THE LIVING WORD OF THE BUDDHA
The Buddha's Teachings in the Oldest Texts
Celebrating 21 years of full-time sutta translation and teaching, 2002-2023

Handbook of Meditation in Society 5

Sutta Discovery Vol 60.1e
Theme: Delusion and Experience
Epistemology, psychology and the Abhidhamma
©TAN Beng Sin (Piya Tan) 2023b

For conventions (textual and technical) and bibliography, see **SD Guide**.
[PDF] To move around the book, click the BOOKMARK icon ⌶ on the far right or left panel; click the HEADINGS.

"What we know is what we sense: thinking makes sense of it."

Sutta translations & study website: http://dharmafarer.org

Courses and messaging:
http://themindingcentre.org;
t.me/suttasangha (Global Sutta Community telegram)

THE MINDING CENTRE, based in Singapore, is part of Piya Tan's Dharma ministry. It was founded in 2006 to provide non-religious Dharma-based services to those in need of counsel and solace. It also serves as a haven and hub for those seeking Dharma by way of critical thinking, creative feeling, meditation, sutta translation and study, spiritual experience, and sharing that light and joy. The Centre also supports and promotes Piya Tan in his full-time Buddhist and related work.

Courses: http://themindingcentre.org

THE SUTTA DISCOVERY SERIES is part of the Living Word of the Buddha project which aspires to present and encourage an exploration of early Buddhism, both in a Dharma-inspired and academic manner for personal development as well as outreach work on a local and global scale. The Minding Centre and the Living Word of the Buddha project are motivated and guided by a quest for the historical Buddha and a vision of mere Buddhism.

Suttas: http://dharmafarer.org

THE MERE BUDDHIST VISION. We aspire to learn, teach and practise mere Buddha Dharma, or "non-religious Buddhism," that is, Buddhism as simple as possible, as the teaching of the historical Buddha, so that it is open to all who seek true stillness and liberating wisdom. We aspire to compassionately and joyfully proclaim the possibility, necessity and urgency of gaining spiritual liberation in this life itself—at least as streamwinners, with or without dhyana—in keeping with the spirit of the Okkanta Saṁyutta (S 25). ***Mere Buddhism is easy: live it and be free.***

YOU can help Buddhism grow

Your pledge & support bring Dharma to others:

- ☑ **Print Dharma and related books, and Internet Dharma**
- ☑ **Support our sutta translation:** http://dharmafarer.org
- ☑ **Sponsor our full-time Dharma work and global ministry**

Wᴇ ɢɪᴠᴇ
for the sake of a beautiful mind,
as a support for the mind (in inner peace).
(Aṭṭha Dāna Sutta, A 8.31/4:236)

KEEPING BUDDHISM CENTRED
Sutta translations: **http://dharmafarer.org**

As people today become more aware of Buddhism, many seek the simple original teachings of the Buddha. For over two decades now, Piya Tan has been inspired by this ideal of "mere Buddhism." In this connection, he has set up the Minding Centre and Pali House.

The Minding Centre
A still centre in life's storms

Suttas and commentaries: http://dharmafarer.org
Classes and enquiry:
themindingcentre@gmail.com; Telegram Group: t.me/suttasangha.
hp +65 8211 0879 (Telegram & WhatsApp)

Address all mails to: "Pali House," Blk 248, Jurong East St 24, #08-50, Singapore 600248

Pali House

On Vesak Day, 12ᵗʰ May, 2006, Pali House was born, fulfilling Piya's long-time dream for living space that is spacious, quiet and conducive for his Dharma work.

☐ Pali House has <u>one of the most complete sets of early Buddhist scriptures</u> (texts and translations).
☐ <u>The translating of the early Buddhist texts</u> in the **Sutta Discovery** series is done at Pali House.

Pali House is possible through the generosity of the Buddhist community and various individuals like yourself who have generously and regularly contributed to Piya Tan's work. He is doing <u>full-time lay Dharma work</u> without any salary. As such, your continued support will greatly help our Dharma work.

How you can help

☐ Support for <u>Piya Tan's full time Buddhist work</u> (especially the Sutta Translation & related projects).
☐ Help with <u>the Dharmafarer website</u> (http://dharmafarer.org) through your expertise and time.
☐ Introduce people to the <u>the Minding Centre</u> and advertise our activities to your friends, etc.
☐ Donate to <u>cost of computer peripherals and printing</u>, especially laser printer toner and A4 copy paper.
☐ Sponsor purchases of <u>Buddhist scriptures, books and materials</u> (for the Sutta Translation library).
☐ Contribute to **the Sutta publication fund** (for printing costs of study notes and SD books, etc).
☐ Encourage relatives and friends to <u>offer dāna together</u> for merit of happy togetherness.
☐ After making such offerings or acts of merit, make this **Dharmafarer aspiration:**

May this merit bring my mind peace and wisdom.
May I enter the path of streamwinning in this life itself.

To pledge or donate, please make your cheque payable to **"The Minding Centre"** & mail to:

"Pali House," Blk 248, Jurong East St 24, #08-50, Singapore 600248.

The Living Word of the Buddha • Living the Word of the Buddha

---

SUTTA DISCOVERY
Directly seeing the Buddha's Teachings

THE MINDING CENTRE
hp: +65 8211 0879; email: themindingcentre@gmail.com
Websites: http://dharmafarer.org; http://themindingcentre.org
Global Sutta Community Telegram: t.me/suttasangha (for online sutta class)
Piya Tan's Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/piyatan
The Minding Centre Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/themindingcentre

The most direct way to learn Buddhism is to read and live the Pali suttas which contain some of the oldest records we have of the Buddha's teachings. As we search these scriptures, we will discover ourselves amidst their stories, teachings and practices, and even take a first step towards spiritual awakening.

This series will also help you **learn and master the Pali Canon:** to locate suttas, teachings and stories, and have an idea of how Suttas are transmitted and translated. Wherever feasible, comparative studies are made between the Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese (Āgama) versions of the suttas. Although a very basic knowledge of Buddhism (the 5 Precepts, etc) is helpful, no knowledge of these languages is required for this course. This class is suitable for beginner and mid-range level.

The Sutta Discovery (SD) series started with **the NUS Buddhist Society** weekly Sutta Study Group (SSG) classes (February 2002 onwards), and **the Buddhist Fellowship** SD series (February 2003 onwards). The SD works are now freely available worldwide on **http://dharmafarer.org.** There is an on-going global team of volunteer **Sutta readers** who regularly study the suttas and essays, and proof-read them.

● **PIYA TAN**, a former **Theravada monk** for 20 years, works full-time on the Suttas with new commentaries, and teaches them. As a full-time lay Dharma teacher, he specializes in early Buddhism. He was consultant and regular lecturer to the Buddhist Studies Team (BUDS) that successfully introduced **Buddhist Studies in Singapore Secondary Schools** in the 1980s, and then, invited as a visiting scholar to **the University of California at Berkeley, USA**. He has written many ground-breaking and educational books on Buddhism (such as *Total Buddhist Work*) and social surveys (such as *Buddhist Currents* and *Charisma in Buddhism*).

As **a full-time Dharma teacher,** he runs Sutta and related classes like the basic Pali course series, the Sutta Study Group (NUSBS), Dharma courses (the Singapore Buddhist Federation), Sutta Discovery classes (Buddhist Fellowship and elsewhere), and Sutta-based (including meditation) courses (The Minding Centre), besides his own full-time **Pali translation and research project**, the Pali House, and doing a comparative study of the Pali Nikāyas and the Chinese Āgamas. As a Theravāda monk, he learned insight meditation from **Mahasi Sayadaw** himself in the 1980s, and forest meditation from various forest monks. He has run numerous **meditation courses and retreats** for students and adults (including non-Buddhists) since 1980s. In 1992, he taught meditation at the University of California at Berkeley, USA, and also to BP, JPMorgan, the Defence Science Organization, GMO, HP and SIA. He writes weekly reflections and gives daily online teachings on Facebook. All this for the love of Dharma and of Ratna and posterity.

GLOBAL DHAMMA SERIES (GDC) VIA ZOOM MEETING
Register at Telegram Group: Global Sutta Community (GSC) t.me/suttasangha
The Minding Centre YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/c/TheMindingCentre/videos

BOOKS BY PIYA TAN

Sutta Discovery Series (plus Piya's current works, with Pāli fonts & PDF versions)
☐ Dharma thumb drive   2003-2022   by donation   (please contact us)

Trilinear Translations
(Pāli / Word-for-word translation / Modern English) with notes
☐ Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (D 22) (around 77 pages) $10.00
☐ Ānāpānasati Sutta (M 118) (around 40 pages) $10.00

Buddha & Buddhism
☐ The Buddha and His Disciples $15.00
☐ History of Buddhism $15.00
☐ Teaching Method of the Buddha $10.00
☐ Background to Buddhism (Introd. to Buddha & Teachings) $10.00
☐ Introduction to Pali Chanting $10.00

Buddhist psychology notes
☐ Meditation for Beginners $10.00
☐ Buddhist psychology (Diploma in Buddhist Counselling P102)
   2-volume set: (1) Early Buddhist Sutras; (2) Readings (on Buddhism and psychology) $25.00
☐ Psychology of Meditation $15.00
☐ Basic Buddhist counselling $10.00

Audio CDs of Piya's talks (the monk years) [MP3; $10.00 per CD unless otherwise stated]
The Diamond Sutra ($30) • Psychological Types • The word of the Buddha • What happens when a person is born • What happens when a person dies • Buddhism and the nature of the universe • Buddhism and the God-idea • Preaching Techniques of the Buddha ($15) • Actions of the Buddha & Noble Silence (CDA format) ($15).

ORDERS
To order, please contact:
        Ratna Lim (dharmafarer@gmail.com) or the Minding Centre (+65 8211 0879: ask for Ratna Lim)

Dharma Drive
Early Buddhist Texts

The Sutta Discovery series by Piya Tan,
beginning in 2002 and still going on.

For illustration only; products may vary.

For Dharma stewards (supporters): The Dharma Drive (USB thumb drive 16 GB) contains +60 SD vols, sutta teachings (MP3 talks, videos), reflections & books by Piya Tan.

Make this a gift to a monastic or someone who needs it

This series will also help you **learn and master the Pali Canon:** to locate suttas, teachings and stories, and have an idea of how Suttas are transmitted and translated. Wherever feasible, comparative studies are made between the Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese (Āgama) versions of the suttas. If you can read this message, you are ready to study the Sutta translations. No deep knowledge of Buddhism is needed. [For 20 reasons for the SD series, see http://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/sutta-discovery/printing-the-suttas]

Sutta Discovery (quarterly; ring-bound A4 vols): S$15.00 each (unless otherwise stated) or donation.

☐ SD Guide (key & index volume) FREE		
☐ SD 1	(2003, 2010)	Dhammacakka Sutta & the Buddha's early teachings
☐ SD 2	(2003, 2010)	Wealth & Lovingkindness
☐ SD 3	(Sep 2003)	Refuge-going
☐ SD 4	(Jan 2004)	Karma 1
☐ SD 5	(Apr 2004)	Dependent arising
☐ SD 6	(Jul 2004)	Wisdom 1
☐ SD 7	(Jan 2005)	The world and universe
☐ SD 8	(Apr 2005)	Lay sainthood
☐ SD 9	(Nov 2004)	Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta
☐ SD 10	(Apr 2006)	The limbs of awakening
☐ SD 10b	(2016)	The noble eightfold path
☐ SD 11	(Jan 2006)	Emptiness
☐ SD 12	(Apr 2006)	Brahmā (the High God)
☐ SD 13	(Jul 2005)	Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas
☐ SD 14	(Oct 2006)	Self-identity view
☐ SD 15	(Jul 2006)	Mental cultivation
☐ SD 16	(Jul 2007)	Impermanence 1
☐ SD 17ab	(Jan 2007)	Five Aggregates (2-vol set) $30
☐ SD 18	(Oct 2007)	Karma 2
☐ SD 19	(Jan 2008)	The meditation sign
☐ SD 20	(Jul 2008)	Revulsion
☐ SD 21	(Oct 2008)	Views
☐ SD 22	(Apr 2008)	Giving & generosity
☐ SD 23	(May 2008)	Death & Rebirth
☐ SD 24	(Dec 2008)	Samadhi
☐ SD 25	(Nov 2006)	Brahmajāla Sutta
☐ SD 26	(Apr 2009)	Non-self
☐ SD 27	(Jul 2009)	Psychic powers
☐ SD 28	(Oct 2009)	Parables 1
☐ SD 29	(2010a)	Elements
☐ SD 30	(2010b)	Skillful means
☐ SD 31	(2010c)	Latent tendencies
☐ SD 32	(2011a)	Mental hindrances

☐ SD 33	(2011b)	Dhyana
☐ SD 34	(2011c)	Spiritual friendship
☐ SD 35	(2011d)	Wisdom 2
☐ SD 36ab	(2011e/2012a)	Buddhism & mythology (2-vol set)
☐ SD 37	(2012b)	Right Livelihood 1
☐ SD 38	(2012c)	Love & compassion
☐ SD 39	(2012d)	Karma 3
☐ SD 40a1+2	(2013ab)	Levels of learning (2-vol set)
☐ SD 40b	(Oct 2008)	Chinese Buddhism $20
☐ SD 41	(2013d)	Samatha & vipassana
☐ SD 42	(2014a)	Impermanence & diligence
☐ SD 43	(2014b)	Healing
☐ SD 44	(2014c)	Solitude & silence
☐ SD 45	(2014d)	Faith & giving
☐ SD 46	(2015a)	Teaching & learning
☐ SD 47	(2015b)	Precept & practice
☐ SD 48	(2015c)	Death & mindfulness
☐ SD 49abc	(2015d/2016ab)	Life of the Buddha 1 (3-vol-set)
☐ SD 50ab	(2017ab)	Awakening & nirvana (2-vol set)
☐ SD 51ab	(2017cd)	Effort and energy (2-vol-set)
☐ SD 52.1	(2018a)	Miraculous life of Gotama Buddha
☐ SD 52b	(2018b)	Parables 2
☐ SD 53	(2018c)	Truth & reality
☐ SD 54	(2018d)	Devas 1
☐ SD 55ab	(2019d/2020a)	Happiness and progress
☐ SD 56ab	(2020bc)	The gradual way/Various faculties
☐ SD 57ab	(2020d/2021a)	Rebirth and cosmology
☐ SD 58	(2021b)	Listening and speaking
☐ SD 59a&b	(2021c&d)	Moral virtue 1 (2-vol-set)
☐ **SD 60.1ab -1f HANDBOOK MEDITATION IN SOCIETY (HMS):**		
☐ SD 60.1ab HMS 1+2		Character types; types of meditation
☐ SD 60.1c HMS 3		Rhetoric of Buddhist experience
☐ SD 60.1d HMS 4		Evolutionary psychology of mindfulness
☐ SD 60.1e HMS 5		Delusion and experience
☐ SD 60.1f HMS 6		Psychopathology of mindfulness

Please order from:

The Minding Centre "Pali House," Blk 248, Jurong East St 24, #08-50, Singapore 600248.
email: themindingcentre@gmail.com ; hp **+65 8211 0879 ;** Telegram: **@RatnaTMC**

The essay, **SD 60.1e** *Delusion and experience*, is part of the multi-volume *SD 60 Handbook of Meditation in Society*, comprising (to date):

SD 60.1a	Character Analysis
SD 60.1b	Samatha, Vipassana, Kammaṭṭhāna
SD 60.1c	The Rhetoric of Buddhist Experience
SD 60.1d	An Evolutionary Psychology of Mindfulness
SD 60.1e	Delusion and Experience
SD 60.1f	Psychopathology of Meditation

Detailed Table of Contents

60.1e   Handbook of Meditation in Society 5
Delusion and Experience

Epistemology, psychology and the Abhidhamma
by ©Tᴀɴ Beng Sin, 2023

1 "Mindfulness" and Buddhist meditation

1.0 In this volume, **SD 60.1e**, we will examine the 2ⁿᵈ training in the Buddhist path, that of mental cultivation, as popularly understood and often exploited by professional scholars and specialists. Although we may not, as a rule, see traditional Buddhist meditation as "McMindfulness," there are often enough, aspects of it that may not actually reflect the sutta teachings, or, for some reasons, may have negative effects on such practitioners.

Psychological and scholarly studies of "**mindfulness**" (Buddhist teaching of mind development and health), **mindfulnessᴷᶻ** (Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness, with the superscripted KZ) and "**Mindfulness**" (the psychologization and secularization of Buddhist mind teachings and methods) have figured prominently in debates not only in the psychological disciplines but also in sociological and religious studies. Specialists from different disciplinary fields have discussed at length the mental and emotional states of those who meditate, who join meditation courses or groups, or have left and still bear the scars allegedly inflicted by their involvement.

There is also the issue of whether such practices, especially the plagiarized and commercialized meditation known as "**McMindfulness**" [1.1.2.1], are a threat to individuals and to public health. These specialists also discussed the kind of counselling or therapy that such victims need and how to prevent the recurrence and persistence of such conditions and problems.

This study will be a sort of digest of currently available studies and analyses of such meditation theories and practices, with relevant critical comments for our understanding of their significance in the light of early Buddhism and our own practice. All this will hopefully give us a better understanding of how meditation works psychologically in the light of early Buddhist spirituality.

1.1 Bᴜᴅᴅʜɪsᴛ ᴍᴇᴅɪᴛᴀᴛɪᴏɴ: Hɪsᴛᴏʀɪᴄᴀʟ ᴀɴᴅ sᴏᴄɪᴀʟ ʀᴇᴀʟɪᴛɪᴇs

1.1.1 Persistent influences of Buddhist meditation

1.1.1.1 Historically the foundation of psychological "mindfulness" is **meditation**, especially modern Buddhist meditation. Hence, we need to understand what "Buddhist meditation" refers to today, especially in the context of our title topic. **Ann Taves**, in her overview of psychology and religious experience, *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (2009:81 f), notes that despite the vast "textual traditions" (or modern literature) on meditation in Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity today, there are new developments in the way that meditation is popularized amongst their respective followers (such as the Buddhist laity). Clearly Buddhist meditation today plays the most prominent role in such developments.[1]

We have already noted that Buddhist meditation practice has continued unbroken over centuries, even going back to the Buddha's time.[2] In the West, however, meditation as a living tradition has largely disappeared with the destruction of classical civilization.

1.1.1.2 The closest that Christianity came to adopting meditation is clearly its theology and practice known as **hesychasm** (inner peace, *hēsychia,* or *hesychazein,* "to be quiet, at rest," akin to the

---

[1] See R Sharf, "Buddhist modernism and the rhetoric of meditative experience," *Numen* 42,3 Oct 1995a:228-283.

[2] See SD 60.1b (4.4.1.1).

Buddhist *samatha*). This practice had its origins in the Sinaitic school of the Eastern Orthodox Church (7th century) and in the writings of Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022).[3] St Gregory of Sinai (early 14th century), however, is attributed by most as the founder of the Hesychastic (meditative) prayer.[4]

The Hesychast prayer, involving the whole being—soul, mind and body—is often called "pure" or "intellectual" prayer or the "Jesus prayer" [1.1.1.3]. St John Climacus (6th-7th century), one of the great writers of the Hesychast tradition, wrote: "Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with your every breath, | Then, indeed you will appreciate the value of stillness."[5] This practice is very much closer to the traditional Theravāda invocation of *buddho* while meditating than to the Mahāyāna mantra recitation.[6]

The Jesus Prayer is an interesting Christian method of meditation that consists in the control of breath and bodily movement accompanied by the repetition of the name of Jesus to bring about a dhyana in the presence of God. It postulates concentration of consciousness through an intensive exercise of those bodily organs in which spiritual potentialities are supposedly located. The method demands that, in a sitting position, the meditator controls their breathing and flex their muscles, concentrating on the heartbeat and repeating continually, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," while surrendering the will[7] in acts of forgiveness, mercy and hope in God.[8]

Like in Theravāda meditation, its aim is not ecstasy but a liberation of the understanding for the peaceful acceptance of union within the Word of God or the Silent Nameless One.[9] *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* adds: "The origin of this kind of prayer is unknown, though hypotheses postulate the influence of ancient Indian Chakras technique on the Greek Fathers."[10] One of the earliest roots of the Hesychast movement was clearly the Greek theologian and mystic Evagrius Ponticus (or Evagrios of Pontus) (345-399) who lived in Pontus, Asia Minor (now Anatolia, Turkey), whose teaching "stands essentially closer to Buddhism than to Christianity."[11]

Such a practice was popular with the laura (monastery) of Mount Athos founded in 963 by Athanasius, although solitaries or eremites had by then already been living in the mountain. Another famous Hesychast laura is the Monastery of Saint John, founded in 1068 on the island of Patmos. Both still exist today.[12]

---

[3] *The New Catholic Encyclopedia,* 2nd ed, Thomson/Gale 2003 13:671 under Symeon the New Theologian says that he was born in 949 and "d. March, 102." He actually died in 1022 (*Ency of Eastern Orthodox Christianity,* 2 vols, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011 2:550).

[4] "The History of Mount Athos": https://web.archive.org/web/20091207062434/http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/Athos/General/AthosHistory.html.

[5] St John Climacus, *The Ladder of the Divine Ascent,* Step 27 (1112C), (tr) C Luibheid & N Russell, London: SPCK, 1982:269 f.

[6] On the meditation on *buddho,* see SD 60.1d (5.5.2; 5.9.1.6; 5.13.1 n).

[7] "Surrendering the will" parallels the Buddhist meditator giving up "the doer" (the notions of "I, me, mine"): SD 17.6 (8.4).

[8] On the textual background to *buddho* as meditative sound, see SD 15.7 (3.10.1).

[9] In early Buddhist meditation too, the aim of meditation is not to attain dhyana (*jhāna*), but to gain inner calm and clarity (*samatha*) for the development of insight (*vipassanā*) into true reality [SD 8.4 (9)]. Experienced Buddhist meditators would easily identify "the Silent Nameless One" as alluding to dhyana or the equanimity that arises in the higher dhyanas.

[10] This and the prec para are from: *The New Catholic Encyclopedia,* 2nd ed, 2003 7:861. On Christian mystic experience (incl dhyana), see **Miraculous stories**, SD 27.5b (1.3).

[11] Quote by H U von Balthasar, "The metaphysics and mystical theology of Evagrius," in *Monastic Studies* 3 1965:193; also I Hausherr, "Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 1 1935:123 f. See also D E Linge, "The life of angels: Ascetic practice and reflection in the writings of Evagrius of Pontus," J of the American Academy of Religion 68,3 2009:537-568; R Gethin, "Emptiness and unknowing: An essay in comparative mysticism," *Buddhist Studies Review* 35,1-2 2018:81-96.

[12] Macmillan Ency of Religion (ed L Jones), 2nd ed, 2005:2826 f Eremitism.

While the Jesus Prayer is the earliest attestation of psychosomatic techniques in the Hesychast prayer, according to Kallistos Ware, "its origins may well be far more ancient,"[13] influenced by the Sufi practice of *dhikr*, "the memory and invocation of the name of God," which in turn may have been influenced by the ancient yoga tradition, especially Buddhist meditation from Central Asia (such as Bukhara).[14] It is possible that the Sufis were influenced by early Christian monasticism or the influences were working both ways.[15]

1.1.1.3 St Nicephorus the Hesychast (13th century), a Roman Catholic who converted to the Eastern Orthodox faith and became a monk at Mount Athos, advised monks to bend their heads toward the chest, "attach the prayer to their breathing" while controlling the rhythm of their breath, and "to fix their eyes during prayer on the 'middle of the body'," concentrating the mind within the heart in order to practice **nepsis** (watchfulness; cf P *manasikāra; jāgara*).[16]

Both the theology of the Hesychasts and the practice of **omphaloskepsis**[17] were regarded as heterodox by some theologians, and a controversy arose in the early 14th century. The strongest opponent of this imported meditative theology was Barlaam the Calabrian, who derided the Hesychasts as *omphalopsychoi*, "those with their souls in their navels." St Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) however, defended the Hesychast monks, and the controversy was resolved in 1351.[18] What we know as the breath meditation continues to be practised in the Jesus prayer on Mount Athos and among other Orthodox communities to this day.

The term **omphalopsychoi** or Omphalopsychians, "navel-gazers,"[19] is sometimes used as a derogatory term by those who do not approve of meditation. This only affirms the fact that meditation (or specifically breath meditation) was not originally or naturally a part of early Christianity. Whether such an ancient practice originated in early Buddhism is less significant than the fact that it is practised by the Eastern Christians to this day, and its ancient essence and structure are found in early Buddhism, centuries before Christ was born—this forms a bridge and a ladder for interfaith dialogue.[20]

1.1.1.4 Meditation only began to become mainstream in the West when Eastern meditative practices were introduced by Asian teachers. As such, the meditation techniques that are practised in the modern West today derive from Hindu and Buddhist traditions. But neither Hinduism nor Buddhism are unitary religions: they are divided into independent sects and subjects, and further discrete groups led by their own charismatic gurus, each with their own teachings and meditation practices.

Anna Lutkatjis thus concludes: "Therefore, to simply refer to 'Christian meditation' or 'Buddhist meditation' is not very meaningful, as both religions contain a vast range of different philosophies, traditions and lineages. As such, meditation practices are best understood within the context of cer-

---

[13] Ware 1995:7.

[14] Ware 1992.

[15] Ware 1992.

[16] Kallistos **Ware**, *Praying With the Body*: The Hesychast method and non-Christian parallels," *Sobornost Incorporating Eastern Churches Review* 14,2 1992:6-35. K **Ware**, *Act Out of Stillness: The influence of 14th-cent hesychasm on Byzantine and Slav civilization,* Toronto, 1995:6. G E H **Palmer**, K **Ware** & P **Sherrard**, *The Philokalia: The complete text,* vol 4, 1999: PR7.

[17] **Omphaloskepsis**, Greek, *omphalos.* "navel" + *skepsis,* "viewing, examination, speculation."

[18] On hesychasm, see: *The New Ency Britannica,* 15th ed, Micropaedia 1983; W M **Johnston** (ed), *Ency of Monasticism,* Routledge, 2000; *Ency of **Eastern Orthodox Christianity*** 2011 1:299-306; B **Kovačević**, "Silence in Theravāda Buddhism and orthodox Christianity: Cases of the Buddha and Evagrius of Pontus" II, *Religion & Tolerance* ns 19,37 2022:33-48.

[19] J G Milligen, *Curiosities of Medical Experience,* 2nd ed, London: Richard Bentley, 1839:40. E R Lyn, *Abbreviations Acronyms Glossary for American Readers*, Paramount, CA: CreateSpace, 2009:490.

[20] Other forms of Christian meditation include the Carthusian "way of silence," the Benedictine *lectio divina* ("divine reading"), and the Ignatian imaginative exercises (or Ignatian contemplation). However, compared to Orthodox *meditation* described above, these other forms are better described as "contemplations."

tain <u>schools of thought, individual teachers and specific texts</u>." (2020:18, underscore added).[21] In a 2021 interview, she quotes her friend, Daniel Ingram, "Attention isn't Buddhist, but the Buddhists have a lot to say about it."[22] [1.1.2.4 f]

Taves [1.1.1.1] similarly notes that even within religions, as in the case of Buddhism, meditation techniques are culturally embedded within very specific contexts. Buddhism, like any religious tradition that includes meditation practices, has "created data of various sorts, including philosophical discussions of meditation, prescriptive guides to meditation, rituals that include meditation, and, especially in the modern era, post hoc accounts of experiences that occurred during meditation." (2009:81)

The best-known Buddhist meditation methods today are those of the Burmese Vipassana traditions and the Thai Samatha traditions. The Burmese **Vipassana** traditions today are of 2 streams: <u>the monastic stream</u> of Mahasi Sayadaw,[23] and <u>the lay stream</u> of Goenka, who belonged to a meditation lineage going back to well-known reformer monk, Ledi Sayadaw (1846-1923).[24] The Thai Kammatthana systems are mostly Samatha taught by various monks.[25] However, there is a unique lay system introduced by Nai[26] Boonman Poonyathiro (1932-   ), practised by the Samatha Trust of the UK, which now has affiliated groups in the US.[27]

1.1.1.5 Around the middle of the 20th century, modernist Sinhalese monks in Sri Lanka worked to secularize their Buddhism by <u>sidelining, even rejecting, the Vinaya and meditation</u>, and looked up academic attainments, and to being "socially-engaged" and involved in politics, often of a racist nature.[28] With the rise in the popularity of meditation amongst the laity, Sinhalese monks, especially those living overseas, supported by the local laity, find themselves in a quandary: they are simply unprepared to teach meditation. To attract followers and funds, they have to turn to some kind of simple ritualized or academic form of meditation.[29]

Hence, the modern Sinhalese style of meditation is not the traditional Buddhist meditation of the forest tradition found in Sri Lanka (which keeps to the Vinaya). It is mostly based on academic study by modernist scholar-monks.[30] This modernist meditation is basically to give lay members of their Viharas some semblance of meditation.

Such Sinhalese **Vihara meditation** sittings tend, as a rule, to be short (often never going beyond half an hour), usually forming part of their Puja (devotional service) or some periodic activity with Dharma talks. Since such sessions tend to be short, they do not seriously pose any kind of meditation problems that we will be discussing here. In this sense, the Vihara meditation is neither traditional in

---

[21] Anna Lutkatjis, *The Dark Side of Dharma: Meditation, madness and other maladies on the contemplative path.* Masters thesis, UNSW, Australia. London: Aeon Books, 2020.

[22] Interview by Rosalind McAlpine, a neuroscience scholar at the University College London, 2021: https://www.mentalhealthscience.org/blogs/1aoe26eo7cgluxk6mb7fbv6v69aslj.

[23] On Mahasi Sayadaw, see SD 60.1b (2.4.5), SD 60.1d (6.1.1).

[24] On the Goenka's lineage leading back to Ledi Sayadaw, see SD 60.1b (2).

[25] On the Thai Samatha (kammatthana) system, see SD 60.1b (4-5).

[26] "Nai" (lit "master") is a general Thai appellative use which tr as "Mr" in English, denoting that Boonman is a layman.

[27] On Nai Boonman and the Samatha Trust, see SD 60.1b (6).

[28] See eg H L Seeniviratne, *The Work of Kings,* 1999; also SD 60.1b (2.1.1).

[29] The only well-known Sinhala missionary teaching meditation is the scholar monk, "Bhante G" (H Gunaratana), see **The Buddha discovered dhyana,** SD 33.1b.

[30] For a close study of such secular Sinhalese monks, see eg H L Seneviratne, *The Work of Kings,* London & Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press, 1999. See also R Gombrich & G Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed,* Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 1988: eg 225-231; on lay meditation (237-240). N Ghosh, "Politics of hate … ," Straits Times (Singapore) 24 Mar 2023 A11. F Ispahani (ed), *Politics of Hate: Religious Majoritarianism in South Asia,* HarperCollins, 2023 essays by Neil Devotts & by Gehan Gunatilleke.

the Vipassana/Samatha sense nor "modernist" in the McMindfulness sense. They may be said to be a kind of *modernist Vihara ritual meditation*. We will thus leave this Vihara meditation as it is.

1.1.2 Mindfulness as a product and its consequences

1.1.2.1 Critics have used the term **McMindfulness**[31] for the popularized form of mindfulness available like "fast-food," that is, as a "commodity."[32] According to Jeremy Safran, the popularity of McMindfulness is the result of a marketing strategy: "McMindfulness is the marketing of a constructed dream; an idealized lifestyle; an identity makeover" (ib). Psychologist Thomas Joiner warns that modern mindfulness meditation has been corrupted for commercial gain by self-help gurus, and that it encourages unhealthy narcissistic and self-obsessed mindsets.[33]

Numerous scholars and writers have criticized popular clinical Mindfulness[KZ] as being rooted in Buddhist practice but without any spiritual[34] elements. The reality is that Mindfulness[KZ] is often taught denatured of its traditional Buddhist ethics, hence opening it up to undesirable effects. Or, it is "re-moralized" with clinically based ethics, which however fails to give the proper foundation for the practice.[35]

Bluntly put, McMindfulness is effectively an economic tool—both in the sense that it is used as a sticking plaster for wider problems ("Stressed at work?—Use your lunch hour to meditate in the company-provided quiet room) and as a way of individualising problems ("If you meditated, you wouldn't get so stressed out.") Deal with your stress, pay for it; use McMindfulness, pay for it.

Ronald Purser, an ordained teacher in the Taego branch of Korean Sōn Buddhism and a professor of management at San Francisco State University, in his cheeky yet insightful critique, *McMindfulness: How Mindfulness became the new capitalist spirituality* (2019), amongst other things, says that one way to read the McMindfulness trend is that our health is being sold back to us by the same people (or at least the same system) which made us ill in the first place! On that reading, it is unsurprising that McMindfulness can be unhealthy—not only does it not fix the things in the world which were making us understandably unhappy (overwork, low pay, work insecurity), but makes us feel responsible when we haven't meditated ourself into equanimity with those things.[36]

---

[31] "McMindfulness" was coined by Miles Neale, a Buddhist teacher and psychotherapist (R Purser, McMindfulness and frozen yoga," 2011).

[32] J D Safran, "McMindfulness," (*Straight Talk. Cutting through the spin on psychotherapy and mental health*) *Psychology Today*, 13 June 2014; McMindfulness | Psychology Today. See SD 60.1d (4.2).

[33] T Joiner, *Mindlessness: The corruption of mindfulness in a culture of narcissism,* Oxford, 2017.

[34] As a rule (often clear from the context), I use "spiritual" to mean "connected with the human spirit, usually transcending religious narrowness."

[35] Some of these titles are: G **Ritzer**, *McDonaldization of Society* (1993); D S **Lopez**, *The Scientific Buddha: His Short and Happy Life* (2012), historicizes and critiques the conversion of Buddhism into a self-help technique backed by dubious scientific claims; J **Wilson**, *Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhism Meditation and American Culture* (2014), tracks the mindfulness movement's widespread penetration into different areas of contemporary American society; C G **Brown**, *Debating Yoga and Mindfulness in Public Schools: Reforming Secular Education or Reestablishing Religion?* (2019), explores legal and ethical debates around the secularization of Buddhist practices; J **Kucinskas**, *The Mindful Elite: Mobilizing from the Inside Out* (2019) is a sociological study of American mindfulness. Interesting reviews of **Purser** 2019 incl: W **Higgins**, a secular Buddhist, https://secularbuddhistnetwork.org/winton-higgins-on-ron-pursers-mcmindfulness/ & J **Barker**, *J of Global Buddhism* 22,1 2021:251-257 https://www.globalbuddhism.org/article/download/1294/1131/2511.

[36] I thank Matt Jenkins (UK), one of my volunteer proofreaders, for directing my attention to Ronald Purser's *McMindfulness: How Mindfulness became the new capitalist spirituality* (London, 2019a), and Guardian (UK) article on McMindfulness: *The Mindfulness Conspiracy,* The Guardian 14 June 2019b: https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jun/14/the-mindfulness-conspiracy-capitalist-spirituality.

1.1.2.2 Besides risks in the student's actual practice, there are also serious concerns with the teacher's or facilitator's credentials and qualifications. Buddhist-based practices are being standard-ized and manualized, uprooted from their Buddhist background to become a mental cultivation with neither proper instructions nor close guidance. This vital close guidance, called "spiritual friendship" (*kalyāṇa,mittatā*), is tutelage given by experienced monastics or trained lay teachers, whether in a retreat environment or in a modern meditation setting.[37]

At clinical Mindfulness programmes, the clients are given doses of meditation instructions, coat-ed with modern psychological jargon, without any instructions on the nature of the mind, or how such meditation methods may present certain difficulties in terms of distractions or emotional reac-tions. Often, the instructors themselves have not gone through sufficient hours and experience of meditation to understand the nature of the mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*)[38] [5.1.1] to meditation and of the awakening-factors (*bojjhaṅga*),[39] especially the catalysis of joy (*pāmojja*)[40] in the early stages of meditation.

1.1.2.3 Many, if not most, people who turn to meditation do so from feeling a sense of "lack," of something that seems to be missing from their lives, or because they have some kind of difficulty, usually emotional, or because, in some cases, they may have some kind of psychological issues. Some meditation participants may even be taking some kind of medication for their mental health. Hence, it is still possible for most beginners to have some kind of difficulties with the practice, espec-ially with the longer sittings.

In media reports, people have attributed unexpected effects of increasing fear, anxiety or panic attacks on account of their meditation practice. In some cases, participants may suffer breakdowns during the practice itself. Such symptoms may have arisen from bipolar vulnerability or repressed PTSD[41] symptoms.[42] However, according to published peer-reviewed academic articles, these negat-ive effects of meditation are rarely noticed in mindfulness meditation when they do occur,[43] and seem to happen due to a poor understanding of what actually constitutes mindfulness and medita-tion.[44]

---

[37] Steven Stanley, "*Sīla* and *sati*: An exploration of ethics and mindfulness and their implication for secular mindfulness-based applications," in E Shonin et al (edd), *Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness*, Springer, 2015: 90-94.

[38] On the 5 mental hindrances, see **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

[39] On the 7 awakening-factors, see **Bojjhaṅga Sīla Sutta** (S 46.3), SD 10.15.

[40] On joy as a meditative catalyst, see **Vimuttâyatana S** (A 5.26,2.3), SD 21.5 (2); SD 10.15 (4.4.1+4.4.2).

[41] PTSD, "post-traumatic stress disorder," is a disorder that may result when an individual lives through or wit-nesses an event in which he or she believes that there is a threat to life or physical integrity and safety and ex-periences fear, terror, or helplessness. The symptoms are characterized by (a) re-experiencing the trauma in painful recollections, flashbacks, or recurrent dreams or nightmares; (b) avoidance of activities or places that recall the traumatic event, as well as diminished responsiveness (emotional anesthesia or numbing), with dis-interest in significant activities and with feelings of detachment and estrangement from others; and (c) chronic physiological arousal, leading to such symptoms as an exaggerated startle response, disturbed sleep, difficulty in concentrating or remembering, and guilt about surviving the trauma when others did not. (APA *Dictionary of Psychology,* 2nd ed, 2015)

[42] M Bond, "Lost in meditation: Two books argue over mindfulness," *New Scientist* 13 Sep 2017; T Joiner 2017.

[43] J D Creswell, "Mindfulness interventions," *Annual Review of Psychology* 68, Jan 2017:491-516; T Joiner 2017; R Purser, "The mindfulness conspiracy," *The Guardian* 14 June 2019.

[44] N Karunamuni & R Weerasekera, "Theoretical foundations to guide mindfulness meditation: A path to wis-dom," *MindRxiv* 38,3 19 Sep 2017:627-646. MindRxiv Papers | Theoretical Foundations to Guide Mindfulness Meditation: A Path to Wisdom.

1.1.2.4 In our own times, not only the religiously inclined but also scholars are amongst those who, at some point, are serious practitioners of meditation. Some continue with their practice, others change their views, often maturing, in their approach to meditation; some simply give it up or lose touch with the meditation group.[45] Such practitioners often write about their meditation experiences, contributing valuable first-hand feedback on their practice for our study and benefit.

Amongst such scholars is **Anna Lutkatjis** [1.1.1.4], a PhD candidate at the University of Sydney (Australia), who, after completing her Master's degree on Religion Studies, published her findings in *The Dark Side of Dharma* (2020). She researched into the possible undesirable side-effects, that is, adverse effects, of meditation and mindfulness. She wanted to know why these effects, which are well-known in religious and spiritual traditions—especially Buddhism—have been ignored in contemporary secular contexts, such as Western psychology.

1.1.2.5 Lutkatjis [1.1.2.4], opens her book, ***The Dark Side of Dharma,*** by describing a couple of experiences that are often mentioned by meditators, especially beginners:

> I first learned meditation in 2011. Like many people, I came to the practice for non-religious reasons: stress relief and the myriad health and wellbeing benefits that were promised. I did not know exactly what meditation was or where it came from, only that it was "ancient" and associated with Eastern religions and gurus. I took a short course, learned a basic technique and diligently practised at least once per day as the teacher instructed.
>
> During the first week of my meditation practice, I experienced strong headaches after each session. I thought this was unusual and checked in with my teacher, who assured me this was normal for some people and would pass after the first week or so (they did). I continued to meditate, and noticed another strange effect. Every time I would begin my practice, within several minutes I would feel myself drop into a trance-like state and I would see a purple sphere of light appear in the centre of my vision. This light was not at all unpleasant, but it was unusual and I was curious as to whether it meant something. Again, I asked my teacher. It was nothing, he said. Some people see lights when they meditate, others hear sounds. None of it mattered, just keep going.
>
> To me, this was a highly unsatisfying answer, so of course I went straight to Google and typed in "purple light when meditating." After some basic searching I seemed to have an answer—the light appeared to be a *nimitta*. The Pali word *nimitta* literally means "sign" and the *nimitta* itself is a mind-generated object that appears when a meditator has reached a good state of concentration. Immediately I was both intrigued and annoyed—either my meditation teacher did not know what a *nimitta* was (which was concerning, given his self-professed status as a "meditation expert" and the high cost of his meditation course), or he was concealing this information from me. Either way, I wanted to know why.
>
> (A Lutkatjis, *The Dark Side of Dharma,* 2020 Preface)[46]

1.1.2.6 Lutkatjis, in an interview with McAlpine (2021) [1.1.1.4], notes that there is a lot of scholarly debate regarding whether meditation can ever be truly "secular." While this is an interesting issue, she thinks that it is more important to consider:

(1) Why do we meditate?
(2) What outcomes can we reasonably expect from various meditation techniques? For example, are we meditating because we want stress relief or because we want to significantly alter experience of our self and the world?

---

[45] For a well-documented study of Vipassana practice by a specialist scholar, M S Rahmani, see SD 60.1c (12.4) Leaving Vipassana.
[46] Anna Lutkatjis, *The Dark Side of Dharma,* London: Aeon, 2020.

From a pragmatic perspective, Lutkatjis proposes, people who start a meditation practice <u>should be fully informed of the possible benefits, risks and results</u>. These are key questions we must ask here, and try to answer, or at least examine those questions' significance. Understandably, question (1) must be carefully pondered over by you (the reader) yourself, and then weighed against the answers and directions suggested to question (2).

   We will now examine more closely what <u>mindfulness</u> really is, both from the secular side as well as the Buddhist teachings on mindfulness to serve as a useful foundation for our following discussion on the practical aspects of the nature and the adverse effects of meditation in some detail.

1.1.3 Plagiarism and disavowal?

   1.1.3.1 Jon Kabat-Zinn (1944-   ) is an American professor emeritus of medicine and the creator of the "Stress Reduction Clinic" (1979) and the "Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society" at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (Worcester, MA), USA. Kabat-Zinn was a student of modern Zen Buddhist teachers such as Philip Kapleau, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Seung Sahn, and was a founding member of Cambridge Zen Center (Cambridge, MA), which is part of the Kwan Um School of Zen. He also studied at the Insight Meditation Society (Barre, MA) and later taught there.[47]

   Kabat-Zinn's practice of yoga[48] and studies with Buddhist teachers led him to borrow and integrate their teachings with medical science. He taught mindfulness, which he claimed could help people cope with stress, anxiety, pain, and illness using what he called[49] [1.1.3.4] the "Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction" (MBSR) programme, a structured 8-week course offered by medical centres, hospitals and health maintenance organizations, and is described in his book *Full Catastrophe Living* (1991).[50] The lucrative course now includes an online training programme called "Mindful Leader."[51]

   1.1.3.2 Steven Stanley, in his "Mindfulness, Overview" article in *the Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*,[52] criticizes how the explicit connection between mindfulness and ethical conduct in the early Buddhist tradition has largely been lost in contemporary definitions, especially in Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness and those influenced by it. The association between <u>mindfulness and bare attention</u> has led to a de-ethicization or demoralization at the level of theory and perhaps also at the level of practice too. MBSR, for example, has been adapted for use by the US military to improve combatants' "operational effectiveness," apparently with Kabat-Zinn's approval, which has provoked some controversy among mindfulness practitioners.[53]

---

[47] Jeff Wilson, *Mindful America,* Oxford Univ Press, 2014:35.

[48] Shreya Wagh-Gumbaste, "Influence of Hindu spiritual teachers on Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) of Jon Kabat-Zinn: Focusing on the teachings of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj and Sri Ramana Maharishi," *International Journal of South Asian Studies* 12 2022:1-18.

[49] <u>"What is the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course?"</u> Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, archived from <u>the original</u> on April 14, 2012. G Winter, <u>"Mindfulness has been McDonaldised and commodified"</u> *The Irish Times*. 19 Sep 2017. Interestingly, I'm told, this name is also used by U Tejaniya of Myanmar in his teachings.

[50] Judith Horstman, *The Scientific American Brave New Brain*, San Francisco: John Wiley, 2010:33.

[51] <u>https://www.mindfulleader.org/mbsr-training?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI2d2cj_6d_gIV5JNmAh1VuQJ_EAAYASAAEgI62fD_BwE</u>. The Singapore version is run by <u>https://bemindful.sg/</u>.

[52] S Stanley, "Mindfulness, Overview," in (ed) Thomas Teo, *Ency of Critical Psychology,* Springer, 2014:1190 f.

[53] Christopher Titmuss, <u>"Are Buddhist Mindfulness Practices used to support International War Crimes?"</u> Ronald Purser, <u>"The Militarization of Mindfulness,"</u> *Inquiring Mind*, Spring 2014. T Nakahara, <u>"Dr Kabat-Zinn talks about mindfulness program in Camp Zama,"</u> 6 Dec 2012.

Stanley adds, "How else can we explain Mindfulness-Based Mind Fitness Training:[54] a program modelled on MBSR for US military personnel actively serving in war zones? Ostensibly it is described as a way of improving the operational efficiency of 'warriors' in a context characterized by increasing levels of burnout and suicidal ideation amongst soldiers. Such a program only becomes possible through the transformation of right mindfulness within the context of the eightfold path (alongside right livelihood) and ethical training guidelines (eg, refraining from intentionally taking life) into an ethically neutral attention regulation for the cultivation of well-being. Such programs might be *mana-sikāra* [attention] training—an ethically variable state—whereas Olendzki[55] states that mindfulness is not just heightened attention, but fundamentally wholesome." (2014:1120) [1.1.4.4]

1.1.3.3 Kabat-Zinn grew up in a non-practising Jewish family.[56] He has stated that his beliefs growing up were a fusion of science and art.[57] Although he was "trained in Buddhism and espouses its principles," apparently, to ensure the success of his ideas, and because they became very successful, he rejected the label of "Buddhist,"[58] preferring to "apply mindfulness within a scientific rather than a religious frame."[59]

We may see Kabat-Zinn's unfettered success in **secularizing and popularizing Buddhist meditation** as the freeing of a profoundly beneficial self-reliant religious practice from the charismatic Buddhist masters for the general benefit of non-Buddhists, the world and posterity. In this sense, we may compare how—in Max Weber's view—*the ethic of ascetic Protestantism* (such as that of the Calvinists) had significantly contributed to *the creation and rise of the capitalistic spirit*.[60]

As more people in the world pick up the habit of regular and easy meditation (the Kabat-Zinn way), more people, it seems, will have mental peace and be more productive. Other religions too are taking up Buddhist meditation, converting it as they see fit [1.1.1.2 f]. So long as we all close our eyes and put our palms together in meditation, we will not even have to beat our swords into plowshares, or our spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.[61] This is, in fact, the Buddha's prophecy in **the Cakkavatti Sīha,nāda Sutta** (D 26) on how the world will be like in preparation for the return of the Buddha in the form of Metteyya.[62]

This, then, is the Buddhist response to the Protestant ethic: *Buddhist mindfulness and the modernist spirit of wholesome productivity*. But, as Kabat-Zinn, "the Master of Mindfulness,"[63] has aptly shown, "Buddhism" is dispensable. Like Goenka, Kabat-Zinn claimed that he teaches only "Dharma," the teaching of the Buddha himself, "who was not a Buddhist."[64] Kabat-Zinn insists that he is himself

[54] E A Stanley, J M Schaldach, A Kiyonaga & A P Jha, "Mindfulness-based mind fitness training: A case study of a high-stress pre deployment military cohort," *Cognitive & Behavioral Practice* 18,4 2011:566-576.

[55] A Olendzki, "The construction of mindfulness," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12,1 2011:55-70.

[56] R Booth, "Master of mindfulness, Jon Kabat-Zinn" *The Guardian* 22 Oct 2017: https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/print/20041206/27421-mindful-writing.html.

[57] T Cochran, "Mindful writing: Jon Kabat-Zinn asks us to come to our senses," 6 Dec 2004: https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/print/20041206/27421-mindful-writing.html.

[58] Barry Boyce, "Jon Kabat-Zinn: The Man Who Prescribes the Medicine of the Moment". *Shambhala Sun*, May 2005.

[59] J Wilson, op cit, 2014:35.

[60] M Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* tr Talcott Parsons, NY & London, 1930. See https://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-protestant-ethic-thesis/.

[61] Based on the Tanakh and the Bible, Isaiah 2:4.

[62] D 26,21-26 (SD 36.10).

[63] R Booth, G2 interview, "Master of Mindfulness, Jon Kabat-Zinn: 'People are losing their minds. This is what we should wake up to,'" *The Guardian,* 22 Oct 2017: https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/oct/22/mindfulness-jon-kabat-zinn-depression-trump-grenfell.

[64] For this claim, see eg E Shonin's interview, "This is not McMindfulness by any stretch of imagination," 18 May 2015: https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/not-mcmindfulness-any-stretch-imagination.

not a Buddhist.[65] Furthermore, he argues, to insist mindfulness meditation is Buddhist is like saying gravity is English because it was identified by Isaac Newton.[66]

Kabat-Zinn's simile is a surprisingly poor but revealing one. We could well claim that gravity is alchemy because Newton was an alchemist—which, even if we don't accept as fully true, clearly contains an element of truth in it (given the close relation between alchemy and science, especially during that period). As a separate objection though, Kabat-Zinn's words are clearly sophistry. Jesus wasn't Christian but he was Christ. The first clause is technically correct, but deliberately misses the point, which is the second clause.[67] The Buddha may not be Buddhist, but he *is* Buddha.

1.1.3.4 Kabat-Zinn's innovativeness and creativity with Buddhist meditation has turned it into a world (and worldly) system that is even more successful (and more worldly) than Goenka's Vipassana movement.[68] Both Goenka and Kabat-Zinn declare that their own system is neither "religious" nor "Buddhist," but with "non-Buddhist" roots which go back to the Buddha himself![69] Both Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness and Goenka's Vipassana seem to want to have it both ways. Anyway, they are, in fact, successful manifestations of Buddhist modernism.[70]

Kabat-Zinn's medical Mindfulness was very successful because it cannibalized those aspects of Buddhist meditation that he needed or thought would work, put them together, and gave them life by the lightning of medical science and psychology. He declared mindfulness as being simply "non-judgmental moment-to-moment awareness" [1.1.3.1], a convenient definition borrowed probably from the popular Vipassana movement.[71] After all, he was teaching Mindfulness, a psychological method, not Buddhism: there's no need to stickle on religious pedantry.

On account of this, scholars, and others familiar with Buddhism and meditation, see Kabat-Zinn's notion of mindfulness as a Procrustean error [1.1.4]. **Procrustes** (the Stretcher) was the mythical Greek rogue smith and bandit from Attica who bound his hapless guests to his infamous iron bed. When his guests' legs were too short, he would stretch them to exactly fit his bed, or when they were too long, he would lop off the extra length![72]

Anyway, Kabat-Zinn's clients and followers were already blissfully gazing too deep into the bright lights of Mindfulness to even squint at the plebeian bickering of unmindful critics. Kabat-Zinn, as doctor and scientist, immediately commanded an *ex-cathedra* authority on what Mindfulness should be, especially when it worked for him and those he worked with. After all, he has been called the "Master of Mindfulness." [1.1.3.3]

In an ironic sense, the informed public (those who tend to be swayed by the latest fads and fashion) now perceive Mindfulness as being defined by Kabat-Zinn and his accredited network. Around 2009, my son in junior college decided not to join his school's Mindfulness programme run by a teacher trained in a Mindfulness-based Programme (MBP) in the UK: "I've learned it from my father who teaches it."

---

[65] See eg D Fisher, "Mindfulness and the cessation of suffering: An exclusive new interview with mindfulness pioneer Jon Kabat-Zinn," 7 Oct 2020: https://www.lionsroar.com/mindfulness-and-the-cessation-of-suffering-an-exclusive-new-interview-with-mindfulness-pioneer-jon-kabat-zinn/. For responses to Kabat-Zinn "not Buddhist" claim, etc, see SD 60.1b (2.5.2.6).

[66] See R Booth, G2 interview, op cit 2017.

[67] Thanks to Matt Jenkins (UK) for this sharp repartee.

[68] On Goenka's work, see SD 60.1c (12.3).

[69] Goenka said that his Vipassana was "not a religion," but "a lifestyle": see SD 60.1c (1.1.1.3; 12.3.8).

[70] On Buddhist modernism, see SD 60.1c (1); cf SD 60.1b (2.4.10.3 f).

[71] Kabat-Zinn quotes Nyanaponika's *Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (1962) in E Shonin's interview, "This is not McMindfulness by any stretch of imagination," 18 May 2015: https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/not-mcmindfulness-any-stretch-imagination. On "Moment-to-moment awareness" as "bare attention," SD 60.1c (1.2.5).

[72] On Procrustes, see SD 21.6 (1.2.2.3).

However, when my wife Ratna and I happily met the Mindfulness teacher during the School's open day, she gave us the silent treatment! Anyway, in Singapore, she would be regarded as being a "professional," while traditional Buddhist teachers were not. I don't think this is an isolated case of traditional meditation being sidelined for its professionalized modern Avatar.

Sociologist Jamie Kucinskas, in her book, *The Mindful Elite* (2019), explains that such an attitude was "emblematic of a privileged community of mindfulness enthusiasts who preferred to optimize their own well-being, careers, and relationships, rather than address deepening social inequalities, and the role of the tech industry in promoting and sustaining them."[73]

1.1.3.5 One of Kabat-Zinn's admirers, Willem Kuyken, a professor of clinical psychology at Oxford University, even suggested that Kabat-Zinn's pioneering work "could one day see him mentioned in the same breath as Darwin and Einstein. 'What they did for biology and physics, Jon has done for a new frontier: the science of the human mind and heart.'"[74]

Darwin and Einstein were great scientists because they formulated groundbreaking theories that brought science new perspectives for progress: Darwin in terms of the theory of evolution, and Einstein in terms of the theory of relativity. Since their times, modern scientists have worked with new and better ideas in the centuries-old history of modern science. Kabat-Zinn formulated no theory of meditation; even his borrowed light on mindfulness as *non-judgemental moment-to-moment awareness* [1.1.3.1, 1.1.4.2] flickers dimly in the daylight of traditional Buddhist meditation.

Kabat-Zinn's best sellers—*Full Catastrophe Living* (1990), *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (1994) and *Coming to Our Senses* (2005)—are popular books outlining his professional expertise and private views on how to relax using practical Buddhist meditation. Other than easy passages on karma and "ethics," there is mention of neither Buddha Dharma nor a single sutta, sutra or Buddhist text. They are very easy reading "how to be well" guides. Nowhere in his other writings or interviews does he go beyond the comfortable preachings on his "non-judgemental moment-to-moment awareness" philosophy and practice.

I've made this note knowing well that it would not effect an iota on Kabat-Zinn's wealth or reputation. Most informed Buddhists probably agree with this, or write something similar. Silence here may be mistaken for our being complicit with what "not-Buddhist" Mindfulness[KZ] stands for. May Kabat-Zinn continue to be rich and successful despite everything.

1.1.4 Debates over Mindfulness

1.1.4.1 A growing number of concerned scholars have contributed papers and feedback on the deficiencies, difficulties and dangers of secularized meditation, especially the Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness programmes and their hybrids. **Georges Dreyfus**, Jackson Professor of Religion at Williams College, Williamstown, MA (USA), for example, has written an insightful summary of the mindfulness[KZ] problem: "Is mindfulness present-centred and non-judgmental?" (2011).[75] Continuing from our examination of Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness [1.1.3], we shall now begin our study on the psychopathology of meditation by examining some of Dreyfus' key points regarding mindfulness[KZ].

Dreyfus opens his paper by writing about his observations upon discovering the psychological use of mindfulness with what is by now a very common concern of informed scholars and Buddhists:

---

[73] Jamie Kucinskas, *The Mindful Elite: Mobilizing from the inside out,* NY: Oxford Univ Press: 2019. Quoted by M C Nisbett, "Mindfulness Inc," *Sciences, Publics, Politics* fall 2019:33-35. https://issues.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Nisbet-Sciences-Publics-Politics-Fall-2019.pdf.

[74] R Booth, G2 interview, op cit, 2017.

[75] G Dreyfus, "Is mindfulness present-centered and non-judgmental? A discussion of the cognitive dimensions of mindfulness," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12,1 May 2011:41-54.

I was at first pleasantly surprised that a concept so central to Buddhist practice could be used with great effectiveness as a therapeutic tool, but quickly my enthusiasm gave way to a certain unease at the ways in which psychologists treated this topic, taking it as more or less self-evident or discussing it through cursory definitions based on the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990).

I was struck by the extent to which these psychological discussions proceeded without any serious reference to the original Buddhist sources from which they were supposed to derive. As a Buddhist scholar I felt that these discussions often missed important points and presented a view of mindfulness that I had trouble recognizing at times.

The first temptation for me was to view these presentations as simply inauthentic, failing to be true to the ideas found in the original texts. This did not disqualify them, for I thought that there is nothing wrong with a thorough reinterpretation of old ideas to adapt them to the modern context. I understood the therapeutic use of mindfulness as an invention of tradition that provided tools and concepts useful within the context of therapeutic interventions, but I thought everybody would be better served by just dropping the reference to Buddhism and the pretense to represent authentically its ideas and practices.

<div align="right">(G Dreyfus, 2011:41 f, paragraphed)</div>

Like many of the scholars, Dreyfus, upon reflection, realizes that there are a "great multiplicity of religious traditions" of which **Buddhist mindfulness** is only one. Even then, Buddhist mindfulness has itself evolved over centuries to include a large variety of views about mindfulness. As Lutkatjis has noted, as discussed earlier, what we know today as Buddhist meditation and mindfulness are best understood in the contexts of Buddhist "schools of thought, individual teachers and specific texts" [1.1.1.4].

1.1.4.2 While all this diversity in meditation traditions may be true historically and socially, these different texts, teachers and traditions all agree on the basics of meditation and mindfulness. Having examined Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness and its general impact, we must now ask: Does mindfulness need to be "***non-judgemental moment-to-moment awareness***" as he claims? In fact, is this a correct assumption of mindfulness at all? In the rest of this section (and in the next), we will see that there are very good reasons for doubting, even rejecting, this loose presumption of what mindfulness is. [1.1.3.4]

Kabat-Zinn's definition of mindfulness[KZ] misses the central aspect of mindfulness as taught by the Buddha, which is to hold its object and thus allow for sustained attention regardless of whether the object of attention is present or not. In arguing that mindfulness is best understood as retentive, the emphasis is on its *cognitive* function rather than its non-conceptuality. This retentive function plays a central role in many cognitive processes, reminding us not to lose sight of the "recalling" (*sati*) nature of mindfulness. We should not confuse practical instructions and operational definitions with theoretical analysis. There are also negative consequences of our failure to attend to the cognitive process of mindfulness [4.30.

1.1.4.3 Steven Stanley summarizes **the traditional debates** over mindfulness[KZ] as follows:

"Mindfulness[KZ] is commonly assumed to be a psychological construct existing within the mind-brain of individuals or as a form of clinical intervention. It is usually taken as an object of study within existing paradigms of western scientific practice. Mindfulness has been developed as a 'mind-body practice' within behavioural and psychosomatic medicine, as well as clinical psychology for various populations.

Debates tend to focus on:
(1) the effectiveness and efficacy of Mindfulness-Based Interventions—increasingly through the use of randomized controlled trial designs;
(2) the cognitive mechanisms which support mindfulness, studied using experimental methods;
(3) neural dynamics correlated with mindfulness practice, studied as part of a "contemplative neuro-science." (2014:1189 f)

A number of meta-analyses have been conducted demonstrating various health benefits of MBSR and MBCT for a wide spectrum of clinical populations (eg, pain, cancer, heart disease, anxiety, major depression) and stressed nonclinical groups. Interventions evidence increased subjective well-being, reduced emotional reactivity, and improved regulation of behavior.[76] However, such reviews question whether mindfulness is the "active ingredient" contributing to demonstrated effects. It is even contestable whether different "mindfulness-based approaches" are equivalent to one another.[77]

One key limitation is the confusion about whether mindfulness is a state, trait, way of being, meditation practice, or outcome of meditation practice. Correlational studies using psychometric measures involving self-report questionnaires differ about whether mindfulness is a meditation-dependent state or trait within the general population.[78]

Debates about how to conceptualize and measure mindfulness have centered around the number of factors which make up mindfulness, a recent attempt suggesting:

(1) present-centered attention/awareness;
(2) self-regulation of attention towards the immediate present moment, an orientation marked by curiosity, openness, and acceptance;
(3) attention, attitude, and intention;
(4) attention regulation, body awareness, motion regulation, and change in perspective on the self;
(5) and non-reactivity, observing, acting with awareness, describing, and nonjudging.[79]

There is a concern that self-report questionnaires may come to define mindfulness in psychology and that the measurement tools do not actually measure (Buddhist) mindfulness.[80]

1.1.4.4 The critical debates over Mindfulness[81] are even more urgent: we have already seen how Mindfulness[KZ] has been recruited into the military with Kabat-Zinn's approval [1.1.3.2]. The key critical debate over Mindfulness remains in how it is largely understood as a self-improvement practice leading to adaptive functioning within society. Mindfulness is used to repair the kind of self which is required for correct adaptation to the conditions of modern society, whether in terms of health, work, or relationships.

However, the Pāli canon does *not* use mindfulness to encourage deeper engagement, participation, and connectedness with the world. Instead, mindfulness frequently functions as an alternative path away from the world for those who are convinced that they do *not* want to be drowned in

---

[76] Inter alia: L O Fjorback, Arendt, Ornbøl, Fink & Walach, "Mindfulness-based stress reduction and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy: A systematic review of randomized controlled trials," *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 124 2011:102-119.

[77] A Chiesa & P Malinowski, "Mindfulness-based approaches: Are they all the same," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 67,4 2011:404-424.

[78] R J Davidson, "Empirical explorations of mindfulness: Conceptual and methodological conundrums," *Emotion* 10,1 2010:8-11.

[79] For a review, see B K Hölzel, S W Lazar, T Gard, Z Schuman-Olivier, D R Vago & U Ott, "How does mindfulness meditation work? Proposing mechanisms of action from a conceptual and neural perspective," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6,6, 2011:537–559.

[80] M S Christopher, S Charoensuk, B D Gilbert, T J Neary & K L Pearce, (2009), "Mindfulness in Thailand and the United States: A case of apples versus oranges?" *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 65,6 2009:590-612. P Grossman N T Van Dam, "Mindfulness, by any other name … : Trials and tribulations of sati in western psychology and science," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12,1 2011:219-239.

[81] "Mindfulness: with the initial capital M refers to Mindfulness as appropriated by professionals for their purposes; "Mindfulness[KZ]" (with the superscript "KZ") refers specifically to Kabat-Zinn's "Mindfulness," except where the context clearly refers to KZ-Mindfulness.

worldliness. Hence, mindfulness works to empower world-leavers in seeing the world to be what it really is, that is, to dissolve the illusion of any kind of real self or substantiality.[82]

Early Buddhism highlights how mindfulness is a key tool of the renunciant for cultivating a social distance and disenchantment with worldliness, and one which empowers the renunciant to gain freedom from the world. This starkly contrasts with a modern secular use of Mindfulness[KZ] for engagement and re-enchantment with life, even liberation *within* the world. From a modernist perspective, the self is not necessarily deconstructed, but is often seen or taken as an object to be improved and made more desirable—that is, commodified—as often occurs in New Age spirituality and self-help Mindfulness.[83]

1.1.4.5 Despite the popularity of Kabat-Zinn's writings and methods with the masses, there are scholars and practitioners of Buddhism who know better: they find his teachings and methods unsatisfactory and troubling to say the least. A simple account of their objections is that Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness and its numerous hybrids teach us how to cope with life, work and productivity,[84] *living the full catastrophe; going wherever we go just to be there; merely coming to our senses*—but nothing more beyond that; neither happiness nor freedom beyond that. Most people are, however, satisfied with this (this is the basis for Kabat-Zinn's success), but those who really know Buddhism or non-Buddhism are not convinced. Many are even concerned with the proliferation and impact of Mc-Mindfulness, as we have seen.[85] It's like **Frankenstein**,[86] brought to life by his namesake, has become more sapient over time: but then would his creator realize the horror?

Critics are concerned that Kabat-Zinn has created a meditation method that is dead to Dharma, animated with mere modern scientific "speakeasy."[87] Mary Shelley's depiction of a godless world in which science and technology have gone awry is a powerful metaphor for our times, and the conscription of ancient teachers and teaching to do the bidding of a modern Mindfulness Master. Like the novel's scientist, he has brought Frankenstein to life out of cannibalized parts from cadavers, with the aim of exploiting humanity in the guise of helping them: How much damage would it have to do for its creator to realize its harm? The tragedy is that there is little that Kabat-Zinn could now do, except to let it pass as a fad and face the fruits of his karma.

1.1.4.6 Mary Shelley (1797-1851) was only 18 when she started writing **Frankenstein**, a Gothic tale of the powers of science, and how that power has its limits, and the dangers of transgressing those limits. We read in the book's 3rd edition (1831), these prophetic words put into chemistry Professor M Waldman's mouth which makes an impression on the young student Victor Frankenstein:

> So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein—more, far more, will I achieve;
> treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers,
> and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.
> Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831:34, ch 3, edition; emphasis added)[88]

---

[82] See eg Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct pact to realization,* Birmingham: Windhorse, 2003.

[83] J Carrette & R King, *Selling Spirituality,* Oxford: Routledge, 2005.

[84] On how Mindfulness initiatives benefit corporations, see SD 60.1d (4.2.2).

[85] On McMindfulness, why it is so successful, and ultimately insidious: see SD 60.1d (4.2.3).

[86] *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) was written by 18-year-old Mary Shelley and published when she was 20.

[87] This colourful term, "speakeasy," plays a dual role in suggesting how *easily* Kabat-Zinn co-opted Buddhism to prop up his Mindfulness, and, secondly, suggests a self-*intoxicated* gratification in doing so. Speakeasy was originally a slang for place for the illegal sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks, as during Prohibition in the US. Speakeasies were "so called because of the practice of speaking quietly about such a place in public, or when inside it, so as not to alert the police or neighbors" (Douglas Harper, "speakeasy," *Online Etymology Dictionary*).

[88] https://www.gutenberg.org/files/42324/42324-h/42324-h.htm.

In Michael Crichton's ***Jurassic Park***—both book (1990) and film (1993)[89]—the protagonist, Dr Ian Malcolm, echoes Waldman's sentiments in this memorable statement: "Scientists are actually pre-occupied with accomplishment. So they are focused on whether they *can* do something. They never stop to ask if they *should* do something." (1990: Fifth Iteration; emphases added).

In the first Jurassic Park movie, Jeff Goldblum voices Dr Malcolm's cautionary words in this iconic dialogue, in the spirit of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*:

> John Hammond : I don't think you're giving us our due credit. Our scientists have done things which nobody's ever done before ...
>
> Dr Ian Malcolm : Yeah, yeah, but your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could that they didn't stop to think if they should.

We lose ourselves in the implications of things but miss the things which prompted them.[90]

1.1.4.7 Both Frankenstein and Kabat-Zinn are creating what they believe to be for the better-ment of humanity, but the former has a moral blindspot and the latter a spiritual one. Neither stop to wonder what *humanity* actually is or entails. And so both create a monster. Kabat-Zinn's Mindful-ness has become **McMindfulness**, a dehumanized monster, representing the alienation of humanity by the exploitation of "not-Buddhism," the commercialization of medicine and psychology, and con-ditioning the common masses to be the functioning cogs and wheels of modern business enterprise.

What literary critic George Levine (1931-   ) writes on **Frankenstein** resounds with the effects of Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness: "Frankenstein spells out both the horror of going ahead and the emptiness of return. In particular, it spells out the price of heroism. … Heroism is personal satisfaction writ large. That is, it implies the importance and the power of the individual human being, not in the web of re-sponsibilities … but in the testing and fulfillment of personal powers."[91]

Frankenstein: or, the modern Prometheus (1818), farsighted beyond its time, still relevant even today, presents to the world the scientist Victor Frankenstein, a name for the reckless use of science and technology—and its dark foreboding. It's a matter of time before the full catastrophe gets here: Will we come to our senses of seeing where we are going? As for us practising Buddhists, we may not be able to stem the flood, but we have been admonished to build Dharma rafts and use them to cross the waters to safety, health and freedom.

1.1.5 "Mindfulness": Trait, state or intervention?

1.1.5.1 Apparently, Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) seem to work because of the prac-tical aspects of the traditional Buddhist mindfulness and yoga. Clearly, the theoretical bases for such therapies are not in keeping with the Buddhist teachings in which these mindfulness practices are rooted. Mindfulness[KZ] is merely using Buddhism where it seems to fit their agenda and sell their pro-duct.

Many therapists have put together their own methods with their own acronyms, but none of them seem certain, or agree upon, the meanings of the terms "meditation" or "mindfulness." Al-though we hear about "Mindfulness[KZ]" being used in therapies, we could never be certain what mind-fulness processes are really at work, or if any of them work at all, or in what way, or what are the costs of it all.

---

[89] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107290/characters/nm0000156.

[90] Thanks, Matt Jenkins, for this germane reminder.

[91] G Levine, "*Frankenstein* and the tradition of realism," *Novel* Fall 1973:14-30:
http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/Articles/levine3.html.

Many scholars and specialists, trained in psychology, are themselves unsure or unclear about the meaning of the terms "meditation" and "mindfulness." In this connection, Mindfulness researcher Frank W Bond notes:

> I do not think that I really understand the distinctions and overlaps between meditation and mindfulness. I have examined the relevant literature to try to identify established and agreed-upon definitions for both terms, but I have not been able to do so for "meditation," although I have found agreed-upon definitions for "mindfulness." … Psychology has largely adopted the term mindfulness, so it is not surprising that there are agreed-upon definitions for this word. Further complicating the definitional quandary is that "mindfulness medita-tion" is used freely in the literature, which could imply that this is different from mere "meditation" or "mindfulness."
>
> (F W Bond, "Personal meditation journey," 2016:255)[92]

1.1.5.2 "Mindfulness[KZ]" has today clearly become mainstream, but it means different things in contemporary psychology, without much constructive agreement. On the bright side, there are a few helpful insights in this problem, such as that in Davidson (2010), in which he proposes that we exam-ine whether the Mindfulness we are applying is a "trait," a "state" or a process (that is, an "interven-tion").[93]

Based on the APA Dictionary of Psychology (2nd ed 2015), we have the following 4 basic defini-tions of the mentioned terms. A **trait** is "an enduring personality characteristic that describes or determines an individual's behaviour across a range of situations." A **state** is "the condition or status of an entity or system at a particular time that is characterized by relative stability of its basic compo-nents or elements." An **intervention** is "generally any action intended to interfere with and stop or modify a process, as in a meditation method used or a treatment undertaken to halt, manage or alter the course of the pathological process of a disease or disorder."

1.1.5.3 Most researchers in contemporary psychology—from reports in their papers—made use of questionnaires that were supposed to measure **Trait Mindfulness**. However, not all Mindfulness questionnaires refer to the kind of Mindfulness we are familiar with. For instance, Ellen Langer's (1989) rationally driven theory of mindfulness proposes that a "mindful" person seeks out novelty and creates novelty, is attentive to context, and is flexible enough in thought and conduct. This is the kind of mindfulness measured in the *Mindfulness/Mindlessness Scale* (MMS).[94] Langer, however, studies the illusion of control, decision-making, aging, and mindfulness theory. This is very different from Mindfulness[KZ].

1.1.5.4 "Mindfulness" is a convenient broad term widely used amongst modern therapists—is clearly rooted in a Buddhist background upon which modern psychological ideas and practices are grafted. Bergomi et al 2013, list 7 validated scales attempting to measure mindfulness[KZ] as **a trait**. From these, they identified a total of 9 different aspects of mindfulness, as follows: (1) observing, attending to experiences; (2) acting with awareness; (3) non-judgement, acceptance of experiences; (4) self-acceptance; (5) willingness and readiness to expose oneself to experiences, non-avoidance; (6)

---

[92] F W Bond, in (ed) M A West, *The Psychology of Meditation: Research & practice,* Oxford University Press, 2016:255 -256.

[93] R J Davidson, "Empirical explorations of mindfulness: Conceptual and methodological conundrums," *Emotion* 10,8 2010:8-11.

[94] E J Langer, *Mindfulness,* De Capo Press, 1989. Haigh et al, 2011. E A Haigh, M T Moore, T B Kashdan, & D M Fresco, "Examination of the factor structure and concurrent validity of the Langer Mindfulness/Mindlessness Scale," *Assessment* 18,1 2011:11-26.

non-reactivity to experience; (7) non-identification with own experiences; (8) insightful understanding; and (9) labeling, describing.[95]

Most other individual Mindfulness questionnaires applied from (1) to (5) of such aspects. Several of the questionnaires reviewed by Bergomi et al 2013 did not stand up to replication, and, sometimes, new factors with new interpretations were identified in later studies.[96] In a similar survey, including 9 meditation-related Trait Mindfulness questionnaires, Sauer et al 2013 conclude that most researchers seem to agree that mindfulness comprises 2 distinct factors, presence and acceptance, but that all questionnaires needed improvement.[97]

Sedlmeier, in his *Psychology of Meditation* (2022), based on a selective but probably representative choice of sources, concludes: "It seems that within a few years, the concept of Trait Mindfulness was created using some loose associations to the original Buddhist notion of mindfulness [1.3.1], and then adding in some additional characteristics that resulted from the interplay with practices and results of MBIs. It seems fair to say that, as of yet, the concept of Trait Mindfulness does not have a firm theoretical basis: It is not really clear what it is, whether it can be summarized as one single construct or a collection of different ones (if so, which ones), and how it differs from other constructs, such as affectivity, curiosity, decentering, mind wandering, or meta-awareness (see also Chapter 10)." (2022:27)

1.1.5.5 Bergomi et al 2013 [1.1.5.4] actually examined a total of 8 Mindfulness scales, but only one of them measured mindfulness as **a State** [1.1.5.2]. The first State Mindfulness questionnaire was put together by Brown and Ryan 2003 (Study 4) by rephrasing 5 items from their Trait Mindfulness scale so that they referred to *a specific time* (eg, "I was doing something automatically, without being aware of what I was doing"; "I was rushing through something without being really attentive to it").[98] Participants had to make their ratings each time they received a pager signal. Brown and Ryan (2003) used both scales, Trait and State, to predict some other variables (autonomy, as well as pleasant and unpleasant affect) and found common as well as different effects. This questionnaire, however, seems to have been rarely used.[99]

More recently, Tanay and Bernstein 2013 developed the *State Mindfulness Scale* (SMS). Their questionnaire, beginning with 25 items, had 2 (correlated) factors: *State Mindfulness of mind* (15 items, eg, "I noticed pleasant and unpleasant emotions") and *State Mindfulness of body* (6 items, eg, "I noticed some pleasant and unpleasant physical sensations").

Research comparing results in Trait Mindfulness questionnaires and measures of State Mindfulness were found to be inconsistent,[100] or with little to no relationship between the 2 constructs.[101] Hence, it might have been better to separate the 2 measures. In general, the Mindfulness-Based Interventions seem to have an effect on *State Mindfulness*, but the measurement of State Mindfulness might be troubled with similar difficulties to those of Trait Mindfulness, especially *given that neither has any sound theoretical grounding*.[102]

If I understand this correctly, this is saying that while the few studies which have considered State Mindfulness suggest that MBIs seem to have an effect, additional work might be needed. That

---

[95] C Bergomi, W Tschacher, Z Kupper, "The assessment of mindfulness with self-report measure: existing scales and open issues," *Mindfulness* 4 2013:191-202; see Table 1, p193.

[96] See P Sedlmeier, *The Psychology of Meditation,* Hogrefe, 2022:24.

[97] S Sauer, H Walach, S Schmidt, T Hinterberger, S Lynch, A Büssing, & N Kohls, "Assessment of mindfulness: Review on state of the art," *Mindfulness* 4 2013:3-17. Sedlmeier 2022:25.

[98] K W Brown & R M Ryan, "The benefit of being present," *J of Personality and Social Psychology* 84,4, 2003: 822-848.

[99] K W Brown & R M Ryan, "The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, 2003:822-848.

[100] Tanay & Bernstein 2013.

[101] Bravo et al, 2018; Thompson & Waltz, 2007.

[102] Sedlmeier 2022:28.

is, there haven't been many studies which have tried to define State Mindfulness, given the lack of theoretical grounding it's likely we'll end up with variations if we get more studies.

1.1.6 Mindfulness[KZ] as an intervention

1.1.6.1 Sedlmeier 2022, in his overview of recent attempts at measuring Mindfulness, seems more favourable towards "**mindfulness as an intervention**," that is, as "Mindfulness meditation." In 1976, Jon Kabat-Zinn introduced the *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* (MBSR) programme at the University of Massachusetts,[103] which proved to be very successful.[104] Just a quick look through Mindfulness literature gives us the impression that many scholars in the field equated (and some still do) Mindfulness Meditation with MBSR.

MBSR was originally applied in clinical settings and inspired the development of other treatment regimens that were partly based on it: today these are known as Mindfulness Based Interventions. The term "Mindfulness Meditation" seems to encompass almost every kind of meditation, and MBSR is also used in non-clinical populations, alongside a growth in its use.

1.1.6.2 The MBSR programme started off as *Stress Reduction and Relaxation Program* (SR&RP), and consisted of 3 "mindfulness meditation practices": *sweeping* (now known as body scan), *mindfulness of breath and other perceptions*, and *hatha yoga postures.*[105] Since then, MBSR has been augmented and modified in many ways, as seen in the numerous Web pages and books on the programme.[106] The standard MBSR program taught by thousands of certified trainers worldwide is an 8-week workshop with weekly 2.5- to 3.5-hour group meetings and a 1-day retreat.[107]

MBSR comprises a set of practices with cognitive, emotional, and bodily components, drawn from different secular and religious backgrounds. In each class, participants are taught informal and formal practices. The informal practices include group discussions and exercises, mindful eating (chewing on a piece of raisin), mindful speaking and listening, and mindfulness of daily activities. The formal practices are those focusing on the breath—with several different ways of focusing on the breath—and the practices of open awareness, body scan, yoga postures, walking meditation and lovingkindness meditation.

Sedlmeier comments: "Apart from the program's superior structure and organization, as well as its relatively short duration and the interesting mix of techniques, the main reason it has flourished so well is probably that it works … . Another reason for its success might be that it does not openly refer to any religious or spiritual basis: MBSR is a fully secular meditation program … ." (2022:30 f)

1.1.7 Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs)

1.1.7.1 The MBSR curriculum has become a framework for other, more specific intervention regimens such as:

---

[103] Jon Kabat-Zinn, "Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future," *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* 10,2 2003:144-156.

[104] V Husgafvel, "On the Buddhist roots of *contemporary* non-religious mindfulness practice: Moving beyond sectarian and essentialist approaches," *Temenos* 52 2016:87-126.

[105] Jon Kabat-Zinn, "An outpatient program in behavioral medicine for chronic pain patients based on the practice of mindfulness meditation: Theoretical considerations and preliminary results." *General Hospital Psychiatry* 4 1982:33-47.

[106] J Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life.* Hachette Books, 2009; B Stahl & E Goldstein, *A mindfulness-base stress reduction workbook,* New Harbinger Publications, 2019.

[107] S F Santorelli, F Meleo-Meyer, L Koerbel, & J Kabat-Zinn, *Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) authorized curriculum guide.* Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society (CFM), Univ of Massachusetts Medical School, 2017.

the Mindfulness-Based Relationship Enhancement (MBRE),[108]
the Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness Training (MB-EAT),[109]
the Mindfulness-Based Art Therapy (MBAT);[110]
and other broader therapeutic approaches in the MBI family. The 3 most influential of these are presumably the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) [1.1.7.2], Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT) [1.1.7.3] and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) [1.1.7.4], which are briefly described as follows.

1.1.7.2 The Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)[111] is based on the MBSR's 8-week programme but has been specifically adapted to people with recurring depressive episodes. It combines mindfulness practice with cognitive therapy. However, whereas cognitive therapy includes an effort to evaluate and change thoughts and feelings, MBCT works towards accepting them.

1.1.7.3 The next 2 widely used MBIs, *Dialectical Behavior Therapy* (DBT) and *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (ACT), are sometimes referred to as mindfulness-informed interventions because they place less emphasis on formal meditation practices.[112]
Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)[113] originally focused on treating borderline personality disorder but is now being used for numerous other conditions. The programme teaches mindfulness skills, typically in group settings, to develop one's "wise mind" by focusing on 3 *what* skills (observing, describing, and participating) and 3 *how* skills (being non-judgmental, one-mindful, and effective), thereby connecting to the two-component model of mindfulness.[114]

1.1.7.4 Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT),[115] is usually provided in an individual therapy setting. It draws strongly from a cognitive behavioral framework, emphasizing commitment and behavior change strategies, but also heavily relies on acceptance and mindfulness strategies. To help clients accept their current circumstances, ACT uses real-life examples and metaphors, which is expected to increase contact with the present moment, thereby decreasing rumination on past deeds and worry about the future.[116]

1.1.7.5 Sedlmeier (2022) further notes that while MBSR and the MBIs can arguably be classified into distinct categories, the use of the term "**mindfulness meditation**" has been used to refer to sys-

---

[108] J Carson, K Carson, K Gil, & D Baucom, "Mindfulness-based relationship enhancement," *Behavior Therapy* 35 2004: 471-494.

[109] J L Kristeller, R A Baer, & R Quillian-Wolever," Mindfulness-based approaches to eating disorders," in (ed) R Baer, *Mindfulness and Acceptance-Based Interventions: Conceptualization, application, and empirical support.* Elsevier, 2006.

[110] D A Monti, C Peterson. E J Shakin Kunkel, W W Hauck, E Pequignot, L Rhodes, & G C Brainar, "A randomised, controlled trial of mindfulness-based art therapy for women with cancer," *Psychooncology* 15 2006: 363-373.

[111] Z V Segal, J M G Williams, & J D Teasdale, *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression.* 2nd ed. Guilford Press, 2013.

[112] B G Shapero, J Greenberg, P Pedrelli, M de Jong, & G Desbordes, "Mindfulness-based interventions in psychiatry. *Focus* 16 2018:32-39.

[113] M M Linehan, *Cognitive-behavioral treatment of borderline personality disorder,* Guilford Press.1993; see also K Koerner, *Doing Dialectical Behavior Therapy: A practical guide,* Guilford Press, 2012.

[114] S Bishop, M Lau, S Shapiro, L Carlson, N Anderson, J Carmody, Z v Segal, S Abbey, M Speca, D Velting, & G Devins, "Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition," *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* 11 2004: 230-241.

[115] S C Hayes, K D Strosahl, & K G Wilson, *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: The process and practice of mindful change,* 2nd ed. Guilford Press, 2012.

[116] For details on ACT, see SD 43.1.

tems quite beyond these approaches. It has been used for different forms of Vipassana and Zen meditation,[117] for Samatha (concentration) meditation,[118] Tibetan Buddhist practices,[119] or simply some form of breath meditation.[120] Even mantra meditation, such as Transcendental Meditation (TM) is said to increase mindfulness.[121] "Such an indiscriminate use of the term may invoke the impression that 'mindfulness[KZ] meditation' (or mindfulness[KZ] for short) is just a synonym for 'meditation.'"[122] (Sedlmeier 2022:31 f).

Sedlmeier (in the same chapter) then discusses the traditional Buddhist definition of meditation based on various suttas. He then concludes:

> Are contemporary practices to [*sic*] mindfulness meditation (MBSR and MBIs) consistent with the traditional notion of mindfulness? Some parts of MBSR, such as the body scan or mindful eating, certainly are, whereas others, such as yoga postures or group discussions, certainly are not. For others, such as focusing on one's breath and practicing loving kindness meditation, it depends: If they are done with the aim of deepening concentration (moving toward absorption),[123] they are not, but if these techniques are used to cultivate awareness of the processes involved, they are."
>
> We have seen that there is a sizeable discrepancy among the uses of the term "mindfulness" even within contemporary meditation research, and that none of the recent uses of the term fully coincides with its traditional meaning. A good illustration for the confusion, or rather the incoherent mixture, can be found in a recent article that summarizes the effects of mindfulness on event-related potentials (Verdonk et al, 2020).[124]
>
> (Sedlmeier 2022:40)

1.1.7.6 We will briefly examine the theoretical background of MBSR. Kabat-Zinn's MBSR is a highly eclectic mix of techniques rooted in different religious traditions, both Buddhist (Theravāda and Zen) and Hindu (Yoga and Vedanta). However, scholars have noted, the MBSR set of techniques is presented without explicit reference to their origins—in contrast to an earlier, widely ignored, proposal by Deatherage (1975). [1.1.7.7]

However, Sedlmeier notes, this is not necessarily a bad thing. On the contrary, the omission of all of the philosophical, religious, and cultural undertones might draw people who otherwise would not ever consider trying out meditation. Kabat-Zinn acknowledges the diversity of MBSR's theoretical and religious background but argues that "Mindfulness" may be used as an umbrella term.[125]

Sedlmeier warns that while this might, pragmatically, have been a good decision, as judged from the success of the MBSR; from a theoretical standpoint the indiscriminative use of the term "Mindful-

---

[117] S Bowen, K Witkiewitz, T M Dillworth, N Chawla, T L Simpson, B D Ostafin, M E Larimer, A W Blume, G A Parks, & G A Marlatt, "Mindfulness meditation and substance use in an incarcerated population," *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* 20 2006:343-347.

[118] F Zeidan, S K Johnson, B J Diamond, Z David, & P Goolkasian, "Mindfulness meditation improves cognition: Evidence of brief mental training." *Consciousness and Cognition* 19,2 2010:597-605.

[119] C N Ortner, S J Kilner, & P D Zelazo, "Mindfulness meditation and reduced emotional interference on a cognitive task," *Motivation and Emotion,* 31 2007:271-283.

[120] F Zeidan, K T Martucci, R A Kraft, N S Gordon, J G McHaffie, & R C Coghill, "Brain mechanisms supporting the modulation of pain by mindfulness meditation," *The Journal of Neuroscience* 31 2011:5540-5548.

[121] M A Tanner, F Travis, C Gaylord-King, D A F Haaga, S Grosswald, & R H Schneider, "The effects of the transcendental meditation program on mindfulness," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 65 2009:574-589.

[122] Sedlmeier, in ch 3 of his book discusses the different traditional and modern forms of Buddhist meditation, showing that they are different from mindfulness[KZ].

[123] Here, Sedlmeier is probably referring to the Buddhist practice of samatha as the basis for attaining dhyana.

[124] C Verdonk, M Trousselard, F Canini, F Vialatte, & C Ramdani, "Toward a refined mindfulness model related to consciousness and based on ERP," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 25, 2020:1095-1112.

[125] J Kabat-Zinn, "Some reflections on the origins of MBSR, skillful means, and the trouble with maps," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12 2011:290; Sedlmeier 2022:32.

ness" can severely restrict the advancement of our understanding of how meditation works.[126] In-
deed, the different components of MBSR may differ considerably in their effects.[127] In fact, observes
Sedlmeier, the theoretical background of the MBIs seems to consist mainly of the consensus defini-
tions that also have been used in defining <u>mindfulness both as *a Trait* and *a State*</u> [1.1.5].

 "Sometimes these definitions seem quite circular because, somewhat simplified, the argument
runs like this: What is mindfulness? The result of mindfulness meditation. And what is mindfulness
meditation? A procedure that increases mindfulness. This is different for other traditional practices,
which are also sometimes summarized under the term 'mindfulness meditation,' such as Vipassana,
Zen, and Tibetan Buddhist practices, as well as concentrative approaches to meditation."[128]

 1.1.7.7 Gary Deatherage,[129] Canadian clinical psychologist, sees "**Buddhist satipatthana**" or
"mindfulness meditation" as "far from being a 'religion' concerned with higher beings external to the
individual human, is more accurately an exquisitely introspective, but highly systematic, psychology
and philosophy which obtains its data from the very bases of human experience, namely sensations,
perceptions, emotions, thoughts and consciousness itself." (1975:133).[130]

 Deatherage discusses the successful use of such Buddhist <u>meditation methods</u> (that is, satipat-
thana) in 5 case studies (1975:137-141). The "significant discovery for the therapist," reports
Deatherage, was that "the thought and emotion contemplation can be carried out quite effectively
without the patient sitting quietly, watching the breathing process … It is not necessary for the
patient to know that he is meditating … The techniques can be readily modified to suit the individual
patient's overall program of therapy." (1975:141)

 In fact, the method as described by Deatherage is the well-known practical modern Vipassana.
"Each of the cases cited above has primarily emphasized certain aspects of thought and emotion
observation, followed by naming where those thoughts and emotions originate—in past, present
and future—thereby allowing the person direct and immediate insight into the workings of his own
mental processes." (1975:141 f).

 Deatherage, however, sounds these 2 caveats, that is:

  While this psychotherapeutic approach is extremely effective when employed with
  patients suffering from depression, anxiety, and a wide variety of neurotic symptoms, a

---

[126] Sedlmeier 2022:32: see chs 10 & 11.

[127] Sedlmeier 2022: ch 8.

[128] Sedlmeier 2022:21; see chs 3 & 9.

[129] Olaf Gary Deatherage (b 1940) was a tenured neuroscientist and clinical psychologist at the U of Leth-
bridge, Canada, in the 1970s. Deatherage got his PhD in Psychology at Kansas State Univ, and completed an
obligated tour of duty as a US Army officer, incl a year in Vietnam. He then served as Asst Prof of Psychology at
the U of Lethbridge where he published some of the earliest papers on the use of mindfulness meditation as
psychotherapy, as well as papers on brain function. Following that, Gary served almost 30 years as an independ-
ently practising clinical psychologist in Creston and the Kootenay Region of BC prior to his retirement.

 From the 1980's to today—Deatherage, who loves music since childhood and plays the clarinet and guitar—
worked, with his son Jason at various versions and locations of their studio, Fort Cosmos Studios, advancing his
musical abilities, and becoming a talented musician and prolific songwriter. He published 17 albums of original
music with 3 bands: https://deepdude.bandcamp.com. Since 2018, he worked with a number of artists and
filmmakers in bringing his novel *Sun Pipes for the Dreamers* (Bk 1; incl full audiobook) to wider expression—incl
close work with local artist Alison Masters in rendering a condensed version of Book 1 of the project. He prefers
recording studio music ("better quality") that performing on stage ("too loud"). He lives with his wife of 50+
years in a log cabin in British Columbia. His son and music partner, Jason, lives nearby. They play music together
daily. https://www.kootenayfilmsociety.com/governance. https://www.crestonvalleyadvance.ca/news/home-
studio-offers-creative-outlet-for-creston-valley-musician/. (Thanks to Tom Anderson of Canada for the research,
and thanks to Gary Deatherage for his kind responses.)

[130] G Deatherage, "The clinical use of 'mindfulness' meditation techniques in short-term psychotherapy,"
Journal of Transpersonal Psychology 7, 1975:133-143.

caution should be issued regarding its use with patients experiencing actively psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, thinking disorders, and severe withdrawal. To effectively carry out the Satipatthana techniques for self-observation requires an intact and functional rational component of mind, as well as sufficient motivation on the part of the patient to cause him to put forth the effort required to do that observation. …

 A second caution is also in order concerning the employment of Satipatthana techniques in psychotherapy with patients. The sincere psychotherapist who wishes to apply such techniques with his own patients will find that it is necessary to explore the techniques with himself first, thus coming to know experientially the meanings of the terms used, the steps through which one progresses as the techniques are applied, and the nature of the insights available using this approach. He will then be better prepared to facilitate the experience of patients using this approach.

<div align="right">(1975:142; emphasis added)</div>

Deatherage wrote his paper in 1975, and Kabat-Zinn founded the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Reduction (MBSR) programme at the University of Massachusetts (where he was professor of medicine) in 1979. Deatherage's method could have made Mindfulness (as psychotherapy) more humane, and certainly acceptable to the Buddhists. Indeed, such a practice would be suitable lay Buddhists—it would be against the Vinaya for monastics (unless they give up their renunciation)—to be trained in such therapeutic use of Buddhist meditation. On the other hand, monastics may use such counselling skills as an incidental part of their parochial duties, but certainly not as a profession or specialization.

 I think Deatherage's proposal did not grow as phenomenally as Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness[KZ] did for 2 main reasons: (1) Kabat-Zinn had his grand ambitions and visions, and the backing of a prestigious University and profession, and he was willing to use—in fact, plagiarize—Buddhism as he saw fit. (2) Deatherage, on the other hand, deeply respects Buddhism, showing us how we may ourselves properly learn and use the ways the Buddha teaches to identity our sufferings and heal ourselves with satipatthana.

 We are likely to admire or loathe Kabat-Zinn for the same reason. Surely, Kabat-Zinn must have wondered if only he had not killed the golden goose (*suvaṇṇa,haṁsa*).[131]

 Deatherage is, on the other hand, that rare human who truly celebrates life and Dharma, with his inimitable talents, as someone who loves truth and beauty, the twin pillars of Buddha Dharma. In the Dharma spirit, Detherage is clearly an emulable person.

---

[131] I leave the thoughtful Buddhists (or non-Buddhist) to wholesomely discuss this open metaphor.

2 A brief history of mindfulness

2.1 MINDFULNESS: RIGHT AND WRONG

2.1.1 George Bernard Shaw's famous play **Pygmalion** (1912) is about how an English professor of phonetics, Henry Higgins, is able to transform a Cockney flower-girl, Eliza Doolittle, into a high-society lady through refinement of speech, mannerism and appearance. Higgins takes this on as a bet with a Colonel Pickering—that Higgins cannot effect the transformation. After a few months of coaching, he succeeds in turning Eliza into a proper English lady and wins the bet. After some interesting deve-lopments and near the play's end, Eliza, when her father announces that he is getting married, reverts to her Cockney accent.

Eliza herself, instead of marrying the bully and tyrant Higgins—who remains a bachelor out of love for his own mother—says, "Freddy's not a fool. And if he's weak and poor and wants me, may be he'd make me happier than my betters that bully me and don't want me," and that, unlike Higgins, "I never thought of us making anything of one another; and you never think of anything else. I only want to be natural." (Act 5). Shaw's romantic comedy pokes delightful fun at the superficial prejudices of the English class system with its petty attitudes and posturings.[132] As the play makes clear, the English class system is actual and damaging. The superficial elements are how the system is policed and regulated —accent and rules and rituals of conduct—and they are *superficial* in the sense that they are what exists on the surface, in appearances, even in religion.

One of the points of the play is to lay bare the space between class and moral goodness—Higgins is an immoral monster. Neither Eliza nor the audience are surprised when he hits her in the final min-utes of the play. Liza starts as a comic character because she is "vulgar" because of her accent, she ends as a tragic character because Higgins has revealed himself to be vulgar despite his class and re-finement. In part, the play may arguably be a tragicomedy, since it reveals the cruelties of Victorian class realities in our own days.[133]

2.1.2 Pygmalion[134] comes from a famous Greek myth about how a sculptor's beautiful statue of Gala-taea changes into a living woman. Shaw based his play on the Pygmalion myth, but in his play, he inverts the theme: it is Eliza (Galataea) who turns into a mechanical doll who resembles a duchess," a puppet stringed by Professor Higgins. In the end, Eliza regains her truly human self and marries happi-ly ever after, while the unloving Professor remains alone with himself, as it were, yet unborn.

It is not difficult to see how Buddhist mindfulness is depicted by Eliza, and those who conscript Mindfulness[KZ] into their professional services to be like the Professor. The serious difficulties may be seen thus:

(1) The transformation is always incomplete: Eliza is never "truly" upper class, she is only ever acting it. Mindfulness[KZ] is never complete; we are never really healed. At best we heal the symptoms as they arise, but they never end, so long as we are caught in our current predicament, job, and so on.

(2) That means she is never secure in it. However comfortable she may have been at the ball (Act 4) and however much she enjoyed moments in the process, she always knew she was teetering on a precipice from which she could fall. With Mindfulness[KZ] we are not healed but acclimatized to

---

[132] Accent is both marker and synecdoche for class in England—to have a regional accent is to be "lower" class, to have an RP accent ("received pronunciation" or "The King's English") is to be upper. Eliza could have changed her deportment, behaviour, phraseology, everything which made her who she was—and Higgins would still have lost the bet if she had retained her accent.

[133] Thanks to Matt Jenkins (UK) for giving some living details of Shaw's play, "Pygmalion," as the social reali-ties of our own times.

[134] On the Greek myth of Pygmalion and Galataea, see SD 60.1d (5.2.2.1).

better tolerate our working or living conditions; the real conditions of our problems remain caus-
ing the recurrent symptoms.
(3)   Here is the key point. Eliza is left between worlds—she has lost the comfort of her home-life with-
out the security of a new status. We are given what Buddhism teaches, just a modified bit of it,
but the "cure" we have learned merely deals with the symptoms. The original Buddhist teachings
and practice, on the other hand, are, with the initial guidance of a proper teacher, a complete
self-healing method—a training path—we can and must work with ourselves. [1.1.7.7]

The critical perspective here is not so much about the modern class consciousness amongst pro-
fessionals (if it does exist), but more so about how we may have serious difficulties when we try to
conscript ancient wisdom into modern professional service. Let the wise reflect on this rich and apt
metaphor more profoundly, while we return to the matter of discovering more the metaphor's
theme, that is, the early Buddhist teaching on mindfulness.

Pygmalion—whether the Greek myth or Shaw's play—reflects the dark realities of McMindfulness
too. Kabat-Zinn creates McMindfulness—a hybrid of Frankenstein [1.1.4.5] and Galataea, or a female
Frankenstein—It glorifies him, makes him fabulously rich and powerful, so that he denounces even
the original teachings. He now defines his new class of Professionals by Class training and Training
fees. Yet, below the Professional skin is a monster, a Dracula that induces all those it has touched to
glorify Mindfulness[KZ] and the Corporate Master to serve them more than well and not to bite the
hands that feed them. This is a theme that other concerned writers will highlight. [1.1.2.1]

2.1.3 The early Pali texts define **mindfulness** (*sati*)[135] more broadly than the later schools, which
would understandably use the same basic definitions and foundations of related concepts. For exam-
ple, all agree that "greed" (*lobha*) and "hatred" (*doṣa;* Skt *dveṣa*) are always unwholesome; all agree
that "concentration" (*samādhi*) might be either. In the case of "mindfulness," however, there is a basic
disagreement.[136]

According to Gethin, the Pali Abhidhamma[137] takes "mindfulness" (*sati*) as an intrinsically whole-
some quality. Hence, **the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha**[138] (ch 2, Cetasika Saṅgaha, on mental factors,
§5) lists mindfulness as the 2nd of its 19 "universal beautiful factors" (*sobhana,sādhāraṇa*). Its modern
guide (based on its commentaries) defines mindfulness as follows [13.9]:

> **Mindfulness (*sati*)**: The word *sati* derives from a root meaning "to remember," but as a
> mental factor it signifies presence of mind, attentiveness to the present, rather than the
> faculty of memory regarding the past. It has the characteristic of not wobbling, ie not float-
> ing away from the object [1.1.8]. Its function is absence of confusion or non-forgetfulness. It
> is manifested as guardianship, or as the state of confronting an objective field. Its proximate
> cause is strong perception (*thira,saññā*) or the 4 foundations of mindfulness.
>
> (Abhs:BRS 86)

---

[135] *Sati* first appears in Dhs list of dhammas [3.11.7] among the 5 faculties (*indriya*). It is also present as a
path-factor (*magg'aṅga*), a power (*bala*), and a "helper" (*upakāraka*). On mindfulness, see SD 10.16 (7); SD
54.2e (2.3.4); on mindfulness & memory: SD 56.2 (3.7.11).

[136] Much of this section follows Gethin, "Buddhist conceptualizations of mindfulness," in (ed) K W Brown et
al, *Handbook of Mindfulness,* 2015b, which is a helpful comparative survey of how the early schools define
mindfulness.

[137] Gethin 2015b:21; he does not mention "Abhidhamma" in this sentence. However, it is clear that in this
paragraph (2015b:21 para 3) he is discussing Abhidhamma. See Noa Ronkin,"Abhidhamma," Stanford Ency of
Philosophy, 2022: https://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=abhidharma.

[138] "Compendium on the Meaning of Abhidhamma" [Abhs] written by a relatively unknown Ācariya Anurud-
dha**,** prob an elder (the abbot?) of Mūlasoma Vihāra in Polonnaruva, around the turn of the 11th cent. In Bur-
ma, Abhs is revered as the 1st of the 9 "little-finger manuals" (*let-than*) [Abhs:BRS 15].

2.1.4 However, it should be noted that **the suttas**, in all the 5 Nikayas, and the Abhidhamma, often speak of both right mindfulness (*sammā,sati*) and "wrong mindfulness" (*micchā,sati*).[139] The latter is the negative factors of the eightfold "wrong path" (*micchatta,* "wrongness"). The Pali Abhidhamma is being technical here, taking *sati* as meaning "proper attention" (*yoniso manasikāra*), while the suttas take *sati* broadly (as being polysemic), meaning either "proper attention" or "improper (wrong) attention" (*ayoniso manasikāra*), depending on the context. This is, clearly, the rule of context.[140]

    Mindfulness—as proper attention—is never associated with consciousness rooted in greed, hatred, or delusion, but only with consciousness rooted in non-attachment and lovingkindness. In fact, the Abhidhamma states that mindfulness is a feature of *all* wholesome consciousnesses. When the minding is rooted in greed, hatred or delusion, it is not "right mindfulness"; we are said to be "unmindful." In this sense, according to Abhidhamma, there is no "wrong mindfulness." We are either mindful or not.[141]

2.1.5 An early Indian Abhidharma school, **the Yogācarā**,[142] rejected both the Sarvāstivādin view that mindfulness is present in all consciousness, and the Theravādin view that it is always and only associated with wholesome states of mind. For the Yogācārins, mindfulness was one of several qualities of mind "limited or determined" (*viniyata*) by specific objects. That is, it might occur in both unwholesome and wholesome states of mind, depending on conditions. The extent to which and the manner in which mindfulness should be identified as playing the crucial role in acts of memory was the subject of some discussion.

    The **Attha,sālinī** (exposition of meaning), the Commentary on the Dhamma,saṅgāṇi (the 1st book of the Pali Abhidhamma), discusses the question of why the Abhidhamma sees mindfulness only as being wholesome:

        In a mind lacking (wise) faith (*asaddhiya,citte*), there is no mindfulness. How then, do
    not those with false views remember actions they have done? They do remember. But this

---

[139] On *micchā,sati:* **Saṅgīti S** (D 33/3:254,26), **Das'uttara S** (D 34/3:287,2, 290,26, 291,22); **Sallekha S** (M 8/-1:42,26), SD 51.8; **Dvedhā Vitakka S** (M 19/1:118,9), SD 61.1, **Mahā Cattarīsaka S** (M 117/3:77,7 f), SD 6.10, **Bhūmija S** (M 126/3:140,8), SD 73.4; **S** 14.27/2:168, 22.84/3:109, 45.1/5:1, 45.12/5:13, 45.18/5:16, 45.21-26/-5:18-20, 55.383/5:383; **A** 4.205/2:220-229, 5.120/3:141, (A 6.30/3:328 has a wrong form of *anussati*,) 8.34/-4:237, 10.103/5:212, 10.105/5:214, 10.106/5:215, 10.107/5:217, 10.108/5:219, 10.110/5:220, 10.111/5:221, 10.113/5:222, 10.114/5:224, 10.115/5:228, 10.116/5:231, 10.117/5:232, 10.132/5:240, 10.134-170/5:240-253; **Nm** 1:78, 137; **Pm** 2:88, 90; **Vbh** 373, 387, 392. Gethin 2015b:21; at the bottom of the same page, Gethin says "the earliest Buddhist texts … contrast 'right mindfulness' with 'wrong mindfulness'." See Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization,* 2003: 52 n31. See also [3.11.6 f].

[140] On the rule of context or the contextuality rule, see SD 60.1d (7.7.2.7).

[141] The numerous refs to "wrong mindfulness" [n above] seem to contradict Comy view that *sati* is an exclusively *wholesome* mental factor (eg DhsA 250). This Comy view poses a practical difficulty: how do we reconcile *sati* as a wholesome factor with satipatthanas in terms of the hindrances, if wholesome and unwholesome mental qualities cannot coexist in the same mental state? Comy attempts to resolve this by suggesting that satipatthana of a defiled mind is a quick alternation between mind-moments associated with *sati* and those under the influence of defilements (eg MAPṬ 1:373). Analayo rejects this explanation, "since with either the defilement or else *sati* being absent, *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation of the presence of a defilement in one's mind becomes impossible (cf eg the instructions for contemplating the hindrances, which clearly refer to such a hindrance being present during *satipaṭṭhāna* practice: "he knows 'there is … in me'" (M 1:60) (2003a:52 n31). See Gethin, *The Buddhist Path,* 1992:40-43; Nyanaponika, *Abhidhamma Studies,* 1949:68-72. According to Sarvāstivāda, *sati* is an indeterminate mental factor (Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism,* 1922:101).

[142] **Yogācāra** (the practice of *yoga,* "mental engagement"), also called Vijñānavāda (the doctrine of consciousness), arose in the 4th cent in India. Yogācāra (founded by Maitreyanātha Asaṅga and Vasubandhu) and Madhyamaka (founded by Nāgārjuna) were the 2 most important Indian Mahāyāna schools. Under these 2 schools, early Mahāyāna developed very complex philosophical systems. See Oxford Dict of Buddhism 2003: sv; Macmillan Ency of Religion (2nd ed) 2005: sv.

is not mindfulness. The whole process of unwholesome consciousness is due to such a mere mode of remembering.[143] That is why mindfulness is not included (in unwholesome consciousness).

But why, then, is "wrong mindfulness" (*micchā,sati*) mentioned in the suttantas? It is for the sake of completing the "wrong path" (*micchā,magga*) and the notion of "wrongness" (*micchatta*), because of the unwholesome aggregates [the sets of path-limbs] are bereft of, opposed to mindfulness.

For these reasons, wrong mindfulness is mentioned in a relative exposition (*pariyāyena*) (of the suttas) but in an ultimate exposition (*nippariyāyena*) (of the Abhidhamma). Since there is no mindfulness in unwholesome consciousness, it is not included (in the Abhidhamma).   (DhsA 250,1-8)[144]

To paraphrase this important passage: When asked whether those in unwholesome states of mind remember their past actions, the **Attha,sālinī** replies that they do, "but this is not called mindfulness." It is simply an unwholesome consciousness functioning as <u>memory</u>. The Commentary goes on to explain that the expression "wrong mindfulness" in the suttas merely indicates how unwholesome states of mind are deprived of and opposed to mindfulness. "Wrong mindfulness" is thus spoken of merely by way of completing an eightfold wrong path, the negative counterpart of the noble eightfold path.

2.2 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "MINDFUL"

2.2.1 As a rule of thumb, **mindfulness** (*sati*) is what *directs the attention to the sense-object*. This is the ideal situation, that is, when we are mindful and the object is wholesome (such as a happy thought): then, we are acting <u>mindfully</u>. It also often happens that the mind can draw a sense-object or conjure up an object (through perception or conception)[145] so that we experience this (which is usually unwholesome or at best neutral). As already noted, we are said to be <u>mindful</u> when we attend to a wholesome object; we are <u>unmindful</u> when the mind-object is unwholesome, or when we are not properly minding the wholesome object, or misconstrue it otherwise. [2.1.4 f]

Hence, in the *sutta*s, mindfulness practice is consistently identified with the "4 satipatthanas" (*cattāro satipaṭṭhāna*), that is, focuses on foundations of mindfulness. These 4 focuses are listed as the contemplation (*anupassanā,* "sustained looking") of the body (*kāyânupassanā*), of feelings (*vedanā'nupassanā*), of the mind (*cittânupassanā*), and of mind-objects (*dhammânupassanā,* ie, realities that arise as mental phenomena). The practice of mindfulness in these 4 focuses is recommended by the Buddha as "the one-going (or direct) way[146] for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of

---

[143] *Kevalaṁ ten'ākārena akusala,citta,pavatti.*

[144] For other translations, see DhsA:M 333; Nyanaponika 1992:61.

[145] "Perception" (*saññā*) refers to our recognizing of sense-objects, esp from past memory [5.4.3]; "conception" (verbal forms of **kappa** meaning "imagines, invents, contrives, theorizes"), eg *kappayanti* (pl), "(they) form views" (Sn 794a), (*na kappayeyya*) "(one) should not form a view (or views)" (Sn 799a); **maññanā,** Nm 1:80, 234, 2:413, 424, 426; Nc:Be 205; Dhs 198; Vbh 350, 353-356 passim). In most cases, "conceive" relates to imagining some kind of "measure" (*māna*) of oneself against others (Sn 382, 806, 813,855). Such ideas are expressed by verbs: *kappeti, kappayati* [DP 635d]*, maññati* and its various forms (D 1:60, 189; S 3:103, 104; Sn 199, 388, 840). Nm 124 lists 7 types of <u>self-centred conceptions</u> (*mama-y-idan ti maññati*): those rooted in craving (*taṇhā,maññanā*), in views (*diṭṭhi-*), in conceit (*māna-*), in defilements (*kilesa-*), in immorality (*duccarita-*), in undertaking (*payoga-*), and in karmic fruition (*vipāka-*). On *maññanā,* see SD 31.10 (2.6.2).

[146] The popular tr of *ek'āyano* as "the one way" has been challenged by various scholars, eg, **Gethin**, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 2nd ed, Oxford: Oneworld, 2001; "On some definitions of mindfulness," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12,1 2011:263-279; **Anālayo**, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization*. Kandy: BPS, 2003; *Perspectives on Satipaṭṭhāna*, Cambridge: Windhorse Publications, 2013.

sorrow and distress, for the elimination of pain and sadness, for attainment of the right method, and for realization of nirvana."[147] [3.2]

2.2.2 "Mindfulness" is the usual English translation of the Pali term *sati* (Skt *smṛti*). As a meditation technique, *sati* is widely defined as an attentive observing, that is, *keeping the mind properly focused on the mind's object*. This issue is complicated, however, by occasional references in the suttas, when describing *sati*, to **long-term memory**.[148] The references to this latter description are less common than the former definition of *sati.*
    A good example of this canonical description of *sati* is found in 3 consecutive *sutta*s of the **Indriya Saṁyutta** (Connected Teachings on the Faculties), namely **S 48.8-10**.[149] In each of these 3 *sutta*s the Buddha explains the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*), the 3rd of which is the faculty of *sati*. The 3 Suttas are as follows:

(Indriya) Daṭṭhabba Sutta   S 48.8   the 4 satipatthanas
Indriya Vibhaṅga Sutta 1   S 48.9   "recollecting and remembering things done and said long ago"[150]
Indriya Vibhaṅga Sutta 2   S 48.10   both of the above

The parallel discourses in the Sarvāstivādin Saṁyukta Āgama (SĀ) agree with the first of these 3: the Chinese parallels to Pali S 48.8+9 both equate the faculty of 念 *niàn* (that is, *sati*) with the 4 focuses of mindfulness, while the Pali S 48.10 has no known Chinese parallel.[151] The Pali suttas' description of *sati* in terms of long-term memory rarely have any parallel in the Chinese Āgama (the Sarvāstivāda parallel). One of these rare cases is the famous "Discourse on the Fortress Parable,"[152] where both the Pali and the Chinese versions liken *sati* to the ability of the fortress gate-keeper to recollect things long past.[153]

2.3 MINDFULNESS AND MEMORY

2.3.1 Note that from the start, we have *not* mentioned "memory of things long past" as a definition of *sati.* This is simply because it does not fit well with what is said in the suttas about how *sati* is to be practised [2.2.2]. Memory is only part of the description of the process of *sati,* "mindfulness"; that is, memory is an extension—a support of mindfulness, or a result of it—of what happens when we are mindful.
    Mindfulness practice usually relates to events in the present or in the very recent past. In the context of meditation, *sati* develops when we cultivate attentive observation of our breath, for example. It is in this context of reflection that *sati* develops as memory when we intentionally recall the Dharma as we have been taught or that we have learned.[154]

---

[147] **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10/1:55–57), SD 13.3 = **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22/2:290–297), SD 13.2 = MĀ 98 (T1.-582b-583b) = EĀ 12.1 (T2.568a).
    [148] The usual Pali word for "remember" or "recollection" is *anussati* or *anussaraṇa*; eg, "he recollects his former existences" (*pubbe,nivāsânussati*).
    [149] **(Indriya) Daṭṭhabba S** (S 48.8/4:196), SD 10.4(1.1.3); **Indriya Vibhaṅga S 1** (S 48.9/5:197), SD 74.7a; **Indriya Vibhaṅga S 2** (S 48.10/5:198), SD 74.7b.
    [150] See (2.3.2) below. For a similar exposition, see **(Ānâpāna,sati) Ānanda S 1** (S 54.13), SD 95.12.
    [151] SĀ 646 (T2.182b20; SĀ 647/T2.182c04-07. S 48.10, with no known parallel, perhaps originated as a variant of S 48.9 (prec n). The situation noted in S 48.8 + 9 is virtually replicated in **(Pañcaka) Vitthata S** (A 5.14/-3:11) and **(Pañcaka) Daṭṭhabba S** (A 5.15/3:12).
    [152] **Nagarôpama S** (A 7.63/4:110) = MĀ 3 (T1.423a28-b02) [2.3.2].
    [153] Presumably the gate-keeper's good memory enables him to recall the identities of those who have earlier sought entry to the fortress, allowing him to weed out the city's foes.
    [154] See S:B 2:1901 n63. On *nepakka* [3.11].

Another possibly relevant factor is the etymological connection between the Pali word *sati* and the cognate Sanskrit ***smṛti.*** "Memory" was definitely the primary meaning for the Sanskrit *smṛti*. This connection, which was well-known to monastic students and scholars of mindfulness: they had to re-member these instructions and put them into practice as part of their <u>mindfulness</u> training. Hence, mindfulness is understood as entailing the remembering of wholesome states that we should focus on, develop and guard.

Furthermore, even more importantly, this <u>memory</u> is reinforced *as a result* of mindfulness itself; but the definitive feature of *sati* remains that of <u>attentive observation</u>. We will see this definitive role of *sati* highlighted in the parable of the city in **the Nagarôpama Sutta** (A 7.63) in the next section.

2.3.2 The Nagarôpama Sutta (A 7.63) defines <u>the noble disciple</u> (*ariya,sāvaka*)—one on the path of awakening (streamwinner, etc, including the arhat) as having <u>7 good qualities</u> (*satta saddhamma*): *wise faith, moral shame, moral fear, deep learning in Dharma, exertiveness (in moral virtue and concentration), mindful and wise (understands the true nature of reality)*.[155] The quality "mindful" (*satimā*) is defined as follows:

> "He is **mindful**, possessing excellent mindfulness and penetration;[156] and he <u>remembers and recalls</u> what was done long ago, what was said long ago."[157]   (A 7.63,25.2), SD 52.13

Clearly here, we can see how mindfulness, as taught by the Buddha, works with other spiritual quali-ties for the sake of gaining the path of awakening.

2.3.3 He "**remembers and recollects**" what was said or done long ago—for effective Dharma learn-ing and practice, we should have <u>a good memory</u>. The Commentary distinguishes between *sarita,* "remembering" (that is, remembering once) and *anussarita*, "recollecting" (remembering again and again). To "**remember**" means to be familiar with past events or experiences, recalling them almost at once. To "**recollect**," on the other hand, needs some effort to recall something, and to sustain that memory in some purposeful way.

Mindfulness (*sati*), then, should be understood as functioning as <u>memory</u>, with which it *perceives* the present object of awareness. Mindfulness keeps up this perception: this is **attention** to <u>the pre-sent moment</u>, which is itself the basis for a continuing good memory. The Commentary takes the mention of *sati* here to imply all the 7 factors of awakening,[158] of which <u>mindfulness</u> is the first (MA 3:30) [4.2.4]. Hence, we should add that even by itself, especially in reference to being mindful, such as while meditating, being mindful also means that we are **aware** (*sampajāna*) or "clearly knowing" what is going on before us.

2.4 MINDFULNESS AND PERCEPTION

2.4.1 When we are <u>mindful</u>, we are directing and keeping the mind on the object; when this is done on a simple level (before there is deep concentration), there is some level of "initial application" (*vitakka*) and "sustained application" (*vicāra*) respectively. This process means that we are **aware** of the object, of recognizing and remembering it. In other words, we are <u>perceiving the object</u>: this is called <u>perception</u> (*saññā*). [3.1]

---

[155] These <u>7 good qualities</u> are, in Pali, respectively: (adj) *saddha, hirimā, ottappa, bahu-s,suta, āraddha,viri-ya, satimā* and *paññavā* (A 7.63,19-27), SD 5.13 (2.3).

[156] "Mindfulness and penetration," *sati,nepakka;* on *nepakka,* see Vbh 249; VbhA 311 f.

[157] *Satimā hoti paramena sati,nepakkena samannāgato cira,kataṁ pi cira,bhāsitam pi saritā anussaritā.*

[158] See *satta bojjhaṅga*, SD 10.15.

2.4.2 Ānanda, in his Subcommentary (*ṭīkā*) (6th century?) to the Attha,sālinī (DhsA), explains that when we bear some grudge, say, and we recall some perceived wrong done to us by reflecting on things done long ago, this memory should be understood not as being facilitated by its association with mindfulness but rather its association with clear and sharp **perception** (*saññā;* Skt *saṁjñā*).[159]

Of relevance here is that from the perspective of mindfulness, it is apparent that many of our "memories," far from being accurate reflections of the way things truly were, are rather simply conceptions and ideas that are the products of a mind affected by greed, hatred, and delusion (Gethin, 1992:41 f). Hence, they can, often enough, be some kind of "conceptual identification."[160]

2.4.3 In all systems of Indian Buddhist psychology, ***saññā*** is understood as a further distinct quality of consciousness that is associated with all states of mind. How precisely it was understood in the suttas is perhaps problematic, but in Buddhist psychology it is said to perform the function of learning (*uggaṇhana, uggahaṇa;* Skt *udgrahṇa*) the "signs" or "marks" (*nimitta*) of objects of awareness.[161] The Yogācārin Asaṅga (4th century) describes *saññā* as thereby providing the means of giving conventional expression to things that have been perceived through the senses or conceived by the mind.[162]

The Theravādin Buddhaghosa (4th-5th century) describes it as labeling or marking objects of experience so that they can be recognized again as the same (Vism 14.130; cf DhsA 110; Abhāv 18). Hence, *saññā* is usually translated as **perception** (or, cumbersomely, apperception), and functions as recognizing the mind-object, that is, relating it with past experience. If we try to look at it through the lens of modern psychology [1.1.5], then "it seems to embrace something of the semantic range of English *conception, identification*, and *recognition*."[163] But as understood in Buddhist psychology, *saññā* clearly functions to support memory, a kind of "conceptual identification" [2.4.2] of a mind-object.[164]

2.5 ATTENTION AND THE PAST

2.5.1 Regarding memory there is some disagreement between the Sarvāstivādins and others, including Yogācārins, on the question of whether the object of "mindfulness" may be present or past. For the **Sarvāstivādins**,[165] mindfulness "recalls" (*abhilāpati*) objects of awareness in the present moment, thereby creating one of the conditions for objects to be subsequently remembered.[166]

---

[159] DhsA 250,1-8; DhsMṬ 120; Nyanaponika, 1992.

[160] This term is used by P S Jaini, "*Smṛti* in the Abhidharma literature and the development of Buddhist accounts of memory of the past," in (ed) J Gyatso, *In the Mirror of Memory,* SUNY, 1992:49.

[161] Triṁśbh 57: *saṁjñā viṣaya,nimittôdgrahaṇam | viṣaya ālambanam | nimittaṁ tad-viśeṣo nīla,pīt'ādy-ālambana-vyavasth'ākāraṇam | tasyôdgrahaṇaṁ nirūpaṇaṁ nīlam etan na pītam iti*.

[162] This portion of Abhsm survives only in Chin and Tib; see W Rahula 2001:3, T1605.31.663b5–663b7.

[163] A Wayman, "Regarding the translation of the Buddhist terms saññā/saṁjñā viññāṇa/vijñāna," in (ed) Wijesekera, *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume,* Colombo, 1976:325-335. Gethin 2015b:22.

[164] Abhk 472.17 f; Pruden 1988 4:1339. See also P A Payutto, tr R P Moore, *Buddhadhamma,* Bangkok 2021: 17-19.

[165] Sarvāstivāda was originally part of the Sthaviranikāya (the school of the elders) which split up from the Mahāsaṅghika (the great assembly) during the 2nd council (a century after the Buddha's death). 300 years later, it became the **Sarvāstivāda**, after its doctrine that all conditioned factors (*dharma*) continue to exist (*sarvam asti*) throughout all 3 time-periods of past, present and future. An important branch, the **Vaibhāṣika**, an Abhidharma tradition, and most of whose teachings are found in the great commentary (*vibhāṣa*) to a text summarizing the 7 Abhidharma books of the Sarvāstivāda. Later, when the Vaibhāṣika broke away, the older school came to be called **Mūlasarvāstivāda** (the original Sarvāstivāda), The Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivāda is preserved in the Tibetan tradition. See Routledge Ency of Buddhism 2007:4-6, 673-675; Princeton Dict of Buddhism 2014: Sarvāstivāda.

[166] Collete Cox, "Mindfulness and memory: The scope of *smṛti* from early Buddhism to the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma," in (ed) J Gyatso, *In the Mirror of Memory,* State Univ of New York.1992:84.

For the **Yogācārins**, on the other hand, mindfulness should be seen as only "recalling" an object of consciousness *that has been previously apprehended*. How mindfulness works in this way is described in some technical detail in Sthiramati's (6th century) commentary to Vasubandhu's succinct *Triṁśikā* (Thirty Verses):

> Mindfulness is not losing a familiar object; it is the mind's recalling [of that object]. A familiar object is one that has been previously experienced. There is no losing of this object because [in mindfulness] there exists a cause that prevents its apprehension from fading away. Recalling is repeatedly remembering the previously apprehended object's appearance as a mental support … . Moreover, mindfulness has the effect of non-distraction. That is, when an object is being recalled, this has the effect of non-distraction because there is no distraction either by a different object of consciousness or by a different aspect.
>
> (Trimśikā 72)[167]

The Yogācarā view that the object of mindfulness is always one that has been previously apprehended should not be misconstrued as meaning that mindfulness only recollects what was done or said long ago. On the contrary, this view is to highlight how mindfulness facilitates continued and unbroken awareness of an object in the present. Once an object is known to the mind, mindfulness repeatedly "recalls" it to mind and prevents the mind from being distracted by other objects of consciousness.[168] This again has to do with the fundamental idea of mindfulness as keeping focus on the object of the mind in meditation practice.

2.5.2 All this is to highlight the process of paying attention as described in the Buddhist psychology of mindfulness. In fact, besides mindfulness and "conceptual identification," there are at least 5 more mental factors that have specific functions in the act of being aware of an object: attention (*manasikāra*), concentration (*samādhi*), understanding (*paññā*), initial application (*vitakka*), and sustained application (*vicāra*).

Despite the Abhidharma schools not agreeing on everything, there is general agreement on some key ideas. Thus, **attention** refers to the mind's turning towards the object of awareness in each conscious moment; **concentration**, to the various mental capacities, qualities, and emotions becoming unified and settling, either momentarily or for a longer duration, on a single object of awareness; **initial application**, to the mind's deliberately and actively thinking about the object; **sustained application**, to the mind's closer examination of the different aspects of an object; and **understanding**, to the mind's forming some understanding of the value or significance of the object. However, according to the different Abhidharma schools, not all of these mental qualities are necessarily active at all times and in every conscious moment.

2.5.3 What then shaped these technical differences in the various Abhidharma theories of the mind and attention? The answer has to do with a complex interaction of tradition, reason and introspection. All the terms discussed [2.5.2] come from the earliest Buddhist tradition and therefore are established as part of Buddhist thought on such matters and are necessarily included in the early Abhidharma schools. The manner in which they are then presented as mental qualities that are both distinct yet related is then determined by a continuing traditions of both logic and introspection.[169]

---

[167] *Smṛtiḥ saṁtute vastuny asaṁpramoṣaś cetaso 'bhilapanatā | saṁstutaṁ vastu pūrvānubhūtam | ālambanagrahaṇāvipraṇāśakāraṇatvād asapramoṣaḥ | pūrvagṛhītasya vastunaḥ punaḥ punar ālambanākārasmaraṇam abhilapanatā | … sā punar avikṣepakarmikā | ālambanābhilapane sati cittasyālambanāntara ākārāntare vā vikṣepābhāvād avikṣepakarmikā ‖* (Triṁś 72)

[168] P J Griffiths, "Memory in classical Indian Yogācāra," in (ed) J Gyatso, *In the Mirror of Memory,* State Univ of New York, 1992:111 f.

[169] Gethin 2015b:24.

This can, in part, be illustrated by Vasubandhu's explanation of **initial application** (*vitarka;* P *vi-takka*). He views initial application as <u>essentially</u> (*svabhāva*) that of <u>understanding</u> (*prajñā*). This is because the suttas describe its practice as a form of "contemplation" (*anupaśyanā*), and according to Vasubandhu's traditional reading of the suttas, this involves some form of *seeing or insight* into how things are; in other words, understanding.

2.5.4 Borrowing from the Abhidharma Commentaries available to her, Collete Cox[170] lists **Vasu-bandhu**'s <u>2 alternative explanations of the role of mindfulness in this kind of contemplation</u>. According to the 1st explanation, mindfulness plays the leading role in *holding whatever is being observed before the mind*; understanding is then able to arise:

> Why does the Buddha speak of understanding as "presence of mindfulness"? Those who follow the Abhidharma Commentary say that it is because of the dominance of mindfulness [in the practice of the application of mindfulness]. What they mean is that it is because of the circumstance of the application of the power of mindfulness. It is like holding together splitting wood with a peg.[171]

According to her 2nd, preferred, explanation, *understanding observes how the object actually is*, and mindfulness then has the role of "<u>recalling</u>" (*abhilāpana*) this:

> But the following explanation is the appropriate one. Mindfulness applies itself through understanding, so the application of mindfulness is understanding because [mindfulness] recalls things as seen [by understanding].[172]

2.5.5 In part, Vasubandhu's 2 accounts of the functioning of mindfulness highlight the tension inherent in the basic meaning of *smṛti* noted at the start of this discussion. According to the 1st explanation, mindfulness simply holds the present object of consciousness firmly in attention. According to the 2nd, mindfulness, literally, "speaks about" (*abhilāpati*), that is, recalls, records, notes, or even remembers what has just been observed.

For Buddhist thinkers such as Vasubandhu, mindfulness can function both as the means by which we hold on to what is seen by understanding and more generally as the means by which we keep in mind what has been perceived. But in terms of modern cognitive psychology, it appears to be envisioned more in terms of working memory and short-term memory than long-term memory. As ***the Abhidharma,dīpa*** [2.3.1], puts it,

> With reference to the body, and so on, as discerned by understanding, the faculty of mindfulness is not losing [what is perceived], both as undistorted recalling—that is, recognition—and as the means by which there is no loss of a mind-object once ascertained.[173]

2.5.6 From our discussions so far, it is clear that historically **mindfulness** is never defined as *present-centred non-judgemental awareness* [1.1.3.1]. Dreyfus (2011) thus concludes:

---

[170] Cox, 1992:75-77

[171] *Kasmāt prajñā smṛtyupasthānam ity uktā bhagavatā | smṛtyudrekatvād iti vaibhāṣikāḥ| smṛtibalādhāna-vṛttitvād iti yo ʾrthaḥ | dārupāṭakilasaṁdhāraṇavat |* (AbhkBh 342.9-10 (6.15 a-b), with AbhkVy 530).

[172] *Evaṁ tu yujyate | smṛtir anayopatiṣṭhata iti smṛtyupasthānaṁ prajñā yathādṛṣṭasyābhilapanāt ‖* (AbhkBh 342.11 (6.15 a-b))

[173] *Smṛtindriyaṁ nāma kāyādīṣu prajñāyopalakṣiteṣu yā khalv aviparītābhilapanā pratyabhijñānam yenāva-dhārite viṣayasaṁmoṣaś cetasi na bhavati sa khalv asaṁmoṣaḥ smṛtindriyam* (Abhdī 360). See Gethin 2015b: 35 n13.

Mindfulness is then not the present-centred non-judgmental awareness of an object but the paying close attention to an object, leading to the retention of the data so as to make sense of the information delivered by our cognitive apparatus. Thus, far from being limited to the present and to a mere refraining from passing judgment, mindfulness is a cognitive activity closely connected to memory, particularly to working memory, the ability to keep relevant information active so that it can be integrated within meaningful patterns and used for goal directed activities.[174]   (Dreyfuss 2011:47) [1.1.4.1]

By giving close attention to the object of awareness, we better understand the nature of the object, we can better retain this understanding, seeing deeper into its true significance rather than being distracted by other reactions to it. This object of our attention is maintained by working memory and thus becomes available for proper evaluation. In fact, this connection between mindfulness, working memory and proper evaluation comes through very clearly in the Buddha's key teaching on mindfulness, **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10).[175]

In summary, (right) <u>mindfulness</u> (*sati*) has these 4 basic qualities:

(1) Mindfulness <u>remembers</u> and holds the object of awareness.
(2) Mindfulness "stands" (serving and guarding) the mind in <u>present moment awareness</u>.
(3) Mindfulness <u>recalls</u> the past, allowing us to know and correct our views.
(4) Mindfulness <u>sees things as they are: it leads to wisdom.</u>

In the next section, we will examine teachings related to satipatthana, the focuses of mindfulness.

---

[174] Jha et al. 2010.
[175] See G Dreyfus [1.1.4.1], 2011:44-48.

3 Mindfulness and awareness

3.1 CLEAR AWARENESS (*SAMPAJAÑÑA*)

3.1.1 We have already noted that what we understand as **mindfulness** (*sati*) actually works in 2 broad interrelated ways [2.4.1]: we first <u>direct</u> the mind (attention) to the object; then, we <u>keep</u> our mind in that state of awareness. The former is a *specific* sense of *sati* as mindfulness, while the latter is *sati* as a *broad* "monitoring" process of keeping the mind undistracted, thus *understanding* the true nature of the object. These twin processes are called **sati,sampajañña**, <u>mindfulness and awareness</u>, or more fully we can say "mindfulness and clear awareness." Hence, the suttas often describe how <u>mindfulness</u> works properly and closely with other mental qualities so that we are clearly aware of the mind object, fully understanding it, knowing and penetrating it. This is what we will examine in this section.[176]

Basically, **awareness** (*sampajañña*), or clear awareness, keeps us properly watching the mind-object, such as the breath, and not daydreaming. In this section, we will examine how we cultivate <u>awareness</u>, and how the term is used in the suttas, so that understanding, even wisdom, arises for us from this self-cultivation.[177]

3.1.2 The quality of awareness occurs in a succinct definition of the cultivation of **the 4 focuses of mindfulness** (*satipaṭṭhāna*), the definition applying to each of <u>the 4 contemplations</u> (*anupassanā*), that is, *of the body, feeling, mental states and dharmas*: "exertive, clearly aware, mindful, … remov-ing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world (*ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhij-jhā,domanassaṁ.* M 10,3; S 52.6, etc). This succinct definition of the essentials of proper mind-fulness practice reflects a collaboration of mindfulness (*sati*) with other qualities, key of which is <u>clear awareness</u> (*sampajañña*).

An early Abhidhamma work of the Pali canon, **the Vibhaṅga**, explains the significance of <u>clear awareness</u> by giving a standard list of terms related to **wisdom**, the first two of which are <u>wisdom</u> (*paññā*) itself and the act of <u>knowing</u> (*pajānanā*) (Vbh 194). As Gethin notes in his *The Buddhist Path to Awakening,* such correlations are not innovative but simply to "formalize something that is looser but already present in the Nikāyas." Even at a glance, we can, for example, recognize in the 4 prim-ary Nikāyas the special association of terms derived from the roots √JÑĀ, "to know," and √DṚŚ and √PAŚ, "to see." (1992:48)

The Vibhaṅga's reference to an act of <u>knowing</u> (*pajānanā*) corresponds to a verb which regularly occurs in the actual instructions given in **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** and its parallels, such as to "know" (*pajānāti*). Taking the case of *pleasant feeling* as an example, the instructions are: "Feeling a pleasant feeling, he knows [understands]: 'I feel a pleasant feeling'" (*sukhaṁ vā vedanaṁ vediyamāno, sukhaṁ vedanaṁ vediyāmī ti pajānāti,* M 10,32), SD 13.3.

Note too that the words are in <u>direct speech</u> marked with the quote mark *iti* or *ti* for short. This signifies a mental noting (subverbalization), in the form: "I feel a pleasant feeling," and so on. Such a subverbalization is indicated by the phrase "to know" (*pajānāti*), which stands in place of clear aware-ness mentioned in the succinct description of the "focus of mindfulness" above.

Clearly, from this context of proper mindfulness practice, the role of <u>clear awareness</u> is to give an understanding of what we are experiencing. Due to such clarity of understanding we are able to

---

[176] Dunne et al (2019) noted the role of clear "knowing" or clear "comprehension" (P *sampajañña*, Skt *sam-prajanya*, Chin 正知/正智 *zhèng zhī / zhèng zhì*, Tib *shes bzhin*) as the capacity to notice when a distraction has occurred in the Tibetan Mahāmudra meditation. J D Dunne, E Thompson, & J Schooler, "Mindful meta-aware-ness: sustained and non-propositional," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 28 2019:307-311.

[177] For the rest of this section, see Analayo, "Clear knowing and mindfulness," *Mindfulness* 11,4 2019:862-871, which gives both the Pali and the Chin parallels, and sometimes the Tib.

tell ourself, "I feel such and such a feeling." We are actually experiencing it: it is both sensed and known.

3.1.3 The word "**feeling**" in English has a wide and uncertain connotation ranging from that of touch (the tactile or somatic), the hedonic, the conative, and the spiritual states, to expressing an opinion. A few modern translations of the Pali *vedanā* are "feeling tone," "sensation" and "sensory feeling," which are helpfully descriptive, or near-synonyms at best, but otherwise awkward.

It helps, wherever possible, to use *a single word* in such a translation, with the understanding and determination that it means *vedanā.* The single, usually Anglo-Saxon, word allows succinct elegance when we use it in the context of sutta explanations of this common yet important term.[178]

A relationship between contemplating **feeling** (*vedanā*) and the cultivation of clear awareness (*sampajañña*) is highlighted in **the Pahāna Sutta** (S 36.3) and **the Ākāsa Sutta 1** (S 36.12), thus:

Yato ca bhikkhu ātāpī	So long as a monk is zealous and
sampajaññaṁ na riñcati	does not neglect clear awareness,
tato so vedanā sabbā	to that extent, regarding all feelings,
parijānāti paṇḍito.	he understands—he is wise.

<div align="right">S 36.3/4:206 (SD 31.1) = S 36.12*/4:218</div>

An idiomatic translation of the above: "So long as a monk is zealous and does not neglect clear awareness, to that extent he is wise in understanding all feelings."[179] [7.3.2]

This description proceeds beyond a mere recognition of types of feeling envisaged in the previous passage. Here, the role of clear awareness evolves to become "penetrative" (*nepakka*) [3.11] and thereby productive of wisdom. This is not to say that the basic contemplation of feeling described in **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) and its parallels cannot also be penetrative and lead to wisdom. The point is only that this potential of clear awareness is highlighted in the above verse.

3.1.4 Wisdom arises when we penetrate into the **impermanent** nature of feelings: we are then seeing the true nature of reality. Such a cultivation of clear awareness of impermanence can cover feelings *together with perceptions and thoughts*. A description of this type of practice occurs as part of an account of the meditative contemplation cultivated by the elder Nanda,[180] where **the (Aṭṭhaka) Nanda Sutta** (A 8.9) records the Buddha as praising him with these words for our benefit:

> Here, monks, Nanda knows the arising of feelings, knows their persisting, knows their ceasing. He knows the arising of perceptions, knows their persisting, knows their ceasing. He knows the arising of thoughts, knows their persisting, knows their ceasing. Monks, this then is Nanda's being mindful and clearly aware.[181]   (A 8.9/4:168), SD 84.14

The monk Nanda is aware of a feeling arising, staying and ceasing, established in right mindfulness that prevents him from being distracted. He is aware of perception arising, staying and ceasing (with right mindfulness so that he is undistracted). He is aware of a thought arising, staying and ceasing in the same manner. This is Nanda's accomplishment in right mindfulness and awareness.

This is a simple yet profoundly interesting description of a clear awareness and recognition of **impermanence**, by way of discerning not only *the arising and ceasing*, and also that this interim

---

[178] On the facility of words as how we use them, see SD 17.4 (2.3); SD 50.2 (1.1.2).

[179] **Pahāna S** (S 36.3/4:206), SD 31.1, = S 36.12*/4:218.

[180] Nanda here is the Buddha's half-brother (Mahā Pajāpatī's son). For his story, see **(Arahatta) Nanda S** (U 22/3.2/21-24), SD 43.7.

[181] *Idha bhikkhave nandassa viditā vedanā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatthaṁ gacchanti; viditā saññā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatthaṁ gacchanti; viditā vitakkā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatthaṁ gacchanti. idaṁ kho, bhikkhave, nandassa sati,sampajaññasmiṁ hoti.* (A 8.9/4:168), SD 84.14.

moment during which feeling, perception or thought seems to "stand" (*tiṭṭhati*); yet, it is itself changing. We often see forms of the verb *tiṭṭhati,* "to stand," which can also mean to "wait (upon)," that is, "to attend to or serve" someone as in this parable from the Vibhaṅga Commentary, showing <u>why wisdom is included in *sati*</u>:

> … in order to indicate a strong state of sati. For *sati* arises both with and without wisdom. When it arises with wisdom, it is strong; when it arises without it, it is weak ...
>
> Similarly the king's two ministers may wait in two (different) districts. One of them may be serving a prince, the other just by himself in his own right. Now, of these (two ministers), one has authority of both the prince's authority and his own authority. The one serving by means of his own ability cannot match this authority.
>
> Thus, <u>the minister serving a prince</u> is like **sati that has arisen with wisdom**; the one serving in his own right is like *sati* that has arisen without wisdom.[182]   (VbhA 312,2-11)

3.2 THE USES OF MINDFULNESS AND AWARENESS

3.2.1 This recognition of <u>an interim</u> reflects the early Buddhist conception of impermanence which differs from the doctrine of momentariness (*khaṇa*) that arose in later traditions.[183] According to this later doctrine of momentariness, any phenomenon will disappear immediately after having arisen. From an early Buddhist viewpoint, however, what has arisen can stand for some time before ceasing; yet this interim itself is a continuously changing process without any permanence.

The Buddha was, in fact, describing the elder Nanda's mind as being that of an arhat; that is, one whose mind is undistracted in mindfulness and awareness. However, even an unawakened person, with proper training and practice, will be able to observe such a continuous impermanence of mental processes in terms of feelings, perceptions and thoughts.

An unawakened person, with training and mindfulness, would be able to notice the mind during meditation when it is about to be distracted, prompting an adjustment that keeps the practice unbroken and undistracted. This effort to keep our attention fixed and flowing is well recognized in the suttas as a part of the task of mindfulness and awareness, a vital function that was given greater attention in some later developments.[184]

3.2.2 The **Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), as a part of its contemplation of the body (*kāyânupassanā*), includes the practice of <u>clear awareness</u>. The clear awareness instructions are given in connection with daily mundane <u>activities</u>, as follows:

A monk,
(1) in going forward or going backward [stepping back],   clearly knows what he is doing.
(2) In looking forward or looking back,   clearly knows what he is doing.
(3) In bending or stretching,   clearly knows what he is doing.

---

[182] *Satiyā balava,bhava,dīpan'atthaṁ. sati hi paññāya saddhim pi uppajjati vinā pi. paññāya saddhiṁ uppaj-jamānā balavatī hoti, vinā uppajjamānā dubbalā … yathā hi dvīsu disāsu dve rāja,mahāmattā tiṭṭheyyuṁ; tesu eko rāja,puttaṁ gahetvā tiṭṭheyya eko attano dhammatāya ekako va; tesu rāja,puttam gahetvā ṭhito attano pi tejena rāja,puttassa pi tejena tejavā hoti; attano dhammatāya ṭhito na tena sama,tejo hoti. evam eva rāja,-puttaṁ gahetvā ṭhito mahāmatto viya paññāya saddhiṁ uppannā sati; attano dhammatāya ṭhito viya vinā paññāya uppannā.* (VbhA 312,2-12)

[183] A von Rospatt, *The Buddhist doctrine of momentariness: a survey of the origins and early phase of this doctrine up to Vasubandhu*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995.

[184] J Dunne, "Buddhist styles of mindfulness: A heuristic approach," in (edd) B D Ostafin, M D Robinson, & B P Meier, *Handbook of Mindfulness and Self-regulation,* NY: Springer, 2015:251-270.

(4) In carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl,[185]   clearly knows what he is doing.
(5) In eating, drinking, chewing and tasting,   clearly knows what he is doing.
(6) In voiding or peeing,   clearly knows what he is doing.
(7) In walking, in standing, in sitting, in being asleep,
    in being awake,[186] in talking, or in remaining silent,   clearly knows what he is doing.
                                                                                            (M 10,8/1:57), SD 13.3[187]

While <u>mindfulness</u> (*sati*) engages a mind in calm meditation *internally*, **clear awareness** (*sampa-jañña*) is directed to any kind of bodily <u>activity</u> *externally*, even mundane ones. A further benefit of such a practice is that of maintaining <u>decorum</u> regarding bodily actions observable by others. The mention of "robe" and "bowl," of course, refers to the monk's training. Clearly, then, such a practice also serves to ensure that a monk or nun would evoke faith in the laity, so that they too practise such clear awareness, and keep their faith in the sangha.[188]

3.2.3 From the way **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** sequences the exercises for our daily activities, we can deduce that we should not only be circumspect (mindful and aware) of our bodily actions, but that we should also be *clearly aware* that "this body is in such and such a gesture or posture." We should, under proper conditions, ensure that our conduct is <u>harmonious</u> as well as <u>dignified</u>. The "ensuring" or monitoring is here done by the <u>mindfulness</u> (*sati*): ensuring that we are rightly focused on the mental object.

Notice that the inner speech quote *iti* is missing throughout the "clear awareness" exercise above [3.2.2 n]. While in the passage on <u>mindfulness</u> (*sati*), it is said, in direct speech, for example, "Going (forward), the monk knows, 'I go forward [Walking]'" (*bhikkhu gacchanto vā "gacchāmî ti pajānāti")* in the <u>full awareness</u> exercise, he is simply "well aware," that is, he is focused on the <u>knowing</u> that he *is* doing so: like in breath meditation, where our focus is on <u>knowing</u> that we are breathing without any inner direct speech.

Our focus in these "full awareness" exercises is on <u>fully knowing</u> our bodily action itself: any kind of speech here would distract us from the flow of the action. The task is thus for us to simply per-form the action in an appropriate manner, so that we are <u>clearly aware</u> (*sampajāna*) that we are doing so.

3.2.4 Clear awareness does not apply only to bodily actions, but also to <u>speech</u>. The suttas and the Vinaya (especially the latter) often apply clear awareness to *intentionally* speaking <u>what is untrue</u>

---

[185] This whole line: *Saṅghāṭi,patta,cīvara,dhāraṇe sampajāna,kārī hoti,* lit "upper robe, bowl, outer robe ..." Traditionally, the **"3 robes"** (*ti,cīvara*) are (1) the outer robe (*uttar'āsaṅga* = "one-sided robe," *ekaṁsika cīvara*), (2) the under-garment (*antara,vāsaka,* also called *nīvasana,* V 1:46) and (3) the upper robe (*saṅghāṭi*) (V 1:94,8 = 2:272,11 ≈ 5:175,2). When "amongst houses" (ie, outside of the monastery, eg, for almsround) the outer robe must cover both shoulders. However, when showing respect to elders or the sangha, it should be placed on one shoulder (*ekaṁsaṁ uttarā,saṅgaṁ karitvā,* V 1:45,32, 46,5, 2:126,32). *Cīvara* is a generic term, meaning "robe," and can refer to any of the 3 above. Here, however, the context clearly refers to it being used as an "outer robe," *uttar'āsaṅga.* See CPD: uttarâsaṅga; also C S Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms,* Vara-nasi, 1975: 88-91.

[186] "In being asleep, in being awake" *sutte jāgarite* (both loc of reference). Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane,* "lying down, reclining." For details, see SD 13.1 (3.6.2).

[187] (1) *Abhikkante paṭikkante sampajāna,kārī hoti,* (2) *ālokite vilokite sampajāna,kārī hoti,* (3) *samiñjite pasā-rite sampajāna,kārī hoti,* (4) *saṅghāṭi,patta,cīvara,dhāraṇe sampajāna,kārī hoti,* (5) *asite pīte khāyite sāyite sampajāna,kārī hoti,* (6) *uccāra,passāva,kamme sampajāna,kārī hoti,* (7) *gate ṭhite nisinne sutte jāgarite bhāsi-te tuṇhī,bhāve sampajāna,kārī hoti* (M 10,8/1:57), SD 13.3.

[188] S Mrozik, *Virtuous Bodies,* Oxford, 2007.

(*sampajāna,musā*), "a falsehood consciously (spoken)," that is, a conscious lie.[189] This is, of course, a breach of the precept of natural morality against lying, and entails unwholesome karmic consequences, such as others not believing us even when we are telling the truth.

Understandably, the phrase "**conscious lie**" (*sampajāna,musā*) appears most frequently in the 4th rule of defeat (*pārājika*), that is, a monastic falsely claiming to have gained spiritual attainments, which makes him fall automatically from the monastic state.[190] Since he has not gained any spiritual attainment, he is simply pretending or conning others in the hope of material or worldly gains. This is one of the heaviest offences (entailing losing one's monastic status) because the monastic has openly taken the vows of training, having renounced the lay life, and depending on support by the laity, yet he is still unable to restrain himself verbally, not even keeping the precepts of a layperson.

Clearly, from this usage of *sampajāna*, "clearly aware," the idea is that both our bodily and verbal activities should be executed consciously, that is, intentionally, and not automatically; and clearly, *not unmindfully* or *mindlessly*, that is, carelessly. However, in the Vinaya case, the opposite of "consciously" would be unintentionally, that is *without greed, hatred or delusion*, without any intention of falsehood or of breaking a Vinaya rule.

3.3 THE ETHICS OF MINDFULNESS AND AWARENESS

3.3.1 Although mindfulness and awareness relating to *bodily activities* form only one set of exercises in the range of practices connected with meditation training described in **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), these twin practices are mentioned in descriptions of the gradual path of Buddhist training. While mindfulness is *implicitly* listed as **sense-restraint** (*indriya,saṁvara*), clear awareness is *explicitly* mentioned.

The gradual path of Buddhist training lays out key aspects of personal conduct that prepare us for the path of awakening, whether as a monastic or as a lay practitioner. For a monastic, the gradual path starts with renunciation of worldly life, and training the body, speech and mind for realizing awakening in this life itself.

For a lay practitioner, busy with the world, should always keep within the safe boundaries of moral conduct (*sīla*), that is, at least, keeping to the 5 precepts [6.5.2, 13.12.18], and possibly finding time to keep to the gradual path. Despite our business—indeed, because of it—we must conduct our body and speech with mindfulness and awareness in an appropriate manner as described [3.2.2], so that our mind is neither distracted by lust nor its opposite, ill will. Being mindful and aware of our actions and speech basically means that we habitually know and understand **their impermanent nature**.[191] To that extent, we are unlikely to be led astray by delusion. Hence, for both kinds of training—the monastic and the lay—*mindfulness and awareness* are an essential part of the gradual path.[192]

3.3.2 That all things are impermanent may be obvious to some people, even the ignorance, *some* of the time, such as when they lose something precious or something dear to them is broken. For most of us, however, the reality of **impermanence** is quickly forgotten by our other ideas, beliefs and activities. Our views or religion, for example, may claim that the things of *this world* may be imper-

---

[189] **Udumbarikā Sīhanāda S** (D 25/3:45, 47), SD 1.4; **Cakka,vatti Sīhanāda S** (D 26/3:68), SD 36.10; **Pāsādika S** (D 29/3:133), SD 40a.6; **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,2.1(10)/3:235); **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41/1:286, 288), SD 5.7; **Verañjaka S** (M 42/1:291x2); **Sandaka S** (M 76/1:523), SD 35.7; **Sevitabbâsevitabba S** (M 114/3:48, 49), SD 39.8; **S** 3.7/1:74x2, S 10.6/1:209, S 17.11/2:233, S 17.12/2:233, S 17.13-20/2:234, S 17.37-43/2:243x5; **A** 3.28/1:128x2, A 6.54/-4:370x2 372, A 10.176/5:265 267, A 10.211/5:283 285, A 10.217/5:293 295.

[190] Pārājika 4.1-5 (**V** 3:93-99), 103 refs, passim.

[191] This key teaching, which is the basis for streamwinning, is found in **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), and the other 9 suttas of the Okkanta Saṁy (S 25.2-10): SD 16.7.

[192] Analayo, *Early Buddhist Meditation Studies* (vol 1). Barre, MA, 2017e:80-89.

manent, but there are those things *beyond* this world—such as heaven, God, a universal Soul, and so on—are eternal. Such ideas can only be accepted on faith: in other words, they are rooted in <u>ignorance</u>. We must have *faith* in these things because they are *false*. We don't need to have faith in facts: whether we believe them or not, they will still work, they still *is.*

This is merely the <u>philosophical</u> part of it: when we seriously think about it. Then, there is the **ethical** and **moral** part of it, regarding how we behave (the meaning of life) and what happens when we behave like that (or we don't) (the purpose of life). All things are impermanent means that everything changes, conditioned by our actions. Our actions change things, our actions change situations and lives—we are changed by our actions—by our actions, words and thoughts. **Our actions have consequences**. This is called <u>karma</u> (*kamma*). This is the meaning of <u>impermanence</u>.

3.3.3 In the context of <u>the 3 trainings</u>, we often see a detailed description of how a practitioner of the gradual path is endowed with "**mindfulness and awareness**" (*sati,sampajañña*). This dvandva or twin term affirms that this exercise clearly involves mindfulness. As explained in **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), mindfulness includes being aware of our bodily activities that form the focus and basis for clear awareness by way of decorum (keeping all our actions proper) with good intent.

A key reason for early Buddhist textual accounts of <u>the gradual path</u> to incorporate *mindfulness and awareness* in this way has to do with **the training in moral virtue**, which is basically <u>sense-restraint</u>, that is, the mindful restraint of <u>body and speech</u>, a "quality control" of the 6 senses. A colourful parable compares the 6 senses to <u>6 animals</u>: a snake, a crocodile, a bird, a dog, a jackal and a monkey.[193] Mindfulness and awareness are vital for such a proper restraint which conduces to a calm and clear mind as <u>the support for</u> **mental cultivation**.

3.3.4 Another reason is related to the tendency for such accounts of the gradual path to be given to <u>newcomers and outsiders</u> is to convey to them some idea of the type of practice undertaken by the Buddha's disciples and followers. In such a context, a description of a circumspect decorum functions as an easily recognizable recommended practice and its benefits.

While mindful contemplation of a pleasant feeling, for example, is a meditation practice that is hardly visible to an outsider, the decorum maintained by both monastics and laity in their conduct can more easily be seen as inspiring the truth and beauty of Buddhist training. Hence, clear awareness naturally *beautifies* us <u>externally</u>, in the sense that we, as practitioners, see ourselves, as it were, from the outside. That way, we are better prepared to rectify any improprieties or shortcomings that may invite criticisms, especially from outsiders. The truth, however, remains that this wholesome exteriority is a natural reflection of our <u>interiority</u> of Dharma-spirited joy and beauty.

The training thus refers to <u>learning</u> about the path in terms of <u>moral virtue</u> (body/speech), <u>mental cultivation</u> (the mind), and <u>wisdom</u> (the basis for awakening). However, in actual practice, we would naturally work with whichever needs our immediate attention in a natural manner. At this early stage, all the 3 trainings help one another to progress, as we shall see. [3.5.1]

3.4 THE GRADUAL PROGRESS OF MINDFULNESS AND AWARENESS

3.4.1 The suttas often show how our spiritual practice progresses <u>gradually</u> (in an ascending manner), one serving as the "food" (basis) for the next, and so on, such as in **the (Āhāra) Avijjā Sutta** (A 10.61), thus:

(1) spiritual friendship, that is, "associating with true individuals,"   *sappurisa saṁseva*
(2) listening to the true teaching,   *saddhamma-s,savana*
(3) faith,   *saddhā*

---

[193] **Cha Pānā S** (S 35.247), SD 19.15. The domains of these animals are, respectively, an anthill, the water, the sky, a village, a charnel ground, and the forest.

(4) wise attention,	*yoniso manasikāra*
(5) **mindfulness and (clear) awareness**,[194]	*sati,sampajañña*
(6) **sense-restraint**,[195]	*indriya,saṁvara*
(7) **the 3 good actions**,[196]	*ti,sucarita*
(8) **the 4 focuses of mindfulness**,[197]	*cattāro satipaṭṭhāna*
(9) the 7 awakening factors,	*satta bojjhaṅga*
(10) knowledge-and-freedom.	*vijjā,vimutti*

(A 10.61,4+6.2), SD 31.10

3.4.2 The gradual progress from one "food" (*āhāra*) or basis to the next is self-evident above. Hence, we will only highlight **stages 5-8**:

(5) When we direct **mindfulness and awareness** to all our actions (body, speech and mind), we readily avoid unwholesome actions, speech and thoughts (or minimize them). This leads to (6) **sense-restraint**, that is, we are in full charge of our 5 senses and the mind, preventing the unwholesome roots (greed, hatred and delusion) from influencing our actions. This results in (7) **the 3 good actions**, that is, those of body, speech and mind. When our body, speech and mind are pure in this manner, we are ready to properly cultivate and maintain (8) **the 4 focuses of mindfulness**. This, in turn, brings us (9) the joy and focus needed to progress on the path of **knowledge and freedom**, leading to (10) nirvana, or at least happiness here and now.

3.4.3 This 10-step gradual training is condensed into **the 4 accomplishments** (*sampadā*) of a lay practitioner's spiritual welfare and happiness (*samparāyik'attha*), here listed showing how they incorporate the 10-step training, thus:

(1) the accomplishment of faith	*saddhā,sampadā*	(steps 1-3)
(2) the accomplishment of moral virtue	*sīla,sampadā*	(steps 4-6)
(3) the accomplishment of charity	*cāga,sampadā*	(step 7)
(4) the accomplishment of wisdom	*paññā,sampadā*	(steps 8-10)

When a lay practitioner goes deeper into the **accomplishment of faith**, they reflect how they are happier and drawn closer to the Buddha Dharma through spiritual friendship, especially with those who have attained the path, such as streamwinners. They are inspired by their personal example of *faith, moral virtue, charity and wisdom.* On account of such spiritual friends, they are able to hear and study the true teachings preserved in the suttas. As their own understanding grows and they taste the Dharma for themself, they feel its joy and wisdom, which affirms their wise faith.

Through their wise faith, arises their **accomplishment of moral virtue** which fires them with diligence to direct wise attention to all their waking experiences. They are thus able to keep their mind focused on such experiences with mindfulness and awareness. Understanding the nature of their experience, they are able to guard themself with sense-restraint. Through faith and moral virtue, they are inspired to gain the **accomplishment of charity**, through actions of body, speech and mind (the 3 good actions) to show their appreciation of the values of *life, happiness, freedom, truth and mindfulness* that shape true happiness.

As they grow spiritually, they are able to practise body-based meditations (such as mindfulness of the breath), they observe the impermanent nature of feelings, and the rise and fall of phenomenon as they deal with thoughts. They learn from the dharmas that arise, becoming calmer and clearer about how their mind works. These are their practice of the 4 focuses of mindfulness.

---

[194] See SD 31.10 (3.5).
[195] See SD 31.10 (3.6).
[196] See SD 31.10 (3.7).
[197] See SD 31.10 (2.8).

With better command of mindfulness, they investigate their mind. As their growing energy is directed to mental concentration, they feel zest, followed by tranquillity, calming their body and mind, they easily gain mental concentration, and attain the equanimity of a free mind. These are the 7 awakening factors. Practising in this way, in due course, they gain knowledge and freedom, attaining nirvana. Essentially this is the pilgrim's progress on the path of awakening.

3.5 MENTAL HARMONY IN DAILY LIFE

3.5.1 The gradual progress on the Buddhist path of training clearly shows that it is defined by the cultivation of mindfulness and awareness, working in tandem with moral conduct, the very foundation of Dharma-spirited life. Although we speak of the path of "the 3 trainings" as comprising moral virtue, concentration and wisdom [3.3.4], this triad is, in practice, **not always sequential**: they are attended to naturally, as necessary. They are more like the 3 wires of a power-cable working together to relay electrical power.

While it is true that we need a strong foundation of **moral virtue**, it is not something that we can perfect overnight, nor is it a status that we attain through some kind of ritual, empowerment or franchise. We need to constantly strengthen ourselves morally with mental cultivation and wisdom. Further, for our **meditation** to progress, it needs the support of our moral virtue—mindfulness and awareness are empowered by moral virtue; moral virtue is enhanced by mindfulness and awareness.

Moral virtue and mental cultivation help us cultivate **wisdom**. Wisdom, in its turn, keeps our mind free from mental hindrances, and enhances our moral strength by keeping us above any sense-distractions. Hence, moral virtue, mental training and wisdom work and grow together *pari passu*,[198] in step, as our developing mind gains greater capacity to see and pierce into true reality more broadly and more deeply. The focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) become more established with the help of moral virtue on one side and mindfulness and awareness on the other. In this way, moral conduct becomes natural, which conduces to mindfulness-awareness in all our waking actions.

3.5.2 The arhat remains unshakeably impartial with whatever he is experiencing through the senses, due to being established in mindfulness and awareness. In the case of visual experience, for example, it is described as follows in **the Vappa Sutta** (A 4.195):

> Having seen a form with **the eye**, one is neither joyful nor sad, dwelling in equanimity with mindfulness and awareness.[199] (The same situation with the other sense-faculties.)
>
> (A 4.195/2:198), SD 77.12

An awakened mind naturally embraces mindfulness and awareness, and invariably remains aloof from reacting with desire or aversion. Even joy is seen with equanimity, with the mind harmonious towards all sense-objects. This equanimity supports mindfulness and awareness, and is in turn supported by them. This awakened level of equanimity, and that of the path saints, are clearly different from mere indifference. While the supermundane equanimity is rooted in wisdom, mere indifference is the result of ignorance.

---

[198] The idea that atolls were formed *pari passu* with the rise of ocean level was first outlined by Charles Darwin, though the idea is now dated (but still quoted): *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Soc of London, President's address*, 1889:78 = 1890:108. "Ecologically": R Maino & D Emrullahu, "Climate change in Sub-Sharan Africa fragile states," IMF working paper, 2022: https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/001/2022/054/article-A001-en.xml. The Latin term *pari passu* ("on equal footing," ie at an equal rate) was widely used in numerous other learned writings on physical geography. *Pari passu* is today a well-known legal term in accounting and finance. I use *pari passu* in a developmental sense, to reflect *an equal or compatible growth* in the 3 trainings to correct a proofreader's view that *pari passu* is used only in the legal sense. I first learned the term in my A Levels geography class.

[199] *Cakkhunā rūpaṁ disvā n'eva sumano hoti na dummano, upekkhako viharati sato sampajāno.* (A 4.195)

3.6 MINDFULNESS-AWARENESS AND SLEEPING

3.6.1 In the "clear awareness" (*sampajañña*) section of satipatthana, it is said that "**in sleeping, in waking** (*sutte jāgarite*), one is clearly aware of what one is doing."[200] All aspects of sleeping are meant: reclining, falling asleep, actually sleeping, waking up and rising. Mindfulness with clear awareness fulfils a special role in relation to sleeping. Here is a description of how the Buddha himself is mindful and aware in this regard, as stated in **the Suppati Sutta** (S 4.7):

> Then the Blessed One, having done walking meditation during much of the night in the open, the night being near dawn, having washed the feet and entered the hut, lay down on the right side in the lion's posture, with one foot on the other foot, with mindfulness and awareness, having given attention to the perception of rising up again.   (S 4.7)[201]

Falling asleep in this manner—says **the Muṭṭha,sati Sutta** (A 5.210) and the Vinaya—improves the quality of one's sleep and prevents bad dreams and nocturnal emissions.[202]

3.6.2 In such contexts of sleeping as the abovementioned, the task of mindfulness and awareness are clearly related to **time**, that is, both as moment (of falling asleep, of awaking) and duration (while asleep). As we know, there were in the Buddha's time neither clocks nor watches to keep track of time, and monastics would not be able to rely on an alarm clock, for example, to ensure that they wake up early. Hence, they had to be mindful and aware of the time and their sleeping pattern.

As a rule, renunciants would not sleep through the night until sunrise. Thus, they had to condition themselves to rise early for their early-morning practice. Through mindfulness and awareness, they train themselves to perceive the proper time of rising. In this sense, mindfulness and awareness need to be continuously present while they sleep. In fact, when we notice how we time ourself in this manner with proper sleep, we do not need any extraordinary effort to rise on time.[203]

3.6.3 Analayo comments that "possessing mindfulness and awareness while asleep would presumably be a fairly relaxed modality of establishing these two qualities, otherwise one would not be able to fall asleep" (2019f:868). In waking life, we need a lucid level of mindfulness and awareness to discern any unwholesome state in our mind and to deflect it. The suttas are quite clear about this.

The (Dasaka) Sacitta Sutta (A 10.51) gives a short but remarkable teaching of practical "mind-reading" for ourself to detect unwholesome states in our mind, and overcome them, thus:

> If, bhikshus, on reflecting, a monk[204] knows thus:
> (1) 'I dwell with   much covetousness;   *bahula abhijjhālu*

---

[200] M 10,8(7) (SD 13.3). "In being asleep, in being awake" *sutte jāgarite* (both loc of reference). Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane,* "lying down, reclining." For details, see SD 13.1 (3.6.2).

[201] *Atha kho bhagavā bahud eva rattiṁ abbhokāse caṅkamitvā rattiyā paccusa,samayaṁ pāde pakkhāletvā vihāraṁ pavisitvā dakkhiṇena passena sīha,seyyaṁ kappesi pāde pādaṁ accādhāya sato sampajāno uṭṭhāna,-saññaṁ manasi karitvā.* (S 4.7/1:107), SD 32.13; also **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,46/1:249), SD 49.4.

[202] V 1:295,14-24; A 5.210/3:251 (SD 103.12).

[203] Based on this, we can perhaps understand the nature of **lucid dreaming**, such as in Vajrayāna: N Norbu & M Katz, *Dream yoga and the practice of natural light,* Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1992; A Crescenzi & F Torricelli, "Tibetan literature on dreams: materials for a bibliography," *The Tibet Journal* 22,1 1997:58-82; T Wangyal, *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, Snow Lion, 1998. The application of mindfulness seems to allow us to actually be "present" in our own dreams, even to participate in it (T Stumbrys, D Erlacher, & P Malinowski, "Meta-awareness during day and night: the relationship between mindfulness and lucid dreaming," *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 34,4 2015:415-433). A lucid dream prob occurs in some kind of subconscious state between the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) and the conscious state.

[204] "Monk" here is a synecdoche for anyone present at a teaching session: SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1).

(2) I dwell with	much ill will in mind;	*bahula vyāpanna,citta*
(3) I dwell in the grip of	much sloth and torpor;	*bahula thīna,middha*
(4) I dwell with much	restlessness;	*bahula uddhato*
(5) I dwell with much	doubt;	*vicikicchā*
(6) I dwell with much	anger;	*kodha*
(7) I dwell with	a very defiled mind;	*bahula saṅkhiliṭṭha,citta*
(8) I dwell with	a very agitated body;	*bahula sāraddha,kāya*
(9) I dwell	very often lazy;	*bahula kusita*
(10) I dwell	very often lacking in concentration'—	*bahula asamāhita*

then, bhikshus, that monk should apply his utmost will, effort, energy, and
   unrelenting <u>mindfulness and clear awareness</u>,
     to the abandoning of the bad unwholesome states.
Bhikshus, just as one **whose clothes are ablaze, whose head is ablaze**,
   desire, and effort, and industry, and perseverance, and persistence,
     or <u>mindfulness</u>, or <u>clear awareness</u>, beyond measure,
      would be made, to extinguish that blaze on his clothes or his head.[205]
Even so, bhikshus, that monk *should apply his desire, and effort, and industry, and persever-*
ance, and persistence, and <u>mindfulness</u>, and <u>clear awareness</u>, beyond measure,
   to the abandoning of the bad unwholesome states.   (A 10.51,4/5:93), SD 5.13

From this proactive passage, we can safely deduce that <u>mindfulness and awareness</u> in this con-
text involve a constant monitoring of our mental state. When our mind is overcome by an unwhole-
some condition, we need resolute effort to free our mind. Even then, such an effort still needs some
monitoring and enhancing to safeguard the mind from overdoing it. [3.5]

3.7 MINDFULNESS-AWARENESS AND POSITIVE EMOTIONS

3.7.1 Both **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33) and **The Das'uttara Sutta** (D 34) declare <u>mindfulness and aware-
ness</u> to be the 2 states that are of "great help" (*bahu,kāra*) because, says the Commentary, they are
like benefactors that bring us good wherever we are, keeping us heedful (*appamāda*) by way of
fulfilling moral virtue and so on.[206] In other words, mindfulness and awareness remove unwhole-
some states and arouse wholesome states, such as positive emotions. The best of these positive
emotions are, of course, **the** "**divine abodes**" (*brahma,vihāra*), that is, lovingkindness, compassion,
altruistic joy and equanimity.

3.7.2 **The Kesa,puttiya Sutta** (A 3.65) records how the Buddha, after teaching the Kālāmas how to
avoid unhelpful teachings based on the 10 doubtworthy points, advises them to cultivate <u>whole-
some, blameless states</u>—that is, avoiding the 3 unwholesome roots of greed, hatred and delusion,
thus freeing their minds from defilements [3.6.3]. They are then ready to cultivate <u>the divine abodes</u>,
that is, to live happily together here and now like the high gods:

---

[205] *Seyyathā'pi āvuso āditta'celo vā āditta,sīso vā tass'eva celassa vā sīsassa vā nibbāpanāya adhimattaṁ.*
This is a popular parable in the Aṅguttara, evoking the urgency of <u>self-review and meditation</u>: **Samādhi S 2** (A
4.93/2:93), SD 95.8; **(Chakka) Maraṇa-s-sati S 2** (A 6.20/3:307, 308); **(Aṭṭhaka) Maraṇa-s-sati S 2** (A 8.74/4:320
f), SD 48.6; **(Satthā) Sa,citta S** (A 10.51,4/2/5:93), SD 5.13; **(Sa,citta) Sariputta S** (A 10.52/5:95) = A 10.51; **Sama-
tha S** (A 10.54/5:99 f), SD 83.8; **Parihāna S** (A 10.55,7.2/5:103 + 8.2/5:105), SD 43.5. The blazing head (*āditta,-
sīsa*) parable is mentioned in connection with working at <u>the goal of renunciation</u>, in Comys (MA 1:95; SA 1:48;
ThaA 1:112; PmA 1:261). **Jātaka Nidāna** records a related parable of the burning house, as the Bodhisattva
reflects on his life, "The threefold existence (the sense-world, the form world, and the formless word) appeared
to be like a burning house" (*tayo bhavā āditta,geha,sadisā khāyiṁsu*) (J 1:61).
[206] D 33,1.9(18)/3:213 = D 34,1.3(1)/3:273; DA 3:1057,18-20.

(that noble disciple) thus free from covetousness, free from ill will, unconfused,
   clearly comprehending, ever mindful—
     dwells pervading with a heart of **lovingkindness**, dwells suffusing one quarter;
        so too the second; so too the third; so too the fourth;
          thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself,[207]
             he dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness
               that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill will.
(The same is said of compassion, altruistic joy and equanimity.)

(A 3.65), SD 35.4a

Notice that in the above context, the role of <u>mindfulness and awareness</u> goes beyond their moni-toring function for overcoming of unwholesome states, as previously described [3.6.1]. They now work to bring the mind to deep concentration in order to develop positive emotions, beginning with <u>lovingkindness</u>. In other words, mindfulness and awareness are also helpful in bringing about dhyana.

3.8 MINDFULNESS-AWARENESS AND THE 3RD DHYANA

3.8.1 Note that in **the (Dasaka) Sacitta Sutta** (A 10.51) passage on the 10 unwholesome states [3.6.3], 1-5 are also <u>the 5 mental hindrances</u> (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*)[208] [5.1.1]. They are so called because they hold us back, keeping us body-bound, caught in the 5 physical senses, thus *hindering* the mind from being fully free from processing the attention-demanding sense-data. Once these 5 mental hindrances are overcome (at least temporarily), the freed mind attains the joyful calm and clarity of dhyana, that is, the 1st dhyana.[209]

3.8.2 In early Buddhist meditation psychology, <u>the 3rd dhyana</u> is a state of profound concentration characterized by a mental oneness that is fully thought-free, which is already present, at a basic level, in the 1st dhyana.[210] Interestingly, <u>clear awareness</u> features explicitly in the textual definition of the 3rd dhyana, as stated in **the Cūḷa Hatthi,padôpama Sutta** (M 27):

… <u>with the fading away of zest</u> (*pīti*), he dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly aware, and experiences happiness with the body.[211]

He enters and remains in **the 3rd dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare,
'Happily, he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.'   (M 27), SD 40a.5[212]

The 5th-century commentator Buddhaghosa, in his **Visuddhi,magga**, explains why clear aware-ness finds special mention in the textual definition of the 3rd dhyana (Vism 4.175/163), but is not mentioned in connection with the first 2 dhyanas. According to Buddhaghosa, while in the 3rd dhyana the meditator has to ensure that the mind does not fall back to exuberant <u>zest</u> (*pīti*) of the 2nd dhyana by which he would fall from the 3rd dhyana.

---

[207] *Iti uddhaṁ adho tiriyaṁ sabbadhi <u>sabb'attatāya</u>.* This underscored word is a better reading than *sabbat-thatāya* (PED "on the whole") since *sabbadhi* ("everywhere") precedes it. It is resolved as *sabba + atta +* the suffix *-tā* (making it an abstract noun), giving the sense of "all-and-self-ness." The word *sabbattatāya* is dative, giving the sense, "to all-and-selfness," or as **Bodhi** translates it: "to all as to himself" (2005:90).

[208] Often, in passages with dhyana, esp as the dvandva, "covetousness and displeasure [sorrow]" (*abhijjhā,-domanassa*, is a shorthand for <u>the 5 hindrances</u> [4.1.2 n].***

[209] On the 4 dhyanas, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (6).

[210] See Anālayo 2019, 2020.

[211] "Body" (*kāya*), while in dhyana, refers to the "mental body" (*nāma,kāya*). (Vism 4.175/163)

[212] *Pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati <u>sato ca sampajāno</u>, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṁvedeti, yaṁ taṁ ariyā ācikkhanti: upekkhako satimā sukha,vihārī ti tatiyaṁ jhānaṁ upasampajja viharati* (M 27,21/1:182), SD 40a.5.

The Visuddhi,magga illustrates this mental tendency with the parable of a calf that keeps follow-ing the cow unless it is prevented from doing so. In the same way, in order to maintain the subtler and deeper meditative concentration in the 3rd dhyana, mindfulness and awareness guards the meditator from falling back to the 2nd dhyana.

3.8.3 The definition of **the 3rd dhyana** [3.8.2] highlights a very significant point: speech and thinking (such as the kind we are used to in daily life) do not occur in dhyana;[213] <u>mindfulness and awareness</u> here function in a naturally non-propositional manner. Usually when we observe a feeling, we do so subverbally: "This is pleasant" or "This is unpleasant." We do this propositionally, that is, by way of a statement that it is true or not true.

In dhyana, mindfulness and awareness work with neither verbalization nor thinking. Clear aware-ness works in a silent, unobtrusive manner, supported by mindfulness, keeping the mind unified in the 3rd dhyana. It's like the way we breathe: when we are ready we simply breathe in, when we are ready we simply breathe out. Or, it's like a child who has learned to walk: they naturally put one foot before the other in a balanced manner.

Just as in the definitions of the other 3 dhyanas, the definition above [3.8.2] does not mention any object. A dhyana, on account of the depth of its mental concentration, is <u>a non-dual mental state</u>. This mental oneness raised some issues with later Buddhists unfamiliar with the early Buddhist medi-tation practice, where the mindfulness does not have any object. The later scholastics and teachers came up with interesting, even helpful, teachings on such an object-free mind, but some of these theoretical views, proposed from bias rather than from proper experience, seem to be like outside theologies trying to prove the God-idea, and creating God in their own image.[214]

3.9 CLEAR AWARENESS OF EMPTINESS

3.9.1 The cultivation of <u>clear awareness</u> also applies to a perception of nonself known as **dwelling in emptiness** (*suññata vihāra*), as explained in **the Mahā Suññata Sutta** (M 122). This Sutta distinguishes between dwelling in emptiness, internally, externally or both, followed by instructions for overcoming difficulties in doing so. For one who dwells in emptiness <u>internally</u>, for example, one is clearly aware as follows:

> One understands: "Attending to emptiness internally my mind then advances, acquires confidence, becomes established in, and becomes released in emptiness internally."
> In this way, one clearly knows that.   (M 122), SD 11.4[215]

On a simple level, the "<u>emptiness</u>" is perceived *internally* in our own aggregates (form, feelings, perception, formations and consciousness), seeing them as being conditioned and nonself. On a deeper level, with the arising of concentration, we attain the "fruit of attainment through emptiness" (*suññatā phala,samāpattiṁ,* MA 4:154,15), that is, dhyana arising through the perception of empti-ness. The same perception of emptiness can be made <u>externally</u>, that is, viewing others as the aggre-gates, and seeing these aggregates as "empty."

3.9.2 We can see that <u>clear awareness</u> in this perception of emptiness is similar to the way it works in the 3rd dhyana [3.8]. Hence, when we lack clear awareness, we lose concentration; then, we will not be able to dwell in emptiness. While in the 3rd dhyana, the task of mindfulness and awareness is

---

[213] See **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.2).

[214] J Dunne, "Toward an understanding of non-dual mindfulness," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12,1 2011:71-88

[215] **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122): *Evaṁ pajānāti: ajjhattaṁ suññataṁ kho me manasikaroto ajjhattaṁ suññatāya cittaṁ pakkhandati pasīdati santiṭṭhati vimuccatī ti. itiha tattha sampajāno hoti.* (M 122,6 f/3:111 + 9 f/3:112) + SD 11.4 (2.3).

to ensure that we do not revert to the 2nd dhyana; in the perception of emptiness, we must ensure that the mind does not fall away from the emptiness-dwelling, the emptiness-based attainment.

3.9.3 From sitting meditation or standing meditation, dwelling concentrated in emptiness, our clear awareness, according to the Sutta [3.9.1], then proceeds to **walking**. In walking, the continuity of insight into emptiness is sustained by keeping aloof from desire and discontent. Other levels of a continuous dwelling in emptiness, accompanied by clear awareness, include keeping the mind free from unwholesome thoughts, avoiding unsuitable topics of conversation, and remaining aloof from being distracted by any of the 5 cords of sensual pleasure.[216]

We can see here how clear awareness extends from the perception of emptiness in a deep meditative state to cover our daily mundane activities, such as interacting with others. This essentially describes the wholesome personality of a contemplative meditator.

3.9.4 For those of us who are unable to practise **dwelling in emptiness** to the level of attaining dhyana, especially lay followers, we can still cultivate emptiness-dwelling, as in the perception of impermanence, for each or any of the 5 aggregates. We cultivate the emptiness-dwelling internally by watching the aggregates in *ourselves*; we cultivate it externally by watching the aggregates in *others*.

(1) INTERNAL DWELLING IN EMPTINESS
Dwelling in emptiness by way of **form** internally is done when we see our own body by reflecting its impermanent nature (such as how we are losing our hair a bit at a time, or how our eye-sight is worsening, or when we fall sick), as comprising the 4 elements (earth, water, fire, wind).[217]

When we notice a **feeling** that has arisen as *pleasant*, we simply note it as being conditioned and impermanent: it will pass away. When the feeling is *unpleasant*, it too is conditioned and impermanent. On an occasion when we are able to discern that a feeling is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, we note is as "neutral."

Perception can be noted when we recall that we have had a similar experience in the past, and we examine how our memory of that past has influenced the way we recognize a present object (a sight of someone or something, a smell, a taste, or a touch). Even if we have been unable to do this as it arises, we can reflect on the perception after the fact, of what has already happened.

Formations arise when we intentionally act, speak or think—such as about any of the above events. We should note that whether our reaction to that state was motivated by *lust* (desire) or by *hatred*; when we are focused enough we may even discern how we have been *deluded* into such an act of body, speech or mind. This should be mindfully done with awareness so as not to direct any new unwholesome thought to how we are discerning this karma-formation. Or, to be certain, we may verbalize at the end of such an exercise: "By this act of truth, may I be well and happy!"

Consciousness can be mindfully discerned with awareness at any of the 6 sense-doors: through any of the 5 sense-doors (which are easy enough) or upon thinking a thought (which can be more difficult). For example, we can reflect how we become aware of shapes or colours, say, on the computer screen.

Or, when we hear a sound, notice how we know it's a sound (focus on the ear-door): we notice many sounds arising seemingly from different sources; yet, we can only make sense of any of them at our ear-door.

Similarly, when we smell a smell: we discern it at our nose-door. We may at first discern it as being pleasant or unpleasant, weak or strong, where it is coming from, and so on. When we are practising the perception of foulness (of a rotting corpse), we must then keep to the meditation

---

[216] The 5 cords of sensual pleasure arise through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching: see SD 60.1d (7.4.2.2(1)).

[217] On the 4 or 6 element practice, see **(Rahula) Dhātu S 1** (S 18.9/2:248 f), SD 3.11(6.3).

advice to stay upwind so that we are not unhealthily affected by the bad odour. Otherwise, under normal circumstances, we then simply note it "smelling" without reacting to it in hedonic terms.

To discern taste, we need to take in some food slowly enough; over time, we may even notice how the same kind of food may taste differently or simply taste bland. Or, if we are more discerning, we may notice it to be sweet, or sour, or salty, or bitter, or savoury (umami).[218] Or when drinking tea or coffee, we may notice (or not) the kind or blend that we are drinking (when this happens naturally. We should however not dwell on this aspect, but simply note the passing taste as a passing pheno-mena. We notice how the taste actually comes and goes: we know it is tea, coffee, water, etc, by this change.

Consciousness through touch can be discerned when we touch someone, and then reflect how we feel and react to such a touch (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral).

Discerning a thought is often interesting but tricky (when we get carried away by that thought!): we must be resolute enough to simply watch how that thought arises and then ends, taken over by another thought. We can also observe how a thought emotionally affects us: how we would rather avoid an unwholesome thought (rooted in greed, hate or delusion), and nurture a wholesome one (free of the 3 roots).

(2) EXTERNAL DWELLING IN EMPTINESS

When dwelling in emptiness **externally**, we basically adjust the exercises we have done *internal-ly* [3.9.4] in terms of another person. For example, we discern our reaction to the sight of another: how that person has aged or changed in some physical way (grown fatter or thinner), and note this as a characteristic of impermanence. When we are attracted to a person, we will notice that there are features of the person that displease us, and so on.

When we hear the sound of another, notice how we recognize (or think we recognize) who or what it is; or when we do not know its source, we note how we react to it as a result, and so on. We may also notice how a sound may be made by someone who is sick or in pain,[219] or how the wind may distort a sound and make it non-intelligible. We may notice how we're able to follow what a person says (even if we do not know this person) in the midst of other people talking. We may even notice the conditioned nature of sound, or realize the context or nuance of the words; or, we may notice how we have constructed an experience of listening to another.

When we notice another person or animal discerning a smell, we simply take it as a "smell" with-out evaluating it (unless it is some kind of danger-sign, like the smell of smoke from a fire).

We may notice how others relish taste when taking food or a drink, even when it is not to our taste. Note how it is just a taste but our body and mind react differently to it. Or, we may notice someone taking food or drink. Even then, such a taste (experienced by anyone) is impermanent too. A hungry baby drinks milk; an elderly person tastes their soup with a spoon. We then reflect on the impermanence of touch or feeling, how we the pleasant feeling comes and goes just like that.

Discerning another person or being experiencing touch is similar to that for *internal* dwelling, only the focus is here on the other subject, and may be similar to the preceding experience.

When we are certain enough to *know* what another's thoughts are, we should reflect that they are *not* our thought: it's just the way that the other person thinks or is: whether that person is happy or sad on account of that thought, how we react should be wholesome for our own mental health and personal development.

Usually, we will not really know the mind or heart of another, but we must certainly know our own. When we feel anger or hatred against another, even towards our own self, we should first of all understand that what we dislike is *not* the person. Rather, what we dislike is the situation: we must

---

[218] SD 28.15 (2).
[219] When such a sound comes from someone who needs help or from a dangerous situation (like a fire), we should, of course, stop our meditation and investigate—unless it is a controlled situation where there are others already doing this, or it is beyond our power to do anything.

examine what we dislike about this situation, and keep on asking this way until we reach the root of our feeling. **The Vitakka Saṇṭhāna Sutta** (M 20) calls this the "stilling of thought-formations" (*vitakka,-saṅkhāra,santhāna*), or, in modern terms, *thought-reduction*.[220]

The same method can be used when our mind is troubled by a lustful thought towards a person, including falling in love with someone. We should mindfully examine: Are we desiring only one part of the person? Have we really looked at the person as a whole? [See the paragraph of "sight" for external dwelling.] Do we really know that person? Essentially, we must learn to love, which is to learn; to learn is to grow and see beyond appearances and expectations.[221]

Finally, it is always wise to close our contemplation of emptiness with some lovingkindness meditation.

3.10 MINDFULNESS AND DYING WELL

3.10.1 On account of mindfulness and awareness as the necessary and natural supports for Dharma-spirited mental development, both as *sati* (the focuses of mindfulness) and *samādhi* (the 4 dhyanas), understandably, mindfulness and awareness should be present too, at the time of **dying**. The suttas often refer to the certainty of death (only its actual moment is uncertain) with the figurative expression "**(should) await the time**" (*kālam āgameyya*), such as in this admonition found in 2 re-lated suttas: "Bhikshu, a monk should await the time with mindfulness and awareness. This is our instruction to you," in **the Gelañña Suttas 1 and 2** (S 36.7 + 8).[222]

For these twin qualities to be our dying companions, we must have cultivated them well in life. Effectively, every moment of mindfulness and awareness in all the activities in life is a preparation for a truly "good death": the true meaning of *euthanasia*. With every in-breath, we live; with every out-breath, we die; we breathe in again and again; we are reborn. Only nirvana is truly breathless, breath-free.

3.10.2 We have discussed, in a wide range of contexts, how mindfulness acts to see the object of awareness and to bring the mind to this object. In essence, this is perceiving the moment. Awareness recognizes this moment for what it really is: the living present, a living presence. Mindfulness brings us a gift of life; awareness shows its gratitude to this living moment. This is the highest gratitude we can show for the Buddha's teaching: by practising his teaching—as exemplified by the elder Dhamm'-ārāma (Dh 364).[223]

Collett Cox (1992) notes that the twinning of these 2 qualities indicates that, in many contexts, the cultivation of mindfulness alone does not function as a self-sufficient practice, but rather as *a*

---

[220] M 20,6/1:120 (SD 1.6).

[221] The reflection on emptiness may give spiritual humility to those high up in a religious hierarchy to prevent abuses, physical, emotional and sexual. When we are in positions of authority or power (such as monks, Order Members or clerics), it would be truly compassionate on our part to look deeply at elderly colleagues and re-flect that they were young boys once—and look at elderly nuns when thinking of molesting young girls. (On the other hand, this may not work when they rape old nuns too.) When we sexually violate the defenceless young who have almost no choice but to turn to the Sangha or the Church, we have violently torn a pupa from its co-coon. The victims lose their childhood and youth, and become emotionally scarred and maimed for life. They will darkly remember us for this. The 2-part 1992 docudrama, "The Boys of St Vincent" is a vivid lesson on the dark karma of child molestation by the cloth that is supposed to clothe them with love and charity.

[222] *Sato bhikkhave bhikkhu sampajāno kālaṁ āgameyya. ayaṁ vo amhākaṁ anusāsanī*, S 36.7/4:211x2, S 36.8/4:213 f. We see the foll forms relating to dying and death: when one dies, "one does (one's) time," *kālaṁ karoti* (D 3:236; M 3:112; A 1:57, 141, 3:94; U 87; V 1:121); the dead, "(one who) has done one's time," *kālaṅ,-kata* (D 2:26; M 2:61; S 1:234; V 1:60), also *kāla,kata*, *kāla,gata*; death ("when time is done"), *kālaṅ,kiriyā, kāla,-kiriyā* (D 2:192; V 1:122)*.

[223] See the Buddha's praise of the monk, Dhamm'ārāma's "supreme worship" (D 16,5.3.2), SD 9 (14).

necessary stage of simple observation that is merely preparatory to a subsequent stage.[224] As we have already noted, the role of <u>mindfulness</u> is to draw the mind to the object of awareness. It is <u>awareness</u> then that calms and clears the mind so that the mind-object comes into full focus: sama-dhi is then attained.

From there, we, <u>the meditator</u> may switch to looking deep into the true nature of the object to gain insight; or we can go on to attain dhyana, and with that, we then gain insight (*vipassana*). Whe-ther we gain **wisdom** through <u>calm</u> (*samatha*) or through <u>insight</u> (*vipassanā*) depends on our use of mindfulness and awareness. As a practical rule, when we focus on <u>mindfulness</u>, we cultivate the foundation of mindfulness; when we apply <u>awareness</u> we gain insight into true reality.

However, as we well know, every path-limb (eg, right mindfulness) is linked to the other limbs. Hence, we can practise any aspect of satipatthana (such as breath meditation) to develop dhyana, and then go on to use satipatthana to cultivate the awareness for gaining insight into true reality. Mindfulness-awareness thus work to prepare the meditator for <u>penetration</u> into true reality; hence, we have the term *sati,nepakka,* "mindfulness and penetration," which we will now look into.

3.11 MINDFULNESS AND PENETRATION (*SATI,NEPAKKA*)

3.11.1 We have noted how when *sati* works with *sampajañña,* there is concentration leading to wisdom [3.1.1]. The suttas have another well-known dvandva—***sati,nepakka***, "mindfulness and penetration"—that describes how mindfulness works with awareness.[225] We will look at a few suttas to see how *sati,sampajañña* is replaced by *sati,nepakka,* clearly suggesting that *sampajañña* and *nepakka* are synonyms.

(1) *Nepakka* is an abstract noun from *nipāka,* "intelligent, adept, prudent." ***Nipaka*** famously appears in the 2nd verse of **the Karaṇīya Metta Sutta** (Khp 9 = Sn 1.8), thus:

[226]*santussako ca subharo ca*	contented and easily supportable,
appa,kicco ca sallahuka,vutti	with little busyness and living a simple life,
sant'indriyo ca nipako ca	with the senses calmed, and **wisely careful**,
appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho	unobtrusive, not running after families.

(Khp 9,2/8 = Sn 144), SD 38.3

According to the Commentaries, "**wisely careful**" (*nipako*) means "wise, prudent, intelligent" (*viññū vibhāvī paññabā*) in terms of keeping the mind undistracted. This entails understanding how to keep up moral conduct and, for a renunciant, it includes understanding about managing robes and the other supports; and understanding <u>the 7 kinds of suitability</u> (*sappāya*), that is, regarding *abode, alms-resort, speech, person, food, climate, and posture* [Vism 4.35-41] (KhpA 242). Note that the skills here are di-rected mostly towards maintaining an external conduct and environment conducive to meditation.

(2) ***Sātacca*** is usually defined in the dictionaries as "perseverance," which does apply to both *sati* and *sampajañña.* However, in the Vibhaṅga (at least), I think that it is an abstract noun for *sati,* that is "<u>mindfulness</u>" (which thus makes no difference in English terminology). But noting this subtle dif-ference helps us better understand the difference between *sati* and *sampajañña,* and between *sātac-ca* and *nepakka,* as explained in the Vibhaṅga, by a set of 17 synonyms, thus:

---

[224] C Cox, "Mindfulness and memory: the scope of *smṛti* from early Buddhism to the Sarvāstivādin Abhidhar-ma," in (ed) J Gyatso, *In the mirror of memory,* SUNY Press, 1992:72.

[225] D 33,2.3(7)/3:253, 34,1.8(9)/3:283. A 4:15, 16 as *sati,nipakkenaI*: D 3:268, 286, 290; M 1:356; S 5:197, 198, 225, 226; A 3:11, 4:4, 111, 234, 5:25; Vbh §467/227.

[226] **§2 (Sn 144)** The qualities listed here are also those of <u>a silent sage</u> (*muni*) who, as a rule, is not influenced by the outside world as he has attained true inner peace. Cf **Khagga,visāṇa S** (Sn 3/35-75); **Muni S** (esp Sn 213b, 214b); **Nalaka S** (Sn 712c); **Magandiya Pañha** (Sn 844).

"that which is *1* arousing of mental energy, endeavour, advancing, aspiring,
5 effort, zeal, exertion, strength, stability,
10 unfaltering advance, fervent wish, fervent toiling, fervent hold of the task, energy,
15 energy faculty, energy as power, right effort."[227]

(3) ***Nepakka*** is defined by **the Vibhaṅga** with the same register of 32 synonyms (like a thesaurus) as for *sampajañña* (awareness), thus:

"*1* <u>wisdom</u>, <u>understanding</u>, investigation, full investigation,
5 dharma-investigation (mundane), discernment, discrimination, differentiation, erudition,
10 skilfulness, subtlety, analysis, minding, examination,
15 extensiveness, sagacity, guidance, insight, awareness,
20 the goad, wisdom, wisdom faculty, wisdom as power, sword of wisdom,
25 palace of wisdom, light of wisdom, lustre of wisdom, lamp of wisdom, jewel of wisdom,
30 <u>non-delusion</u>, <u>dharma-investigation</u> (supramundane), <u>right view</u>."[228] [3.11.6 (1)].

From the registers of synonyms describing ***sātacca*** (*sati*) and ***nepakka*** (*sampajañña*), we can deduce that while the former—**mindfulness**—is <u>a persistent directing</u> of the mind to the object of awareness, the latter—**awareness**—is a <u>sustained and penetrative attending</u> to that same object. This is also "initial application" (*vitakka*) and "sustained application" (*vicāra*) on a meditative level.[229]
        Here, we should also note that *nepakka* and *sampajañña* are synonyms.

3.11.2 The Sekha Sutta (M 53) mentions *sati,nepakka*[230] as part of the 6th of the 7 "good qualities" accomplished by the noble disciple, that is, he is "mindful" (*satimā*), which is defined as follows:

He is <u>mindful</u> (s*atimā*),[231] possessing excellent mindfulness and **penetration** (*sati,nepakka*); and he remembers, he recalls[232] what was done long ago, what was spoken long ago.
                                                                    (M 53,16), SD 21.14[233]

In this passage, we see "mindfulness" being paired up with "penetration" as ***sati,nepakka***. This is the pattern in the above stock passage recurring in the suttas and passages below.

---

[227] *Yo 1 cetasiko viriy'ārambho nikkamo parakkamo uyyāmo 5 vāyāmo ussāho ussoḷhi thāmo dhiti 10 asithila,-parakkamatā anikkhitta,chandatā anikkhita,dhuratā dhura,sampaggāno viriyaṁ 15 viriy'indriyaṁ viriya,balaṁ sammā,vāyāmo* (Vbh 249,33 f = 217,2-9). On *ārambha* and *parakkama,* see **Atta,kārī S** (A 6.38) + SD 7.6 (5.2).

[228] *Yā 1* <u>*paññā*</u> <u>*pajānanā*</u> *vicayo pavicayo 5 dhamma,vicayo sallakkhaṇā upalakkhaṇā paccupalakkhaṇa paṇ-ḍiccaṁ 10 kosallaṁ nepuññaṁ vebhavyā cintā upaparikkhā 15 bhūrī medhā parināyikā vipassanā sampajaññaṁ 20 patodo paññā paññ'indriyaṁ paññā,balaṁ paññā,satthaṁ 25 paññā,pāsādo paññā,āloko paññā,obhāso paññā,pajjoto paññā,ratanaṁ 30* <u>*amoho*</u> <u>*dhamma,vicayo*</u> <u>*sammā,diṭṭhi*</u> (Vbh 250,25-31 = 250,35 f).

[229] On <u>initial application and sustained application</u>*,* see ***Vitakka,vicāra***, SD 33.4.

[230] "Mindfulness and penetration," *sati,nepakka*; see Vbh 249; VbhA 311 f.

[231] Cf S 5:197; A 3:11.

[232] "Who remembers, who recalls." Comy distinguishes between *sarita* (remembering once) and *anussarita* (recalling again and again). "Remember," then, means a familiarity with it; "recall," on the other hand, needs some effort to remember something. Mindfulness (*sati*) here should be understood simply as <u>memory</u>. <u>Atten-tion</u> to the present moment is the basis for good memory. MA takes the mention of *sati* here to imply all 7 awakening-factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*) [SD 10.15], of which it is the first. (MA 3:30)

[233] *Satimā hoti paramena sati,nepakkena samannāgato, cira,kataṁ pi cira,bhāsitam pi saritā anussaritā* (M 53,16/1:356,17-19), SD 21.14.

3.11.3 Here are 4 suttas from the Saṁyutta Nikāya with the dvandva *sati,nepakka.*

(1) Let us first look at a pair of Suttas—**the (Indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 1** (S 48.9) and **the (Indriya) Vibhaṅga Sutta 2** (S 48.10)—both of which define in the same way the "faculty of mindfulness" (*sat'-indriya*), mindfulness as practised by ordinary practitioners, as follows:

> Here, bhikshus, the noble disciple is mindful, possessing supreme mindfulness and **penetration**, one who remembers, who recalls what was done long ago, what was spoken long ago.
> He dwells contemplating the body in the body … feelings in feelings … the mind in the mind … dharmas in dharmas, ardent, clearly aware, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world.[234]   (S 48.9 = S 48.10)[235]

Note that the phrase ***sati,nepakka,*** "mindfulness and penetration," appears in the very first sentence of the passage; and it also includes the 4 satipatthanas in the following paragraph, showing how *sati,* properly done, leads into *satipaṭṭhāna.*

(2) In **the Maṇi,bhadda Sutta** (S 10.2), the Buddha states that *sati* on its own, despite its many advantages, may not suffice for eradicating ill will.[236] This passage indicates that other factors are needed to work with *sati*, such as being diligent and clearly knowing in the case of developing sati-patthana. Thus, for *sati* to be "right mindfulness," it must work with other wholesome mental qualities.[237]

(3) Next, we have **the Āpaṇa Sutta** (S 48.50) which defines "one who has destroyed the influxes" (*khīṇ'āsava*) [13.1.3], that is, an arhat, as one who has (fully) developed the 5 faculties of *faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom* (which are as such also called the "spiritual powers" (*bala*), that is, of an arhat. Mindfulness (*sati*) is defined as in the 2 previous Sutta mentioned, except without any mention of the passage on the 4 focuses of mindfulness [S 48.9], meaning that the arhat has already mastered the satipatthanas. In the same Sutta, Sāriputta then gives this definition of the faculty of mindfulness of a noble disciple which the Buddha endorses, thus:

> It is indeed to be expected, bhante, that a noble disciple
> who has faith, and whose effort is roused,
>   will be **mindful,** having supreme mindfulness and **penetration** (*sati,nepakka*),[238]
>   one who remembers, who recalls what was done long ago, what was said long ago.
>   That mindfulness of his, bhante, is his faculty of mindfulness.
>
> (S 48.50/5:225, 226), SD 10.4(4.4)

3.11.4 The following Suttas from the Aṅguttara Nikāya are special teachings related to the laity.

(1) **The (Bala) Vitthata Sutta** (A 5.14) speaks of the noble disciple's 5 powers as being those of *faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom*. The noble disciple's power of mindfulness

---

[234] **(Pañcaka) Daṭṭhabba S** (A 5.15/3:12) defines the "power of mindfulness" as the 4 satipatthanas.

[235] S 48.9/5:197 (SD 74.7a; S 48.10/5:198 (SD 74.7b).

[236] The Buddha says that "being mindful, one is always blessed, being mindful one dwells happily, being mindful one lives better each day, and one is free from ill will." He then repeats the first 3 lines, but says in the 4th line: "yet one is not free from ill will." Thus, the Buddha stresses that *sati* alone may not suffice for removing ill will. However, this does not mean that *sati* is incapable of preventing ill will, since its presence goes a long way in helping us to stay calm in the anger of others, as shown at **Akkosaka Bhāradvāja S** (S 7.2/1:162), SD 84.2; **(Sakka) Vepacitti S** (S 11.4/1:221 f), SD 54.6a; **Isayo Āraññaka S** (S 11.9/1:222), (SD 54.21).

[237] S 10.4/1:208 (SD 114.5).

[238] "Mindfulness and penetration," *sati,nepakka* (*nepakka,* fr *nipaka*) (M 1:356; S 5:197 f; A 3:11, 4:15; Nc 629B; Vbh 244, 249; Vism 3 = *paññā*; DhA 4:29).

(*sati,bala*) is defined as one "having supreme <u>mindfulness and **penetration**</u>, who remembers, who recalls what was done long ago, what was said long ago."[239]

(2) **The (Sattaka) Bala Sutta 2** (A 7.4) speaks of the noble disciple's <u>7 powers</u> as being those of *faith, energy, moral shame, moral fear, <u>mindfulness</u>, concentration and wisdom*.[240] The noble disciple's <u>power of mindfulness</u> (*sati,bala*)—referring to the harmonization of the faculties, centering on mindfulness leading on to concentration and then wisdom. This is, to say the least, the making of a streamwinner; this is defined here with the same *sati,nepakka* stock passage.

(3) **The (Sattaka) Vassakāra Sutta**, also called **the Niddasa,vatthu Sutta** (A 7.20), mentions an enigmatic term ***niddasa*** (Skt *nirdaśa*), which literally means "not-10, 10-less, 10-free, and so on"— this is like a riddle. Apparently, it was a term used by the Jains for their notion of attaining sainthood so that one does not have to undergo the "10 years" of tutelage, or "10 years" as a recluse, or any number of years—they are free from "the years," a synecdoche for <u>rebirth</u>.
Ānanda tells the Buddha about this term, and the Buddha responds by saying that there are already those in the teaching who are such, that is, the arhats, who are free from rebirth.[241]
I would presume that the simplest explanation for this strange term would be that such arhats are "**free from the 10 fetters** (*dasa,saṁyojana*)," or they are those who aspire to overcome the fetters (to attain arhathood)—which then makes this a very meaningful early Buddhist idiom.
The Sutta lists <u>7 grounds</u> for the "10-free" (*niddasa*), that is, <u>one has a strong desire</u> (*tibba-c,-chanda*):

(1) for undertaking the training,   and does not lose this desire;   *sikkhā,samādāna*
(2) for keeping to the Dharma,   and does not lose this desire;   *dhamma,nisanti*
(3) for removing wishes,   and does not lose this desire;   *icchā,vinaya*
(4) for enjoying solitude,   and does not lose this desire;   *paṭisallana*
(5) for asserting effort in practice,   and does not lose this desire;   *viriy'ārambha*
(6) for <u>mindfulness and **penetration**</u>,   and does not lose this desire;   *sati,**nepakka***
(7) for penetrating views,   and does not lose this desire.   *diṭṭhi,paṭivedha*
(A 7.20/4:15),[242] SD 55.11

(4) **The Nagarôpama Sutta** (A 7.63) uses the famous parable of *a strong frontier fortress* to illustrate these <u>7 good qualities of a noble disciple</u>:[243]

(*1*) a deeply sunk pillar (protecting the main gate)   has faith   *saddhā*
(*2*) a deep and wide moat around the fort   has moral shame   *hirimā*
(*3*) an encircling wall-walk, high and wide   has moral fear   *ottappa*
(*4*) a great armoury of weapons   is deeply learned   *bahu-s,suta*
(*5*) many kinds of troops   are exertive in effort   *āraddha,viriya*
(*6*) an intelligent and wise gate-keeper   is mindful   <u>*satima*</u>
(*7*) a high and wide wall   is wise   *paññavā*

The 6th quality—that of being <u>mindful</u>—is defined, including *sati,nepakka,* as follows:

> Bhikshus, just as in the rajah's frontier citadel there is **a gate-keeper**
> who is intelligent, experienced and wise,

---

[239] A 5.14/3.11.
[240] A 7.4/4:4.
[241] AA 4:7 f; A:B 1774 n1472.
[242] Listed as the 7 *niddasa,vatthu* in **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,2.3(7)/3:252) *niddasa,vatthu,* and **Das'uttara S** (D 34,1.8-(9)/3:283) *abhiññeyya*; **Niddasa,vatthu S** (A 7.18/4:15), SD 19.9; **Niddasa,vatthu S 1** (A 7.42/4:36); V 1:70, 71.
[243] Also in **Sekha S** (M 53,11-17/1:356), SD 21.14.

keeps out strangers [those whom he knows not], lets in only those whom he knows,
for the protection of the city's inhabitants and for warding off those outside—
even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple is <u>mindful</u> (*satimā*):[244]
<u>possessing excellent mindfulness and **penetration**;[245]</u>
who remembers and recalls what was done long ago, what was spoken long ago.[246]

(A 7.63,25/4:111), SD 52.13

(5) **The Anuruddha Mahā,vitakka Sutta** (A 8.30) records how the elder Anuruddha, during his solitary retreat reflects on the first 7 of these "thoughts of a great man," with the 8ᵗʰ and last one added by the Buddha himself, thus:

(*1*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for one of few wishes, *not for one with many wishes*.
(*2*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for the contented, *not for the discontented*.
(*3*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for one in solitude [for the reclusive], *not for one who delights in social-izing*.
(*4*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for one who puts forth effort [the energetic], *not for the indolent [lazy]*.
(*5*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for one <u>established in mindfulness</u>, *not for one of confused mind*.
(*6*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for one in samadhi [mental concentration], *not for one without samadhi*.
(*7*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for the wise, **[233]** *not for the foolish*.
(*8*) This Dharma, bhikshus, is for one
who rejoices in the non-proliferation of the mind,
who delights in the non-proliferation of the mind,
not for one who rejoices in mental proliferation,
who delights in mental proliferation.

The 5ᵗʰ thought is explained by the Buddha as follows:

'This Dharma, bhikshus, is <u>for one established in mindfulness</u>, *not for one of confused mind*,' so it is said. On account of what is this said?
Here, bhikshus, a monk is mindful,
possessing excellent <u>mindfulness and **penetration**</u>;
who remembers and recalls what was done long ago, what was spoken long ago.[247]

(A 8.30,24/4:234), SD 19.5

The Sutta Commentary explains ***sati,nepakka*** as follows: "Here, *nepakka* is wisdom, one that grasps the helpfulness of mindfulness" (***nepakkenâti*** *ettha nepakkaṁ vuccati paññā, sā satiyā upakāraka,-bhāvena gahitā*).[248]

(6) **The Nātha Sutta 1** (A 10.17) records the Buddha as exhorting the monks to "live under a pro-tector (*nātha*)," so that they have support for their Dharma practice. This protector comes in the form of these 10 qualities to be cultivated by the renunciant, that is:

(*1*) one is morally virtuous;
(*2*) one is deeply learned;

---

[244] Cf S 5:197; A 3:11.

[245] "Mindfulness and penetration," *sati,nepakka;* on *nepakka,* see Vbh §521/249, §466/227, §508/244; VbhA 311 f.

[246] This para: *Evam eva kho bhikkhave ariya,sāvako satimā hoti paramena sati,nepakkena samannāgato cira,-katam pi cira,bhāsitam pi saritā anussaritā.*

[247] *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu satimā hoti paramena sati,nepakkena samannāgato cira,kataṁ pi cira,bhāsitaṁ pi saritā anussaritā.*

[248] AA 3:226; see also MA 3:30; SA 3:234; VbhA 311).

(*3*) one keeps spiritual friends;

(*4*) one is amenable to instructions;

(*5*) one is skillful and diligent in one's duties;

(*6*) one loves the Dharma and is joyful in the Dharma-Vinaya;

(*7*) one exerts oneself in abandoning the unwholesome and cultivating the wholesome;

(*8*) one is content with any kind of support in terms of almsfood, robes, lodging and medicines;

(*9*) one is mindful, <u>possessing excellent mindfulness and **penetration**; who remembers and recalls what was done long ago, what was spoken long ago</u>;

(*10*) one is wise in discerning the arising and ceasing leading to the ending of suffering.

(A 10.17/5:25), SD 79.4

Saṅgīti Sutta (D 33)	Das'uttara Sutta (D 34)
no. 6 of 7 grounds for recommendation (*satta niddasa,vatthu*) D 33,2.3(7)/3:252 f	no. 6 of 7 things to be thoroughly understood (*satta dhamma abhiññeyya*) D 34,1.8(9)/3:283
	no. 7 of 8 qualities of great help (*aṭṭha dhamma bahu,kāra*) D 34,2.1(1)/3:286
no. 9 of 10 qualities that give protection (*dasa nātha,karaṇa dhamma*) D 33,3.3(1)/3:268	no. 9 of 10 qualities of great help (*dasa dhamma bahu,kāra*) D 34,2.3(1):3:290

Table 3.11.5 *Sati,nepakka* in dharma sets

3.11.5 Here, we will examine a late canonical classification of the dvandva *sati,nepakka* as found in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33) and **the Das'uttara Sutta** (D 34), the last 2 suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya. Both these Suttas mention *sati,nepakka* in 2 parallel sets, with D 34 also listing the 8 qualities of great help, but which is omitted in D 33. The doctrinal sets have been comparatively collated in **Table 3.11.5**.

That the phrase *sati,nepakka* is found in the doctrinal sets preserved in these 2 Suttas attest to their popularity and importance that they should be remembered as the early teachings.

3.11.6 Finally, we examine <u>the Abhidhamma definition</u> of the dvandva *sati,nepakka* (mindfulness and penetration)*,* which helps in affirming that it actually is another name for *sati,sampajaññā,* and that *sampajañña* and *nepakka* actually are synonyms: the latter pair functions to effect what *sati* has initiated by keeping the mind on the object of awareness.

(1) According to **the Vibhaṅga**, *nepakka* means "wisdom (<u>*paññā*</u>) or understanding (*pajānanā*) … non-delusion (*amoha*), investigation of mental states (*dhamma,vicaya*), right understanding (*sammā diṭṭhi*)" (Vbh §521/249) [3.11.1]. It is a synonym for "awareness" (*sampajāna*) (Vbh §525/250 f), whose role is that of "penetrating" into <u>the true reality</u> behind the object of awareness: *imperma-nence, unsatisfactoriness and nonself*. In other words, *nepakka* refers to "penetrating into wisdom."[249]

(2) **Sammoha,vinodanī**, the Vibhaṅga Commentary, in its analysis of the awakening-factors (*boj-jhaṅga vibhaṅga*), under its 1st method, speaks of <u>2 kinds of mindfulness</u>, that is,

the weak   (*dubbala*),   which is "without wisdom," and

the strong (*balavatī*),   which is "with wisdom." (VbhA 311 f)

---

[249] *Sati,nepakka* is mentioned at Vbh §467/227, §521/249 = §525/250 f.

The mindfulness "with wisdom," the one with "penetration" (*nepakka*) into wisdom, refers to *right mindfulness.*

This <u>mindfulness</u> is the first of **the 7 awakening-factors** (*satta bojjhaṅga*), comprising those of mindfulness, dharma-investigation, energy, zest, tranquillity, concentration and wisdom (SD 10.15). This mindfulness has also been noted by the commentary on the Sekha Sutta [3.11.2] as encompassing *all* the 7 awakening-factors (MA 3:30). This is the right mindfulness connected with satipatthana.[250]

 3.11.7 We see an interesting anomaly in the description of **right mindfulness** as a factor of the noble eightfold path, where the term *sati* is repeated in the definition of right mindfulness (*sammā sati*), especially in the Abhidhamma (such as the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī)[251] and the canonical Commentaries, Niddesa.[252] This repetition is not merely accidental but rather points to a qualitative distinction between <u>right mindfulness</u> (*sammā sati*) as *a path-factor* and mindfulness as a general *mental factor*.

According to this definition, *sati* requires the support of being diligent (*ātāpî*) and clearly aware (*sampajāna*). It is this combination of mental qualities, supported by a state of mind that is free from desires and discontent, and directed towards the body, feelings, the mind, and dharmas, which becomes the path-factor of <u>right mindfulness</u>.

In fact, numerous suttas also mention "<u>wrong mindfulness</u>" (*micchā sati*), which suggests that certain forms of *sati* are not right mindfulness. This is the kind of mindfulness that does not bring penetration (into true reality), and should be avoided since it is unwholesome. [2.1.4 n]

---

[250] D 2:313: "he abides contemplating the body … feelings … the mind … dharmas … , diligent, clearly aware and mindful, free from covetousness and discontent in regard to the world—this is called right mindfulness." **Attha,sālinī** (Dhamma,saṅgaṇī Comy) gives an alternative def of "right mindfulness," ie, that of remembering properly (DhsA 124). Chin Āgamas' def of right mindfulness too, does not mention the 4 satipatthanas*:* "he is mindful, widely mindful, keeping in mind, not forgetful: this is called right mindfulness," (tr Thich Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991:97; cf Choong Mun Keat, *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000:210).

[251] The Abhidhamma <u>def of mindfulness</u> is: "That which on that occasion is (right) <u>mindfulness</u>, recollection, remembrance, <u>mindfulness</u> (as mental factor), holding in mind, not drifting, not forgetting," *ya tasmiṁ samaye sati anussati paṭissati <u>sati</u> saraṇatā dhāraṇatā apilāpanatā asammussanatā.* (Dhs §14/11,10-12; Vbh 124,4-6; Pug 25,16-19)

[252] Nm 1:10, 2:347, 506; Nc:Be 30.

4 The versatility of mindfulness

4.1 THE 2 KINDS OF MINDFULNESS

4.1.1 Taking the term **mindfulness** in a broad practical sense, it is helpful to speak of 2 kinds or levels of mindfulness, that is, **mindfulness** as *sati* ("mindfulness," focusing the mind on the object) and **awareness** as *sampajañña* (the awareness that sees into the mind itself). We see such a twinning of mindfulness in **the Sato Sutta** (S 47.2), where the Buddha speaks of the 2 kinds of mindfulness as follows:

> Bhikshus, a monk should dwell mindfully (*sata*) and (clearly) aware (*sampajāna*). This is our instruction to you.

> **1**   And how, bhikshus, is a monk **mindful**?
> Here, bhikshus,
> (1)   a monk[253] dwells [254]exertive, clearly aware, mindful, contemplating the body in the body,[255]
>   removing [having removed][256] covetousness and displeasure [discontent][257]
>   in regard to the world;[258]
> (2)   he dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful, contemplating feeling in the feelings,
>   *removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world;*
> (3)   he dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful, contemplating mind [thought] in the mind,
>   *removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world;*
> (4)   he dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful, contemplating dharma in the dharmas,
>   *removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world.*
> In this way, bhikshus, a monk is *mindful.*

> **2**   And how, bhikshus, is a monk **(clearly) aware**?[259]

---

[253] Here "a monk" (*bhikkhu*) may refer to either an ordained monastic or anyone who is meditating (here, doing satipatthana) (DA 3:756; MA 1:241; VbhA 216 f; cf SnA 251): see SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5). Note that in **Dhānañ-jāni S** (M 97) Sāriputta teaches the divine abodes to the layman Dhānañjāni (addressing him directly) (M 97,-32.2), SD 4.9, and that in **(Nānā,karaṇa) Mettā S 1** (A 4.125), the subject of each of the stock passages on the 4 divine abodes is "a certain person" (*ekacco puggalo*) (A 4.125,2 etc), SD 33.9.

On meditation as renunciation, see **Hāliddakāni S 1** (S 22.3/3:9-12), SD 10.12; *Bhāvanā*, SD 15.1 (14.7); **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (1.6.2).

[254] *Ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhā,domanassaṁ.* Here we find 4 of the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*) in action: see SD 13.1 (4.2).

[255] "Contemplating body in the body" (*kāye kāyânupassī*). See SD 13.1 (3.4).

[256] *Vineyya* can mean "would or should remove" (as pot or opt, like *vineyya*, Sn 590) or as "having removed" (as ger or absol, like *vineyya,* Sn 58, or *vinayitvā,* Pm 1:244), and both senses apply in Satipaṭṭhāna S. U Silananda similarly ends the sentence with "removing covetousness and grief in the world" (1990:177); also 1990:22-25. See Sn:N 170 n58 + 284 n590. See SD 13.1 (4.2c).

[257] "Covetousness and displeasure," *abhijjhā,domanassaṁ,* alt trs: "desire and discontent," "desiring and disliking," or "longing and loathing." Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders it as "hankering and fretting [in regard to the world]." See SD 13.1 (4.2).

[258] "World" (*loka*). See SD 13.1 (4.2.4).

[259] In this set of clear awareness of one's bodily activities, the Chin version (**MĀ 98**/T1.582b25) has fewer activities than both the Satipaṭṭhāna Ss (D 22, M 10): it does not mention such activities as *looking forward and looking back*, *eating and drinking*, and *voiding and peeing*. These same activities seem to be absent from the passage on clear awareness in Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra: frag S 360 fol 167V6 (Waldschmidt 1950:15) continues after *sāṅghāṭi,cīvara,pātra,dhāraṇe* right away with *gate sthite niṣaṁṇe śayite*. M 10,8 (1:57,7), on the other hand, follows *saṅghāṭi,patta,cīvara,dhāraṇe* with *asite pīte khāyite sāyite* and *uccāra,passāva,kamme,* and then on to *gate ṭhite nisinne sutte*. Chin **DĀ 2** (T1.14a3), mentions clear awareness regarding looking in different dir-

Here, bhikshus, a monk,

(1)	in going forward or going backward [stepping back],	is clearly aware what he is doing.
(2)	In looking forward or looking back,	*is clearly aware what he is doing.*
(3)	In bending or stretching,	*is clearly aware what he is doing.*
(4)	In carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl,[260]	*is clearly aware what he is doing.*
(5)	In eating, drinking, chewing and tasting,	*is clearly aware what he is doing.*
(6)	In voiding or peeing,	*is clearly aware what he is doing.*
(7)	In walking, in standing, in sitting, in sleeping, [3.6] in waking,[261] in talking, or in remaining silent,	*is clearly aware what he is doing.*
	In this way, bhikshus, a monk is *aware*.	(S 47.2/5:142),[262] SD 60.11

Passage 1 of S 47.2 above, on <u>being mindful</u>, describes how we should direct our mind to the object in body-based meditation, feeling-based meditation, mind-based meditation and dharma-based meditation. This is the usual way that a beginner would start when practising satipatthana, such as with the breath meditation. The purpose of such a meditation is to clear our mind of <u>the 5 hindrances</u> [5.1.1]. For most of us this is an on-going process where we learn to calm and clear our mind.

Technically, we can, with this approach, see the "<u>mindfulness</u>" (passage 1 above) as samatha practice, since it brings us focus and mental stillness, and the "<u>awareness</u>" (passage 2) as <u>vipassana</u>, when we examine it in terms of conditionality (that it is mind-made, hence impermanent and so on). However, during our own practice, we should set aside such academic analysis, and do this (if we are inclined to) only during the "review period" at the end of our sitting.

4.1.2 The Pali phrase, *ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhā,domanassaṁ,* "exertive, clearly aware, mindful, … removing [having removed] covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world" [M 10,3; S 47.2,2], embodies <u>the 5 faculties</u> for unawakened practitioners (that is, for most of us). As **the Netti-p,pakaraṇa** (an exegetical manual) helpfully tells us that 4 of <u>the 5 spiritual faculties</u> (*pañc'indriya*) are present in the above formula, thus:[263]

ātāpī	"exertive"	the faculty of <u>effort</u> [energy]
sampajāno	"(clearly) aware"	the faculty of <u>wisdom</u> [3.11.1 (3)]
satimā	"mindful"	the faculty of <u>mindfulness</u>
vineyya loke abhijjhā,domanassaṁ:[264]		
(1) "removing covetousness and displeasure … "		the faculty of <u>samadhi</u>
(2) "having removed covetousness and displeasure … "		the faculty of <u>faith</u>[265]
(3) "in regard to the world"		the 5 sense-faculties.

---

ections as well as regarding eating and drinking (cf Yit's tr, 2008:273 n17), as does the Śrāvakabhūmi (Shukla 1973: 111,12; ŚSG 1998:20,5); T1579 (T30.397b17); for a detailed exposition of clear awareness: Shukla 1973: 111,11; ŚSG 1998:172,1; and T1579 (T30.413c29). The set of activities described in **D 22**,4 (2:292,25) and **M 10**,8 (1:57,5) appears to be pericope for proper conduct in the suttas. The importance of such proper conduct is reflected in **Cātumā S** (M 67,16/1:460,9), SD 34.7, and **Ūmi,bhaya S** (A 4.122/2:123,29), SD 47.9, according to which a monk's unwillingness to submit to instructions on how to undertake these activities can eventually lead him to disrobing. A description of proper conduct in the Jain tradition (Deo 1956:487), also mentions voiding and peeing.
   [260] On *saṅghāṭi,patta,cīvara,dhāraṇe sampajāna,kārī hoti,* lit, "upper robe, bowl, outer robe … ," see (3.2.2 n).
   [261] "In sleeping, in waking," *sutte jāgarite* (both loc of reference). Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane,* "lying down, reclining." For details, see [1.3.6]; also SD 13.1 (3.6.2).
   [262] Also at D 16,2.12 f/2:95 (SD 9); see also **Gelañña S 1** (S 36.7/4:211). Chin parallels: SĀ 622/T2.174a202-20.
   [263] Nett §481 f/82 f.
   [264] "Covetousness and displeasure" (*abhijjhā,domanassa*): "covetousness" (*abhijjhā*) is the 1st hindrance and "displeasure" (*domanassa*) the 2nd. As a whole, this dvandva is a shorthand for <u>the 5 hindrances</u>: *sensual lust, ill will, restlessness and worry, sloth and torpor, doubt* [3.8.1]. See **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.
   [265] Nett §481 does not mention "faith." It is here subsumed under *vineyya loke abhijjhā,domanassaṁ.*

   The 5 faculties (*pañc'indriya*) refer to 5 vital aspects of meditation that we (as unawakened prac-
titioners) should harmonize in our practice, that is, *faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wis-
dom* [4.2.4]. Through mindfulness, we harmonize effort with concentration (putting in just enough
effort and thus sustaining concentration). Through mindfulness, we harmonize faith with wisdom
(faith keeps us going; wisdom helps us understand what is going on in our practice) [4.2.2].
   We should include faith (omitted in the Netti-p.pkaraṇa explanation) which is what keeps us go-
ing in our meditation despite not attaining dhyana, or even concentration. Hence, we need to keep
on "removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world." This means that we diligently
work at removing the 5 hindrances [4.1.3]. At the end of our meditation, with whatever calm, clarity
or joy we have, we then direct our mind to insight practice (reflecting on impermanence, etc).
   In this practice, every meditation moment, whether good or bad, counts so long as we are willing
to learn from failure and build on the wholesome. When we persevere to see impermanence in all our
practice and experiences, we are assured of streamwinning in this life itself, if not certainly at the
moment of dying, as guaranteed by the Buddha himself in **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1).[266]

4.1.3 The phrase "**removing** [**having removed**] **covetousness and displeasure**" refers to when we
have overcome (at least temporarily) all the 5 hindrances [5.1.1], which means that we will go on to
attain dhyana. Usually our teachers may instruct us to keep on meditating in this way so that we
master the dhyana (that is, the 1st dhyana) in these 5 ways (*pañca,vāsī*), that is:

(1) Mastering advertence (*āvajjana,vasī*):   the ability to bring the mind into dhyana;
(2) Mastering attainment (*sampājjana,vasī*):   entering dhyana quickly and whenever we wish to;
(3) Mastering resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna,vasī*):   staying in dhyana for as long as determined;
(4) Mastering emergence (*vuṭṭhāna,vasī*):   easily emerging from dhyana at the appointed time;
(5) Mastering review (*paccavekkhaṇa,vasī*):   discerning dhyana-factors after emerging from it.
                                                   (Pm 1.459/1:99 f; Vism 4.131/154, 23.27/704, etc)[267]

   Once we have mastered dhyana, having emerged from it, we direct our calm and clear mind to
examine a particular satipatthana method which we then take up, such as the breath meditation or
simply reflecting on impermanence. Ideally this is the way to practise satipatthana, that is, based on
calmness (*samatha*) which we use to cultivate insight (*vipassanā*).
   On the other hand, if we find it difficult to meditate or have difficulty in attaining dhyana, we can
practise any proper Buddhist meditation that we find suitable so that we gain some calm and clarity.
Having emerged from our meditation, in that moment of calm and clarity, we then go on to practise
the satipatthana.

4.1.4 Notice that Passage 1 of S 47.2 [4.1.1] refers to the "mindfulness" practice that is, as a rule,
done sitting, with the goal of attaining focus and inner calm. Passage 2 refers to the "awareness"
practice, that is, we become **clearly aware** of our daily activities in some detail, to the best of our
ability. There are 2 essential aspects of this awareness practice:

(1) We should keep our attention to the "here and now" of what is going on (as listed in Passage
    2), one activity at a time, in a smooth natural way. Some teachers advise us to "note" (that
    is, subverbalize) whatever we are doing, such as "sitting … sitting," or "chewing … chewing."
    It is vital that we do not end up merely reciting these words, but actually "see" what we are
    doing in the moment and be with it.

---

[266] S 25.1/3:225 (SD 16.7), or any of the 10 suttas of Okkanta Saṁyutta (S 25).
[267] See **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,31), SD 49.4; SD 24.3 (2); SD 33.1a (2.1.3).

(2) At some point when we feel "connected" with the moment, we then reflect on this feeling of peace or joy (or discomfort or pain) is "conditioned … impermanent," and watching how it arises and passes away. (It is, of course, wise to adjust our posture should it persist in giving us some pain that can end up distracting, even harming, us.)

4.2 LOCATION OF MINDFULNESS

4.2.1 Note that throughout the description of **the 4 satipatthanas,** we have the phrase, "he dwells exertive, clearly aware, mindful, …" (… *ātāpī sampajāno satimā*) [4.1.1]—note the sequence, instead of the usual "mindful and aware" (*sato ca sampajāno*)—contemplating the body in the body, feeling in feelings, the mind in the mind, and dharma in the dharmas. Note the sequence—*sampajāno satimā,* "aware, mindful." There is a good reason for this: we need to calm and "find" the mind first before we can direct it into the object of awareness itself.

In **awareness** practice, we "wisely attend" (*yoniso manasikaroti*) to the bodily activities so that they are properly executed, and we are mentally calm and clear towards them. This "wise attention" (*yoniso manasikāra*) calms our body down, so to speak, so that we can then go on to direct that attention to the object of awareness (such as a posture, body-scan or the breath).

Hence we see *sampajāna,* "awareness," sandwiched between *ātāpī,* "exertive," and *satimā,* "mindful*.*" Thus, we exert our mind in being aware of our body in the reality of the present moment. In that way, we are cultivating our mindfulness. Here, awareness is applied to cultivate mindfulness.

7 awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*)	**5 faculties** (*indriya*) + **5 powers** (*bala*)	**noble eightfold path** (ariy'aṭṭh'aṅgika magga)
mindfulness (*sati*)	faith (*saddhā*)	right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*)
dharma-investigation (*dhamma,vicaya*)	energy (*viriya*)	right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*)
energy (*viriya*)	mindfulness (*sati*)	right speech (*sammā vācā*)
zest (*pīti*)	concentration (*samādhi*)	right action (*sammā kammantā*)
tranquillity (*passaddhi*)	wisdom (*paññā*)	right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*)
concentration (*samādhi*)		right effort (*sammā vāyāma*)
equanimity (*upekkhā*)		right mindfulness (*sammā sati*)
		right concentration (*sammā samādhi*)

Table 4.2 Location of *sati* among the dharma sets (based on Analayo 2003:50)[268]

4.2.2 From **Table 4.2**, we can see that mindfulness can be located or understood in various ways, depending on its function.[269]

Mindfulness (*sati*)—as right mindfulness (*sammā sati*)—is well-known as a limb of the noble eightfold path. It also holds a central position among the 5 faculties (*indriya*) of the unawakened, and

---

[268] These 4 are part of the "7 sets" (comprising the 37 limbs of awakening, *bodhi,pakkhiya.dhamma*): SD 10.1; also Analayo, "The qualities pertinent to awakening: Bringing mindfulness home," *Mindfulness* 13 2020j:1979-1996.

[269] See Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization,* Kandy, 2003:50 f; R S Bucknell, *Reconstructing Early Buddhism,* Cambridge, 2023:184-186.

the 5 powers (*bala*) of those on the path, and stands as the first of the 7 awakening factors (*satta bojjhanga*). In all these roles, *sati* functions as both *present-moment awareness and memory*.[270] Let's examine mindfulness in terms of its location in these dharma-sets. [Table 4.2]

We will now functionally examine the significance of mindfulness as follows:

(1) mindfulness stands at the head of the 7 awakening factors;
(2) mindfulness stands right in the middle amongst the 5 faculties and the 5 powers; and
(3) mindfulness stands near the end amongst the 8 path-factors.

Sati appears first amongst **the 7 awakening factors** (*satta bojjhaṅga*) as the very foundation for the conditions that bring about awakening. As an awakening factor, *sati* is well grounded in Dharma connected with the mind and meditation. Here, *sati* leads like the captain, while the awakening factor "dharma-investigation" is like the navigator. Yet it is the captain who best knows where the navigation brings them. Clearly, *sati,* having directed the mind to the object of awareness, then examines it more closely, as awareness (that is, wisdom).[271]

Hence **the Ānâpāna,sati Sutta** (M 118), in its description of the 7 awakening factors, says that they arise sequentially: " … mindful, he investigates and examines that state with wisdom and makes a thorough inquiry of it," on account of which "dharma-investigation" arises.[272] Here we see *sati* as a pregnant term functioning as *sati,sampajañña,* mindfulness and awareness, the mind and wisdom. In relation to the faculties, the powers, and the path-factors, *sati* works closely with associated factors like energy, wisdom, and concentration. Thus *sati* as an awakening-factor stands at the head of the septad leading it in the right direction.[273]

4.2.3 In the next 2 dharma-sets (the faculties and the powers), *sati* stands right in the *middle* between the pairs of **the 5 faculties** (*indriya*) and the pairs of **the 5 powers** (*bala*), harmonizing *faith with wisdom*, and *effort with concentration*.[274] Here *sati* harmonizes the faculties, and balances the powers by correcting excesses or deficiencies. With the harmonious functioning of faith and wisdom, and effort and concentration, mindfulness penetrates ever deeper into true reality, examining every step with awareness.

Sati has a similar harmonizing function in **the noble eightfold path**, where *sati* occupies a middle position, the heart of the mental training aggregate of the path. *Sati*'s harmonizing function is however not restricted only to right effort and right concentration. According to **the Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta** (M 117), right mindfulness underpins all the other path-factors, empowering each of them in their rightness, that is, with right view.[275]

4.2.4 In **the noble eightfold path**, *sati* performs additional functions for its 2 neighbours, right effort and right concentration [Table 4.2] (the triad forming the "concentration training," *samādhi sikkhā*). For right effort, *sati* plays a protective role as *sense-restraint*, preventing the arising of unwholesome

---

[270] Definitions of *sati* as a faculty incl both the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* (**S 48.8**/5:196 and **S 48.11**/5:200) and of memory (**S 48.10**/5:198), the latter being also the def of *sati* as a power (**A 5.14**/3:11). As an awakening factor, *sati* again has both aspects, since at **M 118**/3:85 the presence of undistracted mindfulness from *satipaṭ-ṭhāna* makes *sati* an awakening factor (the same def recurs passim at **S 54.13-16**/5:331-339). Here *sati* works to recollect and reflect on the teaching; but at **S 46.3**/5:67, the awakening factor *sati* works as memory.

[271] On directed meditation (*panidhāya bhāvanā*), see **Bhikkhuṇī Vāsaka S** (S 47.10) + SD 24.2 (1).

[272] **Ānâpana,sati S** (M 118,30-36/3:85 f), SD 7.13; cf **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3/5:68), SD 10.15.

[273] *Paṭisambhidā,magga* highlights this point, this special position constitutes "knowledge of analytic skill in the Dharma" (*dhamma,paṭisambhidā,ñāṇa*); cf Pm 1:88, 90.

[274] See ***Pañc'indriya,*** SD 10.4 esp Diag 2.1; SD 3.6 (3); SD 54.3h (3.1).

[275] **M 117** defs right mindfulness as the awareness in overcoming wrong intention, wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood, and when establishing their counterparts (M 117,15+21+27 +33/3:73-75), SD 6.10.

states of mind: this is also an aspect of *right effort*. When *sati* is well established, it is the foundation for *right concentration*, developing deeper levels of mental focus, even attaining *dhyana*.

Sati's location between the 2 mental qualities of <u>energy</u> (or effort) and <u>concentration</u>, as we have noted, is also seen in **the faculties** and **the powers** [4.2.3]. The "satipatthana" stock passages [4.1.1] of **the Satipatthana Sutta** (M 10) too are structured with *sati* located with these 2 qualities, repre-sented here respectively by being "<u>exertive</u>" (*ātāpī*) and by <u>the absence of covetousness and discontent</u> *(vineyya … abhijjhā,domanassa).*

The sequence "effort-mindfulness-concentration" in all these contexts reflects the natural pro-gress of *sati* in meditation. We must first put in effort to push away distractions, so that mindfulness is well established*, which*, *in turn,* leads to a more focused mind in deepening concentration until dhyana is attained.

4.2.5 In this section, we have gone through an amazing journey with <u>mindfulness</u> which begins with us looking at the polysemy of *sati,* functioning both as "mindfulness," the mind's guide, and as "awareness," the local expert in dealing with the visiting tourists (the objects of awareness) [4.1]. Then we see how *sati* works with *satipaṭṭhāna* [4.1.2], and the versatility of *sati* in working with *effort* and *concentration* to free the mind from distractions and hindrances to attain dhyana [4.2.4].

Brief as this journey may seem, it is sufficient to show us that *sati,* "mindfulness," is very much more than "non-judgemental moment-to-moment awareness" [1.1.4.2] as dreamt up by the Mind-fulness[KZ] Merchants [1.0] and profitably peddled as a kind of cure-all for troubles rooted in a difficult social and business system. The "Quick & Easy" Mindfulness[KZ] of the Professionals is thus a modern method inducing us to "non-judgementally" accept our sufferings and limitations, for greater tolera-tion of our working conditions, to be fully productive as well-oiled and primed cogs and wheels in the profitable enterprises of our employers and bosses.

4.2.6 Far from being "non-judgemental," mindfulness in Buddhist practice tends to perceive or re-cognize our current state of mind in terms of our *memories*, that is, of the past. Once mindfulness has anchored on its object, we become more <u>clearly aware</u> (*sampajānāti*) of it. Like a wise doctor, clear awareness then "reads" its object like a patient: is it filled with *lust*, or with *hatred*, or *deluded*, or *narrow*, or *exalted*, or *surpassable* (to be further cultivated), or *concentrated*, or *freed*? [3.7.2].

Mindfulness is "moment-to-moment awareness" *not* in a nonchalant way, as suggested by mod-ern Mindfulness[KZ] but it is <u>our awareness</u> that closely and clearly examines its object like a young per-son, well dressed up and looking into a mirror to ensure they are clean and well groomed. In actual meditation, after seeing the mind's object for what it is, in due time, we go on to understand *how* this object has *arisen,* and how we can *end* the resultant suffering, and then we go on to work on this healing process with further proper meditation practice.

This vital healing process needs to be reiterated. The **mindfulness** taught by the Buddha begins with our *knowing what suffering is, its causes and conditions, how that suffering is ended, and getting down to freeing ourselves from suffering*. Mindfulness trains the mind to turn away from suffering, neither glorify nor tolerate it. **Awareness** teaches us to live with life that is free from the hindrances —"**removing covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world**"—so that we are at peace with ourself and enjoying life.

4.3 To sense, to know or to cognize

4.3.1 So far, we have discussed <u>mindfulness and awareness</u> of mind-objects. We have looked at the versatile roles of **mindfulness** and awareness in working with other dharma-sets, that is, *the 7 awakening factors, the 5 faculties, the 5 powers, and the noble eightfold path*. These dharma-sets are the "meditation explorers" who clear up a safe direct path through the forest of undergrowth to the ancient city that is nirvana.

In simple terms, the "**forest**" is the way the world sees Buddhism and anything else, for that matter. This is the world of things and views which we see from the path. We see these things for what they really are. We will now stop for a moment or take a step back, as it were, to see what these "things and views" really are, to which we have been applying mindfulness and awareness.

"**Things**" refers to the 5 ways in which we <u>perceive</u> the world, that is, as sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. "**Views**" refers to how we <u>conceive</u> them as "things," how we construct them according to our memory and conditioning. We have elsewhere discussed[276] how <u>memory and conditioning</u> work on us as past karma creating new conditions in the present. This is our **perception** of "things," how we recognize (or construct) them with our Identi-Kit of memory and present conditioning. The eye, ear, nose, tongue and body do not, by themselves, perceive things: their perception is dictated by the mind, which is both our memory (mostly past karma) and conditioning (present or new karma).

This working of the mind[277] that dictates how we *perceive* things, how we construct our experiences, is actually a separate process called **conception.** This process refers to the mind's constructing memories, presenting or re-presenting them in some selective, squinted and tinted fashion. Hence the mind decides and defines how we <u>perceive</u> through the senses making "sense" of things *out there*, and the mind itself <u>conceives</u> ideas *within itself*. In Pali, perception is *saññā*[278] and conception, in a broad practical sense, is *saṅkhārā. Saṅkhārā* are our own "mental constructions" of reality, that is, the virtual world we have created and in which we live.[279]

4.3.2 Although modern psychological terms often help us in understanding early Buddhist psychology, we should not force these technical ideas onto a rich, practically self-sufficient ancient Buddhist system of <u>ethics-based psychology</u> whose purpose is to gain liberating insight for a happy life here and hereafter. In fact, this is the reason for the singular failure of the Kabat-Zinn Mindfulness (Mindfulness[KZ]): he uses Buddhist teachings and methods, sticking them onto his modern ideas as he sees fit, with good intentions but often with the unintentional result of creating *lucus a non lucendo.*[280]

Unlike technical terms and many words in English that often have fixed or definite meanings (in conventional usage), Pali words, especially doctrinal terms, tend to be <u>polysemic</u>: they have more than one meaning that can apply at the same time. The most notorious example is the well-known word *dhamma,* which has the broadest range of meanings in any religious language. [281] It has, however, 4 basic or commonly used meanings:[282]

(1) <u>natural order</u> (*niyāma*): the universal law that underpins the operation of the world in both the physical, moral and existential senses;[283]

---

[276] SD 60.1d (1.1.2.3), which should be reread before going further, for a better understanding of this section.

[277] Once again, we must remind ourselves, for the sake of better understanding the Dharma teachings about perception, conception and Buddhist psychology, that it is best, for the moment, to set aside all modern definitions, psychologese and psychologies we have learnt, and take the Buddhist teachings as they are. Only after we have some clear idea of the Dharma presented here, may we go on to review them in the light of our modern learning; that way, we benefit from the best of both worlds, early Buddhism and modern psychology.

[278] For the role of *saññā* as one of the 5 aggregates, see **Early Buddhist psychology as experience**, SD 56.22.

[279] *Saṅkhārā* is usually, as an overarching term, tr as "formations": *Saṅkhāra* (SD 17.6).

[280] Latin: "The grove does not shine," a play on the words *lucus,* "grove," and *lucendo,* "shine." A paradoxical or otherwise absurd derivation; something of which the qualities are the opposite of what its name suggests. Recorded in English from the early 18th cent, this Latin phrase means "a grove (so called) from the absence of *lux* (light)"; ie, a grove is named from the fact of its not shining, a proposition discussed by the Roman rhetorician Quintilian (c35-c96) in his *Institutio Oratoria* (*Oxford Dict of Phrase and Fable,* 2005). See SD 60.1d (5.3.4.5).

[281] SD 51.25 (2.2.2.5).

[282] For an academic overview, see "Dharma," in Routledge *Ency of Buddhism,* 2007:271-280.

[283] On *dhamma* as the principle underlying all things, or <u>natural</u> order: **Dhamma,niyāma S** (A 3.134), SD 26.8.

(2) <u>the totality of Buddhist teachings</u> (*desanā, sacca* or *saddhamma,* as theory, practice, realization):
     discovered and taught by the Buddha himself, that accurately describe and explain the underlying
     universal law [sense 1] so that beings may live in harmony within; this is the sense of *dhamma* as
     the 2nd of the 3 refuges;
(3) <u>a mind-object</u> (*dhamm'āyatana*): anything cognizable that is past, present or future, physical or
     mental, conditioned or unconditioned,[284] real or imaginary;
(4) <u>element of existence</u> (*dhātu*): in the suttas, this refers to the existential elements of reality [SD
     60.1d (2.2)]; in the Abhidhamma classification, it refers to the individual elements that collect-
     ively constitute the empirical world (*saṅkhāra,loka*).

4.3.3 The point of this exercise is to show the necessity of understanding (and using) the natural
language of early Buddhism when studying and communicating it. For example, in early Buddhist
psychology, the term "**cognize**," broadly, has the sense of both perceiving and conceiving experiences
(sense-based and mind-based respectively). The APA *Dictionary of Psychology* (2nd ed, 2015) simply
defines "cognize" as "to know or become aware of." The technical details are found in the noun,
"cognition" and terms qualified by the adjective "cognitive," making them psychological terms.

In that we may thus render it into English as "**know**" (meaning "to have information in our mind from
experience or from learning or thinking about it"); hence we may take it as synonymous with "to
cognize," which the OED defines as "to perceive, become conscious of; to make (anything) an object
of cognition." OED notes that "cognize, cognise" is "A comparatively modern word [mid-17th cent-
ury], formed with reference to *cognizance*, *cognizor*, and the kindred words, and the earlier *recog-
nize*. It thus corresponds analogically but not phonetically."

4.4 THE RANGE OF KNOWLEDGE: *DIṬṬHA SUTA MUTA* AND *VIÑÑĀTA*

4.4.1 In the oldest layers of the suttas—such as in the texts of the Sutta Nipāta[285]—the idea "to know
or experience" is attested by the phrase ***diṭṭha suta muta,*** "(what is) seen, heard or thought." For
convenience, we can call this the "<u>cognition triad</u>," constituting the means of knowledge via the 5
senses.[286] The duo, *diṭṭha suta,* "what is seen, what is heard," refers to <u>seeing</u> and <u>hearing</u>, are the 2
most critical means of experiencing and knowing amongst the 5 sense-doors. This duo involves the
most extensive range of sense-experiences and knowing; hence, they are distinguished from the rest
of the 6 senses.

In this Visual objects rely on light and sounds on vibrations as the means of conveying information: they
are activated by "<u>external</u>" stimuli. The remaining 3 senses—those of **the nose, tongue, and body**—
share a common feature: they are "*internally*" stimulated, as it were. They function when they obtain
their respective sense-objects—those of smell, taste and touch. These 3 senses literally *make contact
with their respective sense-bases*.

In this The eye and the ear cognize objects that have "not reached (the sense-bases)" (*appatta,visaya-
g,gāhika* or *appatta,gāhika*), that is, they do not impact the sense-base. The nose, tongue and body,
on the other hand, cognize objects that "have <u>reached</u> (the sense-bases)" (*sampatta,visaya-g,gāhika
or sampatta,gāhika*). Unlike the eye and the ear, the other 3 physical sense-faculties have, as it were,
their respective sense-objects actually "impact" their respective sense-faculties.[287]

4.4.2 What we have just explained [4.4.1] is reflected in the following passages in **the Dhamma,-
saṅgaṇī**, which says:

---

[284] Except for nirvana, which is not a *dhamma*, since it is "unconditioned," *sub specie aeternitatis* [SD 26.8
(1.1.3)]. See SD 26.8.
[285] Sn 793b, 798c, 813b, 901b, 914b, 1083c.
[286] On *diṭṭha suta muta,* see ***Diṭṭha Suta Muta Viññāta,*** SD 53.5 (3.1).
[287] Abhs 6.7; Abhs:BRS 345 f; VismṬ:Be 14.449/26:108.

*rūp'āyatanaṁ **diṭṭhaṁ***	**The seen** [the visible] is the form-base.
*sadd'āyatanaṁ **sutaṁ***	**The heard** is the sound-base.
gandh'āyatanaṁ ras'āyatanaṁ	**The sensed** (comprises) the smell-base,
*phoṭṭhabb'āyatanaṁ **mutaṁ**.*	the taste-base, (and) the touch-base*.
*sabbaṁ rūpam **viññātaṁ** rūpaṁ*	All (material) form is form <u>cognized</u> (by the mind).
evaṁ catubbidhaṁ rūpa,saṅgaho	These are the fourfold categories of "form" [matter].
	(Dhs §961/177,4-7)

This Dhamma,saṅgaṇī passage, however, describes **the cognition tetrad**—*diṭṭha suta muta viñ-ñāta*—reflecting a later stage in the evolution of early Buddhist psychology. **The Sammoha,vinodanī** (the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī Commentary), commenting on the above passage, gives this interesting explanation of *muta*:

> The 3 bases of smell, etc, when they have been reached by the nose, the tongue and the body, become "considered" (*muta*) through the arising of knowledge when there has been contact. Therein (in the Commentary), all should be known by means of mind-cognition: thus it is known as "cognized by the mind."[288]   (DhsA 338,3-15)

The Pali-English Dictionary (PED) defines *muta* as "thought, supposed, imagined (ie, received by other vaguer sense impression than by sight & hearing)."[289] Mrs C A F Rhys Davids, in her Dhamma,-saṅgaṇī translation makes this helpful note: "Buddhaghosa [DhsA 338] paraphrases *mutaṁ* by *muni-tvā jānitabbaṭṭhena*: considered in the meaning of 'is knowable'; and by *phusitvā pi ñāṇ'uppatti,kāra-ṇato*: by reason of the arising of knowledge when there has been contact."[290]

PED also notes that this definition probably referred to "the old (popular) psychology." Mrs Rhys Davids further notes that the Prāśna Upaniṣad (probably older than the Abhidhamma) either grouped the 5 senses under *manas,* eye and ear, or the last 2 are alone "held worthy to rank with the divine element of life." She adds that the older Bṛhad'āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (5.3) says that through *manas* we know when we are *touched* from behind. "It is as though the tradition were endeavouring to say, smell, taste, touching *without* the aid of either sight or hearing require a greater effort of inference, of mental construction, of imagination, to realize the external cause or potential concrete mental percept, than either sight or hearing." (DhsA:F 221 n1)

It is thus clearer, with this background, why perhaps the Buddha used this term *muta* in the cognition triad. It was also understandable that as Buddhist psychology became more established, the Buddha used a more detailed formula, the cognitive tetrad, since it better reflects the nature of his teachings, such as in the Bāhiya/Māluṅkya teaching. [4.4.3]

4.4.3 The cognition triad clearly belonged to a very early and brief phase in sutta literature. The Buddha went on to bring into relief the mental aspect of experience and knowledge in the term ***viññā-ta,*** as evident in the well-known <u>cognitive tetrad</u>, ***diṭṭha suta muta viññāta***, displacing the older cogni-tive triad. In fact, the canonical Commentary, Mahā Niddesa uses the phrase, <u>*diṭṭha suta muta viññāta,*</u> "the seen, heard, sensed, known," to explain the cognitive triad, *diṭṭha muta suta.*[291] We can thus deduce that by the time **the Niddesa** (comprising Mahā Niddesa and Cūḷa Niddesa) was compiled

---

[288] *Gandh'āyatana-t,tayaṁ ghāna,jivhā,kāyehi patvā gahetatabbato munitvā jānitabbaṭṭhena **mutaṁ** nāma jataṁ. Phusitvā pi ñāṇ'uppatti,kāraṇato **mutaṁ** nāmā ti pi vuttaṁ. Sabbam eva rūpaṁ mano,viññāṇenā jāni-tabban ti manasā viññātaṁ nāma jātaṁ.* (DhsA 338). See D 3:232; Sn 790 (cp Nm 87 f), 793, 798, 812, 887, 901, 914, 1086, 1122.

[289] M 1:3; Sn 714 (= *phusa'arahaṁ,* SnA 498), 812; J 5:398 (Comy, *anumata*); Vbh 14, 429 f.

[290] *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics,* 1900, 3rd ed 1974, DhsA:F 221 n1). On *muta* as "the known," see SD 53.5 (5.2).

[291] Nm 96,13, 106,14, 137,21, 315,5, 334,8; Nc:Be 25:121,8.

(3ʳᵈ cent BCE-2ⁿᵈ cent CE),[292] the word **muta**, shed its old sense of "the thought (including the known)," and took on the narrower sense of "the sensed," referring to the experiences of *smelling, tasting and touching.*[293]

The **Param'aṭṭhaka Sutta** (Sn 4.5) preserves a rare single occurrence (a hapax legomenon) of this tetrad, *diṭṭhe sute mute pakappitā,* in this ancient verse:

tass'idha diṭṭhe va sute mute vā	For him here, in the <u>seen, heard, or sensed</u>,
pakappitā n'atthi aṇū pi saññā	not even a jot of perception has been <u>formed</u>.[294]
taṁ brāhmaṇaṁ diṭṭhim anādiyānaṁ	That brahmin who takes up not a view,
ken'idha lokasmiṁ vikappayeyya	how could anyone here in the world categorize him?
	(Sn 802ab; Comy Nm 1:110-112)

In idiomatic English:

Not even a moment of notion is perceived	about what is seen, heard or sensed here.
How would anyone here in the world	categorize that brahmin who clings not to any view?

It is true that there is only the triad *diṭṭhe sute mute* (loc pl) with **pakappitā** (a participle modifying *saññā*); hence it is not really part of a tetrad. Nevertheless, this important verse gives clues to the evolution of the cognitive tetrad (*diṭṭha suta muta viññāta*). It is unlikely that *mute* here translates as "thought" (Sn:N 107 = Sn 802), when *pakappitā* already gives that sense.

It is possible that on account of *pakkapitā* being juxtaposed following the cognitive triad, gives an associated sense of "cognized" (*viññāta*) which was then added to form the cognitive tetrad. At this point too *muta* shed its sensed "thought," and came to mean "sensed." After this, the cognitive tetrad, *diṭṭha suta muta viññāta,* became widely used as meaning, "the seen, heard, sensed and cognized."

4.4.4 The term **viññāta** was added to designate the experience of <u>knowing</u> *on a mental level,* that is, through the mind-objects (*dhamm'ārammaṇa*); the other terms refer to sense-based experiences. Technically, as we have noted, the cognitive triad—*diṭṭha suta muta*—now refers to only knowledge based on the 5 senses—encompassed by "perception by way of the 5 senses" (*pañca,dvārika saññā*). All knowledge beyond that is encompassed by the term *viññāta*, knowledge arising at the mind-door.

This "cognition tetrad" [295]—*diṭṭha suta muta viññāta*—is found in the Vinaya where it is defined as explained above[296] [4.4.2]. Since the Vinaya is a late canonical compilation, we may safely assume this phrase—its length also suggests later provenance—is the *final* phrase that evolved from the cognitive triad, *diṭṭha muta suta.* This is further attested by the most common occurrences of the cognition tetrad, *diṭṭha suta muta viññāta,* found in the 5 Nikayas, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the most famous of which is in <u>the cognition tetrad passage</u> in **the Māluṅkya,putta Sutta** (S 35.95):[297]

---

[292] K R Norman, *Pali Literature*, 1983b:86.

[293] See DA 3:914; cf MA 1:36 f; SA 2:237; AA 3:31; UA 91; ItA 2:187; SnA 498. See SD 53.5 (2.1.1).

[294] "Formed," *pakappitā,* past part of *pakappeti,* "to arrange, fix, settle, prepare, determine, plan" (PED). Comy glosses *pakappitā* as "made" (*katā,* SnA 471), "prepared, created (put together), established" (*kappitā abhisaṅkhatā saṇṭhapitā,* Nm 186); hence, *pakappitā,* "mentally formed or constructed." Cf Sn:B 1072.

[295] On the cognition tetrad, see SD 3.13 (5.2), SD 53.5 (3).

[296] V 4:2,25 f ≈ Nc:Be 127,10; see SD 53.5 (2.1.2.1).

[297] Also taught Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya in **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10), SD 33.7. See also SD 53.5 (2.3). Rarely, we will encounter longer phrases that seem to <u>describe</u> cognition (not define it), such as: *diṭṭhaṁ sutaṁ mutaṁ viññātaṁ pattaṁ pariyesitaṁ anuvicaritaṁ manasā,* "the seen, heard, sensed, known, found, sought after, mentally pursued," found in **Alaggadûpama S** (M 22,15) + SD 3.13 (5.2.1).

Here, Māluṅkyāputta, regarding things[298] seen, heard, sensed and known by you:

in the seen	there will only be the seen;	
in the heard	there will only be the heard;	
in the sensed	there will only be the sensed;	
in the known	there will only be the known.	(S 35.95/4:73), SD 5.9

---

[298] "Regarding things seen, heard, sensed and known," *diṭṭha,suta,muta,viññatabbesu dhammesu,* lit "in things that are to be seen, to be heard, to be sensed, to be known." See prec n.

5 The nature of contemplative knowledge

5.1 EMBODYING THE MIND

5.1.1 In academic debates on mindfulness [1.1.4], we have noted that the key word in the function-ing of mindfulness is <u>attention</u>, properly directing **the mind** to its object, whether in meditation or in our daily experiences. In either case, our experiences are summarized in the suttas in the phrase "the seen, heard, sensed, known" (*diṭṭha suta muta viññāta*) [4.4.3]: this is how the mind works, both through the senses and by itself. To be **mindful** of an experience basically means that we are able to see our experiences for what each of them is: there is only what is *seen, heard, sensed and known*.

Such a practice, when properly done, is likely to have the effect of <u>calming</u> and <u>clearing</u> our mind. This means that the mind often gradually but quite quickly for some, clears away **the 5 mental hin-drances** (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*): *sensual lust, ill will, restlessness and worry, sloth and torpor,* and *doubt.*[299] Once all these hindrances have been cleared away, we attain the 1st dhyana.

Once we have attained dhyana, we stay with it for as long as we can, that is, we do this as often as we need to until we have mastered the process.[300] Then, having emerged from dhyana, we scruti-nize the seen, heard, sensed and known, *just as each of them is.*

5.1.2 While we are trying to cognize our experiences as they are, any of the mental hindrances may arise again. Normally, our meditation instructor would teach us to bring our attention back to the mind-object, that is, to "establish mindfulness" (*satiṁ upaṭṭhapeti*), of which the noun is ***satipaṭṭhā-na,*** that is, "the establishing of mindfulness," usually by:

(1) <u>watching the body</u> (*kāyânupassanā*), through a body-based mindfulness practice, such as the breath meditation, bodily actions, postures, the perception of the foul (bodily decay), or reflect-ion on death; or
(2) <u>watching feelings</u> (*vedanā,nupassanā*) as they are, arising and dissolving; or
(3) <u>watching the mind</u> (*cittânupassanā*), that is, the thoughts as they arise and pass away; or
(4) <u>watching mind-objects</u> (*dhammânupassanā*) as they arise and dissolve, that is, we watch any aspect of these sets of **dharmas** (realities as mind-objects), which are:

the 5 hindrances:	sensual lust, ill will, restlessness and worry, sloth and torpor, doubt;
the 5 aggregates:	form, feeling, perception, formations, consciousness;
the 12 sense-bases:	the eye and form, the ear and sound, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the body and touch, the mind and thoughts;
the 7 awakening factors:	mindfulness, dharma-discernment, effort, zest, tranquillity, concentra-tion, equanimity;
the 4 noble truths:	suffering, its arising, its ending, the path to its ending.

The <u>4 focuses of mindfulness</u> form a complete system of meditation practice for the cultivation of *calm and insight*. The method is presented in **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) and in **the Mahā Sati-paṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22).[301] The latter Sutta also gives an elaborate exposition of the 4 noble truths, which is a lot of theory. Hence, for meditation practice, it is best to stay with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, because it is practice-oriented. The meditation method is also given in a collection of connected suttas, **the Satipaṭṭhāna Saṁyutta** (S 47).[302]

---

[299] On the 5 mental hindrances, see ***Nīvaraṇa***, SD 32.1.
[300] On the absence of thinking, willing and speech during dhyana, see SD 33.1b (6.2).
[301] M 10/1:55-63 (SD 13.3); D 22/2:290-315 (SD 13.2).
[302] For modern comys: Soma Thera, *The Way of Mindfulness,* Kandy: BPS, 1981 (dated); Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation,* London: Rider, 1962; U Silananda, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness,* Boston: Wisdom, 1990. For a sutta study, see SD 13 (foll n).

Finally, the 4 satipatthanas are said to be "**right mindfulness**" (*sammā sati*)[303] [3.11.7]. This is because through the satipatthanas, we gain right concentration, which in turn helps to calm and clear mind so that it can penetrate true reality, and purify our mind (as mentioned).

5.1.3 In a previous section [4.2], we have seen how **mindfulness and awareness** work with other dharma-sets—the 5 faculties and the 5 powers, the 7 awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path—to strengthen and refine the mind to reach the path. These are only some of the dharma-sets that mindfulness works with, that is, beginning with the 4 focuses of mindfulness, watching closely *the body, feelings, the mind and mind-objects* (*realities*). **The 4 satipatthanas** are only the 1st of **7 sets** of dharmas (teachings and practices), totalling as the 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi,pakkhiya dhamma*).

These teachings—the 7 sets—are a summary list of all the key teachings of the Buddha "that discern reality (*vicayaso*),"[304] namely:[305]

(1)	the 4 focuses of mindfulness	*catu satipaṭṭhāna*
		watching the body, feelings, the mind, and mind-objects
(2)	the 4 right strivings [efforts]	*catu samma-p,padhāna*
		the effort to avoid (*saṁvara*) an unarisen unwholesome,
		to overcome the unwholesome that has arisen,
		to cultivate an unarisen wholesome,
		to maintain an arisen wholesome
(3)	the 4 bases of spiritual success	*catu iddhi,pāda*
		will, energy, the mind, investigation
(4)	the 5 spiritual faculties	*pañc'indriya* (of the learners who are not-arhats)
		faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom [4.1.2]
(5)	the 5 spiritual powers	*pañca bala* (of the arhats)
		faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom
(6)	the 7 awakening-factors	*satta bojjhaṅga*
		mindfulness, dharma-discernment, effort, zest, tranquillity, samadhi, equanimity;
(7)	the noble eightfold path	*ariya aṭṭh'aṅgika magga*
		right view, right thought; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

We will see all these qualities summarized in the Mahā Niddesa explanation of "the mindful" (*sato*) (Nm 9 f) given below [6.2.1.2]

5.1.4 Every one of these 7 sets of teachings is an application of mindfulness, or is rooted in mindfulness, that leads to the gaining of wisdom (liberating knowledge).[306] We only need to take up the practice of any of these 7 sets to gain wisdom, as the Buddha states in **the Mahā Sakul'udāyī Sutta** (M 77)—that his disciples "who practise the way" (*paṭipannā*) have cultivated any of these 7 sets, and "have attained to the perfection that is the peak of superknowledge" (*abhiññā,vosāna,-pāramī,pattā*).[307]

The point of the section on the 7 sets [5.1.3] is to show how, in practice, *mindfulness* lies at the heart or root of every set. Due to the profound significance of mindfulness in our spiritual practice, it

---

[303] See **Sacca Vibhaṅga S** (M 141,30), SD 11.11; **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,21(vii)), SD 13.2; **(Magga) Vibhaṅga S** (S 45.8,10), SD 14.5.

[304] **Pārileyya S** (S 22.81,11), SD 6.1.

[305] See esp SD 10.1; SD 9 (10.3). On the term *bodhi,pakkhiya dhamma*, see SD 10.1 (1).

[306] On how all the limbs of the eightfold path are operationally interconnected, grounded in right view, see **Mahā Cattārīsaka S** (M 117), SD 6.10.

[307] See **Sakul'udāyī S** (M 77,15-21), SD 6.18.

is also apophatically called "non-heedlessness" (*appamāda*), that is, **heedfulness**, being mindful and acting rightly with wise attention. Hence, the suttas often state that heedfulness is said to be the foremost of *wholesome* states,[308] the "one dharma" that is beneficial both *in this world*, by keeping our body and mind free from carelessness and craving, and, if we do not awaken in this life, by giving us the basis for *a happy future life* that is the basis for liberation.[309] Significantly, the Buddha's last words were that we should "strive on heedfully!" (*appamādena sampādetha*),[310] that we are *diligently mindful* in our practice and daily life.

5.2 DIMENSIONS OF MINDFULNESS: THE 4 SATIPATTHANAS

5.2.1 We have done a quick survey of how mindfulness works with various dharma-sets; we will now briefly examine how it works with awareness in the larger context of **the focuses of mindfulness** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) and modern psychology. We will look at how mindfulness and awareness (*sati,sampajañña*) work through the 4 satipatthanas, which in turn feed back into mindfulness. In this way, we will see how *sati,sampajañña* works in our waking mind, covering all the 4 satipatthanas—*the body, feelings, the mind and dharmas*—as the somatic, the hedonic, the conative and the spiritual (dharma-based) respectively. [Table 5.2]

Every moment in our waking life, we (our minds) are being bombarded with incessant flows of sense-data and thoughts. We often try to seize everything into our perceptual field: in trying to grasp all, we lose all. **The 4 satipatthanas**, according to early Buddhism, are those vital threads of experiences that we need to focus on simply because we are *them,* states arising one moment, passing away the next. Since there are so many of them, we simply need to focus on just *one* of them at a time. Apparently, it is not *how many* of them we "grasp," but rather how we grasp each one.

5.2.2 The satipatthana method classifies all our waking experiences into 4 kinds of "**contemplations**" (*anupassana*), those of the body (*kāyânupassanā*), feelings (*vedanā'nupassanā*), the mind (thoughts) (*cittânupassanā*), and realities that arise as mind-states (*dhammânupassanā*). The contemplations generate and use a special kind of knowledge that is directed towards the body, or feelings, or thoughts, or realities, by means of mindfulness and clear awareness (*sati,sampajañña*). They are thus skills (they are applied) rather than knowledge; hence, **awareness** is used, such as "somatic awareness." However, they can be considered knowledge since we do learn from them.

In modern psychological lingo, we need to be aware of these existential states in 4 respective ways: **the somatic, the hedonic, the conative and the spiritual**; or simply: *what we do, how we feel, how we think and what we are*. How mindfulness and awareness work with this tetrad is graphically represented in **Table 5.2**. We will now look at each of the 4 satipatthanas not as meditative contemplations in formal sitting, but as being clearly aware of them in our daily lives, that is, our human experience as *the body, feelings, thoughts and realities*.

This is an exciting Buddhist taxonomy of knowledge since it is mostly contemplation-based, arising from mental concentration, mindfulness, and aesthetics, that is, the realm of the artistic. The ideas here can be further developed into **a philosophy of Buddhist aesthetics**, but this interesting and important topic will have to wait for another time. [5.6.5]

---

[308] **(Dasaka) Appamāda S** (A 10.15), SD 42.23. For def of *appamāda,* see **(Chakka) Appamāda S** (A 6.53), SD 42.22 (2.2.4); **Pamāda Vihārī S** (S 35.97), SD 47.6; **Sāra,gandha S** (S 45.143), SD 42.24; **(Duka) Paṭisallāna S** (It 45), SD 41.4; **Dh 150**, SD 46.15 (2.7.2); SD 46.15 (2.7.2); SD 47.1 (1.1.2.5); SD 47.17 (2.3.4.1); SD 54.22 (4.6.1.2).
[309] **(Dasaka) Appamāda S** (A 10.15), SD 42.23.
[310] **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.51) SD 9; SD 60.1d (6.2.3.4).
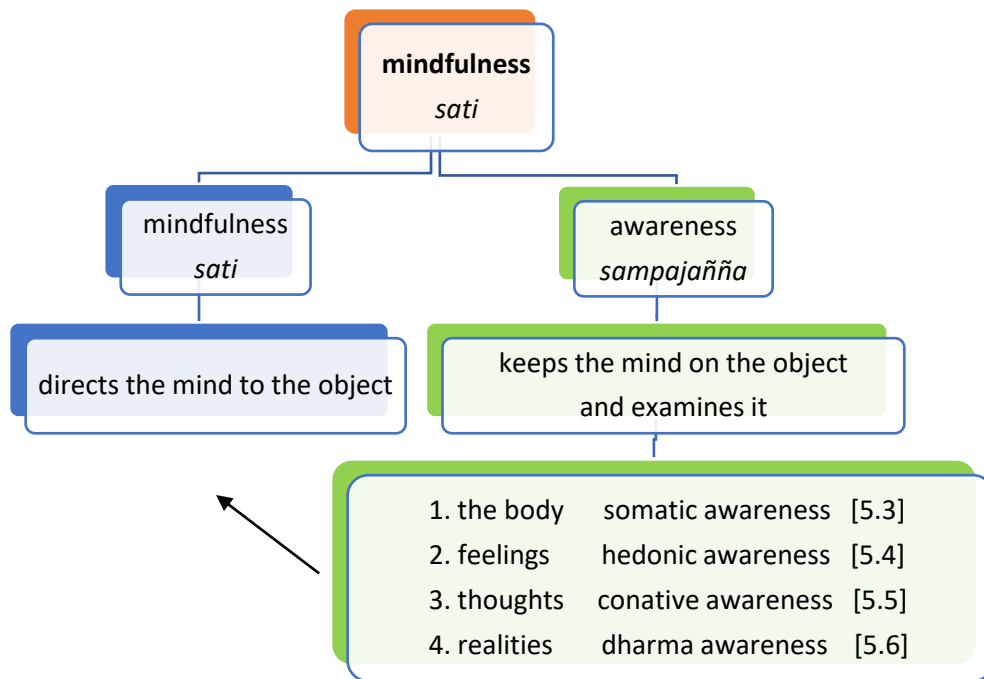
Table 5.2 Mindfulness and awareness

5.3 DIMENSIONS OF MINDFULNESS: (1) SOMATIC AWARENESS

5.3.1 The 1st satipatthana, ***kāyânupassanā***, involves <u>somatic awareness</u>, which basically refers to mentally managing our **conscious body** (*sa,viññāṇaka,kāya*)**:** <u>what we *actually* do</u>, how we act, that is, our body of deeds. According to **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10), <u>the body</u> refers to our breath (which keeps us alive), postures (standing, walking, sitting, reclining), bodily activities, bodily parts, the physical elements (earth, water, fire, wind), and the stages of bodily decomposition.[311] By <u>soma-tic awareness</u> is meant that we contemplate the true nature of *our body* in terms of any of these aspects.

The best-known body-based satipatthana practice is **the mindfulness of the breath** (*ānâpāna,-sati*). Its popularity lies in its versatility: we start our breath meditation by watching the breath as a *bodily* activity. As we become more focused mentally, the breath slows down and becomes subtler: it slowly transforms itself into a <u>mental</u> activity. That's when we begin to focus deeper into the mind.

Similarly, when our body is actively *standing, walking, sitting or reclining*, we direct our attention to where the action is. While **standing**, we feel how our feet are anchored on the ground: we feel <u>the earth element</u>. While **walking**, running or jogging, we feel the impact of each foot on the ground (again the earth element); then, we sweat: the water element; we feel warm: the fire element; we are moving, or we feel the breeze: the wind element. In this way, we are cultivating **the 4 elements**.

While we are in any bodily posture—*standing, walking, running, sitting or reclining*—we should habitually feel the earth element at the lowest point we are conscious of. When standing, moving or sitting, this would be where the body is in contact with the ground. This habit is especially vital for senior folks: we keep ourselves well balanced and prevent falls that can really hurt us.

---

[311] M 10,4-31/1:56-59 (SD 13.3).

5.3.2 Speech is also a bodily activity that works as a kind of "peripheral awareness" even as we speak. Notice how lively our speech and expressions are when we are *happy*. Or, how easily we tire ourselves when we speak too loudly[312] (*khīna,vādaṁ na bhāseyya*) or too quickly (*taramāno*).[313]

Notice also how **speech** is intimately connected with **our breath**: speech converts our life into words and communication that should be tr*uthful, unifying, pleasant and beneficial*,[314] especially when we are sharing the Dharma of true reality. Wrong speech is also karmically unwholesome, meaning that we will feel its effects for ourselves inconveniently and exponentially.[315]

Speech as **language** is also expressed in writing, in print or digitally. How we express ourselves in words is basically a karmic expression and communication of our thoughts that in turn affects others in karmic ways, such as inducing them to react with lust, hate or delusion (which is, of course, bad karma). Hence, the social expressions of our thoughts should be wholesome, that is, promoting *truth, unity, joy and usefulness.* Thus, an important mindful reflection is the awareness of how our language and writings would affect others and posterity.

5.3.3 Somatic awareness—how we wisely work with our conscious body—starts with our own physical being, and goes on to embrace others we care about, and society at large. How we act with our body thus, in significant ways, influences others, in our own times and in the future. This is a wise way of being aware of our somatic potential.

Our somatic awareness comprises our body and mind: the 5-sense **body** creates what we are now, and dies the very next moment, like the flow of the frames of an old celluloid movie or the bits and bytes of digital processing. This is our life. **The mind** works with the senses, by which it becomes self-aware of what we think (philosophy), how we feel (psychology), and speculate about reality and beyond (religion). We work with others to create society and culture (social sciences); we develop language, and learn to measure (the sciences) and build things and control the forces of nature (technology); we explore lands and use them (geography). We write about all this, even imagine a better life (literature); and finally, we record all this so that others can build on us and learn from us (history).[316]

While we live, we write and enjoy beautiful sounds with the 4 elements (music), into which we breathe beauty (elocution, poetry and singing). We rearrange light and colours to envision realities beyond our senses (painting and sculpture). We transform our faith and vision into magnificent buildings and structures (architecture). The greatest of all these is our love of learning, that drives us to teach others *to live, love, learn and grow* to be better than what we are today. We see the future as a timeless reality so that we may understand it and become it, beyond time and space that now shape and hold us.

5.3.4 In our waking lives, we actively work with our body and are always aware of it in some way through the 5 senses, and of course, the mind (thoughts). Collectively, this is our somatic awareness. When we start to train (that is, regulate or habituate) or measure any such somatic awareness, it becomes our **somatic knowledge**. For example, we train ourselves to read words (and write), signs and numbers (tracking, the weather, etc), to understand languages; hear music and play music, to sing; to taste food and beverages; to dance, to massage, to cook; to count, calculate, envision, build, destroy, imagine, mind the mind; and so on. These are some examples of somatic knowledge: body-based knowledge or skills that have the 6 elements (earth, water, fire, air, space and consciousness) as the tools of trade or training.

---

[312] "Loudly" is here used in a broad sense of "being strong, loud, rough, hurtful."

[313] **Araṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 139,10 f/3:234), SD 7.8.

[314] These are the qualities of right speech (*sammā vācā*), SD 10.16 (3.4).

[315] See eg **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136,8/3:209 f), SD 4.16.

[316] This overview of human experience is based on the 10 classes of knowledge of the Dewey Decimal system of library classification introduced by Melvil Dewey in 1876 in the US.

In important ways, these are <u>creative</u> knowledge and skills, or what in modern terms, can also be called or include <u>professional skills</u>. Such knowledge or skill may be applied "professionally," without any feelings involved, for purely cerebral preoccupations. Often, however, these creative activities based on somatic knowledge *overlap* with **hedonic awareness**. When such an awareness is valued, remembered and used for advancement of our somatic skills, such as in meditation, then, they may flower into **spiritual knowledge** [Table 10; 9.12].

5.4 DIMENSIONS OF MINDFULNESS: (2) HEDONIC AWARENESS

5.4.1 Let's look at **the contemplation of feelings** (*vedanā'nupassanā*). In ordinary speech, **feeling** has a number of senses. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (8th ed, 2005), for example*,* gives these 9 senses of "feeling" (both countable [C] and uncountable [U]):

(1) [C] something that you feel through the mind or the senses;
(2) [sing] the idea or belief that a particular thing is true or a particular situation is likely to happen;
(3) [U, C] an attitude or opinion about something;
(4) [pl] a person's emotions rather than their thoughts or ideas;
(5) [U, C] strong emotion;
(6) [U] the ability to understand somebody or something, or to do something in a sensitive way;
(7) [sing] sympathy or love for somebody or something;
(8) [U] the ability to feel physically;
(9) [sing] the atmosphere of a place, situation, etc.

Apparently, the early Buddhist idea of **feeling** (*vedanā*) does not fit into any of the 9 modern definitions of "feeling." The Commentarial etymology for it is simply *vedetī ti vedanā,* "It feels [senses, knows]; hence, it is *vedanā*" (MA 2:343). Terse as this definition is, it clearly suggests a cognitive dimension of *vedanā:* how we "cognitively feel."

5.4.2 Buddhaghosa, in his **Visuddhi,magga**, illustrates this experience "cognitively feeling" with **the meal parable** in terms of the 5 aggregates: <u>the body</u> (form) is like a bowl, <u>feelings</u> are like the main food, <u>perception</u> is the various dishes, <u>mental formations</u> the cook or server, and <u>consciousness</u> the consumer of the food.[317] *Vedanā* thus "tastes" experiences as being pleasant, unpleasant or neutral through each of the physical senses, and the same for mental states.

There are altogether <u>6 kinds of feelings</u>,[318] arising at each of the 6 sense-doors (the physical senses and the mind). For each of these 6 kinds of feelings, there are the pleasant, the unpleasant and the neutral feelings arising from sight, from sound, and so on. In this way, we then have <u>the 18 kinds of feelings</u>, that is, according to their hedonic tones.[319]

Technically, *vedanā,* according to early Buddhism, is a psychosomatic faculty of experiencing sensations in terms of hedonic tones: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. At least one of these feelings arise in every moment of sensory consciousness, that is, in every waking moment. Hence, feeling is one of <u>the "universal" set of 7 cetasikas</u> accompanying all mind-states.[320]

---

[317] Vism 14.221/479; VismMhṭ 504.

[318] Abhidhamma, however, speaks of only <u>5 kinds of feelings</u>: the pleasant physical and mental, the unpleasant physical and mentally, and the neutral (there is neither a pleasant "neutral" nor an unpleasant "neutral") [1.7.3.2 f].

[319] Further see **Vedanā (Feeling)**, SD 17.3. On the 18 kinds of feelings, see SD 17.3 (4.6).

[320] The suttas def of "<u>mind</u>" (*nāma*) as comprising feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), sense-contact (*phassa*), and attention (*manasikāra*)": **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15,20), SD 5.17; **Sammā Diṭṭhi S** (M 9), SD 11.14; **(Nidāna) Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2), SD 5.15. The Abhidhamma adds 2 more mental factors: <u>life faculty</u> (*jīvita*) and <u>one-pointedness</u> (*ekaggatā*); thus totalling the 7 "universal" mental factors (Abhs 2,2; Abhs:BRS 78-81).

5.4.3 According to early Buddhism, every time when a sense-experience arises at any of the 6 sense-doors, we tend to perceive or "recognize" it as some past memory; unless we have no memory of such an experience; then, we will ignore that sense-stimulus. Generally, we would react to each experience in terms of the "**hedonic tone**" and so perceive it in different ways. Thus, having viewed it as being *pleasant,* we feel desire for it; when we view it as *unpleasant,* we react with aversion and reject it; and when we have no idea about a *neutral* sensation, we simply ignore it.

However, at this stage of our mental experience, we can still avoid any unwholesome karmic arousal, so long as we do not invoke any of the 3 unwholesome roots of motivation (*akusala mūla*), that is, greed, hatred and delusion.[321] Hence, we do not feed their roots that go deep down into our unconscious latent tendencies, a process that occurs when there is conative awareness [5.5]. We can and must *consciously* intervene at this stage by reflecting on the object of awareness as being "mentally constructed; hence, impermanent … ." Every time we respond in this positive way, we are habituating to wholesome mental karma, making us less likely to desire, to hate or to ignore that object. Hence, we avoid unwholesome karma.

5.4.4 Contemplation of feelings (hedonic tones of pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral) may also habituate us to wholesome conduct, that is, through applying **body scans** to prevent our reactivity towards any of the 3 hedonic tones, or even to correct our unwholesome reactions to them. The body scan may be done for both physical and mental perceptions of the objects.

It is emphasized that the body is a natural and constant source of unpleasant feelings, especially caused by pain. For this reason too it is the most vulnerable cognitive moment in the here and now, when we can at once intervene by cultivating a very subtle pleasant feeling. The continued contemplation of feelings brings the changing nature of feelings into relief. A pleasant feeling is then seen as a reminder or reflection of impermanence, a true reality on which we then contemplate and deepen our wisdom.

5.5 DIMENSIONS OF MINDFULNESS: (3) CONATIVE AWARENESS

5.5.1 The 3rd satipatthana, ***cittânupassanā*** (the contemplation of the mind or mental states) *,* essentially refers to mentally watching our mind's states (basically thoughts and ideas), that is, how we react or respond (emote) to the other 3 dimensions (the somatic, the hedonic and the spiritual) of experience. Contemplation of the mental states consists of inspecting the qualities of the mind: Is it mindful or not, lustful or not, hateful or not, or deluded or not? It helps for us to "label" each of them, such as "anger." Eventually, we should notice that the mind constantly changes: this, again, is a message of impermanence as in the rising and passing of the hedonic tones in feelings [5.4.4].

5.5.2 The primal force of our latent tendencies of sensual lust, repulsion and ignorance is often so strong that we do not even realize that we have coloured the perceptions of our experiences with tones of *greed, hate or delusion*. This triad is deep-rooted in our latent tendencies (*anusaya*),[322] which is our ancient karma feeding and prodding us on as its samsaric playthings. This is a kind of "damage control" stage: we want to correct whatever wrong we can notice that we have done by, as it were, recalibrating how we respond to our objects of awareness.

In an unawakened mind,
each time there is **desire** for something,
  it is fed by the karmic latent tendency of sensual lust (*rāgânusaya*), and
    the renewed desire in turn feeds that latent tendency;
every time there is **hate**,
  it feeds the karmic tendency of repulsion (*paṭighânusaya*),

---

[321] On the 3 unwholesome roots, see SD 35.6 (5.1.1).
[322] See ***Anusaya***, SD 31.3.

which then feeds the latent tendency;
every time one **ignores** a neutral object, it feeds the karmic tendency of ignorance (*anijjā'nusaya*).

We thus habituate ourselves karmically as karmic creatures chained to our uroboric habits: we feed on our own emotions. Notice that the verb "feed" here can mean that we are feeding the latent tendencies, and the latent tendencies are feeding us. It is a kind of "food" (*āhāra*)[323] prison.

5.5.3 Buddhaghosa's **parable of the prison** for the 5 aggregates applies here. The body is like a prison because it "gets punished" (by suffering in various ways); perception is like the offence (for which we are imprisoned) for perceiving pleasantness (beauty), unpleasantness and blandness. Feeling, from reacting to such perceptions, is then seen as the cause of the punishment. Formations are like the punisher since they are the conditions (or causes) of feeling. And consciousness, afflicted by the feeling, is like the offender.[324]

5.6 DIMENSIONS OF MINDFULNESS: (4) DHARMA AWARENESS

5.6.1 The contemplation of dharmas is here discussed as "conative awareness" to highlight how we mentally manage what we have not been able to do in the previous contemplations. Our awareness by now should be stronger so that we better understand what we are actually *doing* or what is *happening* to us existentially, that is, karmically. In other words, we are now looking at our "self" (the mind) in terms of the Dharma, which are aspects of true reality.

During the contemplation of the mind [5.5], we watch our mental states: with conative awareness, we see them as dependently arisen (*paṭicca samuppanna*) objects of awareness. **The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10) lists the following dharma-sets we can use to see this conditionality of our current state: the 5 mental hindrances,[325] the 5 aggregates,[326] the 6 sense-bases,[327] the 7 awakening-factors,[328] and the 4 noble truths.[329] The idea is that whichever dharma-set we have well understood, we use that set to reflect on our current state of mind.

5.6.2 Two of these early Dharma-sets are especially efficacious since they reflect the process of preparing the mind for progress to awakening, or at least joyful peace at this stage, that is to say: the 5 hindrances and the 7 awakening factors. **The 5 hindrances** are what prevent the mind from turning to the vision and path of liberation. The contemplation on the hindrances investigates the conditions that give rise to sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt, and also how these 5 hindrances can be overcome to open up the path to liberation.

The contemplation of **the 7 awakening factors** starts with the application of mindfulness. This brings about the qualities of keen interest and open receptivity, as well as calm and clear observation of what is going on in our mind. Mindfulness, as we have noted, is the basis for the other 6 factors,

---

[323] On the early Buddhist psychology of "food," see SD 20.6 (2); SD 55.14 (2).

[324] Vism 14.221/479; VismMhṭ 504.

[325] *Pañca,nīvaraṇa*: sensual desire (*kāma-c,chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*) (M 10,36), SD 13.3. On the 5 hindrances, see ***Nīvaraṇa,*** SD 32.1.

[326] *Pañca-k,khandha:* form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (M 10,38), SD 13.3. On the 5 aggregates, see SD 17.

[327] *Saḷ-āyatana*: eye (*cakkhu*) and forms (*rūpa*), ear (*sota*) and sounds (*sadda*), nose (*ghāna*) and smells (*gandha*), tongue (*javhā*) and tastes (*rasa*), body (*kāya*) and touches (*phassa*), and mind (*mano*) and mind-states (*dhamma*) (M 10,40), SD 13.3. On the 6 sense-bases, see **Saḷ,āyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137) + SD 29.5 (1.2).

[328] *Satta bojjhaṅga*, those of: mindfulness (*sati*), dharma-discernment (*dhamma,vicaya*), effort (*viriya*), zest (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) (M 10,42), SD 13.3. On the 7 awakening-factors, see **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3), SD 10.15.

[329] *Catu ariya,sacca*: those of suffering (*dukkha*), its arising (*samudaya*), its ending (*nirodha*), and the path to its ending (*paṭipadā = magga*) (M 10,44), SD 13.3. On the 4 truths, see SD 1.1 (4).

and without it none of the factors will work [4.2.2]. The next 3 awakening factors—those of dharma-discernment, energy and zest—are meant to empower the practice; and the remaining 3—tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity—bring calmness to the practice: like stilling a pool of water so that we can clearly see what is in the pool itself. This "pool" is, of course, our mind.

5.6.3 In each of these 7 steps, all preceding ones are repeated to bring us to the next one. In other words, after each cycle of practice, we reconnect with the reality that is our conscious body [5.3.1]. After each of these contemplations, we should then direct mindfulness to each of the 6 sense-doors simply being aware of whatever is there, just as it truly is (conditioned and so on).

   The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta ends with the Buddha declaring 7 years of practice can lead us to arhathood itself, or at least attain the path of non-returning (M 10,46) [SD 13.3]. We will certainly have a taste of the Dharma even after diligently practising these 7 Dharma contemplations as a 7-week re-treat, practising each of the dharma-sets per week.[330] Even when we are able to master just one of these 7 sets [5.1.3], it will be sufficient to serve as a spiritual guide for practising the 4 satipatthanas as part of our mindful daily living.

   This, then, is our "conative awareness" put into practice. Basically, conative awareness reminds us that we have **self-reliance**: indeed, that's all we really have in samsara, despite all the religious fiction of outside help. With this will, there is surely the way (*magga*).

5.6.4 Conative awareness is being aware, and knowing, how we act karmically.[331] When we fail to do this, and our thoughts are unwholesome, then, our acts are also unwholesome. Hence, before we act, we should make sure that our thoughts are wholesome; while acting, we keep our thoughts wholesome; and after the act, we examine to ensure those thoughts behind our actions were wholesomely motivated.

   As unawakened beings, we have no free will in the sense that we are, as a rule, moved by either greed, hatred or delusion, either unconsciously or consciously, as a matter of habit, even through reflex or instinct. In this sense, we lack wholesome restraint: we may have a *human* body but are not yet human in mind and heart. We are thus caught in a subhuman level, that is, of the asura, the animal, the preta, or the hell-being [7.3.10]. Our human body does not always entail a *human* mind; we need to cultivate our mind so that we are moved habitually to act humanely. This is what moral training is about.

   We should thus wisely attend to every action of our body, every feeling and every thought as they arise and pass away. We mind each moment, reflecting it to be **mind-made**, thus impermanent; even to see the unsatisfactoriness in it, and envision its nonselfness. We are clearly aware (*sampajā-nāti*) of whatever sense-object that impinges on our mind, or whatever is the mind's object. We are then truly mindful. We have **dharma awareness**.

   Knowing the Dharma, we are empowered to assert our will—rejecting greed, rejecting hatred, rejecting delusion—applying non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion, we direct the mind behind every act, speech or thought so that it is wholesome (*kusala*). We thus act with **dharma-spirited aware-ness**. Each time we will ourselves in this manner, we restrain ourselves from evil—we humanize ourselves or tap our human potential.

   In doing so, we are also wholesomely conditioning, habituating ourselves, so that we act naturally and spontaneously with non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion. In this sense, we don't even need to *will* ourselves in our actions any more. We have broken from the fetters of subhuman worldliness. In this sense, there is no more need of any "free will": we are already on the path of freedom, heading for nirvana.

---

   [330] See Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna meditation: A practice guide,* Windhorse, 2018d:2 (Intro).
   [331] An unawakened person is likely to perform karmic acts *habitually*, ie, without any conscious effort—un-consciously (*acittaka*) or unmindfully (*asampajāna*)—thus facing the potential fruition of such karma, good and bad: SD 17.8b (1.2); SD 51.20 (2.2.2); SD 57.10 (1.3.2.1).

5.6.5 Traditionally, satipatthana entails contemplating of the body, feelings, thoughts and realities, for the sake of overcoming the mental hindrances to attain dhyana, or at least weakening the hindrances with mindfulness training (such as for the perception of impermanence). However, on a mundane level, contemplating of any 4 satipatthanas may also invoke profound aesthetic experiences. The contemplative mastery of **the body**, for example, brings us the beauty and joy of dance, such as ballet, singing, or even stage-acting.[332]

When **feelings** are contemplatively mastered, they infuse beauty into music playing, poetry, text-reading, and a range of the arts, such as painting. The contemplative mastery of one's **thoughts** inspires good leadership, thinking and philosophizing. Finally, a contemplative mastery of the dharmas and experiences of reality are the best way of putting life and love into our mentorship, counselling and spirituality. The satipatthanas, when properly understood and applied, may even turn our mundane acts, done with aesthetics, into windows into spiritual experiences.

5.7 METAPHORS FOR MINDFULNESS AND AWARENESS

5.7.1 **Table 5.2** shows how mindfulness and awareness work together to cultivate <u>wisdom</u>, that is, insight into true reality. **Awareness** (the green section), by keeping the mind on the object of awareness and examining it, learns its true nature. This wisdom supports mindfulness (represented by the arrow from the bottom green box leading up to the bottom blue box). In this way, mindfulness and awareness work together to cultivate wisdom that joyfully frees the mind from the worldliness.

Analayo gives 2 helpful metaphors showing how how mindfulness and awareness work together to feed us with wisdom, the knowledge that frees us with joy. I have expanded on these metaphorst.

In the 1st metaphor—that of **dough and yeast**—mindfulness is like <u>dough</u> (which we must properly and thoroughly knead), which by itself when cooked becomes flatbread, which can be eaten with some spicy curries. However, when <u>yeast</u> is properly added to the dough, then left to stand, and then baked, it gives us a variety of bread, depending on what other ingredients (raisins, nuts, etc) we add to it. Mindfulness is like the dough; awareness the yeast. Satipatthana is like our working on the yeast and dough to make the bread of wisdom, and then joyfully feasting on it.[333]

The 2nd metaphor—that of **water and soup**—is again that of putting in the right effort to work with the ingredients at our disposal. Using <u>water</u> alone we cannot make soup; we need to add some spices and ingredients to the water at the right time, cooking it properly, and it is often best to take the soup of wisdom while it is hot.[334]

5.7.2 Now that we have seen how <u>mindfulness and awareness</u> (*sati,sampajañña*) work with <u>the 5 aggregates</u> (form, feelings, perception, karma-formations and consciousness), let us remind ourselves of the common link in all these processes and exercises, that is, **memory**. We suffer basically because we *forget* what the wholesome or good is; forgetting this, we mistakenly and forgetfully act unwholesomely. For this reason, we should remind ourselves that *sati* has the *literal* meaning of **remembering**, that its broad active sense is that of <u>minding</u> (directing the mind to its object) and <u>reminding</u> (keeping our attention there) in the right way of what is real.

The contemplations (*anupassanā*) make us do just this: they help us *mind and remind*, to *see and know* the wholesome, what helps us to grow spiritually:

---

[332] **Tāḷa,puṭa S** (S 42.2) records the Buddha as discouraging taking up acting, since it evokes sensual pleasures and negative emotions. However, the unwholesome effects may be prevented, and wholesome ones effected when we play wholesome roles, or learn not to "own" the negative roles, or catharize ourselves (eg, with lovingkindness cultivation) after each act (SD 20.8).

[333] The bread metaphor is found in Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation: A practice guide.* Windhorse, 2018d:8.

[334] The soup metaphor is found in Analayo, "Mindfulness constructs in early Buddhism and Theravāda: Another contribution to the memory debate," *Mindfulness* 9 2018c:1050.

(1) *kāyânupassanā:* appreciating the impermanent nature of <u>the conscious body</u>;
(2) *vedanā'nupassanā:* learning how to <u>feel</u> (or experience) the changes and alterations in the conscious body;
(3) *cittânupassanā:* observing how we <u>react</u> to these changes and thus being carried away by the action itself and forgetting ourself; and
(4) *dhammânupassanā:* bringing us back to our minding self with reminders, that is, <u>the dharma-sets</u>.

How then is ***sati,sampajañña*** (mindfulness and awareness, or minding and reminding, or seeing and knowing) connected with ***anupassanā*** (literally, "seeing again, following (the object)," contemplation)? Through *anu-ssati,* of course; that is, *anu-* (again, after) + *sati* (mindfulness), meaning "recollection." Although we are more familiar with *anussati* as referring to meditations that help us "recollect" special qualities (such as virtues of the 3 jewels, our own charity and moral virtue, and the moral virtue of the devas, for example)[335] [6.1.2], we should understand that the basic function of **recollecting** is to ensure that these wholesome qualities remain in our <u>long-term memory</u>, becoming wholesome habits.

5.7.3 Scholars of early Buddhism have, since its modern discovery in the late 19th century, noted that **mindfulness** (*sati*) has <u>twin functions</u>: that of *minding* and of *reminding,* that is, of attention (*manasikāra*) and of recall (*anussati*).[336] These twin aspects of mindfulness reflect how we remember things: broadly, the minding or attending (*manasikāra*) works with "<u>short-term memory</u>" (STM) while the reminding or recalling (*anussati*) refers to "<u>long-term memory</u>" (LTM). We are more likely to forget with STM when we attend only to the present moment (passive experience of brief moments) but do not recall it in the long term (as a past experience); by reminding ourselves, such as by way of a reflective recollection, we lengthen and strengthen our memory.[337]

Then, there is "**working memory**" (WM) (which is often confused with short-term memory). STM was previously understood (either explicitly or implicitly) as a relatively <u>passive</u> process. But we now know that people do more than just hold information in the short-term store. For example, if we have a sentence held in our short-term memory, we can usually repeat the words in the sentence in reverse order, or recite the first letter of each word in the sentence.

This more <u>active</u> sense of STM is denoted by the term <u>working memory</u>, because there are some mental operations (or "work") being done on the information that is currently held in mind. The terms STM and WM are also often used synonymously with <u>consciousness</u>. This is because what we're consciously aware of—that is, what we're currently holding in mind—is held within our working memory.[338] [2.3]

---

[335] These are respectively *buddhânussati* (SD 15.7)*, dhammânussati* (SD 15.9)*, saṅghânussati* (SD 15.10a)*, sīlânussati* (SD 15.11), *cāgânussati* (SD 15.12) and *devatā'nussati* (SD 15.13)*.* See also SD 60.1f (1.1.2.1). For other refs, see SD 60.1f (1.1.2.1).

[336] On <u>mindfulness</u> as *attention and memory*, see SD 54.2e (2.3.4). See C **Cox**, "Mindfulness and Memory, The Scope of Smṛti from Early Buddhism to the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma," in (ed) J Gyatso, *In the Mirror of Memory,* Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992:67-108. P J **Griffiths**, "Memory in classical Indian Yogācāra," in (ed) J Gyatso, op cit 1992:109-131. R **Gethin**, "Buddhist conceptualizations of mindfulness," in (edd) K W Brown et al, *Handbook of Mindfulness: Theory, research, and practice,* NY & London: Guilford Press, 2015:10 f.

[337] Gethin, however, thinks that "in the tensions between *smṛti* [Skt for *sati*] as memory and attention may be resolved if we think of the Buddhist understanding of *smṛti* as having more affinity with modern discussions around the notion of 'working memory' [A D Baddeley & G Hitch, "Working memory," in (ed) G H Bower, *Psychology of Learning and Working* 8 1974:47-89], than, say, 'long-term memory'." (Gethin 2015b:11).

[338] See G Dreyfus 2011:44-48; R Gethin 2015b:9-25. Further see *Gale Ency of Psychology* 2nd ed, 2001:415-418 Memory. J K Foster, *Memory: A very short introduction,* Oxford: OUP, 2009:33 f. For refs: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_memory.

---

6 Mindfulness: From anchoring to plunging to floating

6.1 FROM ANCHORING TO PLUNGING

6.1.1 The Sotânugata Sutta (A 4.191)

6.1.1.1 We will here examine how a fascinating word changed in its spelling and also its meaning and to start a new meditation movement in our time. Our study begins with a unique text in the Aṅg-uttara Nikāya—**the Sotânugata Sutta** (A 4.191)[339]—which contains a rare Pali word, *apilāpati.* The Buddha relates how a person who has memorized the teachings but he passes away with a confused mind. Despite a loss of mindfulness, he is reborn as a deva in a heavenly realm.

In that heaven, the devas recite parts of the Buddha's teachings before him. Although newly reborn there and his mindfulness thus slow in arising, once he hears the teachings, he quickly remembers them. The Sutta then describes how he quickly gains "spiritual distinction" (*visesa*), meaning that he attains streamwinning:

> Dying <u>with a confused mind</u>, he is reborn into a certain host of devas.
> There, the happy ones **recite** Dharma passages to him.
His mindfulness [memory], bhikshus, is slow in arising, but, even then, this being quickly reaches distinction.

> *so muṭṭhassati kālaṃ kurumāno aññataraṃ deva,nikāyaṃ uppajjati. tassa tattha sukhino dhammapad<u>âpilapanti</u>. dandho, bhikkhave, sat'uppādo, atha so satto khippaṃ yeva visesa,gāmī hoti.*   (A 4.191,2/2:185), SD 58.2

6.1.1.2 Note that word *apilapanti* (pl) *in* the phrase *dhammapadâpilapanti* above has been underscored. The word *apilapanti* (sg *apilapati*) occurs only here in the whole of the Pali canon.[340] This interesting phrase has the following Pali <u>variant readings</u> for the sentence, "(the happy ones) recite the Dharma passages … ":

Burmese test	(Be)	*dhammapadā plavanti*	*plavanti* is probably a wrong reading
Sinhalese text	(Ce)	*dhammapadâpilapanti*	= *dhammapadā apilāpanti*
Siamese text	(Se)	*dhammapadâpilapanti*	as in Ce & Ke
European text	(Ee)	*dhammapadāni pi lapanti*	probably a wrong reading
			(A 4.191,2.2/2:185,12) + SD 58.2 (2)

Clearly the best reading is that of the Sinhalese and the Siamese texts,[341] which are preferable and identical. This seemingly laborious exercise shows the benefit of comparing readings across the various manuscripts of the Pali canon so that we can decide on the best reading. This reading is confirmed by the Commentary (AA 3:170), and is also the form accepted by most scholars.[342]

For the different Pali editions to show such variations regarding the word *apilapanti* is not surprising, since the word is very rare (occurring only once in the Pali canon). However, these variant readings are less significant to the later Buddhist traditions than the reading found in the Commentary and the Abhidhamma. It is this later reading which would have influenced the understanding of this passage in later tradition, as we shall see in a moment.

---

[339] A 4.191/2:185-187 (SD 58.2).

[340] Such a unique occurrence of a word or phrase in literature is called *hapax legomenon.*

[341] You will not see any Se readings in Bodhi's commercial translations as he has the policy of omitting all Siamese readings.

[342] See Analayo, "How mindfulness came to plunge into its object," *Mindfulness* 10 2019:1183.

The basic idea conveyed by the Sutta passage [6.1.1.1] seems to be that the recital of the teachings by the other devas helps the one newly reborn there to recall what he has learned. *The Dictionary of Pali* defines the corresponding noun *apilāpana* as giving the sense of "enumerating; reminding or remembering by reciting or enumerating." (Cone 2001:174)

6.1.2 Mindfulness in early Abhidhamma

6.1.2.1 The Vibhaṅga, the 2nd book of the Pali Abhidhamma Piṭaka, surveys the 4 focuses of mindfulness from two perspectives, one according to the <u>sutta</u> method and the other according to the <u>Abhidhamma</u> method. Its presentation according to the sutta method reflects an early stage in the evolution of descriptions of satipaṭṭhāna meditation.[343]

Following this exposition, the Vibhaṅga gives a commentary on the key terminology. This part of the work can however be taken to be later than the preceding exposition of satipaṭṭhāna. For the case of mindfulness, the work provides a list of near-synonyms (Vbh 195). One of these is the abstract noun ***apilāpanatā***, formed by adding to *apilāpana* the suffix *-tā* (which makes it an abstract noun, denoting an idea, quality or state).

In the Vibhaṅga's listing, *apilāpanatā* is preceded by two abstract nouns, both of which convey the sense of "remembrance," namely, *saraṇatā* and *dhāraṇatā*. This clearly suggests that, when this list was made, *apilāpanatā* was considered a synonym or near-synonym of these two terms. A subsequent part of the Vibhaṅga then gives a definition of the term *muṭṭha,sacca*, "loss of mindfulness," by providing again a list of synonyms. In the Pāli language, an *a-* prefixed to a word serves to negate it. Hence, in order to turn a particular term into its opposite, one either prefixes an *a-* or else, if the term is already a negative (beginning with an *a-*), we drop that initial vowel. On adopting this procedure, the terms *saraṇatā* and *dhāraṇatā* become *asaraṇatā* and *adhāraṇatā,* respectively.

6.1.2.2 The same word-formation applies to the term *apilāpanatā*, with the result that it takes on an initial (negating) *a-*. The final outcome is thus the term *pilāpanatā* [6.3.2] joins the list of terms to describe a "loss of mindfulness" (Vbh 360). A problem with this lexical register is that *apilāpana* was not originally formed from a combination of *a-* and *pilāpana* but rather of ***api*** + ***lāpana***.

In this way, the division of the term in this part of the Vibhaṅga (and also in other Abhidharma books, such as the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī) involves a separation of the term at the *wrong* place. As a result, *apilāpana* (or its abstract form *apilāpanatā*) is given a new meaning. K R Norman explains that

> the initial *a-* was taken to be a negative, and its opposite was created by removing the *a-* … and the resultant *pilāpantā* was explained as "floating" … a distinction is therefore made between *muṭṭhasacca*, which is connected with things floating on the (surface of the) mind, and *sati* which is connected with things not floating, ie entering into the mind.
> ("Pali lexicographical studies V," JPTS 12, 1988:50)

6.1.2.3 According to Rupert Gethin, reflecting on Buddhaghosa's comments in his Attha,sālinī (DhsA 121 f), that:

> [39] *apilāpana* seems to have been misunderstood or at least reinterpreted by the Pāli Abhidhamma tradition … it seems to me the Milindapañha [6.2.1] … preserves the original significance of the term.

---

[343] See J Bronkhorst, "Dharma and Abhidharma," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* 48 1985:305-320.

The Dhammasaṅganī creates a pair of opposites, *apilāpanatā* and *pilāpanatā*, which are used to explain *sati* and *muṭṭhasati* ("lost mindfulness") respectively.[344] Now *apilāpanatā* would seem to mean "not floating [on the object of the mind]" and *pilāpanatā* "floating [on the object of the mind]." This, at least, is evidently how the commentarial Abhidhamma tradition took the terms [DhsA 147,11-13] …

[40] It seems that because the commentaries fail to recognize *api-lapati* (= *abhi-lapati*), they therefore make use of a rather different image: *sati* is the mental quality that sub-merges itself in the objects of the mind; when there is no *sati* the mind floats or drifts on the objects of the mind.   (*The Buddhist Path to Awakening,* Leiden, 1992:38, 40)

Whether this is an error or a reinterpretation, the end result is a conception of mindfulness that differs considerably from the early Buddhist sutta passages examined earlier. Hence, "mindfulness," instead being of a "receptive monitoring" quality that does not interfere, comes to be seen as being much more *active*, to the extent of "plunging"[345] into its object. This new way of viewing mindfulness significantly changes the way it is understood, and it defines how Vipassana meditation is done today in the modern Theravāda.

6.1.3 Mindfulness and modern Vipassana meditation

6.1.3.1 What we know today as **Vipassana meditation** (or Insight meditation) is the best known Buddhist meditation globally. It has become now the Vipassana movement but has effectively split into two or three independent groups: the International Meditation Centre (Heddington, Calne, UK), the American Vipassana (Insight Meditation Society, Barre, MA, & Spirit Rock, Marin County, CA) and Goenka's Vipassana movement (Igatpuri, Nasik, Maharashtra, India).[346]

The roots of "Vipassanā," the widely taught practice of insight meditation, go back to the ideas and teaching activities of the scholar-monk **Ledi Sayādaw** in Myanmar during the period of British colonization. In order to fortify local Buddhists against the destabilizing effects of foreign rule and the loss of the patronage that the local government had earlier afforded Buddhism, Ledi Sayādaw began teaching Abhidhamma to the laity.[347]

According to post-Buddha prophecies, the decline of Dharma will start with the disappearance of the Abhidharma, beginning with the last of its 7 books, the Paṭṭhāna.[348] Hence, an attempt to prevent such a decline naturally focused on the preservation of Abhidharma teachings. Besides en-couraging the formation of Abhidharma study groups, Ledi Sayādaw also taught insight meditation as a means to facilitate a direct and personal experience of these Abhidharma teachings. The type of meditation taught was meant to lead to an experience of the ultimate realities listed in a popular 11th-century handbook of Abhidharma, Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha [1.2.1.3].

6.1.3.2 In such an ambience, the later Abhidhamma and commentarial construct of mindfulness naturally has a strong influence on the Vipassana teachers and students even today. Based on the understanding of *apilāpanatā* as overlapping with *pilāpanatā*, mindfulness is conceived as a quality that "plunges" into its objects [6.1.2.3].

---

[344] Fhs 11, 232; at Dhs 232 *apilāpanatā* is to be corr to *pilāpanatā,* cf DhsA 405; Vbh 360. (Gethin's n)

[345] The Pali for "plunge (into)" is *ajjhogahati,*but this is never used for *sati.* On the Buddha's "plunging (*ajjh-ogāhetvā*) (into the forest)," see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18,2.2), SD 6.14.

[346] On the history of modern Vipassana since Ledi Sayadaw, see SD 60.1b (2). On the split between Goenka and IMC, see SD 60.1b (2.5).

[347] See eg Erik Braun, *Birth of Insight,* Chicago, 2013a; also SD 60.1b (233-235).

[348] AA 1:88 f; T Endo, "The disappearance of the true Dhamma (*Saddhamma-antaradhāna*): Pāli commenta-rial interpretations," 2004:235-255; also **Dharma-ending Age**, SD 1.10.

The influence of this idea can be clearly seen, for example, in the teachings of the Vipassanā teacher U Sīlananda on the role of mindfulness in the insight meditation as taught in the Mahāsi tradition. The following passage shows the degree to which the making of a strong effort has become an intrinsic quality of mindfulness:

> Mindfulness is something like a stone hitting a wall. In order to throw a stone, you must put out energy. You throw the stone with energy and it hits the wall. Like the stone hitting the wall, mindfulness hits the object. Whatever the objects are the breath, or the move-ments of the abdomen, or the activities of the body your mind, as it were, goes to the objects. That hitting of the object is mindfulness.
>
> (U Sīlananda, *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness,* Boston, 1990:21)

Another teacher from the same Vipassanā tradition, U Paṇḍita, similarly explains:

> "Mindfulness" must be dynamic and confrontative. In retreats, I teach that mindfulness should leap forward onto the object … if we throw a cork into a stream, it simply bobs up and down on the surface, floating downstream with the current. If we throw a stone instead, it will immediately sink to the very bed of the stream. So, too, mindfulness ensures that the mind will sink deeply into the object and not slip superficially past it.
>
> (*In This Very life: The liberating teachings of the Buddha.* Kandy, 1992:99)

This definition agrees with the one quoted earlier. In the quote from U Paṇḍita the element of a strong focus is particularly evident. This is what enables a "deep sinking" into the object, and not merely hover about on the surface superficially.

This is in fact the interpretation given in the Visuddhi,magga. [6.3.4]

6.1.3.3 Compared to an early Buddhist perspective of mindfulness (*sati*), this later understanding and application of mindfulness may be seen as a somewhat specific application of mindfulness when it occurs in conjunction with *other* qualities, in particular a strong focus and considerable effort. This particular view of mindfulness came to be a central influence on Vipassanā meditation traditions that spread from Myanmar to other parts of the world, and in turn on how mindfulness came to be understood in some groups in the West.

Analayo, in his carefully researched criticism of "How mindfulness came to plunge into its object" (2019), is judicious not to be summarily judgemental, but the clear truth and calm urgency of his message are clear:

> Pointing out such developments is not meant to imply that only the type of mindfulness described in early Buddhism is correct and that differing conceptions of this quality are wrong. Mindfulness is such a versatile and multidimensional quality that the existence of different definitions that take up specific aspects of this quality is hardly surprising. Moreover, insight meditation traditions based on the idea of mindfulness as a quality that plunges into its objects have been remarkably successful and have changed the lives of many for the better.
>
> The above exploration [Analayo's paper] is therefore only meant to show a historical development that led to a certain understanding of mindfulness, in order to clarify that this is not the only way of conceptualizing sati. The type of mindfulness cultivated in vipassanā meditation practice that follows the Mahāsi Sayādaw tradition can be understood to occur invariably in combination with considerable effort and focus, in order to plunge into its objects. Although a valid approach, this is clearly not the only possible way of cultivating mindfulness in insight meditation.
>
> In sum, mindfulness in the early Buddhist discourses appears to be a receptive and non-interfering quality. Due to a misunderstanding or a reinterpretation of a particular Pāli term,

in the course of time a different notion of mindfulness as plunging into its objects arose, which had considerable influence on the nascent revival of insight meditation and in turn on understandings of mindfulness in its current usage. From the viewpoint of current research on mindfulness, it would be helpful to distinguish clearly the different constructs of mindfulness in existence, each of which has its particular value and potential, in order to adjust research accordingly.   (2019:1185)

6.2 FROM PLUNGING TO FLOATING

6.2.1 Memory

6.2.1.1 Memory (Skt *smṛti*; old sense of *sati*) is a vital function of mindfulness (*sati*), reminding us that we need to keep our mind anchored to the Dharma (as real teaching and true reality). Hence, post-Buddha Buddhist literature often reminds us to "keep hold" to the *dhamma* (which can mean the teaching, but more likely, mind-object), not to "float away" from it, and so on. Let us examine a few important related terms in this connection.

An early paracanonical work of Buddhist apologetics, **the Milinda,pañha**,[349] records a fictional question-and-answer dialogue between the monk Nāgasena and king Milinda (Menander of Bactria, 2nd century BCE). At one point, Milinda asks Nāgasena for a definition of, among other qualities, mindfulness.

Nāgasena explains that **mindfulness** has 2 distinctive characteristics of "recalling" (*apilāpana*) and "keeping hold" (*upagaṇhana*): we shall examine both terms. The term ***apilāpana*** (*a-pilāpana*) is especially elusive, but may be surmised from Parable 1, that of the wheel-turner, that is used to illustrate it.

(1) THE FIRST PARABLE OF THE WHEEL-TURNER goes thus:

It is like the Wheel-turning King's treasurer [steward][350] who reminds (*sārapeti*) the king morning and evening of his glory. He causes the king to delve into thoughts (***apilāpeti***)[351] of his property, saying,
"Let my lord remember (*saratu*): so many, sire, are your elephants, so many horses, chariots, foot soldiers, so much your silver, gold, property!"
In the same way, maharajah, when mindfulness arises, it ***causes us to delve into thoughts*** of various qualities and their opposites—wholesome and unwholesome, with faults and faultless, inferior and refined, dark and pure—[recalling],
"These are the 4 foundations of mindfulness, these the 4 right strivings, these the 4 bases of success, these the 5 faculties, these the 5 powers, these the 7 awakening factors, this the noble eightfold path, this calm, this insight, this knowledge, this freedom."
As a result, the meditator (*yogāvacara*) resorts to qualities that should be resorted to and not to those that should not be resorted to; he embraces qualities that should be embraced and not those that should not be embraced.   (Miln 37,8-16; Miln:H 1:51)

The Milinda,pañha's Commentary (**Milinda Ṭīkā**)[352] explains *apilāpeti* (a causative verb) as meaning "causes one to delve into (a mind-object)," as we have noted above. This was probably a late ex-

---

[349] Milinda's questions (Miln, not earlier than 2nd cent BCE), is extant in Pali and Chin (P Demiéville, "Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha [The Chinese versions of the Milindapañha]," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient,* 24,1 1924:1-258.

[350] See n on the "commander jewel" in Parable 2 below.

[351] MilnṬ explains *apilāpana,lakkhaṇa* as "of the characteristic of immersing, in the sense of going right into, the mind's object" (*ārammaṇe anupavisan'atthena ogaḷhana,lakkhaṇā,* MilnṬ 10,21).

planation (by the 15ᵗʰ century MilnṬ author). Its older etymology was probably: *a* (not) + *pilāpeti* (causing or allowing to "float") [6.2.1]. Either way, it implies directing our mind to the past, recalling a certain event or state, or what we know about the present object. Hence, it means more than just "recalling" something, but is *caused* by an "external" trigger. In other words, it is a passive reaction of the mind to an object, here that of "recalling" <u>wholesome</u> qualities.

(2) THE 2ᴺᴰ PARABLE OF THE WHEEL-TURNER illustrates the 2ⁿᵈ characteristic of mindfulness mentioned in the Milinda,pañha, that of "**keeping hold**" (*upagaṇhana*), which seems to be a synonym of *apilāpeti*, reiterating the function of mindfulness as keeping an object before the mind. However, from its parable, *upagaṇhana* clearly connotes something more:

> It is like a Wheel-turning King's <u>commander jewel</u>,[353] knowing what is beneficial and unbeneficial to the king, [he thinks,]
> "These things are good, these not good, these beneficial, these unbeneficial."
> As a result, he gets rid of the unbeneficial things and *keeps hold* of the beneficial.
> In the same way, when <u>mindfulness</u> arises, it follows the course (*gati*) of the beneficial and unbeneficial qualities, [and knows,]
> "These qualities are good, these not good; these beneficial, these unbeneficial."
> As a result, the meditator gets rid of qualities that are not good, and *keeps hold* of the good qualities; he gets rid of unbeneficial qualities and *keeps hold* of beneficial qualities.

(Miln 37 f)

This 2ⁿᵈ parable suggests that <u>mindfulness</u> not only "delves into" (draws our attention to) the mind-object, that is, keeps it before the mind; mindfulness is also understood to follow the course or outcome of the mind's states, keeping track of which states are wholesome and which are unwholesome. At this stage, when we directly "take hold" of the wholesome, it is <u>right mindfulness</u>. When the object is seen in an unwholesome way (such as mindfully breaking a safe in a robbery), it is wrong mindfulness, meaning that it entails bad karma.

Both of these Milinda,pañha parables thus work to draw out significant implications of the quality of the states that the mind holds. This makes **mindfulness** something more than merely sustaining attention, but applying some past memory to it in attending to a present state or getting something done. In this limited sense, mindfulness is itself a neutral activity that simply keeps and holds the object of awareness; but with *right view*, it becomes <u>right mindfulness</u>.

6.2.1.2 The Niddesa [4.4.3] gives an early canonical explanation of <u>mindfulness</u> (*sati*) as *keeping and holding* the mind's object of meditation. Explaining the term **sato** (adj)*,* "(one who is) mindful," the Mahā Niddesa refers to one who practises the 4 focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) [5.2]; then, to the set of 6 inspiring recollections (*anussati*)—of the Buddha, the Dharma, the sangha, moral virtue, charity, and the gods [5.7.2]—along with the mindfulness of death, of the breath, of the body, and the recollection of peace (nirvana).

Then, it lists the following terms as synonyms of (right) mindfulness: recollection (*anussati*), recalling (*paṭissati*), remembering (*saraṇatā*), keeping in mind (*dhāraṇatā*), not forgetting (*asammussanatā*), the faculty (*indriya*) of mindfulness, the power (*bala*) of mindfulness, right mindfulness as path-factor (*magg'aṅga*), the constituent of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*) that is mindfulness, the direct path

---

[352] MilnṬ—called Milinda,pañha Vaṇṇanā (Gandha,vaṁsa 65,29) or Madhurattha Pakāsinī—in its colophon states Mahātipiṭaka Cūḷābhayatthera (MilnṬ 71,24 f) as its author, and prob written in 1474 (Jaini (ed), MilnṬ, London: PTS 1961:xiv); Norman, *Pali Literature,* 1983b:150.

[353] The "commander jewel" (*pariṇāyaka,ratana*), is one of the wheel-turner's "7 jewels" (*satta,ratana*); so is the "steward jewel" (*gaha,pati ratana*), who is simply said to the "treasurer" [parable 1]: **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17,1.7-17) + SD 36.12 (3); **Bāla Paṇḍita S** (M 129,33-41), SD 2.22.

(*ekāyaṇa,magga*) (Nm 9 f; cf Nm 347, 506). This register of words for *mindfulness* is thus a summary of the 7 sets [5.1.3].

These terms reinforce the basic understanding of mindfulness as holding or keeping in mind, especially directed towards the objects specified in the exercises of the focuses of mindfulness. But this list also includes the first of the 2 terms used in the Milinda,pañha [6.1.1, 12.2.3]: *apilāpana*, which is given in several paracanonical[354] Pali texts as the special characteristic of mindfulness.[355]

6.3 APILĀPANA AND PILĀPANA

6.3.1 We have noted in the Milinda,pañha passage explaining *sato* above [6.2.1.2], where its context requires that *apilāpana* means something like "recalling," that is, the mind "not floating away (from the meditation object)"; hence, it has a positive sense, as we have noted. In this connection, **the Netti-p,pakaraṇa** defines mindfulness thus:[356]

> *Yathā,diṭṭhaṁ apilāpan'aṭṭhena sati*
> "It is mindfulness in the sense of 'not floating away' (from its object) as it is seen"
> (Nett 15,18)

> *Apilāpana,lakkhaṇā sati. Tassā satipaṭṭhānaṁ padaṭṭhānaṁ*
> "Mindfulness has the characteristic of 'non-drifting' (from its object). Its footing is the foundation of mindfulness."   (Nett 28,13 f)

A Dictionary of Pali (DP) defines (based on the Commentaries) *pilāpana* as *"*(just) floating, not going deep into; letting float." The word *apilāpanatā* appears in the Abhidhamma definition of <u>mindfulness</u>, thus:

> *Ya tasmiṁ samaye sati anussati paṭissati <u>sati</u> saraṇatā dhāraṇatā apilāpanatā asam-mussanatā.*
> "That which on that occasion is (right) <u>mindfulness</u>, recollection, remembrance, <u>mindfulness</u> (as mental factor), holding in mind, not drifting, not forgetting."
> (Dhs §14/11,10-12; Pug 25,16-19)

Note in the above broad definition of mindfulness that *sati* is repeated: while the 1st mention refers to "right mindfulness," a path-factor, the 2nd is a general mental factor. The repetition of *asati* is also found in the definition of unmindfulness below.[357]

6.3.2 The term *pilāpanatā* is found in Abhidhamma in the definition of "forgetfulness" (*muṭṭhasacca, muṭṭha,sati*) (the opposite of "mindfulness"):

> *Yā asati[358]ananussati appaṭissati asati asaraṇatā adhāraṇatā pilāpanatā sammussanatā.*

---

[354] "Paracanonical" refers to those Pali texts on the fringes of the canon composed prob after the Buddha's time, such as the Peṭakopadesa, Netti-p-pkaraṇa, and Milinda,pañha, some of which are, however, regarded as canonical in the Burmese tradition.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracanonical_texts_(Theravada_Buddhism).

[355] Peṭk 187; Nett 15, 28, 54; Nm 10, 347, 506; Nm:Be 30. See Gethin, "Buddhist conceptualizations of mindfulness," in (ed) K W Brown et al, *Handbook of Mindfulness,* NY & London, Guilford Press, 2015b:18-20.

[356] See CPD for other forms: *a-pilāpana,* "not allowing any floating" (MA 1:82,31; NettA as Nett 28,13, 54,11); *a-pilāpeti,* "not to allow any floating" (Miln 37,9; MA 1:82,33-83,2 where MAPṬ=DhsAMṬ; DhsA 121,27). On *apilāpanatā,* see SD 60.1d (6.2.3.5).

[357] See Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization,* 2003:51 f.

[358] Ee *anussati* wr; the privative *a-* should be dropped in *apilāpanatā, asammussanatā:* both are wr.

"The unmindfulness that is non-recollection, non-remembrance, unmindfulness (as a mental factor), not holding in mind, mental drifting, forgetting."

(Dhs §1349/232,7 f; Vbh 360,39-41, 373,6-8; Pug 21,14 f)

Pilānatā (*pilāna* + *tā*) is the abstract noun of **pilāna**, the cognate of the Sanskrit form **plavana** (from √PLU, to swim or float), *"*(1) swimming, floating; (2) sloping towards, inclined." The Buddhist commentators were clearly challenged by the polysemy of such Sanskrit terms like *plavana.* Such commentaries may understand or use such terms in their Pali forms differently from one another. However, such difficulties may always be cleared up by carefully examining the context or comparing the texts themselves (the intratextual context).

6.3.3 Note that **pilāna** and its various forms, both positive and negative, occur neither in the suttas nor the Vinaya, but only in the Abhidhamma. Further, the form **pilāpanatā**, "the state of floating, not going deep (into the mind-object)," is found only in the Abhidhamma, and it was common in later works. This shows that this family of words first arose during the early Abhidhamma period in connection with the explanation of <u>mindfulness</u> (*sati*).

Even then, during that formative period, there seemed to be 2 different derivations or etymologies for the negative verb **a-pilapati.** The Milinda,pañha (originating in the north of India, probably 4th-century Central Asia or Kashmir) came up with its derivation from *api-lāpati* (from Skt *abhi-lapati*), "to talk or speak about." The Abhidhamma scholars (probably from South India or Sri Lanka) derived it from *pilavati* (from Skt *plavate,* "to float or swim").[359] [6.1.1.2]

6.3.4 According to the Pali Commentaries (4th-5th century CE), <u>mindfulness</u> is therefore characterized as the mind's "not floating about" (*apilāpana*), that is, its "immersion in" (*ogāhana*) or "going right into" (*anupavisana*) the mind's object. This is to be contrasted with the "floating about" characteristic of "<u>forgetfulness</u>," when the mind floats away from the mind's objects, "bobbing about on the water like a gourd or a pot" (*lābu,kaṭah'ādīni*) (DhsA 147, 405).

Buddhaghosa elaborates on <u>mindfulness</u> in this way:

Sati is what remembers, or it is (the act of) remembering itself, or it is the means by which (the mind) remembers. Its characteristic is **not floating about**[360] (*apilāpana*); its property is the absence of forgetting; its manifestation, guarding or being face to face with the mind's object; its basis is steady perception (*thira,saññā*) or the application of mindfulness of the body, and so on. Because of its being firmly set in the mind's object, it should be seen as a pillar and, because it guards the gates that is the eye and other faculties like a gatekeeper.   (Vism 14.141/464; cf DhsA 121 f)[361] [8.3.9 (29) (1)]

---

[359] *Pilavati* occurs in *pilavati va me kayo,* "my body floats" (like cotton in the wind) (Tha 104d); *so palavati hurahuraṁ,* "he moves [jumps] hither thither" (like a monkey searching for fruit in a forest) (Dh 334c), where it reads as *uppalavati* (DhA:Ee 4:44), *uplavati* (*ut* + √PLU): DhA:Ce (ed A P Buddhadatta), DhA:Ce (ed K Ratanasara). Dh:Patna *sā prāplavate.* See DP *apilapati*; Cox (1992, pp. 79–82); Gethin (1992, pp. 38–39); Norman (1988, pp. 49–51). Geiger & Norman, *Pali Grammar* 1994:31.1, 179.4.

[360] "Not floating about," or "not wobbling"; opp *pilāpana*: SD 15.1 (8.5.2)*.* See SD 40a.9 (2.2.3.2); SD 60.1b (8.2.1.1); SD 6.1d (6.2.3.5).

[361] What we have discussed thus far gives the essential points of the various aspects of mindfulness in the suttas. Similar definitions are found in the other traditions, but usually more succinctly. Similarly, they highlight mindfulness as simply "not losing" (*asaṁpramoṣa, avipramoṣa*) the mind's object, as recalling it to mind (*abhi-lāpana*). The 5th-cent Vaibhāṣika-Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma,dipa* (Lamp of Abhidharma) defines mindfulness as "a type of function of the mind; it is recalling (*abhilāpana*) the mind's purpose; it has the characteristic of not losing an action, whether it is something done, to be done or being done" (69) Asaṅga (4th cent), a founder of the Yogācāra school, defines mindfulness in his *Abhidharma,samuccaya* (Compendium of Abhidharma) as "not mentally losing a familiar object … in effect non-distraction" (16.3 f).

6.3.5 Hence, to be "mindful" applies both to when we are working with the mind (minding and meditating) and acting through the body and speech (in daily life). In both these situations, we should always be guarded: there should be sense-restraint. To use the Pali apophatic idiom (skilful language via negation) this refers to being _not_ heedless (**appamāda**), not being distracted. This means to guard our mind from being led astray by greed, hatred or delusion.

The Commentaries tell us that *appamāda*, "heedfulness," as used in the suttas, is, in fact, a term for *sati*.[362] Furthermore, the Sarvāstivāda included *appamāda* in their list of mental factors (*caitta*) of universal wholesome consciousness (*kuśala,mahā.bhūmika*).[363] Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharmakośa* defines *apramada* (Skt for *appamāda*) as follows:

> Heedfulness (*apramada,* "non-heedlessness") is the cultivation of wholesome states. But what kind of cultivation is different from these (wholesome states)? That which is directed to them. The followers of other schools[364] take the Sūtras as saying that [*apramāda*] is the guarding of the mind.[365]   (Abhk 55.07-09)

6.4 THE WOBBLE

6.4.1 After a ponderous technical survey of the origins and usages of words related to mindfulness, we will turn to look at some practical aspects of the nature of **apilāpana**, "*not* mentally drifting, floating, or wobbling" [6.2], that is, keeping the mind from moving away from its object when trying to focus, or during a near-dhyana state. We have noted that our task in meditation or mindfulness practice in daily life is "to set up our mindfulness" so that it is anchored to the object; then, we have "presence of mind" (*upaṭṭhitā,sati*).[366]

Dhyana (*jhāna*) is a most beautiful and pure mental state when the mind has fully renounced the body; that is, the mind is fully free of the 5 mental hindrances [5.1.1]. "We" are then, as it were, no more in control of things. The mind has settled itself like a bright crystal-clear ball on a perfectly level plane with only a single point of contact at a tangent. Everything is, in fact, on autopilot, and we have no sense of control whatsoever.

However, before attaining such a state, while we are still working to gain the 1st dhyana, while we are in some blissful state of radiant peace, we may sometimes be distracted by a subtle apparent movement called "the wobble" or bobbing (**pilāpana**). This is, of course, a new sense, a useful one, derived from *apilapati* [6.1.1.2], a source we should well remember for the sake of proper perspective in meditation terminology and development.

This bliss is overwhelming but we still have latent tendencies (*anusaya*) [5.5.2] because we are unawakened. We may still have traces of attachment in that blissful state, or a sense of the bliss and power of the dhyana, and desiring it, or even being amazed at it! In other words, the equilibrium, the renunciation, is disturbed. We may even subtly try to grasp at it, concerned about not losing it. There

---

[362] Cf Buddhaghosa who glosses *appamāda* as "non-absence" *(avippavāsa)* of *sati* (DA 1:104). Dhammapāla gives the same explanation but adds: "It is a name for permanence of established *sati;* but some say that when they occur by means of the application of *sati* and *sampajañña,* the 4 formless aggregates (feeling, perception, formations and consciousness) are *appamāda*" (*niccaṁ upaṭṭhitāya satiyā eva c'etaṁ nāmaṁ. apare pana sati,-sampajañña,yogena pavattā cattāro arūpino khandhā uppamado ti vadanti,* ItA 1:80).

[363] Abhk 55/7-55.9 = Abhk:Pr 5.25.2/1:292.

[364] The Mahāsaṅghika (Abhk:Pruden 1:336 n123).

[365] *Apramādaḥ kuśalānāṁ dharmānāṁ bhāvanāḥ. Kā punas te bhyo'nyā bhāvanā. Yā teṣv avahitatā. cetasa ārakṣeti nikāyântarītāḥ sūtre paṭhanti.* (Abhk 55.07-09). This reading (based on Gethin 2001:43 f) seems to vary slightly from Abhk:Pr 1:191.

[366] For such instruction in the Burmese practice, see SD 60.1d (6.2.3.5 f).

is an almost involuntary "struggle" by the mind to keep the equilibrium: this gives rise to the "wobble" in the 1st dhyana.[367]

6.4.2 Another way of looking at this **wobble** is as the involuntary shifting between grasping for the bliss and automatic letting-go of it. This is, in fact, the subtle working of the dhyana-factors of "initial application" (*vitakka*) and "sustained application" (*vicāra*). *Vicāra* is the involuntary grasping of the bliss, while *vitakka* is the natural shift back into the bliss. Ironically here, it is in letting go of the bliss that we remain in clear focus: what we are letting go of is the attachment; then, we really enjoy it, as it were.

Outside of meditation, *vitakka,vicāra*[368] usually function as "thinking and pondering"; when a thought arises, we follow it, keeping to it.[369] This is noticeable even in deep concentration when we are absorbed in the present moment of a profoundly enjoyable state (like playing music or perform-ing something we really enjoy)—the moment we notice this thinking process (when we think about it), we notice that we lose that sense of bliss for that moment! This is the wobble. Technically, then, *vitakka* and *vicāra* during dhyana and deep concentration are both subverbal, and so do not really qualify as normal thought: it is *the mind's sigh of bliss.*[370]

6.4.3 While the mind may "**wobble**" during the 1st dhyana or in deep concentration, it does so more often in our mundane thinking on account of a sense-stimulus (a sense-experience) or a mental stimulus (an idea): in either case, a thought arises, we follow it, examine the details, and get caught up in them. This feeds our latent tendencies: this means that we will *keep on blissfully repeating our-selves* like parrots cleverly echoing what we have been programmed to say.

It's like when Romeo (in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* act 2, scene 2) first notices Juliet: "But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?" Then, he sees the sun that is Juliet. It starts with the sign (*nimitta*) of Juliet, and he is sucked into the details (*anuvyañjana*) of the sight of Juliet on the balcony. The star-crossed young couple is then embroiled in a tragic love-affair making an early end of their unfinished lives. [6.4.3]

We may not be caught in such a romance but we often have love affairs with shopping. In a shop-ping mall, we often hear piped music whose tempo, loudness and style set our mood for buying the products even before we are inside. Music enhances the retail experience by pepping us up with cat-chy pop tunes or a soothing embrace of soft music. Hearing the music, we feel warmly enveloped in a private space of pleasure as we move around in comfort and readiness to spend.[371]

Slow, soft music tends to move the crowd more slowly (for more purchases), while louder, fast music is likely to speed up the footwork of the crowd, allowing more customers to enter the store. A 2005 study showed that people buy more impulsively with a background of pleasant music.[372] Classic-

---

[367] On "wobbling" during dhyana, see SD 15.1 (8.5.2-8.5.4).

[368] On the def of these dhyana-factors, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (6).

[369] See *Vitakka,vicāra*, SD 33.4.

[370] On a meditation scholar's erroneous view that thought occurs during dhyana, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.2.2).

[371] Donovan and Rossiter, 1982 writes on how customers are induced to spend money through the pleasure-arousal-dominance (PAD) model.

[372] Maureen Morrin, in a 2005 study presented to the American Psychological Association concluded that music alone caused impulse buyers to purchase more, while scent alone (specifically a citrus scent) encouraged non-impulse buyers to spend more. But when *both* music and scent were present in a shop, income from im-pulse and non-impulse buyers decreased.

al music, it seems, induces people to buy more expensive products.[373] A 2013 research showed that an effective music strategy helps boost staff morale, focus and productivity.[374]

Understanding how such strategies used by stores and malls to make us spend more helps us better immunize ourselves against being induced to do so. We may not be able to move around the store with our eyes and ears closed, but having a shopping list of necessities and a determination to go to just where the products are, and leaving just with them, is a practice in self-discipline. With greater mindfulness, we can observe our mind that is pondering over whether to buy an advertised product: "I don't really need this!"

Once we have some understanding of the shopping ambience (music, product display, discount offers, etc), we are better prepared to do wholesome mindful shopping. It also helps that we plan ahead what to buy, and for some shopping alone may help. We should take this as a training in daily mindfulness in dealing with the world for simple happy living by watching out *the signs and details* while we are shopping. Our 3 true friends for a happier life in the world are *effort, mindfulness and focus*. The same, of course, applies in a life of Dharma practice.[375]

6.5 THE 3 FRIENDS OF RIGHT CULTIVATION

6.5.1 The Indian commentator Buddhaghosa, in his **Visuddhi,magga** ("the path of purity"),[376] explains how the eightfold path functions to promote spiritual progress as the "3 aggregates,"[377] that is, the training in moral virtue, concentration and wisdom. He illustrates the training in concentration (mental cultivation), with **the parable of the 3 friends**, showing how they cooperate to achieve their goal.

During a festival, 3 friends see a flowering champak tree (Magnolia champaca). The fragrant flowers, however, are way too high up, out of their reach. So the 1st friend bends down, and the 2nd stands on his back, but he is unable to reach the flowers because of his unsteadiness. Then the 3rd friend stands firm and offers his shoulders. The 2nd (standing on the back of the 1st) now steadies himself with one arm on the 3rd friend's shoulder. The 2nd friend, standing steadily on the back of the 1st is then able to happily gather whatever flowers they want. Then, adorning themselves with the fragrant flowers, they go about enjoying the festival.

Buddhaghosa explains that the 3 limbs—**right effort, right mindfulness** and **right concentration** —arising together, are like the 3 friends who enter the park together. The mind-object is like the champak tree in full bloom. **Concentration**, which cannot, by itself [of its own nature], bring about full concentration by mental one-pointedness (*ek'agga,bhāva*) through the object, is like the 2nd friend who is unable to reach the flowers with his arm. **Effort** is like the 1st friend who bends down, giving his back for support to gain some height. **Mindfulness** is like the 3rd friend who stands steadily by, giving his shoulder for support.

Just as the 3 friends, working together, could gather as many flowers as they want, so too, when effort accomplishes its task of *exerting*, and when mindfulness accomplishes its task of *preventing* mental wobbling or bobbing (*apilāpana,kicca*) [6.2], with such cooperation, **concentration** is gained through *mental oneness* in the object.[378] Working with different kinds of goodness we are able to produce better results.

---

[373] N Gueguen et al, a 2007 study stated that playing classical music in a wine store increased sales by inducing customers to buy more expensive merchandise from the same country that the music was from.

[374] Thomas Schafer, et al, in a 2013 paper published in *Frontiers of Psychology*, explained how previous research categorized the response to music into 4 psychological categories or dimensions: social, emotional, cognitive and arousal.

[375] See *Nimitta & anuvyañjana*, SD 19.14.

[376] Vism 16.95-101/514 f.

[377] This is found in question 10 of **Cula Vedalla S** (M 44,11), SD 40a.9.

[378] See SD 40a.9 (2.2.3.2).

6.5.2 In terms of our own meditation and mindfulness practice, we should start off by putting in **effort**, directed both internally (to ourself) and externally (the environment). Internal right effort refers to our keeping the precepts (that is, at least the 5 precepts,[379] or the Vinaya in the case of a monastic). While on retreat, it is wise to be celibate[380] so that we can focus all our energies, bodily and mental, to our effort in cultivating the mind. External right effort refers to properly preparing a space for our meditation so that we are safe and undisturbed in every way so that we can focus on meditating, or to select a suitable space in open nature, and preparing ourself (suitable clothing, drinking water, etc).

   Mindfulness refers to our actual efforts in meditation, that is, keeping the mind on the object of awareness, especially when doing satipatthana [1.1.7.2]. The easiest way is to start with breath meditation (a **body**-based meditation).[381] If this is difficult, then we should use the cultivation of lovingkindness[382] to summon sufficient joyful energy as a support for focusing on the breath.

   We should also understand the nature of **feelings** (*vedanā*), that is, our tendency to like or dislike things, and see all these as impermanent events. As we become better at meditation, we are better able to see and understand how **thoughts** (the mind, *citta*) work; again, in our practice, we only need to see how a thought arises and passes away. Finally, we learn to see the nature of reality as **mind-objects** (*dhamma*) and examine them [10.1.4].

6.5.3 As we get better at keeping ourself mindful, we are able to notice the very first sign (*nimitta*) of an unwholesome thought, or even a wholesome thought, for that matter. During meditation, we simply let go of this sign, thus keeping closed Pandora's box[383] (our past latent tendencies and present karma) from flooding our mind with distracting details (*anuvyañjana*). As we get better at this vital minding skill, our mental **concentration** (*samadhi*) will grow and blossom.

   After a spell of mental concentration or dhyana, emerging from it, we should gently and naturally direct our mind to the perception of impermanence (*anicca,saññā*). A good start here is to reflect on the impermanence and conditionality of the calm and clear concentration we just had: it comes and it goes. Then, we perceive *impermanence* in whatever state or event that comes to mind; nei-

---

[379] On the 5 precepts, see *Sīlânussati*, SD 15.11 (2.2); SD 21.6 (1.2.3); SD 37.8 (2.2).

[380] On celibacy (*brahmacariya*), see SD 29.6a (5.3).

[381] On breath meditation, see **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118,5-7 + 15-22) SD 7.13.

[382] On the cultivation of lovingkindness, see **Karaṇīya Metta S** (Khp 9 = Sn 1.8) & SD 38.3 (6).

[383] In Gk mythology, **Pandora** (*pan,* "all," + *dora,* "gifted") was the first woman, created by Hephaestus out of clay (earth and water) on Zeus' instructions, as a retribution upon humans on account of the titan (mythical pre-human) Prometheus' stealing fire from the gods and giving it to man. Pandora herself is endowed with gifts from the gods: Athena clothes her, Aphrodite makes her beautiful, Hermes makes her deceitful, so that she is attractive to Epimetheus (brother of Prometheus).

   Her myth is a theodicy for the existence of evil in the world. Her creation is as a way of smuggling through a set of curses—every god contributes "a plague to men who eat bread" (Hesiod WD 82), and that's what goes in the jar. According to Hesiod's *Theogony* (570-612), each god gave Pandora a plague to smuggle with her into the world of men. Once she had been taken in by Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, she unstopped the jar (*pithos;* popularly referred to as "Pandora's box"), with the result that "countless plagues wander amongst men; for Earth is full of evils, and the sea is full" (Hesiod WD 100).

   Scholars have argued that this interpretation of Pandora's story influenced both Jewish and Christian theology and so perpetuated her bad reputation into the Renaissance. A great deluge sent by Zeus destroyed all mankind, except for Pyrrha (Pandora's daughter) and Deucalion, who repopulated the Earth.

   Clearly, Pandora is not to be blamed. As Hesiod himself points out, the moral of the story is that you can't out-run Zeus. Pandora is the means of punishment, but it is Zeus who is doing the punishing. The plagues and evils are his work, not hers.

   Ref: Hesiod, *Works and Days,* lines 5-102 (accessed 14 Apr 2023):
http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0020.tlg002.perseus-eng1.

---

ther liking nor disliking any of them, we simply see them as being *impermanent*: they are of the nature to arise and pass away.

In time, we will find ourselves in some really deep and beautiful state, where we have fully freed ourselves from our body of senses and desires, from the mind of thoughts and uncertainties: we have attained dhyana (*jhāna*).[384] Yet, the purpose of early Buddhism is not to attain dhyana, beautiful and profound though it may be. The mental calm and clarity of dhyana, even of mindfulness, is helpful in our attaining some level of <u>knowledge and vision</u> of true reality which brings us true happiness and total freedom.

---

[384] See **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b.

7 A psychology of knowing

7.1 DO WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE?

7.1.1 We have a physical <u>body</u> but most of us know so very little about what really is going on in it.[385] We are compelled to react to <u>feelings</u> but don't really know why we do so. We think we remember some past event but it is really a heavily distorted <u>perception</u> of what really happened. When we react to how our body feels or to other bodies, we often hear a feedback in our head: this is really a reflex from the unconscious, our latent tendencies. We don't seem to have any control over our reactions to these <u>karmic fruitions</u>. We are drawn to *own* the pleasure as well as the pain: "I am this; this is me; this is mine."

   We are owning the "self" but we don't know what it really is. If we follow the Buddha Dharma, we would see this *cycle of activity-reactivity* as **the 5 aggregates** (*pañca-k,khandha*)—form, feelings, perception, formations and consciousness—but we do not really know how they function by way of <u>the 6 sense-bases</u> (*saḷ-āyatana*) [7.2.3]. Yet, we don't give it much thought and often don't care about it. We may perhaps only take an interest in these functions when there is some abnormality or malfunction; when we are sick or in pain, or facing some dismal failure. [7.4]

   Often we leave the care and healing of our own body and mind to others; we expect or hope that others will help us. We leave the study of the mind and matters of the heart to scientists and scholars, or religious figures, and think that they should know better about our own body and mind when we ourselves do not. On the other hand, we may go to the other extreme of assuming that when we know some science or Abhidhamma, we now know "everything."

7.1.2 For most of us, **the value or meaning of life** centres on our everyday engagement with the world. The world defines us—by our name, social status, titles, wealth, occupation, religion, even by our looks—we only know by appearances *who* we are, rather than <u>what</u> we really are. We want to delude others by our appearances, by what we are not. The reality is that we are simply deceived by our desires. Instead of learning about the deficiencies and dangers of such appearances and desires, we wear *social make-up and masks* or *personal charm and charisma* so that we will appear accepta-ble, perhaps desirable, even exciting to the world.

   As we age and time catches up with us, we see our own body, our world, our audience breaking up. There is no more of *who* we are: we then know ever less people, even fewer know us. We are left with **the remains of the day**.[386] In the evening of our life, we realize that we have been running after something we thought was bigger than ourself; we then realize too late we are nothing but a shadow cast in the light of others. We have wasted our life chasing and serving greatness, measuring ourself against others, when we could have grown with the day. We could have truly lived and loved, but never had the heart for it.

   To know we have missed the day makes us human; it is better than to perish unknowing like a hamster in its spinning wheel. To live and die *human*, when we make a habit of it, is to become human for a new day.

   Perhaps, we may just catch a glimmer, by the light of wisdom, of *what* we really were. Then, we really know or learn to know **what we really are**; and in the twilight of our thoughts and feelings, we become our own best friend (*kalyāṇa mitta*). Perhaps, there is still time for us to be good friends to others, humbly and wisely, telling our story so that they may live truly happy lives of meaning and purpose, a full bright day. Making others happy, we are surrounded by happiness.

---

[385] Much of this section [1.7] follows the clear and simple explanations by P A Prayudh, *Buddhadharma,* Bang-kok, 2021:37-96 (ch 2 Six sense spheres).

[386] Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989) is a modern classic about an English butler who has been conditioned to serve, and does so consummately, so that he could never learn to be happy for himself, or even reciprocate the love of others for him. See SD 60.1d (4.5.3.2). Also SD 7.9 (4.5.3.3); for similar works, see (4.5.3).

7.1.3 For most of us, the importance of life is in our engagement with the world. For a healthy relationship with the world, we must first understand what the world really is. According to early Buddhism, this worldly engagement is conducted through 2 avenues (*dvāra,* "door"):

(1) **Knowledge and experience** of the world by way of the 6 sense-doors (*phassa,dvāra*, "the doors of sense-contact"): the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. These sense-doors know only what they come in contact with, namely, the 6 sense-objects (*āyatana*):[387] forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects and mind-objects. These sense-experiences occur naturally all the time during our waking moments.

(2) **Conduct and response** to the world through the 3 doors of action (*kamma-dvāra*): the body (*kāya,dvāra*), speech (*vacī,dvāra*), and mind (*mano,dvāra*), producing physical actions (*kāya,kamma*), verbal actions (*vacī,kamma*), and mental actions (*mano,kamma*). These 3 kinds of karmic actions are either unwholesome (rooted in greed, hate or delusion) or wholesome (rooted in generosity, love or wisdom).

7.1.4 In terms of the 5 aggregates, avenue (1) [7.1.1] is form (*rūpa*), our **body** (*kāya*), comprising the 6 sense-faculties, their respective sense-objects and sense-consciousnesses. As a set, they are called the 18 elements (*aṭṭha,rāsa dhātu*), the bases of our conscious experience.[388] According to **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), this is "all" (*sabba*) that we can know: the 6 sense-faculties, the 6 sense-objects and the 6 sense-consciousness. They operate together to feed us sense-data (knowledge) through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking.[389] [8.1.3]

As for avenue (2), it is the 4th aggregate itself, that is, **karma-formations** (*saṅkhāra*). It comprises our various karmic deeds, wholesome, unwholesome and neutral, which arise and work, defined and dictated by intention (*cetanā*), often resulting in more bodily deeds, words and thoughts.

In the context of human experience, karma-formations are reclassified in 3 ways, that is according to:

(1) the intention,   that is, as wholesome or unwholesome;
(2) the karmic door   by which we act (through body, speech or mind); and
(3) the specific action performed   (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, unmindfulness, etc).

We will now go on to examine how such conduct shapes our mind, and how our mind, in turn, influences such conduct.[390]

7.2 EXPERIENCE AND KNOWING

7.2.1 Let us look more closely at the "**all**" (*sabba*) that are the tools of knowing, the objects of knowing and what is known. Broadly, we can call these our "senses": the special Pali term for the set is "element" (*dhātu*), that is, the "elements of knowledge." These 18 elements comprise our body-mind existence (our "world"), that is, **the 6 sense-faculties** (the 5 physical senses and the mind). Then, there are **the 6 sense-objects**, along with **the 6 sense-consciousnesses**.

To denote their actively cognitive (perceiving and conceiving) functions, we use the Pali term ***āyatana***. It is polysemic,[391] which etymologically means "it extends [stretches]" (*āyatati = tanoti*)[392]

---

[387] *Āyatana* means "sense-base," ie, "sphere of experience." Abhidhamma uses *ārammaṇa* here.
[388] SD 60.1d (2.1.1.7). See **Bahu,dhātuka S** (M 115,4) SD 29.1a; SD 17.13 (3.3.3).
[389] S 35.23/4:15 (SD 7.1).
[390] See P A Payutto, *Buddhadhamma* (tr R B Moore), Bangkok, 2021:37-39.
[391] On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2; 2.2); SD 54.3b (2.1.1.4).
[392] Payutto uses the verb "link" in the sense of "linked to the world" (2021:39).

and it leads (*nayati*) "to the extended" (*āyataṁ*) samsara.[393] Literally, *āyatana* means "dwelling-place, resting-place, abiding-place, meeting-place, region, tract" (CPD). Specifically here, it refers to "a field or sphere of contact" for each of the faculties and its respective objects, or collectively as "fields or spheres of contact."[394] It is also translated as "internal sense-base(s)" (*ajjhatt'āyatana*) or "sense-faculty (-ies)," and "external sense-base(s)" (*bahiddh'āyatana*) or "sense-object(s)."

7.2.2 Our "internal" sense-faculties (*āyatana*) "extend" our conscious body [5.3.1] and "link" it with the world (our external environment, to begin with, and stretching as far as our mind can sense or imagine) as our "sphere" of experience. Even then, the world only reveals limited bits and random pieces of itself to us, depending on our 6 <u>faculties</u> mentioned above, and extensions of these senses by way of inventions (such as the microscope, telescope, etc) and skills (like reading, writing, drawing and crafting) that help us see better, hear better, learn better, communicate better.

However, it seems that we have yet to invent (if it is possible) instruments for advancing our powers of smelling, tasting, and touching[395] (feeling). In fact, these 3 faculties are grouped together as simply "<u>the sensed</u>" (*muta*) in the well-known phrase, *diṭṭha,suta,muta,viññāta* [4.4]. For these senses (early Buddhism takes the mind as a sense too), we simply have to <u>cultivate</u> them, such as with meditation.

7.2.3 Generally speaking, the 6 external sense-objects—visual forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and mind-objects—are referred to by the term ***ārammaṇa***, which literally means "something that detains the mind" or "something that holds attention". In simple terms, they are "objects of attention."

the 6 sense-base:[396]		**that cognizes**:[397] [4.3.3]		**that is conscious as**:	
(1) eye	*cakkhu*	form	*rūpa*	seeing	*cakkhu,viññāṇa*
(2) ear	*sota*	sound	*sadda*	hearing	*sota,viññāṇa*
(3) nose	*ghāna*	smell	*gandha*	smelling	*ghāna,viññāṇa*
(4) tongue	*jivhā*	taste	*rasa*	tasting	*jivhā,viññāṇa*
(5) body	*kāya*	touches	*phoṭṭhabba*	touch (feeling)	*kāya,viññāṇa*
(6) mind	*mano*	mind-objects	*dhamma*[398]	minding	*mano,viññāṇa*

• the 6 sense-bases (internal *āyatana*): eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind.
• the 6 sense-objects (external *āyatana*): form (visible objects), sound (audible objects), smell (odorous objects), taste (sapid objects), touch (tangible objects), mind-objects (cognizable objects).
• 6 kinds of consciousness: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind-consciousness.

(D 33,2.2(1-3)/3:243 f)

Table 7.2.3 The 18 elements of cognition

---

[393] UA 1:41,32 f; ItA 2:168,20-169,22. Cf Vism 481 f; KhpA 82 f; PmA 1:83; VbhA 45 f.

[394] For details, see CPD: sv; DP: sv.

[395] "Touching" here is a broad term for easy reference in the often *non-technical spirit* of the suttas. Notwithstanding modern "haptic" developments in surgery:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361520161_Haptic_Feedback_and_Force-ased_Teleoperation_in_Surgical_Robotics.

[396] For teachings on <u>the 6 sense-bases</u>, see **Saḷ-āyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137/3:2116-222), SD 29.5 (1.2).

[397] In early Buddhist psychology, "cognize" may mean either "perceive" (in the case of the physical senses), or "conceive" (in the case of the mind). **Saṅgīti S** (D 33) refers to these with the suffix *-āyatana,* respectively as *rūp'āyatana,* and so on.

[398] For technical clarity, Abhidhamma refers to these "mind-objects" as *dhamm'ārammaṇa*, instead of simply *dhamma*, which is the most polysemic of Pali terms.

This should be elaborated as follows:

When an (internal) sense-faculty (*āyatana*) comes into contact with an (external)[399] object [12.7.4] of attention (*ārammaṇa*), an awareness specific to that individual sense arises.[400] When the eye comes into contact with forms, the awareness of "seeing" arises; when the ear comes into contact with sounds, the awareness of "hearing" arises, and so on. This awareness is called "**consciousness**" (*viññāṇa*), that is, the awareness of sense-objects.

There are thus 6 kinds of consciousness, corresponding to the 6 sense-faculties and the 6 sense-objects: eye-consciousness (seeing); ear-consciousness (hearing); nose-consciousness (smelling); tongue-consciousness (tasting); body-consciousness (touching); and mind-consciousness (awareness of mind-objects), as in **Table 7.2.3**.

7.2.4 Another term used for the 6 internal sense-bases (*āyatana*) is **indriya**, meaning "faculty" or, sometimes, "controlling faculty."[401] This term refers to the predominant or principal agent in a specific conscious act. The eye, for example, is the principal agent in cognizing forms, and the ear is the principal agent in cognizing sounds. The 6 faculties thus are: the eye-faculty (*cakkhu'ndriya*), the ear-faculty (*sot'indriya*), the nose-faculty (*ghān'indriya*), the tongue-faculty (*jivh'indriya*), the body-faculty (*kāy'indriya*), and the mind-faculty (*man'indriya*). The term *indriya* is generally used when referring to the active engagement of the sense-bases, to their operation in everyday life, and in the context of moral conduct, such as the restraint of the eye-faculty" (*cakku'ndriya saṁvara*).

The term **āyatana**, on the other hand, is generally used when referring to specific factors within a causal process (such as: "dependent on the eye and visual forms, eye-consciousness arises"), and also when referring to characteristics of the senses (such as: "the eye is impermanent").

Another term frequently used for the sense-bases when explaining specific factors within a causal process is **phass'āyatana**, "the basis or source of contact." Alternative terms referring to the external *āyatana*—the sense-objects (*ārammaṇa*)—include *gocara* ("resort, pasture," that is, a place for obtaining sustenance) and *visaya* ("range," "sphere of engagement"). These terms are common in the Abhidhamma and the Commentaries.

7.3 CONTACT AND FEELING

7.3.1   Although it is said that consciousness arises dependent on contact between a sense-faculty and its sense-object (eg, the eye and forms),[402] consciousness does not *always* arise when a sense-object meets its sense-faculty. There must also be other factors present, such as receptivity, determination, and interest, as stated in **the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38).[403] For example, while we are in deep concentration, or focused in some work, or forgetful, or upset, or sleeping, various visual forms, sounds or smells come within cognitive range but they are neither seen nor heard nor smelt.

Similarly, when we are meditating or watching a show, we may not be aware of the contact between our body and the chair; when we are focused on writing a letter or a book, we may not notice the pen between our fingers or the keyboard. In such cases, when sense-faculties and sense-objects are in contact, but without the arising of consciousness, "cognition" is not said to have arisen.

---

[399] Technically, an idea is regarded as "external," since it always some kind of stimulus on the "internal" mind-base. On the significance of this "external" senses, see

[400] Normally, the term *dvāra* is paired with *ārammaṇa*, and the term "internal *āyatana*" is paired with "external *āyatana*." In Abhidhamma, the internal sense-spheres are referred to as *āyatana*, and the external sense-objects as *ārammaṇa*.

[401] *Indriya* here should not be confused with *indriya* as the "5 spiritual faculties" [1.5.1.3(4)].

[402] M 38,8/1:259 f (SD 7.10).

[403] **Mahā Hatthi,padopama S** (M 28,27/1:190), SD 6.16.

   Cognition arises only when *all these 3 factors* are present: a sense-faculty (*āyatana*), a sense-ob-ject (*ārammaṇa*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). The Pali term for the union of these 3 factors is *phassa* or *samphassa*. Although this term means "contact," it refers specifically to the coming together of these 3 factors. In this context, *phassa* may be described as "cognition," or technically we say that there is "sense-stimulus."

7.3.2 Like consciousness [7.2.3], there are **6 kinds of contact**, according to their respective sense-base, that is:

(1) eye-contact	*cakkhu,samphassa*	seeing
(2) ear-contact	*sota,samphassa*	hearing
(3) nose-contact	*ghāna,samphassa*	smelling
(4) tongue-contact	*jivhā,samphassa*	tasting
(5) body-contact	*kāya,samphassa*	sense of touch (feeling)
(6) mind-contact	*mano,samphassa*	thinking

   This kind of contact is the basis for a wide range of cognitive activities, the first and foremost of which is **feeling** (*vedanā*) in response to the object, followed by perception (or recognition), related thoughts, and actions of body and speech, and further thoughts. This is how we interact with our virtual world.

7.3.3 Feeling, as we have already noted [3.1.3], has a wide range of meanings, but here we can specify it as experiencing the nuance of "flavour" of sense-contacts. In hedonic terms [5.2.2], there are 3 kinds of feelings, as follows:

(1) *sukha*	pleasurable, agreeable, comfortable, easeful
(2) *dukkha*	painful, uncomfortable
(3) *adukkha-m-asukha* (or *upekkhā*)[404]	neither pleasant nor painful, neutral

The triad is sometimes expanded into 5 kinds of feeling, thus: [Table 13.13.16 (3)]

(1) *sukha*	physical pleasure
(2) *dukkha*	physical pain
(3) *somanassa*	mental pleasure; joy
(4) *domanassa*	mental pain; sorrow
(5) *upekkhā*	neither pleasure nor pain; neutral feeling

In terms of the sense-doors, there are 6 kinds of feelings, corresponding to the 6 sense-bases, as follows:

(1) feelings arising from eye-contact	*cakkhu,samphassajā vedanā*	
(2) feelings arising from ear-contact	*sota,samphassajā vedanā*	
(3) feelings arising from nose-contact	*ghāna,samphassajā vedanā*	
(4) feelings arising from tongue-contact	*jivhā,samphassajā vedanā*	
(5) feelings arising from body-contact	*kāya,samphassajā vedanā*	
(6) feelings arising from mind-contact	*mano,samphassajā vedanā*	(S 36.22/4:232), SD 60f.12

---

[404] *Upekkhā,* in this context of feeling (*vedanā*), differs from *upekkhā* in the context of karma-formations (*saṅkhāra*), such as that of a divine abode (*upekkhā brahma.vihāra*) or an awakening-factor (*upekkhā,sam-bojjhaṅga*).

This cognitive process leading up to **mental proliferation** [7.5] is described in the suttas as follows:

> … dependent on *the eye and form*, *eye-consciousness* arises.
>> The meeting of the 3 is <u>contact</u>.   With contact as condition, there is **feeling**.
>> What one feels, one perceives.   What one perceives, one <u>thinks about</u>.
>> What one thinks about,   one <u>mentally proliferates</u>.
> From that as source, **proliferation of conception and perception**[405]
> assails a person <u>regarding past, future and present</u> *forms* cognizable through *the eye*.[406]
>> (M 18,16) + SD 6.14 (4); (M 28,27), SD 6.16; SD 60.1d (1.1.1.3)

This process starts with "the eye, form and eye-consciousness" leading up to <u>mental prolifera-</u><u>tion</u> (*papañca*). The same template applies to "the ear, sound and ear-consciousness … ," and the other cognitive triads. It's easiest to start remembering this process as the "**triangle of experience**" or "feeling triangle"[407] (the first 2 lines in the sutta quote above). The triad is here represented as a flowchart, thus:

āyatana	*ārammaṇa*	*viññāṇa*	*phassa*	*vedanā*
(sense-base +	sense-object →	sense-consciousness)[408]	= sense-contact →	feeling

Table 7.3.3 <u>The basic cognitive process leading up to feeling [SD 60.1d (1.1.1.3)]</u>

7.3.4 Human evolution is basically shaped by our awareness of <u>sense-objects</u> (*ārammaṇa*), that is, those aspects of the world that appear to us by way of the sense-bases (*āyatana*). As we make more and more "sense" of this—construct an inner image of this outer reality—we engage with this world, that is, in accordance with this inner reality. It is this trial-and-error engagement with the virtual world that we call **human evolution**, making us what we are today.

In simple terms, this is how we, as unawakened beings, "sense" the world: by constructing a per-sonal virtual world through our sense-experiences. Often this virtual world becomes so private that it is real *only* to us, a very private reality: this is either <u>genius</u> or <u>madness</u>, often the latter. In the case of the former, the "inner image of outer reality," when properly understood and applied, represents *a universal truth* that advances our learning and culture; the latter—our undiscerning sense-experi-ences—remains a private and limited reality that alienates one from true reality.

7.3.5 Feeling (*vedanā*) is a key factor in this cognitive process, indicating to us what is <u>unwholesome</u> and harmful, and should be avoided, and what is <u>wholesome</u> and nurturing, and should be cultivated. Feeling thus provides us with a comprehensive understanding of human experience. For the unawak-ened, however, the role of feeling only begins here, and defines the psychological and moral quality of our experience.[409]

Feeling is thus not merely a factor in the cognitive process. Feeling defines and enhances our knowledge of the world and of ourselves, thus enabling us to progress as a species, and to live virtu-ous lives so that a good **society** and humane civilization are possible. The wise mastery of feelings is

---

[405] Or, "perceptions and notions due to mental proliferation*," papañca,saññā,saṅkhā*: SD 6.14 (3).

[406] This important passage is the earliest statement on the Buddhist theory of perception: SD 6.14 (4).

[407] SD 1.1 (App 4); **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18,16) + SD 6.14 (4); **Mahā Hatthi,padôpama S** (M 28,27-38), SD 6.16; SD 56.22 (2.4.1.2 passim); SD 60.1d (1.1.1.3).

[408] This pair of round brackets groups 2 key consecutive teachings: (1) "Dependent on ⟨*eye and form, eye-consciousness*⟩ arises": sense + object → sense-consciousness; (2) "The meeting of the 3 is contact": sense + object + sense-consciousness → contact; (M 18,15, SD 6.14). For the full diagram, see SD 1.1 (App 4).

[409] See **Sevitabbâsevitabba S** (M 114), SD 39.8.

the basis of our development as **individuals**. With unwholesome feelings, we drown in the dense crowd of subhuman existence; with wholesome feelings, we evolve into individuals enjoying the bright space of divine life even here and now.

7.3.6 Yet, for the unawakened, feeling is often perceived as the world's way of rewarding or compensating us for engaging with it. The perceived notion is that we gain happiness (*sukha,vedanā*) by taking control of the world (other people, things and nature), that is, by engaging with sense-objects the way we fancy or desire. This is at best only *worldly* happiness; it is conditioned, momentary and impermanent; hence, unsatisfactory. That is why we are never satisfied with it, and keep wanting more.

To seek and collect feelings (pleasures) in this manner, or to cause suffering to gain our goals or impose our views, is to depart from the natural cognitive process and expose ourselves to a negative emotional dynamic. Feeling plays a key role here, giving rise to other negative factors with negative consequences. This new dynamic dictates our cognitive process, forcing on us a distorted view of our world.

7.3.7 This new negative dynamic occurs quite easily and just as easily overwhelms us. When we experience pleasure (*sukha,vedanā*) upon contact with a sense-object, we would naturally feel a desire (*taṇhā*) for that object. This desire feeds our latent **clinging** (*upādāna*). We are simply unable to let go of the object, even when, in reality, it is impossible to have it, since it has already passed on like starlight [8.2.2]. At this stage, we are mentally preoccupied, creating various views and fancies on how we may have the pleasurable object, and planning how to acquire it. Finally, we act on it, words (verbal acts) turning into deeds (bodily acts), to gain that desired goal and to taste that pleasure.

Conversely, if contact with a sense-object leads to painful or uncomfortable sensations (*dukkha,-vedanā*), we become discontented and upset. Our **craving** (*taṇhā*) either drives us to try to flee from our failure, or to try to eliminate the object of failure, or to simply deny them all. Yet, we remain fixated to that object; this is **clinging** (*upādāna*). We are then predisposed towards aversion, fear and avoiding.[410] We seek distractions, yearning to rise like the roots of wild weeds after a forest fire; we continue to hide in the past that never was or escape into the future that never comes.

For most of us, caught in this bind of clinging and avoiding, we are more than likely to hear a proliferation (*papañca*) of voices clamouring our desires, failures and anger towards them. We seek new ways of attaining our goals, even to the extent of plotting "revenge," finding someone or something to blame for our failures. Before we succumb to that *papañca* [7.5], we should struggle to make a last-ditch effort to save ourself from our self. There is our second chance.

7.3.8 This new dynamic [7.3.5] produces a complex, desperate and protracted mental rut of joy and sorrow, starting with **feeling** (*vedanā*). This is one function of the nasty recycling process, the "round of rebirth" (*saṁsāra,vaṭṭa*): it keeps us chained to worldliness. It explains how we have fallen into a maelstrom of subhuman emotions—and mental proliferation [7.5]—unable to reach higher states of mind, which are normally attainable for humans.

The link in the cognitive process following **contact** (*phassa*) is thus very significant. It is, in fact, the critical nexus or turning point in our dependently arisen state. Feeling plays a key role at this stage: it dictates the role of the subsequent factors in the cognitive. It is vital to know a few wholesome mental strategies in this connection.

---

[410] "Avoidance" or technically, "avoidance coping," is a psychological term for any strategy "for managing a stressful situation in which a person does not address the problem directly but instead disengages from the situation and averts attention from it. In other words, the individual turns away from the processing of threatening information. Examples of avoidance coping include escapism, wishful thinking, self-isolation, undue emotional restraint, and using drugs or alcohol (APA *Dict of Psychology,* 2015); see SD 43.1 (2.2.3).

Firstly, the link following <u>contact</u> is a critical juncture, like a fork in the road between a pure cognitive process and the so called "cyclic round." Within a "pure" (natural) cognitive process, feeling is simply a minor factor, helping to bring about accurate and useful knowledge. Within the "cyclic round," however, feeling is the *predominant* factor, dictating the entire process. We may thus say that *feeling shapes all thoughts and actions of the unawakened*—their lives are determined and dictated by feeling.

Within this process, we are less likely to experience sense-contacts merely to learn about the world and to engage with it in a healthy way. We begin to view the world as something to be consumed and acquired: we see the world, including its people, as comprising measurable things.

Technically speaking, within a pure cognitive process, the link of <u>feeling</u> is effectively absent or considered inconsequential. Here, cognition is completed with <u>contact</u> (*phassa*). The following stage is referred to as the process of <u>knowing and seeing</u> (*ñāṇa,dassana*), or the process of "**turning away**" (*vivaṭṭa*), which is the opposite to the "cyclic round."[411]

7.3.9 Secondly, the link following on from contact is a critical juncture in terms of moral conduct. It is the decisive turning point between wholesome and unwholesome, between a renewed round and spiritual freedom, between suffering and awakening.

At this point, we should revisit the subject of the sense-bases (*āyatana*), because all of the cognitive factors discussed so far begin with and rely on the sense-bases. These sense-bases play a vital role in the cognitive process. For example, they are the source of feeling or the avenues for the arising of <u>feeling</u>. As unawakened persons, we tend to desire and seek feelings, and the sense-bases make it possible for us to experience feeling. In sum, **the sense-bases** serve us in 2 ways:

(1) They are the world that is <u>apparent</u> to us, which thus forms the bases for our lives and the avenues for our experience. They are our means for observing the world and communicating with others, providing us with raw data for understanding nature and one another, and for self-understanding. They are thus essential as the means of engaging effectively with the world, for survival, and for a good life.
(2) They are seen as worldly objects for "<u>consumption</u>"; the door which we can open and enter to enjoy the goodness and pleasures of the world by seeing sights, hearing sounds, smelling fragrances, tasting flavours, touching tangibles, and enjoying our thoughts and imagination.

These two functions are connected, but the first is the principal or primary one; hence, necessary. The second function is secondary; it can be said to be "extra," even "excessive" for one who is mentally unrestrained. In both cases, the sense-bases operate in the same way. The difference lies in our intention: to be merely or excessively thrilled by feeling (which is unwholesome) or for the sake of gaining wisdom (which is wholesome).

7.3.10 The unawakened tend to value and indulge more in the second function, that of consuming and accumulating sense-contacts. The first function is then merely taken up as an accessory for fulfilling the second. Cognition without mindfulness enslaves to consuming the world and the world consumes us in turn. The mutual feeding only gathers momentum and lengthens the duration of the cycle of rebirth—like a hamster lustily scurrying in its wheel but going nowhere.

Ordinarily, we use our senses to gather only those kinds of experiences or knowledge that bring us pleasurable or satisfying sense-objects. We are generally not interested in gathering knowledge beyond this function. Moreover, the physical, verbal, and mental conduct of the unawakened only feed the cyclic rounds, and we simply keep repeating and reinforcing old habits, stuck in a subhuman rut as:

---

[411] Further on "turning away" as solving life's problems, see Payutto 2021: section IV, "Goal of Life" and section VI, "A Worthy Life."

asuras   exploiting others merely for power and pleasure;
animals   living fearful predictable lives of foraging, procreating, resting and devouring one
                    another;
pretas   unable to enjoy the abundant or precious they find, never having enough;
hell-beings   ever violent with body and speech, destroying others as a matter of belief and habit.

Hence, our entire lives are walled and barred in within the prison of the 6 senses.

7.4 THE AGGREGATES AND THE SENSE-BASES

7.4.1 Although the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*) and the 6 sense-bases (*saḷ-āyatana*) are parallel teachings, they are rarely mentioned together, except in **the Dvaya Sutta 2** (S 35.93), SD 57.39, and **the Rahul'ovāda Sutta** (S 35.121), SD 93.6.[412] While the 6-sense-base model explains how our physical senses work with the mind, the 5-aggregate model shows how the mind works in a conscious body. The simpler 6-sense-base model was probably popular with teaching for the laity, while the 5-aggregate model was used for more advanced students, especially monastics.[413]

7.4.2 Although the 6 sense-bases are only one part of the 5 aggregates (that is, form, *rūpa*) and do not comprise the entirety of human life (as the 5 aggregates do), they play a vital role for us, especially in defining and directing our lives. As ordinary humans, we engage with the world as dictated by our 6 senses: the 6 senses give meaning to our lives. If the 6 senses fail to function properly, life becomes meaningless for us; it may even end for us. On the other hand, when we understand the true meaning of life, life really begins to make sense for us.

aggregate	cognitive process of *seeing*	sense-base	
form	the eye	eye-base	*cakkh'āyatana*
	form	form-base	*rūp'āyatana*
consciousness	eye-consciousness	mind-base	*man'āyatana*
(formations)	eye-contact (on account of attention)		
feeling	feeling arising from eye-contact	mind-state base	*dhamm'āyatana*
perception	perception of form		
formations	volition regarding form		

Table 7.4.2 An event of seeing in terms of the aggregates and the sense-bases[414]

---

[412] For a helpful discussion on this, see SD 57.39.

[413] All the 6 internal sense-bases (*ajjhatt'āyatana*) are found in the 5 aggregates, but there are exceptions for the 6 external sense-objects (*bahiddh'āyatana*): The first pairs of *āyatana* (*cakkhu/rūpa, sota/sadda, ghāna/-gandhas, jivhā/rasa,* and *kāya/phoṭṭhabba*) are classed under *rūpa,khandha*. The 6th internal *āyatana,* the mind (*mano*), is part of *viññāṇa,khandha.* The 6th external *āyatana* (*dhamma* or *dhamm'āyatana*) is part of the 4 aggregates: 3 "mental aggregates" (*nāma,khandha: vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*) and the form aggregate (*rūpa,-khandha*), in particular, subtle matter (*sukhuma,rūpa*), eg, the space element (*ākāsa,dhatu*), femaleness, maleness, levity, flexibility, continuity, decay, expansion, physical transformation, etc. The exception is nirvana, which (being unconditioned) transcends all the 5 aggregates (*khandha,vinimutta*). (Vbh 70-72)

[414] In Abhidhamma terms, the factors of contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arise as "connascent states" (*sahajāta,dhammā*): they arise simultaneously. Their linear presentation here is merely to facilitate explanation and visualization.

	material (physical)										non-material (mental)		
the 4 ultimate realities[5]	matter (*rūpa*)										mental factors (*cetasika*)	nibbāna	consciousnesses (*citta*)
the 5 aggregates	form aggregate										feeling aggregate / perception aggregate / formations aggregate	*none*	consciousness aggregate
the 12 sense-bases	eye-base	ear-base	nose-base	tongue-base	body-base	form-base	sound-base	smell-base	taste-base	touch-base	mental-object base[1] (subtle matter, mental factors, nirvana)		mind-base[2]
the 18 elements	eye-element	ear-element	nose-element	tongue-element	body-element	form-element	sound-element	smell-element	taste-element	touch-element	mental-object element[3] (*same as above*)		eye-consciousness / ear-consciousness / nose-consciousness / tongue-consciousness / body-consciousness / mind-element / mind-consciousness element[4]

Key: 1. Mental-object base (*dhamm'āyatana;* Abh, *dhamm'ārammaṇa*). 2. Mind-base (*man'āyatana*). 3. Mental-object element (*dhamma,dhātu*). 4. Mind-consciousness element (*mano.viññāṇa,dhātu*). 5. The traditional sequence is *citta, cetasika, rūpa, nibbana* (Abhs 1.2)*.

Table 7.4.3 The 4 ultimates as aggregates, sense-bases, and elements

(Vbh 70-72; Abhs 7.34-37; Abhs:BRS 285-288)—see [7.4.3] for explanation.

For another version: Table 4.2 (SD 29.5). Cf SD 60.1d (Table 1.1.1.6) The 7 aspects of the mind.

The above template similarly applies to the ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Note however that, in the suttas, contact (*phassa*) is not assigned any place amongst the 5 aggregates; but it is classed in the aggregate of karma-formations (*saṅkhāra*) in the Abhidhamma and the Commentaries.[415] Finally, we can graphically represent all the interconnectedness of components mentioned in **Table 7.4.3.**

The 6 sense-bases (*saḷ-āyatana*) and the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*) are teaching models for helping us to see **the meaning of life** in our own being. With this understanding of the true *meaning* of life, we are then inspired by a wholesome purpose of life, that is, personal growth leading to self-awakening. **The Dvaya Sutta 2** (S 35.93) explains the meaning of life by way of how the sense-bases work with the aggregates to show the true reality of life in our every action in every sense.

The **Dvaya Sutta 2**, in its key teaching, starts by referring to the cognitive process from the triangle of experience up to feeling [Table 7.3.3], stating thus:

• *the eye, forms and eye-consciousness* are "impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise";
• the meeting of the 3 is contact, which is also *impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise*;
• "Contacted, one feels; contacted, one intends; contacted, one perceives.[416]

The Commentary explains the last line as referring to the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*) thus:

the eye + object "contacted" at the eye-door	the aggregate of **form**	*rūpa-k,khandha*
it feels (*vedeti*)	the aggregate of **feeling**	*vedanā,khandha*
it thinks (*cinteti*)	the aggregate of **formations**	*saṅkhāra-k,khandha*
it perceives (*sañjānāti*)	the aggregate of **perception**	*saññā,khandha*
consciousness	the aggregate of **consciousness**	*viññāṇa-k,khandha*

The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to each of the other 5 senses and the respective objects.

(SA 2:381,4-13)

7.4.3 [Table 7.4.3] From the perspective of **the 12 sense-bases,** the totality of concrete entities is viewed by way of the sense-doors and objects of consciousness.

The physical sense-bases—(1) the eye-base, (2) the ear-base, (3) the nose-base, (4) the tongue-base, and (5) the body-base—are identical with the 5 kinds of "sensitive materiality" (the sense-faculties).

The sense-object bases—(7) the visible form base, (8) the sound base, (9) the smell base, (10) the taste base, (11) the touch base, and (12) the mental-object base, are identical with the 5 kinds of "objective materiality" (the 6 kinds of sense-objects).

The mind base (*man'āyatana*) (6), however, has a wider range than the mind-door. It is identified with the consciousness aggregate in its totality, comprising all 89 types of citta. [7.4.4]

The mental-object base (*dhamm'āyatana*) does not completely coincide with the mind-objects (*dhamm'ārammaṇa*), but (the former) comprises only those "objects" not found among the other bases; that is, they are purely generated by the mind itself. Thus, it excludes the first 5 objective bases, the 5 types of sensitive matter, and citta, which is identical with the mind-base. It also excludes concepts (*paññatti*) [8.5], since the notion of base (*āyatana*) extends only to ultimate realities, that is, things existing by way of intrinsic nature (*sabhāva*) [8.6], and does not extend to things that arise from conceptual construction.

The mental-object base (*dhamma,dhātu*) comprises the 52 mental factors (*cetasika*), the 16 kinds of subtle matter, and nirvana.[417]

The elements (*dhatu*) are so called because they "bear" (*dhārenti*) their own intrinsic natures. The 18 elements comprise the 12 bases dividing the mind-base into the 7 elements of consciousness (Abhs 3.21). In all other respects, the bases and the elements are identical.

---

[415] See **Dvaya S 2** (S 35.93/4:67-69), SD 57.39.
[416] *Phuṭṭho bhikkhave vedeti phuṭṭho ceteti phuṭṭho sañjānāti.*
[417] See Abhs:BRS §39/290. For details on the sense-bases and elements, see Vism 17 & DhsA 6.

Table 7.4.2 tabulates the process of seeing by our conscious body (that is, in terms of the 5 aggregates and the 5 senses).

Table 7.4.3 tabulates the correlation between the aggregates, bases, and elements with the 4 ultimate realities.

We will now briefly examine how the Abhidhamma classifies such consciousnesses or mind-states, as found in the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha.

7.4.4 The Abhidhammattha,saṅgaha classifies consciousness (*citta*) as follows:

Abhs 3.21

Tattha pañca,viññāṇa,dhātuyo yathā-k,kamaṁ ekantena pañca-p,pasāda,vatthūni nissāy'eva pavattanti. Pañca,dvār'āvajjana,sampaṭicchana,sankhātā pana mano,dhātu ca hadayaṁ nissitāy'-eva pavattanti. Avasesā pana mano,viññāṇa,dhatu,sankhātā ca santīraṇa,mahā,vipāka,paṭigha,-dvaya,paṭhama,magga,hasana,rūpâvacara,vasena hadayaṁ nissāy'eva pavattanti.

Avasesā kusalâkusala,kriyā'nuttara,vasena pana nissāya vā anissāya vā. Āruppa,vipāka,vasena hadayaṁ anissāy'evā ti.

Therein, **the 5 elements of sense-consciousness** occur entirely dependent on the 5 sensitive parts [the sense-faculties] as their respective bases (2 x 5 = 10). **But the mind element**—namely, the 5-door-adverting consciousness and the (2 types of) receiving consciousness—occurs in dependence on the heart.[418]

Likewise, those that remain—namely, <u>the mind-consciousness element</u> comprising the investigating consciousness, the great resultants, the 2 accompanied by aversion, the first path consciousness, smiling consciousness, and form-sphere consciousness—occur in dependence on the heart-base (the Abhidhamma name for "the mind"). (3 + 3 + 8 + 2 + 1 + 1+ 15 = 33).

The remaining classes of consciousness, whether wholesome, unwholesome, functional, or supramundane, may be either dependent on or independent of the heart-base (12 + 10 + 13 + 7 = 42).

The formless-sphere resultants are independent of the heart-base (4).

Commentary on §3.21

The 5 elements of sense consciousness, etc. In the Abhidhamma, the 89 types of citta are distributed among 7 consciousness-elements (*viññāṇa,dhātu*) as follows:

element		cittas	
eye-consciousness element	*cakkhu,viññāṇa,dhātu*	eye-consciousness	2
ear-consciousness element	*sota,viññāṇa,dhatu*	ear-consciousness	2
nose-consciousness element	*ghāna,viññāṇa,dhātu*	nose-consciousness	2
tongue-consciousness element	*jivhā,viññāṇa,dhātu*	tongue-consciousness	2
body-consciousness element	*kāya,viññāṇa,dhatu*	body-consciousness	2
mind element	*dhamma,dhātu*	5-door-advertence, receiving consciousness	3
mind-consciousness element	*mano,viññāṇa,dhātu*	All remaining cittas	76

Table 7.4.4 The 7 consciousness elements (viññāṇa,dhātu) and 89 cittas [Table 7.4.3]

---

[418] Abhidhamma locates the mind in the "heart" or "heart-base" (*hadaya,vatthu*), ie, the mind-base. The suttas do not locate the mind anywhere but pervades our whole being. SD 26.2 (3.1.3.6) n; SD 56.20 (2.2.2.4).

The 3 cittas called **mind-element** (*mano,dhātu*) involve a very weak grasp of the object: the 5-door adverting consciousness because it encounters an utterly new object and is followed by a citta with a different base; and the twofold receiving consciousness because it follows a citta with a different base. The 5 elements of sense-consciousness are slightly stronger because they directly *see, hear, smell, taste, or touch* the object, but they are still relatively weak because they come in between 2 cittas with bases different from their own.

The cittas collected under **mind-consciousness element** (*mano,viññāṇa,dhātu*), being preceded and followed by cittas which share their own base, are capable of a fuller and clearer cognitive grasp of their object.

But the mind-element … occurs in dependence on the heart. The 33 cittas enumerated here do not arise in the formless world, but only in worlds where matter exists. Hence, they are always supported by the heart-base. The cittas accompanied by aversion do not occur in the form and formless planes because aversion has been well suppressed as a prerequisite for attaining jhāna.

The 1st path-consciousness, the path-consciousness of streamwinning, cannot occur in the formless realms because it is contingent on hearing the Dharma, which presupposes the ear-faculty. The smile-producing consciousness, of course, requires a body to exhibit the smile.[419]

The remaining classes of consciousness. They are: 10 unwholesome cittas (excluding the 2 accompanied by aversion), the 8 great wholesome cittas, the 8 great functionals, 4 formless wholesome, 4 formless functionals, 7 supramundane (excluding the 1st path), and the mind-door adverting —a total of 42.

These cittas are dependent on the heart-base when they occur in the planes where matter exists, that is, in the sense sphere and the form sphere, and independent of the heart-base when they occur in the formless plane.

The formless-sphere resultants occur only in the formless plane, which is without any base (as in the form sphere).

7.5 MENTAL PROLIFERATION

7.5.1 Once we are overwhelmed by craving and clinging to an object of desire [7.3.8], we will invariably be sucked into a cacophony of voices about pleasure and profit, what to do about it, where to go from there, and so on. This is called *papañca*, an explosion of diverse and complex perceptions (*papañca,saññā*). These are the clamour of the burning desires, vengeful anger, desperate wanting, inconsolable jealousies, and other dark forces of our mind in a war-dance before us.[420]

The term *papañca* refers to our being "strongly" (*pa-*) assailed by thoughts connected with any of our "5" (*pañca*) senses, that is, being entangled with the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*kāma,guṇa*),[421] that we voraciously consume *fivefold,* that is, exponentially. We are in turn *consumed* by the pleasures, bound in a tight cycle of feeding and being fed on: we have become the proverbial **uroboros**.[422]

---

[419] This seems to be the Commentator's personal views, not attested in the suttas. In **Sāriputta S 2** (S 55.5), Sāriputta defs "the stream" (*sota*) as "this noble eightfold path … " (SD 16.5); cf *magga,saṅkhata,sotaṁ*, "*sota* is reckoned as the path" (UA 306,3). **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1) records the Buddha as saying that the habitual reflecting on impermanence will bring one to streamwinning in this life itself: "One is incapable of dying without having attained the fruition of streamwinning." (S 25.1, SD 16.7). According to **Vimutt'āyatana S** (A 5.26) there are 5 "grounds for freedom" (reaching the path): (1) listening to the Dharma, (2) teaching it, (3) reciting [learning] it, (4) reflecting on it, (5) properly grasping the concentration-sign. (A 5.26), SD 21.5. Cf Comy: "'streamwinner' means one who, having entered, having attained to the stream that is the path, remains in the fruit of streamwinning" (*sotâpanno ti magga,saṅkhāta,sotaṁ āpajjitvā pāpuṇitvā ṭhito sotāpatti,pha'laṭ-ṭho ti attho*) (UA 306)*.* See also Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening,* 2001:247-252 (§7.4 The path as a "stream").

[420] **Sakka,pañha S** (D 21,2.1/2:277 f), SD 54.8.

[421] M 13,7(1) n SD 6.9; A 6.63,3.2 + SD 6.11 (2.2.2.6).

[422] On the uroboros, see SD 23.3 (1); SD 49.2 (4.3.2.3).

This is our proliferative thinking driven by the forces of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), or thinking, conceiving everything in terms of "I," "me" and "mine." This is the darkest manifestation of self-identity, a self-constructed world revolving around one's self, a self that feeds on itself: a serpent biting its own tail, biting ever hard on account of the pain, seeing it as other to the self.

7.5.2 Normally, **perception** (*saññā*) is how we recognize the objects of our experiences, shaping, knowing and feeling them. This is usually what goes on in our daily lives as we process things and manage them through the day. It is the 2nd stage—that of proliferative perceptions (*papañca,saññā*)—that sucks us into an orgy of voices each demanding our immediate attention. This is the work of our karma-formations (*saṅkhāra*), projecting a myriad of consuming images and imaginations with our sense-objects.

If we are, for even a moment, lucidly able to watch this whole proliferative process, we may notice that it has 2 aspects:

(1) **The sense-based aspect**, from the internal sense-bases to feeling, is a pure cognitive process; all of the factors arise according to natural causes and conditions—without any "being," "person," or "self."
(2) **The feeling-based aspect**, from feeling onwards, is the process of consuming the world, that is, the cyclic round of rebirth (*saṁsāra,vaṭṭa*). This is because from feeling there arises thinking, from which arises perception; in other words, we are flooded with thoughts leading to more perceiving (through the senses) and conceiving (through the mind).

It is vital to understand how the feeling-based aspect leads to the cyclic round, pulling us back into the floods of lust, existence and ignorance. By perceiving the feelings as "pleasant" or "unpleasant," we create a **duality** of "self" and "other," caught in a push-pull cycle of liking and disliking. We are thus caught up in the whole consuming process, a serpent devouring its own tail.

Now, since feeling is the key factor leading to the cyclic round through mental proliferation, we can break the cycle here by not reacting to the feelings. We simply see them as they are: a natural process of conditioned causes and effects, without any being, person, or self. We have thus initiated the process of **turning away** (*vivaṭṭa*) from the duality of the consumer and the consumed. We simply let it all arise and fall away as it naturally does. We are at peace.[423]

---

[423] The metaphor of "consuming" is a fittingly modern one: it fits well with the nature of the 5 aggregates and the 6 sense-bases. A more comprehensive description of the round of rebirth is that of: **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (18+19.3.2); SD 53.15 (2.1).

8 Early Buddhist epistemology

8.1 VALIDITY OF KNOWLEDGE

8.1.1 Buddhism started with Siddhattha Gotama's quest for liberating knowledge. At 29, the spiritually precocious Siddhattha saw the 4 sights: an aged man, someone afflicted with a deadly disease, a corpse and a renunciant. Struck with an "existential shock" (*saṁvega*) upon seeing the first 3 sights, he followed the example of the 4th sight. He left home as a seeker of liberating knowledge.[424]

In due course, he sought the teachings of the 2 leading teachers of the day—Ālāra Kālama and Uddaka Rāma,putta's son—but even after mastering their teachings and meditation, he still found neither liberation nor resolution nor any answer to the questions of the 4 sights. Disappointed, but determined to find the truth, he went on to spend 6 years of painful **self-mortification** (as was then the religious tradition). He ritually starved himself until he collapsed into a near-death faint.[425]

Having lived a pleasurable life in his palatial home, and now experiencing the fruitlessness of self-mortification, he concluded that he must now turn to **a middle way**. There was no middle way then, that is, until he turned to one! He recalled a profoundly blissful dhyana experience when he was only 7.[426] This, he realized must be his path to awakening, and indeed it was. He went into dhyana and came out of it with a calm, clear and ready mind. He attained awakening knowledge (*bodhi,ñāṇa*): he *is* the Buddha.[427]

8.1.2 The Buddha's story is that of a quest for awakening, which he gains, and spends the rest of his 45 years wandering all over the central Gangetic plain of north India teaching that awakening knowledge and how to attain it. From his own experience, he saw how physical pleasure simply exists in the absence of pain; and that pain is suffering. But by understanding our body-mind existence, we will be able to transcend the lusts and limits of the body to attain profound light and joy that lessen, even free, the mind from suffering.

The liberating knowledge realized by the Buddha is conceived neither as an insight into religious metaphysics nor as some grand revelation of divine lordship. He teaches us to look deep into our lives for what it really is, to discern the conditions that make it so, to understand and transform the mind by breaking the chains of conditionality, and then to take that path of self-awakening.

The Buddha's liberating knowledge is that of wisdom into the true nature of suffering, and how to fully and finally end suffering. Our spiritual liberation comes neither from some heaven-bound God nor priestly rituals and promises. Instead, the Buddha teaches us to discipline our own body and speech with moral virtue; with the body calmed, we learn to master our mind; freeing the mind from being enslaved by the body, we gain wisdom into the causes and conditions that shape our experiences.

The early Buddhist texts give detailed accounts of how we perceive and project our own virtual worlds. Even at the highest levels of knowledge, the Buddha teaches only **a spiritual psychology** to remove these worldly habits and defilements that corrupt and stifle our mind. Such is the knowledge that we should cultivate to reach the path of awakening that leads to the highest goal: nirvana.

8.1.3 According to early Buddhism, there are many different ways of knowing;[428] hence, there are many ways of classifying knowledge. The most natural classification of knowledge is, however, that based on the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*) since they provide a comprehensive teaching on our

---

[424] On the 4 sights and his subsequent quest for liberation knowledge, see SD 52.1 (7).

[425] On the episodes of the 2 teachers and Siddhattha's self-mortification, see SD 52.1 (12 f).

[426] On Siddhattha's 1st dhyana, see SD 52.1 (5.2).

[427] On the Buddha's great awakening, see SD 52.1 (17).

[428] This section on types of knowing and knowledges is inspired by P A Payutto, *Buddhadhamma,* 2021:51-96. Some of the presentation here, however, differs significantly from Payutto's helpful study.

body-mind existence. The aggregates are also closely related to the 18 elements (*aṭṭharāsa dhātu*), that is, the 6 sense-faculties (internal sense-bases), the 6 sense-objects (external sense-bases) and the 6 consciousnesses [Table 7.4.3].

In fact, **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), as we have seen [7.1.4], states that:

• all (*sabba*) that we *can* know,	(the 6 sense-faculties)
• all that there is *to* know,	(the 6 sense-objects)
• all that is *known*,	(the 6 sense-consciousnesses).

The bracketed factors refer to the 18 elements in 3 sextets. The 6 sense-faculties are our only means of knowing; the sense-objects are all there is to know; and the 6 consciousnesses are all the known, that is, our learning processes. This is how we *know* things, and progressively purifying this knowledge, we awaken to true reality. But once it becomes glorified as epistemology, it holds us back in the world, and prevents us from awakening.

Just as the Buddha has discovered this truth by his own experience, he teaches us to experience this true reality for ourselves: through our direct experience of that reality, not by philosophizing about it. This is the Buddha's way of self-verification, as he declares in **the Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38), thus:

> "Come now, bhikshus, do you speak only of what you have known, seen[429] and understood for yourselves?"
> "Yes, bhante."
> "Good, bhikshus! So have you been guided by me with this Dharma, seen here and now [to be realized in this life], timeless, for one to come and see, accessible [leading onward], to be personally known by the wise.   (M 38,24 f/1:265), SD 7.10

8.1.4 According to early Buddhism, **knowledge** (*ñāṇa*; Skt *jñāna*)[430]—is a form of mentality (*nāma,dhamma*), that is, they are mind-made reality. On the other hand, many academic scholars (especially those in the humanities) hold the view that knowledge is socially constructed as realities (plural). This is equally true especially on the worldly level, limited by worldly knowledge. Society is, however, made up of individuals: only individuals think, crowds (society) do not think. Hence, our interest is in investigating into how the mind creates and uses knowledge.

Scientists and social scientists, on the other hand, hold an objective view of truth—that it is independent of social agreement or convention. This scientific objectivity is based on measurement and theories. We know very well that only *material things*, not non-material states, are measurable. While we may measure certain brain-based states of meditation, even of human emotions, there is no way of measuring *goodness, love, compassion, joy, peace or awakening*. Whatever is measurable is necessarily impermanent, time-based. Nirvana is beyond time and space. [13.11.2]

8.1.5 Although the Buddha speaks of knowing "all" (*sabba*) [8.1.3], he is not referring to "knowing everything" or omniscience. Rather, the Buddha is actually highlighting the limits of knowledge. We can only know because there is a limit to knowledge—it is called impermanence. Through impermanence, we are able to compare one state with another, that is, we can see the changes in the rhythm of experience. In this sense, experience *is* knowledge.

According to early Buddhism, our experience comprises **the 5 aggregates**, that is form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, or in modern terms, the somatic, the perceptual, the conceptual and the spiritual [Table 1.10]. **Form** is our physical body comprising *the eye, ear, nose, tongue,*

---

[429] "Seen," *diṭṭhaṁ,* ie, seen with the eye of wisdom (*paññā,cakkhu*) (MA 2:309).
[430] Etym related to Gk & Eng *gnosis* from the √JÑĀ, "to know." See E Partridge, *Origins,* Routledge, 4th ed 1966: 1296, "gnome."

and body, which are our 5 physical senses, also called the 5 faculties (*pañc'indriya*).[431] These faculties are simply the tools with which we know ourself and the world; but as tools, they do not work by themselves. [5.3]

     Our actual knowing begins with our feelings [7.3.4]: these experiences range from raw emotional reactions to artistic musing to transpersonal rapture to spiritual ecstasy. They normally cannot be induced, but arise naturally under the right conditions. These are mostly body-based pleasurable states, except perhaps dhyana, which is purely mind-based.

8.1.6 Actual knowledge—that can be nurtured and used—is found in the 4 "aggregates of mentality" (*nāma-k,khandha*), namely:

(1) feeling aggregate	*vedanā-k,khandha*	hedonic knowledge	[5.4]
(2) perception aggregate	*saññā-k,khandha*	perceptual knowledge	[8.2]
(3) karma-formations aggregate	*saṅkhāra-k,khandha*	conceptual knowledge	[10]
(4) consciousness aggregate	*viññāṇa-k,khandha*	spiritual knowledge	[9.12]

They respectively form the bases for **the 4 distinct kinds of knowledge** classified according to the immaterial aggregates: *feeling, perception, karma-formations and consciousness*, that is, respectively, hedonic knowledge, perceptual knowledge, conceptual knowledge and spiritual knowledge (including wisdom, *paññā*).

     Again, this taxonomy attests to the fact that in early Buddhism, knowledge is *not* something that comes from outside us, not some kind of revelation, but arises from within our own being. It, in fact, denotes the *transformation* of how we perceive and conceive the world and ourselves, and how we realize the truth that frees us with self-awakening. This is, of course, a gradual process, but may arise in this life itself, or take 7 lives at most (in the case of the streamwinners, those who have taken the first steps on the path of awakening).[432]

8.2 PERCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE

8.2.1 Perception (*saññā*) is the basis of **perceptual knowledge**, that is, a knowledge of the perceptual process and the wisdom that arises from such processes. This is essentially memory-based knowledge. What we know in daily life is gathered and stored as memories: these are the raw materials for thought and for enabling recognition, contemplation and understanding, leading to wisdom.

     Perceptual knowledge is also sense-based—or sense-based memories—and are of 6 kinds: perception of form (*rūpa,saññā*), perception of sound (*sadda,saññā*), perception of smell (*gandha,saññā*), perception of taste (*rasa,saññā*), perception of touch (*phoṭṭhabba,saññā*), and perception of mind-objects or thoughts (*dhamma,saññā*).

     From the way perceptions arise, they can be said to go through 2 stages:

(1) Initial perception: Direct perception of the features and characteristics of things as they are; for example, we perceive blue, green, hard, soft, sour, sweet, round, flat, long and short.[433] This includes perceptions related to conventional designations (*paññatti*), for example: '"person," "house," "tree," and "book."

---

[431] These 5 *indriyas*—the 5 sense-faculties—should not be confused with the 5 (spiritual) faculties [1.5.1.3(4)], also called *indriya* [1.4.2.3]. However, when the mind (*mano*) is included, they are called *āyatana* (sense-bases) [1.7.2.3]. To complicate matters, the Abhidhamma and Commentaries also call this septad the "6 faculties" (*cha,indriya*) (in the suttas, apparently, only in S 48.25-29/5:205 f).

[432] On streamwinning, see **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

[433] This is "perception by way of the 5 sense-doors" (*pañca,dvārika,saññā*): perception of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches; they are sense-based" (MA 4:20). The other kinds of perception mentioned below are perception by way of the mind-door.

(2) <u>Secondary perception</u>: This is a development from "initial perceptions"; hence, secondary per-
ception overlaps with it. It comprises thoughts and views arising from sense-perception, that is,
from various levels of knowledge and understanding,[434] for example, we perceive something as
beautiful, loathsome, unsatisfactory, impermanent, or nonself.

8.2.2 This **secondary perception** is of <u>2 kinds</u>:

(a) Perception resulting from **mental proliferation** (*papañca,saññā*), that is, an explosive tangle
of thoughts arising from crafty machinations of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong view
(*diṭṭhi*). The Commentaries refer to <u>mental proliferation</u> as "defiled perception" (*kilesa,saññā*), per-
ception tainted with mental defilement and perverted by it.[435] Hence, it deviates from the path of
true knowledge.
     Far from developing knowledge, this (mis)perception spawns greed, hatred and delusion, and
distorts knowledge and hinders wisdom. This unwholesome tendency includes:
     perceiving signs or details on account of lust;
     perceiving signs or details that we see as wretched;
     perceiving signs or details that project others as inferior;
     perceiving signs or details that feed our sense of self-importance; and
     perceiving signs or details that deceive us with notions of ownership and control.

(b) Perception resulting from **wholesome thinking** (*kusala,saññā*); perception clarified by wise
understanding. It is <u>conducive to knowledge</u> (*vijjā.bhāgiya,saññā*), and fosters the development of
wisdom and the growth of wholesome qualities. This wholesome perception includes:
     perceiving qualities that inspire love and friendship; and
     perceiving qualities that highlight conditionality, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness or nonself.

8.2.3 The Buddha and the arhats have perception too but theirs are free from mental influxes
(*āsava*), and from defilements (*kilesa*)—as stated, for example, in **the Saṅkhār'upapatti Sutta** (M
120).[436] Arhats are able to at once identify <u>proliferative perception</u> (*papañca,saññā*) experienced by
the unawakened, or as they themselves had done before their awakening. They are untroubled in any
way by these perceptions. They observe it simply for the sake of knowledge or for the benefit of
others, such as pointing them out when counselling others to help them solve their problems. Under-
standably, we should train ourselves to emulate the conduct of the arhats.[437]
     While it is difficult, even impractical, to act in the way that arhats act, it is easier and practical for
us to try to see, or learn to see, <u>how arhats see things</u>, that is, through **dharma knowledge**. We will
examine this by way of how the Abhidhamma classifies realities (*dharma*), that is, in terms of the 52
mental factors (*cetasika*). [9]

---

[434] An example of perception resulting from mental conceptualization: "when he is established in the peak of
consciousness (the base of nothingness, *ākiñcaññ'āyatana*), it occurs to him: 'Mental activity is bad for me. It
would be better for me not to be thinking. Were I to go on thinking and deliberating, these states of conscious-
ness I have reached, would pass away, and other coarser consciousness might arise. So <u>let me simply neither
think nor deliberate any more</u>.'" (D 9,17/1:184 f), SD 7.14.
     [435] Eg MA 2:74,19-24; SA 2:382,3-5, as *papañca,saññā*.
     [436] M 121,12 f/3:108 f.
     [437] See eg **(Tad-ah') Uposatha S** (A 3.70/1:205-215), SD 4.18.

THE 28 FORMS OF MATERIALITY (*RŪPA*)

(Dhs 127; Vism 443; Abhs:SR 159; Abhs:BRS 6.2-5/235-242; Abhs:WG 216-228) [SD 60.1b (12.8)]

concretely produced materiality
(*nipphanna,rūpa*)

non-concretely produced materiality
(*anipphanna,rūpa*)

I. *the primary elements (mahā,bhūtā)*
1.	earth element	*paṭhavī dhātu*
2.	water element	*āpo dhātu*
3.	fire element	*teja dhātu*
4.	wind [air] element	*vāyo dhātu*

II. *sensitive materiality*[438] (*pāsāda,rūpa*)
5.	eye-sensitivity	*cakkhu*
6.	ear-sensitivity	*sota*
7.	nose-sensitivity	*ghāna*
8.	tongue-sensitivity	*jivhā*
9.	body-sensitivity	*kāya*

III. *Objective materiality (gocara,rūpa)*[440]
10.	visible form	*rūpa*
11.	sound	*sadda*
12.	smell	*gandha*
13.	taste	*rasa*
	[touch = 3 elements:	
	earth, fire, wind	*phoṭṭhabba*]

IV. *sexual materiality (bhāva,rūpa)*
14.	femininity	*itthatta*
15.	masculinity	*purisatta*

V. *heart materiality*
16.	heart-base	*hadaya,vatthu*[441]

VI. *Life materiality (jīvita,rūpa)*
17.	life faculty	*jīvit'indriya*

VII. *Nutritional materiality (āhāra,rūpa)*
18.	nutriment	*kabaḷiṅk'āhāra*

VIII. *limiting materiality (pariccheda,rūpa)*
19.	space element	*ākāsa,dhātu*

IX. *communicating materiality (viññatti,rūpa)*
20.	bodily intimation	*kāya,viññatti*
21.	vocal intimation	*vacī,viññatti*

X. *mutable materiality (vikāra,rūpa)*[439]
22.	lightness (agility)	*lahutā*
23.	plasticity (malleability)	*mudutā*
24.	wieldiness (adaptability)	*kammaññatā*
	(plus 2 intimations, 20-21)	

XI. *characteristics of form (lakkhaṇa,rūpa)*
25.	growth (production)	*upacaya*
26.	continuity	*santati*
27.	decay	*jaratā*
28.	impermanence	*aniccatā*

Only the primary elements are the real states of matter. All the others are *derived or second-ary states of matter* (*upādā,rūpa*), dependent on the primary elements, without any real separate existence or reality. **Mahā Hatthi,-padôpama Sutta** (M 28) records Sāriputta as presenting the 4-element practice [§§5.2-25], and the dependent arising of the derived elements (the sense-faculties and their objects) [§§27-38].

Table 8.3: The 28 forms of materiality [SD 17.2a (10)]

---

[438] These are the internal senses (*ajjhattik'āyatana*) as faculties of perception (*cakkhu, sota, ghana, jivhā, kāya*). See 8.2 above.

[439] These are the 3 characteristics of the living body. **Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** defines lightness as "light transform-ability" (*lahu,pariṇāmatā*), lack of heaviness (*adandhatā*), non-rigidity (*avitathatatā*); plasticity (*mudutā*) is softness (*maddavatā*), lack of hardness (*akakkhaḷatā*); and wieldiness (*kammaññatā*) (Dhs 144). These defs may seem to apply to all forms of matter, but later scholiasts say that they only refer to certain characteristics of a living body, and are not found apart from one another (*na aññam-aññaṁ vijahati*) (Abhvk 281). The terms *lahu* and *kammañña* often occur in the Suttas in reference to bodily health and efficiency (D 1:204, 3:257 = A 4:335,6 = 335,14; M 1:437, 473; U 15). *Mudu* mostly occurs in reference to bodily beauty (A 1:9, 4:421; M 3:-243; S 2:268). See Karunadasa 1967:77 f.

[440] Also called *visaya,rūpa.*

[441] This term is not found in the Canon, but only occurs as *vatthu* in **Paṭṭhāna** (Paṭ 1,4). See esp n by Shwe Zan Aung, 1910: Abhs:SR 277-279. See esp Vism 8.111-113/256; Abhs:BRS 6.3/239 (5); also SD 56.20 (2.2.2.4).

8.3 AN ABHIDHAMMA ANALYSIS OF THE DHARMA

8.3.1 The term ***abhidhamma*** is found in the suttas but not in the sense of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, which was compiled over several centuries beginning from 300 BCE.[442] The word appears in the suttas often as *abhidhamme,* meaning "about or relating to the Dharma"[443]; and often as *abhidhamme abhivinaye*¸ "relating to the Dharma and the Vinaya."[444] It is only in Buddhaghosa's Attha-sālinī (Dhamma,saṅgaṇī Commentary) that we first come across the rendition of *abhidhamma* as "that which exceeds and is distinguished from the Dhamma" (*dhammâtireka,dhamma,visesa*).[445]

We often see the Abhidhamma systematizing and explicating the Buddha's teaching to give a more comprehensive understanding of it. As a rule, we see the Abhidhamma rooting all its teachings in the suttas, and only proposing solutions for the sake of completeness where the Buddha seems, for some reason, to have omitted some teachings or does not elaborate.[446]

The Abhidhamma tends to explain or present the Dharma in **an analytic manner** in a comprehensive or "ultimate" sense (*param'attha*).[447] In the Abhidhamma, for example, the aggregate of form (in the *khandha* analysis) is broken down into 28 items called "material states or realities" (*rūpa,dhamma*). The next 3 aggregates—feeling, perception and karma formations—are together listed as 52 cetasika (mental factors). And the 5th aggregate, consciousness, is counted as one item with 89 varieties, each of which is referred to as *citta.*[448]

8.3.2 We now come to **karma-formations**, or simply formations (*saṅkhāra*), the most *creative* of the 5 aggregates: they are the creators of karma, the acts of body, speech and mind that create us in their images and chain us to samsara (the human world, the nether worlds and the heavens), that is, the endless cycle of lives and deaths. Hence, 2 senses of ***saṅkhāra*** apply here:

(1) our karmic intentions through body, speech and mind, and
(2) the projected worlds out there that is the objects of our senses.

The suttas normally define karma-formations (*saṅkhāra*) as the 6 kinds of **intentions** (*sañcetanā*), those pertaining to:

		karma arising through
form	*rūpa,sañcetanā*	seeing and actions through gestures[449]
sounds	*sadda,sañcetanā*	hearing
smells	*gandha,sañcetanā*	smelling
tastes	*rasa,sañcetanā*	tasting (taking food)
touches	*phoṭṭhabba,sañcetanā*	touching, tactile feeling
mind-objects	*dhamma,sañcetanā*	thinking

---

[442] On the Abhidhamma, see **Dhamma and Abhidhamma** (SD 26.1).

[443] **Mahā Gosiṅga S** (M 32/1:214,24), SD 44.12; **Kinti S** (M 103/2:239,4), SD 85.14, its Comy says that the term refers to the 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi,pakkhiya dhamma*) (MA 4:29,3 f); **Citta Hatthi,sari,putta S** (A 6.60,5), SD 51.9; A 1:288, 289,7, 290, *passim*; 4:398-400 passim; 5:339x3, 341.

[444] Eg D 3:267,27, 290; M 1:472,5 *passim*; A 5:24x2, 27x2, 90x2; V 1:64x2, 65, 68x2, 98, 4:344.

[445] DhsA 2,14. Tr from Abhs:BRS 5. Of course, it is possible to freely tr *dhammâtireka,dhamma,visesa* as "(relating) specially to dhammas (mental states or realities), extra to the Dharma," viz, explaining phenomena in terms of the Buddha Dharma.

[446] The best-known example of this is the location of the mind as being in the heart-base (*hadaya,vatthu*): SD 26.2 (3.1.3.6).

[447] In fact, of the 7 canonical Abhidhamma books—Dhamma,saṅgaṇī, Vibhaṅga, Kathā,vatthu, Puggala,paññatti, Dhātu,katha and Yamaka—all, except the last, apply an analytic method (*bheda*); the last uses a synthetic method (*saṅgaha*), ie, only in Paṭṭhāna. See Karunadasa, *Theravada Abhidhamma,* Hong Kong, 2010:20.

[448] Dhs 5-8.

[449] The 2 senses of *saṅkhāra* is clear here: one through *seeing* and the other through actions of bodily gestures, ie, *kāya,kamma.*

We create karma—whose fruits we will taste in exponential frequency and abundance—by intention-ally reacting to any of these sense-objects.[450]

8.3.3 *Saṅkhārā* (formations) has another important meaning. They are what we mentally create and project as our virtual world. This is the world we see around us. That external world is real but we can only "perceive" or "sense" it with our senses, or "conceive" it with our mind. Hence, this external reality appears to each of us tinted and squinted by our lenses of perception. The question then is: What is truly real? This is postulated by **the dhamma theory**, an Abhidhamma innovation to explain what is <u>ultimately real</u>.

As we should well know, the Abhidhamma is there for us to have a fuller and better understand-ing of the Buddha Dharma (*buddha,dhamma*). The roots of the dhamma theory can be traced back to the suttas that analyze empiric individuality (our personal existence) and its relation to the external world. In the Buddha's teachings, there are <u>5 such modes of analysis</u>, which are summarized here:[451]

(1) *Nāma,rūpa*, <u>name and form</u>. First, there is the most elementary analysis specifying what we are, what we experience, in terms of 2 basic components: "name" (*nāma*) and "form" (*rūpa*). In this basic or specific sense, *nāma* means the 5 mental factors that invariably arise with consciousness, namely, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*) and attention (*manasikāra*). *Rūpa* here means all the material aspects of experience, comprising the 4 great mater-ial or primary elements (earth, water, fire, wind) and their derived materiality [8.3.5].

Nāma,rūpa, however, is not the whole of our individuality. In fact, in the dependent arising for-mula, we see *nāma,rūpa* arising conditioned by <u>consciousness</u> (*viññāṇa*), and, interestingly, *nāma,-rūpa*, in turn, conditions *viññāṇa.*[452] In this specific sense, it is clear that *nāma,rūpa* is much more than merely "states" of "mind" and "matter." Neither mind nor matter is a *fixed state,*[453] that is, they are both always in flux. In this sense, our psychophysical being—comprising *nāma,rūpa*—is actually <u>a process of becoming</u> (*bhava*), a series of process phenomena. [13.14.3]

(2) *Pañca-k,khandha*, <u>the 5 aggregates</u>: form or materiality (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhārā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). *Rūpa* is what constitutes our body, and the remaining 4 are the non-material aggregates. Basically, this is how we function as a conscious body (*sa,viññāṇaka kāya*).[454] The main purpose of this model is to show that there is no ego, self or soul within or without the 5 aggregates (which are *all* that we are).[455]

(3) *Cha dhātu*, <u>the 6 elements</u>: earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), wind or air (*vāyo*), space (*ākāsa*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).[456] While the 1st analysis (*nāma,rūpa*) deals with the mind and the body, the 2nd (*pañca-k,khandha*) deals more with the mental aspects, that is, the last 4 aggregates representing the mental aspects. In this 3rd analysis (*dhātu*), the focus is on the non-mental aspects, with the dynamic aspects of *rūpa* or the body and matter in general. This analysis shows that we are physically composed of the very same physical elements around us. In an interesting way, conscious-

---

[450] Eg **(Upādāna) Parivaṭṭa S** (S 22.56/3:60 f), SD 3.7.

[451] For details, see Karunadasa 2010: ch 1, esp pp16-22.

[452] S 1.50/175*/1:35; Sn 1036 f; Nm 435,9-11; Miln 49,14-28.

[453] OED records "state (n)" as "fixed or stable condition" and being obsolete. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (10th ed 2020) def "state" as "the mental, emotional or physical condition that a person or thing is in." We can broadly use "state" to refer to "something that is or exists one we can imagine": hence, we can speak of nirvana as "a state beyond space and time" (this however is merely a description, not a definition).

[454] M 109,12-18/3:18-20 (SD 17.11); S 12.32/2:252 f passim (SD 84.6), S 22.71/3:80 f (SD 80.11), S 2.82/3:103 (SD 17.11), S 22.91+92/3:136 f (SD 19.2ab), S 22.124/3:169 f; SD 17.8a (12.3); SD 56.1 (4.3.2.2) n.

[455] S 22.49/3:48-51 (SD 31.13).

[456] S 18.9/2:248 (SD 3.11), S 26.11/3:231.

ness too, is or can be everywhere, that is, *not* located in any particular spot (certainly not in the brain).[457]

(4) *Dvādasa āyatana*, the 12 sense-bases: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; and their respective objects: visible form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mind-objects. Here, the focus is on our 5 physical senses, with only 1 pair of bases representing the mind. This is how we interact with the world, how we make "sense" of things, how we know things, and the limits of knowledge.[458]

(5) *Aṭṭhārasa dhatu,* the 18 elements (of cognition), which is an elaboration of the preceding list: there are the 6 sense-faculties (internal sense-bases), the 6 sense-objects (external sense-bases) [from (4) above], with the addition of the 6 kinds of consciousness, arising from the contact (phassa) between the sense-faculties and their objects. These 6 consciousnesses are those of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.[459] This model shows that consciousness is neither a soul (abiding self) nor an extension of any soul-substance, but a mental process arising from various conditions.[460] Consciousness does not exist on its own.[461]

8.3.4 The Abhidhamma and mental programming

8.3.4.1 The main aim of the canonical Abhidhamma—the 7 books of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka—is to define and classify the dharmas (states or realities) and their interconnection with the teachings of the suttas. The Abhidhammikas (Abhidhamma scholastics), based on their understanding of the suttas were driven by the inspiration that to understand any given item properly is to know it *in all its relations*, *under all aspects* based on the suttas and their meditation experience.

Hence, the Abhidhamma Piṭaka preserves treatises that classify the same material in different ways and from different viewpoints. This explains why, in the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī (the 1st book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka) and the 6 other Abhidhamma treatises contain numerous lists of classifications. To a neophyte or outsider, they appear monotonously repetitive; but, like a computer programme (written in computer language):[462]

The Abhidhamma may be seen to be like a massive 7-volume technical dictionary of systematic and technical Buddhist dogmas. In order to use this Dictionary properly, we need to know its structure, arrangement, terminology and grammar. There are almost no metaphors in the Abhidhamma, unlike the Dharma (suttas) and Vinaya which are full of figurative language. In short, the Abhidhamma is a technical system in itself.

Whether the Abhidhamma helps us understand the Dharma better or not, it depends on how well we understand its system. It is like a **dictionary of historical Dharma**: it should define and reflect the words and teachings as taught and understood in early Buddhism. The task of a good teacher is to explain the definitions and reflections of the Dharma in current terms, in the language and idiom of our time, neither revising nor misrepresenting the Buddha Dharma in any way.[463]

---

[457] On *sa,viññāṇaka,kāya*, see SD 60.1d (1.2.5.1, 7.5.1.1).

[458] See eg D 22,15/2:302 (SD 13.2), D 28,4/3:102 (SD 14.14), D 33,2.2(1-3)/3:243; A 6.61/3:400 f (SD 65.18), A 10.17/5:52 (SD 85.15).

[459] M 115,4/3:62 (SD 29.1a); S 14.1/2:140 (SD 29.9); SD 17.13 (3.3.3).

[460] "There is no other condition that is the source of consciousness" (*aññatra paccayā n'atthi viññāṇassa sambhavo*)*,* M 38,3/1:256 f (SD 7.10); cf Sn 734 f.

[461] We are always conscious "of" something (SD 17.8a (7.1)).

[462] A **programming language**, simply, is a vocabulary and set of grammatical rules for instructing a computer or computing device to perform specific tasks. A **computer program** is a sequence or set of instructions in a programming language for a computer to execute. Computer programs are one component of software, which includes all or part of the programmes, procedures, rules, and associated documentation of an information processing system.

[463] On Abhidhamma innovations of *dhamma* categorization, theory of momentariness (*khaṇika,vāda*) theory of the consciousness-process (*citta,vīthi*), own-nature (*sabhāva*), reinterpretation of causation (*paccaya*), and

8.3.4.2 There are 2 important reasons why the Abhidhamma, even the "canonical" Abhidhamma, is not part of the original Dhamma-Vinaya taught by the Buddha:

(1) The suttas do not mention the Abhidhamma teachings as scholastically preserved in the treatises. However, we may, in most cases, use or accept these post-Buddha texts as canonical commentaries to the suttas where they do not contradict the suttas.
(2) The early Buddhist schools each has their own Abhidhamma canon—which differs in their names and interpretations. The best-known "alternative" Abhidharma (to the Pali Abhidhamma) is that of the Sarvāstivāda.[464]

Clearly then, these Abhidhamma/Abhidharma treatises were the works of deeply learned scholastics but who were unlikely to have been arhats (in the sutta sense). Indeed, if we truly understand and accept the Buddha's teachings, we will find it quite difficult to even imagine arhats compiling scholastic treatises. Their methods would certainly be that of living encounters, guiding their disciples on the path to awakening as an interpersonal and living experience—just like the Buddha.[465] Having said that, the Abhidhamma can be a useful study tool in early Buddhism and psychology—that is, provided we have a good understanding of the suttas.

8.3.5 Derived matter

8.3.5.1 The Abhidhamma, following the suttas,[466] presents **matter** (*rūpa*) in 2 ways, and explains it in great detail.[467] Since our focus here is on the mind, we will only briefly mention the nature of matter.[468] **Matter**,[469] is twofold: **the 4 primary elements** or great essentials (*mahā,bhūta,rūpa*) and **the 24 derived forms or materiality** (*upādā rūpa*), totalling 28 types of materiality.
       The 4 primary elements are the "great essentials" (*mahā,bhūta*)—earth, water, fire, and wind. These are the fundamental constituents of matter which are inseparable and which, in their various combinations, comprise all material forms, from the tiniest particle to the most massive forms of matter (like galaxies).

8.3.5.2 **Derived form or materiality** (*upādā rūpa*) are materiality derived from, or dependent upon, the 4 primary elements, and they total 24. These primary elements may be compared to the earth, the derivative materiality to trees and shrubs that grow in dependence on the earth. All these 28 types of materiality are classed into 11 general classes. The first 7 of these are called <u>concretely produced materiality</u> (*nipphanna,rūpa*), since they possess intrinsic natures and are thus suitable for

---

the shift from process to event metaphysics, see N Ronkin, "From the Buddha's teaching to the Abhidhamma," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* <u>64 no 253 (3</u>) 2010:341-365, <u>https://philpapers.org/rec/RONFTB</u>.
   [464] See eg K L Dhammajoti, *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma,* Hong Kong, 2015.
   [465] "Just like" here refers to <u>the act of engaged teaching</u>. The Buddha's wisdom and skillful means are of course unique and incomparable in certain cases. Often though, we see the Buddha approving of an arhat's teaching, such as in **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18): "If you had asked me the meaning of this, I would have explained it in the same way that *Mahā Kaccāna* had explained it." (M 18,21/1:114), SD 6.14
   [466] "Derived materiality or form" (*upādā,rūpa*; late, *upādāya rūpa*), totalling 24: **(Upādāna) Parivaṭṭa S** (S 22.56,7), SD 3.7. Listed at Dhs 596, 980; Tikap 3, qu at Vism 535; Tikap 89, 109; Vism 444. Also SD 17.2a (10) esp Table 10; SD 17.13 (3.3.2.2).
   [467] "Derived materiality or form" (*upādā,rūpa*; late, *upādāya rūpa*), totalling 24: **(Upādāna) Parivaṭṭa S** (S 22.56,7), SD 3.7.
   [468] For details, see Abhs ch 6. Also SD 17.2a (10) esp Table 10; SD 17.13 (3.3.2.2).
   [469] See Dhs 596, 980; Tikap 3, qu at Vism 535; Tikap 89, 109; Vism 444.

contemplation and comprehension by insight. The other 4 classes, being more abstract in nature, are called <u>non-concretely produced materiality</u> (*anipphanna,rūpa*).[470] [Table 8.3]

8.4 FROM DHAMMA TO DHAMMAS

8.4.1 The early Buddhist texts (EBT)—the historical teaching of the awakened human Buddha—have been preserved to this day in 2 major traditions, that is, the Pāli **5 Nikāyas** and the Chinese **Āgamas**.[471] The EBTs analyze sentient experience in different ways, such as name-and-form (*nāma,rūpa*), the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*), the 12 sense-bases (*dvādāsa āyatana*), and the 18 elements (*atthārasa dhātu*).[472] These modes of analysis describe sentient experience as a succession of physical and mental processes that arise and cease dependent on various conditions. Unlike the EBTs, the Abhidharma[473] world-views narrowed the time-scale of these processes as operating from moment to moment: what the suttas present as sequential processes, the Abhidhamma portrayed as discrete, momentary events.[474]

8.4.2 The dhamma theory

These events are referred to in Pali as *dhammā* (Skt *dharmā*), in the plural, dhammas, differently from the singular *dhamma* that signifies the Buddha's teachings (usually anglicized as Dhamma or Dharma).[475] The EBTs use the plural form *dhammā,* anglicized as <u>dhammas</u>, to refer to all sensory and mental states of whatever nature as we experience them through the 6 sense-faculties (the 5 physical senses and the mind, *manas*). The canonical Abhidhamma treatises, however,

> draw subtle distinctions within the scope of the mental, and marginalize the differences between multiple varieties of mental capacities. Within this context, *dharmas* are seen as the objects of a specific mental capacity called mental cognitive awareness (Skt *mano,vijñā-na*; Pali *mano,viññāṇa*) that is considered the central cognitive operation in the process of sensory perception. Mental cognitive awareness is a particular type of consciousness that discerns between the stimuli impinging upon the sense faculties and that emerges when the requisite conditions come together.
>
> *Dharmas* are not merely mental objects like ideas, concepts, or memories. Rather, as the objects of mental cognitive awareness, *dharmas* may be rendered **apperceptions**: rapid consciousness-types (*citta*) that arise and cease in sequential streams, each having its own object, and that interact with the five externally directed sensory modalities (visual, audit-ory, etc) of cognitive awareness. The canonical Abhidharma texts portray *dharmas*, then, as psycho-physical events with diverse capacities by means of which the mind unites and assi-milates a particular perception, especially one newly presented, to a larger set or mass of ideas already possessed, thus comprehending and conceptualizing it.
>
> (Ronkin, "Abhidharma," SEP 2022; highlighted)[476]

---

[470] For technical details, see Abhs:BRS 234-260.

[471] For a careful study of <u>the early Buddhist texts</u>, see Sujato & Brahmali, *The Authenticity of the Early Buddh-ist Texts,* Perth, 2015:33-99 (chs 3-4). https://ocbs.org/the-authenticity-of-the-early-buddhist-texts-2/.

[472] See SD 26.1 (3).

[473] For an overview of the Pali Abhidhamma, see N Ronkin, "Abhidharmas," *Stanford Ency of Philosophy* [SEP, 2010], 2022: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abhidharma/. For a textual survey, see K R Norman, *Pali Liter-ature,* Wiesbaden, 1983b:96-107, 151 f.

[474] Cousins 1983:7; Ronkin 2005:66-78.

[475] On the technicality and <u>polysemy</u> of *dhamma,* see SD 51.25 (2.2.2.5).

[476] For the evolution of the Buddhist ideas of *dhamma/dharma,* see R **Gethin**, "He who sees Dhamma sees Dhammas: Dhamma in early Buddhism," *J of Indian Phil* 32 2004; N **Ronkin**, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics,* Rout-ledgeCurzon*,* 2005:35-42; W **Waldron**, *The Buddhist Unconscious,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2003:28-33, 50-52.

8.4.3 According to Abhidhamma, ultimately, dhammas are all that really exist: all that we are and experience are merely *dhamma-events*. Modern Abhidhamma point to "atoms," that is, an atomic theory, as embodying the final state of experience, both physically and mentally.[477] They are generally understood as evanescent events, occurrences, or dynamic properties rather than enduring substances.[478]

The Abhidharma thus attempts to give a comprehensive description of every possible type of psychosomatic experience in terms of its constituent dharmas and relational contexts. This endeavour involves dismantling the objects of ordinary perception into their constituent, discrete dharmas and clarifying their relations of causal conditioning (*paccaya*). This exercise comprises both an analysis of dharmas into constituent categories and their synthesis as a unified event by means of their various relationships of causal conditioning: the principle behind all this is referred to as the "**dharma theory**."[479]

8.5 THE PAÑÑATTI THEORY

8.5.1 It would be very beneficial for us to understand that the Abhidhamma tradition works to help us "verbalize" the ultimate realities to which the suttas point. The suttas are records of the Buddha's experience of awakening, presented in numerous dialogues, passages and verses, in different ways, the Buddha's experience of **awakening**, that is, ultimate reality. To illustrate this point, we may consider how a computer programmer envisions a computer game or programme he plans to create. He has to put all this down in machine language which computers can "read." Basically, the repetitive style and technical approach of the Abhidhamma is similar to what machine language is to the programmer. Hence, I reckon that a programmer would probably find it easier to understand Abhidhamma language than most of us who are new to Abhidhamma.

With this metaphor of the computer programmer and his mastery of machine language, we come closer to understanding the true purpose of Abhidhamma study. For most of the 20 years of translating the early texts, I have been verbalizing (putting into words) the suttas and the Abhidhamma, hopefully in some practical way. In Abhidhamma terms, both these approaches—the sutta approach and the Abhidhamma approach—use the *paññatti* theory that introduces common concepts by way of conventions or designations to explain my understanding of the suttas and the Abhidhamma which would in turn help or improve your own understanding of them.

The technical sense of *paññatti* as used in the Abhidhamma is rooted in a well-known passage in **the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta** (D 9) where the Buddha refers to his usage of language:

> *… loka,samaññā loka,niruttiyo loka,vohārā loka,paññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasan ti*[480]

> … these are merely common names (*samaññā*), common expressions (*nirutti*), common usages (*vohāra*), common designations (*paññatti*) in the world that the Tathāgata [thus come] uses without clinging to them.   (D 9,53.2/1:202,7-9), SD 7.14. [10.3.4]

This is, of course, not the only place where the Buddha explains his way of teaching.

---

[477] See eg Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma,* 2010:238.

[478] The different schools, however, disputed the nature and function of dharmas, and some interpretations led to ontological views about the existence of dharmas (that they actually exist). See Ronkin, "Abhidharma," 2022: sections 3+4.

[479] On the *dhamma* [*dharma*] theory, see SD 26.1 (4). See also Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma,* Hong Kong, 2010:14-46 (ch 1 The Real Existents), 234-261 (ch 17 Momentariness).

[480] *Loka,samaññā loka,niruttiyo loka,vohārā loka,paññattiyo yāhi Tathāgato voharati aparāmasan ti,* lit "These are names of the world, expressions of the world, usages in the world, designations in the world … ." See D 9 ad loc + SD 7.14 (1); also Miln 25, 27.

According to **the Nirutti,patha Sutta** (S 22.62)—where we see the earliest reference to the term *paññatti*—the division of time into past, present and future, and the designation of time as "was," "is" and "will be," are described as the 3 pathways (*patha*) of <u>expression</u> (*nirutti*), <u>designation</u> (*adhivacana*), and <u>conceptualization</u> (*paññatti*),[481] or more simply, by way of language, terms and ideas respectively.

The first Abhidhamma definition of *paññatti* is found in **the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī**, where the 3 terms —*adhivacana, nirutti and paññatti*—are used synonymously, and each term defined by a number of synonyms or near-synonyms:

> *Yā tesaṁ tesaṁ dhammānaṁ saṅkhā samaññā paññatti vohāro nāmaṁ nāma,kam-maṁ nāma,dheyyaṁ nirutti vyañjanaṁ abhilāpo—ime dhammā* **adhivacana** [*… nirutti … paññatti*].
> *Sabb'eva dhammā* <u>adhivacanā</u> *… nirutti … paññatti.*

> That which is an enumeration, a designation, a concept, a current term, a name, a de-nomination, an assigning of a name, an interpretation, the details and discourse on these or those states.
> All these dharmas (states) are designations, … expressions … conceptualization.
> (Dhs §1306 = §1307 = §1308 /226.21-35)[482]

8.5.2 Now that we have some idea on the nature of <u>concepts</u>, we can investigate further into how this relates to **realities** (*dhamma*), the terms for describing true reality (like the machine language of the computer software developer or programmer). Since *paññatti* represents name (*nāma*) and meaning (*attha*) as concepts [8.5.1], it has to be distinguished from dhammas (anglicized "dharmas")*,* the category of the real. Since the term **param'attha** is used in the Abhidhamma as a description of what is ultimately real, the above distinction is also presented as that between *paññatti* and *param-attha,* or that between *paññatti* and *dhamma,* because *paramattha* and *dhamma* are cognate terms or near-synonyms.

The 2 categories—*paññatti* and *paramattha/dhamma*—imply **2 levels of reality**, that is, <u>the conceptual</u> (or conventional) and <u>the real</u> [8.6.5]. This distinction depends on the operation of the mind (in the case of the former), and that which exists independently of the mind's operation (the latter). While the former arises from the cognitive act, the latter exists independently of the cognitive act. These 2 categories, the *paññatti* and the *paramattha,* or the conceptual and the real, are said to be mutually exclusive, and together comprise all that is **knowable** (*ñeyya,dhamma*) in the worldly sense and the spiritual (ultimate) sense.

Hence, what is not *paramattha* is *paññatti*; what is not *paññatti* is *paramattha.* In this connection, **the Abhidhammâvatāra** asserts the following:

> *Paramattho ca paññatti*   There are the ultimately real and the conceptual,
> *tatiyā koṭi na vijjati*   a third category is not found.
> *dvīsu ṭhanesu kusalo*   One skillful in these 2 categories
> *para,vādesu na kampati.*   trembles not before other teachings.   (Abhāv 84)

8.6 "OWN-NATURE" (*SABHĀVA*)

8.6.1 Although the *paññatti* theory is often mentioned in the books of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, its specific definition and details are found in the Abhidhamma commentaries, showing the nature and scope of *paññatti* and how they become objects of cognition. In the first place, a *paññatti* cannot be

---

[481] S 22.62/3:71-74 (SD 68.1).
[482] Further on *paññatti* and concepts, see Karunadasa 2010:47-58 (ch 2).

subsumed under the Abhidhamma categories of *nāma* (the mental) or *rūpa* (the material) because it lacks "own-nature" (*sabhāva*).

Hence, **the Nāma,rūpa,pariccheda**[483] describes *paññatti* as being "distinct from mind and matter" (*nāma,rūpa,vinimmutta*) (Nāmrūpp 53). This means that *paññatti*s are not dhammas.[484] In fact, both *paññatti* and nirvana are excluded from the 5 aggregates.[485] Since *paññatti* refers to *what has no corresponding objective counterpart*, **the Abhidhamatta,vikāsinī** describes it as "dhammas without **own-nature**" (*asabhāva,dhamma*) (Abhvk 850/346).

The term "own-nature" (***sabhāva***)[486] is an Abhidhamma term for "real existence," in the sense that they are not concepts. Although, like formations (*saṅkhārā*), *paññatti*s are also "mind-made" (we mentally experience in our own way), *paññatti*s lack "own-nature" in the sense that they do not exist in themselves (outside of our mental constructs). They are simply concepts about <u>states</u>.

8.6.2 A very interesting case of how the Abhidhamma and the Commentaries define things as "relative" (*pariyāyena*), or conceptually, and "absolutely" (*nippariyāyena*) in the real or ultimate sense, is found in the definitions of **consciousness** (*citta*),[487] which are given in <u>3 ways</u>, thus:[488]

(1) definition by **agency** (*kattu,sādhana*). "Consciousness is that which cognizes an object" (*āram-maṇaṁ cintetī ti cittaṁ*).[489] It is, of course, true that apart from the mind-object *(ārammaṇa)*, there are other conditions, such as contiguity (*samanantara*) and support (*nissaya*) necessary for the arising of consciousness. However, they are not mentioned here because even if they are present, consciousness cannot arise without the object-condition. The importance given to the object is also shown by the fact that consciousness is also defined as "that which grasps the object (*ārammaṇika*)."[490] This definition is intended to refute the wrong notion that consciousness can arise without an object (*nirālambaṇa,vāda*).[491]

(2) definition by **instrumentality** (*karaṇa,sadhana*). "Consciousness is that through which the mental factors cognize the object" (*etena cintetī ti cittaṁ*).[492] In this definition, while consciousness becomes the instrument, the mental factors become the agent.

(3) definition by way of **process or state** (*bhāva,sādhana*). "Consciousness is the mere act of cognizing the object" (*cintana,mattam eva cittam*).[493]

---

[483] **Nāma,rūpa,pariccheda** [Nāmrūpp], an Abhidhamma treatise in verse, in 13 chs, by Anuruddha of Kāñci-puram (S India). It has 3 *ṭīkā*s, one by Vacissara and the other by Sumaṅgala. Nāmrūpp, ed A P Buddhadatta, JPTS 1914: 1-114.

[484] Although, as a rule, I prefer using the anglicized "dharma" for *dhamma* (esp as teaching) and in the sutta context, here I keep to the Abhidhamma tradition of using "dhamma" and "dhammas" as anglicized terms in that context.

[485] *Ettha ye paññatti,nibbāna,saṅkhātā dhammā khandhā na honti* (YamA 60,7 f).

[486] On "own-nature" (*sabhāva*), see Karunadasa 2010:32-38.

[487] The Pali *citta* comes from √CIT, "to cognize, know," and forms the stems *cint-* (pres *cinteti,* etc) [9.1.1] and *cet-* (pres *ceteti, cetayati*).

[488] See PED: cinteti & ceteti; Abhs:BRS 27 f; Abhs:WG 7 f.

[489] Cf "It thinks; hence, it is c*itta* (the mind), meaning that it knows the object. Thus it is said: 'The mind is characterized by the range of its knowing," *cintetī ti cittaṁ. Ārammaṇaṁ vijānātī ti attho. Yathâha: visaya,vijā-nana,lakkhaṇaṁ cittan ti.* (Abhāv 4)

[490] "It is called *citta* (mind) because it has mind-objects," c*ittaṁ ārammaṇikaṁ nāma* (AbhvṬ 5).

[491] "The mind arises not without an object as the conditions of support or contiguity; hence, it is said to be its characteristic. By this, the view that (the mind arises) without objects is refuted." *Sati hi nissaya,samantara,-paccaye na vinā ārammaṇena cittaṁ uppajatī ti tassa tā lakkhaṇatā vuttā. Etena nirālambaṇavādi,mataṁ paṭikkhittaṁ hoti.* (AbhvṬ 4)

[492] See eg Nāmrūpp 9; Viśuddhimarga Dannaya (Sinh) 5:184.

Definitions (1) and (2) are given "in relative terms" (*pariyāyena*), to refute the wrong views of those who hold that a permanent self or ego is the agent or instrument of cognition. Definition (3), the ultimate or proper (*nippariyāyato*)[494] definition (AbhsVṬ 57), is the only valid one, because, strictly speaking, consciousness is neither that which cognizes (agent) nor that through which cognition takes place (instrument), but is only *the process* of cognizing an object. As a basic factor of reality (*dhamma*), consciousness is a mere event due to conditions.[495] It is not an entity but a process, an event without an actor. The point is that there is no conscious "subject" behind consciousness.[496]

The definitions by way of agent and by instrument are to be understood simply as provisional defining devices. Their purpose is to facilitate our understanding, to "ease our grasp of the meaning" (*sukha,gahan'attham*) of the nature of consciousness. More importantly, it refutes the wrong view that some permanent self-entity is the agent or instrument of cognition.[497]

8.6.3 Another defining approach adopted by the Commentaries in defining consciousness or any other ultimate existent (*dhamma*) is to specify the following:

(1)	its **characteristic**	*lakkhaṇa*	the own-nature or own-characteristic that sets it apart from other existents,
(2)	its **function**	*rasa*	the task (*kicca*) it performs,
(3)	its **manifestation**	*paccupatthāna*	the way it presents itself in an experience, and
(4)	its **proximate cause**	*padatthāna*	the immediate condition of its dependence.[498]

In the case of consciousness, its characteristic is the cognizing of an object. Its function is to serve as a forerunner (*pubbaṅgama*) of the cetasikas, which necessarily arise together with it. Its manifestation is as a continuity of a dependently arising process (*sandhāna*). Its proximate cause is *nāma,rūpa,* the mental factors and corporeal states, without which consciousness cannot arise in each of us.[499]

8.6.4 Since *sabhāva,* the intrinsic nature of a dhamma, is itself *the dhamma,* it implies that what qualifies as *asabhāva* (absence of own-nature) amounts to "non-existence" (*abhāva*); it does not really exist. As such, the 3 salient aspects of empirical reality—arising (*uppāda*), presence (*ṭhiti*) and dissolution (*bhaṅga*)—do not apply to them.[500] These 3 aspects can be predicated only to those states that accord with the Abhidhamma's definition of empirical reality. Unlike real existents, *paññatti*s do not arise from conditions (*paccaya-ṭ,ṭhitikatta,* KhpA 77,20 f), like the links of dependent arising.

In other words, *paññattis* differ from *dhammas* in that only the latter are characterized by rise and fall. *Paññati* and nirvana do not rise, stay and fall; they have no reference to time (*kāla,vimutta*).[501] For the same reason, *paññattis* have no place in the traditional analysis of empirical reality into the 5 *aggregates,* for what is included in the *khandhas* should have the characteristics of empirical reality and be subject to the temporal process.[502]

---

[493] Sammoha,vinodanī Attha,yojana p42 adds 2 more definitions (*sādhana*): object denotation (*kamma,sādhana*) and locative denotation (*adhikaraṇa,sodhāna*) (Nāmrūpp 9; AbhsvṬ 4; Viśuddhimarga Sannaya 5:184).

[494] *Citta,cetasikānaṁ dhammānaṁ bhava,sādhanam eva nippāriyāyato labbhati.* (Abhvk 6; also ViśmS 5:184)

[495] *Yathā,paccayaṁ hi pavatti.mattam etaṁ sabhāva,dhammo* (VismMṬ 462; also Abhvk 116; ViśmS 5:132)

[496] Cf Y Karunadasa, *The Dhamma Theory: Philosophical cornerstone of Abhidhamma,* Wheel 412/413, Kandy: BPS, 1996:13 f.

[497] AbhMūṬ 66; DAṬ 673; VismMṬ 484.

[498] DAṬ 325 f; PmA 1:14.

[499] See Abhs:BRS 29 f.

[500] PugMṬ:Be 27.

[501] *Vina,sābhāvato atīta,kāl'ādi,vasena na vattabbattā nibbānaṁ paññatti ca kāla,vimuttā nāma* (AbhVṬ 36).

[502] MA 2:360.

Nor can *paññattis* be assigned a place in any of the 4 planes of existence recognized in Buddhist cosmology (*paññatti bhūmi,vinimmuttā*), which are all time-bound.[503] **Dhammas**, on the other hand, as real existents, "having not existed, come into being" (*ahutvā sambhonti*); and, "having been, they cease" (*hutvā paṭiventi*).[504] [8.4]

8.6.5 We should also note that *paññattis* cannot be described either as <u>conditioned</u> (*saṅkhata*) like the realities of the world (the body, feeling, thoughts, karma), or as <u>unconditioned</u> (*asaṅkhata*) (like nirvana), since they do not have any own-nature (*sabhāva*).[505] Since the 2 categories of the conditioned and the unconditioned encompass all realities, the exclusion of *paññattis* from these 2 categories is another way of highlighting their "<u>non-existence</u>" (like a unicorn), occurring only as concepts.

The significance of such observations is that while a dhamma is something <u>established by own-nature</u> (*sabhāva,siddha*), a *paññatti* is something <u>conceptualized</u> (*parikappa,siddha).* The former is an existent verifiable by its own distinctive intrinsic characteristic, but the latter, being a product of the mind's synthesizing and conceptualizing functions, exists only by virtue of concepts.

8.6.6 Those who are new to Abhidhamma but are familiar with the teaching of nonself may wonder if **own-nature** (*sabhāva*) is any different from <u>the self-view</u> that the Buddha clearly speaks against as being an insidious hindrance against spiritual progress. The Commentaries go to great lengths to explain that this is *not* the case, that *sabhāva* has nothing to do with any "abiding self or soul" (*attā; Skt ātman*). There are only conditions, change and impermanence; without these we can make no sense of the world, and have no way of social progress and personal evolution. We would be caught in the rut of eternalist or materialist "no change," whatever this means to either of them.

For Buddhists, whenever a dhamma arises in the present moment, it does not mean that its future own-being appears in the present; when it ceases to be, it does not mean that its own-nature continues to persist in the past.[506] There is no "store" (*sannidhi*) from which dhammas arise and there is no "receptacle" (*sannicaya*) to which they go.[507] Dhammas have neither "arrival" *(āgamana)* nor "departure" (*nigamana*), because they have no existence either before their appearance or after their disappearance.[508] When they appear, they have not come from anywhere (*na kuto ci āgacchanti*); when they disappear, they go nowhere (*na kuhiñ ci gacchanti*). With neither pre-existence (*pubbanta*) nor post-existence (*aparanta*), they exist only in <u>the present</u>; even that is dependent on conditions (*paccayâyatta,vutti*),[509] incessantly rising and passing away, like our breath.

When we need to speak of a past or a future existence of the dhammas, it is merely their nascent and cessant phases; for a dhamma was not before it arises, and is not when it ceases.[510] There is only the on-going dynamic present. **The Abhidhamm'attha Vikāsīni** adds that if anything can be predicated of the past and the future dhammas, it is none other than their absolute non-existence

---

[503] PaṭA 107; PaṭA:Be 359.

[504] VismMṬ 210.

[505] Cf *Saṅkhatâsaṅkhata,lakkhaṇānaṁ pana abhāvena na vattabbā saṅkhatā ti vā asaṅkhatā ti vā* (KvuA 91,25-92,1).

[506] NcA 106 f. *Pubbant'âparantesu avijjamāna,sarūpattā udayato pubbe kuto ci nâgacchanti, vayato ca uddhaṁ na kattha ci gacchanti* (VismMṬ 512).

[507] Vbh 68. Cf *Imesaṁ khandhānaṁ uppatito pubbe anuppannaṁ rāsi vā nicayo vā n'atthi; uppajjamānānam 'pi rāsito vā nicayato vā āgamanaṁ nām n'atthi; niruddhānaṁ vā 'pi ekasmiṁ ṭhāne rāsito nicayato nidhānato avatthānaṁ nāma n'atthi* (PmA 253,16-21).

[508] AbhVk 417.

[509] Vism 15.15/484,8-11. *Atha kho pubbe udayā appaṭiladdha,sabhāvāni uddhaṁ vayā paribhinna,sabhāvāni pubbâparatna,vemajjhe paccayâyatta,vuttitāya avasani pavattanti* (VbhA 68); NcA 73; PmA 1:271, 3:633; DhsA 48).

[510] Cf *Pubbanto vā sabhāva,dhammassa udayo tato pubbe avijjamānattā. Aparanto vayo tato paraṁ abhāvato. Tasmā pubbantâparanta,vivittato ti pākābhāvato viddhaṁsā,bhāvato ti vuttaṁ hoti* (VismMṬ:Be 2:181).

(*sabbena sabbam n'atthi*). [511] For in the case of past and future dhammas, we cannot speak even of an inkling of existence (*vijjamānatā,lesa*)*.*[512] We may speak of a certain "past" and an uncertain "future," but all there is really is this real *present.* Each temporal division is devoid (*suñña*) of the other two and thus "distinct" (*vivitta*) from one another.[513]

When we play a musical instrument (a piano, a violin, a flute or a drum), the sound produced does not come from a pre-existing store (inside it or anywhere else) and when the music ends, it is not deposited anywhere.[514] It is the various parts of instrument working together with the appropriate efforts of the musician (among other conditions) that produce the sound, which does not exist before, and when it fades away, it vanishes without a trace. It is this incessant change that makes sense of things, making knowing and unknowing, awakening and freedom, possible. Thus, we know by naming these fragments of time—past, present, future—whose meaning *is* only in the present moment of its occurrence.

8.7 *PAÑÑATTI:* **NAMING AND MEANING**

SD 60.1e(8.7)   **(Sa,gāthā) Nāma Sutta**

<div align="right">The (Sa,gāthā) Discourse on Name | S 203 f/1.61/1:39
Theme: In all things, name is supreme</div>

Kiṁsu sabbaṁ addhabhavi[515]	What overcomes everything?
kismā bhiyyo na vijjati	What has nothing more (than itself)?
kissassu eka,dhammassa	What is the one thing
sabb'eva vasam anvagū ti[516]	that has all under its power?
nāmaṁ sabbaṁ addhabhavi	Name overcomes everything.
nāmā bhiyyo na vijjati	Nothing is more than the name.
nāmassa ekadhammassa	Name is the one thing
sabb'eva vasam anvagū ti	that has all under its power.[517]

8.7.1 The Pali Abhidhamma gives **2 kinds of *paññatti,*** thus (summary follows):

(1) ***nāma,paññatti,*** concept-as-name, which refers to names, words, signs, or symbols through which things, real or unreal, conceptualizes *subjectively*, designates (*abhidhāna*) and expresses (*vācaka*) the concept; it relates to the word that the idea refers (*saddassa atthehi sambandho*); the referent.

(2) ***attha,paññatti,*** concept-as-meaning, which refers to ideas, concepts or views, that is then verbalized *objectively* as the designated (*abhidheyya*) names, words, signs, or symbols of the concept expressed (*vacanīya*); it relates or refers to the idea with the word (*atthassa saddehi sambandho*); the reference.

---

[511] AbhVk 417. Cf Kvu:SF 377.

[512] VismMṬ:BE 2:172.

[513] VbhA 89,22-33 = Vism 16.90/512 f; NcA 105 ff; AbhVk 417.

[514] We may record the music, but these are merely sounds recorded by some kind of media which, although reproducible, are activated when certain conditions are present. Hence, these sounds are not everlasting.

[515] *Addha,bhavi* is aorist of *adhibhavati,* "overcomes, overpowers, surpasses"; see CPD addhabavati. Ce *anvabhavi.*

[516] Vl *vasam-addhagū.*

[517] Comy: "There is neither living being nor entity that is free from a name, whether the name be natural or fabricated (*nāmaṁ sabbaṁ anvabhavī ti nāmaṁ sabbaṁ abhibhavati, anupatati … Nāmena mutto satto vā saṅkhāro vā n'atthi*). Even a tree or stone with no known name is still called 'the nameless one'." (SA 1:95)

nāma,paññatti (concept-as-name)	*attha,paññatti* (concept-as-meaning)
(1) words, signs, symbols	ideas, concepts, views
(2) conceptualizes subjectively (conceptualizing)	verbalizes objectively (the concept)
(3) designates (*abhidhāna*)[518]	the designated (*abhidheyya*)
(4) conceives and expresses (*vacaka*)[519]	concept expressed (*vacanīya*)
(5) the words referring to the ideas (referent)[520]	the ideas the words refer to (reference)
(6) recognizing	interpretation
(7) worldly conventions and usages	the mind's synthesis of the conventions
(8) generalization (eg, people, tables)	particularization (this person, this table)
(9) it makes known (*paññāpiyanato*)[521]	that which is made known (*paññāpiyattā*)
(10) agency	object

Table 8.7.1 Comparative table: *nāma,paññatti* and *attha,paññatti*

Nāma,paññatti is the mere mode of recognizing (*saṅkhāra,matta*) by way of this or that word, whose significance is determined by worldly convention.[522] It is created by worldly consent (*loka.saṅketa,nimmitā*) and established by worldly usage (*loka,vohārena siddhā*). *Attha,paññatti* is produced by the interpretative and synthesizing function of the mind (*kappanā*) and is based on the various forms or appearances presented by the real existents when they are in particular situations or states (*avatthā,visesa*).[523]

Nāma,paññatti is often defined as "that which <u>makes known</u>" (*paññāpanato paññatti*) or referent, and *attha,paññatti* as "that which <u>is made known</u>" (*paññāpivattā paññatti*).[524] The former is an instance of agency-definition (*kattu,sādhana*) and the latter of object-definition (*kamma,sādhana).* What both attempt to show is that *nāma,paññatti* which makes *attha,paññatti* known, and *attha,paññatti* which is made known by *nāma,paññatti,* are mutually interdependent and therefore logically inseparable. Both *nāma,paññatti* and *attha,paññatti* thus have a mental origin and as such both are *devoid of objective reality*.

According to its very definition *attha,paññatti* exists by virtue of it being conceived (*parikappiyamāna*) and expressed (*paññāpiyamāna*). Hence it would be incorrect to explain *attha,paññatti* as that which is conceptualizable and expressible, for its very existence stems from the process of being conceptualized and expressed. There is thus no possibility of its existing without being conceptualized and expressed.

8.7.2 As already noted, **names** (*nāma,paññatti*) can also be assigned to dhammas which constitute the real. However, we should also note that names given to dhammas do not have corresponding *attha,paññatti,* concepts-as-meanings. Hence, the Visuddhi,magga Sub-commentary notes: "A dhamma having its own-nature is profound (*gambhīra*), but a *paññatti* is not."[525] What this means is that objects of conceptual thought like "person" and "house" are, as a rule, easily recognizable, whereas the dhammas are often difficult to be grasped.

---

[518] *Abhidhāna/abhidheyya:* Abhidharmārthasaṅgraha Sannaya: AbhsSan 54.

[519] AbhsSan 159.

[520] AbhsSan 53.

[521] AbhsvṬ 151; Sacca,saṅkhepa: Saccsaṅ 37 ff; Paramaṭṭha,vinicchaya (ParamV 1066).

[522] VismMṬ 225.

[523] AbhsvṬ 151; AbhVk 317 ff; MilnṬ 7 f.

[524] AbhvṬ 151; Saccsaṅ 37 ff; ParamV 1066.

[525] *Sabhāva,dhammo hi gambhīro, na paññatti* (VismMṬ 218)

    Names given to dhammas do not have corresponding *attha,paññatti,* concepts-as-meanings. This is attested by the identification of *attha,paññatti* (also called *upādā,paññatti)* with what is called *sammuti* or conventional reality.[526] The denotation of *attha,paññatti* includes only the various objects of <u>conceptual thought</u>, which constitute conventional reality (*sammuti*), and not the constituents of ultimate reality (*paramattha)*. Accordingly, we can have the following sequence: *attha,paññatti* (meaning-concept) = *upādā,paññatti* (derivative concept) = *sammuti* (conventional reality).

8.7.3 As **the Abhidhamma Mūla,tīkā** says, when we consider them as separate abstractions, **names** to share the nature of conceptual constructs (*paññatti,gatika),* with no objective reality (*para-matthato avijjamāna*),[527] or, in addition to and distinct from what is subject to impermanence, there is no separate independent entity called *impermanence*. The same situation is true of the other 2 characteristics—*suffering* and *nonself*—as well.

    Even the principle of "dependent arising," which is set forth as the central conception of Buddhism, turns out to be a conceptual construction. Because in addition to and distinct from the dhammas that arise in dependence on other dhammas*,* there is no independently existing entity called "dependent origination."

8.7.4 Logically then, the doctrine of *paññatti* means that all hypostatized entities and all objects of reification are nothing but <u>mind-made states</u>, conceptual constructions, logical abstractions, with no corresponding objective realities. Only the dhammas are real. A *dhamma,* as we have noted, is that which has its <u>own-nature</u> (*sabhāva, saka,bhāva*) or own-characteristic (*sa,lakkhaṇa, saka,lakkhaṇa*).

    The characteristics common to all the dhammas are known as **universal characteristics** (*sāmañ-ña,lakkhaṇa*). The best-known is the triad of <u>impermanence</u> (*aniccatā),* <u>suffering</u> (*dukkhatā*)*,* and nonselfness (*anattatā*), which are known as the 3 marks (*tilakkhaṇa*) of sentient existence. Although these 3 characteristics are fundamental to the Buddhist view of phenomenal existence, in the final analysis, they too turn out to be conceptual constructions.

8.7.5 As unawakened beings, we have only *paññatti* to work with, but this is appropriate and sufficient to begin with. However, *paññatti* is the language ladder with which we transcend the concepts themselves with mindfulness (*sati*), or better, with higher levels of concentration (*samādhi*). Going beyond the conceptual, we establish our mind directly on the real, the dhammas. This is what is called the "**transcending of the conceptual level**" (*paññatti,samatikkamana*).[528] We best do this with a calm and clear mind of mindfulness and concentration.

    In meditation, we should first go beyond such concepts as "earth-element," "water-element," etc, and establish our mind directly on the individuating characteristics that correspond to them, such as solidity, fluidity, etc. It is when we are continuing to focus our uninterrupted attention on them that the individuating characteristics become more and more evident, more and more clear, and our whole material body appears in its true form as a mere mass of elementary matter, all empty (*suñña*) and nonself (*nissatta, nijjīva*).[529] This is a state we have to experience for ourself,

---

[526] Cf *mehi karma sadhana prajñapti śabdayena rūpādi,dharmayange 'samatha,santānādi avatthāvisesādi bheda' eti saṁvṛti satya nam vū upādā prajñapti saṅkhyāta artha prajñapti darśanaya,kartṛsādhana prajñapti śabdayen saṁvṛtiparamārtha dharmayaṅge abhidhāna vayi kiyana lada nāma prajñaptiya ukta yayi data yutu.* (AbhsSan 159)

[527] *Aniccatā dukkhatā anattatā ti hi visuṁ gayhamānānaṁ lakkhaṇaṁ paññatti,gatikaṁ, paramatthato avij-jamānaṁ. Na vijjamānattā eva paritt'ādi,vasena na vattabba.dhamma,bhūtaṁ. Tasmā visuṁ gahetabbassa lakkhaṇassa paramatthato abhāva aniccaṁ dukkham anattā ti saṅkhāre sabhāvato sallakkhento va lakkhaṇā-ni sallakkheti nāmā ti* (AbhMūṬ 85)

[528] VbhA 257,31; VismMṬ:Be 1:266.

[529] *Paññatti,samatikkamanato ti yā ayaṁ paṭhavī,dhatu ti ādikā paññatti, taṁ atikkamitvā lakkhaṇesu eva cittaṁ ṭhapetabbaṁ. Evaṁ paññattiṁ vijahitvā kakkhaḷatta,lakkhaṇesu eva manasikāraṁ pavattentassa lak-*

since it is beyond words and concepts. However, we can only access them at first by way of words and concepts, by way of *paññatti.*

Crossing the bridge of *paññatti* over the troubled waters of ignorance, we enter the garden of knowledge and wisdom. At this stage of our journey, we are still unawakened: we read the variety and see the beauty of this green and spacious garden through a different kind of language, a Dharma-related (*abhi-dhamma*) language [10.3.3], as the basis of what we can know of true reality so that we are freed by this knowing.

---

khaṇāni supakāṭāni suvibhūtāni hutvā upaṭṭhahanti. Tass'etaṁ punappunaṁ manasikāra,vasena cittaṁ āse-vanaṁ labhati. Sabbo rūpa,kāyo dhatu,mattato upaṭṭhāti, suñño nissatto nijjvīvo. (VismMṬ 351)

9 The 52 mental factors (*cetasika*)

9.1 THE NATURE OF THE CETASIKAS

9.1.1 While the sutta tradition presents "the all" (*sabba*)—the ultimate realities that we can know—as the 6 sense-faculties and their objects [7.1.4]—the Abhidhamma systematizes and "completes" the list of realities (all that there is and that we can know) as *citta, cetasika, rūpa, nibbāna* (Abhs 1.2). **Citta** is consciousness (the mind) [8.6.2],[530] the 5th and last of the aggregates; **cetasika**s are the mental factors or concomitants [9.1.2], comprising the remaining mental aggregates [Table 9.1.3]; **rūpa** is the form aggregates; and finally, **nirvana**, the freedom from "the all" [7.1.4]. These are elaborated in commentarial works like the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha. [2.1.2]

Here the Abhidhamma explains to us the nature of early **Buddhist epistemology** (theory of knowledge), especially by its explanation of consciousness and classification of realities (*dhamma*). Consciousness does not arise by itself because it is *transitive* in nature: it is always conscious *of* something.[531] When consciousness (*citta*) arises, it is always accompanied by a set of mental factors (*cetasika*).

Chapter 2 of **the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha**, on the "a summary of the compendium of mental factors" (*cetasika,saṅgaha,vibhāga*), opens with a verse stating these 4 characteristics common to both consciousness and the mental factors, citta and cetasika:[532]

> (1) arising together with consciousness   *ek'uppāda*
> (2) ceasing together with consciousness   *eka,nirodha*
> (3) having the same object as consciousness   *ek'ālambana*
> (4) having the same base as consciousness   *eka,vatthuka*

(1) If only "**arising together**" were stated, the definition would wrongly include as cetasikas those material states that arise simultaneously with the citta, that is, material states produced by the mind and by karma (P *kamma*).

(2) However, these material states do not all cease at the same time as the co-arisen citta, but mostly endure for 17 mind-moments. Thus, to exclude them, the characteristic "**ceasing together**" is also stated.[533]

(3) Now, there are 2 material states related to communication—bodily intimations (*kāya,viññatti*) and verbal intimations (*vaci,viññatti*)[534]—which arise and cease together with consciousness. However, these material states do not take an object, which distinguishes mental states, both citta and cetasika, from material states. All mental states experience an object, but co-arisen citta and cetasikas experience the same object, and material states do not have any object at all. Thus, the 3rd characteristic states that citta (the same mental process, eg, seeing) "**have the same object**."

(4) In those realms where there is the form aggregate, that is, the sense-world and the form-world, the citta and its cetasikas, have the same physical base, that is, they arise with the common support of either one of the material sense-faculties or the heart-base (the mind),[535] that is, "**having the same base as consciousness**."

---

[530] Comys define *citta* as: (1) agent (*kattā*), that which cognizes an object (*ārammaṇaṁ cintetī ti cittaṁ*), (2) instrument (*karaṇa*), the means by which the accompanying mental factors cognize the object (*etena cintentī ti cittaṁ*), and (3) activity, as merely the process itself of cognizing the object (*cintana,mattaṁ cittaṁ*).

[531] SD 17.8a (7.1).

[532] See Abhs:BRS 76 f; Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma,* Hong Kong, 2010:98.

[533] See Abhs:BRS (Bodhi et al) 1999:77; Abhs:G (Gethin) 2002:54 f.

[534] See Abhs:BRS §6.4 (9).

[535] On the heart-base (*jadaya,vatthu*), see Abhs:BRS 3.20-22; SD 26.2 (3.1.3.6); SD 56.20 (2.2.2.4).

I MORAL VARIABLES [9.3] (aññā,samāna cetasika)—13			III BEAUTIFUL FACTORS (sobhana cetasika)—25 [9.7]		
(A) universals (sabba,citta sādhāraṇa)—(7) [9.3 (A)]			**(E) beautiful universals** (sobhana sādhāraṇa)—(19) [9.8]		
(1) contact		phassa	(28)	1 faith	saddhā
(2) feeling (aggregate)		vedanā	(29)	2 mindfulness	sati
(3) perception (aggregate)		saññā	(30)	3 moral shame	hirī
(4) intention		cetanā	(31)	4 moral fear	ottappa
(5) one-pointedness		ekaggatā	(32)	5 non-greed	alobha
(6) life-faculty		jīvit'indriya	(33)	6 non-hatred	adosa
(7) attention		manasikāra	(34)	7 neutrality of mind	tatra,majjhattatā
			(35)	8 tranquillity of cetasikas	kāya,passaddhi
(B) occasionals (pakiṇṇaka)—(6) [9.4]			(36)	9 tranquillity of consciousness	citta,passaddhi
(8) 1 initial application		vitakka	(37)	10 lightness of cetasikas	kaya,lahutā
(9) 2 sustained application		vicāra	(38)	11 lightness of consciousness	citta,lahutā
(10) 3 decision		odhimokkha	(39)	12 malleability of cetasikas	kāya,mudutā
(11) 4 energy		viriya	(40)	13 malleability of consciousness	citta,mudutā
(12) 5 zest		pīti	(41)	14 wieldiness of cetasikas	kāya,kammaññatā
(13) 6 will		chanda	(42)	15 wieldiness of consciousness	citta,kammaññatā
			(43)	16 proficiency of cetasikas	kāya,paguññatā
II UNWHOLESOME FACTORS [9.5] (akusala cetasika)—14			(44)	17 proficiency of consciousness	citta,paguññatā
			(45)	18 rectitude of cetasikas	kāy'ujjukatā
			(46)	19 rectitude of consciousness	citt'ujjukatā
(C) unwholesome universals (akusala sādhāraṇa)—(4) [9.5.2]			**(F) abstinences** (virati)—(3) [9.10]		
(14)	1 delusion	moha	(47)	1 right speech	sammā vācā
(15)	2 shamelessness	ahirika	(48)	2 right action	sammā kammantā
(16)	3 fearlessness of wrong	anottappa	(49)	3 right livelihood	sammā ājīva
(17)	4 (mental) restlessness	uddhacca			
			(G) illimitables (appamaññā)—(2) [9.11]		
(D) unwholesome occasionals (akusala pakiṇṇaka)—(10) [9.6]			(50)	1 compassion	karunā
			(51)	2 altruistic joy	muditā
(18)	1 greed	lobha			
(19)	2 wrong view	diṭṭhi	**(H) non-delusion** (amoha)—(1) [9.12]		
(20)	3 conceit	māna	(52) wisdom faculty		paññ'indriya
(21)	4 hatred	dosa			
(22)	5 envy [jealousy]	issā			
(23)	6 avarice [stinginess]	macchariya	For a study of these cetasikas, see: Abhs:BRS 1999:76-113 (ch II); Karunadasa, *Theravāda Abhidhamma,* [536] 2010 chs 7-9.		
(24)	7 worry	kukkucca			
(25)	8 sloth	thīna			
(26)	9 torpor	middha			
(27)	10 (spiritual) doubt	vicikicchā			

Table 9.1 The 52 mental factors (*cetasika*)

---

[536] Many of the book's footnotes are inaccurate or unattested.

9.1.2 The Pali Abhidhamma lists a total of **52 mental factors** (*cetasika*)[537]: we shall henceforth use the anglicized "cetasika" for convenience.[538] These 52 mental factors are classified into 4 broad categories, as follows:

I the 7 universals (morally variable);	*sabba,citta sādhāraṇa*	[9.2, 9.3 (I)A]
II the 6 occasionals (morally variable);	*pakiṇṇaka*	[9.4(B)]
III the 14 unwholesome factors; and	*akusala cetasika*	[9.5 f]
IV the 25 beautiful factors.	*sobhana cetasika*	[9.7-9.12]

9.1.3 If we compare the Abhidhamma classification with the teaching of the 5 aggregates, the cetasikas comprise *feeling, perception,* and *formations.* Of the 52 cetasikas, one of them is feeling and another is perception; the remaining 50 cetasikas are all karma-formations [Table 9.1].

    These 52 cetasikas and **the cittas** are classed in terms of the 4 immaterial aggregates (the 5 aggregates less the body or form, *rūpa*)[539] as follows:

cetasika *2*	feeling	feeling aggregate	*vedanā khandha*
cetasika *3*	perception	perception aggregate	*saññā khandha*
cetasikas 1, 4-52	formations	formations aggregate	*saṅkhāra khandha*
cittas	consciousness	consciousness aggregate	*viññāṇa khandha*

Table 9.1.3 Cittas, cetasikas, aggregates and knowledge [cf Table 5.2; 8.1.5]

9.1.4 The 13 morally variable cetasikas (*añña,samāna cetasika*) comprise the first 2 categories: the 7 universals [9.2, 9.3] and the 6 occasionals [9.4]. The term *añña,* "other," refers to the beautiful cittas[540] in relation to the non-beautiful ones (ie, the unwholesome cittas). The first 13 cetasikas of the first 2 categories are common (*samāna*) to both beautiful and non-beautiful cittas, and they assume the moral quality of their associated cetasikas (respectively, as wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate). In other words, these cetasikas are "variable" in accordance with the nature of the object and the mental state.

9.2 THE 7 UNIVERSALS

9.2.1 The 7 universals are contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), intention (*cetanā*), one-pointedness (*ek'aggatā*), psychic life-faculty (*jīvit'indriya*), and attention (*manasikāra*).[541] The 7 universal cetasikas are common (*sādhāraṇa*) to all cittas (*sabba,citta*). These factors perform the most rudimentary and essential cognitive functions, without which we would not be conscious of any object. The listing sequence does not reflect any chronology, since they all occur *simultaneously* with the arising of every citta.

---

    [537] Both *citta* and *cetasika* come from the same root, √CIT, "to perceive, know, appear." But the vb *cinteti,* "to think," comes from √CINT, "to think." *Cetasika* is the adj form of *ceto* or *citta,* "the mind"; hence, "mental factors or concomitants," or anglicized as "cetasika" [9.1.3]. See Abhs:SR (Shwe Zan Aung; rev C A F Rhys Davids) 1910: 237-241.

    [538] Another common Abhidhamma anglicization, which seems easier than saying "mental factors."

    [539] **The body** or form (*rūpa*) (our physical being) is not included here since the cittas and cetasikas form the mental aspects of our being. However, we experience the body through "somatic awareness" (Table 5.2).

    [540] In Abhidhamma, "citta" is a convenient anglicized term for the consciousnesses or "minds."

    [541] See eg Vism 18.8/589, but where *cittaṭṭhiti,* "steadiness of mind," is used as a synonym.

9.2.2 The origins of <u>the theory of the universal</u> are found in the suttas, where it is said that con-sciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāma,rūpa*) are dependent on each other: "Dependent on consciousness arises name-and-form" (*viññāṇa,paccayā nāma,rūpaṁ*), and "dependent on name-and-form arises consciousness" (*nāma,rūpa,paccayā viññāṇaṁ*). **Nāma** in *nāma,rūpa* refers to the <u>5 mental factors</u>, namely, *feeling, perception, intention, contact, and attention. Rūpa* in *nāma,rūpa* refers to materiality consisting of the 4 elements of matter and derived matter.[542] **The Naḷa,kalāpiya Sutta** (S 12.67) compares the mutual dependence of consciousness and *nāma,rūpa* to the way 2 bundles of reeds keep standing by leaning against each other. When one falls, the other falls as well.[543]

9.2.3 Further, **the Mahā,nidāna Sutta** (D 15) states that the analysis of the world of experience can-not go beyond the mutual reciprocity of consciousness and *nāma,rūpa*.[544] When we are untroubled by the forms (*rūpa*), that is the material factors, even momentarily, we are more likely to see that consciousness and the 5 mental factors (*nāma*) are necessarily co-nascent and mutually dependent. It is also worth noting that the 5 mental factors which the suttas bring under *nāma* occur in the list of mental factors that the Abhidhamma calls "universals," although the Abhidhamma adds 2 more to raise the number to 7.[545]

9.3 (*I*) THE 13 MORAL VARIABLES (*AÑÑA,SAMĀNA CETASIKA*) [Table 9.1]

Cetasikas 2 + 3 are aggregates, namely, feeling and perception. The other 11 mental factors, common to both the wholesome and the unwholesome (*añña,samāna cetasika*), are all karma-forma-tions: The 13 moral variables are:
(A) The 7 universal cetasikas [below], and (B) the 6 occasional cetasikas [9.4].

(*A*) **The 7 universal cetasikas** (*sabba,citta sādhāraṇa cetasika*)
These cetasikas arise in every mind moment, and comprise: (1) contact, (2) feeling,* (3) percep-tion,* (4) intention, (5) one-pointedness (= mental concentration, *samādhi*), (6) psychic life-faculty, and (7) attention.
[*As already noted, unlike the other cetasikas, which are all <u>karma-formations</u>, *feeling* and *per-ception* are each a cetasika that is also an aggregate (*khandha*) each in its own right.]

(1) Contact (*phassa*) has the <u>characteristic</u>[546] of "touching" (the coming together of sense faculty + object + consciousness). Its <u>function</u> is impingement, as it causes consciousness and its object to impinge. Its <u>manifestation</u> is the concurrence of consciousness, sense-faculty and object. Its proxim-ate cause is an objective field that has come into focus.[547]

---

[542] See eg **(Nidāna) Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2/2:3 f), SD 5.15; Miln 49: "these states are mutually dependent, but they arise together" (*añña-m-aññaṁ upanissatā ete dhammā, ekato'va uppajjanti*).

[543] S 12.67/2:114 (SD 83.11).

[544] D 15/2:63 f (SD 5.17).

[545] The earliest Pali text that mentions <u>the 7 universals</u>, but without any technical designation, "common to all cittas," attached to them is Milinda,pañha (Miln 56,28 f, 56,32-57,1). For details, see Karunadasa 2010:99-101.

[546] Comys use <u>4 defining devices</u> to delimit cetasikas: (1) characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*), the salient quality of the phenomenon, (2) function (*kicca,rasa*), its performance of a task or attainment of goal, (3) its manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*), the way it presents and effects itself within experience, and (4) its proximate cause (*padaṭ-ṭhāna*), the principal condition upon which it depends (PmA 2:434; DhsA 63). For explanations, see Vism 4.88-100/141-145, 9.93-96/318, 14.134-177/463-471; DhsA 107-133, 247-260 (tr DhsA:M 142-180, 330-346). See Abhs:BRS 29.

[547] On *phassa,* see **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140,7), SD 4.17; SD 57.34 (2.3.4). See Karunadasa 2010:101-105.

(2) Feeling (*vedanā*) (an aggregate in its own right) is closely connected with contact, that is, the initial descent of consciousness on the object, when the mind meets its object;[548] hence, it is said in the suttas, "Conditioned by contact, feeling arises" (***phassa,paccayā vedanā***).[549] Feeling has the characteristic of being felt [experienced] (*vedayita*) as the hedonic tone that necessarily and simultaneously arises with contact.

This hedonic tone can be pleasant (*sukha*), painful (*dukkha*) or neutral (*adukkha-m-asukha*). The "neutral" feeling is what divides the hedonic tone into pleasant and painful. However, this hedonic neutrality is not the same as equanimity or mental equipoise (*tatra,majjhattatā*). The latter implies a higher intellectual state.

There is no cognitive act that is not hedonically affected by the object of cognition. Hence, in the same way as contact, feeling too is a universal cetasika. As a cetasika, feeling's function is experiencing or enjoying the object's desirable aspect. Its manifestation is the relishing of the associated cetasikas. Its proximate cause is tranquillity.[550]

(3) Perception (*saññā*) has the characteristic of perceiving the object's qualities. Its function is to make a sign as a condition for perceiving again that "this is the same," or recognizing what has been previously perceived. It is manifested as the interpreting of the object (*abhinivesa*) by way of the features that has been apprehended. Its proximate cause is the object as it appears.[551]

(4) Intention (*cetanā*) is the cetasika concerned with the actualization of a goal; the conative aspect of cognition. Intention organizes the associated cetasikas in acting upon the object. Its characteristic is the state of willing, its function is to accumulate karma, and its manifestation is co-ordination. Its proximate cause is the associated states. Intention is the most significant cetasika in generating karma, since it is intention that determines the moral quality of an action.[552]

(5) One-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) is the unification of the mind on its object. Although this factor comes to prominence in the dhyanas, where it functions as a dhyana-factor, the Abhidhamma says that the germ of that capacity for mental unification is present in all types of consciousness, even the most rudimentary. It thus functions to fix the mind on its object. One-pointedness has the characteristic of non-wandering or non-distraction. Its function is to bring together or unite the associated states. It is manifested as peace, and its proximate cause is happiness.[553]

(6) Life-faculty (*jīvit'indriya*), of which there are 2 kinds: the mental, which vitalizes the associated mental states, and the physical, which vitalizes materiality. The mental (or psychic) life-faculty alone works as a cetasika. It has the characteristic of maintaining the associated mental states, the function of making them occur, its manifestation is in establishing their presence, and its proximate cause is the mental states to be maintained. (DhsA 124)

(7) Attention (*manasikāra*) is the cetasika responsible for the mind's advertence to the object, by virtue of which the object arises to consciousness. Its characteristic is the conducting (*sāraṇa*) of the associated mental states towards the object. Its function is to yoke the associated states to the

---

[548] Abhs:BRS 297.

[549] See SD 17.3 (3.1). On dependent arising, see SD 5.16.

[550] Dhs §40/14, §320/66. Comy explains the "proximate cause" for feeling as applying only to the arisen pleasant feeling calming the (mental) body (during concentration) (DhsA 109 f). A more general proximate cause for feeling would simply be contact, thus: "with contact as condition, there is feeling" (*phassa,paccayā vedanā*). In fact, the entire treatment of feeling here is limited to a particular kind of feeling. For details, see Abhs:BRS 3.2-4 and Guide; Karunadasa 2010:105-107.

[551] On *saññā*, see SD 17.4.

[552] On intention (*cetanā*), see **Sañcetanika S** (A 10.206), SD 3.9.

[553] Again, the Abhidhamma, as in its explanation for feeling [above], seems to refer to a mental state of profound concentration. See Karunadasa 2010:107 f.

object. It is manifested as facing the object, and its proximate cause is the object (DhsA 133,7-14). Attention is like a ship's rudder, which directs it to its destination. *Attention* should be distinguished from *initial application.* While the former directs its factors to the object, the latter applies them to it. The former is a necessary cetasika, but the latter is a specialized cetasika not necessarily present in every cognitive process.[554]

9.4 (*B*) THE 6 OCCASIONAL CETASIKAS (*PAKIṆṆAKA CETASIKA*)

These mental factors are common to both the wholesome and the unwholesome cittas, although they do not arise in every one of them. These 6 cetasikas are similar to the universals in being morally variable factors, which take on the moral quality of the citta as determined by other factors. However, unlike universals, occasionals are found only in specific types of consciousness, rather in all of them.

(8) *1* **Initial application** (*vitakka*) is the first of the 5 dhyana-factors. Its characteristic is the directing or "mounting" (*abhiniropana*) of the cetasikas to its object. Its function is to "strike" at and "thresh" the object, illustrating how the mind becomes focused. It is manifested as the leading of the mind onto an object. Although no proximate cause is mentioned in the Commentaries, the object may be understood as its proximate cause.
Ordinary *vitakka* simply applies the mind to the object. However, when *vitakka* is cultivated to reach concentration, it becomes a dhyana-factor, which is called "attainment" (*appanā*), the absorption of the mind in the object. *Vitakka* is also called "intention" (*saṅkappa*), but in this context it applies only to meditation, especially dhyana. As such, it is certainly not "wrong intention" (*micchā,-saṅkappa*). It is also not "right intention" (*sammā,saṅkappa*)," which is the 2nd factor of the noble eightfold path. The *saṅkappa* in the last 2 terms refers to our interaction with karma.[555]

(9) *2* **Sustained application** (*vicāra*) is also a dhyana-factor, and has the characteristic of continued "pressure" or "stroking" (*anumajjana*) on the object, in the sense of examining it. Its function is sustained application of the associated mental phenomena to the object. It is manifested as the anchoring of those phenomena onto the object. The object may be understood to be its proximate cause.[556]

(8+9) *Vitakka,vicāra* are closely related and often work together. The former directs and fixes the mind on the object, "lifting" (*abhiniropana*) the citta and its cetasikas to the object, and the latter continually adjusts and binds (*anumajjana*) the citta to the object. They represent 2 levels of the same process: the former is like the striking of a bell, the latter is like the bell's reverberating peal. (DhsA 115)
The Commentaries describe *vitakka* as the inception of mental process, involving the deliberate movement of voluntary attention. However, *vitakka* should be distinguished from **manasikāra** which is a universal. While *manasikāra* represents a rudimentary cognitive factor which must involve every type of citta, *vitakka* represents a more complex form of attention that is not necessary for a cognitive act. *Vicāra,* as the sustained mental exercise maintains the voluntary thought continuum initiated by *vitakka*.
The *vitakka,vicāra* pair has a causal connection with **speech**. The suttas, in fact, define them as **vacī,sankhāra,** that is, the verbal construction or preconscious mental process resulting in speech.

---

[554] See Karunadasa 2010:108.
[555] On the 5 dhyana-factors (*jhān'aṅga*), see SD 8.4 (6).
[556] See SD 33.4 (3); SD 8.4 (5.12). On the difference between *vitakka* and *vicāra,* see SD 8.4 (6.1 f), SD 33.4 (2).

Hence, it is said in **the Cūḷa Vedalla Sutta** (M 44): "Avuso Visākha, having first thought and ponder-ed[557] (*vitakketvā vicāretvā*), one then breaks out into speech. Therefore, thinking and pondering are <u>verbal formations</u>."[558]

The close connection between *vitakka* and speech is also shown in **the Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18), the earliest description of a Buddhist theory of perception. In this Sutta, during a thought pro-cess leading to perception, *vitakka* (but not *vicāra*) is seen to emerge immediately before mental proliferation (*papañca*), a complex mental thought-explosion associated with speech.[559]

The Abhidharmakośa Vyākhyā (Spuṭārtha)[560] quotes comments by ancient teachers (*pūrv'ācār-iya*) explaining why *vitarka,vicāra* (Skt) are defined as verbal constructions (*vacī,saṅkhāra*). In their opinion, *vitarka* is an indistinct mental murmur which has enquiry as its aim (*paryeṣaka,manojalpaḥ*). It is dependent on intention (*cetanā*) or knowledge (*prajñā*) and represents the gross state of mind. *Vicāra* is also an indistinct mental murmur but it has as its aim the attempt to fix (*pratyavekṣaka*) its object and it represents a refined state of the coarser *vitarka*.[561] As such, *vitakka* and *vicāra* are almost identical, differing only in that while *vitakka* refers to the state of enquiry of the mind, the latter relates to the state of judgement. Both precede all speech.

Another important role assigned to *vitakka* and *vicāra* is as 2 factors of dhyana consciousness. In this role, they operate at a higher level of mental intensity. Hence, in dhyana experience, *vitakka* has the capacity to inhibit the hindrances of sloth and torpor *(thīna,middha),* and *vicāra* the capacity to inhibit the hindrance of doubt (*vicikicchā*). Both *vitakka* and *vicāra* are present in the 1st dhyana*,* but cease in the 2nd; and is absent from the 3rd and 4th dhyanas. (Vism 453)

(10) *3* **Decision** (*adhimokkha*) literally means freeing of the mind so that it can fix on the object. It presupposes some initial hesitancy of the mind whether it should attend to a particular object when faced with multiple objects. The <u>freedom</u> is when the mind stops wavering and keeps anchored to one course in the face of a number of others. Hence, it has been rendered as <u>decision or resolution</u>; but it is not judgement. It has the characteristic of conviction, the function of not groping (losing its way), and is manifested as decisiveness: it concludes, "Just this is the one" (*imam evā ti sanniṭṭhāna,-karaṇaṁ*).[562] Its proximate cause is a thing to be convinced about.

(11) *4* **Energy** (*viriya*) is the state or action of one who is vigorous. Its characteristics are support-ing exertion, and marshalling effort. Its function is to support its associated states. Its manifestation is non-collapse (ie, neither retreating nor receding). Its proximate cause is a sense of urgency (*saṁ-vega*)[563] or a ground for arousing energy, that is, anything that stirs one to vigorous action. Energy upholds and supports all the associated states and prevents them from regressing.

(12) *5* **Zest (*pīti*)** is a dhyana-factor. It has the characteristic of endearing (*sampiyāyana*). Its func-tion is to invigorate mind and body, or to pervade it (to thrill it with rapture). It is manifested as elation. Its proximate cause is mind-and-body (*nāma,rūpa*).

---

[557] Here, *vitakka,vicāra* are rendered as "thinking and pondering" because they are *not* mental formations working with the mind, but "verbal formations" (*vacī,saṅkhāra*) preparing for speech.

[558] *Pubbe kho āvuso visākha vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaṁ bhindati, tasmā vitakka,vicārā vacī,saṅkhāro* **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,15/1:301 f), SD 40a.9; also **Kāma,bhū S** (S 41.6/4:293), SD 48.7. Qu at DA 1:315; PmA 1:316; YamA 79.

[559] M 18,15(1)/1:112 passim (SD 6.14). See also Ñāṇananda, *Nibbāna: The mind stilled* vol 2, 2004:126 = 2012: 162.

[560] A Skt Comy by Yaśomitra (fl 6th cent) on Vasubandhu's Abhidharma,kośa.

[561] See Sphuṭārtha Abhidharmakośa Vyākhyā [Abhk ṭīkā] (AbhkVy 140); also Stcherbatsky, *Central Concep-tion of Buddhism,* 1923:87 f.

[562] Subhūti (index), Abhidhānappadīpika,sūci (Colombo, 1893).

[563] On samvega, see SD 1.11 (3); SD 9 (7.6).

(13) *6* **Will [desire]** (*chanda*) means the desire to act (*kattu,kāmatā*), that is, to perform an action or achieve some positive outcome. This will must be distinguished from unwholesome desire, that is, greed (*lobha*) and lust (*rāga*).[564] While *lobha* and *rāga* are invariably unwholesome, *chanda* is a morally variable factor which, when conjoined with wholesome factors, can function as wholesome desire to achieve a worthy goal. The characteristic of *chanda* is desire to act, its function is searching for an object, its manifestation is the need for an object, and that same object is its proximate cause. It is like the stretching forth of the mind's hand towards an object.

9.5 (II) THE 14 UNWHOLESOME CETASIKAS (AKUSALA CETASIKA) [Table 9.1]

9.5.1 The 14 unwholesome cetasikas are so called because they arise with unwholesome cittas. They characterize a mind that is negative and bad, driven by bad karma and creating new bad karma. These 14 cetasikas are grouped as follows:

(i) **4 unwholesome universal factors** (*sabbâkusala,sādhāraṇa cetasika*; always present in every unwholesome citta): (14) delusion (*moha*), (15) lack of moral shame (*ahirika*), (16) lack of moral fear (*anottappa*), and (17) mental restlessness (*uddhacca*).

(ii) **10 unwholesome occasional factors** (*pakiṇṇaka,akusala cetasika*; present only occasionally in certain cittas): (18) greed (*lobha*), (19) wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), (20) conceit (*māna*), (21) hatred (*dosa*), (22) envy [jealousy] (*issā*), (23) avarice (*macchariya*), (24) worry (*kukkucca*), (25) sloth (*thīna*), (26) torpor (*middha*), and (27) (spiritual) doubt (*vicikicchā*).

9.5.2 (C) The 4 unwholesome universal cetasikas: (14-17)
According to the Abhidhamma, an unwholesome mind is defined as one that is deluded, lacking moral shame and moral fear, and restless.

(14) *1* **Delusion** (*moha*) is a synonym for ignorance (*avijjā*). Its characteristic is mental blindness (*cittassa andha,kāra,bhāva*) or unknowing (*aññāṇa*). Its function is non-penetration (*asampaṭivedha*), or concealment of the real nature of the object (*ārammaṇa,sabhāva,chādana*). It is manifested as wrong conduct (*asammā,patipatti*), which draws us away from the path. Its proximate cause is unwise attention (*ayoniso manasikāra*).[565] [13.1.2]
Lobha, dosa and *moha* are the notorious 3 unwholesome roots of karma, yet *moha*'s sway over unwholesome mental states well exceeds those of *lobha* and *dosa*.[566] While *moha* is present in all the 12 types of unwholesome cittas, *lobha* is present in only 8 and *dosa* in merely 2. This means that *lobha* and *dosa* arise only in a mind overcome by *moha,* a mind that cannot see the real nature of the object. In this sense, *moha* is the same as *avijjā,* and is thus more potent than *lobha* and *dosa.* The Commentaries thus note that *moha* should be seen as the root of all that is unwholesome.[567] *Lobha* and *dosa* cannot arise together because of their mutual exclusivity.

(15-16) *2-3* **Shamelessness** (*ahirika*) and **fearlessness of wrongdoing** (*anottappa*) co-arise with every unwholesome citta. The characteristic of moral shamelessness is absence of disgust (*ajiguc-chana*) and lack of shame (*alajjā*) towards bodily and verbal misconduct; the characteristic of moral fearlessness of wrongdoing (or moral recklessness) is absence of dread on account of such miscon-

---

[564] The suttas sometimes use *chanda* in an unwholesome sense as a synonym for *lobha* and *rāga*. But it is also seen as a potentially beneficial factor, such as when it is about arousing of desire for abandoning unwholesome states and for the cultivation of wholesome states. See eg the def of right effort in **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22/-2:312), SD 13.2, = **Sacca Vibhaṅga S** (M 141/3:251 f), SD 11.11.

[565] DhsA 250; AbhkVy 132.

[566] *Lobha* is attachment to what is agreeable and attractive, while *dosa* is repulsion to what is disagreeable and repulsive.

[567] *Moho … sabba,akusalānaṁ mūlan ti daṭṭhabbo* (Vism 468); DhsA 250 f.

duct. Both have the function of doing bad. They are manifested as not shrinking away from bad. The proximate cause of *ahirika* is the absence of respect for self and of *anottappa* the absence of respect for others, respectively.[568]

These 2 cetasikas play a vital role in the arising of moral evil. This is clearly seen in their opposites, moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*)*,* being defined as "guardians of the world" (*loka,pāla dhamma*)*.*[569] **The (Duka) Sukka** (A 2.8) says that if moral shame and moral fear were not to protect the world, it would descend to the lowest level of moral depravity—"there would be no mothers, nor mothers' sisters, nor uncles' wives, nor teachers' wives, nor gurus' wives[570] … the world would come to confusion such as there is amongst goats and sheep and fowl and pigs and dogs and jackals."[571] Thus, the lack of moral shame and moral fear are the 2 primary conditions for the deterioration of human relationship and values.

(17) *4* **(Mental) restlessness** (*uddhacca*) or agitation is the 4th cetasika arising with every unwholesome consciousness. It has "mental excitement as its characteristic like wind-whipped water; wavering is like a flag fluttering in the wind; whirling as manifestation like ashes scattering when struck by a stone; disorganized thought owing to mental disquiet as proximate cause."[572] It is the distraction of the mind, the state of being distrait.

However, *uddhacca* is not a mental property antithetical to attention. As we have noted, attention is present, in varying degree, in all cittas, irrespective of their moral quality. For without some degree of attention to the object, no thought process would arise at all. Mental restlessness is therefore the opposite of *vūpasama,* mental calm.

The presence of *uddhacca* in all unwholesome cittas shows that a mind overcome by it is not a fertile ground for the emergence of wholesome qualities. *Uddhacca* is also one of the 5 hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) [5.1.1]*,* because it distorts mental clarity and weakens the capacity for proper understanding.

9.6 (*D*) THE 10 UNWHOLESOME OCCASIONAL CETASIKAS: (18-27)

9.6.0 The above 4 mental factors are always present in all unwholesome consciousness. This does not mean that they are the only conditioning factors of unwholesome states. As unwholesome universals, they have to combine with other unwholesome factors to produce a given unwholesome citta, that is, with any of these 10 unwholesome occasionals:

9.6.1 (18) Greed
(18) *1* **Greed** (*lobha*), the first of the 3 unwholesome roots, covers all degrees of selfish desire, longing to have and to hold, attachment and clinging, whether sense-based or mind-based. It has "the characteristic of sticking to an object like bird lime; the function of clinging like fresh meat in a dry hot pan; the manifestation of not letting go like a taint of lampblack; the proximate cause as seeking to enjoy things that lead to bondage."[573]

A more intense state of *lobha* is **abhijjhā** (covetousness), the obsessive desire to acquire what others possess (*para,sampatti*), to acquire others' property as one's own. "It is the outstretched

---

[568] DhsA 248; Vism 468. As this pair is the opposite of moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*), their meaning is better understood by contrast with their counterparts as beautiful cetasikas [1.9.8].

[569] *Dve'me bhikkhave sukkā dhammā lokaṁ pālenti. Katame dve. Hiri ca ottapañ ca* (A 2.9/1:51), SD 2.5c. See Abhs:BRS 86; DhsA 124 f; Vism 14.142/464 f.

[570] ItA 159. This is a statement on the family as the foundation of humanity and society with humane values that civilize us and allow social development.

[571] A 2.9/1:51 (SD 2.5c). See also **(Duka) Kaṇha S** (A 2.7), SD 2.5a.

[572] DhsA 250,25-30; AbhkVy 133.

[573] DhsA 249,2-6; Vism 468.

hand of the mind for others' prosperity."[574] This is the first of the 5 hindrances to mental concentra-tion. [5.1.1]

9.6.2 (19) Wrong view

(19) *2* **Wrong view** (*diṭṭhi*). The Pali ***diṭṭhi*** simply means "view or seeing," which suggests a partial or incomplete vision of something. However, when qualified with *sammā*—as *sammā,diṭṭhi*—it is "right view." As a cetasika, *diṭṭhi* simply means "seeing wrongly" even though the term is not quali-fied with the prefix *micchā,* "wrong." It encompasses all forms of wrong perspectives, views, opinions, interpretations, speculations and ideologies. Its characteristic is unwise (unjustified) interpretation of things. Its function is to presume. It is manifested as a wrong interpretation or belief. Its proximate cause is unwillingness to see the noble ones (*ariya*).[575]

It is interesting that *diṭṭhi,* in the sense of <u>wrong view</u>, arises only in a citta that is primarily condi-tioned by ***lobha*** (greed), and not as one might expect in a citta that is motivated solely by *moha* (delu-sion). The reason for this becomes clear when we consider the early Buddhist critique of views. As unawakened beings, our views are always rooted in <u>desire</u>, our tendency to believe in what is agree-able and palatable, and to reject what is disagreeable and unpalatable.

9.6.3 This unawakened state produced a tendency that is reflected in the well-known phrase: *taṇhā,paccayā upādānaṁ,* "conditioned by craving, there is grasping." Now <u>grasping</u> is said to be of 4 kinds,[576] of which two are concerned with *views.* One is called *ditthi,upādāna, "*the grasping of views" and the other *atta.vāda,upādāna,* "the grasping of the self-doctrine." Since there is no abiding self, what is grasped here is simply an *idea* of it or *desire* for it. This is why the 2nd type of grasping is called "grasping of self-<u>doctrine</u>" and not "grasping of the self."

What is relevant here is the fact that Buddhism, as quoted above, identifies <u>craving</u> as the condi-tional factor for all speculative views, including the self-belief. In this connection, Buddhism traces the origin of the eternalist view (*sassata,vāda*) and the annihilationist view (*uccheda,vāda*) to psycho-logical factors.

The first is the Buddhist expression for all *spiritual* views of existence which are based on <u>the duality principle</u>, the duality of the permanent self (soul, spirit) and the temporary physical body. The second is the Buddhist expression for all *materialist* views which are based on <u>the identity prin-ciple</u>, the identity of the self and the physical body.

The former (the duality principle) is called **eternalism** (*sassatavāda*) because it believes in a metaphysical self which is permanent and survives death. The latter is called **annihilationism** (*uccheda,vāda*), because it believes in a temporary physical self which is annihilated at death.

9.6.4 According to early Buddhism, both views are explainable in psychological terms. The former (eternalism) is due to *bhava,taṇhā* (the desire for eternal life), that is, when the body perishes, some kind of disembodied state is believed to survive forever, that is, as long as we are caught in samsara. The latter (annihilationism) is due to *vibhava,taṇhā* (the desire for eternal death), that is, the belief that we are completely annihilated at death without any post-mortem existence.

When the Abhidhamma says that *ditthi* arises only in a citta that is mainly motivated by *lobha,* it aligns with the early Buddhist teaching on the arising of views and beliefs. Yet one question remains: Why does the arising of wrong view not include cittas motivated by *moha* which, as we saw outlined

---

[574] DhsA 249,14-20.

[575] Since approaching them will lead us to listening to the Dharma, which will then free our minds from wrong views. See eg **(Aṭṭhaka) Punniya S** (A 8.82), SD 57.22 (1.2.1.1); **Sīla Sampanna S** (It 104), SD 59.13.

[576] <u>The 4 graspings</u> (*upādāba*) are those to: (1) sense-pleasure (*kāmûpādāna*), (2) views (*diṭṭhûpādāna*), (3) vows and rituals (*sīla-b,batûpādāna*), and (4) the self-doctrine (*atta,vādûpādāna*): **Mahā,nidāna S** (D 15,6), SD 5.17; **Sammā Diṭṭhi S** (M 9,34), SD 11.14.

earlier, is delusion or ignorance? Isn't wrong view more attributable to delusion (*moha*) rather than to desire (*lobha*)?

Now, there are 2 types of cittas tainted by *moha*. One is associated with **vicikicchā** (spiritual doubt), the other with **uddhacca** (restlessness). The former is a mind overwhelmed with perplexity, indecisiveness and vacillation, due to *moha.* Such a citta is not capable of forming any view, whether it is right or wrong. A view requires some form of positive or negative evaluation of the object. As to the latter, a mind overcome by restlessness means that it is in a state of agitation due to distraction and disquietude. Such a consciousness is also not capable of forming any view whether right or wrong, because the mind's agitation prevents any positive or negative evaluation of the object.

This is not to overlook the fact that, as already noted, the cetasika of *uddhacca* is common to all unwholesome cittas. However, in this particular citta, it is more pronounced than in others. Thus, the 2 types of cittas motivated by delusion and obsessed with doubt and restlessness respectively lack the acumen to evaluate; hence, they do not form views. It is for this very reason that the description in terms of prompted (*sa,sankhārika*) and unprompted (*asaṅkhārika*)[577] is not applicable to these 2 types of cittas.

9.6.5 Wrong views are not beneficial for 2 main reasons. Firstly, dogmatic attachment to views (*ditthi,parāmāsa*) gives rise to ideological perversion which prevents us from seeing things in their proper perspective. Secondly, wrong views can be a source of wrong and bad aspirations resulting in wrong and bad conduct. Such tendencies—on account of their moral depravity—are likely to create karma that leads to rebirth in subhuman states.

Hence, the Buddha says:

> I do not see a single thing on account of which unarisen unwholesome qualities arise,
> and arisen unwholesome qualities increase and grow so much as **wrong view**. …

> I do not see a single thing on account of which unarisen wholesome qualities do not
> arise, and arisen wholesome qualities decline so much as **right view**. …

> (A 1.306+308)[578]

The complex role of *ditthi* as wrong view in the arising of unwholesome states of mind is shown by its being considered under a number of aspects. It is one of the latent tendencies (*anusaya*) which becomes patent (*pariyutthāna*) when the appropriate conditions for its arising are there.[579] As one of the mental influxes (*āsava*) [13.1.3], it muddles the mind and causes the loss of the mind's clarity, the clarity that is necessary for seeing things in their proper perspective.[580]

9.6.6 Conceit, hatred, envy and avarice

(20) *3* **Conceit** (*māna*) has the characteristic of haughtiness. Its function is self-exaltation. It is manifested as vainglory.[581] Its proximate cause is greed dissociated from views.[582] It should be seen as a form of delusion.

Like *ditthi, māna* arises only in a citta primarily motivated by *lobha*.[583] For this reason, *māna* (conceit) is closely associated with attachment to the notion of an individual selfhood. Although *ditthi*

---

[577] *Sa,saṅkhārika* means that the citta arises induced ("prompted") by an external factor, or by one's inclination or habit; *asaṅkhārika* means that it arises spontaneously ("unprompted"). See Karunadasa 2010:84.

[578] A 1.306+308/1:31 f; also A 1.307+309/1:31 f.

[579] Vism 22.60/684.

[580] Vism 22.56/683; DhsA 253 f.

[581] *Ketu,kamyatā,* (lit) a desire to fly the banner (to advertise oneself) (Nm 1:80, 170, 234, 413, 424, 426; Dhs 198; Vbh 350)

[582] Because conceit arises only in greed-rooted cittas dissociated from views.

[583] *Māno catūsu ditthi,gata,vippayuttesu,lobha,sahagatesu citt'uppādesu uppajjati* (Dhs §1548/257,32 f)*.*

and *māna* are primarily motivated by *lobha,* by nature they are mutually exclusive. They do not arise simultaneously in one and the same citta. They are compared to two fearless lions living in the forest but who never live together in the same den.

If *ditthi* arises from self-deception, *māna* arises from self-comparison. *Māna* is conceit that arises at the thought, "I am the better person" (*seyyo'ham asmi*) or "I am as good [as they]" (*sadiso'ham asmi*) or "I am inferior" (*hīno'ham asmi*)—"all such sort of conceit, overweening, conceitedness, loftiness, haughtiness, flaunting a flag, assumption, desire of the heart for self-advertisement."[584] The threefold conceit based on the notions of *superiority, equality and inferiority* is in the suttas called **tisso vidhā,** "the 3 modes of comparison," and their origin is attributed to ignorance of the true nature of reality.[585]

The next 4 unwholesome mental factors—*dosa* (hatred), *issā* (envy), *macchariya* (avarice), and *kukkucca* (worry)—are closely associated as they occur only in 2 types of cittas primarily motivated by aversion (*patigha*). They do not arise in cittas rooted in greed because none of them shows any sign of attraction to the object in relation to which they arise. What is common to all the 4 cetasikas is not their empathy but repugnance to the object.

(21) *4* **Hatred** (*dosa*), the 2nd unwholesome root, comprises all kinds and degrees of aversion, such as "the vexation of spirit, resentment, repugnance, hostility, ill temper, irritation, indignation, antipathy, abhorrence, mental disorder, detestation, anger, fuming, irascibility, hate, hating, hatred, disorder, getting upset, derangement, opposition, hostility, churlishness, abruptness, disgust of heart."[586] Its characteristic is ferocity. Its function is to spread, or to burn up its own support, that is, the mind or body in which it arises. It is manifested as persecuting, and its proximate cause is a basis for annoyance.[587]

Hatred is the annoyance at the thought of harm, real or imagined, either to oneself or to those who are near and dear to one, or at the thought of benefit accruing to those whom one does not like. It could even arise groundlessly *(aṭṭhāne),* without any reason. One gets annoyed saying, "It rains too much," "It does not rain," "It is too sunny," "The sun is not shining."[588]

Hatred is a peculiar citta in that it is always accompanied by a feeling of displeasure (*domanassa*). When we encounter things or situations which are offensive, distasteful and contrary to our expectations, we tend to be unhappy and become sullen.

(22) *5* **Envy** (*issā*) has the characteristic of being jealous of other's success, the "resentment at the gifts, the hospitality, the respect, the affection, reverence, and worship accruing to others."[589] Its function is to be dissatisfied with others' success or happiness. It is manifested as aversion towards that. Thus, its proximate cause is *others'* success or happiness. It has the characteristic of jealousy (*usūyana*) at another's success, dissatisfaction with it (*anabhirati*) as its function, aversion (*vimukha,-bhāva*) towards it as its manifestation, and others' success (*para,sampatti*) as its proximate cause.[590]

(23) *6* **Avarice** (*macchariya*) or stinginess is characterized by "meanness, niggardliness, selfishness, want of generosity, the inability to bear the thought of sharing with others.[591] It has the characteristic of concealing one's own success when it has been or can be obtained. Its function is not to bear sharing the fruits of success with others. It is manifested as shrinking away (from sharing) and

---

[584] Dhs §1116/276; Dhs:F 275.

[585] See eg D 3:216; S 1:12; Sn 842.

[586] Dhs §1060/190; Dhs:F 1923:260 (§1060)*.*

[587] For the 9 grounds for annoyance (or bases for malice, *aghāta,vatthu*), see D 33,3.2(1)/3:262.

[588] DhsA 367; DhsA:M 72.

[589] Dhs §1121/198 f; Dhs:F 276.

[590] DhsA 258; DhsA:M 343.

[591] Dhs §1122/199; Dhs:F 276 f.

as a mean or bitter feeling. Its proximate cause is *one's own* success. It is of the nature to think: "Let it be for me only and not for another."[592] It is a form of mental ugliness (*cetaso virūpa,bhāva*).[593]

There are **2 varieties of avarice**. One is the soft variety (*mudu*) called *veviccha,* obsession with too many wants. It is manifested as: "Let it be mine, not another's." The other is the hard variety (*thadda*)*,* also called *kadariya* (covetousness). It abhors generosity or charity; thus, prevents another from giving to others, which therefore is more ignoble than the soft variety.[594] Both varieties of avarice can occur not only in relation to material possessions but in relation to spiritual matters as well. The latter is called *dhamma,macchariya* (spiritual avarice).[595]

9.6.7 Worry

(24) *7* **Worry** (*kukkucca*)—meaning literally "what is wrongly done"—is remorse after having done wrong through recalling the past. Its characteristic is subsequent regret. Its function is to make us sorrow over what has and what has not been done. It is manifested as remorse. Its proximate cause is what has and what has not been done.

Kukkucca is mainly rooted in *dosa.* However, the Abhidharmakośa,bhāṣya points out it refers not to the act wrongly done, but rather to "scruples, remorse, uneasiness of conscience, worry resulting from such acts. It is a case of naming the effect by its cause."[596] This is, in fact, the Theravāda view too. "It is not only remorse over the evil deed that is done but also remorse over the good deed that is not done."[597]

It is "consciousness of what is lawful in something that is unlawful; consciousness of what is unlawful in something that is lawful; consciousness of what is immoral in something that is moral; consciousness of what is moral in something that is immoral—all this sort of worry, fidgeting, over-scrupulousness, remorse of conscience, mental scarifying—this is what is called worry." It can be thought of "mental scarifying" because "when one's reproach of conscience arises over deeds of commission and omission, it scales the mind as the point of an awl does a metal bowl."[598]

9.6.8 Doubt about the wholesome

Together with *uddhacca* ("restlessness")*, kukkucca* ("worry") is one of the 5 mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). While *uddhacca* arises in every unwholesome citta, *kukkucca* is limited to the 2 types of unwholesome cittas rooted mainly in *dosa.* This shows that *uddhacca* can occur without *kukkucca,* but *kukkucca* cannot occur without *uddhacca.*

However, *kukkucca* can be a wholesome state when we are uncertain if any Vinaya rule or precept has been transgressed, and then make efforts to correct this. Hence, the Commentaries often praise this as a commendable act termed *vinaya,kukkucca,* "scruple regarding the Vinaya," which should not be confused with *kukkucca* as a mental hindrance.[599] The former is a conscientiousness in keeping to the Vinaya; the latter is simply worry arising from doubt.

---

[592] DhsA 373-377; DhsA:M 480 f. This is from etym def of *macchariya*: *Idaṁ acchariyaṁ mayham eva hotu, mā aññassa acchariyaṁ hotū ti pavattatā macchariyan ti vuccati* (VbhA 513).

[593] DhsA 258,2; DhsA:M 343.

[594] *Mayham eva hontu mā aññassā ti sabbā'pi attano sampattiyo vyāpetuṁ na* icchatī ti* **viviccho**. *Vivicchassa bhāvo* **veviccaṁ**; *mudu,macchariyass'etaṁ nāmaṁ, kadariyo vuccati anariyo, tassa bhāvo* **kadariyaṁ**; *thaddha,macchariyass'etaṁ nāmaṁ* (DhsA 375; *Ee omits *na*); tr DhsA:M 482 f.

[595] DhsA 374,27-32.

[596] AbhkBb 57 f; AbhkVy 132 f.

[597] Karunadasa 2919:122.

[598] Comy: *Uppajjamānaṁ pana kukkuccaṁ āraggam iva kaṁsa,pattaṁ manaṁ vilikhamānam eva uppajjati. Tasmā mano,vilokho ti vittaṁ* (DhsA 384) tr based on Pe Maung Tin, DhsA:M 491 f & Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma*, 2010:122.

[599] *Na taṁ nīvaraṇaṁ … nīvaraṇa,paṭirūpakaṁ pan'etaṁ kappati na kappatī ti vīmaṁsana,saṅkhataṁ vinaya,kukkuccaṁ nāma* (DhsA 384,15-19; also VA 2:400).

To remove the worry, we need first to clear the doubt. In order to do that, we need some under-standing of the nature of **doubt** (*vicikicchā*) [cetasika (27) below] so that it does not result in *uddhacca*. However, the reality is that when such a doubt appears strong or urgent enough in us, it becomes a distraction—unless we well understand and accept this commentarial explanation, and set aside that thought of doubt to be properly addressed at the right time, and meantime go on with the meditation.

The last 3 of <u>the unwholesome occasionals</u>—(25) *thīna* (sloth), (26) *middha* (torpor) and (27) *vici-kicchā* (doubt)—also function as mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) that prevent us from attaining mental concentration during meditation. By their very nature, they are all rooted in delusion (*moha*).

9.6.9 [25-26] Sloth, torpor, sloth and torpor

(25) *8* **Sloth** (*thīna*) is defined as "indisposition or unwieldiness of consciousness" or "sluggishness or dullness of consciousness."[600] Its characteristic is lack of driving power. Its function is to sap energy. It is manifested as mental sinking (*saṁsīdana*). Its proximate cause is unwise attention to boredom, drowsiness, etc.[601]

When the mind is overcome by *thīna,* it becomes inert and "hangs down like a bat from a tree and like a pot of raw sugar hung from a peg. It is a form of mental density with no possibility of expansion, like a lump of butter too stiff for spreading."[602] "It is the shrinking state of the mind like a cock's feather before a fire."[603]

(26) *9* **Torpor** (*middha*) is the morbid state of the cetasikas that shuts in mental factors and pre-vents them from issuing forth by way of diffusion.[604] Its characteristic is unwieldiness. Its function is to smother. It is manifested as laziness, drooping, nodding or sleepiness. Its proximate cause is the same as that of sloth: unwise attention to boredom, drowsiness, etc.[605]

(25-26) Sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*) are 2 unwholesome cetasikas that always occur toge-ther as 2 kinds of "cognitive" illnesses (*gelañña).* While *thīna* refers to illness of the consciousness (*citta,gelañña*), *middha* to illness of the cetasika (*cetasika,gelañña*), or of the body (*kāya,gelañña).* As a pair, they form one of the 5 hindrances, which is overcome by initial application (*vitakka*). They are opposed to or overcome by energy (*viriya*), that is, the proper preparations for meditation practice [3.11.1], the right meditation strategies.[606]

9.6.10 One characteristic shared by both *thīna* and *middha* is their inability to combine with the types of consciousness that are <u>unprompted</u> (*asaṅkhārika*) [13.9.1 (e)]. This is because these 2 cetasikas represent "psychological fatigue" or "psychological inertia." By their very nature they are opposed to adaptability and the necessary drive for action. Consequently, they are therefore compelled to arise only in the types of unwholesome cittas, 5 in all, which are prompted or induced by external factors (*sa,saṅkhārika*).

As regards the nature of *middha,* the Abhayagiri fraternity[607] viewed *middha* not as unwieldiness of the mind, but rather as <u>unwieldiness of the physical body</u>. On account of the Abhayagiri monks' "unorthodox" interpretation as such, they were nicknamed *middha,vādī,* "torpor advocates," by the

---

[600] DhsA 256/Vism 14.167/469.

[601] id.

[602] Abhs:BRS 97.

[603] DhsA 378.

[604] id.

[605] DhsA 379; DhsA:M 484; Abhs:BRS 84.

[606] DhsA 379; DhsA:M 484; Abhs:BRS 84.

[607] Abhayagiri was the more liberal rival of Mahā,vihara, both located in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, 1st cent BCE-13th cent.

Mahā,vihāra Theravādins.[608] The term was intended to be derogatory, also meaning "those who profess a state of torpor." But, as we shall see below [9.6.11], this is not the last word on the controversy.

Hence, Buddhaghosa (a north Indian monk living in the Mahā,vihara), in his **Attha,sālinī** (commentary on the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī) was judicious (without mentioning the Abhayagiri fraternity) in criticizing that view. According to Buddhaghosa, in the Dhamma,sangani definition of *middha, kāya* means *not* the physical body, but the "body" (collection) of cetasikas. If *kāya* in this context were taken to mean the physical body, then such cetasikas as *kāyassa lahutā* (lightness of body), *kāyassa mudutā* (malleability of body), etc will have to be understood in a similar way, that is, as referring to the lightness and malleability, etc, of the physical body.

9.6.11 How are we then to understand such physical factors as *rūpassa lahutā* (lightness of materiality) and *rūpassa mudutā* (malleability of materiality), etc, which specifically mean lightness and malleability of the physical body?[609] In the *suttas,* for instance, we find such statements as: (of the 3rd dhyana) "He feels joy with his own body (*kāya*),"[610] and "he **realizes** the ultimate truth with his own body (*kāya*)."[611] If *kāya* here means the physical body, does it mean that the experience of bliss and awakening arises in the physical body, rather than the mind? It must at once be clarified that "body" (*kāya*) in the context of concentration (including dhyana) and awakening refers to the mental body (*nāma,kāya*), not the physical body. [3.8.2]

The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī, in its definition of *middha,* uses words like *paccalāyikā* ("nodding") and *soppa* ("sleep"). This clearly suggests that the reference is to physical, not mental, torpor. In other words, in the non-meditative context—including that of the hindrances—such terms can refer to the physical body. However, Karunadasa, in his *Theravāda Abhidhamma,* offers an explanation:

> Our answer to this contention is that sleep and drowsiness are not *middha* as such but its causes. It is a case of describing the effect through its cause *(phalûpacdra),* just as the two faculties of masculinity and femininity are sometimes described as the two sexes though in fact they are what result from the two faculties. Again together with *thīna, middha* constitutes one of the mental impediments (*nīvaraṇa).* And since impediments [hindrances] are defined as that which "causes the weakening of knowledge and corruption of mind," *middha* cannot surely be understood as something material. [DhsA 378; DhsA:P 485 f]
>
> (Karunadasa 2010:124)

Outside of meditation, doctrinal clarification from the learned and wise is, as a rule, helpful and interesting. However, we must also consider the fact that when we do feel *middha* during meditation, we would usually feel its effect both in *both* the mind and the body: we then feel both *sleepy* and *tired.* We are thus moved to agree with the view of the Abhayagiri fraternity (who probably spoke from experience) while the Mahā,vihara clerics were probably more concerned with dogma. My point is that, with due respect to the commentarial explanation, we must admit that it is more logical to consider that *middha* refers to the torpor of *both* mind *and* body. It is almost impossible to imagine a tired mind that does not tire the body too.

9.6.12 Doubt about the unwholesome

(27) *10* **Doubt** (*vicikicchā*), can arise as spiritual doubt, is defined as a lack of faith in or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the Dharma, the noble sangha and the spiritual training. Its characteristic is

---

[608] AbhkVy 284.
[609] DhsA 378-382; Vism 14.65/448 f.
[610] Eg, **(Navaka) Nibbāna S** (A 9.34,6), SD 55.1.
[611] … *samāno kāyena c'eva parama,saccaṁ sacchikaroti,* **Caṅkī S** (M 95,20(12)), SD 21.15.

doubting. Its function is that of mental wavering [vacillation]. It is manifested as indecisiveness and as taking various sides or perspectives. Its proximate cause is unwise attention.[612]

The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī definition highlights the various nuances of *vicikicchā*: "This kind of doubt, this working of doubt, this dubiety, puzzlement, perplexity, distraction, standing at cross-roads; collapse, uncertainty of grasp; evasion, hesitation, incapacity of grasping thoroughly, stiffness of mind, mental scarifying."[613] The Majjhima Commentary says that *vicikicchā* is the inability to decide which is which (*idam ev'idan ti nicchetuṁ asamattha,bhāvo ti vicikicchā.* (MA 1:116,17 f)

Vicikicchā contrasts with *adhimokkha*, "decisiveness or resolve." For *vicikicchā* is vacillation of the mind and the inability to decide. In fact, the Pāli commentaries often use the 2 verbs *vicikicchati* (one doubts) and *na adhimuccati* (one is not decisive) as synonymous expressions.[614] A Visuddhi,-magga passage reads: "with the absence of *vicikicchā* there arises *adhimokkha.*"[615] From the long list of quotes just listed for *vicikicchati* and *na adhimuccati,* we also see the occurrence of *sampasāda* (serenity, tranquillity, faith), in the negative as *"na sampasīdati"* (is not tranquillized) as a near-synonym for *vicikicchati.*"

Vicikicchā is also defined as a state of denseness and rigidity in a psychological sense. For when we are overcome by perplexity due to indecision, our mind becomes stiff and clouded, a condition that impedes effective thinking. This is why it is counted as a mental hindrance, for vexation due to indecision and vacillation hinders mental cultivation and spiritual progress.

9.7 (*III*) THE 25 BEAUTIFUL FACTORS (*SOBHANA CETASIKA*) [Table 9.1]

The 4 classes of the beautiful factors

(*E*)	the 19 beautiful universals	*sobhana sādhāraṇa*	[9.8]
	(the 6 *citta-kāya* pairs)		[9.9]
(*F*)	the 3 abstinences	*virati*	[9.10]
(*G*)	the 2 illimitables	*appamañña*	[9.11]
(*H*)	non-delusion	*amoha*	[9.12]

9.7.1 This category of cetasikas or mental factors—the 25 beautiful cetasikas—should be understood as functioning with the beautiful cittas or consciousnesses (*sobhana,citta*). "Beautiful consciousness" is an Abhidhamma expression for all cittas (consciousnesses or mind-moments), excluding the karmically unwholesome (*akusala*) and the rootless (*ahetuka*).[616] The beautiful states include not only all karmically wholesome consciousnesses but also the resultant (*vipāka*) and functional (*kiriya*) consciousnesses which are karmically indeterminate (*avyākata*) but possessing "beautiful" cetasikas— the mental factors we will study here.

---

[612] DhsA 259,10-13; Vism 14.177/471; Abhs:BRS 85.

[613] DhsA §1004/183 = §1118/198; DhsA:F 239.

[614] Esp the phrase *vicikicchati nâdhimuccati na sampasīdati:* D 1:106,1-3 + 6 f, 109,5 f + 11 f; DA 1:275,15 + 3:992,28-33; M 1:101,10 f + 12 f passim; MA 2:68,10-18 + 3:368,12-21; A 3:249 + 4:460,13-16 + 5:17,23-25; AA 3:324,18-23; Sn 107,16+20 f; SnA 2:451,26-30; DhsA:Be 388; ItA 2:177; Vbh 367,21-26; VbhA 504,1 f.

[615] *Vicikicchāya abhāvena pan'ettha adhimokkho uppajjati* (Vism 471).

[616] In the suttas, **hetu** is used in either its literal and general senses to mean (1) "cause" or "reason," and is synonymous with "condition" (*paccaya*). In Abhidhamma, *hetu* refers exclusively to the roots (*mūla*) that are unwholesome and wholesome. (2) In that sense, it is the first of 24 conditions (*paccaya*) given in the intro to **Paṭṭhāna** [Nyanatiloka, *Guide to Abhidhamma,* 1971: 117]. **Duka Paṭṭhāna** (Nyamatiloka 1971:144) and **Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** (Dhs 1052-1082) have sections on *hetu.* (3) *Hetu* or "root-condition" for rebirth-consciousness is classed as "rootless" (*ahetuka*), "2-rooted" (*dvihetuka*) and "3-rooted" (*ti,hetuka*) [BDict: Paṭisandhi]. (4) Consciousness (*citta*) is classified as *sa,hetuka* (with root) or *ahetuka* (without root). There are 6 roots: 3 are unwholesome (*akusala,mūla*) and 3 wholesome (*kusala,mūla*). The wholesome roots are those associated with wholesome cittas, and are indeterminate when they arise in resultant and functional ("karmically neutral") cittas [Karunadasa 2010:206]. In the above case, (4) applies.

There are altogether 25 cetasikas that are said to be beautiful (*sobhana*), so called because they each beautify our minds and lives with wholesome karma and their benefits. This also means that the beautiful cetasikas are more numerous than the 2 categories of cetasikas—the moral variables and the beautiful universals. The efficacy is, however, not in numbers, but in their quality and frequency: the beautiful cetasikas should be cultivated and habituated so that they become fully natural for us, and we will not fall from them. Then, we have reached the path of awakening, or heading for it.

9.7.2 Of the beautiful cetasikas, 19 of them occur in all beautiful consciousness; hence, they are called "beautiful universals" (*sobhana,sādhāraṇa*). These 19 are: (1) *saddhā* (faith), (2) *sati* (mindfulness), (3) *hiri* (moral shame), (4) *ottappa* (moral fear), (5) *alobha* (non-greed), (6) *adosa* (non-hatred), (7) *tatra,majjhattatā* (neutrality of mind), (8) *kāya,passaddhi* (tranquillity of cetasikas), (9) *citta,passaddhi* (tranquillity of consciousness), (10) *kāya,lahutā* (lightness of cetasikas), (11) *citta,lahutā* (lightness of consciousness), (12) *kāya,mudutā* (malleability of cetasikas), (13) *citta,mudutā* (malleability of consciousness), (14) *kāya,kammaññatā* (wieldiness of cetasikas), (15) *citta,kammaññatā* (wieldiness of consciousness), (16) *kāya,pāguññatā* (proficiency of cetasikas), (17) *citta,pāguññatā* (proficiency of consciousness), (18) *kāy'ujjukatā* (rectitude of cetasikas), and (19) *citt'ujjukatā* (rectitude of consciousness).

9.7.3 The rest of the 6 beautiful cetasikas do not necessarily arise with every beautiful consciousness; hence, they are called "occasionals" (**pakiṇṇaka**, literally, "miscellaneous"). They are as follows: (1) *sammā,vācā* (right speech), (2) *sammā,kammantā* (right action), (3) *sammā,ājīva* (right livelihood), (4) *karuṇā* (compassion), (5) *muditā* (altruistic joy), and (6) *amoha* (non-delusion). (1-3) are 3 path-factors (*magg'aṅga*) constituting the training in moral virtue (*sīla*); hence, they are termed **virati** (abstinences) [9.10]. (4-5) are the 2 middle abodes of the 4 divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*), which are all-embracing boundless positive emotions; hence, they are termed **appamañña** (illimitables) [9.11]. Finally, there is the singular **amoha** (non-delusion), that is, *paññ'indriya* (wisdom faculty) [9.12]. This completes a total of 52 kinds of cetasikas, the various qualities of our mind.

9.7.4 In the Abhidhamma, the term **"path factor"** (*magg'aṅga*) is used in a broad sense of that which leads to a particular destination, that is, the happy states, the suffering states, and nirvana. Of the 12 path-factors, **the first 8**—(1) right view, (2) right thought, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, (8) right concentration—lead to happy states and nirvana, while **the last 4**—(9) wrong view, (10) wrong thought (or initial application), (11) wrong effort, and (12) wrong concentration (or one-pointedness)—lead to suffering states.[617]

These 12 path-factors may be reduced to **9 cetasikas**. *Right view* is the cetasika of wisdom faculty. *Right thought, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration* are, respectively, the cetasikas of *initial application, energy, mindfulness and one-pointedness* found in the **wholesome** and **indeterminate** cittas with roots.

Right speech, right action and right livelihood are the 3 abstinences [cetasikas 47-49, Table 9.1] found collectively in the supramundane cittas and separately on particular occasions in mundane wholesome cittas.

Of **the 4 wrong path-factors**, wrong view is the cetasika of views, and is the only exclusive unwholesome cetasika among the path-factors. The other 3 factors are, in sequence, the cetasika of initial application, energy, and one-pointedness in the **unwholesome** cittas. There are no distinct path-factors of *wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood*, since these are simply unwholesome modes of conduct motivated by defilements. According to the Abhidhamma, there is no factor of *wrong mindfulness*, since mindfulness is an exclusively beautiful cetasika absent in the unwholesome cittas.

---

[617] Abhs BRS 273 Guide to §17.

9.8 (E) THE 19 BEAUTIFUL UNIVERSALS (SOBHANA SĀDHĀRAṆA)

9.8.1 As we have noted above, these 19 beautiful cetasikas occur in all beautiful consciousnesses; hence, they are called "beautiful universals" (*sobhana,sādhāraṇa*). This does not mean that their presence is palpably felt: it means that we have these inherently good qualities. It is tempting to name these wonderful qualities with some high-sounding dogmatic or theological terms like "Enlightenment-mind" (*bodhi,citta*) and "Buddha-nature" (*buddha,dhātu*). Such terms tend to attract and promote self-identity view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhī*) ("I am enlightened" or "I have gained this status or title") and are often rooted in attachment to ritual and vows (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*). These weaknesses tend to drive us to fall for sectarian views and Guru cults. These are the mental <u>fetters</u> that chain us to the world (indeed, we are frozen into carbonite[618] for the collection and pleasure of cult Gurus). Hence, we do not see such dogmatic or theological terms in the suttas.

9.8.2 Words are simply tools for defining ideas, to facilitate communication, and for cultivating wisdom. They convey teachings that are meant to help us to cultivate wholesome <u>states</u>—to transform ourselves by self-effort into good, and potentially awakened beings. However, when they are seen as "good" in themselves, or we are certified to "have" them from some external authority, then, they become mere **status** symbols, giving a false appearance of good and wisdom that we lack. It is like wearing impressive vestments and parading in a bubble of superiority that attracts the blindly foolish in the service of a greater, darker foolishness. This is what often happens in religion—ominously alluded to in literature and depicted in great movies. [1.1.4.6]

(*3*) These **beautiful universals** are *inherently* good qualities (in early Buddhism, at least) in the sense that **goodness** is our natural evolutionary state—that which truly trains and keeps us from danger, teaches us to overcome them, and inspires us to cultivate a common goodness: we should embrace them as the fruit of morally wise individuals who contribute to the creation of a good society. These beautiful universals have allowed us to evolve as human beings capable of embodying <u>humanity</u> through understanding and accepting the values of *life, happiness, freedom, truth and mindfulness*.

The evolution of our species has brought us thus far biologically and socially. However, to ascend to the next stage, we must evolve *psychologically* and *spiritually*; that is, on an individual level. When we become aware of and cultivate these beautiful universals, then, we begin to appreciate how the practice of **abstinence** by way of right speech, right action and right livelihood will promote personal growth through wholesome learning and mental cultivation. By breaking out of the shell of narcissistic religiosity and power thirst, we learn to live as beings capable of **illimitable** compassion and joy. We are then ready for the **wisdom** that awakens us from our samsaric slumber into wakefulness of true freedom of space and light.

It behoves us then to familiarize ourselves with these <u>beautiful factors</u>, beginning with the 19 **beautiful universals**, the first of which is faith.

9.8.3 (28) *1* Faith (*saddhā*)

<u>Faith</u> may be understood as trust or confidence which we place in someone or something that arises from a clarity of mind and sense of self-assurance in relation to what we need or want to undertake. Although *saddhā* is confidence in someone or something external, it generates self-confidence as well. It removes mental perplexity that arises from self-doubting. In the Buddhist context, *saddhā* is the faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the noble sangha: they represent respectively

---

[618] "Carbonite" here is a fictional substance, used to imprison (freezing) Han Solo cryonically in the film *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), to be delivered to Jabba the Hutt. The reverse process is seen in *Return of the Jedi* (1983). The technology also appears in *The Mandalorian* (2021). See [carbonite freezing](),

the possibility and reality of self-awakening, the path to achieve this goal, and a community of those who have attained this path and goal.

Often, acceptance of the teaching begins as **cognitive faith** based on lessons or testimonies from others who may be a respected teacher, a dear friend or an inspiring source—that is, we accept this *out of faith* rather than our own realization or understanding. In due course, as we gain wisdom through personal experience through wisdom, we are able to weed out falsehood and fancy from our received wisdom, we joyfully begin to realize and understand true reality. This is **affective faith**, that is, a confidence we have experienced and realized for ourselves.

9.8.4   As we spiritually mature as an individual and break free from the tribal herd conditioning of God-based religion, we wean ourself off its imposed fear and fiat to become more independent self-thinking individuals. At this point, we often discover that early Buddhism is a refreshing growing space for our continued individuation. However, when it comes to <u>faith</u>—even at the mention of the word—we may react with suspicion, even disgust, as if to some dead waste we have flushed away in the unclean past seeping into the present. Our instinctive reaction is worth investigating since it is working as a fetter and a hindrance to our learning and growth. Such reactivity comes from the darkness of our past to which we are still fettered: it is a form of self-identity ("I was that!"). We are still chained to self-doubt or our victim-role: "I was fooled for so long!" (Dh 3 f).[619] We start to break the chains by bravely accepting this as it is. Then, we go on to examine Dharma-spirited **wise faith**[620] in its new liberating context: as confidence based on self-effort and realized wisdom.[621]

9.8.5 The characteristic or main function of *saddhā* is to purify (*sampasādana*) the mental states associated with it. **The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** gives an old mythical allusion: "Like the purifying gem of a universal monarch thrown into water causes solids, alluvia, waterweeds, and mud to subside and the water to clear up, makes it lucid and still, so <u>faith</u> when it arises, clears away mental obstacles, causes defilements to subside, purifies the mind, and stills it."[622]

Thus, the main function of *saddhā* is to bring about mental clarity and lucidity, by removing the defects and taints of emotional and intellectual instability. *Saddhā,* thus, paves the way for the arising of positive mental states. In brightening up the mind with joyful faith, it is the forerunner and precursor (*pubbaṅgama, purecārika*) for all acts of charity and virtue.[623]

Saddhā functions as <u>a spiritual faculty</u> (*saddh'indriya*) for unawakened practitioners, and as <u>a spiritual power</u> (*saddhā,bala*) for those on the path [5.1.3]. These dual roles of *saddhā* attest to the fact that it is not only a prerequisite for reaching the path of awakening, but also a catalyst for progressing on the path itself towards the final goal.

9.8.6 (29) *2* Mindfulness (*sati*)

Sati, as we have noted, in its old extra-Buddhist sense means "memory" (Skt *smṛti*) [2.3]. Although "memory" is the root-sense or primary meaning of *sati,* the early Buddhist texts place more stress on its usage as "presence of mind," that is, to be attentive and clearly aware of the present. Its characteristic is "not wobbling" (*apilāpana*) [6.3], that is, not floating away from the object; it is manifested as guarding (the object of awareness) (*ārakkha*); its function is to maintain non-forgetfulness (*asammosana*), it manifests as presence before the object's field[624] (*visayâbhimuka,bhāva*), its proximate cause is steady perception (*thira,saññā*)."[625]

---

[619] See SD 26.9 (4.1); SD 32.12 (1.3).
[620] On "wise faith" (*avecca,pasāda*), see **Pañca Vera Bhaya S 1** (S 12.41,11 n) SD 3.3 (4.2).
[621] On cognitive faith and affective faith, see SD 10.4 (2.2).
[622] DhsA 119,8-18; DhsA:M 157.
[623] DhsA 120,13; DhsA:M 158.
[624] Traditionally, this is "having established mindfulness before oneself" (*parimukhaṁ satiṁ upaṭṭhapetvā*): **Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 62,4+25) + SD 3.11 (3); **Ānâpāna,sati S** (M 118,17) + SD 7.13 (2.4); **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140,4) SD 4.17.

"Steady [firm] mindfulness" (*thira,saññā*) refers to the practice of the 4 focuses of mindfulness.[626] This shows the close connection between perception (*saññā*) and mindfulness (*sati*): to be mindful is to perceive the object of awareness. This specially refers to the fourfold focuses of mindfulness as the proximate cause.

9.8.7 *Sati* is the presence of mind in relation to the object, as opposed to being mentally diffuse. A concentrated mind is able to plunge directly into the object, and not "float about" like a gourd or a pot on the water [6.1.2.3]. Although **attention** (*manasikāra*) is closely related to *sati,* they are not the same. No cognitive act can occur without at least some degree of attention. This, however, is not the case with mindfulness: there can still be a cognitive act *without* mindfulness. The act would then be an *unmindful* one.

For this reason, attention is reckoned as a universal [cetasika no 7], a factor common to all cittas, but *sati* is specifically *a universal beautiful cetasika*, a factor shared only by a wholesome mind. However, when mindfulness is present, that is, when the citta is beautiful, the attention directed to it only enhances it (like stoking a fire), upgrading the quality of the whole cognitive act. This is the benefit of mindfulness in all our actions, through body, speech and mind. *Sati* is able to discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad, true and false, beneficial and harmful, so that we wisely choose what is right, good, true and beneficial.[627]

A Dharma-spirited meditator is able to discern the various teachings connected with his practice: "These are the 4 focuses of mindfulness, these the 4 right strivings, these the 4 bases of success, these the 5 faculties, these the 5 powers, these the 7 awakening factors, this the noble eightfold path, this calm, this insight, this knowledge, this freedom." [4.2]

9.8.8 (30) *3* Moral shame (*hiri*) & (31) *4* moral fear (*ottappa*)

The cetasikas of moral shame and moral fear always occur as a pair, as ***hiri,ottappa***, both in relation to bodily and verbal misconduct. **The Puggala Paññatti** defines the pair as follows:

"… To be ashamed of what one ought to be ashamed of, to be *ashamed* of bad karma, the attaining of unwholesome states: this is called moral shame.
… To fear what one ought to fear, to *fear* bad karma, the attaining of unwholesome states: this is called moral fear."[628]   (Pug 2.15/24; BDict:75 hiri-ottappa)

They work together by restraining us against their opposites, lack of moral shame and lack of moral fear, shamelessness and fearlessness in doing bad.

9.8.9 Moral shame arises with regard to **oneself** (*ajjhatta,samutthānā hiri*)*,* whereas moral fear arises with regard to outside of oneself (*bahiddhā,samutthānaṁ ottappaṁ*): the former is influenced by oneself as priority (*attâdhipati hiri nāma*), and the latter by **others**, that is, public opinion, society, the world at large (*lokâdhipati ottappam*).[629]

In the case of **moral shame**, the motivating factor is our self, our conscience, our moral sense, that acts as an inner voice or guide directing our actions in the right direction. In the case of **moral fear**, the motivating factor is wholesome public opinion, the social norm, what the world at large says and thinks about the basic values of life.

---

[625] NmA 145,20-27; DhsA 122,11-15; DhsA:M 161.
[626] NmA 145,24 f; DhsA 122,13 f; Vism 14.141/464.
[627] On wrong mindfulness, see [1.2.1.4 f].
[628] Pug 2.15/24 (BDict:75 hiri-ottappa).
[629] NmA 1:57,25; PmA 3:622,16; DhsA 125 f.

9.8.10 <u>Moral shame</u> is therefore said to be rooted in the intrinsic nature of **shame** (*lajjā,sabhāva*) and <u>moral fear</u> in the intrinsic nature of **fear** (*bhaya,sabhāva*).[630] By "<u>public opinion</u>" is meant neither the opinion of the majority nor of the powerful, but the wisdom of the wise individuals (*viññū,purisa*) in the society. Hence, what is morally beneficial is described as being "praised by the wise" (*viññū-p,pasattha*) and what is morally reprehensible as being "censured by the wise" (*viññū,garahita*).[631]

Thus, self-restraint by way of **moral shame** (*hiri*) is a case of <u>giving priority to oneself</u> (*attâdhipa-teyya*) in terms of being able to control oneself. Self-restraint by way of **moral fear** (*ottappa*) is a case of <u>giving priority to society ("the world")</u> (*lokâdhipateyya*), in terms of putting others first, or by way of considering <u>public opinion</u> and <u>the common good</u>.[632] The difference between *hiri* and *ottappa* is illustrated as follows:

> If there were 2 iron balls, one cold but smeared with dung, the other hot and burning, a wise man would neither catch the cold one because of his loathing for the dung, nor the hot one for fear of getting burnt.
> Even so a wise man should avoid bodily and verbal misconduct through moral shame and moral fear. (DhsA 126,34-127,2; DhsA:P 166)

9.8.11 Considering the need for *hiri,ottappa* as upholders of a good society, it means that their absence—that is, the prevalence of *ahirika,anottappa*—would be disastrous to social well-being, leading to anomie and social collapse. Hence, the 2 separate cetasikas of *ahirika* (absence of moral shame) and *anottappa* (absence of moral fear) are invariably present in all unwholesome cittas, thus endangering society on account of the predominance of those who lack self-respect and other-respect.

Moral shame and moral fear stabilize and protect social relationships so that a workable family system thrives and wealth is properly defined, distributed and used beneficially in a healthy society that is productive and progressive. Moral shame and moral fear serve as the very foundations and fabric of wholesome governance. Their absence leads to the erosion and collapse of the social fabric resulting in anarchy and social disorder. Hence, the Buddha declares moral shame and moral fear to be those states that are "the guardians of the world" (*loka,pāla dhammā*).[633]

9.8.12 (32) *5* Non-greed (*alobha*), (33) *6* Non-hatred (*adosa*)

Here we have another pair of beautiful universal cetasikas: ***alobha*** (non-greed) and ***adosa*** (non-hatred). Together with *amoha* (non-delusion), they constitute the <u>3 roots</u> that may be either karmically wholesome (*kusala*) or indeterminate (*avyākata*). They are *wholesome* when they occur in wholesome cittas and *indeterminate* when they occur in resultant (*vipāka*) and functional (*kiriya*) cittas. We will consider *amoha* separately following this.

As cetasikas, *alobha* and *adosa* can be inferred as both negatively and positively. In the negative sense, they refer to absence of greed and hatred respectively. In the positive sense, *alobha* signifies wholesome qualities such as charity, generosity, and renunciation (letting go), while *adosa* denotes lovingkindness (*mettā*), goodwill, gentleness, friendliness, benevolence, and love*.*

The divine abode or positive emotion of <u>lovingkindness</u> is the same as non-hatred (*adosa*) when regarded as a beautiful cetasika. On the other hand, it should be noted that the negative term *amoha* always has two levels of positive significance: at the base level, it refers to spiritual knowledge and understanding, and on a higher level, it denotes insight, wisdom, or a direct vision into the nature of true reality.

---

[630] DhsA 126,25-33.
[631] Eg **D 16**,1.11/2:80 (SD 9); **D 33**,2.2(14)/3:245; **S 12.41**/2:70; **S 55.1**/5:343 (SD 66.15).
[632] DhsA 129,35-130,7.
[633] A 2:7-9/1:51 (SD 2.5).

As Nyanaponika notes, "If the other two roots [*alobha* + *adosa*] provide the volitional impetus and the emotional tone required for wholesome consciousness, this particular root [*amoha*] represents its rational or intellectual aspect."[634] This should explain why *mettā* is not mentioned as one of the 4 illimitables (*appamannā*) among beautiful cetasikas [nos 50 + 51]. [9.11]

9.8.13 *Alobha* has the characteristic of <u>neither clinging</u> (*agedha*) <u>nor adhering</u> (*alagga,bhāva*) to the mind-object, as it at once rolls off "like a drop of water, having fallen on a lotus petal or leaf" (*kamala,dala,bindu viya*). Its function is not to lay hold and is manifested as detachment. *Adosa* has the characteristic of absence of anger or resentment, the function of removing vexation or dispelling distress, and is manifested as agreeableness.[635] When *adosa* functions as a cetasika, it is refined into a divine abode (*brahma,vihāra*)*,* that is, *mettā,* an unconditional and boundless acceptance of all living beings.

As a divine abode, *adosa* or *mettā* has the characteristic of promoting the welfare (*hitâkāra,pavatti*) of all living being, self and others*.* Its function is to give priority to welfare (*hitûpasaṁhāra*)*.* Its manifestation is the removal of ill will. Its proximate cause is seeing beings as lovable. Allaying of aversion is its attainment (*vyāpād'upasamo etissā sampatti*)*;* its failure is the arising of selfish love (*sineha,sambhavo vipatti*).[636]

9.8.14 As is well-known in the suttas, *alobha, adosa* and *amoha* form the triad of wholesome roots (*kusala,mūla*)*.* **The Attha,sālinī** (Dhamma,saṅgaṇī Commentary) gives a long list of the various benefits of cultivating the 3 wholesome roots, which is worthy of being read for itself. I shall mention only a few selected passages of special interest to our study:[637]

By **non-greed**, we gain insight into <u>impermanence</u>; when we are neither greedy nor obsessed with wealth or prosperity, even while possessing things; we are able to see the impermanent as impermanent. By **non-hatred**, we have insight into <u>suffering</u>; we are inclined to friendliness, we have abandoned the basis of vexation, and will be able to see conditioned things as a source of suffering.

By **non-delusion**, we gain insight into <u>nonself</u>, since the non-deluded grasps the nature of <u>reality</u>. On the other hand, through insight into *impermanence* arises <u>non-greed</u>; through insight into *suffering* arises <u>non-hatred</u>; through insight into *nonself* arises <u>non-delusion</u>. Thus, we benefit in every way.[638]

<u>Non-greed</u> prevents birth in the realm of **pretas** (hungry ghosts), since it is mainly due to craving that beings arise there. <u>Non-hatred</u> prevents birth in **the hells**, since it is due to hatred associated with violence that beings arise there. <u>Non-delusion</u> prevents birth in **the animal kingdom**, since it is due to <u>delusion</u> that beings are born among **animals**, who are always in a state of delusion.[639]

<u>Absence of greed</u> is a condition for **good health**, since the non-greedy does not resort to what is attractive but unhelpful. <u>Absence of hate</u> is the cause of **youthfulness,** since one with no hate, not being burnt by the fire of hate, stays healthy more easily, remains young for a long time. <u>Absence of delusion</u> is the cause of **long life**, since the non-deluded knows what is beneficial and not beneficial, and avoiding the unbeneficial and cultivating the beneficial, lives a long life.[640]

Again absence of greed is a condition for **wealth**, since wealth is obtained through generosity. Absence of hate is a condition for gaining **friends,** since through love, friends are made and not lost.

---

[634] Karunadasa 2010:130 quotes Nyanaponika, *Abhidhamma Studies*, 2nd ed 1965, 1998:69; *The Vision of Dhamma,* Kandy, 2nd ed, 1994: 117 ff; however, I was unable to locate this quote.
[635] DhsA 127,22 f; DhsA 167.
[636] DhsA 193,7-10. DhsA:M 258 f.
[637] DhsA 127-129; DhsA:M 167-171.
[638] DhsA 129,16-24; DhsA:M 169.
[639] DhsA 128,17-23; DhsA:M 168.
[640] DhsA 128,37-129,4; DhsA:M 168 f.

Absence of delusion is the cause of **personal attainments**, since the non-deluded, doing only what is good for himself, perfects himself. (DhsA 127-129).

9.8.15 (34) 7 Neutrality of mind (*tatra,majjhattatā*)

Tatra,majjhattatā literally means "middleness therein" with "therein" referring to all the cognitive objects. As a technical term, it signifies a balanced state of mind resulting from an impartial view of all objects of awareness. Hence, *tatra,majjhattatā* means "equanimity, equipoise, even-mindedness or mental neutrality." It overlaps with *upekkhā,* which means "equanimity." However, *upekkhā* also means "neutral feeling," the zero standing midway between pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

However, when *upekkhā* is used as a synonym for *tatra,majjhattatā*, the former sheds its hedonic mode, and refers only to *a balanced state of mind in relation to the object*. This is what is meant by the term, *tatra,majjhatt'upekkkhā,* "equanimity as neutrality."[641] This neutrality is a conative [Table 5.2] or wilful, not hedonic, state of mind, which enables us to maintain a balanced attitude.

9.8.16 The characteristic of *tatra,majjhattatā* is the evenness of citta and its cetasikas. Its function is to avoid deficiency and excess, and to prevent partiality (*pakkha,pātupacchedana*). It is manifested as neutrality (*majjhatta,bhāva*). It is this *neutrality of mind* that raises itself to the level of equanimity towards all living beings, when it becomes one of the 4 "divine abodes" or "illimitables," the other 3 being lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and altruistic joy (*muditā*). [9.11]

Equanimity, in this higher sense, has the characteristic of promoting the aspect of neutrality towards all living beings. Its function is to see equality in living beings. It is manifested as the allaying of resentment. It succeeds when it pacifies aversion (*paṭighânunayavûpasamo tassā sampatti*).[642] "It fails when it produces mundane indifference due to ignorance (*gehasitāya aññâṇupekkhāya sambhavo vipatti*)."[643] Equanimity enables us to naturally transcend, among other things, all preferences and prejudices based on colour, caste, race, ethnicity, gender, status and beliefs.

9.9 (35-46) THE 6 *CITTA-KĀYA* PAIRS (*YUGALAKA*)[644]

(35) tranquillity of cetasikas	*kāya,passaddhi*
(36) tranquillity of consciousness	*citta,passaddhi*
(37) lightness of cetasikas	*kāya,lahutā*
(38) lightness of consciousness	*citta,lahutā*
(39) malleability of cetasikas	*kāya,mudutā*
(40) malleability of consciousness	*citta,mudutā*
(41) wieldiness of cetasikas	*kāya,kammaññatā*
(42) wieldiness of consciousness	*citta,kammaññatā*
(43) proficiency of cetasikas	*kāya,pāguññatā*
(44) proficiency of consciousness	*citta,pāguññatā*
(45) rectitude of cetasikas	*kāy'ujjukatā*
(46) rectitude of consciousness	*citt'ujjukatā* [Table 9.1]

9.9.1 The list of beautiful cetasikas continues with 12 items arranged in 6 pairs, representing 6 different qualities of *kāya* (a collective "body") and *citta* ("consciousness"). Here, *kāya* is "body" in the figurative sense, that is, the body of cetasikas, the mental factors taken collectively; or, technically, the cetasikas that arise together with cittas. Each pair of cetasikas thus signifies a quality shared by

---

[641] SA 3:121 or 122; NmA 1:138x2; Vism 5.156/160 = DhsA 172 = PmA 1:187 10 kinds, passim; VA 1:150, 166.
[642] Vism 9.96/318.
[643] Id.
[644] The term *yuga;ala* or *yuga* (both meaning "pairs") are used for these 6 pairs: DhsA 250,14 (*passadhi,ādīni*); MAṬ:Be 2:277; Abhāv 29; VismMṬ:Be 3:430.

both the consciousness (*citta*) and its mental factors (*cetasika*). These 6 paired qualities always arise together and are closely interconnected.

9.9.2 Among these 6 pairs, only *passaddhi*—as *kāya,passaddhi* and *citta,passaddhi*—is mentioned in the suttas, apparently only in **the (Bojjhaṅga) Kāya Sutta** (S 46.2),[645] but it occurs often in the canonical Abhidhamma, especially the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī and the Vibhaṅga (and, of course, in their Commentaries).[646] We can also trace the roots of these 6 *citta-kāya* pairs to the sutta usages of terms such as *lahu, mudu, kammañña* and *uju,* relating to the nature of the mind. Let's look at some of these interesting occurrences of those phrases in the suttas.

The Aṅguttara Book of Ones (*eka,nipāta*) says that the mind is said to be "quick to change" (*lahu,parivaṭṭa*) (A 1.48).[647]

The Ayo,guḷa Sutta (S 51.22) records the Buddha as stating that when he "immerses the body in the mind and the mind in the body" in his meditation, his "body becomes more buoyant, malleable, wieldy and radiant (*kayo lahutaro c'eva hoti mudutaro ca kammaniyataro ca pabhassarataro ca*)."[648]

The defiled mind, says **the (Saṅkhitta) Kilesa Sutta** (S 46.33), is "neither malleable nor wieldy" (*na c'eva mudu hoti na ca kammaniyaṁ*).[649]

On the other hand, **the Pabbateyya Gāvī Sutta** (A 9.35) adds that after emerging from dhyana, our mind is "pliable and malleable" (*mudu cittaṁ hoti kammaññaṁ*), and when our mind is such, we will be able to well develop boundless samadhi.[650]

The flickering, fickle mind is difficult to control; the wise straightens (*ujuṁ karoti*) his mind (Dh 33).

In **the (Chakka) Mahānāma Sutta** (A 6.10), the Buddha teaches the layman Mahānāma that when we reflect on our faith (in the 3 jewels), moral virtue, learning, charity and wisdom both within ourself and the deities, then, our mind is free from greed, hatred and delusion: such a mind is straight (*uju,gata,citta*). A straight mind is not overcome by the 3 unwholesome roots, and so gains inspiration into the meaning, purpose and joy of the Dharma. When our mind is joyful, our body is tranquil. This brings happiness that concentrates the mind. As streamwinners, we are then called noble disciples who dwell balanced in an unbalanced world, unafflicted amongst the afflicted. [651]

9.9.3 Although we often associate the 6 pairs of cetasikas [9.9] as describing the mind, they necessarily also encompass the body. In other words, a healthy mind often entails a healthy body. **Physical health** is also vital for meditation and mental development. Hence, the Abhidhamma highlights the lightness (*lahutā*)*,* malleability (*mudutā*)*,* and wieldiness (*kammaññatā*) of the physical body (*rūpassa*)*.* These 3 physical properties always arise together, just as do the 6 pairs of mental properties, always arise together, and "they do not abandon one another" (*na aññam aññam vijahanti*).[652] Their simultaneous presence attests to the kind of physical health and bodily ease needed for mental cultivation. Hence, Buddhism advocates for a healthy mind in a healthy body.[653]

---

[645] S 46.2/5:66 (SD 62.9).
[646] Nyanaponika, *Abhidhamma Studies* (1965) 1998:78- 87.
[647] A 1.48/1:10,2.
[648] S 51.22/5:283,8-12.
[649] S 46.33/5:92 (SD 74.6).
[650] A 9.35/4:421 (SD 24.3).
[651] A 6.10/3:288 (SD 15.3).
[652] DhsA 326,22
[653] DhsA 326 d; DhsA:M 425 f.

9.9.4 (35+36) The tranquillity pair (*passaddhi yugalaka*

(35) 8 **Tranquillity of cetasikas** (*kāya,passaddhi*)
(36) 9 **Tranquillity of consciousness** (*citta,passaddhi*)

The 1st "*kāya-citta*" pair—*kāya,passaddhi* and *citta,passaddhi*—refer to the calm, tranquillity and composure of the cetasikas and consciousness.[654] "Taken together, this pair has the characteristic of pacifying the suffering of both cetasikas and cittas. Their function is crushing the suffering of both. Their manifestation is an unwavering and cool state of both; and have cittas and cetasikas as proximate cause."[655]

9.9.5 (37+38) The lightness pair (*lahutā yugalaka*)

(37) 10 **Lightness of cetasikas** (*kāya,lahutā*)
(38) 11 **Lightness of consciousness** (*citta,lahutā*)

The 2nd "*kāya-citta*" pair has the common characteristic of *lahutā, "*lightness," that is, buoyancy or quickness, as the opposite of sluggishness or inertia. Its characteristic is the absence of (mental) heaviness (*garu,bhāva*) and its function is to remove heaviness. It is manifested as absence of rigidity. Its proximate cause is the body of cetasikas and cittas. It is opposed to such defilements as sloth (*thīna*) and torpor (*middha*) which bring about rigidity and inertia.[656] This quality of lightness is the "mind's capacity for quick transformation or modification" (*sīghaṁ sīghaṁ parivattana,samattha*)*,* a quality useful for moral training and spiritual development.[657]

9.9.6 (39+40) The malleability pair (*mudutā yugalaka*)

(39) 12 **Malleability of cetasikas** (*kāya,mudutā*)
(40) 13 **Malleability of consciousness** (*citta,mudutā*)

The 3rd "*kāya-citta*" pair is *mudutā* (malleability) in its twofold aspect, that is, plasticity, absence of rigidity. Its characteristic is the absence of stiffness (*thaddha,bhāva*) and its function is to remove stiffness. It manifests as non-resistance and has cittas and cetasikas as its proximate cause. Its presence means the absence of such defilements as wrong view (*diṭṭhi*) and conceit (*māna*)*,* which give rise to stiffness and rigidity.[658]

9.9.7 (41+42) The wieldiness pair (*kammaññatā yugalaka*)

(41) 14 **Wieldiness of cetasikas** (*kāya,kammaññatā*)
(42) 15 **Wieldiness of consciousness** (*citta,kammaññatā*)

The 4th "*kāya-citta*" pair is *kammaññatā* (wieldiness) in its twofold extension to cittas and cetasikas. *Kammaññatā* literally means "workableness or serviceableness." It is wieldiness, tractability or pliancy as a quality of cittas and cetasikas. Its characteristic is the subsiding of unwieldiness, and its function is to remove unwieldiness. It is manifested as success in focusing on the object of cittas and cetasikas. It is opposed to all mental hindrances which make consciousness unwieldy.[659]

---

[654] *Kāya* here refers to the 3 mental aggregates: feeling, perception and formations [1.7.4.1 n]. Dhs §§40 f/14 f (Dhs:F 21); DhsA 130 (DhsA:M 171). Generally (as we have noted), **kāya** may also refer to the physical body (S 6.14/1:156), the touch sense and bodily action, or a group (as here).
[655] DhsA 130,8-15; DhsA:M 171 f.
[656] DhsA 130,16-21; Vism 14.145/465 f.
[657] DhsA 150,26-29.
[658] DhsA 151,1-6; Vism 14.146/465.
[659] DhsA 151,7-11; Vism 14.147/465 f.

9.9.8 (43+44) The proficiency pair (*paguññatā yugalaka*)

(43) 16 **Proficiency of cetasikas** (*kāya,pāguññatā*)
(44) 17 **Proficiency of consciousness** (*citta,pāguññatā*)

The 5th "*kāya-citta*" pair is *pāguññatā* (proficiency), that is, fitness, ability or competence as a quality of mind. Its characteristic is healthiness of the cittas and cetasikas. Its function is to eradicate this twofold unhealthiness. It is manifested as absence of disability. It is opposed to defilements such as lack of faith which gives rise to mental unhealthiness.[660]

9.9.9 (45+46) The rectitude pair (*ujjukatā yugalaka*)

(45) 18 **Rectitude of cetasikas** (*kāy'ujjukatā*)
(46) 19 **Rectitude of consciousness** (*citt'ujjukatā*)

The 6th and last "*kāya-citta*" pair is *ujju,katā,* that is, rectitude, straightness, or the absence of deflection, twisting or crookedness (mental deviousness). Its characteristic is uprightness and its function is to remove the mind's crookedness. It is manifested as absence of crookedness and is opposed to such defilements as craftiness which creates crookedness in the body of cittas and cetasikas.[661]

We have completed examining the 19 cetasikas [Table 9.1 Section E], all of which are universally beautiful, those that occur in all beautiful cittas. There remain 6 more beautiful factors. They are not universals, but occasional or variable factors that may not occur in all the beautiful cittas.

9.10 (47-49) (*F*) THE 3 ABSTINENCES (*VIRATI*)

(47) 20 **Right speech** (*sammā,vācā*)
(48) 21 **Right action** (*sammā kammantā*)
(49) 22 **Right livelihood** (*sammā ājīva*)

9.10.1 Among the remaining beautiful cetasikas, the first 3 are called *virati* (abstinences), that are occasional cetasikas. They are called so because they are the 3 cetasikas responsible for our deliberate abstinence from wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood. These are the 3 cetasikas corresponding to right speech (*sammā,vācā*), right action (*sammā,kammantā*)*,* and right livelihood (*sammā,ājīva*)*.*
    Right speech is abstinence from 4 types of wrong speech: false speech, slander, harsh speech, and frivolous talk.[662]
    Right action is abstinence from the 3 types of unwholesome bodily action: killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct.[663]
    Right livelihood is abstinence from wrong livelihood: abstinence from dealing in poisons, intoxicants, weapons, slaves, and live trading (especially trading in animals for slaughter), and from any other means of livelihood that is immoral even if it is profitable.[664]

9.10.2 These 3 abstinences represent only 3 limbs of the noble eightfold path. The other 5 are found amongst the other cetasikas. **Right view** (*sammā,ditthi*) appears as non-delusion or wisdom (*amoha*), which is the last of the beautiful factors and of all the 52 cetasikas. **Right thought** (*sammā,saṅkappa*)

---

[660] DhsA 151,12-15; Vism 14.148/466.
[661] DhsA 151,16-18; Vism 14.149/466.
[662] On right speech, see SD 10.16 (3).
[663] On right action, see SD 10.16 (4).
[664] On right livelihood, see SD 10.16 (5); for details, see SD 37.8.

and **right effort** (*sammā,vāyāma*) are found respectively in *vitakka* [cetasika 8] and *viriya* [cetasika 11]*,* which are two of the morally variable occasional factors.[665]

   Right mindfulness (*sammā,sati*) appears as the cetasika **sati** [cetasika 29]*,* that is, the 2nd in the list of beautiful cetasikas. **Right concentration** (*sammā,samādhi*) is the cetasika *ekaggatā* [cetasika 5]*,* one of the 7 universals. We thus have all the 8 factors of the noble eightfold path amongst the wholesome cetasikas in 4 of the wholesome groups: universals, occasionals, beautiful universals, and beautiful occasionals.

9.11 (50+51) (*G*) THE 2 ILLIMITABLES (*APPAMAÑÑA*)

   (50) *23* **compassion** (*karuṇā*)
   (51) *24* **altruistic joy** (*muditā*)

9.11.1 The next 2 occasional cetasikas of beautiful cittas are **_karuṇā_** (compassion) and **_muditā_** (gladness or altruistic joy). They are the first 2 of the 4 divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*) here called illimitables (**_appamannā_**); the other 2 being *mettā* (lovingkindness) and *upekkhā* (equanimity). But these names are not found amongst the 52 cetasikas.

   Mettā and *muditā* are not mentioned because, as we have seen, they are 2 modes of the 2 mental factors called *adosa* (non-hatred) [cetasika 33] and *tatra,majjhattatā* (neutrality of mind) [cetasika 34] respectively. This does not mean that non-hatred and neutrality of mind always arise as 2 of the divine abodes. At some point, the 2 cetasikas—*adosa* and *tatra,majjhattā*—can develop into divine abodes*.* On the other hand, *karuṇā* (compassion) and *muditā* (gladness) are not elevated states of other cetasikas. They are cetasikas in their own right. While *adosa* and *tatra,majjhttatā* occur in all beautiful consciousnesses, *karuṇā* and *muditā* are present only occasionally.

9.11.2 *Karuṇā* (compassion) has the characteristic of taking initiative in lessening or removing suffering in others. Its function is that of not tolerating or allowing suffering in others. It is manifested as non-cruelty. Its proximate cause is in seeing the helplessness of those overcome by suffering. Its success lies in the quelling of cruelty. Its failure lies in the arising of sorrow.[666] True compassion is not merely feeling sorrow for others who are suffering, but also the wisdom to understand that suffering is painful for them, especially when they are unable to help themselves. We are moved to help others so that they can help themselves.

9.11.3 *Muditā* (altruistic joy) has the characteristic of gladness in the happiness and success of others. Its function is in not having any envy. It is manifested as the absence of aversion. Its proximate cause is in seeing others' happiness. Its success is in the subsidence of aversion. Its failure lies in the arising of merriment.[667] Altruistic joy is not merrymaking, even when accompanied by excitement, elation, or emotional outburst over others' success.

9.12 (52) NON-DELUSION (*AMOHA*)

   (*H*) *25* **wisdom faculty** (*paññ'indriya*)

9.12.1 The last of the beautiful cetasikas is *amoha* (non-delusion), also called *pannā* (wisdom) or *nāṇa* (spiritual knowledge). It denotes the direct understanding of things as they really are (*yathā,-bhūta*)*,* or knowledge in conformity with true reality. This particular cetasika combines with non-greed (*alobha*) and non-hatred (*adosa*) to form the well-known triad of wholesome roots (*kusala,-mūla*). Non-delusion or wisdom is an occasional cetasika of beautiful cittas: unlike the other 2 roots,

---

[665] On the eightfold path, see SD 10.16.
[666] DhsA 192,33-193,2; Vism 9.94/318.
[667] DhsA 193,3-5; Vism 9.95/318.

it does not always occur in all beautiful cittas. In the minds of sense-sphere beings (like humans), of their 8 types of wholesome cittas, 4 are "dissociated from knowledge" (*nāṇa,vippayutta*) and 4 are "associated with knowledge" (*ñāṇa,sampayutta*).[668]

9.12.2 *Paññā* has the characteristic of illuminating (*obhāsana*) or understanding (*pajānana*). "Just as when a lamp burns at night in a four-walled house, the darkness is routed, light manifests itself, so understanding has illuminating as its characteristic. There is no illumination equal to the illumination of understanding."[669] "Wisdom (*paññā*) has unfaltering penetration as its characteristic, like the penetration of an arrow shot by a skilled archer. It has illumination of the object as its function, as if it were a lamp. It has non-confusion as its proximate cause, as if it were a skilled guide in the forest."[670]

---

[668] On the sense-sphere consciousness, see Karunadasa 2010:84-91 (ch 6).
[669] DhsA 148,36-149,5; DhsA:M 161 f.
[670] DhsA 123,14-16; DhsA:M 123.

10 Conceptual knowledge

[9] [671]		**aggregate**		**classes of knowledge**	
	the body	form	*rūpa khandha*	somatic knowledge	[5.3]
2	feeling	feeling	*vedanā khandha*	hedonic knowledge	[5.4]
3	perception	perception	*saññā khandha*	perceptual knowledge	[8.2]
1, 4-52	*formations*	formations	*saṅkhāra khandha*	conative knowledge	[5.5]
				conceptual knowledge	[10.1]
cittas	*consciousness*	consciousness	*viññāṇa khandha*	spiritual knowledge	[9.12]

Table 10 Classes of knowledge (*khandha*-based) [cf Table 5.2]

10.1 THE RANGE AND TYPES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

10.1.1 The Sabba Sutta (S 35.23) records the Buddha as stating that all that we can know is either
sense-based (through the 5 physical senses) or mind-based (what we perceive or conceive). We
have, in our study of the cognitive triad, *diṭṭha suta muta,* and the cognitive tetrad, *diṭṭha suta
muta viññāta*, examined the nature and arising of these 2 kinds of knowledge: the sense-based and
the mind-based [4.4].

We then examined knowledge arising from **the 4 satipatthanas** (focuses of mindfulness) [5.2],
which are rooted in mindfulness and meditation. This gave us quite a broad purview of "clear aware-
ness" (*sampajañña*). The full satipatthana practice entails truly knowing and enjoying *the body, feel-
ings, the mind and dharmas* at various levels.

The verb "enjoying" is significant in that it literally refers to the practice of satipatthana that not
only enhances our mental focus but also "arouses joy" (*en-joy*) in us. Hence, the satipatthana-based
meditations—on *the body, feelings, the mind and dharmas*—can serve as the bases for aesthetic feel-
ing or artistic creativity, experience and expression of ytuyh and beauty. A calm and clear mind in-
spires creativity, even genius. [5.6.5]

10.1.2 The 5-aggregate model presents for us a full range of knowledges [Table 10]. We have already
briefly examined each of the first 4 kinds of knowledge: the somatic, the hedonic, the perceptual and
the conative [Table 10]. Note that under the formations aggregate, we have 2 kinds of knowledge:
"conative knowledge" and "conceptual knowledge." What is the difference between the two?

Conative knowledge, on a mundane level, encompasses "will to act" by way of thinking, com-
municating and acting: this is our karmic or intentional being comprising *the mind, body and speech*.
In satipatthana practice, conative knowledge is rooted in our intention (*cetanā*) to cultivate the
mind, that is, to know the mind, to tame it and free it. The "freed mind," at this stage, refers to the
attainment of dhyana. Ultimately, *the freed mind* refers to awakening itself.

10.1.3 Conceptual knowledge encompasses the habitual kinds of worldly thinking and learning that
preoccupy us, based on the personal learning, scholarship, intellect, reasoning and intuition in a
non-spiritual sense. This is the range of mundane learning that we often encounter in our daily lives.
On a mundane level, both conative knowledge and conceptual knowledge, are formation-based,
that is, constructed through our past karma and present conditioning.

For the unawakened, conceptual knowledge can be bad (unwholesome) or good (wholesome).
Bad conceptual knowledge is rooted in *greed, hatred and delusion*; good conceptual knowledge is
rooted in *non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion*. In the case of good conceptual knowledge, it
prevents us from creating bad karma, but by itself is insufficient to bring us to the path of awaken-

---

[671] The numbers in this column are those of the cetasikas [9; Table 9.1].

ing. Due to its goodness or wholesomeness, it can bring us happiness here and now, as well as in the hereafter. When consistently cultivated, it becomes an "evolutionary" or "developmental" kind of knowing.

Good conceptual knowledge is our best means of discerning between good and bad (*puñña,-pāpa*), and wholesome and unwholesome (*kusalâkusala*). Basically, "**good**" (*puñña*) refers to moral goodness (as in keeping to the precepts), and "bad" (*pāpa*) results from habitually breaking the precepts and holding unwholesome thoughts. Good karmic fruits bring happiness and good lives; bad karmic fruits bring suffering and bad lives. "**Wholesome**" (*kusala*) include what is good, and more importantly, trains the mind in wholesome karma, which further empowers us to habitually *avoid the bad, cultivate the good and purify the mind*. [13.12.1 (1)]

Conceptual knowledge that is good and wholesome trains us to discern and avoid **delusion and mental aberration** which we will examine later under "wisdom and spiritual knowledge" [11].

10.1.4 Spiritual knowledge. Psychologically, the sense-objects are all "out there" and real in the sense that they exist outside of ourself. Technically, even a mind-object is "external" to the mind itself. Each of us <u>views</u> or <u>knows</u> these objects in different ways, coloured by our defilements or clarified by our wisdom. In other words, it all depends on how our mind interprets, constructs and sustains our virtual world through the props of mind-objects. When properly cultivated, this <u>conceptual knowledge</u> can help us see the reality of each of these 6 sense-objects. <u>Spiritual knowledge</u>—a more refined form of conceptual knowledge [11]—is able to penetrate into the true nature of these mind-objects or constructed realities.

The creator of the 5 kinds of sense-based knowledge is **the mind**. In addition to these 5 sense-based knowledges, the mind also creates *its own mind-made ideas*, which may or may not reflect the reality existing out there. In other words, we can and often do imagine or conjure up ideas of things that do *not* exist, such as deities, demons, God, Paradise, and unicorns. Or, we imagine things that may be useful to us too. Many useful things have been invented or discovered in this way. In Buddhism, we are also encouraged to envision how we can be kind to others, or be happy for ourself in a wholesome way. [10.2.1]

Ordinarily, the range of our sensing and thinking may be limited in some ways, but the power of our imagination is boundless. Hence, we are capable of learning and creating knowledge that can be right or wrong (depending on how much it reflects reality), good or bad (bringing true happiness or creating more suffering), useful or harmful (helping us grow wiser or becoming more foolish). Here, however, we will limit our discussion only to **views**, which is closely connected with our study here.

10.1.5 Very simply, a **view** (*diṭṭhi*) is knowledge that arises through our own notions and viewpoints, which may be wrong or right, bad or good, useless or useful. Since we are not awakened, most of our knowledge would be views, very often wrong views, that need to be straightened. At this stage in our lives, views, especially worldly right views, are the only kind of knowledge we have. So long as we are unawakened, all views should be seen as "provisional." They are the clothes and gear we wear to weather the words that cloud up our minds.

As such, <u>having views</u> is an important but evolutionary stage in the development of wisdom. Often these views are what we call "*received wisdom*," that is, knowledge taken on <u>faith</u> from various sources, like the mass media and literature (especially books). Hence, views and faith are often closely related, since they are really different aspects of the same process.

Views are formed in 2 general ways. Firstly, we form views when we accept what we know based on <u>deep faith</u>, desires or preferences, and tenaciously hold on to that knowledge. Secondly, our views come from <u>another person</u>, usually a teacher or power-figure, and we unquestioningly accept this as knowledge, identifying it as our own. Hence, an important, but negative, aspect of <u>a</u>

view is *adhering to it as our own*, even when we lack full understanding of it, and despite all compel-ling reasons against it.[672]

10.1.6 Knowledge as **view** (*diṭṭhi*) ranges from the rational (reasonable or well-reasoned), to the highly rational, but often even includes the irrational (or bizarre). When a view is developed to the point of being <u>correct knowledge, good understanding, useful and good</u>—when it corresponds with true reality—it is called **right view** (*sammā,diṭṭhi*) and regarded as <u>wisdom</u> (*paññā*).[673] When we develop wisdom to the point of clearly discerning the true nature of things, we no longer need to *depend* on such an understanding as being "our own." Since reality exists in *a neutral, objective way*, it does not depend on anyone's assertions or affirmations. Such a truth lies beyond the realm of "views." Briefly, this is **spiritual knowledge**, a noble truth [Table 10].

Because <u>a view</u>, especially a wrong view, tends to be linked with personal desires and attach-ments, it often brings useless, even harmful, effects, especially when it becomes a very *personal* truth propping up a *private* reality.[674] When our attachment is strong and tenacious, despite our views being very close to the truth, the views may end up actually being an impediment, preventing us from seeing the truth. This is because we are unable to see beyond our current knowledge, to realize something higher, more meaningful, more liberating. We are thus limited by what we think we know.

For this reason, in **the Alagaddûpama Sutta** (M 22), the Buddha advises us to master the teach-ings, and then to "let go" of even the Dharma itself. This does not mean that we "forget" what we have learned (which only makes us more foolish), but rather we should apply the true <u>purpose</u> of learning, that is, to grow on the path of awakening. This is illustrated by a second parable in the same Sutta—that of **the raft**—we use a raft (or boat) to leave behind our cravings, and cross over the dangerous waters of ignorance for the safe shore, where there is the path to awakening. Understand-ing these parables, "you should abandon even the dharmas, how much more so that which are not the dharmas!"[675]

10.2 HOW DO WE KNOW?

10.2.1 According to early Buddhism, **contact** (*phassa*) is <u>the source of knowledge</u>: all forms of knowing arise as a result of contact, or they arise at the point of contact.[676] Knowledge is dependent on our sense-experience, by which sense-data passes through the 6 sense-bases (*āyatana*) or doors (*dvāra*) of cognition: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

If we start with <u>the 6 sense-bases</u> as the doors of cognition, we can classify knowledge into 2 kinds:

(1) **sense-based knowledge**, that is, by way of <u>the 5 sense-doors</u> (*pañca,dvāra*): the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. These are our basic forms of knowledge, that is, knowing visual forms (shapes and colours), sounds, smells, tastes, and touches (*phoṭṭhabba*). These can be summarized as[677]

---

[672] Terms related to *diṭṭhi* include: *abhinivesa* ("adherence"), *parāmāsa* ("attachment"), and *upādāna* ("grasp-ing," which on a deeper level is conditioned by craving, *taṇhā*); see Vbh 149.

[673] Eg, Vbh 124, 250.

[674] <u>Madness</u> may be a self-conjured reality that is so private that it is real only to oneself. But then someone may accuse the Buddha himself of being mad, as the only one understanding awakening. There is a clear me-thod in this kind of "madness," the fruit of which is joyful freedom and happiness for the many. Ironically, it is the unawakened who is really unhinged, *ummatta*(*ka*), since they are the ones who do not see true reality.

[675] Parable of <u>the water-snake</u>, M 22,10/1:133 f; parable of <u>the raft</u>, M 22,13/1:134 f (SD 3.13).

[676] **S 22.56**/3:59 f, **22.57**/3:63 f, **35.93**/4:68 f; **A 6.63**/3:413, **8.83**/4:338 f, **9.14**/4:385; **Pm** 1:57.

[677] These are 3 of the 4 primary elements (*mahā,bhūta* or *dhātu*): the omitted 2nd element is "water" (cohe-siveness). See **Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 11,8-11, with §12 on "space"), SD 3.11; **Mahā Hatthi,pādôpama S** (M 28,6), SD 6.16; SD 17.2a (2 f).

"earth" (*paṭhavī*) or solids; "fire" (*tejo*), heat or temperature, oxidation, decay; and "wind" (*vāyo*), movement, vibration, and tension.[678]

   Technically, contact is not a condition for the knowledge referred to as "consciousness" (*viñ-ñāṇa*), because consciousness is one of the factors involved for the arising of contact. Hence, the suttas do not state *phassa* as the "cause" for the arising of the consciousness aggregate (*viññāṇa,-khandha*). Instead, they state that "name-and-form" (*nāma,rūpa*) is the cause for its arising. How-ever, we are still right in saying that "contact is the source of all knowledge," since the term "source" can refer both to "condition" as well as a "location where we obtain something."

(2) **mind-based knowledge,** that is gained through the mind-door (*mano,dvāra*) or knowing mind-objects (*dhamm'ārammaṇa,* or *dhamma*, for short). This encompasses all of those things known and reflected upon by the mind, that is, processed by the mind-base (*mano,viññāṇa*).[679] More broadly, we may also include our views, beliefs, imaginings, and visions as "knowledge." How-ever, not all these qualify as genuine or even useful knowledge.

10.2.2 According to the Abhidhamma, there are 5 kinds of **mind-based knowledge**, which are also called "mind-elements" (*mano,dhātu*),[680] since they are experienced or known by the mind:[681]

(1) **feeling aggregate** (*vedanā,khandha*), that is, feeling as something known by the mind. The fol-lowing 4 factors should be understood in the same way.
(2) **perception aggregate** (*saññā,khandha*).
(3) **karma-formations aggregate** (*saṅkhāra,khandha*).
(4) **subtle intangible forms** (*anidassana,appaṭigha,rūpa*), invisible forms found in the mind-object class. This is simply referred to as "refined form" (*sukhuma,rūpa*), and comprises 16 kinds:
     the element of cohesion (*āpo,dhātu*);
     femininity (*itthī,bhāva*); masculinity (*purisa,bhāva*);
     physical basis of the mind (*hadaya,rūpa*; the heart);
     life-faculty (*jīvit'indriya*);
     material food (*āhāra,rūpa*; including nutritive essence, *ojā*);
     space (*ākāsa*);
     bodily communication (*kāya,viññatti*); verbal communication (*vacī,viññatti*);
     the 3 qualities of alterability (*vikāra,rūpa*): lightness (*lahutā*), malleability or softness (*mudutā*), and wieldiness (*kammaññatā*); and
     the 4 material qualities of salient features (*lakkhaṇa,rūpa*): growth or enlargement (*upacaya*), continuity (*santati*), decay (*jaratā*), and impermanence (*aniccatā*).
(5) **the unconditioned element** (*asaṅkhata,dhātu*), that is, nirvana.

10.2.3 Later Abhidhamma texts, such as **the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha**, present a more complex analysis of **mind-objects** (*dhamm'ārammaṇa*), dividing them into 6 kinds:[682]

(1) the 5 sense-faculties (*pasāda*), that is, the sensitivity or clarity that acts as the cognitive medium in regard to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body.
(2) the 16 kinds of refined materiality (*sukhuma-rūpa*), mentioned in the previous list (4).
(3) the physical basis of the mind (*citta*) (the heart).

---

[678] See Prayudh, *Buddhadhamma,* 2021:57-63.
[679] On the mind-consciousness (*mano,viññāṇa*), see Table 1.4.2 (SD 29.5).
[680] Vbh 71 f (VbhA 80 f); Dhs §455/91 (DhsA 263, 29 f), §1418/241; Vism 15.14/483 f. On mind-element, see Table 1.7.4; SD 29.9 (1.2).
[681] On the functions of *citta*, *mano* and *viññāṇa* in the cognitive process, see Table 12.5 (SD 17.8a).
[682] Abhs 3.16 (Abhs:BRS 135).

(4) <u>mental factors</u> (*cetasika*), corresponding to the feeling aggregate, perception aggregate, and formations aggregate mentioned earlier.

(5) <u>nirvana</u>.

(6) <u>conventions</u> (*paññatti*) [8.5], that is, the language we commonly use to refer to "people," "tree," "school," "country," "the moon"; including technical language like mathematical formulas, scientific jargon and computer language. These languages, conventions and words refer to systems and objects that actually exist, or to virtual or imagined realities.

10.2.4 According to **the *paññatti* theory**, we may, for example, speak of a "mirage" or "starlight," as phenomena which we can actually see from a certain distance and angle. However, neither of these exists where we perceive them to be located. In the case of starlight, for example, the star from which the light originated had ceased to exist a long time ago; and what we are seeing is merely the remnants of the star's light traversing the vast distances of the universe.

Or, we may speak of a "house" as a safe living space with walls, doors, windows and a roof. A poor family's house may be just a small hut; or that of a forest-dwelling renunciant, a leaf-hut, or even a cave; or for a street-dweller, it could be pieces of newspapers or just a box. In each case, it is a "home" to its dweller. The idea of *home applies* to any natural dwelling-places, like a tree, a cave or a hole for an animal.

Yet, none of these "homes" has a fixed form but is mere concept (*paññatti*). A "cave" is, for example, just a hole in the side of a hill or in the ground, usually with some level floor on which we can move and live. There is no fixed "form" that defines a cave, though it is usually made of earth or rocks, and which may "cave in": it is fragile, subject to change and decay (just like our houses and homes).

10.2.5 Similarly, what is called **perception** (*saññā*) arises and passes away, and is subject to breaking up, but the name "perception" is neither affected nor diminished. Wherever and whenever such an event occurs, we call it "perception" (according to the conventional term as we accept it). It is a "conventional designation" (*paññatti*) [8.5].

<u>Our body</u> too is subject to decay, but the term "body" remains constant. The same applies to countless other things we refer to and take for granted. Wherever such phenomena arise, they are referred to by their respective <u>names</u> [8.7]. Ironically, the explanation is more difficult to understand than the names and usages themselves! In other words, we have been using this kind of language without truly understanding its deep significance.

When this same language is applied to a deeper level of experience, most people are at a loss. They are puzzled or confused by phrases like "feeling is impermanent" or "perception is impermanent." They are uncertain what "impermanence" actually means or to what it refers, or whether it is just a word, a name. In most cases, it is just a "name," a word, to them, nothing more. They often think that knowing the name is knowing what it is; but *the word is not the thing*. Merely knowing the word may be regarded as knowledge, but it is clearly not wisdom.

Words are how we use them; but how we use a word may not reflect reality. We cannot define something into existence. Just because we can define a "unicorn" in the clearest and most elegant words do not mean that unicorns exist (except in our imagination or some make-believe). Similarly, words are often used as <u>titles</u> to empower ourselves and to control or mislead others.

The Kevaḍḍha Sutta (D 11) relates a humorous story of Mahā Brahmā who prides in having a long series of titles:

"I, bhikshu, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Vanquisher, the Unvanquished, the All-
knowing, the All-powerful, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer, the
Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be."[683]   (D 11), SD 1.7

However, when a monk questions him, "where these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind
—cease without a trace?" Mahā Brahmā is unable to answer the question.[684]

10.2.6 Impermanence is everywhere, in everything in this world, in everyone of us. Yet, we rarely
seem to really understand what it actually means. Often we don't even think about it. When we are
confronted with the reality of impermanence, such as when someone close to us dies, we quickly
dismiss it with rituals and formalities, more to fulfil our social obligations and impress others of our
seeming social virtues than learning from the loss. We simply do not want to accept its reality, dis-
tracted by "more important" things—until it's too late.
   A good way to start learning about life is to seek to understand why we are unwilling or unable
to know or accept what "impermanence" really is. Perhaps, we only see, hear, smell, taste or touch
it briefly, and it is gone. Then we experience something else, which leads us to believe that there is
always "something" there. Then, age catches up with us, we notice decay in our own body and mind
(maybe), and we come to realize that *we are ourself impermanent.* Unfortunately, it is often too late:
our memory fails us; our mind is not as sharp as before. Impermanence just slips by us unnoticed like
the timely tick of the clock.

   10.2.7 However, *right now*, our mind is clear enough (if we are reading and understanding this).
First, we should know the difference between knowing at the body-door (through the 5 senses), and
understanding through the mind-door (*mano,dvāra*). This distinction is more important that we may
realize.
   For example, as a child, we look at the sky and learn that it is filled with clouds. The clouds move,
often with the wind. When the clouds gather thick and dark, it then rains. Then the clouds clear up,
and it is sunny. Yet sometimes it suddenly just rains. Our understanding of the sky and weather at
the eye-door alone is not enough. We have to examine this knowledge through the mind-door: by
remembering and understanding these patterns of causes and effects better, we understand the
vagaries of weather better.
   Another example: we hear someone *speaking*, an experience bringing sense-based knowledge;
in this case, by way of **the ear-door**. We are hearing a sound: this is simply an awareness of sound.
We may not at first understand the meaning of the words (maybe it's a foreign language, or the
words are quite profound, or simply too soft, or there's too much distraction). But when we are able
to listen clearly and attentively to those words, we process them at the mind-door. As we think and
reflect on them, we become more familiar with them, and begin to understand them better. This
subsequent understanding arises at the mind-door.

10.2.8 Mind-based knowledge, arising by way of the mind-door, or the knowledge of mind-objects
(*dhamm'ārammaṇa*), also includes knowledge arising at all our sense-doors. It includes both the
mental awareness of data gained by way of the 5 senses and knowledge exclusive to the mind itself.
Taking all this into consideration, we may classify mind-based knowledge [7.4.3] in the following 6
ways:[685]

---

[683] *Aham asmi brahmā mahā,brahmā abhibhū anabhibhūto aññad-atthu,daso vasavatti issaro kattā nimmā-
tā seṭṭho sañjita vasī pitā bhūta,bhavyānaṁ.*
   [684] D 11,81-83/1:221 (SD 1.7). On the title "Chief High Priest," see SD 60.1d (4.5.2.1).
   [685] More commonly, however, the suttas and Abhidhamma list only 4 kinds of knowledges—the seen, the
heard, the senses and the cognized [1.4.4]—arising at the mind-door: M 3:261; S 4:73; Vbh 429; Nm 55. See
also: D 3:135 = A 2:23 f; M 1:356 f, 3:261; S 3:202 f; A 2:25 = It 121 f; A 5:318, 321 f, 353-8. As cpds: M 2:231 f;

(1) objects specific to the mind (**emotions**), such as desire, love, anger, fear, confusion, lucidity, sadness, happiness, loneliness, joy, fear, courage;

(2) conceptions of the past (**memories**), of objects cognized by way of the 5 senses;

(3) conceptions associated with **materiality** (*rūpa,dhamma*) cognized by way of the 5 senses, of which we are not yet clearly conscious, specific to each of these senses, operating unconsciously. These include <u>designations</u> (*paññatti*) and conceptions of the relationship between various forms of materiality, eg, cohesiveness, resistance, expansion, and interdependence.

(4) **minding**: thinking, imagination, reasoning and judgement occurring as a result of emotions (*1*), conceptions pertaining to the past (*2*), and conceptions of the relationship between various forms of materiality, along with designations (*3*).

(5) **insight** or special knowledge that pervades a luminous mind (during meditation or moments of realization at different levels). For example, when we discern the true relationship between various factors (like impermanence, kindness, and karma), a clear understanding arises and we see into the interbeing of lives and things, how they relate to one another. This is special knowledge (*ñāṇa*), which when well developed into "higher knowledge" (*abhiññā*), that is, superpowers that include awakening itself.

(6) **the unconditioned** (that is, nirvana).

10.3 THEORY OF THE 2 TRUTHS

10.3.1 The knowledge that awakens the Buddha frees him from the samsaric or cyclic world into the unconditioned state he calls **nirvana** (*nibbāna*). For 7 weeks (49 days) after his awakening, he spends meditating and rejoicing in his new-found freedom. Near the end of his solitary retreat, he reflects on the profound experience of awakening (*bodhi*). As he is doing so, it is said that the High God (*brahmā*) who lives just beyond our own sense-universe, appears to the Buddha, beseeching him to teach the Dharma (the truth), the *bodhi* that is his awakening, for the benefit of the world.

   The **Āyacana Sutta** (S 6.1) tells us that the Buddha, seeing that there are those in the world "with little dust in their eyes," and so that they would not fall back into the depths of the samsaric cycle of rebirth and redeath, decides to teach the Dharma.[686] In order to reach out from his liberated awakened state, he has to sound a clear reveille that would rouse the sleepers caught in a deep samsaric dream state.

10.3.2 The Buddha has to speak the language of sleep and dreams—the language of samsara —so that the sleepers would awake, some abruptly, most gently. The Buddha teaches the Dharma as the occasion dictates, and he speaks the language of the listeners, at their level, reaching down to them, so that he is able to pull them out of their rut, raising them safely onto the human life, characterized by moral virtue and mental development. In this way, they can go on to cultivate the wisdom that leads them to the path to awakening.

   The Abhidhamma was the work of scholastics—probably deeply learned monastics (as such, they were unlikely to be arhats or even non-returners)—who were driven to systematize the Buddha's teachings, partly because they were inspired to find some kind of common denominator to the wide variety of doctrines and approaches used by the Buddha, and partly to answer challenges from sectarian rivals with a completist canon of dogmas. This was, in fact, a common trend with all the major early schools, such as the Sthaviravāda, the Dharmaguptaka, the Sarvâstivāda, the Mūlasarvâstivāda, and a few other early Indian schools.

Sn 209 f; Nm 9, 50-51, 53-4, 133 f, 189 f, 203 f, 227, 245, 247, 333 f; Nc 16. As *diṭṭhi*, *suta* and *muta*: S 1:202 f; Sn 155, 175 f; Nm 95 f, 106, 110 f, 315; Nc 28.
   [686] S 6.11:136-138 (SD 12.2).

The first major scholastic attempt of the Abhidhammikas (the Abhidhamma scholastics) was probably the "**dhamma theory**" [8.3.3], by which they hoped to formulate a Buddhist theory of the final state of reality: this was the theory of momentariness (*khaṇika vāda*), which explains that only the present is real [8.6.6].

In due course, this theory led to the rise of another, one explaining that even time, like everything else in samsara, is a concept: this is **the *paññatti* theory** [8.5]. Subsequently, this led to the development of **the theory of the 2 truths**, that is, the conventional truth (*sammuti,sacca*)[687] and the ultimate truth (*param'attha,sacca*). These Abhidhamma developments were, of course, all rooted in ancient trends in the suttas, as we have discussed in the case of the first 2 theories. Therefore, we will examine only the 3rd theory: that of the 2 truths.

10.3.3 Despite appearing innovative in its approaches, early Abhidhamma is clearly "about the Dharma" (*abhi-dhamma*) [8.7.5]. Nowhere in the traditional Abhidhamma is there any suggestion that it was "above, beyond or superior to" the Dharma, as suggested by the Commentaries and later Abhidhamma treatises.[688]

Although the Abhidhamma assigns specific technical terms to these concepts of "conventional truth" and "ultimate truth," it often cites the suttas to authenticate its claims. This shows that the Abhidhamma concepts, or at least their essence, have existed from the beginning. It is likely that even in the Buddha's time, there was a clear understanding of these concepts, making it unnecessary to give them any kind of definitive terms.

Such an idea is, in fact, clearly seen in the nun **Vajirā**'s response to Māra when she is accosted by him:

What "being" is there that you assume?	How you have fallen into views, Māra!
It is a mere heap of conditioned states:	here no being is to be found.
Just as with parts assembled together	we have the word "chariot,"
even so, when there are the aggregates,	there is the convention (*sammuti*) of a "being."

(S 553* f/5.10/1:135), SD 102.13; cited at Kvu 86 f

10.3.4 The Buddha, as a rule, instructs his audience in the Dharma using everyday language, communicating in a dialogic and conversational way, using simple words, figures, stories, even riddles and "intentional language."[689] By applying conventional means, he acts as a guide to individuals towards the path of happiness and ultimate truth when the time is right, depending on the listeners' personal disposition and spiritual readiness.

The Buddha thus inspires us to see **language** merely as a means of communication and learning, without the wordplay or sophistry of a Cult Guru. Language serves as a safe and expeditious bridge of present engagement with the true teaching so that we can, by our own effort, cross over into the presence of true reality.

The Commentary on **the (Sa,gathā) Arahanta Sutta** (S 1.25) plainly states that although arhats have abandoned talk rooted in self-belief, such as "I, mine," they do not reject conventional discourse

---

[687] The 2 truths are well-known in the suttas and early Abhidhamma, but as a distinct theory, it only occurs in Kvu only as *sammati,sacca* (Kvu 311,3+13), and also *sacchikattha,param'attha* ("real and absolute") and *param'attha* ("ultimate") (Kvu 1.1/1-69 passim). Kvu Comy mentions the 2 kinds of truths, ie, *sammati,sacca* and *paramattha,sacca* (KvuA 84,5 f); also at MA 1:217 = SA 2:13; DhA 3:403; UA 396; ItA 1:162; DhsMūṬ 165, 280; DhsAṬ 328; VismṬ:Be 1:385; Abhs 8.29-32). While PED lists *sammuti* (with *sammati* as past part), SED lists only Skt *sammati*.

[688] On the Commentaries, see Norman, *Pali Literature,* Wiesbaden, 1983b:118-137; on the later Abhidhamma texts, op cit 145-150.

[689] SD 26.11 (6.5) ; **Dh 97**, SD 10.6 esp (5).

by saying things like, "The aggregates eat, the aggregates sit, the aggregates' bowl, the aggregates' robe"; for no one would understand them. (SA 1:51,20-25) [10.5.2]

A monk who has become an arhat	with influxes destroyed, bearer of the last body,
might say, "I speak," or	he might say, "They speak to me";
he is skillful, knowing the world's way.	He would use them only as mere expressions.

There are no knots for one who has	
abandoned conceit,	whose knots of conceit are all scattered away;
the wise has transcended the conceived,	(but) he might speak such, "They speak to me."
He is skillful, knowing the world's way;	he would use them only as mere expressions.

(Sa,gāthā) Arahanta Sutta (S 62*+64*/1.25/1:14), SD 68.4

Then, there is the well-known remark of the Buddha in **the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta** (D 9) on how he uses words and language for proper communication without clinging to them. [8.5.1]

We do, however, see the Abhidhamma tending to be technical and exacting in its teaching approach, and describing the suttas as a "vernacular teaching" (*vohāra,desanā*), because the suttas are mostly given in conventional, even vernacular, language. In contrast, the Abhidhamma claims to express an "ultimate teaching" (*paramattha,desanā*), because most of its teachings are a direct pre-sentation of "absolute truths."[690]

The key terms—"ultimate teaching" and "absolute truths"—are within quotes to highlight the point that the Abhidhamma did not claim to introduce new Buddhist concepts or dogmas but merely systematized and classified the early teachings. However, in trying to present a full and complete system, it did introduce some radically new ideas that are not found in the early Buddhist texts and foreign to its spirit.[691]

10.4 THE 2 TRUTHS IN THE SUTTAS

10.4.1 Another important sutta antecedent to the Abhidhamma 2-truth theory is found in the Buddha's injunction on a proper reading of the suttas. This injunction is highly significant as it direct-ly applies to us to this day, and is found in **the Neyy'attha Nīt'attha Sutta** (A 2.3.5 f) on the differ-ence between a teaching "whose meaning has been drawn out" (*nīt'attha*), and one "whose mean-ing has to be drawn out" (*neyy'attha*).[692] In other words, this is a case of explicit teaching (of direct meaning) and implicit teaching (of indirect meaning). This distinction is highly significant, since to overlook it is to misrepresent the Buddha's teaching:

(1) Those who explain a sutta **whose sense is drawn out** (*nīt'attha*) as *to be drawn out* [whose sense is direct as indirect].

(2) Those who explain a sutta whose **sense is to be drawn out** (*neyy'attha*) as *drawn out* [whose sense is indirect as direct].

These, bhikshus, are the 2 who misrepresent the Tathagata.

(A 2.3.5 f/1:60), SD 2.6b

---

[690] V 1:21; DA 1:19; MA 1:217 = SA 1:13; DhsA 21, 56.

[691] See Sujato, "The mystique of the Abhidhamma" (2010) https://santifm.org/santipada/2010/the-mystique-of-the-abhidhamma/; https://buddhistuniversity.net/exclusive_01/The%20Mystique%20of%20the%20Abhidhamma%20-%20Sujato.pdf. Noa Ronkin, "From the Buddha's teaching to the Abhidhamma," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 253 2010/3:341-365 https://www.cairn.info/revue-internationale-de-philosophie-2010-3-page-341.htm.

[692] A 2.3.5+6/1:60 (SD 2.6b).

The Commentary says that those who speak of 1 person, 2 persons, require interpretation; that their meaning has to be understood that, in the ultimate sense, a person does not exist (*param'at-thato pana puggalo nāma n'atthi*).

One who misconceives the suttas that refer to a person, holding that the person exists in the ultimate sense, explains a sutta whose meaning requires interpretation as one whose meaning is explicit. A sutta whose meaning is explicit is one that explains impermanence, suffering and nonself; for, in this case, the meaning is simply impermanence, suffering and nonself.

One who says, "This sutta requires interpretation," and interprets it in such a way as to affirm that "there is something permanent, there is the pleasurable, there is the self," explains a sutta of explicit meaning, as one requiring interpretation. (AA 2:112)

Clearly, the first criticism was directed against the Puggalavādins, who held that the person is ultimately existent. The latter was probably directed against an early form of the *tathagata,garbha* or "Buddha-nature" idea (as, for example, the Mahāyāna Mahā.parinirvāna Sutra asserts) affirmed as an eternal, blissful pure self.

10.4.2 Further, it should be noted that the Sutta passage makes no preferential value-judgement in respect to either of the statements. Neither statement is singled out as being higher or lower than the other. It seems very likely that this distinction between *nīt'attha* and *neyy'attha* has provided a basis for the emergence of **a doctrine of double truths**, not only in Theravāda but also in other Buddhist schools.

In fact, the Aṅguttara Commentary quoted above [10.4.1] seeks to establish a correspondence between the original sutta passage and the Theravāda version of the 2 truths.[693] It must also be noted that in Mahāyāna Buddhism (which uses Sanskrit), *nītārtha* (P *nīt'attha*) is regarded as being higher than *neyârtha* (P *neyy'attha*).

As F Edgerton observes in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit literature: "a *nītārtha* text ... is recommended as a guide in preference to one that is *neyârtha.*" Edgerton adds that, "In Pāli neither is *ipso facto* preferred to the other; one errs only in interpreting one as if it were the other."[694]

10.4.3 Another important link between the Abhidhamma theory of and early Buddhism is found in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33)*,* where these 4 kinds of knowledge regarding the **double truths** are mentioned:

(1) the direct knowledge (of true reality)	*dhamme nāṇa*
(2) the inductive knowledge (of true reality)	*anvaye nāṇa*
(3) the knowledge of analysis, and	*paricchede nāṇa*
(4) the knowledge of (linguistic) conventions	*sammuti,nāṇa*[695]

It is clearly obvious that there is a close parallel between the last pair of knowledges mentioned above and the sutta theory of the 2 truths as being ultimate (*paramattha*) and conventional (*sammuti*). For what is called *paramattha* is gained by analysing what is amenable to analysis (*pariccheda*).

The **knowledge of analysis** (*paricchede nāṇa*) may be understood to mean the ability to resolve what appears as substantial and compact into its basic constituents. This is **the *dhamma* theory**. On the other hand, *sammuti,ñāṇa,* which is the knowledge of linguistic conventions, could be understood to mean the ability to know that what appears as substantial and compact, yet analysable, is not something ultimately real and therefore it is a part of conventional reality (*sammuti*).

---

[693] AA 2:118.
[694] BHSD: nītārtha.
[695] D 33,1.11(11)/3:226.

Thus what the sutta passage refers to as the 3rd and 4th kinds of knowledge anticipates not only the *dhamma* theory but also the theory of double truths, which is a logical extension of the *dhamma* theory.

10.4.4 In the 2-truth theory, there is an interesting difference not only in language but in etymology and meaning between the Pali *sammuti* and its Sanskrit cognate **saṁvṛti**. The term *sammuti* is derived from the root √MAN, "to think," and when prefixed with *sam-* (cp English "com-"),[696] it means "consent, convention, or general agreement." The term *samvrti,* on the other hand, is derived from the root √VṚ, "to cover," and when prefixed with *sam-*, it means "covering, concealment." Hence, what the Pali *sammuti* sees as "conventional," the Sanskrit *saṁvṛti* takes to be "covered up, hidden." This difference is not confined to only the context of the double truths theory but is quite universal: where the Pali reads *sammuti,* the Sanskrit cognate is *samvṛti*.[697]

Since *sammuti* refers to "convention or common usage," *sammuti,sacca* means "truth based on convention or general agreement." On the other hand, the idea behind (Skt) *samvrti,satya* is that which "covers up" the true nature of things and makes them appear otherwise. In introducing the double truths theory, a number of Pāli Commentaries quote two verses. [10.4.5]

According to the first, the Buddha himself proclaims the 2 kinds of truth as the conventional and the ultimate, and that a third does not exist. The Commentaries quote these 2 verses:

(1) The self-awakened, best of speakers, spoke of two truths:
the conventional and the ultimate, no third is found.[698]

(2) There is the truth, the speech that is the world's convention by common engagement;
there is the speech that is the highest truth whose characteristic is that of true dharmas.[699]

The teaching on the 2 truths is also highlighted in a verse occurring in the Sanskrit *Pitāputra Samā-gama Sūtra,* stressing the uniqueness of the relative (*samvrti*) truth and the absolute (*paramārtha*) truth:

For the world-knower (the Buddha), there are these 2 truths, seen by the wise for them-selves. They occur as conventional truth and as ultimate truth, but a third exists not.[700]

---

[696] The Eng prefixes incl: *co, cog, col, coll, con, com, cor*, meaning "with, together" (as in "cognate, collabor-ate, combine, confer, confluence, conjoin, convene), or com or con, "fully" (as in "complete, conscious, con-fess, confirm." The form of prefix combined with the morpheme follows the rules of sandhi: before vowels and *h* it is *co-*; before *b, m, p,* it is *com-*; before *l,* it is *col-*; before *r,* it is *cor-*; before *n* or *gn,* it is *co-*; before *s* or *j*, it is nasalized *as* con-.

[697] Cf *yā kāc'imā sammutiyo puthujjā | sabbā va etā na apeti vidvā* (Sn 897), and its parallel in Bodhisattva-bhūmi 48: *yaḥ kuścana saṁvṛtayo hi loke sarvā hi tā muni nopaiti*.

[698] This emphasis on 2 kinds of truth to the exclusion of a 3rd runs counter to the interpretation of the Yogā-cāra school, which actually advocates a theory of 3 truths. In Vasubandhu's *Trisvabhāva Nirdeśa* (Treatise on the Three Natures), experiential phenomena can be understood in terms of 3 natures (*svabhāva*) and 3 forms of naturelessness (*niḥsvabhāvavatā*). The 3 natures are: the fabricated or constructed nature (*parikalpita,sva-bhāva*), the dependent nature (*paratantra,svabhāva*) and the perfected or consummate nature (*parisniṣpan-na,svabhāva*). M Mackenzie, "The Yogācāra theory of three natures: Internalist and non-dualist interpretation," *Comparative Philosophy* 9,1 2018:18-31. From the early Buddhist viewpoint, the 1st truth (the constructed) refers to *saṅkhārā,* which is inherent in *sammuti,* but highlighted by Vasubandhu, ie, a truth that "does not really exist."

[699] *Duve saccāni akkhāsi sambuddho vadataṁ varo | sammutiṁ paramatthaṁ ca tatiyaṁ nûpalabbhati ‖ saṅketa,vacanaṁ saccaṁ loka,sammuti,kāraṇaṁ | paramattha,vacanaṁ saccaṁ, dhammānaṁ tatha,lakkha-nan ti* (DA 3:283,20-24; MA 1:138,11-14; SA 2:77,31-35; AA 1:95,21-24 ending *bhūta,kāraṇā*; ItA 1:82,26-29 + KvuA 34,10-14 ending, *tatha,lakkhaṇan ti*).

10.4.5 The 2nd verse quoted by the Commentaries [10.4.4] regarding the double truths theory sets out the validity of the 2 kinds of statement corresponding to *sammuti* and *paramattha* thus:

> Statements referring to conventionally accepted things (*saṅketa*) are valid because they are based on common usage.
> Statements referring to ultimate states (*paramattha*) are valid because they are based on the true nature of the real things.[701]

This means that the distinction between the 2 truths depends on the distinction between *saṅketa* and *paramattha.* The former term, *saṅketa,* includes things which exist only as ideas or views to reflect the nature of reality. For instance, the word "home" is based not on an objective or natural existent corresponding to the term, but on an idea given to a collection of material states put together in a certain way.

Although a *home* is not a separate reality distinct from the material states that compose it (say, as a house), nevertheless is given the **name**[702] "home" [10.2.4] as a common notion to refer to a commonly agreed object (a dwelling place). In other words, the idea of a *home* has been put together in the mind, depending on some accepted terminology: this is said to be *sammuti,sacca.*

On the other hand, on the *paramattha* level, there are real existents (*dhamma*) with their own objective nature (*sabhāva*). In other words, we see a *home,* say a brick house as made of the 4 elements: earth (bricks, concrete, wood), water (cement), fire (the warmth within the house) and wind (movement of the curtains, etc), and of course space.

However, when we describe a forest *home* [10.2.4], say a leaf-hut of a recluse monk, as being constructed of branches, sticks, leaves and mud, we explain the idea of "leaf-hut" by putting it together in the mind, using some accepted terminology: this explanation is said to be *sammuti,-sacca.* Its validity is based on its correspondence to conventional terms.

The difference between the 2 truths may be stated as follows: When a particular situation is explained in terms of real existents (*dhamma*), such as the 4 or 5 elements, that explanation points to *paramattha,sacca.* Its validity is naturally based on its empirical correspondence to ultimate reality.[703]

10.5 THE VALIDITY OF THE 2 TRUTHS

10.5.1 The question we will now explore is: **Are the 2 truths co-ordinate**: are they equal in value and harmonious in function? Or is either truth more valid or more important than the other? Does *sammuti* as "relative or conventional" mean that *sammuti,sacca* is less true than *param'attha,sacca*? Does *param'attha*—which means "ultimate, absolute, highest"—describe that truth as representing a higher, even the highest, level of truth? After all, as **the Sutta Nipāta** says: "There is only one truth; there is no second" (*ekaṁ hi saccaṁ na dutīyaṁ atthi,* Sn 884a) [10.7]. Almost all the traditional Buddhist schools, except the Theravāda, have apparently taken this Sn statement literally—as meaning that the *paramattha,sacca* is the higher level of truth.[704]

---

[700] *Satya ime duvi loka,vidūnām | diṣṭa svayaṁ aśrunitva paresāṁ ‖ saṁvṛti vā ca tathā paramārtho | satyu na sidhyati kiṁ ca tṛtīyu* [*iti*]. Qu in Bodhicaryāvatāra Pañjikā 9.1 (BodhcāvP 171; Poussin 1901-14:352,5-354,3); V A Wallace & B A Wallace, A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, Snow Lion, 1997:117 f; P A Oldmeadow, *A Study of the Wisdom Chapter* (thesis), ANU, 1994:14-16.

[701] See DA 2:383,20-24; MA 1:138,11-14; SA 2:77,31-35; AA 1:95; ItA 1:82,26-29; KvuA 34,10-14; Saccsaṅ 2:77. See n above (*Duve …*).

[702] On the nature of "name" and "meaning," see (1.8.6).

[703] For the Sarvâstivāda notion of the 2 truths, see AbhkB 335.

[704] Karunadasa 2010:62.

Jayatilleke noted in his *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* that a common misconception we have about the Theravāda version of the double truths is that *paramattha,sacca* is superior to *sammuti,sacca.* He argues that although the Commentaries speak of the 2 truths, "they do not imply that what is true in the one sense, is false in the other or even that the one kind of truth was [sic] superior to the other, notwithstanding the use of *paramattha* (absolute) to denote one of them" (1963:364 §617).

Karunadasa confirms this observation that the distinction in the 2 truths is *not* based on a theory of degrees of truth. He gives the following free translation of the relevant passages from 3 Commentaries:

> Herein references to living beings, gods, Brahma, etc, are *sammuti,kathā,* whereas references to impermanence, suffering, egolessness, the aggregates of the empiric individuality, the bases and elements of sense-perception and mind-cognition, bases of mindfulness, right effort, etc, are *paramattha,kathā.*
>
> One who is capable of understanding and penetrating to the truth and hoisting the flag of arhathood when the teaching is set out in terms of generally accepted conventions, to him the Buddha preaches the doctrine based on *sammuti,kathā.* One who is capable of understanding and penetrating to the truth and hoisting the flag of arhathood when the teaching is set out in terms of ultimate categories, to him the Buddha preaches the doctrine based on *paramattha,kathā.*
>
> To one who is capable of awakening to the truth through *sammuti,kathā,* the teaching is not presented on the basis of *paramattha,kathā,* and conversely, to one who is capable of awakening to the truth through *paramattha,kathā,* the teaching is not presented on the basis of *sammuti,kathā.*
>
> There is this simile on this matter: Just as a teacher of the 3 Vedas who is capable of explaining their meaning in different dialects might teach his pupils, adopting the particular dialect which each pupil understands, even so the Buddha preaches the doctrine adopting, according to the suitability of the occasion, either the *sammuti-* or the *paramattha,kathā.*
>
> It is by taking into consideration the ability of each individual to understand the Four Noble Truths that the Buddha presents his teaching either by way *of sammuti* or by way of *paramattha* or by way of both (*vomissaka,vasena*). Whatever the method adopted the purpose is the same, to show the way to Immortality through the analysis of mental and physical phenomena.[705]   (DA 1:251 f; SA 2:77; AA 1:54 f)

10.5.2 As seen from the above miscellany of commentarial quotes, the penetration into the truth is possible by either truth—the conventional or the ultimate—or by the combination of both. No method is singled out as superior or inferior to the other. It is like using the language or dialect that a person or audience readily understands, and there is no implication that one medium is either superior or inferior to another. It is a bridge that the Dharma crosses over for the benefit and awakening of the audience.

What is more, as the Commentaries specifically state that whether the Buddhas teach the Dharma according to *sammuti* or to *paramattha,* they present only what is true, only what reflects true reality, without involving themselves in what is the false (*amusā'va*).[706]

The statement: "The person exists" (= *sammuti,sacca*) is not erroneous, provided we do not imagine that the person or being is composed of some substance (visible or invisible) that does not change or that endures forever. Convention requires the use of such terms as "person" and pronouns ("I, you, they"), but so long as we do not imagine substantial entities corresponding to them; then, such statements are valid.

---

[705] Karunadasa 2010 paragraphed.
[706] DA 2:282,15-19; KvuA 36,4-8.

10.5.3 On the other hand, as already noted [10.3.4], the Commentators observe that when, for the sake of conforming to the ultimate truth, we were to say, "The 5 aggregates eat," "The 5 aggregates walk," instead of saying: "A person eats," "A person walks," such a verbalization would result in an awkward "breach of convention" (*vohāra,bheda*), effecting a breakdown in meaningful communication.[707]

Hence, when teaching, the Buddha does not violate linguistic conventions (*na hi bhagavā samaññam atidhāvati*),[708] but uses such terms as "person" without being led astray by their superficial implications (*aparāsaṁ voharati*).[709] Because the Buddha is able to employ such linguistic designations as "person" and "individual" without presuming any substantial entities, he is called one "skilled in expression" (*vohāra,kusala*).[710] Significantly, such manner of expression does not in any way involve falsehood (*musāvādo na jāyati*).[711]

As **the Sumaṅgala Vilāsinī** (Dīgha Commentary) says: Whether the Buddhas speak according to conventional truth or whether the Buddhas speak according to absolute truth, they speak only what is true, only what is actual, what is not false.[712]

10.5.4 A Dharma teacher must build their skill in the use of words to conform to conventions (*sammuti*), usages (*vohāra*), designations (*paññatti*), and style (*nirutti*) in common use without being led astray by them.[713] Hence, in understanding and teaching the Buddha word, we are advised not to adhere dogmatically to mere words or their superficial meanings.[714]

These observations show that, according to the Pali version of double truths, one kind of truth is not held to be superior or inferior to the other. In this connection, an important question arises. If no preferential evaluation is made in respect of the 2 truths, *what is the justification for calling one the conventional truth and the other the absolute or ultimate truth?*

It should be kept in mind that if one truth is called "absolute or ultimate" it is because this kind of truth employs a technical vocabulary to express <u>ultimate truths</u>, that is, the dhammas into which the world of experience is ultimately resolved. Strictly speaking, the expression *param'attha* (ultimate or absolute) does *not* refer to *the truth* as such, but rather to <u>the technical terms</u> by which the truth is expressed. Thus, *param'attha,sacca* really means "the truth *expressed* by using the technical terms *expressive* of the ultimate factors of existence."

In like manner, conventional truth (*sammuti,sacca*) means "the truth *expressed* by using conventional or transactional terms in common usage." While the ultimate truth is rightly presented to the ready person or audience, the conventional truth is a provisional expression of the truth to reach out to the unready like the smile of dawn beaming through the night[715] upon the sleepy and unawakened.

---

[707]SA 1:51,20-22.

[708] KvuA 36,16 f.

[709] *Atthi puggalo ti vacana,mattato abhiniveso na kattabbo* (VismṬ 346; KvuA 36,16-18). Cf *Loka,sammutiñ ca buddhā bhagavanto na-p,pajahanti, loka,samaññāya loka,niruttiyā lokâbhilāpe ṭhita yeva dhammaṁ desenti* (MA 1:139,14-16; AA 1:97,1-4).

[710] MA 1:138,15; AA 1:95,25; ItA 1:82,31.

[711] Cf *tasmā vohāra,kusalassa loka,nāthassa satthuno | sammutiṁ voharantassa musāvādo na jāyati* (MA 1:138,15 f; AA 1:95,25 f; ItA 1:82,31 f; Abhāv:Be 2:210).

[712] DA 2:282,15-19; KvuA 36,4-8.

[713] ItA 1:82; Abhāv 138.

[714] *Na vacana,mattam ev'ālambitabbaṁ, na ca daḷha,mūḷha,gāhinā ca bhavitabbaṁ* (Abhāv 88).

[715] *Aruṇaṁ nandi,mukhī rattī* (Cv 9.1.1 (3.1)/2:236), SD 59.2c.

10.6 SAMMUTI AND SAMUTTI,SACCA

10.6.1 We have *sammuti* and we have *sammuti,sacca*: they are not the same. So too *param'attha* and *param'attha,sacca*: they are different. The word **sammuti** is that which is based on common consensus and general usage, such as "being," "house," "tree," "the sun" or "a person" as a living entity. They each exist in a **word-designated** (*nāma,paññatti*) way. All these forms of *sammuti* or the real in terms of common language are really different kinds of **meaning-concepts** (*attha,paññatti*). These forms of *sammuti* are all objects of conceptual thought.[716]

Now, **param'attha** means "that which is ultimate," not further resolvable or divisible. It refers to the dhammas, the ultimate data, bit and bytes, of existence. As such, *sammuti* and *param'attha* are not the same thing at all. *Sammuti* is a concept, a mental construct of something; *param'attha* is the thing itself, directly experienced.

On the other hand, **sammuti,sacca** and **param'attha,sacca**, although not the same thing, have the same status of truth (*sacca*). They are both true and valid ways of describing what is true, and are thus of equal truth value. Neither is superior nor inferior to the other. There is no preferential value-judgement of either of them.

10.6.2 The Theravāda view regarding the relative positions of the 2 truths closely reflects the distinction drawn in the **the Neyy'attha Nīt'attha Sutta** (A 2.3.5 f) between the 2 ways of reading the Dhamma as presented in the suttas, that is, between "the direct or explicit" (*nītattha*) and "the indirect or implicit" (*neyy'attha*) [10.4.1]. There is no preferential evaluation for either of the two.

Neither statement is considered higher or lower than the other. The rule is that they should not be confused. This is exactly the Theravāda position with the double truths too. In fact, **the Abhidham-m'āvatāra** states that if we are to understand the true nature of the 2 truths, we should not confuse between the two (*asaṅkarato ñātabbāṁ*).[717] This means that we should "not see one truth as if it were the other." They are two different but *parallel* presentations whose perspectives *do* meet.

10.6.3 This reminds us of the perspective of **the 4 noble truths**. In almost all the non-Theravāda Buddhists schools (that is, the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna), the term *paramârtha,satya*, "absolute truth" is considered superior to *samvrti,satya*, "relative truth." This becomes all the more obvious by the use of the term *samvṛti* to express the conventional or relative truth.

The Sanskrit term **saṁvṛti** means "that which covers, hides, or conceals" the true nature of reality. This clearly implies that *paramârtha* is that which reveals the true nature of reality. Thus, the very use of the term *saṁvṛti* to express one of the truths shows that this particular truth is less true and thus inferior to what is called *paramârtha,satya*, the absolute truth. This is how the Sanskrit schools of Buddhism view the 2 truths.[718]

The Theravāda, following the Pali canon, especially **Sn 884**, upholds that "there is only one truth; there is no second" [10.7.1]. This important statement means that there is only one truth or true reality, but there are 2 ways of teaching it: by using conventional teaching (*sammuti desanā* or *sammuti kathā*) or by using the ultimate teaching (*param'attha desanā* or *param'attha kathā*). Neither truth is superior to the other; they are co-ordinate. This is the Theravāda approach.

10.6.4 In the case of **the 4 noble truths** too although they represent 4 different aspects of the same situation, none of the truths have preferential value over the rest or any other truth teaching: they are all co-ordinate. No truth is superior or inferior to another or the rest. That is precisely why they

---

[716] See Saccasaṅ 367 ff; Paramv 1062 ff; Nāmrūpp 847 ff.

[717] Abhāv 88: *Tasmā dve'pi sammuti,paramattha,saccāni asaṅkarato ñātabbāni. Evaṁ asaṅkarato ñatvā koci kārako vā vedako vā nicco dhuvo attā paramatthato n'atthī ti.*

[718] See Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge,* London, 1963:364.

are all introduced as "noble truths" (*ariya,sacca*). All are equally noble (*ariya*), all are equally true (*sacca*).

However, this does not mean that "suffering" (*dukkha*) and "cessation of suffering" (*dukkha,-nirodha*) in themselves are the same. They each express a different way of seeing the same true reality. Hence, as 2 propositions or statements of truth they are co-ordinate. As pointed out by K N Jayatilleke in his *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, the Theravāda teaching of 2 truths "does not imply that what is true in the one sense is false in the other or even that the one kind of truth is superior to the other, notwithstanding the use of the term *paramattha* to denote one of them."[719]

To one who is capable of awakening to the truth through *sammuti,kathā* , the teaching is not presented by way of *param'attha,kathā*, and conversely, to one who is capable of awakening to the truth through *param'attha,kathā*, the teaching is not presented by way of *sammuti,kathā*. Here is a parable: Just as a teacher of the three Vedas who is capable of explaining their meaning in different dialects might teach his pupils, adopting the particular dialect, which each pupil understands, even so the Buddha teaches the Dharma, appropriate to the occasion, using either the *sammuti*,kathā or the *param'attha,kathā.*

It is by taking into consideration the ability of each individual to understand the 4 noble truths, that the Buddha presents his teaching, either by way of *sammuti*, or by way of *param'attha*, or by way of both. Whatever the method used, the purpose is the same: to show one the way to nirvana through the analysis of mental and physical phenomena. The advantage of this method is that it prevents any distinction between substance and quality, a distinction that allows the intrusion of the notion of a substantial self (*attā,vāda*) and all that it entails.[720]

10.7 TWO VIEWS OF THE SAME TRUTH

10.7.1 We should thus remind ourselves that as far as the Pali canon is concerned, the distinction between *sammuti,sacca* and *param'attha,sacca* does not refer to 2 *separate* truths but rather to 2 ways of presenting true reality, 2 ways of understanding the same thing. Although they formally appear as 2 truths, they are explained as actually *2 modes of expressing true reality*. [10.6.4]

Further, they are not about 2 *degrees* of truth of which one is superior or inferior to the other. This is why the 2 terms *kathā* (speech) and *desanā* (discourse) are sometimes used when referring to the 2 kinds of truth.[721] The great and real advantage in presenting *sammuti,sacca* and *param'attha,-sacca* in this way is that there is no conflict between the concept of a plurality of truths with the well-known Sutta Nipāta statement: "**There is only one truth; there is no second**" (Sn 884a) [10.5.1]. What this means is shown by **the Bodhisattva,bhūmi** (a Mahāyāna work) when it says that "truth is only one in the sense of its being non-contradictory" (*avitathārthena tāvad ekam eva satyam na dvitīyaṁ*).[722]

10.7.2 The Theravāda teaching of the 2 truths further gives us a clear clue regarding how we should understand the Commentarial statement that the sutta teachings and the Abhidhamma teachings correspond respectively to conventional teaching (*vohāra,desanā*) and absolute teaching (*param'attha,desana*). The suttas are said to contain teachings mostly based on conventional terms because they are based on the Buddha's skilful use of conventional language in teaching the Dharma. The Abhidhamma, on the other hand, is said to contain teachings mostly based on *param'attha,-*

---

[719] Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge,* London, 1963:364.
[720] DA 2:382; SA 2:18, 77; AA 1:94 f.
[721] See eg AA 1:54, 95; SAṬ:Be 2:91; Abhvk 324.
[722] Jayatilleke *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge,* 1963:364.

desanā because it records the Buddha's skilful use of <u>absolute terms</u> to teach the Dharma as true reality.[723]

This does not mean, as some tend to think, that the Abhidhamma teachings represent a "higher" set of doctrines. The distinction is just like that between the 2 kinds of truth [10.6.2]. Neither of the 2 kinds of doctrines is higher than the other. These are simply <u>2 different ways of presenting the same teachings</u> regarding true reality. The suttas make more use of *conventional and transactional terms* in common usage, while the Abhidhamma employs more *specific, technical terms* which directly refer to the ultimate categories of empirical existence. It is a question pertaining to methodology and not a question pertaining to content.[724]

10.7.3 We have already seen how *sammuti* refers to what is conventional, and *param'attha* to what is ultimate [10.4.5]. However, what should not be overlooked here is that not only *sammuti* but also *paramattha,* when they serve as 2 kinds of truth, have to be communicated through a common medium, namely *nāma,paññatti* (name-concepts). This is the significance of the commentarial statement: "It is without going beyond (the parameters) of *paññatti* that the ultimately real is presented" *(paññattim anatikkamma param'attha pakāsito).*[725] This means that both truths are subsumed under *paññatti,* the category of the nominal and the conceptual [8.7].

We will now look at another conceptual pair of teaching methods used by the Buddha.

10.8 THE 2 TEACHINGS: *PARIYĀYA* AND *NIPPARIYĀYA*

10.8.1 The versatility of the Buddha's teaching method is further attested in the distinction between *pariyāya,desanā,* the relative teaching*,* and *nippariyāya,desanā,* the absolute teaching. The former is the discursively applied method, or illustrated discourse employing stories, similes, metaphors and other figures of speech, which we find in the suttas (*suttanta,bhājanīya*). From their frequency in the suttas, especially as the *dhamma,pariyāya,* they are clearly a teaching device that is older than the *sammuti/paramattha* pair. The *pariyāya/nippariyāya* pair is, of course, also used in the Abhidhamma but often in a way different from the sutta usage.[726]

The latter, *nippariyāya,* refers to the presentation of the Dharma in a precise, technical and impersonal terminology, which we find in the Abhidhamma (*abhidhamma,bhājanīya*)*.* **The Milinda,-pañha** gives a list of synonyms for <u>the *nippariyāya* method</u>:

sabhāva,vacana	words expressive of own-nature of dhammas
asesa,vacana or *nissesa,vacana*	words expressive of that which is all-inclusive
bhūta,vacana	words expressive of what is real
taccha,vacana	words expressive of what is true
yāthāva,vacana	words expressive of what is exact
aviparīta,vacana	words expressive of that which is not distorted.[727]

10.8.2 *Pariyāya* basically means "a way, manner, or mode of proceeding."[728] It also has the sense of "exhortation, exposition, teaching," as in **Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1), "the discourse on the root teaching"[729] and **the Āditta,pariyāya Sutta** (M 26), "the discourse on the exposition on burning."[730]

---

[723] Cf *Sutta,piṭakaṁ vohāra,kusalena bhagavata vohāra,bāhullato desitattā vohāra,desanā; abhidhamma,-piṭakaṁ paramattha,kusalena paramattha,bāhullato desitattā param'attha,desanā ti vuccati* (DhsA 32).

[724] Karunadasa 2010:67.

[725] Mohv 266.

[726] DhsA 154. See ***Pariyāya nippariyāya,*** SD 68.2.

[727] Miln 188; also MilnṬ 391.

[728] See eg Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening,* 1992:135.

[729] M 1 (SD 11.8).

[730] S 56.11 (SD 1.3).

Or, secondarily, it can mean "figure, imagery," as in **the Saṁsappanīya Pariyāya Sutta** (A 10.205), "the discourse on the figure of creeping."[731] Or, it is an adverbial phrase meaning, "relatively speaking," as in **the Bahu,vedaniya Sutta** (M 59).[732]

   The *pariyāya* **approach** of teaching is thus more versatile than the *sammuti* convention, since the former employs a wide range of interesting literary devices. While *sammuti* "fixes" categories of dhammas in conventional terms—concretizing the abstract ultimate truth into the language of common usage—*pariyāya* often present "alternative" categories or approaches to a teaching. It is a teaching tool for "going around" (*pari-yāya*) the difficulties one has with understanding the Dharma.

   Interestingly, *pariyāya* is also found in abbreviated form as its synonym, ***peyyāla*** (contracted as *pa, pe* or *la pe*), which is equivalent to the English "et cetera (etc)" for ellipses in repetitive passages. Apparently, in the Pali textual tradition, the *peyyāla* is not merely an ellipsis of a well-known or routine list. It is also a marker for the sutta teacher to use their skill in improvising teachings permitted by that familiar space.

---

[731] A 10.205 (SD 39.7).
[732] M 59,5.1/1:397 + SD 30.4 (3).

11 Wisdom and spiritual[733] knowledge

11.1 KNOWLEDGE "TO BE DEVELOPED"

11.1.1 In this section, we will examine the kind of knowledge that develops in us when we have the benefit of the Buddha's teachings, whether at the conventional level or the ultimate level. These teachings inspire or imbibe us with **knowledge "to be developed"** (*bhāvetabba dhamma*). In the background of all this development, there is consciousness (*viññāṇa*), that is the knowledge simply "to be understood" (*pariññeyya,dhamma,* literally, "states to be recognized"). As such, this knowledge (consciousness) is not included as a factor here, that is, as wisdom development: it is something on-going.

11.1.2 Wisdom development comprises 3 kinds of knowledge, which, in terms of their stages of development, or the strength of the wisdom, arise sequentially as:

knowledge as perception   *saññā*   [11.2]
knowledge as view   *diṭṭhi*   [11.3]
direct knowledge   *ñāṇa*   [11.4]

11.2 KNOWLEDGE AS PERCEPTION (*SAÑÑĀ*)

11.2.1 Perception (*saññā*) is knowledge derived from perceiving, remembering, recognizing and identifying the attributes of people and things. This knowledge is recorded in the mind in some way. It acts as the basis for comparison, and as data for thinking and for subsequent understanding. Perceptual knowledge is of 2 kinds or, rather, arises in roughly 2 stages:

(1) **sense-perception**, that is, a basic or initial perception, by way of the 5 sense-doors (*pañca,dvārika saññā*): perception of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches (MA 4:20). These are direct perceptions of the signs and features of sense-objects as they are; for example, we perceive colours, texture (roughness, smoothness, hardness, softness), shapes and dimensions.[734] This includes perceptions based on conventional designations (*paññatti*), such as "cat," "table," "city," "mountain," and identifying people by their names.

(2) **mental perception**, that is, an overlapping or supplementary perception that is exclusively perceived by way of the mind-door (*mano,dvārika saññā*). This perception arises from mental conceptualization,[735] or perception in accordance with various levels of knowledge and understanding; for example, we perceive something as beautiful, ugly, despicable, impermanent, or nonself. This supplementary or secondary perception may further be subdivided into 2 more kinds:

(*2a*) Perception resulting from **unwholesome mental proliferation** (*papañca,saññā*), that is, muddled or convoluted perception stemming from the elaborate embellishment by craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). The Commentaries refer to it as "defiled perception"

---

[733] I use "spiritual" in the sense of "directly related to the Buddha Dharma, that effectively helps us in progressing towards the path."

[734] This is perception that is exclusively by way of the mind-door.

[735] A case of perception arising from mental conceptualization: "When he is established in the peak of consciousness [the most subtle and refined perception, ie, *ākiñcaññāyatana*], it occurs to him: "Thinking and deliberating is worse for me, lack of thought and deliberation is better. Were I to go on thinking and deliberating, these states of consciousness I have reached would pass away, and other coarser consciousness might arise? So let me simply neither think nor deliberate any more." (D 9,17/1:184 f), SD 7.14.

(*kilesa,saññā*): perception tinged with mental defilement.[736] It is perverted by defilement and thus deviates from the path of knowledge.

   Rather than fostering understanding, it breeds greed, hatred, and delusion, and it distorts or obstructs understanding. Examples of this kind of perception include: perceiving those features we consider despicable; perceiving those features that answer to covetousness; perceiving those attributes that feed a sense of self-importance; perceiving such attributes in others whom we consider inferior to us; and perceptions of ultimate ownership and control.

(*2b*) Perception resulting from **wholesome thinking**, that is, wholesome perception (*kusala,saññā*), arising from wise attention and right understanding. This is conducive to wholesome knowledge (*vijjā,bhāgiya saññā*). It fosters the development of wisdom and growth of wholesome qualities. Examples of this wholesome perception include: perceiving those attributes that foster friendship and boundless love; and perceiving those attributes that reveal the realities of conditionality, of impermanence, of nonself, and so on.

11.2.2 The perception arising in <u>our normal cognitive process</u>—both basic perception and the perception bringing the rise of wisdom development—is simply that of either knowing or not knowing wholesomeness or true reality. This is true even from the simplest to the highest levels of perception, from indistinct to lucid perception, from partial to complete perception, or from false to right perception. This pattern is directly connected to knowledge and its development.

   This wholesome process is in direct contrast to the unrestrained or excessive perception known as "proliferative perception" (*papañca,saññā*) or "defiled perception" (*kilesa,saññā*), which invariably obstructs and distorts knowledge. We are then caught dead in the past, without present mindfulness, without future growth. We have fallen into a subhuman state of ignorance and suffering.

11.2.3 Since **arhats** have a human body (the 5 aggregates), they have perception too but it is perception free from mental influxes (*āsava*), that is, free from the defilements (*kilesa*) of *sensual desire, existence* (including rebirth) and *ignorance* (including views)[737] [13.1.3]. As we have noted, arhats are well aware of proliferative perception without being personally troubled or affected by them. As practitioners, we should model our conduct after those of the arhats. [8.2.3]

11.3 KNOWLEDGE AS VIEW (*DIṬṬHI*)

11.3.1 The 2nd level of knowing is based on **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*), that is, knowledge arising from the consciousness-aggregate (*viññāṇa,khandha*). Since consciousness is the most basic of the 5 aggregates—it is aware of all mental activity—it is the principal form of all knowledge and awareness; that *consciousness* is the constant function of the mind.

   Like perception, consciousness relies on the present sense-objects to function. Consciousness constructs images or concepts of these sense-objects and discerns them. For the unawakened consciousness, this is the level of <u>conceptualization</u>, with or without reasoned understanding. For the unawakened, this knowledge is mostly **views** (*diṭṭhi*).

11.3.2 When we are <u>unawakened</u>, we draw conclusions of some kind, and hold various viewpoints as our own. This worldly knowledge may arise from an external source but, having passed through a screening process, is then adopted as our own, regardless of how logical or reasonable this knowledge may be.

   Often, it is illogical and deluded. It includes views of eternalism (*sassata,diṭṭhi;* the view of an eternal soul and eternal life), annihilationism (*uccheda-diṭṭhi;* the notion that the soul and the body

---

[736] MA 2:74; SA 2:382.
[737] See **Cūḷa Suññata S** (M 121,12/3:108), SD 11.3.

are one), and the view of non-causality (*ahetuka,diṭṭhi;* that everything happens with neither cause nor effect). This is basically how most worldlings think and live, caught in a rut of ignorance and suffering.

11.3.3 Although **views** (*diṭṭhi*) constitute knowledge based to our own notions and biases, they are important stages in the development of wisdom. Often, we initially know things based on our own biases, or from the faith we have in other's knowledge. If we have learned enough from our own experience and understanding, we then come to our own understanding or reasoned discernment.

 View and faith (*saddhā*) are often closely related, or are two aspects of our knowledge: **faith** is when we believe in anothers' words or knowledge; they are our **views** when we identify them as our own. This "owning" is what empowers our views to potently act on us unwholesomely or wholesomely.[738]

 The knowledge that is "views" ranges from the irrational, to the moderately rational, to the highly rational. When a view is "straightened" (*diṭṭhi'ju,kamma*)[739] to reflect the truth or true reality, it is called "right view" (*sammā,diṭṭhi*) and becomes "wisdom" (*paññā*), knowledge that conduces to reaching the path of awakening.[740] When we develop wisdom to the point of clearly discerning the nature of things, we no longer need to "own" such an understanding. The truth exists in a neutral, objective way, and does not need our affirmation for its validity.

 Because views tend to be linked with personal attachments, they often produce harmful effects. If our attachments are strong and fixed, even when we are close to the truth, they will end up becoming an impediment, preventing us from seeing the real truth. A **view** may be just a *glimpse* we had of what may be unwholesome or wholesome. When we hold on to any view, it is like taking that passing glimpse or faulty memory to be the *whole* thing or to be the *thing* itself. This is how delusion works.

 Wisdom is, on the other hand, when we have properly scrutinized the whole reality and understood it well for what it really is, so that it has no hold on us; rather, wisdom frees us. We are free to move on closer to the path.

11.4 DIRECT KNOWLEDGE (*ÑĀṆA*)

11.4.1 We started off this section with an idea of how **knowledge** arises: it begins with perception, which turns into views (which we tend to own), which when straightened becomes wisdom [11.3.3]. The Commentaries use the parable of 3 people looking at the same coin: a young child, an adult, and a treasurer (a coin expert).

 Perception (*saññā*) is like a young child who merely sees the size and shape of the coin—small, large, square, or round—its colour, attractive sheen, and strange markings. He does not know that it is a conventional means of trade, exchange and wealth.

 Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is like an adult who discerns the shape, markings, etc, of the coin, and knows that it is used as a common means for trade, exchange and wealth. However, he does not have any deeper understanding of whether the coin is genuine or counterfeit, or of what kind of metals were used to mint the coin.

 Wisdom is like a treasurer (or coin expert) who discerns all of the mentioned qualities of the coin, and in addition has expert knowledge. He expertly examines it, taps and listens to it, smells it, bites and tastes it, or weighs it in his hand, so that he knows enough about it, including where and by whom it was made.[741]

---

[738] Words that qualify *diṭṭhi* include *abhinivesa* ("adherence"), *parāmāsa* ("attachment") and *upādāna* ("clinging"), which on a deeper level is conditioned by *taṇhā* ("craving") (Vbh 149).

[739] DA 1:231; MA 1:132; AA 2:109; ItA 2:45; CA 103 *diṭṭh'uju,kamma*; DhsA 159.

[740] Eg Vbh 124, 450.

[741] MA 2:344; SA 2:294; Abhāv:Be 2:295; Vism 14.3-6/436.

11.4.2 Direct knowledge (*ñāṇa*) is true knowledge or gnosis (Skt *jñāna,* cognate with Greek & English, *gnosis*) [8.1.4]. *Ñāṇa* is a synonym of ***paññā*** ("wisdom"), but the definition of *ñāṇa* is more specialized. Hence, we often see *ñāṇa* referring to specific functions and fruits of wisdom; amongst the best-known of which are as follows:

kammassa,kata,ñāṇa	knowledge into how we are owners of our karma	VbhA 415[742]
atīt'aṁsa,ñāṇa	knowledge of the past	D 34,1.4(8)/3:275,20
saccânulomika,ñāṇa	knowledge that conforms with the truth	SD 12.13 (2.1.2)
ṭhānâṭhāna,ñāṇa	knowledge of the possible and the impossible	SD 51.19 (1.2.3.1)
nānâdhimuttika,ñāṇa	knowledge of the disposition of various beings	M 1:70,11[743]
ceto,pariya,ñāṇa	knowledge of mind-reading	D 1:79,28[744]
pubbe,nivāsânussati,ñāṇa	knowledge of the recollection of past lives	SD 38.4 (3.2.5.6)
cutûpapāta,ñāṇa	knowledge of death and rebirth (retrocognition)	D 3:220,16[745]
āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa	knowledge of the destruction of the influxes	D 3:12,27.[746]

As awakening wisdom, *ñāṇa* is a pure and radiant knowledge that arises spontaneously in the mind and discerns a particular quality as it really is.

Although there are many levels of *ñāṇa*, including knowledge that is false, mistaken or incomplete, they can all be referred to as "genuine," even "pure," forms of knowledge, so long as they are not adulterated by self-identification or self-attachment. In our times, for example, we often find bad translations, wrong views and clear errors in the works and teachings of celebrity monks.[747] Of course, it is almost impossible to know whether any of these teachers identify with their views, or were simply ignorant of those teachings. This colourful reality was true even during the Buddha's time, and is still true today in other religions too.[748]

11.4.3 Occasionally, *ñāṇa* arises as a consequence of reasoned thought, but this knowledge exists independently of such thought, because it connects with some aspect of reality that truly exists. This is an important distinction between *ñāṇa* and *diṭṭhi*. The knowledge referred to as *diṭṭhi* (a view) relies on personal beliefs and logical reasoning, whereas ***ñāṇa*** makes contact with external aspects of reality that truly exist.[749]

On a basic level, perception (*saññā*) is the raw material for all thinking and subsequent knowledge. For this reason, both view (*diṭṭhi*) and direct knowledge (*ñāṇa*) rely on perception. It's easy to understand how views arise from perception. When we perceive or discern something, we at once have an opinion about it: we recognize it.

---

[742] VbhA 415,13 f at Vbh 328,20 qu Moh 196,26.

[743] M 12,14/1:70,11; S 52.19/5:305,3; Vbh 339,28; Nett 98,5.

[744] **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,93.2/1:79,28), SD 8.10; SD 1.7 (1.4).

[745] D 33,1.10(58)/3:220,16; M 144,11/3:266,8; S 12.40/2:67,6; A 4.189/2:183,11; Sn 902.

[746] **Gopāka Moggallāna S** (M 108,23/3:12,27 *āsavānaṁ khayā*), SD 33.5; the Buddha's *āsavakkhaya,ñāṇa*, **Jhānâbhiññā S** (S 16.9,29/), SD 50.7.

[747] By "celebrity" monks, nuns, etc, I mean those to whom we look up by attributing them charisma. In other words, their views are accepted on their <u>personal</u> authority even when these views are not verifiable in the Dharma-Vinaya, or even clearly against them. See **The teacher or the teaching?** (SD 3.14)

[748] In this connection, the Buddha declares: "Even famous teachers can have wrong views": **(Pañcaka) Thera S** (A 5.88), SD 40a.16 & SD 1.3 (2.1). On the wrong views of 2 celebrity <u>meditation teachers</u>, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana** (SD 8.4). On teachers having difficulties with **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), see SD 13.1 (3.9.6.3).

[749] Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha Comy outlines the basic difference between *diṭṭhi* and *ñāṇa*, thus: "View (*diṭ-ṭhi*) has the characteristic of the conviction 'this alone is the truth; the rest is foolishness.' **Knowledge** [*ñāṇa*] knows the object according to its true nature, view rejects its true nature and comprehends the object as it is not. This is the difference between them." (Abhs:WG 59)

Although perceiving the features of things is useful in everyday life, **perception** is selective and often conceals reality, or only partly sees the real picture. Hence, we are misled or deceived by perception, or it goes on to obstruct wisdom. **False views** arise from wrong perceptions.

11.4.4 How do views arise? According to the Pali suttas, views arise from <u>contact</u> in the following way at the mind-door:

(1) **Contact**: The first step in the process is <u>contact</u>, which refers to the meeting of a sense faculty with its object. For example, the eye sees a visual object, or the ear hears a sound, and so on.
(2) **Feeling**: Contact gives rise to <u>feeling</u>, which can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. This feeling is not a view but a simple experience.
(3) **Perception**: Perception follows feeling and is the act of recognizing or labeling the feeling. For example, we might perceive a sound as "pleasant" or "unpleasant," depending on how we evaluate the feeling in terms of past memories. At this stage, *craving* is the driving force (highlighted in <u>the dependent arising formula</u> below).
(4) **Thought**: Based on the feeling and perception, there arise <u>thoughts</u> related to the perception. This is where views start to form.
(5) **View**: Finally, views emerge from these thoughts. Views are considered to be more complex and entrenched than thoughts. They are the beliefs, opinions, or judgments that a person holds about the object or experience.

In summary, <u>contact</u> leads to feeling, which leads to perception, which leads to thought, which ultimately leads to views. This process is considered to be the root of all mental formations, and is a fundamental early Buddhist teaching.[750]

Following the principle of **dependent arising** (*paṭicca,samuppāda*), <u>views</u> arise as follows:

(1) Dependent on **the 6 sense-bases**, there is <u>contact</u> (*phassa*) between any of the 6 senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental objects) and their respective objects.
(2) Dependent on **contact**, there is <u>feeling</u> (*vedanā*), which can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.
(3) Dependent on **feeling**, <u>craving</u> (*taṇhā*) arises, either to prolong a pleasant feeling, or to eliminate an unpleasant feeling.
(4) Dependent on **craving** there is <u>clinging</u> (*upādāna*), which can take many forms, such as attachment to material possessions, to views and images, or to one's sense of self.
(5) Dependent on **clinging**, <u>views</u> (*diṭṭhi*) arise. These views can be personal beliefs, hopes, fears, or assumptions about the self, others, and the world. These views then influence further thoughts or actions, feeding the cycle of dependent arising, keeping us in the samsaric loop.

Thus, according to the suttas, *contact* initiates a process of <u>dependent arising</u>, which involves *feeling, craving, clinging, leading to the formation of views*.[751] [7.3.7; Table 13.11]

11.4.5 <u>Contact</u> (*phassa*) is like when we kick a football, <u>perception</u> (*saññā*) is the dynamics that work to send the ball flying into the air. Hence, we often simply say that someone "kicked" the ball. In a similar way, the suttas often speak of <u>perception</u> as leading to **views**. Hence, a view has <u>perception</u> as its leader and principal agent, and what we perceive we discriminate (seeing it as pleasant or as unpleasant or boring); we may even know that it is impermanent, but still see it as being desirable.

---

[750] S 12.2/2:2-5 (SD 5.15), S 22.79/3:86-91 (SD 17.9); A 10.60/5:108-112 (SD 19.16).
[751] D 15,19+20/2:61 (SD 5.17), D 19,20/2:62 (SD 63.4); M 9,44-47/1:52 (SD 11.14); S 12.2/2:2-4 (SD 5.15), S 12.38/2:65 f (SD 7.6a); A 2.12/1:52 f.

There are not indeed many or diverse truths in the world, except from the (mistaken)
perception that things are permanent.   (Sn 886)[752]

In **the Māgandiya Sutta** (Sn 4.9), another ancient Pali sutta, the Buddha explains to Māgandiya
why Dharma knowledge has not arisen in him. The Sutta's canonical commentary, the Mahā Niddesa,
explains **Sn 841cd** (the Buddha's remarks) as follows:

"**But from this you have not even an inkling (of what I am talking about)**" (*ito ca nâdak-
khi aṇuṁ pi saññaṁ, Sn 841c): From this internal peace, or from this practice, or from this
Dharma teaching, you have not obtained a correct perception, an accurate perception, a per-
ception of the characteristics [impermanence, suffering, nonself], a perception of causes, a
perception of possibilities, how then knowledge? …
"**Hence you regard it utterly confused [foolish]**" (*tasmā tuvaṁ momuhato dahāsi,* Sn
841d).
                                                            Nm 1:193 f (at Sn 866/165 f)

11.4.6 The arising of **direct knowledge** (*ñāṇa*) too depends on *saññā*, as the Buddha declares in **the
Poṭṭhapāda Sutta** (D 9):

It is *saññā*, Poṭṭhapāda, that arises first, and then *knowledge*.[753] And the arising of know-
ledge is dependent on the arising of *saññā*.   (D 9/1:185)[754]

Saññā, it should be noted here, has the ancient polysemic overlapping of both what we today under-
stand as "consciousness" and "perception." The two are, as a rule, clearly distinct in the unawakened,
where perception leads to mostly *views* rather than wholesome knowledge. Whereas in a path saint
(streamwinners, etc), *perception*, as a rule, brings wholesome knowledge. In an arhat, since percep-
tion lacks craving or any defilement, it is almost like his *consciousness*, which is also undefiled.
    An arhat does not have even a hint of a view arising from perception, pertaining to the seen, the
heard, and the sensed (or experienced) (*diṭṭha suta muta*) [4.3 f]:

An arhat, free from mental influxes, possesses no view arising from perception, created
by perception, fashioned by perception, pertaining to the seen, the heard, or the sensed."[755]
                                        Nm 110 f (at Sn 801-803) [4.4.3 *pakappitā*]

11.4.7 Everything is teaching us—when we are willing and ready to learn. A perspicacious or
astutely reflective person may notice remarkable truths from simple or ordinary events, such as an
old man, a sick man, a corpse—or a falling apple. An apple may not have actually fallen on Isaac New-
ton's head: we now know from a manuscript squirreled away in London's Royal Society archives that,
in 1665 or 1666, in Woolsthorpe (near Grantham, Lincolnshire), on a warm day after dinner while
having tea with architect William Stukuley, Newton saw an apple drop from a tree and wondered
why that apple should always descend perpendicularly to the ground.[756]
    Newton went on to formulate his famous law of universal gravitation. The apple might not have
dropped on Newton's head, but what Newton saw of the apple was insightful. The perceptions of
"falling"; perceptions of convergence; perceptions of motion and force; and so on. The ability to clear-
ly see the relationship between these various perceptions gave rise to his insight into gravity. However,

---

[752] *Na h'eva saccāni bahūni nānā | aññatra saññāya niccāni loke* (Sn 886ab/173; Sn:B 1151).
[753] "Knowledge" (*ñāṇa*) has a range of senses (from the mundane to the awakened): (1) worldly knowledge,
(2) dhyana consciousness, (3) insight, (4 path knowledge. See **D 9**,20 n (SD 7.14).
[754] D 9,20.3/1:185,25 (SD 7.14).
[755] Cf UA 373,1: "*Saññā* is the sign (*nimitta,* arising point) of proliferative views (*diṭṭhi,papañca*)." On *pakapp-
ita & diṭṭha suta muta viññāta,* see [4.4.3].
[756] Isaac Newton: Who He Was, Why Apples Are Falling (nationalgeographic.org).

even after over 350 years and an Albert Einstein later, physicists still don't yet *fully* understand gravity. We need, it seems, bigger apples.[757]

Direct knowledge (*ñāṇa*), even on a mundane level, is a hands-on empirical experience and understanding of the natural workings of conscious matter (like our body) and the world. This of course includes scientific knowledge. Mundane direct knowledge (*lokiya ñāṇa*) clearly gives rise to views (*diṭṭhi*) and theories (*parikappa*), and such kinds of knowledge, being superior to ordinary views, tend to evolve into superior even extraordinary, knowledge.

11.4.8 There are also claims by other religions, or in religious stories, or claims by insidious cult Gurus, of "spiritual"[758] knowledge. A well-known example comes from **the Brahma Nimantanika Sutta** (M 49), an account of the brahma named **Baka**, who is able to recall the births of beings before him for a vast duration that appears infinite. He notices the countless births and deaths of other beings, while he himself and his realm, it seems, remain the same. He thus harbours the false notion that his brahma-realm and he himself are eternal, and that he, Great Brahma, is the creator of all that he surveyed.

The Buddha then reveals to Baka that there are *other* brahma realms, and that he is reborn from a brahma realm higher than his present one (implying that his present state is actually lower than his previous one). Baka, however, neither recalls his own past life, nor knows about the other brahma realms. Baka then boasts that he will use his power to disappear, but he fails to do so. It is the Buddha who becomes invisible: Baka could only hear the Buddha but is unable to see him. Baka then realizes the Buddha's superiority.[759]

11.4.9 Similarly, in human history, **Newton**, after his discovery of gravity, used this insight to further observe natural phenomena. Newton's genius was fed by ancient Greek learning and European science of his own time, despite being born into a yeoman[760] family on both sides. He was emotionally handicapped being prematurely born and had a sickly, loveless, unhappy childhood. He never knew his father who died 3 months before his birth; he deeply resented his mother, who left him when he was 3 to remarry. He was left in the care of his aged grandmother. Newton himself never married.

Understandably, Newton tended to be secretive all his life and "conceived a proprietary interest in every subject that he investigated; there was hardly any achievement of his creative scientific life that was unaccompanied by acrimony and quarreling. This was largely owing to a great deal of paranoia and self-doubt in Newton's personality. His ego needed to be continually bolstered by praise and admiration of others, a trait that may have had its cause in Newton's humble origins … a fact that always made Newton uneasy and that he tried to obscure by inventing grandiose genealogies for himself."[761] All this was admirably compensated by the fact that he was regarded as one of the greatest scientists in history.

Even then, Newton was a man of his time, with secret religious beliefs, a deep interest in alchemy and his own version of (nontrinitarian Arian) Christianity. Although many of his insightful theories still apply today, his vision and understanding were not comprehensive. Nevertheless, they helped modern scientists see the universe beyond his ideas about gravitation, classical mechanics and so on. The

---

[757] Newton related this incident to Stukeley in 1726. W Stukeley, *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton's Life,* 1752: 15. http://ttp.royalsociety.org/ttp/ttp.html?id=1807da00-909a-4abf-b9c1-0279a08e4bf2&type=book&_ga=2.245016837.1607771042.1678093525-457042842.1678093525.

[758] "Spiritual" is a notoriously suspicious term, which can mean anything to anyone. The Buddhist def as I use it has been defined above [11 n]; but here it has a "popular or folk" sense, esp in extra-Buddhist context, such as the case of the story of Baka Brahmā.

[759] See M 49/1:326-331 (SD 11.7).

[760] A yeoman was an English farmer with a small piece of land.

[761] *Macmillan Ency of Religion* 2nd ed (ed L Jones), R Ravindra, rev 1987:6588.

point is that <u>scientific knowledge is never up-to-date</u>, but always seeking to understand more about the universe to be challenging and revising itself. Science and worldly knowledge seem to be about knowing more and more of less and less, but the "less" seems inexhaustible.[762] [13.11.2]

11.5 THE 3 KINDS OF WISDOM

11.5.1 In those unawakened, even <u>direct knowledge</u> (*ñāṇa*) leads to <u>views</u> (*diṭṭhi*). Conversely, views may also foster the arising of wisdom. The traditional 3 Buddhist trainings—in moral virtue, mental cultivation and insight wisdom—are sources of wholesome knowledge that lead us to the path of awakening.

Moral training comprises right action (of the body) and right speech. Right action—in preventing wrong action (such as killing, stealing and sexual misconduct)—keeps us undistracted and focused on effective learning. Right speech clearly brings us knowledge that is true, unifying, pleasant and useful.

Moral conduct, in keeping our body disciplined and speech wholesome, prepares us for **mental cultivation**. A mentally cultivated mind easily overcomes the mental hindrances [5.1.1] and brings on samadhi or mental concentration, even dhyana. Such a concentration—even a habitually calm mind—keeps us mindful and clearly knowing so that we can directly see into true reality and gain **insight knowledge** into impermanence, suffering and nonself, especially the first. This is the kind of knowledge that brings us closer to the path of awakening.

11.5.2 Clear views (*diṭṭhi*) and direct knowledge (*ñāṇa*) are conducive to one another. Working to-gether, they open up new perceptions (*saññā*) that bring new knowledge and straighten our views. As learning tools, they are always dynamic: they both see <u>change</u>, and they themselves *change* ac-cordingly for the better. In a sense (*pariyāyena*), *diṭṭhi* is like colours and *ñāṇa* the brush and canvas on which we paint and see the fruits of our work.

A good artist well knows that the painting he has created is just that—a creation, their mind's projection onto the canvas of knowledge. Thus, <u>views</u> tend to create false perceptions, whereas <u>direct knowledge</u> (the artist's mind and skills) helps to create clear and true perceptions and to dis-pel false perceptions.[763]

In other words, perception (*saññā*), view (*diṭṭhi*), and direct knowledge (*ñāṇa*) have a universal and powerful impact on our lives. **Perception** is a defining factor in our cognitive process, in our dis-cerning and comprehending the world, and in generating various forms of knowledge. This shapes how we view ourself and the world, and influences our social emotions and personal inclinations.

We form **views** listening to others and from the mass media (including books and writings), from all kinds of beliefs and ideologies, such as religion, politics and philosophy of life. All this influences our personal values and guiding visions. In other words, *views* guide the entire range of our personal and social conduct, profoundly influencing the society we live in.

Direct knowledge is the most profound and significant form of knowledge: it is the fruit of the highest wisdom attainable by us. Properly cultivated and developed, it is able to shape our character and refine our emotions; it changes or focuses our worldview (*loka,dassana*) and life outlook (*jīva,-dassana*). Its influences and effects on us are more lasting and definite than the knowledge we gain from views.

---

[762] A palaeontology joke goes: The worst thing you can do is find an intermediate species (such as the "miss-ing link" between humans and pre-humans), because then all you've done is created two gaps, one on either side of your new species which need intermediating! Thanks, Matt Jenkins, for this anecdote.

[763] **Paṭisambhidā,magga** says: "Who speculates relying on either the 2 views of existence (*bhava,diṭṭhi*) and of non-existence (*vibhava,diṭṭhi*) is devoid of the knowledge of cessation (of suffering): this is where the world is perverted in views (*viparīta,saññī*)" (Pm 1:159).

11.5.3 From the 3-training model (*sīla,sikkhā, samādhi,sikkhā, paññā,sikkhā*), we gain body-based knowledge, speech-based knowledge and meditation-based-knowledge. "Body-based knowledge" refers to how we perceive our sense-objects or sense-data; hence, it is knowledge that is **perception** (*saññā*). "Speech-based knowledge" is a broad term for learning through listening and writing, including the mass media, through which we form our **views** (*diṭṭhi*). Then, there is "meditation-based knowledge" that we gain directly from our own experience of calm, insight and joy; that is, **direct knowledge** (*ñāṇa*).

    The Pali canon, in fact, regards these 3 kinds of knowledge—arising through *saññā, diṭṭhi* and *ñāṇa*—as the methods for cultivating **the 3 kinds of wisdom** (*paññā*), that is:[764]

(1) *cintā,maya paññā*, "mind-cultivated wisdom," arising from our own reflection and reasoning;
(2) *suta maya paññā*, "heard wisdom (through listening)," from learning from others or the media;
(3) *bhāvanā,maya paññā*, "cultivated wisdom," arising from spiritual practice.

Thinking (*cintā*), learning (*suta*), and cultivation (*bhāvanā*) help to generate, improve, and refine our perception (*saññā*), views (*diṭṭhi*), and direct knowledge (*ñāṇa*).

11.5.4 Although these 3 kinds of wisdom—those arising from thinking, from listening and from meditation—are mentioned in the suttas, they are not explained in any way. These wisdoms are however explained—albeit innovatively—in the Abhidhamma. When explaining the first 2 kinds of wisdom, the Abhidhamma focuses on *kammassakatā,ñāṇa* (the knowledge of our ownership of karma) [11.4.2] and *saccânulomika,ñāṇa* (knowledge that conforms with the truth) [11.4.2], that is, it highlights insight knowledge (*vipassana,ñāṇa*), that arises as a result of personal experience of directly seeing impermanence, suffering or nonself.

    The Abhidhamma sees the 3rd kind of wisdom as *samāpannassa,paññā* (the wisdom of one who is accomplished), which the Commentaries explain as the "wisdom of one who is endowed with meditation attainment (*samāpatti*)," that is, the wisdom arising from concentration (*samādhi*) or dhyana (*jhāna*).[765]

11.5.5 There are, of course, numerous other means of gaining wisdom besides the well-known triad, but all these individual means fit into one or more of the 3 kinds of wisdom, the most important of which is the third, meditation-based wisdom (which is the basis for reaching the path).

    This miscellany of wisdom-generating methods found *passim* in the suttas—such as **the Caṅkī Sutta** (M 95)[766]—includes the following activities (read across, line by line):

listening	(*savana*);	inquiry	(*paripucchā*);
discussion	(*sākacchā*);	observing	(*passana*);
scrutiny	(*nijjhāna*);	wise consideration	(*yoniso,manasikāra*);
wise reflection	(*yoniso,upaparikkhā*),	evaluation	(*tulanā*);
investigation	(*vīmaṁsā*);	research	(*vicaya*);
repetition	(*āsevana*);	cultivation	(*bhāvanā*); and
devoted practice	(*bahulī,karaṇa*).		

---

[764] D 33,1.10(43)/3:219 f; Vbh 324 f.
[765] See VbhA 413; VismMṬ:Be 2:77 f. Generally, this is the wisdom of personal direct experience, that of a Dharma practitioner who, on the simplest level, rightly sees into the true nature of things. On the highest level, this is the arhat.
[766] M 95,22-33/2:174-177 (SD 21.15), ie, from the 12-step gradual learning process.

12 Delusion and mental aberration

12.1 DELUSION AS KEY MOTIVATOR

12.1.1 From what we have discussed so far, we should note at least one vital point: Whenever we are distracted, whether in meditation or in daily life, our mind "wobbles" or our attention "floats away" [6.3] because of any of the 3 "roots" (*mūla*) of karma, greed, hatred or delusion. Usually we react to a sense-stimulus [5.4.3]: either we like something or we hate it.

Often we have no idea what the sense-stimulus is or is about: we are simply "lost" in delusion. Thus, when deluded:

• we **lust** after a "beautiful sign" (*subha,ninitta*), even though it is unwholesome or unattainable, and we do all kinds of silly, even daring things, chasing our lustful vision, unable to give up that sign;
• we **hate** what we view as a "repulsive sign" (*paṭigha,nimitta*), and think unwholesome thoughts about it, resulting in hurtful, even violent acts towards that hated person or object, but we often easily forget about this sign when we think of something else;
• we **delude** ourself by "unwise attention" (*ayoniso manasikāra*), not seeing things as they truly are (impermanent, unsatisfactory, without essence), often acting violently, unwilling to give up our wrong view.

> Hence, **the (Akusala Mūla) Añña,titthiya Sutta** (A 3.68) records the Buddha as declaring thus:

rāgo kho āvuso appa,sāvajjo dandha,virāgī	Lust is a small fault but slow to fade away;
doso mahā,sāvajjo khippa,virāgī	hate is a great fault but quick to fade away;
moho mahā,sāvajjo dandha,virāgī	delusion is a great fault and slow to fade away.
	(A 3.68), SD 16.4[767]

Delusion is thus the most insidious of the 3 roots: it makes us lust and hate, and we do not even know why (often giving excuses, conscious lies, for our unwholesome habits). The power of delusion —which moves us on a preconscious[768] level (just before we act)—comes from deep down in our unconscious latent tendency of **ignorance**, the root of all our sufferings.

As a rule, we don't even know it's delusion, usually because of our ignorance or fixation with lust: we cleverly rationalize why we lust for something or hate something. Delusion is very difficult to detect, except perhaps after some wise retrospection. We will here examine the nature of delusion so that we are able to know it and have better control of it, even direct ourself away from it for our own wholesome growth.[769]

12.1.2 In terms of early Buddhist psychology, forgetfulness (*muṭṭha,sacca*) and ignorance (*avijjā*) prevent us from learning anything useful. The word **dhamma** (Skt *dharma*) comes from the root √DHṚ, "to hold," which gives *dhamma* an inherent meaning of (1) "that which holds true," and (2) "that which we should hold in mind."

The former is the truth to which the Buddha awakens, and the latter is what we can and should master so that we too will awaken like the Buddha. Even as unawakened beings, knowing the Dharma holds us from forgetting the good that benefits us and understanding the truth that frees us. Either way, the Dharma keeps us from being deluded by the world.

---

[767] See SD 16.4 (2) Hierarchy of the unwholesome roots.
[768] On the preconscious in early Buddhism, see SD 17.8b esp (1.1.2; 2.2); SD 7.10 (3.3).
[769] For an overview of the 3 unwholesome roots and the 3 wholesome roots, see **(Kamma) Nidāna S** (A 3.33), SD 4.14.

Hence, the early Buddhist conception of **mindfulness** (*sati*) is that it is a special kind of "remembering." While the brahminical system applies this <u>remembering</u> to their scriptures—it is a book-based religion—the Buddha teaches us to apply it to true reality, to the knowledge and vision of a true and happy life here and now, and unconditioned awakening hereafter. Early Buddhism is a reality-based spiritual training founded on *right remembering*.

12.1.3 Right remembering is at the heart of spiritual training in early Buddhism, "memory" and "recall" deal with tricky and subtle questions. From our own experience—when we carefully examine it—as noted by Gethin in his *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* (2001):

> … many of one's so called memories are simply conceptions or ideas based on a particular perspective of what occurred in the past. In short, they are misconceptions, the product of *saññā* associated with unskilful [unwholesome] consciousness. The point is that as far as Abhidhamma is concerned our "remembering" fails to reflect properly the way things truly are. This point is not particularly hard to appreciate, even conventional wisdom tells me that if I am brooding on some wrong done to me, my view of the world is likely to be coloured as a result.   (Gethin 2001:41 f)

Our <u>mindfulness</u> as "memory," "remembering," or "recall," then, must be properly developed. As a rule, we tend to revise or fabricate our memories of the past, often biased by what is happening to us in the *present,* triggered by such a "memory." This self-delusion goes both ways: a thought arises as a reaction to a current event or a thought; this reaction triggers a memory: "This was exactly what happened in the past!" we surmise. Or, a memory arises and then we relate it to a current event: "This is just what happened in the past!" The reality is that we are likely to have been self-deluded.

12.2 THE 3 KINDS OF MENTAL ABERRATION

12.2.1 In blindly accepting whatever we can remember as true, we are likely to delude ourself [11.3.3]. When we are deluded, we simply believe that we are right; that what we are experiencing, what we are thinking or what we know is real (when it is not). Yet, what we remember is often a wrong perception, a wrong thought or a wrong view. This is explained in **the Vipallāsa Sutta** (A 4.49)[770] as <u>the 3 kinds of mental aberration (*vipallāsa*), perversion or distortion</u>, which are as follows:[771]

		translation	**explanation**	
perceptual	1. *saññā,vipallāsa*	aberrant perception	wrong or defective sensing	[12.3]
psychological	2. *citta,vipallāsa*	aberrant mind	wrong or defective thinking	[12.4]
epistemic	3. *diṭṭhi,vipallāsa*	aberrant view	wrong or defective knowledge	[12.5]

It is clear then that, in most cases, our recalls of the past are actually "false memories," reconstructed virtual realities biased by present biases. Such biases make us take what is <u>impermanent</u> to be permanent, what is <u>suffering</u> (unsatisfactory) to be pleasant, what is <u>nonself</u> to be self (have some kind of abiding essence), and what is ugly (disgusting) to be beautiful. With such aberrations, we construct a virtual world and live in it, caught in a loop of profound self-fooling.

For this reason, we are often reminded to "let go of the past," so that we can properly deal with the present as it arises. Even then, as we deal with it, it passes away, and new situations keep arising

---

[770] A 4.49/2:52 (SD 16.11); Vbh 376 *viparyesa*; Nett passim; cf S 1:188; Dhs (*cipariyesa,gāha*); DhsA 253 n; Śikṣ 198.11; *Friendly Epistle* 48; Yogasūtra 2.5 (def of *avidyā*); also MA 2:80.

[771] In the Abhidhamma *vipallāsa* is referred to as *vipariyesa* (Vbh 376), a term found in **(Vaṅgīsa) Ānanda S** (S 8.4/1:188 f, SD 16.12) = Tha 1224A; cf SA 1:271; NmA 1:163; DhsA 253). Vinaya Subcomy states that these 3 aberrations are placed in order of power, from weaker to stronger (VṬ:Be 1:306).

and passing away! Hence, in **the Bhadd'eka,ratta Sutta** (M 131), the Buddha exhorts us to cultivate <u>direct knowledge</u> of true reality, thus:

Atītaṁ nânvāgameyya	**Let one not pursue the past [not dwell on the past],**
n'appaṭikaṅkhe anāgataṁ	**nor hold fond hope for the future.**
yad atītaṁ pahīnaṁ taṁ	The past is gone,
appattañ ca anāgataṁ.	and the future has not yet come.
paccuppannañ ca yo dhammaṁ	**Only this present state**
tattha tattha vipassati	as it arises one sees that with insight,
asaṁhīraṁ asaṅkuppaṁ	invincibly, unshakably.
taṁ vidvā-m-anubrūhaye	Having known that, let one devote oneself to it.
	(M 131,3/3:187), SD 8.9[772]

12.2.2 In essence, this is the spirit of "<u>present-moment awareness</u>." It is a practice best done by way of the 4 satipatthanas, that is, contemplating our *body* as it is, our *feelings* as they each is, our *thoughts* as they arise and pass away, and *realities* as they arise as mind-states. **The Netti-p,pakara-ṇa** puts this insightfully for us thus:

The one who dwells watching **body** in the body,	abandons the aberration (of seeing) *beauty* in <u>the ugly</u>. …
The one who dwells watching **feeling** in feelings,	abandons the aberration (of seeing) *happiness* in <u>the suffering</u>. …
The one who dwells watching **mind** in the mind,	abandons the aberration (of seeing) *permanence* in <u>the impermanent</u>. …
The one who dwells watching **dharma** in dharmas,	abandons the aberration (of seeing) *(any) self* in <u>the nonself</u>.[773] … .
	(Nett 83 f)

When we say that "**the body** is ugly," it means that what we now see as being attractive and desirable will in no time turn to be repulsive and undesirable. The ugliness is in our hate or fear of the change that occurs in the body. Hence, we think that there is real pleasure in "having" or "owning" what we are not, what is not ours. Yet, when we see beauty that is goodness in both the young and the old, the attractive and the unattractive, we respect life and wisdom, and value them.

When we say that "**feeling** is suffering," we notice the difficulty in tolerating discomfort and pain, and the ease of enjoying comfort and pleasure. Yet, we notice that our love of pleasure only accentu-ates our idea of pain, so that we fear pain. Moreover, when we are used to pleasure, we then suffer boredom with it, and when pain ends, we feel relief, even new pleasure.

When we say that "**the mind** is impermanent," it means that our thoughts and feelings move at great speed, that it is vain to hold on to them. We can only notice how they change. When we note and accept this change, we are likely to learn from it; we grow with it. All our thoughts are of past

---

[772] In the animated movie, Kung Fu Panda (2008), Master Oogway (a wise ancient terrapin) tells Kung Fu Panda: "Yesterday is history, | tomorrow is a mystery, | but today is a gift—that's why they call it present." Thanks, Matt Jenkins, for this happy memory.

[773] *Kāye kāyânupassī viharanto asubhe subhan ti vipallāsaṁ pajahati* ... *vedanāsu vedanânupassī viharanto dukkhe sukhan ti vipallāsaṁ pajahati* … *citte cittânupassi viharanto anicce niccan ti vipallāsaṁ pajahati* … *dham-mesu dhammânupassī anattani attā ti vipallāsaṁ pajahati* (Nett 83 f)*.* Cf Peṭk 103; Vism 22.34/678 f. **Abhidhar-ma,kośa** gives the 4 satipatthanas (*smṛty*-upasthāna) as the opposite (*vipakṣa)* of aberrations (*viparyāsa*) (Abhk 342); as does **Śrāvaka,bhūmi**: A Wayman, *Analysis of the Śrāvakabhūmi Manuscript*, Univ of California Press, 1961:98.

objects, and we should leave them there. Only awareness of change keeps our mind or attention in the present. Then, we truly live the moment.

When we say that "**a dharma** is nonself," we will, in time, learn that it is a truth reflecting reality. It is like looking at a star in the night sky. We see point of light we call a "star," but we only see the *starlight*; the star is no longer there. This light had left the star a long time ago. There is only our *seeing* of that light, a conditioned experience of many causes and effects, without any essence, no fixed moment or state.[774]

12.2.3 We have seen how in the Milinda,pañha, Nāgasena explains *sati* as memory, that is, as "recalling" (*apilāpana*) [6.1] and "holding on (to)" (*upagaṇhana*): the term *apilāpana* should not be confused with *abhilapana* [below]. We have also seen how the term "penetrative" (*nepakka*) is closely related to mindfulness, especially as <u>wisdom</u> [3.11]. All these terms have to do with our *right effort* to be wholesomely mindful, one that is connected with wisdom (*paññā*) [3.1.4].

Once again, the operative word in all these wisdom-related activities is "remembering," that is, not forgetting wholesome teachings about true reality. This wisdom-based memory is what prevents us from wrong views, that is, mistaking what is <u>impermanent</u> to be permanent, what is really <u>suffer-ing</u> to be a source of pleasure, what is <u>nonself</u> to be self (identifying with it), and what is actually <u>impure</u> to be a source of purification. This would be *perverting* reality, having an *aberrant* mind.

According to the early Buddhist texts, <u>mindfulness</u> that arises with wisdom *remembers rightly* true reality. **The Abhidharma,dīpa** (*The Lamp of the Abhidharma*, a 5th-century Sarvāstivādin man-ual),[775] for example, explains the faculty of mindfulness (Skt *smṛti*) as "<u>unaberrant expression</u>"[776] (*aviparītâbhilapanā*).[777] In other words, the Dharma keeps us away from "aberrant designating," seeing and living in delusion.

This brings us to an interesting and important psychological teaching about **the 3 aberrations** or perversions (*vipallāsa*), found both in early Buddhism and later teachings, such as the 4th/5th-century Sanskrit Abhidharma work, **Abhidharma,kośa**[778] (*The Treasury of Abhidharma*). Chapter 5, verse 9ab speaks of the "4 aberrations within the 3 views" (*dṛṣṭi,trayād viparyāsa,catuṣkaṁ*), which is then elaborated in its Autocommentary (*bhāṣyā*).[779] These teachings agree very closely with those of early Buddhism.

This is another helpful way of explaining how, with <u>the faculty of mindfulness</u> (*sat'indriya*), we can and must avoid wrong mindfulness, and cultivate those states (*dhammā*) by which we progress towards the path of awakening and ascend it in due course. In the rest of this section, we will exam-ine what happens when we do *not* have right mindfulness, when wrong mindfulness overwhelms us.

---

[774] See eg **(Anattā) Udayī S** (S 35.234), SD 26.4.

[775] Abhdī. The *dīpa,kāra* (lamp-maker) was prob Vimalamitra, an unknown disciple of Saṅghabhadra (c 5th cent), influential master of the Vaibhāṣika school and principal rival of Vasubandhu. Over half of Abhdī *kārikā* verses are virtually identical to those of Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa, which Abhdī harshly criticizes. See Princeton Dict of Bsm 2014: Abhidharmadīpa.

[776] Or "perverted designation" (Gethin 2001:42).

[777] *Smṛtîndriyaṃ nāma kāy'ādiṣu prajñay'opalakṣiteṣu yā khalv-aviparitâbhilapanā pratyabhijñānam,yenâva-dhārite viṣaya,saṃmoṣaś-cetasi na bhavati sa khalv-asaṃmoṣaḥ smṛtîndriyam* (Abhdī:Jaini 360). On Skt *abhila-pana,* cf SAṬ at SA 1:23,8; cf P *abhilāpa*, V 5:176,3; Dhs 1306; VA 108,16; UA 23,22. See DP sv.

[778] Abhk. Fully, **Abhidharma,kośa,bhāsyā,** "the Treasury of Abhidhamma With Commentary, 450-550 CE, by the Indian scholastic Vasubandhu (c 4th or 5th cent). The root text (*kośa,sthāna*) (8 chs) is in 6,000 verses (*kāri-kā*); the Autocomy (*bhāṣyā*) is in prose. It is the principal Abhidharma treatise of Sarvāstivāda, but at various points criticizes its doctrines from the viewpoint of the progressive Sautrāntika. Its orig is lost, and is extant only in fragments in Tib tr, and 2 Chin trs: by Xuanzang and by Paramārtha. Comys on it have been written by Vasu-mitra, Yaśomitra, Sthiramati and Pūrṇavardhana. See Princeton Dict of Bsm sv.

[779] Abhk 5.9ab = Abhk:Pr 3:781.

12.3 ABERRANT PERCEPTION: DEFECTIVE SENSING

12.3.1 Our virtual world is shaped by how we <u>sense</u> things, how we <u>mind</u> things, and how we <u>know</u> or <u>learn</u>, that is, by the perceptual, the psychological and the epistemic. Every waking moment, we are confronted with these 3 kinds of experiences, and since we are unawakened we have no way of knowing how true or real our experiences are. The kind of religion we believe in, or even when we do not believe in any, is often shaped <u>aberrantly</u> by the way that we *sense, mind* or *know.*

Early Buddhism suggests that we are <u>hardwired to delude ourselves</u> through our *bodily* sensing (sensory experiences), our *mental* experiences, even with how we *know* things [12.2.1]. The first kind of delusion is **aberrant perception** (*saññā,vipallāsa*), which refers to how we, being unawakened, as a rule, tend to be deluded by our <u>senses</u>: by what we *see, hear, smell, taste and touch*.

12.3.2 Sight. An oft quoted example of <u>aberrant perception</u> is that of someone frightened by seeing a piece of rope, perceiving it as a snake; or animals encountering a scarecrow and seeing it as a real person guarding a field; or, someone completely disorientated, unable to discern the quarters. In fact, every waking moment, when we use our **eyes**, the images that they receive are literally *upside down,* but we have conditioned ourselves to see these images (this page you are reading) the "right side up."[780]

When we see a series of still drawings or photos, especially when they are rapidly projected by light onto a screen, we see them as moving. This is because of the optical phenomenon known as "persistence of vision" or "retinal persistence," which gives the illusion of actual, smooth, and continuous movement. It is from such misperception that we are inclined to surmise that this is some kind of abiding "self" or Soul.

Persistence of vision is also an optical illusion where the human eye perceives the continued presence of an image for 1/16th of a second, even after it has disappeared from view. Hence, when a sequence of images (which are bright enough) are moved before the eye at a speed of at least 16 images per second, we experience them as being real, live and moving. It also means that what we are seeing is a nice mix of what's happening now and what happened less than a second ago! Yet all this entertains and fascinates us.[781]

According to early Buddhism, how we see things significantly defines our world. When we are unmindful or deluded, we not only fail to see what is real in us or before us, but we are likely to conjure for ourselves wrong views of the situation. This will prevent our living a happy and purposeful life, as well as harm us with delusion that invites and habituates negative emotions in us. As a good start, we should learn to see all our experiences as being *impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise*, and reflect on the significance of this.

Ordinarily, our eyes are likely to be clouded up with *greed, hatred or delusion* so that we fail to see what is right before us, or we see it as something else. We read the words of the Buddha's teachings, and conclude that that's just what it is (so we think). We do not go beyond the words (*pada,pārama*).[782] We must let the Dharma free itself from the cocoon of words.[783]

---

[780] See SD 60.1b (8.4.1.10); SD 60.1d (7.2.4.2).

[781] In the silent movie films, the eye perceives motion as being fluid at about 16-18 fps (frames per second), partly because of its blurring. Modern theatre films (both celluloid and digital) run at 24 fps. At 50 fps of very sharp images, our eyes would make out more details by way of the "retinal persistence," which also does not notice the intervals of dark stripes or frames. The eye is unable to perceive the breaks! See http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/a/a_02/a_02_s/a_02_s_vis/a_02_s_vis.html. Also T Ditzinger, *Illusions of Seeing,* Springer, 2021. Further see SD 18.11 (3.1.2 n); SD 28.7b (2.1.3).

[782] (1) "The word-learner" (*pada,pārama*), one who perhaps only remembers a few words of the teaching is said to be the slowest kind of <u>the 4 kinds of student</u>. The others are (2) the tractable (who can be guided) (*neyya* or *ñeyya*); (3) who can gain understanding when instructed in detail (*vipañcitaññū*); and (4) the quick learner (who at once grasps the idea) (*ugghaṭitaññū*): see **Ugghaṭitaññū S** (A 4.143), SD 3.13(3.3).

In the dark, our eyes often fail or delude us; the Dharma is the light in which we clearly see. Hence the Buddha declares: "Vakkali, he who sees the Dharma sees me; he who sees me sees the Dharma."[784]

12.3.3 Sound is made up of pitches (loud or soft), timbres (quality), timing cues and movement. To begin with we should reduce or better avoid altogether <u>meaningless noise</u> or sonic distraction. Most of us understand the danger of loud sounds, but few realize that noise can be dangerous even if it isn't loud. The brain evolved to respond to changes in otherwise predictable sound patterns because our ancient ancestors needed to be alerted to potential sources of danger.

Chronic exposure to meaningless noise requires the brain to sustain an exhausting state of alertness and ultimately dulls our perceptions, which means that we are less likely to make good sense of our experiences. Overexposure to the background noise around us can blunt our ability to distinguish meaningful sounds, and to discern signals from noise, which is crucial to almost everything we do. The more noise that surrounds us, the less we are able to get our mind to focus when it is needed. The mind becomes noisy, replaying the noise and unhelpful sounds we have heard. This means that we will have poor concentration, or none at all. We are then easily vulnerable to harmful delusion and negative emotions.

Even more damaging is when the noise level is too high (which we may get used to!) which reduces, even prevents, our minds from being calm and clear. We get used to our noisy mind, and it reduces our mental acumen! This means that we stop noticing what the more significant sounds are and what they mean. Our learning ability and creativity are seriously diminished and affected.

Learning skills greatly depend on making sense of both sound and silence, and skilled reading and listening need a calm and clear mind to focus, take in and enjoy them, thus benefitting from them. In short, we need **a sound mind** to engage how we think, feel, act and understand our other senses, especially the mind itself. "Not only does it shape our health, but it is deeply involved in forming memories and contributes in no small way to making us who we are," writes Northwestern University professor and neuroscientist Nina Kraus.[785]

The Bhaya Bherava Sutta (M 4) tells us that the Buddha loves the peace and solitude of the forest.[786] Since *the peace and solitude of the forest* conduce to meditation and spiritual cultivation, the Buddha encourages renunciants to resort to forest dwelling for their training and life.[787] Arhats like Mahā Kassapa are renowned for their love of peace and solitude of the forest, as evident from his Thera,gāthā (elder's verses):

> A delightful hue of cloud-blue,   the pure streams of cool water,
> wrapped with indagopa (insects),   those rocks delight me.   (Tha 1063)[788]

12.3.4 Smell, unlike vision, is almost impossible to define, difficult to describe; but its effects on us are certain, even if differently. Certain autochthonous tribes, like the Jahai, a nomadic hunter-gatherer tribe of peninsular Malaysia, according to researchers, have a rich vocabulary of smell terms,

---

[783] This reminds us of <u>the gradual way</u> of training. To pretend to know or think we know is like forcing the caterpillar from its cocoon: it will be maimed and never fully grow into a beautiful butterfly.

[784] *Yo kho vakkali dhammaṁ passati so maṁ passati; yo maṁ passati so dhammaṁ passata:* **Vakkali S** (S 22.87,13/3:120) + SD 8.8 (1.3); Miln 71; SA 2:252; AA 1:250; DhA 4:118; UA 311; ItA 2:116; ThaA 2:147; ApA 492. See SD 10.4 (2.2.5); SD 51.25 (2.2.2.6); SD 55.8 (1.2.2.2).

[785] N Kraus, *Of Sound Mind: How our brain constructs a meaningful sonic world,* MIT Press, 2021.

[786] M 4,34/1:23 (SD 44.3).

[787] **Arañña Vana,pattha S** (A 2.3.9/1:60 f), SD 44.3(4.6); SD 44.3 (4).

[788] **Mahā Kassapa Thera,gāthā**: Tha 1051-1145; SD 103.14 (1.2.3.3).

comparable to their colour terms.[789] However, although we often can almost at once identify a smell (like that of say durian),[790] we simply cannot otherwise describe or define it.[791]

In the early Buddhist texts, natural <u>fragrance</u> is often used as a comparison for moral virtue (Dh 54 f): the fragrance that is moral virtue is the best of fragrance; it goes against the wind. On the other hand, any kind of attachment, even to smell, is said to bring about suffering. The very first 10 succinct suttas of **the Aṅguttara Nikāya** record the Buddha as warning renunciants that nothing obsesses "the mind of a man" as *the form, sound, <u>smell</u>, taste and touch* "of a woman." Conversely, nothing obsesses "the mind of a woman" as *the form, sound, <u>smell</u>, taste and touch* "of a man."[792]

Note that the Buddha is referring not to "a man" or "a woman," but to "the mind of a man" (*purisassa cittaṁ*) and "the mind of a woman" (*itthiyā cittaṁ*). This is significant when we consider that even in homosexual relationships, psychologically, the partners each play gender roles of the masculine and the feminine. Such roles are less fixed or clear in such a relationship, but this is what "attracts" one to the other. Such roles are often based on societal as well as parental roles.[793]

12.3.5 Taste. Closely linked with smell is the physical sense of taste. Smell, taste and touch are grouped together as senses that are "internally" stimulated [4.4.1]. Yet, the importance of taste to us is perhaps *the most obvious* of all of the senses: it plays a vital role in proper food selection. Our ability to perceive the taste (and smell) of certain chemical compounds as unpleasant can save us from ingesting food that is poisonous to us. Studies have even suggested that an individual's person-al taste preferences may be linked to specific bodily needs and an aversion to foods that have pre-viously made that person sick.[794]

We taste through the taste buds located on the small bumps, or papillae, of our tongues. Taste buds distinguish 5 distinct types of flavors: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami (savory, "meaty" flavors). The early Buddhist texts similarly distinguish these very same 5 kinds of tastes.[795] Each has a dietary function: sweet flavors usually indicate nutrient-rich foods like fruits and vegetables, salt allows for the regulation of electrolytes, sour flavors indicate the presence of essential acids, bitter flavors help the body detect toxins and inedible substances (in most cases), and umami allows the body to identify food sources rich in amino acids, proteins, and glutamates.

---

[789] A Majid & N Burenhult, "Odors are expressible in language, as long as you speak the right language." *Cognition* 130 2013:266-270.

[790] Perhaps the most popular (and expensive) of local fruits in Malaysia and Singapore. There are some 30 Durio species, at least 9 of which produce edible fruits. Durio zibethinus is native to SE Asia. It has some 300 varieties in Thailand and 100 in Malaysia. Some Westerners simply dislike its smell and shape!

[791] For an academic discussion, see W G Lycan, "The intentionality of smell," *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 art 436, 27 May 2014 8pp.

[792] A 1.1-10/1:1-3. Comy wryly notes that the bodily smell of a woman is foul (*duggandha*), but what is meant here is the smell of her perfume, etc. (AA 1:26,9-11). **Bāla Paṇḍita S** (M 129) describes the world monarch's "woman jewel" as the ideal woman for his pleasure and service: clearly a case of imperial patriarchalism in a mythical setting! (M 129,39/3:174 f (SD 2.22).

[793] M W Ross, "Societal relationships and gender role in homosexuals: A cross-cultural comparison." *Journal of Sex Research* 19,3 Aug 1983:273-388; "Corrections," ib 19,4 1983:338. J Thepsourinthone et al, "It's a man's world: A qualitative study of gender and sexuality amongst Australian gay men." *International J of Environmen-tal Research and Public Health* 19 (2092), 2022:1-15.

[794] K Touzani & A Sclafani, "Learned flavor aversions and preferences," *Ency of Neuroscience* (ed L E Squire), 2009 5:395-399; rev 2010, 2015, 2017.

[795] SD 53.5 (5.5.3.5). A few suttas, however, distinguishes 4 pairs of tastes: sour/bitter (*ambila tittika*)*,* spicy hot/sweet (*kaṭuka madhuka*)*,* sharp/mild (*khārika akhārika*)*,* salty/bland (*loṇaka aloṇaka*): **Khajjanīya S** (S 22.-79,9), SD 17.9; described at **Sūda S** (S 47.8) @ SD 28.15 (12).

As far as taste is about **food**, the renunciant is reminded to live on the alms they get (or don't), and to do so in moderation (*bhojane mattaññutā*).[796] Both monastics and the laity are admonished to abstain from taking intoxicants,[797] which includes narcotics and medicines.[798] At the very opening of **the Aṅguttara Nikāya**, the Buddha warns us against sexualizing taste.[799]

12.3.6 Touch. In the Buddhist texts, the sense of touch is classed as "the physical body" (*kāya*) itself. Indeed, as the primary sensory organ for touch and feeling, our skin is the largest organ in the body, and its tactile sense is scientifically known as <u>mechanoreception</u>. Touch may seem simple but is really a complex process. Our body not only detects different types of "active touch"—texture, pressure, temperature (static contact), weight, volume and shape—but also responds to "passive touch."[800]

The touch nerves from all over the body detect touch (and feeling), and send these data not to the brain, but directly to the peripheral nervous system. These are the nerves branching out from the spinal cord and reaching out to the entire body.

We have specialized nerve-cells just under the skin that sense different touch sensations. The skin on the finger-tips, for example, has different touch receptors from those on the skin of our arms and legs. Our finger-tips can detect changes in texture and pressure like the feeling of sandpaper or pushing a button. The skin of our arms and legs can also well detect the stretch and movement of our joints.

All these nerves under the skin send information to our brain about what we touch, and the brain at once processes them, so that we at once know what to do. The skin on our limbs also sends our brain information about the position of our body. The skin of our lips and soles of our feet are more sensitive to light touch. Our tongue and throat have their own touch receptors. These nerves tell our brain about the temperature of our food or drink so that we know just what to do when we eat.

12.3.7 Pleasure and pain. Our senses not only support and protect our lives, giving us health (for the sake of our spiritual practice), but also gives us comfort and joy. Yet, we also feel <u>pain</u> and <u>pleasure</u> from them on account of our physical body. <u>Nociception</u> (physiological pain) signals nerve-damage or damage to tissue: when we feel pain, we have some form of discomfort, or a sign of ill-health, to which we should attend so that we can keep up with our spiritual practice.

---

[796] **Kakacûpama S** (M 21,7.2), SD 38.1; **Bhaddāli S** (M 65,2), SD 56.2; **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,9), SD 10.13; **Kīṭa,giri S** (M 70,4), SD 11.1; **Āma,gandha S** (Sn 2.2), SD 4.24 (3.4.1); SD 32.2 (5.1); SD 37.13 (1.2).

[797] On <u>abstaining from intoxicants</u>, see **Sigal'ovāda S** (D 31,7+8) n, SD 4.1; SD 59.5 (2.5).

[798] "Almsfood" (*piṇḍapāta*), robes (*cīvara*), shelter (*sen'āsana*) and "medicine and health support" (*gilāna,-paccaya,bhesajja,parikkhārā*) are the 4 "life-support" (*catu paccaya*) of monastic life, and these should be properly used, in a restrained, frugal and practical manner, and reflectively (*paṭisevana*): see **Sabb'āsava S (**M 2,13-16) SD 30.3; **Santuṭṭhi S** (A 4.27) SD 104.8; **Vana,pattha S** (M 17,3.4), SD 52.5.

[799] A 1.1-10/1:1-3. Comy explains "a woman's taste" as that of her lips, flesh (Ce *māsa,* "month, menses; *Ee* maṁsa, "flesh"), "skin-grease" (*sammakkhaṇa,* vl *makkhaṇa,* "smearing") [prob = *vasā,* "skin-grease": M 140,-15.1 n, SD 4.17], saliva (*kheḷa*), etc, and the taste of the rice, gruel, etc, that she gives to her husband. "Many beings meet with disaster after receiving sweets from a woman." (AA 1:26,26-27,4)

[800] **Active touch** refers to the act of touching, and implies voluntary, self-generated movements. With active touch, the environment is explored using specialized touch organs (the hand or forepaw, whiskers in rodents) in order to gather information about the properties of surfaces (texture, hardness, temperature) and/or objects (size, shape, weight, location) located in the nearby peripersonal space. In contrast, <u>passive touch</u>, or the act of being touched, implies that the sensory input is generated by an external agent; this type of touch is not generally exploratory in nature (although there can be exceptions in the laboratory situation). For both modes of touch, sensory input can be dynamic, implying movement between the skin and the object, or static (no movement). For example, a hand-held object can be identified using a combination of active exploratory movements, turning the object over to examine all of its surfaces (dynamic active touch), combined with periods of static holds (static active touch). A special type of dynamic passive touch, often used in experimental situations, is to displace surfaces, mounted on a drum or a moveable platform, over a single region of skin. See C E Chapman, "Active touch," *Ency of Neuroscience* (ed M D Binder et al)*,* Springer 2009:35-41.

The 3 types of pain receptors are *cutaneous* (skin), *somatic* (joints and bones), and *visceral* (body organs). It was previously believed that pain was simply the overloading of pressure receptors, but research in the first half of the 20th century indicated that pain is a distinct phenomenon that intertwines with all the other senses, including touch. Pain was once considered an entirely subjective experience, but recent studies show that pain is registered in the anterior cingulate gyrus of the brain.[801]

The main function of **pain** is to direct our attention to dangers, and motivate us to correct or avoid them. For example, we avoid touching a sharp needle, or hot object, or extending an arm beyond a safe limit because it is dangerous, and thus hurts. Without the signal of pain, we would do many dangerous things without being aware of the dangers.

Analogically, **suffering** means that there's something wrong in our life or with life itself. We need to investigate what causes this suffering: we will learn that it is the drive to have, and to have more without end. When we think we have it, we are then likely to chase after something else, to fill this unfathomable emptiness in us. When we stop for a moment and look deep within ourself, we realize that we have only imagined this emptiness. We simply need to stop daydreaming and imagining, and live a real life: see things as they really are. In time, we learn that there is neither past nor future, only the eternal present. Once we catch up with it, we attain a new life unimagined before, the true and beautiful now.

In this way, the Buddha discovered the middle way: he realized that **pain** is our body's warning against abusing it; **suffering** drives us to flee from it for sensual pleasures. We have already noted how, at the very start of **the Aṅguttara Nikāya**, the Buddha warns us against sexualizing touch.[802]

We need to avoid both extremes of sensual indulgence and of self-mortification—this brings us to the **middle way** that opens before us the path of awakening.

12.3.8 Balance and posture. As we age, doctors and health workers often warn us to stay healthy, build strength, and keep our balance so that we would not fall and hurt ourselves. In medical terms, we need to keep vestibular sense, a sense of balance or equilibrium. This is the sense that helps us with a perception of balance, spatial orientation, direction, or acceleration—technically called equilibrioception.

Along with hearing, **the inner ear** is responsible for encoding information about balance. A similar mechanoreceptor to the skin [12.3.6]—a hair cell with stereocilia[803]—senses head position, head movement, and whether our bodies are in motion. These cells are located within the vestibule[804] of the inner ear. Other parts of the ear detect our head position and head movement, and send neural signals to the brain stem and cerebellum (the "little brain").[805]

Good Vinaya-based monastic training helps a renunciant with keeping proper posture—with *walking, standing, sitting and reclining*—with a calm and clear mind.[806] Similarly, a properly trained renunciant is clearly aware of:

---

[801] R K Fulbright, C J Troche, P Skudlarski, J C Gore, B E Wexler, (November 2001). "Functional MR imaging of regional brain activation associated with the affective experience of pain," *American Journal of Roentgenology* 177,5 Nov 2001:1205-1210.

[802] A 1.1-10/1:1-3.

[803] Stereocilia are tiny single finger-like cell-like projections in the cochlea of the inner ear that are necessary for hearing and balance. They do so by converting physical force from sound, head movement or gravity into an electrical stimulus.

[804] The vestibule is the central part of the bony labyrinth in the inner ear, and is situated medial to the eardrum, behind the cochlea, and in front of the three semicircular canals. Vestibule of the ear - Wikipedia.

[805] The cerebellum is that part of the brain in the back of the head between the cerebrum and the brain stem that controls muscle movements. See Rice Univ, Houston, TX: 14.1 Sensory Perception - Anatomy and Physiology | OpenStax.

[806] **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,6+7/1:56 f), SD 13.3.

going forward or backward;
looking forward or backward;
bending or stretching;
carrying his robes and bowl (including when dressing);
while eating, drinking, chewing and tasting;
while voiding or peeing;
while walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, talking or remaining silent.

This bodily training of a monastic and a meditator is not only that of *decorum and mental focus*, but also for keeping their bodily balance (*thira*)[807] and mental harmony (upekkhā) [9.8.15 f]. The renunciant and meditator dwells contemplating "the body in the body" in this way, mentally or through any of his sense-experiences, seeing impermanence (rising and falling) in all such actions unattached to the world,[808] "free as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden."[809]

12.3.9 Motion and position. The last bodily sense we will examine has a big name: **proprioception**, also called proprioceptive sense, that is, our sense of body movement and position, resulting from stimulation of proprioceptors (motion-and-position sensors) located in the muscles, tendons, and joints, as well as of vestibular receptors in the labyrinth of the inner ear [12.3.8]. Proprioception enables our body to determine its spatial orientation (location in space) without visual clues and to maintain postural stability. In other words, we can reasonably well stand or move (with care) even with our eyes closed or in total darkness.[810]

Proprioception as the kinesthetic sense provides the parietal cortex[811] of the brain with information on the movement and relative positions of our body parts. Neurologists and doctors test this sense by telling patients to close their eyes and touch their own nose with the fingertip. With proper proprioceptive function, we will not lose awareness of where the hand actually is, even though it is not being detected by any of the other senses. Proprioception and touch are related in subtle ways, and their impairment results in surprising and profound deficits in perception and action.[812]

It is interesting that although modern science generally sees the brain as the basis, even centre, of our consciousness, it still speaks of the senses—how we sense things and make sense of things—which occur all over our body. Even from the start, although early Buddhism has a word for "the brain" (*matthaluṅga*) it is hardly mentioned, especially not as "**the mind**" (*mano, citta, viññāṇa*). The mind, according to early Buddhism—is not located anywhere.

However, if we are to speak of the space or environment in which the mind operates, then it covers our whole body. For the mentally developed and the awakened, their minds can pervade well beyond their bodies. In interesting ways, our minds today are being transmitted or transported beyond our bodies by various instruments, such as optical instruments (such as binoculars and telescopes), the radio, television, satellite systems, and of course computers. In other words, the early Buddhist idea of the mind is the extent of our capacity for knowledge in both the mental, spatial and

---

[807] *Thira* lexically means "firm, hard; fixed; strong, durable"; here it is used in a broad sense of "balanced," that keeps one "firm, fixed, durable and strong."

[808] M 10,8+9/1:57), SD 13.3.

[809] D 2,66/1:71 (SD 8.10).

[810] The def of proprioception is from the APA (American Psychological Assoc) *Dictionary of Psychology*, 2nd ed, 2015.

[811] The parietal lobe is one of the 4 major lobes of the cerebral cortex in the brains of mammals. It is located just above the temporal lobe and behind the frontal lobe and central sulcus. Parietal lobe - Wikipedia.

[812] Gabriel Robles-De-La-Torre, "The importance of the sense of touch in virtual and real environments," *IEEE Multimedia* 13,3 Aug 2006:24-30, https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/1667971. See also: https://dbpedia.org/page/Haptic_communication.

spiritual senses (not just our body, much less the brain)—this clearly points in the direction of the "distributed mind." [12.7]

12.4 ABERRANT MIND: DEFECTIVE THINKING

12.4.1 <u>The aberrant mind</u>, as defective thinking, is perhaps the most devastating force in history. One of the most powerful human powers is that of **religious belief**; it is a means of social control that is not easy to defy or dismantle. Since most religion is a matter of faith and belief, those who believe and follow a religion would be under the power of its leader or leaders and those who define and decide what religion is. Historically, the ancient rulers were, as a rule, also priests, and who were often believed to be divine, and so were regarded as the lords of the life.

Religions run on dogmas, manufactured and maintained by priests and religious elites, who feed on religion for their prestige, prosperity and power. Their priests and elites (lay teachers, etc) often astutely use religion to instill greed, hate, delusion and fear in their followers. This way, the priests themselves become powerful rulers, or the powerful rulers use these priests to legitimize their power. Religion thus is merely a tool for empowering the priests and legitimizing the powerful and become powerful and wealthy itself.

When Buddhism was empowered by the ruling powers, such as becoming the state or national religion, it became, ironically, the victim of that very same power. When the patronizing dynasty fell or the ruler died, Buddhism too fell with it. Historically, this explains why Buddhism disappeared from India, Central Asia and East Asia.[813]

12.4.2 In the Buddha's time, the central Gangetic plains of India were evolving into an urbanized society. The discovery of iron led to the making of better tools and vehicles, which promoted agriculture and trade. The rulers who learned to use iron to make better weapons and chariots, controlled trade and employed people in their armies and services.

In this way, kings became powerful without the need of priests or religion. For various reasons too, the once powerful brahmins lost their hold on the rulers and society. With the rise of empire (with the fall of the independent tribal republics, like the Sakyas) and with resulting peace, there was also the rise of commerce, specialization of labour, money economy: these contribute to greater wealth and more leisure for more people—this led to many wise and not-so-wise people asking the basic questions about life.

The wiser and more enterprising amongst such people, like the Buddha, were able to spread their ideas to a populace that had the time and yearning to know the meaning and purpose of their changing social order. The Buddha's religious method and spiritual training were (and are) so successful that his teachings and monastic renunciation system have come down to our own times.

Now the Buddha's ideas of mind and mental health have especially influenced modern **psychology** and society, universalizing the practice of <u>mindfulness and meditation</u>. One of the profound successes of the Buddha's teaching is his clear and effective teachings about how the mind works, especially the healing of an aberrant mind, and training for a healthy individual and wholesome society.

12.4.3 Examples of **aberrant mind** include: an insane person feeding on grass thinking that it is food; a deranged person paranoid of others, thinking that they are planning to harm him; someone seeing a moving shadow in the dark and imagining it to be a ghost. Then, there is the classic story of Chicken Licken, who, after an acorn hit her on the head, thought that the sky was falling.

---

[813] On Buddhism being exterminated by the Muslim Turks in the 12th century India, see SD 36.1 (1.9.2); SD 39.1 (7.3.3). For a radically different view, see J Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road,* Pennsylvania, 2010.

This story probably originated from **the Daddabha Jātaka** (J 322), which relates how a hare sleeping under a bilva (Aegle marmelos) tree[814] was dreaming the sky was falling. A ripe bilva suddenly fell nearby. He jumped up and ran off in panic, shouting, "The sky is falling!" Other forest animals, hearing him, also followed until there was a huge crowd of stampeding animals heading right for the great ocean.

A noble young lion (the future Buddha) standing on a high rock, saw this stampeding crowd that was heading for certain death. He gave a loud roar, and all the animals stopped right on their track. The lion investigated the cause of the great panic. When he finally came to the hare, he knew how it all had started. He took the hare to the spot where the latter had been sleeping, and explained to them what really had happened. A ripe fruit had fallen, and he mistook this for the great disaster he was dreaming about![815]

This is also a great parable about how religions work to spread fear and to exploit on the fearful for the benefit of the elites. This Jātaka is thus warning us of a similar impending disaster with global impact: the dream-tale is used to spur the masses on to *simply mindfully* run, to follow the crowd *just as it is*—just keep going and we are *there*!

12.5 ABERRANT VIEW: DEFECTIVE KNOWING

12.5.1 Aberrant views arise as a result of faulty perceptions and foggy minds. When we perceive something wrongly, we then view it wrongly and react negatively. Similarly, when we think in deviant or errant ways, our views and beliefs are accordingly mistaken and false, often harmful. When we wrongly perceive a rope as a snake, we may conclude that this particular location is teeming with snakes. The perception that it is "a snake" creates fear, the fear from being bitten by it—or the fear of death, to be exact. This negative emotion defines our reaction as a result of <u>an aberrant mind</u>.

Without investigating further, we believe this to be true and spread this view around so that others believe it too. Spreading a false view in this way means that we identify with it—which confirms our aberrant mind. Sadly, we are unlikely to know this. But if we do know that our view is false, and that we are spreading it, this makes us *doubly* bad, so to speak. This is in fact likely to be the way a cult guru operates: knowing that their views are against the suttas (for example) they continue to hold and spread them anyway. Such views arouse powerful emotions that are used by the gurus or leaders who lack moral goodness or humanity, and whose primary goal is that of full control of the crowd, the country, even the world. This is clearly a case of <u>aberrant views</u> and false knowledge, which makes us easy victims of *greed, hate, delusion and fear*.[816]

Religion, in the hands of the deluded and powerful, can easily be used to attract believers, supporters and virtual slaves because of the latter's own <u>greed</u> (*lobha*) for happiness here and heaven hereafter which are promised them by those in whom they believe. Religion often conjures up a common tribal <u>hate</u> (*dosa*) against those who are different or who do not accept the believers' own religion and culture. Religion is used to justify the control, oppression, even extermination of heathens, pagans and unbelievers. These are of course grand <u>delusions</u> (*moha*) officially nurtured and regularly fed to the masses. <u>Fear</u> (*bhaya*) is then evoked by way of eternal punishment or damnation for merely unbelieving or going against the religious elite or their teachings.

Not surprisingly then, religion has destroyed and harmed countless innocent lives, even the young (in religious wars and in peacetime), and those from the same culture, in the name of the

---

[814] On the bilva tree, see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18,2.2 n), SD 6.14.

[815] **Daddabha J** (J 322/3:49-52).

[816] Respectively, these are *lobhâgati, dosâgati, mohâgati, bhayâgati*, collectively known as "the 4 biases" (*agati*) or motives or grounds (*ṭhāna*): **Sigal'ovāda S** (D 31,5), SD 4.1; **Āgati S 1** (A 4.17), SD 89.7; **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5,6.4) n, SD 2.21; SD 31.12 (6.4.1.3); SD 53.5 (2.2.1.1).

Popes, priests, rulers and lords. Death and suffering from religious wars, conflicts and persecutions have often been greater than those from secular wars and natural disasters.[817]

12.5.2 Before the rise of modern education and science, and responsible secular government, religion defined and dominated our world: lives were defined by scripture or the preacher's fiat. Early in our religious history, our ancestors believed that some external, natural and conscious forces controlled and managed nature around us, the weather, thunder, lightning, rain, floods, wildfires, droughts, earthquakes, and volcanoes. As the sole monarch or emperor became the vogue, he saw himself as a reflection of the heavenly king: he was a living god, like the Egyptian Pharaoh, the Chinese emperor, the Japanese Mikado and the Roman emperor. This was a more convenient and unifying belief, especially when the culture had numerous competing gods.

God-centred religions believe and teach that God breathed life into us. When we live worshipping and praising God, our souls, after our death, would enjoy eternal life in heaven. When we lack faith in God, believers claim, we would be cast into everlasting hell. As on Earth so in heaven.

12.5.3 In ancient times—such as in the Mesopotamian[818] and the Egyptian[819] civilizations—religion shaped their world-views, which would be regarded as aberrant by modern standards. One imagines that they perceived the Earth as extending out evenly, as it were, in a straight line, and when they stood on an open shore or a high hill on an island, they saw the horizon almost all around, they concluded that the Earth was flat.

This ancient Egyptian and West Asian **flat-Earth cosmology** was also found in ancient India, even in the Buddha's time.[820] The early Buddhist cosmology too views a flat disc-like Earth supported by the wind-element, and centred around a cosmic axis, called Mount Meru. At the cardinal quarters of this cosmic mountain are the 4 major continents, and beyond them various heavenly quadrants each with its own time-scale. Despite this primitive cosmology, early Buddhist cosmology features the relativity of time,[821] and other universes or multiverses.[822]

12.5.4 Early Buddhist ontology

Early Buddhism does speak of "**worlds**" (*loka*) but not in the theistic or cosmic sense of any of the other ancient cosmologies. The physical world is seen as comprising *the 5 elements*: earth, water, fire, wind and space, such as stated in **the Mahā Rāhul'ovāda Sutta** (M 62).[823] Even then, these 5 elements are used as the bases for the "element-like meditations."[824]

In the remarkable **Titth'āyatana Sutta** (A 3.61)—where the Buddha rebuts determinism, God-centred agency and fatalism—the 1st of the 4 "focuses of mindfulness" (*satipaṭṭhāna*)—the contemplation of the body (*kāyânupassanā*)—is defined as that of the same 5 elements (that is, the 4 prim-

---

[817] See SD 60.1c (15.1). Religious wars: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_war. Death toll of wars: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_by_death_toll.

[818] **Mesopotamia** was a historical region of Western Asia located within the twin-river Tigris-Euphrates system, in the northern part of the Fertile Crescent. Today, this area centres on modern Iraq, but historically, include Iraq and parts of present-day Iran, Kuwait, Syria and Turkey (ie, most of South Asia). S Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Eden that never was*. Cambridge, 1999:1.

[819] The history of **ancient Egypt** began from the early prehistoric settlements of the northern Nile valley followed by the pharaonic period, starting in 3100 BCE, with 30 dynasties spanning 3 millennia. The Pharaoh ruled a unified Upper and Lower Egypt until the country fell under Macedonian rule in 332 BC, and then the Romans in 30 BCE. For an overview: https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/egyptians/.

[820] The ancient Chinese held that the Earth was flat and square well into the 16th cent Ming dynasty, ie, until their encounter with Matteo Ricci and the Jesuits. For refs: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_Earth.

[821] See **Early Buddhist cosmology**, SD 57.10 (1.5).

[822] See **Kosala S 1** (A 10.29,2), SD 16.15; **(Ānanda) Abhibhū S** (A 3.80), SD 54.1; SD 10.9 (8.2.3); SD 2.19 (9.5).

[823] M 62,8-12/1:421-423 (SD 3.11).

[824] **Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 62,13-17/1:423 f), SD 3.11.

ary elements + consciousness): we are composed of the same elements as the external world plus consciousness.[825]

12.5.5 Unlike other ancient cosmologies—which were basically that of "Earth and heaven"—early Buddhist cosmology speaks of **the 3 realms** (*ti,dhātu*),[826] that is, the sense-realm (*kāma,dhātu*), the form realm (*rūpa,dhātu*) and the formless world (*arūpa,dhātu*).[827] Here, *dhātu* (which usually means "element") has the sense of "domain of experience or existence,"[828] that is to say, "world."

The **Bhava Sutta 1** (A 3.76) and its reprise **the Bhava Sutta 2** (A 3.77), describe "existence" (*bhava*) as comprising karma (the field), consciousness (the seed) and craving (the moisture). In psychological terms, this means that the existential world, the world of beings, arises because of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (we are the product of our environment). Each consciousness naturally evolves as it learns to fit in its environment: this is its "will to live" or "natural choice"[829] in the form of craving (*taṇhā*). These are our intentions (unwholesome and wholesome thoughts, acts and speech) that shape our existence and further evolution or devolution.

In due course, the Commentaries systematized early Buddhist cosmology as comprising **the 3 kinds of worlds**, that is, those of space (*okāsa,loka*), of beings (*satta,loka*), and of formations (*saṅkhāra,loka*).[830] Essentially, the world of space is the physical world, that is, the space-time continuum; the world of beings is the inhabited world comprising sentient life and organic life; and the world of formations is our mentally constructed virtual world that defines us.[831]

It is thus vital to understand why early Buddhism neither highlights the physical universe (the "created" world of theism) nor the "creatures" inhabiting it. Buddhism sees both the becoming and the beings as a cosmic process involving *form (matter), feeling, perception, formations* and *consciousness*—the 5 aggregates. This is evident from the first discourse, **the Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11).[832] The world of formations is what we have shaped against the "real world" out there. When we dismantle this fabricated virtual world of aggregates, we will then experience true reality and free ourselves from suffering.

12.5.6 Early Buddhist cosmology is clearly the most developed of religious cosmologies by way of being structured on the 3 trainings (*sikkha-t,taya*): *moral virtue, mental concentration and wisdom*. In terms of **moral ethics**, the Buddhist cosmos is unequally divided between the suffering states (*duggati:* the asuras, pretas, animals and hell-beings) and the heavenly states (*sugati,* 26 heavens), with an in-between state, that is the human world.[833] The suffering states are the 4 subhuman realms (the asura demons, the animals, the pretas and the hell-beings), that is, those who have habitually cultivated bad karma (*pāpa,kamma*) or unwholesome karma (*akusala,kamma*). The heavenly realms are the habitats of beings who have wholesomely cultivated their minds through **mental concentration** (*samādhi*).

The suffering states are so pervaded and overwhelmed with pain and suffering that the beings therein simply have neither the mental capacity nor the opportunity for any spiritual cultivation. The

---

[825] **Titth'āyatana S** (A 3.61,6/1:175 f), SD 6.8.

[826] **Bhava S 1 = Bhava S 2** (A 3.76 = 77), SD 23.13; D 33,1.10(13)/3:215; cf S 2:150,1 for specific heavenly realms. The terms *kāma,dhatu, rūpa,dhatu* and *arūpa,dhatu* are found throughout the 5 Nikāyas.

[827] The term *ti,loka* however is late canonical, appearing only in **Apadāna** (eg ThīAp 25.23/573, & passim). The term *kāma,loka* first appears in **Peṭakôpadesa** (Peṭk §810/198; Peṭk:Ñ 268 n810/2), an early paracanonical work on exegesis.

[828] DP dhātu (4).

[829] "Natural choice" in the sense of "choosing by its nature or instinct."

[830] Vism 7.37/204 f; DA 1:173 f; MA 1:397, 2:200.

[831] SD 15.7 (3.5.1 (2)); SD 17.6 (3.1.3.2).

[832] S 56.11,5/5:421 (SD 1.1).

[833] For a table of the 31 planes of existence, see DEB app 3 or SD 1.7 app.

heavenly states are so imbued with joy, light and space, that the beings there are simply not inclined to spiritual cultivation because they generally feel that they are already enjoying it.[834]

In between the suffering states and the heavenly realms, there is **the human realm**, where humans experience both pain and pleasure, and thus have the capacity for seeing these feelings as the bases for suffering. These bases for suffering are feelings (*vedanā*) arising from our sense-experiences and thoughts. Hence, even the absence of both pain and pleasure, that is, neutral feeling, can be the basis for suffering (due to boredom and ignorance). Insofar as we, as humans have the capacity for **wisdom**, and we direct that wisdom to seeing the impermanent or "process" nature of feelings, and wisely seeing how this relates to our karmic potential, our capacity for good and beyond, we will then gain freedom from suffering, that is, awakening.

12.5.7 Skillful means

12.5.7.1 Early Buddhism is a teaching that liberates us through **skillful means** (*upāya*), such as by way of the 2 truths (the conventional and the ultimate) [10.3 f] and the 2 languages (the relative and the absolute) [10.8]. To the ready and the wise, the Buddha teaches the Dharma using the absolute language, pointing directly to true reality: impermanence, suffering and nonself. To the neophyte and the worldly, the Buddha often brings the Dharma down to their level, as it were, using relative language, so that they can relate to the teaching.

The Buddha's use of **relative language** is well known in the teachings about the heavens and heavenly beings, like Sakra and Brahma Sahampati (we could view them as myths), who are converts from the ancient Vedic mythology. In the pre-Buddhist myths, Sakra was a violent warrior, conqueror of cities; following the Buddha he becomes a streamwinner.[835] Brahma was creator-god in the ancient myths, but became a non-returner under Kassapa Buddha (the buddha before ours).[836]

12.5.7.2 In fact, "above" the human world and the rest of the sense-world, are located the 6 levels of "Earth-bound" heavens populated by gods (*deva*) who often interact with the human world like the gods of old. Many of these gods are themselves from the pre-Buddhist pantheon, but now assume more morally virtuous roles than they did previously. One could imagine this as if early Christianity had converted the Greek gods so that they were less violent to each other and less contemptuous of humans!

12.5.8 Although early Buddhism has a well-developed cosmology, this was not a dogma but a skillful means for teaching the Dharma, and is closely related to the vision of the 3 trainings [12.5.6]. The suttas generally assume the traditional cosmology in early Buddhism. Due to early Buddhism's focus on mental training, and its openness to new conventional and scientific learning, Buddhists through the ages generally have no difficulty in adjusting to scientifically revised worldviews.

Here is a comparative table of the beliefs in God-religion (as expressed in mediaeval Western Christianity), modern science, and early Buddhist teachings:

---

[834] The exceptions are the "non-percipient beings" (*sañña,satta*) who are in a state of suspended animation, and the "pure abodes" (*suddh'āvāsa*), the exclusive dimensional realm of non-returners (*anāgāmi*) to work off their karma and attain nirvana. See **Viññāṇa-ṭ,ṭhiti** (SD 23.14, esp Table 3).

[835] SD 54.8 (1.2.4).

[836] **Ghaṭikāra S** (M 81), SD 49.3 (4.2.1).

God religion	**Science**	**Early Buddhism**
(1) God created the universe	the universe evolves	the universes evolves in cycles[837]
(2) God created Man	humans evolved	humanity is a cultivated state[838]
(3) the universe was geocentric[839]	the Earth is a sphere (globe)	a disc-world in a multiverse[840]
(4) a layered universe	the solar system and galaxies	numerous galactic systems[841]
(5) the mind is from God	the mind is brain-centred	the mind is unlocated [12.3.9]
(6) afterlife: heaven or hell	this is our only life	rebirths: evolution + devolution

   The belief in a geocentric universe is the belief that the Earth is at the centre of the universe with the Sun, planets, stars and galaxies orbiting around it. This was often imagined as being arranged in layers—with, for instance, the moon being fixed on a layer close to the Earth, with the planets on layers farther out, and so on. In western Europe, the Earth was known to be a sphere since the 5th cent BCE writings of Greek philosophers. There were also Christians who accepted this view (cf Schneider 2002), but the idea of a geocentric universe remained a Church dogma until Galileo.

   Modern science grows from centuries of observation, measuring, reasoning and updating. Where the Church is powerful, pioneer scientists risked ostracization, imprisonment, even torture and death (such as being burnt at the stake) for speaking against the Bible (that is, such dissent became a theo-logical issue).[842] Religion is put together by the powerful with an ulterior motive. Nothing could be more different than between the scientific method and religious dogma. The scientific method is proven by its success; religious dogma is proven by its failure.

12.6 HOW SCIENCE INFLUENCES RELIGION

12.6.1 The Scientific Revolution began in 1543 when Nicholas Copernicus published his heliocentric theory of the solar system, marking the dramatic beginning of European acceptance and rise of the scientific theory. By the time Charles Darwin published his theory of evolution—which effectively debunked the idea that God created Man and that the human race descended from an initial man and a woman cloned from him.

   The modern Church generally reacts with lukewarm opposition. The trend today is for the Church to project the catholic notion that it was never against science, but, on the contrary, promoted it, and had many Catholics who were great scientists. There is also the apologetic claim that God still created man with evolution as the means! We can thus happily see that even religion must undergo evolution in its own way, which promises a more life-affirming future.

   Although Buddhism has its own mythical view of the universe,[843] Buddhists, as a rule, have always accepted science, and show keen interest in new scientific developments. The 14th Dalai Lama of the Gelugpa order, declares that science and Buddhism share the same commitment:

---

[837] SD 57.10 (1.5) The world and its cycles.

[838] Evolution of life and humans: **Aggañña S** (D 27,10-29), SD 2.19; On psychological evolution: SD 57.10 (3).

[839] For a delightful scholarly account of Christianity and the "flat Earth" view, see Hutchings & Ungureanu, *Of Popes and Unicorns,* Oxford, 2021:49-93 "Flat wrong" (ch 3). For an insightful rebuttal to the modern tendency to read the Bible as being prophetic of modern science, see R J Schneider, "Does the Bible teach a spherical Earth?" in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 53,3 Sep 2002.

[840] SD 57.10 (1.5; 3.2.3.2).

[841] SD 57.10 (2.2).

[842] The Spanish Inquisition (fully, the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition) was a judicial institution that lasted between 1478 and 1834. Its ostensible purpose was to combat heresy in Spain, but, in practice, it was used to consolidate power in the monarchy of the newly unified Spanish kingdom. Its brutal methods led to widespread death and suffering.

[843] See **Early Buddhist cosmology**, SD 57.10.

My confidence in venturing into science lies in my basic belief that as in science so in Buddh-
ism, understanding the nature of reality is pursued by means of critical investigation: if scien-
tific analysis were conclusively to demonstrate certain claims in Buddhism to be false, then
we must accept the findings of science and abandon those claims."[844]

12.6.2 Religion, as we have seen in history, tends to become an effective means of social control by
the powerful elite (who define religion, including Buddhism), where there is a class system (like in
the feudal West) and schooling is limited to the higher classes in the social pyramid. Now that
accessible education and the free economy have largely levelled social classes,[845] religion has to
legitimize itself in new, even non-religious, ways. We are in fact seeing a growing secularization of
God-centred or god-based religion: religion is devolving closer to its skin and bones as **economic
religion** or a wealth gospel. Religion is, as a rule, overtly or covertly, about <u>power and wealth</u>.

Hence, we see many religions today projecting themselves in more sophisticated and subtle
ways, venturing into education (especially mission schools), charitable projects, social work, even
interfaith dialogues. Religion, as before, continues to attract and hold great wealth, such as in urban
and global Buddhism, where even monks and priests have set up their own trusts and foundations
for "charity."

True charities put the people first; a religious charity, even a Buddhist one, would understand-
ably put itself first; otherwise, why not be a fully secular charity run by experts and specialists? In a
world where those who lack basic amenities (like clean drinking water and proper food) still hugely
outnumber those who have them, even "guilt charities" are better, assuming that they are non-
charities.[846]

12.6.3 These examples are relatively worldly ones, and reflect how the world and worldliness have
transformed and shaped religion (including Buddhism) today. Perhaps we are seeing the slow but
sure demise of God-centred religion—beginning with the publications of Copernicus's *De revolu-
tionibus orbium coelestium* ("On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres," 1543)[847] and Charles Dar-
win's *On the Origin of Species* (1859).[848]

Buddhism, which is not God-centred, is today as good as dead as a religion or non-religion. It
clearly serves as a way of life for many clerics and priests, leaving their homes for greater things and
better lives. Many clerics tend to feverishly seek the salve of scholarship as more practical than nir-
vana, which can wait. Buddhists also tend to devoutly follow a revered teacher (than a teaching), as
in other religions; and to expertly disagree with one another without any deep or careful study of
the topic. Are these the hallmarks of a past-time for the leisurely, the affluent, the narcissist? Per-
haps their Buddhism may be described as an ideal diversion in crosstalk where they agree to dis-
agree while waiting for the next celebrity Buddhist to come to town.

Yet, the ancient and profound wealth of Buddhist wisdom continues to attract and transform
modern psychology, like the dawn of a new Renaissance. Some may see this amalgamating of Bud-

---

[844] T Gyatso, *The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality,* Morgan Road Books,
2005:2 f; See also D Lopez, Jr, *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed*. University of Chicago Press,
2009:136.

[845] This is not to say that the class system has been fully eradicated. In recent times, we read of Elon Musk's
immense wealth, and the coronation of Charles III as the British King, which affirm <u>class</u> in terms of *wealth* and
of *lineage*, not merit (or merit alone). Considering how most Buddhists regard monks (and nuns to a lesser
extent) as the wealthy elites (esp in Asia), even fear them, we must say that traditional and ethnic Buddhisms
are *socially structured religion*s (defined by wealth, titles and class).

[846] See eg F Menga & M K Goodman, "The High Priests of global development: Capitalism, religion and the
political economy of sacrifice in a celebrity-led water charity," *Development and Change* 53,4 July 2022:705-
735. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dech.12723.

[847] https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/copernicus/.

[848] https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsnr.2018.0015.

dhist **mindfulness** teachings and practices into modern psychology as a kind of professional looting of Buddhism now that "the Buddha is dead," and the Sangha (with the big S, not the noble sangha) in dissolute disarray.

Yet here I am writing this concerned essay on "Delusion and Experience" (as part of a 6-volume study of meditation in society). This is possible because of the Dharma legacy the Buddha has left us. The teachings are today freely and easily available, an open-source Dhamma, accessible to all who seek wisdom. Many are drawn to the excitement of the Buddhist crowds, but when we look deep enough, we see a "wise fellowship" spirit centering on the Buddha, his Dhamma and the noble sangha. Let us then gather together to commune and practise for the love of Dhamma and journey together.

12.6.4 So long as we are unawakened, we may in some way be reading Buddhism in aberrant ways, without any awareness at all. Even with our professionalism and cleverness, we may conjure Buddhism and egotism into a refined skill, a fine art. We may try to edit and plagiarize the Buddha, leaving ourself without proof, an unopened book. We are drawn, not to liberating truths, but to deviant views and unconscious reactions to Buddhism and life itself. We are ourself the most inter-esting subject of self-study; yet, this is the most neglected.

Within this conscious body, all the 3 aberrations—of perception, mind and view—mentioned above [12.2.1] are combined. These aberrations of *perception, mind, and view* impede spiritual development, and overcoming them is thus an important goal of wisdom training. The methods of developing direct knowledge described earlier all help us to correct these aberrations. The most effective way of executing this task is to carefully investigate the causes and conditions, and analyse in as much detail as possible the building blocks of conditioned reality.

Before we close this section, let us reflect on the goal of our quest, as stated by the Buddha in **the Vipallāsa Sutta** (A 4.49):

> **2** Bhikshus, there are **these 4 non-aberrations** [non-distortions] of perception, non-aberrations of thought, non-aberrations of view. What are the four?
> (1) Taking the impermanent as impermanent, bhikshus, is a non-aberration of per-ception, non-aberration of thought, non-aberration of view.
> (2) Taking the suffering as suffering, bhikshus, is a non-aberration of perception, non-aberration of thought, non-aberration of view.
> (3) Taking the nonself as nonself, bhikshus, is a non-aberration of perception, non-aberration of thought, non-aberration of view.
> (4) Taking the impure [unattractive] as impure, bhikshus, is a non-aberration of percep-tion, non-aberration of thought, non-aberration of view.
> These, bhikshus, are the 4 non-aberrations of perception, non-aberrations of thought, non-aberrations of view.   (A 4.49,2/2:52), SD 16.11

Not knowing this, much less understanding it, we are driven to debate and debunk others regarding perceptions, thoughts and views. We are like the Sphinx[849] who pose riddles to others, devouring them when they fail to unriddle them, they fail to solve the riddles. We ourselves do not understand the riddles; so we want to see others fooled like us. Now that's a real riddle.

---

[849] In Greek mythology, the sphinx is a treacherous being with the head of a woman, the haunches of a lion, and the wings of a large bird. She challenges those who encounter her to answer a riddle, and kills and eats them when they fail to give the right answer. In the myth of Oedipus, only he manages to outwit the Sphinx. See Martin Kallich, "Oedipus and the Sphinx," in (eds) Kallich, MacLeish & Schoenbohm, *Oedipus: Myth and Drama,* NY: Odyssey Press, 1968.

12.7 THE MIND: DISTRIBUTED AND EXTENDED

12.7.1 Distributed mind

At the close of §12.3.9, we mentioned the "**distributed mind,**"[850] also called "distributed cogni-tion" or "cooperative cognition."[851] Distributed cognition or Dcog is an approach to cognitive science research that was developed by cognitive anthropologist Edwin Hutchins (b 1948) during the 1990s.[852] Drawing on cognitive ethnography, Hutchins argues that mental representations, which cognitive science has held are traces existing within the individual brain, are actually distributed in sociocultural systems that constitute the tools with which we think and perceive the world.

On account of the distributed mind, for example, a native of the Caroline Islands[853] can perceive the sky and organize his perceptions of the constellations typical of his culture and use the position of the stars in the sky as a map to orient himself while sailing overnight in a canoe.[854] According to Hutchins, cognition involves *not only the brain but also external artifacts*, working in teams made up of several people, and cultural systems for interpreting reality (mythical, scientific, or otherwise).[855]

Hutchins' distributed cognition theory explains mental processes as the fundamental unit of analysis, that is, as "a collection of individuals and artifacts and their relations to each other in a particular work practice."[856]

12.7.2 Extended mind

Distributed cognition theory is part of the interdisciplinary field of embodied cognitive science, also called **embodied cognition**. Hutchins' distributed cognition theory influenced philosopher Andy Clark (b 1957), who shortly after proposed, along with philosopher David Chalmers (b 1966), their own version of the theory, calling it "**extended cognition**" or "extended mind."[857] They describe extended cognition as "active externalism, based on the active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes." For the matter of personal identity (and the philosophy of self), the "external mind thesis" (EMT) has the implication that parts of a person's identity can be determined by their environment.[858]

---

[850] Thanks to Matt Jenkins for mentioning this interesting and germane topic.

[851] Before the "distributed mind" theory, there is the "modular mind" theory. **Modularity of mind** is the notion that the mind may, at least in part, be composed of innate neural structures or mental modules which have distinct, established, and evolutionarily developed functions. "Module," however, is defined differently by different theorists. The modular mind is discussed by R Wright, in his *Why Buddhism is True*, Simon & Schus-ter, 2017:91-120 (chs 7-9). For refs, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modularity_of_mind. See also https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/modularity-mind/#WhatMentModu.

[852] E Hutchins, *Cognition in the Wild,* MIT Press, 1995. See also Rogers & Ellis, "Distributed cognition: An alternative framework for analysing and explaining collaborative working," *J of Information Technology* 9,2 1994: 119-128.

[853] The Caroline Islands are an archipelago of small islands in the west Pacific Ocean, to the north of New Guinea. It has been part of the Republic of Kiribati since the island nation's independence in 1979.

[854] Hutchins, 1995:65-93.

[855] Carl Sagan, in his documentary series *Cosmos* (1980 ch 7) talks about ancient cultures who believed that the night was some kind of shield punctured with holes and stars were light shining through them; and how the Bushmen of the Kalahari desert (Africa) who described the Milky Way as the "backbone of night," both of which he finds peculiarly beautiful. We have here cases of ancient extended minds seeing meaning and beauty in nature. (Thanks, Matt Jenkins, 22 May 2023)

[856] Y Rogers & J Ellis, "Distributed mind: An alternative framework for analysing and explaining working," *J of Information Technology* 9. 1994:119-128.

[857] A Clark & D Chalmers, "The Extended Mind*,*" *Analysis* 58,1 1998:7-19. For refs: Wikipedia, "The extended mind thesis": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extended_mind_thesis 15 May 2023.

[858] Clark & Chalmers, "The extended mind," op cit 1998.

In <u>philosophy of mind</u>, the EMT says that the mind does not exclusively reside in the brain or even the body, but extends into the physical world.[859] The EMT proposes that some objects in the external environment can be part of a cognitive process and in that way function as extensions of the mind itself. Examples of such objects are written calculations, a diary, or a PC; in general, it concerns objects that store information. The EMT considers the mind to encompass every level of cognition, including the physical level.

12.7.3 Early Buddhist theory of mind

The <u>distributed cognition</u> [12.7.1] and <u>extended mind theories</u> [12.7.2] present models of the mind which closely resemble that which the Buddha outlines in **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23) [10.1], that all that we can know is based on our senses and the mind. Our means of knowing are our physical senses and the mind. All that *there is* to know, and all that we *can* know are sense-objects and mind-objects.[860] The "knower" is our mind and the known our sense-experiences. In short, our mind comprises the experiences of these 6 sense-bases: those of 5 physical senses and the mind. This is the "all" (*sabba*) of **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23).

In a manner of speaking what we can know—the objects of our knowledge—are "out there" in the form of visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. <u>Thoughts</u> are also regarded as "external" sense-data since they arise with our perception (*saññā*) of these sense-objects: those of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Perception is how we *recognize* and "make sense" of our experiences.

The Pali term for "perception," **saññā,** comes from *saṁ* (like English *com-, con-* or *co-*)*,* meaning "together." This means that what we know is put *together* (*sañjānāti*) by the mind. This is the "distributed mind" we have spoken about [12.7.1]. All that we know of this world and share with the world is said to be **sammuti,** "common knowledge" or conventional mind. This is the "extended mind" we have mentioned [12.7.2]. Essentially, this is the early Buddhist **theory of mind**.[861]

12.7.4 The mind and other bodies

The 5 physical senses are, of course, our physical <u>body</u>: what we know through the body feeds our mind. The "body" (*kāya*), in the Buddhist theory of mind also refers to "other bodies," other people, other beings and our environment, that is nature and the universe. The body also includes **speech**, that is, language, and its related senses and sounds; in short, how we communicate with others through our "external" sense-bases.[862]

Both the body and speech are vital sources of knowledge, the contents of our mind, especially knowledge about others, and what we communicate with others, that is, how we "mind" others: how we <u>perceive</u> them as sense-experiences, and how we <u>conceive</u> them as thoughts. We progress when such bodily experiences and speech are moral and wholesome. We will face difficulties, danger, even destruction, when our actions and speech are immoral and unwholesome.

Early Buddhism does not see the mind as being located in the brain. The point is that we are not lonely self-centred brains living apart from other brains. Our minds arise by our on-going relationships with our parents, others and our ambience (society and nature): we are humanized (become human) by our minds, by other minds. We grow by relating to other minds. Learning means we learn to change our minds wholesomely and strategically in keeping with what we learn from the extended mind.

---

[859] Robert A Wilson, Lucia Foglia. "Embodied Cognition" 2011, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Fall 2011 ed. (1 June 2023).

[860] S 35.23/4:15 (SD 7.1).

[861] Further, see John D Dunne, "Reflexivity in Buddhist epistemology: Implications for cooperative cognition," Farjoun & Smith (eds), *Dualities, Dialectics, and Paradoxes in Organizational Life,* Oxford, 2018:82-105.

[862] See the 12 sense-bases (6 internal sense-bases + 6 external sense-objects): **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1; **Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137,4+5), SD 29.5; SD 26.1 (3.2); SD 56.11 (2.1.2).

We respect <u>great minds</u> because they are capable of giving us ideas and ways of becoming bet-ter individuals, of enriching society with better individuals, of making civilization possible and culture worthwhile. Hence, our minds are not just *extended,* but we are all <u>interconnected</u>, so that our lives are interlinked. Our actions—what we think, say and do—affect others, build them, free them, or chain them, destroy them.

Hence, the primary training in Buddhism is that of **moral conduct**: our acts and speech should not harm others in any way. **Life** is not just our body, but our interbeing with others, with our envi-ronment, with nature. <u>Our body</u> is *a conscious body*: it works with the mind that works with other minds. Hence, the Buddhist theory of mind is solidly founded on **moral virtue** (*sīla*). This is the mean-ing of a wholesome mind in a wholesome body for a wholesome society of minds and hearts.[863]

12.7.5 Nonself and the mind

12.7.5.1 The ideas of "distributed mind" and "extended mind" are profoundly helpful in high-lighting the teaching of **nonself** (*anattā*). We do not and cannot live alone (even in our solitude): the value of solitude is rooted in the idea that we are not alone, but we can be if we want to. We enjoy solitude, benefitting from it, because there are others so that we can be solitary. In our solitude, we see deeper into this interbeing, not of cloying attachment but a spacious togetherness. Heaven is space; space is heaven. Beyond heaven is the radiant space within us to which we awaken, as the Buddha does.

Hence, before we can awaken, we need to grow. Our life and mind grow and evolve through interacting with others and our environment. This means that there is always the presence of **change** (*anicca*): to see and experience change is to learn. To see how others change too and respect that is *selfless* moral virtue.

Moral virtue is *selfless* in the sense that we accept and value the fact that there are *other* indivi-duals or "selves." <u>Selflessness</u> is the basis for moral virtue; it is felt and expressed as lovingkindness and compassion. <u>Nonself</u> is the underlying reality that our lives are experientially interconnected in the manner explained in **the Sabba Sutta** [12.7.3].

12.7.5.2 When we see ourself as being "different" from others in terms of what we <u>have</u>, then we are *measuring* ourself against "others" in terms of <u>status</u>. This arouses a *state* of <u>unsatisfactori-ness</u> (*dukkha*): this is suffering. When we see how we are all interconnected by the universal values of *life, happiness, love, truth and peace*, then, we understand that despite our uniqueness, it is only meaningful and purposeful when we notice and accept the same reality that characterizes others, human and non-human, too.

This is a learning ambience that teaches the principle of **nonself**. We are distributed and extend-ed <u>states</u>, social and mental, not alienated *statuses*. It is our capacity for learning and our personal rate of growth that individuate us: we each must ourself learn about the self through other selves to become <u>true individuals</u>, noble ones (*ariya*).[864]

12.7.5.3 When do not see the close connection between our heads (ourself) and others, we are easily caught up with the notion that "we" are—"I am that"—that there is this abiding self, "I am; this is mine; this is myself." We are caught up respectively with craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and view (*diṭṭhi*). All these are rooted in **the self-view** (*atta,diṭṭhi*), the delusion that there is an abiding self.[865]

When we joyfully see ourself amongst the others, we no more see "self" and "other," but a mut-ual conditioning of deeds, speech and thoughts. This is our constructed world (*saṅkhāra,loka*). It is

---

[863] On moral virtue and social values, see the <u>golden rule</u>: SD 1.5 (1).
[864] For a related reading, see Daniel J Siegel, *Mind: A journey to the heart of being human,* W W Norton, 2016.
[865] For details, see **I: The nature of identity** SD 19.1; **Me: The nature of conceit** SD 19.2a; **Mine: The nature of craving** SD 19.3.

"constructed" in the sense that we built it together. When we realize *we* are the ones *doing* this, we should realize that we *can* and *must* do this rightly (with moral conduct), mindfully (with mind of calm and clarity) and wisely (with liberating wisdom).

This is, of course, the ideal (based on mental vision). However, very often most of us allow our bodies—what we see, hear, smell, taste or touch—define (and defile) our minds. We are thus spurred on by greed, hate and delusion. In time, we learn to moderate our greed and hate; we learn not to show them to others: we call this "class," "manners, "culture" and so on. But deep down, delusion lurks and simmers darkly, ready to rear its ugly head at any provocation. We simply need to know *delusion* better and overcome it.

13 Delusion and Abhidhamma

13.1 THE NATURE OF DELUSION

13.1.1 Delusion as a modern Buddhist term

The term **delusion** is used both as a countable noun, "a delusion," that is, a *case* of delusion, or as an uncountable noun, "delusion," an abstract term referring to the 3rd of the 3 unwholesome roots [5.4.3]. The countable noun, delusion, thus has the secular (psychological) sense, and the uncountable noun, delusion, is an early Buddhist term. Often, however, we will see the two usages overlapping, but we should be able to tease out the sense from the context.

An early modern psychological or clinical definition of **a delusion** is given by the APA *Dictionary of Psychology* as follows: "an often highly personal idea or belief system, not endorsed by one's culture or subculture, that is maintained with conviction in spite of irrationality or evidence to the contrary." (2nd ed, 2015: delusion).

In the later DSM editions, **a delusion** is a false belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained despite what almost everyone else believes, and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary. The belief is not one ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture or subculture.[866]

In this secular definition of *a delusion*, the exception "not endorsed by one's culture or subculture" should be well noted. It means that even when what has been defined as a "delusion" above (or as a "wrong view" in early Buddhism), when widely or culturally accepted as true or as a dogma, is regarded as "psychologically true." This distinction is significant since the effects of religious beliefs, even as dogmas, can have ambiguous effects on the believer, depending on how that believer thinks and behaves.

13.1.2 Delusion and ignorance

What then is **delusion** (*moha*) as an abstract noun? To understand what delusion is, we must first understand what **ignorance** (*avijjā;* Skt *avidyā*) is. Ignorance refers to "the fundamental not-knowing" of the 4 noble truths;[867] the ignorance that conditions the formations (*saṅkhārā*) and keeps samsara going;[868] ignorance is the root of unwholesome states.[869] Hence, its opposite is properly not *vijjā* (Skt *vidyā*), "(general) knowledge, science"; but *ñāṇa* (Skt *jñāna*), "(direct) knowledge, gnosis" [11.4.2]. *Aññāṇa* (Skt *ajñāna*) is sometimes used in a register of near-synonyms;[870] it usually means "(intellectual) ignorance."

Delusion (*moha*) is rooted in ignorance; hence, delusion and ignorance overlap significantly and function together in some way. Since delusion is *rooted* in ignorance, it has to do with our past, culminating as feelings in our present, feeding and shaping what we are. On account of feeling, there is craving, the root of the present extending into the future, culminating in decay-and-death.

Delusion functions as **cetasika 14**, the 1st of the 4 unwholesome universal mental factors [9.5.2]. Delusion is the unwholesome root (*akusala,mūla*) at our preconscious level (just before we think, speak or act). It is deeply rooted as the latent tendency (*anusaya*), ignorance, buried deep in our unconscious mind.[871] This means that although *greed, hatred* and *delusion* are the 3 unwholesome roots, it is only in **a mind overcome by delusion**—a mind that cannot see the nature of true reality—

---

[866] DSM 4 TR 2000:297-343; DSM 5 TR, 2022:102-139.

[867] S 56.11,5-8 (SD 1.1).

[868] Pm 1:162,18; SnA 585,12 f (Sn 1026).

[869] *Avijjā pubbaṅ,gamā akusalānaṁ dhammānaṁ samāpattiyā:* S 45.1/5.1 ≈A 10.105/5:214,10 = It 2.2.3/- 34,7; DhsA 250 f. *moho … sabba,akusalānaṁ mulan ti* (Vism 468).

[870] *Avijjā aññāṇā sammohā* (M 101,15/2:219,33), SD 18.4.

[871] For the early Buddhist understanding of *consciousness, preconscious and unconscious* (not to be confused with their psychodynamic counterparts), see SD 17.8a (6.1); on **The unconscious,** SD 17.8b (1).

that *greed* and *hatred* can arise. On the other hand, *delusion* being rooted in *ignorance* is more primal, that is, stronger and darker, more blinding than *greed* or *hatred*.[872]

13.1.3 Root of ignorance

The Sammā Diṭṭhi Sutta (M 9) records Sāriputta, when asked about the cause of <u>ignorance</u>, as answering that ignorance arises from <u>the influxes</u> (*āsava,samudayā avijjā,samudayo*), that is, sensual desire, existence and ignorance (from the past) [11.2.3]. When he is asked about the cause of the influxes, he replies that they arise from ignorance (in the present) (*avijjā,samudayā āsava,samudayo*). The causal relationship here is that of <u>time</u>: our past conditions our present, which, in this case, applies to ignorance.

Of <u>the 4 influxes</u> (*āsava*)—those of sensual desire, of existence, of views and of ignorance—the influx of ignorance (*avijjâsava*) is the most fundamental. Hence, Sāriputta's answer implies that the ignorance in our life arises from the ignorance of our previous existence. This, in fact, leads to an infinite regress, that is, a cycle of existence that is beginningless (*anādikaṁ*), since any instance of ignorance always depends on a preceding life. This is what samsara, the cycle of suffering means.[873]

13.1.4 Delusional belief

An ethical psychiatrist or clinical counsellor would not judge whether the client's beliefs are consistent with Buddhist right views or their religion's tenets of faith. In fact, there are some delusional beliefs that seem to allow a person to live a reasonably normal life. In that case, the counsellor has to work with the counselee to determine what really troubles the client.

However, when a client's problem is <u>religion-related</u>, we need to uncover what *ails the religion* (*or belief*) *that ails the client,* that is, there's something wrong in the teaching or its presentation that is troubling the client. For example, the client is troubled by the view that since merit can be "transferred" (a wrong teaching popular in Sinhalese Buddhism), a bad deed they have done is causing suffering to his parents.

Or, we need to discover what is the client's wrong view or negative attitude towards the religion or their perception of it. For example, the client thinks that he has a lustful thought, and has, by that thought broken a precept. Since this is a matter of teaching, he should be told that a mere intention that is not expressed by body or speech does not breach the 3rd precept. However, he should learn some mindfulness or meditation practice that can help correct or overcome the lustful thoughts.

Perhaps, the client's issue is a matter of faith (such as whether they should continue with their present religion or not, especially if it is a religious cult). In this case, if the counsellor lacks training in cult psychology, they should recommend the client to see a counsellor trained or experienced in the client's religion, or in cult psychology, or in comparative religion.

Due to the lack of universal agreement on what precisely constitutes a delusional belief, the key criteria used for psychiatric diagnosis are practical ones: A belief should be considered *delusional* if it is definitively bizarre; it is held with excessive devotion, especially if the believer is unwilling or unable to accept good arguments against it; and if the belief causes distress to the client.[874]

If a belief meets the criteria for a delusional belief, and yet causes no distress or even improves the believer's quality of life, then the counsellor may prefer to allow the belief to remain unexamined (for the time being). As with Freud's view of religion, even some untrue or unprovable beliefs may be helpful to the believer, and should only be removed if they can be replaced with good science or clear reason.[875]

---

[872] For details, see P Fuller, *The Notion of* diṭṭhi *in Theravāda Buddhism,* 2005:78-91 (ch 3).

[873] M 9,66-70/1:54 f (SD 11.14); see Abhs 8.10.

[874] See L Lees-Grossman, "Delusion," *Ency of Psychology and Religion,* Springer, 2010:217 f.

[875] Freud, in his *The Future of an Illusion* [1927] (ed J Strachey, Norton, 1961) held a negative view of religion as a means of social control of the lower classes, and highly held up "science and reason" which he hoped would replace religion in due course.

The rest of this section will discuss the wisdom or the folly of such an angelic tread.

13.1.5 Sin-belief vs non-identification

If we accept that "the sabbath is made for man,"[876] then the counsellor should work to ultimately empower and delight the client to wisely decide for themself which path to take thereafter. The darkest shadow in which a modern God-believer loses themself is the shadow of **sin-belief**.[877] Instead, counselling should work to develop the client's independence and decision-making.

Those who work to reject this shadow—Schopenhauer and Nietzsche tried—they stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back.[878] "Thus, despite his advocacy of a compassionate ethic, Schopenhauer could not cope with human beings and became a recluse who communicated only with his poodle, Atman. Nietzsche was a tenderhearted, lonely man, plagued by ill health, who was very different from his Superman. Eventually he went mad."[879]

Schopenhauer wrote profoundly; Nietzsche wrote aesthetically; but the truth and beauty are hidden by the darkness of words. The only way to be free of Sin is to free ourself from the Word, to transcend it all: to turn away from the darkness and move into the light of **self-reliance** [5.6.3]. Like a beautiful piece of music or poem, a work of art, we can only see it, hear it for ourself; no one else can do that for us. This is the Buddha's light:

The self is the master of the self;	for, who else can the master be?
With a self that is well-tamed, indeed,	one gains a master that is hard to find.
	(Dh 160; cf 104, 380)[880]

By oneself is evil done,	by oneself is one defiled.
By oneself is evil not done,	by oneself is one purified.
Purity or impurity depends on oneself.	No one purifies another.
	(Dh 165; cf 276) [5.6.3; 13.5.3]

The Maṅgala Sutta (Khp 5 = Sn 2.4), the discourse on blessings, gives a list of 37 blessings here and now, the first of which comes from "avoiding the foolish" (*asevanā ca bālānaṁ*): social distancing from the foolish and the negative. To be safe from negative religion and people, we practise social distancing; to be safe from the Sin pandemic, we keep spiritual distance from it. This is the beginning of the spirit of **renunciation** that pervades early Buddhism: it is called "non-identification" (*atam-mayatā*).[881] [13.3.3]

---

[876] A quote from the Christian Bible—Mark 2:27 (Mark 2:23-28; Matthew 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5); Isaiah 58:13—taken in an early Buddhist spirit meaning that religious observance (such as keeping the precepts) is meant to be self-development in a spiritual sense.

[877] The sin-belief is so disempowering that it leaves the believer completely powerless, even delusional, to the extent of destroying even their own kind, as attested in the pre-modern religious history of the God-driven West. After the Protestant Reformation began in 1517, wars disrupted the religious and political order in the Catholic countries of Europe, or Christendom. For an overview, fatality estimates, and refs, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_wars_of_religion. Refs: C J Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion, 1000-1650*, London: Greenwood, 2006; Shaw & Demy, *War and Religion: An ency of faith and conflict,* ABC-Clio, 2017; M Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts: A statistical ency of casualty and other figures, 1492-2015,* McFarland, 2017.

[878] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* [1886], tr J Norman, Cambridge, 2002:69 (no. 146).

[879] K Armstrong, *A History of God,* Knopf, 1993:358.

[880] See SD 27.3 (3.1) self-mastery; **Spiritual friendship: A textual study**, SD 34.1 (5.2).

[881] See **Atam,maya S** (A 6.104), SD 19.13(2.4); **Atam,mayatā,** SD 19.13.

13.1.6 The 6 wrong views

Socially distant from negative people, spiritually distant from negative teachings, we go on to avoid <u>wrong views</u> and cultivate **right views**. To set our mind on the right course of training, we examine what *wrong views* are, and we avoid them. The early Buddhist texts—such as **the Sāmañña,- phala Sutta** (D 2) and **the Sāleyyaka Sutta** (M 41)—consistently list <u>these </u>6 wrong views, thus:

> … he <u>holds wrong view</u>, with distorted vision,[882] thus:
> (1) "There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed.
> (2) There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.
> (3) There is no this world, there is no next world;
> (4) there is no mother, no father;
> (5) there are no spontaneously born beings.
> (6) There are no recluses or brahmins who, living rightly and practising rightly, having direct-
>   ly known and realized for themselves this world and the hereafter, proclaim them."
> <p align="right">(D 2,22/1:55), SD 8.10; (M 41,10(10)/1:287), SD 5.7</p>

Briefly, these 6 wrong views can be explained as follows:

(1) This 1st wrong view refers to the notion that there is no karmic fruit in **giving**, that there is no goodness in charity, such as giving and kindness. By giving to others, especially what they need for proper living, we show a respect for <u>life</u>, which is the spirit behind the 1st and 2nd precepts, of not killing and of not stealing. Basically, the spirit of <u>charity</u>: give what we can, take only what we need (in the spirit of moral virtue).[883]

(2) The 2nd wrong view is, of course, related to the 1st as mentioned. It refers to rejecting the truth and teaching on **karma**. Although, technically, we cannot properly "prove" that karma always works, its principle follows from that of <u>charity</u>, as explained in (1). We give with *a mind* of charity and lovingkindness: this is good karma. The giver is loved; he feels happy; the receiver benefits too. It is twice blessed: it blesses him that gives and him that takes. It reflects not only our respect for life, but for a life of quality, that is, our "appreciation of being."[884]

(3) "There is no this world" refers to the wrong view that we should live this life honouring or worshipping some powerful God, and then be rewarded with an eternal afterlife. This false view means that this world has no significance (hence, environment and ecology do not matter), that people do not matter, family, relatives and friends do not matter, since God matters above all and will reward us in the hereafter.

"There is no next world [no hereafter]" is the false notion that this is our only life, which we should live as best as we can, taking every advantage we can from anyone or anything. This means that good and bad are merely worldly conventions, and means nothing (so long as we do not get caught doing any wrong). Basically, this is a materialist view that once we die, there is no hereafter and no karma will follow us. This view may be deterministic (where our lives are all fixed or fated,) or amoral (where good and bad do not matter, but only what benefits us personally).[885]

---

[882] "He holds wrong view … ," *micchā,diṭṭhi kho pana hotu viparita,dassano.*
[883] MA 2:332 = DA 165; cf D 1:55; M 1:401, 515; S 3:206. On <u>giving</u>, **Dān'ānisaṁsa S** (A 5.35), SD 45.3. On <u>the values</u> behind the 5 precepts, see SD 1.5 (2) Table.
[884] See **Karma**, SD 18.1.
[885] On the problem of associating these 2 differing views to the sectarian teacher, Ajita Kesambala, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,22-24/1:55 f), SD 8.10. Deeds done in such a deterministic system would not carry over into the afterlife, even if this view concedes to a hereafter.

(4) "There is no father, no mother," reflects the wrong view that we owe our parents nothing,[886] even though they have nurtured us with love and humanity in our early formative years.[887] On the wholesome side, it is an affirmation of the family as the basis of a good society with proper human relationships and harmonious distribution of wealth. Even when our parents have been abusive, we should seek to understand their circumstances in our freedom and wisdom: we forgive ourselves, we accept them as they are.[888]

(5) "There are no spontaneously born beings (*opapātika*)." *Opapātika* is a term for the rebirth of a non-returner in the pure abodes,[889] but here also refers to all divine and subhuman beings, except animals*.* This wrong view is essentially a rejection of rebirth, implying that this is our only life, a kind of materialism. This wrong view is an extension of (3).[890]

(6) This 6th and last wrong view is the rejection of **the Buddha** as the awakened one, liberated by his own efforts, who has attained nirvana, and who teaches us that very same path to awakening. Broadly, it is the negative notion that awakening is neither possible nor are there any arhats, or those who have attained or can attain the path of awakening. Those with such wrong views are likely to see Buddhism as merely some kind of worldly or academic learning, even a secular system, from which they can profit in a material way. In short, awakening is not possible, or not possible any more, perhaps until the next Buddha comes, and so on.[891]

13.2 DELUSION AS A MENTAL FACTOR (*CETASIKA*)

13.2.1 Throughout the early Buddhist texts, **delusion** is listed as the 3rd of the 3 unwholesome roots of karma. In the Abhidhamma list of the 52 mental factors (*cetasika*), **delusion** is listed as number 14, that is, the 1st of the 4 unwholesome universals, meaning that it is present in all bad or evil actions but absent from a wholesome action (thought, speech or action) [Table 9.1].

Technically, every unwholesome state with delusion will also have these 3 unwholesome universals, that is, *lack of moral shame, lack of moral fear*, and *mental restlessness* [items 15-17, Table 9.1]. Further, this unwholesome state may also be attended by any one or more of these unwholesome occasionals: greed, wrong view, conceit, hatred, envy, avarice, worry, sloth, torpor, or doubt [Table 9.1].

13.2.2 Citta and cetasikas

The **cetasikas** are "mental factors" or mental concomitants, that is, states or phenomena that occur concurrently with a citta or mind-moment (also called "consciousness"). They assist the citta by executing specific tasks in the cognitive process. The mental factors cannot arise without citta, nor can citta arise completely without any mental factors. However, though the two are functionally interdependent, citta is regarded as primary because the mental factors help in the cognition of the object depending upon citta, which is the principal cognitive element.

The relationship between citta and its cetasikas is compared to that between a king and his retinue. Although we may say "the king is coming," he does not, as a rule, come alone, but is always

---

[886] Comys explain "there is no fruit of good or of bad behaviour (towards them)" (MA 2:332 = DA 1:165).
[887] **Sigal'ovāda S** (D 31,27 f), SD 4.1. Parents instill humanity in their children: SD 21.6 (1.2.2); also **Kataññū Kata,vedī S** (A 2.11.2), SD 3.1(1.4.4).
[888] On forgiving those who have hurt us: SD 38.5 (4.3).
[889] On the non-returner (*anāggāmi*), see SD 10.16 (1.6.7, 13). On the pure abodes (*suddh'āvāsa*), see SD 10.16 (13.1.6); SD 23.14 (Table 3).
[890] See **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,2.28/1:27), SD 25; cf **Mahāli S** (D 6,13/1:156), SD 53.4.
[891] Comy: This last statement is, in the comy tradition, the view that there are no "all-knowing" (*sabbaññū*) Buddhas (MA 2:322), in other words, the view that awakening is impossible.

accompanied by his retinue. Similarly, whenever a citta arises, it never arises alone but always accompanied by its retinue of cetasikas.[892]

13.2.3 Association and inclusion

In the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha, the cetasikas are examined in 2 complementary ways: by way of association or by way of inclusion. **The association method** (*sampayoga,naya*) takes the mental factors as the basis of inquiry and seeks to determine which types of citta each mental factor is associated with (Abhs 2.10-17). **The method of inclusion or combination** (*saṅgaha,naya*) takes the citta as primary and seeks to determine, for each type of citta, which mental factors are combined within it (Abhs 2.18-29).

A deeper study is best pursued with an experienced Abhidhamma teacher who presents it in the light of the suttas. Unlike sutta study, Abhidhamma study, no matter how advanced or profound, is nevertheless incomplete because it is still *theoretical.* Ideally, there should be a comparative study with modern neuroscience or cognitive psychology, along with practical meditation related to such broad-based and engaging study.

13.3 UNWHOLESOME OR PATHOLOGICAL?

13.3.1 From the start, it is important to distinguish the terms "unwholesome" (*akusala*) and "pathological" (**rogya*). While **unwholesome** is an early Buddhist term referring to the negative moral nature of an act or its fruit, **pathological** is a modern secular term referring to the state of the body or mind or both from *the psychomedical perspective*. In this study, only those issues rooted in the "unwholesome" are of interest, especially when they are also *pathological.* However, when the issue is purely *pathological,* the condition may instead need the attention of the health specialist (or those with the power of spiritual healing).[893]

When is a belief or view unwholesome? The Buddhist answer is a simple one: A belief or view is unwholesome when it is motivated by delusion (when the intention is deluded). Earlier, we have noted various defilements crowding an unwholesome citta [13.2.1], but the presence of delusion (*moha*) alone is sufficient to define that citta as being unwholesome, thus karmically negative in potential. Of the 3 unwholesome roots—greed, hatred and delusion—delusion is the most insidious, and hence deserves a closer study, both as an unwholesome root and in a pathological perspective.

13.3.2 When is a delusion pathological?
Lisa Bortolotti, in her entry, "Delusion," in *the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,*[894] not only gives a helpful catalogue of the types of delusion, but also the helpful criteria for identifying possible conditions that make delusions pathological, as follows (adapted to reflect a Buddhist or religious perspective):

(1) Delusions are pathological because they appear as what they are not. They resemble beliefs but are not beliefs, because they do not share some of the core features of beliefs, such as action guidance. They are more deeply **irrational** than or qualitatively different from irrational beliefs.[895]

---

[892] DhsA 67; DhsA:R 90.

[893] By "spiritual healing" I mean a pure Buddhist (non-medical) intervention, such as those described in the 3 **Gilāna S** (S 46.14-16), concerning the illness of Mahā Kassapa, Mahā Moggallāna and the Buddha respectively (SD 46.11-13).

[894] L Bortolotti, "Delusion," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* 2009*.* Delusion (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy/Fall 2010 Edition).

[895] For a discussion of aspects of this view, see **G Currie & J Jureidini**, "Delusions, rationality, empathy," *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology* 8,2-3 2001:159-162f; **K Frankish**, "Delusions: A two-level framework," in (edd) Broome & Bortolotti, *Psychiatry as Cognitive Neuroscience: Philosophical Perspectives*, Oxford, 2009: 269-284.

(2) Delusions are pathological not because people describe their experience inaccurately or differently, but because they are signs that they <u>are living a virtual reality</u>, in a private, limited world of their own creation, and do not share even fundamental views and ways with others around them.[896]

(3) Delusions are pathological because they are puzzling and unsettling—in so far as <u>they defy folk-psychological expectations</u>[897]—and this feature also makes them less amenable to reasoning and interpretation. Often, when we do not know a person well enough, and that person says something that we may perceive as being delusional. For example, someone says, "I am an arhat." We may regard the person as being deluded.[898] The point is that we may be right, but for different reasons. We have not carefully examined the reasons for the person making such a statement.[899]

(4) Delusions are pathological because (differently from many false and irrational beliefs) they <u>negatively affect a person's well-being</u> in a number of ways by draining most of their cognitive resources, impairing social functioning, and causing social isolation and withdrawal.[900]

(5) Delusions are pathological because of their **aetiology** (causes and conditions). Differently from other beliefs, they are produced by <u>mental mechanisms that are dysfunctional or defective</u>. For instance, the process of their formation may be characterized by aberrant perception, aberrant thinking and reasoning, and aberrant view and bias; even cognitive deficits. [12.2.1]

13.3.3 Analysis of pathological delusion [Referring to 13.3.2]

The 1st condition is more complicated than it appears since it is difficult, even impossible, to know whether the irrationality is simply that of unfounded "common beliefs" that are resistant to change (such as superstitions or beliefs in alien abductions), or it is the irrationality of delusions. Researchers have compiled a huge amount and range of evidence that delusional symptoms are widespread in the "normal" population, suggesting that it is oversimplistic to simply see irrational delusions as being clearly cut between the "normal" and the pathological.[901]

The 2nd condition may be plausible for some delusions that appear to defy common sense and are accompanied by a certain type of heightened experience. However, it does not seem to apply equally well to more mundane delusions such as jealousy or feeling of being persecuted.

The same applies to **the 3rd condition**, where we may not see the great difficulty of explaining or predicting the behaviour of a person who is attributed with a delusion that is a belief—such as the false notion that "everyone is a sinner," or even the ethnic belief that "all Chinese are hard-work-

---

[896] For different versions of this view, see **G L Stephens & G Graham**, "Reconceiving delusions," *International Review of Psychiatry* 16,3 2004:236-241; "The delusional stance," in (edd) M Cheung Chung, W Fulford, G Graham, *Reconceiving Schizophrenia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006:193-216; **L Sass**, *The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber, and the Schizophrenic, Mind*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994; **S Gallagher,** "Delusional realities," in (edd) Broome & Bortolotti, *Psychiatry as Cognitive Neuroscience: Philosophical Perspectives*, Oxford, 2009:245-268; **J Rhodes & R Gipps**, "Delusions, certainty, and the background," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 15,4 2008: 295-310.

[897] On "folk psychology," see SD 60.1d (7.4.2.1).

[898] For an interesting study, see the case of "the arahant" D M Ingram: SD 60.1f (***).

[899] This idea is explored in **J Campbell**, "Rationality, meaning and the analysis of delusion," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* 8,2-3 2001:89-100.

[900] For a multidimensional account of delusions, see **P A Garety & D Freeman**, "Cognitive approaches to delusions: A critical review of theories and evidence," *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* 38 1999:113-154; for a harm-related account of mental illness in general, see **D Bolton**, *What is Mental Disorder?* Oxford, 2008.

[901] See **B A Maher**, "Delusional thinking and perceptual disorder," *Journal of Individual Psychology* 30 1974: 98-113; **L C Johns & J van Os**, "The continuity of psychotic experiences in the general population," *Clinical Psychology Review* 21,8 1965:1125-1141; **R Bentall**, "The paranoid self," in (edd) Kircher & David, *The Self in Neuroscience and Psychiatry*, Cambridge, 2003:293-318.

ing." We may notice *some* of the person's views and conduct, but it is difficult to know the correct reasons or conditions for them. We may not be aware of our own biases or inabilities, not to mention the nature and levels of our own delusions.

The **4ᵗʰ condition** is very attractive because it highlights the distinction between delusions and irrational beliefs in terms of their noticeable effects on other aspects of a person's mental condition and social life. However, even the notions of well-being and harm in accounts of delusions can be problematic, since it is possible for some people to live seemingly better with their delusion than when they do not have the delusion. For example, a long-time famous TV broadcaster or celebrity teacher would find it difficult to start accepting that they have been mentally unwell, which can then cause low self-esteem bringing on depression and suicidal thoughts.

In **the 5ᵗʰ condition**, we need to examine the explanations we get to the question why pathological delusions need to be further and more carefully explored. So far, the professional consensus seems to be that biases affect normal reasoning, but seems absent in people with delusions. The deluded do not see their own biases; not as easily as the mentally lucid anyway. Hence, the deluded are less likely to correct their biases, or understand why these biases have arisen in the first place. Perceptual aberrations can explain the formation of some delusions, but are not always the core-factor in the formation of all delusions.

13.3.4 The professionals understand the difficulties in defining or evaluating the formation of beliefs from which delusions arise. There is also no agreement as to whether a delusion situation is a permanent deficit or a passing performance error. Thus, aetiological considerations cannot support a categorical distinction between pathological beliefs and normal ones.

The last but not the least consideration is that of the modern professional notion of delusions and the Buddhist teaching of personal analysis and management of wrong views. While a professional psychologist (broadly speaking) sees themselves as being "qualified" or "empowered" to analyse and treat others, they may not be aware or may be unable to resolve their own personal issues which may have driven them to take up psychology in the first place. According to early Buddhist psychology, we should each ideally master the Buddha's teachings and minding methods for ourself so that we are the resident expert in our own personal difficulties. In this sense, we are our first and foremost client, and our best regular therapist. [13.1.5]

13.4 TYPES OF DELUSION

13.4.0 This section summarizes recent discussions (around the last 20 years or so) on the types of delusions and theoretical approaches to delusion by mind specialists like Lisa Bortolotti, Deborah Rosch Eifert, Jennifer Hahn, Ryan McKay and others. Some familiarity with this basic taxonomy is helpful for our understanding and discussion of the early Buddhist psychology of delusion and the healthy mind in the modern context. In some places, the typology has been adapted to reflect the Buddhist context, especially the mental health of Buddhists and meditation practitioners.[902]

I have put all these ideas together also as a reflection on impermanence, fully well understanding that many of them would be revised, or become dated. Psychology is now a growing family of diverse sub-disciplines focused on the study of the mind, its functions and dysfunctions, their healing and health, and the range of methods available for all these. We are also seeing modern psychology taking over and updating some of the best teachings of Buddhism (especially early Buddhism) and, in significant ways, giving us a better understanding of how Buddhism has come to function as a delusions for most of us.

---

[902] L Bortolotti, "Delusion," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* 2009 (sections 2.2 f). Delusion (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy/Fall 2010 Edition); **D R Eifert**, "Delusional disorder," *Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders,* 2003; **J Hahn**, "Delusions," *Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders,* 2003; **Ryan McKay**, Delusion," *Ency of the Mind,* (ed) H Pashler, Sage, 2013:230-232.

One of my concerns about such an essay as this is: Will it be dated by the next generation (like the growing piles of the learned papers entombed in the libraries. Perhaps the notion of being "dated" is itself a fad since there is always something we can help in our learning process as we age. On the other hand, we are now better informed about early Buddhism than ever before, and the scholars are becoming even more insightful with every generation of Buddhism specialists.

In learning and growing, our past should have <u>humanized</u> us (to know what our mistakes were); in the present, we should keep ourselves <u>human</u>, doing what is right and good; then we have a future, that is, transcending even our human limitations for deeper self-understanding and self-realization. For the moment, the learning continues and must deepen and widen.

13.4.1 Delusion: bizarre or non-bizarre

The types of delusions, according to modern psychotherapy, are as follows:

(1) bizarre or non-bizarre   [13.4.1]
(2) functional or organic   [13.4.2]
(3) genetic or biological   [13.4.3]
(4) motivated or defensive   [13.4.4]
(5) monothematic or polythematic   [13.4.5]
(6) circumscribed or elaborated   [13.4.6]
(7) primary or secondary   [13.4.7]

While we have explored the complexities of defining delusion in a traditional psychological or a folk psychological context [12 f], for our purposes we can consider **a delusion** (singular countable) to be an irrational or false belief, held with a high level of conviction, that is resistant to change even when the delusional person is exposed to reality, reason or proof that contradicts the belief. It is pathological (psychologically unhealthy) or "**bizarre**"[903] compared to **an overvalued idea**, that is, an unreasonable, sustained belief that is held with less than delusional intensity (meaning that the person may acknowledge, to some degree, that the belief may be false). The belief—according to modern psychology—is not accounted for by the person's cultural or religious background.

Early Buddhism, however, has a broader definition of **delusion** (mostly in the uncountable form) which includes *any kind of conditioning* (meaning past experiences), especially culture and religion, including our views of Buddhism itself. Hence, we may take it that while psychology studies mostly *others*, in Buddhism we study mostly <u>ourselves</u>. Hence, informed Buddhists would take all experiences by an unawakened mind as provisional truths—useful for the moment—until overtaken by a clearer, more liberating truth.

Hence, to the unawakened mind, all views that do not contradict the Dharma (the teaching and reality) are **non-bizarre delusions**. Such delusions are considered to be plausible; that is, there is a possibility that what the person believes to be true could actually be true to some extent. A non-bizarre delusion, for example, may be that we conclude that all our recent failures must be due to bad karma (without considering various *present conditions*—such as amount of effort made, one's qualities and qualifications, the socioeconomic conditions—bringing about those failures).

Furthermore, in terms of <u>non-bizarre delusions</u>, our delusional states experience **hallucinations**[904] but far less frequently than do those with <u>schizophrenia</u>[905] or <u>schizoaffective disorder</u>.[906] Unawakened

---

[903] **A bizarre delusion is** a belief that is clearly fantastic and implausible but is nonetheless maintained with conviction. For example, an individual with schizophrenia may believe that external forces are removing the thoughts from their mind (see "thought withdrawal," APA *Dict of Psychology* 2015). See SD 60.1f (5.4.7.2 (4)).

[904] **A hallucination** is a false sensory perception, that is, delusional states that are experienced with a false sense of reality. One thinks one "hears" sounds or "sees" people or objects that are not present. Hallucinations can also affect the senses of smell, taste and touch. Taking unreal events experienced during those delusional states for real can be experienced as threatening by the patient, or create dangers as they react to a stimulus

minds, as a rule, hallucinate less than schizophrenic minds. In either case, we can be trained to see a hallucination for what it is, and so not be driven on by it. When we learn to habitually mange halluci-nations in this manner, we may be said to have a "beautiful mind."[907]

13.4.2 Functional or organic

Delusions used to be divided into *functional* and *organic*. This distinction is now generally seen as obsolete, at least in its original form. A delusion was called "organic" when it was the result of brain damage (usually due to injuries affecting the right cerebral hemisphere). A delusion was called "functional" when it had no known organic cause and was explained primarily in terms of psycho-dynamic or motivational factors.

Mind experts know better now, with the development of neuropsychiatry, that the 2 categories overlap. Experts view that there is a "biological" basis for all types of delusions, but that in some cases it has not been exactly identified yet. Some studies reported very little difference between the phenomenology and the symptomatology of delusions that were once divided into functional and organic.[908]

13.4.3 Genetic or biological

When we, in a Buddhist discussion, speak of "delusion," we are referring to the broad sense of the term, especially as the third of the 3 unwholesome roots, that is, greed, hate and delusion; that is, as a rule, in connection with wrong views arising from aberrant thinking [12.2]. However, when we speak of "a delusion," we usually mean a fixation to a certain view of things or a habit. There are of course potential risks when the believer takes such a delusion to be real and acts on it.

People with a delusional disorder, such as a schizophrenic, have a greater likelihood of delusions or paranoia. A number of studies comparing the activity of different regions of the brain in delusion-al and non-delusional research participants yielded data on differences in the functioning of their brains. These differences in brain activity suggest that persons with delusions tend to react as if threatening conditions are consistently present. Non-delusional persons only show such patterns when real threats are actually perceived.

13.4.4 Motivated or defensive

Close relatives of persons with delusional disorder have greater likelihood of themselves having an ongoing delusional disorder or paranoid personality traits. Similarly, people who are predisposed

---

which is not there. Usually, there is a strong personal concern connected with the hallucination experienced, giving it a personal meaning, purpose, message or even directives to act upon. The hallucination is experienced to be as real as an apple in one's hand. Usually, there is no means by which to distinguish a hallucination from true reality despite its highly unusual and often bizarre character. Even as the hallucination is a product of one's own disturbed mind, the patient realizes the hallucination as something alien to them. They are like daydreams and are events experienced parallel or concurrent to and while living true reality. My thanks to Dr Vera Ries (health care) of Germany.

[905] **Schizophrenia** a psychotic disorder characterized by disturbances in thinking (cognition), emotional re-sponsiveness, and behavior, with an age of onset typically between the late teens and mid-30s. **Schizoaffective disorder** is an uninterrupted illness featuring at some time a major depressive episode, manic episode, or mixed episode concurrently with characteristic symptoms of schizophrenia (eg, delusions, hallucinations, dis-organized speech, catatonic behavior) and, in the same period, delusions or hallucinations for at least 2 weeks in the absence of prominent mood symptoms. (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed, text revision, 2000 = DSM-IV-TR)

[906] D R Eifert, "Delusional disorder," *Gale Ency of Mental Disorders,* 2003:269.

[907] This phrase comes from "Beautiful Mind" (2001), an American biographical drama film directed by Ron Howard.

[908] E Johnstone et al, "Phenomenology of organic and functional psychoses and the overlap between them," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 153 1988:770-776.

to keeping up appearances or high self-esteem may suffer ongoing a delusional disorder when coping becomes a challenge. They may view others as the cause of their personal difficulties. Hence, they are likely to display unconscious defences.[909] There are similarities in the apparent features of self-decep-tion and motivated delusions [13.6]—both conditions typically involve beliefs that are poorly support-ed by evidence and that conflict with our other beliefs or attitudes, or with reality. Moreover, in both cases, the beliefs are strongly resistant to counterevidence.

Further similarities are seen in the function of the beliefs: they serve to either preserve positive emotions, deny unpleasant or disturbing facts, or satisfy some other pressing psychological need. Given what we know about self-deception and delusion, there are at least 2 features that distinguish the one from the other:

(1) while self-deception beliefs are always *motivated*, not all delusional beliefs are motivated;
(2) delusions, as symptoms of psychiatric disorders, are accompanied by other symptoms, and are typically impair functioning, cases of self-deception are common in normal people.[910]

13.4.5 Monothematic or polythematic

In persecutory delusions, people believe that they are followed and treated with hostility, and that others want to harm them. In delusions of mirrored-self misidentification, people usually still have the capacity to recognize images in the mirror as reflections, but do not recognize their own face reflected in the mirror and think that there is a person in the mirror, a stranger who looks very much like they do.

In either case, the delusion is resistant to counterevidence and has pervasive effects on one's life. One of the differences is that persecutory delusions are polythematic, that is, they have more than one theme, where the themes can be interrelated.

Delusions of mirrored-self misidentification are monothematic, and apart from the content of delusion itself, no other (unrelated) bizarre belief needs to be reported by the same person.

Other examples of monothematic delusions often referred to in the philosophical literature are and Cotard. The Capgras delusion[911] involves the belief that a dear one (a close relative or the spouse) has been replaced by an impostor. The Cotard delusion[912] involves the belief that one is dead or disembodied.[913]

Other examples of polythematic delusions are the belief that one is a genius but is often mis-understood by others (grandeur), and the belief that one is loved by a famous or powerful person (erotomania).

---

[909] On defence mechanisms, see **(Aṭṭhaka) Khaluṅka S** (A 8.14) + SD 7.9 (3).

[910] Further see Bortolotti & Mameli, "Self-deception, delusion and the boundaries of folk psychology," *Hum-ana Mente* 5,20 2012:207-210 f.

[911] "New Amsterdam" TV series (2021) season 3, episode 4, "This is All I need," has a moving subplot where Linus Wilding's (Griffin Santopietro) mother, Yana (Paula Jon DeRose), has Capgras syndrome. Iggy (the psychi-atrist) (Tyler Labine) tells Linus, "Your mother is never going to recognize you again … " Their story climaxes with Linus acting as if his mother had died: he is alone and knows not what to do. He forges a bond with his "new" mom (who has "lost" her son). Slowly, she accepts him to start a new type of relationship.

[912] The movie "Pretty Dead" (2013) chronicles the last days of Regina Stevens (Carly Oates), a young doctor who after killing and cannibalizing several men and being found unfit for trial in 2007, was diagnosed with Co-tard's syndrome—a rare dissociative disorder also known as "Walking Corpse Disease." The movie is composed entirely of recovered footage from the evidence archives of the 2009 US District Court case against the Califor-nia State Health Dept for the return of Regina's body to her family.

[913] Disembodied situations can also occur in otherwise healthy persons under extreme stress situations, severe exhaustion and sleep deprivation.

13.4.6 Circumscribed and elaborated

Monothematic delusions [13.4.5] tend to be <u>circumscribed</u> whereas polythematic delusions tend to be <u>elaborated</u>.[914] The distinction between circumscribed and elaborated delusions is relevant to the level of integration between delusions and a person's other intentional states and to the extent to which the person's endorsement of the delusion is expressed in verbal reports and observable behavior.

Delusions may be more or less *circumscribed*—when they do not lead to the formation of other intentional states whose content is significantly related to the content of the delusion, nor have pervasive effects on the behavior of the person with the delusion. For instance, a person with Capgras syndrome who believes that his wife has been substituted by an impostor, but is not concerned with her absence and does not look for her: he appears to have <u>a circumscribed delusion</u>.

A delusion can be *elaborated*, when the person with the delusion shows effects from the delusional state and forms other beliefs related to the delusion. For instance, a person with Capgras can develop paranoid thoughts related to the delusion, claiming that the impostor has evil intentions and will likely cause harm.

13.4.7 Primary and secondary

Depending on whether delusions are reported on the basis of some reasons, and defended with arguments, delusions can be described as <u>primary</u> or <u>secondary</u>. The traditional way of distinguishing *primary* from *secondary* delusions relied on the notion that primary delusions "arise out of nowhere."[915] This traditional distinction has been found problematic, because it is difficult to establish whether there are antecedents of the delusion in a person's line of reasoning, and for other methodological and clinical reasons.[916]

New ways of the distinction have been proposed in recent philosophical literature on delusions, where we should distinguish between people who can endorse the content of their delusions with reasons, and people who cannot.[917] This can clearly be problematic, as it might simply be a direct function of the education or training received, and our bias that the experiences and views of a "better educated" person is itself more convincing than that of one less educated. Moreover, the well-educated may be able to reason with such a bizarre aptitude as to sound convincing. Yet the point remains that they may have a mental problem.

13.5 Delusion and irrationality

13.5.1 Delusions are irrational beliefs when they are not corrected, or even abandoned, in the face of counter-evidence. However, in <u>self-deception</u>, too, people either are unaware of available evidence or unwilling to accept it. Hence, there is a close link or continuity between delusions and self-deceptions. In short, if folk psychology allows for beliefs to arise to satisfy a desire, and for beliefs that are poorly supported by evidence, then it can also account for delusions.[918]

---

[914] For more detailed explanation and examples, see **M Davies & M Coltheart**, "Introduction," in (edd) Coltheart & Davies, *Pathologies of Belief*, Blackwell, 2000:1-46.

[915] Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology* [1923, 1946] tr Hoenig & Hamilton, Manchester & Chicago, 1963: "Primary delusions" (98 f, passim), but no mention of "nowhere to be found" (Bortolotti, 2009: SEP §2.2.4)

[916] Eg, Miller & Karoni, "The cognitive psychology of delusions: A review," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 10 1996:489.

[917] Eg **Bortolotti & Broome** talk about authored and unauthored delusions: "Delusional beliefs and reason giving," *Philosophical Psychology* 21,3 2008:1-21; **Aimola Davies & Davies** distinguish between pathologies of belief and pathological beliefs on similar lines: "Explaining pathologies of belief," in (edd) Broome & Bortolotti, *Psychiatry as Cognitive Neuroscience: Philosophical Perspectives*, Oxford, 2009:285-326.

[918] Further, see **M P Levine**, "No-self, real self, ignorance and self-deception: Does self-deception require a self?" *Asian Philosophy* 8,2 1998:106-109, and **L Bortolotti & M Mameli,** "Self-deception, delusion and the

There is thus some significant level of <u>self-deception</u> in a delusion, especially when the person is unaware that it *is* a delusion. In Buddhist terms, the unconscious (latent tendencies) [5.5.2] is pulling the strings here. We can understand this further by examining how **self-deception** is brought about conceptually and psychologically. **Conceptually**, there is a "negative illusion" (as the deluded sees it), that is, some <u>self-fulfilling beliefs</u>. **Psychologically**, there is the "blissful ignorance," that is, not knowing the real issues we are facing.

Thus, when we are deluded or self-deceived, we are caught in an internal tension where our weaknesses feed our anxiety, fear and other negative emotions. On a happy note, if conceptually it is a "positive illusion," such as identifying with a wholesome role model (even if this were Superman, a great historical person, or some successful sportsman), then, we are cultivating their wholesome qualities, we may grow in emotional maturity—even if this is a defence mechanism (a positive one). It is even more helpful when we realize and accept that we have made it all up, and we are feeling better for it.[919]

13.5.2 A delusion, then, is a belief that drives us to action despite evidence or truth (such as Buddhist teachings) that do not support it. What we have learned here can now be instructively applied to a number of **ethnic Buddhist practices** such as "<u>transference of merit</u>." Some Buddhist priests (especially the Sinhalese secular priests) claim that lay devotees giving them food and cash donations in the name of the dead will transfer these things as "merits" for the dead who, it seems, will benefit. Like marketing executives creating in the public a <u>desire</u> for their product, these priests are creating a <u>belief</u> that material things can be "transferred" to the dead—despite the early Buddhist teaching that **karma** is personal accountability that is non-transferable. Hence, "merit transfer" is a wrong view and karmically unwholesome.

A more glaring error—the light of belief that blinds believers—is the notion that there are the "dead" who can receive or need such offerings. This belief is very common in traditional Chinese religions (including Chinese Buddhism). However, it clearly violates the Buddha's teaching on **rebirth**, that we are reborn when we die.

Such a belief also overlaps with the false view that the dead have souls or "ghosts" that can or need to partake of human goods. When the dead are reborn as animals, for example, they are unable to receive those things given to the priests. (It is better to good care of our pets while they live.)[920] When they are reborn as devas, they enjoy much better things than whatever we may offer to the Vinayaless priests, anyway.[921]

Such a practice is effectively a case of **self-deception** since we *believe* that there are the "dead" (but they have already been reborn) and that they need such offerings when they don't or are unable to receive them anyway. Whether we know this or not, the fact remains that they are against the Buddha's basic teachings.

13.5.3 Merit-transfer as ego-defence

The best, even, only, explanation for such a malpractice is that of **an ego-defence**, that is, we fear the dead (or death itself) and would like to extend what we see as humanly necessary and pleasant in this life. Secondly, there is a <u>fear</u> of the dead, that they will "punish" us for neglecting them—as happens in real life where it is customary to give expensive gifts to seniors and the powerful to gain their favour. Ironically, often enough, the neglect has already occurred when the deceased were yet alive. Better than "merit-transfer," then, would be to care and love our parents and elders <u>while they still live</u>.

---

boundaries of folk psychology." *Humana Mente* 20, 2012: §2 (5-8); for a philosophers' explanation of self-deception and delusion, see §3 (8-10).

   [919] See L Bortolotti, "Delusion," SEP 2009:11-13; N Van Leeuwen 2013:7-9.

   [920] On the merits of caring for living animals (incl pets), see **Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 142,5(14)+6), SD 1.9(3).

   [921] On <u>animals that are reborn in heaven</u>, see SD 6.1 (3); reflections R68a & R152.

The ritual of "merit-transfer" is thus pernicious: it is rooted in our ignorance of basic Buddhist teachings; an ignorance encouraged and exploited by secular priests. It is psychologically and socially harmful, in deluding us with an excuse and distraction from fulfilling of our rightful duties for the living, to treat them with love and care while we are all still alive.

The practice of love and care is the kind of **group karma** that we need to cultivate for a whole-some and vibrant society, instead of supporting Vinayaless secular priests, and creating bad karma for ourselves individually and as a community, fearing the dead, fearing the priests, seeking their approval for doing good— thus disempowering ourselves. We should instead cultivate self-reliance in moral virtue, mindfulness and clear awareness, and wisdom in treating the living and the dead buried.[922]

13.6 OVERLAPPING OF DELUSION AND SELF-DECEPTION

13.6.1 A common form of delusion is **self-delusion**, a personal manifestation of delusion [13.6.2], especially since self-delusion is unmotivated, that is, unconsciously arisen. On the other hand, **self-deception** (deceiving oneself) is usually motivated; it is consciously driven. Yet, we can also see that delusion can be motivated too: for example, a mother whose only son was caught stealing and sen-tenced refuses to believe he is guilty. If she holds this view consciously, she is *motivated*; hence, it is *self-deception*. If she is driven to believe so (unconsciously), then it is *a self-delusion*.

Philosophically, we would debate such a case;[923] but as Buddhists, we would try to help the troubled mother with her difficulties. Most scholars would "study" the situation and write about it; a practising Buddhist feels the pain, too (lovingkindness), and is moved to wholesome action (compassion).

13.6.2 There is no consensus amongst mind scientists on whether delusions and self-deception significantly overlap. For the view that delusions and self-deception can overlap, Bortolotti lists 3 views or arguments, as summarized below.

(1) The 1st view is that delusions and self-deception overlap when they both are motivated by some bias despite counterevidence. If we agree with deflationists[924] that self-deception is character-ized by its biased motivation,[925] then people with delusions can be said to be self-deceived when they are significantly biased towards available evidence, or if they search for evidence with similar bias.

A different analysis might be appropriate for other delusions, such as delusions of jealousy or persecution. Take the case of Thai monks in northern peninsular Malaysia, who often turned to the robes because they were poor. They tend to feel junior monks who were English-speaking Chinese a threat as they were more accessible to the wealthy urban supporters who were English-speaking. Hence, they were likely to ignore or socially isolate the non-Thai monks amongst them.

---

[922] On the proper way for dedicating merits to pretas, see **Tiro,kuḍḍa S** (Khp 7 = Pv 1.5), SD 2.7; **(Saddha) Jā-ṇussoṇi S** (A 10.177,1-6), SD 2.6a.

[923] For further analysis, see Bayne & Fernàndez, *Delusion and Self-deception: Affective and Motivational In-fluences on Belief Formation*, Hove: Psychology Press, 2008.

[924] Technically, **deflationism** is one of a family of theories that all commonly claim that assertions of predi-cate truth of a statement do not attribute a property called "truth" to such a statement. Eg, When I say, "I be-lieve in God," it is a statement, but it need not be true. Very simply, the best thing about the deflationary theory of truth is that *it enables us to draw a clean separation between philosophical issues regarding truth and philosophical issues regarding truthmaking*. These two sorts of inquiry are easily and frequently conflated.

[925] **A R Mele**, *Self-Deception Unmasked,* Princeton Univ Press, 2001:4; **A R Mele**, "Self-deception and delu-sion," in (edd) T Bayne & J Fernandez, *Delusions and Self-deception: Affective Influences on Belief Formation*, Hove: Psychology Press, 2009:55-70.

In urban cities like Kuala Lumpur, on the other hand, in a large Sinhalese foreign mission, its Chief High Priest ensured that any local Buddhist, lay or monastic, should work *for* him and the Temple. Hence, there should be no mention of the Vinaya. The High Priest's strategy was that his Temple should be promoted as the prime promoter of Buddhism in the country, at least back in Sri Lanka. Local Buddhists, lay or ordained, who broke this "Vihara" rule would be ostracized with a silent priestly smile.

In both the Thai case and the Sinhalese case, we see an identification with the delusion of ethnic origins, even racial purity. Hence, it is useful to distinguish between different types of delusions. However, delusions of misidentification may not seem to overlap with self-deception, when there is no fundamental role for motivational biases in the person's delusion. In the case of the High Priest, he thought that he had the right and might to do so, since all locals see or fear him as a charismatic "Chief."

(2) The 2nd view is that there are delusions that are *extreme* cases of self-deception, and that they have a protective and adaptive function.[926] An example is offered by Ramachandran, who discusses anosognosia, the denial of illness, and somatoparaphrenia, the delusion that a part of one's body belongs to someone else. Ramachandran (1996) reports the case of a woman, FD, who suffered from a right hemisphere stroke which left her with left hemiplegia. FD could not move without a wheelchair and could not move her left arm. But when she was asked whether she could walk or engage in activities which require both hands (such as clapping), she claimed that she could. Ramachandran advances the hypothesis that behaviors giving rise to confabulations and delusions are an exaggeration of normal defense mechanisms that have an adaptive function, as they allow us to create a coherent system of beliefs and to behave in a stable manner.[927] [13.4.4]

(3) The 3rd view about the potential overlap of delusions and self-deception is that the very existence of delusions (which shows that conflict in belief is possible) can help us vindicate the traditional account of self-deception, according to which a person has two contradictory beliefs but is aware of only one of them, because of the motivation to remain unaware of the other.[928] This account derives from Donald Davidson's theory of self-deception:[929] When I deceive myself, I believe a true proposition but act in such a way as to cause myself to believe the negation of that proposition.

Neil Levy argues that the conditions for self-deception set by the traditional approach are not necessary for self-deception, but that the case of FD described by Ramachandran (1996) is living proof that a person can, at the same time, believe that her arm is paralyzed, and believe that she can move her arm. Moreover, it is the belief that her arm is paralyzed that causes her to acquire the belief that her arm is not.[930]

From the views summarized here, it shows that it can be very difficult to see clear-cut distinctions between delusion and self-deception. Even when it is diagnostically and scientifically useful to maintain a distinction between symptoms of conditions such as amnesia, dementia, or schizophrenia, and the irrational beliefs that characterize normal cognition, there are many elements of significant overlap.

---

[926] W Hirstein, *Brain fiction: self-deception and the riddle of confabulation*. MIT Press,2005.

[927] V S Ramachandran, "The evolutionary biology of self-deception, laughter, dreaming and depression: some clues from anosognosia," *Medical Hypotheses* 47,5 1996:347-362.

[928] McKay *et al.* 2005a:314.

[929] See eg **D Davidson**, (1) "Paradoxes of irrationality," in (ed) R Wollheim, *Philosophical Essays on Freud*, Cambridge, 1982:289-305; repr in Davidson, *Problems of Irrationality*, Oxford, 2004:169-188; (2) "Deception and Division," in (ed) J Elster, *The Multiple Self*, Cambridge, 1985; repr in Davidson, *Problems of Irrationality*, Oxford, 2004:199-212.

[930] For details, see N Levy, "Self-deception without thought-experiments," in (edd) T Bayne & J Fernandez, *Delusions and Self-Deception: Affective Influences on Belief Formation*. Psychology Press, 2009:234.

13.6.3 An overlap between delusion and self-deception

A classic case of an overlap between delusion and self-deception (though a fictional one) is that of Miss Havisham in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861).[931] Havisham is perhaps the most tragic of Dickens' characters: she was left standing alone at the church door by Compeyson on their wedding day. She stops all her clocks, keeps the wedding breakfast, and wears her wedding gown for years; she prides herself on her broken heart; she brings up the adopted Estella to inflict vengeance on men but later repents when she sees how Pip Pirrip's love for Estella resembles her own frustrated love.

While Miss Havisham's original goal was to prevent Estella from suffering as she had at the hands of a man, her view changed as Estella grew older:

> Believe this: when she first came, I meant to save her from misery like my own. At first I meant no more. But as she grew, and promised to be very beautiful, I gradually did worse, and with my praises, and with my jewels, and with my teachings, and with this figure of my-self always before her a warning to back and point my lessons, I stole her heart away and put ice in its place. (Chapter 49)

While Estella was still a child, Miss Havisham began looking around for boys who could be a test-ing ground for Estella's education in breaking the hearts of men as vicarious revenge for her own pain. Pip, the story's protagonist and narrator, is the eventual victim. Miss Havisham readily dresses Estella in jewels to enhance her beauty and to highlight the vast social gulf between her and Pip. When, as a young woman, Estella leaves for France for her education, Miss Havisham eagerly asks him, "Do you feel you have lost her?"

Miss Havisham repents late in the novel when Estella leaves to marry Pip's rival, Bentley Drum-mle. She realizes that she has caused Pip's heart to be broken in the same manner as her own. Rather than achieving any kind of personal revenge, she has only caused more pain that she herself still suffers. She realizes that Pip is a compassionate person, and that he loves Estella.

In her urgency to apologize to Pip for his distress over Estella, Miss Havisham moves too close to the fire, which catches on her decrepit wedding dress and engulfs her in flames. Pip tries to save her, but her burns eventually cause her death.

Estella, near the end of the novel tells Pip:

" … now, when suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to under-stand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but—I hope—into a better shape. Be as considerate and good to me as you were, and tell me we are friends."[932]

13.7 TRAJECTORIES IN MODERN BUDDHISM

13.7.1 Psychologization of Buddhism

It is clear from our study thus far, there is a **psychologizing trend** in modern Buddhism. This trend has 2 main trajectories: the first is that of the psychologists and neurologists adopting and adapting Buddhism to effectively revolutionize psychology with better theory and tools to study the mind and behaviour of beings, especially humans. The richest of these theories comes from **the**

---

[931] Students are invited to discuss in what ways is Havisham deluded, in what ways she is self-deceived, and where the two overlap.

[932] My friend and proof-reader, Matt Jenkins, begs to differ that the most tragic characters in Dickens' oeuvre are the mice in "A Muppet Christmas Carol" (1992) who sing "no cheeses for us meeces." "In my hum-ble opinion, the screenplay for 'A Muppet Christmas Carol' is Dickens' finest work; and the film is also Michael Caine's finest role. I watch it about twice a year." "Some dreams come true. Some dreams fall through." When love is gone. When love is found.

early Buddhist teachings, which are more practical, and less philosophical or flippant than those of later sectarian and ethnic Buddhisms.

And, of course, **Buddhist meditation** is the next psychological revolution, with the mind specialists themselves meditating and seeing it expertly for themselves. With their expertise and diligence, they may be able to look deeper and closer into the Buddha's awakening than most modern Buddhists have done.

This is what will usher in a truly brave new world of such advanced levels of mind-healing and mental health technology that will effectively displace the primal drive of religions and cults, and instill greater humanity, progress and peace amongst us. If anything can successfully replace religion, including modern Buddhism—and something will—it will be enlightened scientists who are masters of Dhamma and Abhidhamma who are also good meditators—they are then truly **masters of the mind**.

13.7.2 "Judaification" of Buddhism

Besides the psychologization of Buddhism, there is another closely parallel revolutionary development, that is, **the "Judaification" of Buddhism**. By this, I do not mean that Buddhism is becoming more Jewish: in fact, we could well use the phrase, Buddhification of Jews, but the former sounds less triumphalist. Sylvia Boorstein, US psychotherapist and Buddhist teacher, in her book, *That's Funny, You Don't look Buddhist* (1998) hints at how Jews are comfortable being Buddhists: "The only God worthy of our ultimate allegiance is the God whose true name is *Ehyéh,* 'I am' (aka *Ayin,* 'Emptiness').[933]

Judaic history is an amazing testimony to the realities of the 4 noble truths. The Jews have suffered the extreme that is humanly possible. Their ancient tribal fortitude allows common learning to be focused and for them to progress through millennia; they are also a culture of remarkable industry, resilience, creativity and affluence. Yet they have all emerged as Jews in the lotus.

13.7.3 The population of Jewish Buddhists today is phenomenal—many of them leading Buddhists—although I know of no official statistics. Anyway, my interest is not in numbers, but the spirit in which the Jewish Buddhists look up to Buddhism. There are even a number of entries on Wikipedia dealing with **Jews and Buddhism**.[934] Basically, a Jewish Buddhist is a Jew who practises some form of Buddhist chanting, meditation or spirituality. Rodger Kamenetz, in his book, *The Jew in the Lotus: A poet's rediscovery of Jewish identity in Buddhist India* (1994), coined the term **JewBu** or **Jubu** for those of Jewish background who practise Buddhism.

Among the leading Buddhist monks, nuns and teachers today are Jews are Nyanaponika, Kittisaro and Bodhi; and nuns, Ayya Khema and Thubten Chodron.[935] Bodhi's translations of the Majjhima Nikāya, Saṁyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya and Sutta Nipāta have been commercially published by Wisdom Publications (Massachusetts, USA). The highly successful press was founded in 1983 by Nick Ribush (its current director) for "the preservation of the Mahāyāna." Ribush is also one of the first Jews to become a Tibetan lama. Many of Bodhi's translations and books are supported with funds from the Hershey Family Foundation, which is also Jewish. With such great financial success, Bodhi has been able to start his own foundation, Buddhist Global Relief, to help feed the world's hungry.[936]

Among the leading lay Jewish Buddhists are US poet and writer Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) and Jon Kabat-Zinn, pioneer of the Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme. Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield and Sharon Salzberg are amongst the first US Vipassana teachers and co-found-

---

[933] S Boorstein, *That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist,* HarperSanFrancisco, 1997: S Mitchell's foreword.

[934] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Buddhist; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews_and_Buddhism; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_and_Judaism.

[935] https://thubtenchodron.org/2010/03/jewish-buddhists/. Chodron's book has refs to helpful books on Jews and Buddhism.

[936] http://www.buddhistglobalrelief.org.

ers of the Insight Meditation Society (IMS); and Helen Tworkov, is the founding editor of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*.

13.7.4 Tikkun olam, tikkun ha-olam

The inspiration of these Jewbus towards Buddhism may be seen as reflecting the Jewish spirit of *tikkun olam* ("repairing the world") or *tikkun ha-olam* ("repairing humanity"). Traditionally, as in the Aleynu prayer, this Hebrew saying means to remove idolatry from the world. In the Mishnah (post-biblical code of oral laws), it means amending the law to keep society well-functioning (Gittin 4:2-9). In modern times, that is, the post-Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment), it has come to mean that every Jew bears responsibility not only for their own moral, spiritual and material welfare, but also for the welfare of society at large. The idea is to see meaning in being truly Jewish. For a growing number of Jews, Buddhism is giving them that meaning.

Of special mention is **Prof Nissim Cohen** (1930-2009), also known as Upāsaka Dhammasāri, who had dedicated his life to the passionate study and propagation of Theravāda Buddhism in the Portuguese language. Born in Istanbul, Turkey, he lived for some years in Israel, where he graduated in Engineering, and, in 1958, when he was 28, he moved to Brazil, and lived and taught in the city of Jacareí in São Paulo .

He discovered Buddhism in 1973, during a stay in the US, through Alan Watts. Later, he studied under Joseph Goldstein and Anagarika Munindra, but otherwise was mostly self-taught in Buddhism. He was especially interested in Pali, and having mastered it he went on to translate *Dhammapada: A senda da virtude* (2001). He also wrote *Fundamentos da Grammática Pali & Dicinário Basico Páli-Português* (a basic Pali grammar and dictionary, 2001)[937] and *Ensinamentos do Buda: Uma antoligica do cânone Páli* [938] (Teachings of the Buddha: An anthology of the canonical Pali, 570 pages, 2008). He started the Centro de Estudos Budicos CEB in São Paulo. He left his works on open media for the benefit of all interested in Buddhism. Sadly, the CEB died with Cohen.[939]

The Centre de Estudos Buddhistas Nalanda (founded in 1989 by Ricardo Sasaki, Dharma name Dhanapāla),[940] located in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, is currently the most active in propagating early Buddhism in Brazil.[941]

13.7.5 After an excursus into a bit of the human side of our study, let us return to examining "delusion and experience." When we start our journey with Buddhism, we often begin with what we are often most curious about or familiar with, that is, Buddhism as a religion. We are curious about what Buddhism teaches; its beliefs and practices; what's right or wrong in terms of Buddhism, and so on. As we meet good teachers and find better writings on Buddhism—best of all, when we study the suttas from good translations available today—we grow wiser in our approach to Buddhism. We then ask questions about "belief," "view," and so on. These are some of the ideas we will now examine.

13.8 DELUSION, BELIEF, VIEW

13.8.0 What is belief? What is a belief? What is a view? Is a delusion a belief or a view? These questions are related, as are their answers. For a better understanding of these concepts, we should have some good working idea of ignorance and delusion [13.1.1 f], which are very well developed ideas in

---

[937] Download: https://scdd.sfo2.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/uploads/original/3X/b/8/b8df55b8ab0a8cf7241d1d77b7a0cf9da2dd0baf.pdf.

[938] https://www.scribd.com/doc/160835912/ENSINAMENTOS-DO-BUDA-previa-pdf.

[939] https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nissim_Cohen.

[940] https://nalanda.org.br/sobre-o-nalanda/quem-somos/quem-dirige/dhanapala.

[941] https://nalanda.org.br/. https://www.dhamma.ru/sadhu/910-comunidade-buddhista-nalanda.

early Buddhism. If you are still unsure about these 2 concepts, it is good to pause here and go on to read up on them (again) in §§13.1.1 f.

13.8.1 Belief, uncountable and countable

Belief (uncountable) is a strong feeling that someone or something exists or is true, or a confidence that someone or something is good or right. The APA *Dictionary of Psychology* defines "belief": as (1) acceptance of the truth, reality, or validity of something (eg, a phenomenon, a person's veracity), particularly in the absence of substantiation; (2) an association of some characteristic or attribute, usually evaluative in nature, with an attitude object (eg, "This car is reliable") (2nd ed 2015).

A belief (countable, usually plural) (*laddhi*) is something we believe (in or that), usually as a part of our religion, ideals or life. We think or accept it as true at least for ourself. It becomes **a view** (*diṭṭhi*) when we have a better understanding of it, or are able to give some kind of reasoning that is convincing, or is imposed upon us by some authority.

Philosophically (epistemologically, to be exact, that is, what we can know), we cannot prove that God or nirvana exists; but there are many who believe in them. Conversely, it is also true that there are various clear and coherent proofs *against* the existence of God (of one defined as a Creator who is almighty, all-loving, all-knowing), but many, for various reasons, still choose to believe in such an idea.[942]

13.8.2 Cognitive faith, affective faith

The belief in an almighty, all-loving, all-knowing Creator is based on **cognitive faith**, that is a belief or view we hold because we accept the authority or testimony of another, as leader, preacher, teacher, peers, family, tribe or some authority. Or, we believe because we *thought* that we have experienced it (Him) for ourselves, but it's really a cognitive reality we constructed for ourselves. [9.8.3]

On the other hand, something is <u>true</u> because it exists *in itself,* whether we believe it or not, whether we know it or not. And when we truly know it, or rightly believe it, this is what we will experience [9.8.4]. The Buddhist teaching is said to be "**the gradual teaching**" (*anupubbī,kathā*) because we can properly progress from understanding one teaching, and then relating it to another or to other teachings: like knowing the parts of the machine, knowing how they work together to run properly. This is **affective faith**.

13.8.3 The 4 influxes

We have already noted that there are <u>the 4 influxes</u>: those of sensual desire (*kām'āsava*), of existence (*bhav'āsava*), of views (*diṭṭh'āsava*) and of ignorance (*avijjâsava*) [13.1.3]. The question is why are <u>views</u> and <u>ignorance</u> listed as separate influxes? Aren't they both a lack of knowledge?[943] The Commentaries define each of the 4 influxes as follows:

---

[942] See eg J Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* [1953; 1967, 1968], 4th ed, Routledge, 1997: 201-247. Hume summarizes Epicurus's (341-270 BCE) arguments against God's existence as follows: "Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then from whence comes evil?" (M W Hickson, "A brief history of problems of evil," in (edd) J P McBrayer & D Howard-Snyder, *The Blackwell Companion to The Problem of Evil,* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014:6 f).

[943] For a discussion of textual sources, see P Fuller, *The Notion of* diṭṭhi *in Theravāda Buddhism,* Routledge-Curzon, 2005:79-91.

The influx of

(1) sensual desire	*kām'āsavo*	the lust for the 5 sense-pleasures;
(2) existence	*bhav'āsavo*	the desire for rebirth in a form-world and the formless world, desire for dhyana, and aspiring for eternal life (that is, the eternalist view);
(3) views	*diṭṭh'āsavo*	the 62 views;[944]
(4) ignorance	*avijjāsavo*	not knowing 8 things (the 4 truths; the past, the future and both; and of dependent arising).

(DhsA 369; DhsA:M 475)

This explanation implies that <u>views</u> and <u>ignorance</u> refer to different things. Basically, **the influx of views** is *philosophical*, that is, the attachment to knowledge and ideas; and **the influx of ignorance** is *spiritual,* that is, false knowledge itself (that does not lead one to the path).[945] A <u>view</u> is a distorted or private glimpse of what is *not* reality; <u>ignorance</u> is *not* having any idea of how to catch even a glimpse of anything.

This does not mean that we know nothing: it means that we have some great idea of something or even about "everything," but it has nothing to do with true reality. This becomes clearer when we understand how merely having a clever idea or some deep knowledge of Dharma is *not* the Dharma itself: we are neither awakened nor even have attained the path merely *knowing* the teachings: we need to *penetrate* true reality, see into it personally. Our life will be changed for the better by this.[946]

13.8.4 *Diṭṭhi:* wrong view(s), right view

Diṭṭhi is listed as <u>cetasika 19</u>, that is, the 2nd of the unwholesome occasional cetasikas [Table 9.1]. It is only sometimes present in an unwholesome citta or mental state. This means that even as unawakened practitioners, we can still have <u>right view</u>, which is basically one that does not go against the nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and nonself. The easiest of these 3 characteristics for us to appreciate is the first, impermanence. Occasionally, we may have glimpses of insight into unsatisfactoriness (like when suffering from a severe sickness). Nonself is the most difficult characteristic to master. The basic idea is that of *not identifying* with any of the 5 aggregates—form (our body), feeling, perception, formations (karmic states) or consciousness.[947]

When *diṭṭhi* is mentioned by itself, as here, it usually means "wrong view(s)." Its characteristic is unwise interpretation of things (going against true reality). Its function is to presume. It is manifested as a wrong interpretation or belief. Its proximate cause is unwillingness to see the noble ones (*ariya*) and so on.[948]

<u>Wrong view</u> can arise in the form of any of the morally nihilistic views which deny the efficacy of moral virtue and karma, such as those stated in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2), **the Apaṇṇaka Sutta** (M 60) and **the Sandaka Sutta** (M 76), namely,

---

[944] Listed in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.

[945] The early suttas mention on the 3 influxes (*kām'āsava bhava'āsava avijj'āsava*): **D 2**,99.1 n (SD 8.10); **M 11**,9 n (SD 49.2). The 4th of the influxes, that of views (*diṭṭh'āsava*), ie, as a tetrad, is common in comys and later works. The late **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16) lists the 4 influxes (D 16,1.12. 1.14, 1.18, 2.4, 2.10. 2.20, 4.4, 4.12), SD 9. **Ogha Pañha S** (S 18.11) lists the 4 "floods" (*ogha*), which are a canonical list of the influxes (*kām'ogha bhav'ogha diṭṭh'ogha avijj'ogha*), SD 30.3 (1.4, 1.4.2).

[946] P Fuller, *The Notion of Diṭṭhi,* 2005:8, 78 f.

[947] See esp **Atammayatā**, SD 19.13.

[948] "The noble ones" (*ariya*) are the streamwinners, once-returners, non-returners and arhats, who may be either monastics or lay practitioners. Listening to any of them we hear the true Dharma, which prevents us from falling into wrong views. In our own times, when it is difficult to ascertain who exactly is an ariya, we must rely on the early suttas.

(1)	nihilism	*n'atthika diṭṭhi*	denial of life after death, efficacy of good deeds, such as generosity;
(2)	inaction	*akiriya diṭṭhi*	that actions, bad or good, have no consequences, thus rejecting all moral distinctions;
(3)	non-conditionality	*ahetuka diṭṭhi*	that there is neither cause nor condition for the defiling or the purifying of beings, that we are bad or good by chance, fate, or necessity. (D 2; M 60, 76)[949]

These 3 wrong views are elaborated at the better known "6 wrong views" pericope [13.1.6].

13.8.5 Furthermore, I cannot more seriously stress that the Abhidhamma should only be a subject of study *after* we have some mastery of the suttas. The basic reason for this is that there was no Abhidhamma Piṭaka during the Buddha's time: only *dhamma,vinaya,* "the teaching and the discipline." The Abhidhamma is an attempt by post-Buddha scholastics to systematize the Buddha's teaching and fill in (as it were) what these scholastics saw as "loopholes" in the teaching. The language of the Abhidhamma text is mostly *technical.* In this sense, to begin with Abhidhamma is like studying Quantum Physics without any grounding in basic Science.

    Without a proper sutta grounding, we may end up wrapping ourselves tightly in a blinding pall of conceit (*māna*), which will then be a hindrance to our Dhamma practice, not to mention bringing upon us some of the pathology we are discussing here. A sutta-based approach to Abhidhamma is helpful where the Abhidhamma terms and concepts can help us better understand the nature of modern psychopathology, especially in connection with meditation and the religious mind.

13.9 THE 12 UNWHOLESOME CITTAS

13.9.0 We will begin our study of a sutta-based Abhidhamma conception of consciousness with **the 12 unwholesome cittas** (*kusala,citta*) [Table 13.9.3] that characterize the sense-world mind (*kām'āvacara*) (that is, our own world of the 5 senses dominated by the mind)*.* This is a good place to start familiarizing ourselves with the Abhidhamma "programming language."

    The Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha (Abhs) [2.1.3] is an unparalleled attempt to catalogue all the possible mental states (*citta*) [Table 13.9] and their respective concomitant mental factors (*cetasikas*) [13.9.0]. It opens with "a summary of the compendium of consciousness" (*citta,saṅgaha,vibhāga*) by listing the 12 unwholesome cittas that can arise in a sense-world mind. These are then explained by its autocommentary, **the Vibhāvinī Ṭīkā,** a summary of which follows below.[950]

    Following the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha, I have here only briefly introduced the nature of consciousness (*citta*)—which, as a rule, refers to "mind-moments"—and will focus on the following:

13.9	the 12 unwholesome cittas,
13.10	the unwholesome cetasikas,
13.12	the 24 conditions (*paccaya*).

---

[949] **D 2**,16-23/1:52-56 (SD 8.10); **M 60**,5-12/1:401-404 (SD 35.5); **M 76**,7-18/1:515-519 (SD 35.7). See Bodhi, *The Discourse on the Fruits of Recluseship,* Kandy, 1989:69-83. See also Abhs:BRS 207 f.

[950] The foll subsections are excerpted from Abhs:BRS 1999:23-52 (Abhs 1.4-1.15), simplified, with additional nn.

MUNDANE CITTAS 81		
sense-sphere cittas 54		
unwholesome cittas 12		
(1) – (8)	greed-rooted	8
(9) – (10)	hatred-rooted	2
(11) – (12)	delusion-rooted	2
rootless cittas 18		
(13) – (19)	unwholesome-resultant	7
(20) – (27)	wholesome-resultant	8
(28) – (30)	rootless functional	3
sense-sphere beautiful cittas 24		
(31) – (38)	sense-sphere wholesome	8
(39) – (46)	sense-sphere resultant	8
(47) – (54)	sense-sphere functional	8
form-sphere cittas 15		
(55) – (59)	form-sphere wholesome	5
(60) – (64)	form-sphere resultant	5
(65) – (69)	form-sphere functional	5
formless-sphere cittas 12		
(70) – (73)	formless-sphere wholesome	4
(74) – (77)	formless-sphere resultant	4
(78) – (81)	formless-sphere functional	4
SUPRAMUNDANE CITTAS 8 OR 40		
supramundane wholesome cittas 4 or 20		
(82) or (82) – (86)	path of streamwinning	1 or 5
(83) or (86) – (91)	path of once-returning	1 or 5
(84) or (92) – (96)	path of non-returning	1 or 5
(85) or (97) – (101)	path of arhathood	1 or 5
supramundane resultant cittas 4 or 20		
(86) or (102) – (106)	fruit of streamwinning	1 or 5
(87) or (107) – (111)	fruit of once-returning	1 or 5
(88) or (112) – (116)	fruit of non-returning	1 or 5
(89) or (117) – (121)	fruit of arhathood	1 or 5

Table 13.9 The 89 and 121 cittas (a summary) (Abhs:BRS 1999:28)

13.9.1 The cittas rooted in greed (*lobha,mūla,citta*)

1. One citta,	accompanied by joy,	associated with wrong view,	unprompted.
2. One citta,	accompanied by joy,	associated with wrong view,	prompted.
3. One citta,	accompanied by joy,	dissociated from wrong view,	unprompted.
4. One citta,	accompanied by joy,	dissociated from wrong view,	prompted.
5. One citta,	accompanied by equanimity,	associated with wrong view,	unprompted.
6. One citta,	accompanied by equanimity,	associated with wrong view,	prompted.
7. One citta,	accompanied by equanimity,	dissociated from wrong view,	unprompted.
8. One citta,	accompanied by equanimity,	dissociated from wrong view,	prompted.

Abhs 1.4; Abhs:BRS 27-36)

Table 13.9.1 The 8 types of cittas accompanied by greed

(a) Unwholesome cittas (*akusala,citta*)

In analyzing unwholesome cittas, the Abhidhamma first classifies them by way of its most promi-nent **root** (*mūla, hetu*), whether greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), or delusion (*moha*). Greed and hatred, according to the Abhidhamma, are mutually exclusive: they cannot coexist within the same citta. Thus those cittas in which **greed** is the principal root are termed "cittas rooted in greed" (*lobha,mūla,citta*) of which there are 8 [Table 13.9.1].

Those states in which **hatred** is the principal root are termed "cittas rooted in hatred" (*dosa,-mūla,citta*) of which there are 2 [13.9.2]. The 3rd unwholesome root, **delusion**, is present in every state of unwholesome citta. Thus, in those cittas rooted in greed and those rooted in hatred, delusion is also found as an underlying root.

There are also types of cittas in which delusion alone arises without the accompaniment of greed or hatred. These cittas—two in number—are called "cittas with sheer delusion" or "cittas rooted in strong delusion" (*momūha,citta*)[951] [13.9.3 (a)].

(b) Consciousness rooted in greed (*lobha,mūla,citta*)

The Abhidhamma begins its analysis of the 3 classes of unwholesome cittas by distinguishing the different cittas rooted in **greed**, as greed is always mentioned first among the unwholesome roots. The Pali word *lobha* includes all types of greed ranging from subtle liking to intense passion to cling-ing. Cittas rooted in greed are divided into <u>8 types</u> on the basis of 3 principles of dichotomy (con-trasting pairs of qualities):

(1) the concomitant feeling, whether a feeling of joy or equanimity;	*vedanā*
(2) the presence or absence of wrong view;	*diṭṭhi*
(3) whether the citta is *prompted* or *unprompted*.	*cetanā*

From the rearrangements of these 3 pairs of qualities, we get 8 distinct types of cittas [Table 13.9.1]. The key terms will now be explained along with some salient points of the 8 types of cittas.

---

[951] The adj *momūha* (Skt *momugha,* "very much perplexed," SED) is an intensifier/reduplicative formation from *moha* + √MUH, "to be crazed" (W D Whitney, *The roots, verb-forms …,* 1885) "to lose control over one's mind" (Geiger/Norman PG §185): D 1:27,9; M 1:520,35 f *maṇḍatta*; A 3:164,1 7 *maṇḍa,* 165,18; Sn 840, 841, 1120; Nm 153 (= *maṇḍa*), 192; Nc 521 (= *avidvā* etc), Pug 65, 69. In most cases, *momūha* is listed with *maṇḍa,* "dull, confused" (not so in PED; only in Childers' DPL: *maṇḍo*). Geiger & Norman, *Pali Grammar, momūha,* "mad" (S 1:133,32*), *momūhattā,* (A 3:119,9), 1994 §37.

(c) Accompanied by joy (*somanassa,sahagata*)

The word **somanassa**, (mental) joy, comes from *su,* "pleasant," + *manas,* "mind"; hence, it means "a pleasant mental state." All cittas are accompanied by some feeling, which may be bodily or mental, pleasant, painful, or neutral. *Somanassa* is a feeling that is <u>mental</u> rather than bodily, and <u>pleasant</u> rather than painful or neutral. This feeling always "accompanies" (*sahagata*) this type of citta, inextricably, just like when the waters of two rivers meet, or the waters of different rivers flow into the sea: they blend together and are indistinguishable.[952]

The Abhidhamma describes 4 cittas rooted in **greed** that are accompanied by joy. The other 4 cittas in this class are <u>accompanied by equanimity</u> (*upekkhā,sahagata*). In the suttas, *upekkhā* often refers to lofty spiritual quality of equanimity, a state of mind which cannot be swayed by biases, or by liking and disliking.

Here, however, **upekkhā** simply means "neutral feeling," a mental feeling which tends neither towards gladness nor dejection. In contrast to pleasant and painful feelings, which experience the object in diametrically opposed ways, *upekkhā* experiences the object in a neutral manner. Thus *upekkhā* or equanimity is also called *adukkha-m-asukhā vedanā*, "neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling."

(d) Associated with wrong view (*diṭṭhi.gata,sampayutta*)

Having divided the greed-rooted cittas into 2 classes on the basis of **feeling**—as accompanied by joy or by equanimity—the Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha again divides that same citta on the basis of its relationship to **wrong view** (*diṭṭhi*). The term *diṭṭhi* means "view," and unless it is specified by the prefix *sammā*, "right," it generally refers to "wrong view" (*micchā diṭṭhi*).[953]

Wrong view accompanies the citta rooted in greed as a conviction, belief, opinion or rationalization. The view may either reinforce the attachment from which the citta arises by providing it with a rational justification, or the view itself may be an object of attachment in its own right.

Wrong view is associated with 4 types of cittas in all: 2 <u>accompanied by joy</u>**,** and 2 <u>accompanied by equanimity</u>. The other 4 are <u>dissociated from wrong view</u> (*diṭṭhi.gata,vippayutta*), in that **greed** operates in them without any accompanying justification provided by a view.

(e) Unprompted (*asaṅkhārika*)

The 3rd distinguishing principle of cittas rooted in greed is *the presence or absence* of **prompting** (*saṅkhāra*). The polysemic word **saṅkhāra** is used here in the Abhidhamma sense to mean "prompting, instigation, inducement" (*payoga*), or the application of an expedient (*upāya*). This prompting thus instils the citta with energy which may come from others, or it may arise from within oneself. The means employed may be bodily, verbal, or purely mental.

The instigation is <u>bodily</u> when someone induces us by bodily means to give rise to particular types of cittas which may result in corresponding actions. It is <u>verbal</u> when the means employed is another's command or power of persuasion. And it is <u>mental</u> when, either by reflection or the determination of the will, we make a deliberate endeavour, despite inner resistance, to generate certain types of cittas.

Prompting can be associated with either unwholesome or wholesome cittas, as we will see below. That citta which arises spontaneously, *without* prompting or inducement by expedient means, is called **unprompted** (*asaṅkhārika*). That citta which arises *with* prompting or inducement by expedient means is called **prompted** (*sasankhārika*). In the greed-rooted class of cittas, 4 types are unprompted or spontaneous, and 4 types are prompted or induced.

---

[952] See eg **Paharada S** (A 8.19,5+14), SD 45.18.

[953] AbhsVṬ says that *diṭṭhi,gata* simply denotes "wrong view." Other than indicating the condition of something, the suffix *gata* has no special meaning here: eg M 65/1:435,31 f (SD 56.2), M 147/3:279,5 f (SD 70.7).

13.9.2 The cittas rooted in hatred (*dosa,mūla,citta*)

9. One citta,   accompanied by displeasure,   associated with aversion,   unprompted.
10. One citta,   accompanied by displeasure,   associated with aversion,   prompted.
       These 2 types of cittas are <u>associated with aversion</u>.   (Abhs 1.5; Abhs:BRS 36 f)

(a) Rooted in hatred (*dosa,mūla*)

The 2nd class of unwholesome cittas analyzed by the Abhidhamma is that <u>rooted in hatred</u>, the 2nd of the 3 unwholesome roots. This citta is of 2 kinds, distinguished simply as *unprompted* and *prompted*. In contrast to cittas rooted in greed, which can arise with alternative types of feeling—either joy or equanimity—cittas rooted in hatred arise with only *one* kind of feeling, that of **displeasure** (*domanassa*).

Again, unlike a citta rooted in greed, a citta rooted in hatred does not arise in association with wrong view. Although wrong view can motivate acts of hatred, according to the Abhidhamma, the wrong view does not arise simultaneously with hate, in the same citta, but at an earlier time in a different type of citta.

(b) Accompanied by displeasure (*domanassa,sahagata*)

The feeling that accompanies cittas rooted in hatred is **displeasure**. The Pali word *domanassa*, which comes from *du,* "bad" + *manas,* "the mind," signifies unpleasant mental feeling. This feeling accompanies only cittas rooted in hatred, and such a citta is necessarily accompanied by displeasure. Thus displeasure, or unpleasant mental feeling, is always unwholesome. In this respect, it differs from unpleasant bodily feeling, which is karmically indeterminate, and from joy and equanimity, which may be wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate.

(c) Associated with aversion (*paṭigha,sampayutta*)

While cittas rooted in greed are explicitly said to be accompanied by greed, cittas rooted in **hatred** (*dosa*) are expounded under the synonym <u>aversion</u> (*paṭigha*). **Paṭigha** includes all degrees of aversion, from subtle irritation to violent rage. The word means literally "striking against," which indicates a mental attitude of resistance, rejection, or destruction.

Though displeasure and aversion always accompany each other, their qualities should be distinguished. <u>Displeasure</u> (*domanassa*) is the experience of unpleasant feeling; aversion (*paṭigha*) is the mental attitude of ill will or irritation. In terms of the 5 aggregates, displeasure is included in the aggregate of feeling (*vedanā-k,khandha*), while aversion is included in the aggregate of mental formations (*sankhāra-k,khandha*).

13.9.3 Cittas rooted in delusion (*moha,mūla,citta*)

11. One citta,   accompanied by equanimity,   associated with doubt.
12. One citta,   accompanied by equanimity,   associated with restlessness.

These 2 types of cittas involve sheer delusion.

Thus end, in all, **the 12 types of unwholesome cittas**.   (Abhs 1.6; Abhs:BRS 37-39)

(a) Rooted in delusion (*moha,mūla*)

This last class of unwholesome cittas comprises those cittas in which the other 2 unwholesome roots—greed and hatred—are absent. Usually delusion leads to the arising of greed or hatred as well. But though delusion is always present as a root in cittas accompanied by greed and hate, its function there is subordinate. In these last 2 types of unwholesome cittas, however, delusion alone is present as an unwholesome root, and thus they are classified as **cittas rooted in delusion**. Since the working of delusion is especially evident in these 2 types of cittas, they are also described as cittas **involving sheer delusion** (*momūha,citta*). The Pali word *momūha,* as we have noted in 13.9.1 (a)], is an

intensification of *moha*, "delusion." There are 2 types of cittas in which delusion is especially strong: one is associated with <u>doubt</u> [(c) below], the other with <u>restlessness</u> [(d) below].

	root	feeling	associated with	dissociated from	prompted	no.
1	greed	joy	wrong view	…	no	1
2	"	"	wrong view	…	yes	2
3	"	"	…	wrong view	no	3
4	"	"	…	wrong view	yes	4
5	"	equanimity	wrong view	…	no	5
6	"	"	wrong view	…	yes	6
7	"	"	…	wrong view	no	7
8	"	"	…	wrong view	yes	8
		"				
9	hatred	displeasure	aversion	…	no	9
10	"	"	"	…	yes	10
11	delusion	equanimity	doubt	…	…	11
12	"	"	restlessness	…	…	12

Table 13.9.3 The 12 unwholesome cittas (Abhs:BRS 1999:35)

(b) Accompanied by equanimity (*upekkhā,sahagata*)
Even if a desirable object is present when a delusion-rooted citta arises, it is not experienced as desirable, and thus pleasant mental feeling (*somanassa*) does not arise. Similarly, an undesirable object is not experienced as such and thus unpleasant mental feeling (*domanassa*) does not arise. Moreover, when the mind is obsessed by *doubt* or *restlessness*, it is not capable of forming a determinate positive or negative evaluation of the object, and thus cannot be associated with either pleasant or unpleasant feeling. For these reasons the feeling that accompanies these 2 cittas is *neutral*, the feeling of <u>equanimity</u> (*upekkhā*).

(c) Associated with doubt (*vicikicchā,sampayutta*)
The Commentaries give 2 etymological explanations of the term ***vicikicchā***:[954]

(1) vexation due to perplexed thinking   *vici* (*vicinanto*)*,* "inquiring" + *kicch,* "to be vexed"
(2) lacking the remedy that is knowledge   *vi*, *"*lacking, devoid of*"* + *cikicchā,* "remedy"

Both these explanations indicate that *vicikicchā*, "doubt," means perplexity, skepticism or indecisiveness, due to the prevalence of delusion. The citta associated with this doubt is the 1st type of citta rooted in delusion.

(d) Associated with restlessness (*uddhacca,sampayutta*)
Restlessness is disquietude, mental distraction, or agitation, and the citta shaken by this restlessness is the 2nd type of citta rooted in delusion. According to the Abhidhamma, the cetasika of restlessness is found in all 12 unwholesome cittas (Abhs 2.13), but in the other 11 cittas its force (*satti*) is

---

[954] DA 1:275, 3:988, 992; MA 2:68, 3:368; AA 3:324; SnA 2:452; ThaA 1:176; Nm 1:63, 2:429; PmA 1:285; DhsA 259; VbhA 503.

relatively weak and its function is secondary. However, in this last type of citta, restlessness becomes the chief factor; thus, this last type alone is described as *citta associated with restlessness.*

It should be noted that no qualification in terms of prompted or unprompted is attached to the description of these 2 cittas rooted in delusion. The Commentaries offer different explanations for this omission. The *Vibhāvinī Ṭīkā* (Commentary on Abhs) and the *Mahā,ṭīkā* to the Visuddhi.magga maintain that the distinction in terms of *prompting* is omitted because neither alternative is applicable. They state that since these 2 cittas lack natural acuteness, they cannot be described as *un-prompted*; and since there is no occasion when one deliberately tries to arouse them, they cannot be said to be *prompted*.[955]

Ledi Sayadaw, however, rejects this position, saying that these cittas are exclusively *unprompted*. He contends: "Since these 2 cittas occur in beings naturally, by their own intrinsic nature, they need not be aroused by any inducement or expedient means. They always occur without trouble or difficulty. Therefore, they are exclusively <u>unprompted</u>, and this should be seen as the reason the distinction by way of prompting is not mentioned here."[956] [13.14.4]

13.9.4 Now that we have briefly surveyed <u>the 12 kinds of unwholesome cittas</u>, let us look at examples for some of them for the sake of a practical understanding.

The 8 types of cittas <u>rooted in **greed**</u> may be illustrated by the following cases:

1. With joy, holding the view that there is no wrong (not bad karma) in stealing, a boy and his friend go into a neighbour's backyard and steal a mango from the tree there.
2. With joy, holding the same view, the boy prompts his friend to steal one too.
3-4. The same as 1 and 2 except that the boy does not hold any wrong view. (He steals and prompts his friend to steal despite informing him it is wrong.)
5-8. These 4 are parallel to 1-4 except that the stealing is done with a neutral feeling.

The 2 types of cittas <u>rooted in **hatred**</u> may be illustrated thus:
9. With hatred, a person murders another in a spontaneous fit of rage.
10. With hatred, a person murders another after premeditation.

The 2 types of cittas <u>rooted in **delusion**</u> may be illustrated thus:
11. A person, due to delusion, doubts the awakening of the Buddha or the efficacy of the Dhamma as the way to freedom.
12. A person is so distracted mentally that they are unable to focus their mind on any object.

Abhidhamma seems difficult when we merely memorize the terms and lists. It's a blessing to have a good memory. It's a greater blessing (that helps us progress) when we are able to relate such teachings to our daily lives, and examine our words, deeds and thoughts. We need to notice greed, hate or delusion in them; correct them, and cultivate non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion so that our 3 doors of karma are beautiful.

13.10 THE UNWHOLESOME CETASIKAS

13.10.1 Note that the Abhidhamma lists **delusion** as cetasika 14, <u>the 1st of the 4 unwholesome universals</u>, and **wrong view** as cetasika 19, <u>the 2nd of the 10 unwholesome occasionals</u>. That gives a total of 14 unwholesome cetasikas. (There are, however, 25 wholesome cetasikas and 13 morally

---

[955] *Tato yeva ca sabhāva,tikkhatāya ussāhetabbatāya abhāvato saṅkhāra,bhedo pi n'esaṃ n'atthi.* (AbhsVṬ 81)

[956] Paramattha,dīpanī 1907:48, Points 33+34. See Visuddha, *Abhidhamma Debate: … selected points …* Bangkok: MCR, 2016:121 f.

variable cetasikas) [Table 9.1]. From the lists of unwholesome cetasikas, it means that whenever we think, act or speak unwholesomely, <u>delusion</u> is *always* present, but <u>wrong view</u> is only present *occasionally* when we act so. Why is this so?

   Ignorance is a component in the ancient triad of <u>unconscious tendencies</u> (*anusaya*).[957] **Delusion** is basically ignorance in action, or more correctly, <u>delusion</u> is when we act out of *ignorance*, mistaking one thing for another: like thinking that a coil of rope in a dimly lit place is a snake [12.5.1]. Delusion, as a motivational root (*mūla*), is present in all our intentional acts (karma), beginning with when we *perceive, think or know* (or even all 3) aberrantly (*vipallāsa*), taking things to be permanent, pleasant, having a self, or beautiful when they are just the opposite. Basically, <u>delusion</u> is a motivational root [13.1.2]; a <u>wrong view</u> is an occasion of delusional aberration. [12.2.1]

   Greed arises when we aberrantly view something as permanent (or lasting), pleasant (pleasure-giving), or with which we identify, or as beautiful (from a certain view). **Hatred** arises when we notice that the object is none of these—that it is actually, impermanent, unpleasant, not self or ugly. **Delusion** has misguided us because we fail to realize that what we have viewed (hence, have views) are simply our <u>mind-objects</u> that are viewed as permanent, pleasant, self or beautiful, or just their opposite. This is how **the 3 unwholesome roots** work. [5.4.3]

13.10.2 Let us look a bit closer at *all* the **unwholesome *universal* cetasikas** (there are only 4 of them): (14) delusion (*moha*), (15) lack of moral shame (*ahirika*), (16) lack of moral fear (*anottappa*), and (17) (mental) restlessness (*uddhacca*) [Table 191]. They are present in all unwholesome thoughts, words and deeds—these actions are all rooted (motivated) in *delusion*, supported by moral shame and moral fear, and some level of mental restlessness. Hence, it is clear that they will distract us from doing good, especially from mindfulness and mental cultivation.

   These 4 unwholesome universal cetasikas occur in <u>all 12 unwholesome cittas</u> [13.9], since every unwholesome citta involves a mental blindness to the danger in bad and evil (that is, delusion), a lack of shame and moral fear, and an underlying current of restlessness.

13.10.3 Now, we have noted that **wrong view** is the 2nd <u>unwholesome occasional</u> [Table 9.1 D]: the 1st one is **greed** (*lobha*)*,* that is, cetasika 18; and the 3rd is **conceit** [Table 9.1: cetasikas 17-19]. These first 3 of the unwholesome occasional cetasikas are very important, and we need to know them well so that we can avoid them as much as possible.

   Both **wrong view** and **conceit** are found only in the cittas rooted in *greed*, for they involve some degree of clinging to at least one of the 5 aggregates. However, the 2 cetasikas each have contrary qualities, and thus cannot coexist in the same citta. <u>Wrong view</u> occurs in the mode of misapprehending, that is, seeing things in a manner contrary to reality; <u>conceit</u> occurs as self-centred measuring, that is, of taking oneself to be superior, equal, or inferior to others.

   While **wrong view** is necessarily present in the 4 cittas rooted in <u>greed</u> accompanied by <u>wrong view</u>, **conceit** is not a necessary cetasika of the 4 greed-rooted cittas dissociated from wrong view [13.9.1]. It does not arise apart from these cittas, but these cittas can occur without conceit.

13.10.4 Wrong view (or simply, view) [9.6.2] is primarily a form of <u>greed</u>, while **ignorance** is the root of <u>delusion</u>. We can see greed and delusion functioning as <u>the 3 unwholesome roots</u> (*akusala mūla*): greed, hatred and delusion. *Greed* arises when we like something viewing it as being permanent, pleasant, self or beautiful (when it is their nature to change and be other). When we notice any of these "other" qualities, *hatred* arises. All this is because we have been *deluded* by our ignorance. Our wrong views are the expressions of greed, hatred and delusion. This is how *the 3 unwholesome roots* of karma work. [13.10.1]

---

[957] The triad comprises the latent tendencies of sensual lust (*kāma,rāg'nusaya*), aversion (*paṭighânusaya*) and ignorance (*avijjā'nusaya*). See **Sammā Diṭṭhi S** (M 9,65-67), SD 11.14; *Anusaya,* SD 31.3 (8.2).

13.11 THE 2 ROOTS AND 12 LINKS

PAST EXISTENCE	1. ignorance 2. volitional formations	**karma cycle** (*kamma,bhava*) 5 past causes: 1,2,8,9,10

PRESENT EXISTENCE	3. consciousness
	4. name-and-form
	   (mental and physical
	   existence)
	5. the 6 sense-bases
	6. contact
	7. feeling
		rebirth cycle
		(*upapatti,bhava*)
		
		5 present results:
		3, 4, 5, 6, 7

	8. craving 9. clinging 10. existence	**karma cycle** (*kamma,bhava*) 5 present causes: 8, 9, 10, 1, 2
FUTURE EXISTENCE	11. birth 12. decay-and-death	**rebirth cycle** (*upapatti,bhava*) 5 future results: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Links 1-2, together with 8-10, represent the Karma cycle, containing the 5 karmic causes of rebirth.
Links 3-7, together with 11-12, represent the Rebirth cycle, containing the 5 karmic results.

Table 13.11 The 12 links over 3 consecutive lives [SD 8.2; SD 59.12 Table 3.1.2]

13.11.1 The Abhidhamma lists a total of 14 unwholesome cetasikas [9.5]: 4 universals (delusion, shamelessness, fearlessness of wrong, restlessness) and 10 occasionals (greed, view, conceit, hatred, envy, avarice, worry, sloth, torpor, doubt). All these defilements can be summarized into **the 2 roots of suffering**: ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*): *Avijjā,taṇhā,vasena dve mūlāni ca veditabbāni,* "Ignorance and craving should be understood as the two roots." (Abhs 8.9)

   Ignorance is our karmic root from the past reaching into the present, which culminates in feeling, that is, our sense-experiences and minding. In other words, because of our ignorance, we act through thought, speech and action. We can see the way ignorance develops in the progress of babies and children—over time they start to differentiate toys and the world, identify them and with them, develop favourites, and so on.

   As we act, we become more conscious of ourself and things; we name them so that they take forms that we can enjoy as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts. Through such sensual contacts, we have to deal with feelings, liking, disliking or ignoring such experiences. This is our present life rooted in past ignorance.

   Craving is the root from the present reaching into the future, culminating in decay-and-death. [13.11.2]. Craving arises from our feeling-based liking and disliking. When we like or dislike, we cling to that idea. We *become* what we cling to: this is our existence that keeps us going until the end of this life. This is our present karma that takes rebirth. So long as we live, we decay and die, and are reborn over and again.

We have just described, in practical terms, **the dependent arising** (*paṭicca,samuppāda*) [958] of our lives. **Table 13.11** shows how the 12 links that we have described extending over 3 consecutive lives.

13.11.2 Just a brief but helpful aside on dependent arising before we move on. The nature of our existence, in terms of its unsatisfactoriness and ending, is fully demonstrated by the method of **dependent arising** (*paṭicca,samuppāda*). This is essentially an account of the conditional structure of the cycle of existence (*vaṭṭa*), showing how a cyclic network of causes and effects keeps the wheel of birth and death turning life after life.

The Commentaries define dependent arising as the mutual effects arising in dependence on a conjunction of conditions (*paccaya,sāmaggiṁ paṭicca samaṁ phalānaṁ uppādo*). This means that no single cause can produce an effect, nor does only one effect arise from a given cause. One state serves as the condition for another: this is said in order to single out *the chief condition* in a network of conditions, and relate it to the most significant effect among a network. There is always an inter-linking of conditions giving rise to a network of effects.[959]

13.12 THE 24 CONDITIONS (*PACCAYA*)

13.12.0 The first 6 books of the Abhidhamma—the Dhamma,saṅgaṇī, Vibhaṅga, Kathā,vatthu, Puggala Paññatti, Dhātu,katha and Yamaka—explain analytically how phenomena arise and cease without any abiding essence or entity. However, the 7th and last Abhidhamma book, **the Paṭṭhāna,** lists synthetically what happens to a state when it arises, persists and ceases, by priority and poster-iority, being determined by and determining another state, by producing, supporting or maintaining. This interrelatedness, determination, influence or function is called "correlativity" (*paccaya,satti*). This correlativity works by way of the 24 conditions (*paccaya*), that is **the paṭṭhāna method** (*paṭṭhā-na,naya*) [Table 13.12].

Following *the traditional sequence*, **the 24 conditions** (*paccaya*) may be briefly explained as follows.[960]

13.12.1 The root condition (*hetu,paccaya*)

(1) **The root conditions** are the firm foundation of conditional states upon which all mental states fully depend, just as a tree depends on its root. These root conditions are basically of 2 kinds: the unwholesome and the wholesome. **The 3 unwholesome roots** (*akusala,mūla*) are greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), so called because they move us (consciously and unconsciously) to commit evil (believing in sin and Soul) and bad (breaking the precepts).

Their opposites, that is, **the 3 wholesome roots** (*kusala,mūla*) are non-greed (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*) and non-delusion (*amoha*). They are listed using negative language as a reminder of the slow but sure gradual path of good: we progress from *not doing bad*, then *doing good* (the 3 wholesome roots) and *purifying the mind* (mindfulness and meditation into true reality) (Dh 183). At least one of these 6 roots are present in us in some form or relation to it, whenever a mental state arises—which is in our waking moment.

(2) According to *the sutta method*, the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala,mūla*) actually go back to 2 older and larger roots, those of **craving** (*taṇhā*) and **ignorance** (*avijjā*). These twin roots need to be avoided and weakened by the constant practice of *the 3 wholesome roots* in the form of **mental**

---

[958] For the full 12 links of dependent arising, see SD 5.16 (4.1.1); for technical details, see Abhs:BRS 292-303.
[959] For defs of the 12 links, see SD 5.16 1.4); also VbhA 6/130-213; Vism 17/517-586.
[960] For a traditional order showing the conditioning and conditioned states for each condition, see Table 8.3 (Abhs:BRS 308-311). See also Ledi Sayadaw, *The Paṭṭhān'uddesa Dīpani,* 1935; U Nārada, *Guide to Conditional Relations* part 1. London: PTS, 1979: esp xviii-xxvi, 3-79.

renunciation (*nekkhamma*): that is, letting go of greed, hatred and delusion, and cultivating compass-ion (*karuṇā;* lovingkindness in action) and wisdom (*paññā;* insight into true reality).

Thus, the root condition may be *negatively* that of 3 unwholesome roots, or *positively* that of the 3 wholesome roots.

Note on Table 13.12

The synthetical method of Abhidhamma shows how conditions work together bringing about effects, by way of the 24 conditions (*paccaya*). This is called **the paṭṭhāna method** (*paṭṭhāna,naya*), comprising the follow:[961]

(1) *hetu,paccayo*	(2) *ārammaṇa,paccayo,*	(3) *adhipati,paccayo,*	(4) *anantara,paccayo*
(5) *samanantara,paccayo,*	(6) *ahajāta,paccayo*	(7) *aññam-añña,paccayo*	(8) *nissaya,paccayo*
(9) *upanissaya,paccayo*	(10) *purejāta,paccayo*	(11) *pacchājāta,paccayo*	(12) *āsevana,paccayo*
(13) *kamma,paccayo*	(14) *vipāka,paccayo*	(15) *āhāra,paccayo*	(16) *indriya,paccayo*
(17) *jhāna,paccayo*	(18) *magga,paccayo*	(19) *sampayutta,paccayo*	(20) *vippayutta,paccayo*
(21) *atthi,paccayo*	(22) *n'atthi,paccayo*	(23) *vigata,paccayo*	(24) *avigata,paccayo*

These 24 conditions and their varieties are given in English in the following table:

1. root condition [13.12.1]	14. karma-result condition [13.12.14]
2. object condition [13.12.2]	15. nutriment condition [13.12.15]
3. predominance condition [13.12.3] 　i. object predominance 　ii. connascent predominance	i. material nutriment 　ii. mental nutriment
	16. faculty condition [13.12.16] 　i. prenascence faculty 　ii. physical life-faculty 　iii. connascence faculty
4. proximity condition [13.12.4]	
5. contiguity condition [13.12.5]	
6. connascence condition [13.12.6]	17. jhāna condition [13.12.17]
7. mutuality condition [13.12.7]	18. path condition [13.12.18]
8. support condition [13.12.8] 　i. connascent support 　ii. prenascent support 　iii. base-prenascent support 　iv. base-object prenascent support	19. association condition [13.12.19]
	20. dissociation condition [13.12.20] 　i. connascent dissociation 　ii. prenascent dissociation 　iii. postnascent dissociation
9. decisive support condition [13.12.9] 　i. object-decisive support 　ii. proximity-decisive support 　iii. natural-decisive support	21. presence condition [13.12.21] 　i. conasent presence 　ii. prenascent presence 　iii. postnascent presence 　iv. base prenascence 　v. object prenascence 　vi. nutriment presence 　vii. faculty presence
10. prenascence condition [13.12.10] 　i. base prenascence condition 　ii. object prenascence condition	
11. postnascent condition [13.12.11]	
12. repetition condition [13.12.12]	
13. karma condition [13.12.13] 　i. connascent karma 　ii. asynchronous karma	22. absence condition [13.12.22]
	23. disappearance condition [13.12.22]
	24. non-disappearance condition [13.12.21]

Table 13.12 The 24 conditions (*paccaya*) and their varieties

---

[961] See **Ledi Sayadaw**, *The Paṭṭhān'uddesa Dīpanī,* Rangoon, 1935; **Karunadasa**, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma,* HK, 2010:262-281 (ch18); **Agganyani**, "Relations in Buddhism," *Ency of Sciences and Religions,* Springer, 2013.

13.12.2 Object condition (*ārammaṇa,paccaya*)

Object condition is an object of perception and as such forms the condition for mental phenomena, that is, as a support for conditioned states. External sense-objects, such a sound, each comprises the object condition for the 5 physical sense-consciousnesses, while mental objects such as thoughts, emotions, and memories comprise the object conditions for the single internal mind-consciousness. They are usually either unwholesome or wholesome.

The cittas and cetasikas attach themselves to any of the 6 senses (the 5 physical senses and the mind): the cittas and cetasikas are thus like iron filings or metallic objects that are easily moved and drawn to a lodestone that is the sense-objects. In our waking moments, each of our sense-faculties is always drawn to its respective object.

We are, as a rule, drawn to the more "dominant" of them, those that, for some reason, we find interesting (pleasurable or unpleasurable). More likely, however, we will be hopping about from one sense-object to another, trying to grasp them all. But as it is said: *grasp all, lose all*. Our mind ends up being distracted and "spaced out."

Even in a sleeping person, though unaware (the physical senses are at rest), the mind can still attract objects which may or may not waken the person, or one may experience them as dreams. When such objects are strong enough, they may waken the sleeper. These are some of the workings of the object condition.

Among mindful practitioners and meditators, these objects may range from dhyana-states to superknowledges (*abhiññā*) (like recalling rebirths), and even nirvana itself.[962] All these objects are related to the mind-consciousness element (*mano,viññāṇa,dhātu*). [Table 7.4.3; 7.4.4]

13.12.3 Predominance condition (*adhipati,paccaya*)

Predominance condition is the predominant factor for conditioned states to arise. It is of 2 kinds: (i) connascence-predominance and (ii) object-predominance.

In the case of (a) **connascence-predominance**, any of the 4 bases of success (*iddhi,pāda*)—will (*chanda*), energy (*viriya*), the mind (*citta*), or investigation (*vīmamsā*)[963]—may predominate a citta (that is, in any of the 52 of its components: jāvanas,[964] etc).[965] In fact, "will" here is a synonym for "strong intention" to overcome greed, hatred or delusion that is present. In rapid succession, the will is focused; it energizes itself up; the mind readies itself; and in investigates the situation, doing what needs to be done.

In the case of **connascence-predominance**, the conditioning states and the conditioned states of (b) are analysed. These cittas, along with their cetasikas, arise and relate to one after the other by the predominance condition, depending on the nature of its object. The result of this relationship, depending on the degree of predominance, may be (i) inferior, (ii) medium or (iii) superior. The different results produced by these 3 classes are shown, for example, with the 1st dhyana.

The quality of such a process is conditioned by the degree of predominance with which the past karma was performed; hence, we see differences in the situation in the same group of humans. This is not only true of the sense-world, but also the other higher levels, and the supramundane paths.[966]

---

[962] Those who have attained the path may meditate with nirvana as the objects, but only the arhats have attained it and awakened.

[963] These 4 "bases of success" (*iddhi,pāda*) are the bases of mental striving: **Cattāro Iddhi,pāda**, SD 10.3.

[964] *Jāvana* ("impulsion"), as part of the cognitive process—*citta,vīthi,* for the mind, and *viññāṇa,kicca,* for the 5 senses [here the former is meant]—is the phase of full cognition, climaxing with it, if the object is large or distinct. It is also at this stage that karma, unwholesome or wholesome, is produced. See SD 19.14 (2), esp (2.4.9); SD 47.19 (3.2.2.3).

[965] See U Nārada, *Guide to Conditional Relations* part 1, PTS, 1979:123.

[966] For details, see Ledi Sayadaw, 1935 (3) Adhipati,paccaya … .

13.12.4 Proximity condition (*anantara,paccaya*) &
13.12.5 Contiguity condition (*samanantara,paccaya*)

Proximity condition and **contiguity condition** refer to any stage in the process of consciousness that serves as the condition for the immediately following stage (Vism 17.74). They are conditions for mental states to arise <u>repeatedly</u> (**anantara**) and successively <u>without a break</u> (**samanantara**). For example, an eye-consciousness that sees a visual object functions as the immediately antecedent condition for the arising in the next citta that receives the visual image. That citta, in turn, serves as the immediately antecedent condition for the citta that performs the function of investigating the object.

One of the interesting effects of this Abhidhamma explanation is the belief amongst (especially traditional ethnic) Buddhists that a newborn child's previous existence may be deduced from their immediately apparent appearance or condition. If they look ugly or fierce, it is likely they had just emerged from a hell-state; if they have some kind of bestial tendency, they were previously an animal; if they appear beautiful and good-natured, they had fallen from a divine state.

However, if we are to follow the suttas, we must also include the most important possibility: that these predispositions are likely to have arisen from <u>present conditions</u>, such as how the mother took care of herself while carrying the child, the care (domestic, medical and personal) given to the mother, and of course, the disposition of the parents and their families themselves.

13.12.6 Connascence condition (*sahajāta,paccaya*)

(1) **Connascence condition** is any condition that necessitates the simultaneous arising of another state; for example, any one of the 4 mental aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) functions as the connascent condition for all the rest, since all 4 invariably arise together in the same moment. In other words, they are 4 aspects of the same phenomenon.

<u>Connascence</u> means "coexistence," arising together, happening at the same time. The sun, for example, arises with its heat and light. The sun (a ball of burning gases) itself is like the material qualities; its heat and light are like the connascent or coexistent mental states.[967] The same can be said of a candle: the wax and wick are the material qualities; the flame, heat and light are the mental states.[968]

(2) The 5 aggregates arise <u>mutually</u> as form (*rūpa*) and name (*nāma*), <u>connascently</u> as the 4 immaterial aggregates. When any of the immaterial aggregates (say, feeling) arises as the conditioning factor (*paccaya*), the other 3 immaterial aggregates arise as the conditioned factors (*paccay'uppanna*). They arise, mutually and connascently conditioning one another.

It is clear with our own being: our body is <u>physical</u> (comprising form: the 4 elements and space, or actively the 5 physical senses); our mind is <u>mental</u> (consciousness, or actively as the 4 immaterial aggregates): they comprise connascently our "conscious body," or this "body with its consciousness" (*sa,viññāṇaka,kāya*).[969]

Mutuality condition is a part of the connascence condition and is included in the latter.

13.12.7 Mutuality condition (*aññām-añña,paccaya*)

(1) **Mutuality condition** refers to the fact that all simultaneous phenomena, such as the mental aggregates mentioned above, are mutually supportive and so are also conditioned by way of mutuality: they arise and cease in dependence of one another. Just as the legs of a tripod of sticks support each other, the phenomena condition one another reciprocally.

---

[967] Ledi characterizes the sun as "mental states," and heat and light as "material qualities."
[968] Abhs:BRS 317.
[969] SD 17.8a (12.3); SD 56.1 (4.3.2.2) n.

The 4 elements—earth, water, fire and wind (air)—arise and exist mutually and harmoniously so that we live healthily. The body and mind arise connascently as our 5 physical senses as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. For us to be able to experience these sensings, our senses (the body) must arise mutually with the mind: the mind thus senses (experiences). Or, we can more tacitly say: there is only <u>sensing</u>, no agent, no one sensing.[970]

(2) **The Mahā Rāhul'ovāda Sutta** (M 62) preserves a beautiful reflection on the <u>mutual conditioning</u> of our physical body and our environment: "whatever is the <u>internal</u> earth element and whatever is the <u>external</u> earth element are simply the earth element." The same applies to water, fire, wind and space. There is this element *inside* us, there is this same element *outside* us: we are composed of these very same elements. This reality should be understood, with right wisdom, thus: "This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self." This very reality is also an occasion for rising above suffering, just as the elements suffer not anything: "they are neither troubled nor ashamed nor disgusted." This is the benefit of understanding the mutuality condition.[971]

13.12.8 Support condition (*nissaya,paccaya*)

Support condition is a preceding or simultaneous condition that works as a foundation for another phenomenon in the manner of earth supporting a tree. An example is <u>the 5 external sense-faculties</u> (eye, ear, nose, tongue and body) and <u>the one internal mental faculty</u> (mind), which are the preceding and simultaneous conditions for the 6 kinds of consciousness that arise when sense-faculties come into contact with their respective objects.

There are 3 kinds of support relation:

(i)   connascent support   *sahajāta nissaya*
(ii) base prenascent support   *vatthu,purejāta nissaya*
(iii) base-object prenascent support   *vatth'ārammaṇa,purejāta nissaya*

(i) **Connascent support** is identical with <u>connascence condition</u> (*sahajāta paccaya*), the 6th condition, that is, where the arising of one state necessarily entails the simultaneous arising of another. [13.12.6]

Prenascent support comprises 2 conditions: the base prenascent support and the base-object prenascent support.

(ii) **Base prenascent support** refers, while we live, to the 6 sense-bases—the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind—which are causally related as part of our sensing apparatus, that is, the 7 elements of consciousness [Table 7.4.4]. The material base or form preexists and serves as the ground: hence, it is called "base prenascence support."

We see the same base <u>prenascence support</u> for the production of sound or music when a conch-blower blows a conch-shell, or when a guitarist strums, plucks and thumps a guitar, or when a pianist plays a piano. In each case, the person merely expresses themself through the instrument—the horn, the guitar or the piano—the ground for sound, and plays a tune. The instrument is only a precondition for the sound and music, but which works together with the blower or musician (there is also a mutuality condition at work).

"Preexist" is merely a convenient term meaning that it exists beforehand—one mind-moment before the state—serving as the ground for it.[972] The death-consciousness (*cuti,citta*), as it were,

---

[970] Abhs:BRS 317 f.

[971] M 62,8-17 (SD 3.11).

[972] This is somewhat similar to the Actor Network Theory (ANT). French philosopher and sociologist Bruno Latour (1947-2022) argues that we need to look beyond agents if we are to understand actions and their results—it may be me who decides to nail two bits of wood together, but to do so I need a hammer. The hammer

exists a moment before the rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi,citta*). Neither actually exists in itself: for the convenience of description, we speak of the last living moment of this life as the "death-con-sciousness," and the very first consciousness in the new life as "rebirth-consciousness." In an import-ant sense, they are identical!

(*iii*) **Base-object prenascent support** is at work when we reflect and view thus: "My mind is located in the matter ("the heart"), or arises in the brain—this is I, me and mine"; or that this mental process occurs in the brain and controls everything else in the body. This is done on account of crav-ing, conceit or view [opinion], or as a result of it.

Or, we may view that the mind arises in dependence upon matter that is impermanent, unsatis-factory, not self; there arises the mind-door cognitive process, such as determining and so forth. At that time, each of the sense-bases becomes the ground for, and the object of, each of the mind-door cognitions. Hence, the mind ("heart-base") is causally related to such and such a citta and its cetasikas by way of base-object prenascent support.

13.12.9 Decisive support condition (*upanissaya,paccaya*)

(1) **Decisive support condition** is anything that works as a strong inducement to unwholesome, wholesome, or neutral mental or physical action. It is of 3 kinds:

(i) object decisive support	*ārammaṇûpanissaya*	= object decisive support condition
(ii) proximity decisive support	*anantar'upanissaya*	= contiguity condition
(iii) natural decisive support	*pakatûpanissaya*	elaborated below

(*i*) **Object decisive support condition** (*ārammaṇûpanissaya*) is so called because the support is by way of a mental object, which can be something real or imaginary. It is the same as object pre-dominance condition (*ārammaṇâdhipati paccaya*). [13.12.3]

(*ii*) **Proximity support** (*anantar'upanissaya*) is the same as the contiguity condition (*saman-antara paccaya*). [13.12.4]

(*iii*) **Natural decisive support** is so called because it is naturally known to the wise or occurs sporadically for others. It includes such things as mental attitudes and associations with friends that can act as natural inducements to either wholesome or unwholesome conduct, or climate and food, that induce health or illness of the body. The influence of *a contiguity condition* is effected only by immediate contact, but a natural decisive support condition can pervade remotely in space and time.

(2) What has been "seen, heard, sensed or known"[973] from long ago can still, by its very nature, influence us even today. We may refer to these as historical developments, socioeconomic growth or religious transmission. We see Western Europe, for example, having gone through the loss of countless lives, destruction of property and social disruptions on account of religious power and violence, so that today many of the states of modern-day Western Europe work to ensure proper governance, open education and social justice—above all, preventing religion from usurping some favoured place in society.

(3) We should learn from the past and not repeat its mistakes: how natural decisive support brings about exploitative conditions. A well-learned lesson of history is that when a religion is given a

---

is thus part of the network of action and results—an "actant" in Latour's terminology. Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An introduction to Actor-Network-Theory,* Oxford, 2006. (Thanks, Matt Jenkins, 19 June 2023).

[973] *Diṭṭha suta muta viññātam*, SD 53.5 (2); one of over half-a dozen formulas of "total experience" used us in the suttas.

favoured socially, it is more than likely to abuse its position to reprimand, marginalize, ostracize, even oppress, persecute or execute, unbelievers and non-believers, and also abuse others, including children.[974]

Similarly, as clear from religious history, when Buddhism becomes a state religion, it rises to power or gains worldly favours. But when the state or ruling house falls or for any reason, Buddhism may lose its power. When we play with power, we will be crushed by it. This is an explanation of how Buddhism disappeared from India[975] [12.4.1].

Even today, we often see "national" or ethnic Buddhism facing numerous difficulties to keep Buddhism and the Sangha pure and functional as a spiritual community, without priests being drawn into worldliness, political violence and rejecting the Vinaya. These are lessons and warnings we must heed when we see the patterns of the natural decisive support of Buddhist social development in our own time.

(4) Another example of natural decisive support is how loving parents bring up their children. They spend the first 7 years or so[976] humanizing their children with touch, love, and care; blessing them with their humanity, the ground on which they grow into wholesome humans.[977] Conversely, children who are not well humanized during their formative years find it difficult, even impossible, to remain human (keep the precepts) despite having grown into successful, affluent, influential adults.

On the other hand, when monastics today live Dharma-spirited and Vinaya-centred secluded lives, money-free, unblinded by celebrity, socializing minimally, and being free from other worldly distractions of titles and status, they become wholesome renunciants. They are likely to reach the path in this life itself; or are at least able to properly train those who seek renunciation here and now, and to inspire lay practitioners to head for the path too.

This is clearly seen from the workings of natural decisive support of the Dharmafaring life, here referring to lay practitioners dedicating some time for Dharma study, practice and teaching. Working as "lay Dharmafarers," my wife Ratna and I have been working on the suttas, translating and teaching them as our practice. The support we receive from those who feel joy and faith in our work sustain our family so that we have been full-time Dharma workers since 2002. As the translations and studies build up, we begin to see greater and better connections in the Buddha's teachings, such as reflected in the SD 60 series.

13.12.10 Prenascence condition (*pure,jāta,paccaya*)

(1) **Prenascence condition** is basically the previously arisen state forming a base for the one arising just after it; this arisen one now giving rise to the next and so on. An example is any of the 5 physical sense-faculties or the mind that, having already arisen, forms the condition for the arising of the citta through the sense-door process or the mind-door process.

Prenascence condition is of 2 kinds:

(i)   base prenascence condition   *vatthu,purejāta paccaya*   [13.12.8 (iii)]
(ii) object prenascence condition   *ārammaṇa,purejāta paccaya*   [13.12.8]

---

[974] See SD 64.17 (10).

[975] On Buddhism as state religion: SD 36.10 (5.4.1.2); SD 60.1c (9.4.1).

[976] The first 7 years are crucial as foundations of personal development. Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) was quoted as saying, "Give me a child until he is 7 and I will show you the man." This sentiment aligns with Aristotle's belief in the formative years of a person's life and the idea that early education and experiences greatly influence their future development. This saying was also attr to Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the notoriously manipulative Jesuit Order of Catholicism. Christian mission schools employ this principle to assimilate our children and young to become Christians, esp in colonized countries. In our times, the proselytism and intolerance are worse in Protestant mission schools.

[977] On the spiritual significance of "7 years old" in early Buddhism, see SD 60.1f (4.5.1.2).

(2) **(*i*) Base prenascence condition** [13.12.8 (iii)].

(*ii*) Object prenascence condition refers to the 18 "concretely produced matter" (*nipphanna,-rūpa*) present in us (namely, the 4 elements, the 5 sense-faculties, their respective objects (except touch), masculinity, femininity, the heart-base [location of the mind], the life-faculty and nutriment) [Table 8.3]. Of these, the present 5 objects (visible form, sound, etc) are each causally related by way of object prenascence, to those thoughts capable to taking part in the 5-door process (or sensing activity).[978]

Just as the sound of a trumpet is heard when it is properly blown, it also entails prenascence of both the trumpet, wind and the skilled blower, and also his thoughts, which occur at the mind-door process.[979] On this account, the life-continuum vibrates twice; when it stops, it gives rise to a conscious-series. This series cannot arise without prenascence of the sense-bases and the sense-objects.

(3) The 18 kinds of produced matter [above] are either *present* (since they are still operating), or they are *past* (since they have ceased), or they are *future* (since they have not yet arisen). All of them may be objects of the mind-door process. However, only the present objects act as the object prenascence. However, even if any of these 18 are not actually present or they are quite distant or they are hidden, any of them can still act as a "present object" in the mind (should the mind imagine it, for example).[980]

13.12.11 Postnascence condition (*pacchā.jāta,paccaya*)

Postnascence condition refers to when a citta, arising through the operation of the senses, serves as the necessary condition for the continued preservation of this "conscious body" [13.12.6 (2)], that is, with its functioning senses. It refers to a relation where a condition, having arisen later, serves as a support to the preceding one in a cognitive sequence.

When rebirth-conception occurs, there arise 2 groups of material qualities, one born of karma, the other born of heat (*utu*): this is during the arrested moment. But at the nascent moment of the first life-continuum, 3 groups spring up: that born of karma, that born of heat, and that born of mind. The *oja* (the nutritive essence) of the food taken by the mother spreads throughout the body, which absorbs and produces a group of material qualities.

From that time onward, the groups are produced by a seemingly endless series of 4 factors—karma (*kamma*), consciousness (*citta*), heat (*utu*) and nutriment (*āhāra*)[981]—like a lamp's flame. Leaving out the nascent moment, so long as these groups stand at their static stage, every one of the posterior 15 classes of consciousness supports them by way of postnascence.[982]

13.12.12 Repetition [frequency] condition (*āsevana,paccaya*)

(1) **Repetition condition** refers to impulsion moments (*jāvana*) of a citta that arise in a series, and recurrently, serving as a causal condition giving effectiveness and strength to the succeeding moments by way of that habitual repetition and frequency. The preceding perceptual sequence, by its habitual frequency, causes the conditioned phase (*paccy'uppanna,dhamma*) to become proficient in wholesome states (or unwholesome states in the opposite case) that are the preceding state. Simply, this is best-known learning process—by habitual frequency (*āsevana*).

---

[978] The 5-door cognitive process (*pañca,dvāra viññāṇa,vīthi*): SD 19.14 (2) with table, the mango simile (Table 2.3).

[979] On the mind-door process (*mano,dvāra vīthi*), see SD 19.14 (2.2).

[980] Abhvk 449.

[981] The 4 factors—called "causes" in Ledi 1935 *passim*, without the Pali—are the first 4 of 5 natural orders (*pañca,niyāma*), ie, omitting the 5th, *dhamma,niyāma.* [13.12.13 (i)]

[982] See Ledi Sayadaw, *Paṭṭhāna Dīpani,* 1936: *Pacchajāta Paccaya.* On the mind-door process, see SD 19.14 (2.2).

In Abhidhamma lingo, this is **perfuming** or <u>inspiring</u> (*parivāsa*): just as a piece of cloth is sprinkled with perfume, so is the mind pervaded with lust, hatred or delusion—this is, of course, religious conditioning—or inspired by generosity, amity or wisdom. In the traditional explanation by way of the mind-door process, the habitual recurrence usually ceases at the 7th mind-moment, after which either resultant mind-moments of retention follow, or the mind subsides into the life-continuum.[983]

(2) However, even when the apperception ceases, its <u>apperceptual force</u> does not cease: its momentum pervades the subsequent thoughts. When this is kept up, as each new mind-moment arises, it becomes more accepting of the conditioning or habituation. This is **proficiency** (*paguṇa,-bhāva*), that is, *the habitual frequency* taking effect.

There are numerous references in the suttas **habitual recurrence** or *repetitive frequency*, of which some examples are as follows:

• *satipaṭṭhānaṁ bhāveti*	"one cultivates the focuses of mindfulness"
• *samma-p,padhānaṁ bhāveti*	"one cultivates right striving"
• *sati.sambojjhaṅgaṁ bhāveti*	"one cultivates mindfulness and clear awareness"
• *dhamma,vicaya,sambojjhaṅgaṁ bhāveti*	"one cultivates the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation"
• *sammā,saṅkappaṁ bhāveti*	"one cultivates right thought"
• *sammā,diṭṭhiṁ bhāveti*	"one cultivates right view."

The famous verb **bhāveti** (literally, "let it become"), "one cultivates," refers to effort put in for a day, or 7 days, a month, 7 months, a year, or 7 years—or even just a brief but sustained moment.

When the <u>habitual frequency</u> is cultivated to a level of <u>proficiency</u> (the repetition is effected), and this proficiency is sustained, it will in time fruit in the "**sufficing condition,**" leading to a great attainment, such as remembering a sutta, understanding it, mastering a teaching, even attaining the path or higher. On a mundane level, we would surely pass an exam, write a profound thesis or book, become a great scholar or teacher, or, on a supramundane level, gain awakening.

13.12.13 Karma condition (*kamma,paccaya*)

(1) **Karma condition** refers to the karma or intention (*cetanā*) of a previous birth that functioned to generate the physical and mental characteristics of an individual's present existence. The intention keeps directing the related state to accomplish their function. The karma condition is, in fact, of 2 kinds: (i) connascent karma and (ii) asynchronous karma.

(*i*) Connascent karma (*sahajāta,kamma*) encompasses all intentions, wholesome, unwholesome and neutral, operational over the 3 periods of time (past, present and future). They relate to all classes of cittas and their cetasikas connascent with intention: material qualities born of karma, which arise simultaneously with rebirth-conception and material qualities produced by the mind during the life-span.

<u>Connascent karma</u> works like any karma and has a dual function: it arises with the cittas (in important ways, it *is* the citta) and habituates our thought, speech and action. Here, we should be reminded that *not* everything is due to karma. Karma is only one of **the 5 natural orders** (*pañca,-niyāma*):[984]

(1) the natural order of heat	*utu,niyāma*	the energy cycle
(2) the natural order of seeds	*bīja,niyāma*	heredity
(3) the natural order of karma	*kamma,niyāma*	mental volition or intention

---

[983] See Ledi 1936: *Asevana,paccaya;* also SD 19.14 (2.2).
[984] SD 5.6 (2).

| (4) the natural order of the mind | *citta,niyāma* | the psychological and cognitive processes |
| (5) the natural order of nature | *dhamma,niyāma* | causal conditionality |

That we *gestate* properly as a human foetus is a result of the natural order of heat (energy cycle); that we are *born* human (of human parents) is due to our past good <u>karma</u>; that we *are biologically* human is <u>heredity</u> ("seeds"); that we are able to <u>conduct</u> ourselves (act and communicate) as humans is <u>psychological</u>; that we *evolve* spiritually is due to our keeping to the *dhamma* of true reality.

(2) (***ii***) **Asynchronous karma** (*nāna-k,khaṇika kamma*) refers to past wholesome and unwholesome intentions. They relate to the 37 classes[985] of mundane cittas and their cetasikas, and all the material qualities born of karma. When we act intentionally (with greed, hatred or delusion, or with non-greed, non-hatred or non-delusion) we create <u>karma</u>. This karmic potential will fruit whenever the conditions are right; we will "feel" the effect of such fruits dependent of the working of other karmic habits; the frequency and intensity of such fruits depends on our own current mental and karmic state. These may be seen as *connascent* conditions when citta and cetasika arise *connascent* with intention, and asynchronous when arising separately from intention. [Paccaya 6].

"Asynchronous" (*nāna-k,khaṇika*) means that our karma keeps fruiting over time, and its frequency and intensity depend on the prevalent conditions. Karma takes effect immediately following the death-moment, bringing on the rebirth-consciousness. In the absence of opportunity, karma remain *latent* like *seeds* that will sprout once the conditions are right.

Just as every plant has a lifespan, so do individual or "sublime" karma: they will then cease. But the potential remains, and like seeds will rise repeatedly. Such a sublime karma may bring us a heavenly birth, but it will end with the natural lifespan there. Heavenly beings who have not attained the path, knowing the signs of their impending death, as a rule, react negatively to it, and thus "fall" (*cavati*) from their heavenly state for a lower, even a subhuman, state.[986]

13.12.14 Karma-result condition (*vipāka,paccaya*)

(1) **Karma-result condition** refers to the 5 karmically resultant external sense-consciousnesses that function as simultaneous conditions for other mental and physical phenomena. It is thus a condition that assists other associated karmic-resultant phenomena by its passive nature, that is, not having other activity.

<u>Karma-result condition</u> operates at all the 31 levels of rebirth (the 4 subhuman suffering states; the 7 sense-worlds; the 16 form worlds, and the 4 formless worlds).[987] The same condition operates when we attain any of the 4 stages of the path (or 8 stages, if we count them as "path" and "fruit-ion"), and finally nirvana, where all karma ends.

Karma-result also works to create and support the material qualities born of karma from the time of conception, and whatever is produced by resultant cittas during life itself. Abhidhamma literature coin the term ***vipaccana,*** "maturation" (an abstract noun from *vipaccati,* "to ripen"), for the process of growth and decay we go through in life, from birth through infancy, youth, adulthood, senility and death.

(2) Technically, karmic intention has <u>4 stages</u> or <u>aspects</u> (*avattha*):
(i)   those of **intention** (cetanā'vattha),
(ii) continuation as **karma** (kammâvattha),
(iii) representation by a **sign** (nimittâvattha), and
(iv) karmic **fruition** (vipākâvattha).

---

[985] On the 37 wholesome cittas, see Abhs:BRS 74 f.
[986] Abhs:BRS 312.
[987] For a chart of the 31 planes, see SD 1.7 (App).

(3) (*i*) **The Amba,laṭṭhika Rāhul'ovāda Sutta** (M 62) records the Buddha instructing the 7-year-old Rāhula to reflect *before* acting, speaking or thinking, whether such an act will harm oneself, others or both: it should be avoided if it is in any way harmful. The same principle applies to *while* acting, speaking or thinking—if it is harmful in any way, one should at once give it up. *After* the act, speech or thought—if it is seen as harmful, one should confess it and rectify it accordingly. If it is wholesome, then one may joyfully act, speak or think. In short, one should review one's actions to keep the 3 doors of action free of *greed, hatred and delusion*.[988]

(4) (*ii*) This is a vital lesson in keeping **wholesome intention** (*cetanā'vattha*). This lesson is vital because a new karma arises or **a karma is renewed or reinforced** (*kammâvattha*) whenever there is an intention. So long as there is *greed, hatred or delusion* in an action, there is karmic potential there-in. This is what is meant by *intention,* by which one creates *karma,* whether one is conscious of the deed or not. In short, karma is often habitually done.

(5) (*iii*) When the conditions are right, especially when one is dying, one is likely to see certain **karmic signs** (*nimitta*). Such signs may appear as visions of past *bad* actions (for example, one recalls killing or some other negative deed) and one sees subhuman beings and states (in terms of one's cultural conditioning), or such signs may appear as visions of past *good* deeds (such as cultivating lovingkindness, or doing charity, and so on) and have pleasant visions of happy people or heavenly beings and states. Most such actions arise from cultural conditioning. Hence, it would be wise to learn about their real significance and how to deal with them as taught in the suttas for the sake of our mental health.

Since karma is basically a habitual process, the momentum of our most common habitual karma would drive us into some commensurate rebirth. Discourses like **the Sāleyyaka Sutta** (M 41) and **the Saṅkhār'upapatti Sutta** (M 120) record the Buddha as stating that with a wholesome moral life (and good meditation habits), we are capable of choosing a happy rebirth (or at least avoiding a negative one).

(6) (*iv*) Interestingly, later Buddhist tradition has it that when we dream or have visions, they are likely to be related to our past karma, or our present habitual karma, or signs of impending rebirth. However, such karmic fruitions are usually too weak to be more than that: they are merely reflections of our mental state, which we should manage with Dharma training.[989]

13.12.15 Nutriment condition (*āhāra,paccaya*)

This condition is based on the sutta teaching of the 4 kinds of food—as stated in **the Putta,maṁsa Sutta** (S 12.63), that is:[990]

(*i*)   material food (*kabalinkār'āhāra*), that is food for the body;
(*ii*) sensory and mental contact (*phassa*), which are food for feelings (*vedanā*);
(*iii*) mental volition (*cetana* = *kamma*), which is food for rebirth; and
(*iv*) consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which is food for the name-and-form (*nāma,rūpa*) at the moment of conception.

The Abhidhamma nutriment condition is used in the widest sense to include **2 kinds**, that is, the material nutriment (*rūp'āhāra*) and the mental (or immaterial) nutriment (*nām'āhāra*). "Nutriment" is so called because it nourishes us, and we subsist on it (*āhāra-ṭ,ṭhitika*).

---

[988] M 61/1:414-420 (SD 3.10).
[989] Abhs:BRS 247, 313.
[990] S 12.63/2:98-100 @ SD 20.6 (2); also SD 55.14 (2).

In their role as conditions, while <u>material nutriment</u> nourishes the physical body, <u>mental nutriment</u>, consisting of contact, mental volition and consciousness, is related to the mental and material dhammas that arise together with it.[991] [13.13.12]

13.12.16 Faculty condition (*indriya,paccaya*)

(1) **Faculty condition** is of 3 kinds: (i) connascence (*sahajāta*), (ii) prenascence (*purejāta*), and (iii) the physical life-faculty (*jīvit'indriya*).[992]

(*i*) The related states (*paccaya,dhamma*) of **connascence condition** (*sahajāta,paccaya*) are <u>the 22 connascent faculties</u> listed in the suttas as forming the bases of our physical, mental and spiritual life. Each of these conditioning states has a key control over the respective conditioned states.

(*ii*) The conditioning factors of **prenascence condition** are the 5 sense-faculties (the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body). The conditioned factors are the 5 sense-experiences and their cetasikas.

(*iii*) There is only one conditioning factor of **physical life-faculty**, that is, physical life itself. The conditioned factors are all the karma-born material qualities (except physical life itself).

(2) On **the 2 sex faculties**: [13.13.13 (2)].

In summary, <u>the 22 faculties</u> are:

(1) the 6 sense-bases	*saḷ-āyatana* (the 6 internal sense-bases, *ajjhatt'āyatana*)
(3) the 3 faculties of being	*indriya* or *bhava* (controlling principles)
(2) the 5 spiritual faculties	*pañc'indriya* (called "powers," *bala,* in a path-saint)
(4) the 5 faculties of feeling	*vedanā* (feelings arising from each of the 5 sense-faculties)
(5) the 3 principles of knowledge	*aññā* (the state of one the path of awakening)

<u>The 22 faculties</u> [Table below] are as follows:[993]

---

[991] See Abhs:BRS 272, 312.
[992] See Abhs:BRS 272, 312.
[993] SD 10.4 (4); SD 101.7 (1.2.3).

The 22 faculties[994]

bāvīsat'indriya

(1) The 6 sense-bases (*saḷ-āyatana*)

The first 5 are "the 5 sense-faculties" (*pañc'indriya*) or "internal sense faculties" (*ajjhatt'ayatana*).[995] When the mind or mind-faculty (*man'indriya*) is included, as here, they are called "the 6 sense-bases" (*saḷ-āyatana*):

1. *cakkhu'ndriyaṁ*	the eye-faculty	*cakkhu*
2. *sot'indriyaṁ*	the ear-faculty	*sota*
3. *ghān'indriyaṁ*	the nose-faculty	*ghāna*
4. *jivh'indriyaṁ*	the tongue-faculty	*jivhā*
5. *kāy'indriyaṁ*	the body-faculty	*kāya*
6. *man'indriyaṁ*	the mind-faculty	*mano*

(2) The 3 faculties of being (*indriya* or *bhāva*)

7. *itth'indriyaṁ*	the female faculty or femininity[996]	*itthatta*
8. *puris'indriyaṁ*	the male faculty or masculinity	*purisatta*
9. *jīvit'indriyaṁ*	the life-faculty, vitality or "life-force" [997]	*jīvita*

(3) The 5 feelings (*vedanā*)

10. *sukh'indriyaṁ*	bodily pleasurable feeling faculty	*sukha*
11. *dukkh'indriyaṁ*	bodily painful feeling faculty	*dukkha*
12. *somanass'indriyaṁ*	mental pleasurable feeling faculty	*somanassa*
13. *domanass'indriyaṁ*	mental painful feeling faculty	*domanassa*
14. *upekkh'indriyaṁ*	indifference (equanimity) faculty	*upekkhā*

(4) The 5 spiritual faculties (*indriya*) [998]

15. *saddh'indriyaṁ*	faculty of faith	*saddhā*
16. *viriy'indriyaṁ*	faculty of effort	*viriya*
17. *sat'indriyaṁ*	faculty of mindfulness	*sati*
18. *samādh'indriyaṁ*	faculty of concentration	*samādhi*
19. *paññ'indriyaṁ*	faculty of wisdom	*paññā*

(5) The 3 supramundane faculties (*lok'uttara*)

20. *anaññātañ,ñassāmît'indriyaṁ*	the faculty of assurance, "I shall know what I did not know!"[999]
21. *aññ'indriyaṁ*	the faculty of highest knowledge (*aññā*)[1000]
22. *aññātāv'indriyaṁ.*	the faculty of the one who knows (the highest knowledge).[1001]

Table 13.12.16 The 22 faculties

---

[994] Vbh §219 f/122,6-9. Table 4.3 is also found at SD 101.7 (1.2.3.3).

[995] See SD 17.2a (9.5); SD 29.6a (5.2.1.1).

[996] Of the 22 faculties, only the 2 sex-faculties—this and the foll—are not incl amongst the cetasikas.

[997] For details, see **Sāra S** (S 48.55), SD 42.19 (1); SD 60.1e (Table 12.13.6 (9)). The Vaibhāṣika take this "life-force" as the "intermediate state," *antarā,bhava.*

[998] **Āpaṇa S** (S 48.50), SD 10.4(4.4). See "The Way of Wisdom" (BPS Wheel 65/66).

[999] *Anaññātañ, ñassāmî ti.* This arises on the attaining of <u>the path of streamwinning</u> (*sotāpatti,magga*). See 10.4 (4.3.6). See foll n.

[1000] This phrase, preceding the last phrase, clearly refers to <u>an arhat's liberating knowledge</u> (*aññā*).

[1001] *Aññātāvi = aññāta + (ā)vi(n)* (BHS *ājñātāvin*); *aññā* is <u>an arhat's review knowledge</u>, that arises after the attaining of the fruit of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*). See **Aññ'indriya S** (S 48.23) SD 42.19(1.5).

13.12.17 Jhāna condition (*jhāna,paccaya*) refers to the 7 dhyana-factors as conditions for simul-taneous mental and corporeal phenomena. They are initial application (*vitakka*), sustained applica-tion (*vicāra*), zest (*pīti*), joy (*sukha*), displeasure (*domanassa*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and concentra-tion (*samādhi*). All types of cittas (except for the 5 sense-faculties and sense-based cittas) and their cetasikas are the states conditionally arisen from the 7 dhyana-factors. They start to function by "burning away" the mental hindrances, bringing on dhyana that calms and clears the mind, preparing it for liberating wisdom.

Even before dhyana is attained, the trained mind is inspired by jhāna condition to keep bodily actions free from greed, hatred and delusion; to keep speech restrained, to speak Dharma or be nobly silent to prepare the mind for samadhi; to free the mind from sensual lust and ill will, to open the breath-door into the space of calm clarity.

Vitakka has the characteristic of directing the mind to the mind-object, and keeping it there. *Vi-cāra* fixes the attention on the object by constantly reviewing it. *Pīti* arises showing the growing zest (joyful interest) in the object; it is an exuberant form of joy. *Sukha,* on the other hand, resolves this zest, settling it down to a calm sense, contented and pervasive sense of happiness. Finally, attention fixes the mind to the mind-object so that it becomes *one* with the mind-object*,* with neither self nor other, neither subject nor object, utterly selfless. This attention become *ekaggatā* (unification of mind), which becomes a factor in the 2nd dhyana upwards.[1002]

13.12.18 Path condition (*magga,paccaya*) refers basically to any of the 8 supramundane factors, that is to say: right view (*sammā,diṭṭhi*), right thought (*sammā,saṅkappa*), right speech (*sammā,vācā*), right action (*sammā,kammantā*), right livelihood (*sammā,ājīva*), right effort (*sammā,vāyāma*), right mindfulness (*sammā,sati*), and right concentration (*sammā,samādhi*) [9.7.4]. However, being "supramundane" (*lok'uttara*), it means that these factors are the qualities of a streamwinner and the other path saints (*ariya*).

On a wholesome mundane level, that is, for us to be able to reach the path of a streamwinner, we depend on **the path** (how we act on the path) to create good karma. By keeping the precepts (beginning with the 5 precepts) we create good *moral* **karma**, that is, those of the body and speech. This helps us to be more mindful and, perhaps, master some mental concentration; either way we create some good *mental* **karma** for momentum up the path of awakening.

These wholesome karmic conditions of the path are the "**way in**" to the path of awakening. The developmental (*bhāvanā*) path condition then sets in to cultivate the wisdom of *penetrating true reality*, that is the "**way out**" of samsara into the unconditioned space that is nirvana.

13.12.19 Association condition (*sampayutta,paccaya*) refers to the 4 mental aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*), which *work with and assist one another* by inseparable association through sharing a common physical base, a common object, and arising and passing away simultaneously. Take for example, the act of seeing.

The suttas would simply describe this as the eye receiving visual impressions of a visual object: the eye + eye-consciousness (the mind) + visual object, with these 3, there is contact. In Abhidham-ma lingo, the "universal" set of 7 cetasikas—feeling, perception, intention, sense-contact, attention, one-pointedness (attention) and life-faculty work in association to produce **sight**.[1003] [Table 9.1 (A)]

At this stage, it is useful to understand that none of the 24 conditions (*paccaya*) are separate from the processes that they describe. These conditions give us a better idea of the psychological (and often also ontological) nature or make-up of an action or experience.[1004]

[1002] See Abhs:BRS 272, 312.
[1003] For technical details, see Abhs 2.2.
[1004] See Karunadasa, *The Tharavāda Abhidhamma,* 2010:74.

13.12.20 Dissociation condition (*vippayutta,paccaya*) refers to phenomena that assist other phenomena by virtue of not having the same physical base and objects. Clearly, it shows the opposite effect of the association condition [13.12.19]; so they form a pair. There are a number of other pairs: prenascence and postnascence, presence and absence, disappearance and non-disappearance. In fact, the last 3 pairs of conditions are practically synonyms, the pairs differing only in a subtle nuance of relative process.

The dissociation condition is of 4 kinds:

(i) connascent dissociation	*saha,jāta vippayutta*	
(ii) base prenascent dissociation	*vatthu,purejāta vippayutta*	[13.13.5 (1)]
(iii) base-object prenascent dissociation	*vatth'ārammaṇa,purejāta vippayutta*	[13.12.8 (iii)]
(iv) postnascent dissociation	*pacchā,jāta vippayutta*	[13.12.11]

In the case of **connascent dissociation** (*sahajāta vippayutta*), the conditioning (*paccaya,dhamma*) and the conditioned states (*paccay'uppanna,dhamma*) may be either mental or physical, as shown under "connascence" [13.12.6]. Therefore, a mental conditioned state may be shown to be causally related to a physical conditioned state by way of connascent dissociation, and vice versa.

By "mental" conditioning (*paccaya*) here is meant the 4 mental aggregates (feeling, perception, formations and consciousness) during life; and by "physical" conditioned (*paccy'uppanna*) state is meant material qualities produced by the mind.

Further, by "physical" conditioning is meant the heart-basis (the mind) at the moment of conception, and by a "mental" conditioned state is meant the 4 mental aggregates belonging to rebirth.[1005]

Two of the 4 variations have been explained elsewhere as noted above.

13.12.21 (*Paccaya* 21 & 24) Presence condition (*atthi,paccaya*) and **non-disappearance condition** (*avigata,paccaya*) refer to any phenomenon whose presence is a condition for other phenomena. This is where a conditioning state helps the conditioned states to arise or persist during a time when it exists alongside the conditioned states. It is not necessary, however, for the conditioning state and the conditioned states to be connascent (that is, to arise or cease together). The two only need to temporarily overlap, and for the conditioning state to support in some way the conditioned states while they overlap.

Thus presence condition includes connascence, prenascence and postnascence [*paccaya*s 6, 10 and 11 respectively].[1006] For, although prenascence condition arises earlier and postnascence condition later than the states to be conditioned by them, both activate as conditions at the present moment.[1007]

Hence, presence condition is so called because it may causally relate to its effect by being present before acting, while acting and after acting, that is, the 3 moments of time (*khaṇa*). The presence condition can be of 7 kinds: connascence, prenascence, postnascence, base prenascence, object prenascence, nutriment, and faculty presences.[1008]

13.12.22 (*Paccaya* 22 & 23) Absence condition (*n'atthi,paccaya*) is where a mind-moment, having just ceased, becomes an opportunity (*okāsa,dāna*), that is, the necessary condition for the arising of the one immediately following it. **Disappearance condition** (*vigata,paccaya*) is one where a mind-moment, having disappeared, is the necessary condition for the next state to arise. Both conditions describe the linear sequence of consciousness where the immediately preceding one disappears

---

[1005] AbhsSn 154.
[1006] See Abhs:BRS 322 (Guide to §26).
[1007] Abhvk 453.
[1008] ViśmSn 6.167; Abhvk 454.

before the emergence of the immediately succeeding one. The states related by the 2 conditions are thus identical with the states related by the proximity and contiguity conditions [*paccaya*s 4 and 5 respectively].[1009]

13.13 THE 24 CONDITIONS: A SYNTHESIS

13.13.0 Anuruddha, in his **Abhidhamm'attha,saṅgaha** [13.9.0], explains how the 24 conditions structure and effect the relations between the different classes of phenomena (Abhs 1.13-27). Instead of proceeding to show how each condition works in the original order [Table 13.12], Anuruddha classifies **the 3 factors**: the conditioning states and the conditioned states as mind, matter, and mind-and-matter conjoined; and then introduces the resultant conditions pertinent to the relations between these classes in their 6 permutations [below]. The 3 factors characterize all the 24 conditions (*paccaya*). These relations, highlighting the 3 factors, are briefly explained below.[1010]

13.13.1 Abhs 8.12 Summary

Chadhā nāman tu nāmassa pañcadhā nāma,rūpinaṁ
ekadhā puna rūpassa rūpaṁ nāmassa c'ekadhā.
paññatti,nāma.rūpāni nāmassa duvidhā dvayaṁ
dvayassa navadhā cā ti chabbidhā paccayā—kathaṁ?

1   In 6 ways **the mind** is a condition for the mind.
2   In 5 ways the mind is a condition for mind-and-matter.
3   Again, the mind is a condition in 1 way for matter, and
4   matter in 1 way for mind.
5   In 2 ways concepts and mind-and-matter are a condition for mind.
6   In 9 ways the dyad—mind-and-matter—is a condition for mind-and-matter.

Thus the relations are sixfold. How?[1011]

13.13.2 Abhs 8.13 The mind for the mind

    Anantara,niruddhā citta,cetasikā dhammā paccuppannānaṁ citta,cetasikānaṁ dhammānaṁ anantara-samanantara-n'atthi,vigata,vasena; purimāni javanāni pacchimānaṁ javanānaṁ āsevana,-vasena; sahajātā citta,cetasikā dhammā aññam-aññaṁ sampayutta,vasenā ti chadhā nāmaṁ nāmassa paccayo hoti.

    In 6 ways **the mind** is a condition for the mind:
Consciousness and mental factors that immediately cease are a condition for present consciousness and mental factors by way of (*1*) proximity, (*2*) contiguity, (*3*) absence and (*4*) disappearance.
    (*5*) Preceding jāvanas are a condition for subsequent jāvanas by way of repetition.
    (*6*) Connascent consciousness and mental factors are a condition for one another by way of association.

[1009] ViśmSan 6.167; Abhvk 454.
[1010] For details, see Vism 17/66-100; U Nārada, *Guide to Conditional Relations* 1, London: PTS, 1979:8-79; Ledi Sayadaw, *Paṭṭhānuddesa Dīpanī* (*The Buddhist Philosophy of Relations*), 1935; Repr Kandy: BPS, 1986:1:57.
[1011] The translation follows that of Abhs:BRS, and the numbering have been added for convenience.

⟨The angled brackets refer to the *paccaya* traditional numbering: Table 13.12.⟩

(1) Proximity condition ⟨4⟩, contiguity condition ⟨5⟩

These 2 conditions are almost identical in meaning; they highlight the same relation from slightly different angles. The formal definitions are as follow:

Proximity condition is a condition where one mental state (the conditioning state) causes another mental state (the conditioned state) to arise immediately after it has ceased, so that no other mental state can intervene between them. Proximity condition refers to the <u>positioning</u> of the cause and effect.

Contiguity condition is a condition where the conditioning mental state causes the conditioned mental state to arise immediately after it has ceased, in accordance with the fixed order of the mental process. Contiguity condition refers to the cause acting on the effect, which in turn acts as cause on the next effect, and so on (as applicable).

These 2 conditions apply to the relationship between the cittas and cetasikas ceasing at any given moment and the cittas and cetasikas that arise in immediate succession. The citta and cetasikas that have just ceased are <u>the conditioning states</u>; the cittas and cetasikas that arise immediately afterwards are <u>the conditioned states</u>.

An arhat's death consciousness, however, does not function as proximity or contiguity condition, since it is not followed by any other citta.

(2) Absence condition ⟨22⟩, disappearance condition ⟨23⟩

These 2 conditions are another pair which are almost identical in form. **Absence condition** is where a mental state in ceasing gives the opportunity to another mental state to arise immediately next to itself. **Disappearance condition** is a condition where a mental state, by its own disappearance, gives the opportunity for the next mental state to arise. The conditioning and conditioned states in these 2 relations are identical with those of the proximity and contiguity conditions. [See (1) above.]

(3) Repetition condition ⟨12⟩ is where the conditioning mental state causes the conditioned states, mental phenomena similar to itself, to arise with increased power and efficiency after it has ceased. Just as a student, by repeated study, becomes more proficient in his lessons, so the conditioning states, by causing states similar to themselves to arise in succession, impart greater proficiency and strength to them.

The conditioning states in this relation are solely <u>mundane</u> wholesome, unwholesome, and functional mental phenomena at any given moment in the *jāvana* (impulsion) process [13.12.3 n] except the last jāvana, insofar as they serve as conditions for mental phenomena having the same karmic quality (wholesome, unwholesome, or functional) in the following jāvana moment. The latter are the conditioned states in this relation.

Although the 4 supramundane path cittas are wholesome jāvanas, they do not become the conditioning states of <u>repetition condition</u> because they are followed by **fruition cittas**, which are resultants, and thus the repetition essential to this relation is lacking. And though <u>fruition cittas</u> can occur in succession in a jāvana process, because they are <u>resultants</u> they do not meet the full definition of the conditioning states in the repetition condition. However, the triple-rooted[1012] sense-sphere wholesome cittas which immediately precede the path cittas are conditioning states and the latter are conditioned states in the repetition condition.

[1012] "Triple-rooted" (*ti,hetuka*) means that the rebirth occurs with the 3 wholesome roots (non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion), ie, free from the 3 unwholesome roots: such is the moment of attaining arhathood, and the rebirth-moment of learners (streamwinners up to arhats-to-be), and some worldling (Abhs 4.25, Abhs:BRS 179).

(*4*) **Association condition** ⟨19⟩ is where a mental state (the conditioning state) causes other mental states (the conditioned states) to arise and be associated in an inseparable group character-ized by its members having a common arising and cessation, a common object, and a common phy-sical base (Abhs 2.1). This condition obtains between any citta or cetasika as the conditioning state and all the other mental phenomena in the same unit of consciousness as the conditioned states.

13.13.3 Abhs 8.14 The mind for mind-and-matter

Hetu,jhān'anga,magg'angāni sahajātānaṁ nāma,rūpānaṁ het'ādi,vasena; sahajātā cetanā sahajātānaṁ nāma,rūpānaṁ; nānā-k,khaṇikā cetanā kammâbhinibbattānaṁ nāmamrūpānaṁ kamma,vasena; vipāka-k,khandhā aññam-aññaṁ sahajātānaṁ rūpānaṁ vipāka,vasenā ti ca pañcadhā nāmaṁ nāmā,rūpānaṁ paccayo hoti.

In 5 ways **the mind** is a condition for <u>mind-and-matter</u>:

(1) Roots, jhāna-factors, and path-factors are a condition for **connascent** mind-and-matter by way of **root**, etc.

(2-4) **Connascent** volition is a condition for connascent mind-and-matter, and **asynchronous** intention for mind-and-matter born of karma, by way of **karma**.

(5) The (mental) **resultant** aggregates are a condition for one another and for connascent matter by way of **result**.

(*1*) **Root condition** is where a conditioning state functions like a root by imparting firmness and fixity to the conditioned states. <u>The conditioning states</u> in this relation are the 6 mental factors known as <u>roots</u> (Abhs 3.5): the 3 unwholesome roots—greed, hatred, and delusion; and the 3 beautiful roots —non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion—which may be either wholesome or indeterminate.

<u>The conditioned states</u> are the mental states associated with each root and the connascent materialities. Connascent materialities are those born of karma at the moment of rebirth-linking, and those born of consciousness during the course of existence.

Just as the roots of a tree are the basis for a tree's existence, growth, and stability, so these roots give rise to the conditioned states and make them firm and steady.

(*2*) **Jhāna condition** ⟨17⟩ is a condition where a conditioning state causes the conditioned states to participate in the close contemplation of an object. The conditioning states are **the 7 dhyana factors** [13.13.3 (2)], which reduce to 5 cetasikas (Abhs 7.16, 23). The conditioned states are the cittas and cetasikas associated with <u>the dhyana factors</u>—that is, all cittas except the 10 types of sense conscious-ness—and the connascent materiality. Although the connascent materiality cannot contemplate the object themselves—because they are produced by the close contemplation accomplished by the dhyana factors—they are included among the conditioned states.

(*3*) **Path condition** ⟨18⟩ is a condition where a conditioning state relates to the conditioned states by causing them to function as a means for reaching a particular rebirth destination. <u>The con-ditioning states</u> in this relation are the 12 path-factors, which reduce to 9 cetasikas (Abhs 7.17, 23). The 4 wrong path-factors[1013] are the means for reaching the suffering destinations; the 8 right path-factors[1014] are the means for reaching the happy destinations and nirvana [9.7.4].

[1013] <u>The 4 wrong path-factors</u> are the cetasikas of view (*diṭṭhi*), thought (*vitakka*), effort (*viriya*) and one-point-edness (*ekaggatā*); these lead to the suffering states [9.7.4].

[1014] <u>The 8 right path-factors</u> are (1) right view, (2) right thought, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration [9.7.4]. These lead to the happy destinations and nirvana (Abhs:BRS 272, 312).

The conditioned states are all cittas except for the 18 that are rootless,[1015] the associated ceta-sikas, and the connascent materiality. While the path-factors in the resultant and functional cittas do not lead to any destinations, they are still classed as path-factors because, considered abstractly in their own nature, they are identical with those capable of leading to different destinations.

(4) Karma condition ⟨13⟩: This condition is of 2 kinds: (*1*) connascent karma condition (*sahajāta,-kamma.paccaya*), and (*2*) asynchronous karma condition (*nānā-k,khaṇika-kamma,paccaya*).

(*4.1*) In the connascent karma condition, the conditioning states are the intentions (*cetanā*) in the 89 cittas. The conditioned states are the citta and cetasikas associated with those volitions and the connascent materiality. Intention here functions as a connascent karma condition by causing its concomitants to perform their respective tasks and by arousing the appropriate kinds of materiality simultaneously with its own arising.

(*4.2*) In the asynchronous karma condition there is a temporal gap between the conditioning state and the conditioned states. The conditioning state in this relation is a past wholesome or past unwholesome volition. The conditioned states are the resultant cittas, their cetasikas, and material-ity born of karma, both at rebirth-linking and in the course of existence. The conditioning force here is the ability of such volition to generate the appropriate resultant mental states and karma-born form (*rūpa*). This conditional relation also obtains between a path-consciousness and its fruition.

(5) Result condition ⟨14⟩ is where a conditioning state makes the conditioned states that arise together with it to be as passive, effortless, and quiescent as itself. The conditioning states in this relation are the resultant cittas and cetasikas. The conditioned states are those same resultants with respect to each other and the connascent materiality. Since resultants are produced from the maturing of karma, they are not active but passive and quiescent. Thus, in the mind of a person in deep sleep, the resultant life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) consciousness arises and passes away in constant succession, yet during this time no effort is made for action by body, speech, or mind, and there is not even distinct awareness of an object. Similarly, in the 5-door cognitive process (the act of sensing),[1016] the resultant cittas do not make an exertion to know their object. It is only in the jāvana phase [13.13.2 (*3*)] that effort is made to clearly cognize the object, and again it is only in the jāvana phase that actions are performed.

13.13.4 Abhs 8.15 The mind for matter

Pacchā,jātā citta,cetasikā dhammā pure,jātassa imassa kāyassa pacchā,jāta,vasenā ti ekadhā va nāmaṁ rūpassa paccayo hoti.

Only in one way is the mind a condition for matter: Subsequent cittas and cetasikas are each a condition for this preceding (material) body by way of postnascence.

(*1*) **Postnascence condition ⟨11⟩** is a condition where a conditioning state assists conditioned states that had arisen prior to itself by supporting and strengthening them. The conditioning states in this relation are subsequently arisen cittas and cetasikas, the conditioned states are the material phenomena of the body born of all 4 causes, by which materiality had arisen along with preceding cittas. This condition begins with the first bhavanga in relation to the materiality born of kamma at

---

[1015] "Rootless" (*ahetuka*) refers to all form or matter (incl the physical sense-activities and mental activities in themselves, Abhs 1.10) because it does not associate with either wholesome, unwholesome or indetermin-ate roots. See Abhs 1.3 + 8-11, 2.28 f, 4.24; Abhs:BRS 1999:40-45 Table 1.3 (rootless cittas), 108, 179, 234 Guide to §6; 312.
[1016] See [13.12.10 (ii) n].

the moment of rebirth-linking. Just as the rainwater that falls later promotes the growth and deve-
lopment of the already existing vegetation, so the subsequently arisen mental states support the
pre-arisen materiality so that they continue to produce similar material phenomena in succession.

13.13.5 Abhs 8.16 Matter for the mind

Cha vatthūni pavattiyaṁ sattannaṁ viññāṇa,dhātūnaṁ; pañc'ālambanāni ca pañca,viññāṇa,-
vīthiyā purejāta,vasenā ti ekadhā va rūpaṁ nāmassa paccayo hoti.

Only in one way is matter a condition for the mind: The 6 bases during the course of existence
are a condition for the 7 elements of consciousness, and the 5 objects for the 5 processes of sense-
consciousness, by way of prenascence.

(*1*) **Prenascence condition** ⟨10⟩ is a condition where a conditioning state—a material state which
has already arisen and reached the stage of presence (*ṭhiti*)—causes mental states (the conditioned
states) to arise after it. This is like the sun, that rises first in the world and gives light to beings who
appear after it has risen.
There are 2 main types of prenascence condition, (i) base prenascence (*vatthu,purejāta*) and (ii)
object prenascence (*ārammaṇa,purejāta*):

(i) Each of **the 6 physical bases** during the course of existence is a conditioning state by way of
base prenascence for the citta and cetasikas (the conditioned states) that take it as the material sup-
port for their arising (Abhs 3.20-22). The heart-base (the Abhidhamma term for the mind's location)
is not a prenascence condition for the mental states at the moment of rebirth-linking, since on that
occasion the heart-base and mental states arise simultaneously as connascence and as mutuality
conditions.
The heart-base (that is, "the mind") arisen at the rebirth-moment becomes a prenascence con-
dition for the first bhavaṅga-citta (the 1st conscious moment) immediately following the rebirth-con-
sciousness, and thereafter it becomes a prenascence condition for all mind element and mind-con-
sciousness element cittas for the rest of our life.

(ii) Each of **the 5 sense-objects** is a conditioning state by way of object-prenascence for the citta
and cetasikas in a sense-door cognitive process [7.3] that take it as an object. In addition, all 18 types
of concretely produced matter (see Abhs 6.2) that have reached the stage of presence can become
object prenascence condition for the cittas and cetasikas in a mind-door process.[1017]

13.13.6 Abhs 8.17 Concepts and mind-and-matter for the mind

Ārammaṇa,vasena upanissaya,vasenā ti ca duvidhā paññatti nāma,rūpāni nāmass' eva paccayā
honti.
Tattha rūp'ādi,vasena chabbidhaṁ hoti ārammaṇaṁ.
Upanissayo pana tividho hoti: ārammaṇûpanissayo, anantarûpanissayo, pakatûpanissayo cā ti.
Tatth'ālambanam eva garukataṁ ārammaṇûpanissayo. Anantara,niruddhā citta,cetasikā dhammā
anantarûpanissayo. Rāg'ādayo pana dhammā saddh'ādayo ca sukhaṁ dukkhaṁ puggalo bhojanaṁ
utu senāsanañ ca yathā'rahaṁ ajjhattañ ca bahiddhā ca kusal'ādi,dhammānaṁ kammaṁ vipākānan
ti ca bahudhā hoti pakatûpanissayo.

In 2 ways concepts and mind-and-matter are conditions for mind—namely, by way of <u>object</u> and
<u>decisive support</u>. Therein, **an object** is sixfold as visible form, etc. But **decisive support** is threefold,
namely, object decisive support, proximity decisive support, and natural decisive support.

[1017] On the mind-door cognitive process (*citta,vīthi*)—how the mind processes itself—see <u>SD 19.14 (2, esp
2.4.9);</u> SD 47.19 (3.2.2.3).

Of these, <u>the object</u> itself when it becomes prominent serves as <u>object decisive support</u>. Cittas and cetasikas that immediately cease act as <u>proximity decisive support</u>. **Natural decisive support** is of many kinds: states of lust, etc, states of faith, etc, pleasure, pain, individuals, food, season, lodgings, (all such things), internal and external, as the case may be, are conditions for wholesome states, etc. Karma too is similarly a condition for its results.

(**1**) **Object condition** ⟨**2**⟩ is a condition where a conditioning state, as object, causes other states, the conditioned states, to arise taking it as their object. The 6 classes of objects [III, §16] are the conditioning states in this relation, the corresponding cittas and cetasikas are the conditioned states.

(**2**) **Decisive support condition** ⟨**9**⟩: Of the 3 types of this condition:

(i) <u>Object decisive support</u> (*ārammaṇûpanissaya*) is a condition where the conditioning state is an exceptionally desirable or important object which causes the conditioned states, the mental phenomena that apprehend it, to arise in strong dependence on it.

(ii) <u>Proximity decisive support</u> (*anantarûpanissaya*) is identical with proximity condition with respect to the conditioning and conditioned states, but differs from it slightly in the forces of the conditions. Proximity is the force which causes the succeeding mental states to arise immediately after the preceding states have ceased; proximity decisive support is the force which causes the succeeding states to arise because they are strongly dependent on the ceasing of the preceding states.

(iii) <u>Natural decisive support</u> (*pakatûpanissaya*) is a wide relation that includes as the conditioning states all past mental or material phenomena that become strongly efficacious for the arising, at a subsequent time, of the conditioned states, which are subsequent cittas and cetasikas. For example, prior lust may be a natural decisive support condition for the intentions of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc; prior faith for the intentions of giving alms, undertaking precepts, and practising meditation; the gaining of health for happiness and energy, the onset of sickness for sorrow and torpor, etc.

13.13.7 Abhs 8.18 Mind-and-matter for mind-and-matter

Adhipati,sahajāta,aññam-añña,nissaya,āhāra,indriya,vippayutta,atthi,avigata,vasenā ti yathā'-rahaṁ navadhā nāma,rūpāni nāma,rūpānaṁ paccayā bhavanti.

Mind-and-matter is a condition for mind-and-matter in 9 ways according to circumstances, namely, by way of predominance, connascence, mutuality, support, nutriment, faculty, dissociation, presence, and non-disappearance.
These conditions will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

13.13.8 Abhs 8.19 Predominant condition

Tattha garu,kataṁ ālambanaṁ ālambanâdhipati,vasena nāmānaṁ sahajātâdhipati catubbidho pi sahajāta,vasena sahajātānaṁ nāma,rūpānan ti ca duvidho hoti adhipati,paccayo.

Therein, **predominance condition** is twofold:

(i) <u>The object</u> to which weight is attached is a condition for states of mind by way of object predominance.

(ii) The fourfold connascent predominance is a condition for <u>connascent mind-and-matter</u> by way of connascence.

(1) Predominance condition (3): Of the two types of this condition:

(i) Object predominance (*ārammaṇâdhipati*) is a condition where the conditioning state, as object, dominates over the mental states which take it as their object. Only those objects which are esteemed, cherished, or strongly desired can become the conditioning states in this relation.
This condition is virtually identical with *the object decisive support condition*, differing from it only slightly in the conditioning forces: while the latter has the force of being a strongly efficacious cause for the arising of the cittas and cetasikas, the former has the force of strongly attracting and dominating those states.

(ii) Connascent predominance (*sahajātâdhipati*) is a condition where a conditioning state dominates conditioned states connascent with itself. The conditioning states in this relation are the 4 predominants—will [desire], energy, the mind and investigation (Abhs 7.20): these 4 are the bases of success (*iddhi,pāda*) [13.12.3]. Only one of these can take on the role of predominance condition on a given occasion, and then only in jāvana cittas with 2 or 3 roots. The connascent mental and material phenomena are the conditioned states.

13.13.9 Abhs 8.20 Predominant condition

Citta,cetasikā dhammā aññam-aññaṁ sahajāta,rūpānañ ca, mahā,bhūtā aññam-aññaṁ upādā,-rūpānañ ca, paṭisandhi-k,khaṇe vatthu,vipākā aññam-aññan ti ca tividho hoti sahajāta,paccayo.

Connascence condition is threefold: consciousness and mental factors are a condition for one another and for the connascent materiality; the 4 primary elements [the 4 elements] are a condition mutually and for the derived materiality; the heart-base and the resultant (mental aggregates) for one another at the moment of rebirth-linking.

(1) Connascence condition ⟨6⟩ is a condition where a conditioning state, on arising, causes the conditioned states to arise simultaneously with itself. This is compared to the flame of a lamp which, on arising, causes the light, colour, and heat to arise along with it. This condition may be divided into 3 types, as is done in the above text, or it may be more finely divided into 5 types:
  (i)   each mental state—citta or cetasika—for the associated mental states;
  (ii) each mental state for the connascent materiality;
  (iii) each of the 4 primary elements for the other 3 primary elements;
  (iv) each of the 4 primary elements for derived materiality [8.3.3 (1)]; and
  (v)   at the moment of rebirth-linking, the heart-base for the resultant mental states, and the latter in turn for the heart-base.

13.13.10 Abhs 8.21 Mutuality condition

Citta,cetasikā dhammā aññam-aññaṁ, mahā,bhūtā aññam-aññaṁ paṭisandhi-k,khaṇe vatthu,-vipākā aññam-aññan ti ca tividho hoti aññam-añña,paccayo.

Mutuality condition is threefold: consciousness and mental factors are a condition for one another; the 4 primary elements for one another; the heart-base and the resultant mental aggregates for one another at the moment of rebirth-linking.

(1) Mutuality condition ⟨7⟩ is actually a subordinate type of connascence condition.
In the general connascence condition, the conditioning state simply causes the conditioned states to arise together with itself, but no reciprocity in the conditioning force is required. However, in the mutuality condition, each of the conditioning states is, at the same time and in the same way, a conditioned state in relation to the very states that it conditions. Thus a conditioning state in the relation of mutuality gives its force to the conditioned state and also receives the force of the conditioned

state, which is a conditioning state relative to itself. This is compared to a tripod, each leg of which assists the other two legs reciprocally in enabling the tripod to stand upright.

13.13.11 Abhs 8.22 Support condition

Citta cetasikā dhammā aññam-aññaṁ sahajāta rūpānañ ca mahā bhūtā aññam-aññaṁ upādā,-rūpānañ ca cha vatthūni sattannaṁ viññāṇa,dhātūnan ti ca tividho hoti nissaya,paccayo.

Support condition is threefold: consciousness and mental factors are a condition for one another and connascent materiality; the 4 primary elements for one another and derived materiality; and the 6 bases for the 7 consciousness elements.

(*1*) **Support condition** ⟨8⟩ is where the conditioning state causes the conditioned states to arise by serving as the support or foundation on which they depend. The conditioning state is said to be related to the conditioned state in a manner similar to the way the earth supports trees and vegetation or a canvas supports a painting.
    Two main categories of support condition are recognized:
(i)   connascent support (*sahajāta-nissaya*) and
(ii) prenascent support (*purejāta-nissaya*).
    Connascent support condition is identical in all respects with the connascence condition. **Prenascence** support condition includes 2 subsidiary types. One is simple <u>base-prenascent support</u> (*vatthu,purejāta,nissaya*), which is identical with <u>base prenascence</u>, discussed under the prenascence condition. The other is called <u>base-object support prenascent support</u> (*vatth'ārammaṇa,purejāta,-nissaya*). This refers to the special case when a citta arises supported by the heart-base and at the same time makes that heart-base its object. Thus on such an occasion the heart-base is simultaneously a support and an object for a single citta.
    Referring to this condition, **the Paṭṭhāna** states: "One contemplates with insight that internal base as impermanent, suffering, non-self; one enjoys it and delights in it; making it an object, lust arises, wrong view arises, doubt arises, restlessness arises, displeasure arises."[1018]

13.13.12 Abhs 8.23 Nutriment condition

Kabaḷīkāro āhāro imassa kāyassa, arūpino āhārā sahajātānaṁ nāma,rūpānan ti ca duvidho hoti āhāra,paccayo.

Nutriment condition is twofold: as edible food it is a condition for this body; and as immaterial nutriment it is a condition for connascent mind-and-matter [13.12.15].

(*1*) **Nutriment condition** ⟨15⟩ is where a conditioning state relates to the conditioned states by producing them, maintaining them in existence, and supporting their growth and development. This is compared to a prop which supports an old house and prevents it from collapsing.
    Thus the essential function of nutriment is supporting or reinforcing (*upaṭṭhambana*).
    Nutriment condition is twofold: (i) material nutriment (*rūp'āhāra*) and mental nutriment (*nām'-āhāra*).

[1018] One line of Abhidhamma interpretation adopted by the teachers would restrict the base-object-prenascence support condition to the heart-base arisen at the 17th mind-moment preceding the death-consciousness, on an occasion when the last jāvana process takes the heart-base as object. Ledi Sayadaw argues at length in his Paramattha,dīpanī against this narrow interpretation, and Abhs:BRS accepts his position here. (Abhs:BRS 372: ch VIII n3)

(i)   Material nutriment is the nutritive essence found in 2 kinds of food: (a) the external and (b) the internal.

    (a) **External food** is the edible food that we normally consume, that is a conditioning state for our physical body.

    When food is ingested, its nutritive essence produces (b) a new matter born of nutriment, and it also reinforces the material groups born of all 4 causes (karma, consciousness, heat and nutriment) [13.12.11], keeping them strong and fresh so that they can continue to arise in succession. The **internal nutriment** contained in the material groups born of all 4 causes also serves as a condition by reinforcing internal materiality connascent with it in its own group and materiality in the other groups in the body.

(ii) Mental nutriment is threefold: the nutriments that are contact, mental volition, and consciousness. These are conditions for connascent mental and material phenomena.[1019]

13.13.13 Abhs 8.24 Faculty condition

Pañca,pasādā pañcannaṁ viññāṇānaṁ, rūpa,jīvit'indriyaṁ upādinna,rūpānaṁ, arūpino indriyā sahajātānaṁ nāma,rūpānan ti ca tividho hoti indriya,paccayo.

The faculty condition is threefold:

the 5 sensitive faculties are a condition for	the 5 kinds of consciousness;
the material life-faculty is the life-faculty for	the form phenomena born of karma;
the formless faculties are the life-faculties for	**connascent** mind-and-matter.

(1) Faculty condition ⟨16⟩ is where a conditioning state relates to the conditioned states by exercising control in a particular aspect or function. This condition is compared to a panel of ministers, each of whom has freedom of control in governing his particular region of the country and does not attempt to govern the other regions. As stated in the text, there are 3 types of faculty condition:

(i) prenascence faculty, (ii) material life-faculty, and (iii) connascence faculty, thus:

(*i*)   In prenascence faculty, each of the 5 faculties (arisen at the static phase of the past bhavaṅga citta) is a faculty-condition for its respective type of sense-consciousness along with its cetasikas. This is so because the sense-faculty controls the efficiency of the consciousness that takes it as a base. For example, good eyes produce acute vision while weak eyes result in poor vision.

(*ii*)   The material life-faculty in the material groups born of karma is a faculty-condition for the other 9 kinds of materiality in the same groups, for it controls them by maintaining their vitality.

(*iii*)   The 15 immaterial faculties (Abhs 7.18) are each a connascence-faculty condition for the associated mental states and the connascent materiality.

(2) Sexuality. Of the faculties, the 2 sex faculties of **femininity** and **masculinity** do not become conditioning factors in the faculty condition. They are excluded because they do not have the functions of a condition (*paccaya*). A condition has 3 functions—producing, supporting and maintaining— but the sex faculties do not execute any of these functions. Nevertheless, they are still classed as faculties (*indriya*) because they control or shape the sexual organs (*liṅga*), gender appearance (*nimitta*), character (*kutta; "*ways"),[1020] and deportment (*akappa*) (including mode of dress and looks), so that the whole personality tends towards either femininity or masculinity.[1021]

[1019] That "all beings are sustained by food" (*sabbe sattā āhāra-ṭ,ṭhitikā*): **Putta,maṁsa S** (S 12.63) + SD 20.6 (2.2).

[1020] The words *kutta* and *ākappa* occur in **Saññoga S** (A 7.48) quoted below.

The technicality presented in this passage is liberated by the teachings of **the Saññoga Sutta** (A 7.48), where the Buddha explains the nature of sexuality, thus:[1022]

> **2 A woman** considers her own womanly faculty,[1023] her own womanly ways,[1024] her womanly looks,[1025] her womanly pride,[1026] her womanly desires, her womanly voice, her womanly adornments.[1027] She is aroused by them and delights in them.[1028]
>
> 2.2 Thus aroused, she considers another in terms of a man's faculty,[1029] his manly ways, … . She is aroused by them and delights in them.
>
> 2.3 Thus aroused, she desires external union,[1030] and she desires the (physical) pleasure and (mental) joy arising on account of such a union.
>
> Bhikshus, <u>attached to her womanliness, she enters into union with men</u>.
>
> 2.4 In this way, bhikshus, a woman does not rise above her womanliness.
>
> <div align="right">(A 7.48/4:57-59), SD 8.7</div>

The Sutta then goes on to describe **a man** reacting in a similar manner, and its results, and closes by stating how sexual dichotomy and sexual lust can be overcome.

What is interesting in the Saññoga Sutta's teaching is that we can read it as a whole as highlighting how a **dichotomy** and **externalizing** of sexuality—seeing physical (sexual) difference makes us desire what we think we lack—makes us like it or dislike it instead of cultivating balance wholesomeness of masculinity and femininity, animus and anima, within our own being. We should respect the sex of others and accept them as **humans**, relating to them with life, love, freedom, truth and wisdom, and grow as individuals to awaken and brighten the world.

13.13.14 Abhs 8.25 Dissociation condition

Okkanti-k,khaṇe vatthu vipākānaṁ, citta,cetasikā dhammā sahajāta,rūpānaṁ sahajāta,vasena, pacchā,jātā citta,cetasikā dhammā pure,jātassa imassa kāyassa pacchā,jātavasena, cha vatthūni pavattiyaṁ sattannaṁ viññāṇa,dhātūnaṁ pure,jātavasenā ti ca tividho hoti vippayutta,paccayo.

[1021] Ledi Sayadaw, *Paṭṭhān'uddesa Dīpanī*, 1935:50 ch 16.

[1022] A 7.48/4:57-59 (SD 8.7).

[1023] "Own feminine faculty," *ajjhattaṁ itth'indriyaṁ,* ie, her own, "internal," sexual organs. *Indriya* here has a <u>psychological </u>sense. It refers to the <u>gender</u> that she perceives herself to be, ie, "femininity." Note that the Sutta's reference is "in terms of a man's faculty," not "in another man": <u>gender</u> is meant here. This is very significant as it reflects the fact that those sexually attracted to others, consciously or unconsciously, may look for such features and responses that excite them in either sex. The term "femininity" usually refers to the <u>psychological</u> aspect or *gender* of a woman, related to Jung's notions of *anima* and *animus* [SD 8.7 (4.1)].

[1024] "Womanly ways," *itthi,kutta,* eg seductiveness, coquetry, and wiles (AA 4:32). Many of such terms in this sentence and their cognates below are in the Pali singular, which however need to be rendered idiomatically into the English plural.

[1025] "Womanly looks," *itth'ākappa,* ie, her physical looks and how she is dressed (AA 4:32).

[1026] "Womanly pride," *itthi,vidha,* ie, her pride and conceit (AA 4:32).

[1027] "Womanly adornments," *itth'alaṅkāra,* "adorning the head, the neck, the hands, the feet, the hips (*kaṭi*)" (*sīsûpago gīvûpago hatthûpago pādûpago kaṭûpago,* V 4:340)

[1028] "By them … in them," *tattha,* lit "therein," here rendered idiomatically.

[1029] *Ajjhattaṁ puris'indriyaṁ,* ie, his own or "internal" sexual organs. *Indriya* here has a <u>psychological </u>sense. It refers to the <u>gender</u> that he perceives himself to be, ie, "masculinity." Note that the Sutta's reference is "in terms of a man's faculty," not "in another man": <u>gender</u> is meant here. This is very significant as it reflects the fact that those sexually attracted to others, consciously or unconsciously, may look for such features and responses that excite them in either sex. See SD 8.7 (4.1).

[1030] "She desires external union," *bahiddhā saṁyogaṁ ākaṅkhati.* Note that she does not consider her <u>sexual</u> features, but her "femininity." It is possible to understand here that "man" and "woman" are both this person's own perceptions of gender. See SD 8.7 (3.2).

    Dissociation condition is threefold:
• at the moment of descent (rebirth-linking) the heart-base is a condition for resultant mental aggre-
    gates, and consciousness and mental factors are conditions for connascent matter, by way of con-
    nascence;
• postnascent consciousness and mental factors are the condition for this prenascent material body
    by way of postnascence;
• the 6 bases, in the course of life, are the conditions for the 7 consciousness elements by way of
    prenascence.

    (1) Dissociation condition ⟨20⟩ is where the conditioning state is either a mental phenomenon
that assists present materiality, or a material phenomenon that assists present mental phenomena.
In this relationship the 2 components—the conditioning state and the conditioned states—are
necessarily of different types: if one is <u>matter</u> the other must be <u>mind</u>; if one is *mind* the other must
be *matter*. This is like a mixture of water and oil, which remain separate though placed together.
    Thus at the moment of rebirth the heart-base and the mental aggregates arise simultaneously,
each a dissociation condition for the other by reason of the particular characteristics that distinguish
them as material and mental phenomena. At the moment of rebirth, again, the mental aggregates
are a condition for the other kinds of karma-born matter, and during the course of existence for
mind-born matter, by way of <u>dissociation condition</u>.
    Dissociation also comprises prenascent and postnascent types: the former obtains between
matter as the conditioning state and mind as the conditioned state; the latter obtains between mind
as the conditioning state and matter as the conditioned state. These are identical with prenascent
support condition and postnascence condition, respectively.

13.13.15 Abhs 8.26 Presence and non-disappearance conditions

    Saha,jātaṁ pure,jātaṁ pacchā,jātaṁ ca sabbathā
    Kabaḷīkāro āhāro rūpa,jīvitam icc' ayan ti.
    Pañca,vidho hoti atthi,paccayo avigata,paccayo ca.

    The presence and non-disappearance conditions are altogether of 5 kinds: connascence, prena-
scence, postnascence, edible food, and material life.

    (1) Presence condition ⟨21⟩, non-disappearance condition (24): These are 2 conditions identical
in meaning, differing only in terminology. In this relationship a conditioning state helps the condi-
tioned states to arise or persist in being during a time when it exists alongside these conditioned
states. It is not necessary, however, for the conditioning state and these conditioned states to be
connascent; all that is required is for the two to temporally overlap, and for the conditioning state to
support in some way the conditioned states during the time they overlap.
    Thus <u>presence condition</u> includes prenascence and postnascence as well as connascence. While
the text mentions only 5 types of presence condition, since these 5 in turn include additional subsi-
diary types presence condition comprises a wide variety of other conditions. This will become clear
in the next section, which deals with the subsumption of all conditional relations under 4 master
conditions.

13.13.16 Abhs 8.27 The synthesis of conditions

    Ārammaṇûpanissaya,kamma,atthi,paccayesu ca sabbe pi paccayā samodhānaṁ gacchanti.
Sahajāta,rūpan ti pan' ettha sabbatthā pi pavatte citta,samuṭṭhānaṁ paṭisandhiyaṁ kaṭattā rūpā-
nañ ca vasena duvidho hoti veditabbaṁ.

    All conditions are included in the conditions of object, decisive support, karma, and presence.

Connascent materiality should always be understood as being twofold:
• throughout the course of *existence* it should be understood as those born of consciousness, and,
• at *rebirth-linking*, as that born of karma.

(*1*) The way in which all conditions are included in these 4 conditions is explained by Ledi Saya-daw in his commentary as follows:[1031] Predominance condition being twofold, object predominance always comprises the object and decisive support conditions, and sometimes presence condition as well; while connascence predominance comprises presence condition.

(*2*) The main types of support condition—connascence support and base prenascence support—both come within the scope of presence condition. The special case of base-object-prenascence support, in which the heart-base becomes an object of the same mind-door cittas it supports as a base, is included in both object and presence conditions, and in decisive support as well if the heart-base is given special importance as object.

Of the 2 main types of prenascence condition, base prenascence is included in presence condition while object prenascence is included in both object and presence, and possibly in decisive support too.

Of the 2 types of karma condition, connascent karma is included in presence condition, while asynchronous karma is included in karma condition and, if strong, in decisive support as well.

Dissociation condition is included in presence condition but, if the heart-base becomes simultaneously base and object, it is included in presence, object, and possibly decisive support.

Of the remaining conditions, the following 11 are always included within presence condition: root, connascence, mutuality, resultant, nutriment, faculty, jhāna, path, association, non-disappearance, and postnascence. The following 5 are always included in decisive support condition: proximity, contiguity, repetition, absence, and disappearance.[1032]

13.13.17 Abhs 8.28 Summary

Thus the things pertaining to the 3 periods of time and the timeless, internal and external, conditioned and unconditioned, are threefold by way of concepts, mind, and matter.

In all, the conditions in the scheme of conditional relations are 24.

13.14 THE KEY PROBLEMS WITH THE ABHIDHAMMA

13.14.1 Noa Ronkin concludes her lucid article on "Abhidharma" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* with these insightful words, summarizing the key problems with the Abhidhamma, on which we should reflect:

(1) In sum, the Abhidharma project, as evident by the *dharma* theory and its supporting doctrines, is, at bottom, epistemologically oriented. Yet the project also intends to ascertain that every constituent of the experiential world is knowable and nameable, and that the words and concepts used in the discourse that develops around the discernment of these constituents uniquely define their corresponding referents.

(2) The *dharma* analysis therefore paves the way for conceptual realism: a worldview that is based on the notion of truth as consisting in a correspondence between our concepts and statements, on the one hand, and the features of an independent, determinate reality, on the other hand.

(3) Conceptual realism does not necessarily have implications for the ontological status of this reality as externally existing. But to espouse such a position is to make a significant

---

[1031] Ledi, *Paramatthadīpani* §167/228. (Word ed 1907:169).
[1032] The manner in which the various conditions are subsumed under the main types of conditions is summarized in Abhs:BRS 1999:323 Table 8.4.

move away from the earliest Buddhist teaching that presents the Buddha's view of language as conventional.

(N Ronkin, "Abhidharma," SEP 2010, 2022; numbered paragraphs)[1033]

We shall here summarize the key problems with Abhidhamma.

13.14.2 The Abhidhamma, language and realism

(1) The traditional biography of the Buddha tells us that he spends the first 7 weeks after the great awakening in solitary retreat,[1034] and seems to be reluctant to teach the Dharma until Mahā Brahmā himself comes down and supplicates him to do so.[1035] Contemporary scholar of Buddhism Noa Ronkin, after a careful study of the suttas and related texts, tells us that this apparent hesitance and reluctance to teach is simply because the Buddha's awakening is *unique in terms of human, or any sentient, experience*.

When the Buddha starts teaching he wisely and compassionately does so on 2 levels: the explicit (*nīt'attha*) for the right and ready who may attain streamwinning, even arhathood; and the implicit (*neyy'attha*), whose sense needs to be drawn out and elaborated on, for the ordinary audience.[1036] Yet, **the Alagaddûpama Sutta** (M 22) preserves 2 important parables—those of the water-snake and the raft, respectively—that admonish us to let go of even the Dharma itself, so that we can cross over to nirvana [10.1.6].

(2) The reason for the Buddha's hesitation to teach is partly to simply enjoy the bliss of awakening, partly to find the words and ways to convey his unique personal experience of awakening. When he starts teaching, he uses language as merely a tool (the word, *anuvyañjana*) for conveying the meaning (*attha*) of his awakening, and the purpose (also *attha*) of the training (of Buddhism). This special emphasis on **skilful means**—often forgotten or ignored by Buddhist teachers and students alike—is to remind us of the inherent insufficiency and inadequacy of language.

Although **language**—verbal, scribal, technical and body language—is a constant feature of our experience, communication and learning, we are simply unaware of the paradox in our cognitive process: to become knowable, *all the incoming sensory data must be verbally differentiated*. When we speak to others, we also speak to ourselves. All speech is constructed, mind-made, mental formations. Hence, no language construct justifies its reliability because it could equally have been constructed otherwise, in accordance with other conventional guidelines.[1037]

It is this reliance on language—especially Sanskrit, the tradition that takes language to be itself as both the means and the ends—that was (and is) a key cause for the rise of sectarian schools of Buddhism after the Buddha's passing. It is this reliance on language—the Dharma/Dhamma as mere words (Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, and so on)—that makes us view the one teaching (*eka,dhamma*) in many different ways, each in our own way, to become "vehicles" (*yāna*) and "private truths" (*pacceka,sacca*).[1038]

[1033] On the Buddha's view of language: **Ronkin**, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2005:244-250 Conclusion; R **Gombrich**, *What the Buddha Thought,* London, 2009: 144-160 ch 10.

[1034] See SD 63.1; **Dhamma & Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1 (5).

[1035] See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19.4), SD 1.11; **Why the Buddha "hesitated" to teach**, SD 12.1.

[1036] **Neyy'attha Nīt'attha S** (A 2.3.4-5), SD 2.6b; **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9) @ SD 7.14 (4.1); SD 26.11 (1.2). The Abhidhamma and Commentaries call this pair of teachings the "conventional Dharma" (*sammuti,dhamma*) and "ultimate Dharma" (*param'attha.dhamma*): SD 2.6b (1); SD 5.17 (5.3.7); SD 10.6 (3.3).

[1037] On the Buddha's view of language, see Gombrich 2009: ch 10, esp pp144-155; Ronkin 2005:244-250.

[1038] SD 60.1d (6.2.6.2); SD 40a.8 (5.2.1.1).

(3) On a deeper level, we can say that the Buddha rejects **realism**, conceptual and ontological alike: the view that words, thoughts and experiences are ultimately real. **Abhidhamma** takes a big leap away from the Dhamma in:

(i) holding the notion that the encountered world is made up of distinguishable substances: the *dhamma*s that the Buddha advises us to abandon in due course;
(ii) holding up a linguistic theory that words refer to these substances which they represent; the conviction that our language corresponds to or mirrors a mind-independent reality.

Instead—as Ronkin stresses—the Buddha points towards conventionalism in language and under-mines the misleading notion of nouns as substance-words.[1039] Whatever we can know is part of the activity of language, but language, by its very nature, undermines certified knowledge. The Buddha shows that language is, in principle, faulty: having the power to make manifold and endlessly to proliferate (*papañceti*), it makes things appear and disappear; it can construct anything and hence cannot be representational of reality. There can be no innocence of relations between word and world. The word is not the thing.[1040]

(4) In the Abhidhamma, we can see how language *is* everything. The word *is* the thing; Dham-ma becomes dogma. One of the greatest thinkers of our time, George Steiner (1929-2020), in his 1986 lecture at the Cambridge University, ominously warns us:

> *Anything* can be said and, in consequence, written about *anything*. We scarcely pause to observe or to countenance this commonplace. But an enigmatic enormity inhabits it.
> Every other human instrument and performative capability has its limitations … .
> Only language knows no conceptual, no projective finality. We are at liberty to say any-thing, to say what we will about anything, about everything and about nothing … .
> The conceptual process, the deed of imagining, can abolish, reverse or confound all cate-gories (themselves embedded in language) of identity and of temporality.
> We can say any truth and any falsehood. We can affirm and negate in the same breath. We can construe material impossibility at will; … . Thus language itself possesses and is pos-sessed by the dynamics of fiction.
> (George Steiner, *Real Presences,* Cambridge, 1986:53 f)

(5) British scholar of early Buddhism, Noa Ronkin (2005:246), directs our attention to the nature of Abhidhamma:

> Yet another problem is that the developed Abhidhamma uses the atemporal category of **sabhāva** as an ontological determinant while atemporal individuation is ontologically impov-erishing. A complete account of a *dhamma*'s nature must involve the dynamics of its opera-tion through time, but *sabhāva* as an atemporal category falls short of such a description of its *dhamma*.
> Also, the very idea of a complete individuating description is dubious, for when the *dhammas*' individuation does take into account their causal and temporal relations, then a vast range of descriptive possibilities is effected, none of which is complete. A variety of dif-

---

[1039] Ronkin 2005:252 n5. N Smart, *Reflections in the Mirror of Religion,* London, 1997:89 f. Smart proclaims that the notion of language as representational of the world helped reinforce not only the sacred status of San-skrit but also the Vedas' supposedly everlasting validity. By promulgating conventionalism in linguistic theory, the Buddha rejected the prestige of the Vedas and the brahmins, although this rejection also had a deep-cutting social edge.

[1040] Ronkin, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics,* 2005:245.

ferent possible individual *dhamma* instances may then be the referents of that incomplete description, and hence the uniqueness essential to individuation would be lacking.
                            (Ronkin, *Early Buddhist Metaphysics,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2005*:*251) [1041]

The Buddha's teaching on language and conceptual thought is attested by his teachings of **non-self (***anatta***)** and the analysis of the person into **the 5 aggregates** (*pañca-k,khandha*). He thus both rejects the idea of a metaphysical self as an abiding entity or substratum of being, and rejects an endless idea of "self" that is an "I" which can be discovered by introspection. "Self," "person," "being" are mind-made ideas and conventional labels for what are really changing, conditionally arisen psycho-physical processes.

The Buddha not only rejects the concept of self, more importantly, he points to a broader reality: that language is neither means nor criteria for determining the nature of the moments or episodes of our existential experience, let alone is the means or criteria for reflecting reality. There are simply no features in reality that are mirrored in our conceptual constructs. Any word, term or definition is an arbitrary phonetic mark, an empty sign. We simply cannot define things into existence, except as delusions.

Hence, to quote Steiner again, "To ascribe to words a correspondence to 'things out there,' to see and use them as somehow representational of 'reality' in the world, is not only a vulgar illusion. It makes of language a lie."[1042]

13.14.3 We are always "conscious *of* something," but not of some *thing*

(1) According to early Buddhism, **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*) is not a state but an activity of one of the 6 senses: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind. Hence, when we direct our attention to an active sense, we are conscious *of* that sense's activity, such as seeing or hearing, and so on. We are always "**conscious *of* something**."[1043]

We may be conscious of some **state**, physical (one of the 5 senses) or mental (a feeling or a thought). Each of these sensed states, according to the early Buddhism, is a conditioned response to visual objects, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, or the mind "minding" *one* of these sense-activities.[1044] We may speak of these as "physical states" and "mental states," but they are not *static*[1045] conditions: they are dynamically conditioned states. In other words, each of these sensings is an **activity**. Such an understanding is said to be **a process epistemology**, that is, a way of knowing things through our sensing and minding activities.

The history of Abhidhamma is, on the other hand, that of a gradual shift from epistemology to metaphysics, more specifically from an implicit *process-oriented* conceptual scheme to **an event metaphysics**. Bluntly put, while the suttas teach us practical ways of transforming ourselves (through moral discipline and mental concentration), the Abhidhamma tries to define in technical terms what these changes are, even how these changes occur, and so on. In religious studies, this is called **scholasticism**.

(2) Although **the *dhamma* theory** [10.4.3] can help us understand early Buddhist ontology (the nature of being), in its post-canonical formulation, the ontology centres on the problem of the individuation of mental states, laying the foundation for a metaphysical theory of mental events. This is

---

[1041] See also N Rescher, *Process Philosophy: A survey of basic issues,* Pittsburgh, 2000:127-130.
[1042] Steiner 1986:54.
[1043] See SD 17.8a (7.1).
[1044] The mind (n) can only mind (vb) one of these sense activities (incl minding itself) at a time. Such a minding is so rapid that we may get *the illusion* that we are "multitasking."
[1045] Both "state" (n) and "static" (adj) der from Lat *stare,* "to stand" (E Klein, *A Comprehensive Etym Dict of the Eng Lang,* Elsevier, 1966: state); they are related to Skt root √STHĀ, to stand; P *tiṭṭhati* (Skt *tiṣṭhati*)*,* "he stands."

best understood as **a metaphysics of mind** rather than a comprehensive ontology. In other words, later Abhidhamma is mostly only about <u>knowing</u> the nature of the mind than *how* to know, *tame* and *free* the mind, that is the heart of early Buddhist training. Abhidhamma is merely about knowing rather than being <u>freed</u> by knowing.

The Abhidhamma seeks not only to *explain* the transformation of the unawakened mind of the "ordinary person" (*puthujjana*) into the awakened mind of the "noble person" (*ariya,puggala*), but also *how* such transformation occurs. To this end, the Abhidhamma attempts to explain, as it were, what is going on at each and every moment of transformation at the turning point in the process of awakening, how the mind breaks through into establishing the 8 factors of the "noble path" beginning with right view.[1046] It tries to explain the journey through the park or the museum, but we have not taken up that visit yet.

The Abhidhamma thus lays down the technical details regarding the nature of mental events, their powers and qualities that distinguish them from ordinary types of mind, and how they are related. In short, the Abhidhamma defines the *dhammas* that are held up as the means for penetrating ignorance into true reality and awakening. The focus of such an enterprise is actually **meta-psychological**, not ontological: it is thinking about thinking about the mind, rather than understanding how to calm and clear that mind in the spirit of **the Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38) [8.1.3], for example.

> So while the Buddha spoke of the mind "changing while it stands," the Abhidhamma just speaks of "standing." It is much easier to define a static entity than a process evolving over time. This is why a butterfly collector wants to have his butterflies dead, with a pin stuck through their heart and a little label underneath, not madly meandering about in the woods. The dead mind. But the Buddha was not a butterfly collector, he was an observer of nature. He wanted us to watch the flight and flitter of the butterfly, to understand how it behaves in its natural environment, and to follow it gently, delicately, quietly until it settles down to rest and be still according to its nature—which he called "samadhi."
>
> (Sujato, *The Mystique of Abhidhamma,* Bundanoon, Australia, 2010:7)[1047]

(3) Whereas, in the early Buddhist texts, consciousness is *of something,* in Abhidhamma consciousness is about some <u>thing</u>. That thing is the **citta**, a term for the mind in its moment of activity. Now this *citta* is defined as each having a <u>fixed activity</u>, even fixed state, its own nature, indeed own-nature: **sabhāva** (Skt *svabhāva*). This is an individuator that determines its internal structure and mode of operation, and that discriminates it from all other eventualities. It is the *citta*'s selfhood. It is no more about *knowing* the mind; it is about <u>being</u> instead of *becoming,* no more about arising and ceasing, no more about changing ourselves. It is about **being** change itself. Here, epistemology is taken over by **ontology**.

> In the post-canonical Abhidhamma, however, when the problem of the principle of individuation takes centre stage, this framework is gradually invested with an **ontological** signification,
> for the *dhammas* that are discerned and distinguished are reckoned not only as constitutive conditions of the experiential world as it arises, but as distinguishable, meaningful factors of experience, by the individuation of which anything experienced acquires reality.
> They are throbs of experience, as it were, that make up world-creating processes; irreducible units of secondary, apparent identities; particulars best represented by the category of event, and finally the ultimate constituents of encountered phenomena: they alone really exist.   (Ronkin 2005:249, paragraphed)

[1046] Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening,* Leiden, 1992a:344-349.
[1047] See D 22,2A/2:291 (SD 13.2); M 10,4A/1:56 (SD 13.3). For a differing opinion, see Analayo, SD 13.1 (3.9.1).

In its later stages, adds Ronkin,[1048] the Abhidhamma system is reminiscent of Leibniz's monadological metaphysics. German mathematician and polymath Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) employs the term "monad" in both a physical and a metaphysical sense. Physically, monads are centres of activity, loci characterized by a dynamic impetus to change. Metaphysically, monads are self-sufficient, self-existing items the individualities of which lie in their uniqueness. A pivotal contention of monadological metaphysics is that concrete particulars are individuated descriptively; that to be is to be uniquely describable, the bearer of a peculiar definition.[1049]

This is a brilliant idea, but how does it help us better understand the difficulties we face in our study of the Abhidhamma? Just think about it for yourself for a moment.

13.14.4 The conditional relations (paccaya) are circular

(1) To show how the cittas function in a person's mind, the Abhidhamma applies the atemporal (timeless) **own-nature** (*sabhāva*) of the *dhamma*s as "conditional relations" (*paccaya*) to the theory of momentariness (*khaṇika,vāda*) [10.3.2]. But this, as we have noted, draws the Abhidhamma away from early Buddhism towards <u>ontological realism</u> ("being") and <u>reification</u> ("a fixed thing"). This effectively becomes "independent arising" of being and a shadowy self, respectively.

An alternative resort is, according to Ronkin, to turn to the conditional relations that exist among the *dhammas*, both simultaneously and over a period of time—an attempt embodied in the Paṭṭhāna theory of *paccaya* [13.12 f]. "This attempt, though, is <u>circular</u>: at least some *paccaya*s are events, namely, *dhammas*, and hence we cannot use relationships of causal conditioning as the criteria for the individuation of events, *the effort of making of the moment real for the person*. The circularity arises from the fact that causal conditions individuate *dhammas* only if the latter are already individuated."[1050] Simply put, the causal conditions only work when there are "individuals" with which to work: an idea that is foreign to the early texts.

(2) In trying to define the "individual" experiencing the mental realities, the Abhidhamma falls back on the slippery slope of self-view, that well goes against the spirit of the suttas. Although the Abhidhamma aims to seek the same ends as that of early Buddhism, the means that the Abhidhamma introduces and uses creates an inevitable tension with the early teachings, inspiring new problems and difficulties (even resurrecting ancient ones) that undermine the early teachings and confuse its own concerns with the quest for awakening.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Abhidhamma (and Abhidharma) metaphysical enterprise was strongly criticized by some Mahāyāna philosophers. Eventually, this difficulty and confusion led to the crafting and turning of diverse Dharma-wheels by innovative teachers and thinkers.[1051]

(3) Finally, there is **the human problem**. The very nature of Abhidhamma—its abstruseness and difficulty—inspires a mystique about it. It thus attracts especially those who have little interest in the suttas or understanding of them with the notion that its *power* will dispel or displace their spiritual ignorance. Unlike sutta teachings, most Abhidhamma doctrines are **dogmas**: we only need to believe them and feel empowered. <u>A dogma</u> has this effect on us: we only know *the word* and we think we understand <u>*the reality*</u> to which it purports to point.

[1048] Ronkin 2005:73, 161, 249, 251.

[1049] Rescher 2000:123 f.

[1050] Ronkin 2005:252. According to Ronkin, contemporary philosophers direct this criticism at Davidson's <u>theory of events</u> (2005:253 n24): J E Tiles, *Things That Happen,* Aberdeen, 1981:3-7; L B Lombard, *Events: A metaphysical study,* London, 1986:41-46; J Bennett, *Events and Their Names,* Oxford, 1988:52; C Cleland, "On the individuation of events," *Synthese* 86, 1991:230.

[1051] Ronkin 2005:252.

This dogmaticism is often reflected in the dour Abhidhamma teacher who will suffer no other opinions except the ultimacy of their dhammas. While it is often true that religious teachings are, as a rule, defined by the preacher, the Abhidhamma teacher will, as a rule, tolerate no deviance from their hieratic fiat. A case of Abhidhamma intolerance for deviance is famously exemplified in Ledi Sayadaw's diatribe (in Pali)—**the Paramattha,dīpanī Ṭīkā** (1897)—listing purportedly 325 "errors" in Sumaṅgalasāmi's Abhidhamm'attha Vibhāvinī Ṭīkā, 12th-century Commentary on the Abhidhamm'-attha,saṅgaha.[1052] Fifteen years later, in 1912, Vimala Sayadaw wrote **the Aṅkuta Ṭīkā**, defending the Vibhāvinī Ṭīkā against Ledi Sayadaw's criticism.[1053]

13.15 DHARMA AND ABHIDHAMMA IN PERSPECTIVE

13.15.1 Relative teaching (*pariyāya*)
The suttas often record the Buddha as teaching that there are different ways of learning the Dharma without upholding dogmas, especially in terms of the numbers of Dharma items. In other words, the Dharma are *not* measures of truth, but rather are the means to free us from measured and fixed daily rounds of chickens and cattle.

Not only does the Buddha encourage the effective use of language in teaching and learning the Dharma, he also says that we may even allow differences in opinion in the spirit of fellowship, without stabbing each other with the daggers of words, but approve of what is well said so that we "will live in concord, in mutual appreciation, without disputing, mixing like milk and water, looking at each other with kindly eyes."[1054]

Both **the Bahu Vedanīya Sutta** (M 59) and **the Pañcak'aṅga Sutta** (S 36.19) relate an account of disagreement over the Dharma between a carpenter and a monk: while the monk says that there are 3 kinds of feelings, the carpenter replies that he knows of only 2 kinds. When the matter is brought up before the Buddha, he declares that the Dharma is taught "in a relative way" (*pariyāye-na*), that is, relating to the occasion, and depending on the audience's readiness.

Hence, we may speak of different numbers of feelings, depending on how we classify them, that is to say: 2 kinds, 3 kinds, 5 kinds, 6 kinds, 18 kinds, 36 kinds and 108 kinds.[1055] An important point to note here is that the Dharma is not about the technical, even "scientific," nature of the world, that is, seeing it in a worldly sense, but rather about *how* we perceive the world, and how such learning can help us understand ourselves better, so that we progress closer to the path of awakening. Meanwhile, we live this present moment, learning and understanding the true nature of life.

13.15.2 "Scientific" Buddhism?
Unlike the Buddha Dharma, the Abhidhamma is full of technical terms and numerical lists, ideas of citta, cetasika, matter and nirvana, all fixed in the "absolute" or "ultimate" sense. There are even scholars and students today who think of the Abhidhamma as some kind of Buddhist "science" or that it is "scientific Buddhism." In doing so, they ironically take "science" as the gold standard and measure "Buddhism" by that standard.

Apparently, such "scientific" Buddhists do not need to practise such a Buddhism or any Buddhism: they only need to "know" something about it; they don't have to change or better themselves in any way—they change Buddhism! If we attribute such a *status* as "science" to Abhidhamma or Buddhism, we do not need to experience any awakening state.

[1052] Abhs:BRS xxiv. See eg E Braun, *The Birth of Insight,* 2013:13, 44 f, 45-76 (ch 2); Visuddha, *Abhidhamma Debate* (Mahachulalongkorn U PhD thesis), Bangkok, 2018.

[1053] On Ledi's criticism of Sumaṅgalasāmi's Vibhāvinī Ṭīkā, see Braun, *The Birth of Insight,* 2013:46-62.

[1054] **Bahu Vedanīya S** (M 59,5/1:198), SD 30.4; **Pañcak'aṅga S** (S 36.19,10/4:225), SD 30.1.

[1055] See SD 30.4 (2.1).

What do you think is wrong with this way of thinking?[1056]

According to scientific thinkers, <u>science</u> must be **falsifiable**; more exactly: *scientific theories* must be falsifiable. The statement that "All swans are white" is *falsified* once we see a single black swan. Newton worked with the idea that light travelled in a straight line. Einstein, however, explained that light bends around massive objects like the Sun. In this way science corrects itself, and gets to know the world better.[1057]

13.15.3 Higher Dharma?

The question is: will Abhidhamma or any aspect of it be proven wrong by modern science or true learning? Will it be proven one day that there are more than 52 cetasikas, or perhaps less? Or that there are a different number of moral variables, or unwholesome factors, or beautiful factors?

Abhidhamma scholars and students claim that it is "higher Dhamma," the absolute truth: What if some revisions of it are needed in time? In the case of the suttas, any *neyy'attha* (implicit) teaching—those using worldly or conventional language—can be changed. In the Buddha's time, people thought that the world was a flat disc. Now we know better: we need to revise this *neyy'attha* teaching. [10.4.1]

The *nīt'attha* (explicit) teaching—such as the 3 characteristics, the 4 noble truths, the 5 aggregates, the 12 links, and meditation—have yet to be proven wrong. In fact, we see modern learning, like psychology, adapting these teachings to improve themselves. The point is clear: We must keep to the Dharma; so long as the Abhidhamma keeps close to the Dharma and clarifies it, the Abhidhamma is useful. It certainly should not be a cause of conflicts. [13.14]

13.15.4 To respect early Buddhism, we must take it *as it is*. It comprises <u>the conventional</u> or worldly language (especially its ancient and Indian background), and <u>the Dharma</u> language points directly, as it were, to true reality. These are <u>the 2 presentations</u> pointed out in **the Neyy'attha Nīt'attha Sutta** (A 2.3.5 f) [10.4.1]. This is our **study guide**: we take the <u>historical</u> (or the social and conventional) for what it is; we must take the <u>ahistorical</u> (pointing to true reality) for what it is. Then we will truly learn, neither for title nor status, but as a basis for personal transformation and spiritual breakthrough.

This is true renunciation for both the monastic and the laity: the noble path.

Then there is the teaching of **the 2 teachings**, that is, by way of presenting <u>the relative truth</u> (*pariyāya*) and presenting <u>the absolute truth</u> (*nippariyāya*), using "worldly language" and using "Dharma language" respectively [10.8]. As **teaching tools**, neither is the superior: it depends on how we *skillfully* present the Dharma to transform lives for the better, and to see true reality [10.3.2]. It is like when we use fairy-tales and Jātaka stories to inspire children with good role models and the cultivation of moral virtue; and we teach the suttas as they are for those with ready minds and radiant hearts. Or, we retell inspiring stories (especially from the last 10 Jātakas) to enrich the lives of the audience and to move them to a higher vision of the Dharma. [10.5]

We may use science to explain certain points, but we must not do this to measure the Dharma against science. Science is conventional and worldly: all scientific data are theory-laden, historically contextual and falsifiable. Early Buddhism is "prescientific" (it is older than modern science) and "non-scientific" (not about what science tries to measure); true reality is unfalsifiable. Science is theoretically <u>sense-based</u>; the Dharma teaches us to rise beyond the senses.

[1056] On the word is not the thing: SD 26.3 (5.1.2.5); SD 44.1 (5.4).; identifying with words or lineage: SD 60.1d (7.6.7.2); the name is not the named: SD 17.4 (4), SD 26.3 (5.1.2.5); the statement is not the state: SD 10.16 (1.3.2.3), SD 49.5b (4.6.4.2).

[1057] **Falsifiability** is *the capacity for some statement, proposition hypothesis or theory to be proven wrong*. The concept of falsifiability was introduced in 1935 by Austrian philosopher and scientist Karl Popper (1902-1994). See https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scientific-method/; https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-idea-that-a-scientific-theory-can-be-falsified-is-a-myth/.

We may, however, take what makes sense in science and use it to better understand what true reality is as the Buddha himself has shown us. We should neither reject science, nor put science above the Dhamma. They are different paradigms with different goals.

Science measures the world; the Dharma teaches *the immeasurably free mind*.

Science teaches us how the eye sees; the Dharma teaches us to *see beyond sight*.

One last point, just as vital, remains: it is not how much Dharma or Abhidharma we know—nor all our titles nor status—that matters. Our compassion and wisdom are what really matter: **compassion** includes the joy and willingness to be falsified; **wisdom** straightens our views when we see our errors. Compassion cultivates moral virtue out of respect for self and others; wisdom knows and values life and all that it signifies.

In this way, compassion conduces to **mental concentration** by cultivating a calm, clear and joyful mind. Wisdom prepares us to personally and directly see into true reality, so that we gain freedom and **nirvana**. [10.8]

— — —

221226 230227 230716 230803

Sutta Discovery (SD) Publication Project (since 2002)
"The most detailed Sutta translation today"

Why support our sutta translation work: Reasons and history

(1) 20 reasons for Sutta Discovery series

1. It is a global resource for Buddhism scholars, Buddhist teachers, students, monastic and lay.
2. The SD series is based on themes to sustain an interesting and connected reading. (For example, SD 37 is on Right Livelihood.)
3. A modern commentarial approach with detailed notes on difficult words, names, and doctrines; and bibliographies.
4. The Sutta's *peyyāla* (repetitive cycles) (especially those on Dharma training) are translated in full, for reflection by monastics and lay practitioners.
5. The works are paragraphed, subtitled and numbered in a reader-friendly way for easy reading in a scribal tradition (in contrast to the oral tradition).
6. A high standard of referencing and cross-references to other Suttas, essays, journal articles, etc, that are helpful to specialists and students, for discussion or self-study.
7. A broad-based translation that uses alternative translations, amplified translations, and comparative studies with Sanskrit, Chinese and other texts where necessary.
8. It includes a digest of the related and latest scholarly researches and writings, summarized, explained and discussed.
9. They serve as comprehensive sources and resources for study and teaching notes for Dharma teachers, researchers and students.
10. Easy-to-use handbook for monastics (especially forest monks) and practitioners for Sutta readings (for recording on MP3 etc) and for meditation.
11. Socially-engaged studies and essays to inspire social workers: it addresses various social and historical issues affecting Buddhism and religion.
12. The SD texts are freely available online at our website, http://dharmafarer.org, and also separately on Micro SD cards and USB drives. They can be freely used as is.
13. The SD texts form the basis of an online Buddhist studies course.
14. The SD series are the materials for other reference projects such as *Dictionary of Early Buddhism* (DEB)*, Sutta Title Index* (STI)*, Dictionary of Early Buddhist Names* (DEBN), *Dhamma Numerical Index* (DNI) and *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (DOLT) *for Dhamma Studies*.
15. The translated Suttas will be published separately according to Nikaya, that is, *The Long Texts, The Middle-length Texts, The Connected Texts* and *the Numerical Texts*.
16. The SD series is inspired by the Mere Buddhist vision, simple Dharma-spirited living that brings awakening in this life itself.
17. The SD series is the basis for Dharma-based reforms in Buddhism today.
18. It is a historical and practical guide to early Buddhist meditation.
19. A helpful introduction to the study of key Pali terms and passages.
20. An excellent and enduring gift of the Dharma to others.

(2) Brief history of the Sutta Discovery

The Sutta Discovery series started with the NUS Buddhist Society weekly Sutta Study Group (SSG) classes in February 2002 and the Buddhist Fellowship in February 2003. A new volume of translations and essays (A4 size, averaging 180 pages) was released every 3 months. These new books were studied at Poh Ming Tse (every 2nd & 4th Sundays), Singapore Buddhist Mission (every 3rd Sunday) and The Minding Centre (every Wednesday, since 2006). By 2022⸺20 years later⸺Piya had completed over 80 SD volumes.