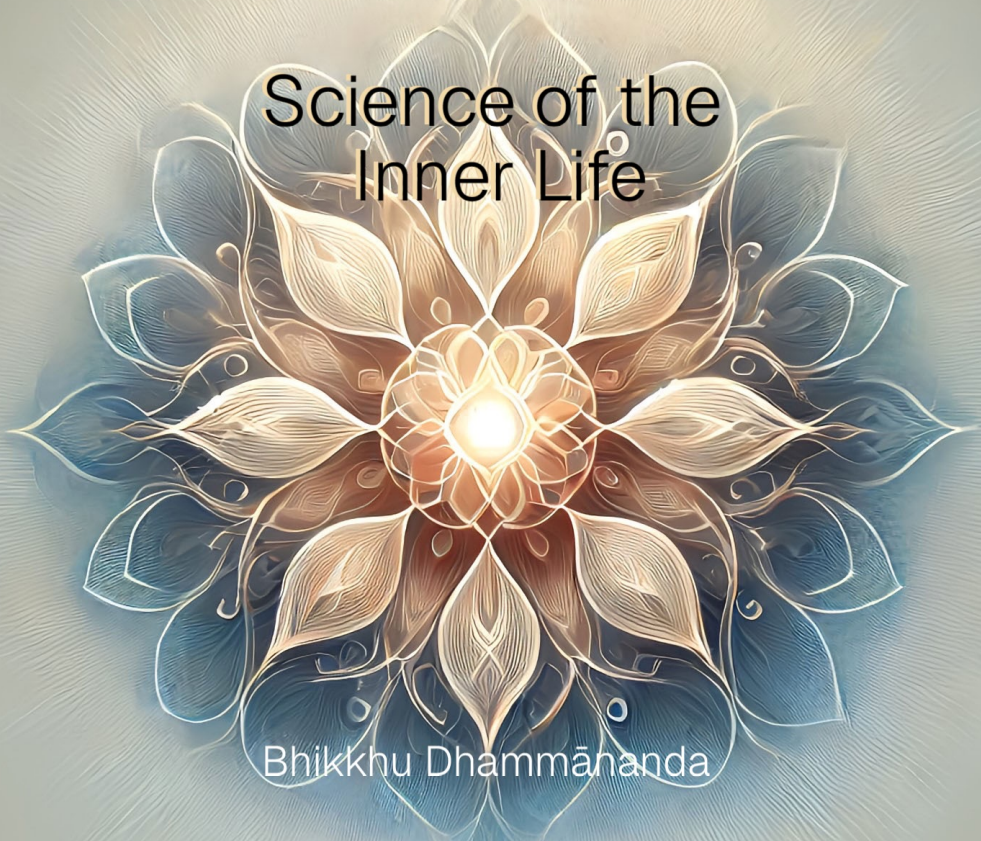
Paramattha

Science of the Inner Life

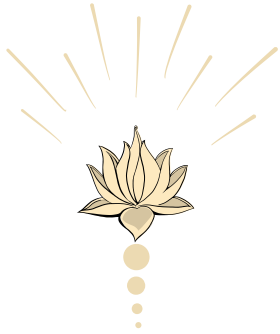


Bhikkhu Dhammānanda

A Guidebook for Consciousness
And a Modern Exposition
Of Ancient Buddhists Abhidhamma Teachings

Paramattha: Science of the Inner Life

A Guidebook for Consciousness and a Modern Exposition of Ancient Buddhists Abhidhamma Teachings



Bhikkhu Dhammānanda

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PREFACE

"That I may perchance some secret
reach Through spirit-power and
spirit-speech. And thus the bitter task
forego
Of saying the things I do not know.–
That I may detect the inmost force
which binds the world, and guides its
course; Its germs, productive powers
explore. And rummage in empty
words no more!"

(From Goethes' Faust)

The Abhidhamma, literally 'Higher Dhamma', is the Philosophical-Psychological System of Buddhism. It is a system of highly philosophical ideas, to which the designation 'Paramattha' (lit. Highest Truths)* is applied.

In traditional Buddhist countries the Abhidhamma is held in highest esteem, being considered the more advanced teaching of Buddhism. Yet, although it is held in such high esteem, many a student studying it, found himself at the very least perplexed as to its usefulness. Oftentimes, a more serious attempt to get to the meaning of this system has led the serious student to confusion and doubts. And to the question of whether it is really of the Buddha's making.

Being a monk ordained in a tradition that highly emphasises Abhidhamma, and having seen much suffering arising from people being forced by circumstance of their tradition to study the Abhidhamma, I have set before myself the task, of

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* *The word 'Paramattha' is a word-compound that is made of two parts, the first part, 'parama', having the meaning of ultimate, highest, or final, while the second part 'attha' denotes, reality, thing or truth. Thus the word Paramattha means 'Things ultimate', 'Highest Truths' or more loosely, 'Timeless-' or 'Eternal Truths'.*

creating a better Abhidhamma book — one that should be both more meaningful and more practical in kind.

With that in mind, I approached the Abhidhamma not as something entirely apart from the Suttas and the Vinaya (the main Buddhist scriptures), but rather as an explanatory model that can, amongst other things, show people without any other guide, both a more ordered and more detailed step-by-step approach to getting closer to the realisation of the Buddha's teaching.

Nevertheless, even though I started out with the sincere intention to really limit myself only to the items given in the Abhidhamma system, knowing that the commentators of the Abhidhamma too evolved various new ideas†, which through the various Abhidhamma manuals became tradition — I eventually broadened its spectrum to fill certain evident gaps, which, once addressed, make many of the traditional Abhidhamma concepts much clearer, while also placing them on firmer ground.

At times, I therefore also departed in my naming and translation of terms, where I felt it to be unavoidable in order to make things meaningful. This may scholastically not be entirely impermissible, as most good scholars, when translating from a foreign language, will usually compromise on the side of literalness in order to achieve intelligibility. However, that being said, this book should be understood more as an Abhidhamma-like (or Abhidhamma inspired) guidebook for practice rather than as a scholastic treatment of the traditional Abhidhamma.

In accordance with the nature of the Abhidhamma system, I will try to show in this book a path from material (or phenomenal) existence to spiritual consciousness — or, put differently, a natural sequence for leading mindfulness and meditation toward an understanding and direct experience

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† *One example being the teachings on the mental process (vīthi), which are not from the canonical Abhidhamma books.*

of almost anything a spiritually minded person might wish to know about.

Hence, the book is an outline of Abhidhamma philosophy and psychology, which seeks to give those who are inclined to meditate on Abhidhamma subjects — and along the lines of the Abhidhamma system — clear subjects or headings for contemplation. These headings, however, are not random, but all point in a definite direction: the realization of the highest Dhamma (or the highest teachings of Buddhist philosophy). Thereby, one subject usually provides the basis for the next.

Without any understanding of the body, with its sensory organs and internal processes, as will be shown, it will not be possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the mind. Therefore the book starts with matter. Without a sufficient understanding of the mind, it will not be possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of kamma (skt. karma), of virtue and vice, of knowledge, of vision, and of samsara, and Nibbana (nirvāna).[1] All of which I will try to give some clues about, sufficient to make a start contemplating oneself.

I have divided the book into four main parts. The first presents, so to speak, the vocabulary of insight. In it, I attempt to show a more connected and revised presentation of the basic items of the Abhidhamma system. This represents the foundational method for contemplating phenomena of what we might call the simplest type, summarized as matter, mind, consciousness, and — to a lesser degree — Nibbāna.

The second part introduces the grammar of insight. It shows a way to elaborate on the basic items given in the first part, in a similar manner as one could elaborate on basic numbers (i.e. 1-9) by means of mathematical operations (as plus, minus and so on). It does so by applying the twenty-four Paṭṭhāna conditions of the Abhidhamma to the various basic items described in the first part.

The third part is showing how those insights into mind and matter can lead to a comprehension of the entirety of existence. It is concerned with the five Laws of Existence, in Pali called Niyāma, which I describe in sequence and for which I attempt to show how their understanding may naturally follow from an understanding of the various relations between mind and matter as described by the Paṭṭhāna conditions.

The final part gives various examples of what the practical application of this knowledge may look like. I have also added an appendix with footnotes to different words and statements, which are further clarified there.

To make this book practically more useful, I also added various graphics and diagrams, which should make it more easy to grasp how the given items may be perceived by the meditator.

For readers with different preferences, two natural ways to travel through this book present themselves. Track A, the Conceptual Track, is for readers who enjoy systems and theory: read Parts I–III in order, treating the text as a structured course in the science of the inner life, and then turn to Part IV for applications. Track B, the Practice Track, is for those seeking a practical manual: begin with the part on the four elements in the beginning of Part I, then move to the core practice guidance in Part IV, and only afterward circle back to the more detailed Paṭṭhāna and Niyāma discussions as curiosity and experience grow. In this way, the same material serves both as a conceptual map and as a hands-on guide.

At the end of each part there is also a short section summarizing the key elements of that part. I encourage readers to bookmark these pages so that whenever the material begins to feel dense or abstract, they can briefly return to these summaries to re-orient themselves. They are designed as quick reference points that restate the central ideas in simple language, so that the reader does not become lost in detail.

For readers who wish to understand the interpretive and terminological choices in this book more precisely, a separate companion booklet can be found on the author's website. This clarifies translation decisions, conceptual transitions, and the experiential logic underlying the four paramatthas and the Paṭṭhāna conditions as they are used in this book. It is intended to be consulted alongside this text, whenever questions arise. Apart from that, two videos summarizing the first two parts can likewise be found on the author's website‡.

I hope the reader will forgive the various imperfections present in this book, bearing in mind that to work out a system meant to explain the entirety of existence — and to make it intelligible and relevant to the modern reader — is no small undertaking.



‡ https://highermindart.info

INTRODUCTION

In the ancient world, the wise man was often called the knower of the gods. The gods signifying hidden entities which were believed to be the controlling agents of the world. Entities which were accessible only to those who were initiated into their mysteries. In modern times too, there are wise people investigating hidden entities, only now they are designated 'forces of nature'. The understanding of them, similar to the understanding of the gods of old, can give them certain powers over external nature. The modern means of their studies being called the 'Sciences'. A word coming from the meaning 'to know'.

The Buddhist Abhidhamma system, being almost a blend of both, might be thought of as both an ancient system of 'scientific knowledge' or a 'divine science'; only its main aim is not so much to explore and explain the outer world, but primarily to explore how the inner world of each individual is ruled and held together. This understanding too shall give the student certain powers, but rather over the forces of his/her[§] own inner nature.

This system then, is a system, which can give a diligent student a higher than human, that is, in fact, a divine perspective. Hence we could even call it a divination system if the latter term would not have acquired such a distorted meaning in modern times. In Buddhist countries it often is used as a system for initiation, as a system for developing higher faculties and as a system for understanding the world, both without and within.

Consequently, the aim and use of this system is principally quite different from what you find in common religion. The primary aim of most common religions is, first to see to it,

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[§] *For simplicity's sake, I will use the male pronoun 'his' throughout this book. This choice is not intended to exclude any gender, but simply to simplify the flow of the text.*

that each member of society comes out of the coarsest forms of sinfulness and reaches a good standard of ethical development.**

The main agenda of the study of this system on the other hand, is the development of the mind and the will, and the exploration of the inner workings of things. And thus, like all genuine education, it is also a means for making knowledge oneself.

Of course you may gain knowledge from reading just any book, but not all books enable you to make knowledge yourself. And unless you know how to make knowledge yourself, you will always depend on outside sources for keeping you going. On the other hand side, if you know how to make knowledge yourself, you may become both independent yourself, while also becoming for others a wellspring whence solutions for the problems of life shall flow forth. You may compare this with either giving a person a bag of rice, which may feed a man and perhaps his family for a few weeks, but which when it is finished up, will leave that man in the same situation as before; that is, hungry and helpless. Or, in contrast, educating a man as to how to clear land, how to plant seeds, how to harvest crops, etc. An education which of course may take a considerable amount of time, and which will be only of use, if it thereafter is put into practice. But which once acquired, can lead to a much greater amount of independence and the acquisition of yet higher things than that.

So there are definite benefits to be gained. Nevertheless, we also must state, that when studying an old system such as the Abhidhamma, a modern student has to have some tolerance. Because, being such an old system, it naturally may appear not quite perfect, in that, it may contain various types of information that seem to contradict what is now generally

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** *Of course, a person who has not reached a good standard of development and who is deeply engrossed in suffering, will be a person utterly unfit for the study of such system.*

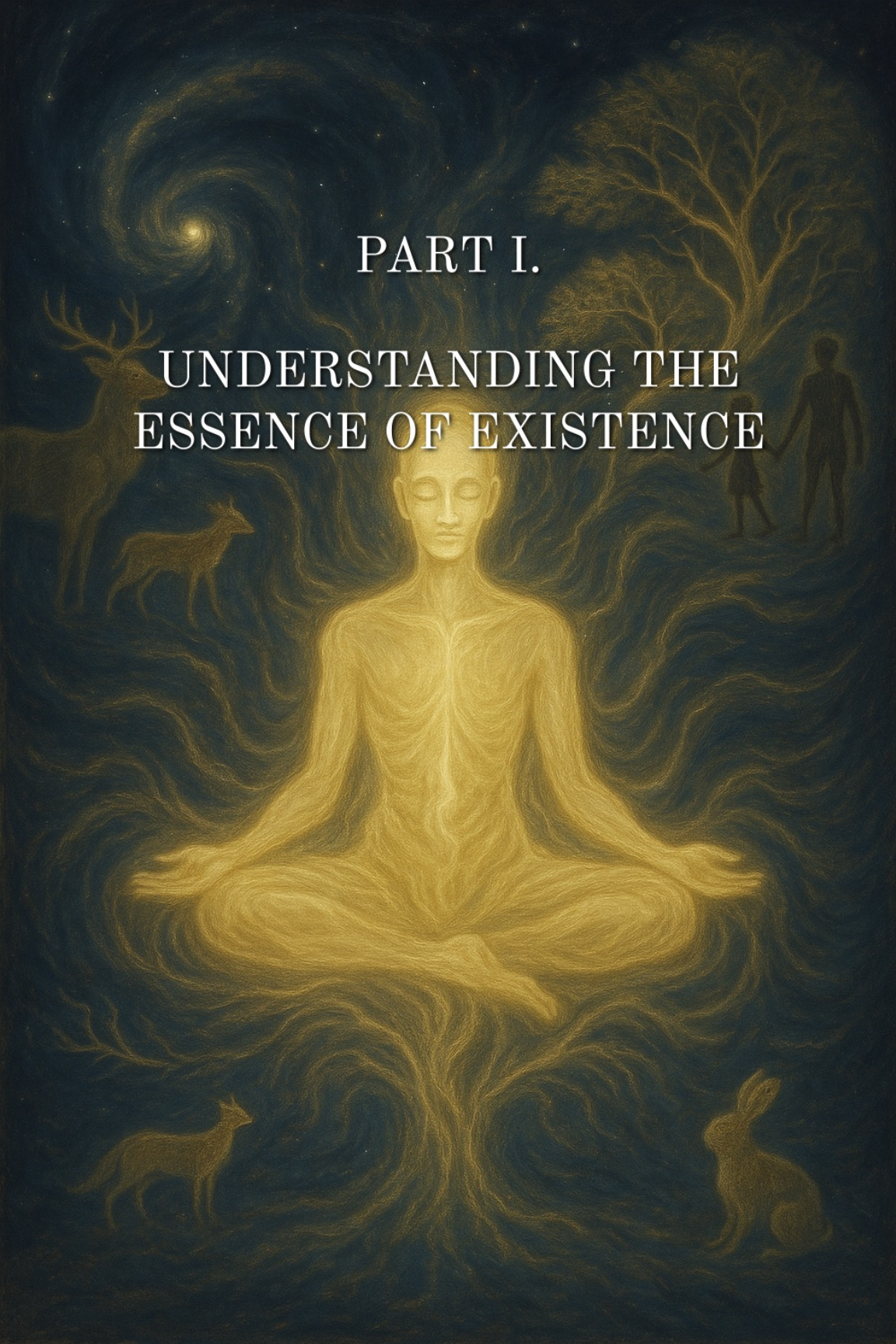
accepted. This should not prevent the modern student from such study, because the main purpose of ancient systems never was to provide accurate details about the world, but to give to those who were inclined to its study, a map of the inner side of life, the details of which had to be worked out by each student for himself. And that may be the most important point that a modern student will appreciate about such a system, that is, the method of a "closed system", with a limited amount of concepts that can yet be used, if used wisely and with keen intuition, to unriddle the whole mystery of life.

Actually without studying any such system, without any training on a path of learning, a person has little reason to pay attention to life or to remember or process his life experiences. He will always be too busy with "life-stuff". On the other hand, possessing a training and studying a system, a person has reason to pay attention to and remember even the unpleasant experiences of life. Many-one might be regularly surprised by ever the same unfortunate happening, constantly lamenting or being angry. With this system, he will have a method to work on his life. That is, the Abhidhamma system can give the framework into which a person can fit his life experiences and understanding, both of the nature of personal insights, as well as from reading scriptures. If then thus everything is put into its rightful place within the system (de-filement means putting things into the wrong place, wrongly filing things), every situation may be mastered in a way that leads to further understanding and wisdom. And by that, to infinitely more potential for constructive action.

A modern student of course should also study it, at least to some degree in conjunction with the perhaps often more accurate knowledge (as far as its subjects go) of modern science. And actually if this is done properly, the result will be much more lucid in either of the two disciplines. That is, the ancient system will first of all show the outline and unity of a closed system, thereby giving a certain superstructure into which all other acquired knowledge can be fitted. And then,

it will also provide knowledge that modern science still is vastly ignorant of, such as the law of kamma and the existence of various planes of existence. While on the other hand, the modern knowledge can fill out various gaps and increase the quality of the details.

Still, it should be needless to say, that the aim of a meditator or truth seeker, which are the main types of persons who would study the Abhidhamma, is not to just acquire more and more random knowledge, but rather proficiency in a path that becomes only discernible with the intelligent study of life. Thus, the outer end is of course not intellectual or mental, but what is aimed at is the highest spiritual reality. Neverthelessthe main instrument for reaching that end is the instrument of mind. That will be the initiator for the will and devotion, seeing to it that no step, or at least no important step, is taken blindly.



PART I.

UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENCE OF EXISTENCE

THE FIVE BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE WORLD

MATTER

If you but seek'st enlightenment;
first it's opposite must comprehend.
But what is the opposite of spirit?
Tis matter whose coarseness is most vivid.

But what is matter?, we might ask. Everything, that you can grasp. Anything, that you can see, can touch, can hear, or smell, belongs indeed to matters spell. Anything solid, liquid, fiery, or moving,
is matter in its forms you spooking.

But he who all these knows, indeed he knows, what to enlightenment is opposed.

Yet, if you know them to their border, and in your mind can put in order; their spell will cease to reach you then, their trouble for you will come to 'ts end.

LIFE (and Feeling)[2]

Next we have life. This is something more than matter. If with the former compared, it is both refined and better.

Be't plant, polyp, giraffe, or man, the life within is all the same. Makes grow, what starts as smallest thing, takes in, excretes, and dies at end. It feels, that is it's central mark, if you seek to explore it, here embark.

MIND

Yet higher still a thing is mind, be it cruel, or be 't kind. It thinks and thinks, is glad or sad, becomes enraptured or else b'comes mad.

PERCEPTION

Perception still another thing, distinguishes between a cube or ring, distinguishes: tis good, tis bad; distinguishes a rat from cat.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Yet, what is it, that knows these all? Whose vision may go beyond each wall? Tis consciousness spelled out as name. And of this whole set, deserves best fame. It measures universes space, and calculates an aeons days. It knows the life without, within; can know a thought, be't brilliant, be't dim; can see, can know perception's workings...and with each knowing, will be growing.



MATTER



It's hard, or wet, or hot, or fleet,
Most obvious–everywhere its seat.

Since time immemorial, or at least since the arising of the first traces of mind, what the mind pays attention to is what we now call matter. And, since in here we hope to not just comprehend anything, but a whole universe of things, our search for ultimate truth is commenced best with this most obvious element of existence called matter.

Hence, we might start our journey, by asking ourselves 'What is matter?'.

For most people what matter is, seems to be so obvious a thing that probably only a few will bother thinking about it any further. Consequently this book is probably for the most part, written for the few only.

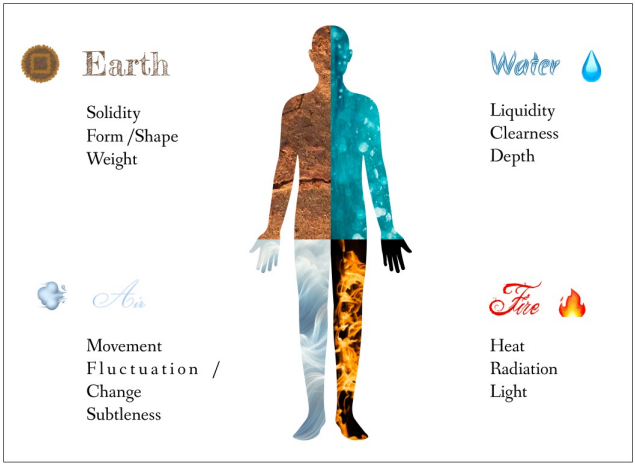
Nevertheless, throughout this book, I will try to show, how an understanding of a certain thing is the first step in the direction of improvement. Accordingly, if a person is in any way dissatisfied with his experience of matter, to study matter may prove indeed quite useful a thing to improve upon the situation of this his dissatisfaction.

In the Buddhist system of thought, matter is divided into four primary elements.* And consequently we start our exploration of the nature of matter with these four elements.

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* *The four elements were known to most cultures of the past, although in some cultures there were five.*

THE FOUR ELEMENTS



The Pāli terms for the four elements (dhātu) are: paṭhavī (earth), āpo (water), tejo (fire) and vāyo (wind).

Keeping an eye on the practical relevance of the exposition, the thing of primary importance regarding understanding the four elements, is to first understand their nature or characteristics, and secondly to learn how to balance them.[3]

Commencing thus, anything material which is experienced as solid, as possessing shape and as having weight, we take to pertain to the earth element. Anything that is experienced as liquid, as clearness or as depth is grouped under the element of water. All forms of heat, radiation and light are taken as expressions of the fire element. While all manifestations of change or fluctuation, or of movement, and anything which is subtle, is categorised under the wind or air element.[4]

This is the first dissection of matter, which allows for a greater comprehension of what matter is.

When this can be done, various other forms of matter and phenomena belonging to the category of matter may become comprehensible.[5] For example may forces such as magnetism, electricity, gravity, and others, equally be deduced through the comprehension of this basic form of classification and through a study of how these, arising in conjunction, will interact with one another to form all the variations of things pertaining to matter.

Accordingly we can consider a material force as electricity as a combination of the qualities of the fire and the air element. Magnetism, on the other hand may be said to arise due to the interaction of the qualities of water with those of fire. A force as cohesion or binding, comes about through the interaction of water with earth. Physical maturation arises through the interaction of the fire, the earth and the water element. The quality of expansion arises through the interaction of the element of fire with the air element, while the quality of pressure can be seen to come about through the interaction of the elements of air and earth.

But then, as has been said, not only is it important to learn to distinguish matter thus by means of the four elements, but as the experience of matter by itself very often is rather disagreeable an experience, a person will also have to learn how to balance these four elements out against one another. For that end he might try to recognise, that each element has a certain counter element to it. Thus, earth, being the most substantial of the elements, has as a counterpart the air element. An understanding which will suggest, that the best way to remove an excess in the earth element (i.e. too much heaviness), is through an increase in the air or wind element (i.e. increasing movement). A similar thing can be seen with the other pair. In that, an excess in fire (i.e. too much heat) for example, might best be balanced by an increase of the water element, etc.

And this then will be the first step in mastering matter.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS AS SENSE OBJECTS

Usually, these four elements first will have to be apprehended through any one of the 5 senses. And through each sense, they are apprehended somewhat differently in accordance with the nature of the sense-organ.

Regarding the object of the eye, there may be found two separate qualities for consideration, one is the form of the object and another is the colour of it.†

Hence, there are earthy forms, such as heavy looking, coarse, bulky objects. There are fiery forms, such as objects which glow or radiate light. There are watery forms, marked by their translucency or clearness and depth of appearance. And there are airy forms such as those appearing misty or subtle.

But then, there are also earthy colours such as brown, black, or grey. There are fiery colours such as red, orange and yellow. There are watery colours as deep blue, and green. And to the wind element may be assigned the colours of white and light blue.

Similarly in regards to each sense organ.

Odours are apprehended through the nose. Thus, there are earthy odours, such as odours that are heavy, suffocating, or in some way coarse. There are odours that are of a fiery kind, such as those which have some characteristics of sharpness or stinging or burning. There are odours of a watery kind, like those that have some characteristics of moistness, clarity, or depth. And there are odours of the airy type, like odours of freshness, purity, and subtleness.

Flavours are apprehended through the tongue. So there will be earthy flavours, like heavy or nutty flavours, salty and

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† *The Vimuttimagga mentions form as the object of the eye. But even tradition takes 'form' (rūpa) as the object of the eye in relation to the mental process. (Pāli names may be found in the Appendix.)*

peppery flavours, or any flavour of a coarse type. There are fiery flavours, as spicy, or biting flavours as bitter and sour. There are flavours of a watery kind, such as clear, easy down flowing flavours as sweetness, or flavours with some characteristics of wateriness, such as those of salads and fruits. And there are flavours of the airy kind, such as flavours that are rather plain, subtle or tasteless.[6]

Similarly with the element of sound, apprehended through the ear. There are earthy sounds, that are heavy, coarse, or painfully loud. There are sounds that are fiery, such as forceful or glorious kinds of sound. There are also sounds that are of a watery nature, such as sounds that are characterised by clarity and depth. And there are equally sounds of an airy nature such as sounds that are sounding very swift, fast, and subtle.

Concerning tangibles, there are those of an earthy kind, such as what feels solid, hard, or heavy. Tangibles of a fiery type, are experiences of heat, sharpness, or pain. A touch of a watery kind is what feels liquid or is experienced as possessing depth. And tangibles of an airy kind will be experienced as movement, fluctuation, or as subtleness.

Each of those sensory experiences, in turn, is conveyed via a certain medium. Thus, the main medium for the conveyance of forms and colours to the eye is the element of light (an element belonging to the fire element). The main medium for conveying tastes to the tongue is the element of water (viz. saliva). The main medium both for conveying smells to the nose and sounds to the ear is the element of air. And in regards to touch is the earth element the main medium of conveyance.

Thus may the whole of sensual experience be fitted into this basic scheme of classification.‡

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‡ *Note: A small booklet treating these Four Elements in greater detail can be found on my website (Title: "Wisdom of the Elements").*

THE LIFE ELEMENT



When these four elements have become balanced, a new element emerges; the element of life.

The life element, or in traditional terms, the faculty of life[§], is a form of matter, that possesses the definiteness of the earth element, the subtleness and movement of the wind or air element, the energy, or heat of the fire element, and the depth of the water element — harmonised to a degree of perfect balance.

In distinction to ordinary matter, life is not a mere static phenomenon, but rather a process that continues by itself, being initiated from a centre around which the process gravitates or revolves.[**] This life is characterised by growth, and decline, by birth and by death. And as long as it lasts, it will be drawn or animated by the duality of pleasure and pain, or attraction and repulsion. Wherein pleasure is the guiding principle towards growth and increase, while pain signals danger and threat. While, attraction being the natural inclination towards pleasure, and repulsion the instinct to escape pain.

Thus following this, its nature, a life gradually grows and becomes more complex. And growing in this fashion in complexity, one life becomes more and more an interaction of many lives, and a chain of long processes.

[§] *In Pāli: Jīvitindriya*

[**] *One may argue that physical phenomena also can be processes as for example the burning of a fire, etc. This is indeed true, which is why in ancient cultures all natural processes were believed to be the life of some entity. Yet, for our purpose, one should try to understand the distinction between a phenomenon as heat and a process as the burning of a fire.*

THE BODY



When the elements have become balanced, and some understanding has been gained of the nature of life, and of life being a chain of processes and interactions, then, a certain exploration becomes possible as to the nature of such processes. This most conveniently is done within a living organism after a yet more detailed distinction of its constituent parts.

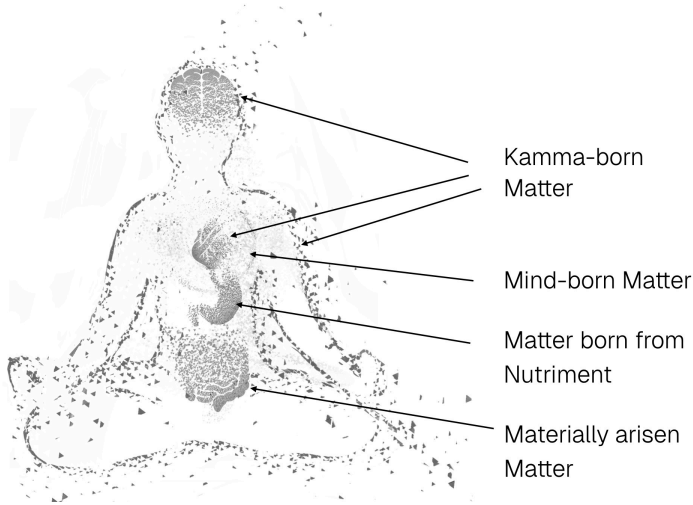
FOUR KINDS OF MATTER

All of the body's organs, most of its fluids, some of its internal winds, as well as many of its internal forms of heat, such as body heat or to some degree the digestive heat, in Abhidhamma terms, are matter born of kamma[††]. All forms of matter that are entirely foreign to the body, as matter which is either not yet assimilated in the body or such as is ready to be excreted[#], are materially arisen-or caloric matter. Caloric matter, when broken down and assimilated by the bodies organs, supporting these, becomes matter born from nutriment. And finally, matter that arises in conjunction with mental impulses, is called mind-born matter.

[#] *The meaning of which will be explained later on*

[#] *This includes the air that is inhaled and exhaled*

Four Kinds of Matter



Notes:

❖ The Pāli terms in order are: kammaja-rūpa, cittaja-rūpa, āhāraja-rūpa and utuja-rūpa

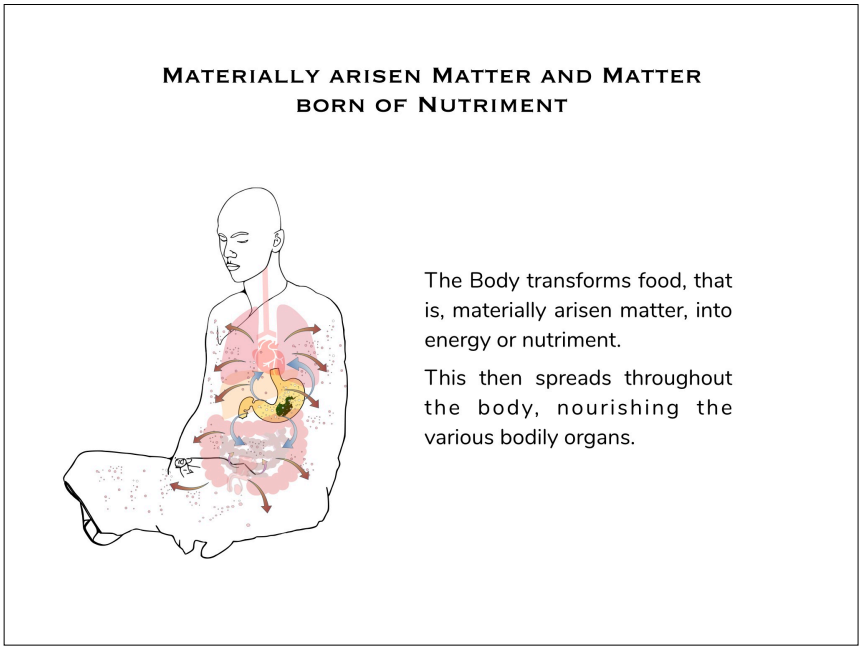
❖ Āhāraja-rūpa, matter born from nutriment, means basically energy or vitality.

❖ Utuja-rūpa, the last, is usually translated as Temperature-born matter. I prefer to translate it as Materially arisen matter, but it may alternatively also be rendered "matter born of season", "nature-born matter", "physically generated matter", "caloric matter" or "externally produced matter".

❖ The treatment outlined in here represents a perspective on matter which, quite distinct from the worldview derived from modern science, is a view that revolves around understanding all things from the perspective of one conscious entity, that is, the perceiver. That comes out most strikingly to the modern mind, in view that things like plants, but in truth even animals and human being other than the perceiver, are in Abhidhamma terms all utuja-rūpa, which then might perhaps be best termed "externally produced matter".

THE MECHANICS OF THE BODY

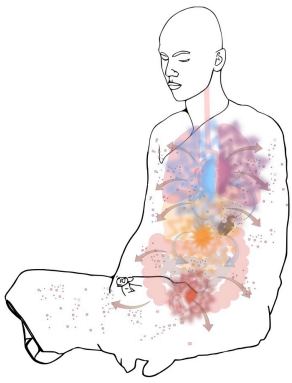
The body's digestive apparatus transforms food into readily absorbable nutriment, or energy. This spreads throughout the body via an intricate network of blood vessels, feeding the various internal organs. The heart, being the pump of the body, is the organ which drives this nutriment-rich blood to the numerous places in the body. The organs, nourished by this energy, come to life and fulfill their respective functions. Thus, when the heart pumps blood to the lungs, the lungs begin to breath; when it pumps blood to the arm, the arm can be seen to move, and so on.



Then, the body being for the most part born of kamma, is an expression or manifestation of a persons kamma. Hence, receiving new nutriment, the body can make manifest a greater amount of a person's kamma. This will first manifest through the arising of mind-born particles (an Abhidhamma term akin to the modern concept of hormones).

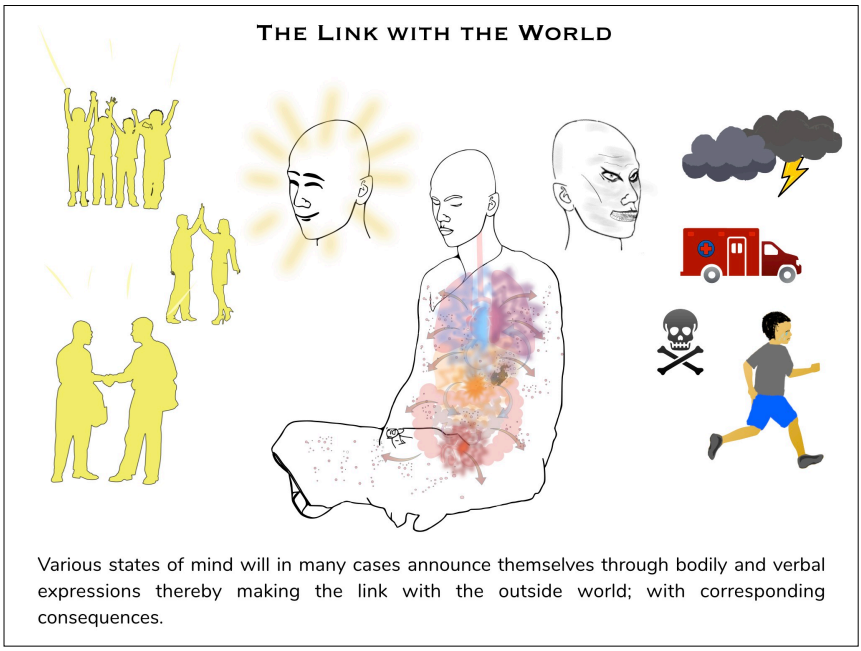
Various organs produce mind-born matter corresponding to specific states of mind. Thus will the genitals produce mind-born matter related to mental states of lust. Liver and heart will produce mind-born matter related to mind-states of anger or joy, and so on. Those then will equally circulate throughout the body, carried by the heart's pumping action.

Mind-born matter and States of Mind



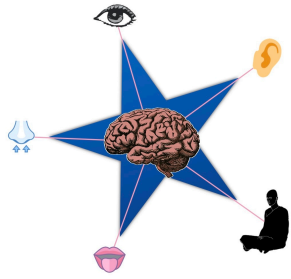
Through the support of energy (or nutriment), the various organs are able to fulfill their respective functions. Coming to life, many organs execute not only physical functions but also produce mind-born matter—that is, matter which relates to various states of mind. Thus will the genitals produce mind-born matter related to mental states of lust, while for instance liver and heart generate mind-born matter related to states such as anger, joy, and restlessness. This mind-born matter, in turn, is distributed throughout the body, being pumped by the heart to various locations.

Thus, when an arm, fuelled by mind-born matter associated with anger, is moved, it may manifest an angry action. Similarly, facial muscles moved by blood influenced by states of joy may produce a smile. In this way, the outer world is continuously conditioned by the body's internal functions.

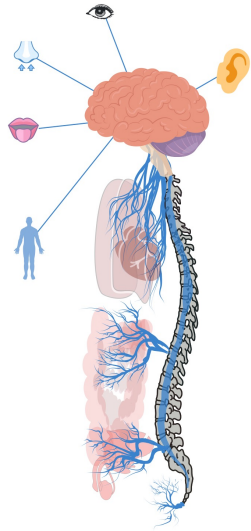


Various states of mind will in many cases announce themselves through bodily and verbal expressions thereby making the link with the outside world; with corresponding consequences.

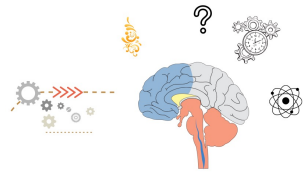
Conversely, the inner world is conditioned by the outer world. Forms received by the eye, sounds by the ear, odours by the nose, tastes by the tongue, and tangible objects by the body create impressions on the corresponding sensory matter. These impressions in turn, are conveyed to the mind through an intricate network of nerves, ultimately converging in the brain, the organ that, in the sense-sphere world, is central to the arising of consciousness.



The Senses and the Brain



Impressions from the senses, as well as signals from the body as a whole, are conveyed to the brain through an intricate network of nerves, most of which are aligned along the spine. The organ, we may call it that acts as the “arm of action” for the brain.



The brain itself is made up of various parts. The inner being concerned with receiving information from the senses through the nerves, the outer with storing information and relating incoming information with that accumulated store of previous information. While the forepart of the brain is largely responsible for more elaborate mental tasks, such as mindfulness, creativity and visualisation.

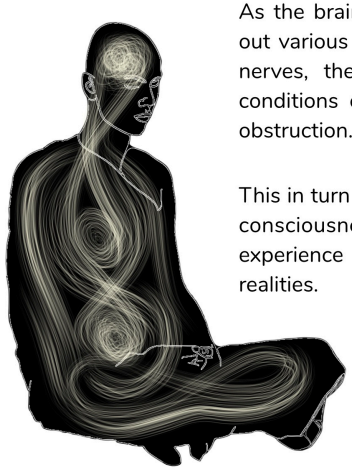
The brain itself is composed of various parts (as seen in the diagram). The inner regions handle sensory input relayed through the nerves, while the outer regions store information and relate incoming data to previous experiences. The forepart of the brain governs higher mental tasks such as mindfulness, creativity, and visualisation.

That brain then, as it makes manifest, so to say the kamma of the brain, becomes gradually capable of wielding a certain amount of control over those processes below it. Its "arm of action" therein is the spine, the organ, we might call it, in which most nerves are rooted and along the extension of which they are lined up.

Thus the brain learns to control both sense-perception, as well as manifestations within the body. So will it through introspection and control mechanisms gradually learn to mas-

ter both the life without (the life perceived with the senses) and within. And as the brain becomes thus skillful in mastering what manifests without and within, that body's internals will more and more acquire a condition of pliancy, smoothness, and freedom from obstruction.

Pliancy of Body and Mind



As the brain takes charge of the senses and balances out various internal processes by use of the system of nerves, the body attains more and more often to conditions of pliancy, smoothness, and freedom from obstruction.

This in turn allows consciousness to experience subtler realities.



Thus, that consciousness arising in the brain, attuning by use of the spine and the nerves more often to the whole of the body, will function equally with ever greater ease.

Which in turn will allow it to experience realities, which are more subtle in nature than mere physical phenomena.

And having delimited matter thus, it becomes possible to tell the limit of matter, that is, to make a start in distinguishing it from things immaterial...

MIND



The mind—a subtle thing to know,
It dreams, it thinks, it plans, and oh,
It's angry, joyful, hateful too,
Wise at times or void of clue.

THE LIFE-CONTINUUM§§



From the birth of the physical body until its death, there flows along with its internal processes a mind that is deeply attached to the existence of that body.*** Depending on the physical manifestation or process, this mind will manifest in various forms.

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§§ *The Pali word for the English term "Life-continuum" is, "Bhavanga" which literally translated means something like: "That wherein one's existence is rooted"*

*** *See Note 12 in the Appendix for explanation*

DREAMS, FANTASIES AND THOUGHTS BELOW THE THRESHOLD OF CONSCIOUSNESS



Dreams, hallucinations, and wandering thoughts are the mental activities of a life left to itself. They constitute the first stirrings of a latent mind seeking manifestation.

Their essential characteristic is that mental activity and thought are entirely governed by sensation and bodily processes.

Similar to how concepts are generated through deliberate mental processing (as will be explained in the following chapter), these processes involve a synthesis of various types of sense-impressions into a new whole. However, while concept formation is guided by reason and intentional cognition, these unconscious syntheses are dictated by the nature of physical stimuli or internal physiological processes.

As an example, consider the following scenario:

In the morning, a man goes for a walk and notices on the other side of the road, an unfamiliar woman wearing a beautiful dress. Later in the day, he reads in the newspaper about a monkey that has escaped from the zoo. That night, as he falls asleep, he dreams of swinging from tree to tree, dressed in the beautiful gown of the woman he saw that morning, while chasing the escaped monkey.†††

Traditionally such consideration will then be analysed into its constituent parts. Thus, to keep things still close enough to tradition, here a small listing of various mental factors involved.

The traditional listing of Mental factors involved will include:[8]

The Mental Life Faculty
Sense-impressions (Contact)
Pleasant or Painful Feeling
Various Perceptions
Desire or Aversion
Delusion
Applied Thought
Sustained Thought
A Distorted View

These will be the inner mental makeup of close to all "unconscious" processes.

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††† For some further example see Footnote 7 in the Appendix

Yet, as this book is meant to show a step-by-step approach to truth, we first also want to show, how this part of the mind is building up on our previous considerations of various bodily processes. With that, we may be able to gain a much deeper comprehension of the mind also.

In the previous section, we explored the body, starting with the process of digesting food, and consequently, here we want to understand the mind-side to that. Thus, we find, that the mind which is involved with the organs of digestion; in the absence of food in the stomach will oftentimes manifest thoughts and dreams related to food and drink. A stimulation to the sexual organs will produce thoughts or dreams of a sexual nature. Stagnations in the chest, in heart or liver, may generate thoughts and dreams related to joy or sadness, or desire or hate. While energisation of the senses will "turn on the senses", producing an interest in their respective sphere (i.e. for the eye, physical forms etc.).

Even the activation of the brain may, if run automatic, generate only a semi-conscious desire to think about the subject put before the mind by the senses.

And, as all these processes very often get mingled up, either with each other, or with impressions from the past; continuously new connections are made between previously accumulated life experiences and new sense-stimulation or bodily processes; establishing a greater bond between mind and matter, with the mind as the subservient element.

EMOTIONS



Emotions are the mental activities of a Life involved with Life

Living in the human world, the life-continuum## —or the mind's ongoing flow of continuity— oftentimes becomes interrupted while there is an adverting of the mind to the body or the objects of the senses.[9] And once a person started contacting sense-objects, he will slowly distinguish two major types of contact. That is, contact causing pleasure and contact causing pain or displeasure.

Experiencing thus pleasure and pain, various mind-states will arise as a reaction thereto.

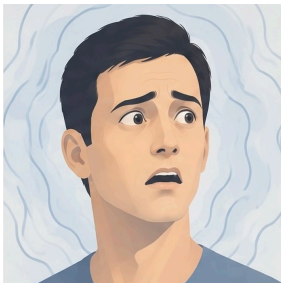
.....

Trying to comprehend emotions, we may divide them at first into two: A negative mental response towards an experience (pleasant or painful), we might call an unwholesome emotion and a positive response towards an experience we might term a wholesome emotion.§§§ Both of these will be seen to possess their own qualities that too can be distinguished and classified by a subtle mind. Thus each mood also has a mind of its own:

For some explanation of the term see Footnote 12 in Appendix

§§§ *A more exact consideration of what exactly is wholesome and unwholesome, or 'good' and 'bad', will be established later on. Here in accordance with the above definition of Emotions, it is referring especially to responses in human life.*

UNWHOLESOME EMOTIONS



Fear

Fear is the repelling or moving away from unpleasant sense-impressions. *Yet there are other mental factors involved:*

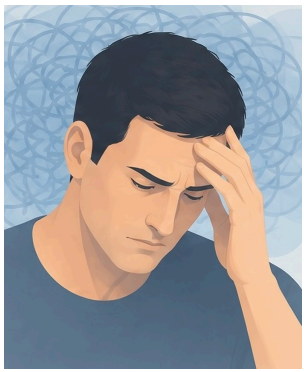
Mental Life
Perception of an outer object[10] ('the feared')
Agitation
Unpleasant Feeling
Desire to move away



Greed/Desire

Desire is the wanting for more of what is perceived.
But other mental factors include:

Mental Life
Perception of an outer object ('the desired')
Agitation
Pleasant Feeling
Possessiveness

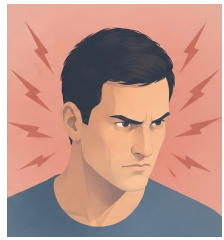


Worry

Worry is the condition of being stuck in unpleasant perceptions (of past, present, or future). *But other mental factors include:*

Usually reduced Mental Life
Negative Perceptions of past,
-present, or future
Agitation
Unpleasant Feelings
Aversion
Delusion

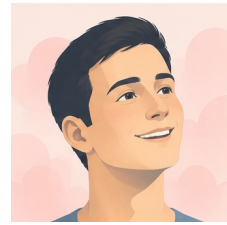
The above mind states may actually only vaguely be termed as emotions, in the sense of movements of the mind. They are a comparatively weak or more rudimentary kind of mental activity when compared to the ones to follow.



Anger/ Hatred

Anger is the minds resistance to life. *But it usually comes with various other factors.*

Mental Life
Perception of an outer object ('the hated')
Agitation
Unpleasant Feeling
Desire to hurt
Aggressiveness
One-pointedness on the Object
Applied and sustained thought
Exertion
Spiritual Delusion
Lack of Conscience



Passion

Passion is the minds thirst for experience.
But yet other factors involved are:

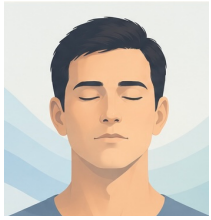
Mental Life
Perception of an outer object ('the desired')
Agitation
Pleasant Feeling
Desire to get
Possessiveness
One-pointedness on the Object
Applied and sustained thought
Exertion
Spiritual Delusion
Lack of Conscience

Anger and Passion may be more justifiably termed emotions. They possess, or constitute a much greater amount of mental activity, and contain much more mental life than the former two.

Yet other examples of unwholesome states of mind are: pride, viscousness, jealousy, irritability, frivolity, shamelessness, laziness, insolence, dishonesty, contempt, dullness, insatiability, lack of conscience, vindictiveness, and stupidity.

When these rule over the mind and become powerful, the consequences usually will be undesirable. Thus they are classed as 'negative' or 'unwholesome' states of mind.

WHOLESOME MIND STATES



Then, there are also 'bright' states of mind. Examples of which are, braveness, intelligence, kindness, optimism, compassion, tranquility, respectfulness, forgiveness, thoroughness, objectivity, responsibility, modesty, firmness, independence, and devotion.

These are the mind's turning towards higher things. They usually make life more beautiful and social relations more harmonious. Thus, they are classed as positive or wholesome states of mind.

They too come with other factors:

Mental Life
Perception of an Object ('the person in need', 'the chance for inner progress'...)
Feeling
Desire to do Good
One-pointedness on the Object
Applied and Sustained Thought
Exertion /Inner strength /Vigour
Faith/ Inspiration
Mindfulness/ Clarity†
Spiritual Understanding
Balance
Conscience
Wisdom
Calmness of Mind and Body (Peacefulness)*
Lightness of Body and Mind
Malleability/ Flexibility of Mind & Body
Proficiency of Mind and Body
Rectitude of Mind and Body

† The term vīriya may be translated either as 'inner strength/ vigour' or as 'exertion'. For the Pāli word 'saddhā' I believe the term inspiration to be a preferable rendering. Why, may become more clear when they are treated specifically as 'spiritual faculties' (which will be explained later on). Mindfulness, I usually felt to not convey much meaning, thus I changed it here to clarity (perhaps short for clarity of mind). ...Pāli terms can be found in the Appendix .

** With calmness etc. of the body is meant the inner experience of the body as cognised by the nerves. Because body and mind start to come more into agreement with each other, they start to display similar qualities.*

In each case of emotionality, the mental life is also deeply interwoven with the life of the body and the nature of the predominant elements. Thus will fear often be accompanied by a sense of liquidity and dilution and a mere passive reception of the threat (qualities of the water element). Desire on the other hand and even more so passion, is often accompanied by an increase in heat (fire-element). A similar condition applies to anger (principally a form of passion). A condition of restlessness usually comes with an increase in the wind element. While pride mostly is accompanied by various tensions (an increase in the earth element).

Wholesome factors of mind[****] too can be related to certain qualities of the elements. So will the mental factor of mindfulness or clarity be relatable to the water element. The factor of exertion, may be easily understood to posses certain qualities such as energy which relate to the fire element. Balance (upekkhā) may be related to the element of earth. While wisdom due to its quality of not being hindered by outer forms, while yet being able to enter them, can be related to the element of air, the subtlest of the elements.

[****] I deliberately change here the wording towards what is more close to the Pāli word 'cetasika', as the word 'emotion' although for the most part a more fitting translation, is generally not thought to be applicable to mental factors as wisdom, which the Pāli word does include.

MENTAL PROCESSING

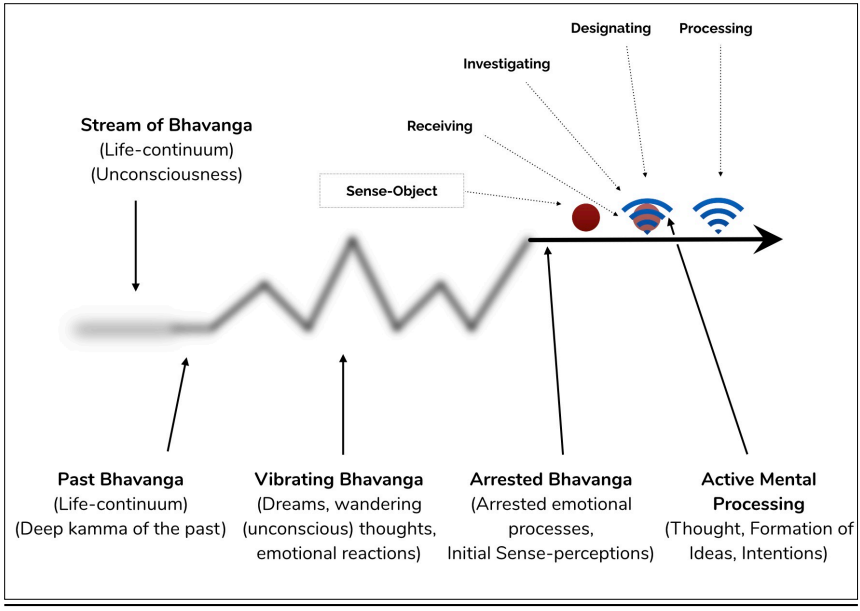


Mental Processing is the mind's seeking for order

As desires, aversions, and emotional reactions become too numerous and by themselves unfulfilling, the mind learns to occasionally arrest itself in order to choose among them or amongst their objectives.

For that end the mind investigates and names the objects of the senses in order to, via the process of thinking, move towards a comprehension of them.

THE MENTAL PROCESS IN THE SENSE-SPHERE WORLD



The diagram above reveals the characteristics, functions, manifestations and proximate causes (four important Buddhist analytical devices) of each phase of the mental process.

Before the arising of the most rudimentary forms of mentation, primarily during deep dreamless sleep, there is the condition of utter unconsciousness. This is termed the stream of bhavanga, which being "all unconscious", is usually taken to stand entirely outside the mental process.

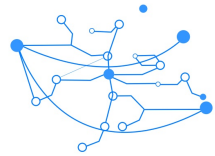
In the first phase of the sequence of the activities of the mind, stand unconscious inclinations from the deepest past, that have almost no relation to the present life. These being thus, gain close to no mental energy from the present life and are due to that generally difficult to apprehend. As the mind awakens to greater life, there arise dreams, wandering (unconscious) thoughts and emotional reactions, which usually are the result of internal physiological processes or, unprocessed sense-impressions from the past. It is only when these unconscious processes become arrested, that adverting to present sense-objects and active conscious processing become possible.* During active mental processing, the mind transforms sense-objects into ideas. First by giving a name to the thing apprehended (evolving a name concept), later by, via the process of thinking, creating more complex ideas that give meanings to the object thus processed.†

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* *Strictly speaking, the "vīthi" only begins with this part. Vīthi, meaning literally track or street, is the track the mind has to follow from the receiving of an sense-impression to the comprehension thereof. (On my take regarding the traditional teaching that a mental process is made up of 17 mind moments, one may see the Practical Example in the last section of the book 'Using the Sequences-Condition to work out a better understanding'.)*

† *For an explanation about how the above treatment relates to the older Buddhist teachings of the five khandhas, see Appendix 13.*

CONCEPTS



A concept is a combination of various designations put together by the process of thinking.

Designating the objects of the senses, the mind turns physical objects into ideas‡. And, thinking about those simple name ideas, the mind creates ideas of their meaning. As the mind's conscious activities thus grow, it ceases to be continuously disturbed by the ever present objects of the senses and learns to abide for ever more prolonged periods of time in a world of ideas, rather than a world of physical objects.§

For elaboration: When an object is apprehended in an unclear manner, (that is, it is only received, without being properly investigated), it will usually be quickly followed by a vibrating bhavanga mind. That is, by some desire, aversion or emotional reaction. On the other hand, if an object has been apprehended clearly, that is, it has been investigated, it has been given an appropriate designation, and it has been thought about, it will be taken into the mind as a concept which the mind can then further elaborate on. Thus the life-

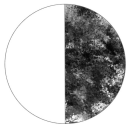
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‡ *Note: The Pāli word paññatti is derived from the same root (√ñā, "to know") as the Pāli word for "wisdom" (paññā); thus, the word "idea" may actually be more fitting than the usual translation "concept". For examples of different kinds of concepts see Footnote 14 + 15*

§ *An idea in this system can never be acquired from the outside. An idea from some external source, is only an impression. Still, the process from an impression to an idea may be very fast, if the impression is happening to be a "good bridge" between already acquired impressions or ideas.*

continuum remains for longer periods arrested, while the conscious mind can grow in its own capacities.

GOOD AND BAD



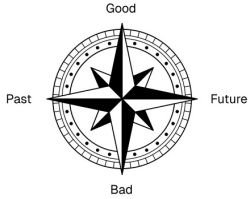
Good and Bad are the most basic division of concepts

Creating thus concepts of the world, the mind divides the objects it contacts into a 'good' and a 'bad'.** And this will become the most basic division of ideas for the mind. So will at first, naturally following an instinctive distinction of feelings of pleasure and pain, whatever brings pleasure, be conceived of as 'good', while whatever brings displeasure or pain, will be conceived of as 'bad'. This will be the most rudimentary idea of good and bad.

Yet, as ideas become both more numerous than impressions of pleasure and pain, as well as more complex, the basis of the idea of good and bad also slowly changes to the stock of acquired concepts.

** *The Pāli words 'Kusala' and 'Akusala' although usually only applied in the moral sense, seem to be equally fitting here.*

INTENTION & KAMMA



Intention is the mind's direction.

As the mind has learned to give meanings to the objects surrounding it, and based on that made evaluations along the line of 'good' and 'bad', it begins to make consistent choices. This is how kamma gets accumulated.

When the mind makes a certain decision in one direction or another, it will either create entirely new kamma, or it will modify kamma that has been created in the past.†† That is, an intention will either give a new direction to the workings of consciousness (and thus experienced reality), or it will modify the way along which consciousness used to work (and thus change experienced reality).

Thus consciousness either learns to "see" new things, or it will change the way it used to "see" particular things.

Intentions may then in turn also be classified into being of four different kinds: That is, there are strong intentions (viz. a strong will), there are habitual intentions, there are intentions which just follow the nature of a certain sense-impres-

†† *In the second case, the new kamma will either support some past intention, or it will obstruct, if not entirely annihilate it.*

sion, and there are intentions which are neither.# Those we may for convenience sake term as random intentions.§§

And, as thus the consciousness of the sensory world changes, so too does the content of the life-continuum change. Hence will whatever has been wished for, be "taken in"*** as an image, where it occasionally will manifest, in the form of desires, emotions, or dreams, whenever that life-continuum vibrates.†††

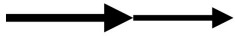
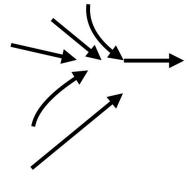
For example, when you were young, you had the strong wish to become a doctor. And based on that wish, you were reading many medicine books and made various efforts to go to university. But then, you got hooked up with a girlfriend and due to that, making money became more important. Thus you developed various habitual intentions, such as a wish to please your girlfriend, the wish to make money, etc. Then, you occasionally watch TV and sometimes seeing some clever advertisement, you develop a wish for the thing advertised. Lastly, you may off and on have some wish coming up in you, which does not possess much strength, nor is it a habitual wish, nor do you remember that it relates to any recent sense-impression. Just some apparently random or arbitrary wish.

§§ *Random here means simply anything which comes not under the above three ways of kamma making*

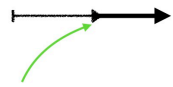
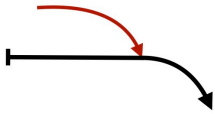
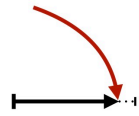
*** *In Pali 'tadārammaṇa'*

††† *Which means, that there are habitual desires, emotions and dreams; desires, emotions and dreams based on strong intentions (will); etc. These will be technically called 'Vipāka', 'kammical resultants', rather than 'Kamma'*
How this process in turn will be related to rebirth, I have described in some detail in the respective part (Kamma and Vipāka) in the later chapter on the Paṭṭhāna Conditions.

4 PATTERNS OF KAMMA GENERATION (FOUR KINDS OF INTENTIONS)

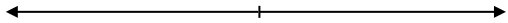
Strong Kamma 	Habitual Kamma 
Kamma based on some sense-impression 	Random Kamma 

4 MODES OF KAMMA GENERATION

Generating New Kamma 	Generating Supportive Kamma 
Generating Obstructive Kamma 	Generating Destructive Kamma 

TIME





Time is for the mind a concept in the frame of which it seeks reference to direct its decision-making.

Time and Kamma are intertwined. The result of past Kamma arrives at the present, where it may get modified and from where, if not destroyed in the present, it will continue to flow into the future.

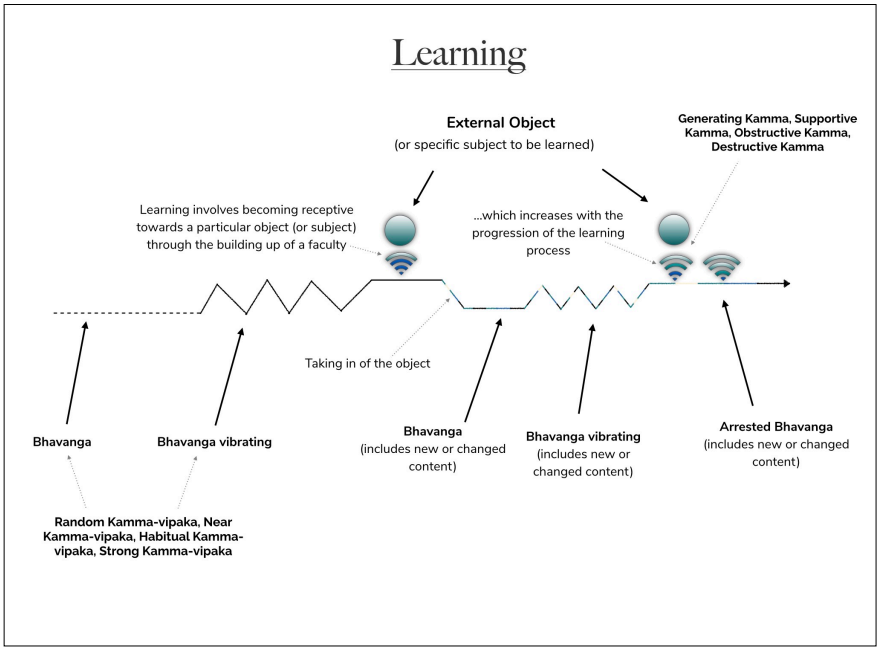
Investigating and designating the things of the senses, the mind builds up concepts of the things it contacts. And when trying to make a decision in the present, it remembers these in hope of anticipating therefrom some possible future results.## Thus the mind learns to extend into the past and into the future.

Then, as the mind's store of concepts grows, so does the for it calculable time-span grow. And as in the beginning stages of conscious life, the mind's main reference gradually becomes the world of the body and the sphere of the senses, the mind will naturally begin to calculate for a better experience of the expected duration of the body and its surroundings contacted by the senses. Only gradually this conception may become surpassed by more elaborate ideas of life, making possible further-reaching time calculations.

As a simple example: Before I ate an apple fruit. It makes me feel healthy and tasted so good. Thus, as I am hungry now, I should go to the apple tree and plug some apples. Then I will feel healthy and well after that meal.

LEARNING

Conceiving thus of a past and a future and a good and a bad, the mind seeks to make more often decisions that assure a greater 'good' in the vaster space of the future. But as it may oftentimes be undecided as to the good and the bad of things, it seeks for outside sources of knowledge to guarantee a greater accuracy of decision making.



This diagram is meant to depict, that learning is not primarily an outer act, but foremost an activity of consciousness, in which adverting to and receiving of the object (or subject) play only a preliminary role. And it too shows that in a learning process both the faculties of consciousness and the life-continuum are involved.

MENTAL HINDRANCES



In the course of learning, what was in normal life simply a desire, aversion, or emotion, is now seen as a mental hindrance that obstructs the progress of the learning process.

The main hindrances to learning will be:

- restlessness /distraction and worry
- desire regarding things of the senses
- aversion or ill-will
- slothfulness, laziness, and lethargy
- and doubt and confusion[§§§]

While learning, the mind will initially contact very unfamiliar objects. Which in turn will produce confusion or emotional reactions. That is, the life-continuum will be repeatedly vibrating, often for prolonged periods of time after the reception of the unfamiliar object. Repeated adverting to the object, receiving it, investigating it, and finding an appropriate designation for it, will familiarise the object and allow for more prolonged periods of an arrested life-continuum even during the learning process.

Nevertheless, if too numerous or too strong old kammas are getting obstructed for too prolonged a period of time, there will usually be little space left for the generation of new kamma. Rather as a consequence, the life-continuum will start vibrating more violently whenever the higher faculties (even the sense-faculties) don't check it by their own activity.

[§§§] *In Pāli, Pañca nīvarana, respectively: uddhaccakukkucca, kāmacchanda, vyāpāda, thīnamiddha, vicikicchā*

Only when activities are found wherein the vibrating mind's content (i.e. the obstructed kamma) can flow in an unobstructed manner will the pressure be released.

A prolonged period of arrested life-continuum comes about, either, when with the progression of the learning process, within the life-continuum an idea has started manifesting, which is in agreement with the higher faculties; or, when the higher faculties have turned their attention towards an object, that is in agreement with the content of the life-continuum.

The higher faculties therein may be thought of as growing out of the manifesting latent mind, as flowers grow out of a leaf-butt of a tree or plant.

KNOWLEDGE



The primary aim of learning, is the acquisition of knowledge.

When not just impressions, but ideas are, via the process of thinking (which in this case means learning), combined to form an integrated whole, they become "a body of knowledge".

This "body of knowledge" is not just a store of impressions, but becomes a faculty of consciousness which sees the world it knows about as a connected whole.

Yet, knowledge may be best thought as being of two distinct kinds, each with a different function in relation to life. Thus,

there is Worldly Knowledge and there is Spiritual Knowledge.

Worldly knowledge is a network (or body) of connected ideas related to the things of the senses. Usually accumulated with the desire to gain profit in the realm of the senses.

Spiritual knowledge on the other hand, is a network (or body) of connected ideas which give a timeless meaning to the things of the senses and the mind.

Hence, while worldly knowledge, having its meaning in the senses, will make consciousness only arise in relation to sense-objects, allowing it to perish when its purpose is fulfilled, spiritual knowledge allows consciousness to expand from its centre of knowledge for as vast its connections are woven and for as long its extend permits.

INTUITION



Based on knowledge, there may arise a certain faculty, that can perceive a myriad things at one singular glance.[****] This is what is called intuition.[††††]

When a mind possessed of knowledge, becomes aware of a certain thing, there becomes possible a synchronising (at-

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[****] *It is this faculty which this science both is based upon as well as which it seeks to develop*

[††††] *The proper Pāli word is 'Aññātāvindriya'...'The Faculty of One who Knows', treater briefly again later on under the 'Faculty Paṭṭhāna Condition'.*

tuning) of the mind with its object of perception. This synchronicity of the mind with its object, allows the mind to penetrate ever deeper into the particularities of the object. Thus it may perceive a myriad things, where before there appeared a unified object.

Nevertheless, the trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of both what is apprehended as well as the interpretation thereof, will still depend on the mind's general development. That is, the mind's stock of knowledge and experience.

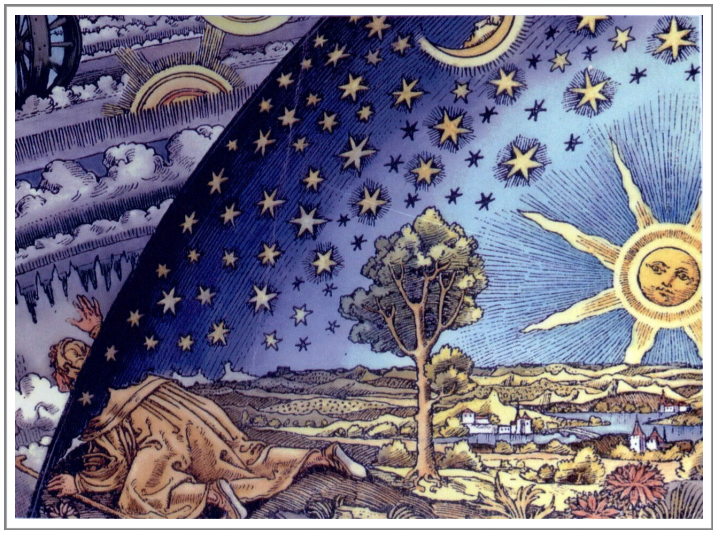
Intuitions can be both regarding very concrete things, such as the thought or way of thinking of another, or the proper 'how to' for solving a difficult issue at hand; or they may be about abstract things, like an idea of the ultimate nature of things.

Training in a certain sphere, will develop a greater power of intuition in regards to that sphere of development.

Thus will a person on a spiritual path, training in virtue, develop a certain objective intuition in regards to ethical questions##. A person who is studying the mind, may develop a certain objective intuition in regards to the workings of his own and other peoples mind. While for a person training in meditative development, a certain intuition in regards to the capacities of the mind become possible.

An Intuition as to what is ethically 'right' or 'wrong' is what is called Conscience.

ULTIMATE AND RELATIVE TRUTH



What is true, depends on your level of development. — If you live in a world of appearances and you can know nothing more than the appearance of things, then it will be better for you to consider the world a flat disk around which sun and moon revolve. Because that is the world that presents itself to you. And looking at it in this manner, you can learn many things, and many connections become clear to you, which otherwise would be obscure for you and difficult to make sense of.

Learning in this way, turning your sense perceptions into knowledge, with time, you will find you less and less require 'sparks' of sense perception from without. Slowly a fire gets kindled within, that keeps going by itself without easily dying out. You require less and less a sun that daily rises on your horizon, as you yourself become more and more sun-like. Now the light that is within, starts illuminating the worldly forms without. And more and more it is the earth, that starts revolving around you, a true sun. As the fire of that knowledge becomes more and more refined, it becomes ever more capable of embracing infinity itself.

For Explanation:

If you only know the 5 sensory world and you have no conception of anything higher, then the 5 sensory world may be said to be ultimate truth for you.

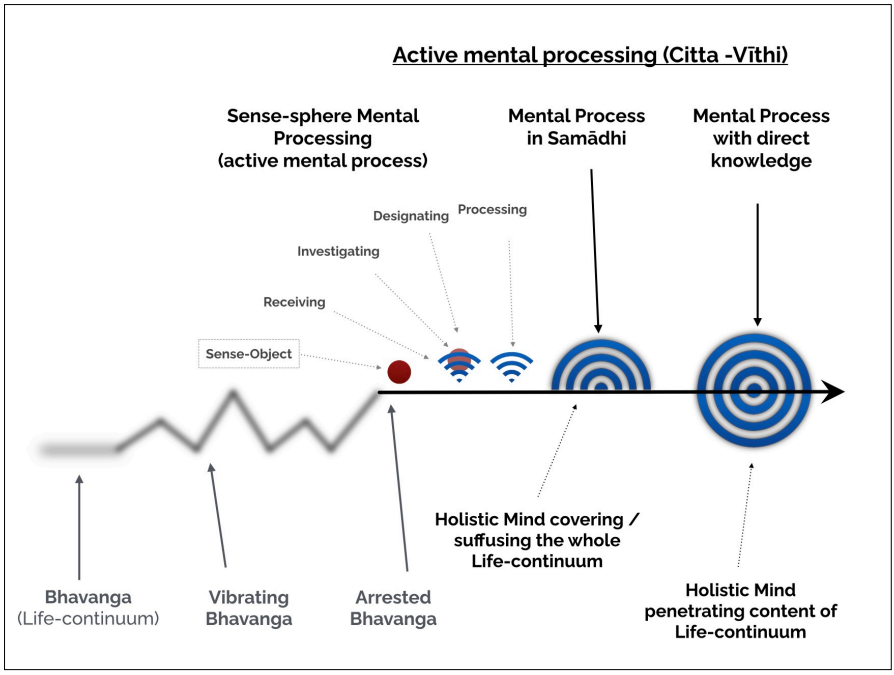
If you hear about ideas like nāma, rūpa and nibbana (What is mind?, What is matter?, What is liberation from both?), at first that will be only sense impressions. But if you then think about those impressions, you may evolve an idea of their meaning. Thus they become a relative truth for you. When this idea then acquires a more prominent role in your life than any sense-impression related to its meaning, that idea becomes more and more an ultimate truth for you.

The means for making ideas of the spiritual life an ultimate truth, is called meditation.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT



As the mind acquires knowledge of things higher than the things of the senses, its interest to develop into higher regions of life increases. Thus the mind evolves a conception of something more ideal than what it experiences through the senses. And having conceived of it, it seeks to grow towards it.



For this, the mind aiming at its new ideal, learning gradually will mean, becoming so skillful in inspiration (saddhā), clarity (sati), exertion, and wisdom (etc.)[§§§§], as to be able to maintain sustained mental processes directed at developing increased inner freedom from all that stands between it and the ideal.

When some amount of success arises, due to the then much closer bond between body and mind (both having become more calm, malleable, and light), the resultant phase of the mind is during mental processing not as such arrested, but starts getting itself processed. This growing unity between body and mind is what is called samādhi. Which in turn will have to be ever greater rarified until it becomes the unity between the mind and its chosen ideal.

To make this point more clear, on the next page, we have a diagram which shows in a much clearer manner the progressive development of both the life-continuum and of consciousness. Terms as 'Fine-material samādhi' and 'Immaterial samādhi' will be explained in greater detail in the following chapters.

The diagram below shows a more accurate consideration about the progressive development of both the life-continuum and of consciousness.

[§§§§] *The five spiritual faculties — inspiration (saddhā), clarity (sati), exertion vīriya), samādhi, and wisdom (paññā), will be explored in greater depth in a later chapter.*

Life-Continuum and Consciousness

During normal dreaming, the life-continuum continuously vibrates, while there is very little arising of consciousness.



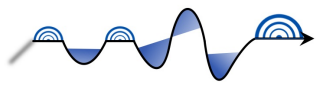
In a sense sphere mental process the life-continuum is first arrested whereupon a mental process happens which is entirely disconnected from that life-coninuum. Through contact with sense-sphere objects, the content of the life-continuum becomes more definite, while consciousness grows in its capacity of comprehending concrete things.



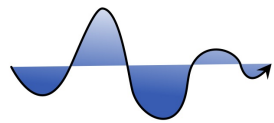
During lucid dreaming, the life continuum vibrates, but is less rigidly established, so that consciousness can be aware of the content of the life-continuum.



During a fine-material samādhi process, the life-continuum is through conscious processing made responsive to consolidating, harmonising, uplifting ideas. Therein the life-continuum will be less rigidly arrested, while consciousness is deliberately conditioning the content of it.



During an immaterial samādhi mental process and a process with diret knowledge, the life-continuum is not arrested but fully functions in harmony with an idea that the mind is determined to consider. That is, consciousness is perfectly taking the lead of the life-continuum. In distinction to the finematerial process, both the life-continuum and consciousness are continuously active.



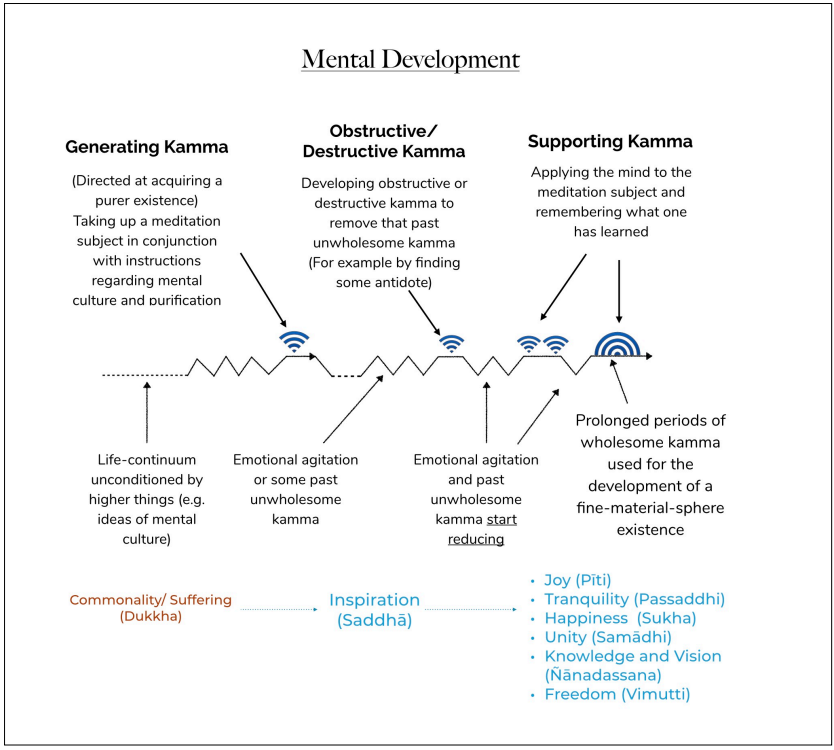
Life-continuum



Consciousness

THE KAMMICAL SEQUENCE OF MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

The following diagram is seeking to make clearer the process of mental development from the point of view of kamma and the path to liberation.*****



As the mind considers about a certain meditation subject (or object), it makes more all-encompassing concepts its own acquisition, and these in turn will start to harmonise the various conflicting ideas that the mind might have previously acquired.

***** *Notes to the Diagram:*

-On the bottom-line - Kamma technically is called Kamma-Vipāka (Kamma resultant, which will be explained in detail in a later chapter).

- The whole diagram will become much clearer in the context of later chapters, and I encourage the reader to come back to this diagram whenever necessary.

MEDITATION, INITIATION, REALISATION



Usual 'daily life meditation techniques' will normally at first aim at arresting the vibrating mind ('life-stuff') and secondly at developing some habit of introspection — questioning the 'life-stuff' as to its truthfulness — considering, what in the rush of life one takes to be oneself, whether it might not be rather non-self (anatta), what in the rush of life one takes to be happiness, whether it might not more truly be suffering (dukkha), what in the rush of life one takes to be lasting, whether it might not rather be fleeting only (anicca).

Short-time meditation courses, using a form of ceremonial magic†††† and ideally aiming at the bringing about of the first initiation (in Buddhism, 'Stream-entry') and in the less ideal case conversion towards their own tradition or sect, will usually make use of various symbolic external objects and pleasant surrounding conditions in order to calm a person and to gradually "trick him" "out of his life-stuff".[16]

Gradually, especially in personal retreats, a person learns to calm his own 'life-stuff' (e.g. habits, personal problems) and to develop the spiritual faculties. When these become mature, he becomes capable of attaining samādhi.[17]

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†††† *Which means you have an operator or leader, performing certain ritual or ceremonial actions directed at focussing the attention of the participants and through thus gradually gaining a certain control over the feelings of the participants, is leading them towards mind-states different from ordinary life.*

NIMITTAS

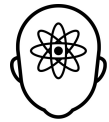


A nimitta is a sign, that indicates, that the meditator has gained some amount of concentration. Principally, any sign of concentration can be considered a nimitta. This could be a sensation of stability, calmness, lightness, specific mental qualities like happiness or equanimity, or even visual perceptions like light, colour, or shapes. All these occurrences can be referred to as nimittas.

But traditionally there are three kinds of specific nimittas enumerated: First there is the preparatory sign (parikamma nimitta), which is followed by the learning sign (uggaha—nimitta), and at last will arise the counterpart sign (paṭibhāga-nimitta). The preparatory sign is a visual perception of dull, dark colour and fuzzy outline which might arise when the mind is trying to attune itself to the coarser physiological processes, especially in the belly or that of the breath. The learning sign is a more clearly outlined perception, at times of some specific colour. This may arise when the mind attunes itself to the emotive processes in the heart. And finally there is the sign which fully resembles the mind as such. This may be seen as a perfect image of the idea, person or thing the mind is devoted to.

The quality of any meditation experience will be primarily determined by a) the quality of the concepts used (that is, the ideas that give the incentive for a person to meditate) and b) a person's capacity to make his organism and higher faculties skillfully respond towards those concepts.

MASTERY OVER MENTAL PROCESSES



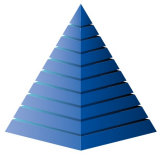
Once a yogi attained to some skill-fulness with his mind, he may at times be able to choose* as to whether to lead his mind back into latency (e.g. to recover from illness etc.), as to whether to go with the flow, allowing his kammical seeds to manifest unchecked, as to whether to keep his mind in a balance condition of being neither fully active nor fully passive†...which will be the primary means for allowing the finer senses to become manifest or the general senses to become more acute, or whether to allow for full mental activity, generating new kamma or obstructing/supporting previous kamma.

Samādhi principally only refers to the condition, in which the resultant phase of the mind (life-continuum) is functioning already in agreement with some higher idea, while the active part of the mind is continuing to develop supportive kamma related to that sphere and obstructive kamma towards sense-sphere related things.

**...or at least condition (e.g. through repeated emphasising at a certain time or in a certain set of conditions)*

† When the life-continuum is arrested, but the mind is not allowed to burst into activity [having only sometimes occasions of mind-door adverting arising].

THE HIERARCHY OF EXISTENCE[‡]



As a person grows in purity, slowly an understanding of the difference between body and mind begins to emerge. Hence, the mind becoming purified, perceives itself as an entity apart from the body. This in turn naturally leads to the question of the condition of the mind after the death of its physical encasement.

This is perhaps THE most fundamental question of religion. Nevertheless, since the dawn of religion, and human pondering over that question, diverging answers have been given. From a life in an underworld, or a continuous life as a ghost, to an everlasting heaven, or an everlasting hell. Yet, as understanding grows, we need not take diverging answers to stand against each other, but can draw a picture wherein all views of afterlife ideas become explainable, all fitting into one grand picture, all complementing one another, all shedding more light on those ideas that stand beside them.

On the next page, is drawn an image which, in a rough manner, is seeking to encompass the totality of possible afterlife life, or afterlife experience. The key to the comprehension of which comes, when it is realised that the condition of the mind during life indicates the condition of the mind after death. Hence we get a scheme of things ranging from the most terrible suffering and torture the mind can possibly imagine, usually referred to as hell; to the loftiest, noblest, grandest, and most divine experiences the mind can conceive of.

[‡] Note: The Pali word for the Hierarchy of Existence, or for the Planes of Existence, is Bhūmiyo (with Bhūmi as the singular form)

The Hierarchy of Existence



Starting with the human realm, the realm most familiar to us, we have a realm, cosmologically speaking midway between heaven and hell. It is a place in which we find a mixture of happiness and suffering, but also a mind that can make choices to yield or not to yield to these.

Hierarchically below this realm is the realm of animals. The animal realm, is a place in which mind-states of desire and fear predominate, but with the possibility of some amount of sense-pleasure.

Further below still, in matters of consciousness, is the realm of ghosts. This too is a place wherein mind-states of desire and fear predominate, but much more intensely so. Ghosts are beings who are entirely caught up in their specific suffering. Although they do posses senses, little else is received through them.

While at the very bottom of things we have the hell realm. The hell realm stands indeed for suffering itself. Much more may not need to be said about it.

Yet moving upwards again, we come to the brighter side of existence. In buddhist cosmology there are 6 (sense-sphere) heavens, towering one above the other, and representing a hierarchy of virtues.§

The lowest of these is called the Realm of the Four Great Kings (Cātummahārājikā). It is a realm of earth bound deities, which are said to be more powerful, but not necessarily more virtuous or intelligent than human beings (although they will have at least one virtue in which they excel).

Secondly, we have the Tāvatiṃsa devas**, who distinguish themselves especially through a high moral nature, usually attained through selfless service.

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§ *This is not clearly worked out in the traditional texts, but I am trying my best to draw a meaningful picture that is faithful enough to the traditional scheme.*

** *A deva (lit."shining one") is a being similar to the angels in the abrahamic religions or the gods of the pagan pantheons.*

The third realm is the Realm of the Yāmā devas. These possess (apart from a high moral nature and so on††), high judgement qualities regarding what is objectively (morally) good and right and what is morally wrong. That is, they posses insight into cosmic laws (esp. the law of kamma). They also seem to have a certain responsibility towards the realm of ghosts and the beings in hell; that is, although they can not directly interfere with the law of kamma, their role seems to be similar to a judge of the dead‡‡.

The realm above this is the Tusitā realm. It is the realm where a "Buddha to be" dwells before he takes birth as a human in order to become a Buddha. But taking things more universally, it is the realm in which most of those who become distinguished saints on earth, such as founders of religions, will dwell before they take birth as humans to fulfill their mission. Thus, the beings in this realm are distinguished not only by a high degree of insight into the nature and results of good and evil, but also posses great wisdom as to how to help beings to attain a higher mode of existence.

The fifth realm upwards, is the Nimmānaratī realm, the realm of devas who create. Following the scheme of an ever broadening consciousness, we may contrive that these may be concerned with certain creative processes regarding the planet as a whole.§§ That is, although working with natural law, they may work out schemes and plans as to how animal species in the process of evolution should turn out, how human races should look like, perhaps, how far a certain civilisation may advance before being succeeded by the next

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†† *The higher devas will surpass those below them, thus they will not be lacking in good qualities those below their realm possess.*

‡‡ *A judge in the human realm also can not interfere with, or create laws, but he weighs out the different aspects of a case.*

§§ *The texts themselves do not give us any information regarding their function, hence most of this is speculative contrivance of the author.*

one, etc.*** And they may too, use their creativity in moulding the sense-sphere heavens below them, especially in the beginning stages of a planet.

While the last and highest of the (sense-sphere) heavens, is the realm of the Paranimmita-vasavattī devas†††, "the devas who control the creation". These, following the scheme further, wield a certain power over the world and its inhabitants.‡‡

Higher than the heavens, is the world of Brahma, a being of pure light§§§. Brahmas by their nature are dedicated to the purification of mind.

*** *Their life-spans is said to be many billions of years, so what to humans might look like an exceedingly long, arbitrary process might for them be just like the necessary kneading of the dough before they can get a pizza.*

††† *The word "para-" in the word-compound may mean either "other /another" or "higher". The second rendering is the preferred one for the author, as it would then add up to "Beings who wield control over the higher part of creation". The "higher part of creation" in this case would mean, anything from humans upwards (viz. the human world and the deva realms). The word creation in this case will be due to the adoption of the name from pre-buddhist times.*

‡‡ *Although, they are generally not likely to concern themselves with individuals but rather, usually perceiving a century or even millennium in a blink of an eye, they will for the most part control or manipulate things on a vast scale.*

Some further footnotes to the Sense-sphere heavens: According to Buddhist Cosmology, demons or "anti-gods" (asuras), are classed under the same category as the sense-sphere gods. This is because they possess greater power and often greater knowledge than those beings below them, thus they are considered as beings of the lower heaven realms. In their case they were distinguishing themselves through training rather in 'anti-virtues', as those on the dark path of black magic. Yet, there is also mentioning in some texts of a plane for demonic beings below the realm of ghosts.

§§§ *I use here deliberately the singular form, although in Buddhist cosmology it is emphasised that there are countless Brahmas, but it too is stated, that a Brahma wields power over (at least) one world (in Buddhism called a world system, which might perhaps be equivalent to a modern days sun-system). Thus there is a giant difference in scale in the traditional texts. It too is meant to indicate that it is not as easy a place to attain to as some (who usually did not try much) seem to imagine.*

They usually do not posses the ordinary five senses, (although they might be able to create such at will for themselves), but are living purely in a world of light or energy (a fine-material world).

Beyond that live the beings called Arūpa Brahmas. These are Cosmic Brahmas (Cosmic Gods). The lowest kind of these is of a nature of boundless space, the one hierarchically above, of consciousness, which is superseded by beings that are identified with void (or no-thingness) itself, while on the highest or most rarified plane of this scheme are said to be beings whose nature it is to be in a condition of "neither perception nor non-perception" (or "neither being consciousness, nor not consciousness"). About these we can not say much. But following the scheme of a hierarchy of consciousness we may contrive that although the nature of the Brahma of the first kind is boundless space, his object of perception might be the content of that space, hence the content of the cosmos, which he will be thinking and contemplating about. The nature of the second Arūpa Brahma is consciousness itself, but the object he contemplates, we may contrive to be the wholeness of space, with, or without the cosmos it contains.[****][††††]

[****] *The main complication in this scheme comes from the "Sphere of neither perception nor non-perception", which is said to be the transcendence of the sphere of nothingness. In an "origin of the world" scheme (from which this scheme is likely to have been derived) we can easily make sense of a sequence of: a consciousness (slowly growing into infinity) arising out of the void (sphere of nothingness) and with time conceiving a cosmos (infinite space), which gradually will be filled with fine-material brahmas. The complication with the sphere of "neither perception nor non-perception" is, that perception is generally understood to be a function of consciousness, which would fit this sphere at best into the space between the "Sphere of Voidness" (or nothingness) and the "Sphere of the infinity of consciousness". The author still works on solving the riddle.*

[††††] *An essay describing the Planes of Existence in greater detail can be found on my website.*

SPHERES OF CONSCIOUSNESS



As it is realised, that the key to the comprehension of after-life existence comes from the understanding of the mind during life, greater care may be taken to analyse the nature of conscious experience (viz. how the mind experiences the world) and the spheres in which consciousness may operate.

Following what has been said regarding consciousness, we find, that impressions, thoughts, and concepts which the life-continuum (usually becoming tangible through the various manifestations in the organism [i.e. feelings],) has become responsive towards, will delineate the sphere (or spectrum) of experience, and thus also the sphere in which kamma making takes place.## A conception of good and bad will therein play a determining role in the nature of the experience and the direction that is set for the progression of the experience into the future.

That is, only those impressions, thoughts and concepts, which are felt also in the organism will be kammically relevant, influencing the nature of conscious experience. An "artificial", unfelt thought on Dhamma, etc. will not change the nature of consciousness, and hence of conscious experience.

CONSCIOUSNESS IN SPHERE OF PAIN



When a being, having acquired a conception of good and bad, realises itself as being definitely bad, it will due to that get drawn to the places where suffering prevails.

For beings in the grip of suffering (or in a realm of suffering), mental processing generally will not go beyond the mere receiving of usually painful and unpleasant impressions, whereafter the life-continuum will just move into latency, bringing into manifestation (thereafter...i.e. life-continuum vibrating) kammical seeds that are responsive towards those painful and unpleasant impressions (i.e. inner mind states of agony and agitation).

SENSE-SPHERE CONSCIOUSNESS



When a being, having acquired a conception of good and bad, perceives the good in the realm of the senses, it will due to that be drawn to the world of the senses.

Thus, for human beings, as well as for animals, although the nature and quality of existence can greatly vary, the sphere of the senses is the main reference point for the workings of thought and the accomplishing of kamma. And so will in the sense- sphere world, the main activity of consciousness be the receiving, designating, and processing of (thinking about) sense objects and ideas related to the senses, occasionally followed by activity producing intentions.

FINE-MATERIAL-SPHERE CONSCIOUSNESS



Further, when a being, having acquired a conception of good and bad, perceives more and more the sphere of the senses as bad, and due to that searches for some higher good, it slowly draws away from the sense-sphere world into a world of finer matter.[18] Finer feelings; light or apparitions, self-created or objectively real; gradually begin to appear more often in the field of consciousness. And the mind accumulating kamma in that sphere, begins to enter it more and more fully. Thus consciousness begins to expand in extend (that is, in space) and duration.

IMMATERIAL-SPHERE CONSCIOUSNESS



When based upon prior refinement, the mind can see and engage directly with ideas utterly disconnected from material things, consciousness becomes established in the immaterial sphere. Here the objects of conscious processing will be abstract ideas of a scientific or cosmic/ cosmological character. And based on such processing will the mind initiate kamma in that sphere. As there is no resistance to consciousness by any matter, as long it dwells in that sphere, there will be no perception of locality, nor of time. Both appear, when reflected upon as infinite and eternal.

PATH CONSCIOUSNESS



Having seen the futileness of the realm of the senses, having glimpsed the imperfection of the fine-material sphere, and recognising that the mere exploration of ideas is not in itself the highest path, consciousness, learning to comprehend each sphere in matters of ultimate truth and natural law, begins to enter and exit each in accordance with what is needed for spiritual perfection and liberation from worldliness. Thus, gradually it becomes accomplished in 'moving about' without accumulating any personal kamma in any of those spheres. With that, consciousness's proper sphere becomes the path of holiness.

THE NATURE OF EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENT MIND-STATES

If you follow the laws of earth well and intelligently, you may be able to procure positive results of a worldly nature.

If you have a thought based on a concept related to the deva-world, your consciousness partakes of the laws of the deva-world. As when you give something to someone without a thought of attachment, just thinking 'It is good to give'. Thinking in this way, your thinking is in alignment with the laws of the deva-world, where everything is ever provided, where everything is ever flowing and where holding onto something, hindering the flow of life, will be so self-evidently painful. Your consciousness being attuned to those laws, will start to function in alignment with those laws. Becoming skilled with that, it becomes verily possible to live in heaven on earth.

On earth, you have to toil hard for your daily bread. While tuning into higher spheres, just ridding yourself of desire makes you worthy of gifts and a worthy recipient of the bounty that you start perceiving all around you, once you cleared the veil of worldly delusions.

Further still, if you attain samādhi, you yourself will start to become the centre of abundance and you will be law unto yourself more than in any of those previous conditions.

On the reverse side of things, if you break the laws of the human world (without taking refuge in any higher laws), you will get various undesirable results in that world. And if you do thus due to your consciousness being able to work only under the coarsest of physical laws, you will get only results that are in accordance with those laws.

You will be moulded in accordance with physical laws, where the strongest force bends or crushes all matter susceptible to it. There will be no consideration for your feelings or your mind.

Hence you will find, that what kind of laws govern you, is dependent on your spiritual development (viz. your general condition of consciousness). The coarser your habitual states of mind, the more you are governed primarily by the various laws of the material (and thus also for example social) world. While on the other hand, if you dwell more and more in lofty thoughts and lofty states of being, the gravity of certain laws and forces will have no longer power over you, while different types of laws will start to govern you.

It is thus that the wise, by subjecting themselves to higher laws, can escape those of a lower order.

...

NIBBĀNA - THE ELEMENT OF LIBERATION



Before ending this chapter, I want to say only a few things about Nibbāna.

Nibbāna is the transcendent reality. It is the end of phenomenal existence and the summum bonum of the spiritual life. It is unconditioned by matter, mind, and consciousness, and hence by personal experience. However, it can only be experienced by those who are experienced. That is, those who understand existence (whose meaning may be grasped by understanding matter, mind, and consciousness), may transcend these by the experience of Nibbāna.

Nibbāna, once even glimpsed, becomes the point toward which matter, mind, and consciousness will naturally incline. Matter, in the sense that coarse material (environmental and bodily) circumstances will be sought to be escaped from or refined; mind, in the sense, that the contents of the thinking mind will be sought to be brought into alignment with the glimpsed truth of perfection, and consciousness, in the sense that it will begin to pay attention to phenomena only in such a way as to realise some ultimate truth they may reveal.

But in a yet other sense, it may be said, that, Nibbāna stands at the end of the spiritual journey, as matter stands at the beginning, with the road from one to the other being travelled by the mind.

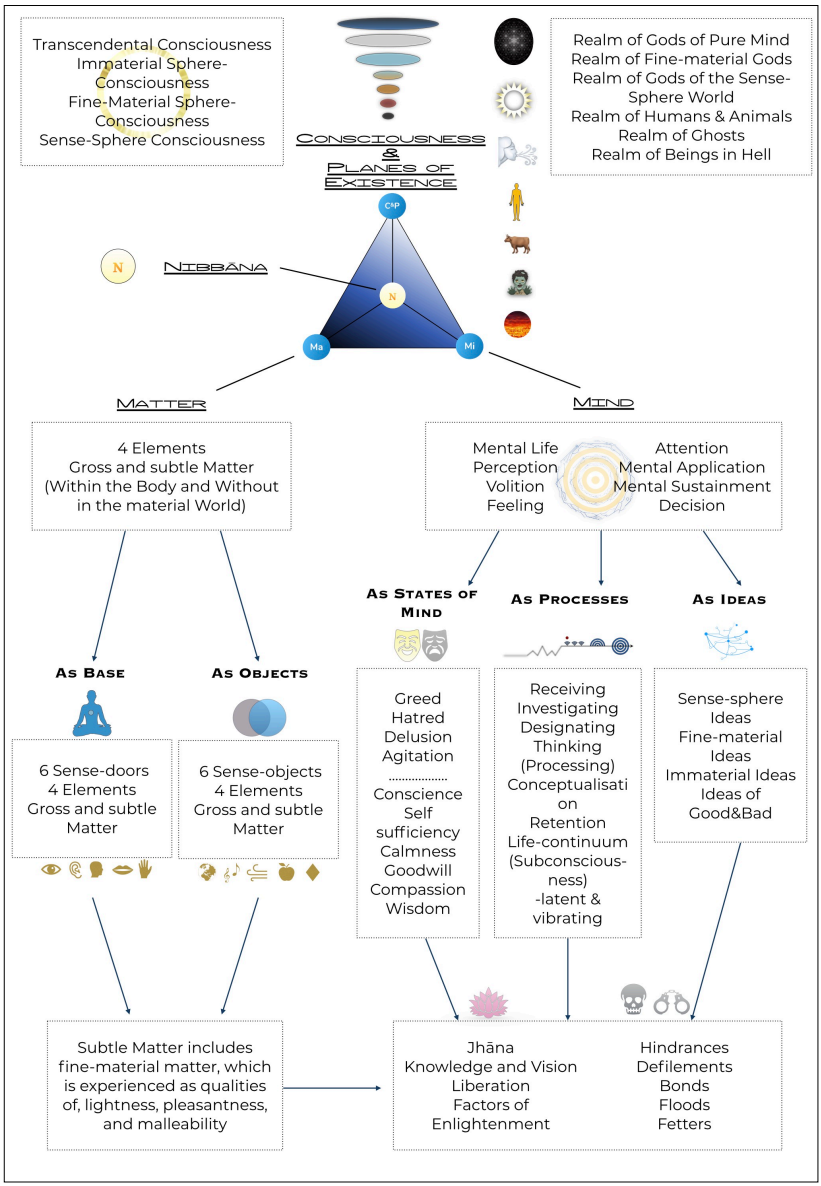
SYNTHESISING THE FIRST PART

Concluding, let us examine the meaning and significance of this first part. As we have indicated in the introduction, the aim of the Abhidhamma system, is to draw within the aspirant of knowledge an image of reality —an inner cosmos so-to-say, however imperfect, which with every act of processing an impression or life experience, should become an inner reality.

Whoever seeks to become wise, whoever seeks to become a superior person, must draw into himself life experiences and process them in line with his chosen path. Both good and bad experiences have to be welcomed, as the path to wisdom requires the understanding of both. For that end, I have given so far a basic means to investigate and understand experiences of a quiet broad spectrum.

Now, a central key point for thinking along the principles of a system, is, to realise the logic of the system. Once that logic is realised, or understood, everything that is seeked to be understood, can be measured with the whole structure of the system. If even one point of contact with something known can be found, any problem can be turned into a solution.

To better realise the logic of the Abhidhamma, or to easier accommodate the above-said drawing of a map in consciousness, I will give below a brief overview chart of the main categories of the Abhidhamma system. This will help the student to better memorise the fundamentals of the system, as well as to visualise how all things fit together.



As we can see, the fundamentals of Abhidhamma Philosophy can be reduced to 4 ultimates: Matter, Mind, Consciousness, and Nibbāna. These are the foundational division of Abhidhamma.

Gross matter refers especially to the matter of the body (treated usually either as body parts or as made up of the 4 elements) and the 5 senses with their respective objects. And it too refers to all phenomena and processes related to these, such as digestion, sexuality, birth, aging, death, and bodily comfort, or discomfort.§§§§ Subtle matter includes fine-material matter, usually experienced as energy (which is the material side to what we have discussed under the heading of "The Fine-material sphere").

Mind can be divided into emotions (or mind-states), mental processes and ideas. Emotions although usually containing all the mental factors shown, are most easily knowable through the factors of mental-life (mental-life faculty) and feeling. Mental Processes, although containing all the above-shown factors of mind, may be most easily knowable through the mental factors of mental application, mental sustainment, and decision, (perhaps with exception of the life-continuum). Ideas (or concepts) (together with physical objects) are the contents of the thinking mind. While consciousness is the individual way of experiencing the world.

When considering about mental development and the path to Nibbāna, these categories are treated differently: As consciousness tries to shift from the sense-sphere world to the fine-material world or later still to the immaterial world or Nibbāna, what were in life simply sensations or emotions with a justified purpose in that sphere, are then seen as hindrances, (floods, bonds or defilements)*****, which have to be overcome in order to make any progress. The main means to that will be mental processing, higher ideas and decision making.

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§§§§ *The traditional list of terms related to matter can be found in the appendix. Adding all terms here I'm afraid would cause more confusion than doing good.*

***** *These are common Buddhist synonyms for the mental hindrances covered earlier, added mostly for the benefit of those familiar with the Buddhist system.*

Nibbāna itself is the perfection which lies beyond mind and matter, but towards which these are meant to be directed.

APPLICATION

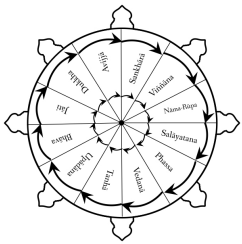
Wherever the mind meets the body (and later wherever the mind meets the mind), there must be in the mind either a good designation or a good question like: "What is it?". If it is unwholesome: "How can I get rid of it?"; if it is wholesome: "How can I make it grow?". Or else: "What is the cause of it?", "What can I learn from it?" — Having the right type of question, the mind will be made capable of receiving a good answer. Doing thus, at some point in time, the mind will start to answer its own questions, and undesirable experiences will be gotten rid of before they are hardly even noticed. While the mind will learn to effortlessly build up and make grow any good kammical seed or arisen good opportunity.

Key questions to ask oneself in this section

1. How to recognise/distinguish the four elements?
2. How to balance the four elements?
3. How to feel life? / How to feel more alive?
4. How can I be attracted only to what supports my life, and how can I repel what threatens or causes harm to it?
5. What physiological process can I notice? / How does my body work?
6. How to allow the physiological processes of my body to function more natural (or more ideal)?
7. How to use my brain? / How to use the potential faculties of my brain?
8. How to be more awake?
9. How to remove negative emotions?
10. How to establish positive emotions?
11. How to arrest the emotional mind?
12. What is the proper name/designation for the things that my senses are contacting?
13. How to think rightly? / How to think more clearly?
14. What is important for me to know? / What is important for me to remember?
15. What do I want? / Where do I want to go with my life?
16. How to develop in the direction I chose?
17. Is the direction I chose leading me to the transcendence of all imperfection?

THE CHAIN-REACTION OF BECOMING

(Paticca Samuppāda)



Paticca Samuppāda, often translated as the Law of Dependent Origination, is perhaps the most famous of Buddhist Laws[19]. Discovered by the Buddha and prescribed by him as one of the most fundamental principles to comprehend, it is a sequence of 12 links, which is spanning the whole of human experience in a cause-effect manner. It thereby describes both, how what is commonly thought of as 'The Self' comes about and how it relates to the world at large. That is its metaphysical aspect. But perhaps more importantly, it constitutes the second of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths††††, showing the true origin of all the suffering#### in the world, and the sequence it takes from that origin to its most acute end form.

In this chapter I will give a few ideas as to different ways of comprehending this important law of existence.

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†††† *1. The Noble Truth of Suffering*
2. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering
3. The Noble Truth of the possibility of an Ending of all Suffering
4. The Noble Truth of the Path of Liberation

The reader should keep in mind that the word suffering commonly used in modern times as a translation for the Pali word "dukkha" is quite an imperfect one. It is indeed difficult to capture the whole breadth of meaning of the term in the English language, but a more faithful translation might be "flaw", "imperfection", or "taint". Hence, the statement is that existence is flawed and filled with imperfection.

The Formula

	Avijjā	Ignorance
	Sankhārā	Kammical Formations
	Viññāna	Consciousness
	Nāma-Rūpa	Mind and Matter
	Salāyatana	Six-Sense Bases
	Phassa	Contact
Because	Vedanā	Feeling
of	Tanhā	Desire / Thirst
	Upādāna	Clinging / Fuel
	Bhāva	Becoming
	Jāti	Birth
	Jarāmarana, Soka, Parideva, Dukkha-Domanassa	Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair

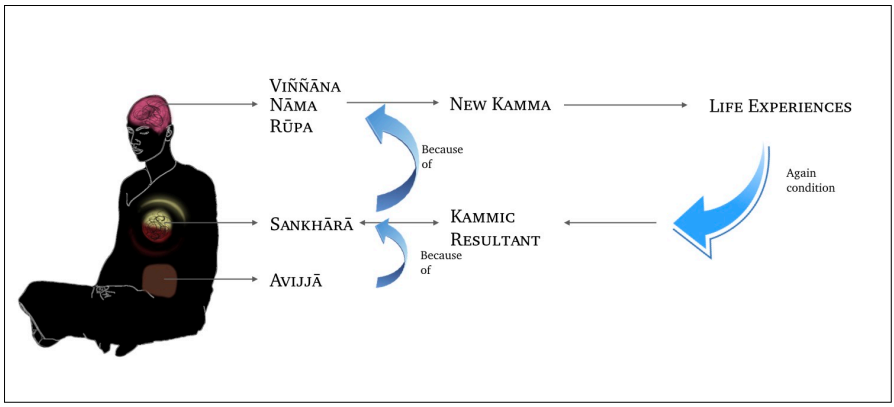
Unfathomable as the deep dark depth of the earth, is the deep dark depth of ignorance, out of which in random fashion, sprout formation after formation. Those are the kammical seeds of an infinite past, which, like little saplings whose planting has been long forgotten pierce through into the field of consciousness. There they grow and prosper, becoming manifest as the things of the world, and the mind that is animating them. Slowly becoming manifold as the various spheres of the senses. Through those, consciousness learns to know what is pleasant, what unpleasant, and what neutral. Delighting in the one and reviling the other, becoming attached to the one and seeking distance from the other. This is how the experiences of life start modifying the existence that grew out of those kammical seeds whose offspring it has become. Yet, having reached so far into manifestation, it has to follow the laws of manifest life and sooner or later yield to its own disintegration, leaving behind only the seeds, that were in the fruits of its blossom.

Explanation

Ignorance refers in this case especially to spiritual ignorance, or spiritual darkness, that is, lack of understanding regarding inner things. Due to this lack of understanding, there will arise within, more or less continuous mental formations, that is unconscious delusive thoughts, desires, emotional reactions and so on. These very often will force themselves into consciousness. And having become conscious, a mind will arise, that seeks for fulfilment and answers without, in the material world. For that end, it makes the senses seek contact with that world. With the arising of contact with the material world, in turn, there will arise pleasant feelings within, if that contact is an agreeable one and unpleasant feelings, if disagreeable. Feeling thus pleasure and pain, thirst arises for more pleasure and less pain. Both of which providing thus more fuel for further becoming. And where there is becoming, there will be birth and where there is birth, death has to follow.

BASIC COMPREHENSION OF THE SEQUENCE OF BECOMING

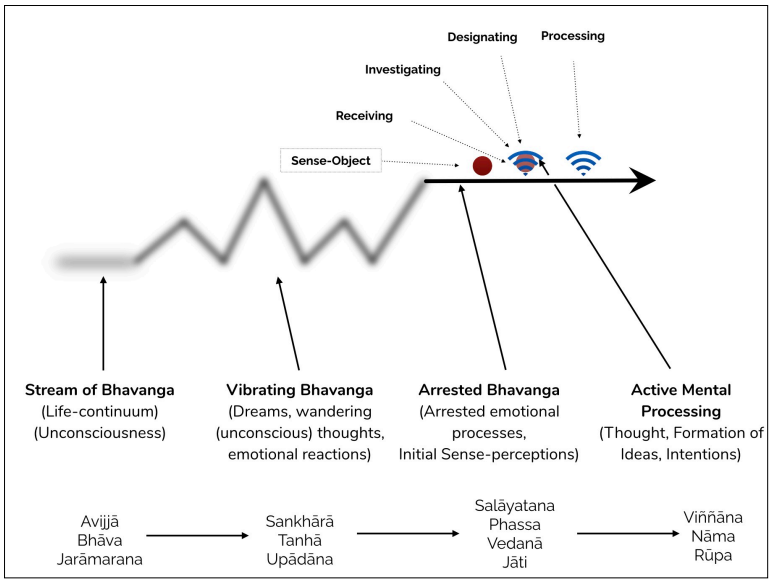
A meditator will usually at first seek to grasp the Sequence of Becoming via the tool of his body. And the diagram below shows how such beginning comprehension may about look like. Thus it may become obvious how the various teachings in the beginning part of this book will help to almost infinitely deepen also one's understanding of the Sequence of Becoming.



The square on the level of avijjā stands symbolically for physiological processes as a whole, which may be said to have as their main centre of gravity the digestive apparatus. While what is in the diagram for simplification referred to as 'Life-experiences', are actually sense-experiences (that is, Six Sense bases + Contact), feelings, desires or aversions, clinging, and thus further becoming. Thus the meditator may understand with further reflection. But even with the basic understanding shown in the diagram established, further considerations become possible...

THE SEQUENCE OF BECOMING AND THE MENTAL PROCESS

As the mind becomes more subtle, it may then equally also gain a subtler comprehension of this law. Thus will a meditator with improvement in skill, be able to comprehend this law not only via the body, but also through the perception of mental phenomena.

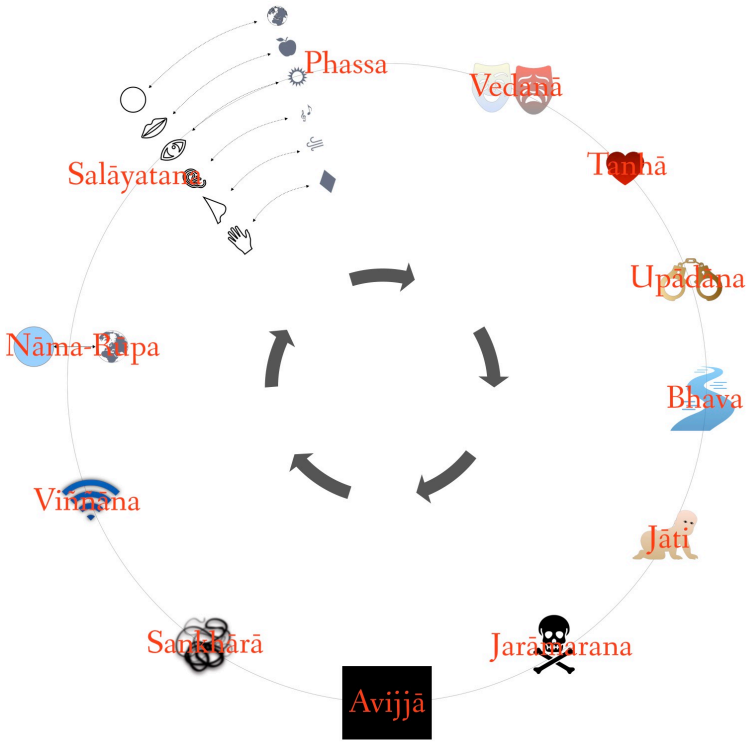


As the second diagram above indicates, actually each of the phases of the mental process has more than one significance in relation to the Sequence of Becoming, and thus can give us various clues for the comprehension of the same.

The diagram on the next page shows in pictorial form, how the whole sequence of this Law is indeed a self turning wheel, wherein the end, is just the beginning of another round.

Thus, spiritual darkness (avijjā) ultimately ends in sorrow, lamentation and suffering, which in turn again will condition the prevalence of further ignorance or darkness. Thereby it should be understood, that while “The Law of Becoming” is presented as a sequence, in reality each factor in the sequence underlies all the factors that follow it. Hence, “Ignorance” underlies the entire sequence, “Sankhārā” most of it, and so on — which is the key to undoing the whole process.

THE WHEEL OF BECOMING



THE SEQUENCE OF BECOMING TO COMPREHEND LIFE

Here I only want to show a more concrete example of how our life experiences arise as a result of our ignorance, and how things gradually build up to greater complexity in a manner that becomes describable with the 'Sequence of Becoming'. I use in this example the gradual development of an occupation based identity, which grows into, and is based upon a distorted perception of the world and is followed by life-experiences which are thus strongly limited by that identity and distorted perception of things.[20]

Thus, because of...

Avijjā - Ignorance, or Lack of Understanding

For example a person might have been born, unconscious of himself and without any perceptible choice on his part, into a family of businessmen.

Sankhārā - Kammical Formations

As result there arise in him mental formations, that is, desires, aversions and confusions, related to the life of a businessman.

Viññāna - Consciousness

These will lead his consciousness to perceive an outer world that is tinged by those desires, aversions and unconscious thoughts.

Nāma-Rūpa - Mind and Matter

And what he thus perceives without, further crystallises into a solid world that he engages with. Together with that, a mind arises, which will involve itself in that world of solid objects.

Salāyatana - Six Senses, Phassa - Contact, Vedanā - Feelings

Thus, his senses, instead of perceiving neutral objects of nature without, become geared to perceive certain pieces of paper as money, certain persons as customers or competitors. And based on that contact with the things of the senses, pleasure arises when that 'money' is for him increasing, while painful feelings arise when his 'competitor' is doing better than him.

Tanhā - Desire/ Thirst

These feelings of pleasure and pain in turn will lead to further and further desire towards those pleasure bringing objects.

Upādāna - Fuel

These desires for more pleasure and less pain, no less natural, with time, become more lasting than the stimulating impressions and the resulting feelings.

Bhava - Becoming

And thus, that person becomes more and more specialised in a businessman reality of businessmen inclinations.

Jāti - Birth

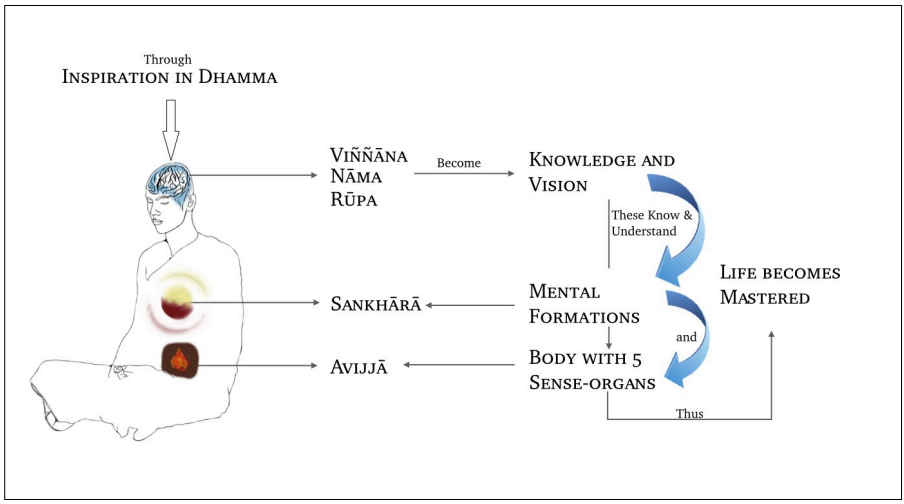
Which will lead to further birth into a businessman's reality in the future.

Soka, Parideva, Dukkha-Domanassa - Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair

With all its accompanying worries and sufferings.

CESSATION OF THE SEQUENCE

But with the removal of ignorance — avijjā (for example through hearing Dhamma teachings), sankhārās (that is, i.e. kammical formations of being a businessman), start ceasing. With the ceasing of those sankhārās, the field of consciousness ceases to be that limited place of customers and competitors only. With that, life- experiences lead to liberating wisdom. And thus, a person's being gradually moves towards liberation from any form of self-centred becoming. Thus, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair will cease.



The Chain of the Cessation of Suffering, as perceived in Meditation

As this diagram shows, when knowledge is applied to internal processes, avijjā starts ceasing, sankhārās (mental/ kammic formations) become modified or transformed, and thus life is lived more and more by Dhamma principles.

CONDITIONING FREEDOM

When you learn to cultivate the field of consciousness (through the exercise of mindfulness, exertion, wisdom and right intending), weeding out bad seeds that have started sprouting, and skillfully plant good seeds, then the nāma and rūpa that start growing out of this consciousness (the experiences that are to a big extent the result of past kamma, as well as the mind that is engaging with those experiences), no longer are determined entirely by the randomness of nature, but rather consciousness becomes a field, most of whose fruits are self chosen. Then, your journey through life, instead of being a toilsome battle with sense- impressions and the mind, will become more and more like a walk through a garden of your own liking.

PART II. THE PAṬṬHĀNA



If existence has four parts
Of which each into the other darts
Then 24 are the relations
Which show their way of interaction

Are they manifest or latent just?
Do they combine or do they blast?
Do they relate by way of correspondence?
Or do they stand as firm foundations?

Manifold are the ways
in which existence, existence sways
A mathematics deep and wide
A grammar which no law does hide

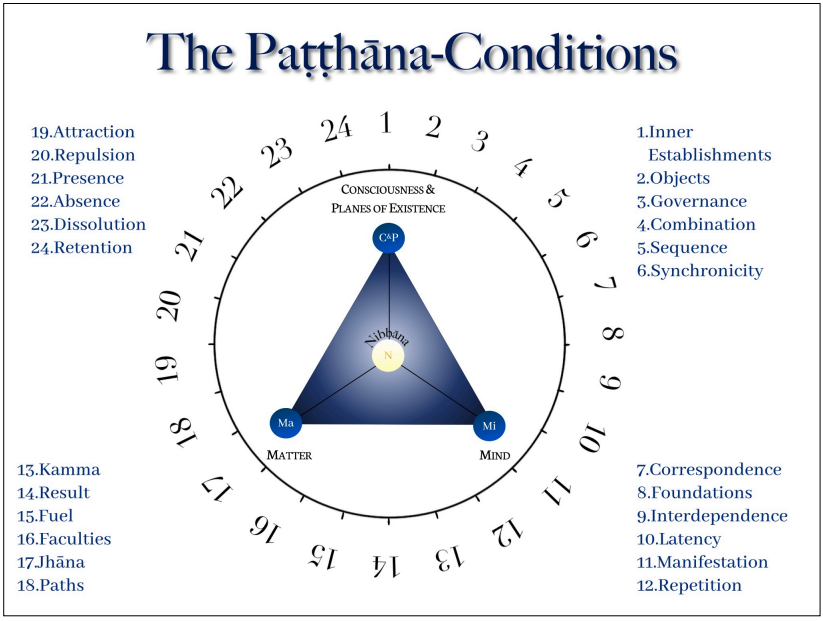
The Paṭṭhāna, profound a system
For developing highest wisdom
Who learns it and who understands
Will insights reap with open hands

"To understand means, to understand all.
To understand only in part, means to not understand at all"
(An occult Axiom)

'The Paṭṭhāna', traditionally regarded as the quintessence of the Buddha's wisdom and as the surest proof of his omniscience; is a system which, in mathematical order, seeks to expand the comprehension of matter, mind, consciousness, and Nibbāna (as delineated in the previous part of the book); to cover the entirety of existence.

In total there are 24 Paṭṭhāna conditions. And these may perhaps best be thought of as patterns in the phenomenal world (that is, patterns in how material and mental things occur). But, as phenomenal realities are so to say the objects a meditator seeks to gain insight in, the Paṭṭhāna may equally be viewed as the grammar of insight. Thus, the Paṭṭhāna is a system which is seeking to reduce the infinite variety of phenomena, or the infinite amount of life experiences, to a finite amount of universal realities which follow 24 possible modes or ways of relating to each other.

Sometimes the Paṭṭhāna is also called the system of Synthesis of the Abhidhamma. That is, it is synthesising the basic ideas of what matter, mind and consciousness are, into ideas of growing complexity. And it is doing that, by applying these 24 conditions to them, in quite the same manner as one would apply mathematical operations as plus, minus, division and multiplication to the numbers 0 to 9 in mathematics. Consequently, as such operations in mathematics allow for an infinitely larger use for those numbers, so do the Paṭṭhāna conditions allow for an infinitely larger use for the understanding of mind, matter, consciousness, and the path to enlightenment. This is how the Paṭṭhāna seeks to provide the means for comprehending the entirety of existence.



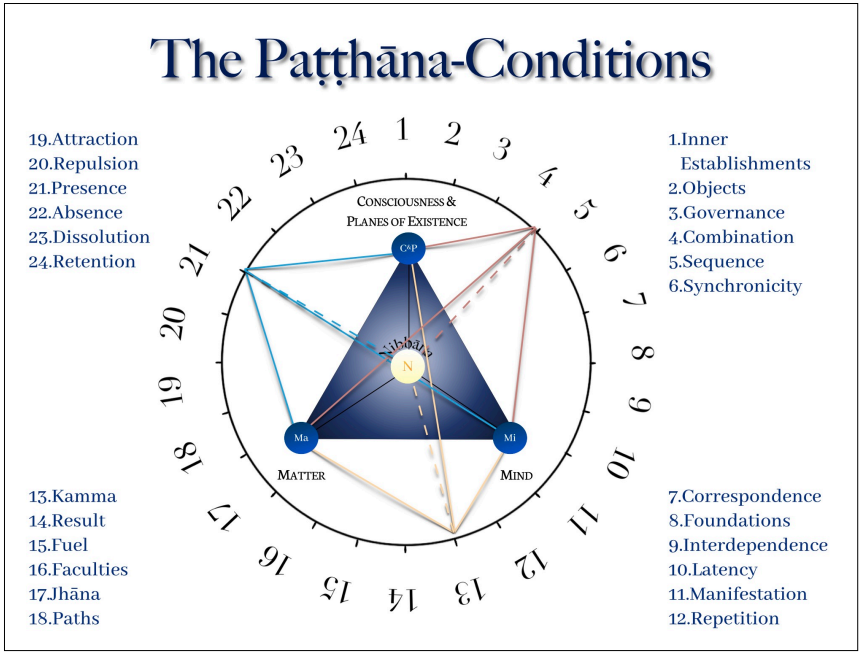
A meditator seeks to understand everything grounded in his own reality. Therefore his understanding of anything will always start with an observation of matter, mind and consciousness. These are his computer hardware and computer software. And with these, he will learn to measure and calculate everything.

In this book, the Paṭṭhāna Conditions are usually treated first with a consideration of the four elements and then in relation to body and mind processes. Thus, anyone who has gained some understanding of the four elements, will with some further meditation come into the position to gain some comprehension of each of the Paṭṭhāna Conditions. Further on, will give the treatment of the Paṭṭhāna Conditions in relation to bodily and mental processes the more advanced meditator the ability to exceedingly extent his comprehension of these. The element of Nibbāna is the goal and direction towards which the contemplation should be directed. In most of the Paṭṭhāna conditions it is represented by their practical relevance for the aim of deliverance from bondage.

.....

To comprehend the Paṭṭhāna conditions there may be two primary ways of asking an appropriate question. Either, as an example, one may ask: 'What is the condition of mind, matter and consciousness in a state of meditation (Jhāna Condition)?, or in relation to kamma (Kamma Condition), or in a condition of latency (Purejāta Condition) etc.?' Or, reflecting on some present condition of mind and matter, one may ask, ...'How does this mind-state or physical condition relate to successful meditation (Jhāna Paccaya), or to the establishment of character (Hetu Paccaya)...Or, 'Is it pointing to Nibbāna?'(Magga Paccaya), etc.

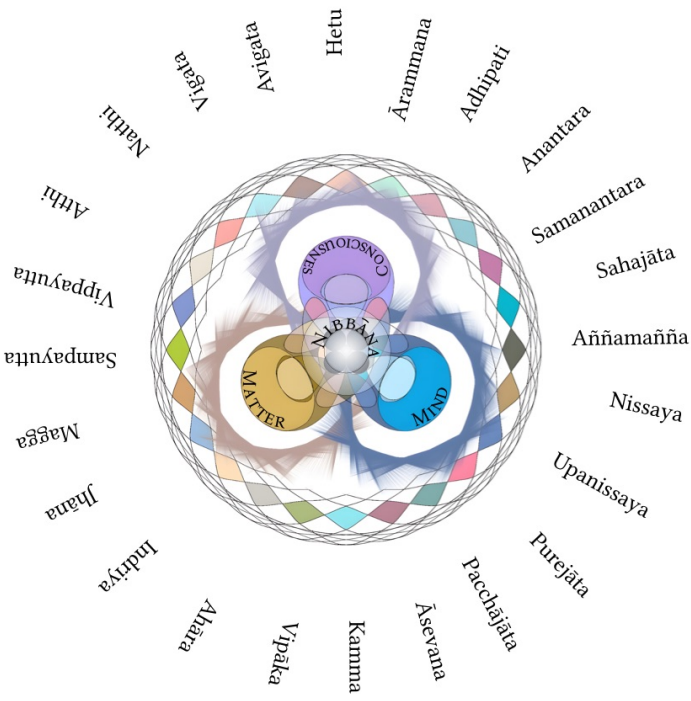
This will be the primary method, both for attaining a deeper philosophical knowledge of existence, as well as for understanding the 'how to' in regards to one's higher aspirations.



The above graphic shows how each of the three phenomenal categories —Matter, Mind, and Consciousness— converges in one of the Paṭṭhāna conditions (elucidated in the next chapter). The broken lines leading to or from Nibbāna indicate that such convergence may or may not be informed by an understanding of Nibbāna, and that it may or may not lead toward it.

For example, any ordinary life situation is the convergence of matter, consciousness, and mental factors under the condition of presence. If understood with wisdom, this situation may lead toward Nibbāna. A situation involving the deliberate generation of new kamma is a convergence of consciousness, mental factors (or mind), and matter in the condition of kamma. A condition which too may lead in the direction of Nibbāna, if performed with right intent and skill. And the same principle applies to all other conditions.

THE PAṬṬHĀNA -CONDITIONS



Note and Disclaimer:

There are various translations of the Paṭṭhāna conditions around, from which this author admittedly at times differs quite drastically. Traditionally it is said that although there are 24 Paṭṭhāna conditions, there are at least three pairs, which are identical in meaning and differ only in the letter. This author's purpose was to write a meaningful Abhidhamma book, that is practically relevant. In that spirit he treated things at times more loosely than his predecessors. The translations given in here definitely relate to the Pali terms, but are perhaps more loose renderings.* Besides, as the Paṭṭhāna conditions are not in themselves sequential (as is for example 'The Sequence of Becoming'), the author treated them here according to his own preference. The reason for which may be seen after reading the first few of the Paṭṭhāna conditions. Still, this might be temporal only, and possibly will be changed in future editions.

Addendum:

Readers who wish to examine the reasoning behind specific translation choices and terminological shifts are referred to the companion booklet to Paramattha, which was written to make these interpretive decisions explicit and to relate them more closely to lived experience.

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* *In this context one should also try to understand the limited nature of words and more so of translations. For example the word "kamma" means literally only "action", yet, the Buddha declared "intention is kamma", while in general usage the word kamma means for the most part something like "causality".*

CONDITION OF ANALOGY OR CORRESPONDENCE

(Aññamañña Paccaya)



Wherever two (or more) phenomena possess similar characteristics, a correspondence between these two phenomena can be seen. And whatever is known about one of them may also hold true for the other. That is, any point of contact between two things known, may permit a certain exploration of things unknown, for him who comprehends this Paṭṭhāna condition.

Matter

It is because of this condition of correspondence [21], that a person may make deductions regarding things which appear to be of quite different natures. Thus, if we would seek to grasp or understand anything unknown, we might start by finding a relation or correspondence with things we know about. For example, seeking to comprehend 'what is matter', we could make a start by defining it for instance in terms of the instruments that cognise or recognise the matter. That is, we may learn to grasp what it is, by defining it for example, through what we perceive with the eye, calling it 'form', or perhaps even 'colour'; or through the sense of touch, calling it hard (earth) or wet (water), or painful (fire), or moving (air). Similarly, if we try to grasp 'What is mind', we could try to do so by relating it to not-mind — defining it for instance as that, which knows material-phenomena (i.e. material things), or that which thinks of, or comprehends phenomena (i.e. things). And this is actually a very fundamental method of

how things are generally known. In fact, even knowing something as simple as, 'what is large' may actually only be achieved, by relating it to something smaller, or we can in reality know what is 'good' only by relating it to something we define as 'evil'.

These may as a starting ground, show already the fundamental nature of this condition.

The Four Elements

Then we will, in our treatment of the subsequent Paṭṭhāna conditions, usually start by examining the nature of the four elements in relation to whatever Paṭṭhāna condition is concerned.



In relation to this Paṭṭhāna condition of correspondence, the first analogy we find is, that the characteristics of the four elements within the body, somehow correspond to the characteristics of these four properties of matter on the larger scale of phenomena in nature. The flesh and bones within the body, somewhat correspond to the earth and stones without in nature. The flow of the blood within, somehow corresponds to the flow of the rivers without. An element of

wind can be witnessed both without as within and so it is with an element of warmth.

And understanding things thus, we see that the comprehension of each sphere supports the comprehension of the other sphere.

But this is by far not the limit of this condition in relation to the four elements. In fact, if we can find some point of reference between any thing or any experience we might have, to any of these elements, actually almost anything may become comprehensible using this condition of correspondence or analogy.

Thus, seeing some relation between even the mind and any of the elements, we may have some chance of comprehending for example this very subtle and most difficult to comprehend element.

Along such line, the mind, precisely due to being subtle, can be understood to have this quality in common with the air element. But then, we have previously divided the mind into emotions, mental processes and ideas. Each of which can be seen to possess certain qualities related to the elements. Thus one may see a relation between emotions and the element of water. In that, emotions are to a fair degree only reflections of sense-impressions (which themselves may be understood to be aspects of the earth element) unified in one singular element. Mental processes on the other hand, are quite different. For example, they possess a certain forward movement, which is a characteristic of the wind element. While ideas, again differ, in that they possess a certain quality of lastingness, which is a quality of the earth element.

And following these tracks we may extend our understanding both of the elements and the subject of correspondence, almost ad infinitum.

The Life Element

Then, we had in the first part of the book, as the subject following the four elements, what we called the life-element. And here too, we should try to see, where we can find proof of this condition of correspondence.

For example, we may observe, a certain correspondence between the life in the plants of nature and the life that animates us human beings... We see a tiny seed, gradually grow into a tender plant, then into a fully grown tree, which eventually perishes. An observation which triggers a realisation, that this sequence of growth and decay also exists in the animal and human kingdom.

Then, as a step which may naturally follow the previous one, if we examine the sequence from a fertilised ovum to a fully mature human being, we might gain insights into the evolution of physical forms in general, if we realise how the two correspond. From which in turn, we might even deduce where the process might be heading: A fertilised ovum may appear hardly different from a drop of blood or even turbid water, but it gradually develops to a form quite akin to certain vegetation. Further it evolves into an almost fish-like creature until it eventually becomes more and more mammalian shaped. Finally a baby with human features is born, continuing to grow until it reaches its peak of development. There we have two sequences of development. And what we learn from one, gives us clues about the other.

Structures in Society

Further, just as we observe correspondence between the elements in the body and in nature, we can also observe a similar correspondence between life processes and societal structures. So may the human body serve as a comprehending device to gain some better understanding about, as one example 'larger bodies', such as a 'body of a society'. Which

will be a very important clue also to get the most out of many of the Paṭṭhāna conditions to follow.

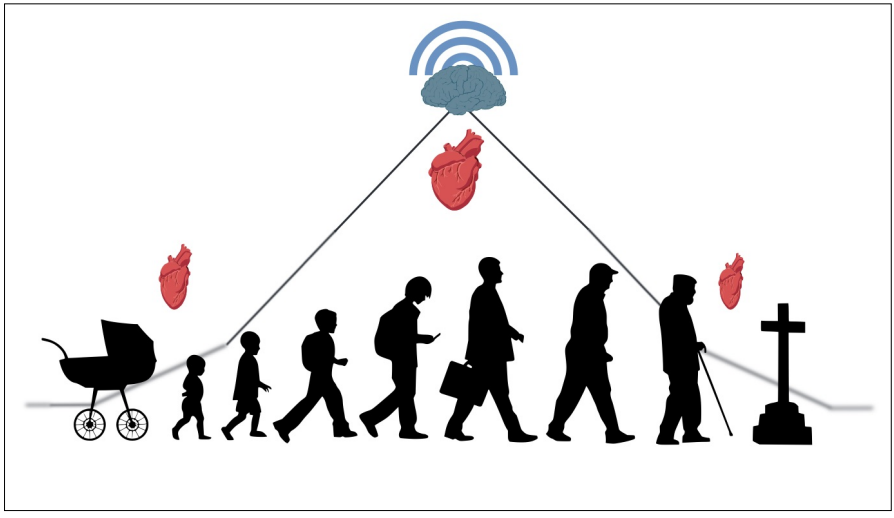


For instance, we might perceive a certain correspondence between the stomach of the body, and the working class of a society. The stomach's duty being to 'harvest' nutriment from the matter produced by nature, just as the duty of the farmer and field worker is to 'harvest' food from the field or from nature in general. A method of correlation which will serve to understand anything we might seek to know about the larger body of society. With anything known about the physical body we should try to find some correspondence in the larger body of concern. Following these lines, if we were to investigate further into the matter, we might find, that, as there are organs which produce hormones for the refinement and pleasure of the whole body, so there are householders, whose work is to transform the coarse materials of a bare natural life into varieties of things for enjoyment and trade. Further, there are also organs and body parts which protect the body from dangers; either within, from viruses and harm-

ful bacteria, or from without, from things that threaten the body as a whole; just as there exists a police force or army in every country. These in turn, are ruled over by the king or ruler of the state, as the lesser part of the brain rules over the, for the most part, unconscious processes of the body. Finally, there is the greater part of the brain, which gives meaning to the experience of the entity as a whole. And this then corresponds to the priest or philosopher, whose duty is to give meaning to life. [22].

The Mind and Consciousness

Leaving the world of matter behind, we might consider the mind by itself. There we may as a start, correlate the alternations of the manifest and latent periods of a mental process, as given in the first part of the book, with the alternations of waking and sleeping within the full course of a 24 hour day. Both of which in turn could then give us some clues in regards to the condition of the mind after a period of manifest life. That is, after death. Thus showing three levels of growing magnitude as existing in a relation of correspondence in the sphere of mind.



This diagram is meant to indicate a certain correspondence between the pumping action of the heart (cycling between being rather empty and being at its fullest, then emptying again), the mental process (moving from a state of unconsciousness to a state of full consciousness and back again towards unconsciousness), and the span of a life as a whole.

Alternatively or additionally, we may then also relate the condition of consciousness or the manner and content of thinking, to the various planes of existence and the beings that are said to exist therein. Which I have already shown to some degree in the part on the 'Planes of Existence'. So that I will not go further into it here.

Ideas

Finally, we have as a last category of the mind, ideas or concepts. Thinking of these in relation to this Paṭṭhāna condition, we may find, that there are ideas which correspond to reality and there are ideas which do not correspond to reality. And it is he who possesses ideas which correspond to reality whom people call a wise, or at least intelligent person. While he who possesses only ideas which do not correspond to reality, will sooner or later be known as a fool.

Nibbāna

Lastly, this condition of correspondence can even be observed in relation to Nibbāna, the highest reality. The gradual path to complete enlightenment reflects a progressive realisation of and transcendence of matter, mind, and consciousness. Therein the initial stages of the path correlate with the realisation (aspects of the phenomenon of “Ideas”) of the unsatisfactory and impermanent nature of especially matter. Subsequent stages (elaborated in detail under the Paṭṭhāna condition of Paths and in the third chapter on the Niyāma) reflect similar realisations regarding the mind and even consciousness. All these aspects are ultimately transcended in the experience of final Nibbāna. However, the realisation of

Nibbāna experienced “within”, also corresponds to a deathless element (Nibbāna-dhātu) which stands as the transcendent reality beyond matter, mind, and consciousness “without”.

* * *

In conclusion, the Paṭṭhāna condition of correspondence offers a comprehensive framework for understanding all levels of existence — from the physical and mental to the societal and cosmic. By recognising the interconnections between known and unknown phenomena, we not only gain insight into the nature of reality but also take meaningful steps toward the ultimate goal of Nibbāna.



Practice Key

Try to find today 3 phenomena (things, experiences) that you can relate to a seemingly unrelated other phenomenon.

CONDITION OF FOUNDATIONS

(Upanissaya Paccaya)



In life, all things build up on some foundation. Everything somewhat stands on something. And this is what defines this condition.

The Four Elements

In matters of the four elements, this condition is symbolically represented by the element of earth. But in more concrete terms, at least three of the elements may be seen to act as a foundation for something else. The element of earth, of course, acts as a foundation for all living things thriving thereon. But then also does the element of water act as a foundation for the various creatures of the sea. While the element of air is to some degree the foundation for the creatures of the air, such as birds and flying insects. And it too is the foundation for the clouds, the rain and the thunder. The fire element on the other hand, stands rather for the destruction of those foundations.

The Life Element

In matters of life phenomena, has what gradually will become a human being, as its first foundation, the womb of a mother. And as this human being grows, will with each major stage of growth, the foundation shift to a basis that is more appropriate. So will during childhood, the home, family life, and basic education be the foundation upon which the child grows. Further on in life, will very often the larger scale of

the society of the growing adult, be the base and foundation for his life and occupations; providing the opportunities that his life offers, and thus also becoming the foundation for the workings of his mind and consciousness, and for the condition of his body.

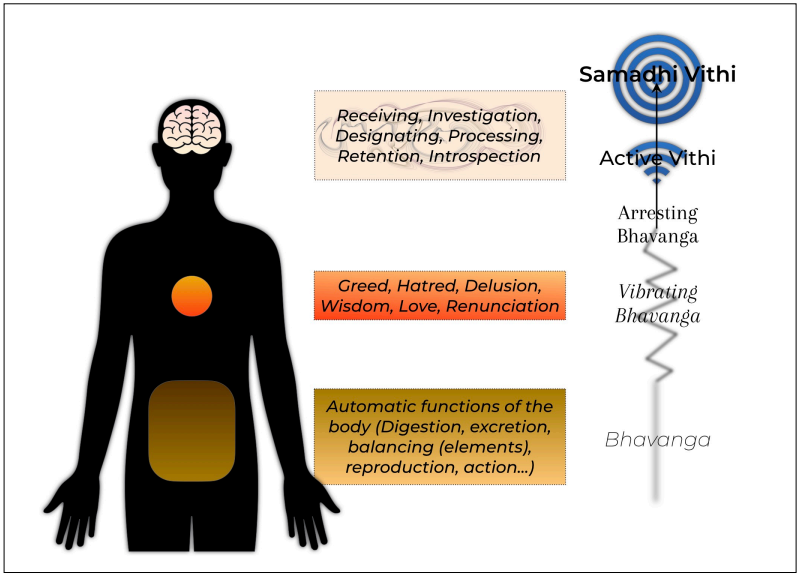
Then there will be some societies which will not only provide a foundation for physical labour, but equally for religion and mental culture. And as there is thus a foundation laid for religious training and the cultivation of the mind, foundations of another kind start to become relevant.

The Mind

As a 'being' so to say, stands on outside foundations, so does 'mentation' stand on the foundation of internal processes. Accordingly will the mind's processes, at the very least in the human world, be dependent upon the activities of the bodily organs (for a better comprehension of that, one may see the next diagram). And as the person seeking to follow his religion, or the person seeking to cultivate his mind, tries to bring under control the working of his mind, he will equally have to gain some control over the working of his internal physiological processes.

As the following diagram shows, specific parts of the body act as a foundation for various immaterial factors such as emotions, mental processes as well as life related processes. All life related processes have as the most important foundation the organs of digestion. Resultant mind states (what in modern terms are called 'emotions'), wholesome or unwholesome, for simplification purpose, arise in dependence of the heart (although in modern times we might consider them to arise in dependence of the endocrine glands), while intellection arises in dependence of the brain.

RELATION BETWEEN BODY, MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS



But then is the mind itself also somewhat acting as a foundation for the mind's processes. Little mental processing can arise upon an in-stable foundation of agitation and emotional reactions. Only when they have become at least temporarily arrested will the mind be able to receive new impressions. The mere stock of received impressions will then in turn become the foundation for the activity of thought. Sustainment of thought is the foundation for the formulation of concepts. And formulated concepts are the foundation for the more lasting forms of intention. These in turn will be the internal foundation for the workings of consciousness and thus for the experiences that a being will have.

Consciousness

But this consciousness too is dependent on some form of external foundation. So is each plane wherein conscious existence is possible, made up of some particular form of matter,

which acts as a foundation for the beings in that plane. For beings in the sense-sphere world, the main material is solid matter of different gradations of solidity. And thus, for the average human being, solid matter is what makes consciousness arise.

Even lofty entities as gods and devas (angels) depend on some material foundation as the support for their existence. Their sphere of existence is the fine-material realm, in which the main material is a more subtle and malleable form of matter, which to common human beings is invisible, but which can be experienced by the developed meditator.

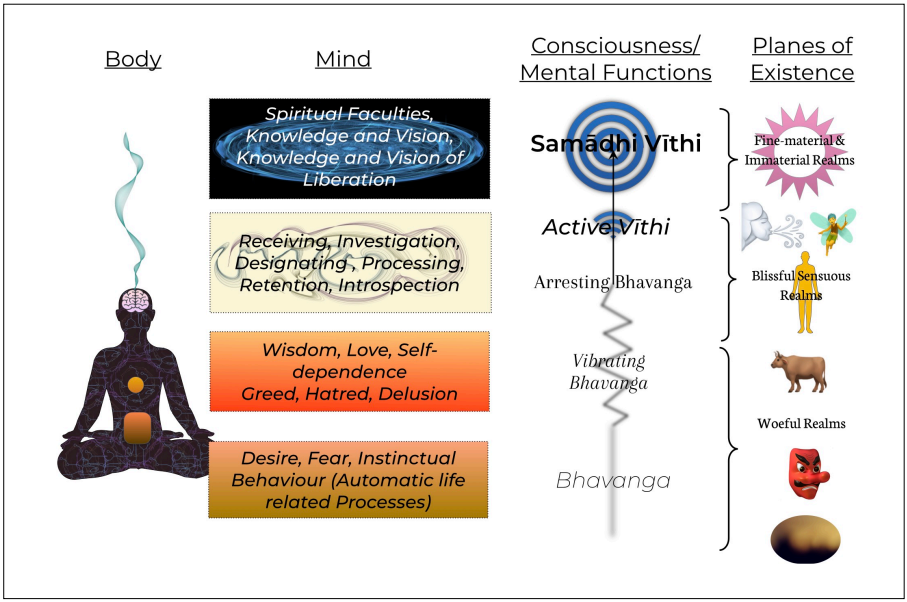
At last there are beings, difficult to comprehend to most, who live in a realm that is entirely immaterial. These beings lack physical form, yet they too possess a certain foundation for their existence. In their case, the foundation is a realm composed entirely of mind and ideas.

Practical Relevance

Through meditation and refinement of one's being, consciousness may be modified to an awareness of these different spheres of existence. And to the degree consciousness can be aware of these other spheres of existence, the respective sphere becomes the foundation for the working of that consciousness.

As an example, may a person in the human realm bring about a condition akin to the fine-material sphere within himself by working with the mind on the physical matter of the body. When successful, his consciousness may be able to take as a foundation not only the subtle matter that arises within the thus refined body, but may also be able to extend far beyond that.

BODY, MIND, CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE



This diagram completing the previous one, shows the relations of the different planes of existence to various material and immaterial factors. Thus extending the Condition of Foundations to encompass the entirety of existence.

Nibbāna

Finally, let us consider how this Paṭṭhāna condition relates to Nibbāna. Unlike the foundations of conditioned existence — which rely on material, mental, and social factors — Nibbāna, 'The Unconditioned', serves as the ultimate foundation for the noble person. When one transcends the conditions of the material, fine-material, and immaterial worlds, one establishes Nibbāna as one's foundation.

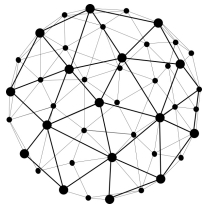


Practice Key

Find 3 layers of foundation that you stand on — materially and mentally (3 material, 3 mental).

CONDITION OF INTERDEPENDENCE / INTERCONNECTEDNESS

(Nissaya Paccaya)



No phenomenon is a single isolated unit. All things are interrelated. And being thus, the condition of one thing always depends on the conditions of various other things.

The Four Elements

Using the consideration of the four elements again as a basis, we may gain the first grasp of the fundamental nature of this condition of Interdependence. Thus, a good starting point is to observe interconnectedness of the elements in the elements without. And for that we might consider the wholeness of the entity we call our planet.

Of course, the most obvious element for us here is the element of earth, which is probably why it is called by that name. But this earth is surrounded by air, it is interspersed with air, and its very movement through space is due to the characteristic of movement which, as we have stated, belongs to the element of air. Then, it is perpetually warmed by the fire of the sun; off and on some lightning ignites a fire here or there; and, every now and then some volcano erupts, bringing to the earth's surface fire from the very depth of the planet. The element of water at last, is filling the larger part of the earth's surface, can be found variously beneath its surface, while much of it is also hanging in the air so to say,

in the clouds, the rain, the snow and in fog. Thus, we can see, at least without, how all the elements are interconnected, and exist in a condition of interdependence.

Within too, we can find certain dynamic, interrelated activities of the elements. Thus, is the earth element (food) taken into the body, lit up by the fire element (digestive heat), moved around by the wind or air element and then flushed out by the water element. Water is delimited or held in place by the earth element (i.e. in the body, by the bodily organs), is prevented from solidifying by the warming nature of the fire element, and is made to change place by the action of the air element. And similar things apply to the other elements too.



The Body

Then, further we have a connection between these two worlds of the without and the within. Part of the without is serving as a support for the within. The oxygen produced by the trees without, is breathed in by the lungs within. The

fruits and the grains without, are taken as a nutriment into the stomach within. Then will the digestive organs transform this physical food into energy. That energy spreads throughout the body via the arteries and veins. Through that, all the organs of the body receive the energy they need for their functioning. And when all the energy is drained out of the material taken from the without, that material is in turn again returned to the without, serving as support for the growth of the plants and the trees. The energy which continuous within on the other hand, will be further refined by other organs, as the liver, in order to be of use for higher bodily functions, such as the working of the brain.

The Mind

These bodily organs or bodily functions in turn exist in a condition of interdependence with the mind, a fact which I have shown already in the previous chapter and variously in the beginning part of the book. There I showed, how the mind's functions highly depend upon the internal physiological processes of the body, while the mind's content largely depends on the body's sense faculties. This in turn again is connecting the whole inner system intricately to the world without.

On the reverse side, the body's functions, also largely depend on the mind. So will the mind's interests determine were the senses turn. Conscious thought will force the body to make energy available for the brain. Self-control mechanisms, as will become established when a person begins to develop certain virtues, will also modify the body's inner workings, by for example controlling the body's life faculty (or more technically the spreading of nutriment and mind-born matter). And thus will especially the processes arising in the heart be controlled by the workings of the mind.

This basic controlling of the heart's processes (viz. practicing certain virtues) in turn will largely be the foundation for ordered inter-human relations or social relations as a whole. Which thus bind together the entities of a family, of a tribe, of a country or nation, as well as of whole civilisations. These inter-human relations in turn will bring forth inter-human concepts. That is, when people are functioning as a group, all members of that group will usually think along the line of quite similar concepts. Thus those concepts will condition the members of the group, but the members of the group may equally modify their ruling concepts.

Then are even within a singular mind, all the various functions and powers of that mind interdependent. Thus, will the mind's interests determine the amount of impressions received, investigated, designated and processed. These will determine the quality and extent of concepts acquired. Which in turn will increase the mind's interest to investigate, properly designate and process more impressions. A consideration which becomes exceedingly important when considering about mental development or when pursuing the development of any kind of skill.

Consciousness

At last we have consciousness itself. Consciousness is intricately interconnected with body and mind on the lower side and ideas and knowledge on the upper side. Thus, if body and mind are coarse, consciousness can't know or understand subtle and refined things. It can then only know and understand coarse things. While if body and mind are subtle and refined, consciousness can know subtle and refined things. On the other hand side, if consciousness does not know about subtle and refined things to begin with (that is, it does not contain ideas or knowledge thereof), mind and body will usually also not become subtle and refined.

Nibbāna

And seeing thus the importance of knowledge, and following those conditions of mental and material phenomena to their natural conclusion, we may begin to understand, that for him who seeks knowledge and experience of enlightenment must follow a similar scheme. That is, the phenomenal world being entirely interrelated, can only be overcome by comprehending it through a system of equally interrelated ideas. And with such knowledge, ultimately anything may be deduced from anything. Hence, the phenomenal world can be transcended and Nibbāna achieved.



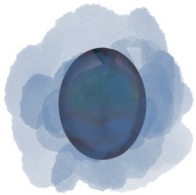
Practice Key

Find 3 ways in which you are so interdependent with others, that your wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of those you are interconnected with and vice versa.

CONDITION OF LATENCY

(Purejāta Paccaya)





CONDITION OF MANIFESTATION

(Pacchājāta Paccaya)





The condition wherein things, material or immaterial, exist rather as a potential, without actually being manifest, is what is called a condition of latency. It is the condition of mental or material phenomena existing in germ form (the term Purejāta literally means pre-nascence).

Anything already in existence, on the other hand, is in a state of manifestation (literally post-nascence).

These two make up one pair.

Matter

In relation to the four elements, stands the earth element for manifestation, while the element of water is the proper symbol for the condition of latency. The fire element in turn, will then mean the ending of manifestation, and the wind element can be regarded as the element symbolising the moving out of latency.

The whole visible universe, or from the individual perspective, all the things that the five senses are continuously contacting, are things that are in the condition of manifestation. Equally so is the whole duration of a persons life from birth

to death, with all that happens within that space of time, one example of the condition of manifestation. Latency on the other hand is rather something hidden and more difficult to grasp. Yet these two conditions are not entirely separate.

In fact we may learn much, if we learn to comprehend the relationship between latency and manifestation. This is in fact one secret magic key to the accomplishment of much in the realm of manifestation. One simple example to begin with, which should at the same time serve as a useful image in the readers mind, is the process of winning salt, a quite valuable resource, from the waters of the sea, wherein it is abundant, but wherein it is not at all considered as valuable or useful. This is one simple process of making what may be regarded as latent, manifest.

The Element of Life

In relation to the health of the physical body, these two conditions in reference to the four elements reveal a fact, that is particularly relevant, especially for the meditator. Just as we may extract (latent) resources like salt from the sea, we also witness the manifestation of latent elements in the digestive process. For instance, all solid foods when taken into the mouth, are at first evidently predominantly of the earth element. That will be the element that is most manifest. But, once they react with the digestive juices, certain other, that is, latent qualities start to become evident, either immediately, or after some time. Accordingly, will a root like ginger, when eaten, quickly show forth qualities belonging to the fire element. Algae derived foods, often, even when taken in dried or powdered form, will be felt within as manifesting qualities belonging to the element water. While foods like garlic or onion may show forth qualities of the air or wind element. All qualities that exist before their manifest appearance latently within the herb, or food, or medicine.

The Mind

From an outer perspective, the whole of life exists in the condition of manifestation. But from an inner perspective, one half of life is actually a journey of gradually bringing into manifestation things which lie latent within a beings life, or more accurately, within a beings life-continuum; while, after the peak of life has been reached, with the appearance of ageing and decay, a second half of life sets in, which is rather a journey of gradually moving back from manifest life towards a condition of latency.

One is the nurturing and bringing into fruition, kammical seeds that have been planted in previous lives; which for some time remained content to linger only in latency, but of which many a one, sooner, or later develops some longing to become manifest. The other is the gradual digestion of the fruits of the labour of a life; and the laying down into the earth, the seeds that were contained in those fruits.

Limitation and Potency

But then, what does it actually mean, that something is manifest? What does it mean that something is latent?

Something being manifest means, that it is restricted by certain laws of manifestation. It is limited, it has a definite duration, it exists in dependence and in relations to myriad other things manifest. Something being in the condition of latency on the other hand means, that it, as such does not possess duration or limitation, while it possesses an principally infinite amount of potential for manifestation.

As from the root of a plant or tree, however much of it's outgrowth has been chopped off; again and again may grow a plant or tree as big or bigger still as the former one; so it is also with mental and bodily phenomena; whenever there is suitable soil for their arising, they may become manifest. And whenever what is manifest, dies and perishes; as long as it's root is not entirely destroyed, a new phenomenon,

which concretely will mean, a new faculty, weakness or capacity, or a new emotion, or thought, may grow again from their condition of latency.

Latent mental phenomena are especially those thoughts or emotions or dreams, that are not manifestly present in consciousness, but which exist as potentials within the life-continuum. You may not be always angry and you may not be always wise, but if the potential for anger or wisdom exists in you, at any given moment these states of mind may become manifest within you.



The Idea

Still, even something that is manifest in relation to consciousness, may yet be regarded as something that is rather unmanifest in relation to the material world. From that point of view will all mental phenomena be somewhat unmanifest. And the least something is manifest, the more potential for manifestation may be attributed to it. If we agree to that supposition, as the phenomenon that may be regarded as

least manifest is perhaps the idea, the idea will also be the phenomenon that possesses the largest spectrum of possibilities for manifestation. The bearing of which will be shown below.

Nevertheless, whatever exists in the condition of latency, or whatever exists only in non-manifest form, exists only as a potential whose definite mode of manifestation will still depend on the material in which it will finally come into manifestation. And so is a thought, intention, or idea, however grand, when seeking manifestation in the material world, always hindered by the material in which it seeks to manifest.

Many a one has great dreams and hopes and aspirations, but when he seeks to bring them into manifestation, he finds himself restricted by an infinitude of things. A child seeing a superhero movie, promptly wants to be like the superhero, and in little time even believes that it can become a superhero just by strongly wishing for it. Many an ordained monk too, hopes for superhuman attainments, yet, when facing the manifest world, finds himself constrained on every side and does not understand how to make use of the things manifest to get closer to the fulfilment of his manifesting dreams.

Practical Relevance

So is there then any magic key for making one's dreams and better ideas manifest?

Yes, there is. One key lies in understanding how the mind turns material things into mental things, and how observation of the manifest world, allows the mind to create ideas from it —bringing the world of the manifest into the Unmanifest. Which in turn enables the mind (the unmanifest) to initiate actions in the sphere of the manifest.

Accordingly, if the mind learns to observe not only the world of manifest things, but also observes and creates ideas of the world of dreams and hopes—and then connects the two — it may come into a position to initiate actions in the mani-

fest world that are informed by both realms. That is, by the world of the manifest and by the world seeking manifestation. Which will be one of myriad possible practical applications of understanding the conditions of manifestation and latency.

Nibbāna

Finally, if our goal is the overcoming of all constraints and liberation from all imperfections — both of which signify Nibbāna — this too must be brought into manifestation step by step, once the potential for such liberation has been recognised. Which will require the exact same procedure of: observing the manifest, relating it to one's latent potential, and then acting in a way that bridges both worlds.



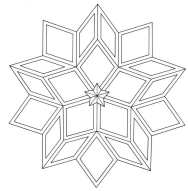
Practice Key

Find 3 examples in your noticing of material phenomena that can be described as latent. Then find 3 examples for latent mental phenomena in your own life.

Do the same for manifest phenomena (that should be easy).

CONDITION OF COMBINATION / COMPOSITION

(Anantara Paccaya)



A combination is a coming together of various elements, material or immaterial, to form a new whole.

As a matter of fact, the whole universe is but a combination of elements.

The Four Elements

But to start small, comprehending this condition in childlike simplicity, we seek to understand it first in matters of the four elements.

Thus we may observe, how the qualities of any of the elements changes, when combining with other elements. Earth becomes something like mud, when combining with the element of water. It becomes brittle, when in close contact with fire. And it becomes animated when combining with the air or wind element. Similarly, water loses its transparency and liquidity when mixed with the element of earth. It may lose depth and increases in heat, when combining with the element of fire, while becoming less clear and more turbulent when combining with the element of air. The element of fire too will change depending on what it is combining with. So will the element of earth usually fuel it, the element of water decreases its strength, while the element of air will make it more animated and lively. And for the element of air itself likewise changes of quality may be seen. In that it in combin-

ing with the earth element, air is usually hindered in its freedom of movement, something which to a lesser degree holds true for combining with the water element, which may also make it denser. While the element of fire may further rarify the air element, apart from adding its quality of heat to it.

I have already indicated in the beginning part of the book how various combinations of the elements will produce all of the manifold observable phenomena of the world. Apart from that will an understanding of the proper combination of elements be exceedingly important to him who seeks to master his body, him who wants to cure his body and to him who wants to purify his body. To see how that is so, one may read the practical 'Example on the Balancing of the Elements' in the last part of the book.



Life-Phenomena

Likewise we can observe that life-phenomena too combine, as has been shown before. So will various cells combine to make up tissues, tissues combine to make up organs, organs

combine to make up a physical body, and so on. Individual entities combine to make up a group. Groups combine to make up a society and different societies combine to make up a state or nation. And as the earlier ones are more established and thus more fundamental than the latter ones, much can be learned from the former in matters of creating better combinations of the latter.

The Mind

Emotions too can be understood in matters of combination. Thus we can find that there are mind states which are more fundamental than others, which when combined, will make up more complex ones. So may for example the two emotions or mental states of anger and joy combine to become cruelty. The mind states of anger and greed, may combine to become jealousy. Delusion and hate may become pride. A combination of fear, delusion and sustained thought may become a mental condition of dogmatism. Or greed and delusion may combine to become perversion, etc.

And of course this condition holds true no less with wholesome factors of mind. These too may combine to become a mind state different from those entering the equation. Hence we could find for example joy and effort combining to become braveness. Wisdom and decision may become justness. Or joy and thoughtfulness (applied and sustained thought) may become inspiration, etc. All of which gives us plenty of material to be aware of when studying the mind. Which will be the requisite condition for gaining the proper distance from our mind to make wise choices as to what to allow and what to discard.

The Faculties of Consciousness

In other mental phenomena this condition of combination too can be seen. For example will rudimentary forms of mentality, such as the bare consciousnesses (awarenesses/know-

ings) of stimuli combine, until the stimulating object is properly received into the mind. Many objects of a similar kind will have to be received again and again into the mind, before the mind will give a designation to that object. And that designation will be valid for all objects of that kind. Thus the mind learns to combine many objects into one name. Many such names or designations then will combine into a thought. And again many thoughts will combine into an idea (or concept). Until many ideas combined, become one faculty of knowledge. Much knowledge in turn then may combine into intuition, a process which may be taken to has its final phase in complete omniscience.

Consciousness

But then, these rather represent the faculties of consciousness, than consciousness itself. However, consciousness itself too is a composite thing. Many people think of consciousness as being some kind of mirror that merely reflects the outside world, or anyhow the present moment. Yet, keen analysis reveals, consciousness is a composite thing. You are not one, you are many. Consciousness, the very core of our being is very multifaceted. And that multifacetness, is because consciousness is rooted in kamma. Kamma is multifaceted therefore consciousness is multifaceted. The very multifacetedness of the world we perceive is in fact only a reflection of the multifacetedness of consciousness.

Nibbāna

Which in turn leads us to a consideration of the last of the four Paramattha— Nibbana. Now, it is a fact that our consciousness is not only multifaceted, but also, to a large extent, rather fractured. Many of us are at war with ourselves. Why is that? It is because our very centre has different intents, which pull us in different directions. Nevertheless, though compositeness is inherent to consciousness, fracturedness can be transcended. And the way to do that is,

first by understanding our own composite nature, by then relating those composite parts of ours to a larger picture (or a larger framework of reality), and then by gradually aligning our various parts to those aspects of reality that we perceive to be free from fractures*. This way we ascend the ladder of divine virtues and ever loftier states of consciousness by means of a gradual process, wherein we explore ever more harmonious compositions, until all signs of compositeness vanish altogether in the experience of Nibbāna.



Practice Key

Try to build something from various materials you have easy at hand.

Then, try to think of some mental phenomenon (for instance an idea, wish, memory) and see if you can notice various components making up that phenomenon.

* *This is cosmologically represented by the devas, who by definition are much more harmonious beings than humans are.*

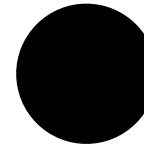
CONDITION OF PRESENCE (OR BEING)

(Atthi Paccaya)



CONDITION OF ABSENCE (OR NON-BEING)

(Natthi Paccaya)



Presence Condition (or condition of being) is referring to the existence of mental and material phenomena in the limited space of the "Now". While the condition of absence is referring to the opposite, that is, to the non-existence of mental and material phenomena in that limited space of the "Now".

A question about being and absence seems as absurd, if not more so, than our question "What is matter?" in the beginning of this book. Presence and absence seem so self-explanatory things that hardly anyone would bother about giving it any second thought. Yet, as the thoughtful reader of our treatment on matter might have found, for the philosopher or truth seeker there are benefits to be derived from studying that which for the common person seems self-explanatory. Thus, if we seek some guiding light as to how to better order this, our existence, we might well give some further thought about the meaning of "being" or the meaning of "presence and absence".

These two in fact make up one duality. And the crux of these two conditions is really best summarised by the Buddhas formula:

"When this is, this will be, with the arising of this, this will come to be"...and equally, ..."When this is not, this will not be, with the cessation of this, this will cease."

The Four Elements

Having to begin somewhere, we ever best start with what seems most obvious. Thus, we again start with matter and with our consideration of the four elements.

There we might see that, material things may be known either through the presence of certain qualities or through the absence thereof. So will an experience of heat be indicative of the presence of the fire element, while cold means just the absence thereof. So it is with light and its absence, darkness. Substance means the presence of the element of earth, but its absence experienced as insubstantiality may at times be noticed too. Stillness is the absence of movement, the defining presence condition of the air element, while dryness is really just the absence of liquidity or wetness. And naturally following that, we see that, we may get the one either by removing or by filling the space of the other.

That much perhaps even an animal will be able to do at times.

The Life Element

But then we go further. We have already before talked about the life-element. And when we begin to meditate about it, we begin to understand, that its existence is experienced as being alive, as feeling alive. This is different from feeling hot or heavy or diluted. And when we had any experience of it even once, its absence will become noticeable when it has happened to disappear.

Further we too have shown, that there are certain laws attached to the presence or existence of this life-element. That is, it is in the nature of that element to be attracted to what appears to support it and it is equally in the nature of that element to feel repelled by whatever seems to threaten it. These are the essential characteristics and hence, the inmost **being** of that element.

And when this life-element is then considered in relation to a physical body, its presence or absence may manifest in more manifold manners. It may for example manifest as craving for food, or it may manifest as being attracted to agreeable sights, sounds, or smells, etc. Or it may manifest as the drive to sexuality. But equally so may its absence become manifest as the absence of appetite, or the absence of attraction to sights, sounds, smells, etc. Or as the absence of the sexual drive.



The Mind

And here we see already the relation to the mind and how the mind is conditioned by the presence or absence of the element of life within the physical body. And thus by the body itself. Hence we find, that much life within the body will also allow for a richer mental life. While lack of physical life will usually also mean lack of mental life.

But then, what is that mental life? It is greed, it is anger, it is love, it is wisdom. And that life, be it of a greedy, angry or loving kind, will in turn too have its laws of existence at-

tached to it. And here we may perhaps rather reformulate the Buddha's initially stated formula into: 'What you are, is what you get!' (or, 'Who you are is what you get!').

If you are radiating calm and peace and goodness, the people you are in contact with will usually also become calm and talk to you in a calm manner. In the same manner, if you are full of anger, full of wicked mindedness, then you are also much more likely to find yourself surrounded by people who interact with you in an angry or wicked manner. Thus will the presence of certain mind-states very often condition the life-experiences which you are facing. But equally so it is with the absence of certain mind-states. If you appear to be quite free from fear, you are less likely to attract bully people for example. While if you are a person who is void of love, most likely you will also not be loved by others. Etc.

What was written under 'Laws and experiences of different mind-states' was precisely also an example of the far reaching extend of these two conditions.

Consciousness

And this will then quiet naturally lead us to a consideration of the nature of consciousness in relation to the conditions of presence and absence.

Consciousness, the way it is usually understood, that is, as awareness, usually requires something without in order to arise from a condition of latency within. And that is the precise reason for the existence of the senses. It is through sense experience that consciousness becomes manifest and it is through sense experience that consciousness learns to remain manifestly present. That is at least how things work in the sense-sphere world. It is through the knowing of an object that consciousness is. Only gradually consciousness learns to investigate, designate and evolve ideas of things. And each of those faculties in turn will give consciousness

greater power of presence, while their sequence also allow consciousness to remain present for longer a duration.

Only when consciousness's interest in mere transient material phenomena begins to cease and when it starts to look for (or advert to) things which are subtler than the things of the ordinary 5 senses, it gradually begins to function independent from outer sense-impressions. That is, it will no longer require sense-impressions to trigger it into activity, but begins to respond to subtler feelings and perceptions. And based on these it evolves ideas of their meaning and purpose, which will give it greater power of presence still.

Still greater power of presence consciousness gains, when it not only learns to respond to subtler feelings and perceptions but also begins to see and respond to ideas about inner realities, allowing it to transcend these phenomena themselves.

Nibbāna

This, of course, is what the Abhidhamma is all about — establishing and refining consciousness's presence in relation to the phenomena of the world, until it can stand in the presence of the transcendent, the ultimate reality of Nibbāna.



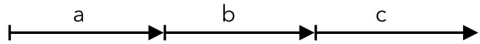
Practice Key

Try to think of 3 instances where the mere presence of a certain thing or person was distinctly changing the course of a situation or the outcome of something.

Do a similar thing for 3 instances wherein the absence of a certain thing or person was changing an outcome or a situation.

CONDITION OF SEQUENTIALITY

(Samanantara Paccaya)





A sequence is a chain of events or phenomena, that follow one after another. Thus, the crux of this condition is to describe that there is a natural progression in how material and mental phenomena succeed one another.

The Four Elements

Expressed in matters of the four elements, is the sequence condition, being a forward movement, primarily an aspect of the wind element. However, since this movement follows a defined path, it can also be understood as the wind element being guided by the earth element.

Considering all four elements in relation to this condition, one can even organise them in a sequence; for instance, from the coarsest to the subtlest (or in reverse). In such an arrangement, earth would be at the beginning of the sequence, followed by water, fire, and finally air.

But it might perhaps be more compelling to explore sequences in nature that involve the four elements. One such sequence can be observed in the water cycle on earth—what we experience as weather. The waters of the oceans and lakes evaporate due to the heat (fire) of the sun, rising up as they merge with the element of air. Following the air's

upward movement, they accumulate in the sky until the nature of water gathers strength again, eventually falling back to the earth as rain. The water then suffuses the earth, and when the earth can no longer absorb it, the excess flows back to the oceans and lakes, where the sequence begins anew. This cyclical process demonstrates a continuous sequence.

Of course there are many other sequences to be found in the material world, such as the changing of the seasons or even the broader sequence of the universe's evolution, but this should suffice for now as a demonstration of the reality of sequences in the material world.

Within the Body

Moving from the external natural world to the internal processes within the body, we observe similar sequential patterns in life phenomena. Life processes within the body demonstrably occur in sequences, as discussed already earlier in the book. There, we described the intake of food (referred to as nature-born matter, made up of the four elements) as a possible starting point of the sequence. The food is gradually broken down to become nourishment for the body, which in turn strengthens the body's life-element and supports the various internal organs. Ultimately, the energy diminishes, and whatever remains may serve as a foundation for the beginning of a similar sequence.

The Sequence of Life

Then there are also sequences related to life phenomena on a grander scale. For instance, we can clearly observe a natural sequence in the stages of life: a baby is born, gradually grows into youth, matures into adulthood, and eventually declines with age, heading toward the end of the sequence — death. It is clear that this sequence could never unfold in any other way.

And along a very similar line, may 'The Sequence of Becoming' (treated earlier), actually be said to be a special form of this condition.

Another significant sequence can be seen in the rise and fall of nations or civilisations. Civilised human life often begins with small villages, which gradually grow into towns, then states, until a civilisation reaches its peak as a prosperous nation. However, like all other life phenomena, this sequence is marked by decline once its peak is reached, ultimately leading to death and destruction.

Yet, as a nation prospers and thrives, it brings forth more and more manifestations of the mind.

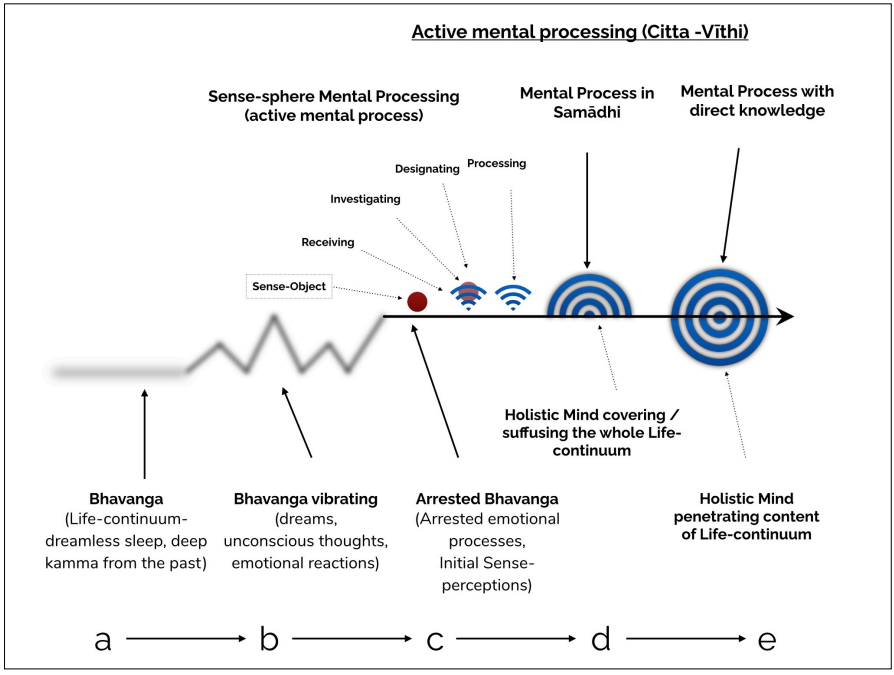
The Mind

And here too, just as with the sequences in matter, and in relation to life phenomena, in the realm of mind we also can organise things in a sequential manner. For example, we can, as a first attempt, organise mental states sequentially based on their complexity. Wherein we can observe at the simplest level, emotions that arise as mere reactions to present objects in our environment. Examples of this are greed, anger, fear, disgust, and so on. Following this, we can identify more complex mental states, which usually involve a greater degree of thought. This category will include fully developed hatred or love, shame, guilt, perverseness, cruelty, and so on. Finally, at the highest end of this sequence, we encounter mind states that transcend individual conditions altogether. These include spiritually motivated qualities such as compassion, gratitude, and wisdom, which are grounded in experiences that surpass the limited self. As we can see this progression in complexity is a natural, organic sequence, proving once again the universality of this principle.

Consciousness

Then, moving further into the territory of consciousness, I have in the first part of the book already given another scheme for organising mental phenomena sequentially. Of this I will put here once more a diagram for illustration.

The Natural Sequence of Mental Phenomena



The natural sequence of mental processing begins with the latent mind (bhavanga) (a), which gradually becomes more active and begins to vibrate (b). This is followed by sense-sphere processing (c) and, finally, by the mental processing of higher states (d+e). Each phase represents a condition of greater refinement and development compared to the previous one.

It is important to note that, unlike life phenomena — such as the stages of life or physical processes like eating, digestion, energy increase and decline, and excretion — mental phenomena do not always follow a pattern of growth and decline. Mental processes, when considered independently of physical life, can grow continuously, refining themselves without necessarily undergoing a decline.

The Hierarchy of Existence

Next, if we continue to follow the progression of mental phenomena, we find that as the mind or consciousness evolves with each stage of development — becoming vaster and more encompassing — there also unfolds a vertical sequence. This sequence is a hierarchy of existence, where different states of "being" follow one another in an ascending order. I have already explored this concept in the section on the 'Planes of Existence' so I will not elaborate on it further here.

The Nature of Ideas

Beyond this, we can also reflect on the nature of ideas. Where we find, that what we usually call reasoning or logic, is actually a capacity to order ideas in a manner of a natural sequence — where idea A is followed by idea B, then idea C, and finally concluded by idea D. Someone who would put an idea X directly after an idea A, without expounding any connecting ideas between the two, or he who would put an idea C before an idea A, will usually be perceived as being irrational. And for him who lacks reason and a capacity for rational thinking, it is not to be expected that he will attain to true knowledge or anything leading toward enlightenment.

Nibbāna

Finally, from the progression of physical elements to the refinement of mental states and the logic of ideas, each se-

quence lays the groundwork for the ultimate sequence — the path to Nibbāna, where all sequences cease. Hence, in concluding the nature of the condition of sequences, let us consider how Nibbāna fits into this framework. Nibbāna is the end of the sequence in the Buddhist path of enlightenment, marking the transcendence of becoming, and thus the transcendence of sequences themselves. However, it is important to remember that the path to Nibbāna is itself a sequence — a progression of unfolding purity in which certain delusions are first diminished and eventually eradicated. This process requires an intuitive understanding of the rightful sequence of phenomena. Therefore, we can say that the attainment of Nibbāna is deeply intertwined with a proper understanding of sequences.



Practice Key

Try to notice 3 material phenomena (including living things or situations) and 3 mental phenomena in a manner that you can see a distinct sequence of it's unfolding.

CONDITION OF FUEL

(Āhāra Paccaya)



Nutriment or Fuel condition refers to the way in which a particular physical thing or mental state or process is supported in its further growth or continuity.

Most people will have had some experience of this condition when their mind was running wild due to having too much fuel from the senses.

Traditionally there are 4 kinds of fuel enumerated:

- Physical Food (kabaliṅkārāhāra)
- Contact (or Sense-impressions) (phassa)
- Volition or Will (mano-sañcetanā)
- Consciousness (viññāna)

Physical Food keeps the physical body going

Contact with objects keeps the stream of thoughts going

Volition or Will keeps a line of kamma going

Consciousness keeps the experience of mind and matter going

The Four Elements

Treating the four elements under this condition, one may again see, how useful a comprehension device they are. So will stand the earth element for physical food in general. Sense-impressions as a fuel, may be seen to possess certain qualities of the water element, in that they are only a rather quick refreshment, running through the senses as it were, but requiring quick replacement in order to keep a sense sphere being going. While at the same time easily binding a being to matter, when the flow of impressions becomes more stagnant. Intention or will possess certain qualities of the fire element, in that a being being fuelled by it, so to say burns free its own path. While the element of air, may be used to describe how a being may be fuelled by consciousness. In that, that the path of a being which is kept going mostly by means of swift attention and mindfulness is the most difficult to see and it is most difficult to know where it goes.

The Body

Further on, I have shown already in the beginning part of the book, how physical food fuels the body, how that fuel in the body is a necessary condition for sense contact to have an impact on the senses, how that in turn fuels the mind, intentions and finally conscious processing leading to knowledge. And I too have shown, where each of these processes occurs inside the body. Which gives the meditator precisely the clue where to make adjustments and where to win conscious control over what type of process is fuelled.

Through that in turn, slowly a bigger picture becomes discernible...

THE FUEL FOR LIFE

Since its very conception, a physical being requires continuous fuel for the body. The moment the fuel becomes exhausted, that moment the life becomes exhausted.

Then, being born, its mother will cradle it, rock it, stroke and whip it, in order to produce impressions on the baby's mind, tempting its mind from its habitual condition of latency into a condition of a more active mind. Thus, more and more, both sense activity and thought activity arises being fuelled by the various sense-objects impressing themselves onto the senses. And these keep the being busy in the sense-sphere world.

Mind and Consciousness

But then, as thought processes run longer and longer without being all the time stimulated by impressions upon the senses, more and more the mind's intentions will become the fuel that keeps a being going.

Finally, when a being, being initiated for longer periods of time from within, gains life experiences, then, based on that, consciousness becomes more and more a faculty of knowledge. And in that faculty of knowledge, consciousness becomes a fuel for knowledge and knowledge in turn becomes a fuel for consciousness.

Yet, in the first place, from the moment of conception, it was actually a certain knowledge inherent in consciousness that allowed the evolving being to make use of the fuel available for its growth. And it was equally a certain knowledge inherent in consciousness which directed the being's attention to the various sense-objects and exerted the mind to more prolonged periods of unprompted mental activity.

Nibbāna

Which in turn leads us to a consideration of this condition in relation to Nibbāna. It is this understanding of how consciousness fuels body and mind, and hence life-experiences, that reveals how this condition should be used for liberation. Because this is what we aim to cultivate deliberately on the path to Nibbāna. Wherein we are trying to use fuel in a very purposeful and careful manner — seeing the danger in all processes fuelling ignorance, and the necessity of using fuel in a right manner to support processes that aid liberation. — we seek to steer the course of our existence toward the transcendent.[23]

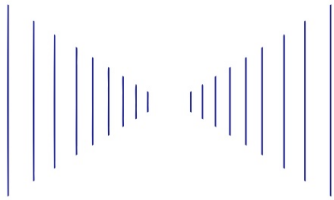


Practice Key

Try to notice and remain mindful in at least 2 instances wherein physical food actually feels like fuelling your bodily strength, 2 instances of sense impressions fuelling your activity, 2 instances of paying attention fuelling your sense of existing, 2 instances of your will fuelling your future unfolding.

CONDITION OF SYNCHRONICITY

(Sahajāta Paccaya)



Whenever two or more phenomena become attuned to each other, they temporarily become more than singular, separate phenomena and may at that time function almost as one.

The Four Elements

When we relate synchronicity to the four elements, we can find only a rather simple dynamic: that of a passive element being receptive to the active nature of another element. Only to that degree we can talk about two elements being in sync. Within the framework of that consideration, we observe that two of the four elements, namely earth and water, actually are natural receivers, while the other two, fire and wind/air, are of a inherently more active nature. Thus we may talk about wind moving earth, or fire heating water, because earth due to its concreteness is susceptible to being displaced, while water due to its depth is susceptible to containing temperature. Therefore we can draw as a first conclusion, that synchronicity requires both something which is receptive, and a particular activity or force which it is receptive towards.

Nevertheless, when we think about synchronicity, an image which might be closer to the meaning we have in mind than the examples we gave above, is that of two stable samples of earth, with the wind element going continuously back and forth amidst them, producing adjustment between the two.

In ordinary life, whenever a person feels more "in tune" with life, it is due to some wholesome mind state arising in synchronicity with some pleasurable occurrence without. All magical experiences are basically due to this synchronous occurrence of internal factors of mind, arising at the same time with some sympathetic life happenings without. And this is precisely the reason why magical experiences require knowledge that is applicable to life or sympathetic with life conditions.

Life

Life itself is full of this magic of synchronicity. Hence the power which comes from studying life's secrets. Every part of a living organism is functioning through the synchronous together workings of a myriad cells and further up the scale through the synchronous workings of various organs. And if a mind, malleable, calm and possessed of knowledge, is able to synchronise consciousness with some living material phenomenon, such as certain bodily processes, as breathing, or any other phenomenon of nature, it may thereby learn to penetrate into the mysteries of the animating life within and come to an attainment of samādhi.

Mind and Consciousness

Once the mind is in synchronicity ('in tune') with a certain object (internal or external), there becomes possible a comprehension of that object, which is distinctly different from ordinary intellection. In ordinary intellection the mind is just becoming aware of something and through an act of labelling, is turning it immediately into an mental object, which then is either thought about or reacted towards. Followed by another thought process, either related but more often entirely unrelated. All while the object is still present.

During an experience of synchronicity on the other hand, there occur many points of contact of a mind filled with

knowledge related to the object and the object itself.† The longer that synchronicity lasts the deeper the mind will be able to look into that object, perceiving a multiplicity where there appeared to be a unity. And it is thus that a person with knowledge may be able to comprehend a myriad secrets of the universe just by placing his mind into synchronicity with a particle of dust or by synchronising it with the flow of mental activity.

True love and true friendships are another quite different example of this condition, being much more characterised by this condition than by the condition of attraction. And this again is made use of in all group activities. Group meditations and initiation ceremonies rely precisely upon the effective use of this condition, usually producing much greater results than would be procured when these activities are pursued alone. As many people doing the same activity become more easily attuned to their thus common activity.

A yet other phenomenon that is making use of synchronicity is the phenomenon of hypnosis, wherein a person of strong willpower is seeking to align certain internal factors of the other person (except in a condition of autohypnosis) with a certain idea of his own will. The 'how to' becomes easily accessible to a person understanding this condition. The results of such hypnosis are very often only reversible when the person succeeds in synchronising his internals with a new idea — overwriting the previous one.

People of much sensitiveness often find their moods change in alignment with the phases of the moon or with certain unusual events. Thus, the comprehension of their condition equally may be found by comprehending this condition of synchronicity.

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† *Therein will the good ideas contained in the body of knowledge, be precisely what allows the mind to attune to the subject it is about.*



Nibbāna

At last, let us consider how this condition relates to Nibbāna. On the path of enlightenment, this condition plays a very important role, in that, part of the process of letting go of a narrow sense of self with its various limitations comes from learning to attune (or synchronise) our consciousness with conditions and ideas of a higher nature.

By gaining insight into the way things are and acting in alignment with that knowledge, we gradually align ourselves with the Dhamma — the law of purification and purity. Thus, gradually, we become less attuned to the world and its ways as we progressively become attuned to the Dhamma and the element that is unconditioned by the world of phenomena.



Practice Key

See if you can do something in synchronicity with other people, noticing that synchronicity. Alternatively see if you can have an experience where you are utterly "in-tune" with what is happening. Try to have 3 such instances.

CONDITION OF OBJECTS

(Ārammaṇa Paccaya)



Ārammaṇa, usually translated as objects, may more accurately be thought of as supports of the mind (and the senses).

Thus, this condition is describing any relation between mind or matter (as in the case of sense-base matter) and a supporting object.

Any consideration wherein "my house", "my country", "my friends", "my relatives", "my property" etc. is the central theme of the consideration, is a condition of mind and matter under this Paṭṭhāna condition of objects.

An object in regard to the mind, means any kind of support for the mind, thus both physical objects, as well as subjects or conceptual ideas the mind is pondering upon. And so will considerations such as "my views", "my beliefs" or "my tradition" come in equal amount under this condition.

The Four Elements

For gaining a better comprehension of objects, following our previous scheme, we again may at first class them in line with the four elements. So will material objects be taken as an expression of the earth element. Objects of affection may be classed as belonging to the water element. Objects of hatred or aversion are classed under fire element. And objects of a subtle and spiritual kind will be taken as expressions of the air element.

Mind and Matter

But then, under the categories of mind and matter, we may be able to go a little deeper in our considerations.

Thus, the outer world and outer events and conditions are the objects of the senses, and through percept turn into objects of the mind. These objects which the mind then starts to consider in turn will support the mind and modify the functioning of consciousness. Hence can a consideration as "my house", "my family", "my bank account" or "my tradition" indeed stabilise a mind which is only concerned with the sense-sphere world.



Consciousness

Yet, there are also other spheres. And a mind, or consciousness which seeks to expand its horizon to explore vistas inaccessible to the senses, ultimately will have to learn to stand independent from sense-sphere objects. So, we can classify objects or supports in relation to the spheres of con-

sciousness into three broad categories. First, there are sense-sphere objects, some of which are mentioned above. That is, things and ideas of ourselves and our environment. Who we are (in a sense-sphere sense), what we should do, what will be the (physical) outcome of our actions, etc.. The second category of objects or supports of mind, are subtle or fine-material objects. Examples of which are energy, subtle feelings and mental perceptions of a fine-material kind, but it too will be ideas, which relate to the development of the mind into these regions which are higher than the world of the senses. Usually such perceptions begin only to arise when the mind becomes capable of being stabilised by religious, or philosophical, or philanthropical ideas. That is, ideas which relate to making the mind or person more noble and perfect. Examples of this are ideas about saintly people or more perfected beings above, aspirations for world peace or ideas about unconditional love or goodness. These then, together with the various perceptions that arise based on them, will be the supports which stabilise the mind.

The third category of objects relate to immaterial things. This contains all objects, which are so to say abstracted from matter. Considerations of a scientific character, mathematical questions, ideas about the conditions of particles or of consciousness etc. fall into this category of objects.

In the first of the above cases, the objects of consciousness will be ever changing, because the material world is only to a very limited degree controllable. Thus there will be continuously alternating feelings of pleasure and pain. And following that, will for a consciousness rooted in the senses, the mind continuously alternate between wholesome and unwholesome considerations.

But in the second case, will the mind itself continuously seek to condition the feelings through the use of higher ideas and broader considerations. The mind will not accept material objects as a support, rather only subtler feelings alternate with higher ideas and loftier considerations as the supports

for consciousness. Each conditioning the other and supporting the other.

In the last case, that of immaterial supports for the mind, they can only really support the mind, when the feelings have become so refined as to be imperceptible to the mind, while the consciousness itself must have become so sophisticated as to be supportable entirely by mind-objects.

Relation to Nibbāna

Finally, to attain Nibbāna, we ultimately have to reach the state where we can remain conscious without any support whatsoever. Plunging into the unconditioned requires purity in and of itself, hence the mind must be free from all needs for support, whether material or immaterial.



Practice Key

Notice 3 conditions where you find your personal stability strongly depends on outer circumstances, other people, or certain fixed ideas you hold. Then think of what it would mean for your life if that condition would disappear.

CONDITION OF REPETITION

(Āsevana Paccaya)



The term Āsevana means both repetition and practice.

Repetition is what establishes, makes strong and develops, both in regards to mind and matter. And, in its own boundaries, whatever it is that is repeated, becomes gradually easier with each repetition.

The Four Elements

Starting small, beginning again with a consideration of the four elements, we may acquire the first simple comprehension of this condition. Understanding the element of air to be the element representing change, movement and direction and the element of earth representing limitation and concreteness, one will see this condition for the most part as a dynamic of these two elements. That is, repetition means a limited forward movement of something concrete, with the forward movement perishing again and again, just to begin ever new at its starting position. While the earth element accumulating wherever the forward movement stops.

But then again we may divide repetitions into four kinds. First, there are earthy repetitions, such are all (mechanical) habits (some of which are mentioned next). Then there are fiery repetitions, an example of which are human vices, as any form of cyclical destruction. Further, there may be watery repetitions, such are on the human-level engagements, especially marriages or family bonds, wherein the feeling element (represented by the element of water) increases with the repetitions. But on a grander scale, it also comes as cyclical rejuvenation as becomes yearly manifest during the time of spring. And finally, there may be airy repetitions, an

example of which will on a human level be learning, or the execution of any kind of skill. But on a grander scale it will also represent any gradual refinement as can be seen in the prospering periods of all civilisations, wherein technology and increased knowledge allow for ever more refined activities. The element of increase is brought about through the condition of repetition.

Repetition is indeed built into the fabric of existence. On a grand scale, is the yearly recurrence of the seasons an example of the universality of this condition. Stars, sun systems and planets, all are machineries of ever-repeating revolutions.

In fact the whole universe is a machinery of cyclic repetitions.



Life Phenomena

Life phenomena too are phenomena of ever-repeating patterns. Cells eat, excrete and reproduce. And then again eat,

excrete and reproduce. Then they slowly die and get replaced by cells which follow those same patterns.

Likewise, do organs repeat in cycles their respective activities. And only when all the organs of a body steadily follow their repetitions, the body as a whole, can make repeated and steady steps.

Mind and Consciousness

With the mind, it is no different. Many, if not all of us, have experienced thoughts or emotions that seem to relentlessly pursue or even harass us, repeating again and again in the mind. Only a few truly possess mastery over them.

Yet, when it comes to consciousness, we do attempt to harness repetition. After all, what is learning if not the deliberate choice of what we wish to have arise in the mind more often? Through mental repetition or practice, a being becomes capable of learning. It is through repeated engagement with what is learned that skills develop. Through the repetition of decisions about what is right or wrong, virtues or vices are cultivated.

Thus, it is only through repetition that the various paths in life unfold. A person choosing a path — be it spiritual or worldly — is ultimately choosing what they will do repeatedly over long periods of time.

But then there is not only the individual path of repetition. When many individuals posses various skills, each performing his at regular intervals, a group or society as a whole is starting to make progress. And when these repetitions of a whole group or society become established, the group or society will outlive its individual constituent bodies.

Nevertheless, even civilisations arise, grow and prosper, only to gradually decline and die. Just to get succeeded by a civilisation which, following the same pattern, will usually yet take the process a little bit further than its predecessor.

Furthermore, will indeed, in the end all sentient life come to an end and even the universe itself will perish one day. Doubtlessly to be succeeded by another one following similar patterns.

Relation to Nibbāna

Nonetheless, even though repetition is such an integral part of the fabric of the phenomenal world, as we free ourselves from identification with that world, both the need for-and the compulsiveness of repetition gradually cease. Nibbāna, the unconditioned, is a reality free from arising, free from ceasing, and hence from all repetition.



Practice Key

Notice 3 fundamental actions you daily repeat. What would your life be like if you were to cease that repetition?

CONDITION OF DISSOLUTION AND DESTRUCTION

(Vigata Paccaya)



All phenomena sooner or later come to a condition of fading, dying and disappearance. And becoming thus, they are instances of this condition.

This condition may perhaps equally be translated as 'going asunder', 'falling apart', 'moving towards destruction', or the familiar Buddhist favourite, 'impermanence'.

Old age, sickness, death, loss of property, loss of relatives and friends, and on the level of the mind, experiences like depression and dementia; all fall under the condition of dissolution and destruction.

The Four Elements

In relation to the four elements, is the element of fire, the element which stands for destruction as such, while the element of air may stand for the gradual ceasing of things manifest.

But then, in a yet different consideration; in the realm of the manifest, is each element always endangered by the winning in strength of the other elements. Matter is always engaged with and worn off by other matter. Thus, is earth destroyed by fire, dissolved by water, and worn off or dispersed by wind. Water is vaporised by fire, absorbed or soaked up by earth and equally dispersed by the wind element. Fire is suffocated by earth, extinguished by water, and blown out by wind. And finally wind is hindered by earth and water, loosing its force through contact with them, while the fire element is consuming its force.

And, as that, which we know as our world, is made up of these four elements, we should rightly conclude, that the manifest world around us, is not likely to last forever, least of all in the conditions which are familiar to us. Earthquakes, flooding, tsunamis, forest fires, these should not be looked upon as unnatural, but are indeed a natural part of the manifest world, thus proving the universality of this condition.



Life Phenomena

Then is life, whether in plants, animals, human beings, or even of the planet as a whole, most of the time weighted down by the nature of these elements. Physical life does not exist apart from the elements of earth, water, fire and air. But any excess of some of the elements often will prove disastrous. If it's too hot, life can not be. If the water is in excess, much of presently existing life too can not be. If there would be only earth, and too much of a lack of the other elements,

there too could be no life. And the same applies to the air element.

Within our body too, almost every moment, there can be observed destruction. After we have eaten, the food we have taken into ourselves, gradually gets destroyed by the fire of digestion. On the other hand side, whenever we have not eaten enough, various cells of the body undergo destruction. In fact, however well a person may look after himself, many cells within the body become destroyed anyhow all the time. And so it is also with the cells in plants and animals. Gradually this process of continuous tiny destructions will then lead to the big destruction of the body as a whole. Which is, what we then call death.

The Mind

But this death or destruction is not limited to physical phenomena. Because the mind too is perpetually under the sway of death and destruction. Especially so the mind which is involved with matter and life; that is, the sense-sphere mind.

We feel happy, everything seems to work out. People like us. We do well in whatever we do. And then, suddenly, the people who appeared to respect us, without any visible cause, start to criticise us; the next task in hand seems to be beyond us, we become depressed, which makes it worse. So the whole brightness and joy and happiness has disappeared, leaving us with things that appear perhaps worse than death itself.

On the other hand side, that depression and gloom that suddenly has come over our life and our mind, too does not last forever, but equally comes to an end with time. The sun rises again and what appeared like a permanent condition, has equally turned out to be just a shifting, changing thing, that lasted for some time and then died on its own accord.

Relation to Nibbāna

And as the reality of impermanence and destruction in material things and of material life thus gradually begins to dawn on consciousness; consciousness learns to disengage from material phenomena and begins to look for things which appear to be of a more lasting nature. It aspires for lasting ideas, but recognises, that their lasting nature can not be appreciated unless, it acquires a footing on a more stable ground than sense-sphere phenomena. Consequently the mind places its attention on more peace giving objects and on the peace they give to it.

But as the peace that is based on peace giving objects also always fades again, and as the same object too gradually looses its power to give peace; sooner or later, the search for the lasting will have to be resumed...

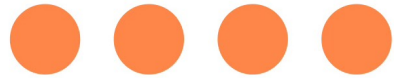


Practice Key

Think of 3 things that are very important in your life. Then reflect on the fact that they will eventually disappear.

CONDITION OF RETENTION OF IDENTITY

(Avigata Paccaya)



All phenomena in manifest existence posses some amount of duration, long or short. The continuation of certain characteristics that occur in the course of that duration, is what is called the continuity of its identity.

The Four Elements

In terms of the four elements, duration or lastingness is symbolised by the earth element — the element representing solidity and stability. However in manifest existence, all of the four elements exhibit a form of stability. This is clearly seen when we observe our planet. While the earth element defines the planet's solid structure, the oceans, made predominantly of the water element, have retained their form and presence for millions or even billions of years, showing us the enduring nature of water. Similarly, the fire element, which on this planet makes up earth's molten inner core, and becomes manifest in volcanic eruptions and geologic activity, proves the lasting nature of the fire element. Lastly, the air that surrounds the planet, though invisible and often in motion, remains a stable and vital component of the planet's identity.

The Body

Within (and in regards to) the body too, we have certain signs proving the condition of retention of identity. In the first place, the organs, the blood, the heat of the body and the body's ceaseless motion (internal manifestations of the four elements) maintain a certain continuous identity. If that identity would cease, that is, if the body's organs would fall apart, or the blood would dry up, or the body's heat would disap-

pear, or the body's motion would entirely cease; then death would set in.

Even externally, signs of continuous identity of a body are discernible. Things like the colour of the hair or eyes of the body, in most cases do not change before old age, and with few exceptions, whatever gender a person is born with, he will retain that gender until the end of his life.

Larger scale life-phenomena such as nations and civilisations too prove the validity of this condition. With them, similar to the constituent parts of a body (there called cells), the individual entities making up a civilisation or nation are ever changing phenomena, but the nation or civilisation is outliving them all, retaining at least some of its characteristics throughout its life.

The Mind

Retention in relation to the mind means, memory. Yet, memory is not entirely a mental thing. Even coarse material phenomena as stones or water, can retain impressions and ideas. This is the foundation of ancient talisman magic, as well as of 'holy' (blessed) water. And this has been brought in modern times to a high pitch of perfection, as modern information technology as computer, CDs, hard drives etc. all rely on this condition of matter being able to retain impressions and ideas.

Then is the body made up of the same material elements as earth and water and so on, interacting with each other to form living processes. So there will be more intricate ways of memory in relation to the body.

But then one might ask, how about the mind itself? Is there any memory or retention of ideas and impressions apart from matter?

Well, in modern times we know about the technology of transmitting ideas via semi-material forces. An antenna can

send out various informations to a certain receiver. The information being temporarily stored in the electromagnetic waves send out by the antenna. Yet, the short-lasting nature of the electromagnetic wave, makes the storage of the idea equally short. Thus we can get some clue about the possibility of memory independent from matter, but we equally realise that in the nature we know of, memory does depend for the most part on a material container containing it. Only we might contrive, that in as much as there may be entities whose body is somewhat similar to the electromagnetic waves of modern science, these may be able to maintain a more lasting memory even without a physical container.



Consciousness

Then is memory intricately connected with consciousness, although expressing it the other way around is perhaps more accurate (viz. consciousness is intricately connected with memory). A human being is constituted of various parts, some material, but also some immaterial. The consciousness of the most primitive person, will be aware of and responsive

only towards things which are material. And as, both the material part of a person (viz. the body), as well as the material things contacted by the senses are ever changing, that person's consciousness with its respective memory will be ever changing. But, as beings evolve, consciousness grows in responsiveness towards ever more refined things, both internally, as well as externally. The consciousness of the person of virtue not only is responsive towards material things, but too knows of, and is able to respond towards emotions and ideas. Consequently that person's consciousness with its respective memory may last longer than the ever shifting material elements of the body or of the senses.

Still longer in duration will last the consciousness of a meditator who is able to both, transform his body in such a manner as to produce a stable current of energy, as well as his consciousness to respond towards that same energy. Which will mark the attainment of a finematerial sphere consciousness. This in turn might then become still superseded by such a refinement of both body and consciousness as to bring about even an attainment to the immaterial sphere. And the beings who live in that sphere, may be expected to have both a memory and a consciousness which lasts for exceedingly long a period of time.

Furthermore, intricately connected both with memory and with consciousness is another mental phenomenon, the idea. We have defined an idea as a combination of various designations put together by the process of thinking. But in here we might ask: Are there any lasting ideas?, or are all ideas just ephemeral things?

A sense-sphere consciousness develops ideas regarding the senses-sphere world. Some of which may last throughout the whole of a persons (sense-sphere) life. But many ideas will on account of their uselessness get constantly overwritten by newer ones.

Nevertheless, there do exist ideas in this world, which do last for a considerable amount of time, sometimes several cen-

turies or even millennia. Which makes us wonder where the limits might be, as to the lastingness of great ideas.

Nibbāna

Certainly, one conclusion we can make is that, as ideas are still conditioned phenomena, however close they might come to even the most lasting truths, they can only serve as aids to help us on the path to Nibbāna — the one thing untouched by time and change.

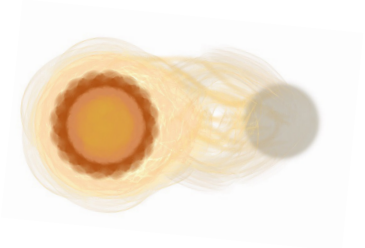


Practice Key

Think of 3 phenomena because of whose long continuous existence you have come to be who you are.

CONDITION OF ATTRACTION

(Sampayutta Paccaya)



Whenever one phenomenon, by virtue of its own qualities, pulls another phenomenon towards itself, it is called attraction.

On all the conceivable scales of life, can there be found this condition of attraction. Matter from the tiniest of particles, to the matter of the whole universe is kept together through the condition of attraction. While mind, from the pettiest or coarsest of desires, to the loftiest feeling of love, too is an expression of this condition.

The Four Elements

But how can we understand the condition of attraction in matters of the four elements?

All things of substance, fall to the earth. That is the attraction of the earth element.

All things of moderate substance get dispersed within water due to the attractive quality of water, which attracts the different parts of a compound more than the parts attract each other.

All things of little substance follow the direction of the wind. That is the attraction of the wind element.

All things living feel attracted and grow towards the light. That is the attraction of the fire element.

However, there is another way of thinking about the elements under this condition. And that is in matters of affinities towards one another. Thus we find that earth and water have some natural affinity, and so it is with fire and air. In each pair the elements form a perfect supplement to one another. The knowledge of which gives us a certain clue as to a better harmonisation of these elements.

Attraction and the senses

Attraction may also be observed in the sphere of the senses. For instance, forms which are symmetrical, proportionate, and smooth are generally more attractive than forms marked by distortion, imbalance, or roughness. In sound, harmony attracts more than discord. In smell, freshness and sweetness attract more than foulness and decay. In taste, sweetness and agreeable savour (e.g. saltiness) attract more than bitterness or sourness. In touch, softness, warmth, and gentleness attract more than roughness, burning, or pain.

Human beings, being inventive creatures, often seek to increase the attractiveness of things through various inventions. Thus they adorn the body, build beautiful and well proportioned buildings and other structures, compose music, prepare pleasing scents, and improve the flavour of food. In this manner, the attraction already found in nature is deliberately intensified.

The Body

The matter of the physical body, vivified by life, too is susceptible to this condition of attraction. Each body part has its particular counterpart. And thus, when any particular body part becomes vivified by the element of life (the faculty of life), it produces a certain sense of attraction towards that corresponding counterpart.

So will an empty stomach, vivified by life, produce a certain attraction towards food. The lungs, vivified by life, will produce an attraction towards the air element. The sexual organs, vivified by life, will produce an attraction towards a person (usually) of the other gender, or to other things of a sexual nature. The sense-organs, vivified by life, produce an attraction towards beautiful sights, sounds etc.. And a brain, vivified by life, will produce a certain attraction towards things which might stimulate the intellect or intelligence.

And for a mind, that is deeply attached to the life of the body, these attractions then will dominate the activities of the mind.

The Mind

However, the mind also has its own life, which too is within the domain of this condition of attraction. Hence we find, that different states of mind, are equally attracted to certain direct counterparts.

So will for example a restless mind be attracted to activity.

A peaceful mind usually is attracted to non-activity.

An angry mind is easily attracted to quarrels and fights.

A greedy mind is quickly attracted to various goods.

A depressed mind, will be attracted to gloomy environments.

A joyful mind will be attracted to bright environments.

A brave mind is attracted to adventure.

A fearful mind is attracted to security.

A lazy mind is attracted to comfort.

A loving mind, is attracted to people and animals of various kinds.

A hateful mind is attracted to usually people of a specific kind.

And an objective mind is attracted to justice. Etc.

These counterparts need not be external objects. A depressed mind may equally be attracted to gloomy thoughts and memories, an angry mind to thoughts which sustain its anger, and so forth. Thus, the mind may be attracted not only towards environments corresponding to its present state, but also towards mental objects of a corresponding nature.



Consciousness

But then, there is also the condition of consciousness, where consciousness is attracted not to counterparts of the bodily organs or senses, nor to matches to certain mind-states, but rather to counterparts or matches to certain kinds of kamma performed in the past.

A past wish or aspiration to become a monk or a scholar, for example‡, even more so if vivified by supportive actions, will cause that consciousness to be attracted to learned people, books, libraries, etc. While a past wish to become a rich businessman will equally so attract consciousness to items of a particular kind. In that case it will be rather items as money, luxury goods, and the like. And as the consciousness becomes attracted towards those things; the mind, —viz. the life-continuum, with its mental life, emotions and desires— will start vibrating in accordance with the strength of the past kamma. Which in turn will then also move the body into various activities, directed at getting closer to the thing which is thought to be attractive.

A similar thing applies to the condition of habits. A habit of playing a certain sport or an addiction to drugs will cause a force of attraction to arise whenever "the time has come" for the next repetition of the habit. That is, it will cause the mental life (the mental life faculty) to vibrate in accordance with the strength of the habit. And this force will attract the body into proximity of its object of desire, or into the condition wherein the habit can be accomplished.

All these a meditator will have to struggle with. And as he struggles with them, here and there, he will find some perception of the subtle, of the higher, of the beautiful, of the peaceful — Nimittas (signs) of the fine-material world. Allowing his consciousness, while maturing in the struggle, to learn how to think about and respond to perceptions of the fine-material world. Which will naturally lead it to gradually disengage from all things material or sensual, simply because consciousness will feel increasingly more attracted towards the subtle, the higher and the beautiful.

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‡ *The aspiration having come about due to having perceived something attractive in the idea of it*

Ideas

Ideas too can become attractive for many different reasons, independent of whether they are true or not. An idea may be attractive because it seems to explain a great many things at once.

It may be attractive because it is new and surprising.

It may be attractive because it gives a simple explanation for complex problems.

It may be attractive because it is elegant or beautiful.

It may be attractive because it gives us hope or consolation.

It may be attractive because it confirms what we already believe, flatters our sense of identity, or makes us feel superior to others.

It may be attractive because it comes from someone whom we respect or regard as an authority.

Or finally an idea may too be attractive because we have made investigations in a certain matter, pondered upon it for long and hence came to be convinced that it is a truthful idea.

Nibbāna

Hence, as consciousness becomes increasingly refined, its attraction towards ideas may itself become part of the movement towards something more universal. Through meditation, contemplation, investigation and enquiry, ideas may gradually cease to be merely personal constructions and come to correspond increasingly with the way things actually are. The more consciousness comes into correspondence with reality, the more its understanding transcends the limitations of the individual.

In this manner, the subjective increasingly corresponds to the objective, while the objective increasingly corresponds to the subjective. The distinction between the two consequently becomes less absolute. Consciousness no longer merely apprehends a world from one particular standpoint, but increasingly participates in an understanding of what is universal.

This eventually leads to the transcendence of the whole gamut of phenomenal experience, from matter, to mind, and eventually to experience of any personal nature altogether. Hence, as gradually the distinction between subjective and objective dissolves, and with it the distinction between a subject and an object, the force of attraction itself disappears, giving way to the nature of Nibbāna.



Practice Key

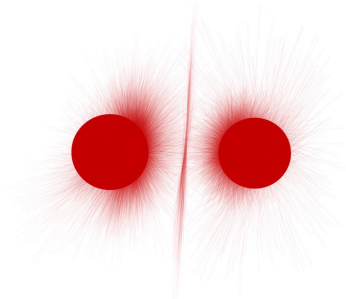
Notice 3 instances wherein you are attracted to something beyond your conscious control.

Then, for each one, ask yourself: What exactly is attractive about it? Is it the object itself, the feeling it produces, its familiarity, the idea associated with it, or something within yourself that responds to it?

Finally, consider one thing towards which you would like to cultivate a stronger attraction because it leads you towards greater inner beauty, clarity, peace or freedom.

CONDITION OF REPULSION

(Vippayutta Paccaya)



All forces have their counterparts. The reverse of the previous condition, this condition describes how and why mental and material phenomena repel other mental and material phenomena.

Antagonisms, conflicts, wars, hatred and fear, and even diseases are examples of this condition of repulsion.

But why are there conflicts, why are there wars? How can our understanding of mind, matter and consciousness help us to solve the mystery of antagonism?

The Four Elements

Let us start as before, with a consideration of the four elements first. There we find, that there is a certain inherent tendency to repulsion even in the interaction of the elements of nature.

In an abstract sense, precisely because each element has no similarity with the other elements, all the elements may be said to be repellent towards all the other elements. Earth repels through its inherent solidity. Air repels because of its characteristic of movement. Fire repels through burning. Water repels the other elements through its fluidity -(i.e. solid objects sink through it until they reach a more solid base, and it disperses air while also reducing its strength).

This then might give us some clue, that repulsion and perhaps following that, also its more elaborate forms such as antagonism, hatred and so on, has to do with differentiation, that is, with being different.

And that will be thus one guiding principle for exploring the reason and meaning of repulsion, antagonism, hatred and similar things.

Life Phenomena

In the plant kingdom, to take the first complex form of life as the next thing to explore, we find plants with spikes, plants with stinging smells and those with poisons. In them, these armouries with few exceptions, exist only for protection.

With animals things become more complex. Here we find armouries which are much more varied— from shells to claws, from sharp teeth, to spitting of poison. But in animals these armouries exist not just for protection, but equally for preying upon other animals. And there we may begin to see already, that with each level of complexity there is introduced a new layer to repulsion. With the elements we had repulsion, in the guise of just being different, possessing identity. This exists also in plants and in animals, but in the plant kingdom we have found a second form of repulsion, and that is "deliberate" protection from what is threatening to life. In the animal kingdom there is added repulsion or antagonism in the form of aggression towards another life for the purpose of food and for competing with mates. Seeing this condition thus unfold, we might expect some still more elaborate form of repulsion in human beings.

Of course amidst the human species the devices invented to repel other human beings, or to prevent other human beings from entering one's own sphere, are innumerous, as are the means for active aggression. But humans do not just defend themselves from threats and attack for the purpose of sustenance, but quite otherwise, human beings destroy other

lives for sport (fishing, hunting, shooting birds, etc.), for religious purposes (sacrifice), for science, and even for gaining a certain sense of sensual, or perhaps even sexual pleasure therefrom. Not only that, often they kill not just in an instance and to accomplish the death of the other, but they might even kill with great ceremony and with a definite purpose of prolonging the torture of their victim.

On a small scale we may sometimes feel inspired to observe some of this within our own body and mind. In our own body, whenever we are in an unhealthy condition, which means that, not the life-element is the predominant element, but that the experience of the four elements has become the predominant condition, we will notice that, whatever element is added to our body (viz. usually eaten) is more likely to threaten the already imbalanced elements. Thus causing inner conflicts.



In a healthy condition, the life-element being higher in order, usually is able to solve the conflict. But even in an healthy condition there will be manifold conflicts and repulsions

within the body. Very often harmful bacteria and viruses provoke some battle within, and in more severe cases there might grow some life inside which, small as it might be, may yet threaten the whole of the body's life. This will especially be the condition of the tumour or of cancer.

But herein also, just as the element of life can balance out conflicts of the four primary elements, so here too can the element next higher in order do something to arbitrate the discord. In that, a right mind that attends to the life with care may help that life to overcome the disease.

The Mind and Consciousness

But even if it succeeds with that, the battle usually will not end. Because the mind too often enough is a battle field.

Many an enquiring man has been astounded by the horrors he is capable of committing in his own mind, especially so at times or in situations any person is usually least inclined to look within himself.

A great many wicked things a mind that is uncontrolled is capable of committing in thought. And only he who has some good "will", will have something to put against all these. Therein, the stronger the good will, the least easily it will give up the battle. Hence we can see, that even in the mind there is actually some purpose for violence and conflict, in that, it is the battleground which gives a chance to train and make strong a good will.

But on the other hand side, it should not be forgotten, it actually gives an equal chance also for an evil will to grow strong and more crafty. Thus, he who wants to grow his good will strong, should proceed carefully to send it well prepared into the battle and call it back onto safe ground when the chances for winning have diminished beyond hope.

If the good will loses the battle, consciousness gradually becomes of the nature of the Asuras (Demons), thereby enter-

ing a higher battlefield still. Demons (A-suras, lit. "anti-shining ones") are the counterforce to goodness (Suras, lit. "the shining ones") in the world. They are to the world, what cancer cells are to the body. Feeding on and destroying the very world they are part of.

But they too play their part in the scheme. Their very presence gives chances to the life of their opponents. It is through friction with these, that those who have the light, but whose inner nature is yet still too attached to matter, can learn to burn off their weaknesses and grow new strengths. Just as the evil tendencies within give the man whose inner nature is of both kinds, a possibility of learning to choose the right thing and to then fight for his chosen course, thereby strengthening his will.

If thus in the inner battle the 'good will' wins, consciousness becomes of the nature of the Devas (Suras, the "Shining ones"). Which are generally marked by their unity and lack of inner conflict[§].

Ideas and Nibbāna

Then, at last we also have ideas. There are ideas, which stimulate conflict, fear, and aggression and there are ideas which promote unity, peace and friendliness.

Principally all ideas which are arrived at solely by processing sense-sphere data are productive of conflict. This is so, because they see everything only from the one position of "the self", and can not take into account another one's position. Hence it is said in the scriptures, that initially Dhamma always comes from without, except in the case of a Buddha. Dhamma is something that has to be heard or learned at first. It is not something that can easily be arrived at merely by observing the things of the senses.

[§] *At least as long as they remain true to their nature.*

It is through acquiring ideas of Dhamma and religion, which are always said to originate above**, that some people instead of pushing away the things without, begin to push away within themselves evil thoughts and ideas. Thereby seeking to make an end to this chain of conflicts.

Which is thus also proving again the working of the same dynamic as before, of the above giving the balance to the below. Conflicts of the four elements are balanced out by the life-element, conflicts in the life-element (i.e. diseases) are balanced out by the right type of mind, and conflicts in the mind are balanced out by consolidating ideas. Consolidating ideas in turn arise from insight into the Dhamma — the Divine Law which brings unity to both body and mind, and everything emerging from these. And he who has insight into the Dhamma, ultimately will transcend all conflicts, and attain the peace and liberation of Nibbāna.



Practice Key

Notice 3 instances wherein you could not help but be repelled by a certain phenomenon (person, thing, internal state).

** *In the Buddha's case, his enlightened mind also counts as belonging to the nature of heaven and "the above".*

CONDITION OF INNER ESTABLISHMENTS

(Hetu Paccaya)



Hetu Paccaya, usually translated as root condition, is the condition of an inner establishment in regards to mind and matter.

The Four Elements

An establishment is symbolised by the earth element. But here we are concerned with an establishment of mind in matter. Thus along the line of the four elements, we would try to conceive of an establishment of the element of air or wind, the subtlest of elements, in the element of earth. Now, earth by itself is the most rigid of elements, so conceiving of an establishment of wind in the element of earth is difficult to contrive, thus we will come to realise that the element of water will be necessary in order to establish the element of wind in the earth. But then, what really makes these two malleable and workable, can only be accomplished by the element of fire or heat.

Now, the earth element stands for the body as a whole, the element of water stands for the receiving capacities of both the body and the mind, while the element of fire represents the element of will. These three together are the key points then for the establishment of the mind in the body and for the realisation of the meditator who would seek to comprehend, how to bring about such arrangement deliberately.

Body and Mind

Along the traditional lines of the Abhidhamma, we consider this condition in quite a similar manner, only we rather relate it to bodily and mental processes. So there we divide inner establishments in two different ways. The first one is along the line of capabilities. The second one is along the line of wholesome and unwholesome.

The first root or establishment, is the mind's establishment in the matter of the body, that is, the mind's capacity to look after the body (perhaps one might call it the instinct of self preservation).

The second root, being the mind's attuning to emotions, is the capacity of the mind to express its contents through emotions and not only through physical actions.

The third root is the mind's capacity to think constructively along some definite line, independent from sensations or emotion. Hence we might also called it the mind's establishment in intelligence.

In each of those cases, apart from the condition of the mind, certain parts of the organism (such as the brain or the sympathetic nervous system), will also either be established in their proper functioning or not. Which is why it was said, that the condition describes establishment of both mental and material phenomena.

Furthermore, in each case, the inner establishment may be either a skillful or 'good' one, or an unskillful or 'bad' one. Thus, if the first root is established properly, it is seen as a healthy capacity to look after the body. But if it is a 'wrong' establishment, it will show forth some aberration, such as overindulgence in food, excessive fear or similar conditions of imbalance.

Equally so in regard to the second root. In a 'good' or desirable condition, it is the mind's capacity to express its contents in such a manner, as to bring about a better adaptation

to the environment and beings of similar kind. But in a 'bad' or undesirable condition, it will show forth as conditions like over emotionality or cruelty, etc.

While a 'good' establishment in regards to the third root, will show forth as a capacity to think along definite lines; to be able to think about past, present and future, and to work out intelligent strategies for the problems of life. But if the establishment becomes aberrant, it will lead to excessive worrying, planning out any small detail of life, or thinking along unhealthy (for example morbid) lines.††



Relation to Consciousness

Classifying the roots (or establishments) along purely ethical lines of wholesome and unwholesome (that is, regarding

†† *Note: These three conditions are elaborated on in the Abhidhamma as the various ways consciousness may arise...That is, prompted or unprompted (which relates to the first root), with or without wholesome or unwholesome emotions and with or without understanding.*

them in relation to an idea of 'good' and 'bad'), we find, that, if mind-states of a certain type (wholesome or unwholesome) are repeatedly indulged in or cultivated (that is, they arise with a certain regularity), they become roots. Through that, they acquire a more permanent condition. In modern days, we would call them then either virtues, if wholesome (non-greed, non-hatred, non-delusion) or vices, if unwholesome (greed, hatred, and delusion). As these they will manifest both as habits and character traits.

A person whose mind is generally more often rooted in wholesome states (of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion, or, self-sufficiency, good-will, and wisdom or intelligence), is what is commonly thought of as a good character or virtuous person.

A virtuous person is one, which even in the face of tempting objects will not give in to greed or in the face of unjust treatment will not seek revenge.

A person whose mind is generally rooted in unwholesome states (like greed, hatred, and delusion) is what one would usually designate a 'bad character' or iniquitous person.

Such person, in whom the unwholesome roots are established, may seek to acquire things unrighteously, even when they are not in proximity to him or he may hurt other beings, experiencing a certain sense of pleasure therein.

Along the line of mental processing, in the three rooted person, who is a definitely virtuous person, after receiving through the senses either a very attractive object or a very repulsive object, if it is only a short instance of conscious processing, wherein the process lapses immediately into the latent mind again, there will still (in spite of the attractiveness or repulsiveness) only manifest wholesome mind-states in the following vibrating mind. And if the process runs further and the person would investigate, designate and think about the object, he would think about it in a definitely intelligent manner and equally untinged by greed or hatred.

For a definitely vicious person (in whom the three roots of greed, hatred, and delusion are established), a short mental process of just receiving an impression, if the impression would be an agreeable one, would be followed by a vibrating resultant mind, that is responding with greed and delusion. If the impression is a disagreeable one, it would be followed by aversion. While in the case of long mental processes, including kamma producing thought, the thought processes itself, equally will be tinged by greed for, or aversion towards the object.

Nevertheless, for completion we should mention, that even a person who may generally be thought of as having a certain definite establishment, at times can be found in an unrooted condition. Such may be the case in a situation of weakness, or stress, or other unusual factors.

All roots are supported by birth but are not entirely dependent on it. A person's actions (mental, verbal, or physical) can strengthen or weaken particular roots throughout life, or generate new seeds from which wholesome or unwholesome roots (virtues or vices) will sprout in the future.

Relation to Nibbāna

Concluding, let us understand how the roots relate to Nibbāna. The establishment of character is indeed an important step away from being swayed by the world, and it is, in truth, the first step to becoming "unconditional". Hence wholesome roots form the foundation for the attainment of Nibbāna, while, in contrast, unwholesome roots are in fact just the mind's being conditioned by the world. A factor which evidently needs to be uprooted for liberation from the same.

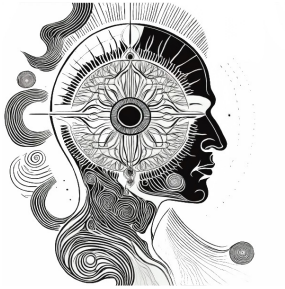


Practice Key

Try to find, either in yourself or in someone else, 3 instances of virtue (established wholesome mental pattern) and 3 instances of vice (established unwholesome mental pattern).

CONDITION OF POWER / CAPABILITY

(Indriya Paccaya)



Indriya Paccaya#, is the property of power within a certain material or mental phenomenon.

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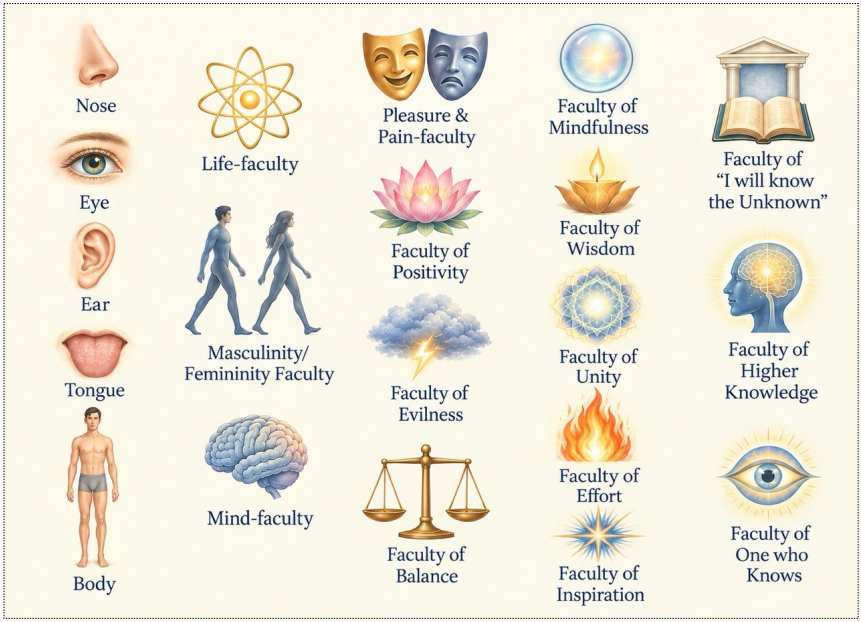
In the realm of the elements this means, that the Indriya of water is its fluidity, the Indriya of earth is its solidity, the Indriya of fire is its heat, and the Indriya of air is its motion. These represent powers inherent in these elements.

But traditionally 22 powers are listed...

 # The word "Indriya" relates to the word Indra, the name of the ruler and hence the most powerful of Hindu gods of the old Indian pantheon. Traditionally the word is translated as faculty or capacity, but the word power is not incorrect and seems to be the more meaningful English term in this context. The terms in the list below also slightly differ from the traditional translations. For traditional terms plus Pali, one may see appendix 24.

The 22 Powers

(1) the power of seeing
(2) the power of hearing
(3) the power of smelling
(4) the power of tasting
(5) the power of feeling touch
(6) the power of femininity
(7) the power of masculinity
(8) the power of vitality
(9) the power of thinking
(10) the power of feeling pleasure
(11) the power of feeling pain
(12) the power of goodness
(13) the power of evilness
(14) the power of balance
(15) the power of inspiration
(16) the power of effort /strength
(17) the power of clarity/ mindfulness
(18) the power of unity
(19) the power of wisdom
(20) the power of knowing the Unknown
(21) the power of higher knowledge
(22) the power of one possessing higher knowledge



The Powers of Sensing

These are the powers of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and perceiving touch, that a human being shares with most other living creatures. When habitually used for a long time, they are usually taken for granted. However, those who lose any of these sense capacities after having possessed them will understand why they are considered as powers.

The Powers of Masculinity and Femininity

Furthermore we have the power of masculinity and the power of femininity. These grant both outwardly as well as inwardly certain capacities.

The former might as an outward appearance grant certain rights within society, while as inner capacity it expresses itself in the capacity to assert strength, determination, and to display rationality and similar things. While the power of femininity, can equally at times grant certain rights without, such as for instance a greater right for protection, while as a power from within it will express itself as qualities like empathy, receptivity, and the capacity for nurturing.

The Power of Life

Next we have as the 9th power, the power of life, or the power of vitality. This can in fact be divided into physical and mental. The amount of physical vitality the body is capable of manifesting is called the physical life-power. The amount of mental life the mind manifests is called the mental life-power. The former expresses itself in an urge for physical activity, while the latter will be usually seen in creativity and an urge to learn new things.

The Power of Thinking

The power of thinking is the capacity to process sense-impressions in order to formulate ideas.

The Power to experience Pleasure and Pain

Pleasure and pain also can be regarded as powers. No sentient being would survive without a capacity to feel pain when something threatens the body, or pleasure when something proves beneficial to the body. This does not just function on a sensual level, because, human beings evolve. Human beings are not just sensory beings but also possess a mental life. Hence will pleasure and pain in evolving beings more and more often arise through contact with mind objects also, teaching the individual what to avoid even in the long run.

The Powers of Goodness and Evilness

Good-mindedness and evilness, are on the other hand capacities or powers which are entirely mental. To be either good or evil is an acquired capacity of the mind. Thus will a capacity for goodness usually manifest as compassion, sympathetic joy, helpfulness and so on.

While on the reverse side, evilness or 'bad mindedness' will manifest as deliberate cruelty, sadism, wicked mindedness, evil craftiness and similar things. These are capacities which are acquired and gradually develop through paying attention to life in an unskillful manner.

The Power of Balance

The Power of Balance is the mind's capacity to maintain equilibrium or to produce balance.

The Power of Inspiration

The Power of inspiration, more often termed as faith, is the capacity of consciousness to become connected with and responsive to some higher idea or ideal.

The Power of effort, is the capacity bring up energy for the purpose of surmounting obstacles.

The Faculty of Clarity (Sati)

Customarily translated as mindfulness, it is the capacity to gain clarity of mind by intelligently paying attention to what is present (body, feelings, mind) or by a certain Dhamma-reflection (four noble truth, factors of enlightenment,...)

The Power of Samādhi (unity of mind)

Samādhi is the capacity to bring together and harmonise, body and mind.

The Power of Wisdom

Wisdom is the capacity to find or create meaning and of relating particular things to some bigger picture.

These previous 5 are usually referred to as the 5 spiritual faculties (here I call them powers for reasons given above). Because they have some more outstanding role in Buddhist practice, they will be elaborated more specifically further downwards.

....

Then we have at last, a set of 3 powers, which may be referred to as the powers of gnosis, or the powers of higher knowledge.

The Power to Know the Unknown

Of these, the first is a power which "can know the unknown". That is, a power which can come to know things purely by direct intuition, independent from the senses, or from any outside sources of knowledge. This power is, in fact, the first fruit of the path of enlightenment, and acquiring it is synonymous with reaching the stage of the stream enterer (Sōtapanna).

The Power of Knowledge

As the stream enterer attains samādhi more frequently, and utilises it for acquiring wisdom and direct knowledge, he gradually develops an ever-growing power of knowledge[§§]. This enables him to pass perfect judgment in regards to whatever things he has seen or realised..

The Power of One who possesses Higher Knowledge

Finally, this power of knowledge, will enable its possessor not only to pass judgment in regards to life, kamma, or whatever has been seen with direct wisdom, but it will actually enable him to perceive life itself and the world around him in an entirely new way. For example when a person acquired intuition in regards to the law of Kamma, he will slowly start to perceive certain relations between actions and their result. Thus he will more and more come to live in a spiritual world full of meaning.

.....

Along the line of mental processing, the powers of sensing, as well as the pleasure and the pain faculty will be the main causal conditions for ordinary human beings, through the action or stimulation of which new mental processes are getting generated.

For further evolved human beings, it will be more and more the spiritual powers of inspiration, inner strength, clarity of mind (mindfulness), samādhi (collectedness of mind) and wisdom, that are generating new mental processes from within.

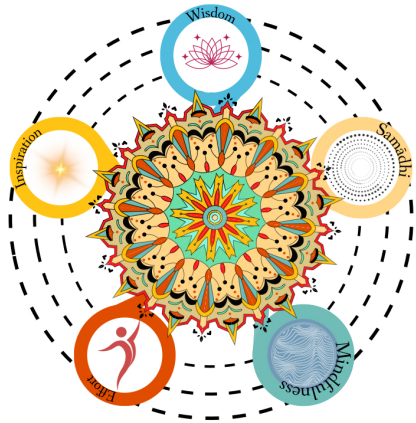
[§§] *Regarding knowledge it is especially important to realise, that if there is entirely no correspondence between knowledge acquired and life experiences, knowledge will not be regarded as a power at all, but rather, as it is in fact only stored up impressions, belongs under the 'object-governance' condition (treated hereafter).*

Only when these are developed, will the higher powers of searching for higher truth and the power of knowledge become the main causes for the arising of mental processes.

This whole book may be regarded as having as one of its central purposes, to aid the development of especially the higher powers.

For a practical example related to this condition, one may read the two examples on 'Development of Spiritual Capabilities' in the last part of the book.

THE FIVE SPIRITUAL POWERS



As these 5 spiritual powers fulfill a quite prominent role in Buddhist practice, we may consider them in a more elaborate manner after this simple definition list.

Every person who, through proficiency in some skill, rises above his fellow human beings, does so by cultivating a dynamic interaction of the above mentioned five spiritual pow-

ers. But, although it might be easy enough to understand them intellectually, it is usually not such an easy task to deliberately cultivate them.

So here I want to give some clues about how to grasp what is needed to cultivate them in meditation.

The Four Elements

As a good starting point, these five powers may be grasped through certain qualities they have in common with the four primary elements. Thus we can perceive inspiration (saddhā), as 'the light of inspiration', as having a relation to the fire element. Vīrya, vigour, due to its association with energy, may also be understood to posses certain qualities of the fire element, but it too has the moving quality of the wind element. Clarity (sati), as it reflects what is present, has this distinguishing quality in common with the water element. Samādhi in the sense of unity of body and mind, will be easily recognisable as the stabilising element, thus being properly understood as relating to the earth element. While wisdom, paññā, is often perceived as 'the voice of wisdom' and thus possess certain characteristics common with the air element, the subtlest of elements.

The Body

But these five powers can also be correlated to certain parts of the body, which will equally make it easier to recognise them from early on. Thus we may see, that although inspiration may come from without, it lights up/ gives its light to the heart within. Vigour on the other hand may be perceived to reside in the solar plexus area, the central area from which digested food gives energy to the whole of the body. Clarity arises within that part of the brain, where the senses, so to say, merge together. Samādhi, relates to the nervous system as a whole, but has as its focal area the spine. While the voice of wisdom will be perceived to arise first in the larger outer part of the brain (the neo-cortex).

Then, when we have thus comprehended these powers through certain characteristics they project into matter, we may slowly learn to perceive them as mental things proper. For that, we will look for what mental functions they exert. Thus, inspiration 'lights up' the mind. It is basically an uplifting sense-perception or idea, which 'comes in' (in-spires), either through any of the 5 senses, or which arises directly from the stream of bhavanga (life-continuum), entering into the space of the mind. Vigour energises certain bodily and mental processes. Thus, it can relate either to the vibrating bhavanga, or to any part of the active mental process. Clarity, 'clears' both the body (especially the brain) and the mind. And thus relates to all the active parts of the mental process. That is, sense-door adverting till memorisation (tadārammaṇa). Samādhi harmonises body and mind. Which makes it foremost an aspect of the arrested bhavanga. While wisdom directs their activities. That is, it processes various related impressions, evolves ideas about them and based on that often initiates action by the power of intent.

But then, then, do these five also have their counterparts or antagonists. And it is precisely for the removing of these that they are most needed. Any truly creative act usually starts with the battle between these spiritual powers and their five antagonists.

Ordinary life is naturally inclining towards matter and not towards heaven or the higher things of life. Thus do certain hindrances (we have mentioned them in the first part of the book) arise precisely as a reaction to a life which is not ideal. And a turning towards the more ideal things, naturally makes it unavoidable to deal with these.

Principally will all the five hindrances only be kept at bay for a prolonged period of time through a continuous, dynamic action of all the 5 spiritual powers. But for the purpose of being better prepared for unclear situations, which might

demand quick decision making, one may look which hindrance is best removed by precisely which spiritual power. Thus, is slothfulness and laziness usually best removed by inspiration and vigour. Sense-desire and ill-will may also be removed by these, but clarity of mind will usually be the first right antidote. Restlessness evidently is the precise antagonist (or counterpart) to samādhi. Thus the one will best remove the other. While doubt may most naturally be removed by wisdom.

When this battle of removing the unwholesome and asserting the wholesome then becomes continuous, there will be no more consideration as,...'I stand', 'I walk', 'I sit'. There will be only, clarity noticing the situation, wisdom deciding upon a way of improvement, effort acting upon the command of the voice of wisdom, until some amount of samādhi is attained. Then again clarity will notice the depth and general condition of the samādhi, wisdom will judge how to improve it, effort will follow. Until the inspiration for the struggle fades, or the material to work upon has diminished below a point of workability.

Nibbāna

The cause of this struggle really is the strong desire to know the higher things (that is the knowledge of the power to know things unknown) and it is this which will gradually develop into an understanding of the way to attain true knowledge for oneself. This in turn is the requisite condition for liberation and the attainment of Nibbāna.

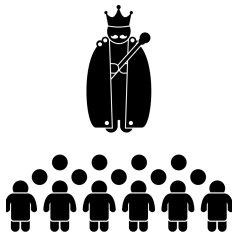


Practice Key

Try to notice as many of the faculties/ powers mentioned above in your own experience of yourself. Then single out especially the spiritual faculties and try to perceive 3 instances (with each) where you use them in your spiritual practice.

CONDITION OF RULING PRINCIPLES

(Adhipati Paccaya)



Adhipati paccaya, the condition of ruling principles, describes the various principles by which a person may be governed. Traditionally, there are five: a person may be ruled purely by external factors, or by specific internal factors such as Will, Exertion, Investigation, or Thought/Emotions.

Governing or ruling, due to its connotation of stability, firmness and general worldliness, may be thought of as being for the most part a condition related to the earth element. But the means of governing will be, either, on the 'bad end' the fierceness of the fire element; the pleasure giving nature of the water element, as a middle position, or the subtle nature of the air element at the higher end. The last may in concrete terms for example mean, the governing through education.

But here we are for the most part concerned with conditions on an individual scale. Thus, there are five ruling principles, by which a person can be ruled.

Ārammaṇa-Adhipati

Most people are sensuous people. Which means the consciousness of the majority of people is for the most part governed by sense-impressions and 'unfelt' ideas. Hence

this condition may be said to be the defining ruling condition of the common person.



The condition of consciousness being in synchronicity with internal factors is called "Sahajāta-adhipati" (Synchronous governance). This is divided into four:



Chanda-Adhipati

First there is the person who is full of willpower. Whatever goal he sets before himself, he is determined to follow through with it till the end. Thus his consciousness functions in alignment (synchronicity) with his will. This may be thought of as being like the mind of a king, that of a magician, or in modern times the manager type of person.

Vīriya- Adhipati

Then there is the person of much inner strength, vigour and exertion. Such is the heroic type of person, as is often found

in sportsmen. It is basically the mind of the person who is defined by action and activity. His consciousness too is not merely ruled by outer objects, but by his personal sense of heroism.

Citta-Adhipati

Further there are also persons which are full of devotion, emotionality and creativity. Their consciousness is usually governed by their 'feeling mind' and a desire to be creative, no matter how or whatever the object may be.

Vīmaṁsā-Adhipati

At last, there is the person governed by the search for knowledge. This kind is the ruling condition of the intellectual or scientific type of person.

Each of these types can also be understood in relation to the four elements, as well as physiologically, mentally, and in matters of certain ideas which he is likely to hold.

The Elements

First the elements. Each of these adhipatis can be attributed to one of the four elements, and a person seeking to develop one specific of these mental powers might be well advised to meditate on the element related to it. Thus, may a person seeking to strengthen his power of will, meditate on the element of earth, with its characteristics of firmness and immovableness. A person seeking to develop more creativity may be well advised to pay attention to the element of water with its characteristics of flowing or liquidity, its capacity of mirroring and binding and its general association with depth of feeling. A person seeking to make heroism his path, would be well advised to meditate on the fire element, with its characteristic of energy. While the person of scientific bend might emphasise the wind element with its qualities of swift-

ly moving over things without changing their characteristics. The first condition (of external governance) would also be attributed to the earth element, but as there the element stands outside the person, its attribution will be less important for our consideration.

Relation to Physiology

Similar to the more abstract relationship between the elements and these types, we can also identify a clear physiological connection for each kind.

Therein will the person of dominating will be physiologically characterised by a strong solar plexus, usually coupled with a strong, well working brain. The effort type of person on the other hand, will have as his predominantly working body parts his limbs and solar plexus. The primarily creative person is physiologically distinguished by a well working cooperation between his senses and his heart. And the person of scientific character is primarily distinguished by his brain. While the person who is ruled only from outside is physiologically distinguished by living mostly in his senses.

And as with the elements, so here too can the knowledge be used to counteract imbalances.

So might the too wilful person at times be well advised to more often pay attention to his heart. A suggestion which might equally apply to the scientifically inclined person. There perhaps together with an equally more balanced use of limbs and solar plexus. Which might help him to turn his ideas into practical inventions. The person who is distinguished by his effort, often could profit from greater depth of heart and more frequent use of his brain. While the creative person, if he becomes too dreamy, might need to ground himself by giving more attention to his solar plexus

area, as well as perhaps pay attention again more often to the things of the senses.

The Mental Process

Now that we have examined the physiological and elemental aspects, let us explore how the Adhipatis function within the mental process. For instance, in the case of the object governance condition, an outer object produces some strong impression on the mind. However, here the mind only receives the object, but does not further process it. This will result in the impression entering the life-continuum, from which it will govern the inner activity of the mind. Which, in turn, will usually be followed by activities of the body.

In contrast, the governing condition of the Will operates quite differently. For the Will to become a governing condition, many kamma-generating mental processes must arise. These must then be followed by further processes that support that type of kamma. And once the kammic seed begins to take root, the Will may determine the direction of life and even obstruct or destroy both sense-impressions and resultant mind-states from the past.

In the Vīriya type of person or condition will the primary mental activity be marked by having far more vibrating bhavanga mind conditions arise. These will arise from the kammical seed of a set goal, but, under this condition, are comparatively less adjusted through conscious processing.

The mental processing of the Citta Adhipati condition, in turn, is characterised by more adjustment between the resultant vibrating mental activity (the life-continuum) and active conscious activity. Such an individual will often, at least temporarily, modify their goal to fit their present mental state.

While the Vīmaṁsā or Truth searching type or condition is marked by much active thought activity with comparatively little decision making, and followed by equally little activity.

It has as its main agenda the finding of truths and thus most mental activity will be directed to that end.

Relation to Ideas

Furthermore, these different Adhipati types not only affect a persons mental processes but also influence the specific ideas they are drawn to.

So is the person who is for the most part, moved only by external things, in as much he possess any conscious views whatsoever, likely to think, that there is no meaning in this world. That there is nothing worth striving for. That only matter is real. And that upon death, all will come to an end anyway.

Not so for the person ruled by his own will. The person of strong will power, will believe that there are things worth striving for. He will believe that life does have meaning, even if the meaning of life is something which depends upon each individuals will. And he typically is likely to believe that a leader is the most superior type of person.

The heroic type of person again will be different. His mind is likely to revolve around an idea that death is no problem for one following a worthy cause. And that a person's virtue will best shine forth by showing skill in battle.

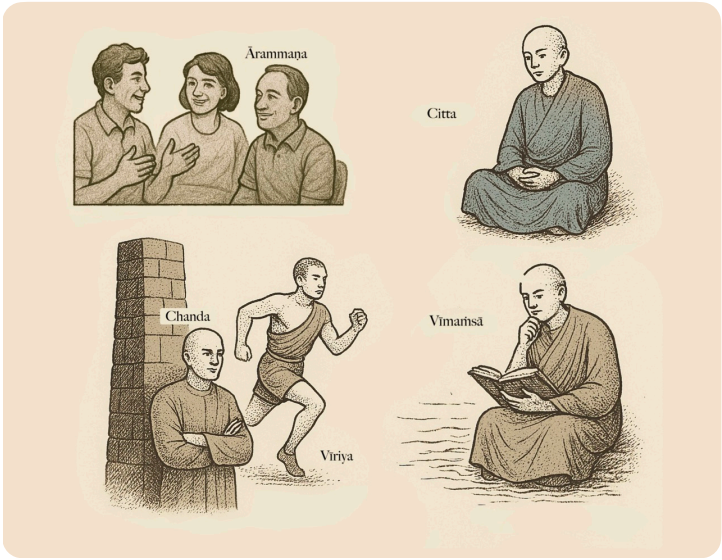
The person who makes the mind with its various faculties his main governing principle, is likely to cherish ideas about creativity being a divine faculty, and as such, the highest expression of the human mind. Or similar ideas.

While at last, the scientifically inclined person, as he is focused on realising ultimate truth, will in the first instance believe that it is possible to gain insights into the workings of the cosmos and the nature of existence, as well as perhaps that that is the most worthy cause to pursue for a human being.

Often people might think themselves to be a mixture of all, or some of them, but still, these Adhipatis can be distinguished as distinct types of people.

...

In religious life these will take on their own nuance. Therein the person of strong will power is likely to incline to either become a teacher or to aim for higher human powers. He wants to exercise his willpower. The vīriya type might have a strong tendency to asceticism or else will follow the path of devotional activity. The citta-adhipati type of person will incline to devotion through prayer, or to the playing around with various meditations. While the vīmaṁsā type will be mostly drawn to scholasticism and to analytical meditation. The ārammaṇa-adhipati person too can be found in religious life in the further sense of it, but he will be primarily defined by imitating his surroundings.



Nibbāna

Finally, let us consider Nibbāna. Of course, a capacity for all the four inner governing conditions will be necessary to some extent for attaining liberation from the world. Liberation is not an option for one entirely lacking in will, effort, mental pliancy, or wisdom.

A strong will is required to continuously lead the mind away from the world and point it in the right direction. Effort naturally follows from that will, serving as the fuel that propels one further into the good and away from the bad. Mental pliancy allows, despite a definite goal and plan, for an appropriate, flexible response to ever-changing situations. While investigation and wisdom, as the governing condition of insight, ensure that the path is illuminated, preventing the other factors from proceeding blindly.

Nevertheless, while all of these are necessary, being particularly strong in one or two can often compensate for a relative lack in the others.



Practice Key

Try these experiments one by one, each after you finished the other. Choose one of the 4 “inner adhipatis” or start with will (chanda) as the first: Choose a goal for yourself that you really would like to attain (start with something small) and see to it that you attain it mostly through the power of your will (for example do some physical exercise that you think is good for you, but that is difficult for you to do and push through it even if it is painful).

2nd: Then do something that you don’t necessarily have much motivation for your own sake, but where through good effort you accomplish something, even though you might be quite indifferent about the specific outcome.

3rd: Choose a goal that you are not likely to accomplish merely through either will power, or through excessive effort, but where you have to think creatively and intuitively to accomplish the goal (for example making friendship with a certain person you respect).

4th: Choose a goal that really requires your reasoning capabilities and think yourself through to the desired end (perhaps find a mathematical problem that is challenging but possible for your level).

CONDITION OF MEDITATION

(Jhāna Paccaya)



Meditation, is a condition wherein the mind seeks an escape from matter.

The Four Elements

Meditation is about finding the middle path. And this applies also to our familiar consideration of the four elements. Each of the four elements has its own distinctive qualities, some of which are sought to be overcome through meditation, while other qualities are deliberately pursued.

Starting with a consideration of the earth element, the first thing we may find, is, that in meditation we are trying to overcome, or else avoid, all forms of coarseness. But, we do want something of the earth, and that are the qualities of stability and distinctness.

With the element of water we have a similar dynamic. Here we want to avoid especially the qualities of diluteness and liquidity; while we are at the same time after the experiences of depth and clarity.

The element of fire follows the same pattern. There, what we do not want in meditation, is any excess of heat, or energy of an excessive fiery kind, while the main fire-quality we do hope for, is the quality of brightness.

Lastly, with the element of air, we endeavour to balance stagnation, without creating an excess of kinetic energy. That is we do want to avoid an excessive inner drive to move. Hence, the main airy qualities that we are after, are subtlety, purity and non-stagnation.

The Body

Further in our scheme, we always had as a second consideration of the Paṭṭhāna, various examinations of the nature of the body. And following these considerations, we find, that first of all, meditation builds up on a foundation of good health.

Now, good health in our scheme means, the experience of the life-element, or an increase in the life-element. This in turn has one major cause: a wise driving of the body, or a wise usage of the body. Yet, in order to wisely drive the body, or in order to wisely use the body, a certain amount of understanding of the physiological processes of the body will be quite necessary. Because this is what brings the mind's awareness to the body. Further, will then this, first initial and, further on, sustained awareness on the bodily processes actually many times constitute, what are called the first two Jhāna factors. Therein will the closer connection between the body and the mind, be precisely the requisite condition for the factor of sustainment and all the wholesome factors to follow.

The Mind

The mental factors that a meditator seeks to develop, are those mental factors categorised as wholesome, as listed in the part on 'Emotions' in the beginning of this book. Thus, a meditator should keep in mind, that one of the goals of meditation is to cultivate wholesome mental states such as:

> *Calmness of mind (and body) (that is, what generally is referred to as peace), malleableness of body and mind,*

collectedness, proficiency, wisdom, goodwill (desire to do good), love, compassion, and/or similar beneficent mind states.

These are usually established already in germ form by the practice of virtue and are here then further developed.

But the Abhidhamma does also recognise an unwholesome Jhāna. That is, a Jhāna with a 'bad mind' (domanassa). This will usually only be cultivated by those on the dark path (or those bending in that direction). For even many acts of black magic will have a certain kind of Jhāna as their base.

To attain whatever Jhāna, what was before merely an unwanted emotion, will now be considered as a defilement, a hindrance, a flood or a bond.

Objects of Meditation

The objects or ideas a meditator pays attention to in order to achieve meditative states of mind, will vary according to temperament. And once some success is secured, the object used as an anchoring (and as a counterbalance to arising obstacles) in the preliminary stages of meditation is usually, for the most part, let go of, while wholesome mental factors as have been mentioned before, together with various nimittas (meditation signs) will be the main support for the mind.[25]

Consciousness

Seen from the point of view of mental processing, meditation, or Jhāna, is, although basing itself on wholesome resultants, a condition of continuous wholesome mental activity. An activity which is involved with, or aware of, things subtler than sensory or material things, often stabilised by thoughts of a grander nature than common in the sense-sphere world.[26] Thus the mind is usually taking as a support an idea that is counterbalancing a certain unwholesome kamma. Ex-

amples of which will be the contemplation of unattractiveness, for a person with a kammical condition of much greed, the contemplation of light for a person who generally lacks brightness, or the contemplation of the qualities of a saint or Arahant to counterbalance all forms of worldliness. And conceptualising thus, an idea forms regarding a 'Right' as distinguished from a 'Wrong' in regards to the proper way of considering.

Traditionally the Jhānas are distinguished into Rūpa- and Arūpa Jhānas, depending on whether the mind is primarily involved with the fine-material element (again subdivided into grades of varying refinement) or with cosmic perceptions and ideas, of which the 4 handed down in the tradition refer specifically to ideas of Indian cosmology.***

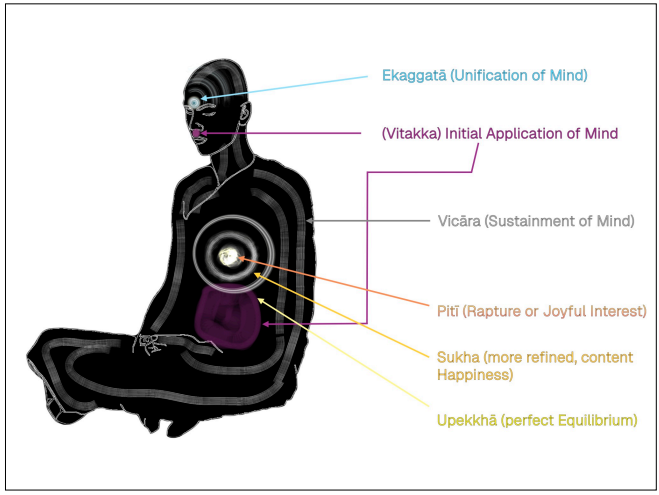
Cosmological, the first 4 Jhānas are related to the fine-material realm (rūpa-loka), in which are said to abide those gods, which, through their purity have transcended sensuality (at least as long they remain in that realm). While the remaining 4 (the 4 Arūpa Jhānas) relate to the immaterial sphere, wherein the mind is capable of functioning entirely without any kind of material support of inner or outer visual perception (at least beyond the second arūpa Jhāna), contemplating purely abstract ideas.

The usual sequence of the factors of Jhāna will be, application, sustainment, interest or joy, happiness and one-pointedness. The initial effort put forth to attain concentration, therein is called application of consciousness (vitakka). This is the first Jhāna factor. If some sign (nimitta) arises, indicating that some amount of concentration is attained, and the mind can attune to this sign of concentration for some time, it is called sustainment of consciousness (vicāra), the second

*** *In modern days, diligent scientists like for example the well known physicist Stephen Hawking, will be comprehensible examples of persons attaining arūpa jhānas following western cosmology.*

Jhāna factor‡‡‡. If the mind, being attuned to this inner experience, becomes interested or filled with enthusiasm, it is called joy (pīti). If the mind, being attuned to the experience and enthusiastic about it, becomes happy, it is happiness or sukha.‡‡ And if, based on this balance, the mind becomes perfectly collected, it is called unification of mind (ekaggatā - often translated as one-pointedness).✣

The first Jhāna will be marked by the repeated breaking of the experience, followed by the repeated application of consciousness. But gradually, the mind learns to sustain the experience for longer, slowly perfecting it by giving emphasis to the more desirable qualities in it.



‡‡‡ *Vitakka and vicāra according to my understanding have a dual aspect: Vitakka means application on the side of consciousness, but thinking on the side of mind. While vicāra means sustainment on the side of consciousness, but pondering or sustained thought on the side of mind. But in the context of the Jhāna factors it is always the condition of consciousness that is concerned.*

‡‡ *Pitī and Sukha cease in the 4th Jhāna, where they are transcended by Upekkhā.*

✣ *Ekaggatā is not a point in or on the body, but rather means unification of mind*

Nibbāna

Finally, to conclude this examination, let us understand the relation between meditation and Nibbāna. If the establishment of the roots was the first step towards Nibbāna, meditation is the second. Meditation purifies consciousness, and this inner purity is essential for gaining knowledge and vision of liberation. This purified consciousness allows insight into the path to Nibbāna, making meditation not only a practice of mental refinement but also a direct step towards liberation.

Note: For a description of how the process of Jhāna may look like, you may read 'The Foundations of Jhāna' in the last part of the book.

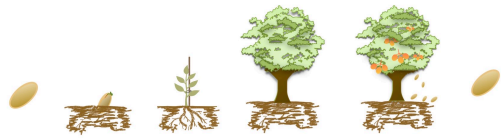


Practice Key

Try to notice times, either in meditation or outside meditation (perhaps during a walk in nature, etc.), where your mind became elevated enough that for that time you transcended worldly concerns and sense-sphere related thinking.

CONDITION OF INTENTIONAL ACTS AND THEIR RESULTS

(Kamma Paccaya, Vipāka Paccaya)



Kamma as a Paṭṭhāna condition, refers to the condition wherein actions, but more specifically mental acts of will or intention are acting as a cause to produce some particular result (mental or material) in the future.

Whereas the condition of Vipāka refers to the result of past actions and intentions, either in the form of mental or material phenomena. Thus the two conditions are cause and effect.

The Four Elements

For gaining at first a most simple comprehension of the condition of Kamma, we might again consider what it means in terms of the four elements. Thus, represents the element of air both the mind and direction (intention). And in this instance, for understandings sake, we may try to conceive of the element of air entering the element of earth (vipāka). As this moves the earth, the two generate the power of fire. The power of fire is the power of producing lasting effects (thus producing kamma). However, this process of producing effects, often leaves the earth element dried out. Hence, wherever possible, it seeks to draw in water (symbolising the search for pleasure), which eventually will bind the mixture further to the earth.

Body, Mind, and Consciousness

Then we again try to go deeper in our understanding, by thinking in matters of bodily and mental processes. The physical body is produced by 4 causes (or one might also say the result thereof). That is, Mother and Father*, Nutriment, the Consciousness that is arising at the moment of rebirth (rebirth linking)† (or shortly thereafter when the being to be born agrees to the new existence), and Kamma, that is a previous intention or desire related to sense-sphere existence.

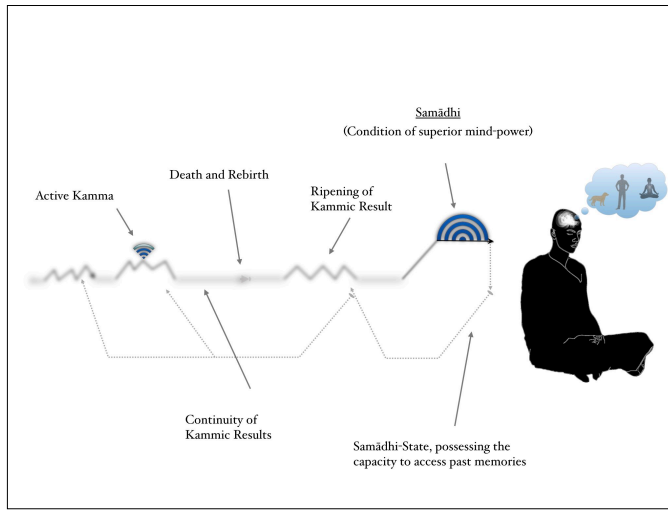
Following that, the being made up of body, mind and consciousness, creates Kamma in four ways. That is, in the course of its life, it acquires habits, which are habitual kamma (or repeatedly the same conditions of consciousness), off and on it develops strong Kamma through strong intentions confirmed by actions, many times it develops kamma merely as a response to sense-impressions, and it at times too develops Kamma purely as a result of some random thought. These Kammas once initiated perpetually become modified by new Kammas that follow

Any such Kamma might be motivated by a positive or wholesome thought (or idea/concept), such as a thought of kindness or of wisdom, or by a negative one, such as a thought of hatred or greed or stupidity. The result in each case will be, that consciousness in the future will more easily follow the trail of such thought, while it will follow thoughts of the opposite nature with greater difficulty.

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* *These are within the Abhidhamma system simply treated as nature-born matter -as all matter that is entirely disconnected from body and mind of the particular person considered*

† *The first conscious moment after conception*



But how does this law of kamma work in detail?

For a Buddhist practitioner, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the law of Kamma, is one of the essential things to aim at. So here I will insert some more elaborate elucidation of the workings of this very fundamental law, along the line of Abhidhamma.

Suppose, for example a skilled meditator, attains samādhi, and, with his mind, picks up a certain Kamma related to his spiritual path. Presumably, being a good meditator, many times in the past he has been a monk, a priest, shaman, or scholar or something of that sort. Perhaps in the first place initiated through the sight of some such person of knowledge. Then, in many further lives, he off and on gathers Kammical seeds (generating supportive Kamma) related to that initial Kamma. Which means, that after Kamma generating thoughts related to this particular Kamma, a binding or registering consciousness (tadārammaṇa) arises, which binds those new types of Kamma to the stock of related previous Kamma.

In some lives, that Kammical seed finds some opportunity to grow within an introspective consciousness (technically

called mind-door adverting), and gets fed by a further desire for growth (Pali: Javana - a thought, in this case accompanied by a wholesome desire)‡.

That Kammical seed sprouting thus in consciousness, occasionally grows into speech and actions. Those verbal and physical actions in turn create circumstances and opportunities for further growth of that Kamma. Which in some lives means, that that person will take on the mode of life of a monk, or priest, or scholar.

But then, as is the nature of the physical world, this manifestation has to yield itself to the laws of the physical world and in due time decay and perish. However, in accordance with certain laws governing the nature of the mind, at the near death moment of the body, there will arise certain mind states, (depending on the quality of the faculties at that time), which will initiate — based on certain fundamental tendencies — the continuation of certain kammical seeds in a future body.

Once the future physical body is taken on, certain tendencies of a more fundamental kind will agree to the new existence (in Pali: bhava-nikkhantika-lobha). And thus, in the initial period of the new existence, usually only the more fundamental kammical seeds will have a chance of growth while many new kammical seeds are getting generated through responses made to impressions coming from the physical senses. Thus, there may come lives in which kammical seeds related to phases of further development will have no chances of growth due to a persons having to cope too continuously with impressions coming through the sphere of the senses.

Then again, there may come lives in which a person will be able to more frequently raise himself above sensory conditions. Thus good kammical seeds related to the higher facul-

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‡ *Kamma is the seed, consciousness is the field, desire for more is the moisture*

ties (such as the faculty of faith, of spiritual or heroic exertion, of mindfulness and reflection, samādhi [inner unification] and the wisdom faculty) are getting generated and those from the past are getting supported and nurtured.

If these attain to a more permanent condition, becoming part of a persons character, and remaining so until the time of approaching death, that persons consciousness after death, still will move back into latency (life-continuum of the past) as happens during life in deep dreamless sleep. Yet, upon becoming manifest again, may not become manifest in a physical body. Because the person's identification has already shifted from a self-perception of a sense-sphere being with a physical body, towards a more lofty type of being that rather finds self-expression through spiritual exertion, reflection and higher intellection (that is, the concepts surrounding the development of those faculties have become the main concepts that the organism responded towards). Thus, that person may find himself reborn in a fine-material body, and upon recovering the senses, may find himself surrounded by surroundings of equally finer matter.

On the reverse side, there may come about a condition, wherein a person is entirely unsuccessful in processing his sensory experiences, and where pain, anguish and confusion become so predominant a factor in a persons life, that he can not get ahead of them. When that condition becomes so continuous a condition, that it becomes rooted in the personality (root-condition) (...taken in (Pali: tadārammaṇa) as the default state, wherein the higher faculties cease to develop obstructive kamma towards those unwholesome impressions coming from within), he may be said to slope downwards towards lower forms of existence. When such person dies, he may thereafter arise as a rather senseless being, being entirely self absorbed in its own suffering.

Because it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to do any new (especially wholesome) kamma in those spheres, it will generally be quite difficult to rise out of the lower realms into higher forms of existence again. Generally this might

only happen, when the material to which such a being is bound, itself becomes unstable.



As for the animal life — generally a person who is reasonably functional in ordinary society, will not easily slope backwards into animal life. However, this might be different for persons who grow up and live in very primitive conditions, and with very little human establishment. There, a greater possibility of falling downward again into animal life is present, as such type of person has not yet attained a very firm self-identity as a human being.

An animal has very little intellection (active, kamma producing mental processes). That is why very little progress happens in an animals life. It moves mostly by impulse (kammical resultant) and has very little reason for-or power to modify or curb those kammical impulses arising from within. Usually only strong shock experiences (like when seeing some animal that is part of the herd being brutally killed by some predator animal), will produce greater amounts of intellection, capable of modifying the inner organisation of that ani-

mal and hence change the direction of his kamma. It is usually only when coming into contact with species of a higher order, that learning becomes accelerated and moves in a higher direction. Such is the case for example when a dog develops admiration for his owner, distinctly understanding the superiority of the latter.

Nibbāna

Taking a turn again upwards, let us conclude by examining how Kamma and its result relate to Nibbāna.

As mentioned in the first part of this book, Kamma manifests in four ways: generation, support, obstruction, and destruction. On the path toward Nibbāna, the goal is to transform these Kammic activities in a way that leads to the cessation of all personal Kamma-making. Hence, firstly in regards to generation: Even for enlightenment generating Kamma is essential. However on the path to Nibbāna all new Kamma making should be functional. Which means deliberate creation of wholesome Kamma should aim solely at the cessation of personal Kamma. Each Kammic act should be performed with the dedication to uproot all causes that bind us to the cycle of rebirth (Samsāra).

Secondly, supporting our wholesome Kamma is critical in the early stages of our practice, as this keeps at bay unwholesome tendencies. But as we progress, supporting shifts to supporting only 'functional' Kamma, which we dedicate to our spiritual purification.

Thirdly, obstructing unwholesome Kamma prevents the fruits of negative actions from ripening. Through mindfulness and intentional cultivation of wholesome states, we can prevent unwholesome Kamma from taking root in the present mind.

Fourthly, destroying Kamma means eradicating all Kammic formations that conflict with our level of realisation, especially as we traverse the four stages of enlightenment.



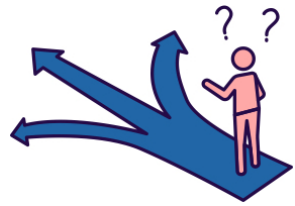
Practice Key

Try to notice 3 instances in your life where you tried to shape your future by the force of your will.

Then try to notice 3 instances in your life where what you experience seems to have a direct relation to choices you made in the past.

CONDITION OF PATHS

(Magga Paccaya)



When conscious processing is pointing in a definite direction, in that the mind's choices become more consistent,* consciousness gets established on a certain path.

Yet, this Path-condition refers not only to paths brought about through choice, but to any path, brought about through choice or brought about through circumstances, spiritual or worldly, good or evil.

The Four Elements

In the context of the four elements, paths may be divided into paths of earth, paths of fire, and paths of air. Paths of earth are the paths of those who are stable in their human life, usually not deviating from the common course most humans are engaged in. Paths of fire are the paths of those who incline towards destruction and chaos. While the paths of air, are the paths of those who incline to lofty, that is spiritual things.

But then, what is a path itself in terms of the four elements? It is a moving forward, which makes it an aspect of the wind element; and it is a moving forward along a definite line, the aspect of definiteness being an aspect of the earth element.

** Or expressed differently: Certain established resultant Kammas are getting repeatedly supported by new intentions of a similar kind.*

The Body

Then is our own body an intricate machinery which can teach us much about the different paths of life. Because within the body there are also pathways of life. If nutrient rich blood (that is, blood which is alive,) travels the right pathway upwards, and does not neglect to remain around the heart† until it has been well purified, then, if it enters our body's heaven, the brain, the devas will rule over our life. That is, our consciousness will become divine. If on the other hand, nutrient rich blood enters the brain un-purified, then the asuras (demons) will start to become the ruling agents of our life. That is, our consciousness will become perverted and demonic. Conversely, if nutrient-rich blood follows the body's pathways in an imperfect manner and gets stuck only in the senses, consciousness will find itself only in a human, if not an animal-like condition. The gravest condition however will occur when nutrient-rich blood flows downwards only, away from heaven and the brain. Then our consciousness will head towards very low forms of existing, entering a ghost, if not a hell realm life.

The Mind and Consciousness

In relation to the mind, we of course also have pathways... If the mind follows only the direction or dictates of sense-impressions (i.e. it thinks along the line of sense-impressions and makes decisions in regards to them)‡, then the paths consciousness travels are quite random, or dictated by society at best. This is of course the normal condition of common human beings.

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† *actually in the liver*

‡ *Or to make things still more abhidhammic: If consciousness is only capable of sense-sphere processing.*

On the other hand side, there are human beings who choose a goal for themselves and thus, if they posses wisdom and inquiry, their path becomes equally a chosen one.

Self-chosen paths may generally be expected to be paths leading upwards. This may at least mean an aim to acquire a better condition in human life. But for those possessing knowledge, paths aiming higher than that also become available. Thus, for those who have come to know about the various heavens towering above the realm of human beings, they may aim for a rebirth in any of these, if they equally acquire an understanding of some of their characteristics and fulfill the proper conditions necessary for a rebirth in there.

As for meditators, even higher paths become accessible, such as those which would lead them to the realms of the gods of light or to the cosmic gods.§

The Path to Enlightenment and Nibbāna

Viewed entirely from the meditators perspective, on a path directed at unworldliness, the first step will ever be, wherever an opportunity arises, to work hard to free the mind from the spell of matter (making consciousness repel from the sense-sphere world). This is accomplished in another set of stages. Beginning with the systematic balancing of the elements in the body, followed by the gradual gaining of control over the various bodily functions and through that the development of greater malleability of perceived materiality. Only with an accomplishment in that, it becomes possible to work on the mind directly.

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§ *Therein, depending on whether the goal is put outwardly or inwardly, will be the nobleness or lack thereof of the quest. Because even Brahma gods, if complacent with their life and still attached to being and becoming may become negligent and again fall from their condition. Only those who have disavowed the totality of the phenomenal world will never fall again.*

When then consciousness starts to function in alignment with its chosen path, still having to work with past kamma, it will ever calculate the kammical potency of the physical and mental actions it initiates and thus becomes capable of knowing, when it is the time to develop obstructive kamma, when it is the time to develop destructive kamma, when to develop new kamma and when to develop supportive kamma towards results coming from the past. Thus, a well established path-consciousness will continuously work on and curb whatever arises within body and mind, to move in the direction of the chosen path. Working in this manner, the path through life becomes self chosen and slowly loses all randomness.

And when a beings knowledge and vision has eventually become so broad, as to be able to encompass and respond towards any outer and inner phenomenon or circumstance that life brings, its liberation will have become perfected. Then all kamma is mastered through knowledge, and the highest fruit of Nibbāna is attained.



The Three Trainings

At last, talking about paths, we should not entirely neglect the Buddhist path of training as it can be found throughout the Suttas. This is divided into specific stages, which allows a trainee to rest more closely in the here and now, temporarily loosing sight of the goal of enlightenment, in order to more effectively walk the path thereto. In the buddhists scheme of training, a trainee will first train in virtue (through repetition of virtuous actions), which will protect him or her to some degree, from coming into easy contact with persons whose goals and intentions may be un-virtuous and thus harmful to his or her path and wellbeing. When that is established (retained), that trainee will cease to emphasise outer actions and give more emphasis to inner conditions such as calmness of mind and body, or mental attitudes such as unconditional loving kindness. These will provide further protection, generally assuring more agreeable surrounding conditions and easier dealings with lives problems. Following these, as these inner conditions have been to some degree honed and integrated, the primary intention gradually will transition to the attainment of knowledge and vision, which in turn ultimately is meant to give way to the ultimate Buddhist goal — an unshakeable, permanent liberation of mind, known as Nibbāna.



Practice Key

Take 10 minutes a day for one week (/one month) and think about what path you have taken so far, and what path you would want to take. Think about where you want to be in 5/10/20 years, and where you would want to be in your next life.

Keys to the Paṭṭhāna Conditions

Each of the Paṭṭhāna conditions may be assessed by asking a certain question:

1. Correspondence (Aññamañña): What does it correspond to? /What is it analogous with?
2. Foundation (Upanissaya):What is my foundation?/What is the base upon which I try to build?
3. Interdependence (Nissaya): What is it connected with? /How to connect it?
4. Latency (Purejāta): What latent potential does it possess?
5. Manifestation(Pacchājāta):How to make it manifest?/ What will be the limitations?
6. Being (Atthi): Who am I? /How do I want to be?
7. Absence (Natthi): What is lacking?/What am I lacking?
8. Sequence (Samanantara): What is the proper sequence (e.g. for achieving my goal...)?
9. Combination (Anantara): What factors are involved?/ What is it made up of?/ How to put it together?
10. Fuel (Ahāra): What does it fuel on?
11. Synchronicity (Sahajāta): What forces do I tune into? / What is the right thing to tune into?
12. Object/Support (Ārammaṇa): What is the right object or consideration to support my mind? (e.g. in this condition)
13. Repetition (Āsevana): What can I do repeatedly? / What do I want to do repeatedly?
14. Dissolution (Vigata): Since all will come to nothing, what should I do?
15. Stability (Avigata): What is lasting?
16. Attraction (Sampayutta): What should I attract?
17. Repulsion (Vippayutta): How to resist?

18. Establishment (Hetu): How to establish virtue or character?
19. Capabilities (Indriya): What capability is needed?
20. Governance (Adhipati): What governs my life? / What governs me?
21. Meditation (Jhāna): How to meditate?
22. Volition (Kamma): What should I will?
23. Result (Vipāka): What will be the result of my will?
24. Path (Magga): Where am I going? /Where will it lead to? /What path do I want to follow?

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PART III: PAÑCA NIYĀMĀ - THE LAWS OF EXISTENCE



Five laws that move the way of things
Five laws from which all wisdom springs
Five laws, the quintessence of all
Five laws to Cosmic view us call

The law of matter is the first
Organic life proceeds by thirst
The mental law gives mind its shape
Intents through Kamma weave our fate
At last the Dhamma is the law
From which all saints their wisdom draw

"He who reached some conclusions about himself,
becomes curious about the world at large."

Having gained a foundational understanding of matter, mind, and consciousness, and seeing how these may be related to each other to form ever more complex ideas of reality and the nature of existence, as consciousness grows ever grander and more-encompassing, it may slowly come into a position to gain insight into the laws governing the entirety of phenomenal existence. In Buddhism these are called Niyāma, and are five in number.

The method of their contemplation will be precisely the same as before. As a person has gained a solid enough comprehension of various conditions that exist throughout various (in themselves) differing phenomena, he might slowly render his mind capable of comprehending unchangeable and eternal laws.

To lead these ideas really to perfection, is of course a lifetime task and probably a task which for most people takes more than a lifetime. Only a person who believes that the study and contemplation of this system can lead a person indeed to divine knowledge, will be willing to put forth the effort required to 'gain the method' of an ultimate comprehension of existence.

Note:

I ask the reader to please bear with the technicalities in the first two Niyāma, as each Niyāma forms the foundation for those that follow. The later sections of the second Niyāma should gradually become more comprehensible.

Apart from that, I would like to state that the scheme presented here explains the laws of the universe from a 'matter-first, mind-after' perspective. This should not be seen as contradicting the 'spirit-first' or 'consciousness-first' perspective of Buddhist cosmology, which the author has at least touched upon in another work (Kamma, Rebirth, and the Law of Dhamma). This approach is simply following the scheme laid out from the beginning of this book, which always starts by exploring the world that is tangible to everyone. It does not

deny the existence of hidden, immaterial — perhaps even intelligent — factors influencing the scheme from the very beginning.

Finally, the picture presented in this chapter represents no more than the author's current understanding of these topics. It is offered primarily with the intent of provoking thought in the reader.

UTU NIYĀMA



The Buddha declared, that an absolute beginning of things can not be found. Yet, in regard to the phenomenal world, whether on a grand scale or in the very tiny things, all things are understood to possess these two sides of a spectrum, one being the beginning and the other being the end. Between these two points (or poles) there will be a space, large or small, and whatever thing (or phenomena) it is, whose beginning is considered, it will undergo change until it reaches its end(ing).

The immaterial, dynamic aspect that causes change to occur in regard to a universe and in regard to the coarsest inanimate forms of matter, in Buddhism is called Utu Niyāma, the law of generation or the law of physical nature. It is the law, which governs the arising, evolution and dissolution of the physical universe.

Energy, mass, movement and cohesion,...these are the first primary qualities of matter.

As these primary qualities become balanced and begin to work in the direction of synthesis (sampayutta) rather than being repelled by each other (vippayutta), they allow for the crystallisation of concrete matter. Thus tiny particles of mat-

ter evolve. These, occasionally gather together. At first, more or less only accidentally, once in a while, and only for a short time, whereafter they disperse again, often to recombine again with other particles of matter. Thus nebulas, that is, clouds of material particles begin to appear.

But slowly, as this process of combining, dispersing and recombining of particles happens more often, more numerous, and faster; particles remain more frequently in particle-compounds (Anantara - Condition of Combination), which consequently also become more and more dense. These more dense particle-compounds then slowly will form a more liquid kind of matter, wherein the process of dispersion of these particles happens at a much slower rate, while dispersing particles will quickly find sympathetic particles to recombine with. And this process continues until denser and denser forms of matter are achieved.

Gradually, there evolves a central focus of conglomerated matter. And thus a sun gets born. This, apart from steadily growing in mass, also grows more and more in attractive force; and whatever is gained in mass through that conglomeration, is also gained in matters of force of attraction.

This central sun then delimits by virtue of its own force, a sphere of influence apart from the vast infinity of space. And, as out of the nebulous background matter, still other mass centres develop, some of these also begin to gather around the body of that central sun.

Benefitting from existing in that sphere of influence, they begin to orbit, at an orderly distance, around this focal point of their new habitat.

Living in the secure space of the sun's sphere of influence; being radiated at the beneficent energy-giving rays of that central orb of light, these smaller planetary bodies begin to undergo their own processes of transformation. Thus, they gradually develop into conditions of increasing inner refinement. And accordingly, these planets then begin to develop

their own sphere of influence, while slowly surrounding themselves with the shield of an atmosphere.

Gradually, the myriad varieties of matter that will form the surface and structure of the planets, establish themselves.

Gems and crystals, mountains and valleys, surrounded by oceans and filled with rivers, are blown at by winds, weak or strong, and on occasions get disrupted by fires from below.

Slowly matter becomes more and more refined. And more specialised forms of matter begin to evolve.

And when under the rule of this Law of Utu, material evolves, that is more light, malleable and better structured, then it starts giving way to the next Law which is higher in order.

BĪJA NIYĀMA



Bīja literally means 'seed', in the sense of 'germ of life'. Thus this law called Bīja Niyāma, is essentially the law that governs the growth of organic life, from the smallest germ to the birth and growth of higher beings.

When some small particle of matter, surrounded by a medium of water which is neither too hot, nor too cold, and neither too stagnant, nor too fast moving, is itself coming to a condition wherein earth, water, movement and temperature are so highly balanced, that they form a unified whole, capable to resist the surrounding elements*, a new variety of matter arises.

This new matter, although being able to resist the surrounding matter, exists yet entirely in dependence of it. Hence, it is continuously moved by the forces that surround it.

But slowly, as this matter adopts or imitates those movements, those movements begin to function for an increasing momentum of time more and more independently. And with that certain internal mechanisms evolve, which with time begin to function longer and longer by themselves. This be-

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* *This stability being an instance of avigata paccaya, non-disappearance or retention condition*

comes the first living matter†, that is matter, which possess a certain self-initiation.

Now, initially these internal movements will be only short lasting and then some further external impulse will be needed again; the impulse bringing with it also new material needed to maintain its stability. Yet, slowly even that becomes an acquisition of the new matter, that it acquires a capacity to use its own movement to draw in new material as its source of energy, and that also only when needed.

In a stable environment, myriad of such particles may form. And as the forces of the environment are more hostile than those particles of a like kind, being in contact with those other particles works itself out as a more preferable condition. Thus being not anymore surrounded on all sides by forces that quickly can turn into a threat, allows for further improvement of stability of all the particles connected. Slowly there arise particle groups that more and more function as a singular entity. Now energy is not just drawn in and kept in each particle, but is exchanged and moved around within the group. Thus cell colonies form and with time become the first tissue like matters.

Gradually, not only do particles attract each other, but equally so develop these tissues mutual interactions and thus relations with each other. By that slowly, ever more complex entities develop. Cells develop into cell-colonies, cell colonies into tissues, tissues into plants and plants are becoming ever more elaborate and lasting, till they reach such a stage of aliveness and complexity that entirely new faculties develop in them. Thus, certain such entities develop more complex forms of sensing material, which they with equally growing skill learn to draw in, transform into energy and assimilate into their bodily structure.

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† *The reason why I am here a using the term particle or later living particle, rather than cell, is because, this is closer to the traditional Abhidhamma designation 'kalapa'.*

Then also, with the increase in energy in each particle, the internal life (and movement) increases too. And as that life starts overflowing, when its own limit of growth is for the most part reached, it brings forth another life akin to itself. This then becomes the way, not only of individual particles, but equally so of the steadily complex growing structures.

The growth of energy and stability slowly also allows for making faster and further movements in order to seek beyond the mere immediate surrounding matter for sources of nutriment. Thus develop worms, sea-stars, the first simple insects and various other simple build animals, whose internals are often made up of hardly more than a simple digestive tract and some muscle-like structures to move.

With time, new organs form. A heart allows energy to be moved around the whole body, although some species living in water may be able to entirely rely on the tides of sea water to both move themselves as well as to move food and energy around in their body. An evolving nervous system allows for more complex movements and sense-reactions. And an evolving brain allows for better control and coordination of the senses, more complex behaviour patterns towards what is perceived by the senses, and the management of the organism as a whole. Then also other organs evolve, such as liver and lungs, which allow for a much greater refinement of the bodily energy and the transformation of more varying material into such refined energy. This more refined energy then in turn allows for even greater refinement of the bodily organs especially the brain, as well as for greater skills and capacities of the organism or entity as a whole. Thus a mechanism of mutuality assures a generally continuous forward movement in the direction of improvement. Wherein greater skill of the entity to acquire food and security assures a better working of the internal organs, which in turn allows for further improvements of its skills.

Then, as the brain becomes more elaborate, the evolving entity not only becomes better in assuring its own immediate

survival, but learns to coordinate its actions with beings of the same species, both to assure greater levels of security, as well as to easier follow its instinct of reproduction. Thus evolves another type of entity, that is, a herd, or family, or tribe.

Similar to the cells of a cell-colony or tissue, or the organs making up a body, the members of a herd, family or tribe are sharing material, exchange energy, as well as develop more specialised tasks which get divided amongst the members.

With time, most of the members of the group are becoming specialised in some particular field. So will, similar to the brain in the body or even the nucleus in a cell, some entity become established as the ruling or governing entity. Other parts will have to fulfill tasks related to supplying the whole group with nutriment. Again others will be charged with seeing to it, that the group or body is kept clean from things that endanger its continuation or well-fare.

Yet, usually in a well governed body or group, there then evolves anther type of entity, which is fulfilling a task, that in itself is quite unrelated to the physical functions of the body or group. It is an entity which has become specially charged (that is, temporarily synchronised) by something altogether outside of the group (and the groups interests). And indeed outside the whole law of organic life.‡ Their activity and function will only become clear when treating a further law later on.

Families grow into tribes, tribes grow into states, states grow into countries, and so there arise more and more complex entities out of simpler entities.

Therein too, some family or tribe is developing some specialised support, that is, some skill or technology which also is of use to the members of other groups. Thus may some

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‡ *Of course the entity referred to, is the religious person. How the charging happens I hope will become clear in the treatment of the next Niyāma.*

village or tribe, develop some way to form out of lumps of clay, a vessel which allows for a much longer storage of food, or out of some long poles of wood, some structure, which can protect the whole family or tribe from rain or wind. While some other village or tribe develops some tool for digging up eatable plant roots or some skill to knit dried grass into a mat or basket. And the two tribes seeing the benefit for each other, develop close relations, which with time, too make two or more entities slowly function as one.

Yet, while beings, or groups of beings, similar to more simple entities, may easily become attracted towards whatever supports or affirms their life and identity, they may equally easily become repelled or repelling towards what does not. Thus develop bonds and friendships, as well as enemies and animosities. And thus it also comes about, that complex or simple entities not only develop skills and technologies that support their own life, but also such as can repel what is a threat to it.

But however well even a civilisation can both support itself, as well as repel what is a threat to it, although it will survive an almost infinite amount of cells, a great many generations of people, and may see the rise and fall of many cities, its vitality will in the end equally fade and dissipate, becoming the nourishing ground for whatever comes after.

However, while civilisation advances, there comes into play more and more a yet other law.

CITTA NIYĀMA



Citta Niyāma is the law of mind. It is the law that governs the appearance and sequence in regard to mental phenomena.

Even as the coarsest and deadest of matter, contains in it the potential for life, in that, by chance it might combine with a material sympathetic with its own combination of elements, to form a combination that is capable of bringing forth life,[§] so too, wherever there is life, there is at least a latent mind (the potency of mind). That is, there will be some information on how to grow and how to reproduce.[**] This may be thought

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[§] *Just as a seed, which might be as hard as a rock, showing no sign of life, starts to become animated and sprouts when contacting the element of water, so do the elements making up a universe contain already the potential of life (in a pre-nascent condition).*

[**] *There are certain well established facts regarding dead matter, which allow for a thought-consideration regarding a mind in dead matter...in that, it is possible to charge various materials (usually either water or stones) with thought forms which they seemingly retain. This is the basis of talisman-magic, as well as 'holy' (blessed) water. The same phenomenon is also employed in the case of hypnotism, wherein thought forms are impressed on living matter. But a consistent mind as in the case of individuation is of course only possible in higher forms of life. This I will treat under the the next Law (Kamma Niyāma).*

of as constituting the first root or establishment of mind in matter.††

And as life grows in complexity, so will the mind involved with it grow in complexity.

More and more often will this mind move out of the condition of latency in order to manifest its content. And the 'lack' of life gradually becomes the 'desire' of the mind, and the 're-pelling' of life gradually becomes the 'aversion' of the mind.

Furthermore, as the lives capacity to receive impressions grows, so does the mind's capacity to receive information grow. Hence, the mind's content grows too.

As a consequence, as impressions and informations grow more and more numerous, the mind is forced to grow for it-self a yet new faculty. That is, it learns to investigate and classify those impressions or informations coming from without in order to choose amongst them, and in order to work out appropriate means for responding towards them. Which becomes the third root or establishment in matter.

Thus, the mind faculty evolves and develops. Taking its reign over matter and life. And the law of mind begins competing to attain rulership over the evolving being.

Then, as the mind's content increases, also the first primary conception of good and bad develops. Wherein 'good' will initially mean a conception of what brings pleasure, while 'bad' will be whatever brings displeasure.

And based on these concepts and this primary division of things, the mind learns to make decisions as to what actions should be initiated and which inner impulses should be initiated and which inner impulses should be restrained in order to attain the "pleasant" and avoid the "unpleasant".#

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†† *in Pali - hetu*

Generating active kamma in 4 modes as described in the beginning chapter on mind

With time, the mind starts to extend further into the past and into the future, remembering previous experiences and based on that anticipating future ones. And with that, refining its own conception of experience, slowly 'good' no longer just means 'pleasant now' but, may also mean 'unpleasant now but pleasant in the future'.

Furthermore, as the mind learns to become thus skilled in decision making, it becomes by that also skilled in organising the immediacy of the life's life. With that, more and more often it comes to be, that it receives sense-impressions (or informations) for which there will be no need to relate them to the needs of the physical life. Consequently, new ideas form for which there is no exact correspondence in the physical world.

Thus, investigating a thunderstorm[§§] under conditions where it does not appear as an immediate thread (to the life), or a large mountain unproductive of full-filling any physical needs, may evoke 'strange' feelings unfelt before...and the mind investigating it in its condition of upliftment, gives a designation to it that is much grander than the mere physical appearance.

Accordingly, the mind starts to possess mind-objects which require a special kind of feeling (or more beautiful mental factors)[***] in order to be processed. Processing no longer is meant to subserve the body or physical matter, nor does it just follow the classification of sense-impressions, but rather it arises in conjunction with or in dependence on a certain feeling of upliftment.

[§§] *As this is meant to be a writing explaining "All"...I am following here the naturalistic scheme of things, building up on the previous Niyāmas. Of course further along the line it will more often mean statues of some saint or god (for example Buddha-statues), religious symbols, inspiring personages, buildings of grand architecture, inspiring writings or meditation subjects like the breath.*

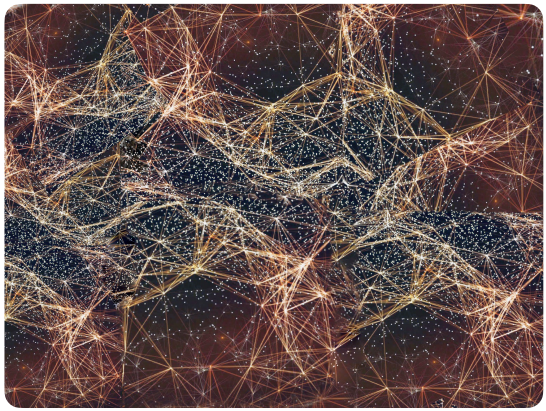
[***] *primarily Pīti and Sukha*

As a consequence, the primary division of good and bad equally takes on a different, new meaning. In that, 'Good' is no longer what serves the body or physical existence, but what brings forth (and sustains) these 'special' new feelings. While 'Bad' becomes whatever disturbs these feelings of upliftment. And the mind succeeding in reproducing (repeating) those experiences of upliftment, develops ideas of evolving complexity and makes decisions more often based on these.

Then, in consequence of learning to reside in feelings of upliftment for more prolonged periods of time, eventually the mind starts to contact and perceive its own contents. And as it thus perceives things in the world of ideas, it orders them along definite lines, the most obvious of which will be again 'right' and 'wrong', or 'good' and 'bad'.

And as the mind, based on this distinguishing of things into good or bad, is making decisions for the one or the other, it starts to come under a law yet higher in order...

KAMMA NIYĀMA



Kamma Niyāma is the law of will or intention.

Whenever the mind based on previous investigation and designation (initially of some sense-sphere phenomenon), is thinking a thought, that thought will incline in one direction or another (usually depending on how something was designated).

When that direction of thought, becomes more and more a consistent choice, a yet other faculty will evolve,...the faculty of will.

As the mind makes more consistent choices, the mind and life (viz. the life of the body), will less and less just follow only their own nature of going after pleasure and seeking for comprehension. Because, as consciousness begins to follow a definite trend of choice as to what to pay attention to and what to expel, the organism will learn to respond only to some kinds of stimulation, while the mind will start to seek to understand only that which is important for the will.

The most primitive forms of choices, will be choices directed towards certain objects (supports of mind), (which may include particular environments, or people or experiences).

Thus, the mind having willed, will be inclined to drive the organism into habitual contact with a certain object or environment, establishing a definite relation with that object*. This will almost inevitably form the main form of will for a human being in the initial phases of life.

Even in cases wherein the emotions are repelled by a particular object or person, this relation will become established, in that, the mind being inclined on something, will drive the organism into habitual contact with that object...even for the purpose of further despising it.

Then, with the progression of the life of the body, there will be actions of body and mind that are repeatedly executed, ...habitual actions, practices, occupations, or the various forms of learning. And their repeated performance will create further opportunities for their execution in the future.

So will a habit of smoking, make consciousness see opportunities both for smoking and for the gaining of cigarettes.

Training in a sport like boxing, will make consciousness see opportunities for fighting with somebody.

Having a hobby like drawing, will make consciousness see various things that could aid the imagination.

Seeking to become a religious person or training to be a preacher, will make consciousness see opportunities for preaching the religion.

Or having a habit of meditating, will make consciousness see opportunities for sitting down to calm the mind and reflect on a certain thing of interest.

Then, as the mind gains experiences, grouping them into 'good' and 'bad', and starts to make more consistent choices

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* *This relates to the condition of attraction (sampayutta)*

in the direction of 'good', or based on an conception of 'good'; the good roots, or certain virtues will become established. That is, a 'good will' becomes established. With that, the organism will be less bound to be driven to some particular objects or environment, but rather it will be in easy sympathy with anything and anyone who is/ that is symbolising the mind's considerations of good. While when the mind, distinguishing things into 'good' and 'bad', makes choices repeatedly based on the conception of 'bad', the bad roots are getting established. That is, the will becomes sinful or promiscuous, and the organism will be in easy sympathy with any environment, object or person, that are of likewise establishment.

Besides, whether the mind is developing a relation with a certain object (/environment, etc.), or is developing a habit, or reflects on the good and bad of things, ...that thought or mental condition or intendedness on things, will usually possess a certain time component to it. That is, the object, idea or habit will not just be considered in the present or in relation to the present, but will also be considered about as something of the past and something in the future.

And it is thus, that the intendedness on outer objects will highly condition the life-circumstances of the unfolding future. The habits and practices of body and mind, will have a strong influence on the opportunities that life offers. While the mind's considerations of right and wrong will establish the character of body and mind.

Then, as the body grows old, the will (mind) in many cases will more frequently seek to revoke consolidating thoughts and images from the past. Often while perceiving them, developing new intentions based on them. Thus, one such old kamma may gain new strength, becoming a desire in the mind's attempt to cling to the life, even when life is just ceas-

ing.† And as the life of the body is gone,...that desire will fasten itself onto some other material akin to its own nature. A desire, being immaterial in nature, but possessing a certain amount of force, if it's nature is of a human-world kind, as matured human bodies are usually occupied by some conscious or unconscious processes, may find as a suitable receiver only a fertilised ovum, getting drawn to such, even if the latter is at a far distance from the body that has just been left behind.‡

In the sense sphere world kamma making will be usually directed to sense-sphere objects. Consequently, a human being acquiring an understanding of the law of cause and effect, will start to make calculations as to his future good in the sense-sphere world. And an alike kamma is likely to come up at the time of approaching death.

When the mind acquires knowledge of things higher than the things of the 5 senses, with time, it starts becoming intent on them. Then, the mind more and more starts driving the inner parts of the organism into the proximity of those higher things, in that, the organism is seeked to become modified to get a feeling of precisely those higher things.

If the will succeeded in this modification of body and mind, and is able to maintain that condition even until the body's death, with the falling away of the body, the mind will seek its counterpart in loftier spheres with bodies whose native condition is subtle from the very beginning.

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† *There are four possibilities as to the kamma which will be decisive for the birth to the next life. Strong kamma, habitual kamma, kamma near the moment of death and random kamma. Strong kamma is any strong intention made during the life, or a strong will at the near death moment that deliberately decides where and/or under what circumstances the next birth shall be. Habitual kamma is the habitual inclination of the mind/will which was there for a longer period of time before the approaching death of the body. Kamma near the moment of death, is an aspiration made recently before the approaching death. And for a mind which lacks both wholesome supportive kamma and decisive will, rebirth will usually happen entirely according to random kamma (The kammical seed falling into any form of existence).*

‡ *similar to other immaterial forces as radio waves etc.*

Further still, there may be even cases, wherein the mind is able to live and move purely in ideas. In such case, at the break up of the bodily form, the mind, if powerful enough, will be drawn to spheres wherein there is no matter and only mind and ideas prevail.

In both of the above cases, will due to the much lesser resistance of the matter to the direction(s) of the mind, the working of time also be quite different from that of the sense sphere world. In that, conceptions or perceptions of time will be of a much grander nature, usually encompassing much more of past, present and future.

On the reverse side, there are also spheres of existence, which are exceedingly hostile to life. So that a kammical seed landing there, finds any life-seeking impulses sprouting from within immediately killed off. As there is only suffering prevailing in such sphere, there will be no opportunity for forming concepts, including forming a conception of time.

Usually only such kammical seeds end up here, whose inner nature itself is one of utter hostility to life.

DHAMMA NIYĀMA



As choices become more consistent and the mind develops the capacity to make intelligent kammical calculations in alignment with those choices, individuality reaches its peak. Ultimately, the mind will then seek to discover the worthiest goal to aspire towards.

Hence, it sets out to study life with the aim of acquiring knowledge of things unchanging, hoping that through this, it may come to realise life's ultimate goal and meaning.

Consequently, again the mind formulates concepts regarding the good and the bad and the right and the wrong way of proceeding. So becomes good or right, whatever seems to lead to the realisation of higher truths, while bad or wrong becomes whatever appears to lead away from such realisation. And as it starts thus, whatever appears to be an obstruction, the mind studies for the purpose of overcoming it, while whatever appears to be an aid or support on the way to the aimed-at realisation, it studies for the purpose of reproducing it or in order to be able to make use of it more efficiently.

Studying thus, the mind begins to recognise, that there is some correspondence between the inner subjective world and the outer world of objects. And following that track, it

begins to distinguish certain universal elements of experience.

First, its focus lands on matter. And there, for the first time, it begins to clearly recognise, that all matter can be reduced to four primary material qualities.

Earth being the most obvious to be recognised as matter, but water is quickly understood to be a form of matter too. Yet, upon deeper thought, the wind that blows through the world and the fire that, at times may be daily lit, becomes understood to too belong to the sphere of matter.

And, as this first truth of nature has been discovered, the mind begins to see, that this truth is not just a truth of the nature without, but equally can be experienced within. Hence it tries to classify new experiences, both in the world without and within, more often in accordance with these newly discovered truths.

Furthermore, as the mind studies those elements in nature, it notices, that these elements can exist in a condition of balance and harmony with each other, but occasionally become imbalanced and then begin to work one against the other. And perceiving the former condition in most cases as the preferable one, the mind makes experiments as to how to balance those elements more efficiently, as well as to how to counteract the many times threat-full condition of the disruption of the balance.

Accordingly, as the mind succeeds with its endeavour to balance those elements and due to that finds itself more often surrounded by conditions of balance, it becomes aware of a yet more subtle universal element, which, too seems to exist both within and without. Thus it starts recognising that there is an element of life. This is what animates matter. This is what makes the human and the squirrel as one, nay, even the human and the shrub and the stem of corn.

Conceiving thus, the mind dives deeper still to investigate what this life actually is that all living creatures seem to

share. And thus it learns to observe life as living processes. It learns that all life feeds on something. First of all, all life gets born. But then, all life eats, assimilates what it ate in order to move and to grow, and, once grown, it usually seeks to reproduce itself, to yet in the end slowly diminish in strength and gradually fall dead to the ground. These are the natural processes of life.

Yet, the mind too discerns, that there are more ideal lives, and less ideal ones, more ideal working outs of those processes and less ideal ones. And comprehending that such is the case, the mind makes still further experiments as to how to improve the natural working out of life both without and within.

As it does so, the mind begins to detect, that there is a mind involved with life. In fact, upon closer observation, it finds that there is not just one mind, but many minds.

Thus it perceives, that based upon the nature of the life-process, there exists a mind particular to that process. Within, involved with the digestive process or the organs of digestion, there exists some particular mind that concerns itself with food and nourishment only. Involved with the organs of reproduction exists another mind which is interested in all things of a sexual nature; involved with each organ of sense, there exist yet different minds, each with its particular likes and dislikes in regards to its respective sphere; while involved with the organ and the processes of the brain there exists still another mind. This one seeks to govern, or put into order all the rest.

And as the mind already realised that the world without and the world within are somewhat equal in their ways, the mind henceforth will look for, or at least believe in minds that may exist also in the processes of nature without.

These are, of course, the thunder-, the ocean-, and the rain-gods, as well as the gods of love, the gods of war, and so on, which, until the advent of the newer religions, have existed in

all cultures of the past. These are usually presided over by one who is their leader, just as the minds involved with internal processes of the body are somewhat presided over by the mind of the brain. And as our truth seeking mind awakens to these facts of nature, it realises, that although each of those minds within, or gods without, has its definite purpose, the last, that is, the ordering and governing one, is the most sublime and important one of all. Naturally that realisation then leads to giving that mind or god more attention, which will equally give it greater power also.

Now, when a ruling mind or entity gains more power to order its subjects, it will seek to not only acquire dominion over them in the small sphere of the present, but equally, tries to guide their condition towards an ordered future. Thus, gradually, that mind, taking note of the present, remembering the past, and thinking of the future, begins to realise certain facts about life. It starts witnessing instances of the great spiritual messengers of life; that is, birth, sickness, old age and death.§ And it too learns about the duality of good and evil. That latter realisation in turn, of perceiving a good that is distinct from a bad, ultimately, sometimes sooner, sometimes later then will also lead the mind to pursue the good, at least in preference of the bad. And when the mind finally does pursue the good, it finds an inner joy occasionally arising, which leads the way towards loftier feelings still. These experiences of joy and of lofty feelings, progressively expand the mind's horizon. The mind begins to be less concerned with the body, and indeed its whole identification with the body starts to gradually diminish. Which will lead it to quite new concerns. That is, as the mind's identification with the body diminishes, at times it begins to wonder about the possibility of the mind existing independent from the body. A consideration which in turn leads it to occasionally

§ *That is, with the growth of the mind, sooner or later, the spiritual powers (Indriya), of mindfulness, energy, wisdom and so on begin to develop.*

undertake to make certain calculations regarding possible conditions of the mind after death.

One of its earliest investigations leads it to a consideration regarding the difference between a possible after-death-life of an evil mind against one that is good. But later it too realises other patterns, such as what the difference between a mind inclining towards material things, as opposed to a mind directed at nobler things would mean in relation to an after-death-life world.

Slowly, based on its discernment of different conditions of consciousness, the mind gains glimpses of a hell that is equivalent to a mental condition of utter inner cleavage and suffering, as opposed to a heaven of perfect inner peace and at-oneness. Realising thus, naturally the mind will determine to avoid anything which might lead to the former condition, while the latter becomes the more appealing the more it is understood.

All this our discerning mind perceives as a natural progression of the path towards perfection.

Yet, with the progression of insight, comprehending more and more how present mind-states and intentions relate to future experiences, the mind begins to become more focused on realising the workings of the will.

Little by little it realises the intricacies between willing and experiences and experiences and willing. That is, how the will (directed towards phenomena; that is, mental and material things) creates experiences (that is, phenomena existing as objects for consciousness) and how experiences in turn condition the arising of a will, or more often even, of many wills.

And seeing the endlessness and uncertainty of that cycle, the mind sees more and more the suffering nature therein. As a consequence, it begins to more deliberately remove both all wills and all experiences which may lead to undesirable wills and experiences in the future. In that process, it

realises that all wills arise from a store of latent dispositions and that by considering experiences in a universal light or in matters of ultimate truth and natural law, seeing the suffering in all things transient, latent wills become purified from the stain of revolving around transient phenomena and a singular illusory self. Thus all suffering and all that is less than perfect becomes gradually transcended.

Still, this process of purification usually does not happen at once, but often is accomplished in stages. Therein the first stage is accomplished when, having glimpsed 'a life' beyond the personal, the belief in the 'ultimateness' of the self is destroyed, doubt about the essence of the spiritual life is destroyed, as well as superstition and all forms of belief in wrong practices for a proposed spiritual development. This accomplishment is called 'entering into the stream' (Sotāpatti magga).

Emphasising thus ultimate truth and ever seeking to go beyond the veil of the phenomenal world, gradually the passions, especially of greed and hatred start to diminish. A stage which is called Sakadāgāmī ('One who returns only once').**

When all the passions related to sense-sphere existence are entirely destroyed, the third stage of enlightenment is reached. And a person who has attained this stage is called an Anāgāmī ('Non-returner').†† After the attainment of this stage, only fetters of attachment to the higher stages of meditation, as well as minor imperfections of character, as restlessness and pride, along with the last bit of ignorance

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** *The second stage of holiness is called the path of a Once-returner (Sakadāgāmī), because a person on this path will be reborn only one more time as a human being. He has diminished greed, hatred, and delusion to such an extent that he will soon transcend human entanglement altogether.*

†† *The third stage of enlightenment is called the Path of the Non-returner (Anāgāmī), because a person who has reached this stage will have risen above human conditions, and with his passing from this life, he will never be reborn as a human again*

regarding spiritual perfection is left. And when these are eliminated, a person is called an Arahat, a 'Holy One'.#

....

The final stage of Liberation is called an Arahat or "A Holy One. This person has transcended conditioned existence altogether and has realised the Unconditioned — Nibbāna.

SUMMARY OF THE 5 NIYĀMA

Let us recapitulate:

The first enumerated law is Utu Niyāma, the law of physical nature or physical existence. This is the law, that governs the coming into being, evolution, and final destruction of the physical universe.

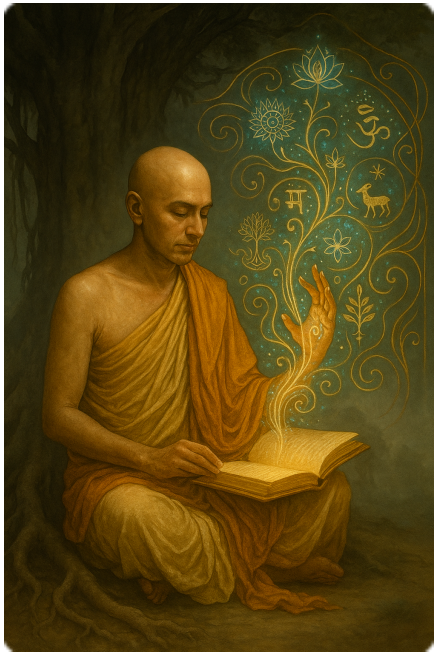
The second law, called Bīja Niyāma, or the law of heredity and growth, is a law that comes into play after the physical universe has reached a certain stage of evolution and balance. It is the natural law that governs the growth and reproduction of the various species from plant life to higher beings.

When life has evolved to such a degree, that it is capable of sustained growth and the building upon an inheritance of reasonably well functioning faculties, the third law, called Citta Niyāma, begins to take the lead. This is the law that governs the appearance and sequence in regard to all mental phenomena.

The fourth, Kamma Niyāma, is the law of cause and effect, specifically in regards to mind and intention. This, too, builds upon the previous ones, in that, through thinking and the creation of ideas, an intention develops, especially in relation to the three periods of time, that is, past, present, and future.

The last law described, Dhamma Niyāma, is the law of Holiness. It is the law that comes into play when a person becomes skillful in using the law of kamma. That is, a person, based on acquired learning about the imperfect nature of material or worldly life and the possibility of perfecting his being, is setting before himself to transcend this material or worldly life and works to become such perfected being.

PART IV: PRACTICAL APPLICATION



"In theory, theory and practice are the same.
In practice, they are not."

Albert Einstein

Now regarding practical matters, the Abhidhamma system offers a wealth of practical applications. In principle, can the study of this system give a person the key to comprehend any teaching, statement, or problem whatsoever — be it religious, mathematical, philosophical, personal, or otherwise. Because, although there is a certain relativity to all truths spoken or written down, there is yet the possibility of coming to a universal understanding of existence. Approaches to discovering truth may vary, but the results revealed through these approaches, if truly universal, cannot contradict one another.

Examples of the Abhidhamma's usage range from being able to answer questions about simple everyday problems, or questions of a personal kind, to finding solutions to the most difficult of religious or philosophical questions. It can be used to design meditation methods or initiation rituals, serve as a shared language for meditators and scholars, facilitate deeper communication of insights, or even offer solutions to physical ailments.

The key therein lies in the fact, that having a language to describe the various processes experienced both in meditation, as well as with general mindfulness practice, will facilitate the possibility of repeating successful experiments, both in meditation and other aspects of life.

In this section I will give concrete examples of how the usage of this system may look like when applied to various problems of life. Each chapter in this section demonstrates a specific application of the Abhidhamma system. The "Practical focus" tags highlight the core theme of each chapter - useful as navigation points, guiding you to the most relevant sections based on your current needs. The examples are not rigid formulas, but invitations to experiment, adapt, and personalize the system. The true value lies not in memorizing doctrine, but in cultivating direct, experiential understanding. This section is designed not just to inform, but to empower you to become your own guide in the science of inner life.



THE FIRST STEP

The first step is to learn the basics of the system. Once a person has learned even the basics of the system, he has acquired a basic means for answering his own questions without relying on other people. This I have shown in the manifold ways one can consider about a great variety of things even with a simple understanding of the four elements. After this basic learning one should try to gather experiences and translate them into the terms one has learned. Once a person can do that (especially with the greater scheme of mind, matter and consciousness), and the words start to become a connected network of ideas, he will be pretty independent already in matters of practice. And when based on this connected understanding of things, a person is able to organise his own experiences into what is hierarchical higher and what is hierarchical lower, he will start to come into the position of directing his efforts and activities into a definite direction. He can start calculating what to do, and what not to do; what to think, and what not to think; when to act, and how to act. Not just based on how things present themselves. Not just based on what is visible, which is very often all too deceptive. Not just based on..."It can't be that bad if everyone is doing it". But rather based on glimpses of a deeper reality. Slowly allowing a person to conquer his way into the hidden workings of things.



CREATING A MEDITATION DIARY

The second essential thing for a meditator is to keep (or create) a meditation diary. This book may be seen as one example of a meditation diary. Thus it could serve as a general framework for the creation of a meditation diary for a practitioner interested in comprehending the Abhidhamma.

Keeping a meditation diary will help the meditator to keep track of his progress. It will keep him motivated to try hard to discover new things in his meditation, and it will help him to remember his insights and later to intelligently order them along definite lines, as shown throughout this book.

For a meditator the essential thing is personal experience. There will always be things pressing on him to accomplish something outside of himself. So keeping a diary will help to build up some pressure to accomplish something inside instead.

But in order to be able to write about one's personal experiences, one has to learn to name what one experiences. Thus a meditation diary also will have to capture some theoretical knowledge.

Hence should a meditation diary best be divided into a theoretical part, which gradually becomes modified to one's own understanding of principles, and a practical part proper. That is, a record of specific personal experiences and experiments, which one will gradually seek to refine and deepen. Such part will usually start off with simple experiences, which yet have been perceived as somewhat magical or significant. However, as more profound experiences are gained and captured, naturally some of the very simple ones will

lose their significance and might be removed or marked as unimportant.



ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE

There are various methods as to how to acquire knowledge by the use of this system. One is experimentation. That is, a person sets before his mind that he wants a certain answer. With this in mind he runs various experiments to lead him from certain things he knows about, towards the things he wants to know about. For instance, he might want to understand what is Jhāna. Depending on what he already knows, he might either start by investigating his body to understand what sort of body condition might give him some clue as to what is Jhāna, or, if he is more developed, he might try to start off straight away from a condition of wholesome emotions or even from an concentrated mind. When he thus starts out with a condition he can comprehend, the primary method of acquiring greater understanding is by asking questions,...'How does it relate to Jhāna?', 'How to proceed?', 'What escapes my attention?', etc. and when an answer arises which is not yet the perfect answer to the main question, to make adjustments in accordance with that answer. For example he might discover, that he lacks energy and that that condition is likely to be contrary to a condition of Jhāna. Enquiring further based on an understanding that energy comes from nutriment, he tries to find out whether there is any 'latent' nutriment present in his body that he could access through application of mind, or not. If he somehow succeeds in solving that problem, usually the next problem will arise, with which he again will have to see to it how to proceed. Yet, if done skillfully and long enough, there will come

times wherein he can enjoy the fruits of his labour for longer periods of time...experiencing things that only in retrospect make sense to think about. And thinking about them in retrospect, he might find that he already has found a perfect answer to his question.

However, sometimes knowledge comes to an inquisitive person rather spontaneously. Thus it may happen, that he perchance observes, as a simplified example, here an old man, and a little further, there, a young infant and a little later still, somewhere a middle aged man. And reflecting on in this example, the 'Sequence Condition', he starts realising, that there is only one proper sequence as to how to order these three human beings. Nobody will start of as a full grown adult, to become younger again and yet at the end of that somehow still ending up as an old person. Realising that this really is part of the fabric of existence, that things happen in some particular order, that person might start to look within himself, to find, if he can't discover some natural sequences within also. Thus he might discover the natural sequence of his bodily or mental processes and perhaps further on, a certain natural sequence for moving out of various problems of life.

A yet further method for acquiring knowledge, which somewhat naturally follows in sequence the former ones, will be a method akin to brainstorming. That is, understanding that the latent mind is the storehouse of uncountable impressions, which like little seeds in fertile ground, under the right conditions might sprout one after another. And which due to being of a subtler kind than physical seeds, may manifest their potential very fast. One may, whenever the conditions are favourable, allow one's consciousness to be flushed with any type of information or even fragments of information somewhat related to a certain subject. Making sure to dispel any utterly unrelated bits of information, while at the same time intending to perceive new links between, (/or combinations of) the things that arise from that stream of acquired kamma. Thus one's knowledge about certain things increas-

es through seeing correspondences with other knowledge previously acquired, while at the same time new sequences or new links in natural sequences may be discovered. This method also will be the basis method for the enquiring into one's past lives.



EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Then we can use the psychological teachings of the Abhidhamma to at the very least tackle problems we might have with, or in our minds:

Let us take a common problem of an emotional reaction towards another person. We may find it undesirable, but somehow we may not be able to put into words what we experience, which in turn makes it difficult to find a solution for the problem. Using some of the depicted diagrams, we may be able to first at least visualise what the problem is...and since many of the images show a relation of things, we may actually quickly realise a cause or solution to our problem. In the mentioned example, we would first give a designation to the emotion. In the first part of the book there are various emotions of the wholesome and the unwholesome type listed. And, the pictures shown in there may also help us to become more aware of the manifestations of those emotions (e.g. facial expressions).

Then, we might look at the diagram on the Relation between Mind and Body (in the Paṭṭhāna condition of Foundations [the second one]) ...wherein in the middle we find depicted the emotions, while next to it, which part of the mental process they refer to (viz. the vibrating bhavanga). Further, applying it to the mental process-diagram,...to the phase of

the vibrating bhavanga, we may comprehend a relation with the 'Repetition Condition' of the Paṭṭhāna and make it more clear to our mind by visualising the three arrows shown as a diagram to that Paṭṭhāna Condition.

Delineating our problem thus, we then might with little effort comprehend, that along the line of mental processing, our duty will be to first arrest the vibrating bhavanga and then, bring about an active mental process, that either generates new wholesome kamma, or develops obstructive kamma towards that resultant of past kamma vibrating.

While the mind perceives images related to those diagrams, interest arises within towards this science, and with that, we may be willing to bring about greater exertion and make further experiments as to how to develop, in this example, an appropriate obstructive kamma towards the arisen problem. As we thus start studying life, we find ourself less drawn by life-stuff such as greed, revenge or life-dramas. And being less drawn by those things, our character acquires more and more nobility.



WITHIN MEDITATION

As a meditator becomes aware of various kinds of sensations within his body, his mind may occasionally become interested in what it is that is experienced and further perhaps, how one particular experience relates to other things he may know about. Thus, given the situation that a person starts only from scratch in matters of theory, when he gets some meditation experience...working with the diagrams, he may thereafter check under which heading he would want to

fit his experience.§§ Initially accuracy will not be important, because the whole idea is to first build a coarse structure and only later refine it. Once he established one thing, he may then try to think how it relates to the other headings. For example in perceiving his body, he may find out as to what bodily functions he has noticed. Further he may seek to understand what mental functions he became aware of, whether his mind was mostly in a latent state of utter unawareness, whether his life-continuum was continuously vibrating due to some agitation or some dream, or whether he felt himself having generated at least some new kamma, and in the latter case was it wholesome or unwholesome kamma. Then, when the meditator starts getting more pleasant experiences, he gradually may try to find out, whether his consciousness was entering the fine-material world, or whether he was somewhat still continuously only in the sense-sphere world.

Investigating along these lines, a meditator will start collecting data and group it intelligently. From this raw-data he will over the years build up his own understanding of things, both in matters of meditation practice as well as his understanding of existence as a whole. He will generate an inner representation of the whole cosmos, which then, as it becomes more harmonious will also grow his capacity to balance disharmonies in the outer Cosmos. The more complex it is, the more capable it will be to respond to complex life situations.

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§§ *In the long run, one may want to learn at least the main categories of the system by heart and may during difficult times in meditation recite those items. With time, one may be able to find points of contact between what one has learned and what one is experiencing.*



PRACTICAL RELEVANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE

Towards the end of the first part of this book we have given some outline of various planes of existence and explored the conditions of consciousness that beings in such planes would have. Now let us look at the practical relevance of that.

In the first instance, the practical relevance of understanding the various planes of existence lies exactly in this fact that they correspond to various conditions of consciousness. Secondly, the fact that these planes are arranged in a hierarchical order, gives us a need hierarchy in which we may pinpoint where we (as consciousnesses) are at and what would be the next higher level of consciousness we should consider developing. Within that frame, will the different heavenly realms give us also some clue as to the virtues and qualities, we will have to acquire on our way to an attainment of Jhāna. Further will this hierarchy also help those who find final Nibbana still a bit un-gripping a goal, to nevertheless make some further-reaching plans as to where they would want to go in their next life.

Additionally will lofty subjects, as the gods and the ways of heaven more easily give wings to the mind, aiding the imagination, which is a very important faculty for meditative.

Beyond that can this framework also help us to see people (e.g. the people we are contacting) not only as bodies, but also as consciousnesses. Which in turn, if we develop the skill and grow in understanding, will give us the ability to calculate where people are coming from and where they are heading.

Apart from that, can, as our knowledge may actually become an actual faculty, the knowledge of the various planes or regions of existence, help us to gain actual perceptions of those planes.

And last but not least, will this whole frame for understanding existence also help us to not make the mistake to mistake some minor elevation of consciousness as the end of the spiritual journey.



WORKING OUT THE PAṬṬHĀNA CONDITIONS

The Paṭṭhāna conditions, widely regarded as utterly irrelevant for meditation practice, as I want to show in here, can be used for it, if one knows how.

For example while meditating you realise "the topic" of your consciousness. Be it that you have some aversion towards someone or something, or be it that you are so utterly satisfied with your state of being, or be it anything else. Both, in order to maintain your experience for longer, as well as in order to gain some wisdom from this your experience, you somewhat have to learn to think about your experience. Thinking requires words to think about. So, if you can think of any words that are somewhat summarising what you are experiencing, you can make a start thinking about the matter. Of course, you may make it a point to regularly read some part of a scripture before meditating and then think about your experience in relation to the scripture. But there is also another way, and one may well try this other way too, especially if one seeks to pursue a meditation path perhaps for the whole of ones life (and possibly even beyond). Thus

you would memorise the basics of this system. Which enables you, realising "the topic" of your consciousness, to give a word to it. Now, once you got used to them, the Paṭṭhāna conditions may offer themselves quite well for many topics of consciousness. Hence, you would take your aversion towards someone or something to be synonymous with the Paṭṭhāna condition of Repulsion, or you would take your satisfaction with your state of being as being an instance of the Paṭṭhāna condition of 'Being'. And having one of these then as a heading to meditate about, you meditate, observing your body and mind. This will of course be especially useful when your "topic of consciousness" lasts for some prolonged period of time, such as many days, weeks or months. Meditatively then observing your body and mind, you try to see whether you can find some relation between the theoretical knowledge on mind and matter contained in the first part of this book, with what you are experiencing now. And whatever words you find to describe to yourself what you are experiencing, you try to direct the understanding of their meaning to the realisation of your "topic of consciousness" headed under your chosen Paṭṭhāna condition. Gradually you will learn to understand the seemingly infinite "topics" of your consciousness as relating to rather finite universal human topics. The comprehension of which shall make you slowly but progressively a realised master of the human condition.



AHĀRA PACCAYA

All of the Paṭṭhāna conditions can teach us something useful for meditation. So also the Paṭṭhāna condition of fuel, the use of which I will try to show in this practical example:

For example, you eat some food (kabaliṅkārāhāra) for breakfast. Your body receiving nutriment, becomes energised and wants to move. Then, moving a little, more of the energy activates the senses. The senses being energised, begin to see or hear things around you. Thus, the world around you impresses itself onto your senses (phassāhāra). Contacting your room or your house with the senses, you see many things that need to be done. Consequently, the sense-impressions you received start fuelling your activities. Then, also your brain becomes fuelled by nutriment, resulting in your picking up some book in order to read a little. But while you are doing your work, fuelled by the impressions of the senses, or while you read in your book a little, your intention to meditate re-arises in your mind (mano- sañcetanā ahāra)...and fuelled by that intention you begin to abandon your other activities in order to meditate. While meditating, you are becoming aware of your body and mind (viññāna-hāra), and, if you have a capacity to analyse, as is developed by the knowledge of the Abhidhamma, you are likely to become aware of exactly those very processes that were driving you up to now. And becoming aware and thinking about your experience, your stock of knowledge develops (fuelled by your conscious awareness [viññanahāra]), but equally so also your ability to concretely know the things that exist within you now. Which means that your ability to remain consciously aware within meditation increases, which is the second factor of Jhāna — precisely what you are trying to develop (fuel) in the initial phases of meditation.



PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

The Abhidhamma too may be useful when encountering physical problems.

Here some examples as to the how:

Learning to recognise the four elements, may help you to make a start in balancing out coarse imbalances of those very elements inside your body. How this can be done will be elaborated on below.

Further, may an understanding of the natural sequence of the functions of the body, help you to make a start investigating into possible causes of a certain affliction you might suffer from, or prevent further afflictions from happening by arranging your lifestyle in such a manner, as to allow your bodily functions to happen according to their natural sequence.

Even an understanding of the various functions of the mental process, might help finding some solution to physical problems. In the first instance it will give you a clue, that, while there is a mind that can only think as dictated by sensation, there is also the possibility of the mind thinking apart from sensation, which, if it is employed and cultivated, may seek out solutions where it naturally would have been only stuck in problems. Then, as the working of consciousness is better understood, it becomes clear, that the formulation of clear cut ideas, followed by an appropriate intention, can program the workings of consciousness; thus allowing it to see things which without a clear intention it will not be able to see. A realisation which too can be used for more efficient problem solving, because as the mind learns more about the workings of the mind and consciousness, it understands

more and more how to ask the right questions and how to receive the right answers.

At last, if you gained a sound enough understanding of the workings of body and mind, as well as various principles in nature as shown in the part on the Paṭṭhāna conditions, you will become more confident in making experiments with your body and mind. Thus you may come to learn to cure your body purely with your mind by means of skillfulness in samādhi.



EXAMPLES ON BALANCING THE FOUR ELEMENTS

In meditation practice, you can, either as a practice in itself, or whenever the practice with your primary meditation subject (for example Anapanasati) is getting stagnant, ask yourself questions like: "What is the predominant element in my body at the moment"...Waiting for an answer, you might repeat to yourself the names of the elements (earth, water, fire, wind...). When an answer comes, you may ask further as to how to balance it out with the aid of some other element. When you notice, that you have a condition of repeatedly one element being predominant or in excess, you may try to extend your meditation practice beyond the sitting and ask yourself more often during the day as to what the predominant elements in the things you are contacting are and whether they are balancing the elements in your own body or are rather producing imbalances. This can be done during any activity. For example you might notice that much hectic and activity is producing an excess in the wind element, or during eating you may try to remain aware as to whether what you are eating is rather producing things like lightness

and energy (principally qualities of the air element but in this situation you might rather treat it just as a conditions of balance) or rather things like heaviness and lethargy. And noticing thus you should try to adjust your eating habits.

Balancing the elements thus, how you feel will improve... As you start feeling better, your mind becomes calmer...As your mind becomes calmer, you will have more choice as to what of your mental contents you want to allow to continue and what not. And having such choice, you will have more control over life itself.

Alternatively, you might also use the Four Elements meditation as your main subject for establishing mindfulness. In that case, you might frequently recite to yourself the names of the primary elements? This you may further on extend to also include the main characteristics of the elements. Thus you might first recite earth, water, fire, wind,... earth, water, fire, wind... earth, water, fire, wind...and when you notice, that the name of a certain element seems to resonate with something you are experiencing now, you start reciting more of the specific characteristics of that element. Thus you might, when getting stuck on the earth element, start to recite,...solidity, weight, texture,... solidity, weight, texture,...and then perhaps further on go deeper into one of those...solidity, weight,...solidity, weight,...weight, weight,....heaviness, heaviness. When you thus found a proper word for it, you go on asking questions,...heaviness, ...heaviness, ...how to solve?, how to balance?... The important thing thereby is, that you come to a condition of sustained mindfulness. What words you use to achieve this end is secondary. When mindfulness becomes thus longer sustainable, some intuition may arise as an answer to the posted question... Maybe an answer comes such as 'movement (air-element) can balance heaviness', or 'heat can burn it up'...And when such answer arises, you should try to make some adjustment in your activity in order to follow the intuition. Ideally you should try to keep going the meditation even during the solution process, for example by reciting to yourself easily recite-able words, that

at least off and on seem to resonate with your experience. The recitation may at times become almost like a song. This is no problem (if it is not in an unsuitable place or condition), but rather is almost desirable, as this fulfils the factor of sustainment for longer and may move even into a condition of joy...

Alternatively to the above listed characteristics, you might also use the traditional ones used in some Abhidhamma texts. Which are hardness, roughness, heaviness, and softness, smoothness, lightness for the earth element, flowing and cohesion for the water element, heat and cold for the fire element and pushing and supporting for the wind or air element. As mentioned above the words are secondary and may be modified to suit your own understanding of the particular element.



OVERCOMING DISSATISFACTION THROUGH ANALYSIS

I don't see what the future holds
The past gives me no guidance
Today, tomorrow, any day,
seem pointless, useless, anyway
So what then can I say...
If the Reaper were to come
The last thing I would do is run
The grave appears so peaceful still,
When my head is full of noises
From each side I am pressed with ill
come-on, please quickly make your choices
My life such sad a thing to bear
I wish something were worth to dare

There may not be many people that are never dissatisfied. Thus, if you find yourself being dissatisfied with your life...not doing what you would like to do...doing what you don't really like to do...In order to get a handle on such situation you might want to analyse it during a more clear moment of your day, so that you might find a solution to it (as for most people just making a decision to change is usually not enough):

Factors involved:

Diminished mental life
Perceptions of various burdens or burdensome things
Applied and sustained thought (thinking about the burdensomeness/vainness of life)
Sadness
Weakness/Lack of power
Conflicting desires
Confusion
Unpleasant Feelings
Disinterest
Perhaps occasional decisions to change your life
Agitation
Restlessness

Very often this simple act of analysing will already give you a good clue to the solution of your problem. As you look onto these factors, you might naturally understand that what you seek in your life are the very opposite conditions as these. Hence you want to find a way to bring into your life factors such as:

A rich Mental Life
Focusedness on some worthy goal
Calmness of Mind
Inner Joy
Collectedness
Inner Strength
And so on.

Usually the best way to bring factors into your life that are opposed to those mentioned above, is by finding an embodiment of such opposite factors. Even if you do not find a perfect embodiment of all wholesome mind states that you hope to possess yourself—looking around yourself and becoming keenly observant, you may occasionally find yourself in contact with people who possess at least some of those. Labelling their mental condition allows you to think about it, and thinking about a certain thing, allows you to develop a definite intention. Intention is Kamma. And Kamma is what moves who you are at present towards who you will be in the future. Thus, intending anew and in a positive manner will help you become new and more positive in the future.



DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL CAPABILITIES

Then, we of course also want to use the Abhidhamma system to develop our spiritual powers. There are countless ways to apply it in developing spiritual capabilities, and a true meditator will ever be on the lookout for opportunities of doing that. The following example, though it may seem a bit drawn out, illustrates how the knowledge of the Abhidhamma can guide you through meditation long enough for truly special things to occur.

For example, you hear music being played somewhere, and, being accustomed to meditating on the four elements, you try to you try to understand the music in terms of them.

You hear the soft, dreamy notes of a piano, flowing like the slow, clear waters of a brook. As you follow its flow, you notice how it sometimes widens, sometimes narrows. Occasionally, it churns in a pool before continuing in a definite direction. As you keep following, bright notes emerge like glittering beams of sunlight refracting on the surface of the steadily flowing brook..

Suddenly, a thunderous sound grabs your attention—a deep bass instrument enters, bringing in the earth element just when you were wondering where it might be. Yet you comprehend it as a water-suffused earth element, combining both heaviness and depth.

More and more of that comes in —a drum, a bass— earth with more water, earth with more wind. You see how things blend together, and you realise how your understanding gradually deepens allowing you to know more than just one element at a time.

Slowly the thunderous sounds pass, and you again perceive notes of brightness. A gentle wind's blowing speeds up the flow of your perception. You see how the wind element and the water element merge softly. Above them, the brightness of fire begins to shimmer. And as your mind sharpens to such a heightened state of comprehension, you see, in the light of those bright notes glittering harmoniously, the appearance of a dancing fairy, playfully moving in rhythm with the song.

Gradually you come to understand, that that artist having so perfectly harmonised his notes, has actually created a new life—a being with its own definite powers and individuality. And you also realise that this life-form has a kind of mind, a mind breathed into it by the creator of the music.

Your comprehension of what is called “life” deepens further, as you see how this life-form can move people, even enter into people. It can uplift the depressed, calm the hectic, deepen the superficial, but also, at times, dominate the weak or distract those who seek to concentrate their minds.

Recalling your knowledge of emotions, you try to identify the primary character of this new life-form before continuing your observation. As you watch the music flow, sparkle, and foam, you gradually perceive not just one, but many fairies dancing. You come to understand that life does not necessarily require a single form or base. It can consist of many centres of activity, playing together to form a larger organism — an entity providing a collective mind for all involved.

Little by little, you gain insight into the lives of beings that seem very different from anything you have known before. You continue observing, aided by your faculty of knowledge and intuition — guiding lights that help you maintain discernment. With their help, you study the strengths and limitations of entities whose growth or decline depends on how they are received by others.

The more you observe, the more you perceive the infinite variety of lives filling the cosmos — some brief, some long-lasting, some beneficial, some harmful. You sense beings revolving around veins, wires, and even ecosystems in nature, or around processes that destroy those ecosystems.

And as you reflect on these perceptions, you realise that the beings you encounter can be as complex and varied as music itself. Furthermore, you realise that you yourself can be as complex and varied as music, and that whether music or these other beings, all are actually reflections of the infinite varieties of the mind. Going deeper into this, you remember moments when you were like a song - full of joy, bravery, love or enthusiasm, contrasting sharply with the limited material creature you are when you are caught up in sense impressions or petty fears.

This insight then makes you realise more than ever the importance of turning away from both identification with and involvement in fleeting external forms and material things, and the need to continually attune yourself to the higher aspects of existence. This you realise is not just a more beautiful way of living, but also an obligation to life itself.***



DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL CAPABILITIES 2

Here another example of how sense-perceptions, coupled with some knowledge of the Abhidhamma may be used to initiate the development of higher capacities.

For instance you observe some animal, for example a cat. And trying to sharpen your faculties, you see if you can get to understand something of the inner side of the cat. Thus you try to think and see where those inner organs are which you are familiar with. At first you may rather only clumsily project some image of the bones, or heart or brain and so on onto the physical body that you see. But as your mind becomes more engaged, your imagination also starts getting more lively. Slowly you not only see a cat, whose outer appearance has largely faded, with various organs being openly visible to you, but you begin to realise also some of the

*** *Note: I chose the example of music to provide an example for developing spiritual powers that is distinctly different from the sense of bodily feelings, which most meditators are in the habit of using. I believe a good meditator will have no difficulty translating this example into the sphere of meditation experiences centering around bodily feelings.*
Apart from that, I would recommend anyone who really is determined to get somewhere with the element meditation, to also try to use (or harmonise) more than one sense-organ, for example the body and sound or sight and sound, etc

workings of those inner organs. Having made such gain, you become enthusiastic, that even if what you see might be only imagination, it can yet give you some objective benefits. Observing those processes, various insights arise as to what the cat may think, when eating, what it may think when looking at you, what when hearing the sound of a squirrel and so on. Ever deeper becomes your comprehension of various mental processes, until you arrive at a conclusion that many of those processes of recognising particular objects followed by often quite intelligent responses to them, can not have been acquired in those few years of a cat's life. They appear too intelligent. Becoming thus absorbed in the mental processes of the cat, you start getting visions of a mind that evolves over various lifetimes. A mind that learns and forgets again, learns and forgets again, until the learning process becomes ever more quick while the process of forgetting is kept for ever longer periods in abeyance.

Observing thus, a question arises as to where this process will lead to. And you realise, that left to itself, a being which is repeatedly reborn as a cat, although it may gradually become more smart in certain specialised activities if conditions demand it or are conducive to it, is yet not likely to progress beyond a certain quite narrow limit. While an association with beings which are both exceedingly agreeable and distinctly superior to itself might bring about an inclination to be reborn as a child of such higher creature. And in a case in which this inclination has been sufficiently strong, it may indeed take effect. Although you realise, that such being will there repeatedly for many lives not survive beyond childhood stage.



THE FOUNDATIONS FOR JHĀNA

Amongst the Paṭṭhāna conditions, we have shown that all things depend upon a basis or foundation. So, here I want to give one example of the relevance of understanding the proper foundations upon which the mind may function. Besides, this example also illustrates the meaning of the Jhāna factors in actual meditation practice.

As you focus on your in-breath and out-breath[†††], gradually your brain becomes clear. Due to that, gradually you begin to notice that inside your body some process of purification has begun. And becoming aware of that process, slowly you decide that you should start to follow that trail of purification from your breath into your body. As you do so, feeling into your body, you more and more often reach to the bottom of it. And as you reach the bottom, you find as a natural task opening up before you, to fiddle as it were, your mind into your spine. This you realise, is the only way to a natural sustainment of your awareness (consciousness) in your body.

As you succeed with that, immediately you feel much more alive. Now you notice that you can be aware of your body as a whole. Trying to maintain this condition, you feel that your energy naturally centres around your solar plexus, the point just above your navel. Staying there with your awareness, feelings of power fill your body and mind...which will be the beginning of the third Jhāna factor (pitī -joy or exhilaration). Thus, swapping back and forth between your body as a whole and its centre of power just above the navel, you find, that your energy becomes ever more purified.

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††† This will be the Jhāna factor of vitakka - application of mind.

Feeling this sense of exhilaration, a yet other process gets triggered. As there is now no more need for your heart to pump strenuously blood elsewhere, you feel that your heart remains for prolonged periods of time an open pool of energised blood, or simply energy.

And as your consciousness has remained aware of this process, alongside with the purification of the bodily energy, consciousness too became subtle and refined....And consciousness being subtle and refined, it becomes cognisant, that, as the vigour of your body increases, some of your bodily energy starts reaching further and further beyond your bodily frame.

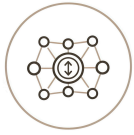
Now you again find yourself moving back and forth between two quite different foundations. One is your heart, or more accurately the beating of your heart. The other is the aura or energy field emanating from your body, ...having as its centre the heart, but reaching ever further beyond your physical form.

As you succeed in taking this energy field for more prolonged periods of time as the foundation for your consciousness, you become more and more capable of balancing your consciousness solely by means of acts of expanding and contracting that energy field. Thus, you learn to expand that foundation for your consciousness over ever-increasing, at times vast, distances. This then becomes sukkha (happiness), the fourth Jhāna factor, which, as it stabilizes will gradually do away with the prior Jhāna factors.

But then, seemingly even without your noticing, the centre for the functioning of your consciousness moves yet higher. As you feel very very good, your mind, that is, your imagination starts to grow more and more vivid. Thus, you begin to see within your sphere of consciousness apparitions which are, at first, self-evidently for the most part self-created. But the experience of which motivates you to set to work, making experiments, as to how to gain more clear and more objectively real perceptions. And by that you learn to bring the

one-pointedness of your consciousness and the clarity of your mindfulness##, the last two Jhāna factors, gradually to ever greater perfection.

And as a yet higher base for your mind and consciousness becomes more and more involved, your faculty of knowledge too will involve itself in those perceptions. Thus, whatever knowledge you might have acquired before, regarding those fine-material perceptions that you have, will give you insight into life and laws and perhaps the workings of the entire cosmos



USING THE PAṬṬHĀNA CONDITIONS TO WORK OUT A BETTER UNDERSTANDING

Very often we find different teachings on similar subjects or identical phenomena and we do not know, which one to believe. In the traditional Abhidhamma books for example, there is a teaching that the mind arises as a process of 17 mind moments, each possessing an arising, standing and perishing phase, happening so fast that you might never come to certainty as to whether you just experienced it or not. [27] So, many a one may wonder, how to approach such teachings. One simple approach to get at least somewhere out of doubt, may be through looking for something you can make sense of. In the example, you might find it easy to agree, that the mind arises as a process, (perhaps because it

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Strictly speaking the last two Jhāna factors are 'upekkhā' and 'ekaggatā', which I usually translate as balance and one-pointedness, but the meaning should be clear here to be equal. An alternative rendering for 'ekaggatā' could also be 'unity' or 'collectedness'.

somehow agrees with other things you have heard regarding the mind). Picking up that consideration, you may try to think, what you can get out of that statement. For example, you may think to yourself, 'What is a process?'. An answer may come such as, 'a sequence, with a beginning and an end, wherein a certain thing gets transformed from one thing into another'. If your mind finds that consideration satisfying, you try to apply that definition to the mind. Thinking, 'Do I know two things or more, in regards to the mind, which I could put along a certain timeline between a beginning of the mind and an end of the mind?'. Or, 'Do I know of any mental thing, which could be said to transform into another mental thing?' Thus, slowly certain conceptions arise regarding part of the teaching on the mind. Working in that manner, you may or may not arrive at some conclusion regarding the rest of such teachings, but in either case you will have made some progress in regards to comprehending some of those teachings which you hoped to gain a comprehension of.



EXAMPLE ON THE CONDITION OF ATTRACTION

Here an example of how some understanding of the physiological processes and mental sequences described in the beginning part of the book, may be used to describe a meditative process of overcoming some personal problem. The benefit of which could be compared to the benefit of being able to describe music using notes.

For example, you find that you are attracted to something that you suspect to be the wrong type of thing. Whatever it may be...girl, boy, smartphone, too young, too old, perverse, unhealthy, or whatever else... With an aim too gain some clar-

ity of mind regarding this issue, you meditate. When your mind becomes clearer, you put in front of your mind that condition of attraction, considering that any time you loose clarity of mind this condition may overcome you.

Meditating, you feel into your body, how undifferentiated things happen there at first. How any sensation easily wins the upper hand of your mind. While when you pay attention to what happens, distinctions start to arise and you begin to know, what is higher and what is lower.

You may also begin to notice, how certain organs, fed by nutriment begin to develop a mind of their own. And that, when you don't become aware of that, how that mind at times becomes quite elaborate.

Yet, slowly you too become aware, that whenever you do notice that, you cease to be identified with it. Gradually you realise that your brain is a better governor for your consciousness than the rest of your body.

Still, with time you start wondering, whether it is proper to make the brain only become attracted to those inferior processes. Slowly you discover, that the brain too has its interests, and that by pursuing the interests of the brain, you also strengthen its powers to control what is below it.

But then, as you pursue that strategy for some time, slowly you find again, that that too is not really doing away with the problem. You start to long for a mind that is united and not just either diverted or ruled by force.

Little by little you seek out ways to integrate the interests of the body with those of the brain, while yet keeping the brain interested in what happens in the body. And doing thus, you start noticing a new mind and a new consciousness, which is neither of the body, nor of the brain, not undifferentiated yet not divided, not bodily but also not ignorant of the body, higher in interests than the interests of the brain, yet without ignorance towards the lower. Slowly, you become whole,... *almost like a god*.



USE OF THE SYSTEM FOR ORGANISING MEDITATION RETREATS

The scheme of the Abhidhamma system too could be used to organise more intelligent meditation courses. Modern vipassanā meditation courses are usually very limited or narrow in their approach. But what is not, still may be in the future. So could for example, developed practitioners seeking to give a chain of meditation courses, use such step by step approach as given in this book as a scheme for organising their meditation retreats. In such arrangement, the initial period of one retreat or even the first retreat as a whole, could be used to teach about the four elements, their characteristics, their use, how to recognise them and how to balance them. A second retreat could be used for explaining about the life faculty (or life-element), how it relates to the four elements, how it exists within the body, how it manifests as the various functions of the internal organs and how to consciously control and use it. And similar courses or retreat periods could follow about the mind, its functions, characteristics, use of understanding and potential powers. Such scheme can principally be followed for all the Paṭṭhāna conditions too. Which I have given in this book only some clues about, but the comprehension of which can be infinitely extended by intelligent practitioners.[§§§]

A similar thing applies of course also to individual practitioners, who plan for some solitary retreat.

[§§§] *Of course such an approach should always be made alongside with an understanding that different people have different dispositions and usually come with different kinds of sufferings, as well as with previously acquired knowledge.*



WORKING OUT THE PATHWAY TO HEAVEN

Of course, in meditation practice, once the mind becomes malleable, it will not consider each aspect of the Abhidhamma system in isolation. Instead, higher meditative experiences usually occur only when at least part of the knowledge contained herein has become intuitive.

Below, I provide an example of a successful meditation, and I invite the reader to follow the flow of occurrences in their mind. This can serve as a template for future meditations. But before we begin, I also encourage the reader to try to identify what Paṭṭhāna conditions he can find in the process.

When food is eaten, it enters the stomach, where it is broken down into a semiliquid pulp. This pulp moves to the upper small intestine, an area rich in nerve endings called the solar plexus. The pulp contains various nutrients, which are absorbed by the nerves and transferred to the bloodstream, circulating throughout the body. If the blood contains too much energy or toxicity, the liver purifies it before it enters the brain. The lungs, meanwhile, add oxygen, burning off excess energy and transforming it into gas to be excreted through the mouth and nose. As the purified blood reaches the brain, the remaining balanced energy is transformed into mental energy, completing the physical cycle. This physical process in turn, mirrors the mind's transformation through meditation, wherein carnal thoughts and toxic emotions are refined into higher states of awareness—but only, if the mind processes what occurs in an equally organic and intelligent way.

Moreover, if consciousness, during meditation, closely follows and observes this entire process, it might realise, that it witnesses not just the physical workings of a healthy body but also the natural evolution of life itself — from coarse material elements to increasingly refined and intelligent forces, even to the attainment of heaven, the macrocosmic counterpart to the body's brain.

Yet another realisation might follow: in reality, neither the body nor the mind naturally follows this sequence on its own. As a result, the mind struggles to find rest within. Failing to discover peace inwardly, it seeks it outwardly, where only faint reflections of this inner perfection exist. This inability to find rest, either within or without, keeps the mind tethered to the cycles of nature, where it endlessly accumulates more material than it can purify, making it difficult to transcend coarse matter and crude life-experiences.

However, once the mind glimpses even a moment of heavenly light — a natural order refined and cultivated — it begins to cultivate both nature and experience, aligning them with that perfection it once encountered, even if only briefly.

Concluding, let us reflect on the meditative process by examining which Paṭṭhāna conditions were in play throughout this meditation.

As our mind has realised a certain correspondence between the physiological processes of the body and a certain spiritual ascension of consciousness, the Condition of "Correspondence" can easily be discerned. Secondly, as it is evident that the processes described are all interrelated, the Paṭṭhāna condition of "Interdependence", has been witnessed. Thirdly, as the processes described occurred in a sequence, the Paṭṭhāna condition of "Sequences" is evident too. Fourthly, as matter acted as fuel for energy, and energy as a fuel for mentation, the Paṭṭhāna condition of "Fuel" was

involved. And, perhaps lastly, as what appeared from the outside as a sequence, was for the meditative mind actually a path, the Paṭṭhāna condition of "Paths" too is apparent.



EXAMPLE ON MEDITATION IN RELATION TO THE CONDITIONS OF IMPERMANENCE AND LASTINGNESS

Here another example of how the knowledge of the Abhidhamma may help to systematically find a solution to problems in meditation.

For example, a meditator struggles to maintain a previously attained meditation state for more than a short period, for example, half an hour before it fades.

A guide, using Abhidhamma knowledge, may systematically investigate the possible causes by reviewing factors such as those in the 'Overview.' For instance, they might ask whether the problem is due to physical exhaustion (weakness of the base). Perhaps after half an hour, the meditator's physical energy might be depleted. In that case, the guide may recommend doing lighter tasks until the next day or next meal, then starting afresh. They might also suggest taking vitamins or medicine, depending on the situation.

On the other hand, if the issue seems to stem from emotional disturbance arising after a certain period of time, the guide might recommend further investigation to determine if it's a recurring issue or general restlessness. In the case of restlessness, they could advise slowly getting up and practicing walking meditation for a few minutes or longer until the emotional disturbance subsides.

If neither physical exhaustion nor emotional disturbance is the cause, the guide may find that the issue lies in a general weakness of faculties. The meditator may not be accustomed to sustained mental effort, causing the mind to fall back into bhavanga (life-continuum) after short periods of concentration. In this case, the guide might suggest cultivating mindfulness during daily activities and changing sense-sphere situations before attempting to build up capacities solely in meditation.

Another possible cause could be the meditation object itself. For example, mettā (loving-kindness meditation) might be recommended for someone with an angry temperament, mindfulness of breathing for a restless mind, asubha (recollection of the unbeautiful) for those prone to greed, or recollection of death for those who are mostly lazy. An experienced teacher could provide even more tailored instructions based on the meditator's specific temperament.

By systematically exploring these possibilities, there is a far greater chance of achieving longer-lasting meditation states than through blind experimentation or trial-and-error.

EXAMPLE ON USING PLEASURE AND PAIN AS A POWER IN THE TRAINING ON THE PATH

Practical focus: Body · Consciousness · Paṭṭhāna

Starting to comprehend the relation between body and mind, you will be able to properly work out how to track your path of training.

If you start feeling unpleasant sensations whenever you do something wrong, that is your success in practicing the

training of virtue[****]. If you start feeling unpleasant sensations whenever you feel inside yourself feelings of sluggishness, or unclarity, or non-uprightness, that is your success in the training of mind. And if you start feeling unpleasant sensations, whenever you perceive inside yourself views that are not leading to goodness, to harmony and to greater understanding, that is your success in training in right view.

Equally so the other way around. Whenever you see yourself doing deeds, which accord with your training in virtue, if you practice rightly, pleasant feelings will arise. Whenever you perceive inside yourself states or conditions, that accord with your training of mind, if you practice rightly, there will arise pleasant feelings. And so it is with the training in right view. When you experience inside yourself views or ways of looking at an issue that accord with your training in right view, if you practice rightly, pleasant feelings will arise in you.

From that point onwards, search for truth, always will go hand in hand with purification of body and mind, never solely by reading or listening. However, to purify body and mind it will be very helpful to know a little about how both work, for which the knowledge in this book should be quite useful.

[****] *Which is actually part of the root-condition (Hetu-paccaya) of the Paṭṭhāna.*



EXAMPLE ON UNDERSTANDING STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Here is another real-life example where understanding Abhidhamma helps turn an unpleasant situation to one's advantage:

For instance, having experienced a conflict, a person, after having calmed down, reflects on what there is to learn from it. He examines the mental factors involved — both internally and externally — looking at his own reactions as well as those of the other person. Perhaps he finds in himself emotions such as anger, or fear, or bravery, or compassion. Or he might perceive within the other person mind states such as frustration, or distress, or meanness, or a tendency for sadism.

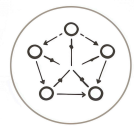
Having some idea about the mental situation, he tries to determine what plane of consciousness each individual was operating from. For example, when bullied or dominated, he might initially attribute the other person's actions to meanness of character and from there classify his consciousness as akin to a Yakkha (or Asura) demon.

While, if he himself has reacted with anger, or with fear, he may have to admit that he is susceptible to falling into lower realms, which at least can inspire a greater sense of urgency for spiritual development.

If however, he is able to calmly see the situation in terms of mental and kammic conditions, he may recognize his own response as aligned with the faculties of the devas, indicating that he has tuned into higher planes of consciousness.

After evaluating the mental aspects, he may also turn to the physical conditions. For instance, he may assess the underlying physical conditions influencing both individuals. Perhaps he was physically weak, with his kamma-born matter poorly supported by nutriment, while the other person was strong. As a result, he made compromises or underperformed compared to his usual capacity.

By learning to assess such conditions, a person gradually understands where he stands spiritually—what his strengths and weaknesses are. With this awareness, he can make better judgments, not only about himself but also about others. Hence, he begins to recognize when he can trust himself and when he still needs to rely on outside feedback, such as teachers or spiritual authorities. This deeper understanding confirms the value of his Abhidhamma studies, demonstrating how truly fruitful they can be in navigating life's challenges.



APPLICATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE 5 NIYAMAS

Once a person has acquired an understanding of the Niyāma, he may order each item of importance under the functionings of those laws. That is, how anything that he would like to understand properly, is working out or is functioning under the governance of each of those laws.

This principally can be done with anything that a person can conceive of and anything that a person would like to understand on a philosophical level. Examples of that might include relationships, hobbies, beliefs, or occupations for earn-

ing a living. Here I give one example of how religion may be comprehended through the understanding of those five Niyāma.



RELIGION UNDERSTOOD IN RELATION TO DIFFERENT NIYAMAS

Religion under the first Law of Physical Matter

A religion that is functioning entirely only under the first law of physical nature, is a religion that is purely based on imitation (of what is seen, heard, etc.), on rituals and mere outer observances. Its members will be so only by force of some external circumstances. While its internal organisation will be only held together by the selfish drives of individuals who seek only personal benefit from cooperating with others.

Religion under the Law of Life

A religion under the second law of "life", is a religion that is focused on community work, internal harmony within a community, more intimate relationships with other members of the religion, as well as with things like the growth of the community and the spreading of the tradition or religion. Other internal factors where the essential factors of this law are worked out, are things like a thinking of exchange of the items of the religion for material improvement (following the essential drive for the appropriation of food), that is for example, the giving of Dhammatalks in exchange for food.

Religion under the Law of Mind

A religion is for the most part functioning under the law of mind, when the study of religious texts, the contemplation of religious topics and the acquisition of religious knowledge is becoming the essential element within the religion.

Religion under the Law of Kamma

When the knowledge of the religious doctrines is having a definite effect on the internal organisation of the religion and the minds of its members, and thus the organisation as a whole is starting to acquire a definite direction based on its doctrines, it is coming under the law of kamma, or is working in accordance with the law of kamma.

Religion under the Law of Dhamma

When the members of the religion, following a religious training, acquire a universal understanding of life or existence that is in conflict with none and nothing, the religion may be said to have come under the law of Dhamma, or has begun to function in line with the law of Dhamma.

Such way of considering is of course far more fruitful, when applied to one's own religion. For example with Buddhism. There we have the Buddhism of mere imitation and outward observances, the Buddhism of a happy and peaceful life, the Buddhism of studying and realising truths, the Buddhism of following through with one's realisations of truths, and the Buddhism of bringing that to a degree of perfection that no untruth is left. Thus, nothing being left, that could become defiled again.

And considering in this way, the laws of existence will become ever more clear and thus one's actions, thoughts and speech will be more easily disentangled from the lower laws and made more swiftly to align with the laws of a higher order.



THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL

Good begets good, bad begets bad. Most people, at the very least have heard such saying.

Yet, although there may be situations in life where it is quite obvious what is good and what is bad, many times in life we may come across situations in which it is difficult to tell apart which road or decision is the good one and which one is the bad, or even more often, which one is the bad, and which one is the worse road to take.

The question of good and evil might be one of the oldest and one of the most important of religious and philosophical problems there ever was. Here only a brief suggestion of how a comprehension of the five Niyāma may allow a person to get a handle on this most fundamental of philosophical issues:

Under the first Law of Physical Nature good is what everyone does and bad is not doing what everyone does.

Under the second Law of Life, good is what leads to pleasure and growth of life, bad is, what leads to displeasure and in the direction of death.

Under the third law, the Law of Mind, good is, what leads to greater clarity and understanding, bad is, what leads to confusion and stupidity.

Under the fourth law, the Law of Kamma, good is, what leads to greater power of the will, that is, greater capacity to work with the law of kamma/ greater capacity to intent intelligently, bad is what leads to lack of willpower /lack of capacity to work with the law of kamma.

While under the fifth law, the Law of Dhamma, good is what purifies, bad is what corrupts and pollutes.

And comprehending Good and Evil in this manner, a person may have a better chance to follow the good he can comprehend, as well as to more skillfully resist what he thus understands to be the comparative evil in a certain situation.

It is with this kind of discernment — born from understanding the laws that govern all of existence — that the practical value of the Abhidhamma may perhaps be most clearly seen.

.....

In conclusion, we see that the Abhidhamma contains not only theoretical insights, but also a broad spectrum for practical application. From tools that aid in addressing life's challenges, conflicts, and emotional troubles, to attaining higher stages of meditation, and comprehending deep philosophical problems. The application is as vast as existence itself.



CONCLUSION

As a roundup, let us summarise again the essence of all we have said throughout.

As I have stated in the preface, my intention for writing this book was to write a more comprehensive, as well as a more practical Abhidhamma book, as compared to those books which are the standard works for Abhidhamma study. With that in mind, I began the first part, by presenting a step-by-step approach of contemplation, aiming to reveal a gradual path from material existence to spiritual consciousness.

I started with a consideration of the four elements as four primary qualities of matter, and continued with an exposition on the workings of the body, describing some of its most fundamental functions. Further I went on describing the link between the body and the mind, elaborated on the characteristics and functions of different phases of conscious processing, using a revised idea of the Abhidhamma teachings on the mental process; and concluded the first part with an exposition of 'The Chain-reaction/Sequence of Becoming', my translation of 'Paticca- Samuppāda' (which is usually translated as the 'Law of Dependent Origination'). In the second part, I tried to give an, I believe, entirely new outlook on the Paṭṭhāna conditions; showing how they can be used similar to mathematical operations (as plus, minus, multiplication and so on) to expand the basic items that were given in the first part, almost ad infinitum. That is, expanding them in such a manner that, ideally they can be used to comprehend any phenomenon of existence. The third part was a formulation of the most fundamental laws of existence, in Pali called Pañca Niyāma. These were expounded in a manner that their relation to the previous sections should have been obvious, in that they organically were building up on them.

And this was finally followed by the last, and fourth part, in which I tried to show, how a practical application of the understanding of the Abhidhamma system in actual life might

look like, or how such understanding can be used to solve various problems of actual life, as well as in meditation.

The author hopes, that at least some of his readers will have derived some benefit from this book. And with that, this book is brought to its close.

.....

Herein ends this book on Abhidhamma. May some beings gain some benefit from it. Thus is the authors aspiration.

The work commenced, the work fulfilled
But not for labours ending willed,
The labour is now turned over to the reader
The work of becoming five khandhas leader
The work of becoming perfected by one self
Of ruling the six universes space.
Each ending succeeded by another start
Let that not from the mind depart
Each thing that is in manifest existence
Will change its course, will loose persistence
Thus you now seek to make thy spirit's powers grow
That worldliness unceasingly canst disavow
But what are spirit's powers then?
Let's mention them now here again:
Tis inspiration, effort, mental clearness,
Which knows what the spiritual path last goal is
Tis unity and wisdom too
To find still more I leave to you



APPENDIX - FOOTNOTES

1. As I am ordained in the Theravada tradition, I use throughout this book the Pali designations, instead of the more common Sanskrit terms (like Karma, Nirvana). But as this book is for the most part practically oriented, I limit the use of Pali words to a minimum.

2. As will be seen throughout this book, and as has been mentioned in the preface, the author took in various cases a often quite liberal attitude to explaining Abhidhamma teachings; ever with the aim in sight of creating a more practical oriented Abhidhamma book.

3. Personally I can not see why it should be particularly important that a meditator sees particles in meditation. Which is one postulate of modern Vipassanā traditions. The word 'kalāpa', habitually taken to mean particle, actually more often has the meaning of 'group'. How the elements function as a group I have shown throughout various of the Paṭṭhāna-conditions. Nevertheless, we certainly agree, that it is not altogether unimportant to understand, that matter, as anything else, is not some fixed, unchangeable thing, and that anything big is made up of smaller things. Because obviously this understanding forms the basis for being able to modify matter, and thus making a start to modify one's being

4. As I believe that the given set of qualities may be more easily comprehensible to the english reader, I have given a slightly different set of words than tradition.

The traditional characteristics ascribed to each element are:

- Hardness, Roughness, Heaviness and Softness, Smoothness, Lightness as qualities of the earth element
- Flowing and Cohesion (Binding) as qualities of the water element

- Pushing and Supporting as qualities of the wind element and
- Heat and Cold as qualities of the fire element

The Abhidhamma books mention various other types of derived matter: such as colour, odour, flavour and nutritive essence (or energy). These are also just special combinations of these four elements. Apart from that, more complex forms of matter can be derived from a combination of these, plus mind or kamma.

For some explanation on how these four elements relate to or condition the mind, please refer to my other writing... "Elements and Rūpa"/ "Teachings on Matter".

5. THE TRADITIONAL LIST OF 28 MATERIAL PHENOMENA

The Four Primaries (Mahā bhūta)	
1. Earth-element (pathavī-dhātu)	3. Fire-element (tejo-dhātu)
2. Water-element (āpo-dhātu)	4. Wind-element (vāyo-dhātu)

	Concrete Derived Matter (nipphanna rūpa)		
1	Eye transparent-element (cakkhu pasāda)	Colour (vaṇṇa)	Nutritive essence (ojā)
2	Ear transparent-element (sota pasāda)	Sound (sadda)	Life-faculty (jivitindriya)
3	Nose transparent-element (ghāna pasāda)	Odour (gandha)	Heart-materiality (hadaya-rūpa)
4	Tongue transparent-element (jivhā pasāda)	Flavour (rasa)	Male sex-materiality (purisa bhāva-rūpa)

Concrete Derived Matter (**nipphanna rūpa**)			
5	Body transparent-element (kāya pasāda)	Tangible (poṭṭhabba)	Female sex-materiality (itthi bhāva-rūpa)

Unconcrete Derived Matter (anipphanna rūpa) /Subtle Indicators of Matter		
Space-element (ākāsa-dhātu)	Softness (mudutā)	Decay (jaratā)
Bodily Intimation (kāyaviññatti)	Wieldiness (kammaññatā)	Impermanence (aniccatā)
Verbal Intimation (vacīviññatti)	Growth (upacaya)	
Lightness (lahutā)	Duration (santati)	

According to tradition, concrete matter of any kind is made up of a minimum of 8 qualities. These are traditionally enumerated as the 4 elements plus colour, odour, flavour and ojā (energy or nutritive essence). The Vimuttimagga, the commentarial work upon which the Visudhimagga is largely based upon, lists tangibility instead of ojā. In the meditation manuals that were at my disposal (from which the above table is derived), this quality was also mentioned. In a work on the 4 defining devices of characteristics, function, manifestation and proximate cause of matter, ojā also was only included further down the list, as the defining characteristic of physical food (kabalīkāro āhāro).

6. The three main types of flavour (sweet, sour, and salty) may perhaps best be distinguished by means of a combination of the elements ...Principally what makes any flavour strong or intense, is the fire element. Thus all are a composite of elements containing the fire element. Salty flavour is a compound of the earth and fire element. Sweet flavour is a

compound of the water and the fire element. And sour (and bitter) is/are a combination of the fire and the wind element.

7. One further example for illustration:

For example, might some sense-impression of "my mother", followed by a later sense-impressions of a certain difficult lesson in school and yet later still, by a strange sight of a dog that has been funnily dressed, ...become all mixed up when dreaming at night to form some elaborate story of my mother wearing a funny dress while, as my teacher, is giving me difficult lessons in school, perhaps while holding a dog on her arms.

8. THE TRADITIONAL LIST OF 52 MENTAL FACTORS:

Seven Universals (sabba·citta·sādhāraṇa)

1) contact (phassa)
2) feeling (vedanā)
3) perception (saññā)
4) volition (cetanā)
5) one-pointedness (ek·aggatā)
6) life faculty (jīvit·indriya)
7) attention (manasikāra)

Six Sundries (pakiṇṇaka)

1) application (vitakka)
2) sustainment (vicāra)
3) decision (adhimokkha)
4) energy (vīriya)
5) joy (pīti)
6) desire/ will (chanda)

Fourteen Unwholesome Mental Factors (akusala·cetasika)

1) delusion (moha)
2) consciencelessness (ahiri)
3) shamelessness (anottappa)
4) restlessness (uddhacca)
5) greed (lobha)
6) wrong view (diṭṭhi)
7) conceit (māna)
8) hatred (dosa)
9) envy (issā)
10) possessiveness (macchariya)
11) remorse (kukkuca)
12) sloth (thina)
13) torpor (middha)
14) doubt (vicikicchā)

Nineteen Beautiful Universals (sobhana·sādhāraṇa)

1) faith /inspiration (saddhā)
2) mindfulness /clarity (sati)
3) sense of honour (hiri)
4) conscience (ottapa)
5) non-greed (a·lobha)
6) non-hatred (a·dosa)
7) ever-evenness (tatra·majjhattatā)
8) tranquillity of body (kāya·passaddhi)
9) tranquillity of mind (citta·passaddhi)
10) lightness of body (kāya·lahutā)
11) lightness of mind (citta·lahutā)
12) flexibility of body (kāya·mudutā)
13) flexibility of mind (citta·mudutā)
14) wiliness of body (kāya·kammaññatā)
15) wiliness of mind (citta·kammaññatā)
16) proficiency of body (kāya·pāguññatā)
17) proficiency of mind (citta·pāguññatā)
18) rectitude of body (kāy·ujukatā)
19) rectitude of mind (citt·ujukatā)

Two Immeasurables (appamaññā)

1) compassion (karuṇā)
2) sympathetic joy (muditā)

Non-Delusion(a·moha)

1) wisdom faculty (paññ·indriya)

In the original Abhidhamma texts (specifically the Dhammasanghaṇī) the list of mental factors is concluded with: 'or whatever other (unmentioned) conditionally arisen immaterial phenomena there may be...', but it was later closed by the Commentaries' limiting it to the above given list of mental factors.

9. Once there is a definite connection established between the mind and the body, the life continuum will occasionally become interrupted and advert to the body or some other sense-object. This happens, because shortly after a persons rebirth linking, there happens a mental process of agreeing to the new life or new existence (bhāva-nikkhantika-lobha), thus there develops a certain response-ability towards the new body and the life apprehended through the senses. For more on that see section on Kamma and Vipāka under the Paṭṭhāna Conditions.

10. For a better understanding of the meaning of objects, please read the section on 'Object-condition' in the part on Paṭṭhāna. To elaborate on it here would mingle things up too much.

11. May be equally found under:
"https://www.highermindart.info/books/"

12. I have translated the pali word "bhavanga" sometimes as "life-continuum" and sometimes as "life-stuff" (that especially in regards to the vibrating bhavanga). The use of the word

"life-stuff" is meant to indicate, that the essential nature (or characteristic) of this part of the mental process is, that it is engaged with life problems and life experiences. This connotation and the idea behind it, I tried to show more extensively, in the later parts of the book (esp. in the part on the laws of existence, wherein it comes rather more under the "Law of Life" than under the "Law of Mind" and the "Law of Dhamma".)

A more literal translation of the word may be something like "that wherein one's life is rooted" or "that wherein one's becoming is rooted". Principally it is describing the same phenomena that in modern times is referred to as the subconscious mind.

13. The scheme laid out in here may be understood to be an elaboration of the older Buddhist scheme of the five khandhas (5 parts/constituents of a being). The correlation being as follows: The treatment of the 4 elements and that of the body relates to the rūpa khandha (often translated as the aggregate of matter). The short treatment on the life-element relates to the vedanā khandha ("feeling"). What is written about the life-continuum relates to the sankhārā khandha (usually translated as "mental formations" or "kammical formations"). In the treatment of this book, the two khandhas of saññā ("perception") and viññāna ("consciousness") are largely explained together. Perception (saññā) refers especially to the receiving part of the mental process, but it also exists as the perception of an object or idea during the process of thought. While viññāna or consciousness is principally referring to the entire treatment of the mental process, beginning with the "adverting to an object", thinking, intention, knowledge and intuition (treated hereafter).

14. Examples of various concepts in relation to different Planes of Existence

Concepts Regarding The 5 Sensory World

• I'm a man /woman/ monk, etc. (technically referred to as 'name-concept')

• A monk /man /woman.. should do such type of things, should learn such type of things

• These are my friends, those are my enemies

• Such are my duties, such and such things are my personal interests

• If I do this, I will get that result (breaking the law/ a rule, some person might reprimand me.., if I do things well, I may get more freedom)

• ...

Concepts Regarding The Fine Material Sphere Or Meditation In General

• 5 sensory existence/ experience is suffering

• There are things higher than the things of the 5 senses

• Peace and harmony are superior to fighting and conflict

• ....

• Having pleasant feeling in the body, anger or negativity is not likely to arise

• If the mind is collected, no desire for other (worldly) things will arise

• Pushing a little in meditation energy can be produced. Pushing too much, energy may quickly dissipate

• Repeated experiences of lightness and uprightness of the body

may change a person into an optimistic good character

• ...

Concepts Regarding Ultimate Things

• All physical matter is composed of particles
• The mind can be distinguished into various mental factors
• There is a definite sequence regarding (the occurrence of) mental phenomena
• There are various planes of existence, and they relate to the
various states of consciousness or ways consciousness can function
• ...

15. Ideas like 'loving kindness for all beings', 'all-encompassing compassion' and 'unconditional goodness' or 'totalities' like the kasinas (f.ex. fire-kasina for those who have much kamma along the line of fire-worship, earth for those who could evoke all-encompassing perceptions of earth (mother earth etc.), colours like white, which could produce all-encompassing perceptions of purity; or yellow...reminding of gold and thus divine-splendour, etc.)...were in ancient times the more commonly used. Yet, in modern times, were on the one hand side inspiring ideas are much more widespread and on the other hand psychological knowledge is at least to some degree common good,...a more comprehensible set of conditions in regards to understanding the meaning of mental development and the prerequisite for attempting to understand higher Dhamma-ideas may be, that a person at least occasionally is feeling himself at one with his higher ideals, plus that he has a general habit of contemplating inspiring topics.

I have elaborated a bit more on the subject of concepts in another piece of writing titled 'Concepts', for further explanation on the subject one may refer to that. One may see also the post on Time for the following chapter.

16. In the case of both conversion to a group, or true initiation, there is the establishment of a connection with some bigger force.

But in the case of a real initiation there will be some form of supernormal* experience which gives a person a higher than ordinary perspective on life on the one hand and on the other, a system of reference for where such experience fits in the scheme of things (so as to know how to continue).

Some of the main points that a good initiation should seek to initiate in an aspirant are:

- An understanding about how phenomena of different orders relate to one another
- An understanding of certain conditional sequences (in regards to samsara...the cycle of regenerating suffering)
- An understanding of the sequence of the path out of suffering (out of mechanical life)
- Initiation of a habit of introspection and of seeking a direct experience of the inner world

** Yet, what is normal and what super-normal perhaps will have to be considered in dependence of a persons general condition*

17. Generally it is important to understand that formalised (especially short-time-) meditation courses, have as such little to do with attainments, their central purpose being initiation. Attainments being a rather personal thing, which may become to some degree classifiable through knowledge of the different stages of meditation.

18. It took me a long time to in any way get used to the designation of fine-material consciousness (there is an alternative rendering of form-sphere consciousness which seems even worse), but that is the Abhidhamma designation for anything related to experiences that are subtler (and purer) than mere sensory experiences. One may say, that the bot-

tom end of the fine-material element delineates all experiences of Qi or Prana, providing the basis for the mental factor of sustainment (the second Jhāna factor, treated later on), while at the upper end it has become so refined, that it gives way to pure mindfulness and spiritual vision.

19. The reason why I tried to find another term for "Dependent Origination" is that the term "Dependent Origination" does not really capture the whole sequence described. It basically only captures how one link in the chain is related to the previous one (B arises from A; C arises from B; etc.). That's why, in this writing, I for the most part, opted for "Sequence of Becoming" instead. In distinction to the former term, "Becoming" implies a process — in this case the process from ignorance to suffering (A to Z). Hence, I feel it is a better pointer to the larger picture of this teaching.

20. For more examples, one may see my article 'Dependent origination applied', to be found on my website.

21. I admit, that my explanations and often also translations of the Paṭṭhāna conditions are very different from the traditional ones. It took me a long time to conceive of words which appear to be still quite in accordance with the pali names, while being at the same time productive of meaning. Traditionally it is said that although there are 24 Paṭṭhāna conditions, there are at least three pairs, which are identical in meaning and differ only in the letter. The traditional explanations of each of the 24 Paṭṭhāna conditions is no less bizarre and confusing, making the whole system look like as if its only use is to give complicated names to the most petty and arbitrary things. Thus, for my take on that, I again refer the reader to the Practical Example 'Using the Sequences Condition to work out a better understanding '.

The List of the Twenty-four Conditions in Pali and English:

(Note: A Companion booklet with detailed explanations about the retranslations in this book and their relation to tradition can be found on the author's website.)

(1) hetupaccayo	(1) root condition
(2) ārammaṇapaccayo	(2) object condition
(3) adhipatipaccayo	(3) predominance condition
(4) anantarapaccayo	(4) proximity condition
(5) samanantarapaccayo	(5) contiguity condition
(6) sahajātapaccayo	(6) conascence condition
(7) aññamaññapaccayo	(7) mutuality condition
(8) nissayapaccayo	(8) support condition
(9) upanissayapaccayo	(9) decisive support condition
(10) purejātapaccayo	(10) prenascence condition
(11) pacchājātapaccayo	(11) postnascence condition
(12) āsevanapaccayo	(12) repetition condition
(13) kammapaccayo	(13) kamma condition
(14) vipākapaccayo	(14) result condition
(15) ahārapaccayo	(15) nutriment condition
(16) indriyapaccayo	(16) faculty condition
(17) jhānapaccayo	(17) jhāna condition
(18) maggapaccayo	(18) path condition
(19) sampayuttapaccayo	(19) association condition
(20) vippayuttapaccayo	(20) dissociation condition
(21) atthipaccayo	(21) presence condition
(22) natthipaccayo	(22) absence condition
(23) vigatapaccayo	(23) disappearance condition
(24) avigatapaccayo	(24) non-disappearance condition.

The author of this book has some reason to believe, that the translators of these terms were not much wiser than the author himself regarding the subject matter. The translations given above are from Bhikkhu Bodhi's Abhidhammattha-

sangaha. There do exist alternative translations, some of which are better then the above.

Here some explanatory remarks from the same source:

Proximity condition (4) and contiguity condition (5), according to tradition, are identical in meaning and differ only in the letter.

Absence condition (22) and disappearance condition (23), too, is a pair of conditions, which are said to be identical in substance but differ merely in the letter.

And so it is with, presence condition (21) and non-disappearance condition (24): These too, are two conditions that are said to be identical in meaning and differing only in the letter.

22. From this treatment, which is somewhat out of the traditional line, it will become clear that according to the authors understanding, 'ultimate truth' is not concerned only with abstract ideas, as mental processes or particles of matter, but rather is about 'timeless truths', that are not obscured by relative circumstances.

23. For a slightly different treatment of the subject 'Fuel', one may read also my blog post 'Continuity'

24. The Pali terms for the 22 Indriyas are:

1. eye: cakkhu
2. ear: sota
3. nose: ghāna
4. tongue: jivhā
5. body: kāya
6. mind: mano
7. femininity: itthi
8. masculinity: purisa

9. vitality: jīvita
10. pleasant feeling: sukha
11. painful feeling : dukkha
12. positive mindedness: somanassa
13. negative mindedness: domanassa
14. neutrality/equanimity: upekkhā
15. inspiration /faith: saddhā
16. exertion /strength: vīriya
17. mindfulness: sati
18. unity /concentration: samādhi
19. wisdom: paññā
20. the assurance: 'I shall know what I did not yet know!': anaññātañ-ñassāmītindriya
21. the faculty of higher knowledge: aññindriya
22. the faculty of him who knows: aññātāvindriya.

According to the traditional texts the powers of masculinity and femininity are actually excluded under this Paṭṭhāna condition. However, as I found the reason given for that as unreasonable as various other statements made by traditional texts, I have listed and explained them here as well in order to give a complete explanation of all the powers.

25. The Abhidhamma gives a more detailed view on the stages leading up to Jhāna:

Preparation and development of meditation practice

Parikamma: Preparatory phase for mental development — abandoning one's desires for things of the 5 sensory world, learning the rules of the place/of the meditation 'school' (learning about the environment).

Access (Upacāra): living in conformity with one's desire for mental development — acquiring the habit of regular formal meditation practice, living a simple, non-busy lifestyle, prac-

ticing celibacy, success in the acquisition of speech and action which are in line with mental development

Conformity (Anuloma): attaining to maturity — generally being successful in calming the mind, experiences of meditation signs (nimittas), ...

(Change of Linage) Gotrabhu: contemplation — the mind is dwelling on topics related to the fine-material sphere...or perceives internal phenomena with a fine-material-sphere consciousness

An alternative way of considering about those stages could be:

Beginning Stage (Parikamma): forcing the mind inward

Access...the mind of and on is successfully drawn inward but then gets drawn out again

Conformity...the mind is for longer periods successfully drawn inwards, yet with some amount of resistance remaining

Change of Linage...the mind is established inside, dwelling on the meditation subject

26. Thus it should be clearly understood that vitakka in this case does not mean thought, but rather application of consciousness. It is not thought which ceases when vitakka and vicāra are abandoned, but the need to apply and sustain consciousness in its involvement with the fine-material element. In the Jhānas (and even in the higher knowledges — abhiññana) not thought ceases, but thoughts related to the senses cease. Fine-material-sphere-thoughts will have a condition of far greater spaciousness to them and thus are more difficult to comprehend, but they are what helps to orient the mind in that sphere.

27. For the time aspect in this teaching, one may want to read my post on 'Time' or read variously on the subject in my other book 'Keys to the higher Life'.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bhikkhu Dhammānanda is a German born Theravada Buddhist monk. At the age of 20, he embarked on a journey across various countries in search of deeper spiritual meaning. At 23, he ordained as a monk in Myanmar, where he has spent over 15 years immersed in the study and meditation on the Buddhist scriptures, particularly focusing on the Abhidhamma. His teachings blend traditional Buddhist wisdom with practical insights for modern-day practitioners.

Bhikkhu Dhammānanda has written on Buddhist philosophy, spiritual growth, and meditation, aiming to make these teachings accessible to a contemporary audience. His works, including *Paramattha*, emphasise both scholarly and practical approaches to understanding the Dhamma.

He currently shares his knowledge through books, essays, and Dhamma talks available on his website:

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Companion materials for further study and clarification:



Book Resources Pages (All)

highermindart.info/paramattha-resources/



Paramattha Companion Booklet

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If you notice any mistakes (typographical or factual), have suggestions for improvement, or would like to share feedback, please feel free to contact me at:

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Also, as the study of Abhidhamma is particularly significant in Burma (Myanmar), I hope this book might one day be translated into the Myanmar language. If you are interested in assisting with this effort, please reach out via the email address above. The same applies if you are interested in translating it into other languages as well.