A Companion to Paramattha

An Elucidation of the Four Paramatthas and the Paṭṭhāna Conditions

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Preface

This booklet serves as a companion to Paramattha, accompanying the reader through questions of terminology, translation, and conceptual transition as they arise in the main work. It is not designed as a stand-alone introduction, nor does it aim to replace *Paramattha*. Rather, its purpose is to support, clarify, and orient the reader as they move through the main text.

In *Paramattha*, the focus lies on presenting a coherent experiential and philosophical framework grounded in the Abhidhamma. In doing so, the author has often departed—sometimes subtly, sometimes more visibly—from standard English renderings of Pāli terms as well as from traditional ways of interpretation. These departures were not made arbitrarily, nor for the sake of novelty, but to restore the experiential logic that traditional Abhidhamma texts themselves promise in their introductions. While many Abhidhamma works—particularly in their more complex sections like Paṭṭhāna—often descend into seemingly arbitrary technical expositions far removed from lived experience, their opening pages invariably describe the system as a marvelous, coherent framework capable of explaining the totality of existence and demonstrating the Buddha's profound omniscience.

Yet precisely at this point, a tension arises for the contemporary reader. If the Abhidhamma truly constitutes a unified and experiential explanation of existence, why does it so often appear fragmented, opaque, or detached from direct observation when encountered through its later technical expositions? The difficulty does not lie so much in the profundity of the system itself, but in the gradual loss of transparency between its technical language and the lived realities it is meant to illuminate. Over time, terms that originally functioned as

precise pointers to experience have hardened into abstract labels, and explanatory frameworks meant to clarify reality have become ends in themselves.

That hardening is what made *Paramattha* necessary: the author wrote *Paramattha* to recover the Abhidhamma's experiential logic and to make it usable for contemporary practitioners.

At the same time, *Paramattha* was not a simple restoration of earlier forms. In striving for clarity and practical use the author sometimes adopted renderings and conceptual moves that depart from standard translations and received exegesis. Those departures — made to restore lived meaning — naturally raise questions for readers familiar with Pāli or the classical Abhidhamma: "How did he move from this Pāli term to that English expression?" or "How does this exposition relate to traditional teachings?"

This companion booklet exists to answer those questions. It does not aim to simplify the Abhidhamma or to replace the rigor of *Paramattha*. Its purpose is to trace the principles, translation choices, and conceptual steps that took the author from Abhidhamma to *Paramattha* — to re-open the path from terminology back to experience, and from structure back to insight — so that readers may follow the transitions with confidence.

This text may therefore be read selectively. It is perfectly appropriate to consult it only when a particular term, condition, or conceptual move in *Paramattha* raises questions. In that sense, it is closer to a reference key than to a linear exposition.

For further orientation, two short animated introductions to these topics are available on the author's YouTube channel and may be useful: a presentation on the Four Paramatthas and one on the Paṭṭhāna

(links below*). Various Dhamma talks on many individual Paṭṭhāna conditions can be found both on YouTube and on the author's website (https://highermindart.info). The reader may use those materials as complementary orientation; precision and argument remain in *Paramattha* itself.

Part I: The Four Paramatthas as Domains of Analysis

1. Preliminary Note on Method

In classical Abhidhamma, the four paramatthas—rūpa, citta, cetasika, and nibbāna — are presented as ultimate realities, that is, irreducible constituents of experience and existence. In *Paramattha*, this fourfold framework was retained, but it was employed in a functional and explanatory manner, rather than as a strictly exhaustive ontological scheme.

Accordingly, the paramatthas were used there as domains of analysis: reference axes that clarify where a phenomenon belongs and at what level it is being described. Not every structure discussed in *Paramattha* maps one-to-one onto a single paramattha. In particular, mental processes are treated as dynamic configurations that span several domains rather than a part of one ultimate category.

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* **Videos:**
The Four Paramattha: https://youtube.com/watch?v=qus_bwjU2b4&si=ICUBUvqjpyxTMhb4

The Paṭṭhāna: https://youtu.be/YtXSwitT7DQ?si=PYAmeRwTYh8Rg8Yr

1. Rūpa — The Material Domain

Rūpa refers to the material aspect of experience, including physical elements, sense organs, and sense objects. In Abhidhamma (both traditionally, as well as the author's exposition of it), rūpa is not only treated as inert substance, but essentially spans the domains that in modern terms we call inorganic and organic matter.

In *Paramattha*, the domain of "rūpa" is usually divided into:

- the 4 elements
- The life element
- The senses and
- The body as a whole (including bodily organs and bodily processes)

A Note on the Life Element

In traditional Abhidhamma expositions, the life-element (in Pali — Jīvitindriya) does not occupy as central a role as in the exposition given in *Paramattha*. The reason it is given that more central role in there is simply because it has a central role in lived experience and even more so in meditation. Furthermore, it serves as an essential building block for more complex material phenomena such as bodily processes.

The essential progression is:

Four elements

➞ Life element

➞ Bodily processes

➙ (via hormones etc.) ➙ Emotions and other mental processes

2. Cetasikas — Mental Qualities or States

In *Paramattha*, Cetasikas are treated primarily as mental qualities or states, such as:

Greed

Wisdom

Confidence

Intention

Attention

And so on...

They answer the fundamental question: With what qualitative tone, tendency, or orientation does experience occur?

In *Paramattha*, the idea of cetasikas or mental factors is not treated as a category entirely separate from the other paramatthas. Instead, they are embedded in a larger systemic progression:

Four Elements

➙ Life Element

➙ Bodily Processes

➙ Production of Hormones and Other Phenomena

➙ Mental Factors (Cetasikas)

➙ Mental Processes (to be expounded afterwards)

Cetasikas give texture, value, and direction to experience and a large portion of them may be more or less easily sorted into two divisions: Wholesome and Unwholesome.

3. Citta (Viññāṇa) — Consciousness as a Mode of World-Relation

In classical Abhidhamma, the term citta is used as the primary analytic designation for moments of consciousness. In many contexts, however, the same reality is also referred to as viññāṇa, particularly where the aspect of cognizing or object-relation is emphasized. Thus expressions such as kāmāvacara citta, rūpāvacara citta, or arūpāvacara citta may, without altering their referent, be read as kāmāvacara viññāṇa, rūpāvacara viññāṇa, or arūpāvacara viññāṇa.

In *Paramattha*, the author largely avoided usage of Pāli terms. Nevertheless, it may be worth noting that the author himself, in many ways, regards the second term (viññāṇa) as superior for his own understanding of what is commonly translated as "Consciousness."

Consciousness (Citta/Viññāṇa) in *Paramattha* is understood as an individual way of experiencing the world, that can to some degree be classified in accordance with the planes of existence that form an integral part of Buddhist Cosmology.

Hence, when talking about consciousness in Abhidhamma, it is essential to talk about different "worlds" or conditions of existence that can be inhabited by a being and hence that can be experienced by consciousness.

The traditional classification of consciousness into eye-, ear-, nose-consciousness, etc., falls in this system under the "heading" of sense-sphere consciousness.

Besides, in the traditional classification of consciousness, the first term is usually translated as “consciousness in the sphere of desire” (kāmāvacara citta/kāmāvacara viññāṇa). In *Paramattha*, this is divided into two distinct categories:

Consciousness in the sphere of pain (a consciousness that distinctly corresponds to lower spheres of existence such as hell and ghost realm), and “sense-sphere consciousness”.

The change is made, because the author believes that this division is more intuitive and practically very useful and relevant.

This paramattha answers the question: “What kind of world is being lived in or disclosed here?”

Viññāṇa is not merely awareness, nor is it reducible to a collection of mental states. It provides the contextual field within which cetasikas arise and function.

A Note on Classification:

Readers familiar with traditional Abhidhamma may notice the absence of the detailed 89 (or 121) types of consciousness. This omission is intentional. The traditional scheme's distinctions—such as "prompted vs. unprompted," "wholesome vs. unwholesome," or "greed/hate/delusion-rooted"—are not discarded, but are instead addressed functionally through the Paṭṭhāna conditions.

For example, the qualities that define a consciousness as "rooted in greed" are more dynamically explained in the section on Inner Establishments (Root Condition). By treating these as conditional factors

rather than static labels, the system remains more intuitive and less prone to redundancy.

3.1. The Mental Process — A Sequence of the processes of consciousness

"The Mental processes" in *Paramattha* refers to a cognitive sequence, which begins with what in modern times would be regarded as "unconsciousness"[†] (stream of consciousness—in Pāli: *Bhavaṅga-citta*), and runs through a sequence of gradually increasing conscious life:

1. Dream Consciousness (*Vibrating Bhavanga—Bhavaṅga Calana*)

2. Gradually Awakening (*Arresting the Autonomous/Automatic Life Stream—Bhavaṅgupaccheda*)

3. Consciousness of Sense Objects[‡] (*Sampaṭicchana*)

4. Investigation of the Same (*Santīraṇa*)

5. Determining (Giving Them a Name) (*Votthapana*)

6. Thinking About Them (*Javana*), which includes:

   Intention and hence Karma Formation

7. Memorization (*Tadarammana*)

This "mental process" is not treated as an additional *paramattha*, nor is it confined only to the category of consciousness. Instead, it is un-

[†] It should be noted that in Buddhism consciousness is a continuum and therefore a person can never be “unconscious” in the sense of “entirely without consciousness”. In Buddhism consciousness flows on even in deep sleep or in coma.

[‡] 5 Door Adverting (*Pañca-dvārāvajjana*) in *Paramattha*, for simplification, is essentially merged with consciousness of sense objects

derstood as a relational process that unfolds over time and spans multiple domains of reality.

More precisely, "the mental process" is a dynamic configuration in which:

- *Viññāṇa* provides **orientation**
- *Cetasikas* provide **qualitative content**
- *Rūpa* provides **sensory and bodily conditioning**

"The Mental process" therefore sits between *viññāṇa*, *cetasikas*, and to a slightly lesser degree *rūpa*, not ontologically, but functionally. It describes how consciousness and mental qualities interact, develop, and condition one another in lived experience (which is largely represented by *rūpa*).

4. Nibbāna — The Transcendent Reality

Nibbāna is treated as a transcendent reality that does not belong to any of the above domains. It is neither a mental state nor a refined mode of consciousness.

Nibbāna lies outside all configurations involving:

- rūpa,
- cetasikas,
- viññāṇa,

Understanding these domains and their conditional interplay does not cause Nibbāna, but it is a necessary condition for its realization, insofar as it removes:

Confusion

Misidentification

Misplaced appropriation

Nibbāna marks the limit of conditional explanation.

Note:

In the Paṭṭhāna part of *Paramattha* the category of nibbāna is treated more broadly — not only as the transcendent, unconditioned reality, but also as the field under which practical elements of the path and the progressive conditions that lead toward liberation are grouped and discussed.

I I. The Paṭṭhāna — The Grammar of Insight

1. The Paṭṭhāna as a Bridge from Experience to Metaphysical Principle

The four *paramatthas*—whether as presented in *Paramattha* or in tradition—define the fundamental constituents of existence. They serve as the necessary **vocabulary of insight**. However, a vocabulary alone does not constitute a language. A list of constituents is not yet an explanation of life.

The discussion that follows the first part therefore naturally should shift from domains of experience to general principles: from classification to conditionality. Therefore the *paramatthas* are followed by the **grammar of insight**: the relational principles described by the 24 Paṭṭhāna conditions.

To better understand why certain Paṭṭhāna terms were reinterpreted in *Paramattha*, it is important to keep the broader aim in view. The intention of *Paramattha* was not merely to refine the analysis of experience, but to develop a coherent system that runs from direct phenomenological observation to more general metaphysical principles. Within this movement, the Paṭṭhāna occupies a pivotal position. It functions as the bridging link between the structures of lived experience discussed previously and the universal principles that were articulated in the part that follows the Paṭṭhāna — the doctrine of the five Niyāmas.

It is precisely this dual applicability that makes the Paṭṭhāna both powerful and difficult to translate: its principles are abstract enough to apply widely to all domains of existence (Matter, Mind, Conscious-

ness, and Enlightenment), yet concrete enough to be observed directly in lived experience.

2. The Paṭṭhāna conditions

What follows is an enumeration of the twenty-four Paṭṭhāna conditions in traditional order. Each Paṭṭhāna condition is first summarized in accordance with how it is explained in *Paramattha* and then elucidated to show how that explanation relates to the traditional treatment of the condition.

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On the next page you will find a reference table comparing the traditional translations of the Paṭṭhāna conditions with those given in *Paramattha* with a small summary of its meaning given in *Paramattha*

Pali	Traditional Translation	Personal Retranslations	Summary
(1) hetupaccayo	(1) root condition	(1) inner establishments	(1) shifts focus from a single “root” moment to stable, internal configurations that shape virtue, vice, and character.
(2) ārammaṇapaccayo	(2) object condition	(2) object / support	(2) reframes “object” as a sustaining anchor that stabilizes consciousness, not just something known
(3) adhipatipaccayo	(3) predominance condition	(3) ruling / governance	(3) distinguishes external versus internal governance; highlights how will, effort, heart-mind, and inquiry direct experience
(4) anantarapaccayo	(4) proximity condition	(4) combination	(4) emphasizes seamless conjunction without gaps; foundations for creative synthesis and new configurations.
(5) samanantarapaccayo	(5) contiguity condition	(5) sequence	(5) stresses ordered progression where later states depend on former placement in a clear sequence.
(6) sahajātapaccayo	(6) conascence condition	(6) synchronicity	(6) factors that arise together function as a unified constellation, not by temporal priority alone.
(7) aññamaññapaccayo	(7) mutuality condition	(7) correspondence	(7) relates disparate domains by meaningful structural likenesses, enabling cross-domain insight without collapsing differences.
(8) nissayapaccayo	(8) support condition	(8) interdependence / interconnectedness	(8) everything is embedded in a web of relations; phenomena condition one another within relational systems.
(9) upanissayapaccayo	(9) decisive support condition	(9) foundation	(9) grounding conditions that must be in place for phenomena to arise and persist; not a direct cause but a proximate base.
(10) purejātapaccayo	(10) prenascence condition	(10) latency	(10) potential that has not yet manifested; latent capacities can express when conditions converge.
(11) pacchājātapaccayo	(11) postnascence condition	(11) manifestation	(11) emergence of definite form and relational impact; realization of latent potential with form and duration.

(12) āsevanapaccayo	(12) repetition condition	(12) repetition	(12) repeated enactment strengthens patterns and makes them more automatic across matter, mind, and consciousness.
(13) kammapaccayo	(13) kamma condition	(13) kamma	(13) intention shapes future potentials; how volition configures what can arise.
(14) vipākapaccayo	(14) result condition	(14) result	(14) the fruits of past kamma ripen in the present and shape future experience; not a separate force but patterned outcomes.
(15) ahārapaccayo	(15) nutriment condition	(15) fuel	(15) maintenance and intensification of processes through what feeds them (food, contact, volition, consciousness).
(16) indriyapaccayo	(16) faculty condition	(16) capability / power	(16) when body and mind are integrated, functioning capacities (senses, attention, mindfulness, insight) become active
(17) jhānapaccayo	(17) jhāna condition	(17) meditation	(17) meditative states condition the direction of mental development toward higher stability and unification.
(18) maggapaccayo	(18) path condition	(18) path condition	(18) directionality and consistent tendencies that shape thought, action, and energy flow toward a goal (worldly or spiritual).
(19) sampayuttapaccayo	(19) association condition	(19) attraction	(19) compatible factors cohere into functional wholes; attraction aligns tendencies toward constructive unions.
(20) vippayuttapaccayo	(20) dissociation condition	(20) repulsion	(20) dissimilarities are kept apart to preserve order and differentiation; repulsion preserves system integrity.
(21) atthipaccayo	(21) presence condition	(21) being / presence	(21) mere presence can condition phenomena; availability itself can shape possibilities.
(22) natthipaccayo	(22) absence condition	(22) non-being / absence	(22) lack or withdrawal constrains what can arise, shaping potentials by what is not present.
(23) vigatapaccayo	(23) disappearance condition	(23) impermanence	(23) all conditioned phenomena ultimately dissolve; impermanence tempers attachment and invites discernment.
(24) avigatapaccayo	(24) non-disappearance condition.	(24) retention of identity	(24) phenomena persist for a time, granting continuity and the space for learning; long duration accumulates significance.

(1) Hetu-paccaya - Inner establishments

(traditionally: root condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha:

This condition is concerned with what happens when the mind takes root in the body or when an idea takes root in the mind. When the mind takes root in the body, the two begin to manifest certain capabilities. These may range from a very simple capacity to look after the body, as a growing infant is learning, to a capacity to control the emotions, as well as to master the mind faculty which in a human body works through the brain.

On the other hand, when an idea gets established in the mind, a being begins to manifest things like virtues and vices. If a positive idea or a positive set of ideas is established in the mind, a being slowly becomes virtuous. If, however, a negative or harmful idea gets established in the mind, a being starts to develop vices.

The purpose of understanding this paṭṭhāna condition is to gain insight into how virtues, character, and skills can be developed by gradually adapting the mind to the body and to its modes of functioning.

Relation to Tradition:

In traditional Abhidhamma, hetu is discussed in two closely related ways. On the one hand, there are the well-known three wholesome and three unwholesome roots. On the other, there is the classification of persons as two-rooted, three-rooted, or rootless, which already points beyond individual mental states to more enduring inner configurations.

The retranslation of hetu as “inner establishments” is intended to make this more explicit and descriptive. While the term “root” is technically correct, it often requires additional explanation when applied to lived experience. Virtues and vices, as well as inner capacities such as intelligence or wisdom (as in the case of a three-rooted person), are established internally in a way that shapes how experience unfolds.

These inner establishments are not fixed in an absolute sense, but neither are they momentary. They can be gradually transformed or uprooted, yet while they persist, they function as stabilizing factors that make certain patterns of perception, thought, and action more likely than others.

(2) Ārammaṇa-paccaya - Support

(traditionally: object condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

This condition concerns how consciousness is supported or anchored by objects encountered through the senses and the mind. The mind does not exist in a vacuum; it is continually conditioned by sense impressions that become ideas in consciousness. These ideas, together with the sense impressions that support them, stabilize and sustain the mind. Hence, the purpose of understanding this paṭṭhāna condition is first, to understand the contents of the mind, and secondly, to understand how to condition the mind by choosing wisely the objects we contact through our senses, as well as the ideas we allow our minds to hold.

Relation to Tradition

In Abhidhamma, ārammaṇa is commonly translated as “object,” meaning that which consciousness apprehends. However, the Pāli dictionary indicates that ārammaṇa denotes a “point of support” or “something that holds,” and is classified as a paccaya, i.e., a conditioning principle. The retranslation as “support” makes this function explicit: consciousness is not only a momentary phenomenon but can exhibit degrees of stability, continuity, and coherence. An ārammaṇa is what stabilizes consciousness by giving it something to hold on to, and around which it can organize itself.

The stabilizing function is often illustrated by traditional imagery, such as a staff or rope used by a blind or infirm person. The support does not initiate movement nor determine direction on its own, but without it, movement and orientation would collapse altogether.

In the same way, an ārammaṇa supports consciousness by providing something to rely on, even when it does not actively guide or motivate it. Viewed in this sense, ārammaṇa-paccaya does not merely designate “what is known,” but what upholds and stabilizes a particular mode of knowing. Consciousness may shift, wander, or fluctuate, but as long as a support remains operative, it does not disintegrate into incoherence.

This becomes especially clear in the case of conceptual supports. Ideas such as “my family,” “my possessions,” or even “my tradition” may not be present to the senses at any given moment, yet they can stabilize consciousness over long periods of time. For a consciousness largely confined to the sense-sphere world, such supports provide a persistent reference that maintains identity, concern, and orientation, even in the absence of immediate sensory stimulation.

Seen in this way, ārammaṇa-paccaya expresses a general principle of existence: consciousness tends to anchor itself by taking up supports

that allow it to persist in a relatively ordered and continuous manner. Different supports stabilize consciousness to different degrees and in various ways, but without some form of support, consciousness would lack coherence and remain fragmentary and unstable.

The traditional term “object” captures only part of this picture. By contrast, “support” emphasizes the sustaining and stabilizing function an ārammaṇa performs, making it clear that this condition is not about what is known any single moment, but about what allows consciousness to remain gathered, held, and maintained across moments.

(3) Adhipati-paccaya - Governance or Rulership

(traditionally: predominance or dominance condition)

Summary of the Condition as Interpreted in Paramattha

This condition concerns the principle by which experience is governed or ruled. At any given time, one factor comes to the forefront and assumes a directing role, shaping perception, behavior, and the overall pattern of life. In this sense, adhipati-paccaya explains how order and direction arise within experience.

Two fundamental forms of governance can be distinguished. External governance occurs when environmental factors or external objects exert a stabilizing or directive influence on consciousness. Internal governance, by contrast, occurs when inner mental factors take command and shape the course of experience from within.

In the case of internal governance, four principal factors may assume a ruling role: will (chanda), effort (vīriya), heart-mind (citta), and inves-

tigation/ enquiry (vīmaṃsā). When one of these becomes dominant, it does not merely influence isolated moments, but establishes a characteristic pattern of orientation, effectively governing the person's way of engaging with the world.

Understanding this condition therefore provides insight into how character, motivation, and life-direction are formed, and why different individuals may be governed by very different inner principles.

Relation to Tradition

Etymologically, the term adhipati derives from adhi ("over, above") and pati ("lord, master"), and literally means "ruler" or "governing influence." This sense of rulership is preserved in the traditional presentation of adhipati-paccaya as a condition of predominance.

Traditionally, two main modes of predominance are distinguished. External governance (ārammaṇa-adhipati) refers to situations in which an external object or support becomes dominant, stabilizing consciousness and directing attention. Internal governance (sahajāta-adhipati)§, by contrast, refers to the predominance of factors that arise together with consciousness itself and guide it from within.

In the case of internal governance, tradition identifies four possible ruling factors. When will (chanda) dominates, life is governed by intention, aspiration, and resolve. When effort (vīriya) dominates, perseverance, striving, and endurance take command. When heart-mind (citta) dominates, experience is shaped by creative, emotional, or imaginative engagement. When investigation (vīmaṃsā) dominates,

§ Sahajāta literally means "arising together." In this context, it points to the fact that consciousness and its governing mental factor are in line with one another, moving in the same direction and reinforcing a single mode of experience. The implications of sahajāta as a principle of internal coherence are examined in greater detail in a later chapter.

analytical thinking and critical inquiry become the ruling mode of consciousness.

These factors do not operate as external controllers imposed upon the mind. Rather, they synchronize with consciousness moment by moment, arising together with it and directing its movement from within. In this sense, governance is not coercive but structural: one factor comes to the forefront and organizes the whole field of experience around itself.

Seen in this way, adhipati-paccaya describes a universal principle of existence: wherever coherent activity arises, some form of governance is present. Whether dominance is assumed by an external support or by an internal governing factor, one element leads and the rest follow. Without such predominance, experience would lack direction and coherence; with it, a distinct pattern of life, action, and character inevitably emerges.

(4) Anantara-paccaya - Condition of Compoundedness/ Combination

(traditionally: proximity condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Anantara-paccaya, or the Condition of Compoundedness/Combination, points to the fundamental fact that nothing we experience through the senses is indivisible or fundamental in itself. All phenomena are composites: material things are built from atoms, which themselves are made of subatomic particles; our bodies are arrangements of organs, cells, molecules, and atoms. The mind is likewise a complex combination: sense impressions combine to form words, those words form ideas, ideas accumulate into knowledge, and emotions arise as

combinations of feeling, perception, and thought. The core insight is that apparent solidity and boundary-like distinctions are the product of countless interwoven parts coming together. Because things are compounded, new configurations can be created by recombining existing elements. This makes anantara-paccaya a foundational lens for understanding creativity, change, and the potential to reconfigure experience by rearranging the components that constitute it.

Relation to Tradition

Anantara literally means “without gap” or “without separation.” In *Paramattha* however, anantara-paccaya is understood not primarily in a temporal sense, but as expressing the principle by which multiple factors combine into a single compound reality.

Where there is no interval or separation, elements do not merely coexist; they adhere to one another and form a unit. Anantara-paccaya points to this absence of internal gaps, by which diverse components become tightly conjoined and function as a whole. It thus highlights the principle of compoundedness, rather than succession.

Understood in this way, anantara explains how complex formations can arise through close conjunction, without invoking a theory of momentary temporal succession.

(5) Samanantara-paccaya - Condition of Sequentiality

(traditionally: contiguity condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

This condition affirms that both mental and material phenomena often unfold in a sequence rather than in a single, isolated instant. Examples

include the stages of a human life—from infancy through maturity to old age and death—and the stages of consciousness as it develops—from utter unconsciousness to sense consciousness, up to higher states such as jhānas and immaterial attainments, including enlightenment experiences. Even the path to enlightenment is a sequence of steps or stages one travels in time in order to arrive at the final stage. Hence, samanantara-paccaya expresses a principle of determinate, ordered progression. The emphasis here is on sequence rather than on mere aggregation or combination. What comes later depends on what comes before, and also on its proper place within the sequence, underscoring that order is essential for processes to function.

The benefit of understanding this condition is that it can illuminate how we move from our present position toward a goal we wish to reach, helping us map a practicable path forward.

Relation to Tradition

In traditional Abhidhamma presentations, anantara and samanantara are often treated as near-equivalents, both referring to immediacy or contiguity, and thus may appear to describe principles that are either redundant, trivial, or both. Read purely in a temporal sense, this impression is understandable.

Paramatthas retranslation makes explicit two distinct conditions, each of which accords with the Pāli meaning of the term. Anantara names the absence of internal gaps by which multiple factors form a compound, whereas samanantara emphasises an ordered sequence in which one phenomenon must follow another in the correct position, without interruption.

(6) Sahajāta-paccaya - Synchronicity

(traditionally: co-arising condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

This condition is concerned with the fact that there is a possibility that two or more mental or material phenomena attune to each other or become synchronized. This can be seen in the formation of flocks of birds or in schools of fish moving about in a very synchronized manner. It can be seen in musicians playing together to produce a song. It is cultivated in meditation through attempting to synchronize the mind with the breath or with certain physiological processes, cultivating a sense of unity across processes that would otherwise unfold independently. It can also be perceived in those conditions that are usually called meaningful coincidences, which might have a psychic synchronicity as their base.

Understanding this condition invites us to notice how diverse factors can arise in concert, contributing to a coherent, integrated experience. This awareness supports a more harmonious relationship with life and with ourselves, as we recognize how parts of experience can align and reinforce one another rather than operate in isolation.

Relation to Tradition

The Pāli term sahajāta literally means “born together” or “arisen together.” In dictionaries it is linked to notions of shared origin (i.e.born as twins) or inseparable togetherness. In the Paṭṭhāna, sahajāta-paccaya points to a distinctive principle: certain factors condition one another precisely by arising together and functioning as a unified constellation. Their effectiveness does not lie in temporal priority or causal force, but in synchronic presence and mutual attunement. For

this reason, sahajāta was retranslated as “synchronicity.” This term is not meant symbolically or acausally, but in a strictly functional sense: it refers to factors that operate together, at the same time, and in natural alignment, such that they collectively sustain a coherent mode of experience.

Synchronicity differs from mere simultaneity. Many things can occur at the same time without forming a meaningful whole. Sahajāta-paccaya, by contrast, describes togetherness that is structurally significant. Like twin-born siblings, sahajāta factors are distinct yet inseparable in function, sharing a common field and shaping it jointly.

Seen in this way, sahajāta-paccaya expresses a fundamental principle of existence: that factors can condition one another simply by being naturally present together. When phenomena are born together, share the same field, and function in attuned simultaneity, their very togetherness becomes effective.

(7) Aññamañña-paccaya - Correspondence

(traditionally: mutuality condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Aññamañña-paccaya names the way things of very different kinds can be meaningfully related by finding one or ore shared characteristics. The condition is visible when we map familiar cycles or structures onto unfamiliar ones: the stages of a day (dawn to night) can illustrate the stages of a life (infancy to death); the four elements we find in the body — solidity, liquidity, heat, and motion — correspond to rocks or trees, rivers and rain, sunlight, and wind in the environment. Likewise, mental states such as greed, anger, or joy can be set beside whole planes of existence — from hellish suffering to heavenly joy — to

show how inner qualities and external destinations reflect one another.

The practical value is clear: correspondence lets us increase understanding by relating what we do not yet know to what we already do know. By recognizing structural or functional likenesses across domains, we gain intuitive grasp, analogical insight, and pedagogical tools for practice and teaching. In short: correspondence turns disparate phenomena into intelligible patterns.

Relation to Tradition

Literally “one to another,” aññamañña is classically explained as mutual support — the familiar image is of sticks leaning on one another. While this captures one meaning of the term, it does not exhaust its possible scope. In *Paramattha*, therefore, aññamañña-paccaya is understood as correspondence: the principle by which distinct phenomena stand in meaningful relational alignment. Rather than merely supporting one another, such phenomena mirror or reflect one another in structure or function, while remaining distinct.

Many functional aspects commonly attributed to “mutual support” were, in *Paramattha*, articulated through other conditioning principles (e.g. Condition of Supports, Condition of Foundations, etc.). Aññamañña-paccaya is therefore reserved for expressing correspondence itself as a unique and fundamental principle among the twenty-four. Understood in this way, it allows relations between microcosm and macrocosm, inner and outer processes, or different levels of organization to be seen as intelligible rather than accidental.

Correspondence is thus a thinking-tool as much as a metaphysical principle: it helps us see patterns, teach insight, and translate experience across scales without collapsing the distinctness of the things compared.

(8+9) Nissaya + Upanissaya - Interdependence & Foundations

(traditionally: support- and decisive support condition)

In traditional Abhidhamma, nissaya and upanissaya are usually translated as “support condition” and “decisive support condition.” While this distinction can be maintained within a scholastic framework, it tends to obscure rather than illuminate the underlying principles when the Paṭṭhāna is approached as a system of fundamental laws rather than as an explanatory catalogue.

In *Paramattha*[**], the notion of “support” was therefore not treated as a single vague concept, but articulated through several clearly distinct principles: orientation toward an object under the object/support condition (ārammaṇa), sustaining influence under the fuel condition (āhāra), and structural grounding and contextual embedding under the two principles discussed here.

(9) Upanissaya - Foundation

(traditionally: decisive support condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

This condition concerns the fact that all things are built on a foundation. Nothing simply stands on a void. Just as building a house requires a solid base, or pursuing work demands education and skills as

[**] Note: In earlier versions of Paramattha, nissaya was treated as foundation and upanissaya as interdependence. Further reflection led to reversing this assignment in order to achieve a clearer conceptual distinction. The present booklet adopts this refined interpretation.

its foundation, mental processes rely on bodily functions and experiences as their supporting structure. Similarly, the mind's activities too do not emerge in isolation, but are sustained by physical conditions, much like thoughts depend on prior ideas to develop into knowledge. Hence, recognizing this condition underscores that development — whether of virtue, skill, or insight — begins with strengthening the appropriate foundation; without it, efforts remain unsupported and unstable.

Relation to Tradition

The prefix upa- conveys nearness, contact, resting upon, or approach from below. In combination with nissaya ("reliance" or "resting"), upanissaya naturally suggests immediate grounding — that upon which something directly stands.

For this reason, upanissaya in *Paramattha* is understood as the principle of foundation. It refers to those conditions that function as a proximate ground, without which a phenomenon could neither arise nor remain present in the form it does. It is neither cause nor force. It does not act; it bears. It is the quiet fact that something must already be there for something else to stand.

(8) Nissaya - Interconnectedness

(traditionally: support condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

This condition concerns the comprehensive interconnectedness that binds all things within a web of relations. Nothing exists independent-

ly; all phenomena are embedded in mutual dependencies that condition their arising.

The air we breathe is exchanged with trees, food taken in is transformed and given back to nature, thoughts arise from external contacts while shaping the world through actions and speech. Within the body, nerves network everything, blood circulates to sustain parts, and energy fuels the whole. The mind, too, is interwoven with worldly inputs and outputs. We are constantly conditioned by our surroundings and, in turn, condition them, forming a cycle of interdependence.

The benefit of understanding this condition is profound: it fosters a sense of connection to life, others, and all beings, encouraging us to act as integrated parts of a larger whole rather than as isolated centers.

Relation to Tradition

Nissaya, without the prefix upa-, expresses reliance in a broader sense — not the immediate base beneath something, but the wider structure in which it is embedded.

For this reason, nissaya in *Paramattha* is rendered as interconnectedness/interdependence. It expresses that no phenomenon stands alone; every state depends on a surrounding web of conditions — language, culture, habit, environment, biology, karmic tendencies — that are not direct foundations but make the phenomenon conceivable and possible. This is not about proximate support, but systemic embeddedness: phenomena arise within relational systems that quietly condition what can occur.

The functional roles traditionally attributed to nissaya and upanissaya are not rejected here. Rather, they are distributed across distinct principles in order to preserve clarity and avoid redundancy. What is

gained by this redistribution is a system in which each Paṭṭhāna condition articulates a unique and irreducible principle, rather than multiple overlapping explanations of the same idea.

Seen in this way, foundation and interconnectedness are not competing notions of support, but two different dimensions of conditionality: one expressing ground, the other context. Both are necessary, but they operate at different levels.

(10–11) Purejāta- and Pacchājāta-paccaya - Latency and Manifestation

(traditionally: pre-nascence- and post-nascence condition)

Relation to Tradition

Purejāta and pacchājāta are traditionally translated as “pre-nascence” (before birth) and “post-nascence” (after birth). In the commentarial tradition, these conditions are commonly understood in a strictly temporal sense, as referring to phenomena that have arisen earlier or later.

However, little explanatory value can be drawn from the mere fact that one phenomenon has arisen before another. Temporal priority alone does not account for the way in which earlier conditions shape, contain, or make possible later developments. Moreover, the terms themselves lend themselves to a broader interpretation.

In *Paramattha*, these two conditions are therefore reinterpreted as expressing the complementary principles of latency and manifestation.

Here, “birth” (jāti) is not understood narrowly as biological birth, but more generally as entry into manifestation. What is “before birth” exists in a condition prior to manifest appearance; what is “after birth” has fully entered it. These conditions thus describe two distinct modes in which phenomena can be present and effective.

(10) Purejāta-paccaya - Latency

(traditionally: pre-nascence condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Purejāta-paccaya is understood as the condition of latency. Latency refers to the presence of potential that has not yet entered manifest form. What is latent is real, yet not explicit; it does not appear or act in a determinate way, but remains capable of later expression.

A seed holds the potential of a full-grown tree; an infant holds the potential of a mature human being. In both cases, what later appears is not created ex nihilo, but unfolds from a prior, unmanifest condition. Likewise, capacities, tendencies, insights, and dispositions may remain hidden for long periods, yet be fully capable of manifestation when conditions converge.

(11) Pacchājāta-paccaya - Manifestation

(traditionally: post-nascence condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Pacchājāta-paccaya is understood as the condition of manifestation. Manifestation refers to the state in which something becomes explicit,

determinate, and operative. What has entered manifestation appears under definite constraints: it has form, duration, and relational impact.

In manifesting, potential is narrowed into a specific expression, where some possibilities are realized and others excluded. What arises in this way can exert decisive influence, even though it depends upon what previously existed latently. Manifestation thus conditions later phenomena by making potential effective.

Significance of the pair

Latency and manifestation form an inseparable pair. Together, they articulate how phenomena may be effective either without appearing, or by appearing.

This distinction provides a coherent framework for understanding emergence without creation and disappearance without annihilation. It clarifies how potentials may suddenly become visible, and how what has entered manifestation may later withdraw again, leaving behind conditions for future arising.

Seen in this way, purejāta and pacchājāta name two fundamental conditions through which becoming can be intelligibly understood.

(12) Āsevana-paccaya - Repetition

(traditionally: repetition condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Āsevana-paccaya names the principle by which phenomena become strengthened, stabilized, or intensified through repeated occurrence.

What is repeated does not merely recur; it becomes more firmly established and more readily available.

This applies across all 4 paramatthas: bodily processes are shaped by repeated use, social and cultural forms persist through habitual enactment, and mental patterns — thoughts, emotional reactions, and skills — acquire ease or atrophy according to how often they are repeated. Each occurrence conditions the next, not by introducing novelty but by making the same pattern more fluent. Tendencies are reinforced, neural and habitual pathways are worn in, and responses grow more automatic. The practical upshot is simple and far-reaching: continuity is produced by recurrence; structure is maintained through use. What is repeated becomes established; what is not repeated fades.

Relation to Tradition

As noted above, the Pāli term āsevana carries the double sense of repetition and of practice or cultivation (frequenting). Traditional Abhidhamma treatments often emphasize āsevana on the mental level — how recurring thoughts and intentional practices build habit — but the term's lexical range supports a broader reading. In *Paramattha* this condition is therefore applied across the four paramatthas while preserving the canonical insight: regularity of enactment gives rise to stability. Read this way, āsevana-paccaya remains faithful to the Abhidhamma emphasis on repeated moral and mental cultivation, while also reminding us that repetition shapes bodies, behaviours, and social forms as surely as it shapes minds.

(13–14) Kamma- & Vipāka-paccaya - Intentional Action and Result

(traditionally: kamma condition and result condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Kamma-paccaya concerns the role of intentional action, or volition itself, as a condition that shapes future possibilities. Intention (cetanā) does not merely occur; it creates, strengthens, obstructs, or even destroys potential. In practical terms, a volitional act may generate entirely new potential for the future, reinforce tendencies already present, block certain possibilities, or dissipate latent tendencies.

This operation applies both to mental potentials (habits, dispositions, intentions) and to how those mental orientations can influence bodily and situational circumstances.

Vipāka-paccaya is the complementary side of this relation: the results or fruit of past intentional action as experienced in the present. Every intentional act bears consequences — sometimes immediately, sometimes later in life, and sometimes extending beyond a single lifetime. These consequences range in quality and intensity: wholesome actions tend to produce wholesome results, unwholesome actions tend to yield painful results, and mixed or indeterminate actions lead to correspondingly mixed outcomes.

Together, kamma and vipāka describe a dynamic continuity: intentional activity shapes what will be possible, and present experience reveals the outcome of past intentionalities. Presenting them together helps clarify that this is not a mechanical law of reward and punishment but a conditional polarity: intentional action conditions future unfolding, and experience is the unfolding of those conditionings.

Practically, awareness of this pairing supports ethical reflection and skillful cultivation: attending to intention alters the direction of future experience.

Relation to Tradition

The Pāli term kamma literally means “action” or “doing”. In the Buddha’s teaching, however, it is defined more precisely as intentional action, or often as intention (cetanā) itself. Hence, mere occurrence or movement does not constitute kamma; only action informed by volition does. Vipāka, literally “ripening” or “fruit,” refers to the results that ripen from prior kamma.

Traditional Abhidhamma and suttanta passages treat kamma and vipāka as two aspects of one system: ethical volition that conditions and the consequent experience that matures.

Doctrinally, presenting kamma and vipāka together makes explicit how conditional continuity across time is possible without a permanent agent: volitional acts plant tendencies that condition later states of consciousness, and those later states manifest as vipāka.

This model preserves moral responsibility while avoiding metaphysical speculation about a self. It also aligns with the Paṭṭhāna’s aim of showing precise modes of conditioning: kamma-paccaya describes how intention configures potential, and vipāka-paccaya describes how that configuration is realized in experience.

Practical takeaway: cultivating wholesome intentions and recognizing the shaping power of volition are central practices. By attending to cetanā and choosing skillfully, one practices not merely immediate restraint but the long-term conditioning of experience.

(15) Āhāra-paccaya - Fuel

(traditionally: nutriment condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Āhāra-paccaya expresses the principle by which an already existing process is sustained, continued, or intensified through what feeds it. Fuel does not bring something into being or serve as its foundation; rather, it maintains momentum and continuity once a process has begun.

This applies across the 4 paramatthas: physical food keeps the body going, recurring sensory contact keeps the mind engaged, volitional energy sustains intentional directionality, and consciousness itself provides the living continuity of experience. Because fuel only matters where a process is already operative, its effect is one of maintenance and intensification rather than origination.

Relation to Tradition

The Pāli term āhāra literally means “that which is taken in” and is commonly rendered as “nutriment.” In *Paramattha*, the term is re-translated as fuel in order to highlight its functional role: whatever a process consumes to persist. This makes plain that āhāra-paccaya is not merely about bodily food but about any intake that sustains continuity — material, sensory, volitional, or conscious.

The four kinds of fuel:

Physical food (kabaḷiṅkārāhāra) — fuels the continuity of the body.

Contact (phassa) — fuels ongoing sensory and mental engagement.

Volition/intention (mano-sañcetanā) — fuels the continuation of intentional directionality.

Consciousness (viññāṇa) — fuels the continuity of lived experience itself.

Each functions as fuel only where the corresponding process is already in motion; without that process, fuel has no sustaining effect.

The principle of fuel:

Āhāra-paccaya explains why habits, thought-streams, emotional patterns, skills, and life-processes persist: they are continually nourished. It names an irreducible mode of conditionality — maintenance and intensification through what sustains a process — distinct from repetition (which strengthens patterns by recurrence), from foundation (which provides the proximate ground), and from intention (which initiates or directs).

Recognizing āhāra invites practical attention to what we feed ourselves physically, mentally, and socially, because those inputs keep processes alive and intensify their future expression.

(16) Indriya Paccaya - Power or Capability

(traditionally: faculty condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

When body and mind are sufficiently integrated, they manifest distinct operative capacities. These range from the seemingly simple abilities of seeing, hearing, and moving, to more refined powers such

as sustained attention, meditative absorption, and higher forms of knowledge.

Indriya-paccaya refers to this principle: the arising and effective functioning of powers once a being has reached a sufficient degree of organization. Where appropriate conditions are present, capacities do not remain merely potential, but become actively operative.

Understanding this condition clarifies both what a human being is and what a human being is capable of becoming. It shows that abilities are not accidental additions to experience, but lawful expressions of an organized psycho-physical continuum. As integration deepens, more refined faculties can arise; as it weakens, capacities decline or disappear.

Indriya-paccaya therefore expresses the principle by which structured systems give rise to powers that enable perception, action, regulation, and higher development.

Relation to Tradition

Traditionally, indriya is translated as “faculty” and refers to operative capacities such as the sense faculties, the life faculty, the faculty of pleasure and pain, the faculty of mind, as well as spiritual faculties cultivated on the path.

In modern usage, however, the term “faculty” often suggests a static endowment or abstract classification, rather than an active and governing power. For this reason, in *Paramattha* the term is retranslated with an emphasis on power or capability, in order to stress efficacy, control, and functional dominance rather than abstraction.

Indriya does not merely denote a latent potential, but an effective capacity that actively governs, regulates, or commands a specific domain of functioning. This rendering brings into clearer focus what the

traditional lists already imply: that faculties are not passive features, but dynamic powers by which phenomena operate, regulate themselves, and achieve specific effects.

The five spiritual faculties, in particular, illustrate how such powers can be deliberately strengthened, balanced, and refined, culminating in higher forms of stability, insight, and liberation.

(17) Jhāna-paccaya - Condition of Meditation

(traditionally: jhāna condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Meditation refers to the gradual cultivation and refinement of consciousness through sustained inner training, ranging from deliberate effort and recollection to deeply unified and elevated modes of inner knowing. Jhāna-paccaya expresses the principle by which progressively refined mental states condition the further unfolding, stabilization, and elevation of consciousness.

This condition encompasses the entire meditative process, from the initial gathering of attention and regulation of effort, through increasing calm, clarity, and unification, up to the most subtle and exalted states of consciousness accessible through training.

Meditative development involves a continuous interplay between body and mind. Bodily processes — such as posture, breathing, vitality, and elemental balance — provide the supporting field in which mental refinement can occur, while mental factors such as directed attention, sustained engagement, joy, tranquility, and unification progressively shape and elevate the inner state.

Jhāna-paccaya also accounts for individual differences in meditative development. Variations in temperament, emotional constitution, and

cognitive inclination influence how refinement proceeds, which qualities mature first, and how unity is established. The condition therefore does not describe a single uniform attainment, but a lawful yet flexible pattern by which higher states of consciousness arise through cultivation.

Understanding this condition provides insight into the structure, dynamics, and attainability of higher consciousness, showing that such states are neither accidental nor arbitrary, but conditioned, cultivable, and inwardly intelligible — while remaining open to profound depth and mystery.

Relation to Tradition

Traditionally, jhāna is often explained as absorption or concentration upon an object, and is frequently narrowed down to the meditative attainments described in the commentarial tradition. While this presentation captures important aspects of collectedness and stability, it can unintentionally narrow the meaning of jhāna to object-fixation alone.

In the suttas themselves, jhāna is presented more broadly as a process of mental unification, purification, and refinement, accompanied by the calming of coarse activity and the emergence of increasingly subtle modes of awareness.

Etymologically, jhāna is related both to contemplating (jhāyati) and to burning or refining, suggesting an active inner transformation rather than a passive state of absorption. In this light, jhāna is best understood as a living process of integration, in which the mind becomes progressively unified, clarified, and inwardly luminous.

In *Paramattha*, jhāna-paccaya is therefore rendered as the condition of meditation, emphasizing not a fixed absorptive event, but the func-

tional role of refined and unified states of consciousness as conditioning forces within the entire trajectory of mental development.

(18) Magga Paccaya - Path

(traditionally: path condition)

Summary of the Condition as interpreted in Paramattha

Magga paccaya refers to the condition by which consciousness becomes oriented, such that mental activity no longer proceeds at random but follows a recognizable direction.

A “path” is established whenever choices, intentions, and responses begin to align consistently: deliberate decision, repeated inclination, or surrounding circumstances can all set a direction. Once a path exists, certain thoughts and responses arise more readily, alternative possibilities are increasingly excluded, and the chosen trajectory tends to self-reinforce by virtue of continued orientation.

A path can be worldly or spiritual, wholesome or unwholesome, consciously chosen or gradually imposed by habit and environment. It may refer to ordinary life trajectories (career, relationships) or to inner developments (habitual modes of thinking). It also includes energy pathways used in practice — for example, bodily energy channels attended to by meditators — which the mind may exploit to stabilise a particular direction of attention.

Where no path is established, mental life tends to be scattered and reactive; with a path, continuity, selectivity, and inner coherence increase. Thus magga-paccaya explains how consciousness comes to move along a line rather than merely responding moment to moment.

Hence in practice, understanding this condition can help to notice where we are going, as well as whether our path is chosen or inherited, and consequently make appropriate adjustments.

Relation to Tradition

Magga literally means “path” or “way.” In the Paṭṭhāna, magga-paccaya names how a settled direction of mind or life — a consistent way of acting, thinking, or attending — itself becomes a conditioning factor. Once consciousness takes a particular direction, that direction makes certain thoughts, feelings, and responses more likely; it shapes what follows without requiring a mysterious cause beyond ordinary habit and orientation.

The Noble Eightfold Path is a canonical, structured “way” in Buddhism that intentionally orders behavior, mindfulness, and wisdom. It is a useful, concrete instance of how a magga can be deliberately cultivated; Paṭṭhāna’s magga-paccaya, however, names the general conditioning role of such ways and need not be limited to this single canonical formulation.

Treating magga-paccaya this way keeps the classical sense but widens it: it is not limited to explicitly spiritual training nor to conscious choice alone. It encompasses physical paths, energy pathways, social and cultural routings, and the transmitted knowledge of earlier practitioners. Doctrinally, magga-paccaya shows how directionality conditions which tendencies prevail, and why learning established paths (or deliberately abandoning them) is central to ethical and meditative practice.

(19 - 20) Sampayutta- & Vippayutta-paccaya - Attraction and Repulsion

(traditionally: association condition and dissociation condition)

Summary of the Condition as Interpreted in Paramattha

The conditions of sampayutta and vippayutta express two complementary ways phenomena may relate to one another: the tendency of phenomena to come together and the tendency of phenomena to remain apart or repel. Taken as a pair, they explain why experience shows both coherent unities and enduring boundaries.

The shared idea is simple: some factors naturally cohere into functional wholes, while others resist conjunction because combination would disrupt their integrity. In *Paramattha*, these conditions are rendered as attraction and repulsion.

Attraction explains why compatible phenomena converge into coherent configurations, while repulsion explains why incompatible or disruptive combinations are prevented, and why boundaries endure.

(19) Sampayutta-paccaya - Condition of Attraction

(traditionally: association condition)

Where phenomena share compatible qualities, orientations, or functions, they incline toward conjunction. This principle is here called attraction.

Sampayutta-paccaya refers to the condition by which phenomena draw one another into functional conjunction by virtue of shared characteristics or mutual compatibility. Examples of this can be found in attraction between magnets (in the sphere of matter); in attraction

between opposite genders, as well as attraction between beings of a similar kind (in relation to mind); and in attraction toward particular objects or interests (in relation to consciousness).

Understanding this condition has practical significance: what a being is attracted to can be cultivated and transformed. Attraction can shift from unwholesome or unsuitable objects toward those that support clarity, wisdom, and inner development.

(20) Vippayutta-paccaya - Condition of Repulsion

(traditionally: dissociation condition)

Where phenomena lack compatibility, or where conjunction would undermine their own functional coherence, they remain apart. This principle is here called repulsion.

Where attraction binds, repulsion prevents collapse. Without it, structured systems — physical, biological, psychological, or cognitive — would disintegrate into an undifferentiated mass.

Repulsion as a Conditioning Principle

On the material level, repulsion is evident in forces that keep entities apart, such as like magnetic poles. In biological systems, it appears in defensive responses: immune reactions, avoidance of harm, and protective boundaries. In the mind, repulsion manifests as aversion, resistance, or withdrawal — the immediate sense of “this is not suitable.” This may arise toward external objects, internal states, memories, or patterns of thought.

In relation to consciousness, repulsion governs selective exclusion: the turning away from distractions, the refusal to engage certain mental

contents, or the relegation of incompatible experiences to the background.

Understanding this condition allows one to establish skillful limits, not only against external disturbances but also against unwholesome or destabilizing mental tendencies. Repulsion, rightly understood, is the structural counterpart to attraction, preserving differentiation and integrity within the flow of experience.

Relation to Tradition

Both the terms sampayutta and vippayutta derive from the Pāli root yuj, meaning to yoke, bind, or join. Sampayutta literally means “yoked together,” while vippayutta carries the sense of being set apart, or “dis-yoked.

In the traditional Abhidhamma exposition, sampayutta and vippayutta are largely explained in terms of mere association and dissociation: whether certain phenomena arise together or not. While technically serviceable for classificatory purposes, this manner of explanation has very limited explanatory value. It describes the fact that phenomena coincide or remain separate, but offers little insight into why coherent unities form at all, or why boundaries persist.

For this reason, the traditional presentation often remains descriptively correct yet conceptually sterile. It catalogues patterns of conjunction and separation without identifying any general principle that could account for their operation across different domains of reality.

The reinterpretation adopted in *Paramattha* arises from this limitation. Rather than treating sampayutta and vippayutta as neutral labels for coincidence and non-coincidence, they are here understood as expressions of attraction and repulsion — that is, as universal relational tendencies by which phenomena are drawn together or kept apart.

This rendering does not deny the traditional observations; it explains them. What the Abhidhamma records as repeated patterns of association is intelligible as attraction. What it records as persistent separation is intelligible as repulsion. These principles operate not only in mental factors, but throughout nature — in matter, in life, in mind, and in consciousness.

Seen in this way, sampayutta and vippayutta are no longer isolated technical rules within a scholastic system, but expressions of a general logic of conditionality: why some things form functional wholes, and why others must remain apart if order, structure, and intelligibility are to be preserved.

(21–22) Atthi–Natthi-paccaya - Presence (Being) and Absence (Non-being)

(traditionally: existence and non-existence conditions)

Atthi and natthi express the most elementary polarity of conditionality: that phenomena condition other phenomena by being present or by being absent.

These two are best understood together, not as independent principles, but as complementary aspects of a single law.

(21) Atthi-paccaya - Presence

(traditionally: existence condition)

Atthi-paccaya refers to the conditioning power of mere presence.

A phenomenon, simply by being there, can function as a condition for other phenomena.

Fire is a condition for light and heat by being present. Vitality, when present, is a condition for vigor, responsiveness, and mental clarity. Certain emotional states, when present, condition a corresponding range of perceptions, actions, and possibilities.

In all such cases, nothing needs to be produced or directed. Presence itself already shapes what can arise. Atthi-paccaya therefore names conditioning through availability rather than activity.

(22) Natthi-paccaya - Absence

(traditionally: non-existence condition)

Natthi-paccaya expresses the complementary principle: conditioning through absence.

The absence of fire conditions darkness and cold. The absence of vitality conditions weakness or decline. The absence of particular mental qualities conditions the non-arising of the experiences and actions that depend upon them.

Here too, nothing acts. Absence does not produce effects, yet it decisively constrains the field of what is possible. Natthi-paccaya thus names conditioning through lack, omission, or withdrawal.

Presence and absence as a single principle

Taken together, atthi and natthi articulate a fundamental fact of conditioned existence — phenomena condition one another not only by acting, but by being present or not present at all.

This polarity operates across all domains of experience and does not overlap with other Paṭṭhāna conditions. It expresses neither support, foundation, nor sequence, but the most basic prerequisite of all conditional relations: that something is there — or is not.

(23+24) Vigata- & Avigata-paccaya - Impermanence and Duration

(traditionally: disappearance condition and non-disappearance condition)

The conditions of impermanence and duration (vigata and avigata paccaya) describe the temporal structure of conditioned existence. Duration accounts for the fact that phenomena persist for a time and remain available to function, while impermanence accounts for the fact that all conditioned phenomena eventually pass away. Taken together, they explain how continuity and change coexist: why things endure long enough to matter, yet never long enough to be secure.

Without avigata, there would be no stability, memory, or development; without vigata, there would be no transformation, learning, or release.

23. Vigata-paccaya - Condition of Impermanence

(traditionally: disappearance condition)

Vigata-paccaya expresses the principle that all conditioned phenomena eventually pass away. Whatever has arisen will, sooner or later, be gone.

In relation to matter, this is evident in loss, decay, and destruction. Objects we cherish deteriorate or disappear, and even the body itself moves steadily toward breakdown. What is born is already subject to dissolution.

This condition applies equally to mental phenomena. Memories fade, emotions shift, and cognitive capacities decline. In conditions such as dementia, mental contents may dissolve almost as quickly as they arise. Observed over the course of aging, it becomes clear that even personality — often taken to be the core of identity — is impermanent and subject to change.

Vigata therefore does not merely describe external change, but reaches into the continuity of consciousness itself. What once was present ceases, and is replaced by something else.

The practical value of understanding this condition lies in its de-identifying power. It weakens attachment to possessions, to life situations, and even to the mind itself, revealing experience as a transient process rather than a stable essence.

24. Avigata-paccaya - Condition of Duration

(traditionally: non-disappearance condition)

Avigata-paccaya expresses the complementary principle that phenomena, once arisen, do not vanish immediately but remain present for a time.

In relation to matter, this is evident in durability and relative stability. Diamonds form over immense periods of time and often remain unchanged for equally long durations. In the human body, structures such as bones — and large portions of the brain — persist with little alteration across most of a lifetime.

Mental phenomena also exhibit duration. Long-term memory provides continuity across years and decades, enabling learning, planning, and the coordination of life as a whole. Moreover, actions generate kamma whose effects may unfold over long spans of time, shaping character, circumstances, and modes of consciousness.

Avigata therefore explains why phenomena can accumulate significance. That which persists long enough acquires weight — beneficial or harmful. Understanding this condition offers a practical criterion for discernment: what endures tends to have greater impact, and thus deserves greater care and responsibility.

Relation to Tradition

In the traditional Paṭṭhāna analysis, vigata and avigata are often treated descriptively, marking whether a phenomenon has ceased or is still present. While this is factually correct, it leaves largely unexplored the explanatory significance of these conditions.

In *Paramattha*, these terms are understood as temporal conditioning principles. Avigata explains how continuity, memory, and functional stability are possible at all. Vigata explains why no such continuity can be made permanent.

Seen together, these conditions articulate a fundamental insight: existence unfolds within a finite temporal window. Phenomena endure just long enough to function and to matter, yet inevitably pass away. This pairing clarifies how conditioned reality can support both meaningful continuity and the possibility of release.

Conclusion

This booklet has not attempted to exhaust the Abhidhamma, nor to systematize the Paṭṭhāna anew. Its purpose has been more modest and more practical: to restore intelligibility to conditionality by showing how the four paramatthas and the Paṭṭhāna conditions can be read as principles that structure lived experience.

Seen in this way, the Paṭṭhāna is no longer a remote scholastic matrix, but a descriptive map of how matter, life, mind, and consciousness co-condition one another. The conditions do not merely classify phenomena; they illuminate how experience forms, stabilizes, transforms, and dissolves.

If this companion succeeds, it will not replace study, nor eliminate the need for practice. Rather, it will help the reader move more freely between structure and experience — using the Abhidhamma not as an object of belief, but as a lens through which conditioned reality becomes clearer, more workable, and ultimately more transparent.

For readers who wish to explore these themes further, additional animated presentations and recorded Dhamma talks elaborating the four paramatthas and the Paṭṭhāna conditions are available through the author's website and teaching platforms.