Chapter One: Āsava-concept

‘Āsava’ is a significant term which is fundamentally characterized as a representative of all the unwholesome dhammas, and as a technical term that is used in psychological ethics from the earliest sources of the Pāli literature. Its representative nature is prescribed by negative expressions like ‘khīṇāsava’ and ‘anāsava’ that stand for Arahantship.\(^1\) It is also positively supported by its identification in paraphrasing both the ‘āsavas’ and ‘pāpakā akusalā dhammā’ (evil unwholesome phenomena).\(^2\) These facts show the crucial importance of āsava in determining one’s very existence in the circle of transmigration because with āsava being left unabandoned, one can never dream of attaining emancipation from all sufferings.

The technical usage of the term is evident from the Atthakavagga of the Suttanipāta\(^3\) that comes within the earliest of the Pāli sources. The fact that āsava is used in plural form indicates that this term is already familiar though the reference does not give any concrete evidence to the meaning or type of āsava.

A literary survey reveals that in the Pāli literature, the word āsava is used in three different instances.\(^4\) They are (1) āsava used as a name for ‘surā’ or ‘meraya’, (2) āsava used as expressing ‘discharge’ from the uncured wound\(^5\) and (3) āsava technically and most

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\(^1\) Throughout the Pāli literature, the expressions ‘khīṇāsava’, ‘āsavakkhaya’, ‘anāsava’, etc. denote Arahantship.

\(^2\) It will be discussed later in the Nikāyas’ treatment.

\(^3\) Sn p. 178: Pubbāsavo hitvā nave akubbaṃ, na chandagū no pi nivissavādo.

\(^4\) In the Dīgha-nikāya (II. p. 261), it is mentioned as ‘jotināma ca āsavā’. According to the Commentary, the deities called ‘āsa’ are referred to as ‘āsavā’ for the sake of metre. (Āsā devatā chandavasena āsavāti vuttā.) This reference has nothing to do with our concept.

\(^5\) See below ‘similes’ for details.
frequently used as a psychological factor. As a psychological factor, three types of āsava are technically referred to in the early sources of the Pāli literature and ‘diṭṭhāsava’ appears to have been subsequently added. Interdependence between avijjā and āsavas is a significant conceptual distinction. The various descriptions of the arising and abandoning of āsavas are also the major sources that the four Nikāyas provide for understanding the concepts of āsavas.

The conceptual development of āsavas is presented in the compositions belonging to the later period of the Khuddaka-nikāya and thenceforth. A different gradation of the four āsavas distinguishes the conceptual magnitude of āsavas. In the Abhidhamma period, the four āsavas are technically elucidated in the categories of akusala dhammas. Besides, the causal reciprocation between the four āsavas, and the activities of āsavas in relation to cittuppāda, also preserve the conceptual aspects of the Abhidhamma scheme. The treatment of āsavas in the sub-canonical texts is quite schematic as well as innovative. Particularly, it is significant that the four āsavas are placed between ‘gantha’ and ‘ogha’ among the ten bases of the group of defilements, and that the concepts of āsavas are distinguished by their own intrinsic nature (sabhāva). In the commentaries, the concepts of āsavas are clarified through the commentaries’ general literary aspects such as reconsolidating all the earlier sources, divulging optional views. While dealing with two optional meanings of āsavas, or contextual interpretations for the arising of āsavas, etc., one needs to be more attentive in order to understand the concepts of āsavas in the commentarial stage.

PTSD gives the meaning of āsava for three occasions respectively as: (1) ‘spirit, the intoxicating extract or secretion of a tree or flower’, (2) ‘discharge fiom sore’ and (3) ‘in psychology, t. t. for certain specified ideas which intoxicate the mind’.
Studies on āsavas have been very much confined to a limited scholastic work so far. According to my observation, Dr. Bhikkhu Satyapala’s “A Critical Note on āsavas” is the only available scholastic work apart from some serial short notes of Bodhi Leaves Publications. Hence, the present survey has been predominantly based on the primary sources of the Pāli literature.

In tracing the origin and development of the concepts of āsavas, it is imperative to keep in mind the above brief accounts of different literary stages. Careful attention has to be paid to seek the exact meaning of āsava along with its concerned derivational exegesis, and to find out how āsavas technically represent all the akusala dhammas. It is crucial to investigate with what specific nature the āsavas are distinguished from the other technical terms in the categories of akusala dhammas.

Before grammatical aspects and similes, what is worthy of remark here at the very outset is that throughout the Pāli literature, āsavas are recurrently referred to as technical concepts with ‘khīnāsava’ constituting ‘Arahant’ even though the āsavas are generalized as kilesas in the later literary stages.

**Grammatical**

‘Āsava’ is a nominal form which is derived from the root sū with the prefix ‘ā’. The prefix ‘ā’ has the meaning “forth, out, to, towards, at, on, etc.” Etymologically, the term āsava means ‘that which flows forth’.

In the commentaries, āsavas are defined as follows:

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7 Mahesh Tiwary (Ed.), PBE, pp. 34-45.
9 PTSD p. 92.
10 Cf. PTSD p. 114.
“Tattha ásavanti ti ásavā. Cakkhuto pi ...pe ... manato pi savanti, pavattanti ti vuttam hoti.”\textsuperscript{11} Herein, ásavas are those [dhammas] which flow forth; it is said that they flow, become active from the eyes...from the mind [to the respective objects].

The verbal usage of ásava is very rare in the Pāli literature. In the Āṅguttara-nikāya, there is a cognate expression of ásava with the verb ‘assavati’\textsuperscript{12} which is a doublet of ‘ásavati’:\textsuperscript{13}

“Passasi no tvam Vappa tam ñhanam yatonidānam purisam dukkhavedaniyā ásavā assaveyyum abhisamparāyan ti?”\textsuperscript{14}

Now, Vappa, do you see any cause owing to which ásavā leading to painful feeling would flow forth towards that person in the future?

According to this statement, ‘ásavā assaveyyum’ shows nothing but the etymological meaning of the term. In the Cūlaniddesa, the verb ásavati appears in paraphrasing the verb savati:

“Savanīti savanti ásavanti sandanti pavattanti.”\textsuperscript{15}

These four terms are synonymous, and mean ‘to stream’, ‘to flow forth’, ‘to flow’ and ‘to move on’ respectively. Furthermore, in the Nettippakarana, this verb implies the same meaning as in “tassa evam ganthitā kilesā ásavanti”\textsuperscript{16} (The defilements, thus tied, flow forth in him). Then, in the commentaries, this verb is used to define the term ásava (i.e. tattha ásavanti ti ásavā...).\textsuperscript{17}

As an adjective, ‘sásava’ often modifies dhammas such as “atthi...sammādīṭṭhi sāsavā puñña bhāgiyā...”\textsuperscript{18} or “phasso sāsavo upādāniyo”.\textsuperscript{19} The prefix ‘sa’ has the basic

\textsuperscript{11} MN-a I, p. 61. Also cf. AN-a II, p. 182; Itv-a I, p. 114; etc. For the detailed discussion of etymological accounts of ásavā, see below pp. 60-64.
\textsuperscript{12} There is another variation with regard to ‘assavati’, see DN I, p. 70 for ‘anvāssaveyyum’ (anu+ assavati): Yatvādhikaranam enam cakkhundiyaṃ asamvutam viharantam abhijjhā-domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammaḥ anvāssaveyyum, ... See also MN I, p. 180; SN IV, p. 104; AN I, p. 113, etc.
\textsuperscript{13} PTSD: ásavati [ā + sru, cp. Sk. āsravati; its doublet is assavati] to flow towards, come to, occur, happen.<\n\textsuperscript{14} p. 115> DPL: ásavati, to trickle, to flow.
CPD: ásavati, pr. 3 sg,[sa. āsravati], to flow (in)to, approach, appear, exist.<Vol. II, p. 240>
\textsuperscript{15} MN III, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{16} DN III, p. 272.
meaning of ‘with’ and the commentaries interpret ‘sāsava’ as "attānam ārammaṇaṁ katvā pavattehi saha āsavehi ti sāsavā"²⁰ (sāsavā [dhammas] are those which occur with āsava by making their own selves as objects).

Compounded with the negative suffix ‘an’, the term āsava also modifies dhammas and denotes the dhammas which are ‘free from’ or ‘absent of’ āsavas. It also signifies Arahant who is free from āsavas.²¹ Besides, this term āsava is often compounded with ‘khīna’ and identifies one whose āsavas are destroyed.²²

The renderings of the term āsava are various. More than ten types²³ which have been compiled by modern scholars reveal as to how difficult it is to bring out the meaning of āsava in psycho-ethical sense. Out of the three instances mentioned above, some scholars²⁴

²⁰ Dhs-a p. 48. See also Ps-a I, p. 109.
²¹ Ap (Vri) II, p. 126: So sakyaputto arahā anāsavo deseti dhammaṁ arahattapattiyā. See DN III, p. 83; MN I, p. 4; SN III, p. 83; AN I, p. 109; etc.
²² Various renderings of the term āsava by modern scholars can be seen in the following four groups:
   {Group-A}
   Corruptions (— Maurice Walshe; Steven Collins; R. F. Gombrich)
   Cankers (— E.M. Hare; Bhikkhu Bodhi; Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli)
   Taints (— Thera Piyyadassi; Bhikkhu Bodhi)
   Deadly taints (— T.W. Rhys Davids)
   Mental taints (— P.V. Mahāthera)
   Impurities (— Étienne Lamotte)
   Defilements (— P. A. Thitiṭila; Frank J. Hoffman)
   {Group-B}
   Intoxicants (— C. Rhys Davids; Pe Maung Tin)
   {Group-C}
   Flowing entity (— Bhikkhu Satyapala)
   Influences (— D.J. Kalupahanā; Asanga Tilakaratne)
   Influences (— A.K. Warder)
   {Group-D}
   Defiling impulses (— D.J. Kalupahanā)
   Influences or cankers (— Bhikkhu Nāṇananda)

Out of the four groups (A.B.C.D.), the scholars belonging to {group-A} seem to specially consider the accounts of āsavas in the Nikāyas, or the account that the commentaries generalize āsavas as kilesas. The etymological sense is taken by the scholars in {group-C} and the scholars in {group-B} follow one of the commentarial accounts. In {group-D}, the scholars seem to compromise the accounts of both the four Nikāyas and the Commentaries. This aspect will be seen clearly in later discussions in the sections of ‘similes’, the nature of āsava in the ‘Nikāyas’ treatment’, and etymological accounts in the ‘commentaries treatment’.

²³ See T.W. Rhys Davids, DB, p. 92, fn. 2; Mrs. Rhys Davids, CP, pp. 227-228 and BMPE p. 291.
are concerned about the first two figurative expressions with the supportive accounts of the commentaries. Some scholars, as Bhikkhu Bodhi points out, have preferred to consider the Nikāyas’ accounts only. Others have accepted the etymological meaning of the term. In either case, however, the problem lies in whether it possibly covers the entire range of the concepts of āsava throughout the Pāli literature. A more lucid answer to this problem ought to be reserved until the concepts of āsava are traced accordingly because the interpretation of the concepts of āsava shows some rather developed aspects through different literary stages in the Pāli literature.

In the similes, we can observe how three different instances are connected in defining the meaning of āsava.

Similes

The similes that throw light on āsava are observed in the commentaries reconsolidating the earlier sources in defining the same. As mentioned earlier, the term āsava is used in the context of ‘sūra’ and ‘meraya’, or ‘discharge’ from the old wound respectively. In order to comprehend how these earlier sources are reconsolidated in the similes, let us observe the implication of the term āsava in two different instances.

In the Jātaka, āsava is referred to as a name for ‘sūra’ (liquor):

"Āsavo tāta lokasmiṃ surā nāma pavuccati, manuṇhā surabhī vaggū sādubhuddaraśupāmā Visam tad āhu ariyāse brahmacariyassa Nārada."

There is āsava in the world, my son, that men call liquor, fragrant, delicious, honey-sweet, and cheap, of flavour fine: This, Nārada, is poison for holy men, say the wise.

25 See Bhikkhu Nanamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, MLDB, p. 38.
In the Vinaya, different āsavas are also referred to as ‘meraya’ (strong drink):

"Merayo nāma pupphāsavo phalāsavo madhvasavo gulāsavo sambhārasamyutto." 27

Flower-intoxicant, fruit-intoxicant, honey-intoxicant, sugarcane-intoxicant, which is arranged for fermentation is called Meraya. 28

Both the references reveal that the term āsava bears ‘poisonous’ or ‘intoxicating’ nature and such a nature is brought out from fermentation. The reference of the Āṅguttara-nikāya implies āsava in the sense of ‘discharge’:

"Seyyathāpī namā duṭṭhāruko katthena vā kathalāya vā ghaṭṭito bhīyosomattāya āsavam deti, evam eva kho bhikkhave idh’ ekacco puggalo kodhano hoti ... kopa ca dosa ca appaccaya ca pātukaroti." 29

Just as an old wound, when struck by a stick or a pebble, sheds āsava (oozes pus) exceedingly, similarly, bhikkhus, a certain person is herein angry..., he displays anger, hatred and discontent.

As per the reference above, āsava denotes an impure nature. The Āṅguttara-nikāya commentary interprets that “āsavam deti’ means it flows out repeatedly; because the old wound, only due to its own nature, flows out three things such as pus, blood and bloody broth; if the old wound is rubbed, it flows out them exceedingly.” 30 According to these references, the āsava bears two meanings, that is, ‘intoxicating’ and ‘oozing pus’ in two different instances.

27 Vin (Vri) IV, p. 149. See also DN-a III, p. 944; Mnd-a II, p. 353.
28 The commentary (Vin-a IV, p. 859) explains as follows:
Pupphāsavo nāma madhukapupphādīnām rasena kato. Phalāsavo nāma muddikaphaladīnī maddītyā tesam rasena kato, madhvasavo nāma muddikānām jātirasena kato, makkhikāmadhunāpi kariyātīti vadanti.
Gulāsavo nāma ucchurasadīhi karāyati. Surā nāma pithakinnapakhítāntālīkēdīnām rasena katā surā tv eva sankhyam gacchatī ti, tassā yeva kinnapakhītāya mande gahiye meraya tv eva sankhyam gacchatī ti vadanti.
(Pupphāsavo is produced from the essence of the flowers of Madhuka, etc.; phalāsava is prepared from their direct essence after having mixed up the fruits such as Muddika, etc.; madhvasavo is prepared from the honey collected by bees; gulāsavo is from the juice of sugarcane, etc; surā is only called so after being made on essence from the flour mixed with coconut water, etc.; when it is taken in the pot for its (surā’s) arranged ferment, that is only called meraya).
29 AN I, p. 124. See also Pug p. 30.
30 AN-a II, p. 195: Āsavam deti ti aparāparam savati. Purānavāno hi attano dharmatāy’ eva pubbaṁ lohitam yūsan ti imāni tiṇi savati. ghaṭṭito pana tāni adhikataram savati. See also Pug-a p. 211.
As per the similes that occur in the commentaries, these two meanings of āsava are implied to āsavas in the psychological aspect. In the commentaries of the Majjhima-nikāya and others, a simile is described as follows:

"Cirapārīvāsikaṭṭhena madirādayo āsavā/viṇā ti pi āsavā. Lokasmīṃ hi cirapārīvāsikā madirādayo āsavā ti vucessā. Yadi ca cirapārīvāsikaṭṭhena āsavā, ete yeva bhavitum arahanti, Vuttam h'nam: "purimā, bhikkhave, koṭi na paññāyatī avijjātā, ito pubbe avijjā nāhosī"ti-ādi 31 Madira, etc. are āsavas (intoxicants) in the sense of being kept (fermented) for a long time; āsavas are those [dhammas] which are also like intoxicants (āsavas). For in the world, the long fermented Madira, etc. are called intoxicants. If they (Madira, etc.) are called āsavas (intoxicants) in the sense of being kept for a long time, these [dhammas] also deserve the name (āsavas). For, it has been said “No beginning point of ignorance is made known, bhikkhus, before which there was no ignorance”, etc.

In this simile, emphasis is given to the meaning ‘being kept for a long time’ (cirapārīvāsiyāṭṭhena) through which the commentaries seek for the identification of those dhammas (āsavas) with intoxicants (āsavas).

In the case of the Visuddhimagga, a simile rather emphasizes an etymological sense of the term āsava as follows:

"Āsavā ti ārammaṇavasena ā gotrabhuto, ā bhavaggato ca savanā, asamvutehi vā dvārehi ghatacchidehi udakaṃ viya savanato, niccapaggaratāṭṭhena samsāradukkhassa vā savanato kāmarāga-bhavarīgamicchāditvā-avijjānām etam adhivacanam." 32 Āsavas are fluxes [which flow out] up to gotrabhu33 and up to the highest plane of existence through objects because of flowing (savāna) from the unguarded sense-doors just as water [flows out] from cracks in a pot in the sense of constant trickling, or because of producing (savāna) the suffering of the circle of transmigration. This is a term for lust for sensual pleasure, lust for existence, [wrong] view, and ignorance.

In paraphrasing ‘āsavā’ as ‘savāna’ which has a double meaning herein, the simile visualizes the ‘flowing nature’ of the four dhammas called āsavas when the sense-doors are not guarded. The ‘savāna’ in the sense of producing is also optionally referred to here.

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31 MN-a I, p. 61; AN-a II, p. 183; Itv-a I, p.114; Ps-a I, p. 37.  
32 Vism XXII p. 587.  
33 ‘Gotrabhu’: change-of-lineage (state of consciousness preceding jhāna or path) <Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, BTT, p.42>. For details, See, Nyanatiloka, BD, p. 60.
However, in the Abhidhammatthavibhāvini-tīkā that belongs to a much later period of the Pāli literature, āsavas are featured through a simile, 'yūsa' (pus) as follows:

"Pubbakoṭiyā apaṇṇāyānato cirapārīvāsīyaṭṭhena, vanato vā vissandamānayūsā viyaacakkhādito visayesu vissandanato āsavā."\(^{34}\)

Āsavas are so called in the sense of being kept (fermented) for a long time because their beginning point is not known, or because they (āsavas) flow from eyes, etc. into their objects just as pus oozing from an abscess.

The reference shows that the word āsava denotes both pus oozing from an abscess and intoxicants which have been fermented for a long time. And the nature of those dhammas called āsavas is figuratively expressed herein, as their nature is similar to oozing pus and to fermented intoxicants.

According to all these similes, āsavas are treated in four senses: i) in the sense of flux (savana), ii) in the sense of producing (savana) the future suffering, iii) in the sense of intoxicant, and iv) in the sense of oozing pus. The first three senses are equally observed in the other commentaries that give etymological accounts of āsavas.\(^{35}\) The last one appears to reconsolidate the account of the Āṅguttara-nikāya as cited above. In the second case, the emphasis is on the nature of the dhammas called āsavas. It is commonly observed in the other commentaries which rather phonetically etymologize ‘āsavā’ such as “āyatam vāsamsāraddukkham savanti pasavantīti pi āsavā”.\(^{36}\)

These four senses can also be condensed in different ways. Firstly, the internal or psychological bearing is represented by the first and second meanings. Secondly, the external bearing is represented by the third and fourth meanings. While the former is related to the applied meaning, the latter deals with figurative or metaphorical meaning. Thirdly, there is the question of flowing and fermentation. Flowing occurs because āsavas

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\(^{34}\) Atth-vī (Vri) p. 193.


\(^{36}\) Ibid.
act as a kind of stream for the living beings to wander in the *samsāra*, and fermentation is reflected because *āsava* are enacted as fermentation as a matter of habit or a long journey in the *samsāra*.

In these similes, what is remarkable is that the two usages of the term *āsava* (i.e. ‘*surā*’ or intoxicant and ‘discharge’ from the old wound) are encapsulated in the concepts of *dhammas* through the similes in the commentaries.

### 1.1. Nikāyas treatment

In the four Nikāyas, *āsava* are frequently referred to in various contexts collectively as well as specifically from the psycho-ethical point of view. With a glance at the contexts referring to *āsava*, it is apparent that they are conspicuously characterized as the final stage to be eliminated in the process of spiritual progress. This is emphasized by understanding the four noble truths including *āsava* which are representative of unwholesome *dhammas*.

#### 1.1.1. The meaning and nature of *āsava*

As already pointed out in the similes, the four meanings of *āsava* have been applied optionally when the commentaries define the *āsava* as *dhammas* with reconciliation of earlier sources. Out of the four, two meanings, ‘fluxes’ (*savanā*) and ‘producing (*savana*) of the future suffering’ occur in which the four Nikāyas form the psycho-ethical point of view.

First, the *āsava* in the sense of ‘fluxes’ are based on the etymological approach to the term *āsava* which is observed in the *Vappa-sutta* of the Āṅguttara-nikāya. As already mentioned
in the ‘grammatical’ aspect, the cognate expression of “āsavā assaveyyum” is reflected in the Blessed One’s following question:

“Tam kim maññasi, vappa? Ye kāyasamārambhappaccayyā uppaajjanti āsavā vighātapariṇāhā, kāyasamārambhā paṭiviratassa evaṃ sa te āsavā vighātapariṇāhā na honti, so navānca kamman na karoti, purānān kamman phussa phussa vyāntikaro, sandiṭṭhi kā sādharakā ehipassikā opanayikā paccattām veditabhā viññūhi. Passasi no tvām Vappa tam ‘ṭhānaṃ yatonidānaṃ purisaṃ dukkhavedaniyaṃ āsavā assaveyyum abhisampārayaṃ ‘ti? ‘No h’ etam, bhante.”

What do you think, Vappa? While āsasas which are vexation and fever arise through the condition of the bodily activities, there are no āsasas which are vexation and fever in one who abstains from the bodily activities. He does no new deed; he wears out the former deed by constant contact, through annihilation that can be directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise. Now, Vappa, do you see any cause owing to which āsasas leading to painful feeling would flow forth towards that person in the future?” No, venerable sir, that cannot be.

Even though the cognate expression is referred to only in this sutta among the four Nikāyas, this passage signifies that in the Nikāyas, the meaning of āsasas is understood in its etymological sense. As the passage shows, the phrase “āsavā assaveyyum” ultimately holds the same meaning of phrase “āsavā uppaajjanti” which signifies the activity of āsasas with certain conditions.

Secondly, the meaning of āsasas as ‘producing the future suffering’ appears to be applied on their nature that the four Nikāyas variously characterize in paraphrasing them (āsasas) by equivalents. As already noticed in the above citation, āsasas are paraphrased by ‘vighātapariṇāha’. It is found in various contexts throughout the three Nikāyas. The other significance of āsasas is referred to in the Majjhima-nikāya as follows:

“eva kho Aggivessana Tathāgatassa ye āsavā saṅkilesīkā ponobhavikā sadarā dukkhavipākā āyatim jātijarāmaraniyaḥ pahiṇā ucchinnamulā tālavitthukatā anabhāvakatā āyatim anuppādadhamma.”

“The Tathāgata, Aggivessana, has abandoned the taints that defile, bring renewal of being, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future birth, ageing, and death; he has cut them off at the

37 AN II, pp. 197-198.
38 This sutta refers to the same questions and answers with regard to ‘vacīsamārambhappaccayyā’; ‘manosamārambhappaccayyā’ and ‘avijjāpaccayā’ respectively.
39 See DN III, 240-41; MN I, 361-363; AN II, pp 197-198; III, pp. 387-390; etc.
40 The Dīgha-nikāya has ‘vighāta’ and ‘parilāha’ (which are not compounded as ‘vighātapariṇāha’). However, Vri Ed. (CD-Rom) shows the variant reading as ‘vighātapariṇāha’ (Syā, Kam).
41 MN I, p. 250. See also p. 331 and p. 464.
root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to
future arising.”

Along with ‘vighāṭaparīḷāha’, all the terms in the phrase “sāṅkilesikā \... \āyatim
jātijarāmaranīyā” characterize the nature of āsava. What is significant is that unlike the
two figurative meanings (i.e. ‘intoxicant’ and ‘oozing pus’) which the commentaries apply
to āsavas as dhammas, the meanings ‘fluxes’ and ‘producing of the future suffering’ have
their origin in the contexts of āsavas the four Nikāyas deal with from a psycho-ethical
point of view.

In dealing with the nature of āsavas, a set of equivalents of the Majjhima-nikāya is quite
apparent because āsavas are identified with ‘pāpakā akusalā dhammā’ (evil unwholesome
dhammas) through the same equivalents. In addition to that, the same set of equivalents is
referred to negatively in defining ‘Arahant’ as follows:

“Kathāñca, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araham hoti: arakā 'ssa honti pāpakā akusalā dhammā,
sāṅkilesikā, ponobbhavikā, \... \āyatim, jātijarāmaranīyā. Evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araham
hoti ’ti.43

“And, how is a bhikkhu an arahant? Evil unwholesome states that defile, bring renewal of
being, \... lead to future birth, ageing, and death, are far away from him. That is how a bhikkhu is
an arahant.”44

These references show that those equivalents are, on the one hand, representing the salient
features of āsavas, and on the other hand, signifying that āsavas are technically
representative of ‘pāpakā akusalā dhammā’. For gaining the spiritual status of Arahant,
one needs to get rid of the mental concomitants (i.e. āsavas).45

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41 Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, MLDB, p. 343.
42 MN III, p. 116: Ācariyapaddavena avadhimsu nam pāpakā akusalā dhammā sāṅkilesikā, ponobbhavikā,
43 MN I, p. 280.
44 Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, MLDB, p. 371.
45 See the stock passage “…araham khināsavvo vusitavā…” which frequently occurs in the four Nikāyas <DN
III, p. 83; MN I, p. 522; SN III, p. 112; AN III, p. 359; etc.>
1.1.2. Application of the fourfold pattern of ăsavas

The concept of ăsavas is specifically featured by its application of the four-fold pattern after understanding the four Noble Truths in the context of knowledge (năna). The Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya explains the four-fold pattern of ăsavas as follows:

"Katamo pan' āvuso āsavo, katamo āsavasamudayo, katamo āsavanirodho, katamā āsavanirodhagāmini-paññipadā: Tayo 'me āvuso āsavā: kāmāsavā bhavāsavā āvijjāsavā. Āvijjāsamudayā āsavasamudayo, āvijjānirodhā āsavanirodho, ayam-eva ariyo athancaiko maggo āsavanirodhagāmini paññipadā, seyyathidam: sammādiṭṭhi ...pe... sammāsaṃādhi."\(^{46}\)

And what, friend, are ăsava? What is the origin of ăsava? What is the cessation of ăsava? What is the way leading to the cessation of ăsava? There are three ăsava: kāmāsavā bhavāsavā, and āvijjāsavā. With the arising of ignorance, there is the arising of ăsava; with the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of the ăsava. The way leading to the cessation of ăsava is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, ... and right concentration.

Again, in the Nikāyas, the following stock passage often appears in the context of knowledge (năna) of destruction of ăsavas:

"So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe ... āsavānaṃ khaya-nānāya cittam ... abhininnāmeti. So 'idam dukkhan'ti yathā-bhūtam pajānāti, ... 'ayam dukkhanirodhagāmini paññipadā 'ti yathā-bhūtam pajānāti; 'me āsavā 'ti yathā-bhūtam pajānāti, ... 'ayam āsavā-nirodha-gāmini paññipadā 'ti yathā-bhūtam pajānāti. Tassa evāṃ jānato evaṃ passato kāmāsavā pi cittam vimuccati, bhavāsavā pi cittam vimuccati, āvijjāsavā pi cittam vimuccati, "Vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam 'iti nānā hoiti. "Khiṇā jāti...nāparaṃ itthattāyati pajānāti."\(^{47}\)

When his concentrated mind is thus purified, ... he directs it to the knowledge of destruction of ăsava. He understands as it truly is: 'This is suffering'; ... He understands as it truly is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' He understands as it truly is: 'These are ăsava'; ... He understands as it truly is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of ăsava.'

When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from kāmāsavā, bhavāsavā and āvijjāsavā. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: 'It is liberated.' He understands: 'Birth is ceased, ...there is no more coming to any state of being.'

Realization of the four-fold pattern of ăsava denotes the achievement of the final knowledge. In the Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta, ignorance (avijjā) is defined as the unknowing (aṅnāna) aout the four Noble Truths. Its arising and cessation are due to the arising and cessation of ăsava. As per the above citation from the Sammādiṭṭhi-sutta, the arising and

\(^{46}\) MN I, p. 55.
cessation of āsava are interdependent with avijjā. In the Samyutta-nikāya, it is explained that “whatever unwholesome dhammas are there, they all are rooted in ignorance and converge upon ignorance, and they are all uprooted when ignorance is uprooted”.

Therefore, as far as the knowledge of destruction of āsava is concerned, the realization of the four Noble Truths is significant in eliminating ignorance. And the realization of the four Noble Truths symbolizes the realization of one’s own complete liberation from all the unwholesome dhammas from the viewpoint of defilements. As put forth in the Sāmaññaphala-sutta, out of the final three stages of the path to Enlightenment, the knowledge of the four Noble Truths and the destruction of āsava belongs to the third knowledge (vijjā) which is regarded as the achievement of the final knowledge.

1.1.3. The types and classifications of āsava

The first mention of the specific number of āsava appears in the four Nikāyas even if this term, in a technical sense, is referred to from the earliest sources onwards. The four Nikāyas present various contexts in which three āsava are referred to. Also in each of the four Nikāyas, the context which directly refers to the number of āsava is observed such as “tayo ‘me, āvuso, āsavā: kāmāsavā bhavāsavā avijjāsavā” (There are, friends, these three āsava – āsava in the form of sensual pleasure, āsava in the form of existence, āsava in the form of ignorance).

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48 MN I, p. 54: Katamā paññavo, avijjā, katamo avijjāsamudayo, katamo avijjānirodho, katamā avijjānirodhāgāmini-paṭipadā: Yaṁ kho, āvuso, dukkhe aṁnaham, dukkhasamudaye aṁnaham, dukkhanirodhhe aṁnaham, dukkhanirodhagāmini-paṭipadāya aṁnaham, ayaṁ vuccat āvuso, avijjā. Āsava samudayo avijjāsamudayo, āsavaniruddhā avijjānirodho, ayam eva ariyao atthāṅgiko maggo avijjānirodhagāmini-paṭipadā, seyyathidham–sammādīthi ...pe... sammāsambuddhi.


49 SN II, p. 263: Evam eva bhikkhave ye keci akusala dhammā sabbe te avijjāmula āsavāsamo sambuddhā, āsavāsamo sabbaticā samuddhā, sabbe te samuddhātām gacchanti.

50 MN I, pp. 81-84.

51 E.g. Ibid. p. 84: Tassa evam jānato evam passato kāmāsavā pi cittaṁ vimuccati, bhavāsavā pi cittaṁ vimuccati avijjāsavā pi cittaṁ vimuccati, “Vimuttaśūnā vimuttaṁ ‘ti ānām hoti,...

52 MN I, p. 55; see also DN III, p. 216; SN V, pp. 56, 189; AN III, p. 414.

53 Various renderings for three āsava:
However, it is seen that in the Mahāparinibbāna-sutta of the Dīgha-nikāya, the four types of āsava are referred to as follows:

"Paññā-paribhāvitam cittaṃ sammad eva āsavaḥ vimuccati, seyyathidaṃ- kāmāsavā, bhavāsavā, diṭṭhāsavā, avijjāsavā" ti.24

The mind cultivated by knowledge becomes completely free from āsavas, that is, from kāmāsava, bhavāsava, diṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava.

Throughout this sutta, the same passage recurs eight times. However, except this sutta,55 we find no reference to ‘diṭṭhāsava’ which is included in the types of āsava in the four Nikāyas.56 Considering all the references, diṭṭhāsava that occurs in the Mahāparinibbāna-sutta seems to be a later addition than the other three types of āsava. Therefore, it is concluded that three types of āsava are mainly treated in the four Nikāyas.57

The four Nikāyas also present other collective classifications of āsavas. In the Dīgha-nikāya, two divisions of āsavas are referred to as follows:

"Diṭṭha-dhammikānam c' evāhaṃ, Cunda, āsavānam samvarāya dhammam desemi; samparāyikānāca āsavānam paṭighātāya."58

Cunda, I teach Dhamma for the restraint of āsavas in the present as well as for the destruction of āsavas in the future.

In the Aṅguttara-nikāya, the variety of āsavas are referred to as five different planes:

"Katamā ca, bhikkhave, āsavānam vēmattatā? Atthi bhikkhave āsavā nirayagamanīyā,59 atthi āsavā tiracchānayonigamanīyā, atthi āsavā pettivisayagamanīyā, atthi āsavā\n
The taint of sensual desire, the taint of being, the taint of ignorance (— Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi)
The corruption of sense-desire, of becoming, of ignorance (— Maurice Walshe)
Canker of lust, of becoming and of ignorance (— E.M. Hare)
54 DN II, p. 8; see also pp. 84, 91, 98, 123, and 126.
55 PTS Ed. records the variant readings regarding ‘diṭṭhāsava’ which is omitted in K. But, Vri. Ed. omits ‘diṭṭhāsava’ throughout the sutta.
56 Cf. DN-a III, p. 989: Abhidhamme te yeva diṭṭhāsavena saddhim cattāro. Also see Ud-a p. 176; Itv-a I, p. 115. Also cf. MN-I (Vri) I, p. 146: Catūṣa āsavesūti idam abhidhammanayena vuttam, na suttanāyana.
Na hi sutte kathacī cattāro āsavā āgatā atthi.
57 PTS Ed. records the occurrence of ‘diṭṭhāsava’ in the Nikāyas. Regarding the following record “A i.165 sq., 196; ii.211; iii.93, 414; iv.79”, it is mistaken.
58 DN III, p. 130. Also cf. AN I, p. 98; Vin (Vri) III, p. 22.
59 ‘nirayagamaniyā’ (sic, ka.)
What is, bhikkhus, the variety of āsavas? There are āsavas leading to hell; there are āsavas leading to the [plane of] animals; there are āsavas leading to the [plane of] Pettas (spirits); there are āsavas leading to the human [plane]; there are āsavas leading to the celestial [plane]. This is called the variety of āsavas.

From the viewpoint of abandoning of āsavas, the Aṅguttara-nikāya refers to six classifications of āsavas, that is, āsavas to be abandoned by ‘restraint’ (sāmvara), by ‘using’ (patisevana), etc.61 In the Sabbāsava-sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya, there are further seven types of classifications, including the āsavas that have to be abandoned by ‘dassana’ (seeing).62

All these references ought to be considered as a sort of general classification of āsavas according to different points of view, and not to be considered as the types of āsava in a technical sense. Emphasis is more on short-listing various categories or groups into which āsava can be divided. Hence, here in classifications, we notice a kind of numerical approach rather than a spiritual one.

1.1.4. The arising and abandoning/destruction of āsavas

(1) The conditions for the arising and abandoning of āsavas

The Sabbāsava-sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya treats both the arising and abandoning of āsavas in detail. At the outset of the sutta, the Blessed One expresses:

"Jānato aham bhikkhave passato āsavānaṁ khayam vadāmi, no ajānato no apassato. Kiṁ ca bhikkhave jānato kim passato āsavānaṁ khayo hoti: yoniso ca manasikārāṁ ayyoniso ca manasikārāṁ. Ayyoniso bhikkhave manasikaroto anuppannā c’ eva āsavā uppajjanti uppānā cā

60 AN III, p. 414.
62 MN I, p. 7: Atthi bhikkhave āsavā dassanā pahātabbā, atthi āsavā sāmvarā pahātabbā, atthi āsavā paitisevanā pahātabbā, atthi āsavā adhivāsānā pahātabbā, atthi āsavā parivajjānā pahātabbā, atthi āsavā vinodanā pahātabbā, atthi āsavā bhāvanā pahātabbā.
Bhikkhus, I preach the destruction of āsavas to the one who knows and sees, not to the one who does not know and see. To one who knows and sees what, bhikkhus, is the destruction of āsavas? [There is the destruction of āsavas to the one who knows and sees] wise attention and unwise attention. When one attends unwisely, the unarisen āsavas arise and the arisen āsavas increase. When one attends wisely, the unarisen āsavas do not arise and the arisen āsavas are abandoned.

Throughout the four Nikāyas, the arising of āsavas is expressed by the verbs ‘uppaįjati’ and ‘uppaįjeyyum’. Between both the expressions, there is a slight difference that is not to be overlooked in understanding the concepts of āsavas. The contexts expressed by uppaįjati show the direct reason for the arising of āsavas while the contexts expressed by uppaįjeyyum, as the potential form of the word indicates, show the potentiality for the arising of āsavas.

As the above citation shows, the reason for the arising of āsavas is directly referred to as ‘ayoniso manasikāra’ (unwise attention) while ‘yoniso manasikāra’ (wise attention) is the reason bringing about the abandoning of the arisen āsavas. In the Nissāranīya-sutta of the Aṅguttara-nikāya, the conditions for the arising and abandoning of āsavas are referred to as follows:

“Idha bhikkhave bhikkhuno kāmam manasikāro kāmesu cittam na pakkhandati na ppaśīdati na santīṭṭhati na vimuccati, nekkhammam kho pan āssa manasikāro nekkhamme cittam pakkhandati paśīdati santīṭṭhati vimuccati. Tassa tāṁ cittam sukaṭam subhāvitam suvaṭṭhitam suvimuttam suvisamyuttam kāmehi, ye ca kāmāpaccayā uppaįjanti āsavā vighāta-parīlāhā, mutto so tehi, na so tam vedanām vediyati.”

Herein, bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu pays attention to sensual pleasure, his mind neither launches out upon sensual pleasures, nor acquires confidence, nor settles down, and nor resolves on them. But, when he pays attention to desirelessness, his mind launches out upon it, acquires confidence, settles down, and resolves upon it; his mind is well set, well developed, well raised up, well freed, well unfettered from sensual pleasure. And thus, he is free from āsavas, vexation and fever that arise due to the condition of sensual pleasure; he does not feel that sensual feeling.

63 Ibid.
64 AN III, p. 245. Also cf. DN III, p. 239-240.
Although the condition of the arising of āsavas is herein expressed by ‘kāmapaccayā’, the main reason for the arising of āsavas is signified by ‘kāmaṃ manasikaroto’ and that for liberation from āsavas is signified by ‘nekkhammaṃ manasikaroto’. In the same fashion, this sutta refers to byāpāda (ill will), vihēsa (cruelty), rūpa (material form) and sakāya (personality) respectively. It indicates that attention to each of them is unwise attention (ayoniso manasikāra), and it also denotes that such an attention becomes the condition for the arising of āsavas. On the contrary, attention to abyāpāda, avihēsa, arūpa and sakāyanirodha respectively leads to the liberation from āsavas that arise with the condition of byāpāda, etc.\(^\text{65}\) Eventually, this account of the Aṅguttara-nikāya is also in line with the above quotation of the Sabbāsava-sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya.

As for the arising of āsavas expressed by uppayeyum, the contexts show the potential reason for the arising and abandoning of āsavas. For example, the Blessed One states:

"Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu, paṭisaṅkhā yoniso cakkhundriyasamvarasamvuto viharati. Yam hi 'ssa bhikkhave cakkhundriyasamvaram asamvutassa viharato uppayeyum āsavā vighātapiḷāhā, cakkhundriyasamvaram samvutassa viharato evam-sa te āsavā vighātapiḷāhā na honti..."\(^\text{66}\)

Herein, reflecting wisely, a bhikkhu abides with the restrained eye-faculty. For when one abides with the unrestrained eye-faculty, āsavas which are vexation and fever might arise in him. When one abides with the restrained eye-faculty, āsavas which are vexation and fever are no more in him...

This passage reveals that the arising and abandoning of āsavas mainly lie in whether one’s sense faculties are restrained or not. In this regard, the five sense faculties with the mind are mainly responsible for the accumulation of āsavas. Unless they are properly restrained, there are always chances that unarisen āsavas get into one’s own mind and establish themselves therein. One who restrains these faculties with wise attention (yoniso manasikāra) can curb the incoming āsavas before they get rooted in the mind.

\(^{65}\) See ibid. pp. 245-246.

\(^{66}\) MN 1, p. 9. For the other five sense faculties, the same explanation is followed.
This process of the arising and abandoning of āsavas expressed by uppaṭṭiyati and uppaṭṭiyeyum is further clarified in the accounts of the Sabbāsava-sutta. This sutta prescribes āsavas that are to be abandoned by seven different methods as follows:

(i) Āsavas to be abandoned by dassana (seeing)

The Sabbāsava-sutta indicates that dassana is ‘to understand’ what things are unfit for attention (amanasikaranīya dharmas) and what things are fit for attention (manasikaranīya dharmas). The things unfit for attention are those that when one attends to them, the unarisen āsavas (i.e. kāmāsava, bhavāsava and avijjāsava) arise (uppaṭṭiyati) and the arisen āsavas increase. The things fit for attention are those that when one attends to them, the unarisen āsavas do not arise and the arisen āsavas are abandoned (pahīyati).

When one attends unwisely (ayoniso manasikaroto), one of the six views arises in him: the view ‘self exists in me’ arises as true and confirmed, or the view ‘no self exists in me’ arises in him as true and confirmed, etc. However, when one attends wisely (yoniso manasikaroti): ‘this is suffering’, etc., three fetters (samyojanas) are abandoned in him: personality view (sakkayaditthi), doubt (vicikicchā), adherence to rules and observances (silabbataparamāsa), which are called the āsavas that are to be abandoned by dassana (seeing).

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67 In this sutta, it is not determined as to what things are fit or unfit for attention. The distinction consists rather in the mode of attention. It is observed through the description for the attention of puthujjana and ariyasāvaka:

The ordinary person (puthujjana) attends to such things that when attended to, the unarisen āsavas (kāma, bhava, and avijjā) arise and the arisen āsavas increase. He does not attend to such things that when attended to, the unarisen āsavas do not arise and the arisen āsavas are abandoned. <MN I, p. 7>

However, the noble disciple (ariyasāvaka) understands what things are fit for attention and what things are unfit for attention. And he does not attend to those things unfit for attention and he attends to those things fit for attention. (ariyasāvaka ...manasikaranīye dhamme pajānāti apanasikaranīye dhamme pajānāti; so manasikaranīye dhamme pajānānto apratisahitaṃ dhamme pajānānto ye dhammā na manasikaranīya te dhammā na manasikaranīya te dhamme manasikaroti.) <ibid. pp. 8-9>

68 Cf. p. 286 on ‘samyojana-concept’.
(ii) Āsavas to be abandoned by samvara (restraint)

Reflecting wisely (paṭisāṅkhā yoniso), one abides with the restrained six sense-faculties beginning with the eye-faculty up to the mind-faculty. When one does not restrain these sense-faculties, āsavas might arise in him. But the restraining of those sense-faculties leads to the abandoning of āsavas.⁶⁹

(iii) Āsavas to be abandoned by patisevana (using).

Reflecting wisely, one uses the four requisites for proper purposes. Those requisites are: the robe for protection from cold, the almsfood for the endurance and continuance of the body, the resting place for protection from contact with wild animals, and the medical requisites only for protection from the arisen afflicting. When one does not use those requisites wisely, āsavas might arise in him.⁷⁰

(iv) Āsavas to be abandoned by adhvāsana (enduring).

Reflecting wisely, one bears things such as cold and heat, hunger and thirst and contact with mosquitoes, unwholesome words, the bodily feelings that are painful, distressing, etc. The āsavas might arise in one who does not endure such things.⁷¹

(v) Āsavas to be abandoned by parivajjana (avoiding).

Reflecting wisely, one avoids wild animals such as elephants, horses, bulls, dogs, snakes, etc., and one avoids sitting on unsuitable seats, wandering to unsuitable resorts, and associating with bad friends. When one does not avoid such things, āsavas might arise in him.⁷²

⁶⁹ MN I, p. 9.
⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 10.
⁷¹ Ibid.
⁷² Ibid. pp. 10-11.
(vi) Āsavas to be abandoned by vinodana (removing).

Reflecting wisely, one does not tolerate the arisen thought of sensual desire, ill-will and cruelty; he does not tolerate the arisen evil unwholesome dhammas; he removes them. When one does not remove such thoughts, āsavas might arise in him.⁷³

(vii) Āsavas to be abandoned by ‘bhāvanā’ (developing).

Reflecting wisely, one develops the seven enlightenment factors such as mindfulness, the investigation of states, energy, rapture, tranquillity, concentration and equanimity, which are supported by seclusion, dispassion, cessation and relinquishment. When one does not develop these enlightenment factors, āsavas might arise in him. Developing these dhammas leads to the abandoning of āsavas.⁷⁴

Out of these seven methods, the treatment of āsavas that has to be abandoned by dassana is distinguished from the other six methods:

(i) In the description of dassana, ‘manasikāra’ / ‘manasikaroti’ occurs in coalition with ‘manasikaranīya dhammas’ and ‘amanasikaranīya dhammas’, or ‘yoniso’ and ‘ayoniso’.

(ii) The word paṭisaṅkhā which is referred to in the other six methods is linguistically considered as the truncated form of paṭisaṅkhāya that is basically a gerund. Being combined with yoniso, this term signifies the psychological attitude for the abandoning of āsavas.

(iii) The verbal form uppaṭijjati (present tense) is referred to in the context of dassana and the potential form uppaṭijjeyyum occurs in the other six methods of the abandoning of āsavas.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 11.
⁷⁴ Ibid.
In the *Potaliya-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the eight dharmas such as pānātipāta, etc. which are called *samyojanas* (fetters) as well as *nīvaranas* are referred to as the potential conditions for the arising of āsavas:

"Etadeva kho pana samyojanam etam nīvaranam yadidam pānātipāto, ye ca pānātipātapaccayā uppajjeyyum āsavā vighataparīlāhā, pānātipātā pativiratassa evam sa te āsavā vighataparīlāhā na honti."

But this killing of living beings itself is a fetter and a hindrance. And while āsavas which are vexation and fever might arise through the condition of the killing of living beings, there are no āsavas which are vexation and fever in one who abstains from the killing of living beings.

Similarly, adinādāna (taking of what is not given), musāvāda (false speech), pisunavācā (malicious speech), giddhilobha (rapacious greed), nindārosa (spiteful scolding), kodhūpāyāsa (angry despair) and atimāna (arrogance) are referred to as the potential conditions for the arising of āsavas. Abstaining from each of these eight dharmas leads to the abandoning of āsavas which might arise through each condition.

In another case, the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* refers to the eight types of asaddharmas as the same potential conditions for the arising of āsavas:

"Yam hi ssa bhikkhave uppannam lābhām anabhībhuyya viharato uppajjeyyum āsavā vighataparīlāhā, uppannam lābhām abhībhuyya viharato evamsa te āsavā vighataparīlāhā na honti."

Oh, bhikkhus, while one abides not overcoming the gain that has been obtained, āsavas which are vexation and fever might arise in him. While one abides overcoming the gain that has been obtained, there are no āsavas which are vexation and fever in him.

The rest of the seven asaddharmas are alabhā (loss), yasa (fame), ayasa (ignoring), sakkāra (hospitality), asakkāra (hostility), pāpicchatā (evil wish), and pāpamittatā (evil friendship). When one abides without overcoming these dharmas, āsavas might arise in him. Overcoming each of them leads to the abandoning of such conditioned āsavas.

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76 MN I, p. 361.
77 I have followed the renderings of Bhikkhu Ānānāthi & Bhikkhu Bodhi with some modifications. See MLDB, p. 468.
78 AN IV, p. 161. Cf. Vin (Vri) II, p. 342
79 Ibid.
According to all these references, it is obvious that the direct reasons for the arising and abandoning of āsavas expressed by uppajjati, are contributed to ‘ayoniso manasikāra’ and ‘yoniso manasikāra’ respectively. Further, we may say that the arising and abandoning of āsavas are mainly connected with avijjā and nāṇa/ vijjā respectively. This is because, as already seen earlier, āsavas and avijjā are interdependent on each other from the viewpoint of their arising (samudaya) and cessation (niruddha). The phrase ‘jānato passato’ which occurs in the Sabbāsava-sutta denotes nothing but nāṇa and in the Aṅguttara-nikāya, ‘ayonisomanasikāra’ is indirectly referred to as the nutriment (āhāra) of avijjā.  

Through the accounts expressed by uppajjeyyum, it is clear that the potential conditions for the arising and abandoning of āsavas are mainly dependent on one’s own psychological attitude towards different conditions that are referred to in various ways. Even in this case, it would not be possible to exclude the involvement of knowledge or ignorance towards such a psychological attitude.

(2) The realization and development for the destruction of āsavas

The Nikāyas’ frequent dealing with the destruction of āsavas is another notable feature. Emphasis on the destruction of āsavas denotes a conceptual peculiarity of āsavas in comparison to the other concepts of akusala dhammas. It is also very closely related to what Theravāda Buddhism refers to as the final stage of the spiritual progress of ariya atthapuggalas; that is, the highest out of the eight stages leading to Nibbāna.

The four Nikāyas present various contexts referring to the destruction of āsavas. Among them, there are two major trends: (i) the phrase ‘jānato passato’ emphasizing the
understanding of the nature of dhammas for the destruction of āsavas and (ii) the cultivation of various dhammas vis-à-vis the foundation or means for the destruction of āsavas.

According to the Samyutta-nikāya, the phrase jānato passato signifies the understanding of the nature of certain objects. That understanding leads to the abandoning (pahāna), destruction (khaya) or uprooting (samugghāta) of āsavas. For instance, a passage reads:81 When one knows and sees the eyes as non-self (anattā), there is the abandoning (pahāna) of āsava (cakkhum kho, bhikkhu, anattato jānato passato āsavā pahīyanti). Similarly, the phrase jānato passato refers to the items beginning with the six internal senses up to the three feelings which arise through the condition of mind-contact (manosamphassa) and it signifies that the understanding of the characteristics of ‘anattā’ with regard to each of those objects brings about the abandoning or uprooting (samugghāta) of āsavas.82 For the destruction (khaya) of āsava, the phrase jānato passato refers to the four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccañi),83 and the five aggregates, their arising (samudaya) and passing away (atthāṅgama).84

In the context of ‘anantarā āsavānaṁ khayo’ (the immediate destruction of āsava), the phrase jānato passato signifies the understanding of the nature of impermanence, etc. with regard to the five aggregates. In the Pārīḷyaya-sutta of the Samyutta-nikāya, the Blessed

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81 SN IV p. 32: Cakkhum kho bhikkhu anattato jānato passato āsavā pahīyanti. Rūpe anattato...
cakkhuvinnaṁ... cakkhusamphassaṁ... yampidam cakkhusamphassaṁ paccaṁ upajjati vedayitaṁ suκkhaṁ
vā dukkhaṁ vā adukkhamasukhaṁ vā tāmī anattato jānato passato āsavā pahīyanti. Sotam... ghiṁ...
jīvham... kāyam... manam... dharmem... manovinnaṁ... manosamphassaṁ... yampidam
manosamphassaṁ paccaṁ upajjati vedayitaṁ suκkhaṁ vā dukkhaṁ vā adukkhamasukhaṁ vā tāmī anattato jānato passato āsavā pahīyanti “ti.

82 Ibid: Cakkhum kho bhikkhu anattato jānato passato āsavā samugghātoṁ gacchanti. Rūpe anattato...


84 SN II, p. 29: Kim ca bhikkhave jānato kim passato āsavānaṁ khayo hoti. Iti rūpam iti rūpassa samudayo
iti rūpassa atthaṅgamo. Iti vedanā ...pe... iti saṁā... iti saṁkharā... iti viññānaṁ iti viññānaṁ samudayo iti
viññānaṁ atthaṅgamo ti. Evam kho, bhikkhave, jānato evam passato āsavānaṁ khayo hoti
One expounds a teaching with regard to the Dhamma when the reflection arises in the mind of a certain bhikkhu "how should one know and see for the immediate destruction of āsavas to occur?"

"Idha bhikkhave, assutavā puthujjano...rūpam attato samanupassati. Yā kho pana bhikkhave sā samanupassāna saṅkhāro so. So pana saṅkhāro kimnidāno kimśamudayo kimjātiko kimpabhavoti. Avijjāsamphassajena bhikkhave vedayitena phutthassa assutavato puthujjanaṃ uppāṇaṃ tanhā; tatojo so saṅkhāro. Iti kho bhikkhave so pī saṅkhāro anicco saṅkhato pātīcchasamuppanno. Sā pi tanhā ...Sā pi vedānā ...So pi phasso...Sā pi avijjā anicccā saṅkhata pātīcchasamuppannā. Evam pī kho, bhikkhave, jānato evam passato anantarā āsavānaṃ khayo hoti." 86

Here, bhikkhus, the untaught ordinary person... regards material form as self. That regarding is a formation. That formation—what is its cause? What is its origin? From what is it born and produced? When the untaught ordinary person is contacted by a feeling born of ignorance—contact, craving arises. That formation is born out of it. Thus, bhikkhus, that formation is also impermanent, also conditioned, also dependently arisen; that craving also...; that feeling also...; that contact also...; that ignorance also is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen.

When one knows and sees thus, bhikkhus, there is the immediate destruction of āsavas. 87

Likewise, this sutta refers to the other aggregates as well. When one regards any of them as self, etc. 88 or holds view 'that which is the self is the world', etc., such a view is a formation, and has the same nature: 'impermanent', 'conditioned' and 'dependently arisen'. The understanding of the nature of such a formation leads to the immediate destruction of āsavas. 89

As for the destruction of āsavas by possessing or developing certain dhammas, the four Nikāyas present various contexts. Through the dative case 'āsavānaṃ khaya', they reveal that possessing certain dhammas (qualities) sets the foundation for the destruction of āsavas:

"Tī hi bhikkhave, dhammehi samanāgato bhikkhu diṭṭheva dhamme sukhasomanassabahulo viharati, yoni 90 cassa āraddhā hoti āsavānaṃ khaya. Katamehi tihi? Indriyesu guttadvāro hoti, bhojane mattaṇṇā, jāgariyam anuyutto." 91

85 As for the Dhamma, thirty-seven types of bodhipakkhiyadhammas are mentioned. See SN. III, p. 96.
86 Ibid. pp. 96-97.
87 I have followed Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation with some modifications, see CDB I, p. 922.
88 There are twenty types of views known as ‘sakkāyādityi’. See SN III, pp. 97-98.
91 SN IV, p. 175.
Bhikkhus, by possessing of three qualities, a bhikkhu lives with full of happiness and joy in this life, and he has laid a foundation for the destruction of the taints [āsavas]. What are the three? He is one who guides the doors of the sense faculties, who is moderate in eating, and who is devoted to wakefulness.92

In the same way, the following four or six dhammas are referred to as ‘jāni’ (foundation) for the destruction of āsavas:

(i) By possessing the four dhammas: virtue (sīla), the state of being well-versed (bahussutā), ardent energy (āraddhavīrya) and wisdom (paññā);93

(ii) By possessing thought of renunciation (nekkhammavitakka), thought of non-ill will (abyāpādavitakka), thought of non-cruelty (avihimsāvitakka) and thought of right view (sammādīthi);94

(iii) By possessing the six dhammas: delight in Dhamma (dhammārāma), delight in cultivation of mind (bhāvanārāma), delight in abandoning (pahānārāma), delight in solitude (pavivekārāma), delight in being free from ill-will (abyāpajjhārāma) and delight in non-proliferation (nippapañcārāma).95

On the other hand, the four Nikāyas refer to the following different dhammas that lead to the destruction of āsavas:

(i) Concentration by mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānasatisamādhi);96

(ii) The confirmed confidence (aveccappasădo) in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha and virtues dear to noble ones (ariyakantāni sīlāni);97

(iii) Contemplation of foulness in the body (kāye asubhānapassanā), perception of repulsiveness in food (āhāre paṭikkūlasaṅnā), perception of non-delight in the entire

92 Bhikkhu Bodhi’s Translation (except āsavas), CDB II, p. 1239.
93 AN II, pp. 76-77.
94 Ibid. p. 77.
95 AN III, p. 431.
97 Ibid. p. 396.
world (sabbaloke anabhirtasaṅgā), perception of impermanence in all volitional formations (sabbasankhāresu aniccānupassanā), perception of death (maranasaṅgā).\(^9\)

(iv) Five faculties beginning with saddhindriya upto paññindriya;\(^9\)

(v) Ten dhammas beginning with sammādiṭṭhi upto sammāvīmūti.\(^1\)

In other contexts, the four Nikāyas also refer to various wholesome dhammas such as the four satipatthānas,\(^1\) the four iddhipādas,\(^2\) the five indriyas,\(^3\) the five balas,\(^4\) and the Noble Eightfold Paths.\(^5\) After developing these dhammas, one’s mind is free from āsavas due to the destruction of āsavas.

With reference to this matter, the Atthakatagara-sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya describes how the destruction of āsavas is achieved through jhānic knowledge.

"Idha gahapati bhikkhu vivicce’ eva kāmehi ...pathamam jhānam upasampajja viharati. So iti paṭissāṅcikkhāti: Idam-pi pathamam jhānam abhisankhatam abhisāṅcetayitam. Yām kho pana kiṃci abhisankhatam abhisāṅcetayitam tad-aniccām nirodhadhāman-ti pājānāti. So tathā thito āsavānaṁ khayam pāpunāti: no ce āsavānaṁ khayam pāpunāti, ten’ eva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā pañcannam orambhāgiyānaṁ sāmyojanaṁ parikkhayā oppaṭṭiko hoti tathappariniḥbāyā anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā. "\(^6\)

"Here, householder, quite secluded from sensual pleasures... a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhāna... He considers this and understands it thus: this first jhāna is conditioned and volitionally produced. But whatever is conditioned and volitionally produced is impermanent, subject to cessation.” Standing upon that, he attains the destruction of āsavas. But if he does not attain the destruction of āsavas, then because of that desire for the Dhamma, that delight in the Dhamma, with the destruction of the five lower fetters he becomes one due to reappear...

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\(^9\) AN III, p. 83.
\(^9\) SN V, p. 236.
\(^1\) AN V, p. 537.
\(^1\) SN V, p. 190: Imesam kho bhikkhave tinnaṁ samāsavānaṁ pahānāya cattōro satipaṭṭhānaṁ bhāvetabbā. Cf. SN V, p. 305.
\(^2\) Ibid. p. 257: Ye hi keci bhikkhave etarahi bhikkhā āsavānaṁ khayā... viharanti, sabbe te catunnam iddhippādanaṁ bhāvetattā bahuṅkataṭṭā.\(^3\)
\(^3\) AN III, p. 282: Saddhindriyena viriyindriyena satindriyena samādhindriyena paññindriyena āsavānaṁ khayā...\(^4\) Ibid: Saddhābalena viriyabalena satibilena samādhibalena paññābalena āsavānaṁ khayā...

\(^5\) SN IV, p. 256:...ariyo athangiko maggo etesam āsavānāṇam pahānāya, seyyathidham sammādiṭṭhi sammāsankappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammā-ājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsattā sammāsaddhi. Cf. SN V, p. 56.

spontaneously [in the pure abodes] and there attains final Nibbāna without ever returning from that world.”

Similarly, one knows the nature of dhammas beginning with the first jhāna up to ākiñcaññāyatanasamāpatti, and then he achieves the destruction of āsavas. According to the Nivāpa-sutta, āsavas are completely destroyed by pañña (wisdom) belonging to the final jhānic sphere, that is, the wisdom by acquiring the cessation of perception and feeling (saññāvedayitanirodha) after surmounting ‘nevasaṅgānaśaṅnāyatana’.

All these references that the four Nikāyas provide indicate that the destruction of āsavas is achieved not only by understanding the nature of dhammas, but also by gradual cultivation of different wholesome dhammas. The destruction of āsavas is highlighted by ‘khīnāsava’ which is often referred to as the stock passage: “Yopi so, bhikkhave, bhikkhu arahāṁ khīnāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo...”

So far, the discussion has been pursued from the perspective of seeking the origin of the concepts of āsavas. The following figure (1-1) illustrates the nature of āsavas, the relation between the āsavas and avijjā, etc. The figures (1-2) and (1-3) illustrate the arising and abandoning of āsavas respectively. The table (1-1) illustrates the realization and development for the abandoning/destruction of āsavas.

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107 Bhikkhu Ānāgamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation except āsavas, see MLDB, pp. 454 - 455.
108 That is, the four jhānās, mettācetovimutti, upekkhācetovimutti, ākāsānāṁcāyatanasamāpatti, viśuddhānāṁcāyatanasamāpatti and ākiñcānāṁcāyatanasamāpatti.
109 MN I, p.160: “Puna ca paraṁ bhikkhave bhikkhu sabbaso nevasaṅgānaśaṅnāyatanam samatikkamma saññāvedayitanirodham upasampajja viharati, pañña c’assa disvā āsavā pariṇāṇā honti See also p. 175, p. 204; III, p. 28, p. 45. See also AN IV, p. 418, p. 431, etc.; V, p. 209
110 Ibid. p. 4.
Figure 1-1: The nature of āsavas, the relation between āsavas and avijjā, and the application of the fourfold pattern of āsavas.

The nature of āsavas, and the relation between āsavas and avijjā

Application of the fourfold pattern of āsavas

Destruction by understanding (ñāna) & development (bhāvanā)

Realization through the Noble Eightfold Path

Arahant (khiṇāsavā)

Keys:

- signifies equality
- indicates the inter-dependency of arising and cessation
- indicates the root cause
- indicates the direction towards

(ārakāssa honti pāpakā akusalā dhammā, saṅkilesikā ponobhavikā sadarā dukkhavipākā āyatiṃ jātijarāmaṇīyā )
Figure 1-2: The arising of āsavas

Potential causes:
Six types of mental attitudes.
- asamvarā
- appatiṣeṇeva
- anadhivāṣana
- aparivajjana
- avinodana
- bhāvanā

Eight dhammas
- pāññātipāta
- adinnādana
- musāvāda
- pisunavācā
- giddhilobha
- nindārosa
- kodhūpāyāsā
- atimāna

Eight asaddhammas
- labba
- alābha
- yasa
- ayasa
- sakkāra
- asakkāra
- pāpicchatā
- pāpamittatā

Direct causes:
- manasikaro to kāmaṁ, etc
  - kāmapaccayā
  - byāpādāpaccayā
  - vihīnesāpaccayā
  - rūpāpaccayā
  - sakkāyapaccayā

Keys:
- ≈ signifies equality
- ↓ indicates the inter-dependency of arising
- ← indicates the cause for arising
- ↑ indicates the indirect cause for arising
Figure 1-3: The abandoning of āsavas

Six types of mental attitudes through “paṭīsāṅkhā yoniso”:
- samvara
- patisevana
- adhivāsana
- parivajjana
- vinodana
- bhāvanā

Through “abstaining” (pativirata) from eight dhammas:
- pāññātipāta
- adinnādāna
- masāvāda
- pisunāvācā
- giddhilobha
- nindāroja
- kodhupāyāsa
- attimāna

Through “overcoming” (abhibhūta) eight asaddhammas:
- labha
- alabha
- yasa
- ayasa
- sakkāra
- asakkāra
- pāpicchatā
- pāpamittatā

Keys:
- ~ signifies equality
- indcicates the inter-dependency of cessation
- indicates the cause for abandoning
- indicates the indirect cause for abandoning
Table 1-1: The realization and development for the abandoning/destruction of āsavas in the four Nikāyas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realization of nature</th>
<th>Possession of dhammas</th>
<th>Development of dhammas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'jānato passato'</td>
<td>(i) Three dhammas(qualities)</td>
<td>(i) ānāpānasatisāmiddhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) For pahāna, samugghāta or ‘khaya’:</td>
<td>Indriyesu guttadvāra</td>
<td>(ii) aveccappasāda in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and ariyakantāni silāni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of ‘anattā’</td>
<td>Bhojane Mattaṇṇā</td>
<td>(iii) kāye asubhānupassanā, āhāre pāṭikkulāsaṇā, sabbaloke anabhiratasaṇā, sabbasankhāresu aniccānupassanā, maraṇasaṇā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) For immediate destruction (anantarā khaya):</td>
<td>Jāgariyam anuyutta</td>
<td>(iv) Five indriyas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of ‘anicca’, ‘sānkhaṭa’ and ‘patīccasamuppanna’</td>
<td>(ii) Four dhammas</td>
<td>(v) Ten dhammas beginning with sammādiṭṭhi upto sammāvimiṭṭi.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sila</td>
<td>Wholesome dhammas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bahussutā</td>
<td>Four satipatthānas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>āraddhaviriyā</td>
<td>Four iddhipādas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>paṇṇā</td>
<td>Five indriyas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Four dhammas</td>
<td>Five balas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nekkhamavitakka</td>
<td>Noble Eightfold Path</td>
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<td>abyāpādavitakka</td>
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<td>avihimsāvitakka</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sammādiṭṭhi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iv)Six dhammas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dhammārāma</td>
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<td>bhāvanārāma</td>
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<td>pavivekārāma</td>
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<td>abyāpajjhārāma</td>
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<td></td>
<td>nippapaciṭṭhārāma</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Realization of the nature of jhānas as ‘abhisaṅkhata’, ‘abhisaṅcetayita’ and ‘nirodhadhamma’

The four jhānas
mettācetoṇītāni
upekkhācetoṇītāni
ākāsānaṁcayoṭaṇaṁsāmāpiṇī
viññānaṁcayoṭaṇaṁsāmāpiṇī
ākiṁcayoṭaṇaṁsāmāpiṇī

Destruction by wisdom (paññā) after acquiring the cessation of perception and feeling (saṁñhāvedayiṭṭhānādha), and surmounting ‘nevasaṁñhaṁsanāṅāyaṇa’
1.2. Khuddaka-nikāya treatment

In the earlier texts of the Khuddaka-nikāya, āsavas are referred to both technically as well as specifically. The following gāthās show how the concepts of āsavas are depicted in the earlier sources.

"Vijjāya-m-eva sampanno, (iti Sātāgiro yakkho)
Athe samuddhacarano,
Sabb' asa āsavā khīṇā, n'atthi tassa punabhavo".111
“He is indeed endowed with knowledge, and of pure conduct, said the yakkha Sātāgiira, All his āsavas are destroyed. There is no renewed existence for him.”112

"Bhavāsavā yassa vaci kharā ca, vidhūpitā atthagatā na santi.
Sa vedagī sabbadhi vippamutto, tathāgato arahati pūrajāsām. "113
“Of whom the āsavas of existence and (of whom) harsh speech are destroyed, finished, no longer exist, he has knowledge (and) is released in every respect. The Tathāgata deserves the sacrificial cake”114

The ‘bhavāsavā’ is herein supposed to be in the nominative plural form. Syntactically, it cannot be taken as an ablative case. Grammatically, the plural form is correct, but conceptually, bhavāsava must be singular in a technical sense.115

In the prose of the Itivuttaka, three āsavas are referred to116 while in the following verses, the realization of the fourfold pattern of āsavas is described as follows:

“Samāhito sampajāno, sato buddhassa sāvako;
Āsave ca pajāna ti, āsavānaṃca sambhavam,
"Yattha cetā nirujjhan ti, maggaṇca khayagaṇinaṃ;
Āsavānaṃ khāyā bhikkhu, nicchāto parinibbuto'°ti. 117
A disciple of the Buddha, mindful, concentrated, comprehending clearly, understands āsavas and the origin of āsavas,
Where they finally cease, and the path leading to their destruction.
With destruction of āsavas, a bhikkhu is without craving and completely quenched.

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111 Sn p. 29. Cf. Dhp p. 34: Sadā jāgaramānanam, ahorattānussikkhinam;
Nibbānam adhimuttānanam, attham gacchanti āsavā.
112 K.R. Norman, GD, p. 18.
113 Sn p. 83.
114 K.R. Norman, GD, p. 50.
115 ‘Bhavāsavo’ would be better grammatically as well as conceptually. But the commentary interprets it in the plural sense: Sn-a II, p. 409: Bhavāsavā ti bhavaṇṭhājjānānakānīsassatajājjhisahagata rāgā.
117 Ibid.
The conceptual development of āsavas is observed in the Paṭisambhidāmagga and Niddesas (Cūla- and Mahā-) which belong to the later period of the Khuddaka-nikāya. The Paṭisambhidāmagga, particularly in the context of nāṇa (knowledge), presents three different gradations of āsavas from the viewpoint of destruction. At first, the text explains nāṇa:

“Nekkhammavasena cittass’ ekaggatā avikkhepo samādhi, tassa samādhissa vasena uppaṭijjati nāṇam, tena nāṇena āsavā khiyanti; iti paṭhamam samatho, paccā nāṇam, tena nāṇena āsavānāṁ khayo hoti: tena vuccati—‘Avikkhepaparīsuuddatā āsavasamuccchede pañña ānantarikasamādhismiṁ nāṇam.”

Undistracted concentration is one-pointedness of consciousness through renunciation. Owing to that concentration, knowledge arises; through that knowledge, āsavas are destroyed. Thus, serenity comes first, and knowledge follows; through that knowledge, there is the destruction of āsavas. Hence, it is said, “wisdom in removal of āsavas due to purity [achieved] through non-distraction is knowledge with immediate concentration.

The text further proceeds explaining the four types of āsavas and their destruction through the four paths of ariyapuggalas:


What are these āsavas? They are kāmāsava, bhavāsava, diṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava. Where are these āsavas destroyed? By the path of stream-entry, diṭṭhāsava is completely destroyed, and the kāmāsava, bhavāsava and avijjāsava leading to hell are destroyed; these āsavas are destroyed herein.

By the path of once-returning, the gross kāmāsava is destroyed, and the bhavāsava and avijjāsava co-efficient with that are destroyed; these āsavas are destroyed herein.

By the path of non-returning, kāmāsava is completely destroyed, and the bhavāsava and avijjāsava co-efficient with that are destroyed; these āsavas are destroyed herein.

By the path of Arahantship, bhavāsava and avijjāsava are completely destroyed; these āsavas are destroyed herein.

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118 Ps I, p. 94.
119 Ibid. Also see Ps II, p 31.
120 Cf. Bhikkhu Ēnāmoli, POD, p. 91.
According to these two citations, the *Patisambhidamagga* apparently puts forth the idea of combining *samatha*/*samādhi* and *ñāna*/*vipassanā* together for the destruction of *āsavas* while the four *Nikāyas* deal with the development of *samādhi* or *ñāna* for the destruction of *āsavas* in different contexts. It is more lucid in explaining how to develop both the *samatha* and *vipassanā* together.\(^{121}\)

As seen in the second citation, the *Patisambhidamagga* also shows a specific range of *āsavas* after dividing *āsavas* into three gradations according to the paths of noble persons. In comparison with the varieties of *āsavas* that we have already seen earlier in the four *Nikāyas*, *āsava* in the most powerful sense is herein referred to by the term ‘*apāyagamanīya*’.\(^{122}\) This term probably includes the first three varieties (i.e. *nirayagamanīya*, *tiracchāna-yonigamaniya* and *pettivisayanīgamanīya*) excluding ‘*manussalokagamanīya*’ and ‘*devalokagamanīya*’. The two excluded ones are possibly covered by ‘*olārika*’ and ‘*avasesa*’ respectively.

Both the *Niddesas* (*Cūla-* and *Mahā-* ) present the application of the fourfold pattern of *āsavas* that has already been witnessed in the contexts of *vijjā/ñāna* in the four *Nikāyas*. Both the *Niddesas*, however, refer to the same pattern in the training of higher understanding (*adhipaṭissikkhā*).\(^{123}\) Not only the Noble Truths but also *āsavas* are taken into consideration in the case of *adhipaṭissikkhā*.

\(^{121}\) See Ps (Vri), p. 279: *Katham vimuttaṁ thena samathavipassanam yuganaddham bhāveti?* Uddhaccam pajahato cittaṁ ekaggata avikkhepo samaddhi kāmāsavā vimutto hoti nirodhagocarā, avījjaṁ pajahato amapassanātthena vipassanā avijjasavā vimutto hoti nirodhagocarā.


\(^{123}\) Cf. Ps-a I, p. 31 and Mnd I, p. 40: *Katamā adhipaṭissikkhā?* Idha bhikkhu paññavā hoti udayathāgaminīyo paññāya samannāgato arthiyā nībibherhiyā sammadukkhaṁkhaṁnakayagaminīyā So idam dukkhan ti yathābhūtam pajānāti, ayam dukkhasamudayo ti yathābhūtām pajānāti, ayam dukkhanirodho ti yathābhūtām pajānāti, ayam dukkhanirodhaṁgaminī paṭipadmā ti yathābhūtām pajānāti; ime āsavā ti yathābhūtām pajānāti, ayam āsavasamudayo ti yathābhūtām pajānāti, ayam āsavanirodho ti yathābhūtām pajānāti, ayam āsavanirodhaṁgaminī paṭipadmā ti yathābhūtām pajānāti. Ayam adhipaṭissikkhā.
Commenting on ‘pubbāsave’, the Mahāniddesa provides a new interpretation of āsavas. The text first paraphrases āsavas as the five aggregates (khandhas) and it further interprets āsavas as follows:

"Atite samkhāre ārabbhā ye kilesā upppajjeyyūṃ, te kilese hitvā...anabhāvaṃ gamītvā ti, pubbāsave hitvā. “124

‘After having abandoned the former āsavas’ means after having abandoned, ... annihilated those defilements which might arise with regard to the past volitional formations.

Here, the concept of āsavas is paralleled with that of kilesas, which appears to be a sort of generalization. This is another conceptual aspect that the canonical commentary provides.

1.3. Abhidhamma treatment

In the Abhidhamma texts, which are characterized as the most stereotyped and thoroughly analyzed canon, literary devices like similes, etc. are hardly come across. On the contrary, schematic treatment like causal relation stands as a new phenomenon of the Abhidhamma stage. The Dhammasaṅgani, the Vibhaṅga and the Paṭṭhāna portray a rather mature conceptual development. According to the Vibhaṅga, there are two traditions regarding the āsava classification. While the Dhammasaṅgani and the Paṭṭhāna125 refer to the four āsavas, the Khuddakavatthuvibhaṅga presents both ‘tayo āsavā’ and ‘cattāro āsavā’.126

However, in defining the word, it uses ‘peyyāla’ and presents exactly the same idioms for each of the three and four āsavas127 as those of the Dhammasaṅgani.

1.3.1. The Abhidhamma definition of the four āsavas, and their arising

The Dhammasaṅgani presents the Abhidhamma definition of āsavas. It apparently brings out a list of synonymous idioms that provide, in a strict sense, a different psycho-ethical

127 See Ibid. p. 364 for the three āsavas and pp. 373-374 for the four āsavas.
value, and a centralized conception of āsava. In the Nikkhepakanda, each of the four āsavas is explained as follows.

"Tattha katamo kāmaśava? Yo kāmesu kāmacchando kāmarāgo kāmanandī kāmattanā kāmasineho" 128 kāmaparīlāho kāmacchandā kāmajhosānam - ayāṃ vuccati kāmaśava." 129

Herein, what is kāmaśava? That which is, with regard to sensual pleasures, desire for sensual pleasure, lust for sensual pleasure, delight for sensual pleasure, craving for sensual pleasure, affection for sensual pleasure, fever for sensual pleasure, yearning for sensual pleasure, adherence to sensual pleasure — this is called kāmaśava. 130

"Tattha katamo bhavaśava? Yo bhavesu bhavachando bhavanandī bhavatathā bhavasineho bhavaparīlāho bhavajhosānam - ayāṃ vuccati bhavaśava." 131

Herein, what is bhavaśava? That which is, with regard to existences, desire for existence, lust for existence, delight for existence, craving for existence, affection for existence, fever for existence, yearning for existence, adherence to existence — this is called bhavaśava.

"Tattha katamo ditthasava? Sassato loko ti vā asassato loko ti vā antavā loko ti vā anantavā loko ti vā, tām jīvam tām sarīrān ti vā aūnaṃ jīvam aūnaṃ sarīrān ti vā hoti tathāgato param maranā ti vā, na hoti tathāgato param maranā ti vā, hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato param maranā ti vā, neva hoti na na hoti tathāgato param maranā ti vā, yā evarūpā ditthi ditthigataṃ ditthihiganāṃ ditthikantāro ditthivisūkāyikām ditthivipphanditaṃ ditthisaññojananāṃ gāho patigāho abhiniveso parāmāso kumaggo micchāpatho micchattamo tīthhāyanām vipariyāsaggāho - ayāṃ vuccati ditthasavo-sabbāpi micchāditthi ditthasavo." 132

Herein, what is ditthasava? 'the world is eternal', or 'the world is not eternal', or 'the world is infinite', or 'the world is finite', or 'the soul is the same as the body', or 'the soul is one thing and the body is another', or 'after death, Tathāgata exists', or 'after death, Tathāgata does not exist', or 'after death, Tathāgata both exists and does not exist', or 'after death, Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist' — such a speculative view that is the thicket of view, the wilderness of view, the contortion of view, vacillation of view, the fetter of view, the grip and tenacity of [view], 133 insistence, misapprehension, evil path, wrong way, falseness, the base of heresy, inverted grip 134 — this is called ditthasava. Even, all the wrong views are [included in] ditthasava.

"Tattha katamo avijjasava? Dukkke aūnaṃ dukkhasamudaye 135 . . . dukkhanirodhe . . . dukkhanirodhaṃgaṃiniyā patipadāya . . . pubbante . . . aparante . . . pubbantaparante . . . idappaccayatā 136 patīcchasamuppannesu dhhammesu aūnaṃ yam evarūpam aūnaṃ adassanaṃ anabhissamayo ananubodho asambodho appativedho

128 PTS edition adds ‘kāmapipāso’ while Vri. edition drops it. Here, I have followed Vri. edition. See Dhs (Vri) p. 245.
129 Dhs p. 195.
130 Cf. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, BMPE, pp. 292-293.
131 Dhs p. 195.
132 Ibid.
133 For ‘gāho patigāho’, see C.A.F. Rhys Davids, BMPE, p. 325.
134 I have followed P.A. Thittila’s renderings for ‘tīthhāyanām vipariyāsaggāho’, see BA, p. 190.
135 Here, PTS Edition reads ‘dukkhahāye aūnaṃ’. And it drops ‘dukkhanirodhe aūnaṃ’. These seem to be a misprint and an error apparently by mistake in this definition.
136 The text shows an uncompound word. Syntactically, it has to be compounded just as the Vri. edition of the Dhammasaṅgani commentary reads: ... idappaccayatāpatīcchasamuppannesu dhhammesu sankhati nāma.
Herein, what is avijjāsava? Unknowing about suffering, ...about the future, ...about the past and future, ... about specific conditionality and dependently arisen dhammas — such unknowing which is not-seeing, non-understanding, non-wakefulness, non-enlightenment, non-penetration, non-comprehension, non-scrutiny, non-discrimination, non-contemplation, non-perspicacity, stupidity, childlessness, non-awareness, delusion, illusion, confusion, ignorance, flood of ignorance, yoke of ignorance, underlying tendency of ignorance, obsession by ignorance, the barrier of ignorance, delusion that is the unwholesome root — this is called avijjāsava.

Through the eight synonymous terms that are scattered by and large in the Suttas, both kāmāsava and bhavāsava are defined comprehensively. Those idioms of kāmāsavas are in exactly the same way referred to as kāmupādāna, kāmarāgasamyojana and kāmacchanda as nīvarana. Bhavāsava is identified with bhavarāgasamyojana with the same idioms.

Dīthīsava is defined through the ten types of views that are often referred to in the four Nikāyas and a list of synonyms centralizes its conceptual range. It is also identified with dīthisamyojana and dīthī as kilesa by the same idioms. Avijjāsava is defined as unknowing about the eight types of bases while the four Nikāyas refer to avijjā as absence of knowledge only about the first four in the above citation. A list of twenty-five types of synonyms constituting the concept of avijjāsava reflects the characteristics of avijjā.

While commenting on the given compounded term, the commentary interprets it as 'Idam vuttam hoti – idappaccayataya ca paticcasamuppannesu ca dhammesu kankhatit'.< Dhs-a(Vri) p. 384> However, the PTS edition of the same commentary reads: ... idappaccayataya paticcasamuppannesu dhammesu kankhati nāma. And this edition interprets the phrase as “Idappaccayataya va paticcasamuppannesu ca dhammesu kankhati ti”.<Dhs-a p. 355>

The Nettipakaranas shows the word in compound form. See pp. 75-76.

137 Dhs pp. 195-196. Also see Vbh p. 364.
138 Cf. AN II, p. 10: ...yo kāmesu kāmarāgā kāmanandi kāmasneho kāmapipāsa kāmapariśāho kāmājīhosānam kāmatanāṁ sānuseti-ayam vuccati bhikkhave kāmavyo.
...yo bhavesu bhavārāgā bhavanandi bhavasneho bhavapipāsā bhavapariśāho bhavājīhosānam bhavatānāṁ sānuseti-ayam vuccati bhikkhave bhavavyo. Iti kāmavyo bhavavyo.
140 Cf. ’bhavarāgasamyojana’, p. 263.
141 See MN I, pp.189-190; SN III, p. 258.
142 Cf. ’dīthisamyojana’, p. 262; ’dīthī’ as kilesa , p. 423.
Through all these idioms, *avijjāsava* is also identified with *avijjāsamyojana*, *avijjānīvarana* and *moha* as *kilesa*.  

Such identification indicates that those idioms equally constitute a conceptual affiliation with other technical terms (i.e.*nīvaranas*, *samyojanas*, etc.). This takes place in other technical terms of the categories of unwholesome *dhammas* systematically applied and arranged in the *Abhidhamma* period.

Another important *Abhidhammic* aspect of understanding the concepts of *āsava* can be seen in relation to *cittuppāda*. In the *Atthuddhārakaṇḍa* of the *Dhammasaṅgani*, the arising of *āsava* is explained as follows:

>`Kāmāsavo atthasu lobhasahagatesu cittuppādesu uppajjati, bhavāsavo catūsu diṭṭhigatavippayuttalobhasahagatesu cittuppādesu uppajjati, diṭṭhāsavo catūsu diṭṭhigatasampayuttas cittuppādesu uppajjati, avijjāsavo sabbākusalesu uppajjati."`  

*Kāmāsava* arises in eight types of consciousness which arises accompanied by greed; *bhavāsava* arises in four types of consciousness which arises accompanied by greed, and disassociated with wrong view; *diṭṭhāsava* arises in four types of consciousness which arises associated with wrong view; *avijjāsava* arises in all types of unwholesome consciousness.

As the reference shows, this account mainly stands for the arising of the four *āsava* which are based on the *Abhidhamma* scheme of the relation with unwholesome *cittas* and *cetasikas*.

Out of the twelve types of unwholesome consciousness (*akualsa cittas*), the relation between four *āsava* and *akualsa cittas* is illustrated in the following table (1-2) and figure (1-4).

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143 Cf. *‘avijjāsamyojana’*, p. 264; *‘avijjānīvarana’*, p.172; *‘moha’* as *kilesa*, p. 422.
144 Dhs p. 245.
Table 1-2: Twelve akusala cittas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Assoc. With</th>
<th>Dissoc. From</th>
<th>Prompted or not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>lobha</td>
<td>somanassa</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>upekkhā</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>diṭṭhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>dosa</td>
<td>domanassa</td>
<td>patigha</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>moha</td>
<td>upekkhā</td>
<td>vicikicchā</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>uddhacca</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Three roots: lobha (greed), dosa (hatred) and moha (delusion); three feelings: somanassa (joy), upekkhā (equanimity), domanassa (displeasure); associations (sampayutta): associated with diṭṭhi (wrong view), patigha (aversion), vicikicchā (doubt) and uddhacca (restlessness); dissociation (vippayutta): dissociated from diṭṭhi (wrong view); asankhāra (unprompted) and sasankhāra (prompted).

Figure 1-4: The arising of the four āsavas in the twelve akusala cittas.
1.3.2. The causal interrelation of the four āsavas

The Patthāna, the seventh text of the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, presents the causal interrelation of the four āsavas which are mutually combined. Under the name of ‘āsavagocchaka’, the interrelation of āsava dhammas is expressed through different conditions such as paticca, sahajāta, etc. For instance, “āsava dhamma arises depending on āsava dhamma by root condition…”. Their interrelation through ‘paticca’ occurs as follows:

1. Depending on kāmāsava
   — diṭṭhi- and avijjā — (arise by root condition)

2. Depending on diṭṭhāsava
   — kāma- and avijjā-

3. Depending on avijjāsava
   — kāma- and diṭṭhi-

4. Depending on bhavāsava
   — avijjā-

5. Depending on diṭṭhāsava
   — avijjā-

Besides, therein, the positive existence of āsava dhammas is interrelated with other āsava dhammas through a specific condition. Based on the twenty-four conditions (paccayas), the Patthāna shows how the four āsavas are interrelated both positively and

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145 The patthāna shows the six ways through which the arising of all the dhammas is interrelated: (1) ‘dependent on’ (paticca) (2) ‘conascent’ (sahajāta) (3) ‘conditioned’ (paccaya), (4) ‘supported’ (nissaya), (5) ‘conjoined’ (samsattha) and (6) ‘associated’ (sampayutta).

146 Ptn (Vri) III, p.188: Āsavo dhammaṁ paticca āsavo dhammo uppaṭṭaṁ hetupaccayā—kāmāsavam paticca diṭṭhāsavam avijjāsavam, diṭṭhāsavam paticca kāmāsavam avijjāsavam, avijjāsavam paticca kāmāsavam diṭṭhāsavam, bhavāsavam paticca avijjāsavam, diṭṭhāsavam paticca avijjāsavam.

147 E.g. ibid. p. 195: Āsavo dhammo āsavassa dhammassa hetupaccayena paccayo—kāmāsavu diṭṭhāsavassu avijjāsavassa hetupaccayena paccayo; bhavāsavu avijjāsavassa hetupaccayena paccayo.

148 The twenty-four conditions (paccayas) are as follows.

hetupaccaya (root condition), ārammanapaccaya (object condition), adhipatipaccaya (predominance condition), anantarapaccaya (proximity condition), samanantarapaccaya (contiguity condition), sahajātapaccaya (conascence condition), aṅkamaṁaṅkamappacayā (mutuality condition), nissayapaccaya (support condition), upanissayapaccaya (decisive support condition), purejātapaccaya (prenascence condition), pacchajātapaccaya (postnascence condition), āsevanapaccaya (repetition condition), kampapaccaya (kamma condition), vipākapaccaya (result condition), āhārapaccaya (nutriment condition), indriyapaccaya (faculty condition), jhānapaccaya (jhāna condition), maggappaccaya (path condition), sampayuttapaccaya (association condition), vippayuttapaccaya (dissociation condition), atthipaccaya (presence condition), nattipaccaya (absence condition), vigatapaccaya (disappearance condition), and avigatapaccaya (non-disappearance condition). See Tpt p. 1.
negatively. From the logical point of view, their permutation and combination are explained in detail.\textsuperscript{149} Here, the conceptual significance lies in the causal interrelation between the four āsavas, signifying that āsava dhammas are ‘conditioning’ as well as ‘conditioned’ correlatively under different conditions (paccayas).

\textbf{1.4. The sub-canonical texts treatment}

The Sub-canonical texts contribute some significant aspects to āsavas that are presented through their scheme. Those aspects are, on the one hand, considered to be developed in the link of earlier literary stages; on the other hand, they are supposed to be treated as a conceptual innovation. In particular, the Nettippakarana and the Peṭakopadesa that have schematic similarity present such innovative features in different contexts. Also, in the Milindapañha, the sub-canonical interpretation of āsavas as regard to the destruction of āsavas is seen.

\textbf{1.4.1. Understanding of āsavas in connection with other defilements}

The Nettippakarana and the Peṭakopadesa present a peculiar feature of āsavas placed between ‘gantha’ and ‘ogha’.\textsuperscript{150} According to the Nettippakarana, the more descriptive of the two, all defilements (kilesas) are demonstrable through the four perversions (vipallāsa) in the group of defilements (kilesapuṇṇja) with ten bases (vatthus). Āsavas which constitute one of those ten bases\textsuperscript{151} are characterized as follows:

\begin{quote}
"Tassa evam ganthitā kilesā āsavanti. Kuto ca vuccati āsavanti ti? Anusayato vā pariyuṭṭhānato vā. Tattha abhijjhākāyaganthena kāmāsavo, byāpādākāyaganthena bhavāsavo, parāmāsakāyaganthena diṭṭhāsavo, idamsaccābhinivesakāyaganthena avijjāsavo."\textsuperscript{152}
\end{quote}

His defilements, which are tied thus, flow forth. And why is it said ‘they flow forth’? Because of underlying tendency or obsession. Herein, there is kāmāsava through the bodily knot of

\textsuperscript{149} Ptn (Vri) III, p. 195 ff.
\textsuperscript{150} Ntt p. 117 and Pe p. 245.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid. p. 114: Katamāni dasa vattaḥini? Cattāro āhārā, cattāro vipallāsā, cattāri upādānāni, cattāro yogā, cattāro gathā, cattāro āsavā, cattāro oghā, cattāro sollā, catasso viññāṇatthitiyo, cattāri agatigamanāni.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid. p. 116. Cf. Pe. p. 245.
covetousness, bhavāsava through the bodily knot of ill will, diṭṭhāsava through the bodily knot of the distorted grasp of rules and observances, and avijjāsava through the bodily knot of dogmatic assertion of truth.¹⁵³

When these four āsavas become enlarged and bound up, they became oghas.¹⁵⁴ Thus, out of the ten bases of kilesas, the Nettippakaranā features these four āsavas as effected by the four relevant ganthas, and they lead to the four oghas respectively. It is worthy to note here that the Nettippakaranā refers to the reason of the activity of āsavas through anusaya or pariyutthāna, which denotes the ‘state of not being abandoned’ of defilements and the ‘state of encircling’ of defilements respectively.¹⁵⁵

The Nettippakaranā also specifies these four āsavas as upakkilesas belonging to particular persons. Kāmāsava and bhavāsava are upakkilesas of a person characterized by craving (tanhdarita). Diṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava are upakkilesas of a person characterized by wrong views (diṭṭhicarita).¹⁵⁶

1.4.2. The padatthāna and lakkhāna, etc. of the four āsavas

Equating the four āsavas with tanhā and diṭṭhi (i.e. kāmāsavā and bhavāsavā with tanhā, diṭṭhāsavā and avijjāsavā with diṭṭhi),¹⁵⁷ the Petakopadesa characterizes each of the four āsavas through padatthāna and lakkhāna:

"Tattha rūpakāyo kāmāsavassa bhavāsavassa ca padatthānam; nāmakāyo diṭṭhāsavassa avijjāsavassa ca padatthānam."

"Tattha aliyanāyanā ajjhavāhanam kāmāsavassa lakkhānam; patthanā ganthanā abhisānkhāra-kāyasānkhārānam bhavāsavassa lakkhānam; abhiniveso ca parāmāso ca diṭṭhāsavassa lakkhānam; appatiṃdho dharmesu asampajñāṇā ca avijjāsavassa lakkhānam."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Cf. p. 431 on ‘kilesa/upakkilesa-concept’.
¹⁵⁶ Ntt p. 115.
¹⁵⁷ Pf p. 94: Tattha tanhā ca diṭṭhi cattūro āsavā tanhā: kāmāsavo ca bhavāsavo ca diṭṭhāsavo ca avijjāsavoca ca.
¹⁵⁹ Pf p. 94.
Herein, the physical body is a proximate cause for kāmāsava and bhavāsava, while the mental body is a proximate cause for diṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava. Herein, the characteristic of kāmāsava is any sticking to and bias towards the [external five] bases adhered to; the characteristic of bhavāsava is determining [a physical or mental body] by aspiration, ties, and determinative acts. The characteristic of diṭṭhāsava is insistence and misapprehension; the characteristic of avijjāsava is non-penetration and unawareness about dhammas.

Further, the Petakopadesa identifies the four āsavas with the four upādānas: “These four āsavas are the four graspings. Kāmāsava is the grasping of sensual pleasure; bhavāsava is the grasping of existence; diṭṭhāsava is the grasping of view; avijjāsava is the grasping of a doctrine of self”.

It is certain that this type of conceptual affiliation of āsavas with other unwholesome dhammas is mainly based on the textual scheme of the Petakopadesa and the Nettippakarana. In this regard, the Nettippakarana does not directly equate āsavas with tanhā and diṭṭhi, or with the four upādānas. Certainly, the Nettippakarana also indirectly shows the same ideas in the accounts of interconnecting the ten bases of the group of defilements, and classifying the four numbers of each base according to a person characterized by tanhā and diṭṭhi. It is also peculiar to equate bhavāsava with bhavupādāna that is only referred to in the Petakopadesa and the Nettippakarana.

The literary aspect of the sub-canonical texts provides abundant light in understanding the concepts of āsavas. The following Petakopadesa passage is a fine example in this regard.

"Yathā cattāro āsavā sabhāava-āsavatāya āsavā, no tu cittasāsavatāya āsavā sabhāvatāya āsavā pakkhe āsavatāya āsavā. Atha pan āha suttantam yena te sampayutā vā vippayutā vā āsavā, te yeva ēte vattabbd sāsavā vā anāsavā vā." 162

Just as the four āsavas are āsavas through the state of being āsavas by their intrinsic nature, yet they are not āsavas through the state of consciousness with āsavas; [the four āsavas are] āsavas by their intrinsic nature, [and] partly [they are so called] āsavas through their state of being āsavas. However, the Discourse has said: these āsavas depending on which they (i.e. dhammas) are associated or disassociated would be called sāsavā or anāsavā.

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160 As for kāmāsava and bhavāsava, I have followed Bhikkhu Ēñānamoli’s translation. For variant reading, he notes thus: “Ba: alliyānta; Cy: alliyamāyatanaca; Bb. Supports PTS. Perhaps read allināyatanesastu”. See Bhikkhu Ēñānamoli, PD, p. 126, fn. 341/2.

161 Pe. p. 94: Ēme cattāro āsavā cattāri upādānāni: Kāmāsavo kāmupādānam, bhavāsavo bhavopādānam, diṭṭhāsavo diṭṭhipādānam, avijjāsavo attavādāpādānam...

162 Pe. p. 158.
1.4.3. The abandoning of āsavas

The conceptual development of āsavas is also noticed for the abandoning of each of the four āsavas. The Nettippakarāṇa specifically matches it with each of the four satipaṭṭhānas. When one cultivates the four satipaṭṭhānas (the establishments of mindfulness), he is free from āsavas. Further, the Nettippakarāṇa specifies as follows:

"Kāye kāyānupassi viharanto asubhe subhan ti vipallāsām pajahati. Kabāḷikāro c’assa āhāro pariṇāmaṃ gacchati...kāmāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati..." When one abides contemplating the body as a body, he abandons the perversion that there is auspiciousness in the inauspicious. His physical nutriment becomes limited... He is freed from kāmāsava...

In the same way, bhavāsava, diṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava correspond to the contemplation of vedanā, citta and dhamma respectively. As already seen earlier, the four satipaṭṭhānas are collectively referred to for the abandoning of āsavas in the four Nikāyas. However, the Nettippakarāṇa schematically specifies the conceptual distinction of each of the four āsavas for the sake of its abandoning.

In the case of the Petakopadesa, the accounts of the abandoning of diṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava are contrary to those of the above citation. According to the Petakopadesa, avijjāsava is abandoned in one who contemplates dhammas as dhammas while diṭṭhāsava is abandoned in one who contemplates consciousness as consciousness.

The abandoning of the four āsavas is also characterized through the three different ways of liberation (vimokkha). Kāmāsava and bhavāsava are abandoned by appaññihita-vimokkha

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163 Ntt p. 31: Catūsu satipaṭṭhānesu bhāvīyamānesu...āsavehi ca anāsavo bhavati...
164 Ibid. p. 83.
165 Ibid. pp. 83-84: Vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharanto dukkhe sukhan ti vipallāsām pajahati. Phasso c’assa āhāro pariṇāmaṃ gacchati...bhavāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati...
Citte cittānupassi viharanto anicce niccan ti vipallāsām pajahati. Viṁśīnaṃ c’assa āhāro pariṇāmaṃ gacchati...diṭṭhāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati...
Dhammesu dhammānupassi viharanto anattān attā ti vipallāsām pajahati. Manosoṉcetanā c’assa āhāro pariṇāmaṃ gacchati...avijjāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati...
166 Pe. p. 94: Tattha avijjāsavo citte pahātabbo; so citte cittānupassissa pahiyyati. Diṭṭhāsavo dhammesu pahātabbo; so dhammesu dhammānupassissa pahiyyati.
Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli assumes that it is a copyist error. For his assumption, see PD, p. 127, fn 344/1.
(desireless liberation); $dīṭṭhāsava$ is by $suññatā-vimokkha$ (voidness liberation) and
$avijjāsava$ is by $animitta-vimokkha$ (signless liberation).\textsuperscript{167}

For the destruction of āsavas, the Milindapañha emphasizes how savana (listening to Dhamma), uddesa (recitation), etc. are greatly helpful. The venerable Nāgasena illustrates with an example of the Elder Sāriputta to the King Milinda that savana, uddesa, etc. are important in achieving the destruction of āsavas:

"Yasmā ca kho, mahārāja, savanena karaṇīyāṁ hoti, therō, mahārāja, sāriputto aparimitam sakheyyakappam upādāya upacitatukusalamūlo paññāya koṭīm gato, sopi vinā savanena nāsakkhi āsavakkhayam pūpanītaṁ. Tasmā, mahārāja, bahukāṁ savanam, tathā uddesoparipucchāpi."\textsuperscript{168}

O king, listening to Dhamma is still to be performed; as if, great king, even the Elder Sāriputta who achieved the peak of wisdom with the help of accumulated wholesome deeds for immeasurable and innumerable eons was unable to achieve the destruction of āsavas without listening to Dhamma. Therefore, great king, listening to Dhamma is crucially helpful, so is recitation and inquiring.

This citation highlights the very crux of a core issue of the spiritual practice. For achieving the final goal, ‘savana’ (listening to Dhamma), ‘uddesa’ (recitation), etc. constitute the first step in the noble path; one who passes through that only is exposed to more hierarchical steps later. Therefore, they are highly instrumental in eradicating āsavas.

1.5. The commentaries treatment

The commentaries have played a very crucial role in exploring the entire spectrum of the concepts of āsavas. Their contribution in this regard is very vital as they try to define āsavas in many different ways in order for the reader to have a comprehensive understanding of the matter. The conceptual development of āsavas is conspicuously divulged to the general literary aspects; the commentaries attempt to reconsolidate the

\textsuperscript{167} Nīt p. 119: Tattha kāmāsavo ca bhavāsavo ca appanihitena vimokkhamukhena pahānaṁ gacchanti, dīṭṭhāsavo suññatāya, avijjāsavo animittena.

\textsuperscript{168} Mil (Vri) p. 246.
earlier sources while providing various different views and clarifying these views in wider and more dynamic perspectives.

1.5.1. Etymological accounts

There are four types of etymologies through which the commentaries optionally interpret āsavas. In the discussions of ‘grammatical’ aspects, such etymological approaches have already been partly referred to. Even in the ‘Similes’, it has been discussed that the four types of meanings are mainly based on the commentarial etymological approaches. Therefore, the discussion will herein focus on drawing out the commentarial emphasis and different views on etymological accounts.

The commentaries refer to āsavas through the following four types of etymological approaches:169

(i) Tatha āsavanti ti āsavā. Cakkhuto pi...pe...manato pi sandanti, pavattantī ti vuttam hoti.
(iv) Ayatam vā saṃsāradukkhhaṇi savanti pasavantī ti pi āsavā.

Out of these four accounts, the first two are basically etymological approaches that the commentaries imply to the different ranges of the activities of āsavas on the basis of the cognate expression in the Sutta period. The first one seems to be a general implication in drawing out the range of activities between the six senses and their objects, which is more definite in the account of the Dīgha-nikāya commentary that further refers to

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170 For the translation, see p. 17 and p. 21 respectively.
‘āsavanaṭṭhena āsavāti’,\(^{171}\) and in the account of the Saṁyutta-nikāya commentary as well.\(^{172}\)

According to the ṭīkā of the Majjhima-nikāya, “whatever the activity of the wholesome [dhammas], etc. is there in the process (vīthi) of eye-consciousness, etc. and in the process of mind-consciousness accompanied by eye-consciousness, etc., only kāmāsava, etc. flow (sandanti) as an impure state of trickling (paggharāṇaka-asucibhāvena) like pus (yūsa) [oozing] from an abscess (vaṇa)”.\(^{173}\)

In the second, the commentaries distinguish the range of the activities of āsavas from the first one in the sense that their ranges are drawn out from the viewpoint of ‘dhammas’ and ‘space’ (okāsa). The ṭīkās illustrate that [āsavas flow forth] ‘up to the gotrabhu with regard to dhammas’ because they (āsavas) are not active beyond that (gotrabhu) among the paths (maggas) and the fruits (phalas). For, they (āsavas), while approaching those dhammas by means of taking them as objects, do not go beyond that (gotrabhu).\(^{174}\)

Out of two types of ‘avadhi’ (limitation), that is, mariyādā (boundary) and abhidhi (restriction), the prefix ‘ā’ is herein taken in the sense of abhidhi. Herein, the mariyādā means that it is active after taking its function outwardly just as “the sky rains up to the city of Pātaliputta”. The abhidhi means it is active after pervading its function [to the abode

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\(^{171}\) See DN-a III, p. 989: Cakkhuto rūpe savati assavati sandati pavattati. Sotato sadde... Ghānato gandhe... Jīvhāto rase... Kāyato pḥṭṭhabbe... Manato dhamme savati assavati sandati pavattattī evaṁ assavān’ atthena āsavā veditabbā.

\(^{172}\) SN-a II, p. 64: Āsavā nānussavanti ti, ‘cakkhuto rūpe savanti, āsavanti, sandanti, pavattanti ’ti evaṁ chahi dvārehi chasū ārammanesu savanadhammā kāmāsavādyayo āsavā...

\(^{173}\) MN-t (Vri) I, p. 128. ... cakkhuviṇṇādāvīthīsu tadanugatamanoviṇṇāvīthīsu ca kiṅcāpi kusalaśīmapi pavatti atthi, kāmāsavādyayo eva pana vanato yūsaṁ viya paggharanaka-asucibhāvena sandanti, tasmā te eva ‘āsavā ’ti vuccanti.

\(^{174}\) Ibid: Dhammato yāva gotrabhunī tato paraṁ maggaphalesu appavattanato vuttaṁ. Ete hi ārammanaṭṭhena dhamme gacchantā tato paraṁ na gacchanti. Also see Dhs-mṭ (Vri), p. 49.
of restriction] just as “the fame of the Blessed One has reached up to the highest existence”.

The following figure (1-5) illustrates it accordingly.

Figure 1-5: The limitation (avadhi) of the activities of āsavas applied to the prefix ‘ā’

As already discussed in the ‘similes’, the third one is figuratively implied in the sense of ‘being kept for a long time’ (ciraparivāsiyātthena). The last etymological approach, as already pointed out in the four Nikāyas, is clearly an application in considering the nature of āsavas that produce the future suffering. In interpreting ‘pasavanti’ (to produce) as ‘phalanti’ (to bear fruit), the tiḍka says that “Na hi taṁ kiṁci saṁsāradukkham atthi, yaṁ āsavehi vinā uppajjeyya” (there is no any suffering of the circle of transmigration, which would arise without āsavas).

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Also Cf. DN-t (Vri) III, pp. 169-170; Dhs-mt (Vri), p. 49.

176 Ibid. p. 129. Also cf. AN-t (Vri) II, p. 80.
As for these four types of etymology, the commentaries further state:

“Purimāni c’ettha nibbancanāni yattha kilesā āsavā ti āgacchanti, tattha yujjanti; pacchimam kamme pi. Na kevalañ ca kammakilesā yeva āsavā, api ca kho nānappakārakah uppaddava pi. Suttessu hi, ‘Nāhaṁ, Cunda, diṭṭhadhammikānaṁ yeva āsayaṁ saṁvarāya dhammaṁ desemi ‘ti ettha vivādamulabhūta kilesā āsavā ti āgatā.’”

Herein, the former etymologies are applicable to the case that āsavas stand for defilements (kilesas). The latter etymology is also applicable to kamma. Not only kammakilesas are āsavas but also different types of distress are called āsavas. For, in the Sutta, “Oh Cunda, I do not teach Dhamma for the restraint of āsavas in the present life only”, herein, āsavas stand for kilesas which are the bases of dispute.

According to this remark, the āsavas also represent the other unwholesome dhammas from the viewpoint of kilesas and kamma. According to the Majjhima-nikāya ṭīkā, āsavas stand for the remaining unwholesome dhammas due to ‘unwholesome kamma.’

Unlike the other commentaries, the Dīgha-nikāya commentary, while etymologizing āsavas, refers to “ettha cira-parivāsiy’ aṭṭhena vā āsavan’ aṭṭhena āsavā” (āsavas are [so called] in the sense of being kept for a long time or in the sense of flowing forth).

However, the Dhammasaṅgani commentary, while referring to different divisions of āsavas observed in the four Nikāyas, specifically mentions that in order to prevent confusion regarding āsavas referred to in different contexts, the different divisions beginning with one fold should be considered. For as per the meaning, those āsavas are regarded as one-fold in the sense of ‘being kept for a long time’ (cirapārivāsiyāṭṭhena).

However, the other commentaries, which also refer to the same divisions, do not specify āsavas as one-fold with the meaning of being kept for a long time. It is certain that in the

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178 The ṭīkā indicates that the former definitions are the first three etymological applications and the latter is the last. See MN-ṭ (Vri) I, p. 129 and AN-ṭ (Vri) II, p. 80.
179 MN-ṭ (Vri) I, p.129 and AN-ṭ (Vri) II, p. 80: Avasesa ca akusalā dhammāti akusalakammato avasesa akusalā dhammā āsavāti āgatāti sambandho.
180 MN-ṭ (Vri) I, p.129 and AN-ṭ (Vri) II, p. 80: ’Avasesa ca akusalā dhammāti akusalakammato avasesa akusalā dhammā āsavāti āgatāti sambandho.
184 Ibid. p. 369: Tattha tattha āgatesu pana āsavessu asammohatthā ekavidhādibheda veditabbo. Atthato h’ete cira parivāsiyāṭṭhena āsavāti evam ekavidhī va honti.
Dhammasaṅgani commentary, the emphasis is specifically given to the nature of āsavas in the sense of being kept for a long time.

As already observed in the ‘Similes’, the Visuddhimagga emphasizes āsavaśas with the meaning of ‘savana’ (i.e. in the meaning of ‘flux’ and ‘producing the future suffering’). In the Vibhāvīni-ṭīkā of the Abhidhammatthasaṅgha, the much later Abhidhamma text āsavas are emphasized with the meaning of ‘being kept for a long time’ or ‘oozing pus (vissandamānayūsā).

Considering these etymological approaches discussed heretofore, it is clear that all the commentaries optionally accept the first etymological meaning expressed as ‘flowing forth’ (āsavaṇa), ‘flux’ (savana) or ‘oozing pus’ (vissandamānayūsā), or the third (i.e. intoxicant) in the sense of ‘being kept for a long time’ (cirapārivāsiyaṭṭhena). Of course, it is quite noticeable that the specific emphasis mentioned above plays a crucial role in understanding the concepts of āsavaśas.

1.5.2. The commentarial definition of three/four āsavaśas

In almost all the commentaries, the definition of āsavaśas is given in more or less similar fashion even though there are minor nuances in certain cases: the four Nikāyas’ commentaries treat the three āsavaśas while the other commentaries refer to the four āsavaśas. Particularly, bhavāśava is defined in various ways.

The Majjhima-nikāya commentary interprets three āsavaśas as follows:


Herein, kāmāsava means lust for the five cords of sensual pleasure. Bhavāsava means the desire and lust for the fine-material and immaterial existences, and meditative hankering accompanied by eternality-view and annihilation-view. Thus diṭṭhāsava also is included in bhavāsava. Avijjāsava means unknowing about the four truths.

However, the Dīgha-nikāya commentary, referring to the Abhidhamma definition in abstract form, presents a slightly different account:


Kāmāsava is called lust for the five cords of sensual pleasure, which is explained as “with regard to sensual pleasures, that which is desire for sensual pleasure.” Bhavāsava is called lust accompanied by eternality-view, which is explained as “with regard to existences, that which is desire for existence”, or aspiration for existence. Avijjāsava is called ignorance described by the method “unknowing about the suffering,” etc.

As for kāmāsava and avijjāsava, the accounts of both the commentaries are in accordance with the same idea. In defining bhavāsava, however, they differ to a certain extent: while the Majjhima-nikāya commentary defines bhavāsava by two direct meanings and further includes diṭṭhāsava within the range of bhavāsava, the Dīgha-nikāya commentary presents two optional meanings.

The Itivuttaka commentary regards kāma and avijjā themselves as āsavas respectively. But bhavāsava is therein specifically defined in four ways:

(i) rūpārūpabhavesu chandarāgo (desire and lust for the fine-material and immaterial existences),
(ii) jhānanikanti (meditative hankering),
(iii) sassatadiṭṭhisahagato rago (lust accompanied by eternality-view),
(iv) bhavapatthananā (aspiration for existence).

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185 DN-a III, p. 989.
Dealing with the four āsavas, the Patisambhidamagga and Dhammasaṅgani commentaries present the same account of kāmāsavā as that of the Majjhima-nikāya commentary. Besides, bhavāsavā is defined in the same way as that of the Itivuttaka commentary. However, diṭṭhāsavā stands for sixty-two views and avijjāsavā is defined as unknowing (aṇṇāṇa) about the eight types of bases.\(^1\) In the Dhammasaṅgani commentary, bhavāsavā is further defined from the view point of kamma and upapatti such as: “rūpārūpasanakkāte kammato ca upapattito ca duvidhe pi bhave āsavo bhavāsavā”\(^2\) (bhavāsavā is āsavā with regard to existences called the fine-material and immaterial which are two fold as kamma and rebirth).

The Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-tīkā, which presents the same accounts as for the other three āsavas, more precisely explains bhavāsavā as follows:

“Rūpārūpabhavesu chandarāgo bhavāsavā. Jhānanikantisassatadiṭṭhisahagato ca rāgo ettheva sangayhati. Tattha pathamo upapattibhavesu rāgo, dutiyo kammabhave, tatiyo bhavadiṭṭhisahagato.”

Bhavāsavā is desire and lust with regard to the fine-material and immaterial existences. And lust accompanied by meditative hankering and eternality view is included here itself. The first is lust for rebirth-existences; the second is lust for kamma-existence; the third is lust accompanied by wrong view about existence.

Considering all these references, it is noteworthy to pay attention to certain points vis-à-vis commentarial interpretation of three/four āsavas. In spite of the minor differences, the commentaries agree upon the fact that kāmāsavā itself is lust (rāga) for the five codes of sensual pleasures. In another sense, as the Dīgha-nikāya commentary signifies, rāga (lust)


\(^2\) See Dhs-a p. 370: pañcakaṁmagunasankhāte kāme āsavo kāmāsavā. Rūpārūpasanakkāte kammato ca upapattito ca duvidhe pi bhave āsavo bhavāsavā. diṭṭhi eva āsavo diṭṭhāsavā. avijjā va āsavo avijjāsavā (Kāmāsavā is āsavā with regard to sensual pleasure called the five cords of sensual pleasure. bhavāsavā is āsavā with regard to the existences called the fine-material and immaterial [existences], which is two fold from kamma and rebirth. Diṭṭhāsavā is wrong view itself. Avijjāsavā is ignorance itself.)

\(^3\) Atth-ṭṭ (Vri) p. 193.
herein is a more comprehensive term standing not only for rāga alone, but also for the other seven synonymous factors mentioned in the Abhidhamma definition.

As for bhavāsava, the commentaries refer to one thing in common, that is “rūpārūpabhave chandarāgo” (desire and lust in regard to the fine-material and immaterial existences). It is a specific feature of bhavāsava that ‘sassatadiṭṭhi’ is affiliated with ‘rāga’ or ‘jhānaniṅkanti’ even in the Abhidhamma commentaries that refer to diṭṭhāsava specifically other than bhavāsava. Those four phrases through which bhavāsava is defined signify that the ‘bhavāsava’, in the ultimate sense, is craving and a [wrong] view with regard to the fine-material and immaterial existences (rūpārūpabhave) that are divided into kamma and upapatti.

With regard to diṭṭhāsava, the commentaries regard wrong view itself as āsava and they collectively reveal sixty-two types of wrong views, as reflected in the Abhidhamma definition. While the four Nikāyas’ commentaries define avijjāsava through the four bases, the Abhidhamma commentaries show the definition through eight types of bases.

The following table (1-3) illustrates how the various commentaries and the Abhidhammatthavibhāvinī-ṭikā differ on the definitions of the three/ four āsavas.

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190 The above quoted phrase “Yo bhavesu bhavacchando” in the Dīgha-nikāya commentary signifies the same idea.
Table 1-3: The definitions of the three/four āsava in the commentaries and in the *Abhidhammatthavibhāvini-ṭīkā*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kāmāsava</th>
<th>Bhavāsava</th>
<th>Ditthāsava</th>
<th>Avijjāsava</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DN-a</td>
<td>rāga (pañcakāmagunika)</td>
<td>(i) rāga (sassatadīthi-sahagata)</td>
<td>avijjā (dukkhe aññāna, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN-a</td>
<td>rāga (pañcakāmagunika)</td>
<td>(i) chandarāga (rūpārūpabhavesu)</td>
<td>Included into bhavāsava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) āsava (pañcakāmagunika-sankhāte kāme)</td>
<td>aññāna (catūsu succesu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itv-a</td>
<td>kāma (kāmesu āsava) or (kāmasankhāta-āsava) kāmarāga (rūpādi-abhiratī)</td>
<td>(i) chandarāga (rūpārūpabhavesu)</td>
<td>avijjā (eva)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) āsava (pañcakāmagunika-sankhāte kāme)</td>
<td>(*) avijjā (eva)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps-a</td>
<td>rāga (pañcakāmagunika)</td>
<td>(i) chandarāga (rūpārūpabhavesu)</td>
<td>Ditthiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhs-a</td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) āsava (pañcakāmagunika-sankhāte kāme)</td>
<td>aññāna (attṭhasu thānesu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) rāga (pañcakāmagunika-sankhāte kāme)</td>
<td>ditthi (eva)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atth-vt</td>
<td>kāma (eva)</td>
<td>(i) chandarāga (rūpārūpabhavesu)</td>
<td>duññhā (dvāsattthividhā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) rāga (pañcakāmagunika-sankhāte kāme)</td>
<td>Aññāna (attṭhasu thānesu)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This reference occurs only in the Dhammasaṅgani commentary.*
1.5.3. Contextual interpretations of āsavas

(1) The commentarial account on interdependence between āsavas and avijjā

As already observed in the Sammādīṭṭhi-sutta of the Majjhima-nikāya, āsavas and avijjā are interdependent. In its commentary, this fact is more clarified through different conditions, that is, sahaṭādi (conascence, etc.) and upanissaya (decisive support):

"Avijjāsamudāya ti ettha avijjā kāmāsava-bhavāsavām sahaṭādiyavasena paccayo hoti; avijjāsavassa upanissayavasen’ eva. Aparāparuppanā c’ ettha avijjā avijjāsavavo ti veditabbā. Pubbuppannā avijjā yeva sā aparāparuppannassa avijjāsavasassa upanissayapaccayo hoti."\(^{192}\)

‘With the arising of ignorance’: herein, ignorance is a condition of kāmāsava and bhavāsavā by way of co-nascence, etc... [It is a condition of] avijjāsavā by way of decisive support only. And herein, the ignorance that has arisen subsequently should be understood as avijjāsavā. The ignorance that had arisen previously becomes itself a decisive support condition of the avijjāsavā that has arisen subsequently.

In commenting on ‘āsavasamudāya’, the same commentary also refers to the condition for the arising of avijjā:

"Āsavasamudāya ti ettha pana kāmāsavabhavāsavā sahaṭādiyavasena avijjāya paccayā honti; avijjāsavavo upanissayavasen’ eva. Pubbuppannā c’ ettha avijjā avijjāsavavo ti veditabbā. Sā aparāparuppannāya avijjāya upanissayapaccayo hoti."\(^{193}\)

‘With the arising of āsavas’: herein, kāmāsava and bhavāsavā become the conditions of ignorance by way of co-nascence, etc.; avijjāsavā is a condition of ignorance by way of decisive support only. And herein, the ignorance that had arisen previously should be understood as avijjāsavā. The ignorance (i.e. avijjāsavā) is a decisive support condition of ignorance that has arisen subsequently.

Here, the commentary reveals that interdependence between avijjāsavā and avijjā lies in a decisive support condition and it basically refers to the preceding and succeeding existences. Eventually, it reveals the condition of avijjā, the foremost factor in the formula of paṭiccasamuppāda, and confirms that no beginning point of ignorance can be known, and hence the samsāra is with no discernible beginning.\(^{194}\)

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\(^{192}\) MN-a I, p. 224.

\(^{193}\) Ibid. pp. 223-224

\(^{194}\) Ibid. p. 224: Ayam vāro yā esā paṭiccasamuppādapadesu jeṭṭhikā avijjā, tassā pi paccayadassanavasena vutto. ...Asavasamudayena hi avijjāsamudayo. Avijjāsamudayena āsavasamudayo. Evam āsavā avijjāya, avijjā pi āsavānam paccayo ti katvā, pubbā koṭi na paññāyatī avijjāya, tassā apaññāyanato samsārassa anamattaggatā siddhā hoitt ti.
In the commentaries, the following figurative description of the wheel of *samsāra* appears:

"Yañ c' etam avijjābhavatanhāmayanābhī puññādi-abhisankhārāram jarāmarananemi āsavasamudayamayena akkhena vijjhitvā tibhavarathe samāyojitaṁ anādikālappavattam samsāracakkaṁ..."\(^{1}\)

This wheel of transmigration (*samsāracakka*) which has its hub (*nābhi*) made of ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving for existence (*bhavatanhā*), and which has its spokes (*aras*) consisting of volitional formation of merit and so on, and which has its rim (*nemi*) of ageing and death, and which is joined to the chariot (*ratha*) of the triple existence (*tibhava*) by piercing it with the axle (*akkha*) made of the origin of āsava has been revolving throughout time that has no beginning.

As this citation shows, the origin of āsava as *akkha* is instrumental in joining one existence (*bhava*) to the other. It also presents the same idea as that of the *Majjhima-nikāya* commentary which explains the interdependence between āsava and avijjā by means of connecting the preceding and succeeding existences. The following figures (1-6, 1-7 and 1-8) illustrate the interdependence and relation between āsava and avijjā.

Figure 1-6: The interdependent arising of avijjā and āsava

"avijjāsamudaya āsavasamudayo"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>āsava</th>
<th>sahajātādivasena paccayo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kāma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avijjā</td>
<td>avijjā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

apanissayapaccayo
Pubbuppannā avijjā

\(^{1}\) Sn-a II, p. 441. Also see Ud-a p. 84; Mnd-a I, 184; Ps-a I, pp. 213-214; VismVII p. 163.
Figure 1-7: The interdependent arising of āsavas and avijjā

"āsavasamudayā avijjāsamudayo"

āsavas
- kāma
- bhava
- avijjā

pubbuppannā avijjā (avijjāsavā)

sahajātādivasena avijjāya paccayā

aparāparuppannā avijjā
avijjāya upanissayapaccayo

Figure 1-8: The relation between āsavas and avijjā in the circle of samsāra
(2) The four āsavas as a base of the group of defilements

The Nettippakarana commentary explains as to how the four āsavas are established from the state of ganthas in the groups of defilements (kilesapuñja) with ten bases. While commenting on “kuto ca vuccati āsavanti” (why is it said that ‘they flow forth’?), the commentary first interprets it as ‘because of what cause do those defilements flow forth?’

The defilements (kilesas) become the cause for the origin of āsavas because they obstruct the arising of the wholesome (kusala) and remain after overpowering citta, or only because they are not uprooted by path. Therefore, it is told “anusayato vā pariyuṭṭhānato vā” ([they flow forth] because of underlying tendency or obsession). This commentary further explains: through the establishment of the bodily knot of covetousness, kāmāsava is established due to the nature of lust for sensual pleasure. When one is disheartened (domanassita) with a certain object, he wishes its opposite object and the existence (bhava) which has such opposite objects in abundance. Thus, it is said that there is bhavāsava through the bodily knot of ill-will. Through the establishment of the bodily knot of adherence to rules and observances, ditthāsava is established because of its nature, or it is established in a dogmatic person who constantly holds his views. When one adheres and attends unwisely to view “this alone is true, anything else is wrong”, avijjāsava arises along with various unwholesome dhammas, or because all the unwholesome dhammas have ignorance as their forerunner, avijjāsava is established through the bodily knot of dogmatic assertion of truth as its cause. When āsavas, which

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196 Cf. p. 462 on ‘kilesa/upakkilesa-concept’.
197 Ntt-a (Vri) p. 321: Kuto ca vuccati āsavanti kuto pana hetuto te kilesā āsavantīti āsavahetum pucchati. Yasāna pana kilesā kusalappavattim nivāretvā cittam pariyādāya īṭīthamā, maggena asamucchinnā eva vā āsavānaṃ uppattihetu honti, tasmā “anusayato vā pariyuṭṭhānato vā”ti vuttam.
are themselves ostensible (paribuddha), float and submerge in the flood of the circle of rebirth (vatta), then they are called oghas (floods).\textsuperscript{199}

(3) \textit{Āsavas as kilesas, and as the cause of the circle of transmigration}

It has been casually observed in the earlier sources that āsavas are generalized as kilesas. Such a generalization is collectively referred to in the commentaries. In the Suttanipāta commentary that comments on ‘pubbāsave’, āsavas are interpreted as kilesas; that is, the dhammas which arise with regard to the five aggregates (i.e. rūpa, etc.).\textsuperscript{200} The Apadāna commentary regards ‘sabbāsave’ as sakalakilese.\textsuperscript{201} The Majjhima-nikāya commentary also interprets ‘āsavānam khaya’ (through the destruction of āsavas) as ‘āsavānam khaya ti arahattamaggena sabbakilesānam khaya’ (through the destruction of all the kilesas by the path of arahantship).\textsuperscript{202}

In the Theragāthā commentary, which interprets bhava (existence) as samsāra (a circle of transmigration), āsavas are referred to as the cause (kāraṇa) of samsāra. The four āsavas beginning with kamāsava increase constantly and are not diminished in a person because of their nature leading to the cause (kāraṇa) of samsāra.\textsuperscript{203}

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid: Yasāma pana āsavā eva paribuddhā vaṭṭasmim ohananti osādentii “oghā”ti uccanti, tasmā vuttam–
“tassa ime cattāro āsavā”ti-ādī.

\textsuperscript{200} For the definition of ‘ogha’, Dhs-a p. 49: Oghagocchake yassa samvijjanti tam vaṭṭasmim ohananti osidāpentī ti oghā. Also Cf. Ath-vī (Vri) p. 193: Ottharitvā karanato, ohananato vuhetthā karvā karanato osidāpanato “oghā”ti uccati jalappavāho, ete ca satte ottharitvā karanatā vattasmim satte osidāpentā viya hontī oghasadiśaṭṭaya oghā, āsavāyeva panetiṭṭha yathāvuttaththa “oghā”ti ca uccanti.

\textsuperscript{201} Sn-a II, p. 561: Tattha pubbāsave ti atitāriyādini ārabba uppajjā[mā]nadhamme kilese.

\textsuperscript{202} Also see Mnd-a II, pp. 370-371.

\textsuperscript{203} Ap-a p. 243: Sabbāsave sakalakilese.

\textsuperscript{204} MN-a 1, p. 164. See also Ps-a III, p. 628.

\textsuperscript{205} Thrag-a I, p. 214:…tassa vaddhānti āsavā bhava-mūlopagāmino ti bhavassa samsārassa mūla-bhāvaṃ kāraṇa-bhāvaṃ upagamanasabhāvā kāmāsavādayo cattāro pi āsavā tassa puggalassa uparāpari vaddhānti yeva, na hāyanti.
(4) The arising and abandoning/destruction of āsavas

(i) The direct reasons for the arising and abandoning of āsavas

In the four Nikāyas, it has already been observed that ‘ayoniso manasikāra’ and ‘yoniso manasikāra’ are the direct reasons for the arising and abandoning of āsavas respectively. The Majjhima-nikāya commentary first clarifies what the phrase ‘jānato passato’ signifies in the context of abandoning of āsavas. Commenting on the phrase, this commentary states that jānato signifies the characteristic of knowledge because knowledge has the characteristic of knowing. Passato is mentioned with reference to the power of knowledge because knowledge has the power of seeing.

As for ‘ayoniso manasikāro’ and ‘yoniso manasikāro’, the explanation is as follows:

Tattha yoniso manasikāro nāma upāyamanasikāro, pathamanasikāro. Aniccādisu aniccan ti ādīnā eva nayena saccānulomikena va cittassa āvāṭṭanā anvāṭṭanā abhogo samannāhāro manasikāro, ayam vuccati yoniso manasikāro.

Ayoniso manasikāro ti anupāyamanasikāro uppathamanasikāro. Anicce niiccanti, dukkhe sukhan ti, anattani attā ti, asubhe subhan ti, ayoniso manasikāro, uppathamanasikāro; saccapaṭikkūlena va cittassa āvāṭṭanā anvāṭṭanā abhogo samannāhāro manasikāro, ayam vuccati ayoniso manasikāro ti.  

Herein, wise attention is called the attention by [right] means, [right] path. The advertence, continued advertence, inclination, engagement and attention of consciousness only by way of considering the impermanent as impermanent, etc. or by what is conducive to truth — This is called wise attention.

Unwise attention is the attention by wrong means, wrong path. Attention by wrong path, that is, unwise attention to the impermanent as permanent, the painful as pleasurable, the non-self as self, the inauspicious as auspicious; or the advertence, continued advertence, inclination, engagement and attention of consciousness by what is contrary to truth — This is called unwise attention.

204 As for the origin of āsavas, the Itivuttaka commentary refers to not only ‘ayonisomanasilidra’ but also ‘avijjā, etc. as follows: “Āsavānake sambhavan-iti ettha ayoniso-manasilidro avijjādāyo ca kilesā āsavānam sambhavo”.<Itv-a II, p. 19>


206 Ibid. p. 64.
The commentary emphasizes that *jānato* is knowing how to produce wise attention, and that *passato* is seeing that unwise attention is not arisen when it is not arisen. Furthermore, this commentary explains what the terms ‘*yoniso*’ and ‘*ayoniso*’ imply in the *sutta*. These two terms are overwhelmingly used throughout the entire *sutta* because the entire *sutta* is explained by way of the circle of rebirth (*vattta*), and by way of the cessation of the circle of rebirth (*vivattta*). The circle of rebirth has its root in unwise attention and the cessation of the circle of rebirth has its root in wise attention. When unwise attention grows, it brings out the two dhammas: ignorance and craving for existence. When there is ignorance, “with ignorance as condition, there are volitional formations, ...thus, there is the arising of the mass of suffering. When there is craving for existence, with craving as condition, there is grasping, ... thus, there is the arising of the mass of suffering".

Therefore, a person who has much unwise attention, as if it were a boat strayed by the striking of the forceful wind, ...turns the circle of rebirth successively among existence, destiny, station of consciousness, and the abode of the living beings. Thus, the circle of rebirth, first of all, has its root in unwise attention. However, when wise attention grows, it brings out the eightfold path led by the right view. The right view is knowledge. Through the arising of knowledge, there comes cessation of ignorance. Through the cessation of ignorance, there comes cessation of volitional formations... Thus, the cessation of the circle of rebirth has its root in wise attention.

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207 Ibid: *Apica yonisomanasikāram uppādetum jānato, ayoniso manasikāro ca yathā na uppajjati, evam passato ti ayam ettha sāro.*


209 Ibid. p. 65: *Yoniso manasikāro pana vaddhamāno, "Yoniso manasikārasampannass' etam, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pāṭikkākkham: ariyam aṭṭhāṅgikam maggam bhāvessati, ariyam aṭṭhāṅgikam maggam bāhuḷikarīsati’'ti vacanato sammadhiṭhippamukhān aṭṭhāṅgikam maggam paripūreti. Yā ca sammadhiṭhi sā vijjā ti tassa vijuppādā avijjāniruddhā saṅkhāranirodho ...pe... evam etassa kevalassa dikkhaṅkhandhassā nirodho hotī ti. Evam yoniso manasikāramulakām vivattam veditabbam.*
As already mentioned in the four Nikāyas, the direct reason for the arising of āsavas also mainly involves what one attends to. The Sabbāsava-sutta commentary refers to it as follows:

"Tattha kāmagune asādāya manasikaro anuppanno ca kāmāsavo uppajjati, uppanno ca pavaḍḍhati. Mahāgattaṭhamme asādāya manasikaro anuppanno ca bhavāsavo uppajjati, uppanno ca pavaḍḍhati. Tisu bhūmīsu dhamme catubbi paḷīsa-padaṭṭhānabhāvane manasikaro anuppanno ca avijjāsavo uppajjati, uppanno ca pavaḍḍhati ti veditabbo." 210

Herein, when one attends to the code of sensual pleasure through satisfaction, the unarisen kāmāsava arises and the arisen kāmāsava increases in him. When one attends to superior dhammas through satisfaction, the unarisen bhavāsava arises and the arisen bhavāsava increases in him. When one attends to dhammas belonging to three planes by means of the proximate cause of four perversions, the unarisen avijjāsava arises and the arisen avijjāsava increases in him. Thus it should be understood.

The commentary further explains the reason why only three āsavas are considered in the Sabbāsava-sutta through the following question:


However, why are only three āsavas referred to in this context? Because they are contrary to liberation. Kāmāsava is the counterpart of the liberation of desirelessness. The other two āsavas are the counterparts of the liberation of signlessness and voidness (respectively). Therefore, those who produce these three āsavas do not partake three liberations. Those who do not produce three āsavas partake three liberations. In order to show this purpose, only three āsavas are referred to. Thus it should be understood. Or. [according to some commentator], diṭṭhāsava is also referred to here only.

Out of the seven methods by which āsavas are to be abandoned, the direct reason for the arising and abandoning of āsavas is related with only that of dassana. In dealing with the ‘āsavas to be abandoned by dassana’, the commentary explains that the six types of doubt such as "was I in the past?” etc. are referred to in order to show diṭṭhāsava through the heading of doubt (vikkicchā). To a person in whom this doubt is arisen,

210 Ibid. p. 67.
211 Cf. Dhs-a p. 371: Ime dhammā āsavā ti ime kāmāsavo ca bhavāsavo ca rāgavasena ekato katvā sankhepato tayo viṭṭhārato cattāro dhammā āsavā nāmā.
212 MN-a I, p. 68.
ayonisomanasikāra is strengthened in consequence; then, any view out of the six [wrong] views arises in him.213

However, when one wisely attends with right means (upāya), three fetters (sāmyojanas) are abandoned, namely, personality view with twenty bases, doubt with eight bases, and adherence to rites and observances such as “purification is achieved by [a particular] rule; purification is achieved by [a particular] observance.” Out of the four āsavas,214 because personality view (sakkāyadiṭṭhi) and adherence to rites and observances (silabbataparamāsa) are included in diṭṭhāsava, they are āsavas as well as fetters, while doubt (vicikicchā) is [classified as only] a fetter (sāmyojana), not an āsava. But because it is included here among ‘āsavas to be abandoned by seeing’, it may be called as an āsava.215

The commentary mentions that what ‘sakkāyadiṭṭhi’, etc. are referred to herein is to show the āsavas that are to be abandoned by dassana.216 The sakkāyadiṭṭhi is abandoned together with the dhammas co-efficient with co-nascence (sahajāta), and with abandoning (pahāna), for when diṭṭhāsava is abandoned, kāmāsava as well as avījjāsava which are conascent with it (i.e. diṭṭhāsava) are abandoned in the four types of consciousness (citta) associated with [wrong] view. However, the co-efficiency with abandoning (pahānekaṭṭha) is related with bhavāsava that arises in the four types of consciousness by means of

213 Ibid. p. 70: Evam solasappahhedam vicikiccham dassetvā, idāni yaṁ iminā vicikicchāsīsena diṭṭhāsavaṁ dassetum ayam desanā āraddhā, tām dassento, tassa evam ayoniso manasikaro to channaṁ diṭṭhinān ti ādīm āha. Tassa puggalassa yathā ayam vicikicchā uppaṭṭijātēva evam ayoniso manasikaro to tass’ eva savicikicchassa ayoniso manasikārassa thāmagatattā channaṁ diṭṭhināṁ aññatarā diṭṭhi uppaṭṭijātī ti vuttaṁ hoti.
216 According to the commentary, ‘dassana’ signifies the path of stream-enterer. See ibid. p. 74: Dassanaṁ pahātabbā ti dassanam nāma sotāpattimaggio, tena pahātabbā ti attho.
aspiration for accomplishment [of rebirth] in the form of nāga, supaṇṇa, etc. Avijjāsavā is also associated with it (i.e. bhavāsavā); it also causes the killing of living beings, etc. in two types of consciousness associated with displeasure (domanassa); likewise, avijjāsavā is also associated with the consciousness [accompanied by] doubt. Thus, the remaining three āsavas are abandoned.\textsuperscript{217}

As to another direct reason for the arising and abandoning of āsavas presented in the Āṅguttara-nikāya, the commentary interprets ‘kāmapaccayā āsavā’ as ‘kāmahetukā cattāro āsavā’ (the four āsavas with the cause of sensual pleasure), and as for ‘vighāta’ and ‘parīlāha’, it interprets them as ‘dukkha’ (suffering) and ‘kāmarāgapaṭilāha’ (the fever of lust for sensual pleasure) respectively.\textsuperscript{218}

Further, it refers to the six types of jhānas that are the escapes (nissarānas) from kāma, etc. Asubhajjhāna is referred to as an escape (nissarāna) from sensual pleasure (kāma).\textsuperscript{219} For the other three, byāpāda (ill-will), vihēśa (cruelty) and rūpa (material form), mettājjhāna, karunājjhāna and arūpajjhāna are referred to as its respective escape.\textsuperscript{220} With regard to sakkāya (personality), the escape is the consciousness of meditative attainment by the fruit


\textsuperscript{218} AN-a III, pp. 321-322: Kāmapaccayā āsavā nāma kāmahetukā cattāro āsavā. Vighātā ti dukkhā. Parīlāhā ti kāmarāgapaṭilāhā. See also DN-a III, p. 1032.

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid. p. 322: Idam akkāṭām kāmānaṃ nissaraṇaṃ ti idam aṭṭhājjhānaṃ kāmehi nissatattā kāmānaṃ nissaraṇaṃ ti akkāṭām.

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid: Ayam pana vīseso: Dutiyavāre mettājjhānāni vyāpādassa nissaraṇaṃ nāma, tatiyavāre karunājjhānāni viḥimsāya nissaraṇaṃ nāma, catutthavāre arūpajjhānāni rūpānaṃ nissaraṇaṃ nāma.
of Arahant, which is arisen in such a way that “there is no personality again” to a bhikkhu who remains by seeing nibbāna by the path and fruit of Arahantship.\(^{221}\)

(ii) The potential reasons for the arising of āsavas, and their abandoning

The Sabbāsava-sutta commentary also explains the potential reasons for the arising of āsavas, and the six types of methods by which āsavas are to be abandoned. While commenting on ‘patisaṅkhā yoniso’ which occurs in each of the other six methods of the abandoning of āsavas, the commentary reveals that the abandoning of āsavas through restraint, using, etc lies in nāṇa (knowledge). The commentary refers to patisaṅkhā as nāṇa and interprets ‘patisaṅkhā yoniso’ as ‘realizing through the right means and path’.\(^{222}\)

Herein, ‘reflecting wisely’ means realizing the danger in the unrestrained circumstances (ettha ca asamvare ādīnavapatisaṅkhā, yoniso patisaṅkhā ti).\(^{223}\)

The commentary further presents the details of the arising and abandoning of āsavas which have to be abandoned by the other six methods. The conceptual aspects may be observed briefly as follows.

(1) With regard to the āsavas that are to be abandoned by restraint, the commentary shows what ‘āsavā vighāta-pariḷāhā’ signifies herein and how each of the four āsavas arise:

> ‘Āsavā vighāta-pariḷāhā ti cattāro āsavā ca aṅñe ca vighāta-pariḷāhā, vipāka-pariḷāhā vā. Cakkhudvāre hi iṭṭhārammaṇam āpāthagatam kāmāsādava sāsādayato abhinandato kāmāsavo uuppajjati. Īdisaṃ aṅñasmim pi sugatihave labhissāmi ti bhavapattanaṇaḥ sāsādayato bhavāsavo uuppajjati. Satto ti vā sattassā ti vā gāṇhantassa diṭṭhāsavo uuppajjati. Sabheva eva saha-jātaṃ aṅñānaṃ avijjāsavo ti cattāro āsavā uuppajjanti. Tehi sampayutta uapa kilesā vighātāpariḷāhā, āyatim vā tesaṃ vipākā, te pi hi asaṃvutass’ eva vīharato uuppajjeyyun ti vuccanti.’\(^{224}\)

‘Āsavas which are vexation and fever’ means the four āsavas and other [āsavas], that is, the fevers of defilements or the fevers of kammic results which cause vexation. Because when one takes satisfaction with, and is delighted in the favorable objects impinged in the eye-door by

\(^{221}\) Ibid: Idam akkhātam sakkāyasā nissaranan ti idam arahattamaggena ca phalena ca nibbānaṃ disvā thitassa bhikkhuno ‘puna sakkāyo n’ atthi ti uppannaṃ arahattaphalasamāppatticittaṃ sakkāyasā nissaranan ti akkhātam.

\(^{222}\) MN-a I, p. 75: Patisaṅkhā yoniso ti upāyena pathena patisaṅkhāya. Nāvā paccavekkhivatā attho.

\(^{223}\) Ibid. Also see AN-a III, p. 394.

\(^{224}\) Ibid. p. 77. Also cf. AN-a III, p. 395.
way of satisfaction of sensual pleasure, kāmāsava arises. With such a thought "I would also obtain the same one in the next heavenly existence", when one takes delight in the objects through aspiration for existence, bhavāsava arises. When one holds view thus: "this is a living being" or "this belongs to a living being", diṭṭhāsava arises. Avijjāsava is indeed ignorance co-nascent with all. Thus, the four āsavas arise. Associated with them, there are other defilements which are vexation and fever, or there are their kammic results in the future. It is said that they would arise only to a person who abides with his sense-faculties unrestrained.

As the citation shows, the commentarial interpretation is rather conceptually developed. The commentary applies the term vighātaparīlāhā to the other āsavas that cause vexation while it is regarded as an adjective of ‘āsavā’ in the four Nikāyas. This interpretation of vighātaparīlāhā and its connection with uppajjeyyum will be applicable to the other methods that incorporate the same phrase.

By multiplying four āsavas by each of the six sense doors, it is said that twenty-four types of āsavas are to be abandoned by restraint (saṃvara). Under all these circumstances, it should be known that restraint by mindfulness (satisaṃvara) is merely a restraint herein.225

(2) With regard to the āsavas that are to be abandoned by using (paṭisevana), the arising of āsavas is connected to a person who does not use the requisites wisely:

"Kevalam pan’ ettha aladdhacivārādīm patthayato laddham vā assādayato kāmāsavassa uppatti veditabbā. Īdham anīnasmin pi sampattibhave sugatibhave labbhasāmi tī bhavapatthanāyā assādayato bhavāsavassa; aham labhāmi, na labhāmi tī vā, mayham vā idan ti attasaṣāṇam avijahato226 diṭṭhāsavassa uppatti veditabbā. Sabbe bh’ eva pana sahajāto avijjāsavo ti evam catunnam āsavānām uppatti, vipākaparīlāhā ca navavedanuppadanato227 veditabbā.228"

Herein, only when one desires the robes, etc. which are not obtained, or when one takes satisfaction with the obtained [robes, etc], kāmāsava arises. When one takes satisfaction [with such objects] by aspiration for existence: “in the other specially acquired existence, blissful existence also, I would get such objects”, bhavāsava arises; when one does not give up self-perception: “I do obtain, I do not obtain” or “this belongs to me”, diṭṭhāsava arises. However,

225 Ibid: Ime vuccanti āsavā samvaro pahātābā ti, ime chasu dvāresu cattāro cattāro katvā catuvisati āsavā samvarena pahātābā ti vuccanti. SABBATb’ eva c’ ettha satiṣāṃvaro eva samvaro ti veditabbo. Also cf. AN-a III, p. 396.
226 Vrī. edition reads as ‘attasaṇān adhitthahato’ (when one insist on self perception). See MN-a (Vrī) I, p. 84.
227 Vrī. edition reads as ‘navavedanuppadanato’. See ibid.
228 Cf. MN-t (Vrī) I, p. 151: Navavedanuppādanatopi na kevalam āyatim eva vipākaparīlāhā, aha kho atibhojanapaccavā alamsāṭākādinaṃ viya navavedanuppādanatopi veditabbāti attho.
229 MN-a I, p. 77.
avijjāsavā is indeed co-nascent with all. Thus is the arising of four āsavas; and the fever of kammic results should be understood as arising through a new sensation.

The commentary mentions sixteen types of āsavas to be abandoned by this ‘using’ through reviewing (paccavekkhāna) which is named as restraint by knowledge (nānasamvarā).²²⁹

(3) As for the arising of the āsavas that are to be abandoned by enduring (adhivāsena), the commentary refers to a person who does not endure ‘cold and heat’ etc. wisely:


Herein, the arising of āsavas should be understood thus: when one is touched with cold and he desires for heat, kāmāsava arises; So too is in all [other] cases. When one desires for existence: “there would be neither cold nor heat for us in the specially acquired existence, blissful existence”, bhavāsava arises. Diṭṭhāsava is holding the view: “cold belongs to myself, heat belongs to myself”. Āvijjasava is associated only with all of them.

Applying four āsavas to each of cold, etc., various āsavas are to be abandoned by this ‘enduring’ called restraint by patience (khantisamvara).²³¹

(4) The arising of the āsavas that are to be abandoned by avoiding (parivajjana) is explained as follows:


When one who is touched by suffering caused by an elephant, etc. desires for pleasure, kāmāsava arises. When one has aspiration for existence: “there is no such suffering to us in the specially acquired existence and the heavenly existence”, bhavāsava arises. Holding the view: “an elephant attacks me, a horse attacks me” is Diṭṭhāsava. Āvijjasava is associated only with all of them.

²²⁹ Ibid. pp. 77-78: Ime vuccanti, bhikkhave, āsavā patisevanā pahātabbā ti ime ekamekasmim paccaye cattāro cattāro katvā solava āsavā iminā nānasamvarasankhātena paccavekkhānapatisavanena pahātabbā ti vuccanti. See cf. AN-a III, p. 396.
²³⁰ Ibid. p. 80. Also cf. AN III, p. 397.
²³¹ Ibid: Ime vuccanti ...pe... adhivāsanā pahātabbā ti ime sitādisu ekamekassa vasena cattāro cattāro katvā aneke āsavā imāya khantisamvarasankhātāya adhivāsanāya pahātabbā ti vuccanti ti attho.
²³² Ibid. p. 81. Also cf. AN III, p. 398.
By applying four āsavas to each of such objects, various āsavas are to be abandoned by this ‘avoiding’ called restraint by virtue (sīlasamvara). 233

(5) With regard to the arising of the āsavas that are to be abandoned by removing (vinodana), the commentary says:

"Kāmavitakko pan’ ettha kāmāsavā eva. Tabbiseso bhavāsavo, tamsampayutto diṭṭhāsavo, sabbhatākku avijjā avijjāsavā ti evaṁ āsavuppatti vedittabbd. 234

Herein, the thought of sensual pleasure is kāmāsavā itself. Bhavāsava is specified by that (kāmāsavā). Diṭṭhāsava is associated with that (bhavāsava). Avijjāsavā is ignorance [connected] to all the thoughts. Hence the arising of āsava should be known. 235

These āsavas which have the modes explained through kāmavitakka, etc. are to be abandoned by ‘removing’ called restraint by energy accompanied by realization of danger in any of the three thoughts. 236

(6) With regard to the āsavas that are to be abandoned by development (bhāvanā), the arising of āsavas is referred to as follows:

"...uparimaggattaya-sampayuttānam bojjhagānam abhāvitattā ye uppajjeyyum, kāmāsavā, bhavāsavā, avijjāsavā ti tayo āsavā, bhāvaya evaṁ 'sa te āsavā na honī ti ..." 237

Due to non-cultivation of the enlightenment factors which are associated with these three higher paths, the three āsavas would arise: kāmāsavā, bhavāsavā and avijjāsavā. When one cultivates the enlightenment factors, there is none of those āsavas in him.

Out of the seven methods mentioned in the Sabbāsava-sutta, the Majjhima-nikāya commentary explicates that the abandoning of āsavas is directly affected by two methods,

233 Ibid: Ime vuccanti ...pe... parivajjana pahātabbā ti ime ḍhatthi-ādisu ekekassa vasena cattāro cattāro katvā aneke āsavā iminā sīlasamvarasanākhāteta parivajjanena pahātabbā ti vuccanti ti veditabbā.

234 Ibid, p. 82.

235 The commentary refers to nine types of vitakkas: Tattha tayo vutta eva. Avasesā, ṇāti vitakko, janapadavitakko, amaravitakko, parānuddayapatisamyutto vitakko, labhasakkāràsīlocapatisamyutto vitakko, anavānātītapi samyutto vitakko ti ime cha. (Three vitakkas which are mentioned herein and the remaining six: thought of relatives, thought of country, an immortal thought, thought connected with kindness to others, thought connected with gain, honour and renown, and thought connected with not being despised). See ibid.

236 Ibid: Ime vuccanti ...pe... vinodana pahātabbā ti ime kāmavitakkādivasena vuttappakārā āsavā, iminā tasnim tasnim vitakke ādinasavaccekkhanasahitena viriyasamvarasanākhāteta vinodanena pahātabbā ti vuccanti ti veditabbā.

237 Ibid. p. 86.
that is, seeing (dassana) and developing (bhāvanā) that comprise the four paths (maggas). By the remaining five methods, the āsayas are suppressed during the preparatory stages and they are uprooted by means of the four maggas.²³⁸

The Majjhima-nikāya commentary shows how the four āsayas arise through pāṇātipāta, etc. which are referred to as the potential conditions for the arising of āsayas. While interpreting ‘vighātaparilāha’ as the suffering (dukkha), the fever of defilements, and the kammic results respectively, the commentary explains the arising of four āsayas through the cause of each of the eight unwholesome dhammas as follows:

(1) With the cause (kāraṇa) of pāṇātipāta (killing living beings)
   — avijjāsava alone arises.²³⁹

(2) With the cause of adinnādāna (taking of what is not given), (3) of musāvāda (false speech) and (4) of pisunāvācā (malicious speech) respectively
   — kāmāsava, ditthāsava and avijjāsava arise

(5) With the cause of giddhilobha (rapacious greed)
   — ditthāsava and avijjāsava arise

(6) With the cause of nindārosa (spiteful scolding) and (7) of kodhupāyāsa (angry despair)
   — avijjāsava arises

(8) With the cause of atimāna (arrogance)
   — bhavāsava and avijjāsava arise.²⁴⁰


(iii) The simultaneous arising of the four āsavas

The Dhammasaṅgani commentary presents a unique account of the simultaneous origin of the four āsavas basically related to the Abhidhamma category of cittas and cetasikas.

According to the commentary,

"Yattha dve tayo āsavā ekato uppajjantī ti ettha tividhena āsavānaṁ ekato uppatti veditabbā. Tattha catūsā dīṭṭhivippayuttesu avijjāsavanaṁ dīṭṭhasampayuttesu dīṭṭhāsavaṁvijjāsavehi saddhīn ti kāmāsavo duvidhena ekato uppajjatī. Bhavāsavo catūsā dīṭṭhivippayuttesu avijjāsavanaṁ saddhīn ti ekadhā va ekato uppajjatī."  

The simultaneous origin of āsavas should be understood in three ways:  

1) kāmāsava simultaneously arises with  
   — avijjāsava in the cittas (3-4 and 7-8)  
   — dīṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava in the cittas (1-2 and 5-6)  

2) bhavāsava simultaneously arises with  
   — avijjāsava in the cittas (3-4 and 7-8)  

(iv) The abandoning/destruction of āsavas

The commentaries interpret that the destruction of āsavas denotes ‘ariyamagga’ (the noble path), ‘phala’ (i.e. the fruit of Arahantship) and ‘nibbāna’. The ‘ariyamagga’ leads to the destruction of āsavas. Kāmāsava is abandoned by the path of non-returning; bhavāsava and avijjāsava are abandoned by the path of Arahantship. The Dhammasaṅgani commentary refers to the abandoning of āsavas in twofold ways, kilesapatiṭṭiyā (by the order of defilement) and maggapatiṭṭiyā (by the order of path). Therein, dīṭṭhāsava is

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241 Dhs-a p. 427.
242 i.e. threefold is thus:
1) kāmāsava simultaneously arises with  
   — avijjāsava in the cittas (3-4 and 7-8)  
   — dīṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava in the cittas (1-2 and 5-6)  

2) bhavāsava simultaneously arises with  
   — avijjāsava in the cittas (3-4 and 7-8)  

244 Also see Itv-a I, p. 115: "Sekkassa sikkhamānassa uju-maggānusārino Khayasmim pathaṁānaṁ nānaṁ, tato añña anantarā"ti.
   Ettha -ariyamaggo āsavakkhayo-ti vutto.  
   "Āsavānaṁ ḭhayā samāṇo hoiti ettha phalam.  
   "Paravajjānupassissā nicaṁ ujñhāna-soññino Āsavā tassa vaddhantī, āyā so āsava-kkhyāti"ti.
   ettha nibbānām. Idha pana phalam sandhāya "āsavānaṁ ḭhayā-ṭi vuttaṁ. Arahattaphal'atthāyā-ṭi attho.  
   244 Itv-a II, p. 19: Maggaṁca khayaṁcaṁ na-ṭi āsavānaṁ khayaṁcaṁ arīyamaggaṁca. Tattha kāmāsavo anāgāmimaggena pahāyati, bhavāsavo avijjāsavo ca arahattamaggena."
Concluding remarks

At the very outset, the conceptual survey on āsavas has to begin with two points through which āsavas are fundamentally characterized: (i) āsavas are representative of all the akusala dhammas and (ii) as a technical term, āsava has been used from the earliest sources onwards. The main reason for such a perspective lies in the fact that those two points, as have been observed so far, are not only existent from the earlier sources, but also constantly active throughout the Pāli literature. Let us bring out certain significant aspects that require more attention to understand the concepts of āsavas and their developments. For, even though certain conceptual aspects are not persistent in the later literary stages, the accounts that are so far discussed in different literary stages are pivotal in understanding the concepts of āsavas from the literary perspective.

Grammatical aspects and similes are self-expressive. However, the following two points are worthy to highlight herein: (i) the cognate expression directly reveals that the etymological meaning is first applied to āsavas as psychological factors in the four Nikāyas, and (ii) in the similes, two other usages of the term āsava are conceptually applied as psychological factors in the commentary period. While consolidating these sources, the similes express the four kinds of meaning, that is, (i) flux (savana), (ii) producing (savana) the future suffering, (iii) intoxicant (āsava) and (iv) oozing pus.

245 Dhs-a p. 372: Ime pana āsave kilesapaṭipāṭiyā pi āharitum vattati maggapaṭipāṭiyā pi. Kilesapaṭipāṭiyā kāmāsavo anāgānimaggena pahiya, bhavāsavo arahattamaggena, diṭṭhisavo sotāpattimaggena, avijjāsavo arahattamaggena, maggapaṭipāṭiyā sotāpattimaggena diṭṭhisavo pahiya, anāgānimaggena kāmāsavo, arahattamaggena bhavāsavo avijjāsavo cā ti.
Cf. Vism XXII p. 588: Āsavesu diṭṭhisavo paṭṭhamaṇāṇavajjho; kāmāsavo tatiyaṇāṇavajjho; itare dve catutthaṇāṇavajjho.
(vissandamānayūsa). These applications are contextually based on the nature of āsava
technically referred to in the four Nikāyas.

The reference in the Atṭhakavagga of the Suttanipāta verifies that āsavas are technically
used from the earliest stage of the Pāli literature. However, the meaning of āsava as a
technical term, its types and nature are depicted in the four Nikāyas.

Three types of āsavas have been referred to throughout the four Nikāyas. Diṭṭhāsava that
occurs in the Mahāparinibbāna-sutta appears to be a later addition. This is because some
other editions have dropped diṭṭhāsava in that sutta. The Majjhima-nikāya commentary
presents an account as to why only three āsavas are referred to in the Sabbāsava-sutta.
Furthermore, in its tīkā, it is mentioned that “the four āsavas are of the Abhidhamma
method, not of the Sutta method. The four āsavas are mentioned nowhere in the Suttas”.

Even though there are different modes of collective classifications of āsavas in the four
Nikāyas such as “the restraint of āsavas in the present as well as the destruction of āsavas
in the future”, or “there are āsavas leading to hell...”, they ought to be considered as
certain general classifications which short-list āsavas into various categories or groups.

The nature of āsavas is depicted through the two sets of equivalents of āsavas. They are (i)
“vighatapariḷāḥā” and (ii) “saṅkilesikā ponobhavikā sadarā dukkhavipākā āyatim
jātijarāmaraniyā”. Particularly, through the second set, āsavas are identified with ‘pāpakā
akusalā dhammā’, and they are equally referred to in defining ‘arahant’ that also reflect
their positive values to a greater extent. This aspect signifies that āsavas are representative
of akusala dhammas through their own intrinsic nature. Such a representative nature is also
firmly ensured through interdependency of āsavas and avijjā which play a crucial role on
their arising and cessation. In this regard, the application of the fourfold pattern of āsavas
underlies the realization of ‘dukkhasaccāni’. The realization of the fourfold pattern denotes the achievement of final knowledge. This fact has been confirmed by indirect references. Avijjā is defined as ‘unknowing’ (anñāna) about the four Noble Truths, and it is the root of akusala dhammas. Therefore, it indirectly denotes that āsavas and avijjā are co-related with regard to the arising and cessation. This has been clearly pointed out in the figure (1-1).

The direct cause for the arising and abandoning of āsavas is referred to as ‘ayonisomanasikāra’ and ‘yonisomanasikāra’ respectively. This significantly reveals that the mental attitude determines whether one follows the wrong path or the right path. Potential conditions are also involved in whether or not our sense faculties are restrained wisely, etc. The abandoning/destruction of āsavas depends on the possession of certain wholesome dhammas (qualities), and the realization of the nature of ‘anicca’, ‘anattā’ and ‘paṭiccasamuppanna’. Cultivation of thirty-seven bodhipakkhiyadhammas along with serenity (samatha) and insight (vipassanā) consists in positive values in pursuit of liberation from āsavas.

The conceptual development takes place in the later texts of the Khuddaka-nikāya onwards. The four āsavas are classified in conjunction with the four paths of ariya-puggalas, and their conceptual realms are analyzed and classified according to their destruction. While grading the destruction of the four āsavas in three ways, that is apāyagamaniya, olārika and avasesa from the perspective of nāṇa, the conceptual scopes of āsavas are transformed from the idea of collective classifications as depicted in the four Nikāyas.

Comprehensive definitions of the four āsavas finely reflect the Abhidhamma perspective. With regard to kāma and bhava, kāmāsavas and bhavāsavas are respectively defined through
eight types of synonymous idioms such as kāmacchanda, kāmarāga, etc. Diṭṭhāsava is defined as a speculative view with ten bases regarding loka, jīva and tathāgata while a list of synonyms centralizes its conceptual realm. Avijjāsava is referred to as ‘unknowing’ about the eight types of bases while the Nikāyas define avijjā as absence of knowledge only of the four Noble Truths. A list of twenty-five types of synonyms constituting the concept of avijjāsava reflects various characteristics of avijjā.

The causal interrelation of the four āsavas and their arising in cittuppāda also formulate the Abhidhammic conceptual trend systematically characterized in the categories of akusala dhammas, while sustaining the systematized category of akusala cittas and cetasikas. In dealing with the causal interrelation between the four āsavas through ‘patīcca’, it has been proved that the conceptual significance lies in the fact that āsavā dhammas are ‘conditioning’ as well as ‘conditioned’ correlatively under different conditions (paccayas). Besides, the arising of the four āsavas in cittuppāda reveals the conceptual realm of each of the four āsavas in twelve akusala cittas. Kāmāsava arises in eight cittas (i. e. 1-8), bhavāsava in four cittas (i.e. 3-4 and 7-8), diṭṭhāsava in four cittas (i.e. 1-2 and 5-6), while avijjāsava arises in twelve cittas (i.e. 1-12).

Several conceptual aspects prove schematic as well as innovative in the sub-canonical texts. Beginning with the placing of āsavas between ‘ganthas’ and ‘oghas’, the texts particularly equate the four āsavas with four upādānas. The accounts of āsavas explained through padaṭṭhāna, lakkhana and sabhāva (their intrinsic nature) are unique in the Pāli literature. However, the abandoning of the four āsavas is characterized through three different ways of liberation (vimokkha). Kāmāsava and bhavāsava are abandoned by ‘appanihita-vimokkha’ (desireless liberation); diṭṭhāsava by ‘suṇñata-vimokkha’ (voidness liberation) and avijjāsava by ‘animitta-vimokkha’ (signless liberation).
duly supported by the Majjhima-nikāya commentary, which explains as to why three āsavas are referred to in the relevant sutta.

On the etymological front, the commentaries clarify that āsavas flow forth from six senses to their respective objects. Optionally, they explain that āsavas are active up to the gotrabhu from the perspective of dharmas and they flow forth up to the highest existence (bhavagga). These are the commentarial evolutions of the cognitive expression that has been referred to in the Aṅguttara-nikāya. The second optional evolution is specific for the prefix ‘ā’ of the term āsava. In this regard, the fikā clarifies that ‘up to the gotrabhu’ signifies the limitation (avadhi) with restriction (abhividhi) of the activities of āsavas. As has been discussed in the similes and in the etymological accounts, the meaning of āsavas as ‘intoxicants’ (āsavas) has been applied to āsavas as psychological factors in the sense of ‘ciraparivasīyaṭṭhena’; and the meaning of āsavas as ‘oozing pus’ (vissandamanāyaśa) has been formulated in considering the case of ‘discharge’ from the wound referred to in the Aṅguttara-nikāya. In this regard, the Dīgha-nikāya commentary’s optional interpretation of āsavas, ‘ciraparivasīyaṭṭhena vā āsavanaṭṭhena’ possibly covers the four meanings of āsavas featured in the commentaries.

The commentaries interpret kāmāsava, diṭṭhāsava and avijjāsava as ‘rāga’, diṭṭhi’ and ‘aṇṇāṇa’ respectively. As for bhāvāsava, there are some other different views (table 1-3).

However, those views are included in the following four ways:

i) rūpārūpabhavesu chandarūgo (desire and lust for the fine-material and immaterial existences),
ii) jhānanikanti (meditative hankering),
iii) sāsasatadittisahagato rago (lust accompanied by eternality-view),
iv) bhavapatthanā (aspiration for existence)

Interdependency of āsavas and avijjā is further developed in the commentary by sahajāta, and upanissaya. While avijjāsava and avijjā are interdependent on the condition of
upanissaya; kāmāsava and bhavāsava are connected with avijjā by the condition of sahajāta. This fact reveals that their interdependency underlies in the preceding and succeeding existences. It reflects the same idea that the āsaves are the axle joining the chariot of Triple existence having the hubs of avijjā and bhavataṇhā.

The āsaves are contextually interpreted as a main cause (kāraṇa) of saṁsāra. While interpreting ‘yoniso’ and ‘ayoniso’ from the viewpoint of vatta and vivatta respectively, the commentaries reveal how the causes for the arising and abandoning of āsaves are reformed in the commentary period, and how the mental attitude towards certain objects is an absolutely important key to determine whether or not one goes through the circle of saṁsāra or the cessation of saṁsāra.

The commentaries refer to the two ways of abandoning of āsaves, kilesapaṭipātiyā (by the order of defilement) and maggapaṭipātiyā (by the order of path). Therein, ditṭhāsava is abandoned by the path of stream-entry. Kāmāsava is abandoned by the path of non-returning; bhavāsava and avijjāsava are abandoned by the path of Arahantship in the respective order. The final elimination of āsaves denotes ‘ariyamagga’, ‘phala’ and ‘nibbāna’.

The Nikāyas references that reveal the origin of the concepts of āsaves are more or less the same except for some gradual reforms until the later commentary period. While tracing the development of the concept, it has been observed that there are schematic and innovative conceptual aspects even though they are not overwhelmingly supported in the later literary stages. The Abhidhamma aspects specifically reveal the conceptual affiliation with the other technical terms through a list of idioms in defining the terms as well as their arising in cittuppāda. This point will be considered for detailed discussion in chapter seven or in the final conclusion.

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