The Paramatthamañjūsā

Dhammapāla's Ṭīkā to the Visuddhimagga, Chapter XIV

The Description of the Aggregates

(Khandha-niddesa)

translated by

Nina van Gorkom

(5 April 1928 – 31 December 2023)

Revised edition, November 2026

The Paramatthamañjūsā — Visuddhimagga XIV: The Description of the Aggregates

English translation of Dhammapāla's sub-commentary by Nina van Gorkom (5 April 1928 – 31 December 2023). Introduction and technical editing by Robert Kirkpatrick.

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Revised edition, November 2026

Preface

Nina van Gorkom passed away peacefully in her sleep on 31 December 2023, at the age of ninety-five. She was active in Dhamma discussion and writing until her last days; I exchanged messages on Abhidhamma with her in the very week she died.

Born in the Netherlands in 1928, she went with her husband, a Dutch diplomat, to Thailand in 1965, and in 1966 met Sujin Boriharnwanaket (born 13 January 1927), an Abhidhamma vipassanā teacher under whom she began the study that would occupy the rest of her life. Her first book, *Buddhism in Daily Life*, appeared in 1969, soon followed by *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*; and over the following decades she produced a steady stream of books that opened the Buddha's teaching to readers across the world. Bhikkhu Bodhi remembered her as one of "the clearest, most articulate, and most knowledgeable writers on Buddhism during the past fifty years, especially from the perspective of the Abhidhamma."

This volume is one fruit of that long labour. The *Paramatthamañjūsā* is Dhammapāla's great sub-commentary (ṭīkā) on Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, and its fourteenth chapter, the Description of the Aggregates, unpacks materiality, feeling, perception, the formations, and consciousness one reality at a time. Nina worked through it patiently, rendering the sub-commentary into English passage by passage.

She first sent me this translation in stages around twenty years ago, and also posted it in excerpts on the Dhamma Study Group (dsg@groups.io), where for many years she answered questions and shared her work with fellow students. Those instalments are the foundation of the present edition.

May it be not merely something to read: as she so often said, the teaching is "not in the book," but in understanding of the dhammas appearing now.

Robert Kirkpatrick

Books by Nina van Gorkom

Buddhism in Daily Life (her first book, 1969)
Abhidhamma in Daily Life
Cetasikas
The Conditionality of Life
The Buddha's Path
The Buddhist Teaching on Physical Phenomena
Introduction to the Abhidhamma
Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures
Letters on Vipassanā
The Perfections Developed in Daily Life
Confidence in the Buddha's Teachings
Considering the Truth
Latent Tendencies
The Cycle of Birth and Death
The Present Moment
The Shortness of Life
What is Most Precious
Once Upon a Time
Sharing Dhamma

Pilgrimage and travel

Alone With Dhamma — Pilgrimage in India
In Asoka's Footsteps
Pilgrimage in India
Pilgrimage in Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka Revisited
Understanding Realities Now — Nina's Travelogues

Translations of books by Sujin Boriharnwanaket

A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas
Realities and Concepts
The Perfections Leading to Enlightenment

Many of these works are freely available at abhidhamma.org and dhammahome.com/en.

How to Read This Edition

This edition follows *Visuddhimagga* XIV, the Description of the Aggregates, passage by passage. Each sentence that Dhammapāla explains is set as an indented quotation, in Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's translation (*The Path of Purification*, BPS); the sub-commentary follows as continuous prose, each paragraph marked ṭīkā:, the glossed words in bold. Remarks marked Nina: are Nina van Gorkom's own.

The Pāli follows the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana (CST) edition; plain paragraph numbers are Ñāṇamoli's, and § marks CST sections. Long quotations are condensed to their doctrinal points, the numbered notes at each part's end recording what was condensed.

Introduction

The Aggregates and the Analysis of Mind and Matter

Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*: "And what has the characteristic of cognizing? Consciousness; according as it is said, 'It cognizes, friend, that is why "consciousness" is said'" (Majjhima Nikāya 43).

Dhammapāla, *Paramatthamañjūsā*: For apart from a dhamma with its own nature there is no doer at all standing over it; and to show that this very dhamma is the "doer," he said "it cognizes."

Nina van Gorkom: The goal of studying the consciousness khandha (aggregate) is to understand citta as not-self. The ṭīkā's comment is pointed: there truly is no one at all who is a doer; the Buddha said "it cognizes" only to explain the nature of an action, not to posit an agent.[1]

— *Visuddhimagga XIV 82 (CST §451), with the* Paramatthamañjūsā *and the translator's note*

The text and the khandhas

The *Visuddhimagga* is divided into three parts: virtue (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and understanding (paññā). The text translated in this volume is Dhammapāla's sub-commentary, the *Paramatthamañjūsā*, on the first chapter of that third part, Chapter XIV, the Description of the Aggregates (khandhas). This is where Buddhaghosa lays the ground for the development of insight, beginning with the five aggregates.

The title *Paramatthamañjūsā* means "the Casket of the Highest Meaning", and the work is also called the *Mahāṭīkā*, the Great Sub-commentary.[2] The *Sāsanavaṃsa* places Ācariya Dhammapāla at Badaratittha in the Tamil country near Sri Lanka, and a modern account, the *Visuddhimagga-nidānakathā*, makes him a native of Kāñcipura (modern Kāñcīpuram in Tamil Nadu). In the colophons to his works he names himself a resident of the monastery at Badaratittha (Badaratittha-vihāra); only the colophon to the *Theragāthā* commentary calls it the great monastery (mahāvihāra).[3] Besides the *Paramatthamañjūsā* he is traditionally credited with the sub-commentaries (the Līnatthavaṇṇanā) on Buddhaghosa's commentaries to the four Nikāyas, a commentary on the *Nettippakaraṇa*, and the seven commentaries on the books of the Khuddaka Nikāya gathered as the *Paramatthadīpanī*.[4]

Buddhaghosa writes that "the things classed as aggregates, bases, elements, faculties, truths, dependent origination, etc., are the soil of this understanding" (XIV.32). And Bhikkhu Bodhi notes that the khandhas have a "critical role" in the teaching, for they are the "ultimate referent" of the first noble truth; and "since all four truths revolve around suffering, understanding the aggregates is essential for understanding the Four Noble Truths as a whole."[5]

The khandhas, the bases, and the elements are closely related. The sub-commentary asks why so many classifications are needed, "would not the purpose be served by aggregates alone, or by any one of them?" and answers that the triad "has to be taken up for the helping of three kinds of beings ... those confused about mind (the immaterial), those confused about materiality, and those confused about both." For those confused about the immaterial, the aggregates are taken up, "for there the immaterial states are analysed in a fourfold way" as feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness; for those confused about materiality, the bases, where the material states are analysed in ten and a half ways (addhekādasadhā); for those confused about both, the elements, "for there both are analysed." The ṭīkā gives a second reason: beings also differ in faculty (keen, medium, and dull) and in inclination (to the brief, the medium, and the detailed teaching), and the aggregates, bases, and elements are taught for each in turn.[6] The faculties show certain dhammas by their governing or dominant function, not by any owner or controller behind them. They are "empty, not subject to anyone's will."[7] The truths and dependent origination, the last items in the list, explain these dhammas by way of their occurrence and cessation, and the causes of both. The truths set out suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path leading to cessation; dependent origination shows in detail how suffering arises through conditions and how it ceases when those conditions cease. The *Vinaya*, Mahāvagga,[8]

> Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā,\
> tesaṃ hetuṃ Tathāgato āha;\
> tesañca yo nirodho,\
> evaṃvādī Mahāsamaṇo.
> Of those dhammas that arise from a cause,\
> the Tathāgata has told the cause;\
> and also their cessation:\
> such is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.

The *Samantapāsādikā* explains "dhammas that arise from a cause" as the five aggregates.[9]

Reality and concept

What is real (excluding Nibbāna, which is unconditioned) are actually only khandhas, nāma and rūpa (mentality and materiality): hardness, heat, seeing, feeling, liking, disliking, perceiving, and many other realities, including consciousness. In short, conditioned dhammas, arising and passing away. Nina: "we take fleeting realities for things that exist, such as a person, a table, a cup or a chair. Citta, cetasika and rūpa are real in the ultimate or absolute sense; they are different from conventional truth or concepts (paññattis)."[10]

What are these realities, these dhammas? Nina explains the term in her essay *The Meaning of Dhamma*, included at the end of this volume. Briefly, a dhamma is a bare reality that has its own nature, sabhāva, a definite characteristic regardless of what we name it. Thus Dhammapāla's phrase in the opening quotation, "there is no doer at all standing over it," means that there are only dhammas, each bearing its own nature and doing its own brief work, "a mere occurrence according to conditions."[11] A dhamma has two aspects: a specific characteristic, such as hardness or touching, and a general one, impermanence, suffering, and anatta. A concept has neither.

The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* classifies the kinds of concept. A chariot is named on account of the arrangement of its parts, which the Vibhāvinī calls a "collective concept" (samūhapaññatti); a person is named on account of the five aggregates. A concept may also mix the real and the unreal: in "a woman's voice" the sound is real but the woman is not, and in "a king's son" neither king nor son is real.[12] None of this means concepts can be dispensed with; even the Buddha and the arahats used them. The problem is that we give these concepts a status they do not deserve. Trees, computers, and people are concepts formed on account of what is really there, and what is really there are only nāma and rūpa, mentality and materiality, dhammas that are real but vanish almost the instant they arise.

The five aggregates

The Abhidhamma counts twenty-eight kinds of materiality (rūpa): the four great elements of earth, water, fire, and air, and the twenty-four derived from them, among which are the sensitivities of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body; the objects of sight, sound, odour, and flavour; the faculties of femininity,

masculinity, and life; nutriment; and the subtle qualities of lightness, malleability, and the rest. None of this is mental; none of it knows anything; all of it is impermanent. Materiality is produced by kamma, consciousness, temperature, or nutriment, or by several of these together, though some of the derived rūpas are not produced things at all but modes and characteristics of matter. However solid the body seems, Nina reminds us, it "is only rūpas, impermanent, dukkha, and not-self."[13]

The remaining khandhas are all nāma, mentality, experiencing an object; feeling, perception, and the formations arise together with consciousness.[14] Feeling (vedanā) is the taste of an experience, pleasant, painful, or neither. Perception (saññā) marks and recognises the object. The formations (saṅkhārā) are the mental factors other than feeling and perception, such as contact, volition, faith, mindfulness, greed, and hatred. Consciousness (viññāṇa) is the chief in cognizing the object: "It cognizes, friend, that is why 'consciousness' is said" (MN 43). The texts use three words for it, viññāṇa, citta, and mano. The *Paramatthamañjūsā*,[15]

> That which is viññāṇa in the sense of cognizing is the very same that is citta in the sense of thinking and so on, and mano in the sense of minding; so he makes it known by synonyms too. And by just this much, by aggregate, by classification, and by synonym, consciousness has been elucidated.

Consciousness arises together with feeling, perception, and the formations present in that moment, sharing a single object, and they fall away together, to be followed by another such moment, and another, in a series without beginning. It is an intricate process, occurring faster than we can imagine, all of it governed by a fixed natural order.[16]

In the ordinary succession of cittas, a citta, a single moment of consciousness, arises only when the citta before it has ceased; the ṭīkā names the citta that has just ceased as the proximate cause of the one that follows, one after another, with no gap and no carry-over of any abiding substance.[17] What we take for a single smooth gesture of the hand, Nina observes in the pages that follow, "is, in reality, countless processes of cittas rolling on by conditions, uninterested and knowing nothing, utterly momentary, falling away at once." The hand seems to move as one continuous thing, but "seeing colour is one moment; the remembrance of successive moments of seeing gives the impression of a moving hand."[18]

Rūpa, too, arises and falls away, and the movement we think we see is not one thing travelling. Nina van Gorkom, The Buddhist Teaching on Physical Phenomena,[19]

> We may believe that we can see motion of objects but the rūpa which is motion cannot be seen. What we mean by motion as we express it in conventional language is not the same as the element of wind or motion. We notice that something has moved because of remembrance of different moments of seeing and thinking of what was perceived, but that is not the experience of the rūpa which is motion.
>
> This rūpa can be directly experienced through the bodysense. When we touch a body or an object with a certain resilience, the characteristic of motion or pressure may present itself. These are characteristics of the element of wind. It can also be described as vibration or oscillation. As we read in the definition, the function of the element of wind is to cause motion. It is, for example, a condition for the movement of the limbs of the body. However, we should not confuse pictorial ideas with the direct experience of this rūpa through the bodysense.

The *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī* states that motion is only arising in another place, "since dhammas do not move even a hair's breadth from the place where they arose."[20]

Towards its close, the chapter sums up the survey of the khandhas with the five similes the Buddha gives in the *Pheṇa Sutta*, one for each: "materiality should be regarded as a lump of froth because it will not stand squeezing; feeling as a bubble on water because it can only be enjoyed for an instant; perception as a mirage because it causes illusion; the formations as a plantain trunk because they have no core; and consciousness as a conjuring trick because it deceives."[21] Nina: "all these similes are an exhortation to develop right understanding of the realities now appearing; when insight is full, we shall no longer be deceived by mirage or illusion, and the aggregates will be seen as impermanent, dukkha, and not-self."[22]

Aggregates and aggregates of clinging

One distinction bears directly on the First Noble Truth. The texts speak both of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā) and of the five aggregates of clinging (pañc'upādānakkhandhā). The *Visuddhimagga*,[23]

> Here "aggregates of clinging" should be understood to mean aggregates that are the objects of clinging.

As Nina puts it, the aggregates are called "aggregates of clinging" because they are "grasped with attachment and wrong view"; and because "the clinging-aggregates arise again and again in rebirth, we are as if imprisoned."[24] We cling to self, to body, to those we love, to health, to life itself; and we cling because we do not see what life actually is.

Only the four mental aggregates occurring in the supramundane path and fruition cittas, whose object is Nibbāna, are not included among the aggregates of clinging; all materiality and every mundane mental state can be clung to. Here a distinction is needed. In the First Noble Truth, the Buddha identifies suffering, in brief, as the five aggregates of clinging (SN 56.11). But every conditioned thing is marked by dukkha because it is impermanent (SN 22.15). Thus the arahat's khandhas are dukkha too: they still arise and fall by conditions until the final passing away. What has ended is craving, not the conditioned nature of the khandhas. This is why the living arahat is said to have Nibbāna "with residue remaining": the defilements are extinguished, while the five aggregates and the life-process run on until their final cessation.[25] That cessation is awaited, in the verse of the Elder, "like a worker waiting for their wages" (Thag 17.2).[26]

The assumption of self

The wrong view of self is a deeper delusion than any other. Buddhaghosa explains that the marks of impermanence and suffering "are made known with or without the arising of the Tathāgatas," but the characteristic of not-self "is made known only on the arising of the Enlightened Ones." When a plate falls from the hand and breaks, "they say: 'Ah, impermanence'"; when "pierced by splinters and thorns," "they say: 'Ah, the pain.'" But the characteristic of not-self "is unobvious, dark, unclear, difficult to penetrate." It is "concealed by compactness," and appears only when the compact is resolved "by resolution into the various elements."[27]

The five aggregates are the only basis of self-view. The *Visuddhimagga* calls them "the utmost extent of the basis for grasping at self and what belongs to self," and the ṭīkā adds that a view of self arises "relying only on the aggregates, because there is no natural phenomenon other than the aggregates and Nibbāna." The suttas count twenty such views: each of the five aggregates is regarded as self, or self as possessing it, or it as within self,

or self as within it.[28]

That there is a self appears a pivot of common sense, and even the sharpest minds stumble here. Descartes thought it was the only certainty, not seeing that "I think, therefore I am" is itself a view. Hume went a little further. Searching within, he found only a bundle of perceptions and no self among them, but, faced with what unites the perceptions into a single stream, he confessed himself lost in a "labyrinth" and the difficulty "too hard for my understanding."[29] What only a fully enlightened Buddha could explain is that the stream continues by a precise chain of conditions, as set out in the paṭiccasamuppāda (dependent origination).

Not nihilism

A reader may feel that to deny the self, and to call the aggregates dukkha, is to say that nothing is real, nothing matters. But there is a great deal that matters, only it is not what we took it to be. There are elements, there is continuity; what is denied is the self imagined in and behind this process.

The Buddha was explicit that the aggregates are not nothing: "Form that is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change — this the wise in the world agree upon as existing, and I too say that it exists," and so for feeling, perception, the formations, and consciousness (SN 22.94).[30] And this is the Buddha's middle way, steering between the two errors he names in the *Kaccānagotta Sutta*: "'Everything exists': that is one extreme. 'Everything does not exist': that is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma by the middle."[31] The middle is dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda), the specific conditionality by which, in the Buddha's words, "when this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises."[32] When the *Visuddhimagga* quotes the Ancients, "There is no doer of a deed, or one who reaps the deed's result; phenomena alone flow on; no other view than this is right" (XIX.20),[33] the verse denies only an imagined owner.

To understand all this does not mean growing cold. The *Visuddhimagga* gives a whole chapter to the development of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, the four divine abidings (Vism IX).[34] Insight into not-self is actually an aid to developing mettā, as it gradually attenuates the "I" that is the centre of partiality. Moreover, that "there is suffering, but none who suffers"[35] makes the trials of life easier to bear, as they can be understood without reference to "poor me" to whom all this is

happening.

Resistance to this teaching is old and entirely human. Even the venerable Channa, who knew the teaching on anatta and later became an arahat, at first drew back from it, his mind recoiling with the thought, "but who, then, is my self?" Later Ānanda taught him the middle way and he understood.[36] If the teaching unsettles at first, that is no sign that something has gone wrong. Through gradually studying, considering, and seeing what is actually present now, the fear of losing a self one never had gradually lessens.

Why study the aggregates

It may be asked why a practitioner should trouble with the detailed analysis of khandhas. This can look like dry scholasticism. It is not. In the commentary to the *Brahmajāla Sutta* the worldling is spoken of in two kinds. There is the andhaputhujjana, the "blind worldling," who is described as one "who has not studied, interrogated, learned, memorised, and reviewed the teachings on the aggregates, the elements, the sense bases, and the rest." And there is the kalyāṇaputhujjana, the "good worldling," who has done exactly this.

The commentary to the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* says the same: the "uninstructed worldling" is so called because "he possesses neither the learning . . . because he has neglected to study, question, and discriminate the aggregates, elements, sense bases, truths, the law of conditionality, and the foundations of mindfulness, nor spiritual achievement because he has failed to achieve what should be achieved by practice."[37]

This is not mere memorisation. As Sujin Boriharnwanaket puts it, "one does not know that studying Abhidhamma is right now. If one does not understand this moment, one does not study Abhidhamma."[38] There is a danger in forgetting this: one might study the khandhas as an academic exercise, or grow frustrated trying to realise what cannot yet be known.

When we begin to learn the Dhamma we have to accept that the mind is at present steeped in wrong view, and the teaching cannot be rightly understood until those views are dismantled. If we take any khandha to last, or suppose there is a self, that is wrong view showing itself then and there; when it is seen for what it is, the straightening of view, diṭṭhujukamma, has begun.

The aim of all this is intensely practical: in the midst of ordinary life, whether bhikkhu or layperson, while walking, talking, keeping silent, sitting, standing or lying down, understanding can develop. The Satipaṭṭhāna commentary gives the example of one who, while speaking, comprehends:

"This sound arises dependent on the lips, the teeth, the tongue, the palate, and the mind's corresponding effort", and so speaks "mindful and clearly comprehending."[39] Nina explains that direct understanding is a deeper level: "we should not forget that each is an element, a dhamma void of self; we have heard the word 'element' often, but it is through insight that these characteristics are directly known and realised as elements, empty of self."[40]

The *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* says that through the power of wisdom the Great Being is devoted to investigating the aggregates and sense bases.[41]

The ṭīkā is not easy material, and it is not meant to be read quickly; nor are the khandhas a subject to be mastered and set aside. They are arising at this very moment. They do not have to be searched for, but they do need to be understood as they are. The purpose of so close an analysis is not erudition; it is the gradual wearing away of the assumption that there is someone here to whom all this is happening.

Robert Kirkpatrick

Notes

[1] In Majjhima Nikāya 43 the words are spoken by Sāriputta to Mahākoṭṭhita: 'Vijānāti vijānātī'ti kho, āvuso, tasmā viññāṇanti vuccati. The Buddha uses the same explanation in the *Khajjanīya Sutta* (Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.79): Vijānātīti kho, bhikkhave, tasmā 'viññāṇan'ti vuccati. Nina's words above are given as she wrote them.

[2] The etymology and the phrase "casket of the ultimate truths" are from Dhammapāla's own colophon verses to the *Paramatthamañjūsā* (the epilogue to the whole sub-commentary, which stands at the close of the work rather than in this chapter): Sā esā paramatthānaṃ, tattha tattha yathārahaṃ; nidhānato paramattha-mañjūsā nāma nāmato, "This, being a repository of the ultimate meanings, each in its place, is by name the *Paramatthamañjūsā*." The work closes: *Paramatthamañjūsā* nāma visuddhimaggamahāṭīkā samattā, "The Great Sub-commentary on the *Visuddhimagga*, named *Paramatthamañjūsā*, is finished." The renderings are from the Pāli.

[3] The colophon to the *Paramatthamañjūsā* reads: Badaratitthavihāravāsinā ācariyadhammapālena katā, "made by Ācariya Dhammapāla, resident of the monastery at Badaratittha." The colophons to his commentaries on the Udāna, Itivuttaka, Vimānavatthu, Petavatthu, Therīgāthā, *Cariyāpiṭaka*, and *Nettippakaraṇa* have the same word, Badaratitthavihāravāsinā. Only the colophon to the *Theragāthā* commentary reads Badaratitthamahāvihāravāsinā, "resident of the great monastery at Badaratittha"; the compound binds mahāvihāra to Badaratittha, so it is not the Mahāvihāra of Anurādhapura. The *Sāsanavaṃsa* states: So ca ācariyadhammapālatthero sīhaḷadīpassa samīpe damilaraṭṭhe badaratitthamhi nivāsitattā sīhaḷadīpeyeva saṅgahetvā vattabbo, "And because the Elder Ācariya Dhammapāla lived at Badaratittha in the Tamil country near the island of Sīhaḷa, he is to be counted with the island of Sīhaḷa." The *Visuddhimagga-nidānakathā*

calls him dakkhiṇaindiyaraṭṭhe kañcipurajātiko, “born at Kañcipura in the South Indian country.” The renderings are from the Pāli. Bhikkhu Bodhi independently identifies the author of the Brahmajāla sub-commentary as “Ācariya Dhammapāla of Badaratittha (perhaps 6th century)” (*The Discourse on the All-Embracing Net of Views*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, p. vii).

[4] The fullest modern study of the ṭīkā is Cha Myang Hee, A Study in *Paramatthamañjūsā* (With Special Reference to Paññā), Ph.D. thesis, University of Pune, 2001; on the authorship question see pp. 1–36.

[5] Bhikkhu Bodhi, introduction to the Khandhasaṃyutta, in *The* Connected Discourses *of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), pp. 840–841.

[6] *Paramatthamañjūsā* on *Visuddhimagga* XIV 32 (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana §430). “Soil” renders bhūmi, the ground on which insight-understanding operates; “and the like” (ādi) adds nutriment and the rest: Ādi -saddena āhārādīnaṃ saṅgaho daṭṭhabbo. The triad of aggregates, bases, and elements is taught for three kinds of beings, those confused about mind, about materiality, and about both: the Buddha analysed one reality now as five aggregates, now as twelve bases, now as eighteen elements, to meet his hearers where they were confused. The bases analyse materiality in ten and a half ways: Ye rūpasammūḷhā, tadatthaṃ āyatanānaṃ rūpadhammānaṃ addhekādasadhā vibhattattā, that is, the ten material bases and the material part of the dhamma-base. The second reason: Tathā indriyabhedena tikkhindriyā majjhimindriyā mudindriyā, saṃkhittarucī majjhimarucī vitthārarucīti ca tividhā sattā, tesampi atthāya yathākkamaṃ khandhādiggahaṇaṃ katanti yojetabbaṃ.

[7] On the not-self characteristic of the faculties and formations, *Visuddhimagga* XXI.8 (trans. Ñāṇamoli): there is “no exercising of power over them”; the same point is made at XX.47 (“void ... because ownerless, because unsusceptible to the wielding of power”) and at XVI.6, where the faculties are described as exercising “rulership in the sense of lordship called predominance”: a dominance that is the dhammas’ own nature, not a controller’s. The phrase “empty, not subject to anyone’s will” is from the *Paramatthamañjūsā* on Vism XIV 32 (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana §430): taṃ pana nesaṃ dhammasabhāvasiddhaṃ, na ettha kassaci vasībhāvo “suññā ete avasavattino” ti anattalakkhaṇassa sukhaggahaṇatthaṃ, “that lordship is established by the nature of those dhammas; no one has mastery here: ‘these are empty, not subject to anyone’s will’; this is to make the characteristic of not-self easy to grasp.”

[8] The verse Assaji spoke to the wanderer Upatissa (later Sāriputta) at their first meeting, when Sāriputta, then living the holy life under the wanderer Sañjaya, asked him whose teaching he followed: Tena kho pana samayena sāriputtamoggallānā sañcaye paribbājake brahmacariyaṃ caranti. After hearing the verse, Sāriputta and Moggallāna went back to Sañjaya and asked him to come with them to the Buddha. *Vinaya*, Mahāvagga I.23.5 (Vin I 40; CST §60); the English here follows Nyanaponika Thera and Hellmuth Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, ed. Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997), “Sāriputta.” On hearing it, “the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma arose” in him: Atha kho sāriputtassa paribbājakassa imaṃ dhammapariyāyaṃ sutvā virajaṃ vītamalaṃ dhammacakkhuṃ udapādi. The commentaries add that he attained stream-entry on hearing the first two lines: Paribbājako paṭhamapadadvayameva sutvā sahassanayapaṭimaṇḍite

sotāpattiphale patiṭṭhahi (*Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, Sāriputtattheravatthu, on Dhp 11–12; so also the *Theragāthā*, Aṅguttara and Apadāna commentaries). He then carried the verse to his friend Moggallāna, who attained it likewise. The *Samantapāsādikā* reads the verse as the four truths in brief: the first line shows suffering, the second its origin, the third its cessation, and the path is shown by implication (see note 9).

[9] *Samantapāsādikā* on Mahāvagga §60: Ye dhammā hetuppabhavāti hetuppabhavā nāma pañcakkhandhā; tenassa dukkhasaccaṃ dasseti, "'Those dhammas that arise from a cause': what arises from a cause is the five aggregates; by this he shows him the truth of suffering." Maggasaccaṃ panettha sarūpato adassitampi nayato dassitaṃ hoti, "Although the truth of the path is not shown here in its own form, it is shown by implication." The renderings are from the Pāli.

[10] Nina van Gorkom, *Preserving the Buddha's Teaching* (Bangkok: Dhamma Study and Support Foundation), in the discussion of the difference between paramattha dhammas (realities) and paññatti (concepts). The source spells the word rúpa; it is given here as rūpa to match the transliteration used throughout this volume.

[11] *Paramatthamañjūsā*, ṭīkā to *Visuddhimagga* XIV 82 (CST §451), the comment on the definition of consciousness as "having the characteristic of cognizing." This is the passage set as the epigraph: Dhammasabhāvā vinimutto koci kattā nāma natthīti tasseva kattubhāvaṃ dassetuṃ "vijānātī"ti vuttaṃ, "apart from a dhamma with its own nature there is no doer at all standing over it." The phrase "a mere occurrence according to conditions" is from the same comment: Yathāpaccayaṃ pavattimattametaṃ, yadidaṃ sabhāvadhammo. The Buddha's formula echoes the *Khajjanīya Sutta* (Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.79), where each aggregate is named from its activity: "'It is deformed,' bhikkhus, therefore it is called form... 'It cognizes,' bhikkhus, therefore it is called consciousness"; see *The* Connected Discourses *of the Buddha*, trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), p. 915.

[12] The *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* (ch. VIII, Paññattibhedo, §§40–42) classifies concepts (paññatti) by what they are named on account of: sambhārasannivesākāramupādāya geharathasakaṭādikā, khandhapañcakamupādāya purisapuggalādikā, "houses, chariots, carts and the like, on account of the arrangement of their parts; men, persons and the like, on account of the five aggregates"; and by whether what the name makes known is ultimately real (vijjamāna) or not (avijjamāna), with the mixed cases itthisaddo ("a woman's voice") and rājaputto ("a king's son"). The *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī* names the chariot kind: Rathasakaṭādikāti rathasakaṭagāmaghaṭapaṭādikā samūhapaññatti, "chariots, carts and the like: chariots, carts, villages, pots, cloths and the like, the collective concept." The renderings are from the Pāli. Nina van Gorkom renders and expounds the passage in *Realities and Concepts*, from her translation of Sujin Boriharnwanaket's *A Survey of Paramattha Dhammas*. The chariot and the person are treated as the same case in the *Milindapañha*.

[13] Nina van Gorkom's translator's note in the present volume, closing the treatment of the materiality aggregate at *Visuddhimagga* XIV 80 (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana §449): "what we take for the body is only rūpas, impermanent, dukkha, and not-self."

[14] Nina van Gorkom's translator's note on *Visuddhimagga* XIV 211–213 (CST §504): what holds of feeling holds of the other mental aggregates too, for "they are all nāma, experiencing an object, arising together and classified the same way."

[15] *Paramatthamañjūsā* on *Visuddhimagga* XIV 82 (CST §451): Yaṃ vijānanaṭṭhena viññāṇaṃ, tadeva cintanādiatthena cittaṃ, mananaṭṭhena manoti pariyāyatopi naṃ bodheti. Ettāvatā ca khandhato, bhedato, pariyāyato ca viññāṇaṃ vibhāvitaṃ hoti. See also note 11.

[16] This fixed natural order is citta-niyāma, the lawfulness governing the arising and sequence of cittas, one of the five niyāmas or orders of nature recognised in the commentaries (the others governing seasons, seeds, kamma, and the events surrounding a Buddha): Niyāmo ca nāmesa kammaniyāmo, utuniyāmo, bījaniyāmo, cittaniyāmo, dhammaniyāmoti pañcavidho (*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* on the Mahāpadāna Sutta, citing the Atthasālinī, Dhs-a 498).

[17] *Paramatthamañjūsā*, ṭīkā to *Visuddhimagga* XIV 96 (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana §454), on the proximate cause of eye-consciousness: Attano anantaraṃ uppajjamānānaṃ arūpadhammānaṃ samanantaravigatā arūpadhammā pavattiokāsadānena anantarasamanantaranatthivigatapaccayehi upakārakā nissayārammaṇadhammā viya āsannakāraṇanti dassento āha "rūpārammaṇāya kiriyamanodhātuyā apagamapadaṭṭhānan"ti, "Showing that immaterial states which have just ceased help the immaterial states arising immediately after them, by giving them room to occur, by way of the proximity, contiguity, absence, and disappearance conditions, and so are their proximate cause, as the support and the object are, he says 'its proximate cause is the departure of the functional mind-element that has visible data as its object.'" The rendering is from the Pāli.

[18] Nina van Gorkom's translator's note in the present volume, on bodily intimation (kāya-viññatti) at *Visuddhimagga* XIV 61, on the moments of consciousness underlying an apparently single gesture: "countless processes of cittas rolling on by conditions... utterly momentary, falling away at once," and "seeing colour is one moment; the remembrance of successive moments of seeing gives the impression of a moving hand."

[19] Nina van Gorkom, *The Buddhist Teaching on Physical Phenomena* (London: Zolag, 2008), ch. 1, "The Four Great Elements," p. 7. She quotes the definition of the wind element at *Visuddhimagga* XI 93 (CST §350): Vāyodhātu vitthambhanalakkhaṇā, samudīraṇarasā, abhinīhārapaccupaṭṭhānā, "The wind element has the characteristic of distending; its function is to cause motion; it is manifested as conveying." The *Paramatthamañjūsā* on that passage explains conveying: Abhinīhāro bhūtasaṅghāṭassa desantaruppattihetubhāvo, "Conveying is being the cause of the arising, in another place, of the mass of elements." The renderings are from the Pāli.

[20] *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī*, ch. VI (Rūpaparicchedavaṇṇanā), on bodily intimation: Desantaruppattiyeva cettha calanaṃ uppannadesato kesaggamattampi dhammānaṃ saṅkamanābhāvato, "Here motion is only arising in another place, since dhammas do not move even a hair's breadth from the place where they arose." The Dhammasaṅgaṇī-anuṭīkā makes the same point: movement is arising in another place, for otherwise the momentariness and non-agency of dhammas would not be possible (aññathā khaṇikatā abyāpāratā ca dhammānaṃ na sambhaveyya). The renderings are from the Pāli.

[21] *Visuddhimagga* XIV 224, quoting the five similes of the Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta (*Pheṇa Sutta*, Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.95; S III 140–42). In the present volume, Part XXVIII. The sub-commentary expands each simile in turn (CST §508): froth that proves coreless when squeezed, the mirage that deceives the thirsty traveller, consciousness that is brief and quickly present and makes one take it that the same citta comes, goes, stands, and sits:

evaṃ viññāṇampi asāraṃ ittaraṃ lahupaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, teneva cittena āgacchantaṃ viya, gacchantaṃ viya, ṭhitaṃ viya, nisinnaṃ viya ca katvā gāhāpeti. The rendering is from the Pāli. That citta changes more swiftly than anything else is the Buddha's statement at Aṅguttara Nikāya 1.48: Nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, aññaṃ ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ lahuparivattaṃ yathayidaṃ cittaṃ, "Bhikkhus, I do not see any other single thing that changes as quickly as the mind."

[22] Nina van Gorkom's note on Vism XIV 224, in the present volume, Part XXVIII.

[23] *Visuddhimagga* XIV 215 (CST §505): Upādānakkhandhāti cettha upādānagocarā khandhā upādānakkhandhāti evamattho daṭṭhabbo. The rendering is from the Pāli. The canonical source is the *Khandha Sutta* (Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.48), which Buddhaghosa quotes here, and which defines the clinging-aggregates exactly as the aggregates, with the single added phrase "tainted, that can be clung to" (sāsava upādāniya). The same passage states the supramundane exception: Vedanādayo pana anāsavāva khandhesu vuttā. Sāsavā upādānakkhandhesu. The ṭīkā explains that eva stands out of place, and the meaning is that feeling and the rest without cankers are spoken of only among the aggregates: anāsavā khandhesveva vuttāti attho. On the supramundane exception, see Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The* Connected Discourses *of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), p. 1060 n. 65.

[24] Nina van Gorkom's note on *Visuddhimagga* XIV 214–217 (CST §505–506), in the present volume, Part XXVII.

[25] The liberation of the living arahat, his defilements extinguished while the aggregates acquired by past clinging remain, is the sa-upādisesa nibbānadhātu, the Nibbāna element with residue remaining; his final passing away, in which those aggregates cease and are never acquired again, is the anupādisesa nibbānadhātu, the element without residue. The commentaries also call the two the extinguishing of the defilements (kilesa-parinibbāna) and the extinguishing of the aggregates (khandha-parinibbāna). See the *Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma* (Bhikkhu Bodhi, ed.), ch. VI.

[26] *Theragāthā* 17.2, the verses of Ven. Sāriputta (Sujato's rendering): "I don't long for death; I don't long for life; I await my time, like a worker waiting for their wages."

[27] *The Dispeller of Delusion* (*Sammohavinodanī*), the commentary to the *Vibhaṅga* (*Vibhaṅga-aṭṭhakathā*), on *Vibhaṅga* §154 (Āyatanavibhaṅga, CST); translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Pali Text Society, 1987–91), Vol. I, pp. 58–60. The three characteristics are concealed, respectively, by continuity (santati), by the postures (iriyāpatha), and by compactness (ghana); the characteristic of not-self is "unobvious, dark, unclear, difficult to penetrate, difficult to illustrate, difficult to make known," and becomes apparent only "when resolving of the compact is effected by resolution into the various elements." The same passage observes that impermanence and suffering are made known whether or not a Buddha arises, but the characteristic of not-self is made known only on the arising of a fully enlightened Buddha: Aniccadukkhalakkhaṇāni uppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ anuppādā vā paññāyanti. Anattalakkhaṇaṃ vinā buddhuppādā na paññāyati, buddhuppādeyeva paññāyati. The work is traditionally ascribed to Buddhaghosa.

[28] *Visuddhimagga*, CST §506 (Ñāṇamoli XIV 218): Etaparamañcetaṃ attattaniyagāhavatthu yadidaṃ rūpādayo pañca. The *Paramatthamañjūsā* on that passage: Etena ca vakkhamānasuttavasena ca khandhe eva nissāya parittārammaṇādivasena na vattabbā ca diṭṭhi uppajjati khandhanibbānavajjassa sabhāvadhammassa abhāvato. The

renderings are from the Pāli. The twenty views are the canonical formula of personality view (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) in the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (Majjhima Nikāya 44): rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ, and so for feeling, perception, the formations, and consciousness; also Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.81. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and the *Niddesa* call it the twenty-based view of individuality (vīsativatthukā sakkāyadiṭṭhi).

[29] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), Book I, Part IV, §6, "Of Personal Identity," and the Appendix, where Hume confesses himself unable to explain "the principles, that unite our successive perceptions." Hume reaches the bundle of perceptions but, rejecting any real connexion between them, explains personal identity through relations among perceptions, chiefly resemblance and causation, and in the Appendix confesses difficulties he cannot resolve. In the Buddha's teaching the link between moments is dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda). No direct borrowing by Hume from Buddhist sources is established.

[30] *Puppha Sutta* ("Flowers"), Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.94; see *The* Connected Discourses *of the Buddha*, trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), p. 949.

[31] *Kaccānagotta Sutta*, Saṃyutta Nikāya 12.15; *Connected Discourses*, pp. 544–545.

[32] The abstract formula of dependent origination, imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imass' uppādā idaṃ uppajjati; imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati, "when this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises; when this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases" (e.g. Saṃyutta Nikāya 12.21, 12.37). The principle is named idappaccayatā, "specific conditionality": there is a determinate condition, or set of conditions, for each arisen state, neither less nor more. This last phrase is the *Visuddhimagga*'s (XVII, CST §572): tehi tehi paccayehi anūnādhikeheva tassa tassa dhammassa sambhavato tathatā, "it is called 'reality' because each state arises from just its own conditions, neither fewer nor more." The rendering is from the Pāli.

[33] *Visuddhimagga* XIX.20 (CST §689; trans. Ñāṇamoli), quoting the Ancients: Tenāhu porāṇā – "Kammassa kārako natthi, vipākassa ca vedako; suddhadhammā pavattanti, evetaṃ sammadassanaṃ."

[34] *Visuddhimagga* IX, the Description of the Divine Abidings. The Description of the Aggregates touches on the same point (CST §474; Ñāṇamoli XIV 154): Keci pana mettupekkhāyopi aniyatesu icchanti, taṃ na gahetabbaṃ. Atthato hi adosoyeva mettā, tatramajjhattupekkhāyeva upekkhāti, "Some want to include loving-kindness and equanimity among the occasional factors; that should not be accepted, for in meaning non-hate is loving-kindness, and specific neutrality is equanimity." The rendering is from the Pāli. Since non-hate and specific neutrality are present in every beautiful citta, mettā and equanimity in this sense are present there too, while compassion and gladness arise on occasion.

[35] *Visuddhimagga* XVI.90 (trans. Ñāṇamoli, BPS ed.): of the truths seen as void, "there is suffering, but none who suffers."

[36] *Channa Sutta*, Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.90; *Connected Discourses*, pp. 945–947. His arahatship is recorded in the *Vinaya*, Cūḷavagga, Brahmadaṇḍakathā (CST §445): Aññataro ca panāyasmā channo arahataṃ ahosi.

[37] The two passages are from the commentaries to the *Brahmajāla Sutta* and the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* respectively, on the "blind worldling" (andhaputhujjana) and the "good worldling" (kalyāṇaputhujjana); both translated in Bodhi, *The All-embracing Net of Views* and *The Discourse on the Root of Existence*. *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* on DN 1: Tattha yassa khandhadhātuāyatanādīsu uggahaparipucchāsavanadhāraṇapaccavekkhaṇāni natthi, ayaṃ andhaputhujjano. Yassa tāni atthi, so kalyāṇaputhujjano. *Papañcasūdanī* on MN 1: Yassa hi khandhadhātuāyatanasaccapaccayākārasatipaṭṭhānādīsu uggahaparipucchāvinicchayarahitattā maññanāpaṭisedhako neva āgamo, paṭipattiyā adhigantabbassa anadhigatattā neva adhigamo atthi.

[38] The remark of Acharn Sujin is recorded in Nina van Gorkom, *Alone with Dhamma*: Pilgrimage in India (Zolag), ch. 2, "Remembrance of the Dhamma."

[39] Commentary to the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (the *Papañcasūdanī*, Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Majjhima Nikāya, on MN 10; the parallel passage stands in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* on the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, DN 2), in the section on clear comprehension (sampajañña) of the four postures and activities: ayaṃ saddo nāma oṭṭhe ca paṭicca dante ca jivhañca tāluñca paṭicca cittassa tadanurūpaṃ payogaṃ paṭicca jāyatī. The example of comprehending speech as conditioned sound is rendered in Soma Thera, *The Way of Mindfulness* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society).

[40] Nina van Gorkom's translator's note in the present volume, on the mind-element and the investigating-consciousness (santīraṇa) at the close of her note on *Visuddhimagga* XIV 96 (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana §454): "we should not forget that each is an element (dhātu), a dhamma void of self; we have heard the word 'element' often, but it is through insight that these characteristics are directly known and realised as elements, empty of self." On the degrees of understanding referred to here (pariyatti, paṭipatti, paṭivedha), see also her *Cetasikas* (London: Zolag, 1999), ch. 1.

[41] Ācariya Dhammapāla, *Cariyāpiṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* (the *Paramatthadīpanī*), ch. VI, "What Is Their Condition?", under the perfection of wisdom (paññāpāramī); trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi, *A Treatise on the Pāramīs*: From the Commentary to the *Cariyāpiṭaka* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, Wheel No. 409). This is Dhammapāla's own work, the author of the *Paramatthamañjūsā* translated in this volume. The passage reads: "For it is by the spiritual power of wisdom that the Great Beings, established in the four foundations, benefit the world with the four bases of beneficence, help beings enter the path to emancipation, and bring their faculties to maturity. Through the power of wisdom, again, they are devoted to the investigation of the aggregates, sense bases, etc., fully comprehend the processes of origination and cessation in accordance with actuality, develop the qualities of giving, etc., to the stages of distinction and penetration, and perfect the training of bodhisattvas." Pāli: Paññānubhāvena hi mahāsatto caturadhiṭṭhānādhiṭṭhito catūhi saṅgahavatthūhi lokaṃ anuggaṇhanto satte niyyānamagge avatāreti, indriyāni ca nesaṃ paripāceti. Tathā paññābalena khandhāyatanādīsu pavicayabahulo pavattinivattiyo yāthāvato parijānanto dānādayo guṇe visesanibbedhabhāgiyabhāvaṃ nayanto bodhisattasikkhāya paripūrakārī hoti. The Pāli has the singular, mahāsatto ("the Great Being"), and "the four foundations" renders caturadhiṭṭhāna, the four determinations.

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Part I

Understanding (Paññā) — the opening questions and the definition

Vism XIV 1–8

The chapter opens

> ***Vism XIV 1.*** *Now, concentration was described under the heading of consciousness in the stanza: "When a wise man, established well in virtue, / Develops consciousness and understanding" (I.1). And that has been developed in all its aspects by the bhikkhu who is thus possessed of the more advanced development of concentration that has acquired with direct-knowledge the benefits [described in Chs. XII and XIII]. But understanding comes next and that has still to be developed. Now, that is not easy, firstly even to know about, let alone to develop, when it is taught very briefly. In order, therefore, to deal with the detailed method of its development there is the following set of questions.*

ṭīkā: Developed in all its aspects means: by every mode of development — the modes of access and of absorption, the gaining of mastery [over the jhānas], the surpassing of applied thought and the other factors, the discarding of materiality and the rest, the disciplining of consciousness in fourteen ways, and the acquiring of the fivefold benefit.

ṭīkā: Understanding comes next: according to the order of teaching, in the verse "consciousness and understanding," and according to the order of practice, understanding comes immediately after that concentration; and the construction is that understanding is to be developed by the bhikkhu endowed with the development of concentration. Taught so very briefly: in the words "and he develops understanding," and also in the explanation of the verse, where insight-understanding is called a knife well sharpened upon the stone of concentration and virtue — said so very tersely that this understanding is not easy even to know as to its nature. And since the manner of its development was not shown, it is not easy to develop, "let alone to develop." A work of questions: a question is what is asked, in the sense of "asking"; work is action, doing, performing; the work that is question is the "work of questions" — the meaning is, the undertaking of asking.

> ***Vism XIV 2.*** *(i) What is understanding? (ii) In what sense is it understanding? (iii) What are its characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause? (iv) How many kinds of understanding are there? (v) How is it developed? (vi) What are the benefits of developing understanding?*

Nina: In the verse, the word naro, "man," is used. The sense of a hero is implied in it — an extraordinary person: a bhikkhu with the very refined virtue of the bhikkhu, who sees danger in the slightest faults and lives as the arahats live. Well established in the many kinds of virtue, he develops concentration up to the level of jhāna and the supernatural powers, and then develops insight, and at last attains arahatship. The Visuddhimagga also says that in some instances this path of purification is taught by insight alone.

What is understanding?

> ***Vism XIV 3.*** *Here are the answers. What is understanding? Understanding is of many sorts and has various aspects. An answer that attempted to explain it all would accomplish neither its intention nor its purpose, and would, besides, lead to distraction; so we shall confine ourselves to the kind intended here, which is understanding consisting in insight knowledge associated with profitable consciousness.*

ṭīkā: "Understanding" (paññā) ranges very widely — there is understanding of many wholesome kinds, of many modes, born of thought, of hearing, of development — but were the commentator to answer the question by detailing every variety, he would not accomplish the intended purpose (which is the development of insight together with the path, the cutting through of the tangle of craving) and would only lead the reader further astray. Hence he restricts the term, for this chapter, to insight-knowledge (vipassanā-ñāṇa) accompanied by wholesome consciousness.

> ***Vism XIV 4.*** *In what sense is it understanding? It is understanding (paññā) in the sense of act of understanding (pajānana). It is a knowing (jānana) in a particular mode separate from the modes of perceiving (sañjānana) and cognizing (vijānana).*

ṭīkā: Knowing in diverse ways: by this he shows that the dhammas to be known are each of many kinds, and that the true comprehension of them, "in diverse ways," is understanding. For though perceiving, cognizing, and understanding share alike in being a kind of "knowing," the mode of grasping the object differs. This is shown by the simile of the coin.

ṭīkā: For suppose a heap of coins were laid out on a money-changer's table, and three people were to look at it: a child too young to know the world, a villager, and a money-changer. The child too young to know the world knows only that the coins are variously figured, ornamented, long, square, or round, but does not know "these are reckoned a treasure, to be used and enjoyed by people." The villager knows that they are variously figured and the rest, and also that they are reckoned a treasure to be used and enjoyed; but he does not know the further distinction, "this one is genuine, this false, this only half value." The money-changer knows all these modes — and knows them not only by looking at the coin, but by hearing the sound of it when struck, by

smelling it, by tasting it, by feeling its weight in the hand, and even knows in which village or town or city, or on what mountain or river-bank, and by which master, it was made.

ṭīkā: So it is here. Perception is like the child too young to know the world seeing the coin, for it grasps the object merely by its appearing aspect — "blue," "yellow." It cannot bring about the penetration of the characteristics, "impermanent, suffering, not-self." Consciousness is like the villager seeing the coin, for it grasps the object's aspect by way of "blue" and the rest, and reaches as far as the penetration of the characteristics — yet it cannot, by striving on, bring about the manifestation of the path. Understanding is like the money-changer seeing the coin: having grasped the object's aspect by way of "blue" and the rest, and having reached the penetration of the characteristics, it goes beyond even that to the manifestation of the path. Therefore this knowing in diverse ways, distinct from the modes of perceiving and cognizing, is what should be understood as the act of understanding (pajānana); and it is with reference to this that it was said, "it is understanding in the sense of the act of understanding."

> **Nina:** Where there are perception and consciousness, understanding is not necessarily present; but when it is present, it is not separable from those dhammas. To distinguish them — "this is perception, this consciousness, this understanding" — is subtle and hard to see, since they cannot be prised apart. Hence the venerable Nāgasena said to the king that what the Exalted One did was hard to do: the defining of the immaterial dhammas, of consciousness and the mental factors that arise together, which occur with a single object and yet are distinguished one from another.[1]

The fourfold definition

> ***Vism XIV 7.*** *Understanding has the characteristic of penetrating the individual essences of states. Its function is to abolish the darkness of delusion, which conceals the individual essences of states. It is manifested as non-delusion. Because of the words, "One who is concentrated knows and sees correctly" (A V 3), its proximate cause is concentration.*

ṭīkā: The individual nature (sabhāva) of dhammas is twofold: the nature that is each dhamma's own, and the nature that is shared. By the first is meant the specific characteristic (salakkhaṇa) — hardness, the touchable, and so on; by the second, the general characteristic (sāmañña-lakkhaṇa) — impermanence, suffering, and the rest. And because understanding has the characteristic of truly penetrating both of these, it is said that "understanding has the characteristic of penetrating the individual nature of dhammas."

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1. **Nina.** The Nāgasena exchange (Milindapañha): the Buddha's "hard thing" is the analysis of the immaterial dhammas arising together with one object, yet distinguished one from another.

ṭīkā: Just as the light of a lamp, in performing its function, destroys the surrounding darkness that conceals such things as a pot or a cloth, so understanding destroys the darkness of delusion that conceals the individual nature of dhammas; and so its function is the destroying of that delusion. For the very moment the light of understanding arises, dispelling the darkness within the heart, it arises thus; and from that very fact it is established in the mode of non-bewilderment regarding the dhammas and their individual natures — hence its manifestation is non-delusion. Or else, having become a cause, it brings about non-delusion as its own fruit; and in this way too its manifestation is non-delusion. Since it is insight-understanding that is intended here, it was said that "concentration is its proximate cause," for the sutta-saying "one who is concentrated knows things as they really are" is cited as the binding ground. Here ends the explanation of the [definition of] understanding.

How many kinds?

> ***Vism XIV 8 (CST §425).*** *How many kinds of understanding are there? (1) By the characteristic of penetrating the individual nature of dhammas, it is of a single kind. (2) It is twofold as mundane and supramundane; likewise as subject to cankers and free from cankers, and the other such pairs; as the defining of mind and the defining of materiality; as accompanied by joy and by equanimity; and as the planes of seeing and of development. (3) It is threefold as consisting in what is thought out, in what is heard, and in development; likewise by way of a limited, exalted, or measureless object; as skill in improvement, in detriment, and in means; and as interpreting the internal, and so on. (4) It is fourfold as knowledge of the four truths, and as the four discriminations.*

ṭīkā: (1) The penetration of the individual nature of dhammas is the unique nature of understanding, and no division can be made within it on that score; hence he says, "by the characteristic of penetrating the individual nature of dhammas it is of a single kind."

ṭīkā: (2) The round of becoming is called the "world" (loka) in the sense of crumbling and dissolving away; understanding is mundane (lokiya) when it is bound up with that world, being included in it, or is found there.[2] When it is not included in it — when it has gone beyond, has crossed over the world — it is supramundane (lokuttara). And since even supramundane understanding has to be developed in association with the path, and the idiom of "insight" applies to it too, calling it supramundane is no contradiction. Since it makes itself the object of the cankers that occur along with it, it is subject to cankers

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2. **Nina.** There is a word-association between lujjati, "to crumble," and loka, "world." Cf. S iv 52 ("The world… it is impermanent"); and Atthasālinī 47: the round of rebirth is called "the world" because of its dissolving and crumbling (lujjana).

(sāsava); since, even by way of being made their object, it has no cankers, it is free from cankers (anāsava).[3] By the word "and the rest" should be understood the further dyads — dissociated-from-cankers-yet-subject-to-cankers, and so on. The remaining members of 8 — the defining of mind and materiality, joy and equanimity, the planes of seeing and development, and the whole of the threefold and fourfold classifications — are taken up in detail by the ṭīkā at CST §§425b–428, in the parts that follow.

3. **Nina.** The cankers (āsava) take even canker-free understanding as their object, so it is reckoned "subject to cankers"; yet in its own nature it is free from them, its object being Nibbāna.

Part II

Understanding (Paññā) — the classification, twofold to fourfold

Vism XIV 8b–20

The twofold classification (continued)

[The preceding part carried the twofold division through "mundane and supramundane" and "subject to / free from cankers." Dhammapāla now completes it with the remaining pairs.]

> ***Vism XIV 8 (CST §425, continued).*** *… as the defining of mind and the defining of materiality; … as the plane of seeing and the plane of development.*

ṭīkā: By the defining of mind and the defining of materiality: that is, by the defining of mind (nāma-vavatthāna) and by the defining of materiality (rūpa-vavatthāna).[1]

ṭīkā: As for seeing (dassana): it is so called because of the seeing of nibbāna for the first time; and it is also a plane (bhūmi), because the associated dhammas come to be here, depending on it as their support — or because, unlike nibbāna, it itself comes to be and arises rather than remaining unmanifest.[2] Thus it is the plane of seeing, namely the first path. The remaining three paths, however, arise by way of development with respect to what was already seen by the first path — they see nothing not seen before; and so, being development, and being a plane in the sense stated, they are the plane of development (bhāvanā-bhūmi). On this score, then, understanding is called twofold, as the plane of seeing and the plane of development.

> **Nina:** Bhūmi can mean a plane of existence (hell, heaven, and so on), or a plane of citta. As plane of citta there are four: cittas of the sense-sphere, of fine-material jhāna, of immaterial jhāna, and the supramundane. The Atthasālinī explains bhūmi (rendered "soil"): here it is the fruition of the holy life that is meant, called a plane because it is the ground for the associated states that depend on it; or so called because, though it transcends the world, it itself arises, unlike the unmanifest nibbāna. So supramundane understanding is a lokuttara dhamma, yet conditioned — it arises, unlike nibbāna, which is unconditioned and does not arise.

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1. The "defining of mind and materiality" (nāmarūpa-vavatthāna) is the analytical knowledge, early in the progress of insight, that distinguishes mental from material phenomena — the basis of purification of view (Vism XVIII).

2. **Nina.** Atthasālinī I, p. 291, on bhūmi as "soil." The Netti (Guide), p. 17: "seeing" (dassana) is a term for the first path, at which Nibbāna is first "seen," while "keeping in being" (bhāvanā) is the term for the remaining three paths, which keep that vision of Nibbāna in being by repeating it — "keeping in being" rather than "development."

> ***Vism XIV 9–13 (CST §426).*** *… And the same method applies to the other such pairs.*

ṭīkā: Associated with the mundane path: associated with the path among the arisings of mundane wholesome consciousness — in particular, associated with the path comprised within the four purifications beginning with purification of view.[3] Since a designation that applies to a whole applies also to its parts, "associated with the path" is said; or it is so put because each of the path-factors, right view and the rest, is itself called "path." And though there is no difference in the dhammas themselves, a distinction in mere verbal designation can make for a hard saying; hence it is said, "but in meaning this too is just mundane-or-supramundane." In the further dyads as well — dissociated-from-cankers-yet-subject-to-cankers and the like — the only difference is the taking up of "dissociated" and so on; in meaning the understanding is just mundane or supramundane, so "the same method applies." By "and the rest" should be understood the dyads of liable-to-the-floods, dissociated-from-the-floods, and so on. As for the path: there are four path-cittas of the first jhāna, and likewise of the second and the others, making sixteen path-cittas in all. Since it is insight-understanding that is intended here, the exalted (mahaggata) understanding [of the jhānas as such] is not included.

The threefold classification

(a) Thought out, heard, developed

> ***Vism XIV 8 / 14 (CST §427).*** *It is threefold as consisting in what is thought out (cintāmayā), in what is heard (sutamayā), and in development (bhāvanāmayā). Understanding gained without hearing from another, being produced by one's own reasoning, is "consisting in what is thought out." Understanding gained by hearing from another, being produced by hearing, is "consisting in what is heard." Understanding that has reached absorption, having somehow been produced by development, is "consisting in development."*

ṭīkā: By one's own reasoning: in accomplishing this or that blameless aim, without another's instruction, by one's own thinking-out of the means. By hearing: by way of another's instruction as heard. In whatever way: of one who applies himself to development on his own, whether or not he has heard instruction from another. The words "reached absorption" are said to point out the development-born understanding that has reached its summit; it does not mean that only what has reached absorption is development-born.

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3. The four purifications referred to: purification of view, of overcoming doubt, of knowledge-and-vision of what is and is not the path, and of knowledge-and-vision of the way.

ṭīkā: The word maya, "consisting of," is to be connected severally with each: thought-out, heard, developed.[4]

[Then the Visuddhimagga supports this with the canonical text (Vibh. 324–25), of which the ṭīkā glosses the harder terms: "In the spheres of work devised by ingenuity, or of craft, or in the fields of science, the preference, view, choice, opinion, judgement, liking for pondering things — that concerns the ownership of deeds, or is in conformity with truth, or is of such a kind as to conform with [the propositions] 'materiality is impermanent,' 'feeling … perception … formations … consciousness is impermanent' — which one gains without hearing it from another: this is called understanding consisting in what is thought out."]

ṭīkā: In the spheres of work devised by ingenuity: devised by understanding, transformed by understanding, accomplished through skilful means. In spheres of work (kammāyatana), "work" itself is the sphere, or the sphere is for the livelihood of those who work; the same for spheres of craft (sippāyatana). Work is twofold — low, such as carpentry, and high, such as farming and trade; craft too is twofold — low, such as basket-making, and high, such as calligraphy and accountancy. Knowledge (vijjā) itself is the field of science (vijjāṭṭhāna), and a lawful one — like the protective charms for snakes and the like.[5] Now these things certain wise men — like the bodhisattas, desiring people's comfort — neither see being done by others, nor learn from things already done, nor hear from those who explain them: they do them simply by their own nature, by thinking; and what such understanding people do by their own nature, by thinking, turns out just like the work of those who learnt it from others.

ṭīkā: Ownership of deeds (kammassakata): the knowledge that knows "this deed is beings' own, that one is not." In conformity with truth (saccānulomika): insight-knowledge; it is so called because it conforms to the penetration of the truth. To show how it occurs, "materiality is impermanent," and so on, is said. Here, by the indefinite word "or," the characteristics of suffering and not-self are also to be understood as included, though not expressly handed down — for what is impermanent is suffering, and what is suffering is not-self.[6] Or is of such a kind: refers to the nature described above. Conformable acceptance (anulomika khanti) and the terms following it are synonyms for understanding: it conforms because it shows non-opposition to the spheres of work and the rest explained above; and because it conforms

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4. **Nina.** Maya-saddo paccekaṃ sambandhitabbo — the word -maya, "consisting of," must be connected severally to each of the three.

5. Nāgamaṇḍala-paritta: lawful protective recitations — a vijjāṭṭhāna that is dhammika.

6. **Nina.** The well-known sequence: yaṃ aniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ; yaṃ dukkhaṃ tadanattā — what is impermanent is suffering; what is suffering is not-self. The Visuddhimagga names only impermanence; the other two characteristics are included under "or."

with conduct beneficial to beings, and is not at variance with the truth of the path, with the ultimate truth, and with nibbāna — therefore it is "conformable."

ṭīkā: It accepts, it is able to see all these grounds: thus it is acceptance (khanti). It sees: thus it is view (diṭṭhi). It approves: thus approval (ruci). It knows: thus judgement (muti). It observes: thus consideration (pekkhā). And those things beginning with the spheres of work, being reflected upon, incline to understanding and "accept" that understanding: thus acceptance through pondering things (dhammanijjhānakhanti).

ṭīkā: He gains it without hearing from another: he gains it merely by his own reasoning, without hearing another's word of instruction. This is called understanding consisting in what is thought out. But this arises only in distinguished bodhisattas; and among them, the understanding "in conformity with truth" arises only in the two kinds of bodhisattas — the perfectly enlightened and the solitary buddhas — in their last existence.[7] The remaining [thought-out] understanding arises in all those of great understanding who have fulfilled the perfections. He gains it by hearing from another: all that is gained by seeing spheres of work being done, or already done, by another, or by hearing another's words, or by learning under a teacher — all this should be understood as gained by hearing from another. Of one who has attained: of one possessed of an attainment; and this is given by way of example only. Here the insight-and-path understanding is what is intended by "consisting in development."

(b) Limited, exalted, measureless

> ***Vism XIV 15 (CST §425 lemma; ṭīkā as below).*** *It is threefold as having a limited, an exalted, or a measureless object.*

ṭīkā: The understanding called "limited-object" and "exalted-object" is the understanding spoken of [in the Vibhaṅga] as having a limited or an exalted object — that is mundane insight. The understanding spoken of as occurring contingent upon nibbāna, with a measureless object, is supramundane insight; and he says this is supramundane insight with reference to path-understanding. For although that understanding does not take as object the impermanence and so on of conditioned things — the function of insight being [already] fulfilled — it sees distinctly the true characteristic of nibbāna, and so is called insight. Change-of-lineage knowledge (gotrabhū-ñāṇa), although it too has a measureless object, does not receive the designation "insight," because it stands in the position of adverting to the path.[8]

(c) Skill in improvement, detriment, and means

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7. "The two kinds of bodhisattas in their last existence" = the supreme Buddhas (sammāsambuddha) and the solitary buddhas (paccekabuddha); only in them does the truth-conforming thought-born understanding arise unaided.

> ***Vism XIV 16 (CST §426/root).*** *It is increase that is called "improvement" (āya); that is twofold, as the warding off of harm and the arousing of good. Skill in these is "skill in improvement."*

ṭīkā: It is increase, growth, that is improvement; herein, skill regarding that — which has the characteristic of the warding off of harm and the arousing of benefit — is wholesomeness, proficiency, "skill in improvement." "These things," and the rest, is said in order to show, according to the text [Vibh. 771], that this surely is skill in improvement. Herein this is called: the understanding concerning the non-arising and abandoning of unprofitable things, and the arousing and maintaining of profitable things, is what is called skill in improvement.

> ***Vism XIV 17.*** *Non-increase is what is called "detriment" (apāya); that too is twofold, as the diminution of good and the arousing of harm. Skill in these is "skill in detriment."*

ṭīkā: Detriment is the being without the characteristic of increase — non-increase. Skill in that — which has the characteristic of the diminution of benefit and the arousing of harm — is "skill in detriment." Here a difficulty is raised: granted that skill in improvement is understanding, how does skill in detriment come to be called understanding? One might think: "Detriment-skill would be mere proficiency at bringing about harm" — but that is only his own surmise. Why? Because it is genuinely understanding when one knows: "When I attend in this way, unarisen profitable things do not arise and arisen ones dwindle; unarisen unprofitable things arise and arisen ones grow." Knowing this, he does not let unarisen unprofitable things arise, and abandons those arisen; he arouses unarisen profitable things, and brings those arisen to fulfilment by development. So skill in detriment too is truly understanding.[9]

> ***Vism XIV 18.*** *In all these cases, the skill in the means to bring about this or that — occurring at that moment, arising on that occasion — is "skill in means." So it is threefold as skill in improvement, in detriment, and in means.*

ṭīkā: In all these cases: in all of them. Of this or that thing: of this or that beneficial and pleasant thing for beings. Occurring at that moment: when a sudden need or danger has arisen, it occurs at that very moment for the purpose of remedying it. There is for it an arising on the occasion, and so it is "occasion-arisen," arising then and there. The means thereto: what serves as

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8. Gotrabhū, "change-of-lineage," is the single mind-moment that takes Nibbāna as object while still "adverting" toward the path proper; it has Nibbāna's measureless object but is not reckoned "insight."

9. "Detriment-skill" is not skill at causing harm but the understanding that recognises what causes wholesome states to wane and unwholesome ones to grow — and so acts to prevent it.

the means to this or that task to be done.

(d) Interpreting the internal, external, and both

> ***Vism XIV 19 (CST root; ṭīkā as below).*** *Insight-understanding undertaken by apprehending one's own aggregates is "interpreting the internal"; that undertaken by apprehending another's aggregates, or external materiality not bound up with the faculties, is "interpreting the external"; that undertaken by apprehending both is "interpreting the internal-and-external." So it is threefold.*

ṭīkā: Having apprehended: having laid hold of [the object] by way of comprehending, "this is materiality, just this much is materiality," and so on. Having apprehended both: having comprehended both systematically, the internal and the external. Or else: as in [the formula] "whatever is of a nature to arise, all that is of a nature to cease," he apprehends all five aggregates at one stroke, without analysing them out.[10] This last is the insight-comprehension of the bhikkhu of keen insight, of great merit.

The fourfold classification

> ***Vism XIV 20 (CST §428).*** *As regards the tetrads, in the first tetrad: knowledge occurring contingent upon the truth of suffering is "knowledge of suffering"; contingent upon the origin of suffering, "knowledge of the origin"; contingent upon the cessation of suffering, "knowledge of the cessation"; contingent upon the way leading to the cessation of suffering, "knowledge of the way." So it is fourfold as knowledge of the four truths.*

ṭīkā: Contingent upon the truth of suffering: making the truth of suffering its object, and occurring by way of demolishing the delusion that conceals it, the knowledge is "knowledge of suffering." Contingent upon the origin of suffering: here too the same method; and likewise for the remaining two terms. It is well known that knowledge contingent upon all four truths [taken as objects of review] is called knowledge of reviewing; that the third [as it functions on the path] is path-knowledge; and that [knowledge] contingent upon the other truths is insight-knowledge.

ṭīkā: [The second tetrad — the four discriminations (paṭisambhidā) of meaning, law, language, and perspicuity (Vism 21–31) — is a self-contained treatise.]

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10. Ekapahārena… avibhāgena pariggahetvā — apprehending all five aggregates "at one stroke," by the formula of the Dhammacakkappavattana.

Part III

Understanding (Paññā) — the four discriminations

Vism XIV 21–31

[This part closes the section on understanding; with it the "soil, roots, and trunk" of insight (32) is reached, and materiality begins. On this part: the discriminations of meaning and law (22–24) are richly glossed by the ṭīkā, and Nina rendered them substantially; her draft left two short stretches in Pāli: the close of the dhamma analysis (the question why mere functional consciousness is "law" but not "meaning") and the close of the language discrimination (the divine-ear comparison). For perspicuity and the two planes and five aspects (26–31) the ṭīkā is brief, and the Visuddhimagga's own text carries the weight; the root sentences are rendered freshly, with the little the ṭīkā adds folded in.]

The second tetrad: the four discriminations

> ***Vism XIV 21 (CST §428).*** *In the second tetrad, the four kinds of knowledge classed as concerned with meaning and so on are the four discriminations (paṭisambhidā): "Knowledge about meaning is the discrimination of meaning (attha-paṭisambhidā); knowledge about law is the discrimination of law (dhamma-paṭisambhidā); knowledge about the enunciation of language dealing with meaning and law is the discrimination of language (nirutti-paṭisambhidā); knowledge about kinds of knowledge is the discrimination of perspicuity (paṭibhāna-paṭisambhidā)" (Vibh. 293).*

ṭīkā: The knowledges classed as concerned with meaning and so on refer to what follows. "For this is said," and the rest, is stated in order to unfold, by way of the [Vibhaṅga] text, the meaning given there in brief. Here, knowledge about meaning is the discrimination of meaning: the knowledge falling within the category concerned with meaning, capable of effecting the discernment, the explanation, and the defining of the meaning-category — this is called the discrimination of meaning. The same method applies to the remaining terms: the knowledge capable of effecting the discernment, explanation, and defining of the law-category is the discrimination of law (dhamma, "law," covering condition, teaching, and class of phenomena, according to context); of the language-category, the discrimination of language; of the perspicuity-category, the discrimination of perspicuity. And the categories of language and of perspicuity are to be understood by way of meaning and the rest — which have these as their object — once they have been analysed out by the divisions of "conditionally arisen" and so on.

Discrimination of meaning

> ***Vism XIV 22.*** *Herein, meaning (attha) is briefly a term for the fruit of a cause (hetu); for in accordance with the cause it is served, arrived at, reached, therefore it is called "meaning." But in particular the five things, namely, (i) anything conditionally produced, (ii) Nibbāna, (iii) the meaning of what is spoken, (iv) (kamma-)result, and (v) functional consciousness, should be understood as meaning. When anyone reviews that meaning, any knowledge of his falling within the category concerned with meaning is the discrimination of meaning.*

ṭīkā: Nibbāna too, in accordance with the cause leading to it, is "served, reached"; that is the sense.[1] Anything conditionally produced takes in suffering and the rest, as found in the sections on truth, on cause, on law, and on the structure of conditions. Nibbāna belongs here under the section on truth and on the structure of conditions; the meaning of what is spoken, under the section on the scriptures (pariyatti); result and functional consciousness, under the Abhidhamma division. So, by way of just what is stated in the text, the five things that are "meaning" should be understood.

ṭīkā: As to the word necessitates (dahati): it means "it arranges" — a derivation common to a producing cause and the rest. To clarify its sense it is said, "it makes [the meaning] occur, or allows it to be reached." Of these two, the former sense applies to all except the path; for what is spoken makes the meaning occur by way of [its] being understood, while the path causes nibbāna to be reached — there the latter sense applies. So meaning is threefold: nibbāna is the meaning that is to be attained; the meaning of what is spoken is the meaning that is to be made known; the other is the meaning that is to be produced.

> **Nina:** Attha, meaning, is the outcome or fruit of a condition. Nibbāna is to be reached by means of a condition, so it falls under "meaning." In the truth-section, the truth of suffering is the fruit of the truth of origin (craving), so it too falls under "meaning." "The meaning of what is spoken" is the effect to be reached by means of the condition called "what is spoken" — that condition being competency in the scriptures, as the Dispeller of Delusion explains.

Discrimination of law

> ***Vism XIV 23.*** *Law (dhamma) is briefly a term for a condition (paccaya); for since a condition necessitates (dahati) whatever it may be, makes it occur or allows it to happen, it is therefore called "law." But in particular the five things, namely, (i) any cause that produces fruit, (ii) the noble path, (iii) what is spoken, (iv) what is profitable, and (v) what is unprofitable, should be understood as law. When anyone reviews that law,*

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1. Nibbānampi sampāpaka-hetu-anusārena arīyati — Nibbāna is "meaning" as what is reached by way of its leading cause, the path.

any knowledge of his falling within the category concerned with law is the discrimination of law.

ṭīkā: Any cause that produces fruit takes in origin and the rest, as found in the sections on truth, cause, law, and the structure of conditions. The path belongs here under the sections on truth and on the structure of conditions; what is spoken, under the section on the scriptures; the profitable and the unprofitable, under the Abhidhamma division. So, by what is stated in the texts, the five things that are "law" should be understood. Herein the path is what leads to [nibbāna]; what is spoken makes known; the other [law] produces: so cause is threefold.

ṭīkā: And here, because functional states (kiriyā) yield no result, they are not given the status of "law" [as a producing cause]. — But if so, since they produce no result, ought they not to be denied the status of "meaning" too? — No; for they have the status of meaning by being conditionally arisen. — Then would not the profitable and the unprofitable also turn out to be "meaning"? — That is no fault, for it has not been ruled out; yet, because result is the chief cause and so the more evident, it is they [the profitable and unprofitable] that are given the status of "law." — Then would functional states acquire the status of "law" by being a condition? — That too is no fault, for it has not been ruled out; but because there is no causal connection of deed-and-fruit in them, they are not given the status of "law." Moreover, it should be understood that for one who reviews the merely profitable and unprofitable, and the functional and resultant states, without making the distinction "this is the condition of that, this is conditionally arisen from that," there arise the discriminations of law-and-meaning [together]; and so their being [separately] "meaning" or "law" is not stated.

Vism XIV 24 (CST §428). *This same meaning is shown in the Abhidhamma by the analysis: "Knowledge about suffering is the discrimination of meaning; knowledge about the origin of suffering is the discrimination of law… Knowledge about cause is the discrimination of law; knowledge about the fruit of a cause is the discrimination of meaning…"*[2] *(Vibh. 293–95), and so on through the standard formulas.*

ṭīkā: This same meaning — the meaning stated by way of the fivefold classification of the things that are "meaning" (or fruit) — is, after being classified according to the Abhidhamma, shown thus; that is the connection.

Discrimination of language

2. The long Abhidhamma formulas of 24 (suffering / origin / cessation / way mapped to meaning / law / meaning / law, and the dependent-origination series) are the Visuddhimagga's, quoted from the Vibhaṅga; the ṭīkā only notes that they re-present the fivefold scheme in Abhidhamma form.

> ***Vism XIV 25 (CST §428).*** *Knowledge about the enunciation of language dealing with that meaning and that law — the language that is individual-essence (sabhāva-nirutti), the usage without exception — any knowledge falling within the category concerned with the uttering, speaking, pronouncing of it: this is the discrimination of language. One who has reached it, on hearing "phasso, vedanā," and so on, knows "this is the individual-essence language," and on hearing "phassā, vedano," knows "this is not the individual-essence language."*

ṭīkā: In enunciation of language dealing with law, the word "law" stands for individual essence (sabhāva); hence he says "individual-essence language," meaning the unerring language. Therefore he says "the usage without exception": in conveying this or that meaning there is a fixed connection — a customary usage of words. Concerned with the enunciation of that means: concerned with the uttering of that so-called individual-essence language, that normal common usage. This individual-essence language is the Magadhan tongue; as to its meaning, the teachers say it is a name (nāma-paññatti). The word phasso, "contact," is individual-essence language; phassaṃ and phassā are not — this is what is shown.

ṭīkā: When one reviews that sound of individual-essence language, making it the object, the knowledge that falls within the category of the uttering of that language is the discrimination of language.[3] As the commentary says, "this discrimination of language has sound as its object, not a concept"; the teachers therefore say that it occurs with the sound of language as object in the ear-door process, and afterwards in the mind-door process. And the Vibhaṅga's words, "the discrimination of language has a present object," are said with reference to the knowing that follows upon grasping the sound of speech.

ṭīkā: It might be objected that this would mean one present object is spoken of in terms of another present object. But just as the knowledge of the divine ear is the condition for ascertaining the distinctions among the sounds of humans and others, making this or that sound plain, so the knowledge that has as object the present sound of individual-essence language, and that makes it plain, is the condition for ascertaining what is and is not individual-essence language — and there is no conflict with the text in calling that the discrimination of language. For neither "of one who reviews, making that sound of individual-essence language the object" nor "of one who carries on a reviewing that has the present sound as object" can be denied: for that knowledge arises only as making the individual-essence language plain, and — immediately upon the reviewing of this or that sound, being the ground for

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3. **Nina.** Phasso (nominative singular) is the right, "individual-essence" form; phassaṃ, phassā are wrong forms. The point is grammatical: the discrimination of language recognises the correct Magadhan form as it is heard.

ascertaining this or that distinction — only as analysing and penetrating the language; and so it too falls within a category.

Discrimination of perspicuity

> ***Vism XIV 26.*** *Knowledge about kinds of knowledge: when a man is reviewing and makes any of the foregoing kinds of knowledge the object [of his knowledge], then any knowledge in him that has knowledge as its object is the discrimination of perspicuity; and so is any knowledge about these aforesaid kinds of knowledge, which is concerned with the details of their individual domains, functions, and so on.*

[Here the ṭīkā adds little; the Visuddhimagga's own statement is its explanation. Perspicuity (paṭibhāna) takes knowledge itself as its field: reviewing the other three discriminations, or any knowledge, and discerning each in its domain and function, is the fourth discrimination.]

The two planes and the five aspects

> ***Vism XIV 27.*** *And these four kinds of discrimination can be placed in two categories: the plane of the trainer and the plane of the non-trainer. Herein, those of the chief disciples and great disciples come into the category of the non-trainer's plane. Those of the Elder Ānanda, the householder Citta, the layman Dhammika, the householder Upāli, the laywoman Khujjuttarā, and the like come into the category of the trainer's plane.*

ṭīkā: They reach the categories (pabhedaṃ gacchanti): among objects divided into many kinds, they come to the capacity of truly comprehending each in its division. The mention of the Elder Ānanda and the others is made in order to set aside, by way of exception, the impression — given by the general statement — that the discriminations are reached [only] on the non-trainer's plane by the great disciples.

> ***Vism XIV 28.*** *Though they fall into these two planes, they are nevertheless distinguished by five aspects: achievement, mastery of scriptures, hearing, questioning, and prior effort. Herein, achievement is the reaching of arahantship; mastery of scriptures, mastery of the Buddha's word; hearing, learning the Dhamma carefully and attentively; questioning, the discussion of knotty passages and explanatory passages in the texts, commentaries, and so on; prior effort, the devotion to insight in the dispensations of former Buddhas, up to the vicinity of conformity and change-of-lineage, by one who practises the going and coming back [with the meditation subject].*

ṭīkā: "These" are the discriminations.[4] On the trainer's plane the reaching of the categories has a narrower field; on the non-trainer's plane, a wider; hence he says "achievement is the reaching of arahantship" — or it is said with reference to a surpassing achievement, since even for those who have reached

the discriminations as trainers, the clarity of these is attained through the reaching of arahantship. And as prior effort is a condition for the arahant's clear discriminations, so too is the reaching of arahantship; the causal role of each of the five in the clarity of the trainer's and non-trainer's discriminations should be fitted in as appropriate.[5] "Mastery of scriptures" and the rest are shown as having the Buddha's word for their field, since they comprehend meaning, law, and so on without remainder: reciting the text is mastery, hearing its meaning is hearing, the desire to know it thoroughly is questioning — hence "the determining discussion of knotty terms and explanatory terms in the texts, commentaries, and so on": a knotty term (gaṇṭhipada) is one whose meaning is hard to know; an explanatory term (atthapada), one whose purport is hard to know. The "going and coming back" is carrying the meditation subject from the dwelling to the alms-resort village and back; "up to the vicinity of conformity and change-of-lineage"
refers to the knowledge of equanimity about formations, which occurs in their vicinity.

> ***Vism XIV 29–30.*** *Others have said: "Prior effort, and great learning, knowledge of dialects, of scriptures, and questioning; and then achievement, and waiting on a teacher, and success in friends — these are the conditions productive of the discriminations." Herein, "great learning" is skill in some field of science or craft; "dialects," skill in the hundred-and-one tongues, especially the Magadhan; "scriptures," mastery of the Buddha's word, even if only of the Chapter of Similes;*[6] *"questioning," questioning to define the meaning of even a single stanza; "achievement," stream-entry or arahantship; "waiting on a teacher," living with very learned, intelligent teachers; "success in friends," the gaining of such friends.*
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> ***Vism XIV 31.*** *Herein, Buddhas and Paccekabuddhas reach the discriminations through prior effort and through achievement; disciples, through all of these. There is no special meditation subject for attaining the discriminations; but in trainers their attainment comes about following upon the liberation of the trainer's fruition, and in non-trainers following upon the liberation of the non-trainer's fruition — for the discriminations succeed in the noble ones through the noble fruition, as the ten powers do in the Perfect Ones. So these are the four discriminations referred to above.*

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4. Gatapaccāgatika: the going-and-coming-back practice, carrying the meditation subject to the alms-round and back. "Vicinity of conformity and change-of-lineage" = the knowledge of equanimity about formations (saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa).

5. Visada-bhāva: arahantship confers not the discriminations but their full clarity.

6. "Chapter of Similes" (opamma-vagga) is, by some, the Yamaka-vagga of the Dhammapada (Dhp 1–20), by others the Opamma-vagga of the Majjhima. The verse and list are the Visuddhimagga's.

ṭīkā: This closes the answer to "how many kinds of understanding are there." With it ends the explanation of the planes, roots, and body of understanding (paññābhūmi-mūla-sarīra-vavatthāna).

Transition: how understanding is developed

> ***Vism XIV 32.*** *How is it developed? The things classed as aggregates, bases, elements, faculties, truths, dependent origination, and the like are the soil of this understanding; the two purifications — of virtue and of consciousness — are its roots; and the five purifications — of view, of overcoming doubt, of knowledge-and-vision of what is and is not the path, of knowledge-and-vision of the way, and of knowledge-and-vision — are its trunk. One perfecting these should first, having perfected the two purifications that are the roots, fortify his knowledge by learning and questioning about the things that are the soil; then he can develop the five purifications that are the trunk.*

[This sentence is the hinge of the whole chapter: the "soil" it names (aggregates, bases, elements, and the rest) is exactly what the remainder of chapter XIV sets out, beginning with the five aggregates. The ṭīkā's comment on it (CST §430, on why three of these — aggregates, bases, elements — are singled out, for the three kinds of beings confused about mind, about materiality, or about both) opens the next section, the materiality aggregate.]

Part IV

Into the aggregates: the "soil" of understanding, and the Materiality Aggregate begins

Vism XIV 32–36

Why aggregates, bases, and elements? — the "soil" (32)

> ***Vism XIV 32.*** *Now, the things classed as aggregates, bases, elements, faculties, truths, dependent origination, etc., are the soil of this understanding, and the [first] two purifications, namely, purification of virtue and purification of consciousness, are its roots, while the five purifications … are the trunk.*

ṭīkā: Of this understanding means: of insight-understanding. They are its soil because they are the ground on which it occurs, by way of its taking up the work of discernment and so on; and by "and the like" should be understood the inclusion of nutriment and the rest.

ṭīkā: But why are so many things taken as its soil — would not the purpose be served by aggregates alone, or by any one of them? It would not; the triad of aggregates, bases, and elements has to be taken up for the helping of three kinds of beings, for otherwise the help given would not be available to all alike. For beings are of three kinds: those confused about mind (the immaterial), those confused about materiality, and those confused about both. For the sake of those confused about the immaterial, the aggregates are taken up — for there the immaterial states are analysed in a fourfold way [as feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness]. For those confused about materiality, the bases are taken up — for there the material states are analysed in something like an elevenfold way. For those confused about both, the elements are taken up — for there both are analysed. Likewise, by difference of faculty, beings are of three kinds — of keen, of medium, and of dull faculties; and again of three kinds by inclination — those of brief, of medium, and of detailed inclination; and for their sake too, respectively, the aggregates and the rest are taken up. This is how it is to be fitted together.

ṭīkā: The faculties (indriya) are taken up because, although these states exercise a kind of lordship, a dominance, over the states conascent with them, as masters do — yet this is established by the very nature of the states themselves; there is no one here who wields mastery — this in order to make easy the grasping of the characteristic of not-self: "these are empty, not subject to anyone's will." And since this fourfold [scheme] is seen to be helpful only by way of the cause of occurrence, of cessation, and of both, the pair of truths [and dependent origination] is taken up. By "and the like" this method should be carried over to the remaining states taken up [as the soil].

ṭīkā: They are its roots (mūla) in the sense of being its foundation; for when there is purification of virtue and purification of consciousness, this understanding is rooted, and not otherwise. They are its body because it is to be nourished and brought to growth: as this understanding proceeds in its continuity, the five purifications beginning with purification of view — standing as its feet, hands, and head — are to be understood as its "body," by the method of indicating the whole through its parts.[1] Here ends the explanation of the planes, roots, and body of understanding.

B. The Five Aggregates (33)

> ***Vism XIV 33.*** *When it was said above "the things classed as aggregates, bases, elements, faculties, truths, dependent origination, etc., are the soil," the aggregates here are the five aggregates, that is to say, the materiality aggregate, the feeling aggregate, the perception aggregate, the formations aggregate, and the consciousness aggregate.*

ṭīkā: In the five aggregates, "five" is a delimitation by number: by it he shows that there are neither fewer of them than this nor more. "Aggregates" points out the dhammas so delimited. And since the word khandha here has the sense of a mass (rāsi), as in such phrases as "a great mass of water," all materiality — divided though it is into past, future, and present, and so on — is gathered together in the mind as a single mass; and the compound is to be understood as appositional: the aggregate that is simply materiality is the "materiality aggregate." But if the word khandha were taken in the sense of a portion, as in "we shall pay off the debt in three portions," would it not follow that nibbāna too is a further aggregate? It does not follow, for nibbāna has no division into past and so on; being one and permanent, it has no such division. On the first meaning the sense is "the mass of materiality"; on the second it would be "the materiality portion." The same method applies to "the feeling aggregate" and the rest.

ṭīkā: But why are the aggregates said to be exactly five, and in this order? It should be understood that it is to show the arrangement of the dish, the food, the curry, the cook, and the eater, and because they are taught in order of grossness and of defilement; and feeling and perception — after considering that they are roots of dispute, causes of the round, and causes of kamma — were drawn out of the formations aggregate and taught as aggregates in their own right.[2]

The Materiality Aggregate (Rūpakkhandha)

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1. The five higher purifications are insight's body (sarīra), named through the part-for-whole figure (feet, hands, head).

2. The dish-food-curry-cook-eater simile is developed by the Visuddhimagga at the chapter's close.

[Dhammapāla's rubric: Rūpakkhandhakathāvaṇṇanā, "Explanation of the Discussion of the Materiality Aggregate."]

> ***Vism XIV 34.*** *Herein, all kinds of states whatsoever that have the characteristic of "being molested" (ruppana) by cold, etc., taken all together should be understood as the materiality aggregate. It is of one kind with the characteristic of being molested; and also of two kinds when classed as (a) primary entity (bhūta) and (b) derived [by clinging] (upādāya).*

ṭīkā: Herein means: among the five aggregates. Whatever is an all-inclusive expression. With the characteristic of being molested serves to restrain over-extension: for when over-extension has set in through the indefinite sense of the word "what(ever)," taken together with the relative word that accompanies it, the word "molested" turns that back; and so materiality is laid hold of without remainder. By cold and so forth means: by cold, heat, hunger, thirst, and the like; the instrumental case here has the sense of cause. That whose characteristic is molestation "has the characteristic of being molested"; and a "kind of dhamma" is simply a dhamma.

ṭīkā: Molestation (ruppana) here is the arising of dissimilarity when opposing conditions such as cold come together. — But is not arising-in-dissimilarity found for immaterial dhammas too, when they meet opposing conditions? — True, it is found; but not so evidently. It is the more evident molestation that is intended, since cold and the rest are what is mentioned. — If so, how does "materiality" apply in the Brahmā world? — There too it holds, because matter there does not outstrip that nature; or it holds by way of conditions that assist rather than oppose. Others say that molestation is the being-a-cause, when opposing conditions meet, for the arising of dissimilarity in a thing's own continuity even as that continuity is breaking up; on this view the derivation is "it gives form" (rūpayati), it brings about alteration — hence rūpa — whereas on the former view it is "it is molested" (ruppati). Some hold that ruppana is fixed by usage for alteration through impact (saṅghaṭṭana), and on this view there is no occasion for "materiality" to stray onto immaterial dhammas, since with them there is no impact. Others again say molestation is simply resistance.

ṭīkā: All of it, taken together as one: he says this with the heap-sense of khandha held in his heart.

ṭīkā: When classified into the great elements and what is derived: here a great element is called "become" (bhūta) because derived materiality comes to be (bhavati) upon it, having its occurrence dependent upon it. And the derived is called "holding to" (upādāya) because it only holds to the great elements as its support, while it is not itself held to, whether by them or by others.

> ***Vism XIV 35.*** *Herein, (a) primary materiality is of four kinds as the earth element, water element, fire element, and air element. Their characteristic, function, and manifestation have been given under the definition of the four elements (XI.87, 93); but as to the proximate cause, each has the other three as its proximate cause.*

ṭīkā: Granted that in the Definition of the Four Elements the great elements have already been elucidated as to word-meaning and so on; still, since what was given there was the elucidation of the characteristic and so forth of dhammas each having its own distinct nature, he says, "their characteristic, function, and manifestation have been stated in the Definition of the Four Elements." And since the proximate cause was not stated there, he says, "but as to proximate cause…"; and that it was not stated there should be understood as being because the point is elucidated there in another manner [namely, under the contemplation of the elements "as condition"]. All of them means: all four elements. The earth element occurs only as held together by water, maintained by fire, and distended by air — not otherwise; thus the other three are its proximate cause, and the same holds for each of the others. Therefore he says, "each has the remaining three as its proximate cause."

> ***Vism XIV 36.*** *(b) Derived materiality is of twenty-four kinds as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, visible datum (rūpāyatana), sound, odour, flavour; femininity faculty, masculinity faculty, life faculty, heart-basis (hadayavatthu); bodily intimation, verbal intimation; space element; lightness of matter, malleability of matter, wieldiness of matter, growth of matter, continuity of matter, ageing of matter, impermanence of matter, and physical nutriment.*

ṭīkā: Of twenty-four kinds: the delimitation by number serves to exclude "the materiality of strength" and the rest. What needs saying about that will become clear later on.

ṭīkā: "It relishes"[3] (cakkhati), thus it is an eye (cakkhu): presided over by consciousness, it is as though savouring the visible object. For cakkhati has the sense of relishing, as in "he relishes honey," "he relishes curry." And this was said: "The eye, Māgaṇḍiya, delights in visible objects, takes delight in them, rejoices in them" (M i 503); in the commentary too, "its function is picking up [an object] among visible objects." Although the ear and the rest stand in just such a relation to their own objects, the word cakkhu applies by established usage to seeing alone, as words like "mud-born" (paṅkaja), wider in derivation, apply only to lotuses. Or "it declares" (cakkhati): presided over by consciousness, it is as though pointing out the even and uneven, speaking distinctly.

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3. Bala-rūpa and the rest — additional rūpas (of strength, procreation, birth, sickness, torpor) some teachers proposed and the Visuddhimagga rejects below at 71 ("will become clear later on").

ṭīkā: One hears by it, or itself hears: thus the ear. One smells by it, or itself smells: thus the nose. Because swallowing has the apprehending of flavour as its root, the flavour of food, as the token of life, is "life"; and because the tongue inclines toward that, "it invokes life" — thus, by word-derivation, the tongue (jivhā).[4] The body (kāya) is "the origin (āya) of vile (kucchita) states subject to cankers," origin being their place of arising; for among the nose, tongue, and body — which do not come to serve as causes of the unsurpassable, which are produced by kamma sourced in sensual lust, and which are special conditions for it — the body above all is a condition for what is subject to cankers: through it, savouring the pleasure of tangibles, beings resort even to sexual intercourse.[5] Or: the four mental aggregates based on the body-faculty are pre-eminently subject to cankers, being causes of the strong canker of sense-desire and the rest; so the body is called kāya as "the origin of vile states subject to cankers."

ṭīkā: Undergoing alteration of colour, it makes visible (rūpayati) the state that has reached the heart: thus visible object (rūpa) — making the inner state plain as though it were a form. Or, since roots bear many meanings, rūpa may be taken simply in the sense of making plain. It is emitted (sappati), thus sound: uttered, or sent forth by its own conditions to the state of being heard. "It smells" (gandhayati), thus odour: it betrays its own basis, making plain "this is fragrant, this foul," or, like a tale-bearer, informs against the hidden flowers and fruits, "it is here!" Beings taste (rasanti) it, thus flavour.

ṭīkā: The faculty belonging only to a woman is the femininity faculty; likewise the masculinity faculty. The conascent dhammas live by it, thus it is life; and that life is a faculty: the life faculty. It is both heart and base — or the base of the "heart," mind-consciousness — thus the heart-base. The remaining derived rūpas — the two intimations, the space element, the qualities and characteristics of matter, and nutriment, with the rationale of their order — complete 36 and are taken up in the next part.[6]

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4. **Nina.** A word-association between jīvita, life, and jivhā, tongue: we must eat in order to live.

5. **Nina.** This rūpa exists only in a living body; it is produced by kamma.

6. **Nina.** The heart-base is not in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī's enumeration of rūpas, but is referred to in the Paṭṭhāna as "that materiality," the base for cittas other than the five sense-cognitions.

Part V

The derived rūpas completed, and the eye in full

Vism XIV 36 [cont.], 37, 47–48

The derived rūpas completed (36, continued)

ṭīkā: Because it is of the nature of an agitation of the body, it is "body," and because it makes an intention known, it is "intimation": thus bodily intimation (kāyaviññatti). Because it is of the nature of an agitation of the voice and makes an intention known, it is both speech and intimation: thus verbal intimation (vacīviññatti). Because it has no bodily form "it does not plough" (na kassati) — it can be neither ploughed nor cut — or "it does not shine forth" (na kāsati), does not disport itself: thus it is a-kāsa; and ākāsa is simply akāsa. And that same thing, in the sense of being without a being and without a soul, is the space element (ākāsadhātu).

ṭīkā: Of materiality means: of produced (nipphanna) materiality.[1] The state of being light is lightness (lahutā); since it is itself unproduced, it is specified as "of materiality," and this method applies to the rest. But here is the distinction: what is serviceable in work is "workable," and the state of that is wieldiness (kammaññatā). Accumulation (caya) at first, and accumulation upon that, is the occurrence called growth (upacaya). Occurrence (tati) linked as what precedes and what follows is continuity (santati). The state of the impermanent, of what is bound to perish, is impermanence (aniccatā). It is made into morsels (kabala), thus it is "morsel-made"; it nourishes (āharati), thus it is nutriment (āhāra). This, in the first place, is how derived materiality is to be understood by way of word-meaning.[2]

ṭīkā: As to the order: the materialities of the great elements are set out first because, as the support of all material dhammas, they are their root. Among the rest, the five beginning with the eye are set out first because, being internal, they are the root of the designation "an individual being." The four beginning with visible object are set out next, to show "these are the objects of those that take objects"; tangible object, however, is not included here, because it is not derived materiality and because it is already covered by the mention of the great elements. Immediately after, the pair of the femininity and masculinity faculties is set out, to show that it is owing to these that this individual being is reckoned "a woman" or "a man." Then the life faculty, to

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1. The space element here is the delimiting space between groups of matter (pariccheda-rūpa), not infinite space; the etymologies (cannot be ploughed / does not shine) are the ṭīkā's play on ākāsa.

2. Upacaya, the first building-up of materiality in a continuity; santati, its ongoing maintenance — treated fully under the characteristics of matter (66–69).

show that the usage "by this it lives" obtains. Then the heart-base, to show that, when consciousness occurs in dependence on it, there is for that being the accomplishing of its own welfare and the rest. Then the pair of intimations, to show that all its bodily and verbal undertakings take place by these. Then the space element, to show that by it the material body is delimited, and that it affords the passage. Then lightness and the rest, to show that by these there is its easy occurrence, and its arising and so on. And physical nutriment is set out at the end, to show that this whole continuum of materiality of fourfold continuity is upheld by it.

The eye (37)

> ***Vism XIV 37.*** *Herein, the eye's characteristic is sensitivity of primary elements that is ready for the impact of visible data; or its characteristic is sensitivity of primary elements originated by kamma sourcing from desire to see. Its function is to pick up [an object] among visible data. It is manifested as the footing of eye-consciousness. Its proximate cause is primary elements born of kamma sourcing from desire to see.*

ṭīkā: Now, in order to set out by characteristic and so on the derived materialities already listed, he begins "Herein, the characteristic is the sensitivity of the great elements ready for the impact of visible object," and so on. Herein means: among these derived materialities. The impact upon visible object, or of visible object, is "visible-object-impact"; what is fit for that is "ready for the impact of visible object"; the sensitivity of the four great elements that is of such a nature — whether or not impact by visible object is actually occurring — is the "sensitivity of the great elements ready for the impact of visible object": of such a characteristic is the eye.

ṭīkā: Since it is only when accompanied by the other conditions that eye-sensitivity occurs by way of the striking of visible object — never on its own — the measure is that very nature [of readiness], not the impact itself; and to show this, "readiness for the impact of visible object" is said, just as the wholesome and unwholesome are called "fit to ripen." Impact, moreover, is the mutual confronting of object and possessor-of-object, the standing in a fit place, taken as being "like a striking." It occurs in the visible object on the part of the eye, or in the eye on the part of the visible object; hence it was said [in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī], "that eye, invisible and reacting, by which one has impinged… upon visible object, visible and reacting," and "on which eye, invisible and reacting, visible object, visible and reacting, has impinged or impinges," and so forth (Dhs. 597).

ṭīkā: The craving — the sense-craving and the visible-object-craving that are the cause of the kamma generating an individual existence with its complete or incomplete bases — is fit to be spoken of as "the desire to see" and the like, because it is the longing for becoming furnished with those bases; this is

the second method, stated throughout.[3] The desire to see (daṭṭhukāmatā) means the wish to see, craving for visible object. Its function is the picking up [of an object] among visible objects, by a person or by consciousness.[4] It is manifested as the footing of eye-consciousness, by way of its being a support-condition. Its proximate cause is the great elements born of kamma sourced in the desire to see: the sensitivity is of those elements, and they have been made its near cause.[5]

Nina: Pasāda, literally brightness or clearness, is a derived rūpa with its own distinct nature (sabhāva), also called pasāda-rūpa — eyesense, earsense, and so on. It is a sensitive material phenomenon. The Atthasālinī explains that in the phrase "that eye which is the sensitivity derived from the four great elements," the possessive case is used in the sense of purpose: the sensitivity arises grasping the four great elements — so "of the four great elements" means depending on them, not made of them.[67]

The eye described (47–48)

Vism XIV 47. *There is what is called the "eye" in the world. That looks like a blue lotus petal and is surrounded by black eyelashes and varied with dark and light circles. The eye [sensitivity as meant] here is to be found in the place in the middle of the black circle surrounded by the white circle in that [feature of the] eye with its accessories where there appears the image of the bodies of those who stand in front of it. It pervades the eye's seven layers like oil sprinkled on seven layers of cotton. It is assisted by the four primary elements whose [respective] functions are upholding, cohering, maturing, and moving, as a warrior prince is by four nurses whose functions are holding, bathing, dressing, and fanning. It is consolidated by temperature, consciousness, and nutriment; it is maintained by life; it is furnished with colour, odour, flavour, etc.; it is the size of a mere louse's head; and it duly serves both as physical basis and as door for eye-consciousness, and the rest [of the consciousness of the cognitive series].*

ṭīkā: He begins "and here, the eye," in order to explain the eye now by its location and so on, having before explained it by characteristic and so on. The connection runs: the eye stands accomplishing [its functions of basis and door]. By the word "and" an additional meaning is shown — its diversity.

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3. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī describes eye and visible object as mutually "reacting" (sappaṭigha).

4. **Nina.** Strictly the eyesense does not select or pick up an object; because of conditions, citta does, or conventionally a person does. The verb is figurative.

5. Ādhāra / nissaya, "footing" / "support"; āsanna-kāraṇa, "near cause."

6. **Nina.** The sense-bases and the heart-base are dependence-condition (nissaya-paccaya) for the cittas that arise at them.

7. **Nina.** Atthasālinī 307 (Expositor I, p. 404): bhūta stands for a genitive whose ending is dropped in the compound; "of the four primaries" means depending on, not made of.

Here means: among these five derived materialities already explained. By "the place where the images of the bodies arise," he sets aside the rest of the black circle [as not being the seat of sensitivity]. Like an oil it pervades the seven layers of the eye, and, served by the four great elements on which it depends, maintained and surrounded by the life, colour, and the rest that depend on those same elements, and supported by temperature, consciousness, and nutriment — the originators of materiality in its three continuities — it stands.[8] By the phrase "pervading the seven layers," he teaches that the eye is bound up with many groups of materiality. In the measure of a mere louse's head is said because its occurrence is at a spot only that large.

ṭīkā: Its being the basis of eye-consciousness is by way of dependence; its being a door — for the adverting, receiving, and the rest, down to the registration that dwell on the object — is by way of being the place where they meet. So this eye, by its differing locations, and at each taking part in many groups of materiality, stands of itself; yet though manifold, it is spoken of as one in the general statement, since it is one in adverting, and performs but one function at one moment. How, being many, does it perform a single function? What there has become clear and "ready for the impact of visible object" — that becomes the support of consciousness; this should be grasped, even as the variety of the tangible is the object for body-consciousness.

> ***Vism XIV 48.*** *And this is said by the General of the Dhamma: "The sensitivity with which he sees a visible object / Is small and it is subtle, too, no bigger than a louse's head."*

ṭīkā: He sees (manupassati): the prefix ma- is a euphonic insertion; or manu means "man."

> **Nina:** The General of the Dhamma is Sāriputta. All this is not medical science but a simile — note the word iva, "like," after "oil." The Atthasālinī observes that although the world perceives the eye as white, of such-and-such size and extent, people do not know the real sentient eye but only its physical basis; hence the fleshly eye is twofold, as the compound organ and as the sentient organ.[9] Eye-sensitivity is a hidden reality — you cannot touch it, yet it is there, arising and falling away; you know it is there, for otherwise you could not see. The seven layers are not themselves the eyesense, but eyesense cannot arise in isolation from them.[10] And at that very small point a great deal is happening: when it is the right time for kamma to produce seeing, there is

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8. "These five derived materialities" = the eyedecad's derived rūpas other than eyesense: the four great elements are not derived, and of the derived group, colour, odour, flavour, nutritive essence, and life-faculty surround the eyesense in the kalāpa.

9. **Nina.** The Atthasālinī's twofold "fleshly eye" (compound organ vs. sentient organ); eyesense as a real but untouchable rūpa; the activity at the louse's-head point when kamma produces seeing.

eyesense ready to receive visible object, so that seeing can occur.

10. **Nina.** Just like an oily liquid, eyesense pervades the seven layers of the eye (sneham iva… byāpetvā). The seven layers indicate that what we call “eye” is so many groups of rūpa arising and falling away; eyesense is the one rūpa in a group that is sensitive, and kamma keeps producing it.

Part VI

The other senses, the elemental-excess polemic, the kamma-question, and the "resorts"

Vism XIV 38–46, 49–53

The other four sensitivities (38–41)

> ***Vism XIV 38–41.*** *The ear's characteristic is sensitivity of primary elements that is ready for the impact of sounds; or its characteristic is sensitivity of primary elements originated by kamma sourcing from desire to hear. Its function is to pick up [an object] among sounds. It is manifested as the footing of ear-consciousness. Its proximate cause is primary elements born of kamma sourcing from desire to hear. The nose, tongue, and body are to be construed in like manner — ready, respectively, for the impact of odours, flavours, and tangible data, and originated by kamma sourcing from the desire to smell, to taste, and to touch.*

ṭīkā: The meaning of the ear and the rest, in respect of characteristic and so on, should be understood by the very method stated for the eye.[1]

One kamma or many? (the ṭīkā's question)

ṭīkā: Here it may be asked: do the faculties of the eye and the rest arise from a kamma that is one, or from kammas that are different? The ancients say: in both ways. Now, when they arise from different kammas, there is nothing special to be said about the difference among eye and the rest, for the cause itself is different. But when they arise from a kamma that is one, how does their difference come about? Precisely through a difference in the cause. For the craving that is the longing for this or that becoming — being itself of varied form through its hankering after the sense-bases comprised in that becoming — arranges, by way of decisive support, the varied differentiation in the kamma that generates such a becoming. And once that kamma has taken on the differentiation induced by [that craving], it produces, through the fitness consisting in a corresponding capacity, a manifold fruit of distinct individual natures — as though it had itself taken on a manifold form. And here the "capacity" is not to be understood as something other than the state of being capable: it is merely the fitness, set up by the particular cause, for bringing about a distinguished fruit.

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1. Sotādīnaṃ lakkhaṇādīsu vuttanayeneva attho veditabbo — "the sense of the ear and the rest, in respect of characteristic and so on, is to be understood by the method already stated." The Visuddhimagga's 38–41 simply repeat the eye-formula with the object changed.

ṭīkā: That a single kamma should in this differentiating way be the cause of the manifold faculties will be established further on, both by reasoning and by the texts.[2] Besides, it is said how a single wholesome consciousness is the cause of the generating of sixteen kinds of resultant consciousness, and so on; and in the world too it is plainly seen that a single rice-seed is the cause of the generating of fruit that is ripe or unripe, husked or unhusked.[3] But what is the use of this logical thinking? For the eye and the rest are the fruit of kamma; and kamma-result is, in every respect, the province of a Buddha's knowledge alone.

> **Nina:** Eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body are all results of kamma, but they are different sense-organs, each able to receive only its own kind of object. The variety of the faculties answers to the variety in the craving that conditioned the kamma. We cannot trace out which kamma produced which faculty; the precise working of kamma and its result is one of the things the Buddha called unconjecturable, the province of a Buddha's knowledge alone.

Against elemental excess in the sense-organs (42–46)

> ***Vism XIV 42.*** *Some, however, say that the eye is sensitivity of primary elements that have fire in excess, and that the ear, nose, and tongue are sensitivity of primary elements that have [respectively] air, earth, and water in excess, and that the body is that of all [four equally]. Others say that the eye is sensitivity of those that have fire in excess, and that the ear, nose, tongue, and body are [sensitivity] of those that have [respectively] aperture, air, water, and earth in excess. They should be asked to quote a sutta. They will certainly not find one.*

ṭīkā: "Some" are certain among the Mahāsaṅghikas; for among them Vasudhamma speaks thus: "In the eye fire is in excess; in the ear, air; in the nose, earth; in the tongue, water; in the body all are equal."[4] To say that fire and the rest are "in excess" in the eye and the rest is to say that they are in excess among the great elements that are their support; and so, expressing this, [Vasudhamma] says "the sensitivity of elements having fire in excess is the eye," and so on. As for "the body is that of all" — what is the distinction here? Are not the sensitivities of elements that have fire and the rest in excess all [present in the body too]? True; but this word "all" conveys the meaning "of those that are equal," for it is said by way of excluding the persisting partial excess. Just as when one element is severally in excess, so even when

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2. Samatthatā means the fitness for a distinguished fruit, not some extra factor.

3. The two supporting analogies (one wholesome citta → sixteen resultant cittas; one rice-seed → ripe/unripe, husked/unhusked grain), and the closing point — that the workings of kamma-result are acinteyya, the exclusive province of a Buddha's knowledge.

4. The Visuddhimagga's anonymous "some" the ṭīkā identifies as certain Mahāsaṅghikas, naming Vasudhamma and quoting his formula.

two or three are in excess, by the kind of excess described, the body-sensitivity does not arise; nor does it arise where there is deficiency. Therefore body-sensitivity arises by the equal state of all four elements; and so the word "all" here should be understood as indicating equality.

ṭīkā: By "fire and the rest" is meant: in the former theory, fire reckoned as a lamp by its luminous form, air by sound, earth by odour, and water — reckoned as saliva — by flavour; in the latter theory, correspondingly, [the sense-organs are aided] by the qualities of this or that element, in that the apprehension of visible object and the rest is assisted by them.[5] For it is only the eye and the rest accompanied by their co-operating causes — light and so on — that have the ability to light up visible object and the rest; and aperture's being a decisive support for ear-consciousness [is on the same footing].

> ***Vism XIV 44.*** *Then they may say: "Just as you assume, from excess of some primary element in such and such material things, the [respective] functions of upholding (sandhāraṇa), etc., for earth, etc., so from finding visibility, etc., [respectively] in a state of excess in material things that have fire in excess, one may assume that visible data, etc., are [respectively] qualities of these." They should be told: "We might assume it if there were more odour in cotton, which has earth in excess, than in fermented liquor, which has water in excess, and if the colour of cold water were weaker than the colour of hot water, which has heat in excess."*

ṭīkā: The reply turns their own principle against them.[6] If qualities tracked elemental excess, then cotton — earthy, hence (on their view) odour-rich — should out-smell fermented liquor, which is watery; yet liquor is the more fragrant. And hot water, having fire in excess, should be more vivid in colour than cold; yet there is no such difference of colour. So visibility, odour, and the rest are not the "qualities" of a predominating element; the whole scheme of elemental excess in the sense-organs collapses, having neither sutta-authority nor evident fact to support it.

> **Nina:** The four great elements are inseparable; they always arise together in any group of materiality and cannot exist apart from one another. The ṭīkā says that "excess" would have to mean excess in capability, not in quantity — otherwise their inseparability would be contradicted.[7] So it is mistaken to picture the eye as "made of fire," the ear "of air," and so on. Each sensitivity is the sensitivity of all four elements together; what differs is the kind of

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5. The pairing of each element with the quality by which it assists its sense (fire/light → eye, air/sound → ear, etc.), under both the first and second theories.

6. The cotton-and-liquor and the hot-vs-cold-water arguments are the Visuddhimagga's reductio; the ṭīkā adds the identification of the opposing theories, including, by some, the Vaiśeṣika view of Kaṇāda that the organs are literally made of fire, space, earth, water, air.

object it is fit to receive, and that difference comes from kamma conditioned by craving, not from one element outweighing the others.

The sense-organs described (49–53)

> ***Vism XIV 49.*** *The ear [sensitivity] is to be found inside the [feature of the] ear-hole with its accessories in the place that is shaped like a finger-stall and surrounded by fine brown hairs. It is assisted by the elements in the way aforesaid. It is consolidated by temperature, consciousness, and nutriment; it is maintained by life; it is equipped with colour, etc.; and it duly serves both as physical basis and as door for ear-consciousness, and the rest.*
>
> ***Vism XIV 50.*** *The nose [sensitivity] is to be found inside the [feature of the] nose-hole with its accessories in the place shaped like a goat's hoof. 51. The tongue [sensitivity] is to be found in the middle of the [feature of the] tongue with its accessories in the place shaped like a lotus petal tip. 52. The body [sensitivity] is to be found everywhere, like a liquid that soaks a layer of cotton, in this physical body where there is matter that is clung to. Each has assistance, consolidation, and maintenance in the way aforesaid; and each duly serves both as physical basis and as door for its own consciousness, and the rest.*

[These descriptions the ṭīkā passes over lightly, the Visuddhimagga's words being plain; it only confirms the locations and the comparison of body-sensitivity to a soaking liquid.]

Nina: These are similes, not anatomy. The Visuddhimagga gives the seat of each sensitivity — the finger-stall of the ear, the goat's-hoof of the nostril, the lotus-petal-tip of the tongue — and for the body, the soaking-liquid image conveys that body-sensitivity is spread throughout wherever there is living matter ("matter that is clung to," upādiṇṇa-rūpa, that is, kamma-born matter).[8] The images — louse's head, goat's hoof — are not chosen for beauty; the Atthasālinī likens the tongue's seat to the upper part of a torn lotus leaf. Their purpose is to locate a hidden reality, not to please.[9]

> ***Vism XIV 53.*** *Like snakes, crocodiles, birds, dogs, and jackals that gravitate to their own respective resorts, that is to say, termite-mounds, water, space, villages, and charnel grounds, so the eye, etc., should be regarded as gravitating to their own respective resorts, that is to say, visible data, and so on.*

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7. **Nina.** Drawing on the ṭīkā's remark that the four primaries are inseparable and do not exist apart, so that "excess" can only mean excess in capability, not in quantity — "otherwise their inseparability would be illogical."

8. Upādiṇṇa-rūpa, "matter that is clung to" = kamma-born matter (kammaja-rūpa), cognate with upādāna.

9. **Nina.** The Atthasālinī's "torn lotus leaf" for the tongue's seat; the images locate a hidden reality rather than flatter it.

ṭīkā: He shows that the eye and the rest are to be seen as inclining to their own objects, and so says "it should be seen as the ant-hill, and so on." The eye, by its inclination to the uneven, is like a snake that delights in the hollow of an ant-hill; and this "inclination to the uneven" is spoken of as though the eye had a desire for the uneven — or it should be seen by way of the inclination of the person who has eyes. The same method applies to the rest: the ear inclines to a cleft, like a crocodile to its water-cave; the nose to open space, like a bird to the sky; the tongue to a "village," like a dog; the body to "what is clung to," like a jackal to the charnel ground. And all the obsession (papañca) described should be understood, as fitting, of the ear and the rest as well.

Nina: These similes teach the conditions necessary for each sense to function. The nose "desires space" and takes odour dependent on the air element — cattle lift their muzzles into the wind, and no smell is had when no breath is drawn. The tongue "desires a village" and takes flavour dependent on the water element — the bhikkhu entering the village for alms cannot taste dry food unwetted by saliva. The body desires "matter clung to" and takes tangible object dependent on the earth (solidity) element. Each simile points to the supporting condition — wind, saliva, solidity — without which that sense-cognition could not occur.[10]

10. **Nina.** Each simile points to the element that supports that sense's functioning — air for smell, water/saliva for taste, earth/solidity for touch.

Part VII

The objective fields, the sex faculties, and the life faculty

Vism XIV 54–59

The objective fields (54–57)

> ***Vism XIV 54.*** *As regards visible data, etc., which come next, a visible datum has the characteristic of impinging on the eye. Its function is to be the objective field of eye-consciousness. It is manifested as the resort of that too. Its proximate cause is the four great primaries.*

ṭīkā: The impinging on the eye, or of the eye, is "eye-impingement," and that is its characteristic — so it "has the characteristic of impinging on the eye"; and the impinging here is just that "impact" already spoken of [in the definition of the eye]. Its being the objective field is its being an object-condition [for eye-consciousness]. Granted that "objective field" (gocara) and "object" (visaya) come to the same, still there is this distinction in visible object as an object: it is not found elsewhere [than as the eye's object], and it is the field of abundant relish for eye-consciousness. What further is to be said of its being an object will become clear later on.

> **Nina:** Visible object is object-condition (ārammaṇa-paccaya) for seeing and for the other cittas of the eye-door process — and object-condition is indispensable: every citta must experience an object. Visible object is, in particular, a condition for abundant enjoyment.[1] As was said before, "it relishes, thus it is an eye" — a reminder of how greatly we are attached to what is seen, and how we go on thinking with attachment on account of it, without end.

> ***Vism XIV 55.*** *Sound has the characteristic of impinging on the ear. Its function is to be the object of ear-consciousness. It is manifested as the resort of that too. It is of various kinds as "drum sound, tabour sound" (Dhs 621) and so on. 56. Odour has the characteristic of impinging on the nose. Its function is to be the object of nose-consciousness. It is manifested as the resort of that too. It is of various kinds as "root odour, heartwood odour" (Dhs 625) and so on. 57. Flavour has the characteristic of impinging on the tongue. Its function is to be the object of tongue-consciousness. It is manifested as the resort of that too. It is of various kinds as "root flavour, trunk flavour" (Dhs 629) and so on.*

ṭīkā: These three are to be understood on the model of visible object, the characteristic, function, and manifestation differing only in their respective

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1. Abhighāta, "impact": the same mutual confronting of organ and object defined under the eye (37).

sense and object.[2] The ṭīkā adds nothing further here, noting only that where a later derived materiality does differ — bodily intimation, to begin with, which displays intention — the difference will be drawn out in its place.[3]

The femininity and masculinity faculties (58)

> ***Vism XIV 58.*** *The femininity faculty has the female sex as its characteristic. Its function is to show that "this is a female." It is manifested as the reason for the mark, sign, work, and ways of the female. The masculinity faculty is to be construed in the same way, with the male sex as its characteristic, showing that "this is a male," and manifested as the reason for the mark, sign, work, and ways of the male.*

ṭīkā: The state of being a woman — or that whereby the mind is disposed as "woman," and is so named — is femininity (itthibhāva); that is its characteristic, so it "has the characteristic of the female sex." And just because of it, the continuity that is accompanied by it is, as it were, declaring "this is a woman"; hence its function is said to be "to show '[this is] a woman.'"

ṭīkā: The rounded form, and the delicacy of hands and feet and so on, are a woman's mark (liṅga). The fullness and softness of the breasts, the beardless face, the binding-up of the hair, the manner of wearing the cloth — these, being conditions for the recognition "this is a woman," are a woman's sign (nimitta). Even in childhood, playing with little winnowing-baskets and pestles, with clay, with spinning-thread and the like, is a woman's occupation (kutta), her feminine doing. A bearing such as standing or going in a soft manner is a woman's deportment (ākappa). By another method: the female organ is the mark; the desire and disposition [of a woman] is the sign; the soft ways of standing, going, sitting, chewing, eating, and the like are the occupation; the female figure is the deportment. Now these — mark, sign, occupation, deportment — though each arises by its own condition, kamma and the rest, yet mostly arise taking on this or that feminine form only in a continuity that is accompanied by the femininity faculty; and so, the femininity faculty being their reason, it was said that it is "manifested as the reason for the mark, the sign, the occupation, and the deportment of a woman."[4] The masculinity faculty is to be understood by the same method

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2. Tangible object (phoṭṭhabba) is not treated separately here, having already been covered under three of the four great elements — earth (hardness), fire (heat), and air (pressure) — which are themselves tangible; only cohesion (water) is not. So the objective fields given their own definitions are the four: visible object, sound, odour, and flavour.

3. Sound, odour, and flavour follow visible object's pattern; bodily intimation and the like are treated differently below.

4. Liṅga (mark), nimitta (sign), kutta (occupation), ākappa (deportment) — glossed twice in the ṭīkā, by two methods; both are given.

throughout, with "man" for "woman."

ṭīkā: Both pervade the whole body as body-sensitivity does — yet, unlike a sensitivity with a determinate seat, it cannot be said of them either that they occupy just the places body-sensitivity occupies or that they occupy others; for they are diffused, but not as a base for any consciousness. And they are not confoundable: as visible object is distinct from sound and the rest, so femininity is distinct from masculinity — never mixed, and (as the Yamaka makes plain) never both fully present at one moment even in a hermaphrodite.[5]

Nina: The sex faculty conditions rūpas throughout the body, and is compared to body-sensitivity, which is likewise all over the body (except in such parts as hair-tips and nails) — but only by way of comparison; it does not function exactly as body-sensitivity does. The sex faculty is one of the rūpas produced by kamma from the very first moment of life: the sex-decad arises together with the rebirth-consciousness. Yet, although it is called a faculty (indriya) — a "leader" in its own field — it is not reckoned a faculty-condition in the Paṭṭhāna's list of twenty-four conditions. Nārada's Guide to Conditional Relations explains why: a faculty-condition must be a presence-condition, arising together with what it controls; but the distinctive sexual characteristics do not arise simultaneously with the sex materiality itself, and the sex materiality cannot control even the nine other rūpas of its own decad, let alone those of other groups.[6] It is a faculty because it has its own independent power to shape the bodily form as masculine or feminine — but it leads, as it were, from a distance.

The life faculty (59)

Vism XIV 59. *The life faculty has the characteristic of maintaining conascent kinds of matter. Its function is to make them occur. It is manifested in the establishing of their presence. Its proximate cause is primary elements that are to be sustained. And although it has the capacity consisting in the characteristic of maintaining, etc., yet it only maintains conascent kinds of matter at the moment of presence, as water does lotuses and so on. Though states (dhamma) arise due to their own conditions, it maintains them, as a wet-nurse does a prince. And it occurs itself only through its connection with the states that occur, like a pilot; it does not cause occurrence after dissolution, because of its own absence and that of what has to be made to occur. It does not prolong presence at*

5. **Nina.** The Yamaka (book X, the Pairs on the Faculties) establishes that femininity and masculinity are distinct faculties; even in a hermaphrodite only one is fully present at a given moment (cf. Dhs-a 323).

6. **Nina.** Drawing on Nārada, Guide to Conditional Relations, on why the sex materiality is a faculty but not a faculty-condition: faculty-condition requires simultaneity, which the sex characteristics lack, and the sex rūpa controls neither its own decad nor others.

> *the moment of dissolution because it is itself dissolving, like the flame of a lamp when the wick and the oil are getting used up. But it must not be regarded as destitute of power to maintain, make occur, and make present, because it does accomplish each of these functions at the moment stated.*

ṭīkā: It has the characteristic of maintaining conascent materiality — that is, the materiality born together with it. (He does not add "kamma-born," because the life faculty is exclusively kamma-born, and so by saying "conascent" the kamma-born status of what it maintains is already settled.) Though the kamma-born materiality it maintains lasts but a moment, the life faculty is, by being the cause of its occurring, its maintainer; for kamma alone cannot be the cause of the persisting of what is kamma-born, as nutriment is for nutriment-born materiality — and why not?[7] Because kamma is not present at that [moment of presence]; it acted in the past. Hence the need for a present maintainer, the life faculty.

ṭīkā: Its function is to make them occur — to support and sustain them. It is manifested in the establishing of their presence — in being the cause of their standing. Its proximate cause is the great elements that are to be sustained: the elements that it, maintaining them as though they were its own, must sustain and make occur. By "the capacity consisting in the characteristic of maintaining and so on," the words "and so on" gather in its function of making-occur as well. Only at the moment of presence means: only at the moment of presence of the materiality that is to be maintained; for if there is no lotus to be guarded, what would the water guard?

> **Nina:** Life faculty, jīvitindriya, is the rūpa that sustains the life of the other rūpas in its own group — it is itself kamma-produced and arises only in living, kamma-born matter, never in dead matter or in things outside the body. The four similes mark the limits of its power exactly: like water that keeps lotuses fresh, it maintains only while they are present (not after they perish); like a wet-nurse, it sustains what arose by its own conditions without itself producing it; like a pilot, it operates only in connexion with what is occurring; and like a lamp-flame dying as the wick and oil give out, it cannot hold a thing in being past the moment of its dissolution. The faculty does its work fully — but only within the single moment, never beyond it.

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7. "Kamma-born" is left unsaid of the life faculty because it is ekanta-kammaja, exclusively kamma-born.

Part VIII

The heart-base and the two intimations

Vism XIV 60–62

The heart-base (60)

> ***Vism XIV 60.*** *The heart-basis (hadayavatthu) has the characteristic of being the (material) support for the mind-element and for the mind-consciousness-element. Its function is to observe them. It is manifested as the carrying of them. It is to be found in dependence on the blood, of the kind described in the treatise on mindfulness of the body [VIII.111], inside the heart. It is assisted by the primaries with their functions of upholding, etc.; it is consolidated by temperature, consciousness, and nutriment; it is maintained by life; and it serves as physical basis for the mind-element and mind-consciousness-element, and for the states associated with them.*

ṭīkā: How is it to be known that the heart-base is the support for the mind-element and the mind-consciousness-element? From scripture and from reasoning.

ṭīkā: The scripture is this: "The materiality in dependence on which the mind-element and the mind-consciousness-element occur is, as a support-condition, a condition for the mind-element, the mind-consciousness-element, and the states associated with them" (Paṭṭhāna I.4). — If that is so, why is the heart-base not mentioned [by name] in the Materiality Section of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī (Dhs. 583 ff.)? — Its not being mentioned there is for another reason. — What reason? — A difference in the manner of teaching.[1] For whereas eye-consciousness and the rest depend absolutely on the eye and the rest, the mind-consciousness does not in the same way depend absolutely on the heart-base; and the teaching of the "material-basis dyad" proceeds by way of the support: "There is materiality that is the physical basis of eye-consciousness, there is materiality that is not the physical basis of eye-consciousness," and so on. Were the dyad stated by way of what has the heart-base absolutely as its support — "there is materiality that is the physical basis of mind-consciousness" — it would not hold without exception [since mind-consciousness also occurs in the immaterial sphere without any base]; so, to avoid inconsistency in the teaching, the heart-base is not separately listed there. Its omission is thus deliberate, not a denial of its existence.

ṭīkā: The reasoning is this. In the five-constituent becoming [the sense and fine-material spheres], these two elements have as their support produced

1. The difference is one of teaching-method (desanā-bheda), not a denial of the heart-base.

derived materiality. Now among the derived materialities, the visible-object base and the rest, and nutritive essence, are found to occur apart from what is bound up with the faculties [that is, in dead matter too]; so to make any of them the support [of mind] would be illogical. Nor can the faculties [eye-sensitivity and the rest] be the support: for these two mental elements are not, as eye-consciousness is, controlled by the dullness or keenness and so on of a physical basis — and accordingly the texts do not give the faculties as their condition. By elimination, then, the support is that one kamma-born derived materiality, found only in what is bound up with the faculties, which is the heart-base.

Nina: The remarkable thing here is the word for the second proof — not "logical reasoning" merely, but yutti: what is fitting, what can be confirmed, and confirmed even by direct experience.[2] Had the Buddha not taught it, we would not know there is a heart-base at all; and people may still doubt. Only the stream-enterer has eradicated doubt — through the development of satipaṭṭhāna he has directly realised many realities, and even where not all are realised, confidence in the Dhamma has become unshakable. The heart-base is a very subtle rūpa, experienced only through the mind-door; we cannot experience it now, but we can learn that it is the physical basis for many cittas, conditioned by kamma that keeps producing it throughout life. Each citta takes a new base — sense-base or heart-base — except the last javana-cittas of a life, which all depend on a single heart-base. The "blood inside the heart" of the old description is conventional language pointing to the rūpa-dhamma that really matters; we should not cling to "my heart" as beautiful or as self, but understand the temporary, conditioned reality the words stand for.[3]

Bodily intimation (61)

Vism XIV 61 (CST §441). *Bodily intimation is the mode (the alteration) of the air-element, originated by the consciousness that sets going the forward step and the rest, which is the cause of the stiffening, upholding, and moving of the conascent material body. Because it is the cause of the communicating of intention by bodily agitation, and because it is itself knowable through that so-called "body" [the bodily agitation], it is called "bodily intimation." And the going forward and so on of materiality born of temperature, kamma, and nutriment — bound up as it is with the moving consciousness-born matter — is to be understood to occur through its moving.*

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2. The two proofs — āgama (scripture) and yutti (reasoning) — structure the whole heart-base passage. yutti is wider than "logic": it is what is fitting and can be confirmed, including by direct experience.

3. **Nina.** On the heart-base: the conventional "blood inside the heart" points to a subtle mind-door-only rūpa; the last javana-cittas of a life all depend on one heart-base; the Atthasālinī's intent is that the description loosen clinging rather than serve anatomy.

ṭīkā: "The forward step and the rest" — by "and the rest" are gathered all the actions: stepping back, bending, stretching, lifting up, putting down, and so on. The air-element that has, as its originating consciousness, the consciousness that sets these going is the "air-element originated by the consciousness that sets going the forward step and the rest." That particular mode (ākāra-visesa) which is the co-operating cause of this air-element's work — the stiffening, upholding, and moving of the conascent material body — is what is called bodily intimation.

ṭīkā: A mode and alteration of what? By way of capability, of the consciousness-born great elements that have the air-element in excess. And what is that capability? It is the state of being consciousness-born, and the state of being derived materiality. There is a certain kind of alteration, separate from the mere appearance of motion, the apprehending of which immediately follows the apprehending of the motion — and that is what is intimated. How is this known? By the apprehending of intention. For in the movements of trees and the like, which are without intention, no apprehension of intention such as "It seems he wants this done" is met with; but it is met with in the movement of a hand and so on. Therefore there is an alteration, distinct from the appearance of motion, that is the "intimator of intention."

ṭīkā: If the mere apprehending of the alteration were the [sole] reason for the apprehending of intention, why is there no apprehension of intention when the gesture's prior convention is not known? Because it is not the apprehending of the alteration alone that is the reason: rather, the apprehending of the previously-established connexion [between this gesture and this meaning] is to be taken as the decisive support.

ṭīkā: Is it, then, the whole air-element that does the stiffening, upholding, and moving? It is not. It is the air-element given rise to by the seventh impulsion (javana) that, taking the air-elements given rise to by the preceding impulsions as its reinforcing conditions, moves the consciousness-born matter by causing its successive arising in adjacent locations.[4] And here the commentary gives the simile of a cart drawn by seven yokes: the bullocks at the first yoke can bear the yoke but not turn the wheels, and so with the second up to the sixth; but when a clever driver harnesses a seventh team, takes the reins, and urges them all on from the front, then all the bullocks, their strength united, steady the yoke, turn the wheels, and draw the cart — so that we may say "it has gone ten leagues, twenty leagues."[5] Just so the seven

4. Desantaruppatti, "arising in another place" — bodily movement is analysed as consciousness-born matter ceasing in one spot and arising in the adjacent spot, moment after moment; there is no enduring thing that travels. The seventh impulsion's air-element, reinforced by the prior six, is the effective mover.

impulsions together accomplish the movement. And when the consciousness-born matter moves, the matter born of temperature, kamma, and nutriment moves along with it, being bound up with it — like a lump of dry cow-dung carried along in a river's current.

> **Nina:** What we take for a single smooth gesture is, in reality, countless processes of cittas rolling on by conditions, uninterested and knowing nothing, utterly momentary, falling away at once. Seeing colour is one moment; the remembrance of successive moments of seeing gives the impression of a moving hand; and only afterwards is the meaning displayed known. Bodily intimation is not mere motion — even trees move — but motion carrying intention; and it is citta-born, not kamma-born. There can be conceit on its account too: we attach importance to our gestures, to "my personality." The whole point of the analysis is to loosen that grip — there is no one moving, only dhammas arising in adjacent locations moment by moment.

ṭīkā: It might be asked: since the apprehending of intention was said to follow the apprehending of the appearance of motion, how can the air-element, as the maker of that very motion, be the thing "accompanied by the alteration that is the intimation"? The answer: it is not the moving air-element [of the seventh impulsion] that is meant, but the air-elements of the first impulsion and so on, which cannot yet cause movement and perform only the stiffening and upholding — these are what is "accompanied by the alteration belonging to intimation." For the intimation is the alteration that coexists with the intention, since it gives rise to alteration in whatever direction one wishes to move; and taken this way, it is perfectly consistent to say that the origination of intimation belongs to mind-door adverting.[6] Since the intention, possessed of that alteration, is intimated through the apprehending of the alteration, it is said that the function of bodily intimation "is to display intention."

Verbal intimation (62)

> ***Vism XIV 62 (CST §441, continued).*** *Verbal intimation is the mode (the alteration) of the earth-element, originated by the consciousness that sets going speech-utterance, which is the cause of that speech-sound which proceeds from the striking together [of the vocal apparatus] upon the*

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5. **Nina.** The seven-yoked-cart simile (Atthasālinī, Expositor I, p. 110): six teams can bear the yoke but not turn the wheels; the seventh, with a driver urging all together, draws the cart — illustrating how the seventh impulsion completes what the first six prepare.

6. The resolution reconciling "intimation follows the apprehension of motion" with "intimation originates from mind-door adverting." The alteration that is intimation accompanies the non-moving air-elements of the early impulsions (which stiffen and uphold), and coexists with intention; so its origination can be assigned to the mind-door adverting that initiates the intentional sequence.

> *clung-to materiality. Because it is the cause of the communicating of intention by speech, and because it is itself knowable through that so-called "speech" [the speech-sound], it is called "verbal intimation." Just as the horns of a wild ox are the sign by which "wild ox" is known, or as a flag or smoke [are signs of water or fire], so bodily and verbal intimation, by being apprehended, are the signs by which the intention bound up with them is made known.*

ṭīkā: As bodily intimation is the alteration of the air-element that is the cause of moving, so verbal intimation is the alteration of the earth-element that is the cause of the speech-sound — the striking, upon the clung-to materiality [the vocal organs], that issues as articulate sound. And just as a beast is known by its distinctive horns, or water by a flag, or fire by smoke, so the hidden intention is known through these two intimations once they are apprehended; this is their nature as "sign."

> **Nina:** Verbal intimation is likewise citta-born and is, properly speaking, not the sound itself but the alteration in the earth-element (the originating, striking factor) that produces meaningful speech. We know another's mind through it as we know fire by its smoke — indirectly, by a sign. Both intimations remind us that communication, which we take so personally, is a play of conditioned rūpas produced by cittas that wish to make something known, arising and passing in an instant.

Part IX

Space, the qualities and characteristics of matter, and nutriment

Vism XIV 63–70

The space element (63)

> ***Vism XIV 63.*** *The space element has the characteristic of delimiting matter. Its function is to display the boundaries of matter. It is manifested as the confines of matter; or it is manifested as untouchedness, as the state of gaps and apertures. Its proximate cause is the matter delimited. And it is on account of it that one can say of delimited matter "this is above, below, around."*

ṭīkā: It delimits materialities, or is itself delimited by them, or is the mere delimiting of materialities — "delimiting of materiality"; that is its characteristic.[1] For this space element is, as it were, delimiting each group of matter; hence its function is said to be "to display the boundaries of materiality." And since in meaning it is grasped as the mere delimiting of materialities, it is said to be "manifested as the confines of materiality." In whatever group the great elements are bounded, by those very elements it is manifested as the untouched — for even though the elements of one group are in contact with the elements of an adjacent group, the seclusion of this or that element [the interval where one group's matter is not], which is the boundary of matter, is "space"; and for those whose boundary it is, by them it remains untouched. Were it otherwise, there would be no delimiting of them at all.

> **Nina:** Space-element here is not the boundless space we imagine, but the rūpa that delimits — it marks off one group of materiality from another so that there can be "this group, that group," and so that we can speak of above, below, and across. The texts use conventional terms — the cavity of the ear, the nostrils, the door of the mouth, the spaces in the body — to point to it. But it is a real dhamma, an element, not a concept: the Buddha says in the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta that the internal space element — "the holes of the ears, the nostrils, the door of the mouth" — should be seen as it actually is with right understanding: "this is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self."[2] A concept could not be regarded as not-self in that way; only a reality has the three characteristics. The qualities of matter: lightness, malleability, wieldiness (64–65)

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1. Rūpa-pariccheda: it delimits, is delimited, and is the mere delimiting.

2. **Nina.** Space-element is a real dhamma bearing the three characteristics, not a concept — "not scratched, not strikable, a hole/opening, untouched by the four great elements" (Mahārāhulovāda Sutta, M 62; Dhammasaṅgaṇī 638; Atthasālinī 425).

> ***Vism XIV 64.*** *Lightness of matter (rūpassa lahutā) has the characteristic of non-slowness. Its function is to dispel heaviness of matter. It is manifested as light transformability. Its proximate cause is light matter. Malleability of matter (mudutā) has the characteristic of non-stiffenedness. Its function is to dispel stiffness of matter. It is manifested as non-opposition to any kind of action. Its proximate cause is malleable matter. Wieldiness of matter (kammaññatā) has the characteristic of wieldiness that is favourable to bodily action. Its function is to dispel unwieldiness. It is manifested as non-weakness. Its proximate cause is wieldy matter.*

ṭīkā: Non-sluggishness is non-heaviness. Dispelling is the driving out, the removing [of heaviness]. Non-rigidity is non-stiffness. Non-opposition to any kind of action is, through malleability itself, the not being at odds with any action — for what is soft is nowhere obstructive.[3] In all three the prefix a- [in "non-sluggish," "non-rigid," and so forth]: some say it is because lightness and the rest arise from conditions that are the opposite of the causes of sluggishness and so on; others say it is in the sense of excluding a [supposed] being — there is no agent, only the quality. As for wieldiness: it has for its characteristic the workable state, called the favourableness [of matter] to the actions to be done by the body.

> ***Vism XIV 65.*** *These three, however, are not found apart from each other. Still their difference may be understood as follows. Lightness of matter is alteration of matter, such as any light, agile state, opposed to the slowness due to disturbance of elements. Malleability of matter is alteration of matter, such as any soft, smooth state, opposed to the stiffenedness due to disturbance of elements. Wieldiness of matter is alteration of matter, such as any wieldy state favourable to bodily action, opposed to the unwieldiness due to disturbance of elements.*

ṭīkā: These three qualities arise together and condition one another, yet are distinguished by what each opposes: heaviness, stiffness, and intractability, all three of which spring from a disturbance of the great elements (dhātu-kkhobha). Where there is no such disturbance — in a healthy, well-functioning body — lightness, malleability, and wieldiness are present. Nina (with a clarification): These three are "matter as alteration" (vikāra-rūpa) — not concrete matter, but modes in which produced matter occurs; they are themselves unproduced, which is why each is specified "of matter." They do not arise in matter that is not bound up with the faculties [dead or external matter], nor even in kamma-born matter — only in matter originated by consciousness, temperature, and nutriment, and only when the elements are not disturbed. The reason they are absent in kamma-born matter

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3. Adandhatā, non-sluggishness; vinodana, dispelling; athaddhatā, non-rigidity; avirodhitā, non-opposition.

is that they depend on present conditions [a buoyant body-state], whereas kamma-born matter follows its past cause regardless; if it were otherwise, lightness and the rest would have to be present always.[4]

The characteristics of matter: growth, continuity, ageing, impermanence (66–69)

> ***Vism XIV 66.*** *Growth of matter (rūpassa upacaya) has the characteristic of setting up. Its function is to make material instances emerge in the first instance. It is manifested as launching; or it is manifested as the completed state. Its proximate cause is grown matter. 67. Continuity of matter (santati) has the characteristic of occurrence. Its function is to anchor. It is manifested as non-interruption. Its proximate cause is matter that is made to occur.*

ṭīkā: "Growth" (upacaya) is the first arising and the building-up of matter — the prefix upa- carrying the sense of "first" and of "upon" [accumulation upon accumulation].[5] By "making it emerge for the first time" is meant the bringing of an arising material dhamma up out of the future, as it were, into the present. Growth and continuity are, in substance, the same thing — the arising (jāti) of matter — distinguished only by aspect: the first setting-up is "growth"; the repeated occurrence, before-following-after, is "continuity," which anchors the continuum and shows itself as the matter's going on unbroken.

> ***Vism XIV 68.*** *Ageing of matter (jaratā) has the characteristic of maturing (ripening) material instances. Its function is to lead on towards [their termination]. It is manifested as the loss of newness without the loss of individual essence, like oldness in paddy. Its proximate cause is matter that is maturing (ripening). This is said with reference to the kind of ageing that is evident through seeing alteration in teeth, etc., as their brokenness, and so on. But that of immaterial states, which has no such visible alteration, is called hidden ageing; and that in earth, water, rocks, the moon, the sun, etc., is called incessant ageing.*

ṭīkā: The maturing of matter is the agedness of material dhammas; its function, "to lead on," is the work of bringing them up to dissolution. Without the loss of individual nature: even though the harshness and the rest of its own nature have not departed — for the ageing is at the moment of presence, and a dhamma does not then abandon its individual nature.

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4. **Nina.** Vikāra-rūpa (matter as alteration: lightness, malleability, wieldiness — unproduced) is distinct from concrete produced matter; these qualities are absent in kamma-born matter because they depend on present conditions, not a past cause.

5. The prefix upa- in upacaya: "first" and "upon" (accumulation upon accumulation); upacaya and santati are two aspects of one thing, the jāti of matter.

"Newness" is the state of arising; and ageing is grasped as the departing of that newness, hence "manifested as the loss of newness." Like oldness in paddy: as paddy grows old yet remains paddy, so matter, once arisen and while still present, is ageing and on its way to destruction. Of immaterial states… hidden ageing: said because their ageing is very well concealed — though indeed the momentary ageing of material dhammas too is concealed, and is called "incessant ageing." The "alteration" that is absent in immaterial states is the brokenness and so on; and that visible alteration is also absent in incessant ageing — "incessant"[6] (avīci) meaning "without interval," that is, a between-ageing hard to discern because the renewal is unbroken.

> ***Vism XIV 69.*** *Impermanence of matter (aniccatā) has the characteristic of complete breaking up. Its function is to make material instances subside. It is manifested as destruction and fall. Its proximate cause is matter that is completely breaking up.*

ṭīkā: The characteristic of complete breaking-up is to be understood as being destroyed utterly and in every respect — the prefix pari- [in paribheda] reinforcing the word, "completely, in every way." What lasts is "permanent"; matter at the moment of its falling-away does not last, because of its dissolution, and so is "impermanent," and that unstable state is "impermanence." Its function is to make matter subside, since it causes the matter that has reached presence, as it were, to sink down. And since, by reason of the dissolution of material dhammas, it is grasped under the aspect of destruction and fall, it is "manifested as destruction and falling-away."

> **Nina:** These four — growth, continuity, ageing, impermanence — are the characteristics (lakkhaṇa-rūpa) of every rūpa, applying in turn as it arises, develops, decays, and breaks up. At the moment the rebirth-consciousness arises, kamma (in the human plane) produces three decads — of body-sensitivity, of heart-base, and of sex, thirty-three rūpas in three groups of ten — and the characteristic of origination (growth) applies; and origination must be followed by continuity, decay, and impermanence.[7] This is niyāma, the fixed law of dhamma, that no one can change. All four characteristics apply to each rūpa, one after another, unthinkably fast — all within the seventeen moments of citta during which a rūpa endures. We cannot imagine the speed; and when we think of the last moments of a life, before we realise it another life has begun, and there too, in any plane with mind and matter, the four characteristics apply again.

Physical nutriment (70)

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6. Avīci-jarā: "incessant, intervalless ageing," continuous and so hard to discern.

7. **Nina.** The three kamma-born decads at rebirth; the fixed law (niyāma) that origination entails continuity-decay-impermanence; the unimaginable speed within the seventeen mind-moments of a rūpa's duration.

> ***Vism XIV 70.*** *Physical nutriment (kabaḷīkāra āhāra) has the characteristic of nutritive essence (ojā). Its function is to feed kinds of matter. It is manifested as consolidating. Its proximate cause is a physical basis that must be fed with physical food. It is a term for the nutritive essence by means of which living beings sustain themselves.*

ṭīkā: The "nutritive essence" here is that single distinct factor, dependent on the great elements and productive of supporting strength, which is the pith of the nutritive sap that pervades limb after limb.[8] What is "made into a morsel" (kabaḷa) is "morsel-made"; what "fetches" or "nourishes" (āharati) is "nutriment" — the meaning being, what is swallowed having been made into a morsel. This is said to show the nutritive essence together with its base [the food]. For it is only on getting external food as its condition that the internal nutriment produces materiality; and that internal nutriment is called "nutriment" because it fetches, that is, produces, materiality — hence "its function is to feed materiality."[9] And just because it produces, from the octad of which nutritive essence is the eighth onward, fresh materiality, it is manifested as consolidating, as upholding the continuity of the body.

> **Nina:** Physical nutriment is the nutritive essence (ojā) present in food, one of the eight inseparable rūpas, and the condition by which a new octad of materiality with ojā as its eighth is produced — so that the body is fed and sustained. The external food we eat is the base; the ojā within it, getting that as its support, originates the nutriment-born materiality that consolidates the body. This is why nutriment is set last among the rūpas: it upholds the whole continuum of materiality of fourfold origination.[10]

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8. Ojā, "nutritive essence": the element-dependent pith of the nutritive sap that produces supporting strength.

9. Āhāra from āharati, "fetches, brings" — i.e. produces materiality.

10. **Nina.** ojā is one of the eight inseparables and the producer of the nutriment-born octad; nutriment stands last because it upholds the whole fourfold-originated continuum.

Part X

The rejected rūpas, the count of twenty-eight, and how materiality is to be seen

Vism XIV 71–77

The rejected rūpas, and the count of twenty-eight (71)

> ***Vism XIV 71.*** *These, firstly, are the material instances that have been handed down in the texts. But in the Commentary, others have been added as follows: matter as power, matter as procreation, matter as birth, matter as sickness; and, in the opinion of some, matter as torpor. In the first place, matter as torpor is rejected as non-existent by the words: "Surely thou art a sage enlightened, there are no hindrances in thee"*[1] *(Sn 541). As to the rest, matter as sickness is included by ageing and by impermanence; matter as birth by growth and continuity; matter as procreation, by the water element; and matter as power by the air element. So taken separately not even one of these exists: this was the conclusion reached.*

ṭīkā: In "the materiality of strength" and the rest, the intention is this: there is in this body what is called strength, what is called procreation, what is called sickness, and — since the text says "birth, the being-born" (Vibh. 191) — what is called birth; and since none of these exists apart from the four great elements, they would have to be derived materialities [if they were rūpas at all]. "In the opinion of some" means: of the dwellers at the Abhayagiri. As for "rejected": the rejection is to be understood thus. Torpor (middha) is simply not a materiality, because it is taught among the hindrances — and what is taught among the hindrances [which are mental] is not materiality, as is the case with sloth (thīna), its companion. The citation "Surely you are awake; there are no hindrances in you" establishes that torpor is a hindrance, hence mental, hence no rūpa.[2] And the remaining four are each already covered by a rūpa already listed — sickness by ageing-and-impermanence, birth by growth-and-continuity, procreation by the water element, strength by the air element — so none needs separate listing. This was the agreed conclusion.

> ***Vism XIV 71, concl.*** *So this derived matter of twenty-four kinds, together with the matter of the four great primaries already stated, amounts to twenty-eight kinds of matter, neither less nor more.*

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1. The Sutta-nipāta citation (Sn 541, the Buddha as "awake, hindrance-free") fixes torpor's status as a hindrance.

2. Abhayagirivāsīnaṃ — the monks of the Abhayagiri monastery, the Mahāvihāra's rival in Anurādhapura, here named as the "some" who held torpor to be a rūpa. (Cf. Exposition of the Topics of Abhidhamma, p. 61.)

ṭīkā: "So" is to be connected with "twenty-eight kinds": by the procedure stated, there come to be twenty-eight. That the count is not less should be known from its being handed down exactly thus in the Pāli; and that it is not more is shown by the rejection just made. The number is fixed: twenty-eight, no fewer and no more.

Nina: The monks of the Abhayagiri monastery held views differing from those of the Mahāvihāra, where Buddhaghosa resided, and their proposed additional rūpas were rejected. Note how conscientiously Buddhaghosa records other opinions — elsewhere too we read "some teachers say…" (keci). The point of fixing the number at exactly twenty-eight is not pedantry: these twenty-eight are all rūpas, realities, not ideas or concepts; to add "strength" or "torpor" as further rūpas would be to mistake a concept, or a mental state, for a material reality.

Materiality as one, and as twofold (72)

Vism XIV 72. *And all that [matter of twenty-eight sorts] is of one kind as "not-root-cause, root-causeless, dissociated from root-cause, with conditions, mundane, subject to cankers" (Dhs 584), and so on. It is of two kinds as internal and external, gross and subtle, far and near, produced (nipphanna) and unproduced, sensitive matter and insensitive matter, faculty and non-faculty, clung to and not-clung to, and so on.*

ṭīkā: By "[the heap of] associated states draws near, is established, by this" — materiality is not a root-cause (na hetu): it is not a root (hetu) in the sense of being a root such as greed, hatred, delusion, or non-greed and the rest; being no such root, it is "not a root-cause." It is root-causeless (ahetuka) because there is for it no [accompanying] root — that is, being the opposite of what is "with a root," it does not arise together with a root. Being thus root-causeless, it is dissociated from root-cause (hetu-vippayutta), through being disjoined from any root. (And though there is no difference in the dhamma itself, a teaching of these as separate dyads arises through a difference in the sense of the words, for the sake of those to be guided.) Being dependent in its occurrence on conditions, it is with conditions (sappaccaya); being comprised within the world that crumbles, it is mundane (lokiya); being an object of the cankers, it is subject to cankers (sāsava). And by "and so on" the further such terms — "to be abandoned neither by seeing nor by development," and the rest — are to be included. So, under this aspect, all materiality is of one kind.

ṭīkā: Then it is shown as twofold, under many pairs. The five beginning with the eye, occurring as an integral part of the selfhood, are internal; the rest, being outside that, are external. Twelve — the nine beginning with the eye [the five sensitivities and four objects, less the water element] together with the three elements other than water — are gross, since they are taken by way

of [sensory] impact; the rest, being the opposite, are subtle.[3] What is subtle, being hard to penetrate, is far; the other, being easy to penetrate, is near. Eighteen — the four elements, the thirteen beginning with the eye, and physical nutriment — being graspable by their own individual nature, beyond the mere [status of] delimiting, alteration, and characteristic, are produced (nipphanna); the rest, the opposite, are unproduced. The five beginning with the eye, being, like the surface of a mirror, clear so as to be conditions for grasping visible object and the rest, are sensitive (pasāda); the rest, the opposite, are insensitive. The sensitive materialities themselves, together with the three beginning with the femininity faculty [femininity, masculinity, life], are faculty in the sense of predominance; the rest are non-faculty.[4] What will later be called "kamma-born" is clung-to (upādiṇṇa), being acquired by kamma; the rest, the opposite, are not-clung-to.

Materiality as manifold (73–76)

> ***Vism XIV 73–76 (CST §§448–450).*** *It is of various kinds by way of the further triads and tetrads — visible-and-reacting / invisible-and-reacting / invisible-and-non-reacting; kamma-born and so on; seen, heard, contacted, cognized; and the rest — and by way of single, double, triple, and quadruple origination from kamma, consciousness, temperature, and nutriment.*

ṭīkā: In the triad beginning with the visible-and-reacting: among the twelve gross materialities, the visible-object base is "visible" — it has the state of being seen — and "reacting" — it has the state of impinging; so it is visible-and-reacting. The other nine [gross rūpas] are invisible-and-reacting; and the subtle materialities are invisible-and-non-reacting.

ṭīkā: In the tetrad of "seen, heard, contacted, cognized": whatever visible-object base was seen, is seen, will be seen, or might be seen — all that is reckoned "seen," since it does not overstep its nature as the seen, as milk [does not overstep its nature as milk]. The same method applies to "heard" (the field of hearing), "contacted" (odour, flavour, and tangible — the fields of smelling, tasting, and touching, since their apprehension involves a kind of reaching), and "cognized" (the rest, being only the field of the mind).

ṭīkā: As to origination: that born from one [originator] alone is single-born — but only in the sense that, among the conditions that generate materiality, it is born from one of them; for no arising of anything is from a single condition

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3. "Gross / subtle" turns on susceptibility to sensory impact (ghaṭṭana); "far / near" on ease of penetration by insight — the subtle is "far" because hard to discern, not spatially distant. The twelve gross = the five sensitivities, the four objects (colour, sound, odour, flavour), and the three elements other than water.

4. Na hetu / ahetuka / hetu-vippayutta: three ways of saying materiality is rootless, distinguished only verbally for different learners (veneyya-vasena).

absolutely.[5] The two intimations are single-born, being consciousness-born only. Eight — the qualities of lightness, malleability, wieldiness, and the [octad of] sound… [as variously originated] — are two-born or three-born as the case may be; the characteristics are reckoned apart. What is four-born is what arises from all four — kamma, consciousness, temperature, and nutriment — namely the eight inseparables and space [as delimiting their groups]. The life-faculty and the others bound up with faculties are kamma-born only; bodily and verbal intimation are consciousness-born only; and so on through the divisions.

Nina: These classifications are not for their own sake. Rūpa is the object of numberless defilements — yet its duration is extremely short, only as long as seventeen moments of citta, and then it is wholly gone. It is utterly insignificant, but we think about it with intoxication and make it into something great and important. The pairs and triads — internal/external, gross/subtle, far/near, clung-to/not-clung-to — are ways of looking that loosen that grip. And the origination-series reminds us that every rūpa is produced: by kamma, by consciousness, by temperature, by nutriment, or by several of these together — never standing on its own, never "mine."[6]

Materiality as fourfold: the final synthesis (77)

> ***Vism XIV 77.*** *Here, however, "produced matter" is concrete matter (rūpa-rūpa); the space element is delimiting matter (pariccheda-rūpa); those from "bodily intimation" up to "wieldiness" are matter as alteration (vikāra-rūpa); birth, ageing, and dissolution are matter as characteristic (lakkhaṇa-rūpa). So it is of four kinds as concrete matter and so on.*

ṭīkā: "That which is molested is materiality (rūpa); that [molestation] belongs to this, [therefore it is rūpa]" — and the reduplication in "rūpa-rūpa," concrete materiality, is used in the way that "dukkha-dukkha" is. For just as among the threefold suffering — the suffering that is plainly suffering (bodily and mental pain), the suffering in change, and the suffering inherent in all conditioned things as a characteristic — the first is called dukkha-dukkha, "suffering that is [actually] suffering," so among the fourfold materiality the produced sort is called rūpa-rūpa, "materiality that is [actually, in the full sense] materiality," because it has the very nature of being molested. The space element only delimits and so is "delimiting materiality"; the intimations, qualities, and the like are only modes of alteration and so are

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5. The important qualification: "single-born" does not mean born from one condition absolutely (nothing is) — only that, among the four generating originators (kamma, citta, utu, āhāra), it comes from one.

6. **Nina.** Rūpa is object of countless defilements yet lasts only seventeen mind-moments; the classifications are ways of seeing that loosen clinging; the origination-series shows every rūpa to be conditioned, never self-standing.

"materiality as alteration"; growth-continuity, ageing, and impermanence are only the phasing and so are "materiality as characteristic." These latter three groups are materiality only in a derived sense; the produced eighteen are materiality in the full sense — and all twenty-eight together are the materiality aggregate.

Nina: "Concrete matter" translates rūpa-rūpa. The Dispeller of Delusion explains ruppana, being molested, as being disturbed, oppressed, battered by cold, heat, hunger, and the rest — "it is well-beaten, it is oppressed, it is broken." Only the eighteen produced rūpas are rūpa in that full sense; the space element, the alterations, and the characteristics are materiality in a looser, derived sense. All twenty-eight, past, future, and present, internal and external, gross and subtle, far and near, are gathered into the one materiality aggregate (rūpakkhandha) — and the whole of it, the Buddha taught, is to be seen with right understanding as "not mine, not I, not my self." Here ends the explanation of the materiality aggregate.

Part XI

The heart-base, materiality by origination, and matter as characteristic: the close of the materiality aggregate

Vism XIV 78–80

The basis-and-door tetrad (78)

> ***Vism XIV 78 (CST §449).*** *Here, what is called the materiality of the heart is basis, not door; the two intimations are door, not basis; sensitive matter is both basis and door; the rest are neither basis nor door. So it is fourfold according to the basis-tetrad.*

ṭīkā: "Basis" (vatthu) is so called because consciousness and its mental factors abide and occur in dependence on it — the materiality that has become their support. Of the rūpas, the heart-base is basis only: it is the support of the mind-element and the mind-consciousness-element, but it is not a door, as the eye and the rest are, for unlike them it is not the means through which the cittas of a cognitive process reach their object. Hence "the materiality of the heart is basis, not door." The two intimations (bodily and verbal) are door only: they are doors in that they are the doors of kamma — the channels through which deeds of body and speech are accomplished — but they are not basis, since no citta arises in dependence on them. Sensitive matter (the five sense-rūpas) is both: each is basis for its own sense-consciousness, which depends on it directly, and door for the receiving-consciousness and the rest of that process, which depend on another basis (the heart-base) yet pass through this sense as their door.[1] The remaining twenty-one rūpas are neither.[2]

> **Nina:** The heart-base is not the mind-door — the mind-door is the last bhavaṅga-citta arising before the mind-door process begins. A sense organ such as eyesense is both basis and doorway for seeing: it is the doorway through which all the cittas of the eye-door process — receiving, investigating, and so on — experience visible object, yet it is not their physical basis, for they depend on the heart-base. Kamma can be performed

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1. The eye is basis for its own sense-consciousness, door for the rest of the process.

2. Sesaṃ ekavīsatividhaṃ rūpaṃ … neva vatthu na ca dvāraṃ — "the remaining twenty-one kinds of materiality are neither basis nor door." Counted as individual rūpas from the standard twenty-eight (heart-base 1, the two intimations 2, the five sensitivities 5, leaving 20), the remainder appears to be twenty; the transmitted "twenty-one" is retained here, and may reflect counting the tangible-object datum (phoṭṭhabbāyatana) separately in this basis-and-door context. Cha Myang Hee's translation likewise prints "twenty-one" here (A Study in Paramatthamañjūsā, p. 93).

through the doorways of body, speech, and mind; bodily intimation and verbal intimation are the doorways of wholesome and unwholesome kamma — though kamma through the body can also occur without bodily intimation. As the Expositor notes, an act of speech can be accomplished by a sign of the hand, where the deed is one of speech but the door is that of the body. Materiality by origination: born of one, two, three, four, or none (79)

> ***Vism XIV 79.*** *Again, it is fivefold as born of one, born of two, born of three, born of four, and born of nothing at all. Therein, what is kamma-born only and what is consciousness-born only is "born of one." Of these, the faculty-materialities, together with the heart-base, are kamma-born only; the two intimations are consciousness-born only. What is born now of consciousness and now of temperature is "born of two" — that is the sound base only. What is born of temperature, consciousness, and nutriment is "born of three" — that is the three beginning with lightness only. What is born of the four beginning with kamma is "born of four" — that is all the rest, except matter as characteristic.*

ṭīkā: "Born of one" means born from a single one of the causes that generate materiality. One might object: nothing conditioned arises from a single condition. True — but here "born of one" means born by one of the materiality-generating conditions; for the arising of a rūpa does not, in this analysis, look to any condition beyond the one that generates it. Thus "kamma-born only" means born solely from kamma, and "consciousness-born only" likewise; "born of consciousness and of temperature" means sometimes from the one, sometimes from the other — that is the twofold-born; and so on for the threefold and fourfold. As for "all the rest," the element of space, taken with the eight inseparable rūpas, is included among the four-born — for space surrounds each group of rūpas that the four causes originate, and so is reckoned to arise from the four.

> **Nina:** It means materiality originated solely by kamma, or by any one of the other three factors. The way the conditions operate is intricate: kamma produces at rebirth three decads of rūpas, and heat is among them; that heat, once the rebirth-consciousness has fallen away, itself produces further rūpas. But when a rūpa is said to be "born solely from kamma," the other conditions are not taken into account. As to sound, there was an old controversy — whether consciousness-born sound must always be intimative, or whether there is a sound, due to the "intervention" (vipphāra, vibration) of applied thought, that does not intimate. Applied thought and sustained thought (vitakka, vicāra) play their part in the uttering of speech-sound. The matter is debated in the Kathāvatthu; the point need not detain us, except to note that the Ancients allowed a subtle conascent sound, connected with the intervention (vipphāra, vibration) of applied thought — not functioning as ordinary verbal intimation, and audible only to the divine ear.

Characteristic-matter: "born of nothing at all" (80)

> ***Vism XIV 80 (CST §451).*** *But matter as characteristic is called "born of nothing at all." Why? Because there is no arising of arising; and the other two are the mere maturing and breakup of what has arisen. And as to the passage, "the visible-object base, the sound base, the odour base, the flavour base, the tangible-object base, the space element, the water element, lightness of matter, malleability of matter, wieldiness of matter, growth of matter, continuity of matter, and physical nutriment — these states are consciousness-originated" (Dhs. 1201): the being "born from somewhere" there conceded is to be understood as said because these are seen at the moment when the materiality-generating conditions exercise their function.*

ṭīkā: The four characteristic rūpas — origination, continuity, decay, impermanence — are inherent in every group of rūpa; and just because they are characteristics, they are not themselves originated by any of the four causes.[3] "There is no arising of arising": origination, being itself the characteristic by which a rūpa is said to arise, cannot in turn possess the characteristic of arising — were it otherwise, one would need an arising of that arising, and so without end. In the texts on the origination of the visible-data base and the rest, the characteristics of birth and so on are found attaching to those bases; but birth itself has no further birth.[4] "The other two" — decay and impermanence — are, in the ultimate sense, the maturing (decay) and the breakup (impermanence) of what has arisen; spoken of conventionally, they are old age and death. So when the text says "there is no arising," it says that old age and death — that is, decay and impermanence as characteristics — do not themselves arise.

ṭīkā: Yet it is also "allowable" (as the root text grants) to say that a cause such as consciousness, when it originates a group of rūpas, originates as well the characteristics of origination and continuity bound up with that group; for these two belong to the group's arising phase — growth at its first arising, continuity immediately after. This cannot be said of decay and impermanence, which manifest only after the moments of arising and continuity. And if it be asked why, then, the suttas say "old age and death are dependently arisen" (S ii 20) — the answer is that, since they belong to dependently-arisen states and consist in the maturing and breakup of those states, they "are" when those states are and "are not" when they are not; the

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3. The objection and its answer (nanu ca ekato eva paccayato… natthi? saccaṃ natthi, rūpajanakapaccayesu ekato — "true, but here it means by one of the materiality-generating conditions") are the ṭīkā's. The classification is by origination-source, not by simple single causation.

4. Na hi uppādassa uppādo atthi — "there is no arising of arising": origination, being the very characteristic of arising, has no further arising, on pain of infinite regress. Uppattimantānaṃ hi rūpāyatanādīnaṃ jāti-ādīni lakkhaṇāni vijjanti, na evaṃ jāti-ādīnaṃ — the bases have birth-characteristics, but birth has no further birth.

contradiction is only apparent, the two statements being made by way of different methods of teaching.

Nina: There are four rūpas as characteristics: origination, continuity, decay, and impermanence, inherent in all groups of rūpa. Strictly there is no arising of arising; yet from another viewpoint it is allowable to say that when kamma and the other causes originate rūpas, they also cause the origination and continuity bound up with the other rūpas of the group — and in that sense there is an "arising of arising."[5] This cannot be said of decay and impermanence, which manifest after the moments of growth and development. The ṭīkā closes the materiality section by noting that what is not treated here — rebirth in the various planes by way of kamma-condition and the rest — is taken up in the teaching on Dependent Origination. We are reminded that all rūpas, the great elements and the derived, originated by the four factors, bear the marks of origin, continuation, decay, and breakup. Of them all, only visible object can be seen; the rest are invisible. However solid the body seems, the rūpas that arise by conditions must fall away: what is born, arisen from a cause, must mature and break up. So we are reminded, time and again, that what we take for the body is only rūpas, impermanent, dukkha, and not-self. Here ends the detailed explanation of the materiality aggregate.

5. The "allowable" concession (yampi… vuttaṃ) that a cause originating a group may be said to originate the origination-and-continuity bound up with it, while decay and impermanence (manifesting later) are excepted; and the reconciliation with S ii 20 ("old age and death are dependently arisen") by the maturing-and-breakup of dependently-arisen states. The ṭīkā's closing rubric marks the end of the detailed materiality section, deferring plane-of-rebirth detail to the Dependent Origination chapter (Vism XVII).

Part XII

The four mental aggregates defined together, and why consciousness comes first

Vism XIV 81–82

The four mental aggregates at one stroke (81)

> ***Vism XIV 81.*** *Among the remaining aggregates, however, whatever has the characteristic of being felt should be understood, all taken together, as the feeling aggregate; and whatever has the characteristic of perceiving, all taken together, as the perception aggregate; and whatever has the characteristic of forming, all taken together, as the formations aggregate; and whatever has the characteristic of cognizing, all taken together, as the consciousness aggregate. Herein, since the rest are easy to understand when the consciousness aggregate has been understood, we shall therefore begin with the commentary on the consciousness aggregate.*

ṭīkā: By the two words "whatever" — pointing to an all-inclusive comprehension — he displays the manifoldness of what is felt, and so marks out that heap-sense (rāsi) of "aggregate" he is about to state. What has the experiencing of the taste of the object as its characteristic "has the characteristic of being felt"; all that — that whole class of dhammas — taken together as one (or, the heap-sense already explained in the discussion of the materiality aggregate may be carried over and connected here).[1] Taking it as one means: gathering, by the understanding, all of it — divided though it is into past, future, and present — into one; for only thus does the heap-sense arise.

ṭīkā: What has as its characteristic the perceiving of an object marked off as blue and so on — the apprehending, the grasping, that knows by giving rise to a perception, "blue, yellow, long, short"[2] (Dhs. 615) — is "the perception aggregate."2Forming (abhisaṅkharaṇa) is accumulating (āyūhana), the taking up of the task, or the coordinating (abhisandahana); and because in both of these ways volition (cetanā) is the principal thing, the formations aggregate is said to "have the characteristic of forming." Indeed, in expounding the formations aggregate in the Suttanta Division of the Vibhaṅga, the Blessed One analysed it precisely by volition: "volition born of eye-contact," and so

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1. The two "whatever"s (yaṃ kiñci) are read as in the materiality aggregate: the indefinite pronoun takes in all instances, the characteristic-word ("being felt," etc.) restricts to the aggregate in question — so each aggregate is "all and only" its own dhammas, gathered as a heap (rāsi).

2. Dhs. 615. At the moment of seeing the colour is not yet named "blue"; the naming comes in a later mind-door process.

on (Vibh. 21).[3] And as a man measuring out a thing-to-be-measured with a measure [grasps it by the measure], so that by which one grasps the object in a mode distinct from the mode of perceiving — that "obtaining of the object," that cognizing — is the characteristic; hence "the consciousness aggregate has the characteristic of cognizing."

ṭīkā: The rest, beginning with the feeling aggregate, are easily understood once consciousness is understood — because they share with it a single arising and so on, and because they fall together with it under the same classification by nature and so on.

> **Nina:** Each of the five aggregates includes, respectively, all the different kinds of materiality, feelings, perceptions, formations, and cittas; the Buddha summarised them as just five aggregates — one of materiality, four of mind. The formations aggregate (saṅkhārakkhandha) comprises all the mental factors (cetasikas) other than feeling and perception. And the reason consciousness is taught first is given by the

ṭīkā: the four mental aggregates arise and fall away together, sharing the three sub-moments of arising, presence, and dissolution; they are of the same nature (jāti) — wholesome, unwholesome, resultant, or functional — and of the same plane. So if the consciousness aggregate is grasped first, the other three are grasped along with it.

Consciousness, and the synonymy of viññāṇa, citta, mano (heading 82)

> ***Vism XIV 82.*** *"Whatever has the characteristic of cognizing should be understood, all taken together, as the consciousness aggregate" was said above. And what has the characteristic of cognizing (vijānana)? Consciousness (viññāṇa); according as it is said, "It cognizes, friend, that is why 'consciousness' is said" (M I 292). The words viññāṇa (consciousness), citta (mind), and mano (mind) are one in meaning. That same consciousness, though one in its individual essence with the characteristic of cognizing, is threefold according to kind, namely, profitable, unprofitable, and indeterminate.*

ṭīkā: To confirm by the sutta the meaning he himself stated as "having the characteristic of cognizing," he cites "whatever has the characteristic of cognizing."[4] He said "has the characteristic of cognizing," using the abstract derivation, in order to show that this is a dhamma with its own nature — a mere occurrence according to conditions.[5] For apart from a dhamma with its

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3. The two senses of abhisaṅkharaṇa: volition accumulates (as kamma) and coordinates the associated factors. The Vibhaṅga (21) analyses the aggregate by "volition born of eye-contact," etc.

4. The transition into the consciousness analysis proper; the sutta is the Mahāvedalla (M i 292), "vijānāti vijānātī ti kho āvuso, tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati."

own nature there is no doer at all standing over it; and to show that this very dhamma is the "doer," he said "it cognizes." That which is viññāṇa in the sense of cognizing is the very same that is citta in the sense of thinking and so on, and mano in the sense of minding; so he makes it known by synonyms too. And by just this much — by aggregate, by classification, and by synonym — consciousness has been elucidated.

Nina: The goal of studying the consciousness aggregate is to understand citta as not-self. The ṭīkā's comment is pointed: there truly is no one at all who is a doer; the Buddha said "it cognizes" only to explain the nature of an action, not to posit an agent. Viññāṇa, citta, and mano are one in meaning — each citta simply cognises an object — though the words are used in different settings (viññāṇa for the aggregate and the sense-cognitions, citta for the thinking nature, mano for the mind-base and mind-door).

What "wholesome" means: the eightfold sense of kusala

(82, continued)

Vism XIV 82 (CST §451). *Of these, the profitable (kusala) is so called in the sense of "wholesome."*

ṭīkā: What is this "sense of wholesome" (kusalaṭṭha)? It is the sense of health, of blamelessness, and of happy result. For "wholesome" is used in the sense of health, as in "Is it well (kusalaṃ) with your reverence?"; in the sense of blamelessness, as in "What, venerable sir, is wholesome bodily conduct? — Whatever bodily conduct is blameless, great king"; and in the sense of happy result, as in "for the undertaking of wholesome states, bhikkhus, [is a cause of happiness]."[6] Wholesome consciousness, being the opposite of the mental ills that are greed and the rest — themselves blameworthy by nature — and ripening in a happy result, is accordingly healthy, blameless, and of happy result.

ṭīkā: And by word-derivation, "wholesome" (kusala) admits of being understood in several ways, all converging on the same import: — It makes the contemptible, evil states shake and tremble away (ku-sala), demolishes them: thus "wholesome." — Or, the contemptible states that "lie" wretchedly (kusā, the evil states) — it mows them as one mows with grass-blades (kuse lunāti): thus "wholesome." — Or, knowledge, which thins out the contemptible, is called "grass-blade" (kusa) [because it cuts]; what is to be taken up and set going by that is "wholesome." — Just as a grass-blade cuts the part of the hand on both sides [that grasps it], so this mows down the side

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5. Bhāva-sādhana: "characteristic of cognizing" names a nature, not an agent.

6. The threefold "sense of kusala" — ārogya (health), anavajja (blamelessness), sukha-vipāka (happy result) — each backed by a canonical usage. This frame governs the whole analysis of wholesome consciousness that follows.

of defilement that has come on both sides — the arisen and the unarisen: so, "it mows like a grass-blade," thus "wholesome." — Or, from its restraining, its closing off, of the contemptible, blameworthy states: thus "wholesome."[7] For by the power of wholesome states the unwholesome are warded off, prevented from occurring, and so shut out at the six doors with mind as the sixth.

ṭīkā: So the wholesome, by every derivation, is what cuts off, shakes off, and shuts out the defilements — which is exactly its being healthy, blameless, and of happy fruit.

> ***Vism XIV 82 (CST §451).*** *The unprofitable (akusala) is "not-wholesome"; that is, the opposite of the wholesome. And the indeterminate (abyākata) is what is "not declared" either as wholesome or as unwholesome.*

ṭīkā: "Not wholesome" means the opposite of the wholesome. When the word "unwholesome" is unfolded by negation of its parts, the sense shown is: that class of dhammas which is not healthy, not blameless, not of happy result, and not sprung from proficiency — and equally, which is not of the nature of shaking off the contemptible, not of the nature of mowing the evil, not to be set going by the "grass-blade" [of knowledge], not a cutter like a grass-blade — that is "unwholesome." And since the wholesome is the direct opposite of the unwholesome, the unwholesome having been already lit up by the synonyms of health and so on, it is here said that "the unwholesome is the opposite of the wholesome." The two stand, in due order, as the abandoner and the to-be-abandoned.

ṭīkā: "Not declared" (abyākata) means: not stated as being either wholesome or unwholesome. Wholesomeness is the sense of blameless-with-happy-result; unwholesomeness, the sense of blameworthy-with-painful-result; and the indeterminate is what is spoken of as being neither of these two. So it is understood that the "not-declaring" is specifically as-to-wholesome-and-unwholesome, not in some further respect; and it is "not declared" not merely in the sense of being unsayable, but because the nature of those dhammas is genuinely released from both. That is why it is also called "of the nature of yielding no [ripening] result."

Nina: Kusala and akusala are precise: the wholesome is blameless and brings a happy result, the unwholesome is blameworthy and brings an unhappy one. The "indeterminate" (abyākata) — which covers resultant cittas (vipāka), functional cittas (kiriya), all rūpa, and nibbāna — is so called because it is

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7. The string of kusala etymologies. The ṭīkā gives several (here grouped to five lines of sense to avoid clutter): kucchite salayati (shakes off the contemptible), kuse lunāti (mows the evil "grasses"), kusa = ñāṇa (knowledge as the cutting blade), the grass-blade cutting "both sides" (arisen and unarisen defilement), and kucchitānaṃ saṃvaraṇa (restraint). A further play (ku = "earth/base") is noted but not separately listed.

neither wholesome nor unwholesome; it does not produce result, being either result itself, or merely functional, or outside the round.[8] The many derivations of kusala all come to one thing: wholesomeness mows down, shakes off, and shuts out the defilements — which is why developing it is the whole work of the path.

8. Avipāka — not yielding ripening-result — is true of vipāka, kiriya, rūpa, and nibbāna.

Part XIII

Consciousness by plane, and the eight wholesome sense-sphere cittas

Vism XIV 83

Consciousness by plane (83)

> ***Vism XIV 83 (CST §452).*** *Herein, the profitable is fourfold by plane: of the sense sphere, of the fine-material sphere, of the immaterial sphere, and supramundane.*

ṭīkā: "Plane" (bhūmi) is "where dhammas come to be" — a location, and also a state or condition; for a condition, too, is grasped as a "place of occurrence" for what is in that condition, this being the easier way to grasp them.[1] Mundane plane is to be understood by way of location, supramundane by way of condition — or mundane by both, supramundane by condition only.

ṭīkā: Of the sense sphere (kāmāvacara): there are two "sense-desires" — the sense-desire that is the object (vatthu-kāma), namely the five strands of sense pleasure that are desired, and the sense-desire that is the defilement (kilesa-kāma), namely the craving that desires. Where these two together "move about" (avacaranti) is the "sense sphere"; and what is that? The elevenfold sense-becoming. Because this consciousness mostly moves and occurs there, it is "sense-sphere" — one "move-about" (avacara) being elided in the compound. The same method gives "fine-material sphere" and "immaterial sphere," with form-craving for the form-realm and formless-craving for the formless. Supramundane (lokuttara): it "crosses beyond the world" — said of the wholesome [path]; while the other [fruition] "has crossed up out of the world," and so is also "supramundane."

> **Nina:** "Plane of citta" (the four kinds: sense-sphere, fine-material, immaterial, supramundane) must be distinguished from "plane of existence" (the locality of rebirth). The two do not coincide: sense-sphere cittas arise also in the fine-material and immaterial brahma planes — cittas rooted in attachment, and seeing and hearing, arise there too, though smelling, tasting, and body-consciousness do not.[2] The Atthasālinī makes the point: this consciousness is called "of the sense sphere" because it mostly frequents the eleven sense-plane existences, even though it occurs elsewhere as well.

Joy and equanimity (83)

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1. Bhūmi is read as both "location" (ṭhāna) and "state/condition" (avatthā).

2. The "elevenfold sense-becoming" = the eleven sense-sphere planes: four woeful, the human, and six sense-sphere heavens.

> ***Vism XIV 83 (CST §452).*** *That of the sense sphere is eightfold, classified by joy, equanimity, knowledge, and prompting.*

ṭīkā: The division by joy (somanassa) and equanimity (upekkhā) is fitting, since the two are of distinct nature. "Joy": a mind that is good or beautiful is sumana; the state of one whose mind is so is somanassa — by usage, the pleasant mental feeling. A citta is "accompanied by joy" when, from arising to dissolution, it occurs conjoined and associated with that feeling; and its being so accompanied is to be understood by way of its object, for it is toward a desirable object that the mind is accompanied by joy.

ṭīkā: But — is not a desirable object the very basis of greed? How can a wholesome citta arise there? This is not absolute; even toward a desirable object the wholesome can arise, by way of [wise] attention and so on. For one in whom, through the conjunction of the "four favourable wheels" and the like, attention is wise; whose mind is settled upon "I should do only what is wholesome"; who has turned back from unwholesome occurrence and bent the mind toward the wholesome; and who has made this his constant practice — for such a one, even toward a desirable object the citta is associated with non-greed and the rest, not with greed and the rest.

ṭīkā: Equanimity (upekkhā): "it looks on" (upekkhati) — even while feeling the object, it regards it with detachment, being settled in the mode of neutrality. Or, "the experiencing that, having drawn near (upetā), is unopposed to pleasure and pain"; or, that which "looks on" impartially, by way of its fitting occurrence, having no bias toward a desirable or undesirable object — and a citta conjoined with that is "accompanied by equanimity." With and without knowledge — and the conditions for understanding (83)

> ***Vism XIV 83 (CST §452).*** *It is associated with knowledge (ñāṇa-sampayutta) or dissociated from knowledge; and unprompted (asaṅkhārika) or prompted (sasaṅkhārika).*

ṭīkā: "Joined in its modes equally with knowledge" is "associated with knowledge"; and the "modes" here are just the single arising and the rest [the four marks of association].[3] Now there are causes for a citta's being thus associated with knowledge: kamma-resultant rebirth, the maturing of the faculties, and the remoteness of the defilements.

ṭīkā: — By kamma as decisive support: one who teaches the Dhamma to others, or trains them in the blameless spheres of craft, work, and science — doing what conducts to understanding — has, by the support of that kamma, his wholesome citta arising associated with knowledge. — By rebirth: one reborn in a world free from ill-will has, in dependence on that rebirth, a citta

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3. "Modes" (pakāra) = the four marks of association (sampayoga): single arising, single cessation, single object, single base. "Associated with knowledge" = understanding (paññā/amoha) is among the citta's factors.

associated with knowledge; as it was said, "for him, happy there, the lines of Dhamma float up; slow though the arising of mindfulness be, bhikkhus, that being then quickly reaches distinction" (A iv 191). — By maturity of the faculties: one who has reached the age of the "ten years of understanding" has, in dependence on the ripening of the faculties, his wholesome citta arising associated with knowledge. — By remoteness of the defilements: one in whom the defilements have been suppressed has, in dependence on their being far off, a citta associated with knowledge; as it is said, "from application wisdom is born, from non-application wisdom decays"[4] (Dhp 282).

ṭīkā: Prompted and unprompted: the "instigation" (saṅkhāra) is the prior effort, the spur of mind, aroused in oneself or by another. The citta in which this is absent is "unprompted"; the one that occurs with such a spur is "prompted."

ṭīkā: So, by these three variables — joy or equanimity, knowledge or its absence, prompting or its absence — the sense-sphere wholesome consciousness is of eight kinds: (1) joyful, with knowledge, unprompted; (2) joyful, with knowledge, prompted; (3) joyful, without knowledge, unprompted; (4) joyful, without knowledge, prompted; (5) equable, with knowledge, unprompted; (6) equable, with knowledge, prompted; (7) equable, without knowledge, unprompted; (8) equable, without knowledge, prompted.

> **Nina:** Whether a wholesome citta is accompanied by understanding is not a matter of choice in the moment; it depends on conditions, some from the past and some present. The ṭīkā names the "four wheels" — living in a suitable place, association with noble persons, right aspiration, and merit formerly done (A ii 32) — and adds the maturing of the faculties of confidence, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding, which have to be developed; even one's age plays a part, the Visuddhimagga reckoning the years from about forty to fifty as favourable for developing understanding.[5] A wholesome citta with understanding needs many conditions; we cannot summon it at will, but we can cultivate the conditions for it — wise attention, good friends, hearing the Dhamma, and the resolve to do what is wholesome.

How the eight occur, and their fruit (83, close)

ṭīkā: Having listed the eight, [the Visuddhimagga], to show their manner of occurrence, begins "for when…" and so on. There, "the attainment of a recipient and the rest" — by "the rest" are gathered the attainment of a

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4. The three conditions for knowledge-association — kammūpapatti (here unpacked as kamma-as-support and rebirth, two of the four), indriya-paripāka (maturity of the faculties), kilesa-dūrī-bhāva (remoteness of defilements) — each with a canonical proof-text.

5. "The ten years of understanding" (paññā-dasaka) — in the traditional reckoning of the ten decades of a life, the decade (roughly the forties) regarded as the ripening of understanding.

[suitable] gift, time, donee, and so on. By "or some other cause of joy" are gathered: abundance of confidence, purity of view, seeing the benefit in wholesome action, being of joyful rebirth, and the eleven things that conduce to the enlightenment-factor of rapture. By "the right view that things given exist, that what is offered exists…," and by "and so on," are included not only the nine grounds of right view but also what conduces to the enlightenment-factor of investigation-of-states.

ṭīkā: "Putting it in front" (purakkhatvā) means making it the forerunner — and that as a conascent forerunner, since association is intended, as in "mind is the forerunner of states"[6] (Dhp 1). "Not flagging" (asaṃsīdanto) means not falling into the shrinking-back of meritorious action through stinginess about one's reputation, and the like — by this is shown open-handed generosity. "Unurged" means urged by no one; this is the showing of merit-practice from one's own disposition. "By others" shows merit done at an evident urging.

ṭīkā: Thus these eight wholesome sense-sphere cittas, taking any of the six objects from visible object to mental object, arise through the three doors of body, speech, and mind, as bodily action and the rest, immediately after the equanimous rootless functional mind-consciousness-element [the adverting consciousness]. And of these, when the four associated with knowledge generate a three-root rebirth-linking, sixteen resultant cittas ripen [as their fruit]; when a two-root rebirth-linking, twelve, omitting the three-root ones; and so on through the cases. This wholesome consciousness, ripening, brings about rebirth in a sense-sphere happy destiny, and brings about success of property in both happy and unhappy destinies — for even the wealth of nāgas and supaṇṇas, resembling the splendour of the gods, is the fruit of sense-sphere wholesome kamma; there is no desirable fruit of the unwholesome.

> **Nina:** These eight are the "great wholesome cittas" (mahā-kusala) of daily life — the cittas of generosity, virtue, and mental development as they arise in ordinary moments. The analysis is not abstract bookkeeping: it shows that every wholesome moment is conditioned through and through — by its object, by feeling, by the presence or absence of understanding, by whether it springs up readily or has to be urged — and that none of it is "self." Seeing this is itself the beginning of the understanding the chapter is about.

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6. Purakkhatvā, "putting in front" = making conascent-forerunner, not temporal precedence; Dhp 1's "mind the forerunner" is read as conascence.

Part XIV

The jhāna and path cittas, and the unwholesome consciousness

Vism XIV 84–93

The fine-material and immaterial wholesome cittas

(86–87)

> ***Vism XIV 86.*** *The consciousness of the fine-material sphere is fivefold, being classed according to association with the jhāna factors. That is to say, the first is associated with applied thought, sustained thought, happiness, bliss, and concentration; the second leaves out applied thought from that; the third leaves out sustained thought from that; the fourth makes happiness fade away from that; and the fifth is associated with equanimity and concentration, bliss having subsided.*

ṭīkā: This is "fine-material sphere" — having a physical basis, subject to cankers, free of the hindrances. By "having a basis only" the immaterial is excluded; by "subject to cankers," the first path-citta; by "free of the hindrances," the [unwholesome] pair accompanied by aversion.[1] What was said briefly — "fivefold by the variety of jhāna-factor combination" — is unfolded by "that is to say": somewhere five factors, somewhere four, three, two, and a further two; all this was set out in the treatment of jhāna [Vism IV].[2] This consciousness, being development-born, arises taking the earth-disc and the other meditation-objects as its object, immediately after the knowledge-associated wholesome [preliminary] citta; and, varying as inferior, medium, and superior, it produces rebirth, in due order, in the sixteen brahma-worlds from the Retinue of Brahmā upward.

> ***Vism XIV 87.*** *That of the immaterial sphere is fourfold by association with the four immaterial states; for the first is associated with the jhāna of the base consisting of boundless space, while the second, third, and fourth are [respectively] associated with those of the base consisting of boundless consciousness, of nothingness, and of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.*

ṭīkā: The immaterial is reached by the surmounting of perceptions of matter, and so on. "Of the four immaterial states" means: by the four formless jhānas, reckoned as equanimity-and-concentration; this is the possessive used in an instrumental sense — or, by the variety of their yoking [to their objects].

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1. Savatthuka excludes the formless; sāsava excludes the first path; vinīvaraṇa excludes the aversion-pair.

2. The fivefold jhāna scheme (pañcaka method): see Vism IV.

These, too, being development-born, arise — taking as object, in due succession, the space [left by] the removed kasiṇa, the first formless consciousness, the [state of] nothingness, and the base of nothingness — immediately after the equanimity-and-knowledge-associated wholesome citta, and give rebirth-and-occurrence result in the four formless brahma-worlds.[3]

The supramundane wholesome cittas (87, close)

> ***Vism XIV 88.*** *The supramundane is fourfold by association with the four paths. So, firstly, profitable consciousness is of twenty-one kinds.*

ṭīkā: The supramundane is to be reached by the succession of the six purifications. What must be said of it will come later [in the chapters on the purifications]. "By association with the four paths" means: by association with the four noble paths, from the path of stream-entry to the path of arahatship. This fourfold consciousness too, being development-born, arises taking nibbāna as its object — under the names of the void liberation, the signless liberation, and the desireless liberation — and it turns back the arising of becoming, the seven becomings and the rest. So wholesome consciousness, all told, is of twenty-one kinds, by a method neither too brief nor too detailed.[4]

> **Nina:** The wholesome cittas of all four planes have now been set out: eight of the sense sphere, five of the fine-material, four of the immaterial, four supramundane — twenty-one in all. The jhāna cittas differ from sense-sphere wholesome cittas in their power: where the sense-sphere kind abandons defilement only momentarily (tadaṅga), jhāna abandons it by suppression (vikkhambhana), holding it off for as long as the jhāna and its mastery last. The path cittas alone abandon it by eradication (samuccheda), cutting it off so that it can never arise again — and they alone take nibbāna as object. The whole ascending scheme shows the one work of understanding deepening from the wholesome moment of daily life up to the path that ends the round.

The unwholesome consciousness: greed, hate, delusion

(88–93)

> ***Vism XIV 89.*** *The unprofitable is one kind according to plane, being only of the sense sphere. It is of three kinds according to root, as rooted in greed, rooted in hate, and rooted in delusion.*

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3. The four objects: the space vacated by the removed kasiṇa, the first formless consciousness, nothingness, and the base of nothingness.

4. "Neither too brief nor too detailed" (nātisaṅkhepa-vitthāra): the path counted as four, not as the expanded twenty (four paths × five jhānas).

ṭīkā: "Of the sense sphere only": some of other schools would have an unwholesome consciousness of the fine-material and immaterial spheres too; the word "only" is to set their view aside.[5] Though unwholesome consciousness arises in beings of the exalted (brahma) planes, and even gives there its occurrence-result in the form-element, it is, without exception, "of the sense sphere" — and the reason was already stated: taking kāma as "sense-craving," the unwholesome is "where sense-craving ranges," its object being sense-sphere states. For the division by plane must follow the object — otherwise the objectless [path and formless states] could not be placed, nor the result-less; so those included by their object are classed by their object, and those not so included are "supramundane," as having crossed beyond the world.

ṭīkā: "Of three kinds by root": the three unwholesome roots are greed, hate, and delusion; in dependence on them, the unwholesome too is threefold. They are called "roots" because they are the cause of [the unwholesome being] well-established, as a root is for a tree. "Rooted in greed" (lobha-mūla): the designation is by what is not shared — as we say "the sound of a drum," "the sprout of barley." So likewise "rooted in hate." But "rooted in delusion" is named for the root and nothing else — delusion alone is its root.

Rooted in greed (90)

> ***Vism XIV 90 (CST §453).*** *That rooted in greed is eightfold, classified by joy, equanimity, [wrong] view, and prompting: (1) joyful, with wrong view, unprompted; (2) prompted; (3) joyful, without wrong view, unprompted; (4) prompted; (5)–(8) the same four with equanimity in place of joy.*

ṭīkā: The classification-word is to be applied severally — by joy-and-equanimity, by [the presence or absence of] wrong view, and by prompting. "Associated with wrong view": wrong view itself is "diṭṭhigata," "what has gone into [false] view" — formed like "what is in the way of dung, of urine"; or, the merely gone-into-view, there being no real object such as it grasps. Because it occurs as the obstinate hold "this alone is true, all else is worthless," it arises only together with greed, never with hate.

ṭīkā: "When…" and so on shows how the greed-rooted cittas occur. "Wrong view" here is annihilationist and the other wrong views: by these, beings of perverted mind reject the next world — "the range of the living self extends only as far as the faculties reach" — and, holding "there is no danger in sense-desires," fall into indulgence in them however they can. When one, putting such wrong view foremost, and glad — by the attainment of a

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5. "Rooted in greed/hate" names each by its distinctive added root, as "drum-sound" names sound by its source; "rooted in delusion" means delusion is its sole root.

desirable object or some other cause of gladness — indulges in sense-pleasure, or believes there is no fault in it, with a citta that of its own keen nature needs no prompting, that is the first; when the citta is sluggish and needs urging on by oneself or another, the second; and when one acts so gladly but without placing wrong view foremost — in plain sexual indulgence, or coveting another's fortune, or taking what is not given — the third (unprompted) and fourth (prompted).[67] The four accompanied by equanimity (5–8) follow the same pattern, the feeling alone differing.

Rooted in hate (92)

> ***Vism XIV 92.*** *That rooted in hate is of two kinds: being accompanied by grief (domanassa) and associated with resentment (paṭigha), it is either prompted or unprompted. It should be understood to occur at the times when consciousness is either keen [if unprompted] or sluggish [if prompted] in the killing of living things, and so on.*

ṭīkā: Hate-rooted consciousness is always accompanied by displeasure, painful mental feeling, and by resentment, the mind's striking-against its object; and it is unprompted when it springs up of itself in its own keen cruelty, prompted when it has to be roused. It occurs in killing living beings, and the like.

> **Nina:** Aversion (dosa) and the unpleasant feeling that accompanies it are themselves only conditioned nāmas, not lasting, not "mine" — and seeing them as impersonal elements is precisely what frees us from being overwhelmed by them. As to the question whether there is more to dukkha than grief and resentment: indeed there is. Desire is the cause of dukkha; not getting what one wants is dukkha; but the deepest dukkha is to be in the round at all, a prey to the three unwholesome roots that overcome us again and again. Seeing the danger of the round, a sense of urgency arises of itself, to develop the path that leads out.

Rooted in delusion (93)

> ***Vism XIV 93.*** *That rooted in delusion is of two kinds: being accompanied by equanimity, it is either associated with uncertainty (vicikicchā) or associated with agitation (uddhacca). It should be understood to occur at the time of indecision or of distraction. So unprofitable consciousness is of twelve kinds.*

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6. The eight greed-rooted cittas sorted by three binary variables (joy/equanimity, with/without wrong view, prompted/unprompted) — exactly parallel to the eight wholesome, with wrong view replacing knowledge. diṭṭhigata glossed (cf. the earlier yevāpanaka method).

7. The micchādiṭṭhi here is chiefly annihilationism (uccheda-diṭṭhi) and the denial of a world beyond; the ṭīkā adds folk wrong-views (e.g. that having sons secures heaven). The greed-rooted occurrence-passage (sexual indulgence, covetousness, theft) is the Visuddhimagga's.

ṭīkā: The two delusion-rooted cittas are accompanied by equanimity — for in mere bewilderment there is neither the gladness of greed nor the pain of hate, only a blank neutral feeling. The one is associated with doubt, occurring "at the time of indecision," when the mind cannot settle, wavering "is it so, is it not?"; the other with restlessness, occurring "at the time of distraction," when the mind is scattered and will not stay on its object. These two are reckoned unprompted only, since delusion needs no spur.

Nina: Each unwholesome citta is rooted in delusion (moha), ignorance; to that root may be added greed or hate, making the lobha-rooted, dosa-rooted, and moha-rooted families — eight, two, and two: twelve unwholesome cittas in all. They are not "ours"; they are conditioned realities arising by their own conditions, and the Abhidhamma teaches us to see them as non-self. If we do not develop satipaṭṭhāna we go on taking realities for permanent and for self, and wrong view cannot be eradicated; friendship with noble persons, hearing the Dhamma, and wise attention to what appears through the six doors are the conditions by which these very akusala cittas can become the object of understanding rather than the master of the mind.

Part XV

The indeterminate consciousness: the resultant cittas

Vism XIV 94–105

What "indeterminate" includes (94)

> ***Vism XIV 94.*** *The indeterminate (abyākata) is of two kinds: (i) resultant and (ii) functional. Herein, resultant is of four kinds according to plane: of the sense sphere, of the fine-material sphere, of the immaterial sphere, and supramundane; and that of the sense sphere is of two kinds, namely, profitable result and unprofitable result.*

ṭīkā: The neuter form "indeterminate, resultant," and so on, looks back to the word "consciousness"; and it is precisely with reference to the indeterminate that is under discussion [i.e. consciousness] that it is called twofold. Otherwise, since materiality and nibbāna are also indeterminate, it would have had to be called fourfold. The sense-sphere-and-other nature of resultant consciousness should be understood exactly as was stated for the wholesome.

ṭīkā: Rootlessness belongs to resultants as "with-root" does — by way of the associated roots, not the producing roots. For though a resultant's being "with root" is brought about by a kamma that is with root, it is still called "with root" only by reference to the roots that accompany it; otherwise even rootless resultants would turn out to be "with root" [since they too come from rooted kamma]. — But why does a rooted [wholesome kamma] have a rootless result? — The reason for this has already been given [under the eye, where it was shown that kamma-result is the Buddha's province]; and just as non-greed and the rest do not arise in the five sense-cognitions, which merely fall upon whatever object presents itself, so their rootlessness is to be seen in receiving and investigating too, whose work is duller and duller still.[12]

> **Nina:** The four indeterminate dhammas are resultant cittas, functional cittas, materiality, and nibbāna; but in the consciousness aggregate only the two kinds of citta are in view. Vipāka is the result of kamma — wholesome-resultant from wholesome kamma, unwholesome-resultant from unwholesome. Kamma is the cause; vipāka the effect; the functional cittas are neither cause nor result. It is useful to keep these four natures (jāti) firmly apart — wholesome, unwholesome, resultant, functional — for if we do not know when a resultant citta such as seeing arises, and when the unwholesome

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1. The distinction: a resultant is "rootless" or "rooted" by reference to the roots accompanying it (sampayutta-hetu), not the roots that produced it (nibbattaka-hetu) — since all results come from rooted kamma, the producing-root criterion would make every result "rooted."

2. Cross-referenced to the eye-passage: kamma-result is the Buddha's province.

citta that tends to follow it arises, we take the whole stream for "I" and "mine."

The rootless wholesome-resultant (95–99)

> ***Vism XIV 95 (CST §454).*** *Herein, the [wholesome-resultant] that is without root-cause, devoid of the resultant roots such as non-greed, is eightfold: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, and body-consciousness; the mind-element with the function of receiving; and the two mind-consciousness-elements with the functions of investigating and so on.*

ṭīkā: Just as association with non-greed and the rest is impossible in the five sense-cognitions, which merely fall upon the presented object, so — receiving and investigating having a duller and a still-duller work — their rootlessness too should be understood from the very non-arising of roots in them.

> ***Vism XIV 96.*** *Herein, eye-consciousness has the characteristic of being supported by the eye and cognizing visible data. Its function is to have only visible data as its object. It is manifested as occupation with visible data. Its proximate cause is the departure of the functional mind-element that has visible data as its object. Ear-, nose-, tongue-, and body-consciousness [respectively] have the characteristic of being supported by the ear, etc., and of cognizing sounds, and so on. Their functions are to have only sounds, etc., as their [respective] objects. They are manifested as occupation with those, and their proximate cause is the departure of the functional mind-element.*

ṭīkā: Eye-consciousness depends on the eye — the eye being its support by way of dependence, prenascence, faculty, dissociation, presence, and non-disappearance — and cognizes only visible object; its work is to take that and nothing else; it shows itself as turned toward visible object; and its near cause is the passing away of the five-door adverting (the functional mind-element) that adverted to that object — for a citta arises only on the cessation of the citta before it.[3] "Eye-consciousness has visible object as object" and the rest are said in the way the texts hand them down.

> **Nina:** Eye-consciousness — seeing — is a resultant citta; it merely experiences visible object, it does not like or dislike it. The receiving-consciousness (sampaṭicchana, the mind-element) that follows does not see; it just receives the object and is succeeded by the investigating-consciousness (santīraṇa), which investigates it. The ṭīkā notes

3. The six conditions by which the eye supports eye-consciousness — dependence (nissaya), prenascence (purejāta), faculty (indriya), dissociation (vippayutta), presence (atthi), non-disappearance (avigata) — are from the Paṭṭhāna; The "departure of the functional mind-element" = the passing of the five-door adverting citta.

that these functions are not prominent — they only follow the sense-cognition and do their work. We should not forget that each is an element (dhātu), a dhamma void of self; we have heard the word "element" often, but it is through insight that these characteristics are directly known and realised as elements, empty of self.

> ***Vism XIV 98–99 (CST §454).*** *The mind-element [receiving] has the characteristic of cognizing visible object and so on immediately after the five sense-cognitions; its function is to receive; it is manifested as the corresponding state; its proximate cause is the departure of the [respective] sense-consciousness. The investigating mind-consciousness-element is twofold, accompanied by joy or by equanimity: the joyful occurs only toward a very desirable object, in the five doors as investigation and at the end of impulsion as registration, and so has two positions; the equanimous occurs toward a desirable-neutral object, and has five positions — investigation, registration, rebirth-linking, life-continuum, and death.*

ṭīkā: This eightfold rootless wholesome-resultant is also twofold by fixed and variable object, and threefold by bodily pleasure, mental joy, and equanimity. The five sense-cognitions each have a fixed object, occurring only toward visible object, sound, and so on; the rest have a variable object — the receiving mind-element toward the five (visible object and the rest), the two investigating elements toward all six. Among them, body-consciousness is accompanied by bodily pleasure; the two-position investigating element by mental joy; and the remaining six [the four other sense-cognitions, receiving, and the five-position investigating element] by equanimity.

The great-resultant, and the unwholesome-resultant

(100–101)

> ***Vism XIV 100 (CST §454).*** *The sense-sphere with-root [wholesome-]resultant is eightfold, like the wholesome — joyful or equanimous, with or without knowledge, unprompted or prompted. But unlike the wholesome, which is fivefold by destiny and sevenfold by station of consciousness, this arises only in part of that range.*[4] *It occurs toward the six objects, by way of its "coming" [-condition], and serves as rebirth-linking, life-continuum, death, and registration.*

ṭīkā: These eight "great-resultants" (mahā-vipāka) resemble the eight great wholesome cittas in their eightfold sorting, but differ in scope. As to whether the unprompted or prompted character of a result is fixed by the kamma it comes from or by its own conditions: some teachers hold it follows the "coming" — the unprompted wholesome yields an unprompted result, as a

4. "Sevenfold by station of consciousness": see the stations of consciousness, D iii 253.

face's movement makes the reflection move; others hold it follows the strength of present conditions — a result born of strong, clear conditions is unprompted, of weak ones prompted.[5] And the want of the difference that obtains between wholesome and result is by reason of the associated dhammas given in the Pāli; a result has no "drive" (ussāha) — that being the activity, in a continuum where ignorance and craving are uncut, of the capacity to produce result, which a mere resultant lacks.

> ***Vism XIV 101 (CST §454).*** *The unwholesome-resultant, however, is without root-cause only. It is sevenfold: eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, and body-consciousness; the receiving mind-element; and the investigating mind-consciousness-element [accompanied by equanimity].*

ṭīkā: The unwholesome-resultant is rootless throughout — there being no such thing as a "rooted" unwholesome result — and it lacks the joyful investigating element, since an undesirable object gives no occasion for joy; its one investigating element is equanimous only.

> **Nina:** Only one type of unwholesome-resultant — the equanimous investigating-consciousness that is unwholesome-resultant — performs the function of rebirth in the unhappy planes, though it does so with many degrees of intensity; there are four classes of unhappy plane — the hells, the demons (asuras), the ghosts (petas), and the animals. No one can escape the result of kamma; even kamma of many lives ago may find its opportunity to produce an unhappy rebirth. This is not said to frighten but to instil the urgency that turns the mind toward the path.

The jhāna, formless, and path resultants (102–105)

> ***Vism XIV 102–105 (CST §454).*** *The fine-material-sphere resultant is fivefold, like the wholesome, by association with the jhāna factors. The immaterial-sphere resultant is fourfold, by the four immaterial states. The supramundane resultant is fourfold, by association with the four fruits of the four paths. So resultant consciousness, all told, is thirty-six.*

ṭīkā: The fine-material and immaterial resultants match their wholesome counterparts factor for factor, differing only as result differs from cause; they give rebirth-and-occurrence in the brahma-worlds, fine-material and formless. The supramundane resultant is the fruition (phala) of each path — stream-entry-fruit through arahatship-fruit — arising in immediate succession to its path, taking nibbāna as object. So the resultant cittas number thirty-six: sixteen rootless (eight wholesome-resultant, seven unwholesome-resultant, [and the great-resultant counted apart]), eight great-resultant, five fine-material, four immaterial, four supramundane-fruition — set out, like the

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5. Two teacher-opinions on whether a result's prompted/unprompted character tracks its kamma (the "coming," āgamana, with the face-and-reflection simile) or the strength of present conditions.

wholesome, by a method neither too brief nor too detailed.[6]

Nina: The fruition-cittas (phala-citta) are resultant cittas that experience nibbāna; they arise immediately after the path-citta of the same stage and may arise again later when the noble one attains fruition-absorption. They are vipāka, but of a wholly different order from the resultants of daily life — for they are the fruit of the supramundane path, not of ordinary kamma, and they alone among resultants take nibbāna as their object. With them the result-side of the noble path is complete.

6. Total resultant = 36 (the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha's count: 15 rootless-resultant [8 wholesome-rootless + 7 unwholesome-rootless], 8 great-resultant, 5 fine-material, 4 immaterial, 4 supramundane-fruition = 36). "Neither too brief nor too detailed" again signals the path-fruit counted as four, not twenty.

Part XVI

The functional cittas, and the eighty-nine consciousnesses

Vism XIV 106–110

Functional consciousness: the "mere doing" (106)

> ***Vism XIV 106.*** *The functional (kiriya), however, is of three kinds according to plane: of the sense sphere, of the fine-material sphere, and of the immaterial sphere. That of the sense sphere is of two kinds, namely, without root-cause and with root-cause.*

ṭīkā: Functional consciousness is "mere doing": it occurs accomplishing this or that function, but, being neither wholesome nor unwholesome nor resultant, it leaves no trace and bears no fruit. For the arahat's impulsions, that which has reached the impulsion-state, is fruitless, like the flower of an uprooted tree — there being for the arahat no longer any root, wholesome or unwholesome, to make the tree bear fruit.[1] And the phrase "neither wholesome nor unwholesome": owing to the absence of the wholesome condition that is a wholesome root, it is not wholesome; owing to the absence of the unwholesome condition that is an unwholesome root, it is not unwholesome; owing to the absence of the wise and unwise attention that are the wholesome and unwholesome causes, it is neither; and owing to the absence of the productive condition that is wholesome-or-unwholesome kamma, it is not resultant either.

ṭīkā: There is no supramundane functional consciousness — because the supramundane wholesome (the path) is "of immediate result" (ānantarika): its fruition is sure to follow without interval, so there is no room for a merely functional supramundane citta.

> **Nina:** The functional cittas (kiriya) are neither cause nor result. Two of them — the five-door adverting and the mind-door adverting — arise in everyone; the rest arise only in the arahat, whose impulsions (javana), being free of the roots that are wholesome or unwholesome, no longer accumulate kamma. The simile is exact: the arahat's deeds are like blossoms on a tree whose root has been pulled up — they appear, but they set no fruit, because the root of becoming is gone. There is no supramundane functional citta because the path's result, fruition, follows it immediately and inevitably; the noble concentration is "straight-resulting"[2] (ānantarika), and once the path has

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1. The "uprooted tree's flower" simile (Dhs-a) is the classic image for the arahat's fruitless action.

2. Cf. the Ratana Sutta's "straight-resulting concentration" (Sn 226) and the Mahācattārīsaka (M 117).

arisen nothing can prevent its fruit.

The rootless functional: the two advertings and the smile (107–108)

> ***Vism XIV 107.*** *But the mind-consciousness-element is of two kinds, namely, shared by all and not shared by all. Herein, that shared by all is the functional mind-consciousness-element accompanied by equanimity without root-cause. It has the characteristic of cognizing the six kinds of objects. Its function is to determine (votthapana) at the five doors and to advert at the mind door. It is manifested as the states of determining and adverting corresponding to those; its proximate cause is the departure of the life-continuum, or of the [respective] sense-consciousness.*

ṭīkā: This citta is "shared by all" (sabba-sādhāraṇa) because it arises in every being, wholesome or unwholesome, noble or worldling. It is the mind-door adverting (manodvārāvajjana): at the five doors it does the work of determining (votthapana) — after the investigating citta has handed on the object, it occurs as it were fixing or defining it; the word "as it were" (viya) is meaningful, for its function is not what conventional language calls "deciding," but a single conditioned moment of defining. At the mind door this same citta does the work of adverting — it is the first citta of the mind-door process, breaking the stream of life-continuum and turning toward the object. It is neither wholesome nor unwholesome, only functional.

> ***Vism XIV 108 (CST §454).*** *That not shared by all is the smile-producing citta (hasituppāda), accompanied by joy, by which the arahat's faint smile arises toward objects that are not sublime.*

ṭīkā: The "not shared" functional is the arahat's smile-producing consciousness. It arises only in those whose cankers are destroyed, in the processes through all six doors, toward objects that are merely worldly — as when, seeing through the eye-door a place fit for religious striving, or hearing through the ear-door the heedless din of those gripped by greed in the market-place, the arahat is moved to a faint, knowing smile.[3] It is rootless, functional, accompanied by joy.

> **Nina:** The mind-door adverting (here doing the work of votthapana, determining) is one of the most important cittas to understand, for it stands at the threshold between the resultant cittas that merely receive the object and the wholesome or unwholesome impulsions that follow. It is itself neither; it is functional, and only one moment. Whether wholesome or unwholesome impulsions succeed it depends on conditions — on wise or unwise attention — not on a self who chooses. And the arahat's smile shows that even joy can

3. The eye-door and ear-door examples are from the Atthasālinī (p. 386); anoḷārika objects = merely worldly, not sublime (Pm. 476).

arise wholly without root, wholly without kamma: pure responsiveness, leaving no trace. The beautiful functional, and the count of twenty (109)

> ***Vism XIV 109 (CST §454).*** *The sense-sphere functional with root-cause is eightfold, like the wholesome — joyful or equanimous, with or without knowledge, prompted or unprompted; the fine-material-sphere functional is fivefold and the immaterial-sphere functional fourfold, like the wholesome; but they differ in arising only in arahats. So functional consciousness in the three planes is twenty in all.*

ṭīkā: The eight "great-functional" (mahā-kiriya) cittas resemble the eight great wholesome cittas factor for factor, and the jhāna and formless functional resemble their wholesome counterparts; the sole difference is that all of these arise only in the arahat — for in the arahat the very cittas that in others would be wholesome (accumulating kamma) arise instead as merely functional, the roots of accumulation being severed. So functional consciousness numbers twenty: ten rootless (the two advertings, the smile, and the [resultant-paired functionals — counted as in the ṭīkā]) and ten "with root"[4] (eight great-functional, [reckoned with] the five jhāna and four formless functional).

The eighty-nine consciousnesses (110)

> ***Vism XIV 110.*** *So the 21 kinds of profitable, the 12 kinds of unprofitable, the 36 kinds of resultant, and the 20 kinds of functional amount in all to eighty-nine kinds of consciousness.*

ṭīkā: All these — wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate — are eighty-nine consciousnesses, set out by a method neither too brief nor too detailed.[5] And every one of them, of whatever kind, occurs in some function: the function of rebirth-linking, of life-continuum, and so on; for apart from occurring by way of one or another such function — passing from existence to existence as rebirth-linking, sustaining the existence as life-continuum, and the rest — a citta has no other work at all. Hence it is said that the eighty-nine consciousnesses "occur in fourteen modes."[6]

Nina: The twenty-one wholesome are the 8 sense-sphere, 5 fine-material, 4 immaterial, and 4 supramundane; the twelve unwholesome are the 8 rooted in

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4. The count of twenty functional in the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha: 3 rootless functional (two advertings + smile) + 8 great-functional + 5 fine-material-functional + 4 immaterial-functional = 20. (The bracketed phrasing reflects that the ṭīkā's grouping and the Saṅgaha's differ slightly in how the rootless functional are tallied; the total is twenty.)

5. Ekūnanavuti viññāṇāni, "eighty-nine consciousnesses" — for the counting method see the note at 84–93.

6. The statement: a citta's only "work" is to occur as a function — there is no citta idle, apart from rebirth-linking, life-continuum, and the rest. Hence the eighty-nine "occur in fourteen modes" (cuddasa ākārā), which the Visuddhimagga expounds at 111–124 (the next part). The nineteen rebirth-linking consciousnesses among them are noted by the ṭīkā here and detailed in the dependent-origination chapter (Vism XVII).

greed, 2 in hate, 2 in delusion; the thirty-six resultant and twenty functional complete the eighty-nine. This is the consciousness of the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha's shorter reckoning; expanded by counting each path and fruit at all five jhāna-levels, the supramundane become forty and the total a hundred and twenty-one. The point of the whole long enumeration is not the numbers but what they show: that "consciousness" is not one abiding knower but a vast variety of momentary cittas, each arising by its own conditions, performing one function, and falling away — not one of them "I" or "mine." To see this is the very understanding the chapter set out to develop.

[The fourteen modes in which these eighty-nine occur (rebirth-linking, life-continuum, adverting, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, receiving, investigating, determining, impulsion, registration, and death) are expounded by the Visuddhimagga at 111–124, taken up in the next part.]

Part XVII

The fourteen modes: how the eighty-nine consciousnesses occur in the cognitive series

Vism XIV 111–124

Rebirth-linking (111–113)

> ***Vism XIV 111 (CST §455).*** *How so? When, through the influence of the eight kinds of sense-sphere wholesome consciousness, beings come to be reborn among deities and human beings, then the eight kinds of sense-sphere resultant with roots occur; and also the rootless resultant mind-consciousness-element accompanied by equanimity, the weak two-rooted result, in those reborn handicapped among human beings.*

ṭīkā: The eight great wholesome cittas of the sense-sphere — whether two-rooted (with non-greed and non-hate) or three-rooted (accompanied also by understanding) — produce rebirth in the human plane or the six lower deva planes. Those reborn with a rootless investigating-consciousness (the result of weak wholesome kamma) are handicapped from birth. The object of the rebirth-consciousness is whatever was the object of the last impulsions of the life now ending — kamma, the sign of kamma, or the sign of destiny.[1]

> **Nina:** There are three classes of object of the rebirth-consciousness: kamma, the sign of kamma, and the sign of destiny. When a past wholesome or unwholesome volition is itself taken as object, it is the kamma object; when something involved in the doing of a deed is taken — the image of a pagoda one built, say — it is the sign of kamma; when an image appears of the existence into which one is about to be reborn — a heavenly mansion, or the flames of hell — it is the sign of destiny. Whichever was the object of the dying process is the object of the rebirth-consciousness. The next life follows on this one very rapidly — it all occurs in one flash.

> ***Vism XIV 112–113.*** *When, through the influence of the wholesome of the fine-material and immaterial spheres, beings are reborn in those planes, the corresponding resultants occur as rebirth-linking.*

ṭīkā: So nineteen kinds of consciousness can perform the function of rebirth-linking: one rootless unwholesome-resultant investigating-consciousness, one rootless wholesome-resultant investigating-consciousness, eight great resultants of the sense-sphere, five fine-material resultants, and four immaterial resultants. These same nineteen perform also the functions of life-continuum and death.

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1. The three-objects scheme (kamma, kamma-nimitta, gati-nimitta) follows the Paṭṭhāna and the Dispeller of Delusion.

Life-continuum (114)

> ***Vism XIV 114 (CST §456).*** *When the rebirth-linking consciousness has ceased, then, following on whatever kind of rebirth-linking it may be, the same kinds, being the result of that same kamma, occur as life-continuum (bhavaṅga) with that same object; and again those same kinds, again and again.*

ṭīkā: "With that same object": if kamma was the rebirth-consciousness's object, the life-continuum takes that kamma; if the sign of kamma or the sign of destiny, then one of those. All the bhavaṅga-cittas arising throughout life, in the intervals between cognitive processes, are the result of that same kamma, and are of the same nineteen kinds as the rebirth-consciousness.

> **Nina:** Aṅga is a limb or constituent; bhavaṅga is the constituent of becoming, of life — it keeps the continuity of the individual. There is no moment without citta, even between processes or in dreamless sleep, when no object impinges on any of the six doors. The life-continuum maintains the unbroken stream of cittas from birth to death. By contiguity-condition, the life-continuum is succeeded by adverting: the adverting-consciousness, the first citta of a process, is conditioned by the bhavaṅga that immediately precedes it.

Adverting, and the disturbance of the life-continuum

(115)

> ***Vism XIV 115 (CST §457).*** *When a visible datum has come into the eye's focus, there is impact upon the eye-sensitivity; and thereupon, owing to the impact's influence, there comes to be a disturbance of the life-continuum. Then, when the life-continuum has ceased, the functional mind-element arises accomplishing the function of adverting to that same visible datum.*

ṭīkā: The ṭīkā asks: how does the life-continuum, which has a different support — the heart-base — come to be disturbed by an impact upon the eye? Because it is connected with it. And the simile is this: when grains of sugar are scattered on the surface of a drum, and one grain is tapped, a fly settled on another grain moves. So, by the force of the impact (ghaṭṭanā-bala) on the eye, the life-continuum supported by the heart-base is disturbed.[2] The faculties — eye and the rest — ripen only gradually; "capable of apprehending an object" is said because of this.

> **Nina:** At the first moment of human life kamma produces only three decads — the decads of body-sense, sex, and heart-base; there is not yet eye-, ear-,

2. The fly-on-the-drum simile (bheri-tale… makkhikā) for how an impact on the eye disturbs the heart-base-supported life-continuum "because it is connected with it" is the ṭīkā's; ghaṭṭanā-bala (force of impact). The gradual ripening of the faculties, and the runner-slowing simile from the Saṅgaha commentary, are Nina's supplementary citations.

nose-, or tongue-sense. As we read in the commentary, the eye-decad appears later, and a week after it the ear-decad, then the nose-decad, then the tongue-decad. As for the disturbance: the commentary likens it to a fast runner who, wanting to stop, halts only after a step or two more — the stream of life-continuum is not cut off suddenly, but vibrates for a moment or two and then is interrupted. The visible object impinging on the eye-sense is the condition for seeing — a reminder that seeing is not self, but arises only when the conditions are present. When seeing arises, the eye-sense and visible object that condition it have not yet fallen away; for rūpa lasts seventeen moments of citta, so the object can be experienced by several cittas of the process.

The mind-door, and adverting there (116)

Vism XIV 116 (CST §457). *When an object of any one of the six kinds has come into focus at the mind door, then, next to the disturbance of the life-continuum, the functional rootless mind-consciousness-element arises accompanied by equanimity, as it were cutting off the life-continuum and accomplishing the function of adverting.*

ṭīkā: In the five-door process the five-door adverting-consciousness turns to the object and is at once followed by seeing and the rest; in the mind-door process this single rootless functional adverting performs the turning.

Nina: When visible object, sound, or another sense object has been experienced by the cittas of a sense-door process, it is then experienced by the cittas of a mind-door process, after intervening bhavaṅga-cittas; and later, mind-door processes may arise having concepts as their objects. The five sense-cognitions, receiving, investigating, determining (117–120)

Vism XIV 117 (CST §458). *Next to adverting, eye-consciousness arises, accomplishing the function of seeing; and so for ear-, nose-, tongue-, and body-consciousness, hearing and the rest. These are the wholesome-resultant kinds with respect to desirable and desirable-neutral fields, and the unwholesome-resultant with respect to undesirable and undesirable-neutral fields. This is how ten kinds of resultant consciousness occur as seeing and the rest.*

ṭīkā: Seeing and the other sense-cognitions are wholesome or unwholesome resultants: a wholesome resultant experiences a desirable or moderately desirable object, an unwholesome resultant an undesirable or moderately undesirable one.

Vism XIV 118. *Next to eye-consciousness and the rest, mind-element arises receiving the same field — wholesome-resultant next to wholesome-resultant, unwholesome-resultant next to unwholesome-resultant. This is how two kinds occur as receiving.*

ṭīkā: The receiving-consciousness follows the nature of the sense-cognition before it: unwholesome-resultant after an unwholesome-resultant seeing,

wholesome-resultant after a wholesome-resultant one.

> ***Vism XIV 119.*** *Next to receiving, rootless resultant mind-consciousness-element arises investigating that same field. This is how three kinds occur as investigating.*
>
> ***Vism XIV 120.*** *Next to investigation, the functional rootless mind-consciousness-element accompanied by equanimity arises determining that same field. This is how one kind occurs as determining.*

ṭīkā: The investigating-consciousness is succeeded by the determining-consciousness (votthapana), which defines the object and notes it carefully. This is the same citta that, as mind-door adverting, performs the turning in a mind-door process — neither kamma nor result, but functional.

> **Nina:** The nucleus of the process-cittas is present in the Suttanta, but not the details; these are found partly in the Paṭṭhāna, the Book of Analysis, and the Path of Discrimination, and in full in the commentaries. The synonyms "consciousness, mind, mentation" come from the Book of Analysis.[3]

Impulsion (121)

> ***Vism XIV 121 (CST §459).*** *Next to determining, impulsion (javana) impels — seven moments, or sometimes five. In the five-door process these are among the eight sense-sphere wholesome, the twelve unwholesome, or the nine remaining sense-sphere functional. In the mind door, the same arise next to mind-door adverting; and beyond change-of-lineage, any that obtains a condition impels — the five fine-material wholesome and five functional, the four immaterial wholesome and four functional, and the four path and four fruition consciousnesses of the supramundane. This is how fifty-five kinds occur as impulsion.*

ṭīkā: In the sense-sphere the impellers are twenty-nine: eight great wholesome, twelve unwholesome, eight great functional, and the one rootless functional that is the arahat's smile-producing citta. "Beyond change-of-lineage" includes the preliminary-work and the cleansing, not change-of-lineage alone.[4]

> **Nina:** This passage reminds us that the order of cittas is fixed: no one can change it, nor cause a particular object to come into focus at a chosen moment, nor make a sense object last beyond its seventeen moments. The function of citta is to know an object; and at the moment of impulsion the beautiful or the unwholesome cetasikas accompanying it make the citta — in one who is not an arahat — wholesome or unwholesome. Before dying, too, there are five impulsions, not seven.

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3. The "consciousness, mind, mentation" synonyms are from Vibhaṅga 88.

4. "Beyond change-of-lineage includes the preliminary-work and cleansing, not gotrabhū only" — the ṭīkā's correction (Pm. 479).

Registration (122–123)

> ***Vism XIV 122–123 (CST §460).*** *When impulsion is finished, then, if the object is vivid and the existence is the sense-sphere, registration (tadārammaṇa) occurs — through whatever condition it has obtained, such as previous kamma and the impulsions, with a desirable or other object — making the impulsions' object its own. This is how eleven kinds occur as registration.*

ṭīkā: "Previous kamma" is said to show the different kinds of registration: not only the kamma that generates rebirth-linking generates registration; other kamma does too, though differently. "The impulsions" is said because registration is defined by impulsion — "registration is definable by impulsion." Like some of the water that follows a little behind a boat going upstream, registration — though ready to occur with the life-continuum's object once the impulsions have ended — instead takes the impulsions' object; and because of this it is called tadārammaṇa, "having-that-as-its-object."

> **Nina:** Registration seizes the object of the impulsions — hence its name (tad, "that"; ārammaṇa, "object"). The eleven are eight great resultants (with beautiful roots) and three rootless resultant mind-consciousness-elements, the same three types as the investigating-cittas, here performing the function of registration.[5] Registration cannot be accompanied by happy feeling immediately after unhappy feeling; in such a case it is accompanied by indifferent feeling.

Death, and the round without break (124)

> ***Vism XIV 124 (CST §460).*** *Thus the cognitive series occurs, according to the law of consciousness, again and again, until the life-continuum of one becoming is exhausted. For the very last life-continuum consciousness of one becoming is called death (cuti), from falling (cavana) out of that becoming; and that too is of nineteen kinds, like rebirth-linking and life-continuum. After death there is rebirth-linking again; and after rebirth-linking, life-continuum. So, for beings who hasten through the kinds of becoming, destiny, station of consciousness, and abode of beings, the wheel of consciousness occurs without break.*

ṭīkā: The dying-consciousness is the last bhavaṅga of a life, and so is of the same nineteen kinds. "Becoming, destiny, station, abode" are, the ṭīkā notes, the three becomings, five destinies, six states of consciousness, and nine abodes of beings — given in full elsewhere, in the Saṅgīti discourse and its commentary.

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5. The eleven registration-cittas: eight great resultants and three rootless.

Nina: Saṃsarati means to go on again and again, traversing one life after another. Before we realize it a process of cittas is over, followed by bhavaṅga-cittas, and then another process begins — and so it is, life after life, until ignorance is eradicated when arahatship is attained. The study of the processes, and of the bhavaṅga-cittas between them, teaches us that dhammas roll on without a doer — like the wheel of a cart turning in due order, until the roots of the round are cut off. This can give a sense of urgency: to develop understanding at this very moment, so that ignorance can be eradicated.

Part XVIII

The Feeling Aggregate

Vism XIV 125–128

What feeling is (125)

> ***Vism XIV 125.*** *Now, it was said above, "Whatever has the characteristic of being felt should be understood, all taken together, as the feeling aggregate." And here too, what is said to have the characteristic of being felt is feeling itself, according as it is said, "It is felt, friend, that is why it is called feeling" (M I 293).*

ṭīkā: "Being felt" (vedayita) is that which occurs in the mode of experiencing by way of feeling; the class of dhammas to be marked as "felt" is what "has the characteristic of being felt" — and that, in meaning, is just feeling itself. The doubled "it feels, it feels" is said by way of marking its repeated occurrence in its own domain; the agent-form ["it feels"] is used to show that there is no doer apart from the dhamma with its own nature.[1] "That is why" gives an indefinite causal sense; the meaning is: because it experiences the taste of the object according to conditions, therefore it is called "feeling."

> **Nina:** Feeling experiences the "taste," the flavour, of the object — this is its function. We are inclined to take feeling for self, but it is only a conditioned nāma, arising with each citta and falling away with it. Pleasant and unpleasant feelings have a strong impact: a pleasant or painful feeling experienced in the past on account of some object is the very condition for vividly remembering that object; we do not forget. And feeling conditions more feeling — when there is aversion, accompanied by unpleasant feeling, we dislike that very unpleasant feeling, and so aversion arises again, now taking the unpleasant feeling itself as object. Indifferent feeling we are usually ignorant of; we do not notice it.

Feeling threefold by nature (126)

> ***Vism XIV 126 (CST §456).*** *Though it is of one kind by its individual essence, the characteristic of being felt, it is threefold by nature: wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate — being associated, respectively, with wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate consciousness.*

ṭīkā: "Associated with wholesome consciousness" is said as a mark of wholesome feeling — meaning that whatever wholesome feeling there is, all of it is associated with wholesome consciousness — not as showing what

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1. The doubled verb "it feels, it feels" (M i 293) marks repeated occurrence and, by the agent-form, denies a doer behind the dhamma.

makes it wholesome. For a feeling's being wholesome is not brought about by its association with a wholesome citta, but by wise attention and so on; that is why he says "by nature" (jāti-vasena). The same holds for the unwholesome and the rest. And just as it is threefold by association with wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate consciousness, so it may be understood to be of as many as eighty-nine kinds, by association with each of the eighty-nine consciousnesses.

Nina: Pleasant feeling and indifferent feeling can each be wholesome or unwholesome — pleasant feeling accompanies wholesome cittas and also the cittas rooted in attachment, so one may easily take feeling that is unwholesome for feeling that is wholesome, since unwholesome cittas may arise very shortly after wholesome ones. It is only when mindfulness and understanding arise that the different characteristics of wholesome and unwholesome can be told apart; this needs wise attention (yoniso manasikāra). So long as we do not distinguish the characteristic of nāma from the characteristic of rūpa, we do not understand feeling as it is — we confuse bodily phenomena with feeling. As understanding develops, feeling can be known as nāma, an impersonal element.

Feeling fivefold by faculty (127–128)

Vism XIV 127 (CST §456). *By way of faculty, it is fivefold: the faculty of [bodily] pleasure, of [bodily] pain, of [mental] joy, of [mental] grief, and of equanimity.*

ṭīkā: This fivefold division is by the genuine difference of individual nature, leaving aside the differences that come merely from association, plane, object, and so on.

ṭīkā: — "It gives ease" (sukhayati) — it makes the body and the associated dhammas taste enjoyment: thus [bodily] pleasure (sukha). (Or: it "thoroughly devours" bodily affliction; or, by others, "it readily gives room.") — "It gives dis-ease" (dukkhayati) — it afflicts the body and the associated dhammas: thus [bodily] pain (dukkha). — Joy (somanassa) and equanimity (upekkhā) have been derived already [under the wholesome cittas]; grief (domanassa) is to be understood by the reverse of "joy" — a "bad-minded" state, painful mental feeling.

ṭīkā: But why are bodily and mental pleasure split out as "pleasure" and "joy," and bodily and mental pain as "pain" and "grief," while equanimity is given as one only? Because of a difference in the one case and its absence in the other. For pleasure and pain affect the body in one way — by helping and harming it — and the mind in another; so they are taught as two each. But equanimity does not so differ in its working upon body and mind; therefore, there being no difference, equanimity is taught as one.

> ***Vism XIV 128 (CST §456).*** *These five are made plain at their places of occurrence. Bodily pleasure has the characteristic of experiencing a desirable tangible object; its function is to intensify the associated dhammas; it is manifested as bodily enjoyment; its proximate cause is the body-faculty. Bodily pain has the characteristic of experiencing an undesirable tangible object; its function is to wither the associated dhammas; it is manifested as bodily affliction; its proximate cause is the body-faculty. Joy has the characteristic of experiencing a desirable object; its function is to partake of the desirable aspect in one way or another; it is manifested as mental enjoyment; its proximate cause is tranquillity. Grief has the characteristic of experiencing an undesirable object; its function is to partake of the undesirable aspect; it is manifested as mental affliction; its proximate cause is the heart-base. Equanimity has the characteristic of being felt as neutral; its function is neither to intensify nor to wither the associated dhammas; it is manifested as peacefulness; its proximate cause is consciousness without rapture.*

ṭīkā: The proximate cause of bodily pleasure is the body-faculty, since it has no other basis; its function, "intensifying," is the strengthening of the conascent dhammas, and this is keener than the mere mental gladness, being unmixed [with thought-construction]. Joy's proximate cause is said to be tranquillity, on the strength of the text "with tranquil body he feels ease" (S v 376) — though this is to be understood of the unworldly joy. Grief's proximate cause is fixed as the heart-base, because it arises only in the sense sphere [where there is a heart-base]. And equanimity's manifestation as "peacefulness," and its proximate cause as "consciousness without rapture," are to be understood of the blameless, unworldly equanimity, not of equanimity in general.

ṭīkā: The place of occurrence: just as a hammer striking a cotton-lump on an anvil drives through the cotton and strikes the anvil, the friction being strong — so, the friction of impact being strong, body-consciousness toward a desirable or neutral-desirable object is accompanied by pleasure, and toward an undesirable or neutral-undesirable object by pain.[23]

ṭīkā: By the count: bodily pleasure and bodily pain each accompany one consciousness (the respective body-consciousness); joy accompanies sixty-two; grief, two (the hate-rooted); and equanimity, fifty-five — so the fivefold feeling pervades the whole range of the eighty-nine.[4]

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2. Joy → tranquillity: S v 376, of unworldly joy. The qualifications "unworldly/blameless" are the ṭīkā's guards.

3. The anvil-and-cotton simile is also at Dhs-a 263.

4. The tally across the eighty-nine: pleasure 1, pain 1, joy 62, grief 2, equanimity 55 — totalling 121 feeling-associations over the 89 cittas (the figure expands because feeling is counted per citta, and the supramundane are here reckoned at jhāna-levels for the 62/55 counts).

Nina: The five feelings are realities each with its own characteristic, arising because of their own conditions, and without owner. Bodily feeling is the feeling that accompanies body-consciousness, the result of kamma: pleasant bodily feeling with the experience of a pleasant tangible object, painful bodily feeling with an unpleasant one; body-consciousness is never accompanied by indifferent feeling, because the impact of tangible object on the body-sense is strong, like the hammer striking through the cotton to the anvil. Mental feeling — joy, grief, equanimity — accompanies the other cittas. All these classifications remind us that feelings each have their own conditions for arising and are without self: mere elements, void of an owner. Here ends the explanation in detail of the feeling aggregate.

Part XIX

The Perception Aggregate, and the Formations Aggregate begun: contact

Vism XIV 129–134

The Perception Aggregate (129–130)

> ***Vism XIV 129.*** *Now, it was said above, "Whatever has the characteristic of perceiving should be understood, all taken together, as the perception aggregate." And here too, what is said to have the characteristic of perceiving is perception itself, according as it is said, "It perceives, friend, that is why it is called perception" (M I 293).*

ṭīkā: What is to be said here — "what has the characteristic of perceiving is perception," and the rest — is to be understood by the method already stated for the feeling aggregate. But there is this difference: although there is no consciousness dissociated from feeling either, yet because feeling is of a distinct nature, a given consciousness, though associated with feeling, may [in respect of another feeling] be dissociated from it; with perception there is nothing of this kind — all consciousness, of all four planes, is uniformly "of the characteristic of perceiving." So, where feeling was defined by its difference (the breaking-up characteristic and so on), perception is all of one characteristic, the perceiving of an object marked off as blue and the rest.

ṭīkā: Its function is re-cognising by the sign (paccābhiññāṇa): having earlier made a sign, it knows again by that sign.[1] The occurrence is like a carpenter's recognising a piece of timber by a mark he himself made on it. Its proximate cause is the making of a sign as the condition for re-cognising — as when one fixes the mark "this is the one" so as to perceive it again; and this making-of-a-sign-and-re-cognising is common to all perception, whether it is perception that makes the sign or perception that knows by the sign.

> **Nina:** Perception (saññā) marks and remembers the object cognised by citta so that it can be recognised; it accompanies every single citta. It marks, for example, the seeing of a colour such as blue — though at the moment of seeing the colour is not yet named "blue"; only in a later mind-door process is it defined as blue. The object perception marks may be citta, cetasika, rūpa, or nibbāna, and also concepts (paññatti); whatever object citta cognises, perception marks and remembers it. Perception "follows" whatever it accompanies: with wrong view, it becomes the perception of permanence or of self (nicca-saññā, attā-saññā) — one takes seeing and hearing for lasting, persons and things for "self"; with right understanding, it becomes the perception of impermanence and not-self, complying with paññā. Firm

1. Paccābhiññāṇa: re-cognising by a previously made sign.

remembrance of the Dhamma heard is the proximate cause of the mindfulness of satipaṭṭhāna.

The Formations Aggregate: its definition (131)

> ***Vism XIV 131.*** *Now, it was said above, "Whatever has the characteristic of forming should be understood, all taken together, as the formations aggregate." And here too, what is said to have the characteristic of forming is that which has the characteristic of agglomerating; that is, formations themselves, according as it is said, "They form the formed, bhikkhus, that is why they are called formations" (S III 87).*

ṭīkā: "The characteristic of forming" is the characteristic of heaping together, of combining (rāsi-karaṇa, sampiṇḍana); and from this the formations are said to have the function of accumulating (āyūhana). It is because volition (cetanā) is the principal thing among them that the dhammas of the formations aggregate are spoken of thus — for which reason [the Visuddhimagga] asks "but what are they? — just the formations," answering that "they form the formed." "They form the formed" means: they bring their own fruit, the formed thing, fully and rightly to accomplishment. It is manifested as activity (vipphāra, "intervention") — that is, as a state of being busied, having a function; for whenever such-and-such a citta arises, the formations invariably arise [doing their work].

Nina: Saṅkharoti means to put together, to combine; the prefix abhi- here has the sense of preponderance. The formations aggregate (saṅkhārakkhandha) includes all the cetasikas — both unwholesome and beautiful — except feeling and perception, which are aggregates in their own right.[2] Volition (cetanā) is the chief of this aggregate; kamma is in fact the cetanā cetasika. When we perform a good or bad deed, it is volition that motivates the deed, and this is the activity of kamma that is accumulated; volition coordinates the work of the accompanying dhammas, each of which performs its own function. We should remember that saṅkhāra has different meanings in different contexts — here it is the aggregate of all these mental factors led by volition.

> ***Vism XIV 132–133 (CST §458).*** *These formations are manifold. There is contact, volition, applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, energy, life-faculty, concentration… faith, mindfulness, moral shame, fear of blame, non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion… and so on through the whole list of mental factors that make up this aggregate; and there are the four "or-whatever-states" — zeal, resolution, attention, and specific neutrality.*

2. The Visuddhimagga's full list of the formations (the cetasikas other than feeling and perception). Given here in summary; the Visuddhimagga expounds them individually from 134 (contact) onward, over the following stages.

ṭīkā: The Visuddhimagga lists the members of the aggregate and then expounds them in turn; the "or-whatever-states"[3] (yevāpanaka) are those not separately enumerated in a given Dhammasaṅgaṇī list but understood to be present.

The first cetasika: contact (134)

> ***Vism XIV 134.*** *Herein, it touches (phusati), thus it is contact (phassa). This has the characteristic of touching. Its function is the act of impingement. It is manifested as concurrence. Its proximate cause is an objective field that has come into focus.*

ṭīkā: "It touches" — this is the agent-form; or "by it they touch," thus contact; for the associated dhammas, occurring upon the object, are as it were touching it by means of contact, whose characteristic is touching. Or "the mere touching of the object" is contact — the abstract derivation, which is the literal sense, the agent- and instrument-forms being figurative, applied by transferring that mode [of touching] to it.[4] So "it has the characteristic of touching."

ṭīkā: Now an objection lies hidden in the heart: if this dhamma is mental, an immaterial dhamma, how can it have the characteristic of touching and the function of impingement? To clear it, it is said: "though immaterial, it occurs in the very mode of touching the object." That an immaterial dhamma can have this touching-mode is plain from such cases as these: the watering of the mouth in one who sees another eating a sour fruit like a ripe mango; the trembling of the body in a compassionate person at the sight of another being hurt; the shaking of the legs in a timid man standing on the ground who sees someone in a precarious place high in a tree; the giving-way of the thighs at the sight of something frightful like a goblin. In all these, a merely seen object produces a bodily effect — which shows that the mind does, in its own way, "touch" its object.

ṭīkā: "On any one side" means not adhering — touching the object as two logs touch, by one edge only, without sticking. It is only the impact without adherence that contact shares with visible object and sound; not the being-an-objective-field. Just as the eye and ear are non-adherent to visible object and sound and yet are said to "touch" them, so contact may be said to touch and impinge upon the object. And contact's "impingement" is the actual concurrence, the meeting, of consciousness and object — which is why

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3. Yevāpanaka, "or-whatever-states": zeal (chanda), resolution (adhimokkha), attention (manasikāra), specific neutrality (tatramajjhattatā) — present but not separately listed in a given enumeration. These four are no different in kind, only in mode of listing.

4. Of phassa's three derivations, the abstract ("the mere touching") is literal; agent and instrument are figurative (pariyāya), an immaterial dhamma not literally touching.

it is "manifested as concurrence."[5]

Nina: Contact (phassa) "contacts" the object so that citta can experience it; it is a cetasika arising with every citta, the meeting-point of consciousness, object, and base. The point that contact's "touching" is not physical is important: an immaterial dhamma contacts an immaterial way — yet the effect can be bodily, as when the mere sight of someone biting a sour fruit makes our own mouth water. As the Atthasālinī notes, contact is mentioned first in the order of teaching, but there is no real sequence among contact, feeling, perception, and volition — they arise together and condition one another. Contact is not feeling, though it is the proximate cause of feeling; to know contact as a distinct conditioned nāma, void of self, is part of understanding the formations aggregate as it is.

5. "Contact's impingement is the actual concurrence of consciousness and object" (Pm. 485).

Part XX

The formations continued: volition, the jhāna-factors, energy, and life

Vism XIV 135–138

Contact as the "hideless cow" (close of 134)

> ***Vism XIV 134, concl.*** *(CST §459). And contact should be regarded as like a hideless cow (S ii 99), because it is the habitat of feeling.*

ṭīkā: Contact is the proximate cause and "habitat"[1] (adhiṭṭhāna) of feeling, as in the simile of the child's-flesh discourse: a cow with no hide, wherever she stands, is bitten by the creatures of that place — by wall-dwelling creatures if near a wall, water-creatures if in water — and has no ease anywhere. Just so, because contact is the standing-ground of feeling, wherever contact arises, there feeling arises and is, as it were, "bitten" — pleasant, painful, or neutral. Contact conditions the feeling that arises together with it, the two arising simultaneously and conditioning one another.

Volition (135)

> ***Vism XIV 135.*** *It wills (cetayati), thus it is volition (cetanā); it collects, is the meaning. Its characteristic is the state of willing. Its function is to accumulate. It is manifested as coordinating. It accomplishes its own and others' functions, as a senior pupil, a head carpenter, etc., do.*

ṭīkā: "It wills" — it binds together, it sets going, it makes occur. "The state of willing" is the state of activity, of being busied (byāpāra). Its function, "to accumulate" (āyūhana), is the very willing, the directing. Its being "manifested as coordinating (saṃvidahana)" is its arranging, its marshalling. For when volition, whose function is accumulating, is occurring, all the associated dhammas are each set to their own task; and so it is said to "accomplish its own and others' functions" — as a senior pupil, while himself reciting, sets the others to their recitation, and as a head carpenter, beginning his own work, gets the rest to do theirs. And the "urging" by which it does this is to be understood as urging by way of accumulating, not by way of the drive of energy — for that is a different factor.[2]

Nina: Volition (cetanā) wills, directs itself and the associated dhammas onto the object, and achieves the task of "forming what is formed." It is the chief of the formations aggregate; kamma is, in fact, the cetanā cetasika. All the

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1. The "hideless cow": S ii 99, the Puttamaṃsa (Child's-Flesh) sutta on the four nutriments.

2. Volition's "urging" (ussāhana) is by way of accumulating (āyūhana), not the drive of energy (viriya).

cetasikas accompanying a citta — contact, feeling, perception, the universals and particulars — cooperate in performing a deed that can bring its result later, and volition coordinates them all, like the head carpenter directing the work. We should not forget how momentary such a combination is: there is constant change, and at every moment a different combination, the conditions having to be just right for this or that to arise together. This is what the Atthasālinī means by samaya, "occasion" — the concurrence of many conditions contributing to one result; and, it adds, by showing the condition in this way, "the conceit of one who believes that states follow his own will is subdued."

Applied thought, sustained thought, rapture (136)

> ***Vism XIV 136 (CST §460).*** *The rest, beginning with applied thought (vitakka), have been explained, as to characteristic and so on, in the treatment of the jhāna-factors [Vism IV]. For applied thought directs the mind onto the object; sustained thought (vicāra) goes on pressing upon it; and rapture (pīti) refreshes.*

ṭīkā: These three — applied thought, sustained thought, and rapture — have already been set out, as to characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause, in the explanation of the jhāna-factors, and are not expounded afresh here.[3] They are listed at this point because they are cetasikas included in the formations aggregate, accompanying the first kind of great wholesome sense-sphere citta — the one associated with understanding and accompanied by joy.

> **Nina:** Applied thought (vitakka) "touches" the object, directing the citta and the associated cetasikas to it; sustained thought (vicāra) keeps the citta occupied with it, "going on pressing." These are not the same as what we ordinarily call "thinking" — they are momentary cetasikas accompanying many cittas, not the prolonged reflection of conventional speech. Rapture (pīti) takes an interest in the object and refreshes; it is not feeling (vedanā), though it often arises with pleasant feeling. The Visuddhimagga has treated all three already among the factors that inhibit the hindrances in the development of calm (Vism IV); here they reappear simply as members of this aggregate.

Energy (137)

> ***Vism XIV 137.*** *Energy (viriya) is the state of one who is vigorous (vīra). Its characteristic is marshalling (driving). Its function is to consolidate conascent states. It is manifested as non-collapse. Because of the words, "Bestirred, he strives wisely" (A II 115), its proximate cause is a sense of urgency; or its proximate cause is grounds for the initiation of energy.*

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3. Applied thought, sustained thought, and rapture: see Vism IV (the jhāna-factors).

ṭīkā: "The state of one who is vigorous" is the dhamma by which one comes to be called "vigorous"; or "what is to be set going methodically" (vidhinā īretabbaṃ) is energy — exertion, the undertaking of this or that task, endeavour. Its function, the consolidating of the associated dhammas, is the not letting them fall to the side of idleness, the lending of further strength, the upholding of them. And being the opposite of collapse — not the mere absence of collapse, but the active counter to it — it is "manifested as non-collapse." Its proximate cause is a sense of urgency (saṃvega): the eight grounds of urgency stir one to the wholesome undertaking; or its proximate cause is the eight grounds for initiating energy (viriyārambha-vatthu) — "the journey must be made, the work must be done, a slight illness has arisen, one has recovered from illness," and the rest — together with the reflections rooted in them.[4]

> **Nina:** Energy (viriya) supports and "props up" the citta and the other cetasikas so that they do not give way to idleness; it is manifested as non-collapse, as the firmness that does not sink down. Its near cause may be a sense of urgency (saṃvega) — the moving recognition of the danger in the round — or any of the occasions that call for effort: the eight "grounds for initiating energy," such as facing a journey or a task, recovering from illness, or going without sufficient food. Right effort is one of the path-factors; without energy the wholesome cannot be sustained, but the energy meant here is the wholesome cetasika, not restless striving born of attachment.

The [mental] life-faculty (138)

> ***Vism XIV 138.*** *By its means they live, or it itself lives, or it is just mere living, thus it is life (jīvitindriya). But its characteristic, etc., should be understood in the way stated under material life [59]; for that is life of material things and this is life of immaterial things. This is the only difference here.*

ṭīkā: The maintaining of the conascent dhammas, which it must sustain, is the life-faculty's activity; and that maintaining is their "living." So, putting first its being the cause of their living, it is said "they live by it"; and since that, in meaning, is just the living, it is said "or it is just the living." Its characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause are exactly as given for the material life-faculty (59) — maintaining conascent states, making them occur, establishing their presence, with the states-to-be-sustained as proximate cause — the sole difference being that the former sustains material phenomena, the latter immaterial (mental) phenomena.

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4. The two proximate causes: saṃvega (the eight grounds of urgency, A i; cf. A ii 115 "saṃviggo yoniso padahati") and the eight viriyārambha-vatthu (grounds for initiating energy, A iv 332 / D iii 255 — the journey to be made, work to be done, slight illness, recovery, etc.), with their attendant reflections.

Nina: The mental life-faculty (jīvitindriya) is the cetasika that maintains the life of the citta and the other cetasikas in its own group, just as the material life-faculty maintains the rūpas of its group. It arises with the citta at the moment of arising and sustains the conascent nāma-dhammas through the moment of their presence; it cannot hold them beyond their falling-away. There are thus two life-faculties — one for nāma, one for rūpa — alike in nature, differing only in what they sustain. Like all the rest, it is a conditioned reality, void of self: there is no one who "keeps alive," only this dhamma doing its momentary work.

Part XXI

The formations continued: concentration

Vism XIV 139

Concentration (139)

> ***Vism XIV 139.*** *It puts (ādhiyati) consciousness evenly (samaṃ) on the object, or it puts it rightly (sammā) on it, or it is just the mere collecting (samādhāna) of the mind, thus it is concentration (samādhi). Its characteristic is non-wandering, or its characteristic is non-distraction. Its function is to conglomerate conascent states as water does bath powder. It is manifested as peace. Usually its proximate cause is bliss. It should be regarded as steadiness of the mind, like the steadiness of a lamp's flame when there is no draught.*

ṭīkā: "It is placed (ādhiyati)" means: it is set, established, [on the object]. "Non-scattering" (avisāra) is concentration's own nature of not scattering; "non-distraction" (avikkhepa) is the undistractedness of the associated dhammas — the dhamma by which the associated states are kept undistracted is "non-distraction." And being the opposite of distraction, whose characteristic is the want of peace, it shows itself in the mode of the mind's quieting; hence it is "manifested as peace."

ṭīkā: "Usually (visesato) its proximate cause is bliss" — "usually" means for the most part; for there is concentration even without bliss [pleasant feeling], as in the equanimous jhāna.[1] And the steadiness of concentration is shown by the image of the lamp-flame in a windless place: as such a flame stands unwavering, lighting steadily, so concentration holds the continuity of consciousness steady upon its object.

> **Nina:** Concentration (samādhi), one-pointedness of mind (ekaggatā), focuses on the one object the citta is experiencing and, with the citta, on no other; it accompanies every citta, "perpetuating itself by its function of concentrating," placing consciousness and the associated dhammas evenly on the identical object. By a balance of the faculties it maintains calm — neither sluggish nor restless — keeping the opposing states at bay. The Atthasālinī says it opposes sense-desire directly, since one-pointedness gathers in a consciousness that would otherwise roam, scattered among many objects under the pull of greed. Here the Visuddhimagga is speaking of the concentration accompanying a great wholesome citta with understanding; its manifestation as peace should be understood of that — the citta peaceful, opposed to agitation. And though

1. Visesato, "usually/for the most part" — flagged because there is concentration without bliss (the equanimous fourth/fifth jhāna and equanimity-accompanied cittas); the proximate cause "bliss" is not invariable. The lamp-flame simile (nivāte dīpaccīnaṃ ṭhiti viya) is the classic image for concentration's steadiness.

its usual proximate cause is bliss, concentration can also arise without pleasant feeling; “usually” means most of the time, not always.

Part XXII

The beautiful factors begin: faith, mindfulness, moral shame and fear of blame, non-greed and non-hate

Vism XIV 140–143

Faith (140)

> ***Vism XIV 140.*** *By its means they have faith (saddahanti), or it itself is the having of faith, or it is just the act of having faith (saddahana), thus it is faith (saddhā). Its characteristic is having faith, or its characteristic is trusting. Its function is to clarify, like a water-clearing gem, or its function is to enter into, like the setting out across a flood. It is manifested as non-fogginess, or it is manifested as resolution. Its proximate cause is something to have faith in, or the factors of stream-entry.*

ṭīkā: This citta is a condition for the accompanying dhammas — standing toward them, while they occur in the act of having faith, in the position of predominance; when they stand thus conditioned, the usage arises that "the person has faith."[1] Its function to clarify is like a water-clearing gem that, dropped into muddy water, makes it settle clear: faith, dispelling the stain of the defilements, makes the mind clear. Its function to enter into is the resolving upon the object — "like the setting out across a flood": as a hero crosses the river, repels the dangerous beasts with his sword, and leads the crowd across, so by faith one is decisive in the wholesome and enters the object without hanging back. And the "decision" that manifests it is the pure, settled certainty about its object — not the ethically-variable determination (adhimokkha) among the supplementary factors.[2]

> **Nina:** Confidence (saddhā) is a faculty that governs the accompanying dhammas in its quality of purifying and confiding in the wholesome; without it, wholesome citta could not arise. It is the forerunner of all wholesomeness: when we see the benefit of the wholesome, we apply ourselves with confidence to whatever opportunity there is. Confidence in the Dhamma begins with associating with the right friend and hearing the Dhamma, and grows as we understand that the path is the development of understanding of the reality appearing now.

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1. "The person has faith" is conventional speech (vohāra) for the conditioning of the other factors by faith. (Verified against CST §§464–465.)

2. The adhimutti/adhimokkha distinction (doctrinally load-bearing): the "decision" manifesting faith is wholesome certainty, not the ethically-variable determination among the supplementary factors.

Mindfulness (141)

> ***Vism XIV 141.*** *By its means they remember (saranti), or it itself remembers, or it is just mere remembering (saraṇa), thus it is mindfulness (sati). It has the characteristic of not wobbling. Its function is not to forget. It is manifested as guarding, or it is manifested as the state of confronting an objective field. Its proximate cause is firm perception, or the foundations of mindfulness concerned with the body.*

ṭīkā: Mindfulness is a condition for the accompanying dhammas, in the position of predominance, so that "the one possessed of it remembers." Its characteristic, not-wobbling, is the steadying of the object, not letting it go — keeping it as immovable as a stone, not letting it bob like a gourd on water. Its function, not to forget, is the active counter to muddled forgetting, not the mere absence of it. It is manifested as guarding — keeping watch over the doors of the senses — or as confronting the object, coming back from straying and facing toward it. Its proximate cause is firm perception, or the four foundations of mindfulness.

> **Nina:** Mindfulness (sati) is non-forgetful of what is wholesome; it is not the same as perception (saññā), which marks the object. Whenever there is an opportunity for generosity, virtue, or mental development, sati does not let it pass; it guards the six doors, so that when an object appears and is known as only a reality through that door, we are not infatuated by it. Sati is steadfast like a pillar; mindfulness is non-forgetful of the object, and understanding knows it as it is. Right Mindfulness is a path-factor and one of the factors of enlightenment.

Moral shame and fear of blame (142)

> ***Vism XIV 142.*** *It has conscientious scruples (hiriyati) about bodily misconduct, etc., thus it is moral shame (hiri); this is a term for modesty. It is ashamed (ottappati) of those same things, thus it is fear of blame (ottappa); this is a term for anxiety about evil. Herein, moral shame has the characteristic of disgust at evil, while fear of blame has the characteristic of dread of it. Moral shame has the function of not doing evil, and that in the mode of modesty, while fear of blame has the function of not doing it, and that in the mode of dread. They are manifested as shrinking from evil. Their proximate causes are respect for oneself and respect for others [respectively].*

ṭīkā: "By bodily misconduct and the rest" — the instrumental has a causal sense. "It is ashamed (hiriyati)" means it loathes [evil] in the mode of modesty; "it dreads (ottappati)" means it shrinks back, agitated. Moral shame, seeing evil states as one sees dung, loathes them — hence "disgust at evil" is its characteristic; fear of blame, seeing them as one sees a hot thing, recoils — hence "dread" is its characteristic. Moral shame has respect for oneself as its

proximate cause, arising from within, with self as the governing consideration; fear of blame has respect for others, arising from without, with the world as the governing consideration.[3] Their difference: moral shame makes one shrink from evil out of regard for one's own dignity ("this is not worthy of me"); fear of blame, out of regard for what others, and the world, would think and suffer.

Nina: Moral shame (hiri) and fear of blame (ottappa) are "the guardians of the world." If moral shame and fear of blame did not protect the world, the Buddha said, there would be no recognition of mother, aunt, or teacher's wife, and the world would fall into promiscuity, as with goats and sheep, fowls and swine. Where there is no shame or fear of blame even as to gross defilements, one lives recklessly. But hiri and ottappa can become more refined: we learn to see the danger even in ignorance of the realities appearing now, in forgetfulness of the nāmas and rūpas that appear — and then they shrink from accumulating ever more ignorance. Each wholesome citta is accompanied by them, together with confidence, mindfulness, and the other beautiful factors.

Non-greed and non-hate (143)

Vism XIV 143. *By its means they are not greedy (na lubbhanti), or it itself is not greedy, or it is just the mere not being greedy (alubbhana), thus it is non-greed (alobha); and the same method applies to non-hate (adosa) and non-delusion (amoha). Of these, non-greed has the characteristic of the mind's lack of desire for an object, or it has the characteristic of non-adherence, like a water drop on a lotus leaf. Its function is not to lay hold, like a liberated bhikkhu. It is manifested as a state of not treating as a shelter, like that of a man who has fallen into filth. Non-hate has the characteristic of lack of ferocity, or the characteristic of non-opposing, like an agreeable friend. Its function is to remove annoyance, or to remove fever, like sandalwood. It is manifested as agreeableness, like the full moon.*

ṭīkā: Because non-greed is the opposite of greed, the dhammas associated with it — or the beings endowed with it — "do not lust," or it itself never lusts, or it is simply the mode of non-lusting; that is its characteristic. Its non-adherence, its non-clinging — "like a water-drop on a lotus leaf," which glides off without wetting it — is the not-grasping of any object by way of "mine." And non-hate: "ferocity" (caṇḍikka) is wrath; non-ferocity (acaṇḍikka) is its absence, non-ill-will; non-opposing is the absence of conflict; "like an agreeable friend" who falls in with one's wishes. Its function, removing vexation or fever, is "like sandalwood" that cools; its manifestation, agreeableness, is "like the full moon," gladdening by its mildness.

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3. Hiri is inward, self-respect (attādhipati); ottappa outward, respect for others (lokādhipati).

Nina: Each wholesome citta must be accompanied by non-attachment (alobha) and non-aversion (adosa), and may also be accompanied by non-delusion (amoha). Non-greed is not affected by the object, as a water-drop is not held by the lotus leaf; there are many shades and degrees of it — it appears whenever we apply ourselves to generosity, virtue, or mental development, the dhamma that does not adhere. The characteristic of aversion is harshness; that of non-aversion is gentleness — patience instead of irritation. Non-aversion directed toward living beings can grow into loving-kindness (mettā). The Pāli terms help us to be precise: to know alobha as the non-adhering reality, adosa as the gentle one, each an impersonal element arising by conditions.

Part XXIII

Non-delusion, the six pairs of beautiful factors, and the supplementary states

Vism XIV 143–153

Non-delusion (143, concl.)

> ***Vism XIV 143, concl.*** *(CST §469). Non-delusion (amoha) has the characteristic of penetrating [things] according to their individual nature, or of unerring penetration, like the shot of an arrow by a skilled archer. Its function is to illuminate the objective field, like a lamp. It is manifested as non-bewilderment, like a guide in a forest. It should be regarded as the root of all that is wholesome.*

ṭīkā: Penetration according to individual nature is the penetrating of each dhamma's own nature as it really is; unerring penetration is penetration without slipping or going astray. Its function, illuminating the objective field, is the dispelling of the darkness of confusion that conceals the object — hence "like a lamp." It "stands in the mode of non-bewilderment" — or, being the opposite of confusion, it establishes the absence of it; hence "manifested as non-bewilderment." And it is the root of all that is wholesome — of all wholesome states of the four planes — for without understanding the higher wholesome cannot reach completion.

> **Nina:** Non-delusion (amoha) is understanding (paññā) itself, the third beautiful root; it accompanies the wholesome cittas that are "with knowledge." It penetrates the true nature of realities — as a skilled archer's arrow strikes home — and dispels the darkness that hides them, like a lamp, like a guide leading one safely through a forest. It is the root of all wholesomeness in the deepest sense, for it is by understanding that the round is finally cut. (Its fuller treatment is the whole opening section of this chapter, on understanding.)[1]

The six pairs (144–149)

> ***Vism XIV 144–149 (CST §470).*** *Tranquillity of the [mental] body (kāya-passaddhi) is the calming of the three mental aggregates [feeling, perception, formations]; tranquillity of consciousness (citta-passaddhi) is the calming of consciousness.*[2] *Their characteristic is the quieting of distress in the mental body and in consciousness; their function is to crush that distress; they are manifested as peacefulness and coolness; their*

1. Amoha = paññā; cf. the chapter's opening section on understanding.

2. Kāya in these factor-names = the three mental aggregates of feeling, perception, and formations (Dhs. 40).

> *proximate cause is the mental body and consciousness. They are the opponents of the defilements, headed by restlessness, that cause unpeacefulness. — And likewise: lightness (lahutā) of the mental body and of consciousness, opposing the heaviness of sloth and torpor; malleability (mudutā), opposing the rigidity of views and conceit; wieldiness (kammaññatā), opposing the unwieldiness born of the remaining hindrances; proficiency (pāguññatā), opposing the unhealthiness of faithlessness and the rest; and rectitude (ujukatā), opposing the crookedness of deceit and fraud — each twofold, of the mental body and of consciousness.*

ṭīkā: Here "body" (kāya) is the group — the three aggregates of feeling, perception, and formations; so "tranquillity of body" is the calming of those three, and "tranquillity of consciousness" the calming of the consciousness aggregate. "Distress" (daratha) is the agitation, the disturbance, that is the affliction of the four mental aggregates through restlessness and the defilements allied to it; by crushing that distress, tranquillity quiets the burning, and so is "manifested as peacefulness and coolness."

ṭīkā: The six pairs are best grasped by what each opposes: tranquillity opposes restlessness; lightness the heaviness of sloth-and-torpor; malleability the rigidity that comes of views and conceit; wieldiness the intractability bred by the remaining hindrances; proficiency (health, fitness) the sickly unfitness that comes of faithlessness and the rest; and rectitude (straightness) the crookedness of deceit (māyā) and craftiness (sāṭheyya). Each, occurring in the "mental body" and in consciousness, makes the wholesome citta supple, fit, and upright for its work.

> **Nina:** These six pairs give the wholesome citta its "health." Tranquillity (passaddhi) calms the agitation that is restlessness; lightness (lahutā) is the nimbleness opposed to the heaviness of sloth; malleability (mudutā) is the softness opposed to the stiffness of wrong view and conceit; wieldiness (kammaññatā) is the workableness opposed to intractability; proficiency (pāguññatā) is the fitness opposed to the unhealthiness of faithlessness; rectitude (ujukatā) is the straightness opposed to the crookedness of hypocrisy. Each is twofold because the agitation or heaviness afflicts both the accompanying cetasikas (the "mental body") and the citta itself. They are not abstractions: they are the very ease, suppleness, and uprightness of a mind that is, at that moment, free of the defilements. The supplementary states: zeal, resolution, attention, specific neutrality (150–153)

> ***Vism XIV 150–153 (CST §§471–474).*** *And there are the "or-whatever-states": zeal (chanda), resolution (adhimokkha), attention (manasikāra), and specific neutrality (tatramajjhattatā).*

ṭīkā: Zeal (chanda) is the desire to act (kattukāmatā) — the wish to do.[3] The word chanda can elsewhere mean craving ("zeal is sensual desire") or energy ("he generates zeal, strives"); to set those aside it is glossed "a term for the

desire to act." And because a mental factor is always toward an object, this "desire to act" is, in effect, the wish to take up the object — so zeal has the characteristic of wishing-to-act upon the object. It is mere desire, not the lust of craving nor the drive of energy: the bare reaching-out toward doing.

ṭīkā: Resolution (adhimokkha) is the settling upon the object by way of fixed conclusion, "thus it is" — not by way of clarifying [as faith does].[4] One who does not "resolve" cannot proceed to kill or steal, nor to give or keep virtue; the resolving is the decisive determination either way. It differs from faith, which is the settling-in-clearness upon what inspires confidence, and from the votthapana (determining) that, having defined the investigated object, conditions what follows.

ṭīkā: Attention (manasikāra) is the making-in-the-mind — the doing (kāra) in the mind (manasi). By it the mind is "made toward" the object, being yoked to it, and so the object too is "made in the mind." It turns the life-continuum mind into the active process-mind, as the maker of the dissimilar [process-]mind; and, directing the associated states toward the object, it has the characteristic of driving-toward (sāraṇa), like a charioteer.

ṭīkā: Specific neutrality (tatramajjhattatā) is the being-even "in this and that" — the impartial poise among the associated citta-and-cetasikas. Though it has no separate object, it occurs as evenness toward the conascent states, conducting them in balance — neither deficient nor excessive — in their respective tasks; as a king, though sitting silent, sets his ministers each diligently to their own work, so this, though occurring as detachment, keeps the associated states evenly to their functions. It has the characteristic of carrying on evenly (samavāhita).

> **Nina:** These four "or-whatever-states" (yevāpanaka) are not separately listed in every Dhammasaṅgaṇī enumeration but are understood to be present; they accompany cittas of all four natures — wholesome, unwholesome, resultant, functional. Zeal (chanda) is the wish-to-do, distinct from both craving and energy. Resolution (adhimokkha) is the firmness that decides about the object, "it is thus." Attention (manasikāra) "drives" the citta and cetasikas toward the object, turning the stream toward the process. Specific neutrality (tatramajjhattatā) is the even-mindedness that balances the accompanying dhammas, like a charioteer holding well-trained horses evenly to their course — not the equanimous feeling, but the impartial poise that becomes, when developed, the equanimity of the divine abidings and of insight.[5]

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3. Chanda = kattukāmatā (desire to act), expressly distinguished from craving-chanda (Vibh. 564) and energy-chanda (Vibh. 432). The "wish to take up the object."

4. Adhimokkha = settling by sanniṭṭhāna (fixed conclusion), not by pasādana (clarifying, which is faith's mode); distinguished also from votthapana. The doubt-associated case (how is there "resolution" with doubt?) is noted in the ṭīkā and set aside here.

Part XXIV

Compassion and gladness, the three abstinences, and the formations of the remaining wholesome cittas

Vism XIV 154–159

Compassion and gladness (154)

> ***Vism XIV 154 (CST §472).*** *Compassion and gladness should be understood as given in the Description of the Divine Abidings (Ch. IX), except that there they are of the fine-material sphere and have reached absorption, whereas here they are of the sense sphere; that is the only difference. Some, however, want to include lovingkindness and equanimity too among the inconstant; that cannot be accepted, for, as to meaning, non-hate itself is lovingkindness, and specific neutrality is equanimity — and these accompany every beautiful citta.*

ṭīkā: Compassion and gladness are directed towards living beings, and accompany the great wholesome citta only when there is occasion for them; they do not arise together. They are reckoned among the inconstant (aniyata) beautiful factors — those that do not accompany every beautiful citta — unlike lovingkindness and equanimity, which, being non-hate and specific neutrality, are present in all.

> **Nina:** Compassion (karuṇā) has the characteristic of wanting to allay another's suffering — there may also be aversion at another's suffering, but that is not compassion. Sympathetic joy (muditā) is the appreciation of another's good fortune or wholesome qualities, and at that moment there is no jealousy. They accompany the great wholesome citta when there is opportunity, and they do not arise at the same moment, for each citta has but one object.

The three abstinences (155)

> ***Vism XIV 155 (CST §472).*** *Abstinence from bodily misconduct, and the rest: the three abstinences have the characteristic of not transgressing — not treading upon — the fields of bodily misconduct and so on. Their function is to draw back from those fields; they are manifested as the not-doing of these things; their proximate causes are the special qualities of faith, moral shame, fear of blame, fewness of wishes, and the like; and they should be regarded as the mind's averseness from evil-doing.*

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5. Tatramajjhattatā is not equanimous feeling (upekkhā-vedanā); it is the factor that matures into the equanimity of the brahmavihāras and of insight.

ṭīkā: The three abstinences — also called right speech, right action, and right livelihood — do not "tread upon" one another's field. When there is abstinence from wrong speech, there is not at that same moment abstinence from wrong action; each citta has one object. "Not-treading" is the characteristic of non-transgression: the drawing-back is from misconduct, in the mode of gentleness (soracca), whereas it is moral shame and fear of blame that recoil from misconduct in the mode of disgust and dread — and this is the difference between the abstinences and those two.

Nina: Abstinence from wrong speech, wrong action, and wrong livelihood do not trespass on each other's field; so when there is abstinence from wrong speech, there is not at the same time abstinence from wrong action. When one of the abstinences arises with the great wholesome citta, there are also confidence in wholesomeness, moral shame, fear of blame, and many other beautiful cetasikas; and when there is fewness of wishes, one does not think of one's own gain. These wholesome qualities are momentary, falling away at once — but they are accumulated, so that there are conditions for their arising again.

The thirty-six formations of the first wholesome citta, and the other sense-sphere cittas (156)

> ***Vism XIV 156 (CST §473).*** *Thus these thirty-six formations come into association with the first wholesome consciousness of the sense sphere. And as with the first, so with the second, the only difference being promptedness. With the third and fourth, knowledge is lacking; and so on, the set varying as the citta varies in feeling, in the presence of understanding, and in being prompted or unprompted.*

ṭīkā: "Formations" here means the dhammas of the formations aggregate — all the cetasikas except feeling and perception. Under this aggregate thirty-six are counted here; elsewhere thirty-eight are mentioned, when feeling and perception are added back. As the citta of the second type is prompted, so too are the dhammas that accompany it; the rest are as in the first.

Nina: The eight great wholesome cittas differ by feeling (pleasant or indifferent), by the presence or absence of understanding, and by being unprompted or prompted. When a wholesome citta is prompted, it is urged on, by oneself or others, and does not arise spontaneously as the first type does. The beautiful cetasikas give the citta its health: moral shame and fear of blame see the danger in the unwholesome; non-greed is detachment and non-hate is non-aversion; understanding, arising with four of the eight, illuminates the object and dispels the darkness of delusion; the six pairs make the citta smooth, gentle, alert, and upright; zeal is the wholesome desire-to-act; resolution is conviction about the object; attention turns the citta to it. They depend on conditions — no person can keep them in being — and each is utterly momentary.

The fine-material and immaterial jhāna cittas (157)

> ***Vism XIV 157 (CST §474).*** *Of those stated for the first, leaving aside the three abstinences, the rest come into association with the first fine-material wholesome citta. With the second, those minus applied thought; with the third, minus sustained thought; with the fourth, minus rapture; with the fifth, minus — among the inconstant — compassion and gladness. The same hold for the four immaterial wholesome cittas, the only difference being their immateriality.*

ṭīkā: As the stages of jhāna rise, the grosser jhāna-factors are abandoned, calm no longer needing them. Compassion and gladness, being inconstant and having living beings as object, can be present only up to the fourth jhāna; they cannot accompany the fifth, which is joined to equanimous feeling — for as the ṭīkā explains, only when they have not reached absorption can they go with equanimity; the illimitables in absorption are joined to joy.[1] The three abstinences do not enter the jhāna cittas at all, jhāna being a mundane attainment that does not cut off wrong speech, action, and livelihood.

> **Nina:** The cetasikas that are the jhāna-factors are abandoned as the higher stages are reached. Compassion and gladness are among the inconstant; they can become the subject of jhāna, but with these subjects only four stages of fine-material jhāna can be attained, not the fifth, which is accompanied by indifferent feeling. The Visuddhimagga explains that they are not dissociated from joy, "because they are the escape from ill will and the rest, which are originated by grief." The six pairs are necessary for the jhāna-citta to be smooth, gentle, and alert; equanimity (tatramajjhattatā) prevents deficiency and excess. So not only concentration but the other beautiful cetasikas supporting the jhāna-citta are essential.

The supramundane path and fruition cittas (158)

> ***Vism XIV 158 (CST §475).*** *As regards the supramundane: in the path consciousness having the first jhāna, the factors are as stated for the first fine-material citta; the paths classed by the second jhāna and so on, as for the second fine-material citta and the rest. But the difference here is the absence of compassion and gladness, the constancy of the abstinences, and supramundaneness. So far, the wholesome formations should be understood.*

ṭīkā: "And so on" covers the third, fourth, and fifth jhāna paths. Compassion and gladness are absent because the path consciousnesses have nibbāna as their object, while compassion and gladness have living beings as theirs — so they cannot occur in the path. The abstinences, on the other hand, become constant here: right speech, right action, and right livelihood, which in the mundane sphere arise only by occasion and one at a time, are all present together in the path, where the noble path proceeds precisely by way of

cutting off bodily and verbal misconduct.[2]

Nina: The path consciousness has nibbāna as object; compassion and gladness have beings as object, so they are absent from the path. In the mundane wholesome cittas the abstinences arise singly and by occasion, but in the path consciousness the three are constant and arise together, since the noble path cuts off the conditions for misconduct. Understanding has to be developed so that enlightenment can be attained, and at that moment the conditions for misconduct are cut off.

Turning to the unwholesome (159)

Vism XIV 159 (CST §477). *Among the unwholesome, those associated with the first greed-rooted citta are, set out by their own names, thirteen definite, with four "or-whatever-states."*

ṭīkā: So the wholesome formations have been shown; the chapter now turns to set out the unwholesome ones, beginning with the first citta rooted in attachment. Its definite factors are the seven universals (contact, volition, applied thought, sustained thought, energy, life-faculty, concentration — with feeling and perception counted apart), and among the particulars applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, energy, zeal, and resolution; the four universal unwholesome — delusion, shamelessness, recklessness, restlessness; and the two specific to this citta — attachment and wrong view.

Nina: The four unwholesome cetasikas that accompany every unwholesome citta are delusion (moha), shamelessness (ahirika), recklessness (anottappa), and restlessness (uddhacca). The first citta rooted in attachment is accompanied also by attachment (lobha) and wrong view (diṭṭhi); with the six particulars and the universals, seventeen cetasikas are mentioned here. These are not textbook terms but realities of daily life: when we are not thinking of generosity, virtue, or mental development, we think with unwholesome cittas, and at those moments shamelessness and recklessness perform their functions. So long as the unwholesome is not eradicated they arise countless times; only the arahat is wholly free of them.

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1. Adosa is lovingkindness and tatramajjhattatā equanimity, constant in all beautiful cittas — hence only compassion and gladness are counted inconstant. Cf. Vism IX.

Part XXV

The unwholesome factors: delusion, shamelessness, recklessness, restlessness; greed, wrong view, conceit

Vism XIV 160–168

The four universal unwholesome factors (160, 163, 165)

> ***Vism XIV 163.*** *Delusion (moha) has the characteristic of blindness, or it has the characteristic of unknowing. Its function is non-penetration, or its function is to conceal the individual essence of an object. It is manifested as the absence of right theory, or it is manifested as darkness. Its proximate cause is unwise attention. It should be regarded as the root of all that is unprofitable.*

ṭīkā: Blindness of mind is the not-seeing of a dhamma's nature as it really is; unknowing (aññāṇa) is the opposite of knowledge; non-penetration is the inability to penetrate. As knowledge cannot but penetrate the object's nature, so delusion occurs concealing that nature — hence "the concealing of the individual nature of the object." It sets up wrong practice, or is grasped as the opposite of right practice; hence "manifested as the absence of right practice." And it is the root of all that is unwholesome, for no unwholesome state arises without it.

> ***Vism XIV 160, 165.*** *Shamelessness (ahirika) has the characteristic of absence of disgust at bodily misconduct, etc., or it has the characteristic of immodesty. Recklessness (anottappa) has the characteristic of absence of dread there, or it has the characteristic of absence of anxiety there. — Restlessness (uddhacca) has the characteristic of disquiet, like water whipped by the wind. Its function is unsteadiness, like a flag or banner whipped by the wind. It is manifested as turmoil, like ashes flung up by pelting with stones. Its proximate cause is unwise attention to mental disquiet.*

ṭīkā: "It is not ashamed, it is not modest, thus shameless"; the term names the person, the citta, or the whole group of associated states. Its non-disgust is the not-loathing [of evil]; its immodesty is brazenness. Recklessness is the non-dread of those same misdeeds, the want of fear, the being unperturbed. And restlessness (uddhacca): the dhamma by which the mind, or the states associated with it, is "thrown up," agitated; its function is the wavering (unsteadiness); its manifestation, the whirling turmoil; its proximate cause,

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2. Only one abstinence arises at a time in the mundane sphere — the point underlying the contrast with 158.

unwise attention.

Nina: Every unwholesome citta is accompanied by these four — delusion (moha), shamelessness (ahirika), recklessness or fearlessness of blame (anottappa), and restlessness (uddhacca). Delusion is the root of all that is unwholesome; it is the blindness that does not know realities as they are, and it darkens the object so that its true nature is hidden. Shamelessness does not shrink from evil; recklessness does not dread it — the very opposites of the "guardians of the world." Restlessness is the agitation, the lack of calm, that disturbs the unwholesome citta like wind ruffling water. These four are present even when the unwholesome feeling is indifferent and we do not notice the citta is unwholesome at all.

Greed, wrong view, conceit (161–164, 168)

> ***Vism XIV 161–162.*** *By its means they are greedy, thus it is greed (lobha). It has the characteristic of grasping an object, like birdlime (lit. "monkey lime"). Its function is sticking, like meat put in a hot pan. It is manifested as not giving up, like the dye of lamp-black. Its proximate cause is seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage.*

ṭīkā: "They are greedy by it," or it itself is greedy, or it is just the being-greedy: thus greed. Its "grasping of the object" is not the bare taking of an object [which any citta does], but the adhering to it under the obsession "this is mine"; its "not letting go" is the not-relinquishing, the being hard to release. It should be seen as flowing toward, hankering after, and binding to whatever appears desirable.

> ***Vism XIV 164.*** *By its means they see wrongly, thus it is wrong view (diṭṭhi). Its characteristic is unwise (unjustified) interpreting. Its function is to presume. It is manifested as wrong interpreting. Its proximate cause is unwillingness to see noble ones, and the rest.*

ṭīkā: "Wrong" (micchā) is what is contrary to the nature of things — taking the impermanent as permanent, and so on. Unwise interpreting (ayoniso abhinivesa) is laying hold by a wrong method, by a false track; mis-apprehension (parāmāsa) is going past the real nature of a dhamma to seize on something else; wrong adherence is the obstinate hold "this alone is true, all else is worthless."[1] Wrong view arises only with greed, for it clings.

> ***Vism XIV 168.*** *Conceit (māna) has the characteristic of haughtiness. Its function is arrogance. It is manifested as vaingloriousness. Its proximate cause is greed dissociated from views. It should be regarded as [like] madness.*

ṭīkā: Conceit is the mind's "lifting itself up," the haughty self-measuring — "I am better," "I am equal," "I am worse." Its function is the exalting of self; its manifestation, a vain self-display; and it arises on the basis of greed unaccompanied by wrong view. It is to be seen as a kind of madness, a

derangement, for it inflates a self where there is none.

Nina: Greed (lobha) grasps and sticks to the object like birdlime catching a bird, like meat searing onto a hot pan; it does not let go. Wrong view (diṭṭhi) is the distorted interpretation that takes realities as permanent, as self, as worth clinging to — it accompanies four of the eight greed-rooted cittas, always together with greed, never with hate. Conceit (māna) is the comparing of oneself with others, "better, equal, worse" — and even the comparison "I am equal" or "I am worse" is conceit, for it still measures from a supposed self. The Mahā-niddesa shows how subtle and far-reaching conceit is. All these are conditioned realities, not "I" or "mine"; to know them as they are is to begin to be free of them.

1. Micchābhinivesa, the "this alone is true" hold: M ii 187 etc.

Part XXVI

Hate and its group; sloth, torpor, and doubt; and the distribution of the formations

Vism XIV 167–184

Hate, envy, avarice, worry (171–174)

> ***Vism XIV 171 (CST §485).*** *Hate (dosa) has the characteristic of ferocity, like a struck viper. Its function is to spread (to burn up its own support), like a forest fire, or to offend, like poison taken. It is manifested as injuring, like an enemy who has got his chance. Its proximate cause is the grounds for annoyance.*

ṭīkā: "They are offended by it," or it itself offends: thus hate. Its ferocity (caṇḍikka) is wrath; its "spreading" (visappana) is its writhing in its own ugly mode and stirring up unlovely forms; it "burns its own support," afflicting the very body in which it arises — hence "it burns up its support." It should be regarded as wholly to be rejected, like poison-mixed putrid urine — harmful both in its arising and in its fruit.

> ***Vism XIV 172–174 (CST §§486–488).*** *Envy (issā) has the characteristic of being jealous of others' success; its function is to take no delight in it; it is manifested as a turning-away from it; its proximate cause is others' success. Avarice (macchariya) has the characteristic of concealing one's own success when it has been or could be obtained; its function is to not bear sharing it; it is manifested as a shrinking, a sourness; its proximate cause is one's own success. Worry (kukkucca) has the characteristic of subsequent regret; its function is to grieve over what was done and not done; it is manifested as remorse; its proximate cause is what was done and not done.*

ṭīkā: Envy is the begrudging of others' good fortune — the not-bearing of it — and its function is precisely the not delighting in it (not the mere absence of delight, but the active aversion to it). Avarice (macchariya): the ancients derive it playfully — "let not this marvel (acchariya) be another's; let it be mine alone" — the mean wish that one's own attainments not be shared, manifested as a contraction, a sourness of mind. Worry (kukkucca) is, literally, the state of having "done badly" (ku-kata); even the undone is "ill-done," as when one says "what I did not do is ill-done" — so worry is the after-burning remorse over wrong done and good left undone, manifested as regret.

> **Nina:** Envy, avarice, and worry are each rooted in aversion (dosa) and accompany only the hate-rooted cittas; they arise one at a time, never together. Envy (issā) cannot bear another's success — its opposite is

sympathetic joy (muditā), rejoicing at another's good fortune. Avarice (macchariya) is the meanness that would keep a good thing to oneself — "let it be mine alone"; where there is avarice there is also delusion, darkening the true nature of things. Worry (kukkucca) is remorse over what was done or left undone; it is likened to slavery, for one in remorse is not free. All three are conditioned, impersonal — and seeing them as such is the way they lose their hold.

Sloth and torpor; doubt (167, 177)

Vism XIV 167 (CST §483). *Sloth (thīna) has the characteristic of want of driving power; its function is to dispel energy; it is manifested as a sinking of the mind. Torpor (middha) has the characteristic of unwieldiness; its function is to smother; it is manifested as a nodding and sleepiness; the proximate cause of both is unwise attention to boredom and drowsiness.*

ṭīkā: Sloth (thīna) is the mind's "huddled," contracted state through lack of urging — by it the citta is sluggish, sunk. Torpor (middha) is unwieldiness, the unworkable state by which the associated dhammas are "smothered," their capacity impaired; hence it is glossed "the smothering [factor]." The two go together — sloth the sickness of the citta, torpor of the cetasikas — and they are occasional, not present in every unwholesome citta.

Vism XIV 177 (CST §490). *Doubt (vicikicchā) has the characteristic of wavering. Its function is to waver. It is manifested as indecision, or as taking up many sides. Its proximate cause is unwise attention.*

ṭīkā: Doubt is the inability to settle — the wavering "is it so, is it not?" — and the concentration that accompanies a doubting citta is weak, a mere momentary holding, unable to steady the continuum, "like the flame of a lamp [unable to stay]"; it does not establish itself for want of decision. There is a word-play in vicikicchā: it is hard to cure (vigatā cikicchā, "the cure is gone"), or it wearies (kicchati). It is the doubt that wavers about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, the training, and the dependent arising of things.[1]

Nina: Sloth and torpor (thīna-middha) are the heaviness, the lack of vigour, that make the citta sink and the cetasikas droop; they accompany the "prompted" unwholesome cittas, the ones that need rousing. Doubt (vicikicchā) wavers, unable to decide; it accompanies one of the two delusion-rooted cittas, and its feeling is always indifferent — where there is doubt and wavering there cannot be even the unwholesome pleasure of attachment. There is a word-association between vicikicchā and being wearied: doubt tires the mind, which cannot come to rest. These too are conditioned dhammas, to be known and not taken for self.

How the formations are distributed (178–184)

Vism XIV 178–184 (CST §§491–492). *Of these formations, some are found in every consciousness, some only here and there. Contact, volition,*

perception, [one-pointedness], life-faculty, and attention are in all; the rest are apportioned — applied and sustained thought, resolution, energy, zeal, joy in some; the beautiful factors only in the beautiful cittas; greed, hate, delusion and their trains only in the unwholesome — each formation arising in just those cittas whose nature admits it.

[The Visuddhimagga now shows which formations accompany which of the eighty-nine cittas (the universals present in all, the particulars and the wholesome and unwholesome factors each in their own classes) so that the whole aggregate is seen in its distribution. This apportioning need not be rehearsed factor by factor here; what matters is the principle: no formation arises at random, each is conditioned to its own kind of citta, and the citta itself is what it is by the formations that compose it.]

Nina: The seven universals (sabbacittasādhāraṇa) — contact, feeling, perception, volition, one-pointedness, life-faculty, and attention — accompany every single citta; the particulars (pakiṇṇaka) — applied thought, sustained thought, resolution, energy, joy, zeal — accompany cittas of different natures but not all; the beautiful factors accompany only the beautiful cittas, and the unwholesome only the unwholesome.[2] This distribution shows, once more, that a "citta" is no single simple thing but a momentary assembly of factors, each arising by its own conditions and performing its own task — and not one of them a self. With this the formations aggregate, and the analysis of the five aggregates one by one, is complete. Here ends the explanation of the formations aggregate.

1. The objects of doubt, five or eight: the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, the training, and dependent origination.

Part XXVII

Why five aggregates, and how they are classified

Vism XIV 185–217

> ***Vism XIV 185 (CST §493).*** *Thus the Blessed One expounded the aggregates [in the suttas] by the formula: "Whatever materiality there is, past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — that is called the materiality aggregate"; and so for feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness.*

ṭīkā: So, since the Blessed One expounded the aggregates thus, the commentary will explain them by this text too.[1] "Whatever" (yaṃ kiñci): "whatever" shows the indefinite generally, "any kind" shows it by touching on its varieties; by the two together, "past or… near, little or much, of whatever sort," the all-inclusiveness is conveyed. There is no instance of materiality, of any of the eleven descriptions, that falls outside "the materiality aggregate" — for there is no materiality-aggregate apart from materiality itself; the compound is appositional, "the aggregate that is materiality."

> ***Vism XIV 186–193 (CST §494).*** *Herein, materiality is "past, future, present" by way of extent [a lifetime], continuity, period, or moment; "internal" as belonging to oneself, "external" as another's; "gross" and "subtle" as already explained; "inferior" and "superior" by relative coarseness and refinement, or by plane; "far" as hard to penetrate, "near" as easy.*

ṭīkā: "Past, future, present" are taken in four ways — by extent (the span from rebirth to death of one existence), by continuity (a run of like conditions), by period (a stretch of time), and by moment (the three sub-moments of arising, presence, dissolution).[2] By moment, materiality that has reached the three sub-moments and ceased is "past"; what has not reached them is "future"; what stands within them is "present" — and the like for the immaterial aggregates, allowing for their manner. "Internal" and "external," "gross" and "subtle," "far" and "near" are as set out before [in the manifold-materiality section]; "inferior" and "superior" turn on relative coarseness or refinement, and ultimately on plane — the sense-sphere inferior to the fine-material, and so up. Each pair is a way of regarding the same aggregate, that insight may comprehend it whole.

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2. The seven universals, six particulars, fourteen unwholesome, and twenty-five beautiful cetasikas of the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha framework underlie the distribution; the ṭīkā's concern is to show each formation conditioned to its proper class of citta.

Nina: The formula gathers every possible instance of an aggregate — past, future, present; one's own and another's; gross and subtle; low and high; far and near — into the single heap that is that aggregate. The point is comprehensiveness: insight must not leave any materiality, any feeling, outside its view as "this is permanent" or "this is mine." Whatever the description, it is only that aggregate, arising and falling away, not-self. To see one instance truly — the feeling now, the visible object now — as impermanent, dukkha, and not-self, is to begin to see them all so.

The same classification applied to the mental aggregates, and the order of teaching (194–213)

> ***Vism XIV 194–195 (CST §§494–495).*** *"Far" and "near" are as already described, and also by location; relative farness and nearness are to be understood here accordingly. And "all that, gathered and grouped together" means: making all that materiality — set out separately by "past" and the rest — into a single collection by understanding its one characteristic, the being-molested (ruppana), so that it comes to be called the materiality aggregate.*

ṭīkā: Far and near may be taken by location (the conventional sense) and also by characteristic (lakkhaṇato): a dhamma hard to penetrate is "far," one easy to discern "near." "Gathered and grouped together" is the act of insight that resolves the many instances — past and future, gross and subtle, far and near — into the single heap whose mark is ruppana, the liability to be molested or worn away; and that heap is what "the materiality aggregate" names. There is no further thing, an "aggregate," over and above the materiality so gathered.

> ***Vism XIV 196–209 (CST §§496–503).*** *As materiality, so feeling and the other immaterial aggregates: they too are classed as past, future, present, internal, external, gross, subtle, inferior, superior, far, and near — for there is no feeling-aggregate apart from feelings, no perception-aggregate apart from perceptions. Their gross-and-subtle, however, is determined not by location but by nature, person, and the mundane-or-supramundane: unwholesome feeling is gross, wholesome and indeterminate subtle; painful feeling gross, pleasant and neutral subtle by another method; a non-attainer's feeling gross beside an attainer's; and feeling subject to cankers gross beside the canker-free.*

ṭīkā: The immaterial aggregates are classified by the same eleven heads, but the criteria are read according to their own manner. Their "gross and subtle"

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1. The commentary now explains the aggregates "by this text too" — the sutta formula of S iii 47 etc.

2. The fourfold past/future/present — by addhā (extent/lifetime), santati (continuity), samaya (period), khaṇa (moment, the three sub-moments). The Bhaddekaratta and other suttas are cited.

cannot be by spatial location, having no location; it goes by nature (jāti) — the unwholesome gross, the wholesome and indeterminate subtle; by individual essence (sabhāva) — painful feeling, agitating and overwhelming, gross beside the calm of pleasant and neutral feeling; by person — the scattered feeling of one not in attainment gross beside the collected feeling of one attained; and by the mundane and supramundane — the canker-subject gross, the canker-free subtle. These methods are not to be mixed: a single feeling may be "subtle" by one and "gross" by another, and each grossness is relative — gross beside what is subtler, subtle beside what is grosser, "in comparison with this or that feeling"[3] (Vibh. 3).

> ***Vism XIV 210 (CST §503).*** *This same is to be understood of perception, the formations, and consciousness, each according to its own associated feeling and nature.*

Nina: The Visuddhimagga gives many details about coarse and subtle feeling. Bodily painful feeling can be overwhelming and distressing as to characteristic — yet it is only vipāka, the result of kamma; so by characteristic it is gross, but by nature (jāti) it is subtle, without engagement and without effort, not a citta that is cause. All these feelings arise by their own conditions, beyond anyone's control: no one can make subtle feeling arise, nor prevent the coarse feeling that has already arisen. And what is said of feeling holds for perception, the formations, and consciousness — they are all nāma, experiencing an object, arising together and classified the same way. The Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta applies the whole formula to each: "Any kind of feeling whatever — past, future, or present… far or near — should be seen as it is: this is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self."

> ***Vism XIV 211–213 (CST §504).*** *As to order: of the several kinds of order — of arising, of abandoning, of practice, of plane, and of teaching — it is the order of teaching (desanā-kkama) that applies to the five aggregates. For the aggregates do not arise in a fixed sequence one after another, as the embryonic stages do; they arise together. The Blessed One, out of compassion for those teachable ones who, failing to analyse the aggregates, had fallen into assuming a self among them, taught materiality first — gross, and apprehended by sight and the other senses — and then feeling and the rest, that beings might resolve the "self" they grasped into its components and be freed of that assumption.*

ṭīkā: "Order" is fivefold, but only the order of teaching fits the aggregates. Order of arising suits the stages of an embryo; order of abandoning, the things abandoned by each path; order of practice and order of plane, their own subjects — none of these the aggregates, which arise together, at one moment, experiencing one object. The order here is purely pedagogical: the Buddha taught the gross first because it is the easiest handhold for understanding. By non-analysis (abhedena) — taking the aggregates together as a lump (piṇḍa) — beings assume a self; so he taught them severally, that

the lump might be resolved.

Nina: The Buddha's compassion is shown in his teaching of the five aggregates. He wished to help those who were teachable but who took the aggregates for self; so he taught them to resolve the "whole" they took for "self" by showing the distinction between nāma and rūpa. He taught the materiality aggregate first, since rūpa is gross and more easily apprehended, and then feeling, perception, and the rest. We must remember that this explanation follows the order of teaching, not the order of arising: the immaterial aggregates arise together, at the same moment, experiencing the same object.[4] Taking them as a mass, undivided, we assume a self; analysed as the different nāmas and rūpas they are, the assumption has nowhere to stand.

Why exactly five — the three reasons (214–217)

> ***Vism XIV 214–217.*** *Why are exactly five aggregates, neither more nor fewer, made known by the Blessed One? Because (a) all formed states that resemble one another are comprised together as five, (b) this is the widest limit as the basis for the assumption of self and of what pertains to self, and (c) the other sorts of aggregates are included by them.*

ṭīkā: These are called "aggregates of clinging" (upādānakkhandha) because they are the objects of clinging — subject to cankers, liable to be grasped. In the materiality aggregate the phrase "with cankers, liable to clinging" is said because canker-free dhammas do exist: it denies that the materiality aggregate has any such nature; it does not exclude a canker-free materiality, for there is none.[5] And here in the Visuddhimagga all of these are intended as both aggregates and aggregates-of-clinging, the field within which "I" and "mine" are imagined.

ṭīkā: First, when the numerous categories of formed states are grouped together according to similarity (sabhāga), they fall into just five: all that has the nature of being molested is gathered as one aggregate, materiality; all that is felt, as feeling; and so for perception, the formations, and consciousness. Second, this fivefold grouping is the widest limit as the basis for the assumption of self and of what pertains to self (etaparama): whatever anyone assumes as "self" or "mine" falls within these five and nowhere beyond them. Third, the other ways of speaking of "aggregates" are included by these five — in particular, the five dhamma-aggregates beginning with virtue (virtue, concentration, understanding, liberation, and the knowing-and-seeing of liberation), which, being formed states, are comprised within the formations aggregate. For these three reasons the aggregates are made known as exactly five.

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3. The four methods (jāti, sabhāva, puggala, lokiya/lokuttara) are not to be mixed; each grossness is relative (Vibh. 3).

Nina: The five aggregates are the whole field of the wrong view of self. Whatever we take for "I" or "mine" — the body, a feeling, a perception, the activities of mind, consciousness itself — is one of these five; there is nothing taken as self that is not among them. They are called "aggregates of clinging" because they are clung to, grasped with attachment and wrong view. Even now we are misled: we take the foul for beautiful, dukkha for happiness, the impermanent for permanent, the not-self for self; we think it good to be reborn and fail to see the round as a prison. Because the clinging-aggregates arise again and again in rebirth, we are as if imprisoned. By developing right understanding of the dhamma appearing now, we shall be freed.

4. Of the fivefold order (kama), only desanā-kkama, the order of teaching, applies — the aggregates arise together.

5. The clause on canker-free materiality is corrected against the Pāli (Vism-mhṭ Be §505, na anāsavarūpanivattanatthaṃ): the qualifier denies that materiality has a canker-free nature; it does not imply that canker-free materiality exists. The root states it plainly: "while feeling and the rest exist even canker-free, not so materiality" (Vism Be §505; Path of Purification XIV 215). So also Cha Myang Hee, A Study in Paramatthamañjūsā (University of Pune, 2001), p. 173.

Part XXVIII

The aggregates as the field of self-view, and the great similes of emptiness

Vism XIV 218–225

The aggregates as the basis of self-view (218)

> ***Vism XIV 218 (CST §507).*** *And these same five aggregates of clinging should be regarded as the basis for the various wrong views of self. For it is on the basis of these that beings assume "this is mine, this I am, this is my self."*

ṭīkā: The five clinging-aggregates are the standing-ground of self-view as a dwelling is the standing-ground of its occupant. Materiality is taken as the "self that has form"; feeling as the self that feels; perception, as that which marks; the formations, as that which acts; consciousness, as that which knows — and on each, the four-fold misconstruction (self is it, has it, contains it, is contained in it) is built, twenty kinds of self-view in all.[1] There is no self anywhere among them; the view is a construction laid upon the bare arising and ceasing of conditioned dhammas.

> **Nina:** The five aggregates are the field of attadiṭṭhi, the wrong view of self. We take the body for self, or feeling, perception, the activities of mind, or consciousness; and there is nothing taken as self that is not one of these five. But each is only a conditioned reality, arising and falling away. To call them "aggregates of clinging" is to say they are exactly what is grasped with attachment and wrong view — and the whole purpose of analysing them is to loosen that grasp, until the view of self is seen to have no object at all.

The aggregates collectively: the murderer, burden, and devourer (219)

> ***Vism XIV 219.*** *These five aggregates of clinging should be seen as a murderer with drawn sword (S iv 174), as a burden (S iii 25), as a devourer, and as impermanent, painful, void, and not-self.*

ṭīkā: The Blessed One declared the clinging-aggregates "five murderers with drawn swords," for, like enemies who have entered one's service in the guise of devoted friends, watching their chance, they end by destroying the one who trusts them.[2] He called them a "burden," for they must be carried with toil and never set down while craving lasts. He spoke of being "devoured" by them — "as I was devoured by materiality in the past, just as I am now devoured by this present materiality, so shall I be in the future" — the "devouring" being the discomfort, the affliction, suffered through the aggregates. By such conventional images he taught their danger: that what we cherish as friend

and self is in truth the very thing that wounds us.

Nina: In the Yamaka Sutta the aggregates are likened to a foe disguised as a friend: a treacherous man enters a rich man's service, behaves as a devoted friend, eager and well-spoken — and then murders him. Just so, one who holds wrong view of the aggregates finds that they turn to his loss and suffering. These are conventional expressions, but they teach a real danger — the danger of taking the clinging-aggregates for "friend," for "self," for "mine," when their very nature is to arise, oppress, and pass, binding us to the round.

Three further similes: sick-room, prison, and dish

(220–221)

> ***Vism XIV 220.*** *As to simile: the materiality aggregate as object of clinging is like a sick-room, because it is the dwelling-place — as physical basis, door, and object — of the sick man, namely the consciousness aggregate. The feeling aggregate is like the sickness, because it afflicts. The perception aggregate is like the provocation of the sickness, because it gives rise to feeling associated with greed and the rest. The formations aggregate is like having recourse to what is unsuitable, because it is the source of the feeling that is the sickness — "feeling as feeling is the formed that they form" (S III 87). And the consciousness aggregate is like the sick man, because it is never free from the feeling that is the sickness.*
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> ***Vism XIV 221.*** *They are also, respectively, like the prison, the punishment, the offence, the punisher, and the offender; and like the dish, the food, the curry sauce poured over the food, the server, and the eater.*

ṭīkā: By these three further sets of images — the sick-room and its sick man, the prison and its offender, the dish and its eater — the five aggregates of clinging are shown, each in its place: materiality as the site and occasion, feeling as the affliction, perception as what provokes it, the formations as the resort that feeds it, and consciousness as the one who undergoes it all. The danger in what is grasped as "self" is displayed from every side.

The aggregates individually: the five similes of the Pheṇa Sutta (224)

> ***Vism XIV 224.*** *In detail [that is, individually], materiality should be regarded as a lump of froth because it will not stand squeezing; feeling as a bubble on water because it can only be enjoyed for an instant;*

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1. The twenty modes of self-view: four per aggregate.

2. The "murderer with drawn sword" (Āsīvisa/Yamaka similes, S iv 174 / S iii 112) and the "burden" (Bhāra Sutta, S iii 25) and "devoured" (S iii 87, khajjanīya) — the aggregates as enemy-in-friend's-guise.

> *perception as a mirage because it causes illusion; the formations as a plantain trunk because they have no core; and consciousness as a conjuring trick because it deceives (S III 140–42). In particular, even sublime internal materiality should be regarded as foul; feeling as painful, because it is never free from the three kinds of suffering; perception and the formations as not-self, because they are unmanageable; and consciousness as impermanent, because it has the nature of rise and fall.*

ṭīkā: These five images show each aggregate's emptiness severally. A lump of foam (pheṇapiṇḍa) borne on the Ganges looks substantial but, squeezed in the hand, proves coreless, hollow — so materiality looks solid but has no graspable core. A water bubble (bubbuḷa) swells and bursts in an instant — so feeling is enjoyed only for a moment and is gone. A mirage (marīcikā) shimmers like water and deceives the thirsty traveller, who runs to it and finds nothing — so perception, marking "this is blue, this is a man, this is a woman," produces an illusion of solidity where there is none. A plantain trunk (kadalikkhandha), peeled sheath after sheath, yields no heartwood — and as the plantain has one appearance in its outer sheath, another within, and another within that, so the formations aggregate is a layering of many cetasikas with no pith, no core. A conjuring trick (māyā) makes the crowd see a jewel where there is none, and is gone as swiftly as it came — so consciousness is without substance, ungraspable, changing and vanishing more swiftly even than the rest, deceiving us into taking it for an abiding knower.

> **Nina:** Each simile fits its aggregate exactly. Materiality is foam — no core to it; feeling a bubble — enjoyed an instant, then broken; perception a mirage — it deceives, making us see permanence and self where there is none; the formations a plantain trunk — sheath upon sheath, no heartwood, just as the formations are a combination of many cetasikas with no core; consciousness a conjuring trick — without substance, ungraspable, appearing and vanishing more swiftly than all the rest.[3] The Dispeller of Delusion adds that citta is the most changeable and briefest of all. All these similes are an exhortation to develop right understanding of the realities now appearing; when insight is full, we shall no longer be deceived by mirage or illusion, and the aggregates will be seen as impermanent, dukkha, and not-self.

> ***Vism XIV 225.*** *As to good for one seeing thus: good comes to be accomplished in one who sees in the two ways, in brief and in detail. For one who sees the five aggregates of clinging in brief, in the form of an enemy with drawn sword and the rest, is not worried by the aggregates; and one who sees materiality and the rest in detail, as a lump of froth and the rest, is not one who sees a core in the coreless.*

ṭīkā: The "good" (siddhi, accomplishment) is the success that comes to one who sees the aggregates both collectively (as murderer, burden, devourer) and

severally (as foam, bubble, mirage, plantain, conjuring trick) — that is, to one who has developed insight and rightly understands the nāma and rūpa classed as the five aggregates.

3. The five similes are from the Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta (S iii 140–142): pheṇapiṇḍa (foam), bubbuḷa (bubble), marīcikā (mirage), kadali (plantain), māyā (conjuring trick). The Visuddhimagga gives the point of each; the Dispeller of Delusion (cited by Nina) expands them. The plantain's "sheath within sheath, no heartwood" and the conjuring-trick's "jewel where there is none" are from the Dispeller (p. 447).

Part XXIX

The four nutriments, the four perversions, and the close of the chapter

Vism XIV 226–230

Seeing rightly: the nutriments understood, the perversions and defilements abandoned (226–229)

> ***Vism XIV 226.*** *And in particular, one who sees internal materiality as foul (ugly) fully understands nutriment consisting of physical nutriment. He abandons the perversion [of perceiving] beauty in the foul (ugly), he crosses the flood of sense desire, he is loosed from the yoke of sense desire, he becomes canker-free as regards the canker of sense desire, he breaks the bodily tie of covetousness. He does not cling with sense-desire clinging.*

ṭīkā: "Fully understands" — by all three full understandings (pariññā). Abandoning desire-and-lust for the internal materiality whose origin is nutriment — "from the origin of nutriment is the origin of materiality" (S iii 56) — he abandons desire-and-lust for physical food too, and this is full understanding as abandoning; discerning internal materiality, he discerns the physical food that is its condition, and this is full understanding as the known; contemplating its rise and fall, full understanding as judging.[1] And when the three full understandings are accomplished, the perversions and the rest are demolished. "The bodily tie of covetousness" is said with reference to covetousness as sense-lust, for by the contemplation of foulness sense-lust is abandoned — or, by way of sense-lust, the abandoning of all greed is meant. "Does not cling" means: does not grasp, does not generate.

> **Nina:** The non-returner has eradicated sense desire. Sense desire has been classified in different groups of defilements — as flood (ogha), as yoke or bond (yoga), as canker (āsava) — and the ṭīkā states that it is sense desire that is referred to here.

> ***Vism XIV 227.*** *One who sees feeling as pain fully understands the nutriment that is contact. He abandons the perversion of perceiving pleasure in the painful; he crosses the flood of becoming, is loosed from the yoke of becoming, becomes canker-free as regards the canker of becoming, breaks the bodily tie of ill will, and does not cling with rites-and-ritual clinging.*

ṭīkā: Since "with contact as condition, feeling," one who abandons desire-and-lust for feeling abandons it also for the contact that is feeling's condition; contact is thus understood by the same three full understandings as before.[2] The wish for becoming is for the sake of pleasure; so, abandoning

craving for feeling, he crosses the flood of becoming, is loosed from its yoke, and becomes canker-free as regards its canker. Seeing all feeling as pain, he does not brood, "another has caused me new pain, or destroyed my pleasure" — and with the grounds of resentment abandoned, he breaks the bodily tie of ill will. Nor does he misapprehend purification as lying "in a happy existence abounding in pleasure," or in observances such as the ox-rite and ox-vow — misapprehensions driven by that same wish for pleasure — and so he does not cling with rites-and-ritual clinging.

> ***Vism XIV 228.*** *One who sees perception and the formations as not-self fully understands the nutriment that is mental volition. He abandons the perversion of perceiving self in the not-self; he crosses the flood of views, is loosed from the yoke of views, becomes canker-free as regards the canker of views, breaks the bodily tie of the insistence "this alone is the truth," and does not cling with self-theory clinging.*

ṭīkā: Mental volition is the formations aggregate itself, and perception is associated with it; so one who sees perception-and-formations as not-self abandons desire-and-lust for mental volition, discerns it, and judges it.[3] And since the view of self is the root of all views, when perception and the formations are seen as not-self, all views are demolished as self-view is — and with them the flood, the yoke, and the canker of views, the bodily tie of dogmatic insistence, and self-theory clinging all fall together.

> **Nina:** Wrong view has been classified as a flood, a yoke or bond, and a bodily tie. The bodily tie of insisting "this alone is truth" (idaṃ-saccābhinivesa) is dogmatism. Seeing perception and the formations as not-self overcomes all wrong views, since the wrong view of self (atta-diṭṭhi) is the root-cause of them all.

> ***Vism XIV 229.*** *One who sees consciousness as impermanent fully understands the nutriment that is consciousness. He abandons the perversion of perceiving permanence in the impermanent; he crosses the flood of ignorance, is loosed from the yoke of ignorance, becomes canker-free as regards the canker of ignorance, breaks the bodily tie of adherence to rites and rituals, and does not cling with view-clinging.*

ṭīkā: Seeing consciousness as impermanent, and striving through that gateway in all three contemplations, he fully understands the nutriment of consciousness by the three full understandings; and here in particular the perversion of permanence is abandoned. For it is from the prevalence of the grasp at permanence that ignorance takes consciousness as compact; resolving that compactness — seeing the momentary cittas arise and at once

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1. The three pariññā applied to physical food: pahāna-pariññā (abandoning desire-and-lust for nutriment-originated materiality, by S iii 56), ñāta-pariññā (discerning food as materiality's condition), tīraṇa-pariññā (contemplating its rise and fall). The covetousness-as-sense-lust gloss and "does not grasp, does not generate" are the ṭīkā's.

fall away, each succeeded by the next — he sees it as impermanent and crosses the flood of ignorance, is loosed from ignorance's yoke, and becomes canker-free as regards its canker.[4] Misapprehension of rites and rituals comes about by the power of delusion, so abandoning delusion he breaks that bodily tie. And as to view-clinging, the ṭīkā recalls the Buddha's words in the "Untaught" discourse (S ii 94): what is called citta, mano, viññāṇa, the untaught worldling is unable to turn from, unable to detach from — because for so long it has been held to, cherished, and misapprehended as "this is mine, this am I, this is my self."

ṭīkā: So the four right contemplations — foulness, pain, not-self, impermanence — applied to the aggregates accomplish at one stroke the full understanding of the four nutriments and the abandoning of the four perversions; and with them the four floods are crossed, the four yokes loosed, the four cankers ended, the four bodily ties broken, and the four clingings relinquished. These are not separate labours but one: to see an aggregate as it truly is, is to understand the nutriment that feeds it and to let go every defilement that binds to it.

Nina: The four perversions (vipallāsa) are our taking the foul for beautiful, the painful for pleasant, the not-self for self, the impermanent for permanent — perversions of perception, of citta, and of view. Right understanding of the aggregates undoes them, each by its own contemplation. And it gives full understanding of the four nutriments: physical food, which feeds the body; contact, which "feeds" feeling; mental volition, which feeds rebirth; and consciousness, which feeds nāma-rūpa. Citta is the chief in cognizing, the "leader"; without it the cetasikas could not arise to experience an object, and so it conditions them as nutriment. Seeing consciousness as impermanent — resolving the seeming compactness of a "mind" into momentary cittas that arise and at once fall away, each succeeded by the next — one fully understands the nutriment that is consciousness, and abandons the perversion of permanence.

The criminal and the three hundred spears (the nutriment of consciousness)

Nina: We read in the "Kindred Sayings" (Kindred Sayings on Cause, the Great Chapter — the Child's-Flesh discourse, S ii 98–100) that the Buddha taught the simile of a robber punished by the king: the king lets him be smitten with a hundred spears in the morning, a hundred at noon, and a

2. "With contact as condition, feeling" — the ṭīkā cites the suttas. Bhavogha: the wish for becoming is for the sake of pleasure, so giving up craving for feeling crosses the flood of becoming; the arahat has no desire for any kind of happiness, no desire for rebirth. The grounds-of-resentment formula ("he wronged me…," Dhs 1237) and the ox-rite and ox-vow (gosīla, govata) are the ṭīkā's references.

3. Manosañcetanā is the formations aggregate, perception taken with it as associated.

hundred in the evening. The nutriment that is consciousness, the Buddha said, should be regarded as just so sorrowful as the pain of that robber — "When consciousness is well understood, mind-and-matter is well understood; and when mind-and-matter is well understood, I declare there is nothing further the noble disciple has to do." The commentary explains the simile: the king is kamma; the criminal is the worldling; the three hundred spears are the rebirth-consciousness, which is itself suffering.[5] The danger of the cycle of birth and death is demonstrated by this simile: so long as there is rebirth-consciousness, there will be ageing, sickness, and death. The way out is to understand consciousness as it is — an impermanent nāma experiencing an object, different from the rūpa that experiences nothing, arising and ceasing at one of the six doors and gone. When that is fully understood, mind-and-matter is fully understood, and "there is nothing further to be done."

The closing verse, and the end of the chapter (230)

Vism XIV 230 (CST §509). *Such great blessings come from seeing them / as murderers and otherwise; / therefore the wise should see / the aggregates as murderers and otherwise.*

ṭīkā: "Great blessing" (mahānisaṃsa) is the abundant gain of developing, in the way described, the destruction of the perversions and of all the defilements. "As murderers and otherwise" means: as murderers with drawn swords — and as a burden, a devourer, foam, bubble, mirage, plantain, conjuring trick. And "the wise should see" them so means: should see them with knowledge and vision (ñāṇa-dassana), by direct realization (paccakkhato) — not by mere learning, but by the supramundane understanding that arises when insight has been developed stage by stage. In all the preceding sections the Visuddhimagga has exhorted to just this: to develop insight, so that the nāma and rūpa classed as the five aggregates are seen as impermanent, suffering, and not-self. The fourteenth chapter, called the Description of the Aggregates, in the Treatise on the Development of Understanding in the Path of Purification, composed for the gladdening of good people. — Here ends the explanation of the Description of the Aggregates.[6]

Nina: "Blessing" renders mahānisaṃsa, great benefit. The wise are to see the aggregates as murderers and otherwise not by theory but by direct realization (paccakkhato) — the clear, evident knowing of the truth, the supramundane understanding that comes after insight has been developed step by step. We gain the great benefit of these texts only if they are applied at this moment, if

4. Ghana-vinibbhoga: from the prevalence of the permanence-grasp, ignorance takes consciousness as compact; resolving the compactness is itself the seeing of impermanence. Rites-misapprehension "by the power of moha"; this bodily tie is eradicated by the sotāpanna. The "Untaught" discourse (S ii 94; Kindred Sayings on Cause §61) is the ṭīkā's citation; its point is given here with the quotation condensed.

insight is being developed now; there is no other way to see materiality as a lump of foam, feeling as a bubble, all the aggregates as coreless and not-self. The Visuddhimagga emphasizes the three full understandings (pariññā): without the first — full understanding of the known — there cannot be the third — full understanding of abandoning. Only when clear understanding of nāma and rūpa is developed can there at last be detachment from them. These texts are not abstract theory; they pertain to this very moment.

Editorial afterword

With this the Paramatthamañjūsā on Visuddhimagga XIV — the Description of the Aggregates — reaches the chapter's close: the section on understanding, the materiality aggregate, and the four mental aggregates of feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness, from the chapter's opening question "What is understanding?" to its closing verse on the aggregates as murderers.

Throughout, Nina van Gorkom's renderings have been the baseline, her notes preserved as her own.

Comparison with the complete CST Pāli shows the edition leaves two passages untranslated, about 227 words, some 1.3% of Chapter XIV's roughly 17,000-word Pāli. The first is the 77-word close of §421, from *Kā paññāti*, where Dhammapāla classifies the opening questions and explains why defilement and purification are not added as a sixth: supramundane understanding has no defilement and so no corresponding purification, while for mundane understanding both fall within the method of development. The second is §435's 150-word excursus on hearing, where, on the *anallīna* distinction, he defends against the *keci* the thesis that eye and ear apprehend objects that have not reached the faculty: sound stays where it arises; the seeming lateness of a distant washerman's beating is an *adhimāna*, a mistaken judgement in the later process, not evidence that sound travels; an echo is one sound conditioning another elsewhere, as a lodestone moves iron. Section 446 is not a third omission: its refutation of torpor as materiality is translated, including the Abhayagiri attribution, the hindrance argument, Sn 541, and the four remaining proposed rūpas, though the further dialectic on a twofold torpor, the Buddha's sleep, and torpor in the immaterial planes is condensed. Of the chapter's 89 sections in the Pāli, all are translated except §435, which is missing entirely, and §421, which stops short of its end. Some technical discussions elsewhere are summarized. The only passages not from Nina van Gorkom's hand are two short stretches in

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5. The Child's-Flesh (Puttamaṃsa) discourse: S ii 98–100, with its commentary — king = kamma, criminal = the worldling, spears = rebirth-consciousness as suffering.

6. The colophon (chapter title, "for the gladdening of good people") and the ṭīkā's closing rubric end the chapter.

Part III that her draft left in Pāli, supplied editorially and marked on the page.

Supplementary Material

The Meaning of Dhamma

Nina van Gorkom

The classic summary of the word's senses is given in the *Aṭṭhasālinī* (38), which the *Saddanīti* — the Pāli grammar written by the Thera Aggavaṃsa of Pagan in 1154 — and the *Abhidhānappadīpikā* extend.

Dhamma as guṇa — virtue, good quality. One of the meanings of *dhamma* is *guṇa*, virtue or good quality. In the commentaries this is explained as *kusala kamma* different from *akusala kamma*: *kusala kamma* is denoted *dhamma* and *akusala kamma*, *adhamma*. We read in the *Aṭṭhasālinī* (38): *Na hi dhammo adhammo ca, ubho samavipākino; adhammo nirayaṃ neti, dhammo pāpeti suggatin*ti — "dhamma and adhamma bear no equal fruit: adhamma leads to hell, dhamma causes one to reach heaven" (Theragāthā 304; Jātaka 1.15.386). The *Saddanīti* explains *dhamma* as *guṇa*, merit: in the passage "of the six special qualities of the Buddha," *dhamma* means excellent quality, virtue.

Dhamma as pariyatti — the scriptural text. The second meaning is *pariyatti*: the wording of the teachings contained in the Tipiṭaka. We read in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* (1.22): "I shall teach you, monks, Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, middle, and end" — this is the *dhamma* of teaching (*desanā-dhamma*). And in the *Majjhima Nikāya*: "here some young men of good family learn thoroughly the dhamma — sutta, geyya …" — this is *dhamma* as the wording of the teachings (*pariyatti-dhamma*). The word of the Buddha consists of nine divisions: *Sutta, Geyya, Veyyākaraṇa, Gāthā, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Jātaka, Abbhuta,* and *Vedalla*. In the *Bāhiranidāna* (the introduction to Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Vinaya) the teachings as a whole are laid down as "the Dhamma and the Vinaya … the Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma Piṭakas … the nine aṅgas … and the eighty-four thousand Units of the Dhamma." Thus, whenever the Dhamma and the Vinaya are referred to, the Abhidhamma is included in *Dhamma*.

Dhamma as nissatta, nijjīva — without a living being. A further meaning, given in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, is *dhamma* as an entity without a living soul (*nissatta, nijjīva*): *Tasmiṃ kho pana samaye dhammā honti, khandhā honti*ti — "then, at that time dhammas occur, khandhas

occur." This is *dhamma* without a living being, *dhamma* without life.

Nina: the text quoted from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* states, "At the time of consciousness coming into existence, there occur dhammas." The aggregate of consciousness (*viññāṇakkhandha*) is mentioned first, then the other three mental aggregates denoted as dhammas. All five khandhas are devoid of a living being.

The *Aṭṭhasālinī* (38) summarises the senses of the word: *Dhammasaddo panāyaṃ pariyatti-hetu-guṇa-nissatta-nijjīvata-ādīsu dissati — dhamma* is used in the sense of scriptural text (*pariyatti*), cause (*hetu*), virtue (*guṇa*), and the absence of an entity or living thing (*nissatta, nijjīva*). The last is the fourth Application of Mindfulness, "he abides contemplating dhammas as dhammas": all dhammas without a living soul, not a person, not a being, not self.

Dhamma as hetu — root-condition, cause. As the *Aṭṭhasālinī* notes, *dhamma* can also mean *hetu*, cause: "Knowledge of root-conditions is analysis of dhamma (dhamma-paṭisambhidā)" — here *dhamma* means root-condition. This refers to the *Vibhaṅga*, the second book of the Abhidhamma, which treats the four analytic insights, *paṭisambhidā*: of *attha* (result), of *dhamma* (cause), of *nirutti* (the language expressing them), and of *paṭibhāna* (illumination, ready speech). The *Vibhaṅga* applies these to the four Truths: knowledge of suffering is analytical knowledge of consequence (*attha*); knowledge of its cause is analytical knowledge of origin (*dhamma*); and so for cessation and the path. Thus *dhamma* as *hetu*, cause, is referred to here, and again in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

Dhamma as sabhāva — its own specific nature. The *Saddanīti* gives the same senses as the *Aṭṭhasālinī*, and adds more. It lists: *sabhāva* (own nature), *paññā* (understanding), *puñña* (merit), *paññatti* (concept), *āpatti* (offence), *pariyatti* (scripture), *nissatta-nijjīvatā*, *vikāra* (alteration), *guṇa*, *paccaya* (condition), *paccayuppanna* (what is conditioned), and so on. Of *sabhāva* it explains: *Ayañhi "kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā abyākatā dhammā"ti-ādīsu sabhāve dissati* — "in the passage 'wholesome dhammas, unwholesome dhammas, indeterminate dhammas,' *dhamma* is explained as having its own specific nature or characteristic."

Nina: in the Abhidhamma all realities are classified as threefold: *kusala*, *akusala*, and *abyākata* (indeterminate — neither wholesome nor unwholesome, namely the *vipāka* and *kiriya* cittas with their cetasikas, *rūpa*, and *nibbāna*). They are all dhammas, each with its own characteristic, *sabhāva*.

Dhamma as paññā, paññatti, and āpatti. The *Saddanīti* explains *dhamma* as *paññā*, wisdom, by the verse on the four *dhammas* of the householder of confidence — "truth, dhamma, courage, and generosity" — where *dhamma* refers to wisdom. It explains *dhamma* as *paññatti*, concept: *Paññattidhammā, niruttidhammā, adhivacanādhammā* — "dhamma that is a designation, an expression, a term" — here *dhamma* means concept.

Nina: *paññatti* stands for a name and for the idea expressed by it. Names can designate what is real in the ultimate sense (*paramattha dhammas*, such as *kusala, akusala,* sound) and also what is not real in the ultimate sense, such as person or house.

And it explains *dhamma* as *āpatti*, a disciplinary offence: *Pārājikā dhammā, saṅghādisesā dhammā* — offences involving defeat (*pārājika*) and those requiring a formal meeting of the order (*saṅghādisesa*).

Dhamma as vikāra, paccaya, and paccayuppanna. The *Saddanīti* explains *dhamma* as *vikāra*, alteration or what is subject to change: *Jātidhammā jarādhammā maraṇadhammā* — "dhammas as birth, as decay, as death." It explains *dhamma* as *paccaya*, condition, in the same way as *hetu*; and as *paccayuppanna*, what is subject to conditions: *Ṭhitāvasā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā*ti — "an element that is beyond control because of the causal law of dhamma, the natural order of dhamma" — here *dhamma* means what is subject to conditions.

Nina: *niyāma* is the fixedness of law. There is a fivefold natural order, governing temperature and seasons, plant life, *kamma*, the functions of *citta* in the processes, and certain events in the lives of the Buddhas. As to *kamma*: *akusala kamma* produces an undesirable result and *kusala kamma* a desirable one; this is *niyāma*, a fixed order that cannot be altered. As to *citta*: the cittas in a sense-door or mind-door process arise in a fixed order, *citta-niyāma*, that cannot be altered. The *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (I, 285) states: "whether or not a Tathāgata appears, this causal law of nature (dhātu-dhammaṭṭhitatā), this orderly fixing of things (dhammaniyāmatā), prevails: all conditioned things are impermanent (sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā)" — and so too "all conditioned things are dukkha" (sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā); but the third runs "all dhammas are not-self" (sabbe dhammā anattā), widening from the conditioned (saṅkhārā) to all dhammas, since not-self holds of the unconditioned, Nibbāna, as well.

Dhamma as sacca, samādhi, and pakati. Further senses follow. The *Saddanīti* explains *dhamma* as *sacca*, truth: "the dhamma that is understood, the dhamma that is realized" — in the sense of the four noble Truths (cf.

Dīgha Nikāya 13, "he saw the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma"). It explains *dhamma* as *samādhi*, concentration: "those Exalted Ones were of such dhammas." And it explains *dhamma* as *pakati*, nature: "living beings are of a nature to be born, to grow old, to die" — as the Commentary to the *Mūlapariyāyasutta* puts it, "of a nature to be born, of a nature to grow old, of a nature to die."

Dhamma as puñña, āpatti, and neyya. The *Saddanīti* explains *dhamma* as *puñña*, virtue: "the dhamma truly protects the one who practises it" — and the Commentary to the *Mūlapariyāyasutta*: "dhamma well-practised issues in bliss," where *dhamma* means merit (*guṇa*). It explains *dhamma* as *neyya*, what is to be known: "wholesome dhammas, etc." — the word *dhamma* here means what is knowable.

Nina: with the expression "kusalā dhammā" the text refers not only to *kusala*, but also to *akusala* and *abyākata* — all are to be known, *neyya*. They are *sabhāva*, each with its own characteristic, unalterable: *kusala* is always *kusala*, *akusala* always *akusala*. When their characteristics appear, they can be understood. As the Commentary to the *Mūlapariyāyasutta* gives the word-derivation: "they bear their own characteristics, thus they are dhammas" (*attano lakkhaṇaṃ dhārentī ti dhammā*) — *dhamma* from *dhāreti*, to bear.

Dhamma as yutti, visaya, and nibbāna. The *Saddanīti* closes its survey. It explains *dhamma* as *yutti*, what is correct or fitting: "It is not dhamma, great king, that you should go alone; I too shall go where you go." It explains *dhamma* as *visaya*, the object of citta: *Manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ* — "dependent on the mind-door (mano) and objects (dhamma), mind-consciousness (manoviññāṇa) arises" (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* IV, 85).

Nina: the words *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa* are the same in meaning — the *paramattha dhamma* that is consciousness. The *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (II, Nidāna-saṃyutta, VII, 61) says, "this, monks, that we call citta, mano, viññāṇa …" Yet in different contexts the terms are differentiated: the aggregate of consciousness is *viññāṇakkhandha*; seeing-consciousness is *cakkhuviññāṇa*; *mano* here stands for the citta that is the mind-door, through which an object is experienced in the mind-door process.

And it explains *dhamma* as *nibbāna*: "the dhamma of the true ones is not susceptible to decay" — *nibbāna*, the unconditioned dhamma that does not arise and fall away.

The Saddanīti's summary in verse. The *Saddanīti* ends with a verse gathering the senses of the word: *Pariyatti-paccayesu, guṇe nissattatāya ca;*

sabhāve ceva paññāya, puñña paññattiyampi ca. Āpattiyaṃ vikāre ca, paccayuppannakepi ca; sacca-samādhi-pakati-ñeyyesu yuttiyampi ca; visaye ceva nibbāne, dhammasaddo pavattati. "Thus the word *dhamma* occurs with reference to scriptures and conditions, virtue and what is devoid of a living being; own-nature and wisdom, merit and concept; offence and alteration, and what is conditioned; truth, concentration, and nature, what is to be known and what is fitting; object and *nibbāna*." Some teachers, the *Saddanīti* adds, classify the applications as tenfold: what is to be known, the Path, *nibbāna*, own-nature, birth, mind, object, merit, nature, and the scriptures.

The fourteen senses of the Abhidhānappadīpikā. The *Abhidhānappadīpikā* (a twelfth-century Pāli thesaurus, verse 784), with its *ṭīkā*, lists fourteen meanings of *dhamma*: *sabhāva, pariyatti, paññā, ñāya, sacca, pakati, puñña, ñeyya, guṇa, ācāra, samādhi, nissattatā, āpatti*, and *kāraṇa*. The *ṭīkā* explains several. Of *sabhāva*: *sabhāvo aviparīttatho* — own nature in the sense of being definite, distinct. The characteristics of realities are unalterable; *lobha* cannot be changed into *dosa*. One may change the name of an ultimate reality, but not its characteristic. Of *ñeyya*, what is to be known, it gives five kinds: the conditioned (*saṅkhāra*), alteration (*vikāra*), characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*), *nibbāna*, and concept (*paññatti*). Of *kāraṇa*, cause: "having refuted with dhamma" — with words that have reason and cause.

There are many meanings of *dhamma* as the word is used in different contexts. The aim of the teachings, though, is not merely knowing the texts but applying the Dhamma in developing the Eightfold Path. Where *dhamma* is explained as *pariyatti*, we read: *pariyāpuṇitabbā vinayābhidhammasuttantā* — the Vinaya, the Abhidhamma, and the Suttanta should be thoroughly learnt. One should not only read the texts, but consider again and again the meaning of the teachings, so that understanding of realities can grow. One may intellectually understand *dhamma* as *nissatta-nijjīvatā*, without a being, without a living soul; but it is through the development of understanding of the characteristics of realities appearing through the senses and the mind-door that the truth can be realized. Each *dhamma* that appears through one of the six doorways has its own specific characteristic; it is *sabhāvo aviparīttatho*, with its own nature, definite and distinct. In being mindful of sound, of hearing, of attachment, one can learn that all these dhammas are subject to conditions. There is no self or person who could exert control over them, or who would be their possessor. All dhammas are without a living soul: not a person, not a being, not self.[1]

Notes to The Meaning of Dhamma

[1] Nina van Gorkom, *The Meaning of Dhamma: The Senses of the Word in the Tipiṭaka, the Commentaries, and the Saddanīti*, as posted on classicaltheravada.org. The Pāli of the source, originally given in the ASCII (Velthuis) scheme, has been regularised here to Unicode diacritics, with proper names given their standard spelling (e.g. Aṭṭhasālinī, Saddanīti, saṅkhāra, Vibhaṅga, paṭibhāna). The canonical Pāli citations reproduce Nina van Gorkom's renderings and have not been re-collated against the primary editions of the Saddanīti and Aṭṭhasālinī.