Chapter Four

CONCEPT OF ĀHĀRA IN BUDDHISM

As discussed, most other religions have used āhāra as a special symbol of ceremony, ritual, taboo, or a certain metaphor, and some other rules and practices for dietary, kosher, or fasting days. The followers will be able to observe these rules whenever fasting and ritual days come. This means that the practice of laws or moderation in food and deeds is not regular; therefore, it is difficult to explore how we nourish ourselves with food and to understand that transformational nourishment is about feeding our entire being.

Different from other religions in the world, Buddhism is neither only a philosophy, nor also a religion of mere belief, but a religion that involves practice, understanding, learning, a way of living, or useful application in real life. Hence, āhāra is not a pure symbol of any ritual or ceremony. Lord Buddha did not attach special importance to dietary or fasting laws; hence, He showed that liberation is not possible through extreme fasting, but equally to be avoided is attachment to the sensual pleasure of eating.\footnote{Robert E. Buswell, Encyclopedia of Buddhism, vol. I, p. 228.} Because āhāra is a special thing (dhamma) that must be understood, chant daily, “This single doctrine should be a chanting in concord, not a wrangling, that thus this holy life may persist and be long maintained. That may be for the welfare and happiness of many folk, for compassion on the world, for the good, the welfare, the
happiness of devas and of men." It is clear that āhāra quite bears an extraordinary and profound meaning, so it is difficult for historians of religion and cultural anthropologists to face and analyze.

As already mentioned, while discussing about āhāra in Buddhism people often refer to the problems of vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism in relation to Theravāda and Mahāyāna tradition, and refer to their traditional standpoints to talk about. In fact, this discussion has not showed concept of the Buddha on āhāra as recorded in Pāli Nikāya. The researcher will not be dependent upon any traditional standpoint to discuss because it is clear that all dhammas are taught by Lord Buddha quite relate directly to the truth of life, the truth of suffering and the end of suffering, and āhāra that is one of the dhammas, covers those truths as discussed in the third chapter.

This chapter centers on solving the basic and main points of the present study. Firstly and secondly, the meaning and enumeration of āhāra will be found in the Pañcanikāya and other Commentaries (āṭṭhakathā.) Thirdly, the consideration of each of four āhāras that maintains physical and mental life, then explains the meaning of each type in details. Fourthly, the operation of four āhāras from which the eater not only has consumed food, but also so has done food, they have constantly consumed each other, and this is carefully analyzed in this chapter. Fifthly, an attempt to point out a state of happiness and suffering is always present at a process of operation of the four foods (cattāro āhārā).

4.1. The meaning of āhārā

The term "āhāra" means food, nutrition, nourishment, nutriment substance; it is something to eat for sustaining physical body. People often think of the meaning of 'food' in that way, but as revealed in the

\(^{196}\) Sangīti sutta of Dīghanikāya.
Panca Nikāya, all objects such as form, sound, etc. are called food for the eyes, ears, etc. Whatever makes one feel either comfortable or uncomfortable such as cold, hot, advantage and disadvantage of circumstances is also called āhāra. Whatever causes pain or happiness is also called āhāra. Furthermore, āhāra also means a condition (paccayā,) for condition brings its own fruit, for example, demerit is called āhāra because it is the cause of suffering, and vice versa; āhāra in these meanings which cover both Life and Universe, consist of both in literality and figurativeness. On this simple word is hinged practically the entire teaching of the Buddha, particularly his specific doctrines of the Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination, Karma, and Rebirth as mentioned in the third chapter. It is also the key-word which unlocks the doors of the mysteries of life and death, of happiness and pain in their universal application.197 All has indeed been played upon throughout the Pañca Nikāya. Thus, the quest for food, as well as the supply thereof, constitutes physically, psychologically and sociologically, the basis of all action. As a primary need of life itself, it conveys the energy for sustenance at all levels, material, biological, volitional and intellectual. All this is involved in the term āhāra, derived from the Sanskit root “ā-hṛ,” means to support, to bring near, to carry, to fetch, to convey to oneself, which action is followed by absorption and assimilation.198

In the Pāli Nikāya, āhāra sums up the whole teaching of the Buddha in relation to Life and Universe, all that is condensed in the answer to the first question, before which no problem can arise: Katamo eko dhāmmo? Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā: What is this one thing? All beings are maintained by nutriment.199 This statement covers the whole nature of a

198 Ibid.
199 D. III, 211.
living organism, which depends not only on material food but also on psychic food, for its sustenance. It is also one thing that must be thoroughly learnt that comes from the question: Ko dhammo abhiññeyyo? Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā: eko dhammo abhiññeyyo? Which one thing is to be learnt? All beings are maintained by causes (foods.) This means that causes are the very foods that must be understood in the high levels of meaning.

The commentary on the Dhammasaṅgani, called the Atthasālinī, gives a lengthy exposition on physical food as a derived material quality (rūpa). Here āhāra is shown to be both the material foodstuff and the nutritive essence (ojā). It is the presence of the material stuff in the stomach, which prevents the feeling of hunger; in its absence, the bodily heat seizes the stomach-walls, but when material food is introduced the bodily heat seizes and the process of assimilation in digestion begins. In gross sustenance, it is said, the nutritive essence is weak; and thus after eating coarse grain, etc., one becomes hungry again after a brief interval. But in subtle food, such as butter, the nutritive essence is great. The food derived from herbivorous animals, such as deer and cattle, is more subtle and more nutritious than that from carnivorous animals, such as tigers and crocodiles.

In sixth chapter ‘Rūpasangahavibhāga (compendium of matter)’ of the Abhīhhammattha Sangaha of Ācariya Anuruddha, āhāra in āhārarūpa (nutritional phenomenal) is one of the eleven kinds of material phenomena that are treated as twenty-eight according to their specific properties. How eleven and twenty-eight? (1) Great essentials: earth,

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200 Ibid., 273.
201 Cf. Khp. IV; A. V, 50, 55. The Dīgha alone gives the second aphorism. ‘Cause’: āhāra, usually meaning ‘food,’ is literally a thing ‘adduced,’ ‘brought up’. Four kinds of āhāra are specific, e.g., S.II, ii f.; below, 219 - food, contact, purpose, consciousness (in connection with rebirth), all considered as so many causes, conditions, antecedents of ‘result’ or fruit. Hence āhāra in general can always be rendered by paccaya. (See footnote from The Dialogues of The Buddha, vol. III, trans. by T.W. & C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers reprinted, 2007, p. 204).
203 Ibid.
water, fire, air element; (2) Sensitive phenomena: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body sensitive; (3) Objective phenomena: visible, sound, smell, taste; (4) Sexual phenomena: femininity, masculinity; (5) Heart phenomena: heart-base; (6) Life phenomena: life faculty; (7) Nutritional phenomena: nutriment; (8) Limiting phenomena: Space element; (9) Communicating phenomena: bodily intimation, vocal intimation; (10) Mutable phenomena: lightness, malleability, wieldiness (plus two intimations); (11) Characteristics of matter: production, continuity, decay, impermanence. All of these, from (1) to (7) is eighteenfold, are called concrete matter; from (8) to (11) is ten that are not concretely produced. In all there are twenty-eight.

From the above enumeration, the nutritional phenomena are the seventh of the eleven kinds of material phenomena and the eighteenth of twenty-eight. In these, “āhāra” is only described for “matter” that is “Edible food (kabāḷīkārāhāra) has the characteristic of nutritive essence (ojā,) that is, the nutritional substance contained in gross edible food. Its function is to sustain physical body. It is manifested as the fortifying of the body. Its proximate cause is gross edible food, which is the base of nutritive essence.”^204

Out of the twenty-eight material phenomena (rūpa) the following twelve find their origin in the process of nutrition (āhāra) or that arise from nutriment. The twelve comprises of the eight kinds of material phenomena (ojaṭṭhamaka-rūpāni,) the basic corporeal octad (suddhaṭṭhakakalāpa): the four great essentials (see above) and four derivatives - colour, smell, taste, and nutritive essence, the eight kinds are inseparable, the rest are separable; the lightness triad and space (see above). These are the material phenomena, which are nutriment-

originated (āhāra-samutṭhāna), for which nutriment is the producing condition (janakapaccaya).\textsuperscript{205}

In the representation of the classifications of material phenomena, āhāra is one of the four modes of origins of the origination of matter (rupasamutṭhāna): “Material phenomena originate in four ways, from kamma, consciousness, temperature, and nutriment” (Kammaṁ, cittam, utu, āhāro cā ti cattāri rupasamutṭhānāni nāma.)\textsuperscript{206} Why is āhāra one of the four modes of origins or the four supporting conditions of materiality? Because ‘this body of the damsel is hidden in the darkness of ignorance, avijjā has stuck in us like a thorn. It is hard to take out. It is one’s own making only.’ It can be described as follows:\textsuperscript{207}

“Kamma is the prime actor. Citta (Mind) is the master. Utu (Temperature or Climatic condition) is the mason. Āhāra (Nutriment) is the labourer. Here, Citta the master asked his men, “Build a house for me.” Kamma the prime actor asked, Citta, in which part shall I build it? At one place there are no visible objects to see; no sounds to hear; no odours to smell; no flavours to it taste; no physical contacts to be made. It is a barren place. At another place, visible objects are there, pleasing to the eye; there are various pleasant sounds; there are pleasant smells; there are pleasant tastes; there are pleasant tangible objects. Of these two places, where would you like to build your house? Citta, the master said, “O, Kamma the prime actor, I am fond of pleasant sights, pleasant sounds, pleasant smell, pleasant tastes and pleasant tangible objects, I would like that sort of place”. To this, Kamma said, “Don’t choose that place, my dear. It is a bad place to live”. Citta asked, “Why is it a bad place to

\textsuperscript{205} Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, vol. I, ibid., p. 281.
\textsuperscript{206} A Comprehensive Manual of Abhihhamma. ibid., p. 246.
\textsuperscript{207} Source: http://www.sunlun-meditation.com.mm/Content_24.htm.
live?” Kamma explained; “It is a ruined place. Land-slides often occur.” “Never mind the land-slides,” said Citta, “I am fond of pleasant visible objects”. “Don’t choose that place,” said Kamma, “It is subject to floods.” Citta said, “Never mind the floods. I am fond of pleasant sounds.” “Don’t choose that place,” said Kamma, “It is subject to violent storms.” “Never mind the violent storms,” said Citta, “I am fond of pleasant smells.” “Don’t choose that place,” said Kamma, “It is subject to frequent fires”. “Never mind the fires,” said Citta, “I am fond of pleasant tastes and pleasant tangible objects. Do build my house at that place.” “Kamma, the prime actor then asked, “May I build it underneath the earth?” “No, no,” said Citta, “that would suffocate me to death.” “Then, may I build it underneath the water” asked Kamma? “No, no,” said Citta, “that would drown me to death.” “Then, may I build it in the big storm,” asked Kamma? “No, no,” said Citta, “I would be carried away by the storm.” “Then, may I build it in the flames,” asked Kamma? “O! No, no,” said Citta, “I would be burnt to death.” “In that case,” said Kamma, “I will have a mixture of earth, water, wind and fire in equal proportions and build your house with that compound. What do you say”? To this Citta agreed and ordered, “Go ahead”. Kamma the prime actor said, “I can’t do it myself. I have to ask my man, Utu, the mason.

“Hey, Utu, the mason,” called Kamma, “Citta wishes to have a home built for him, to be of a compound made up of earth, water, fire and wind, in equal proportion. Will you do the job”? Utu replied, “I will master but it all depends on Āhāra. My work is dependent on the quality of bricks he supplies. His bricks might not be always sound; some might be half burnt, some might be broken and some might be soft.” Kamma protested, “Don’t make a fuss. Just
go about your work." The mason could not say any further. He had
to build the house with the assistance of his helper Āhāra."
So dear audience, you have seen houses being built in towns and
villages. The mason has to use whatever bricks he is being supplied
by his helper Āhāra. Some bricks are sound, some are not sound,
there are half-burnt bricks and some are broken bricks. Utu the
mason plastered them all to look nice. In this way, some fine houses
are built. In the three worlds, houses are built some for Humans,
others for Devās and for Brahmās. We mean the bodies, which are
likened to houses. In the animal world, various kinds of animals
likewise get various kinds of bodies. As all of these bodies are built
of the four Primary Elements, sometimes earth fail and the individual
suffers agony; sometimes water drowns them and the individual
suffers agony; sometimes wind plays havoc and the individual
suffers agony; sometimes fire burns and the individual suffers agony.
We have seen these things, haven’t we?
That is why, it has been said by the Buddha, all things which are
conditioned by the four conditioning elements are subject to decay. In
spite of this warning, most people long for fresh existence, with the result
that they become subject to land-slides and suffer agony; sometimes they
are drowned in water, suffering agony; sometimes they are caught in
storms and suffer agony; sometimes they get burnt by fire and suffer
agony. All these agonies are the result of one’s own wish for fresh
existence. We must face up to the consequences of our desire. There is no
point in murmuring about them. We wish for it and get what we wished
for, if we had not wished for fresh existence, we would not get it.
However, by simply saying that we do not want a fresh existence,
our wish will not be fulfilled. We must acquire the necessary knowledge
for which we need to meditate in the *Vipassanā* practice. When we have acquired this necessary knowledge, we will no more wish for a fresh existence; if we do not wish for it, fresh existence will not be forthcoming. If no fresh existence arises, we are freed from all sorts of suffering, we attain *Nibbana*.$^{208}$

In the above representation, material phenomena arises in four ways and *āhāra* is one of them: Nutriment, known as nutritive essence, on reaching its stage of presence, produces material phenomena originating from nutriment at the time it is swallowed (*Ojāsankhāto āhāro āhārasamuṭṭhānarūpaṃ ajjiharanakāle nānappatto va samuṭṭhāpeti*).$^{209}$ Here, material phenomena originating from nutriment (*āhārasamuṭṭhānarūpa*): the internal nutritive essence, supported by the external, produces material phenomena at the moment of the presence starting from the time it is swallowed. The nutritive essence that has reached presence in the material groups originating from nutriment produces a further pure octad, and the nutritive essence in that octad originates still a further octad; thus the occurrence of octad links up ten or twelve times. The nutriment taken by a pregnant mother, pervading the body of the embryo, originates materiality in the child. Even nutriment smeared on the body is said to originate materiality. The nutritive essence in the internal groups born of the other three causes also originates several occurrences of pure octad in succession the nutriment taken on one day can support the body for as long as seven days.$^{210}$

*Āhāra* is not only a material phenomenon but also as an active process it is also a condition (*āhāra-paccaya*) of support of two kinds: the relation of edible food (material) to the body and the relation of

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$^{208}$ Ibid.
$^{210}$ Ibid., pp. 250-251.
immaterial supports to co-existing states of mind and body. It is this nutritive support in the psychological field which forms the basis of the doctrine of the *karma* and the teachings connected therewith. Food or sustenance (*āhāra*) is frequently synonymous with causal condition, e.g., “from the arising of food is the arising of the body; from the ceasing of food is the ceasing of the body; and the way leading to the ceasing of the body is the Noble Eightfold Path” (*āhāra-samudayo rūpa-samudayo, āhāranirodhā rūpanirodhō; ayam eva aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo rūpanirodhaṁgāminī paṭipadā.*)

Again, *āhāra* is described in the *Samuccayasangahavibhāga* - compendium of categories of *Abhihhammattha Sangaha*: “Four nutriments: (1) edible food, (2) contact as the second, (3) mental volition as the third, (4) consciousness as the fourth” (*Cāttāro āhārā: kabalīkāro āhāro, phasso dutiyo, manoṣaṅcetanā tatiyā, viññāṇam.*). Here, the word nutriment (*āhāra*) means that which sustains by acting as a strong supporting condition. According to the *Sutta* method of explanation, edible food as nutriment sustains the physical body; contact sustains feeling; mental volition sustains rebirth in the three realms; and consciousness sustains the compound of mind-and-body. According to the *Abhidhamma* method, edible food sustains the material phenomena of fourfold origination in the body, and the other three nutriments sustain all their conascent mental and material phenomena. Whereas edible food, as matter, is indeterminate, the three mental nutriments can be of all three ethical qualities.

Āhāra-paccaya is one of the twenty-four conditions (*paccaya*) of the *Paṭṭhāna* of *Abhidhammapitaka* in the system of correlation (*paṭṭhāna-naya*) such as: “The nutriment condition is twofold: edible food is

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211 S. III, 59.
condition for body; and immaterial nutriment, for the conascent mind-and-matter\textsuperscript{213} \((Kabajikāro āhāro imassa kāyassa, arūpino āhārā sahajātānam nāmarūpānan ti ca duvidho ho ti āhārapaccayo.) Here the term āhāra is used in a very wide sense to include that, which nourishes or sustains. Material food connotes the nutritive essence (or what is called edible food,) which again is subdivided into two kinds: Internal \((ajjhattāhāra)\) and external \((bahidhāhāra.)\) All the natural qualities born of the four causes or origins (see below), pertaining to those creatures who live on edible food, are here the \(paccayuppanna-dhammā\) related to the two kinds of material food. Mental nutriment is threefold: the nutriments contact, mental volition, and consciousness. These are conditions for the conascent mental and phenomena. In other words, these kinds of immaterial food, or \(paccaya-dhammā\), are causally related to the co-existent properties, both mental and material, which are their corresponding \(paccayup-panna-dhammā.\textsuperscript{214}\)

In what sense is āhāra to be understood? Āhāra is to be understood in the sense of holding up, strongly, which means causing to exist firmly. This is to say, a relating thing nourishes its related thing so as to enable it to endure long, to develop, to flourish, and to thrive, by means of support. Though the causal relation of food possesses a producing power, the power of support is predominant here. Here the two material foods are called āhāra, because they strongly hold up the group of internal material qualities born of the four causes, by nourishing them so that they may exist firmly, endure long, and reach uncurtailed the bounds (or limits) of their life-term. Contact is āhāra also, because it strongly holds up its coexistent things, and enables them to stand firmly and endure long by nourishing

\textsuperscript{213} Ibid. p. 319.
them with the essence extracted from desirable and undesirable objects. Volitional activity of mind, or (will), is an āhāra in that it furnishes courage for the execution of deeds, words, thoughts. And consciousness is an āhāra also, inasmuch as it predominates in all thinking about an object. These three immaterial foods, in supplying nourishment to the co-existent mental also affect the co-existent materials.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 47-48.}

Āhāra here may also be explained after the Sutta method. Just as birds ascertaining where their quarters are, fly with their wings through the air from tree to tree and from wood to wood, and peck at fruits with their beaks, thus sustaining themselves through their whole life, so also beings - with the six classes of consciousness, ascertaining objects, with the six kinds of volitional activity of mind, persevering to get something as an object; and with the six kinds of contacts, making the essence of objects appear - either enjoy pleasure or suffer pain. Or solely with six classes of consciousness, comprehending objects, they avail themselves of forming, or becoming, body and mind. Or solely with the contacts, making objects appear in order that feelings may be aroused through the same, they cultivate craving. Or, committing various kinds of deeds through craving accompanied by volitions, they migrate from existence to existence. Thus, it should be understood how existence is the functioning of the different foods.\footnote{Ibid., p. 48.}

\section*{4.2. The enumeration of āhāra}

The sense of āhāra that, as mentioned, is not only something (food) formed into mouthfuls for eating but also ‘condition’, implies abundantly and diversely all the aspects of human life, the mysteries of life and death, of happiness and pain. From these senses, it is said that all such solemn
utterances alone are already the importance of the subject that should be evident, and it has indeed been played upon throughout the Suttas in the Nikāya, followed up in later Abhidhamma texts of the Dhammasaṅgani and played in the many commentaries of Buddhaghosa and in later treatises such as a Anuruddha's Abhidhammattha Saṅgha up to the present century writers, such as Paul Dahlke in his Buddhism. Thus, we find enumerated four sustenances (cattāra āhāra) for the maintenance of beings and for the assistance of those seeking birth. The enumerated number of the fourfold āhāra repeated many times in the Pañcanikāya.

First of all, in the Saṅgītisutta:

"Four supports (or foods), to wit, solid (bodily) food, whether gross or subtle, contact, as the second, motive or purpose as third, consciousness (in rebirth) as fourth."

In the Dasuttarasutta Lord Buddha said:

"Four things are to be understood: the Four Nutriments, to wit, solid nutriments, gross or subtle; contact as second, the purpose of the mind as third, (rebirth) consciousness as fourth."

In the Sammādiṭṭhisutta, especially, Venerable Sāriputta who is the chief disciple of the Buddha also taught that:

"And what, your reverences, is sustenance, what the uprising of sustenance, what the stopping of sustenance, what the course leading to the stopping of sustenance? Your reverences, there are these four (kinds of) sustenance for the stability of creatures who have come to be or for the assistance of those who are seeking to be. What are the

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217 Ibid. p. 280.
218 D. III, 228 (Dialogues of the Buddha, vol. III, PTS, p. 219.)
219 Ibid., 278 (ibid., p. 250.)
four? Material food, coarse or fine; (sense-) impingement is the second; volition is the third; consciousness is the fourth.”

In the Mahātaṁśāsankhayasutta:

“Monks, these four (forms of) nutriment are for the maintenance of creatures that have come to be or for the assistance of those seeking birth. What are the four? Material nutriment, whether coarse or fine, sensory impingement is the second, mental striving is the third, consciousness is the fourth.”

In the Āhārasutta of Nidānavagga of Saṁyutta Nikāya:

“There are these four sustenances, brethren, for the maintenance of beings that have come to birth or for the forwarding of them that seek to become. Which are the four? Material food, coarse or fine, secondly, contact, thirdly, volition, fourthly, consciousness. These four are the sustenances for the maintenance of beings that have come to birth, or for the forwarding of those that seek to become.”

In the Puttamasūpamasutta:

“There are these four foods, brethren, for the maintenance of beings that have come to birth, or for the forwarding of those who seek to come to be. Which are the four? Material food, coarse or fine; contact is second, willing of mind is third, consciousness is the fourth. These are the four foods for the maintenance of beings that have come to birth, or for the forwarding of those who seek to come to be.”

“Monks, if in four things a monk rightly feel revulsion rightly feel fading interest (in the world.) rightly be released, rightly have sight to the furthest bounds and rightly comprehend the meaning of things,

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220 M. I, 48 (The Collection of the Middle Sayings, vol. I, PTS, p. 59.)
221 Ibid., 261 (ibid., p. 316.)
222 S. II, 11 (The Book of The Kindred Sayings, part II, PTS, p. 8.)
223 Ibid., 98 (ibid., pp. 67.)
then in this same visible state he makes an end of Ill. In what four things? The four sustenances.\footnote{224}

It is observed that nutriment (āhāra) has the meaning of “condition” (paccaya) because conditions carry (āharanti) their own results. Here an objection may be raised: “If the meaning of nutriment is that of condition, why are only four of them mentioned here, though living beings are conditioned also in other ways?” In reply, it is said: “Because these four are prominent conditions for the individual life continuity.”\footnote{225}

For beings living on material food, it is an important condition for their physical organism (rūpa-kāya.) As to their mental organism (nāma-kāya,) sense-impression is an important condition of feeling, volitional thought of consciousness, and consciousness of mind-and-body (nāmarūpa.) Accordingly, it was said: “Just as this body subsists on nutriment, subsists because of nutriment, does not subsist without nutriment;”\footnote{226} in the same way, “O monks, are feelings conditioned by sense-impression, is consciousness conditioned by kamma-formations (sānkhāra-cetanā, ‘karmic volition’,) is mind-and-body conditioned by consciousness.”\footnote{227}

What is it, now, that is fed (or conditioned) by each of the four nutriments? Edible food feeds and conditions the set of corporeal qualities that have nutritive essence as their eighth factor.\footnote{228} The nutriment sense-impression feeds and conditions the three kinds of feeling (pain, happiness, and neither anguish nor joy.) The nutriment volitional thought feeds and conditions the three states of existence

\footnote{224} A. V, 52 (The Book of The Gradual Sayings, vol. V, PTS, p. 35.)
\footnote{225} The Four Nutriments of Life, ibid., p.25.
\footnote{226} S. V, 64.
\footnote{227} S. II, 12:1, 1, etc.
\footnote{228} Ojāṭhamaka-rūpāni, the “basic corporeal octad” (suddhaṭṭha-kāḷāpa), consisting of the four material elements, and color, smell, taste, and nutritive essence. This is the simplest kind of material group recognized by the Abhidhamma theory of matter. All the more complex material groups also contain these eight phenomena as their foundation. Material groups in a living organism require an input of nutriment in order to endure in continuity.
(craving for sense pleasures, for existence and for non-existence). The nutriment consciousness feeds and conditions mind-and-body at rebirth.

From the above discussion and quotations, āhāra that is the enumerated four in number is not only taught in the Nikāya but in the Abhidhamma, Vinaya pitaka and other commentaries. In fact, for this worldly life, what taught by Buddha is immutable truth that is “life is pain and the way to end it” is the same as the four foods are suffering and the way leading to stopping them. All this is involved in the four kinds of āhāra that can be divided into twofold corresponding with physical body and mental life: the first one (kabalinkārāhāra) food for body and the rest (phassāhāra, manosaṅcetanāhāra, and viṅnānāhāra) food for mind.

In short, it can be said that the sense and enumeration of āhāra that is examined has not been seen and heard before, it demonstrates that the quest for food, as well as the supply thereof, constitutes physically, psychologically and sociologically, the basis of all action. As a primary need of life itself, it conveys the energy for sustenance at all levels, material, biological, volitional and intellectual.229 We shall now consider each of four kinds of āhāra singly next.

4.3. The consideration of each of four types of āhāra

4.3.1. Kabaliṅkārāhāra

4.3.1.1. Meaning of kabaliṅkārāhāra

The term “kabaliṅkārāhāra” (S. kavadimkārāhāra) means physical nutriment, edible food or material food, ‘food formed into balls, i.e. food formed into mouthfuls for eating (according to Indian custom) belongs together with the three mental nutriments, to the group of four nutriments. In other words, kabaliṅkārāhāra is nutriment that can be swallowed after

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making it into a ball or piece (kabalinkāro ca so āhāro cāti kabalikārāhāro;) this is a term for the nutritive essence which has as its basis boiled rice, junket, etc.\textsuperscript{230} This means that material food that nourishes the eightfold corporeality namely the solid, liquid, heat, motion, color, odour the taste and the nutrient essence\textsuperscript{231} as above mentioned. So, when one asks, what is that form which is kabalinkāro āhāro (bodily nutriment,) the answer is boiled rice, sour gruel, flour, fish, flesh, milk, curds, butter, cheese, tila-oil, cane-syrup, or whatever else there is in whatever region that by living beings may be eaten, chewed, swallowed, digected into the juice by which living beings are kept alive - this is that form which is bodily nutriment.\textsuperscript{232} Being a primary need for itself, it constitutes the physical basis of all action.

Edible food is divided into various categories. A basic categorization is into solid and gross food (olārika) and fine and exquisite food (sukhuma.) A further sub-division of this is khajja, bhojja, leyya (to be sipped) and peyya (to be drunk.) What is eaten (asita), drunk (pūta) chewed (khāyita) and tasted (sāyita) also is a similar division.\textsuperscript{233} From this it is clear that food, in the broader sense, constitute not only of what is eaten, but also of what is drunk. Hence common term (anna-pāna: food and drink) could be taken as another term for food in general, though pāna itself could mean water.\textsuperscript{234}

Material food, which sustains the body, which is either gross or subtle (olārika va sukhumo va): it is gross because of the grossness of the

\textsuperscript{230} According to the \emph{Abhidhamma}, the nutriment proper is the material phenomenon called nutritive essence (oja), while the solid food ingested is the mere “basis” (vatthu) of the nutritive essence. (Tran. by Bhikkhu Ṛnāmoli, Edited and Revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi, \emph{The Sammaditthi Sutta and its Commentary}, source: http://www.geocities.com/ekchew.geo/wheel377.htm#n23.)

\textsuperscript{231} \textit{Vism.}, p. 341.


\textsuperscript{233} G. P. Malalasekera, \emph{Encyclopaedia of Buddhism}, vol., V, p. 255.

\textsuperscript{234} Śn., Verse No. 485.
basis, and subtle because of the subtlety of the basis. But because physical nutriment is included in subtle materiality, by way of its individual essence it is subtle only.\(^{235}\) That grossness and subtlety should be understood relatively in respect of the basis.\(^{236}\) Thus, the nutriment of peacocks is subtle compared with the nutriment of crocodiles. Crocodiles, they say, swallow stones, and these dissolve on reaching their stomachs. Peacocks eat such animals as snakes, scorpions, etc. But the nutriment of hyenas is subtle compared with the nutriment of peacocks. These, they say, eat horns and bones thrown away three years before, and these become soft as yams as soon as they are moistened with their saliva. In addition, the nutriment of elephants is subtle compared with the nutriment of hyenas. For these eat the branches of various trees, etc. The nutriment of the gayal buffalo, the antelope, the deer, etc., is subtler than the nutriment of elephants. These, they say, eat the sapless leaves of various kinds of trees, etc. The nutriment of cows is subtler than their nutriment; they eat fresh and dried grass. The nutriment of hares is subtler than their nutriment; that of birds is subtler than that of hares; that of barbarians is subtler than that of birds; that of village headmen is subtler than that of barbarians; that of kings and kings’ ministers is subtler than village headmen’s; that of a Wheel-turning Monarch is subtler than their nutriment. The earth deities’ nutriment is subtler than that of a Wheel-turning Monarch. The nutriment of the deities of the Four Great Kings is subtler than that of the earth deities. Thus, nutriment should be elaborated

\(^{235}\) The point is that while in conventional terms food substances are distinguished as gross or subtle, this distinction is made in terms of the physical base only. The Abhidhamma classifies nutritive essence as subtle materiality (sukhumampa); it contrasts with gross materiality (olārikarupa), which includes only the five sense organs and their objects. Ibid.

\(^{236}\) Ibid., The Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta and its Commentary.
up to that of the deities who wield power over others’ creations. But after saying, “Their nutriment is subtle,” the end is reached.

And here, in a basis that is gross, the nutritive essence is limited and weak; in one that is subtle, it is strong. Thus one who has drunk even a full bowl of gruel is soon hungry again and desirous of eating anything; but after drinking even a small amount of ghee, he will not want to eat for the whole day. Therein, it is the basis that dispels fatigue, but it is unable to preserve; but the nutritive essence preserves, though it cannot dispel fatigue. But when the two are combined they both dispel fatigue and preserve. There is one question: Are all things preserved by ‘edible food’ to sustain and grow? Therefore, what is it preserved? In reply it is said: The very ‘edible food’ hoards itself. For example, a mother cares for her newborn baby, to help baby grow up in strength, and she also preserves herself.

Furthermore, gross food is not exclusively enjoyed among humans, animal and other infra-human beings, for in the entire sphere of sense (kāmāvacara) the objects of the senses provide the food for the sense-contact (this will be discussed more in the second type of four foods). Thus, some devas are referred to as feeding on gross food (kabalinkārāhāra-bhakkha) and they are of lower rank than those who live in a mind-made-body (manomaya-kāya.) Although this latter class of devas have body and form, they do not come under the spheres of sense-pleasure (kāmāvacara,) but under the sphere of form (rūpavacara,) where the pleasures of the senses, such as the tastes of food, do not occur. It was

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237 This is the highest realm among the sense-sphere heavens. Above this come the Brahma realms, where physical nutriment is non-existent. Ibid.
238 Ibid.
239 A. I, 192.
Udāyin’s\textsuperscript{240} wrong view to think that devas with mind-made bodies is formless (arūpa).\textsuperscript{241} It can be said that beings of the five aggregates are existing and will exist with four kinds of āhāra, beings of the four aggregates are existing and will existing with three kinds of āhāra: contact, volition, and consciousness.

Material food, or rather the process of digestion, which involves the decomposition of food in the process of assimilation by the body, is one of the forty meditation-object (kammatthāna) and is called reflection on the loathsomeness of food (this will be discussed in details in the sixth chapter).

\textit{4.3.1.2. Function of kāballikārāhāra}

Among the four kinds of nutriment, edible food fulfills the function of nourishing, by way of sustaining (upathambhento)\textsuperscript{242}

The edible food sustains the body by fortifying it, serves for the (bodily) stability of beings. Though this body is produced by \textit{kamma}, it is through being sustained by edible food that it lasts for 10 years or 100 years, until the end of a being’s normal life span. This may be compared, firstly, to a child that, though brought forth by the mother, is nourished by the wet nurse at the breast, and is nurtured in other ways; and reared thus it lives long. Secondly, it is like a (dilapidated) house propped up by supports.\textsuperscript{243} As it was said: “just as a house that is about to fall, will not fall when supported by timber, so, O great king, is this body sustained by nutriment and persists because of nutriment.”\textsuperscript{244}

Similarly, it is by sustaining that the nutriment edible food fulfills its function of nourishing. In fulfilling that function, it is a condition to two

\textsuperscript{240} Udāyi was one of the Buddha’s disciples, his mind often arose wrong views to the Dhammas. He did not answer exactly the questions of the Buddha. Hence, he was blamed by the Buddha (A. I, 228; A. III, 184, 322; S.v. 89; S.iv. 223-4).


\textsuperscript{242} The Four Nutriments of Life, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{243} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{244} Milp. II, 1, 11.
kinds of corporeal continuity: that produced by nutriment (āhārasamūṭṭhāṇa) and that karmically acquired (upādinnaka; due to clinging in a former life.) For kamma-born (kammaja-upādinnaka) corporeal processes, edible food is a condition by way of being their preserver (anupālaka;) and for those produced by nutriment, by way of being their originator (janaka).²⁴⁵

In order to fulfil the function of edible food, from the early morning to the night and forever, man has an only purpose that tries to get edible food in many different ways. It is said that, the process of search for edible food is really complex, miserable, and arduous, but one must get it at all costs. For the edible food, the Buddha has brought the special simile to humankind’s intention that can be considered as follows:

“And how, brethren, is material food to be considered? It is as if two parents who had taken slender provisions were on their way in path through the jungle, and theirs was an only child dear and sweet. Now suppose that the scanty provisions of those parents in the jungle came to an end, used up. And suppose that there was yet a portion of the jungle untraversed. Then those parents might say: What scanty provisions we had are come to an end, are used up, and there is this remainder of the jungle to traverse. What if we were to slay this our only child, sweet and dear, and make both dried pieces and juicy pieces, and so, eating flesh of child, might traverse that remainder of the jungle. Let us not all three perish! And so those two parents slew that only child sweet and dear, and made both dried pieces and juicy pieces, and so, eating flesh of child they could traverse that remainder of the jungle. They would both eat child flesh and smite on their breasts crying: Where is our only child? Where is our only

child? Now what think you, brethren? Would they take the food for sport? or would they take the food from indulgence? Or would they take the food for plumpness? Not so, lord. Would they not take the food, brethren, in order that they might last till the jungle was crossed? Even so, lord. Even so, brethren, I declare should solid food be regarded. When such food is well understood, the passion of the five senses is well understood. When the passion of the five senses is well understood, the fetters do not exist bound by which the Ariyan disciple could come again to this world.\textsuperscript{246}

The above simile has described a couple, foodless in the midst of a desert, eat their little child, to enable them to reach their destination. The simile seems to refer to many aspects of human life concerning the way of search food edible food, something that deserves to be contemplated through this simile. If not, one will feel conscience-stricken at the struggle for food.

The readers can understand this simile by various ways but for the researcher, the simile both reflects the risky reality of search for edible food and instructs the right way of food consumption. The fictitious persons in the simile allude to all living beings who are on the way of struggle for food. The jungle or desert represents a place, environment where the human life or the life span of man; slender provision represents constant privation and hunger of the human world, it is hard to stop. The act of killing and eating the child's flesh allude to the human tragedy in the desire of existence. The extreme state of remorse of the husband and wife allude to torment of mental life of human beings. It is, of course, through the story, the Buddha also instructed the method of how to have food rightly in order to get true happiness in this life.

\textsuperscript{246} S. II. 98, § 63 (\textit{The Book of The Kindred Sayings}, part II, PTS, p. 68.)
Looking at the persons in the Buddha's simile, humankind ever since it emerged on this planet has traversed the desert of life where food is the most urgent concern. Again as in that story, the stilling of man's hunger has often been a heart-rending business - if not for the sometimes quite callous eater, then for his prey and for a sensitive observer. Often, in his search for food, man has destroyed what is commonly dearest to him, be it relatives and friends or the ideals of his youth. True, this is only one aspect of life: life is not 'desert' entire; it has a goodly number of oases where travelers can rest and enjoy themselves to such an extent that they are prone to forget the surrounding desert, which often encroaches on the tiny oasis and buries it.\(^\text{247}\)

The couple in the story, coming near starvation, eats their own beloved son. It is a gruesome and seemingly fantastic story indeed. But knowing from the records of history that, at times of famine, war or shipwreck, men did resort to cannibalism, people have to admit that what the story tells may have substantially happened ever so often, in one way or another. In his incessant search for food, or for better food or for control of food resources, - how often has man killed, cruelly crushed or exploited his fellow creatures, even those who are close to him by common blood or race! For an unfathomable time, caught in the ever-turning Wheel of Life, man has been everything: the prey and devourer of all, parent and child of all, this human beings should consider while contemplating the edible food and the Buddha's simile for it.

If men wish to eat and live, they have to kill or tacitly accept that others do the killing for them. When speaking of the latter, they do not refer merely to the butcher or the angler. Also for the strict vegetarian's sake, living beings have to die under the farmer's ploughshare, and his

\(^{247}\) The Four Nutriments of Life, p. 6.
lettuce and other vegetables have to be kept free of snails and other pests, at the expense of these living beings who, like himself, are in search of food. A growing population's need for more arable land deprives animals of their living space and in the course of history, has eliminated many a species. It is a world of killing in which man lives and has a part. Man should face this horrible fact and remain aware of it in his reflection on edible food. It will stir him to effort for getting out of this murderous world by the ending of craving for the four nutriments.

In one short life-time, how many train loads of food have passed in and out of this puny body! How many people have had to labour in the production, preparation and distribution of that food, for keeping unbroken the traffic line that runs straight through this small body! It is a grotesque picture if man visualizes it. There is yet another aspect of that life-giving function of eating. To illustrate it, man should think of a silo, or store house or food bag: after it has been emptied, a few grains will mostly remain in it. Similarly, there will always be left some tiny remnants of food in his body that is neither assimilated nor expelled but remain and putrefy. Some physiologies say that it is this putrefaction of residual food that ultimately brings about the ageing and death of the organism if there are no other causes. If they are right, the food is not only life-giving but also death-bestowing, and it appears that man has in this life of his choice between death by starvation or by putrefaction. 'The food devours the eater', this close connection between nutriment and death is very poignantly expressed in Greek myth, according to which Demeter is the Goddess of corn (that is, food) and of death as well. Bach

\[248\] Ibid., p. 7.
ofen, that great explorer and interpreter of classic myth, has expressed the significance of it very succinctly: “She feeds man as a prey to her.”

People, as far as they give any thought to the humdrum act of eating, have taken very different attitudes towards food. Some, who became tired of the dull routine of eating dull food, have made a fine art of it and became gourmands. To them the Buddha says, “All nutriment is miserable, even divine food.” Others keenly aware of the importance of food for good health, have devised various ideas about pure food: man has here the dietetic rules of several religions and the belief of ancient and modern sects in man’s ‘purification by nutriment’ (āhāra-parisuddhi,) of which already the Buddha made mention, down to nowadays with the ersatz – religions of numerous food-reformers. Others again, have tried to solve the problems of the body’s dependence on food by reducing nourishment below sustenance level and by long periods of fasting. This harsh and futile method of self-mortification the Buddha, too, had tried out and rejected before His enlightenment, and had vividly described His experience in the Discourse on the Noble Quest (Ariyapariyesana sutta, M. I, sutta No. 26.) Also later on, the Buddha never recommended periods of fasting, beyond the abstention from solid food after noon enjoined upon bhikkhus, and in the periodic observance of the Eight or Ten Precepts.

The deep contemplation will help human beings to realize the truth of suffering not only comes from search for food but also comes from not eating mindfully. Indeed, human beings need to learn the right ways to consume edible food in order to preserve the health and well-being of their body and spirit. When they smoke, drink, or consume toxins, they are eating their lungs, liver, and heart. If they have children and do these

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249 Ibid.
things, they are eating their children’s flesh. Their children need them to be healthy and strong.

Human beings have to look deeply to see how they grow their food, so they can eat in ways that preserve their collective well-being, minimize their pain and the pain of other species, and allow the earth to continue to be a source of life for all of them. If while they eat, they destroy living beings and the environment, they are eating the flesh of their own sons and daughters. They need to look deeply together and discuss how to consume, what to eat, and what to resist. This will be a real Dharma discussion.\(^{250}\)

The above discussion reflects the real situation of human society on the way of search for food, but the more important matter is what the Buddha, as a teacher of the Middle Way, taught was moderation in eating, non-attachment to the taste of food, and wise reflection on nutriment. He advised while consuming edible food not for amusement or for enjoyment or for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the sake of crossing the desert of suffering.

### 4.3.1.3. The peril of \textit{kabaliṅkārāhāra}

When the edible food fulfils of nourishing, its peril is to be seen that is craving for physical body, the peril of desire\(^ {251}\) in the case of physical food as nutriment. But for what reasons are they peril? Having desire for the edible food, people, taking up various crafts for the sake of food, undergo many hardships, like enduring cold, etc. Others, having become monks in this dispensation, seeking food in a way wrong for a monk, engage themselves in a physician’s work, etc., and thereby incur blame in this very life; and hereafter they become hungry monk-ghosts as described in the \textit{Lakkhāna-samyutta} as follows:


\(^{251}\) This is said because the craving for taste is strong when taking edible food. By being the cause of much harm, it is a peril (\textit{bhaya}).
"I saw a bhikkhu moving through the air. His Outer robe, bowl, waistband, and body were burning, blazing, and flaming while he uttered cries of pain...That bhikkhu had been an evil bhikkhu in the Buddha kassapa’s Dispensation..."252

For these reasons, it should be understood that desire is an element of peril in edible food. When body is nourished by edible food with much nutritive essence, it becomes beautiful and strong, the very taste of the nutritive essence concurrently attaches the mind and makes it defile, as said, edible food is the basic need of human beings in the Desire Realm (kāma-loka).253 Because of this urgent need, human beings must work hard and can do the unwholesome such as, killing, stealing, deceit of each other etc. Even animals, due to food, must harass one another, wound, and lose their lives. Many accidents, unexpected things, evil ones, and degradation of environment as well have caused from the wrong ways of quest for edible food.

Hunger that is great fear, always press upon human’s mind, is a serious disease never stop. Generally, ones use proper medicine when they are sick and will get better, but the illness of hunger is refractory, “Jighachā paramā rogā: Hunger is the greatest disease.”254 The Cūtuma sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya II has stated these four perils for one going down to the water are to be expected: Peril of water, peril of crocodiles, peril of whirlpools, and peril of fierce fishes. Similarly, monks four perils

252 S. II, 17.
253 Triloka or Tiloka in Pāli: The ‘triple world’ of samsāra or rebirth. Buddhist cosmology adopts an ancient Āryan conception of the world having three strata or layers (earth, atmosphere, and sky) and renames these as the Desire Realm (kāma-loka), the Form Realm (rūpa-loka), and the Formless Realm (ārūpya-loka). Human beings live in the Desire Realm, the lowest of the three, and they (along with other denizens of the six realms of rebirth) are reborn here because they are still subject to desire. In the Form Realm there is no desire but corporeality remains, and in the Formless realm there is neither desire nor corporeality. Access from one world to another is by two methods: by being reborn there in accordance with one’s karma, or through the meditational practice of the dhyānas. These worlds are alternatively known as realms (dhātu) or spheres (avacara), thus kāma-dhātu, kāma-avacara, etc.
254 Dhp., 203.
to be expected: Peril of water, peril of crocodiles, peril of whirlpools, and peril of fierce fishes. Out of the four, peril of crocodiles is a synonym that of hunger and for gluttony. Without enduring lack of edible food, some monks can disavow the training and return to the low life of the world because of hunger. The following story\(^{255}\) is evident:

- Prince Tissa was the scion of a wealthy house at Rājagaha. One day he came to the Bamboo-grove and there hearing a discourse from the Master, wished to join the Brotherhood, but, being refused because his parents would not give their consent, obtained their consent by following Raṭṭha-pāla's\(^{256}\) example and refusing food for seven days, and finally took the vows with the Master.

- After admitting this young man, Tissa went to Sāvatthi and dwelt at Jetavanavihāra training his round for alms from house to house, omitting none, so he called Cullapiṇḍapatika Tissa.

- A festival having been proclaimed at this time at Rājagaha, the Elder's mother and father laid in a silver casket the trinkets he used to wear as a layman, and took it to heart, bewailing thus, “At other festivals our son used to wear this or that bravery as he kept the festival; and he, our only son, has been taken away by the sage Gotama to the town of Sāvatthi. Where is our son sitting now or standing?” Now a slave-girl who came to the house, noticed the lady of the house weeping, and asked her why she was weeping; and the lady told her all.

- “What, madam, was your son fond of?” “Of such and such a thing,” replied the lady. “Well, if you will give me authority in this house, I’ll fetch your son back.” “Very good,” said the lady in assent, and gave the girl her expenses and despatched her with a large following, saying, “Go, and manage to fetch my son back.”

\(^{255}\) Jātaka, I, Vātāmiga No. 14.
\(^{256}\) M. II, No. 83.
The girl rode in a palanquin to Sāvatthi, where she took up her residence in the street which the Elder used to frequent for alms. Surrounding herself with servants of her own, and never allowing the Elder to see his father's people about, she watched the moment when the Elder entered the street and at once bestowed on him an alms of victual and drink. And when she had bound him in the bonds of the craving of taste, she got him eventually to seat himself in the house, till she knew that her gifts of food as alms had put him in her power. Then she feigned sickness and lay down in an inner chamber.

In the due course of his round for alms at the proper time, the Elder came to the door of her house; and her people took the Elder's bowl and made him sit down in the house.

When he had seated himself, he said, "Where is the lay-sister?" "She's ill, sir; she would be glad to see you."

Bound as he was by the bonds of the craving of taste, he broke his vow and obligation, and went to where the woman was lying.

Then she told him the reason of her coming, and so wrought on him that, all because of his being hound by the bonds of the craving of taste, she made him forsake the Brotherhood; when he was in her power, she put him in the palanquin and came back with a large following to Rājagaha again.

Again, if a person takes food with much nutritive essence, his body will become good-looking. This person can attach to clinging for his body and try to get kinds of cosmetic and various instruments to make this body more beautiful. Thus, the mind is sunk and reborn in the Desire Realm (kāma-loka,) this is one of perils of edible food.
Again, the following stories are proof:

Abhirupānandā who was one of some famous women figures prominent in the early Buddhist texts. She was the daughter of a Sakya noble named Khemaka. She was called Nanda the Fair for her great beauty and amiability. Her beloved kinsman, Carabhuta, died on the day on which she was to choose him from amongst her suitors. She had to leave the world against her will. Though she entered the order, she could not forget that she was beautiful. Fearing that, the Buddha would rebuke her, she used to avoid his presence. The Buddha knew that the time had come for her to acquire knowledge and asked Mahapajapati Gotami to bring all the bhikkunis before him to receive instruction. Nanda sent a proxy for her. The Buddha said, “Let no one come by proxy.” So she was compelled to come to him. The Buddha by his supernatural power conjured up a beautiful woman, who became transformed into an old and fading figure. If had the desired effect, and Abhirupananda disabused suddenly and became an arhat. Then Lord Buddha taught the verse:

“After a stronghold has been made of the bones, it is covered with flesh and blood, and there dwell in it old age and death, pride and deceit: Atthinam nagaram katam. Mansalohitalepanam; Yattha jarā ca macu ca. Māno makkho ca ohito.”

Khema was born in the royal family of Sagala. She was very beautiful and her skin was like gold. She became the consort of Bimbisara. One day she heard that the Buddha was in the habit of speaking ill of beauty, since then she did not appear before the Buddha. The king was a chief supporter of the Buddha. He asked his court-poets to compose a song on the glories of the Veluvana hermitage and to sing the song very loudly so that the queen might hear it. The royal order was

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258 Dhp., 150.
carried out. Khema heard of the beauty of the hermitage and with the
king’s consent she came to the Veluvana Vihara, where the Buddha was
staying at that time. When she was led before the Buddha, the latter
conjured up a woman to be a celestial nymph who stood fanning him with
a palm leaf. Khema observed this woman being more beautiful than she
and was ashamed of her own grace. Sometime after she noticed again that
the woman was passing from youth to middle age and then to old age, till
with broken teeth, grey hair, and wrinkled skin, she fell on earth with her
palm leaf. Then thought Khema that her beautiful body would meet with
the same fate as that of the nymph. Then the Master, who knew her
thoughts, said that persons subject to lust suffer from the result of their
action, while those freed from all bondage forsake the world. When the
Master had finished speaking, Khema, according to the commentary,
attained arhatship and according to the Apadana, she was established in
the fruition of the first stage of sanctification and with the king's
permission she entered the order before she became an arhat. Thereafter
she made a name for her insight and was ranked foremost amongst the
bhikkhunis possessing great wisdom. In vain Mara tried to tempt her with
sensuous ideas. Then the Buddha said:

"Brethren, who contemplates the enjoyment that there is in all that
makes for grasping (upādāniya dhammā), craving grows." Or:
Looking with satisfaction on things that bind like fetters
(Samyojaniyesu dhammesu assādānupassitā.)

260 S. II, 84.
261 The Ten Fetters claimed by the Buddha specifically and Buddhism generally as standing in the way
of Enlightenment: 1. personality belief, 2. skeptical doubt, 3. adherence to wrongful rites, rituals
and ceremonies 4. sensual desire, 5. literal meaning of this term is "to hit against", but it is often
translated into English as "ill-will or hatred", 6. attachment to the form realms, 7. attachment to the
formless realms, 8. conceit, arrogance, self-assertion or pride, 9. restlessness, 10. ignorance, but this
is ignorance in a special sense. The first five Fetters are known as Lower Fetters (orambhagiya-
In regard to the edible food with its peril, for the sake of eliminating desire for the nutriment physical food, the Fully Enlightened One taught the simile of a couple, foodless in the midst of a desert, eat their little child, to enable them to reach their destination (see above). For this purpose, they did not eat it with gusto and full of greed for it, but ate it in a detached way, without lust and desire. When eating they did not leave aside what was attached to bone, sinew and skin, selecting only the choice, substantial pieces; but they ate just what came to their hands. They did not take their fill, gorging themselves, but they took only very little of it, just sufficient to sustain them for a day. They did not grudge or envy each other the food, but free from the stain of selfishness they ate it with a pure heart. They did not eat it with the illusion that it was deer’s meat or peacock’s meat, but they were well aware that it was the flesh of their beloved son. They did not eat it with longing, but they ate it without any such longing. They did not hoard a portion of it, thinking: “That much we shall eat in the desert, and the remainder we shall eat when we are out of the desert, adding to it salt and spices.” But having reached the end of the desert and fearing that the town people would see it, they would have buried any remainder in the ground or burned it. They did not harbor any such pride and conceit as: “There is none like us who has the chance of eating such meat!”; but they rather ate it with quite the opposite of such pride (that is, with shame and humility). They did not eat it with disdain, “Oh that saltless, tasteless and evil-smelling thing!”; but they ate it without such disdain. They did not quarrel with each other, “This is

*samyojana* because they bind us to the sensuous world. The second five Fetters are known as *Higher Fetters (uddhambhagiya-samyojana)* because they bind us to the *rupa* and *arupa* worlds.

your share, that is my share! It is your son! It is my son!”; but they ate in concord and harmony.263

The above evidences have pointed out that the peril of edible food is the craving and grasping of physical body and bound by the ten fetters and leading to rebirth. Indeed, edible food is one of four sustenances, for the maintenance of beings that have come to birth or for the forwarding of them that seek to become (Cattārome, bhikkhave, āhārā bhūtānāṃ vā sattānāṃ thitiyā sambhavesīnāṃ vā anuggahāya).264

Lord Buddha taught:

“If there be passion, brethren, if there be delight, if there be craving as to solid food, it is there that consciousness is firmly placed and becomes fruitful. Where consciousness is firmly placed and fruitful, there is descent of name-and-shape. Where there is descent of name-and-shape, there is growth of activities. Where there is growth of activities there in the future is renewed becoming and rebirth. Where in the future is renewed becoming and rebirth, there in the future is decay-and-death. Where there is in the future decay-and-death, I declare, brethren, that with it is grief, affliction, despair.”265

The above passage has pointed out that edible food that will bring the maintenance of beings or be reborn in the future and that is the extreme peril of edible food. In order to liberate its peril and to dominate desire for it, the above simile should be carefully considered. This is the most valuable and persuasive advice of the Buddha to all human beings.

Because of an extreme peril of edible food, the Buddha strongly recommended monks to be moderate in eating. He taught edible food should not be taken for pleasure, should not be taken for indulgence

263 The Four Nutriments of life, p. 32.
264 S. II, 97, § 63.
265 Ibid., 101, § 64 (The Book of The Kindred Sayings, part II, PTS, p.71.)
(madāya,) should not be taken for personal charm (maṇḍanāya,) should not be taken for comeliness (vibhūsanāya,) but merely for the sheer necessity of living or for maintaining and supporting the body, avoiding harm and assisting noble life, as parents with their child in the jungle, when their provisions have run out, forced by extreme hunger and faced with the prospect of certain death, would be driven to kill the child and eat its flesh etc., even so, without passion of the senses should material food be taken. The Buddha, considering in such food its aspect of being taken without greed and attachment, wanted also the community of monks and householders to appreciate that aspect. He declared should solid food be regarded thus. When such food is well understood, the passions of the five senses are well understood.

"If the nutriment edible food is comprehended, the lust for the five sense-objects is thereby comprehended." Here, the five strands of sense desire are the five kinds of sense-objects cognizable by five senses organs: Shapes cognizable by the eye, longed for, alluring, pleasurable, lovely, bound by with passion and desire. Sounds cognizable by the ear ... smells by the nose ... tastes by the tongue ... contacts by the touch, longed for, alluring, pleasurable, lovely, bound by passion a desire. If a person who enjoys these five strands of sense-pleasures enslaved and infatuated by them, addicted to them, not seeing the peril in them, not escape from them - he will come to calamity, to misfortune and it is to be done to by the Evil One as he wills. It is like a deer living in a forest who might be lying caught on a heap of snares - this may be said of it: It has come to calamity, it has come to misfortune, it is one to be done to by the

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266 A. I, 114.
267 Forms cognizable via the eye - agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. Sounds cognizable via the ear... Aromas cognizable via the nose... Flavors cognizable via the tongue... Tactile sensations cognizable via the body - agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing (M. Suttas No.26, 122.)
268 A. IV, 457 (ix, vii, § iii (65.)
trapper as he wills, for when the trapper comes it will not be able to go away as it wishes. In order to understand fully the five sense-desires, ones have to realize their satisfaction, misery, and escape from them. When pleasure that arises owing to the eye, - that is the satisfaction of the eye. The impermanence, that ill, that instability which is the eye, - that is misery of the eye. That restrain of desire and lust, that renouncing of desire and lust which are in the eye, - that is the way of escape from the eye. Likewise pleasure that arises owing to the ear, nose, etc. When the five sense-desires are well understood, the fetters do not exist bound by which the Ariyan disciple could come again to this world.

If edible food is fully understood: it is fully understood by these three kinds of full understanding (pariṇāṇa): (i) the full understanding of the known (nātapiṇṇā); (ii) the full understanding by scrutiny (ūrṇapiṇṇā); the full understanding as abandonment (pahānapapiṇṇā). The first one, a monk understands: What is called the “nutriment edible food” is the material group with nutritive essence as the eighth factor (i.e., nutritive essence), with (the other component factors of) its material basis. This material octad, where does it impinge? At the tongue-sensitivity (jīvha-pasāda.) On what is the tongue-sensitivity based? On the four great primaries of matter (the elements.) Hence (on this occasion of eating), the material octad with nutritive essence as its eighth factor, tongue-sensitivity, and the conditions of it, the four great primaries, - these things constitute the aggregate of corporeality (rupakkhandha.) The group of mental factors having contact (sense-impression) as the fifth factor, which takes it up (i.e., the aggregate of corporeality,) these are the four mental aggregates. All these (phenomena constituting the) five

269 M. 1, 172.
270 S. IV, 6 (xxxv, ii, § 13.)
aggregates are just “mind-and-matter” ($nāma-rūpa$.) Thus, he understands (the ultimate facts underlying the act of eating.) Having defined these phenomena according to their individual functions and characteristics, he searches for their conditionality and finds it in the dependent origination ($paticca-samuppāda$,) in its ascending and descending order. By such correct understanding of mind-and-matter with its conditions, in the instance of the nutriment edible food, the latter has in so far been understood ($parināṇa$) “as known” ($ñāta-parināṇa$; i.e., as an object of knowledge in ultimate terms).

The second, to that very (instance of) mind-and-matter with its conditions, he now applies the three characteristics: impermanence, suffering and not-self - and discerns it ($sammañca$) by way of the seven contemplations ($satisambojjhaṅgassa$.)$^{272}$ Hereby the nutriment edible food has been comprehended by way of the investigating comprehension consisting in the full penetration of the three characteristics and the knowledge of discernment ($sammasana-ñāna$).

The last one, by discarding attachment and desire in regard to that very mind and- matter, and comprehending it through the attainment of the path of non-returning, the nutriment edible food has been comprehended by comprehension as abandoning ($pahāna-parināṇa$).$^{273}$

4.3.2. Phassāhāra

4.3.2.1. Meaning of phassāhāra

The term “phassāhāra” (S. sparśākārāhāra) means food or nutriment sense-impression. The Pāli word phassa is rendered here by sense-impression means literally ‘touch’ or ‘contact’. It is derived from the verb phusati, means “to touch,” but contact should not be understood as

$^{272}$ S. V, 100-104, Bojjhaṅgasamyutta (II), Sākacchavagga (IV), Āhārasutta No 1.

$^{273}$ The Four Nutriments of life., pp. 34-35.
the mere physicality of the object on the bodily faculty. It is, rather, the mental factor by which consciousness mentally "touches" the object that has appeared, thereby initiating the entire cognitive event. Sense-impression, together with attention (manasikāra,) is mind’s first and simplest response to the stimulus exercised by the world of material objects and ideas. According to Buddhist Psychology, Sense-impression is a constituent factor in each and every state of mind, the lowest and the highest, occurring also in dream and in subliminal states of consciousness.

Phassa is only the meeting of three groups of the six:

- The first six is the six sense organs or internal sense-fields (cha ajjhātikāni abyatanaṁ): sense-field of the eye, sense-field of the ear, sense-field of the nose, sense-field of the tongue, sense-field of the body, and sense-field of the mind (cakkhāyatanaṁ, sotāyatanaṁ, ghānāyatanaṁ, jivhāyatanaṁ, kāyāyatanaṁ, manāyatanaṁ).

- The second six is the six sense objects or external sense-field (chabbhirāni abyatanaṁ): sense-field of material shapes, sense-field of sounds, sense-field of smells, sense-field of tastes, sense-field of touches, and sense-field of mental states (Rūpāyatanaṁ, saddāyatanaṁ, gandhāyatanaṁ, rasāyatanaṁ, phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṁ, dhammāyatanaṁ).

- The third six is six classes of consciousness (cha viññānakāyā): the visual consciousness that arises because of eye and material shapes; the auditory consciousness that arises because of ear and sounds; the olfactory consciousness that arises because of nose and smells; the gustatory consciousness that arises because of tongue and tastes; the bodily consciousness that arises because of body and touches; the mental consciousness that arises because of mind and mental states.

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274 A Comprehensive Manual of Abhihhamma, ibid, p. 78.
276 M. III, 281, Chachakkasutta.
The meeting of these three groups of the six creates the fourth six called the six groups of contact or impingement (cha phassakāyā): eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, and mind-contact. This is called contact. This is understood that the visual consciousness that arises because of eye and material shapes - the meeting of the three is sensory impingement. The auditory consciousness that arises because of ear and sounds - the meeting of the three is sensory impingement. The olfactory consciousness that arises because of nose and smells - the meeting of the three is sensory impingement. The gustatory consciousness that arises because of tongue and tastes - the meeting of the three is sensory impingement. The bodily consciousness that arises because of body and touches - the meeting of the three is sensory impingement. The mental consciousness that arises because of mind and mental states - the meeting of the three is sensory impingement. Six classes of sensory contact are to be understood thus.

Thus, touch is only the meeting of three elements: sense organ, sense object, and the consciousness regarding to the sense organ. This also means the meeting of the subject of cognition, the object of cognition and the content of cognition. Contact is therefore the manifestation of consciousness or ignorance or suffering.

As discussed, phasso dutiyo means sense-impressions or the six contacts is the second kind of nutriment (phassaḥāra) of the four nutriments. When the six senses organs - eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind - are in constant contact with sense objects - forms, sounds, scents, tastes, tangibles and mind-states and these contacts become food

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277 S. II, 3.
279 The concept of personality revealed through the Pañcānikāya, ibid, p. 82.
for our consciousness. When men travel somewhere, their eyes see many nice places and landscapes or drive through a city their eyes see so many billboards, and these images enter their consciousness. When they pick up a magazine, the articles and advertisements are food for their consciousness. Advertisements that stimulate their craving for possessions, sex, and food can be toxic. If after reading the newspaper, hearing the news, or being in a conversation, they feel anxious or worn out, they know they have been in contact with toxins.

Movies and other views are food for eyes, ears, and minds. When people watch television, the program is their food. Children who spend five hours a day watching television are ingesting images that water the negative seeds of craving, fear, anger, and violence in them. Human beings are exposed to so many forms, colors, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and ideas that are toxic and rob their body and consciousness of their well-being. When men feel despair, fear, and depression, it may be because they have ingested too many toxins through their sense impressions. Not only children need to be protected from violent and unwholesome films, TV programs, books, magazines, and games, but also adult people can be destroyed by the media.

The operation of contact is that of operation process of the six organs, six objects, together with six consciousnesses in which they are attached to the passion fraught, inciting to lust, hatred, grasping, and this is called Māra’s home, controlled by Evil Ones, not wholly set free:

“There are, brethren, objects cognizable by the eye, objects desirable, pleasant, delightful, and dear, passion fraught, inciting to

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280 The heart of the Buddha’s teaching, ibid., p. 32.
281 Ibid.
282 Ibid., p. 33.
283 Mental consciousness, the sixth consciousness, functions by itself as well as together with the first five consciousnesses.
lust. If a brother delights in them, welcomes them, persists in clinging to them, this brother is called ‘One gone to Māra’s home, gone under Māra’s sway.’ Māra’s noose encircles him. Bound is he with Māra’s bond, for the Evil One to work his will upon. ... Mind-states cognizable by mind, objects desirable. ... Objects cognizable by the eye ... mind-states cognizable by the mind, states desirable. ... If he is fully grasping, he is not a wholly set free. This is the condition; this is the cause why in the world some beings are not in this very life wholly set free.”

4.3.2.2. Function of phassāhāra

In the term of fourfold defining device in the Pāli commentaries, contact has its characteristic of touching. Its function is impingement, as it causes consciousness and the object to impinge. Its manifestation is the concurrence of consciousness, sense faculty, and object. Its proximate cause is an objective field that has come in to focus. Here, phassāhāra fulfils the function of nourishing by way of touching (providing contact; phusanto.) In which way? The nutriment sense-impression, by establishing contact with an object that is the basis of pleasure, etc., makes for the sustenance of beings by causing the occurrence of pleasant or unpleasant feelings etc.

If the second type of nutriment always fulfils its function in relation to desirable passion and lust, the human’s fate is truly mournful and stinging, and hard to get peace for internal life and hard to avoid pricks

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284 S. IV, 90, 91, 101.
285 To elucidate the nature of any ultimate reality, the Pāli commentators propose four defining devices by means of which it can be delimited. These four devices are: (1) its characteristic (lakkhana), i.e. the salient quality of the phenomenon; (2) its function (rasa), its performance of a concrete task (kiçca) or achievement of a goal (sampatti); (3) its manifestation (paccupajjhāna), the way it presents itself within experience; and (4) its proximate cause (padañjhāna), the principal condition upon which it depends. A Comprehensive Manual of Abhihhamma, ibid, p. 29.
286 Ibid., p.78.
that come from the external. This is the reason why Lord Buddha offered the drastic image that can be mentioned as follows:

“And how? Brethren, is the food that is contact to be regarded? It is as if, brethren, a cow with a sore hide should stand leaning against a wall. The creatures that live in the wall would bite her; if she stood leaning against a tree, the creatures that live on the tree would bite her; yea, whatever she stood leaning against, whatever creatures lived thereon would bite her. If she stood buoyed up by the air, the creatures that live in dependence on the air would bite her, yea, whatever she stood up against, whatsoever creatures that lived in dependence thereon would bite her.

Even so do I declare that the food which is contact should be regarded. When such food is well understood, the three feelings are well understood. When the three feelings are well understood, I declare that there is nothing further which the Ariyan disciple has to do.”

The above simile has given a description of a skinned cow, wherever she stands, will be ceaselessly attacked by the insects and other creatures living in the vicinity. Here, contact, the nutriment on which the senses thrive, should be regarded as a cow with sore hide would regard all contact. What do we think about this simile?

If contemplated deeply of the simile, modern man’s life is also like a skinned cow; man is helplessly exposed to the constant excitation and irritation of the sense-impressions, crowding upon him from all sides, through all six senses.

Human beings who seem not to be able to control their eyes, ears, etc. when attractive objects are in front of them, are exposed to invasions of all kinds - images, sounds, smells, touch, ideas - and many of these

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287 S. II, sutta No. 63 (Tran. Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, The Book of The Kindred Sayings, part II, PTS, p. 67.)
feed the craving, violence, fear, and despair in them. According to the Buddha’s simile, the sense objects are like insects that are clawing, scratching and tearing both body and mind of man. These insects are gradually thriving and harassing modern human’s life. The development of science and technology of the 21st century has brought humankind many advantages of material living; it can eliminate insects in physical body, but cannot stop thriving of the insects arisen from phassāhāra. This is to say the very development of science and technology has constantly produced irresistible images, sounds, smells, touch, ideas that make human beings enchanted with them; while enchanting them, feelings (vedāna) will appear ‘conditioned by contact is feeling: phassapaccayā vedanā.’ As long as there is craving (tanhā) for sense-impressions which arise from unguarded feelings: vedanā-paccayā tanhā, there will be an unlimited supply of that foodstuff to be digested by feeling. In an unending stream and in rapid alternation, forms, sounds, smells, flavors, bodily impacts, and ideas impinge upon us as long as people live.

The appearance of the feelings on body and in mind of man is like a skinned cow harassed by insects from all side. Not only a person but also human world is being withered by these feelings.

What is feeling (vedāna)? There is multitude of kinds of vedāna that taught by Lord Buddha in His way of explanation either two or five feelings etc., alternate enumerations including up to 108 kinds. This can be summarized as follows:

1. The two feelings: bodily and mental feelings.

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288 The heart of the Buddha’s teaching, ibid., p. 34.
289 M. III, 281.
290 Ibid., 282.
291 S. IV, 231 (xxxvi, ii, § 22).
2. *The three feelings*: pleasant, painful and neutral feelings.\(^{292}\)

3. *The five feelings*: the controlling powers (*indrīyāni*) of pleasant, joy, pain, grief, and indifference or equanimity.

4. *The six groups of feeling*: feeling that is born of eye-contact, feeling that is born of ear-contact, feeling that is born of nose-contact, feeling that is born of tongue-contact feeling that is born of body-contact, feeling that is born of mind-contact. This is called feeling.

5. *The eighteen feelings*: the six ways of giving attention (*upavicārā*) to joy, grief, and indifference. Or explorations of the aforementioned three mental kinds of feelings (mental pleasant, mental painful, equanimous) each in terms of each of the aforementioned six sense faculties.

6. *The thirty six feelings*: the six forms of joy concerned with the worldly life, the six forms of joy concerned with giving up; the six forms of grief concerned with the worldly life, the six forms of grief concerned with giving up; the six forms of indifference concerned with worldly life, the six forms of indifference concerned with giving up (the aforementioned 18 kinds of feeling for the householder and the aforementioned 18 kinds for the renunciate).

7. *The one hundred and eight feelings*: the aforementioned 36 kinds for the past, for the present and for the future.

The Buddha further declares that whatever is felt is included in suffering (*yaṃ kiñci vedayitam tam dukkhasmiṃ.*)\(^{293}\) In this statement, the word *dukkha* does not bear the narrow meaning of painful feeling, but the broader meaning of the suffering inherent in all conditioned things by reason of their impermanence.

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\(^{292}\) *Tiss* *vedanā*: sukhā, dukkhā, and adukkhā asukhā. See at D iii.275; S ii.53, 82; iv.207; A iii.400; It 46; or: kusala, akusala, avyākatā Vism. 460.

\(^{293}\) S. IV. 216 (xxxvi. ii, § 11)
As examined, Lord Buddha taught about feelings in multiple modes, however, there are three modes of *vedanā* as they are often introduced in many discourses recorded in Pancanikāya: happy feeling, painful feeling and indifferent one. They are rooted in contact “there are these three feelings that are born of contact, rooted in contact, related to contact, conditioned by contact.”

The happy feeling always produces more craving or desire in one's mind. The painful one always produces anger. The last one always fosters illusion. Feeling is, therefore, the source nurturing desire, anger and illusion. It really is the maker of rebirth and suffering.

Thus, “sense-impression is a basic nutriment or as nutriment, which is a sustaining condition of life, and what is nourished or conditioned by it the three kinds of feelings (*vedanā*) which are living on that multitude of constantly occurring sense-impression and assimilating them as pleasant (*sukha-vedanā*) unpleasant (*dukkha-vedanā*) and neutral (*abyākata.*) When contact productive of pleasant feeling arises it nourishes pleasant feeling. Contact productive of painful feeling nourishes painful feeling and contact productive of neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling nourishes neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.” This demonstrates that in all ways contact as nutriment nourishes beings.

From the above quoted paragraph, it is the poignant awareness of that constant bombardment by sense-impressions that induced the Buddha to choose for the sense-impressions the simile of a skinned cow whose raw flesh is the target of swarms of insects that cause intensely painful feelings to the animal. According to the Buddha, any type of feeling is bound to cause suffering and conflict in him who has not yet freed himself from attachment. Painful feeling is suffering in itself; pleasant

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294 Ibid., 213 (xxvii, ii, § 10).
295 The Four Nutriments of Life, p. 10.
feeling brings suffering through its transience and its unsatisfying and unsatisfactory nature; worldly indifferent feeling produces suffering through the dullness and boredom involved in it. It is sense-impression that is the constant feeder of these feelings.

A monk of old, yearning to see still more vividly the burning and irritating nature of sense-impressions, was moved to exclaim:

“When shall I with calm endowed
Wisely see as caught in raging blaze
The countless forms, sounds, scents, and tastes,
And contacts and mental things?”

Again, Lord Buddha taught:

“Brethren, the all is on fire. What all, brethren, is on fire? The eye is on fire, objects are on fire, eye-consciousness is on fire, eye-contact is on fire that weal or woe or neutral state experienced, which arises owing to eye-contact, - that also is on fire. On fire with what? On fire with the blaze of lust, the blaze of ill-will, the blaze of infatuation, the blaze of birth, decay and death, sorrow and grief, woe, lamentation and despair. ... The tongue is on fire, tongue-consciousness is on fire. ... The mind is on fire, mind-states ... mind-consciousness. ... So I declare.”

Though man is amply aware of the host of impressions that cause painful sensations in him, yet he is quite willing to pay that price for his pleasurable experiences, nay, for almost any sort of “experiencing” which he prefers to no sensation at all, unless the pain it causes comes too close to tolerance level. What is at the psychological root of this situation is

296 Thera. v. 1102 (Kadā nu rūpe amite ca sadde, gāndhe rase phusitabbe ca dhamme; Ādittatoham samatthehi yutto, paññāya daccham tadiham kadā me.) Tran. by Soma Thera in “His Last Performance, Verses of Talaputa Thera” (Colombo 1943; available from Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

297 S. IV, 19 (xxxv, iii, § 26 (6)), (The Book of The Kindred Sayings, part IV. PTS, p.10.)
man's hunger for ever new experiences. If that hunger is not temporarily but regularly satisfied, it leaves him empty, starved and helpless. From that comes man's wish for change and novelty, and his longing for a close contact with life that for its own sake becomes a habituation and makes solitude unbearable for most men.

In short, the nutriment sense-impression feeds the "World as Enjoyment" or the "World as Enjoyment of Experience." It feeds the craving for existence (bhava-tanhā.) This habitual craving can be broken only if one ceases to identify oneself with the stream of impressions and learns to stand back as an observer wherever one can dispense with active response. Then feeling that is nourished by sense-impression will cease to turn into craving, and the Dependent Origination of suffering has been severed at this point.

4.3.2.3. The peril of phassāhāra

It is extremely disgusting and awesome to imagine our lives like the skinned cows as described in the above story. For a long time, we have eaten the countless kinds of visible objects, sound, flavor, taste, etc. that are objects of eyes, ear, nose, etc. the foods that have constantly staggered our lives families and society. Because the objects have always stimulated ambitions and wishes of a man, and they are like motives for him carrying out his dreams, therefore, he is always approaching the objects. In food sense-impression (phassāhāra,) approaching (an object) is the peril, because 'approach' is the coming-together (sangati) of object, sense-organ, and consciousness, or of object and consciousness. By being the cause of arising of feeling, etc., it is a peril. The peril of phassāhāra, which alludes to the six sense organs that are not controlled, crave uninterruptedly for the objects and tied by them. The peril of the food contact also can be found in the Mahatma Gandhi's word "Not to
have control over senses is like sailing in a rudderless ship, bound to break to pieces on coming in contact with the very first rock.”

Those who are fond of sense-impressions, may, in their approach to sense-impression, offend against others’ property, which is under their guard and protection, or they may offend against the wives of others, etc. Then the owners of that property will seize the offenders and the goods (stolen), cut those thieves into pieces and throw them on the rubbish heap; or the owners will hand them over to the king who will punish them, inflicting various tortures on them. And after the break-up of the body, a bad destiny awaits the offenders. Thus, all kinds of peril occur here and hereafter, which are rooted in fondness for sense impressions. For this reason, (active) approach is the peril in sense-impression.

As mentioned, conditioned by contact is feeling. The painful feeling is the lurking tendency to anger, the pleasant feeling the lurking tendency to lust, and the neither the pleasant nor painful is the lurking tendency to ignorance. Thus, feeling is the cause of suffering, conflict, and all other crises. Human beings are not frequently content with painful feeling and indifference, only delighted with pleasant feeling. A drunken man likes seeing alcohol (eye-contact,) one loves music who will be satisfied with a good piece of music (ear-contact), one who likes living in luxury, will feel delighted to lie on the luxurious bed-clothes (body-contact), etc.

When touching with adversities (bad forms,) one feels uncomfortable about them, and mind is immediately attached to anger. Again, a drunken man will not be happy when someone advises him to abstain from alcohol, etc. Pleasant feeling with a lovely object attracts one; whenever that object is not in his hand, one will fall into painful feeling and tries to find back what is lost. Thus, one can do evil deeds, to

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be imprisoned and punished in this present life, and will be anguished in
the future because of that evil cause. In case a person lost a sum of
money, he endeavors to get it back by deceiving others etc. Therefore,
approaching objects while touching is the peril of the nutriment sense-
impression. However, while touching, the eyes, ears, nose, etc. are not the
fetters of objects, nor object the fetters to the eyes, ears, etc. But the
desire and lust that arise owing to the pair of them, those are the fetters.299
So, the peril of phassāhāra is also the very desire and lust.

In order to prevent the peril from phassāhāra, Lord Buddha has said
that phassāhāra should be regarded as a skinned cow. The outer skin of the
cow is shed, and it is so stinging when someone touches it anywhere on her
body. Similarly, nutriment contact with any object that only causes pain.

Lord Buddha taught:

"If there be passion, brethren, if there be delight, if there be craving as
to nutriment sense-impression, it is there that consciousness is firmly
placed and becomes fruitful. Where consciousness is firmly placed
and fruitful, there is descent of name-and-shape. Where there is
descent of name-and-shape, there is growth of activities. Where there is
growth of activities there in the future is renewed becoming and
rebirth. Where in the future is renewed becoming and rebirth, there in
the future is decay-and-death. Where there is in the future decay-and-
death, I declare, brethren, that with it is grief, affliction, despair.300"

Conditioned by the nutriment contact is feeling, conditioned by
feeling is craving, conditioned by craving is rebirth. This is the extreme
peril of phassāhāra that should be understood.

If we have a deep look, we will see the stinging of a skinned cow is
that of the human condition from many generations who was and are

299 S. IV, 281.
300 S. II, 101, § 64 (The Book of The Kindred Sayings, part II, PTS, p. 71.)
weeping, wailing, and coming by utter bewilderment when touched by painful bodily feelings, pleasant feelings, and neutral feelings. These feelings, which are known as the traditional and invisible enemies of each individual and the entire humankind, have caused global warming and other calamities. Although human beings try to be free from them, it is useless like one who drinks seawater while thirsting. Why is it? Because of craving and grasping, they cannot understand the nature of impermanence and no-self of contacts and feelings, have desire for the sense-impressions of the three planes of existence\textsuperscript{301} hence pain\textsuperscript{302} always follows them as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws carriage.\textsuperscript{303}

Just as the skinned cow, exposed to the peril of being attacked by the creatures living in various places, has no wish for honor and attention paid to her, nor for bodily care given to her by cleaning her back and massaging. Similarly monks, considering that they are exposed to the peril coming from those devouring creatures, the mental defilements, that are rooted in the nutriment sense-impression, have no desire for the sense-impressions of the three planes of existence hence happiness always follows them as the shadow follows the body.\textsuperscript{304} Here, too, there are three understandings:

The first understanding, in this case, sense-impression represents the formation aggregate (sankhāra-khandha;) the feeling conjoined with it is the feeling aggregate; perception is the perception aggregate; consciousness (citta) is the consciousness aggregate (viññāna-kkhandha;) the (respective) organ base and its objects are the corporeality aggregate

\textsuperscript{301} The craving for sense pleasures (kāmatan̄hā), the craving for becoming (bhavatān̄hā), and the craving for annihilation (vibhavatān̄hā).

\textsuperscript{302} The word \textit{pain} does not bear the narrow meaning of painful feeling, but the broader meaning of the suffering inherent in all conditioned things by reason of their impermanence. See at S. IV, 216 (xxxvi, ii, § 11).

\textsuperscript{303} Dhp. Verse No. 1.

\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., No. 2.
(rupa-kkhandha.) Such correct understanding of mind-and-matter with its condition is “understanding as the known.” The second one, the application to it of the three characteristics and the examining of it as impermanent, etc., by way of the seven contemplations - this is “understanding as investigating.” The last one, the path of sainthood (arahatta-magga) that discards attachment and desire for that very (combination of) mind-and-body - this is “understanding as abandoning.”

If the nutriment sense-impression is thus comprehended in a threefold way, the three kinds of feeling are likewise understood thereby, because they have their root in sense-impression and are conjoined with it (sampayutta.) In such a way, the exposition of the nutriment sense-impression has been led up to the attainment of Sainthood.\(^{305}\)

From the analysis of the understanding of the nutriment sense-impression, one can ask, what is the difference between the feelings of the ordinary person and the holy one? This question can answer briefly from the Salla sutta\(^{306}\) (Discourse on by the barb) as follows:

- The untaught manyfolk being touched feeling that is painful, weeps and wails, knocks the breast, falls into utter bewilderment. For he feels a twofold feeling, bodily and mental. But the Ariyan disciple when touched by painful feeling, weeps not, he feels but ones feeling, the bodily, not the mental.

- The untaught manyfolk when touched by painful feeling he feels anger for it and delights in pleasant feeling, he knows of no refuge from painful feeling save sensual pleasure; delighting in that sensual pleasure, he is tied by lust; because he does not understand the arising and the destruction of feelings, nor the satisfaction, the misery and the way of escape from feelings, the lurking tendency to

\(^{305}\) The Four Nutriments of Life, ibid., p. 36.
\(^{306}\) S. IV, 207.
ignorance of neutral feeling fastens on him. The *Ariyan* disciple has not the above things, he does opposite ways.

-If the untaught manyfolk who feels feelings that are pleasant, painful, and neutral feeling, feels them as ones in bondage; he who is called ‘in bondage to birth, death, sorrow and grief, woe, lamentation and despair, is in bondage to ill’. The *Ariyan* disciple who has no feelings like that, does in contrast.

In short, if edible food is the beginning of the pain of physical body, the food contact is that of the anguish of the mental. This suffering begins coming in through the six sense doors. When ones read an article, hear the news, look views, or listen to music, they consume. In consuming so, the toxins of fear, craving, violence, discrimination, or hate water into their mind. The sense organs are the most important doors of life which have not seriously been guarded, so one has lost many precious things and damaged much inner power. The Blessed One has advised humankind to post a sentinel, namely mindfulness, at each of their sense doors to protect themselves, however they are heedless with this valuable teaching because they are busy to pursue their goal or career in relation to position and wealth. In order to achieve that goal they have to cope with many obstacles and create many violent enemies, this relates to the third kind of food called *Mano*.

4.3.3. **Manosañcetanāhāra**

4.3.3.1. **Meaning of manosañcetanāhāra**

As discussed in the third chapter, *manosañcetanāhāra*, the third kind of food is volition, intention, or will. Volition (*cetanā*) is the ground of all one’s actions. *Cetanā* is volitional thought that is called food because *cetanā* is *paccaya* (condition - food, see also *āhāra* and dependent origination in the third chapter) to create consciousness (the result of
But *manosañcetanā* means ‘intention to do something,’ viz close thinking is to create the rebirth-consciousness, as Lord Buddha taught:

“That which we will, brethren, and that which we intend to do, and that wherewithal we are occupied: this becomes an object for the persistence of consciousness. The object, being there, become a station of consciousness. Consciousness being stationed and having grown, there comes a bending; there being a bending, there is a going to a coming; there being a going to a coming, there is decease and rebirth.”

“Monks, there are these eight rebirths due to making gifts. What eight? Herein, monks, a man makes a gift to a recluse or godly man in the shape of food, drink, raiment, a vehicle, flowers, scents, ointment, bedding, dwelling, and lights. He gives hoping for a return. He sees wealthy nobles, *brāhmans* and householder surrounded by, attended by, enjoying the five strands of sensuous pleasure, and thinks: ‘Ah! If only I can be reborn among them, on the breaking up of the body after death!”

The above teachings point out that one does charity work with his desire to be reborn, the very desire of rebirth in the future is called *manosañcetanāhāra* (the nutriment volitional thought). Thus, *manosañcetanā* is “Intention to be reborn in the future” and it is conditioned by craving (*tañhā*), hence Sāriputta Thera has taught: “From the uprising of craving is the uprising of sustenance: *tañhāsamudayā āhārasamudayo*.”

The Buddha says that *cetana* is *kamma*, as discussed in third chapter, volition is ethical action whether good or bad in daily life, *cetana*; volition is the chief. For example, a man was brutally attacked and killed
by a mob. In this atrocious deed, the blows of most of the attackers were ineffective; only one member of the mob, prompted by a strong will, cruelly gave blow after blow which resulted in the victim’s death. So only this man will be the culprit of the murder. Like wise a number of combinations of citta-cetasika function together in both kusala kamma (good actions) such as making of offering (dana) or observance of precept (sila) and akusala kamma (bad actions) such as killing (panatipata.) In such activities it is the strong cetana (will) which is the most potent and post responsible and which determines one’s destiny and appropriate results here or hereafter.

Cetana (volition) is the strongest force in the world, prompting or encouraging all kinds of kamma (actions) and their effects. Cetana is the true motive force of all kamma actions; hence the saying, cetana is the maker, the true culprit of actions, or Cetana is the prime maker of one’s destiny. This cetana decides one’s fate and makes him what he is.”

The will of mind is called food (āhāra) or will is called the food of mind because it always feeds or nourishes the deepest desire that motivates a person’s life - the desires that one wants to obtain for his life. If one thinks that, the way for him to be happy is to get Ph.D. degree or to become vice-chancellor of any university, everything one does or says will be directed towards realizing that goal. Even when he sleeps, his consciousness will continue to work on it. Or suppose one believes that all his suffering and the suffering of his family has been brought about by someone who wronged him in the past; he believes he will only be happy if he inflicts harm on that person. One’s life is motivated solely by the desire or want for revenge, and everything one say, everything one plan, is to punish that person. At night, one dreams of revenge, and he thinks
this will liberate him from his anger and hatred. Such wants penetrate into human’s body and mind is like a food. Therefore, want is the kind of food that is called mansaṅcetanāhāra (the nutriment volitional thought.) If one has a strong desire, it will help him to increase energy so that he can carry out his aspiration anytime.

4.3.3.2. Function of manosaṅcetanāhāra

The food volitional thought fulfils the function of nourishing and accumulating Kamma (āyāhamāno) by way of wholesome and unwholesome kamma, is “for the maintenance of beings” because it provides or generates the root of existence. In order to fulfil its function, food volition has to operate constantly. Its operation is seen through the Buddha’s simile as follows:

“And how, brethren, is the food that is will of mind to be regarded? It is as if, brethren, there were a pit of charcoal, deeper that a man is high, filled with clear, glowing, smokeless charcoal. And a man were to come by, loving his life, not loving death, loving happiness, and loathing pain. And two strong men seizing him by each arm were to drag him up to the pit. Now to be far from that, brethren, would be the will of that man, to be far would be his wish, to be far would be his aspiration. Why so? Verily the man would think: I shall fall on that heap of charcoal; through that I shall come in for death, or for mortal pain. Even so, brethren, I declare that the food which is will of mind should be regarded”

From the above teaching, the pit of glowing embers is the round of existence in its three spheres. The man desirous to live, is a foolish worldling attaching himself to the round of existence. The two strong men

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310 The heart of the Buddha’s teaching, ibid., p. 34.
311 S. II, 98 (The Book of The Kindred Sayings, part II, PTS, p. 68.)
are the wholesome and unwholesome *kamma*. Their dragging the man to the pit is the accumulation of *kamma* (or *karmic effort,* *kammayūhana,*), because if *kamma* is accumulated it drags into rebirth. The pain inflicted by the pit of embers is the *samsāric* suffering inflicted by *kamma*.

In the story, Lord Buddha showed that the nutriment volitional thought manifests itself in man’s incessant urge to plan and to aspire, to struggle and conquer, to build and to destroy, to do and to undo, to invent and to discover, to form and to transform, to organize and to create. This urge has sent man into the depth of the ocean and into the vastness of space. It has made him the most vicious of predatory animals and also enabled him to reach the lofty heights of a genius of creative art and thought. The restlessness that is at the root of all lust for activity and of the creative urge, is the constant hunger for all four nutriments of life and for a variety of them on different levels of coarseness and sublimity. It is volitional thought that has to go for aging to provide man with the other kinds of nutriment he craves for. It is an incessant task, yielding a conquest of but short duration, and one that again and again ends in defeat.

In volitional thought, the world appears as will and power, and as creative force. Nourished by this powerful nutriment, the process of world-building and world destruction will go on until *samsāra* is seen in its true nature as a pit of glowing embers, the bottomless depth of which cannot be filled by our plunging into it again and again in whatever guise we assume in our migrations.

Again, it can be said that all wish or want in this worldly life can bring about suffering, conflicts, violence, or war. Hence, the value of happiness or joy in this life should be reviewed.

Indeed, happiness or suffering of human life is frequently tied by the eight conditions as Lord Buddha has taught: “Monks, these eight worldly
conditions obsess the world; the world resolves round these eight worldly conditions. What eight? Gain and loss, fame and obscurity, blame and praise, contentment and pain. These eight worldly conditions appear in life as a strong wind that makes men's life-boat in the ocean of suffering. The very eight conditions which act upon men's mind and cause troubles to arise; these troubles, in their turn, hinder men's regard to things from truth, and pull off their mind from abiding in the very present moment, and so pull off men from true life. The description shows that happiness in this worldly life is synonymous with suffering.

Everyone wants to be happy, and there is a strong energy in us and pushing us toward what we think will make us happy. But we may suffer a lot due to this. We need the insight that position, revenge, wealth, fame, or possessions are, more often than not, obstacles to his happiness. We need to cultivate the wish to be free of these things so we can enjoy the wonders of life that are always available - the blue sky, the trees, our beautiful children. After three months or six months of mindful sitting, mindful walking, and mindful looking, a deep vision of reality arises in us, and the capacity of being there, enjoying life in the present moment, liberates us from all impulses and brings us real happiness. We do not want to suffer, but their deep-seated habit energies drag them into the fire of suffering. The Buddha advised us to look deeply into the nature of our volition to see whether it is pushing us in the direction of liberation, peace, and compassion or in the direction of suffering and unhappiness. We need to be able to see the kinds of intention-food that we are consuming.

In short, the food volitional thoughts that can help us to increase energy in order to perform our aspiration, but also there are ones that bring about suffering all life such as fame, gain etc. Wishing to be healthy

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312 A. IV, 153.
313 The heart of the buddha's teaching, ibid. p. 35.
and joyful, wishing to help family and society, wishing to save the environment, wishing to cultivate and transform, and so forth, are the kinds of food volitional thought that can lead to happiness and peace should be nourished.

4.3.3.3. The peril of manosañcetanāhāra

With the nutriment of mental volition, it is said to be the peril of accumulating (of kamma and rebirths) which creates the imbalance. The entire peril in the three realms of existence has come about through accumulation of wholesome and unwholesome kamma.

For the peril of the accumulation of food volition, Lord Buddha said if there be passion, delight, and craving as to food volitional thought, it is there that consciousness is firmly placed and becomes fruitful. Where consciousness is firmly placed and fruitful, there is descent of name-and-shape. Where there is descent of name-and-shape, there is growth of activities. Where there is growth of activities, there in the future is renewed becoming and rebirth. Where in the future is renewed becoming and rebirth, there in the future is decay-and-death. Where there is in the future decay-and-death is that with it is grief, affliction, despair.314

As mentioned in the part of “āhāra and kamma” of the present study, called evil kamma, if it is caused by craving, ill-will or illusion, it will actually lead the doer to woe-states of existence. Called good kamma, if it is caused by desirelessness, compassion or wisdom, it will lead the doer to happy states of existence. Between the cause of a deed and its result exists a short or long period, according to the kind of kamma. No external power gives reward or punishment to a man’s deed. The doer of deeds also is the receiver of their results as Lord Buddha declared:

314 S. II, 100.
"I am the result of my own deeds; heir to deeds; deeds are matrix; deeds are kin; deeds are foundation; whatever deed I do, whether good or bad, I shall become heir to it - this ought to be often contemplated by woman and man, by house dweller and by one gone forth." \(^{315}\)

From the above teaching, according to the doctrine of Buddhist kamma, one should not understand it as predetermined or predestinate. In fact, it is not simple to understand as such. According to Lord Buddha, there are two kinds of kamma which are called old kamma and new kamma: It is called the old action because the six senses are to be viewed as action that are old, brought about and intentionally done, as a base for feeling. This is called "action that is old." It is called the new action because the action one performs now, by body, speech and mind, that is called "action that is new." And the ceasing of action by body, speech and mind, by which one contacts freedom, that is called "the ceasing of action ‘kamma.’" The way leading to the ceasing of action is the Aryan Eightfold Path, to wit: right view,..., right concentration. \(^{316}\)

The accumulation of old food volition is what has made up this body of the five aggregates sustained by the four foods with its relation to things are out of a person’s mind. What a man has done, is doing and will do in this life through his body, speech and mind. The intention, effort, desire, will to live, determination, etc., of a person are mental agents of new food volition. These things can cause him suffering or happiness according to his regard of things. So, the accumulation of the food volitional thought in the past or in the present that creates the circle of birth - and - death is the cause of suffering, war and hatred as what a man is facing in the here-and-now.

\(^{316}\) S. IV, 182-183.
It can be said that the gravest peril of old food volition has left for a human being in this life is his habit of thirsting for things, and of thinking of things as having a permanent self (or soul) which has created the current human culture full of troubles. If a person nourishes his self-thought and desire, he will strengthen his old kamma and go further in suffering. If he stops them, he will come to cease his old and new Kamma for freedom and happiness.

Furthermore, the accumulation is called the peril of the food volitional thought because craving (tanha) is motive for its constant accumulation. In a process of the accumulation, self-thought makes arise in one’s mind perception of “I am,” “I am this,” “I am that,” “I am not this,” “I’m not that,” “I was,” “I was this,” “I wasn’t this,” “I was that,” “I wasn’t that,” “I will be,” “I will be this,” “I will be that.” “May I be,” “May I be this,” “May I be that,” etc. These perceptions therefore are root causes of craving for sensual desire, craving for existence, craving for non-existence, hatred, anger, etc. They lead men to sorrow, lamentation, grief, suffering. Thus, the operation of the food volitional thought is that of self-thought.

In order to get out of the peril of the food volitional thought one has to connect with the threefold comprehension is the same as in the case of sense-impression (see above).

Lord Buddha taught:

“When that food is well understood, the three cravings are well understood. When these are well understood, I declare that there is nothing further that the Ariyan disciple has to do.”

From the above teaching, craving (tanha) is motive for all actions (cetana) that lead to suffering. Thus, craving (tanha) is the principal

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317 S. II, 98 (The Book of The Kindred Sayings, part II, PTS, p. 69.)
condition of any “in-take” or “up-take” (upādāna,) that is, of nutriment in its widest sense. This is the basic factor of all types of nutriment, be they physical or mental. As to craving, the Buddha said, “There are these six groups of craving: craving for things seen, for things heard, for odours, for tastes, for things tangible, for ideas. This is called craving.”

There are three groups of craving taught by Mahāthera Sāriputta as follows:

“And what, your reverences, is the uprising of anguish? That craving which is connected with again - becoming, accompanied by delight and attachment, finding delight in this and that, namely the craving for sense pleasures, the craving for becoming, and the craving for annihilation-this, your reverences, is called the origin of anguish.”

This quotation shows that craving for pleasures means craving for the satisfaction of forms, sounds, odours, tastes and touches, except the sphere of ideas; this means sensual pleasures. Craving for becoming (bhava) means craving for existence, survival in good states of life, or in happier and more delicate states of existence. Craving for annihilation means craving for non-existence, because of the tiresome existence.

In the early times men enjoyed self-delight, the delight arising in their mind. Sensual pleasures came afterwards and became their need, then their crucial need, then appeared as the meaning of human life which controlled men’s mental activities. Due to impermanence, sensual pleasures cannot fulfill men’s strong desire. The more men feel unsatisfied with sensual pleasures and sexual pleasures, the more they thirst for them. Now, men’s sensual and sexual desires make up a new operation of feeling and thinking and force them to regard sensuality and sexuality as basic instincts without seeing the way out. Indeed, as to

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318 Ibid, 3 (Ibid., p. 4.)
319 M. I, 48-49 (The Collection of The Middle Length Sayings, vol. 1, p. 60.)
320 The Concept of Personality revealed through the Pānicānikāya, p. 189.
sensual pleasures, the Buddha teaches there is no other single form, sound scent... savour... touch by which a man's heart is so enslaved as it is by that of a woman, and a woman's form... touch obsesses a man's heart. No other single form, sound, scent, savour and touch by which a woman's heart is so enslaved as it is by the form, sound, scent, savour and touch of a man, and a woman's heart is obsessed by these things.\textsuperscript{321}

But sensual and sexual desires that exist in the condition of impermanence, cause their pleasures and sufferings in which nothing sacred or mysterious is present. It is said that, the state of life of no greediness, which is regarded as the wholesome way of life, came to greediness; then from greediness came to sensual and sexual desires which are considered as evil ones. Greediness is the result of the operation of wrong thought - which supposes that a human being has his own self or soul. A person's thought that every existing thing has its own self means "I am," "I was," "I will be," etc.,\textsuperscript{322} which is haunted by craving, and is operating as craving. So he is regarded as craving from which sensual and sexual desires arise.\textsuperscript{323}

For those who are tired of desire for sensual pleasures, they come to the desire for existence called \textit{rupatāṇhā} or \textit{bhavatāṇhā} in Pāli. This is a higher and more delicate level of desire, i.e., desire for a state of mind abiding in the First Meditation (\textit{Jhāna,}) the Second Meditation, the Third or the Fourth Meditation. Meditative thoughts are only mental activities belonging to aggregate of activities which is suffering, therefore a number of human beings may leave "desire for existence" for "desire for non-existence." Those who are tired of sensual desire and desire for existence tend to come to desire for non-existence or annihilation, because for them

\textsuperscript{321} A. I, I.
\textsuperscript{322} A. II, 211-1-212
\textsuperscript{323} Ibid.
if existence is suffering, non-existence, in their belief, will be happy. And, psychologically when a person is tired of existence, he automatically thirsts for non-existence or annihilation. In reality, desire for anything is but a desire for non-existence belonging to the aggregate of activities, and so it will lead a person to suffering of some state in the Round of Rebirth - That state of mind is appropriate to Arūpa states.\textsuperscript{324}

From the above explanation, it is said that one comes into existence to live with his thirst for happiness and pleasures derived from the six senses - objects. But, unfortunately, everything, every pleasure changes from moment to moment, and this brings man doleful sufferings and makes man's desires burst into flames. The more his desires burst into flames, the more suffering he experiences... This says that craving means the root cause of suffering, or suffering itself.\textsuperscript{325} If understood thus, one who with right insight sees the uprising and passing away of the world as it really is, does not hold with the sensual pleasure, the existence, and the non-existence of the world\textsuperscript{326} because all existing things are conditioned.

In order to refrain from desire for manosāñcetanāhāra, the Buddha taught that one need to contemplate food volition as a fire pit that is like the Three Realms (Tiloka): Realm of Desire (Kāmadhātu,) Realm of Form (Rūpadhātu,) and Realm of Non-Form (Arūpadhātu,) one who has still reborn in these Realms, is suffering and is burnt by smokeless charcoal of old age, illness, and death. The wise men who do not long for enjoying pleasure in the Three Realms while doing wholesome actions, only want to stay away from the Three Realms, viz escape from the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, it is called without accumulating from the food volition. The presence of birth and death is that of craving. When

\textsuperscript{324} Ibid., pp. 197-198.
\textsuperscript{325} Ibid., p. 84.
\textsuperscript{326} S. II, 15.
manosaṅcetanāhāra is fully understood three cravings are understood, the cessation of three cravings is that of the cycle of birth and death in the Three Realms.

4.3.4. Viññāṇāhāra

4.3.4.1. Meaning of viññāṇāhāra

According to Theravāda Buddhist tradition, the terms citta, viññāna, or mana have the same meaning, which means consciousness or mind. According to Abhidhamma Sangaha, consciousness is the first of four ultimate realities (citta, cetasika, rūpa, and nibbāna). It contains 89 or 121 cittas in which sense-sphere consciousness (kāmavacaracitta) with 54 cittas, fine-material-sphere consciousness (rūpavacaracitta) with 15 cittas, immaterial-sphere consciousness (arūpavacaracitta) with 12 cittas, and supramundane consciousness (lokuttaracitta) with 8 or 80 cittas.

The Pāli word "citta" is derived from the verbal root citi, to cognize, to know. The commentators of Suttas explained the word "citta or consciousness" in three ways: as agent, as instrument, and as activity. As the agent, citta is that which cognizes an object (ārammaṇam cintetī ti cittam.) As the instrument, citta is that by means of which the accompanying mental factors cognize the object (etena cintetī ti cittam.) As an activity, citta is itself nothing other than the process of cognizing the object (cintanamattam cittam). The third definition is regarded as the most adequate of the three: that is, citta is fundamentally an activity or process of cognizing an object. The Buddhist thinkers point out, by means of these definitions, that is not a self that performs the act of cognition, but consciousness or citta. This citta is nothing other than the act of cognizing, and that act is necessarily impermanent, marked by rise and fall.\footnote{A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma. ibid., pp. 28-29.}
three ways of consciousness are also regarded as “awareness” (sanjānāti), “discrimination” (vijānāti,) and “decision” (pajānāti).

In the suttas, Lord Buddha taught “these are the six groups of consciousness: Eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, smell-consciousness, taste-consciousness, touch-consciousness, and mind-consciousness.” It is explained that: the word “consciousness” is used because one is conscious, “It is conscious of [flavour] sour or bitter, acrid or sweet, alkaline or non-alkaline, saline or non-saline. Therefore, one is conscious; therefore, this is called “consciousness.”

Being conscious of the six sense objects, as Lord Buddha affirmed, is the source of man’s knowledge, man’s attachment to the world and man’s sufferings. It conditions name-and-form (nāma-rūpa) and other elements, so it is recognized as the subject of cognition, the object of cognition and the content of it. It exists in all mental, oral and bodily activities.

From the above quotations, the term viṇṇānāhāra has the same meaning, but here, Lord Buddha has taught viṇṇāna as āhāra; therefore, viṇṇānāhāra means the food consciousness or the nutriment of intellection, which is the fourth kind of food of four āhāras. While doing the cognition, consciousness is like the body which absorbs the foods into it, called the food consciousness. Again, the cuti-citta (sencience acting at the close of one span of life) as cause, is followed by the patisandhi-viṇṇāna (reconception consciousness) as effect at the first conscious moment in the new life is called viṇṇānāhāra. When one asks, what on that occasion is viṇṇānāhāro? The answer will be the thought which on that occasion is ideation, mind, the heart, which is clear, ideation as the sphere of mind, as the faculty of mind, the nutriment of intellect, the

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328 S. ll. 4.
329 S. lll, 87.
appropriate element of representative intellect - this is the nutriment of intellect that there then is.\textsuperscript{330}

For consciousness, Thich Nhat Hanh has explained that, consciousness is composed of all the seeds sown by our past actions and the past actions of our family and society. Every day our thoughts, words, and actions flow into the sea of our consciousness and create our body, mind, and world. We can nourish our consciousness by practicing the Four Immeasurable Minds of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, or we can feed our consciousness with greed, hatred, ignorance, suspicion, and pride. Our consciousness is eating all the time, day and night, and what it consumes becomes the substance of our life. We have to be very careful which nutriments we ingest.\textsuperscript{331}

It can be said that, the nutriment consciousness plays the most important role in the kinds of āhāras. Our consciousness is like the ocean with the six rivers of our senses flowing into it. Our mind and our body come from consciousness. They are formed by ourselves and our environment. Our life can be said to be a manifestation of our consciousness. Because of the food that our consciousness consumes, we are the person we are and our environment is what it is. In fact, the edible foods we take into our body and the foods of sense-impression and intention all end up in to our consciousness. Our ignorance, hatred, and sadness all flow back to the sea of consciousness. We should know the kinds of food we feed our consciousness every day. When vijñāna (consciousness) ripens, it brings forth a new form of life, nāma-rūpa (mind and body.) Rūpa is our body or physical aspect, and nāma is our mind or mental aspect. Body and mind are manifestations of our consciousness are made of these kinds of food. We have to look at the Five Aggregates

\textsuperscript{330} \textit{A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics}, ibid., pp. 29-30.

\textsuperscript{331} \textit{The heart of the Buddha's teaching}, ibid. p. 36.
(skandhas) in us - form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. They are nāma-rūpa. The first of the Five Aggregates is rūpa, and other four are nāma. They are all products that store consciousness.

4.3.4.2. Function of viññānāhāra

The nutriment consciousness, in its cognizing function, serves the sustenance of beings by causing the occurrence of mind-and-body.

In order to specify its nature, function, and operation in the cycle of birth and death, Lord Buddha offered another dramatic image to illustrate this: “A dangerous murderer was captured and brought before the king, and sentenced him to death by stabbing. ‘Take him to the courtyard and plunge three hundred sharp knives through him.’ At noon a guard reported, ‘Majesty, he is still alive,’ and the king declared, ‘Stab him three hundred more times!’ In the evening, the guard again told the king, ‘Majesty, he is not yet dead.’ So the king gave the third order: ‘Plunge the three hundred sharpest knives in the kingdom through him.’” Then the Buddha said, “This is how we usually deal with our consciousness.”

Every time we ingest toxins into our consciousness, it is like stabbing ourselves with the three hundred sharp knives. We suffer, and our suffering spills out to those around us.

This kind of food is the most subtle but it is the extremely perilous. One should contemplate it so that he could mourn for his fate from the past time until now.

In the application of the simile of the criminal pierced by spears, the king should be understood as kamma. The criminal is the foolish worldling attaching himself to the round of existence. The 300 spears are the rebirth-consciousness. The order of the king to pierce the criminal with 300 spears, corresponds to the King of Kamma seizing the foolish

332 S. II, 98.
worldling attached to samsāra, and flinging him into rebirth. Though, herein, the 300 spears have been compared to rebirth consciousness, there is no pain in the spears themselves, but the pain that originates from the wound caused by the spears’ piercing. Similarly, there is no suffering in rebirth itself; but there is kamma-resultant suffering (vipāka-dukkha) arising during the life-process in a given rebirth, as corresponding to the painful wound caused by the spears. The sharp shafts of conscious awareness, the punitive results of past cravings and delusions, inflicted on us one’s life at all times of the day, pierce his protective skin and lay him open to the impact of the world of objects.

The desire for conscious awareness has the same character as that for sense impressions: the craving to be alive, to feel alive in the constant encounter with the world of objects present to consciousness (or present within consciousness - as the idealists prefer to say).

But there is still more meaning than that to be derived from the description of consciousness as a nutriment if we consider that it is explained primarily as rebirth consciousness. This rebirth consciousness, which is a single moment’s occurrence, feeds (or conditions) the mindbody process (nāma-rūpa) of the present existence; and it is the arising of such moments of rebirth consciousness at the beginning of each successive life that continues the interminable chain of future births, deaths and sufferings. Growth or proliferation is a characteristic feature of all consciousness. Each rebirth consciousness, though its direct link is with the life immediately preceding it, has behind it the inexhaustible storehouse of the beginningless past, a vast granary of potential seeds of life. Fed from the dark unfathomable recesses of the past, lurks consciousness, an octopus with not eight but a thousand arms, ready to
grasp and take hold wherever it finds a chance, and there to procreate a fresh breed of beings, each with its own set of grasping tentacles.

Life is always in readiness to spring up, and its most prolific manifestation is consciousness. Seen from one’s limited viewpoint, it is consciousness that contributes most to the “expanding universe” of samsāra. Hence the Enlightened One warned: “Do not be an augmenter of worlds!”\footnote{Dhp. verse, No. 167.} It is by one’s insatiable and greedy feeding on consciousness and the other nutriments that the world “grows,” and the potentialities for its growth are endless. Also the end of the world of consciousness cannot be reached by walking. Seen from that world-wide perspective, consciousness appears as the feeder and procreator of innumerable beings all of whom undergo that daily ordeal of life’s piercing spears. Such a visualization of the reach of consciousness will increasingly lead to revulsion, to turning-away and dispassion, undeceived by the magician’s enchanting illusions with which the Buddha compared the aggregate consciousness.

4.3.4.3. The peril of viṇṇāṇahāra

When the food consciousness, thus fulfilling its respective function of sustaining by cognizing, there is its peril, which should be known. In (rebirth) consciousness, manifestation (of a new body-and-mind) is the peril. In whatever place rebirth-consciousness becomes manifest, there it arises along with the mind-and-body existing at the moment of rebirth. And with the arising of that mind-and-body, all perils have arisen because they have their roots in it. It is for this reason that manifestation (in a mind-and-body) is the peril in the nutriment consciousness.

Human beings in the world generally desire for beauty, health, virtues, the Brahma-life, friends, much knowledge, wisdom, position,
fame, etc. They try to do wholesome actions to appropriate their wish. They will get *nāma-and-rūpa* that is appropriate to the former wish after death. However, this result is ruled by impermanence and then they have to come back suffering, it is similar to a man who has worked for a long time, accumulated properties, but he wastes his own property excessively, then he is poor and ill as before. The contrary, one who does unwholesome actions that tends to rebirth-consciousness, then that consciousness creates *nāma-and-rūpa* that is appropriate to the rebirth place. Similarly, a human who is fallen into the hell, nutriment consciousness also creates *nāma-and rūpa* in accordance with the fire of the hell, but it is not burnt by the fire. For this problem, King Milinda asked Nāgasena as follows:

“You say that the fire of purgatory would instantly destroy a boulder the size of a house; but you also say that whatever beings are reborn in hell, though they burn for hundreds of thousands of years they are not destroyed. How can I believe this?” Nāgasena answered: “That is the strong of evil results which keeps human life. For example, although the food, bones and even stones eaten by various female beings are destroyed inside their abdomens yet their embryos are not destroyed. Just so those beings in hell avoid destruction by the influence of their *kamma.*”

In order to prevent from the peril of *viṇṇānāhāra,* Lord Buddha has given to human beings one example of three hundred darts as mentioned. It is said that a wound is enough to feel extremely painful and stinging, let alone three hundred wounds. Rebirth is like piercing of dart; *nāma-rūpa* is like wound, different sufferings rise from wounds that are like

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different sufferings of mind-and-body. It is enough to be miserable because hundreds of darts pierce into this nāma-rūpa in a day.

Whenever one sees the peril of food consciousness, viz he understands well the peril of name-and-shape or the five Aggregates of man (Pañcakkhandha). Lord Buddha said, “Feeling, Perception, Will, Contact, work of mind; this is called Name. The four great elements and the form derived from them; this is called form. This is the Name, this is the Form called Name-and-Form.” In this teaching, Feeling, Perception, Will, Contact, Work of mind, from the above teaching, are of the aggregates of Feeling, Perception, Will and Consciousness; Form is Form Aggregate. Name - and - Form are therefore the five Aggregates of man.

In the Mahāniddāna sutta of Dīgha Nikāya, Lord Buddha has explained that:

“I have said that cognition is the cause of Name-and-Form. Now in what way that is so, Ānanda, is to be understood after this manner. Were cognition not to descend into the mother’s womb, would Name-and-Form become constituted therein? - It would not, Lord. Were cognition, after having descended into the mother's womb, to be extinct, would Name-and-Form come to birth in this state of being? It would not, Lord. Were cognition to be extirpated from one yet young, youth or maiden, would Name-and-Form attain to growth, development, expansion? - It would not, Lord. Wherefore, Ānanda, just that is the ground, the basis, the genesis, the cause of Name-and-Form, to wit, cognition.”

According to the doctrine of Dependent Origination, consciousness is the cause of mind-and-body and mind-and-body is the cause of

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335 S. II, 98.
336 Ibid., 3-4.
consciousness, both really are not entities having a fixed nature, but relate closely to each other: In consciousness (or Cognition) exist the other eleven elements; also in Name - and - Form exist the other eleven ones. Both come from Ignorance and both lead to suffering.

In brief, looking back to the Buddha's similes for the four nutriments, we are struck by the fact that all four evoke pictures of extreme suffering and peril. They depict quite unusual situations of greatest agony. Considering the fact that the daily process of nutrition, physical and mental, is such a very humdrum function in life, those extraordinary similes are very surprising and even deeply disturbing. And they obviously were meant to be disquieting. They are meant to break through the unthinking complacency in which these so common functions of life are performed and viewed: eating, perceiving, willing, and cognizing.

The contemplations on the four nutriments, as presented in these pages, cut at the very roots of the attachment to life. To pursue these contemplations radically and methodically will be a grave step, advisable only for those who are determined to strive for the final cessation of craving and, therefore, are willing to face all consequences, which that path of practice may bring for the direction of their present life and thought.

But apart from such full commitment, also a less radical pursuit but serious and repeated thought given to this teaching of the four nutriments will be beneficial to any earnest follower of the Buddha. To those who feel it premature for them to aim straight at the cessation of craving, the Dhamma has enough teachings that will soothe the wounds received in the battle of life, and will encourage and help a steady progress on the Path. Though gentle guidance will often be welcome amidst the harshness of life, yet when there is only such gentleness and when, for a while, the winds of fate blow softly and pleasantly, there will be the peril that man
settles to a comfortable routine and forgets his precarious situation in this world, which the Buddha so often described. Hence, there is the need that man, and especially a Buddhist, should face now and again such stern teachings as those on the nutriments, which will keep him alert and will strengthen his mental fiber so that he can fearlessly meet the unveiled truth about the world in which he lives.

The contemplation on the four nutriments of life can do this for him. From that contemplation, man can learn not to recoil from the real and not to be carried away by the unreal. He will learn from it that it is suffering which is nourished and pampered by the four nutriments. He will more deeply understand that "only suffering arises where anything arises and only suffering ceases where anything ceases."\(^{338}\)

4.4. The operation of four kinds of \(\text{āhāra}\)

As discussed in chapter three, the operation of the four nutriments \(\text{(āhāra)}\) is that of craving \(\text{(tanhu)}\) of name-and-body of Dependent Origination and five aggregates and so is the operation of Dependent Origination itself. And, the four nutriments co-exist; they cannot be separate from each other.

Though Lord Buddha said that the four nutriments constantly support for the subsisting of man, this is not to say the four nutriments are separate from man or the five aggregates. Here, nutriments are known as conditions and craving is called the origin of nutriment, of the five aggregates, and of name-and-form in that the craving of the previous existence is the source of the present individuality with its dependence upon and continual consumption of the four nutriments in this existence. Craving is one of elements of the twelve causes; hence, the operation of craving is the operation of the twelve causes, of the five aggregates, and

\(^{338}\) M.I, Sutta 22.
of the four nutriments; they cannot separate from each other. Thus, man who is a combination of the four nutriments subsisted, subsisting, and will subsist on these foods. So man is the four nutriments, and the search for truth of man and universe now should turn to be the realization of the four nutriments of life. Actually, the true meaning of the search for truth of man is the very meaning of the search for the truth of suffering or nutriment of life. In fact, the Truth of suffering of man and world or the Truth of nutriment, of the four nutriments, or the five aggregates or man and world – they do not cause suffering, but a person’s craving for the four nutriments that causes suffering. Now, the root meaning of the search for the truth of man and life turns to the meaning of examining human beings’ craving for things. This is the meaning of the operation of craving element and of activities aggregates, and this is the very operation of Ignorance element of Dependent Origination.

Seeing the operation of the four foods, one can understand their nature that is conditioned, impermanent, non-self. If one attaches to them, he will be suffering. If the operation of the four foods or five aggregates controlled by wisdom - the Noble Eightfold Path: right view ... right concentrate which will lead to the elimination of troubles.

4.5. Āhāras and the problems of anguish and happiness

“Anguish or suffering and its cessation” is known as the sacred slogan of Buddhism which was declared in the first discourse339 at the Deer Park: “Life is nothing but anguish” and the method of the end of suffering.” It is the central point from which the Buddha’s teachings are propagated in the world from the Buddha’s time until now.

In order to propagate effectively this sacred slogan in human life as well as to help them to free from troubles, the slogan was skilfully taught in

339 S. III, 32.
various ways. The Buddha taught that all pain or suffering in the world that arises from name-and-form, feeling, pleasure, forms, touch, consciousness, commotions, etc., especially in the First Noble Truth, the eight kinds of suffering were declared. It can be said that such forms of suffering are difficult for someone (who are sinking into the ocean of sensual pleasures) to understand, to accept and to practise. In the researcher’s opinion, it can be easy for men to understand and to accept the truth of suffering of Buddhism through āhāra because āhāra is the basic need for ones to exist, to work, to wish, to plan, etc. as said by Lord Buddha that:

“Whatever pain arises is all in consequences of āhāras,
By the destruction of the āhāras, there is no origin of pain.”341

“Yam kiñci dukkham sambhoti, sabbam āhārapaccayā;
Āhārānañāṁ nirodhena, natthi dukkhassa sambhavo.”342

In the above teaching, the term āhāras, in plural form, refers to the four types of nutriments (see above.) As discussed in the part of “āhāra and Four Noble Truths” of the third chapter, āhāra is synonymous with dukkha (anguish or suffering): āhāra, the origin of āhāra, the cessation of āhāra and the way leading to the cessation of āhāra is the Noble Eightfold Path. Here, one question can arise that: The food itself does not harm man, why is the destruction of āhāras that of suffering? The answer for this question can be found in the teaching as cited, “Through the origin of craving, there is origin of nutriment. Through the ceasing of craving, there is ceasing of nutriment. The way leading to the ceasing of nutriment is the Noble Eightfold Path. If a noble disciple thus knows nutriment, knows the origin of nutriment, the ceasing of nutriment and the way leading to the ceasing of nutriment, he entirely abandons the

341 Ibid. p. 137.
inner tendency to lust, he casts off the inner tendency to ill-will, eliminates the inner tendency to the opinion-and-conceit of 'I am,' he discards ignorance, produces knowledge, and becomes an ender of suffering here and now.\textsuperscript{343}

The teaching shows that from the old past time till to the present, one has consumed the four types of food with motive or stimulus of lust, craving, and of ill-will, of ignorance. Furthermore, one takes foods with the aim of increase in sensual and sexual pleasures for both physical and mental life, of nourishing wishes or plans, of building his 'self' (atta) in the future such as: "I am," "I am this or that" "I will be," "May I be," etc. These toxins that have deformed the pure nature of the foods have caused many diseases and troubles in life. For this reason, why Lord Buddha taught the destruction of foods is that of suffering. Such a process of absorption and digestion of food is to create the entire mass of anguish. Changing the purpose of consumption that means one has to eliminate those toxic spices while cooking and consuming foods, he will be happy. The following teaching specifies:

"This body has come into being through food, is dependent on food; the food must be abandoned," Herein, a monk takes food with reflection and judgment, not for sport, not for indulgence, not for personal charm, not for beautifying, but just enough for the support, for the upkeep of body, for its resting unharmed, for helping the living of the God-life. (He takes food with the thought:) Thus do I check my former feeling and set going no new feeling; thus maintenance shall be mine, blamelessness and comfort in life. Then some time later, though dependent on food, he abandons food.\textsuperscript{344}

\textsuperscript{343} M. I, sutta No. 9.
\textsuperscript{344} A. II, 144, Bhikkhunisutta No.9 (The Book of The Gradual Sayings, vol. II, PTS, pp. 148-150.)
In short, it is said that in the process of nutrition, physical and mental, not only the eater who consumes the food, but in the course of assimilation, also the food devours the eater. There is thus mutual absorption between them. If looked deeply, one will know how much people can be changed (for better/happier or worse/more painful) by ideas they have absorbed and which finally have absorbed and consumed them. Through the problems are discussed in the third chapter and this one, a new regard for a system of āhāras that has fed human beings taught by Lord Buddha is opened. This will be explained in the next chapter "Buddhist view on Man and his āhāras."