

***Seeing the spontaneous
Destruction, Theravada,
and Vipassana***

Compiled By
Ven. Bellanwila Dhammānanda Thero

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" Seeing the spontaneous, Destruction Theravada, and Vipassana "

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- *Clear Understanding of Right Mindfulness*
- *Abhidhamma That is Not Abhidhamma*
- *In search of early Buddhism*
- *Contemplation of Feelings*

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Dedication

True good dharma pervades the entire Tripitaka. Regardless of how extensive Dhamma is in written form, it is not easy to understand its profound teachings merely by the proficiency in language. Certain teachings are meaningful during meditation, while others need to be understood beforehand. Some doctrines may not be relevant to everyone. some apply universally,

To comprehend a brief point mentioned in one sutta, knowledge of several other suttas may be necessary. Even a person with intellectual ability might face difficulties if they lack linguistic familiarity. This highlights the value of **Kalyāṇamitta** (spiritual friendship) and the guidance of a teacher.

Throughout Buddhist history, various masters and ancient Theras compiled, summarised, and further elaborated on the Tripitaka teachings for benefit of others. They provided simple explanations for Pāli terms. In this way commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) were born for Tripitaka. Recognising the importance of these commentaries, later Theras wrote **sub-commentaries (Ṭīkā)**.

Among these sub-commentators, **Ven.Wanarathana Ānanda Thera**, who authored the primary sub-commentary on the **Abhidhamma**, holds a special place. Through his profound interpretations, one can appreciate his wisdom and analytical skill.

As a monk in Theravāda lineage While adhering to the traditional boundaries of Theravāda doctrine to some extent, but his certain interpretations sometimes transcended these limits, courageously presenting insights beyond conventional explanations.

One such exceptional interpretation is found in the **Dhammasangani Mūlatīkā**, where Ven. Ānanda Thera identifies an error in presenting two interpretations of the term '**Paññatti**' (**designation**).

In contemporary Abhidhamma studies, students often begin with the **Paramattha-Sammuti Katha (discussion of ultimate and conventional realities)**. Interestingly, this discussion is not explicitly mentioned at the beginning of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. Instead, it represents an ancient methodological structure developed by early scholars to organise and systematise Dhamma principles. In this system, the term '**Paññatti**' is used in the context of **conventional reality** in Theravāda Abhidhamma.

In the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the term Paññatti is defined in relation to linguistic usage and naming conventions. However, as Theravāda Abhidhamma evolved, particularly in the post-commentarial era, this term began to be applied to conceptual entities that do not have ultimate existence, or which are not paramattha dhammas (ultimate realities).

Over time, *Paññatti* was interpreted in two ways: **Artha-Paññatti (meaning-designation)** and **Nāma-Paññatti (name-designation)**. These dual interpretations caused **confusion and overlap** in later sub-commentaries (*Ṭīkā*), leading to ambiguity in understanding.

Anticipating the complications that would arise from this confusion, Ven. Ānanda Thera, dedicated several pages in **Dhammasaṅgaṇī Mūlatīkā**, to clarifying these errors. Despite these clarifications, it seems that the **core Theravāda Abhidhamma tradition** did not give significant attention to these warnings.

Eventually, this lack of clarity contributed to the ambiguity seen in modern Sinhala Theravāda Abhidhamma texts, especially regarding the Paramattha-Sammuti discussion.

This work is, above all, a tribute to Ven. Ānanda Thera, the eminent scholar of the Abhidhamma Mūlatīkā. May this work serve as a token of gratitude for his profound wisdom and analytical skill.

About This Edition

This is the English Edition to the book which was compiled in **2023**. In some places extra notes were added to enhance the meaning. Also, some amendments were done to the previous. Special gratitude is extended to Dr Lasita Malalasekara who supplied me with initial rough translation. May this merit also contribute to his **path to Nibbana!**

Walagamba Monastery
2025 – 03 - 09

Preface

A dedicated disciple walking the path to Nibbāna must understand an important distinction regarding the Dhamma they encounter. Specifically, one must discern whether a particular Dhamma teaching shown by the Bhagawan is something to be directly realised for attaining the path and fruit (Magga-Phala) or whether it is sufficient to accept it with faith and act accordingly.

For example, it is stated in the Buddha's teachings that someone who commits a heinous crime (Ānantarika Kamma), such as killing their mother or father, will undoubtedly fall into hell in their next life. This is not something a disciple can directly realise. Even it is realised, it is not indispensable for the path to Nibbāna. However, the disciple must accept it with faith and ensure he refrain from such actions.

Similarly, it is taught that the merit (puñña) of giving (dāna) increases based on the virtue of the recipient. A disciple cannot directly perceive this effect, but it must be accepted with faith and incorporated into their meritorious actions.

The impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anattā) nature of all conditioned phenomena have been explained in countless ways by the Buddha. No one has ever attained the path and fruit

(Magga-Phala) without realising the Three Marks of Existence (Tilakkhaṇa). Throughout the Tripitaka, the Lord Buddha has elaborated on impermanence from various perspectives, and later scholars have added further insights.

Among these teachings, a wise disciple must determine:

- What must be directly realised?
- What can be understood theoretically?
- What can be understood metaphorically?

For example, the Buddha, through his knowledge of the future (Anāgatamsa Ñāṇa), stated that one day this entire earth will be completely destroyed, like a camphor ball burning away without a trace. While understanding impermanence is essential for a disciple, directly realising the destruction of the earth exactly in that way, is not necessary. Instead, the impermanence of the earth should be understood through other Dhamma principles.

Therefore, whatever facts one gets to hear, about the momentary dissolution (Kṣaṇa Bhaṅga) and impermanence, a disciple must discern:

- What needs to be directly realised for the attainment of the path and fruit?
- What should be contemplated upon?
- What can be accepted with faith?
- What can be understood metaphorically?

This book aims to serve as a guide for disciples seeking wisdom, in answering these questions.

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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa

This work seeks to examine a complex issue observed within the Theravāda Abhidhamma tradition. It focuses on an area that may appear contradictory or entangled yet holds significant weight in the development of Vipassana insight (Vipassanā Ñāṇa).

Usually, ancient Theravāda Theras, when providing explanations for teachings of Lord Buddha, do that, ensuring their interpretations were well-founded and aligned with the Tripiṭaka. They try to present their views in a manner that neither contradicted the core teachings of the Buddha nor opposed the interpretations of earlier teachers.

However, in modern times, many critiques against Theravāda doctrines arise from a limited understanding while disregarding the broader context. Such criticisms often stem from superficial observations or misinterpretations. Some individuals, due to their lack of study or acceptance of Abhidhamma, view Theravāda interpretations with scepticism and offer unfounded criticisms. In contrast, Theravāda scholars base most of their expositions on the foundation of Abhidhamma principles.

Theravāda Abhidhamma

But there is a distinction between Abhidhamma and Theravāda Abhidhamma, and it is essential to clarify what I mean by these terms before delving deeper into the subject.

Within a few centuries after the Parinibbāna of the Blessed one, the Sangha community split into multiple sects (Nikāyas). Among these sects, some lost portions of the Tripiṭaka, while others incorporated additional suttas claiming them to be Bhagawan's teachings. In some cases, these divisions arose due to differing interpretations of Dhamma

principles based on the sections of the Tripitaka available to specific Sangha sects.

Among these sects, the Mahāvihāra tradition of Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka holds a special place. This is because they preserved the original Tripitaka from the three Great Councils (Saṅgāyanā) and enriched it with the ancient Sinhala Atthakathā (commentaries). **A unique way in which Lord Buddha's teachings were interpreted, along with related theories and principles, came to be known as Theravāda.**

The term "Thera" signifies stability and steadfastness within the Buddhism. It conveys a deep, well-grounded understanding of the Dhamma. Theravāda, therefore, refers to the doctrinal stance presented by these elders (Theras), who attained stability in their understanding of the Dhamma.

The Theravāda perspective was systematically compiled in the commentaries authored by the great scholar Buddhaghosa Thero, based on the ancient Sinhala Aṭṭuvā. Alongside his works, contemporary Theras composed commentaries on other texts of the Tripiṭaka, forming a body of literature that includes sub-commentaries (Tīkāṣ), sub-sub-commentaries (Anuṭīkāṣ), and various other expository texts. These works collectively present the Theravāda doctrinal standpoint.

Theravāda Abhidhamma encompasses certain principles that are not explicitly stated in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka but are derived from it through interpretative analysis. **When such principles or related theories are to be mentioned, they are referred to as Theravāda Abhidhamma in this work.**(See footnote 1)

Current State of Theravāda Abhidhamma

Although most monks in Sri Lanka today receive their higher ordination within the Theravāda lineage, only a small number deeply study

Theravāda Abhidhamma and endeavour to develop insight meditation (Vipassanā) based on its principles.

For many Sinhala Buddhists, their understanding of Theravāda Abhidhamma is largely shaped by the works of venerable Rerukane Chandawimala Thero, particularly his books "Fundamentals of Abhidhamma" and "The Path of Abhidhamma." These books are structured upon the Abhidhammāṛtha Saṅgraha, a widely accepted Theravāda Abhidhamma manual.

Unique Features of Theravāda Abhidhamma

Certain aspects are unique to Theravāda Abhidhamma, and are not explicitly stated in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka itself:

- The **lifespan of each consciousness (Citta)** is considered uniform.
- The **lifespan of each material phenomenon (rūpa)** is considered uniform.
- The lifespan of rūpa is defined as **17 moments of consciousness (cittakkhaṇa)**.
- A **distinct stable moment (ṭhitikkhaṇa)** is assigned to **nāma-rūpa phenomena**.
- The explanation that newly arising rūpa formations are generated by the Tejo (fire) element from existing rūpa clusters at its stability phase.
- A **series of seven impulsive moments (javana)** in the cognitive process (citta-vīthi) is described.
- Dhammas are categorised into **ultimate reality (paramattha)** and **conceptual reality (paññatti)**.

- Paññatti is further divided into **Artha-Paññatti (meaning designation)** and **Nāma-Paññatti (name designation)**.

Some assume that the commentarial literature consists of collection of facts spoken by Arahants, with supernormal knowledge (Abhiññā) directly knowing the mind set of Lord Buddha. However, even the Aṭṭhakathācāriya (Bhuddagosa Thero) did not hold such a view.

The Sinhala ancient Hela Atthakathā served as his primary foundation. Interestingly, certain facts of the Sinhala Aṭuvās, by quoting Tripiṭaka passages, explicitly rejected by the Buddhaghosa thero. This indicates that he did not assume, that every word contained within them was the literal speech of the Blessed One. In some explanations, when referring to statements on those ancient commentaries, Thero remarks as "The elders said so." (Porāṇa). It is difficult to imagine that Buddhaghosa Thera would refer to the Lord Buddha himself as merely "the elders."

However, as this discussion highlights theories of established Theravāda scholarly lineage related to insight meditation, shaped through centuries of analysis, debate, and doctrinal refinement, matters must be analysed in detail, particularly with extensive references to the Tripiṭaka, especially the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, particularly those extending into the depths of Vipassana meditation.

Some teachings from the Yamaka Pāli may initially appear difficult to comprehend. However, one can proceed by focusing on their conclusions without becoming entangled in every detail.

In Theravāda Abhidhamma, when examining the subtle impermanence of nāma-rūpa (mind-matter phenomena), the characteristics of arising (uppādakkaṇa), stability (ṭhitikkaṇa), and dissolution (bhaṅgakkhaṇa) are considered in relation. Through an

analysis of those, this study aims to highlight several essential principles that are crucial for Vipassana insight.

Since the Tripiṭaka Abhidhamma does not explicitly describe nāma-rūpa phenomena in terms of these three stages, it is known among those who have deeply studied Theravāda Abhidhamma principles, that two primary doctrinal perspectives exist within Theravāda regarding this matter:

1. The first perspective, supported by Buddhaghosa Thera and later some sub-commentators (Ṭīkā Ācariyas), explains that nāma and rūpa exist with a lifespan divided into three stages—arising (uppāda), stability (ṭhiti), and dissolution (bhaṅga).

2. The second perspective, presented by Ānanda Thera in the Abhidhamma Mūlatīkā, states that for nāma (mental phenomena), only arising and dissolution should be considered, whereas for rūpa (material phenomena), the stability phase (ṭhitikkhaṇa) should also be acknowledged.

Of these two perspectives, the first view is more widely accepted in the mainstream Theravāda tradition. Ven. Ānanda Thera, the Mūlatīkā Ācariya despite being aware of Ven. Buddhaghosa's perspective, and its foundation in the ancient Sinhala Aṭṭuvās, proposed an alternative viewpoint. However, this was not arbitrary; rather, it was based on key elements found in the Yamaka treatise, particularly from the sections on Saṅkhāra-yamaka and Citta-yamaka.

Beyond Theoretical Understanding

This work intends to analyze the underlying reasoning behind these two doctrinal views. However, before delving into that, it is essential to first understand the significance and relevance of concepts such as arising (uppāda), momentary existence (kṣaṇa), and dissolution (bhaṅga) in Vipassanā meditation.

It should be understood that this is not merely an academic inquiry but has a practical significance for Vipassanā meditation practice. Rather than focusing solely on whether citta has two or three moments, this study aims to explore the Vipassanā-related principles behind these two perspectives.

The foundation of Vipassanā meditation mainly lies in the perception of impermanence (*aniccasaññā*) and the understanding of impermanence. The impermanence of phenomena is directly connected to the arising and dissolution characteristics of *nāma-rūpa*. It is for this reason that this study has been undertaken—to clarify these concepts for practitioners. A proper understanding of these principles is essential for a meditator to establish a strong foundation in Vipassanā. No one has ever attained the Path and Fruition (*Magga-Phala*) without realizing impermanence.

The Dhamma states that whoever perceives the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) as impermanent enters the Stream of the Noble Path (*Sotāpatti Magga*). ultimate reality of existence is the continuous arising of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena. Therefore, any perception of impermanence must be reflected within the framework of *nāma-rūpa*.

In the subsequent sections, this work will gradually clarify the connection between momentary dissolution (*kṣaṇa bhaṅga*) and the perception of impermanence.

Unresolved Matters in the Explanation of Momentary Dissolution

When explaining momentary dissolution (*Kṣaṇa Bhaṅga*), we must address a range of ambiguous and unresolved matters. Some of these involve hypothetical assumptions and theoretical debates.

In the early chapters of this book, I will present these unresolved points, with the confidence that, by the end, I will be able to offer clear

conclusions. This analysis seeks to highlight how these deep Abhidhamma insights serve as a foundation for practical Vipassanā meditation, ensuring that practitioners can build their practice on a firm theoretical and experiential understanding.

Word Clarification Section

Since a clear understanding of certain Pali terms will be highly beneficial for grasping the concepts discussed ahead, a brief word clarification section is provided. Some of the upcoming words have closely related meanings.

1. **Nāma-Rūpa** – In this work, the term Nāma refers to all mental phenomena, including Citta and Cetasika Dhammas. It is not limited to just the five—Phassa (contact), Vedanā (feeling), Cetanā (volition), Saññā (perception), and Manasikāra (attention). The term Rūpa encompasses both the Four Great Elements (Mahābhūta) and all derived material phenomena (Upādāya Rūpa).
2. **Uppajjati** – meaning includes arising, emerging, or growing.
3. **Nirujjhati** – Refers to diminishing or fading away.
4. **Uppāda** – manifestation or emergence of phenomenon (due to the presence of causes and conditions).
5. **Vayo** – The cessation or dissolution of a phenomenon (due to the absence of causes). In Theravāda, it also conveys meanings such as disappearance, and destruction
6. **Samudaya** – The arising of phenomenon due to the causation.
7. **Uppādakkhaṇa** (Moment of Arising) – The moment when Nāma-Rūpa Dhammas emerging and in a state of arising.

8. **Bhaṅgakkhaṇa** (Moment of Dissolution) – The moment when Nāma-Rūpa Dhammas diminish and fade away.
9. **Ṭhitassa Aññathattaṃ** – A change in the nature of that which exists.
10. **Ṭhiti** – State of presence or continuation.
11. **Uppanna** – The arisen, existence of a Nāma-Rūpa which has arisen, not yet ceased. It refers to something present.
12. **Paccuppanna** – The existence of a Nāma-Rūpa due to causation.
13. **Khaṇa** (Moment or Instant) – A suitable occasion for a phenomenon to arise or emerge due to the proper alignment of causes. In later interpretations, this term has also been used to refer to an extremely brief time unit.
14. **Saṅkhata** – That which is formed due to causes and conditions.
15. **Paññāyati** – Becoming apparent or existing.
16. **Ṭhitikkhaṇa** (Moment of Stability) – In commentarial literature, this refers to the intermediate moment between Uppāda (arising) and Bhaṅga (dissolution), existing independently from them.

The moments of Arising and breaking

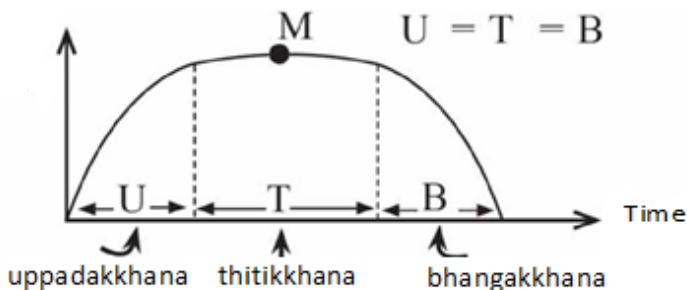
Now as uppāda, ṭhiti, bhaṅga, the conceptual framework presented by the Atuwacharin regarding the mind, which assumed to be aligned with the perspective of the Blessed One, let us first examine that model. For a student who has studied Abhidhamma through Sinhala texts, the above statement may seem somewhat perplexing. This confusion could arise if one assumes that the division of the

lifespan of a mental state is directly derived from the scriptural texts, particularly the Abhidhamma Pitaka, as an explicit teaching of the Lord Buddha. However, this is not the case. Even within the Theravāda tradition, scholars adhering to Theravāda principles have presented two differing interpretations on this subject as shown earlier.

First, let us consider the perspective of the Buddhaghosa Thero. According to him, the lifespan of *nāma-rūpa* (mind-and-matter phenomena) can be divided into three distinct phases. Based on this viewpoint, every mental and associated phenomenon (*citta* and *cetasika*) undergoes an initial phase of arising (*uppādakkhaṇa*), a final phase of breaking (*bhaṅgakkhaṇa*), and an intermediate phase of stability (*ṭhitikkhaṇa*).

In the traditional commentarial period, the stage of stability (*ṭhiti*) was generally understood as the duration during which a phenomenon, having arisen, remains relatively steady while gradually undergoing decay or maturation. These three phases are classified as having equal time periods. The following diagram further illustrates this theory.

nama dhamma



In the above diagram, the term "nāma dhamma" represents any mental state or associated factor (citta and cetasika). It depicts how a previously non-existent mental phenomenon gradually arises and ceases over time.

For example, if we consider "painful sensation" (dukkha vedanā) as a mental phenomenon, the peak point **M** in the diagram (represented by the highest marker) signifies its most intense manifestation. In other words, the point **M** represent the moment at which a being experiences the highest intensity of pain before it subsides within a specific timeframe.

According to the main commentarial point of view, the horizontal axis represents the passage of time. However, this representation is intended for ease of understanding. On the other hand, to align with the model they propose regarding the lifespan of a mental state. Actually, for that another phenomenon would be better rather than **time**. It will be clarified through later analysis.

To understand the main commentarial interpretation, one can refer to the relevant section of the commentary on the Paṭhama Ānanda Sutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, Khandha Vagga.

[Application to Physical Phenomena \(Rūpa\)](#)

The framework described above differs slightly when applied to physical phenomena (rūpa dhamma). The Atuwacharin state that the lifespan of a physical entity is equivalent to seventeen mind-moments (cittakkhaṇas). However, this fact is not mentioned in the Abhidhamma Pitaka. Rather, it is an interpretation derived from ancient Sinhala commentaries, presented as the intended meaning of the Blessed One.

The Lifespan of Rūpa and its Interpretation

When it is said that the lifespan of a rūpa (material phenomenon) is 17 thought-moments (cittakkhaṇa), two key implications emerge:

1. **Uniform Lifespan of All Consciousness (Citta):**

- o Every consciousness, whether **wholesome (kusala)**, **unwholesome (akusala)**, or **neutral (abyākata)**, must have the **same duration**.
- o A weak, sluggish consciousness burdened by **sloth and torpor (thīna-middha)**, and a strong consciousness arising in a state of **deep absorption (jhāna)**, must both dissolve after the same lifespan.
- o Similarly, a **consciousness arising from a powerful visual object (a bright colour)** and one arising from a **weak visual object (dim light)** must share an identical lifespan.

If this were not so, the idea of a **17-cittakkhaṇa lifespan** for rūpa would result in **mathematical inconsistencies**.

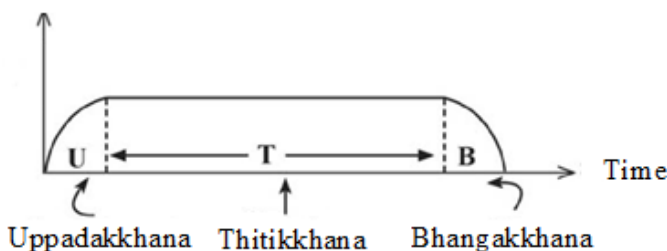
2. **Uniform Lifespan of All Rūpa:**

- o Every rūpa, whether **produced by strong causes or weak causes**, must have the **same duration**.
- o Whether a rūpa is **kamma-produced (kammaja)**, **seasonal (utuja)**, or **nutriment-based (āhāraja)**, all must endure for the same number of thought moments before dissolving.

When considering both of these implications together, it suggests that the lifespan of both mental and physical phenomena follows a fixed pattern. In other words, any past, future, or present nāma-rūpa phenomenon adheres to a universal law governing its lifespans.

Accordingly, the representation of physical phenomena in the diagram should be as follows:

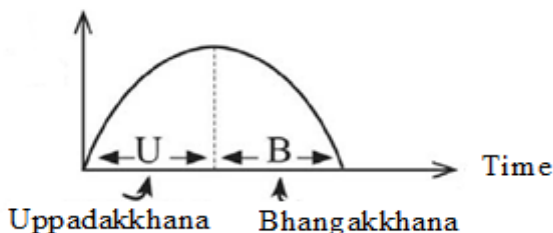
Intensity of a rupa



In this framework, the stability phase (thitikkhaṇa) of a physical phenomenon lasts approximately sixteen mind-moments. (See footnote 2) This means that, compared to the phases of arising and breaking, the stability phase is relatively prolonged.

In contrast according to the Mūlatikā the main sub commentary, the arising and breaking of mental and associated phenomena (nāma dhamma) can be depicted in a simplified diagram as follows:

Citta and chaitasika



There is no intermediate phase of stability (Thitikkhana) mentioned above.

When considering the three phases previously mentioned, it refers to the idea that a Dhamma does not fully form at the moment of arising (uppādakkhana). Its structure is not yet well established. Similarly, at the moment of diminishing (bhaṅga), it breaks down and ceases.

To illustrate with an enlarged example, the stage in which a fetus inside the womb is not yet fully developed represents the phase of arising (uppāda). The rapid deterioration of the body just before death represents diminishing (bhaṅga). The intermediate period is referred to as continuity (ṭhiti).

However, when considering the existence of a Dhamma across two moments, it can be viewed as being fully formed from the beginning. The difference lies in considering that, at its inception, it exists at a weak or underdeveloped level.

There is a highly significant Sutta discourse that suggests that the lifespan of any nāma (mental) or rūpa (physical) Dhamma may be analyzed through these three stages: arising (uppāda), continuity (ṭhiti), and dissolution (bhaṅga). This teaching is found in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, within the First Ānanda Sutta.

First Ānanda Sutta (Saṃyutta Nikāya, Khandha Vagga)

In this sutta, the Lord Buddha questions Ven. Ānanda about the three characteristics of conditioned phenomena (saṅkhata-lakkhaṇa):

- Uppāda (Emergence)
- Vaya (Cessation)
- Ṭhitassa Aññathattaṃ (Change while remaining)

The conversation proceeds as follows:

"Ānanda, if someone were to ask you, 'Venerable Ānanda, in which phenomenon emergence is manifested (Uppādo paññāyati)? Cessation is manifested (Vayo paññāyati)? change in their continuity is manifested (Ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati)?—Ananda asked in this way how would you respond?"

Then, Venerable Ānanda replied:

"Venerable Sir, if I were asked such a question—Re-, I would answer as follows:

'Indeed, the emergence of rūpa (form) can be seen, its cessation can be seen, and its change in continuity can be seen.

Similarly, the emergence of vedanā (feeling), saññā (perception), saṅkhāra (mental formations), and viññāṇa (consciousness) can be seen. Their cessation can be seen, and their change in continuity can be seen.

Thus, the emergence, cessation, and change in continuity of these Dhammas can be observed.' Venerable Sir, asked in that way I will answer like this "

Then Blessed One declared:

"Very well, very well Ānanda, you should answer in this manner:

Emergence of Ananda, rūpa (form) can be seen, its cessation can be seen, and its change in continuity can be seen. Emergence of vedanā (feeling), saññā (perception), saṅkhāra (mental formations), and viññāṇa (consciousness) can be seen. Their cessation can be seen, and their change in continuity can be seen.

A similar profound Sutta that further condenses the above meaning appears in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, within the Tika Nipāta, in the Chūḷa Vagga, as the Seventh Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta. It states:

Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta.

" Thinimāni Bhikkawē, Saṅkhatassa Saṅkhata lakkhanāni. Kathamāni Thini : Uppādo paññāyati, Vayo paññāyati, Ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati. Imāni kho Bhikkawē, Saṅkhatassa Saṅkhata lakkhanāni."

"Bhikkhus, there are three characteristics of conditioned phenomena. What are the three?

1. Uppādo paññāyati – The emergence is seen.
2. Vayo paññāyati – The cessation is seen.
3. Ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati – The change in continuity is seen.

Bhikkhus, these are the three characteristics of all conditioned phenomena."

At first glance, these two suttas seems to suggest that the three phases—uppādakkhana, thitikkhana, and Bangakkhana— described by the commentators reflect the nature of mental and physical phenomena. However, the question that needs to be examined here is

- Does the term ‘**uppādo**’ in these suttas refer explicitly to the **moment of arising (uppādakkhaṇa)**?
- Does ‘**vayo**’ refer to the **moment of diminishing (bhaṅgakkhaṇa)**?
- Does ‘**ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ**’ correspond directly to the **stable moment (ṭhitikkhaṇa)**?

Since the words uppādo and uppāda appear similar in the Pali phrases uppādo paññāyati and uppādakkhaṇe, it is reasonable to understand them as conveying the same meaning.

The Yamaka Pāli

When considering the mind, the terms *uppādakkhana* and *bhaṅgakkhāṇa* can be found exactly in the Lord Buddha's words, within the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, specifically in the *Yamaka* section. The word *yamaka* means "pair" or "duality." This section discusses various phenomena (*nāma-rūpa dhamma*) in pairs, explaining how they arise and cease, and whether these processes occur in a parallel or non-parallel manner. The *Yamaka* text is a crucial part of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, emphasizing and reminding the impermanent nature of phenomena.

The Analysis in Citta Yamaka

In the *Citta Yamaka*, the Blessed one presents the following inquiry:

"*Yaṃ cittaṃ uppajjati taṃ cittaṃ uppānanti: āmantā*"

This means: "When a mind developing, growing, should it be considered as an arisen mind?" The response given is: "Yes, it should."

Subsequently, the Bhagawan further elaborates:

"*Yaṃ vā pana cittaṃ uppānaṃ taṃ cittaṃ uppajjati iti: bhaṅgakkhāṇe cittaṃ uppānaṃ, no ca taṃ cittaṃ uppajjati, uppādakkhāṇe citta uppānaṃ ceva uppajjati ca.*"

(*Yamaka* – 2 – Bu.J – 646 Page)

The simplified meaning of this passage is: "If a certain mind is in the state of having arisen, does that mind continue to arise (*uppajjati*)?"

The answer given is:

- ""At the moment of diminishing (*bhaṅgakkhaṇe*), the mind is considered to have arisen (*uppanna*), but it does not continue to arise.
- At the moment of arising (*uppādakkaṇe*), the mind both exists as *uppanna* and is in the process of arising.""

According to this Pali passage, only two moments are mentioned: arising and dissolution. The stage of stability (ṭhiti) is not mentioned. The term *uppādakkaṇa* is used to describe the moment when a mind arises, grows and develops. The term *bhaṅgakkhaṇa* describes the moment when a mind is fading and weakening. In both cases, the word *uppanna* is commonly used.

The Meaning of 'Uppanna'

The term 'uppanna' refers to a state that exists, whether it is in the process of arising or fading. Even at the moment of dissolution, since the mind has not yet disappeared, it is still considered to be "alive" or present. Similarly, at the moment of arisen, as the mind is in the moment of development, it is also considered to be present, and live. Therefore, 'uppanna' indicates the present existence of a phenomenon or something that has lively manifested due to causation.

In the Dhammasaṅgaṇi, under the Nikṣepa Kāṇḍa, section number 1045, it is stated:

"Katame dhammā paccuppannā: ye dhammā jātā, bhūtā, sañjātā, nibbattā, abhinibbattā, pāṭubhūtā, **uppannā**, samuppannā, uṭṭhitā, samuṭṭhitā, paccuppannā, paccuppannaṃsēna saṃgahitā, rūpā, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāṇaṃ, ime dhammā paccuppannā."

(Dhammasaṅgaṇi – Bu.J – 398 page)

Translation:

"Which dhammas are considered causally arisen (**paccuppannā**)?"

"The dhammas that are born (jātā), have come into being (bhūtā), have distinctively born (sañjātā), have born (nibbatta), have been distinctly born (abhinibbattā), have become apparent (pāṭubhūtā), have arisen (**uppannā**), have co-arisen (samuppannā), have arose (utṭhitā), have collectively arisen (samutṭhitā), and are causally arisen (paccuppanna), whatever rūpa, vedanā, Perception, Formation, and Consciousness designated under causally arisen ."

This passage explains the nature of presently existing phenomena, describing them as those that have arisen due to causes and conditions. Consecutive paragraphs in Dhammasaṅgaṇi shows definitions of past and present, or future. Thus, this explanation emphasizes that the term '**paccuppanna**' refers to phenomena that currently exist, which manifest, and actively present. The terms **jātā**, **bhūtā**, **pāṭubhūtā** and **samuppannā** all convey the meaning of "having born, having come into being, have become apparent or having emerged due to causes."

In this passage an important word '**uppanna**' is encountered, which relates to the discussion. Thus, it gives the impression term '**uppanna**' refers to a phenomenon that has arisen and is currently present.

Thus, In the analysis of **nāma dhamma (mental phenomena)**:

- During the **Uppādakkaṇa** (moment of arising), a nāma dhamma is said to be **alive and existent**, as it is actively forming and manifesting. Therefore, it can be described as '**Uppanna**' (arisen).
- During the **Bhaṅgakkhaṇa** (moment of diminishing, even though the dhamma is in the process of **fading and weakening**, it has not yet ceased entirely. Therefore, it still qualifies as '**Uppanna**' (arisen).

This insight indicates that the term '**Uppanna**' applies to both **arising and diminishing states** because, in both phases, the dhamma is **still existing in the present moment**.

The Significance of 'Nirujjhati'

The **Yamaka text** uses the term '**Nirujjhati**' to describe the diminishing phase of consciousness.

In the **Citta Yamaka** section, the following analysis is presented:

"Yaṃ cittaṃ Nirujjhati taṃ cittaṃ uppanna'ti: āmantā" "Yaṃ vā pana cittaṃ uppannaṃ taṃ cittaṃ Nirujjhatiti: Uppādakkhaṇe cittaṃ uppannaṃ, no ca taṃ cittaṃ Nirujjhati, bhaṅgakkhaṇe cittaṃ uppannaṃ ceva Nirujjhati ca."

*"When a consciousness is dissolving, should it still be considered as 'arisen' (uppannaṃ)? "Yes " "then when consciousness is said to be 'arisen,' does it simultaneously weakening? During the **Uppādakkhaṇa** (arising phase), consciousness is 'arisen' but not diminishing. During the **Bhaṅgakkhaṇa** (diminishing phase), consciousness is both 'arisen' and diminishing."*

From first phrase in the passage, it is understood that any mind that is diminishing or weakening is still considered an arisen phenomenon. This illustrates that '**Nirujjhati**' occurs specifically during the moment of bhaṅga.

The second phrase implies that a mind that is developing at Uppādakkhaṇa is considered '**Uppanna**' that it is existing in present and at that moment it is not weakening '**Nirujjhati**'. However, at the moment of breking, the mind is both categorized as '**Uppanna**' and diminishing simultaneously.

From all this information, it is clear that the lifespan of a mind is divided into two phases: the moment of arising (uppādakkhaṇa) and the moment of diminishing (bhaṅgakkhaṇa). It also clarifies that there is no intermediate phase referred to as a 'static moment' (ñhitikkhaṇa) as described in some later Theravāda commentaries.

So, the Mûla Tika perspective seem to be the correct one.

The Meaning of 'Khaṇa' (Moment)

The Pāli term '**Khaṇē**' frequently appears in the **Yamaka text** and is best interpreted in English as '**at opportune moment**' or '**at a specific instance**'. For example, 'uppādakkhaṇe' could be translated as 'at the moment of arising.' The word 'khaṇa' appears to indicate the moment when the necessary causes for the emergence of a phenomenon become active.

For example, here is two citations from sutta:

"**Khaṇo vo mā upaccagā**"

"Do not let the (noble) moment pass by."

Here, the rare opportunity of being born human and encountering the Lord Buddha's teachings can be regarded as a noble moment.

"**Khaṇātītā socanti**"

"Those who miss the moment lament."

Special Note

Although the Yamaka Pāli uses term '**khaṇe**' frequently , there is never a usage of '**khaṇa**'. The term is always used dynamically rather than statically. Not in entity wise. This small difference in letters 'e' and 'a' makes a big difference to the understanding.

Here, reader may be perplexed, that even in this book itself, you may have seen words 'uppādakkhaṇ**a**, bhaṅgakkhaṇ**a**' used frequently. On some occasions readers may have thought they are citations from

Abhidhamma Pitaka. Actually, in Yamaka Abhidhamma Pali the words are always used in the form of 'uppādakkaṇṇe, bhaṅgakkhaṇṇe'.

This happens Because it is easy to grasp something in entity wise language. When thinking about phenomenon, habit is to Stop at places. Habit is to search for stopping places. But the phenomenon is changing continuously and there is no place to stop within them. Whole 'uppādakkaṇṇa' does not appear in a same time. It's a dynamic development.

[Back to the subject](#)

However, in the era of commentaries and even today, the term 'khaṇa' is often used to denote a very brief period in time, infinitesimally small moment of time, particularly in the context of impermanence (anicca). This subtle distinction in meaning plays a crucial role in insight meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā).

[Khaṇa in Vipassanā Practice](#)

Thus, practitioner who strive to observe impermanence through the main Theravāda viewpoint, Incline to see impermanence of phenomena over time. This is why many who studied Theravāda Abhidhamma emphasize the concept of nama-rupa (mind-matter) breaking apart moment by moment. This highlights the significance of perceiving the momentary dissolution of nama-rupa.

According to Theravāda doctrine, phenomena do not require cause to cease; rather, they inevitably dissolve over time as a fundamental principle of existence. This perspective emphasizes that dissolution does not occur due to an absence of causes but as a natural consequence of the passage of time.

In Theravāda tradition, it is stated that the lifespan of a material form (rupa) is 17 thought moments (cittakkhaṇa). This suggests that both thoughts and material phenomena are bound by a definite law of

existence. This reinforces the idea that dissolution is dictated by **Time** rather than the absence of causes.

In Theravāda doctrine, the cessation of a phenomenon due to absence of causes is understood as an ending of 'continuation in successions' (**santati**), That means the disappearance of combination of mentalities or materials that prevails for a long period.

Cyclic definition of Khana

When it is said that nama-rupa dissolves moment by moment, the question arises: what exactly is meant by '**moment**'? According to the Theravāda tradition, a moment is often defined as the brief period during which a single citta exists. But again, we say citta exists only for a moment.

This looks like a cyclical definition. Altogether what has been said is ' citta prevails only for moment of time of citta existence'. Nothing new is said here. Similar to situation when asked what is right view is? answering 'seeing with wisdom' and when asked what is 'seeing with wisdom' is? Then answering as 'right view'. Since these concepts are highly relevant to insight meditation, they will be further explored in subsequent discussions.

The way a citta's lifespan should be divided is further confirmed in the following Yamaka passages:

"Yaṃ cittaṃ na uppajjati taṃ cittaṃ na uppannaṃ'ti: Bhaṅgakkhaṇe cittaṃ na uppajjati, na ca taṃ cittaṃ na uppannaṃ, atīta anāgata cittaṃ na ceva uppajjati na ca uppannaṃ."

First, the Bhagawan inquires, "Does a mind that is not arising is it not 'uppanna'?(Is it not arisen)?"

Answer: "At the moment of diminishing, the mind does not arise. However, this does not mean that the mind is not arisen. The past and future mind neither arising nor are they arisen."

If the Blessed one had intended to emphasize a distinct stable moment (thitikkhaṇa) for the mind's existence, then the above explanation should be like this: “Just as at the moment of diminishing, the mind does not arise, so too at the moment of its duration, it does not arise, but this does not mean that the mind is not arisen.” However, this is not stated.

Therefore, it is even more evident, from the lastly cited Yamaka Pali verse, when considering the lifespan of a mind, that its entirety is comprehensively depicted through the phases of arising and diminishing.

‘thiti’ and thitikkhana

From the above explanations, it is not to be inferred that mental or material phenomena lack continuity or existence. The Pali term ‘thiti’ closely aligns with the simple English word ‘staying’ (being or existence). It may also be understood as continuity.

A particular interpretation confirming this can be found in the Dhammasangani. It is given in the explanation of the phenomenon known as Jīvitindriya (the faculty of life). Below is the definition related to the immaterial Jīvitindriya:

“Yo tesaṃ arūpīnaṃ dhammānaṃ āyu, **thiti**, yapaṇā, yāpaṇā, iriyana, vattanā, pālanā, jīvitam, jīvitindriyam, idaṃ tasmim samaye jīvitindriyam hoti.”
(Dhammasangani - Bu.J. - 32)

This can be translated as: “That which is the life capacity, Staying, sustenance, maintenance, conduct, continuation, preservation, life, life faculty (Jīvitindriya) of those immaterial phenomena, is called Jīvitindriya at that time.”

Jīvitindriya is a co-arisen phenomenon that functions in conjunction with the consciousness and its associated mental factors. It represents the life potency of a particular mind. In the above definition, the word

‘ṭhiti’ is used in reference to the life potency of the mind, and in translation, it is rendered as ‘Staying.’

A significant implication that emerges from this is that the term ‘ṭhiti’ can be applied to the entire lifespan of a mind. The duration of a mind persists as long as the immaterial Jīvitindriya continues to exist. This raises the idea, could not the ‘ṭhiti’ which is the sustenance of a phenomenon, be portrayed solely through the phases of arising and diminishing.

A definitive answer to this will be explored further in the upcoming explanations. For now, let us redirect our attention back to the Yamaka Pali. Buddhaghosa Thera, The Atuwāchārin, were not unaware of the implications regarding the lifespan of a mind in the verses of the Yamaka. He or the ancient Sinhala Theras, whom he followed in writing the commentaries, introduce a distinct intermediate phase between arising and diminishing likely due to some facts stated within the Yamaka itself.

How the Moment of Stability introduced

The concept of 'Ṭhitikkhaṇa' most likely introduced when trying to explain certain sections in Saṅkhāra Yamaka. The Saṅkhāra Yamaka discusses bodily formations (kāya-saṅkhāra), verbal formations (vacī-saṅkhāra), and mental formations (citta-saṅkhāra). It defines kāya-saṅkhāra as breathing, vacī-saṅkhāra as discursive thinking and mental examination (vitakka-vicāra), and citta-saṅkhāra as perception (saññā) and feeling (vedanā). Various modes of arising and cessation related to these trio are elaborated within the saṅkhāra Yamaka. **(See footnote 3)**

Relevant passages regarding the discussion are presented below:

1. “**Yassa kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjati tassa cittasaṅkhāro uppajjati: āmantā**”
(Bu.J.14 page - Yamaka Prakarana 02(1))

Translation: "If bodily formations are arising for someone, do mental formations also arising? The answer is: Yes."

2. " *Yassa kāyasaṅkhāro nirujjhati tassa cittasaṅkhāro nirujjhati: āmantā*" (Bu.J. 56/Yamaka 02(1))

Translation: "If bodily formations are diminishing for someone, do mental formations also diminishing? The answer is: Yes."

3. "*Yassa kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjati tassa cittasaṅkhāro nirujjhati: no*" (Bu.J. 94/Saṅkhāra Yamaka 02(1))

Translation: "If bodily formations are arising for someone, do mental formations diminishing? The answer is: No."

According to the first two statements, every time breath, which is a consciousness-originated rūpa, arising or developing, the corresponding consciousness also at the stage of arising. Similarly, when breath is diminishing, weakening, the consciousness also weakening. This demonstrates that the arising and diminishing phases (Uppādakkhaṇa and Bhaṅgakkhaṇa) of bodily formations align with the arising and diminishing phases of the associated consciousness.

From the Pāli passage presented at the end, stated at "Sankhāra Yamaka's" arising and cessation section, it becomes evident that no mental state ever in the phase of diminishing while breath is at the stage of arising. On the other hand, although this arising and cessation section does not explicitly state (possibly due to the shortening of certain declarations) it is clear that always bodily formations are not at the phase of diminishing when mental states are arising.

In the "Dhamma Yamaka," within the arising and cessation section, the answer "No " to the phrase: "*Yassa kusalaṃ dhammā uppajjati tassa abyākathā dhammā nirujjhanti*" ("If wholesome dhamma's are arising for someone, do neutral phenomena diminishing") is confirming above. (Bu.J. – 760, Yamaka 2-(1))

This is because in the classification of "Abyākata Dhamma" (neutral phenomena), "Cittasamuttāna Rūpa" (mind-originated matter) is also included. (See footnote 4)

When the above-mentioned facts in three or four Pāli passages are there, a particular issue arises when assuming the lifespan of Breath, (which is Cittasamuttāna Rūpa) to be 17 mind-moments.

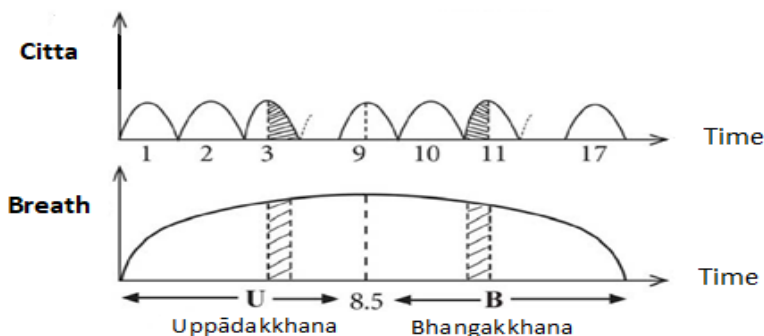
According to the Abhidhammatṭhakathā (Abhidhamma Commentary), the lifespan of all rūpa (matter) is stated to be 17 mind-moments. The commentators accepted that all types of matter—Cittaja (mind-originated), Utuja (temperature- originated), Kammaja (kamma-originated), and Āhāraja (nutrition- originated)—follow this fundamental principle.

The problem arises when the lifespan of material phenomena is depicted in terms of two distinct phases, similar to mental states. In that case, the arising moment of bodily formations would coincide with the diminishing moment of a mental state, and at another instance, the arising moment of a mental state would coincide with the diminishing moment of bodily formations.

This is because if a rūpa's lifespan is 17 mind-moments, then 8.5 mind-moments would be its arising phase, and the remaining 8.5 mind-moments would be its diminishing phase (assuming that the arising and diminishing phases of a rūpa are of equal duration). This creates a contradiction with the previously mentioned Yamaka Pāli passages.

The following Graph further clarifies this point:

17 Consecutive Citta Moments



From the first diagram, mental activity is depicted, while in the second diagram, the temporal fluctuations of a rūpa that arises simultaneously with the initial consciousness are analyzed. This diagram is based on the assumption that the lifespan of a rūpa is 17 mind-moments. Under this assumption, Breath event that begins with the arising of the first consciousness ceases with the cessation of the 17th consciousness. While this does not contradict the Yamaka Pāli text, upon closely examining the areas highlighted, a discrepancy clearly emerges.

For example, when the third consciousness is diminishing, the bodily formation (rūpa) is still in its arising phase. When considering the 11th consciousness, it is observed that it is arising, while the inhalation-exhalation process is in its diminishing phase.

This contradicts the earlier stated proposition: “If bodily formations are arising for someone, do mental formations diminishing? ” No.” Similarly, it is not possible for bodily formations to be diminishing while the mind is still arising.

To resolve these discrepancies, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

1. Consideration, that an inhalation-exhalation event, which is a **Cittasamuttāna Rūpa**, ceases simultaneously with the cessation of the consciousness that gives rise to it. (In this case, the lifespan of a citta initiated rūpa would be equal to the lifespan of a consciousness.)
2. If it is assumed that a rūpa has a longer lifespan than a consciousness, then rather than ceasing at the end of the bhaṅgakkhana of the consciousness that gave rise to it, the rūpa would develop during the arising phase of the next consciousness and weaken during its diminishing phase before disappearing at the conclusion of a subsequent consciousness.
(See the diagram at page 62)
3. A conceptual **ṭhitikkhaṇa** (moment of stability) can be hypothesized related to inhalation-exhalation, which should not be said as either developing or diminishing manner.

Other than these three possibilities, no alternative explanation seems to align with the Yamaka Pāli text. When considering the first hypothesis, which equates the lifespan of Cittasamuttāna Rūpa with that of a consciousness, several factors mentioned in the Sankhāra Yamaka provide strong support for this view. Further analysis in this work will reveal that for certain Cittasamuttāna Rūpa such as inhalation-exhalation, their lifespan is equivalent with that of the corresponding consciousness.

Apart from the Cittasamuttāna material phenomena (rūpa), namely bodily intimation (kāyaviññatti) and verbal intimation (vacīviññatti), all other Cittasamuttāna rūpa can persist for a longer duration than a single moment of consciousness (citta). This is supported by the facts found in the Paṭṭhāna. Therefore, the second alternative cannot be dismissed outright.

Now, considering the final alternative—by inserting a stable phase (ṭhiti-kṣaṇa) between uppāḍakkhana and bhaṅgakkhana, some discrepancies in the Yamaka texts can be somewhat reconciled. That is, by placing an intermediate persistence phase, the simultaneity of bodily formations

(kāya-saṅkhāra) diminishing at the exact moment of mental arising can be avoided, as well as the simultaneity of bodily formations arising at the exact moment of mental weakening.

This may explain why the Aṭṭwācārin or even earlier Theravāda scholars emphasized the necessity of an intermediate stable phase regarding rūpa. Furthermore, the way, the arrangement of details in the Paṭhama Ānanda Sutta and the Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta is understood, also may have led to this notion.

Once an intermediate stable phase is introduced for rūpa, it logically extends to nāma-dhamma as well, that is, to mental phenomena such as consciousness (citta) and mental factors (cetasika).

The reason is that in the Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta and the First Ānanda Sutta, the three characteristics of conditioned phenomena (saṅkhata lakkhaṇa) were understood by Theravāda scholars as representing the different stages in the lifespan of a conditioned phenomenon and Since the Thitikkhana was introduced for rūpa, the same three characteristics were also applied to nāma-dhamma in those suttas.

Instead of a general 'Thiti' (continuum), extending throughout the existence of conditioned phenomena, Main commentarial viewpoint appears to have proposed a distinct temporal interval of stability (ṭhiti-kṣaṇa) between arising and diminishing, separate from both.

The Abhidhamma Mūlatikā commentator, Ānanda Thera, did not accept such a distinct stable phase concerning nāma-dhamma. However, he also did not consider 'Thiti' to be entirely explained by the arising and diminishing phases alone. Rather, Thero regarded 'change in continuity' is manifested due to sequential manner across different moments of conditioned phenomena.

The Three Characteristics of Conditioned Phenomena

Now, let us examine in detail the first Ānanda Sutta and related discourses mentioned earlier. These suttas are regarded as highly significant in Buddhism. Both the First Ānanda Sutta and the Saṅkhaṭa Lakkhaṇa Sutta define the characteristics of conditioned phenomena as follows:

"Uppādo paññāyati, vayo paññāyati, ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati."

A key observation regarding the sequence of these characteristics in the suttas is that ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati (the change in continuity) is positioned at the end, rather than between emergence (uppāda) and cessation (vaya).

Had the Blessed One placed ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ in the middle, it would have aligned more closely with the interpretation of the Buddhaghosa Thera's idea. That is, instead of the order **"Uppādo paññāyati, vayo paññāyati, ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati,"** it would have been more fitting as **"Uppādo paññāyati, ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati, vayo paññāyati."**

Next, we must consider the term paññāyati carefully. This term can mean "Designated," "appears," "is understood by wisdom," or "manifest." When the Blessed One asked, Venerable Ānanda, "in which, emergence does manifest? in which, cessation does manifest? in which, change in continuity does manifest? Way the Venerable Ānanda's response suggests, that he was not merely recalling from memory, but directly perceiving these phenomena in an immediate and experiential manner, as would be understood by an enlightened disciple.

This is why the Bhagawa highly praised Ven Ānanda—not merely for his memory, but for his deep insight.

To precisely determine the limits of 'Uppādakkhana' and 'Bangakkhana' within the brief lifespan of a single moment of consciousness is beyond the direct Knowing of an ordinary disciple. For instance, determining exactly how much time is spent in arising, how much in diminishing, and how much in stability, within a single thought-moment—whether each and every thought consists of precisely three sub-moments—these cannot be perceived directly but only inferred.

Even more difficult is discerning whether the arising or diminishing of a moment of consciousness perfectly coincides with the arising or weakening of another rūpa(material) phenomenon.

Sotāpanna does not need to know such things. That is a subject for the Omniscient knowledge. Any noble disciple who attains a path and fruition realizes a common characteristic of impermanence. However, it cannot be said that every path and fruition attainer perceives mind-moments or momentary states.

In the **Second Ānanda Sutta**, which follows the First Ānanda Sutta quoted above, another important point related to this discussion emerges. The essence of that discourse can be summarized as follows:

Second Ānanda Sutta

The Blessed One asked Venerable Ānanda,

- "Ānanda, on which phenomena, emergence were manifested? cessation was manifested? change in continuity were manifested? (question is in relation to the past)
- on which phenomena, emergence will be manifest? cessation will be manifest? change in continuity will be manifest?
- on which phenomena emergence do manifest? cessation do manifest? change in continuity do manifest?

Thus, the Blessed One questioned Venerable Ānanda regarding the conditioned characteristics of formations across the three time periods.

Venerable Ānanda explained that the arising, cessation, and change in continuity of past *nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter) had already occurred, while these characteristics would manifest in future *nāma-rūpa* phenomena. However, what Thero said regarding the present is particularly significant to the theme of this text. The original Pali passage is as follows:

“Yaṃ kho āvuso, rūpaṃ jātaṃ, pātubhūtaṃ, tassa uppādo paññāyati, vayo paññāyati, ñhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyati. Yā vedanā... re... yā saññā... ye saṅkhārā... yaṃ viññāṇaṃ jātaṃ pātubhūtaṃ, tassa uppādo paññāyati, vayo paññāyati, ñhitassa aññathattaṃ paññāyatīti.”

"Whatever form has arisen and appeared, its arising does manifest, its cessation does manifest, and its change in continuity does manifest." The same applies to feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

A particularly noteworthy point in the above response is the **statement**, that even in a form or sensations etc, that has already arisen and appeared, **'it's arising does manifest'**. If the word "uppāda" (arising) referred strictly to the moment of origination, then it would not be logical to say that an already arisen *nāma-rūpa* is manifesting it's arising in present tense. If that were the case, the text should have stated, "Its arising was manifested" (**uppādo paññāyittha**), referring in a past sense. This is because the already-arisen *nāma-rūpa* seem to have surpassed **'Uppādakkhana'**.

Furthermore, Venerable Ānanda should have stated only that "ñhitassa aññathattaṃ" (change in continuity) is manifesting in the present. Therefore, it becomes evident that the term **"uppāda"** does not specifically denote the moment of arising (**uppādakkhana**).

Similarly, the term "**vaya**" (cessation) does not specifically denote the moment of diminishing (**bhaṅgakkhaṇa**). Additionally, from the way the response is structured, it becomes clear that all three conditioned characteristics (arising, cessation, and change in continuity) manifest at any given moment within the lifespan of a conditioned phenomenon.

Reconciling Temporal Phases and Sutta Teachings

This suggests that whether during the moment of arising or during the moment of diminishing, these three conditioned characteristics are simultaneously present. They are not sequential temporal phases but rather functional characteristics that can be observed concurrently. It appears that noble disciples who attain the path and fruition realize this as a universal characteristic.

Let us now examine another related sutta passage. This is found in the Uppāda Saṃyutta within the Saṃyutta Nikāya, specifically in the Cakkhu Sutta and similar discourses:

"Yo bhikkhave, cakkhussa uppādo, ṭhiti, abhinibbatti, pātubhāvo, dukkhassa so uppādo, rogānaṃ ṭhiti, jarāmaraṇassa pātubhāvo. Yo sotassa - pe - yo ghānassa - pe..."

(Saṃyutta Nikāya / Khandha Vagga / Bu.J. 450 p.)

"Monks, if there is arising, continuity, birth, or manifestation of the eye, it is the arising of suffering, the continuity of disease, and the manifestation of aging and death. If there is arising of the ear..."

In the above suttas, following the 'arising' term related to the eye and so forth forms, the term 'ṭhiti' has been used. One might infer that 'uppādo' refers to the moment of arising, and 'ṭhiti' signifies the moment of continuity. However, in the same sutta, the subsequently used terms abhinibbatti and pātubhāva indicate the berth and manifestation of a certain phenomenon. Therefore, meaning of 'ṭhiti'

can be understood as some characteristic of a dhamma simultaneously happening with whatever the 'uppādo'.

This implies that *ṭhiti* and *uppāda* characteristics prevails concurrently. The subsequent sequence of suttas conveys the same meaning regarding *nāma dhamma* (mentalities) as well.

Another significant point that emerges from these suttas is that when *nāma-rūpa* arises and persists, the Blessed One equates it to the manifestation of aging and death. Death coincides with the characteristic of cessation (*vaya-lakkhaṇa*).

The ancient Saying, “*Uppattiya sahedam maraṇam āgataṁ sadā*”, also supports this notion. Its meaning is: "With the birth, death always came to be manifested."

From all these considerations, it becomes more and more evident that *uppāda*, *ṭhiti*, and *vaya* characteristics coexist simultaneously.

A further important observation, drawn from examining the *Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta* and the *First Ānanda Sutta*, is that the *Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa*, the characteristics *uppāda* and *vaya* and etc, as mentioned in these discourses, apply to all *nāma-rūpa dhammas*. That is, they pertain to all conditioned formations (*saṅkhāras*).

Synchronisation with Yamaka Analysis

However, in the *Yamaka Pāli*, the arising moment (*uppādakkaṇa*) and the diminishing moment (*bhaṅgakkhaṇa*) are discussed in relation to all *nāma dhammas* and, when concerning *rūpa*, it is used only for *cittaja rūpa* (mind-originated matter). The *Saṅkhāra Yamaka* mentions the arising and dissolution of *cittaja rūpa*, such as inhalation and exhalation (*assāsapassāsa*).

In the *Āyatana Yamaka*, *Indriya Yamaka*, *Dhamma Yamaka*, and *Skandha Yamaka*, karmically produced (*kammaja*) *rūpa* is also discussed. However, it is always limited to the beginning of existence (i.e., at the

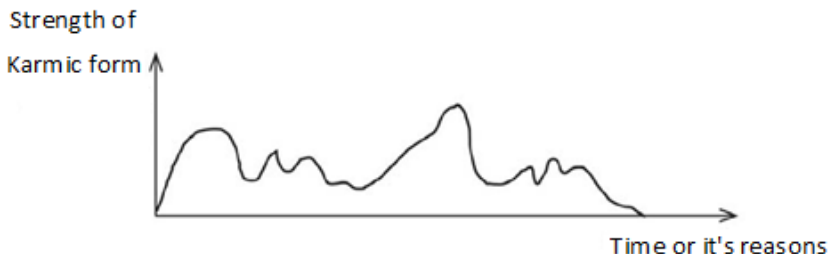
moment of rebirth) and to the cessation of karmically produced rūpa at the moment of death. Nevertheless, for karmically produced rūpa such as the eye and ear, the Yamaka texts **do not state**, "At the moment the eye arises" (Cakkhussa uppādakkhaṇe) or "At the moment the ear arises" (Sotassa uppādakkhaṇe)." likewise.

Khana is only for mind-originated rūpa

While mind-originated rūpa is described as arising and weakening during daily life, there is no explicit mention of karmically produced rūpa behaving in the same way. If the arising moment (uppādakkhaṇa) of karmically produced rūpa such as the eye is to be ascribed, then according to the Yamaka Pāli methodology, it would imply a corresponding diminishing moment (bhaṅgakkhaṇa), and through these two, the lifespan of that rūpa would be determined.

However, when considering karmically produced rūpa that persists for a longer period, its strength may fluctuate over time due to various conditions such as nutriment (āhāra paccaya), influence of the mind (Vippayutta paccaya, pacchājāta paccaya). This suggests that during an individual's lifetime, the intensity of kammaja rūpa may weaken at times and later strengthen again. Unlike mind-originated rūpa, which follows a gradual increase and decrease, kammaja rūpa does not always follow this pattern.

The following chart illustrates possible fluctuations of kammaja rūpa over time.



A similar fluctuation can also be observed in nutriment-originated (āhāra) and seasonal-originated (utuja) rūpa. Therefore, it becomes apparent that discussing their lifespan strictly in terms of separate arising (uppādakkhaṇa) and diminishing (bhaṅgakkhaṇa) phases—or even dividing them into three phases by including continuity (tṭhiti)—may not be entirely appropriate.

Therefore, when considering all material phenomena related to bodily constituents, for most of them, it appears unnecessary to divide their lifespan into two phases—arising and diminishing—. However, eye, ear, masculinity, femininity, and other karmically produced material phenomena are crucial in the life of a sentient being. Some of these are called as inherent forms. (Ajattika). When discussing the aggregate of form, it is not appropriate to ignore or overlook these types of forms.

From these points, it becomes evident that although the Blessed One described the conditioned characteristics emergence, cessation, change in continuity concerning material phenomena, applying them to 'Uppādakkhana' and 'Bangakkhana' is inappropriate. In short, when the characteristics described in the Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta and similar teachings applied to all material phenomena, it is clear that arising and diminishing moment 'Uppādakkhana' and 'Bangakkhana' pertain specifically to consciousness-originated material phenomena.

For those studying the Yamaka Pali section, I wish to highlight a few additional points with this. When analysing the Yamaka, a question arises as to why seasonal and nutriment-produced material phenomena are not considered in the divisions such as Dhamma Yamaka, Sacca Yamaka, and Saṅkhāra Yamaka.

It cannot be said that these material forms are inherently exclusive in a sentient being's existence. For example, within the human body, countless microorganisms also claim these material phenomena as their own. Unlike karmically produced material phenomena, these forms do not inherently belong to the life of a sentient being. Furthermore, they do not necessarily follow the mental processes in a synchronized manner—meaning, their arising and dissolution do not always align with

the arising and cessation of thoughts. While coincidences may occur, it is incorrect to assume a constant synchronization. In fact, discussing the arising moment or diminishing moment of these material forms in the same manner not even meaningful.

Consciousness-originated material phenomena align with the mind because they arise as a result of specific mental causes. If one were to consider these non-synchronized material phenomena in the Yamaka analysis, the complexity of classification would increase significantly. Since the primary objective of the Yamaka section is to highlight the impermanence of dhammas rather than to introduce unnecessary complexity, it is evident that the Blessed One omitted these material forms in those classifications.

Regarding karmically produced material phenomena, their exclusion from the classifications in the Yamaka section daily life is most likely due to the fact that they do not follow a fixed pattern over time. If taken it will lead to complexities in classification. As mentioned earlier, their fluctuation over time prevents a straightforward categorization.

Back to the main subject

Many Theravāda Teachers opposed the idea that the characteristics of emergence and cessation could exist simultaneously within a conditioned phenomenon. They believed that such an interpretation would introduce contradictions and inconsistencies. They may have thought, if emergence and cessation manifest simultaneously, it would undermine the very process of formation, as the characteristic of cessation would counteract the phenomenon's continuation.

In the consciousness-related Yamaka section (Citta Yamaka), it is stated that when a mind is at the moment of arising, its weakening does not occur simultaneously. If one were to claim that when dhamma develops or grows while simultaneously perishing, it would be meaningless.

However, it should be noted that some Theravada Theras misunderstood and mixed the concepts of emergence (Uppāda) with Moment of arising (Uppādakkhana) and Cessation with moment of diminishing (Bhaṅgakkhaṇa).

Emergence and Cessation

What, then, is meant by the terms "Uppāda and Vaya"? It refers to the manifestation, Emergence of a phenomenon due to causation, and the cessation of the phenomenon when the causation disappears. This is why these are called the characteristics of conditioned phenomena. The word "*saṅkhata*" itself means "that which is formed by causes."

A phenomenon's existence is manifesting from the beginning of Uppādakkhana. The important point to understand is that, throughout the moment of a mental-material phenomenon's breaking, it continues to receive support from its causes. Even during its diminishing phase, the phenomenon remains present as a current reality. Not that from the beginning of 'Bhaṅgakkhaṇa' that it loses the connection with its cause, as if the phenomenon simply floated in the air for a while and then suddenly vanished.

Therefore, even at the final stage of 'Bhaṅgakkhaṇa', a phenomenon remains until its complete cessation, solely due to the influence of its causes.

Since throughout the lifespan of nama-Rupa (name-and-form) phenomena it exists due to its causes, the statement "*Uppādo paññāyati*" (emergence does manifest) is valid for the lifespan. Once this phenomenon ceases and is entirely absent, it should be stated retrospectively that emergence had occurred. This is expressed as "*Uppādo paññāyittha.*"

The Cessation (Vaya)

Describing the characteristic of cessation is somewhat challenging. Previously graphical representations have been used to illustrate the fluctuations in the existing nature of a phenomenon. Any point on these curves indicates the existence of a phenomenon. However, the absence of a nama-Rupa phenomenon cannot be represented by any point on the graph. Nevertheless, since nama-Rupa ceases to exist due to the cessation of their inherent causes, the characteristic of **Vaya** is intrinsic to nama-Rupa itself.

It is important to focus on a particular aspect of the previously cited Dutiyā Ānanda Sutta regarding the characteristic of '**vaya**'. In that sutta, for rupa (form), vedana (sensations), and other **arisen** phenomena, it is stated, "**Vayo paññāyati**" (cessation do manifest).

If '**Vaya**' were understood solely as whatever happening at the moment of diminishing (**Bhaṅgakkhaṇa**) or full extinguishment of phenomenon at the end of **Bhaṅgakkhaṇa**, then at any moment of a phenomenon's existence, it would have to be said that it will be destroyed in the future or will succumb to 'Vaya' in future.

That would mean, Venerable Ananda must have said "**Yaṃ rūpaṃ jātaṃ pātubhūtaṃ tassa vayo paññāyissati**" (Any form that has arisen and appeared **will** experience cessation – In a future sense). However, it is not mentioned in that manner.

What Venerable Ānanda said was that the characteristic of 'Vaya' is presently manifesting in a phenomenon that is arisen. This indicates that even the characteristic of cessation '**Vaya**' is manifesting throughout arisen state (Uppanna) of a phenomenon. Once a phenomenon is completely gone, its characteristic of '**Vaya**' is no longer manifesting. Regarding past nama-rupa, Venerable Ānanda stated that their characteristic of '**Vaya**' "had occurred" (**paññāyittha**) rather than saying "is manifesting" (**paññāyati**).

Insight from the Satipatthana Sutta

A relevant passage from the Satipatthana Sutta should be recalled in this context. The Blessed One separately stated, “**Samudaya-dhammānupassī viharati**” (One dwells contemplating arising of phenomena) and “**Vaya-dhammānupassī viharati**” (One dwells contemplating cessation of phenomena). However, afterward, Lord Buddha unified both aspects by stating, “**Samudaya-vaya-dhammānupassī viharati**” (One dwells contemplating both arising and cessation of phenomena together).

This is because both the arising and cessation characteristics of formations become evident to the meditator simultaneously and must be comprehended as such. Otherwise, if arising and cessation were to be considered entirely separately, there would be no necessity to later combine them into a single statement.

Let's take example about contemplating impermanence. So that knowledge gained up to now can be applied.

Cause and Effect & Impermanence

As an example, consider how one reflects on the impermanent nature of the body of a person who passed away long ago. When one recalls that person's nature of body as it was when he was alive, one perceives that it was something that had arisen and had not existed before. Similarly, if one understands that this bodily nature ceased due to the cessation of its causes, then recognizing both its emergence and cessation simultaneously is the correct way of reflection. In this understanding, it is not necessary to contemplate every detail of the arising moments and breaking moments of the individual material components of that body.

The cessation of that bodily nature occurred due to the cessation of its underlying causes. For instance, the complexion of that person's skin once existed based on the four great elements (mahābhūta). When those four great elements ceased, the complexion also disappeared. At the moment you reflect on the impermanent nature of that body, nothing related to it remains. It did not vanish from the world in which you currently live.

The world you now live in is newly formed; The world now you live did not exist as it is, when that past body was present. If the external world had remained the same since that time, it could be said that the past body disappeared from this world.

But since that is not the case, if one asks where that past body went, the answer would be that it existed as long as its causes existed, that it was sustained by those causes, that its causes themselves served as the foundation for its existence, and that therefore, its disappearance was not something that happened later—it occurred together with the cessation of those causes. It ceased exactly where it once existed.

That means the characteristic of cessation (**vaya lakkhana**) can be understood when that very phenomenon exists. When considering a human body visible in the present, karmic- originated, seasonal- originated, nutritionally originated, and mind-originated material elements which coexist at same moment, Some elements are being generated, while others may be weakening. However, all of them are in arisen nature. meaning they belong to the '**uppanna 'nature'**' .

Taking this arisen nature into account, an insightful observer can encapsulate the entire body in a singular manner. Whichever the state observed, it is possible to directly see that state itself is something impermanent.

In this way, any form, whether it be a chair, a house, or even the entire earth, can be perceived as impermanent. The way defilements arise, taking overall span of material structure in a singular way, the way the

object is taken, the same object, the very aspect of form to which attachment did arise can be contemplated as impermanent.

“A large form does not exist as an absolute reality. Such forms are conventional (paññatti); therefore, reflection of impermanence does not apply to them”, in such a way, if one comes to a view, it would be a significant misjudgment. No matter how subtle the momentary dissolution may be, there is no obstacle to seeing both the arising and cessation in this manner. Arising and cessation refer to something existing at a given moment due to specific causes and ceasing to exist when those causes are no longer present.

The term "**moment**" mentioned above does not refer to "**khana**" (the smallest time unit) as stated earlier in this text. Instead, it applies to any level where a phenomenon is reflected. When it is said that a phenomenon goes to cessation due to the absence of its causes, one might mistakenly associate the word "**goes to**" with the concept of time. At this point, it is appropriate to explain one of the most crucial aspects of this text: the confusion between cause-and-effect relationships and time.

Time

So, what exactly is time? How does time emerge?

Time is depicted through the existence of nama-rupa (mental and physical phenomena). Time does not exist independently, causing new mental or physical phenomena to arise. Instead, it is the arising and continuation of nama-rupa phenomena that give rise to the designation of time.

A person perceives time as passing when he observes changes in his surroundings or his body. Even when he is not focused on his external environment, time is sensed when the emergence and cessation of various mental streams become apparent.

Abhidharma and the Concept of Time

Describing the world through the lens of *nāma-rūpa* (mental and material phenomena) is the fundamental principle of Abhidharma. The key factor that differentiates Theravāda Abhidharma from other traditions is its acceptance of the existence of unique *nāma-rūpa* phenomena. It acknowledges various *nāma* (mental) and *rūpa* (physical) phenomena as either wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral, and it recognizes the reality of these ultimate phenomena. In Theravāda Abhidharma, these unique phenomena are referred to as *paramattha* (ultimate realities).

Within the Abhidharma Piṭaka or even within the broader Theravāda tradition, time is not regarded as a *paramattha* (ultimate reality). This gives rise to a philosophical dilemma: Does the characteristic of cessation (*vaya-lakṣaṇa*) manifest due to the passage of time, or does it emerge from the absence of causes? According to Theravāda, the former explanation is more commonly accepted.

Misinterpretation through External Comparison

When one contemplates the impermanence of a mental or physical phenomenon, when he think of it in relation to time, in fact what he does is, imagining the changes in that phenomenon from a measurement of time, which is based and constructed from world of *nāma-rūpa* elements external to the object he is targeting —either from his current surroundings or from past experiences on name and forms stored in memory. **His perception of time acts as a framework through which he conceptualizes the possible transformations of the *nāma-rūpa* he is focusing on.**

A simple Example would be defining the time by movement of sun or bits of a clock. Then applying it to measure the day-to-day transformations. In this context, divide that into Nano seconds and visualize subtle impermanence of name and forms.

Thus, in above situation, designation of time is imposed based on the existence and transformation of other nāma-rūpa phenomena. This means that one's visualization of impermanence is often derived from observing external changes rather than directly analyzing the causes of the phenomenon itself.

If a phenomenon exists due to its own specific causes, why should its impermanence be assessed in relation to other external phenomena? Does the targeted nāma-rūpa phenomenon, is merely waiting to disappear while watching the other phenomena?

The term "external phenomena" here refers to those nāma-rūpa elements that are not directly related to the targeted phenomenon, that are neither its co-arising conditions nor other supportive causes. When one mistakenly conceptualizes impermanence by associating it with external elements, this misunderstanding can be corrected by reflecting on impermanence in a broader way. It means visualizing the impermanence of external things simultaneously.

All nāma-rūpa phenomena, whether near or far in three times, should be analyzed through the lens of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. By doing so, one can eliminate the false perception of impermanence that arises from using time as an arbitrary measuring tool for the targeted phenomenon.

This relates to the phrases in satipattana sutta where reflection on external and internal phenomenon simultaneously, is advocated. (Ajjattabahidda va kāye kāyanupassi viharati).

However, this does not imply that one should completely disregard the time comparisons in continuations of name and forms. Such comparisons have practical significance as well.

For example, if one considers the color of a flower, it exists in dependence on the four great elements (mahābhūta). Instead of defining its impermanence in relation to external elements, it is more

appropriate to analyze its impermanence in terms of its fundamental components, the four great elements themselves.

The Matrix is different

This perspective on time can also be understood in another way. Not all phenomena arise and cease within the same world. As previously discussed, thoughts that arose in an earlier moment may later be examined through insight at a subsequent moment. However, the original thought did not cease within the same world, that the subsequent thought comes to, nor did the later thought arise to the same world where the previous one was.

Each phenomenon exists within its own specific causal framework—a world unique to that phenomenon. Therefore, searching for impermanence across an entire world using the notion of time as a reference point is an unnecessary effort. The true impermanence of a phenomenon should be understood in relation to its own causes and conditions rather than as a universal concept imposed across an entire world.

Key sutta reference

At this point, it is relevant to recall an incident from Savatthi, where a monk posed a question to the Blessed One. This encounter is documented in the Khandha Vagga of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, specifically in the Gomaya Piṇḍa Sutta. The monk asked:

"Venerable Sir, is there any rūpa (form), vedanā (feeling), saññā (perception), saṅkhāra (mental formations), or viññāṇa (consciousness) that is eternal, unchanging, and everlasting?"

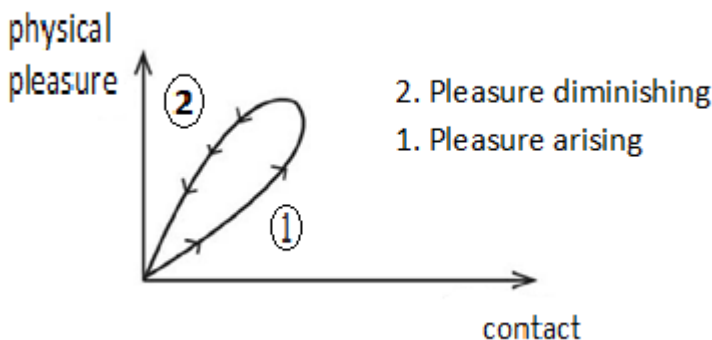
As a response, Blessed One declared that there is no form, sensation, perception, or any other phenomenon that exists permanently, immutably, and eternally.

Furthermore, to emphasize that point, the example which Blessed One referred to, is relevant to the discourse:

At that moment, the Blessed One took a small (dry piece of) cow dung and said to the monk, “Monk, there is not even as much as this—a minute, unchanging, eternal essence of self that does not undergo transformation.”

When asked whether anything is permanent, someone thinking in line with Commentary based Abhidhamma would typically not answer in the manner of the Blessed One’s response above. Instead, they would assert that there is not even a million fraction of a second during which any form or mental phenomenon remains unchanged. Or they would state that all mental and material phenomena dissolve moment by moment.

However, the Blessed One did not explain impermanence in terms of time. When time is disregarded, any change in a phenomenon must be



explained in relation to its causes. For example, the above diagram illustrates, how physical pleasure (*kāyika sukha vedanā*) may fluctuate depending on its primary cause—contact (*phassa*).

When the specific contact that gives rise to a sensation ceases, the sensation itself also disappears. This can be equated to a person walking on an Exercise roller—no matter how much he walk; he remain in the same place. In a similar way, the entirety of a being’s existence in

Samsara is a continuous cycle without true progression. This may be why the Lord Buddha referred to the journey of life as *samsāra* (the endless cycle of rebirth).

Life Span of a Citta Moment

Apart from contact, other causes of physical pleasure include the sensory base (*kāyāyatana*), the external stimulus it encounters, co-arising mental factors (*cetasika*), past karmic energy, and so on. Representing the fluctuation of sensation through a diagram, considering all those causes, is very difficult, because then the diagram would be multi-dimensional.

At the moment a pleasant sensation arises, the sensory base (*kāyāyatana*) supporting it may be getting stronger or weaker. Similarly, the tactile stimulus (*phoṭṭabbārammaṇa*), which includes the characteristics of earth (*paṭhavī*), fire (*tejo*), or wind (*vāyo*), may also get vary in intensity. The influence of past karmic energy at that moment is also subject to decay. Because the meritorious karma that gives rise to pleasurable sensation does so, with the cost of decay.

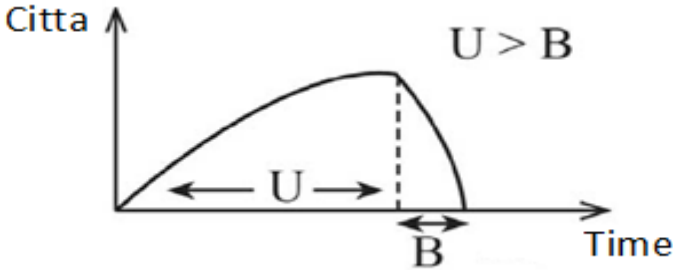
Thus, different sensations which arises under varying conditions, their durations must be different to each. Thus, their lifespans cannot be considered uniform.

Even within a single moment of consciousness, the duration of arising moment (*uppādakkhaṇa*) and diminishing (*bhaṅgakkhaṇa*) are not necessarily equal. There is no necessity to divide the lifespan of a citta into two equal parts. The fact that the duration of arising (*uppādakkhaṇa*) were to differ from that of diminishing (*bhaṅgakkhaṇa*) it will not contradict the teachings of Blessed One found in the Yamaka Pali.

With the above clarification, the complaint that " the Abhidhamma presents a Mathematical but impractical model of the world " (*niyatīvāda*) does not hold. Nor the ignorance of the influence of

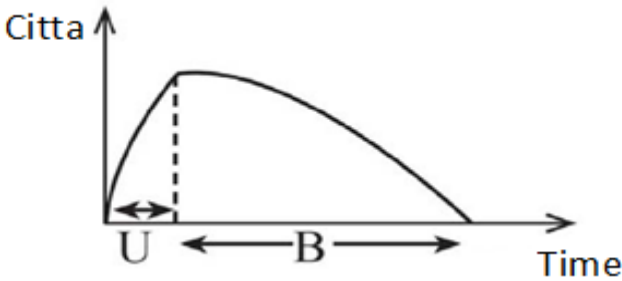
conditions (paccaya) on the existence of a phenomenon do happen. The Bhagawan's teachings do not lean towards an 'Akiriya vāda'.

To illustrate this point, a diagram depicting variations over time is provided below for ease of understanding:



Above the duration of arising (uppādakkhāṇa) is shown to be longer than that of diminishing (bhaṅgakkhāṇa).

The following diagram represents other way around:



If, at the moment of experiencing a physical sensation, the sensory base (kāyāyatana) and external stimulus gradually become stronger, the time it takes for the pleasurable sensation to fade may be extended.

Since the Pāli terms “uppādo paññāyati” and “uppādakkhāṇe” both contain “uppādo,” and “uppāda” one might reasonably interpret them as having the same meaning. The Blessed One may have used these closely related words because when phenomenon grows and takes

shape during the process of arising (uppāḍakkhaṇa), it makes the characteristic of formation (uppāda saṅkhata lakkhaṇa) more apparent at that stage.

More Evidence from Abhidhamma related books

Approximately 200 years after the Bhagawan's time, the Kathāvatthu, a text compiled to address doctrinal disputes, replaced the term bhaṅgakkhaṇa with vayakkhaṇa in the discussion on the "continuity of mind" (cittaThiti katha). Moggaliputta Tissa Thero may have chosen this term because, at that moment, the characteristic of cessation (vaya lakkhaṇa) is more prominent. Even in that discussion in the Kathāvatthu the lifespan of a mind (citta) is represented only in two phases: arising (uppāḍakkhaṇa) and bhaṅgakkhaṇa as vayakkhaṇa.

Opponents of correct view believed that some mental states persisted for an extended period. They argued that, during deep meditative absorption (jhāna-samāpatti), a single citta could last for an entire day. To counter this misconception, the Thero questioned whether half of that duration would be considered the phase of arising and the other half the phase of diminishing. This discussion in the Kathāvatthu indicates that, even by that era, the idea of a citta having three distinct moments (arising, continuity, and breaking) was not indicated.

When contemplating time and thought moments, there is an extraordinary event in the divine world associated with this topic. This is mentioned in the story of the 'Patipūjaka kumāri' in the Dhammapada.

According to the teachings, a single day in the Tavatimsa heavenly realm is equivalent to one hundred years in the human world. This does not mean that the deities enjoy a hundred years' worth of pleasure in a single day. Rather, they do not feel that one day spans a hundred years.

In the Tavatimsa heaven, there was a certain celestial prince who had a divine consort. One morning, as she was plucking flowers in the celestial garden, she passed away and was reborn in the human world. She grew up, reached adulthood, married, and had several children. Throughout

her life, she engaged in numerous meritorious deeds and observed religious practices with the aspiration of returning to her previous divine abode. After her death, she was reborn in the same celestial garden during the evening of the very day she had initially left.

The celestial prince, noticing her absence, inquired about her whereabouts. He was astonished by her story given through her divine knowledge of past lives (Jatismarana Ñana). He was amazed at how brief a human lifespan was in comparison.

For the deity, only a part of the day had passed. This does not mean that the deity and the other celestial beings had spent fifty or sixty years in the flower garden. After all, what would they do in a flower garden for fifty years? **This demonstrates there is a difference in how time flows across different realms.** Since time is represented through name-and-form (Nāma-Rūpa), it is evident variations in their lifespans manifest even across different worlds.

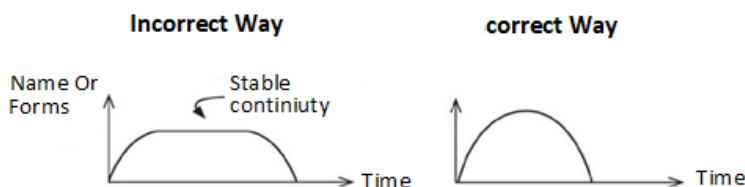
One might wonder whether divine beings experience more subconscious thoughts (Bhavanga citta) in their thought processes. (To protect commentary idea that every citta has same life span) When someone is in deep sleep, they can only determine the duration of their sleep upon waking by comparing changes in their surroundings and bodily states before and after sleep. If no such changes exist, it is difficult to ascertain how long they have slept.

During deep sleep, only Bhavanga thoughts persist. However, if Bhavanga thoughts were to increase between thought processes, a different problem would arise. When two deities communicate, one speaks, and the other must wait a while for a response. This happens because not all beings experience Bhavanga thoughts simultaneously.

The change in continuity "T̥hitassa Aññathattam"

Previously, the characteristics of arising (Uppāda) and cessation (Vaya) were discussed. Now, regarding the characteristic of "T̥hitassa Aññathattam"—it was shown the term "T̥hiti" signifies a state of existence within a phenomenon. This state of existence can be perceived throughout its entire lifespan. "T̥hitassa Aññathatta" refers to the 'change continuity' of an existing phenomenon. Instead of remaining unchanged for a period and then dissolving, a phenomenon undergoes constant transformation from the moment it arises.

Graphical Representation



What is denoted by Name and forms here is to consciousness (Citta), mental factors (Cetasika), and matter originating from consciousness (Cittaja Rūpa). Other forms of matter do not necessarily follow sequential variation. Time has been represented on the horizontal axis for ease of comprehension.

Therefore, rather than stating that name-and-form (Nāma-Rūpa) has a stable existence (T̥hiti), it is more appropriate to state that it has a changing existence (Aññathatta). No phenomenon remains unchanged, even for a brief moment, maintaining a uniform nature. (As represented by left diagram) If this were the case, it would imply the phenomenon as an entity, leading one to the incorrect view of "seeing the world in fixed entities like manner" ("Atthiti ko kacchayana ēko anto").

However, this does not mean that a phenomenon lacks an inherent nature. For instance, consider the experience of physical pain at a given

moment. During the arising phase (Uppādakkaṇa), the intensity of pain gradually increases. In other words, the sensation of suffering progressively intensifies, reaching its peak at the beginning of the diminishing phase (Bhaṅga-khaṇa) and then gradually diminishing. Despite the increase and decrease, its fundamental nature remains as pain.

Another example is a wholesome mind (Kusala Citta) imbued with loving-kindness (Mettā). During the arising phase, if it is arisen towards a particular person, that feeling of loving-kindness on that person intensifies over time, reaching a peak before gradually subsiding. Eventually, it disappears entirely. It does not remain constant or uniform, as its supporting conditions are continuously changing.

One of the key discussions among ancient Theravāda scholars regarding this topic was whether the arisen phenomenon itself ceases to exist or whether one phenomenon arises while another ceases. Since some scholars preferred to argue that the arisen phenomenon itself ceases, they were more inclined towards the idea of a uniform stability phase (ṭhiti-kṣaṇa) between arising (uppādakkhana) and diminishing (bhaṅgakkhana).

When considering the previously mentioned example related to loving-kindness (mettā), throughout the period when that state of mind persisted—whether getting stronger or weaker, it remained imbued with the nature of mettā — throughout the period it is a wholesome quality. The term '**uppajjati**' designated during the phase of arising does not imply that mettā characteristic is not entirely formed but rather that it is getting more intense. Similarly, during diminishing (bhaṅga-kṣaṇa), while the quality of mettā may weaken, it still persists.

Thus, rather than saying that one phenomenon arises while another ceases, it can be said that the same nature of mettā undergoes emergence and cessation.

Before its '**Uppanna**' Nature, it was entirely absent in all respects. Moreover, since it is a wholesome phenomenon, and because it coexists

with and arises due to factors to it, such as non-greed (alobha) and non-delusion (amoha) specially unique to itself, as well as possessing other distinctive characteristics, this mettā mental factor demonstrates its uniqueness. It is this unique nature that manifests emergence, cessation, and change in continuity .

Once the phrase 'ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ' (the change in continuity) is understood in this way, the necessity of a distinct 'ṭhiti-kṣaṇa' (a separate phase of existence) does not arise. However, if rūpa (matter) is not assigned a ṭhiti-kṣaṇa, the previously mentioned issue may have raised by Theravāda scholars arises—how to reconcile this with the phrases in the Saṅkhāra Yamakā. The resolution to this problem is found within the very framework of the Saṅkhāra Yamakā.

The Nature of Citta-Samuṭṭhāna Rūpa (Mind-Originated Matter)

According to the Yamakā, citta-samuṭṭhāna rūpa, such as the bodily function of inhalation and exhalation, always arise and cease along with the mind. That is, the inhalation-exhalation process which arises in conjunction with a particular mind-moment, and the arising phase of that mind should coincide with the arising phase of bodily formation (kāya-saṅkhāra). Conversely, the diminishing phase of bodily formation should coincide with the diminishing phase of a mind. If this were not the case, it would directly contradict the Bhagawan's words as recorded in the Yamaka Pāli.

In Theravāda Abhidhamma, an initial conclusion states that the lifespan of citta-samuṭṭhāna rūpa should be 17 mind-moments (except for kāya-viññatti and vacī-viññatti rūpa—bodily and verbal expressions). This leads to a challenge: since bodily formation (kāya-saṅkhāra) cannot be diminishing when a mind-is developing, nor can it be arising when a mind-is weakening. **Particular Rūpa is called citta-samuṭṭhāna rūpa, if it is generated under the initiation of the mind.**

When the mind gradually weakens and come to an end, the citta-samuṭṭhāna rūpa, which arose as its main conditioning factor (janaka-paccaya), will also gradually weaken. If one assumes that this rūpa has a

longer lifespan than the mind, then even after the end of the originating mind, it will not cease immediately but will persist, gaining strength during the arising phase of subsequent mind-moments and weakening during their diminishing moment. Eventually, it would cease after the termination of a certain later mind-moment.

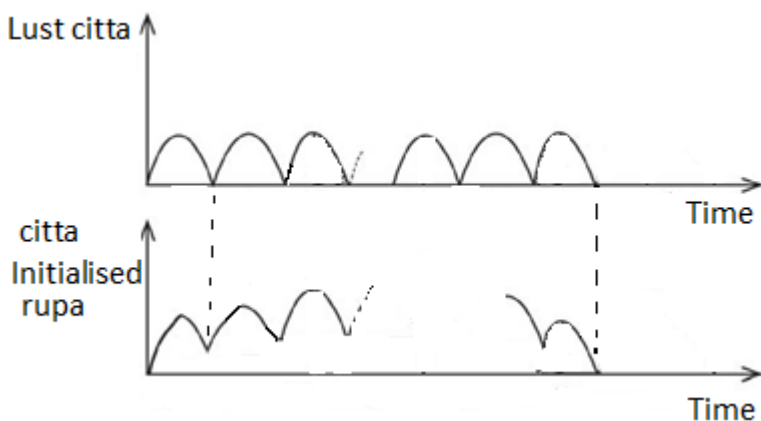
When it is stated that bodily formations (*kāya-saṅkhāra*) "are arising" (*uppajjati*) along with a mind, there is no need to assume that breath was entirely absent before that moment. If the bodily formation that weakened during the diminishing phase of the previous mind gain strength again during the arising moment of the next mind, this does not contradict the Yamaka Pāli.

Similarly, the term '*nirujjati*' (is weakening) in the Yamaka Pāli is used in a present-tense sense, meaning that it does not imply a past-tense notion of total annihilation. Therefore, there is no necessity to assume that the bodily formation, which weakened during the diminishing phase of the previous mind, was entirely annihilated along with that mind.

Furthermore, a unique characteristic of all consciousness-originated (*cittaja*) material phenomena is that they do not derive sustenance from physical food (*kabalīkāra āhāra*). Consciousness-originated material phenomena receive no external support apart from the assistance provided within the four great elements (*mahābhūta*) either it is based upon or in-case of it being a one of four great elements, then other three.

The only external support they receive is from the mind that follows them. The mind provides support to consciousness-originated material phenomena through conditions such as dissociation (*vippayutta*), dependence (*nissaya*), co-nascence (*sahajāta*), and other causal influences like '*presence*'(*atthi*) and similar factors.

For example, when a stream of lustful thoughts (rāga citta) arises in succession, it gives rise to a distinctive material phenomenon within the body. This phenomenon strengthens at the moment of the arising of the lustful thought and weakens at the moment of its diminishing. Ultimately, this material phenomenon ceases along with the final occurrence of the lustful thought in that stream. **Even In such a situation, there is no necessity to postulate a static moment (ṭhiti-kṣaṇa).**



However, in the case of karma-originated (kammaja) material phenomena, they receive external support in the form of sustenance from physical food, assistance from past karma, and sustenance from the mind. Since some of these causal influences fluctuate irregularly, they do not possess synchronized behavior dependent on the mind, as stated earlier.

Nonetheless, according to the facts in the Saṅkhārayamaka, inhalation and exhalation (assāsa-passāsa) seems to persist only for a single moment of consciousness (cittakkhaṇa). Bhagawan's intended meaning seems to be that breathing is momentary in nature.

[Study of Saṅkhārayamaka - synchronous variations of phenomena](#)

Upcoming some phrases may appear complex. For those who are not so much interested in detail, can proceed taking the conclusions. As some

facts presented in this book sometimes conflicts with accepted theories or with Therawada Lineage, even the minute details have to be addressed.

The initial section of the Saṅkhārayamaka contains the following passage:

" yassa vā pana vacīsaṅkhāro uppajjati, tassa kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjati :
Vina assāsapassāsēhi vithakkavicārānaṃ uppādakkhanē tēsaṃ
vacīsaṅkhāro uppajjati, Nô ca tēsaṃ kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjati.
Patamajjānaṃ samāpannānaṃ kāmāvacarānaṃ assāsapassāsānaṃ
uppādakkhanē tēsaṃ vacīsaṅkhāro ca uppajjati, kāyasaṅkhāro ca
uppajjati. "

The meaning of this is as follows:

"Moreover, if someone's verbal formation is arising, does his bodily formations also arising: In one who is at the moment of vitakka-vicara arising, without inhalation-exhalation, his verbal formation is arising, but bodily formations is not arising. However, in those who attain the first jhāna within the sensual realm, at the moment when inhalation-exhalation is arising, both verbal and bodily formations are arising."

The phrase "without inhalation-exhalation, at the moment of arising of Vitakka-Vicara" implies that whenever the process of inhalation-exhalation is taking place, at the arising phase of Vitakka-Vicara and in that 'uppādakkhana' inhalation-exhalation should be at arising phase. Numerous parallel passages in the Saṅkhārayamaka corroborate this interpretation.

Additionally, in some sections of the Saṅkhārayamaka, phrases such as "at the moment of the arising of inhalation-exhalation" and "at the moment of the diminishing (Bhangakkhane) of inhalation-exhalation" indicate that the duration of inhalation-exhalation is defined only by the two moments of arising and diminishing.

This conclusion is drawn based on the absence of any mention of arising or diminishing moments for karma-originated material phenomena like the eye and ear throughout the Yamaka-pāli and that kind of two moment designation applies specifically to citta-cetasika which confirmed to have no **intermediate temporal span**.

By the **intermediate temporal span**, what I ment here was, in between first uppadakkhana and last Bhangakkhana another phases of growing and weakening as illustrated by "Lust citta initiated Rūpa diagram"

Following passage from the future section of the Saṅkhārayamaka provides additional clarity on this matter:

" yassa vā pana cittasaṅkhāro uppajjissati, tassa kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjissatiti : Yassa cittassa anantara kāmāvacarānaṃ pacchima cittaṃ uppajjissati, Rūpāvacarē Arūpāvacarē pacchimbhawikānaṃ, yē ca Rūpāvacaraṃ Arūpāvacaraṃ uppajjitwa parinibhayissanti tēsaṃ cavantānaṃ tēsaṃ cittasaṅkhāro uppajjissati, no ca tēsaṃ kāyasaṅkhāro uppajjissati, itarēsaṃ tēsaṃ cittasaṅkhāro ca uppajjissati, kāyasaṅkhāro ca uppajjissati "

(Yamaka – Part Two, Bu.J. 26)

“If someone experiences the arising of mental formations, will they also experience arising of bodily formations in the future?

When a Final mind (Last citta for enlightened being at his death) will be arising following a citta, in the realm of sensual desire (kāmāvacara), and also this applies to persons at their last berth both in the realms of form (rūpāvacara) and formlessness (arūpāvacara), and also When such a person reach the moment of departure, who will be born and fully extinguish in the realms of form or formlessness, for all of those mental formations will be arising (in the future), but bodily formations will not. However, for others, both mental formations and bodily formations will be arising in the future.”

This passage from the Yamaka text raises the question: if mental formations (*cittasaṅkhāra*), which are interpreted as perceptions and feelings, arise in the future, will bodily formations (*kāyasaṅkhāra*) also arise? The term "future" here does not refer to a single lifetime but encompasses the entire cycle of *saṃsāra* (existence).

In response to this question, Blessed One first presents cases where this does not apply. When considering prior *citta* before the final mind of an arahant residing in the sensual realm (*kāmāvacara*), it is stated that while mental formations will be arising in the future, bodily formations will not. This is because bodily formations never arise in conjunction with the final thought-moment (*Cuti-citta*). This implies that not only arahants but any being, at the moment of their final thought (*cuti-citta*), does not generate form dependent on consciousness (*cittaja-rūpa*). The Blessed One refers specifically to arahants because, even in a future existence, they will not experience inhalation-exhalation.

Next, in a passage sequence about cessation, we find the following statement:

“*yassa vā pana cittasaṅkhāro nurujjissati, tassa kāyasaṅkhāro nirujjissatīti :*”
(Yamaka – Part Two, Bu.J. 62)

“If in someone there will be the diminishing of mental formations, will him also experience diminishing of bodily formations in the future?”

As part of the explanation of this passage, it is stated that if the final consciousness in the sensual realm (*kāmāvacara*) is analyzed at the moment of arising (*uppāda-khaṇa*) and even from the prior *citta*, then onwards, mental formations will be diminishing, but bodily formations will not diminish.

One key insight from this passage and its explanation is that inhalation-exhalation does not dissolve at the same time as the final consciousness (*cuti-citta*). From the previous passage, we understood that form initiated by consciousness (*cittaja-rūpa*) is not arising with the moment of final consciousness. From this latter passage, we understand that

form initiated by consciousness does not cease with the dissolution of the final consciousness.

If the lifespan of consciousness- initiated form asbreath is taken to be 17 mind-moments, then any bodily formations arising with a prior citta which had existed 17 citta moments ago likely to cease at the moment of the final consciousness. Even if no new cittaja-rūpa arises with the final consciousness (since that mind is weak), a cittaja-rūpa that arose with an earlier consciousness may continue up to the final consciousness. This raises a logical question: why does it not cease with the cuti citta?

From this Yamaka passage and many other discussions in the Yamakappakaraṇa (the Book of Pairs), it becomes evident that bodily formations, as inhalation-exhalation, defined to be cease together with the mind that generated them. One may reason that bodily formations may have stopped functioning at least 18 mind-moments before the final consciousness. Instead of interpreting the text to match the commentaries, the commentaries should be derived based on the original text. Here, it seems appropriate to rely on the Pāli Canon (Buddha's words) rather than later interpretations.

In this context, there is no need to hypothesize a separate "duration phase" (ṭhiti-khaṇa) for cittaja-rūpa. The term cittasamuṭṭhāna does not mean that form is entirely generated by the mind alone, but rather that a particular citta serves as the initiating cause for the arising of form.

In the presence of a physical system of form (like human body), arising mind acts as a trigger, and the force of that mind assists in initializing new formation of Rūpa. At that point, it can be referred to as a cluster of form that arises together with the mind. Since it arises together with the mind (citta + co-nascence + arising), the term cittasamuṭṭhāna is more fitting than cittaja. Cittaja would imply that the form is entirely mind-generated.

Breathing and Mind-Generated Forms

At this point, it becomes easier to understand how inhalation-exhalation function as form generated by the mind (*cittasamuṭṭhāna rūpa*). Otherwise, it would be confusing to consider how the mind generates external atmospheric gases such as oxygen and nitrogen. If Citta solely creates *rupa*, then even a living being placed in a vacuum devoid of air should be able to breathe. Additionally, if this were the case, forms should arise in conjunction with the thoughts of beings in the formless realms (*Arupa Loka*).

When the mind exerts influence on a particular system of form, it implies that a new formation of form arises in response to the necessary bodily functions. Since a new transformation arises due to the impact of the mind, it is important to consider the origin of that form from that transformation point onward. The principle of *sahajāta paccaya* (co-nascence condition) is also applied here. When the mind acts as a cause for bodily forms through "*paccajāta paccaya*" (post-natal condition), those forms are merely reinforced by the mind rather than undergoing significant transformation due to mental influence.

The Perspective of the Mūlatikā and contemporary Theras

The Mūlatikā Thero and other Theravāda commentators argued against the imposition of a 'stable phase' (*ṭhiti*) concerning the mind, referring to the *Cittayamaka* text. Furthermore, since the mind arises and ceases rapidly, these Theras reasoned that it does not have time to remain stable. However, they seemingly overlooked the possibility of considering the presence of the mind during its arising (*uppāda-khaṇa*) and diminishing (*bhaṅga-khaṇa*) phases, as well as the staying ability attributed to consciousness due to its connection with the life faculty

Tithi" defined on sequential process

Instead of imposing an artificial phase of continuity, the Mūlatikā Thero proposed understanding '*ṭhiti*' and the phrase '*ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ*' (Change in continuity) in terms of a sequential process (*santati*).

For example, if one considers a headache that persists for several hours, the existence of numerous consecutive painful mental states during that period is evident. Observing this collective phenomenon, the assertion was that the persistence nature of headache as 'ṭhiti' and overall variations within that several hours as 'ṭhitassa aññathattam', meaning change in continuity of an existing condition.

However, within the Theravāda tradition itself, there exists resistance to this interpretation. This is because Theravāda philosophy considers mental sequential process (citta santati) to be a conceptual construct (paññatti), rather than an ultimate reality (paramattha). The Saṅkhalakkhaṇa Sutta describes ṭhitassa aññathattam in relation to conditioned phenomena (saṅkhata), meaning that it signifies inherent characteristic of an ultimate reality (paramattha), rather than a designation imposed by individual perception or a concept designated on name-and-forms (nāma-rūpa). Thus, it does not merely reflect a mental perspective but an intrinsic property of all conditioned things.

The Notion of Life potency in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī

When considering the impermanence of nāma-rūpa (mind and matter), a significant term found in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī is "āyu" (lifepotency). Regarding mental and karmically generated physical phenomena, "āyu" is uniquely identified as a distinguishing characteristic. Interestingly, this attribute is not extended to seasonally generated (utuja), nutritionally generated (āhāraja), or mind-generated (cittasamuṭṭhāna) forms. Typically, the term "āyusa" is used to describe the total duration of a mental or material phenomenon. This raises an intriguing question: why is "āyu" applied exclusively to karmically generated (kammaja) forms and not to other types of form?

The term āyu appears in two places in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, specifically in reference to both formless (arūpa) and physical (rūpa) life faculties. The definition of the physical life faculty (rūpa jīvitindriya) is as follows:

"Yaṃ tesaṃ rūpīnaṃ dhammānaṃ āyu, ṭhiti, yapana, yāpanā, irīyanā, vattanā, pālanā, jīvitam, jīvitindriyam, idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ jīvitindriyam."

(Dhammasaṅgaṇī – Bu.J. 300, Rūpa Section)

Meaning: “The attribute of, life potency, stability, sustenance, continuation, preservation, persistence, endurance, maintenance, life or vitality, and the life faculty of those physical phenomena—this is what is called the life faculty in terms of form.”

Similarly, for formless phenomena (arūpa), the same description applies, with the only difference being that instead of “*Yaṃ tesam rūpīnaṃ*” (for those physical phenomena), it is phrased as “*Yo tesam arūpīnaṃ*” (for those formless phenomena).

The Life faculty, limited to kammic forms

When defining the meaning of rupa jīvita indriya (the faculty of life in form), it may seem applicable to all types of form. However, in the Paccaya Niddeśa Vāra section of the Paṭṭhāna, the explanation of indriya paccaya (faculty condition) is given using the Pali phrase:

“Rūpa jīvitindriyaṃ katattā rūpānaṃ indriya paccayena paccayo”,

which demonstrates that the rupa jīvita indriya is a phenomenon (dhamma) that coexists with kammaja rūpa (form initiated by kamma).

By life faculty It suggests that, a certain characteristic which is present in either in an arūpa dhamma (non-material phenomenon) or kammaja rūpa. This characteristic is explained as *ṭhiti* (remaining without vanishing), *yapanā / yāpanā* (sustaining existence), *vatthanā* (continuance), *iriyanā* (extension to some degree), *pālanā* (preservation), and *jīvitaṃ* (life, vitality). In the explanation of these, the word *āyu* is first introduced, implying that it conveys a meaning similar to the above-mentioned characteristics.

According to the Theravāda Abhidhamma system, a particular issue arises here. It is stated that not only kammaja rūpa, but all types of form have a lifespan of 17 cittakkhaṇas (mind moments). Additionally, it is mentioned that every form has three intrinsic moments—uppāda

(arising), *ṭhiti* (persisting), and *bhaṅga* (dissolution). This raises the question: why is "Ayu" specifically attributed to one type of form but not to others?

The Theravāda Abhidhamma texts, including commentaries and sub-commentaries, do not appear to discuss this issue. At present, it can be said that this concept does not align with the Theravāda Khaṇa Bhaṅga model (Spontaneous destruction framework) and is, therefore, disregarded because it cannot be satisfactorily explained.

Life potency Limited to Nāma Dhamma and Kammaja Rūpa

Although we may not be able to fully explain this matter, we will attempt to present an answer that may be satisfactory to readers. This distinction arises due to the unique nature of the conditions (*paccaya*) that contribute to the arising of a particular dhamma. Two types of conditions which influence both the arising and continuation of a *nāma-rūpa* dhamma should be focused here.

1. The first type consists of the co-nascent conditions—those dhammas that arise simultaneously with the phenomenon and provide support to it.
2. The second type consists of pre-existed conditions, those dhammas that have ceased before but still exert influence on the arising of the phenomenon.

As an example for first type, if we consider *viññāṇa* (consciousness) as a *nāma* dhamma, it receives support from *phassa* (contact), *vedanā* (feeling), *saññā* (perception), *cetanā* (volition), etc which arise simultaneously with it. These supports function as *sahajāta* (co-nascent), *aññamañña* (mutual), *atthi* (presence), *avigata* (non-disappearance), *nissaya* (dependence), and *sampayutta* (association) conditions.

On the other hand, in the second type of conditions, viññāṇa is influenced by samanantara paccaya (immediate proximity condition) and anantara paccaya (proximity condition) provided by preceding citta and cetasikas (mental factors). It is also influenced by upanissaya paccaya (situational dependence condition), and at times, āsevana paccaya (repetition condition). If the viññāṇa arises in a vipāka citta (Kamma resultant consciousness), it is also influenced by kamma paccaya (kamma condition)

The Role of Samanantara, Anantara, and Kamma Conditions

When considering the second type of conditions, the samanantara, anantara, and kamma conditions, it appears that they provide a fundamental initial impulse or push for the emergence of viññāṇa. Since the force of these pre-existed conditions seems to be already embedded in the citta from its beginning, it suggests that an inference can be made regarding the potential duration and continuation of that consciousness or its associated mental factors when those are at the state of "Uppanna" nature.

Furthermore, this indicates that the supportive force of these conditions has limitations. Due to these limitations, it seems possible to predict the lifespan of a viññāṇa and associated mental factors at the beginning to some extent. The strength of the samanantara-anantara conditions depends on the strength of the preceding mind moment. As the citta is continuing, this power given by the previous Citta seems to be used up. Similar to a situation for a rocket as fuel is used up and diminishing while the rocket is going further and further.

Co-nascent conditions within the first category can introduce extensions in the duration of consciousness, depending on how powerful they are. Because the initial life potency given by samanantara and anantara conditions are limited not endless, citta will succumb to destruction. Variation due to Co-nascent conditions are similar to extension in the journey by efficient maneuvering. But the rocket cannot make fuel within the journey.

Therefore, arūpa jīvita indriya—the mental factor that manifest the lifespan of a mind-moment—can be understood in relation to these two types of conditions.

The supportive conditions such as habitual tendency (asevana) and situational dependence (upanissaya), derived from past mental and concomitant factors, serve to shape the nature of the subsequent consciousness as wholesome (kusala), unwholesome (akusala), or neutral (abyakata). However, unlike proximity and immediate proximity conditions, they do not significantly determine lifespan.

For instance, in the case of a Mano viññāna, the lifespan of consciousness fluctuates depending on the intensity of the Rūpa that it is based upon (vatthu-rupa) and the variations in its strength while the citta is present. However, since proximity and immediate proximity conditions have inherent limitations while co-arising supportive factors do not, the lifespan of mental and concomitant factors seems to be fluctuating subject to a predefined range.

Due to the varying intensity of the influence by samanantara-anantara conditions from past citta, as well as the impact of wholesome and unwholesome karmas, in case if it is affecting, the overall lifespan of consciousness is fluctuating within certain limits. Factors such as the strength or weakness of past karmic forces, the intensity of the vatthu-rupa, and the nature of co-arising mental and concomitant factors (such as the presence or absence of fundamental wholesome roots like non-greed (alobha) and non-hatred (advesha)) all contribute to this fluctuation.

An analogy can be drawn to a ball thrown into the air. Its height of ascent depends on the force exerted while throwing it. Additionally, external factors like gravity and air resistance influence the extent of its rise and descent.

Thus, when consciousness exists at a given moment—whether in its arising phase (uppadakkhana) or diminishing phase (bhanga-kkhana)—until it's total destruction it has a kind of life potency from the previously

established influences from samanantara-anantara which seems to be already embedded in consciousness. Hence, by observing the state of consciousness or its concomitant factors at any given moment, it is possible to make conclusions regarding their potential persistence and continuity.

This life potency seems to be the what the Blessed one refer to as Life faculty (jīvitindriyaṃ) and "Ayu"

Similarly, when considering karmically initiated forms (kammaja rupa), they are directly connected to past karmic energy. As a result, their lifespan can also be predicted to some extent. For example, when examining kammaja rupa like the eyes, ear, and vatthu-rupa of an elderly person, one might infer that their longevity is relatively limited. Conversely, in the case of a child's eyes, greater longevity can be expected.

Unlike immaterial dharmas, material dharmas can be influenced or obstructed by adjacent material structures. Despite having a significant lifespan, karmically generated forms can still be disrupted before their expected duration.

Extra Note

According to the law of causality, when considering a dharma, if excessive emphasis is placed on the causes, the uniqueness of the resultant will be overlooked. Since the resultant itself becomes a cause for other phenomena, and because the entire world is represented within this cause-and-effect relationship, all conditioned phenomena show unique nature, inherent nature.

As an example when the body is taken as a cause, when reflected it as the cause for a process the resultant may appear as a mere shadow, appearing as though it has no real existence.

The "Ayu" shows potential of a dharma more than the inherent uniqueness stated above in a phenomenon.

When Outer environmental form structures such as trees, Rocks and chemicals etc. which do not connect to a body of a being, and the seasonal forms within a body(utuḥ) are considered in relation to conditions (paccaya), only the first category of conditions apply.

According to the causal principles in the Paṭṭhāna, it is evident that rūpa phenomenon does not receive assistance from a preceding rūpa phenomenon. Even though it seems bit weird it is indeed the case. The existence of co-arising phenomena stays with their mutual support. For instance, if a bodily rūpa (matter) is generated due to seasonal factors, it may receive assistance from subsequently arising mental and mental-associated phenomena through post-natal (pacchājāta) and dissociated (vippayutta) conditions. However, the Paṭṭhāna does not indicate any form of assistance from past rūpa phenomena.

In Theravāda Abhidhamma, there was a view that a cluster of rūpa (Rūpa Kalāpa), once stabilized, could generate adjacent clusters through the influence of the tejo (heat) element. However, such a concept is not stated in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, and it entirely contradicts the causal structure presented in the Paṭṭhāna. A detailed explanation regarding this matter, along with a clarification of how external four great elements (mahābhūta) are structured, can be found in the book I compiled "Mull Buddha Samaya Soyā Gattthemī"(In search of early Buddhism) on pages 86-94.

It is not possible to impose the notion of life (āyu) on elements such as pathavī (rigidness), āpo (adhesiveness), and tejo (heat), which exist solely based on co-arising causes. There is no inherent potentiality embedded within them due to past conditions that enables them to sustain their existence further. **Although their emergence (uppāda) and cessation (vaya) characteristics can be observed, they do not have an intrinsic life's potency.** The characteristics of emergence and cessation indicate the presence or absence of causes, while 'Ayu' refers to an

inherent potential within a phenomenon that allows it to persist over time.

In Simple terms, one cannot say, that physical substance like a rock, water, or a chemical by observing its nature and declare that it is old or that it will perish after a certain period. Water can be transformed into ice, and ice can revert to water. However, an aged human body cannot be transformed back into a youthful body. This is because the aging human body consist of kammically produced (kammaja) rūpas which have matured irreversibly and it exert influence over other types of rūpas (either sequentially or generationally), preventing such a transformation.

The same explanation applies to food-produced (āhāraja) rūpas as it does to seasonally produced (utuḷā) rūpas.

One might raise a question regarding citta-initiated (cittasamutthāna) rūpas. It was previously explained that the Blessed One defined the moment of arising (uppādakkaṇa) and dissolution (bhaṅgakkhaṇa) for such rūpas. However, why is the concept of life potency not imposed on them?

'Ayu' refers to an inherent potential within a phenomenon that allows it to persist, continue. A citta-produced rūpa does not receive any push from a previously existing rūpa. Its existence is determined by the citta that initialize it and sometimes sequence of citta moments which have the influence on it. The duration of its existence is thus dictated by the lifespan of the corresponding citta or sometimes sequence of citta moments, rather than any inherent potential within the pathavī, tejo, vāyo, and other elements composing it. Thus, it becomes evident that it is not possible to assign a life faculty characteristic to pathavī and other elements arising in conjunction with a citta.

If someone other than a Blessed One had compiled the Abhidhamma, they would have likely imposed the notion of life faculty on all rūpas, not only for kammically produced rūpas. The fact that this was not done confirms that Abhidhamma is indeed the word of the Blessed One.

Through these definitions, we can appreciate the depth and precision of Bhagwan's wisdom.

Jaratā (Aged)

When discussing the transformation of phenomena, one frequently encounters the term "jaratā," also referred to as "jarā". In the Theravāda tradition, the commentaries and some sub-commentaries relate this nature to the moment of stability (ṭhitikkhaṇa) where they thought "change in continuity" is taking place. By defining, the moment when a nāma-rūpa phenomenon begins its transition towards breakin, as "ṭhiti" and Thereafter, as the state in which a phenomenon going to maturation, it is described sometimes as jaratā in Theravāda tradition.

This is why In the Buddha Jayanthi translation, the Pali phrase “**ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ**” is translated as "jarā" within brackets. Occasionally, the term “**ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ**” is directly translated as "jarā".

The term "jarā" appears in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, specifically in the rūpakkhanda (aggregate of form), where jaratā rūpa (the rūpa of aging) is defined.

"Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ, rūpassa jaratā?" "Yā rūpassa jarā, jīraṇatā, khaṃḍiccaṃ, pāliccaṃ, valittatacā, āyuno saṃhāni, indriyānaṃ paripāko, idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa jaratā."

"What is the aged (jaratā) of rūpa? It is the aged, deterioration, , worn out, faded (such as graying hair), wrinkled skin, depleted lifepotency, and the maturation of faculties. This is what is meant by the jaratā of rūpa."

A noteworthy point here is that jaratā is only described in relation to sentient beings' bodies. There is no mention of plants. Modern research has shown that although trees appear to age, the rate of cell development in plants does not necessarily decrease over time. The ending of growth in large trees may sometimes be due to physical

constraints, such as the difficulty in drawing water upwards, rather than biologically aging.

For example, while a fruit from a tree may be beneficial to humans when ripe, it becomes valuable to some worms only when it starts to rot. What appears as aging to one being may appear as beginning for another.

For instance, when a banana tree bears fruit and subsequently withers away, this is not truly aging. Rather, it is a transformation governed by specific stimuli and evolutionary adaptations over time. This process of transformation, which enhances the efficiency of the tree's reproductive mechanism, encourages humans to cultivate it further, thereby ensuring its survival in the ecosystem.

However, for kammically produced rūpa the notion of maturation does not apply merely based on the perspective.

The Relationship Between "āyu"(life potency) and "jaratā"(Aging)

At the definition of life faculty rūpa, the term "āyu" (lifepotency) appears. In defining aging (jaratā) rūpa, the term "āyuno saṃhāni" (decline of lifepotency) is used. This suggests a connection between these two aspects.

Jaratā rūpa is also an upādāya rūpa (derived matter) according to "Dhammasangani", meaning that it exists in association with the four great elements (mahābhūtas). If the moment when a cluster of rūpa moves towards breking is termed as its "jarata" as per the Therawada Abhidamma viewpoint, then it is evident that aging is more of a temporal derivation than a structural one. Then "jarata" becomes time base matter rather than four element-based matter.

Since transformations can also occur in a positive manner, and because a phenomenon manifest "change in contiinity" as it is getting stronger at the moment of arising (Uppadakkhana), it is clear that jaratā rūpa should not be equated with "ṭhitassa aññathattaṃ" (mere change). In Pali language word jaratā used in a negative manner.

Additionally, because there is no mentioning of the word "**aññathattam**" within the words taken to describe "**jaratā**" in its above stated definition in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī. Also within Dhammasaṅgaṇī there is no reference to as "**nāmassa jaratā**" (aging of mental phenomena). It is inappropriate to consider "ṭhitassa aññathattam" as a proper definition of aging. Point is " **ṭhitassa aññathattam**" relate to all conditioned phenomena, while "**jaratā**" is only connected with Rupa.

On the other hand, if The Bhagawan's intention was to highlight a specific rūpa quality, which gives a sense of detachment, which manifests due to the depletion of life potency in kammically produced rūpas within the sentient body, how to express it, other than the way it is illustrated.

Therefore, if we attempt to generalize "**jarata**" to all nāma and rūpa phenomena, we risk losing its practical significance. If rūpa is unnecessarily refined in analysis, the practicality in insight meditation (Vipassanā) will be lost.

Impermanence and Change

In Buddhist discourse, the term "change" is often used to describe impermanence (aniccatā). The Pāli word "aññathattam" closely resembles the concept of change. However, a common misconception exists regarding this in Buddhist communities.

Often, when people observe environmental changes or significant physical transformations in a person, they say:

"Look at how true the Bhagawan's words are! Everything in this world is changing. There is nothing that does not change. This is anicca! This person's previous appearance no longer exists."

Scholars who have studied Dhamma more deeply may respond:

“That change is visible to everyone. You don’t need a Bhagawa to point that out. Simply seeing that things change does not lead to enlightenment. One must perceive impermanence at a subtle level, at a paramattha level.”

By stating it in that manner, people devalue the original statement about impermanence. What truly needed to be conveyed was something else. When it is said certain aspects of a person has changed and their physical nature has altered, it should be recognized that this change has been acknowledged, that there is no fault in it, and that it is, in fact, a good thing. One should also contemplate the impermanence of other aspects associated with that individual.

When someone perceives that a person has changed (in terms of their physical form), it happens because, within the set of name-and-form phenomena that one takes as the person, part of it is recognized as still existing while another part seen as impermanent. Therefore, one should also reflect on the impermanence of those other name-and-form phenomena associated with that person. This is the guide that should be provided.

When contemplating impermanence and the dissolution of phenomena, many discuss certain insights related to Vipassanā knowledges mentioned in "Paṭisambhidāmagga". Most of the content in this treatise is believed to be originated or compiled by Venerable Sariputta Thero. These include Udayabbaya Ñāṇa (knowledge of arising and passing away) and Bhaṅgānupassanā Ñāṇa (knowledge of dissolution). The Paṭisambhidāmagga explains these insights in detail.

Udayabbaya Ñāṇa

The knowledge of seeing the arising and cessation of the phenomena related to one's life in the present moment is known as Udayabbaya Ñāṇa. When discussing Udayabbaya Ñāṇa, many think it must be something related to seeing rapid spontaneous dissolution of name-and-form phenomena. However, what is illustrated is something else. Here, the arising and passing away of the five aggregates—Rūpa (form),

Vedanā (feeling), Saññā (perception), Saṅkhāra (mental formations), and Viññāṇa (consciousness)—are examined in fifty different ways.

The Paṭisambhidāmagga states:

“Avijjāsamudayā rūpasamudayoti — paccayasamudayaṭṭhena rūpakkhandhassa udayaṃ passati. Taṇhāsamudayā rūpasamudayoti — paccayasamudayaṭṭhena rūpakkhandhassa udayaṃ passati. Kammāsamudayā rūpasamudayoti Āhārasamudayā rūpasamudayoti Nibbattilakkhaṇaṃ passantopi rūpakkhandhassa udayaṃ passati. Rūpakkhandhassa udayaṃ passanto imāni pañca lakkhaṇāni passati.

Text initially presents these four aspects : the arising of form due to ignorance, craving, kamma, and nutriment is separately stated. The dhamma statement implies, seeing the causal origination of above stated four main reasons as well (paccayasamudayaṭṭhena). While seeing the causal origination of those causes one sees the origination of Rupa in related to them. Additionally, it states that one perceives the characteristic of origination (nibbatti lakkhaṇa) and thus sees the arising of the Rūpakkhandha (aggregate of form).

Thus, the arising of the Rūpakkhandha is explained in five ways. Correspondingly, five parallel ways are provided to illustrate the dissolution of form. The cessation of ignorance, craving, kamma, and nutriment results in the cessation of the Rūpakkhandha, revealing the characteristic of dissolution. Additionally, it is stated that “perceiving transformation also reveals the characteristic of dissolution” of form aggregate.

“Avijjānirodhā rūpanirodhoti — paccaya nirodhaṭṭhena rūpakkhandhassa vayaṃ passati. Taṇhānirodhā rūpanirodhoti — paccaya nirodhaṭṭhena rūpakkhandhassa vayaṃ passati. Kammanirodhā rūpanirodhoti ... Āhāranirodhā rūpanirodhoti Vipariṇāmalakkhaṇaṃ passantopi rūpakkhandhassa vayaṃ passati.”

Thus, ten ways of perceiving arising and dissolution are presented. Similarly, it is stated that the arising and dissolution of the Vedanā,

Saññā, and Saṅkhāra aggregates are perceived in ten ways each. The only difference is that, instead of "nutriment" (āhāra samudaya), "contact" (phassa samudaya) is mentioned. For the Viññāṇa aggregate, "name-and-form" (nāma-rūpa samudaya) is mentioned instead of "nutriment".

When all these aspects are considered, a total of fifty ways are presented. Out of these, forty describe the arising and cessation through the relationship of cause and effect.

The issue at hand is understanding what is meant by Nibbatti Lakshana (characteristic) and Viparinama Lakshana. In the Buddha Jayanti translation, the word "Nibbatti" has been interpreted as "seeing the origination in three ways – **“Addha-Santati-Khana”**

In the commentarial context, "Addha" refers to - assuming an aspect of a being to prevail over the whole lifespan, even though it exhibits both arising and passing away in between and then considering its origination as whole. "Santati" refers to seeing the origination of a particular sequence. (Either specific mind pattern or continuation of rupa). "Khana" refers to seeing the origination of an entity existed in an extremely brief moment, essentially a minute fraction of time.

But such an explanation is not found in the Pali text. This has been introduced through the commentary of the Paṭisambhidāmagga. Based on the explanations given so far in this book, readers can comprehend how such an interpretation has been incorporated into the translation.

The simple meaning of "Nibbatti" is coming into being or arising. In an earlier citation of a text from the Samyutta Nikaya, particularly in the Khandha Vagga within the "Uppada Samyutta", the words "Thiti" and "Abhinibbatti" are shown to be used in parallel meaning. Something that "stays" is something that originated. Something that originates continues to exist even if it is changing.

Therefore, I propose that the most suitable meaning for the term "Nibbatti" is "having arisen due to causes" Or "having arisen which was previously absent".

During insight meditation (Vipassana), some practitioners clearly perceive that the Nama-Rupa phenomena they observe have arisen due to specific causes. They recognize distinct causal relationships between these Nama-Rupa phenomena.

At times, one may not see specific causes in a concrete manner, yet through mindfulness and wisdom, they comprehend that the phenomena they experience are the result of some cause. They also come to realize that what was previously nonexistent has now arisen. This is the intended meaning in this context in my viewpoint.

Viparinama (Transformation)

Now, it is time to analyze what is meant by the statement "perceiving transformation also reveals the characteristic of dissolution of form aggregate". (*Vipariṇāmalakkhaṇaṃ passantopi rūpakkhandhassa vayaṃ passati*). This is stated similarly for other aggregates also. Important thing to be noted here is rather than stating about seeing some kind of collapsing, Spontaneous destruction, seeing sudden total vanishing as someone may have assumed, rather seeing the cessation through transformation is illustrated.

Here, three closely related terms must be examined: Thitassa Anyathattam (change in what persists), change, and transformation—each carrying very close meanings.

Within a Nama-Rupa phenomena, fluctuations occurring during their existence is referred to as Thitassa Anyathattam. During the moment of arising (Uppada Khana), the mind builds up and gains strength, thus subtle transformation or fluctuation can be seen. However, one does not immediately recognize characteristic of cessation (Vaya Lakshana), because Nama phenomena tend to persist and stabilize for a while.

When one perceives that Nama-Rupa phenomena are gradually weakening or completely ceasing to exist, the characteristic of cessation (Vaya Lakshana) becomes evident.

For example, when one sees or recalls a dead body, he recognizes that the once-living body has ceased to exist. This realization makes the characteristic of cessation evident. Likewise, when one sees a decomposed or transformed corpse, he can infer the cessation of the once-living body related to it. By recognizing similar patterns, he can infer the cessation of the other living bodies.

Here the dead body no longer falls within the stage of “**Thitassa Anyathattam**” of living body. The term “**Thitassa Anyathattam**” applies specifically to the inherent nature of those respective Nama-Rupa phenomena. The three conditioned characteristics (Sankhata Lakshana) manifest separately in both a living body and a dead body. Living body does not always transform into a decomposed corpse upon death—it can be cremated, or it can be eaten by the animals.

Therefore, the words Viparinama (transformation) or change are used, should be used in relation to Nama-Rupa processes or continuities. Meanwhile, “**Thitassa Anyathattam**” should be applied specifically to individual Nama-Rupa phenomena.

In the Navasivathika Bhavana (meditation on the nine stages of a corpse), the Lord Buddha presented various stages of a decaying body to illustrate the disappearance of each state. This was done to highlight those certain physical aspects, such as bones, sinews, and flesh, eventually cease to exist. To convince the cessation of each aspect or state.

Each of the nine stages of decomposition were allocated with separate arising and cessation statements in **Satipattana sutta**. Actually, this meditation portrays nine aspects of Kayanupassana (contemplation on the body). Not a single meditation technique.

Time itself does not need to be entangled into this meditation. Entangling time in this context led to Bhagawan's teaching on impermanence given here to be seen as inadequate. This, in turn, caused in a negative manner for development of Kayanupassana meditation faithfully.

For some individuals, when they were taught about two adjacent stages in Navasivathika Bhavana with the expectation of convincing them about cessation characteristic—for example, the description of a swollen corpse followed by the stage where only bones with sinews remain without flesh—they ask, "Isn't this just a conventional understanding of impermanence? Can you explain how to perceive impermanence in an ultimate (Paramattha) sense?"

All these discussions are entanglements developed from Theravāda Abhidhamma concepts of Spontaneous destruction (Kṣaṇa bhaṅga) and the concept of conventional and ultimate reality. Resolving the confusion that arises from the interpretation of conventional and ultimate reality is even more challenging. That topic has been elaborated in our compiled works, "Abhidhamma That is Not Abhidhamma" and "in search of early Buddhism."

If Udayavaya ñāṇa does not mention spontaneous destruction (Ksanabhaṅga) of materials, then we must pay attention if such a thing is at least illustrated in Bhaṅgānupassanā ñāṇa in patisambidamagga.

[Bhaṅgānupassanā ñāṇa - knowledge of spontaneous destruction](#)

The Paṭisambhidā Pāḷi provides details on this subject. Under the section on Bhaṅgānupassanā ñāṇa, it states:

“Rūpārammaṇatā cittaṃ uppajjitvā bhijjati, taṃ ārammaṇaṃ paṭisaṅkhā tassa cittassa bhaṅgaṃ anupassati.”

“Vedanārammaṇatā cittaṃ uppajjitvā bhijjati, ...pe... Saññārammaṇatā ...pe... Saṅkhārārammaṇatā ...pe... Viññāṇārammaṇatā ...pe... Cakkhārammaṇatā ...pe... Jarāmarañārammaṇatā cittaṃ uppajjitvā bhijjati, taṃ ārammaṇaṃ paṭisaṅkhā tassa cittaassa bhaṅgaṃ anupassati.”

“Anupassatīti kathaṃ anupassatīti: aniccato anupassati, no niccato; dukkhato anupassati, no sukhato... pe... no ādiyati.”

“Citta which took Rupa as an object collapses after arising, By considering (Reflecting wisely) that object, termination of that Citta is seen.”

“Citta which took feeling (Vedanā) as an object collapse ...Re... Perception ...Re... Mental Formations ...Re... Consciousness ...Re... Eye ...Re... Ear ...Re.. Citta which took Age and death as an object collapses after arising, by considering that object termination of that Citta is seen.”

“Reflecting in which way: As impermanent, not as permanent. As suffering, not as pleasant Nor attaching into.”

Many assume that Bhaṅgānupassanā refers to a moment in which a yogi becomes aware of and observes the rapid spontaneous breaking of present nāma-Rūpa dhamma. However, this interpretation is not entirely accurate.

To understand Bhaṅgānupassanā, it is helpful to first understand what it is not. First, it should be stated, this contemplation applies only to nāma-dhamma. In the Paṭisambhidā, there is no mention of the dissolution of rūpa (material phenomena) under the section on Bhaṅgānupassanā.

The above Pāḷi passage states that “a mind arising through a rūpa-ārammaṇa (Color as its object) ceases, and by reflecting on that object, one perceives the dissolution of that mind.” The same applies to nāma-dhamma such as vedanā (sensations), saññā (perceptions), and mental

formations, as well as to mental cognitions arising taking objects as sense faculties like the eye and ear.

Since this knowledge (*ñāṇa*) is explained in relation to both the mind and its object, some may assume that by seeing the impermanence of the object, one perceives the cessation of the mind that takes it as an object.

The impermanence of the object influences the cessation of the mind only in specific cases. Only if the mind is taking a present existing object. For instance, if a sound serves as the object for *sotaviññāṇa* (ear-consciousness), then the cessation or disappearance of that sound will influence the cessation of that particular consciousness.

However, for a mind that takes a past phenomenon as its object, the impermanence of that object is not relevant to its dissolution. The fact that the object arose and ceased in the past does not directly impact the cessation of the present cognition that recalls it. The past phenomenon no longer exists; recalling it in the present mind is merely a process of remembrance.

The present mind dissolves due to the weakening of *samanantara paccaya* (immediate proximity condition) and *anantara paccaya* (proximity condition), co-arising causes (*sahajāta hetu*), and sometimes, due to the weakening of the supporting material base (*vatthu rūpa*).

According to the *Paṭṭhāna* methodology, any arising mind requires an *ārammaṇa-paccaya* (object condition). However, for a mind that takes a past dhamma as its object, the impermanence of that object does not cause instability in the present *ārammaṇa-paccaya* during its existence.

The same applies to a mind that takes a future object. Future phenomena will cease in the future. Their impermanence has no impact on the cessation of the present cognition that anticipates them.

One might wonder whether *Bhaṅgānupassanā* applies only to present-object *citta*'s. The quoted Pāli passage includes *viññāṇa* (consciousness),

vedanā (sensations), and saññā (perceptions) as objects. Usually In one's mental continuum, these Nama-dhammas taken as main objects in a past or future sense; Even according to Theravada viewpoint they cannot be perceived by a present mind. Just as a knife cannot cut itself, a present mind cannot observe itself as to the Theravada viewpoint.

Additionally, many objects taken by jhana (meditative absorption) consciousness are not truly existent, as they belong to a domain beyond the three times (past, present, and future). Therefore, the impermanence of these objects does not manifest. So, it is irrelevant even to talk about the dissolution of such jhana minds with respect to the impermanence to the object.

In the practice of Bhaṅgānupassanā, because one expects to see the breaking down of any type of mind that has ceased, Since seeing that is not limited to just a few types of minds that take present-moment objects—such as eye-consciousness (cakkhaviññāṇa) and ear-consciousness (sotaviññāṇa)—it is clear that observing the impermanence of an object does not imply merely seeing the dissolution of the mind that takes that object.

Some mentalities that were expected to arise in the future do not manifest because certain environmental objects disappear. Reflecting on this is not seeing the dissolution of an arisen mind but rather observing the non-arising characteristic (anuppāda nirodha) or the cessation of a continuity (santati nirodha).

[The Meaning of "Reflecting on the Object"](#)

In the above guidance on insight knowledge, the phrase “**Ārammaṇaṃ patisaṅkhā**” refers to considering the object with wisdom. What does this mean?

Citta or mentality which associates Citta, cannot be analyzed without reference to its object. Consciousness itself is the way an object is manifested. By looking back at the object, one can discern the nature of the mind and mental formations related to that object.

For example, when reflecting on the breaking of an eye-consciousness (cakkhuviññāṇa) that ceased a moment ago, one must first of all grasp the nature of that consciousness. One must recollect in what manner the seeing occurred. Seeing cannot be described without reference to the visual form that was perceived. The awareness or the knowing of the color is eye-consciousness.

The subsequent few moments of mind organize the perceived visual object in various ways. Like table tree or chair. Awareness and recollection of the nature of that eye-consciousness enable one to discern its impermanence.

Since understanding the classification of objects and how to take out mentalities from it is crucial in insight meditation, one is encouraged to develop a detailed comprehension of objects(Arammana).

Materials are irrelevant in Bhaṅgānupassanā

Object taking applies only to mental phenomena (nāma dhamma). Therefore, the dissolution of physical forms is not relevant in the context of insight knowledge of Bhaṅgānupassanā.

Regardless of whether the mind that has ceased, arose just a moment ago or long ago, this contemplation remains relevant. However, minds that arose recently are more closely linked to the current defilements in one's mental continuum, making seeing their breaking more crucial to reflect upon.

Some Theravāda teachers hold the view that billions of minds arise and cease within a single second. However, it must be noted that seeing rapid dissolution of one of those billion, through extraordinary wisdom is not what is emphasized here. That domain belongs to the knowledge of the Bhagawan rather than the insight of disciples. Regardless of how quickly a mind breaks, a meditator can take a mind as an object of contemplation. The process involves first recognizing its arisen nature

(Uppanna nature) and then observing its characteristics of cessation, dissolution.

Past mind will never collapse when it is being observed. Because it is already broken. Not that it did not vanish. When observing close by minds that have passed away, A meditator may feel like something that is still present. But the experienced meditator will know that he is reflecting upon a mind which is not present rather it is ceased to exist.

Observing the Impermanence of Continuity

When the knowledge of arising and cessation (Udayabbaya ñāṇa) and the knowledge of spontaneous destruction (Bhaṅgānupassanā ñāṇa) are explained in this manner, without assuming "moments" as mere tiny time intervals, a question may arise.

Specifically, regarding physical phenomena (rūpa), many people have heard that a visual form appears same way in the same place for an extended period because identical forms keep arising repeatedly in that location. That is, the perception of a same thing exists due to the persistence of the form's continuity.

Continuity in forms does exist. Even the Lord Buddha mentioned about "continuity of form" (rūpassa santati) in the Abhidhamma (Dhammasaṅgaṇī, Rūpakaṇḍa).

For example, the light emitted by an electric bulb flicker approximately 50 times per second. However, to an observer, it appears to remain steadily lit. However, when an insight meditator contemplates the impermanence of that light, he should not be concerned about the frequency of flickering but with seeing that at any given moment, the color of the light exists only due to causes and conditions. Moreover, instead of perceiving that color as a permanent attribute, one discerns it as merely a conditioned phenomenon.

The Lord Buddha's Teaching on Impermanence

The Bhagawan declared:

"Bhikkhus, form (rūpa) is impermanent. The cause and condition for the arising of form is also impermanent. Form which arises from impermanent things—how could it be permanent?"

(Saṃyutta Nikāya, Khandha Vagga, Sahetu Anicca Sutta)

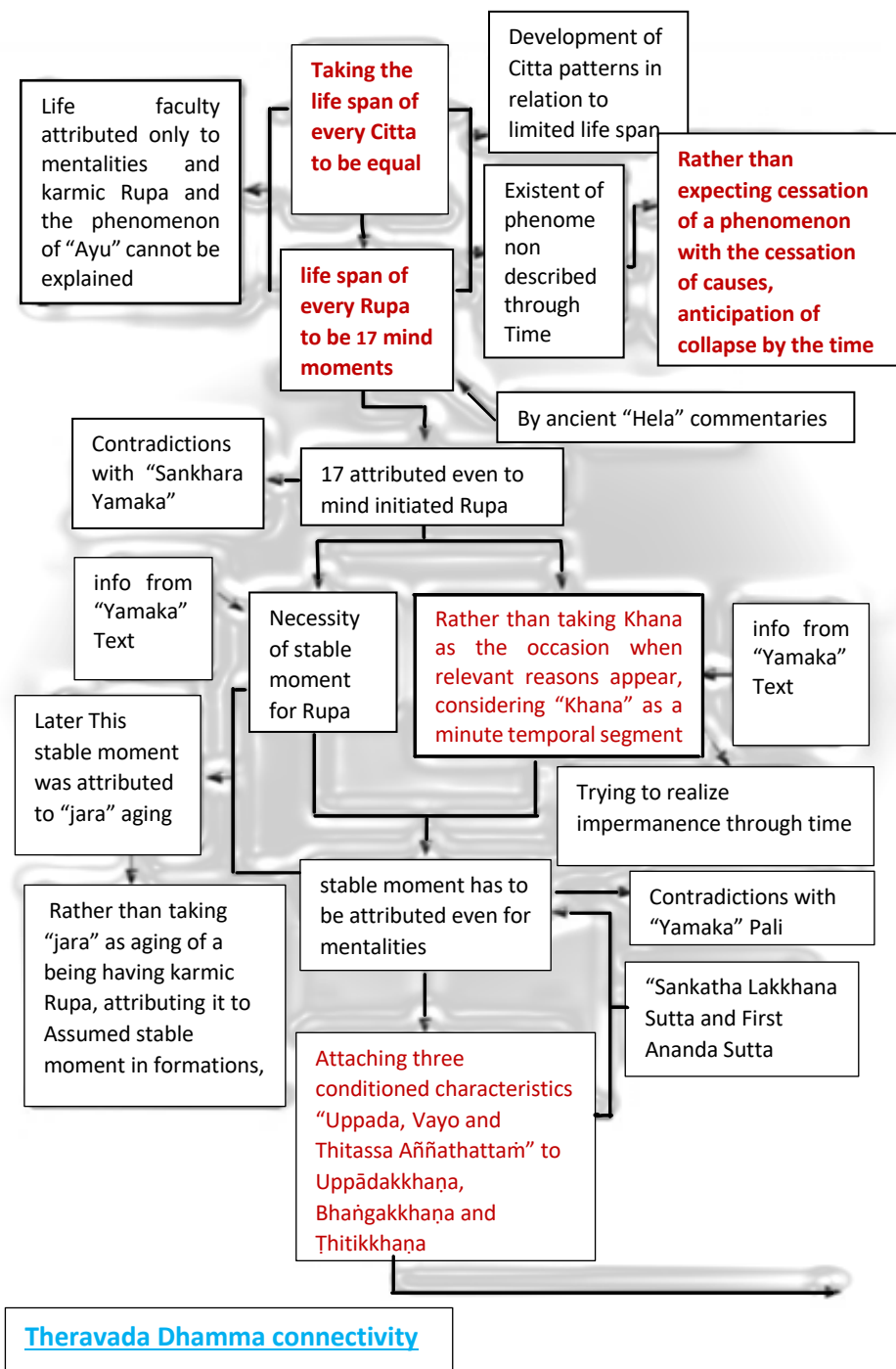
Understanding that some forms exist only for a very brief period and that they appear continuous due to the persistence of their continuity can be useful to have a sense of detachment. This perspective has practical significance, but is not an essential insight required for attaining the path and fruition (magga-phala). However, in medical and electronic sciences, this knowledge is particularly beneficial.

Point to ponder here

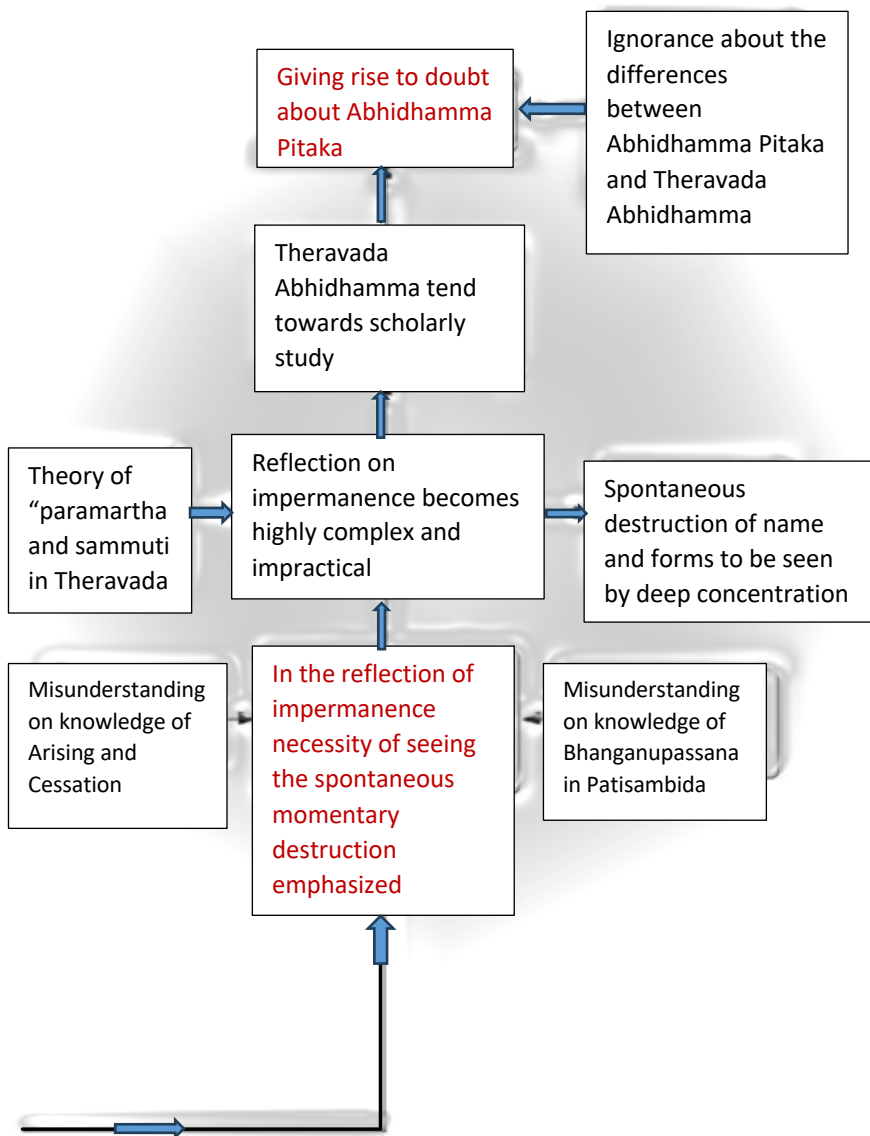
If phenomena were to remain unbroken for a moment (Kshana) and breaks only after two moments, would this contradict the laws of Dhamma taught by the Bhagawan? And to how extent if the moment expanded in time, would it render Bhagawan's teachings invalid?

Thēravāda Dhamma connectivity

Summarizing the all the above-discussed concepts, integration of dhamma theories within the Thēravāda Abhidhamma and how it evolves to the present doctrinal framework, is shown by a diagram below. By defining the lifespan of mind and matter in fixed terms and considering a moment (khaṇa) as a minute temporal segment, how various doctrinal interpretations that are not explicitly found in the Tipiṭaka Abhidhamma came to be existent will be even clear from that.



Theravada Abhidhamma evolution on spontaneous destruction



From fixing the lifespan of *nāma-rūpa* to the introduction of the concept of a ‘static moment’ (*ṭhitikhāṇa*) and subsequently associating this moment with conditioned characteristics (*saṅkhata lakkhaṇa*), these factors have contributed to making the contemplation of impermanence more complex and impractical. The Theravāda Abhidhamma’s distinction between conventional truth (*sammuti*) and ultimate reality (*paramattha*) has influenced also to this complexity and impracticality.

Furthermore, as demonstrated in this book, discrepancies arose between Abhidhamma Pitaka and numerous sutta teachings. Particularly, contradictions emerged in relation to the “Citta Yamaka” and “saṅkhāra Yamaka”, as well as between the first Ānanda Sutta and the Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta. Initially, determining the fixed lifespan of *nāma-rūpa* did not appear to be a crucial issue. However, upon careful study of the ideas presented in this book, one can understand how significantly this affects the fundamental principles of Vipassanā meditation.

It is also evident that the interpretation of ‘moment’ (*khaṇa*) in relation to Vipassanā has a profound impact on fundamental meditative concepts. Given the interconnected nature of *nāma-rūpa*, the Lord Buddha would have explicitly mentioned the concept of a fixed lifespan for *nāma-rūpa* when teaching Abhidhamma if it were a universal law of nature. A discerning reader, using simple logical reasoning, can recognize this. If this were indeed the truth, the Lord Buddha would not have presented it to the world through the commentarial literature (*Aṭṭhakathā*).

Rather at the very beginning of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī’s section on *rūpa* (matter), it would be stated, ‘All *rūpas* have a lifespan of seventeen thought-moments (*sabbé rūpā sattarasa cittakkhaṇikā*).’ As such a statement could be refuted through simple logical analysis, then the ancient Theravāda teachers deserve credit for not incorporating such a notion into the Tipiṭaka Abhidhamma.

Practical Implications of Defining the fixed Lifespan for Nāma-Rūpa

Considering the fixed lifespan of nāma-rūpa can also create practical challenges when aligning this concept with real-life experiences. For instance, when a headache persists for hours, what actually occurs is the repeated arising of painful bodily consciousness (dukkha-sahagata kāyaviññāṇa). According to the Paṭṭhāna methodology, the consciousness that arises before and after painful bodily consciousness is neutral (upekkhā-sahagata). The mind preceding painful bodily consciousness, as well as the subsequent consciousness that follows it—such as the five-door adverting consciousness (pañcadvārāvajjana), reception consciousness (sampaticchana), investigation consciousness (santīraṇa), and determination consciousness (voṭṭhapana)—are all in neutral feeling in nature.

Even when the life continuum (bhavaṅga) consciousness arises before the five-door adverting consciousness, it remains either neutral or accompanied by joy (somanassa-sahagata). This cyclic repetition of mental states results in the experience of a prolonged headache. However, during this period, other mental processes (cittavīthi) can also occur.

If every consciousness had an identical lifespan, then given that neutral consciousness arises more frequently than painful consciousness, one would assume that a person's experience during that period would be predominantly neutral rather than painful. However, this is not the case. If one assumes that painful bodily consciousness persists for a longer duration due to past karmic force and thus has a greater lifespan compared to other nearby consciousness, then this issue can be resolved.

Unresolved Issues

There is no unanimous agreement regarding the lifespan of a rūpa (form) even in the main commentary and Ṭīkā (sub-commentaries). Various opinions exist on this matter. It is mentioned that the ancient

Sinhala Aṭṭhakathā stated that it lasts for 16 moments. However, Venerable Buddhaghosa Thero, by presenting a fact in “Yamaka”, suggested that it should be 17. On the other hand, the Abhidhamma Mūlaṭīkā presented an argument that it should be 16.

Basing insight meditation, which leads one to liberation from saṃsāra, on such unresolved issues is not advisable. In our view, insight meditation should be grounded solely on the definitive teachings found in the Tipiṭaka.

Several Buddhist sects emerged a few centuries after the Lord Buddha’s Parinibbāna (Passing Away), among which the Sarvāstivāda school displayed particular enthusiasm towards Abhidhamma matters, apart from the Theravāda tradition. Historical evidence suggests that during the reign of King Kaniṣka in India, Sarvāstivāda doctrines were widely prevalent (See footnote 5). The fact that counterarguments against their views are presented in the Kathāvatthu indicates that this sect had already emerged by the time of the Third Buddhist Council.

Even within their expositions on nāma (mentality) and rūpa (materiality), the lifespan of a rūpa is not explicitly stated as a precise number of thought-moments, nor does it align at least somewhat close to Theravāda position. Furthermore, in the Kathāvatthu, which was compiled approximately two centuries after the Lord Buddha’s Parinibbāna, there is no mention of such an idea in the discussions on the interrelationships between nāma and rūpa. Based on all this evidence, it appears that the unique analytical perspectives found in Theravāda Abhidhamma were developed within the Sinhala Aṭṭhakathā tradition during the Anuradhapura period in Sri Lanka.

In Theravāda Abhidhamma, it is stated that a citta-vīthi (mental process) includes seven moments of javana (impulsion). In a visual cognitive process (cakkhudvārikacittavīthi), counting from the bhavaṅga-upaccheda (arrest of the life-continuum), through pañcadvārāvajjana (five-sense-door adverting), cakkhuvīññāṇa (eye-consciousness), and the subsequent thought moments, there are 15 cittas, including two tadārammaṇa (registration) moments that follow the seven javanas. If

one assumes that all these cittas are based on the same rūpārammaṇa (visual object), excluding the bhavaṅga-upaccheda, then that rūpārammaṇa must have a lifespan exceeding 15 thought moments.

Thus, during the era of the Sinhala Aṭṭhakathā, a viewpoint may have emerged that the minimum lifespan of a visible rūpa should be at least 16 thought moments. In later periods, this minimum number may have become solidified to an exact figure of 16. As previously mentioned, later Aṭṭhakathācāriyas (commentators) may have established the opinion that it should be 17. Alternatively, it is possible that the original range of 16-17 thought moments was proposed first, and from that, the idea of a maximum of seven javanas per mental process was derived.

Although the Theravāda Abhidhamma has certain weaknesses, one should not overlook the value of the knowledge system presented through the commentaries and sub-commentaries. In modern times, apart from Theravāda teachings, various interpretations of Vipassanā are widely disseminated, especially through the internet, often leading to more confusion. Many people tend to lean towards Vijñānavāda (Idealism) or Śūnyatāvāda (Emptiness philosophy), mistakenly believing that these are part of Theravāda and thus studying them as such.

A fundamental characteristic of Theravāda Abhidhamma is its recognition of distinct and real dhammas (phenomena), classified as wholesome, unwholesome and so on. In contrast, many contemporary explanations suggest that everything is merely an illusion, relative, or devoid of substance, yet fail to present a systematic and coherent doctrine. In comparison, Theravāda Abhidhamma remains more methodical. Therefore, if the limitations of Theravāda Abhidhamma can be addressed, it will be a worthy pursuit. Otherwise, Abhidhamma studies should be grounded in the original Tipiṭaka-based Abhidhamma rather than relying solely on later interpretations.

Actually, a book to understand Abhidhamma Pitaka is in the process of compilation. I have shown various faulty interpretations within Theravāda Abhidhamma with the main objective of alerting the dangers a wisdom seeker may fall into. It is very clear to me that some

commentarial interpretations will hinder the development of a wisdom seeker. So, I felt it is my duty as well as great gift of dhamma to compile a new Abhidhamma compendium which will support as the base for the beautiful insight meditation that Bhagawan put forward to the world.

Those who are interested in learning Abhidhamma without the commentarial interpretations can inquire. That will encourage me to translate the Abhidhamma compendium which is in the process of compilation in Sinhala language.

Proposals

The key points established in this work are as follows:

1. Depicting the existence only of Citta, cetasika, and Citta initiated matter in two stages—developing (uppādakkhana) and diminishing (bhaṅgakkhana).
2. Recognizing that, apart from that developing and diminishing stages, there is no necessity for an intermediate state of persistence (thiti).
3. Understanding that focusing on an extremely brief moment when contemplating impermanence is meaningless.
4. Understanding that impermanence should be contemplated by considering the “Uppanna” Nature Arisen nature of a phenomenon.
5. Meditating on impermanence in accordance with the principle of cause and effect.

6. Understanding that the three characteristics of conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhata lakṣhaṇa*) should be realized experientially by a disciple.
7. Expecting the cessation of a phenomenon due to the cessation of its cause, rather than merely the passage of time.
8. Avoiding the fixation of a definitive lifespan for either the mind or matter.
9. By that preventing *Abhidhamma* from turning into a mathematical formula and ensuring that Buddhism does not become a doctrine that devalue the correct action-effort (*Non-Akiriya vada*).
10. Avoiding the interpretation of “change occurring within the lifespan of a phenomenon” as decay (*jarā*).

When considered in this way, no contradictions or inconsistencies with the *Tripitaka* arise. Instead, a practical *Vipassanā* path becomes evident.

Footnotes

1. Note that when people talk about Theravada – Mahayana, the main two sects of Buddhism, it is in different context to the above. In that sense *Tripitaka* the three baskets accepted in Burma Thailand and in Sri Lanka are also incorporated as Theravada. Here I making a distinction between *Tripitaka Abhidhamma* and later commentarial *Abhidhamma*.

2. In Theravada Abhidhamma, the lifespan of a single Citta moment is represented by three sub-moments. Given that a single cognitive process (Citta vīthi) consists of 17 cittas, the total sub-moments would then be 51. In Theravada viewpoint Since two sub-moments are spent in arising (uppādakkhana) and dissolution (bhaṅgakkhana) of a rūpa, the remaining 49 sub-moments are considered the duration (ṭhiti) of the rūpa. When converted into citta moments, this corresponds to approximately 16 ($16 \times 3 = 48$).

3. Saṅkhāra (Formations)

In the Tripiṭaka, the term saṅkhāra is fundamentally used in two meanings:

1. Phenomena that create or generate other phenomena (causal formations).
2. Phenomena that arise as a result of causes (resultant formations).

When referring to causal formations, the term saṅkhāra is frequently associated with cetanā (intention) as it plays a fundamental role in shaping mental and material states.

The term abhisāṅkhata saṅkhāra is used when referring to formations resulting from causes.

The classification of saññā (perception), vedanā (feeling), as citta saṅkhāra (mental formations) is somewhat different to the above two meanings but aligns more closely with the first meaning, referring to phenomena associated with and bound to the mind.

The meaning of saṅkhāra should be determined based on the context in which it appears in the Tripiṭaka.

4. Cittasamuttana Rūpa (Mind-initiated Matter)

All forms (*rūpa*) are categorized into two groups: the Four Great Elements (*mahābhūta*) and the Derived Material Forms (*upādāya-rūpa*). Additionally, considering the unique causes of material formations, all rūpa can be classified into four categories:

- *Kammaja Rūpa*
- *Cittasamuttana Rūpa*
- *Utuja Rūpa*
- *Āhāraja Rūpa*

Kammaja Rūpa: Matter arising due to the influence of past kamma is known as *kammaja rūpa*. Examples include the sense faculties such as the eye and ear,

Cittasamuttana Rūpa: Matter arising along with the mind of a being is called *citta-samutthāna rūpa*, also known as *cittaja rūpa*. These rūpa arise in various parts of the body in accordance with the mind's activity. For example, bodily postures adjust according to the movements directed by the mind. When one experiences fear, the heartbeat accelerates; when one becomes angry, the body trembles; and when one engages in lustful thoughts, various hormonal processes are triggered. These are manifestations of *cittaja rūpa*.

Breathing, or the process of inhalation and exhalation (*āssāsa-passāsa*), also occurs as a result of the mind's activity. Therefore, respiration is considered a *kāya-saṅkhāra* and a type of *Cittasamuttana Rūpa*

When recalling old, familiar forms, or whatever earlier seen, some individuals state that "get to see a *citta rūpa* " or " *citta rūpa* came to mind." However, these are merely objects of mind (*ārammaṇa-mātra*) rather than *cittaja rūpa*. *Cittaja rūpa* refers to material phenomena that truly arise and exist due to mental processes.

5. Reign of King Kaniṣka

The reign of King Kaniṣka is dated to the first century CE