

Chapter - II

THERAVĀDA CONCEPTION OF ULTIMATE REALITIES (DHĀTU)

2.1. Definition of *Dhātu* (Element)

Etymologically, the word *dhātu* comes from the root √*dhā*, to bring. The commentaries, ancient and modern, both give the same definition of *dhātu*: “*Dhātu*” is that bears its own characteristics.¹ It exists in nature and performs its function will not depending on any external agency. To understand the term properly it would be useful to illustrate some of the commentarial definitions of *dhātu*.

According to the situation, it arranges or appoints or assigns or provides various kinds of sufferings of *samsāra* (round of rebirth), so it is called *dhātu*.² Again, burden is carried or brought by beings, like ones who carry or bring one’s burden. Therefore, it is called *dhātu*.³ And it means that they are only mere sorting out (*vidhāna*) of suffering because no power is exercisable over them.⁴

¹ Ven, Summaṅgalasāmi. *Abhidhammatthavibhāvini* (Abhi.v.n), p. 230.

² *Ibid.*, p. 230.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

In the book of *Sammohavinodanī*⁵ (*Commentary to vibhaṅga*), read, by means of them being instruments, the suffering of the round of rebirths is continually sorted out by beings. So it is called *dhātu*. And again these are called elements just as the term “elements” is used for the juice, blood, etc. which are the constituents of the collection known as the “body.”⁶ The next definition puts, “in the world the variously coloured orpiment, cinnabar, etc., being the constituents of stones, are called elements, so also these elements are like those ones, for they are the variously “coloured” constituents of knowledge and knowable.”⁷

Venerable Sumaṅgalasāmi in Abhidhammattha Vibhāvinī also says in the similar vein:

*“Vidahati vidhānañca Dhiyate ca vidhīyate.
Etāya dhīyate ettha iti vā dhātu summate.
Sarīraselavayava dhātuyo viya dhātuyo.”⁸*

In the *Sammohavinodanī*, Venerable Buddhaghosa elucidates the meaning of *dhātu* in detail: The general meaning of *dhātu* is as

⁵ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. *Sammohavinodani* (Abhi IIA), p. 72.

⁶ Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu, *Dispeller of Delusion* (D.O.D I), p. 91.

⁷ Ven, Setthila. *The book of Analysis* (B.O.A), p. 90.

⁸ Ven, Summaṅgalasāmi. *Abhi*, v.n, p. 230.

follows: (a) it sorts out (*vidahati*), (b) it assort [well] (*dhīyate*), (c) a sorting out (*vidhāna*), (d) it is sorted out (*vidhīyate*) by means of that, or (e) it causes to be sorted (*Dhīyati*) here, thus it is a sort (*dhātu* =element).

- (a) The mundane sorts (elements), when defined, according to their instrumentality, sort out (*vidahati*) the suffering of the round of rebirth, which in many aspects as the gold and silver 'sorts' (ores) {sort out actual}.
- (b) They assort [well] (*dhīyate*) with living beings, as a burden does with burden bearers; they are borne (*dhāriyanti*), is the meaning.
- (c) They are only mere sorting out (*vidhāna*) of suffering because no mastery is exercisable over them.
- (d) By means of them being instruments the suffering of the round of rebirths is continually being sorted out (*anuidhīyati*) by living beings.
- (e) That [suffering], being sorted out (*vihita*) in this way, is caused to be sorted (*dhīyati*) into those [sorts

(elements)]; it is caused to be placed in them, is the meaning. So, each thing (*dhamma*) among those beginning with the eye is called a 'sort' (*dhātu* = element)' with the meaning stated above begins thus: "It sorts out, it assort well," accordingly it is appropriate.

Furthermore, while the self of the sectarians does not exist with an individual essence, not so these are. These, on the contrary, are elements (*dhātu*) since they cause [a state's] own individual essence to be born (*dhārenti*). And just as in the world the variously-coloured constituents of marble such as malachite, cinnabar, etc., are called 'elements'. So, these [beginning with the eye] are elements like those; for they are the 'variously-coloured' continuously of knowledge and the knowledge. Or just as the general term 'elements' is used for the juices, blood, etc., which are constituents of the collection called the 'car case', when they are distinguished from each other by dissimilarity of characteristic. So, the general term 'elements' should be understood as the constituents of the selfhood (personality) called 'the pentad of aggregates'; for these things begin

with the eye are distinguished from each other by dissimilarity of characteristic.

Furthermore, the 'element' is a term used for what is soulless; and for the purpose of abolishing the perception of soul. The Blessed One accordingly taught the elements in such passages as '*Bhikkhu*, this man has six elements'. Therefore, the exposition should be understood, here, firstly since it is an eye being an element, thus it is the eye-element... It is mind and that is an element, thus it is mind-consciousness element. The exposition of 'eye', etc., should be known individually as to meaning in the way beginning; It relishes (*cakkhati*), thus it is an eye (*cakkhu*); it makes visible (*rūpayati*), thus, it is a visible datum; and the consciousness of the eye is eye consciousness.

2.2. Contextual Meaning of Dhātu (Element)

Sometimes, the Buddha spoke about six elements; or he classified realities as two elements. There are many different ways of classifying realities, but no matter in which way realities are classified, as *Khandha*, by way of *ārammana*, or in any other way, we

should remember the purpose of classifying realities: realizing that what we take for self are only nāma elements and rūpa elements.⁹

Venerable Moggallana from Sri Lanka, in his work,¹⁰ explains eight types of elements concisely like this;

- (a) *Sehmādo*, phlegm, etc.,
- (b) *Rasarattādo*, *rasa*, *rudhira*, *mamsa*, *medha* and so on, seven elements,
- (c) *Mahābūte*, in great essentials,
- (d) *Pabhādike*, visible form and so forth, object element,
- (e) *Aṭṭhi ādīsu*, clavicle or collar bone, etc., relic,
- (f) *Cakkhādīsu*, eye and so forth,
- (g) *Bhvādīsu*, *bhu*, etc.,
- (h) *Gerukādīsu*, yellow orpiment or realgar etc.

Again, *dhātu* also refers to the remains of the body after cremation (especially holy people), bodily relic, the tooth relic; *varadāṭhādhātu cetiya*, *sarīra dhātu*, *dāṭhā dhātu*, etc. Pāli English and English Pāli Dictionary gives six meaning of *dhātu*: an element,

⁹ Van, Nina, Gorkom. Abhidhamma in Daily Life (AIDL) ch. 18.

¹⁰ Ven, Moggalāyana.; Abhidhānappadīpikāpāli (Abhidhā), p.100.

natural condition, a relic, root of a word, humour of the body, and faculty of senses.

2.3. Ultimate Realities and 18 Elements

Abhidhammā explains basically four ultimate realities and also *paññatti*. Nevertheless, the purpose of *Abhidhamma* is to show ultimate realities in detail. The book of *A Manual of Abhidhamma* explains that the word *paramattha* is of great significance in *Abhidhamma*. It is a compound formed of ‘*parama*’ and ‘*attha*’. The word “*parama*” is explained as immutable (*A viparīta*), abstract (*nibbattita*); ‘*attha*’ means ‘things’. *Paramattha*, therefore, means an immutable or abstract thing. Abstract reality may be suggested as the closest equivalent.¹¹

Although the term immutable is used here, it should not be misunderstood that all *paramatthas* are eternal or permanent. It is referring to their intrinsic nature that they never loose, they are permanent, unchangeable. For example, *lobha*, wherever it may arise, never changes its intrinsic nature of greed whether it arises in the mind of the wise and virtuous, or the wicked, or of dogs. Only in

¹¹ Nārada, Thera. *A Manual of Abhidhamma* (M.Abh), p. 7.

this meaning, it is said that the ultimates always maintain permanently their nature.¹²

What we call a brass vessel, is not a *paramattha*. It changes every moment and may be transmuted into a vase. Moreover, both these object could be analysed and reduced into fundamental material forces and qualities, which in *Abhidhamma* are termed *rūpa paramattha*. They are subject to change, yet the distinctive characteristics of these *rūpas* are identically the same whether they are found in a vessel or a vase. They preserve their identity in whatever combination they are found—hence the commentarial interpretation of *parama* as immutable or real. *Attha* exactly corresponds to the English multi-significant term “things.” The *pali* word ‘*attha*’ also means “meaning.” But, here it is not used in the sense of ‘meaning.’

There may arise possibly a question, why is it called ‘ultimate reality’ or ‘ultimate truth’? The *Vibhāvinī* teacher gives the answer: “*paramo uttamo aviparito attho paramattho*”¹³ — consciousness, mental factor, matter and *nibbāna* always bears their intrinsic nature. They

¹² Ven, Silānanda. *Abhidhamma in Daily life* (Abhi. D.L.), p. 2.

¹³ Ven, Summaṅgalasāmi. *Abhi. v.n.*, p. 74.

never change their intrinsic nature. Thus, the unalterable intrinsic nature is called “Ultimate Reality” (Ultimate Truth).

The Buddha has divided all the realities into eighteen *dhātu* or elements for the benefit of those who could not understand *upādānakkhandhās* (aggregates of Clinging) and *āyatana* (base) to show them clearly that there is no ‘*atta*’-‘soul’ nor a living being – ‘*satta*’ These eighteen *dhātus* can be equally divided into three groups:

- (a) Six subjective elements, receptor (of senses). These six subjective elements are also called *dvāra* and *ajjhattikas*. They help to receive the sense information from the external world.
- (b) Six objective elements something which excites or stimulates the senses. These six objective elements (*Ārammanaṇa*) are also called *bāhiras*.
- (c) Six intellectual elements, (Consciousness) bloom

Six Subjective elements

(1) Chakkhu-Dhātu (Eye element)

The Buddha defined *cakkhu dhātu* as: “That which, deriving from the four great essentials, is sensitive surface, included in the body, invisible, impinging; by means of which invisible

impingement eye (one) saw, sees, will see or may see visible impingent visible (object); this is eye, this is eye base; this is eye element; this is controlling faculty of eye; this is a world; this is a door; this is an ocean; this is lucence; this is field; this is a basis; this is a guide; this is guidance; this is the near shore; this is an empty village. This is called eye element.”¹⁴

According to *pāli* grammar, *cakkhu* is derived from $\sqrt{cakkha}+u$. it “relishes” and “tastes” the visible datum, thus it is an eye.¹⁵ That is an element, thus, it is eye element. In the ultimate sense, it refers only to *cakkhupasāda* that is born of *kamma* and not the whole eyeball. It, exclusively, refers to the visual sensitive matter that lies at the center of the pupil where an image forms, pervading the seven layers of the visual sense organ. In Sanskrit, it is known by *cakkus* (*h*).

In Buddhist literature, we can find two types of *cakkhu*.¹⁶

- 1) *Mamsa cakkhu*- Eye of flesh
- 2) *Paññā cakkhu*- Eye of Insight.

¹⁴ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A., p.112

¹⁵ Ven, Subhūti. Abhidhānappadipikāsuci (Abhi. Sū)., p.184.

¹⁶ Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar. Itivuttaka (Iti), p. 211

Of these, the former one, eye of flesh is twofold viz., *Sasambhāracakkhu*, constituent part of the eye and *Pasādacakkhu*, eye-sensitivity. The latter one, eye of insight is fivefold:

- 1) *Buddha Cakkhu*-Buddha eye: complete intuitive knowledge of another's inclinations, hopes, hankering, will, disposition, proclivities, and stage of moral development,
- 2) *Samanta Cakkhu*-All-seeing eye, the eye of perfect wisdom,
- 3) *Paññā Cakkhu*-Eye of knowledge, insight into the Four Noble Truths
- 4) *Dibba Cakkhu*-Clairvoyant eye, the Deviance Power of Sight and
- 5) *Dhamma Cakkhu*-Eye of the *Dhamma*; the Eye of Truth, the attainment of the first three *maggas* and *phalas*.

The passage: '*Bhikkhus*, in surveying the world with the eye of a Buddha, I was beings with but little dust of corruption in their eyes...beings docile and in docile,'¹⁷ refers to the 'Buddha eye'.

'Omniscience is called the *all-seeing eye*'¹⁸ this is the all-seeing eye,

¹⁷ Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar. *Mulapannāsa pāli* (MN, I), p.225.

¹⁸ Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar *Theragatha* Khu VIII, p. 178.

'Vision arose, knowledge arose'¹⁹ this is the eye of knowledge. 'Bhikkhus, with clarified spiritual eye indeed I saw'²⁰ this is the psychic eye. 'In that very seat, the pure, unstained eye of the *dhamma* arose'²¹ this is the *Dhamma* eye, comprising the first three Paths.

On the other hand, the eye of flesh is twofold, that is, as compound organ and as sentient organ. Of these, a lump of flesh is situated in the cavity of the eye, bound by the bone of the cavity of the below, by the bone of the brow above, by the eye-peaks on both sides, by the brain inside, by the eye-lashes outside. It has fourteen constituents: briefly, the four elements, colour, odour, taste, nutritive essence, collocation, appearance, life, nature, sensitive skin, sentient eye. In detail, there are the four elements and the following six which dependent on them: - colour, odour, taste, nutritive essence, appearance, and collocation. These ten spring forth four causes, which make forty. Four, to wit, life, nature, sensitive skin, sensitive eye, spring from solely from *kamma*. Thus, these forty-four material qualities make forty-four constituents. Such is the compound organ of the eye.

¹⁹ Ven, Buddhaghosa. *Visuddhimagga* (Vis), p. 15.

²⁰ Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar. MN,I, p. 227.

²¹ Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar *Majjhimapannāsa* Pāli (MN,II), p. 346.

The sentience organ situated in and bound to it is called the sentient eye as derived from the four great essentials. In the circle of vision where arise images of the bodies of men standing, right in front, in the middle of the black dish surrounded by white circle of the constituent organism.

As it has been said by the 'General of the *Dhamma*' – that the organ of the visual sense, by which object are apprehended, is a small and subtle thing, and like a louse's head.²²

(2) Sota-Dhātu (Sound element)

In *Vibhaṅga*, (the book of analysis) the Buddha made a statement thus: "That ear which, deriving from the four great essentials, is sensitive surface, included in the body, invisible, impingent; by means of which invisible impingent ear (one) heard, hears, will hear or may hear invisible impingent audible (object); this is ear, this ear base, this is ear element; this is controlling faculty of ear; this is a word; this is a door; this is ocean; this is lucence; this is field; this is a basis; this is the near shore; this is an empty village. This is called an ear element."²³

²² Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa, *Atthasālini* (Abhi IA), p. 345.

²³ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A., p. 113.

Sota is derived from $\sqrt{su+ta}$. Dispeller of Delusion explains *sota* as: “it hears” thus it is an ear.²⁴ It is an ear, and that is an element, thus it is an ear element. In the ultimate sense, it refers to the *sotapasāda* that is born of *kamma*. It is the auditory sensitive matter that lies at the smooth hairs inside the inner ear. In Sanskrit, it is known by the name *Śrota & Śrotra*.

Ven Buddhaghosa opines that eye and ear are, as their objective source does not come into physical contact with our organism are *asmpatta gocaraggāhika rūpa* —not reaching the (object) matter.²⁵ The Compendium of Philosophy indicates that the *Mahā Aṭṭhakathā* did not distinguish light and sound from other sensible. The distinction began with *Ven Buddhaghosa*, probably, because he was, to a certain extent, acquainted with the comparatively modern undulatory theory of light and sound. But this distinction has led the author of *Abhidhammattha-vibhāvinī* to comment himself to the view that there is no contact between eye and its object, ear and sound.

U Pho Hlaing, the Yaw-Atunwun, one of the ablest authorities on Buddhism in Myanmar, rejected this distinction itself on the

²⁴ Ven, Moggalāyana. *Abhidhānappadipikātikāpāli*; (*Abhidhā*). Tī, p. 117.

²⁵ U Shwe Zan Aung. *Compendium of philosophy* (C.p), p. 3.

authority of the *Mahā-Aṭṭhakathā*. Ledi Sayadaw, on the other hand, accepts the distinction, and explains the fact that, though there is undoubtedly contact between eye and light, ear and sound, yet the mind, by habit, refers these sensations to the outer objects that do not come in contact.²⁶

These two elements are very useful in our daily life and regarded as the most worthy one. Even the *Rūpa Brahmas* (Fine material-sphere beings) who are not attached to any sense objects still possess these two elements. It is very important because it is said that they are useful to see the Buddha and to hear the *Dhamma*.²⁷ So, the Buddha urged us not to indulge them.

Once a prostitute could not guard her ear on the sound object of Guttilla's harp-sound, she wanted to listen to it earnestly. So, she jumped out through the window and, therefore, died immediately. And that was just because of indulging the ear sense.

There is one saying in Myanmar "*mje' si, a hsoun: na: a shoun:*", meaning, if you lose your eyes, you are a defeat or loss or failure in

²⁶ U Shwe Zan Aung. C.p, p. 160.

²⁷ Ven, Summaṅgalasāmi. Abhi.v.n, p. 135.

your life. In the same way, if you lose your ears, you suffer a loss or sacrifice in your life.

(3) Ghāna-Dhātu (Nose element)

Nose element: "That nose which, deriving from the four great essentials, is sensitive surface, included in the body, invisible, impingement; by means of which invisible impingement nose (one) smelled, smells, will smell or may smell invisible impingement odorous (object); this is nose; this is nose base, this is nose element, this is controlling faculty of nose; this is a world, this is a door, this is an ocean, this is lucence; this is a field; this is a basis; this is the near shore; this is an empty village. This is called nose element."²⁸

Ghāna is derived from √ghā+yu. The dispeller of Delusion explains *ghāna*: "It smells" thus it is a nose.²⁹ In ultimate sense it refers exclusively to the *ghānapasāda* that is born of *kamma*. It is the olfactory sensitive matter that lies on the olfactory bulb. In Sanskrit it is *ghrāṇa*.

(4) Jivhā-Dhātu (Tongue element)

²⁸ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 90.

²⁹ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi IIA, p. 42.

“*Vibhaṅga* (the book of analysis) gives an account of the tongue element — “ That tongue which deriving from the four great essentials, is sensitive surface, included in the body, invisible impingement, by means of which invisible impingement tongue (one) tasted, tastes, will taste or may taste invisible impingement sapid (object); this is tongue, this is tongue base; this is tongue element; this is controlling faculty of tongue; this is a world, this is a door, this is an ocean, this is lucence; this is a field; this is a basis; this is the near shore; this is an empty village. This is called tongue element.”³⁰

The *Sammohavinodani* Commentary gives an explanation for tongue: it evokes life thus it is tongue.³¹ Although this word means *Jīvita+avhā*, it is finished as *jivhā* by means of philosophy. Its literal meaning is calling the life of taste including six types of favours such as sweet, sour, pungent, astringent, salty, and bitter in metaphor. *Jivha* is *Jivhā-pasāda* in ultimate sense. It is the gustatory sensitive matter that lies at the center of the tongue, the lotus-petal-like growth. In Sanskrit also it is called *jivhā*.

³⁰ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi IIA, p. 42.

³¹ Bhikkhu, Ñānamoli. Disperller of Delusion (DOD) Vol. I, p. 53.

(5) Kāya-Dhātu (Body element)

The book of analysis (*Vibhāṅga*) text explains body element thus: “That body which, deriving from the four great essentials, is sensitive surface, included in the body, invisible, impingement; by means of which invisible impingement body (one) touched, touches, will touch or may touch invisible impingement tangible (object); this is body; this is body base, this is body element; this is controlling faculty of body; this is a world; this is a door; this is an ocean; this is lucence; this is a field; this is a basis; this is the near shore; this is an empty village. This is called body element.”³²

Kāya can be separated as $\sqrt{ku}+aya$. *Sammohavinodani* explains the term *kāya*: it is the origin of vile states subject to cankers, thus, it is body.³³ In the ultimate sense, it refer to the *kāya-pasāda*, body sensitive matter that lies on the body spreading through out all parts of the body except on the hair, on the tips of nails, and withered skin. In Sanskrit, it is also *kāya*.

The three sensitivities — nose, tongue, and body, as giving immediate access, are three kinds of field-holding material quality

³² Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 114.

³³ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi IIA, p. 42.

(*sampatta*). They cannot be gotten by Form Brahmas as beings in these higher planes (have) temporarily inhibited the desire for sensual pleasures (*kāmarāga*).³⁴

(6) Mano-Dhātu (Mind element)

Mind element: “Immediately after the cessation mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind element, Immediately after the cessation of the Ear-consciousness-element that has arisen there consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind element. Immediately after the cessation of the Nose-consciousness that has arisen there consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind element. Immediately after the cessation of the Tongue consciousness-element that has arisen there consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind,

³⁴ Ven, Summaṅgalasāmi. Abhi. v.n, p. 135.

consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind element. Immediately after the cessation of the body-consciousness-element that has arisen there arises consciousness, mind-ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind element; also (at the time of) first advertence in all states there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind element. This is called mind element.”³⁵

According to Compendium of Philosophy the mind is an element—that is to say, there is behind it no more primal, noumenal being or entity of which it is a phenomenal appearance.³⁶ *Citta, ceta, mano, viññāṇa, hadaya, mānasa*, and these terms are for us synonymous.³⁷ *Mano-dhātu* comprises the five-door adverting consciousness, and two receiving consciousness. Thus three kinds of *citta* are *manodhātu*.

³⁵ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 114.

³⁶ U Shwe Zan Aung. C.p, p. 254.

³⁷ Ven, Moggalāyana. Abhidhā, p. 20.

It has the characteristic of knowledge visible or other objects immediately after visual or other cognition respectively. The function of it is receiving visible and other sense objects. The manifestation of it is the state of such reception. The proximate cause is the absence of visual and other cognition.³⁸

The five sense elements except *manodhātu* are also called doors, in *pāli*, *dvāra*, derived from *du*, two and *√ar*—to go, to enter, is that which serves both as an entrance and an exit. Eye, ear and other organs of sense act as doors for objects to enter. The five physical senses and the mind are regarded as the six doors through which objects gain entrance.³⁹

Six objective elements

(1) Rūpa-Dhātu (Visible element)

Visible element: “The visible (object) which, derived from the four the great essentials, is of shining appearance, visible, impingent, blue, yellow, red, white, black, crimson, green, gold-colour, the colour of a mango bud, long, short, small, big, circular, spherical,

³⁸ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi. IIA, p. 304.

³⁹ Nārada Thera. M.Abh, p. 169.

square, hexagonal, octagonal, sixteen-cornered, low, high, shady, glowing, light, dark, dull, misty, smoky, dusty, of the shining appearance of the moon`s disc, of the shining appearance of the sun`s disc of the shining appearance of a gem, shell, pearl, cat`s-eye, of the shining appearance of gold and silver; or whatever other visible (object) there is, derived from the four great essentials, of shining appearance, visible, impingement; that visible impingement visible (object) which (one) saw, sees, will see or may see by means of invisible impingement eye; this is visible (object); this is visible base; this is visible element. This is called visible element.”⁴⁰

Rūpa dhātu should not be confused with the *Rūpa* that refers to all the matters in general. Here, it refers only to the *Vañña*, visible object (form, colour, and shape are implied by this term) of the 28 *Rūpa* mentioned in the *Abhidhamma*. Shwe Zan Aung states that *Rūpa* here seems to be confined to the *Vaññāyatana*, or sense of colour, the only strictly visible object (*sanidassanarūpam*), the form, the figure, the shape (*sañthāna*) being known inferentially in one of the ‘sequels’ of sense-cognition.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 113.

⁴¹ U Shwe Zan Aung, C.p, p. 119

Once a *bhikkhuni* could not control her eye on the visible object of stature of man, she attached to it very much. While she embraced it she fell down and died.⁴² Such is the ill, such is the power of visible object.

(2) *Sadda-Dhātu* (Audible element)

Audible element: Among eighteen elements, "That audible (object) which, deriving from the four great essentials, is invisible, impinging, drum sound, tabor sound, conch shell sound, tom-tom sound, song sound, musical sound, cymbal sound, manual sound, the sound of beings, the sound of concussion of things, wind sound, water sound, human sound, non-human sound; or whatever other audible (object) there is, deriving from the four great essentials, invisible, impingement; that invisible impingement audible (object) which (one) heard, hears, will hear or may hear by means of invisible impingement ear; this is audible (object); this is audible base; this is audible element. This is called audible element."⁴³

Sadda, sound or audible object arises from the friction of element of extension. The four fundamental of matter are always

⁴² Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar. *Cturārkka Dipni* (CAD) V p.331.

⁴³ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 113.

inter-dependent and related. At times, one element may preponderate over the other, for example; the element of extension predominates in earth, the element of cohesion in water, the element of heat in fire, and the element of motion in air. When an element that is of extension collides with a similar element there arises sound. It can spring from both mind (*citta*) and seasonal phenomena (*utu*).

(3) Gandha-Dhātu (Odorous element)

Odorous element: "That odorous (object) which, deriving from the four great essentials, is invisible, impingement, the odour of roots, the colour of sap, the odour of bark, the odour of leaves, the odour of flowers, the odour of fruit, the odour of raw things, putrid odour, pleasant odour, unpleasant odour; or whatever other odorous (object) there is, deriving from the four great essentials, invisible, impingent; that invisible impingement odorous (object) which (one) smelled, smells, will smell or may smell by means of invisible impingent nose; this is odorous (object); this is odorous base; odorous element. This is called odorous element."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 113.

Gandha comes from the root \sqrt{gam} , to go. It is explained in the *Kaccāyana*⁴⁵ since, this entity goes from one particular to another place through wind, and it is smell element. *Gandha* is derived from \sqrt{gandh} , to express (*sūcane*). It springs from all the four sources that can produce matter; *kamma, utu, āhāra, citta*.

(4) Rasa-Dhātu (Sapid element)

Sapid element: In the original text, the Blessed One expounded: “That sapid (object) which, deriving from the four great essentials, is invisible, impingent, the taste of roots, the taste of stems, the tastes of bark; the taste of leaves, the taste of flowers, the taste of fruits, sour, sweet, bitter, pungent, salt, alkaline, sweet-acrid, acrid, nice, nauseous; or whatever other sapid (object) there is, deriving from the four great essentials, invisible, impingement; that invisible impingent sapid (object) which (one) tasted, tastes, will taste or may taste by means of invisible impingement tongue; this is sapid (object); this is sapid base; this is sapid element. This is called sapid element.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ven, Kaccāyana. Kaccāyanapāli (Kac), p. 309.

⁴⁶ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 114.

The commentary explains taste.⁴⁷ According to entomology *rasa* comes from $\sqrt{rasa+a}$, means that these six types of tastes; sweet, sour, hot, astringent, salt, and bitter are enjoyed. So they are termed as *rasa*. Sapid object is one of the inseparable matters. So, it is diffused in all the elements in some or the other quantity.

(11) Phoṭṭhabba-Dhātu (Tangible element)

Tangible element: The genuine definition should be learned from original doctrinal expression: “The element of extension, element of heat, element of motion, hard, soft, smooth, rough, pleasant contact, painful contact, heavy, light, that invisible impingement tangible (object) which (one) touched. Touches, will touch or may touch by means of invisible impingement body; this is tangible (object); this is tangible base; this is tangible element. This is called tangible element.”⁴⁸

In this case, *phoṭṭhabba* is derived from $\sqrt{phusa+tabba}$. The Dispeller of Delusion explains it as; it is touched, thus it is tangible datum.⁴⁹ *phoṭṭhabba Dhātu* comprises three kinds of *rūpa*: *pathavī*, *tejo*, *vāyo*. *Abhidhamma* maintains that the three elements— extension,

⁴⁷ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi. IIA, p. 42.

⁴⁸ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 114.

⁴⁹ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi. IIA, p. 42.

heat and motion— are tangible elements. The element of cohesion owing to its subtlety cannot be tangible (touchable) object. For instance, when we put our hand in water, the cold felt is *tejo*, the softness is *pathavi*, and the pressure is *vāyo*. Thus only these three fundamental elements are regarded as tangible.

Venerable Mahāgandāyone Sayādaw explained that pleasant sight, pleasant sound, pleasant smell, pleasant taste and pleasant touch are called the five *kāmaguṇa*. The physique, voice and scent of the female, the taste of food prepared by her, her bodily touch, are the favourite sensual pleasures for men. The converse is also true for the female.⁵⁰ Therefore, the Buddha always admonished monks to restrain from one's bad senses, to free from overcoming of *Māra*, to be like a rocky mountain which cannot be thrown down by the wind.⁵¹ For Buddhist Monks, the Buddha has also laid down the *indriya samvara* rules so that a monk would not be overcome by the object of senses.

(12) Dhamma-Dhātu (Ideational element)

⁵⁰ Ven, Silānanda. Abhi. D.L, p. 258.

⁵¹ U, Pannādīpa. Dhammapada (DHP I), v. 8.

Dhamma is derived from \sqrt{dhar} , to bring. *Sammohavinodanī* explains, they bear their own characteristic, thus they are mental data.⁵² Ideational things are natures as well as element, thus is an ideational element. In ultimate sense, it refers to fifty-two mental factors, sixteen subtle matters and *nibbāna*. Its synonym is *dhammāyatana*. Although *dhammāyatana* is connected with object (*ārammaṇa*), this *dhamma-dhātu* is different from *dhammārammaṇa*.⁵³

Cittas (consciousness) are included in *dhammārammaṇa*, but not in *dhamma dhātu* since it is; *cetasika*, subtle *rūpa* and *Nibbāna*. When *cittas* are classified as elements there are seven classes of *viññāṇa dhātu*, namely: *pañcaviññāṇa dhātu*, *mano-dhātu*, *mano viññāṇa dhātu*. Concepts and conventional terms (*paññatti*) which are included in *dhammāyatana* are not *dhammadhātu*, because they are not *paramattha dhammas* (absolute truths). Only *paramattha dhammas* are classified as elements.⁵⁴

Here, researchers should note the difference between *Dhamma Dhātu* from *suttanta* point of view and *Dhamma Dhātu* from *Abhidhamma* point of view. From *Abhidhamma* aspect, it has been

⁵² Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. *Abhi II A*, p. 42.

⁵³ Ven, Anuruddhā. *Abhidhammatthasangaha* (*Abhi. S*), p. 128.

⁵⁴ Ven, Nina, Gorkom. *Abhi II A*, p. 42.

already mentioned above. Regarding the *Suttanta* point of view, the Buddha expounded it, referring to *Sabbāñuta ñāṇa* in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, *Majjhima Nikaya*, in the discourse of Prince *Abhaya* belonging to the division on householders, "Why is that? That 'element of things' has been fully penetrated by the Buddha, though the full penetration of which the answer occurs to the Buddha on the spot."⁵⁵

Six Intellectual Elements (Consciousness)

(13) Cakkhuvīññāṇa-Dhātu (Eye-consciousness-element)

Eye-consciousness-element: "Depending on eye and on visible (object) there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, hear (i.e., consciousness), lucence, (i.e. consciousness), mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, eye-consciousness-element. This is called eye-consciousness-element."⁵⁶

Dhammasaṅgaṇī (A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics) explains, the fourfold explanation of *cakkhu* as, the characteristic of visual awareness is being aware of a visible object by dependence

⁵⁵ Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar MN, Vol. II, p. 58.

⁵⁶ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p.113.

upon the sense of sight; the function is the taking as object merely the visible form; the manifestation is the state of confronting the visible object; the proximate cause is the disappearance of the inoperative element of mind with regard to visible object.⁵⁷

According to the commentaries, there are at least these four types of conditions necessary for the appearance of *cakkhuvīññāṇa dhātu*. These are as follows⁵⁸:-

1. *Asambhinnattā cakkhussa* (the visible organ unimpaired),
2. *Āpāthagatattā rūpānam* (access of visible objects to the line of visible),
3. *Ālokasannissitam* (dependence on light) and
4. *Manasikāra hetukam* (attention).

Suppose we see visible object ordinary people may take it for granted what? Actually there are many conditions working together for the seeing phenomenon to appear. These four factors are the minimum causes and seeing the visible object is the effect. If one of them lacks, we cannot see the object or let's say the seeing consciousness cannot arise.

⁵⁷ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi. IA, p. 303.

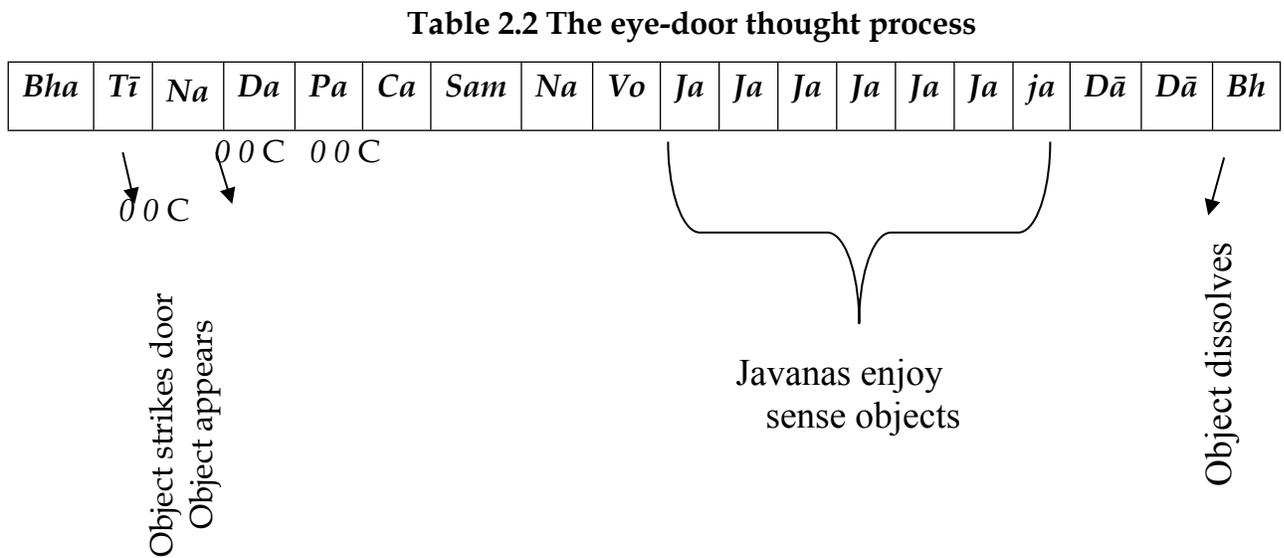
⁵⁸ Bhikkhu, Bodhi. A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (C.M. Abhi), p. 151.

The new commentator Venerable Buddhaghosa explained that visual cognition arises with its concomitant phenomena. So, its concomitants are also one among many conditions necessary for the visual cognition to arise. For instance, the eye of a dead man is impaired. The sight of a living man, which is extinguished or impeded by bile, phlegm, or blood, being unable to cause visual cognition, is unpaired. And although the eye may not be impaired, the object does not come into the line of vision since visual cognition does not arise. And although that object may come into the line of vision, when there is no basis or medium of light visual cognition does not arise. And although there may be light, the five-door-adverting does not agitate the life-continuum, visual cognition does not arise; it arises only when the life-continuum is agitated. Visual cognition, thus, arises together with the support of its associated states.

Here, how the eye-consciousness thought process arises should be understood. Before we see something, the thought process arises starting with three *bhavaṅga*. And *āvajjana* adverts the consciousness towards the sense. To be clear, we may learn the

occurrence of *atimahantārammaṇa vīthi* in *cakkhu dvāra* (eye-door thought process of object of very great intensity) as follows:-

When a visible object of very great intensity strikes the eye-door, *atimahantārammaṇa vīthi* arises. The cognitive series may be represented by the following symbols:



Bha = *Bhavaṅga*, life-continuum. At first there is a stream of *Bhavaṅga citta*s.

Tī = *atīta-bhavaṅga* (the three small circles represent three small instants that make up a *cittakkhana*). At the arising instant of this *citta*, the visible object and the *cakkhu-pasāda* arise simultaneously. This is the arising instant (*uppāda*) of *rūpārammaṇa*.

- Na* = *bhavanga-calana*, vibrating life-continuum. At the arising instant of this *citta*, *rūpārammaṇa* appears (becomes distinct at *cakkhu-pasāda*).
- Da* = *bhavaṅgupaccheda*, arresting life-continuum. *Bhavaṅga* stream is cut off after the dissolution of this *citta*.
- Pa* = *Pañcadvārāvajjana*, five-door-adverting consciousness. It is always the first *citta* in the cognitive series of *Pañca-dvāra vīthis*. It adverts the consciousness stream towards the sense-object.
- Ca* = *cakkhuvīññāṇa*, eye consciousness. It sees the visible objects. It makes the sense impression and transmits the impression to the next consciousness before it dissolves.
- Sam* = *sampaṭicchana*, receiving consciousness. It receives the visible object together with the sense impression and relays them to the next consciousness.
- Na* = *santīraṇa*, investigating consciousness, it investigates the object and the impression.
- Vo* = *voṭṭhabbana* (*manodvārāvajjana*) determining consciousness. It determines whether the object is good or bad.
- Ja* = *javana*, impulsive consciousness that enjoys the taste of the sense object. One of the 29 *kāma-javana cittas*, as

conditioned by *manasikāra* (making in the mind or attention) and *voṭṭhabbana*, arises mostly seven times, i.e., it runs for seven conscious moments.

Dā = *tadā lambana*, registering consciousness. It immediately follows *javana* and runs for two conscious moments enjoying the taste of the sense-object. At the dissolving instant of the second *tadā lambana citta*, the visible-object and the *cakkhu-pasāda* (eye-sensitivity) dissolves together because their life-time of 17 conscious moments is now complete.

Since the visible object no longer exists, the cognitive series ends and the consciousness stream sinks into life-continuum (sub-consciousness). This is a notable point. The *atimahantārammaṇa vīthi* is also known as “*tadā lambana-vāra vīthi*” as it terminates with *tadā lambana-citta*. There are 75 *pañcadvāra vīthis*. In the process of cognition at the eye-door, there are one *tadārammaṇavāra vīthi* for *atimahantārammaṇa*, two *javana-vāra vīthis* for *mahantārammaṇa*, six *voṭṭhabanavāra vīthis* for *parittārammaṇa* and six *mogh-vāra vīthis* for *atiparittārammaṇa*. All together there are 15 *vīthis* at the eye door. Similarly for other four sense doors. Thus the total number of *pañcadvāra vīthis* at the five doors is $15 \times 5 = 75$.

Chart 2.3 Thought processes at the Eye-consciousness

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Retention	1	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	Dā	Dā
Apperception	2	Ti	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	Bh
	3	Ti	Ti	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	J	J	J	J	J	J	J
Determination Grade	4	Ti	Ti	Ti	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	Vo	Vo	Bh	Bh	Bh	Bh
	5	Ti	Ti	Ti	Ti	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	Vo	Vo	Bh	Bh	Bh
	6	Ti	Ti	Ti	Ti	Ti	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	Vo	Vo	Bh	Bh
	7	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	Vo	Vo	Bh						
	8	Ti	Na	Da	Pa	Ca	Sa	Na	Vo	Vo	Vo							
	9	Ti	Na	Na	Bh	Bh	Bh	Bh	Vo	Vo								
Futile Grade	10	Ti	Na	Na	Bh	Bh	Bh	Bh	Bh									
	11	Ti	Na	Na	Bh	Bh	Bh	Bh										
	12	Ti	Na	Na	Bh	Bh	Bh											
	13	Ti	Na	Na	Bh	Bh												
	14	Ti	Na	Na	Bh													
	15	Ti	Na	Na														

(14) Sotaviññāṇa-Dhātu (Ear-consciousness-element)

With reference to this element, the Lord Buddha expounded in the Book of analysis (*Vibhaṅga*): “Depending on ear and on audible (object) there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind,

consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, ear-consciousness-element. This is called ear-consciousness-element.”⁵⁹

Ear consciousness refers to the two *sota-viññāṇa cittas*. These are ear-unwholesome-result consciousness accompanied by equanimity and ear-wholesome-result consciousness accompanied by equanimity. Its characteristic is of sound awareness, is being aware of a sound object by dependence upon the sense of sound; the function is the taking as object merely the sound; the manifestation is the state of confronting the sound; the proximate cause is the disappearance of the inoperative element of mind with regard to sound.⁶⁰

In order to hear the appearance of *sota-viññāṇa*, four conditions are necessary:

1. *Asanbhinnattā sotassa* (ear-door must be good),
2. *Āpāthagatattā saddānam* (sound must be present).
3. *Ākāsannissitam* (space for the passing of sound must be present, and

⁵⁹ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 113.

⁶⁰ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi IIA, p. 303.

4. *Manasikāra hetukam* (attention must present).

Unless there is sound, neither the function of hearing nor the process of cognition can take place. Same is for the necessity of other three conditions. The four factors combined together make the cause and the effect becomes hearing. And then hearing becomes the cause and making a note of hearing becomes the effect.

(15) Ghānaviññāṇa-Dhātu (Nose-consciousness element)

Vibhaṅga (the book of analysis) explains nose-consciousness-element clearly. “Depending on nose and on odorous (object) there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, nose-consciousness-element. This is called nose-consciousness-element.”⁶¹

It is two *ghāṇa-viññāṇa cittas* referring to two nose consciousnesses. There are nose-unwholesome-result consciousness accompanied by equanimity and nose-wholesome-result consciousness accompanied by equanimity. Its characteristic is nose awareness of a smell object by dependence upon the sense of odour;

⁶¹ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa, Abhi IIA, p. 113.

the function of nose consciousness is the taking as object merely the smell; the manifestation is the state of confronting the odour; the proximate cause is the disappearance of the inoperative element of mind with regard to smell.⁶²

For the arising of nose consciousness, at least four conditions must work together. They are as follows:

1. *Asambhinnattā ghāṇassa* (nose-door must be good),
2. *Āpāthagatattā gandhānam* (smell must be present),
3. *Vāyosannissitam* (air-element that carries smell must be present) and
4. *Manasikāra hetukam* (attention must be present).

If the air is not present, odours cannot come into contact with the nose-basis, and consequently the function of smelling and the nose door cognitions cannot take place. The same is applicable for the other conditions. The four factors combined together make the cause and the smelling is the effect. And again, smelling is cause and noting of the smelling is the effect.

(16) Jivhāviññāṇa-Dhātu (Tongue-consciousness-element)

⁶² Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa, Abhi IIA, p. 303.

Tongue-consciousness-element: Depending on tongue and on sapid (objects) there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, tongue-consciousness-element. This is called tongue-consciousness-element"⁶³ the Lord Buddha defined it.

It is two *Jivhāviññāṇa cittas*, which mean the two tongue consciousnesses. There are tongue-unwholesome-result-consciousness accompanied by equanimity and tongue-wholesome-result-consciousness accompanied by equanimity. Its characteristic being awareness of a taste object by dependence upon the sense of taste, the function of it is the taking as object merely the taste; the manifestation is the state of confronting the sapid; the proximate cause is the disappearance of the inoperative element of mind with regard to taste.

Four conditions must meet for the arising of tongue consciousness. They are:

- 1) *Asambhinnattā jivhāya (jivhā-pasāda, tongue-door must be*
good),

⁶³ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa, Abhi IIA, p. 114.

- 2) *Āpāthagatattā rasānam* (*rasārammaṇa*, taste must be present),
- 3) *Āposannissitam* (*āpo*, liquid-element such as saliva must be present),
- 4) *Manasikāra hetukam* (attention must be present).

If the tongue is dry the savour cannot come into contact with the tongue-basis and tongue consciousness cannot arise. The same is the case for the other three conditions. These four combined factors are the causes and the sense of tasting is effect. Then again, tasting is the cause and noting the taste is the effect.

(17) Kāyaviññāṇa-Dhātu (Body-consciousness-element)

Body-consciousness-element: Depending on body and tangible (object) there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, body-consciousness-element."

It refers to two *kāya-viññāṇa cittas*, two body consciousnesses. This is body-unwholesome-result consciousness accompanied by pain and body-wholesome-result consciousness accompanied by happiness. Its characteristic being aware of a tangibility object by

dependence upon the sense of tangibility; the function of it is the taking as object merely the tangibility; the manifestation is the state of confronting the tangibility; the proximate cause is the disappearance of the inoperative element of mind with regard to tangibility.⁶⁴

Four conditions must meet for the arising of body consciousness.⁶⁵ They are:

1. *Asambhinnattā kāyassa* (body door must be good),
2. *Āpāthagatattā phoṭṭhabbānam* (touch must be present)
3. *Pathavīsannissitam* (firm solid element must be present for transmittance of the touch).
4. *Manasikārahetukam* (attention must be present).

If the object of touch is too fine, it cannot impinge impression upon the body-basis. And unless there is impingent, neither consciousness of touch nor the body-door cognitions can arise. Scars, finger or toe nails, hairs where no blood air can flow, cannot sense the impingent. These four combined factors are the causes and the touch is the effect; and then, the touch is cause and noting of touch is

⁶⁴ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi. IIA, p. 303.

⁶⁵ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi. IA, p. 322.

effect. Now, we should know that on account of cause and effect comes to be.

If we know that there is cause and effect in every thing and every phenomenon, the doubts are removed, overcome, and transcended. At that stage one can reach the purity of transcending doubt.

(18) Manoviññāṇa-Dhātu (Mind-consciousness-element)

Mind-consciousness-element: Immediately after the cessation of the eye-consciousness-element that has arisen there arises mind element; immediately after the cessation of the mind element that has arisen there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind-consciousness-element. Immediately after the cessation of the ear-consciousness-element that has arisen there arises mind element; immediately after the cessation of the mind element that has arisen there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate

of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind-consciousness-element.

Immediately after the cessation of the nose-consciousness-element that has arisen there arises mind element; immediately after the cessation of the mind element that has arisen there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind-consciousness-element.

Immediately after the cessation of the tongue-consciousness-element that has arisen there arises mind element; immediately after the cessation of the mind element that has arisen there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind-consciousness-element. Immediately after the cessation of the body-consciousness-element that has arisen there arises mind element; immediately after the cessation of the mind element that has arisen there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind,

mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind-consciousness-element. Depending on mind and on ideational (objects) there arises consciousness, mind, ideation, heart, lucence, mind, mind base, controlling faculty of mind, consciousness, the aggregate of consciousness; and, depending on the aforesaid, mind-consciousness-element. This is called mind-consciousness-element.”⁶⁶

It is, in essential elements, seventy-six consciousnesses such as twelve immoral consciousnesses, three investigating consciousnesses accompanied by both joy and indifference, one mind-door- adverting consciousness accompanied by indifference, smile-producing consciousness accompanied by joy, twenty four beautiful consciousness of the sense sphere, fifteen consciousness mostly experienced in *rūpa-loka* (Material-sphere plane), twelve consciousness mostly experienced in *arūpa-loka* (Immaterial-sphere plane), and eight consciousness experienced in supramundane level, in brief, forty consciousness experienced in supramundane level, in detail.

⁶⁶ Ven, Setthila. B.O.A, p. 116.

In general, its characteristic is awareness of an object; its function is to be a forerunner of the mental factors in that it presides over them and is always accompanied by them; its manifestation — the way it appears in the meditator`s experience — is as a continuity of processes; its proximate cause is mind-and-matter,⁶⁷ because consciousness cannot arise alone, in the complete absence of mental factors and material phenomena.

Four conditions must for the arising of mind-consciousness.

They are as follows:

- 1) *Asambhinnattā manassa* (mind-door must be present),
- 2) *Āpāthagatattā dhammānam* (mind-object must be present),
- 3) *Hadayavatthusannissitam* (heart-base must be present),
and
- 4) *Manasikāra hetukam* (attention must be present).

Here, are some notable points. These six types of consciousness arise based on six doors and six sense objects. For example, when *rūpadhātu* (visible object) strikes *cakkhudhātu* (eye door), *cakkhuviññāṇa dhātu* (eye consciousness) arises, and so forth.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Bhaddanta, Buddhaghosa. Abhi IIA, p. 129.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar Anguttara-nikāyapāli

The 18 are *dhātus* (elements) which comprise all *rūpas*, all *cittas*, all *cetasikas*, and *Nibbāna*: 1-10 are physical; 11-16 and 18 are mental; 17 may be either physical or mental. The 4 primary elements viz., *pathavī dhātu*, (Earth element) *āpo dhātu*, (cohesion) *tejo dhātu* (Heat) and *vāyū* (motion element) *dhātu* — should not be counted among the eighteen elements, which of course include the four primary elements.

The knowledge, with only 18 elements in a person and no ‘self’ or ego or ‘*atta*’ exists; in insight meditation can lead to the attainment of the path-consciousness. Here we should understand seeing the similes in accordance with the saying that a wise man knows the meaning through simile.⁶⁹ The eye element should be regarded as the surface of a drum, the visible-data element as the drum stick and the eye-consciousness element as the sound. Likewise, the eye element should be regarded as the surface of a mirror, the visible data element as the face and the eye-consciousness element as the image of the surface. The eye element should be regarded as sugar-cane or sesamum, visible-data element as the [sugar-cane] mill or the [sesamum] wheel-rod, and the eye-

(MN, I), p. 158.

⁶⁹ Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar. *Jātaka* (Jā II), p. 55.

consciousness element as the sugar-cane juice or [sesamum] oil. Likewise the eye-element should be regarded as the lower fire-stick, the visible-data element as the upper fire-stick and the eye-consciousness element as the fire. So with the ear, etc., is said in the same way. The mind element should be regarded as the forerunner and follower of eye-consciousness, etc. as that arises. As regarded as the mental-data element, the feeling aggregate should be regarded as a dart and as a stake.

The perception and formations aggregates as a disease owing to their connection with the dart and the stake of feeling, or the perception of ordinary man as an empty fist because of producing pain through disappointed desire or as a forest deer with a scarecrow because of grasping the sign incorrectly; and the formations aggregate, as the men who throw one into a pit of coals because of throwing one into rebirth-linking, or as thieves pursued by the king's men because of being pursued by the pain of birth; or as the seeds of a poison tree because of being the root-cause of the continuity of the aggregates which carries all kinds of harm and materiality should be regarded as razor-wheel because it is the sign of various kinds of danger. The unformed element should be

regarded as the deathless, as peace, as safety. Because of its being opposed to all harm. The mind-consciousness element should be regarded as a forest monkey because it proceeds by releasing the object it has grasped and grasping another, or as a wild horse because of difficulty in taming, or as a stick thrown into the air because of its falling as it pleases, or as a theatrical dancer because of its connection with the various defilements beginning with greed and hate.

2.4 Order or Arrangement of elements

In the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, (A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma) Venerable *Ācariya Anuruddha* said about 18 elements:⁷⁰

- (1) The eye element,
- (2) The ear element,
- (3) The nose element,
- (4) The tongue element,
- (5) The body element,
- (6) The visible element,
- (7) The sound element,
- (8) The smell element,

⁷⁰ Ven, Anuruddhā. *Abhi.s*, p. 127.

- (9) The taste element,
- (10) The tangible element,
- (11) The eye-consciousness element,
- (12) The ear-consciousness element,
- (13) The nose-consciousness element,
- (14) The tongue-consciousness element,
- (15) The body-consciousness element,
- (16) The mind element,
- (17) The mental-object element,
- (18) The mind-consciousness element.

Here, we should know the reason why the arrangement of *dhātu* in *Dhātuviḅhaṅga* is different from that of *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. *Dhātuviḅhaṅga* arranged it according to the door element, object element, and subjective consciousness element. In *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, distinguishing matter and mind-matter elements are many and they are cause of mind. So, ten material elements are arranged first and the mental elements are arranged later.⁷¹

⁷¹ Venerable, Janakābhivamsa. *Saṅgaha bhāsātikā* (S.bhā. ṭī), p. 594.

In the *Vibhaṅga*, (the book of analysis) the second book of *Abhidhamma* text, the eighteen elements mentioned are:

- (1) The eye element,
- (2) Visible element,
- (3) Eye-consciousness element,
- (4) Ear element,
- (5) Sound element,
- (6) Ear-consciousness element,
- (7) Nose element,
- (8) Odorous element,
- (9) Nose-consciousness element,
- (10) Tongue element,
- (11) Sapid element,
- (12) Tongue-consciousness element,
- (13) Body element,
- (14) Tangible element,
- (15) Body-consciousness element,
- (16) Mind element,
- (17) Ideational element,

(18) Mind-consciousness element.⁷²

“As to the order”, here only order of teaching, out of those beginning with order of arising, is appropriate. It is set forth by successive definition of cause and fruit as follow:

Cause (hetu) elements	Fruit (Phala) elements
Eye, visible object	eye-consciousness
Ear, sound	ear-consciousness
Nose, odor	nose-consciousness
Tongue, sapid	tongue-consciousness
Body, tangible	body-consciousness
Mind, ideational	mind-consciousness

2.5 Common and Specific Characteristics

There are two kinds of characteristics; specific or individual characteristic (*sabhāvalakkhaṇā*) and general or common characteristic (*sāmañña lakkhaṇā*). At first, we should study the *sabhāva lakkhaṇā* in order that *diṭṭhivisuddhi* (purification of view), the third purity arises

⁷² Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar. Vibhanga pāli of Abhidhamma pitaka (Abhi), II, p. 89.

in our mind. And we should clearly understand the characteristic, function, mode of appearance, and proximate cause. At first, I am going to show the four primary elements for both tranquillity meditator and insight one.

Every mental state and material unit has its own individual characteristic which is known as *sabhāva lakkaṇā*. *Pathavī dhātu*, earth element, has hardness and softness as its specific or individual characteristic. Its function is to act foundation. It is manifested as receiving. Its proximate cause is the other three great essential. The specific or individual characteristic of *āpothātu*, water, is fluidity and cohesion, its function is to intensify; it is manifested as holding together, its proximate cause is the other three great essentials.

Tejo dhātu, fire element, has heat and cold as its specific or individual characteristic. Its function is to mature (maintain), it is manifested as a continued supply of softness. Its proximate cause is the other three great essentials. Vibration, supporting are the specific or individual characteristic of *vāyoudhātu*, wind-element. Its function is to cause motion in the other material phenomena. It is manifested as conveying to other places. Its proximate cause is the other three

great essentials. The eye`s characteristic is sensitivity of the primary elements that is ready for the impact of visible data; or its characteristic is sensitivity of the primary elements springing from a desire to see. Its function is to pick up a visible datum as object. It is manifested as the foundation of eye-consciousness. Its proximate cause is the primary elements born of *kamma* springing from a desire to see.

Each of the other sensitive material phenomena — the ear, the nose, the tongue, and the body — should be similarly understood, with appropriate substitutions. Collectively, object material phenomena have the characteristic of impinging on the sense bases. Their function is to be the objects of sense consciousness. They are manifested as the resort of the respective sense consciousness. Their proximate cause is the four great essentials.

Mind or consciousness has cognizing as its specific or individual characteristic. Its function is to be a forerunner of the mental factors and it presides over them and is always accompanied by them. Its manifestation is the way it appears in the meditator`s experience — is a continuity of processes. Its proximate cause is

mind-and-matter, because consciousness cannot arise alone, in the complete absence of mental factors and material phenomena. Of sixteen subtle matters, water element is already explained above. Material phenomena of six (*bhāva rūpa*) have, respectively, the characteristics of the female sex and of the male sex. Their function is to show femininity and masculinity. They are manifested as the reason for the mark, sign, work, and ways of the female and of the male; that is, for the sexual structure of the body, for its feminine or masculine features, for the typical feminine or masculine deportment.

Material phenomena of the heart (*hadaya vatthu*) have the characteristic of being the material support for the mind element and the mind-consciousness element. Its function is to uphold them. It is manifested as the carrying of these elements. The life faculty has the characteristic of maintaining the coexistent kinds of matter at the moment of their presence. Its function is to make them occur. It is manifested as the establishment of their presence. Its proximate cause is the four great essentials that are to be maintained. Edible food has the characteristic of nutritive essence, that is, the nutritional substance contained in gross edible food. Its function is to sustain

the 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.

The space element has the characteristic of delimiting matter. Its function is to display the boundaries of matter. It is manifested as the confines of matter, or as the state of gaps and apertures. Its proximate cause is the matter delimited. The bodily-intimation is a special modification in the consciousness-originated air element which causes the body to move in ways that reveal one's intentions.

The vocal intimation is a special modification in the consciousness-originated earth element which issues in speech by which one reveals one's intention. Both have the function of displaying intention. They are manifested, respectively, as a cause of bodily movement and of verbal expression. Their proximate causes are respectively, the air element and the earth element born of consciousness. Lightness has the characteristic of non-sluggishness. Its function is to dispel heaviness in matter. It is manifested as light transformability. Its proximate cause is light matter. Wioldiness has

the characteristic of wieldiness that is favourable to bodily action. Its function is to dispel unwieldiness. It is manifested as non-weakness. Its proximate cause is wieldly matter. Continuity of matter has the characteristic of occurrence. Its function is to anchor. It is manifested as non-interruption. Its proximate cause is matter to be anchored. Decay has the characteristic of maturing or aging of material phenomena. Its function is to lead them on towards their termination. It is manifested as loss of newness without loss of being. Its proximate cause is matter that is decaying. Impermanence has the characteristic of the complete breaking up of material phenomena. Its function is to make them subside. It is manifested as destruction and falling away. Its proximate cause is matter that is completely breaking up. *Nibbāna* has the characteristic of peacefulness. Its function is which is deathless. It is manifested as without sign. There is no proximate cause.⁷³

As *Sāmañña lakkhaṇa*—impermanence, suffering or unsatisfactoriness and impersonal nature, no-soul or no-self-nature is in common with all mental and material phenomena. They are

⁷³ Bhikhu, Bodhi. C.M Abhi, p. 238.

common or general characteristics, *Sāmañña lakkhaṇā*. Every mentality and materiality has these three characteristics.