

Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta

The Discourse on the Honey-ball

[Perception and mental proliferation]

(Majjhima Nikāya 18/1:108-114)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003

1 Introduction

The Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta opens on a dark note with the Buddha's meeting up with Daṇḍa,pāṇī,¹ whose name means "stick-in-hand." The Majjhima Commentary explains that he would walk around ostentatiously with a golden stick even during the first phase of his life, while still young and healthy. When Devadatta, the Buddha's cousin, attempted to create a schism, Daṇḍapāṇī sided with Devadatta (MA 2:73). It is also possible that his nick-name suggests that he is one who believes in power and violence.² Daṇḍapāṇī's posture (leaning on his stick, speaking while standing to the seated Buddha) is discourteous and the tone of his question is arrogantly provocative [§3]. The Buddha's answer clearly hints at this [§4].

The Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta is an example of a brief teaching by the Buddha [§8] which is elaborated by another monk, in this case, Mahā Kaccāna [§§16-18]; but it is on account of Ānanda that the sutta got its name [§22]. The heart of the sutta, that is, Mahā Kaccāna's elaboration on the Buddha's brief teaching [§§16-18] should be studied with **the Pariññā Sutta** (S 35.60), where the learned noble disciple becomes disillusioned (*nibbindati*) with the contact arising from sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness (also using the sentence, *tinnam saṅgati phasso* [§16]), and as such "becomes dispassionate (*virajjati*); through dispassion, he is liberated (*vimuccati*); through liberation, he understands, 'Clinging has been fully understood by me.'"³ In fact, the Pariññā Sutta should be read after §18 of the Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta.

The Mahā Hatthi,paḍōpama Sutta (M 28) closes with a similar analysis of the eighteen elements (the 6 sense-organs and 6 sense-objects) as the Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta [§16], beginning with the statement:

If, avuso, internally, **the eye** is unimpaired [intact] but no external forms come into its range, and there is no appropriate conscious engagement [appropriate act of attention] (*tajjo samannāhāro hoti*), then there is no appearance of that class of consciousness. (M 28.27-38/1:190 f)

Nāgita the Sakya was in the congregation when the sutta was expounded. Hearing it, he was inspired to join the Order, and soon after became an arhat (ThaA 1:193).

2 Mental proliferation (*papañca*)

At the heart of this sutta is the overcoming of *papañca* [§§15-18], a popular Indian philosophical term that became an important Buddhist technical term.⁴ In an insightful study, *Concept and Reality in Early*

¹ A Sakya of Kapila,vatthu, son of Añjana and Yasodharā. His brother was Suppabuddha, and his sisters Māyā and Pajāpatī. On other words, he was the Buddha's maternal uncle. (Mahv 2.19). The Tibetan sources say that Siddhattha's wife was Daṇḍapāṇī's daughter (Rockhill 1884:20).

² *Daṇḍa* has two main senses: (1) stick, rod (V 3:132, 196; S 1:176; A 1:138, 206; Sn 688); (2) punishment (V 1:247, 2:290; D 2:154 *brahma,daṇḍa*; M 1:86=Nc 199; S 4:62; J 4:382, 5:442); (3) a stick used as a weapon (V 1:349; D 1:4, 63; M 1:287; A 1:211, 2:208, 4:249, 5:204; S 4:117; Dh 406=Sn 630; Sn 35, 394, 629, 935); (4) violence (as a means of causing fear) (M 1:372; Nc 293, cf Sn 35). On Bodhi's comments, see M:NB 1204 n229 & S:B 1409 n71.

³ S 35.60/4:32 f = SD 6.17.

⁴ M 1:65; S 1:100, 4:52, 71; A 2:161 f, 3:393 f; Sn 530. Comys are full of stories connected with "mental proliferation," a good example is of story of the monk's nephew Saṅgha,rakkhita (DhA 3.4/1:299-304). A well-known secular example is Aesop's fable of the day-dreaming milk-maid ending with the moral: "Don't count the chickens before they are hatched": <http://aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?sel&TheMilkmaidandHerPail>.

Buddhism (1971), **Ñāṇananda** renders *papañca* as “conceptual proliferation” which is more widely accepted today than **Nāṇamoli**’s “diversification.” **Bodhi** notes with caution, thus:

It seems, however, that the primary problem to which the term *papañca* points is not “diversification,” which may be quite in place when the sensory field itself displays diversity, but the propensity of the worldling’s imagination to erupt into an effusion of mental commentary that obscures the bare data of cognition. (M:ÑB 1204 n229)

Papañca also translates as “obstacle, hindrance, delay,”⁵ the sense used in the official Thai translations. **WS Waldron** speaks of *papañca* as “language’s endless recursivity” (2002: 152).⁶

The phrase *papañca,saññā* appears in helpful contexts in the Saṃyutta and the Sutta Nipāta (in verse in both cases), and we shall examine both in turn. **The Saṅgayha Sutta** (S 35.94) has the adjectival or participial form *papañcīta* in the following verse:

<p><i>Papañcīta,saññā itarītarā narā papañca,yantā upayanti saññīno mano,mayaṃ geha,sitañ ca sabbam panujja nekkhamma,sitaṃ iriyati</i></p>	<p>People here and there of proliferated perception, when perceiving, go on to become the tools of proliferation. But all the mind-made that is house-bound, having dispelled them, one moves in renunciation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(S 35.94/4:71)</p>
---	--

The Saṃyutta Commentary says that *itarītarā narā* here refers to “morally inferior beings” (*lāmacca,sattā*) “on account of being defiled perception” (*kilesa,saññāya*) (SA 2:382). In this sense, “proliferated perception,” say **Bodhi**, may be interpreted as the perverted perception (*saññā,vipallāsa*) of permanence, pleasure, self, and beauty, regarding what is really impermanent, suffering, not-self, and foul.⁷

The form *papañcīta* appears with its synonyms in **the Yava,kalāpi Sutta** (S 35.248), namely, conceiving (*maññamāna*), vacillating (*iñjita*), agitation (*phandita*), proliferating (*papañcīta*), and falling into conceit (*māna,gata*). Each of these five terms qualifies the following self-centred conceivings, namely,

- “I am”;
- “I am this”;
- “I shall be”;
- “I shall not be”;
- “I shall consist of form”;
- “I shall be formless”;
- “I shall percipient”;
- “I shall be non-percipient”;
- “I shall be neither percipient nor non-percipient.”

All such conceivings bring suffering upon one: they are “a disease,... a boil,... a dart,” and we should train ourselves to dwell with a mind free of them.⁸

The Commentaries state that the sources of mental proliferation are threefold, namely, craving (*taṇhā*), views (*diṭṭhi*) and conceit (*māna*).⁹ It is on account of mental proliferation being rooted in craving, views and conceit that the mind colours our experiences by interpreting them in terms of “I”, “mine” and “myself.” As we have seen, *papañca* is synonymous with “conceiving” (*maññamāna*), a usage also found in **the Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1/1:1-6) and **the Brahma,nimantanika Sutta** (M 49/1:326-338). In his Majjhima translation manuscript, **Ñāṇamoli** makes this insightful observation:

⁵ DhA 1:8, 2:91; J 1:260, 4:145, 6:392.

⁶ See **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15) in SD 5.13 Intro (7) for a discussion on “the problem of language.”

⁷ S:B 1409 n71. On *saññā,vipallāsa*, see **Vipallāsa S** (A 4.49/2:52) = SD 16.11.

⁸ S 35.248/4:202 f; also in **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140.31/3:246) = SD 4.17 & **Samanupassanā Sutta** (S 22.47/3:47) = SD 26.12. For an analysis, see SD 19.1(5.3).

⁹ DA 2:425; MA 4:167; SnA 431, 553 = Nm 280.

The meeting of eye, form, and eye-consciousness is called contact. Contact, according to dependent origination [*paṭicca,samuppāda*], is the principal condition for feeling. Feeling and perception are inseparable [M 43].¹⁰ What is perceived as “this” is thought about in its differences and is thus diversified from “that” and from “me.” This diversification—involving craving for form, wrong view about permanence of form, etc, and the conceit “I am”—leads to preoccupation with calculating the desirability of past and present forms with a view to obtaining desirable forms in the future. (M:ÑB 1205 n232)

Further insight can be found in Ñāṇananda’s *Concept and Reality*,¹¹ where he proposes a **three-phase process of mental proliferation** in §16 of the *Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta*, that is, (1) the impersonal phase (ending with “feeling”), (2) the personal phase (ending with “mentally proliferates”), and (3) the objective subject (the rest):

The impersonal note is sustained only up to the point of ‘*vedanā*.’ The formula now takes a personal ending suggestive of deliberate activity....

The deliberate activity implied by the third person verb is seen to stop at ‘*papañceti*’. Now comes the most interesting stage of the process of cognition. *Apparently*, it is no longer a mere contingent process, nor is it an activity deliberately directed, *but an inexorable subjection to an objective order of things*. At this final stage of sense-perception, he who has hitherto been the subject now becomes the hapless object. (Ñāṇananda, 1971:5 f)¹²

Later, in his book, Ñāṇananda discusses how through imagining (*maññanā*), “one [identifies] oneself with the sense-data, as suggested by the term ‘*tam,mayo*.’¹³ No sooner does one clutch at these data with ‘*maññanā*’ (imaginings) than they slip into unreality.” (1971:29).¹⁴

The key to understanding the sutta’s central passage [§16], as **Bodhi** points out,¹⁵ is found in Mahā Kaccāna’s explanation of his *bhadd’eka,ratta* verses in the **Mahā Kaccāna Bhadd’eka,atta Sutta** (M 133).¹⁶ The reference to the three periods of time here [§§15-18] links up to Mahā Kaccāna’s elaboration of the Bhaddekaratta Sutta verses in reference to the prominent role played by delight in the elements of cognition in causing bondage over the three periods of time.

3 Papañca,saññā,saṅkhā

One of the most difficult passages in the Pali Canon is found in this sutta [§8], that is, in connection with the term *papañca,saññā,saṅkhā* [§§8, 11, 15-18], literally “what is termed as the perception of proliferation,” but the exact translation of which remains conjectural. We can take it to mean “formation of countless ideas on account of much misdirected thinking.” The term appears only in a few places in the Canon,¹⁷ mostly in the *Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta*.¹⁸ Some attempts at translating the term are listed here:

Ñāṇananda	“concepts characterised by the mind’s prolific tendency” (1971);
John D Ireland	“concepts that proliferate through perception” (U:I 1990:104 at U 7.7/77);
Bodhi	“perceptions and notions tinged by mental proliferation” (1995);

¹⁰ **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.9/1:293) = SD 35.1.

¹¹ Subtitled *An essay on ‘Papañca’ and ‘Papañca-saññā-saṅkhā.’*

¹² For the canonical six-phase process of mental proliferation, see following §4.

¹³ *Tam,mayo* = *tad* + *maya*, lit “made of that”. *Na hi tam,mayo so ti na taṇhā,vasena diṭṭhi,vasena tam,mayo hoti tap,paramo tap,parāyano*, “For he is not made of that’ means that he is not made of that which is under the sway of craving or of views; he has cross over ‘that,’ he has gone beyond ‘that.’ (Nm 1:206). The word and its opp occur at M 3:42 ff, A 1:150; Sn 846. See *Atammayatā* = SD 19.13.

¹⁴ **Sappurisa S** (M 113) explains in detail now the “true person” (*sappurisa*), a true practitioner, does not identify even with any of the spiritual states he attains (M 113/3:37-46).

¹⁵ M:ÑB 1205 n232.

¹⁶ M 133.13-18/3:195-198.

¹⁷ D 21.2.2/2:77; U 7.7/77.

¹⁸ M 18.8+10+11+15+19/1:109-114.

Bodhi	“perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation” (M:ÑB 202, passim);
Analayo	“concoctions of proliferation and cognitions” (2003:222);
Waldron	“series of proliferation-apperception” (2003:199 n73);
Piya Tan	“apperceptual proliferation,” “apperception-based proliferation.”

The Majjhima Commentary gives an unclear gloss of the phrase,¹⁹ where *saṅkhā* is *koṭṭhāsa* (portion), and that *saññā* is either perception associated with *papañca* or is *papañca* itself. Bodhi treats *saññā*, -*saṅkhā* as a dvandva (a type of copulative compound) meaning “perceptions and notions” with the note that

The sequel will make it clear that the process of cognition is itself ‘the source through which perceptions and notions [born of] mental proliferation beset a man.’ If nothing in the process of cognition is found to delight in, to welcome, or to hold to, the underlying tendencies of the defilements will come to an end. (M:ÑB 1205 n232)

An in-depth study of the **Kalaha,vivāda Sutta** (Sn 4.11/862-877), especially Sn 874, would provide some clues to a better understanding of the term *papañca*, *saññā*, *saṅkhā*:

<i>Na sañña,saññī na visañña,saññī</i>	He perceives not perception, nor misperceives it, ²⁰
<i>no pi asaññī na vibhūta.saññī</i>	Nor is not a non-perceiver, ²¹ nor one without perception: ²²
<i>evaṃ,sametassa vibhoti rūpaṃ</i>	For one who has won such a state, form disappears:
<i>saññā,nidānā hi papañca,saṅkhā</i>	For what is reckoned as “proliferations” has perception as its source. (Sn 874)

I think the best clue we have to the translation of *papañca*, *saññā*, *saṅkhā* is found in **Sn 874d**, where perception is said to be the source (*nidāna*) of *papañca*, *saṅkha*, which should be translated as “proliferative notions.”²³ As such, *papañca*, *saññā*, *saṅkhā* could best be rendered as “proliferative notion [reckoning] due to perception,” or “mental proliferation arising from (ap)perception,”²⁴ or more technically, “apperceptual proliferation, or apperception-based proliferation.” This is close to John D Ireland’s “concepts that proliferate through perception” (U:I 1990:104 at U 7.7/77).

4 Theory of perception

The earliest Buddhist teaching on sense-perception (*saññā*) is found in the **Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta** [§§15-18]. This canonical version differs in some important aspects from the more developed Abhidhamma and Commentarial version, but one feature is common to both, that is, that an act of complete perception does not arise as an immediate result of the contact between the organ and the sense-object. Perception is regarded a process of thought that begins as a simple sensation and ends up with the complete apprehension of the object.

The canonical theory of the perceptual process comprises six stages:²⁵

¹⁹ *Ettha saṅkhā ti koṭṭhaso, papañca,saññā ti taṇhā,māna,diṭṭhi,papañca,sampayuttā saññā, saññā,nāmena vā papañcayeva vuttā* (MA 2:75).

²⁰ As in madness (*ummattaka*) or when mentally unhinged (*khitta,citta*). (SnA 553)

²¹ As in the realm of the non-conscious beings (*asañña,sattā*), or in the state of cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*). (SnA 553)

²² *Na vibhūta,saññī*, lit “not one whose perception has disappeared (*vi + bhavati*),” ie with perception suppressed, as in the formless attainments (*ārūpa*). (SnA 553)

²³ Comy: *evaṃ paṭipannassāpi yā saññā, taṃ nidāna taṇhā,diṭṭhi,papañcā appahīnā eva hontī ti dasseti* (SnA 553).

²⁴ *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (1976) defines ‘apperception’ as ‘perception with recognition or identification by association with previous ideas,’ with the verb ‘to apperceive’ meaning ‘unite and assimilate (a perception) to ideas already possessed, and so comprehend and interpret.’ This is exactly what *saññā* is.

²⁵ Discussed in greater detail in **Saññā** = SD 17.4. See also Analayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization*, 2003:222-226.

(i) The first stage is, for example, **visual consciousness** (*cakkhu, viññāna*), which arises with the eye and visual object as its conditions. At this point, it is bare sensation before the object is fully apprehended (which is similarly understood in the Abhidhamma).

(ii) The second stage is the process of **sensory impression** or sense-contact (*cakkhu, samphassa* or *phassa*), defined as the conjunction of the sense-organ, the sense-object and sense-consciousness (*tiṇṇam saṅgati phasso*, M 18.16/1:111).

(iii) The third stage is **feeling** (*vedanā*), which refers to the hedonic tone or emotional value of the resultant experience.

(iv) The fourth stage is **perception**, or more technically, apperception (*saññā*). The fact that *viññāna* (bare sensation) occurs before *saññā* [bare reaction] shows that *saññā* represents a more complex form of awareness. While *viññāna* refers to mere sensory awareness, *saññā* “suggests a state of awareness obtained by introducing distinctions to the earlier stage of bare awareness” (Karunadasa, 2001: 211).

(v) The fifth stage is **thinking** (*vitakka*, often translated as “initial application (of thought)”), suggesting a stage where the perceived object is *interpreted*.

(vi) The sixth and last stage is called **mental proliferation** (*papañca*) that “hints at the tendency of the individual’s imagination to break loose” (Ñāṇananda 1971:4). This is a very complex level of experience that is coloured by one’s desires and prejudices.²⁶ The last stage of this process is clearly detailed in the short **Cetanā Sutta 1** (S 12.38):

Monks, what one intends, and what one plans, and what lies latent [has latent tendencies]—this is a support²⁷ for the continuation of consciousness. When there is a support, there is a basis for the establishing of consciousness. When consciousness is established and increases, there occurs further rebirth. When there is further rebirth, there arise further birth, decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, anxiety and despair. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Yaṅ ca kho bhikkhave ceteti yaṅ ca pakappeti yaṅ ca anuseti. Ārammaṇam eta hoti viññāṇassa thitiyā. Ārammaṇe sati paṭiṭṭhitā viññāṇassa hoti. Tasmim paṭiṭṭhite viññāṇe virulhe āyatim puna-b, bhavābhiniḅbatti hoti. Āyatim puna-b, bhavābhiniḅbattiyā sati āyatim jarā, maraṇam soka, parideva, dukkha, domanass’upāyāsā sambhavanti. Evam etass kevalassa dukkha-k, khandhassa samudayo hoti. (S 12.38/2:65 f)²⁸

The Sutta’s detailed analysis of the perceptual process is also an example of the application of the dependent arising formula in the present moment, without reference to the other lives. As **Analayo** notes:

This discourse depicts the “arising” (*uppāda*) of consciousness “in dependence” (*paṭicca*) on sense organ and sense object, with contact being the coming “together” (*sam*) of the three. This passage [§16] reveals a deeper significance of each part of the term *paṭicca sam-uppāda*, “dependent” “co-” “arising,” without any need for different lifetimes or for the whole set of twelve links. Thus realization of dependent co-arising can take place simply by witnessing the operation of conditionality in the present moment, within one’s own subjective experience. (Analayo 2003:109 f)

²⁶ Karunadasa argues that in this sixfold process, the final stage of perception is not “mental proliferation” (as proposed by Sarathchandra, 1958 & Ñāṇananda 1971:5 ff) but actually “perception” (stage 4) since “what follows *saññā* could be understood not as a process of sense-perception but as a purely ideational process set up by a process of perception. In point of fact, both Sarathchandra and Ñāṇananda (1971:5 ff, 41 ff) explain the stages subsequent to *saññā* as a process of interpretation and judgement.” (2001:212).

²⁷ “Support,” *ārammaṇa*, also tr “object,” that is, one of the six sense-objects, forming the external support for sense-perception, and without them there is no sense-perception.

²⁸ See S:B 757 n112.

5 Latent tendencies

The Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta [§8] gives a full list of the latent tendencies (*anusayā*),²⁹ also translated as “underlying tendencies” and “latent dispositions.” There are seven latent tendencies, namely:

- 1 sensual desire (*kāma,rāga*);
- 2 aversion (*paṭigha*);
- 3 wrong view (*diṭṭhi*);
- 4 spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*);
- 5 conceit (*māna*);
- 6 desire for existence (*bhava,rāga*); and
- 7 ignorance (*avijjā*).

They are also listed in **the Saṅgīti Sutta**,³⁰ **the Cha,chakka Sutta**,³¹ **the Anusaya Sutta**,³² **the Paṭisambhidā,magga**,³³ and **the Vibhaṅga**.³⁴ The Paṭisambhidā,magga and the Vibhaṅga define the latent tendencies in practically the same way:

And what is **the latent tendency of beings**?

There are the seven latent tendencies:

- the latent tendency of sensual lust;
- the latent tendency of aversion;
- the latent tendency of conceit;
- the latent tendency of wrong view;
- the latent tendency of doubt;
- the latent tendency of lust for existence;
- the latent tendency of ignorance.

That which in the world is pleasant and likable, there the tendency of sensual lust of beings lies latent.

That which in the world is unpleasant and unlikable, there the tendency of aversion of beings lies latent.

Thus in these two states, ignorance continuously occurs, and so too conceit, wrong view and doubt.

This is the latent tendency of beings.³⁵

(Pm §587/123; Vbh §816/341)

The latent tendencies are deeply embedded in one’s mind through past habitual deeds and can only be uprooted on attaining the path. Wrong view and spiritual doubt are eliminated at streamwinning; sensual desire and aversion, at non-return; conceit, attachment to existence and ignorance, only at arhathood. **The Abhidhammattha,saṅgaha** says: “The latent dispositions (*anusayā*) are defilements which ‘lie along with’ (*anusenti*) the mental process to which they belong, rising to the surface as obsessions whenever they meet with suitable conditions” (Abhs 7.9). The term “latent dispositions” highlights the fact that the defilements are liable to arise so long as they have not been eradicated by the supramundane paths.

Although all defilements are, in a sense, *anusayā*, the seven mentioned here are the most prominent (Abhs:BRS 268).³⁶ The first three latent tendencies are mentioned in **the Sall’atthana Sutta** (S 36.6/

²⁹ See also **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.3) = SD 5.5 Introd.

³⁰ D 33.2.3(12)/3:254, 282.

³¹ M 148.28/3:285.

³² A 7.11-12/4:8 f.

³³ Pm §587/123.

³⁴ Vbh §816/341, §949/383.

³⁵ *Katamo ca sattānaṃ anusayo? Sattānusayā: kāmarāgānusayo, paṭighānusayo, mānānusayo, diṭṭhānusayo, vicikicchā’nusayo, bhavarāgānusayo, avijjā’nusayo. Yam loke piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ, ettha sattānaṃ kāmarāgānusayo [rāgānusayo, Vbh] anuseti. Yam loke appiyarūpaṃ asātārūpaṃ ettha sattānaṃ paṭighānusayo anuseti. Iti imesu dvīsu dhammesu avijjā’nupatitā, tadekaṭṭho māno ca diṭṭhi ca vicikicchā ca daṭṭhabbā. Ayam sattānaṃ anusayo.*

4:207-210)³⁷ and the **Cūḷa,vedalla Sutta** (M 44), the latter of which says: “The latent tendency of sensual desire underlies pleasant feeling. The latent tendency of aversion underlies painful feeling. The latent tendency of ignorance underlies neutral feeling” (M 44.25/1:303). **The Majjhima Ṭīkā** on this passage says that these three defilements are called “latent tendencies” in the sense that they have not been destroyed in the life-continuum (*bhav’āṅga*) to which they belong and because they are capable of arising when the conditions are right (MṬ:Be 2:286).

The Visuddhi,magga distinguishes three levels of defilements, that is, as follows:

- 1 The transgression level (*vītikamma*), a gross level of defilements, where they instigate unwholesome bodily and verbal action.
- 2 The obsession level (*pariyuṭṭhāna*), an obsessive level of defilements, where they arise to obsess and enslave the mind.³⁸
- 3 The latent level (*anusaya*), a subtle level of defilements, where they remain as latent disposition in the life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*).

The gross level of transgressive defilement is prevented by the observance of moral precepts (*sīla*). The habitual level of obsessive defilement is surmounted through mental cultivation (*samādhi*). And the subtle level of latent defilement is overcome by insight wisdom (*paññā*) (Vism 1.13/5). These three levels of defilements are often referred to throughout the Commentaries.³⁹

The term *anusaya* is found in the compound *adhiṭṭhānābhīnivesānusaya*,⁴⁰ translated as “the mental standpoints, adherences and latent tendencies.” They are “mental standpoints” (*adhiṭṭhāna*) because they are the foundations for the unwholesome mind, and “adherence and latent tendencies” because they adhere to the mind and lie latent there (SA 2:259; NmA 2:310). Evidently, this compound embodies the canonical roots for the commentarial conception of the three levels of defilement. The “mindset” or “mental standpoint” (*adhiṭṭhāna*) here refers to the motivation behind the gross level of transgressive defilement. The “adherence or habituation” (*abhīnivesa*) or inclination refers to the motivation behind the habitual level of addictive or obsessive defilement. And the “latent tendencies” (*anusayā*) lie dormant at *bhavaṅga* level ready to rear their ugly heads and wreak havoc at the slightest instigation.

6 Dan Lusthaus’s clarifications

[The following section is an edited version of Dan Lusthaus’ response to an argumentation thread on Buddha-L chat site, 14 Feb 2008. Used with permission.]

Of the 7868 occurrences of the term *prapañca* (xilun) in the Taisho or Zokuzokyo editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, I haven’t been able to find a single one where it is being applied to “someone else” in any manner whatsoever. It comes up in contexts that list or describe mental problems, used as a synonym or a term related to *kalpanā* [projective conceptual construction], *vikalpa* [false conceptual construction], and *parikalpa* [ubiquitous imaginary construction].⁴¹

Nagarjuna calls the telos (purpose) of his own method the “putting to rest of *prapañca*” (*prapañcopasama*). It occurs over 1000 times in the Prajñāpāramitā corpus translated by Xuanzang; and occurs frequently in Asāṅga’s writings, and elsewhere.

³⁶ See also Abhs:BRS 172.

³⁷ See SD 5.5, 2005.

³⁸ This is referred to in **Mahā Māluṅkyā S** (M 64) in connection with the lower mental fetters (*oram, bhāgiya saṃyojanā*): self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), attachment to rituals and vows (*silā-b, bata, parāmāsa*), sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), and ill will (*paṭigha*), “and he does not understand it as it really is the escape from the arisen <fetter>, and when that <fetter> has become habitual and is not eliminated in him, it is a lower fetter” (M 64.5/1:434 f).

³⁹ See also **Cāgānussati** = SD 15.11(2) Levels of practice.

⁴⁰ S 2:17, 3:10, 135, 161; A 5:3.

⁴¹ The senses within parentheses are based on Lusthaus’ paper, “The core of the Yogācāra project,” <http://www.bu.edu/religion/faculty/bios/Lusthaus/yogacara%20crux.pdf>.

In the Chinese equivalent, xilun, where *xi* means a play, a drama put on. For modern sensibilities, we might suggest being “dramatic,” making a drama out of something, understanding something by reducing it to a narrative, a fictitious construction that engages one’s mind and emotions.

Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player | That struts and frets his hour upon the stage | And then is heard no more. It is a tale | Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, | Signifying nothing.
(Shakespeare. *Macbeth*, Act 5 Scene 5, 1603-1606)

Etymologically, *prapañca* implies verbal proliferation. Indian thinkers, taking language seriously, treated the verbal as the conceptual (they used the term *saṃjñā* to express that). So *prapañca* implies conceptual proliferation. For a simple (and too simplistic for Indian usage) example, Frege,⁴² the father of the modern Analytic philosophy, claimed that the referent (Bedeutung) of every proposition is “true/false,” by which he meant not only that any statement might be determined to be either true or false, but that “true or false” was the actual referent. For example, “Roger Clemens took steroids” is “true or false.” So the single statement immediately implies not one, but two possible states of affairs.

To explore that statement further elicits (for some, with passion and commitment) additional statements, which point to additional doubling of possible states of affairs. Since everything can be reduced to a proposition (even the proposition that “Everything cannot be reduced to a proposition”), the entire universe of possible statements, by this doubling, has doubled the actual universe. Since fictional lines of thought can further proliferate, in actuality the proliferation is exponentially greater than mere doubling.

Richard is right to complain that there is a certain ambiguity to the term *prapañca*, in that it is often dropped into Buddhist texts without additional explanation of what, exactly, the term itself refers to—as if the reader is expected to already know what it precisely means. For a single example, a reader may or may not find the following passage from Asaṅga’s *Abhidharma, samuccaya* elucidating. This is Sara Boin-Webb’s English translation of Rahula’s French version (from a back-translation into Sanskrit). It corresponds to Pradhan’s 102.8-13; the Chinese Taisho version T.31.692c28-693a4; Tibetan: D 117a2-5; P 138a3-6; Tatia’s edition of the *Abhidharma, samuccaya, vyākhyā* [Sthiramati’s commentary, to attest the Sanskrit] 139.4-26) (*prapañca* is rendered here as “idle speculation” which is not an ideal translation):

[After a list of 10 types of *vikalpa*, Asaṅga writes:] What is the absence of discrimination (*nirvikalpatā*)? In brief, it is threefold: (1) non-discrimination in contentment (*saṃtuṣṭi, nirvikalpatā*), (2) non-discrimination in the absence of perverse views (*aviparyāsa, nirvikalpatā*), and (3) non-discrimination in the absence of idle speculation (*niṣprapañca, nirvikalpatā*).

One should consider these three kinds as pertaining respectively to the ordinary man (*prtagjana*), the disciple (*śrāvaka*) and the bodhisattva. Non-discrimination in the absence of idle speculation should not be understood as non-thought (*amanasikāra*), or as going beyond thought (*manasikāra, samatikrama*) or as appeasement (*vyupaśama*), or as own-nature (*svabhāva*), or as a mental construction concerning an object (*ālabane abhisamkāra*), but as a mental non-construction concerning an object (*ālabane anabhisamkāra*).

(Sara Boin-Webb’s tr of *Abhidharma, samuccaya, vyākhyā*)

Though defining the negative case (*niṣprapañca*) rather than the positive, one can infer the inverse implications (it is Asaṅga’s propensity for using negative definitions of the most crucial terms that was one of the major inspirations for Dignaga’s *apoha* theory, I believe). *Prapañca* here is a type of *vikalpa* that is *abhisamkāra*, ie, conceptualized, ideational, mentally constructed, implying conceptual-

⁴² Analytic philosophers regard the German philosopher Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) as the most important thinker since Kant. Frege wanted to put a rigorous logic at the heart of philosophy. He was influential in the philosophy of mathematics, logic and language. He thought that the basis for mathematics could be securely derived from logic and that a rigorous analysis of the underlying logic of sentences would enable us to judge their truth-value. Analytic philosophy attempts to clarify, by analysis (breaking something down into its constituent parts), the meaning of statements and concepts. <http://www.philosopher.org.uk/anal.htm>.

ization that is conditioned, habitual (*saṃskāra*). It is evaluative in the sense that neither ordinary people nor śravakas are considered capable of doing away with it completely. Only Bodhisattvas can do that.

As for its use in the *hetu, vidyā* [logic/dialectic]... Debate is not solely about logical coherence, but about articulation, hesitation, verbal proficiency, etc. I've tended to see the fault of *prapañca* in this context as someone who, finding himself in trouble, begins to rant, to overtalk, to say too much, which may or may not make sense, but, in short, to display his discomfort and nervousness by verbally over-compensating, going on tangents, etc. That's the giveaway that he's lost it, and such a display renders him a loser of the debate.⁴³

7 Breaking the cycle of mental proliferation

The roots of the latent tendencies have three long and deep unwholesome roots, namely, greed, hate and delusion. These roots cause one to habitually react to pleasant feelings with lust, painful feelings with aversion and neutral feelings with ignorance.⁴⁴ In other words, the three unwholesome respectively underlie each of these three latent tendencies, causing craving, views and conceit to arise.

Mental proliferation (*papañca*) or conceiving (*maññanā*) are mental constructs created by the power of the latent tendencies (*anusaya*) of craving (*taṇhā*), views (*diṭṭhi*) and conceit (*māna*).⁴⁵ These constructs in turn lead to stronger and more tenacious defilements that motivate unwholesome thoughts, speech and actions, all of which in turn reinforce one's negative attitudes and habits in a vicious cycle.

The first step towards breaking this cycle is to restrain the senses which involves stopping at the bare sense-experience without plastering it over with layers of colourful meanings whose origins are purely subjective. A classic example of the instruction in sense-restraint (*indriya, saṃvara*) is the one the Buddha gives to the monk Māluṅkyāputta as recorded in **the Māluṅkyāputta Sutta** (S 35.95):⁴⁶

“...Māluṅkyāputta, regarding what is seen, heard, sensed and cognized by you,

in the seen there will be only the seen,⁴⁷

⁴³ Further reading: Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, London & NY: Routledge Curzon, 2002, esp ch 4 (Pratītya-samutpāda).

⁴⁴ Amongst the 7 latent tendencies [§8], these 3 are specifically correlated with feelings; see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.25-28/1:303 f) & **Pahānena S** (S 36.3/4:205 f).

⁴⁵ DA 2:425; MA 4:167; SnA 431, 553 = Nm 280. Later tradition speaks of 2 kinds of *anusaya*: *ārammaṇ'anusaya* (latent tendencies regarding sense-objects) and *santan'anusaya* (continuity latent tendencies) (Vbh Mūla Ṭikā (BE) 212; cf YamA 91, SA 3:74, 76, SA Ṭikā (Be) 2:355). *Ārammaṇ'anusaya* refers to *kāma, rāga* (sensual lust), especially with regards to objects that one is unmindful of, even during meditation. *Santan'anusaya*, being subtle forms of defilement, exists in all except the liberated saint, the arhat. See §8n below & Mahasi Sayadaw 1982:15 f.

⁴⁶ This teaching is also given to the ascetic Bāhiya Dārucīriya (**Bāhiya S**, U 1.10/8) = SD 33.7. According to SA, in the form base, i.e. in what is seen by eye-consciousness, “there is only consciousness”, that is, as eye-consciousness is not affected by lust, hatred or delusion in relation to form that has come into range, so the *javana* will be just a mere eye-consciousness by being empty of lust, etc. So, too, for the heard and the sensed. The “cognized” is the object cognized by the mind-door adverting (*mano, dvārāvajjana*). In the cognized, “only the cognized” is the adverting (consciousness) as the limit. As one does not become lustful, etc, by adverting, so I will set my mind with adverting as the limit, not allowing it to arise by way of lust, etc. *You will not be by “that” (na tena)*: you will not be aroused by *by that* lust, or irritated *by that* hatred, or deluded *by that* delusion. *Then you will not be “therein” (na tattha)*: the seen”. For eye-consciousness sees only form in form, not some essence that is permanent, etc. So too for the remaining types of consciousness (ie the *javana* series, SĀPT), there will be merely the seen. Or, alternatively, the meaning is “My mind will be mere eye-consciousness, which means the cognizing of form in form. When you are not aroused by that lust, etc, then “you will not be therein”—not bound, not attached, not established in what is seen, heard, sensed and cognized. (See Bodhi S:B 1410 n75)

⁴⁷ This verse is the crux of the **Maluṅkyāputta S** and *satipaṭṭhāna*. In sutta terms, such experiences are not to be seen as “This is mine” (*etam mama*) (which arises through craving, *taṇhā*), or as “This I am” (*eso'ham asmi*) (due to conceit, *māna*), or as “This is my self” (*eso me attā*) (due to wrong view, *diṭṭhi*) (**Anattā, Jakkhaṇa S**, S 3:68). In short, such experiences are not “beliefs” but direct experiences of reality. See Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. In simple Abhidhamma terms, such process should be left at the sense-doors, and not allowed to

in the heard there will only be the heard;
in the sensed there will only be the sensed;
in the cognized there will only be the cognized.” (S 35.95.13/4:73) = SD 5.9

The Sutta also contains a beautiful poem composed by Maluṅkyāputta himself reflecting his understanding of this teaching he has received (S 35.95.14/4:73-75 = Tha 794-817).

The last two sections (*vaggā*) of **the Saḷāyatana Vagga** of the Saṃyutta Nikāya contains a number of suttas relating to sense-restraint and that are replete with startling imagery and extended similes, and which should be studied in this connection:

The Samudda Sutta 1 (S 35.228/4:157),⁴⁸ where the sense-faculties are compared to an ocean, the sense-objects to their currents, and the spiritual path as a voyage.

The Balisika Sutta (S 35.230/4:158 f),⁴⁹ where agreeable sense-objects are like baited hooks cast out by Māra, and swallowing them, one falls under Māra’s power.

The Ādittena Pariyāya Sutta (S 35.235/4:168-171),⁵⁰ where it is said that it were better that our sense-faculties be lacerated by sharp, hot and glowing instruments than to be infatuated with attractive sense-objects; for such infatuations lead one to be reborn in lower realms.

The Āsīvisa Sutta (S 35.238/4:172-175),⁵¹ where worldly life is like a person pursued by four vipers, five murderous foes, and an assassin, and his only means to safety is a handmade raft.

The Kumma Sutta (S 35.240/4:177-179),⁵² where one is exhorted to draw one’s senses inward as a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell, for Māra is like a hungry jackal ever ready to seize one.

The Cha,pāṇa Sutta (S 35.247/4:198-200),⁵³ where the six senses are like six animals each drawn to their natural habitat, and which should be tied by the rope of sense-restraint and bound to the strong post of body-directed mindfulness.

The Yava,kalāpi Sutta (S 35.248)⁵⁴ gives the parable of the magical bonds of the asura-king Vepa,citti, and the exhortation to cut off all modes of conceiving rooted in craving and view.

8 No doer, only deeds

Although in our daily language, it is common to speak of “knowing,” “feeling,” “cognizing,” or “perceiving” sense-objects, in the syntax of dependent arising, one does not really experience anything—it simply *is* the experience that arises when the requisite conditions are present [16]. This point is clearly shown in **the Visuddhi,magga**:

*Kammasa kāraṇa n’atthi
vipākassa ca vedako
suddha,dhammā pavattanti
ev’etaṃ samma,dassanaṃ*

There is neither doer of the deed
Nor one who reaps its result:
Mere events roll on—
Just this is right seeing.

reach the mind-door. As long as the experience of sensing is mindfully left at its sense-door and taken for what it really is, that is an experience of reality (*param’attha*); after it has reached the mind-door and evaluated it becomes conventional (*paññatti*) reality, that brings one suffering due to greed, hate or delusion. When such sense-experiences are mindfully left on the reality level, one would in due course see the three characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. See Mahasi Sayadaw, *A Discourse on Malukyaputta Sutta*, tr U Htin Fatt, Rangoon, 1981.

⁴⁸ The PTS ed ref is S 35.187.

⁴⁹ The PTS ed ref is S 35.189.

⁵⁰ The PTS ed ref is S 35.194.

⁵¹ The PTS ed ref is S 35.197.

⁵² The PTS ed ref is S 35.199.

⁵³ The PTS ed ref is S 35.206.

⁵⁴ S 35.248/4:201-203. The PTS ed ref is S 35.207.

*Na h'ettha devo Brahmā vā
saṃsāraṃs'atthi kāraṃko
suddha,dhammā pavattanti
hetu,sambhāra,paccayā*

Here there is neither God nor Brahmā,
Nor is there creator of the rounds of life and death;
Mere events roll on

With cause and component as their condition.

(Vism 19.20/603 on an untraced quote by “the Ancients” (*porāṇā*); cf Miln 78)

Vasubandhu (late 4th-5th cent CE), in his **Abhidharma,koṣa**, makes the same point with exceptional clarity, quoting the Sautrāntikas:

The Sūtra teaches: “By reason of the organ of sight and of visible matter there arises the visual consciousness”: there is not there either an organ that sees, or visible matter that is seen; there is not there any action of seeing, nor any agent that sees; this is only a play of cause and effect. In the light of [common] practice, one speaks, metaphorically, of this process: “The eye sees, and the consciousness discerns.” But one should not cling to these metaphors. The Blessed One said that one should not take them in the manner of popular speech, that one should not seriously grasp an expression in use in the world.⁵⁵ [One should not reject expressions in worldly use for the reason that they do not correspond to realities. (Mā T1.703a2, Sā13.12)]

(Abhk Bhāṣya 42d.7, Pruden's tr 1988:118; see also Waldron 2002:143-145)

— — —

⁵⁵ Cf M 3:230, S 4:230, It 49.

The Discourse on the Honey-ball

(M 18/1:108-114)

1 Thus have I heard.

Dandapāṇī

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Nigrodha's Park near Kapila, vatthu in the Sakya country.

2 Then in the morning, the Blessed One, having dressed himself and taking robe and bowl, entered Kapila, vatthu for alms. Then the Blessed One, having gone into Kapila, vatthu for alms, having returned from the almsround and finished his meal, went into Mahā, vana [the Great Forest]⁵⁶ and sat down under a bilva tree⁵⁷ for his noonday rest.

3 Then Daṇḍa, paṇī the Sakya⁵⁸ who was walking about on a stroll,⁵⁹ also went into Mahā, vana and went up to the bilva tree where the Blessed One was.

Then Daṇḍa, paṇī the Sakya went up to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable exchange was concluded, *he stood at one side and leaned on his stick.*⁶⁰ Leaning thus on his stick, he asked the Blessed One:

What does the recluse say; what does the recluse teach?⁶¹

4 ⁶²“Avuso [Friend], I say and teach in such a way so as not to quarrel with anyone in this world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers⁶³ and people; and in such a way that perceptions no more lie latent in that brahmin⁶⁴ who abides detached from sensual pleasures, free from doubt, having cut off worry,⁶⁵ free from craving for any kind of existence.⁶⁶

⁵⁶ Mahāvana. This was virgin forest stretching up to the Himalayas. The Mahāvana outside Vesālī was partly natural, partly cultivated (MA 2:73).

⁵⁷ “Bilva tree,” *beluva, laṭṭhikā*, lit “bilva or vilva sapling” (KhA 118); cf *sāla, laṭṭhi*, sal tree (A 2:200). The word *laṭṭhi* or *laṭṭhikā* evidently refers to a young tree. As such, the tr “sprout” cannot apply here. PED identifies the *beluva* or *beluva* (M 1:108, 2:6; J 4:363, 368, 6:525, 560) as the Aegle marmelos. The wood of the bilva tree is also mentioned in the suttas (D 2:264; S 1:22). In Sanskrit it is called bilva; in Bengali and Hindi, bel; and in Gujarati, bili. The Hindus regard the bilva as the embodiment of Lord Shiva himself and is one of the sacred tree symbols of Hinduism.

⁵⁸ On Daṇḍa, paṇī, see Intro (1).

⁵⁹ “Walking about on a stroll,” *jaṅghā, vihāraṃ anucaṅkamāno anuvicaramāno*, lit “wandering to and fro on foot and walking up and down” (KR Norman, *Group of Discourses II*, 1992: 63). Stock phrase as at D 1:235; M 1:108, 227, 2:118, 3:128; A 1:136, 138, 3:76; Sn p105, p115; Sn p105. Comy: “For the sake of seeing parks, woods, mountains” (MA 2:73).

⁶⁰ Daṇḍapāṇī's posture (leaning on his stick, speaking while standing to the seated Buddha) is discourteous and the tone of his question is arrogantly provocative. See Intro (1).

⁶¹ *Kim, vādī samaṇo kim-akkhāyī ti*, lit “What does the recluse say, what does the recluse show?” Comy glosses *kim, vādī* as *kim, diṭṭhiko*, “what is your view?” and *kim-akkhāyī* as *kim katheti*, “what do you teach?” (MA 2:73). The wanderer Sāriputta similarly asks Assajī, *kim, vādī pan'āyasmato satthā kim-akkhāyī ti* (V 1:40).

⁶² The first part of the Buddha's reply here clearly reflects Daṇḍapāṇī's aggressive attitude. Comy alludes to **Puppha S** (S 22.94) where the Buddha declares, “Monk, I do not quarrel with the world; rather it is the world that quarrels with me. A Dharma speaker does not quarrel with the world.” (S 22.94/3:138). In the second part of the Buddha's reply, the word *brahmin* is used as a self-reference, while the use of the verb *anusenti* (lie latent) refers to the latent tendencies (*anusaya*), elaborated in §8. The arhat has overcome his latent tendencies.

⁶³ *deva*, here in the sense of “devas by convention” (*sammati, deva*), i.e. kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti, deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi, deva*), i.e. the Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas and Arhants. (CNid 307 KhA 123).

⁶⁴ “Brahmin,” ie one who has destroyed the cankers (MA 2:74), ie an arhat. Here a self-reference by the Buddha.

⁶⁵ “Having cut off worry,” *chinna, kukkucca*. Comy gives two meanings of *kukkucca*: (1) *vippaṭisārī* (remorseful) and (2) *hattha, pāda* (hands and feet) (MA 2:74). Clearly here the former is meant.

⁶⁶ “For any kind of existence,” *bhavābhava*. Comy: Repeated existence, or existence that is low or that is excellent. For an excellent existence is called *abhava* (non-becoming, come to growth) (MA 2:74). The term can also be

This is what I say, avuso, this is what I teach.”

5 When this was spoken, Daṇḍa,pāṇī the Sakya shook his head,⁶⁷ [109] wagged his tongue, and raised his eyebrows until there were three furrows in his brow,⁶⁸ and then leaning on his stick, left.

Brief teaching: *papañca & anusaya*

6 Then when it was evening, Blessed One arose from his retreat, went to Nigrodha’s Park and sat down on the prepared seat. Thus seated, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Now, bhikshus, in the morning, I, having dressed myself and taking robe and bowl, entered Kapila-vatthu for alms. Then, having gone into Kapilavatthu for alms, having returned from the almsround and finished my meal, I went into Mahā,vana [the Great Forest] and sat down under a bilva tree for my noon-day rest.

Then Daṇḍa,pāṇī the Sakya who was walking about on a stroll, also went into Mahā,vana and went up to the bilva tree where I was.

Then Daṇḍapāṇī the Sakya came up to me and exchanged greetings with me. When this courteous and amiable exchange was concluded, he stood at one side and leaned on his stick. Leaning thus on his stick, he asked me:

‘What does the recluse say; what does the recluse teach?’

When he had said this, monks, I said this to Dandapani the Sakya:

‘Avuso, I say and teach in such a way so as not to quarrel with anyone in this world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people; and in such a way that perceptions no more lie latent in that brahmin who abides detached from sensual pleasures, free from doubt, having cut off worry, free from craving for any kind of existence.

This is what I say, avuso, this is what I teach.’

When this was said, Daṇḍa,pāṇī the Sakya shook his head, wagged his tongue, and raised his eyebrows until there were three furrows in his brow, and then leaning on his stick, left.”

7 When this was spoken, a certain monk said this to the Blessed One,

“But how, bhante, do you say and teach in such a way so as not to quarrel with anyone in this world with its gods, its Māras, and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people;

and how, bhante, do perceptions no more lie latent in the Blessed One, the brahmin who abides detached from sensual pleasures, free from doubt, having cut off worry, free from craving for any kind of existence?”

8 THE 7 LATENT TENDENCIES. “Bhikshu, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation⁶⁹ impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to—this is the end of

the latent tendency ⁷⁰ of	lust,
the latent tendency of	aversion, [110]
the latent tendency of	views,
the latent tendency of	doubt,
the latent tendency of	conceit,
the latent tendency of	desire for existence, and

rendered as “existence and non-existence,” the former rooted in the eternalist view (*sassata,diṭṭhi*), esp the Creator-God-believers, and the latter in the annihilationist view (*uccheda,diṭṭhi*), esp the materialists.

⁶⁷ When the naked ascetic Upaka first meets the Buddha and hears his proclamation, Upaka similarly “shaking his head, took a byway and left” (V 1:7; M 26.25/1:171). This body language clearly reflects bewilderment or disbelief.

⁶⁸ In the **Sambahula S** (S 4.21/1:118), this demenour describes Māra the evil one in disguise to confound the monks.

⁶⁹ *Papañca,saññā,saṅkhā*, or simply, “formation of countless ideas on account of much misdirected thinking,” see Intro (3).

⁷⁰ Latent tendencies (*anusayā*), see Intro (5) above.

the latent tendency of ignorance.

This is the ending of the taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, conflicts, disputes, strife, malicious words, and false speech—here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.”⁷¹

9 This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Sugata rose from his seat and entered his dwelling.

Mahā Kaccāna

10 Then, not long after the Buddha had left, the monks thought:

“Now, friends, the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling after giving only a teaching in brief—saying,

‘Bhikshu, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to, this is the end of

the latent tendency of lust,
 the latent tendency of aversion,
 the latent tendency of views,
 the latent tendency of doubt,
 the latent tendency of conceit,
 the latent tendency of desire for existence, and
 the latent tendency of ignorance.

This is the ending of the taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, conflicts, disputes, strife, malicious words, and false speech—here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder,’

—without giving its meaning in detail. Now, who will expound the detailed meaning of this teaching given in brief by the Blessed One?”

Then the monks thought:

“The venerable Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and held in high esteem by wise companions in the holy life.⁷² He would be capable of giving the detailed meaning of this teaching given in brief, whose meaning is not given in detail by the Blessed One. Let us approach the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and question Mahā Kaccāna over and again⁷³ regarding this matter.”

11a Then the monks approached the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable exchange was concluded, they sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, they said this to the venerable Mahā Kaccāna:

“Friend Kaccāna, the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling after giving only a teaching in brief—saying,

‘Bhikshu, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to, this is the end of

the latent tendency of lust,
 the latent tendency of aversion,
 the latent tendency of views,
 the latent tendency of doubt,
 the latent tendency of conceit,
 the latent tendency of desire for existence, and
 the latent tendency of ignorance.

This is the ending of the taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, conflicts, disputes, strife, malicious words, and false speech—here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder,’

—without giving its meaning in detail.

⁷¹ On “the taking up of rod and sword, . . . and false speech,” cf **Apaṇṇaka S** (M 60), where these are said to occur “based on material form, but this does not occur at all in the formless realms” (M 60.31/1:410).

⁷² Mahā Kaccāna is the foremost amongst monks who are able to expound in detail what has been taught in brief (A 1:23). The **Mahā Kaccāna Bhadd’eka,ratta S** (M 133) and **Uddesa,vibhaṅga S** (M 138) are also spoken by him under similar circumstances.

⁷³ “Question . . . over and again,” *paṭipuccheyyāma*, lit “we will counter-question (him).”

11b “Friend Kaccana, soon after the Blessed One had gone away it occurred to us:

“Now, friends, the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling after giving only a teaching in brief—saying,

‘Bhikshu, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to, this is the end of the latent tendency of lust,...here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder’

11c ‘Now, who will expound the detailed meaning of this teaching given in brief, without giving the meaning in detail, by the Blessed One?’

Then, avuso Kaccāna, it occurred to us:

‘The venerable Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and held in high esteem by wise companions in the holy life. [111] He is capable of giving the meaning in detail of this teaching given in brief, without giving the meaning in detail, by the Blessed One. Let us approach the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and question Mahā Kaccāna over and again regarding this matter.

May the venerable Mahā Kaccāna give us a detailed analysis [of this matter]!’”

The heartwood simile

12 “Avuso, just as a person needing heartwood,⁷⁴ seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, after passing over the root and trunk of a great tree that stands full of heartwood, were to think that heartwood would be found amongst its branches and leaves; even so it has come to this, venerable sirs,

even so it is with you, that you think I should be asked about the meaning of this matter when you were right before the Teacher himself.⁷⁵

For, avuso, the Blessed One knows the known, sees the seen; he is the eye, he is knowledge, he is Dharma, he is Brahmā; he is the instructor of spiritual duties,⁷⁶ the shower of meanings, the giver of the deathless, the lord of truth, the Tathāgata [thus come].⁷⁷

That was indeed the time when you should have asked the Blessed One over and again regarding the meaning [of the Blessed One’s statement]. As he explained to you, so you should have remembered it.”

13 “Truly, friend Kaccāna, the Blessed One knows the known, sees the seen; he has become the eye, become the knowledge, become the Dharma, become Brahmā; he is the instructor of spiritual duties, the shower of meanings,⁷⁸ the giver of the deathless, the lord of truth, the Tathāgata [thus come].

That was indeed the time when we should have asked the Blessed One over and again regarding the meaning [of the Blessed One’s statement]. As he explained to us, so we should have remembered it.

But the venerable Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and held in high esteem by wise companions in the holy life. He is capable of giving the meaning in detail of this teaching given in brief by the Blessed One. Let the venerable Mahā Kaccāna give us a detailed analysis [of this matter], if it is no trouble!”

⁷⁴ “Heartwood,” *sāra*, ie, the core or essence of anything; the pith or the best of wood—a simile for spiritual strength and attainment. See **Udumbarikā Sihanāda S** (D 25), where the Buddha’s humour is evident in such a simile given in the latter (D 25.15-19/3:47-53) = 1.4. In (**Saṅgha**) **Uposatha S** (A 4.190.1b/2:182) = SD 15.10b, *sāra* means “essence,” in the sense of accomplished in moral virtue, etc (AA 3:168).

⁷⁵ A slightly different version of this simile is found in **Mahā Sārōpama S** (M 29.3/1:193).

⁷⁶ “Instructor of spiritual duties,” *vattā pavattā*, lit “the turner of duties”. My tr is conjectural. This is a cryptic expression which can also be tr as “he is the propounder, the expounder” (M:H 1:144). The **Dhamma,saṅgaṇī Mūla Tīkā** explains *vattā* as *catu,sacca,dhamme*, “the four noble truth”.

⁷⁷ “[K]nows the known...the Tathāgata,” *jānaṃ janāti passam passati cakkhu,bhūto nāṇa,bhūto dhamma,bhūto vattā pavattā athassa ninnetā amatassa dātā dhamma-s,sāmī tathāgato*. Comy simply says that he knows and sees what is to be known and seen; knowing, he knows; seeing, he sees (MA 2:76).

⁷⁸ “The shower of meanings,” *athassa ninnetā*, alt tr “the bringer of the goal” (M:H 1:144). I have rendered it to reflect the mood of the sutta (that of the full meaning of the Buddha’s brief statement).

Mahā Kaccāna’s reply

14 “Then, listen, avuso, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied the venerable Mahā Kaccāna.

The venerable Mahā Kaccāna said this:

15 “Avuso, when the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling after giving only a teaching in brief, without giving its meaning in detail—saying,

‘Bhikshu, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to, this is the end of

the latent tendency of	lust,
the latent tendency of	aversion,
the latent tendency of	views,
the latent tendency of	doubt,
the latent tendency of	conceit,
the latent tendency of	desire for existence, and
the latent tendency of	ignorance.

This is the ending of the taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, conflicts, disputes, strife, malicious words, and false speech—here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.’

Avuso, in regards to the meaning in detail of this teaching given in brief by the Blessed One, I understand its meaning in detail to be as follows:

16 ⁷⁹(1) EYE-BASED PROLIFERATION. Avuso, dependent on the eye and form, eye-consciousness arises.

The meeting of the three is contact.⁸⁰

With contact as condition, there is feeling.

What one feels, one [112] perceives.

What one perceives, one thinks about.⁸¹

What one thinks about, one mentally proliferates.⁸²

What a person mentally proliferates is the source through which apperceptual proliferation⁸³ impacts one regarding past, future and present forms cognizable through the eye.⁸⁴

(2) EAR-BASED PROLIFERATION. Avuso, dependent on the ear and sound, ear-consciousness arises.

The meeting of the three is contact.

With contact as condition, there is feeling.

⁷⁹ *Cakkhuñ ca āvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu,viññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa,paccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi, yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti, yaṃ papañceti tato,-nidānaṃ purisaṃ papañca,saññā,saṅkhā samudācaranti atītānagata,paccuppannesu cakkhu,viññeyyesu rūpesu. A passage similar to this section is found in **Pariññā S** (S 35.60) where, however, the learned noble disciple becomes disillusioned (*nibbindati*) with the contact arising from sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness (also using the sentence, *tinnaṃ saṅgati phasso* [16]), and as such “becomes dispassionate (*virajjati*); through dispassion, he is liberated (*vimuccati*); through liberation, he understands, ‘Clinging has been fully understood by me.’” (S 35.60/4:32 f). **The Mahā Hatthi, padōpama S** (M 28) closes in a similar manner, beginning with the statement: “If, avuso, internally the eye is unimpaired [intact] but no external forms come into its range, and there is no appropriate conscious engagement [appropriate act of attention] (*tajjo samannāhāro hoti*), then there is no appearance of that class of consciousness” (M 28.27-38/1:190 f). On Nāṇananda’s notion of the 3 phases of mental proliferation, see Intro (2). See foll n.*

⁸⁰ *Tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*. In **Cha Chakka S** (M 148), this phrase is part of the sequences on sense-based reflections (M 148.7-9/3:281 f & 148.28-39/3:284 f) = SD 26.6. For a discussion on this phrase and passage, see Bucknell 1999:318 ff. See prec n.

⁸¹ “One thinks about,” *vitakketi*. On how when thinking stops, desires do not arise, see **Sakka, pañha S** (D 21.2.2/2:277).

⁸² This verse up to here is also found in (**Samuday’atthaṅgama**) **Loka S** (S 12.44/2:71-73 = SD 7.5) and (**Sabb’upādāna**) **Pariññā S** (S 35.60/4:32 f = SD 6.17) in different contexts.

⁸³ *Papañca, saññā, saṅkhā*, see Intro (3).

⁸⁴ This important passage is the earliest statement on the Buddhist theory of perception. See Intro (4).

What one feels, one perceives.

What one perceives, one thinks about.

What one thinks about, one mentally proliferates.

What a person mentally proliferates is the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts one regarding past, future and present mind-objects cognizable through the mind.

(3) NOSE-BASED PROLIFERATION. Avuso, dependent on the nose and smell, nose-consciousness arises.

The meeting of the three is contact.

With contact as condition, there is feeling.

What one feels, one perceives.

What one perceives, one thinks about.

What one thinks about, one mentally proliferates.

What a person mentally proliferates is the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts one regarding past, future and present mind-objects cognizable through the mind.

(4) TONGUE-BASED PROLIFERATION. Avuso, dependent on the tongue and taste, tongue-consciousness arises.

The meeting of the three is contact.

With contact as condition, there is feeling.

What one feels, one perceives.

What one perceives, one thinks about.

What one thinks about, one mentally proliferates.

What a person mentally proliferates is the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts one regarding past, future and present mind-objects cognizable through the mind.

(5) BODY-BASED PROLIFERATION. Avuso, dependent on the body and touch, body-consciousness arises.

The meeting of the three is contact.

With contact as condition, there is feeling.

What one feels, one perceives.

What one perceives, one thinks about.

What one thinks about, one mentally proliferates.

What a person mentally proliferates is the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts one regarding past, future and present mind-objects cognizable through the mind.

(6) MIND-BASED PROLIFERATION. Avuso, dependent on the mind⁸⁵ and mind-object, mind-consciousness⁸⁶ arises.

The meeting of the three is contact.

With contact as condition, there is feeling.

What one feels, one perceives. What one perceives, one thinks about.

What one thinks about, one mentally proliferates.

What a person mentally proliferates is the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts one regarding past, future and present mind-objects cognizable through the mind.⁸⁷

The round of existence

17a (1) EYE-BASED PROLIFERATION. Indeed, avuso, when there is **the eye, form and eye-consciousness**, a manifestation of contact can be discerned⁸⁸—it is possible for this to occur [possible to know this].

⁸⁵ “The mind,” *mana*. Here Comy glosses as *bhavaṅga, citta* (MA 2:79), the life-continuum, sometimes called the unconscious or sub-conscious.

⁸⁶ “Mind-consciousness,” *mano, viññāna*. Here Comy glosses as “advertence” (*āvajjana*) and impulsion (*javana*) (MA 2:77).

⁸⁷ *Yam papañceti tato, nidānam purisam papañca, saññā, saikhā samudācaranti atītānagata, paccuppannesu manu, viññeyyesu dhammesu.*

When there is the manifestation of contact, a manifestation of feeling can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of feeling, a manifestation of perception can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of perception, manifestation of thinking can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of thinking, a manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation⁸⁹ can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

17b (2) EAR-BASED PROLIFERATION. Indeed, avuso, when there is **the ear, sound, and ear-consciousness**, a manifestation of contact can be discerned⁹⁰—it is possible for this to occur [possible to know this].

When there is the manifestation of contact, a manifestation of feeling can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of feeling, a manifestation of perception can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of perception, manifestation of thinking can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of thinking, a manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

17c (3) NOSE-BASED PROLIFERATION. Indeed, avuso, when there is **the nose, smell, and nose-consciousness**, a manifestation of contact can be discerned⁹¹—it is possible for this to occur [possible to know this].

When there is the manifestation of contact, a manifestation of feeling can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of feeling, a manifestation of perception can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of perception, manifestation of thinking can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of thinking, a manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

⁸⁸ *So vat'āvuso cakkhusmim sati rūpe sati cakkhu,viññāṇe sati phassa,paññattim paññāpessatī ti thānam.* Comy says that this passage shows the entire round of existence (*vaṭṭā*) by way of the 12 sense-bases. The next section [18] shows the cessation of the round (*vivaṭṭa*) by the negation of the 12 sense-bases. (MA 2:78). The structure *paññattim paññāpessati* (lit “he describes the description,” “he defines the definition”) is idiomatic, meaning simply “he describes; he defines”. Paraphrased, this sentence may also read “It is possible to define contact as the meeting of sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness.”

⁸⁹ *Vitakka,paññattiyā sati papañca,saññā,saṅkhā samudācarāṇa,paññattim paññāpessatī ti thānam etaṃ vijjati.* On *papañca,saññā,saṅkhā*: see Intro (3).

⁹⁰ *So vat'āvuso cakkhusmim sati rūpe sati cakkhu,viññāṇe sati phassa,paññattim paññāpessatī ti thānam.* Comy says that this passage shows the entire round of existence (*vaṭṭā*) by way of the 12 sense-bases. The next section [18] shows the cessation of the round (*vivaṭṭa*) by the negation of the 12 sense-bases. (MA 2:78). The structure *paññattim paññāpessati* (lit “he describes the description,” “he defines the definition”) is idiomatic, meaning simply “he describes; he defines”. Paraphrased, this sentence may also read “It is possible to define contact as the meeting of sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness.”

⁹¹ *So vat'āvuso cakkhusmim sati rūpe sati cakkhu,viññāṇe sati phassa,paññattim paññāpessatī ti thānam.* Comy says that this passage shows the entire round of existence (*vaṭṭā*) by way of the 12 sense-bases. The next section [18] shows the cessation of the round (*vivaṭṭa*) by the negation of the 12 sense-bases. (MA 2:78). The structure *paññattim paññāpessati* (lit “he describes the description,” “he defines the definition”) is idiomatic, meaning simply “he describes; he defines”. Paraphrased, this sentence may also read “It is possible to define contact as the meeting of sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness.”

17d (4) TONGUE-BASED PROLIFERATION. Indeed, avuso, when there is **the tongue, taste, and tongue-consciousness**, a manifestation of contact can be discerned⁹²—it is possible for this to occur [possible to know this].

When there is the manifestation of contact, a manifestation of feeling can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of feeling, a manifestation of perception can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of perception, manifestation of thinking can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of thinking, a manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

17e (5) BODY-BASED PROLIFERATION. Indeed, avuso, when there is **the body, touch, and body-consciousness**, a manifestation of contact can be discerned⁹³—it is possible for this to occur [possible to know this].

When there is the manifestation of contact, a manifestation of feeling can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of feeling, a manifestation of perception can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of perception, manifestation of thinking can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of thinking, a manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

17f (6) MIND-BASED PROLIFERATION. Indeed, avuso, when there is **the mind, mind-object, and mind-consciousness**, a manifestation of contact can be discerned⁹⁴—it is possible for this to occur [possible to know this].

When there is the manifestation of contact, a manifestation of feeling can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of feeling, a manifestation of perception can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of perception, manifestation of thinking can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

When there is the manifestation of thinking, a manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation can be discerned—it is possible for this to occur.

⁹² *So vat'āvuso cakkhusmim sati rūpe sati cakkhu,viññāṇe sati phassa,paññattim paññāpessatī ti thānam.* Comy says that this passage shows the entire round of existence (*vaṭṭā*) by way of the 12 sense-bases. The next section [18] shows the cessation of the round (*vivaṭṭa*) by the negation of the 12 sense-bases. (MA 2:78). The structure *paññattim paññāpessati* (lit “he describes the description,” “he defines the definition”) is idiomatic, meaning simply “he describes; he defines”. Paraphrased, this sentence may also read “It is possible to define contact as the meeting of sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness.”

⁹³ *So vat'āvuso cakkhusmim sati rūpe sati cakkhu,viññāṇe sati phassa,paññattim paññāpessatī ti thānam.* Comy says that this passage shows the entire round of existence (*vaṭṭā*) by way of the 12 sense-bases. The next section [18] shows the cessation of the round (*vivaṭṭa*) by the negation of the 12 sense-bases. (MA 2:78). The structure *paññattim paññāpessati* (lit “he describes the description,” “he defines the definition”) is idiomatic, meaning simply “he describes; he defines”. Paraphrased, this sentence may also read “It is possible to define contact as the meeting of sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness.”

⁹⁴ *So vat'āvuso cakkhusmim sati rūpe sati cakkhu,viññāṇe sati phassa,paññattim paññāpessatī ti thānam.* Comy says that this passage shows the entire round of existence (*vaṭṭā*) by way of the 12 sense-bases. The next section [18] shows the cessation of the round (*vivaṭṭa*) by the negation of the 12 sense-bases. (MA 2:78). The structure *paññattim paññāpessati* (lit “he describes the description,” “he defines the definition”) is idiomatic, meaning simply “he describes; he defines”. Paraphrased, this sentence may also read “It is possible to define contact as the meeting of sense-organ, sense-object and sense-consciousness.”

The ending of the round of existence

18a Indeed, avuso, when there is **no eye, no form and no eye-consciousness**, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of contact.

When there is no manifestation of contact, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of feeling.

When there is no manifestation of feeling, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of perception.

When there is no manifestation of perception, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of thinking.

When there is no manifestation of thinking, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation.

18b Indeed, avuso, when there is **no ear, no sound and no ear-consciousness**, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of contact...of feeling...of perception...of thinking...of the impact of apperceptual proliferation.

18c Indeed, avuso, when there is **no nose, no smell and no nose-consciousness**, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of contact...of feeling...of perception...of thinking...of the impact of apperceptual proliferation.

18d Indeed, avuso, when there is **no tongue, no taste and no tongue-consciousness**, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of contact...of feeling...of perception...of thinking...of the impact of apperceptual proliferation.

18e Indeed, avuso, when there is **no body, no touch and no body-consciousness**, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of contact...of feeling...of perception...of thinking...of the impact of apperceptual proliferation.

18f Indeed, avuso, when there is **no mind, no mind-object and no mind-consciousness**, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of contact.

When there is no contact, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of feeling.

When when there is no feeling, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of perception.

When there is no perception, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of thinking.

When there is no thinking, it is not possible to discern the manifestation of the impact of apperceptual proliferation.⁹⁵

19 Avuso, when the Blessed One [113] rose from his seat and entered his dwelling after giving only a teaching in brief—saying,

‘Bhikshu, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to, this is the end of

the latent tendency of	lust,
the latent tendency of	aversion,
the latent tendency of	views,
the latent tendency of	doubt,
the latent tendency of	conceit,
the latent tendency of	desire for existence, and
the latent tendency of	ignorance.

This is the ending of the taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, conflicts, disputes, strife, malicious words, and false speech—here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder,⁹

—without giving its meaning in detail, I understand its meaning in detail to be as such.

Now, if you wish, venerable sirs, go to the Blessed One and ask him over and again about the meaning of this. As the Blessed One explains it to you, so should you remember it.”

The Buddha’s approval

20 Then the monks, having joyfully approved of the venerable Mahā Kaccāna’s word, rose from their seats and approached the Blessed One. Having paid homage to the Blessed One, they sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, they said this to the Blessed One.

⁹⁵ At this point, **the Pariññā S** (S 35.60/4:32 f) should be read.

“Bhante, the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling after giving only a teaching in brief, without giving its meaning in detail—saying,

‘Bhikshu, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to, this is the end of

the latent tendency of lust,
 the latent tendency of aversion,
 the latent tendency of views,
 the latent tendency of doubt,
 the latent tendency of conceit,
 the latent tendency of desire for existence, and
 the latent tendency of ignorance.

This is the ending of the taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, conflicts, disputes, strife, malicious words, and false speech—here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.’

Then, bhante, not long after the Blessed One had left, we thought:

‘Now, friends, the Blessed One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling after giving only a teaching in brief—saying,

‘Bhikshus, as regards the source through which apperceptual proliferation impacts a person: if one were to find nothing there to delight in, nothing there to welcome, nothing to cling to—this is the end of

the latent tendency of lust,
 the latent tendency of aversion,
 the latent tendency of views,
 the latent tendency of doubt,
 the latent tendency of conceit,
 the latent tendency of desire for existence, and
 the latent tendency of ignorance.

This is the ending of the taking up of rod and sword, quarrels, conflicts, disputes, strife, malicious words, and false speech—here these evil unwholesome states cease without remainder.’

Now, who will expound the detailed meaning of this teaching given in brief by the Blessed One?

Then we thought:

‘The venerable Mahā Kaccāna is praised by the Teacher and held in high esteem by wise companions in the holy life.⁹⁶ He would be capable of giving the detailed meaning of this teaching given in brief. Let us approach the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and question the venerable Mahā Kaccāna over and again⁹⁷ regarding this matter.’

Then, bhante, we approached the venerable Mahā Kaccāna and asked him about the meaning (of the Blessed One’s statement). [114] Then the venerable Mahā Kaccāna explained the meaning to us in this manner, in this way, with these words.”⁹⁸

21 “Mahā Kaccāna, monks, is wise; Mahā Kaccāna, monks, has great wisdom! If you had asked me the meaning of this, I would have explained it in the same way that Mahā Kaccāna had explained it. Such is its meaning and so should you remember it.”

Ānanda’s simile

22 When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, just as a person exhausted by hunger and weakness were to come upon a honey-ball,⁹⁹ wherever he were to taste it, he would get a sweet agreeable taste¹⁰⁰; even so, bhante, any able-minded¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ [Mahā Kaccāna is the foremost amongst monks who are able to expound in detail what has been taught in brief \(A 1:23\). The Mahā Kaccāna Bhadd’eka,ratta S \(M 133\) and Uddesa,vibhaṅga S \(M 138\) are also spoken by him under similar circumstances.](#)

⁹⁷ “Question...over and again,” *paṭipuccheyyāma*, lit “we will counter-question (him).”

⁹⁸ “In this manner, in this way, with these words,” *imehi ākarehi imehi padehi imehi vyañjehi*. This is stock, as at *Vīmaṃsaka S* (M 47.16/1:320).

bhikshu, wherever he might examine with wisdom the meaning of this Dharma discourse, he would find satisfaction and confidence of mind.

Bhante, what is the name of this Dharma discourse?”

“In this connection, Ānanda, you may remember this Dharma discourse as ‘the Honey-ball Discourse.’”

The Blessed One said this. The venerable Ānanda joyfully approved¹⁰² of the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

Bibliography

- Analayo, Sāmaṇera
2003 *Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path of realization*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2003. Repr Petaling Jaya (Malaysia): Buddhist Wisdom Centre, 2006 (paging reset).
- Amaro, Ajahn
2001 “Thinking.” [A talk given during a 10-day retreat at the Insight Meditation Society, Barre, Massachusetts, USA, 2001.] Redwood Valley, CA: Abhayagiri Monastery, 2001. Parts 1-2.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu
1995 “Mahā Kaccāna: Master of Doctrinal Exposition.” Wheel Publication No. 405/406. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995.
- Bucknell, Roderick S
1999 “Conditioned Arising Evolves: Variation and change in textual accounts of the *Paṭicca-samuppāda* doctrine.” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 22,2 1999:311-342.
- Collins, Steve
1982 *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. 323 pp. See §4.3.2 (pp141 f).
- Hamilton, Sue
1996a *Identity and Experience: The constitution of the human being according to early Buddhism*. London: Luzac Oriental, 1996.
2003 *Early Buddhism: A new approach. The I of the Beholder*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2003. See Index: “manifold, making.”
- Harvey, Peter
1995 *The Selfless Mind: Personality, consciousness and Nirvana in early Buddhism*. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1995.
- Karunadasa, Y
2001 “The Abhidhamma version of the theory of perception.” *The Middle Way* 75,4 Feb 2001: 211-220.
- Lusthaus, Dan

⁹⁹ “Honey-ball,” *madhu,piṇḍika*. A large sweetmeat made from flour, ghee, molasses, honey, sugar, etc. The honey-ball simile is used in another context in **Piṅgiyānī S** (A 5.194/3:237).

¹⁰⁰ “A sweet agreeable taste,” *sāduṃ rasam asecanakam*.

¹⁰¹ “Able-minded,” *cetaso...dabba,jātiko*, alt tr “with a mind worthy of the monk.” Comy glosses *dabba,jātika* as *paṇḍita,sabhāvo*, “the state of a wise person.” (MA 2:78).

¹⁰² “Joyfully approved,” *attamanā...abhinandum*.

- 2002 *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogacara Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun*. Curzon Critical Studies in Buddhism Series. London: Routledge-Curzon, 2002. xii + 611 pp. Appendices, bibliography, index.
- Mahasi Sayadaw
1982 *Purābheda Sutta Dhamma or The Dhamma One Should Accomplish Before Death*. Tr U Min Swe (Min Kyaw Thu). Yangon: Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha (Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization), 1982. <http://www.mahasi.org.mm/pdf/E19PDF.PDF>.
- Ñāṇananda, Bhikkhu
1971 *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought: An essay on 'Papañca' and 'Papañca-saññā,saṅkhā.'* Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971.
- Rothberg, Donald
2007 "Mindfulness and papañca." Audio 40:50. 12 March 2007. USA. Accessed 18 May 2007 from <http://www.audiodharma.org/talks/DonaldRothberg.html>.
- Sarathchandra, ER
1958 *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*. Colombo: Ceylon University Press, 1958. → 1994
1994 *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*. [1958] 2nd ed. Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 1994.
- Silva, Padmal de
1990 "Buddhist psychology: A review of theory and practice." *Current Psychology* 9,3 Fall 1990:236-254. <http://unibodhi.topcities.com/psychology.htm> or <http://www.orientalia.org/article588.html>. (See esp p5 of digital ed.)
- Smith, Rodney
2003 "Honeyball Sutta: *Papañca*." Seattle: Insight Meditation Society, Apr 2003. Talk 40:45. Accessed 18 May 2007 from http://www.seattleinsight.org/audio/honeyball_papanca.-wma.
- Waldron, WS
2002 "The dependent arising of a cognitive unconscious in Buddhism and science." *Contemporary Buddhism* 3,2 Nov 2002:141-160.

040921; rev 061005; 071011; 081031; 090602 CT; 091105