60.9 Sīti,bhāva Sutta

The Discourse on the Cool | A 6.85
(Chakka) Sīti,bhava Sutta **The (Sixes) Discourse on Coolness [the Cool State]**
Theme: Wrong practice and right practice
Translated & annotated by TAN Beng Sin (Piya Tan) ©2022, 2023

1 Sutta summary

1.1 WHAT PREVENTS US FROM REALIZING NIRVANA

The Sīti,bhava Sutta (A 6.85) is a typical correlative sutta, that is, it comprises two closely related parts: the 1st usually states something negative or a practice to be avoided [§§1-2], and the 2nd something positive or a practice to be done [§§3-4]. Here, in the 1st part, the Buddha states that one who is caught in 6 unwholesome conditions will not be able to realize "the supreme cool state" (*anuttara sīti,-bhāva*) or nirvana [§2], that is:

(1) one does not restrain the mind when it should be restrained;	*cittaṁ na niggaṇhāti*
(2) one does not exert the mind when it should be exerted;	*cittaṁ na paggaṇhāti*
(3) one does not encourage the mind when it should be encouraged;	*cittaṁ na sampahaṁsati*
(4) one does not look on the mind with equanimity when one should do so;	*cittaṁ na ajjhupekkhati*
(5) one is of inferior disposition;	*hīnâdhimuttiko*
(6) one delights in self-identity. [1.2.2.1]	*sakkāyâdhirato*

1.2 THE SUTTA COMMENTARY

1.2.1 Why one does not attain nirvana

1.2.1.1 The Aṅguttara Commentary on A 6.85 explains how to correct the first 4 negative aspects of the Sutta teaching [§2], that is, respectively, as follows:

(1) "The mind is *to be* ***restrained*** (*niggahetabbam*) by concentration on an occasion of restlessness (*uddhacca*); (entails practice of the faculty of concentration);
(2) it is *to be* ***exerted*** (*sampahaṁsitabba*) with energy at a time when it has fallen into sluggishness (*kosajjânupatita*); (entails practice of the faculty of effort);
(3) it is to be ***encouraged*** (*paggahetabbam*) with concentration at a time when it is dull (*nirassāda,gata*); (entails practice of the faculty of faith);
(4) it is to be ***observed*** (*ajjhupekkhitabbaṁ*) with the equanimity awakening factor when it is proceeding evenly (*sama-p,pavatta*) (entailing practice of the faculty of wisdom)."

(AA 3:413,14-18)

1.2.1.2 The Sīti,bhāva Sutta (A 6.85) further lists 2 more negative aspects preventing us from gaining nirvana, which are:

unwholesome aspects	**wholesome counterpart**
(5) one is of inferior disposition (*hīnâdhimuttika*)	one is of **superior disposition** (*paṇītâdhimuttika*)
(6) one delights in self-identity (*sakkāyâdhirata*)	one who **delights in nirvana** (*nibbānâbhirata*)

Neither the suttas nor the Commentaries explain any of these qualities, except for the term ***paṇītâdhimuttika***, "one of superior disposition," in §4 (5), which is explained in the Aṅguttara Aṭṭhakathā Ṭīka (subcommentary) as meaning that one is "disposed to, slopes, tends, inclines to[1] the refined, supreme path and fruits" (*panīte uttame magga,phale adhimutto ninna,poṇa,pabbhāro,* AAṬ:BE 20:146). In other words, the practitioner is thus ready to attain the path or is favourably disposed to the idea.

Hence, we may conclude that its unwholesome counterpart—***hīnâdhimuttika***—has an opposite meaning, that is, "**one with an inferior disposition**," who either is unable to attain the path (even to gain streamwinning) or is not favourably disposed towards the idea. Such a person is likely to degrade the arhats or hold wrong views about the Buddha, the bodhisattva (the historical Buddha before his awakening),[2] and so on, that is, to reject the key early Buddhist teachings on the path of awakening (regarding streamwinning, etc).

1.2.1.3 We can thus see that the teachings of **the Sīti,bhāva Sutta** [1.1] cover a number of related practices on how to prepare and train our mind to approach the path of awakening. Now, Item (5) of the negative conditions—"**one is of inferior disposition**" (*hīnâdhimuttika*)—refers to neither understanding nor working for the path. The negative item (6)—"**one delights in self-identity**" (*sakkāyâdhirata*)—is more specific about the problem here: one is overwhelmed by the 3 spiritual fetters so that one is unable to attain even streamwinning. [1.2.2]

1.2.1.4 On the other hand, the positive item (5)—**one is of superior disposition** (*paṇītâdhimuttika*)—means that one is willing and able to work for the path of awakening. With proper training and practice regarding the 5 spiritual factors (*pañc'indriya*), one will be able to progress towards the path [2.1]. The idea of harmonizing the 5 spiritual factors is in fact hinted at by the first 4 positive qualities [§4; 2.1].

The additional two positive qualities—those (5) "of superior disposition" (*paṇītâdhimuttika*) and (6) "who delight in nirvana" (*nibbānâbhirata*)—refer to the overcoming of **the 3 mental fetters** (to begin with) so that one is able to attain the path as a streamwinner. [1.2.2]

In what follows, we will begin with what the 3 spiritual fetters are and how to overcome them [1.2.2.1], and how understanding and weakening the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hatred and delusion) helps us progress on the path [1.2.2.2]. We will then see how the 5 lower fetters are overcome and the benefit of this accomplishment [1.2.2.3].

1.2.2 The 3 spiritual fetters; the 3 roots; the 5 fetters

1.2.2.1 The negative term (6) "**one delights in self-identity**" (*sakkāyâdhirata*) [1.2.1.3] is very interesting. It refers to the first of the 3 spiritual fetters (or simply "fetters"), which are part of the 10 fetters (*saṁyojana*). The phrase "one delights in self-identity" (*sakkāyâdhirata*) clearly, in this context, refers to the fetter that is **self-identity view** (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), the first of the "3 fetters."[3]

---

[1] On the expression, "slopes, tends, inclines to" (*ninna,poṇa,pabbhāro*), see **Mahā Vaccha,gotta S** (M 73,14/-1:493), SD 27.4.

[2] I'm not here concerned with the post-Buddha idea of "Bodhisattva," which I feel is not applicable to early Buddhism.

[3] These are the first 3 of the 10 fetters (*dasa saṁyojana*). For the full list, see SD 56.1 (4.4).

The 3 fetters are:[4]

			description
(1)	self-identity view	*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*	the view that we are our body or our mind;
(2)	spiritual doubt	*vicikicchā*	lacking wisdom or faith to see true reality;
(3)	attachment to rituals and vows	*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*	superstition: dependence on "external" solutions for matters arising internally.

(1) Self-identity view. Early Buddhist texts, such as **the Anatta,lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59), define self-identity view as the notion of identifying with or trying to own or fixate on any or all of the 5 aggregates —*form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness*—as "this is mine, this I am, this is my self."

The Sutta advises us thus:

> "Therefore, any kind of form, … feeling, … perception, … formation, … consciousness,
> whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near[5]—all forms … feelings … perceptions … formations … consciousness …
> should be seen as they really are with right wisdom, thus:
> 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.[6]" (S 22.59,17-21/3:68), SD 1.2

Essentially, **the self-identity view** is the view that there is some kind of abiding essence or "something" (*kiñcana*) that is our body or mind, a part of it, or apart from it. This is usually called a "soul" or "spirit." This wrong view is unequivocally rejected in a succinct teaching preserved in **the Go,datta Sutta** (S 41.7).[7]

A modern example of such a self-view is the notion that **merit** (*puñña*) is "something" that can be "transferred." However, nowhere in the suttas is such a serious wrong view ever mentioned. Out of love

---

[4] On the 3 fetters, see **Abhabba Tayo,dhamma S** (A 10.76,6 f), SD 2.4. On a study of the 3 fetters, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8 esp (2).

[5] See S 22.48/3:47. This classification of the aggregates is explained in detail in the Vibhaṅga and briefly in the Visuddhi,magga: **"internal"** = physical sense-organs; **"external"** = physical sense-objects; **"gross"** = that which impinges (physical internal and external senses, with touch = earth, wind, fire); **"subtle"** = that which does not impinge (mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness, and water); "**inferior**" = unpleasant and unwholesome sense-experiences [sense-world existence]; "**superior**" = pleasant and wholesome sense-experiences [form & formless existences]; **"far"** = subtle objects ("difficult to penetrate"); **"near"** = gross objects ("easy to penetrate") (Vbh 1-13; Vism 14.73/450 f; Abhs 6.7). "Whether or not the details of the Vibhaṅga exposition are accepted as valid for the *nikāyas*, it seems clear that this formula is intended to indicate how each *khandha* is to be seen as a class of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety and also a certain hierarchy" (Gethin 1986:41). See also Gethin 1986: 43-46.

[6] *N'etaṁ mama, n'eso 'ham asmi, na mêso attā ti.* This threefold formula is the contrary of "the 3 graspings" (*ti,vidha gāha*), that is, of view (*diṭṭhi*), of craving (*taṇhā*), of conceit (*māna*) (MA 2:111, 225): here applied to the 5 aggregates [17-21]. A brief version, "There can be no considering that (element) as 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am'" (*ahan ti vā maman ti vā asmī ti vā*) is found in **Mahā Hatthi,padôpama S** (M 28/1:184-191 §§6b-7, 11b-12, 16b-17, 21b-22). These three considerations represent respectively the 3 kinds of **mental proliferation** (*papañca*) of self-view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), of craving (*taṇhā*) and of conceit (*māna*) (Nm 280; Vbh 393; Nett 37 f). In **Anatta,lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59,-12-16/3:68), the formula is applied to the 5 aggregates & in **Pārileyya S** (S 22.81/ 3:94-99) to the 4 primary elements. See also **Rāhula S** (A 4.177/2:164 f). See **Pārileyya S,** SD 6.16 (5).

[7] S 42.7 + SD 60.4 (1.2.1.4).

and respect for the departed, we dedicate a good deed to them. Since most beings are reborn, only the pretas, it is said, will rejoice in our act of merit, and this rejoicing is what benefits the pretas."[8]

(2) Spiritual doubt, in practical terms, refers to either not knowing or not understanding a teaching or some truth and not endeavouring to search the suttas, inquiring of wise and morally virtuous teachers, and reflecting on the teachings until the doubt is cleared or some understanding is reached.

In the suttas, "spiritual doubt" refers to not fully accepting the 3 jewels with wisdom and faith. In other words, we neither understand nor accept that Gotama is the one and only historical Buddha, or we imagine that there are in this universe other Buddhas equal to or superior to Gotama Buddha, or we misunderstand his state as the first arhat amongst other arhats in early Buddhism; that an arhat is awakened just like the Buddha. Essentially, this is a rejection of the *historicity* of early Buddhism and the teaching that we, through *self-effort,* are able to master the Dharma and attain the noble eightfold path of *the arhats*.

In Dharma terms, spiritual doubt is that of clinging or fixation to our views of not directly seeing into true reality. We have objectified those views or any of them—this can be in the form of expert or dogmatic knowledge—and conclude that that is all there is to it. Doubt arises when our own knowledge becomes a hindrance to the understanding that frees us from self-identity view: the "self" here being our own view or views.[9]

(3) Attachment to rituals and vows is essentially resorting to a repetitive action or speech (such as a prayer), with the belief that such a repetitive behaviour will benefit us. A more sophisticated version of this wrong view is that whatever happens to us (whether it is "good luck" or "bad luck") happens for a reason. That reason, we believe, lies outside of ourselves, beyond our control (usually some kind of external power, such as God, the devil, a spirit, demon, our disobedience to some authority figure, and so on). Hence, we need to act in such a way—by a ritual or a vow—to appease or negotiate with that power for our benefit. In short, this is superstition.[10]

Included in this fetter of superstition is that mere ritual and vows will change people and things for the better. In early Buddhist teachings, **prayer** would not be some kind of "bribing" an external power, but should be done only when we are willing to work for it; *pray only for what we are willing to work for*. In **the (Pañcaka) Iṭṭha Sutta** (A 5.43), for example, the Buddha states that most often people desire *long life, beauty, happiness, fame and heavenly birth*, but none of these are gained through prayer (if this were the case, many could have gained them through prayer or wishing). Instead, we should live our lives in such a wholesome way so as to gain longevity, beauty, happiness, fame or heavenly birth.[11]

We should be willing to work for what we pray for. This is called **diligence** (*appamāda*). The best diligence or heedfulness is that of avoiding evil, doing good and cultivating the mind—then, we begin to understand what the path of true happiness is and progress towards it.

1.2.2.2 The 3 fetters—self-identity view, spiritual doubt and attachment to ritual and vows—are "fetters" because they keep us *selfish, stupid and superstitious*. They imprison us to the habitual and cyclic life of suffering through our own selfishness (especially narcissism), stupidity (through lacking a

---

[8] According to **Tiro,kuḍḍa S** (Pv 1.5 = Khp 7), an act of merit is, with lovingkindness, dedicated to the pretas, who are said to "rejoice" (*anumodare*); no "transference" is involved at all (SD 2.7 (4)).

[9] For a succinct exposition of this teaching, see **Antā S** (S 22.103), SD 14.1.

[10] On the 3rd fetter as superstition, see SD 40a.8 (5.2).

[11] A 5.43/3:47-49 (SD 47.2).

desire to learn wholesome things), and superstition (depending on external solutions instead of cultivating our own mind).

When these 3 fetters are understood and broken, we free ourselves from our animal-like habituality and predictability to become streamwinners (*sotāpanna*). This is the very first step on the noble path of awakening which will, in due course, surely bring us to nirvana.[12]

1.2.2.3 We have already stated that the streamwinner is one who has fully overcome the 3 fetters. These 3 fetters are further part of the 5 fetters, properly called "**the 5 lower fetters**" (*orambhāgiya saṁyojana*), so called because they fetter or hold us down to the sense-world. This includes the human world, where, as a result of our bad karma (especially habitually breaking the precepts), we are likely to be reborn in the subhuman worlds as an asura, a preta, an animal or a hell-being. As a result of our good karma, we are reborn among humans commensurate to the karmic fruits that have arisen, or we may arise in one of the lower deva heavens.[13]

When a streamwinner further strengthens themself to weaken the unwholesome karmic roots of *greed, hatred and delusion*, they go on to become **once-returners** (*sakad-āgāmī*), one with only one more life to go before attaining arhathood.[14] How do the fetters relate to the unwholesome roots?

	the 5 lower fetters		**the 3 unwholesome roots**	
(1)	self-identity view	*sakkāya,diṭṭhi,*	greed	*lobha;*
(2)	spiritual doubt	*vicikicchā*,	hatred	*dosa;*
(3)	attachment to rituals and vows	*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*,	delusion	*moha;*
(4)	sensual lust	*kāma,rāga*,	greed	*lobha;*
(5)	aversion	*paṭigha*,	hatred	*dosa.*

In the above table, on the same row or line as the fetter (1) self-identity view, we can see greed (*lobha*), which is basically a desire for "things." What we see as *things* can only be any of the following:

- our *body*, a part of it (like the eye, the face, the hands, the body itself, and so on),
- our *feelings*, especially pleasure, but we are often troubled by pain,
- our *perceptions,* how we recall and recognize things,
- our *formations*, our actions, speech and thoughts, that is, karmic states, and
- our *consciousness,* simply put, our mind.

When we *identify* with any of these **5 aggregates** (that's what they are), we will cling to them; hence, they are called the "aggregates of clinging." The streamwinner understands this; thus, they do not identify with any of these things. However, they still have the unwholesome karmic roots: they still desire a pleasant body, feeling, perception, formation or consciousness.

1.2.2.4 The once-returner (*sakad-āgāmī*) has to some extent weakened these 3 unwholesome roots through their understanding that all these aggregates are impermanent, suffering and nonself. Greed, hatred and delusion thus have a weaker hold on the once-returner. However, as the Buddha tells Mahānāma in **the Cūḷa Dukkha-k,khandha Sutta** (M 14), so long as one lives a household life, enjoying the pleasures of the senses (sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches)—these are called the 5 "cords of

[12] See SD 3.3 (5).
[13] On the 5 lower fetters, see **Oram,bhāgiya S**, (S 45.179) + SD 50.11 (2); SD 10.16 (1.6.7).
[14] On the once-returner, see SD 10.16 (12.1.2.1).

sense-pleasures" (*kāma,guṇa*)—and has not cultivated zest and joy (*pīti,sukha*) of dhyana (which is more pleasurable than any of these sense-pleasures), one will still be drawn to them in some way.[15]

Notice that sensual lust and its opposite, aversion, are listed as fetters (4) and (5), respectively. In other words, they are both still present in the once-returner, although in a weak way. When both sensual lust and aversion are also overcome—through the accomplishment of attaining the dhyanas—then, one becomes **a non-returner** (*anāgāmī*), that is, one who will never return to be reborn in the sense world any more but is bound to attain arhathood in no time.[16]

This completes our study of the teachings of **the Sīti,bhava Sutta** (A 6.85) ending with "one takes delight in self-identity" (or self-centred existence) [§2 (1-6)]. We will now look at how properly practising meditation helps us progress towards the path of awakening, that is, how the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'-indriya*) work to help us do this. [2.1]

2 Conditions for realizing nirvana

2.1 BALANCED MEDITATION PRACTICE

2.1.1 Unbalanced or disharmonious practice

2.1.1.1 In the first part of **the Sīti,bhava Sutta**—on the 6 qualities that "prevent one from realizing the supreme cool state (nirvana)," [§2] we are told that when we have not mastered, at the right time, to restrain the mind, to exert it, to encourage it, or to equanimously look at it, then we will have an "inferior disposition" [§2 (5)], that is, we will fail in our practice [1.2.1.3], because we "take delight in self-identity," explained in some detail at [1.2.2].

In meditation terms, when **the 5 spiritual faculties** (*pañc'indriya*)—those of faith, effort, mindfulness, samadhi and wisdom [2.1]—are not developed or applied harmoniously, we will not be able to get full mental concentration, that is, dhyana. We then lack the mental calm and clarity necessary for cultivating the insight wisdom, and realising true reality.

2.1.1.2 The second part of **the Sīti,bhava Sutta** records the Buddha as stating that these conditions bring one to realize nirvana [§4], that is:

(1) a monk restrains the mind when it should be restrained;	*cittaṁ niggaṇhāti*
(2) he exerts the mind when it should be exerted;	*cittaṁ paggaṇhāti*
(3) he encourages the mind when it should be encouraged;	*cittaṁ sampahaṁsati*
(4) he looks on the mind with equanimity, when one should look on with equanimity;	*cittaṁ ajjhupekkhati*
(5) one is of superior disposition;	*paṇītâdhimuttiko ca hoti*
(6) he delights in nirvana. [1.2.1.3]	*nibbānâbhirato*

We have already noted in some detail how, in the Sutta's negative teachings [§2], one (5) with an inferior disposition will go on to (6) delight in self-identity [1]. We will now look at the positive teachings [§4], where it is stated that one (5) of superior disposition will (6) delight in nirvana; in other words, practise successfully to reach the path. This practice entails meditation [2.2] and doing it properly [2.3].

---

[15] **Cūḷa Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 14), SD 4.7

[16] On non-returning, see SD 10.16 (13). Fetters broken, SD 23.16 (1.1) n. a layman as non-returner, SD 60.1d (3.3.3.5).

2.2 THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

2.2.1 Balancing the meditation

2.2.1.1 One useful way of practising the teachings of **the Sīti,bhava Sutta** (A 6.85) is to see them as instructing us how to balance and harmonize our moral conduct and mindfulness. The negative lessons [§2] remind us of what to avoid; the positive lessons [§4] instruct us how to practise moral conduct and mindfulness, how to keep the body and mind in wholesome harmony. Directly connected with these efforts are **the 5 spiritual faculties** (*pañc'indriya*).

A **spiritual faculty** (*indriya*) is a dharma or wholesome state (*dhamma*) that we must cultivate in a balanced and harmonious way so that our body is well and our mind is able to become calm and clear to see the path of awakening.[17] In other words, these are mental tools that ready the body and prime the mind to gain the path—that is, at least as a streamwinner.

Once we attain streamwinning or higher, these very same faculties are transformed into "spiritual powers" (*bala*), especially those of the arhats. In other words, the arhats are accomplished in them as *natural* spiritual qualities that are not shaken by any lack of *faith, effort, mindfulness, samadhi* or *wisdom*.

2.2.1.2 In terms of Dharma practice, the 5 faculties are cultivated closely in connection with the cultivation of the path (*magga*), that is, the 3 trainings, in *moral virtue, concentration and wisdom*. **The (Indriya) Suddhika Sutta** (S 48.6) lists the 5 spiritual factors (simplified) as follows:

The 5 faculties (pañc'indriya)			**the 3 trainings** (*sikkha-t,taya*)
(1) The faculty of faith	*saddh'indriya*	}	moral virtue (*sīla,sikkhā*)
(2) The faculty of effort [energy]	*viriy'indriya*	}	
(3) The faculty of mindfulness	*sat'indriya*	}	concentration (*samādhi,sikkhā*)
(4) The faculty of samadhi [mental stillness]	*samādh'indriya*	}	
(5) The faculty of wisdom	*paññ'indriya*	—	wisdom (*paññā sikkhā*)

(S 48.6/5.194), SD 10.4 (1)

Upon more careful consideration, we have seen how the 5 faculties are meditation-spirited elaborations of the 3 trainings. **The faculty of faith** arises and grows with an understanding of moral virtue and the practice of the precepts. **The faculty of effort** is seen in the practice of the precepts and is enhanced by the fourfold efforts of seeing what is unwholesome and to abstain from it; of ending any unwholesome habit that we have; of seeing what is wholesome, and of cultivating it. These wonderful efforts are inspired by wise acts of faith.

The faculty of mindfulness is directing the mind undistractedly to the proper mind-object, mindfully aware of its conditioned and impermanent nature. As the mind is more fully aware of the object's true nature, we experience it "with the body," that is, how our body (form) is also conditioned and impermanent. When we then are no longer held back by our self-views, we are more fully focused on the nature of the mind: this is concentraton (*samādhi*), that is, **the faculty of concentration**.

With our deepening understanding of the true nature of the body (form) and how the mind arises as *feelings* on account of *perceptions* (memories and psychological reactions), we fall into karmic *formations,* all this arising on the stage of *consciousness,* that is, our senses and the mind. This understanding of the 5 aggregates is our **faculty of wisdom**.

---

[17] See ***Pañc'indriya,*** SD 10.4; SD 3.6 (3); SD 54.3h (3.1).

2.2.2 Contents of the faculties

2.2.2.1 According to **the (Pañcaka) Daṭṭhabba Sutta** (A 5.15) the faculties are transformed into *powers*, that is, become unshakable by their opposing unwholesome qualities, in the following manner:

		are transformed into "powers" in	
(1)	the faculty of **faith**	the 4 limbs for streamwinners[18]	*sotāpatti-y-aṅga*
(2)	the faculty of **effort**	the 4 right strivings[19]	*sammā-p,padhāna*
(3)	the faculty of **mindfulness**	the 4 focuses of mindfulness[20]	*satipaṭṭhāna*
(4)	the faculty of **concentration**	the 4 dhyanas[21]	*jhāna*
(5)	the faculty of **wisdom**	the 4 noble truths[22]	*ariya,sacca*

(A 5.15/3.11 f)

2.2.2.2 A related text, **the (Indriya) Daṭṭhabba Sutta** (S 48.8), states that these faculties, transformed in this manner, are "seen" (*daṭṭhabba*) as their respective "powers" (*bala*).[23] Although these faculties are developed by the learners (*sekha*)—streamwinners, once-returners and non-returners—at varying levels, they are fully developed as "powers" in the arhat.

Although **the 5 powers** (*pañca bala*) are often associated with the arhat, the last 3 are, in the case of the arhathood of **Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja**, listed as the faculties of *mindfulness*, of *concentration* and of *wisdom*—as stated in **the Piṇḍola,bhāra,dvāja Sutta** (S 48.49/5:224). This Sutta defines Piṇḍola's "final knowledge," that is, his arhathood, as "the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration and the faculty of wisdom" that one has developed and that end in "the destruction of birth, decay and death." This is a *unique* triad called the "3 faculties" (*tīṇ'indriya*).

2.3 THE 7 AWAKENING FACTORS

2.3.1 Proper progress of meditation

2.3.1.1 The 7 awakening factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*) or "limbs of awakening" are the modes by which the mind moves or grows closer to the path of awakening.[24] They may refer to the process of the medi-

---

[18] **The 4 limbs *for* streamwining** (*catusu sotāpatti-y-aṅgesu*), viz: (1) association with true individuals, (2) hearing the true teaching, (3) wise attention, and (4) practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma (SD 47.1 (2.1 + 2.3): the practice of one *not yet* a streamwinner. **The qualities *of* a streamwinner** (*sotāpanassa aṅgāni*) are: (1-3) wise faith in the 3 jewels, and (4) moral virtue dear to the noble ones (SD 47.1 (2.2)), ie, one who *is* a streamwinner. See also SD 3.3 (4.1.1).

[19] *Catusu samma,padhānesu,* or the 4 right efforts, viz: (1) the effort to *prevent* the arising of unarisen unwholesome states, (2) the effort to *abandon* arisen unwholesome states, (3) the effort to *cultivate* unarisen wholesome states, and (4) the effort to *maintain* [guard] arisen wholesome states: see **(Catu) Padhāna S** (A 4.14/2:16 f = D 33,1.11(10)), SD 10.2.

[20] *Catusu sati'paṭṭhānesu,* viz, the contemplation of the body (*kāyânupassana*), the contemplation of feelings (*vedanā'nupassanā*), the contemplation of the mind (*cittânupassanā*) and the contemplation of dharmas [phenomena] (*dhammânupassanā*). See SD 13.

[21] *Catusu jhānesu,* viz, the 1st, the 2nd, the 3rd and the 4th dhyanas. See **Dhyana,** SD 8.4.

[22] *Catusu ariya,saccesu,* viz, the noble truths that are suffering, its arising, its ending, and the way leading to its ending: see **Dhamma.cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1.

[23] S 48.8/5:196, SD 10.4 (1.1.1.3),

[24] For details on the 7 awakening factors, see **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3), SD 10.15.

tating mind reaching concentration and dhyana, or the stages of meditation at which the meditator works to keep the mind in wholesome meditation.

The 7 awakening factors are listed in the suttas as follows:[25]

1. mindfulness	*sati sambojjhaṅga*
2. dharma-investigation [investigation of states]	*dhamma,vicaya sambojjhaṅga*
3. effort	*viriya sambojjhaṅga*
4. zest	*pīti sambojjhaṅga*
5. tranquillity	*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*
6. concentration	*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*
7. equanimity	*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*

2.3.1.2 These 7 awakening-factors work in either of 2 ways: as a sequence or in sets. For an adept meditator or when the meditation is successful, the 7 awakening-factors work sequentially to bring about dhyana (*jhāna*), as illustrated in **the Bojjhaṅga Sīla Sutta** (S 46.3).[26] This is when the meditator successfully and fully frees the mind from the gravitation of the body or physical senses and thoughts. The mind is able to focus on itself and attain a profound state of inner calm and clarity, broadly know in modern terms as enstasy.[27]

2.3.1.3 On the other hand, for the unawakened or inexperienced meditator, especially when the mind is "stuck" (*kosajja*), factors 2-4—*investigation of states, effort*, and *zest*—as a set have to be applied or cultivated to exert or energize the mind [4.2 f]. Or, when the mind is "restless" (*uddhatta*), factors 5-7—*tranquillity, concentration* and *equanimity*—as a set have to be applied or cultivated to restrain or calm the mind down [4.1]. This is laid out in **the (Bojjhaṅga) Aggi Sutta** (S 46.53).[28]

2.3.2 Levels of the awakening factors

2.3.2.1 The Abhidhamma and commentarial literature sometimes describe the Buddha's disciples or a particular teaching in terms of 3 faculties or capacities (*tīṇ'indriya*), that is, those of "weak" or "soft" faculty (*mud'indriya*), those of "medium" faculty (*majjh'indriya*) and those of "sharp" faculty (*tikkh'indriya*).[29] The set or term itself is not found in the suttas but is closely related to the teaching on the 4 kinds of "learners" (*sekha*), where *sekha* has a broad sense, not necessarily referring only to those on the path.[30]

It is possible that the set of "3 faculties" is older but never caught on, since the 4 kinds of learners better describe the capacity for learning and progressing in a practitioner. The 2 sets essentially contain the same idea, more succinct in the 3 faculties and more comprehensive in the 4 learners. It is also possible that the 3 faculties refer to meditators, while the 4 learners refer more broadly to Dharma students generally.

---

[25] **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla Sutta** (S 46.3), SD 10.15; **Mahā Sakul'udāyī Sutta** (M 77,20) + SD 6.18 (7) ; **Aggañña S** (D 27,-30), SD 2.19.

[26] S 46.3/5:67-70 (SD 10.15).

[27] On "enstasy," see SD 60.1f (4.2.3).

[28] S 46.53/5:112-114 (SD 51.13).

[29] The categories *mu'indriya* and *tikkh'indriya* are, however, first mentioned as a set only in **Vibhaṅga** (Vbh 341) and the 3rd category, *majjh'indriya* added to make a triad in **Netti-p,pakaraṇa** (Nett 100).

[30] The set of 4 kinds of learners are listed in **Ugghaṭitaññū S** (A 4.143), SD 3.13(3.3).

Their interconnection can be seen in this comparative table:

the 3 faculties (*tīṇ'indriya*)			**the 4 learners (*sekha*)**	
the sharp facultied	*tikkh'indriya*		the quick learner	*ugghaṭitaññū*
the medium facultied	*majjh'indriya*	{	the diffuse learner	*vipacitaññū*
			the tractable	*neyya* [ñeyya]
the weak facultied	*mud'indriya*		the word learner	*pada,parama*

2.3.2.2 The Vibhaṅga (the 2nd book of the Abhidhamma) defines the weak faculties and the sharp faculties, thus:

(1) Those beings with "**weak faculties**" (*mud'indriya*) are those in whom the 5 faculties of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom "are not pursued, nor cultivated, nor developed, nor are abundant" (*anāsevitāni abhāvitāni abahulīkatāni anussada,gatāni*). (Vbh §381/341)

(2) Those beings with "**sharp faculties**" (*tikkh'indriya*) are those in whom the 5 faculties are "pursued, cultivated, developed, made abundant" (*āsevitāni bhāvitāni bahulīkatāni ussada,gatāni*). (Vbh §822/-341)

Interestingly, the Vibhaṅga does not mention the "medium faculties" (*majjh'indriya*). This shows that it is likely the earliest canonical set comprises only the pair: the sharp faculties (*tikkh'indriya*) and the weak faculties (*mud'indriya*).

2.3.2.3 It seems that **the Netti-p,pakaraṇa** (Netti for short), a paracanonical text (one that is not included in the canon but is older than the Commentaries), preserves what is the first attempt to formulate the 3 faculties regarding mental concentration (*samādhi*):

"That same concentration has 3 states for its equipment, namely faculties (*indriya*), powers (*bala*) and effort (*viriya*). Those same faculties become powers by virtue of effort; they are *faculties* in the sense of predominance (*adhipateyya*), while they are *powers* in the sense of unshakeability. Thus there are those who are weak-facultied, who are medium-facultied and who are sharp-facultied."[31] (Nett 100)

The Netti explains that the Buddha teaches his disciples in terms of *advice, disclosing, meditation method, escape and training* in 3 ways, thus:

teaching method		**the sharp facultied**	**the medium facultied**	**the weak facultied**
(1) advising	***ovāda***	in brief	in brief and in detail	in detail
(2) disclosing	***desanā***	easy teaching	easy to sharp teaching	sharp teaching
(3) meditation	***bhāvana***	samatha	samatha and vipassana	vipassanā
(4) escape	***nissaraṇa***	escape	dangers and escape	gratification, dangers, escape
(5) training	***sikkhā***	higher morality	higher concentration	higher wisdom

(Nett 100 f)

[31] *Tāni yeva indriyāni viriya,vasena balāni bhavanti. Adhipateyy'aṭṭhena indriyāni, akampiyaṭṭhena balāni. Tāni Iti tesaṁ mudu,majjhâdhimattatā: ayaṁ mud'indriyo, ayaṁ majjh'indriyo, ayaṁ tikkh'indriyo ti.* (Nett 100,24 f). See Pm 1:21.

2.3.2.4 The term the "3 faculties," *tīṇ'indriya*, appears in the suttas as a technical term for the moment of attaining the path, that is, of streamwinning and of arhathood, as stated in the Saṅgīti Sutta (D 33):

(1) the faculty, "I shall know the final knowledge yet to be known"	*anaññatañ ñassāmīt'Indriya*,
(2) the faculty of final knowledge	*aññ'indriya*,
(3) the faculty of one accomplished in final knowledge	*aññātā-v-indriya*

The Saṁyutta Commentary (SA 3:237) explains these 3 faculties as follows:[32]

The 1st faculty is the realization—**"I shall know the final knowledge yet to be known"**—arising at the moment of the path of streamwinning for one who is practising with the aspiration, "I will know the Dharma I have not known before in beginningless samsara" (SA 3:237). The function of this faculty is the abandoning of the 3 fetters (self-identity view, doubt, and attachment to rituals and vows), resulting in the attaining of streamwinning.[33]

The 2nd—"**the faculty of final knowledge"**—is the knowledge that arises on the 6 occasions from the fruition of streamwinning onwards (up to the fruition of arhathood). It is a deeper knowledge of the first one.

The 3rd—"**the faculty of one accomplished in final knowledge**"—arises in terms of whatever is fully known at the fruition of arhathood.

The first 2 faculties are found in the following texts: **the Aññ'indriya Sutta** (S 48.23), SD 42.19(1.5) = It 62/53 with verses (SD 98.5), and **the (Iti) Indriya S** (It 3.2.3), SD 50.5. The 3rd faculty is found in **the Aññ'indriya S** (S 48.23), SD 42.19(1.5).

2.3.2.5 In later polemical literature, the Sanskrit notion of the "3 faculties" (Skt *trīndriya*) is often used to declare one's preferred teaching as intended only for those of "sharp faculties" (Skt *tīkṣṇendriya*), while dismissing other competing teachings as intended for those of intermediate (*madhyendriya*) or weak faculties (*mṛdvindriya*).

3 The 10 skills in dhyana and their explanation (Vism 4.42-66/128-136)

3.1 THE 10 SKILLS IN FULL CONCENTRATION (*DASA,VIDHA APPANA,KOSALLA*): SUMMARY (VISM 4.42/128)

3.1.1 A careful study of **the Sīti,bhava Sutta** (A 6.85) and its commentary in the Visuddhi,magga (which follows) suggests that the Sutta is about how to practise so that "full concentration" (*appanā*) or dhyana (*jhāna*) is attained. The Visuddhi,magga includes an analysis of the positive teachings of the Sīti,bhāva Sutta [§4], and elaborates on them in the "10 skills in dhyana" (**Vism 4.51-64**/130-135).

This is what we will now examine, but not in the sequence as they are presented in the Visuddhi,magga. We will here study the Visuddhi,magga commentary in connection with the Sīti,bhava Sutta teachings, meaning that we will be dealing with the Vism commentaries topically (rather than sequentially).

---

[32] See It 53,3 (ItA) = S 5:204,19 (SA) ≈ D 3:219,9 (DA): for other refs, see CPD sv an-aññāta. Further see Pm 1:-115,26-116,3 = 2:30,1-12; P, 1:118,13.

[33] VbhA 127 f; quoted at Vism 491,11.

3.1.2 The 10 skills in full concentration (dhyana)

3.1.2.1 The 10 skills for attaining and sustaining dhyana (*jhāna*) are listed in **the Visuddhi,magga** (Vism 4.42/128) in the chapter detailing the 4 form dhyanas (Vism 4.79-202).[34] The Saṁyutta Commentary mentions these 10 skills in full concentration, as follows:[35]

(1) cleaning up the mind-object,	*vatthu,visada,kiriyatā*	
(2) balancing the spiritual faculties,	*indriya,samatta,paṭipādanatā*	
(3) skill in the sign,	*nimitta,kusalatā*	
(4) **restraining the mind on occasion**,	*samaye citassa niggahaṇatā*	[4.1]
(5) **exerting the mind on occasion**,	*samaye cittassa paggahaṇatā*	[4.2]
(6) **encouraging the dull mind with faith and sense of urgency**,	*citta sampahaṁsitabba*	[4.3]
(7) **equanimously looking on what is occurring rightly**,	*cittaṁ ajjhupekkhitabba*	[4.4]
(8) avoidance of people who lack mental concentration,	*asamāhita,puggala,parivajjanatā*	
(9) association with mentally concentrated people,	*samāhita,puggala,sevanatā*	
(10) resoluteness in this (concentration).	*tad-adhimuttatā*	

3.1.2.2 Note that skills (4-7) are listed in **the Sīti,bhava Sutta** (A 6.85). When we fail to attain this set of 4 skills, we will not be able to attain nirvana [§2]. On the other hand, being accomplished in them will enable us to gain nirvana [§4].

The Visuddhi,magga discusses these 4 nirvana-attaining skills in the broader context of attaining "full concentration" or dhyana (*jhāna*). In other words, these 10 skills help us gain dhyana, whose profound calm and clarity we can use to cultivate insight (*vipassanā*) as the basis for seeing into true reality and thus at least attain the path of awakening.[36]

3.2 THE 11 THINGS BRINGING ABOUT THE *CONCENTRATION* AWAKENING FACTOR

Buddhaghosa, in Vism 4.61, lists the same items in a set he calls "the 11 things bringing about the concentration awakening factor" [3.1.2], where he adds "(10) reviewing of dhyanas and liberations" and pushing "resoluteness in this (concentration)" down to be "(11)," thus:

(10) reviewing of dhyanas and liberations	*jhana,vimokkha,paccavekkhaṇatā*
(11) resoluteness in this (concentration)	*tad-adhimuttatā*

[34] 1st dhyana: Vism 4.79-138/139-155; 2nd dhyana: Vism 4.139-152/155-159; 3rd dhyana 4.153-182/159-165; 4th dhyana: 4.183-202/165-169.

[35] In other words, these 10 conditions are identical with the "11 things bringing the *concentration* awakening factor" (SA 3:163), except for the omission of item (10) "reviewing of dhyanas and liberations" of the set of 11 [4.1.5].

[36] On samatha and vipassana working together, see SD 15.1 (1.2); SD 33.1b (8.1).

4 Visuddhi,magga Commentary on A 6.85: the 10 skills in dhyana

4.1 THE FACULTY OF CONCENTRATION (*SAMĀDH'INDRIYA*)

4.1.1 Cleaning up the bases (*vatthu,visada,kiriyatā*) (Vism 4.43/128 f)

4.1.1.1 {1}[37] Herein, **making each basis clean** is cleansing the internal and the external bases. For when one's head hair, body hair and nails are long, or when the body is soaked with sweat, then the internal basis is also untidy and unclean. So, too, when an old, dirty, smelly robe is worn or when the lodging is messy, then the external basis is untidy and unclean.

When the internal and external bases are unclean, then the knowledge in the mind (consciousness) and the mental factors that arise are also likely to be unpurified, like the light of a lamp that arises with an unclean lampbowl, wick and oil as its support; formations do not become evident to one who tries to comprehend them with unpurified knowledge, and when one devotes oneself to a meditation object, it is not cultivated, developed and fulfilled.

4.1.1.2 (Vism 4.44/129). But when the internal and external bases are clean, then the knowledge in the consciousness and mental factors that arise is clean and bright, too, like the light of a lamp that arises with a clean lampbowl**,** wick and oil as its support; formations become evident to one who tries to comprehend them with purified knowledge, and as one devotes oneself to a meditation subject, it is cultivated, developed and fulfilled.

4.1.2 {2} Balancing the faculties

4.1.2.1 (Vism 4.45/129). Keeping the faculties in balance is harmonising the [five] faculties (faith and the rest).

For if one's faith faculty is strong and the other faculties weak, then the energy faculty cannot perform its function of exerting, the mindfulness faculty its function of establishing, the concentration faculty its function of not being distracted, and the wisdom faculty its function of seeing.

So in that case, **the faith faculty** should be modified either by reviewing the true nature of the mental states (that is, the objects of attention) or by not attending to them in the way in which the faith faculty became too strong.

This is illustrated by the story of **the elder Vakkali.**[38]

4.1.2.2 (Vism 4.46/129). Now, if the energy faculty is too strong, the faith faculty cannot perform its function of resolving, nor can the rest of the faculties perform their respective functions. So in that case, the energy faculty should be modified by cultivating calm, and so on.

This is illustrated by the story of **the elder Sona**.[39] So too with the other faculties, for it should be understood that when any one of them is too strong, the others cannot perform their respective functions.

---

[37] The numbers 1-10 within {braces} refer the sections of **the 10 skills in dhyana** [3.1.2.1].

[38] **Vakkali S** (S 22.87/3:119), SD 8.8.

[39] **Soṇa S** (A 3.55/3:374-76), SD 20.12; V 1:179-85.

4.1.2.3 (Vism 4.47/129 f). However, it is particularly recommended that faith be balanced with Wisdom, and concentration with energy. For one strong in faith but weak in wisdom has faith uncritically and groundlessly.

One strong in wisdom but weak in faith may err on the side of cunning which may be hard to cure, like one sick with a disease caused by the medicine itself. With the balancing of the two, one has faith only when there are grounds for it.

Moreover, dullness overpowers one strong in concentration and weak in energy, since concentration often favours dullness. Restlessness overcomes one strong in energy and weak in concentration, since *energy* often is likely to be restless.

But concentration coupled with energy is unlikely to fall into dullness, and energy coupled with concentration is unlikely to fall into restlessness.

So these two should be balanced, for dhyana comes with the proper balancing of the two.

4.1.2.4 (Vism 4.48/130). Again, faith and concentration should be balanced. One working on *concentration* needs strong *faith*, since it is with such *faith* and confidence that one reaches dhyana.

Now concentration and wisdom need to be balanced. One working on *concentration* needs strong mental unification, since that is how one reaches dhyana; and one working on insight needs strong *wisdom*, since that is how one penetrates the characteristics (of impermanence, etc). But with the balancing of the two, one reaches dhyana, too.

4.1.2.5 (Vism 4.49/130). Strong **mindfulness**, however, is needed in all instances. Mindfulness protects the mind from falling into *restlessness* through faith, energy and wisdom, which favour restlessness, and from falling into *dullness* through concentration, which favours dullness [through being idle]. So it is desirable in all instances just as a seasoning of salt may be desirable in all sauces, or as a prime minister in all the king's businesses.

Hence, it is said, 'And mindfulness has been called universal by the Blessed One. For what reason? Because the mind has mindfulness as its refuge, and mindfulness is manifested as protection, and there is no exertion and restraint of the mind without mindfulness.'[40]

4.1.3 Exerting the mind: the faculty of effort [4.2]

4.1.3.1 (Vism 4.50/130) {3} Skill in the meditation sign

"*Skill in the sign* is skill in cultivating the as yet unarisen sign of mental unification (concentration) through the earth kasina, etc. It is the skill in cultivating the sign when it arises and skill in protecting it by cultivating it. The last is what is meant here."

We will return to the skill in the sign below [4.1.6].

4.1.3.2 (Vism 4.51 f/130 f) {4} How does one *exert the mind on an occasion when it should be exerted*? [4.2.1]. When one's mind is slack with over-laxness of energy, etc, then, instead of developing the 3 awakening factors beginning with tranquillity, one should cultivate those beginning with dharma-investigation. This we will do below [4.2.3].

---

[40] Untraced but qu in all major Comys: *Sati ca pana sabbatthikā vuttā bhagavatā. Kiṅ,karaṇā. Cittaṅ hi sati,paṭisaraṇaṁ, ārakkha,paccupaṭṭhānā ca sati, na vinā satiyā cittassa paggaha,niggaho hoti.* (DA 3:788; MA 1:292; SA 3:157; AA 2:57; VbhA 278)

4.1.4 {5} The mind is *to be restrained* by concentration on an occasion of restlessness (*uddhacca*) (Vism 4.57/133)

4.1.4.1 How does one "restrain the mind on an occasion when it should be restrained"?

When one's mind is restless through being restless (*uddhata*) and so on (*accāraddha,viriyat'ādīhi*); then, instead of cultivating the 3 awakening factors [2.3.1.1][41] beginning with dharma-investigation, he should cultivate those beginning with tranquillity.[42]

For this is said by the Blessed One [**the (Bojjhaṅga) Aggi Sutta**, S 46.53]:

"Bhikshus, suppose a man wanted to extinguish a great mass of fire, and he put dry grass on it ... and did not scatter dirt on it. Would that man be able to extinguish that great mass of fire?

"No, bhante."

"So too, bhikkhus, when the mind is agitated, that is not the time to cultivate the investigation-of-states awakening factor, the energy awakening factor, and the zest awakening factor.

Why is that? Because a restless mind cannot be properly stilled by those states.

When the mind is restless, that is the time to cultivate the tranquillity awakening factor, the concentration awakening factor and the equanimity awakening factor.

Why is that? Because a restless mind can be properly stilled by those states.

Bhikshus, suppose a man wanted to extinguish a great mass of fire, and he put wet grass on it ... and scattered dirt on it. Would that man be able to extinguish that great mass of fire?"

"Yes**,** bhante." (S 46.53,17-20/5:113-115 f), SD 51.13[43]

4.1.4.2 NOTE. Technically, being "**restless**" (*uddhata*) refers only to the hindrance or defilement of restlessness (*uddhacca*). This is when we are hindered from mental focus due to our mind being excited or troubled by something done or undone (the past) or the possibility of things (the future). Often, this is thinking about the future, what to do next, or fearing what is to come.[44]

In the 4th hindrance, "**guilt**" (*kukkucca*), that is, "guilty feeling," is worrying about what we have done or undone, something in the past. However, we can also feel guilty or troubled about such commissions and omissions. Hence, as a dvandva, the 4th hindrance comprises *uddhacca* (which refers to being distracted by the future) and *kukkucca* (which refers to being distracted by the past).[45]

4.1.5 Tranquillity, concentration, equanimity (Vism 4.58/133 f)

4.1.5.1 And here, the cultivation of the tranquillity awakening factor and so on should be understood as the food for each one (of the awakening factors), respectively. For it is said [**the (Bojjhaṅga) Āhāra Sutta**, S 46.51]:

(1) "There are, bhikshus, the tranquillity of body and the tranquillity of mind.[46]

---

[41] Ie, the investigation of states, effort and zest.

[42] Ie, tranquillity, concentration and equanimity [2.3.1.1].

[43] Cf **Aggi-k,khandhopama S** (A 7.68), SD 52.12.

[44] On ***uddhacca*** by itself, see SD 50.12 (2.4.4); *dhamm'uddhacca,* see SD 41.5 (5); SD 32.7 (2.1.4, 2.2.3); SD 41.4 (2.2.1). On how the mind becomes restless, see SD 51.13 (2.2.2).

[45] It should be noted that an early sutta usage of *uddhata,* simply meaning "mentally restless" arises even in the non-returner; only the arhat is not troubled in any way over the nature of things: SD 51.13 (1.1.2.3).

[46] **(Bojjhaṅga) Kāya S** (S 46.51): Wise consideration well and often applied brings bodily tranquillity that leads to mental tranquillity, S 46.51/5:104 f (SD 7.15). Comy on S 46.2: Bodily tranquillity is the stilling of distress (*daratha*)

Frequently giving wise attention to them, this is food for the arising of the unarisen awakening factor of tranquillity and for the growth and abundance of the arisen awakening factor of tranquillity.

(2) Likewise: "There are, bhikshus, the sign of calm (*samatha,nimitta*) and the undisturbed sign (*avyagga,nimitta*).[47]

Frequently giving wise attention to them,[48] this is food for the arising of the unarisen awakening factor of concentration and for the growth and abundance of the arisen awakening factor of concentration.

(3) Likewise: 'There are, bhikshus, the bases for the awakening factor of equanimity (*upekkhā,sambojjhaṅga-ṭ,ṭhāniyā dhammā*).[49]

Frequently giving wise attention to them, this is food for the arising of the unarisen awakening factor of equanimity and for the growth and abundance of the arisen awakening factor of equanimity.'"

(S 46.51,12-14/5:104 f), SD 7.15

4.1.5.2 The Commentary adds the following 7 conditions that lead to the arising of the awakening factor of **tranquillity** (SA 3:162):

(1) a good nutritious diet	*paṇīta,bhojana,sevanatā*
(2) congenial climate	*utu,sukha,sevanatā*
(3) comfortable posture	*iriytā.patha,sukha,sevanatā*
(4) showing impartiality (reflecting on ownership of karma)	*majjhatta,payogatā*
(5) avoiding restless people	*sāraddha,kāya,puggala,parivajjanatā*
(6) associating with calm people	*passaddha,kāya,puggala,sevanatā*
(7) right resolution (a mind bent on establishing tranquillity),	*tad-adhimuttatā*

4.1.6 Wise attention; the signs (Vism 4.59/134)

"Skill in the sign" has been mentioned earlier [4.1.3.1]. Let's look at it a bit more here.

Here wise attention given to the 3 instances (the past, present and future) is attention occurring in arousing tranquillity and so on, by observing the way in which they arose in one earlier.

The *sign of calm* is a term for calmness itself, and *non-diversion* is a term for it, too, that is, as non-distraction [mental focus]. What is this calm? It is the tranquillity awakening factor.

4.1.7 Tranquillity awakening factor (Vism 4.60/134)

Furthermore, the Commentary gives these **7 things that bring about the *tranquillity* awakening factor** (SA 3:162):

(1) taking good proper food,	*paṇīta,bhojana,sevanatā*
(2) living in a suitable climate,	*utu,sukha,sevanatā*
(3) resorting to a suitable posture,	*iriyā,patha,sukha,sevanatā*
(4) keeping moderation,	*majjhatta,payogatā*
(5) avoidance of excitable people,	*sāraddha,puggala,parivajjanatā*

---

in the 3 mental aggregates (feeling, perception and formations), mental tranquillity the stilling of distress in the aggregate of consciousness (SA 3:170,19 f). Cf **(Bojjhaṅga) Kāya S** (S 46.2), SD 62.9; Vbh 228.

[47] Also tr as "the sign of non-dispersal" (S:B). See DA 3:794; MA 1:297; SA 3:141; VbhA 283.

[48] Comy mentions 10 conditions that lead to the arising of the awakening factor of **concentration**: [3.1.2.1].

[49] On the 5 conditions that lead to the arising of the awakening factor of **equanimity**, see [4.1.9]

(6) associating with people who are tranquil in body, *passaddh,kāya,puggala,sevanatā*
(7) resoluteness on this (tranquillity). *tad-adhimuttāta*

4.1.8 Concentration awakening factor (Vism 4.61/134)

The Commentary lists these **11 things that bring about the *concentration* awakening factor** (SA 3:163):

(1) clearing up the mind-object; or personal and environmental cleanliness (or both), *vatthu,visadatā*
(2) skill in the sign, *nimitta.kusalatā*
(3) balancing the spiritual faculties, *indriya,samatta,paṭipādanatā*
(4) restraining the mind on occasion, *samaye citassa niggahaṇatā*
(5) exerting the mind on occasion, *samaye cittassa paggahaṇatā*
(6) encouraging the dull mind with faith and sense of urgency,[50] *nirassādassa cittassa saddhā,saṁ-vega,vasena sampahaṁsanatā*
(7) equanimously looking on what is occurring rightly, *sammā,pavattassa ajjhupekkhanatā*
(8) avoidance of people who lack mental concentration, *asamāhita,puggala,parivajjanatā*
(9) association with mentally concentrated people, *samāhita,puggala,sevanatā*
(10) reviewing of dhyanas and liberations,[51] *jhana,vimokkha,paccavekkhaṇatā*
(11) resoluteness on this (concentration). *tad-adhimuttatā*

4.1.9 Equanimity awakening factor (Vism 4.62/134 f)

The 5 things leading to the arising of the *equanimity* awakening factor listed in the Commentary (SA 3:164) are:

(1) maintenance of neutrality towards living beings, *satta,majjhattatā*
(2) maintenance of neutrality towards formations; *saṅkhāra,majjhattatā*
(3) avoidance of people who are partial to beings and formations; *satta,saṅkhāra,kelāyana,puggala,-parivajjanatā*
(4) association with those moderate to beings and formations; *atta,saṅkhāra,majjhatta,puggala,-sevanatā*
(5) resoluteness on this (equanimity). *tad-adhimuttatā*

Thus by arousing these things in these ways, one cultivates the equanimity awakening factor, as well as the others.

This is how one restrains the mind on an occasion when it should be restrained.

4.2 THE FACULTY OF EFFORT (*VIRIY'INDRIYA*)

The mind is *to be **exerted*** with energy at a time when it has fallen into sluggishness (*kosajjânupatita*).

[50] On "sense of urgency" (*saṁvega*), see SD 1.11 (3); SD 9 (7.6).
[51] This item is omitted from the "10 skills in full concentration" [3.1.2.1].

4.2.1 When the mind is dull (Vism 4.51/130 f)

4.2.1.1 How does one ***exert the mind on an occasion when it should be exerted?*** When one's mind is slack with over-laxness, such as lack of energy, etc, then, instead of cultivating the 3 awakening factors of *tranquillity, concentration and wisdom*, one should cultivate the awakening factors of *dharma-investigation, effort and zest*.

4.2.1.2 For this is said by the Blessed One (**the (Bojjhaṅga) Aggi Sutta**, S 46.53):

14 "Suppose, bhikshus, a person wants to build up **a small fire**,
but he stokes it with wet grass, and with wet cowdung, and with wet wood.[52]
He exposes it to a moist wind and scatters dirt over it.
Would that person be able to build up the small fire?"
"Not at all, bhante!"

14.2 So, too, bhikshus, *when the mind is stuck,*
it is untimely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is tranquillity;
it is untimely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is concentration;
it is untimely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is equanimity.
14.3 What is the reason for this?
The mind, bhikshus, is stuck; it is hard to be uplifted by these states.

15 Bhikshus, when the mind is ***stuck***,
it is timely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is **dharma-investigation**; *dhamma,vicaya s.*
it is timely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is **effort**; *viriya sambojjhaṅga*
it is timely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is **zest** [joy]. *pīti sambojjhaṅga*
15.2 What is the reason for this?
The mind, bhikshus, is *stuck*; it is easy to be uplifted by these states.

16 Suppose, bhikshus, a person wants to *build up* ***a small fire***,
and he stokes it with dry grass, and with dry cowdung, and with dry wood,
he exposes it to a dry wind, and does not scatter dirt over it—
would that person be able to build up the small fire?"
"Yes, bhante!" (S 46.53,14-16/5:112 f), SD 51.13

4.2.2 Investigation of states, energy, zest (Vism 4.52/131)

4.2.2.1 (In **the (Bojjhaṅga) Āhāra Sutta**, S 46.51:)

Here the cultivation of **the dharma-investigation awakening factor**, and so on, should be understood as the food for each one, respectively, for this is said:

[52] *So tattha allāni c'eva tiṇāni pakkhipeyya, allāni ca gomayāni pakkhipeyya, allāni ca kaṭṭhāni pakkhipeyya, | udaka,vātañ ca dadeyya, paṁsukena ca okireyya.*

9 "'There are, bhikshus, wholesome and unwholesome states, blameworthy and blameless things, low and sublime states, and dark and bright states, the counterpart of each other.[53]

Frequently giving wise attention to them: this is food for the arising of the unarisen awakening factor of *dharma-investigation* and for the growth and abundance of the arisen awakening factor of *dharma-investigation*.[54]

Likewise, 'There are, bhikshus, the element of initiative, the element of exertion and the element of strength.[55]

Frequently giving wise attention to them, this is food for the arising of the unarisen **awakening factor of effort** and for the growth and abundance of the arisen awakening factor of effort.'[56]

11 Likewise: 'There are, bhikshus, the bases for the awakening factor of zest (*pīti,sambojjhaṅga-ṭ,-ṭhāniyā dhammā*).[57]

Frequently giving wise attention to them: this is food for the arising of the unarisen awakening factor of zest and for the growth and abundance of the arisen awakening factor of zest.'"

(S 46.51,9-11/5:104), SD 7.15

4.2.2.2 WISE ATTENTION (Vism 4.53/132)

Herein, **wise attention** (*yoniso manasikāra*) given to the *wholesome,* etc, is attention occurring in penetration of individual essences and of [the 3] general characteristics.

Wise attention given to the *element of initiative,* etc, is attention occurring in the arousing of the element of initiative, and so on.

Herein, initial energy is called the *element of initiative.* The *element of launching* is stronger than that because it launches out from dullness [including idleness].

The *element of persistence* is still stronger than that because it goes on persisting in successive later stages. *States productive of the* zest *awakening factor* is a name for zest itself and attention that arouses that is wise attention.

4.2.3 Dharma investigation awakening factor (Vism 4.54/132)

Furthermore, the Saṁyutta Commentary lists these 7 things as leading to the arising of **the *dharma-investigation* awakening factor** (SA 3:157):

(1) asking questions,
(2) making the bases clean,
(3) balancing the faculties,
(4) avoidance of persons without understanding,
(5) association with persons with understanding,
(6) reviewing the field for the exercise of profound knowledge,
(7) resoluteness on this (investigation of states).

---

[53] Qu at Vism 4.53/131.

[54] On the 7 conditions that lead to the arising of the awakening factor of **dharma-investigation**, see [4.2.3].

[55] *Ārambha,dhātu, nikkama,dhātu* and *parakkama,dhātu* respectively. These are the 3 phases of effort: the initial phase, intermediate phase (gathering strength through overcoming sloth) and full intensity phase respectively: qu at MA 1:284. **Atta,kārī S** (A 6.38) uses these words in a literal sense (A 6.38.3b, 4-6 = 3:337), as part of the Buddha's answer that there is self-agency (SD 7.6).

[56] On the 11 conditions that lead to the arising of the awakening factor of **effort**, see [4.2.5].

[57] On the 11 conditions that lead to the arising of the awakening factor of **zest** see [4.2.6].

4.2.4 Energy awakening factor (Vism 4.55/132)

The Saṁyutta Commentary lists these 11 things as leading to the arising of **the *energy* awakening factor** (SA 3:158):

(1) reviewing the fearfulness of the states of loss, such as the hell realms, etc;
(2) seeing benefit in obtaining the mundane and supramundane distinctions dependent on energy;
(3) reviewing the course of the journey [to be travelled] thus: 'The path taken by the buddhas, pratyeka buddhas, and the great disciples has to be taken by me, and it cannot be taken by an idler,'
(4) being worthy of the alms food received (by living a moral life of peace and wisdom), producing great fruit for the givers;
(5) reviewing the greatness of the Master thus: 'My Master praises the energetic, and this unsurpassable Dispensation that is so helpful to us is honoured in the practice, not otherwise';
(6) reviewing the greatness of the heritage thus: 'It is the great heritage called the Good Dhamma that is to be acquired by me, and it cannot be acquired by an idler';
(7) removing stiffness and torpor by attention to perception of light, change of postures, frequenting the open air, etc;
(8) avoidance of idle persons;
(9) associating with energetic persons;
(10) reviewing the right endeavours;
(11) resoluteness upon that [energy].

4.2.5 Zest awakening factor (Vism 4.56/132 f)

The Saṁyutta Commentary lists these 11 things (that is the practice of any of them) as leading to the arising **of the *zest* awakening factor** (SA 3:161,26-30):

(1) the recollection of the Buddha;
(2) the recollection of the Dharma;
(3) the recollection of the sangha;
(4) the recollection of moral virtue;
(5) the recollection of giving;
(6) the recollection of deities;
(7) the recollection of peace;
(8) avoidance of violent persons;
(9) association with morally pleasant (*siniddha*) persons;
(10) reviewing inspiring suttas;
(11) resoluteness upon that (happiness).

Thus, by arousing these things in these ways, one cultivates th**e dharma-investigation awakening factor** [4.2.3] and the others. This is how one exerts the mind on an occasion when it should be exerted.

4.3 THE FACULTY OF FAITH (*SADDH'INDRIYA*)

The mind is to be gladdened [encouraged] with **faith** at a time when it is dull (*nirassāda,gata*).

4.3.1 Gladdening the mind (Vism 4.63/135)

4.3.1.1 {6} How does one *gladden the mind on an occasion when it should be encouraged?*

One gladdens the mind with any of **the 6** "**inspiring meditations.**"[58] Traditionally, the recollections (*anussati*) that are a streamwinner's life-long practice (*nissaya,vihāra*), that is, the recollections of:

(1)	the Buddha	*buddhânussati*	SD 15.7 f,
(2)	the Dharma	*dhammânussati*	SD 15.9,
(3)	the noble sangha	*saṅghânussati*	SD 15.10a f,
(4)	moral virtue	*sīlânussati*	SD 15.11,
(5)	charity	*cāgânussati*	SD 15.12,
(6)	deities	*devatânussati*	SD 15.13.

Understandably, these 6 recollections are also listed in the "11 things" that arouses **zest** (*pīti*). [4.2.6]

4.3.1.2 Furthermore, when one's mind is **dull** owing to sluggishness in concentration or to failure to attain the bliss of peace, then one should stimulate it by reviewing **the 8 grounds** for a sense of urgency (*saṁvega*). These are the 4 natural conditions, namely, *birth, decay, sickness*, and *death*, with (5) the suffering of the subhuman states of loss (*apāya*),[59] and also (6) the suffering in the past rooted in samsara [cycle of rebirths], (7) the suffering in the future rooted in samsara, and (8) the suffering in the present rooted in the search for food and for pleasure.

Thus, one gladdens the mind on an occasion when it should be gladdened.

4.4 THE FACULTY OF WISDOM (*PAÑÑ'INDRIYA*)

The mind is to be *observed* with the equanimity awakening factor when it is proceeding evenly (*samap,pavatta*).

4.4.1 Practising equanimity (Vism 4.64/135)

{7} How does one *look on the mind with equanimity on an occasion when it should be looked on with equanimity?*

When one is practising in this way with the mind following the path of samatha, which arises evenly on the object, and is not idle, not agitated, not dull, then one is inclined neither to exert nor restrain nor gladden it. One is like a charioteer with the horses progressing evenly. This is how *one looks on the mind with equanimity on an occasion when it should be looked on with equanimity*.

4.4.2 Avoiding unwholesome people, associating with wholesome people (Vism 4.65/135)

{8} *Avoidance of unconcentrated persons* is keeping distance from persons who do not give priority to the growth of the practice of renunciation,[60] who are busy with many affairs, whose hearts are distracted.

---

[58] SD 15.1 (1.5.6); SD 15.17 (1.1.2); **(Agata,phala) Mahānāma S** (A 6.10), SD 15.3 (2, 3.3); SD 10.16 (1.4.1.3).

[59] *Apāya* refers to "(a state of) deprivation, a suffering state, the downfall, hell," in ref to "the 4 states of loss" (*cat'upāya*) or the 4 subhuman states, ie, asura, animal, preta and hell states: SD 54.3f (2.2.4); SD 2.22 (1.7).

[60] The phrase "who do not give priority to the growth of the practice of renunciation" (*nekkhamma,paṭipadaṁ anāruḷha,pubbānaṁ*) refers not only to the unmindful laity, but to anyone (incl monastics) who does not keep to the Vinaya or does not live a renounced life.

{9} *Association with concentrated persons* is approaching occasionally persons who give priority to the growth of the practice of renunciation and gained concentration.

{10} *Resoluteness upon that* [Vism 4.42] is the state of being committed to mental concentration; the meaning is, giving priority to concentration; tending, leaning, inclining to concentration.

This is how **the 10 skills in concentration** should be undertaken.

4.4.3 The 5 similes (Vism 4:67-72/136 f)[61]

(1) The bee (Vism 4.67)

When an unclever clever bee learns that a flower is blooming on a tree, it sets out hurriedly, over-shoots the mark, turns back and arrives when the pollen is finished. Then, another, not clever enough bee, who sets out with too slow a speed, arrives when the pollen is finished, too. But a clever bee sets out with balanced speed, arrives with ease at the cluster of flowers, takes as much pollen as it pleases and enjoys the honey-dew.

(2) A surgeon's students (Vism 4:68)

Again, when a surgeon's students are being trained in the use of the scalpel on a lotus leaf in a dish of water, one who is unclever applies the scalpel hurriedly and either cuts the lotus leaf in two or pushes it under the water. Another, not clever enough, does not even dare touch it with the scalpel for fear of cutting it into two or pushing it under. But one who is clever moves the scalpel stroke on it by means of a balanced effort, and being good at his craft, one is rewarded on such occasions.

(3) A spider's thread (Vism 4:69)

Again, when the king announces, "Anyone who can draw out a spider's thread 4 fathoms long shall receive 4,000 pieces (of money)," one person who is unclever breaks the spider's thread here and there by pulling it hurriedly; another who is not clever enough does not dare to touch it with his hand for fear of breaking it. But a clever person pulls it out starting from the end with a balanced effort, winds it on a stick, and so wins the prize.

(4) The skillful skipper (Vism 4:70)

Again, an unclever **skipper** hoists full sails in a high wind and sets his ship adrift. Another, not clever enough skipper, lowers his sails in a light wind and remains where one is. But a clever skipper hoists full sails in a light wind, takes in half his sails in a high wind, and so arrives safely at his destination.

(5) The oil-quiver (Vism 4.71)

Again, a teacher says, "Anyone who fills the oil-quiver without spilling any oil will win a prize." One who is unclever fills it hurriedly out of greed for the prize and spills the oil. Another who is not clever enough does not dare to pour the oil at all for fear of spilling it. But one who is clever fills it with a balanced effort and wins the prize.

(Vism 4.72)

Just as in these 5 similes, so too when the sign arises, one monk forces his energy, thinking, "I shall soon reach dhyana!" Then his mind is agitated because of over-exerting himself, and is unable to attain

[61] Vism 4.66/135 f has been omitted.

dhyana. Another who sees the defect in over-exertion slackens his energy, thinking, "What is dhyaha to me now?" Then his mind falls into dullness because of his lax energy, and so is unable to gain dhyana.

Yet another who frees his mind from dullness, even when it is only slightly idle, and from restlessness when only slightly agitated, directing his mind to the sign with balanced effort, reaches dhyana. One should be like the last person.

— — —

Sīti,bhava Sutta

The Discourse on the Cool

A 6.85

One incapable of realizing the supreme cool state

1 **"**Bhikshus, accomplished in 6 qualities, a monk is incapable of realizing the supreme cool state.[62] What are the six?

2 Here, bhikshus,[63]

(1) a monk does not restrain the mind when it should be restrained;[64]
(2) he does not exert the mind when it should be exerted;[65]
(3) he does not gladden [encourage] the mind when it should be gladdened;[66]
(4) he does not look on the mind with equanimity when he should look on it with equanimity;[67]
(5) he is of inferior disposition;[68]
(6) he delights in self-identity.[69]

Accomplished in these 6 qualities, bhikshus, a monk is incapable of realizing the supreme cool state.

One capable of realizing the supreme cool state

3 Bhikshus, accomplished in 6 qualities, a monk is capable of realizing the supreme cool state. What are the six?

---

[62] "The supreme cool state" (*anuttaraṁ sīti,bhāvaṁ*) is nirvana. It is said to be "cool" (*sīti*) because the 3 fires of greed, hatred and delusion have been extinguished.

[63] The foll points are discussed in some detail in Vism 4.51-64/130-135 but without foll the sequence of teachings here [4].

[64] *Bhikkhū yasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ niggahetabbaṁ, tasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ na niggaṇhāti.*

[65] *Yasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ paggahetabbaṁ, tasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ na paggaṇhāti*.

[66] *Yasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ sampahaṁsitabbaṁ, tasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ na sampahaṁsati*,

[67] *Yasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ ajjhupekkhitabbaṁ, tasmiṁ samaye cittaṁ na ajjhupekkhati*.

[68] *Hīnâdhimuttiko ca hoti.* [1.2.1.2]

[69] Be Ee Se *sakkāyâdhirato ca;* Ce *-abhirato.* [1.2.1.3]

4 Here, bhikshus,

(1)	a monk restrains the mind when it should be restrained;	*cittaṁ niggaṇhāti*
(2)	he exerts the mind when it should be exerted;	*cittaṁ paggaṇhāti*
(3)	he gladdens [encourages] the mind when it should be gladdened;	*cittaṁ sampahaṁsati*
(4)	he looks on the mind with equanimity when he should look on it with equanimity;	*cittaṁ ajjhupekkhati*
(5)	he is of superior [refined] disposition;	*paṇītâdhimuttiko ca hoti*
(6)	he delights in nirvana.[70]	*nibbānâbhirato*

Accomplished in these 6 qualities, bhikshus, a monk is capable of realizing the supreme cool state."

— evaṁ —

220309 231127 231207 240315 240411 250124

[70] "He delights in nirvana" [1.2.1.3].