

Abhidhamma

The Theory Behind The Buddha's Smile

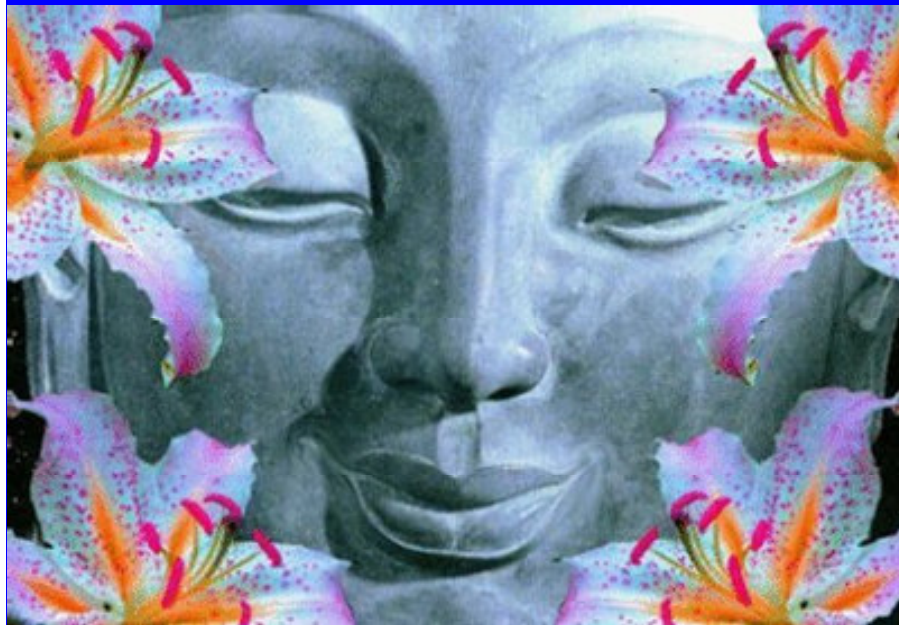


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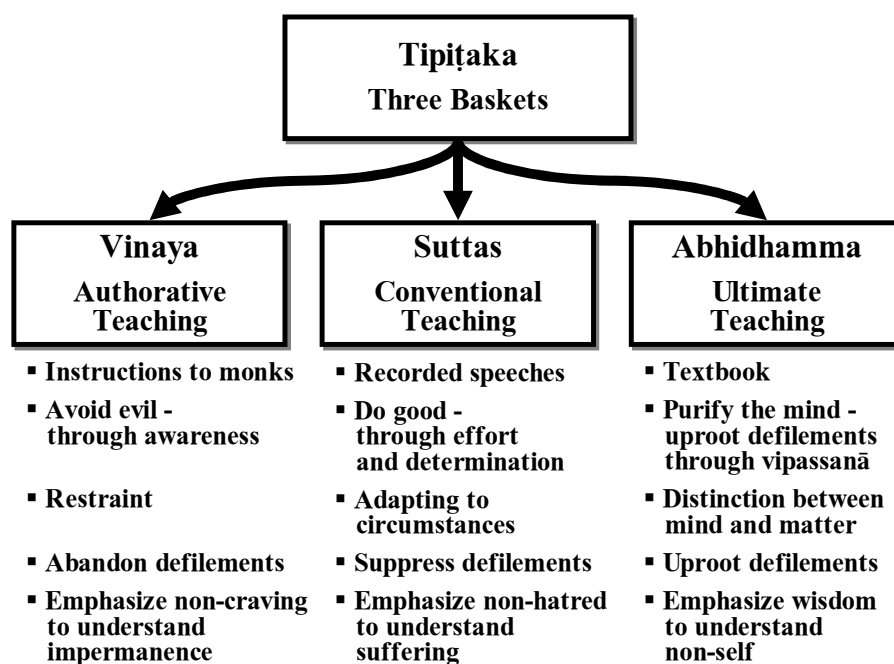
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Introduction to the Abhidhamma

The word Abhidhamma means “higher truth”; it combines abhi (higher or greater) and dhamma (reality or truth). The Abhidhamma explains how the mind operates. The Buddha said, “Avoid evil, do good, purify the mind. This is the teaching of the Buddhas.” How can one purify the mind if one does not know how the mind operates?

Tipiṭaka

In Theravada Buddhism, the sacred books are called Tipiṭaka (three baskets). All together, the Tipiṭaka is about eleven times the size of the Christian Bible¹.



The first basket in the Tipiṭaka is the Vinaya. In the Vinaya, the Buddha used his authority to lay down rules of behaviour for monks and nuns (227 rules for monks, 311 rules for nuns). The Vinaya tells us to avoid evil through awareness. In society, evil usually implies hurting somebody else; in Buddhism, evil means contaminating our own minds. A contaminated mind is the forerunner of all evil speech or deeds.

¹ Christ's ministry was for four years while the Buddha's ministry was for 45 years.

The second basket in the Tipiṭaka is the Suttas. These are the recorded speeches of the Buddha. They often start with the phrase, “Thus have I heard...” The Buddha used everyday, conversational language in the Suttas, depending on the audience to whom He was speaking. Many of the Suttas tell us to be good through effort and determination. In society, being good usually implies helping somebody else; in Buddhism, good means purifying our own minds. A pure mind is the forerunner of all good speech or deeds.

The third basket in the Tipiṭaka is the Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma has the form of a textbook; it uses precise technical terms. The Suttas and the Abhidhamma are two different ways of saying the same thing. As an analogy, the common, imprecise language used by the Suttas is like an image on a TV screen, whereas the technical, precise language used by the Abhidhamma is like the coloured dots which form the image. The focus of the Abhidhamma is to purify the mind by seeing things as they truly are (impermanent, unsatisfactory² and non-self) and thereby uproot defilements. The Abhidhamma uses both analysis (breaking things into parts) and synthesis (showing how parts are related to each other).

Value of Abhidhamma

In “What Buddhists Believe”, Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda writes:
The question is raised whether the Abhidhamma is essential for Dhamma practice. The answer to this will depend on the individual who undertakes the practice. People vary in their levels of understanding, their temperaments and spiritual development.

Ideally, all the different spiritual faculties should be harmonized, but some people are quite contented with devotional practices based on faith, while others are keen on developing penetrative insight. The Abhidhamma is most useful to those who want to understand the Dhamma in greater depth and detail. It aids the development of insight into the three characteristics of existence - impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self. It is useful not only for the periods devoted to formal meditation, but also during the rest of the day when we are engaged in various mundane chores.

² Unsatisfactory (dukkha) when there is no true satisfaction in clinging to it

We derive great benefit from the study of the Abhidhamma when we experience absolute reality. In addition, a comprehensive knowledge of the Abhidhamma is useful for those engaged in teaching and explaining the Dhamma. In fact, the real meaning of the most important Buddhist terminologies such as Dhamma, Kamma, Saṃsāra, Sankhāra, Paṭiccasamuppāda and Nibbāna cannot be understood without a knowledge of Abhidhamma.

Abhidhamma helps us to gain a Buddhist perspective on life. Changing our perspective causes a shift in our perception of the world. As we gain a Buddhist perspective, the nature of the mind and the characteristics of reality will be obvious to us; not just at a knowledge level but at a deeper, belief / confidence level. Knowledge comes from books, belief / confidence comes from examining personal experience. Abhidhamma is about recognizing states in the present moment so that we may penetrate more deeply into the present.

An untrained ear hears a melody while a trained ear recognizes notes, structure and chord progressions in the music. The trained ear has a deeper perspective when listening to music. A trained ear requires study of music theory followed up by practice of listening to music. Studying Abhidhamma is the first step in getting a trained mind. The next step, which builds on study is practice; starting with virtue (sīla), then concentration (samadhi) and finally wisdom (paññā). With a trained mind we will see things as they truly are; this is mindfulness (sati). According to the Abhidhamma, the mind experiences millions of thoughts each second. We can only be aware of a small portion of these thoughts. A trained mind can be mindful of all thoughts.

Most people structure their thoughts around the concept of self; “I am happy”, “It happened to me”. The Abhidhamma has a meditator’s perspective; there is no self, there is only mind (nāma) and non-mental phenomena (rūpa).

Abhidhamma is not for everybody; it depends on one’s accumulations. As mentioned in the above quote by Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda, studying the Abhidhamma helps one to understand the Suttas in depth; the Abhidhamma provides the theory which underpins the Suttas. The Abhidhamma also helps the meditator understand their meditative experiences. Abhidhamma is suited to the enquiring, scientific mind.

Traditional History of the Abhidhamma

In the fourth week after enlightenment, the Buddha contemplated on the Abhidhamma. When the Buddha contemplated the Abhidhamma, He emitted rays of six colours because He had finally found a subject worthy of His great intellect.

Seven years later, during the three months of His rainy season retreat, the Buddha went to Tāvātimsa heaven to teach the Abhidhamma to his former mother³ and many other Devas. One day in Tāvātimsa heaven is equivalent to one hundred human years, so the three month recital was equivalent to 3.6 minutes of Deva time. Each day, when it was time for the Buddha to descend from Tāvātimsa heaven for His alms-round, the Buddha created an image and willed that the created Buddha teach the Dhamma so much during His absence. After alms-round, He met Sāriputta and told him that so much of the Dhamma had been taught during the interval. Thus, there are three versions of Abhidhamma:

- Taught by the Buddha in Tāvātimsa Heaven (long version)
- Taught by the Buddha to Sāriputta (short version)
- Taught by Sāriputta to 500 monks (medium length version; this is the version of the Abhidhamma passed to us)

The Abhidhamma has seven volumes:

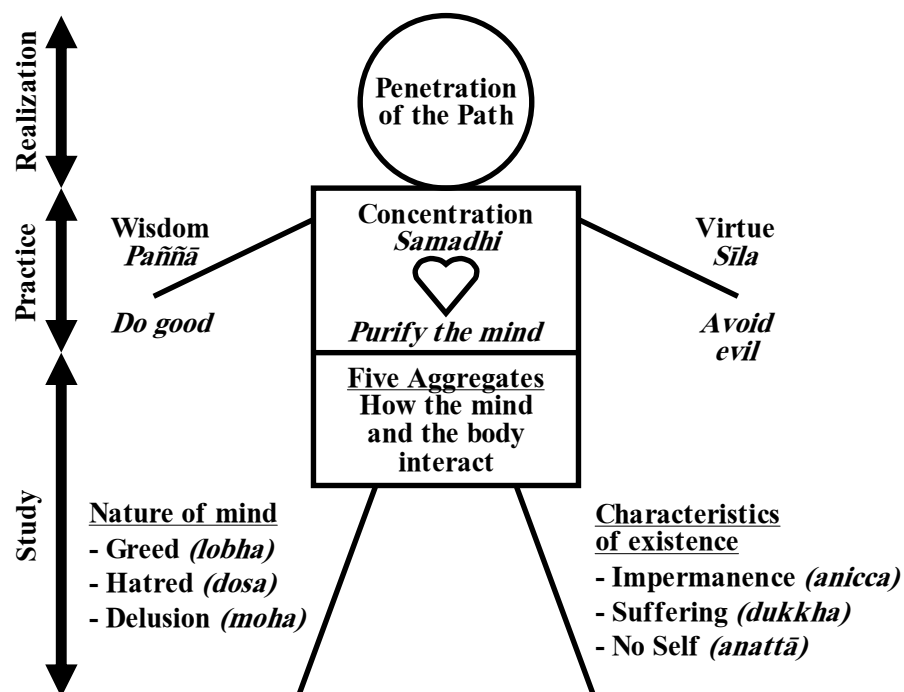
- Dhammasaṅgaṇī: Buddhist Psychological Ethics
- Vibhaṅga: Book of Analysis
- Dhātukathā: Discourse on Elements
- Puggalapaññatti: Designation of Human Types
- Kathāvatthu: Points of Controversy
- Yamaka: Book of Pairs (not translated)
- Paṭṭhāna: Conditional Relations (partially translated)

According to tradition, six books of the Abhidhamma (not including Kathāvatthu) were recited by the monks at the first three councils. The Kathāvatthu was added during the third council. The Abhidhamma was written down, with the rest of the Tipiṭaka, about 2000 years ago. About 1000 years ago, Ācariya Anuruddha summarized the seven books of the Abhidhamma, together with a number of ancient commentaries into the Abhidhammattha Sangaha. This text is the starting point for the serious student of the Abhidhamma.

³ She had died in childbirth and had been reborn as a Deva

Character of the Abhidhamma

The Abhidhamma is a philosophy. It defines four ultimate realities – consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasikas*), non-mental phenomena (*rūpa*) and Nibbāna. The foundation of the Abhidhamma is an understanding of the nature of reality. This includes the nature of mind, the three characteristics of existence and the five aggregates (the realities which constitute a being). For those people with an analytical nature, the Abhidhamma provides a framework for the understanding of our everyday experience and this understanding is a condition for the arising of insight.



The Abhidhamma is a science – it classifies and analyses. It provides us with a classification of all possible states of consciousness and their interrelation. The Abhidhamma defines a set of “elementary components” (*dharmas*). *Dhammas* never occur individually, but they are distinguishable. Just as one cannot separate the “sweet” and “sour” in a soup, one cannot separate the delusion from the greed when they arise in the same mental state.

The Abhidhamma is psychology. The Abhidhamma is really the science of the mind; in today's terms, this is called Psychology. The focus of the Abhidhamma is on personal experience.

The Abhidhamma is ethics. It addresses moral issues of "right" and "wrong" and explains the workings of the law of kamma (good begets good, bad begets bad). The mind plays a central role in Buddhist ethics and this is the theme of the first verses of the Dhammapada:

"Mind is the forerunner of all evil states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with a wicked mind, because of that, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox. Mind is the forerunner of all good states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that never leaves."

Though the Abhidhamma contains elements of philosophy, science, psychology and ethics, it is important to remember the Buddha's stated purpose of the teaching. In the Cūḷamālunkya Sutta (Mn 63), the Buddha was asked a number of theoretical questions; the Buddha refused to answer. In this Sutta, the Buddha gives the analogy of a man pierced with a poison arrow who refuses to allow the surgeon to remove the arrow until he is told the name, height, caste, etc. of the archer who shot the arrow. The man would die before he could learn these things. In this Sutta and again in the Simsapa Sutta (SN LVI.31), the Buddha explains the purpose of the teaching:

"Why have I left [answers to speculative questions] undeclared? Because it is unbeneficial, it does not belong to the fundamentals of the holy life, it does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. That is why I have left it undeclared. And what have I declared? 'This is suffering' - I have declared. 'This is the origin of suffering' - I have declared. 'This is the cessation of suffering' - I have declared. 'This is the way to the cessation of suffering' - I have declared. Why have I declared that? Because it is beneficial, it belongs to the fundamentals of the holy life, it leads to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. That is why I have declared it."

We should avoid temptation to treat the Abhidhamma as an intellectual exercise (analysis paralysis). The Abhidhamma helps us to “see things as they truly are” in the present moment. Abhidhamma is meant for practical use in following the Eightfold Path, rather than for abstract theorizing. We start by studying the nature of reality. We follow this with putting the theory into practice through *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. *Paññā* allows us to directly know the nature of the present moment. Life exists as moments only. Past moments have gone, they cannot be made to come back. The future has not yet come, so it does not yet exist. The present moment is now and is all that really exists. The Abhidhamma helps people with an analytical nature to understand the present moment.

Ultimate Realities (Paramattha)

The Abhidhamma recognizes two types of realities:

- Conventional Realities – *paññatti* (concepts / names) such as “car”
- Paramattha (ultimate realities) – *citta* (consciousness), *cetasikas* (mental factors), *rūpa* (non-mental phenomena) and *Nibbāna*

Conventional realities exist as concepts, not as realities. They are the products of mental construction. Ultimate realities exist by reason of their own intrinsic nature. These are the *dharmas*; the final irreducible components of existence. The mind is made up of *citta* and *cetasika*. *Rūpa* does not experience or know anything. *Nibbāna* is experienced by the mind; experiencing *Nibbāna* is the goal of the path.

The ultimate realities of science, sub-atomic particles, are concepts; studying them has no practical use in daily life. Studying the ultimate realities of the Abhidhamma is of great practical use; it allows us to see things as they truly are. Wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) is being aware of ultimate realities and not being fooled by concepts. Wise attention can occur in daily life, not just in a meditative experience. The Abhidhamma is not a philosophical system dealing with abstractions; it allows us to make sense of our experiences.

The teaching that concepts do not ultimately exist and apparent realities can be broken into ultimate realities can be found in “The Questions of King Milinda”, which was written in the first century BC. The book takes the form of questions from a philosopher king, King Milinda, to a Buddhist monk, *Nāgasena*. The dialogue below takes place when they first meet.

By what name shall I know you, Sir?

*My companions call me Nāgasena. But the name and
the person to whom the name refers do not really exist.*

*If Nāgasena and the person do not exist, to whom do
people offer alms and who receives these offerings?*

Since you receive them, you really exist.

*Your Majesty, did you come to this
monastery on foot or by chariot?*

I came by chariot.

Well then, what is a chariot? Is the horse the chariot?

Is the wheel the chariot? Is the axle the chariot?

Is the carriage the chariot?

I must answer “No” to all of your questions.

*Is there a thing called chariot beside the horse,
the wheel, the axle, the carriage, etc.?*

*There is no chariot beside the horse, the wheels,
the axle and the carriage. Just a combination of
these things has been named a chariot.*

*Very well, your Majesty, you should understand
Nāgasena as you understood the chariot.*

Just as the chariot can be said to consist of various pieces, the self can be said to consist of the five aggregates. The five aggregates are:

- Consciousness (viññāna): Citta
- Feeling (vedanā): One of the cetasikas
- Perception (saññā): One of the cetasikas
- Mental Formations (sankhāra): 50 cetasikas led by volition (cetanā); volition is most important because it creates kamma
- Non-mental phenomena (rūpa): Rūpa

Citta (Consciousness)

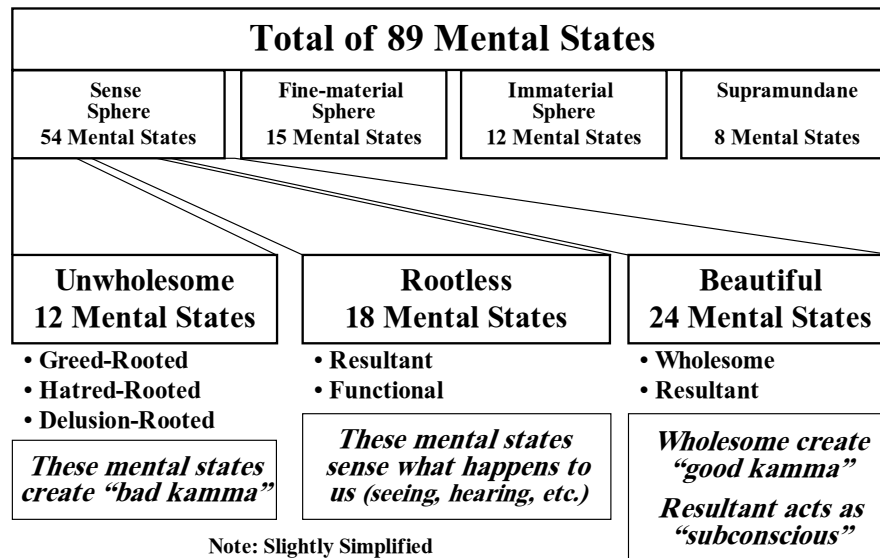
We can define citta as an activity, the process of being aware of an object. The problem with this definition is the question, “If there is no self, what is it that is aware?” The answer is that it is the citta itself that is aware of an object; citta is an “agent”. Citta is also an instrument; the means by which the accompanying mental factors (cetasikas) are aware of an object. Citta is like a container; it carries the various mental factors and allows them to access the object.

Mental States⁴

Much of the Abhidhamma details how the mind works. According to the Abhidhamma, the mind is a continuous stream of mental states. Each mental state includes consciousness (citta) and has a set of accompanying mental factors (cetasikas) which influence and direct the mental state. Some cetasikas, such as “compassion”, are wholesome. Some cetasikas, such as “hatred”, are unwholesome. Some cetasikas, such as “energy” are indeterminate⁵.

The Abhidhamma lists the 89 possible mental states⁶:

- Sense Sphere Mental States – mental states we experience in our day to day lives
- Fine-Material Sphere Mental States – mental states of experienced meditators when they meditate on objects
- Immaterial Sphere Mental States – mental states of experienced meditators when they meditate on specific concepts or realities
- Supramundane Mental States – mental states of those who are approaching enlightenment



⁴ Abhidhamma texts refer to mental states as “cittas”. To avoid confusion, I reserve the word citta to mean consciousness. **Mental State = Citta + Mental Factors**

⁵ An indeterminate cetasika is wholesome in a wholesome mental state, unwholesome in an unwholesome mental state and neutral in a neutral mental state.

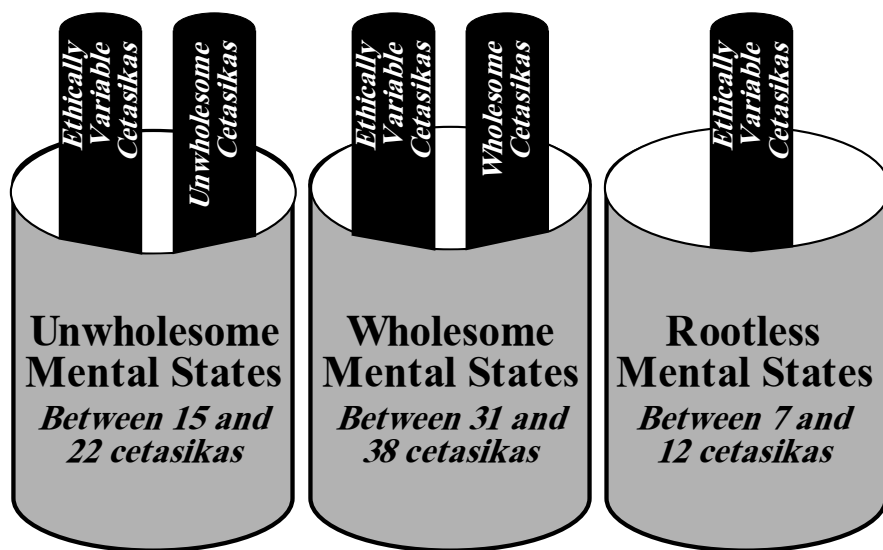
⁶ Sometimes listed as 121 by splitting the 8 Supramundane Mental States into 40

The first group, the unwholesome mental states, is split into greed-rooted (lobha-mūla), hatred-rooted (dosa-mūla) and delusion-rooted (moha-mūla). All unwholesome mental states create bad kamma. The weight of the kamma created depends on the intensity of the volition, or will, behind the mental state. Strong will means strong kamma.

The second group is called rootless because they have neither bad roots nor good roots⁷. These mental states are called resultants, (vipāka). According to Buddhism, past kamma is one of the conditions that cause things to happen to us. The instantaneous mental state of seeing or hearing⁸ is the result of some past kammic action.

The third group is the beautiful mental states. The wholesome beautiful mental states create good kamma for us. There is also a type of beautiful resultant mental state, which acts as our life continuum⁹. In Pāli, this is called a “bhavanga” mental state. Because being born as a human is very fortunate, our life continuum mental state is beautiful.

Cetasikas (Mental Factors)¹⁰



⁷ Bad roots are greed, hatred and delusion. Good roots are non-greed (generosity), non-hatred (loving kindness) and non-delusion (wisdom)

⁸ Called seeing consciousness and hearing consciousness respectively

⁹ Life continuum mental states are described in the next chapter

¹⁰ Appendix II shows which cetasikas are part of each mental state

One of the definitions of citta is, “the means by which the accompanying mental factors are aware of an object”. The accompanying mental factors are the cetasikas; the second type of ultimate reality. Citta never arises without cetasikas and cetasikas depend upon citta to get access to an object. Citta and cetasikas depend on each other. Like a man (cetasikas) in car (cittas), they travel together (they arise together and perish together) and they take the same road (same object and physical base). The driver (cetasika) on an elephant (citta) can move logs; separately, neither can do the job, they must work as a team. Citta is pure awareness; it is the accompanying cetasikas that determine if the mental state is unwholesome, wholesome or neutral. For example, if the cetasika of greed accompanies the citta, then the mental state is unwholesome.

Rūpa (Non-mental Phenomena)

Science has created models for physical phenomena to help us to control our environment. These models have allowed us to put a man on the moon, but have not helped us progress spiritually.

One of the objectives of the Buddha’s teaching is to help us to train our mind. With a focus on senses, the Abhidhamma defines physical phenomena using terms such as hardness, temperature, pressure and cohesion. The term “rūpa” includes much more than what we conventionally call “physical phenomena”. Rūpa includes everything that is non-mental, such as odour, flavour, nutrition, gender, bodily movement and speech. Another objective of the Buddha’s teaching is to understand the nature of rūpa as one of the five aggregates (impermanent, not to be clung to, not self).

Nibbāna

Nibbāna is the result of following the Buddha’s teaching. Some people think of Nibbāna as being like heaven; a place where one goes after one dies. This is not correct. Nibbāna is the object of a Supramundane mind-state¹¹. Nibbāna is something that is experienced. Awareness of Nibbāna arises when conditions are appropriate. Though awareness of Nibbāna depends on conditions, Nibbāna itself is unconditioned. Nibbāna is the extinguishing of all craving.

¹¹ Supramundane mental states are reserved for Saints (see footnote 14 on page 13)

Conditions

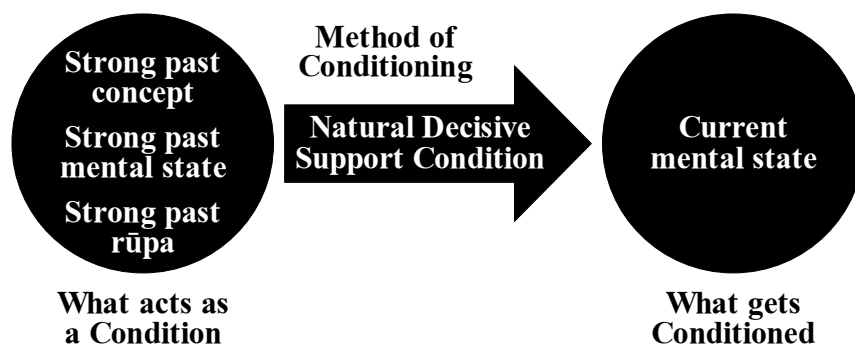
The concept of a conditioned reality is central to Abhidhamma. All realities except Nibbāna are conditioned; they arise dependent on conditions. For example, it is a natural law that when a seed, soil, sun, rain and seasons combine, each in their own way, a tree will be the result. The nature of the tree depends on the seed, but the seed depends on many other supporting conditions to mature.

The principles behind conditionality are:

- It is not possible to identify an absolute original cause of the conditioning process (Abhidhamma is descriptive, not speculative).
- Nothing arises without the appropriate conditions necessary for its origination (there is no fortuitous origination).
- Nothing arises from a single cause (for example, the Abhidhamma rejects all monistic theories which seek to explain the origin of the world from a single cause such as a personal God or an impersonal Godhead).
- Nothing arises singly, as a solitary phenomenon (there is always a plurality of effects).
- From a plurality of conditions a plurality of effects takes place (a multiplicity of dhammas brings about a multiplicity of dhammas).

Natural Decisive Support Condition

The Paṭṭhāna, the seventh book of the Abhidhamma, explains conditional relations; ways in which one thing can be a condition for another¹². One of these methods of conditioning is “natural decisive support condition” (pakatūpanissaya).

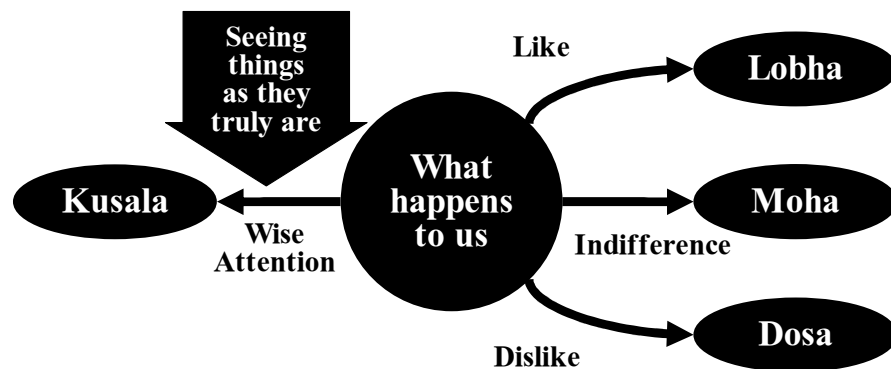


¹² The Paṭṭhāna is silent on how rūpa can condition other rūpa (this would include physics, chemistry, etc.) as it is outside of the scope of the Buddha’s teaching.

Natural decisive support works as a condition dependent upon strong past concept, strong past mental state or strong past rūpa. “Past” not only includes experiences in the current lifetime, but also experiences from previous lifetimes. A concept, mental state or rūpa can be “strong” when:

- It was encountered frequently in the past (a past habit)
- It was experienced very recently (bad news in one moment influences your reaction to something else in the next moment)
- It was associated with very strong volition in the past (strong past impression or a solemn vow)

Natural decisive support condition “decides” if our thoughts will be wholesome or unwholesome and “decides” how strong the volition will be and therefore the weightiness of the resulting kamma. It is natural decisive support that “decides” when we can enter jhāna¹³ or are ready to become a saint (sotāpanna¹⁴).



Decisions are made, not according to the free will of a supervisory self, but rather according to natural decisive support condition. Liking, disliking, being indifferent or having wise attention depends on strong past concepts, strong past mental states and strong past rūpa.

**The mind cannot be controlled...
but it can be trained!**

¹³ A jhāna is highly refined meditative state

¹⁴ Buddhism recognizes four levels of saints, sotāpanna (stream-enterer), sakadāgāmi (once-returner), anāgāmi (non-returner) and arahant (holy one)

The saying that “people are creatures of habit” is true. If we do mettā meditation each morning, our mind naturally reacts with mettā throughout the day. If we feel drawn to the Dhamma, it is probably because we studied the Dhamma in a past life and have accumulations to study the Dhamma in this life as well. If we are attracted to a person, it is probably because we have been associated with them in a past life. If we have a talent in music or art, it is probably because of experience in past lives.

There are many examples in the Suttas and commentaries where the character or circumstances of a person is linked to accumulations from a previous life. At the time of the Dīpaṅkarā Buddha, Sumedhā the Hermit made a solemn vow that he would become a future Buddha. This solemn vow influenced the Bodhisatta for countless lifetimes. Sāriputta and Moggallāna were chief disciples of the Buddha and Ānanda was the attendant of the Buddha because they had made vows in previous lives that this was the role that they wanted to play.

An understanding of how this law of nature called natural decisive support works can be a condition for the creation of good kamma:

- We should look for opportunities to perform wholesome deeds. This searching for and planning a wholesome deed can be, in itself, a wholesome deed. We should ensure that all wholesome deeds are done with strong volition, mindfulness and clear intention. We should review and rejoice in wholesome deeds performed and share the merits of our actions. Each of these activities creates good kamma and good accumulations – a condition to support the performing of more good deeds in the future.
- When there is an unwholesome state of mind, we should note it with mindfulness. Seeing an unwholesome state of mind for what it is constitutes a wholesome action. Mindfulness arrests the process of mental proliferation (papañca) – the multiplication of unwholesome states of mind. Practicing mindfulness on an unwholesome state of mind weakens the power of the accumulation that conditioned the unwholesome state.
- We should understand the potential power of a solemn vow. To increase the potency of the vow, it should be made when the mind is clear and not troubled by restlessness.

Many are deluded into believing in a self that has control. Reflecting upon natural decisive support condition helps us to understand anattā.

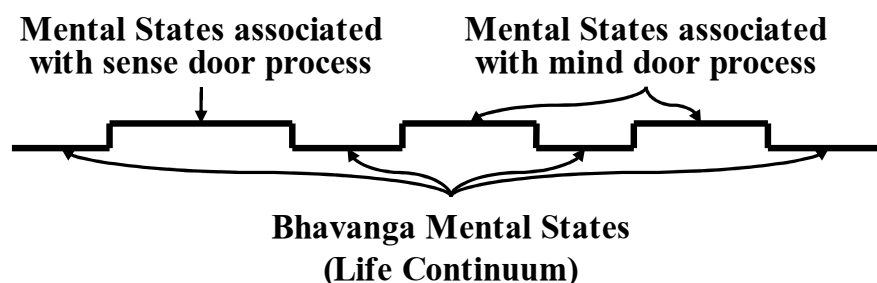
How Does Thinking Occur?

One of the unique characteristics of Buddhism is the comprehensive analysis of how the mind works. This analysis supports the concept of anattā (non-self); “there is thinking without a thinker”.

The basic unit of the mind is the mental state. Abhidhamma texts refer to these mental states as “cittas”, however to avoid confusion, we reserve the word “citta” to mean “consciousness”. Millions of mental states arise and fall away each millisecond. The mental state consists of citta (consciousness) and a combination of mental factors (cetasikas); **Mental State = Citta + Cetasikas**.

Bhavanga (Life-Continuum) Mental State

The bhavanga mental state is the most common mental state. A series of bhavanga mental states fill in the gaps between sense-door processes (sense-door processes are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) and mind-door processes (mind-door processes usually involve “thinking about” a concept)¹⁵. During dreamless sleep, only bhavanga mental states arise. The function of the bhavanga mental states is to provide continuity when there is no current object taken by the mind. There are millions of bhavanga mental states arising each second and they are all the same (for a single course of existence¹⁶).



¹⁵ If we consider how rapidly the mind works when our life flashes before our eyes, (when there are few bhavanga mental states between mind door processes) we get an idea of the number of bhavanga mental states there are between normal sense-door and mind-door processes.

¹⁶ As explained in the Chapter, “What Happens When We Die”, the first mental state in an existence (rebirth-linking or paṭisandhi) is a bhavanga mental state. The last mental state in an existence (death or cuti) is also a bhavanga mental state. At rebirth, we get a new bhavanga mental state that remains fixed throughout that course of existence. The bhavanga mental state in this existence takes the same object as the last sense-door or mind-door process from the previous existence.

Bhavanga is a resultant (vipāka) mental state; it is a result of kamma that led to rebirth in the current existence¹⁷:

- Mental State #19: this unwholesome resultant mental state performs the function of bhavanga for beings in the four woeful planes (hell, animals, ghosts and demons). This mental state is rootless; it does not have any wholesome roots or unwholesome roots¹⁸.
- Mental State #27: this wholesome resultant mental state performs the function of bhavanga for human beings born with congenital defects (born blind, etc.). This mental state is also rootless; it does not have any wholesome roots or unwholesome roots¹⁷.
- Mental State #39: this sense sphere resultant mental state performs the function of bhavanga for human beings and some deities. Because it is unprompted, these people tend to be spontaneous. Because it has three wholesome roots, these people are able to attain jhāna or sainthood¹⁹ in this existence. Because it has pleasant feeling, these people tend to be jovial.
- Mental State #40: Same as mental state #39, except that because it is prompted, these people tend to be passive.
- Mental State #41: Same as mental state #39, except that because it has only two wholesome roots (no paññā / wisdom), these people are not able to attain jhāna or sainthood in this existence.
- Mental State #42: Same as mental state #39, except that these people tend to be passive and they are not able to attain jhāna or sainthood in this existence.
- Mental State #43: Same as mental state #39, except that these people tend to be serious rather than jovial.
- Mental State #44: Same as mental state #40, except that these people tend to be serious rather than jovial.
- Mental State #45: Same as mental state #41, except that these people tend to be serious rather than jovial.
- Mental State #46: Same as mental state #42, except that these people tend to be serious rather than jovial.
- Mental States #60 – #64: these mental states perform the function of bhavanga for deities in the fine material planes of existence²⁰.
- Mental States #74 – #77: these mental states perform the function of bhavanga for deities in the immaterial planes of existence.

¹⁷ See Appendix I for listing of mental states using this numbering system

¹⁸ See footnote 7 on page 10

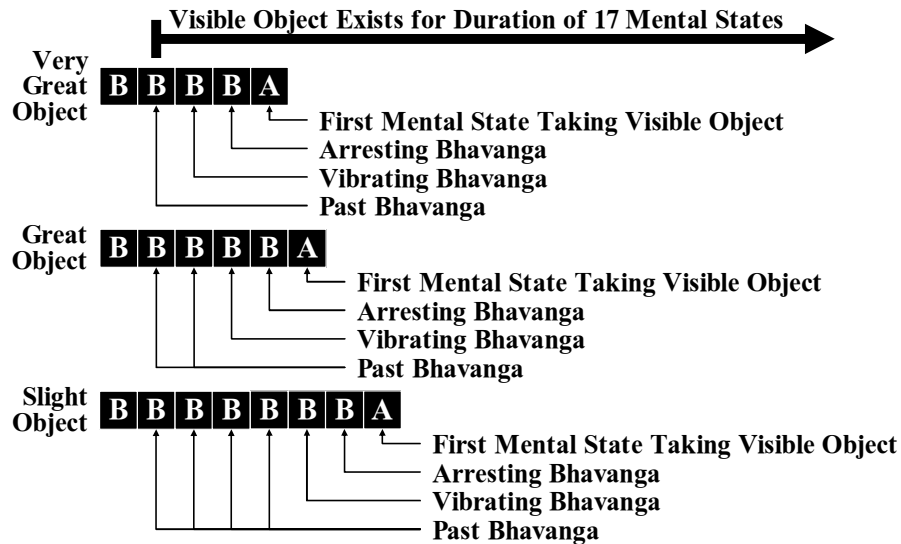
¹⁹ See footnotes 13, 14 on page 13

²⁰ See Chapter on “31 Planes of Existence”

Sense-Door Process

Conditions for the sense-door process start when an external object (rūpa) comes into existence. Rūpa, such as visible object, exists for the duration of seventeen mental states. Sense-door objects are classed according to their ability to attract the attention of the mind:

- Very Great Object: There are three bhavanga mental states before the arising of a mental state that takes the rūpa as object
- Great Object: There are four or five bhavanga mental states before the arising of a mental state that takes the rūpa as object
- Slight Object: There are six to eleven bhavanga mental states before the arising of a mental state that takes the rūpa as object
- Very Slight Object: No mental states that take the rūpa as object



All bhavanga mental states have the function of continuity, but some are given names according to what is occurring at the same time:

- Past Bhavanga: flow of bhavanga is unperturbed by rūpa; mental state is fixed firmly on the past object (object from past existence)
- Vibrating Bhavanga: flow of bhavanga is perturbed by rūpa; only arises when sufficient past bhavanga mental states have arisen (minimum of one) for the object to be strong enough to capture the mind's attention as conditioned by natural decisive support condition.
- Arresting Bhavanga: flow of bhavanga is stopped (condition for the arising of the first mental state taking rūpa as object)

Five-Sense-Door Adverting Mental State

The five-sense-door adverting mental state (mental state #28)²¹ is called functional (*kiriya*) because it is not associated with *kamma* or its result. As part of this mental state, when the mind starts to concentrate on the new object, one-pointedness comes into play. The mind concentrates attention on the source of the disturbance to the flow of *bhavanga*. Concentration of attention turns the mind toward the new object. Attention makes the mind different from the previous (*bhavanga*) mind by controlling the mind to advert to the new object.

Sense-Consciousness Mental State

Conditions supporting the arising of a sense-consciousness mental state include:

- Falling away of the five-sense-door adverting mental state
- Door at which the object appears (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body) – the six senses (including mind) are called doors as they are the way that *rūpas* are involved in the process
- Intrinsic quality of the object (undesirable, neutral, desirable) – most *rūpas* are intrinsically neutral; exceptions include a very hot temperature (undesirable) or the sight of a Buddha (desirable)
- *Kamma* from some past action

Based on the door and intrinsic quality of the object, one of the ten sense-consciousness mental states will arise:

- An undesirable object will cause mental states #13 – #17 to arise
- A neutral object or a desirable object supports the arising of mental states #20 – #24

The sense-consciousness mental state has the function of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching. This is “pure sensing”; there is no processing of the sensory input. The eye-consciousness mental state has eye sensitivity as a base. Other sense-consciousness mental states have their respective sense organs (ear, nose, tongue, body) as a base. Mental states other than the ten sense-consciousness mental states are supported by the “heart-base”²².

²¹ See Appendix I for listing of mental states using this numbering system

²² In the original Abhidhamma texts, this was “the matter that the mind element is based upon”. In classical India, it was believed that the mind was centered in the heart (not the brain). The writers of the commentaries, following the tradition at the time (but not the Buddha’s words), called this the “heart-base”.

Receiving Mental State

Like a butler, the function of this mental state is to make an initial acquaintance with the object and receive the object into the sense-door process. If the object is intrinsically undesirable, mental state #18 will arise. If the object is neutral or desirable, mental state #25 will arise.

Investigating Mental State

This mental state examines the object, looking for distinguishing marks indicating that the object has been perceived before. If the object is intrinsically undesirable, mental state #19 will arise. If the object is neutral, mental state #27 will arise. If the object is intrinsically desirable, mental state #26 will arise, together with pleasant feeling.

Determining Mental State

The previous three mental states (sense-consciousness, receiving and investigating) were resultants (vipāka) of the same past action. The function of the determining mental state is to come to a conclusion regarding the object. This mental state is functional (kiriya), not associated with kamma or its result. Whereas in the adverting stage, attention controlled the mind to advert to the new object, in the determining mental state, attention controls the arising of javana mental states which create new kamma. The process is a series of mental states; there is no self behind the process to exercise free-will or choose a response to the object.

Javana Mental States

The falling away of the determining mental state is one of the conditions for the arising of the Javana mental state, however it is natural decisive support condition that determines which type of Javana mental state will arise. There are 29 possible mental states which function as javana:

- 8 greed-rooted mental states (#1 - #8) → bad kamma
- 2 aversion-rooted mental states (#9, #10) → bad kamma
- 2 delusion-rooted mental states (#11, #12) → bad kamma
- 8 beautiful wholesome mental states (#31 - #38) → good kamma
- 8 beautiful functional mental states (#47 - #54); javana mental states of Arahants do not generate kamma, they are functional
- 1 rootless functional mental state; smile producing consciousness of an Arahant (#30)

If one has kusala accumulations, the object of the process may be “seen as it truly is” (with wise attention / *yoniso manasikāra*). If one has akusala accumulations, the javana mental states may:

- Cling to the object (*lobha* accumulations)
- Have aversion to the object (*dosa* accumulations)
- Be indifferent to the object (*moha* accumulations)

In other mental states, volition has a role of coordinating the functions of the *citta* and *cetasikas*. In the javana mental state of a worldling (a non-arahan), volition also creates *kamma*. The weightiness of the *kamma* produced depends on the strength of the volition. Natural decisive support determines the strength of the volition and therefore the weightiness of the *kamma*.

In almost all cases, there are seven javana mental states arising in sequence²³. Each javana mental state in the sequence is the same²⁴.

Registration²⁵

In the case of a very great object, the vibrating *bhavanga* arose after a single instance of past *bhavanga*. In this case, when the javana mental states have finished, the object (which always lasts for 17 mind-moments) is taken by registration mental states. Registration mental states are *vipāka*, the resultant of the same *kamma* which caused the sense-consciousness mental state, the receiving mental state and the investigating mental state. Registration mental states arise as a pair and only arise for very great objects.

When, for instance, a person looks at the radiant moon on a cloudless night, he gets a faint glimpse of the surrounding stars as well. He focuses his attention on the moon, but he cannot avoid the sight of stars around. The moon is regarded as a very great object (registration mental states will arise), while the stars are regarded as minor objects (registration mental states will not arise). Both moon and stars are perceived by the mind at different moments.

²³ Exceptions are at the moment of fainting and the last process in a lifetime

²⁴ The seven javana mental states have different strengths and bear kammic fruit at different times, but they all have the same qualities.

²⁵ Some texts refer to these as “retention” mental states; in Pāli, *tadālabhāna* or *tadārammaṇa* (literally, “hanging on to that object”)

	Visible Object Exists for 17 Mental States																
Very Great Object	B	B	B	B	A	S	R	I	D	J	J	J	J	J	J	T	T
Great Object	B	B	B	B	B	A	S	R	I	D	J	J	J	J	J	J	B
Great Object	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	S	R	I	D	J	J	J	J	J	J
Slight Object	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	S	R	I	D	D	D	D	B	B

B	Bhavanga – Object is from previous existence	}	– Object is Present Visible Object
A	Five-Sense-Door Adverting		
S	Sense-Consciousness		
R	Receiving		
I	Investigating		
D	Determining		
J	Javana (Kamma-creating)		
T	Registration		

Sense Door Process Mental States

	Intrinsic Nature of Rūpa		
	Undesirable	Neutral	Desirable
Five-Sense-Door Adverting (Functional)	#28		
Sense-Consciousness (Resultant)	#13 to #17	#20 to #24	
Receiving (Resultant)	#18	#25	
Investigating (Resultant)	#19	#26	#27
Determining (Functional)	#29		
Javana (Creates Kamma for Worldlings)	Worldlings: #1 to #12, #31 to #38 Arahants: #30, #47 to #54		
Registration (Resultant)	#19	#26, #43 to #46	#27, #39 to #42

The Mango Tree Simile

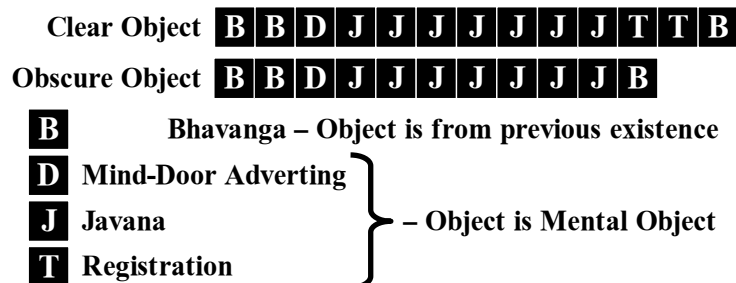
A man sleeps beneath a mango tree.	Stream of bhavanga
A wind strikes the tree.	Past bhavanga
The branches sway with the wind.	Vibrating bhavanga
A mango falls beside the sleeping man.	Arresting bhavanga
The man awakes.	Adverting mental state
The man opens his eyes.	Eye consciousness
The man picks up the mango.	Receiving consciousness
The man presses and smells the mango.	Investigating consciousness
The man understands that this is a mango fruit that is ready to eat.	Determining consciousness
The man eats the mango.	Javana consciousness
The man notes the after-taste; his saliva still retains the mango taste.	Registration consciousness
The man falls back to sleep.	Stream of bhavanga

Mind-Door Process

Immediately after a sense-door process, there will be an indeterminate number of bhavanga mental states followed by a mind-door process taking the present rūpa as object. This mind-door process includes:

- Three bhavanga mental states (past, vibrating and arresting)
- Mind-door-adverting (#29); same as determining mental state
- Seven javana mental states (kamma creating in non-arahants)
- Two registration mental states (“clear” objects have registration mental states, “obscure” objects have no registration mental states)

Next, there is a series of mind-door process (“clear” or “obscure”) taking past, present or future mental states, mental factors, rūpa or concepts as object. These mind-door processes only have two bhavanga (vibrating and arresting) because mental objects do not require a “past bhavanga”; they are already present in the mind.

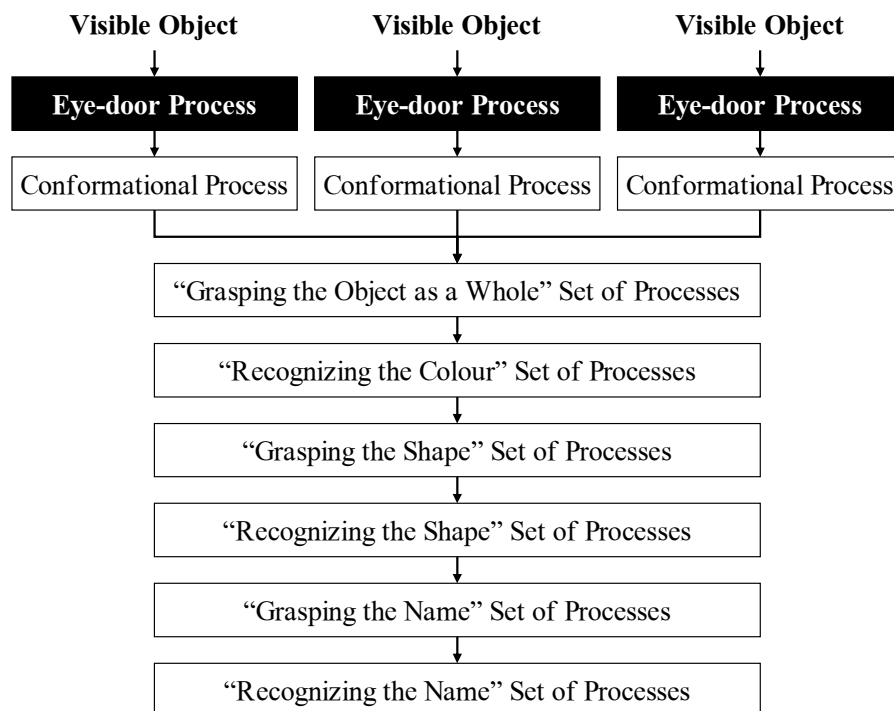


Sense-Door Process and Mind-Door Processes

A “visible object” is that which presents itself at the eye door in a small fraction of a second. As an analogy, visible object is like a single frame from a movie film. Each frame is seen as a visible object and the mind merges them together into a continuous stream.

After the eye-door process, there will be a few bhavanga mental states followed by a mind-door process taking the same rūpa (visible object) as object. This is called a “conformational” process that effectively “copies the rūpa into a mental object”. The mind may then go and deal with other sense doors before coming back and grabbing another visible object from the eye-door.

A mind-door process grasps the object as a whole and “glues together” distinct “frames” to create a perception of unity. There are then sets of mind-door processes that recognize the colour, grasp the shape, recognize the shape, grasp the name and recognize the name.



When Thinking Goes Wrong

So far, the kamma created by these mental processes is quite weak. We now reach the stage of “mental proliferation”. This progression is described in the Honeyball Sutta (Mn18):

Dependent on eye and forms, eye consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a condition there is feeling.

This explains that feeling arises naturally and objectively from contact.

What one feels, that one names. What one names, that one thinks about. What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates.

The wording makes it clear that the process of naming, thinking about and mental proliferation are subjective.

With what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions tinged by mental proliferation beset a man with respect to past, future and present forms cognizable through the eye.

Mental proliferation adds to what is seen; it then feeds upon itself, covering over the true nature of the object, layer by layer.

The Abhidhamma explains that accumulations of greed, hatred and delusion cause “perversion of perception” (saññā-vipallāsa) which in turn builds into perversion of thought and eventually perversion of opinion. In the dark, a man spontaneously perceives a coiled up rope as a snake (perversion of perception). The man then assumes that what he saw was a snake (perversion of thought). Finally, he is convinced that what he has seen is a snake (perversion of opinion).

Unwise attention to the object allows accumulations of greed, hatred and delusion to pervert perception of the object. This perversion of perception then in turn allows greed, hatred and delusion to rise up as emotions. For example, under the influence of an accumulation of greed, an object may appear to be desirable. When the object appears as desirable, the emotion of greed arises. This is mental proliferation.

Based on accumulations, the mind distorts and rationalizes to create its own reality. We can cut through these hallucinations by applying “wise attention”.

Studying the Abhidhamma allows us to understand that the world is made up of ultimate realities (citta, cetasikas and rūpa). The commentary to the Mūlapiriyāya Sutta (Mn 1) explains that this understanding is the first step to wise attention (seeing things as they truly are). Wise attention allows us to understand the five aggregates and subdue the perception of “self”.

Modern science provides some interesting insights. Scientists have identified a portion of the brain that they call the “orientation association area” whose function it is to collect data coming in from the senses and organize it around a perception called “self”. As measured by blood flow, this is normally an extremely active part of the brain. However, there are moments when Buddhist monks enter deep concentration or Christian nuns are deep in prayer when the activity in the orientation association area part of the brain reduces significantly. The monks and nuns describe the event as experiencing a “higher reality”. The monks explain the experience as “perceiving non-self” while the nuns explain it as “talking with God”.

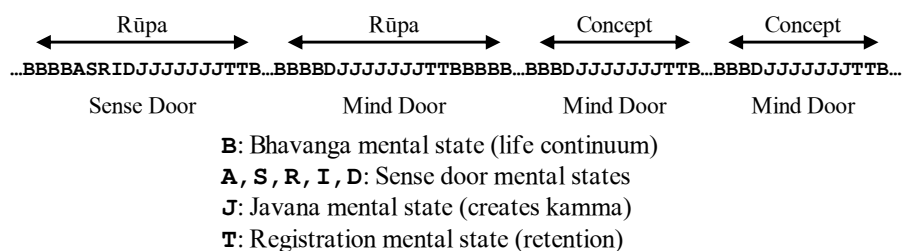
Though the monks and the nuns have a similar experience of a “higher reality”, they rationalize it differently. This was illustrated in a recent extensive survey of patients who had “died” for a short time and then “came back to life”. When asked to describe the experience, most patients described a feeling of floating out of the body, seeing a bright light, going through the centre of the bright light, being told that “it was not their time” and then reversing the process until they were back inside their bodies again. Christians said that Mary or Jesus had told them that it was not their time. Hindus were convinced that they had met Krishna and Jews insisted that they had met Moses. Many Buddhists believed that they had met Kwan Yin or the Buddha.

In another example where modern science provided some interesting insights, there was a man who suffered brain damage in a car accident. After the accident, the man was able to recognize his mother but he insisted that she was an imposter. Doctors discovered that the portion of the brain that recognized objects (naming) was working properly, but the link between the “naming” part of the brain and the part of the brain that stored the emotions associated with the name (thinking about) had been damaged. So when the patient recognized his mother but did not have the expected emotions associated with this person, the patient concluded that this must be an imposter.

Recognizing Mental States

Each sense-door process is followed by a number of mind-door processes. As we can see from the diagram below, most of the time the mental state is either bhavanga (life continuum) or javana (creating kamma). In almost all cases, when we observe the mind, it is the javana mental states that are seen.

A sense door process is followed by a large number of mind door processes



For most worldlings, almost all of the javana mental states will be unwholesome (akusala) and fall into one of twelve categories:

Greed Rooted (Lobha Mūla) Mental States

1. Unprompted, associated with wrong view, with pleasant feeling
2. Prompted, associated with wrong view, with pleasant feeling
3. Unprompted, not associated with wrong view, with pleasant feeling
4. Prompted, not associated with wrong view, with pleasant feeling
5. Unprompted, associated with wrong view, with indifferent feeling
6. Prompted, associated with wrong view, with indifferent feeling
7. Unprompted, not associated with wrong view, with indifferent feeling
8. Prompted, not associated with wrong view, with indifferent feeling

Hatred Rooted (Dosa Mūla) Mental States

9. Unprompted, associated with ill-will, with unpleasant feeling
10. Prompted, associated with ill-will, with unpleasant feeling

Delusion Rooted (Moha Mūla) Mental States

11. Associated with doubt, with indifferent feeling
12. Associated with restlessness, with indifferent feeling

On rare occasions, a beautiful mental state will arise. These mental states fall into one of eight categories (numbering system follows the listing of mental states in Appendix I):

Wholesome (Kusala) Mental States

31. Unprompted, associated with wisdom, with pleasant feeling
32. Prompted, associated with wisdom, with pleasant feeling
33. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom, with pleasant feeling
34. Prompted, not associated with wisdom, with pleasant feeling
35. Unprompted, associated with wisdom, with indifferent feeling
36. Prompted, associated with wisdom, with indifferent feeling
37. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom, with indifferent feeling
38. Prompted, not associated with wisdom, with indifferent feeling

Definitions:

- **Unprompted / prompted:** An unprompted activity is automatic, impulsive or spontaneous. Prompting can come from oneself or from others. An unprompted mental state creates stronger (good or bad) kamma than a prompted mental state because a spontaneous mental state has stronger volition.
- **Wrong view:** When accompanied by wrong view, a mental state is connected with a conviction, belief, opinion or rationalization. A mental state accompanied by wrong view has the mental factor of *diṭṭhi*. A mental state accompanied by wrong view creates stronger bad kamma than a mental state not accompanied by wrong view because wrong view strengthens the volition.
- **Feeling:** The English word “feeling” is very broad in meaning. For example, there are almost unlimited responses to the question “How are you feeling?”. The word feeling (*vedanā*) used by the Buddha in the Suttas and in the Abhidhamma is quite specific. *Vedanā* is limited to “pleasant bodily feeling”, “unpleasant bodily feeling”, “pleasant mental feeling”, “neutral mental feeling” or “unpleasant mental feeling”.
- **Wisdom:** Mental states accompanied by *paññā* (*amoha*) focuses on mental activities such as meditation, listening to Dhamma, teaching the Dhamma or straightening out one’s view. Note that it is not required to be a Buddhist to have mental states accompanied by wisdom. A mental state accompanied by wisdom creates stronger good kamma than a mental state not accompanied by wisdom because wisdom strengthens the volition.

Javana Quiz

Identify the predominant javana mental state in each of the following situations (answers follow the quiz):

- a. You are listening to a pleasant song without giving any thought to kamma and its effect.
- b. A hunter kills for sport.
- c. A woman reads a Dhamma book on her own accord without understanding the meaning and without knowing about kamma and its result.
- d. A person has doubts about kamma and its effect.
- e. A man steals a handbag after much self-persuasion, because he is aware of kamma and its effect.
- f. A girl, after being persuaded by her companion, goes to listen to a Dhamma talk with joy and with a knowledge of kamma.
- g. A person is listening to a Dhamma talk but does not understand a word because his mind is restless.
- h. With joy, knowing that stealing is wrong, a boy steals an apple from a fruit stall through the prompting of a friend.
- i. A boy spontaneously gives some money to a beggar with joy but without knowledge of kamma.
- j. We offer alms without being prompted by anyone and we feel glad at the time of offering.
- k. Reasoning about kamma, you drink coffee with neutral feeling, but you still appreciate the taste.
- l. A mother is worrying about her daughter. What is the mental state of the mother?
- m. A person, after being persuaded by his companion, watches a movie joyfully without any attention to kamma.
- n. A girl sweeps the floor with neutral feeling, but knows that it is a wholesome thing to do.
- o. A father explains to a son that the son has been cheated. The son is sad. What is the mental state of the son?
- p. A small child, who does not know right from wrong, smilingly kills an ant.
- q. One kills a wounded animal, with an object of putting an end to its suffering.
- r. A girl, prompted by her mother, washes her parents clothes with joy and without thinking about kamma.

- s. A boy is eating plain rice with salt with some attachment but without joy and knowledge of kamma.
- t. A lady has knowledge of kamma. But after much persuasion from a saleswoman, she reluctantly buys a new dress.
- u. A man, after being requested by the headmaster to donate some money to the school, donates one hundred dollars joyfully without knowing kamma and its result.
- v. In anger, a man kills another by accident.
- w. A girl is aware of kamma and its fruits, but she, in compliance with the request of her companions, listens to modern songs joyfully.
- x. A man, prompted by a monk, chops wood with neutral feeling, but knowing it to be a meritorious deed.
- y. A girl appreciates her new dress after her mother says that the dress is beautiful. She has a neutral feeling and no knowledge of kamma.
- z. Young children, without knowledge of kamma or kamma-result, pay homage joyfully to a monk or a Buddha image, after being prompted by their parents.
- aa. A lady delightfully puts on a new dress, but she is aware that attachment to the dress causes mental states rooted in attachment.
- bb. A soldier throws a grenade into an enemy stronghold.
- cc. A lady with knowledge of kamma and joy offers flowers to a pagoda on her own accord.
- dd. A person is enjoying food and drink without paying any attention to kamma.
- ee. A hungry boy spontaneously steals an apple from an orchard, thinking that there is nothing wrong because the owner of the orchard has more apples than he needs.

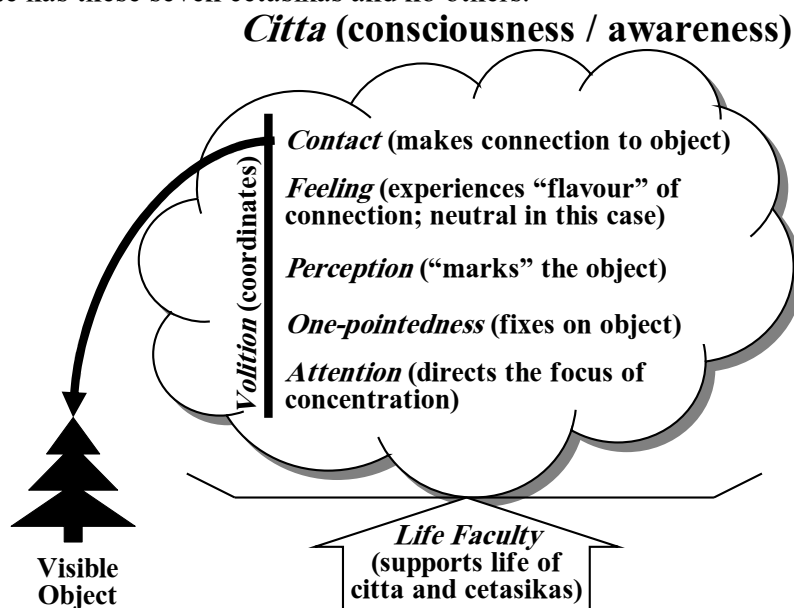
Answers to Javana Quiz²⁶

a 1, b 9, c 37, d 11, e 8, f 32, g 12, h 4, i 33, j 31, k 7, l 9, m 2, n 35, o 10, p 3, q 9, r 38, s 5, t 8, u 34, v 9, w 4, x 36, y 6, z 34, aa 3, bb 9, cc 31, dd 1, ee 5

²⁶ Some of the situations are not fully explained, so the solutions given are just one possible set of correct answers

Universal & Occasional Ethically Variable Cetasikas

Universal cetasikas arise in every mental state whereas occasional cetasikas only arise in some mental states. Ethically variable cetasikas are wholesome when they arise in wholesome mental states (good roots), unwholesome when they arise in unwholesome mental states (bad roots) and neutral when they arise in neutral mental states (no roots). The following diagram shows the function of these seven universal cetasikas in an eye-consciousness mental state; this mental state has these seven cetasikas and no others.



Feeling

Because there are no mental states without these cetasikas, most of them are difficult to recognize. The exception is the cetasika of feeling. The English term “feeling” includes a broad array of emotions; in Buddhism, there are only five types of feeling:

- Unpleasant mental feeling – only associated with hatred-rooted javana mental states
- Pleasant mental feeling – associated with various mental states
- Neutral mental feeling – associated with various mental states
- Pleasurable physical feeling – only associated with unwholesome resultant body consciousness
- Painful physical feeling – only associated with wholesome resultant body consciousness

Universals	<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Manifestation</u>	<u>Proximate Cause</u>
	Salient quality of phenomena	Performance of Task Achievement of Goal	Way it presents in an experience	Principal condition on which it depends
Phassa Contact / Sense	Mentally (not physically) touching object	Impact; Impingement, causes consciousness and the object to impinge	Coinciding of physical base, object and consciousness	Object that has entered the avenue of awareness
Vedanā Feeling / Sensation	Being felt (direct and full experience, not emotion)	Experiencing the taste / flavour of an object; enjoying the aspects of the object	Relishing of the associated mental factors	Tranquility
Saññā Perception / Recognitio	Perceiving the qualities of an object; noting	Recognizing what has been previously noted and making a sign so it can be recognized again	Briefness; the interpreting of the object by way of the features that had been apprehended	Whatever object appeared; the as it appears
Cetanā Volition / Intentio	Coordinating; the state of willing	Willing; to accumulate kamma	Directing; coordination (organizes its associated mental state and cetasikas in acting on the object)	The associated mental state and cetasikas
Ekaggatā One- / Fixing	Non-scattering, non-distraction of cetasikas; non-wandering	Welding together of the coexistent states; conglomerate or unite the associated cetasikas	Peace of mind / knowledge; peace	Usually has ease (sukha); happiness
J'vitindriya Life Faculty / Vitality	Ceaseless watching; maintaining the mental state and cetasikas	Maintain the life of the accompanied mental state and cetasikas	Establishment of mental state and cetasikas to be maintained	Mental state and cetasikas that have to be sustained
Manasikāra Attention / Advertence	Driving associated states towards the object	Joining (yoking) associated states to the object	Facing the object; confrontation with an object	The object

Occasionals	<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Manifestation</u>	<u>Proximate Cause</u>
	Salient quality of phenomena	Performance of Task / Achievement of Goal	Way it presents itself in an experience	Principal condition on which it depends
Vitakka Initial Application / Applied Thinking	Directing the mind onto an object	To strike at and thresh the object	The leading of the mind to an object	The object
Vicāra Sustained Application / Discursive Thinking	Continued presence on the object	Sustained application of all of the cetasikas on the object	Anchoring of all of the cetasikas on the object	The object
Adhimokkha Determination / Decision	Conviction; being convinced about an object	Not groping	Decisiveness	A thing to be convinced about
Viriya Energy / Effort / Exertion	Supporting, exertion and marshalling	Supporting its associated mental states	Non-collapse	A sense of urgency
Pīti Enthusiasm / Zest / Rapture / Interest	Endearing	Refresh mind and body	Elation	Mind and body (nāmarūpa)
Chanda Desire / Zeal / Wish	Desire to act	Searching for an object	Need for an object	The object

See Appendix II for a list of which cetasikas appear in which mental states

Universal Unwholesome Mental Factors

Four mental factors accompany all unwholesome states of mind:

- Moha (Delusion / Ignorance / Dullness / Mental Blindness)
- Ahirika (Shamelessness / Lack of Moral Shame / Impudence / Immodesty / Lack of Conscience)
- Anottappa (Recklessness / Lack of Moral Dread / Disregard of Blame)
- Uddhacca (Restlessness / Distraction / Wavering)

Greed, wrong view, conceit, hatred, envy, selfishness, remorse and doubt cannot arise without moha, ahirika, anottappa and uddhacca. Moha, ahirika, anottappa and uddhacca can be suppressed during moments of wholesome mental states, but they remain dormant in the mind, always ready to accompany the arising of unwholesome mental states until they are uprooted when one becomes an Arahant.

Moha (Delusion / Ignorance / Dullness / Mental Blindness)

- **Characteristic:** Mental blindness or unknowing; opposition to knowledge
- **Function:** Concealment of the true nature of an object; non-penetration
- **Manifestation:** Absence of right understanding; opposed to right practice (paṭipatti); causing blindness
- **Proximate Cause:** Unwise attention (Ayoniso Manasikāra)
- **Regarded as:** Root of all immoralities

Moha is like the director of a film; it directs everything that is unwholesome but we do not see moha directly. Moha arises when there is no right understanding. Moha is not the same as lack of worldly or scientific knowledge. Moha is the mental blindness which conceals the true nature of things:

- Mental blindness to nāma and rūpa as they truly are
- Mental blindness to anicca, dukkha and anattā
- Mental blindness to the four noble truths

Moha cannot be uprooted merely by thinking about realities; it can eventually be uprooted by the wisdom that knows the true nature of realities (Study → Practice → Realization).

There are two kinds of moha:

- **Latent moha:** Even at moments of performing good deeds, latent moha still exists. Latent moha is not a cetasika; it is an accumulation. Only an Arahant has uprooted latent moha. It is like the poison in a tree that bears poisonous fruit.
- **Rising-up moha:** All unwholesome mental states include the cetasikas moha. Because of the concealing nature of moha, the unwholesome nature of the current state of mind is not understood and the future consequences of one's actions are not understood.

Ahirika (Shamelessness / Lack of Moral Shame / Impudence / Immodesty / Lack of Conscience)

- **Characteristic:** Absence of disgust at bodily and verbal misconduct; immodesty
- **Function:** Doing evil things without shame
- **Manifestation:** Not shrinking away from evil
- **Proximate Cause:** Lack of respect for self

Ahirika inhibits the shame and disgust that should arise with unwholesome actions, speech or thought. Ahirika is internally focused; it comes from a lack of respect for self. Just as a pig is not ashamed to roll in sewage, ahirika is not ashamed of committing immoral actions, speeches and thoughts.

The Buddha said to his son, “Of anyone for whom there is no shame at intentional lying; of him I say that there is no evil he cannot do. 'I will not speak a lie, even for fun' - this is how you must train yourself, Rāhula.” (i.e. there is no room for “white lies”)

Anottappa (Recklessness / Lack of Moral Dread / Disregard of Blame)

- **Characteristic:** Absence of dread on account of shamelessness
- **Function:** Doing evil things without dread
- **Manifestation:** Not shrinking away from evil
- **Proximate Cause:** Lack of respect for others

Anottappa inhibits the fear that should arise with unwholesome actions, speech or thought. Anottappa is externally focused; it comes from a lack of respect for others. Just as a moth gets attracted by fire and is burned, anottappa is unaware of the consequences, gets attracted by evil and plunges into unwholesome deeds.

Uddhacca (Restlessness / Distraction / Wavering)

- **Characteristic:** Disquietude; mental excitement; lack of mindfulness
- **Function:** To make the mind unsteady; wavering
- **Manifestation:** Turmoil; whirling
- **Proximate Cause:** Unwise attention (Ayoniso Manasikāra) to mental disquiet; unsystematic thought due to mental excitement
- **Regarded as:** Mental distraction over an object of excitement

Uddhacca is the opposite of steadiness or calm; it can be translated as confusion or mental distraction over an object. Uddhacca makes the mind unsteady and results in unsystematic thought due to mental excitement. Uddhacca is not the same as the conventional term “restlessness” (an unpleasant mental state). Uddhacca is the factor that inhibits us from applying ourselves to wholesome mental states. Just as we cannot see a reflection in a pot of boiling water, the restless mind cannot see the consequences of evil deeds.

Greed-Rooted Mental States

There are eight lobha-mūla mental states:

- Four mental states with pleasant feeling, four with indifferent feeling. Mental states with pleasant feeling are accompanied by the cetasika pīti (enthusiasm), increasing their kammic weight.
- Four mental states accompanied by wrong view, four not accompanied by wrong view (see section below on diṭṭhi).
- Four spontaneous mental states and four prompted mental states. Prompted mental states are accompanied by the cetasikas thīna (sloth) and middha (torpor); see section below on thīna and middha.

Lobha (Greed / Attachment / Sensuous Desire)

- **Characteristic:** Grasping an object
- **Function:** Sticking
- **Manifestation:** Not giving up
- **Proximate Cause:** Seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage
- **Regarded as:** Taking beings with it to states of loss

To catch monkeys, hunters would tie a coconut with a small hole in it to a tree. There would be food placed inside the coconut and the hole would be large enough for the monkey to insert its hand to grasp the food, but too small for the monkey to withdraw its hand while

grasping the food. When the hunters would come to kill the monkey, the monkey would struggle to escape, not realizing that the only thing holding it back was its own greed; the monkey would not even consider letting go of the food in order to escape. From this example, we can see that lobha has a characteristic of grasping an object, a function of sticking to the object, a manifestation of not giving up and a proximate cause of seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage. The story of the monkey hunters illustrate how lobha can be regarded as taking beings with it to states of loss.

The first javana mental state in an existence is clinging to life²⁷. This type of subtle clinging to existence is only uprooted by the Arahant. Clinging to pleasures of the senses (enjoying a taste, etc.) is not uprooted until one is an Anāgāmī (the stage of sainthood before Arahant). It is easy to recognize the coarse forms of lobha (greed, covetousness, craving) but more difficult to recognize these subtle types of lobha.

Lobha arises extremely frequently in our thoughts:

- Politeness and pleasant speech can easily be motivated by a desire to please others. Through mindfulness, we can become more sincere in our behaviour.
- Before and after doing kusala, we can be attached to the idea of “our kusala” and “our kamma”
- When we meditate, we can have a desire for results and this attachment to results may inhibit progress; the purpose of meditating is to sit – results come from proper practice, not from a desire for results

In the Gandhabhaka Sutta (SNXLII.11), the Buddha explained that craving is a source of suffering (dukkha). We experience dukkha when those to whom we are attached experience problems. We do not experience dukkha when those to whom we are not attached experience problems. Therefore, attachment leads to dukkha.

Just as drinking salty water can never quench one's thirst, lobha is insatiable; it cannot be satisfied.

²⁷ This illustrates the futility of trying to control the mind to block unwholesome mental states. The mind cannot be controlled but it can be trained. If the mind is properly trained, there is no possibility of an unwholesome mental state arising and there is no need for control.

Diṭṭhi (Wrong View / Evil Opinion)

- **Characteristic:** Unwise or unjustified interpretation of things; unwise conviction
- **Function:** Pre-assume; perversion
- **Manifestation:** Wrong interpretation or belief; wrong conviction
- **Proximate Cause:** Unwillingness to see the noble ones (ariyans); unwillingness to listen to the Dhamma; not realizing anicca, dukkha and anattā
- **Regarded as:** Highest fault

All akusala mental states contain moha (delusion), but when there is diṭṭhi, one clings to a false view. Diṭṭhi leads one down the wrong path by perverting one's way of thinking. Just as Right View is the foundation of the Noble Eightfold Path, diṭṭhi is the foundation of the wrong path. The Buddha said:

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing so apt to cause the arising of evil states not yet arisen, or if arisen, to cause their more-becoming and increase, as wrong view... Monks, I know not of any other single thing so apt to cause the non-arising of good states not yet arisen, or, if arisen, to cause their waning, as wrong view... Monks, I know not of any other single thing so apt to cause the arising of wrong view, if not yet arisen, or the increase of wrong view, if already arisen, as unwise attention. Monks, I know not of any other single thing so apt, when body breaks up after death, to cause the rebirth of beings in the Waste, the Way of Woe, the Downfall, in Hell, as wrong view...”

Conditions leading to deviation from the right path can arise as long as diṭṭhi has not been uprooted. The Sotāpanna has uprooted diṭṭhi and therefore there are no conditions to break precepts or perform acts that can result in rebirth in one of the four woeful planes. When one does not cling anymore to the concept of self and sees realities as they are, this will bear on one's actions, speech and thoughts. One has to uproot diṭṭhi before other defilements can be uprooted.

Types of wrong view capable of causing an unhappy rebirth are:

- There is no result of kamma
- There are no causes
- There is no such thing as kamma

Examples of less serious wrong view include:

- Personality view (sakkaya-diṭṭhi): Body as self, self having body, body being in the self, self as being in the body (the same for the other four aggregates, for a total of 20 views).
- Ego-illusion (atta-diṭṭhi): Believes in the existence of a soul, ego or life-entity within the body.
- Taking concepts as reality
- Belief that wrong practice can uproot defilements

Māna (Conceit / Pride)

- **Characteristic:** Haughtiness
- **Function:** Self-praise
- **Manifestation:** Desire to advertise self like a banner
- **Proximate Cause:** Greed disassociated from opinionativeness
- **Regarded as:** A form of lunacy

The commentaries say that diṭṭhi and māna are like two lions that cannot live together in the same cave; they cannot arise at the same time. Lobha-mūla mental states with wrong view will never have māna, but lobha-mūla states without wrong view may or may not have māna. The reason that māna and diṭṭhi cannot arise at the same time is:

- The nature of māna is to compare, and comparison requires a separating of “I” from “others” (“I am strong” implies that there are others who are not strong).
- The nature of diṭṭhi is to generalize (“...is the nature of kamma”, “...is the nature of self”, “...is the nature of the world”)

We normally think of conceit or pride as arising only when we think ourselves better than another person. However, māna includes all forms of comparison; “better than”, “equal to” and “inferior to”. “I am luckier than he is” is a form of māna. Racism, bigotry and prejudice are all forms of māna. Competition is driven by māna.

When we see an old and sick person and we think, “I am young and healthy”, this is māna. Māna makes us blind to the fact that we have lived countless lives; youth and health are impermanent. Māna arises often and there are subjects of māna including birth, health, age, position, wealth, appearance, physique, intelligence, reputation, skills, accomplishment, popularity and being moral. What benefit do we get by comparing ourselves with others? Is māna not a source of mental intoxication?

The thought, “I will volunteer to teach Dhamma because I am a good speaker” is based on māna. This thought may condition a wholesome action, but the thought itself is unwholesome. This is an example of akusala being a condition for kusala.

Māna is so deeply ingrained that it remains until one becomes an Arahant. Even though a Sotāpanna has uprooted diṭṭhi and no longer has personality view or ego-illusion, māna can still arise. One may think “one's own” nāmas and rūpas better, equal or less than someone else's, even though one has realized that there is no self.

**Because of Lobha, one thinks, “Mine”
Because of Diṭṭhi, one thinks, “Me”
Because of Māna, one thinks, “I”**

Aversion-Rooted Mental States

There are only two aversion-rooted (dosa-mūla) mental states, spontaneous and prompted; they are easy to recognize because they are always accompanied by unpleasant mental feeling. Within each of these two categories of dosa-mūla mental states, there are four sub-sets according to the accompanying cetasikas:

- Dosa (Aversion / Hatred / Anger)
- Dosa + Issā (Envy / Jealousy)
- Dosa + Macchhariya (Selfishness / Avarice / Stinginess)
- Dosa + Kukkucca (Remorse / Worry / Regret / Brooding)

Dosa (Aversion / Hatred / Anger)

- **Characteristic:** Ferocity; flying into anger; churlishness; savageness
- **Function:** Spread like a drop of poison or burn up its own support like a forest fire (support is heart-base; i.e. takes a mental object)
- **Manifestation:** Persecuting; offending; injuring
- **Proximate Cause:** A ground for annoyance
- **Regarded as:** Stale urine mixed with poison

Giving way to dosa is like picking up a red-hot iron rod to hit somebody; we hurt ourselves first and may not even land a blow. Many of the problems that we create for ourselves in our lives arise because we do not understand the nature of dosa.

Myth	Reality
The cause of dosa is outside of us (the person, the situation, etc.)	The cause of dosa is internal to us (we have a habit of reacting with dosa and dosa is a condition for more dosa)
The best way to deal with dosa is suppression	The best way to deal with dosa is mindfulness and understanding
Our anger can hurt and control others	Our anger hurts and controls ourselves (anger controls by reinforcing bad habits)

When dosa arises regarding events in the past, one should not dwell on it but one should acknowledge, forgive (including forgiving yourself if there is guilt) and learn. This is the practice outlined in the Vinaya to be followed in the Sangha. When dosa arises regarding events in the future, this is fear. Fear makes small things appear large. Fear induces mental rigidity (one “tenses up”). Fear makes it difficult to learn how to ride a bicycle.

The Buddha said, “ ‘He abused me, he defeated me, he robbed me’, in those who harbour such thoughts hatred will not cease. Hatreds never cease though hatred in this world; through mettā alone they cease. This is an eternal law.” Regular mettā meditation can train the mind to react in a skillful way depriving dosa of a condition it needs to arise.

Issā (Envy / Jealousy)

- **Characteristic:** Being jealous of other's success; not enduring the prosperity of others
- **Function:** To be dissatisfied of other's success; taking no delight in the prosperity of others
- **Manifestation:** Aversion towards other's success; turning one's face from the prosperity of others
- **Proximate Cause:** Other's success; prosperity of others

Issā is outward looking, it focuses on others. For example, issā arises when we are dissatisfied because somebody has a better life than ours. We can train our minds to reduce the negative mental habit of issā by developing the positive habit of muditā, sympathetic joy. To counter issā, muditā can be cultivated by meditating, “May all living beings not be deprived of the good fortune they have attained”.

Issā is reduced through the practice of muditā. The Sotāpanna, has no more conditions for issā as they have eliminated the concept of self.

Macchhariya (Selfishness / Avarice / Stinginess)

- **Characteristic:** Concealing one's success when it has been or can be attained
- **Function:** Not to bear sharing with others
- **Manifestation:** Shrinking away from sharing; meanness or sour feeling
- **Proximate Cause:** One's own success
- **Regarded as:** Mental ugliness

Macchhariya is inward looking, it focuses on ourselves. Macchhariya has the characteristic of concealing because one does not want to share. It is meanness and should be regarded as mental ugliness.

There are no things we can possess, there are only *nāma* and *rūpa*. Realities which arise and fall away cannot belong to us. Why are we stingy about what does not belong to us? We cannot take our possessions, our money with us when we die. Life is so short; we waste many opportunities for kusala because of our stinginess. We can reduce our accumulation toward macchhariya by practicing *dāna*.

Kukkucca (Remorse / Worry / Regret / Brooding)

- **Characteristic:** Subsequent regret; repentance
- **Function:** Sorrow over what has and what has not been done; sorrow at deeds of commission and omission
- **Manifestation:** Remorse; regret
- **Proximate Cause:** Wrongs of commission and omission; akusala kamma that has been committed and kusala kamma that has been omitted
- **Regarded as:** State of bondage

When there is regret, there is also aversion towards the object that is experienced. Repentance is considered a virtue, but kukkucca is not wholesome. Kukkucca that regrets the arising of akusala and the non-arising of kusala is different from the wholesome thinking about the disadvantages of akusala and the value of kusala. Regret forms a pair with restlessness (*uddhacca*) as one of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*). The hindrances are akusala cetasikas that hinder the performing of kusala. When regret arises there cannot be kusala at that moment.

Thīna (Sloth) and Middha (Torpor)

Thīna

- **Characteristic:** Lack of driving power; absence of striving; opposition to striving; stiffness
- **Function:** To dispel energy; destruction of energy
- **Manifestation:** Sinking of the mind; sinking of the associated states
- **Proximate Cause:** Unwise attention to boredom; drowsiness; unwise attention in not arousing oneself from discontent, laziness or indulgence
- **Regarded as:** Paralysis due to lack of urgency and loss of vigour; sickness of the citta

Middha

- **Characteristic:** Unwieldiness
- **Function:** To smother; closing the doors of consciousness
- **Manifestation:** Drooping, nodding and sleepiness; shrinking in taking the object; drowsiness
- **Proximate Cause:** Unwise attention to boredom; drowsiness; unwise attention in not arousing oneself from discontent, laziness or indulgence
- **Regarded as:** Paralysis due to lack of urgency and loss of vigour; sickness of the cetāsikas

Thīna (sloth) and middha (torpor) always arise together; they arise in the four lobha-mūla mental states that are prompted and the one dosa-mūla mental state that is prompted. All prompted mental states have thīna and middha.

Thīna is a sickness of the citta while middha is a sickness of the cetāsikas. These cetāsikas make the mind unwieldy and lazy. Mental states with thīna and middha are passive whereas mental states without thīna or middha are active and spontaneous.

Delusion-Rooted Mental States

There are two types of delusion-rooted (moha-mūla) mental states; those with vicikicchā (doubt) and those without vicikicchā. Moha-mūla mental states without vicikicchā are “associated with restlessness” as uddhacca is the predominant cetasika in this mental state.

Vicikicchā (Doubt)

- **Characteristic:** Doubting; shifting about
- **Function:** To waver; mental wavering
- **Manifestation:** Indecisiveness and taking various sides; indecision or uncertainty in grasp
- **Proximate Cause:** Unwise attention
- **Regarded as:** Danger to attainment

Vicikicchā is doubt about realities (nāma and rūpa), about cause and result, about the four noble Truths and about Dependent Origination. When doubt accompanies the mental state, there cannot be determination (adhimokkha) which is sure about the object, neither can there be wish-to-do (chanda) which searches for the object and wants it. Doubt cannot be reduced by thinking; only direct experience (practice) can reduce doubt. Doubt is uprooted by a Sotāpanna; one who sees things as they truly are (nāma and rūpa).

Training to Avoid Unwholesome Mental States

Delusion	Observing the true nature of realities, Vipassanā
Shamelessness	Consider one's reputation
Recklessness	Consider the consequences
Restlessness	Calm the mind, Meditation on breathing
Greed	Dāna, Meditation on impermanence
Wrong View	Study the Dhamma
Conceit	Develop modesty
Hatred	Practice loving kindness (mettā), enthusiasm
Envy	Practice sympathetic joy (muditā)
Selfishness	Practice generosity (dāna)
Remorse	Focus on present and plan for future Meditation on breathing
Sloth & Torpor	Effort to apply thinking about Dhamma Meditation on light / walking / death
Doubt	Effort to sustain thinking about Dhamma

Uprooting Akusala Mental States

	Sotāpanna (Stream Winner)	Sakadāgāmi (Once Returner)	Anāgāmi (Non Returner)	Arahant (Enlightened One)
Delusion	Uproots ignorance associated with doubt			Uproots ignorance associated with restlessness
Shamelessness				Uproots shamelessness
Recklessness				Uproots recklessness
Restlessness				Uproots restlessness
Greed	Uproots greed associated with wrong view	Weakens sensuous clinging	Uproots sensuous clinging	Uproots clinging to existence
Wrong View	Uproots wrong view			
Conceit				Uproots conceit
Hatred		Weakens hatred	Uproots hatred	
Envy	Uproots envy			
Selfishness	Uproots selfishness			
Remorse	Uproots remorse regarding akusala kamma		Uproots all remorse (hatred no longer arises)	
Sloth				Uproots sloth
Torpor				Uproots torpor
Doubt	Uproots doubt			

Universal Wholesome Mental Factors

Wholesome mental factors never arise together with unwholesome mental factors. The following nineteen universal wholesome mental factors arise in every wholesome mental state.

Saddhā (Faith / Confidence / Conviction / Trust)

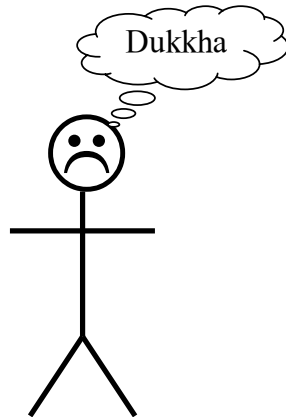
- **Characteristic:** Placing faith or trusting; confiding, purifying or aspiring
- **Function:** Clarify or set forth; purifying
- **Manifestation:** Non-fogginess; freedom from pollution
- **Proximate Cause:** Something to place faith in; an object worthy of faith or factors of “streamwinning” (association with the right friend, hearing the Dhamma, wise attention and practice in accordance with the Dhamma)
- **Regarded as:** Forerunner of all wholesomeness

Saddhā is the leader of all kusala cetasikas. There is Saddhā with dāna, with sīla and with bhāvanā. Only when people have confidence in the value of dāna, sīla or bhāvanā will they apply themselves to it.

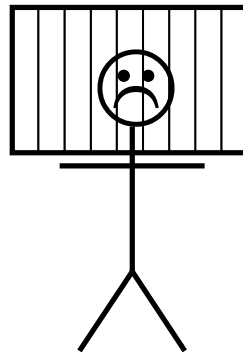
There are different types of faith. A group of people gathered on the edge of a flooding stream want to go to the far shore but are afraid. In this analogy the near shore is our usual confused condition and the far shore is the awakened mind. The people psyche themselves up, “we can do it”, but they have no idea what to do. This is blind faith. A wise person comes along, assesses the situation, takes a running leap and jumps to the other side. Seeing the example of that person, the others say, “Yes, it can be done.” That is a different type of faith. Then the people also jump. After they have jumped, they look back and say, “Yes, it can be done” and this is yet another type of faith.

When a Buddhist takes refuge in the Triple Gem, their faith should be reasoned and rooted in understanding. He is asked to investigate or test the object of his faith. A Buddhist's faith is not in conflict with the spirit of enquiry; doubt over dubious things is allowed and inquiry into them is encouraged. The famous Kalama Sutta (AN III.65) discourages “blind faith” and encourages “reasoned confidence”.

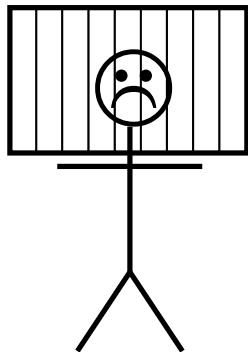
Manussa is unhappy.



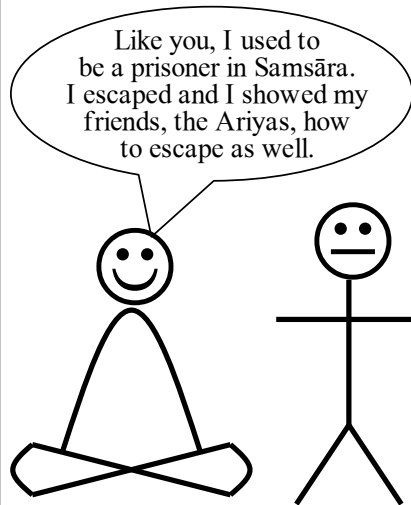
He is unhappy because he is in jail. His crime? Craving. His sentence? Life imprisonment. The prison? Samsāra.



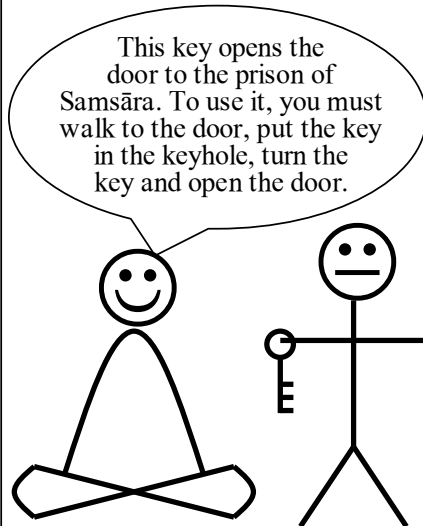
He had just finished a life term for the crime of craving and as soon as he was released, he was thrown back into the prison of Samsāra for the same crime.



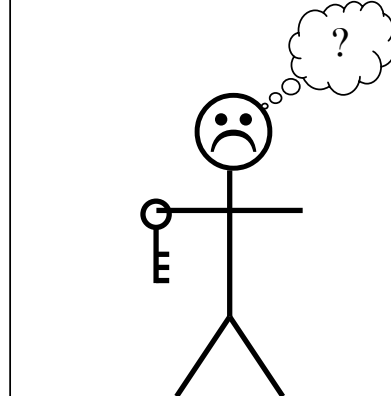
One day, the Buddha appeared.



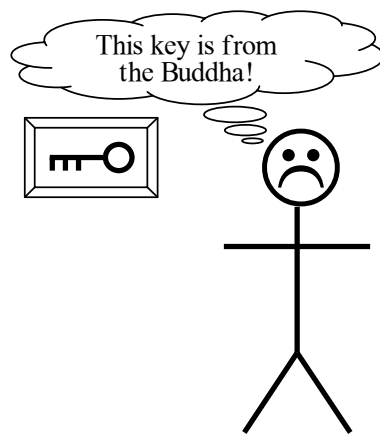
The Buddha gave Manussa a key.



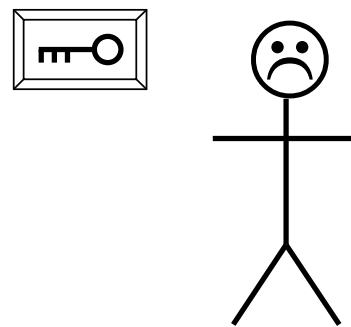
The Buddha disappeared leaving the key behind. Unfortunately, Manussa lacked wisdom (paññā) and wasn't sure what to do with the key.



Manussa decided to put the key on the wall. He worshiped the key, hoping that it would release him from Samsāra.



Manussa needed faith to believe that there was a door and that the key could work. However, to get out of Samsāra, effort is needed. **Without right effort, the key is useless!**



Saddhā (Faith)	Blind Faith	Cunning	Paññā (Wisdom)
Saddhā (Faith)	No Exertion	No Resolve	Viriya (Energy)
Saddhā (Faith)	Easily Distracted	No Absorption	Samādhi (Concentration)
Saddhā (Faith)	No Foundation	No Comprehension	Sati (Mindfulness)
	↑ Excessive Saddhā	↑ Insufficient Saddhā	

Saddhā is one of the “controlling faculties” (indriya) that exercise leadership over the accompanied mental states. Spiritual progress depends on the emergence of indriya; as we progress the indriya dominate and shape our thoughts. As shown above, saddhā must be balanced with the other indriya.

Sati (Mindfulness / Attentiveness)

- **Characteristic:** Not floating away from the object; acquiring or taking up what is beneficial
- **Function:** Unforgetfulness; absence of confusion
- **Manifestation:** Guarding or state of facing the object
- **Proximate Cause:** Firm remembrance (saññā); strong perception or the four foundations of mindfulness (rūpa, feeling, citta and Dhamma)
- **Regarded as:** Door-post from being firmly established in the object / door-keeper from guarding the door of the senses

Sati is different from what is meant by “mindfulness” in conventional language. One may think that he is mindful when he directs his attention to what he is doing or to what is going on around him. That is not the characteristic of sati in the development of insight. Sati in vipassanā is mindful of nāma or rūpa which appears, without there being a thought of self who makes an effort or who is directing the attention to an object.

When you first become aware of something there is a fleeting instant of pure awareness just before you conceptualize the thing and before you identify or name it. That is a stage of sati. Sati is a softly flowing moment of pure experience that is interlocked with the rest of reality, not separate from it. Terms used to characterize Sati include:

- **mirror-thought** - only reflects what is presently happening and in exactly the way it is happening; there are no biases
- **non-judgmental observation** - observes things in their natural state without criticism or judgment
- **impartial watchfulness** - does not take sides; no clinging to the pleasant, no fleeing from the unpleasant
- **non-conceptual awareness** - 'bare attention', not thinking; it registers experiences, but it does not compare them (like seeing everything for the first time)
- **present-time awareness** - stays forever in the present moment
- **non-egoistic alertness** - no reference to self
- **goalless awareness** - does not try to accomplish anything
- **awareness of change** - watches the flow of the show
- **participatory observation** - the meditator is both the participant and the observer at the same time

People who lack sati must chase after Dhamma, but Dhamma chases after those who have sati.

The Suttas define objects of right mindfulness according to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10); contemplation of the body, contemplation of feelings, contemplation of consciousness and contemplation of mental objects.

The Abhidhammattha Sangaha²⁸ defines forty possible meditation subjects and prescribes the most suitable type of meditation object based on the temperament of the meditator. Meditation subjects are also listed according to the stage of development²⁹ they can support. The text also defines which meditation objects can lead to which jhānas.

²⁸ See page 4

²⁹ Preliminary, access and absorption

Hiri (Moral Shame / Conscience / Scruples / Modesty) and Ottappa (Fear of Blame / Moral Dread / Shame)

Hiri

- **Characteristic:** Disgust at bodily and verbal misconduct
- **Function:** Not doing evil because of modesty
- **Manifestation:** Shrinking from evil because of modesty
- **Proximate Cause:** Self-respect
- **Regarded as:** Opposite of Ahirika

Ottappa

- **Characteristic:** Dread of evil
- **Function:** Not doing evil because of dread
- **Manifestation:** Shrinking from evil because of dread
- **Proximate Cause:** Respect for others
- **Regarded as:** Opposite of Anottappa

Hiri and ottappa are the foundation of morality (sīla). The Buddha referred to hiri and ottappa as the guardians of the world, because without them, human society would degenerate into promiscuous animal-like behaviour. Hiri and ottappa are united in the common task of protecting the mind from moral defilement. They are the opposites of ahirika and anottappa.

Hiri, the sense of shame, has an internal reference; it is rooted in self-respect and induces us to shrink from wrongdoing out of a feeling of personal honour. Ottappa, fear of wrongdoing, has an external orientation. It is the voice of conscience that warns us of the dire consequences of moral transgression: blame and punishment by others or the painful kammic results of evil deeds.

The commentary illustrates the difference between the two with the simile of an iron rod smeared with excrement at one end and heated to a glow at the other end: Hiri is like one's disgust at grabbing the rod in the place where it is smeared with excrement, ottappa is like one's fear of grabbing it in the place where it is red hot.

Alobha (Non-attachment / Unselfishness / Greedlessness / Generosity)

- **Characteristic:** Mind's lack of desire for its object; non-adherence like a water drop on a lotus leaf
- **Function:** Not appropriating; not to lay hold
- **Manifestation:** Detachment; like a man fallen into a foul place
- **Proximate Cause:** Sammā Manasikāra (right attention) - absence of greed; renunciation

The three beautiful roots are alobha, adosa and paññā. Alobha and adosa cetasikas accompany all beautiful mental states while paññā only accompanies selected mental states.

Though alobha is found in all wholesome mental states, it is the foundation of the acts of giving (dāna) and nekkhamma (renunciation), two of the ten pāramis (perfections)³⁰.

Planning the act of giving, performing the act of giving and recalling the act of giving are all wholesome mental states where there is alobha toward the object that is being given.

Many people believe that renunciation involves becoming a monk or a nun. This is not true. Renunciation arises whenever there is a withdrawing from sense pleasures and is motivated by a sense of spiritual urgency.

Adosa (Hatelessness / Goodwill / Non-aversion / Non-hate)

- **Characteristic:** Freedom from churlishness, resentment, savagery or violence; non-opposing
- **Function:** Destroying vexation / dispelling distress; removing annoyance
- **Manifestation:** Being pleasing; agreeableness
- **Proximate Cause:** Sammā Manasikāra (right attention) - seeing things as being lovable

Though adosa is found in all wholesome mental states, it is the foundation of the actions of loving kindness (mettā) and patience (khanti), another two of the ten pāramis (perfections).

³⁰ Pāramis are the ten qualities leading to Buddhahood that were developed and brought to maturity by the Bodhisatta in past existences

Mettā is adosa directed toward sentient beings while patience is adosa directed toward beings or situations. Mettā is the feeling of a mother toward her only child. Patience means acceptance; it allows us to endure and tolerate both the undesirable and the desirable (we tolerate the desirable by not clinging to it).

Tatramajjhataṭṭā (Equanimity / Mental Balance)

- **Characteristic:** Conveying citta and cetasikas evenly; promoting neutrality toward beings
- **Function:** Prevent deficiency and excess / inhibit partiality; see equality in beings
- **Manifestation:** Neutrality; quieting of resentment or approval
- **Proximate Cause:** Sammā Manasikāra (right attention) - neither too attentive nor inattentive; seeing the ownership of kamma

Tatramajjhataṭṭā is even-mindedness that does not give mental states such as lobha or dosa a foothold. Tatramajjhataṭṭā arises when we reflect on the fact that all beings are heirs to their own kamma. This cetasika is frequently confused with upekkhā, neutral mental feeling.

The Six Pairs

These twelve (6 x 2) cetasikas arise in every wholesome mental state:

- **Tranquility:** Tranquility is the inner peace bestowed by any moral thought; the peace of an unruffled conscience; a “cool mind”. It can be regarded as the opponent of anxiety, restlessness (uddhacca) and worry (kukkucca) which cause disturbance.
- **Agility / Lightness / Buoyancy:** Agility (presence of mind) allows the mind to quickly react once an occasion to do a good deed arises as the opportunity may not arise again; agility has a stimulating influence on tranquility and tranquility has a moderating influence on agility. It can be regarded as the opponent of sloth and torpor, which cause heaviness and sluggishness.
- **Pliancy / Elasticity:** Pliancy of the mind implies susceptibility, resilience and adaptability, it is the ability to learn and unlearn based on experience. It increases the mind’s imaginative capacity. It allows one to rise above habits and prejudice and conditions patience. It allows us to adapt quickly in a wholesome way when there are contrary events (i.e. stuck in a traffic jam). It can be regarded as the opponent of opinionatedness (diṭṭhi) and conceit, which cause mental rigidity and obstruction.

Six Pairs	<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Manifestation</u>	<u>Proximate Cause</u>
	Salient quality of phenomena	Performance of Task / Achievement of Goal	Way it presents itself in an experience	Principal condition on which it depends
Tranquility	Quieting down of disturbances of citta & cetasikas	Crushing the suffering of citta & cetasikas; crushing disturbances of citta & cetasikas	Neutrality; Unwavering and cool state of citta & cetasikas; peacefulness / coolness	Citta & cetasikas
Agility	Suppressing the heaviness of citta & cetasikas	Crushing heaviness in citta & cetasikas caused by sloth & torpor	Opposition to sluggishness in citta & cetasikas	Citta & cetasikas
Pliancy	Suppressing the rigidity of citta & cetasikas	Crushing the rigidity of citta & cetasikas caused by wrong view and conceit	Setting up no resistance	Citta & cetasikas
Adaptability	Suppressing the unwieldiness of citta & cetasikas	Crushing the unwieldiness of citta & cetasikas caused by sensual desire and hate	Success of the mind in making something of an object	Citta & cetasikas
Proficiency	Healthiness / fitness / competence of the citta & cetasikas	Crush unhealthiness of the citta and cetasikas caused by lack of faith	Absence of disability	Citta & cetasikas
Uprightness	Uprightness of the citta & cetasikas	Crush tortuousness of the citta & cetasikas caused by hypocrisy and fraudulence	Non-crookedness	Citta & cetasikas

For example, there are two “Tranquility” cetasikas – one works on the citta while the other works on the other cetasikas. In this way, there are six pairs.

- **Adaptability / Workableness:** Perfect adaptability means that “firmness” and “softness” of the mind are in the right proportion to permit the greatest efficiency of spiritual development; it is the right balance of firmness and softness. Excessive rigidity makes the mind difficult to transform while excessive pliancy makes the mind too impressionable. Sensual desire makes the mind too “soft” whereas hate makes the mind too “firm”. Pliancy is a fundamental condition of adaptability and adaptability sets a limit to the amount of pliancy desired. It can be regarded as the opponent of sensual desire and hate.
- **Proficiency:** Lack of proficiency appears as inner uncertainty and lack of self-confidence. Proficiency is increased with repetition. With proficiency, kusala actions become spontaneous. Proficiency gives agility the sureness and smoothness of movement that comes from long practice. Agility, the capacity to adapt, prevents proficiency from becoming an inflexible habit. It can be regarded as the opponent of faithlessness which causes unhealthiness of citta and cetasikas.
- **Uprightness / Rectitude:** Uprightness prevents a mental state from being called “kusala” when there are selfish secondary motives. It helps us put kusala thoughts into actions without motive of getting rewarded. Uprightness prevents the agility and pliancy of the mind from falling into insincerity. Agility and pliancy ensure that uprightness does not grow unimaginative and rigid to impair adaptability. It can be regarded as the opponent of insincerity, hypocrisy and fraudulence which create crookedness.

Recognizing mental states rooted in aversion is easy as the associated mental feelings are unpleasant. Mental states with pleasant or neutral feeling can be either wholesome or unwholesome. We can use the six pairs to help us recognize the difference between wholesome and unwholesome states.

In the table below, we compare the mental state of a person who “enjoyed listening to a Dhamma talk” (unwholesome) with the mental state of a person who “listened to the Dhamma talk with joy” (wholesome). In reality, it is never as clear cut as this, the mind can alternate rapidly between wholesome and unwholesome mental states.

	“I enjoyed listening to the Dhamma Talk”	“I listened to the Dhamma talk with joy”
Tranquility	I remember the amusing stories from the Dhamma talk. My pleasant feeling is mixed with excitement and agitation (uddhacca).	I am suffused with a warm feeling from being in the presence of something beautiful. I am patient to listen to the Dhamma so that I will have more understanding. I have no anxieties, “Do I have enough progress in the Dhamma” because I know it all depends on conditions. I do not forget the goal of the teachings.
Agility	The Dhamma talk is finished; “the show is over”. There are conditions for apathy, sloth and torpor.	I leave the Dhamma talk inspired to take positive action. My mind is ready to quickly seize an opportunity for kusala actions.
Pliancy	I focus on my enjoyment of the experience. My focus is on myself, not on the Dhamma. There is a strong sense of conceit.	I focus on the application of the Dhamma. My mind is naturally spreading the Dhamma learned to various aspects of my life.
Adaptability	Though I enjoyed the Dhamma talk, I would say that there were both “fun parts” and “boring parts”. I classify portions of the talk as either good or bad thereby making my mind less workable.	I leave the talk with an even balance of mudutā (pliancy); not too little so as to resist changing my mind, not too much so as to have the impressions of the Dhamma overwritten by the next sensation.
Proficiency	I will soon feel dukkha. I will miss the fun experience of the Dhamma talk. My mental state is “sickly”.	I have performed a kusala action by listening to the Dhamma talk and I am aware of this fact. This awareness gives my mental state confidence and strength.
Uprightness	I remember who saw me attend the Dhamma talk and am pleased that I will be considered by others to be religious. There is a superficial hypocrisy in my mental state.	I am feeling a spontaneous love of the Dhamma. My volition is pure. As it is cetanā that determines the moral quality of any action, the kammic effect of attending the Dhamma talk for me will be significant.

Occasional Wholesome Mental Factors

The following six occasional mental factors arise in some, but not all wholesome mental states.

The Three Abstinences

The three abstinences correspond to the morality (sīla) group of the Noble Eightfold Path. They are as follows:

- Vacī-duccarita Virati (Abstinence from Wrong Speech)
- Kāya-duccarita Virati (Abstinence from Wrong Action)
- Ājīva-duccarita Virati (Abstinence from Wrong Livelihood)
- **Characteristic of abstinence from wrong speech:** Non-transgression by wrong speech (false speech, slanderous speech, harsh speech, idle chatter)
- **Characteristic of abstinence from wrong action:** Non-transgression by bodily misconduct (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct)
- **Characteristic of abstinence from wrong livelihood:** Non-transgression by wrong livelihood (trading in weapons, flesh, spirits, poisons, etc. / taking bribes, etc.)
- **Function of all three abstinences:** Shrink back from evil deeds
- **Manifestation of all three abstinences:** Abstinence from evil deeds
- **Proximate Cause of all three abstinences:** Faith, shame, fear of wrongdoing, fewness of wishes
- **All three abstinences can be regarded as:** Produced by the state of the mind averted from evil action

The abstinences arise one at a time³¹ when the opportunity presents itself (we can only abstain from one thing at a time). There are different degrees of abstinence:

- Abstaining in spite of opportunity obtained (momentary)
- Abstaining because of observance of precepts (temporary)
- Abstaining by way of eradication (permanent, for saints)

We may refrain from wrong speech, action or livelihood because of ignorance or with aversion, but this is not a wholesome mental state. When we abstain from wrong speech, action or livelihood with kindness and patience, this is a wholesome mental state.

³¹ In supramundane mental states, all three arise simultaneously as path factors

For a Sotāpanna, wrong action and wrong livelihood have been eradicated; the possibility of wrong speech remains, but not serious enough to cause rebirth in woeful state. The Sakadāgāmī further weakens wrong speech; Anāgāmī eradicates slandering and harsh speech. Only the Arahant eradicates idle chatter.

There are degrees of the three abstinences; they can arise with or without understanding. When they are accompanied by right understanding of the Noble Eightfold Path they have a higher degree of purity, because at that moment there is no notion of self who abstains from evil.

Karuṇā (Compassion)

- **Characteristic:** Promoting the removal of suffering in others
- **Function:** Not being able to bear other's suffering
- **Manifestation:** Non-cruelty
- **Proximate Cause:** Seeing helplessness in those overwhelmed by suffering
- **Regarded as:** Succeeding when it makes cruelty subside and failing when it produces sorrow

Karuṇā arises when one perceives helplessness in those overwhelmed by suffering. When karuṇā arises, the mind cannot bear others' suffering and wants to remove that suffering. Karuṇā is the opposite of cruelty.

The motives of loving-kindness and compassion are different. When we visit a sick person, we may offer them flowers and wish them well; these are moments of loving-kindness (mettā - treating others as friends). When we notice their suffering, moments of compassion (karuṇā - wishing to allay their suffering) may arise.

Aversion is the "near enemy" of compassion; it displaces compassion through stealth. When we visit a sick person we may have moments of compassion where we wish that the person's suffering be reduced. The next moment, we may be thinking of the person's sickness with aversion or fear. The following moment, we may be thinking about aversion about the injustice of the situation. Feelings of injustice leading to aversion can arise when we feel that we are not in control of a situation. When the unwholesome thoughts rooted in aversion arise, they push aside the wholesome thought of compassion.

Muditā (Sympathetic Joy / Appreciative Joy)

- **Characteristic:** Gladness at the success of others
- **Function:** Being unenvious at other's success
- **Manifestation:** Elimination of aversion
- **Proximate Cause:** Seeing the success of others
- **Regarded as:** Succeeding when it makes aversion (boredom) subside and failing when it produces merriment

Muditā means appreciative joy at the success and good fortune of others. Sympathetic joy is the feeling of a parent or a teacher when a child excels.

The far enemy of muditā is aversion (boredom). The near enemy of muditā is joy based on the home life, as both share in seeing success. When we say to someone else: “What a beautiful garden you have”, there may be moments of sympathetic joy, sincere approval of his good fortune, but there may also be moments with attachment to pleasant objects.

Paññā (Wisdom / Understanding)

- **Characteristic:** Penetrating things according to their intrinsic nature
- **Function:** Illuminate the objective field like a lamp
- **Manifestation:** Non-bewilderment
- **Proximate Cause:** Wise attention

There are ten bases of meritorious deeds:

Dāna Group	Sīla Group	Bhavāna Group
1. Generosity	4. Virtue	7. Meditation
2. Transference of merit	5. Reverence	8. Hearing the Dhamma
3. Rejoicing in others' merit	6. Service	9. Teaching the Dhamma
		10. Straightening out one's view

Deeds in the dāna group and deeds in the sīla group do not require paññā. Deeds in the bhavāna group require paññā.

When one considers the benefits of wholesome actions or when considers that life is short, there is paññā, even if one professes another religion.

One sits practicing meditation and one's mind is restless:

- Samatha (to develop samādhi): one has paññā to recognize the restless mind and use samādhi to bring the mind back to the object
- Vipassanā (to develop paññā): one has paññā to recognize the nature of the mind (anicca, dukkha, anattā)

Both approaches to meditation require fixing the mind in the present moment (satipaṭṭhāna).

Before the Buddha, yogis were able to achieve the highest jhānas, but were not able to uproot defilements. The purpose of the Buddha's teachings is to uproot defilements to obtain Nibbāna. This requires the kind of paññā based on direct understanding of nāma and rūpa.

Summary of Wholesome Mental Factors

All wholesome mental states are:

- **Confident (saddhā):** There is confidence in the value of wholesomeness. One might call this “faith”, but this faith is not blind. This confidence pushes aside any doubt in the mind.
- **Mindful (sati):** The mind is not confused or distracted. The mind is in the present and it is connected with what is happening at the moment.
- **Driven by conscience (hiri):** Driven by self-respect, the mind is guided by a sense morality to do what is wholesome.
- **Afraid of doing wrong (ottappa):** Driven by a respect for others, the mind follows the golden rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”
- **Greedless (alobha):** The mind is not looking to satisfy itself. When this factor is strong, there can be generosity (dāna) or renunciation (nekkhamma).
- **Without aversion (adosa):** The mind is pleasant and agreeable. When this factor is strong, there can be loving kindness (mettā) or patience (khanti).
- **Balanced (tatramajjhataṭṭā):** The mind cannot be dragged into clinging or aversion.

- **Tranquil:** The mind has a peaceful, cool calmness; it is not agitated or restless.
- **Agile:** The mind is light and quick to respond to opportunities to do good things. Agility has a stimulating influence on tranquility and tranquility has a moderating influence on agility.
- **Pliable:** The mind is pliable enough to swim “against the stream” of the unwholesome habits that tend to sweep the mind along.
- **Adaptable:** The mind is not so rigid as to make it difficult to transform and at the same time, it is not so pliable as to make it too impressionable. Elasticity is a fundamental condition of adaptability and adaptability sets a limit to the amount of elasticity desired.
- **Proficient:** The mind performs with skill, like an Olympic athlete. Proficiency gives agility the sureness and smoothness of movement that comes from long practice. Agility, the capacity to adapt, prevents proficiency from becoming an inflexible habit.
- **Upright:** The mind is sincere. Uprightness prevents the agility and elasticity of the mind from falling into insincerity. Agility and elasticity ensure that uprightness does not grow unimaginative and rigid to impair adaptability.

Occasionally, some wholesome mental states can be driven by:

- **Avoidance of wrong speech (vaci-duccarita virati) / Avoidance of wrong action (kāya-duccarita virati) / Avoidance of wrong livelihood (ājīva-duccarita virati):** When opportunities for wrong speech, wrong action or wrong livelihood arise, a wholesome mental state can arise that abstains from them. This can be momentary avoidance in spite of opportunity or as part of a precept.
- **Compassion (karuṇā):** When one sees helplessness in those overwhelmed by suffering, compassion can arise. This is the opposite of cruelty.
- **Sympathetic Joy (muditā):** When one sees another’s success, sympathetic joy can arise. This is the opposite of envy and jealousy.
- **Wisdom (paññā):** Whenever we perform deeds of generosity (dāna) or observe morality (sīla), wisdom may or may not arise. However, when we apply ourselves to mental development (bhāvanā), which includes studying the Dhamma, teaching the Dhamma and meditation, wisdom will always arise.

In All Mental States	In Some Mental States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact / Sense Impression • Feeling / Sensation • Perception / Recognition • Volition / Intention / Will • One-pointedness / Concentration • Life Faculty / Vitality • Attention / Advertence / Reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Application / Applied Thinking • Sustained Application / Discursive Thinking • Determination / Decision • Energy / Effort / Exertion • Enthusiasm / Zest / Rapture / Interest • Desire / Zeal / Wish

In All Unwholesome Mental States	In Some Unwholesome Mental States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delusion / Ignorance / Dullness • Shamelessness / No Conscience • Recklessness / Lack of Moral Dread • Restlessness / Distraction / Wavering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greed / Attachment / Sensuous Desire • Wrong View / Evil Opinion • Conceit / Pride • Aversion / Hatred / Anger • Envy / Jealousy • Selfishness / Avarice / Stinginess • Remorse / Worry / Regret / Brooding • Sloth • Torpor • Doubt

In All Wholesome Mental States	In Some Wholesome Mental States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith / Confidence / Conviction / Trust • Mindfulness / Attentiveness • Moral Shame / Conscience / Scruples / Modesty • Fear of Blame / Moral Dread • Non-attachment / Unselfishness / No Greed / Generosity • Non-Hate / Goodwill / Non-aversion • Equanimity / Mental Balance • Tranquility of citta & cetasikas • Agility / Lightness / Buoyancy of citta & cetasikas • Pliancy / Elasticity of citta & cetasikas • Wieldiness / Adaptability / Workableness of citta & cetasikas • Proficiency of citta & cetasikas • Uprightness / Rectitude of citta & cetasikas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstinence from Wrong Speech • Abstinence from Wrong Action • Abstinence from Wrong Livelihood • Compassion • Sympathetic Joy / Appreciative Joy • Wisdom / Understanding

Rūpa – Non-mental Phenomenon

In the Buddha's teachings, rūpa is the term for all things that are non-mental³². Rūpa can be contrasted with nāma; nāma has consciousness and experiences an object, rūpa does not.

To understand *how* the Buddha analyzed rūpa, one must understand *why* the Buddha analyzed rūpa. Consider a “glass of water”:

- A chemist may look at it as H₂O
- A physicist may look at it as electrons, protons and neutrons
- An artist may look at it as a way to lighten the pigment of his watercolour paints
- A housewife may look at it as a way to make her cake moist

The Honeyball Sutta (MN 18) shows the role of rūpa in the Buddha's teachings, “Dependent on eye & forms, eye-consciousness arises”:

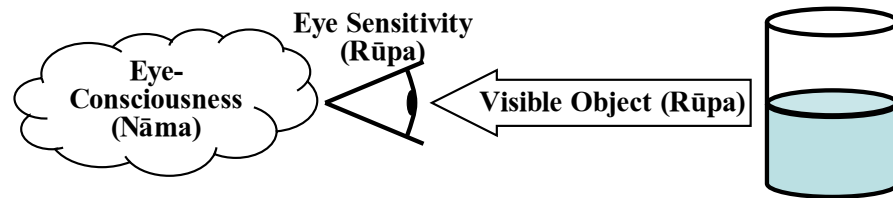
- Eye is the rūpa “eye-sensitivity”, the sensitive part of the eye which is capable of seeing. Eye-sensitivity exists only in the physical eye. Eye-sensitivity is also the basis of support for the nāma eye-consciousness (in the sensuous planes of existence, all nāma must be supported by rūpa³³).
- Form is the rūpa “visible-object”, the instantaneous image that presents itself to the eye. It is a complete image; it is not a “tree” or a “flower” (“tree” and “flower” are concepts, they are not real).
- Eye-consciousness is a nāma, the mental state that performs the function of seeing. According to the Abhidhamma, this mental state has eye-sensitivity as base whereas the other mental states in the sense door process have the rūpa “heart-base” (the base for the mind) as their base.

The Honeyball Sutta also lists the other four physical senses:

- “Dependent on ear & sounds, ear-consciousness arises”
- “Dependent on nose & aromas, nose-consciousness arises”
- “Dependent on tongue & flavors, tongue-consciousness arises”
- “Dependent on body & tactile sensations, body-consciousness arises”

³² Many translate rūpa as “matter”, but rūpa is broader in scope than “matter”

³³ In the immaterial planes of existence, nāma exists without support of rūpa in the same way that an object, thrown in the air, exists without support for a time



So how does a Buddhist perceive a “glass of water”³⁴?

- When perceived through the eye-door, it is a visible object
- When perceived through the nose-door, it is an odour
- When perceived through the tongue-door, it is a flavour
- When perceived through the body-door, it is a combination of hardness, temperature and pressure

Mental State (Nāma)	Sensitivity / Base (Rūpa)	Type of Object (Rūpa)
Eye-consciousness	Eye-sensitivity	Visible object (image)
Ear-consciousness	Ear-sensitivity	Audible object (sound)
Nose-consciousness	Nose-sensitivity	Odour
Tongue-consciousness	Tongue-sensitivity	Flavour
Body-consciousness	Body-sensitivity	Hardness Temperature Pressure

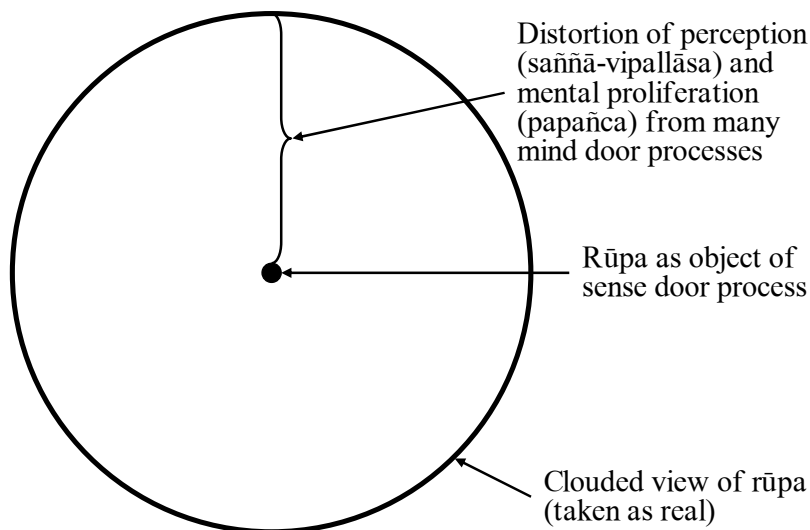
According to the Abhidhamma, a “glass of water” is a collection of:

- Hardness (earth element) – perceived through the body-door
- Temperature (fire element) – perceived through the body-door
- Pressure (wind element) – perceived through the body door as the pressure the object exerts either through it’s resilience, because of the force of gravity or the object’s tendency to move
- Cohesion (water element) – perceived through the mind-door as the element which binds all of the other elements together
- Visible object / image – perceived through the eye-door
- Odour – perceived through the nose door
- Flavour – perceived through the tongue door
- Nutrition – perceived through the mind-door as that which sustains the life faculty when ingested
- Space – perceived through the mind-door as that which maintains separation between all the rūpas

³⁴ A glass of water is silent, so it is not perceived through the ear-door

Considering all non-living things to be “equivalent” (i.e. consisting of the same set of rūpas³⁵) may seem quite un-scientific. However, this is a reflection of the Buddha’s objective in analyzing rūpa. Buddhism is not interested in how rūpa interacts with other rūpa; this is the domain of sciences such as physics and chemistry. The Buddha’s focus was on how the mind interacts with rūpa as it is the mind which leads one to live a holy life and leads one to Nibbāna.

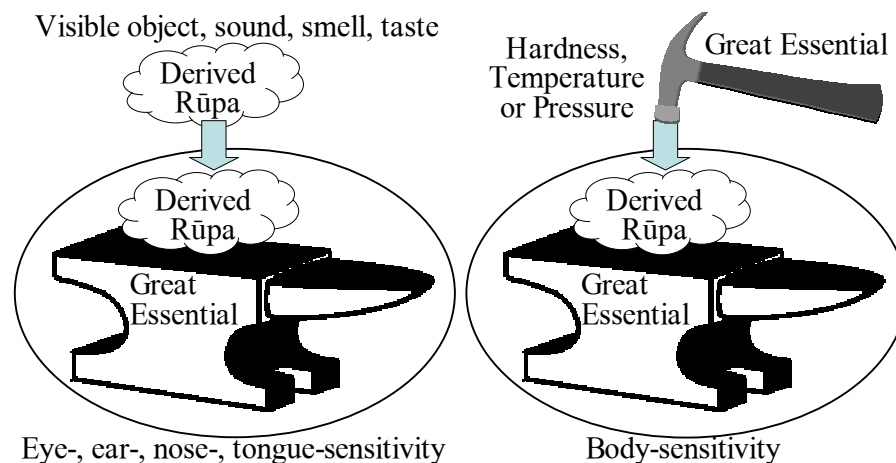
In the Suttas, the Buddha often talked about non-mental phenomenon as “earth”, “water”, “fire” and “wind”. Taken at face value, this may lead one to conclude that the Buddha’s view of the world was similar to the “non-scientific” views of ancient Greeks or ancient Chinese. In the Mūlapariyāya Sutta (Mn 1) the Buddha explained, “The uninstructed worldling (that’s us) perceives earth as earth (water as water, etc.) ... The trainee (one who has attained the first stage of sainthood) directly knows earth as earth (water as water, etc.)...” The commentary explains that “perceiving earth as earth” involves a misapprehension of the rūpa caused by defilements and wrong views³⁶. This distortion is the foundation for mental proliferation (papañca) which further clouds the true nature of the rūpa. When the Buddha talks of “earth”, He is referring to hardness or solidity; a phenomenon that is known through the body-sense.



³⁵ Non-living things may also have a rūpa of “audible object” if they make a sound

³⁶ Perversion of perception (saññā-vipallāsa)

Earth, water, fire and wind are called the “great essentials” and the other rūpas are called “derived” rūpas because they depend on the great essentials. The commentary uses this delineation to explain why eye-, ear-, nose- and tongue-sensitivity mental states arise with neutral feeling while body-sensitivity mental states arise with either pleasant or painful feeling³⁷. The commentary associates the great essentials with the solid metal of an anvil or a hammer while the derived rūpas are like cotton balls. When eye-, ear-, nose- or tongue-sensitivity is struck by an object, it is like striking an anvil covered with a cotton ball with another cotton ball (no feeling detected). When body-sensitivity is struck by an object, it is like an anvil covered with a cotton ball with a hammer (feeling is detected).



All non-living things have the rūpas listed above. Living things also have a rūpa called “life-faculty” (jīvitindriya³⁸). Some living things (or parts of living things) may also have the following rūpas:

- Eye-sensitivity (part of the eye)
- Ear-sensitivity (part of the ear)
- Nose-sensitivity (part of the nose)
- Tongue-sensitivity (part of the tongue)
- Body-sensitivity (all over the body)
- Heart-base (supports the mind)
- Masculinity (pervades the male body)
- Femininity (pervades the female body)

³⁷ See Mental States #13 to #17 and #20 to #24 in Appendix I

³⁸ Not be confused with the universal mental factor with the same name

The Abhidhamma lists “bodily intimation” and “vocal intimation” as rūpas (they do not know anything). Bodily intimation is movement of the body, of the limbs, facial movement or gestures. Vocal intimation is the tone and content of the speech. These rūpas communicate our intentions, ideas, feelings and attitudes. The intention which is expressed through bodily intimation and vocal intimation can be understood by others, even by animals.

Certain groups of rūpas³⁹ (including all non-living things) have the following rūpas⁴⁰:

- Lightness / buoyancy (lahutā) is non-sluggishness
- Malleability / plasticity (mudutā) is elasticity or non-rigidity
- Wioldiness (kammaññatā) is adaptability or workableness

There are four characteristics which are inherent in all rūpas. These four characteristics have been classified as different rūpas:

- Integration: Production of rūpa at the beginning of an existence
- Continuity: Production of rūpa during the course of an existence⁴¹
- Decay: Though individual rūpas last only a moment, over time collections of rūpas show signs of ageing and decay (examples include rusting, wrinkles and gray hairs)
- Impermanence: Over time rūpas will completely break down and completely dissolve; again, we are not referring to a single rūpa which arises only for an instant, but rather to the impermanence of a collection of rūpas

Rūpas never arise alone, they always arise in groups called kalāpas. When the rūpa of hardness arises (earth element), it always arises together with cohesion (water element), temperature (fire element) and pressure (wind element). Whenever these four essentials arise, the rūpas of flavour, nutrition, odour, visible object and space also arise.

³⁹ Does not include rūpas produced by kamma (see next section)

⁴⁰ Not to be confused with wholesome mental states of the same names

⁴¹ Mental states arise serially, one at a time (one falls away to make way for the next) whereas rūpas can accumulate (many produced in parallel). This makes rūpas corporeal whereas nāma is incorporeal.

What Causes Groups of Rūpas to Arise

	Factors Causing Groups of Rūpas to Arise			
	Kamma	Mental States	Temperature	Nutrition
Hardness / Cohesion / Temperature / Pressure / Space	X	X	X	X
Visible Object / Odour / Flavour / Nutrition	X	X	X	X
Sound		X	X	
Eye-sensitivity / Ear-sensitivity / Nose-sensitivity / Tongue-sensitivity / Body-sensitivity	X			
Life faculty / Heart Base / Masculinity / Femininity	X			
Body Intimation / Speech Intimation		X		
Lightness / Malleability / Wieldiness		X	X	X

Groups of rūpas including eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue- and body-sensitivity as well as life faculty, heart-base and either masculinity or femininity are only created by kamma. Groups of rūpas including bodily intimation and speech intimation are only caused by mental states (for example, a mental state accompanied by pleasant feeling can cause a smile). Non-living parts of the body can be created by either temperature (heat) or nutrition whereas non-living things such as rocks are only formed by temperature.

Right Understanding

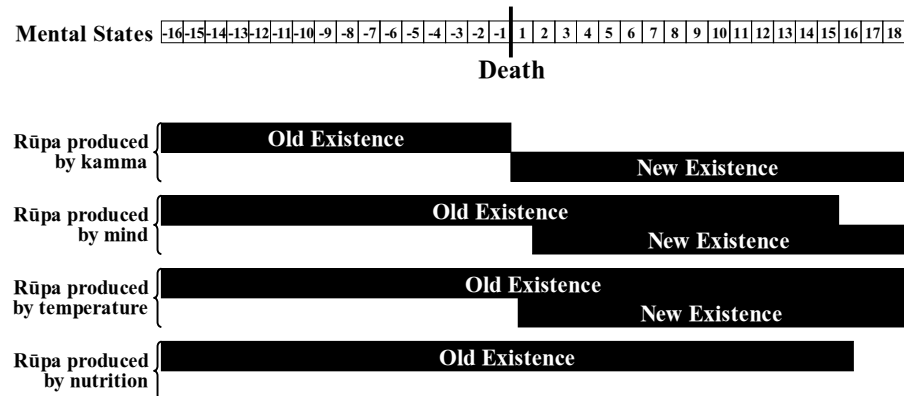
The first step of the Noble Eightfold Path, “Right Understanding”, involves seeing the true nature of nāma and rūpa:

- They are impermanent (anicca) – they arise for an instant when conditions support their arising and then they fall away
- They are a source of suffering (dukkha) when they are clung to
- They are non-self (anattā) – they cannot be controlled (but they can be “trained”)

When there is direct awareness of nāma and rūpa, there is no thinking of a “whole” at that time (there is no “glass of water”, there is only visible object). The study of rūpas helps us to understand sense objects and sense doorways – this helps us to be aware of one reality at a time as it appears in the present moment.

What Happens When We Die

Rūpa at Rebirth



Rūpa Originating from Kamma

The mental factor cetanā arising in most past javana mental states can produce groups of rūpa (arūpavacara kusala mental states do not create groups of rūpa).

Groups of rūpa originating from kamma arise with each mental state. In any existence, the last group of rūpa produced by kamma arises at the arising of the 17th mental state before death. There are no groups of rūpa produced by kamma existing after the moment of death.

The arising of the first mental state of the new existence is a condition for the arising of groups of rūpa produced by kamma. At this moment, three groups of rūpa produced by kamma are produced: body-sense decad, masculine or feminine decad and heart base decad. The remaining decads (eye-base, etc.) appear many weeks later.

Foetus Development in Womb	
1 st Week	Clear water-like mixture of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body-sense decad • Masculine or Feminine decad • Heart base decad
2 nd Week	Foam-like
3 rd Week	Lump
4 th Week	Solid
5 th Week	5 swellings for head, 2 hands, 2 feet
7 th Week	Eye sensitivity
8 th Week	Ear sensitivity
9 th Week	Nose sensitivity
10 th Week	Tongue sensitivity
42 nd Week	Head hair, body hair and nails

Rūpa Originating from Mental States

There is one group of rūpa originating from mental states arising with each mental state. In any existence, the last group of rūpa produced by mental states arises at the arising of the mental state before death. In the new existence, the first group of rūpa originating from mental states arises at the second mental state after rebirth

Rūpa Originating from Temperature

These groups of rūpa arise independent of mental states and continue long after death (while the corpse decomposes, these groups of rūpa continue to arise).

Rūpa Originating from Nutrition

Every group of rūpa contains the nutritive essence but groups of rūpa originating from nutrition will only form when internal nutritive essence meets external nutritive essence. Groups of rūpa originating from nutritive essence arise with each mental state until death. The groups of rūpa originating from nutrition which arise at the moment of death fall away after 17 mental states have passed. It is impossible to determine when the first group of rūpa originating from nutritive essence will arise in a new existence as it depends on the availability of external nutritive essence from the mother.

Rūpa in Various Planes of Existence

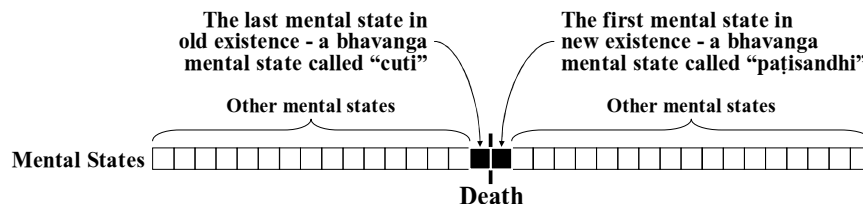
Not all planes of existence support all rūpas. For example, there is no rūpas at all in the formless realms. In the fine-material worlds, body-sense, nose-sense, tongue-sense, masculinity, femininity and nutrition do not exist.

There are four modes of birth (see MN12):

- Moisture born – smaller animals
- Egg born – certain animals
- Womb born – animals, peta, asura, human, earth born devā
- Spontaneous birth – possible for all beings (humans experience spontaneous birth only at the beginning of a world)

Nāma at Rebirth

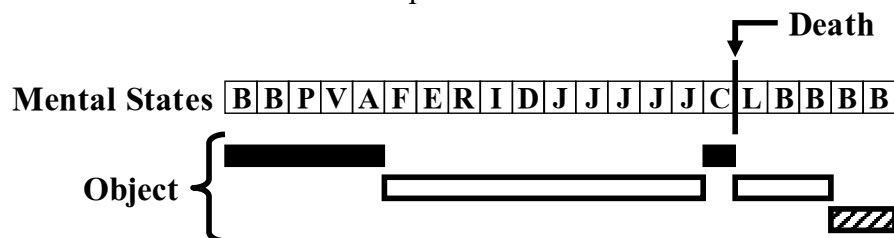
Mental states are constantly arising and falling away. This stream of mental states is not interrupted at the moment of death. The last mental state in each existence is a bhavanga mental state; it is given the special name of “cuti” (literally “departing”). The first mental state in each existence is also a bhavanga mental state; it is given the special name of “paṭisandhi” (literally “reunion” or “relinking”).



The falling away of the cuti mental state is a condition for the arising of a paṭisandhi mental state. They follow right after one after another. Unlike other Buddhist schools, the Theravada school does not accept any “transitory” stage between death and rebirth. This does not deny the possibility of rebirth in an existence for a short time, followed by another death and rebirth.

Nāma Before Rebirth

The death-process (maraṇāsanna vīthi) immediately precedes the cuti mental state, though sometimes an extra bhavanga mental state arises just before the cuti mental state. The death-process can take an object at the mind-door or at one of the sense doors. The death-process has only five javana mental states, not seven. Some death-processes end with two registration mental states while other death-processes do not. The diagram shows a death-process with an object arising at the eye door, without registration mental states and without a bhavanga mental state between the death-process and the cuti mental state.



B Bhavanga	R Receiving
P Bhavanga (Past)	I Investigating
V Bhavanga (Vibrating)	D Determining
A Bhavanga (Arresting)	J Javana
F 5-Sense Door Adverting	C Bhavanga (Cuti / Death)
E Eye Consciousness	L Bhavanga (Paṭisandhi / Linking)

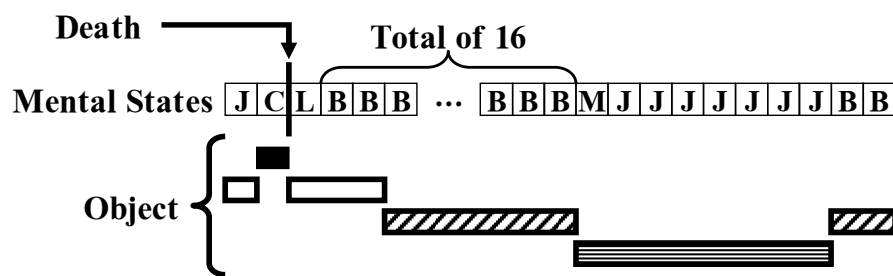
- Object from past existence (kamma, sign of kamma, sign of destiny)
- Present sign of kamma or sign of destiny arising at eye-door
- ▨ Same as □ object; it is now a past object, no longer a present object

The object of the death-process directs the stream of mental states to the next existence. There are three types of objects to a death-process:

- Kamma: Arises at mind-door when one recalls a past action.
- Sign of kamma (kamma-nimitta): Arises at mind-door or sense door when one perceives an object associated with past kamma such as the smell of an incense offering or a doctor's stethoscope.
- Sign of destiny (gati-nimitta): Arises at a sense door or mind-door to give an indication of the next existence. One may feel the heat of hell, see a forest (animal rebirth) or hear celestial music.

Nāma After Rebirth

The rebirth linking (paṭisandhi) mental state is immediately followed by sixteen more bhavanga mental states. These mental states all take the same object as the death-process from the previous existence. This will be object of all bhavanga mental states in the new existence. The sixteen bhavanga mental states are followed by seven javana mental states clinging to the new existence through the mind-door.



B Bhavanga

C Bhavanga (Cutī / Death)

M Mind Door Adverting

L Bhavanga (Paṭisandhi / Linking)

J Javana

■ Object from past existence (kamma, sign of kamma, sign of destiny)

□ Present sign of kamma or sign of destiny arising at eye-door

▨ Same as □ object; it is now a past object, no longer a present object

▤ Mind-door object in new existence (attachment to new existence)

Kamma

Kamma by Way of Function

- **Productive (janaka) kamma** is volition which produces resultant mental states and kamma-born matter. At the moment of rebirth-linking, productive kamma generates the rebirth-linking mental state and the kamma-born types of matter constituting the physical body of the new being. During a course of existence, productive kamma produces other resultant mental states and the other kamma-born matter.
- **Supportive (upatthambaka) kamma** does not produce a result; it strengthens the productive kamma. When an unwholesome kamma has exercised its productive function causing a disease, supportive kamma may prevent medicines from working effectively.
- **Obstructive (upapīḷaka) kamma** does not produce a result; it weakens the productive kamma.
- **Destructive (upaghātaka) kamma** replaces productive kamma with its own result.

Productive	Supportive	Obstructive	Destructive
It creates a lifespan	Like exercise, it extends lifespan	Like smoking it shortens lifespan	Like an accident, it cuts lifespan
Devadatta's good productive kamma allowed him to be born in a royal family	Being a monk was supportive kamma to assist Devadatta's productive kamma in having a good life	Obstructive kamma came into play when Devadatta was excommunicated from the Sangha and subjected to humiliation	Devadatta's actions of causing split in the Sangha and wounding the Buddha were destructive kamma sending him to hell
Productive kamma may send one to an unfortunate rebirth	Supportive kamma will make the unfortunate rebirth worse	Obstructive kamma may support the arising of positive thoughts that reduce the length of time spent in a bad rebirth	A wholesome kamma may suddenly arise and replace the kamma originally intended to cause a bad rebirth

Cause of Death	Analogy
Through the expiration of the life-span	The wick of an oil lamp burns out
Through the expiration of the productive kammic force	The oil in an oil lamp is used up
Through the expiration of both	Both the wick and the oil expire
Through the intervention of a destructive kamma (i.e. a violent death)	A wind blows suddenly or the lamp is extinguished on purpose

Kamma by Order of Ripening

- **Weighty (garuka) kamma** is kamma of such powerful moral weight that it cannot be replaced by any other kamma as the determinant of rebirth. On the unwholesome side, weighty kamma means the kammic potential generated by any one of the following:
 - Maliciously creating a schism in the Sangha
 - Wounding of a Buddha
 - Murder of an Arahant
 - Matricide
 - Patricide

On the wholesome side, weighty kamma means the attainment of the jhānas and maintaining the jhāna attainment until death. This causes rebirth in a world appropriate to the jhāna attainment. If one attains jhāna during a retreat and goes back to the world without maintaining it, the jhāna attainment will not qualify as weighty kamma. If one develops the jhāna and later commits one of the five heinous crimes, the good kamma would be obliterated by the evil deed. For example, Devadatta lost his psychic powers and was reborn in hell for wounding the Buddha and causing a schism in the Sangha. If someone were first to commit one of the heinous crimes, they would not be able later to attain jhāna or Sotāpanna stage, because bad kamma would create an insurmountable obstruction. King Ajātasattu had all the other conditions for reaching Sotāpanna, but he could not because he had killed his father, King Bimbisara. The Buddha predicted that after having repaid their kammic debts, Devadatta and Ajātasattu would attain enlightenment as Paccekabuddhas in a future existence.

- **Death-proximate (asañña) kamma** is the next priority after weighty kamma. This is a potent kamma remembered or performed shortly before death. If a person of bad character remembers a good deed he or she has done, or performs a good deed just before dying, they may receive a fortunate rebirth. This does not mean that one will escape the fruits of the other good and bad deeds one has performed during one's life. When they meet with suitable conditions, this kamma too will produce its due results.

Venerable Tissa received a beautiful robe that he cherished. When he died he was reborn as a flea within the folds of the robe. When the Sangha convened to distribute the monk's possessions, the

Buddha told the Sangha to postpone the distribution of the robe for seven days to allow the flea to die without worry that somebody else had taken the robe. Dying without worry allowed the flea to be reborn in heaven. Venerable Tissa was impeccable in the Vinaya. His only misdeed was in harbouring a strong attachment to his own rightful property. But because this thought was rooted in attachment, it was ultimately unwholesome. Because it persisted until just before his death, it was potent enough to cause rebirth in a woeful state, albeit for only a short spell. There is a popular belief that people who die with strong attachments are reborn as ghosts or animals haunting, or in the vicinity of, their properties.

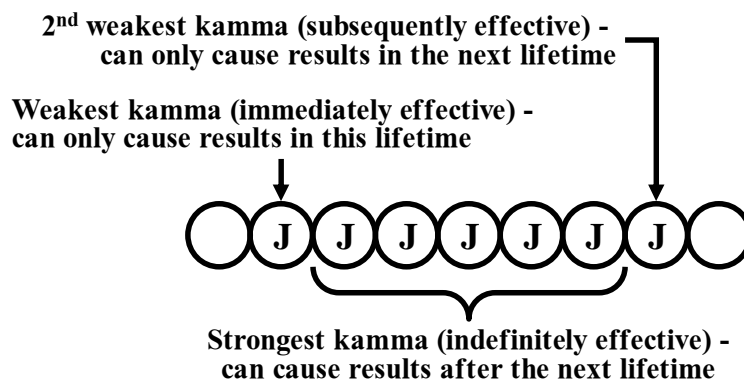
- **Habitual (āciṇṇa) kamma** is the next priority. Habitual kamma is the deed that one habitually performs. Cunda was a cruel butcher who slaughtered pigs by torturing them. Before he died, he was in such great pain and agony that he was grunting and squealing like a pig for several days. He was reborn in hell.
- **Reserve (kaṭattā) kamma** refers to deeds that have been done in the present lifetime which are not included in weighty, near-death or habitual kamma, as well as deeds that were done in past lifetimes. Venerable Tissa was reborn as a flea because of strong attachment to his robe. However when the flea died after seven days, it was reborn in Tusita Heaven because of reserve kamma.

Suppose that many cattle are kept in a shed for the night. In the morning the door of the shed is opened to let the cattle go out to the pasture. Now which one will come out first?

- If there is a leader among them whom everyone respects, this one will walk majestically to the door and come out first. This is like a weighty kamma that is uncontested to bear its result in the next life.
- If there is no leader, the one nearest the door comes out first. This is like a death-proximate kamma bearing its fruit in the next life.
- Sometimes a vigilant one, who has regularly noticed the time when the shed is opened, may walk to the door just before it is opened and come out first when the door is opened. This is like the habitual kamma producing its result in the next life.
- Sometimes a frail one, by being pushed by stronger ones, may come out of the shed first. This is similar to the case when an unexpected reserve kamma has the chance to condition the next life.

Kamma by Time of Ripening

Javana mental states arise in groups of seven. The first javana mental state to arise creates “immediately effective” kamma, which can only cause results in the same lifetime that it was created. The last javana mental state in the sequence creates “subsequently effective” kamma which can only cause results in the next existence. The middle five javana mental states are strong and create “indefinitely effective” kamma which can cause results after the next existence.



Kamma becomes “inoperative” when:

- A lifetime expires and “immediately effective” kamma has not found conditions to create results
- A lifetime expires and “subsequently effective” kamma from the previous existence has not found conditions to create results

Kamma by Place of Ripening

Only when all constituent factors are present, unwholesome kamma can cause rebirth in one of the four woeful planes. For example, killing in self defense (i.e. no intention to kill) will not lead to rebirth in one of the woeful planes.

Action	Constituent Factors	Remarks
Killing	A living being / consciousness that there is a living being / intention of killing / effort of killing / consequent death	Large animals more serious than small animals, humans more serious than animals. Virtuous being more serious than non-virtuous being.
Stealing	Another's property / awareness that it is so / thieving mind / effort / consequent removal	Higher value objects more serious than smaller value objects. Stealing from a virtuous being more serious than stealing from a non-virtuous being.
Sexual Mis-behaviour	The mind to enjoy the forbidden object / effort to enjoy / devices to obtain / possession	Married women and women under guardianship are forbidden. Seriousness of the sin increases with the virtue of the woman (keeping precepts).
Lying	An untrue thing / intention to deceive / corresponding effort / communication of the matter to others	Seriousness depends on the welfare destroyed (lying to harm another is more serious than lying to protect oneself)
Slandering	Other persons to be divided / the purpose, "they will be separated" or the desire to endear oneself to another / corresponding effort / communication	Seriousness depends on the virtue of the "victim" (person being slandered / person to whom rude speech or ill will is directed)
Rude Speech	Another to be abused / angry thought / abuse	
Ill Will	Another being / thought of doing harm	
Idle Talk	Inclination towards useless talk / narration of such themes	Seriousness depends on the frequency that it is practiced.
Covet-ousness	Another's property / bending over of oneself	High value objects more serious than small value objects. Coveting from a virtuous being more serious than coveting from a non-virtuous being.
Wrong View	Perversion of the manner in which an object should be taken / its manifestation according to the contrary view held of it	Seriousness of the sin depends on the frequency with which it is practiced (temporary or permanent).

Wholesome kamma of the sense-sphere can be performed by beings (except Buddhas and Arahants) in any plane of existence. It has the potential to produce rebirth-linking in the sensuous blissful plane, but during the course of existence, it can give effect anywhere in the sensuous world or the fine-material world, according to circumstances.

The ten bases of meritorious deeds are as follows:

Dāna	Sīla	Bhavāna
4. Generosity	7. Virtue	11. Meditation
5. Transference of merit	8. Reverence	12. Hearing the Dhamma
6. Rejoicing in others' merit	9. Service	13. Teaching the Dhamma
		14. Straightening out one's view

The passive aspect of sense-sphere wholesome kamma can be viewed in the ten wholesome courses of action (abstaining from killing, etc.), while its active aspect is classified under the threefold and tenfold bases of meritorious deeds. In the ultimate sense, sense-sphere wholesome kamma is eightfold according to the volition in the sense-sphere kammic mental states associated with non-attachment (generosity), non-hate (loving kindness) and non-delusion (wisdom).

Wholesome kamma of the fine-material sphere is purely mental action. It consists of meditation that has reached absorption and is fivefold by distinction of jhāna-factors. Each wholesome jhāna mental state has the potential to generate rebirth in the fine-material realm that corresponds with its own level.

Wholesome kamma of the immaterial sphere is also purely mental action. It consists of meditation that has reached absorption and is fourfold by distinction of the object. Immaterial-sphere wholesome jhāna mental state has the potential to produce as its result only its corresponding resultant mental state, which fulfills only three functions of rebirth, bhavanga and death in the immaterial realm to which it pertains.

Summary of Kamma

By Way of Function	By Order of Ripening	By Time of Ripening	By Place of Ripening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive • Supportive • Obstructive • Destructive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weighty • Death-proximate • Habitual • Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately effective • Subsequently effective • Indefinitely effective • Defunct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwholesome • Sense-sphere wholesome • Fine-material-sphere wholesome • Immaterial-sphere wholesome

31 Planes of Existence

Worlds, Planes and Spheres

Buddhist cosmology divides the universe into three types of worlds, also called planes (bhūmi) of existence:

- Sensuous Worlds (kāma-loka): Generally, beings in these worlds have all five physical senses. The sensuous worlds are further split into the four Woeful Planes (apāyabhūmi) and Happy Destinations (sugati). Human existence is a happy destination.
- Fine-material Worlds (rūpa-loka): Generally, beings in these worlds have only the “fine” physical senses of sight and hearing; they do not have the “coarse” senses of smelling, taste or touch.
- Immaterial Worlds (arūpa-loka): Beings in these worlds have only mind, they have no physical senses.

Mental states are divided into four spheres (avacara):

- Sense-sphere (kāmāvacara): Beings in the sensuous worlds tend to have these mental states because they are caught up in their senses. Under special circumstances, it is possible for beings in the sense worlds to have mental states belonging to the other spheres.
- Fine-material sphere (rūpāvacara): These mental states arise with high levels of concentration (jhāna) focusing on a physical object. Beings in the fine-material worlds tend to have these mental states.
- Immaterial sphere (arūpāvacara): These mental states arise with high levels of concentration (jhāna) focusing on specific concepts. Beings in the immaterial worlds tend to have these mental states.
- Supramundane (lokuttara): these mental states are associated with the Noble Ones (ariyas); stream-enterers (sotāpanna), once-returners (sakadāgāmī), non-returners (anāgāmī) and liberated ones (Arahant).

Destruction of the Worlds

All things are impermanent, including worlds. When worlds are destroyed by fire, all of the worlds up to the three first-jhāna planes are burned. After being destroyed seven times consecutively by fire, the worlds will be destroyed by water on the eighth time when all of the worlds up to the three second-jhāna planes will be destroyed. After being destroyed in regular cycles seven times by fire and one time by water, the world will be destroyed by wind on the 64th time when all the world up to the three third-jhāna planes will be destroyed.

			Name of Realm	Duration	Cause of Rebirth	Next Life
31	Immaterial Worlds <i>Arūpa-loka</i>		Neither-perception-nor-non-perception <i>N'evasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana Devā</i>	84,000 eons	4 th Formless Jhāna	5-11, 31 (31)
30			Nothingness <i>Ākiñcaññāyatana Devā</i>	60,000 eons	3 rd Formless Jhāna	5-11, 30, 31 (30, 31)
29			Infinite Consciousness <i>Viiññāṇañcāyatana Devā</i>	40,000 eons	2 nd Formless Jhāna	5-11, 29-31 (29-31)
28			Infinite Space <i>Ākāśañañcāyatana Devā</i>	20,000 eons	1 st Formless Jhāna	5-11, 28-31 (28-31)
27	Fine-material Worlds <i>Rūpa-loka</i>	Pure Abodes <i>Suddhāvāsa</i>	Peerless Gods <i>Akanittha Devā</i>	16,000 eons	4 th Jhāna	- (None)
26			Clear-sighted Gods <i>Sudassi Devā</i>	8000 eons		- (27)
25			Beautiful Gods <i>Sudassa Devā</i>	4000 eons		- (26, 27)
24			Untroubled Gods <i>Atappa Devā</i>	2000 eons		- (25-27)
23			Gods not Falling Away <i>Aviha Devā</i>	1000 eon		- (24-27)
22			Unconscious Beings <i>Asaññasatta</i>	500 eons		5-11 (-)
21			Very Fruitful Gods <i>Vehapphala Devā</i>	500 eons		5-22, 28-31 (21, 23-31)
20			Gods of Refulgent Glory <i>Subhakiṇṇa Devā</i>	64 eons	3 rd Jhāna Highest Degree Medium Degree Minor Degree	5-22, 28-31 (20-21, 23-31)
19			Gods of Unbounded Glory <i>Appamāṇasubha Devā</i>	32 eons		5-22, 28-31 (19-21, 23-31)
18			Gods of Limited Glory <i>Parittāsubha Devā</i>	16 eons		5-22, 28-31 (18-21, 23-31)
17			Gods of Streaming Radiance <i>Abhassara Devā</i>	8 eons	2 nd Jhāna Highest Degree Medium Degree Minor Degree	5-22, 28-31 (17-21, 23-31)
16			Gods of Unbounded Radiance <i>Appamāṇabhā Devā</i>	4 eons		5-22, 28-31 (16-21, 23-31)
15			Gods of Limited Radiance <i>Parittābhā Devā</i>	2 eons		5-22, 28-31 (15-21, 23-31)
14			Great Brahmās <i>Mahā Brahmā</i>	1 eon	1 st Jhāna Highest Degree Medium Degree Minor Degree	5-22, 28-31 (14-21, 23-31)
13			Ministers of Brahmā <i>Brahmā-purohita</i>	1/2 eon		5-22, 28-31 (13-21, 23-31)
12			Retinue of Brahmā <i>Brahmā-parisaṃjja</i>	1/3 eon		5-22, 28-31 (12-21, 23-31)
11	Sensuous Worlds <i>Kāma-loka</i>	Happy Destinations <i>Sugati</i>	Gods Wielding Power over Creation of Others <i>Paranimmita-vasavattī</i>	9216 million	10 Wholesome Actions Generosity	<u>Rootless</u> 1-11 <u>Two Roots</u> 1-11 <u>Three Roots</u> 1-22, 28-31 (5-21, 23-31)
10			Gods Delighting in Creation <i>Nimmānaratī</i>	2304 million		
9			Heaven of the Contented Gods <i>Tusita</i>	576 million		
8			Heaven of the Yāma Gods <i>Yāma</i>	144 million		
7			Heaven of the 33 Gods <i>Tāvātīṃsa</i>	36 million		
6			Heaven of the 4 Great Kings <i>Cātumahārājika</i>	9 million		
5			Human <i>Manussa</i>	Indefinite		
4		Woeful Planes <i>Apāyabhūmi</i>	Demon / Titan <i>Asura</i>	Indefinite	10 Unwholesome Actions	1-11 (-)
3			Hungry Ghost <i>Peta</i>	Indefinite	Animal ☐ Behaving like an animal	
2			Animal <i>Tiracchāna Yoni</i>	Indefinite		
1			Hell <i>Niraya</i>	Indefinite	Hell ☐ Heinous Deeds	

Woeful Planes (Apāyabhūmi)

There are four woeful planes:

- Hell (Niraya), the worst possible plane
- Animal (Tiracchāni Yoni)
- Hungry Ghost (Peta)
- Demon / Titan (Asura)

After their kamma has expired, beings from the four woeful planes are reborn into one of the sensuous worlds (Kāma-loka); one of the four woeful planes (again) or one of the Happy Destinations. Noble Ones (sotāpanna, etc.) are never born into the woeful planes. Rebirth into one of the four woeful planes is the kammic result of one of the ten unwholesome actions.

Hell (Niraya)

Being reborn in Hell is a natural result from previous actions; bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, mental misconduct, reviling noble ones, wrong views and actions under the influence of wrong views. Hell beings have no happy moments; they suffer the painful results of their unwholesome kamma throughout their lives in that realm.

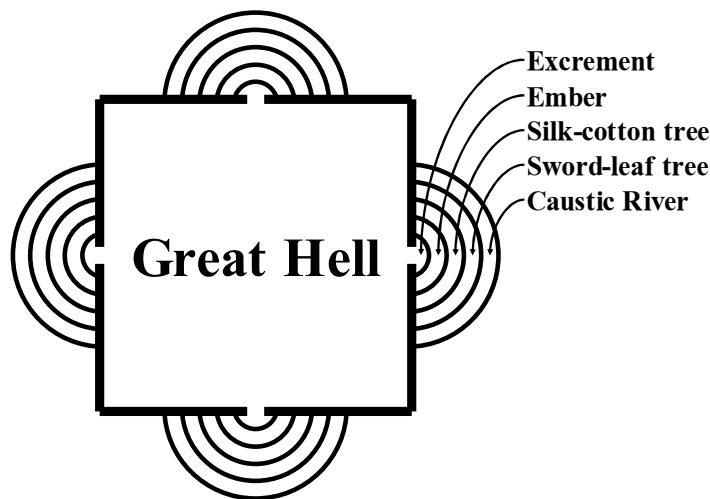
There are eight great hells of increasing intensity of torment:

- **Sañjīva** (“reviver”): This is the least severe type of hell. The guardians of this hell chop and cut the hell beings with glowing weapons. As long as their evil deeds remain unexhausted, the hell beings regain their lives after the punishment is over.
- **Kālasutta** (“black thread”): Hell beings are placed on a floor of heated iron, marked with a black thread and made red hot. The guardians of this hell then plane the hell beings with adzes along the markings.
- **Sanghāta** (“crushing”): Hell beings are constantly being crushed by huge fiery rocks coming from all four directions.
- **Roruva**: Hell beings have noxious gases blown into their bodies.
- **Mahā Roruva**: Hell beings have flames blown into their bodies.
- **Tāpana** (“burner”): Hell beings are pierced by red-hot stakes and remain motionless as long as the results of their evil deeds last.
- **Mahā Tāpana** (“great burner”): The guardians of this hell force the hell beings to climb up a burning iron mountain. Strong winds force the hell beings to fall from the mountain and be impaled on the red-hot stakes below.

- **Avīci** (“without intermission”): This is the most terrible type of hell. There is no space between the hell beings and the flames. Those who have committed the five heinous acts (patricide, matricide, killing an Arahant, wounding a Buddha or causing a schism in the Sangha) are destined for Avīci.

Each of the eight great hells is square with a door on each side. Each door from the great hell leads to five minor hells (for a total of 168):

- Gūtha (excrement) hell
- Kukkuḷa (ember) hell
- SimPālivana (silk-cotton tree) hell
- Asipattavana (sword-leafed forest) hell
- Vettarani (river of caustic water) hell



Each of the 32 doors leading from a great hell to the minor hells is guarded by a Yāmādevā. The duty of the Yāmādevā is to consider the case of each hell being and direct the guardians of the hell (Niraya-pāla) to inflict the punishment. Yāmādevā and Niraya-pāla are from Cātumahārājika Heaven; these beings sometimes enjoy the fruitions of their meritorious kamma in heaven and sometimes suffer the results of their evil deeds in hell. On very rare occasions, one of the doors on the four sides of the great hell will open and a few hell beings will be allowed to pass into the minor hells. Only from a minor hell can a being with good past kamma experience rebirth.

Animal (Tiracchāni Yoni)

In SN XLII.3, the Buddha is asked if a brave warrior can expect rebirth in heaven. The Buddha explained that if a warrior's mind was filled with hate at the time of death, then rebirth would be in hell. If the warrior's mind were filled with wrong view at time of death, then rebirth could be in hell or in the animal realm. In many other Suttas, the Buddha stressed that wrong view resulted in rebirth in hell or as an animal. In MN 57, the Buddha explained that humans who behave as animals are destined for rebirth in the animal realm. Life as an animal is not pleasant as they are exposed to the elements. Animals live most of their lives in fear and craving food. Because of past actions, some animals suffer more and some animals suffer less. In many cases, humans are reborn as animals with a natural affinity for that which they craved as humans. For example, the Elder Tissa was reborn as a flea in his old robe and the Brahman Todeyya's was reborn as a dog in his previous household.

Hungry Ghost (Peta)

These beings are tormented by intense hunger, thirst and other afflictions to which they can find relief. The petas have no world of their own; they live in the same world as humans, in forests, bogs, cemeteries, etc.. They remain invisible to humans except when they choose to make themselves visible or are perceived by humans who have developed the "divine eye" through meditation.

There are four kinds of Peta:

- **Paradattupajīvika-peta:** This sort of Peta lives on the dakkhiṇā (sacrificial gifts) of others. Buddhism encourages dakkhiṇā or merit-making by offering food, clothing, shelter, etc., to virtuous persons such as a Bhikkhu and then dedicating the merit acquired to deceased relatives. If the deceased relatives are this type of Peta, they will appreciate the dakkhiṇā dedicated to them and they will be reborn in a better world. Only the Peta of this sort are able to enjoy the outcome of dakkhiṇā dedicated by their relatives. Other types of Petas are not affected by such a dedication. The dakkhiṇā will become fruitful to the Peta only when three conditions are met:
 - The dakkhiṇā or sacrifice is given to a virtuous person
 - The merit of the dakkhiṇā is dedicated to a deceased relative
 - His deceased relative has been born as a Paradattupajīvika-peta, the Peta knows the dakkhiṇā dedicated to him

If any of these three conditions is lacking, the deceased relative will not be able to enjoy the outcome of the dakkhiṇā. Nevertheless, the performer of the dakkhiṇā will still receive the good result of his meritorious action.

- **Khuppiṇāsika-peta:** This sort of Peta suffers from hunger and thirst and will suffer as a Peta as long as his evil kamma lasts.
- **Nijjhāmatanḥikā-peta:** This Peta's suffering is caused by his own craving (taṇhā). Fire burns in his mouth as long as his evil kamma lasts.
- **Kālakancika-peta:** This sort of Peta has a very tall body that appears to be like a dry leaf with only skin covering the skeleton. His eyes protrude like those of the crab and his mouth is extremely small. He suffers from hunger and thirst like other types of Peta.

Demon / Titan (Asura)

The term “asura” is applied to three types of beings:

- A group of Devās from Tāvatiṃsa Heaven led by Vepacitti
- Another name for the Kālakancika-peta already described
- Titan residents of the Lokantarika-niraya realm

The Lokantarika-niraya realm is situated between the human world, the hell world and the heaven world. The Lokantarika-niraya realm is a dark sea of acid water surrounded by rocky mountains; no light can reach this place. The Asuras hang themselves on cliffs like bats. They are tortured by hunger and thirst as there is no food for them. While moving along the cliff they sometimes come across each other. Thinking that they have come across food, they jump upon each other and start fighting. As soon as they start fighting, they let loose their grip on the cliff and as a result they fall into the sea below and their bodies melt away just like salt melting away in water.

Happy Destinations (Sugati)

Generosity and abstinence from the ten unwholesome actions lead to rebirth in a happy destination. The bases for wholesome actions are:

1. Dāna – giving charity or generosity
2. Sīla – morality; observing precepts
3. Bhāvanā – meditation, both tranquility and insight
4. Appacāyana – reverence to elders and holy persons
5. Veyāvacca – service in wholesome deeds
6. Pattidāna – transference of merit

7. Pattānumodana – rejoicing in others’ merit
8. Dhamma-savana – listening to the Doctrine
9. Dhamma-desanā – expounding the Doctrine
10. Dīṇhijjukamma – straightening one’s right view

Human Plane of Existence

The Pāli word manussa (human) literally means those who have sharp or developed minds. As the human mind is very sharp, this makes man much more capable of weighty moral and immoral action than any other class of being. The human being is capable of development of up to Buddhahood and also of serious crimes such as killing of one’s parents. The human realm is a mixture of pain and pleasure, suffering and happiness.

The main reason that the realm of human beings is regarded as a happy destination (sugati) is that human birth is the result of meritorious kamma. Although the human world is the lowest of all of the happy realms of existence, it possesses significant characteristics which make it the most important realm of existence:

- It is the realm situated between the Woeful Planes (Apāyabhūmi) and the higher realms of happiness or Devāloka. In this sense, it may be seen as the “centre” of all realms.
- It is the only realm where the life of a recluse, an ethical life that leads directly to the realization of the ultimate truth, is possible.
- It is where the fulfillment of the Ten Perfection (Dasa-pāramī) of the Buddha-to-be (Bodhisatta) is made possible.
- It is the only realm where the Bodhisatta attains Buddhahood and preaches the ultimate truth to the world.

Charity (dāna) and virtue (sīla) are the determining factors in bringing about rebirth in the realm of human beings:

- One who only on a small scale performs meritorious action founded on charity (dāna), only on a small scale performs meritorious action founded on virtue (sīla) and does not perform meritorious action founded on mind-development (bhāvanā) is reborn among men of ill luck.
- One who performs meritorious action founded on charity to a medium degree, performs meritorious action founded on virtue to a medium degree and does not perform meritorious action founded on mind-development is reborn among men of good luck.

Being born as a human is a rare event and the Buddha encouraged us to capitalize on this extraordinary opportunity. The four woeful planes are packed with beings while the realms above the human realm are sparsely populated.

There is a Buddhist legend of the “age of materiality” where the population of the world increases dramatically because many beings are reborn from the four woeful planes into the human realm. Because these beings have spent so much time in the woeful planes, they have accumulated some bad habits; they are quarrelsome, rebellious, selfish and greedy.

Heaven of the Four Great Kings (Cātumahārājika)

This heaven has four divisions, each ruled over by its own guardian deity and inhabited by a different class of demiGods:

- East – Dhātaraṭṭha rules over gandhabbas (celestial musicians)
- South – Virūlhaka rules over kumbhaṇḍas (gnomic caretakers of forests, mountains and hidden treasures)
- West – Virūpakkha rules over nāgas (dragon-like creatures)
- North – Vessavaṇa / Kuvera rules over yakkhas (spirits)

Distinctions are made among the three types of Gods of the Cātumahārājika heaven according to the nature of their residences:

- Bhūmmattha-devā (Gods living on the ground): reside on mountains, in pagodas, in public houses like temples, etc. They do not particularly have palaces (vimānas) of their own. The lifespan of these beings is of indefinite length.
- Rukkhāttha-devā (Gods living in trees): some have palaces of their own on the tops of trees and others have no palaces but reside in the trees. Since their residences are in connection with trees, when those trees are chopped down they have to shift to other unoccupied ones. The lifespan of these beings is of indefinite length.
- Ākāśāttha-devā (Gods living in the sky): they have vimānas of their own. The magnificence of their palaces varies depending on the kammic results of the owners. The lifespan of these beings is 9 million human years.

Heaven of the 33 Gods (Tāvatiṃsa)

According to legend, there was a group of thirty-three men who collectively dedicated their efforts to the happiness and well-being of other people. They built and repaired roads, dug wells and ponds, built rest houses at cross-roads, etc. They passed their whole life with such wholesome actions and after death they were reborn in this realm. The leader of the group (Sakka or Indra) became the ruler of this heaven. His thirty-two friends were reborn as high ranking Gods. Since the thirty-three friends were born in this realm, it is called Tāvatiṃsa or the heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods.

Gods of the higher heavens are invisible to the Gods of the lower ones but not vice versa. This is because the bodies of the Gods of the higher realms are more subtle than those of the Gods in the lower realms. The Gods of the higher heavens are visible to the Gods of the lower realms only when they want themselves to be seen by transforming their subtle bodies into grosser bodies. Gods cannot travel to realms higher than their own but they can go to a realm that is lower than their own at will. These two general characteristics, i.e. the invisibility of the higher Gods to the lower Gods and the incapability of the lower Gods to travel to the higher realms, are common to all the heavens except the Cātumahārājika and the Tāvatiṃsa heaven which are closely related. The Gods of the Cātumahārājika heaven can go to Tāvatiṃsa heaven, even though Tāvatiṃsa is a higher realm. The Four Great Kings of Cātumahārājika are among the God-retinue of Sakka.

The Buddha taught the Abhidhamma in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven in gratitude to his mother (who had died seven days after giving birth to the Buddha and then was reborn in Tusita Heaven). The Buddha chose Tāvatiṃsa to teach the Abhidhamma because Tāvatiṃsa is accessible to the Gods of all realms; lower as well as higher heavens. The Buddha wanted his sermon to benefit not only his mother, but also Gods of other realms who were interested in his teachings. If he chose to preach to his mother in Tusita, only the Gods of the same realm and of the higher heavens could attend his sermon but not the Gods of lower realms since Tusita is inaccessible to them.

One day and night in this realm is equivalent to 100 human years and beings of this realm live for 36 million human years. The three months of human time that the Buddha spent teaching Abhidhamma was equivalent to 3.6 minutes of time in Tāvatiṃsa Heaven.

Heaven of the Yāma Gods (Yāma)

This realm is the abode of the Gods whose lives are without hardship. There is very little description of this realm in the texts, other than it is the realm above Tāvātimsa Heaven.

Heaven of the Contented Gods (Tusita)

Every Bodhisatta is born here before the human birth in which he attains Buddhahood. From this realm, the Bodhisatta is reborn as a human and becomes enlightened.

Gods Delighting in Creation (Nimmānarati)

The Gods of this realm enjoy the objects of the senses that they themselves create. In the lower heavens, the objects of sensuous enjoyment exist by their own nature. In Nimmānarati heaven, the beings of the realm create for themselves the objects of sense and enjoy them as they like. The Nimmānarati Gods can enjoy the pleasures of life at will.

Gods Wielding Power over the Creation of Others (Paranimmitavasavatti)

Unlike the Gods of Nimmānarati heaven, the Paranimmitavasavatti Gods themselves have nothing to do with the creation of the objects for sensuous enjoyment. Their duty is only to enjoy such ready-made objects of others' creations. It is said that their God-attendants who realize their desires do such services for them.

Māra, the personification of delusion and desire lives in this realm. He has no faith in the Buddha and Buddhism. He tried many times to create obstacles for the Buddha, but he always met with failure. His power, however, surpasses that of the Gods in the lower heavens.

The Lower Nine Fine-Material Worlds (Rūpa-loka)

These are the destination of those who have developed, during their life, the first, second or third fine-material jhāna and at the time of death, still have potential access to that jhāna. One who develops the jhāna and then loses access to it due to negligence or obsession with destructive states will not be reborn here. Beings born into these realms tend to remain in the jhāna state. These beings do not have any desire to enjoy sense pleasures and do not have the faculty of smell,

taste or touch. These beings are able to see and hear as they desire to witness the appearance of Buddhas and Arahants and listen to them preach. In these planes (and the planes above), there is no gender but Gods appear as male. When a worldling reborn into these planes dies, they are reborn in another plane, not including the woeful states or the pure abodes. When a Noble One reborn into these planes dies, they are reborn in the same plane or higher (except the Asañña satta realm).

Great Brahmās (Mahā Brahmā), Ministers of Brahmā (Brahmā-purohita) and Retinue of Brahmā (Brahmā-pārisajja)

Those who have mastered the first fine-material jhāna are reborn in realm of the Great Brahmās. Those who have developed the first fine-material jhāna to a medium degree are reborn in the realm of Ministers of Brahmā. Those who have developed the first fine-material jhāna to a minor degree are reborn in the realm of Retinue of Brahmā. After gaining enlightenment, the Buddha's first inclination was to remain silent. Sensing this, Sahampati from the Great Brahmā realm appeared before the Buddha and implored Him to teach the Dhamma, "... as there are beings with little dust in their eyes who will understand the Dhamma".

In the Great Brahmā realm, there is a deity who believes that he is the all-powerful, all-seeing creator of the universe. In the Kevatta Sutta (DN11), a monk in search of the answer to a philosophical question approaches this deity. The deity takes the monk aside and scolds him, "The Gods in my retinue believe that there is nothing that I do not know. That is why I could not tell you in their presence that I did not know the answer to your question. You have acted wrongly in bypassing the Buddha. Go directly to the Buddha for your answer."

Gods of Streaming Radiance (Ābhassara Devā), Gods of Unbounded Radiance (Appamāṇābhā Devā) and Gods of Limited Radiance (Parittābhā Devā)

The beings from these planes, the radiant Gods, are usually referred to as the representatives of supreme love (pīti and mettā). Those who have mastered the second fine-material jhāna are reborn in realm of the Gods of Streaming Radiance. Those who have developed this jhāna to a moderate degree are reborn in the realm of Gods of

Unbounded Radiance. Those who have developed this jhāna to a minor degree are reborn in the realm of Gods of Limited Radiance.

The numbering of jhāna states are defined differs in the Suttas and in the Abhidhamma. When discussing planes of existence, we use the Sutta method; the 2nd Jhāna of the radiant Gods does not have initial application nor sustained application as jhāna factors.

Associated Jhāna Factors	Sutta Method	Abhidhamma Method
Initial Application, Sustained Application, Rapture, Happiness, One-pointedness	1 st Jhāna	1 st Jhāna
Sustained Application, Rapture, Happiness, One-pointedness		2 nd Jhāna
Rapture, Happiness, One-pointedness	2 nd Jhāna	3 rd Jhāna
Happiness, One-pointedness	3 rd Jhāna	4 th Jhāna
Equanimity, One-pointedness	4 th Jhāna	5 th Jhāna

Gods of Refulgent Glory (Subhakiṇṇa Devā), Gods of Unbounded Glory (Appamāṇāsubha Devā) and Gods of Limited Glory (Parittāsubha Devā)

Those who have mastered the third fine-material jhāna (fourth fine-material jhāna when using the Abhidhamma system) are reborn in realm of the Gods of Refulgent Glory. Those who have developed this jhāna to a moderate degree are reborn in the realm of Gods of Unbounded Glory. Those who have developed this jhāna to a minor degree are reborn in the realm of Gods of Limited Glory.

The Seven Fine-Material Realms Associated with the Fourth Jhāna

The seven fine-material realms associated with the fourth jhāna are:

- Fruitful Gods (Vehapphala)
- Conscious-less Beings (Asañña satta)
- The Pure Abodes (Suddhāvāsa): Peerless Gods (Akanitṭha), Clear-Sighted Gods (Sudassī), Beautiful Gods (Suddassa), Untroubled Gods (Atappa), Durable Gods (Aviha)

The three realms associated with the first jhāna (Great Brahmās, Ministers of Brahmā and Retinue of Brahmā) share the same space; the beings in these three planes interact with each other. The three realms associated with the second jhāna share the same space. The three realms associated with the third jhāna share the same space. The first two realms associated with the fourth jhāna (Fruitful Gods and Conscious-less Beings) share the same space and each of the five Pure Abodes has their own space.

Fruitful Gods (Vehapphala)

This is the plane or rebirth for those who have achieved and maintained the fourth jhāna but do not desire to be reborn without a mind. When a worldling reborn into this plane dies, they are reborn in another plane, not including the woeful states or the pure abodes. When a Noble One reborn into these planes dies, they are reborn in the same plane or higher (except the Asañña satta realm).

Conscious-less Beings (Asañña satta)

The Asañña satta is the particular type of rebirth for one who develops meditation with the feeling of dispassion (virāga) in perception (saññā). As a result of this, if he dies when his mind is absorbed in the fourth stage of jhāna, he is born as a Conscious-less being in the world of form. He is actually a one-aggregate being, i.e., a being who possesses only the rūpa-kkhandha, with the absence of all the other four aggregates, namely, feeling (vedanā), perception (saññā), disposition (sankhāra) and consciousness (viññāṇa). The Asañña satta is a being without any mental activities.

He remains like a motionless stone in the realm from the beginning up to the end of his life. At the end of their time in this realm, worldlings (Noble Ones are never born here) will be reborn in a happy destination (Sugati) according to the past kamma from the existence prior to the time as a Conscious-less Being.

The Pure Abodes (Suddhāvāsa): Peerless Gods (Akaniṭṭha), Clear-Sighted Gods (Sudassī), Beautiful Gods (Suddassa), Untroubled Gods (Atappa), Durable Gods (Aviha)

Only those who attain the stage of Anāgāmī can be reborn in these realms. After death in a Pure Abode, the Anāgāmī will be reborn into another Pure Abode (same level or higher); Anāgāmī born into the Akaniṭṭha realm will definitely parinibbāna from this realm. Once born in the Pure Abodes, the Anāgāmī will attain Arahantship and parinibbāna from one of these realms. All beings reborn into this realm are Anāgāmī with the fourth jhāna but the controlling principle or the directive force (indriya), which is the predominant character of each individual, will determine the realm where he is to be reborn:

- Directive force of saddhā (faith) → Aviha realm
- Directive force of viriya (energy) → Atappa realm
- Directive force of sati (mindfulness) → Sudassa realm
- Directive force of samadhi (concentration) → Sudassī realm
- Directive force of paññā (wisdom) → Akaniṭṭha realm

According to the Mahāpadana Sutta, the Pure Abodes were the only planes of existence where the Buddha, in his long wandering in Samsāra, had never been born. The Buddha thought of this and appeared among the Gods of the Suddhāvāsa. Gods of the realm came to him and told him of the important events which had occurred in the periods of many previous Buddhas, beginning from the time of the Buddha Vipassī who enlightened the world with his teachings ninety-one eons before the present one.

Immaterial Worlds (Arūpa-loka): Neither Perception nor Non-perception (N'evasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana), Nothingness (Ākiñcaññāyatana), Infinite Consciousness (Viññāṇañcāyatana) and Infinite Space (Ākāsānañcāyatana)

The last planes of existence where living beings are born according to the result of their kamma are the immaterial worlds (arūpa-loka). Beings in these worlds are pure mind and have no body. Similar to the rūpa-loka, the arūpa-loka is closely connected with the arūpa jhāna. This jhāna can be developed only when a person has experienced and then abandoned all the four stages of rūpa jhāna.

There are four stages of arūpa jhāna and the four realms of the arūpa-loka correspond to the stage of arūpa jhāna maintained:

1. Ākāsanañcāyatana: Having obtained and then abandoned the fourth stage of rūpa jhāna, the meditator applies his mind to the infinity of space. He thereby attains the first stage of arūpa jhāna.
2. Viññānañcāyatana: Having obtained the first stage, the meditator switches his concentration to the infinity of consciousness. He thereby attains the second stage of arūpa jhāna.
3. Ākiñcaññāyatana: Having obtained the second stage, the meditator switches his concentration to nothingness. He thereby attains the third stage of arūpa jhāna.
4. N'evasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana: Having obtained the third stage, the meditator's mind enters a state in which cognition is so extremely subtle that it cannot be said whether it is or not. At this point he is regarded as having attained the fourth stage of arūpa jhāna.

Alara, the ascetic who was the first teacher abandoned by the Buddha, was reborn in the Nothingness (Ākiñcaññāyatana) realm after dying one week before the Buddha decided to teach the Dhamma. Udaka, the ascetic who was the second teacher abandoned by the Buddha, was reborn in the Neither Perception nor Non-perception (N'evasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana) realm after dying on the night before the Buddha decided to teach the Dhamma.

When a worldling reborn into these planes dies, they are reborn in another plane; one of the happy destinations (sugati) or in the same plane or higher. When a Noble One reborn into these planes dies, they are reborn in the same plane or higher.

To explain the concept of a mind existing without a body, the texts use an analogy of an iron bar flung into the air. For a certain period, depending on the energy with which it is flung, the bar remains in the air without any support.

Because these are the “highest” realms, one might mistakenly conclude that these are the “objective” of Buddhism. In fact, beings are propelled into these realms because of the delusion that the body is the source of suffering and a desire to be without body. Beings remain in this state for an incredibly long time but they are unable to hear the Dhamma or see a Buddha, so they do not improve themselves. Once their kammic force expires, they return to saṃsāra.

Appendix I: Mental States

89 Mental States			
Sense Sphere 54 Mental States	Fine-material Sphere 15 Mental States	Immaterial Sphere 12 Mental States	Supramundane 8 Mental States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwholesome (12) • Rootless (18) • Beautiful (24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesome (5) • Resultant (5) • Functional (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesome (4) • Resultant (4) • Functional (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesome (4) • Resultant (4)

Sense Sphere (Kāmāvacara)

Unwholesome (Akusala)

Greed Rooted (Lobha Mūla)

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Unprompted, associated with wrong view,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 2. Prompted, associated with wrong view,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 3. Unprompted, not associated with wrong view,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 4. Prompted, not associated with wrong view,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 5. Unprompted, associated with wrong view,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 6. Prompted, associated with wrong view,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 7. Unprompted, not associated with wrong view,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 8. Prompted, not associated with wrong view,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |

Hatred Rooted (Dosa Mūla)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 9. Unprompted, associated with ill-will,
with unpleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 10. Prompted, associated with ill-will,
with unpleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |

Delusion Rooted (Moha Mūla)

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 11. Associated with doubt, with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 12. Associated with restlessness, with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |

Rootless (Ahetuka)

Unwholesome Resultant (Akusala Vipāka)

13. Eye Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
14. Ear Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
15. Nose Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
16. Tongue Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
17. Body Consciousness with painful feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
18. Receiving Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Receiving</i>
19. Investigating Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Investigating, Bhavanga⁴² Registration</i>

Wholesome Resultant (Kusala Vipāka)

20. Eye Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
21. Ear Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
22. Nose Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
23. Tongue Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
24. Body Consciousness with pleasurable feeling	<i>Sense-door</i>
25. Receiving Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Receiving</i>
26. Investigating Consciousness with pleasant feeling	<i>Investigating, Registration</i>
27. Investigating Consciousness with indifferent feeling	<i>Investigating, Bhavanga⁴³, Registration</i>

Functional (Kiriya)

28. Five-sense-door adverting consciousness, with indifferent feeling	<i>Sense-door Adverting</i>
29. Mind-door adverting consciousness, with indifferent feeling	<i>Mind-door Adverting, Determining</i>
30. Smile producing consciousness of an Arahant, with pleasant feeling	<i>Javana (Arahant only)</i>

⁴² Bhavanga for beings in four woeful planes

⁴³ Bhavanga for disabled humans

Beautiful (Sobhana)

Sense Sphere Wholesome (Mahākusala)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 31. Unprompted, associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 32. Prompted, associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 33. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 34. Prompted, not associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 35. Unprompted, associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 36. Prompted, associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 37. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |
| 38. Prompted, not associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i> |

Sense Sphere Resultant (Mahāvipāka)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 39. Unprompted, associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁴,
Registration</i> |
| 40. Prompted, associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁴,
Registration</i> |
| 41. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁵,
Registration</i> |
| 42. Prompted, not associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁵,
Registration</i> |
| 43. Unprompted, associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁴,
Registration</i> |
| 44. Prompted, associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁴,
Registration</i> |
| 45. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁵,
Registration</i> |
| 46. Prompted, not associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Bhavanga⁴⁵,
Registration</i> |

⁴⁴ Three roots; some humans and some Gods (able to achieve jhāna, path)

⁴⁵ Two roots; some humans and some Gods (unable to achieve jhāna, path)

Sense Sphere Functional (Mahākiriya)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 47. Unprompted, associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 48. Prompted, associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 49. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 50. Prompted, not associated with wisdom,
with pleasant feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 51. Unprompted, associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 52. Prompted, associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 53. Unprompted, not associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 54. Prompted, not associated with wisdom,
with indifferent feeling | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |

Fine Material Sphere (Rūpavacara)

Fine Material Sphere Wholesome (Rūpavacara Kusala)⁴⁶

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 55. Associated with 1 st Jhāna (initial application,
sustained application, zest, happiness,
one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i> |
| 56. Associated with 2 nd Jhāna (sustained application,
zest, happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i> |
| 57. Associated with 3 rd Jhāna (zest, happiness,
one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i> |
| 58. Associated with 4 th Jhāna (happiness,
one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i> |
| 59. Associated with 5 th Jhāna (equanimity,
one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i> |

⁴⁶ Note that the Sutta method of counting jhāna has four divisions; according to the Sutta method of counting, the meditator eliminates both initial application and sustained application at once and so the 2nd Jhāna (Sutta method) is equivalent to the 3rd Jhāna (Abhidhamma method).

Fine Material Sphere Resultant (Rūpavacara Vipāka)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 60. Associated with 1 st Jhāna (initial application, sustained application, zest, happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁷ |
| 61. Associated with 2 nd Jhāna (sustained application, zest, happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁷ |
| 62. Associated with 3 rd Jhāna (zest, happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁷ |
| 63. Associated with 4 th Jhāna (happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁷ |
| 64. Associated with 5 th Jhāna (equanimity, one-pointeness) | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁷ |

Fine Material Sphere Functional (Rūpavacara Kiriya)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 65. Associated with 1 st Jhāna (initial application, sustained application, zest, happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 66. Associated with 2 nd Jhāna (sustained application, zest, happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 67. Associated with 3 rd Jhāna (zest, happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 68. Associated with 4 th Jhāna (happiness, one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 69. Associated with 5 th Jhāna (equanimity, one-pointeness) | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |

Immaterial Sphere (Arūpavacara)

Immaterial Sphere Wholesome (Arūpavacara Kusala)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 70. Associated with infinite space | <i>Javana</i> |
| 71. Associated with infinite consciousness | <i>Javana</i> |
| 72. Associated with nothingness | <i>Javana</i> |
| 73. Associated with neither perception nor non-perception | <i>Javana</i> |

⁴⁷ Beings born in Fine Material Realms (Rūpa-loka)

Immaterial Sphere Resultant (Arūpavacara Vipāka)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 74. Associated with infinite space | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁸ |
| 75. Associated with infinite consciousness | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁸ |
| 76. Associated with nothingness | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁸ |
| 77. Associated with neither perception nor non-perception | <i>Bhavanga</i> ⁴⁸ |

Immaterial Sphere Functional (Arūpavacara Kiriya)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 78. Associated with infinite space | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 79. Associated with infinite consciousness | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 80. Associated with nothingness | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |
| 81. Associated with neither perception nor non-perception | <i>Javana</i>
(<i>Arahant only</i>) |

Supramundane (Lokuttara)

Supramundane Wholesome (Lokuttara Kusala)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 82. Sotapanna (Stream-entry) path | <i>Path</i> |
| 83. Sakadagami (Once-returning) path | <i>Path</i> |
| 84. Anagami (Non-returning) path | <i>Path</i> |
| 85. Arahant path | <i>Path</i> |

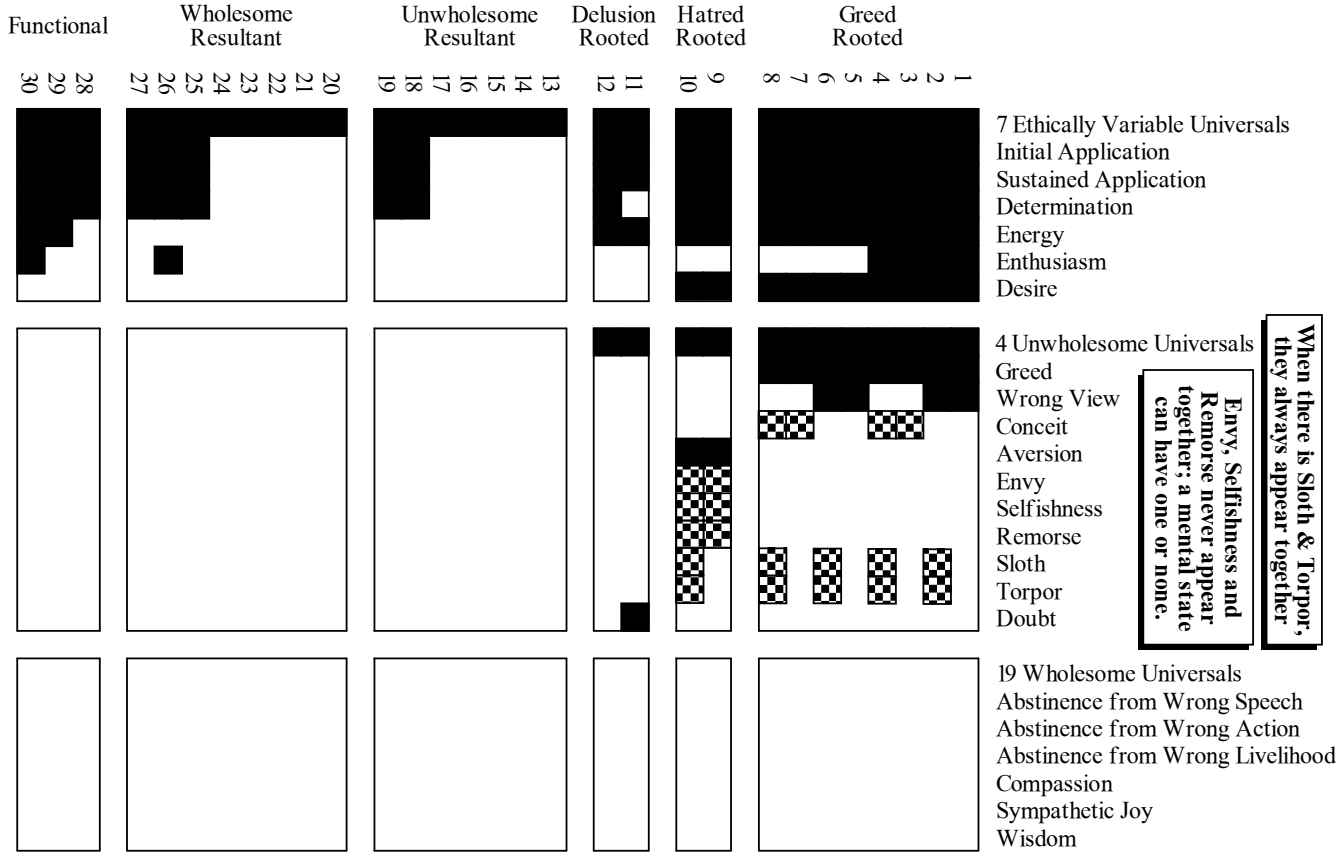
Supramundane Resultant (Lokuttara Vipāka)

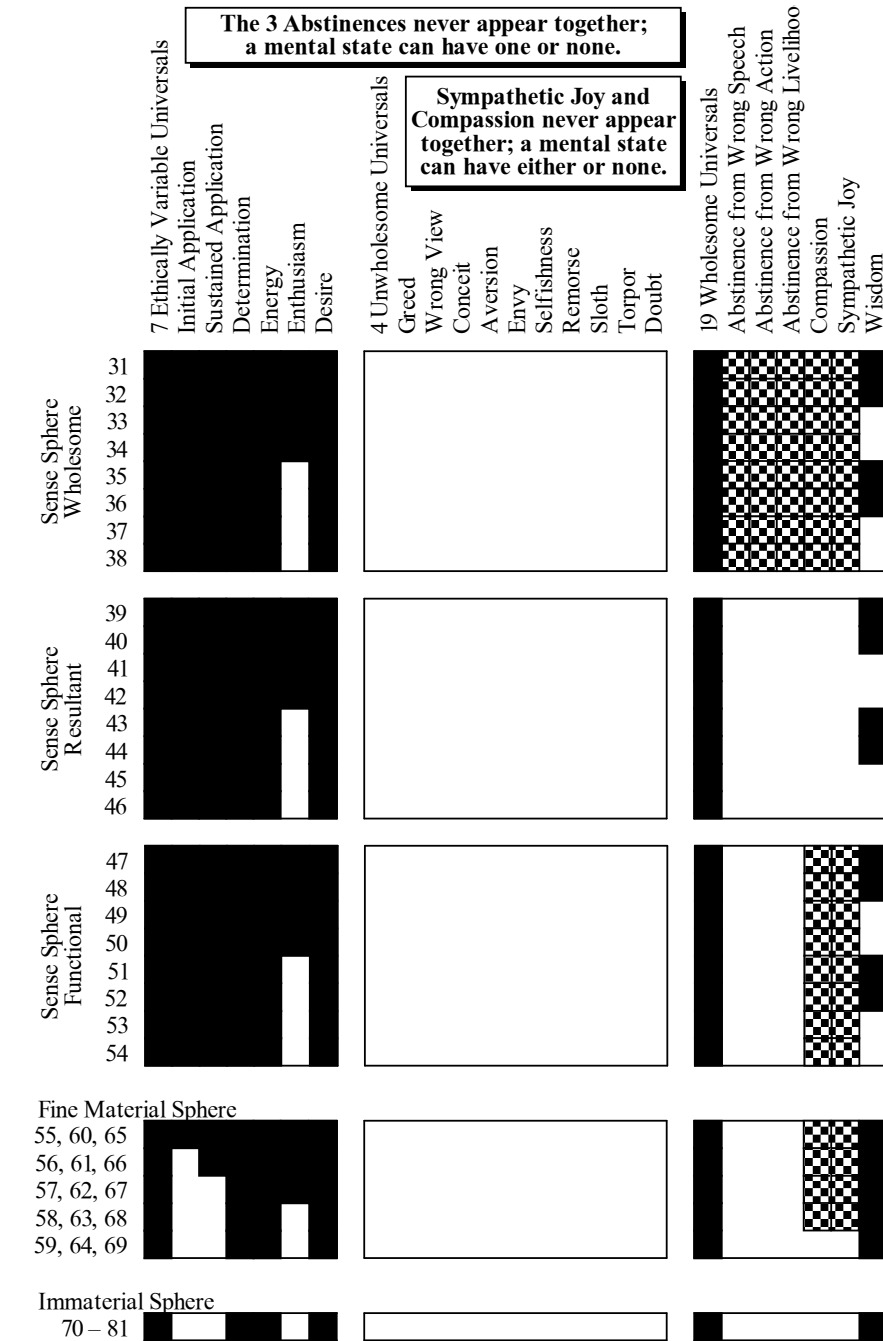
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 86. Sotapanna (Stream-entry) fruit | <i>Fruit</i> |
| 87. Sakadagami (Once-returning) fruit | <i>Fruit</i> |
| 88. Anagami (Non-returning) fruit | <i>Fruit</i> |
| 89. Arahant fruit | <i>Fruit</i> |

Using the extended method of counting, each path and fruit mental state is further divided according to jhāna. For example the one, “Sotapanna path” mental state is replaced with five mental states (Sotapanna path with 1st jhāna, Sotapanna path with 2nd jhāna, Sotapanna path with 3rd jhāna, Sotapanna path with 4th jhāna, Sotapanna path with 5th jhāna). This gives a total of 121 mental states.

⁴⁸ Beings born in Immaterial Realms (Arūpa-loka)

Appendix II: Mental States and Cetasikas

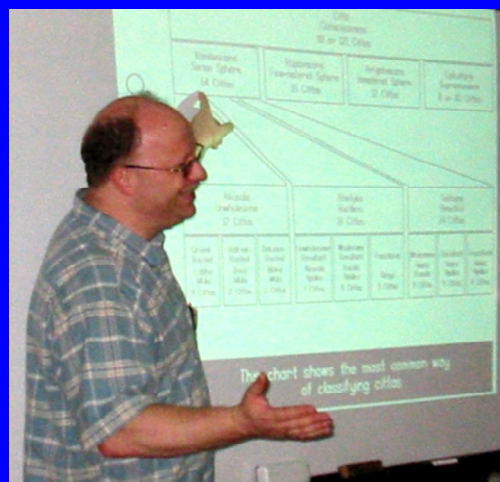




Supramundane mental states (#82 to #89) are not included because there are numerous permutations of cetasikas involved based on the level of jhāna achieved

Appendix III: Mental States and Beings

Sense Sphere Mental States																													
Functional			Wholesome Resultant			Unwholesome Resultant			Delusion Rooted	Hatred Rooted	Greed Rooted																		
28	29	30	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
														Woeful Planes															
														0 / 2 Roots 3 Roots Sotāpanna Sakadāgāmi Anāgāmi Arahant															
														3 Roots Sotāpanna Sakadāgāmi Anāgāmi Arahant															
														3 Roots Sotāpanna Sakadāgāmi Anāgāmi Arahant															
														3 Roots Sotāpanna Sakadāgāmi Anāgāmi Arahant															



Rob Moul is a Canadian engineer who has worked in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for more than a decade. For the past few years, Rob has taught a Sunday morning Abhidhamma class for beginners at Brickfields Mahavihara, home of Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda.

The material in this book was originally written as class notes. Rob then reviewed these notes with his teacher, Brother Teo Toh Liang.

Rob got valuable input from Phil Coristine and Htoo Tint Naing. Phil reviewed the material from the perspective of an interested learner, new to Abhidhamma. Htoo is a serious student of Abhidhamma; he commented on many technical points.

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The artwork on the cover was created by Richard Copeland