THE THERAVĀDIN DOCTRINE OF MOMENTARINESS

A Survey of its Origins and Development

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by Wan Doo Kim

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Contents

Acknowledgements iii
Abbreviations iv
List of tables and figures ix

Introduction 1

PART ONE
The Theravādin Doctrine of Momentariness:
A Survey of its Origins and Development

1. The Origins of the Doctrine of Momentariness 22
1.1 The *dharma* theory and the doctrine of momentariness 25
1.2 The doctrine of impermanence and the conditioned characteristics 60

2. The Developing Theory of Momentariness 88
2.1 Problems of the momentariness of mental and material phenomena 88
2.2 The refutation of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* 91
2.3 The origins and evolution of the theory of the thought process in the Theravāda *Abhidhamma* canon 98
2.4 Buddhist epistemology in relation to the theory of momentariness 107

3. The Developed Form of the Doctrine of Momentariness 123
3.1 The relative duration of material and mental phenomena 124
3.2 The doctrine of momentariness and the thought process 148

4. Presuppositions and Application of the Doctrine of Momentariness 217
4.1 The denial of a post-mortem transitional period and the doctrine of momentariness 218
4.2 The momentary present and its selective application to the *cetopariyañāṇa* 233

Conclusion 249

PART TWO

An Annotated Translation and Edited Sections of the Relevant Texts in the Pāli Commentaries

5. Sources for the Doctrine of Momentariness in the Pāli Commentaries 258

5.1 The *Ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* 258

5.1.1 The *Saṃyutta* commentary (Translation) 258

5.1.2 The edited section of the *Saṃyutta* commentary (Text) 261

5.2 Refutation of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness 263

5.2.1 The *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* (Translation) 263

5.2.2 The *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* commentary (Translation) 265

5.2.3 The *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* sub-commentary (Translation and Text) 266

5.3 The relative duration of the material and mental processes 267

5.3.1 The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary (Translation) 268

5.3.2 The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* sub-commentaries (Translation and Text) 284

5.3.3 The *Yamaka* commentary (Translation and Text) 289

Bibliography 291

Detailed Contents of Introduction and Part One 306

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Abbreviations

Except in the case of dictionaries and other works of reference, abbreviated titles of secondary sources are not listed; for these see under the author's name and appropriate work in Bibliography (C).

A. Pāli and Sanskrit and Chinese texts

For full citation of the editions used see Bibliography (A). Works reconstructed in Sanskrit from Chinese sources and fragments of Sanskrit texts are also included here. The Pāli texts, unless otherwise stated, refer to PTS editions. Non-Pāli sources are abbreviated in capitals. An asterisk before a title indicates a Sanskrit or Pāli title reconstructed from an ancient Chinese translation in cases where the original is lost.

A	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
A C^e	*Aṅguttara-nikāya* (Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed.)
AAS-D	**Abhidharmāṣṭaskandhaśāstra* (*A-p'i-t'an pa chien-tu lun* = **Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra*), trsl. Dharmapriya, Saṅghadeva and Chu Fo-nien.
AKB	*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*
AKB-P	**Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*A-p'i-tamo chü-she-shih lun*), trsl. Paramārtha
AKB-H	**Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*A-p'i-tamo chü-she lun*), trsl. Hsüan-tsang
ADV	*Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*
Ap	*Apadāna*
Abhidh-vb	*Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī* (*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* commentary)
Abhidh-vk	*Abhidhammatthavikāsinī* (= *Abhidhammāvatāra Abhinavaṭīkā*)
Abhidh-s	*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*
Abhidh-av	*Abhidhammāvatāra*
AVB	**Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* (*A-p'i-t'an p'i-p'o-sha lun*)
As	*Atthasālinī* (*Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary)
As N^e	*Atthasālinī* (*Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary)
As-mṭ C^e	*Atthasālinī Mūlaṭīkā* (Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed.)
AH	**Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* (*A-p'i-t'an Hsin Lun*)
It	*Itivuttaka*
EA	**Ekottarāgama* (*Tseng-i a-han ching*)
Kv	*Kathāvatthu*
Kv-a	*Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā*
Kv-aṭ C^e	*Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā Anuṭīkā* (Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed.)
Kv-mṭ C^e	*Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā Mūlaṭīkā* (Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed.)
CU	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
Ja	*Jātaka*
JP-H	**Jñānaprasthāna* (*A-p'i-ta-mo fa chih lun*)
JP (Sk-fr)	*Jñānaprasthāna* (*Un fragment Sanskrit de l'Abhidharma des Sarvāstivādin*)
JP (Sk-rt)	*Jñānaprasthānaśāstra* (re-translated into Sanskrit from Chinese version of Hsüan-tsang)
Tikap	*Tika-Paṭṭhāna*

TS	*Tattvasaṅgraha* (*Tattvasaṅgraha of Śāntarakṣita with the commentary of Kamalaśīla*)
TSŚ	**Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (*Ch'eng shih lun*)
TSŚ (Sk-rt)	*Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (*Satyasiddhiśāstra*, re-translated into Sanskrit from Chinese version)
Th, Thī	*Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā*
D	*Dīgha-nikāya*
Dīp	*Dīpavaṃsa*
DIVY	*Divyāvadāna*
DS (Sk-fr)	*Dharmaskandha* (*Fragmente des Dharmaskandha: Ein Abhidharma-Text in Sanskrit aus Gilgit*)
DS-H	**Dharmaskandha* (*A-p'i-tamo fa yün tsu lun*)
Dukap	*Duka-Paṭṭhāna*
Dhp	*Dhammapada*
Dhs	*Dhammasaṅgaṇi*
NAS	**Nyāyānusāraśāstra* (*A-p'i-ta-mo shun cheng-li lun*)
Nidd I	*Mahāniddesa*
Nidd II	*Cullaniddesa*
Nidd-a	*Saddhammapajjotikā* (*Mahāniddesa* commentary)
NID-S	*Nidānasaṃyukta* (*Fünfundzwanzig Sūtras des Nidānasaṃyukta*)
Paṭis	*Paṭisambhidāmagga*
Paṭis-a	*Saddhammappakāsinī* (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* commentary)
Paṭṭh C^e	*Paṭṭhāna* (Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed.)
PK-G	**Prakaraṇapāda* (*Chung-shih-fen a-p'i-ta'an lun*), trsl. Guṇabhadra, Bodhiyaśas.
PK-H	**Prakaraṇapāda* (*A-p'i-ta-mo p'in-lei tsu lun*), trsl. Hsüan-tsang
Ppk-a	*Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*
PV-A	**Pañcavastuka* (*A-p'i-t'an wu fa hsing ching*)
PV-F	**Pañcavastuka* (*Sa-p'o-to-tsung wu shih lun*)
PVS-H	**Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra* (*Wu shih p'i-p'o-sha lun*)
Ps	*Papañcasūdanī* (*Majjhima-nikāya* commentary)
M	*Majjhima-nikāya*
MA	**Madhyamāgama* (*Chung a-han ching*)
Mhv	*Mahāvaṃsa*
Moh	*Mohavicchedanī* (= *Abhidhammamātikatthavaṇṇanā*)
Mp	*Manorathapūraṇī* (*Aṅguttara-nikāya* commentary)
MPPU	**Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtropadeśa* (*Ta chih tu lun*)
MVB	**Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (*A-p'i-ta-mo ta p'i-p'o-sha lun*)
Yam	*Yamaka*
Yam-a	*Yamaka-aṭṭhakathā* (*Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*)
Vin	*Vinayapiṭaka*
Vibh	*Vibhaṅga*
Vibh-a	*Vibhaṅga* commentary (*Sammohavinodanī*)
Vibh-aṭ C^e	*Vibhaṅga Anuṭīkā* (*Līnatthavaṇṇanā* II) (Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed.)
Vibh-mṭ C^e	*Vibhaṅga Mūlaṭīkā* (Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed.)
VIM	**Vimuttimagga*
Vism	*Visuddhimagga* (HOS)

Vism *Pe*	*Visuddhimagga* (PTS)
Vism-mhṭ *Ne*	*Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā* (*Visuddhimagga* with the *Paramatthamañjūsāṭīkā*)
VK	**Vijñānakāya* (*A-p'i-ta-mo shih shen tsu lun*)
VB	**Vibhāṣāśāstra* (*Pi-p'o-sha lun*)
VB (Sk-fr)	*Vibhāṣā* (*A Sanskrit Fragment, Eastern Turkestan*)
VSŚ	**Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra* (Tsun p'o-hsü-mi p'u-sa so-chi lun)
S	*Saṃyutta-nikāya*
SA	**Saṃyuktāgama* (*Tsa a-han ching*)
SA (Sk-fr)	*Saṃyuktāgama* (*Fragments du Saṃyuktāgama*)
SAKV	*Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (*The work of Yaśomitra*)
Saddh-s	*Saddhammasaṅgaha*
SAV	**Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaviniścaya* (*'Dus byas daṅ 'dus ma byas rnam par ṅes pa*)
SAHŚ	**Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* (*Tsa a-p'i-t'an hsin lun*)
SNŚ	**Sammatīyanikāyaśāstra* (*San-mi-ti-pu lun*)
Sp	*Samantapāsādikā* (*Vinayapiṭaka* commentary)
Spk	*Sāratthappakāsinī* (*Saṃyutta-nikāya* commentary)
Spk-pṭ *Ce*	*Līnatthappakāsinī* III (*Saṃyutta-nikāya* sub-commentary)
Sv	*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (*Dīgha-nikāya* commentary)
Sv-pṭ	*Līnatthappakāsinī* I (*Dīgha-nikāya* subcommentary)
ŚAŚ	**Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* (*She-li-fu a-p'i-t'an lun*)

B. Journals

AP	*Asian Philosophy*, Abingdon
BF	*Buddhist Forum*, London
BS	*Buddhist Studies*, Hamamatsu
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London
BSR	*Buddhist Studies Review*, London
CJH	*Ceylon Journal of the Humanities*, Colombo
EW	*East and West*, Rome
IIJ	*Indo-Iranian Journal*, Dordrecht
JA	*Journal Asiatique*, Paris
JEAS	*Journal of the European Āyurvedic Society*, Reinbek
JIABS	*Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Madison
JIP	*Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Dordrecht
JPTS	*Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Oxford
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London
PEW	*Philosophy East and West*, Hawaii
UCR	*University of Ceylon Review*, Colombo
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
WZKS	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*

C. Dictionaries and other standard works of reference

Apte	Apte, V.S. *The Practical Sanskrit -English Dictionary*, the Revised and Enlarged Edition, Poona, 1957.
BHSD	*Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, F. Edgerton, Yale, 1953.
CCCĀP	*The Comparative Catalogue of Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas*, C. Akanuma, Nagoya, Japan, 1929.
Childers	Childers, R. *A Dictionary of the Pāli Language*, London, 1875.
CPD	*A Critical Pāli Dictionary*, Copenhagen, 1924.
DPB	*Dictionary of Pāli Buddhism*, Sankibo Busshorin, Tokyo, 1997.
EIP	*Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: Abhidharma Buddhism To 150 A.D.*, vol. VII, ed. K. H. Potter, R. Buswell, P.S. Jaini and N.R. Reat, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1996.
ITTP	*Index to the Taisho Tripiṭaka* (*Chinese Tripiṭaka Concordance*), vols. 1-45, Research Association for the Terminology of the Taisho Tripiṭaka, Tokyo, 1975.
KBC	*The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, L.R. Lancaster and Sung-bae Park, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1979.
MW	Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1899.
PACT	*The Pāli Aṭṭhakathā Correspondence Table*, Sodo Mori, Y. Karunadasa and T. Endo, PTS, Oxford, 1994.
PED	*Pali-English Dictionary*, T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, PTS, Lodon, 1921-25.
PTC	*Pāli Tipiṭakaṃ Concordance*, PTS, London, 1955.
IAKB	Index to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (P. Pradhan Edition, 1967), A. Hirakawa, 3 Parts, Tokyo, 1973, 1977, 1978.

D. CD-ROM databases of the Pāli canon and commentaries

BS CD-R	*A Digital Edition of Buddhist Scriptures* (*Budsir IV on CD-ROM*), Mahidol University Computing Center, Bangkok, 1994.
PT CD-R	*Palitext ver. 1.0* (*Buddhist Canon CD-ROM*), Dhammakaya Foundation and PTS, Khlong Luang, 1996.
CS CD-R	Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā CD-ROM (version 1.1), Vipassana Research Institute, Igatpuri, 1997.
CD-Rs	The above three CD-ROMs.

E. General

Common abbreviations listed in dictionaries (e.g. Oxford English Dictionary) are not listed here.

BPS	Buddhist Publication Society
ibid.	same reference as the previous one (ibidem)
id.	same work as in previous reference (idem)

IsMEO	Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
KIK	Kokuyaku Issaikyō (Bidon-bu, v. 7-17)
kr/ krs	*kārikā/ kārikās*
PTS	Pali Text Society
Sk	Sanskrit
T	*Taisho shinshu daizokyo*
trsl	translation/ translated

Abbreviations of printed editions and symbols used in the edited sections (see § 5.1.2, § 5.3.3).

Bc / C^e	Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā ed., Rangoon.
N^e	Edition in *Māgarī* characters
P	Pali Text Society ed., London.
Sh	Simon Hewavitarne Bequest ed., Colombo.
T	Thai Royal ed., Bangkok.
Tcd	Thai Digital Edition of Buddhist Scriptures, BUDSIR on CD-ROM, Mahidol University Computing Center, Bangkok.
Bcṭ	Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyanā *Ṭīkā* ed., Rangoon.
Pvl	*varia lectio*. Variant reading noted in PTS ed.
em.	*emendavi*. 'I have emended'.
⊗...⊗	ed.or ms. reads differently.
...	cited by other texts.
♦...♦	cited by another text.

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Intro-1	Cross-references to the *Visuddhimagga* in the Pāli commentaries	11
1-1	The textual evolution of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad	35
2-1	The attributions of the theory of the perceiving agent to figures or schools in the early textual sources	117
3-1	The application of hypothetical options in different commentarial texts and the *Abhidhamma* manuals	144

Figures

2-1	Historical development of the theory of momentariness in the textual tradition of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas	112
3-1	The theory of mixed origination	126
3-2	The theory of succession	126
3-3	Redundant moments and the mixed origination theory	127
3-4	Redundant moments and the succession theory	127
3-5	The relative duration of material and mental phenomena – the four hypothetical options	132
3-6	The three sub-divisions of a moment and the corresponding materiality	134
3-7	Synchronous arising and asynchronous dissolution with hypothetical Option III	135
3-8	Asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation at the final stages of death	136
3-9	The exceptional application of the sixteen moments theory to the moment of death	137
3-10	Option II and the revised version in *Yamaka* commentary	140
3-11	Option II and the revised version in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary	141
3-12	Option I and the revised version in the *Visuddhimagga*	142
3-13	Three possible cases for rebirth from happy to unhappy destiny	157
3-14	The mind-door process at death and rebirth from happy to unhappy destiny	159
3-15	The sense-door process at death and rebirth from happy to unhappy destiny	160
3-16	The sense-door process and the degree of sensory intensity	169
3-17	The duration of the four types of the sense-door process	170
3-18	Groups of the eye decad in a sequential order	180

3-19	The eye decad and its duration in the sequential rhythm of change	181
3-20	Models of sequential change and the duration of materiality	184
3-21	The three options for the one additional thought moment	189
3-22	Different interpretations of the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena	195
3-23	Prenascent and postnascent conditions of material and mental phenomena	200
3-24	The partial overlap of material and mental phenomena	203
3-25	The duration of materiality in the eye-door process with an ultra intense object	207
3-26	The grades of the sense-door process in the *Abhidhammasaṅgaha*	209
3-27	The degree of sensory intensity and the grades of the sense-door processes	211
4-1	Rebirth with the intermediate state and momentariness	223
4-2	Dispute on the rebirth process – the Vibhajyavādin vs. Yuktivādin	225
4-3	Rebirth with no intermediate state in the three and sixteen moments theories	228
4-4	The theories of the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* – the Abhayagirivāsin and Vibhāṣāśāstrin	239
4-5	The Theravādin theory of the *cetopariyañāṇa* and the mind-door process	241
4-6	The Theravādin doctrine of momentariness: its origins and development	248

INTRODUCTION

At the core of Buddhist thought, as it came to be systematised, lies a vision of the world as a shifting and transitory array of phenomena. It lacks any underlying physical substrate to serve as a common thread holding the moments of phenomena together. The world and its perceiver are seen as an evanescent flux, where real existence is construed simply in terms of the capacity to bring about a subsequent effect. All conditioned material and mental phenomena thus pass out of existence as soon as they have come into existence. They are intrinsically momentary (*kṣaṇika*), and no permanent and unitary self is detected. There is only a relation of causal dependency which governs the transitions between the preceding and following moments, and this causal principle is responsible for the coherent patterns of material and mental phenomena. This seamless pattern is precisely what sustains the illusion of continuity (*santati*). The appearance of continuity between moments is therefore explained by the similarity between instantaneous collocations of phenomena. All conditioned phenomena are thus characterised by momentariness in the sense that they arise and perish in continual succession while presenting a picture of a seemingly static existence.[1]

The doctrine of momentariness was initially a theory created by Buddhist scholastic tradition and eventually became an integral part of its doctrinal system.[2] This reflects a schematic and radical interpretation of the doctrine of impermanence and change. Most scholars agree that this radical doctrine cannot be traced back to early canonical sources (i.e. the Four Pāli *Nikāyas* and their equivalents in other traditions) and does not fit in with the empirically oriented teachings of early Buddhism.[3] The commentary on the *Vibhaṅga*

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1 This is a general outline of the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness (Schweizer, 1994, pp. 81-91), but it cannot cover the divergent views held by the Ābhidharmikas of the early schools, notably the Theravādin Ābhidhammikas.

2 By 'the theory of momentariness', I mean the developing doctrine in the Theravādin *Adhidhamma* texts, whereas by 'the doctrine of momentariness' I mean the developed stage at which the post-canonical tradition has already accepted the theory as an integral part of its doctrinal system.

3 Prof. Gombrich, in the Jordan Lectures for 1994, takes a fresh look at the earliest Buddhist texts and offers various suggestions as to how the teachings in them developed. For instance, he argues that we cannot understand the Buddha unless we understand that he was debating the existence of a soul; but what exactly was he denying? The other main theme he concerns himself with is 'Metaphor, Allegory, Satire'. By taking

clearly states that the notion of momentariness is confined to the *Abhidhamma*, and is not found in the *Suttas*.[4] Nevertheless the doctrine of momentariness comes to be taken for granted as an integral part of the Buddhist doctrinal system. Systematic research on the doctrine of momentariness began in the 1930s with Stcherbatsky (1930) and Mookerjee (1935),[5] who were the first to deal extensively with this issue. Both scholars base their exposition on sources pertaining to the later period, in particular on the *Tattvasaṅgraha* (chapter 8, *Sthirabhāvaparīkṣā*) by Śāntarakṣita and the commentary by Kamalaśīla, which are the indispensable textual sources for a comprehensive treatment of the doctrine. Their studies contributed much to making known the most salient features of this doctrine. But they only produce a picture of the final form which the doctrine of momentariness assumed in the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra schools and do not refer to the earlier phase of this doctrine. Alexander von Rospatt's study fills this gap with its full-scale investigation of the early history of the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness.[6] He discusses an impressive array of passages from early Buddhist literature in several languages – Sanskrit, Pāli, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese – covering most notably the *Abhidharma* of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas and early Yogācāra texts. However, considering his handling of extensive textual sources and the fact that research into this area still remains in its preliminary stages, it is quite natural that he could not provide a comprehensive study of the early formation of this doctrine, as it took place in the Theravāda commentarial texts.

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the words of the texts literally– despite the Buddha's warning not to– successive generations of his disciples created distinctions and developed doctrines far beyond his original intention. He also shows how this led to a scholastic categorisation of meditation, and further argues that failure to understand a basic metaphor inevitably gave rise to the later argument between the Mahāyana and the older tradition. (These lectures have been published under the title *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*, London, 1996)

4 Vibh-a p. 7; cf. As 420; Vism XIV §187-190.

5 Stcherbatsky (1930, Vol. I. pp. 79-118) and Mookerjee (1935, particularly pp. 1-86). See von Rospatt (1995, pp. 3-7) for a bibliography of further research by modern scholars.

6 *The Buddhist Doctrine of Momentariness: A Survey of the Origins and Early Phase of this Doctrine up to Vasubandhu*, by Alexander von Rospatt (1995): A Ph.D. thesis at the University of Hamburg. There are six reviews of von Rospatt's book: Bronkhorst (1995, pp. 513-519); Vetter (1997, pp. 166-170); Pagel (1997, pp.156-158); Butzenberger (1997, pp. 252-258); Gethin (1997a, pp. 478-480); Powers (1998, *JBE*, Vol 5, http://jbe.la.psu.edu/5/power981.html).

Among the early Buddhist schools who subscribed to the doctrine of momentariness, the Vātsīputrīya accepted only the momentariness of mental phenomena,[7] whereas the Sarvāstivādins and several other schools, albeit in a different way, regarded all conditioned phenomena as momentary.[8] In contrast to those schools, the Theravādins claim in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* that material things, namely the great earth, ocean, grass, trees and so on, last longer than a single instant of thought. The Theravādin commentarial tradition subsequently postulates its unique position that a moment of matter lasts as long as sixteen or seventeen thought moments.[9] This computational modelling of the process in terms of the changing rate of material and mental phenomena distinguishes the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness from the rest of the doctrines developed in the Sarvāstivāda. Nevertheless, the Theravādins' interpretation, as it stands, was probably not known to the early Northern Ābhidharmikas because it is not found in the *vibhāṣā* texts (the 2nd century CE) extant in Chinese translations, though a similar view is attributed to anonymous *śramaṇas*.[10] Moreover, in the doxographical sources, we do not find any direct accounts of the view that we currently have in the Theravādin commentaries.

This has inclined some scholars to think that the Theravādins did not develop this particular theory in the early stage of their doctrinal history, and that it may have been interpolated into the Theravādin textual sources later. In fact, von Rospatt explicitly puts forward the hypothesis that the doctrine of momentariness in Theravāda Buddhism was adopted from another Buddhist school and that it may have been introduced by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century CE. He states that his hypothesis needs to be verified by a systematic examination of the early post-canonical sources. In particular, he has suggested a careful investigation to see whether pertinent material can be found in the commentaries attributed to Buddhaghosa,

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7 The Vātsīputrīya (or jointly the Vātsīputrīya-Saṃmatīyas) took all mental phenomena to be momentary and all material phenomena, with the exception of flames and sound, to be non-momentary. The momentariness of flames and sound, which may have been regarded as a self-evident fact, is not specified in the works of Vasubandhu and Yaśomitra (AKB $79^{11\text{-}15}$; SAKV $179^{10\text{-}15}$), but reported by Kamalaśīla (TS 352/ TSP $132^{6\text{-}8}$) and P'u-kuang (*Chü-she Lun Chi*, T 41 $201^{b22\text{-}24}$). See von Rospatt (1995, pp. 36-39) for full citations with translations.

8 See von Rospatt (1995), p. 39.

9 See § 3.1.3 for a discussion of how the numbers differ in the commentarial texts.

10 See § 3.1.1.

and if so, whether this can be identified as the commentator's personal contribution or whether it may be traced back to the Sinhalese commentaries used by him. A similar view to that of von Rospatt, though he has not referred to it, was already to be found in D.J. Kalupahana's publications.[11] Contrary to this position, I propose the hypothesis that the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness was embedded in the Old Sinhalese commentaries. Before outlining the historical background of the Old Sinhalese and Pāli commentarial tradition to which I will refer frequently in the main discussion, let me first specify the aims, method and scope of this study.

(1) Aims, method and scope

At the outset, I should make it clear that the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness is best approached from a psychological rather than philosophical perspective. Investigation of the nature and content of the material reveals that, unlike the later Northern textual sources, the commentators deal with the subject within the domain of the sophisticated psychological system of the Theravādins. The basic premise of the Northern schools has been perpetuated, and later it is represented with a new type of method. That is to say, the developed doctrine of momentariness in Northern India is highly charged with epistemological implications in the philosophical works of notable Buddhist masters, namely, Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Ratnakīrti and others, from the seventh to eleventh centuries CE. In contrast, the Theravādins' approach to the issue employs the computation of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena, and is largely concerned with the internal psychological processes that are involved in making sense of sense data. It is more analogous to a modern cognitive psychological approach[12] than to an epistemological one in philosophy.

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11 The book *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* is an outgrowth of his Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of London in 1966, and his subsequent publications are *Buddhist Philosophy: Historical Analysis* (1976), *The Principles of Buddhist Psychology* (1987) and *A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities* (1992). See bibliography (c) for his articles in Sri Lankan journals.

12 Cognitive psychologists suggest that the traces from one sensory event must endure in the brain for at least 500 milliseconds, if this event is to carry on to enter the full cognitive process (see *Zen and the Brain* by Austin, The MIT Press, 1998, p. 557). Cf. Brown (1999) "Microgenesis and Buddhism: The Concept of Momentariness" in *PEW*, Vol. 49, No 3, pp. 261-277.

I have two objectives in this study: 1) to expound, to some extent, the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness itself, and 2) to make a comprehensive examination of its textual history. More emphasis is given to the textual history of the doctrine, leaving room for a further study on the implications of the doctrine itself in the sophisticated psychological system of the Theravāda. To present the internal evidence for its early textual history, I focus on how the theory gradually evolved in relation to other doctrines within the Theravādin doctrinal system. I further expand the scope of my inquiry to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's literary sources in order to have some external testimony to the formation of the Theravādin theory of momentariness. In particular, I draw some relevant material from the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, which records anonymous views and in some cases the position of the Vibhajyavādins.[13] I also use this parallel textual evidence in order to analyse the Theravādin account of the doctrine from a wider perspective. These parallel views will indirectly demonstrate the ongoing exegetical activity of the early Theravādin commentarial tradition; otherwise, we can only directly detect this activity through fragmentary evidence found in the Pāli commentaries which supersedes the original exegetical sources.

Von Rospatt has already covered the wide range of literary sources of the various early schools. My research will make use of this detailed investigation as an essential reference work, but my inquiry is sharply focused on the origins and gradual evolution of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness, complementing von Rospatt's study, which examines, on a broader scale, the origins and early phase of the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness. Although I have used the literary sources of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, the main textual material that I propose to use consists of the early *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas*, the Pāli *Abhidhamma* texts, their commentaries and sub-commentaries, and also *Abhidhamma* manuals dating from the fifth century CE to the twelfth century CE. In particular, I have made use of the pertinent material in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries, early *Abhidhamma* exegetical texts which are traditionally attributed to Buddhaghosa. I am fully aware that this attribution is controversial among modern scholars, and for the sake of

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13 See Intro. p. 16. fn. 48.

argument I accept the opinion that they are probably the works of a close associate of Buddhaghosa rather than of Buddhaghosa himself. Accordingly, I consider that the pertinent material in the *Abhidhamma* commentaries predates the doctrinal expositions reproduced in Buddhaghosa's own treatise, the *Visuddhimagga*. This chronological preference will be justified when we discuss the probable date of the origins of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. Let us first outline the early history of the commentarial tradition of the Theravāda.

(2) The origins and evolution of the Theravādin exegetical texts

As my study concerns the doctrinal issues developed in the Theravādin exegetical texts, it will be useful to have beforehand an overall view of the early textual history of the Theravādin commentarial tradition. I shall consider with the utmost brevity only what is directly relevant to the present theme.

The Ceylonese tradition claims that the commentaries (*aṭṭhakathā*) were brought from India to Ceylon in the third century BCE. It is stated in the prologues to the Pāli commentaries that the *Aṭṭhakathā*s were recited at the First Synod and subsequent Synods and later introduced to Ceylon by Mahinda and translated into Sinhalese.[14] According to the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa*, the Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* were written down along with the Pāli canon at the Ālokavihāra Synod in the reign of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya in the first century BCE.[15] However, the literal truth of the origins of the Theravādin exegetical texts has usually been accepted by scholars only with some reservations.[16] It is unlikely that the original versions of the Pāli commentaries as we have them now were formed at the First Synod soon after the death of the Buddha; though it is conceivable that certain doctrinal points and ambiguous terms were discussed at that Synod. The interpretations agreed in the Synod would have formed the basis of the later exegetical tradition. With the development of heretical views and the growth of the schisms in the Saṅgha, at the Second and Third

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14 Sv I 1; Ps I 1; Spk I 1; Mp I 1; As 1. This account recurs in the *Mahāvaṃsa* (*Cūlavaṃsa* I xxxvii, vs 227-229) and the *Saddhammasaṅgaha* (*JPTS* 1890, p. 53).

15 Dīp xx, 20-21; Mhv xxxiii, 100-101.

16 Adikaram (1946, pp. 33ff.); Lottermoser (1982, p. 221); Norman (1983, p. 119).

Synods, the elders who assembled would have carried on this process of interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. The commentaries that Mahinda was said to have introduced to Ceylon, along with the canon, probably consisted of the expositions as laid down at the Third Synod,[17] which had just concluded. Very soon after Mahinda's arrival he translated them into Old Sinhalese, and they continued to be studied and further elaborated by the elders of Ceylon, and were eventually committed to writing as stated above.[18]

When Buddhaghosa arrived in Ceylon in the fifth century CE, the commentaries handed down at various places were compiled into compendia and treatises. For instance, the *Mūla-/Mahā-Aṭṭhakathā*, or simply the *Aṭṭhakathā* of the dwellers of the Mahāvihāra at Anurādhapura, was a grand compendium of the orthodox interpretations. The *Andhaka-Aṭṭhakathā* was handed down at Kāñcīpura in South India; the *Kuruṇḍī-Aṭṭhakathā*, was so named because of its having been written at the Kuruṇḍavelu Vihāra in Ceylon.[19] Buddhaghosa thus must have found a large mass of material at his disposal. These commentaries embraced various shades of opinion and were directed at the elucidation of the root (*mūla*) texts. Although the original sources that Buddhaghosa would have used are not extant, we are fortunate, for the verses and passages of the ancient teachers as well as the names of the exegetical works are preserved in the Pāli commentaries. They are truncated and admittedly fragmentary, but at least remain in recognisable and traceable form.

Systematic and comprehensive research on the Pāli commentarial literature is yet to be done, but preliminary studies have been carried out by scholars.[20] E.W. Adikaram (1946) studied the origins of the Theravādin commentaries in his pioneering work, *The Early History of Buddhism*. Making extensive use of Adikaram's work, F. Lottermoser (1982) and Sodō

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17 The Northern tradition only mentions the first two of these communal recitations, see Willemen (1998, pp. 55-59).

18 See Malalasekera (1928/ 1994), pp. 90ff.

19 Twenty-eight major sources of the Pāli commentaries are listed by Adikaram (1946, p. 10); Sodō Mori (1984, pp. 144-146; 1989a, pp. 193-206; 1989b, pp. 685-696) identifies forty sources.

20 Oldenberg (1879, Dīp, Intro. p. 4); Geiger (1916, p. 25); Franke (1907, pp. 203ff); Malalasekera (1928, pp. 79ff.); Smith (1929, CPD I. s.v. *aṭṭhakathā*); Winternitz (1933, p. 184); Frauwallner (1956, p. 186); Bechert (1957, pp. 329ff.); Adikaram (1946); Warder (1980, pp. 321-323); Lottermoser (1982, pp. 631ff.); Norman (1983, pp. 118ff.; 1997, pp. 149-166); Sodō Mori (1984, pp. 718ff. in Japanese; 1989a, pp. 314ff.).

Mori (1984) independently undertook larger-scale studies of the Pāli *Aṭṭhakathā* literature.[21] Their research has uncovered the nature of the early exegetical tradition and Buddhaghosa's own contribution to the Pāli commentaries; although they have used different methods, there are some common findings and observations.[22] I have selected Lottermoser's work for a summary of the early history of the commentarial literature,[23] which is pertinent to our discussion of the date of the Theravādin exegetical texts.

Lottermoser examines approximately 2600 verse passages[24] from the nine selected Pāli commentaries[25] which are traditionally attributed to Buddhaghosa and from his main work, the *Visuddhimagga*. As her central theme is the source material for the *Aṭṭhakathā*, she accordingly investigates all the verse passages in the texts as an effective clue to the source material that must have been current in the early stages of the formation of the Theravādin commentaries. All the verse passages collected from those ten texts are examined from four different standpoints: 1) the length of the individual verse passage, 2) duplication (i.e. repeated occurrence) within the ten texts, 3) source references obtained, and 4) parallels traced in the commentaries of the *Khuddaka-nikāya*.[26] Detailed investigation with this unique method reveals that the lost source material, which is collectively called *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā*, had gradually grown up in four stages, namely, the stages of floating traditions, diversification, standardisation, and translation.

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21 Lottermoser's work was submitted as a Ph.D. thesis to the University of Göttingen, Germany, in 1979 and printed privately in 1982 from typescript for distribution to the libraries of universities and scholars, under the title – *Quoted Verse Passages in the Works of Buddhaghosa: Contributions towards the Study of the Lost Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā Literature*. Sodō Mori's work, however, was submitted as a D.Litt. thesis to the University of Tokyo, Japan, in 1980 and published in Japanese under the title – *Pāli Chūshaku-bunken no Kenkyū* (*A Study of the Pāli Commentaries*) in 1984; parts of this book were translated into English and published in his book, *Studies of the Pāli Commentaries: A Provisional Collection of Articles* (1989).

22 Lottermoser mainly focuses upon an examination of all the verse-passages of the selected commentaries; whereas Sodō Mori is chiefly concerned with the proper names, geographical references, the views presented anonymously, and so on. He reviewed Lottermoser's book and compared it with his own work, see Mori (1989, pp. 159-177).

23 Lottermoser (1982), pp. 221-229. See also a useful Table (XXXI) which conveniently summarises the growth of the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* in four stages of floating traditions, diversification, standardisation, and translation.

24 The length of the verse passages is classified thus: single verses embedded in prose (71. 9 %), long verse passages (23. 7 %), and verse fragments (4. 4 %).

25 The first four *Nikāyas* (Sv, Ps, Spk, Mp) and the three *Abhidhamma* commentaries (As, Vibh-a, Ppk-a), the *Vinaya* commentaries (Sp) and the *Pātimokkha* commentary.

26 By "parallel" she means verses occurring in the texts attributed to Buddhaghosa which are also found in the *Khuddakaṭṭhakathā*, i.e. the commentaries which are not attributed to Buddhaghosa. See Lottermoser (1982), pp. 89ff.

In the earliest phase there was no commentary in a written form, but exegetical teaching traditions in an oral form must have been introduced from India, to which Sinhalese conventions were gradually added. Lottermoser refers to this earliest stage of evolution as 'Porāṇa I' (the ancient teachers). The basic *Sutta* commentary was presumably written down as early as the first century BCE, and this marks the final stage of the floating traditions (the 3rd to the 1st century BCE) of Indian as well as Sinhalese origins, which is referred to as 'Porāṇa II'. During this period, stories connected with Ceylon probably also appeared. This early commentary may have served as the common source not only for the compilation of the Sinhalese version of the four *Nikāya* commentaries, but also to some extent for that of the commentaries on the *Vinaya*- and *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*.[27]

The second stage (the 1st century BCE) is characterised by the development of divergent teaching traditions connected with specific canonical texts, which were already organised into the first four *Nikāyas* (*Dīgha*, *Majjhima*, *Saṃyutta*, and *Aṅguttara* – this distribution was probably the beginning of the *bhāṇaka* system). The *bhāṇaka* tradition may have been the underlying cause of this diversity, in which a common basis of exegetical material was formed. This seems to lead to the growth of different commentaries, which eventually gives rise to a substantial part of the four *Nikāya* commentaries of the Sinhalese *Aṭṭhakathā* literature.

The third stage (the 1st century CE) is the standardisation of the divergent exegetical material. In this period the major growth of the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā* of the *Tripiṭaka* was completed, and subsequent additions were probably of a minor nature.[28] Lottermoser has traced a set of lost source works of the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā* through a close examination of the duplicate patterns for the verse passages in the present Pāli commentaries. She has shown

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27 Lottermoser (1982, p. 223).

28 Adikaram (1946, p. 87) stated that no material was added to the Sinhalese commentaries after the first century CE, but Sodō Mori's study (1988, p. 143) of the individuals mentioned in the commentaries has shown that King Mahāsena is mentioned by name in the *Samantapāsādikā* (III 519[26]). Since this king is datable to 276-303 CE, this shows that additions to the Sīhaḷa *Aṭṭhakathā* continued to be made until the very end of the third century or the beginning of the fourth CE (see Norman, 1997, pp. 155-156).

that the ten texts examined in her study are recastings in Pāli language of such lost Sinhalese source works.

The stage of translation (the 5th century CE) is marked by the literary activity of Buddhaghosa. Although Pāli commentaries attributed to Buddhaghosa drew their material from the Sinhala and Dravidian commentaries they were not verbatim translations of them. This is quite evident from such expressions as "*Mahāṭṭhakathāyaṃ sāraṃ ādāya...*" ("having taken the essence of"),[29] to show how the Pāli commentaries have been compiled. Buddhaghosa was also making use of other available material, such as the canon and various traditions and opinions of teachers. Nevertheless, he does not appear to have had a free hand to stamp his own original thought on his works, because he had to confine the scope of his exegesis to the Mahāvihāra orthodox tradition. Under these circumstances, Buddhaghosa cannot be expected to show much originality in the Pāli commentaries.[30]

(3) The early *Abhidhamma* exegetical texts and their authorship

When the authorship of the Pāli commentaries is ascribed to Buddhaghosa, as mentioned above, it should not be supposed that they are in any way original compositions, or even innovative attempts to interpret traditional material. Most scholars assume that, except for the *Abhidhamma* commentaries, they are carefully edited and translated versions of a vast body of accumulated exegetical material that Buddhaghosa found at the Mahāvihāra.[31] Pind (1992) suggests that the commentaries on the *Vinaya* and the four *Nikāyas* can undoubtedly be ascribed to Buddhaghosa, but that the commentaries on the *Abhidhamma* canonical texts and others cannot be his.[32] It should also be remarked in this connection that Buddhaghosa stipulates in the prologues and epilogues of the four *Nikāyas* that his work, *Visuddhimagga*, is integral to each of his commentaries. This means that he had already

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29 This phrase occurs in the epilogues of the four *Nikāyas* – Sv (PTS ed. does not include the epilogue, see *CS CD-R*, Sv III 249); Ps V 109; Spk III 308; Mp V 98; but the phrase *Porāṇaṭṭhakathānanaṃ sāraṃ ādāya...* occurs in the epilogue of Vibh-a 523.

30 See the conclusion, pp. 252-253.

31 See Adikaram (1946, pp. 10-17); Norman (1983, pp. 119-120); Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993, pp. 13-15); Hinüber (1996 p. 101, §206).

32 Pind (1992), pp. 136-137.

written his work before translating the Sinhalese commentaries. In the prologue of the *Samantapāsādikā*, however, Buddhaghosa does not mention the *Visuddhimagga*, though he refers to it in the main text a few times. The same applies to the *Abhidhamma* commentaries.[33] Previous writers such as Bapat and Vadekar (1942) and Jayawickrama (1979) suggested that the *Abhidhamma* commentaries, including the *Atthasālinī*, are probably the work of a close associate of Buddhaghosa rather than of Buddhaghosa himself.[34] Although I have not entirely dismissed the traditional view that it was Buddhaghosa himself who edited and translated the Old Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* on all the *Abhidhamma* canonical texts into Pāli, when I deal with a cross reference between the commentaries on the *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka*, I have given priority to the view of the scholars mentioned above. This is because my investigation of the issue of momentariness reveals that the *Visuddhimagga*'s stance differs from the position postulated by the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka* commentaries, which indicates their different authorship.[35]

The problem of their authorship does not directly affect my hypothesis that the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness must have appeared in the Old Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* and that it was

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33 *Bs CD-R* shows that in the Pāli commentaries there are many cross-references to the *Visuddhimagga* in the 4 *Nikāya* commentaries, but far fewer in the *Samantapāsādikā* and the *Abhidhamma* commentaries. In the case of the *Samantapāsādikā*, this is understandable because the *Visuddhimagga* deals with the subject of *vinaya* only in the *Sīlaniddesa* (the first two chapters). Given the fact that the *Visuddhimagga* is a comprehensive treatise on Abhidhammic issues, we would expect it to be more closely linked to the *Abhidhamma* commentaries than to other commentaries.

Table Intro-1: Cross-references to the *Visuddhimagga* in the Pāli commentaries

Tipiṭaka Commentaries	*4 Nikāyas commentaries*	*Khuddakanikāya commentary*	*Abhidhamma commentaries*	*Samantapāsādikā*
Nos. of cross-references to the *Visuddhimagga*	248	41	25	11

• Three keywords are used for retrieving the data: *Visuddhimagge* (313), *Visuddhimaggato* (11), and *Visuddhimaggaṃ* (1). The data mostly occur in the locative singular, *Visuddhimagge*.

34 Pind thinks that the term *āgamaṭṭhakathā* in the introduction to the *Atthasālinī* refers collectively to Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the *Nikāyas*, but not to the older sources (i.e. the *Mahāṭṭhakathā*, the *Sīhalaṭṭhakathā*) used by Buddhaghosa in the Pāli commentaries (Pind, 1992, p. 137). Compare this with Norman's remark (Norman, 1983, p. 124, fn. 154). Norman supports the traditional view of Buddhaghosa as the author, whereas Bapat & Vadekar (1942, As p. XXXIII-XXXIX), Jayawickrama (1979, Kv-a p. IX-XIII) and Pind (1992, pp.136-137) insist on someone else's authorship. Cf. Cousins (1987, Vibh-a, trsl. p. IX) and von Hinüber (1996, p. 151). See also Cousins, "The *Paṭṭhāna* and the Development of the Theravādin *Abhidhamma*" in *JPTS* 1981, pp. 22-46.

35 See § 3.1.3.

already accepted among scholastic Theravādin monks. Whoever the author(s) of the *Abhidhamma* commentaries may have been, they must have used the Old Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās*.[36] In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the existence of the early exegetical texts in the regional languages (i.e. Sīhala, Gāndhārī, etc.) is confirmed by the recent discovery of the Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts which are the earliest surviving specimens of an ancient tradition of vernacular commentaries.

(4) The Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathā* compendia as a counterpart to the Gandhārī commentaries

The British Library Kharoṣṭhī fragments from Gandhāra are believed to be the oldest surviving Buddhist manuscripts ever discovered.[37] The references in the manuscripts to historical figures (i.e. Jihonika and Aśpavarman) as well as the paleographic and linguistic features are broadly attributable to a period ranging from about the early first century CE to the middle of the second century CE.[38] In terms of historical enquiry into early exegetical tradition, these oldest dated manuscripts have wider implications for our understanding of the early commentarial literature in general. One major class of texts which is very prominently represented among the British Library fragments is that of commentaries on sets of verses, which are characterised by exegetical structures and genres.[39] In this regard, Richard Salomon makes an intriguing remark:[40]

> Although the individual verses explicated in these commentaries are for most part Gāndhārī translations of material well known in other traditions, the nature, organizational principles, and function of the texts as a whole remain largely obscure. Presumably, they represent local modes of instruction and preaching in fundamentals of Buddhist teachings, which should provide an interesting counterpart to the well-known Pāli

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36 L.S. Cousins (1991, pp. 55-56) remarks that the precise authorship of the *Atthasālinī* is debatable, but it is clear that, whether it was an early work of Buddhaghosa himself or the work of an associate, it is less carefully edited than most of the other commentaries and sometimes preserves earlier traditions which have been normalised elsewhere. For his similar remark on the commentaries on the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* in general, see *The Dispeller of Delusion* (*Sammohavinodanī*), 1987, Intro. p. x.

37 A set of twenty-nine scrolls recently acquired by the British Library promises to provide a window into a crucial phase of the history of Buddhism in India. The fragmentary birch bark scrolls, which were found inside one of a set of inscribed clay pots, are written in the Gāndhārī Prakrit language and Kharoṣṭhī script. Dating from around the beginning of the Christian era, the scrolls are probably the oldest Buddhist manuscripts. R. Salomon (1999) and other contributors in the recent book, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments* provide a detailed description of the manuscripts and a survey of their contents, along with a preliminary evaluation of their significance. Also included are representative samples of texts and translations.

38 Salomon (1999), pp. 141ff.

39 *id.* pp. 26-29; 171-172.

40 *id.* pp. 11-12.

> commentaries, whose arche-types, now lost, were said to have been composed in the local Sinhalese vernacular language. We may therefore have in these new fragments the earliest surviving original specimens of the ancient tradition of vernacular commentaries.

This indicates that the date of the formation of the Gāndhārī commentaries partly accords with the period, as outlined above, of the development of the divergent exegetical material (the 1st century BCE) and the standardisation of the Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* (the 1st century CE).

Another interesting scholastic document, as Salomon reports, is apparently an *Abhidharma* treatise or commentary discussing topics such as the nature of existence in the three time periods, the Sarvāstivādins' well-known eponymous doctrine.[41] Salomon further remarks that there are other substantial remains of scholastic texts, but the contents of these fragments have not yet been closely examined. We may expect to identify the relevant topics, namely, the four characteristics of conditioned factors (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*), the doctrine of momentariness, and so on, as research progresses in the foreseeable future. At this stage, however, it is premature to use this fragmentary material directly, except for its general implications for the early chronology of the exegetical tradition. A useful textual source of approximately the same date as the Gāndhārī commentaries mentioned above are the three *vibhāṣā* compendia, extant in Chinese translation, which preserve the opinions of many of the early Buddhist schools, the recognised masters as well as anonymous teachers, on various doctrinal questions.

(5) The Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* versus the *vibhāṣā* compendia ?

A comparison between the Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* and the *vibhāṣā* compendia should immediately be justified by appropriate qualifications. They were probably composed

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41 A representative passage reads: *sarvakal[o] sarvam astï sarvatra sarvam astï sarvagarena sarvam astï sarvakara[ne]na* (*sarvam astï**) *sarvabhaveha sarvam astï sarvaheduha sarvam astï sarvapacageha sarvam astï.* (Fragment 28, part 2, r, lines 21-22) "Everything exists at all times. Everything exists everywhere. Everything exists with the aspect of everything. Everything exists as the reason for everything. Everything exists as all phenomena. Everything exists as all causes. Everything exists as all conditions." Translation by Salomon (1999, p. 30) with the assistance of Collett Cox; the symbol (*) refers to a lost or completely illegible syllable that has been conjecturally restored on the basis of the context.

around the same period (the 1st century BCE – the 2nd century CE),[42] but as far as the region of their origin and availability as well as their contents and styles are concerned, they differ considerably. The existence of the Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* of the Theravādins in Ceylon can be inferred from the fragmentary references in the Pāli commentaries, while the three extant *vibhāṣā* compendia in Chinese translation represent a much larger group of lost *vibhāṣā* texts of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas in Kāśmīra.[43] As for content, the Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* include the exegetical works of the *Tripiṭaka* as a whole, but the extant *vibhāṣā* compendia are commentaries on the **Jñānaprasthāna/ *Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra*.[44] Both the Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* and the extant *vibhāṣā* compendia contain not only detailed exegesis of the root-texts but also entirely new doctrinal categories and interpretative positions. But their styles are distinctive; the former are characterised by rich illustrations (stories) and similes with which the root-texts are expounded, and employs polemic and reasoned

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42 Despite the scholarly discussion that has been devoted to the problem of the date of Kaniṣka and to the issue whether or not Kaniṣka can be reliably associated with either the revision of the canon or the *vibhāṣā* compendia, a satisfactory answer has yet to be worked out. See chapter 2, p. 108, fn. 266, for a detailed note.

43 Cox (1998, pp. 229-239) remarks that the *vibhāṣā* compendia were compiled in a period of sectarian self-consciousness and intense inter-sectarian debate, as well as tremendous growth in both doctrinal interpretation and techniques of argument. The three extant *vibhāṣā* compendia (the **Vibhāṣāśāstra* [T 1547], **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* [T 1546] and **Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* [T 1545]) represent a much larger group of *vibhāṣā* texts that are no longer extant and whose contents, therefore, are virtually unknown. Sanskrit fragments of a *vibhāṣā* compendium have been identified within the Pelliot collection. The fragments, consisting of four pieces of a single leaf, were probably discovered in the region of Kucā. The Sanskrit corresponds closely to the translations of the **Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* and **Abhidharmavibhāṣā-śāstra*, but with some revealing differences (see F. Enomoto, 1996, pp. 135-143).

44 The *Jñānaprasthāna*, compiled in approximately the first century BCE, is the last of the seven *Abhidharma* texts of the Sarvāstivāda. The text secures a prominent place among those seven texts, because it serves as the root-text for the definitive achievement in Sarvāstivāda scholasticism, the *vibhāṣā* compendia. It is traditionally attributed to Kātyāyanīputra; according to Paramārtha, he compiled the Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma* text in the region of *chi-pin*, or the Northwest, and structured it in eight chapters (*skandha*), undoubtedly a reference to the *Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra*. However, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* states that its root-text, the *Jñānaprasthāna*, was composed when Kātyāyanīputra was in an eastern region, and Hsüan-tsang states that it was composed in Cīnabhukti. The text is cited in traditional sources by two names: the **Jñānaprasthāna*, the title used for Hsüan-tsang's translation (T 1544), and the **Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra* (T 1543), which is the title used for the earlier translation. The latter is sometimes rendered as the *Aṣṭagranthaśāstra* (see Cox, 1998, p. 222, fn. 247, for philological differences of opinion as to whether the Sanskrit equivalent of the name for a section of the text is *skandha* or *grantha*).

argument less rigorously[45] than the latter, which adopt a complex polemical style using specific techniques of criticism and proof.[46]

Despite these obvious differences and limitations on any comparison, some relevant material can be drawn from the three extant *vibhāṣā* compendia. In particular, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, being the repository of virtually every conceivable doctrinal position postulated by the early schools or masters, provides us with invaluable records in which similar ideas to the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness are found. For instance, the three moments theory attributed to *śramaṇas* seems to share the same framework as the sixteen or seventeen moments theory. The views of the Vibhajyavādin (Pāli Vibhajjavādin) are frequently cited along with the Dārṣṭāntika.[47] The debate between the Vibhajyavādin (an analyst) and the Yuktivādin (one who follows the reasoned argument) also occurs in the *vibhāṣā* compendia, but it is not entirely clear whether the Vibhajyavādin here refers to advocates of a historical sect or merely to a generic term for their methology, which is contrasted with the Yuktivādin; the Yuktivādin's position is mostly accepted by the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. André Bareau shows that the doctrinal positions of the Vibhajyavādin as presented in the *vibhāṣā* compendia more commonly agree with the views of other early Buddhist schools (e.g. the Mahāsāṅghika and Mahīśāsaka) than with those of the Theravādin. Apart from this conflicting evidence in the *vibhāṣā* compendia, scholars do not rule out the possibility that the Ceylonese Theravāda traces its lineage through the

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45 The Pāli commentaries usually employ unsophisticated polemics, and the counter-arguments are often attributed to the Vitaṇḍavādins (sophists). <*BS CD-R* retrieves 27 occurrences– *vitaṇḍavādī* (22), *vitaṇḍavādasatthe* (1), *vitaṇḍavādasatthaṃ* (4)>. See Sodō Mori (1989a, pp. 209-226) and L.S. Cousins (1998, March 19, Handout 2 "What the Vitaṇḍavādin said" distributed for the Annual Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions) for a classification of the views.

46 Apart from the traditional catechetical method and the familiar techniques of elaboration through the juxtaposition of matrices, the *vibhāṣā* compendia, taking a comment in the root-text as a starting point, present sustained arguments about specific doctrines. Each section of commentary on a specific passage from the root-text begins with a formulaic statement, declaring the purpose of the text to be that of refuting false views and establishing correct principles. The *vibhāṣā* compendia then list the faulty theories of other schools or masters, often explicitly identified, to be countered by the statements. The text will accordingly proceed with its extended discussion, including passages from the *Sūtra* cited as scriptural authority as well as reasoned arguments. See Buswell (1997c, pp. 561-565) and Cox (1998, pp. 237-239) for further remarks on the complex polemical style and the method of compilation of the *vibhāṣā* compendia.

47 The *vibhāṣā* compendia cite not only other Sarvāstivāda lineages such as the Westerners, the Outsiders, and so on, but also other schools, namely, the Vātsīputrīyas, Mahāsāṅghikas, Dharmaguptakas, Mahīśāsakas, and Kāśyapīyas. They also cite the view of non-Buddhists such as the Sāṃkhyas, Vaiśeṣikas, Lokāyatas, and Śabdavādins. See Cox (1998, p. 239).

Vibhajjavādins.[48] However, when I deal with the issue of the denial of *antarābhava* and its theoretical connection with the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness, without assuming its sectarian connection I simply contrast the Vibhajyavādins' stance in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* with the view of the Theravādins in order to show the formation of this doctrine in the early exegetical texts.

Another useful source in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* for tracing the early doctrinal history is the variety of anonymous views recorded at the beginning of the treatment of each topic.[49] After a series of anonymous opinions, the definitive view of the Vaibhāṣikas usually appears, with the stock phrase 'the critique says' (*p'ing-yüeh*), in response to the topic under discussion. The rest of the views are rejected or marginalised, but they can be used to show the existence of controversies on certain doctrinal points. For example, I compare the divergent views of the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* (insight into the minds of others), which are anonymously attributed to masters, with the opinions of anonymous teachers (*keci*) and *bhāṇakas* in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary. This comparative approach is also applied when I examine the *Khaṇikakathā* (one of the last chapters of the *Kathāvatthu*), which is the oldest evidence of the theory of momentariness, without neglecting the pertinent reference from the textual sources of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. Thus, in our attempt to contrast some related textual sources of the Northern and Southern traditions, we do not unwittingly neglect or isolate the mention of views, seemingly insignificant or unrelated at first, which might upon further investigation prove to be of considerable importance. Provided we are aware of the limitation of this approach and do not overestimate the data, it will allow us to identify the origins and development of certain doctrines within an early

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48 Bareau (1955, pp. 167-180, the table on pp. 205-240) studies the doctrinal positions of early Buddhist schools, largely depending upon the *vibhāṣā* compendia. He shows that the doctrinal positions of the Theravādins disagree 15 times with those of the Vibhajyavādins, but agree only 5 times. In contrast, the Mahāsāṅghika and Mahīśāsaka agree with the Vibhajyavādins 16 and 10 times respectively, but no disagreements are found (see the table on p. 177 for detail). For the possible relationships between the Vibhajyavādins and the Theravādins, see Jayatilleke (1963, pp. 278-280); Prasad (1972, pp. 101-113); Prebish (1974, pp. 239-254); Prebish and Nattier (1977, pp. 237-254); Karunadasa (1983, pp. 1-27); Cousins (1991, pp. 27-60; 1994, pp. 15-32); Norman (1992, pp. 191-218); Gethin (1998, p. 53). See also Buswell (1997a, pp. 1256-1258) for the view of the Vibhajyavādins/ Kāśyapīyas.

49 They are usually introduced with little more than the laconic 'moreover' (*fu-ts'e*) or 'there is this explanation' (*yu-shuo*). This in turn indicates considerable doctrinal diversity and the active intellectual milieu in which the *vibhāṣā* compendia were formed.

exegetical tradition or across several such traditions. This perhaps reveals a picture of an early stage in which those doctrines were developing in the parallel textual sources of the Southern and Northern traditions before they were formalised in the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* respectively in the fifth century CE. I think this type of comparative study has not really been attempted so far in Buddhist scholarship. This comparative approach need not necessarily be confined to the interpretation of ancient texts. Sūtrantic interpretations by modern scholars may have an affinity with the views attributed to anonymous masters or to the Dārṣṭāntika (the Sautrāntikas) in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. For instance, Sue Hamilton and Joong-Pyo Lee do not support the common understanding of the term *āyatana* as the sense organs and their objects, and argue, based on an analysis of the canonical texts, that they are potentialities which determine the nature of each of the types of an individual's psychological process.[50] A similar line of thought, attributed to anonymous masters, is recorded in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.[51]

Finally, a general remark on relative chronology has to be made to justify my use of Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika textual sources. Due to the lack of direct textual documentation and adequate contextual information,[52] the precise dating of individual texts is impossible. We must therefore be satisfied with a relative textual chronology, whether of individual texts within a tradition or across several traditions. One seemingly reliable method for establishing a relative chronology would be to collect textual cross-references; these could then be used to construct a ladder of textual dependence.[53] But here also the possibility of textual interpolation, as C. Cox has rightly pointed out, either in the process of composition or translation, cannot be excluded. Inevitably, then, relative chronologies ultimately depend upon internal textual criteria: namely, characteristics of either format or content. Regardless of which criterion is chosen, the chronology proceeds from certain assumptions concerning the development of these characteristics, and when these assumptions are disputed, the chronologies that they support are quickly undermined. In spite of these potential

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50 Joong-Pyo Lee (1988, pp. 137-158); Sue Hamilton (1996, pp. 1-41).
51 T 27 381^{a24}-382^{b6}. See § 1.1.3-(2).
52 E.g. colophons and chronicles.
53 Cox (1998), pp. 166-167.

difficulties, a relative chronology or periodization has often been used by scholars for early texts.[54] Keeping the methodological limitations and difficulties noted by C. Cox in mind, I examine the historical development of the doctrine of momentariness in the broad context of the textual tradition of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika.

(6) An outline of the chapters

The present study consists of two parts. In the first, I deal with the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness, in particular its origins in the *Nikāyas* and the *Abhidhamma* canon, and its subsequent development and application in the commentarial texts. In the second part, I present relevant textual material drawn from various post-canonical Pāli texts, including some edited sections, translations and annotations.

The first chapter of Part One commences with an overview of the *dharma* theory and a brief survey of the earliest texts, in which the theory of momentariness is likely to have been formed. I have retrieved (from the canonical texts on CD-ROM) the representative passages concerning the doctrine of impermanence and the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*. After tracing the origin of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* formula in the canon, I examine the concept of moment (*khaṇa*) and its interpretations in post-canonical texts in the light of the relevant *Abhidharma* texts of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas.

In the second chapter, as its title 'The Developing Theory of Momentariness' indicates, I focus on how the theory of momentariness emerges from the intellectual milieu of the Buddhist scholastic tradition in India. I examine in detail the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*, which provides the oldest evidence of the theory of momentariness. I analyse the controversy on this issue presented in the *Kathāvatthu* in the light of the Theravāda *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's canonical and exegetical works. I also try to determine when and how the theory of the thought process (*citta-vīthi*) took shape in the *Abhidhamma* canon, in order to examine how the doctrine of momentariness

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54 *id.* pp. 167-168.

developed into the unique doctrine which calculated the exact relative duration of mental and material phenomena.

The third chapter concerns the developed form of the doctrine of momentariness. I study the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary, which seems to be the *locus classicus* for the theory, in the light of comparisons with the three moments theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. I ask why the number sixteen or seventeen was adopted and why the commentaries vary as to the number of thought moments (16 or 17). I present possible solutions drawn from the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Moreover, I analyse the relevant chapters (*Vīthi-pariccheda*) of the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* and its commentaries to examine how the notion of *khaṇa* (moment) is explicitly applied to the seventeen stages of the sense-door process. I also address the issue of the nature of materiality in relation to the theory of *rūpa-kalāpa* (the smallest material unit), the Theravāda counterpart of the atomic theory postulated in the Northern traditions of Buddhism. In this connection, I show that the **Vimuttimagga* does not mention the duration of materiality in terms of sixteen or seventeen thought moments; instead, it explains a single moment (*eka-kkhaṇa*) of materiality in conjunction with the changing phase of the three units of the material groups (*kalāpa*).

The doctrine of momentariness does not seem to appear as a topic in its own right before its fully-fledged treatment in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, but is nevertheless presupposed and applied in the doctrinal tenets of Theravāda Buddhism. As examples of such treatment in the commentarial texts, I present the issue of the denial of *antarābhava* and its theoretical connection with the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness, and the momentary present (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*) and its selective application to the theory of insight into the minds of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*). The fourth chapter thus shows the internal evidence that the doctrine of momentariness evolved gradually, along with other doctrines, within the doctrinal system developed in the commentarial tradition of the Theravāda.

The first part of my study will conclude by reviewing the chronology proposed by von Rospatt and D.J. Kalupahana. I attempt to present substantial evidence that the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness developed in the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* before Buddhaghosa arrived in Ceylon to translate the Old Sīhala commentaries into Pāli.

Part Two, the last chapter of the thesis, provides annotated translations of relevant material with the edited sections of text from the Pāli commentarial corpus (previously untranslated, with the exception of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary). In presenting the draft translation of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (and others), I have made changes and added comprehensive annotation.

PART ONE

The Theravādin Doctrine of Momentariness

A Survey of its Origins and Development

CHAPTER ONE

The Origins of the Doctrine of Momentariness

There is such a vast amount of textual material that could be relevant to the origins of the doctrine of momentariness that it would be pointless to attempt an exhaustive study. Alexander von Rospatt has already made a survey of the origins of this doctrine in the textual sources of the Sarvāstivāda and early Yogācāra schools, and to some extent, of the other early Buddhist schools. I have occasionally summarised his findings and observations on issues which are equally applicable to the Theravādin sources. In order to avoid repetition, I focus upon those subjects, such as the *dharma* theory and the origin of the three conditioned characteristics (*ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*), which von Rospatt has avoided, and also on those points where I disagree with his conclusions.

In his review of von Rospatt's book, Johannes Bronkhorst points out that von Rospatt has overlooked the intellectual context, the debate between the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas on the *dharma*-theory, in which the doctrine of momentariness appears to have arisen.[55] Before examining the sophisticated treatment of the doctrine of the *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas* by various early schools, von Rospatt notes that he has disregarded the origins of the *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas*, for he thinks that they predate the theory of momentariness and are of no immediate interest for his study.[56] I basically agree with von Rospatt's conclusion that the doctrine of momentariness is primarily based on the analysis of impermanence and change, but I am reluctant to accept his contention that the doctrine of the *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas* (viz. origination, duration, change and destruction), as postulated by the Sarvāstivādins, is not intrinsically connected with the doctrine of momentariness.[57] Moreover, he indicates that he will not examine the origins of the eponymous doctrine of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, i.e. "*dharmas* exist in all three time-periods (*sarvam asti*)", for he thinks that this doctrine is not intrinsically linked with the doctrine of momentariness.

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55 Bronkhorst (1995, p. 514).
56 *id.* p. 40, fn. 73.
57 Von Rospatt (1995), pp. 46-48.

Rather he considers that the two doctrines seem to have developed independently on different grounds and were propounded side by side because there is conflict between them.[58]

I am aware of the necessity for careful research on the relation between the doctrine of momentariness and the eponymous doctrine of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas which Bronkhorst has aptly pointed out, but this is beyond the scope of the present study, which is confined to the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. Although the Theravādins disputed this doctrine of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas in the *Kathāvatthu*, it is too vast and complex to include in all its aspects in this survey; my approach to this issue has been selective rather than systematic. The subject is treated more fully by David Bastow in his article: "Debates on time in the *Kathāvatthu*" (1996) and by Robert E. Buswell (1997) in his paper: "The Three Times Controversy in *Abhidharma* Philosophy".[59]

In the first part of this chapter, I will attempt to outline the broad intellectual context in which the distinctive versions of the doctrine of momentariness evolved. I will begin by asking how the categorised lists of *dharmas* form the nucleus of the *Abhidharma* treatises. After brief consideration of this question on the basis of previous research, I will use the CD-ROM database of the Pāli canon for a systematic study of the gradual textual evolution of the *khandhas-āyatanas-dhātus* in the four primary *Nikāyas*, the *Khuddaka-nikāya*, and the *Abhidhamma* works of the Theravādins. The discussion will also cover how the *khandhas*' totality formula was largely elaborated by the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary, which introduced material pertinent for the Theravāda doctrine of momentariness. In comparison with the *khandhas*' totality formula, I will show how the *āyatanas*' totality formula shapes the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's ontology that 'everything exists' in the three time periods. The *dharma* typologies and the atomic theory will be

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58 *id.* p. 39, fn. 72.

59 Bastow (1996), pp. 109-132. Cf. his previous articles on the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' theory of time: "The *Mahāvibhāṣā* arguments for Sarvāstivāda" (1994, pp. 489-500) and "The first argument for Sarvāstivāda" (1995, pp. 109-125). Buswell (1997a, pp. 1129-1266). All of the relevant material has already been translated in two important article by L. de la Vallée Poussin (1925, pp. 343-358;1936-1937, pp. 7-158). See also a classic study on this issue by E. Frauwallner (1995, pp. 185-208).

summarised in order to show how the *dharma* theory was given impetus by the way that *dharmas* were understood as momentary atomic entities. The first part of the chapter will thus serve to locate the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness in the broader intellectual milieu of early Buddhist traditions.

In the second part of the chapter, I have chosen to focus upon the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*. The CD-ROM database of the Pāli canon will show us clear stages in the origin and development of the doctrine in the canonical and post-canonical Pāli texts. At the outset, I will explore the passages in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (III 38) – 'prototype *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*' (the three characteristic marks of the conditioned phenomena) – from which a redactor (or reciter) of the canon eventually derived the well-known formula of *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* which appears in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (I 152). The *Saṃyutta* commentary (Spk II 266-67) will be carefully studied in order to see how the commentarial texts interpret the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* and how the concept of the unit of three moments originated in the Pāli commentarial texts. Von Rospatt and other writers[60] have ignored the *Saṃyutta* commentary and depend solely on the *Aṅguttara* commentary (Mp II 252), possibly because the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* is the place where the formula was actually shaped. The *Saṃyutta* commentary, in which the prototype *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* is expounded, provides intriguing material which probably reflects earlier work by some Theravādin elders, and it also includes material found in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its commentary. To give a clearer picture of the gradual evolution of this doctrine I have drawn on the corresponding exegesis and debates found in the works of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, notably the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the **Nyāyānusāra*.

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60 Rospatt (1995, p. 40, fn. 74); Karunadasa (1967, p. 85).

1.1 The *dharma* theory and the doctrine of momentariness

1.1.1 *Mātṛkā* and *abhidharmakathā*

Early Buddhist literature contains a great number of lists. The penchant of the Buddha's disciples for compiling categorised lists of *dharmas/ dhammas* culminates in the tabulation of matrices (*mātṛkā/ mātikā*) which form the nucleus of the *Abhidharma/ Abhidhammas* treatises. The tendency towards classification represented by groups of lists and composite lists (i.e. lists of lists) is found in the *Sūtra/ Sutta* collections, as well as *Abhidharma* treatises, from the earliest period onwards. They are organised, as a whole, according to either topical or numerical criteria. The *Sūtra* collections often include topical lists; for instance, the *Bahudhātuka-sutta* gathers together a variety of types of elements (*dhātu*), and also provides composite lists, such as the group of seven sets of items that later came to be collectively known as 'the thirty-seven aids to awakening'. This is a convenient mnemonic summary of an aspect of the *dharma* by the apposite grouping of such lists. The method of topical arrangement is fully implemented in the *Saṃyutta/ Saṃyukta Sūtra* collections, and is prominent in some of the canonical *Abhidharma* works, which we will discuss later in this section.

Another principle employed in the *Sūtra* collections is that of systematic arrangement around numerical associations and/ or progression. That is to say, different lists that each comprise the same number of items are brought together, and/ or arranged in a sequential series from lists with one or two items to those with ten or eleven. Texts where this method is employed include the *Kumārapañha*, *Mahāpañha*, *Saṅgīti-sutta*, and *Dasuttara-sutta*. A similar format is adopted in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the **Ekottarāgama*.

What then is the relationship between the modes of classification in the *Sūtra* collections and the origins of the *Abhidharma* treatises ? Traditional descriptions of the origin and evolution of the independent body of *Abhidharma* treatises are found in accounts of the first council. However, the various accounts differ in their description of the structure and

character of the *Abhidharma* texts recited. For instance, according to Collett Cox, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* declares the *Abhidharma* to be a matrix or categorising list (*mātṛkā*) that includes, in addition to other factors, the thirty-seven aids to awakening.[61] The *Sarvāstivādavinaya* also identifies the *Abhidharma* with teachings that are presented in list form: for example, the Buddha presents the *Abhidharma* when speaking of five fears, five evil actions, and so on.[62] Moreover, the Theravādin *Abhidhamma* writings are largely based on three separate sets of *mātikā*: the list of twenty-two triplets (*tika*) and one hundred couplets (*duka*) appears at the beginning of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*,[63] supplemented by an additional list of forty-two *suttantika* couplets. These supplementary *suttantika-mātikās* are soteriological in import and are principally concerned with *dharmas* related to moral precepts, concentration and views. Thirty-two of the forty-two pairs are identical to the pairs of *dharmas* appearing in the *Saṅgīti-sutta*, probably accounting for the designation of this listing as the *Suttantika-mātikās*.[64] The *mātikā* of triplets and couplets is also employed by three other canonical *Abhidhamma* works, namely the *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā* and *Paṭṭhāna*. The *Puggalapaññatti* opens with a straightforward *mātikā* that arranges the headings to be discussed in the text in numerical progression from one to ten. The *Kathāvatthu* and *Yamaka* do not have explicit *mātikās*, although later tradition sees fit to describe both the underlying list of discussion points in the *Kathāvatthu* and the aggregate of the ten lists that form the basis of the *Yamaka*'s ten chapters as *mātikās*.[65] These modes of organisation in the *Abhidhamma* treatises may indicate that they derive from the arrangement by numerical or topical lists in the *Sutta* collections. Nevertheless, as Johannes Bronkhorst shows, it must be kept in mind that they may also reflect, in individual cases, the influence of *Abhidharma* upon the *Sūtra* collections themselves. This is because the final reduction of the *Sūtra* collections partly overlaps with the composition of the *Abhidharma* works.[66]

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61 See Cox (1995), p. 7, fn. 23.

62 *Sarvāstivādavinaya* T 23 449^{a19ff}.

63 The section of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* dealing with the analysis of 'form' (*rūpa*) begins with its own *mātikā*, which considers *rūpa* as comprising one, two, and so on up to eleven categories; see Gethin (1992b, p. 159).

64 Buswell and Jaini (1996), p. 85.

65 Von Rupatt (1992b), p. 160.

66 Bronkhorst (1985, pp. 318-319), see also Cox (1995, p. 10).

The prominent organisational principle employed in the *Abhidharma* works, as Collet Cox remarks, leads most western scholars to contend that *Abhidharma* treatises gradually evolved from the practice of formulating *mātṛkās* of all the topics discussed according to both numeric and qualitative criteria. In contrast, most Japanese scholars suggest that the origin of *Abhidharma* is to be found in dialogues concerning doctrine (*abhidharmakathā*), or monastic discussions in catechetical style, characterised by an exchange of questions and interpretative answers intended to clarify complex or obscure points of doctrine. These are represented by the *Mahā/ Cūḷavedalla-suttas* and a group of the *Vibhaṅga-suttas* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*.[67] Here, the *Uddesavibhaṅga-sutta* is of particular interest. The *Sutta* begins with a brief doctrinal statement (*uddesa*) by the Buddha, each point of which is then analysed in full by Mahākaccāna through a process of catechetical exposition.[68] Cox points out that this format closely resembles the method adopted by the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and the *Vibhaṅga*, which are structured according to *uddesa*, i.e. statements from the *Suttas*, and *niddesa*, i.e. analytical exposition of those statements.[69] This method of *Abhidharma* exegesis, involving catechetical exposition and extended explanation, is intricately interwoven with the taxonomic categories of the Sarvāstivāda. *Mātṛkās* do not occupy a prominent place in the overt structure of Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma* texts; however, they do in *Abhidhamma* texts of the Theravāda. Cox suggests that it is for this reason that Japanese scholars might favour the opinion that the *Abhidharma* treatises evolved from catechetical dialogues concerning doctrine.[70] Although none of the formal *mātṛkās* of the Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra school are now extant, according to R.E. Buswell and P.S. Jaini such tabulations can be reconstructed on the basis of the items dealt with in their *Abhidharma* works: the first and third chapters of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu provide the Sarvāstivāda *mātṛkā*, while the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* of Asaṅga gives the Yogācāra

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67 M I 291-305; III 202-257; MA T1 706^{b12ff}.
68 M III 223ff.; MA T1 694^{b13ff}.
69 Cox (1995), p. 10.
70 *id.* pp. 8-10, fn. 29.

mātṛkā in its opening chapter, *Tridharmapariccheda*. Both texts have lists of couplets and triplets that are nearly identical to those found in the mature Theravāda *Abhidhamma*.[71]

A.K. Warder (1961) made the first attempt to trace the original *mātikās*. He proposes that the prominent placement of a set of three *mātikās* at the start of the first of the seven *Abhidhamma* books was obviously meant to indicate their fundamental position in its doctrinal edifice. Various other lists of *dhammas* are found throughout the six remaining texts. In particular, the lists of the *skandha/ khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu* vary widely throughout the collection of *Abhidhamma* texts, but they provide the organisational framework for four of the seven books, the *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā*, *Puggalapaññatti* and *Yamaka*, and each of these books has a *mātikā* at the beginning. Accordingly, Warder proposes that the organisational framework of *dhammas*, in relatively unsophisticated listings in the *Vibhaṅga*, may actually have been the original matrix, which was subsequently refined by the Theravādins into the much more elaborate couplets and triplets of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*.[72]

Rupert Gethin (1992b), however, argues that the kernel of the triplet/ couplet *mātikā* may be very ancient, and that to regard either the core *mātikā* or the triplet/ couplet *mātikā* as the more fundamental is to misunderstand the basic principle that determines how the *Abhidhamma* develops out of the use of *mātikās*. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and the *Vibhaṅga*, in the form we have them, are clearly mutually dependent. Gethin thus suggests that the triplet/ couplet *mātikā* and the core *mātikā* act like the two axes of a graph, because the *Abhidhamma* method consists precisely in the interaction of the two groups of *mātikās*, and the use of *mātikās* is often characterised by the treatment of one list of categories through the categories of another. Therefore both are equally essential and vital to the analysis and neither is more fundamental than the other.[73] In line with Gethin's observation I would suggest that the core *mātikas* (i.e. the lists of the *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu*) involve the

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71 Buswell and Jaini (1996), p. 86.
72 Warder (1961), p. intro. xx.
73 Gethin (1992b), pp. 162-164.

particular concerns of the Buddhist analysis of human experience and the world, and reflect the attitude of some early Ābhidharmikas who attempted to encapsulate all the *dharmas* in one all-encompassing category. They probably looked for terms in the canonical texts onto which they could pin ontological models. Accordingly, the lists of the *khandha*, *āyatana*, and *dhātu* were selected to serve as the core for later philosophical elaboration, found especially in the exegetical works of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda. Therefore, I shall now turn to the *mātikā* of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad and examine how it evolved in the Theravādin literary sources.

1.1.2 The gradual textual evolution of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad

The five *khandhas*, along with twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*, form a triad among the *Abhidhamma* headings; they represent three different methods of classifying the totality of *dhammas* that make up conditioned existence. In this section, I shall investigate the textual evolution of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad mainly in the four primary *Nikāyas*, the *Khuddaka-nikāya* and the *Abhidhamma* works of the Theravādins.

(1) The *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu* in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* and the *Khuddaka-nikāya*

The CD-ROM database of the Pāli canon shows that of the four primary *Nikāyas*, only the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* features the triad (three times), though separate lists of *khandhas*, *āyatanas* and *dhātus* occur frequently in the canon. They are juxtaposed with numbers specified or unspecified, for instance, *evaṃ khandhā ca **dhātuyo** cha ca **āyatanā** ime....*[74] It is worth noting that two of the three cases differ from the stereotyped sequence, i.e. *khandha*, ***āyatanā*** and ***dhātu***, in the *Abhidhamma* works; the remaining case keeps the same order.

Apart from the limited number of occurrences of the triad in the four primary *Nikāyas*, as Gethin remarked, we find in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* the *Khandha-saṃyutta* and the *Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* – two exhaustive treatments, each running to some two hundred

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74 S I 134; S I 196: *khandhe āyatanāni dhātuyo* (cf. a variant in *CS CD-R*, *khandhāyatanadhātuyo*); S IV 67: *yāvatā bhikkhave khandhā dhātu āyatanā....*

pages in the PTS edition and each dominating its respective *vagga*. A much briefer treatment of the *dhātu-saṃyutta* is found in the second *vagga*, which concerns itself with the eighteen *dhātus* only briefly at its opening, dealing for the most part with the various other items also sometimes termed *dhātu* in the *Nikāyas*. Gethin further suggests that the *Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* does not strictly constitute a treatment of the twelve *āyatanas*, but seems rather to represent an approach which is relevant to analysis, from the viewpoint of *Abhidhamma*, by both *āyatanas* and *dhātu*.

The triad occurs nine times in the *Khuddaka-nikāya*, four times in the *Therā/ Therī-gāthā*, once in the *Apadāna*, three times in the *Mahā/ Cūḷa-niddesa*, and three times in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. The lists are either juxtaposed or compounded; they all maintain the standard sequence, and numbers are unspecified except for one occurrence in the *Cūḷa-niddesa* and three in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.[75]

Bearing these textual data in mind, let us now look closely at each context in which the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad occurs in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* as well as in the *Khuddaka-nikāya*. Two of the three occurrences in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* are doctrinal treatments, while the other is simply a refrain in a verse. The first doctrinal treatment appears in the *Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta*, which generally applies the *anicca-dukkha-anattā* formula to *khandha*, *āyatana*, and other whole series of categories. For instance, the well-known *khandha* formula is found in the *Khandha-saṃyutta*, which demonstrates *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* in terms of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. The formula often concludes, focusing upon the fact that each of the *khandhas* is to be seen by right wisdom as it really is, "This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my *attā*." It is the attainment of this vision that distinguishes the noble hearers (*ariya sāvaka*) from the ignorant ordinary man (*assutavant puthujjana*). In the *Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* we also come across the formula applied to the eye, visible forms, eye-contact and to "what is connected with *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* and arises dependent upon eye-contact"; ear, nose, tongue, body

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75 Ap II 563 (vs. 42); Thī 128 (vs. 43), 130 (vs. 69), 133 (vs. 103); Th 112 (vs. 1255); Nidd I 45, 123; Nidd II 34, 300 (Myanmar page numbers; they do not occur in the PTS edition; perhaps they are abbreviated).

and mind are all treated in a parallel fashion. However, the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad occurs in a modified formula, and the main theme is 'passion (*eja*) and conceit (*maññanā*)'. According to this *Sutta*, if a monk wants to remain passionless and unharmed, he should have no conceit of being the eye, in the eye, or by way of the eye, no conceit that "this is mine". He should not imagine that he has an eye; nor should he have such conceit of objects, of eye-consciousness, of eye-contact, and so on; the same is true for the ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. The *Sutta* sums up by applying this modified formula to *khandha*, *dhātu* and *āyatana* collectively. The second doctrinal treatment of the triad is comparatively simple and occurs in the *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*. Selā Therī, in dialogue with Māra, says that the *khandhas*, *dhātus* and six *āyatanas* came into existence and ceased to exist due to a cause (*hetu*). As noted above, the order of the lists in these two occurrences of the triad differs from the stereotyped sequence in the *Abhidhamma* works. The remaining occurrence is a mere refrain in a verse uttered by Vaṅgīsa Thera in the *Vaṅgīsa-saṃyutta*. Vaṅgīsa Thera, after experiencing the bliss of emancipation, declares: "Hearing the teaching (*dhamma*) concerning *khandhas*, *āyatanas* and *dhātus*, he went forth into the homeless state". This example of the triad in the stereotyped sequence of the *Abhidhamma* works appears in some collections of the *Khuddaka-nikāya*.

The refrain of the triad is repeated in similar verses attributed to Vaṅgīsa in the *Therāgāthā*; to Uttamā, Soṇā, and a certain unknown *bhikkhunī* in the *Therīgāthā*; and to Bhaddā-Kuṇḍalakesā in the *Apadāna*. In the *Mahāniddesa*, however, the triad appears in the commentary on the last *pada* of verse 775 in the *Suttanipāta*. Each item is compounded with the word *dhīra* (one who comprehends), namely *khandha-dhīra*, *āyatana*°, and *dhātu*°, and thus thirteen lists are enumerated. The triad is followed by the ten lists of *dhammas*, of which seven occur most commonly in the collections of *Sutta* and *Vinaya*. They are *satipaṭṭhāna-dhīra*, *sammappadhāna*°, *iddhipāda*°, *indriya*°, *bala*°, *bojjhaṅga*°, and *magga*°; *paṭiccasamupāda-dhīra* precedes these seven items and *phala*° and *nibbāna*° follow. Furthermore, the triad occurs in the *Sutta* citation in the commentary upon the third *pada* of verse 805 in the *Suttanipāta*. Although the citation is from the *Dīgha-nikāya* (D II

144), the particular sentence in which the triad appears is not found; it was most probably added by the commentator.

An explicit reference to the classification of all the *dhammas* appears in the *Cūḷaniddesa*. While commenting upon the third *pada* (*kusalo sabbadhammānaṃ*) of verse 1039 in the *Suttanipāta*, the commentator introduces four alternative classifications. The first two, instead of providing lists of *dhammas*, describe how a monk should be skilled in all *dhammas*, contemplating them from various viewpoints, namely three characteristics (*anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*), twelve dependent originations, four truths, sickness (*roga*), boils (*gaṇḍa*), barbs (*salla*), misery (*agha*) and so on.[76] The third consists of thirteen composite lists which are identical with the lists in the *Mahāniddesa* as shown above, except that each item is compounded with the word *kusala*, instead of *dhīra*. The last alternative claims that the twelve *āyatanas* alone represent the totality of all *dhammas*. This statement is repeated in the exegesis of *Suttanipāta* verses (46, 181, 187) in the *Mahāniddesa*. It is significant because the simple definition of all *dhammas* in terms of the twelve *āyatanas* is elaborated further in accordance with the growing doctrinal complexity and the emerging ontology of the Sarvāstivādins. I shall return to this issue in section 1.1.3.

The *Samasīsaṭṭhañāṇaniddesa* of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* defines all *dhammas* in terms of ten lists, headed by the five *khandhas*, twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*. The remaining seven lists consist of *kusala/ akusala/ avyākatā*, *kāmâvacarā/ rūpâvacarā/ arūpâvacarā* and *apariyāpannā*; they are repeated in the *Atthasandassana-ñāṇaniddesa* and *Samasīsakathā* of the same text. These are the standard lists that we often find in the early *Abhidhamma* texts.

(2) The *mātikā* of the *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu* in the four *Abhidhamma* texts

As noted above, the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad provides the organisational framework for four of the seven books: the *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā*, *Puggalapaññatti* and *Yamaka*.

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76 Nidd II *BS CD-R*, p. 38.

Each of these books has a *mātikā* at the beginning of the text; the *Vibhaṅga* and *Dhātukathā mātikās* are the most comprehensive of the four. The *Puggalapaññatti* lists six designations (*paññatti*), and the *Yamaka* ten pairs (*yamaka*). Let me briefly analyse the *mātikās* of the four texts, presenting the summary by C.S. Anderson.[77]

The *Vibhaṅga* is the second book of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*; it analyses the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu mātikā* according to three kinds of inquiry: *Suttantavibhaṅga* (analysis according to the *Suttas*), *Abhidhammavibhaṅga* (*Abhidhamma* analysis), and *pañhāpucchaka* (interrogation). The contents of the *Sutta* analysis generally reflect the definitions and descriptions found in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. For instance, the *Sutta* analysis of the four noble truths is the same as that found in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta*. The *abhidhammic* analysis of the four noble truths consists of further definitions, employing the categories of impurities (*kilesā*), states (*dhammā*), roots (*mūlāni*), corruptions (*āsavā*), and results (*vipākā*). Finally, the *pañhāpucchaka* section is made up of the *tikas* and *dukas*. This analysis provides a clear example of how the two *mātikās* are often combined. The index of contents in the *Vibhaṅga* consists of eighteen composite lists, which begin with *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu*:

5 *khandhā* (constituents)
12 *āyatanāni* (spheres of sense)
6 *dhātuyo* (elements)
4 *saccāni* (truths)
22 *indriyāni* (sense-faculties)
12 *paṭiccasamuppādā* (dependent arising)
4 *saṭipaṭṭhānā* (bases of mindfulness)
4 *sammāppadhānā* (right effort)
4 *iddhipādā* (bases of psychic power)
7 *bojjhaṅgā* (enlightenment factors)
8 *maggaṅgāni* (limbs of the path)
4 *jhānāni* (trance states)
4 *appamaññā* (illimitables)
5 *sikkhāpadā* (precepts)
4 *paṭisambhidā* (analytic insights)
ñāṇa (knowledge)
khuddakavatthuyo (small items)
dhammahadaya (heart of the teachings)

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77 Anderson (1999), pp. 108-112.

The *Dhātukathā* also begins with *mātikās*, and the first six categories match the *mātikā* of the *Vibhaṅga*, although the list of states included under dependent arising is a collection of the remaining *dhammas* analysed in the *Vibhaṅga*. The *Dhātukathā* uses the first three lists (i.e. *khandhā*, *āyatanāni* and *dhātuyo*) to analyse the remaining items of the core *mātikā* and the twenty-two triplets and one hundred couplets.

The *Puggalapaññatti mātikā* provided at the beginning of the book is similar to those encountered in the *Vibhaṅga* and *Dhātukathā*. The text states that there are six explanations (*paññatti*): five *khandhā*, twelve *āyatanāni*, eighteen *dhātuyo*, four *saccāni*, twenty-two *indriyāni*, and *puggalā*. Except for the last item, the list is the same as the one used in the two texts discussed above. The *Puggalapaññatti* analyses only one list of the core *khandha-āyatana-dhātu mātikā*, although it lists the core *mātikā* as the context for the analysis of the *puggalā*. This style is also used in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and in the *Saṅgīti-sutta*.[78]

There is no *mātikā* provided at the start of the *Yamaka*, but the commentary and the later *Mohavicchedanī* take the chapters as a *mātikā*. There are ten kinds of pairs (*yamaka*): *mūla*, *khandha-*, *āyatana-*, *dhātu-*, *sacca-*, *saṅkhāra-*, *anusaya-*, *citta-*, *dhamma-* and *indriya-yamaka*. The kinds of pairs are derived from the core *khandha-āyatana-dhātu mātikā*.

To conclude this section, we should address the question of whether the standard *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad in the *Abhidhamma* works was influenced by the triad in the *Saṃyutta-* and *Khuddaka-nikāyas* as well as in the four *Abhidhamma* works shows, the triad seems to have evolved gradually. Although it may not be possible to determine the precise stages of evolution, the

78 *id.* p. 122.

occurrences of the triad can generally be classified into the following four groups on the basis of internal as well as external textual evidence (Table 1-1).

Table 1-1: The textual evolution of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad

Group I	*Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* *Bhikkhunī-saṃyutta*	The non-standard triad The doctrinal context
Group II	*Vaṅgīsa-saṃyutta* *Vaṅgīsa-Theragāthā* *Therīgāthā* *Apadāna*	The standard triad The refrain of the triad
Group III	*Mahā/ Cūḷa-niddesa* *Paṭisambhidāmagga*	The standard triad The exegetical and *abhidhammic* context
Group IV	*Vibhaṅga* *Dhātukathā* *Puggalapaññatti* *Yamaka.*	The standard triad The *abhidhammic* context

Group I is probably the earliest stage in the evolution of the triad, not only because the context differs from that of the rest of the occurrences but also because the order of the lists differs from the stereotyped sequence in the *Abhidhamma* works. This indicates that the triad was not deliberately arranged in accordance with the logical sequence for a typical *abhidhammic* exposition of *āyatana* and *dhātu*, in which the eighteen *dhātus* are the twelve *āyatana* plus six types of corresponding consciousness.

Group II comprises the refrains of the triad in a stereotyped sequence. The refrain first occurred in the *Vaṅgīsa-saṃyutta*. It is perhaps copied in the *Vaṅgīsa-Theragāthā* by the editor of the *Therāgāthā*, the same *thera* might possibly repeat it on other occasions. The refrain was subsequently used by *therīs* in the *Therīgāthā* and the *Apadāna*, because there was no law of copyright in ancient times; as K.R. Norman notes, if anyone could repeat a phrase or verse, it became 'his or her' phrase or verse if it was remembered in connection

with his or her name. Norman observes this common practice in the *Therā/ Therī-gāthā* and in the *Apadāna*.[79]

Group III reflects the standard *abhidhammic* classifications of *dhammas*. The thirteen lists of *dhammas* headed by the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad in the *Mahā/ Cūḷa-niddesa* resemble the list of contents of the *Vibhaṅga*. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* defines all *dhammas* not only in terms of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad but also in terms of the first list of triplets (*kusala/ akusala/ avyākatā*) in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*. More significantly, the *Mahā/ Cūḷa-niddesa* states that the twelve *āyatanas* alone represent all *dhammas*. This is probably the earliest exegetical statement based on the *Sabba-sutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*. It becomes an important issue that is discussed in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, and is later cited by both Vasubandhu and Saṅghabhadra as scriptural justification for their divergent ontological positions (see §1.1.3-(2)).

However, it is hardly surprising that the *Mahā/ Cūḷa-niddesa* and *Paṭisambhidāmagga* provide *abhidhammic mātikās* and an ontological model of all *dhammas*, considering that the former involves the exegesis of the three oldest *vagga* of the *Suttanipāta*, and that at some early date the latter was in fact classed among the *Abhidhamma* texts.[80] What concerns us here is whether the standard *abhidhammic* version of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu mātikās* in Group III evolved gradually from Groups I and II, or whether it reflects *Abhidharma* influence (Group IV) upon this group of texts.

No doubt Group I is historically earlier than the other three groups of texts; the former may have influenced the latter, or they may just as well have evolved independently. As for Groups II, III, and IV, the chronology of the individual texts will be the criterion for determining their relationships. If we simply follow the general order of the chronology suggested by the Theravādin chronicles, the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad evolved gradually; the triad in Group II appeared first, and that in Groups III and IV subsequently.

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79 Norman (1983), pp. 73-74.

80 See Warder (1982, Paṭis tr., p. xxxiii); Arnold (1907, Paṭis II, p. iv); Norman (1983, pp. 88-89).

However, considering that Group II involves a simple list in a refrain, it may have derived from Group III, which provides the elaborate lists. Moreover, we cannot entirely exclude the possibility of *abhidhammic* influence (Group IV) upon the texts in Group III, since the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* in particular implies knowledge of the *Vibhaṅga* and they share certain common features. As K.R. Norman and J. Bronkhorst note, for instance, when discussing the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* comments only upon *bhāvanā*, which is not included in the comments in the *Vibhaṅga*; it contains an interwoven exegetical *aṭṭhakathā* like the *Vibhaṅga* and also shares nearly half its section titles with the *Vibhaṅga*. Perhaps the two works influenced each other. In short, we may conclude that the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad evolved gradually in the *Saṃyutta-* and *Khuddaka-nikāya*, influenced also by *Abhidhamma* works. We shall now turn to each list of five *skandhas*, twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*, and examine how they became the foundations for the *dharma* theory postulated by the early Buddhist schools.

1.1.3 What is everything ? – the five *skandhas*, twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*

Physical states and mental events in their totality constitute human experience and are often represented by the five *skandhas*. Moreover, in the later Theravāda tradition, the analysis of human experience and the environment (*dharmas*) into the five *skandhas* is often collectively referred to as the abstract identity of the human being (or other sentient being) in terms of name and form (*nāmarūpa*).[81] The twelve perceptual spheres (*āyatana*) and the eighteen elements of perception (*dhātu*) are the other sets of totality formulas. They represent a subjective and experiential treatment of mental and material phenomena from different standpoints, but these classifications are not finite. The growing interest of Sarvāstivāda Ābhidharmikas in the ontological status of all the material and mental *dharmas* subsequently leads to a fundamental tendency to analyse everything down to its final constituents. In turn, among the Vibhāṣāśāstrins, this primary concern has reinforced attempts to encapsulate everything in a synthetic formula, by asking questions like: What is everything? What does everything include? (See §1.1.3-(2).) The early *Abhidharma* literature

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81 See Hamilton (1996, pp. 121-135) for a discussion of the term *nāmarūpa*.

represents this stage of classification and all-encompassing categorisation of *dharmas*, and this theoretical analysis and synthesis is often called '*dharma* theory' by modern scholars.[82] Leaving aside this issue for the next section, I shall examine in this section the totality formulas – the five *skandhas*, twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*. Let us take first the totality formula of the five *khandhas* and its commentarial elaboration, which shapes the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness.

(1) The totality formula of the five *khandhas* and its commentarial elaboration

The five *khandhas* consist of form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedāna*), apperception (*saññā*), volitional activities (*saṃkhāras*) and awareness (*viññāṇa*). They are conditioned or constructed (*saṅkhata*), transient (*anitya/ anicca*) and insubstantial (*anatta*). This insubstantial reality is not entirely fragmented and chaotic, but is bound together not by the persistence of substance or merely by combining elements but by causal order (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) – constantly and dynamically projecting fresh mental events and physical states. In her comprehensive study of the five *khandhas* in the Pāli canonical sources, Sue Hamilton argues that the analysis of the human being into five *khandhas* is not an analysis of what the human being consists of, but of those processes or events by which one is constituted and which one needs to understand in order to achieve Enlightenment. The Buddha's concern was not *what* we are, but *how* we are. She thus suggests that the consistency of the Buddha's concern with processes rather than substance is reinforced by his dismissal of questions concerning ontological issues. Nevertheless, while attempting to systematise the Buddha's teaching and to interpret the doctrinal issues in theoretical terms, some early Ābhidharmikas tend to place more emphasis on *what* things are rather than on *how* they operate.[83] This inquiry into ontology culminates in the assertion of the

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82 See p. 43, fn. 93.

83 See the comprehensive study of the five *khandhas* in Hamilton's publication *Identity and Experience: The Constitution of the Human Being according to Early Buddhism* (1996). See also Hamilton (1995, pp. 47-60) and "To be, or not to be? That is not the question: The issue and nature of identity in early Buddhism" (Paper given at the Inter-Disciplinary Seminars in The Study of Religion, Christ Church College, Oxford, in February 1999.) Cf. *The Five Aggregates: Understanding Theravāda Psychology and Soteriology*" (1995) by M. Boisvert.

Sarvāstivādins that 'everything exists in the three periods'. I shall return to this issue in the last part of section 1.1.4.

The five *khandhas* clearly form one of those primary lists of schematic terms of which the early Buddhist canon makes frequent use in its analysis of the human being. They also feature repeatedly as categories of analysis in the early *Abhidhamma* works. The totality of each *khandha* is referred to in the *Nikāyas* according to the following formula: "Whatever *rūpa... vedāna... saññā ... saṃkhāras... viññāṇa* are past (*atīta*), future (*anāgata*) or present (*paccuppanna*), internal (*ajjhattaṃ*) or external (*bahiddhā*), gross (*oḷārika*) or subtle (*sukhuma*), inferior (*hīna*) or refined (*paṇīta*), far (*dūre*) or near (*santike*)".[84] They consist of one triplet and four pairs. Although the descriptive terms, mostly adjectives and adverbs, of this formula are not expounded further in the *Nikāyas*, as noted by R. Gethin, the *Vibhaṅga*, which takes this formula as characteristic of the *Suttanta* account of the *khandhas*, furnishes us with an illustration of their application to each of the *khandhas* in turn.[85]

The collective terms *atīta/ anāgata/ paccuppanna* are straightforward in the *Vibhaṅga*, but the *Kathāvatthu* attempts to reject the Sarvāstivādins' claim that all *dharmas* exist in the three times. Though I do not wish to go into detail, the gist of the argument is worth mentioning here. Leaving aside the problem of the relationship between the three times and the five *khandha-dhammas*, we shall see that there was a controversy among early Ābhidharmikas about how to define the three times.

As R.E. Buswell has shown in his study of the three times controversy in *Abhidharma* philosophy, the Theravādins resort to the commonly accepted definitions of the present and the future to reject any notion that something can exist throughout all three time periods. By definition, the past is something which has come to an end; the future is something which has yet to come into being. The present, however, is something which has not yet passed

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84 E.g. M I 138-139, III 16-17; S III 47, 68.

85 The *khandha-vibhaṅga*, *suttanta-bhājaniya*, Vibh 1-12. See Gethin (1986), p. 40.

away. If one attempts to dissect these three times, there will be obvious contradictions. What has not yet ceased still exists in the past, but if it currently exists, it must not have ceased. As it cannot be both ended and still existing, the past does not exist. In the same way, what has arisen currently exists, but if the future were now existing it must already have come into being. As what has yet to come into being cannot simultaneously be in existence, so the future does not exist. Similarly, the present is either that which is currently arising, or that which has already come into existence. This same argument is applied to past, future and present *rūpadhammas* and to all the other four *khandhas*, in order to show the contradictions in the Sarvāstivādin position.[86] Accordingly, the Theravādins claim that the definitions of the past and the future are entirely dependent upon how we take the 'present'. In other words, if the past and the future are as real as the present and if they exist in the same sense as the present, then the three times cannot truly be differentiated.

The pair *ajjhattaṃ/ bahiddhā* is explained in the *Vibhaṅga* as relative, that is to say, its point of reference to any given individual is 'external', and the individual's experience refers to the 'internal'. The two are inseparable and correlated. In this connection, Hamilton suggests that the terms *ajjhattaṃ* and *bahiddhā* should not be interpreted as implying an idealistic ontology. Consider, for instance, the passage from the *Dīgha-nikāya*, *ajjattaṃ rūpasaññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati*, which she translates as "One who apperceives a visible feature of himself [likewise] sees visible features of others". In contrast, Johansson renders the same passage as: "When somebody experiences forms inside himself, he will see forms outside…", and gives his interpretation thus: "The objective world, according to Buddhism, is no different from the experienced world: it simply consists of the subjective world projected by our mind…".[87] Hamilton adduces the convention found in the context of the meditational exercise in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, in which the terms *ajjhattaṃ* and *bahiddhā* are used to indicate that the exercises are to be practised both on one's own physical and mental faculties and also on those of others. The purpose is to realise that one's nature is the same as that of anyone else, rather than to see whether or not the external

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86 Kv I 115-119, see Buswell (1997), pp. 1250-1251.

87 Hamilton (1996), intro. pp. xxvi-xxix, (1997), pp. 276-291; see also Gombrich (1996), pp. 93-95.

world is a projection of one's mind. She also extends this line of argument to an interpretation of the term *loka*, which literally means 'world'. She argues that: "The nature of the human being is so fundamental to the Buddha's teaching that a common metaphor for the life of an individual is 'the world', *loka*. Failure to understand this metaphor has led some to conclude that 'the world is not real', 'the world only exists in our minds', and so on. ..... and it is invalid to extend the metaphor into a statement that world *is* that subjective experience".[88]

The remaining pairs, *oḷārika/ sukhuma*, *hīna/ paṇīta*, and *dūre/ santike* are also explained as relative in the *Vibhaṅga*. In particular, when they are applied to the four mental *khandhas*, for instance, a specific manifestation of *vedanā* is distinguished as gross or subtle, inferior or refined, far or near in relation to another specific manifestation of *vedanā*. However, as Gethin mentions, when they are applied to the *rūpakkhandha*, although the inferior/ refined pair is again treated as merely relative, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga* can be interpreted as taking each term of the pairs gross/ subtle and far/ near as referring to fixed items in the *Abhidhamma* list of twenty-seven kinds of *rūpa*.[89]

The *Vibhaṅga* exposition of the totality of each *khandha* in terms of the formula shown above seems to be intended to indicate how each *khandha* is to be seen as a class of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety as well as a certain hierarchy.[90] The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary (hereafter, the PKV commentary), however, extensively elaborates this canonical formula, adding eleven pairs to the one triplet and four pairs of the lists. Thus the five *khandhas* are analysed in terms of sixteen aspects (*ākāra*) or viewpoints.[91] Six viewpoints are pertinent to the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness:

1. order of succession (*pubba-apara*)
2. limit of duration (*addhāna-pariccheda*)

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88 Hamilton (1996), intro. pp. xxv-xxviii. See also her article: "The External World: its Status and Relevance in the Pali Nikāyas" in *Religion* (forthcoming, 1999).
89 Gethin (1986), pp. 40-41.
90 *id.* p. 41.
91 Vibh-a 21.

3. synchronous arising and asynchronous cessation (*ekuppāda-nānānirodha*)
4. asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation (*nānuppāda-ekanirodha*)
5. synchronous arising and synchronous cessation (*ekuppāda-ekanirodha*)
6. asynchronous arising and asynchronous cessation (*nānuppāda-nānānirodha*)

The PKV commentary provides us with a detailed exposition of the mechanism of the material and mental processes and their relative duration. I have examined these topics in chapter 3 in order to show how the PKV commentary shaped the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness and influenced the later commentarial texts.

In addition to this pertinent material, the *Vibhaṅga* commentary presents a significant distinction between *suttantic* and *abhidhammic* understanding of the three times. As noted above, the collective terms *atīta/ anāgata/ paccuppanna* are straightforward in the *Vibhaṅga* but, as we might expect, their commentarial treatment is more elaborate. According to the *suttantic* method, the three times of the five *khandhas* are divided by way of existence (*bhava*). That is to say, prior to rebirth-linking is the past; subsequent to death is the future; and between these two is the present. In the first *abhidhammic* method, in contrast, the division is made in terms of a moment (*khaṇa*), which consists of a unit of three moments, *uppāda-*, *ṭhiti-* and *bhaṅga-kkhaṇa*. The commentary introduces an alternative classification of time with four divisions: 1) extent (*addhā*), 2) continuity (*santati*), 3) durational time (*samaya*) and 4) moment (*khaṇa*). The term *santati* is explained in terms of the origination of *rūpa*, i.e. the four modes of origin: *kamma*, consciousness (*citta*), temperature (*utu*), and nutriment (*āhāra*). *Samaya* is expressed in terms of general units of time, namely the minute (*muhutta*), day-and-night etc. *Addhā* and *khaṇa* are conceived of in the same way as in the first abhidhammic method.[92]

Although they attempted to present all the possible classifications of the *dhammas* within the confines of the *khandha* formula, in fact the early Ābhidhammikas admitted that it could not accommodate the unconditioned, *nibbāna* (i.e. *asaṅkhata-dhamma*). Therefore, they looked for another formula and discovered in the canonical texts the twelve *āyatanas* and

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92 Vibh-a 7-8.

eighteen *dhātus*, which can account for the unconditioned *dhammas*. In the following section we shall examine the textual history of the twelve *āyatanas* as a totality formula and its implications for the origins and development of the *dhamma* theory in the early Buddhist schools.

(2) The totality formulas of the twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*

According to the *abhidharmic* account, the twelve *āyatanas* along with the eighteen *dhātus* constitute the framework of human experience, all of which is encapsulated in the six sense-fields and their six corresponding object-fields, together with their six corresponding types of consciousness. The first five sense-fields and object-fields are the spheres of the eye and form, of the ear and sound, of the nose and smell, of tongue and taste, and of the body and tangibles respectively. The sixth sense-field is known as *manas* and the twelfth object-field as *dharmā*. Similarly, as far as the framework is concerned, the eighteen *dhātus* are formed by substituting the term *dhātu* for *āyatana* and by adding the six corresponding types of consciousness to these twelve *dhātus*.

Certain early texts state that 'everything' (*sarva*) refers to the twelve *āyatanas*. This simple statement of totality contains the seeds of doctrinal divergence among early Buddhist schools. It has been used to justify the ontological models of *Abhidharma* traditions. The problem seems to lie in the pair of words *manas* and *dharma*, and also in the meaning of the term *āyatana*. I do not intend to discuss the implications of these ambiguous terms here; rather I would like to make some general remarks.

It is well-known that *dharma* has multiple meanings and that it is ambiguous, in that it can lead itself to either phenomenalistic or realistic interpretations, depending on one's approach. In his brief outline of the studies of *dharma* by Geiger (1920) and Carter (1978),[93] R. F. Gombrich suggests that the development of a Buddhist ontology, perhaps

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93 The historical study of *dharma* in the Western academic tradition begins with a recognition of the multiple meanings of *dharma* in the works of E. Burnouf (1844) and R.S. Hardy (1850). A gradual increase in knowledge of the subject brought about comprehensive works by scholars, notably Magdalene and Wilhelm

contrary to the Buddha's intentions, might be traced by considering the history of how the word *dharma* is used.[94] The term *manas* is equally ambiguous and confusing. It is often translated as 'mind', but given that *manas* is an *āyatana*, such a rendering is perhaps inadequate; it cannot distinguish the generic sense, in contexts where it has a mental and cognitive meaning, from the specific sense of *manas* as a sense organ. Moreover, the translation 'mind' would convey idealistic connotations. The word *āyatana* also has contextual variants inherited in the classical Indian texts of religious ritual and philosophy. It has a crucial role in Buddhist psychological systems and is commonly understood as 'the sense organs and their objects'. But some modern scholars, e.g., Sue Hamilton and Joong-Pyo Lee, do not support this common understanding. Mainly on the basis of an analysis of the four principal Pāli *Nikāyas* (Hamilton) and the four Chinese *Āgamas* (Lee), they suggest that the *āyatanas* are potentialities which determine the nature of each of the types of an individual's psychological processes. In particular, the *saḷāyatanas* (*cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāna* and so on) in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula are unlikely to refer to the six sense organs themselves, and the terms are rather to be interpreted figuratively as the faculties of vision, hearing, smell and so on.[95] However, when in chapter 2 I deal with the issue of the simultaneity (*sahajāta*) of the sense faculties and sense objects with each corresponding type of consciousness in the cognitive process, for the sake of argument I have presupposed the Ābhidharmikas' understanding that the senses and their corresponding objects are collectively referred to as *āyatana*. Leaving aside the precise meanings of the words *manas*, *dharma*, and *āyatana*, I shall trace the textual history of the totality formula of the twelve *āyatanas* in the Theravādin literary sources as well as in some exegetical works of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika.

Geiger (1920), Stcherbatsky (1923), and J.R. Carter (1978). For more recent opinions, see Gombrich (1996, pp. 24-26, 34-37) and Hamilton (1996, pp. 22-35).

94 Gombrich (1996), p. 34.

95 See Hamilton (1996), pp. 1-22 for a detailed discussion. Joong-Pyo Lee carried out his study in Korean under the title: "A remark on the twelve *āyatanas* (Sibichago)" in *Korean Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 13, pp. 137-158, Seoul, 1988. He further discusses the meaning of the twelve *āyatanas* and other related topics in his Ph. D. thesis: *A System of Middle Path in the Āgamas* (*Ahamŭ Chung Do Choe Gye*), Seoul, 1991. See also his more recent article: "Are the six internal *āyatanas* identical with the six *indriyas* ? " in *Pômhan Chôlhag*, Vol. 17,1998, pp. 291-311.

The *Mūlapariyāya-sutta*, the first *Sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, analyses the cognitive processes of four types of individuals – the untaught ordinary person, the disciple in higher training, the arahant, and the Tathāgata. In the first section of the *Sutta*, all phenomena of personality are collected together and shown as single-fold: "He perceives all as all. Having perceived all as all, he conceives [himself as] all, ... he conceives all as the 'mine', he delights in all."[96] On these passages, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli comments that the idea of totality can form the basis for philosophers of the pantheistic or monistic type, depending on the relation posited between the self and the all.[97] A more straightforward reference to the totality formula of the twelve *āyatanas* appears in the *Sabba-sutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*:

> What is 'everything', monks ? It is eye and form, ear and sound, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and tangibles, *manas* and *dhammā*. Monks, that is called 'everything'. If anyone claims that he could replace this [version] of 'everything' with another, that is just empty words..... Why is it so ? Because, monks, there is nothing beyond this scope.[98]

Although there are several occurrences of the twelve *āyatanas* in the four primary *Nikāyas*, the CD-ROM database of the Pāli canon shows that this is the only *Sutta* which explicitly states that the six senses and the six corresponding sense objects are all-inclusive. The term *āyatana* is not used in this *Sutta*, but the senses and sense objects could be a shorthand for the twelve *āyatanas*. We find the parallel *Sūtra* with the term *āyatana* specified in the *Saṃyukta-āgama*, which becomes a main scriptural source for the Sarvāstivādin ontology, 'everything exists'.

As shown in section 1.1.2, we come across the explicit statement that the twelve *āyatanas* represent 'everything' (*sabbaṃ vuccati dvādasâyatanāni*) in the *Mahā/ Cūḷa-niddesa* of the *Khuddaka-nikāya*. The Theravādin *Abhidhamma* and commentarial texts do not seem to pay much attention to this claim; we find neither this specific statement nor an elaborate exegesis in those texts, though it is listed as one of several all-inclusive taxonomies. In

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96 M I 3-4; Ñāṇamoli's trsl. (1995), p. 87.

97 Ñāṇamoli (1995), p. 1166, fn. 19.

98 S IV 15: *kiñca bhikkhave sabbaṃ ? cakkhuṃ c' eva rūpā ca, sotañca saddā ca, ghānañca gandhā ca, jivhā rasā ca, kāyo ca phoṭṭhabbā ca, mano ca dhammā ca. idaṃ vuccati bhikkhave sabbaṃ. yo bhikkhave evaṃ vadeyya. ahaṃ etaṃ sabbam paccakkhāya aññaṃ sabbam paññāpessāmī ti tassa vācāvatthur evassa. ..... taṃ kissa hetu ? yathā tam bhikkhave avisayasmin ti.*

sharp contrast, the Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma* and exegetical texts depend heavily on this particular taxonomy of all-inclusiveness, by identifying the term 'everything' in the declaration that 'everything exists' as referring to the very *Sūtra* passage on the twelve *āyatanas*. Therefore, I shall here briefly look at the Sarvāstivādin exegetical texts, in particular the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.

As noted in the introduction, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* is the repository of virtually every conceivable doctrinal position postulated by the early schools or masters. The text provides us with a detailed discussion of the twelve *āyatanas*. It opens its catechetical exegesis by listing each item of the twelve *āyatanas*, and by citing the entire passage from the *Sarva-sūtra* of the *Saṃyukta-āgama*. This *Sūtra* is almost identical with the Pāli version quoted above, except that the Buddha addresses a *brahmin* instead of monks.[99] After this citation, the interlocutor asks why the Buddha states that only the twelve *āyatanas* are all-inclusive, and that anything else is just empty words without any true meaning. He argues that there are several other lists that follow the same principle of an all-inclusive taxonomy, namely the eighteen *dhātus*, the five *skandhas* together with unconditioned *dharmas*, the four truths (*saccā*), space (*ākāśa*), cessation not resulting from consideration (*apratisaṁkhyānirodha*), and name and form (*nāma-rūpa*). The Vibhāṣāśāstrins reply that it is not for the Buddha to deny such different lists of *dharma*, but just to indicate that the teaching of the twelve *āyatanas* is the highest (*parama*) and perfectly fits all-inclusiveness, while others do not. They furnish us with two reasons: 1) the eighteen *dhātus*, despite all-inclusiveness, are difficult to grasp, 2) the five *skandhas*, though simple and easy to grasp, cannot include all the *dharmas*, that is to say, they exclude the three unconditioned *dharmas* (*ākāśa*, *pratisaṁkhyānirodha*, and *apratisaṁkhyānirodha*). However, the twelve *āyatanas* are neither too elaborate nor too simple, but the highest level of totality that encompasses all the *dharmas*.[100]

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99 MVB T 27 p. 378^{b23-c5}; S IV 15; SA T2 p. 91^{a27ff}; cf. AKB V kr 27c, p. 301.
100 MVB T 27 p. 378^{c8-23}.

As mentioned in section 1.1.3-(2), the definition of the totality in terms of the twelve *āyatanas* later forms the basis for the theoretical framework of the Sarvāstivādins' ontology. In the *Anuśaya* chapter of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Vasubandhu cites a *Sūtra* passage: "O, brahmin, 'everything exists' refers to the twelve *āyatanas*" (***sarvam astīti*** *brāhmaṇa yāvad eva dvādaśâyatanānīti*). We immediately notice the textual variant ***sarvam asti***; the verb ***asti*** is absent in the *Saṃyukta-sūtra* passage cited in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* and in the Theravādin textual sources. This textual variant certainly indicates that the later Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma* tradition was eager to find a scriptural justification for the ontological assertion ***sarvam asti***, as encapsulated in the name 'Sarvāstivāda'. A systematic survey of this textual problem would reveal how the ontological idea of the Sarvāstivādins gradually evolved within the four *Āgamas*, the seven *Abhidharma* texts, the *vibhāṣā* compendia and other exegetical works, but it is beyond the scope of the present study. On the basis of this brief textual survey of the totality formula of the twelve *āyatanas*, I shall now turn to the main issue of the present section: how the *dharma* theory and the doctrine of momentariness were evolving and exchanging mutual impetus in the intellectual milieu of early Buddhist *Abhidharma* traditions.

1.1.4 *Dharmas*, atoms and the doctrine of momentariness

The *dharma* is a set of truths (*dharmā*), and is a term commonly used to refer to the Buddha's teaching. In a generic sense, *dharmas* are basic factors of empirical existence, consisting of all knowable things (*dharmā*), as taught by the Buddha.[101] The canonical approaches to *dharma* analysis are centred around the dynamism of human experience and focused on understanding of the human condition in *saṃsāra*. What the Buddha's immediate disciples would have understood by *dharmas* was probably deemed quite sufficient to reveal the true nature of existence in terms of *skandhas*, *nāmarūpa*, *āyatana* and *dhātu*. However, some time after the Buddha, new interpretative issues cropped up, and subsequent generations of his followers demanded further clarification of the master's teaching and a theoretical understanding of their practice. In particular, the early

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101 J.R. Carter (1978, pp. 206ff.); Hamilton (1996, pp. 29-30).

Ābhidharmikas made an attempt to give a comprehensive account in theoretical terms by extrapolating from the peculiarities of their experience in meditation and contemplation of doctrinal issues. They gradually expanded the scope of their inquiry to a systematic and exhaustive account of the experiential world in terms of its constituent physical and mental phenomena. This involved two tasks: 1) to categorise all possible types of phenomena, 2) to consider all possible ways in which those phenomena can interact and so categorise the various kinds of causal relationships.[102] As shown in the previous section, an endeavour was made to analyse all the *dharmas* and to synthesise them in the totality formulas. The early *Abhidharma* literature thus represents this stage of classification into all-encompassing categorisations of *dharmas*, and this theoretical analysis and synthesis are often called '*dharma* theory' by modern scholars. In the first half of this section, I shall outline the *dharma* typologies and the atomic theory, and in the second half I shall show how *dharma* theory was given impetus by the way that *dharmas* were understood as momentary atomic entities.

(1) The *dharma* typologies, *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra* and the atomic theory

The further systemisation of *dharmas* was fuelled by an intellectual milieu in which the Ābhidharmikas had to meet criticism levelled against them by non-Buddhist as well as other Buddhist schools. As a result, they had to develop new terms with specific concepts to turn the comprehensive lists of *dharmas* into more standard formulas. This intellectual activity is reflected in the *Abhidharma* texts and their exegetical works of the Southern and Northern traditions. I shall outline the standard typologies of *dharmas* found in the *Abhidharma* manuals of the Sarvāstivāda and Theravāda, as these will suffice for our present purpose.

At the outset, it should be noted that the term *dharma* is used both of a particular member of a class of *dharma* and of the whole class. The number of classes of *dharma* is more or less finite. The Sarvāstivādins provide a list of seventy-five classes of *dharma* under five categories. Later Theravādin sources give eighty-two classes of *dhamma* under the four

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102 See Gethin (1998), pp. 207-215.

categories. In the Theravādin list, 1) materiality (*rūpa*) consists of twenty-seven or twenty-eight *dhammas*, 2) consciousness (*citta*) of a single class, or alternatively, by a finer method of differentiation, of eighty-nine or one hundred and twenty-one *dhammas* (see Bodhi's Table 1.1),[103] 3) associated mentality (*cetasika*) of fifty-two *dhammas*, and 4) *nibbāna* an additional *dhamma*, but no explicit mention seems to be made of the total number of *dharmas* taken as a whole. Among the Sarvāstivādins subsequent to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the total number of *dharmas* was fixed at seventy-five: 1) three allotted to the unconditioned *dharmas* (*asaṃskṛta*), 2) eleven to materiality, 3) one to consciousness, 4) forty-six to associated mentality (*caitta*), and 5) fourteen to the conditioned forces dissociated from thought (*cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra*).

What concerns us in these lists is the last item, *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra*. This new category is found predominantly in northern Indian *Abhidharma* texts of all periods, though the specific *dharmas* included within the category vary (the **Prakaraṇapāda* lists sixteen *dharmas*, while other exegetical texts list fourteen).[104] The *dharmas* of *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra* are not mentioned in the *Sūtras*, and this category is absent in the lists of the Theravādins, as shown above. Nevertheless, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas reckon that these *dharmas* could not be included in any of the traditional lists of the *skandha*, *nāmarūpa*, *āyatana* and *dhātu* classifications, because they are neither *rūpa* nor *citta*. For instance, the four conditioned characteristics (*saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇa*) i.e. birth (*jāti*), endurance (*sthiti*), decay (*jarā*) and dissolution (*anityatā*) are classified under the category of *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra*, because they are neither mental nor material, but have characteristics common to both. In contrast, the Theravādins classify[105] the four conditioned characteristics in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* under the lists of derived materiality which form part of the twenty-eight *rūpa-dharmas*. Although the Pāli equivalent *cittavippayutta* occurs in the Theravāda *Abhidhamma* texts, it is only used in a generic sense. That is to say, it simply refers to *rūpa* which is dissociated from *citta*, or collectively

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103 Bodhi (1993), p. 93.
104 See Cox (1995), pp. 71-73 for the variant lists of the *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra*.
105 Dhs §§ 642-645.

to *rūpa* and *nibbāna* as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* specifies: "Form and *nibbāna* – these are the factors dissociated from thought."[106] Thus, in contrast to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' understanding, the term *cittavippayutta* does not denote a separate category of discrete *dharmas*. I shall return to this issue when I discuss the four conditioned characteristics in section 1.2.3.

What is most significant for the present enquiry is that the *dharmas* of *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra* are claimed to exist as real entities (*dravya*) by virtue of their own intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), like all the *dharmas* enumerated by the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas. They claim that the existence of these *dharmas* is proven by inference from the particular activity that each performs. However, the attribution of specific activity to a particular *dharma* and the ontological status of the *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra* were subjects of heated controversy throughout the doctrinal history of the early northern Indian Buddhist schools. The problem of the four conditioned characteristics (*saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇa*) is an example par excellence. Even in the earliest treatises, as Collett Cox rightly observes, the complex treatments of these four characteristics indicate that this doctrine was, from its inception, a focus of controversy within the Sarvāstivādin school itself. The major area of disagreement between the Sarvāstivāda and virtually all other early Buddhist schools concerns the doctrine of "*sarvam asti*", which eventually came to be the hallmark position of the Sarvāstivādin school: namely, the claim that *dharmas* actually exist as real entities in the three time periods. Although disagreement on this eponymous doctrine underlies the majority of the specific points of controversy raised in Sarvāstivādin *Abhidharma* texts, the discussion of the four conditioned characteristics provides one of the few occasions where the doctrine itself and its implications are examined explicitly.[107] Thus this doctrine plays a crucial role for the exposition of Sarvāstivāda ontology, though its ontological understanding rendered it intrinsically problematic. Let us now turn to the issue of how the ontological position of

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106 Dhs § 1515: *rūpañ ca nibbābañ ca ime dhammā cittavippayuttā.* See also Vibh 12; Kv 447.

107 See MVB T 27 pp. 198$^{a8ff.}$, 393$^{a9ff.}$; AKB II kr 45c-dff.; NAS T 29 pp. 198$^{a8ff.}$. See also Cox (1995), pp. 75-76, 133-136.

the Sarvāstivāda was reinforced by the understanding of material reality in terms of discrete atoms.

The idea of material atoms makes perhaps its first explicit appearance in the **Abhidharmahṛdaya* of Dharmaśrī (who lived in the early 2nd century CE or before), which probably pre-dates the composition of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (the 2nd century CE).[108] The fully-fledged atomic theory occurs in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, and according to W.M. McGovern it seems to have been adopted from the Vaiśeṣikas of the brahmanical schools.[109] The theory plays an integral part in the works of Vasubandhu and Saṅghabhadra (the 5th century CE). Leaving aside systematic analysis of these textual sources from a historical standpoint, I shall provide a general outline of the *abhidharmic* understanding of material atoms on the basis of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

According to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika doctrinal system, there are two layers of material entities: the unitary atom (*dravya-paramāṇu*) and the collective-atom (*saṅghāta-paramāṇu*). A unitary atom consists of the four primary elements (*mahābhūta*) of earth, water, fire and wind, and these atoms give rise to each atom of the five sense organs and their sense objects. The unitary atom is the smallest unit of matter: it is the most subtle (*sarva-sūkṣma*), it is partless (*niravayavat*), and therefore no spatial dimensions (*dig-bhāga-bhedatva*) can be predicated for it.[110] The unitary atom never arises or exists in isolation, but in combination with other unitary atoms. A collection of atoms, as they arise and cease together simultaneously, is called a collective-atom (*saṅghāta-paramāṇu*). The smallest collective-atom is an octad consisting of the four primary elements and the four secondary elements, namely, form, odour, taste and touch.[111]

Georges B.J. Dreyfus conveniently classifies this *abhidharmic* view of material reality into two different philosophical perspectives: 1) Ontologically, material reality is made of the

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108 See Willemen (1975, pp. Intro. v-viii) for the date and the variant of the name Dharmaśrī (Dharmaśreṣṭhin).
109 McGovern (1923, pp. 125-128); Hattori (1988, pp. 37-39).
110 AKB I kr 43, pp. 31-34; SAKV p. 85.
111 AKB II kr 22, pp. 52-54.

atoms of the four elements of earth, water, fire and wind. This schema does not, however, specify the status of material phenomena other than elements. These macroscopic phenomena are just described as arising from elements (*bhautika*). 2) Such phenomena are included in another classification which describes them from a phenomenological viewpoint according to how they are perceived through the senses. There are five types of sensible phenomena (i.e. form, sound, odour, taste and touch) apprehended by the five sense organs. Among these five, sound is considered apart; a material object can exist without it. The four material elements are necessarily present in any material object which includes sound. Thus, in our ordinary world of desire, all material objects other than sound have eight components (four elements and four types of sensible phenomena). Sound has nine (the former eight plus sound).[112]

Unlike the atoms of the Vaiśeṣikas, however, the atoms of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika are not eternal. They spring into being from moment to moment, and undergo a four-fold process of birth, continuance, decay, and destruction, followed by a new cycle of birth, and so on. But the phenomena themselves are real (*dravya*) and classifiable under the category of *cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra* as seen above. Thus the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas combine these two different philosophical stances, creating a tension in their doctrinal system. The objects such as form, sound and so on are not just atomic components but, including their characteristic phenomena, empirically observable real entities. This is problematic, not coherent, and delineates reality according to contradictory criteria.

Dreyfus shows how the Sautrāntika[113] interpretation of *Abhidharma* presented by Vasubandhu copes with this problem by reducing reality to simple elements. According to Dreyfus, Vasubandhu refutes the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika interpretation that large material objects are made of eight substances; this view is incorrect because it conflates two different senses of substance, ontological and phenomenological. Ontologically speaking, as he says,

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112 Dreyfus (1997), p. 84.

113 By Sautrāntika, I mean Vasubandhu as well as other Buddhist thinkers often described as proponents of the Sautrāntika view.

only the four elements are substances. From a phenomenological standpoint, by contrast, the four sense spheres can be called *substances*. This latter typology cannot, however, be assimilated to the former. Since we are attempting to distinguish what really exists from what is merely conceptually added to reality, only the ontological meaning of substance must be taken into account. Dreyfus thus shows how Vasubandhu eliminates the sensibilia (the spheres (*āyatanāni*) such as form) from the list of real phenomena. They are the building blocks out of which all macroscopic material objects are made. Consequently, they constitute these objects, which are not real in the full sense of the term. Perception of those objects is not due to their reality, but is the result of the causal efficiency of their constituent atoms. According to this Sautrāntika explanation, only infinitesimal atoms and moments of consciousness are real.[114] Before discussing the implications of this philosophical problem for the doctrine of momentariness in the next section, the Theravādin understanding of the atomic theory needs to be summarised.

In fact, as Y. Karunadasa suggests, there is no allusion to the unitary atom (*dravya-paramāṇu*) in the Theravādin textual sources, though the term *kalāpa*, which corresponds to the collective atom (*saṅghāta-paramāṇu*), appears in the post-canonical texts.[115] The term *kalāpa* refers in a general sense to that which holds single parts together, but in a technical sense to the smallest material unit to contain the eight elements (i.e. the four primary and the four secondary elements). This is apparently a post-canonical idea; it makes its first appearance without using the term *kalāpa* in the commentaries of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga*.[116] Although two passages in the *Visuddhimagga* seem to contain an allusion to an ultimate unit of materiality called *paramāṇu* or *cuṇṇa*, according to Karunadasa, Buddhaghosa appears to use the terms in the sense of collective atoms; they are probably identical with *kalāpa* in its technical sense and correspond to the *saṅghāta-paramāṇu* of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika.[117] In the sub-commentarial works and the medieval manuals *kalāpa* became the standard term for the *saṅghāta-paramāṇu*. I shall

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114 *id.* p. 85.
115 See § 3.2.4 (1).
116 As 313; Vibh-a 161.
117 Karunadasa (1967), pp. 144-146.

return to this issue when I discuss the nature of materiality and the **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa* in chapter 3.[118] Let us now turn to the issues of how the atomic theory and conflicting typologies of *dharma* could be reconciled with the doctrine of momentariness accepted by early Buddhist schools.

(2) The nature of atomic *dharmas* and the doctrine of momentariness

Although Vasubandhu disagrees with the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika on the ontological and phenomenological issues discussed above, they do share the view that material reality (*rūpa-dharma*) can be reduced to discrete momentary atoms (i.e. the four primary elements). A jar, for instance, being a collective of evanescent atomic constituent-events is itself momentary (*kṣaṇika*), and has no continuity or stability as a real substratum. This denial of stability is not necessarily a denial of atomic reality but an assertion that atomic reality must be understood first and foremost as change (not in the sense that X transforms into Y). According to this view, the world is not made of everlasting substances with changing qualities. Rather, change itself is the essence of atomic reality. Atoms that appear to endure unchanged are, in fact, a series of moments that arise and perish in rapid succession. However, their appearance and destruction are not random but constantly operate through the causal power of each atom's chief cause as well as through the entire network of the causal complex.

The spirit of this analysis of material reality in terms of atoms applies equally to mental reality; consciousness is a succession of discrete moments of awareness. The arising and passing of each moment of consciousness is understood to occur extremely rapidly, so that, to use a canonical analogy, a countless number pass even in the time it takes to snap one's fingers. Consciousness is experienced as a continuous flow, but is in fact made up of the rapidly occurring sequence of consciousness moments, each in accordance with a rapidly occurring sequence of a particular sense object. Thus, the ratio of change between material and mental phenomena in a given moment is one to one; they occur in perfect synchronicity.

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118 See § 3.2.4-(3).

This is the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness which we come across in the *Abhidharma* exegetical works of the northern Indian Buddhist schools (notably, the Sarvāstivāda and proponents of the Sautrāntika view). Do the Theravādins agree with this version of the doctrine of momentariness ?

(3) The intellectual context of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness

The Theravādins disagree with these schools as regards their basic premise. The *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*, the earliest evidence of the theory of momentariness, argues that the sense organs and sense objects cannot arise simultaneously with each mental phenomenon. Two types of argument are presented in the polemic of the *Khaṇikakathā*. The first apparent argument underlying the denial of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness is that common sense objects, such as the earth, Mt. Sineru and so on do not have the same duration as mental phenomena. In sharp contrast with the northern Ābhidharmikas' understanding of material reality in terms of atoms, the Theravādins consider material objects as aggregated blocks of matter, and believe that they are not as momentary as a single mental phenomenon. As shown above, there is no allusion to the unitary atom (*dravya-paramāṇu*) in the Theravādin textual sources, though the term *kalāpa*, which corresponds to the collective atom (*saṅghāta-paramāṇu*), appears in the post-canonical texts. I do not assume that the idea of the collective atom in its technical sense is implied by this argument, but it is quite probable that material reality is generally regarded on the basis of common sense as the groups of elements that constitute the sense organs and sense objects. The second argument implies this probability, addressing the issue of the simultaneity (*sahajāta*) of the sense faculties and sense objects with consciousness. The polemic here, with its ostensibly simple but actually complex epistemological implications, addresses the incompatibility between the cognitive process and the theory of momentariness (i.e. the idea that all phenomena are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon). What interests me in these two types of argument is that they implicitly address the purview of the real, the criteria that separate the real from the conceptual. They prompt us to ask such questions as: Are common sense objects real at any time ? If we

accept the atomic theory of material reality, does each atom contribute separately to the generation of a perception or do they contribute to it collectively ? To gain some perspective, it would be useful to look at the possible answers proposed by Indian Buddhist thinkers, notably Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. However, I will leave these questions aside, for they raise complex philosophical issues which would go beyond the scope of the present study.

Suffice it to say that there are conflicting views on these questions. Most northern Indian Buddhist thinkers exclude common sense objects from the domain of the real, because their view derives from the epistemological atomism of the *Abhidharma* tradition. However, Dreyfus shows the apparent inconsistency of Dharmakīrti's view on the reality of the common sense objects, that is, spatially extended objects. He argues that the inconsistency is due to a tension within Dharmakīrti's thought arising out of the double perspective that orients his thought: the ontological and the epistemological. Ontologically, Dharmakīrti tends toward an antirealist reduction of reality to simple elements. From this pesrpective, extended objects are reduced to infinitesimal particles. Epistemologically, however, such a reduction is harder to sustain. According to his fundamental thesis that perception accurately reflects reality, extension would seem to exist. Extension appears, after all, to perception. Dreyfus suggests that this leads Dharmakīrti to accept, at some level, a minimal notion of extension. However, he remarks that this does not imply that at this level of analysis commonsense objects, such as a jar, are real. These commonsense objects, which we usually take as being real things, are synthetic and unreal. Hence, at this level, Dharmakīrti's acceptance of the reality of extended objects applies exclusively to objects which are made of elements that belong to the same sense sphere, such as colour, taste and so forth. It does not include commonsense objects.

Dreyfus further shows that the commonsense objects are supposed to be real in other passages in Dharmakīrti's work. For example, while discussing the way in which causal relations are understood, Dharmakīrti demonstrates how we understand the relation

between fire and smoke by observing how smoke follows the presence of fire. In this discussion, causal relations are described as involving common sense objects, such as smoke, which are thus assumed at this level of analysis to be real.[119]

As for the second question "Does each atom contribute separately to the generation of a perception or do they contribute to it collectively? ", according to Dreyfus, one view holds that atoms are merely parts of a collection (*saṃghāta*) and that each atom contributes to a perception of unity without sharing in it. The other view holds that atoms form an aggregate (*saṃcita*) in which they acquire a dual aspect: on the one hand they keep their subtle aspect, while on the other, they collectively acquire a coarse aspect. These two views are described as the collection view and the aggregate view (or coalescence view) respectively.[120]

The simple polemical argument of the *Khaṇikakathā* seems to exclude such understandings of common sense objects in terms of atoms, which are presupposed in the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness. Once the atomic theory was adopted in the *Abhidharma* system of the northern Buddhist schools, divergent philosophical opinions sprang up, creating tension in the intellectual milieu of northern India. The Theravādin Ābhidhammikas did not incorporate the atomic theory directly into their doctrinal system, but they had to explain the status of common sense objects somehow. On the basis of the *abhidhammic* classifications, the Theravādin commentarial tradition attempts to explain the physical world in terms of the smallest material unit which contains the eight elements (i.e. the four primary and the four secondary elements). The four primary elements are represented by solidity, fluidity, heat and mobility. The four secondary elements are colour, smell, taste and nutriment (*oja*), which derive from the above four primary elements. Being virtually inseparable, they arise, exist and perish as one unit. Later commentarial tradition calls this basic unit of materiality

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119 Dreyfus (1997), pp. 83-99.

120 There is some confusion as to which schools entertain which view. Kalupahana seems to think that the Vaibhāṣikas accept the second while the Sautrāntikas hold the first. However, Hattori and Keyt hold a contrary view. Relying on the presentation of K'uei Chi, a disciple of the famous Chinese translator and pilgrim Hsüan Tsang, they assert that the Vaibhāṣikas hold the aggregate view and the Sautrāntikas the collection view. Dreyfus thinks that the orientation of these views in purely doxographic terms is probably too simplistic and likely to mask the complexity of the opinions held by individual thinkers. (See Dreyfus, 1997, p. 100.)

kalāpa, the bare octad (*suddhaṭṭhaka*), whether animate or inanimate. As noted above, it corresponds to the idea of collective atoms (*saṅghāta-paramāṇu*) in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's doctrinal system, with a variation in the eighth element (*spraṣṭavya* instead of *oja*).[121] Even if the Theravādin commentators selectively adopted the idea of collective atoms, without accepting the idea of the unitary atom (*dravya-paramāṇu*), they do not seem to have been concerned about such a question as whether atoms contribute separately or collectively to the generation of a perception. Instead of raising ontological and epistemological issues, they were preoccupied with the changing ratio between material and mental phenomena, eventually creating their own version of the doctrine of momentariness. Apart from the fact that the Ceylon Theravādins were geographically separated from the mainstream intellectual community in Northern India, they were probably reluctant to engage in philosophical debates which did not seem conducive to their salvific goal. Although we come across various doctrinal issues with a philosophical orientation in the *Kathāvatthu*, the Theravādins do not elaborate them in the way that other schools in Northern India develop doctrinal systems with their refined polemical exegesis. As shown above, for instance, the ostensibly simple polemics employed in the two types of argument in the *Khaṇikakathā* would readily have been elaborated in either ontological or epistemological terms in subsequent commentarial tradition. As stated in the introduction, in contrast, the Theravādin commentators' approach to those issues employs the computation of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena, and is largely concerned with how the internal psychological processes are involved in making sense of sense data. They pay little attention to whether atoms contribute separately or collectively to a perception of unity. Thus, unlike Northern Indian Buddhist thinkers, the Theravādin commentators establish a sophisticated psychological system. In this broad intellectual context, we can better see how the Theravādin version of the doctrine of momentariness was characterised by the cognitive psychological approach, forming a contrast with other schools' versions of the doctrine, with their highly philosophical implications.

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121 See § 3.2.4-(3).

To sum up, the main purpose of the first half of chapter 1 has been to sketch the broad intellectual context in which the distinctive versions of the doctrine of momentariness were evolving. My enquiry began with a survey of the categorised lists of *dharmas* in the matrices which form the nucleus of the *Abhidharma* treatises. I systematically followed the gradual textual evolution of the *khandhas-āyatanas-dhātus* in the four primary *Nikāyas*, the *Khuddaka-nikāya*, and the *Abhidhamma* works of the Theravādins. I showed how the *khandhas* totality formula was largely elaborated by the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary, introducing material pertinent for the Theravāda doctrine of momentariness. I contrasted the *khandhas* totality formula with the ontological status of the *āyatanas* totality formula in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's *Abhidharma* literature. Outlining the *dharma* typologies and the atomic theory, I showed how the *dharma* theory was given impetus by the way that *dharmas* were understood as momentary atomic entities. This enabled me to locate the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness in the broader intellectual milieu of early Buddhist traditions. I shall now examine how the doctrine of momentariness originated in conjunction with the doctrine of impermanence and the conditioned characteristics.

1.2 The doctrine of impermanence and the conditioned characteristics

1.2.1 The doctrine of impermanence

The first of the Three Characteristics (*ti-lakkhaṇa: anicca, dukkha, anattā*), 'impermanence', is a doctrine constantly and emphatically insisted upon in the canonical texts. According to this doctrine, there is nothing in the universe which is permanent or stable, unchanging or everlasting. As the Buddha's first sermon[122] shows, the paradigm of impermanence (*aniccatā*) is death - one's own and that of loved ones; one of the basic propositions of his teaching is that all empirical phenomena, all mental events and physical states, are impermanent and constantly changing. This proposition that there is no unchanging essence and that all phenomena must have begun to change from the moment of their inception is neatly expressed in the classical formula, *sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*.[123] Moreover, it frequently says in the *Suttas* that conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhārā* or *saṅkhata-dhammā*) are of the nature of origination (*uppāda*) and dissolution (*vaya*); less frequently, a third characteristic, so called 'change of what endures' (*thitassa aññathatta*) is added to the first two. These three characteristics come to form the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (I 152). The first two occur in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* (D II 157) in the celebrated verse: *aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppāda-vaya-dhammino*...uttered by Sakka at the Buddha's Final Nirvaṇa. This verse also appears in several canonical texts[124] and exhibits no ambiguity. Furthermore, interestingly, the couplet forms a second structure, i.e. process (*pavatti-vāra*), in the *Yamaka*,[125] which analyses some doctrinal concepts in terms of origination (*uppāda-vāra*), cessation (*nirodha-vāra*), and origination-cessation (*uppāda-nirodha-vāra*). In that context, it gives rise to the concept of the two sub-divisions[126] of

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122 Vin I 10-11; S IV 330-31, V 421-24; M I 15, 173ff.

123 M I 230.

124 *PT CD-R* retrieves the following references: D II 157; S I 6, 158, II 193; Ja I 392, V 66; Ap 64.

125 In the *Yamaka*, each chapter (II. *Khandha-*, III. *Āyatana-*, IV. *Dhātu-*, V. *Sacca-*, VI. *Saṅkhāra-Yamaka*) is divided into three sections: 1. Distribution of Designations (*Paññatti-vāra*), 2. Process (*Pavatti-vāra*), 3. Comprehension (*Pariññā-vāra*). The second section analyses the doctrines in terms of origination, cessation, and origination-cessation. See Nyanatiloka Mahāthera (1938, pp. 90-113) and *EIP* (pp. 327-336) for details.

126 The term *khaṇa*, when used in compounds (*uppādakkhaṇa*, *bhaṅgakkhaṇa* etc.), usually refers to the sub-divisions of a moment. It represents, in the Theravādin literary sources, phases of a single momentary phenomenon. See von Rospatt's comprehensive study of the various definitions and usage of the term *khaṇa/ kṣaṇa* in Buddhist sources (1995, pp. 94-110). See also § 1.2.3-(3) below.

origination and destruction moments (*uppādakkhaṇa*, *bhaṅgakkhaṇa*); this seems to be the first occurrence of the term *khaṇa* in the sense of sub-division of a moment in the *Abhidhamma* canonical texts.[127] The threefold scheme of sub-divisions of a moment (*uppādakkhaṇa*, *ṭhitikkhaṇa*, *bhaṅgakkhaṇa*) based on the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* appears first in the commentaries. This introduction of *ṭhitikkhaṇa* in the commentarial tradition involves a hermeneutic problem discussed in the early Buddhist schools. The Theravādins in particular, when interpreting the term *ṭhitikkhaṇa*, were careful to avoid any connotation of existing or continuous phenomena. I shall, therefore, pay specific attention to the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* in order to investigate how later scholastic tradition arrives at the schematic and radical theory of momentariness, departing from the empirically oriented doctrine of impermanence.

1.2.2 *Ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*: The origin in the canonical texts

What the Buddha and his immediate disciples understood by the term *dhamma* is phenomena experienced on the empirical level. Their analysis of man and his environment into *khandhas* etc. was deemed sufficient to reveal the true nature of existence as always changing, devoid of any permanent phenomenon, for all phenomena are dependently originated. The following canonical passage in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (III 24-25) summarises this attitude:

> Ānanda, the body, feeling, apperception, karmic volition and consciousness are impermanent (*anicca*), conditioned (*saṅkhata*) and dependently arisen (*paṭiccasamuppanna*).[128]

I begin with this quotation because it provides a basis not only for the analysis of existence, but also for the interlocking concepts of 'impermanent events' in terms of 'conditioned processes' and 'conditioned genesis'. All mental events and physical states are 1) impermanent (*anicca*), 2) in continuous composition and the conditioned process (*saṅkhata*) of arising and passing away, but 3) closely linked and dependently arisen

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127 Bhikkhu Bodhi (1993, p. 369 fn.10) also briefly noted occurrences of sub-divisions of a moment throughout the chapter "*Citta-yamaka*" of the *Yamaka*.

128 This is a stock passage that occurs in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (S II 26; III 24-25, 96-99; IV 214) and the *Majjhima-nikāya* (M I 500) in conjunction with *dukkha* and *anattā*. It seems that this passage occurs less frequently in the Chinese *Āgamas*, since there is only one passage corresponding to the above occurrences in the Pāli *Nikāyas* (T 2 14[a] = S III 96).

(*paṭiccasamuppanna*). These three interlocking concepts were often elaborated in discourses by the Buddha himself. I shall, therefore, move on directly to the Buddha's explanation in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (III 38), in which, though without using the term *saṅkhata*, the second concept, i.e. conditioned process, is expressed in terms of origination, dissolution and change of what endures:

> Well said, Ānanda, origination (*uppāda*) of the body, feeling, apperception, karmic volition and consciousness is evident, [its] dissolution (*vaya*) is evident, [its] change of what endures (*ṭhitassa aññathatta*) is evident. Origination of these phenomena (***dhammānaṃ***) is evident, [their] dissolution is evident, [their] change of what endures (***ṭhitānaṃ*** *aññathatta*) is evident.[129]

At the outset, I suggest that this is the prototype *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* – the three characteristic marks of the conditioned phenomena – from which a redactor (or reciter) of the canon eventually derived the well-known formula *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, which appears in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (I 152). This suggestion immediately calls for verification. A contextual search of the CD-ROM database of the Pāli canon shows that there are several occurrences of the phrase *ṭhitassa aññathatta*[130] in four Pāli canonical texts: the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (III 37-40), the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (I 152), the *Kathāvatthu* (I 60-61) and the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (II 108). (The *Jātaka* I 32 is irrelevant in this context.) These four texts show how the formula *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* has been shaped and adapted by distinctive stages. The corresponding Chinese passages in the **Saṃyuktāgama* accord with the simpler version of the *saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, i.e. arising and dissolution, not mentioning change of what endures.[131] Sanskrit fragments of the **Saṃyuktāgama*, however, show that there was a Sanskrit recension which included all three items (*utpāda*, *vyaya* and ***sthityanyathātva***) of the prototype *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*.[132] In the Sanskrit *Nidāna-*

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129 I have quoted the concluding part of *Sutta* No 37, Ānanda (1) on page 38, para 6. This is repeated in the *Sutta* No 38, Ānanda (2) in the same question and answer format with a variation of tenses, i.e. first past, then future and then present tense. Reference, S III 36 in von Rospatt's footnote 31 (perhaps a typesetting error) has to be corrected to S III 37. *Sutta* No 37 starts from page 37 line 25.

130 See § 5.1.2.

131 T 2 12$^{a29ff.}$.

132 The Sanskrit fragments were collected by M.A. Stein, and de La Vallée Poussin edited them for the JRAS (1913, pp. 569-581). The particular folio (kha. ii, 12k, p. 573) which contains the items of *saṅkhata lakkhaṇa* is largely unintelligible, but the words *sthityanyathātva* and *vyaya* are clear enough (*paṇḍitāḥ śramaṇapaṇḍitāḥ* ***u*** *...(3)... ñ*[*ā*]*yate* ***sthityanyathātvaṃ*** *praj*[*ñ*]*ā ...(4) ... [gṛhapati] paṇḍitāḥ śramaṇapaṇḍi*[*tāḥ...*] (5)*... jñāyate* ***vyayaḥ*** *prajñāyate....*). <The bold letters are mine and the numbers indicate the lines in the manuscripts. There are ten or eleven lines in each folio.>

saṃyukta these three items also occur under the *dharma* classification of *saṃskṛta* and *asaṃskṛta*.[133] They are the characteristic marks of changing phenomena, but here the term *lakkhaṇa* is not used. That is to say, the items are not arranged in the formula *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, as in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. The third item ***sthityanyathātva*** is divided into two, i.e. ***sthiti*** and ***anyathā***, in the Chinese translation of the corresponding passages in the **Saṃyuktāgama*. This indicates that when these texts were translated into Chinese by Guṇabhadra between 435-443 CE,[134] the version of the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas*[135] was adopted. The *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the Chinese **Ekottarāgama* arrange the three items within the framework of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* formula.[136]

The first stage (S III 37-40), the prototype *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, as I suggested, is an elaboration, by the Buddha himself, of *saṅkhata* in the first quotation above, without using the term *saṅkhata*. These passages are preserved in both the Southern and Northern traditions.[137] The Northern tradition in particular arranges, in the *Nidānasaṃyukta*, these three items under the *dharma* classification of *saṃskṛta* and *asaṃskṛta* using the term *saṅkhata*, but not the term *lakkhaṇa*. This simple explanation of *saṅkhata* without any formula is then slightly modified by both traditions to fit into a compilation of doctrinal items which come in threes, later known as the *Trilakṣaṇa-sūtra*,[138] in the *tika-nipāta* of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (I 152):

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133 NID-S 139[10-14]: *dvayaṃ idaṃ saṃskṛtañ câsaṃskṛtañ ca.* [*tat*]*r*[*a*] *saṃskṛtasyotpādo 'pi prajñāyate vyayo 'pi sthityanyathātvam api. asaṃskṛtasya naivotpādaḥ prajñāyate na vyayo na sthityanyathātvaṃ.* (No corresponding passages are found in the Pāli *Nikāyas*, see *CCCĀP*, p. 45.)

134 The **Saṃyuktāgama* (*Tsa a-han ching*) was translated into Chinese between the 12th and 20th years of Yüan Chia, Liu Sung dynasty at Wakuan Monastery, Yang-tu. See *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* [*KBC*] by L.R. Lancaster (1979, pp. 230-231).

135 See § 1.2.3 for the debate, in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the **Nyāyānusāra*, concerning the discrepancy in the number of *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas*: in the *Sūtra* there exist only three, but in the *Abhidharma* there are four.

136 See § 1.2.2.

137 The Southern tradition refers to the school of the Theravādins, preserved in Southern India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asian countries, and the Northern tradition stands for the schools of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, Sautrāntikas, etc. in Northern India.

138 The Burmese Chaṭṭhasaṅgāyana edition of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (I 150, 1965) gives the name "*Saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa Sutta*" to those passages. As Mr L.S. Cousins remarked (in a personal communication), the Burmese editions tend to give a title to each *Sutta* which has no name in other printed editions and manuscripts. But I have failed to identify such a name in the Sanskrit and Chinese sources. Perhaps de La Vallée Poussin and other writers call it the *Trilakṣaṇa-sūtra* for convenience. The reference **Saṃyuktāgama* 12, 21 given by de La Vallée Poussin (AKB trsl, tome I, p. 223, fn. 1) may refer to his edited text of the Sanskrit fragments of the **Saṃyuktāgama*, though the numbers (12, 21) still puzzle me (volume 12 *Sutta* 21 listed in Akanuma's catalogue does not mention *trilakṣaṇa* at all, and it corresponds to S. 12.18

> Monks, there are these three conditioned characteristic marks of that which is conditioned. What three? Origination is evident, dissolution is evident and change of what endures is evident.[139] Monks, these are the three conditioned characteristic marks of that which is conditioned (*tīni saṅkhatassa saṅkhatalakkhaṇāni*).[140]

It is noteworthy that this *Sutta* occurs without any introduction or conclusion. This recalls Norman's remark on the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* that many of the *Suttas* occur elsewhere in the canon, and it seems reasonable to assume that in part, at least, the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* is the borrower.[141] Let us assume that the *Saṃyutta* passage has been borrowed and reshaped in the numerical system by the *Aṅguttara* redactor (or reciter). Later the passage received sporadic attention in the Abhidhammic canonical texts (i.e. the *Kathāvatthu*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*),[142] but it was given full attention in the commentarial texts.

The third and fourth occurrences of the term *ṭhitassa aññathatta* in the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* formula are in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and the *Kathāvatthu*. The *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* is applied, in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, to each of the Four Truths (i.e. the first two and the fourth truths have the three characteristic marks of origination, dissolution and change of what endures, but the third truth (*nirodha*) is the negation of those marks), and it

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Timbaruka <S II 22>, see *CCCĀP* pp. 44-45). Pruden (AKB trsl,vol. I, p. 349, fn. 284) provides the **Saṃyuktāgama* (T 2 85^{b10}) as the corresponding reference in the Taisho edition, but it turns out to be incorrect (this is the *Sūtra* called "*pratītyasamutpāda*", and line 10 refers to *tribhava* not *trilakṣaṇa*!). In the *Chinese Tripiṭaka Concordance* (*ITTP*, vol. I, Āgama, p. 116), there is only one reference under the entry *trisaṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*, which occurs in the **Ekottarāgama* (EA T 2 607^{c}). Original sources: A I 152 (cf. T 2 607$^{c15ff.}$; S II 37; T 2 12$^{a29ff.}$; NID-S 139$^{10-14}$; T 2 83^{c16}; see Lamotte's trsl of MPPU III 1163, fn. 1). The quotation found in the Sanskrit commentarial texts: JP-H T 26 926$^{b20ff.}$; MVB T 27 199$^{c23ff.}$; AKB 77^{1ff}; SAKV 171$^{26-28}$, etc.

139 The corresponding passage in the **Ekottarāgama* (EA T 2 607^{c}) is similar except that it changes the order to: origination, change of what endures, dissolution. In the immediately following explanation, however, the same order as the one in the Pāli version is kept (cf. Aung's remarks on the unusual order in the formula, in Kv trsl, 1915, pp. 374-375). Cf. Gombrich's remark pp. 84-85 below.

140 See Part II p. 255, fn. 556 for the cited texts in comparison with Sanskrit ones.

141 Norman (1983, p. 55) also considers the possibility that the borrowing was in the opposite direction, i.e. numerical lists passed from the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* to the *Suttas* in the canon. See Gethin (1992a), p. 22 for a further discussion of the complementary relationship between the *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara* system.

142 For the chronology of these two texts, von Hinüber (1996, p. 60, fn. 206) proposes the hypothesis that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* was probably composed too late to be included in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*; it was the only *Abhidhamma* text that has found its way into the *Khuddaka-nikāya* (a collection of various texts), which was still open to further additions until the 2nd century CE. Although I am tempted to follow von Hinüber's suggestion on the date of these two texts, I reserve this issue of the chronology for later investigation and verification. In particular, the historical development of doctrinal tenets in both texts has to be carefully examined. Therefore, I have assumed that the date of *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is earlier than that of the *Kathāvatthu*, following a conventional chronology of the *Sutta-piṭaka* and *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*. Cf. Frauwallner (1971, p. 106; 1972, pp. 124-127); Warder (1982, Paṭis-trsl, pp. xxxiii-xxxv).

is this text that sees the introduction of the twelve characteristic marks (*dvādasa lakkhaṇāni*).[143] This is an elaboration on the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* formula of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. In the *Kathāvatthu*, however, the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* is adduced to dispute the view that there exists a permanent personal entity (*puggalavāda*). Here it is not intrinsically connected with the theory of momentariness, although in the commentaries attempts were explicitly made to reinterpret the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* in conjunction with the theory of momentariness.

To recapitulate what I have said so far, I return to the first quotation, in which the Buddha declares that the five *khandhas* of a human being are impermanent (*anicca*), conditioned (*saṅkhata*) and dependently arisen (*paṭiccasamuppanna*). This was an empirically oriented practical teaching about the nature of sentient existence. The Buddha's elaboration of the conditioned (*saṅkhata*) in terms of origination (*uppāda*), dissolution (*vaya*) and change of what endures (*ṭhitassa aññathatta*) paved the way for schematization in the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* formula. This I regard as a stepping-stone to the theory of momentariness. The post-canonical tradition subsequently developed the doctrine of momentariness, and this doctrine is tacitly presupposed to explain a certain set of doctrines, such as the thought process (*citta-vīthi*), the process of death and rebirth and the theory of insight into the minds of others, and so on.[144]

1.2.3 Interpretations of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* in the exegetical texts

I shall now investigate how the commentarial texts interpret the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* and how the concept of sub-divisions of a moment originated in the Pāli commentarial texts. Von Rospatt and other writers[145] have ignored the *Saṃyutta* commentary (Spk II 266-67) and depend solely on the *Aṅguttara* commentary (Mp II 252), possibly because the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* is the place where the formula was actually shaped. In contrast, I have examined the *Saṃyutta* commentary in which the prototype *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* is

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143 Paṭis I 54-57; cf. Vism XX § 97. See also von Rospatt (1995), p. 41, fn. 75.
144 See § 3.2.1, § 4.1.3, § 4.2.2.
145 Von Rospatt (1995, p. 40, fn. 74); Karunadasa (1967, p. 85).

expounded, since this provides intriguing material which probably reflects earlier sources presented by some of the Theravādin elders, and includes material found in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its commentary. I have edited the relevant part, since some passages in this portion of the existing editions share a common corruption and introduce a considerable number of variant readings. For the sake of clarity I have below re-arranged[146] this informative exegesis into four separate parts according to the subject matter and discussed it in the light of the corresponding exegesis and debates found in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the **Nyāyānusāra*, and other relevant texts of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas.

(1) The conditioned characteristics: three or four ?

> Hence the Ancients said:
> Arising was called birth, and dissolution referred to passing away.
> Change referred to ageing, and endurance to maintenance.
>
> *uppādo jāti akkhāto bhaṅgo vutto vayo ti ca*
> *aññathattaṃ jarā vuttā ṭhitī ca anupālanā ti* (Spk II 266).
>
> Thus each *khandha* has three characteristic marks called arising, ageing and dissolution, of which it is said in the passage: "These are, monks, the three conditioned characteristic marks of the conditioned (*saṅkhatassa*) [*khandha*] " (A I 152).

On the basis of a stanza handed down by the Ancients, the commentator glosses *uppāda* with *jāti* (birth), *vaya* with *bhaṅga* (dissolution), *ṭhiti* with *anupālana* (maintaining) and *aññathatta* with *jarā* (ageing). He then refers to the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* formula in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, and reduces the four categories to three, namely *uppāda*, *jarā* and *bhaṅga*, conspicuously leaving out *anupālana*. This deserves our attention because there is in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the **Nyāyānusāra* a debate concerning the discrepancy in the number of *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas*, only three in the *Sūtra*, but four in the *Abhidharma*.

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146 See Part II § 5.1 for the whole annotated translation and edited passages. A considerable number of errors of printing and punctuation in the PTS edition have been eliminated.

The majority of the early and later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' *Abhidharma* texts acknowledge four such conditioned characteristics: birth (*jāti*), endurance (*sthiti*), ageing (*jarā*) and impermanence (*anityatā*). However certain *Abhidharma* texts of the same school acknowledge only three, omitting endurance (*sthiti*).[147] The masters of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas had somehow to explain this discrepancy in the *Sūtra* passage cited as scriptural authority in support of the existence of the four conditioned characteristics. This problem was discussed first in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* and taken over by the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* and then by the **Nyāyānusāra.* Therefore, I shall briefly look at arguments in the later works.

It is argued in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* that endurance (*sthiti*) is not mentioned for two reasons: firstly, the danger of attachment entailed by the attribution of endurance (*sthiti*), and secondly, there might be confusion between endurance (*sthiti*) of the conditioned phenomenon and endurance of the inherent characteristic (*svalakṣaṇasthiti*) of the unconditioned phenomenon.[148] The **Nyāyānusāra* adds further reasons why the *Sūtra* includes only the three conditioned characteristics. For instance, Saṅghabhadra claims that the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas mention four kinds of characteristics in order to indicate in full both the qualities and defects of the conditioned phenomena. He therefore argues that (1) the *Sūtra* mentions merely three, so as to indicate only the defects of the conditioned phenomena, or (2) that as in the same way another *Sūtra* passage mentions only two conditioned characteristics, arising (*utpāda*) and dissolution (*vaya*),[149] and yet it is not to be assumed that the phenomenon lacks endurance (*sthiti*), or (3) that the *Sūtra* implicitly refers to continuance because it mentions three characteristics explicitly, but does not use the restrictive word 'only'. Moreover, Saṅghabhadra reasons that if the conditioned

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147 See the **Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra*[VSŚ] T 28 796$^{a22ff.}$; the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* [ŚAŚ] T 28 526^{c6}, 663$^{a17ff.}$; the **Abhidharmāṣṭaskandhaśāstra* (the earlier translation or recension of the *Jñānaprasthāna*) [AAS-D] T 28 780$^{b17ff.}$, translated by Saṅghadeva and Chu Fo-nien (cf. JP-H T 26 458^{a18}); the **Vibhāṣāśāstra*[VB] T 28 458^{a18}. Scholars have suggested that the VSŚ, the AAS-D and the VB represent the non-Kāśmīra Sarvāstivādin lineage: Watanabe (1954, pp. 140, 245ff.); Sakurabe (1969, p. 87ff.). Sakurabe also notes that the reference in the **Vijñānakāya* [VK] T 26 545^{b16} is ambiguous and may refer to either three or four characteristics (cited by Cox, 1995, p. 156, fn. 60). For a detailed bibliography of the texts which acknowledge the four items, see Cox (1995, p. 156, fn. 59).

148 AKB II kr 45 (pp. 75-76); cf. MVB T 27 201$^{a\ 29\text{-}b22}$; VB T 28 150$^{b29\text{-}c15}$.

149 See fn. 122 for Pali canonical references in which the two conditioned characteristics occur.

characteristic of endurance (*sthiti*) were not included, the word *sthiti* in the compound *sthityanyathātva* (change in endurance) would be without a function.[150]

In the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*[151] of the Theravādins the four characteristics of secondary material phenomena (*upādārūpalakkhaṇa*) are taught. These can be contrasted with the four conditioned characteristics (*saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇa*) of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas. They are later treated as characteristics of non-concretely produced matter (*anipphannarūpa*),[152] namely accumulation (*upacaya*), continuity (*santati*), ageing (*jaratā*) and impermanence (*aniccatā*). Karunadasa assumes, though he admits that he could not provide explicit textual references, that they are a formulation of four phases, not of matter in general, but of the physical body of a living being. From the way in which they are described, both in the earlier and the later texts, it is clear that this was the underlying assumption. The post-canonical texts recognize *upacaya* and *santati* as an expression of the same phenomenon. That is to say, both *upacaya* and *santati* refer to the growth of the body (*rūpassa upacaya=āyatanānaṃ ācayo*). The former means the growth of the embryo with the gradual accumulation of the sense-organs. It covers the interval from the moment of conception to the moment when the sense-mechanisms are complete.[153] The latter refers to the continuity of the body, complete with all the sense-organs. It is not continuity in a static sense, for certainly the body grows even during this phase. It is therefore continuity by way of growth, as supported by a gloss on the term *santati* in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (§734, cf. As 327): *yo rūpassa upacayo, sā rūpassa santati* (That which is growth of matter is continuity of matter), and the two are virtually synonymous. The remaining two phases, *jaratā* and *aniccatā*, refer respectively to the decay brought about by old age and the break-up of the body at the time of death.[154]

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150 NAS T 29 405^{c10-29}; Cox's trsl, pp. 306-307.

151 Dhs § 585, § 642-45, § 732-39.

152 Vism XIV § 66-72; Abh-s 29-30.

153 According to some schools, such as the Pubbaseliya and the Aparaseliya, the six-fold sense-sphere comes into being all at once (*apubbaṃ acarimaṃ*). Theravādins reject this view on the ground that it is neither logical nor supported by the scripture. Their view is that only *manâyatana* and *kāyâyatana* come into being at the moment of conception. The other four, namely *cakkhâyatana, sotâyatana, ghānâyatana* and *jivhâyatana* arise subsequently in that order (Kv 493-94; Kv-a 148).

154 See Karunadasa (1967), pp. 78-81.

Karunadasa assumes that these four characteristics of secondary material phenomena (*upādārūpalakkhaṇa*) are based on the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* referred to in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*.[155] Von Rospatt however disagrees with Karunadasa about their correlation with the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*. He argues that the four characteristics of secondary material phenomena were conceived independently of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, for the discrepancy between the number of *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas* in the *Sūtras* and that in the *Abhidharma* suggests that the doctrine of the *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas* cannot be traced back solely to the *Trilakṣaṇa-sūtra*. In support of his argument, he adduces the fact that the characteristics *jāti* and *jarā* in the four *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas* (*jāti* is used instead of *utpāda*, *jarā* instead of *anyathātva*, and *anityatā* instead of *vyaya*) in the *Abhidharma* tradition of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas only qualify sentient existence and not conditioned *dharmas* in general, as is the case in the *Trilakṣaṇa-sūtra*. He further cites evidence from the **Pañcavastuka* that these characteristics qualify *skandhas* and not, as *sthiti* and *anityatā* do,[156] conditioned *dharmas* in general.[157]

I am not entirely convinced by von Rospatt's contention, however, and I wonder whether we can make a clear-cut distinction, with the terminology employed, between the characteristics of sentient existence and those of conditioned phenomena (*saṃskṛta-dharma*) in general. Different terms are used in the texts to denote, for instance, the notion of origination: *jāti*, *nibbatti*, *uppāda*, *uppatti*, *udaya*, *upacaya* and *ācaya*. These terms are in some cases interchangeable and often paraphrased by each other, as in the stanza of the Ancients cited above (*uppādo=jāti*), and as in the exegesis of the four characteristics of secondary material phenomena (*jāti*: *upacaya*[*ācaya*]=*santati*) in the commentarial texts.[158] Moreover, even in the canonical texts, such as the *Saṃyutta* passage quoted above which I

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155 *id.* p. 81

156 *Skandhas* are at least originally the group of factors constituting sentient beings, *sthiti* (endurance) causes the arisen conditioned factors not to perish (PK-H T 26 694^{a26-27}; cf. PV-A T 28 997^{c26-27}), and *anityatā* (impermanence) causes the arisen conditioned factors to get destroyed (PK-H T 26 694^{a27-28}; cf. PV-A T 28 997^{c27}). See von Rospatt (1995), p. 43, fn. 81.

157 *id.* pp. 41-43, see especially fn. 81 for a detailed reference.

158 *ubhayam p' etaṃ jātirūpass' evâdhivacanaṃ* (Vism XIV §66, cf. §67); *...rūpâyatanānaṃ ācayo ti nibbattati* (As 327).

suggested as a prototype for the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, it is difficult to draw a distinction between the character of sentient existence (i.e. *pañcakkhandhā*) and that of conditioned phenomena. For in the *Saṃyutta* passage both referents are explicitly denoted, i.e. the character of the five *khandhas* (*rūpassa, vedanāya,* etc.) of sentient existence and that of conditioned phenomena (*dhammānaṃ*). The Buddha asks Ānanda how he would answer a question about the defining characteristic marks of *dhammas* (arising, dissolution, etc.). Ānanda answers first in terms of the five *khandhas*, and later summarises them in terms of *dhammas*.[159] This clearly indicates that the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* primarily applies to both material and immaterial phenomena (*rūpadhammas*, *arūpadhammas*, i.e. physical and mental phenomena), and probably supports Karunadasa's assumption that the four characteristics of material phenomena, which amount to a formulation of phases in the history of the body, are based on the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*. Furthermore the stanza of the Ancients cited at the beginning of this discussion shows flexibility over whether the three *saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* can be expanded to four, though the terminology employed differs in part from the four characteristics of material phenomena, and subsequently strengthens Karunadasa's contention. Before moving on to the next issue, I should also note that the stanza of the Ancients might reflect the four *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇas* of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas.

(2) The characteristics (*saṁskṛtalakṣaṇa*) as real entities

According to the *Dharma*-classification of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, the four characteristics (*saṁskṛtalakṣaṇa*) belong to the category of *dharmas* of the karmic formation dissociated from thought (*cittaviprayuktasaṁskāra*).[160] In order to prove that the four characteristics (*saṁskṛtalakṣaṇa*) are real entities (i.e. existing *dharmas*), Saṅghabhadra, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika exegete, comments on the phrase ***saṁskṛtasya saṁskṛtalakṣaṇāni*** in the *Mūla* passages, denying that the repetition of *saṃskṛta-* (first in

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159 S III 38[5-10], see fn. 168 for the citation of the passages.

160 See Padmanabh S. Jaini's (1959a, pp. 236-249) pioneering article: "The Development of the Theory of the *Viprayukta-Saṃskāras*"; Collett Cox's (1995) annotated translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṅghabhadra's **Nyāyānusāra*, especially her introductory commentaries (pp. 133-158) and translation (pp. 305-375) for the Four Characteristics of Conditioned Factors.

the genitive, then in the compound) is tautologous.[161] The following quotation from his treatise, the **Nyāyānusāra,* shows that Saṅghabhadra's stance is quite different from that expressed by Vasubandhu in his *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya.*[162]

> [406c9] Further, the *sūtra* on the three characteristics is sufficient as a scriptural authority [to prove that the four characteristics exist as discrete real entities]. That *sūtra* states: "There are three conditioned characteristics of conditioned [factors, i.e. *dhammas*]. The arising of that which is conditioned can also be discerned, the passing away, and change in continuance can also be discerned." If [the *sūtra* did not intend to indicate that the characteristics themselves also exist separately as real entities], it would have said merely, "[There are] three conditioned characteristics: that is, the conditioned characteristics of arising, passing away, and change in continuance." [If that were the meaning,] *[1]the repeated word 'conditioned [factors]'*[1] and the phrase 'can also be discerned' would be without a function. You who claim that the three conditioned characteristics of birth, and so on, do not exist as discrete real entities apart from the factors that they characterise should consider what the purport of these phrases ['of conditioned factors' and 'can also be discerned'] is. ... [406c20] Isn't it the case that if the characteristics do not exist apart from the thing characterised, then this *sūtra* passage should have been worded [as we suggested] previously-[that is, as omitting the repeated word*[2] 'conditioned' and the phrase 'can also be discerned']- and the meaning [of the passage] would be established even apart from the use of the genitive case? Furthermore, your adducing of [examples] in which the genitive does not refer to two separate entities as a reason justifying your interpretation of this *sūtra* passage [as not indicating that characteristics exist apart from that which is characterised] is equally subject to the fault of errancy (*vyabhicāra*) [since this interpretation too would be applicable in some cases, and not in others]. How can one conclude with certainty from this that the three characteristics mentioned in the *sūtra* passage are provisional, and not real? (NAS T29[1562], p. 406c; Trsl by Cox (1995), p. 313-314). < *[1]the repeated word 'conditioned [factors]'*[1] - my Trsl : 'the repetition of both the phrase 'of conditioned [factors]'- Cox's Trsl; word*[2]- my Trsl : phrase- Cox's Trsl>.

Saṅghabhadra understands the repetition of the term *saṁskṛta* as indicating that these characteristics are themselves conditioned and thereby exist as discrete entities, whereas Vasubandhu interprets the first term *saṁskṛta* in the genitive case as indicating 'that class of *dharmas* to which these characteristics belong' and the second term *saṁskṛta* in the compound as indicating the quality of being conditioned. Vasubandhu gives several examples in which the genitive does not indicate a relationship between separately existing entities. For instance, a great person (*mahāpuruṣa*) and the characteristics marking that

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161 The *Mūla* passages from Pāli and Sanskrit texts:
A I 152: *tīṇ' imāni bhikkhave* ***saṅkhatassa saṅkhatalakkhaṇāni***. (These are, monks, the three conditioned characteristic marks of the conditioned [*khandha*]).
AKB 77[1-2] and SAKV 171[26-27]: *trīṇī 'māni bhikṣavaḥ* ***saṁskṛtasya saṁskṛta-lakṣaṇāni***.

162 AKB II kr 46b p. 76[21ff.].

great person; a cow and the characteristics of a cow; and the four primary material elements (*mahābhūta*) and their defining qualities.[163]

Theravādins do not discuss this problem explicitly in terms of grammatical formation, but they do make clear the interrelation between a qualifier and the thing qualified. That is to say, the conditioned (*saṅkhata*), i.e. the thing qualified, is not identical with a characteristic mark (i.e. a qualifier), but they cannot reveal themselves without each other. A characteristic mark is a defining attribute of the karmic formation, and in turn the karmic formation manifests itself through the characteristic mark. As Vasubandhu contends, they are not separate real entities, but mutually dependent and indivisible factors (*dhammā*). The *Saṃyutta* commentary further provides the analogy of a cow and its defining attribute, the same analogy used above by Vasubandhu.

> But the karmic formation manifests [itself] through the characteristic mark. Just as a cow itself is not a characteristic mark [of the cow]; nor is the characteristic mark [of a cow] itself the cow. The characteristic mark [of a cow] cannot make [itself] evident dissociated from the cow; nor can a cow dissociated from the characteristic mark [of the cow]. But a cow manifests [itself] through the characteristic mark [of the cow].[164]

From the outset, this analogy is reminiscent of Indian Naiyāyikas' favourite example of 'cowness' (*gotva*) and 'cow' (*go*) in relation to universals (*sāmānya*) and particulars (*viśeṣa*). According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, *sāmānya* denotes the aspect of generality or sameness that we notice in things. For instance, in spite of the difference of colour, etc. between one cow and another, they are all called 'cow' because of their similarity.[165] Each specimen of a class is so by virtue of being a particular manifestation (*vyakti*) of that genus (*jāti*). For Nyāya both *jāti* (also called *sāmānya*, 'commonality') and *vyakti* are real entities, part of the external world. The universal and particular, though intimately related, are regarded as existentially or ontologically different. That is to say, they are complementary,

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163 AKB II kr46b p. 78^{5-7}: *katham tāvan mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇāni mahāpuruṣān nânyāni sāsnālāṅgū lakakudaśa-phaviṣāṇâdīni ca gotvalakṣaṇāni gor nânyāni kāṭhinyâdīni ca pṛthivīdhātvādīnāṃ lakṣaṇāni tebhyo nânyāni.*; hereon: SAKV p. 177^{5ff}. See Cox (1995), p. 359, fn. 43, cf. p. 356, fn. 8.

164 See § 5.1.1 and § 5.1.2 for my translation with edited section. Cf. Mp II 252^{2-17}.

165 These common features are what the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas also call *jāti*, the term that they got from *vyākaraṇa*, especially Patañjali, where the terms are *jāti* and *vyakti*. I am indebted to Dr. S. Gupta for this information.

inseparably related in spite of their mutual difference. To connect them, the Vaiśeṣika postulates an independent category of relation, i.e. *samavāya* (inherence). The **cowness** is **in** the particular cow and it is recognised as such due to the relation of *samavāya* between them.[166]

The above analogy from the *Saṃyutta* commentary and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* appears to follow the same line as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's argument, and Gombrich suggests in his note on my translation of the *Saṃyutta* commentary that this seems to mirror the Nyāya answer to the problem of how 'cow' relates to 'cowness': without 'cowness' there could be no 'cow', but vice versa is also true. However, there is a subtle difference. The *Saṃyutta* commentary compares *saṅkhata* with a cow; *lakkhaṇa* with the characteristic mark of the cow. In other words, the application of the analogy is narrower than that of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas: cowness (the universal) – cow (the particular) > a cow (*saṅkhata*) – the mark of the cow (*lakkhaṇa*). The fundamental difference is, moreover, the fact that Vasubandhu and the *Saṃyutta* commentator use this analogy to refute the notion that *lakkhaṇas* themselves exist separately from *saṅkhata*; they are inseparably related. In contrast, for the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas the universal and particular are independent categories of reality; they are separate entities intimately related by means of *samavāya*. [167]

The *Saṃyutta* commentary does not pay close attention to the repetition of the term *saṅkhata* in the genitive case (*saṅkhatassa*) and in the compound (*saṅkhatalakkhaṇa*), because the referent of the genitive is apparent in the *Mūla* text (S III 37-40). I repeat here the *Saṃyutta* passage for clarity. The Buddha asks Ānanda a question: "If they were to ask you, Ānanda, of which *dhamma*s is arising evident, is dissolution evident and is change of what endures evident? – how would you answer such a question?" Ānanda replies: "Lord, I would answer the question thus: Arising **of form** is evident, friend, its dissolution is

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166 Dasgupta (1922, p. 317); Dravid (1972, pp. 17, 19).
167 Dravid (1972, p. 18).

evident and its change of what endures is evident. Arising **of feeling, of apperception, of karmic formation**... Arising **of consciousness**... Arising **of these *dhammas***... ." [168]

I have suggested above that this *Saṃyutta* passage is a prototype *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* which later gave arise to the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, when a compilation of doctrinal items was set up in a numerical format. The passage from the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* does not specify[169] what is qualified by the genitive *saṅkhatassa*, because it is a brief summary, omitting clear indications of referents supplied in the more elaborate discourse. For instance, the above cited passages from the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* overtly reveal the referents of the genitives, i.e. the five *khandhas* represented by *dhammas*. Moreover, the terms *lakkhaṇa* and *saṅkhata* are not used in the *Saṃyutta* passages and we do not find any strong reason why the term *saṅkhata* has to be repeated as in the *Aṅguttara* passage. Furthermore, Gombrich suggests in his note on my translation of the *Saṃyutta* commentary that *saṅkhata* is probably repeated for emphasis. One could make a similar point from another angle by saying that *saṅkhatassa* is a gloss on the compound *saṅkhatalakkhaṇāni*, (though by this Gombrich does not mean that one should amend the text!) But either way, *saṅkhatalakkhaṇāni* becomes a *tappurisa*. Therefore, I assume that the *Saṃyutta* commentator,[170] when he cites the *Aṅguttara* passage, most probably considers the repetition of the *saṅkhata* merely as a form of emphasis, and does not make much of it because it has no bearing – as Vasubandhu contends – on the meaning of separate real entities.

To sum up, Vasubandhu and the Sautrāntika masters contend that the term *saṁskṛtasya* in the genitive refers to the thing characterised (*lakṣya*), i.e. the karmic formation (*saṅkhāra*), and that the term *saṁskṛta* in the compound indicates that it is conditioned. Thus the

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168 S III 38[5-10]: ...***rūpassa*** *kho āvuso uppādo paññāyati vayo paññāyati* ***ṭhitassa*** *aññathattaṃ paññāyati.* ***vedanāya***..., ***saññāya***..., ***saṅkhārānaṃ***.... ***viññāṇassa*** *uppādo paññāyati vayo paññāyati* ***ṭhitassa*** *aññathattaṃ paññāyati.* ***imesaṃ*** *kho āvuso* ***dhammānaṃ*** *uppādo paññāyati vayo paññāyati* ***ṭhitānaṃ*** *aññathattaṃ paññāyatī ti.*

169 Of course, a referent can be readily guessed from the context or by supplying the word *dhammassa* (*saṅkhatassa dhammassa*).

170 The *Aṅguttara* commentator (Mp II 252[2-17]) is also silent on the repetition of the term *saṅkhata*.

repetition of *saṃskṛta-* does not denote two separate entities. Saṅghabhadra, however, interprets the repetition differently, as indicating that these characteristics are themselves conditioned and thereby exist as discrete entities. Theravādins, as emerges in the *Saṃyutta* commentary, agree with Vasubandhu and the Sautrāntika masters as far as this issue is concerned. They think that the characteristic cannot manifest itself without the karmic formation, nor the karmic formation without the characteristic; just as there is no such thing as the characteristic mark of a cow apart from the cow; nor a cow apart from its characteristic mark. The relation between the conditioned *dharmas* and characteristic marks is thus established in the Theravādin commentarial tradition.

(3) The concept of moment (*khaṇa/ kṣaṇa*) in the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*

The term *khaṇa* (=*kṣaṇa*), as indicated (fn. 126), denotes a very brief phase of time (i.e. moment), although it is also used quite variously depending on the doctrinal stance and the context. For instance, the term *khaṇa* may in some contexts be understood as a defined unit of time, i.e. precisely 1/120th of a *tatkṣaṇa* in the Abhidharmic tradition of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas (which corresponds to 1/ 75th of a second <0.013333∞> in modern terms).[171] But in other traditions, notably in Theravāda tradition, the term *khaṇa*, when used in compounds (*cittakkhaṇa*, *uppādakkhaṇa* etc.), refers to the sub-divisions of a moment. Moreover, the term is not used merely in the literal sense of 'moment'. In the canonical texts it often denotes 'opportunity', or 'auspicious moment',[172] and this usage is attested by the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary, in which *khaṇa* is explained as 'the right

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171 ABK III kr 88b-89c, p. 177: 120 *kṣaṇa*s = 1 *tatkṣaṇa;* 60 *tatkṣaṇa*s = 1 *lava*; 30 *lava*s = 1 *muhūrta*; 30 *muhūrta*s = 1 *ahorātra* (day and night), etc. Cf. MVB T 27 701^{b8-12}; SAHŚ T 28 887^{b7-15}; DIVY 643$^{2ff.}$, 644 $^{8ff.}$. Von Rospatt has examined the lists of the measurements of time in the Buddhist sources and shown a discrepancy in the *Divyāvadāna*, in which the *tatkṣaṇa* is a smaller unit than the *kṣaṇa*. Conversion of these time-units into modern terms was carried out by de La Vallée Poussin (1934, p. 2; 1937, p.140, see fn. 68). The measurement of a *khaṇa* is equal to 1/120th of a *tatkṣaṇa*, which corresponds to 0.013333∞ second. This calculation is done through assimilation of 1 *ahorātra* (day and night) to 24 hours. The result is: 1 *khaṇa* = 0.013333∞ second, but the mark ∞ does not mean that *khaṇa* is infinitely divisible, for this is mere a conversion of the ancient time-unit into modern convention. The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas generally understand *khaṇa* as a defined, smallest unit of time, like an atom as a unit of matter or a syllable in a word, which is indivisible. See p. 76, fn. 176 below and von Rospatt (1995, pp. 94-96, fns. 211, 218) for further textual evidence, and also for the concept of time in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika discussed by Prasad (1984, pp. 233-266), especially an appendix which provides comparative lists of units of time in Indian philosophical systems.

172 S IV 126$^{1ff.}$; A IV 227$^{8-9}$; Th vs 231; Ja IV 204^{1}, etc.

occasion for wholesome consciousness in the meditative state'.[173] These various definitions and usage of the term *khaṇa/ kṣaṇa* in Buddhist sources have been studied systematically by von Rospatt on the basis of the relevant sources presented by de La Vallée Poussin.[174]

The Abhidharmic tradition of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, according to von Rospatt's study, uses the term *kṣaṇa/ kṣaṇika* in a highly technical sense as "the smallest unit of time" (*kṣaṇa*) and "momentariness" (*kṣaṇika*, lit. endowed with a moment).[175] This usage seems to presuppose an atomic concept of time. The term *kṣaṇa* is quite often discussed alongside the concept of atoms or syllables, which are likewise considered to be indivisible.[176] The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas attribute the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* to the *kṣaṇa* conceived as "the smallest unit of time", but this creates numerous difficulties when they come to view all conditioned *dharmas* as momentary. As they classify the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* under *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra-dharmas*, and as each member (birth, etc.) of the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* is considered to be a conditioned entity, which is invariably momentary, each entity must therefore possess its own four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas*. This argument, however, inevitably entails an infinite regression (*aparyavasānadoṣa*) because those additional four secondary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* would also call for four further

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173 The term *khaṇa* is considered in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary (As $57^{5ff.}$; cf. Sv I $31^{24ff.}$) as one of the five different meanings of the term *samaya*. According to this commentary, *samaya* has a broader application than *kāla* and *khaṇa*. See Nyanaponika Thera (1976, pp. 104-110) for a discussion of time and consciousness based on this material.

174 "Notes sur le moment (*kṣaṇa*) des Vaibhāṣikas et des Sautrāntikas" In: *MCB* V, 1937, pp. 134-158. Cf. also "Notes sur le moment ou *kṣaṇa* des bouddhistes" In: *Rocznik Orjentalistyczny* VIII, 1934, pp. 1-9. This material has been evaluated, for the first time, by von Rospatt (1995, pp. 94-110), see especially footnotes which provide translations of the passages from the **Nyāyānusāra* and other Abhidharmic texts of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas.

175 On the contrary, Vasubandhu proposes a different definition of the term *kṣaṇa* in the context of the explication of the term *kṣaṇika* (in AK IV kr 2d). He defines *kṣaṇa* not as a unit of time but as the mode of existence of discrete momentary phenomena themselves. This has been refuted by Saṅghabhadra (NAS T 29 $533^{b23f.}$) and Uddyotakāra (*Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya,Vārttika* 837^{14-17}). Saṅghabhadra's criticism of this definition focuses on the possessive suffix ***ika*** within the word ***kṣaṇika***. See von Rospatt's comprehensive discussion of the issue with full documentation (1995, pp. 104-110).

176 An atomic concept of time, in conjunction with atomic matter and syllabic speech, is found often in various texts of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas:
VB T 28 701^{a27-29}: "The conditioned phenomena (*saṃskṛta*) are subject to three forms of dissection, namely as to time, as to matter [and] as to words. The smallest unit of time is called moment (*kṣaṇa*), the smallest unit of matter is called atom (*paramāṇu*), the smallest unit of words is called syllable (*akṣara*). Cf. SAHŚ, T 28 $886^{c9ff.}$; AK III kr 85bc, AKB hereon ($176^{11f.}$); NAS T 29 521^{b20-22} (see von Rospatt's translation of the relevant passages in the above texts, 1995, p. 98. fn. 216).

saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas. This problem is avoided by proposing that the primary and secondary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* qualify each other in a certain way.[177] That is to say, the conditioned *dharmas* are conditioned due to the four primary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas*, and the four primary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* are conditioned due to the four secondary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas*. More precisely, when an entity is produced, nine entities arise simultaneously: that is, the entity itself constitutes one entity, and the primary and secondary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* constitute eight. Of the four primary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas*, birth (*jāti*) is able to act as the proximate condition for producing the other eight entities with the exception of itself; entities do not have the function of production with regard to themselves. Of the four secondary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas*, the birth of birth (*jāti-jāti*) is able to act as the proximate condition for producing only the primary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa* of birth.[178] The same applies to endurance (*sthiti*), ageing (*jarā*) and impermanence (*anityatā*). The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas further insist that the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* exist separately as real entities within each moment. An objection to this position is raised by an opponent:[179] How can one conditioned entity simultaneously accommodate within the span of one moment the four separate real entities of birth, endurance, ageing and impermanence? The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas respond to this criticism by stating that even though they exist as real entities at the same time, their activities (*kāritra*)[180] are sequential; the limits constituted by the production and destruction

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177 Saṅghabhadra adduces the use of the word 'also' (*api*) as one of the pieces of scriptural evidence that justify the introduction of the secondary *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*s. He states: "In the *Sūtra* passage 'the arising (*utpāda*) of that which is conditioned can also (*api*) be discerned', the word 'arising' refers to the primary characteristic of birth (*jāti*), and the word 'also' indicates [the secondary characteristic of] the birth of birth (*jāti-jāti*)." (NAS T 29 p. 406^{a11-15}; Cox's Trsl p. 309). The Pāli *Sutta* passages in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* have no corresponding particle *api* or *pi*. See § 5.1.1 (fn. 543) for the citation of the passages from the Pāli and Sanskrit texts.

178 Why can birth (*jāti*) produce the eight factors, but the birth of birth (*jāti-jāti*), only birth out of the four primary ones ? The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB T 27 201$^{a1ff.}$) explains that these factors (i.e. birth and the birth of birth) function differently according to their nature (*dharmatā*); this is comparable to a hen who at certain times gives birth to eight chicks and at other times gives birth to only one. Cf. AKB II kr 46b, 76$^{18ff.}$; NAS T 29 406^{a29-b1} (Cox's Trsl p. 308).

179 The Dārṣṭāntikas claim: "If the three *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*s exist in one moment, a single *dharma* originates, endures and perishes at once. Therefore, this is not tenable, because they are mutually contradictary." MVB T 27 200^{a4-6}; cf. AVB T 28 149$^{c3ff.}$ (The **Mahāvibhāṣā* here comments on the *Sūtra* passages of the three *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*s cited in the **Jñānaprasthāna*, T 26 926^{a20-21} (cf. T 26 760^{c23-24}), so it refers to a set of three *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*s rather than four).

180 The term *kāritra* is a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit word based on *cāritra* (classical Skt)-BHSD, s.v. *kāritra*. Kamalaśīla presents the definition of *kāritra* glossed by *vyāpāra* (operation) in the *Pañjikā* to the *Tattvasaṃgraha* of Śāntarakṣita (TSP 1791-1793, p. 506; cf. AKB 78^{12}-79^{13}; SAKV 59$^{4-13}$ NAS T 29 409$^{c17ff.}$).

of one entity are referred to as one moment.[181] This response, however, raises the further difficulty of why the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* should discharge their activities one after another rather than at the same time, which implies that a single conditioned real entity undergoes several phases (i.e. four phases of birth, etc.) within a given moment, and this will inevitably infringe upon its momentariness.[182]

It would be beyond the scope of the present discussion to pursue the debate on these issues any further. Von Rospatt has critically evaluated the position of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas to some extent, and Cox has recently provided primary material on Saṅghabhadra's lengthy defence of the orthodox system against Vasubandhu's criticisms.[183] The main focus of our discussion in this section is just to show how the Theravādins understand the term *khaṇa* in conjunction with the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, but before examining the Theravādins' position, we also need to summarise the doctrinal stance of Sautrāntikas on this issue.

The Sautrāntikas adopt the system of four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* rather than the three and share the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' concept of the *kṣaṇa* as the smallest, indivisible unit of time, but unlike their controversial opponents, they avoid the problem of how to compress the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* of a conditioned entity into an indivisible moment. They do this by applying the concept of the continuous mode of existence of conditioned entities to the doctrine of momentariness. The Sautrāntikas think that the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* do not really exist (*dravya*), but exist only nominally (*prajñaptimātra*). In other words, they are

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181 MVB T 27 200^{a8-12}.: "If one asks how a single phenomenon [within the span of one moment] can simultaneously originate, endure and perish, we reply that there is no contradiction,because timing of the activities [of these characteristics] is different. That is to say, birth has its activity when an phenomenon is about to be produced; ageing and dissolution have their activities when [that phenomenon] is about to perish. Although they exist simultaneously as real phenomena, their activities are sequential; the ultimate unit constituted by the activities of the production and destruction of an phenomenon is called 'a single moment'. Therefore, the discrepancy [that the characteristics perform their activities simultaneously] is not incurred." Cf. Vasubandhu's citation of a similar response in AKB 78$^{12-14}$.

182 See von Rospatt (1995, pp. 52ff.); Cox (1995, p. 151).

183 Von Rospatt (1995, pp. 40-66); Cox (1995, pp. 133-158, 305-375).

four provisional marks of a single momentary entity, which apply conceptually to a continuous stream as a whole.[184]

The *Saṃyutta* commentary, after devoting some space to commenting on the interdependence of *saṅkhāra* and *lakkhaṇa*, as discussed in the previous section, explicitly applies the concept of the moment to each phase of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*. The karmic formation and the characteristic marks are interrelated, and the karmic formation is conditioned by the characteristic marks of the origination moment (*uppāda-kkhaṇa*), endurance moment (*ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*) and dissolution moment (*bhaṅga-kkhaṇa*), which refer to time (*kāla*). The following passages show how the *Saṃyutta* commentary interprets the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* in terms of sub-divisions of a moment (*khaṇa*):

> In that context, at the moment of arising of karmic formations, not only are the karmic formation and the characteristic mark of arising evident, but also its moment (*tassa khaṇo*), which refers to time (*kālasaṅkhāto*). When arising has passed (*uppāde vītivatte*),[185] not only are the karmic formation and the characteristic mark of ageing evident, but also its moment, which refers to time. At the moment of dissolution, not only are the karmic formation and its characteristic mark evident, but also its moment, which refers to time.

The Theravādins do not share the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' concept of the *khaṇa* as a definite unit of time. Instead, they use *khaṇa* as an expression for a short while, the dimension of which is not precisely fixed, but may be determined by the context.[186] In the context of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* the *khaṇa* is prefixed by the words: *uppāda*, *ṭhiti* and *bhaṅga*, and acquires the specific sense of sub-divisions of a moment. The threefold sub-divisions of a moment, i.e. the origination moment, the endurance moment and the dissolution moment are specified by their length of duration and generative capacity in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. In the case of a mental phenomenon, each sub-division has exactly the same duration, but only the origination moment has strong generative power. In contrast, a material phenomenon has a duration sixteen or seventeen times longer than that of a mental phenomenon, or more precisely, the length of the origination moment and the

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184 See Cox (1995, pp. 148-151); Sanderson (1994, pp. 41-42).
185 See § 5.1.1 (fn. 546) and 5.1.2 (fn. 562) for the justification of the emendation.
186 See von Rospatt (1995), p. 60.

dissolution moment are equal to that of the origination and dissolution moment of a mental phenomenon respectively; the endurance moment, however, consists of forty-eight or forty-nine sub-divisions of sixteen or seventeen mental moments, and has strong generative power. I have discussed this in detail in the chapter on the relative duration of material and mental phenomena.[187]

What I intend to show here is that the term *khaṇa* is determined by characteristic marks of origination etc., and by the moment, which refers to time in this specific context. Time in the Theravādin commentarial tradition is regarded as a merely conceptual unit (*paññatti-mattaka*) determined by different phenomenal events, not as an phenomenon in its own right.[188] The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary classifies such phenomenal events into nine sub-divisions.[189] The characteristic marks of phenomena (*dhamma-lakkhaṇa*) in terms of origination-time (*uppāda-kāla*) and of ageing-time (*jarā-kāla*) are one of those sub-divisions. In the compounds *uppāda-kāla* and *jarā-kāla*, the first component, *uppāda* and

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187 See § 3.1.

188 It should be made clear that even though Buddhists speak of past, present and future in conventional terms, they do not thereby assume the absolute reality of time. And no Buddhist School holds time as a substantive reality, except at one place in the *Vibhāṣā* (p. 393, col. I, l. 18, cited by de La Vallée Poussin, 1937, pp. 8-9) where time is regarded as the receptacle of everything. This view – attributed to the School of the Dārṣṭāntikas – is called an erroneous view (*mithyādṛṣṭi*) by Buddhists in general. The *Abhidharma* concept of time is derived from the continuous succession of *dharmas*, which arise and perish in uninterrupted continuity, creating a false picture of relative permanence. Hence only the *dharmas* are real; time is only nominal, with no existence independent from events. It is in accordance with this *Abhidharma* theory of time that in none of the *Abhidharma* treatises is time ever elevated to the status of a *dharma*, i.e. an ultimate phenomenon of existence. When it is speculated whether the past and the future could exist in some subtle form, however, this really means whether past *dharmas* and future *dharma*s could exist in some subtle form. These speculations give rise to the well-known, disputed view of Sarvāstivāda on the *dharma* theory – that *dharmas* persist in all the three phases of time. <See Bastow (1996, pp. 109-132) for an understanding of the early controversies on time in the *Kathāvatthu*, and Karunadasa (1983, pp. 1-27) for the historical background controversial issue, which influenced Buddhist intellectuals during and after the Aśokan period. See also Prasad (1991) for almost all the substantial materials dealing with the Buddhist concept of time published before 1981. These collected papers contain indispensable analyses and source materials presented by Louis de la Vallée Poussin, S. Schayer, Th. Stcherbatsky, A.B. Keith, etc.>.

189 Time is represented in the Theravādin *Abhidhamma* by the term *samaya*, meaning both occasion and chronological time. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* commentary (As 57^5-59^9) further divides the meaning of *samaya* into five categories: I. *samavāya* (concurrence), II. *khaṇa* (the right moment), III. *kāla* (time), IV. *samūha* (group of occurrences) and V. *hetu* (cause). The term *kāla* is again sub-divided into nine: 1. *cittakāla*, *rūpakāla* (temporality of mental and material phenomena), 2. *atīta*, *anāgata* (the mode of *dharmas* denoted by the past and the future), 3. *bījakāla*, *aṅkurakāla* (the orderly process of things denoted by the time of seed germination), 4. *uppāda-kāla*, *jarā-kāla* (the characteristic marks denoted by the origination-time and the ageing-time of *dharmas*), 5. *vediyanakāla*, *sañjānanakāla* (the cognitive process of *dharmas* denoted by the time of feeling and apperception), 6. *nahānakāla*, *pānakāla* (the activity of beings denoted by the time of taking a bath or of drinking), 7. *gamanakāla*, *ṭhānakāla* (the postures of movement denoted by the time of walking, standing), 8. *pubbaṇha-sāyaṇha-divā-ratti* (the revolutions of the sun and moon denoted by the morning, evening, day and night,) and 9. *aḍḍhamāsa*, *māsa* (the period expressed by fortnight, month, etc.).

jarā determine the respective event (*kāla*), but the *kāla* itself does not display a definite duration, as it is an indefinite unit of time. The terms *kāla* and *khaṇa*, in the compounds *uppāda-kāla* and *uppāda-kkhaṇa*, seem to be loosely interchangeable, even though the *khaṇa* has a narrower application than the *kāla*, because for both the duration is not self-determining. The sub-commentary glosses *kālasaṅkhāto* as *uppajjamāna-kālasaṅkhāto*, and *khaṇo* as *uppāda-kkhaṇo*.[190] That is to say, 'the origination moment' is denoted by or reckoned as 'arising time'.

The Theravādins attribute the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* to a single momentary phenomenon. In other words, the origination moment, the endurance moment and the dissolution moment do not correspond to three different phenomena, but merely represent three different phases (*avatthā*) of a single momentary phenomenon. In this way, the Theravādins did not have to face the predicament of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, who understood the four marks as discrete real entities with their own distinct and successive functions. Nevertheless, the Theravādins did encounter some difficulties in interpreting the notoriously problematic phrase *ṭhitassa aññathatta*, on which the early Buddhist schools postulated considerably different views.

(4) The problem of *ṭhitassa aññathatta*

Among the early Buddhist schools, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas in particular had to face the problem of interpreting *sthityanyathātva* (=*ṭhitassa aññathatta*), which refers to ageing (*jarā*). The main difficulty they encountered was how to reconcile the attribution of the mark of ageing to discrete conditioned entities, while maintaining their fundamental position that these real entities themselves cannot be subject to change. Ageing implies change, and change, the loss of identity. Thus, the change of individual momentary entities entails the substitution of the old by a new phenomenon. Vasubandhu adduces a stanza which addresses this problem:

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190 Spk-pṭ 217[19-20]: ***kālasaṅkhāto*** *ti uppajjamānakālasaṅkhāto.* ***tassa*** *saṅkhārassa.* ***khaṇo pī*** *ti uppāda-kkhaṇo pi paññāyati.* (The lemma ***khaṇo pi*** is from the *Saṃyutta* commentary not from the main text; cf. fn. 177.)

> When [an phenomenon] is precisely as it is, ageing (*jarā*) would not be established; when it becomes something other than it is, this is precisely another [phenomenon]. Therefore, it is not justified to attribute ageing to one phenomenon in one mode of existence.[191]

The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas respond to this question by introducing the theory that the mark of ageing becomes a factor which causes loss of the power of the causally efficient entities. This theory had been implied in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* and established in the *Abhidharmadīpa*:[192]

> Because of the loss of the power (*śakti*) [to be causally efficient], ageing is established.

Saṅghabhadra also confirms in the **Nyāyānusāra* that the activity (*kāritra*) whereby a conditioned phenomenon is able to project its own effect within its intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*)[193] is referred to as continuance; it is precisely the deterioration or loss of this activity that is referred to as ageing.[194] Activity here means the power of projecting its own effect.[195] The Sautrāntikas, however, argue that there is still an inconsistency, in that while the activity of an phenomenon changes, its intrinsic nature remains the same, because the distinctive activity of an phenomenon in the present is not of a nature different from its intrinsic nature. Thus, when its activity changes, its intrinsic nature should likewise change. Saṅghabhadra claims that this flaw does not occur in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' doctrinal system, which allows the permanent existence of intrinsic nature in the three time periods ("everything exists", *sarvam asti*). The accepted doctrine of the Sautrāntikas is thus

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191 AKB 79[8-9]: the first two *padas* in the manuscript were unclear, so Pradhan reconstructed from ADV 105[10-11] with the help of the Chinese translation of AKB-H T 29 28[b25-26]. Cf. MVB T 27 200[a14ff]; NAS T 29 410[a24-25].

tathātve na jarāsiddhir, anyathātve 'nya eva saḥ/
tasmān naikasya bhāvasya jarā nāmopapadyate//

192 AD kr 140ab, 106: *śaktihāner jarāsiddhiḥ*, cf. MVB T 27 200[a14ff.]; VB T 28 149[c19ff.].

193 The **Mahāvibhāṣā* presents the following discussion on the interrelation between *kāritra* and *svabhāva*: "Q: Are *kāritra* and *svabhāva* identical or different ? A: It cannot be stated categorically whether they are identical or different. In the same way the *svabhāva* of each *sāsravadharma* (i.e. *saṃskṛtadharma*) possesses many characteristic marks (*lakṣaṇa*) such as impermanence etc., and it cannot be stated categorically whether they are identical or different. Therefore, [the interrelation between *kāritra* and *svabhāva*] is not determinate." (MVB T 27 394[c5-9]; cf. AKB V kr 27bc p. 298; NAS T 29 633[a1ff.]).

194 NAS T 29 410[a13-14].

195 Saṅghabhadra further distinguishes activity (*kāritra*) from capability (*sāmarthya*). Capability refers to the fact that conditioned phenomena act as conditions assisting phenomena of a different category. If they are able to act as the cause in projecting their own effect, this is referred to as activity. For example, an eye in the dark is not capable of acting as a condition that assists in enabling visual perceptual consciousness to arise. However, its activity of projecting its own effect is not damaged by darkness. NAS T 29 409[a26ff.].

inconsistent when it maintains that intrinsic nature does not exist in the past or future.[196] The Sautrāntikas, however, cannot accept the underlying substance or the real existence of intrinsic nature in the three time periods, but regard it as a mere concept on which no duration whatsoever is to be imposed. What appears as duration is in reality a series of fleeting moments, i.e. a continuum of durationless instants. Therefore in the doctrinal system of the Sautrāntikas there is no room to accommodate the static and ageing moment, and they recognize only origination and dissolution.[197]

The Theravādins admit that all mental events and physical states are constantly changing momentary phenomena, but they make a distinction between a moment of thought and one of matter, because, as mentioned earlier, thoughts change more rapidly than physical bodies. This attitude is reflected in the *Saṃyutta* commentary which presents different exegetical opinions regarding the phrase *ṭhitassa aññathatta* (glossed as *jarā*). These are particularly concerned with the incompatibility of the notion of ageing (*jarā*), when it applies to immaterial phenomena such as feeling, apperception etc. Hence, they claim that the marks of immaterial phenomena should be understood either in terms of the moment of existence (*atthikkhaṇa*), or that of continuity (*santati*), as follows:

> But some (*apare*) declare: "The ageing-moment cannot be made known in the case of immaterial phenomena. ... Those [three characteristic marks] are obtained with reference to the moment of existence (*atthikkhaṇa*)". Having said that, they clinch this point by quoting the following stanza of the masters:
>
> > Existence (*atthitā*) is a term for endurance of all phenomena (*sabba-dhammā*, i.e. both the mental and material phenomena). Its own dissolution is invariably (*sabbadā*) death for all living-creatures.
>
> They further say: "Or alternatively, 'endurance' is a state to be understood in terms of continuity (*santati*)". But because any distinction [of this kind] is not conveyed in the *Sutta*, therefore the *Sutta* alone should be taken as authoritative, not discarded in favour of the opinion of masters.[198]

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196 NAS T 29 410[16ff.].

197 The sophisticated doctrinal issue of the three time periods is beyond the scope of the present discussion. Saṅghabhadra also remarks (NAS T 29 410[b1-3]) that he deals only with what is relevant to the four *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*s for clarification of the notion of ageing (*jarā*), reserving for a comprehensive discussion in section 50 (NAS T 29 621[c5ff.]) the issue of the three time periods.

198 Spk II 267[4-14], see § 5.1.2 for the edited section.

The *Saṃyutta* sub-commentary does not tell us the identity of the masters who hold these views, and I have failed to trace the source of the above citation attributed to them. Moreover, it is not entirely clear to me what is meant by the term *atthikkhaṇa* in the first option. Perhaps the term *atthikkhaṇa* denotes the fact that a mental phenomenon changes so swiftly that it exists only in a flash and perishes immediately after arising. It cannot allow duration such as the enduring moment or ageing. The sub-commentary states: "The moment of existence (*atthikkhaṇa*) refers to the existing moment of immaterial phenomena (*arūpadhamma-vijjamānakkhaṇa*), and [here] the origination moment (*uppādakkhaṇa*) is intended".[199] This probably implies that there is no separate endurance moment (*ṭhitikkhaṇa*) because the very brief moment of existence of immaterial phenomena is denoted by the origination moment itself.

Scholars[200] have already noted that Ānanda, the author of the *Mūlaṭīkā* to the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, rejects *ṭhitikkhaṇa* in relation to mental phenomena, appealing for support to the *Citta-Yamaka* chapter of the *Yamaka*,[201] which speaks only of the origination and dissolution moments of thought. He identifies the indefinite personal pronoun *keci* in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary[202] as the Abhayagirivāsins, the rival of the mainstream Theravādins, and remarks that they do not accept *ṭhitikkhaṇa*.[203] Later sub-commentators, notably Sumaṅgala, attempt to defend the position of the mainstream Theravādins. According to Sumaṅgala, Ānanda rejects *ṭhitikkhaṇa*, which he applies exclusively to a series called *pabandha-ṭhiti*, the 'endurance in a series'. Subsequently, the phrase *ṭhitassa aññathatta* is interpreted as *pubbâpara-visesa*, the difference between the preceding and the succeeding phase that constitutes a series.[204] Most probably this position is mirrored in the second option in the above citation; accordingly, endurance (*ṭhiti*) is a state to be understood in terms of continuity (*santati*).

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199 Spk-pṭ 217[28-29]: ***atthikkhaṇan*** *ti arūpadhammavijjamānakkhaṇaṃ, uppādakkhaṇan ti adhippāyo.*

200 Jaini (1959, p. 104, fn. 3); Karunadasa (1967, p. 8); Bodhi (1993, p. 156).

201 Yam II 18.

202 As 421[2]; cf. Vism XIII §115.

203 As-mṭ 194[7-8]: ***kecī*** *ti abhayagirivāsino ti vadanti, te pana cittassa ṭhitikkhaṇaṃ na icchantī ti, ṭhitikkhaṇe vā paṭivijjhatī ti na vattabbaṃ siyā*. Cf. Vism-mhṭ II 935[24], 936 [20-21].

204 Abhidh-vk 304-305 cited by Karunadasa (1967, p. 88, fn. 2), cf. Abhidh-vb 107[5-17].

This interpretation is reminiscent of the Sautrāntikas' view of the notion of *jarā*, and is closer to their doctrinal position. As stated above, ageing (*jarā*) implies change, the loss of identity or intrinsic nature, while change of individual momentary phenomena entails the substitution of the old by the new. Accordingly, the Sautrāntikas do not admit the real existence of intrinsic nature in the three time periods, but regard the mark of *jarā* as a mere continuum of durationless instants. The core concept of the above-cited stanza adduced by Vasubandhu to support this position can be observed in the following argument attributed to Ānanda:

> If [an phenomenon] is destroyed precisely as it is, ageing (*jaratā*) would not be possible (*sambhava*); [if an phenomenon] becomes something other than it is, this is precisely another [phenomenon]. Therefore, mere non-existence of the endurance moment [is] invariably (*sabbathā pi*) [established].[205]

Nevertheless, most Theravādin commentators do not endorse this position. In the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa simply distinguishes the *jarā* of the immaterial phenomena from that of the material ones by designating them respectively as *paṭicchanna-jarā* (hidden ageing) and *avīci-jarā* (disintegrative ageing).[206] The *Saṃyutta* sub-commentary, however, points out that the endurance-moment (*ṭhitikkhaṇa*) is a stage of dissolution separate from the stage of origination of a *dhamma*. Likewise, it is a stage of "facing its own dissolution" (*bhaṅgâbhimukhâvatthā*) separate from the stage of dissolution of a *dhamma*.[207] In other words, the sub-division of subsistence moment is a stage in the occurrence of a *dhamma* separate from the stages of arising and dissolution, during which the *dhamma* endures in the face of its own dissolution. I shall return to this issue in chapter 3, in which the problem of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* in the later post-canonical texts is discussed.

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205 Abhidh-vk 305 cited by Karunadasa (*ibid.*): *yadi tathābhūto 'va bhijjati na jaratāya sambhavo; aññathābhūto añño eva so ti sabbathā pi ṭhitikkhaṇassa abhāvo yeva.*

206 Vism XIV §68: *arūpadhammānaṃ pana paṭicchannajarā nāma hoti. tassā esa vikāro n' atthi; yā ca pathavī-udakapabbatacandimasuriyâdisu avīcijarā nāma.*

207 Spk-pṭ C^e 218^{3-5}: *api ca yathā dhammassa uppādâvatthāya bhinnā bhaṅgâvatthā icchitā, aññathā uppajjamānam eva bhijjatī ti āpajjati. evaṃ bhaṅgâvatthāya pi bhinnā bhaṅgâbhimukhâvatthā icchitabbā.* These passages have been elaborated by Sumaṅgala in Abhidh-vb 107^{17-22}: *yath' eva hi ekadhammādhāra-bhāve pi uppādabhaṅgānaṃ añño uppādakkhaṇo añño bhaṅgakkhaṇo ti uppādâvatthāya bhinnā bhaṅgâvatthā icchitā. itarathā hi añño yeva dhammo uppajjati añño nirujjhatī ti āpajjeyya. evaṃ eva uppādabhaṅgâvatthāhi bhinnā bhaṅgâbhimukhâvatthā pi icchitabbā; sā ṭhiti nāma.*

To conclude this section, I present Gombrich's remarks on this issue. Gombrich approaches the problem of *ṭhitassa aññathatta* from a rather different angle. He thinks that this could be an instance of historical change and doctrinal development within the ancient scholastic tradition. He posits two particular processes of change. One is scholastic literalism, a form of exegesis which reads into words and phrases more meaning than was originally intended, in order to create distinctions, and the other is debate.[208] From this perspective he comments on the issue of *ṭhitassa aññathatta* as follows:

> It would be possible to see the passages in the *Trilakṣaṇa-sūtra* in a different light, as consonant with the simple twofold description of all conditioned phenomena as just arising and passing away. (One could call this the wave model.) This could be done by interpreting *ṭhitassa aññathatta* as simply synonymous with *uppāda* plus *vaya* – another way of expressing the same thing. True, the passage exactly as we have it seems to suggest three perfectly parallel clauses, and since *vaya* is clearly different from *uppāda*, parallelism suggests that *ṭhitassa aññathatta* is different again. However, since the text (in any case not a perfect recording of the Buddha) may have undergone some slight rephrasing, this is not an overwhelming argument. Moreover, if a true tri-partition were intended, one would expect the chronological sequence: *uppāda*, *ṭhitassa aññathatta*, *vaya*.[209] On our interpretation of the text's original meaning, *ṭhitassa* should not be translated "of what endures" but "of what there is ".[210]

We have already seen scholastic literalism applied to the issue of *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas* by the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas. They adduce the grammatical construction of the passage (i.e. the repetition of *saṃskṛta* in the genitive case etc.) or the syntax of the particle *api* to justify their doctrinal position on this issue. In fact, as I noted (fn. 177), the particle *api* or *pi* does not occur in the Pāli corresponding passages. This indicates that the argument is based on their own recension of the canon, and it will be rejected by the schools which have a different recension. Discrepancies[211] in the texts and different interpretations of the same passage provide ample matter for debate. As Gombrich rightly observes, the issue of

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208 See chapter 4, "Retracing an ancient debate: How insight worsted concentration in the Pali Canon" in *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*, Gombrich (1996), pp. 98-134.

209 See p. 64, fn. 139 for a similar remark.

210 Prof. Gombrich made these notes on my translation of the passages from the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (III 38).

211 Discrepancies can occur not only among different recensions but also within the same texts. One likely reason for the discrepancies is that in the course of a preaching career lasting forty-five years the Buddha formulated things in various ways and perhaps even changed his mind (Gombrich, 1990, p. 9).

saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas and *ṭhitassa aññathatta* illustrates the processes of change and innovation in various Buddhist schools in order to maintain the doctrinal position of their scholastic tradition.

In this chapter, I have thus attempted to locate the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness in the broader intellectual milieu of early Buddhist traditions. In the next chapter I shall examine the oldest evidence for the doctrine of momentariness, and show how the doctrine was developing after Aśoka's reign.

CHAPTER TWO

The Developing Theory of Momentariness

In the preceding chapter I argued that the doctrine of impermanence and *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* are interlocking concepts, and that the former served as a source for and the latter as a stepping stone to the theory of momentariness. I shall now examine the *Khaṇikakathā* (one of the last chapters of the *Kathāvatthu*), which is the earliest evidence of the theory of momentariness, in order to determine how the Theravādin theory of momentariness was developing in the intellectual milieu of the Buddhist scholastic tradition during or after Aśoka's reign. The argument in the *Khaṇikakathā*, in which the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness is disputed on the grounds that the sense faculties and sense objects cannot arise simultaneously with each mental phenomenon, is carefully studied in order to evaluate the implications for the comparative chronology of the two textual traditions of the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. I review von Rospatt's contention that the *Kathāvatthu* does not prove that the theory of momentariness was current by the first century CE. Thus my purpose in the present chapter is twofold: 1) to examine an important piece of textual evidence, the chapter on the disputed theory of momentariness and relevant issues in the *Kathāvatthu*, in the light of the Theravādin *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* and the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's canonical and exegetical works and 2) to determine when and how this theory was formulated, in conjunction with the origins of the thought process in the early textual sources, and eventually became the unique doctrine which calculated the relative duration of material and mental phenomena in the later exegetical works.

2.1 Problems of the momentariness of material and mental phenomena

2.1.1 Momentariness of material and mental phenomena

Whatever the interpretation of the term *jaratā* may be, the early Buddhist schools derived the concept of momentariness from the analysis of impermanence (*anicca*) in terms of the fall and rise of all mental events and physical states. The *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* served in this

process directly (if not intrinsically) as a hermeneutic tool with which to arrive at the conclusion that all conditioned events and states are momentary. This version of the fully-fledged doctrine of momentariness was, of course, not upheld by all the early Buddhist schools, but it was certainly the stance of some early schools, notably the Sarvāstivādins and the Sautrāntikas. The Vātsīputrīyas-Saṃmitīyas, however, held only mental events to be momentary, while material states, with the exception of flames and sounds, were considered not to be momentary.[212] An unidentified school held that the sense organs last three times as long as the corresponding momentary cognition.[213] The proposition presented in the *Khaṇikakathā*, that a material phenomenon lasts longer than a mental one, persisted, and eventually the Theravādins produced the unique theory that a material phenomenon lasts for sixteen or seventeen thought moments. To discuss these issues efficiently, I consider the following questions:

First, How did the position that only mental events are momentary originate?

Second, Is it possible that the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness originated and developed on the basis that mental events are momentary ?

Third, What is the implication of the idea of the simultaneity (*sahajāta*) of the sense faculties and sense objects with mental phenomena in the *Khaṇikakathā* ?

Fourth, What is the relative textual chronology of the unsophisticated polemic in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*, and the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' literary sources ?

Fifth, How did the Theravādins establish a clear distinction between material and mental rates of change and give it such precise mathematical form (i.e. the ratio of 1: 16/ 17) ?

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212 Von Rospatt (1995, pp. 36-39) has dealt with the position of the Vātsīputrīyas-Saṃmitīyas, collating the doxographies by Vasumitra and Bhavya and other relevant sources. See intro. p. 3, fn. 7.

213 MVB T 27 787^{c20}-788^{a9}. I call this the three moments theory, which I discuss in § 3.1.1.

The first two questions have recently been dealt with by von Rospatt, who collates a wide range of sources from early Buddhist texts. Therefore I will not go into them again here, but, as a background to my answers to the remaining three, I shall briefly summarise his conclusion. It is a conclusion with which I basically agree, except for his interpretation of the refutation of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the *Khaṇikakathā* and its chronological significance.

2.1.2 All mental phenomena are invariably momentary

How did the position that only mental events are momentary originate? Von Rospatt commences his inquiry (chapter II. A) with an investigation of how the Buddhists arrived at the position that all mental phenomena are invariably momentary. He maintains that it evolved, firstly, from the denial of a subject of mental events, which in turn is based upon the denial of a persisting Self (*ātman*), and secondly, from the observation of the fleeting nature of these events. The first position implies that the mind cannot change, as this would presuppose an enduring element which accounts for the continuity of the phenomenon with itself before and after it has changed.[214] Thus any mental fluctuation, that is, any new thought, perception, feeling or stage of a mental process entails the substitution of a new mind for the old one. The second position involves the introspective observation that the mind is in constant flux, and that mental events follow upon each other rapidly and incessantly, so that an event, as soon as it has come to be, is replaced by the next one. (I A §1, §2.1) This is explicitly taught in the *Suttas*. In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (I 10), for instance, the Buddha says that he "does not even perceive a single other phenomenon which moves on as quickly as the mind" and adds that it is difficult to illustrate this by way of a simile (I A § 2.2).

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214 The idea of a stable stuff with changing qualities is totally unacceptable to the Buddhist premise of momentariness. An phenomenon cannot change and yet remain the same. Change and identity are mutually exclusive. The radical understanding of change involves a total substitution of one phenomenon by another. (See A.N. Balslev, 1983, p. 120.)

2.1.3 The all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness

As for my second question, von Rospatt shows the possibility that the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness originated and developed on the basis that mental phenomena are momentary. He presents three types of proof for momentariness: there are the deduction of momentariness from i) the momentariness of the mind, ii) changes in phenomena, and iii) the spontaneity of their destruction. In addition, he suggests that the doctrine of momentariness may have resulted from a particularly radical spiritual experience of the transience of human existence (II E). The sources he adduces suggest that this experience was induced either by narrowing the time-span over which the rise and fall of mental and physical phenomena (the notion of death, *maraṇasaṃjñā*) are envisaged, or by the application of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*) to the body.

2.2 The refutation of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*

2.2.1 The historical implications of the issue of simultaneity

My third question concerns the *Khaṇikakathā*. What does the simultaneity (*sahajāta*) of the sense organs and sense objects with mental phenomena imply? This question is to be dealt with in this section. Here the main argument is that the perception of the object and the object itself cannot arise at the same moment. Although the polemic employed in the *Khaṇikakathā* is rather naïve and simplistic, it deals with one of the most fundamental questions of Buddhist epistemology,[215] developed in the later exegetical works of Buddhist

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215 In the Western tradition epistemology is the name given to that branch of philosophy which concerns itself with the theory of knowledge, that is to say, the attempted vindication of the reliability of our claims to knowledge. According to B.K. Matilal (1986, pp. 1, 22-23), the function of what is called the *pramāṇa-śāstra* in Indian philosophic tradition coincides to a great extent with this activity. The term 'Buddhist epistemology' is applicable to the theory of knowledge of the Diṅnāga-Dharmakīrti school of Buddhism, which developed in the context of what B.K. Matilal has called the *pramāṇa* epistemology of classical Indian origin. Before Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, the Sautrāntikas and early Yogācāras sporadically discussed some epistemological issues, but did not elaborate them to such an extent as to establish a Buddhist epistemology. (Prasad, 1989, p. 278) Furthermore, if we go back to the Ābhidharmikas of the early Buddhist schools we can catch only occasional glimpses of some of the background notions to epistemology. Nevertheless, for the sake of convenience, I have occasionally used the terms epistemological/ epistemology to note these issues in a loose sense, when I discuss the related sources of the cognitive process and the doctrine of momentariness in the early textual material of the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. For I assume that they afford a fragmentary testimony of the origins and early phases of Buddhist epistemology in conjunction with the theory of momentariness.

schools. However, the historical and textual roots of Buddhist epistemology are immensely complex and to discuss them systematically would require a book-length study. My concern here has been to draw on only those points which I consider both to be important and to offer some clarification concerning the approximate date of the *Khaṇikakathā* and the relation between the doctrine of momentariness and the issue of cognition presented therein.[216]

As remarked in the introduction, due to lack of direct textual documentation or adequate contextual information,[217] the precise dating of individual texts is difficult. We must therefore be satisfied with a relative chronology, whether of individual texts within a tradition or across several traditions. I shall examine the historical development of the theory of momentariness in the broad context of the textual traditions of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika.

2.2.2 The date of *Kathāvatthu* and the intellectual milieu during or after King Aśoka's reign

The *Kathāvatthu* presents a broad cross-section of Buddhist thought in an age of critical transition, when some of the conflicts and obscurities latent in the earlier doctrines emerged and were openly discussed among different groups of Buddhists. Traditionally this work is attributed to Moggaliputta Tissa at the Third Synod (the third century BCE), called the Synod of Pāṭaliputra, in the reign of King Aśoka. Although some scholars have supported the traditional view, it is in fact clear from its content that most of the work must have been composed more than a hundred years after the time of King Aśoka.[218] According to the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvaṃsa*, eighteen schools arose before the time of King Aśoka, and after this time there were six new schools.[219] Since the doctrines criticised in the *Kathāvatthu* include not only the doctrines of the earlier schools, but also those of schools

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216 Von Rospatt (1995) has not dealt fully with this issue, although he makes a few remarks on it (see pp. 19-20, fn. 22).

217 E.g. colophons and chronicles.

218 The precise dating of the schism depends on the dating of the Buddha and is also beset with other difficulties which are too complex to be entered into here. R. Gombrich (1992, pp. 237-259) takes the date of the accession of Aśoka to be c. 268 BCE and therefore suggests that the Buddha's death took place "within six or even five" years of 404 BCE. See Cousins (1991, p. 59) for supportive remarks.

219 Willemen (1998), p. 58.

which supposedly arose later, the text must have been composed after the appearance of those schools and the establishment of their doctrines.[220] This implies that the latter half of the second century BCE is the most probable date for the compilation of the *Kathāvatthu*.

Nevertheless, the earliest portion of the *Kathāvatthu* is likely to have been composed during the third century BCE, the life-time of Aśoka. As L.S. Cousins suggests, it indicates a stage at which there was a three-way controversy involving Vibhajyavāda, Sarvāstivāda and Pudgalavāda. The Pudgalavādins propounded the idea of person (*puggala*); the Sarvāstivādins, however, rejected this idea and taught pan-realism (all exists, *sabbaṃ atthi*); and the Vibhajyavādins, ancestors of the Ceylonese Theravādins among others, opposed both the idea of person and pan-realism.[221]

2.2.3 The date of the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*

The *Khaṇikakathā* is among the latest portions of the *Kathāvatthu*. K.R. Norman suggests that the latest probable date for their inclusion seems to be the first century BCE, when the canon and the commentary upon it, including the *Kathāvatthu-ppakaraṇa-aṭṭhakathā*, were written down. E.W. Adikaram, after critical examination of the commentaries, suggests that no addition was made to the commentaries after the first century CE.[222] At the outset, we should consider who opposed the Theravādins in this controversy. The immediate candidates may be the Pubbaseliyas and Aparaseliyas, to whom the *Kathāvatthu* commentary attributes the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness, but we do not have any convincing textual evidence to support this attribution.[223] The early Sarvāstivādins could have been the opponents because we know from the textual sources of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas that they advocated the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness, and we do have evidence of the nucleus of the theory in the *Jñānaprasthāna, the latest of the seven old *Abhidharma* works of the Sarvāstivāda,

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220 See Frauwallner (1972, p. 124); Norman (1983, p. 104); Cousins (1991, pp. 34-37); Hirakawa (1991, pp. 90-91, 110, 287).

221 Cousins (1991), p. 35.

222 See Adikaram (1946), p. 87.

223 Kv-a 198, see C.A.F. Rhys Davids (1915), xxxiii for difficulties in accepting attributions made by the *Kathāvatthu* commentary. See also von Rospatt (1995, pp. 31-32) for this problem.

compiled approximately in the first century BCE, of which Sanskrit fragments have been found.[224] If we accept the traditional dating of the canon as the latest probable date for the last portions of the *Kathāvatthu*, as K.R. Norman suggested, the *Khaṇikakathā* may have been incorporated into the main body of the text by the first century BCE,[225] a date which approximately coincides with the compilation of the **Jñānaprasthāna*.

Considering the problems involved in dating the *Kathāvatthu* in its final form, however, von Rospatt insists that its evidence does not provide a sufficient textual basis to prove that the theory of momentariness was current by the first century CE.[226] But I argue, in spite of the difficulty of dating the text, that one should not underestimate the significance of the *Khaṇikakathā* by isolating this explicit evidence in the Theravādin literary sources from the textual tradition of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas. Although von Rospatt has examined the *Khaṇikakathā* and some passages from the **Jñānaprasthāna* and its commentary, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, the grand compendium of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, he seems not to consider the textual context and doctrinal implications from the comparative perspective of early Buddhist traditions. In other words, he can not provide a meaningful interpretation of the *Khaṇikakathā* because his account of its actual content has been isolated from his findings and observations on the textual development of the doctrine of momentariness within the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's tradition. I have argued below that von Rospatt is unable to interpret the *Khaṇikakathā* and the other related sections in the *Kathāvatthu* from a wider perspective because he assumes that the Theravāda did not originate and develop the unique doctrine of momentariness within its own doctrinal system, and prefers to think that the Theravādin theory of momentariness was adopted from other Buddhist schools in Northern India and may even have been introduced by Buddhaghosa. I shall return to the issue of the originality of the theory and its relative textual chronology when I deal with my fourth question: "What is the relative textual chronology of the simple polemic in the

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224 A Sanskrit fragment found by Paul Pelliot was identified by Paul Demiéville as that of the *Jñānaprasthānaśāstra* (1961, pp. 461-465). The work was retranslated into Sanskrit from the Chinese version of Hsüan-tsang by Śānti Bhikṣu Śāstrī (1955); see Ch. Willemen (1998, pp. 73-74) for a detailed bibliography.

225 Norman (1983), pp. 104, 119.

226 Von Rospatt (1995), p. 19.

Khaṇikakathā of the *Kathāvatthu* and the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's literary sources?" Perhaps at this point it would be useful to analyse, in the light of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, the polemical argument in the *Khaṇikakathā*, in which a related philosophical issue lies hidden.

2.2.4 Analysis of the argument in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*

The *Khaṇikakathā* presents ostensibly simple polemics, but complex philosophical issues are implied in the argument. As noted, this is the earliest textual evidence for the development of a theory of momentariness in which the doctrine that "all phenomena (*dhamma*) are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon (*ekacittakkhaṇika*)" is refuted on the basis of an epistemological consideration. For the sake of clarity, and to identify the theory of momentariness with relevant issues found in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and the different sections of the *Kathāvatthu*, I have divided the *Khaṇikakathā* into three parts (see § 5.2).

(1) **The first argument** (Kv 620$^{7-12}$):

> [Th]: Are all phenomena as momentary as a single mental phenomenon (*ekacittakkhaṇika*)?
>
> [Op]: Affirmed.
>
> [Th]: Do you imply that the great earth, the great ocean, the king of mount Sineru, water, fire, wind, grass, twigs and big trees synchronise (*saṇṭhāti/ saṇṭhanti*) with each mental phenomenon (*citte citte*)?
>
> [Op]: One can't truly say that.

The first argument urges that the earth, oceans, Mt. Sineru etc. do not have the same duration as mental units. This is the common-sense notion that the material states of solid objects change more slowly than mental events, which are processed very fast. In the canon, the flickering nature of the mind had already been propounded. For instance, the brevity of mental states is illustrated by the simile of the monkey roaming through the jungle, who seizes a branch and lets go of it to seize another branch.[227] The original

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227 S II 95$^{5-9}$: "As a monkey, monks, roaming through the jungle, the forest, grasps one branch and letting go of it grasps another one, just so that which is referred to as thinking (*citta*) or also mind (*mano*) or

implication seems to be that the mind is as restless as the movement of the monkey. The notion of the momentariness of a mental phenomenon must eventually have been derived from the observation of the restlessness and rapidity of mental activity. The *Khaṇikakathā* thus admits the flickering nature of mental activity, which is a canonical idea, but argues that material phenomena such as the earth, oceans and trees do not seem to vanish with the passing away of each mental phenomenon.

(2) **The second argument** (Kv 620[13-18]):

[Op]: Does the visual sphere (*cakkhâyatana*) arise simultaneously (*sahajāta*) with the eye-consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*)?

[Th]: One can't truly say that.

[Th]: [Do you mean to] say that the visual sphere arises simultaneously with the eye-consciousness?

[Op]: Yes I do.

Here the tone of argument has shifted from the common-sense notion to an epistemologically oriented perspective. The Theravādins argue that all conditioned phenomena have the same duration as mental phenomena on the grounds that sense organs and objects cannot be simultaneous (*sahabhū*) with perception, and that this is incompatible with the process of cognition. In other words, the question – "Does the visual sphere (*cakkhâyatana*) arise simultaneously (*sahajāta*) with the eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*)? " – addresses the incompatibility between the thought process and the theory of momentariness (i.e. the idea that all phenomena are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon).

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consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arises day and night as one thing and passes away as another." (*seyyathāpi bhikkhave makkaṭo araññe pavane caramāno sākhaṃ gaṇhati, taṃ muñcitvā aññaṃ gaṇhati, evaṃ eva kho bhikkhave yad idaṃ vuccati cittam iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇaṃ iti pi, taṃ rattiyā ca divassa ca aññad eva uppajjati aññaṃ nirujjhati.*) <Some scribal errors (e.g. *arāññe, ānnad*) as well as some *anusvāras* have been amended with the help of other editions and the testimonium in Kv 205[36]-206[5]. See the commentary on this passages in Sp II 99[23-27] and its translation and discussion in von Rospatt (1995, pp. 115ff.; p. 213 fn. 449). See also NID-S 115-120; SA T 2 81[c4-29]; extracts quoted e.g. in TSŚ T 32 278[c1ff.]; NAS T 29 534[c7-9]; MPPU 200[b23f] (Poussin's MPPU p. 1165 fn.1). Cf. A I 10; Dhp vs. 33. This simile also occurs in the text of the Jains (see Dundas, 1992, p. 88).

(3) **The canonical evidence cited to support the second argument** (Kv 620[19-29]):

[Th]: The following passage [from the canon] is what the venerable Sāriputta said, isn't it ?

> If, friends, internally the eye is intact but no external forms come into its range, and there is no corresponding attention (*tajjo samannâhāro*), then there is no manifestation of the corresponding state (*bhāva*) of consciousness. If internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range, but there is no corresponding attention, then there is no manifestation of the corresponding state of consciousness.[228]

The main concern of the second argument is the issue of the simultaneity (*sahajāta*) of the sense organs and sense objects with consciousness. So, is this canonical evidence cited by the Theravādins focusing on the right issue ? At first sight, it does not seem particularly clear, but if we can grasp what is implied by the phrase 'corresponding attention' (*tajjo samannâhāro*: 'bringing together of like kind') with the help of the abhidhammic texts and the commentary on the *Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta*,[229] we can throw light on this canonical passage.

According to the canonical passage above, visual consciousness arises if only three conditions are present: A) an unimpaired internal sense-organ of sight, B) external visible forms entering into the field of vision, and C) a corresponding act of attention (i.e. a precursor of the thought process). If condition A) is satisfied but not B) and C), or if conditions A) and B) are satisfied but not C), the corresponding process of cognition will not take place. This implies that a corresponding act of attention is an essential ingredient for perception to occur. Attending to the sense-data from the external environment or from the internal environment (i.e. one's own thoughts and information in memory), we interpret and process the gathered information via a series of processing systems (e.g. perception,

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228 M I 190.
229 Ps II 229[28-32].

identification and decision). The thought process requires a few seconds in order for cognition to take place. The second argument and its citation above seem to imply that a material phenomenon cannot arise simultaneously with this thought process. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli has first noted that a ready-formed nucleus of the thought process based on the *Sutta-piṭaka* material appears in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*.[230] I shall briefly look at the origins and evolution of the theory of the thought process (*vīthi-citta*).

2.3 The origins and evolution of the theory of the thought process in the Theravāda *Abhidhamma* canon

This section will show how the theory of the thought process, which usually occurs in the commentarial texts, was already implicit within the canonical *Abhidhamma* of the Theravāda. The earliest text in the *Abhidhamma* canon, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, envisages a series of thoughts consisting of one of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile consciousnesses or the mind consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*). The *Vibhaṅga* and the *Paṭṭhāna* subsequently outlined the specific sequences in which these thoughts occurred. The *Kathāvatthu* explicitly refers to thoughts as lasting only a moment each, and talks of the continuity of thoughts.[231] P. Harvey has briefly investigated the origins and evolution of the theory of the thought process.[232] On the basis of his survey, I have outlined below the theory in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, looking mainly at the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, *Vibhaṅga* and *Paṭṭhāna*.

2.3.1 The mechanism of the origin of thoughts in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*

The *Cittuppādakaṇḍa* of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* describes the mechanism of the origin of thoughts. This chapter aims at the classification of all types of consciousness and a detailed analysis of each. The *Cittuppādakaṇḍa* begins with a question and an answer:

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230 Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (1956, pp. 131-132, fn.13). See M I 111; M III 279; M I 295, etc. for the passages somehow related to the thought process.

231 Kv 458-459.

232 Harvey (1995), pp. 252-258.

> What are the skilful *dhammas*? Whenever (*yasmiṃ samaye*) a state of skilful consciousness belonging to the sensuous sphere has arisen, accompanied by joy and combined with knowledge, due to any object, [namely] an object of sight, sound, smell, taste, or tangible object or mental object, on that occasion (*tasmiṃ samaye*) there are: sense impression (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), apperception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), consciousness (*citta*)..... undistractedness (*avikkhepa*) (Dhs § 1).

Thus in the first part (*yasmiṃ samaye*) the type of consciousness is characterised in terms of the initial phase of the thought process,[233] both subjective and objective, while the second part (*tasmiṃ samaye*) provides fifty-six factors involved in the arising of thoughts.[234] My main concern here is the relationship in time between a material phenomenon and the series of the thought process.

As I noted in chapter 1,[235] time is represented in the Theravādin *Abhidhamma* by the term *samaya,* meaning both an occasion and chronological time. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* does not specify the duration of the arising of thoughts in relation to material phenomena. However, the commentarial exposition of *samaya* in the sense of 'time' briefly defines the relative duration of a material phenomenon and a unit of the mental phenomena giving a ratio of 1 : 16. Here, the word *samaya* is given five meanings: 1) *samavāya* (concurrence), 2) *khaṇa* (the right moment or opportunity), 3) *kāla* (time), 4) *samūha* (the group of occurrences) and 5) *hetu* (cause). It is noteworthy that the terms *khaṇa* and *kāla* are distinguished in this classification. That is to say, the term *khaṇa* is used in the sense of 'the right moment or opportunity', and not in the technical sense of 'the moment of arising, enduring and ceasing' (*uppādakkhaṇa*, *ṭhitikkhaṇa* and *bhaṅgakkhaṇa*) used in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary.[236] It is sufficient to point out that this seems to indicate the beginnings of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness within the commentarial texts.[237]

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233 Nyanaponika Thera classifies the subjective aspects of the thought process as: 1) the sphere of consciousness (the sensuous sphere), 2) the karmic value (skilful), 3) the emotional value (joyful), 4) presence or absence of knowledge (together with knowledge) and 4) spontaneous or non-spontaneous occurrence (spontaneous). See Nyanaponika (1985), pp. 34-35 for an explanation of the aspects.

234 The *Atthasālinī* adds nine supplementary factors (*ye-vā-panaka*) including *manasikāra* to the existing fifty-six (As 132).

235 p. 79, fn. 189.

236 As 57-59; Vibh-a 24-28.

237 I deal with this issue fully in § 3.1.

Other terms with which the theory of the thought process is introduced in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* are '*kiriyā*[238] mind element' (*mano-dhātu*) and '*kiriyā* mind consciousness element' (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*).

> **The *Kiriyā* mind element**: "What are the indeterminate *dhammas*? Whenever a state of **the *kiriyā* mind element** has arisen, neither skilful nor unskilful and not the result of *kamma*, which is accompanied by equanimity, due to any object, [namely] an object of sight ... a tangible object, on that occasion there are: sense impression, feeling, apperception, volition, consciousness ..... life faculty ... ."[239]
>
> **The *Kiriyā* mind consciousness element**: "What are the indeterminate *dhammas*? Whenever a state of t**he *kiriyā* mind consciousness element** has arisen, neither skilful nor unskilful and not the result of *kamma*, which is accompanied by pleasant feeling (*somanassa*), due to any object, [namely] an object of sight ... an object of *dhamma*, on that occasion there are: sense impression, feeling, apperception, volition, consciousness...life faculty... ."[240]

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* does not explain the difference between the mind element and the mind consciousness element precisely, although it retains the successive order of their occurrence in the thought process (i.e. the mind element first and then the mind consciousness element). As we shall see below, however, the *Vibhaṅga* clearly distinguishes the mind element from the mind consciousness element by specifying the order of their occurrence.

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238 The term *kiriyā* basically means 'action' or 'performance', but in the abhidhammic context *kiriyā* is mostly used in a highly technical sense. It designates a type of mentality which does not take part in the karmic process – it is neither the result of some previous action, nor does it give rise to any result in the future. Occurrences of the term *kiriyā* (*kiriya*, *kriyā*) in this highly technical sense are concentrated mainly in three abhidhammic texts: the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Paṭṭhāna*, and occasionally found in the *Kathāvatthu* (checked by *CD-Rs*). L.S. Cousins (1981) suggests that the term *kiriyā* should not be translated by words such as 'functional' or 'operative', which have inappropriate connotations, as the term applies most frequently to the state of mind of the arahat. It is intended to designate the spiritual sensitivity of a man of developed wisdom, who responds to every situation with appropriate activity and without partiality of any kind (pp. 26-27). Cf. C.A.F. Rhys Davids (1974), p. 145, fn. 1.

239 Dhs § 566: *Katame dhammā avyākatā ? yasmiṃ samaye* ***manodhātu*** *uppannā hoti* ***kiriyā*** *n' eva kusalā nâkusalā na ca kammavipākā upekkhāsahagatā rūpârammaṇā vā...pe...phoṭṭhabbârammaṇā vā-- yaṃ yaṃ vā panârabbha--tasmiṃ samaye phasso hoti, vedanā hoti, saññā hoti, cetanā hoti, cittaṃ hoti...jīvitindriyaṃ hoti,..... .* (Cf. Vibh 88, 182, 301).

240 Dhs § 568: *Katame dhammā avyākatā ? yasmiṃ samaye* ***manoviññāṇadhātu*** *uppannā hoti* ***kiriyā*** *n' eva kusalā nâkusalā na ca kammavipākā somassasahagatā rūpârammaṇā vā...pe...dhammârammaṇā vā-- yaṃ yaṃ vā panârabbha--tasmiṃ samaye phasso hoti, vedanā hoti, saññā hoti, cetanā hoti, cittaṃ hoti.....jīvitindriyaṃ hoti,..... .* (Cf. Dhs § 68; Vibh 89, 182, 302).

2.3.2 The basic principles of the thought process in the *Vibhaṅga*

A text of the Theravāda tradition that is complementary to and contemporaneous with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the *Vibhaṅga*, highlights a few basic principles of the thought process. For instance, the five types of sense consciousness (*pañca viññāṇā*) do not experience each other's field and domain; they do not arise without attention (*samannâhāra*) or without bringing to mind (*manasikāra*); they do not arise consecutively or simultaneously.[241] This suggests that the five types of sense consciousness cannot be activated by themselves, unless the mind element, as a sixth sense, operates by collating all the incoming data (*dhammā*), which is the raw material for the thought process.[242] Immediately after the cessation of the mind element that has arisen, there arises a set of cognitive experiences in the thought process, and eventually the appropriate mind consciousness element arises, and is ready to culminate in the comprehension of the input-data. This is documented in the *Vibhaṅga*, on the basis of the passages in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*:

> **The mind element**: Therein what is **the mind element** ? **Immediately after the cessation of the eye consciousness element that has arisen**, there arise consciousness, mind, ideation, heart [base], lucidity, mind, the mind sphere, the controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, *viññāṇa-kkhandha*..... [depending on the aforesaid there arises] **the corresponding mind element**. Or alternatively, [as] it is **the first attention** (***paṭhamasamannâhāro***) **with regard to *dhammas*** [so] this is called **the mind element**.[243]

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241 Vibh 307: "*na aññamaññassa gocaravisayaṃ paccanubhonti, na asamannāhārā uppajjanti, na amanasikārā uppajjanti, na abbokiṇṇā uppajjanti, na apubbaṃ acarimaṃ uppajjanti*.....". The auto-commentary in the *Vibhaṅga* 320 glosses *abbokiṇṇā* as *na paṭipāṭiyā* and *apubbaṃ acarimaṃ* as *ekakkhaṇe*. See the *Mahāvedallasutta* (M 295): *imesaṃ kho āvuso pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ nānāvisayānaṃ nānāgocaravisayaṃ na aññamaññassa gocaravisayānaṃ paccanubhontānaṃ **mano paṭisaraṇaṃ**. **mano ca nesaṃ gocaravisayaṃ paccanubhotī** ti.* (Now these five faculties, each having a separate field, a separate domain, not experiencing each other's field and domain, have ***mind as their collator***, and ***mind experiences their fields and domains***.)

242 Sue Hamilton (1996) has examined the meaning of the term *mano-dhātu* in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. In spite of the unclear and/ or conflicting evidence, she suggests that the *mano-dhātu* has a unique function as a collator of incoming data and can also be described as the sixth in a series of senses, in that it is the sense corresponding to 'mental' objects. Thus she renders the term *paṭisaraṇa* (literally 'resort') as 'collator' (p. 34, see also pp. 26-35). Although in the *Abhidharma-piṭaka mano-dhātu* has a technical meaning which distinguishes it from *manâyatana* and *mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*, the basic understanding of *mano-dhātu* in the *Sutta-piṭaka* can be applied to abhidharmic usage of the term *mano-dhātu.*

243 Vibh 88: *tattha katamā **manodhātu**? cakkhuviññāṇadhātuyā uppajjitvā niruddhasamanantarā uppajjati cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍaraṃ mano manâyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho..... , **tajjā manodhātu**; sabbadhammesu vā pana **paṭhamasamannāhāro**, ayaṃ vuccati **manodhātu***. (Cf. Dhs § 566).

> **The mind consciousness element**: Therein what is **the mind consciousness element** ? Immediately after the cessation of the eye consciousness element that has arisen, there arises the mind element. **Immediately after the cessation of the mind element that has arisen,** there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, etc. .....[depending on the aforesaid there arises] **the corresponding mind consciousness element**. This is called **the mind consciousness element**.[244]

It is noteworthy that the mind element is alternatively glossed above as: 'the first attention (*paṭhamasamannāhāro*) with regard to *dhammas*'. In other words, it seems to serve as a special filter to 'the sixth sense', collating our subjective responses to our objective environment. Here *dhammas* (note the use of the locative plural to express the object with reference to which action is done, *sabbadhammesu*, fn. 243) denote a pluralistic representation of the world. The 'mind element' denotes the receiver of these phenomena through the five sense faculties, and activates their respective sense consciousnesses to function.[245] Meanwhile, 'the first attention' seems to denote selectivity in processing the incoming data that we have received simultaneously from different sensory objects. The issue of selective attention and the perceiving agent and other related problems are sporadically debated in the *Kathāvatthu* and the exegetical works of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. We shall discuss some of them in the last section of this chapter.

2.3.3 A framework for the theory of the thought process in the *Paṭṭhāna*

Now we turn to the established structure of the thought process revealed in the *Paṭṭhāna* – the final work of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* in the traditional order. The work introduces for the first time in Pāli literature twenty-four types of condition (*paccaya*). The immediately relevant *paccaya* for the present purpose is the contiguity condition (*anantara-paccaya*). For instance, in the triplet under the heading 'Resultant Triplet' we read:

Vibh 182, 301: *katame dhammā avyākatā? yasmiṃ samaye* ***manodhātu*** *uppannā hoti* ***kiriyā***, *n' eva kusalā nâkusalā*..... .(Cf. Dhs § 566).

244 Vibh 89: *tattha katamā* ***manoviññāṇadhātu****? cakkhuviññāṇadhātuyā uppajjitvā niruddhasam-anantarā uppajjati* ***manodhātu***, ***manodhātuyā pi uppajjitvā niruddhasamanantarā*** *uppajjati cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ ...pe...* ***tajjā manoviññāṇadhātu***. *ayaṃ vuccati* ***manoviññāṇadhātu***. (Cf. Dhs § 68, § 568).
Vibh 182: *katame dhammā avyākatā? yasmiṃ samaye* ***manoviññāṇadhātu*** *uppannā hoti* ***kiriyā***, *n' eva kusalā nâkusalā*..... .(Cf. Dhs § 568; Vibh 302). <The bold letters are my emphasis and the marks '.....' are my omission. I have followed U Thittila's translation [Vibh trsl, 1969] for the *Vibhaṅga* and C.A.F. Rhys Davids' translation [Dhs trsl, 1974] for the *Dhammasaṅgani* with a few changes: e.g. advertence → attention, inoperative → *kiriyā* etc.. The same applies to footnotes 239, 240, 241 and 243.>

245 See Hamilton (1996), p. 28.

> Five-fold consciousness is related to the resultant mind element by the contiguity condition. **The resultant mind element** (*vipāka-mano-dhātu*) is related to **the resultant mind consciousness element** (*vipāka-mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*) by the contiguity condition. ... ***Bhavaṅga*** is related to advertence by the contiguity condition. The resultant mind consciousness element is related to the *kiriyā* mind consciousness element by the contiguity condition.[246]

Here the consistent framework of the thought process (i.e. the order: the mind element → the mind consciousness element), which we have seen above in the *Dhammasaṅgani* and the *Vibhaṅga*, is kept. The *Paṭṭhāna* however introduces new terms such as *bhavaṅga* and precisely specifies almost all the stages of the thought process. The distinction between a mind door and sense door process is known, although these terms are not used. Each of the separate functions is shown. This is best illustrated by the sense door process. *Bhavaṅga* is known by name,[247] but that name is only used where it is needed to avoid ambiguity, and it developed fully in conjunction with the thought process.[248] This illustrates the gradual evolution of the theory of the thought process within the early *Abhidhamma*. L.S. Cousins has attempted for the first time a serious analysis of the material relevant to the thought process in the *Paṭṭhāna* and shown some evidence that the main framework of the theory is the product of the Theravādin canonical *Abhidhamma*.[249] I will return to this issue when I deal with the thought process and the notion of momentariness in chapter 3.

To sum up, the *Cittuppādakaṇḍa* of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* provides the basic framework for how thoughts arise in relation to different types of *dhammas*. It outlines the function of the *kiriyā* mind element and the *kiriyā* mind consciousness element in the classification of *avyākata-dhammas* (indeterminate *dhammas*). The *Vibhaṅga* more or less keeps the same framework, with additional specifications as to how the mind element receives incoming

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246 The truncated PTS edition (*Tika-Paṭṭhāna*) omits this; see U Ñārada (1969), *Conditioned Relations* (I), pp. 406-407 (I have followed Nārada's translation with a few changes: e.g. proximity → contiguity).
CS CD-R (version 1.1, 1997), Myanmar I. 368:
pañcaviññāṇaṃ ***vipākamanodhātuyā*** *anantarapaccayena paccayo. vipākamanodhātu* ***vipākamano-viññāṇadhātuyā*** *anantarapaccayena paccayo. ...* ***bhavaṅgaṃ*** *āvajjanāya anantarapaccayena paccayo. vipākamano-viññāṇadhātu kiriyamanoviññāṇadhātuyā anantarapaccayena paccayo.*

247 The term *bhavaṅga* occurs throughout the *Paṭṭhāna* (Paṭṭh [C^e] I II III IV) 70 times (*bhavaṅgaṃ* -48; *bhavaṅgampi*-1; *bhavaṅgassa* - 21). Checked by *CS CD-R*.

248 Cousins (1981), p. 42.

249 *id.* pp. 41-42.

raw data at the preliminary stage of the thought process. Grasping and knowing both occur through the operation of the mind consciousness element. In other words, fully-fledged cognition takes place at subsequent stages of the thought process as a function of the various mental faculties. The *Paṭṭhāna* however introduces the concept of *bhavaṅga* and shows how the mind element and the mind consciousness element fit into its fairly sophisticated system of the thought process. This is how the theory of the thought process gradually evolved within the Theravādin *Abhidhamma* canon. Although these texts do not specify the relative time requirement of a material phenomenon and of the thought process, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary briefly defines the relative duration of a material phenomenon and a mental phenomenon, giving a ratio of 1 : 16. Nevertheless, as L.S. Cousins argues, the Theravādin theory of the thought process is not a product of the commentarial stage. It belongs rather to the classic *Abhidhamma*, although the fully elaborated theory is found in the commentaries. In the light of this history of the textual development of the theory, we shall now look at the commentarial interpretation of the phrase 'corresponding attention' (*tajjo samannāhāra*) in the canonical passages of the *Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta* cited in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*.

2.3.4 The commentarial interpretation of the phrase 'corresponding attention'

Although the *Kathāvatthu* commentary is silent on the citation, the commentary on the *Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta* explicitly relates 'corresponding attention' to the sensory process:

> 'Corresponding attention' (*tajjo samannāhāra*) refers to *manasikāra* (i.e. bringing to mind or paying attention) which occurs (*uppajjamāna*) depending on the eye and the visual object, after adverting to the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) consciousness. Consciousness of the *kiriyā* mind element in the eye-door is capable of adverting to the life-continuum.[250]

The above exegesis is based on the standard theory of the thought-process in the commentaries. An appropriate act of attention is here understood as a specific function of

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250 Ps II 229[27-30]: *tajjo samannāhāro ti cakkhuñ ca rūpe ca paṭicca bhavaṅgaṃ āvaṭṭetvā uppajjamāna*-manasikāro. bhavaṅgâvaṭṭanasamatthaṃ cakkhudvāre kiriyamanodhātucittan ti attho* (*variant reading: *uppajjana* Bc).

the *kiriyā* mind element, which adverts to the life-continuum consciousness in order for perception to occur. This implies that all sensory activity involves the activity of the *kiriyā* mind element. If it is the coordinator and collator of all sensory input, then it is activated whenever any of the other five senses function: though the *kiriyā* mind element would be involved in the process whereby arising of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile pleasure arise, as the term *kiriyā* indicates, it would not in itself be the basis for a specific type of pleasure. According to the standard theory of the thought process, the actual experience of sensory input occurs a few steps later, when the *kiriyā* mind consciousness element carries out its function of examining (*santīraṇa*) and then 'establishing' or 'determining' (*voṭṭhapana*) the data filtered. How long would it take to process and experience sensory data fully ? Or more precisely, what is the relative rate of change of the mental phenomenon and the material phenomenon which is its object ? A ready-made answer is afforded by the commentaries, which state that the sense object and the sensitive matter of the sense organ both have a duration of sixteen or seventeen thought moments in the case of full process (*ati-mahanta*).[251] Thus the thought process requires a few seconds for processing, before full cognition can take place. At this point, it is worth returning to the second argument and to the citation from the *Kaṇikakathā* discussed above, which seem to imply that a material phenomenon cannot arise simultaneously with this series of the thought process.

2.3.5 An evaluation of the first and second argument and their citation in the *Khaṇikakathā*

As stated above, the main concern of the first and second arguments is the issue of the simultaneity (*sahajāta*) of the sense organs and sense objects with consciousness (this is the third question formulated at the beginning of this chapter). We have asked whether this canonical citation is focused on the right issue here. The theory of the thought process which originated in the canonical *Abhidhamma* texts has provided us with a fairly good contextual understanding of the phrase 'corresponding attention' in the citation of canonical testimony. Moreover, the exegesis of this phrase in the commentary on the

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251 See § 3.2.3-(3), § 3.2.5-(6).

Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta confirms the gradual evolution of the theory of the thought process from the classical abhidhammic canons to the commentaries. This would enable us to expand our scope of inquiry to the epistemology underlying the theory of momentariness. Some of the relevant issues are disputed in the different chapters of the *Kathāvatthu*, and can mostly be traced in the literary sources of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. Before leaving the present discussion, I will evaluate the first and second arguments and their citation in the *Khaṇikakathā* in the light of my observations above, and review von Rospatt's interpretation of this issue.

The refutation in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the doctrine that all phenomena are as transient as mental phenomena suggests that at this stage the Theravādins had not yet accepted the momentariness of all conditioned phenomena; but it may well be that the refutation is not directed generally against the doctrine that material phenomena are momentary, but only specifically against the position that mental and material phenomena are equally short-lived. This possibility has not been ruled out by von Rospatt, but he seems to be reluctant to take this interpretation. I tend to think, however, that the first argument in the *Khaṇikakathā* reflects the canonical concept that mental phenomena are briefer than material ones,[252] and that the second argument implies the commentarial stance that the duration of matter corresponds to one unit of perception, which consists of several mental phenomena. This would not necessarily contradict the first argument, for I contend that the former represents a general assumption based on common sense, whereas the latter somehow implies an advanced theory of momentariness based on the former, but not yet the fully-fledged version found in the theory of the thought process developed in the Theravādin *Abhidhamma* and commentarial texts. Von Rospatt, however, claims that the second argument stands in opposition to the first one, because he assumes that the second reflects the later Theravādins' fully-developed position that the duration of matter corresponds to one unit of perception, which is made up of a specific number of mental phenomena (i.e.

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252 S II 94; A I 10.

seventeen).[253] Karunadasa remarks that the arguments in the *Khaṇikakathā* suggest the relative permanence of matter in general.[254]

In any case, this problematic issue probably motivated the Theravādins to seek a solution and eventually gave rise to their unique doctrine that a material phenomenon lasts as long as sixteen or seventeen mental phenomena. This allowed them to explain how one and the same object synchronises not with each separate mental phenomenon but with the full mental unit of the thought process. This seems to be the solution that the Theravādins proposed to the problem of the delayed perception of the world. I am therefore inclined to think that the refutation in the *Khaṇikakathā* served as a starting point: a place where the Theravādins honed their arguments and prepared a foundation for the fully-fledged Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. This hypothesis will be supported by a comparative chronology of the textual traditions of both the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. I have addressed this issue in the following section, which considers my fourth question: "What is the relative textual chronology of the unsophisticated polemic in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* and the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's literary sources?"

2.4 Buddhist epistemology in relation to the theory of momentariness

2.4.1 A sketch of Buddhist epistemological issues in relation to the theory of momentariness

The doctrine of momentariness received divergent interpretations from the time of the early Ābhidharmikas up to that of the late Buddhist logicians (Dharmakīrti [the 7th century CE], Ratnakīrti [the 11th century CE], etc.). In the earlier phase, the debate on momentariness is still confined to the Buddhist doctrinal tenets in the *Abhidharma* texts and the early Yogācāra sources, but in the later phase the doctrine is elaborated and refined by using highly sophisticated logical skills to respond to criticism from the Jain and Brahmanical schools. One of the objections postulated by the proponents of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and

253 This is one of his two suggestions. See von Rospatt (1995) p. 20, fn. 22 for the other.
254 Karunadasa (1967), p. 82.

other schools[255] is that no perception is possible on the Buddhist premise of momentariness (here, the term Buddhist, strictly speaking, should refer to Sarvāstivādins and Yogācārins). Perception presupposes contact between a sense organ and its sense object. According to this information-processing system, a stimulus (i.e. an objective event) is presented to the subject, and this stimulus causes certain internal processes to occur. The objective event comes first and the internal thought process follows. If the Buddhist idea of momentariness is to be taken seriously, it would imply that when the thought process occurs the objective contact is not longer extant, and when the contact is present, the cognition has not yet been effected.

A similar argument is formulated within the Buddhist tradition itself. The Sautrāntikas in particular refute the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' position that the perception of the object and the object itself arise at the same moment. This has been documented in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (the 5th century CE).[256] The historical roots of epistemological debate in a rather crude form can be traced back to the *Mahāvibhāṣa* (the 2nd century CE)[257] and even further back to the **Jñānaprasthāna*/ **Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra* (the 1st century BCE)[258] via the multiple recensions of *vibhāṣā* compendia.[259]

2.4.2 The relative textual chronology of related issues in the different sections of the *Kathāvatthu* and in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' literary sources

Though not directly testifying to the doctrine of momentariness, there are related issues in the *Kathāvatthu*. They are scattered throughout the different sections of the work. In the *Samādhikathā*, for instance, the Theravādins argue that even the specific mental phenomenon 'concentration' (*samādhi*) is not to be defined as the continuity of thoughts

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255 The Brahmanical arguments against the Buddhist theory of momentariness have been collected in the book "*Buddhism as Presented by the Brahmanical Systems*" by C.V. Kher (1992), pp. 15-19, 47-57, 105-112, 179-202, 287-296, 524-525, 529-531, 543-547, 578-588.

256 AKB kr 32 a-b, 145-146.

257 MVB T 27 787^{c17}-788^{a21}.

258 JP-H T 27 998^{c20-24}; AAS-D T 876^{b18-22}.

259 See Intro. p. 14, fn. 44.

(*cittasantati*) but as a single, momentary mental phenomenon.[260] They also refute in the *Cittaṭṭhitikathā* the position that a certain mental state can last for an entire day.[261] The Theravādins' argument in the *Khaṇikakathā* seems to presuppose the position that mental phenomena are invariably momentary. As suggested earlier, the Theravādins specifically deny that material and mental phenomena are equally momentary. Nevertheless it is by no means clear whether this controversy represents a genuine debate with a real opponent or whether it is merely a constructed polemic based on related ideas circulating about among early Buddhists. We can at least gather from our analysis of the *Khaṇikakathā* that the polemic directly reflects the issue of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness documented in the doxographical account by Vasumitra[262] as well as in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' literary sources.

In the **Jñānaprasthāna*, the canonical work of the Sarvāstivādins, it is taught that the four gross elements constituting the matter of the sensory faculties (*indriyamahābhūta*) arise, endure and perish together with their respective mental phenomenon.[263] This would imply their momentariness – although it refers only to the sensory faculties and not to the objects – provided the mental entities are considered to be momentary in this context. Von Rospatt however suggests that this is taught apart from the issue of momentariness, and that there is no indication in the **Jñānaprasthāna* that this simultaneity was taken to imply the momentariness of the sense faculties or even of all material entities.[264] In the

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260 Kv 458: *atītā cittasantati samādhī ti ? na h' evaṃ vattabbe -- pe -- ekacittakkhaṇiko samādhī ti ? āmantā.* The Theravādin canonical definition of *samādhī* is 'the one-pointedness of mind (*cittass' ekaggatā*) on a single object' (S V 21; M I 301; cf. Dhs § 15). The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (T 27 821^{c2-5}) presents various opinions on the difference between *samādhi* and *samāpatti*. *Samādhi* is understood as a momentary (*kṣaṇika*) absorption; *samāpatti* as continuous (*prabandha*) absorption. Hsiang-hsüh (*santāna*) may be understood as *prabandha* (rather than *santāna*), as it does not refer to the continuum of phenomena (*santāna*) to which the correlated phenomenon belongs, but to the causal linkage between the *vināśalakṣaṇa* and its effect. See von Rospatt (1995, p. 242) for further discussion. *Samādhi* always involves the mind (*sacittaka*); this mind can be either *samāhita* (absorbed) or *vyagra* (dispersed). The *samāpatti* can be accompanied by mind or not (e.g. *asaṃjñisamāpatti* and *saṃjñāveditanirodhyāsamāpatti*). Cf. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (VIII kr 1) and the *Visuddhimagga* (III §3).

261 Kv 204 : *ekaṃ cittaṃ divasaṃ tiṭṭhatī ti.*

262 See Masuda (1925, pp. 1-75) for an English translation; the doxographical account in the fourth chapter (*prakaraṇa*) of the *Tarkajvālā* by Bhāvaviveka (the 6th century CE), which is also transmitted in the Tibetan Tanjur as a separate text named the *Śramaṇapañcā-śatkārikāpadābhismaraṇa* (Peking-Tanjur 5630) ascribed to Bhavya (cited by von Rospatt, 1995, p. 29).

263 JP-H, T 26 998^{c20-24}; AAS-D, T 26 876^{b18-22}.

264 Von Rospatt (1995), p. 125; cf. § I.A.2.2.

*Mahāvibhāṣā, in contrast, this passage is explicitly interpreted as a demonstration that not only mental but also material entities are momentary.[265] In other words, simultaneity of the sensory faculties and their respective mental acts was taken to mean that they arise and perish at the same moment. Although I admit that there is no direct reference to the issue of momentariness in the *Jñānaprasthāna, I contend that it provided the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas with immediately relevant sources, which they could interpret in line with the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness. Moreover, if one accepts that the *Mahāvibhāṣā was compiled at the time of Kaniṣka (the 2nd century CE),[266] and given that it is a grand compilation of the various doctrinal analyses and interpretative positions current at the time of its composition, it may be possible to date the commentarial interpretation of the relevant passages on the theory of momentariness in the *Mahāvibhāṣā back to the first century CE. That is to say, if we consider that a wide range of views on the doctrinal issues already existed in different recensions of *vibhāṣā* compendia prior to the *Mahāvibhāṣā, then a ready-formed nucleus of the theory of momentariness may well have appeared in some of the recensions of *vibhāṣā* compendia directly derived from the *Jñānaprasthāna. Thus, although von Rospatt proposes the second century CE as the latest date for the theory of momentariness, he also does not rule out the possibility that it may date back to the first century CE as I have suggested. However, he further proposes a closer examination of the pertinent material in the three extant *vibhāṣā* compendia and also in the

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265 T 27 787^{c17-23}.

266 Tradition supplies a possible chronological anchor for the dating of the textual material, with the claim that the Sarvāstivāda canon of texts was revised and a *vibhāṣā* compendium composed during the reign of the Kuśāṇa king, Kaniṣka. Unfortunately, scholarly disagreement about the date of Kaniṣka and whether or not Kaniṣka can be reliably associated with either the revision of the canon or the *vibhāṣā* compendia undermines the utility of this tradition. P.H.L. Eggermont (1968, pp. 87-93) may be taken as representative of the scholarly position supporting the association of the Sarvāstivādins and their Synod with the reign of Kaniṣka. In contrast, for evidence against accepting, as more than legend, the association of Kaniṣka with a Sarvāstivāda Synod or with the composition of the *vibhāṣā* compendia, see E. Zürcher, 1968, pp. 357ff. Even if the connection with Kaniṣka is accepted, questions remain about his date. Whereas Eggermont and A.L. Basham (1968, pp. x-xi) accept the standard date of 78 CE for the reign of Kaniṣka (which is still defended, for example, by G. Fussman 1974, pp. 43ff.), many scholars accept a somewhat later date in the second century CE. For instance, E. Lamotte (1958, p. 648) places his reign in 128-151 CE, on the basis of Hsüan-tsang's report (T 51 887^{a}) in the Ta T'ang Hsi-yü Chi. I have tentatively accepted the later chronology of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (the 2nd century CE) for the obvious reason that until a consensus on the date of Kaniṣka supersedes the current conflicting findings of various scholars and of different disciplines, the dating of the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* texts cannot be significantly aided by recourse to the external evidence (see C. Cox, 1998, pp. 148-149; Von Rospatt, 1995, p. 25, fn. 38). The Chinese translations of the *vibhāṣā* compendia, the *Vibhāṣā* (T 1547), the *Abhidharmavibhāṣā* (T 1546) and the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (T 1545) were made in 383 CE by Saṅghabhadra, 439 CE by Buddhavarman and 659 CE by Hsüan-tsang respectively.

early post-canonical *Abhidharma* works of the Sarvāstivāda such as the *Abhidharmāmṛtarasa* (T 1553) by Ghoṣaka and *Abhidharmasāra* (T 1550) by Dharmaśrī. In fact, von Rospatt briefly examines Ghoṣaka's and Dharmaśrī's works, and shows the difficulty of dating the theory of momentariness back to the second century CE on the basis of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. This is due to the lack of references to the theory of momentariness in those early post-canonical works. Accordingly, he is reluctant to rule out the possibility that all passages testifying to the notion of momentariness in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* were added only after its compilation in the second century CE.[267] I would suggest, however, that we have to consider that at its developing stage the theory of momentariness was not the central issue and that even in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' literary sources it was rather marginal and not dealt with as a topic in itself.[268] It was only dealt with extensively in the writings of the early Yogācāras, notably in the *Hsien-yang shêng-chiao lun* ascribed to Asaṅga.[269] Therefore I contend that the lack of direct references to the theory of momentariness in those early post-canonical works may not be sufficient to disprove the date suggested on the basis of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. It also seems unnecessary to assume that all passages testifying to the notion of momentariness in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* were added only after its compilation in the second century CE; this is because the **Jñānaprasthāna* provides immediately relevant passages which can readily be interpreted from the standpoint of the theory of momentariness in its commentary, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. If we accept the first century CE as the probable date for the theory of momentariness, the argument in the *Khaṇikakathā* (the proposed date of which is the 1st century BCE) becomes more meaningful. The comprehensive chronology of the doctrine of momentariness will be revealed when we examine the Theravādin commentaries of the *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka* in

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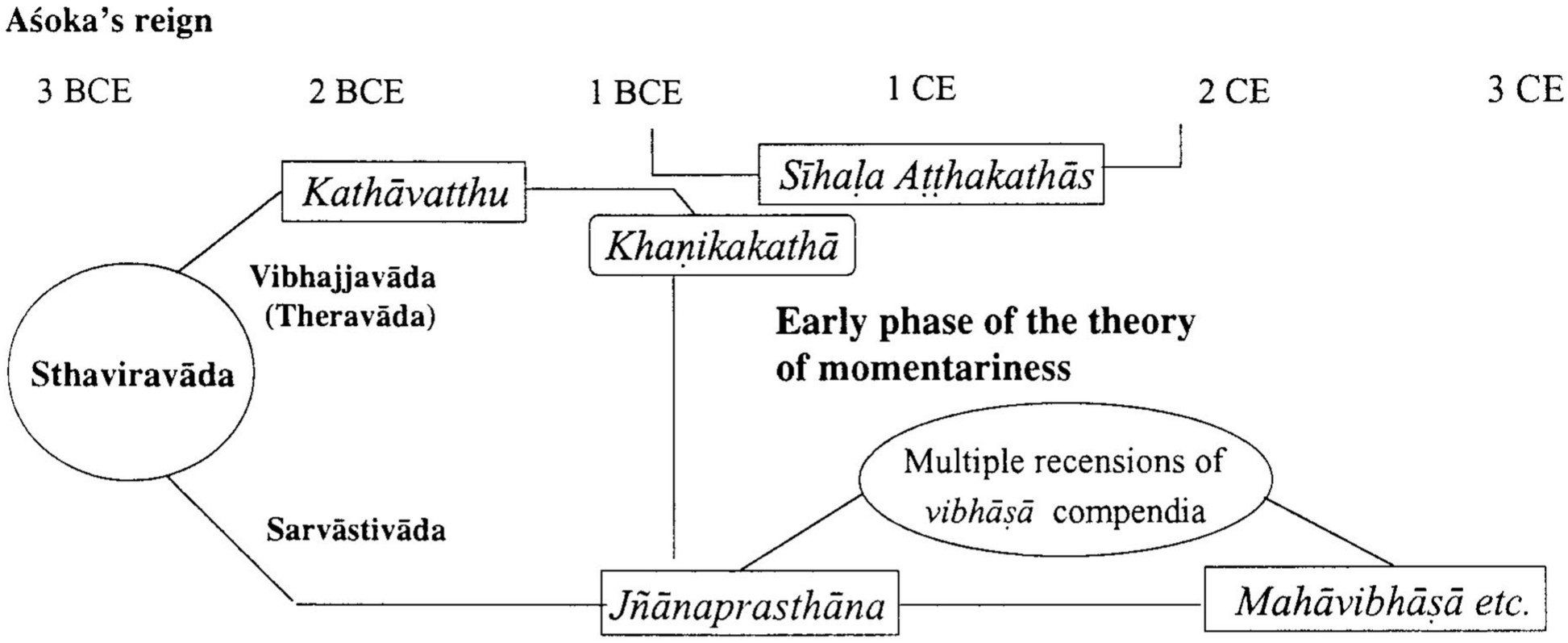
267 Von Rospatt (1995) pp. 27-28.

268 *id.* p. 67, fn. 144.

269 The doctrine of momentariness is treated in its own right in the textual tradition of the early Yogācāras, such as the *Yogācārabhūmi* [Y], the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* [AS] with commentary, the *Abhidharma-samuccayabhāṣya* [ASB] and the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* [MSA] with commentary, the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkārabhāṣya* [MSAB] ascribed to Vasubandhu. The *Hsien-yang shêng-chiao lun* [HY, T 1602] which is only transmitted in Chinese translation, offers the most comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of momentariness, dealing with all important aspects of this doctrine in the early phase. Von Rospatt (1995, pp. 219-248) has carefully studied the text and provides an annotated translation of the analysis of *anityatā* (T 30 548^{a2}-548^{c18}) and of the proof of momentariness (548^{c18}-549^{b21}) in his appendix. He has also documented his translation with parallel passages from other Yogācāra sources [ASB, MSAB, etc.]. See von Rospatt (1995, pp. 253-259) for abbreviations and bibliography.

the next chapter, where there is direct reference to the Sīhaḷa *Aṭṭhakathā*, to which little exegetical material was added after the first century CE.[270] The comparative chronology discussed so far is shown in the following diagram (Figure 2-1).

Figure 2-1: Historical development of the theory of momentariness in the textual tradition of the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas



On the basis of the above analysis of the comparative chronology, I propose the hypothesis that the disputed doctrine of all-encompassing momentariness, in conjunction with the background issue of epistemology in the *Khaṇikakathā*, is a response to the statement in the **Jñānaprasthāna* that the four gross elements constituting the matter of the sensory faculties (*indriyamahābhūta*) arise, endure and perish together with their respective mental phenomenon. The Theravādins probably understood this passage in the same way as the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas did and formulated the proposition, in some of the multiple recensions of *vibhāṣā* compendia, that the primary elements constituting the sense faculties arise, endure and perish simultaneously with the mental phenomenon.[271] To substantiate this conjecture I now turn to some epistemological issues underlying the theory of momentariness presented in the textual traditions of the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika.

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270 Norman (1983) p. 119.
271 JP-H T 27 998^{c20-24}.

2.4.3 The controversy about the perceiving agent: the eyes or consciousness ?

The problem of the perceiving agent has been a fundamental issue throughout the history of Buddhist epistemology. The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas and other early Buddhists in general deny the existence of an unchanging phenomenon, *ātman* or *pudgala*, but the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas in particular accept the reality of *dharmas* in a strict ontological sense. They admit the existence of external realities separate from and independent of our cognition and ideas. Accordingly, they postulate the theory that external data are perceived by the eyes and other sense faculties and not by consciousness, although consciousness operates simultaneously with the corresponding sense faculties and the sense data. In contrast, the Sautrāntikas argue in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* that the sense faculties and the external data and consciousness do not operate simultaneously. They are asynchronous; an external object precedes the sense faculty by one moment, and the perception of the object takes place one moment after the sense faculty functions. Hence, three moments are necessary for perception to be completed. The early evidence of this controversy can be found in the *Kathāvatthu* and the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's early exegetical texts: the **Pañcavastukavibhāsāśāstra* and the **Mahāvibhāsā*.

At the outset, it should be noted that my main concern here is the issues connected with the theory of momentariness rather than the epistemological issue itself. The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's early exegetical works and the *Cakkhunā Rūpaṃ Passatī ti Kathā*, XVIII 9 (henceforth, CRPK) of the *Kathāvatthu* do not explicitly address the theory of momentariness, but simply refer to it indirectly while discussing the perceiving agent.

Although the *Abhidharma* controversy about visual perception occurs in the *Kathāvatthu*, the Theravādin treatment of this issue is simple and fragmentary, compared to the complex and rich dialectic of argument preserved in the Northern Buddhist textual sources. However, a comprehensive study of this issue is too vast and complex to include in this survey; my approach to this issue has been selective rather than systematic. The subject is treated more fully by Collett Cox (1988) in her article "On the Possibility of a Nonexistent

Object of Consciousness: Sarvāstivādin and Dārṣṭāntika Theories" and by Bhikkhu K. Dhammajoti (1997) in his paper "The Abhidharma Controversy on Visual Perception".[272]

The simple debate about whether it is the eye or consciousness which perceives an object is recorded in the later portion the CRPK of the *Kathāvatthu.* This indicates that the CRPK must have been added after the composition of the core of the *Kathāvatthu.* Although the CRPK occurs a few chapters earlier than the *Khaṇikakathā* (XXII 8), the same probable date can be applied to the CRPK (the latest probable date for its inclusion seems to be the 1st century BCE, if we accept K R Norman's suggestion). The Theravādins dispute in the CRPK the position that the perceiving agent is the eye which sees the external object. They provide a couple of simple arguments and a canonical citation by a rival school.[273] Firstly, it is argued that one does not see and recognise the external object through materiality (i.e. the physical eye), and that materiality cannot be identified with the mind-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇa*). Secondly, the eye itself does not possess the function of adverting, wishing, and so on. The opponent however contends that the perceiving agents of sensory data are the eye, the ear and the rest. He supports his argument by citing canonical passages, e.g. "Here, monks, a monk sees the visual object through the eye ..... touches the tangible object through the body".[274] The Theravādins do not explicitly say that the perceiving agent of external data is consciousness, but we gather from the above arguments that the thought process plays a distinctive role in allowing perception to take place. In other words, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the Theravādins claim that the sense-organ alone cannot perceive sensory data unless there is a specific process of mind, namely, an appropriate act of attention or adverting, combined with the coming into existence of the subsequent thought process. Further diverse views on the issue of the perceiving agent are to be found in the **Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra* and the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.

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272 Cox (1988, pp. 31-87); Dhammajoti (1997, pp. 70-117).
273 The *Kathāvatthu* commentary (Kv-a 177) attributes the opposing view to the Mahāsaṅghika.
274 S IV 104; Dhs § 597.

The commentary of the **Pañcavastuka*, the **Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra* of Dharmatrāta[a],[275] is a precursor of, or roughly contemporaneous with the *vibhāṣā* compendia and provides examples of earlier stages in the development of both their exegetical techniques and certain specific interpretative positions.[276] The **Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra* presents the four different positions on the issue of the perceiving agent, namely that the agent is 1) the eye, 2) the eye-consciousness, 3) *prajñā* associated with the eye-consciousness or 4) the combination of *citta* and *caitasika*. The disputant argues that each of these four positions is untenable. The eye alone, he argues, cannot perceive in the absence of consciousness. Eye-consciousness whose characteristic is mere awareness (*prativijñapti*) cannot see, just as *prajñā* associated with the ear-consciousness cannot hear. And the combination of *citta* and *caitasika* is uncertain; the skilful consciousness is accompanied by, at times, twenty-two *caitasikas* and the unskilful one by twenty-one *caitasikas*, and so on.[277] Dharmatrāta[a] defends the authoritative view of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. He first distinguishes two aspects of the eye: i) the visual organ in activity of seeing (*sabhāga-cakṣu*) and ii) the visual organ in non-activity of seeing (*tatsabhāga-cakṣu*).[278] He asserts that only the eye (*sabhāga-cakṣu*) associated with the eye-consciousness perceives the visual object.

The **Mahāvibhāṣā*[279] discusses this issue and attributes each position to specific figures or schools. For instance, it regards the first position, namely, that the eye sees the visual object, as the authoritative view of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika. The second position, that consciousness is the perceiving agent, is attributed to Dharmatrāta[b] (probably not the same as Dharmatrāta[a], author of the **Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra*). The third position,

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275 I have used marks [a] and [b] to distinguish this author from one to whom is attributed below the position that the eye-consciousness is the perceiving agent.

276 Cox (1998), p. 231.

277 The idea expressed here will become much clearer from the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* II krs 28-30. 22 *caitasikas*: 10 general, 10 *kuśalabhūmikas*, *vitarka* and *vicāra*; 21 *caitasikas*: 10 general, 10 *akuśalabhūmikas* and 1 *kaukṛtya*; 18 *caitasikas*: 10 general, 6 *kleśabhūmika*, *vitarka* and *vicāra*; 12 *caitasikas*: 10 general, *vitarka* and *vicāra*.

278 Dharmatrāta[a] defines the term *sabhāga* as 'that which is endowed with activity and function' and *tatsabhāga* as 'that which is endowed with no activity and function' (T 28 991$^{b5ff.}$). See ADB I kr 39; [AKB trsl] I 111 for more detailed definitions.

279 MVB T 27 61$^{c5ff.}$.

namely, that what perceives the visual object is *prajñā* in association with the eye-consciousness, is said to be the opinion of Ghoṣaka. Instead of the fourth position, the Dārṣṭāntikas' view, which emphasises the mutual correspondence of the eye, the visual data and the eye-consciousness, is presented. It is on this epistemological stance that the Sautrāntikas[280] in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* elaborate and eventually establish their position on the basis of the principle of causal relationship. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* also refers to the Vātsīputrīyas' view that the visual object is perceived by one eye, not by both eyes.[281] The issue of the perceiving agent is found in the later textual sources, and is more fully addressed in Saṃghabhadra's **Nyāyānusārā*.[282] The following chart (Table 2-1) shows the attributions of the theory of the perceiving agent to figures or schools by the early textual sources.[283]

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280 In the **Mahāvibhāṣā* we find 86 references to the term Dārṣṭāntika, only 2 to the term Sautrāntika. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, this is reversed; the Dārṣṭāntikas are cited only 3 times and Sautrāntikas 20. In the **Nyāyānusāra*, however, the apparent trend toward the use of 'Sautrāntika' is reversed once again: the term Dārṣṭāntikas is used almost 3 times more often than the term Sautrāntika. See Cox (1995, pp. 37-41) and Willemen (1998, pp. 108-9) for the recent scholarly discussions on the relationship between the Dārṣṭāntikas and the Sautrāntikas.

281 MVB T 27 61$^{c5ff.}$.The **Jñānaprasthāna* (T 26 919^{c27}-920^{a4}) clearly states that the visual object is perceived by both eyes, not by one eye. The **Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra* (T 28 991$^{c13ff.}$) cites a passage from the **Jñānaprasthāna*, but it seems to take this problem as a side issue derived from the main concern of the perceiving agent. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (I kr 43ab) also has a passing comment on this issue.

282 The *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* that came after the **Mahāvibhāṣā* provides an elaborate account of the controversy, the first part of which is similar to the **Pañcavastukavibhāṣāśāstra* (T 28 991$^{c13ff.}$). Vasubandhu advocates the Sautrāntika's position in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (I krs 39-42). Saṃghabhadra, in his *Nyāyānusārā*, argues at length in defence of the orthodox Vaibhāṣika position. Thus, as in the case of Saṃghabhadra, the author of the *Abhidharmadīpa* with auto-commentary, the *Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti* (pp. 31ff.), responds directly to the *Abhidharmakośakārikā* and *Bhāṣya*. Cf. Harivarman's **Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (T 32 267T 32 267^{a6}-268^{a10}) and K'uei-chi's *Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun Shu Chi* (T 1822). See Cox (1988, pp. 31-87) and Dhammajoti (1997, pp. 70-117) for the comprehensive treatment of this issue.

283 I have not included the later textual sources here.

Table 2-1: The attributions of the theory of the perceiving agent to figures or schools in the early textual sources

The Perceiving Agent / Texts	EYE *(sabhagaca-cakṣu)*	CONSCIOUSNESS	WISDOM + CONSCIOUSNESS	CITTA + CETASIKA	EYE + sense data + CONSCIOUSNESS
Kathāvatthu / Kv-a	Uttarāpathaka	- -	- -	- -	Theravāda (?)
Pañcavastukaśāstra	Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika	unspecified	unspecified	unspecified	- -
Mahāvibhāṣā	Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika	Dharmatrāta[b]	Ghoṣaka	- -	Dārṣṭantika

The mutual correspondence (i.e. the eye, the visual data and the eye-consciousness) and the thought process are particularly emphasised by the Dārṣṭāntikas' view. Although Dārṣṭāntikas' contention does not directly address the issue of material and mental momentariness, it seems to be implied in their understanding of the perceiving agent in terms of the cooperative relations of the cognitive tools in the process. In other words, there is the underlying assumption that there has to be mutual correspondence of the three cognitive tools (as above) in order for perception to occur; and secondly, that the sense data that come into contact with the respective sense organs are processed by an appropriate thought process (such as attending, feeling and receiving etc.), which may require a few seconds before cognition takes place. As far as the Sautrāntikas are concerned, cognition is a mere factor (*dharma-mātra*) manifested by the relation of cause and effect (*hetu-phala*); it is not a phenomenon which can be explained by the interaction (*kārya-kāraṇa*) of the subject and object. That is to say, the point instant of the origin of an object and that of the sense organ's operation cannot be simultaneous with the origination moment of consciousness. This is because there is no direct concomitance between the three factors. Accordingly, they cannot be intrinsic components of cognition. In other words, at the moment that perception occurs, the point instants of the object and of the sense organ's operation have become a past event. The only present factors are those involved in cognition, and this is revealed by the cause and effect of the anterior and posterior moments. This is the fundamental position of the Sautrāntikas' epistemology with regard to the

dharma theory and the doctrine of momentariness. They further insist that although we generally say 'the eye sees' or 'I am aware of something', this is not how perception actually operates, for cognition itself is a single factor which cannot be divided according to a subject-object dichotomy.[284]

In contrast, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas consider cognitive phenomena as ontologically related to the sensory faculties and objects, and to the perception of objects. Saṅghabhadra repeatedly argues that a reality means a *dharma* having its own separate nature (*svabhāva*) and function (*kriyā*, *kāritra*), and that a real phenomenon cannot have two or more natures and functions.[285] This is the fundamental concept of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's realism, which is reflected in their discussion of the perceiving agent. If a *dharma* has two or more natures and functions, the classification of *dharmas* has no meaning. The essential nature of consciousness is illumination and its function is cognition.[286] They argue that consciousness cannot have both functions, namely seeing and cognition, because the eye and consciousness belong to different categories of *dharmas*. If this holds true, then the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's whole system of *dharma*-categories collapses. This fundamental position led them to another important theory: that consciousness itself possesses no content or image to be perceived. Consciousness has illumination as its own nature and cannot have the image which belongs exclusively to its object as its own nature, as this would amount to having two natures. In the later Indian philosophical schools this theory is known as 'the theory of knowledge without images' (*nirākāra-jñāna-vāda*).[287]

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284 AKB I kr 42, 68-69.

285 NAS T 29 365[a3-5].

286 See Kajiyama (1977), p. 118.

287 The theory of knowledge without images (*nirākāra-* or *anākāra-jñānavāda*) must be understood by comparison with the theory of knowledge with an image (*sākārajñānavāda*). The necessary corollary of the *sākārajñānavāda* is that cognition denotes nothing other than self-cognition (*svasaṃvedana*). Self-cognition does not mean that cognition perceives another cognition but that cognition is conscious of itself. This view is maintained by the Sautrāntikas and Sāṃkhya and Vedānta. The *nirākārajñānavādins* however think that knowledge cannot be conscious of itself. What is known by knowledge is different from knowledge. The image or form belongs to the object, and knowledge illuminates it. This is mainly claimed by the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas and the Nyāyavaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsaka and Jaina. See Kajiyama (1977), pp. 118, 123-126.

As for the Theravādins, they do not regard the perceiving agent as an isolated single component such as the eye or consciousness, but rather consider such components to be synthetically related entities in the thought process. This position seems to have an affinity with the Dārṣṭantikas' opinion, which is further elaborated in the Sautrāntikas' doctrinal system. As shown at the beginning of this chapter, the second argument in the *Khaṇikakathā* considers the simultaneity of mental and material phenomena on the basis of a canonical citation which implicitly addresses the incompatibility between the thought process and the theory of momentariness. I have also discussed above the origins of the theory of the thought process in the Theravādin *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* in order to support my hypothesis that the refutation in the *Khaṇikakathā* served to initiate and develop theories which led to the fully-fledged Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. My hypothesis may be substantiated by a foray into another – rather fragmented – epistemological issue: the contiguous arising of the sense perceptions in the *Anantarakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* and the contiguity condition (*anantara-paccaya*) which applies to the mental phenomena (*cittas* and *cetasikas*) but not to the material phenomena.

2.4.4 The contiguity condition as the basic premise of the thought process

According to the Theravādins, mental and material phenomena cannot arise and cease simultaneously, for the simple reason that they operate on the basis of different principles of causality.[288] Mental phenomena and their *cetasikas* work on the contiguity condition (*anantara-paccaya*). For example, skilful mental states are conditioned by preceding skilful or neutral states, unskilful states by preceding unskilful or neutral ones and neutral states by any preceding ones. But this same basic premise cannot be applied to the domain of materiality. The fact that phenomena succeed each other in a regular order is not always true of material phenomena, which operate on the principle of prior arising (*purejāta-paccaya*) and posterior arising (*pacchājāta-paccaya*).[289] The *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Khaṇikakathā* points

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288 There is an exception: the mental and material phenomena (*nāma-rūpa*) arise simultaneously at the moment of rebirth (*okkantikkhaṇa*) on the basis of the condition of simultaneous arising (*sahajāta-paccaya*). Here the conditionality is recognised as reciprocal with a view to showing that both come into being simultaneously and that the one cannot come into being independently of the other (Tikap 3,14).

289 Tikap 4-5, 17.

out the precise difference between the material and mental phenomena in this system, as follows:

> Regarding the materiality of the earth and so on, arising and ceasing of whatever they are, thus there is a [process] of support (*patiṭṭhāna*) by means of the continuity of materiality. For there are no conditions of contiguity (*anantara-paccaya*) etc. in relation to materiality. If there is a process in terms of material continuity, just as there is in terms of those continuities of immateriality, one may argue that the great earth would synchronise with each mental phenomenon (*cittakkhaṇe cittakkhaṇe*).[290]

This commentarial interpretation is based on the analytical exposition of the contiguity condition in the *Paṭṭhāna*, as mentioned above. The contiguity condition is illustrated by the lawful order of cognition (*citta-niyama*) in terms of the three main frameworks of mind. That is to say, immediately after the eye-consciousness there arises the mind element (*mano-dhātu*), and then the mind consciousness element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). Each sense-consciousness operates on the basis of the contiguity condition, but it retains its own process without conditioning or influencing other sense-consciousnesses.[291] For instance, the eye-consciousness is not contiguously conditioned by the ear-consciousness because each sense-consciousness arises on the basis of a different specific processing mechanism in accordance with its respective sense organ. In the *Anantarakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*, it is argued that the eye-consciousness does not follow contiguously upon the ear-consciousness in an unbroken sequence.[292] For the cognitive factors, like adverting and aspiring and so on,[293] occurring in relation to the eye-consciousness are not the same as those occurring in relation to the ear-consciousness. In view of the swift alternation of seeing and hearing at performances of dancing and singing, we may mistakenly suppose that the sense-cognitions arise in an unbroken succession. The commentary on the

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290 Kv-mṭ [C^e] 115$^{6-11}$: *pathaviyâdirūpesu kesañci uppādo kesañci nirodho ti evaṃ patiṭṭhānaṃ rūpasantatiyā hoti. na hi rūpānaṃ anantarâdipaccayā santi, yehi arūpasantatiyā viya rūpasantatiyā pavatti siyā ti citte citte mahāpathavī saṇṭhātī ti ādi coditaṃ.*

291 Tikap 2: *anantarapaccayo ti cakkhuviññāṇadhātu taṃ-sampayuttakā ca dhammā manodhātuyā taṃ-sampayuttakānañ ca dhammānaṃ anantarapaccayena paccayo. manodhātu taṃ-sampayuttakānañ ca dhammānaṃ anantarapaccayena paccayo.*
Tikap 13: *yo h' esa cakkhuviññāṇānantarā manodhātu, manodhātu-anantarā manoviññāṇādhātū ti ādi citta-niyamo, so yasmā purima-purima-cittavasen' eva ijjhati, na aññathā, tasmā attano attano anantaraṃ arūpassa cittuppādassa uppādanasamattho va dhammo anantarapaccayo.*

292 Kv 495-498.

293 Kv 380: ... *āvaṭṭanā ābhoga samannâhāro manasikāro cetanā patthanā paṇidhī ti.*

Anantarakathā accordingly argues that the example of dancing and singing is not appropriate, because it shows merely a mixed cognitive state of rapid separate processing within the group of respective objects, rather than the successive conditioning of the sense-cognitions.[294] What we gather from the above arguments is that the Theravādins consistently maintain two positions: firstly, that the material and mental phenomena cannot arise and cease simultaneously because they operate on the different principles of causality, and secondly, that each sense-consciousness forms a unit of the thought process based on an independent processing mechanism. This indicates that a momentary unit of cognition consists of a rapid homogeneous succession of mental phenomena. Thus the patterns of resemblance are maintained consistently in the thought process. In other words, unskilful mental phenomena are not contiguously conditioned by preceding skilful mental ones. But the neutral mental states serve as a sort of transitional stage because they can be related to any subsequent mental states by the contiguity condition. I will examine the issues of correlation and momentariness further in the following chapter. It suffices to point out here that the guidelines for the causal relationship between material and mental phenomena are systematically laid down in the *Paṭṭhāna*, and that the *Kathāvatthu* maintains the epistemological position that material and mental phenomena cannot arise and cease simultaneously.

To sum up, I return to my fourth question: "What is the relative textual chronology of the unsophisticated polemic in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* and the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' literary sources?" In answer, I have proposed the hypothesis that the disputed doctrine of momentariness, in conjunction with the background issue of epistemology in the *Khaṇikakathā*, is a response to the relevant statement in the **Jñānaprasthāna* (the 1st century BCE); the Theravādins probably regarded this this statement as an implicit expression of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness, as did the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, who probably developed the doctrine of momentariness in some of the multiple recensions of the *vibhāṣā* compendia (the 1st

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294 Kv-a 148-149.

century CE). I have argued that if one isolates the Theravādin sources (notably the *Khaṇikakathā*) from the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's early canonical and exegetical works, only an unsatisfactory picture emerges of how the Theravādin theory of momentariness evolved. My analysis of some epistemological issues debated in the *Kathāvatthu* and the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, and in other relevant texts, reveals the Theravādin's fundamental position that the thought process requires time to process the data, and therefore that the physical sense faculties and objects cannot be simultaneous with the respective sense consciousnesses. The texts preserve these debates in a typically haphazard manner, scattering them throughout their different sections. This gives us a picture of the early developing stage of the theory of momentariness as it relates to epistemological issues. However, as mentioned in the introduction, the Theravādin exegetical approach to the issues employs the computation of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena. As a result, unlike the Northern Buddhist schools, the Theravādins did not develop an epistemological system, but enriched their sophisticated psychological system.

I have also discussed the origins of the theory of the thought process in the Theravādin *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and suggested that the refutation in the *Khaṇikakathā* presupposes the theory in a crude form; this motivated the Theravādins to refine their arguments, which in turn prepared the foundations for a fully-fledged Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. This leads us to the fifth question "How did the Theravādins establish a clear-cut distinction between material and mental rates of change and give it such precise mathematical form (i.e. the ratio of 1: 16/ 17) ? ". I will attempt to answer this question in the next chapter by looking at how the Theravādins introduced and developed their unique doctrine of momentariness in conjunction with the theory of the thought process.

CHAPTER THREE

The Developed Form of the Doctrine of Momentariness

As we begin to trace the textual history of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness, we must re-examine some previously accepted suppositions. If one searches for a direct account of what is stated in the Theravādin sources, one immediately discovers, as with many other basic concepts in Buddhist doctrine, that what is written in some of the secondary sources is rather incomplete.

In the first half of this chapter (§ 3.1), I will study in detail the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* chapter of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary (hereafter, the PKV commentary), which provides substantial material on the issue of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena, in the light of comparisons with the three moments theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. In the early sources, the sixteen moments theory is generally regarded as standard, so I ask why the commentaries differ as to the number of thought moments (16 or 17). I present a possible solution to this problem with the help of the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Aṇuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary.

In the second half of this chapter (§ 3.2), I will address the issue of how the notion of momentariness relates to the theory of the thought process in both early and later post-canonical texts. In this discussion, I shall deal with various miscellaneous topics, such as the origins of the number sixteen, determining factors of the duration of materiality, the problem of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* and so on. I also address the issue of the nature of materiality in relation to the theory of *rūpa-kalāpa* (the smallest material unit), the Theravāda counterpart of the atomic theory postulated in the Northern traditions of Buddhism. The analysis of the post-canonical sources from these different perspectives will shed light on the probable date of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness.

3.1 The relative duration of material and mental phenomena

Among the early textual sources concerning the differing theories of momentariness, there are only two known to me in which the duration of a material phenomenon is differentiated from that of a mental phenomenon. The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* gives a fairly detailed account of the issue of the relative duration of mental and material phenomena, which I call 'the sixteen moments theory' or 'the seventeen moments theory', and the **Mahāvibhāṣā* records 'the three moments theory', which was put forward as an objection (*pūrvapakṣa*) to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's assertion that the material phenomena of all sense faculties function simultaneously with the corresponding mental phenomena. I take the latter example first as it is the simpler.

3.1.1 The three moments theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*

The **Jñānaprasthāna* states that the primary elements constituting the sense faculties (*indriyamahābhūta*) of sentient beings in the sensual and subtle material worlds arise, persist and perish simultaneously with mental entities (*citta*), provided the sentient beings do not abide in the state of the *asaṃjñasamāpatti* or *nirodhasamāpatti*.[295] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* comments on these issues and introduces the three moments theory attributed to some *śramaṇas* (not to any particular school) in order to refute it. According to this doctrine, material entities endure for three moments, in which mental entities and *caittas* arise three times and immediately pass away. The *śramaṇas* compute the relative speed of change of material and mental entities as 1: 3. (This is reminiscent, in principle, of the Theravādin's ratio of 1: 16/ 17.) They further present two types of three moments theory, namely 1) the theory of mixed origination and 2) the theory of succession.

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295 If the sentient beings abide in the state of the *asaṃjñasamāpatti* or *nirodhasamāpatti*, their *indriya-mahābhūtas* arise, persist and perish without the *citta*. JP T 26 998^{C20-24}; cf. T 26 876^{b18-22}; see von Rospatt (1995, pp. 21-22, fn. 27) for his translation.

(1) The theory of mixed origination

The theory of mixed origination seems to entail, on the one hand, a radical notion of change in terms of the substitution rather than succession of the same entities, and on the other, a common-sense belief that material entities last longer than mental ones. To put it another way, the first visual consciousness is replaced by the second and the second by the third and so on, but the visual faculty will remain until it is replaced by the second visual faculty, just after the third visual consciousness arises and passes away (see Figure 3-1). The supporters of the theory of mixed origination explain it in the following passage:

> Depending on a first visual faculty (*cakṣurindriya*), a first visual consciousness (*cakṣurvijñāna*) arises. While the first visual faculty remains, having arisen synchronously, the first visual consciousness passes away. Depending on a second visual faculty, a second visual consciousness arises. While [the second] visual faculty remains, having arisen synchronously, [the second] visual consciousness passes away. Depending on a third visual faculty, a third visual consciousness arises. While [the third] visual faculty remains, having arisen synchronously, [the third] visual consciousness passes away. It should be noted that the first visual faculty passes away in synchrony with [the third visual consciousness].[296]

What we understand from the above citation is that three mental moments correspond to the duration of a material phenomenon, i.e. a material phenomenon has a duration three times longer than a mental one. The combination of the radical notion of change and the common-sense belief just mentioned seems to create a number of problems. For instance, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* points out that each visual consciousness does not exactly correspond to a visual faculty. In other words, the first visual consciousness corresponds to the origination of the visual faculty, but not to its dissolution. The same applies to the second visual consciousness. Although the third visual consciousness corresponds not only to the origination of the visual faculty but also to the dissolution of the first visual faculty, it synchronises with the base of another (i.e. the dissolution of the first visual faculty) but not with its own (i.e. the passing of the third visual faculty, which will take place three moments later). We gather from this argument that the theory of mixed origination is based

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296 MVB T 27 787^{C23-28}.

on the principle of synchronous arising and asynchronous dissolution, which I will discuss in the analysis of the PKV commentary.

(2) The theory of succession

The theory of succession is based on the same principle, but it differs somewhat from the theory of mixed origination. The main difference lies in the way in which the visual faculty corresponds to the three moments of consciousness. In the theory of mixed origination, at least, the origination of each visual faculty corresponds to its respective visual consciousness, whereas in the theory of succession the origination of the first visual faculty serves as a base for all three moments of visual consciousness (see Figure 3-2). This theory is presented in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* as follows:

> Depending on a first visual faculty, a first visual consciousness arises. While the first visual faculty remains, having arisen synchronously, the first visual consciousness passes away. Subsequently, depending on that [i.e. the first visual faculty], a second visual consciousness arises. While [the first] visual faculty remains, [the second] visual consciousness passes away. Thereafter, again, depending on that [i.e. the first visual faculty], a third visual consciousness arises. This [third visual] consciousness passes away at the same time as the [first] visual [faculty].[297]

The theory of mixed origination can be criticised in the same terms as the theory of succession. These theories can be illustrated in the following diagrams:

Figure 3-1: The theory of mixed origination

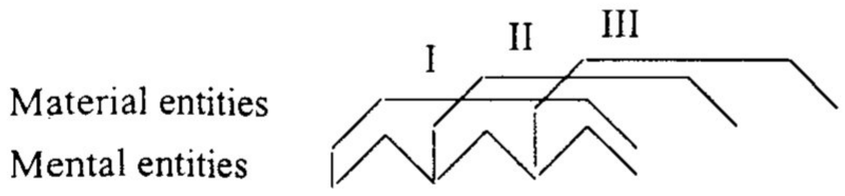
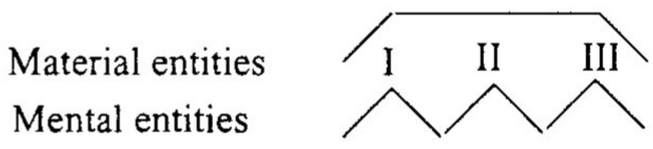
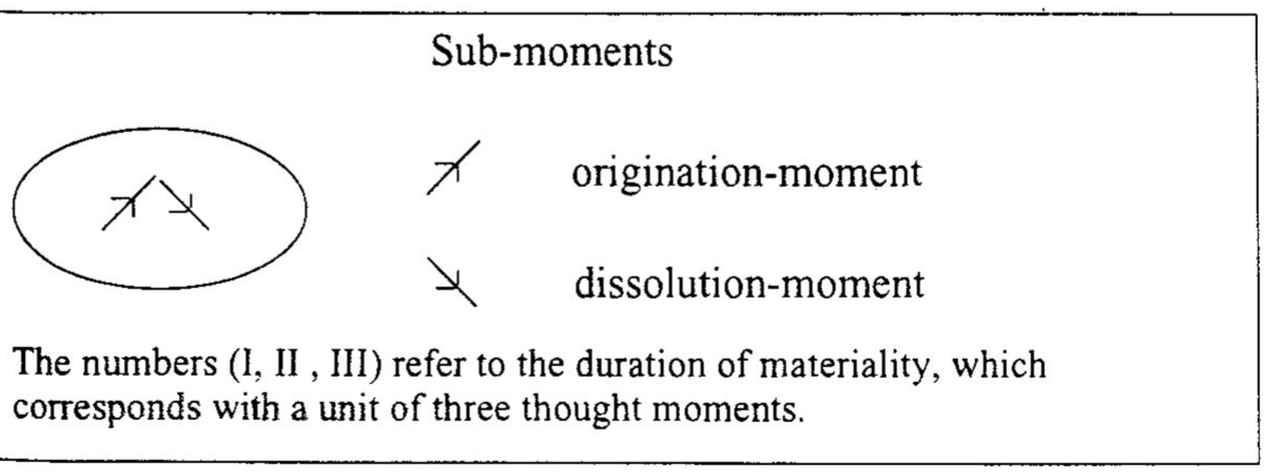


Figure 3-2: The theory of succession



keys The following keys apply also to figures 3-3 and 3-4.



297 MVB T 27 788[a1-5].

The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas argue that both versions of the three moments theory have a common flaw. If someone dies in the realm of human beings (*manuṣyagati*) and is reborn in hell, he reaches hell while still carrying the materiality which arose in the realm of human beings. That is to say, if the three moments theory is accepted, it entails the absurd consequence that immediately after death there will be a confused state of materiality. This is because consciousness, after ceasing to exist, has acquired new materiality; according to the theory of mixed origination, however, materiality that has arisen simultaneously with consciousness will last two more moments. This amounts to saying that there will be a mixture of materiality: some parts from the previous realm and another from the present one. In the case of the theory of succession, however, if rebirth takes place after the cessation of the first consciousness, the materiality which arises simultaneously with the next consciousness will have two more redundant moments; if it occurs after the cessation of the second one, one more moment; and if it occurs after the third one, no redundant moments (but the dissolution of the third consciousness, as mentioned above, synchronises with the dissolution of the first visual faculty, not with its own).[298] This is summarised in the following diagrams.

Figure 3-3: Redundant moments and the mixed origination theory

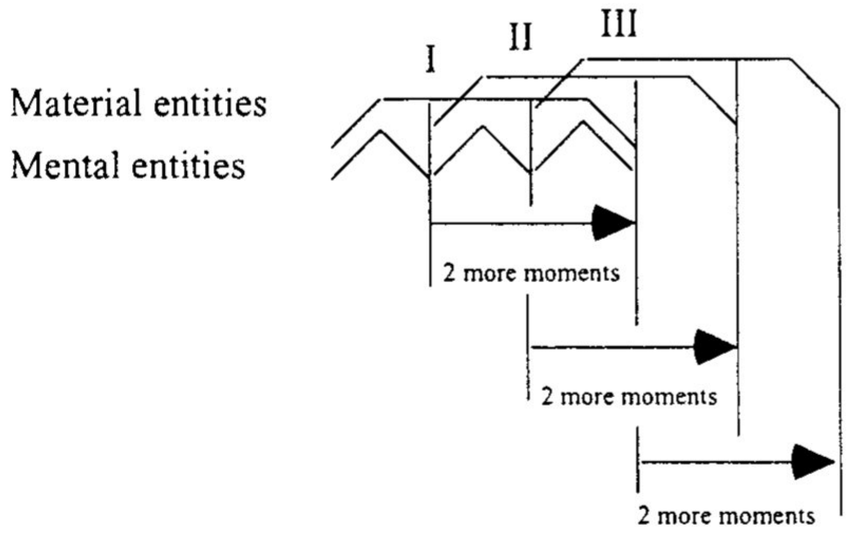
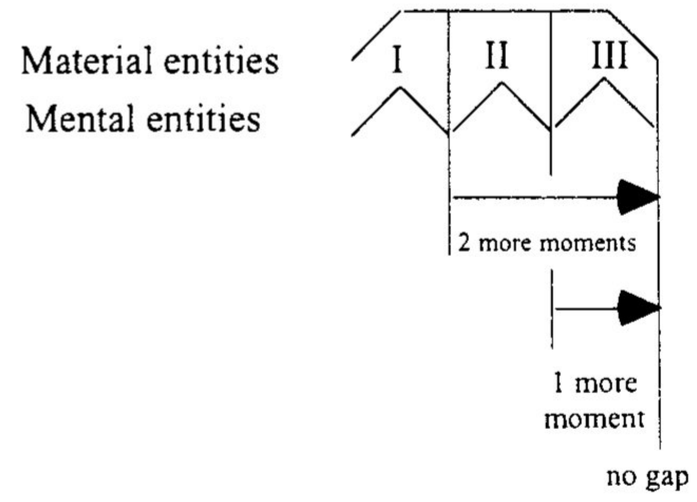


Figure 3-4: Redundant moments and the succession theory



In the light of my analysis of the three moments theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, I will now examine the PKV commentary where the sixteen/ seventeeen moments theories are expounded in some detail.

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298 Cf. MVB T 27 358[a10-20]. See § 4.1.2 for a discussion of the debate about the intermediate state and the theory of momentariness.

3.1.2 The five *khandhas* and the sixteen moments theory in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary

(1) The generative mechanism of the five *khandhas* and their momentariness

Like the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' literary sources, the Theravādin texts do not deal with the doctrine of momentariness as a topic on its own right. The *Pakiṇṇakakathā*, however, in analysing the five *khandhas* from sixteen different viewpoints,[299] introduces substantial material on the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. Six viewpoints are relevant for our purpose here. The five *khandhas* are analysed in terms of 1) order of succession (*pubba-apara*), 2) limit of duration (*addhāna-pariccheda*), 3) synchronous arising and asynchronous cessation (*ekuppāda-nānānirodha*), 4) asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation, 5) synchronous arising and synchronous cessation, and 6) asynchronous arising and asynchronous cessation. The first two viewpoints provide us with a general principle which describes the relative duration and strength of the generative capacity of material and mental entities. This principle has often been applied to theories such as that of the inability of the rebirth-linking consciousness to generate materiality, and to the mechanism of the material and mental process. The remaining viewpoints describe the generative mechanism, from conception to death, of the material and mental entities in four modes (i.e. synchronous-asynchronous, asynchronous-synchronous, synchronous-synchronous, asynchronous-asynchronous). In the sections which follow, I shall examine these topics to determine how the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* shaped the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness and influenced the later commentarial texts and the *Abhidhamma* manuals.

(2) Generative capacity of the five *khandhas* and their relative duration

The relative generative capacity of material and mental phenomena is laid down in the discussion of their 'order of succession' (*pubba-apara*) in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā*.[300] The basic principle is that materiality generates another materiality at the moment of enduring, but that immateriality gives rise to materiality at the moment of arising. This is because the generative power of materiality is weak at the moment of arising and dissolution, but strong

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299 See § 1.1.3 for the totality formula of the five *khandhas* and its commentarial elaboration.
300 Vibh-a 23-25.

at the moment of enduring, and vice versa in the case of immateriality. For instance, after coming into co-existence with the rebirth-linking consciousness[301] and the thirty *kamma*-born forms of materiality, the rebirth-linking consciousness cannot give rise to materiality because it lacks generative power at the moment of enduring and dissolution.[302] On the other hand, the fire element in the form of temperature (*utu*),[303] which arises within the thirty *kamma*-born forms of materiality at the enduring moment, gives rise to the eight kinds of materiality.

(3) Two graphic similes for the relative speed and coextensiveness of material and mental phenomena

In the discussion of the 'limit of duration' (*addhāna-pariccheda*), the relative duration and coextensiveness of material and mental phenomena are defined precisely, with two graphic similes.[304] Although both phenomena arise simultaneously, one changes more quickly than the other. In the same way, when someone strikes the branch of a tree with a mallet to get fruit, both the fruit and the leaves fall from their stalks at the same moment, but due to its weight, the fruit falls to the ground first, while the leaves, due to their lightness, fall to the ground more slowly. Just as the fruit and the leaves fall at the same moment, so the material and the immaterial states appear at the same moment, at the moment of rebirth-linking. Similarly, just as the fruit falls to the ground first, so sixteen thoughts arise and cease while materiality endures. Again, the leaves falling to the ground more slowly is like the ceasing of materiality together with the seventeenth thought.

As we have seen, it is in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary that it is first stated that the duration of the mental phenomenon is one-sixteenth of that of a moment of materiality.[305] On this basis, the *Vibhaṅga* commentary repeats the simile just described and further

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301 This implies three more immaterial *khandhas*, see Vibh-a 22.

302 The reasons why rebirth-linking consciousness does not give rise to materiality are: the weakness of the [heart] basis ([*hadaya-*] *vatthu*), its having no foundation, its deficiency in conditions (*paccaya*), and its recent arrival (*āgantukatā*), see Vibh-a 22.

303 Vibh-a 24-25.

304 Vibh-a 26.

305 As 60-61.

elaborates the theory with a simile regarding their coextensiveness. Suppose one man has short legs and another long legs. When they are walking side by side, for every pace the long-legged man takes, the short-legged man takes sixteen in the same length of time. Thus the one cannot out-distance the other, and the advance of the two is coextensive.

Immateriality is like the man with short legs, materiality like the man with long legs. Just as the former takes sixteen steps in the time in which the long-legged man takes a single pace, so the sixteen consciousnesses arise and cease while materiality endures. Just as the two men's advance is coextensive, so materiality and immateriality occur coextensively, in that neither leaves the other behind. It is worth mentioning that these two similes occur only in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Therefore, I consider this section as a source reference for the theory, from which other commentarial texts drew material to be used in similar contexts.

3.1.3 Sixteen or seventeen thought moments ?

(1) A hermeneutic problem: ambiguity in the phrase *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante*

The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* uses the principles explained above to expound the relative duration of material and mental phenomena, but before going into detail we first have to deal with the problematic statements: ***tasmiṃ*** [*rūpe*] ***dharante*** *'va soḷasa cittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhanti. taṃ pana* ***sattarasamena cittena*** *saddhiṃ nirujjhati.* (While materiality just endures, sixteen thoughts arise and cease. That materiality, however, ceases together with the seventeenth thought).[306] Here, the phrase 'while materiality endures' (*tasmiṃ* [*rūpe*] *dharante*) is ambiguous because it is not stated whether or not the origination and the dissolution moments are included in the enduring moment. It is therefore unclear whether materiality ceases together with the seventeenth thought or with the eighteenth. As a result, the duration of materiality varies in the commentarial texts. For instance, the *Pakiṇṇakakathā*[307] states that the *kamma*-born materiality which arises together with the rebirth-linking consciousness ceases together with the **seventeenth** thought, and

306 Vibh-a 24-28, passim.
307 Vibh-a 27.

subsequently, that the materiality which arises at the moment of endurance of the rebirth-linking consciousness ceases at the moment of arising of the **eighteenth**, and so on. The *Visuddhimagga*,[308] however, paraphrases these passages, but employs the ordinal numbers **sixteenth- seventeenth**, instead of **seventeenth-eighteenth**.

This confusion is noticed by the sub-commentator of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, Ānanda, who approaches the problem from a hermeneutic standpoint. He understands the statement: "*tasmiṃ* [*rūpe*] *dharante 'va soḷasa cittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhanti*" in four different ways depending on how one takes the phrase *tasmiṃ* [*rūpe*] *dharante*. The following four hypothetical options have been proposed.

[i] If both the origination and dissolution moments are included within the enduring moment itself, materiality has **a lifespan of sixteen thought moments**.

[ii] If only the dissolution moment is included, materiality has **a lifespan of seventeen thought moments**.

[iii] If only the origination moment is included, materiality has **a lifespan of more than sixteen thought moments**.

[iv] If, however, both the origination and dissolution moments are excluded from the enduring moment itself, materiality has **a lifespan of more than seventeen thought moments**. (Vibh-mṭ [*Ce*] 19[24]-20[4])

These options can be illustrated by the following diagram (Figure 3-5).

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308 Vism XX § 26.

Figure 3-5: The relative duration of mental and material phenomena – the four hypothetical options

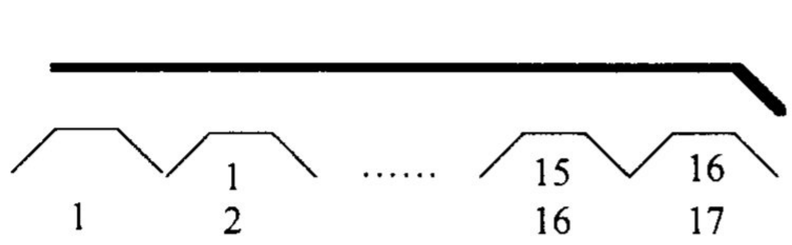
Premise: ***tasmiṃ [rūpe] dharante 'va soḷasa cittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhantī ti***

Option I: Sixteen



etena pana vacanena yadi uppāda-nirodhakkhaṇā dharamānakkhaṇe 'va gahitā, ***soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukaṃ*** *rūpan ti vuttaṃ hoti;*

Option II: Seventeen



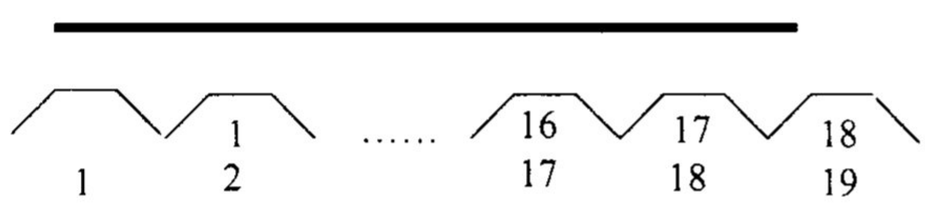
ath' uppādakkhaṇam aggahetvā nirodhakkhaṇo 'va gahito, ***sattarasacittakkhaṇâyukan****ti.*

Option III: Over sixteen



sace nirodhakkhaṇam aggahetvā uppādakkhaṇo gahito, ***adhikasoḷasacittakkhaṇâyukan****ti;*

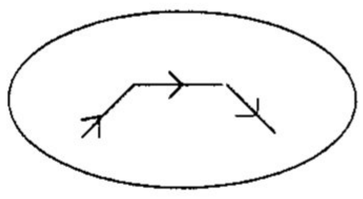
Option IV: Over seventeen



yadi pana uppādanirodhakkhaṇā dharamānakkhaṇe na gahitā, ***adhikasattarasacittakkhaṇâyukan****ti.*

keys The following key applies to the subsequent figures in this chapter.

Sub-moments*



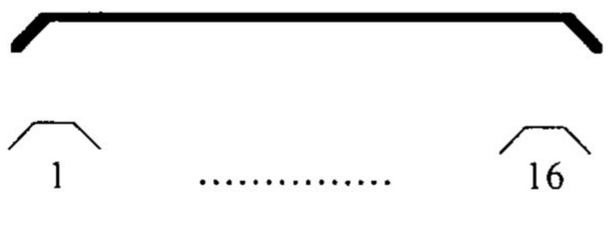
uppādakkhaṇa (origination moment)

ṭhitikkhaṇa (endurance moment)

bhaṅgakkhaṇa (dissolution moment)

* The duration of each sub-moment is identical except for the endurance moment of the materiality, which lasts sixteen times longer than that of immateriality.

(Vism XX § 24)



Material entity: heavy to change, slow to cease
(rūpaṃ garupariṇāmaṃ dandhanirodhaṃ)

Mental entity: light to change, quick to cease
(arūpaṃ lahupariṇāmaṃ khippanirodhaṃ)

(Vibh-a 25)

The *Visuddhimagga*'s ordinal numbers **sixteenth-seventeenth**, noted above, make sense if we apply Option I to them, as do the *Pakiṇṇakakathā*'s **seventeenth-eighteenth** if we apply Option II. With the help of these useful hypothetical tools, I will now analyse the material

on the relative duration of material and mental phenomena in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* and compare it with the relevant material found in the other commentarial texts.

(2) The dynamic mechanism of the five *khandhas* from conception to death

The *Pakiṇṇakakathā*, after expounding the basic principles of the generative capacity and the relative duration of material and mental phenomena, describes the dynamically changing mechanism of the five *khandhas* from conception to death, in the four modes (synchronous- asynchronous, asynchronous-synchronous, synchronous-synchronous, asynchronous- asynchronous). The first two modes are directly relevant to the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. 'Synchronous arising and asynchronous dissolution' is illustrated by looking at how, at rebirth, the five *khandhas* come into existence simultaneously. In other words, it shows how the rebirth-linking consciousness and the thirty *kamma*-born kinds of materiality are interactive at the very first moment of conception, and also how, subsequently, the life-continuum consciousness and the different kinds of materiality are asynchronous. In contrast, 'asynchronous arising and synchronous dissolution' is explained in terms of the death process. At the very moment of death, all the mental and physical functions of a person will cease to exist simultaneously, but before the death consciousness arises, the process is asynchronous.

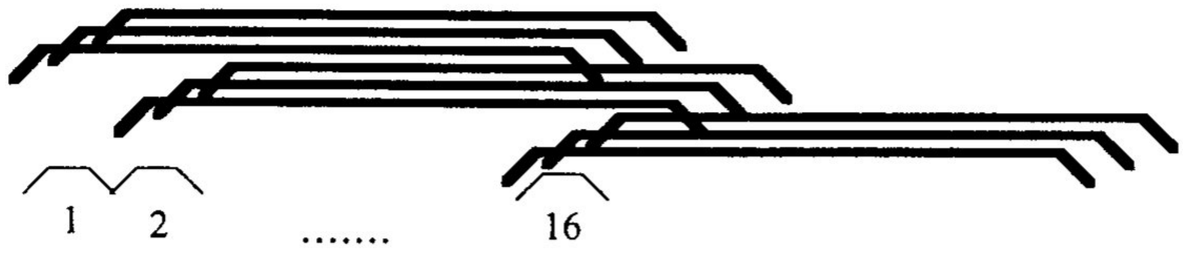
A) Synchronous arising and asynchronous dissolution

At the moment of rebirth, first there is the rebirth-linking consciousness, followed by the second life-continuum, the third life-continuum etc., until the sixteenth life-continuum is reached. Each consciousness is endowed with the three moments of arising, enduring and dissolution. The thirty *kamma*-born kinds of materiality arise in each of the three moments of respective consciousness.[309] Here is an illustration (Figure 3-6):

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309 Vibh-a 27.

Figure 3-6: The three sub-moments and the corresponding materiality

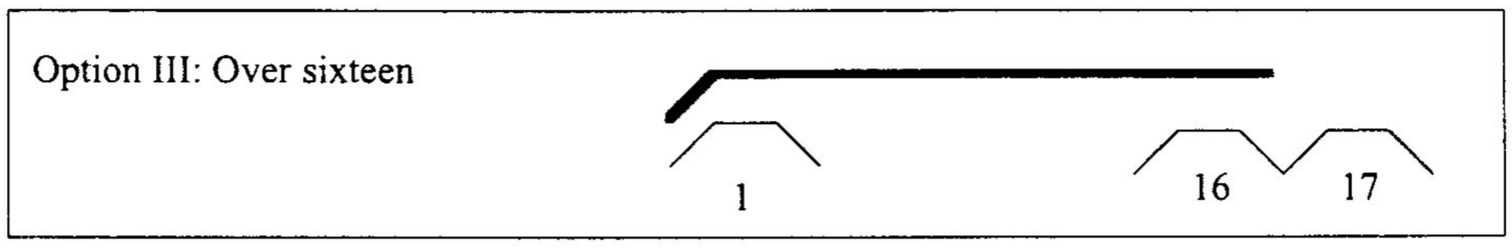


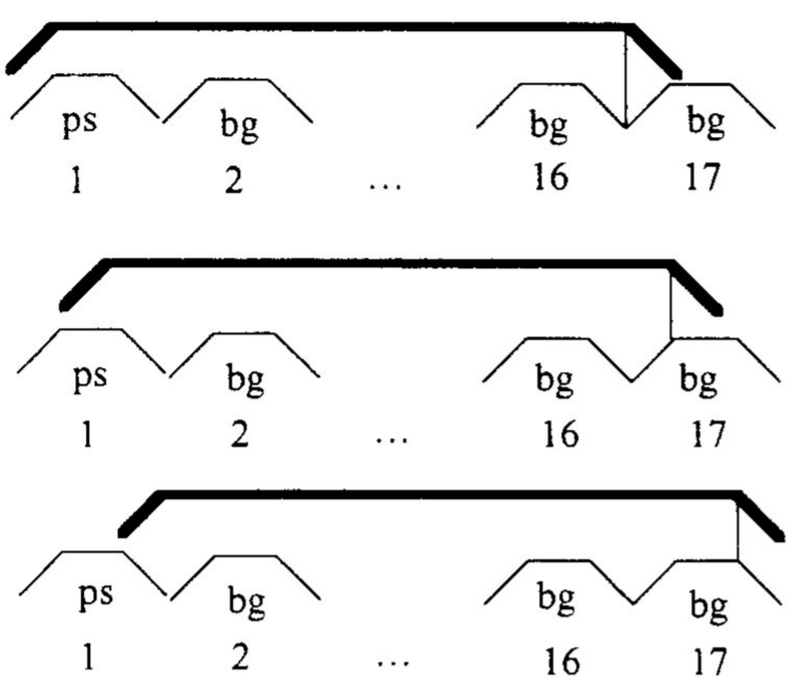
ekekassa uppāda-ṭhiti-bhaṅgavasena tayo tayo khaṇā. tattha ekekassa cittassa tīsu tīsu khaṇesu samatiṃsa samatiṃsa kammajarūpāni uppajjanti.

The rebirth-linking consciousness arises synchronously with the thirty *kamma*-born kinds of materiality. However, because their rate of change is different, it ceases asynchronously with materiality, which lasts sixteen times longer than the mental phenomenon. Subsequently, the materiality which has arisen at the moment of endurance ceases precisely at the moment of endurance, and that which has arisen at the moment of dissolution ceases precisely at the moment of dissolution.

First of all, we have to decide which hypothetical option is to be applied in the present case. Option III (over sixteen moments) seems to be appropriate because, according to the first statement, materiality ceases at the moment when the seventeenth life-continuum consciousness arises, which implies a lifespan of more than sixteen thought moments. This is argued in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā*, as shown in Figure 3-7.

Figure 3-7: Synchronous arising and asynchronous dissolution with hypothetical Option III





paṭhamaṃ hi paṭisandhicittaṃ dutiyaṃ bhavaṅgaṃ, tatiyaṃ bhavaṅgaṃ...pe...soḷasamaṃ bhavaṅgaṃ... tesu paṭisandhicittassa uppādakkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ kammajarūpaṃ sattarasamassa bhavaṅgacittassa uppādakkhaṇe yeva nirujjhati.

ṭhitikkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ ṭhitikkhaṇe yeva,

bhaṅgakkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ bhaṅgakkhaṇe yeva nirujjhati.

The same applies to the subsequent life-continuum consciousnesses. Thus, the sixteen triads make forty-eight. This is called the forty-eight-fold succession of *kamma*-born materiality.[310]

B) Asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation

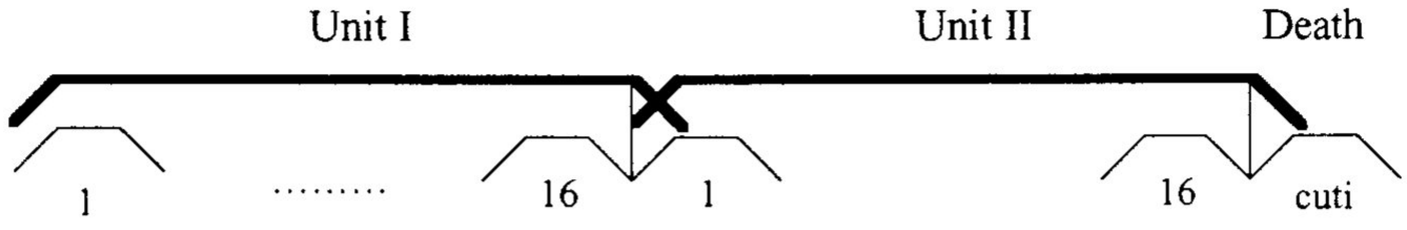
Regarding 'asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation', the commentator suggests that one should take a pair of units of sixteen consciousnesses at the final stages of karmic formation of the lifespan (*āyusaṅkhāra*), and link them together as the anterior sestadecad (*heṭṭhā soḷasaka*) and the subsequent sestadecad (*upari soḷasaka*). These will be followed by the death consciousness (*cuticitta*) at the end of the lifespan. In other words, the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality which arose when the first consciousness in the anterior sestadecad arose cease precisely at the moment when the first consciousness arises in the subsequent sestadecad (i.e. the seventeenth thought from the standpoint of the anterior sestadecad); that which has arisen at the moment of endurance ceases precisely at the

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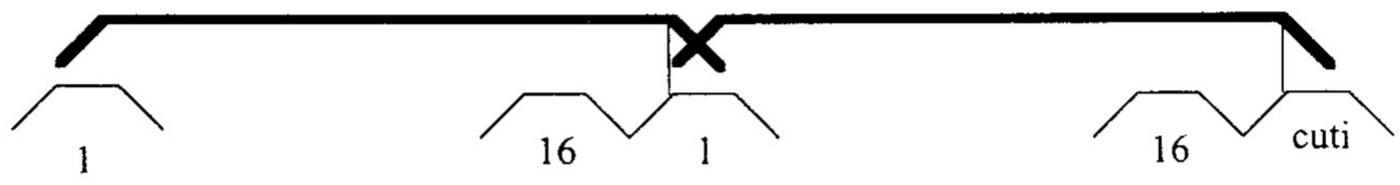
310 Vibh-a 26-27.

moment of endurance; that which has arisen at the moment of dissolution ceases precisely at the moment of dissolution.[311] This may be illustrated as follows:

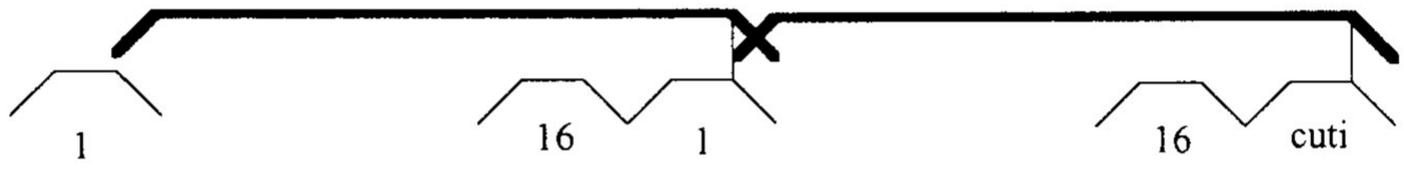
Figure 3-8: Asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation at the final stages of death



heṭṭhā soḷasakasmiṃ hi paṭhamacittassa uppādakkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ samatiṃsa-kammajarūpaṃ upari soḷasakasmiṃ paṭhamacittassa uppādakkhaṇe yeva nirujjhati.



ṭhitikkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ tassa ṭhitikkhaṇe yeva;



bhaṅgakkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ tassa bhaṅgakkhaṇe yeva nirujjhati.

At this point, the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* makes it clear that the succession of *kamma*-born materiality does not proceed after the cessation of the death consciousness. This implies that the materiality which arose from the moment of the second consciousness onward in the last sestadecad will be prevented from completing the full lifespan of materiality, with its sixteen moments. For instance, in the last sestadecad (*heṭṭhima-soḷasaka*),[312] the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality which arose at the moment of arising of the second consciousness etc., up to the sixteenth consciousness ceases precisely at the moment the death consciousness arises; that which arose at the moment of endurance [ceases] precisely at the moment of endurance of the death consciousness; and that which arose at the moment of dissolution ceases precisely at the moment of dissolution of the death consciousness. If it

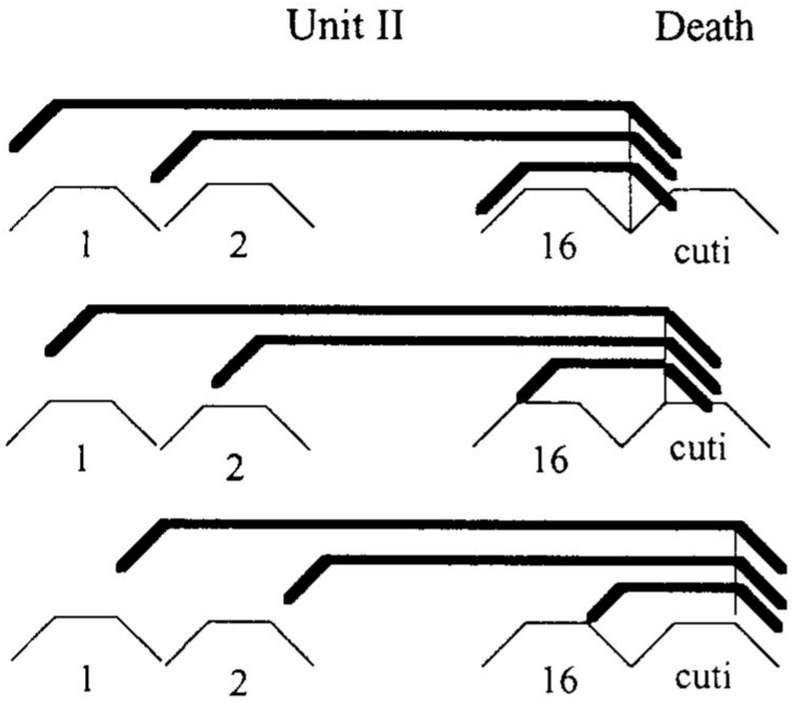
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311 Vibh-a 27.

312 The term *heṭṭhima* (superlative from *heṭṭhā*) might mislead us, as (lower in the manuscript) we have translated *heṭṭhā* (lit. below, i.e. before, above) as 'anterior', as opposed to *upari* (lit. above, on top), which we translated as 'subsequent'. The context suggests that *heṭṭhima-soḷasaka* refers to the last sestadecad.

were to carry on, there would be a confused state of materiality in the subsequent realm, as argued in the *Mahāvibhāsā*. By the exceptional application of the sixteen moments theory to the last moment of death, however, the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* cleverly avoids the theoretical discrepancy.[313] I will deal with this issue in the following section, where the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* is evaluated in the light of comparison with the three moments theory in the *Mahāvibhāsā*. Here are the illustrations.

Figure 3-9: The exceptional application of the sixteen moments theory to the moment of death



heṭṭhimasoḷasakasmiṃ pana dutiyacittassa ...pe... soḷasamacittassa uppādakkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ samatiṃsakammajarūpaṃ cuticittassa uppādakkhaṇe yeva nirujjhati.

tassa ṭhitikkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ cuticittassa ṭhitikkhaṇe yeva;

bhaṅgakkhaṇe samuṭṭhitaṃ cuticittassa bhaṅgakkhaṇe yeva nirujjhati. tato paṭṭhāya kammajarūpapaveṇī na pavattati.

(3) **Can a mental phenomenon arise while a material phenomenon is ceasing ?**

We have now ascertained that hypothetical Option III applies in these cases, from which we can deduce that "a mental phenomenon **arises** while a material phenomenon is **ceasing**". This implies that a unit of a mental phenomenon would not be coextensive with the duration of a material phenomenon, but it contradicts the theory of coextensiveness expounded in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* with the simile of the short-legged and long-legged men walking side by side. Here, the commentator is apparently aware of a theoretical difficulty. He attributes this contradiction to the commentarial tradition, which the *Yamaka* commentator specifically ascribes to the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* of the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa*,[314] and cites passages from a canonical premise in the *Yamaka* to reject the commentarial tradition (discussed below). The commentator of the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* seems to reproduce the material from the *Yamaka* commentary with some modification, and I assume that the *Yamaka* commentary preserves

313 See also the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, pp. 256-257.

314 Yam-a 83: *yaṃ pana* ***Vibhaṅgappakaraṇassa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathāyaṃ*** *cittasamuṭṭhānarūpaṃ sattarasamassa cittassa uppādakkhaṇe nirujjhatī ti vuttaṃ.*

the original form of refutation on this issue. I have dealt with this in some detail in my conclusions on the cross-reference between the commentaries of the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Yamaka*.[315]

(4) The revised version in the *Yamaka* and the *Vibhaṅga* commentaries

The *Yamaka* consists of three basic structures: 1) delimitation of terms (*Paṇṇatti-vāra*), 2) process (*Pavatti-vāra*), and 3) penetration (*Pariññā-vāra*). The *Pavatti-vāra* involves an analysis of all the doctrinal concepts in terms of origination (*Uppāda-vāra*), cessation (*Nirodha-vāra*), and origination-cessation. In particular, in the *Uppādavāra/ Nirodhavāra* of the *Saṅkhāra-yamaka*, cited by the commentator, there is the following exchange. Q: *yassa kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjati/ nirujjhati, tassa cittasaṅkhāro uppajjati/ nirujjhatī ti*? A: *Āmantā*.[316] That is, Q: "When one's *kāyasaṅkhāra* originates/ ceases, does his *cittasaṅkhāra* originate/ cease?" A: 'Yes'. This affirmative answer implies that the material and mental phenomena have, on the whole, an identical time-duration, because they originate and cease at the same moment. This canonical premise has been readily applied in the *Yamaka* commentary.[317] This is because the arising and point-instant cessation of a material phenomenon must be identical with that of a mental phenomenon. In other words, they have to be coextensive. The above canonical premise can be reduced to simpler terms: "While A is arising, B arises; while A is perishing, B perishes". However, the traditional account of the concomitance of material and mental phenomena contradicts this canonical premise, as it implies that "While A is **arising**, B **perishes**".

The *Yamaka* commentary defines *kāya-saṅkhāra* (bodily formation) as the wind of inhalation and exhalation,[318] which is the mind-born materiality (*citta-samuṭṭhāna-rūpa*). *Citta-saṅkhāra* (mental formation) does not necessarily cease at the single moment as *kāya-saṅkhāra*, because it arises and ceases even without *kāya-saṅkhāra*. On the other hand,

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315 See pp. 249-253.

316 There are actually two quotions and answers. For the sake of brevity, I have put the two together as they are identical except for the verbs employed. They occur in Yam I p. 236 and p. 247 respectively .

317 Yam-a 83.

318 This is the canonical definition. See the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (M I 301).

kāya-saṅkhāra always arises and ceases with *citta-saṅkhāra*, which is why it is called mind-born materiality.

On the basis of this principle, the *Yamaka* commentary presents the following revised version of the relative duration of mental and material phenomena.

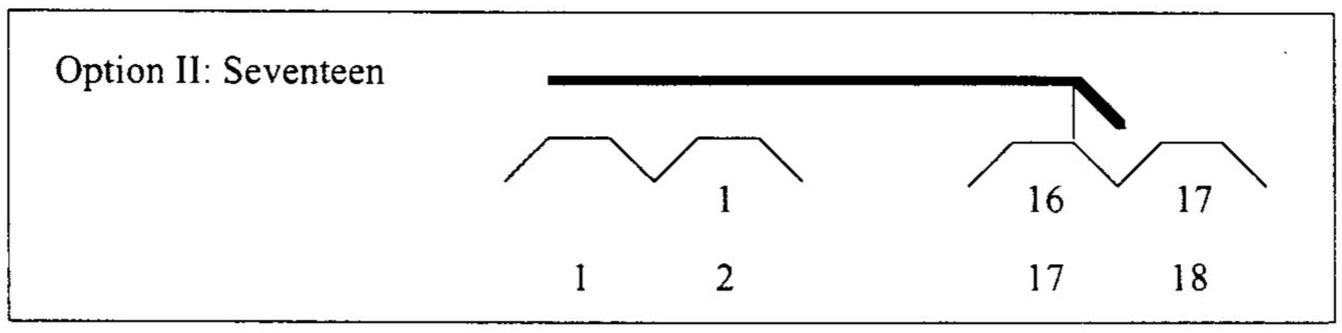
> The mind-born materiality (*cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa*), having arisen at the moment that a consciousness arises, endures **while another sixteen consciousnesses arise**. It ceases together with the very last of those sixteen. **Thus it ceases together with the seventeenth** [counting] **from that consciousness** (i.e. the *citta* before the unit of 16 consciousnesses starts) **with which it arises**. It does not cease at the moment of arising, nor at the moment any consciousness endures; and it also does not arise at the moment of enduring or at the moment of dissolution [of any consciousness].[319]

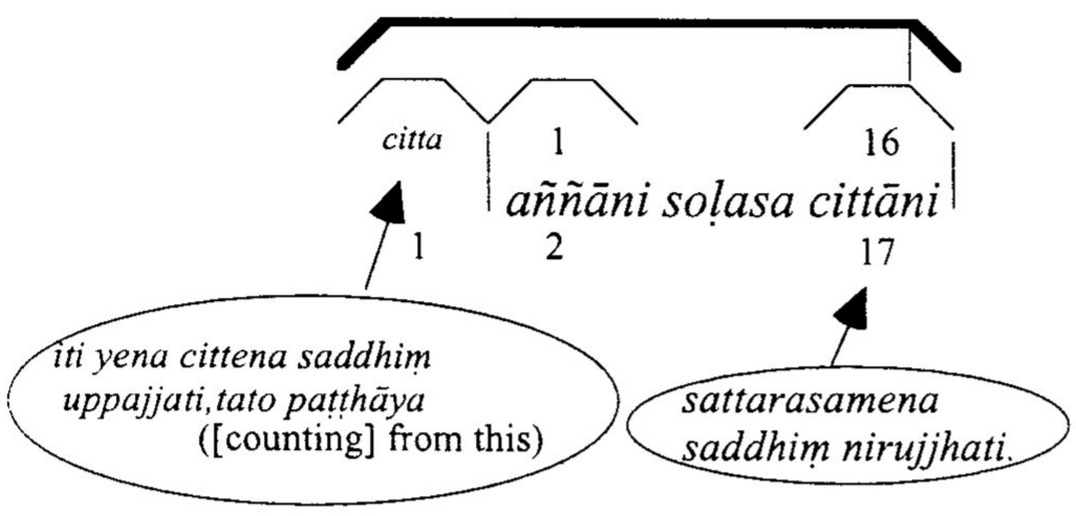
This revised version has two distinctive features. Firstly, the basic principle of the generative capacity of material and mental phenomena is strictly applied. As noted at beginning of this chapter, immateriality gives rise to materiality only at the moment of its arising, because the generative power of immateriality is strong at the origination moment, but weak at the enduring and dissolution moments. Secondly, it fits into hypothetical Option II, in which the origination moment is not included within the unit of sixteen thoughts, so that the mind-born materiality has a lifespan of seventeen thoughts. This is because it ceases together with the seventeenth, counting from the *citta* before the unit of sixteen thoughts starts. The following diagram (Figure 3-10) demonstrates how the relative speed of material and mental phenomena is calculated in the *Yamaka* commentary.

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319 Yam-a $83^{13\text{-}19}$ = Vibh-a $28^{3\text{-}10}$.

Figure 3-10: Option II and the revised version in the *Yamaka* commentary





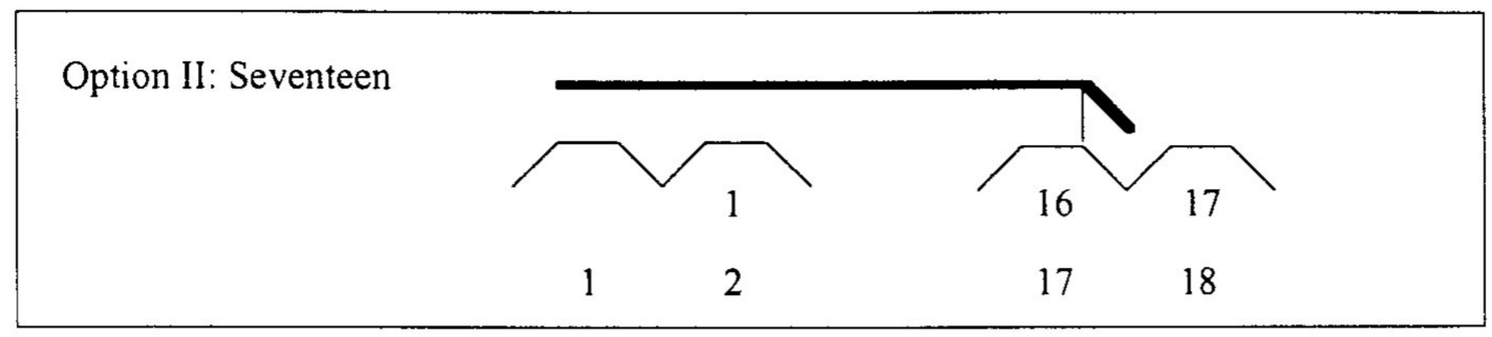
cittasamuṭṭhānarūpañ ca cittassa uppādakkhaṇe uppajjitvā yāva ***aññāni soḷasa cittāni*** *uppajjanti, tāva tiṭṭhati.tesaṃ soḷasannaṃ sabbapacchimena saddhiṃ nirujjhati.* ***iti yena cittena saddhiṃ uppajjati, tato paṭṭhāya satta-rasamena saddhiṃ nirujjhati***

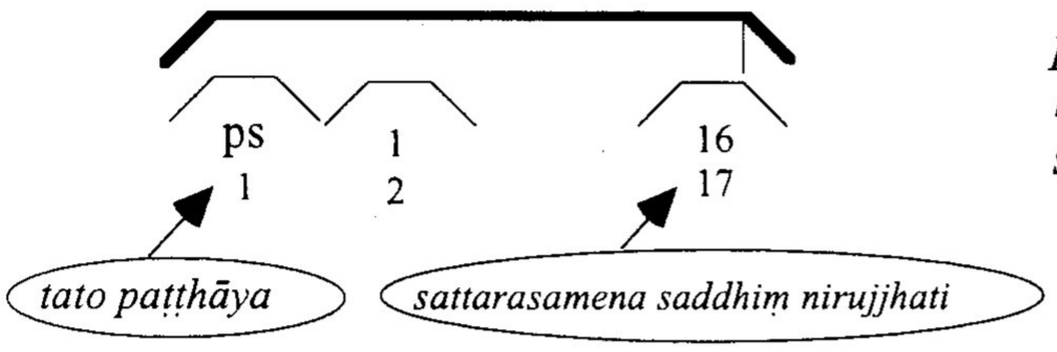
The *Vibhaṅga* commentary, after citing identical passages from the *Yamaka* and commenting upon them in a similar way, applies the same principle that was used for the mind-born materiality to the *kamma*-born materiality (*kamma-samuṭṭhāna-rūpa*). Accordingly, the commentator revises the previous version of the relative rate of change of material and mental phenomena at the time of rebirth. A noticeable modification is that the ordinal number has increased from the **seventeenth** to the **eighteenth**, due to the application of hypothetical Option II rather than Option III. Here is the revised version with illustrations (Figure 3-11):

> Therefore the *kamma*-born materiality arisen together with rebirth-linking consciousness **ceases together with the seventeenth** [thought counting] **from that** (*tato paṭṭhāya*) [thought]; that which has arisen at the moment of endurance of rebirth-linking consciousness ceases at the moment of arising of **the eighteenth**; that which has arisen at the moment of dissolution of rebirth-linking consciousness ceases at the moment of endurance of **the eighteenth**.[320]

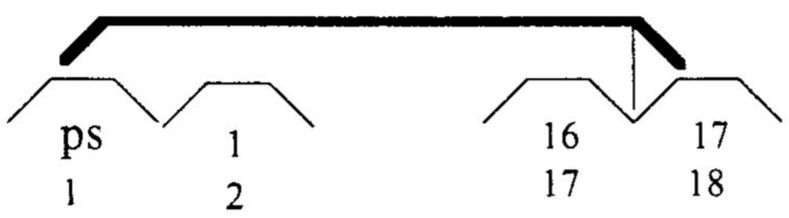
320 Vibh-a 27-28.

Figure 3-11: Option II and the revised version in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary

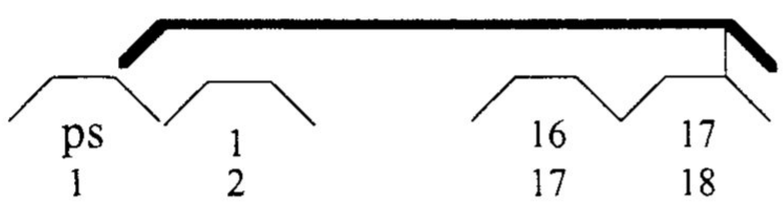




paṭisandhicittena sahuppannaṃ kammajarūpaṃ ***tato paṭṭhāya sattarasamena saddhiṃ nirujjhati.***



paṭisandhicittassa ṭhitikkhaṇe uppannaṃ ***aṭṭhārasamassa*** *uppādakkhaṇe nirujjhati.*



paṭisandhicittassa bhaṅgakkhaṇe uppannaṃ ***aṭṭhārasamassa*** *ṭhānakkhaṇe nirujjhati.*

(5) Another revised version in the *Visuddhimagga*

It is intriguing to see how Buddhaghosa comprehends this somewhat complicated matter and handles it in the *Visuddhimagga*. In the twentieth chapter, *Maggâmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi-niddesa*, he summarises what is stated in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. When the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* expounds the general principle of the lifespan of materiality, it does not spell out every detail; nevertheless, it does imply that the length of each sub-division of a moment is the same, except for the endurance moment of materiality. The *Visuddhimagga* specifies the duration of materiality and immateriality, stating that the three sub-divisions of a moment of materiality (i.e. arising, endurance and dissolution moments) and the two sub-divisions of a moment of immateriality (i.e. arising and dissolution moments) are of equal duration. The endurance moment of materiality, however, has a duration that is sixteen times longer than that of immateriality.[321] This is a problematic

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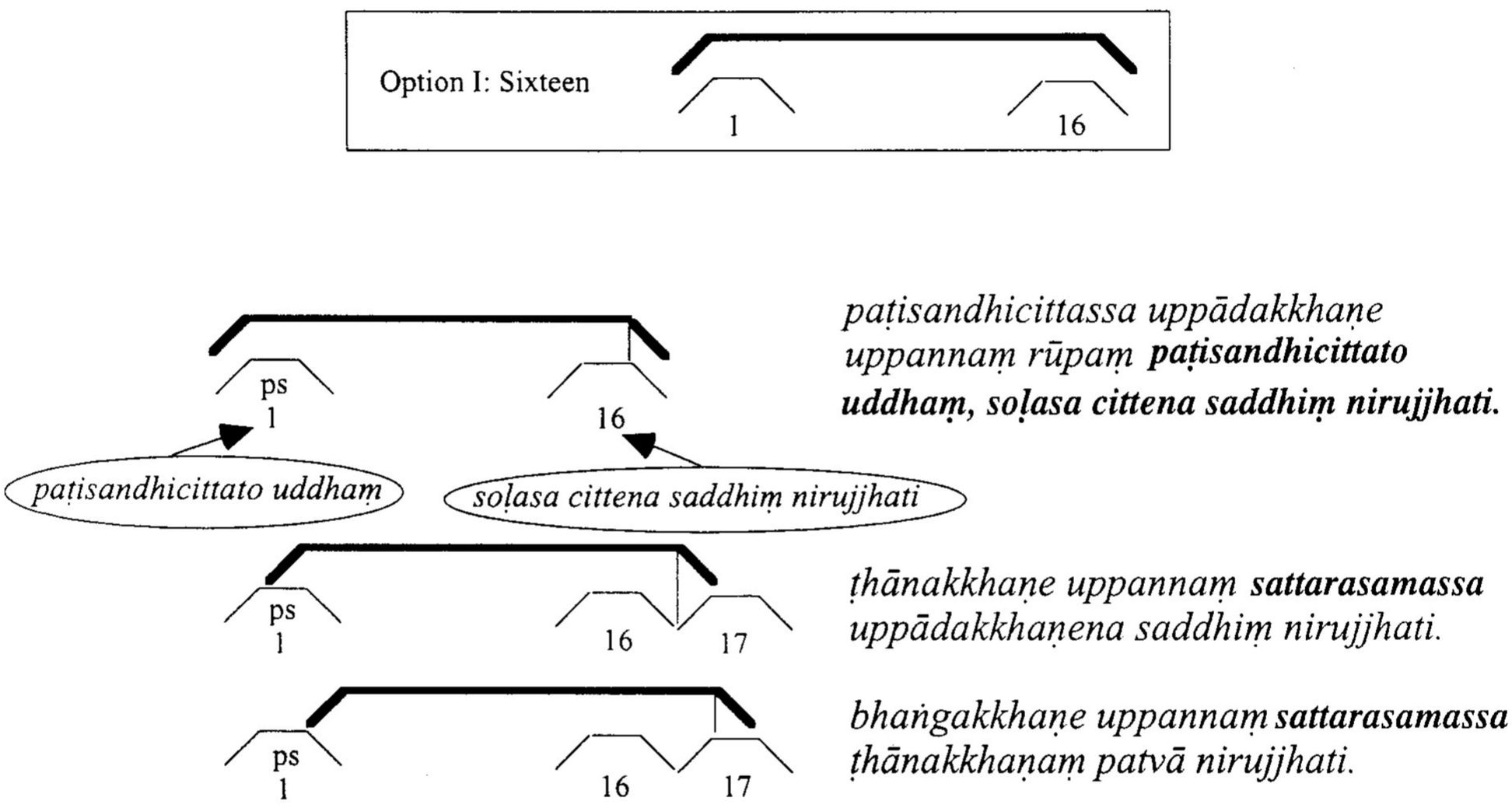
321 Vism XX § 24: *cittassa uppādakkhaṇo pi ṭhitikkhaṇo pi bhaṅgakkhaṇo pi ekasadisā. rūpassa pana uppādabhaṅgakkhaṇā yeva lahukā; tehi sadisā; ṭhitikkhaṇo mahā, yāva soḷasacittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhanti tāva vattati.* Buddhadatta, who appears to have been a contemporary of Buddhaghosa, does not

area which needs to be carefully explored. It makes sense if the first hypothetical option is applied to the revised version in the *Visuddhimagga*, which runs as follows.

> [The *kamma*-born] materiality arisen together with the rebirth-linking consciousness **ceases together with the sixteenth thought** [counting] **from the rebirth-linking consciousness** (*paṭisandhicittato uddhaṃ*); that which is arisen at the moment of endurance ceases at the moment of arising of **the seventeenth**; that which is arisen at the moment of dissolution ceases on reaching the moment of endurance of **the seventeenth**.[322]

This may be illustrated as follows:

Figure 3-12: Option I and the revised version in the *Visuddhimagga*



paṭisandhicittassa uppādakkhaṇe uppannaṃ rūpaṃ ***paṭisandhicittato uddhaṃ, soḷasa cittena saddhiṃ nirujjhati.***

ṭhānakkhaṇe uppannaṃ ***sattarasamassa*** *uppādakkhaṇena saddhiṃ nirujjhati.*

bhaṅgakkhaṇe uppannaṃ ***sattarasamassa*** *ṭhānakkhaṇaṃ patvā nirujjhati.*

Buddhaghosa may or may not be aware of the hypothetical options which underlie the above statement, but he must have come across the criticism by the *Yamaka* commentator, which contradicts the canonical premise in the *Yamaka*. He appears to apply the same principle used for the mind-born materiality to the *kamma*-born materiality, as did the *Yamaka* commentator, but creates his own version, which does not depend on the revised

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pay any specific attention to this issue in his *Abhidhamma* manual, the *Abhidhammāvatāra*. He merely summarises in a couple of stanzas how each sub-division of a moment of the rebirth-linking consciousness proceeds in relation to the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality.

Abhidh-av: *gabbhaseyyakasattānaṃ, paṭisandhikkhaṇe pana*
tañ ca kho sandhicittassa, uppāde yeva jāyare; (§ 763)
yath' eva tassa uppāde, tiṃsa rūpāni jāyare,
tath' eva ṭhitibhaṅgesu, tiṃsa tiṃs' eva jāyare. (§ -764)

322 Vism XX § 26.

version proposed in the *Yamaka* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries. As a result, the number of moments differs from those given in the *Yamaka* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries, and Buddhaghosa's version fits in with hypothetical Option I, in which both the origination and the dissolution moments are included within the enduring moment itself, so that materiality has a lifespan of sixteen thought moments. (The *Yamaka* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries' revised versions are based on Option II, as seen above, where the origination is excluded, bringing the duration of materiality to seventeen thought moments.) This answers the question: Why do the commentaries differ in their calculations of the duration of materiality relative to thought moments (16, 17 or even 18)? Now we shall see what the *Mūlaṭīkā*'s position on this issue is.

(6) The *Mūlaṭīkā*'s position

Of the four hypothetical options outlined earlier in this section, the *Mūlaṭīkā* takes into account the first three, leaving out the last as it is not relevant. So we are left with Option I: materiality has a lifespan of sixteen thought moments; Option II: a lifespan of seventeen thought moments; and Option III: a lifespan of more than sixteen thought moments. As seen above, Option III applies to the old version handed down in the Sinhalese commentarial tradition, and Option II fits into the corrected version proposed in the *Yamaka* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries. Ānanda, the author of the *Mūlaṭīkā*, however, argues that both Option II and Option III are untenable. He accepts Option I (i.e. the sixteen moments theory) and adduces the *Paṭiccasamuppādavibhaṅga* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Later, Dhammapāla II,[323] the author of the *Anuṭīkā*, in turn, disputes Ānanda's sixteen moments theory by endorsing Option II (i.e. the seventeen moments theory). The stance of Dhammapāla II had wide appeal and the seventeen moments theory became the norm in the Anuruddha's *Abhidhamma* manual, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, and its commentaries of the twelfth century and later. I have documented the relevant textual sources in some detail in the later part of this chapter. The following chart (Table 3-1) summarises the application of hypothetical options in different commentarial texts and the *Abhidhamma* manuals.

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323 See Cousins (1972), pp. 161-163.

Table 3-1: The application of hypothetical options in different commentarial texts and the *Abhidhamma* manuals

Hypothetical Options / Texts	Option I Sixteen	Option II Seventeen	Option III Over Sixteen	Option IV Over Seventeen
Vibhaṅga Commentary (Before revision)			√	
Vibhaṅga Commentary (After revision)		√		
Yamaka Commentary		√		
Visuddhimagga	√			
Vibhaṅga Mūlaṭīkā	√			
Vibhaṅga Anuṭīkā		√		
Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha		√		

In the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, Anuruddha explicitly explains the notion of momentariness in conjunction with the thought process and enumerates those moments with reference to each stage of the process. In other words, he specifies the seventeen thought moments as: the fourteen stages of the thought process, two vibrations of the life-continuum and one thought moment technically known as *atīta-bhavaṅga* (namely, the past life-continuum in which the first moment passes, before actual vibration occurs to activate the thought process). This full thought process occurs in seventeen thought moments, which become the standard figure for the duration of materiality in the late Theravāda tradition. So I regard this as a modified version of the sixteen moments theory, and hereafter I call it 'the seventeen moments theory', which is documented in the later part of this chapter. Before moving on to discuss how the notion of momentariness is related to the theory of the thought process, I will compare and evaluate these two theories (i.e. the three moments and sixteen moments theories), in order to summarise what we have seen so far.

3.1.4 A comparative evaluation of the three and sixteen moments theories

To evaluate the theories discussed above, I should first summarise the previous sections. The three moments theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* was presented as an objection to the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's assertion that the material phenomena of all sense faculties function simultaneously with the corresponding mental phenomena. That theory, attributed to some *śramaṇas*, is divided into two forms, namely 1) the theory of mixed origination and 2) the theory of succession. According to these theories, material phenomena endure for three moments, during which mental entities and *caittas* arise three times and pass away immediately. As I have pointed out, however, the main difference between these two theories lies in the way that the activation of the visual faculty corresponds to the three moments of consciousness. In the theory of mixed origination, the origination of each visual activation corresponds to its respective visual consciousness, whereas in the theory of succession, the origination of the first visual faculty serves as the visual object for all three moments of visual consciousness. There is a flaw in these theories, which the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas discover with little effort. If the three moments theory is accepted, it results in the bizarre consequence that immediately after death there will be a mixed state of materiality, because two redundant moments will carry on to the subsequent rebirth, even after the mental process stops.[324] Apart from this major flaw, these theories are presented in an unsophisticated way, ignoring small details about basic issues, such as the duration and strength of material and mental entities. Therefore, I assume that the three moments theory, as it stands, represents an unestablished, nebulous idea circulating among some *śramaṇas*, and that it shows the doctrine of the relative duration of the material and mental entities in its early stages. This may have provided the Theravādins with the basic idea from which they developed the sixteen/ seventeen moments theories.

In contrast, the sixteen moments theory in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* shows a fairly sophisticated approach, with refined definitions and specifications. The relative duration and strength of the generative capacity of material and mental phenomena are clearly defined and vividly

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324 We are not told of any arguments answering this criticism.

presented with graphic similes. On these foundations, it goes on to describe the dynamic, changing mechanism of material and mental phenomena from conception to death. The function of the rebirth-linking consciousness is confined to that of simultaneous occurrence with the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality, and it does not produce materiality. The succession of materiality throughout one's life continues by means of the four generative modes, namely *kamma*, consciousness, temperature and nutriment. All the generative processes of materiality stop at the moment that the death consciousness itself ceases. This exceptional application of the sixteen moments theory solves the problem in the three moments theory of the overlapping of the kinds of materiality at rebirth.

Nevertheless, when the sixteen moments theory was first introduced, there was already an ambiguity in the phrase 'while materiality endures' (*tasmiṃ* [*rūpe*] *dharante*). The duration of materiality depends on how one construes this phrase. This is because it is not explicit about the enduring moment; one may either exclude the origination and dissolution moments from the enduring moment or include them within it. The *Yamaka* commentator revises the traditional interpretation on the basis of the canonical premise postulated in the *Yamaka*. In spite of this revision, there still remains the possibility of different interpretations due to the ambiguous phrasing (*tasmiṃ* [*rūpe*] *dharante*), so that the duration of materiality becomes inconsistent in different commentarial texts. I have clarified this with the help of the invaluable hermeneutic tool proposed in the *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. The *Yamaka* commentator first rejects the traditional interpretation of the duration of materiality and proposes a revised version which fits in with hypothetical Option II (seventeen moments theory). The *Vibhaṅga* commentary adopts this revised version. Buddhaghosa's version follows the basic principles postulated by the *Yamaka* commentator, but it agrees with a different hypothetical option (i.e. Option I). This explains why the number in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary's revised version differs from that in the *Visuddhimagga*. The *Mūlaṭīkā* concurs with the *Visuddhimagga*'s position, but the *Anuṭīkā* concurs with that of the *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka* commentaries, which had an influence on

the mediaeval manuals and their commentaries. I now turn to the issue of how the sixteen moments theory is related to the theory of the thought process in the commentarial texts.

3.2 The doctrine of momentariness and the thought process

3.2.1 The sixteen moments theory and the thought process in the early post-canonical texts

My inquiry in this section is primarily into how the theory of momentariness relates to the theory of the thought process (*citta-vīthi*) in different commentarial texts. *Bhavaṅga* consciousness in the *Abhidhamma* theory of the thought process has been discussed briefly or in depth by a number of writers over the years. The fullest account of the subject is by Sarathchandra.[325] He assumes that the theory of the thought process was applied to the theory of momentariness in the mediaeval manual, i.e. the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* by Anuruddha and its commentaries of the twelfth century and later.[326] But he does not claim to have dealt with the relationship between these two theories through a serious analysis of the available sources from the perspective of their textual history. Although there is a precise application of the notion of momentariness to the theory of the thought process in these later texts, it is not altogether explicit in the earlier sources; the term *khaṇa* is only sporadically employed in the commentarial texts and the *Visuddhimagga* when they expound the stages of the thought process. In general, however, the Theravādin *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* presupposes that the mind consists of mental phenomena (*dhamma*) that arise and cease from moment to moment, even if the texts do not use the term *khaṇa* – as Rupert Gethin notes in his review of von Rospatt's book.[327] In fact, the *Vibhaṅga* commentary clearly states that all material and mental phenomena (i.e. the five *khandhas*) should be understood in terms of moments (*khaṇa*) as described in the *Abhidhamma*

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325 Sarathchandra (1958, pp. 42-96). Cousins (1981, pp. 22-46) points out that Sarathchandra's hypothesis, namely that the theory was probably introduced by Buddhaghosa, is unsatisfactory. Cousins proves that the theory of the cognitive process is to some extent established in the *Paṭṭhāna*, an *Abhidhamma* work which cannot be later than the second century CE. Collins (1982, pp. 238-61), however, approaches this topic from quite another angle. His method is to study patterns of imagery - of chariots, rivers, streams etc.- and he relates the *bhavaṅga* concept in the imagery of rivers or streams to the theory of momentariness. In more recent years, Gethin (1994, pp. 11-35) has reconsidered previous accounts of the subject. He attempts to provide a straightforward account of just what is said in the Pāli sources, thereby illuminating the inadequacies in some secondary sources. In particular, Gethin urges that *bhavaṅga* is most definitely not to be understood merely as a "mental blank" or "logical stop-gap" or "state of unconsciousness". For a briefer account, see *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Ed. Malalasekera (1961), s.v. *bhavaṅga*; *Buddhist Dictionary,* Nyanatiloka (1956), s.v. *bhavaṅga*; Gunaratna (1980), *The Wheel,* 167/169.

326 Sarathchandra (1958), p. 42.

327 Gethin (1997, p. 479) specifies three texts: the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi, Vibhaṅga* (at least the *abhidhamma-bhājaniya* sections) and *Paṭṭhāna*.

exposition (*niddesa*).[328] This obviously supports our position and, further, it indicates that the early commentarial tradition also presupposes the momentariness of each stage of the thought process; however, it does not conspicuously connect the process with the sixteen moments theory. Therefore it is necessary to look more closely at the commentarial sources to see how and to what extent the sixteen moments theory relates to the sixteen stages of the thought process in the same way as the seventeen moments theory is applied explicitly in the later textual sources to the seventeen stages of the thought process.

In chapter 2 (§ 2.3), where I presented evidence from the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* on the origins and evolution of the theory of the thought process, I argued that the refutation in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* presupposes the theory of the thought process in crude form. I also noted the underlying notions of epistemology found in the polemics of the *Kathāvatthu*. On the basis of these observations on the earlier sources I now turn to the commentarial texts, the exegetical treatises and the *Abhidhamma* manuals in order to survey the textual evolution of the theory of momentariness in conjunction with the theory of the thought process in the later texts.

(1) The first introduction of the sixteen moments theory in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary

As we have seen, the *Abhidhamma* canonical work, the *Paṭṭhāna*, provided the foundation of the theory of the thought process. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary preserves an early source of the theory of the thought process, as L.S. Cousins noted, almost certainly reproduced from a *Sinhalese Aṭṭhakathā*.[329] It serves as a primary source on which the other *Abhidhamma* and the *Suttanta* commentaries drew in various contexts. It is noteworthy however that the term *khaṇa* is used inconsistently in the account of each stage of the thought process in this commentary. Moreover, the statement of the sixteen moments theory: "As long as materiality which has arisen persists, sixteen thoughts arise and break

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328 Vibh-a 7-8: *abhidhammaniddese pana khaṇena paricchinnaṃ. tayo hi rūpassa khaṇā: uppādo, ṭhiti, bhaṅgo ti.... ime tayo khaṇe sampattaṃ rūpaṃ pana paccuppannaṃ nāma. tattha kiñcâpi idaṃ suttantabhājaniyaṃ, evaṃ sante pi abhidhammaniddesen' eva atītânāgatapaccuppannarūpaṃ niddiṭṭhan ti veditabbaṃ*. The same is said of *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* (Vibh-a 14, 19-21).

329 Cousins (1981), p. 38

up" occurs only once in the section on word-definitions (*pada-bhājanīya*) at the beginning of the same work.[330] This indicates that there is no direct external evidence for any connection in this earlier material between the theory of the thought process and the sixteen moments theory. As I mentioned in chapter 2, the theory of the thought process was developing gradually in the *Abhidhamma* canon and the refutation in the *Khaṇikakathā* presupposes the notion of the thought process in crude form. But the relevant passages are scattered through different sections of the books and their presentation is unsystematic, which shows us the unarticulated nature of the theories. The same is true of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary, which probably marks a transitional period in the development of the theories; it elaborates the theory of the thought process but not the sixteen moments theory in a comprehensive form.[331] This seems to be where the sixteen moments theory was first introduced in the commentarial texts, as we notice that linguistic features of the statement of the sixteen moments theory are quite different from those in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary and the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhamma* manuals, although they convey virtually the same meaning. The main differences lie in the choice of vocabulary and syntax. For instance, the former uses the adverbial clause of time (*yāva.....tāva*) and the verbs *tiṭṭhati* and *bhijjanti*, but the latter employ the locative absolute construction with the present participle *dharante* and the verb *nirujjhanti*; this grammatical structure is adopted in the later sources. Here are the full citations:

> ***yāva*** *pan' uppannaṃ rūpaṃ* ***tiṭṭhati tāva*** *soḷassa cittāni uppajjitvā* ***bhijjanti***. (As 60)
>
> ***rūpe dharante*** *yeva soḷasa cittāni uppajjitvā* ***nirujjhanti***. (Vibh-a 25, passim)
>
> (Cf.) ***rūpe dharante*** *yeva hi soḷasavāre bhavaṅgacittaṃ uppajjitvā* ***nirujjhati***. (Vism XX §24)

I therefore assume that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary first provided the commentarial tradition with the basic idea of the sixteen moments theory. The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary subsequently paraphrased and elaborated the statement and eventually established the theory. This text further refined[332] the theory in accordance with

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330 As 60.

331 It is useful to remember in this connection that the aim of the commentaries was not to expound any particular doctrine systematically but to explain the meanings of terms and give a better understanding of the main texts.

332 I think that the refinement came later when the Sinhalese commentary was translated into Pāli. I have addressed this issue in the conclusion (pp. 249-253).

the doctrinal system laid out in the *Yamaka*. The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* however does not connect the theory of momentariness directly with that of the thought process. It is only in the *Paṭiccasamuppāda-vibhaṅga* of the same work that the term *khaṇa* appears in the descriptions of some stages of the final thought process at death and rebirth, although its use is not entirely explicit. But before we examine the textual evidence in more detail, we should go through the stages of the thought process.

(2) The stages of the thought process in conjunction with the sixteen moments theory

Since my concern is with the relevance of the thought process to the issue of the sixteen moments theory, many details can safely be ignored. Two types of process are described: the five sense-doors process and the mind-door process. We need to consider only the former here. To give an overview, I present a list of the stages of the sense-door process based on the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary; the stages given below correspond fundamentally with those described in the *Visuddhimagga*.[333] They can perhaps be divided into four sections: (I) the initial entry of the sense data into the stream of *bhavaṅga* and into the sense-doors, (II) the identificatory and determining operations of consciousness, (III) the rapid mechanism of karmic impulsions and (IV) the transitional stage between the activity of the thought process and its inactivity.

- **Stages 1-2-3-4**

  (I) The initial entry of the sense data into the stream of *bhavaṅga* and into the sense-doors

bhavaṅga-calana → *bhavaṅga-upaccheda* → *pañcadvāra-āvajjana* → *pañcaviññāṇa*

When an object impinges on one of the sense-doors or on the mind-door, there occurs [**1**] **vibration of the life-continuum** (***bhavaṅga-calana***), the transition from the inactive mode to the active. This is followed by the stage called [**2**] **arrest of the life-continuum** (***bhavaṅga-upaccheda***), at which the flow of *bhavaṅga* is cut off. Immediately after this, attention turns to the object, either at one of the five physical sense-doors or at the mind-door. This turning to the object is termed [**3**] **adverting** (***āvajjana***); the five sense-doors process involves the *kiriya* mind element and the mind-door process involves the causeless *kiriya* mind consciousness element.

At the sense-doors, after the stage of adverting, there arises (if the sense in question is the visual one; modify according to which sense is operating) [**4**] **the eye consciousness** (***cakkhu-viññāṇa***), the result of either skilful or unskilful action, for example. Here seeing

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333 As 261-288; Vism XIV §§ 110-124; cf. Vibh-a 150-168.

does not refer to the cognitive acts which explicitly identify the objects of sight as such, but to the visual function of a minimal interpretative element in its bare immediacy and simplicity prior to all identificatory cognitive operations. The same will be the case for hearing, smelling and so on.

- **Stages 5-6-7**

(II) The identificatory and determining operations of consciousness

sampaṭicchana → *santīraṇa* → *votthapana*

In the case of the five sense-door process, after the consciousness that performs the function of seeing, hearing and so on, there are the successive functions of [**5**] **receiving** (***sampaṭicchana***), [**6**] **investigation** (***santīraṇa***) and [**7**] **establishing** (***voṭṭhapana***). In the case of the mind-door process, however, these three stages do not occur; the mind-door adverting follows immediately upon the cutting off of the *bhavaṅga*.

- **Stages 8-9-10-11-12-13-14**

(III) The rapid mechanism of karmic impulsions

javana → *javana* → *javana* → *javana* → *javana* → *javana* → *{javana}*

The term *javana* is often translated as impulsion, but its literal meaning is running swiftly, which seems to be used to indicate **the dynamic nature of the mental process**. The ***javana*** process normally consists of a series of six or seven stages [**8-14**] and they are all identical in mode. This is most important from an ethical standpoint, because it is at this stage that skilful or unskilful consciousness originates and forms karmic manifestations and differences in character.

- **Stages 15-16**

(IV) The transitional stage between the activity of the thought process and its inactivity

tadārammaṇa → *tadārammaṇa*

The term ***tadārammaṇa*** is often translated as registration or retention, but its literal meaning is '**having that object**'. It denotes the function of fixing the object that had been apprehended by the *javanas*. This function is exercised for two stages [**15-16**] immediately after the *javana* phase when the object is either very intense to the senses or vivid to the mind. If the object lacks special intensity or clarity, this function is not exercised at all. After this *tadārammaṇa* stage (or the *javana* phase when *tadārammaṇa* does not occur), the mind that is involved in the process (*vīthi-citta*) eventually lapses back into the *bhavaṅga* that is free of the process (*vīthi-mutta*).

The sixteen stages form a complete unit of the thought process in the presence of ultra-vivid sense objects. Do these sixteen stages have any intrinsic connection with the sixteen moments theory? In fact, as noted above, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary neither consistently employs the term *khaṇa* in the explanation of each phase of the thought process, nor conspicuously applies the sixteen moments theory to it. It is therefore

necessary to examine the nature of *bhavaṅga* consciousness and its momentariness in order to look for some internal evidence on this issue.

(3) The nature of *bhavaṅga* consciousness and its momentariness

What is the *bhavaṅga*? Is it a particular type of consciousness or the indispensable condition for sentient existence? Over the years a number of writers have discussed this concept. Rupert Gethin, the latest writer on this topic, reviews the previous research and concludes with the following remarks:

> I hope to have shown in this paper that *bhavaṅga* is most definitely not to be understood merely as a kind of mental blank and logical stop-gap. For any given being *bhavaṅga* consciousness represents a mental province where at least certain characteristics unique to that individual are located (although the spatial metaphor is not the one preferred by the texts). Moreover this mental province exercises a certain determinative power over conscious mental states.[334]

This suggests that *bhavaṅga* has the dynamic function of preserving the continuity and certain properties of an individual existence. That is to say, that, even in the inactive mode, *bhavaṅga-citta* repeatedly arises and passes away and this passive process continues during one's life whenever there is no active thought process taking place. This implies that *bhavaṅga* in either mode (i.e. active or inactive) does not remain static for two consecutive moments. When the commentarial tradition articulates the concept of *bhavaṅga*, it often confines itself to how consciousness operates in a particular mode (*ākāra*) or how consciousness performs a specific function (*kicca*).[335] The thought process is the functioning of *bhavaṅga* in the active mode for a limited duration. If there is no activity within consciousness, *bhavaṅga* lapses into the inactive mode. This continues without interruption in dreamless sleep. The tradition often compares this transitory nature of *bhavaṅga* (i.e. a continual flow of arising and passing away) with the stream of a river.[336]

What I want to suggest here is that the commentarial texts intend one to understand that *bhavaṅga* consists of a series of moments both within the active and inactive modes. That

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334 Gethin (1994), pp. 34-35.
335 *id*. p. 13.
336 See Collins (1982, pp. 247-261) for the Theravādin concept of *bhavaṅga* and river imagery.

this is so may not exactly be explicit in the texts but it surely follows from the way in which the *Abhidhamma* describes and applies the concept of momentariness to mental phenomena.

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary uses various kinds of simile[337] to illustrate the transition between modes and the stages of the thought process. When a simile is given, each stage of the thought process is connected to the corresponding event in the simile by using the term *kāla* instead of *khaṇa* (for example, in the mango-simile: *niddāyanakālo viya bhavaṅgasamaṅgīkālo, patanakālo viya ārammaṇassa pasāda-ghaṭṭanakālo*, etc.).[338] In the section on word-definitions (*pada-bhājanīya*) of the same work,[339] the terms *kāla* and *khaṇa* are used to define the word *samaya* (meaning both occasion and chronological time). Here *khaṇa* refers to 'the right moment' and *kāla* to 'extremely short time'.[340] If this is the case, the word *kāla* at the end of the above compounds can safely be understood as 'extremely brief duration' at each phase in the thought process. It is when defining the word *samaya* as *kāla* that the statement of the sixteen moments theory occurs. This seems to indicate that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary tends to use the term *kāla* rather than *khaṇa* in order to express brevity of time. Nevertheless this surely corresponds to the usage of the term *khaṇa* in other commentarial texts.[341] As shown in chapter 1, unlike the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' concept of the *khaṇa* as a definite unit of time, the Theravādin commentarial notion of *khaṇa* generally denotes a brief time, the dimension of which is not precisely fixed, but may be determined by the context. With this internal evidence in mind, I will now turn to the issue of how the sixteen moments theory is related to some stages of the thought process in the chapter called the *Paṭiccasamuppādavibhaṅga* (or the *Paccayâkāra-vibhaṅga*)[342] of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary.

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337 The similes are: cob-web, door-keeper, village child, mango, sugar-cane squeezing, born-blind and crippled, object-seizing, sufficing condition and purpose. See As 279-284 for details.

338 As 271.

339 As 60-61.

340 See chapter 1, p. 74, fn. 171.

341 Vibh-a 157-159.

342 The Burmese version uses the title '*Paṭiccasamuppādavibhaṅga*', the PTS version '*Paccayākāra-vibhaṅga*'.

(4) The mechanism of the final thought process at the time of death and rebirth

The *Paṭiccasamuppāda-vibhaṅga*, the sixth chapter of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary (hereafter, the PSV commentary), probably provides the most detailed account of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). The relevant material here comes from the section on *viññāṇa* (i.e. the third *aṅga*).[343] This *viññāṇa* in the third *aṅga* is often used specifically to refer to consciousness at the moment of conception (*paṭisandhi*). Thus the section discusses in some detail the mechanism of the thought process bridging death and rebirth. The same material is most probably copied in the *Visuddhimagga* and later summarised in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.[344] In an outline of earlier material the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* relates consciousness at conception (*paṭisandhi*) and death (*cuti*) to the *bhavaṅga* mind. The text presents a general model of the life process from conception to death (i.e. rebirth-linking→ life-continuum → death). In any single life it is the same *bhavaṅga* that performs these three functions.[345] That is to say, at the moment of conception the rebirth-linking thought arises, linking the new existence to the old one; throughout the course of life *bhavaṅga* maintains the continuity of existence, whether operating in active or inactive mode; and finally the dying thought occurs and performs the function of passing away from the old existence. The rebirth-linking thought and dying thought are treated as special terms for the first and last in the series of moments of *bhavaṅga* consciousness.[346]

The PSV commentary claims that the previous account of rebirth-linking (*paṭisandhi*) is too brief and is hard to understand. In order to present the matter in detail, the *Vibhaṅga* commentator proposes a series of questions such as: How many kinds of rebirth-linking and rebirth-linking consciousness are there? Where and by what means does rebirth-linking come about ? What does rebirth-linking have as its object? We find useful material in the answer to the last question. The commentator replies that rebirth-linking has three kinds of

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343 The Burmese version titles the section '*Viññāṇapadaniddesavaṇṇanā*', the PTS version '*Viññāṇapada*'.

344 Vibh-a 155-160; Vism XVII § 133-145; Abhidh-s 27-28.

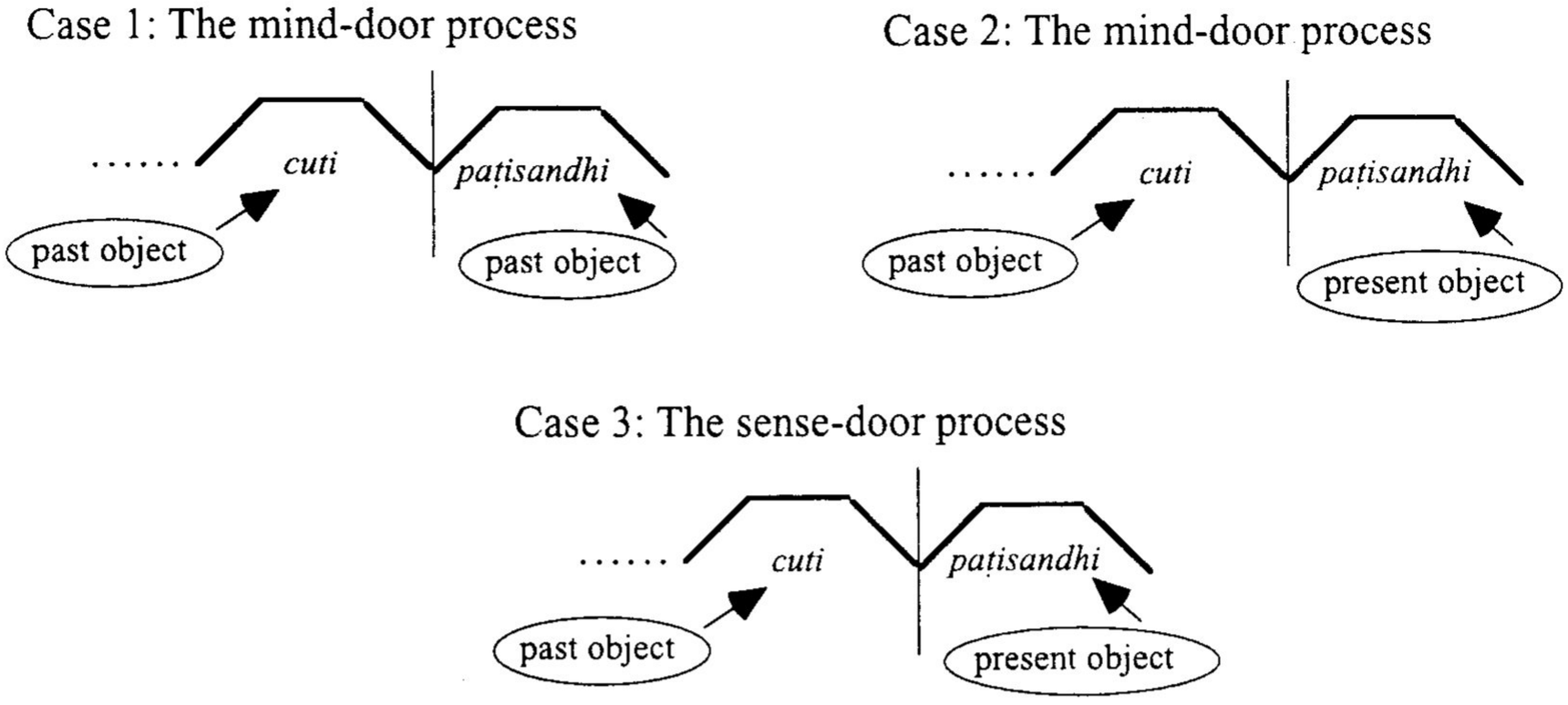
345 Abhidh-s 24: *paṭisandhi bhavaṅgañ ca tathā cavanamānasaṃ*
ekam eva tath' ev' ekavisayañ c' ekajātiyaṃ.
(Thus rebirth, *bhavaṅga* and the thought at death
in a single birth are just one and have one object.)

346 Gethin (1994), pp. 20-21.

objects in terms of i) *kamma*, the sign of *kamma* (*kamma-nimitta*) and the sign of the destiny (*gati-nimitta*), and, in another classification, in terms of ii) past, present and not-so-classifiable (*na vattabba*) objects. It is within the examples for the latter classification that the relevant material occurs. He shows how rebirth-linking consciousness arises in the happy and unhappy destinies and how rebirth-linking consciousness with one of three kinds (i.e. past, present and not-so-classifiable) of object arises immediately after death consciousness with one of two kinds (i.e. past and not-so-classifiable) of object. The commentator here attempts to cover all possible cases, for instance, he presents four possible directions of rebirth with one of three objects either in the mind-door or sense-door: 1) from happy to unhappy destiny, 2) from unhappy to happy destiny, 3) from happy to happy destiny, 4) from unhappy to unhappy destiny. Fortunately only the details of the first are necessary for our present purposes.

With regard to the first case (i.e. from happy to unhappy destiny), there will be three possibilities depending on which object *paṭisandhi-citta* and *cuti-citta* take either in the mind-door or the sense-door. First, both in the mind-door process *paṭisandhi-citta* and *cuti-citta* have a past object (e.g. past karmic action); second, in the mind-door process *paṭisandhi-citta* has a present object (e.g. sign of destiny, *gati-nimitta*) but *cuti-citta* a past one; third, in the sense-door process *paṭisandhi-citta* has a present object (e.g. sense object-swords, flowers etc.) but *cuti-citta* a past one. Here are illustrations (Figure 3-13).

Figure 3-13: Three possible cases for rebirth from happy to unhappy destiny



We can now turn to the full details of each stage of the final thought process in the second and third cases, leaving aside the first, as does the text.[347] This will reveal a link between the sixteen moments theory and the stages of the thought process. But before citing the relevant passages from the text, some details need to be added to the above outline.

In the commentaries the description of the final thought process begins with an interruption of *bhavaṅga* in two stages (*calana* and *upaccheda*). The mind adverts from the passive mode of *bhavaṅga* in order to take up an appropriate object. If it is a present sense object, the mind adverts to the appropriate sense-doors by means of the *kiriya* mind element (*mano-dhātu*); if it is a past sense or mental object, the mind adverts to the mind-door by means of the *kiriya* mind consciousness element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). Having reached the stages of *javana*, either by means of one of the sense-doors or just the mind-door, the *javana* phase, by reason of its weakness, runs for only five thought moments rather than the usual seven. Following the *javana* stage, two *tadārammaṇa* may or may not occur in certain circumstances. At the final moment of old *bhavaṅga*, the consciousness arises to perform the function of passing away from the present life. Following the dissolution moment of the death consciousness, there arises in a new existence the rebirth-linking

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347 With regard to the first case the text does not give each stage of the thought process.

consciousness apprehending the object thus obtained in the final *javana* process of the previous life.

With these general points in mind, I turn to a specific case in the following citation from the PSV commentary .

> In another case, owing to *kamma* of the kind already described, there comes into focus at the mind-door at the time of death **the sign of the unhappy destinies** with the appearance of fire and flames, etc., in hell, and so on [i.e. other bad destinies]. So **when the life-continuum has twice arisen** and ceased, three sorts of cognitive-series consciousness arise contingent upon that object, namely, **the one adverting**, ***javana* numbering five** because of the slowing down due to the nearness of death, and **two *tadārammaṇas***. After that, **one death consciousness** arises, making the life-continuum's objective field its object. At this point **eleven** thought moments (***citta-kkhaṇa*) have elapsed**. Then, **having that same object, which has a life span of the remaining five** thought moments, rebirth-linking consciousness arises. This is the kind of rebirth-linking that has a present object and comes immediately after death with a past object.[348]

This second case gives a standard example of the final thought process at the mind-door when a being is going to undergo rebirth in one of the unpleasant realms of the *kāma-dhātu*. What a being may see is where he or she is about to go; this kind of object is not regarded as some conceptual symbol of one's destiny (*gati-nimitta*) but classified as a present sense-object perceived at the mind-door. In other words, it is truly an actual vision of the place one is headed for.[349] What is to be envisaged in this case is that this vision is an occasion for an unwholesome thought process. Fortunately the text lists precisely each stage of this particular mental process and we do find use of the term *citta-kkhaṇa* in the summary of the list (i.e. *ekādasa cittakkhaṇā*). What concerns us here is whether this is directly linked with the sixteen moments theory or is just a simple list. A pivotal clue comes from the remark: "...eleven thought moments (*citta-kkhaṇa*) have elapsed. Then, having that same object, which has a life span of the remaining five thought moments..." in the

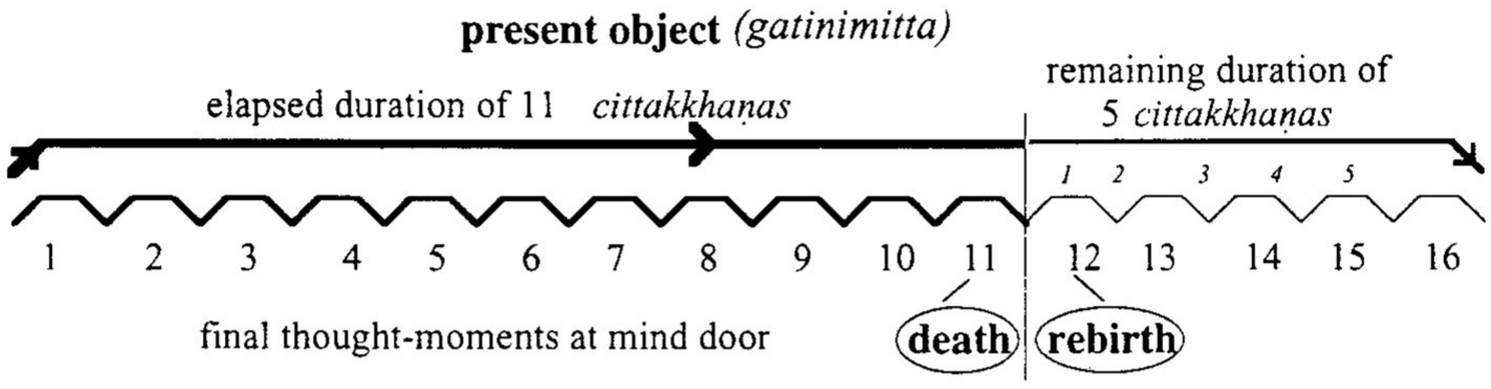
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348 Vibh-a 157 (cf. Vism XVII § 137): *aparassa maraṇasamaye vuttappakārakammavasena narakādisu aggijāla-vaṇṇādikaṃ* ***duggatinimittaṃ manodvāre*** *āpātham āgacchati. tassa* ***dvikkhattuṃ bhavaṅge uppajjitvā*** *niruddhe taṃ ārammaṇaṃ ārabbha* ***ekaṃ āvajjanaṃ***, *maraṇassa āsannabhāvena mandībhūtavegattā* ***pañca javanāni, dve tadārammaṇānī*** *ti tīṇivīthicittāni uppajjanti. tato bhavaṅgavisayaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā* ***ekaṃ cuticittaṃ***. *ettāvatā* ***ekādasa cittakkhaṇā*** *atītā honti. ath'* ***āvasesapañcacittakkhaṇâyuke*** *tasmim yeva ārammaṇe paṭisandhicittaṃ uppajjati. ayaṃ atītârammaṇāya cutiyā anantarā paccuppannârammaṇā paṭisandhi.* (Bhikkhu Ñyāṇamoli's trsl with some changes, especially of technical terms like *javana, tadārammaṇa,* etc..)

349 See Gethin (1994), pp. 23-24.

concluding part of the above citation. The underlined phrases indicate that a present object (i.e. a vision of the place one is headed for) has arisen simultaneously with the first moment of disturbance of *bhavaṅga* and endured until the eleventh moment, the stage of death consciousness. In other words, the present sense-object has a life span of sixteen thought moments: the eleven thought moments which have already passed and the remaining five thought moments. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the present object and the final thought moments in the process of death and rebirth.

Figure 3-14: The mind-door process at death and rebirth from happy to unhappy destiny



Keys:

1. *bhavaṅga calana* (disturbance of *bhavaṅga*)
2. *bhavaṅga upaccheda* (*bhavaṅga* cut off)
3. *āvajjana* (adverting)
4-8. *javana*
9-10. *tadārammaṇa*
11. *cuti-citta* (death consciousness)
12 *paṭisandhi-citta* (rebirth-linking consciousness) = first *bhavaṅga*
13. second *bhavaṅga*
14. third *bhavaṅga*
15. fourth *bhavaṅga*
16. fifth *bhavaṅga*

To contrast the mind-door process with the sense-doors, I quote the third case, which shows each stage of the sense-door process at death and rebirth.

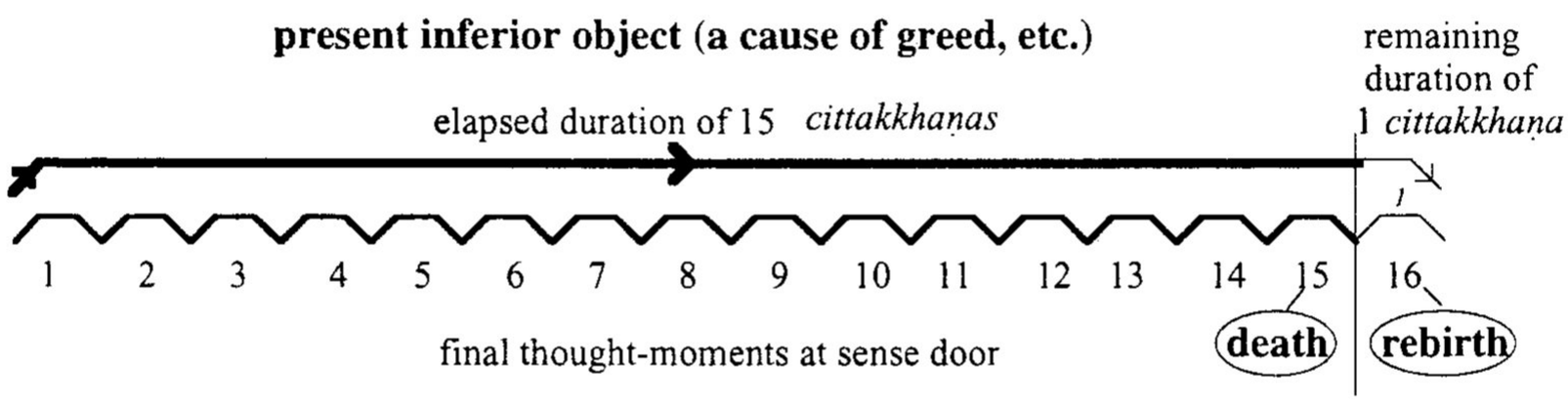
> In another case at the time of death there comes into focus in **one of the five doors** an inferior object that is a cause of greed, and so on. When a series up to determining has arisen in due succession, there arise *javana* numbering five because of slowing down due to the nearness of death, and two *tadārammaṇa*. After that, one death consciousness making the life-continuum's objective fields its object. At this point **fifteen thought moments have elapsed**, namely, **two *bhavaṅgas*, one each of adverting, seeing, receiving, investigating and determining, five *javanas*, two *tadārammaṇas*, and one death consciousness**. Then **having that same object, which has a life span of the remaining one thought moment (*citta-kkhaṇa*)**, rebirth-linking consciousness arises. This also is the kind of rebirth-linking that has a present object and comes immediately after death with a past object.[350]

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350 Vibh-a 157-158 (cf. Vism XVII § 138): *aparassa maraṇasamaye **pañcannaṃ dvārānaṃ** aññatarasmiṃ dvāre rāgâdi hetubhūtaṃ hīnârammaṇaṃ āpātham āgacchati. tassa yathākkamena uppannavoṭṭhapanāvasāne maraṇassa āsannabhāvena mandībhūtavegattā pañca javanâdi dve tadārammaṇānī ca uppajjanti.*

This third case represents a standard example of the final thought process at the sense-door when a being is going to take rebirth in one of the unpleasant realms of the *kāma-dhātu*. If a dying being encounters an inferior or unwholesome object which causes greed, hatred and illusion, the sense-door process occurs, as the text specifies, in fifteen thought moments (*pañcadasa-citta-kkhaṇa*). After the arising of death consciousness, rebirth takes place, having the same object, which has a life-span of the remaining single thought moment. That is to say, the present sense object which has arisen simultaneously with the first moment of the disturbance of *bhavaṅga* endures until the sixteen thought moments arise and pass away. Thus the present sense object lasts sixteen thought moments (i.e. the elapsed duration of 15 *citta-kkhaṇas* and the remaining duration of 1 *citta-kkhaṇa*). Here is an illustration.

Figure 3-15: The sense-door process at death and rebirth from happy to unhappy destiny



Keys:

1. *bhavaṅga calana* (disturbance of *bhavaṅga*)
2. *bhavaṅga upaccheda* (*bhavaṅga* cut off)
3. *āvajjana* (adverting)
4. *dassana* (seeing)
5. *sampaṭicchana* (receiving)
6. *santīraṇa* (investigating)
7. *voṭṭhapana* (determining)
8-12. *javana*
13-14. *tadārammaṇa*
15. *cuti-citta* (death consciousness)
16 *paṭisandhi-citta* (rebirth-linking consciousness) = first *bhavaṅga*

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the theory of momentariness is to a certain extent articulated in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary, but it is confined to the generative mechanism, from conception to death, of the material and mental phenomena of the five *khandhas*. In contrast, the PSV commentary is here concerned with the cognitive

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tato bhavaṅgavisayam ārammaṇaṃ katvā ekaṃ cuticittaṃ. ettāvatā ***dve bhavaṅgāni, āvajjanaṃ, dassanaṃ, sampaṭicchanaṃ, santīraṇaṃ, voṭṭhapanaṃ, pañcajavanāni, dve tadāramma-ṇāni, ekaṃ cuticittan ti*** ***pañcadasa cittakkhaṇā*** *atītā honti. ath'* ***āvasesa-ekacittakkhaṇâyuke*** *tasmim yeva ārammaṇe paṭisandhicittaṃ uppajjati. ayaṃ pi atītârammaṇāya cutiyā anantarā paccuppannâ-rammaṇā paṭisandhi.* (Bhikkhu Ñyāṇamoli's trsl with some changes, especially of technical terms like *javana, tadārammaṇa,* etc.)

mechanism in relation to a physical or mental object during death and rebirth. In simpler terms, the former deals with how the body and mind from conception to death go through the process of change in the ratio of 1: 17, but the latter shows how the mind perceives a sense or mental object at death and rebirth by assuming that one moment of materiality corresponds to sixteen thought moments. This textual evidence has been worked out by simple arithmetic, based on the numerical remarks at the end of each description of the process of death and rebirth. This is why I suggested in the introduction to this section that the theory of momentariness was developed in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary and that it was applied to the final thought process in the PSV commentary, the later part of the same work. The *Visuddhimagga*[351] repeats the same passages in the exposition of dependent origination in the *Paññābhūminiddesa* (XVII. §133-145). But this identification of textual sources does not seem to give us a solution to our inquiry. The specific question, to repeat, was how and to what extent the sixteen moments theory relates to the sixteen stages of the thought process in the same way as the seventeen moments theory is applied explicitly in the later textual sources to the seventeen stages of the thought process.

Having examined the textual material relevant to the present issue, as briefly done in the earlier chapters, we are forced to ask such questions as: how on earth did the Theravādins arrive at the position that a moment of materiality lasts sixteen or seventeen thought moments? What is the determining principle underlying the relative duration of materiality and thought? To put it another way, how did they discern the relative duration of material and mental phenomena in the thought process? These issues are addressed below.

3.2.2 Why the number sixteen ?

(1) A cultural reflection ?

The commentarial tradition and the later *Abhidhamma* manual contend that a moment of materiality lasts as long as sixteen or seventeen thought moments, and this notion of the

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351 The **Vimuttimagga* omits this portion, see Bapat (1937), pp. 105-106.

relative time scale of material and mental phenomena is applied to the thought process, as seen above, in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Let me take the number sixteen first. What are the origins of the number sixteen? Nyanaponika Thera briefly suggests that the choice of the numeral sixteen may have been influenced by the fact that in India "sixteen" was and still is a very popular unit for measuring space, time, and so on. He further adds: "For instance, a Westerner with his decimal system would have chosen 'ten' as a starting point for distributing proportional values."[352] I assume that this is possible, but it needs to be supported with more substantial evidence.

(2) The symbol of wholeness

Why is the number seven lucky in almost every culture? Why do Indians consider the number eighteen as holy or magical?[353] From literature to folklore and private superstitions, numbers have a symbolic meaning and play a conspicuous role in our daily lives. For practical purposes, such as to count or measure things, numerical systems are used. The decimal system seems to be most widespread, but other systems are still in use. A. Schimmel in her book "*The Mystery of Numbers*" remarks that the sexagesimal system in ancient Babylon still survives in the seconds, minutes, and hours of the day, as well as in the degrees of the circle.[354] The people of the Indus valley used a monetary system based on multiples of sixteen: sixteen *māṣas* making one *purāṇa-dharaṇa-kārṣāpaṇa*, sixteen *paṇas* making one *kāhaṇa* and sixteen *annas* making one *rupee*. Until recently in India the *rupee* was divided into sixteen *annas*.[355] In the Roman and Indian system one foot was formed by adding four palms, and each palm or breadth of the hand measured four fingers. Thus the foot was sixteen fingers (*ṣoḍaśa-aṅgulika*). The sixteen-armed goddess Pussa, a Sino-Indian deity, holding the sixteen essential objects, was depicted as the symbol of fulfilment and wholeness.[356] The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* claims that one should venerate the sixteen quarters of Brahman, and a man consists of sixteen parts.[357] There are sixteen signs

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352 Nyanaponika Thera (1976), pp. 111-112.
353 See Otto Stein's article "The Number 18" in *Kleine Schriften*, 1985, pp. 515-551.
354 Schimmel (1993), p. 4.
355 Sircar (1968), p. 55.
356 Schimmel (1993), pp. 216-217.
357 CU 4.5.1-4.8.4; 6.7.1.

of perfect beauty in classical Indian aesthetics, and the lovely lady is adorned with sixteen different pieces of jewellery. Certain measures in poetry are divided into sixteen *mātras*, syllabic units, and the most frequently used measure in Indian music is *tintal*, again with sixteen units.[358]

(3) The idea of the moon's sixteen phases and time-reckoning

The idea of the moon's sixteen phases (*kalā*)[359] is widely reflected in early Indian literary sources. The apparently old Sanskrit idiom *kalāṃ nârhati* [or *nârhanti* or *nârghanti*] *ṣoḍaśīm* (is not worth one-sixteenth part) is found in the *Mahābhārata*, *Manusmṛti* and other Sanskrit texts.[360] This stock idiom is also commonly used in the early Buddhist texts; for instance, it is said in the *Itivuttaka*: "Just as, monks, whatsoever the radiance of all the gleaming stars may be, it is not worth the sixteenth part (*kalaṃ nâgghanti soḷasiṃ*) of the light of the moon, … likewise all those meritorious actions forming the basis of rebirth are not worth the sixteenth part of loving kindness and the release of mind…."[361] The same idiom is found in the *Dhammapada*: "A fool might eat his food month by month with the tip of kusa grass; he is not worth one sixteenth part (*kalaṃ nâgghanti soḷasiṃ*) of those who have perfected the doctrine."[362] This idea of the moon's sixteen phases can be traced back to the early Upaniṣadic period.

What we are interested in is how the moon's sixteen phases were used as a unit of time in ancient India. From the beginning of human civilisation most people, however primitive, have had some method of time-recording and time-reckoning based either on the phases of

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358 Schimmel (1993), p. 216. See MW, p. 1110 for more examples.

359 The sixteen phases of the moon are named: 1. *Amṛtā*, 2. *Mānadā*, 3. *Pūṣā*, 4. *Tuṣṭi*, 5. *Puṣṭi*, 6. *Rati*, 7. *Dhṛti*, 8. *Śaśinī*, 9. *Candrikā*, 10.*Kānti*, 11. *Jyosnā*, 12. *Śrī*, 13. *Prīti*, 14. *Aṅgadā*, 15. *Pūrṇā*, 16. *Pūrṇâmṛtā* (MW p. 1110).

360 *Mahābhārata* 1.94.60d, 2.38.26d, 3.89.19d, 3.171.3d, 3.243.3f, 7.35.6f, 7.86.29d, 7.168.16f, 8,11,28b; *Manusmṛti* 2.86d; *Hevajratantra* I.viii.48d; *Tantrāloka* 4.108b. (I am indebted to Dr Harunaga Isaacson for these references.)

361 It 20: *Seyyathā pi bhikkhave yā kāci tārakarūpānaṃ pabhā sabbā tā candiyā pabhāya* ***kalaṃ nâgghanti soḷasiṃ****..... evam eva kho bhikkhave yāni kānica opadhikāni puññakiriyavatthūni sabbāni tāni mettāya cetovimuttiyā* ***kalaṃ nâgghanti soḷasiṃ****.....*

362 Dhp vs.70: *māse māse kusaggena bālo bhuñjetha bhojanaṃ; na so saṃkhatadhammānaṃ* ***kalaṃ nâgghati soḷasiṃ***. Norman's trsl, p.19. See also S I 211, V 44; A I 166, III 365, IV 151, V 22; Vv 24; Th 105; Ap 133. In A IV 151 there occurs a slightly modified form: *kalam pi te nânubhavanti soḷasiṃ.*

nature, indicated by temporal variations in the climate and the plant and animal life, or on celestial phenomena revealed by elementary astronomical observations. Time-reckoning, that is the continuous counting of time-units, was preceded by time-indications provided by particular occurrences.[363] The oldest method of counting was by means of some readily recognisable recurrent phenomenon, for example counting the days in terms of dawns or of the moon's waxing and waning. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the earliest of the Upaniṣads,[364] identifies the lord of the universe Prajāpati with the moon. The moon's fifteen phases are not constant, as each one disappears on successive nights of the lunar fortnight. The sixteenth phase, however, is constant; it is by means of it that the moon reappears on the night following the new moon. The former are further recognised as Prajāpati's wealth and the latter as his body or person (*ātman*).[365] Thus Prajāpati is the moon with sixteen digits (*ṣoḍaśa-kala*), the means of time-reckoning. This suggests that the idea of the number sixteen as a unit of time-reckoning came from the sixteen phases of the moon. Each phase of the moon stands for a single day and night. The new moon marks the first day of the month; by gradually waxing it becomes the full moon on the fifteenth day, and by gradually waning it disappears altogether, when the sixteenth phase is hidden. To borrow the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*'s analogy, it is Prajāpati's person (*ātman*) which is the permanent source of the renewal of time. Thus the rhythmic pattern of the moon's waxing and waning provides a continuous means of time-reckoning.[366] It is likely that this

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363 Whitrow (1988), p. 14.

364 On linguistic and other grounds, there is general agreement that the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, as a whole, is the oldest of the Upaniṣads, even though individual passages in it may be later than those in others, especially those of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (Olivelle,1998, p. 30).

365 BU **1**.5.14: *sa eṣa saṃvatsaraḥ prajāpatiḥ, soḍaśakalaḥ; tasya rātraya eva pañcadaśa kalāḥ, dhruvaivāsya ṣoḍaśī kalā. sa rātribhir evā ca pūryate, apa ca kṣīyate; so 'māvāsyāṃ rātrim etayā ṣoḍasyā kalayā sarvaṃ idaṃ prāṇabhṛd anupraviśya, tataḥ prātar jāyate. tasmād etāṃ rātrim prāṇabhṛtaḥ prāṇaṃ na vicchindyād api kṛkatāsasya, etasyā eva devatāyā apacityai.*
BU **1**.5.15: *yo vai sa saṃvatsaraḥ prajāpatiḥ ṣoḍaśakalaḥ, ayam eva sa yo 'yam evaṃ-vit puruṣaḥ. tasya vittam eva pañcadaśa kalāḥ, ātmaivāsya ṣoḍaśī kalā, sa vittenaivā ca pūryate apa ca kṣīyate. tad etan nabhyam yad ayam ātmā, pradhir vittam. tasmād yady api sarvajyāniṃ jīyata, ātmanā cej jīvati, pradhināgād ity evâhuḥ.*

366 Although the concept of the month based on the moon's waxing and waning is much more readily attained than that of the year, the solar system is more widely used than the lunar. It is difficult to combine the two satisfactorily, because the solar period is not a convenient multiple of the lunar period. So long as the beginning of the month was determined by observing the new moon, the month was based on lunation, but such months are inconvenient for measuring longer periods, since it is the movement of the sun that determines the seasons and the rhythm of life associated with them. As a result, the present system of months no longer has any connection with the moon but is a purely arbitrary way of dividing the solar year

had a wide influence upon ancient Indian culture: the number sixteen was a popular measuring unit and the symbol of wholeness.

(4) The idea of time and of a linear sequence of thought moments

How can we relate this idea of the number sixteen as a unit of time-reckoning to the notion of the sixteen thought moments? In general, the origin of the concept of numbering is closely connected with the way in which our minds work in time, that is, with the way that we can consciously attend to only one thing at a time. The idea of time is thus closely linked with the fact that the process of thinking consists of a linear sequence of thought moments in discrete acts of attention. This sequence is probably conveyed in terms of the number sixteen in relation to the theory of thought process and the duration of materiality postulated by the Theravādin tradition. It makes sense, accordingly, to think of the number sixteen as a complete unit of the thought process,[367] which corresponds to a full unit of the duration of materiality. The number might reflect simply a generic unit of measurement prevalent in ancient Indian culture. But this is not the whole story. To substantiate this conjecture with textual evidence, it is necessary to return to the statement: "*tasmiṃ rūpe dharante 'va soḷasa cittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhanti*". In particular we have to look more carefully at the full implications of this statement from the perspective of how the thought moments determine the duration of materiality.

3.2.3 Determining factors of the duration of materiality

Since we have already clarified the ambiguity caused by the phrase: *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante*, the examination here will focus on the factors determining the duration of materiality and its relationship with thought moments. At the outset, it is worth noting that the duration of materiality is measured by a unit of sixteen thought moments, not vice versa. Before delving into the implications of the above statement, however, we need to clarify the *Abhidhammic* position on the relationship between the mental process and the object perceived.

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into twelve parts. The present concept of the year can be traced back to the Romans and through them to the Egyptians, who disregarded lunation as a time-measure (see Whitrow, 1988, p. 17).

367 Starting from *bhavaṅga-calana* (the first thought moment) and ending with *tadārammaṇa* (the sixteenth thought moment).

(1) **The relationship between the mental process and the object perceived in a given moment**

In any given moment or event (*samaya*), according to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, as shown in chapter 2, the occurrence of skilful or unskilful thought (i.e. assemblage of *citta* and *cetasika*) involves the operation of the six senses (five physical senses and mind) on the six corresponding sense objects. Physical and mental phenomena at a given moment in time (*samaya*) occur in various relationships to each other in accordance with the principle of causal connectedness; they do not just arise arbitrarily or randomly. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary rightly classifies the five meanings of the word *samaya* in terms of relations (*adhikaraṇa*) and the characteristics of the state (*bhāva-lakkhaṇa*),[368] and it is in this particular context, as noted above, that the problematic statement of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena in the ratio of 1: 16 occurs. The first thing that we have to make clear is whether the distinction between material and mental phenomena (*rūpa* and *arūpa dhammas*) is meant to imply ontological dualism or is just a conventional expression used to describe different levels of events, a figure of speech as untrue as the statement that the sun rises or sets. In the Theravādin *Abhidhamma* system physical and mental events or phenomena are termed *dhammas*. In the present context, each *dhamma* can be defined as an ultimate 'event' or 'factor' or 'reality' that, in relation with other ultimate events or factors, constitutes the basis of reality as a whole. The *rūpa-dhammas* represent the occurrence of certain states or processes which are characterised by solidity, fluidity, heat and motion. The *arūpa-dhammas* might be similarly interpreted as the occurrence of certain states or processes which are not characterised according to the four primary elements. As Sue Hamilton remarks, however, in Buddhism this distinction does not imply the ontological dualism posited by Descartes' well-known polarisation of consciousness (which is unextended) and matter (whose primary property is extension), but indicates that the states or processes occur at different levels on a spectrum of density.[369] With this understanding of the causal connectedness of physical and mental phenomena, let me return to the issue of the duration of materiality and thought moments.

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368 As 61.

369 Hamilton (1996), p. 42.

(2) Thought moments determine the duration of materiality, not vice versa

The occurrence of the *rūpa* and *arūpa-dhammas* at a given moment (*samaya*) is causally connected. According to Theravādin *Abhidhamma* tradition, the *rūpa-dhammas*, even if the things of the world appear to be stable, are in a state of continuous flux, rising up, persisting and subsiding. Similarly, the *arūpa-dhammas*, even if the mental impressions (feeling, cognition etc.) seem to be vivid and sharp, are in a state of constant and rapid change. On the basis of this dynamic process, the *arūpa-dhammas* arise in relation to the *rūpa-dhammas*. That is to say, when we see an object at a given moment (*samaya*), thought (*citta*) arises with regard to the object in successive moments; *samaya* or time defines thought, which, in turn, delimits *samaya*,[370] and at this given moment thought defines the object. What I seek to demonstrate here is how thought contextualises the given object in terms of *samaya*. Before being contextualised by thought, an object undergoes its own process of rising up, persisting and subsiding, and this process is not confined by any particular *samaya* or time-limit (such as 16 or 17). But as soon as the object is arrested by thought in a specific circumstance, the thought defines the relative time span of the object in terms of *samaya*. Here thought is a sort of a yardstick with which to measure the time span of the object, as noted above, not vice versa. If we allow the opposite to be true (i.e. that the object can measure the duration of consciousness), or at least admit that the phases of materiality have an intrinsic and definite time span independent of thought, a contradiction arises, as these views stem from a dualistic world view. For instance, if we assumed that a material phenomenon of a piece of paper had an intrinsic and fixed duration, as soon as the object initiated the thought process, there would be a mixed state of duration; one unit of time span inherited from materiality and the other delimited by the thought moments. This is not to deny the fact that external objects, even when we are not aware of them, are constantly changing from moment to moment, but simply to convey the subjective aspect of time-reckoning.[371] That is to say, the determining factor of the time span of materiality is a

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370 As 57; see Nyanaponika Thera (1976, p. 104) for a discussion of time and consciousness.

371 From an experiential standpoint, to talk of time going quickly or slowly is itself paradoxical. Nevertheless the urge to do so remains, because it stems from an ineliminable contrast between our subjective sense of time as experienced and objective time as measured by calendars and clocks. For practical purposes we need to set up an objective, conventionally measured time because our individual experiences of the passage of time do not agree, whereas we do all agree about the order in which temporal events occur.

unit of sixteen thought moments, and materiality itself has no influence on the measurement of its own duration.

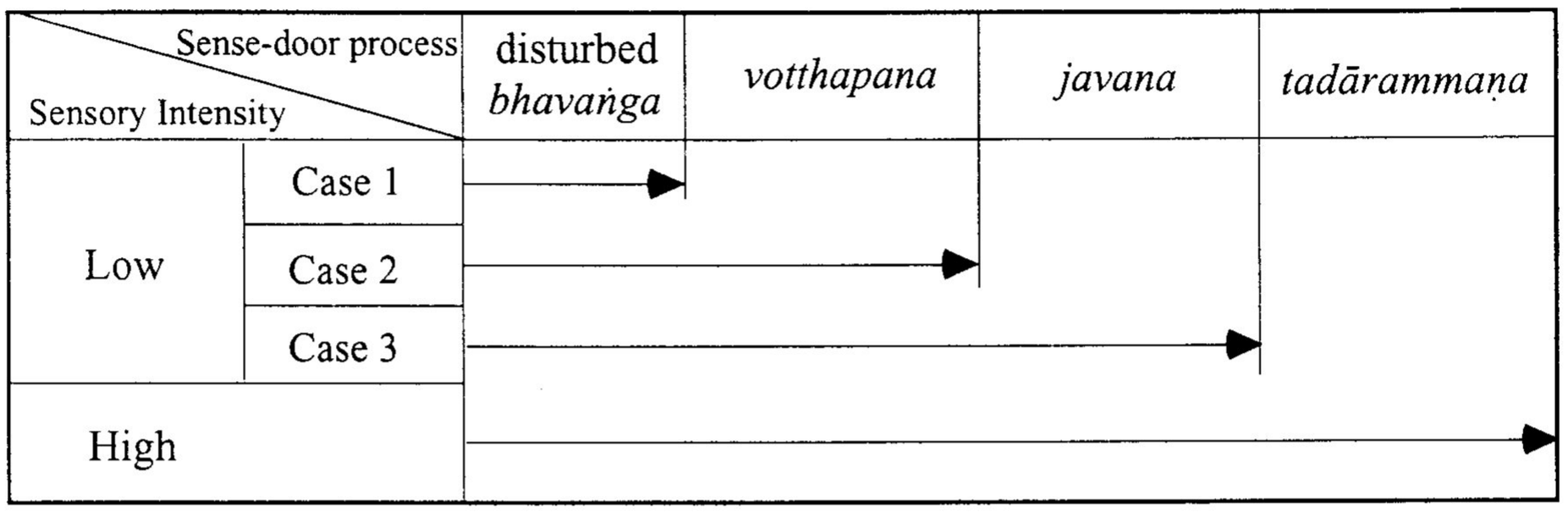
What determine the duration of materiality are the thought moments. Each thought moment has the same length of time, as stated in the *Pakiṇṇakakathā*, but its content is not specified there (i.e. each thought moment is not listed). In contrast, I have suggested above that the sixteen moments theory was applied to the final thought process – each thought moment is precisely listed in this case – in the PSV commentary. It is important to note here that the theory was applied not to the complete thought process during one's lifetime but to the final thought process at death and rebirth (the stages listed are somewhat different from those in the complete thought process). If this is the case, we need to revise the above suggestion that the number sixteen represents a full unit of the complete thought process, and the number might simply reflect a generic unit of measurement. Before modifying what I have suggested, I shall provide some textual evidence to show how the stages of the process are determined in accordance with the sense- and mind-doors and the degree of sensory intensity and mental clarity.

(3) **The degree of sensory intensity determines the grades of the sense-door process**

The duration of the various types of sense-door process is determined by several factors. The mind-door process may either occur independently or arise in succession to the sense-door process. For our present purpose we need to consider only the latter case. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary provides four types of sense-door process, which can be divided into two categories, depending on the presence or absence of *tadārammaṇa*. When the sense-door process terminates with *tadārammaṇa*, it implies that the degree of sensory intensity is high, due to the presence of a powerful sense object (*balavârammaṇa*); if it ends before reaching the stage of *tadārammaṇa*, intensity is low, owing to the presence of a weak object (*ārammaṇa-dubbala*). The latter category is further divided into three futile cases (*mogha-vāras*): 1) the sensory intensity caused by a weak object is too low to bring about adverting to one of the five sense-doors; 2) the intensity is adequate to bring about

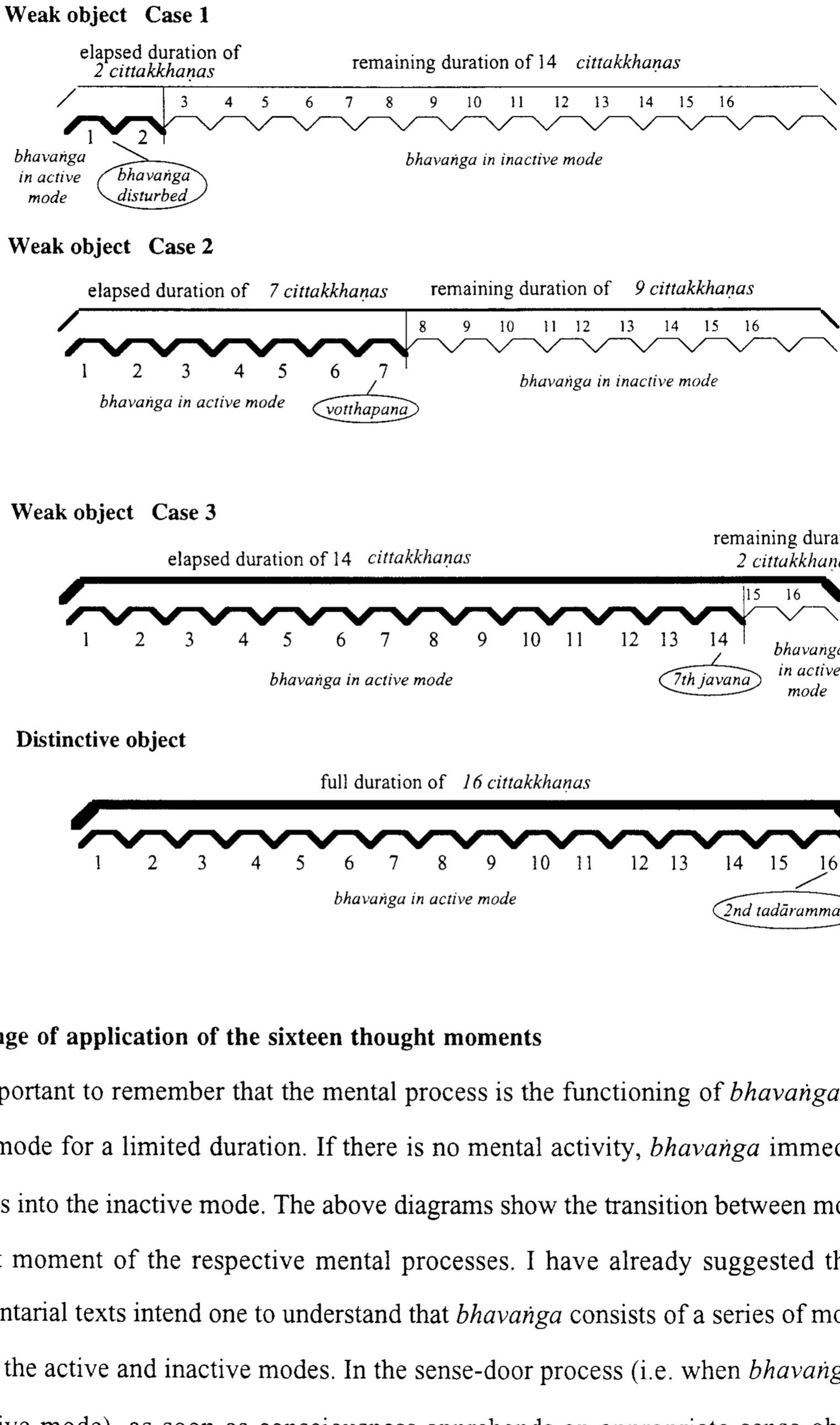
adverting and the succeeding stages through to determining (*voṭṭhapana*); 3) the intensity is great enough to bring about all the stages through to *javana*. Here is an illustration (compare this with Figure 3-26).

Figure 3-16: The sense-door process and the degree of sensory intensity



The text does not explicitly specify each stage of the process in terms of moments (*khaṇa*), but it is useful to have the principle implied in the numerical remarks in the PSV commentary as a tool with which to analyse the relative duration of the mental and material phenomena. When all the stages are counted, the complete process with a powerful object lasts sixteen thought moments. The other three cases with a weak object last two, seven and fourteen thought moments respectively. The process in the first case lasts only for two thought moments and still needs fourteen thought moments in order to correspond to the sixteen thought moments which are the life span of the given object. Similarly the second case requires another nine thought moments and the third a further two thought moments. These cases can be illustrated as follows (see Figures 3-17, cf. Figures 3-15, 3-16).

Figure 3-17: The duration of the four types of the sense-door process



(4) **The range of application of the sixteen thought moments**

It is important to remember that the mental process is the functioning of *bhavaṅga* in the active mode for a limited duration. If there is no mental activity, *bhavaṅga* immediately subsides into the inactive mode. The above diagrams show the transition between modes at the last moment of the respective mental processes. I have already suggested that the commentarial texts intend one to understand that *bhavaṅga* consists of a series of moments in both the active and inactive modes. In the sense-door process (i.e. when *bhavaṅga* is in the active mode), as soon as consciousness apprehends an appropriate sense object, it immediately contextualises the object and delimits its time scale to sixteen thought moments,

but because the duration of the mental process depends entirely on the intensity of the sensory stimulus caused by the object, in many cases the active process ends before reaching the final stage (i.e. the sixteenth thought moment). In these cases, it is assumed that the remaining duration of the object has to be counted by the successive thought moments in the inactive mode of *bhavaṅga*. That is to say, once the time span of the sixteen thought moments of the given object is delimited by consciousness, its duration continues regardless of the modes of *bhavaṅga*. It is only with a distinctive object that the duration of materiality can be synchronised with the time span of the full thought process in a single mode. Thus, in theory, the notion of the sixteen thought moments is not limited to the active process (*vīthi-citta*) but extends to the inactive process (*vīthi-mutta*). This may not exactly be explicit in all the commentarial texts but it certainly follows from the principle implied in the numerical remarks in the PSV commentary about the relative duration of mental and material phenomena. I have suggested that the number sixteen used in the sense of wholeness, which may be a reflection of the wider culture, represents the unit of the complete thought-process with reference to the duration of the object. But the sixteen thought moments can be applied not only to the complete thought process with its sixteen-fold time span but also to thought moments in the inactive mode of *bhavaṅga-citta.*

(5) **Why is the sense-door process not specified in terms of sixteen thought moments in the early post-canonical texts ?**

Even if we accept that the number sixteen represents a unit of measurement, the question still remains why the sense-door process is not specified in terms of sixteen thought moments in the *Abhidhamma* commentarial texts and the *Visuddhimagga*. I assume that the commentators were not particularly keen to use the number sixteen or any other fixed number in the theory of the thought process. Presumably, this is because the time span of the process not only varies according to the intensity of sensory stimulus but also depends on the duration of *javana* and *tadārammaṇa*. The number of thought moments in the *javana* process is variable (six or seven) even in the sense-door process.[372] According to

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372 As 270: "...*javanaṃ hutvā cha satta vāre javitvā*..."; Vism XIV § 121: "...*cha satta vā javanāni javanti*". Cf. Abhidh-s 18: "...*yebhuyyena sattakkhattuṃ javanaṃ javati*...".

the *Visuddhimagga*, the duration of *tadārammaṇa* was also considered variable (one or two) in the *Majjhima Aṭṭhakathā* (most probably the old Sinhalese commentary), but the *Abhidhamma* commentary invariably accepts two thought moments.[373] With respect to all possible cases, it is only when seven *javanas* and two *tadārammaṇas* are present in the sense-door process that the duration of materiality can synchronise with the sixteen thought moments throughout its full course. Thus the concept of the number sixteen can only be applied to the complete thought process. For this reason the commentators probably did not rigidly specify the sense-door process in terms of sixteen thought moments. Upatissa's **Vimuttimagga*, a pre-Buddhaghosa work, which is only extant in Chinese translation, describes the sense-door process with high sensory intensity in only seven stages: *bhavaṅga-citta* → *āvajjana-dassana-citta* → *sampaṭicchana-citta* → *santīraṇa-citta* → *voṭṭhapana-citta* → *javana-citta* → *tadārammaṇa-citta*.[374] Here, Upatissa does not divide *javana* and *tadārammaṇa* into several stages (as seen above, *javana* usually consists of six or seven thought moments and *tadārammaṇa* of two thought moments). Moreover we do not find any statement in the **Vimuttimagga* about the duration of materiality during sixteen thought moments.[375] When the sub-commentators adopt the idea of sixteen thought moments, they clearly qualify its application. For instance, the *Visuddhimagga Mahāṭīkā* states that the complete unit of the thought process with an ultra-intense (*atimahanta*) object has a life span of sixteen thought moments (*soḷasa-cittakkhaṇâyuka*), providing that *tadārammaṇa* stages are included in the process.[376]

To sum up, what we have seen so far is how the duration of materiality is determined by a unit of sixteen thought moments. But the idea of the sixteen thought moments arose

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373 Vism XVII § 129: "...*bhavaṅgavīthiṃ pacchinditvā javanena gahitârammaṇe tadārammaṇavasena ca* ***sakiṃ vā dvikkhattuṃ vā*** *pavattatī ti* ***Majjhimaṭṭhakathāyaṃ*** *vuttaṃ.* ***Abhidhammaṭṭhakathāyaṃ*** *pana tadārammaṇe* ***dve cittavārā*** *āgatā.*"

374 VIM T 32 449^{b5ff}.

375 The *Abhidhammāvatāra* does not seem to mention the duration of materiality for sixteen or seventeen thought moments either. The absence of any statement about the duration of materiality in these well-known *Abhidhamma* manuals might strengthen von Rospatt's hypothesis that Buddhaghosa may have introduced the Theravādin theory of momentariness for the first time in his *Visuddhimagga* and commentarial texts. I shall address this problem in the conclusion (pp. 249-252).

376 Vism-mhṭ II 1024: *atimahantan ti soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukaṃ. tattha hi tadārammaṇacittaṃ uppajjati, na aññattha.*

independently of the generic number sixteen, the unit of time-reckoning rather than the full unit of the sixteen thought moments in the sense-door process, because, in theory, the notion of the sixteen thought moments is not limited to the active process (*vīthi-citta*) but extends to the inactive process (*vīthi-mutta*). In both modes of the *bhavaṅga* process the sixteen thought moments are used as a yardstick to measure the duration of materiality. It is the sub-commentators that identify the sixteen thought moments as the full unit of the thought process. I have further suggested that materiality itself has no influence on the measurement of its own duration. Nevertheless, the **Vimuttimagga* (probably the work of the Theravādin sub-school) does not mention the duration of materiality in terms of sixteen thought moments; instead, it explains a single moment (*eka-kkhaṇa*) of materiality in relation to the changing phases of the three units of material groups (*kalāpa*). This departure from the position of the mainstream Theravāda needs to be explained in order to provide textual sources for the chronological consideration of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. To address this issue, first of all, we need some background information about the nature of materiality, focusing in particular on the theory of *rūpa-kalāpas*, the Theravāda counterpart of the atomic theory postulated in the Northern traditions of Buddhism.

3.2.4 The nature of materiality and the **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa*

(1) The nature of materiality and the concept of *kalāpa*

The term *kalāpa* refers in a general sense to that which holds single parts together, but in a technical sense to the smallest material unit to contain the eight elements (i.e. the four primary and four secondary elements). As mentioned in chapter 1, this is apparently a post-canonical idea; it makes its first appearance without using the term *kalāpa* in the commentaries of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga*, and subsequently *Abhidhamma* manuals and sub-commentarial works. In contrast, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas postulate two layers of material entities: the unitary atom (*dravya-paramāṇu*) and the collective-atom (*saṅghāta-paramāṇu*). Karunadasa suggests that *kalāpa* in its technical sense corresponds

to the *saṅghāta-paramāṇu*, and there is no allusion to the *dravya-paramāṇu* in the Theravādin textual sources.[377]

The Theravādin *Ābhidhammikas* view the physical world in terms of an atomic unit of materiality. A given material object can be reduced to its smallest parts. They would observe, for instance, that a mango consists of several properties, namely chewy texture, juicy liquid, a certain degree of temperature and the property of growing bigger on the tree or becoming smaller when it dries out. The *Ābhidhammikas* place these properties into the categories of the four primary elements (*mahādhātu*) represented by earth (*paṭhavī* - solidity), water (*āpo* - fluidity), fire (*tejo* - heat) and wind (*vāyo* - mobility) respectively. The mango also has its own colour (*rūpa*), smell (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*) and nutriment (*āhāra* or *oja*), which are derived from the above four primary elements. Each particle of the mango contains these eight elements which are virtually inseparable one from another. They arise, exist and perish as a single unit. This basic unit of materiality (*kalāpa*), whether animate or inanimate, is called the bare octad (*suddhaṭṭhaka*). There are seventeen kinds of *kalāpas*.[378] They are formed by adding one or more, as the situation demands, of the remaining material elements to the basic octad. I shall not go through the technical details of each *kalāpa*, as some examples of how to form the *kalāpa* of the five sense organs will be sufficient for our purpose. According to the Theravādins the *kalāpa* of each sense organ is a decad (*dasaka*). To make it organic, *rūpa-jīvitindriya*, the material faculty of life-vitality,[379] is added as a constituent *kalāpaṅga* to the basic octad. The resulting nonad is called *jīvita-navaka*, the vital nonad. The *kalāpas* of the five sense organs are then formed by adding each of the *kalāpaṅga* of the sense organ to *jīvita-navaka*. Thus there are the eye decad (*cakkhu-dasaka*), the ear decad (*sota-dasaka*), the nose decad (*ghāna-dasaka*), the tongue decad (*jivhā-dasaka*) and the body (i.e. the sense of touch) decad (*kāya-dasaka*). These are the smallest units of the sense organs. To form an eye, for example, millions of *kalāpas* of the eye decad may be needed. The same is true for the other *kalāpas* of the sense

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377 See § 1.1.4-(1).

378 Karunadasa (1967), pp. 157-160.

379 There are two *jīvitindriyas* in Theravādin *Abhidhamma* system. See Karunadasa (1967, pp. 59-61).

organs. From the formation of the sense organs in the womb to their dissolution at death each sense decad constantly renews itself, not remaining static even for the least conceivable moment of time.

The seventeen kinds of *kalāpa* can be classified into four kinds of materiality, namely, materiality originating respectively in *kamma* (volitional acts), *citta* (consciousness), *utu* (temperature) and *āhāra* (nutriment), based on the four material generative conditions (*rūpa-samuṭṭhāna-paccaya*). Accordingly, each *kalāpa* of the five sense organs, as well as others, are supposed to originate from *kamma*; *kalāpas* of bodily and vocal expressions from *citta*; and so on.

All these material phenomena are in constant flux, and they are marked by the four characteristics of secondary material phenomena (*upādā-rūpa-lakkhaṇa*), namely *upacaya* (accumulation), *santati* (continuity), *jaratā* (ageing) and *aniccatā* (impermanence). As discussed in chapter 1, these are presumably based on the three conditioned characteristics (*ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*, i.e. *uppāda*, *ṭhiti* and *bhaṅga*). With this brief account of the nature of materiality, we shall proceed to address some controversial points in the classification of materiality in the **Vimuttimagga*, which contradict the doctrinal tenets shared with the orthodox Theravādins. This in turn will help us to understand why the interpretation of the duration of materiality in the **Vimuttimagga* is radically different from the mainstream position of the Theravādins.

(2) Some controversial points in the classification of materiality in the **Vimuttimagga*

Shortly after the dawn of Buddhist scholarship in the West the question was raised as to where the **Vimuttimagga* is located within the Theravādin textual corpus. Although it is accepted that the text belongs to the Theravādin tradition in a broad sense, there is still disagreement as to whether or not it can be associated with the non-Mahāvihāra schools, notably that of the Abhayagiri monastery. The most recent contribution to the debate is by Peter Skilling, who for the first time makes use of extensive quotations from the

**Vimuttimagga* given by Daśabalaśrīmitra in his **Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaviniścaya*, a compendium of the tenets of several Buddhist schools. This is lost in the original, but is extant in Tibetan translation.[380] Peter Skilling concludes that the **Vimuttimagga* may indeed be associated with the Abhayagirivāsins. His main evidence is a list of derived materiality (*upādā-* or *upādāya-rūpa*); the **Vimuttimagga* gives a total of twenty-six varieties of derived materiality, but the *Visuddhimagga* states emphatically that only twenty-four varieties are found in the Pāli. Additional evidence from my observations below will support his contention that the tradition of the **Vimuttimagga* disagrees with the position of the Mahāvihāravāsins on some doctrinal points, including the duration of materiality.

Previous writers on this topic, such as P.V. Bapat is also of the opinion that the **Vimuttimagga* of Upatissa represents the Abhayagirivāsin version and the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa the version of the Mahāvihāra.[381] Although the monks of the Abhayagiri lived as a separate group from the orthodox Theravādins in the Mahāvihāra, a comparison of these two texts presents no fundamental difference in doctrine. However, as W. Rahula suggests, the Abhayagirivāsins were liberal and progressive in their views, and they seem to have kept up constant contact with various Buddhist groups in Northern India.[382] As a result, dissimilarity in certain doctrinal points was inevitable as they assimilated certain views into those they shared with the orthodox Theravādins. For instance, the analysis of material phenomena in the **Vimuttimagga* is a testimonial to the influence of a non-Theravādin tradition, which clearly differs from what were considered orthodox interpretations by the Theravādins. Peter Skilling draws attention to the fact that the position of the **Vimuttimagga* is similar to that of the Vaibhāṣikas, who include all the four primary elements as well as some secondary elements like cold (*śīta*) in the tangible sphere (*spraṣṭavyāyatana*). In contrast, the Mahāvihāravāsins contend that the tangible sphere (*phoṭṭhabbāyatana*) consists of only three primary elements, excluding water (*āpo-dhātu*),

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380 *'Dus byas daṅ 'dus ma byas rnam par ṅes pa* = SAV (see Skilling, 1994, p. 173). For an analysis of this work and a discussion of its authorship and date, see Skilling (1987), pp. 3-23.

381 Bapat (1937), Intro. p. lvii-lix.

382 Cf. Bapat's view that the *Vimuttimagga* was one of the books brought over from India, see Bapat (1937), Intro. p. liv.

and that cold (*śīta*) is not *āpo-dhātu* but *tejo-dhātu*, in the condition of feeble heat (*mande hi uṇhabhāve sītabuddhi*).[383] This position of the Mahāvihāravāsins is not post-canonical but can be traced back to the canonical, *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, in which the *phoṭṭhabbâyatana* and *āpo-dhātu* are explicitly excluded from derived materiality.[384] It is further explained that the *phoṭṭhabbâyatana* consists of the earth, fire, and air elements (excluding *āpo-dhātu*), hardness (*kakkhaḷa*) and softness (*muduka*), smoothness (*saṇha*) and roughness (*pharusa*), pleasant contact (*sukhasamphassa*) and painful contact (*dukkhasamphassa*), heaviness (*garuka*) and lightness (*lahuka*).[385] In contrast, according to the *Mahāvibhāṣa* of the Vaibhāṣikas, the *spraṣṭavyâyatana* consists of the four primary elements and the seven secondary tangibles represented by smoothness (*ślakṣṇatva*), roughness (*karkaśatva*), cold (*śīta*), lightness (*laghutva*), heaviness (*gurutva*), hunger (*jighatsā*) and thirst (*pipāsā*). As noted above, the **Vimuttimagga* shares the Vaibhāṣikas' lists of the four primary elements and the first three secondary tangibles, but it excludes the last four secondary tangibles and adds heat (*uṇhatta*) to the list.[386]

We should note that the Vaibhāṣikas adopt the tangible (*spraṣṭavya*) in the basic octad of the *saṅghāta-paramāṇu* (the collective-atom), of which the first seven (i.e. the four primary elements and colour, taste and odour) are identical with the seven items in the Theravādins' list of the basic octad of *kalāpa*. The only difference is the eighth element (*āhāra* or *spraṣṭavya*); the Theravādins accept *āhāra* instead of *spraṣṭavya*. Karunadasa thinks that this difference is unavoidable as a result of the way in which the tangible sphere (*phoṭṭhabba* or *spraṣṭavya*) was viewed. From the standpoint of the Theravādins, the *phoṭṭhabba* is not regarded as a secondary element and is not needed because it is already represented by the enumeration of the three primary elements. Instead, *āhāra* is included as a separate secondary material element. But for the Vaibhāṣikas, *āhāra* is not a single material element but consists of a combination of three secondary material elements, namely

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383 Skilling (1994), p. 181.

384 Dhs § 647: *kataman taṃ* ***rūpaṃ no upādā*****?** ***phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ āpo-dhātu****, idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ no upādā.*

385 Dhs § 648: *katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ* ***phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ*** *? pathavīdhūtu tejodhātu vāyodhātu kakkhaḷaṃ mudukaṃ saṇhaṃ pharusaṃ sukhasamphassaṃ dukkhasamphassaṃ garukaṃ lahukaṃ ..... idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ phoṭṭhabbâyatanaṃ.*

386 See Karunadasa (1967), pp. 19-20, 29-30.

gandhâyatana (the sphere of odour), *rasâyatana* (the sphere of taste) and *spraṣṭavyâyatana* (the sphere of touch). If they included *āhāra* in the basic octad of the *saṅghāta-paramāṇu*, there would be a duplication of *gandha* and *rasa*, as they already apppear in the basic octad.

Here it should be noted that the **Vimuttimagga* shares the same list with the Vaibhāṣikas. Nevertheless, we cannot simply apply the argument above to explain why *phoṭṭhabba*, instead of *āhāra*, is included in the list of the **Vimuttimagga*. This is because instead of *phassa* or *phoṭṭhabba* Daśabalaśrīmitra's Tibetan citations of the **Vimuttimagga* have *ojā* (*gzi brgyid*), a synonym of *āhāra*,[387] and this agrees with the list of the Mahāvihāravāsins.[388] In accordance with the Mahāvihāravāsins' list of twenty-four types of secondary materiality, *āhāra* is included in the lists of twenty-six types of secondary materiality both in the Tibetan citations and the **Vimuttimagga*. Therefore there is no duplication even if they include *āhāra* in the basic octad of *kalāpa*, as shown above; this differs from the position of the Vaibhāṣikas, who regard *āhāra* as a combination of three secondary material elements, instead of a single material element. In this case, Daśabalaśrīmitra may have used a different recension, or replaced *phassa* or *phoṭṭhabba* (thinking it inappropriate) with *ojā* without any indication in his citation.

All these problems are riddled with complications. These can be somewhat reduced if we accept the hypothesis that the **Vimuttimagga* of the Abhayagirivāsins[389] accommodated some views of the non-Theravādin tradition into the doctrinal tenets which it shared with the orthodox Theravādins. Or alternatively, we could accept that the author of the

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387 See a definition of *ojā* in Vism XIV § 70 which refers to *kabalinkārāhāra*.

388 The **Vimuttimagga* and Daśabalaśrīmitra's Tibetan citations agree with the Mahāvihāravāsins in the following case. According to the Mahāvihāravāsins, as shown above, the *kalāpa* of the eye decad is formed by adding the respective *kalāpaṅgas* of *rūpa-jīvitindraya* and the visual organ to the basic octad. In contrast, instead of *rūpa-jīvitindraya*, the Vaibhāṣikas add the respective *dravya-paramāṇus* of *kāyendriya* and the sense organs to the basic octad. They recognise only one variety of *jīvitendriya,* which is included in the category of *citta-viprayukta-saṃskāras*, unlike the Mahāvihāravāsins who accept two *jīvitindriyas* (i.e. *arūpa-jīvitindriya* and *rūpa-jīvitindriya*). The **Vimuttimagga* and Daśabalaśrīmitra's Tibetan citations include *rūpa-jīvitindriya* instead of *kāyendriya* (see Peter Skilling, 1994, pp. 183-184).

389 If we accept at all that the *Vimuttimagga* was composed by one who belonged in the tradition of the Abhayagirivāsins.

**Vimuttimagga* modified certain Theravāda doctrines to suit his own purposes. This will be confirmed when we analyse the textual sources concerning the time span of materiality in the **Vimuttimagga.*

(3) The **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa*

After this digression we turn to the issue of the duration of materiality. As noted above, we do not find any statement in the **Vimuttimagga* of Upatissa about the duration of materiality during sixteen thought moments. In fact, as far as the duration of materiality is concerned, the **Vimuttimagga* has an entirely different position from that of the Theravādin commentarial tradition. That is to say, unlike the Theravādin, Upatissa does not assign a relative permanence to material phenomena; instead, he states that the changing phases of the groups of materiality (*rūpa-kalāpas*), i.e. molecules, form a single moment (*khaṇa*).

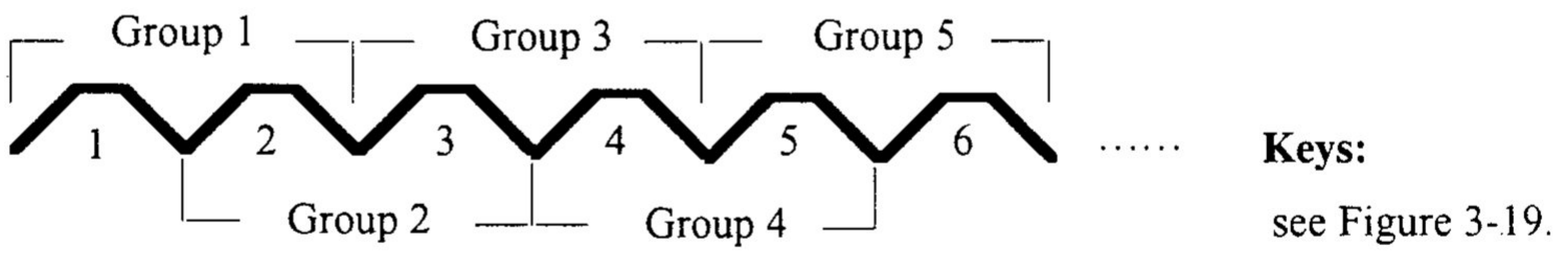
As seen in chapter 2 (§ 2.2.4), the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* refutes the doctrine that "all phenomena (*dhamma*) are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon (*ekacittakkhaṇika*)", using the common-sense notion that the material states of solid objects change more slowly than mental states. The **Vimuttimagga* simply ignores this basic premise of the orthodox Theravādins. In the section on the groups of materiality (*rūpa-kalāpas*), the **Vimuttimagga*, cited below, describes how the eye decad is formulated and how it goes through the process of change in terms of the four conditioned characteristics of materiality.

> Question: What is the eye decad? Answer: The four elements of the tranquillised materiality (*pāsāda*) of the eye are its foundation. It further consists of colour, odour, taste, contact (*phassa*) and the tranquillised materiality of the eye, which depend on the four primary elements. These ten *dhammas* arise simultaneously, without being separated, in a so-called 'group' (*kalāpa*), and it is therefore named the eye decad. Its arising is birth (*jāti*); its maturing is decay (*jaratā*); its destruction is impermanence (*aniccatā*). What delimits this [group] is the space-element (*ākāsa-dhātu*). These four phenomena (*dhammā*) and the *kalāpa* come into existence simultaneously. **While this** [first] **eye decad is decaying, it gives rise to the second eye decad. This two-fold decad is** [also] **known as a 'group'**. The succession of these [groups] is called continuity (*santati*). These six phenomena come into existence simultaneously. Again, while the second eye decad is decaying, it gives rise to the third eye decad. **The second and third eye decad are known as 'groups'**. Sheer succession of these *dhammas* is

> called continuity. **While the first decad is being destroyed, the second decad is decaying and the third decad is arising. These form a single moment (*khaṇa*).**[390] Thus the eye decad arises.[391]

We notice here that the term *khaṇa* is defined in terms of a succession of the three-fold eye decad. The eye decads are not treated separately, but grouped in overlapping, sequential pairs. In other words, the first and second decad form Group One, the second and third decad make Group Two and so on.[392] Here is an illustration.

Figure 3-18: Groups of the eye decad in a sequential order



From the second eye decad onward there is a continuous overlap of groups, so a single moment involves at the most three eye decads and three groups. The **Vimuttimagga* does not specify the duration of the sub-divisions of arising, enduring and ceasing moments; as seen earlier in this chapter, however, the *Vibhaṅga* commentary states that the stages of arising and dissolution are equal in duration for both material and mental phenomena. In the case of material phenomena the stage of presence is equal to forty-eight sub-divisions of sixteen moments of the mental process.[393] The **Vimuttimagga* seems to place more emphasis on the sequential rhythm of change than on discrete sub-divisions of a moment because the previous group immediately conditions the next one. Thus in the following illustration the duration of sub-divisions of a moment is entirely arbitrary and merely used to clarify the process (this also applies to Figure 3-18 above).

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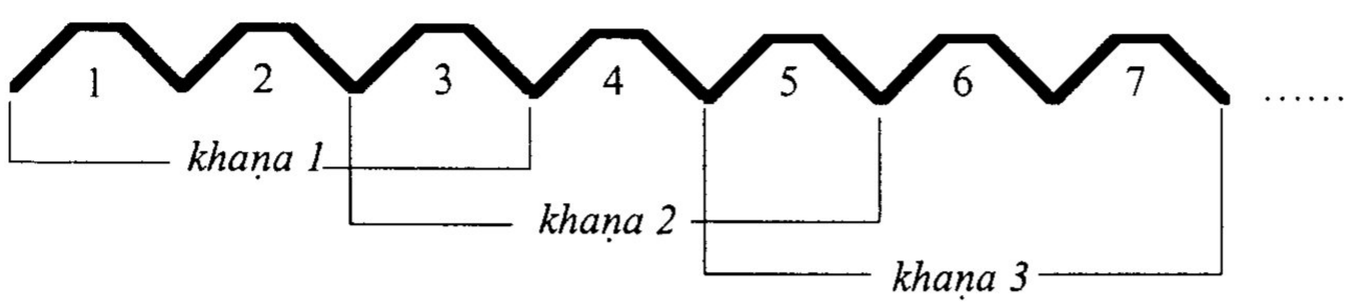
390 The **Vimuttimagga* does not specify three sub-divisions of a moment within a single moment as stated in the *Visuddhimagga*, so the words (i.e. **being destroyed**, **is decaying** and **is arising**) would simply indicate a changing phase of a *kalāpa*, rather than the discrete sub-divisions of a moment. The illustrations (Figure 3-19, 3-20) are entirely arbitrary, and the signs of arising, enduring and ceasing do not imply discrete sub-divisions of a moment, but represent a wave model.

391 T 32 (1648) 446^{b18-28}; cf. *The Path of Freedom* (Ehara, 1977), p. 242.

392 The text describes up to the first and second group, but the same pattern can be extended further.

393 Vibh-a 27: ... *iti soḷasa tikā aṭṭhacattālīsa honti* (16 thought-moments × 3 sub-divisions of a moment = 48 sub-divisions of a moment).

Figure 3-19: The eye decad and its duration in the sequential rhythm of change



Keys:

1: the 1st eye decad
2: the 2nd eye decad
3: the 3rd eye decad
4: the 4th eye decad
5: the 5th eye decad
6: the 6th eye decad
7: the 7th eye decad

The **Vimuttimagga* further claims that no one can discern the interval of change because it is too quick to be perceived by ordinary cognition, but that a practitioner of meditation (*yogin*) can observe the continuity of the eye decads. The text states that it is analogous to the continuity of flowing water in a stream or that of the flame in a lamp,[394] in which it is impossible to pinpoint each sub-division of a moment of arising, enduring and passing away. This analogy is used in some other Buddhist literary sources to express the difficulty of perceiving discrete material phenomena and their changing phases.[395] It seems that the idea of an overlap in the **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa* has both negative and positive implications. On the negative side, it is peculiar from the standpoint of the fundamental proposition of the doctrine of momentariness, which entails that the change of events is constituted by discrete momentary phenomena and dissected spatial arrangement in a series (*santāna*).[396] On the positive side, it is unique from the viewpoint of the theory of *santāna* as it specifies the intrinsic feature of continuity by showing overlaps of groups in causal connections. Therefore, I have applied the idea of an overlap to the problem of the duration of materiality inherited in the phrase *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante 'va* in the Theravādin commentarial texts. I shall return to this issue shortly.

The suggestion that the **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa* is unique needs qualification. Is there any textual evidence that its interpretation of *khaṇa* has been

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394 T 32 (1648) 446^{b28}- 447^{c1}.

395 Abhidh-a 32: "... *catusamuṭṭhānarūpakalāpasantati kāmaloke dīpajālā viya nadīsoto viya ca yāvatāyukaṃ abbocchinnaṃ pavattati*. Application of the same imagery to the steam of *bhavaṅga-citta* in Abhidh-a 18, 28; cf. As 265, 269; Vism XIV §§ 114, 122.

396 This process of succession is analogous to cinematography, in which the rapid projection of distinct pictures evokes the illusion of continuous action on the screen.

influenced by other Buddhist traditions? While the theory of *kalāpa* came from the Theravādin sources, the grouping of *kalāpas* in pairs and the sequential overlap of *kalāpas* in this particular way are distinctive.[397] Vasubandhu's alternative definition of a moment (*kṣaṇa*) partly resembles this, as it is stated in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* that the measure of a *kṣaṇa* is defined as: "the time span that it takes for a *dharma* in progress to move from one atom (*paramāṇu*) to the next atom (*paramāṇvantara*)".[398] The **Vimuttimagga* seems to share with the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* the basic idea that the shortest conceivable incident can be defined by movement or change from one spatial point to the next. However, here, the unit of spatial points is not *dravya-paramāṇus* (atoms) but *kalāpas* (molecules) – at least three *kalāpas* are needed to form a *khaṇa* – which corresponds to the *saṃghāta-paramāṇu* (molecule) of the Northern tradition. As for the perceptibility of the discrete material entities and their changing phases, the *Abhidharmavibhāṣa* claims that the yogin initially views the primary elements (*mahābhūta*) and the derived materiality (*bhautika*), and subsequently proceeds to view materiality as atomic and momentary.[399] The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* states that when the body is viewed as atomic and momentary, the mindful observation of the body (*kāyasmṛtyupasthāna*) has been perfected.[400] In contrast, although the **Vimuttimagga* claims that the yogin can observe the continuity of the groups of materiality, the text does not specify that he observes atoms and their moments but rather expresses the impossibility of viewing the ultra-micro process of change in material entities through ordinary experience. The *Mahāvibhāṣa* more or less agrees with the contention of the **Vimuttimagga*, but it further states that the measure of a *kṣaṇa* can only be known by the Buddha; it is not the object of experience of Śrāvakas,

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397 Cf. Vibh-a 28.

398 AKB 176 (III kr. 85bc): *kṣaṇasya punaḥ kiṃ pramāṇam ? ... gacchan vā dharmo yāvatā paramāṇoḥ paramāṇvantaraṃ gacchati.* (*What is the measure of a moment ? ...* As much as [the time taken] by a moving entity to move from one atom to the next.) This definition of the measure of a *kṣaṇa* recalls the interpretation of *samaya* (a moment) in the Jaina tradition – *samaya* is equated with the shortest conceivable incident when it is defined as the time taken for the movement from one spatial point to the next. Von Rospatt suggests that Vasubandhu's alternative definition of a moment could have been adopted from Jainism. See Von Rospatt (1995, p. 103, fns. 230, 231) for the citations from the *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra* (V 38-39) and Umāsvāti's auto-commentary on the *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra* (IV 15).

399 AVB T 28 (1546) 182^{c22-24}; cf. MVB T 27 (1545) 237$^{a27ff.}$; see von Rospatt (1995, p. 196, fn. 420) for his translation.

400 AKB 341 (VI kr 14cd); cf. ADV 327.

Pratyekabuddhas and so on.[401] The textual sources of the Mahāyāna tradition support this claim.[402] In short, the **Vimuttimagga* more or less shares its interpretation of *khaṇa* with other Buddhist traditions, but the way in which the text explicitly presents the grouping of *kalāpas* in pairs and the sequential overlap of *kalāpas* is not to be found, to my knowledge, in the available textual sources. In this specific sense, therefore, its interpretation of *khaṇa* is unique and distinctive. Now we shall see how the idea of the sequential overlap of *kalāpas* could be applied to the problem of the duration of materiality inherited in the phrase *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante 'va* in the Theravādin commentarial texts.

(4) The sequential overlap of *kalāpas* and the phrase *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante 'va*

As I have suggested earlier in this chapter, the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary shaped and perfected the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. The confusion of numbers, sixteen or seventeen, caused by the ambiguous phrase *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante 'va* is clarified on the basis of the theoretical consideration proposed in the *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. The revised version in the *Yamaka* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries considers seventeen thought moments as the duration of materiality, which fits in with hypothetical Option II (see Figure 3-5). Here, we get the number seventeen by adding one to the unit of sixteen thought moments. The addition is justified by the hypothesis that the origination moment is excluded, if the dissolution moment is included within the enduring moment of materiality. The first set of seventeen thought moments is to be linked to the second set of seventeen thought moments in the serial process of changing material groups (*kalāpas*). There could be two options for this sequential changing process: 1) an overlap of the seventeenth thought moment in the preceding set with the first thought moment in the subsequent set, 2) juxtaposition of the two sets of seventeen thought moments without a gap. If we assume that the additional moment preceding the following unit of sixteen thought moments is purely hypothetical, the model of sequential change presented in the **Vimuttimagga* is highly instructive. In particular, the explicit application of

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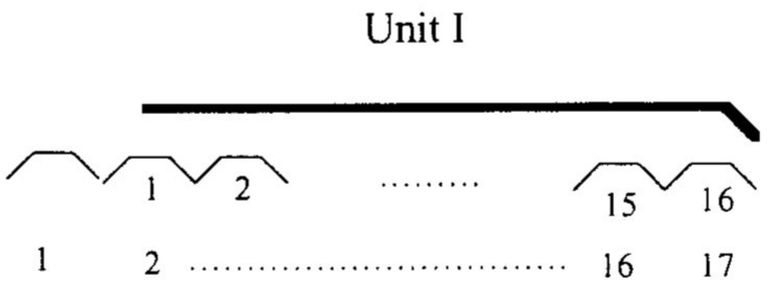
401 T 27 (1545) 201$^{b32\text{-}c1}$; see von Rospatt (1995, p. 100, fn. 221) for his translation of the related passages.

402 ŚRBH T 30 (1579) 485$^{7\text{-}10}$; SNS X 7 p. 156. I will not here go into the topic of how the yogic experience of momentariness of material phenomena can be conceptualised or rationalised. I refer to von Rospatt's comprehensive discussion of the experience of momentariness. See von Rospatt (1995), II.E. pp. 196-218.

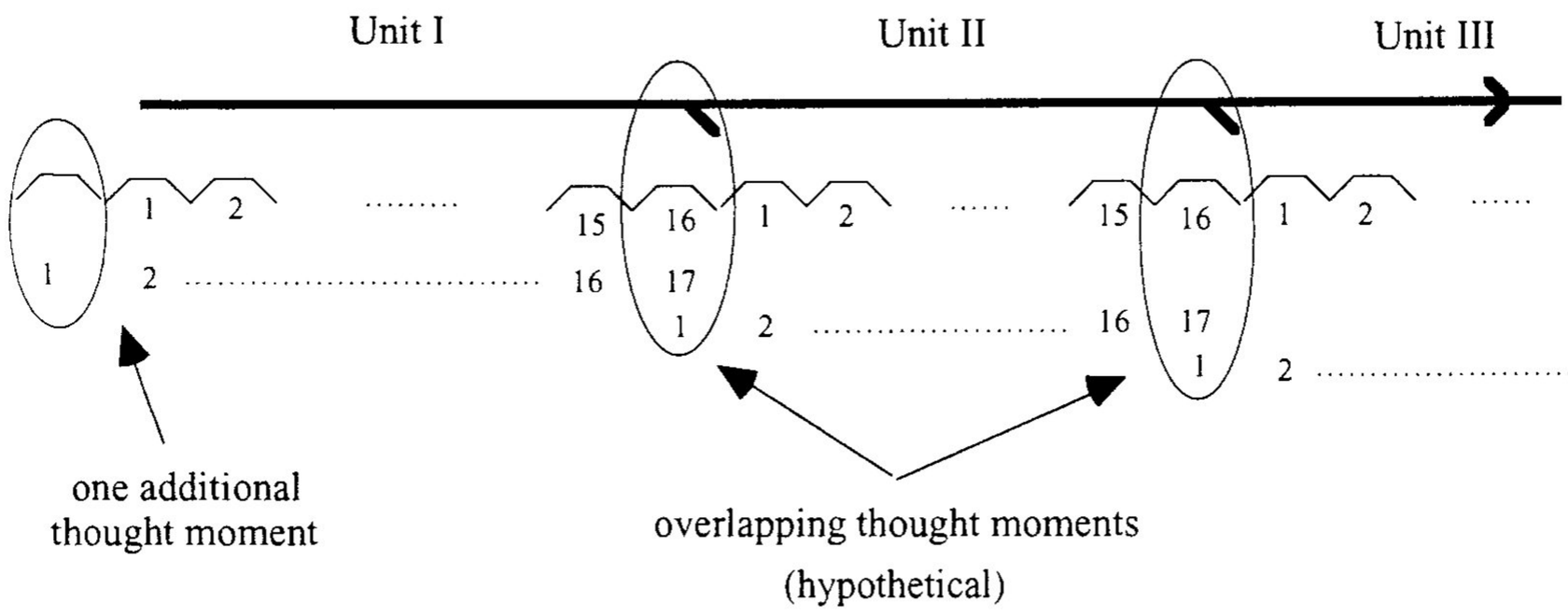
the idea of the sequential overlap to the changing process of *kalāpas* may throw light on the implicit and hypothetical statement in the revised version of the duration of materiality presented in the *Mūlaṭīkā*. But if the additional moment is regarded as real, the sequential overlap is untenable. The following diagram, based on the extension of hypothetical Option II, illustrates the overlap or non-overlap of one thought moment between units of the duration of materiality.

Figure 3-20: Models of sequential change and the duration of materiality

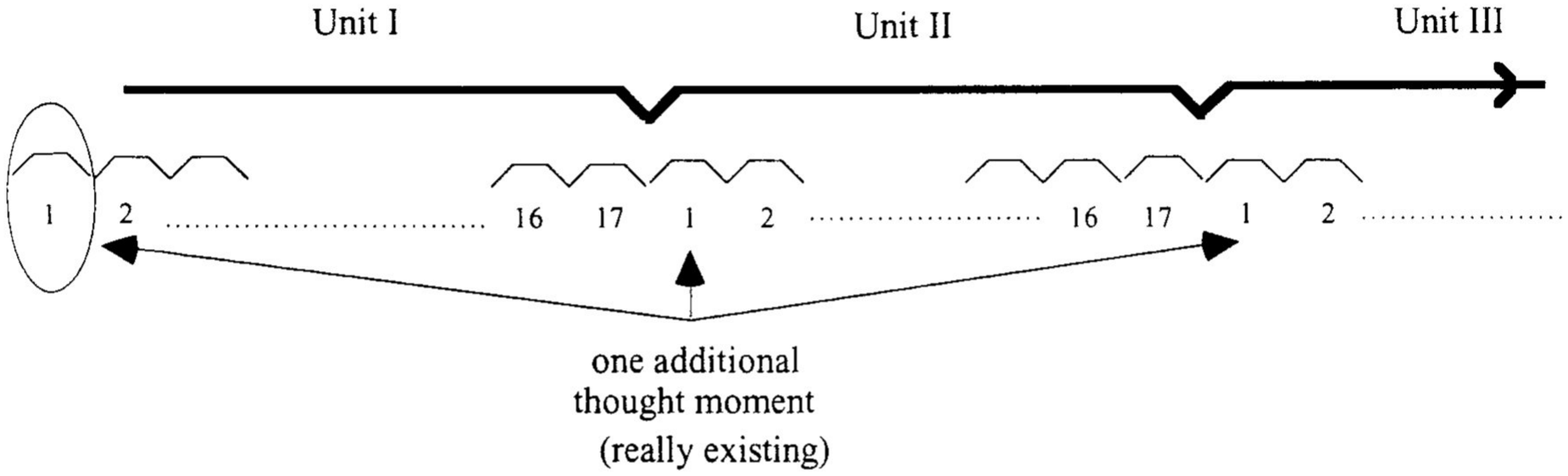
- Hypothetical Option II



- Model I: Overlap of one additional thought moment



- Model II: Non-overlap of one additional thought moment



To sum up, our discussion of the **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa* began from the fact that there is no reference to the sixteen moments theory in the text. The analysis of some textual sources shows that the **Vimuttimagga*, in its interpretation of *khaṇa*, draws on

other Buddhist traditions. I have also drawn attention to its unique and explicit presentation of the grouping of *kalāpas* in pairs and the sequential overlap of *kalāpas*. The model of the sequential overlap of *kalāpas* has been presented to compare it with the model of the non-overlap of sequential change. The **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa* in terms of an overlap is not in evidence in any other textual tradition. However, in the absence of more substantial material, I will not jump to the conclusion that this is the version of the theory of momentariness postulated by the **Vimuttimagga* of the Abhayagirivāsins. This is not only because the **Vimuttimagga* was a practical manual of meditation rather than a sophisticated thesis, but also because the textual evidence is isolated (i.e. the interpretation of *khaṇa* in this particular way does not seem to be applied to any other doctrinal tenets elsewhere in the text).[403] It is therefore more reasonable to think that it was a by-product of a discussion of the classification of materiality. It seems that Upatissa, the author of the **Vimuttimagga*, was not entirely satisfied with the interpretation of the duration of materiality postulated by the mainstream Theravādins, and so modified it by excluding the numerical calculation which had caused such confusion. This does not mean, however, that I disagree with Peter Skilling when he suggests that the **Vimuttimagga* may be associated with the school of the Abhayagirivāsins. On the contrary, this substantiates his evidence for one of the major doctrinal disagreements with the mainstream Theravādins. Nevertheless, I believe we should be wary of concluding that this version of the theory of momentariness was taught in the tradition of the Abhayagirivāsins, or that the **Vimuttimagga*'s stance represents the view of this school. While Upatissa doesn't accept the Theravādin theory of momentariness in its entirety, it seems probable that he was aware of the theory as handed down in the *Sīhaḷa Aṭṭhakathās*. We shall return to this issue in the conclusion when the chronology of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness is discussed in more detail.

Until now, my inquiry has been primarily concerned with how the sixteen moments theory relates to the theory of the thought process in the range of the early post-canonical texts. Focusing on the same issue, but with special reference to the historical development of the

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403 I have checked some related words using the Chinese *Tripiṭaka CD-R* (in progress), but a systematic examination of the text is needed.

seventeen moments theory, I shall now examine the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary and the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* and its commentaries of the twelfth century and later.

3.2.5 The seventeen moments theory and the thought process in the later post-canonical texts

(1) What is new ?

Modern works on the subject of the Theravādin theory of the thought process mostly[404] base their account on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, the work that has dominated *Abhidhamma* studies from about the twelfth century to the present day. This is not simply because of its general popularity, but because the text treats the subject in its own right for the first time in two chapters: chapter 4 explores the nature of the thought process (*citta-vīthi*) and chapter 5 the process-free (*vīthi-mutta*) inactive mode of the *bhavaṅga-citta*. The exposition here is largely based upon the *Abhidhamma* commentaries in which traditional material is interwoven with various doctrines. Putting scattered material together in a systematic format, but within a limited scope, the author, Anuruddha, was forced to rearrange the traditional account, maintaining a balance between concision and comprehensiveness. His editorial discretion is directly reflected in his treatment of the theory of the thought process. Anuruddha explicitly applies the seventeen moments theory to the seventeen stages of the thought process, and creates a unifying context in which the individual theories hang together as parts of a systematic whole. Nevertheless, apart from its presentation and some change in its technical terminology, there is nothing new in the contents of the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. The *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary had already paved the way to integrating the theories in the course of the dispute on whether the duration of a moment of matter is equal to 16 or 17 thought moments. Anuruddha summarises this in a nutshell by accepting the seventeen moments theory. His sub-commentators, notably Sumaṅgala, repeat what had already been discussed in the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary in order to advocate Anuruddha's

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404 Sarathchandra (1958), Cousins (1981) and Gethin (1994) use the canonical and post-canonical texts, but the rest mostly depend on the account in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, see p. 148, fn. 325 for the detailed bibliography.

stance. In the following sections, I first document the original debate in those earlier texts, and then move on to the evidence of this dispute in the mediaeval *Abhidhamma* manuals and their commentaries.[405]

(2) The sixteen moments theory and the reasoning behind its acceptance in the *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary

As shown earlier in this chapter, Ānanda, the author of the *Mūlaṭīkā*, provided in the sub-commentary on the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* a useful tool with which to clarify the problematic statement about the duration of materiality transmitted in the various commentarial texts. We noted that he accepts the sixteen moments theory based on hypothetical Option I by adducing the PSV commentary. This specific textual source was examined earlier, without incorporating Ānanda's view on this issue, when we dealt with the problem of how the sixteen moments theory was related to the thought process in the commentarial texts.[406] Here, I look at Ānanda's argument in the *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Pakiṇṇakakathā*.

> But these options, i.e. **materiality's lifespan of** seventeen thought moments [Option II] **claimed by those** [elders] **as well as the third option, that is the lifespan of more than** sixteen thought moments **in the** [Sīhaḷa] **commentary, are at variance with the version of the lifespan of sixteen thought moments which is shown in the *Paṭiccasamuppāda-vibhaṅga* chapter of the** [*Vibhaṅga*] **commentary.** In order to illustrate the type of rebirth-linking that has a present object and comes immediately after death with a past object, it is stated: "At this point eleven thought moments have elapsed, similarly fifteen thought moments have elapsed; these have a lifespan of the remaining five thought moments and one thought moment [respectively], having each object, rebirth-linking consciousness arises."[407]

Of the four hypothetical options he has proposed, Ānanda accepts Option I (materiality has a lifespan of sixteen thought moments), and shows why two others (omitting the last one)

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405 The relative chronology of the texts, according to Cousins (1972, p. 163), is: the *Mūlaṭīkā* – around the sixth century CE and the *Anuṭīkā* – around 960 CE. It is generally accepted that the late *Abhidhamma* manuals were written from eleventh or twelfth century onwards.

406 See § 3.2.1.

407 Vibh-mṭ 22: ***yā pana etehi rūpassa sattarasacittakkhaṇâyukatā vuttā, yā ca aṭṭhakathāyaṃ tatiyabhāgâdhika-soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukatā, sā Paṭiccasamuppādavibhaṅgaṭṭhakathāyaṃ*** [Vibh-a 157-158] *atītârammaṇāya cutiyā anantarā paccuppannârammaṇaṃ paṭisandhiṃ dassetuṃ "ettāvatā ekādasa cittakkhaṇā atītā honti. tathā pañcadasa cittakkhaṇā atītā honti, athâvasesapañcacitta-ekacittakkhaṇâyuke tasmiṃ yevârammaṇe paṭisandhicittaṃ uppajjatī" ti* ***dassitena soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukabhāvena virujjhati****. na hi sakkā ṭhitikkhaṇe 'va rūpaṃ āpātham āgacchatī ti vattuṃ.*

are untenable. As noted earlier, Option II (a lifespan of seventeen thought moments) fits into the corrected version proposed in the *Yamaka* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries, and Option III (a lifespan of more than sixteen thought moments) into the old version handed down in the Sīhaḷa commentarial tradition. Ānanda rejects both Options II and III by adducing the commentarial exegesis of the statement about the lifespan of sixteen thought moments in the PSV commentary. His main argument is based on two types of canonical premise in the *Yamaka* in order to justify 1) the concomitance of material and mental phenomena and 2) the non-existence of the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena. I suggest that the former is adduced to refute Option III, and the latter to refute Option II. We dealt with the former option earlier when we examined why the commentators of the *Yamaka* and *Vibhaṅga* had to reject the traditional interpretation of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena. They argued that the rise and instant cessation of a material phenomenon must be identical with that of a mental phenomenon. In other words, they have to be coextensive. In simpler terms, "While A is arising, B arises; while A is perishing, B perishes". The traditional interpretation however amounts to the view that: "While A is **arising**, B **perishes**", and this shows an obvious contradiction. Ānanda basically follows the same line of argument, although he cites more extensive evidence from different chapters of the *Yamaka*.[408] I do not, therefore, repeat it here. Instead, I look more closely at the reasoning behind his rejection of the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena, which he regards as one of the theoretical suppositions of Option II.

(3) The problem of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* in the later post-canonical texts

Several scholars[409] have already noted that Ānanda rejects the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena, but they do not appear to have attempted a serious analysis of his argument in the *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Dealing with the problem of *ṭhitassa aññathatta* in chapter 1, I addressed this issue in the specific context of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*. Here, I examine Ānanda's argument from another angle. I am particularly interested in his original motive for rejecting *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* in the context of the sixteen or seventeen moments theory.

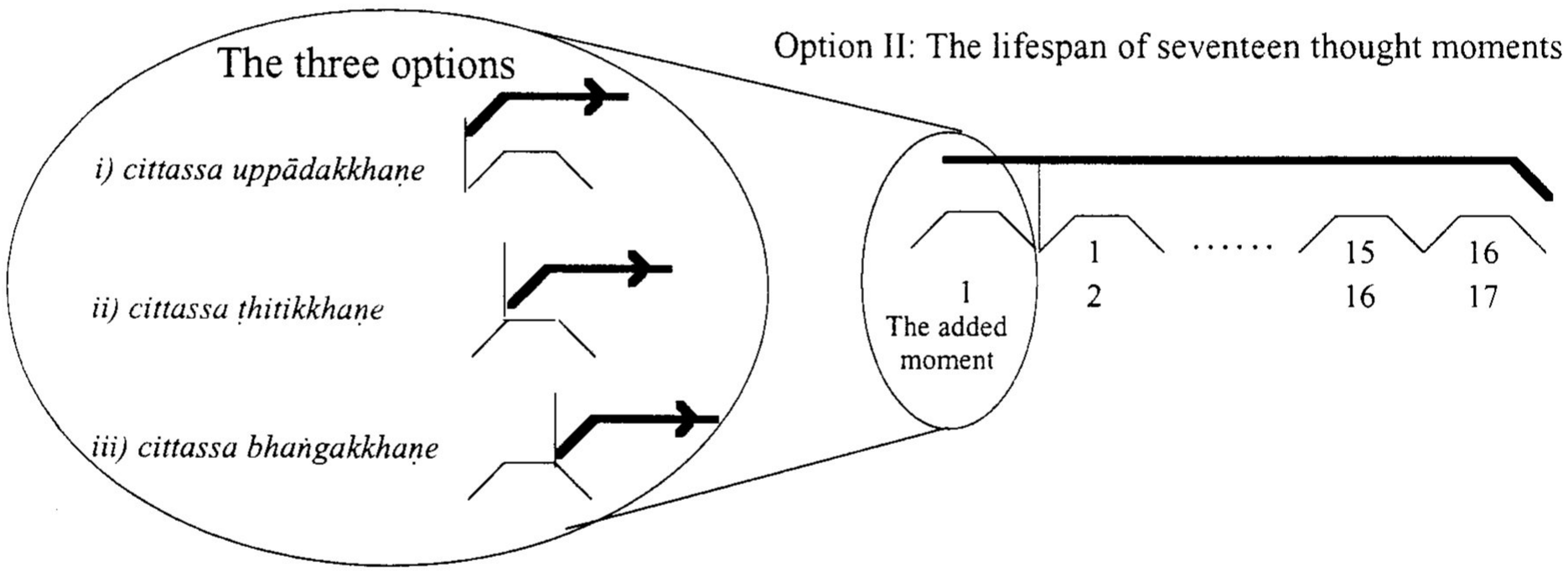
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408 *CS CD-R*: Yam I *Saccayamaka* § 136, II *Saṅkhārayamaka* § 128, III *Dhammayamaka* § 163.

409 Jaini (1959, p. 104, fn. 3); Karunadasa (1967, p. 8); Bodhi (1993, p. 156).

I have suggested above that Ānanda's main reason for rejecting *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* is to dispute the theoretical supposition of Option II, i.e. the lifespan of seventeen thought moments. It was inferred from the hypothesis that the origination moment is not included within materiality's duration of sixteen thought moments, so a single thought moment has to be added prior to the thought process. Ānanda views this additional moment as problematic because it implies that the duration of an object has a time span of one redundant thought moment before the actual process begins. This thought moment constitutes the three sub-divisions of a moment of arising, presence and dissolution, and we have to decide the specific sub-division of a moment at which the materiality arises. There are three options: materiality arises 1) at the origination moment, 2) at the endurance moment, and 3) at the dissolution moment of mental phenomena, respectively. Let me illustrate these first.

Figure 3-21: The three options for the one additional thought moment



The first option has no theoretical shortcomings, but its difficulty from the standpoint of Ānanda is the lack of textual evidence (i.e. it is at variance with the lifespan of sixteen thought moments postulated in the PSV commentary). The other two options, however, not only contradict the canonical and commentarial texts but also have a serious flaw from the viewpoint of the theory of conditional relations (*paṭṭhāna*). Ānanda argues for instance that the visual object cannot enter the avenue of the eye sense-door at the endurance moment of

mental phenomena,[410] and that materiality cannot arise at its dissolution moment, due to the lack of support for origination.[411] He thinks that both options go against the principle of *purejāta-paccaya* (prenascent condition) and *pacchājāta-paccaya* (postnascent condition).[412] It is in this specific context that he addresses the fundamental issue of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* in relation to mental phenomena, appealing for support to the *Cittayamaka* chapter of the *Yamaka* (hereafter, the *Cittayamaka*).

The *Cittayamaka* presents pairs of questions and answers[413] on consciousness with regard to the three time-periods (past, future and present), and to various phases of origination and dissolution (i.e. *uppanna*, *uppajjamāna*, *nirodha*, *nirodhamāna*, etc.), covering all the possible permutations. In this all-round analysis of consciousness, there is no mention of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* at all, and the obvious absence of any textual reference becomes Ānanda's direct source for rejecting *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*. He cites almost the complete *Uppannuppajjamāna* section and some selected parts of the *Nirodhanirodhamāna* and *Atikkantakāla* sections.[414] The gist of his citation is as follows:

> Moreover, in this context, one who claims that materiality arises at the endurance-moment (*ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*) of thought, should examine whether it exists or not, [considering the following canonical statement]. In the *Cittayamaka*, in fact, this much has been said:
>
> Q: Does 'arisen' refer to 'arising'?
>
> A: 'Arisen' at the dissolution-moment is not 'arising', ['arisen' only refers to 'arising' at the origination moment].
>
> There are no references to 'at the endurance-moment and at the dissolution-moment'. Similarly, this much has been said:
>
> Q: Does 'non-arising' refer to 'non-arisen'?
>
> A: 'Non-arising' at the dissolution-moment is not 'non-arisen', [*citta* in the past and future is 'non-arising' and 'non-arisen'].

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410 Vibh-mṭ 22: *na hi sakkā ṭhitikkhaṇe 'va rūpaṃ āpātham āgacchatī ti vattuṃ.* <Surely, it cannot be claimed that a visual object (*rūpa*) enters the avenue of [the eye sense-door] at the very endurance-moment of [a thought]>.

411 Vibh-mṭ 24: ... *cittanirodhakkhaṇe rūpuppādârambhâbhāvato ti.* <...due to the absence of support for origination of materiality at the dissolution-moment of a thought>.

412 See also § 2.4.4.

413 Each chapter of *Yamaka* consists of three basic parts: section I, delimitation of terms (*paṇṇatti-vāra*); section II, process (*pavatti-vāra*); and section III, penetration (*pariññā-vāra*). Section II involves an analysis of all the doctrinal concepts in terms of origination (*uppāda-vāra*), cessation (*nirodha-vāra*), and origination-cessation. The *Cittayamaka* deviates somewhat from the usual format as there are no sections I and III. It is the only *Yamaka* chapter in which section II begins with an enumeration of questions (*uddesa-vāra*), see Nyanatiloka (1983), p. 107.

414 The Burmese Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana edition conveniently divides the chapters into sub-divisions, see *CS CD-R*: Yam II 306, 312; the truncated PTS edition, Yam II 13,18.

> There are no references to 'at the endurance-moment and at the dissolution-moment'. .....
> In the Atikkantakāla chapter, ... but there is no mention of 'at the endurance-moment'. This [clearly] shows the non-existence of 'the endurance-moment' in relation to mental phenomena.[415]

After showing the non-occurrence of the term *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* in the *Abhidhamma* canon, Ānanda now considers evidence from the *Sutta*, quoting the notoriously problematic phrase *ṭhitassa aññathatta* in the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* formula in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. His interpretation is radically different from the traditional view postulated in the commentarial texts. As seen in chapter 1, the *Saṃyutta* commentary glosses *ṭhiti* as *anupālana*, and *aññathatta* as *jarā*, on the basis of the stanza handed down by the Ancients: "Arising was called birth, and dissolution referred to passing away, change (*aññathatta*) referred to ageing (*jarā*), and endurance (*ṭhiti*) to maintenance (*anupālana*)."[416] The commentator eventually identifies *ṭhitassa aññathatta* with *jarā*, the second characteristic mark of the conditioned phenomena. The *Aṅguttara* commentary further specifies *jarā* as *ṭhāna-kkhaṇa*,[417] the second moment of three phases (*avatthā*) in a given *dhamma*. Ānanda seriously questions this identification of *ṭhitassa aññathatta* with the static moment. He suggests that *aññathatta* stands for *santati-ṭhiti* (continuity itself as endurance). If we accept identification with the static moment or ageing phase, this would imply change, and change the loss of identity. Thus, the change of individual momentary *dhammas* entails the substitution of a new *dhamma* for the old. He thinks that this is untenable because a single *dhamma* does not have several stages of change (*ekassa*[*dhammassa*] *aññathattâbhāvato*). Alternatively, *ṭhita* denotes a single *dhamma*'s presence (*vijjamāna*) endowed with two moments (i.e *uppāda-* and *bhaṅga-kkhaṇa*).[418] This seems to imply that *ṭhitassa*

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415 Vibh-mṭ 22-23: *yo c' ettha cittassa ṭhitikkhaṇo vutto, so ca atthi n' atthī ti vicāretabbo. Cittayamake hi uppannaṃ uppajjamānan ti? bhaṅgakkhaṇe uppannaṃ no ca uppajjamānan, [uppādakkhaṇe uppannañ c' eva uppajjamānañ cā]* ti ettakam eva vuttaṃ; na vuttaṃ ṭhitikkhaṇe bhaṅgakkhaṇe cā ti. tathā n' uppajjamānaṃ n' uppannan ti? bhaṅgakkhaṇe n' uppajjamānaṃ no ca n' uppannan, [atītânāgataṃ cittaṃ na c' eva uppajjamānaṃ na ca uppannam]* ti ettakam eva vuttaṃ; na vuttaṃ ṭhitikkhaṇe bhaṅgakkhaṇe cā ti..... Atikkantakālavāre ..... ṭhitikkhaṇe ti avacanaṃ ṭhitikkhaṇâbhāvaṃ cittassa dīpeti.* CS CD-R*: Yam II 306, 312

416 Spk II 266: *ten' āhu porāṇā: uppādo jāti akkhāto bhaṅgo vutto vayo ti ca aññathattaṃ jarā vuttā ṭhitī ca anupālanā ti.*

417 Mp II 252: *tesu uppādakkhaṇe uppādo; ṭhānakkhaṇe jarā; bhedakkhaṇe vayo* (*ṭhāna-kkhaṇa* is synonymous with *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*).

418 Vibh-mṭ 23: *suttesu* [A I 152; S III 37] *pi hi ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyatī ti tass' eva ekassa aññathattâbhāvato yassā aññathattaṃ paññāyati, sā santatiṭhitī ti na na sakkā vattun ti, vijjamānaṃ vā*

aññatattha is another way of expressing the arising and enduring moments in a present *dhamma*. This in turn is reminiscent of Gombrich's remark in chapter 1 that one could interpret *ṭhitassa aññatattha* as simply synonymous with *uppāda* plus *vaya* in the twofold description of all conditioned phenomena (although Ānanda's alternative suggestion is intended only for mental phenomena).[419]

The *Anuṭīkā* presents a counter-argument by anonymous teachers (*keci*). These teachers basically share with Ānanda the premise that the sub-divisions of a moment in a single *dhamma* do not correspond to separate *dhammas*, but merely represent different phases of one momentary *dhamma*.[420] So the anonymous teachers and Ānanda do not have to face the predicament (as outlined in chapter 1) of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, who understood the four characteristics as discrete real *dharmas* with their own distinctive and successive functions. But they disagree with each over the existence of the phase of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* between the arising and ceasing moments. The anonymous teachers argue that whatever *dhamma* originates must also cease to exist, but that there should be at least a phase in which it turns towards its own dissolution (*nirodhâbhimukhâvatthā*). It is this phase, when a *dhamma* is facing its own dissolution, that we reckon to be the moment of subsistence by analogy with the stage of dissolution.[421] This counter-argument appears to be based on two

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khaṇadvayasamaṅgiṃ ṭhitan ti. <As it is said in the *Suttas* too: "change of what endures' (*ṭhitassa aññathatta*) is evident". It is not [in fact] impossible to claim that 'when its change (*aññathatta*) is evident' stands for *santati-ṭhiti* (continuity itself as endurance), because there is absence of change in its single [momentary *dhamma*], or alternatively *ṭhita* denotes the present (*vijjamāna*) [*dhamma*] endowed with two moments.>

419 See chapter 1, pp. 85-86.

420 Vibh-aṭ 30: *ettha ca keci yathābhūto dhammo uppajjati, kiṃ tathābhūto va bhijjati, udāhu aññathābhūto? yadi tathābhūto 'va bhijjati, na jaratāya sambhāvo. atha aññathābhūto, añño 'va so ti sabbathā pi ṭhitikkhaṇassa abhāvo yevā ti vadanti.*<In this connection, moreover, some [teachers] (*keci*) claim that: "When a *dhamma* accordingly arises, is it destroyed precisely as it is or becomes something other than it is? If [a *dhamma*] is destroyed precisely as it is, ageing (*jaratā*) would not be possible; but [if a *dhamma*] becomes something other than it is, this is precisely another [*dhamma*]. Therefore, the non-existence of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* [is] invariably (*sabbathā pi*) [established].">

421 Vibh-aṭ 30: *tattha ekadhammâdhārabhāve pi uppādanirodhānaṃ añño 'va uppādakkhaṇo, añño nirodhakkhaṇo. uppādâvatthaṃ hi upādāya uppādakkhaṇo, nirodhâvatthaṃ upādāya nirodhakkhaṇo. uppādâvatthāya ca bhinnā nirodhâvatthā ti ekasmiṃ yeva sabhāvadhamme yathā icchitabbā, aññathā añño 'va dhammo uppajjati, añño dhammo nirujjhatī ti āpajjeyya, evaṃ nirodhâvatthāya viya nirodhâbhimukh-âvatthāya pi bhavitabbaṃ. sā ṭhiti, jaratā cā ti sampaṭicchitabbam etaṃ.* <Herein, as for origination and dissolution in the manifestation of a single *dhamma*, precisely one is the origination moment and the other is the dissolution moment. For the origination-moment refers to the phase of arising and the dissolution moment to the phase of ceasing. As it should be expected that the stage of dissolution separate from the stage of origination is still confined to the single coherent nature of *dhamma*, so, by analogy with the stage of dissolution, there should also be the stage of facing its own dissolution

underlying assumptions: 1) that the three sub-divisions of a moment of a single *dhamma* do not correspond to three separate *dhammas*, 2) that a *dhamma* cannot both arise and cease to exist at one and the same time. Why do anonymous teachers make these assumptions ? Because, if the former were the case (i.e. if the sub-divisions of a moment did correspond to separate *dhammas*), one would fall into the untenable position that when one *dhamma* arises, the other *dhamma* ceases, while if the latter were the case, existence and non-existence would become co-existent. As for the absence of textual evidence for *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*, the anomymous teachers contend that the static moment is not referred to in the canonical texts on the purely practical ground that this encourages practitioners to eliminate craving for or attachment to the existence of the conditioned mental phenomena.[422]

In his *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, Anuruddha simply takes it for granted that *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* exists in the three sub-divisions of a moment, and his sub-commentator, Sumaṅgala, advocates Anuruddha's stance by repeating what has already been discussed in the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Therefore, we need only a few remarks on the relevant sources in Sumaṅgala's works, the *Abhidhammatthavikāsanī* (the sub-commentary on the *Abhidhammāvatāra*) and the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī* (hereafter, *Vikāsanī* and *Vibhāvinī* respectively). The *Vikāsanī* provides both Ānanda's views on *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* and some teachers' counter-arguments when it briefly expounds the three sub-divisions of a moment of materiality in the *Abhidhammāvatāra*. These are almost identical with what is in the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. A noticeable difference is that the anonymous *keci* (some counter-interlocutors) are identified with Ācariyajotipāla-dhammapāla thera,[423] the author of the *Anuṭīkā*. We gather from his other

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(*nirodhâbhimukhâvatthā*), otherwise (*aññathā*), it would fall into [the untenable situation] that when one *dhamma* arises, the other *dhamma* ceases. Therefore, those *ṭhiti* and *jaratā* have to be accepted.>

422 Vibh-aṭ 30: *yadi evaṃ kasmā pāḷiyaṃ ṭhitikkhaṇo na vutto ti? vineyyajjhāsayânurodhena nayadassana-vasena pāḷi gatāti veditabbā. abhidhammadesanā pi hi kadāci vineyyajjhāsayânurodhena pavattati.* <If so, why is *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* not mentioned in the main text (Pāli)? One should realise that the main text is handed down with the aim of moral instruction. The Abhidhammic discourses are to some degree transmitted in the same way, for the same purpose.>

423 Abhidh-vk II 185: ... *ācariyajotipāladhammapālattherānaṃ* pan' etaṃ nakkhamati.* <But this has not been approved of by Ācariyajotipāla-dhammapāla thera. *The genitive plural is honorific.> See Cousins (1972), pp. 161-163 for several sub-commentators of the name Dhammapāla.

works[424] that he seems to accept *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*. This suggests that he might be giving his own counter-argument, but putting it in the mouth of others, perhaps to show some courtesy to the author of the *Mūlaṭīkā* on which he was commenting. However, if we assume that he agreed with Ānanda, then the attribution of the counter-argument to others would be genuine, and we are forced to reconsider the authorship of the *Anuṭīkā*. A possible candidate is Culla-Dhammapāla, the senior pupil of Ānanda, because he explicitly rejects the existence of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* in the *Saccasaṅkhepa*.[425] I shall leave this issue of authorship open for further investigation.

In the *Vibhāvinī*, Sumaṅgala presents a summary of the argument and its counter-argument; issues which he tackles in more depth in his comprehensive work, *Vikāsanī*, where he quotes extensively from the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Dealing with this issue in comparative detail, Karunadasa assumes that the counter-argument is Sumaṅgala's own contribution.[426] But if we view this issue strictly through the evolution of the textual history, the original contributor is the author of the *Anuṭīkā* or the anonymous teachers. No innovative interpretations of the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* problem were added in the mediaeval *Abhidhamma* manuals and commentaries. In this connection, it is worth noting a new interpretation proposed by Ledi Sayadaw, a well-known latter-day critic of *Abhidhamma*.[427] He regards the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena as the turning point between the two phases of arising and falling (*udaya-vaya*), just as, when a stone is thrown upwards, a moment is needed before it starts falling downwards. He also says that the

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424 See Vism-mhṭ 936-940; Spk-pṭ 218.

425 See Cousins (1972, p. 161) for his view on this issue; for the reference of the attribution of Culla-Dhammapāla to the senior pupil of Ānanda or Ānanda himself, see his footnote 20-21.

426 When Karunadasa (1967, p. 86) was writing his thesis in the1960s, editions of the *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary were probably not readily available. Until recently, the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana edition was the only accessible source; it was in Burmese characters, but now we have it in Roman transliteration on the *CS CD-R*.

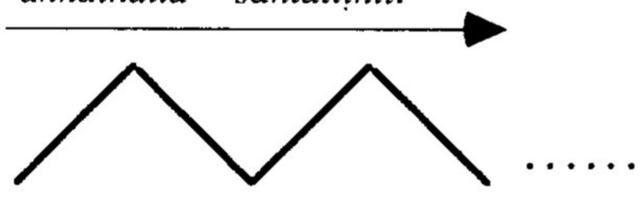
427 Ledi Sayadaw of Burma (1846-1923) was one of the greatest scholar-monks and meditation masters of the Theravāda tradition in recent times. He was the author of over seventy manuals on different aspects of Theravāda Buddhism, including philosophy, ethics, meditation practice and Pāli grammar. His famous work the *Paramatthadīpanī* (the commentary on the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*) created a sensation in the field of *Abhidhamma* studies because he pointed out 325 places in the esteemed *Vibhāvinī* where he alleged that errors and misinterpretations had occurred, though his criticisms also set off a reaction in defence of the older work (Bodhi, 1993, pp. 17-18). Some of his articles in Pāli were published and translated into English by the PTS. (E.g. the Pāli article on the *Yamaka* was published as an appendix to the second volume of that work in 1921, pp. 219-286, and was translated into English by C.A.F. Rhys Davids in the JPTS, 1913-1914, pp. 115-169. It includes a list of additions and corrections to the article by the author).

moment of presence can be taken to cover the entire lifespan of a *dhamma* between the first point of its arising and the end of its falling away.[428] I recapitulate the different interpretations of the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena in the following illustrations:

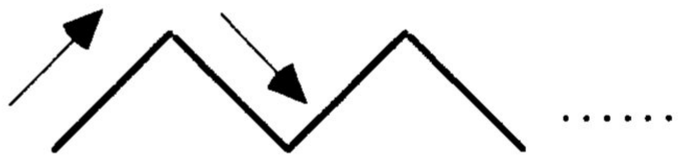
Figure 3-22: Different interpretations of the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena

I. The argument in the *Mūlaṭīkā*

i) Continuity itself as endurance
aññathatta = santatiṭhiti

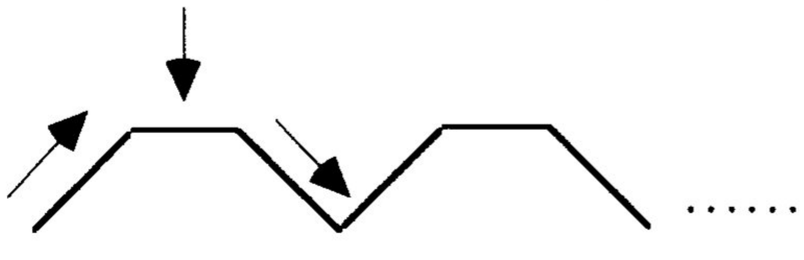


ii) A single *dhamma's* presence endowed with two moments
ṭhiti = vijjamāna-khaṇadvayasamaṅgi



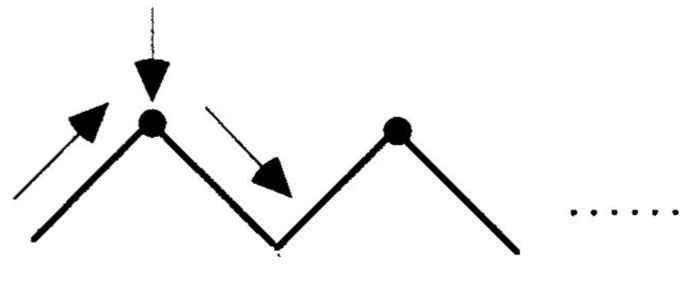
II. The counter-argument in the *Anuṭīkā*

A phase of turning towards its own dissolution
nirodhâbhimukhâvatthā = ṭhitikkhaṇa



III. Ledi Sayadaw's position

turning point



So far I have examined the specific context of the dispute on the duration of materiality, in which Ānanda was motivated to reject *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*; now I return to the problem of the additional thought moment accepted in the seventeen moments theory. Ānanda views the additional thought moment as unacceptable not only because it lacks scriptural evidence, but also because it proves groundless from the standpoint of the thought process, in which material phenomena at the initial stage condition mental phenomena, and vice versa. To comprehend the line of his argument, however, we first need to acquaint ourselves with the Theravādin system of correlations.

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428 Bodhi (1993), p. 156.

(4) The system of conditional relations underlies the theory of momentariness and Ānanda's contention

The Buddhist theory of momentariness has a close connection with the system of conditional relations. Each momentary *dhamma* occurs within a network of multi-relational factors. In the *Paṭṭhāna*, the complex of relations of mental and material *dhammas* is divided into twenty-four types of relation (*paccaya*). The text presents a detailed exposition by applying them to the twenty-two triplets and one hundred couplets of the *abhidhamma-mātikā*, the mnemonic key which forms the framework of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and is employed in the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Dhātukathā*. They are further arranged in various permutations and combinations, the format of which is somewhat forbidding. The *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* puts them into an accessible format: the category of *nāma* (mental phenomena) and *rūpa* (material phenomena)[429] in six permutations: 1) *nāma* → *nāma*, 2) *nāma* → *nāma-rūpa*, 3) *nāma* → *rūpa*, 4) *rūpa* → *nāma*, 5) *nāma-rūpa* → *nāma* , 6) *nāma-rūpa* → *nāma-rūpa*. Fortunately most of the details are unnecessary for our present purposes. We need only concern ourselves with two relations: 3) *nāma* → *rūpa*, 4) *rūpa* → *nāma*. At the very outset, it is essential to understand the three factors involved in any particular relation: i) the conditioning states (*paccaya-dhammā*), the phenomena that function as conditions for other phenomena by producing them, by supporting them or by maintaining them; ii) the conditionally arisen states (*paccayuppanna-dhammā*), i.e. the states conditioned by the conditioning states; iii) the conditioning force (*paccaya-satti*), the particular way in which the conditioning states function as conditions for the conditioned states.[430]

The *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* claims that there is only one way in which *rūpa* is a condition for *nāma*, namely, as prenascent condition (*purejāta-paccaya*). That is to say, in the sense-door process, the material phenomena must reach the stage of presence (*ṭhiti-*

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429 In their most common context, the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula, the terms *nāma* and *rūpa* refer to the name and form of the individual human being; in other contexts they refer to the name and form of any object (see Hamilton, 1996, p.135). In the above permutations, however, *nāma* means mental phenomena (*citta* and *cetasika*), and *rūpa* material phenomena, which include external objects and their corresponding sense organs.

430 Bodhi (1993), pp. 303-304.

ppatti) before the mental ones arise. There are two main types of prenascent condition: base-prenascence (*vatthu-purejāta*) and object-prenascence (*ārammaṇa-purejāta*). Each of the six physical bases during the course of existence is a conditioning state by way of base-prenascence for the *citta* and *cetasikas* (i.e. the conditioned state). These take the physical bases as the material support for their appearance. It should be noted that the heart-base (*hadaya-vatthu*) is not a prenascent condition for mental states at the moment of rebirth-linking, since on that occasion the heart-base and mental states arise simultaneously as conascent (*sahajāta*) and mutual (*aññamañña*) conditions. But the heart-base that arises at rebirth becomes a prenascent condition for the first *bhavaṅga-citta* immediately following the rebirth-linking consciousness, and thereafter it becomes a prenascent condition for all mind-elements and mind-consciousness-elements during the course of life. As for object-prenascence, each of the five sense objects is a conditioning state in the five sense-door process by way of object-prenascence for the *citta* and *cetasikas* that take the sense data as an object. In addition, all eighteen types of concretely produced materiality (*nipphanna-rūpa*)[431] that have reached the stage of presence can become the object-prenascence condition for the *citta* and *cetasikas* in the mind-door process.[432]

Similarly, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* states that there is only one way in which *nāma* is a condition for *rūpa*, namely, as a postnascent condition (*pacchājāta-paccaya*). This is a condition in which a conditioning state assists conditioned states that have arisen prior to itself by supporting and strengthening them. The conditioning states in this relation are subsequently-arisen *citta* and *cetasikas*, and the conditioned states are the material phenomena of the body produced by all four causes (*kamma*, *citta*, *āhāra* and *utu*) which have arisen along with preceding *cittas*. This condition begins with the first *bhavaṅga* in relation to the material phenomena produced by *kamma* at the moment of rebirth-linking.[433]

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431 See Bodhi (1993), p. 236 for a useful table (6.1).

432 The mind-door process here does not refer to the bare mind-door process (*suddha-manodvāra-vīthi*) which emerges from the *bhavaṅga* without depending on a physical sense-door. It refers to the mind-door process (sometimes called mixed door process – *missaka-dvāravīthi*) which is preceded by the sense-door process. See Bodhi (1993), p. 152.

433 Bodhi (1993), pp. 313-314.

With this brief background, we shall examine how Ānanda incorporates the theory of conditional relations into his argument in order to dispute the seventeen moments theory.

As noted above, the additional moment prior to the sixteen thought moments has three sub-phases, and accordingly there are three options (see Figure 3-21). The first option (i.e. materiality arises at the origination-moment of a thought) has no flaw in theory, and has been rejected simply because it is not supported by scriptural evidence; on the other hand, the other two options (i.e. materiality arises either at the endurance moment or at the dissolution moment) contradict the theory of conditional relations. As Ānanda rejects the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of mental phenomena, it is untenable to say that the visual object can enter the avenue of the eye sense-door at the endurance moment (*ṭhiti-kkhaṇa*) of mental phenomena. Now he tackles the last option (i.e. materiality arises at the dissolution moment of a thought) by providing both reasoned investigation (*yutti*) and a canonical citation from the *Saṅkhārayamaka* chapter of the *Yamaka*.

> ..... If it is so, [when it is asked] "When his *kāya-saṅkhāra* arises, does his *vacī-saṅkhāra* cease? " Then should it not be answered "That is not affirmed" ? No! Because there is no support for origination of materiality at the dissolution moment of a thought. This is because **in a literal sense (*nippariyāya*) materiality is arising (*uppajjamāna*) precisely at the origination-moment of a thought.** Nevertheless, **in a figurative sense (*pariyāya*),** it is said that **when a thought moment has not passed (*cittakkhaṇe avītivatte*), it** [materiality] **does not perform its own function of prenascent condition (*purejāta-paccaya*) and** [the function] **of origination of** [other] **materiality, and immateriality does not become a postnascent condition (*pacchājāta-paccaya*) of that** [materiality] because it lacks the distinctiveness to reach the stage of presence (*ṭhiti-ppatti*).[434]

Here, according to the *Cūḷavedallasutta* of the *Majjhama-nikāya*, the *kāya-saṅkhāra* stands for inhalation and exhalation, and the *vacī-saṅkhāra* for *vitakka* and *vicāra* (applied thought and sustained thought).[435] In the mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), for instance, a meditator conditions his/ her body by calming the breath, so the breath is a conditioner of

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434 Vibh-mṭ 24: *... yadi evaṃ, yassa kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjati, tassa vacisaṅkhāro nirujjhatī ti? no ti na vattabban ti ce? na, cittanirodhakkhaṇe rūpuppādârambhâbhāvato ti.* ***nippariyāyena hi cittassa uppāda-kkhaṇe 'va rūpaṃ uppajjamānaṃ hoti, cittakkhaṇe pana avītivatte taṃ attano rūpasamuṭṭhāpana-purejātapaccayakiccaṃ na karoti, arūpañ ca tassa pacchājātapaccayo na hotī*** *ti ṭhitippatti-visesālābhaṃ sandhāya pariyāyena idaṃ vuttan ti.*

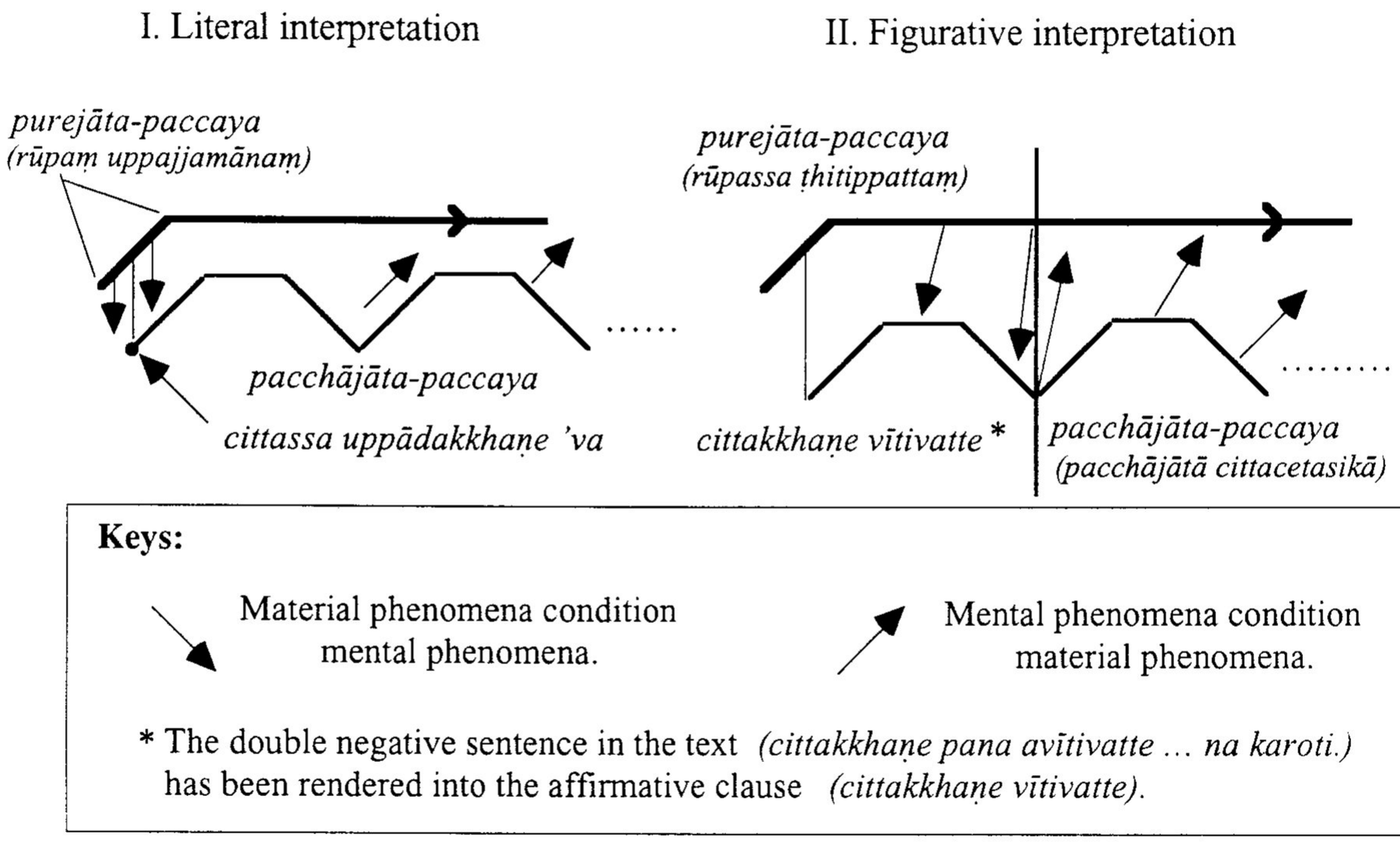
435 See chapter 3, p. 138, fn. 318.

bodily activity. Similarly, prior to any intelligible speech, there must be the inner verbal formation of ideas which precedes and conditions their articulation through the apparatus of verbal expression, so *vitakka* and *vicāra* are conditioners of one's verbal activity. In this specific sense, Ānanda identifies the *kāya-saṅkhāra* and *vacī-saṅkhāra* respectively with material and mental phenomena, which interact in accordance with the theory of conditional relations. In other words, to borrow the model provided in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, there is only one way in which *rūpa* is a condition for *nāma*, namely, as a prenascent condition. In the eye sense-door process, for example, the visual object and the tranquillised materiality (*pasāda-rūpa*) in the eye must reach the stage of presence (*ṭhiti-ppatti*) before eye-consciousness arises. This in turn excludes any possibility that material phenomena originate at the endurance or dissolution moments of mental ones. From this standpoint, Ānanda affirms that materiality does not arise at the dissolution moment of a thought due to the lack of support for origination. He further confirms his contention, applying his argument to both literal (*nippariyāya*) and figurative (*pariyāya*) senses. In a literal sense, materiality is arising (*uppajjamāna*) at the origination moment of a thought. (It should be noted here that the middle present participle *uppajja* [*ud-* √*pad-ya*] + *māna* denotes the continuity of an action[436] or process.) Prior to the origination moment of a thought, materiality has already arisen and persisted. But, in a figurative sense, materiality does not perform its own function of prenascent condition (*purejāta-paccaya*) unless a thought moment has passed (*cittakkhaṇe avītivatte*); moreover, mental phenomena do not become the postnascent condition (*pacchājāta-paccaya*) of materiality, because it lacks the distinctiveness to reach the stage of presence (*ṭhiti-ppatti*). Here, the syntax of the locative absolute clause *cittakkhaṇe avītivatte* remains obscure and seems to contradict the very principle that materiality is the prenascent condition for *cittas* and *cetasikas* (i.e. materiality must have arisen before a *cittakkhaṇa* has passed). Let us illustrate first what we gather from the text, and return to the unclear syntax of the clause to see whether we can add to our interpretation of the prenascent condition.

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436 Vito Perniola (1997, p. 358) suggests that the middle present participle denotes the continuation of an action, whereas the active present participle merely points out that an action takes place.

Figure 3-23: Prenascent and postnascent conditions of mental and material phenomena



The above diagram shows some distinctive features of the literal and figurative interpretations. The former specifies a discrete point for the origin of a thought as well as the time scale of materiality, and it is clear that materiality is the prenascent condition for the origination of *citta* and *cetasikas*. The latter, however, generalises the phase of the rise of a thought and its conditioning agent (i.e. materiality), and I assume that more emphasis is given to the conditionally arisen state (i.e. immateriality) than to its conditioning agent. The locative absolute clause *cittakkhaṇe avītivatte* therefore appears to suggest that immateriality is a conditioning agent. The locative absolute is normally used to express an attendant circumstance, but according to context there may be a causal or conditional implication. For instance, in the canonical sentence, *samādhimhi cute obhāso antaradhāyati dassanañ ca rūpānaṃ* (when concentration fell away, the light and the vision of forms disappeared. M III 158),[437] concentration is a conditioning agent, which causes the light and the vision of forms to appear or disappear. We can compare this with the sentence in question: *cittakkhaṇe pana avītivatte taṃ attano rūpasamuṭṭhāpanapurejātapaccayakiccaṃ na*

437 Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi (1995), p.1012.

karoti. To make it simpler, let us paraphrase it by changing the double negative to an affirmative: *cittakkhaṇe vītivatte rūpaṃ purejātapaccayakiccaṃ karoti* (when a thought moment has passed, materiality performs its function of the prenascent condition). Here the thought moment is a conditioning agent, which causes materiality to carry out the function of the prenascent condition, which amounts to saying that the thought moment has arisen prior to the origination of materiality. To make sense of the obscure syntax of this passage, we should scrutinise the other possible implications of the prenascent condition.

It is necessary to remind ourselves of the basic suppositions regarding the prenascent condition. Firstly, mental phenomena cannot become prenascent conditions in relation to material ones. Accordingly, I have shown in the above diagram that the starting point of materiality in both interpretations precedes that of mental phenomena. Secondly, all mental phenomena that come into existence after the moment of conception become postnascent conditions in relation to material ones. If this is so, how can we draw a border line between the starting point of prenascence and that of postnascence ? In fact, this is a grey area, unless we introduce other interpretative tools, namely the idea of a partial overlap between processes. Ledi Sayadaw's remarks on *purejāta-paccaya* are highly instructive and throw light on the present problem:

> The term pre-existent (*purejāta*) must not be understood to mean a wholly antecedent state which has expired before a consequence arises, but a thing, event, or **process which partly precedes**, and **partly overlaps with**, a later event, or thing, or **process to which the earlier causally relates**.[438]

We have already come across the idea of an overlap in the **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa*, but what makes it different from the above is the context: the former deals with the sequential change in material phenomena (one dimensional), but the latter with the sequential change in the causal relationship of material and mental phenomena (two dimensional). Ledi Sayadaw emphasises the fact that the prenascent materiality partly precedes the postnascent immateriality, and that it is inevitable that the rise of materiality partly overlaps postnascent immateriality because materiality still functions as the

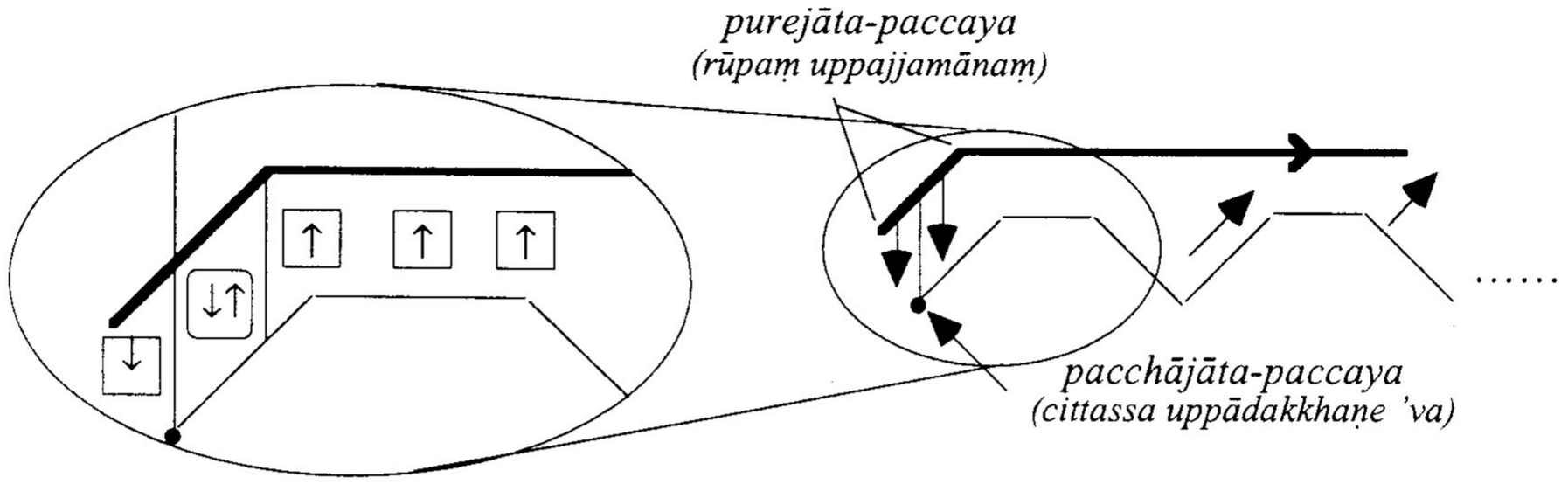
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438 Ledi Sayadaw (1915, p. 46). The emphasis is mine.

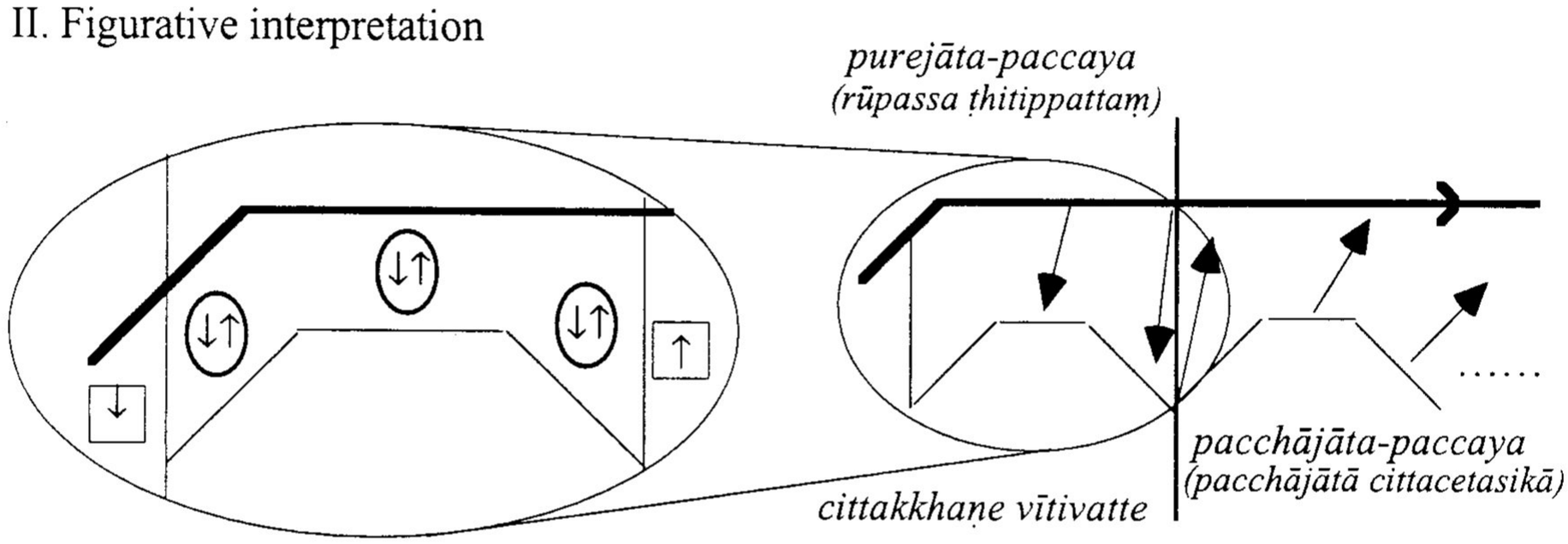
prenascent condition. Let us now apply these ideas to Ānanda's literal and figurative interpretations of the prenascent and postnascent conditions. In a literal sense, as seen above, materiality is arising (*uppajjamāna*) at the origination-moment of a thought, and we noted that the middle present participle *uppajjamāna* is used to denote the continuity of its function as the prenascent condition. From the diagram below, we can see that one stage prior to the rise of a thought, materiality has already arisen and persisted. Therefore, materiality partly precedes and partly overlaps with the thought that arises. Its causal influence (*paccaya-satti*) ceases to operate only when it reaches its enduring moment. We can apply the same principle to the figurative interpretation, except for the range of the overlap. To make the idea of an overlap meaningful in this context, I suggest that the past participle *vītivatte* in the locative absolute clause *cittakkhaṇe vītivatte* has to be understood as the middle present participle *vītivattamāne*, so that it marks a contemporaneous and overlapping process, as for instance, in the sentence, *rukkhamhi patamāne* (or *patante*) *sakuṇā uḍḍesuṃ* (while the tree was falling down, the birds flew up). Literally speaking, the fall of the tree was a conditioning factor for the birds' flight and it surely began prior to this effect, but in a figurative sense, both events occurred almost simultaneously and they overlapped until the tree had completely fallen down to the ground and the birds had flown away. Similarly, in the sentence in question, "While a thought moment is passing (*vītivattamāne*), materiality performs its function of the prenascent condition." Here, in a strictly literal sense, the thought moment is a conditioning agent, but we take only the metaphorical sense that the passing of a thought moment overlaps with materiality's action as a prenascent condition. In the following diagram (Figure 3-24), I have illustrated this interactive process, showing the partial overlap of the action of prenascent and postnascent conditions.

Figure 3-24: The partial overlap of mental and material phenomena

I. Literal interpretation



II. Figurative interpretation



Keys:

- ↓ Materiality partly precedes mental phenomena.
- ↑ Mental phenomena act as a postnascent condition for materiality.
- ↓↑ Materiality partly overlaps mental phenomena.
- ↓↑ Materiality partly overlaps a single thought moment.

The rest as in Figure 3-23.

Ānanda thus contends that the seventeen moments theory is untenable, because the additional moment prior to the sixteen thought moments cannot be accepted. In spite of Ānanda's constructive argument based on scripture and reasoning, the sixteen moments theory did not appeal to the majority of the authors of the later post-canonical texts. In the *Saccasaṅkhepa*, Culla-Dhammapāla, Ānanda's senior pupil, supports his teacher's position

that the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of a thought does not exist,[439] but unlike him accepts the seventeen moments theory with some modification. He makes exceptions for some types of derived materiality, namely, bodily and verbal means of intimation (*viññatti-rūpa*) and for the four material characteristics (*lakkhaṇa-rūpa*).[440] Of the four characteristics, production and continuity are equal in duration to the arising moment, impermanence to the dissolution moment, and ageing to the forty-nine sub-divisions of seventeen moments of the thought process. The two types of intimation have a temporal duration of one thought moment.[441] Nevertheless, this modification directly reflects Ānanda's rejection of the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* of a thought. The two *viññatti-rūpas* are classified under material phenomena originating from consciousness (*cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa*). If the *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* is not accepted, the *cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa* cannot have the enduring moment of the forty-nine sub-divisions, as this lacks a base for the rise of material phenomena. In contrast, the PKV commentary does not distinguish the *cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa* from the three other types of generative materiality (i.e. *kamma*, *utu* and *āhāra*); they are material phenomena originating by four different means, but they invariably follow the same law of a moment (*khaṇa-niyama*).[442] In this case, Culla-Dhammapāla probably thinks that the *cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa* implies the creation of matter by mind. However, if we define the *cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa* as some *rūpa-dhammas* arising in response to a skilful, unskilful or indeterminate thought, the implication is not that they are created but that they are conascently conditioned or prompted by mind. It is precisely for this reason that in the *Paṭṭhāna*, *citta* and *cetasikas* are regarded as a conascence condition (*sahajāta-paccaya*) in relation to the *rūpa-dhammas* qualified by

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439 Ss 6 § 54 *cittuppāde siyuṃ rūpahetū kammâdayo pana;*
ṭhiti na pāṭhe cittassa, na bhaṅge rūpasambhavo.
§ 55 *"aññathattaṃ ṭhitassā" ti, vuttattā 'va ṭhitikkhaṇaṃ;*
atthī ti ce pabandhena, ṭhiti tattha pavuccati.

440 Ss 6 § 60: *taṃ sattarasacittâyu, vinā viññattilakkhaṇaṃ; ... .*

441 Sumaṅgala cites "*taṃ sattarasacittâyu, vinā viññattilakkhaṇaṃ*" (Ss 6 § 60), and comments upon it in the Abhidh-vb 108: *rūpadhammānan ti viññattilakkhaṇarūpavajjānaṃ rūpadhammānaṃ, viññattidvayaṃ hi ekacittakkhaṇâyukaṃ. tathā hi taṃ cittânuparivattidhammesu vuttaṃ. lakkhaṇarūpesu ca jāti c' eva aniccatā ca cittassa uppādabhaṅgakkhaṇehi samānâyukā. jaratā pana ekūnapaññāsacittakkhaṇâyukā. evañ ca katvā vadanti: "taṃ sattarasacittâyu, vinā viññattilakkhaṇan" ti.*

442 Vibh-a 28: *yo câyaṃ cittasamuṭṭhānassa khaṇaniyamo vutto, kammâdisamuṭṭhānassâpi ayam eva khaṇa-niyamo, tasmā paṭisandhicittena sahuppannaṃ kammajarūpaṃ tato paṭṭhāya sattarasamena saddhiṃ nirujjhati.*

citta-samuṭṭhāna.[443] I shall return to the issue of why the sixteen moments theory had very little support from the later post-canonical *Abhidhamma* manuals and their commentaries when I evaluate the sixteen and seventeen moments theories from a comparative perspective.

Finally, I will examine how the addition of one moment of *atīta-bhavaṅga-citta* to the sixteen stages of the thought process was legitimised and how the seventeen moments theory in conjunction with the theory of the thought process became a norm in the *Abhidhamma* manuals and commentaries from the twelfth century on.

(5) The application of the notion of *khaṇa* to the theory of the thought process in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*

I have shown in the preceding sections how Ānanda attempts to dispute the seventeen moments theory. His main textual evidence in support of the sixteen moments theory comes from a passage in the PSV commentary, which is the only reference to the sixteen moments theory relating directly to the sixteen stages of the thought process at death and rebirth. In the chapter on the thought process (*vīthi-pariccheda*) in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, however, Anuruddha endorses the seventeen moments theory by referring explicitly to the seventeen stages of the sense-door process. After providing an overall view of the subject in the first part of the chapter, he systematically tackles each sub-topic, using terse sentences. The sub-section entitled the Five-door process (*pañcadvāra-vīthi*) summarises the basic assumption which underlies the mechanism of the relative duration of mental and material phenomena in the thought process, as follows:

> How [is the intensity of the presentation of objects determined]? One thought moment consists of three [sub] moments - arising, presence and dissolution. The duration of material phenomena consists of seventeen such thought moments. The five sense objects enter the avenue of the five sense-doors at the stage of presence, when one or several thought moments have passed (*ekacitta-kkhaṇâtītāni vā bahucitta-kkhaṇâtītāni vā*). Therefore, if a visible form as an object, having passed one thought

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443 Tikap 3: *cittacetasikā dhammā cittasamuṭṭhānaṃ rūpānaṃ sahajātapaccayena paccayo.* See C.A.F. Rhys Davids (1974, p. 188, fn. 3) and Karunadasa (1967, pp. 112, 131-132) for a discussion of the issue of the *cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa*.

> moment (*ekacitta-kkhaṇâtītaka*), enters the avenue of the eye, the life-continuum vibrates for two thought moments and is arrested..... After the *javanas*, two resultant *tadārammaṇas* arise accordingly. Then comes the subsidence into the life-continuum. To this extent seventeen thought moments are completed, namely, fourteen stages of the thought process, two vibrations of the life-continuum, and one thought moment that had passed prior to [the process]. [444]

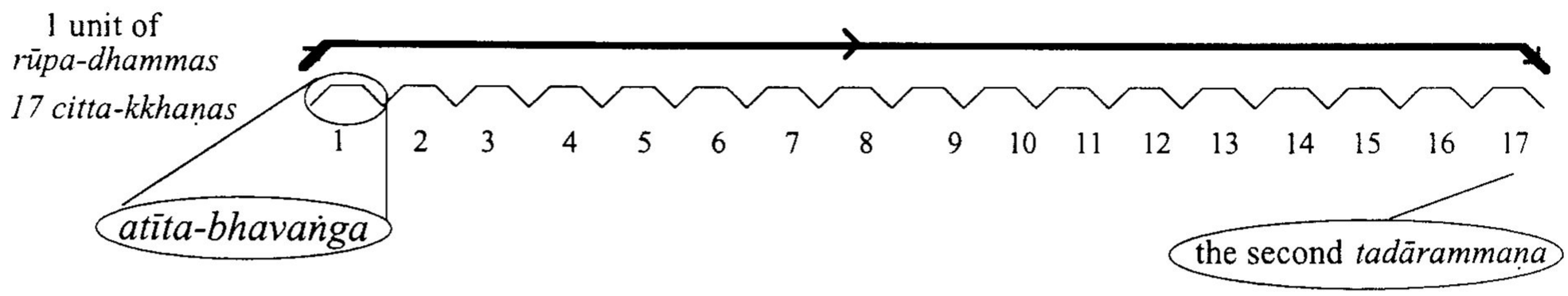
It is significant that here, unlike in the early post-canonical texts, the computation is done on the basis of moments, using the term *khaṇa*. At the very moment that a sense object enters a sense-door, one *bhavaṅga-citta* passes, namely, *ekacitta-kkhaṇâtītaka*: this is paraphrased in the secondary sources as *atīta-bhavaṅga* (the past life-continuum).[445] Accordingly, one moment of *atīta-bhavaṅga-citta* is added to the sixteen stages of the thought process. This is made up of two moments of vibrations of the *bhavaṅga*, plus fourteen thought moments, which are considered the process proper. Thus, a single unit of the thought process involves seventeen thought moments. Anuruddha, after defining one *citta-kkhaṇa* in terms of the three sub-divisions of a moment of origination, enduring and dissolution, directly applies the seventeen moments theory to that of the thought process (*citta-vīthi*). For instance, in the eye-door process with a stimulus of high intensity caused by an ultra-intense object (*atimahanta*), the object arises (*upajjamāna*) at the arising moment of the *atīta-bhavaṅga*. Since the *kalāpas* of the visual object and the eye both have a duration of seventeen thought moments, they perish simultaneously with the second *tadārammaṇa-citta*. This can be illustrated as follows (Figure 3-25):

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444 Abhidh-s 17-18: *kathaṃ ? uppādaṭhitibhaṅgavasena khaṇattayaṃ ekacittakkhaṇaṃ nāma. tāni pana sattarasa cittakkhaṇāni rūpadhammānaṃ āyu. ekacittakkhaṇâtītāni vā bahucittakkhaṇâtītāni vā ṭhitippattān' eva pañcârammaṇāni pañcadvāre āpāthaṃ āgacchanti. tasmā yadi ekacittakkhaṇâtītakaṃ rūpârammaṇaṃ cakkhussa āpāthaṃ āgacchati, tato dvukkhattuṃ bhavaṅge calite bhavaṅgasotaṃ vicchinditvā..... javanânubandhāni ca dve tadārammaṇapākāni yathâraha ṃ pavattanti. tato paraṃ bhavaṅgapāto. ettāvatā cuddasa vīthicittuppādā dve bhavaṅgacalanāni pubb' ev' atītakam ekacittakkhaṇan ti katvā sattarasa cittakkhaṇāni paripūrenti.* (Bodhi's translation is adopted with some modifications of terms, see pp. 154-156). The *Vibhāvinī* glosses *ekacittakkhaṇâtītāni* as *"ekacittassa khaṇaṃ viya khaṇaṃ ekacittakkhaṇaṃ. taṃ atītaṃ etesaṃ, etāni vā taṃ atītānī ti ekacittakkhaṇâtītāni."* (Abhidh-vb 108).

445 Aung (1910), pp. 27-28; Sarathchandra (1958), p. 46; Collins (1982), p. 242.

Figure 3-25: The duration of materiality in the eye-door process with an ultra intense object



Keys:

1. atīta-bhavaṅga	*5. pañcaviññāṇa*	*9-15. javana*
2. bhavaṅga-calana	*6. sampaṭicchana*	*16-17. tadārammaṇa*
3. bhavaṅga-upaccheda	*7. santīraṇa*	
4. pañcadvāra-āvajjana	*8. votthapana*	The rest as keys in Figure 3-5

Sumaṅgala, the commentator of the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, fully supports Anuruddha's stance on the seventeen moments theory. He criticises the sixteen moments theory as lacking substantial value (*asāra*) by attributing it to anonymous teachers (*keci*), but we can immediately recognise from the context that his criticism is directed to Ānanda. He rejects the textual evidence from the PSV commentary, which is given by Ānanda in its *Mūlaṭīka*. The corrected version of the seventeen moments theory in the PKV commentary is adduced to support his position. He argues that when the sixteen moments are referred to, they take into account only those moments that are necessary for the maintenance of the process of thought. Accordingly, one moment must be added at the beginning of the thought process to account for the force exerted by materiality in coming into the avenue of thought.[446]

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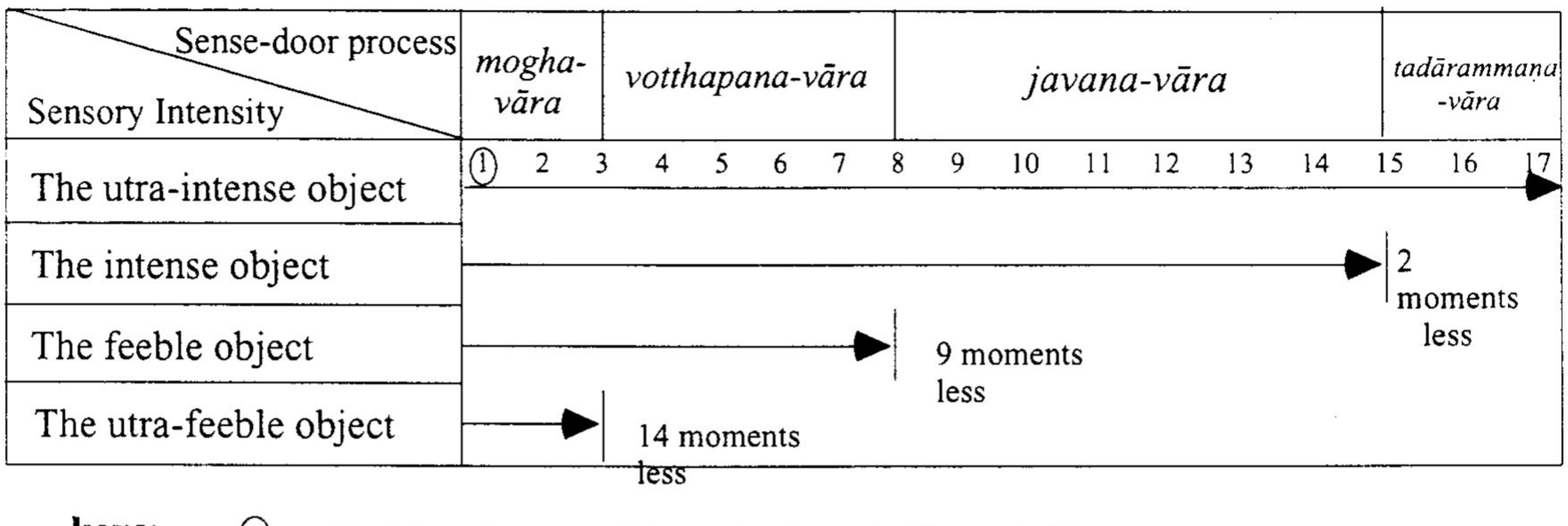
446 Abhidh-vb 108: *keci pana Paṭiccasamuppādaṭṭhakathāyaṃ; ettāvatā ekādasacittakkhaṇā atītā honti athâvasesapañcacittakkhaṇâyuke ti vacanato soḷasacittakkhaṇāni rūpadhammānam āyu. uppajjamānam eva hi rūpaṃ bhavaṅgacalanassa paccayo hotī ti vadanti. tayidaṃ asāraṃ. ..... tyādinā aṭṭhakathāyam eva sattarasacittakkhaṇassa āgatattā. yattha pana soḷasacittakkhaṇān' eva paññāyanti. tattha cittappavattiyā paccayabhāvayogyakkhaṇavasena nayo nīto. heṭṭhimakoṭiyā hi ekacittakkhaṇam pi atikkantass' eva rūpassa āpāthâgamanasāmatthiyan ti, alam ativitthārena.* <But anonymous teachers (*keci*) claim that the lifespan of material phenomena is sixteen thought moments, because the arising materiality itself becomes the condition for the disturbance of *bhavaṅga*. They adduce the following textual evidence from the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* chapter of the [*Vibhaṅga*] commentary: "At this point eleven thought moments (*citta-kkhaṇa*) have elapsed. Then, [having that same object], which has a lifespan of the remaining five thought-moments, [the rebirth-linking consciousness arises]." This has no substantial value (*asāra*) ! It is because [a lifespan of] seventeen thought moments is handed down in the [*Vibhaṅga*] commentary: "..... ". But when sixteen thought moments are referred to, it considers [only] those moments that are necessary for the conditioning state of the thought process. Accordingly, it is claimed that one thought moment is [to be added] to the beginning of the thought process to account for the force exerted by materiality in coming into the avenue [of thought]. Indeed, it hardly needs to be mentioned ! >

As shown in the preceding section, Ānanda's criticism in the *Mūlaṭīkā* centres around the additional moment prior to the sixteen stages of the thought process. The *Anuṭīkā* glosses the redundant moment as *ekacitta-kkhaṇâtīta*. Anuruddha adopts this terminology to describe the transitional stage between the active and inactive modes. This occurs just before the sense-door process begins with the presence of an ultra-intense sense object. Sumaṅgala further applies the idea of the *atīta-bhavaṅga* to the various types of sense-door process with the other three degrees of sensory intensity, namely, intense (*mahanta*), feeble (*paritta*) and ultra-feeble (*atiparitta*) objects. In these cases there will be more than two *atīta-bhavaṅgas* and the number of thought moments increases to fifteen (see Figure 3-27). In the following section, therefore, I shall examine Sumaṅgala's interpretation of the term *ekacitta-kkhaṇâtīta* and its application to the fifteen grades of the sense-door process.

(6) The different grades of the sense-door process and the idea of *atīta-bhavaṅgas*

As we saw earlier, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary provides four types of sense-door process, which can be divided into two groups depending on the presence or absence of *tadārammaṇa*. The former has a powerful sense object (*balavârammaṇa*), and the latter a weak object (*ārammaṇa-dubbala*); the latter is further divided into three futile cases (*mogha-vāras*). The process may terminate: 1) at the disturbing of *bhavaṅga*, 2) at the determining stage (*voṭṭhapana*) or 3) at the *javana* stage. These processes have been re-classified in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* with some terms modified: *ati-mahanta* (ultra-intense object), *mahanta* (intense object) *paritta* (feeble object) and *ati-paritta* (ultra-feeble object). Here is an illustration (Figure 3-26, cf. Figure 3-16):

Figure 3-26: The grades of the sense-door process in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*



keys: ① *atīta-bhavaṅga* The rest as keys in Figure 3-25.

The content remains unchanged, but the intensity of the objects is re-arranged, running from the higher degree to the lower one, which is the reverse of the order from its arrangement in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary. The first two terms, *ati-mahanta* and *mahanta*, occur in the *Visuddhimagga*; however, *paritta* and *ati-paritta* seem to be newly introduced by Anuruddha. In this context the words *mahanta* and *paritta* are not used with reference to the size or bulk of the object, but to the force or intensity of its impact on the thought process. It should be noted that the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* states that the determining (*voṭṭhapana*) *citta* in the process with a feeble object occurs two or three times, whereas the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary says that it happens once or twice.[447] Another noticeable change is that the *atīta-bhavaṅga* is added prior to the thought process, and the duration of the material phenomena in the active and inactive modes of *bhavaṅga-citta* is fixed as seventeen thought moments. If an object is ultra-intense, it will extend to sixteen thought moments in the active mode of *bhavaṅga-citta*, and one thought moment in the inactive mode. In the case of intense, feeble and ultra-feeble objects, however, the processes last for fourteen, seven and two thought moments in the active mode, while the remaining three, ten and fifteen thought moments respectively occur in the inactive mode. Anuruddha does not explicitly tell us how to distribute these periods in the inactive mode. In other words, it is not certain whether those thought moments should be placed prior to or posterior to the

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447 As 269: *voṭṭhapane pana ṭhatvā ekaṃ vā dve vā cittāni pavattanti*. Cf. Abhidh-s 18: *tattha javanam pi anuppajjitvā dvattikkhattuṃ voṭṭhapanam eva pavattati, toto paraṃ bhavaṅgapāto 'va hoti*. <I have not indicated this variation in Figure 3-27>.

thought process proper. Sumaṅgala gives us a clue as to how to solve this problem. Commenting on the process involving futile or ultra-futile objects, he states:

> The process involving a futile object (*paritta*) covers the following ranges: the *atīta-bhavaṅga* thought moments [increase one by one] from four to nine [prior to each thought process], [accordingly, the remaining thought moments decrease] from a lifespan of thirteen to eight thought moments. In the case of the process involving an ultra-futile object (*ati-paritta*), the *atīta-bhavaṅga* thought moments [increase one by one] from ten to fifteen thought moments [prior to each thought process], [accordingly, the remaining thought moments decrease] from a lifespan of seven to two thought moments.[448]

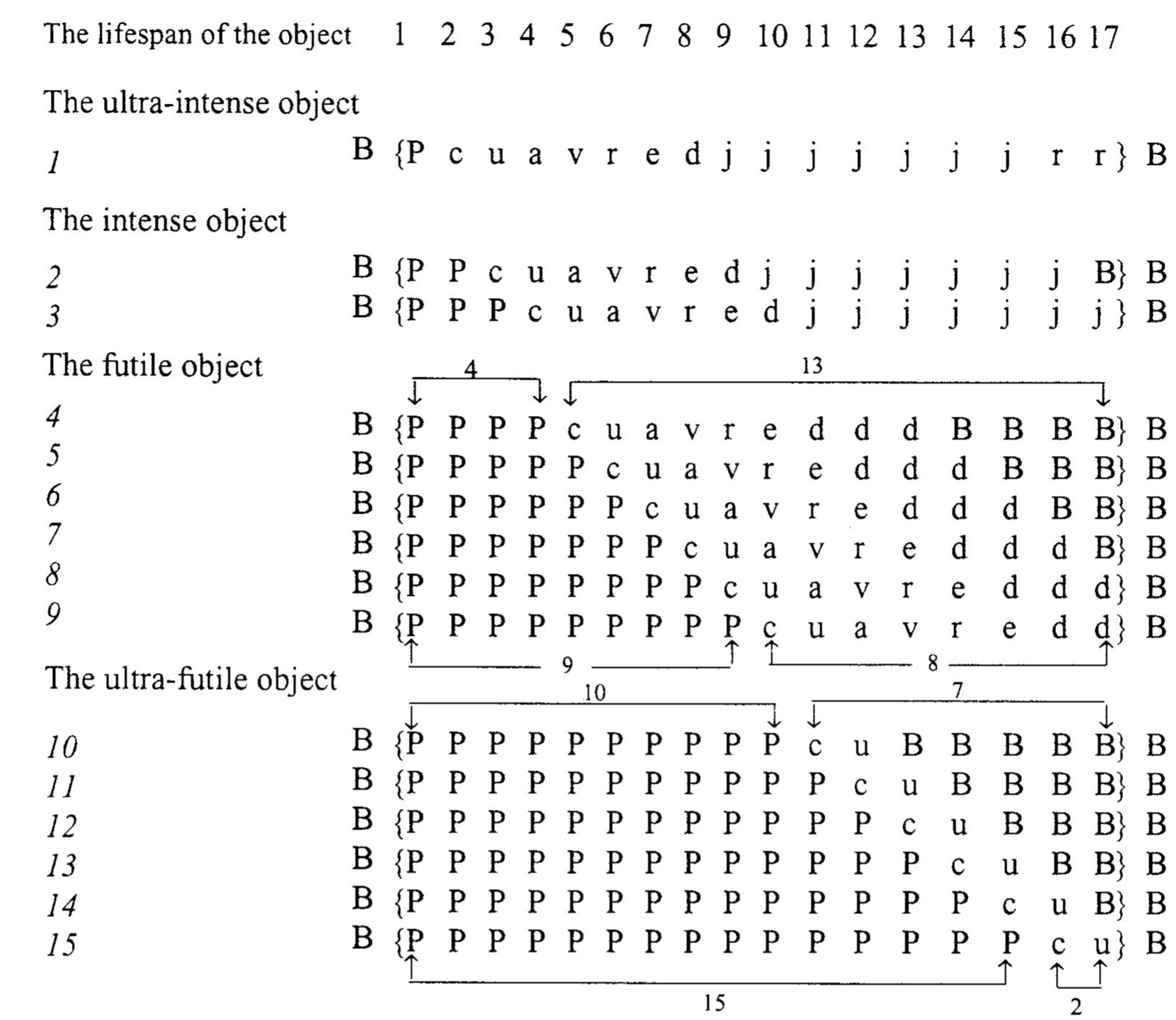
This is not immediately clear unless we illustrate these numerical statements in a chart. Bikkhu Bodhi carefully makes the calculations and provides us with a useful table as shown in Figure 3-27.[449]

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448 Abhidh-vb 106: *catucittakkhaṇato paṭṭhāya yāva navacittakkhaṇâtītaṃ hutvā terasacittakkhaṇato paṭṭhāya yāva aṭṭhacittakkhaṇâyukaṃ parittaṃ nāma. dasacittakkhaṇato paṭṭhāya yāva paṇṇarasacittakkhaṇâtītaṃ hutvā sattacittakkhaṇato paṭṭhāya yāva dvicittakkhaṇâyukaṃ atiparittaṃ nāma.*

449 Bodhi (1993), p. 161, Table 4.2. I have modified it by adding some specifications; abbreviations are mine.

Figure 3-27: The degree of sensory intensity and the grades of the sense-door processes



Keys:

B = *Bhavaṅga-citta*	P = Past *bhavaṅga (atīta-bhavaṅga)*
c = *calana*	e = examination *(santīraṇa)*
u = *upaccheda*	d = determination *(votthapana)*
a = *āvajjana*	j = *javana*
v = *viññāṇa*	t = *tadārammaṇa*
r = reception *(sampaṭicchana)*	{ } = the life span of the object

The rest as in Figure 3-26

As shown in the table above, the past *bhavaṅga* (P) occurs only once in the process involving an ultra-intense object. Thereafter, the number of the past *bhavaṅga* increases one by one up to fifteen in the subsequent types of process. In the process involving an intense object, there are two options depending on the numbers of past *bhavaṅga-cittas*. For instance, when there are two past *bhavaṅga-cittas*, fifteen more *cittas* can arise during the lifespan of the object. In such a case, the object and the sense-door perish simultaneously with the dissolution moment of the first *bhavaṅga-citta* (B) following the seventh *javana-*

citta. When there are three past *bhavaṅga-cittas*, scope remains for fourteen more *cittas* to arise, and in this case the sense object and sense-door perish simultaneously with the seventh *javana-citta*. Similarly, in the process involving a futile object, the determining (*voṭṭhapana*) *citta* occurs two or three times, after which the thought process subsides into the *bhavaṅga*. In this case, depending on the number of past *bhavaṅga-cittas* and *voṭṭhapana-cittas* (d), there are six types of process. For instance, when the past *bhavaṅga-cittas* increase from four to nine, the remaining *cittas* decrease from thirteen to eight. In fact, as we see in the table above, the *bhavaṅga-cittas* posterior to the first five types of process decrease because the other *cittas* in the process of the active mode are fixed, and the past *bhavaṅga-cittas* prior to it increase. As the *voṭṭhapana-cittas* are optional, they decrease from three to two in the sixth type of process. Similarly, in the process involving an ultra-feeble object, depending on the number of past *bhavaṅga-cittas*, there are six types of process; when the past *bhavaṅga-cittas* increase from ten to fifteen, the remaining *cittas* decrease from seven to two.

What does this fairly sophisticated computation imply ? I assume that its main aim is to demonstrate how the various grades of sense-door processes fit in within the lifespan of materiality (i.e. within seventeen thought moments). The basic device underlying this computation is that the number of past *bhavaṅga-cittas* increases from one to fifteen. The bottom line is fixed as fifteen due to the fact that the process involving an ultra-feeble object includes only two thought moments (i.e. 17 - 2 = 15). This is the range of thought moments in the inactive mode within the lifespan of materiality. As seen above, the processes in the active mode vary according to the degree of sensory intensity as well as according to the alternative numbers of thought moments (as in the case of *voṭṭhapana-cittas*). All types of process, except that involving an ultra-intense object, involve not more than fourteen thought moments in the active mode. The remaining thought moments within the given lifespan of materiality subside into the *bhavaṅga-cittas* in the inactive mode, filling up any gaps posterior to the active processes. I suggest that this sort of computation was needed to justify the application of the seventeen moments theory to the thought process. To conclude

this chapter, I shall briefly evaluate the sixteen moments and seventeen moments theories on the basis of our discussion so far.

(7) An evaluation of the sixteen moments and the seventeen moments theories

To begin with, let us recapitulate the textual history of the theory of momentariness. After the idea of the relative duration of materiality as sixteen thought moments was first introduced in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary, it was articulated and refined in the *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka* commentaries. The inherited ambiguity of the phrase '*tasmiṃ rūpe dharante*' resulted in alternative versions of the relative duration of materiality, namely, the sixteen moments and seventeen moments theories. Our investigation has revealed that the account of momentariness in the *Visuddhimagga* is based on the sixteen moments theory, and that the corrected version in the *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka* commentaries assume the seventeen moments theory, which Ānanda, by endorsing the sixteen moments theory, disputes in the *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. In spite of Ānanda's rejection of the seventeen moments theory, it becomes the standard version in the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha* and its commentaries, in which the theory is explicitly applied to the seventeen stages of the sense-door process.

As suggested earlier (§ 3.2.2-(3)), the idea of the number sixteen as a unit of lunar time-reckoning was probably related to the notion of the sixteen thought moments when it was first introduced in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary. Its validity as a popular measuring unit diminished, however, as soon as the commentarial tradition made an emendation based on the seventeen moments theory. Although the *Visudddhimagga*'s account of momentariness, as well as the *Mūlaṭīkā*'s argument, supported the sixteen moments theory, it appears that the phases of the moon did not feature as a time measuring unit in the thought of Buddhaghosa and Ānanda. Setting aside the cultural associations of the number sixteen, it seems that Ānanda's argument was not strong enough to convince his opponents. Firstly, his scriptural evidence from the PSV commentary was less appealing than the direct textual evidence from the emended version in the PKV commentary, adduced by the opponents.

Secondly, his reasoning centred around the disputation of the additional thought moment prior to the process of sixteen stages and was open to the alternative interpretation of the seventeen moments theory. With regard to the three sub-divisions of a moment of arising, endurance and dissolution of mental phenomena, he rejected the last two as counterparts of material phenomena because they go against the principle of *purejāta-* and *pacchājāta-paccaya*. Nevertheless, if one simply accepts the first sub-division of a moment (i.e. origination) during which material phenomena are arising (*uppajjamāna*), the seventeen moments theory is not problematic and it gets immediate textual support from the PKV commentary.

The past *bhavaṅga-citta*, that is the additional moment prior to the sixteen stages of the thought process, functions as a transitional point for the sequential thought processes. In other words, if we assume that one unit of the process is completed before the next starts, as suggested earlier (§ 3.2.4-(4)), the transition between the processes falls into one of the two possible categories: an overlap or a non-overlap of one thought moment between the units of the thought process. In the case of the former, the seventeenth thought moment in the preceding unit overlaps the first thought moment in the following unit. However, we do not see any implication of an overlap in Sumaṅgala's account of the various grades of the thought process. We are therefore left with the second option, i.e. the serial sets of seventeen thought moments in juxtaposition without a gap. First of all, we should remind ourselves that the *bhavaṅga-citta* flows continuously by switching from the active mode to the inactive. After each unit of the active process, it subsides into the inactive mode, but if the process is serial, it is immediately followed by the past *bhavaṅga-citta* in the next unit. Although this past *bhavaṅga-citta* acts as a precursor to the active process, in fact, it does not belong to the sixteen active stages of the thought process, i.e. the two preliminary stages of vibrations of *bhavaṅga* plus the fourteen stages which are considered the process proper. Strictly speaking, the past *bhavaṅga-citta* operates in the inactive mode of the *bhavaṅga-citta*, but it still takes one of the five sensory objects, unlike the normal *bhavaṅga-citta* in the inactive mode, which has the heart base as its object. In this case, the past *bhavaṅga-*

citta functions as a sort of a buffer between the sets of the process. Later Ābhidhammikas effectively use this concept of the *atīta-bhavaṅga* as an interpretative tool when they apply the theory of momentariness to the thought process. They fix the number of stages for the thought process and for the corresponding duration of a material object and sense-door as seventeen thought moments. Accordingly, there are fifteen grades of sense-door processes depending on the various degrees of sensory intensity. As we have seen in the chart above (Figure 3-27), the number of past *bhavaṅga-citta* increases from one to fifteen, so that there will be no gaps before the actual process starts.

Thus, the concept of the past *bhavaṅga-citta* plays a pivotal role in the formation of the seventeen moments theory. It could substitute for the idea of an overlap between the sets of the process. In contrast, if the sixteen moments theory is accepted, we have to explain the serial thought process without the concept of the past *bhavaṅga-citta*. If there is an overlap, the sixteenth thought moment (the 2nd *tadārammaṇa*) in the preceding unit overlaps with the first thought moment (*bhavaṅga-calana*). If there is no overlap, the sets of processes must follow each other in serial fashion without subsiding into the *bhavaṅga-citta* in the inactive mode. As the sense-door process varies according to the various degrees of sensory intensity, there will be some moments which are free of the active thought process within the sixteen thought moments, the lifespan of materiality. However, the sixteen moments theory was not extended to tackle this issue, because there were few advocates of the theory after Ānanda.

Anuruddha provided the integrated framework of the seventeen moments theory and its corresponding theory of the thought process. A synthetic interpretation was necessary because the internal psychological processes are intrinsically involved in perceiving the ever changing material phenomena in the external environment. As noted above, Sumaṅgala articulates the applied theories using the concept of *atīta-bhavaṅga* as an interpretative tool. His systematisation of the theories clarifies some difficulties involved in the serial processes, but the computational approach to the complexity of psycho-physical phenomena

seems to have its own limitations and it is somewhat artificial. My concern has not been to establish whether the account is true; but I may just mention that I would not exclude the possibility that it has something to tell us about how the mind works during meditation. Whether it provides a more comprehensive explanation of how thought processes work is certainly questionable. Nevertheless, this rigorous intellectual account of the psycho-physical processes demonstrates how the later Ābhidhammikas endeavoured to maintain a broad doctrinal unity and consistency within their *Abhidhammic* system of thought.

The method adopted in this chapter has primarily been that of identifying and presenting the historical development of the theory of momentariness through a textual lineage. In the next chapter, I shall return to the early post-canonical sources and select some doctrinal issues related to the theory of momentariness, and examine how the theory was presupposed in certain doctrines, or exceptionally applied to them. This will provide us with internal evidence how the theory of momentariness gradually evolved within the Theravādin commentarial tradition.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Presuppositions and Application of the Doctrine of Momentariness

In the preceding chapter, I traced the textual development of the theory of momentariness in the early and later post-canonical texts, and examined its implications from a critical perspective. In order to highlight how the theory applied to the thought process, certain related issues were set aside. I shall now explore two of these in detail, namely, 1) the computation of the process of death and rebirth based on the theory of momentariness and its implications for the denial of an intermediate state (*antarābhava*), and 2) the momentary present (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*) and its selective application to the theory of insight into the minds of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*). I shall begin, in the first section, by summarising the origins and development of the *antarābhava* theory in the broad historical context of the early Brahmaṇical and Buddhist traditions. Thereafter, I shall focus on the issue of the denial of *antarābhava* and its theoretical connection with the Theravādin theory of momentariness. In the second section, the issue of the momentary present will be addressed in order to consider why the commentarial tradition had to reject it in the context of 'insight into the minds of others'. For both sections, I shall draw on the accounts of *antarābhava* and *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, and adopt a historical perspective in order to see whether there are any parallels between the early exegetical sources of the Northern and Southern traditions. This will shed further light on the idea that the doctrine of momentariness evolved gradually through a process of emendation and refinement within the Theravādin commentarial tradition, and will lead us to a discussion, in the conclusion, of the probable date of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness.

4.1 The denial of a post-mortem transitional period and the theory of momentariness

In the preceding chapter, we dealt with the mechanism of the final thought process at the time of death and rebirth. No reference to the idea of an intermediate state was found in any of the textual sources we examined, apparently because the Theravādins deny a post-mortem transitional period (*antarābhava*). What I am addressing here is the question of the relative chronology of the two ideas: whether the denial of the *antarābhava* influenced the fully-fledged formation of the Theravādin theory of momentariness, or vice versa. We find some evidence in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* that the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas employ the notion of momentariness in order to reject the Vibhajyavādin's interpretation of the mechanism of the rebirth process without an intermediary stage. A similar argument is used in the same text, as shown in chapter 3 (§ 3.1.1), when they refute the three moment theory attributed to some *śramaṇas*. This will throw light on the approximate date of the evolution of the two ideas in the Theravādin doctrinal system. Before the main discussion, I shall outline the origins and development of the *antarābhava* theory.

4.1.1 The origins and development of the *antarābhava* theory

The Buddhist Sanskrit term *antarā-bhava* refers quite literally to existence (*bhava*) in an interval (*antarā*). The term designates the transitional stage between death and subsequent rebirth. It is apparent that some early schools of Buddhism in India speculated about the status of the intermediate existence. Notably, the Theravādins claim that the force of habit-driven craving immediately reappears in another form of life; others, namely, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas and the Sammitīyas and so on,[450] unreservedly posit a post-mortem period, a temporal space between a corpse and a fertilised ovum. In spite of the controversy in the early phase of Indian Buddhism, however, the concept of the *antarābhava* continued to flourish and to exert a significant force upon the theories and practices of the Tibetan, Central and Far East Asian traditions of Buddhism. The Tibetan

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450 The *antarābhava* theory is accepted by the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, Sammitīyas, Pūrvaśailas, the later Mahīśāsakas and Dārṣṭāntikas, but denied by the Mahāsāṅghikas, the early Mahīṣāsakas, Dharmaguptakas, Vibhajyavādins and Theravādins (see Bareau, 1955, p. 291).

equivalent of the *antarābhava* is *bar-do*, and its descriptive content was articulated in the well-known *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Tib. *Bardo Thödol*).[451] The Chinese sources, both in compositions by native authors and in translations from texts of Indian origin, provide us with detailed accounts of the *antarābhava* (Ch. *chung yin* or *chung yu*, etc.), and also supply polemics in defence of this idea.[452] The developed idea of the *antarābhava* is given cultic expression in shaping the funeral rites and weekly ceremonies for the intermediate state of the dead, and it still plays an essential role in the religious beliefs and practices in Mahāyāna Buddhist countries.[453]

Despite its cultural popularity and the existence of rich textual sources, modern scholarship[454] has made relatively little progress in investigating the origins and development of the *antarābhava* theory within the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* canon and its exegetical works.[455] As for its origins in the Pāli canon, and its theoretical connections with earlier Indian systems of thought, P. Harvey (1986), on the basis of several passages found in the *Nikāyas*, claims that the early *Suttas* did accept a between-lives state.[456] B.J. Cuevas (1996) shows the possible links between the Buddhist idea of the *antarābhava* and Vedic and Upaniṣadic theories of post-mortem transition. He suggests that the *antarābhava* theory, from the Buddhist side, is either partially or entirely the result of the fusion of

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451 Evans-Wentz (1927).

452 Works by the Chinese authors: the *Shih shih yao lan* by Tao ch'eng and the *Shih men cheng t'ung* by Tsung chien. The Chinese translations from the texts of Indian origin: the **Traidharmakaśāstra*; the **Sammatīya-nikāyaśāstra*; the **Mahāvibhāṣā*; the **Satyasiddhiśāstra*; the **Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*; the **Nyāyānusāra*; the **Yogācārabhūmi*.

453 Stephen F. Teiser is currently working on Chinese gods and debates about the afterlife in Chinese Buddhism. See his work "The Ghost Festival in Medieval China", Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. Jacqueline Stone is currently researching Buddhist deathbed practices in Japan's premodern period. See also Suneson and Berglie (1990, pp. 1-2).

454 There are a handful of preliminary surveys of the Chinese textual sources of the *antarābhava* theory. See Suneson and Berglie (1990, pp. 1-12) for a remark on the importance of the Chinese sources, and Kritzer (1997, pp. 11-33) for a useful English summary of the section on *antarābhava* in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. Even in non-Western languages a comprehensive study has not been undertaken so far; for preliminary research, see Shôku Bando (1979, pp. 684-685) in Japanese and Hyong-kun Oh (1980, pp. 95-122) in Korean. (See also fn. 457 for a further bibliography).

455 I have done a survey (unpublished) on the origins and development of the *antarābhava* theory within the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* canon and its exegetical works; what I include in this section is a summary.

456 The article "The Between-lives State in the Pāli *Suttas*" first appeared in *Perspectives on Indian Religion: Papers in Honour of Karel Werner*, ed. P. Connolly, 1986, pp. 175-189; later, it formed part of the sixth chapter in P. Harvey's book, *The Selfless Mind* (1995), pp. 98-108.

Upaniṣadic cosmography (*pitṛloka*) and Vedic mythology (*gandharva*), transposed onto a grid that is structurally, but not conceptually, identical to that of its Upaniṣadic model.[457]

Apart from its cosmographical and mythological usage in the early *Suttas*, the term *gandhabba* for one of the three necessary conditions of human conception appears first in the *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, and is repeated in the *Assalāyana-sutta* of the same text.[458] The context of its occurrence is the conditioned arising of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and the rebirth of existence. In particular, the direct motif of the former *Sutta* is Sāti's claim that *viññāṇa* transmigrates through the round of rebirths, upon which the Buddha rebukes him and rectifies his pernicious view by giving the discourse on dependent origination. In a similar context in the *Mahānidāna-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the term *gandhabba* is replaced by the generic word *viññāṇa*, and they are used interchangeably in the post-canonical texts. Given that the Theravādins rejected the idea of *antarābhava*, they would simply have regarded the *gandhabba*, occurring in the early *Suttas*, as a term for the particular consciousness that links one existence to another (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa* in the commentarial texts). It was not regarded as a spirit of any kind in the between-lives state.[459] In contrast, as Paul Dundas shows, the Jains, though they accept the permanent phenomenon *jīva* (usually translated as 'soul', more accurately 'life-monad'), the *jīva* at death leaves its body and progresses to its next place of birth virtually instantaneously, 'leaping like a monkey' without the intermediate stage between existences.[460]

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457 See Cuevas (1996), pp. 291-292; Wijesekera (1945, pp. 73-107), half a century ago, pointed out a historical connection between Vedic *gandharva* and Pāli *gandhabba*, but his article was not devoted entirely to the issue of *antarābhava*. For scholarly writings on the subject of *antarābhava*, see *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol. I (1961), s.v. *antarābhava*; Wayman (1974), pp. 227-239; Samtani (1990), pp. 112-115; Cousins (1994), pp. 20-21. For monographs and an article based on the Tibetan sources, see Evans-Wentz (1927); Back (1979); Lati Rinpoche and J. Hopkins (1985); Dietz (1994), pp. 154-167. Forthcoming articles: Somaratne (1999) in *JPTS*; Kritzer (1999) in *JIBS*. There will be a panel dealing with the topic of *antarābhava* at the XIIth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Lausanne, Aug. 23-28, 1999.

458 M I 265-266; M II 156-157. Checked by *CS CD-R*.

459 McDermott (1980), p. 170.

460 Dundas (1992), pp. 87-88.

Several *Nikāya* passages which might be interpreted as accepting the idea of an *antarābhava* are in fact open to different interpretations, as R. Gethin has pointed out in his review of P. Harvey's book *The Selfless Mind*. In addition, much of the textual evidence Harvey adduces relates to matters which were hotly disputed among early Buddhist schools in India.[461] In contrast, there are isolated occurrences of the Chinese terms *chung yin* (lit. *antarā-skandha*) and *chung yu* (*antarā-bhava*) in the corpus of the four Āgamas,[462] and the idea of *antarābhava* can be traced in the set of seven early Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* texts. The terms merely occur in the list of cosmological worlds in those texts (in particular, the **Saṃgītiparyāya*, the **Dharmaskanda* and the **Vijñānakāya*),[463] but the latest work, the **Jñānaprasthāna*,[464] contains material which broadly defines the idea of the *antarābhava* in accordance with the elaborate theory found in its commentary, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.[465]

The polemical arguments on the *antarābhava* have evolved in several strata through the early exegetical texts of the Northern and Southern traditions. The earliest polemics on the issue are preserved in the eighth chapter on the *antarābhava* in the *Kathāvatthu* (the 1st century BCE),[466] but it does not portray a full picture of the *antarābhava* debate. Relatively detailed arguments are found in the **Sammatīyanikāyaśāstra* (the 1st century CE), a Pudgalavādin text, extant in Chinese translation. L.S. Cousins assumes that the Pudgalavādins were the original promoters of the teachings concerning the intermediate

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461 Gethin (1997b), Vol. 4, p. 2 in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* at URL: http://jbe.la.psu.edu/.

462 The term *chung yin* is found in the 25th chapter of the **Saṃyuktāgama*, but its counterpart is absent in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*. The main theme of the chapter is the decline of the *Dharma* (Ch. *mo-fa* corresponds to Skt. *paścima-kāle*), and the contents indicate its late origin. J. Nattier in her classical work on the subject of *mo-fa*, *Once Upon a Future Time*, shows close parallels in two other texts (the *Aśoka-avadāna* and the *Karmaśataka*) preserved respectively in the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist canons. She dates the emergence of the prophecy between the beginning of the 2nd century CE and the middle of the 3rd century CE (see Nattier,1991, pp. 204-207, 226). The more commonly used term *chung yu* is attested in the *Chang-a-ham Sib Po Pob Ching* (DA T 1 236^{b}), one of the two counterparts of the *Dasuttara-sutta* in the *Dīgha-nikāya* (D III 272-293; the other counterpart in DA T 2 52^{c}-57^{b}), but this text is not included in the thirty *Sūtras* of the *Dīrgha Āgama* proper. The *Sūtra* in question is dated by Shôku Bando between the 2nd century CE and the 3rd century CE (Shôku Bando,1979, p. 685, fn. 1).

463 T 2 632^{a15-17} (cf. M I 73; Ps I 164, II 36); T 2 425^{c28}-426^{c21};T 26 498^{c7ff}; T 26 507^{c2-8}; T 26 $426^{b16-c21}$.

464 T 26 942^{a25ff}. Cf. the corresponding passages in the **Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra* (T 26 800^{c10ff}). T 26 987^{b2-6}. Cf. the corresponding passages in the **Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra* (T 26 863^{a15-18}).

465 MVB T 27 309^{b4-5}; 356^{c13}-366^{a1}.

466 Kv 361-366.

existence.[467] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* includes all the arguments found in the above texts, and expands their scope to discuss elaborate features of the *antarābhava* (i.e. its size, body, clothes, sense organs, food, speed, lifespan, and so on), which is presumably the first attempt to depict the *antarābhava* in its own right.[468] What is important here for our purposes is not the detailed descriptions of the *antarābhava*, but the specific reasoning employed by the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas to prove the existence of the *antarābhava*, based on the conviction that two moments of thought cannot arise simultaneously. In the following sections I shall examine this reasoning and identify a similar line of argument used to refute the three moments theory, which shares a similar framework with the sixteen/ seventeen moments theories postulated by the Theravādins.

4.1.2 Dispute on the intermediate state and the theory of momentariness

Everything within the cycle of *saṃsāra* is conditioned or constructed (*saṅkhata*). To take the example of a human being, a person should be seen as the five causally conditioned constituents of physical state and mental events known as 'five *skandhas*'. The dynamic process of the five *skandhas* continues from conception to death, and does not suddenly cease at the death of the person, but the process carries on in the new pattern of events. This is 'rebirth' in the cycle of unbroken continuity (*santāna*). The mechanism for continuity operates on the basis of the causal chain of 'dependent arising' (*pratītyasamutpāda*) which is central to Buddhist understanding of the human being and its environment. The dispute about the intermediate state is not about the problem of continuity itself, but about that of different divisions of cyclical time periods during one life and the next. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* recognises the intermediate state as one of the four stages of existence (*bhava-catuṣṭaya*) in the cycle of *saṃsāra*, which are 1) the period between birth and death (*pūrvakāla-bhava*), 2) death (*maraṇa-bhava*), 3) the period between death and the next birth (*antarābhava*) and 4) rebirth (*upapatti-bhava*).[469]

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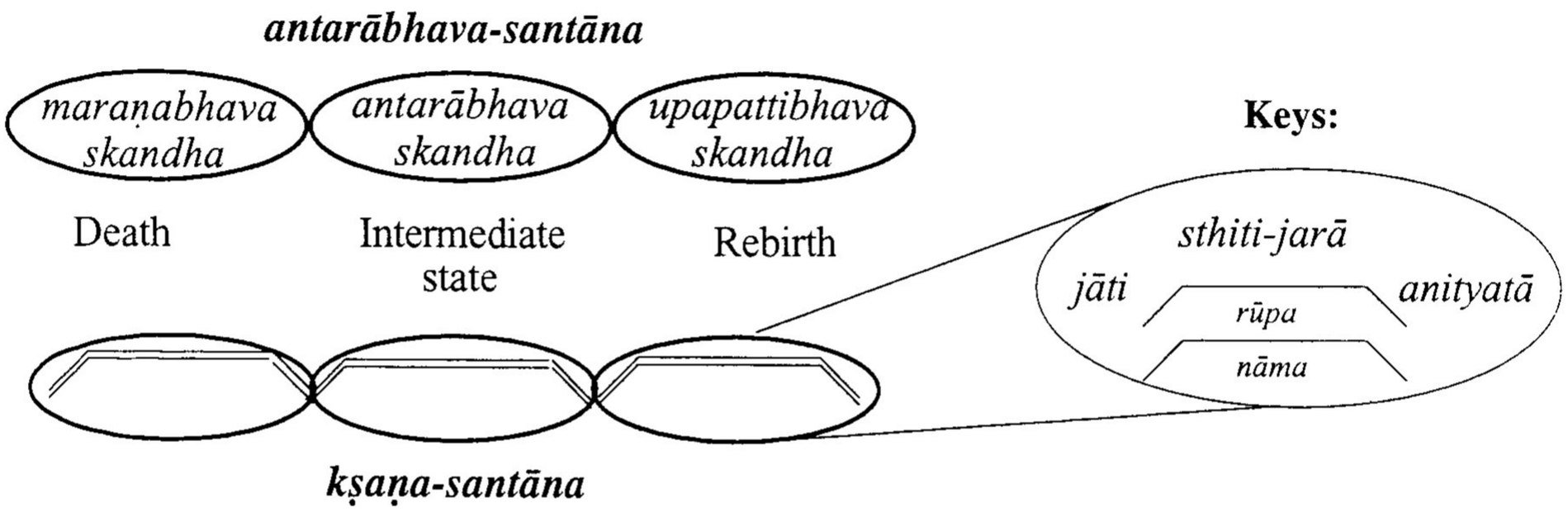
467 Cousins (1994), pp. 20-21.

468 MVB T 27 356^{c13}-366^{a1}.

469 T 26 1024^{a3-6}. Cf. the corresponding passages in the **Aṣṭaskandhaśāstra* (T 26 907^{b28-c4}). This seems to be the first introduction of the four stages of existence (*bhava-catuṣṭaya*) to the Sarvāstivāda *Abhidharma* canon. See also MVB T 27 309^{b4-5}; AKB III kr 13cd (p.124), kr 37d-38c (pp. 151-152).

The **Sammatīyanikāyaśāstra* claims that a person who leaves the five *skandhas* of the present existence simultaneously takes up those of the intermediate existence. This shows the larger scale of a person dying and being reborn. The text further depicts this dynamic event in terms of the smaller scale of changing thoughts. In other words, the process of change is described on the basis of thought moments as: "At the moment when a dying thought arises, the first thought of *antarā-skandha* (*chung-yin*) has not yet arisen, but it is immediately followed by the moment when the dying thought ceases".[470] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* designates the larger scale change as *antarābhava-santāna* (the continuity of the intermediate state), and the smaller scale changing thoughts as *kṣaṇa-santāna* (the continuity of moments) in the classification of the five types of continuity.[471] Furthermore, the text explicitly states that all types of continuity can be reduced to *kṣaṇa-santāna*. This provides the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas with a cornerstone for the theoretical connection between the notion of momentariness and the process of death and rebirth. Accordingly, they contend that both mental and physical phenomena succeed at equal speed (ratio of 1: 1) on the basis of the principle of momentary continuity (*kṣaṇa-santāna*). This can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 4-1: Rebirth with the intermediate state and momentariness



We shall now examine how the idea of momentariness is employed in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* to

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470 T 32 467[c8-10].

471 After cessation of the *skandhas* of *maraṇabhava* or those of *antarābhava*, the *skandhas* of *upapattibhava* arise. This is called *upapatti-santāna* (continuity of rebirth), and is followed by *pūrvakāla-santāna* (the period between birth and death). Finally, the skilful, unskilful or indeterminate thought process succeeds immediately. See MVB T 27 310[a16].

dispute the Vibhajyavādins' denial of the existence of the *antarābhava*. The method used in this particular section of the text is the debate between the Vibhajyavādin and the Yuktivādin.[472] The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika supports the Yuktivādin's position. The Vibhajyavādin argues that it is unnecessary to posit the idea of *antarābhava* for the mechanism of rebirth. The first moment of thought in the new stream of life stands in direct causal sequence to the last moment of thought in the dying person without any gap. Just as a caterpillar (*jalūkā*)[473] on green grass or wood moves along by placing its front foot down and then immediately moving its rear foot, so does a person give up the state of death (*maraṇa-bhava*) immediately upon obtaining the state of rebirth (*upapatti-bhava*). Thus there is no interruption between the state of death and rebirth. To this the Yuktivādin replies:

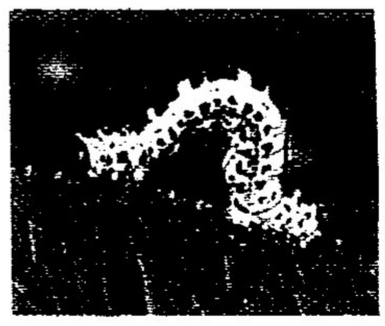
> If so, [your argument] has a serious discrepancy. Suppose a person dies as a human and is reborn as a hell-being, he must first obtain all the *skandhas* of a hell-being and then give up those of a human. In that case, both his destiny (*gati*) and his body would lose their distinctive criteria,[474] and two moments of thought would coexist simultaneously in the same body. Losing the distinctive criteria of the destinies means in this case that the human destiny would include the destiny of hell. Losing the distinctive criteria of the bodies similarly amounts to saying that the human body would include the body which belongs to hell. 'Two moments of thought would coexist simultaneously in the same body' means that each moment of thought (*citta*) in both states of death and rebirth arises spontaneously. Accordingly, the body of a being has two *cittas* which have co-arisen, and in this case the body must be two not one. Therefore, what [the Vibhajyavādin] claims does not clarify the problem.[475]

Here are illustrations (Figure 4-2):

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472 MVB T 27 358[a10-20].

473 The transliterated word *che-lu-chia* is identified as the Sanskrit *jalūkā* (=*jalāyukā*=*jalokā*, etc.) and its meaning is given as a leech in the dictionaries (Apte, MW s.v.). But it does not fit with the context. The term *jalāyukā* (MW p. 415) occurs in the same simile in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.3), and Olivelle (1998, p. 121) aptly translates it as a "caterpillar" (see below fn. 482 for the citation). KIK (p. 174, fn. 56) tentatively suggests *śalaka* (a spider, cf. *śalabha* a grasshopper or moth)), and Venkataramanan (1953, p. 241, fn. 125) renders *jalūkā* as a leech.

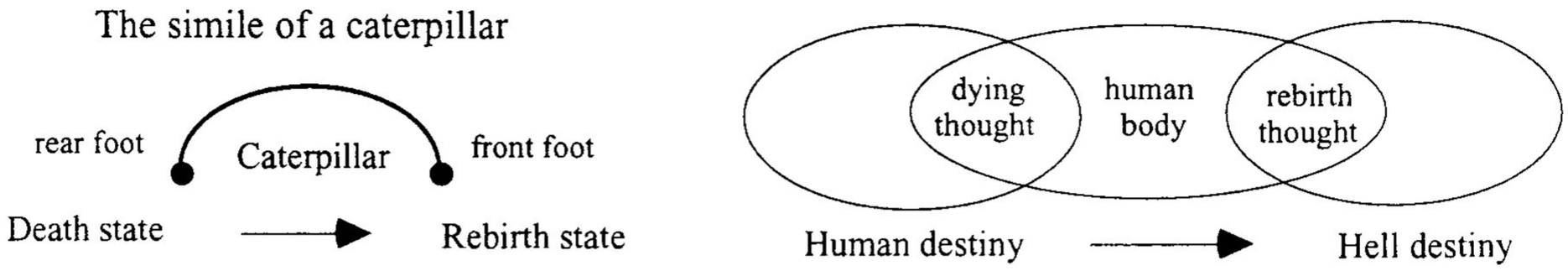


But the rendering "caterpillar" fits best with the context. Some caterpillars move, as described in the simile, in a characteristic "looping" manner, so they are called "loopers" or "inch-measurers" (Hofmann and Marktanner, 1995, p. 152).

474 The word huài literally means 'destruction', but I have translated it as 'lose their distinctive criteria'.

475 MVB T 27 358[a10-20].

Figure 4-2: Dispute on the rebirth process- the Vibhajyavādin vs. the Yuktivādin



What we envisage from the Yuktivādin's argument is that the relative duration of mental and material phenomena is presupposed. According to the Yuktivādin's criticism of the claim of the Vibhajyavādin, each thought moment coexists in the respective states of death and rebirth, but the body still remains in the domain of a human being. This in turn indicates that material phenomena do not change as quickly as mental ones. As seen in chapter 3, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas rejected the three moments theory on the similar ground that if a person dies in the realm of human beings and is reborn in hell, he reaches hell while still carrying the materiality which arose in the realm of human beings. In the case of the theory of succession, which is an alternative version of the three moments theory, for instance, the mental phase is two thought moments ahead of the material process. In the three moments theory as well as in the Vibhajyavādin's understanding of the rebirth process, as they stand, there is no room for the concept of *antarābhava*. We could call this a 'prototype theory of rebirth with no *antarābhava*' which might have been accepted by some early Ābhidharmikas before the full development of the refined theory established by early Theravādin commentators. In the following section, I shall look more closely at the Theravādins' view concerning these issues, and show that it shares the theoretical framework of the prototype theory.

4.1.3 The Theravādin account of the mechanism of rebirth and the theory of momentariness

A detailed account of the mechanism of rebirth without postulating the *antarābhava* theory is found in the post-canonical texts of the Theravādins, notably the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. We have already examined the relevant sections in a supplement to the first chapter and in the sixth chapter of the text (abbreviated as the PKV and PSV commentaries respectively), and have explored substantial material on the rebirth theory as well as on the doctrine of

momentariness. However, I have not fully articulated the relationship between those two theories and their implications for Theravādin doctrinal history.

The PKV commentary analyses the causal cycle of the five *khandhas* from conception to death, and death to rebirth in the process of beginningless *saṃsāra*. The theory of momentariness is fully elaborated and is used as a tool for interpreting the process of death and rebirth. The PSV commentary on the formula of Dependent Arising further explains the process by which the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) functions as a bridge to a subsequent life. The *paṭisandhi-viññāṇa* (i.e. the *bhavaṅga-citta* with a specific function at rebirth) carries, in crude terms, a sort of *karmic* balance sheet of what the dying person did in the preceding life. The *karmic* forces, in more technical terms, are classified into four varieties: i.e. weighty (*garu*), proximate (*āsanna*), habitual (*samāsevita*) and previously performed (*pubbakata*).[476] For instance, if any weighty *kammas* have been performed, these will dominate the last thought process of the dying person and will direct the *paṭisandhi-viññāṇa* to an appropriate destination. But if there are no weighty *kammas*, the *kamma* performed near the terminal moment influences the process of death and rebirth. In the absence of this, that which has been done repeatedly and habitually will play the key role. Failing that, the sum total of any previously performed acts can be the prominent force. These karmic forces appear as one of the three powerful thought objects or death signs (i.e. *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* and *gati-nimitta*) in the terminal thought process. As illustrated in chapter 3 (Figure 3-13), the pattern of the terminal thought process varies depending on the thought objects. If the object of the mind is the past *kamma* or the present sense-object of *gati-nimitta*, the thought process occurs at the mind door. The conceptual objects of the *jhānas*, formless attainments, as well as the past sense-object associated with a previous action, are to be classified as *kamma-nimitta*, which also appears at the mind door. The fourth category, however, would be a present sense-object which prompts a new action just before the time of death. For instance, the final thought process may involve experiencing a sense-object that prompts a greedy thought at the stage of *javana*. Alternatively, the dying

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476 Vibh-a 163; Abhidh-av 117 (vs. 1244); Vism XIX §§ 14-16; Abhidh-s 24.

person's relatives may present him with flowers or incense that are to be offered on his behalf, and thus provide the occasion for a wholesome *javana*, or the dying person may hear *Sutta*s being chanted.[477] In these cases, as shown in Figure 3-15, the terminal sense-door process with the fourteen thought moments (from the stage of *bhavaṅga calana* to that of the fifth *javana*) will be immediately followed by the death consciousness (*cuti-citta*) which has *hadaya-vatthu* as its physical base.[478] Fifteen thought moments have passed so far, and one more thought moment is required, because a single moment of materiality corresponds to the unit of sixteen thought moments. The remaining one thought moment is the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*) which functions as a link to the next life. The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas would certainly argue against this interpretation of the Theravādins. They apply the same reasoning (i.e. an extension of the past sense faculties to the subsequent life) by which they criticised the three moments theory as well as the Vibhajyavadin's rebirth theory. If the Theravādins contend that the present sense object is nothing but the image of flowers or the vibration of a chanting sound which occurred at the eye or ear doors respectively, what carries on with *karmic* force to the next life is not the physical objects themselves but their mental image or vibration. The later post-canonical tradition explicitly states that a *kamma-nimitta* may be perceived at any of the six doors. As R. Gethin noted,[479] the early post-canonical texts (notably, the *Vibhaṅga* commentary and the *Visuddhimagga*) appear to take *kamma-nimitta* as referring solely to the past sense objects perceived through the mind-door, and not to the present sense objects perceived through one of the five sense-doors.

Nevertheless, as seen in chapter 3 (§3.1.3-(2)), the PKV commentary makes it clear in the section on 'Asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation' that all the mental and physical functions of a dying person will synchronously cease to exist at the dissolution moments of the death consciousness. The text explicitly states: "In terms of asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation: ..... From then on the succession of *kamma*-born

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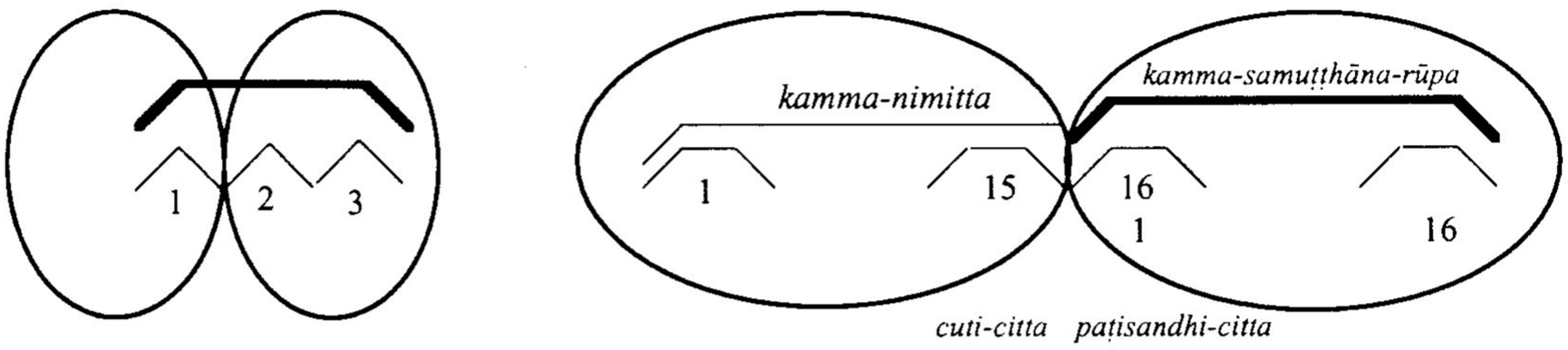
477 Vibh-a 158-159;Vism XVII §§ 138,142; Abhidh-s 27; Abhidh-vb 147.

478 The *hadaya-vatthu* is the *rūpa* which is the *vatthu* of the *paṭisandhi-citta*. All *bhavaṅga-cittas* and the *cuti-citta* have the *hadaya-vatthu* as their physical base. See Gorkom (1990, p. 176).

479 Gethin (1994, p. 23, fn. 39).

materiality does not proceed. If it were to proceed, then beings would not be destroyed, pass away (*avaya*), grow old (*ajara*) and die (*amara*)".[480] This is illustrated below, by a comparison with the three moment theory.

Figure 4-3: Rebirth with no intermediate state in the three and sixteen moments theories



Death process Rebirth process Death process Rebirth process

In the subsequent life, the thirty kinds of new *kamma*-born materiality arise synchronously with the rebirth-linking consciousness, which has past or present objects. It is called the rebirth-linking consciousness because it spans the gap separating the previous life from the beginning of the next becoming. Its specific mission is to provide a bridge to transmit a karmic force fuelled by craving and ignorance, which will instantaneously detect a suitable condition for the re-becoming by abandoning its former support. The PSV commentary depicts this process with the graphic image of a rope which has been tied to a tree on a riverbank, and which serves as a bridge to the other bank. A person in a boat will use the rope to manoeuvre himself across. Likewise, the rebirth-linking consciousness plays a role in connecting the previous life to the new one. What is transmitted is a karmic force fuelled by craving for existence which determines the nature of the next life.[481] This karmic force produces the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality, the first material state of the new life. In theory, this has the rebirth-linking consciousness as its mental counterpart, but the *paṭisandhi-citta* does not play an active role in generating materiality. Moreover, it still carries the thought object from the previous life; as the later post-canonical tradition explicitly states, even the sense object becomes a mental image originated from *kamma* (*kamma-nimitta*). This is because by the time the sense-door process reaches the *javana*

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480 Vibh-a 27: *nānuppād' ekanirodhatā ..... tato paṭṭhāya kammajarūpapaveṇī na pavattati. yadi pavatteyya, sattā akkhayā avayā ajarā amarā nāma bhaveyyuṃ.*

481 Vibh-a163: *taṃ santativasena taṇhāya nāmiyamānaṃ saṅkhārehi khipamānaṃ orimatīrarukkhavinibaddharajjum ālambitvā mātikâtikkamako viya purimañ ca nissayaṃ jahati, ...* (Cf. Vism XVII § 163).

stage it enters the mind-door process. What the rebirth-linking consciousness carries on is the mental object of the final *javana*, and certainly not the sense faculty and external object of seeing or hearing (e.g. flowers or chanting) and so on. Although the PSV commentary does not specify these types of objects at a death bed as *kamma-nimitta*, it is obvious that they do become a mental image at the later stages (*javanas* and *tadārammaṇa*) of the sense-door process. Accordingly, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas's critical reasoning (i.e. the past sense faculties extend to the subsequent life), which proposed to reject the three moments theory as well as the Vibhajyavādin's rebirth theory, is certainly irrelevant to the Theravādin interpretation of the rebirth process. As seen above, the Yuktivādin's criticism centred around the image of a caterpillar's motion, which had been used in the Vibhajyavāda's theory of rebirth. For instance, the Yuktivādin argues that the human body would carry on to hell, as the caterpillar places its front foot down and then immediately moves its rear foot carrying the same body. This simile is misused. It had already been employed by the author(s) of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* to demonstrate the transmigration of the *ātman* (the self).[482] The main pitfall of the simile lies in the fact that the caterpillar carries the same body by moving the front and rear feet in succession, as if the *ātman* transmigrates from one place to the other. Because of the misuse of the simile, the Vibhajyavādins have exposed themselves to the criticism of an excessively literal-minded opponent. In contrast, the simile of the crossing rope in the PSV commentary avoids this problem, and more adequately demonstrates the theory of rebirth without *antarābhava*. Just as the crossing-rope links this shore to the other shore, so the rebirth-linking consciousness connects this life to the next life. As the crossing-rope will be left behind immediately after a person crosses the river, so the rebirth-linking consciousness has only the specific mission of linking. The person in the boat can be compared with the bundle of karmic force which transmits the total sum of personal information from this world to the next, but he is certainly not a permanent agent. The text emphasises the fundamental position of the *anatta* doctrine, stating that the force has neither come here from the previous becoming nor has it

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482 BU 4.4.3: "It is like this. As a caterpillar (*jalāyukā*), when it comes to the tip of a blade of grass, reaches out to a new foothold and draws itself onto it, so the self (*ātman*), after it has knocked down this body and rendered it unconscious, reaches out to a new foothold and draws itself onto it." (Translation by Olivelle, 1998, p. 121. Senart too translates it as caterpillar; see also Yoon Byung Sik, 1992, p. 365).

become manifest without the karmic formations and the push of craving as its cause. A causal process without an unchanging agent is described in the following stanzas:

> A mere state that has got its conditions
> Ushers in the ensuing existence;
> While it does not migrate from the past,
> With no cause in the past it is not.
>
> An echo, or its like, supplies
> The figures here; connectedness
> By continuity denies
> Identity and otherness.[483]

The text further comments that it is a mere psycho-physical state which arises when it has obtained its conditions, and comes into the next becoming. It is not a lasting being (*satta*), not a soul (*jīva*); it has neither transmigrated from the past becoming nor is it yet manifested here without cause from that.[484] The rebirth-linking consciousness is not an agent, as the illustrations of this consciousness convey, but it is a result of the causal process, like an echo, a light, a seal impression, a looking-glass image. The text further argues that with a stream of continuity there is neither identity nor otherness. If there were absolute identity in a stream of continuity, there could be no process of forming curd from milk. And yet if there were absolute otherness, the curd would not be derived from the milk. So too with all causally arisen things.[485]

What are the implications of this elaborate exposition on the doctrine of *anatta* for the denial of *antarābhava* ? As P. Harvey has already pointed out, the Theravādins were very wary about accepting a between-lives state because it seems to suggest that a being already exists between the lives, and because such a being might be construed as the person of the

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483 Vibh-a 162-163: *laddhappaccayam iti, dhammamattam etaṃ bhavantaram upeti.*
nâssa tato saṅkanti, na tato hetuṃ vinā hoti.
siyuṃ nidassanān' ettha, paṭighosâdikā atha
santānabandhato n' atthi, ekatā nâpi nānatā.
See Vism XVII §§ 161, 165 for the same stanzas, I have used Ñyāṇamoli's trsl (pp. 638- 639).

484 Vibh-a 163: *iti h' etaṃ laddhapaccayaṃ rūpârūpadhammamattaṃ uppajjamānaṃ bhavantaraṃ upetī ti vuccati, na satto, na jīvo. tassa nâpi atītabhavato idha saṅkanti atthi; nâpi tato hetuṃ vinā idha pātubhāvo.* (Cf. Vism XVII § 162).

485 Vibh-a 164: *ettha ca santānabaddhato n' atthi ekatā nâpi nānatā. yadi hi santānabandhe sati ekantam ekatā bhaveyya, na khīrato dadhi sambhūtaṃ siyā. athâpi ekantanānatā bhaveyya, na khīrassādhīno dadhi siyā.* (Cf. Vism XVII § 167).

Personalists (*Pudgalavāda*).[486] Some chapters in the *Puggalakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* are concerned with the process of *kamma* and rebirth. The issue of identity and otherness is addressed by the Vibhajjavādin (the commentary refers to him as the Sakavādin) in a set of questions: "Does the very same person transmigrate from this world to the other world, from the other one to this one ? "; "Does he transmigrate without difference (*anañño*) and complete (*avigato*) ? "; "Does he transmigrate together with the *rūpakkhandha* (and other four *khandhas*)? "[487] The commentary connects the last question with the issue of the intermediate state. This is just what we found in the **Sammatīyanikāyaśāstra* and the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.[488] But we cannot exclude the possibility of influence upon its commentarial interpretation from later discussions in those texts. As L.S. Cousins contends,[489] however, if we consider the nature of the issue debated between the Vibhjjavādins and Pudgalavādins, and if we admit the Pudgalavādins as a promoter of the *antarābhava* theory, those interrogative passages hint at the *antarābhava* issue at a very early stage. Accordingly, what the commentary explains mirrors the early phase of the *antarābhava* issue in relation to the doctrine of *anatta*. The discussion of *puggala* versus *anatta* is certainly part of the original core of the *Kathāvatthu*,[490] which is dated to the third century BCE. A couple of centuries later, the existence of the intermediate state may have been a current issue, when the *Antarākathā* of the same texts was added to the lists of disputed doctrines. As for the *Khaṇikakathā*, I suggested in chapter 2 (§ 2.2.3) that the denial of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness probably dates to the first century BCE, when the canon was written down, or to the time of the closing of the commentary upon the *Kathāvatthu*.[491] If we consider the fact that the *Khaṇikakathā* is placed in the last part (Chapter XXII) of the *Kathāvatthu*, the *Antarākathā* (Chapter VIII) apparently predates the theory of momentariness. It suffices to point out that the denial of the *antarābhava* predated the Theravādins' innovation of the fully-fledged version of the theory of momentariness. I shall discuss this issue of relative chronology in more detail in the conclusion.

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486 Harvey, 1995, pp.107-108.
487 Kv 32; See Cousins (1994, pp. 23-24) for the translation and discussion.
488 T 32 465^{c19ff}; T 26 356^{c13ff}.
489 Cousins, 1994, pp. 24-25.
490 Cousins, 1991, p. 36.
491 The Sinhalese commentary upon which Buddhaghosa was based (see Norman, 1983, p. 104).

To sum up, the early Buddhist rebirth theories are divided into two categories: 1) rebirth via an intermediate stage and 2) rebirth with no intermediate stage. A common premise underlying the rebirth theories is that everything within a cycle of *saṃsāra* is conditioned or constructed. In the case of a human being, for instance, the dynamic process of the five *skandhas* continues from conception to death, and from death to conception in a cycle of unbroken continuity. The diversity of opinion arises from the understanding of large and small scale processes of life and the after-life. The larger scale process is concerned with the cyclical time periods of one's life, while the smaller scale process deals with how the psycho-physical phenomena change in rapid succession. The advocates of the *antarābhava* contend that mental and physical phenomena succeed at an equal speed (ratio of 1: 1) on the basis of the principle of momentary continuity (*kṣaṇa-santāna*). In contrast, its opponents postulate different rates of change between mental and physical phenomena; immateriality undergoes more rapid change than materiality. The three moments theory of some *śramaṇas* computes the process of rebirth with a physical and mental ratio of 1: 3. The Vibhajyavādin's rebirth theory also presupposes differential duration of psycho-physical phenomena, though they did not assign any specific relative speed. I have suggested that these are the proto-type rebirth theories which gave rise to the refined version of the Theravādin theory of rebirth. This valuable testimony in the Northern textual sources will enable us to examine the Theravādin theory of momentariness in a wider historical perspective.

In the next section I shall examine the momentary present and its selective application to *cetopariyañāṇa*, which provide us with further complementary evidence.

4.2 The momentary present and its selective application to the *cetopariyañāṇa*

As mentioned in chapter 3, the Theravādin *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* presupposes the notion of momentariness. The *Vibhaṅga* commentary explicitly defines all material and mental phenomena (i.e. the five *khandhas*) in terms of moments (*khaṇa*).[492] This definition occurs in the *Khandhavibhaṅgavaṇṇanā*, the first chapter of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary (hereafter, the KDV commentary). In this section, I shall look closely at the KDV commentary, focusing on its specific statement about time: 'an analysis of the five *khandhas* in terms of the three times – past, future and present' (*atīta-anāgata-paccuppannā*). The first part shows how the KDV commentary makes a clear distinction between the *Suttanta* and *Abhidhamma* ways of dividing time, and establishes the Abhidhammic concept of momentariness. The second part deals with the issue of the momentary present (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*) and its selective application to 'insight into the minds of others' (*cetopariyañāṇa*). I also compare the parallel interpretations in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* with some opinions presented in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary. Finally, I review D.J. Kalupahana's critique of the momentary present.

4.2.1 The concept of the momentary present

As explained in chapter 1, the *dharma* theory is concerned with how the psycho-physical factors (*dharmāḥ*, i.e. the five *skandhas*) are construed from the standpoint of the causal process of human experience in the different phases of time. While commenting on the five *skandhas* in terms of the threefold division of time – past, future and present,[493] the KDV commentary clearly distinguishes the Abhidhammic interpretation of the three times from its Suttantic understanding. We often find, in both the *Nikāya* and *Abhidhamma* canons, a stock description: "Any kind of material form, feeling, etc. whatever, whether past, future or present… ",[494] but the commentator explicitly instructs us to understand the passages as

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492 Vibh-a 7-8: *abhidhammaniddese pana khaṇena paricchinnaṃ. tayo hi rūpassa khaṇā: uppādo, ṭhiti, bhaṅgo ti.... ime tayo khaṇe sampattaṃ rūpaṃ pana paccuppannaṃ nāma. tattha kiñcâpi idaṃ suttantabhājaniyaṃ, evaṃ sante pi abhidhammaniddesen' eva atītânāgatapaccuppannarūpaṃ niddiṭṭhan ti veditabbaṃ.* The same is said of *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* (Vibh-a 14, 19-21).

493 The same passages are repeated in Vism XIV §§ 186-191 with some modification.

494 S IV 151ff.; D 216; Paṭis 54; Dhs §§ 1038ff.; Vibh 1, etc.

described by the Abhidhammic method. For instance, in the conventional meaning of *Suttanta*, the *paccuppannā* might be used to refer to the present lifetime or the periodic present (*addhā*), to a particular continuum (*santati*) and to a general time-frame (*samaya*), but in the definitive sense of the *Abhidhamma*, it refers exclusively to a discrete moment (*khaṇa*) of arising, enduring and dissolution. (Similarly, time prior and posterior to the events might be called *atīta* and *anāgata* respectively.) The Ābhidhammikas would contend that the first three are meaningful in a figurative sense (*sapariyāya*), as might be found in the *Suttas*; only the last, however, would be used in *Abhidhamma*, as it is the only one that is valid from an ultimate standpoint and qualifies as a non-figurative, literally definitive statement (*nippariyāya*).[495] This abhidhammic definition of the three times in terms of a moment (*khaṇa*) is strictly applied to its subsequent expositions of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena in the ratio of 1 : 16/ 17 in the PKV commentary.

Although the Ābhidhammikas attempt to give a systematic and exhaustive account of the dynamic psycho-physical process (*dharmas*), 'the exception proves the rule', as the saying goes, and there are some cases to which the concept of the momentary present cannot be applied. We find in the commentaries that the momentary present is rejected in three different contexts, namely, *jīvitindriya* (life faculty), *anusaya* (latent tendency) and *cetopariyañāṇa* (insight into the minds of others).[496] I have chosen the theory of the *cetopariyañāṇa* in order to further investigate the momentary present.[497]

4.2.2 The momentary present and its selective application to the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary presents focused accounts of the momentary present in the specific context of the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory, which is one of the six modes of higher knowledge (*chaḷabhiññā*). In the canonical texts a meditator who has attained and mastered

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495 See Buswell and Jaini (1996, p. 74). Another classification of the three times in terms of functions (*kicca*), cause (*hetu*) and condition (*paccaya*) is not included in the literally definitive statement (*nippariyāya*), see Vibh-a 7-8 and Vism XIV §§ 186-191.

496 *Khaṇapaccuppanna* is also rejected in the context of *jīvitindriya* (Sp 1-535; Sp-ṭ 65-395; Nidd I 45-148) and that of *anusaya* (Yam 55-372). Figures refer to volumes and pages in *BS CD-R*.

497 Discussion of the topics *jīvitindriya* and *anusaya* requires so much space that I intend to devote a separate article to them.

the fourth *jhāna* is sometimes shown to proceed to these kinds of supernormal knowledge.[498] The *cetopariyañāṇa* is the third *abhiññā*, the ability to penetrate with one's own mind the mental states of others.[499] The commentarial tradition is particularly concerned with the difficulty of comprehending the uniformity of mental phenomena of others at the momentary present.

The main context[500] is a passage in the final section of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, which appears to be concerned with the results (*vipāka*) of the fourth *jhāna* (i.e. the exercise of *abhiññā*) in terms of past, future and present objects.[501] While illustrating the different types of supernormal knowledge, including the *cetopariyañāṇa*, the commentary claims that when one has insight into the minds of others within the past seven days, or within the coming seven days, then that insight has a past object or a future object respectively. In the case of a present object, however, divergent views on the issue of the momentary present are recorded. The commentator enumerates three types of present, namely, the momentary present (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*), the continuous present (*santati-paccuppanna*) and the periodic present (*addhā-paccuppanna*). We have already discussed them above; what is new in this commentary is the exposition of the *santati-paccuppanna*, reporting the opinions of *bhāṇakas*. According to the *Majjhima-bhāṇakas*, the time span of the

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498 D I 79-80.

499 The modes of higher knowledge are presented in different combinations in the canonical texts. Some *Suttas* (A I 163-165; S II 146) mention the threefold knowledge (*tevijjā*): the knowledge of one's former lives (*pubbenivāsânussatiñāṇa*), of the rebirth of all beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa=dibbacakkhu= yathākammūpaga-ñāṇa*), and of the destruction of defilements (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*). Other *Suttas* (S II 216) mention the fivefold knowledge (*pañcâbhiññā*): the knowledge of the modes of supernormal power (*iddhividhañāṇa*), of the divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātuñāṇa*), of the insight into the mind of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*), of one's former lives, and of the rebirth of all beings. Other *Suttas* (D I 77-84, III 281) add the knowledge of the destruction of defilements and make it the sixfold knowledge (*chaḷabhiññā*).

500 The commentator does not follow the sequential order of the *Mūla* text, and the lemma in the commentary is not clearly indicated, but the classification of the fourfold *rūpa-jhāna* in terms of the objects of three times seems to be a corresponding context.

501 Dhs 419 § 1417: *katame dhammā atītârammaṇā ?... § 1418: katame dhammā paccuppannârammaṇā ?... rūpâvacacatutthaṃ jhānaṃ kusalato ca kiriyato ca, ime dhammā siyā atītārammaṇā, siyā anāgatârammaṇā, siyā paccuppannārammaṇā,.... rūpāvacaratikacatukkajjhānā kusalato ca, vipākato ca kiriyato ca catutthassa jhānassa vipāko....* The final section of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* serves as a commentary upon the text, although in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* itself no reference is made to it being anything other than a genuine portion of the work. Buddhaghosa, however, calls it *Aṭṭhakathākaṇḍa* (Dhs 234-264; As 409), and gives it the name *Atthuddhāra*, see Norman (1983), pp 99-100; cf. C.A.F. Rhys Davids (1974, p. 334).

continuous present[502] is one or two rounds of continuity, which is depicted by analogy with the time required for things to become visible after an abrupt change from a well-lit place to a dark one or vice versa. In another simile, it is said that when a person stands at a distance looking at the movements of a washerman (beating clothes on a rock) or that of the striking of gongs, drums, etc., there is an interval of one or two rounds of continuity before he first hears the sound. The *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* however distinguish the material *santati-paccuppanna* from the mental. They share the first analogy with the *Majjhima-bhāṇakas*, but consider it to be a material continuity. They further say that a material continuity lasts as long as it takes for the water in a river to clear, after one has muddied it by treading in it.[503] Alternatively, it lasts for as long as it takes for one's body heat to die down, after one has walked for a while. An immaterial continuity however consists in two or three rounds of *javanas*.[504]

The commentator further introduces the opinion of anonymous teachers (*keci*) who state that the mind at the momentary present is the object of the *cetopariyañāṇa*. They contend that the mental process of the possessor of supernormal power and that of the receiver occur at the same moment. Just as, when a handful of flowers is thrown into the air, the stalk of one flower is probably struck by the stalk of another, likewise, when with the thought 'I will know the minds of others', the mind of a multitude is adverted to as a unit (*rāsi*), then the receiver's mind is penetrated by the insight of the agent, either at the origination moment (*uppāda-khaṇa*), at the endurance moment (*ṭhiti-khaṇa*) or at the dissolution moment (*bhaṅga-khaṇa*). That is to say, this psychic event happens at the momentary present (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*); this is identified by the *Mūlaṭīkā* as the opinion of the Abhayagirivāsins. This position is definitely rejected in the commentaries

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502 Cf. How long is our impression of the *Now* ? William James held that the centre of our present moment, the *Now* usually contained a nucleus of "the dozen seconds or less that has just elapsed." (W. James, 1890, p. 613, *The Principles of Psychology*, New York). Neuroscientists suggest that people estimate their *Now* to embrace intervals of time lasting anywhere from one, to three, up to fifteen seconds. See *Zen and the Brain* by James H. Austin (1998, p. 558).

503 Vism-mhṭ [N^e] 934 adds: *keci pana atinte tīre allapādena akkante yāva pāde udakalekhā na vippasīdati, na saṃsīdati na vupasammatī ti evam ettha atthaṃ vadanti.* <Some however explain the meaning in this way: It is as long as, when one has stepped on the dry bank with a wet foot, the water line on the foot does not disappear.> (Ñyāṇamoli's trsl, XIII § 113, fn. 24).

504 As 420; Vism XIII §§ 112-113.

(*aṭṭhakathāsu paṭikkhitaṃ*), and they propose the continuous present, as well as the periodic present, for the duration in which conformity to the mental state of others could be achieved. Before analysing the reasoning presented in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary, I shall compare the stance of the anonymous teachers with similar views recorded in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*.

4.2.3 The *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* and the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary

The **Mahāvibhāṣā* preserves a relatively lengthy treatment of the topic *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* in the catechetic style which is so ubiquitous in *Abhidharma* texts. It consists of two parts: the former aims at an account of various aspects of the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna*, and the latter focuses on the specific cases and modes of insight into the minds of others. The themes relevant to our discussion are scattered through both parts. A variety of anonymous opinions are given, after which the Vibhāṣāśāstrins give a conclusion. The Vibhāṣāśāstrins basically maintain that the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* exercises its power in the continuous present (*santati-pratyutpanna*) and separately penetrates each moment of *citta* and *caitta* of others within a given present continuum. However, the interlocutor asks: "If one separately penetrates each moment of *citta* and *caitta* of others, are there not multiple objects of the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* ? " The Vibhāṣāśāstrins reply to this question:

> There is no such discrepancy because they correspond with each other. For instance, just as my *cetaḥparyāyajñāna*, which has the twenty-one kinds of *dharmas*[505] with a unit of a limitless number of *kṣaṇas*, separately corresponds with each moment of *citta* and *caitta* of all living beings, so all sentient beings' *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* with a unit of a limitless number of *kṣaṇas* separately corresponds with each moment of *citta* and *caitta* of all living beings. Therefore the problem of having multiple objects of *abhijñā* does not arise.[506]

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505 The twenty-one kinds of *dharmas*: 10 *mahābhūmikas* + 10 *kuśala-mahābhūmikas* + 1 *citta*. See *IAKB* intro. XII-XV for the useful tables of the five groups and the seventy-five *dharmas* postulated by the Sarvāstivādins.

506 MVB T 27 516^{b5-11}.

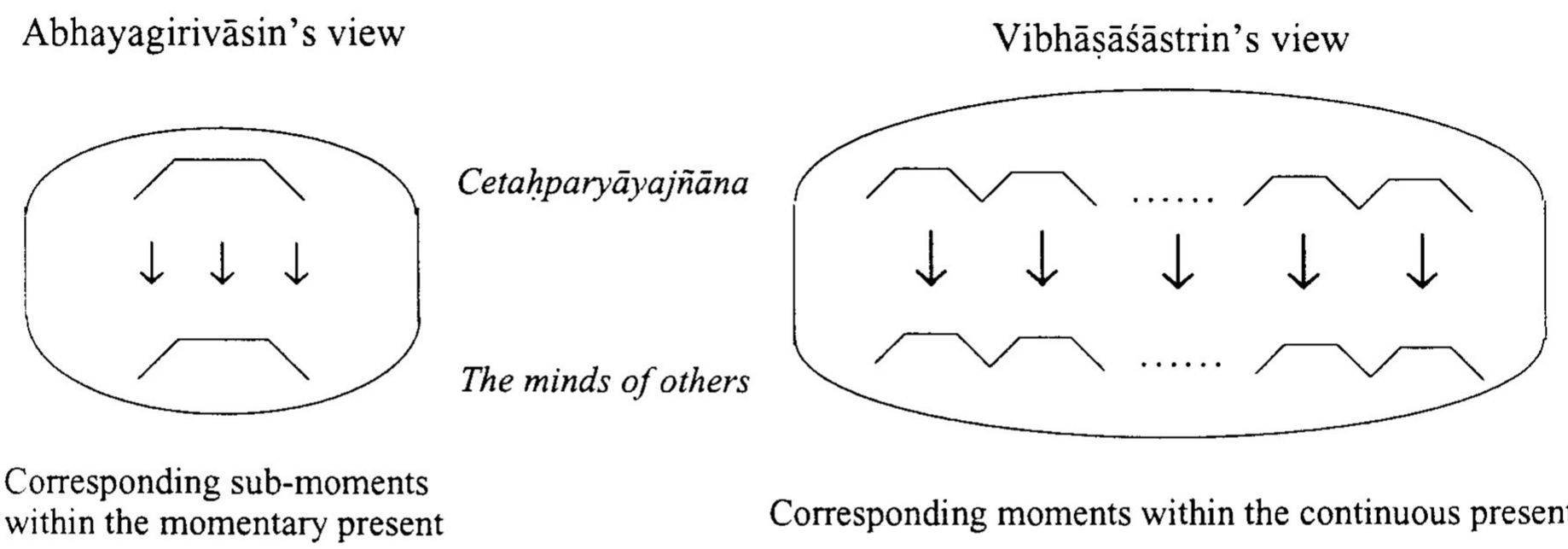
The Vibhāṣā critique (*p'ing-yüeh*) says that this is valid reasoning as each *citta* and *caitta* has corresponding objects.[507] This view of the Vibhāṣāśāstrins appears to be shared by the Abhayagirivāsins (if we accept its attribution, provided by the *Mūlaṭīkā*). On the contrary, some teachers contend that when one's *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* manifests, one comprehends the minds of others within the continuum of three *kṣaṇas*, because the continuum refers to the prior existence of the present (*pratyutpanna*), that subsequent to the previous dissolution and the posterior arising (i.e. past, present and future).[508] This may have some connection with the three moments theory attributed to *śramaṇas* which we examined in chapter 3.[509] Other anonymous masters also argue that one's *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* penetrates the minds of others as a whole unit, not as separate *kṣaṇas*.[510] Unfortunately, no further account is provided, but it seems that they share the basic idea with the Theravādins, who also contend that the *cetopariyañāṇa* grasps the minds of others as a group. I shall return to this shortly. Let us first compare the opinion of the Vibhāṣāśāstrins with that of the Abhayagirivāsins.

As seen above, the Abhayagirivāsins say that the mental process of the possessor of the supernormal power synchronises with that of the receiver. The mind of another is first adverted to as a unit (*rāsi*), and then penetrated by the insight of the agent either at the origination moment, at the endurance moment or at the dissolution moment (i.e. *khaṇa-paccuppanna*). That is to say, the process is depicted in terms of the sub-divisions of a moment within the momentary present. In contrast, the Vibhāṣāśāstrins maintain that the *cetaḥparyāya-jñāna* separately penetrates, not each of the sub-divisions of a moment, but the single unit of a moment of the minds of others within the present continuum. As illustrated in Figure 4-4, the former operates on a subtler scale than the latter, but they share a similar structure, namely, description of the process in terms of *kṣaṇas*.

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507 MVB T 27 516$^{b511-12}$.
508 MVB T 27 516^{b24-26}.
509 See § 3.1.1.
510 MVB T 27 516^{a27-28}.

Figure 4-4: The theories of the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* : the Abhayagirivāsin and Vibhāṣāśāstrin



The Abhayagirivāsins' view is rejected by the Theravādin commentators. It is untenable if one maintains that the two consciousnesses (i.e. that with which one adverts and that of *javanas* with which one knows) cannot co-endure (*sahaṭṭhāna*) simultaneously in the momentary present. Moreover, it is untenable because, if a unified object of adverting and *javanas* are not presupposed, the flow of multiple objects follows. Accordingly, they reject the momentary present, and postulate the continuous and periodic present in order to accommodate the multiple objects within the scope of the mind-door process of the possessor of the *cetopariyañāṇa*.[511]

As seen above, the Abhayagirivāsins state that the *cetopariyañāṇa* penetrates the mind of others either at the origination moment, at the endurance moment (*ṭhiti-khaṇa*) or at the dissolution moment. However, Ānanda, the author of the *Mūlaṭīkā*, criticises this view, arguing that it is overtly self-contradictory, because the Abhayagirivāsins themselves do not accept the *ṭhiti-khaṇa* of a thought. In this case, they should not have said: "Alternatively, it penetrates [the mind of others] at the endurance moment" (*ṭhitikkhaṇe vā paṭivijjhatī ti na vattabbaṃ siyā*).[512] Let us now turn to the Theravādin theory of the *cetopariyañāṇa* and

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511 As 421: *taṃ pana vassasatam pi vassasahassam pi āvajjato, yena cittena āvajjati, yena ca jānāti, tesaṃ dvinnaṃ sahaṭṭhānâbhāvato, āvajjanajavanānañ aniṭṭhe ṭhāne nânârammaṇabhāvappattidosato ayuttan ti Aṭṭhakathāsu paṭikkhittaṃ. santatipaccuppannaṃ pana addhāpaccuppannañ ca ārammaṇaṃ hotī ti veditabbaṃ.* Cf. Vism XIII § 116.

512 As-mṭ 194: *kecī ti Abhayagirivāsino ti vadanti, te pana cittassa ṭhitikkhaṇaṃ na icchantī ti "ṭhitikkhaṇe vā paṭivijjhatī" ti na vattabbaṃ siyā.* Cf. Vism-mhṭ II 936.

its underlying assumption, which is derived from the theory of the thought process (*citta-vīthi*).

4.2.4 The Theravādin theory of the *cetopariyañāṇa* and its application of the cognitive theory

The two arguments concerning the *cetopariyañāṇa* are presented in terms of the continuous present and the periodic present respectively. These are explicitly based on the Theravādin theory of mind-door process (*manodvāra-vīthi*). As mentioned above, the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* define the continuous present by distinguishing the material *santati-paccuppanna* from the immaterial one. They claim that the immaterial continuity consists of two or three rounds of *javanas* in the mind-door process. This has been applied to the theory of the *cetopariyañāṇa* thus: "The minds of others during a time measuring two or three cognitive series with *javanas* extending before and after the currently existing cognitive series with the *javanas*, is all called the *santati-paccuppanna*."[513] The more refined interpretation based on the round of *javanas* (*javanavāra*) is presented in terms of the *addhā-paccuppanna*. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary claims that this is the accepted view (*suṭṭhu vuttaṃ*) and that it was handed down in the *Aṭṭhakathā*, while the *Visuddhimagga* specifies it as the *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*.[514] At the outset, it is important to note that there are two layers of the application of the *paccuppanna*: the *khaṇa-paccuppanna* in the first half and the *addhā-paccuppanna* in the second half. Let us look at the account of the theory in terms of the mind-door process:

> The possessor of supernormal-power who wants to know the minds of others adverts. The adverting [consciousness] makes [the minds of others] at the momentary present (***khaṇa-paccuppanna***) its object and ceases together with it. **[The preliminary process– the 1st context]** After that there are four or five *javanas*, of which the last is the supernormal-power consciousness, the rest being of the sense sphere. That same [others] consciousness, which has ceased, is the object of all these too, and so they have no multiple objects because they have a single object that is at the periodic present (***addhā-paccuppanna***)**[The main process– the 2nd context]**.[515]

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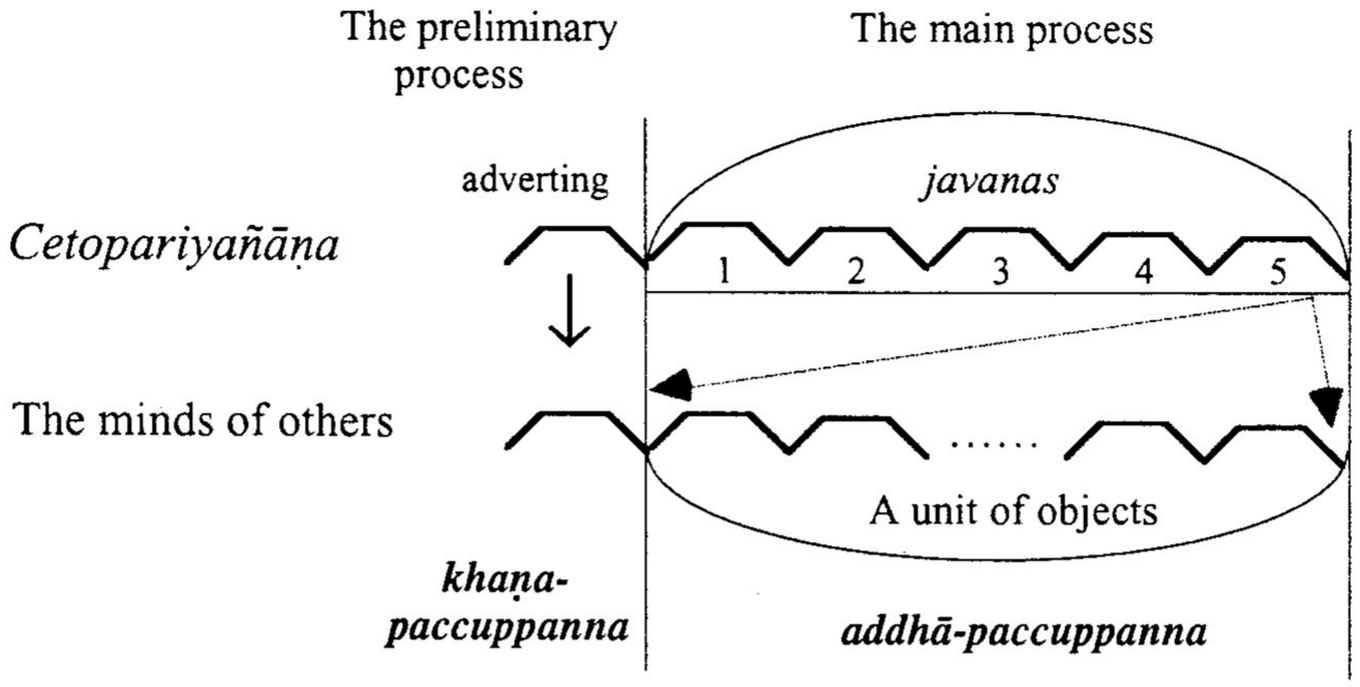
513 As 421: *tattha yaṃ vattamānajavanavīthito atītânāgatavasena dvitijavanavīthiparimāṇakāle parassa cittaṃ, taṃ sabbam pi santatipaccuppannaṃ nāma.* Cf. Vism XIII § 117.

514 As 421: *addhāpaccuppannaṃ pana javanavārena dīpetabban ti* ***Aṭṭhakathāyaṃ*** *vuttaṃ. taṃ suṭṭhu vuttaṃ.*
Cf. Vism XIII § 117: ...***Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathāyaṃ*** *vuttaṃ.... .*

515 As 421: *iddhimā parassa cittaṃ jānitukāmo āvajjeti; āvajjanaṃ khaṇapaccuppannaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā ten' eva saha nirujjhati. tato cattāri pañca [vā] javanāni, yesaṃ pacchimaṃ iddhicittaṃ, sesāni kāmâvacarāni. tesaṃ sabbesam pi tad eva niruddhaṃ cittaṃ ārammaṇaṃ hoti, na ca tāni nânârammaṇāni*

Here is an illustration:

Figure 4-5: The Theravādin theory of the *cetopariyañāṇa* and the mind-door process



The commentator, in the first context, as marked above, explicitly employs the concept of the *khaṇa-paccuppanna* in order to illustrate the advertence of the mind-door (*manodvāra-āvajjana*) in the single moment. In the second context, however, where he explains how the last *javana* (the 4th or the 5th *javana*)[516] actually knows the minds of others, he switches to the *addhā-paccuppanna* so as to avoid the discrepancy of accepting multiple objects in the *khaṇa-paccuppanna*.[517] The commentator accordingly contends that the possessor of the supernormal power penetrates the minds of others in terms of an entire unit of thoughts, not in separate thought moments. He is refuting the incompatibility of the *khaṇa-paccuppanna* with this specific context, not the *khaṇa-paccuppanna* itself. What does this imply for the chronology of the Theravādin theory of momentariness ? We shall attempt to answer this question while recapitulating what we have discussed so far.

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honti, addhā[paccuppanna]vasena paccuppannârammaṇattā. <I have used Bhikkhu Ñyāṇamoli's translation of the *Visuddhimagga* (XIII §118) as it is almost identical with these passages. The bold type and divisions of context are mine.>

516 The illustration above has not taken this optional case into consideration.

517 For the disputation of Abhayagirin's view and further explanation, see Vism-mhṭ II 935-940; As-mṭ 194-197.

4.2.5 A multi-stranded view of the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* theory and its historical implications

We have examined the divisions of the present (*paccuppanna*) and its application to the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* theory in the early exegetical sources of the Northern and Southern traditions. To sum up, the following six versions have been discussed.

Insight into the minds of others takes place:

1) at each moment within the continuous present (the Vibhāṣāśāstrins),

2) in the whole unit of thought moments (anonymous teachers),

3) in the continuum of the three *kṣaṇas* (other anonymous teachers).

4) in one of the sub-division of a moment within the momentary present (the Abhayagirivāsins),

5) in a time measuring two or three cognitive series with *javanas* within the continuous present (the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas*),

6) in the mind-door process with four or five *javanas* within the periodic present (the *Saṃyutta-aṭṭhakathā*).

The former three are preserved in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, and the latter three in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary. All six versions differ to varying degrees, but we still see that some have common features. For instance, versions 1) and 4) share a similar framework, though the latter is based on the subtler scale of the *kṣaṇa*. Version 3) may be derived from the three moments theory. All of these retain the idea of *kṣaṇa* in a strict sense. In contrast, versions 2), 5) and 6) take a longer time scale and reject the idea of the momentary present. What we are interested in, in this diversity of opinions, is the implications for the chronology of the Theravādin theory of momentariness. Their accounts in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* as well as in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary presuppose that mental phenomena are momentary. The Vibhāṣāśāstrins and Abhayagirivāsins try to interpret the process of insight into others' minds using the notion of momentariness, while the anonymous teachers and the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* and the *Saṃyutta* commentator avoid the concept of the momentary present, as they assume that it does not fit in the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory.

The diverse opinions on the theory provide us with some positive indications for the early form of the Theravādin theory of momentariness. Firstly, it is obvious that if the abhidhammic definition of the three times in terms of moments (*khaṇa*) had not been formulated, there could hardly have been the various views about its application to the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory. Secondly, the universal and indiscriminate application of momentariness to other doctrines was disputed by some early exegetes. The Theravādin commentators, in particular, reject the momentary present, as noted above, in three different contexts, namely, *jīvitindriya*, *anusaya* and *cetopariyañāṇa*.

In the case of the three versions recorded in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, the chronology is quite certain, and the text's formation is likely to date back to the first century CE or the date of the compilation of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (the second century CE). The chronology of the three other versions in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary largely seems to accord with the date above, but this has to be carefully considered. To start with, I will outline the date of the *bhāṇaka* system in the Theravādin textual sources. Although the oral transmission of the texts started from the first recitation, according to K.R. Norman the institution of the *bhāṇaka* system with specialist reciters of the *Nikāyas* was only introduced as the result of the second recitation, or even as late as the third recitation.[518] We are not certain how long the *bhāṇaka* system then continued. To judge from the way that Buddhaghosa refers to it, the *bhāṇakas* were still active in his day, but this is not conclusive. This is because when Buddhaghosa refers to the opinions of the *Dīgha-bhāṇakas*, the *Majjhima-bhāṇakas* etc., he may simply be repeating what he found in the old commentarial literature available to him in the Mahāvihāra in Ceylon.[519] In this case, the references to the *bhāṇakas* in the Pāli commentarial texts certainly pre-date the formation of the old commentaries or are at least contemporaneous with them. Moreover, Norman's philological observations suggest that the oral tradition continued to function alongside the written *Tripiṭaka*, and that perhaps the reciters had to revise their *Nikāyas* with the homogenised readings in them (i.e. all

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518 Norman (1997, p. 47) thinks that the *bhaṇaka* system arose before the formation of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*.

519 *id.* p. 49.

absolutives in *-ttā* being changed to *-tvā*, and the forms containing *-r-* being standardised, etc.).[520] We also know that the *bhāṇakas* were not merely reciters, but had their own views on certain doctrinal as well as historical matters.[521] We have seen that the *Majjhima-* and *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* had their own opinions about the *santati-paccuppanna*, and that the latters' interpretation of it was alternatively applied to the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory. What is crucial for our current inquiry is the fact that the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* employed the specific term '*javana*' (impulsion) which refers to the karmically active state that produces fruition. The word *javana* first occurs in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and becomes an abhidhammic technical term in relation to the theory of the thought process in the early commentarial texts.[522] This probably indicates that the *bhāṇakas* were familiar with the abhidhammic interpretations of certain doctrines, and themselves updated their views to accord with the new ideas of the Ābhidhammikas. I therefore assume that they either adopted the term *javana* from the account of the *santati-paccuppanna*, or from the Abhidhammic commentarial texts. The *Saṃyutta* commentary later articulated the view of the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* in accordance with the standard version of the mind-door process, and produced a more refined version of the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory. It is also necessary to stress the fact that the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* made a clear distinction between material and mental continuity, and that this is in line with the opinion on their relative duration stated in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu*.[523] This seems to indicate that the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas*' view portrays an early development in the Theravādin theory of momentariness. The relative duration of material and mental phenomena expressed as a ratio of 1 : 16/ 17 thought moments was subsequently developed in the commentarial tradition. Of course, the commentarial exposition of the fully-fledged theory of momentariness is not relevant in this context, because the *cetopariyañāṇa* operates on the level of the mind-door process, and not that of the sense-door process. What is pertinent is the fact that the commentator distinguishes material continuity from mental, and more importantly that he explicitly employs the *khaṇa-*

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520 Norman (*id.* p. 78) assumes that if the *bhāṇakas* continued to act in the same way as before, they had perhaps to relearn or, at least, to revise their *Nikāyas*, with these homogenised readings in them.

521 *id.* p. 45.

522 Paṭis II 72-73; As 261-288; Vibh-a 150-168. See Harvey (1995, p. 254).

523 See § 2.2.4.

paccuppanna, though he rejects it in subsequent passages by adopting the *addhā-paccuppanna*. I therefore suggest that the three different versions of the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary show the selective adaptation of the notion of momentariness in the commentarial stage of the doctrinal development. This probably goes back to the dates of the composition of the old *aṭṭhakathā* compendia which coincide with the approximate date of the *vibhāṣā* compendia in the Northern tradition. Contrary to this suggestion, David J. Kalupahana is of the opinion that the theory of moments was not known among the doctrines embodied in the Theravādin textual sources preserved at the Mahāvihāra in Ceylon, so its incorporation may be taken as the work of Buddhaghosa in the fifth century CE. In the next section, I review his critique of the momentary present.

4.2.6 A review of David J. Kalupahana's critique of the momentary present

Professor David J. Kalupahana (hereafter, KP) basically assumes that the original Theravādin textual sources preserved at the Mahāvihāra may differ considerably from the works of Buddhaghosa that are currently extant. He believes that Buddhaghosa was at least partly responsible for introducing certain metaphysical ideas, such as the theory of moments and its corollaries (i.e. the conception of *bhavaṅga* and *svabhāva*), into the Sinhala Buddhist tradition.[524] KP's reasoning runs as follows:

> In the Theravāda tradition we first encounter a theory of moments in the works of Buddhaghosa. This is clearly evident from a statement found in Buddhaghosa's *Atthasālinī*. Commenting on the 'present' (*paccuppanna*), he says, "Herein, the continuous present (*santati-paccuppanna*) finds mention in the commentaries; the enduring present (*addhā-paccuppanna*) in the *Suttas*. Here some say that 'the thought existing in the momentary present (*khaṇa-paccuppanna*) becomes the object of telepathic insight' ". This implies that the theory of moments was not among the doctrines embodied in the *Sutta Piṭaka* or the commentaries preserved at Mahāvihāra, the centre of Theravāda Buddhism in Ceylon. If so, the incorporation of this theory in the Pāli Commentaries may be taken as the work of Buddhaghosa.[525] It is not possible to say whether the monks of the Mahāvihāra were aware of the far-reaching consequences of Buddhaghosa's adoption of the theory of moments. There is no question that it did change the character of the original teachings introduced by Mahinda immediately after Moggalīputtatissa's refutation of the heretical views during the third century B.C.[526]

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524 Kalupahana (1987), p. 115.
525 Kalupahana (1975), p. 148.
526 Kalupahana (1992), p. 208.

In spite of the fact that KP's works are widely read among students of the history of Buddhist thought, to my knowledge no critical evaluation of this particular claim has appeared in the reviews of his publication.[527] There are difficulties at every stage of his argument. Most problematic is his assumption that the original Theravādin doctrine is distinct from the doctrinal interpretations embodied in the commentaries of Buddhaghosa. This bias leads him, firstly, to distort the data by taking them out of their specific context, and secondly, to dismiss the early textual history of the Sinhalese commentarial tradition.

First of all, his quotation from the *Atthasālinī* (i.e. the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary) has to be restored to its original context. The specific context is the refutation of the momentary present in relation to the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory, which we have already examined in detail. When the commentator says that: "Herein, the continuous present finds mention in the commentaries; the periodic present in the *Suttas*… ",[528] he is addressing the particular issue of whether or not the notion of the momentary present can be applied to the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory. As stated above, the commentator selectively employs the concept of momentariness to illustrate the advertence of the mind-door (*manodvāra-āvajjana*) at the single moment. In the main context, however, he changes to the periodic present in order to avoid the problem of accepting multiple objects in the momentary present. KP apparently misses this unambiguous point.

Secondly, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentator is not presenting his own view, but draws material from the earlier textual sources, namely, the views of the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* and *Aṭṭhakathā*. The *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas* were using the technical term *javana* to demonstrate the thought process within the continuous present, and the *Aṭṭhakathā* subsequently uses the refined version of the *citta-vīthi*. As noted above, Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga* identifies the *Aṭṭhakathā* as the *Saṃyutta-aṭṭhakathā*.[529] This seems to be the original

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527 See the reviews of his book, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* by Kenneth K. Inada (1976, pp. 339-345) and Mark Siderits (1980, pp. 191-197).

528 As 421.

529 The relevant passages are not found in the extant *Saṃyutta* commentary (checked by *CS CD-R*).

version of the *Saṃyutta* commentary which is extant in Pāli. Or alternatively, he may have inferred this from the name, *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas*, because the theory in the *Aṭṭhakathā* appears to be an extension of the view of the *Saṃyutta-bhāṇakas*.

In any case, I assume that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentator and Buddhaghosa merely organise material scattered in the old commentarial tradition and present it in a coherent context, without attempting to introduce innovations into the theory. However, KP merely states that Buddhaghosa blended old and new ideas in his *Visuddhimagga* and Pāli commentaries, without arousing suspicion in the minds of those who were scrutinising the works. Accordingly, he painted Buddhaghosa as a "great harmonizer".[530] I think that this is a gross over-simplification, as it implies, with no further qualification, that 'the problematic doctrine X was simply not found in the pre-Buddhaghosa Theravāda tradition'.[531] As I remarked in the introduction, it is hard to believe that Buddhaghosa was so successful in his secret mission to manipulate the orthodox Theravādin doctrine preserved in the Mahāvihāra. Before rushing to such a conclusion, one should be more careful, because the early doctrinal history of Theravāda Buddhism is not as simple a matter as KP would like us to believe. I shall amplify my argument on these chronological issues in the conclusion.

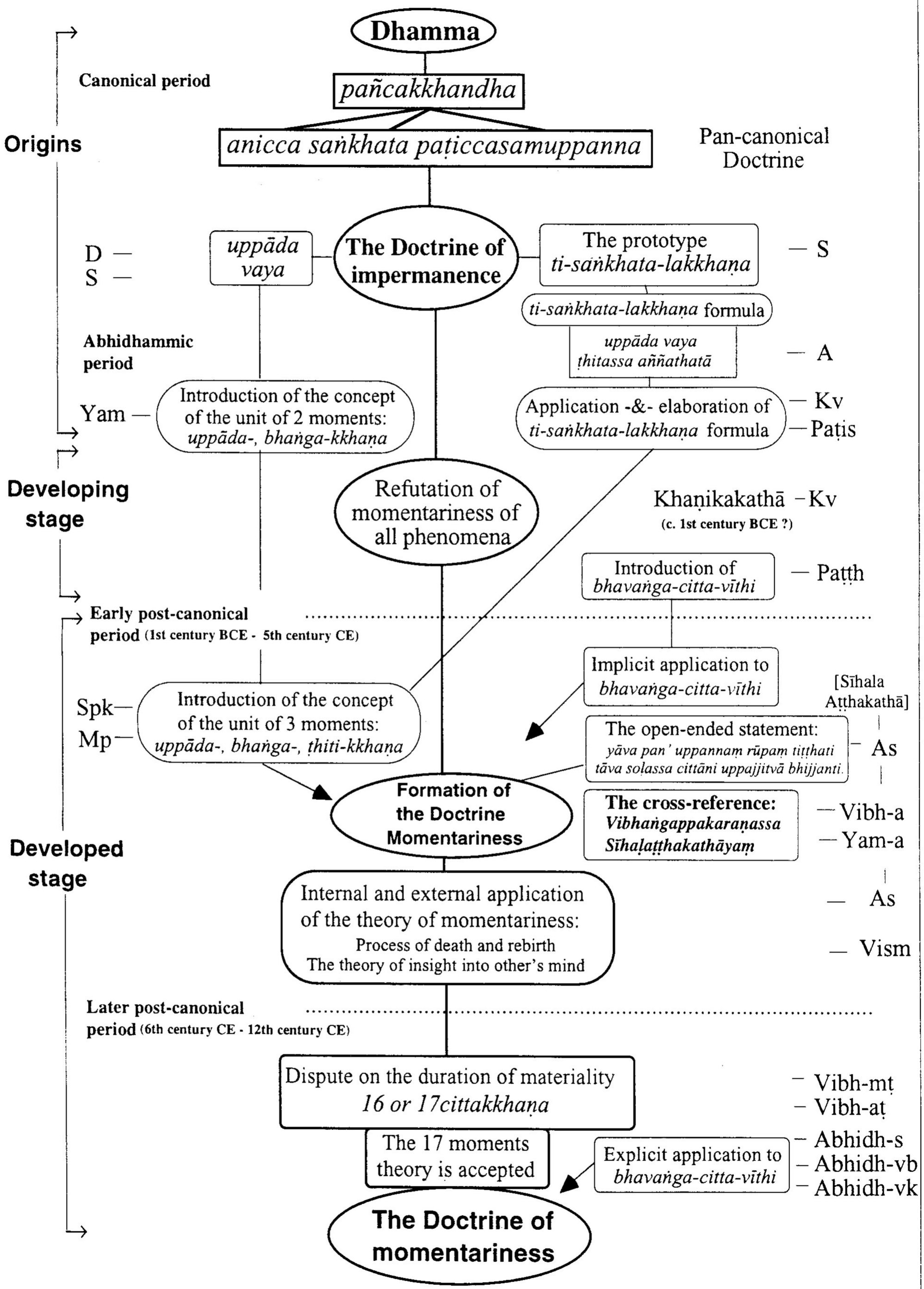
In this chapter, I have adduced two examples to show how the notion of momentariness was already known, and how it was selectively applied to the doctrines described. To summarise the present study, I show the textual history of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness in the diagram (Figure 4-6).

This leads us to the conclusion, in which I present a further discussion of the date of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. In particular, I verify some of the data that I have already noted in passing in the main chapters.

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530 Kalupahana (1992), pp. 207-208.
531 Kalupahana (1975), p. 148; (1992), p. 208.

Figure 4-6: The Theravādin Doctrine of Momentariness: its Origins and Development



CONCLUSION

We have seen various strata of historical development, all of which reflect the early formation of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness. It remains to be asked whether the hypothesis that the doctrine was embedded in the Sinhalese commentaries, now lost, can be proved on the basis of the textual data that we have examined, or whether it will remain little more than conjecture. In particular, 1) To what extent can we rely on the cross-reference (i.e. the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā.*) in the *Yamaka* commentary to justify the idea that the doctrine was formed in the early exegetical texts ? 2) Can we entirely exclude the possibility that the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary may have been interpolated by a commentator in the process of translation into Pāli ? 3) Why do the **Vimuttimagga* and the *Abhidhammāvatāra* not mention the duration of materiality in terms of sixteen or seventeen thought moments ? These are issues that I have already noted in the main chapters, though without further elaboration. I shall now consider these issues, by combining the data that have been collected and analysed in previous chapters. Let us take the last two questions first.

As seen in chapter 3, the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary appears to be the *locus classicus* for the theory of momentariness. In the *Khandhavibhaṅgavaṇṇanā* of the same text, the five *khandhas* are classified in terms of sixteen aspects, out of which five aspects are enumerated and expounded in the *Mūla* text. The remaining eleven aspects are newly introduced by the commentary under the heading *Pakiṇṇakakathā*, which means a miscellany. One might however suggest that this section could be an interpolation since it has the character of an appendix to the main section. There are three possibilities. The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* could have been added to the *Vibhaṅga* commentary: 1) before it was brought from India to Ceylon by Mahinda in the third century BCE and translated into Sinhalese, 2) when Buddhaghosa or his close associate translated the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathās* into Pāli in the fifth century CE, or 3) when the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathās* were written down in the first

century BCE, or when they were studied and further elaborated by the elders of Ceylon in the first century CE onwards.

The first possibility can be safely excluded because the computation of the duration of material and mental phenomena had not yet been introduced when the theory was still developing; the sixteen or seventeen moments theory occurs only in its developed form (see Figure 4-6). The second possibility can also be ruled out because studies of the Pāli exegetical literature show that the Pāli commentaries, as seen in the introduction, are not in any way original compositions, or even innovative attempts to interpret traditional material by imposing the translator's own ideas. That is to say, Buddhaghosa or his close associate had to confine the scope of their exegesis to the Mahāvihāra orthodox tradition, and any new teaching that went beyond the established doctrinal system would have been detected immediately by the elders of Ceylon.

Accordingly, I am inclined to accept the third possibility. The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* is probably an elaboration by the elders of Ceylon between the first and second century CE, though it is quite hard to tell, with any degree of certainty, the period and place of origin of the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā*, the source text for the current *Vibhaṅga* commentary. The *Saddhammasaṅgaha*, the bibliographical reference work, states that the *Vibhaṅga* commentary (i.e. *Sammohavinodanī*) was based on the *Mahāpaccarī*, which originated in Ceylon.[532] Although this statement may not be entirely reliable, as this reference work dates from considerably later (the 14th century CE), we cannot ignore its implications altogether. As suggested in the introduction, the frameworks of the exegetical texts were presumably of Indian origin (perhaps in some cases of Ceylonese origin), and their major growth was most probably completed in Ceylon between the first and second century CE. It is thus possible that the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* was added by the elders of Ceylon. The other reason that leads me to this conclusion is that the sixteen or seventeen moments theory, as it

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532 Saddh-s 56: *tadanantaraṃ abhidhammapiṭake Mahāpaccariyaṭṭhakathā Sīhalabhāsaṃ parivattetvā mūlabhāsāya Māgadhikāya niruttiyā.....tathā Sammohavinodanī nāma Vibhaṅgappakaraṇaṭṭhakathañ ca ṭhapesi.*

stands, is neither found in the *vibhāṣā* compendia, which are supposed to have been composed around the same period in Northern India, nor recorded in any of the doxographical sources. A similar line of reasoning can be applied to the problem that the sixteen or seventeen moments theory does not occur in the **Vimuttimagga*. If we accept that the **Vimuttimagga* was composed in India and brought over to Ceylon, and came to be well-known among the Abhayagirivāsins, it is hardly surprising that a theory which originated in Ceylon was not included in the text of Indian origin.[533] However, we should more carefully consider why reference to the sixteen or seventeen moments theory is absent from the *Abhidhammāvatāra*, the earliest surviving *Abhidhamma* manual.

The *Abhidhammāvatāra* is a summary of the *Abhidhamma* by Buddhadatta from India, who was supposed to be a contemporary of Buddhaghosa. According to the traditional account of its authorship in the *Vinayasāratthadīpanī*, Buddhadatta summarised what Buddhaghosa had translated from the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathās*. K. R. Norman suspects the literal truth of this account, and suggests that some similarities between the two authors' works probably led to the belief that one was dependent upon the other. It is also possible that the name of Buddhaghosa was connected with that of Buddhadatta at a later date to give added authority to his works.[534] If we accept Norman's suggestion, both works are likely to have been written independently based upon the same *Aṭṭhakathās* in the Mahāvihāra. Why then does the sixteen or seventeen moments theory occur in the *Visuddhimagga*, and not in the *Abhidhammāvatāra*, if they drew on the same works ? Considering the fact that the *Abhidhammāvatāra* is a summary, in a mixture of verse and prose, of the large body of *Abhidhamma* texts, and that it is a manual designed for easy access to learning, it seems unsurprising that the theory would be omitted. In contrast, the *Visuddhimagga* is a sort of encyclopaedia, a compendium of the Theravāda doctrine presented in a systematic manner, covering almost all the subjects under the three heads of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. But even in the *Visuddhimagga* only the gist of the theory is presented, omitting the minute detail, with illustrations and a critical observation of the theory based on the *Yamaka*. As noted in

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533 See Bapat (1937), p. Intro. liv.
534 Norman (1983), pp. 124, 131.

chapter 3, the doctrine of momentariness was treated in its own right only in the later post-canonical texts. All these facts seem to indicate that the doctrine may have not been unanimously accepted among the early commentators of the Theravāda. This somewhat explains the absence of any reference to the theory in the *Abhidhammāvatāra*. However, a further investigation would be needed, focusing on the relation of Buddhadatta's manuals to the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhamma* commentaries.[535] Let us now turn to the first question: "To what extent can we rely on the cross-reference (i.e. the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā*.) in the *Yamaka* commentary to justify the idea that the doctrine was formed in the early exegetical texts ? "

As remarked in the introduction, a textual cross-reference can only be used to establish relative chronology provided it is unlikely to be a later interpolation. To determine whether or not the cross-reference in the *Yamaka* commentary to the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* was interpolated, we should closely look at the contexts in which the cross-reference was made.

When the theory of momentariness was first introduced in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary, as seen in chapter 3, an ambiguity was inherited in the phrase 'while materiality endures' (*tasmiṃ rūpe dharante*). This open-ended phrasing results in four different hypothetical options concerning the duration of materiality: Option I (sixteen thought moments), Option II (seventeen thought moments), Option III (over sixteen thought moments), and Option IV (over seventeen thought moments). By referring to the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* the *Yamaka* commentary revises the traditional interpretation (Option III), and proposes a revised version which fits in with Option II. The Pāli *Vibhaṅga* commentary adopts this revised version. In order to tackle the issue of the cross-reference, however, the authorship of the texts should be considered. There can be little doubt that all the *Abhidhamma* commentaries are by one author, for at the end of the commentary upon

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535 Neither the *Visuddhimagga* nor the *Abhidhamma* commentaries are explicitly referred to in the *Abhidhammāvatāra* and the *Rūpārūpavibhāga* (see von Hinüber, 1996, p. 161).

the *Paṭṭhāna* he states that he has now concluded the whole *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*.[536] Accordingly I assume that both the *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka* commentaries were translated by the same commentator. This explains the process of revision: the translator presumably noticed the criticism of the traditional interpretation postulated in the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* while he was rendering the *Yamaka Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* into Pāli. He seems subsequently to have revised his Pāli rendering of the *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary in accordance with the revision either in the *Yamaka Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* or in his own translation of this text. The latter would suggest that the Pāli commentaries were not mere translations of the corresponding Sinhalese commentaries, though not much original thought is shown. As noted in the introduction, Buddhaghosa and other commentators appear to have made a critical study of the various traditional material; the commentarial interpretation is often compared with the canonical and where it disagrees it is rejected. Nevertheless, it is not certain whether the revision was made by the *Yamaka Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* or by a translator while he was rendering it into Pāli. The former would imply that the cross-reference was introduced at the time of composition, but the latter would indicate that it was interpolated by the translator in the fifth century CE. Does this later interpolation of the cross-reference along with the revision disprove the hypothesis that the theory of momentariness was formulated in the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* between the first and second century CE ? The answer is simple: on the contrary, it corroborates the early formation of the theory. Even if we accept that the cross-reference was interpolated later, the translator was not referring to the later material but critically examining the early textual source (i.e. the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā*). Therefore, there can be no reason to discard this clear textual evidence that the theory of momentariness was developed in the early *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā*.

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536 Paṭṭh-a 367: *Buddhaghoso ti gurūhi gahitanāmadheyyena therena katā ayaṃ sakalassa pi Abhidhamma-piṭakassa aṭṭhakathā*. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Vibhaṅga* commentaries and the commentaries upon the remaining five *Abhidhamma* texts (the *Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*) all include the name Buddhaghosa in the epilogue, but other than that there is no evidence that they are written by him. In fact, the first two state that they were written at the request of Buddhaghosa, which has led to the suggestion that they were both written by a pupil of Buddhaghosa (Norman, 1983, p. 123). See Intro. p. 5 for the authorship of the *Abhidhamma* commentaries.

The present study is directly motivated by this cross-reference, which serves as an anchor to prove the early chronology of the doctrine. The explicit textual evidence initially provides us with the assumption that Buddhaghosa was not solely responsible for the introduction of the doctrine of momentariness. This assumption no longer remains mere conjecture. Systematic investigation shows that the doctrine surely gained at least some footing in the *Kathāvatthu* and the *Yamaka* before the fully-fledged doctrine emerges in the early commentarial texts. The substantial content of the theory of the thought process was probably embedded in the *Paṭṭhāna*, and it was implicitly applied to the doctrine of momentariness in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary. Its explicit application took place in the twelfth century *Abhidhamma* manual, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* (see Figure 4-6 for an overview of the textual history).

Moreover, apart from a number of pieces of specific textual evidence, we have to consider the sensitive political situation in which the mainstream Theravādins had to confront the rival sub-sect, the Mahāyāna-oriented (?) Abhayagiri, when Buddhaghosa arrived at Mahāvihāra. It may be envisaged that the Theravāda orthodox monks, in this critical environment, would have been alert to teachings alien to their doctrinal system, and cautious to prevent their entry. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Buddhaghosa introduced the doctrine of momentariness to the Mahāvihāra tradition in disguise. As seen in chapter 4, however, David J. Kalupahana states that Buddhaghosa blended old and new ideas in his *Visuddhimagga* and Pāli commentaries, without arousing suspicion in the minds of those who were scrutinising the works. Alexander von Rospatt, though he is careful not to draw any final conclusion, believes that the theory of momentariness was adopted from outside and was possibly even introduced by Buddhaghosa himself. He adduces a passage from the *Kathāvatthu* commentary (XXII 8) where the stance that all phenomena are momentary (*ekacittakkhaṇikā sabbe dhammā*) is ascribed to Uttarapathakas, that is, to people from Northern India. Consequently, he connects this with the traditional account that

Buddhaghosa came from Gaya, the Northern centre of Buddhist schools.[537] He may be unaware of the alternative opinion that Buddhaghosa was perhaps from Southern India.[538]

The doctrinal history of Theravāda Buddhism cannot be complete unless the extensive body of commentaries is thoroughly studied. As far as the explanation of central doctrines is concerned, however, we tend to think that the account of most commentaries is almost identical with that of the *Visuddhimagga*. This is because Buddhaghosa operates an efficient cross-reference system to achieve coherency with the exegetical texts. Nevertheless, if disputed doctrines which occurred in the context of internal or external intellectual contact[539] were specifically examined in minute detail, there would still be some scope for finding subtle differences between the *Visuddhimagga* and the Pāli commentaries, which might provide a significant clue to the historical development of Theravādin doctrines. For instance, as seen in chapter 3, the *Visuddhimagga* adopts the sixteen moments theory, while the *Vibhaṅga* and *Yamaka* commentaries employ the seventeen moments theory. I have used this discrepancy to determine the date of the doctrine of momentariness. The commentaries thus not only contain much more rich material, at least in quantity, than the *Visuddhimagga*, but also preserve the original sources that Buddhaghosa would have used, though they are truncated and admittedly fragmentary. Furthermore, this sort of research should be carried out in the light of the Chinese Āgamas and Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika's exegetical texts, notably the *vibhāṣā* compendia and the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*. This would reveal a picture of an early stage in which certain doctrines were developing in the parallel textual sources of the Southern and Northern traditions before they were formalised in the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* respectively in the fifth century CE. This type of comparative study would provide illuminating data for the early history of Buddhist thought.

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537 Von Rospatt (1995), p. 34, fn. 60.

538 See Ñyāṇamoli (1956), *The Path of Purification*, Intro. xvi, fn. 8.

539 Here, by internal context I mean disputation among Theravādin masters, and by external context the Abhayagirivāsins or the Sarvāstivādins and so on.

In attempting to trace the textual history of the Theravādin doctrine of momentariness, the present study has given an example of the research results achieved by using this method. This historical investigation could serve as the foundation for further theoretical studies of this doctrine.

PART TWO

An Annotated Translation and Edited Sections of the Relevant Texts in the Pāli Commentaries

CHAPTER FIVE

Sources for the Doctrine of Momentariness in the Pāli Commentaries

5.1 The *Ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* (see Chapter 1, § 1.2.2, -§ 1.2.3)

5.1.1 The *Saṃyutta* commentary (S III 37[25-31]-40[1-21]; Spk II 266[8-26]- 267[1-14]; cf. Mp II 252[1-17])

In the fifth, **change of what endures** (*ṭhitassa aññathatta*) **is evident** means that ageing of what is lasting and living is evident. **Endurance** (*ṭhiti*) is a term for maintenance (*anupālana*), which is the defining attribute of (*saṅkhāta*)[540] the life faculty.[541] **Change** (*aññathatta*) is a term for ageing (*jarā*). Hence the Ancients said:

> Arising was called birth, and dissolution referred to passing away,
> Change referred to ageing, and endurance to maintenance.

Thus each *khandha* has three characteristic marks called arising, ageing and dissolution, of which it is said: "These are, monks, three conditioned[542] characteristic marks (*saṅkhatalakkhaṇānī*) of the conditioned (*saṅkhatassa*) [*khandha*][543] " (A I 152). Herein whatsoever karmic formation originated from a cause (*paccaya*) is termed 'the conditioned'. And the karmic formation is not a characteristic mark; the characteristic mark is not the karmic formation. Nevertheless, the characteristic mark cannot make [itself] evident without the karmic formation; nor can the karmic formation do so without the characteristic mark.

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540 The literal meaning of the term *saṅkhāta* is 'called', 'reckoned' etc., but I have rendered it as 'is the defining attribute of' based on an exegesis: *sahajātarūpânupālanalakkhaṇaṃ jīvitindriyaṃ* (The life faculty has the defining characteristic of maintaining co-born kinds of matter) in the As 323; Vism XIV § 59 (Cf. Dhs § 635; Vibh-a 127; Vism XVI § 10).

541 The life faculty (*jīvitindriya*) is called a faculty because it has a dominating influence over its adjuncts. There are two kinds of life faculty, the mental, which vitalises the associated mental states, and the physical, which vitalises material phenomena. The physical life faculty has the characteristic of maintaining (*anupālanalakkhaṇa*) the co-born kinds of matter at the moment of their presence. Its function is to make them occur. It is manifested as the establishment of their presence. Its proximate cause is the four great elements that are to be maintained. See As 323; Vism XIV § 59; Bodhi (1993), p. 81, pp. 239-40.

542 On the terms *saṅkhāra* and *saṅkhata*, L.S. Cousins (1983, p. 99) remarks: "A *saṅkhāra* is an activity which enables something to come into existence or to maintain its existence - it fashions or forms things. So something which is *saṅkhata* has been fashioned or formed by such an activity, especially by volition". Accordingly, I have rendered *saṅkhāra* as 'karmic formation' in the sense of 'conditioning volitional force'; *saṅkhata* as 'the conditioned'. See also Hamilton (1996), pp. 66-81.

543 The whole *Aṅguttara* passage reads: *tīṇ' imāni bhikkhave* ***saṅkhatassa saṅkhatalakkhaṇānī****. katamāni tīni? uppādo paññāyati vayo paññāyati ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati. imāni kho bhikkhave tīṇi saṅkhatassa saṅkhatalakkhaṇāni ti.* For the corresponding Sanskrit passage, see SAKV p. 171[26-8]: *trīṇī 'māni bhikṣavaḥ* ***saṁskṛtasya saṁskṛtalakṣaṇāni****. katamāni trīṇi. saṁskṛtasya bhikṣava utpādo 'pi prajñāyate.vyayo'pi prajñāyate. sthityanyathātvam apī 'ti* (See also NID-S 139[10-14]; SA-FR 569-581; AKB 75[22-3ff], 76[26], 77[1-4]; NAS T 29 406c[10-11]; MVB T 27 199c[25], esp. T 27 201a[18ff]; EA T 2 607c[14ff]). For the discussion, among early Buddhist schools, of repetition of the term *saṁskṛta* in the genitive case and in the compound (i.e. *saṁskṛtasya saṁskṛtalakṣaṇa*), see § 1.2.3-(2).

But the karmic formation manifests [itself] through the characteristic mark. Just as a cow itself is not a characteristic mark [of the cow]; nor is the characteristic mark [of a cow] itself the cow. The characteristic mark [of a cow] cannot make [itself] evident dissociated from the cow; nor can a cow do so dissociated from the characteristic mark [of the cow]. But a cow manifests [itself] through the characteristic mark [of the cow].[544] Thus this must be understood to have this same feature.

In that context, at the moment of arising of karmic formations, not only are the karmic formation and the characteristic mark of arising evident, but also its moment (*tassa khaṇo*), which refers to time (*kālasaṅkhāto*).[545] When arising has passed (*uppāde vītivatte*),[546] not only are the karmic formation and the characteristic mark of ageing evident, but also its moment, which refers to time. At the moment of dissolution, not only are the karmic formation and its characteristic mark evident, but also its moment, which refers to time.

Others (*apare*)[547] however claim: "The ageing-moment cannot make itself evident in the case of immaterial phenomena. The Fully Enlightened One declares there to be three characteristic marks of immaterial phenomena too in the passage: 'Arising of feeling is evident, dissolution is evident, and change of what endures is evident' (cf. S III 39^{7-9}). Those [three characteristic marks of immaterial phenomena][548] are obtained with reference to the moment of existence (*atthikkhaṇa*)".[549] Having said that, they clinch this point by quoting the following stanza of the masters:

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544 See § 1.2.3-(2) for a discussion of the interrelation of *saṅkhata* and *lakkhana*.

545 Spk-pṭ [C^e] 217^{18-19}: ***tassa*** *saṅkhārassa.* ***kālasaṅkhāto*** *ti uppajjamānakālasaṅkhāto.*

546 I have amended this on the basis of a testimonium in the Paṭis-a III 596^{24-25}. Mahānāma, while commenting on the *Paṭisambhidāmagga,* frequently takes the relevant material from the *Visuddhimagga* and other commentarial texts (Norman,1983, p. 132). Therefore, I assume that the Paṭis-a maintains an original reading of the quotation (i.e. passages in the *Khandhaka-vaggaṭṭhakathā* in the Spk II 266^{25}-267^{3}). Hinüber (1996, § 295) reports that Mahānāma also made use of the old *Aṭṭhakathā*, which he quotes, for instance, 'on *kāmadhātu*' (Paṭis-a 68^{14-18}) and compares what is said on this term in the *Dasuttara-* and *Saṅgīti-suttantas* (D no 33 and 34 respectively). For the date of the Paṭis-a, see Hinüber (1996, § 291). The *Ṭīkā* (Spk-pṭ [C^e] 217^{18-19}) glosses: *uppādo pī ti uppādakkhaṇo pi.*

547 The *Ṭīkā* is silent on these anonymous masters.

548 Spk-pṭ [C^e] 217^{25-26}: ***tānī*** *ti arūpadhammānaṃ tīṇi lakkhaṇāni.*

549 Spk-pṭ [C^e] 217^{26-27}: ***atthikkhaṇan*** *ti arūpadhammavijjamānakkhaṇaṃ; uppādakkhaṇan ti adhippāyo.*

> Existence (*atthitā*) is a term for the endurance of all phenomena (*sabbadhammā*, i.e. both the mental and material phenomena), its own dissolution is invariably (*sabbadā*) is death for all living-creatures.

They further say: "Or alternatively, 'endurance' is a state to be understood in terms of continuity (*santati*)".[550] But because any distinction [of this kind][551] is not conveyed in the *Sutta*, therefore the *Sutta* alone should be taken as authoritative, not discarded in favour of the opinion of the masters.

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550 See § 1.2.3-(4) for a discussion of this issue.

551 Spk-pṭ [C^e] 218$^{7-8}$: ***ayaṃ viseso*** *ti ṭhitikkhaṇo nāma rūpadhammānaṃ yeva, na arūpadhammānan ti ayaṃ īdiso viseso.*

5.1.2 The edited section of the *Saṃyutta* commentary

(S III 37[25-31]-40[1-21]; Spk II 266[8-26]- 267[1-14] , cf. Mp II 252[1-17])

(*I have edited the relevant section, since some passages in this portion of the existing editions share a common corruption and introduce a considerable number of variant readings.*)

pañcame: **ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ**[552] **paññāyatī** ti dharamānassa jīvamānassa jarā paññāyati.

ṭhitī ti jīvitindriyasaṅkhātāya anupālanāya nāmaṃ. **aññathattan** ti jarāya. ten' āhu porāṇā:

uppādo jāti akkhāto bhaṅgo vutto vayo ti ca
aññathattaṃ jarā vuttā ṭhitī ca anupālanā ti.

evaṃ ekekassa khandhassa uppādajarābhaṅgasaṅkhātāni tīṇi lakkhaṇāni honti,. yāni sandhāya vuttaṃ tīṇ' imāni, bhikkhave, saṅkhatassa saṅkhatalakkhaṇānī ti (A I 152; Mp II 252[1-17]). tattha saṅkhataṃ nāma paccayanibbatto ⊗yo[553] koci saṅkhāro. saṅkhāro ca na lakkhaṇaṃ; lakkhaṇaṃ na saṅkhāro. na ca saṅkhārena[554] vinā lakkhaṇaṃ paññāpetuṃ sakkā; nâpi lakkhaṇaṃ vinā saṅkhāro.[555] lakkhaṇena pana[556] saṅkhāro pākaṭo hoti.[557] yathā ca gāvī yeva na lakkhaṇaṃ;[558] lakkhaṇam eva na gāvī. nâpi gāviṃ[559] muñcitvā lakkhaṇaṃ paññāpetuṃ sakkā; nâpi lakkhaṇaṃ muñcitvā gāviṃ. lakkhaṇena pana gāvī pākaṭā[560] hoti.⊗[561] evaṃ sampadam idaṃ veditabbaṃ.

*tattha saṅkhārānaṃ uppādakkhaṇe saṅkhāro pi uppādalakkhaṇaṃ pi kālasaṅkhāto tassa khaṇo pi paññāyati; <u>uppāde vītivatte</u>[562] saṅkhāro pi jarālakkhaṇaṃ pi kālasaṅkhāto tassa

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552 *In the Mūla text the phrase* ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ /m *occurs 18 times as the defining characteristic of* rūpa, viññāṇa; ṭhitāya aññathattam *once as that of* vedanā; ṭhitānam /ṃ aññathattaṃ /m *15 times as the defining characteristic of* saññā, dhammas (cf. *the phrase* ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ /m *etc. in the* A I 152; Kv I 60-1; Paṭis II 108). *In the Tisaṅkhatalakkhaṇa formula in the* A I 152 ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ *becomes a standard phrase.*

553 yo Sh Bc Tcd : ya P (See p. viii for abbreviations and symbols.)

554 saṅkhārena Sh Bc Tcd P : lakkhaṇena pa na saṅkhāro Pvl

555 saṅkhāro Bc Tcd : saṅkhāre Sh P

556 lakkhaṇena pana Bc Tcd : lakkhaṇe pana pākaṭe Sh P

557 hoti Sh Bc P : hotī ti Tcd

558 yathā ca gāvī yeva na lakkhaṇaṃ Sh P : yathā hi na ca gāvī yeva lakkhaṇaṃ Bc : yathā hi na ca bhāvī yeva lakkhaṇaṃ Tcd

559 gāviṃ Sh Bc P : gāvaṃ Tcd

560 pākaṭā Sh Bc P : pākaṭo Tcd

561 ⊗...⊗ Sh Bc Tcd P : T *reads differently-* yo koci saṅkhāro pana na ca lakkhaṇaṃ; lakkhaṇaṃ na saṅkhāro, na ca saṅkhārānaṃ vinā lakkhaṇaṃ paññāpetuṃ sakkā; nāpi lakkhaṇaṃ vinā saṅkhāro. lakkhaṇena pana saṅkhāro pākaṭo hotī ti. yathā pana bhāvī yeva lakkhaṇam eva bhāvinâpī lakkhaṇam eva vinâpī bhāviṃ muñcitvā lakkhaṇaṃ paññāpetuṃ na sakkā; lakkhaṇaṃ muñcitvā bhāviṃ. lakkhaṇena bhāvī pākaṭo hoti.

562 <u>uppāde vītivatte</u> , *em. on the basis of a testimonium in the* Paṭis-a III 596[24-25] : uppādo pi ṭhitī ti vutte Sh P [*om. from* uppādo *to* apare Pvl] : uppādo pī ti vutte Bc [Bcṭ *glosses:* "uppādo pī ti uppādalakkhaṇo pi"] Tcd : uppādetī ti vutte T

khaṇo pi paññāyati; bhaṅgakkhaṇe[563] saṅkhāro pi taṃlakkhaṇam pi[564] kālasaṅkhāto tassa khaṇo pi paññāyati.*

apare pana vadanti arūpadhammānaṃ jarākhaṇo[565] nāma na sakkā paññāpetuṃ. sammāsambuddho ca vedanāya uppādo paññāyati, vayo paññāyati, ṭhitāya aññathattaṃ paññāyatī ti (cf. S III 39$^{7-9}$) vadanto arūpadhammānam pi tīṇi lakkhaṇāni paññāpeti. tāni atthikkhaṇaṃ[566] upādāya labbhantī[567] ti vatvā,

atthitā sabbadhammānaṃ ṭhiti nāma pavuccati,
tass' eva bhedo maraṇaṃ sabbadā sabbapāṇinan ti

imāya ācariyagāthāya tam atthaṃ sādhenti. atha vā santativasena[568] ṭhānaṃ ṭhitī ti[569] veditabban ti ca vadanti. yasmā pana sutte ayaṃ viseso n' atthi, tasmā ācariyamatiyā suttaṃ apaṭibāhetvā suttam eva pamāṇaṃ kattabbaṃ.

... *quoted in the* Paṭis-a III 596$^{23-28}$ (P=Sh) with a slight modification.

tattha saṅkhatānaṃ uppādakkhaṇe saṅkhatā 'pi uppādalakkhaṇam 'pi kālasaṅkhāto tassa khaṇo 'pi paññāyati; uppāde vītivatte saṅkhatā pi jarālakkhaṇam 'pi kālasaṅkhāto tassa khaṇo 'pi paññāyati; bhaṅgakkhaṇe[1] saṅkhatā 'pi jarā 'pi bhaṅgalakkhaṇam pi[2] kālasaṅkhāto tassa khaṇo 'pi paññāyatī ti Khandhakavaggaṭṭhakathāyaṃ (Sp II 266^{25}-267^{3}) vuttaṃ.

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[1] bhaṅgakkhaṇe P Sh : bhaṅgakkhaṇaṃ P*vl*
[2] bhaṅgalakkhaṇam pi PSh : bhaṅgakkhaṇam pi Sh*vl*

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563 bhaṅgakkhaṇe Sh Bc P : bhaṅgalakkhaṇe Tcd
564 saṅkhāro pi taṃ lakkhaṇam pi Sh Bc T Tcd P : saṅkhatā 'pi jarā 'pi bhaṅgalakkhaṇam Paṭis-a III 596$^{26-7}$
565 jarākhaṇo Sh Bc T P : jarājiṇṇo Tcd
566 atthikkhaṇaṃ Sh Bc P : abhikkhaṇaṃ Pvl : atthi khaṇaṃ T Tcd
567 labbhantī Sh Bc T Tcd : labbhanti Pvl : labhatī P
568 santativasena Bc P T Tcd : nettivasena Sh Pvl
569 ṭhānaṃ ṭhitī ti Sh Bc Tcd P : pāṇaṃ T

5.2 Refutation of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness (see Chapter 2, § 2.2.4)

5.2.1 The *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* (Kv 620^{7}-621^{22})

1. [Th]: Are all phenomena as momentary as a single mental phenomenon (*ekacittakkhaṇika*)?[570]

[Op]: Affirmed.

[Th]: Do you imply that [the material phenomena of] the great earth, the great ocean, the king of mount Sineru, water, fire, wind, grass, twigs and big trees [respectively] synchronise (*saṇṭhāti/ saṇṭhanti*)[571] with each mental phenomenon (*citte citte*)?[572]

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570 As far as the momentariness of all mental phenomena is concerned, the Theravādins argue that even the specific mental phenomenon 'concentration' (*samādhi*) is as momentary as a single mental phenomenon. They also refute the position that a certain mental state can last for an entire day. This contention of the Theravādins is recorded in the chapters *Cittaṭṭhitikathā* (Kv 204-208) and *Samādhikathā* (Kv 458-459) of the *Kathāvatthu*. The present chapter, the *Khaṇikakathā*, seems to presuppose the above position that mental phenomena are momentary, but here the Theravādins precisely refute the synchronised frequency of the material and mental phenomena. The compound *ekacittakkhaṇika* does not occur in any other canonical texts except the *Kathāvatthu* (Kv 458; 620-621, checked by the *CD-Rs*). In the commentarial texts, however, it is often used to express extremely short duration or the simultaneous nature of the mental phenomena. For instance, the compound *ekacittakkhaṇika* denotes the simultaneous realisation (*ekâbhisamaya*) of the four noble truths at the time of achieving the stages of sanctity, i.e. stream-entry and so on. A controversy concerning simultaneity as against gradualness is recorded in the *Kathāvatthu* (Kv 212-220), and the Theravādins' position on this doctrine was already well established in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. (See Warder, 1982, pp. v-ixix, espec. xxiii ff.; Cousins, 1996, pp. 52-53). The *Majjhima* commentary preserves the three versions (Ps II 363; II 404; III 192: they are more or less identical) of a brief argument put forward by a petty sophist (*vitaṇḍavādī*) that the supramandane path is to be realised by multiple thought-moments (*bahucittakkhaṇika*) rather than by a single thought-moment (*ekacittakkhaṇika*). The commentator of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* Mahānāma identifies this as the view held by the Sarvāstivādin masters who claim that each path consists of the sixteen paths (*sabbatthikavādâcariyā pana ekekamaggo soḷasakkhaṇiko ti vadanti*, Paṭis-a III 694; cf. Kv-a II 59-60 which attributes this doctrine to Andhakas, Sabbatthika, Saṃmatīyas and Bhadrāyanīyas). This position is documented in the commentarial texts of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika, namely the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (T 27 404^{b11}-406^{a28}) and Vasubandhu's *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya* (VI kr 27, 351^{9}-352^{13}). The Theravādin's view, 'simultaneous realisation' (*ekâbhisamaya*), is expounded in the *Visuddhimagga* (Vism XXII §§ 92-103, Buddhaghosa refers to the *Kathāvatthu* for detailed arguments). The **Vimuttimagga* and **Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (T 32 $257^{b15\text{-}c25}$) however retain the record of the refutation to show the flaws in the opponent's argument (T 32 458^{c11}-459^{a27}). These texts do not use the compounds *ekacittakkhaṇika* and *bahucittakkhaṇika*, which seem to be less technical; instead more technical terms and phrases, such as *saccâbhisamayakālasmiṃ ekakkhaṇe*, *ekâbhisamaya* and *anupubbâbhisamaya*, are employed (Vism XXII § 97; Kv-a II 59-60, etc.). Therefore I suggest that the compound *ekacittakkhaṇika* first appears in the *Kathāvatthu* in conjunction with the momentariness of mental phenomena, but later, in the commentarial texts, the same term is sporadically used to describe the instantaneous nature of mental phenomena, in particular the simultaneous realisation (*ekâbhisamaya*) of the four noble truths.

571 The literal meaning of the verb *saṇṭhāti* (*santiṭṭhati*) is 'to be established', 'to be composed' and so on. I render it as 'synchronise', emphasising the prefix *san* (together) - (*san* + *tiṭṭhati*= 'establishes at the same time' > synchronises).

572 All the printed editions read *citte* with no repetition, but I have amended it based on the variant reading (***citte citte mahāpaṭhavī***) of the lemma ***citte mahāpaṭhavī*** in the *Kathāvatthu* commentary (Ka-a 198, fn. 8). The editor Jayawickrama found this variant in the manuscript (V) of the *Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā* in Sinhalese characters from Vajirārāma, Colombo, copied in 27-08-1931 and in the Sudhammavatī edition (M) of Ppk-a in Burmese characters, Sudhammavatī, 1931. This testimony is further supported by Kv-mṭ [C^{e}] 115^{11} (the lemma ***citte citte*** is attested) and Kv-aṭ [C^{e}] 155^{11} (the lemma ***citte citte*** is glossed as *cittakkhaṇe cittakkhaṇe*).

[Op]: One can't truly say that.

2. [Th]: Are all phenomena as momentary as a single mental phenomenon?

[Op]: Affirmed.

[Op]: Does the visual sphere (*cakkhâyatana*)[573] arise simultaneously (*sahajāta*) with the eye-consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*)?

[Th]: One can't truly say that.

[Th]: [Do you mean to] say that the visual sphere arises simultaneously with the eye-consciousness?

[Op]: Yes I do.

[Th]: The following passage from the canon is what the venerable Sāriputta said, isn't it?

> If, friends, internally the eye is intact but no external forms come into its range, and there is no corresponding [conscious] attention (*tajjo samannâhāro*), then there is no manifestation of the corresponding state (*bhāva*) of consciousness. If internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range, but there is no corresponding [conscious] attention, then there is no manifestation of the corresponding state of consciousness. But, friends, when internally the eye is intact and external forms come into its range and there is corresponding [conscious] attention, then there is manifestation of the corresponding state of consciousness.[574]

[Op]: Affirmed.

[Th]: Therefore it should not be said that the visual sphere arises simultaneously with the eye-consciousness.

3. [Op]: Do the ear sphere..., the nose sphere..., the tongue sphere... and the body sphere [respectively] arise simultaneously [with the ear consciousness...] and with the body-consciousness?

[Th]: One can't truly say that.

[Th]: [Do you mean to] say that the body sphere arises simultaneously with the body-consciousness?

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573 See § 1.1.3-(2) for a discussion of the term *āyatana*.

574 M I 190; I have adopted Ñāṇamoli's translation with a modification (1995, p. 283).

[Op]: Yes I do.

[Th]: The following passage from the canon is what the venerable Sāriputta said, isn't it?

> If, friends, internally the body is intact but no external contact comes into its range, and there is no [manifestation of the corresponding state of consciousness]. If, friends, internally the eye is intact and external contact comes into its range, but there is no [manifestation of the corresponding state of consciousness]. But, friends, when internally the body is intact and external contact comes into its range and there is corresponding [conscious] attention, then there is manifestation of the corresponding state of consciousness.[575]

[Op]: Affirmed.

[Th]: Therefore, you should not say that the body sphere arises simultaneously with the body-consciousness.

4. [Op]: Should it not be said that all phenomena are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon ?

[Th]: No, it should not (*āmantā*).[576]

[Op]: [Then] are all phenomena permanent, enduring, eternal and immutable?

[Th]: One can't truly say that.

[Op]: So you maintain that all phenomena are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon.

5.2.2 The *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* commentary (Kv-a 198[14-29])

Now follows the controversy on momentariness. Therein, in some instances the Pubbaseliyas and Apubbaseliyas are of the opinion (*laddhi*) that: "Because all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, therefore they are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon. Given the impermanence common to [all material and mental phenomena], what is the underlying law (*niyama*) here according to which one phenomenon perishes swiftly, another over a period of time? " With respect to these [questions] the Sakavādin[577] asks: "**Are they as momentary as a single mental phenomenon**? " The opponent assents.

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575 *ibid.*

576 The term *āmantā* (*āma*) is the interjection of affirmation or consent, "yes", "indeed", but when used to express agreement in answer to negatively expressed questions, it implies a negative statement, which corresponds to "no" in English. (See CPD II pp. 116-117.)

577 i.e. the Theravādin.

[As to the question]: "**Does the great earth** ... [synchronise with] **each mental phenomenon**? " etc., [the opponent] denies [this], because he does not observe any such synchronisation (*saṇṭhāna*) between them. **The sphere of the eye** etc. is involved for the purpose of refutation: "If all [phenomena] are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon, the sphere of the eye and so on would [also] cease, having arisen together with the eye-consciousness etc.." However, the opponent refutes this with regard to the arising of consciousness even in an embryo, but [contradictorily] assents in his own contention with regard to the development (*pavatta*) of [the embryo].[578] The rest is clear. **Therefore all phenomena are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon**: he reasons by means of his own imagination, saying that because they are not permanent, therefore they are as momentary as a single mental phenomenon. This conveys almost nothing!

5.2.3 The *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* sub-commentary (Kv-mṭ [c^e] 115$^{6-11}$)

Regarding the material elements, such as the earth etc., some of them are arising, while some of them are ceasing. Thus, this is the [process] of the [material] set-up (*patiṭṭhāna*) by means of material continuity. For there are no conditions of contiguity (*anantarapaccayā*) etc. in relation to material [elements].[579] If there were the process (*pavatti*) in terms of material continuities, like that in terms of the continuities of immateriality, **the** [element of] **great earth would synchronise with each mental phenomenon**.
(*pathaviyâdirūpesu*[580] *kesañci uppādo kesañci nirodho ti evaṃ patiṭṭhānaṃ*[581] *rūpasantatiyā hoti. na hi rūpānaṃ*[582] *anantarâdipaccayā santi, yehi arūpasantatiyā viya rūpasantatiyā pavatti siyā ti* ***citte citte mahāpathavī saṇṭhātī*** *ti ādi coditaṃ.*)

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578 The meaning is not entirely clear; the *Ṭīkā* is silent.

579 There are certain kinds of relation which materiality does not involve. The following *paccayas* (conditions) do not obtain in the domain of materiality: *anantara*, *samanantara*, *āsevana*, *sampayutta*, *natthi* and *vigata*. For instance, *anantara-paccaya* applies only to mental elements, and it is implied that the succession of elements in a regular order is not always true of material elements. See Karunadasa (1967, pp. 139-141).

580 Kv-aṭ [C^e] 155$^{1-4}$: ***pathviyâdirūpesū*** *ti anekakalāpasamudāyabhūtesu sasambhārapathavi-ādirūpesu. tattha hi kesuci purimuppannesu ṭhitesu kesañci tadaññesaṃ uppādo, tato purimantar-uppannānaṃ kesañci nirodho hoti ekekakalāparūpesu samānuppādanirodhattā tesaṃ.*

581 Kv-aṭ [C^e] 155$^{5-6}$: ***evaṃ patiṭṭhānan*** *ti evaṃ vuttappakārena asamānuppādanirodhena pabandhena patiṭṭhānapavattī ti attho.*

582 Kv-aṭ [C^e] 155$^{6-10}$: *sā panâyaṃ yathāvuttā pavatti kasmā rūpasantatiyā evā ti āha* ***na hi rūpānan*** *ti ādi. tass' attho- yadi sabbe saṅkhatadhammā samānakkhaṇā, tathā sati arūpasantatiyā viya*

5.3 The relative duration of the material and mental processes (see Chapter 3, §§ 3.1.2-3.1.4)

Introductory Remarks

A complete translation of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary (*Sammohavinodanī*) was published in 1987/ 1991 by the Pali Text Society in two volumes under the title: *The Dispeller of Delusion*. This is the revised publication of a manuscript translation by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, which was discovered in 1979 at the Island Hermitage in Sri Lanka. The revision for publication was done by L.S. Cousins in corroboration with Nyanaponika Mahāthera and C.M.M. Shaw, but they have made no systematic attempt to introduce their own preferred readings; their aim was simply to produce a published version of Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's own translation (see *The Dispeller of Delusion* I vii-x).

The following translation of a section (Vibh-a 21^{9}-29^{5}) contains relevant material on the doctrine of momentariness in Theravāda Buddhism. Based largely on Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's translation, I have provided detailed annotations, particularly on passages concerning human embryology and on the momentariness of physical and mental phenomena. In the footnotes I have occasionally provided modern medical terms in order to elucidate the meaning of the old Pāli terms which describe the stages of pre-embryonic and embryonic development.

To produce a translation that is both technically precise and lucidly expressed required some revisions in Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's version. (A reliable work, like his translation of the *Visuddhimagga*, would have been produced by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli himself had he had the opportunity to revise his draft for publication.) Most were quite minor but a few were substantial. I have used the two sub-commentaries (the *Mūlaṭīkā* and the *Anuṭīkā*) and provided a translation with the text – mainly for interesting passages or comments. I have discussed my own terminology only where the changes are substantial. Some alterations have been made in the rendering of Pāli doctrinal terms in order to maintain internal consistency with my translation elsewhere. A few typesetting errors and omissions have been rectified. Instead of paragraph numbers, I have employed page and line numbers of the text, and made minor alterations in the divisions of paragraphs. There is no urgent need to edit this section critically as, except for a small number of insignificant variant readings, most printed editions accord with each other.

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rūpasantatiyâpi anantarâdipaccayena vidhinā pavatti siyā, na c' etaṃ atthi. yadi siyā, cittakkhaṇe cittakkhaṇe pathavi- ādīnaṃ uppādanirodhehi bhavitabban ti.

5.3.1 The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary

(**Vibh** 1-12; **Vibh-a** 21^{9}-29^{5}; cf. **Yam-a** $83^{7\text{-}26}$)

A Miscellany[583]

[An analysis of the five *khandhas* in terms of sixteen aspects]

$21^{9\text{-}15}$ Now a miscellany (*pakiṇṇaka*) regarding the five *khandhas* should also be understood under sixteen aspects,[584] namely in terms of: [1] coming into co-existence (*samuggama*),[585] [2] order of succession (*pubba-apara*), [3] limit of duration (*addhāna-pariccheda*),[586] [4] synchronous arising and asynchronous cessation (*ekuppāda-nānānirodha*),[587] [5] asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation, [6] synchronous arising and synchronous cessation, [7] asynchronous arising and asynchronous cessation, [8] past, future and present (*atīta-anāgata-paccuppanna*), [9] internal and external (*ajjhattika-bāhira*), [10] gross and subtle (*oḷārika-sukhuma*), [11] inferior and sublime (*hīna-paṇīta*), [12] far and near (*dūra-santika*), [13] condition (*paccaya*), [14] origination (*samuṭṭhāna*), [15] the projected (*parinipphanna*), [16] the conditioned (*saṅkhata*).

21^{16}-22^{4} [1] Therein, **coming into co-existence** is twofold: the coming into co-existence of one conceived in a womb (*gabbhaseyyaka*) and the coming into co-existence of one

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583 The heading *Pakiṇṇakakathā* occurs only in the Burmese edition. I have rendered this as a miscellany because it is a collection of different aspects of the five *khandhas* rather than general ones.

584 The five *khandhas* are classified in terms of sixteen aspects, out of which five aspects (from item [8] past, future, etc. to item [12] far and near) are enumerated and expounded in the *Mūla* text (Vibh 1-12). The remaining eleven aspects are newly introduced by the commentary under the heading *Pakiṇṇakakathā*. One might argue that this section could be an interpolation since it has the character of an appendix to the previous section. I consider this possibility in the conclusion (pp. 246-249).

585 The general meaning of the term *samuggama* would be 'coming into being' or 'arising', but the commentary explains it in the sense of simultaneous existence. Therefore I have rendered it as 'coming into co-existence'.

586 This refers to the relative duration of the material and mental process (i.e. the ratio of 1: 16/ 17).

587 This category and the following three ([5]-[7]) show the mode in which the material and mental processes change, in terms of the three sub-divisions of a moment, from the arising of rebirth-linking conscousness with the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality to death consciousness and the termination of *kamma*-born materiality. The term 'synchronous' (*eka*) here refers to the simultaneity of material and mental phenomena that occur at rebirth [4] or cease at death [5]. The term 'asynchronous'(*nānā*), however, denotes the absence of simultaneity in the origination-moment or the cessation-moment of mental and material phenomena [7]. That is to say, they never coincide during the course of life, except at the moments of rebirth and death. Item [6] applies to the co-nascent relationship (*sahajāta*), such as that between the *citta* and its concomitant *cetasika*, or between the four *mahābhūtas* and *upādā-rūpas* etc.. The general principle laid down in the previous item [3] that material phenomena are of longer duration than mental phenomena is applied to the above four categories. The English renderings 'single' and 'multiple' do not sufficiently convey the meaning of their relative duration. In particular, the term 'multiple' fails to denote the time difference between the material and mental processes.

spontaneously born (*opapātika*).[588] Therein, the coming into co-existence of one conceived in a womb should be thus discerned. For at the moment of the rebirth-linking (*paṭisandhi*) of beings that are conceived in a womb, the five *khandhas* appear simultaneously, not in any sequence.[589] At that moment the material continuity which has appeared, called the speck (*kalala*, the zygote, i.e. the newly fertilized egg),[590] is [extremely] minute. To say as much as could be drunk by a small fly at one draught would be excessive. It is said to be

588 The four modes of generation (*yoni*), i.e. the egg-born (*aṇḍajā)*, the womb-born (*jalābujā*), the moisture-born (*saṃsedajā*), and the spontaneous born (*opapātikā*) are expounded in the *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta*. Gods and denizens of hell and certain human beings and some beings in the lower worlds are called beings spontaneously born (*devā nerayikā ekacce ca manussā ekacce ca vinipātikā*, M I 73). This implies that the term *opapātika* as a residual category could include those forms of animal life (note the category: certain human beings) which were not readily classifiable under the other three categories. The commentary confirms this, stating that the *opapātika* refers to those who are born in such a manner that they seem to have arisen by means other than these (*vinā etehi kāraṇehi uppatitvā viya nibbattāti opapātikā*. Ps II 36; cf. *opapātiko ti sesayonipaṭikkhepavacanam etaṃ*, Ps I 164). Gunawardana (1984, p. 6) however thinks that this is the modified and improved definition of the term *opapātika* by Sri Lankan in commentaries, but I suggest that it could be just an elaboration of the glosses in the *Mūla* text (see above).
The *Mahābhārata* (MHB XVIII, p. 151, 14.42.19) and the *Manudharmaśāstra* (Bühler, 1886, pp. 15-16) also speak of a fourfold classification of the biological world. Of these the first three, the *aṇḍaja*, the *jarāyuja* and the *svedaja*, are the same as the first three categories of the *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta*. The fourth category, the *udbhijja* in Sanskrit works, pertains to generation in the plant world. The only Sanskrit works in which the term *aupapāduka/ upapāduka*, the equivalent of *opapātika*, occurs are Buddhist texts. Gunawardana (1984, p. 6, fn. 28) erroneously refers to the Sanskrit equivalent to *aupapātika* and assumes that this term was derived from the Pāli *opapātika*. One expects this to be the right derivation (*upapāta +ika = aupapātika*), but this word simply does not occur in any existing Buddhist Sanskrit texts, as Childers has already noted, criticising it as one of the numerous Pāli words which have been mis-treated by the northern Buddhist texts (Childers, s.v. *opapātika*). Edgerton however argues that the historical form should be derived from *upa √pad*; for further discussion on this matter see BHSD, s.v. *aupapāduka*, and CPD, s.v. *opapātika* for the adoption of Edgerton's suggestion.

589 Lit. neither before nor after (*apacchā apure*).

590 I have added the biomedical term 'zygote' (GR. zygōtos: yoked together) for the term *kalala*. This should not be translated as the embryo or the foetus, for it is a specific term which denotes the first stage just after fertilization. The Pāli/ Sanskrit equivalent of the embryo or the foetus is *gabbha/ garbha*, which also carries the meaning 'womb' (strictly speaking, in certain scientific circles the term embryo is used to designate the developing human from about two weeks after fertilization until the end of week 8, and the term foetus from the beginning of week 9 to birth, but I have not applied this precise division). A number of embryonic designations, namely the old established terms *kalala*, *abbuda*, *pesī*, *ghana*, *pasākhā* occur in the *Yakkhasaṃyutta* (S I 206). Mrs Rhys Davids left them untranslated (I 263), obviously because the English equivalents for these technical terms were not readily available and well-established embryonic terms did not exist in those days (the first edition appeared in 1917). A speck, i.e. the word for *kalala*, is one of the new renderings of embryonic terms in Prof. Gombrich and Dr. Somaratne's translation of the *Yakkhasaṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*. They have rendered *abbuda* as a bubble, *pesī* as a lump, *ghana* as a trunk and *pasākhā* as branches. I have mostly adopted these renderings with the exception of the two terms *abbuda* and *pesī*. For the former I have suggested the rendering "sprout pouch" and for the latter I have added the word 'pith' i.e. "a lump of pith" < I am grateful to Prof Gombrich for providing me with their draft translation which will be published in due course by The Pali Text Society>. The terms used are fairly consistent with those denoting the gradual development of seeds in the plant world: a speck (*kalala*)/ a seed → a sprout pouch (*abbuda*)/ a sprout → a lump of pith (*pesī)*/ a seed leaf or a shoot → a trunk (*ghana*)/ a stem → branches (*pasākhā*). Therefore I assume that the Buddha implicitly draws, in the *Saṃyutta* passage, on an analogy between the early development of seeds in the plant world and the pre-embryonic development of a human being. As Suneson (1991, p.112) pointed out, these are the earliest embryonic terms in Indian non-medical texts along with the *Mahābhārata* (12. 308. 114, p. 1722). Although they bear a highly technical sense, since this is a non-medical and ancient text, I have not directly proposed modern biomedical terms, providing them instead in parentheses. <I will present a detailed discussion of the embryonic terms in Buddhist texts in a journal.>

"as much as a drop hanging on the tip of a fine needle dipped into oil, withdrawn and allowed to drip". It is smaller than that;[591] "as much as a drop hanging on the tip of a single hair after it has been withdrawn from oil, held and allowed to drip", it is said. It is even smaller than that; when a hair of the humans living in this country is split into eight, a hair of the Uttarakurus measures one of those parts – as much as a drop hanging on the tip of that after it has been withdrawn from purified sesame oil. It is even smaller than that; newborn kid's wool[592] is called subtle – it is said to be as much as a drop hanging on the tip of a single fibre of that, withdrawn from purified sesame oil and allowed to drip. But it is transparent, purified, unclouded, clean, similar in appearance to a drop of purified sesame oil. This too is said:

> Like a drop of sesame oil, [or of] unclouded cream of ghee,
> Thus is pronounced the counterpart of the embryo's appearance.[593]

22[5-14] Thus there are three types of continuity of the minute material continuity: the [heart] basis decad ([*hadaya-*]*vatthudasaka*),[594] the body decad (*kāyadasaka*) and the sex decad (*bhāvadasaka*), in terms of the femininity faculty in the case of a woman or the masculinity faculty in the case of a man. Therein, (1) the materiality of the [heart] basis ([*hadaya-*]*vatthurūpa*), (2-5) the four great primaries on which that depends, (6-9) the colour, smell, taste and nutritive essence (*ojā*) dependent on those, and (10) life (*jīvita*)- these are called the

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591 Lit. having rejected that (*taṃ paṭikkhipitvā*).

592 *Jāti-uṇṇa*: see Vism XVII § 152; Vism-mhṭ [N^e] III 1285[17-8] explains it as a day old ram kid's wool, etc. (*tadahujāta-eḷakassa lomaṃ …*).

593 Spk I 300; cf. Nidd-a I 247; Sp II 437. Cf. the zygote is said to be approximately 0.1 mm in diameter, according to modern embryology, and some writers on human embryology give the graphic description: "no larger than the dot on this 'i' or smaller than a printed full stop". Its fragile transparency can be revealed under a microscope (Flanagan, 1996, p. 13; Beckett, 1995, p. 120).

594 Here, the text simply says *vatthu*, but the commentarial tradition recognizes it as *hadaya-vatthu* (the heart basis), which was later added to the list of types of derived material elements, and recognized as the physical basis of the mind element (*mano-dhātu*) and the mind-consciousness element (*mano-viññāna-dhātu*). Such a concept, however, does not occur in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. Even in the section in the *Dhammasaṅgani* which provides an exhaustive classification of matter, no mention of *hadaya-vattha* is found. The first *Abhidhamma* canonical reference to a physical basis of mental activity appears in the *Paṭṭhāna* (Tikap 4), but this text also fails to specify the basis with the term *hadaya-vatthu*. In spite of the lack of scriptural support, the later Theravādin *Abhidhamma* tradition accepted the theory that the heart was the seat of mental activity, but the one question the commentators still had to answer was why the term *hadaya-vatthu* was not mentioned in the *Dhammasaṅgani*. According to Dhammapāla, the commentator on the *Visuddhimagga*, the omission had to be made in order to maintain consistency in the method of exposition between the *Vatthu-duka* and *Ārammaṇa-duka* sections of the *Dhammasaṅgani*, (see Ñāṇamoli's Vism Trsl, 1956, pp. 497, fn. 26 for a translation of this comment in Vism-mhṭ [N^e] II 978[18]-979[23]). – For a critique of this suggestion, see Karunadasa (1967, p. 63), and for further discussion of this issue in recent publications, see Harvey (1993, pp. 29-41), Suwanda (1995, pp. 409-430) and Hamilton (1996, pp. 22-24).

[heart] basis decad.[595] (1) The tranquillized subtle [materiality] of the body (*kāya-pasāda*),[596] (2-5) the four great primaries on which that depends, (6-9) the colour, smell, taste and nutritive essence dependent on those, and (10) life- these are the body decad. (1) In the case of a woman the female sex, in the case of a man the male sex, (2-5) the four great primaries on which that depends, (6-9) the colour, smell, taste and nutritive essence dependent on those, and (10) life – these are the sex decad.

22[15-21] Thus in the rebirth-linking of the womb-conceived beings, the thirty *kamma*-born forms of materiality are called, by precise definition, the *rūpakkhandha*. However, the feeling which is co-nascent with rebirth-linking consciousness is the *vedanākhandha*; the apperception is the *saññākhandha*; the karmic formations are the *saṃkhārakkhandha*; the rebirth-linking consciousness is the *viññāṇakkhandha*. This is how the five *khandhas* are completed at the moment of rebirth-linking of those conceived in a womb.

22[22-26] However, if there is a sexless (*napuṃsaka*) rebirth-linking, the sex decad is missing and it is the twenty *kamma*-born forms of materiality that are called the *rūpakkhandha* by

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595 The four great primaries and the four secondaries form the basic octad (*suddhaṭṭhaka*). The material faculty of life (*rūpa-jīvitindriya*) is added to the basic octad to make it organic, resulting in the vital ennead (*jīvita-navaka*). The [heart] basis decad, the body-decad and the sex-decad are then formed by adding, respectively, the materiality of the [heart] basis, the tranquillized subtle material element of the body (*kāyapasāda*) and the female sex or the male sex to the vital ennead. The same method can be applied to the remaining four sense organs, resulting in the eye-decad (*cakkhu-dasaka*), the ear-decad (*sotadasaka*), the nose-decad (*ghāna-dasaka*) and tongue-decad (*jivhā-dasaka*). See Karunadasa 1967, pp. 155-157.

596 The term *pasāda* literally means brightness, clearness, transparency or settledness, and in some contexts in the *Sutta-piṭaka*, also means mental composure or tranquillity. Gethin (1992a, p. 112ff.) discusses the close relationship, in such contexts, between *pasāda* and *saddhā*, faith, in a psychology of 'confidence'. In the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, however, it is used as a term describing the five types of sense-sphere (*āyatana*) with regard to each of the sense organs (Dhs § 597, § 697, etc.; Vibh 70-71, 122). The *Dhammasaṅgani* commentary distinguishes *pasāda-cakkhu* etc. (the tranquillized subtle eye) from the gross sense organ which functions as its support. What is conventionally called the eye, composed of living-flesh (*maṃsa-cakkhu*), is spoken of in the commentary as the composite eye (*sasambhāra-cakkhu*), a compound of various material phenomena. However, the tranquillized subtle eye (*pasāda-cakkhu*) is derived from the four great primaries, and is the sensitive substance in the retina that registers light and colour and serves as a physical base and door for eye-consciousness. In the same way each tranquillized subtle organ has its own registering system and supporting function for the respective consciousness (As 306-307). The term *pasāda* is often translated as 'sensitivity' or 'sensibility' by scholars (Ñāṇamoli, 1956, pp. 489ff.; Bodhi, 1993, pp. 238-239; Karunadasa, 1967, p. 45). They seem to emphasize it as an attribute rather than as a substance. S. Hamilton (1996, p. 21) renders it as 'sensitive surface'. L.S. Cousins, however, has proposed the rendering 'tranquillized' for the *pasāda*; accordingly, he translates *pasāda-rūpa* as 'tranquillized materiality' in a handout provided for the *Abhidhamma* Course at the Oriental Institute in Oxford University (Ox Abhidh 7, July 06, 1997). His rendering, without losing sight of the basic meaning of the term *pasāda*, gives more emphasis to the substances in accordance with the commentarial interpretation. I have therefore adopted it with the addition of the adjective 'subtle', as this would also denote the attribute of the term *pasāda*. The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas seem to understand the Saṅskrit equivalent *prasāda* along the same lines as the Theravādins. <See Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (I kr 9cd, pp. 5-6) and its commentary by Yaśomitra (Abhk-vy I kr 9cd, pp. 23-25), and see also de La Vallée Poussin's translation which renders the term *prasāda* as 'des éléments matériels subtils'. For a brief comparison of the uses of the term in other traditions of Indian philosophy, see Karunadasa (1967, pp. 44-49)>.

way of the decads. The feelings and so on are the same as above. This also is how the five *khandhas* are completed at the moment of rebirth-linking of those conceived in a womb.

22[27-33] In this place the succession of triple origination (*ti-samuṭṭhānika-ppaveṇi*)[597] should have been expounded. Instead of expounding that, however, the coming into co-existence of one spontaneously born is pointed out. For at the moment of rebirth-linking of those born spontaneously with their [sense-] bases (*āyatana*) complete, there appear seven types of material continuity, namely, the three [decads] given above and the eye, ear, nose and tongue decads.[598] Therein, the eye decad and so on are very similar to the body decad. But in the case of one who is sexless there is no sex decad.

22[34]-23[5] Thus the seventy and the sixty [in the case of the sexless] *kamma*-born forms of materiality of those spontaneously born with complete [sense-] bases are called the *rūpakkhandha*. *Vedanākhandha* and the other *khandhas* are of the kind stated above – this is how the five *khandhas* are completed at the moment of rebirth-linking of those born spontaneously. This is called the coming into co-existence of those born spontaneously. Thus in the first place the five *khandhas* should be discerned in terms of coming into co-existence.

23[6-12] [2] **In terms of order of succession**: but since the five *khandhas* of those conceived in a womb have thus not arisen in any sequence, is it materiality that first gives rise to (*samuṭṭhāpeti*) materiality or is it immateriality? It is materiality only that gives rise to materiality, not immateriality. Why? Because of the fact that rebirth-linking consciousness does not produce materiality. For there are sixteen kinds of consciousness that do not give rise to materiality,[599] namely, (1) the rebirth-linking consciousness of all beings, (2) the

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597 The continuity of material groups in the four modes of origin are as follows: i) *kamma*-born (*kammasamuṭṭhāna*) from the time of rebirth-linking, ii) consciousness-born (*cittasamuṭṭhāna*) from the second moment of consciousness (i.e. from the first *bhavaṅga-citta*), iii) temperature-born (*utusamuṭṭhāna*) from the time of the stage of endurance, iv) nutriment-born (*āhārasamuṭṭhāna*) from the time of the diffusion of nutritive essences. The first mode of origin has been expounded above, so the succession of triple origination here refers to the remaining three modes of origin. (See Bodhi, 1993, p. 256).

598 All the forms of materiality in the sense-world (*kāmaloka*) arise during the course of existence, but at the rebirth-linking of moisture-born beings and those of spontaneous birth, there arise at most the seven decads, and in the case of womb-born creatures only three decads. (See Bodhi, 1993, p. 255).

599 The *Vibhaṅga* commentary seems to be a source reference for the notion that a certain type of consciousness lacks the power to produce materiality, for it here provides a detailed explanation with similes. The *Dhammasaṅgani* commentary (As 325) and the *Visuddhimagga* (XX §31) merely list those sixteen items without further exposition.

death consciousness of those who have destroyed the cankers (*Arahat*), (3-12) the two sets of five consciousnesses[600] and (13-16) the four immaterial resultant consciousnesses.[601]

23^{13}-24^{7} Therein, (1) rebirth-linking consciousness in the first place does not give rise to materiality owing to weakness of the [heart] basis ([*hadaya*-] *vatthu*), its having no foundation, its deficiency in conditions (*paccaya*), and its recent arrival (*āgantukatā*). For therein, the co-nascent [heart] basis is weak at the moment of arising; so owing to the weakness of the [heart] basis it does not give rise [to materiality]. Moreover, just as a man falling into a chasm cannot give another support, so also this has no foundation, as if it were falling into a chasm, because it is impelled by the force of *kamma*. Thus it does not give rise to materiality, not only due to its being impelled by the force of *kamma* but also due to its having no foundation. Furthermore rebirth-linking consciousness is arisen [simultaneously] with the [heart] basis, not in any sequence. [So] the [heart] basis cannot be a condition for it by being prenascent;[602] if it could be, [rebirth-linking consciousness] would give rise to materiality. When the [heart] basis is able to be a condition by being prenascent, then the succession is continued (*paveṇi ghaṭīyati*); and there consciousness, not being deficient in factors,[603] gives rise to materiality. For if consciousness were to give rise to materiality at the moment of presence (*ṭhāna*) or at the moment of dissolution (*bhaṅga*), [then] rebirth-linking consciousness would also give rise to materiality. But consciousness does not give rise to materiality in those two moments. Moreover, just as a mushroom bud, when it sprouts out of the earth, rises up taking [with it] grains of soil, so consciousness, depending on the prenascent [heart] basis, rises up together with the eight

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600 Eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-consciousness of skilful and unskilful results (see Vism XIV §§ 98, 101 and the table (III) at the end of Ñāṇamoli's Vism Trsl, 1956).

601 Boundless space, boundless consciousness, nothingness, neither-perception-nor-non-perception, (see Vism XIV § 104 and the table (III) at the end of Ñāṇamoli's Vism Trsl, 1956).

602 *Kamma*-born materiality, which includes the [heart] basis, cannot come into being independently of the rebirth-linking consciousness. This relation is technically called *sahajāta-paccaya* (co-nascence-condition) in the *Paṭṭhāna*, which contains the most comprehensive analysis of the conditionality between material and immaterial existence. Because the [heart] basis and the rebirth-linking consciousness are on a par, the relation between them is described as *aññamañña* (reciprocal). It is one of mutual support. For example, while A is a *sahajāta-paccaya* in relation to B, B too is a *sahajāta-paccaya* in relation to A. Therefore, their inter-relationship cannot be a pre-nascent condition (*purejāta-paccaya*) in which relation A must arise first and then become a support to B, which arises later. (See Tikap 3, 14, 37ff., and for discussion, Karunadasa, 1967, pp. 131-132.)

603 These are the *jhāna* factors, since it is these which give rise to materiality. (Vibh-mṭ [C^{e}] 18^{17-21}). If there is deficiency in *jhāna* factors, the consciousness factor (*cittaṅga*) is weak; if the consciousness factor is weak, it does not give rise to materiality, (cf. the reasoning provided for the two sets of five consciousnesses in the text 24^{16-18}).

kinds of materiality at the moment of its arising. Moreover, since the [heart] basis cannot become, at the moment of rebirth-linking, a condition [of its consciousness] by being prenascent, so owing also to a deficiency of condition, rebirth-linking consciousness does not give rise to materiality. Just as a man who visits a region he has not been to before cannot say to others: "Come, I will give you food and drink, perfumes and garlands inside the village," because it is not his own province and he is not familiar with it, so is rebirth-linking consciousness a visitor, and thus owing to its own recent arrival, it does not give rise to materiality. Furthermore, because the thirty *kamma*-born forms of materiality stand in the place of consciousness-born materiality,[604] rebirth-linking consciousness does not give rise to materiality.

24[8-15] (2) Besides, the death consciousness (*cuticitta*) of one whose cankers are destroyed does not give rise to [materiality][605] because of the severing of the root of the cycle [of existence]. For in him, as regards all [kinds of] existence, all roots are severed and incapable of arising and there is no prolongation of future becoming. In the case of the Stream Enterer, however, the root of the cycle [of existence] is severed in the eighth existence after seven existences [are ended]. Therefore in his case death consciousness gives rise to materiality during seven existences; in the case of the Once Returner, it does so during two, and in the case of the Non-Returner, it does so during one. In the case of one whose cankers are destroyed, because of the severing of the root of the cycle [of existence] as regards all kinds of existence, it does not give rise [to materiality].

24[16-18] (3-12) Besides, in the two sets of five consciousnesses there is no *jhāna* factor and there is no path factor and there is no root-cause (*hetu*), thus the consciousness factor

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604 Consciousness-born materiality (*cittasamuṭṭhāna*) at rebirth arises after the *kamma*-born materiality has come into existence, from the second moment of consciousness (i.e. from the first *bhavaṅga-citta*).

605 The sub-commentator (Ānanda) of the *Dhammasaṅgani* commentary disagrees with the position that the death consciousness of an Arahat alone does not give rise to materiality. Instead, he suggests that the death consciousness of all living beings does not give rise to materiality (As-mṭ [*C*^{e}] 151^{26}-152^{5}). Dhammapāla, the sub-commentator of the *Visuddhimagga*, follows Ānanda's suggestion and reproduces his argument (Vism-mhṭ [*N*^{e}] III 1450^{15}-1451^{13}). This has also been noted by the sub-commentator (Sumaṅgala) of the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* (Abhidh-vb 159^{30}-160^{1}), and for detailed discussion he has further referred to the *Abhidhammatthavikāsinī* (Abhidh-vk [*C*^{e}] 344^{4}-345^{22}). Cf. the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* commentary (Sv II 594^{29}-595^{3}) and its sub-commentary (Sv-pṭ II 239^{31}-240^{4}) which also remark that the death consciousness (*cuticitta*, i.e. the last *bhavaṅgacitta*) of all living beings is indeterminate (*avyākata*).

(*cittaṅga*) is weak; so because of the weakness of the consciousness factor these do not give rise to materiality.

24[19-26] (13-16) [Also] the four kinds of immaterial resultant consciousness, since there is no materiality in that type of existence, do not give rise to materiality. Moreover, not only those but the other forty-two kinds of consciousness[606] that arise in this [immaterial] becoming, namely, eight skilful of the sense-sphere, ten unskilful [of the sense-sphere],[607] nine functional consciousnesses [of the sense-sphere][608], four skilful of the immaterial, four functional of the immaterial, three path consciousnesses[609] and four fruition consciousnesses – these also here do not give rise to materiality due to the sheer absence of materiality. Thus rebirth-linking consciousness does not give rise to materiality.

24[26-35] On the contrary, it is temperature (*utu*)[610] that first gives rise to materiality.[611] What is this temperature? It is the fire element (*tejo-dhātu*) within the thirty *kamma*-born

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606 Consciousness of a particular sphere is not tied to the corresponding plane, but may arise on other planes of existence as well; for instance, fine-material and immaterial-sphere consciousnesses can arise on the sense-plane, and sense-sphere consciousnesses can arise on the fine-material and immaterial planes (see Bodhi, 1993, p. 30). In the same way, 27 consciousnesses (i.e. 8 skilful +10 unskilful + 9 functional) out of the 42 kinds above belong to the sense-sphere, but they occur on the immaterial planes. Therefore, due to the absence of materiality in that plane, they do not give rise to materiality. There are 4 path consciousnesses,12 unskilful consciousnesses and 11 functional ones in the standard lists (see fns. 609, 610 and 611, and the table (III) at the end of Ñāṇamoli's Vism Trsl, 1956). One may ask why one item from the 4 lists (4–1=3) of path consciousnesses of the supramundane path, two items from the 12 lists (12–2=10) of unskilful consciousnesses, and also two items from the 11 lists (11–2=9) of functional ones are missing. Vibh-mṭ and Vibh-aṭ are silent on these lists. I hope to figure this out later.

607 There are, in total, 12 unskilful consciousnesses of the sense sphere rooted in greed (8) + hatred (2) + delusion (2).

608 There are, in total, 11 functional consciousnesses of the sense-sphere with root-cause (8) +without root-cause (3).

609 There are, in total, 4 path consciousnesses of the supramundane path: stream-entry, once-return, non-return and arahanship.

610 The term *utu* has various usages according to its context. The most general meaning is 'a division of time, period and season'. The main characteristics of the changing seasons are changes in temperature and weather, so it may sometimes be translated as 'weather', 'climate' or 'temperature', without, however, losing sight of the basic meaning of the term (CPD, s.v. *utu*). In particular, when its context is female fecundity, it refers to menstruation and the subsequent fertile period. A recent study by W. Slaje shows that the term *ṛtú*, the Vedic Sanskrit equivalent of *utu*, was used from the Vedic period as a term for human reproduction, denoting "a period of female fecundity" lasting – according to different traditions – between twelve and sixteen days, and its derivative *ṛtv<i>ya* refers to "a period fit for reproduction" (JEĀS 4, 1995, p. 148). The term *utunī*, the Pāli equivalent of *ṛtv<i>ya*, often occurs in the Pāli canon as one of three necessary conditions for conception (M I. 265-6; II 156-7; A III 226, etc.), that is to say, a specific condition in women which was supposed to be particularly favourable for conception. There are, moreover, several instances in the Pāli *Sutta* and *Vinaya* texts in which the term *utunī* refers to the period of menstruation (S IV 239; Vin IV 303, etc.). In the Pāli *Abhidhamma* and post-canonical texts, however, the term *utu* is explicitly used as a technical term to denote generative conditions of materiality. The kind of matter conditioned by *utu* is called *utusamuṭṭhāna-rūpa* (temperature- or season- born materiality). It is glossed above by the commentator as 'the fire element' (*tejodhātu*) within the thirty *kamma*-born kinds of materiality (*kammasamuṭṭhana-rūpa*) arisen at the moment of rebirth-linking. In this context, in contrast to the previous usage (i.e. "a period fit for reproduction" or "the period of menstruation" before fertilization), the term denotes the generative condition of materiality just after fertilization. According to the sub-

forms of materiality that arisen at the moment of rebirth-linking. That, after acting as a foundation (*ṭhānaṃ patvā*), gives rise to the eight kinds of materiality.[612] Moreover, this temperature is slow to cease. Thought is swift to cease. While that still endures, sixteen thoughts arise and cease (*tasmiṃ dharante 'va soḷasa cittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhantī*, see Figure 3-5).[613] Among these, the first life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) consciousness, immediately after rebirth linking, gives rise to the eight kinds of materiality precisely at the moment of its arising. However, when it is time for the arising of sound, then temperature and consciousness will give rise to the sound ennead (*sadda-navaka*).[614]

24[35]-25[4] Also material nutriment (*kabaḷiṅkārâhāra*),[615] after acting as a base, gives rise to the eight kinds of materiality. But where would material nutriment come from? From the mother. For it is said:

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commentator, the generative function commences precisely at the endurance moment of rebirth-linking consciousness, and it carries on throughout life up to death. Commonsense tells us that the optimum temperature in the external environment and the internal organs is one of the essential factors for growth of the organic material world. In the same way, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* seems to imply that the internal fire element found at rebirth in the material groups born of *kamma* [in an embryo], together with the external fire element [perhaps the temperature of the womb], produces, under optimum conditions, an organic materiality which has originated from temperature (see Bodhi, 1993, p. 250, Karunadasa, 1967, p. 113, and fn. 31 for the citation of the passage). Thus the term *utu* in post-canonical texts has the connotation both of the environmental seasonal temperature and of an internal fire element comprising hot and cold. There does not seem to be an English word that corresponds to the integral meaning of the term. Therefore, I have kept the rendering 'temperature', but with the qualifications noted here.

611 Vibh-mṭ [C^e] 19[18-9]: "The intented meaning is: **on the contrary, it is temperature** (*utu*) **that first gives rise to materiality**, due to the act of causing origination, at the endurance moment of rebirth-linking consciousness." (***utu pana paṭhamaṃ rūpaṃ samuṭṭhāpeti*** *paṭisandhicittassa ṭhitikkhaṇe samuṭṭhāpanato ti adhippāyo*). Cf. Abhidh-s 31: "The fire element, which is known as the temperature of hot and cold, precisely on reaching its endurance stage [of rebirth-linking consciousness], produces internally and externally, under optimum [conditions] (*yathâraham*), materiality born from temperature." (*sītuṇhotusamaññātā tejodhātu ṭhitippattā va utusamuṭṭhānarūpaṃ ajjhattañ ca bahiddhā ca yathâraham samuṭṭhāpeti*).

612 The four great primaries and the four secondaries form the basic octad (*suddhaṭṭhaka*).

613 See § 3.1.3 for a hermeneutic problem – ambiguity in the phrase *tasmiṃ* [*rūpe*] *dharante*, and pp. 282-287 for sub-commentarial interpretations (Vibh-mṭ 19[24]-20[4]; Vibh-aṭ 24[22]-25[24]).

614 Sounds are classified into groups which originate from consciousness (*cittasamuṭṭhāna-kalāpa*) and from temperature (*utusamuṭṭhāna-kalāpa*). The vocal intimation ennead (*vacīviññatti-navaka*) and sound comprise the vocal intimation decad, and they are material phenomena originating from consciousness. The sound ennead (*sadda-navaka*) are material phenomena originating from temperature (Vism XVII § 193; Abhidh-s 32). Articulate sounds are caused by consciousness and inarticulate sounds by temperature (see As 340; Bodhi, 1993, p. 251).

615 Material nutriment (*kabaḷiṅkārâhāra*, variant: *kabalīkār*°) occurs in a stock phrase in the canonical texts (M I 48; S II 11, 98; D III 228, 276, etc,), which describe four kinds of nutriment, i.e. 1) *kabaḷiṅkārâhāra* (*oḷārika* or *sukhuma*), 2) *phasso*, 3) *manosañcetana* and 4) *viññāṇa*. Nutriment (*āhāra*) is to be understood here in a broad sense as an important condition for life-continuity. Material nutriment is an important condition for the physical body, contact for feeling, karmic volition for consciousness, and consciousness for mentality-materiality, i.e. the psychophysical organism in its totality. For an annotated compilation of the canonical and commentarial texts on the nutriments, see Nyanaponika Thera (1967), *The Four Nutriments of Life*.

> Whatever the mother eats for him by consuming food and drink, thereby a man (*naro*, i.e. an embryo)[616] in his mother's womb maintains himself. (S I 206; cf. Vism XVII §194, etc.)

25[5-21] Thus the child (i.e. the embryo) in the womb maintains itself on the nutritive essence (*ojā*) of the food and drink swallowed by the mother. That [nutritive essence] itself, after acting as its base, gives rise to the eight kinds of materiality. However, is not that nutritive essence harsh (*khara*) and the basis (*vatthu*, the thing, i.e. the embryo) soft (*sukhuma*)? How does this [harsh nutritive essence] acts as its base (*patiṭṭhāti*)[617] for that [tender embryo]? It does not act as its base at first, but when one or two weeks are past it acts as its base.[618] But no matter whether it acts as its base then, earlier or later, as soon as the nutritive essence of the food and drink swallowed by the mother acts as its base for the

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616 The origin of this verse seems to be the *Yakkha Saṃyutta* (S I 206). There is a variant reading '*tiro*' for '*naro*' in the citation in the *Visuddhimagga* of Harvard edition (XVII §194) and Indian edition (vol. III p. 1308). The *Mahāṭikā* of the Indian ed. glosses: ***tiro*** *ti tena mātukucchigatabhāvena tirokkho* (***tiro*** means he is out of sight [*tirokkho=tiras+akṣa* sk., *DPB*, s.v.] because he is in his mother's womb). See fn.3 in Harvard ed. and also *BS CD-R* Vol. 59, p. 168; Vol. 63, p. 353). But PTS ed. (p. 560) reads '*naro*'. The *Yakkha Saṃyutta* commentary comments: ***mātukucchigato naro*** *ti mātuyā tirokucchigato kucchiyā abbhantaragato ti attho* (**A man gone to the mother's womb** means one who has gone inside the womb, i.e. gone within the mother's womb). – Spk I 301, PTS; but *BS CD-R* Vol. 11, p. 286 reads *naro ti mātu naro kucchigato*. A variant reading recorded on the same page agrees with Spk I 301, PTS. Cf. '*tirokucchigata*' (D II 13) is glossed by '*antokucchigata'* (Sv II 436). Buddhaghosa may have thought it somewhat bizarre to use the word '*naro'* (a man) for an embryo, a speck-like tiny being, so he (or another redactor) may have replaced '*naro'* with '*tiro*', which fits the context (i.e. '*mātukucchigato tiro*' >'*tiromātukucchigato*': 'one who has gone within the mother's womb').

617 The verb *patiṭṭhāti* literally means 'establish', 'set up' 'act as a base'. Ñāṇamoli renders it 'establish itself on', but elsewhere he translates it 'pervade', as the nutritive essence diffuses from the mother's body and pervades the embryo. See Vism XX § 37: *mātarā paribhuttâhāro pi dārakassa sarīraṃ pharitvā rūpaṃ samuṭṭhāpeti. sarīre makkhitâhāro pi rūpaṃ samuṭṭhāpeti.* (The nutriment taken by a mother originates materiality by pervading the body of the child [in gestation]. Also nutriment smeared on the body originates materiality.) Ñāṇamoli's Vism Trsl, 1956, p. 717.

618 The *Yakkha Saṃyutta* commentary provides an interesting description of the mechanism by which an embryo is nourished by the nutritive essence (*ojā*) of the food and drink swallowed by the mother. It is explicitly stated that the navel of the embryo is connected with the membrane in the abdomen of the mother by a tube (i.e. the umbilical cord), through which nutrients (*āhārarasa*) continuously flow in to nourish the embryo. <Spk I 301; cf. Nidd-a I 248: ***tena so tattha yāpetī*** *ti tassa hi nābhito uṭṭhahitanāḷo mātu-udarapaṭalena ekâbaddho hoti. so uppaḷadaṇḍako viya chiddo. tena āhāraraso saṃsaritvā āhārasam-uṭṭhānarūpaṃ samuṭṭhāpeti. evaṃ so dasamāse yāpeti.* – "**He is thereby nourished**: for a hollow stalk (*nāḷa*, i.e. the umbilical cord) originating from the navel [of the embryo] is connected with the membrane in the abdomen of the mother. It is hollow like the stem of a waterlily. The nutritive essence (*āhārarasa*) continuously flows in and generates materiality originating from nutrients. He thus maintains life for ten months">. This has presumably been inferred from the fact that at delivery the foetus comes out with the umbilical cord connected to the mother's body. <Modern embryology informs us that implantation of the blastocyst (i.e. a small cluster of cells) commences at the end of the first week, and that well before the end of the second week the blastocyst penetrates and embeds itself completely within the uterine wall. During this second week, the embryo gradually burrows into the lining of the uterus and begins to break into the mother's blood capillaries. At one edge of the developing embryonic disc a thickening of cells can be seen that connects the developing embryo to the trophoblast, which is the outer wall of the early developing embryo. This connecting stalk forms the umbilical cord in the fourth week. Until the umbilical vessels are fully formed, oxygen and food can only get to the embryo cells by diffusion. Diffusion works as a gradual seepage of nutrients through the walls of each cell into the next. See *A Time to be Born: The Life of the Unborn Child*, by Nathanielsz (1994), pp. 21-24>.

child's body, it gives rise to the eight kinds of materiality. In the case of one who is of spontaneous rebirth, reborn in a place where chewable and tastable [food] exist, the nutritive essence, which acts as its base, owing to the taking and swallowing of these, gives rise to materiality in accordance with the normal process. One who is reborn in a forest which is without food and drink is very hungry – he turns over his spittle with his tongue and swallows it, and the nutritive essence in him, which obtains the base, gives rise to materiality. Thus, as regards the twenty-five divisions [of materiality],[619] two sorts of materiality only, i.e. the fire element and material nutriment, give rise to materiality. As regards the immaterial also, two *dhammas* only, i.e. consciousness and *kamma*-volition (*kamma-cetanā*), give rise to materiality.

25[21-29] Therein, materiality is weak at the moment of arising and at the moment of dissolution; at the moment of presence it is strong; and it is at the moment of presence that it gives rise to materiality. Thought is weak at the moment of presence and at the moment of dissolution, and strong only at the moment of arising; it is only at the moment of arising that it gives rise to materiality.[620] Karmic volition is a condition only when it has ceased. For *kamma* which was accumulated in the past as much as a hundred thousand *koṭis* of aeons ago becomes a condition in the present. *Kamma* which is accumulated now becomes a condition even a hundred thousand *koṭis* of aeons in the future. Thus should the order of succession be discerned.

25[30]-26[12] [3] **In terms of the limit of duration**: For how long a period does materiality last and for how long a period immateriality? Materiality is heavy to change and slow to cease; immateriality is light to change and quick to cease.[621] While materiality just endures, sixteen

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619 The twenty-five divisions probably refer to twenty-four kinds of derived materiality (*upādā-rūpa*) + one fire element (*tejodhātu*).

620 This is a general principle which describes the relative strength of the generative capacity of mind and matter. This principle has often been applied to theories such as the "disability of generative power of rebirth-linking consciousness" and the "relative duration of the material and mental process".

621 There is a general common sense assumption that the material phenomena which comprise Mt. Sumeru, stone, etc. change at a slower pace than do mental phenomena. According to canonical texts (A I 10; S II 95), mental events are in constant flux and they flow after each other with great speed, just as a monkey roaming through the forest grasps one branch after another. From this canonical description in conventional terms, the relative duration of material and mental phenomena can be readily envisaged, and this assumption probably results in the proposition that a material phenomenon lasts longer than a mental one (Vism XX § 23; Vism-mhṭ [N^e] III 1447[9-16]); cf. Kv 620). Subsequently, the unique theory of the relative duration of material and mental phenomena was formulated with a precise numerical calculation. I consider this section of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary as a source reference for the theory, from which other

thoughts arise and cease. That [materiality], however, ceases together with the seventeenth thought.[622] Likewise a man, thinking "I will knock down a fruit", might strike a tree branch with a mallet, and both fruits and leaves are released from their stalks at a single moment. At that, the fruits, owing to their own weight, fall first to the ground; the leaves, owing to their lightness, [fall to the ground] afterwards. So indeed, the release of the fruits and the leaves from their stalks at a single moment is like the appearance of the material and the immaterial states at the single moment of rebirth-linking. The falling fruits first to the ground owing to their weight is like the arising and ceasing of sixteen thoughts while materiality endures. The leaves falling to the ground afterwards owing to their lightness is like the ceasing of materiality together with the seventeenth thought.

26[12-34] Therein, although materiality is slow to cease and heavy to change and thought is quick to cease and light to change, materiality can not occur without immateriality nor immateriality without materiality. The occurrence of the two is coextensive (*ekappamāṇa*).[623] Here is this simile: "One man has dwarf legs and one long legs. When they are travelling together, in the time it takes the one with long legs to take one pace, the other takes repeated steps and advances sixteen steps. In the time in which the dwarf-legged man takes sixteen steps, the long-legged man lifts up and extends his leg to take only one step. Thus the one cannot out-distance the other, and the advance of the two is coextensive". This should be understood to be similar (*evaṃ sampadaṃ*). For immateriality is like the man with dwarf legs, materiality like the man with long legs. As the dwarf-legged man takes sixteen steps in the time in which the long-legged man takes a single pace, so among the immaterial states sixteen thoughts arise and cease while materiality endures. Just as what the two men do, while the dwarf-legged takes sixteen paces, the other draws up and extends his leg to take a single pace, so materiality ceases together with the seventeenth thought. As the two men's advance is coextensive, in that neither leaves the other behind, so materiality

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commentarial texts draw material to be used in various different contexts. This unique theory is followed by the two similes which occur exclusively here (checked by *BS CD-R*).

622 See § 3.1.2-(3).

623 If the occurrence of the material and mental phenomena were not co-extensive (*ekappamāṇa*), the perceived object had already passed away at the time of perception, and as a result, cognition of the world would always be delayed.

and immateriality occur coextensively, in that neither leaves the other behind. Thus should it be understood in terms of the limit of duration.

26[35]-27[15] [4] **In terms of synchronous arising and asynchronous cessation** (cf. Vism XX § 26): This should be illustrated by leaving out the last *kamma*-born [materiality].[624] This is because there comes first the rebirth-linking consciousness, then the second life-continuum,[625] the third life-continuum etc. up to the sixteenth life-continuum. As regards these, each has the three moments of arising, enduring and dissolution. Therein, the thirty *kamma*-born kinds of materiality arise in each of the three moments of each thought (see Figure 3-6). As regards these, the *kamma*-born materiality arisen at the moment of the arising of the rebirth-linking consciousness ceases precisely at the moment of arising of the seventeenth life-continuum consciousness; that arisen at the moment of endurance [ceases] precisely at the moment of its endurance; and that arisen at the moment of dissolution ceases precisely at the moment of its dissolution. Likewise, beginning with the second life-continuum consciousness, the method should be applied by linking each unit with its own seventeenth thought (see Figure 3-7). Thus the sixteen triads make forty-eight. This is called the forty-eight-fold succession of *kamma*-born materiality.[626] But this proceeds incessantly like the current of a river night and day, in those chewing and eating and sleeping and idling; thus should synchronous arising and asynchronous cessation be understood.

27[16-31] [5] **In terms of asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation**: [This] should be illustrated by means of the last *kamma*-born [materiality]. Therein, at the end of the lifespan karmic formation (*āyusaṅkhāra*), taking a unit of sixteen thoughts, [the last] two should be

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624 Vibh-mṭ [C^e] 21[7-14]: ***pacchimakammajaṃ ṭhapetvā*** *ti tassa cuticittena saha nirujjhanato nānānirodho n' atthī ti katvā vuttan ti vadanti. tassa pana ekuppādo pi n' atthi heṭṭhā soḷasake pacchimassa bhaṅgakkhaṇe uppattivacanato. yadi pana yassa ekuppādanānānirodhā dve pi na santi, taṃ ṭhapetabbaṃ. sabbam pi cittassa bhaṅgakkhaṇe uppannaṃ ṭhapetabbaṃ siyā. pacchimakammajassa pana uppattito parato cittesu pavattamānesu kammajarūpassa anuppattito vajjetabbaṃ gahetabbañ ca tadā n' atthī ti pacchima-kammajaṃ ṭhapetvā ti vuttan ti veditabbaṃ.* See Vibh-aṭ [C^e] 27[2-8].

625 From the standpoint of the life-continuum, the second life-continuum is the first consciousness subsequent to the rebirth-linking consciousness.

626 Vibh-mṭ [C^e] 21[14-20]: *tato pubbe pana* ***aṭṭhacattālīsakammajarūpapaveṇī*** *atthī ti tattha yaṃ cittassa uppādakkhaṇe uppannaṃ, taṃ aññassa uppādakkhaṇe nirujjhatī ti ekuppādanānānirodhan ti gahetvā ṭhitibhaṅgakkhaṇesu uppannarūpāni vajjetvā evaṃ ekuppādanānānirodhato veditabbā ti yojanā katā ti daṭṭhabbā. taṃ hi rūpaṃ arūpena, arūpañ ca tena ekuppādanānānirodhan ti. tattha saṅkhalikassa viya sambandho paveṇī ti katvā aṭṭhacattālīsakammajiyavacanaṃ kataṃ, aññathā ekūnapaññāsakammajiya-vacanaṃ kattabbaṃ siyā.* See Vibh-aṭ [C^e] 27[8-18].

linked together as the anterior sestadecad (*heṭṭhā soḷasaka*) and the subsequent sestadecad (*upari soḷasaka*). For the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality arisen at the moment of arising of the first thought in the anterior sestadecad cease precisely at the moment of arising of the first thought in the subsequent sestadecad; those which are arisen at the moment of endurance cease precisely at the moment of its endurance; those which are arisen at the moment of dissolution cease precisely at the moment of dissolution. However, in the very first sestadecad (*heṭṭhima-soḷasaka*) the thirty kinds of *kamma*-born materiality which is arisen at the moment of arising of the second thought etc. up to that of the sixteenth thought ceases precisely at the moment of arising of the death consciousness; that which is arisen at the moment of endurance [ceases] precisely at the moment of endurance of the death consciousness; and those which are arisen at the moment of dissolution cease precisely at the moment of dissolution of the death consciousness (see Figure 3-8). From then on the succession of *kamma*-born materiality does not proceed (see Figure 3-9). If it were to proceed, then beings would not be destroyed, pass away, grow old and die.

27^{32}-28^{12} What is said above, however, because it is handed down in the commentary as in the following passages: "The materiality which has arisen at the moment of arising of one thought ceases at the moment of arising of another thought, according to the method beginning: 'it ceases precisely at the moment of arising of the seventeenth life continuum consciousness' " – is at variance (*virujjhati*)[627] with the following passage in the Pāli [canon]: "In one whose bodily formation ceases, does his mental formation cease? That is affirmed" (Yam I 247^{11}).[628] How? Because the bodily formation is the wind of inhalation

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627 Vibh-mṭ [C^e] 22^{5-14}: *uppādakkhaṇe uppannaṃ aññassa uppādakkhaṇe nirujjhati, ṭhitikkhaṇe uppannaṃ aññassa ṭhitikkhaṇe, bhaṅgakkhaṇe uppannaṃ aññassa bhaṅgakkhaṇe nirujjhatī ti idaṃ aṭṭhakathāyaṃ āgatattā vuttan ti adhippāyo. attano panâdhippāyaṃ uppādakkhaṇe uppannaṃ nirodhakkhaṇe, ṭhitikkhaṇe uppannañ ca uppādakkhaṇe, bhaṅgakkhaṇe uppannaṃ ṭhitikkhaṇe nirujjhatī ti dīpeti yeva. evañ ca katvā addhānaparicchede taṃ pana sattarasamena cittena saddhiṃ nirujjhatī ti vuttaṃ.* ***imāya pāḷiyā virujjhati*** (cf. Yam-a 83^{21-26}). *kasmā? catusamuṭṭhānikarūpassa pi samānâyukatāya bhavitabbattā ti adhippāyo. yathā pana etehi yojitaṃ, tathā rūpassa ekuppādanānānirodhatā nānuppādekanirodhatā ca n' atthi yeva.* See Vibh-aṭ [C^e] 28^{1-13}.

628 Vibh-mṭ [C^e] 23^{17}-24^{11}: *yadi* ***saṅkhārayamake*** (Yam I 247; Yam [C^e] II 128) *kāyasaṅkhārassa cittasaṅkhārena sahuppādekanirodhavacanato abyākata-saddena cittasamuṭṭhānam ev' ettha gahitan ti kāraṇaṃ vadeyya, tam pi akāraṇaṃ. na hi tena vacanena aññarūpānaṃ cittena sahuppādasaha-nirodhapaṭikkhepo kato, nâpi nānuppādanānānirodhânujānanaṃ, n' eva cittasamuṭṭhānato aññassa abyākatabhāvanivāraṇañ ca kataṃ, tasmā tathā appaṭikkhittānânuññātānivāritâbyākatabhāvānaṃ sahuppādasahanirodhâdikānaṃ kammajādīnaṃ etena cittassa uppādakkhaṇe nirodho paṭikkhitto ti na sakkā kammajādīnaṃ cittassa uppādakkhaṇe nirodhaṃ vattuṃ. yamakapāḷi-anussaraṇe ca sati uppādânantaraṃ cittassa bhijjamānatā ti tasmiṃ khaṇe cittaṃ na ca rūpaṃ samuṭṭhāpeti vinassamānattā,*

and exhalation which is consciousness-born [materiality]. And consciousness-born materiality, having arisen at the moment of arising of a thought, endures while another sixteen thoughts arise. It ceases together with the very last of those sixteen. Thus it ceases together with the seventeenth [counting] from that thought (i.e. the 16th in the previous unit) with which it arises. It does not cease at the moment of arising or at the moment of endurance of any thought; and it also does not arise at the moment of endurance or at the moment of cessation [of any thought]. Because of the law that "This is the nature of consciousness-born materiality", it is stated as 'affirmed', owing to its ceasing in a simultaneously with the mental formation.

28[12-22] Moerover, what is stated as the law governing the moments of that which is consciousness-born [materiality] is also the rule governing the moments of *kamma*-born [materiality] and so on. Therefore the *kamma*-born materiality arisen together with rebirth-linking consciousness ceases together with the seventeenth [thought counting] from that (*tato paṭṭhāya*) [consciousness]; that which is arisen at the moment of endurance of the rebirth-linking consciousness ceases at the moment of arising of the eighteenth; that which is arisen at the moment of dissolution of the rebirth-linking consciousness ceases at the moment of endurance of the eighteenth (see Figure 3-11, cf. Figures 3-10, 3-12). In this way should the linking be done [up to the end] here. However, after that [arising of *kamma*-born materiality has ceased], only the temperature-born succession persists [till] it has to be said: "Carry away [this body] and have it burned". Thus should asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation be understood.

28[23-25] [6] **In terms of synchronous arising and synchronous cessation**: Materiality, however, arises synchronously and ceases synchronously with materiality. The immaterial

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nâpi ca aññassa rūpasamuṭṭhāpakassa sahāyabhāvaṃ gacchatī ti paṭisandhicittena sahuppanno utu tadanantarassa cittassa uppādakkhaṇe rūpaṃ samuṭṭhāpeyya. evañ ca sati rūpârūpānaṃ ādimhi saha rūpasamuṭṭhāpanato pubbâparato ti idam pi n' atthi; atilahuparivattañ ca cittan ti yena sahuppajjati, taṃ cittakkhaṇe rūpaṃ uppajjamānam evā ti sakkā vattuṃ. ten' eva hi taṃ paṭisandhito uddhaṃ acittasamuṭṭhānānaṃ attanā saha uppajjamānānaṃ na kenaci paccayena paccayo hoti, tadanantarañ ca taṃ ṭhitippattan ti tadanantaraṃ cittaṃ tassa pacchājātapaccayo hoti, na sahajātapaccayo ti. yadi evaṃ yassa kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjati, tassa vacisaṅkhāro nirujjhatī ti? no ti na vattabban ti ce? na, cittanirodhakkhaṇe rūpuppādârambhâbhāvato ti. nippariyāyena hi cittassa uppādakkhaṇe 'va rūpaṃ uppajjamānaṃ hoti, cittakkhaṇe pana avītivatte taṃ attano rūpasamuṭṭhāpanapurejātapaccayakiccaṃ na karoti, arūpañ ca tassa pacchājātapaccayo na hotī ti ṭhitippattivisesālābhaṃ sandhāya pariyāyena idaṃ vuttan ti. See Vibh-aṭ [C^e] 30^{28} -31^{25}.

arises synchronously and ceases synchronously with the immaterial. Thus should synchronous arising and synchronous cessation be understood.

28[26]-29[5] [7] However, **asynchronous arising and asynchronous cessation** should be understood in accordance with materiality of fourfold continuity. For in this body, from the soles of the feet up, from the hair of the head down and confined by the skin, materiality of fourfold origination occurs here and there, heaped in a mass. Synchronous origination, etc. is not to be observed in it as it occurs. However, it is just as when a line of termites or a line of ants, on being looked at, seems as though it were bound together, yet it is not bound together; for the head or the belly or the feet of one is near to the head of another, the head or belly or the feet of one is near the belly of another, the head or belly or the feet of one is near the feet of another. In the same way, indeed, in materiality of fourfold origination, the arising of one or its endurance or dissolution is at the moment of arising of another, the arising of one or its endurance or dissolution is at the moment of endurance of another, the arising of one or its endurance or dissolution is at the moment of dissolution of another. Thus should asynchronous arising and asynchronous cessation be understood here.

Note: As seen above, the five *khandhas* are classified in terms of sixteen aspects, out of which seven ([1]–[7]) are directly relevant to the doctrine of momentariness, five ([8]–[12]) are merely repeated as in the *Mūla* text (Vibh 1-12), and the rest ([13]–[16]) are irrelevant to the present topic.

5.3.2 The *Pakiṇṇakakathā* of the *Vibhaṅga* sub-commentaries (*Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā*) (A supplementary note for Vibh-a 21[9]-29[20])

The *Mūlaṭīkā* (Vibh-mṭ [C^e] 19[24]-20[4])

"**While that still endures, sixteen thoughts arise and cease**": with this statement, however, the following [four hypothetical options] have been implied:

[i] If [both] the origination and the dissolution moments are included within the enduring moment itself, materiality has a lifespan of sixteen thought moments.

[ii] Likewise, if only the dissolution moment is included, having excluded the origination moment, [materiality has] a lifespan of seventeen thought moments.

[iii] If [only] the origination moment is included, having excluded the dissolution moment, [materiality has] a lifespan of more than sixteen thought moments.

[iv] If, however, [both] the origination and dissolution moments are excluded from the enduring moment [itself], [materiality has] a lifespan of more than seventeen thought moments. (See Figure 3-5).

However, because the phrase "**among these** [sixteen thoughts, the first life-continuum consciousness] **immediately after rebirth-linking**" implies the position that rebirth-linking [consciousness] has also been included among these [sixteen thoughts which occur] within the range of the enduring moment of [temperature-born materiality], therefore the following options are to be discerned: either it will be stated (*vakkhamānā*)[629] that the lifespan has more than sixteen thought moments as the origination moment has been included while the dissolution moment has been excluded [iii], or alternatively [when both the origination moment and the dissolution moment] have been included, it means that the lifespan has sixteen thought moments.[i]"

(***tasmiṃ dharante 'va soḷasa cittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhantī*** *ti etena pana vacanena yadi uppādanirodhakkhaṇā*1 *2dharamānakkhaṇe 'va gahitā, soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukaṃ rūpan ti vuttaṃ hoti;*2 *3ath' uppādakkhaṇaṃ aggahetvā nirodhakkhaṇo 'va gahito, sattarasacittakkhaṇâyukan ti.*3 sace nirodhakkhaṇaṃ aggahetvā uppādakkhaṇo gahito, adhikasoḷasacittakkhaṇâyukan ti;*4 yadi pana uppādanirodhakkhaṇā dharamāna-*

629 Vibh-a 25[30]-26[12], *vakkhamānā*, med. fut. pt.

kkhaṇe na gahitā, adhikasattarasacittakkhaṇâyukan ti. yasmā pana[*5] **tesu paṭisandhi-anantaran** *ti paṭisandhi pi* [*6]*tassa dharamānakkhaṇe uppannesu gahitā, tasmā uppādakkhaṇo dharamānakkhaṇe gahito ti nirodhakkhaṇe aggahite*[*6] [*7]*adhikasoḷasa-cittakkhaṇâyukatā vakkhamānā,*[*7] [*8]*gahite vā soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukatā adhippetā ti veditabbā.*[*8])

The *Anuṭīkā* (Vibh-aṭ [C^e] 24^{22}-25^{24})

[*1] ***uppādanirodhakkhaṇā*** *ti yathā vuttesu soḷasasu cittesu ādicittassa uppādakkhaṇo, soḷasamacittassa nirodhakkhaṇo cā ti vadanti, rūpass' eva pana uppādanirodhakkhaṇā veditabbā.*

(**The origination and the dissolution-moments** refer respectively to the origination moment of the initial thought of the sixteen thoughts as explained above, as well as the dissolution moment of the sixteenth thought, but the origination and dissolution moments should be discerned in the case of materiality itself.)

[*2] ***dharamānakkhaṇe evā*** *ti tassa utuno vijjamānakkhaṇe 'va yadi gahitā,* ***soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukaṃ rūpan ti vuttaṃ hoti*** *soḷasah' eva cittehi tassa dharamānatāya paricchinnattā.*

(**Within the enduring moment itself**: within the existing moment of temperature [-born materiality], if [both the origination and dissolution moments] are included, **it has been stated that materiality has a lifespan of sixteen thought moments**, for its endurance is limited to precisely sixteen thoughts.)

[*3] ***uppādakkhaṇaṃ aggahetvā*** *ti utuno dharamānakkhaṇe uppādakkhaṇaṃ aggahetvā nirodhakkhaṇo atha gahito;* ***sattarasacittakkhaṇâyukaṃ*** *rūpan ti vuttaṃ hoti. uppādakkhaṇasahitena ca ekassa cittakkhaṇassa gahitattā.*

(**Having excluded the origination moment**: it is said that materiality has a lifespan of seventeen thought moments, likewise, if the dissolution moment is included, having excluded the origination moment, within the enduring moment of

temperature [-born materiality]. For one [additional] thought moment has been taken by being accompanied with the origination moment.)

*4 ***adhikasoḷasacittakkhaṇâyukan*** *ti vuttaṃ hoti nirodhakkhaṇassa bahikatattā.*

(It is said that [materiality has] **the lifespan of more than sixteen thought moments** because the dissolution moment occurs outside [the sixteen thought moments].)

*5 *evaṃ uppādanirodhakkhaṇesu gahitesu, aggahitesu ca soḷasasattarasa-cittakkhaṇâyukatā, tato adhikacittakkhaṇâyukatā ca siyā ti dassetvā idāni tattha ṭhitapakkhaṃ dassento* ***yasmā panā*** *ti ādim āha.*

(Thus, in this respect (*idāni*), he said **but because**...etc., illustrating what is [alternatively] meant by 'endurance' (*ṭhiti-pakkha*) in this context (*tattha*), after showing that a lifespan would have more than [sixteen or seventeen] thought moments. A lifespan of sixteen or seventeen thought moments depends on whether the origination and dissolution moments have been included or excluded.)

*6 *tattha* ***tassa dharamānakkhaṇe uppannesū*** *ti tassa utuno dharamānakkhaṇe uppannesu soḷasasu cittesu. paṭisandhi pi yasmā gahitā, tasmā utuno* ***uppādakkhaṇo dharamānakkhaṇe gahito ti nirodhakkhaṇe aggahite****. rūpe dharante yeva soḷasacittāni uppajjitvā nirujjhanti; taṃ pana sattarasamena cittena saddhiṃ nirujjhatī ti evaṃ aṭṭhakathāyaṃ vakkhamānā adhikasoḷasacitta-kkhaṇâyukatā adhippetā, gahite vā nirodhakkhaṇe soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukatā adhippetā ti sambandho.*

(Therein, **among these arisen** ...**within the range of its enduring moment** means that among these sixteen thoughts arisen within the range of the enduring moment of that temperature [-born materiality]. Because rebirth-linking [con-sciousness] has also been included among these [sixteen thoughts], therefore **the origination moment of temperature** [-born materiality] **has been included, when the**

dissolution moment has been excluded, within the range of the enduring moment of [materiality]. Subsequently, it will be stated in the [*Vibhaṅga*] commentary (25^{30}-26^{12}) that while materiality just endures, sixteen thoughts arise and cease. That [materiality], however, ceases together with the seventeenth thought. It means that the lifespan has more than sixteen thought moments, or alternatively that when the dissolution moment has [also] been included, a lifespan has more than sixteen thought moments. This is how it hangs together.)

*[7] *ettha ca **adhikasoḷasacittakkhaṇâyukatā** ti idaṃ paṭisandhicittassa uppādakkhaṇo gahito ti katvā vuttaṃ. yasmā pana Paṭicca-samuppāda-vibhaṅgavaṇṇanāyaṃ dve bhavaṅgāni, āvajjanaṃ, dassanaṃ, sampaṭicchanaṃ, santīraṇaṃ, voṭṭhabbanaṃ,[#] pañca javanāni, dve tadārammaṇāni, ekaṃ cuticittan ti pañcadasa cittakkhaṇā atītā honti, athâvasesa-ekacittakkhaṇâyuke ti* (Vibh-a 158). *tathā tadārammaṇapariyosānāni ekaṃ cuticittaṃ; tadavasāne tasmiṃ yeva ekacittakkhaṇaṭhitike ārammaṇe paṭisandhicittaṃ uppajjatī ti* (Vibh-a 159) *ca vakkhati.*

[#]v.l. *voṭṭhapana°* (Vibh-a 158) : *votthapana°* (As 401)

(Moreover, this has been said: that **a lifespan has more than sixteen thought moments** by including the origination moment of the rebirth-linking consciousness. However, because it has been handed down in the *Paṭiccasamuppāda-Vibhaṅgavaṇṇanā* that fifteen thought moments have elapsed, namely two life-continuums, adverting, seeing, receiving, investigating, determining, five impulsions, two registrations and one death consciousness, [then there arises rebirth-linking consciousness depending on that same object, which is] the remaining lifespan of a single thought moment (Vibh-a 158^{5-10}). Similarly, it will state in (Vibh-a 159^{18-21}): "The endings of [two] registrations (*tadārammaṇa-pariyosānāni*),[#] [after that], one death consciousness [arises making the life-continuum's objective field its object]; at the end of that, having that same object, which lasts only a single thought moment, rebirth-linking consciousness arises".)

This seems to be a paraphrase or shortened form of the passage in Vibh-a 159[16-18]: *...dve tadārammaṇāni ca uppajjanti. tato bhavaṅgavisayaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā ekaṃ cuticittaṃ*; ...(or perhaps the sub-commentator used a different recension).

*[8] *tasmā rūpassa soḷasaci[tta]kkhaṇâyukatāya pi atthasiddhi hoti yeva. ten' āha* ***soḷasacittakkhaṇâyukatā adhippetā*** *ti. tathā pi uppajjitvā bhavaṅgacalanassa paccayo hoti; na uppajjamānam evā ti sattarasacittakkhaṇâyukatā veditabbā.*

(Therefore, one concludes that the meaning (*atthasiddhi*) is that materiality has a lifespan of sixteen thought moments. So he said that it means that materiality has **a lifespan of sixteen thought moments**. Similarly, [materiality], after having arisen, becomes the condition for disturbance of the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga-calana*); it is to be understood from the words 'not while actually arising' that a lifespan has seventeen thought moments.)

5.3.3 The *Yamaka* commentary (Yam I 247[11-12]; **Yam-a** 83[7-26])

* ♦***yassa kāyasaṅkhāro nirujjhati, tassa cittasaṅkhāro nirujjhatī*** *? ti ettha niyamato kāyasaṅkhārassa cittasaṅkhārena saddhiṃ ekakkhaṇe nirujjhanato* ***āmantā*** *ti paṭivacanaṃ dinnaṃ, na cittasaṅkhārassa kāyasaṅkhārena saddhiṃ. kiṃ kāraṇā? cittasaṅkhāro hi kāyasaṅkhārena vinā pi uppajjati ca nirujjhati ca;*[630] *kāyasaṅkhāro pana cittasamuṭṭhāno assāsapassāsavāto. cittasamuṭṭhānarūpañ ca cittassa uppāda-kkhaṇe*[631] *uppajjitvā yāva aññāni*[632] *soḷasa cittāni uppajjanti, tāva tiṭṭhati. tesaṃ soḷasannaṃ sabbapacchimena saddhiṃ nirujjhati. Iti*[633] *yena cittena saddhiṃ uppajjati, tato paṭṭhāya sattarasamena saddhiṃ nirujjhati, na kassaci cittassa uppādakkhaṇe vā ṭhitikkhaṇe vā nirujjhati, na pi*[634] *ṭhitikkhaṇe vā bhaṅgakkhaṇe vā uppajjati. esā cittasamuṭṭhānarūpassa dhammatā*♦[635]*ti niyamato cittasaṅkhārena saddhiṃ ekakkhaṇe nirujjhanato āmantā ti vuttaṃ.**[636] ♦*yaṃ pana Vibhaṅga-ppakaraṇassa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathāyaṃ*[637] *cittasamuṭṭhānarūpaṃ sattarasamassa cittassa uppādakkhaṇe nirujjhatī ti vuttaṃ, taṃ imāya pāḷiyā virujjhati.*♦[638] *aṭṭhakathāto ca pāḷi yeva balavatarā ti pāḷiyaṃ vuttam eva pamāṇaṃ.*

("**In one whose bodily formation ceases, does his mental formation cease?** ": (Yam I 247[11-12]). Here the affirmative answer is given because the bodily formation necessarily ceases in a single moment together with the mental formation; not the mental formation together with the bodily formation (i.e. not vice versa). Why? Because the mental formation arises and ceases even without the bodily formation; but the bodily formation is the wind of inhalation and exhalation, which is mind-born [materiality] (*cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa*). And mind-born materiality, having arisen at the moment of arising of a thought, endures while another sixteen thoughts arise. It ceases together with the very last of those sixteen. Thus it

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630 uppajjati ca nirujjhati ca Sh Bc Tcd : uppajjati ca P (See p. viii for abbreviations and symbols.)
631 uppādakkhaṇe Sh Bc Tcd : uppādakkhane P
632 aññāni Sh Bc Vibh-a 28[5] : aparāni Tcd : asaññāni P
633 nirujjhati. Iti Vibh-a 28[6] : nirujjhatī ti Sh Bc Tcd P
634 na pi Bc Tcd P : nāpi Sh
635 ♦...♦ *quoted in* Moh 300[13-21] *with a modification*
636 * ... * *quoted in* Vibh-a 28[1-12] *with a modification*
637 Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathāyaṃ Sh BcTcd : Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathāya P
638 ♦...♦ *quoted in* Moh 300[13-21] *with a modification*

ceases together with the seventeenth [counting] from that thought (i.e. the sixteenth in the previous unit) with which it arises (see Figure 3-10, cf. Figures 3-11, 3-12). It does not cease at the moment of arising or at the moment of enduring of any thought; and it also does not arise at the moment of enduring or at the moment of dissolution [of any thought]. Because of the law that: "This is the nature of mind-born materiality", it is stated as 'affirmed', owing to its ceasing in a single moment together with the mental formation. It is said in the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* of the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa*[639] that mind-born materiality (*cittasamuṭṭhāna-rūpa*) ceases at the moment of arising of the seventeenth thought; but that is contradicted in the main text (Pāli). Only what is said in the main text is authoritative, for a main text overrules a commentary.)

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639 See the introduction (2) for the origins and evolution of the Theravādin exegetical texts, and also the conclusion (pp. 249-254) for the question: "To what extent can we rely on the cross-reference (i.e. the *Vibhaṅgappakaraṇa Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā*.) in the *Yamaka* commentary to justify the idea that the doctrine was formed in the early exegetical texts ? "

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Detailed Contents of Introduction and Part One

Introduction 1

(1) Aims, method and scope 4

(2) The origins and evolution of the Theravādin exegetical texts 6

(3) The early *Abhidhamma* exegetical texts and their authorship 10

(4) The Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathā* compendia as a counterpart to the Gandhārī commentaries 12

(5) The Sīhala *Aṭṭhakathās* versus the *vibhāṣā* compendia ? 13

(6) An outline of the chapters 18

PART ONE

The Theravādin Doctrine of Momentariness:

A Survey of its Origins and Development

1. The Origins of the Doctrine of Momentariness 22

1.1 The dharma theory and the doctrine of momentariness 25

1.1.1 *Mātṛkā* and *abhidharmakathā* 25

1.1.2 The gradual textual evolution of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad 29

1.1.3 What is everything ? – the five *khandhas*, twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus* 37

1.1.4 *Dharmas*, atoms and the doctrine of momentariness 47

1.2 The doctrine of impermanence and the conditioned characteristics 60

1.2.1 The doctrine of impermanence 60

1.2.2 *Ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa*: The origin in the canonical texts 61

1.2.3 Interpretations of the *ti-saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa* in the exegetical texts 65

2. The Developing Theory of Momentariness 88

2.1 Problems of the momentariness of mental and material phenomena 88

2.1.1 Momentariness of mental and material phenomena 88

2.1.2 All mental phenomena are invariably momentary 90

2.1.3 The all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness 91

2.2 The refutation of the all-encompassing doctrine of momentariness in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* 91

2.2.1 The historical implications of the issue of simultaneity 91

2.2.2 The date of *Kathāvatthu* and the intellectual milieu during or after King Aśoka's reign 92

2.2.3 The date of the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* 93

2.2.4 Analysis of the argument in the *Khaṇikakathā* of the *Kathāvatthu* 95

2.3 The origins and evolution of the theory of the thought process in the Theravāda *Abhidhamma* canon 98

2.3.1 The mechanism of the origin of thoughts in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* 98

2.3.2 The basic principles of the thought process in the *Vibhaṅga* 101

2.3.3 A framework for the theory of the thought process in the *Paṭṭhāna* 102

2.3.4 The commentarial interpretation of the phrase 'appropriate attention' 104

2.3.5 An evaluation of the first and second argument and their citation in the *Khaṇikakathā* 105

2.4 Buddhist epistemology in relation to the theory of momentariness 107

2.4.1 A sketch of Buddhist epistemological issues in relation to the theory of momentariness 107

2.4.2 The relative textual chronology of related issues in the different sections of the *Kathāvatthu* and in the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas' literary sources 108

2.4.3 The controversy about the perceiving agent: the eyes or consciousness ? 113

2.4.4 The contiguity condition as the basic premise of the thought process 119

3. The Developed Form of the Doctrine of Momentariness 123

3.1 The relative duration of material and mental phenomena 124

3.1.1 The three moments theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* 124

(1) The theory of mixed origination

(2) The theory of succession

3.1.2 The five *khandhas* and the sixteen moments theory in the *Vibhaṅga* commentary 128

(1) The generative mechanism of the five *khandhas* and their momentariness

(2) Generative capacity of the five *khandhas* and their relative duration

(3) Two graphic similes for the relative speed and coextensiveness of material and mental phenomena

3.1.3 Sixteen or seventeen thought moments ? 130

(1) A hermeneutic problem: ambiguity in the phrase *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante*

(2) The dynamic mechanism of the five *khandhas* from conception to death

A) Synchronous arising and asynchronous dissolution

B) Asynchronous arising and synchronous cessation

(3) Can a mental phenomenon arise while a material phenomenon is ceasing ?

(4) The revised version in the *Yamaka* and the *Vibhaṅga* commentaries

(5) Another revised version in the *Visuddhimagga*

(6) The *Mūlaṭīkā*'s position

3.1.4 A comparative evaluation of the three and sixteen moments theories 145

3.2 The doctrine of momentariness and the thought process 148

3.2.1 The sixteen moments theory and the thought process in the early post-canonical texts 148

(1) The first introduction of the sixteen moments theory in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary

(2) The stages of the thought process in conjunction with the sixteen moments theory

(3) The nature of *bhavaṅga* consciousness and its momentariness

(4) The mechanism of the final thought process at the time of death and rebirth

3.2.2 Why the number sixteen ? 161

(1) A cultural reflection ?

(2) The symbol of wholeness

(3) The idea of the moon's sixteen phases and time-reckoning

(4) The idea of time and of a linear sequence of thought moments

3.2.3 Determining factors of the duration of materiality 165

(1) The relationship between the mental process and the object perceived in a given moment

(2) Thought moments determine the duration of materiality, not vice versa

(3) The degree of sensory intensity determines the grades of the sense-door process

(4) The range of application of the sixteen thought moments

(5) Why is the sense-door process not specified in terms of sixteen thought moments in the early post-canonical texts ?

3.2.4 The nature of materiality and the **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa* 173

(1) The nature of materiality and the concept of *kalāpa*

(2) Some controversial points in the classification of materiality in the **Vimuttimagga*

(3) The **Vimuttimagga*'s interpretation of *khaṇa*

(4) The sequential overlap of *kalāpas* and the phrase *tasmiṃ rūpe dharante 'va*

3.2.5 The seventeen moments theory and the thought process in the later post-canonical texts 186

(1) What is new ?

(2) The sixteen moments theory and the reasoning behind its acceptance in the *Mūlaṭīkā* of the *Vibhaṅga* commentary

(3) The problem of *ṭhiti-kkhaṇa* in the later post-canonical texts

(4) The system of conditional relations underlies the theory of momentariness and Ānanda's contention

(5) The application of the notion of *khaṇa* to the theory of the thought process in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*

(6) The different grades of the sense-door process and the idea of *atīta-bhavaṅgas*

(7) An evaluation of the sixteen moments and the seventeen moments theories

4.	**The Presuppositions and Application of the Doctrine of Momentariness**	217
4.1	The denial of a post-mortem transitional period and the theory of momentariness	218
4.1.1	The origins and development of the *antarābhava* theory	218
4.1.2	Dispute on the intermediate state and the theory of momentariness	222
4.1.3	The Theravādin account of the mechanism of rebirth and the theory of momentariness	225
4.2	The momentary present and its selective application to the *cetopariyañāṇa*	233
4.2.1	The concept of the momentary present	233
4.2.2	The momentary present and its selective application to the *cetopariyañāṇa* theory	234
4.2.3	The *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* theory in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* and the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* commentary	237
4.2.4	The Theravādin theory of the *cetopariyañāṇa* and its application of the cognitive theory	240
4.2.5	A multi-stranded view of the *cetaḥparyāyajñāna* theory and its historical implications	242
4.2.6	A review of David J. Kalupahana's critique of the momentary present	245
Conclusion		249