CHAPTER 2

Wrong-View (Micchā-diṭṭhi)

2.1 The Meaning of Diṭṭhi (View)

Diṭṭhi (Skt. drṣṭi), literally means ‘sight’. It derives from √dis, which means ‘to see’. It has been rendered as view, belief, speculative opinion, insight, dogma and theory. If not modified by the prefix Sammā, ‘right’, it mostly refers to wrong and evil view or opinion. It is evident in the Patisambhidāmagga Pāli,¹ there Ven. Sāriputta, the chief disciple of the Buddha, explicates Diṭṭhi as wrong views as follows;

What is view? Misapprehending or misinterpreting mentalities and materiality as ‘I’, ‘mine’, myself, is view.

(1) How many kinds of standpoints for view are there? There are eight kinds of standpoints for views i.e., five aggregates, ignorance, contact, perception, applied thought, careless attention and indoctrination by another.²

(2) How many kinds of obsession by views are there? There are eighteen kinds of obsession by views such as a recourse to views, thicket of views etc.³

¹Ps, p. 128
²Katamāni aṭṭha diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāni? Khandhāpi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna, avijjāpi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna, phassaopi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna, saññāpi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna, vitakkopi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna, ayoniso manasikāyopi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna, pāpamittopi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna, paratoghosopi diṭṭhiṭṭhāṇāna.
³Katamā aṭṭhārasa diṭṭhipariyutṭhāni? Yā diṭṭhi diṭṭhitagāna, diṭṭhi diṭṭhigahanam....
(3) How many kinds of views are there? There are sixteen kinds of views such as hedonistic view (Assāda-diṭṭhi), views about self (Attānu-diṭṭhi) etc.⁴

(4) How many kinds of misinterpretation by views are there? There are three hundred kinds of misinterpretation by views. Actually these three hundred misinterpretations are different aspects of the abovementioned sixteen views.⁵

(5) What is the eradication of standpoints for views? The stream-entry path is the abolition of standpoints for views. However, in a few instances in Pāli literature the term Diṭṭhi is found to indicate right view, understanding or insight also for example Diṭṭhi-visuddhi, purity of insight; Diṭṭhi-sampanna, possessed of insight. Hence the term Diṭṭhi simply means view, theory, dogma etc. without making a distinction between right and wrong.

2.2 The Importance of View (Diṭṭhi)

The importance of view (Diṭṭhi) can be gauged from the fact that our views on the crucial issues of reality have a bearing that goes beyond mere theoretical convictions. They preside over our attitudes, our actions, and our whole direction to existence. Our views might not be clearly formulated in our mind; we might have only an unclear conceptual grasp of our beliefs. But whether formulated or not, expressed or maintained in silence, these views have a far-reaching influence. They generate our perceptions and crystallize into the ideational framework through which we interpret to ourselves the meaning of our being in the world.

⁴Katamā solasa diṭṭhiyo? Assādadiṭṭhi, attānudiṭṭhi..etc.
⁵Assādadiṭṭhiyā pañcatimsāya ākārehi abhiniveso hoti. attānudiṭṭhiyā viśatiyā ākārehi abhiniveso hothi.
micchādiṭṭhiyā dasahākārehi abhiniveso hothi. etc
This view (*Diṭṭhi*) then conditions action. The views lie behind our choices, goals and our efforts to turn these goals from our dream into actuality. The actions themselves might determine consequences, but the actions along with their consequences hinge on the views from which they spring. Therefore Bhikkhu Bodhi eloquently comments that view (*Diṭṭhi*) implies an “ontological commitment.”

### 2.3 Right-View (*Sammā-diṭṭhi*) and Wrong-View (*Micchā-diṭṭhi*)

As to the distinction between what is right and wrong, view is (*Diṭṭhi*) divided into two classes, right view (*Sammā-diṭṭhi*) and wrong view (*Micchā-diṭṭhi*). The former corresponds to what is real; the latter deviates from the real and confirms the false in its place. These two different kinds of views, the Buddha teaches, lead to radically disparate lines of action, and thence to opposite results. Therefore in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* the Buddha explains, “Monks, for him who has wrong view one of two destinies may be expected, - rebirth in a woeful state or in an animal state: monks, for him who has right view one of two destinies may be expected - rebirth as a deity or human being.”

If we hold a wrong view, even if that view is vague, it will lead us towards courses of action that eventuate in suffering. On the other hand, if we adopt a right view, that view will steer us towards right action and thereby towards the world which might seem innocuous and inconsequential, when looked at closely it reveals itself to be the decisive

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6 Bodhi, Bhikkhu, *The Noble Eightfold Path*, p.16

7 *micchādiṭṭhikassā, bhikkhve, dvinnaṃ gatīnaṃ aññatara gati paṭikaṅkhā- nirayo vā tiracchānayoni vāti. sammādiṭṭhikassā, bhikkhve, dvinnaṃ gatīnaṃ aññatara gati paṭikaṅkhā- devā vā manussā vāti. AN I, p. 62*
determinant of our whole course of future development. The Buddha himself says that he sees no single factor so responsible for the arising of unwholesome states of mind as wrong view, and no factor so helpful for the arising of wholesome states of mind as right view.8

Again, he says that there is no single factor so responsible for the suffering of living beings as wrong view, and no factor so potent in promoting the good of living beings as right view.

Concerning the Sammādiṭṭhi, the Buddha asks, what at that time is right view?9 “that which at that time is wisdom, thorough understanding, scrutiny (of impermanence, etc. of phenomena), comprehensive scrutiny, investigative knowledge of the Dhamma (i.e. the Four Noble Truth), right observation (of impermanence, etc.), close observation, direct observation, erudition proficiency, refinement in knowledge, discriminative knowledge, reflection (on impermanence, etc.), comparative examination, breadth of knowledge, wisdom that destroys defilements, penetrative wisdom, insight, clear comprehension, wisdom like a guiding goad, wisdom as the faculty of power of wisdom, wisdom like a sword (for destroying defilements), wisdom like tower, wisdom like radiance, wisdom like a torch, wisdom like a jewel, non-bewilderment, investigative knowledge of the Dhamma, right view – this at that time is right view”.

Concerning wrong view (Micchā-diṭṭhi), the Dhammasaṅgaṇī mentions that eternalism and nihilism as two wrong and imperfect views. The first one is a doctrine or belief concerned with eternal life or with

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8Micchādiṭṭhikassa, bhikkhave, anuppannā ceva akusalā dhammā uppajjanti uppannā ca akusalā dhammā bhīyobbhāvāya vo puṇītāya sivattātipi. Sammādiṭṭh, bhikkhave, anuppannā ceva kusalā dhammā uppajjanti uppannā ca kusalā dhammā bhīyobbhāvāya vo puṇītāya sivattātipi. AN I, p. 30
9Dhs.I, p. 20
eternal things. Before the Buddha’s time, it was taught that there is an abiding entity which could exist forever, and that man can live the eternal life by knowing the soul in order to be in union with Supreme Being. In Buddhism, this teaching is called *Sassata-diṭṭhi*, ‘the view of eternalists’. Such views still exist even in the modern world owing to man’s craving for eternity.

Why did the Buddha deny the teaching of eternalism? Because when we understand the things of this world as they truly are, we cannot find anything which is permanent or which exists forever. Things change and continue to do so according to the changing conditions on which they depend. When we analyze things into their elements or into reality, we cannot find any abiding entity, any everlasting thing. This is why the eternalist view is considered wrong or false.

The second one is the view held by the nihilists who claim that there is no life after death. This view belongs to a materialistic philosophy which refuses to accept knowledge of mental conditionality.

To subscribe to a philosophy of materialism is to understand life only partially. Nihilism ignores the side of life which is concerned with mental conditionality. If one claims that after the passing away or ceasing of a life, it does not come to be again, the continuity of mental conditions is denied. To understand life, we must consider all conditions, both mental and material. When we understand mental and material conditions, we cannot say that there is no life after death and that there is no further becoming after passing away.

This nihilist view of existence is considered false because it is based on incomplete understanding of reality. That is why nihilism was also rejected by the Buddha. The teaching of *Kamma* is enough to prove
that the Buddha did not teach annihilation after death; Buddhism accepts ‘survival’ not in the sense of an eternal soul, but in the sense of a renewed becoming.

Throughout the Buddha’s long period of teaching the Dhamma to his followers, he actively discouraged speculative arguments. During the 5 century B.C. India was a veritable hive of intellectual activity where scholars, yogis, philosopher, kings and even ordinary householders were constantly engaged in the philosophical arguments pertaining to human existence. Some people engaged in arguments at great length about all manner of subjects where more concerned about proving their powers in mental gymnastics than seeking genuine solutions to the problems that beset humanity.

The Buddha refused to get involved in speculations regarding the universe. He stated very clearly that “the problem facing mankind is not in his past or his future but in the immediate.”

Knowledge about Eternalism or Nihilism can in no way help man to break the present fetters which bind him to existence and which are the source of all his feelings of discontent which arise from his inability to completely satisfy his cravings. The Buddha rejected both extremes of eternalism and nihilism and introduced right view and its indispensability to the attainment of Nibbāna. It is because only when one knows clearly what one is seeking will one be able to attain it.

According to the Buddha, one must first seek to understand one’s own mind. This was to be done through concentration which gives one a profound inner wisdom or realization. And this insight is to be gained not

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10 Atīti nānusocanti nappajanti nāgati. Paccuppantena yāpenti tena vañṇo pasīdati. SN I, p. 5
by philosophical argument or worldly knowledge but by the silent realization of the illusion of the Self.

2.4 The Definition of Wrong-View (Micchā-diṭṭhi)

Wrong-View (Diṭṭhi or Micchā-diṭṭhi) is declared as utterly rejectable for being a source of wrong and evil aspirations and conduct, and liable at times to lead man to the deepest abysses of depravity. In the Aṭṭhasālinī,\(^\text{11}\) it is mentioned that wrong view is untrue or false for beings grasp incorrect vision through it. A view disgusted by the wise as bringing disadvantages is also a wrong view. Furthermore, it together with its associated states see things wrongly or it is the mere act of wrong seeing, thus it is wrong view. It has unwise conviction as characteristic, perversion as function, wrong conviction as manifestation; the desire not to see the Noble Persons as proximate cause.

2.5 Different Categories of Wrong-view

Although wrong view is only one in its characteristic of unwise conviction, it splits into many divisions according to man’s different speculative thoughts and meditative experiences. Since the indulgence in these views can lead into adversities, in many Suttas the Buddha explains in detail about these wrong views. Of them, three kinds of wrong views mentioned in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, three kinds of wrong views in the Majjhima Nikāya, ten kind of wrong-view mentioned in the Pāṭhikavagga Pāli, sixteen kind of wrong views in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, and sixty-two kinds wrong views mentioned in the Brahmajāla Sutta will be mentioned here. The above-mentioned wrong views, in this thesis, are revealed according to serial order. The scheme of these views is treated as

\(^{11}\text{Dhs.A I, p. 290}\)
a net cast out by the Buddha upon the ocean of human thought, designed to catch and contain all possible philosophical theories on the nature of the self and the universe. It takes as its target not only those which were being formulated by thinkers contemporary with the Buddha, or those which have come to expression in the course of man’s intellectual history, but all that are capable of coming to expression whether they have actually appeared or not.

In the *Nikāyas* we find attempts to classify and summarise wrong-views, most notably in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*\(^\text{12}\) and the *Diṭṭhisamayutta*\(^\text{13}\) and, in undertaking this task, I am, to an extent, following in the footsteps of the early *Abhidhamma*. For example, the *Vibhaṅga* gives a list of some 115 wrong-views, mostly drawn from the *Nikāyas*. I will use the *Vibhaṅga* summary as an entry point into the *Nikāyas*, as it is a convenient summary of those views classified as wrong-views.

A terminological issue must be considered first as the views classified in the *Vibhaṅga* as wrong-views are not consistently, or in some cases not at all, referred to as wrong-views in the *Nikāyas*. Indeed, the term *micchā-diṭṭhi* does not occur at all in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. The *Sutta* uses the term ‘basis for views’ (*Diṭṭhiṭṭhāna*), to refer to the 62 views which it considers. In the *Nikāyas* the term *Vāda* (*‘doctrine’, ‘theory’ or ‘school’*) is often used to refer to wrong-views. However, using the *Vibhaṅga* summary, I have classified as wrong-views only those views specifically called *Micchā-diṭṭhi* in one or more places, in addition to the views that appear in the *Brahmajāla Sutta* or the *Diṭṭhisamyutta*.

\(^{12}\)DN I, p. 46  
\(^{13}\)SN III p. 201
The Khuddhaka-vatthu of the Vibhaṅga gives the names and details of many Micchā-diṭṭhi. There are:

The ‘becoming-view’ (*Bhava-diṭṭhi*), which holds that the self and the world will arise again (*Bhavissati attā ca loko cā tī*).

The ‘non-becoming view’ (*Vibhava-diṭṭhi*), which holds that the self and the world will not arise again (*Na bhavissati attā ca loko cā tī*).

The ‘eternalist-view’ (*Sassata-diṭṭhi*), which holds that the self and the world are eternal (*Sassato attā ca loko cā tī*).

The ‘annihilationist-view’ (*Uccheda-diṭṭhi*), which holds that the self and the world will cease (*Ucchijjissati attā ca loko cā tī*).

The ‘finite-view’ (*Antavā-diṭṭhi*), which holds that the self and the world are finite (*Antavā attā ca loko cā tī*).

The ‘infinite-view’ (*Anantavā-diṭṭhi*), which holds the opposite (*Anantavāattā ca loko cā tī*).

The ‘ultimate-beginning-view’ (*Pubbantānu-diṭṭhi*), concerning the ultimate beginning of beings.

The ‘ultimate-end-view’ (*Aparantānu-diṭṭhi*), concerning the ultimate end of beings (*Aparanta ārabbha*).

The ‘identity-view’ (*Akkāya-diṭṭhi*).

The ‘self-view’ (*Attānu-diṭṭhi*). The same view as *Akkāya-diṭṭhi*. 
The ‘gratification-view’ (Assāda-diṭṭhi), which holds that there is no fault in sense pleasures (Natthi kāmesu doso).\(^{14}\)

The ‘four wrong-views’ (Catasso diṭṭhiyo): the first arises firmly as the truth that ‘pleasure and pain are produced by themselves’; the second that ‘pleasure and pain are produced by another cause’; the third that ‘pleasure and pain are produced by themselves and by another cause’; the fourth that ‘pleasure and pain are not produced by themselves, or by another cause, but arise without cause’.

The ‘six wrong-views’ (Cha diṭṭhiyo): the view that arises firmly as the truth that ‘I have a self’; or ‘I do not have a self’; or ‘by the self I perceive what is self’; or ‘by the self I perceive what is not self’; or ‘by what is not self I perceive what is not self’; or ‘it is this self of mine that speaks and feels and experiences for a long time here and there the results of good and destructive actions; this (self) is not born and never came to be; this(self) is not born and never will come to be; this (self) is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change’.

The ‘seven wrong-views’ (Satta diṭṭhiyo). These are the same views as the seven Uccheda-diṭṭhi from the Brahmajāla Sutta.

The ‘wrong-view that has ten bases’ (Dasavatthukā micchā-diṭṭhi). This is ‘the view of nihilism’ (Natthika-diṭṭhi) that I will consider below.

The ‘wrong-view’ (Micchā-diṭṭhi). The same view as the preceding view.

The ‘extremist view that has ten bases’ (Dasavatthukā antaggāhikā diṭṭhi). These are the ten unanswered questions (Avyākata).

\(^{14}\textit{Dhs. p. 358-382}\)
The sixty-two wrong-views that were spoken of by the Buddha in the *Brahmajāla* exposition (*Dvāsahi diṭṭhigatāni brahmajāle veyyākaraṇevuttāni bhagavatā*). These are the ‘four eternalistic theories’ (*Cattāro sassata-vādā*); ‘four partial eternalistic theories’ (*Cattāro ekaccasassatikā*); ‘four finite and infinite theories’ (*Cattāro amarāvikkhepičā*); ‘four theories about immortality’ (*Cattāro amarāvikkhepičā*); ‘two theories (of occurrences) arising without a cause’ (*Dve adhiccasamuppannikā*); ‘sixteen theories of having apperception’ (*Solasa saññā-vādā*); ‘eight theories of having non-perception’ (*Aṭṭha asaññā-vādā*); ‘eight theories of neither perception nor non-apperception’ (*Aṭṭha nevasaññā-nāsaññā-vādā*); ‘seven annihilationist theories’ (*Satta ucccheda-vādā*); ‘five theories on Nibbāna in the present existence’ (*Pañca diṭṭhadhama-nibbāna-vādā*).\(^{15}\)

2.6. Three Kinds of Wrong-view

What are three kinds of wrong views? They are (1) *Pubbekatahetu-diṭṭhi*, (2) *Issaranimmānāhetu-diṭṭhi* and (3) *Ahetukaapaccaya-diṭṭhi*. To elaborate these three kinds of wrong view, the Buddha said in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*\(^{16}\) that all bodily and mentally agreeable sensations, all bodily and mentally disagreeable sensations, and all indifferent sensations enjoyed by beings in the present existence are caused and conditioned only by volitional actions done by them in their past existences. This view is known as *Pubbekatahetu-diṭṭhi*.

The view that all bodily and mentally agreeable sensations, all bodily and mentally disagreeable sensations, and all indifferent sensations

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\(^{15}\)*Dhs*, p. 400

\(^{16}\)*AN I*, p. 174
enjoyed by beings in the present existence are created by a Supreme Being or God. This view is known as Issarimmānahetu-diṭṭhi.

The view that all bodily and mentally agreeable sensations, all bodily and mentally disagreeable sensations, and all indifferent sensations enjoyed by beings in the present life come into existence of their own accord and are not caused by genitive Kamma and sustaining Kamma. This view is known as Ahetukaapaccaya-diṭṭhi.

These views can be found in the Mahābodhi Jātaka also.17 Issarimmāna-vāda is mentioned in the Dhammasaṅganī mūlaṭīkā, as Ekakārana-vāda, Pakatikārana-vāda and Issarakāran-vāda.18 In the Jātaka Pāli and many other sub-commentaries, it is found as Issarakutti-vāda.19 The Buddha explains the danger of these three kinds of wrong views that by adherence to any one of these views one is sure to maintain the forward movement of the cycle of suffering. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Buddha clearly reminds his disciples thus “Bhikkhus, I do not see anything so reprehensible as wrong-view.”20

Nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, aññ ekadhammampi samanupussā yena anuppannā vā akusalā dhammā uppajjanti uppannā vā akusalā dhammā bhīyyobhāvāya vopullāya sivattnti yathāyidam, bhikkhave, micchādiṭṭhi.

The following is one of the ways to eradicate above-mentioned views.

(1)Pubbekatahetu-diṭṭhi

As to the Pubbekatahetuka-diṭṭhi, there are some people who set forth and hold the following view that all pleasant feeling, unpleasant

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17Ja II, p. 240
18Dps. I,[1] p. 61
19Ja II, p. 50
20AN I, p.35
feeling and indifferent feeling enjoyed by beings in the present existence are caused and conditioned only the volitional actions done by them in their past existence. All these things are not created by any one, nor are they caused by acts done diligently by people in the present existence. As this view disclaims the efforts of the acts done by the people in the present existence, it is unreasonable and grossly mistaken. Hence it is called a wrong view.

Suppose this view was really true, there are people who kill living creatures, only because they are prompted by their past volitional actions. There are also people who being conditioned by the wholesome volitional actions done by them in their past existence, have become persons endowed with good conduct. At times these people are prompted by their past volitional action to commit evil deeds. Then they, prompted by their evil actions, kill living creatures, take what is not given, indulge in illicit sexual intercourse; tell lies, carry talks, use harsh language, uselessly babble; are avaricious maintain ill-will against others, and maintain wrong views.

In this world there are such things as “Hearing the discourse delivered by the wise consideration, which are the condition to become wise and virtuous. Supposing all wholesome and unwholesome volitional actions done by people in the present life are solely caused by their past Kammass, then those things such as “hearing the doctrine” and “wise consideration” will become fruitless because the holders this view believe that “to become a wise man” or “to become a food” is solely caused by their past Kamma and by no other cause.

In reality people are able to become virtuous Samanas or brahma8a only when they perform such wholesome volitional actions as “keeping
company with the wise” and “hearing the doctrine” and not otherwise. We have noticed such states of affair in our daily lives. As the Pubbekatahetu-diṭṭhi disclaims the Generative Kamma and the Sustaining Kamma it should be declared as a wrong view.

Once a person holds such a wrong view, the access to arise good Dhammas for example good intention, right effort etc. has been denied. Instead it gives access to bad and immoral Dhammas for example bad intention etc. and finally leads a person to one of the miserable states. Therefore this view should be abandoned.

(2) Issaranimmānahetu-diṭṭhi

As to the Issaranimmānahetu-diṭṭhi, there some people who set forth and hold the following view that all pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings and indifferent feelings enjoyed by beings in the present existence are created by a Supreme Brahmā or God. The Buddha mentioned this view in the Brahmājāla Sutta, the Brahmanimantana Sutta

and Brahma-saṃyutta. Here the great Brahmāis the one who first resided in the first Jhāna plane. This great can be regarded as the Supreme Being for the purpose of explaining this Issaranimmāna view.

Those who hold this wrong view maintain as follows; indeed this being, the Brahmā, the great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the one who cannot be conquered by others, surely is all seeing, all powerful, the Ruler and the Creator of the three worlds Okāsaloka, Sattāloka and Saṅkhāraloka, the excellent, the Almighty, the one who has already practised calm, the father of all that are and are to be. And he has created us. This view exists in this world on account of those samana and brāhmaṇa who held the
ekaccasassata view, the view held by those Brāhmaṇa who having fallen from the Brahmā planes are reborn in the planes of men and Devas and are able to remember their last existence.

This Issaranimmāna-vāda has been clearly expounded in the Brahmajālasutta. Before the Buddha time, this view was maintained by many Brahmins. During Buddha’s time, he fully refuted all wrong views, including Issaranimmāna-vādasince it disclaims the possibility of generative and sustaining Kammas, and it denies the access to a moral life. As a result, this wrong view of Issaranimmāna-vādacould not gain popularity.

(3) Ahetukaapaccaya-diṭṭhi

As to the Ahetukaccya-diṭṭhi, there are some people who hold the following view that all pleasant feelings, unpleasant feelings and indifferent feelings enjoyed by beings in the present life come into existence of their own accord and are not caused by Generative Kamma and Sustaining Kamma. Those who hold this Ahetuka view maintain that in the world everything such as the corruptness or purity of beings is predestined by fate and not by past or present Kamma or energy and knowledge.

In other words they hold that everything in the world comes into existence by itself and is neither caused nor conditioned by past Kammas generative Kamma or sustained Kamma. The various physical phenomena of existence conventionally termed Ego, personality man, woman, animal etc. are a mere play of blind chance and not the outcome of causes and conditions. They come into existence of their own accord without being created by a creator, nor caused and conditioned by generative and sustained Kamma. Such things as richness, poverty, complacency, and
destruction come into existence of their own accord and not due to any cause or condition whatsoever.

Before the Buddha time, this Ahetuka wrong view was held by such heretical teachers for example Guṇakassapas mentioned in the Nārada Jātaka during the life of the Buddha, this fatalistic “view of causelessness of existence was taught by the following heretical teachers called as Makkhaligosāla and Acelaka.

Those who maintain this Ahetuka wrong view reject the Kammasakatā (owner of one’s Kamma) view taught by the Buddha. Although they reject this Kammasakatā view, they are not aware of the fact that they themselves thereby become the holders of the Kammasakatā view, owners of their Kamm as beings.

According to this wrong view, if all physical phenomena of existence be a mere play of blind chance and not the outcome of causes and conditions, then there will be no difference between the “Sphere in which past Kamm operate. Also there will be no difference, whether one acts wickedly, or cleverly because all volitional actions are not the outcome of causes and conditions, but they come into existence of their own accord or as a natural law.

According to this Ahetuka view, intention, energy and volitional actions will be rendered useless and unproductive because however lofty acts beings might perform they would not obtain any specific results. In reality, different intention etc. produces different result, for example, richness and poverty etc. This state of affairs is quite evident in the present world. Therefore this view should also be abandoned.
2.7.1 Another Three Kinds of Wrong View

In the Apanṇaka sutta, three kinds of wrong views; nihilism (Natthika-diṭṭhi), non-doing (Akiriya-diṭṭhi) and non-causality (Ahetuka-diṭṭhi) are mentioned.

2.7.2 Ten Views of Nihilism (Natthika-diṭṭhi)

The view of nihilism is as following:

Nothing is given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed; there is no fruit or result of good and bad actions; no this world, no other world; no mother, no father; no beings who are reborn spontaneously; no good and virtuous recluses and Brahmans in the world who by themselves realised by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.

The person is composed of the four great elements; when he dies, earth returns and goes back to the element of earth, water returns and goes back to the element of water, fire returns and goes back to the element of fire, wind returns and goes back to the element of wind, while the senses disappear into space. [Four] men with the bier as a fifth take up the corpse, the funeral orations last as far as the burning ground, his bones are a dull white, his offerings end in ashes. They are fools who teach alms-giving. The doctrine of affirmation (Atthika-vāda) is empty and false banter. Fools and wise alike are destroyed and perish at the breaking up of the body; they do not exist after death.

Three versions of this formula are found: the first is this one from the Sāmaññaphala Sutta where the view is attributed to Ajita

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21MN II. p. 62
22DN, I. P.- 47–86
A shorter version is often used which consists of the first paragraph. In the Vibhaṅga classification this is the ‘wrong-view that has ten bases’ (Dasavatthukā micchā-diṭṭhi), also simply called ‘wrong-view’ (Micchā-diṭṭhi). A third version, which is very short, consists of the following: ‘There is no other world, there are no spontaneously born beings, and there is no fruit or result of good and bad actions.’

The early Pāli canon seems to have understood the view of nihilism quite literally as the view that ‘there is not’. Actions do not have consequences. There is no point in giving to others. There is no path to purity. There are no enlightened beings. There is no cessation of dukkha. The Dhammasaṅganī uses the phrase ‘non-accomplishment in view’ (Diṭṭhi-vipatti) to refer to the view of nihilism and ‘accomplishment in view’ (Diṭṭhi-sampadā) to refer to the opposite view, the right-view which affirms that ‘there is what is given’, etc. This right-view shall be referred to as ‘the view of affirmation’ (Atthika-diṭṭhi). According to the Dhammasaṅganī, all wrong-views are non-accomplishment in view, and all right-views are accomplishment in view. Right-views are fortunate views, and wrong-views are unfortunate views. Holding that actions have consequences is the right view. Buddhaghosa explains why it is better to have the view of affirmation than the view of nihilism, which may be summarised: accomplishment in view is opposed to attachment to

23 It is termed as ‘the doctrine of annihilationism’ (uccheda-vāda). The formula is not specifically introduced as a diṭṭhi. In the Sandaka-sutta (MN I, p. 513 – 24) at M I, p. 515 the view is not attributed to anyone. It is introduced as being the ‘doctrine’ (vāda) and ‘view’ (diṭṭhi) held by a certain ascetic. It is called one of the four ways which ‘negate the living of the holy life’ (abrahmacariyavāsa). The other three are the views of non-doing, the view of non-causality and the view of Pakudha Kaccāyana. In the Diṭṭhi-samyutta (SN III, p. 201 – 24) at SN III, p. 205 the view is not attributed to anyone. It is called simply ‘there is not’ (nathī). In the Pāṭali-Sutta (SN IV, p. 340 – 59) at S IV, p. 347 it is described as a vāda and diṭṭhi.

24 MN I, p. 285 – 90

25 iti pi n’ atthi paro loko . n’ atthi sattā opapātikā . n’ atthi sukaṭadukkaṭānaṁ kammānaṁ phalam vipāko ti , DN II, p. 319

26 Dhs, p. 233, 1362

27 Dhs, p. 378
view. For this reason it is accomplishment in view.\(^{28}\) He also explains that whereas we know we can give to others, some grasp the idea that there is no fruit and result of these actions.\(^{29}\) Our actions do produce consequences, and this is what this view-holder primarily denies. Indeed the view of nihilism is sometimes used to explain attachment. For example, the Vibhaṅga considers four attachments (Upādānas): ‘attachment to sensuality’, ‘attachment to view’, ‘attachment to precepts and vows’ and ‘attachment to the theory of self’ (Kāmupādāna, Dihupādāna, Sīlabbatupādāna, Attavādupādāna). The attachment of wrong-view is explained, first, as the view of nihilism, then it is stated that all wrong-views constitute attachment to view (Sabbāpi micchā-diṭṭhi diṭṭhupādāna).\(^{30}\) All wrong-views are a form of greed and attachment.

Wrong-views are then opposed to right-view in the sense that right-view, the view of affirmation, is closer to non-attachment. One should practise right-view because it promotes a certain course of action, and in practising right-view there is the realisation of the nature of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion (Alobha, Adosa, Amoha). To deny that actions have consequences is then, in a certain way, an expression of greed, hatred and delusion. Wrong-view prevents the very first stage of the path from being realised, the beginning of the transformation of action which eventually will lead to insight.

There has been some scholarly debate on the nature of the view of nihilism. K. N. Jayatilleke holds that the doctrine as a whole is based upon the epistemological motive that ‘perception’ (Pratyaka) alone is the only


\(^{29}\) Dhs. p. 385 – 6

\(^{30}\) Dhs. p. 375
valid means of knowledge. Since perception is the only valid means of knowledge, ‘higher perception’ (Abhiññā) is denied.

The view of nihilism claims that the person is composed of the ‘four great elements’, hence there is no self. Morality has no value. The view that ‘actions have consequences’ (the right-view of affirmation) is denied because this law cannot be known by ‘perception’. It cannot be known by any ‘valid means of knowledge’ (Skt. Pramāṇa), hence it does not exist. It is generally held that this type of thinking reflects the views of the Lokāyata/Cārvāka schools, or so-called ‘Indian Materialism’, and there are Lokāyata doctrines which may be compared to the view of nihilism. For example, the doctrine of Yadṛcchā-vāda denies cause and effect and proposes that all relationships are accidental. The Lokāyata doctrine of Svabhāva-vāda holds that things operate without a cause, and change according to their ‘own nature’. Similarly, Tucci argues the following:

“This Svabhāva-vāda[posits] the negation of the karma theory […] it maintains that everything which happens on earth is only the effect of various combinations of material elements; human effort is useless […] everything happens Svabhāvena, according to the various combinations of the four elements which constitute the body of everything.”

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34 Tucci ‘A Sketch of Indian Materialism’, in Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, Cārvāka/Lokāyata , p. 384 – 93 (p. 391 – 2)
According to Warder, the doctrine of *Svabhāva-vāda* could then have been used to replace the theory of *Kamma*.³⁵

*Tucci* holds that the essential part of the view of nihilism is the phrase ‘no fruit or result of good and bad actions’ (*N’atthi sukaādukkaānaṃ kammānaṃ phala vipāko*), and that this is in fact the central idea of Indian Materialism.³⁶ He also thinks that if the view of nihilism was derived from real existing doctrines, this would help explain the parallel with Jain sources. The main point made by these scholars is that the view of nihilism denies that actions have consequences.

The view of nihilism runs contrary to the experiential and empirical nature of early Buddhist thought. Actions are held to shape the conduct of body, speech and mind. The notions of ‘is’ and ‘ought’ cannot be divorced from each other. To know how things are we must act in a wholesome way; to act in a wholesome way we must have insight into how things are. This process must begin with the transformation of action. The view of nihilism denies the possibility of transformation. It is a view that produces an unwholesome course of action and it is a wrong-view.

**2.7.3 The View of Non-doing (*Akiriya-diṭṭhi*)**

The wrong-view of nihilism primarily denies that actions have consequences. The second wrong-view also denies that actions have consequences and is described as ‘the view of non-doing’ (*Akiriya-diṭṭhi*):

> “When one acts or makes others act, when one mutilates or makes others stimulate, when one tortures or makes others inflict torture,

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when one inflicts sorrow or makes others inflict sorrow, when one oppresses or makes others inflict oppression, when one intimidates or makes others inflict intimidation, when one kills living beings, takes what is not given, breaks into houses, plunders wealth, commits burglary, ambushes highways, seduces another’s wife, utters falsehood – no wrong is done by the doer. If, with a razor-rimmed wheel, one were to make the living-beings on this earth into one mass of flesh, into one heap of flesh, because of this there would be no wrong and no outcome of wrong. If one were to go along the south bank of the Ganges killing and slaughtering, mutilating and making others mutilate, torturing and making others torture, because of this there would be no wrong and no outcome of wrong. If one were to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving gifts and making others give gifts, making offerings and making others make offerings, because of this there would be no merit and outcome of merit. From giving, from taming oneself, from restraint, from speaking truth, there is no merit and no outcome of merit.”

This view denies morality by denying that action has meaning. To call someone an *Akiriya-vāda* appears to have been a term of disparagement, used by the different traditions. For example, the Jains called Buddhists *Akiriya-vādins*, because of the Buddhist denial of self: ‘The *Akiriya-vādins* who deny karma, do not admit that the action (of the self is transmitted to) the future moments.’ As Gómez has suggested, a *kiriya-vādinis* one who believes in the law of *Kamma*, that ‘some kind of

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37 *DN* I, p. 52–3  
38 Hermann Jacobi, *JainaSūtras*, p. 316
action or human effort [...] would lead to release from Sāṃsāra’ whereas an Akiriya-vādin held that our actions have no consequences.\textsuperscript{39}

2.7.4. The View of Non-causality (Ahetuka-diṭṭhi)

The third wrong-view, which is occasionally found together with the view of nihilism and the view of non-doing, is the following:

There is no cause or condition for the defilement of beings; beings are defiled without cause or condition. There is no cause or condition for the purification of beings; beings are purified without cause or condition. There is no self-power or other-power, there is no power in humans, no strength or force, no vigour or exertion. All beings, all living things, all creatures, all that lives is without control, without power or strength they experience the fixed course of pleasure and pain through the six kinds of rebirth.

It is believed that there are one million four hundred thousand principal sorts of birth, and six thousand others and again six hundred. There are five hundred kinds of Kamma, or five kinds and three kinds, and half Kamma, sixty-two paths, sixty-two intermediary aeons, six classes of humans, eight stages of human progress, four thousand nine hundred occupations, four thousand nine hundred wanderers, four thousand nine hundred abodes of Nāgas, two thousand sentient existences, three thousand hells, thirty-six places covered with dust, seven classes of rebirth as sentient beings, seven as insentient beings, and seven as beings ‘freed from bonds’, seven grades of Devas, men and demons (Disāca), seven lakes, seven great and seven small protuberances, seven

\textsuperscript{39} Gómez, ‘Some Aspects of the Free-Will Question in the Nikāyas’, \textit{Philosophy East and West} (1975), p. 81 – 90
great and seven small abysses, seven great and seven small dreams, eight million four hundred thousand aeons during which fools and wise run on and circle round till they make an end of suffering. There is no question of bringing unripe Kamma to fruition, nor of exhausting Kamma already ripened, by virtuous conduct, by vows, by penance, or by chastity. That cannot be done. Samsāra is measured as with a bushel, with its joy and sorrow and its appointed end. It can neither be lessened nor increased, nor is there any excess or deficiency of it. Just as a ball of thread will, when thrown, unwind to its full length, so fool and wise alike will take their course, and make an end of sorrow.40

I shall refer to this Micchā-diṭṭhi as ‘the view of non-causality’ (Ahetu-diṭṭhi). In the Sāmaññaphala Sutta this view is also described as ‘purification through samsāra’ (Samsāra-suddhi). This may have been a familiar term for Ājīvika ideas. It contains the well-known Ājīvika notion of ‘destiny’ (Niyati). Pande notes that this could reflect a central tenet of Ājīvika soteriology, ‘the unalterable working out of a coiled up necessity’.41 This notion is reflected in the last phrase of the view in which Samsāra is compared to a ball of thread which, when thrown, will unwind naturally to its full length. In a similar fashion, fools and the wise are heading towards an end to sorrow, towards purification (Visuddhi).42

Thus the three wrong-views, the view of nihilism, the view of non-doing and the view of non-causality, which each deny that actions have consequences in their different ways are described. In the Suttas, these three wrong-views are often found together. To summarize these views are wrong because by denying the importance of action, they take one away from what is wholesome. Action can produce both what is wholesome. Action can produce both what is

40 DN I, p. 53-4.
42 Basham, History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas, p. 24
unwholesome and wholesome. In characterising suffering as being caused by both craving and ignorance the Suttas are suggesting that a course of unwholesome action increases both craving and a lack of knowledge. These views, then, not only increase unwholesome action but also craving and ignorance. In this way, they take one away from the right path.

The first view is found in one who holds that “there is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed, no fruit or result of good and bad actions, no this world nor other world, no mother, no father, no beings who are reborn spontaneously, no good and virtuous recluses and Brahmins in the world who have themselves realized by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.”

The second view can be found in one who holds that “there is no evil that is done by the doer; there is no evil because of killing; there will be no evil and no outcome of evil if one were to go along the south bank of the Ganges; there will be no merit and no outcome of merit if one were to go along the north bank of Ganges; there is no merit and no outcome of merit by giving, by taming oneself, by speaking truth.

The third view can be found in one who holds that “beings are defiled without cause or condition; beings are purified without cause or condition; without power, energy, manly strength and endurance, all beings experience pleasure and pain in the six classes.”

With one of these wrong views as their condition, several unwholesome states come into being in this, such as wrong intention, wrong speech, and opposition to noble ones, convincing another to accept an untrue Dhamma, and self-praise and disparagement of others.
Consequently, one who holds one of these wrong views will surely be reborn in one the four woeful states after death.

2.8. Ten Kinds of Wrong Views

The wrong view is responsible for increase of demerit and decrease of merit. Such views can be found in many Suttas throughout the Pāli text. The followings are such views. One sets up and holds that:

(1) There are no results for alms-giving, (Natthi dinnaṃ)
(2) No offering on a big scale (Natthi yiṭṭham)
(3) No offering on a small scale (Natthi hutam)
(4) No result of wholesome and unwholesome actions (Natthi -sukata-dukatānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko)
(5) No existence of this world (Natthi ayaṃloko)
(6) No existence of other world (Natthi paroloko)
(7) No good and evil deeds done to one’s mother (Natthi mātā)
(8) No good and evil deeds done to one’s father (Natthi pitā)
(9) No spontaneously-manifesting of beings (Natthi sattā opapātikā)
(10) No virtuous persons in this world

(Natthi loke samaṇa brahmanā samaggatā sammapātipannā)

“There are no results for alms-giving (Natthi dinnaṃ).” It means one holds the view that alms should not be given, even if alms giving was performed with benevolence in a previous existence, it will not yield beneficial results in subsequent existences.

“There are no offering on a big scale (Natthi yiṭṭham).” It means one holds the view that liberality should not be practiced, even if it was

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43 DN III, p. 220; MN I, p. 356; MN II, p. 263; MN III, p. 72; S I, p. 169; AN I, p. 272; AN III, p. 60; Nd II, p. 276; Dhs, p. 375
extended with belief in past Kamma and with faith in and respect for the virtuous qualities of recipients, it will not yield beneficial results in future existence.

“There is no offering on a small scale (Natthi hutām).” It means one should view that gifts should not be given even on a small scale, even if it was made in previous existence with good will, it will not yield beneficial results in future existence.

“There is no result of wholesome and unwholesome actions (Natthi loke samāṇa brahmanā samaggatā sammapātipannā).” It means one holds the view that cruel deeds done to beings in previous existences and that refraining from such evil acts will not yield harmful or beneficial results respectively.

“There is no existence of this world and the other world (Natthi ayaṁloko, Naṭṭhi paroloko).” It means that one holds the view that there is no future existence in this world referring to the human world, nor the other world referring to the four woeful worlds, the Deva worlds and the Brahma worlds.

“No good and evil deeds done to one’s mother and father (Natthi mātā and Natthi pītā).” It means that one holds the view that good and evil deeds done to one’s mother and father will not yield any good or bad results respectively in subsequent existences.

“There exist no apparitional-born beings (Natthi sttā opapātikā).” It means that one holds the view that there is really no existence of the apparitional-born beings that are invisible to human eyes. An apparitional-born being means that he or she does not take conception in the womb of a mother. Due to the force of their previous Kamma they are
born complete with the limbs and organs of the body, which will not develop further but remain as they are.

“There is no virtuous person in this world (Natthi loke samaṇa brahmanā samaggatā sammāpatipannā).” It means that one holds the view that there are no Samaṇa and Brahmana who attained higher spiritual knowledge and omniscient knowledge, and there is no Samana and Brahmana who exert themselves diligently in fulfilling the perfections and practicing tranquility meditation and insight meditation in this human world to achieve such knowledge. However personages who have achieved such knowledge appear in this world from time to time.

Those who hold one of the above-mentioned wrong views entertain doubt on the Triple gem (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha), on the Kamma and its result and this world and the other worlds, and deny the responsibilities to their parents. Subsequently, practising one of these views increases demerit and decreases merit.

Therefore the Cūḷapunṇama sutta says that those persons hold these ten kinds of wrong views. And how is the unworthy one with unworthy views? Here “the unworthy one is with the view, there are no results for gifts, sacrifices and offerings, there are no results for good and bad actions. There is no this world, no other world, no mother, no father. There are no beings that arise spontaneously, no recluses and Brahmans in the world, who have come to the right path, realizing this world and the other world, by themselves. Thus the unworthy one is with unworthy view.”

Idha, bhikkhe, asappuriso evamdiṭṭhi hoti. Natthi dinnaṃ, natthi yiṭṭham, natthi hutaṃ, natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ

44MN III. p. 72
phalaṃ, natthi ayaṃ loko, natthi paro loko, natthi mātā, natthi pitā, natthi satthā opapātikā, natthi loko samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā, ye imaṅca lokaṃ sayam abhiññāyā sacchiukatvā pavedenti.

2.9 Sixteen Kinds of Wrong Views

In the Paṭisambhidāmagga, Ven. Sāriputta placed principle classes of wrong views scattering in many Suttas under the five categories: these are the definition of wrong view, eight bases of wrong views, eighteen manners in which wrong views hold their grip, sixteen kinds of wrong views, three-hundred functions of wrong views, and the way to escape from wrong views. In this context, only the following sixteen kinds of wrong views will be mentioned:

(1) (Hedonistic) gratification views, (Assāda-diṭṭhi)
(2) Views about self, (Attānu-diṭṭhi)
(3) Wrong view, (Micchā-diṭṭhi)
(4) Views about individuality. (Sakkāya-diṭṭhi)

Identity-view (Sakkāya-diṭṭhi) Bhikkhu Bodhi translates Sakkāya-diṭṭhias ‘identity-view’. Collins translates Sakkāya-diṭṭhias ‘personality belief’, Gethin as ‘the view that the individual exists’. I think that the term implies an ‘identification’ with the Khandhas. The identity-view does not see things as they are, and this produces craving and attachment. The opposite to the identity-view is the non-identity-view, the non-craving-view, namely, right-view. The role of Sakkāya-diṭṭhīn giving rise to other views is stressed in the Nikāyas. For example, in the Dutiya

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45 Ps. p. 133
46 Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses, p. 397
47 Collins, Selfless Persons (1982), p. 93–4
48 Gethin, The Foundations of Buddhism, p. 148
isidatta Sutta\(^49\) at Samyutta Nikāya, it is stated that when there is Sakkāyadiṭṭhi, the ten ‘unanswered questions’ (Avyākata) and the 62 views of the Brahmajāla sutta come to be.\(^50\) According to the Peṭakopadesa, Sakkāyadiṭṭhi is the footing for all wrong-views.\(^51\) The implication is that Sakkāyadiṭṭhi is the first view out of which all other views come.

All, or part, of the following formula is common throughout the Nikāyas. The following is from the Cūlavedalla sutta:\(^52\)

How […] does the identity-view come to be? Here […] an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for the noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in the Dhamma, regards form as self, or self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form. He regards feeling as self, or self as possessed of feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling. He regards apperception as self, or self as possessed of apperception, or apperception as in self, or self as in apperception. He regards volitional formations as self, or self as possessed of volitional formations, or volitional formations as in self, or self as in volitional formations. He regards consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness.\(^53\)

The Paṭisambhidāmagga calls these views ‘adherence through views about self’ (Attānudihi-abhinivesa).\(^54\) They are a conviction, a grasping after the self. Wrong-views are precursors of both craving and

\(^{49}\) SN IV, p. 285 – 8  
\(^{50}\) SN IV, p. 287  
\(^{51}\) Pe, p. 179  
\(^{52}\) MN I, p. 299 – 305  
\(^{53}\) MN I, p. 300  
\(^{54}\) Ps I, p. 143
ignorance, a kind of adherence or conviction (*Abhinivesa*), which clings and misinterprets the phenomenon. At this point I wish to suggest that wrong-view is often caused by attachment to one or all of the *Khandhas*.

(5) Views of eternity based on individuality, (*Sassata-diṭṭhi*)

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* classifies *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi* into two groups. To regard any of the *Khandhas* as self is an *Uccheda-diṭṭhi*. So there are five kinds of *Uccheda-diṭṭhi*. To regard the self as possessed of any of the *Khandhas*, or the *Khandhasas* in self, or self as in the *Khandhas*, are kinds of *Sassata-diṭṭhi*. So there are fifteen *Sassata-diṭṭhis*. They are:

1 – 3. Self as possessed of form, or form as in self, or self as in form (*Rūpavantam vā attānam, Attani vā rūpaṃ, Rupasmim vā attānaṃ*)

4 – 6. Self as possessed of feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling (*Vedanāvantamvā attānam, Attani vā vedanaṃ, Vedanāya vā attānaṃ*)

7 – 9. Self as possessed of apperception, or apperception as in self, or self as in apperception (*Saññāvantamvā attānam, Attani vā saññāṃ, Saññāya vā attānaṃ*)

10 – 12. Self as possessed of volitional formations, or volitional formations as in self, or self as in volitional formations (*Sakhāravantamvā attānam, Attanivā sakhāre, Saṃkhāresu vā attānaṃ*)

13 – 15. Self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness (*Viññāvantamvā attānam, Attani vā viññānaṃ, Viññāasmi vā attānaṃ*)

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55 *Dhs. A.* p.182  
56 *Ps I.* p. 157–8
(6) Views of annihilation based on individuality. (*Uccheda diṭṭhi*)

There are five kinds of *Uccheda diṭṭhi*. They are;

1. He regards form as self (*Rūpaṃ attato samanupassati*)
2. He regards feeling as self (*Vedanaṃ attato samanupassati*)
3. He regards apperception as self (*Sañña attato samanupassati*)
4. He regards volitional formations as self (*Sakhāre attato samanupassati*)
5. He regards consciousness as self (*Viññāṇaṃ attato samanupassati*)

The *Nettipakaraṇa* uses the *Uccheda* and *Sassata-diṭṭhi* classifications to suggest that *Uccheda-diṭṭhis* are based upon some form of delusion (*Moha*), while *Sassata-diṭṭhis* are based upon a form of craving (*Taṇhā*). It does this by suggesting that one of ‘view-temperaments’ (*Diṭṭhi-carita*) approaches the *Khandhas* as self, while one of ‘craving temperaments’ (*Taṇhā-carita*) approaches the self as possessing the *Khandhas*, the *Khandhas* as in self, or self as in the *Khandhas*.57 This suggests interplay of craving and ignorance in hindering the attainment of knowledge. One final point of significance is the simple numerical consideration that in one of the most prominent groups of wrong-views according to the most basic classification, *Uccheda* and *Sassata-diṭṭhi*, a considerable majority of *Micchā-diṭṭhis* are based upon a wrong grasp, on craving, not on a wrong understanding, or ignorance.

(7) Views assuming finiteness. (*Antaggāhika-diṭṭhi*)

(8) Views about past finiteness, (*Pubbantānu-ditthi*)

(9) Views about future finiteness, (*Aparantānu-ditthi*)

(10) Views that fetter (to harm), (*Saññojanikā-diṭṭhi*)

57 *Net*, p.111
(11) Views that shackle with the conceit ‘I’ (Ahamti mānavini-bandhā-diṭṭhi)
(12) Views that shackle with the conceit ‘mine’, (Attavida patisamyutta diṭṭhi)
(13) Views associated with self-theories, (Attavada patisam-yutta-diṭṭhi)
(14) Views associated with world-theories, (Lokavāda patisamyutta-diṭṭhi)
(15) View of being (as eternity), (Bhava-diṭṭhi) and
(16) View of non-being (as annihilation), (Vibhava-diṭṭhi).

These are sixteen kinds of wrong view.

2.10. Sixty-two Kinds of Wrong-View

During the Buddha’s time, according to the Brahmajāla Sutta, there were sixty-two kinds of wrong-views, in brief they are eighteen kinds of wrong-views under the category of Pubbantakappika (speculation about the past) and forty-four kinds of wrong views under the category of Aparantakappika (speculation about the future). Again these sixty-two kinds of wrong views can also be divided into two: seven kinds of Uccheda-diṭṭhi (annihilation view), and fifty-five kinds of Sassata-diṭṭhi (eternity view). The Buddha, in that Brahmajāla Sutta, went on to elaborate on the following sixty-two views.

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58 DN I, p. 34
Sassata-vāda (Eternity-Belief)

1. Sassata-vāda, First View.

This view is held by Pubbenivāsanussati-ñanalabhi-manda-pañña, i.e. those who can remember only up to the last one hundred thousand existences.

2. Sassata-vāda, Second View.

This view is held by Pubbenivāsanussati-ñanalabhi-majjhimapañña, i.e. those who can remember only up to the last 10 world-cycles.


This view is held by Pubbenivāsanussati-ñanalabhi-tikkha-pañña, i.e., those can remember only up to the last 40 world-cycles. Concerning with these views, they hold the respective views as the “attā” and the world appear to be permanent so far as they can remember.


This view is held by Takkī vimansī, i.e. those who are mere speculators or investigators.

Ekacca-sassata-vāda

(Eternity-belief with regard to some and Non-eternity belief with regard to others.)

5. Ekacca-sassata-vāda, First View.

This view is held by one who has fallen from Abhassara Brahmaplane and is able to remember his last existence only.
6. **Ekacca-sassata-vāda, Second View.**

   This view is held by those who were *Khiddapadosika Devas* (Debauched by Pleasure) in their last existence and who can remember only that existence.

7. **Ekacca-sassata-vāda, Third View.**

   This view is held by those who were *Mana-padosika Devas* (Devas debauched in Mind) in their previous existence and who can remember only that existence.

8. **Ekacca-sassata-vāda, Fourth View.**

   This view is held by *Takki vimansi*, i.e. those who are mere speculators and investigators.

9. **Antānanta-vāda, First view.**

   (Belief that there is an end as well as no end of the world)

10. **Antānanta-vāda, Second View.**

    The belief that world has an end and there is a boundary to it.

11. **Antānanta-vāda, Third View.**

    The belief that the world is limited in the upward and downward directions, but infinite across.

12. **Antānanta-vāda, Fourth View.**
The belief that this world is neither finite nor non infinite. It is held by Takkāramansī, i.e. those who are mere speculators and investigators.

_Amarāvikkhepa-vāda (Eel-wriggling)_

13. _Amarāvikkhepa-vāda_, First View.

This belief is held by “Musavada-parijegucchā” (one who has an intense dislike of speaking falsehood). On any question being put to him on this or that, he will equivocally and evasively answer as follows: “I do not take it this way; I do not take it the other way; I also do not take that in this way or that; and I do not take it that it is neither this way nor that way.”

14. _Amarāvikkhepa-vāda_, Second View.

This view is held by “Upādāna-parijegucchā” one who is disgusted with the four _Upādānas_ (Grasping). On a question being put to him on this or that, he will wriggle like an eel and give the same equivocal and ambiguous reply: “I do not take it in this way; I do not take it the other way; I also don’t take that in this way or that way; and I do not take it that it is neither this way nor that way.”

15. _Amarāvikkhepa-vāda_, Third View.

This view is held by “Anuyoga-parijegucchā (one who is disgusted with _Anuyoga_) i.e. “with being challenged by others.”

16. _Amarāvikkhepa-vāda_, Fourth View.

This view is held by some recluse or Brahman who is dull and deluded. Owing to his dullness and delusion, he answers ambiguously and evasively and wriggles like an eel.
Adhicca-samuppanna-vāda

Adhicca-samuppanna-vāda which meant believing that the world arises without a cause.

17. Adhicca-samuppanna-vāda, First View.

This view is held by a certain being who was, in the previous existence, an Asaṅñī Brahmā and who says: “the Attā or the world arises without a cause. And why so? Because I had never been formerly. Even so I am now.”


This view is held by Takkī vīmansī, i.e. those who are mere speculators and investigators.

Aparanta-kapika (belonging to the future)

Saṅñī-ādā (belief that there is Perception after death)

Those who hold this view maintain this in the following sixteen ways: the Attā (soul) after death is not subject to decay, and percipient,

19. has form;
20. is formless;
21. has, and has not, form;
22. neither has, nor is without form;
23. is finite;
24. is infinite;
25. is both;
26. is neither;
27. has one mode of perception;
28. has various modes of perception;
29. has limited perception;
30. has unlimited perception;
31. is absolutely agreeable; this view is held by those who by Dibbacakkhu supernormal eyes’ can see Brahma Loka.

32. is absolutely agreeable; this view is held by those who why by Dibba-cakkhu (supernormal eyes) can see the Niraya (hell).

33. is both; this view is held by those who by Dibba-cakkhu (supernormal eyes) can see the human world.

34. is neither; this view is held by those who by Dibba-cakkhu (supernormal eyes) can see the Vehapphala Brahma plane.

Asaññī-vađa (Belief that there exists no Perception after death.)

Those who hold this view maintain it in the following eight ways: the atta after death, is not subject to decay, and is impercipient,

35. has form;
36. is formless;
37. has, and has apt, form;
38. neither has, nor is without form;
39. is finite;
40. is infinite;
41. is both;
42. is neither.

_Nevasaññī-ñasaññī-vāda_

(Belief that exists neither Perception nor Non Perception after death)

Those who hold this view maintain this in the following eight ways: the _Attā_ after death, is not subject to decay, and is neither percipient nor impercipient,

43. has form;
44. is formless;
45. has, and has not, form;
46. neither has, nor is without form;
47. is finite;
48. is infinite;
49. is both;
50. is neither.

_Uccheda-vāda (Annihilation-Belief)_

This view is held by Annihilationist and they maintain this in the following seven ways;

51. That the _Attā_ is destroyed on the dissolution of the body (in this World).

52. That the _Attā_ is destroyed on the dissolution of the body in the _Deva_ Plane.

53. That the _Attā_ is destroyed on the dissolution of the body in the _Rūpa Brahmā_ plane.
54. That the Attā is destroyed on the dissolution of the body in the Ānisaññāyatana Brahmā plane (the Sphere of Unbounded Space).

55. That the Attā is destroyed on the dissolution of the body in the Viññānañcāyatana Brahmā plane (the Sphere of Unbounded Consciousness).

56. That the Attā is destroyed on the dissolution of the body in the Āncaññāyatana Brahmā plane (the Sphere of Nothingness).

57. That the Attā is destroyed after the dissolution of the body in the Nevasaññā nāsaññāyatana Brahmā plane (the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non Perception).

\textit{Diṭṭhadhamma-nībbāṇa-vāda}

The belief that there is the highest bliss in this very life. Those who hold this view maintain this in the following five ways;

58. Full enjoyment of the five sensuous pleasures is the Highest Bliss in this very life.

59. The First Jhāna is the Highest Bliss in this very life.

60. The Second Jhāna is the Highest Bliss in this very life.

6ā. The Third Jhāna is the Highest Bliss in this very life.

62. The Fourth Jhāna is the Highest Bliss in this very life.

These are sixty-two kinds of wrong views. The Buddha discouraged people from their inclination to speculative thoughts and meditative experiences. These speculative thoughts proceed from
ignorance and blindness rather than from knowledge. They involve misinterpretations of meditative experience stemming from subjective distortion of the actual experiential data. They proclaim a part of the truth to be the whole, as in the tale of the blind-men who take their limited conceptions of the elephant to represent the animal in its fullness. Therefore their speculative thoughts and meditative experiences are sources of adversities leading the holder to a large number of suffering.

2.11. The Six Bases for Views (Diṭṭhiṭṭhāna)

The Alagaddāpama Sutta explains these diṭṭhis as ‘bases for views’ (Diṭṭhiṭṭhāna). The commentary states that Diṭṭhiṭṭhāna are themselves Micchā-diṭṭhis which give rise to other Micchā-diṭṭhis.⁵⁹ The Brahmajāla Sutta repeatedly states that all of its sixty-two views are Diṭṭhiṭṭhāna.⁶⁰ K.R. Norman interprets all six views as ‘wrong-views’ and Richard Gombrich also translates Diṭṭhiṭṭhānā as ‘wrong-views’.⁶² The formula is the following:

Bhikkhus, there are these six bases for views. What are the six bases? Here, bhikkhus, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for the nobleones and is unskilled and undisciplined in his Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in his Dhamma:

View 1: Regards form thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’

⁵⁹ Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, p. 1208,
⁶⁰ DN I, p. 16, 22, 24, 28, 30
View 2: Regards feeling thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’

View 3: Regards apperception thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is myself.’

View 4: Regards volitional formations thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’

View 5: Regards what is seen, heard, thought, cognized, encountered, sought, mentally pondered thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’

View 6: And this is basis for views, namely, ‘This is self, this the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure and last as long as eternity’ – this too he regards thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, and this is my self.’

2. 12. Six Wrong-views from the Sabbāsava Sutta

The next group of views about the self is found in the Sabbāsava Sutta. These views are introduced by the statement that they are all product of ‘reflecting inappropriately’ (Ayoniso manasikāra). I understand this in the way that I have described, as an expression of craving and ignorance. There is inappropriate reflecting when such questions arise as: ‘Was I in the past? What was I in the past?’ There is inappropriate reflecting when such questions are asked about the present and the future:

To one reflecting inappropriately in this way one of six views occurs. The view:

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63MN, I, p. 135
64MN, I, p. 6–12
View 1: ‘I have a self’ arises firmly as the truth.

View 2: ‘I do not have a self’ arises firmly as the truth.

View 3: ‘By the self I perceive what is self’ arises firmly as the truth.

View 4: ‘By the self I perceive what is not self’ arises firmly as the truth.

View 5: ‘By what is not self I perceive what is not self’ arises firmly as the truth.

View 6: ‘It is this self of mine that speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result of good and destructive actions; but this self of mine is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and it will endure and last forever.’

First, as can be seen, each of these views is said to ‘arise as true and established’ (Saccato thetato diṭṭhi uppajjati). If things are not seen as they are, if one reflects inappropriately, the course of action undertaken will be an unwholesome course of action. It will be based upon attachment. Second, the content of the propositions classified as Micchādiṭṭhi and Sammādiṭṭhi to be is the only factor which makes them wrong or right. The problem that Buddhism wishes to address is Dukkha. This being so, it is interested in Dukkha, its arising, cessation and the way to its cessation. Seeing this is what constitutes ‘knowledge’ (Ñāṇa). Knowledge and Sammādiṭṭhi are explained as ‘knowledge concerning suffering’ (Dukkhe ñāṇa), and Sammādiṭṭhi is explained as having four

65MN, I. p. 8  
66Dhs.A, p. 116
names beginning with ‘knowledge regarding suffering’. These views from the *Sabbāsava Sutta* do not concern *Dukkha*, hence they are wrong. They are not views about *Dukkha*, its arising, cessation and the way to its cessation, the only valid content of a right-view. The commentaries analyse views in the following way: right-view always has two roots, ‘non-greed’ (*Alobha*) and ‘non-hate’ (*Adosa*), wrong-view has greed and delusion as roots. They are an attachment which leads to an unwholesome course of action and so to ignorance. *Sassata-diṭṭhisare* described as volitional formations (*Saṅkhāra*). They are part of the process of mental proliferation or manifoldness. Whereas the Buddhist path, led by *Sammādiṭṭhi*, ‘makes cessation its object’. This stage is that *Micchā-diṭṭhi* is a manifoldness (*Papañca*) and a volitional formation: it is mental proliferation. In a very definite sense it can be argued that this is why certain views are classified as *Micchādiṭṭhi*: because they make for cognitive activity, they increase attachment and craving. A view that does the opposite to this, which makes for cessation, for a lessening and calming, is called *Sammādiṭṭhi*.

2.13 Acceptance of a View as a Result of Reflection (*Diṭṭhi-nijjhānakhanti*)

The canon enumerates many *Micchādiṭṭhi*. Forming a view is *Micchādiṭṭhi*. Any view is, I would argue, *Micchādiṭṭhi*. Wrong-views make judgments, about the self and the world, about the *Khandhas*. The wrong-views are found in the *Sabbāsava Sutta*. They are an expression of attachment and craving, of *Dukkha* itself. Wrong-views should be

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67 *Dhs.A.* p. 115  
68 *Ps* I. p. 205  
69 *Ps* I. p. 203  
70 Hamilton, *Early Buddhism*, pp. 76–8  
71 *Dhs.A.* p. 114  
72 *MN* I. p. 6
understood as expressions of greed and attachment, and this is why they are classified as wrong. This makes them invalid means of knowledge and it is this aspect of wrong-views which is important.

The Nikāyas understand the notion of views as part of a list of ten (or sometimes five) means of knowledge. Usually these means of knowledge are invalidated due to their being the product of greed and attachment, but this is not always the case. Before considering these ten means of knowledge another groups of views which occasionally provide the context in which the means of knowledge are found should be taken into account. These are the following 16 views:

Views 1– 8: The self and the world are eternal (only this is true, anything else is wrong, repeated after each view); the self and the world are not eternal; eternal and not eternal; neither eternal nor not eternal; finite; infinite; both finite and infinite; neither finite nor infinite.

Views 9– 16: The self and the world are appercipient of unity (only this is true, anything else is wrong, repeated after each view); the self and the world are appercipient of diversity; appercipient of the limited; appercipient of the immeasurable; [experience] exclusively pleasure; [experience] exclusively pain; [experience] both pleasure and pain; [experience] neither pleasure nor pain.\(^{73}\)

After the sixteen views in the Pañcattaya Sutta it is stated that it is impossible for one to realise the truth that these views proclaim. For the truth of the view to be realised, the Sutta explains, would depend upon:

(1) Faith (Saddhā);

\(^{73}\)MN II. p. 233–4
(2) Approval (Ruci);

(3) Oral tradition (Anussava);

(4) Reasoned cogitation (Ākāraparivitakka);

Acceptance of a view as a result of reflection (Diṭṭhi-nijjhānak-khanti).\(^{74}\)

Apart from these means of knowledge, the view holder will not have ‘clear and personal knowledge’.\(^{75}\) Even any ‘fragmentary knowledge’ (Ñañabhāgamattam eva) that the view-holder has, the Sutta explains as ‘attachment’ (Upādāna). Attachment is then explained as ‘conditioned and gross’ (Samkhataṃ olārikaṃ) and there should be cessation of this.\(^{76}\) This is what the Buddha knows: attachment and its cessation, presumably this is what constitutes ‘personal knowledge’ (Paccatta Ñaṇa). Views (and the other four means of knowledge) are clearly being evaluated. How will a means of knowledge influence the conduct of the person who uses it? This issue has been considered by Walpola Rahula. In *What the Buddha Taught*, Rāhula cites the *Kālama Sutta*\(^{77}\) as expressing an essential point of the Buddha’s teaching. Those seeking freedom from suffering should know for themselves what is ‘wholesome’ (Kusala) and ‘unwholesome’ (Akusala) and not rely on other things to achieve the end of Dukkha. This simple piece of advice Rāhula called ‘unique in the history of religions’.\(^{78}\)

In the *Sutta* the Kālamas explain to the Buddha that the recluses and Brahmins who come to Kesaputta proclaim their own doctrine

\(^{74}\)MN II, p. 234
\(^{75}\)MN II, p. 234
\(^{76}\)MN II, p. 234
\(^{77}\)AN I, p. 188–93
(Vāda) but attack the doctrines of others.\textsuperscript{79} They go on to say that they have ‘doubt and wavering’ as to which recluses and Brahmins are speaking truth or falsehood (Saccam āha, ko musā). The Buddha replies that they may well doubt, they may well waver, but it is on a doubtful point that wavering arises.\textsuperscript{80} The Buddha explains that they should not be misled by:

1. Report/oral tradition (Anussavana);
2. Tradition (Paramparāya);
3. Hearsay (Itikirāya);
4. Not by proficiency in the collections (Piṭkasampadānena);
5. Logic (Takkahetu);
6. Inference (Nayahetu);
7. Reasoned cogitation (Ākāraparivitakkena);
8. Acceptance of a view as a result of reflection (Diṭṭhi-nijjhānakkhantiyā);
9. Not because it fits becoming (Bhabbarūpatāya);
10. Out of respect for a recluse (Samo no garū).\textsuperscript{81}

The Buddha explains what they should understand: “When you know for yourselves: These things are unwholesome, these things are blameworthy, and these things are censured by the wise; these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to loss and sorrow – then reject them.”\textsuperscript{82}

The Buddha explains why he makes this statement: the ten incorrect means of knowledge are rooted in greed, hatred and delusion (Lobha, Dosa, Moha). The reason for this is based on the Kālamas’

\textsuperscript{79} AN I, p. 188
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, p. 189
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid
earlier statement that the recluses and others proclaim their own doctrines and criticise the doctrines of others. The aim of the Dhamma is to overcome what is unwholesome. As the conduct of the recluses and Brahmins does not suggest that their teachings are achieving this, the Buddha takes them as wrong teachings. The Buddha explains this: with the arising of greed, hatred and delusion there is ‘loss’ (Ahitāya) not ‘profit’ (Hitāya).\footnote{AN I, p.189} Losing control of their minds, those overcome by greed, hatred and delusion kill living beings, take what is not given, commit adultery, tell lies and get others to do the same.\footnote{Ibid, p. 189}

All these things are ‘unwholesome’ (Akusala) not ‘wholesome’ (Kusala), ‘blameworthy’ (Sāvajja) not ‘blameless’ (Anavajja), ‘censured by the wise’ (Viṁṇū-garahita), and when undertaken conduce to ‘loss and sorrow’ (Ahitāya dukkhāya).\footnote{Ibid, p. 190} It is for this reason that a person should not be misled by the ten incorrect means of knowledge, for they are unwholesome.\footnote{Ibid, p. 190} They should not be depended upon. They are incorrect means of knowledge precisely because they are unwholesome. The person should know what is wholesome, blameless, praised by the wise, and what, when undertaken, conduce to profit and happiness.\footnote{Ibid, p. 190} Freedom from greed, hatred and delusion produces ‘states’ (Dhammā) that are wholesome, blameless, praised by the wise and, when performed, conduce to happiness.\footnote{Ibid, p. 190} Right-view leads to wholesome action, wrong-view leads to unwholesome action.

Though the ten means of knowledge are rejected in the Kālama Sutta there are occurrences in which some of them are valid or correct

\footnote{AN I, p.189} \footnote{Ibid, p. 189} \footnote{Ibid, p. 190} \footnote{Ibid, p. 190} \footnote{Ibid, p. 190} \footnote{Ibid, p. 190 – 2}
means of knowledge. In the Pañcattaya Sutta it was stated that the five do not lead to ‘clear and personal knowledge’ and that even any fragmentary knowledge that they give will be a form of attachment. In the Cankī Sutta\textsuperscript{89} the original five means of knowledge are again found (faith, approval, oral tradition, reasoned cogitation and acceptance of a view as a result of reflection). However, in the Cankī Sutta the five are said to have two possible outcomes.\textsuperscript{90}

Something may be fully accepted out of faith, approval, oral tradition, reasoned cogitation and acceptance of a view as a result of reflection, yet be ‘empty, hollow and false’ (Rīta, Tuccha, Musā). However, something else may not be fully accepted out of faith, approval, oral tradition, reasoned cogitation and acceptance of a view as a result of reflection, yet it may be ‘factual, true and unmistaken’ (Bhūta, Tuccha, Anāññathā).\textsuperscript{91}

The Sutta considers how one ‘preserves truth’ (Saccānurakkhana).\textsuperscript{92} It explains that the person does not come to the definite conclusion that, ‘only this is true, anything else is wrong’ based on one of the five, but preserves truth when he says ‘my faith is thus’, etc., ‘my acceptance of a view as a result of reflection is thus’.\textsuperscript{93} This is how the five means of knowledge may have two different outcomes. The knowledge gained may be the same through one of the means of knowledge, but the attitude one has towards that knowledge is different. It is perhaps misleading to look at all of the Micchādiṭṭhis as found in the Nikāyas and attempt to understand the philosophical and metaphysical position which they posit. In the Kālama Sutta it is because the views of the various teachers, based

\textsuperscript{89}MN II. p. 164–77  
\textsuperscript{90}Ibid. p. 214–28  
\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., p. 170–1  
\textsuperscript{92}Ibid. p. 171  
\textsuperscript{93}Ibid. p. 171
upon the ten means of knowledge, do not lead to what is wholesome, which makes them incorrect means of knowledge. In the Cankī Sutta it is by becoming attached to the object of knowledge, by holding that it is ‘true’, that the knowledge itself loses its value. The Sutta is positing a non-attached means of gaining knowledge.

If there is ‘acceptance of a view as a result of reflection’, this is likely to involve holding onto a specific view with the thought, ‘only this is true, anything else is wrong’. However, right-view entails knowledge of doctrine free from craving. It is an expression of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion; whereas wrong-view is an expression of greed, hatred and delusion. The notion of wrong-view describes a type of greed for knowledge. It is a false means of attaining knowledge. Things cannot be known ‘as they are’ with a mind corrupted by greed. It is this, in part, which the notion of wrong-view describes.

The Cankīsutta finally explains how there is ‘discovery of truth’ (Saccānubodho). A Bhikkhu should be found who has no states (Dhammā) based on greed, hatred and delusion; who has a mind which is not obsessed by these Dhammas(Dhammehi pariyādinnacitto); who does not claim to know and see, while not knowing and seeing, and does not cause others to act in a harmful way. This Bhikkhu, who is not obsessed by greed, hatred and delusion, teaches Dhamma that is ‘profound, hard to see and hard to understand, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise’. Such a Dhamma as this cannot be taught by someone affected by greed, hatred and

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94 MN II, p. 171
95 Ibid, p. 172–3
96 Ibid, p. 171
97 Ibid, p. 172–3
98 Ibid, p. 172–3
In that Bhikkhu who is purified from states of delusion (Visuddha mohaniye) confidence can be placed. The Dhamma can be heard from him and memorised (Sutva dhamma dharet). The person examines the meaning of the teaching and, having examined the meaning, ‘gains a reflective acceptance of the teaching’ (Attha upaparikkhato dhamma nijjhana khamanti).

This leads to ‘scrutiny’ (Tuleti) of things. With much effort, ‘with the body he realises the ultimate truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom’. In this way there is discovery of truth. The Sutta then states how it is in the ‘repetition, development and cultivation of those same Dhammas that there is final arrival at truth’.

These Suttas are clearly explaining a method by which early Buddhist epistemology is made valid. They are describing what a correct means of knowledge is. In a sense, a correct means of knowledge is the reflective acceptance of the Dhamma from a trusted teacher. But in order to gain knowledge there needs to be some transformation of the conduct and thought of the person who seeks this knowledge. This is in order to realise ‘clear and personal knowledge’. The gaining of knowledge requires the transformation of acts of body, speech and mind. Action is intimately bound up with knowledge. This is why the Suttas reject views that deny Kamma or posit a self. They both lead to action based upon greed and attachment.

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99 MN II, p. 172
100 Ibid, p. 173
101 Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, p. 1300, note 889
102 MN II, p. 174
103 Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, p. 1301, note 892
104 MN II, p. 174
2.14 Views of the Unanswered (Avyākata)

Certain views are used in the Nikāya as characteristic of the notion of wrong-view. One set of views that serves this purpose is the Avyākata. The means of gaining knowledge is intimately bound up with the way one acts and the way one acts is intimately bound up with the knowledge that one has. There is no major difference between the view that denies that actions have consequences, and those that posit a self (attachment to the Khandhas, or to what is seen, heard, thought and cognized, or to one of the ten means of knowledge). They all produce actions of an unwholesome type. This explains the preoccupation with the notion of Attā in explaining wrong-view. According to Buddha belief in the self takes one away from wholesome action (action not based upon craving and attachment), and by definition away from knowledge. This also suggests why familiar groups of views such as the Avyākata are classified as wrong-views.

Wrong-views, expressed by the ideas of Uccheda and Sassata-diṭṭhi, were considered in the early texts, to be particularly destructive. These classifications have already been met in the description of Sakkāya-diṭṭhi. One explanation of these two views is the following from the Sammohavinodanī:

To state that, ‘I have a self’ (Atthi me attā vā) is the view of eternalism (Sassata-diṭṭhi) which assumes the existence of a self at all times. However, to state ‘I do not have a self’ (N’ atthi me attā) is the view of annihilationsim (Uccheda-diṭṭhi) because it assumes the annihilation of an existing being.\(^{105}\)

\(^{105}\)Dhs.A. p. 508
This suggests that the view ‘there is no self’ is as much a wrong-view as the view ‘there is a self’. To posit or deny a self are wrong-views. To say that right-view is the understanding of Anattā is quite different. It suggests that there should not be attachment to the idea of a self; it does not posit or deny a self. Wrong-view is primarily a form of greed and attachment to the idea of a self.

There is a discussion in the Vibhaṅga of the ‘inclination (of thought) of beings’ (Sattānāmāsāyayo). 106 This is to depend on ‘views of becoming’ (Bhava-diṭṭhi-sannissitā), and ‘views of non-becoming’ (Vibhava-diṭṭhi-sannissitā), according to the ten Avyākata. According to the Vibhaṅga, there is an inclination for the mind to take a position. One of the simplest ways to understand Sammā-diṭṭhi is to take it as expressing the middle-way. It is to see the rise and fall of Dhammas. By the idea of Micchā-diṭṭhi the texts perhaps intends to suggest a rigidity of thought, in which only rise, or only fall is seen. The Suttas suggest that if only rise is seen then the mind will incline to Sassata-diṭṭhi, and if only fall is seen then the mind will incline to Uccheda-diṭṭhi. 107 These ideas are expressed by the ten Avyākata. They are:

The world is eternal.
The world is not eternal.
The world is finite.
The world is infinite.
The soul and the body are the same.
The soul is one thing, the body is another.
The Tathāgata exists after death.
The Tathāgata does not exist after death.

106 Dhs. P-340
107 SN.II. p-17
The *Tathāgata* both exists and does not exist after death.
The *Tathāgata* neither exists nor does not exist after death.  

In the *Vibhaṅga* there is a consideration of the unwholesome action that arises from holding to any of these views. This comes in an explanation of ‘seeking supreme practice’ (*Brahmacariyesanā*) described as holding to the ten Avyākata. It is said that unwholesome actions of body, speech and mind occur with these views (*Akusalaṃ kāyakammaṃ*, *Vacīkammaṃ*, *Manokammaṃ*). Wrong-view gives rise to unwholesome actions of body, speech and mind. This invalidates certain views as correct means of knowledge.

Precisely it can be said that wrong-views can be understood according to two categories: the first of these explains a view as wrong if it states that actions do not have consequences. These views deny the law of *Kamma*.

The second explains a view as wrong if it posits a self. Views of this type are wrong-views because they express attachment to the idea of a self, whether existing or not existing. It would be incorrect to understand the view that denies a self to be a right-view. To deny or posit a self is a wrong-view. Technically speaking, wrong-views of self-posit attachment to the *Khandhas*, to what is seen, heard, thought and cognized, to *Attā* and *Loka*. They deny that attachments have consequences. According to the *Nikāyas*, all views can be explained according to the category of *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi* and this can further be understood as either *Uccheda* or *Sassata-diṭṭhi*, the views of

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108SN VI, p.392
109Dhs, p. 366
110DN I, p-22
annihilationism and eternalism. It seems clear that many of the views could be reduced to one of these categories.

This reflects a preoccupation with *Attā* found in the classification of wrong-views. This also reflects the relationship between greed and ignorance found in the notion of wrong-view. Certain terms appear repeatedly in the *Nikāyas* with reference to *Micchā-diṭṭhi*. We find the terms ‘engagement’ (*Upāya*), ‘attachment’ (*Upādāna*), ‘adherence’ (*Abhinivesa*), ‘mental-basis’ (*Cetaso adhiṭṭhānam*)\(^{111}\) and ‘clinging’ (*Parāmāsa*).\(^{112}\) All these terms point to an essential feature of the notion of *Micchā-diṭṭhi*: that it is the grasping, attachment and obstinate side of the cognitive process.\(^{113}\) Buddhaghosastates that ‘clinging’ is a term for wrong-view because it occurs in the aspect of missing the individual essence of a given state (*Dhamma*) and apprehending (*Āmasana*) elsewhere (*Parato*) an unreal individual essence.\(^{114}\)

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\(^{111}\)SN II, p. 17; SN III, p. 181

\(^{112}\)SN III, p. 181; Ps, p. 135

\(^{113}\)Dhs, p. 208 § 1180

\(^{114}\)Vism XXII, p. 57