

# Triune Mind in Buddhism: A Textual Exploration

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## *Abstract*

There are three terms for ‘mind’ in the Buddhist Canon – *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa*. But there does not seem to be much clarity on them in their Canonical usage. In translating the concepts, contemporary scholars, East and West, do not seem to be much clearer either. Exploring what we eventually come to call the ‘Triune mind’ – i.e., three-in-one mind, this limited research delineates the three minds *functionally* – *Mano* as R-Mind (Receiving-Mind), *Citta* as J-Mind (Judging-Mind) and *Viññāṇa* as E-Mind (Executive-Mind). Characterizing this view of mind as a M(ind)-Simplex, each of them, as well as all three taken together, however, come to be seen as a M(ind)-Complex, too, given their multifunctionality and interrelationality. By way of coming out of the confusion relating to the word trio, a general criterion is proposed to be used in seeking clarity – to consider the context. Is it localized or generic? The paper benefits from Western Science and Linguistics, as well as from some creative and unconventional thought on the part of the author. Along these lines are a few new terms and concepts introduced (see end of paper).

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## 1. Introduction

There are three terms in the Canon that refer to the Mind<sup>1</sup>, namely *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa*, to list them strictly in alpha order<sup>2</sup>, but without suggesting a hierarchy or primacy at the moment, a matter we shall come to in the course of the discussion. A classical Canonical line captures a *perceived invariant* use of the three cognates: “Whatever it may indeed be, oh Bhikkhus, it is called *Citta*, it is called *Mano*, it is called *Viññāṇa*”<sup>3</sup> (*yañca kho etaṃ bhikkhave, vuccati cittaṃ itipi mano itipi viññāṇaṃ itipi*) (SN 12.61)<sup>4</sup> Implicit in the line is that all three terms constitute the Mind (*nāma*) component of the totality called Mindbody (*nāmarūpa*). The wording also suggests that they are semantically *non-discriminative*; that is to say, synonymous. That may be understood as pointing to the fact that the sentient mindbody draws upon, i.e., relies on, a certain phenomenon called the mind, but that each of the three labels is a mere convenient convention (*voḥāra*), and that any semantic distinction is irrelevant. There seems to be some confirmation of this when both *Mano* and *Citta* appear in the same context: *santi, bhikkhave, manopadosikā nāma devā, te ativeლა აწამაწამ upanijjhāyanti. te ativeლა აწამაწამ upanijjhāyantā aṇṇamaṇṇamhi cittāni padūsentī. te aṇṇamaṇṇam paduṭṭhacittā kilantakāyā kilantacittā* (bold added) (DN 1 7)<sup>5</sup>. Here we have *Mano* in *manopadosikā* ‘corrupted in *Mano*’ and *Citta* twice: in *cittāni padūsentī* and *paduṭṭhacittā* ‘corrupted in *Citta*’. If that is not confusing enough, there is elsewhere the compound *Manoviññāṇa* (DN 2.9)<sup>6</sup>, combining two of the terms!

Contrary to such an initial impression of synonymity, however, is the fact that the terms do occur with clear differential meaning, in differential contexts. In relation to *Citta*, e.g., we have *samāhite citte* (...so *evaṃ samāhite citte*) (DN 1.31) ‘*Citta* stilled’, *Viññāṇa* occurs in relation to a specific sense, such as, e.g., *cakkhuvīññāṇa* ‘eye-consciousness’<sup>7</sup>. And then we have *Mano* in *manopubbangamā dhammā* (*Dhammapada* 1) (KN 2.1), ‘Mind is of the nature of forerunning’. If indeed the terms were to be semantically non-variant as suggested by the classical line, then we should see in the Canon, e.g., *\*viññāṇapadosakā*, *\*samāhite manasā*, *\*cakkhucitta*, each term marked by a star, as in the tradition of Linguistics, to suggest non-occurrence. But we don’t.

Such non-occurrence suggests how each of the terms also has a specific meaning in a specific context. Indeed the compound *manoviññāṇa* speaks to this. If *Mano* and *Viññāṇa* were meant to be the same, then, the compound would not only be simply redundant but meaningless as well.

It appears, then, that such differential usage – both synonymously

and variantly, is what seems to cause the non-clarity. To point to the issue again, when it comes to *Viññāṇa* itself, “It is difficult to give any one word ... because there is ... a varying use of the term in the Canon itself” (PED). E.g., “*Viññāṇa* as fifth of the five *khandhas* ... is never properly described or defined.” (PED). So it may be understood only as “general Consciousness (as function of mind *and* matter)” (PED) (italics in original). In the words of a contemporary Sinhala Buddhist scholar, “In the basic Buddhist thought, these three [*Mano*, *Citta*, *Viññāṇa*] are not clearly distinguished, and their functions not shown” (Ven. Chandraloka<sup>8</sup>, 2007, 279).

And it should hardly be surprising, then, that scholars, both East and West have over the years found the distinction between and among them elusive and blurred. The confusion and the non-clarity come to be compounded when it comes to translation into English, as can be seen from the following representative, chronological Chart<sup>9</sup>:

AUTHOR	<i>Citta</i>	<i>Mano</i>	<i>Viññāṇa</i>
Dr. Rhys Davids (1899)	Heart	Mind	Consciousness
Ven. Rahula (1959)	Mind	Thought	Consciousness
Prof. Jayatilleka (1963)	Mind	Mind	Consciousness
Dr. Walshe (1995)	Thought	Mind	Consciousness
Ven. Bodhi (2000)	Mind	Mentality; Mind	Consciousness
Prof. Karunadasa (2010)	‘Bare Consciousness’	Mind	Consciousness

**Fig. 1: Translation into English of *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa* by Scholars, Native-English Speaking and Non-Native-English Speaking, over a Century**

As can be seen from the Chart, while there seems to be consensus on the translation of *Viññāṇa* as ‘Consciousness’, there is pretty much unanimity on *Mano*, too, with the exceptions of Ven. Rahula, translating it as ‘thought’, possibly seeking to catch a cognitive element, and Ven. Bodhi who seems “compelled to use “mentality” as a makeshift for *mano*” (Bodhi, 2000, 769), although “normally” he renders “both *citta* and *mano* as mind”. *Citta* has the most variety, from ‘heart’ (Davids) to ‘mind’ (Bodhi, Jayatilleka and Rahula) to ‘thought’ (Walshe) to ‘bare consciousness’ (Karunadasa)<sup>10</sup>. In a footnote to his translation of *Citta* as ‘thought’, Walshe notes that it is “more or less synonymous with *Mano* ‘mind’, but

often used much like ‘heart’ in English (‘to know in one’s heart’, etc.)” (Walshe, 1995, 540). So it is clear that the concept has not been captured any more clearly in English translation.

The lack of agreement among scholars in translating, of course, does not speak to a lack of understanding on their part of the concepts themselves. It simply reflects the limitations of English<sup>11</sup> in capturing an essentially non-western concept.

Since a label is a shorthand for a concept, we need to get a clear idea as to what the terms stand for and seek to convey, if we are to get clarity into our own minds. Do they label the same phenomenon or distinct phenomena, or indeed are they both the same and not the same? In this study, then, it will be the writer’s attempt to seek some clarity between and among the three terms, drawing upon the two traditional Canonical sources - Sutta and Abhidhamma. But he shall also seek to benefit from Western Science<sup>12</sup>.

## 2. Triune Mind: a Textual Understanding

### 2.1 Six Doors, Four Conditions, 51 Sub- Mindmoments

A Sentient Being (*sattā*) is characterized by the Buddha as a ‘mindbody’ (*nāmarūpa*). The mind is made up of the six senses: eye-sense, ear-sense, nose-sense, tongue-sense, body-sense and mind-sense, each being a ‘door’ (*dvāra*).

The formation of Consciousness in any of these six senses begins with a stimulus impacting upon a given *single* sense at a given single mindmoment (*cittakkhaṇa*) in time<sup>13</sup>. And this would be only in the presence of four conditions<sup>14</sup>:

1. Stimulus (*ārammaṇa*);
2. A working sense (*pasādarūpa*);
3. Facilitating condition (*upatthambakapaccaya*)<sup>15</sup>;
4. Attention (*manasikāra*).

A ‘stimulus’ is an ‘objective [form of] matter’ (*gocara rūpa*), such as e.g., a colour in relation to the eye, a sound in relation to the ear, etc. It comes in four strengths: ‘very great’, ‘great’, ‘slight’ and ‘very slight’<sup>16</sup>. But a stimulus can be seen only if the person is not blind; hence ‘working sense’. By ‘attention’ is meant that one’s mind is at the given point in time on the particular object: a flower, sound, odour, taste, touch or e.g., a poem working in one’s head (mind). As for ‘facilitative conditions’, we may ask,

“What else is needed for an eye to see the road on a dark night?” Light, of course. The road (stimulus) is there, and the eyes are open and working (working eye), and one is looking for the road (attention). But unless there is light, no road can be seen. So the light can be said to facilitate, which is why our streets come to be lit! Hence ‘facilitative’, the other facilitative conditions shown as follows: ‘space’ for the ear, ‘air’ for the nose, ‘water element’ for the tongue, ‘earth element’ for the body and ‘ongoing Consciousness’ for the mind.

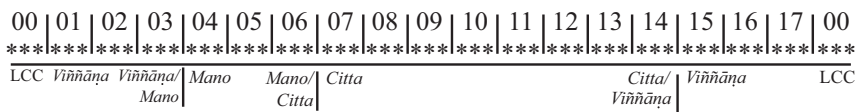
So it is that we can say that four conditions are needed for a stimulus to find a home in our mindbody.

In the Abhidhamma analysis, the process of a stimulus working through a sense-door entails 17 mindmoments (see later for an elaboration). While each step in the process accounts for a single mindmoment, each mindmoment comes to be of three stages: arising (*uppāda*), staying put (*thiti*) and ceasing (*bhanga*). Thus the Stream of Consciousness can be said to be made up of 51 sub-mindmoments.

Thus we see the process of forming a Stream of Consciousness entails one or more of six doors, four conditions and 51 sub-mindmoments.

## 2.2 Mano, Citta and Viññāṇa in a Stream of Consciousness

While there is nothing to be added to the classical explanation of the process of a Stream of Consciousness in terms of 17 mindmoments (see Bodhi, 1999, ch. IV for a characterization), we would like to explore the process in relation to the role of *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa*, this with the help of a diagram:



**Fig. 2: The 17 Mindmoment Process, from Stimulus to Life-Continuum Consciousness, in relation to *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa***

We begin by accounting for the 17 mindmoments as in line 1 of the figure: [00] Life-Continuum Consciousness (LCC), [01] Past LCC, [02] (LCC) Vibration, [03] (LCC) Arrest, [04] Adverting at sense doors<sup>17</sup>, [05] Cognition at specific sense door, [06] Reception, [07] Investigation, [08] Determination, [09 – 15] Impulsion, [16 – 17] Registration<sup>18</sup>, [00] LCC.<sup>19</sup> In the next section, we take up the bottom line showing the different dimensions of the mind in relation to the mindmoments.

### 2.2.1 Mano in Triple Action

Below we seek to clarify Mano in its three functions of 1. Mano as Initial Sensor cum Collective Sense-Door Keeper, 2. Mano as Specific Sense-Door Keeper, and 3. Mano as Mind-Sense-Door Keeper.

#### 2.2.1.1 Mano as Initial Sensor cum Collective Sense-Door Keeper

We begin with mm 04, leaving mm 00-03 for later, for reasons that will become clear as we discuss these early mindmoments (see 2.2.3). At this mindmoment (mm), there comes to be what may be called a ‘sense alert’, as if each of the six senses putting up its antenna, so to speak, in a sense of preparation for determining the incoming visitor, each wondering if the incoming stimulus is meant for it. This is called ‘adverting at the door’ (*dvārāvajjana*)<sup>20</sup>. What we have here, then, is an initial contact process between the existing senses and the incoming stimulus. This comes to be in the role of a ‘scout’ at a lookout - to keep an eye on any potential phenomena impacting on the mindbody (= stimuli), in a type of ‘contact food’ (*phassāhāra*)<sup>21</sup>. We assign this role to what we shall call **Mano the Initial Sensor cum Collective Sense-Door Keeper**.

#### 2.2.1.2 Mano as Specific Sense-Door Keeper

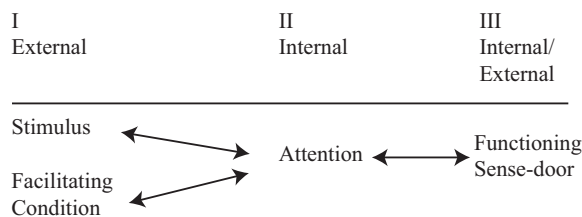
We may think of mm 04 just encountered as someone taking a phone in hand and keeping it to the ear, alerted to an incoming call, but not yet knowing who the call is from. Being alerted, however, is still not explicitly identifying the caller, i.e., the incoming stimulus (object). Rather, it signifies “the rudimentary momentary occasions of Consciousness by which the sense datum is experienced in its bare immediacy and simplicity prior to all identificatory cognitive operations” (Bodhi, 1999, 123)<sup>22</sup>. So at mm 05, just as the phone holder next comes to know who the call is from, one of the six senses can next be said to have identified itself as the most relevant dance partner for the incoming stimulus visitor, when the rest of the ‘uninvited’ and ‘disappointed’ senses sit back, settling down for a next chance. In other words, the sense relevant to the incoming stimulus now comes to own it up. So, e.g., if it is a sound that is the stimulus, the ear-Consciousness ‘steps up’, cognizing (*parijānana*)<sup>23</sup> that the stimulus is in its domain (05).

Stimulus cognized, the particular sense domain, namely the ear as in our example, now ‘receives’ (*sampañicchana*) (06) the message, acknowledging receipt of the call with a ‘hello’, making the phone holder the ‘receiver’<sup>24</sup>.

As shown in the Figure, behind mm 04 to 06 is still *Mano*, but this time with a slightly different function – as ‘specific sense-door minder’. While the activity of minding remains the same, *Mano* as the sole ‘actor’ is to be distinguished from the earlier mm when it has its ‘assistants’, namely, the six senses. This *solitaire* function of *Mano* as the collective ‘**Specific Sense-door keeper**’, then, needs to be distinguished from *Mano* the Initial Sensor cum Collective Sense-Door Keeper experiencing (initial) ‘vibration’ and ‘cutting off itself’ (which we shall come to).

### 2.2.1.3 *Mano* as Mind-Sense-Door Keeper

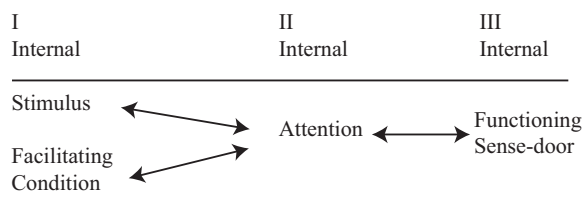
To understand the third sense of the term *Mano* as ‘**Mind-Sense-Door Keeper**’, we make a distinction between the five physical senses and the mind-sense, this with two diagrams, the first in relation to the five physical senses:



**Fig. 3: Conditions for Activation of the Five Physical Sense-doors in relation to Mindbody along an Internal-External Continuum**

As in this figure, the process ‘begins’ with a random stimulus (Col. I), say, a flower, that is *external* to a mindbody, i.e., out in nature, impinging on a functioning sense-door (Col. III) that is *internal* to the mindbody, as e.g., the eye. However, while the eye is ‘internal’ to the extent that it is part of the mindbody, it is still ‘external’ to the extent that it is a visible, physical part of the mindbody exposed to the outside world of which the flower is a component. ‘Attention’ (Col II), by contrast is exclusively ‘internal’ to the mindbody. There is no external manifestation of it, unlike the eye. The ‘facilitating condition’ (Col. I) (light), like the flower itself, again is external. Of course, the internal and the external dimensions work hand in glove with each other, as captured by the bidirectional arrows.

The characterization in Figure 3, however, applies only to the five physical senses. When it comes to the mind-sense, as shown below, we get a slightly different picture:



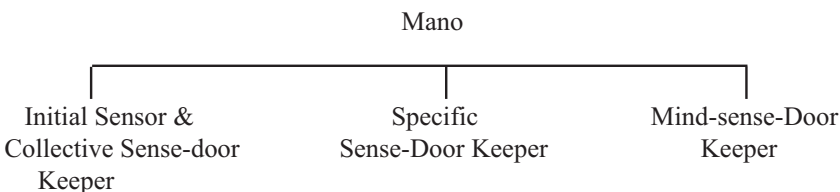
**Fig. 4: Conditions for Activation of the Mind Sense-door in relation to Mindbody**

As contrasted with Figure 3, when it comes to the mind-sense, the difference between external and internal vanishes. The stimulus is no longer external, but internal, just as the sense door and the facilitating conditions are, too. The stimulus is internal since it is something created in the mind or already stored in the consciousness - seen (*diṭṭha*), heard (*śuta*) or other (*muta*), from a past experience during one’s life time, recently or in the long past. (See later for an elaboration.)

But relating to all six senses, then, is *Mano* the ‘Mind-Sense-Door Keeper’, to be distinguished from both *Mano* the generic ‘Initial Sensor cum Collective Sense-Door Keeper’ as well as *Mano* the ‘Specific Sense-door keeper’.

2.2.1.4 Overview

We now show the triple functions of *Mano* in the following diagram:



**Fig. 5: The Triple Functions of *Mano***

Figure 5 shows that there are *three* functions that fit the label ‘Mano’. If ‘Initial Sensor & Collective Sense-door Keeper’ refers to *Manoviññāṇa* at the back of itself and the other five senses, ‘Specific Sense-Door Keeper’ refers to any one of the five physical senses that comes to be activated upon recognizing the stimulus to be within its terrain. ‘Mind- Sense-Door Keeper’ refers again to *Manoviññāṇa*, this time as the individual mind-sense in addition to the five physical senses. They, however, can all be said to relate to the overall function of *receiving*, if also welcoming,

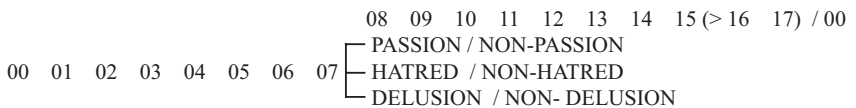


stimuli, a task that takes place every nanosecond throughout life through the six senses. It may be noted that Mano here needs to be seen as being ‘in the family of’ *Viññāṇa*, given that each sense, as seen, carries the ‘surname’ *Viññāṇa* - *cakkhuvīññāṇa*, *sotavīññāṇa*, *ghānavīññāṇa*, *jivhāvīññāṇa*, *kāyavīññāṇa* and *manovīññāṇa*. It may be thought of as an assistant to *Viññāṇa*, though not *Viññāṇa* itself, as noted.

### 2.2.2 Citta’s Trifold Swift Run

To continue the phone example to understand **Citta**, receiver picked up and kept to the ear, the receiving ear-sense now comes to know who the call is from, and listens to see what the call is all about, the language spoken, the intonation and the accent of the speaker, location of the caller, relationship if any, and so on. This can be thought of as an interrogation of someone taken into custody by authorities for questioning. This mindmoment (mm 07) thus comes to be designated ‘Investigating’ mind (*santīraṇa*).

Interrogation over, now is made a ‘determination’ (*votthapana*) (08). But this is no ordinary, or mere impersonal and objective determination. It may begin as an objective one, such as, e.g., ‘Oh, it’s mom calling’. But ‘mom’ entails a deeper psychological imprint, a whole panorama of emotions, depending on the relationship – love, comfort, discomfort, anger or even perhaps hate if the relationship has been sour, or ignorance of all her real strengths or a willing suspension of any knowledge of her weaknesses, and so on. Whatever it is, they all fall under one or more of three types of mindsets, technically, Blemish Roots (*akusala mūla*): ‘Passion’ (*rāga*)<sup>25</sup> or ‘hatred’ (*dosa*) or ‘delusion’ or ‘ignorance’ (*moha*)<sup>26</sup>, or their opposites, as in the following diagram:



**Fig. 6: Alternate Mindsets Impacting on Determination at Mindmoment 08 in the 17 Mindmoment Process**

Here we can clearly see that the mind *makes a judgment call* on the incoming stimulus. Judgment call made, Citta now makes sure, as in Figure 1, that the stimulus is taken on a ‘swift run’ or ‘impulsion’ (*javana*), as if to allow the mind to get a full cognitive sense of what is entailed in the stimulus, this taking seven whole mindmoments (09-15), in contrast to

the single moment taken by each mental activity up to now. This is as if savouring the ‘taste’ of the new mind stimulant, with a sugar-coating of one or more of ‘passion/non-passion’, ‘hatred/non-hatred’ and/or ‘delusion/non-delusion’.

It was noted that the process of a stimulus working its way was taken over by Citta at mm 07 for investigation, taking another mindmoment for determination. So we have now seen its hand in 09-15. Thus in Figure 1 we show Citta as being behind mm 07 to 15, the listing of *Citta* below *Mano* at mm 06 and *Viññāṇa* below Citta at mm 15 indicative of transitional stages.

### 2.2.3 Viññāṇa as CEO (Chief Executive Officer)

We began the analysis of the 17 mindmoment process with mm 04, promising to return to mm 00-03. So we now discuss those initial mindmoments.

The process begins with the Life-Continuum Consciousness (LCC) [00] in an existing mindbody<sup>27</sup>, indicative of continued living, assigning a role for *Viññāṇa* as shown below mm 01-02 in Fig. 2. As the LCC comes to be impinged upon [01] by a stimulus, it comes to be called a ‘past-LCC’, given that the beginning LCC is now history. This impinging may be understood as someone (standing for stimulus) pressing the doorbell. Now LCC comes to be physically disturbed, creating a *vibration*, literally ‘shaking up the LCC’ (*bhavangacalana*) [02], as e.g., what you would feel on the cell phone in your hand when a call comes in (with apologies here for changing metaphors, in order to make it clearer). But to feel that vibration, there first had to be the cell phone. Likewise, there had to be you (= past LCC), in the form of the hand and the sense of touch holding the phone<sup>28</sup>.

Following immediately upon vibration would be ‘arrest’ [03], literally ‘cutting off of LCC’ (*bhavangupaccheda*), since the ongoing Life-Continuum Consciousness has been, if only momentarily, ‘broken’. What this means is that the ongoing mind gives way to the visitor when the existing flow of Consciousness is momentarily cut off (Bodhi, 1999, 123). This is just as in picking up the cell-phone, when all other actions momentarily cease and desist to allow full attention to picking up the phone and keeping it to the ear. We have seen how next (mm 04), *Mano* takes over.

This initial role in the 17 mindmoment process can be seen as an *executive function*, since it initiates the process, handing it over to *Mano* and *Citta* to work out the details.

If that is the initial role of *Viññāṇa*, we see it in a similar executive function at the end of the process, too. The visitor stimulus, past the embarrassment and the hassle of interrogation, and happy to be out of the hands of the judgmental, choosy and grumpy Citta, receives red carpet treatment when it comes to be ‘registered’ (mm16-17) (think of a hotel guest), soon finding a comfy home in *Viññāṇa*. Once through, the process of Registering, taking two mm, the stimulus ends up being deposited into, and coming to be, part of LCC with which the 17 mindmoment process began<sup>29</sup>. So this then may be seen as another executive function of *Viññāṇa*.

So we see *Viññāṇa* as both initiating and concluding the process, rendering *Viññāṇa* the Chief Executive Officer, i.e., E-mind with clout, responsible for the total 17 mindmoment process, even though it is the office staff (Mano and Citta) that handle the details. The executive function of *Viññāṇa* can seem to be given legitimacy from the fact that Mano carries it as its ‘surname’ (*cakkhuvīññāṇa* to *manovīññāṇa* as above), suggestive of the subsidiary role of *Mano* vis-à-vis *Viññāṇa*.

## 2.2.4 Summing Up

We have now seen how *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* come to collaborate to ensure that an innocent little stimulus, somewhere out there in nature, like a flower or sound, eventually comes to be you!<sup>30</sup> Alright, part of you, in relation to one or more of the six senses. Says the Buddha, ‘It is in this fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I proclaim the world’ (*api cāhaṃ ... imasmiṃ yeva byāmamatte kalebare sasaññimhi samanake lokaṃ paññāpemi...* (SN i.62.; AN.ii.47f). If, e.g., it is a Kamakura Buddha figure that you have just seen, it now comes to be part of your perception, and, Consciousness, when prior to visiting the site in Japan, it was not part of your perceptual world. Similarly with a new song, a taste, smell, etc., or a creative thought, or indeed the information you have just been through in these pages.

Following upon ‘registration’ in the 17 mindmoment process, any given stimulus comes to be stored away under the relevant sense-Consciousness. The categories, as in the texts, are as below:

1	Visual-Consciousness	‘Seen’	<i>diṭṭha</i>
2	Aural-Consciousness	‘Heard’	<i>suta</i>
3	Nasal-Consciousness	‘Smelled’	<i>muta</i>
4	Lingual-Consciousness	‘Tasted’	<i>muta</i>
5	Corporeal-Consciousness	‘Touched’	<i>muta</i>
6	Mental-Consciousness	‘Thought’, ‘Created’.	<i>muta</i>

**Fig. 7: Stimulus Data Stored under Each Sense-Consciousness**

While the *diṭṭha* ‘seen’ and *suta* ‘heard’ in the Figure are clear, ‘*muta*’ can be seen to cover the other four - ‘smelled through the nose, tasted through the tongue, felt through touch and known through mind (*ghānena ghāyitaṃ, jivhāya sāyitaṃ, kāyewan phuṭṭhaṃ, and viññātaṃ manasā*)’ (PED). We find the last item, ‘known through mind’, however, not comprehensive enough to capture the functioning of the mind-sense. The addition of ‘imagined’ in PED is helpful, but doesn’t seem to capture the important concept of *creativity*, as any number of meditators, academics and artistes – artists, musicians, dancers and novelists, etc., would vouch for. Creativity is not so much imagination, but something that appears on the mind’s screen when your mind is at rest, doing nothing in fact in particular. If ‘known’ reflects cognitive associations, ‘imagined’ to some extent, and ‘creativity’ to a fuller extent adds the affective. What we have here, then, is cognitive *Mano* (see above) joining hands with affective *Citta*. While we are not averse to taking the labels in the classical sense as covering ‘action (perception) in the 6 senses’ (PED, under ‘*muta*’), we take the liberty to understand them as labels for stimuli *repositories*.

Richer with the latest addition to its stock<sup>31</sup>, LCC (*bhavanga*) (00) now comes to experience the next stimulus alert, the process starting all over again.

Of course, the ‘activity’ entailed in each and every mindmoment needs to be understood simply as a process, with no ‘doer’ behind it, the same way a given individual’s thoughts and actions are a mere process, confirming the reality of ‘knowing without a knower’, ‘thinking without a thinker’ or ‘doing without a doer’, etc., speaking to the concept of ‘asoulity’ (*anattā*)<sup>32</sup>. That is to say, the process takes place “in accordance with the regular order of Consciousness.” (*cittaniyāma*) (Bodhi, 1999, 159)<sup>33</sup>.

### 2.3 Triune Mind as Mind-Simplex: R-Mind, J-Mind and E-Mind

Drawing upon the preceding discussion, then, we may affirm the functions of mm 02 to 17 as follows (01 relating to past LCC), identifying each of

*Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* by role and function:

TYPE OF MIND	<i>Mano</i>	<i>Citta</i>	<i>Viññāṇa</i>
CHARACTER- IZATION	R-Mind: Receiving Mind	J-Mind: Judging Mind	E-Mind: Executive Mind

**Fig. 8: Characterization of the Triune Mind in terms of Function**

From the above, it may be confirmed that each of the three minds, *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa*, has a mind of its own! Put differently, each has its function cut out for them. Mm 00 to 03 belonging to the existing Stream of Consciousness (*bhavanga*), what begins at 04 and ends in 06 entails a *receiving* function. In its initial, and solitary ‘sensory’ function, it receives a stimulus, be it in the form of the five external senses or the mind sense by itself. Thus we may label *Mano* in English the **Receiving Mind (R-Mind)** hereafter). It can be said to have a ‘cool cucumber’, i.e., emotion-free, *cognitive* function, putting this phase in the rightful domain of *Mano* as in Figure 2. *Mano* is from the stem *man-* ‘to think’ + -o ‘nominal sg. masc.’ It “represents the intellectual functioning of Consciousness”, “the rational faculty of man” (PED), a left brain cognitive activity. By contrast to *Citta* (see next), *Mano* is Ms / Mr Modern! Face book, twitter, i-PAD, e-Reader, latest novel, latest screen idol, latest hit song, latest disaster, latest murder, latest best/worst friend, latest thought, etc., are all home to it. They are the stimuli that makes *Mano* come alive. And the latest to appear on the scene of human drama, through any of the doors, is what it takes in. So *Mano* is the face of modernity. It is, again, the cool cucumber, with no emotions attached, just receiving and passing along to *Citta*, in the affective domain (as seen).

Mm 07 to 15 were assigned to *Citta* above, noting how a judgment is made at 07-08, before being sent packing on the swift run. This is a critical juncture in the Stream of Consciousness process since it entails an element of choice, i.e., ‘intent’ (*cetanā*). Whatever the decision – like, dislike or other, based in Passion, Anger and /or Delusion to whatever level, it results in *kamma*, the Buddha’s words being ‘Intent, I say, is *kamma*’ (*cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi*) (AN 6.63). There is also a linguistic basis for associating *cetanā* with *Citta*; they, along with *cinteti*, share a common root *cit-* (*cet-* abstr.) (PED), meaning ‘think’. Unlike the cognitive function entailed in mm 02 to 06, Investigation (07) and Determination (08) entails an affective, “emotional and conative side .. more than its ... rational side” (Karunadasa, 2010: 142). *Citta* literally

means ‘painting’ (as in its meaning 1 in PED), as a Noun, and ‘variegated, beautiful, tasty, sweet, spiced’, etc. as Adj. (PED), again suggesting emotion, and preference, putting it squarely in the *affective* domain, a right brain activity, in contrast to *Mano*, of the left brain hemisphere. Thus we may call it the **Judging Mind (J-Mind)**.

*Viññāṇa*, present at the first three mindmoments, was also assigned the role of registering the stimulus at the end, and storing it in the ongoing Consciousness. Both ‘keeping an eye’ on potential stimuli, registering them following 17 mindmoment process and storing are, of course, executive functions. To that extent, we label it the **Executive-Mind (E-Mind)**.

In our analysis, then, we have seen each of *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* having distinctive functions. To capture this idea of simplicity, we call each of them as well as the three together a **M\_Simplex**. It is a ‘simplex’ in that each has a distinctive function. However, ‘simplex’ is not to be taken as meaning ‘simple’, the concept of ‘simplex’ borrowed from Linguistics, where a given single language, or a dialect thereof, is called an L-simplex<sup>34</sup>. Any given dialect or language is complex by its very nature, taking its phonemic, morphemic, syntagmemic and sememic structures (see Hockett, 1958, ch. 38 for a detailed characterization). Each Mind likewise is as complex as the other. And, of course, again as in language, there is constant change and growth in relation to each of the constituents of the Triune Mind<sup>35</sup>.

Having understood *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa*, listing it again in alpha order, we bundle them up into a ‘**Triune Mind**’, literally, ‘3 in 1 mind’.

## 2.4 Triune Mind as Mind-Complex

We have noted that *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* in the context of the 17 mindmoment process as being of a ‘simplex’ nature. However, this is to speak only relatively. For we have already seen each of them having not only more than one function but also being interrelated with the other two.

### 2.4.1 Viññāṇa

To explore the matter further, this time we begin with *Viññāṇa*, for reasons that will become clear. We have seen it in an Executive function, sensing initially, registering and storing, in the context of a single and all six individual senses. Here then we see *Viññāṇa* in its ‘segmental’<sup>36</sup>, i.e., ‘compartmentalized’ or ‘specialization’ function, each of the six resulting from the presence of the four conditions - stimulus, working eye, light and attention, to take the example of Visual-Consciousness. Each of the sense-*Viññāṇas* is thus a ‘lord’ unto itself, with full control of what will

be ‘allowed’ to be stored in its psychological repository.

However, If the sensory domain of an incoming stimulus has already been identified at mm 04 (sense-adverting), registering it at the end of the process additionally means ‘*identifying*’ the repository to which it should be directed for storage. Once stored, the given repository has to be ‘maintained’ as well. Another function of *Viññāṇa*, in relation to the 17 mindmoment process, thus comes to be ‘*maintenance*’ of the six-sense repositories in the total the mindbody. This in turn calls for ‘*discrimination*’, i.e., distinguishing. Drawing upon Linguistics, we may understand the concept in the context of a ‘minimal pair’. In the pair ‘tin’ and ‘din’ or ‘bit’ and ‘bid’, /t/ and /d/, in the initial and the final positions respectively, are Retroflex stops. What distinguishes /t/ from /d/ is that while the former is ‘voiceless’, the latter is ‘voiced’<sup>37</sup>. This distinction is called ‘discrimination’. Thus, keeping an item in one sense area distinguished from another within the same area, but also from all others, thus suggests ‘discrimination’. This, then, is another critical function of *Viññāṇa*.

The term *Viññāṇa* itself, in fact, can be seen to speak to it. It is made up of < vi[ñ] + ñāṇa < ñā + ṇa, meaning ‘state’ of ‘knowing’ <[ñā-], with ṇa being a nominalizing suffix, as in *gamana* ‘state of going’ or ‘movement’, *pahāṇa* ‘abandoning’ (PED)<sup>38</sup>. *Vi-* literally means ‘separation’, as e.g., in *vigata* ‘gone away’, *vicakka* ‘without wheels’, meaning ‘separated from wheels’ (PED). Separating wheels from the cart, e.g., calls for discriminating between the wheels and the cart. This indeed is how *Viññāṇa* is defined in the Canon: “One discriminates (by means of it), therefore it is called knowledge” (*vijānātī ti ... tasmā viññāṇan ti vuccati*) (MN I.292) (as translated in Jayatilleke, 1980, 435). So *Viññāṇa*, then, literally comes to mean ‘the state of knowledge of separation’. But in the context of a sense, it can be interpreted to mean ‘the mind that discriminates (as between)’. In this sense, then, *Viññāṇa* may be translated as ‘the state of discriminative knowing’. That would give *Viññāṇa* the figurative meaning of ‘the brain behind’.

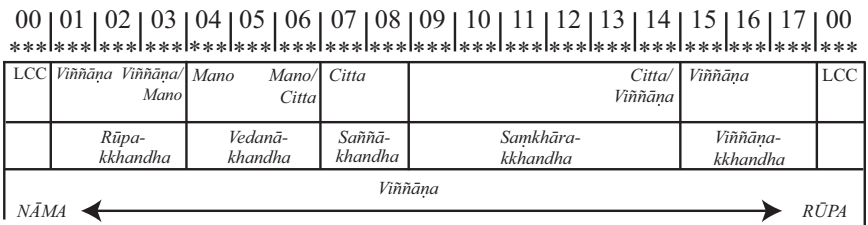
But putting the emphasis on the *process*, as opposed to a ‘doer behind’, *Viññāṇa* may “justly [be] conceived more as ‘minding’ than ‘mind’” (PED). Thus we may translate it simply as ‘discriminative knowing’. This means, then, that once a stimulus is stored following the 17 mindmoment process, it has to be discriminated from everything else that is already there in the given sense Consciousness repository. Once stored, it has to be continuously distinguished from the stored items in the other senses, too, keeping them distinguished from each other. It is thus that we see each of eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body- and mind-*Viññāṇa* in the function of ‘executive minding’.



In this sense, then, *Viññāṇa* can be understood as the ‘Manager’ of knowledge and information, an administrative function, indeed as CEO. This again confirms the earlier identification of it as E-Mind in the context of the 17 mindmoment process.

If *Viññāṇa* was characterized earlier as a component of M-simplex, entailing the addition of an incoming stimulus into the relevant sense repository, we have now seen how that storage process entails more, and continuing, complex tasks - identifying, maintaining and discriminating.

But the 17 mindmoment process, from stimulus to Consciousness, in this Abhidhamma analysis may also be seen, as captured in the Figure below (middle), as being related to the Sutta analysis of five-fold ‘aggregate’ (*khandha*) process - form, feeling, perception, force and Consciousness (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāra, viññāṇa*) (SN III 47):



**Fig. 9: Functional Analysis of the 17 Mindmoments in Abhidhamma in Relation to the Five Aggregates in Sutta**

This, then, begins to show the additional complexity of *Viññāṇa*. It is shown as supporting all of *Mano*, *Citta* and sense-related *Viññāṇa*, i.e., at all the phases of the Stream of Consciousness process (3<sup>rd</sup> Row from bottom). While, e.g., each of the triple functions of *Mano* (as above) has its own function, each of them also can be said to be under the jurisdiction of, or in communication with, *Viññāṇa*, now in the sense of ‘Consciousness aggregate’ (*viññāṇakkhandha*), the culmination of the process beginning with the Aggregate *rūpa* ‘form’, going past the Aggregates *vedanā* ‘feeling’, *saññā* ‘perception’ and *saṃkhāra* ‘forces’ (as in the Figure), understanding each of them to be with ‘grasping’ (*upādāna*).

In a similar vein, *Viññāṇa* as Aggregate provides the ground support for the swift run of *Citta*, when nothing special, in fact, is happening except carrying the information. It similarly supports, as noted, the individual sense-*Viññāṇa* at registration and storage. So it can be seen to provide the ‘ground’ for the ‘figure’ of each and all of *Citta*, *Mano* and sense-*Viññāṇa*. That is to say that had it not been for the existence



of *Viññāṇa* as Aggregate, the three of them would not have come to be. *Viññāṇa* as Aggregate, then, is the very foundation for the total operation – recipient, sustainer, discriminator, supervisor.

Thus we see *Viññāṇa*, the *nāma* dimension of *nāmarūpa* (1<sup>st</sup> Row), as constituting the psychological dimension of ongoing life (LCC) that supports every single activity of the mindbody. That is to say that as the distinct mindmoments continue to be handled by the different aspects of the mind (*nāma*), the mindbody supports them by continuing to live. Put another way, it retains life (*āyu*) and heat (*usmā*), maintaining body temperature, homeostasis, Autonomous Nervous System, *Autonomous Spiritual System* (see later for a characterization), etc. That it is *Viññāṇa* that is in this role, and not *Mano* or *Citta*, can be seen from the fact that the culmination of the Aggregate series – form, sensation, perception and forces (*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāra*), is labelled *viññāṇakkhandha*, and not *\*mano-khandha* or *\*cittakkhandha*<sup>39</sup>. What this suggests is that it is *Viññāṇa* that applies to the whole body.

*Viññāṇa* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Row is to indicate that the entire Mindbody, taken as the Five Aggregates, is supported by the total psychological dimension. This also reminds us, lest we forget, that the 17 mindmoment process is not a disembodied, abstract Abhidhammic description of reality, but an embodied living reality. In turn, *Viññāṇa* itself is shown as being supported by the joint operation of ‘name’ (*nāma*) and ‘form’ (*rūpa*) as in the bottom Row.

We may capture the complexity of *Viññāṇa*, in terms of its functions, as both Sense-*Viññāṇa* and *Viññāṇa* Aggregate, under the label ***Viññāṇa-complex***, allowing it membership in the Mind-Complex club.

## 2.4.2 Citta

To take a look at ***Citta*** now, it was noted that in the 17 mindmoment process, its primary function was to pick and choose, and make a judgment call. But it can be seen to be entailed in other functions, too. *Citta*, as noted, literally means ‘painting’ as a noun, and ‘bright’, ‘colourful’ etc. as an adjective, in its meaning 1 (PED). We find this sense in terms such as *sucitta* (prefix *su-* literally meaning ‘well’) which means ‘gaily coloured’, and even ‘gaily dressed’, or *Cittakāra*, literally ‘doer (*kāra*) of painting’, meaning ‘painter’, ‘decorator’. “It may therefore be rendered by intention, impulse, design, mood, disposition, state of mind, reaction to impressions” (PED). *Citta* is also equated, and associated with, ‘heart’ (*hadaya*)<sup>40</sup>.

Meditation perhaps well affirms this quality control nature of *Citta*. The standard line runs, ‘And so, with *Citta* concentrated, purified and cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities....’<sup>41</sup> (*so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anangaṇe vigatūpakkilese...*) (DN.1.76, # 83).

The term translated as ‘concentrated’ is *samāhite*, the past participle from *saṃ + ā + dhā* literally, ‘together-towards-placed’, or idiomatically, ‘placed on an even keel’ (or as in PED ‘self-collected’). The need to put it together suggests that *Citta* is of the nature of being apart, jumping around, i.e., in popular jargon, a ‘monkey mind’. This is hardly surprising, for as it keeps receiving stimuli every mindmoment of its waking hours, 365/24<sup>42</sup>, in relation to the six senses, and in sleep if only in relation to the mind-sense, it has to make decisions, jumping from between and among Passion, Hatred and Delusion, and in its various shades, from strong to weak. Additionally, the stimuli, too, as noted, come at different strengths. So responding to them calls for another judgment call. Thus it is that in meditation, it needs to be concentrated, and calmed.

The words “...purified and cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities” in the line clearly indicates the literally ‘tainted’, ‘painted’ and ‘coloured’ nature of *Citta* of a sentient being. It is simply impure, indicative of the assured stamp of Passion, Hatred and Ignorance as in Figure 6, ‘freed of passion’ (*vītarāga*), ‘freed of hatred’ (*vītadosa*) and ‘freed of delusion’ (*vītamoha*) being characteristics of an Arahant (PED, under *vīta*)).

*Citta*, then here is not the active actor as in the context of judging in the 17 mindmoment process. Rather it is the passive actor, subjected to the orders of another dimension of mind (of which we shall come to presently). Though no longer in charge, wonderful things happen:

... with mind [*citte*] concentrated, purified and cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities, malleable, workable, established, and having gained imperturbability, [the meditator] directs and inclines his mind [*Cittam*] towards knowing and seeing [*ñāṇadassanāya*]. .. And he knows ‘This my body is material made’ [*kāyo rūpī cātumahābhūṭiko*], made up of the four elements, born of mother and father, fed on rice and gruel, impermanent, liable to be injured and abraded, broken and destroyed, and this is my Consciousness [*Viññāṇam*] which is bound to it and dependent on it [*ettha sitaṃ ettha paṭibaddhan’ti.*].” (Walshe tr., 1987, 1995, 104) (DN 1.76, # 83).

Now, under the ‘orders’ of this other mind, it comes to calm itself, leading to another ‘activity’ - inclining itself, now recapturing some of its

autonomy towards self-control, and ‘knowing’ and ‘seeing’, cleansed of the layers and layers of stain. That is to say that it even comes to rubbing shoulders with its senior partner *Viññāṇa*, which as noted, is literally related to the function of knowing. The calming entailed itself next becomes the first step towards a self-conversion – overcoming Delusion, if also Hatred and Passion as a by-product.

*Citta* is also associated with volition (*cetanā*), the only one in the 17 mindmoment process, and thus with a moral dimension, with a breakdown into wholesome and unwholesome (*kusala / akusala*).

Finally, in the Satipatthāna sutta, there are four ‘contemplations’ (*anupassanā*) the meditator engages on – body (*kāyānupassanā*), feelings (*vedānānupassanā*), *Citta* (*cittānupassanā*) and Dhamma (*dhammānupassanā*). It may have been noted that the term denoting ‘mind’ here is *citta*, and neither *viññāṇa* nor *mano*. And the details to be watched relate to passion, hatred and ignorance. This then suggests the critical role of *Citta* in the practice of meditation. And given that *Nibbāna* is characterized as ‘jettisoning of passion’ (*rāgakkhaya*) and ‘jettisoning of hatred’ (*dosakkhaya*), it is clear how it is also associated with liberation.

So we can see several dimensions and functions of *Citta*, both internal to itself as well as in relation to an external stimulus, allowing it membership in the Mind-Complex club, also earning the label **Citta-complex**.

### 2.4.3 Mano

When it comes to *Mano*, we have already seen its triple functions: collective sense-door manager, specific sense-manager and individual mind-sense, in the context of the 17 mindmoment process. In its function as ‘collective sense-door manager’, we first encounter it very close to the beginning, at mm 04. If this is with eyes to the inside, still working with the incoming stimulus, first as one of six senses adverting, and then running with it, now it is as *Manoviññāṇa*.

*Mano* is also understood in the literature as the psychological counterpart, as e.g., in the *Dhammapada* lines,

Mind is of the nature of forerunning,  
Mind is seniormost, [everything] mindbased.  
If with a mind bad / good ... one speaks or acts ....

If *Mano* as ‘seniormost’ suggests an executive function, equating it with *Viññāṇa*, it can be also said to get physical – ‘speaking’ and ‘acting’, and indeed making choices.

We thus see the complexity of *Mano*, allowing it a badge of honour in the Mind-Complex club<sup>43</sup>, and the label **Mano-Complex**.

#### 2.4.4 Interrelationality

We have now seen each of *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* as being an M-Complex. *Interrelationality* within the Triune Mind is another characteristic that renders them so. To understand this first in relation to *Mano*, we begin by revisiting the 17 mindmoment process.

Four conditions were noted for a stimulus to end up as a ‘perception’ in the mindbody: stimulus, working sense, facilitating condition and attention. Of these, a ‘*stimulus*’ clearly comes to be a condition only in the presence of a ‘*working sense*’. To put it in the classical formula of conditionality, if A, then B; absent A, then absent B, as in the classical line,

When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases (SN 12:41)<sup>44</sup>.

But this conditionality is not only linear, but also reciprocal. That is to say that both stimulus and sense have to be present in relation to each other for the 17 mindmoment process to begin. It can be said to be like the relationship between the bee and the flower. While each of them may exist in its sweet isolation, they both come to be active in the presence of each other. That is to say, when a bee flies by a flower, it comes to be attracted to it. But this attraction is also a function of the flower sending out its fragrance, and its colour<sup>45</sup>.

When it comes to the ‘*facilitating condition*’, as e.g., ‘light’ in the context of seeing. Still, no amount of light would make the eye ‘see’ a flower, if there were to be no flower! Even if there were to be a flower and light, there would result no Visual Consciousness unless there were also to be a working eye. So again what we see is a relationality, a reciprocity.

In this example, both flower and light are external to the mindbody. But the working sense is both internal and external. It is internal in the sense of being part of the mindbody, but external to the extent that it functions only in relation to an external condition. Its internality, of course, suggests the connectivity of the sense to the neuronal system of the mindbody, to put it in Western Scientific terms. It is the optic nerve that carries

the image that has fallen on the retina to the brain that produces a perception. And what is behind is, as seen in the context of the 17 mindmoment process, *Mano* the Sensor.

When it comes to ‘*attention*’, the fourth condition, it is not only totally internal, but also non-physical. It is a function of both *Mano* the Sensor, and, if in its domain, Mind the sense, and if any other domain, Eye the Sense, Ear the Sense, etc. But Sensor or Sense, behind them is *Viññāṇa*. Interrelationality in relation to *Citta* can be seen at the point of judgment where it comes to be in communication with *Mano*. Affectively it works within itself to determine with which of the Triple Blemishes, the incoming stimulus would be a best fit - passion, hatred or delusion? Or indeed a combination of them. Cognitively, it has to check with the six *Viññāṇa* repositories - the seen, heard, smelled, etc., to see which of them would have the best fit template for the incoming image. If it is a Buddha figure, e.g., , it would be to the Visual-*Viññāṇa* that it would turn to. Likewise Aural to Mental.

But for this to happen, the given sense has to allow *Citta* to ‘open’ its door – in a sort of a facilitative condition. Door opened, now attention has to be paid to the details - shape, height, features, ‘state of health’ (meaning solid or decaying, etc.). Image identified, now a cognitive picture emerges.

As for interrelationality in relation to *Viññāṇa*, we find it in the link in the Conditioned Co-origination Principle<sup>46</sup> (‘Con-Coor Principle’ hereafter) ‘conditioned by *viññāṇa* is mindbody, conditioned by mindbody is *viññāṇa* (*viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ; nāmarūpapaccayā viññāṇaṃ*) (DN 14.11). Thus it is actually the dance partner of the body in the totality of mindbody. *Viññāṇa* is then not just in a single location of the body, but in the total body, giving us the Buddha’s *Pancorporeal theory of Consciousness*, being an advance on Ven. Buddhaghosa’s (5<sup>th</sup> c.) *Cardiac theory* and the *Encephalic theory* of Western Science<sup>47</sup>.

If *Viññāṇa* is sustainer (as above), it may be noted that *Viññāṇa* is also one of four nutriments (*viññāṇāhāra*) for the total mindbody, showing us another example of interrelationality. In relation to the 17 mindmoment process, *Viññāṇa* comes to be called ‘life’ (or ‘Life-Continuum Consciousness’ (LCC)), or *Viññāṇasota*, literally ‘Stream of Consciousness’, this again showing the relational role of *Viññāṇa*.

Now while each of *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa* thus has its own individual role (M-Simplex), they can be said to be in a necessary relationship with each other, meaning that each mind would come to be dysfunctional without one or both of the other. They are necessarily interconnected, **rendering the Triune Mind itself an M-Complex.**

2.5 Further Exploration of Triune Mind as M-Complex

Here, then, is a Chart that seeks to capture the complexity of the Triune Mind more comprehensively:

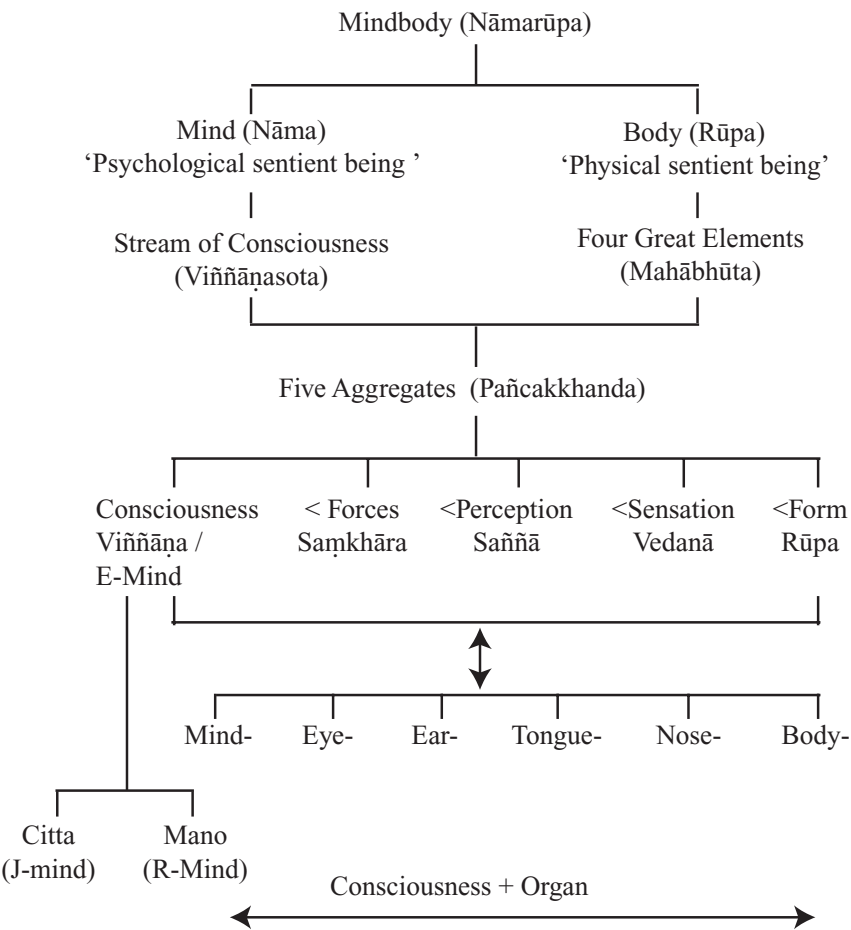


Fig. 10: Triune Mind as M-Complex

In this figure, the Mindbody (top R(ow)) of a sentient being branches off to Mind - the Psychological sentient being, and to Body - the Physical sentient being (R 2). While the former comes to be called (reading down) the Stream of Consciousness, the latter comes to be made up of the Four Great Elements – water, heat, air, earth. The twosome then comes to be brought back into a whole again in terms of the Five Aggregates - ‘Form’

to ‘Consciousness’ (*Rūpa* to *Viññāṇa*), noting that it is to be read from *right to left* (as shown with the reverse wedge). It may be noted that now the five are more reflective of the *process* of being a sentient being: contact of a stimulus with the Body (Form) Aggregate resulting in a Sensation Aggregate and Perception Aggregate, the energy Force Aggregate generated ending up as Consciousness Aggregate (*viññāṇakkhandha*). It may be noted as well how *Viññāṇa*, too, is an ‘aggregate’, meaning complex in its structure-function.

At the next level below, we now move on to the six senses, the vertical two-way arrow indicating how they are co-emergent with the Body to Consciousness process. The senses are also shown as relating to both ‘Consciousness’, i.e., “internal sense bases” as in the Buddha’s words (above) as well as ‘Form’. While, of course, there is no debate about the physicality of the five physical senses, by definition, being of a physical nature, the mind is also taken here as being of a physical nature – *manindriya*<sup>48</sup> ‘mind-faculty’ (PED).

To the left of the mind-sense now finally are shown the Triune Mind as above – *Viññāṇa* as E-Mind, *Citta* as J-Mind and *Mano* as R-Mind. Once again we can see why *Viññāṇa* can justifiably claim to be the Executive Mind. First, it is the culmination of the Body through Sensation through Perception through Forces, and thus in league with the foundational characteristics of the mindbody.

Now it can be seen how the Triune Mind, each of its constituents taken individually or taken together, may truly be characterized, in their relationships with the other dimensions in the Figure, as an M-Complex.

Our characterization of the mind in terms of both distinct function – *Mano* as R-Mind, *Citta* as J-Mind and *Viññāṇa* as E-Mind (i.e. as M-Simplex) as well as M-Complex seems to find confirmation in a Teaching of the Buddha. In a simile, he talks about a ‘frontier city’ with six gates, each with a gatekeeper. Two ‘Swift messengers’ arriving at a gate, inquire “Where, good man, is the lord of the city?”. Told that he is sitting in the central square, they “deliver a message of reality (*yathābhūtaṃ vacanaṃ*) to the lord of the city, and leave ...” (SN 35.195).

Explaining the ‘six gates’, the Buddha compares them to the “six internal sense bases” (*cha dvārā’i kho, bhikkhu, channetaṃ ajjhakkānaṃ āyatanānaṃ adhivacanaṃ*). “The gate-keeper: this is a designation for mindfulness” (*dovāriko’i kho, bhikkhu, satiyā etaṃ adhivacanaṃ*). And the “swift pair of messengers: this is a designation for serenity and insight” (*sīghaṃ dūtayugaṇ’i kho, bhikkhu, samathavipassanānetāṃ adhivacanaṃ*). “The city”: this is a designation for this body consisting of the four great elements, originating from mother and father, built up of



boiled rice and gruel, subject to impermanence ... to breaking apart and dispersal". And "The Lord of the City: this is designation for Consciousness" (*nagarassāmī'ti kho, bhikkhu, viññāṇassetam adhivacanam*) (SN 35.198)<sup>49</sup>.

The six gates that correspond to the "six internal sense bases", of course, is 'Mano' (R-Mind) in its six faces – eye to mind, showing its presence at mm 04-05. The 'gatekeeper' that is 'mindfulness' we encounter at mm 06 when the incoming stimulus is 'received'. The messengers in the simile, serenity and insight, may not be 'judgmental' as is *Citta* the J-Mind, but entailed is a choice, i.e., volition. Successful meditation, e.g., is when 'Citta is on an even keel' (*citte samāhite*) (see above). The messengers now carry their 'message of reality', which by definition has to be understood as the fruit of a deliberation as between reality and unreality. Implicit in this process is 'judging'.

The messengers are interestingly characterized as 'swift messengers', reminding us of the *javana* 'swift run' (thank you, Ven, Bodhi, for the translation) at mm 09-15. And they 'deliver' a message, as indeed does *Citta*, carrying the message of choice – Passion/non-passion, Hatred/non-hatred, Delusion/non-delusion. Interestingly again, the messengers are said to 'leave' after delivering the message. Likewise, we find the relevant sense-*Viññāṇa* 'taking over' at mm 16, allowing *Citta* to leave. While this compartmentalized sense-*Viññāṇa* is a sub-set of *Viññāṇa* the 'Lord of the City', what is relevant is that it still falls within the rubric of *Viññāṇa* (as contrasted with *Citta* and *Mano*).

Finally, the city is the 'body', distinguished as it is from the 'Lord of the City'. But, of course, in the 'real world' of life that is the 17 mind-moment process, mind and body are in a reciprocal relationship, LCC, i.e., Life Continuum Consciousness, capturing this.

Clear from the Buddha's simile, then, is that while each of *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* has its distinct role, each qualifying as an M-Simplex, all players coming to work together, renders the Triune Mind of *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* an M-Complex<sup>50</sup>.

## 2.6 Closing the Doors With a Mayoralty Contest

*Viññāṇa*, we have seen above, is Lord Mayor for life! It is, however, not only in the context of a given single Stream of Consciousness, as in the 17 mindmoment process, but of the total mindbody. A Stream of Consciousness relates to incoming stimuli, from outside as in the case of the first five senses or inside in the case of mindsense. However, that is not all there is to life.



There are, e.g., the four Great Elements (*mahābhūta*) to be maintained, as are the processes of breathing, digesting, eliminating and indeed the equilibrium, physical or mental, that allows us to maintain our balance as we walk, sit or sleep. Then there are the multiple systems that keep us going: Autonomous Nervous System (ANS), Auto-immune System, Ambulatory System, Blood Circulatory System, etc.

And something not covered in Medicine or Science, Eastern or Western, as in the above listing, or in Buddhism itself formally, is what I would like to call the **Autonomous Spiritual System** (ASPS). In addition to our physical and physiological functions that come under ‘body’ or ‘form’ in mindbody, there is certainly the ethical dimension to our life. The skilled and unskilled (*kusala/akusala*) dimensions as well as the characteristics of Passion, Hatred and Delusion, along with their opposites, would be two of the components. Seeking to cultivate the skillful, and honing in the practice of meditation would easily fall under the ASPS. Then there are the Brahmavihāras – friendliness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity (*Mettā, Karuṇā, Muditā, Upekkhā*). Though perhaps practiced more in the breach on the part of the average human being, they are nevertheless part of sentience. The presence of an Autonomous Spiritual System in the mental domain of a sentient being finds some additional support in the fact that the term for ‘spiritual’ in Pali is *ajjhattika* (Buddhadatta, EPD, 1979), literally ‘internal’.

The presence of the multiplicity of functions as in Fig. 10, both in the mind and the body, can then be said to be what distinguishes a living body from a dead body. And of the three minds, what can be said to be directly responsible for these ‘life or death’ functions can be said to be *Viññāṇa*, that again making it Lord Mayor of the City of the Mindbody.

For life! But only!

If ‘but only!’ piqued your interest, let us look at another diagram:

I	II	III	IV
3.	Exit Citta	Relinking Citta; Relinking <i>Viññāṇa</i>	Citta / <i>Viññāṇa</i> / Mano
2.	00-17	00-17	00-17 < > 00-17
1.	<b>DEATH</b>	<b>(RE)BECOMING</b>	<b>POST-(RE)BECOME NEW LIFETIME</b>

**Fig. 11: Citta, *Viññāṇa* and Mano<sup>51</sup> in Death and Life**

In this Figure, Row 1 (at bottom) shows three stages relating to the life of a given human sentient being - Death, (Re)Becoming and the new

(Samsaric) Lifetime. Row 2 characterizes each of them in terms of the 17 mindmoment process. While mm 00-17 in Col. II represents the *last* mm in a sentient being's life, namely death<sup>52</sup>, in Col. III, it stands for the moment of 'Becoming', meaning conception. 00-17 < > 00-17 in Col. IV represents the given lifetime of the post-(Re)Become sentient being, from the first to the final mm following conception. The top Row, Col. IV, shows the presence of all three minds - *Viññāṇa*, *Citta* and *Mano* during the full new lifetime, noting the order here, for reasons that will become clear presently. In Col. II, while the mind at the point of Death is 'Exit Citta'<sup>53</sup> (*cuti citta*), the mind at the point of (Re)Becoming, or more cogently 'Relinking' (*paṭisandhi*) (Col. III), comes to have two labels – 'Relinking Citta' (*paṭisandhi citta*) and 'Relinking *Viññāṇa*' (*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*).

Up to now, our exploration has been in relation to a living human sentient being, getting a clear understanding of each of the constituents of the Triune Mind. But the differential roles of *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* (used here in their technical sense as per fn 51) begin to fall into even sharper focus in the contrastive context of life and death.

To begin with, let us note, as in Col. IV, that all three minds appear in a given Lifetime. By contrast, *only* *Citta* comes to characterize the mm of Death, namely 'Exit Citta' (*cuti citta*). We may understand it in this manner – that the doors come to be shut in preparation for the final event. The Ajanta Frescoes of India, Beethoven's Sonatas, the smell of roses, the tastes of Top Chef on TV cooking shows and the sensations of Shangri-la all continue to exist where they are or have always been, but not as sense stimuli *to a given sentient being*. *Mano* the foregoing (*pubbaṅgamā*)<sup>54</sup>, having advance access to the signs of merit-span and life-span depletion, begins to close shop, shutting down the doors of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. There is simply no more energy to go around responding to the stimuli! The siblings, namely the physical senses, caving in, the conditions of 'working sense' and 'attention' (needed for a stimulus to impact on the senses setting off the 17 mindmoment process) absent, the doors come to be shut. This then explains why *Mano* doesn't get counted in at the point of death.

But why not *Viññāṇa* at the point of death? What this seems to suggest is that the role of *Viññāṇa*, too, as with *Mano*, comes to end by the completion of the penultimate mm of a living sentient being. One reason is that its adjutants, namely, the six senses that looked for its foundational support, as in Figure 4, are no more looking for its services. And it also has been seen that the depleting life-span and merit-span are not looking for its foundational support either. While both the senses and the life-span can be understood as 'name' (*nāma*), i.e., the psychological, dimension of 'nameform' (*nāmrūpa*), they are equally physical. Eye-

Consciousness, e.g., incorporates a physical eye, as does consciousness in relation to ear, etc. The Con-Coor Principle shows the link ‘mindbody conditioned Viññāṇa’ in a reverse process of the ‘Viññāṇa conditioned mindbody’ (*nāmrūpapaccayā viññāṇa; viññāṇapaccayā nāmrūpa*). Thus, in the absence of a mindbody, so to speak, at the point of death, we can see Viññāṇa disappearing without a trace, getting off the ‘Avenue of the Mind’ (*cittavīthi*), leaving poor, or is it the proud, Citta hold the bag of the residual mind marbles.

There is also a Canonical base for the absence of Viññāṇa at the point of death. A sentient being, as noted, comes to be characterized in terms of a series of ‘Five Aggregates’ (*pañcakkhandha*) – Form, Feeling, Perception, Forces and Viññāṇa (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāra, viññāṇa*). While each of them may be taken as an individual characteristic of a particular dimension of the mindbody, it is clear that each of them is to be understood as being ‘conditioned’ (*paccayā*) (as captured in the reverse wedge in Fig 10). Of relevance here is how Viññāṇa comes to be conditioned by *saṃkhāra* (forces), as we can understand it from the example of the Buddha himself. While at the point of attaining Enlightenment, when life continues, Forces (*saṃkhāra*) only come to be ‘appeased’ (*upasama*), at *Parinibbāna*, when life ceases to exist, Forces come to cease completely<sup>55</sup>. In other words, ‘forces’ are what drive the engine of Viññāṇa. Absent the Forces, absent Viññāṇa.

It is for the reason that neither Viññāṇa nor Mano has a place at the gate of death that life comes to an end with Exit Citta. For otherwise, there will continue to be a sentient being, with a fully functioning Viññāṇa and Mano, even after the Exit mind does its final act of execution, namely exiting.

But with a new mindbody appearing, i.e., at relinking (*paṭisandhi*), we see a fresh and robust face of Viññāṇa showing up (*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) (III), all smiles, which speaks to the presence, as in the Figure, of both Citta and Viññāṇa at the point of (Re)becoming. It may be conjectured that a hierarchy of primacy exists here. That is to say that Citta appears first on the scene and then only (at mm 02) Viññāṇa beginning to play its role. After all, if Viññāṇa is a no show at the final mm of the life of a sentient being, how could it possibly be first on base at Becoming? Still there is no gainsaying the fact that Citta comes to be on first base first, for however a minimal fraction of a mindmoment, or as the condition for Viññāṇa to appear. Continuity in the life-cycle would demand that Citta be first in the new life, for, as we have seen above, it was the one carrying the baggage, drooling in Passion and Hatred, and drenched in Ignorance to boot from an earlier life. So it is nothing but fair, and logical, to allow it

the primacy it deserves. We had earlier enthroned Viññāṇa as Lord Mayor for Life. But, absent at both death and conception, it can no longer be said to be Lord Mayor at the point between Death and Rebecoming. It is Citta that has now come to wear the Lord Mayor garland. We may say then that while Viññāṇa is Lord Mayor for Life in Life, Citta is the uncontested Lord Mayor for Saṃsāra<sup>56</sup> in Saṃsāra!<sup>57</sup>

Some additional evidence for the primacy of Citta in Saṃsāra comes from the Buddha's characterization of Citta as being luminous (*pabhasaraṃ cittaṃ* 'Luminous is Citta' (AN I.10). Sentience is doomed to live with the courtesans Triple *taṇhā* ('Sense Thirst' (*kāma taṇhā*), 'Thirst to be' (*bhava taṇhā*) and the 'Thirst to be not' (*vibhava taṇhā*) and Triple Blemish roots (*akusala mūla*, namely, *rāga*, *dosa*, *moha*). So the reference to luminosity here just cannot be to a 'anatomically modern' (Zimmer, 2001, 71) sentient life. So what, then, is the Buddha referring to? The Aggañña Sutta (DN iii.27) provides a possible insight. At the beginning of the current Evolutionary phase (*vivaṭṭa*) following a Devolutionary phase (*saṃvivaṭṭa*), the primordial form of life to appear is an Ābhassara Being (*ābhassara sattā*)<sup>58</sup>. And this being in the sky is said to be 'self-luminous' (*sayampabhā*). As the Devolutionary phase gives way to the Evolutionary phase, 'pitch darkness' disappears with the appearance of the moon and the sun. 'All water' gives way as well when the earth appears, over billions of years<sup>59</sup>. Soon, a crust appearing, a certain Being tastes the earth crust that has come to appear, when at this point, says the Buddha, 'craving' (*taṇhā*) sets in. Then over time, other types of vegetation appearing, and changes in appearance and skin colour taking place, jealousy and hatred (*dosa*) emerge. With sexuality maturing, there comes to be 'lust' (*rāga*) when women and men look at each other for a long time, and engage in sex. By this time then, sentience has come to be plagued by the Triple Thirsts<sup>60</sup> and the Triple Blemish Roots, the mind of a sentient being of the time, in fact, being no different from our own. Such a mind can hardly be said to be luminous. By contrast, the mind (*Citta*) of the first Ābhassara Beings is characterized as being 'self-luminous'. So when the Buddha says that the 'mind is luminous', the quality being in relation to *Citta*, and not *Viññāṇa* or *Mano*, the reference has to be to a 'primordial' *Citta*, i.e., of a being prior to being contaminated by *taṇhā* 'thirst' i.e., 'craving', *rāga* 'passion', etc., as in the case of the Ābhassara Being (See Sugunasiri, 2014, 48ff. for a discussion).

Under such an interpretation, then, again it is evident that the continuing mind in Saṃsāra is Citta and not Viññāṇa or Mano. The Ābhassara Beings are those who have been left unscathed by the Devolutionary seven suns (or the Big Bang in Western Science)<sup>61</sup>, because their Brahmalo-

was beyond the reach of the heat. So that means that the first Ābhassara Beings are travelers in Saṃsāra. They had made it to the Abhassara Brahmaloḥita through the cultivation of the mind (reaching up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> *jhāna*) in an earlier lifetime.

Col. IV, Row 3 of the above Figure (11) shows Citta, Viññāṇa and Mano in that order. What this suggests is that Mano is the last to join in, allowing us to surmise the following order of appearance in the new mind-body<sup>62</sup> in relation to Becoming:

MM01	MM02	MM03
Citta	Viññāṇa	Mano

Indeed we find some confirmation of this ordering in the following link in the Con-Coor Principle:

I	II	III	IV
Ignorance-conditioned	Forces-conditioned	Viññāṇa-conditioned	Mindbody-conditioned
Forces >	Viññāṇa >	Mindbody >	Six senses <sup>63</sup>
CITTA ><	VIÑÑĀṆA	> MANO	MANO

**Fig. 12: Chronological Ordering of Citta, Viññāṇa and Mano at Point of Relinking /Becoming (Conception) as per the Con-Coor Principle**

Associated with Citta has been shown to be ‘Ignorance’ (*moha*), which is what is re-captured in Col. I of Figure 12, confirming ‘Relinking Citta’. ‘Ignorance’ generates a psychological force, conditioning Viññāṇa (Col. II) when carried forward, confirming that ‘(Relinking) Viññāṇa’ follows upon (Relinking) Citta. Viññāṇa-conditioned Mindbody (Col. III), next, conditions the Six Senses (*saḷāyatana*), seen to be the home to Mano. This then places Mano as following upon Viññāṇa. Overall then, as in the bottom Row of the Fig., the chronological ordering of Citta, Viññāṇa and Mano at the point of (Re)Becoming comes to be established.

It is of interest to note here that in the Abhidhamma, each Stream of Consciousness at the point of death as well as relinking comes to be called ‘process-freed’ (*vīthivimutta*) while in the field of perception, it comes to be called ‘Citta-avenue’ (a.t.a. ‘Avenue of the mind’, as above) (*cittavīthi*). Thus it may be said that while Viññāṇa holds sway in the living Avenue of Mind, it is Citta that is the monarch of all it surveys when it comes to the process-freed Avenue.

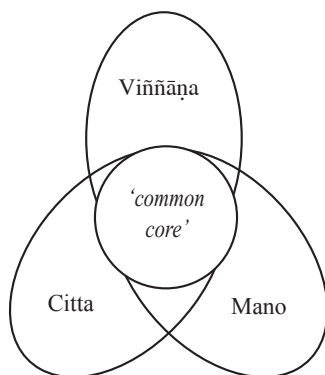
The most striking conclusion that comes out of our discussion, then, is that *the Mayorship of Viññāṇa is exclusively tied to a single given life*. In

the Buddha's parable above of the Lord of the City within a Fortress, for *Viññāṇa* to become Mayor, there has to be a city. That is to say, 'No city, no Mayor'. This is to confirm that *Viññāṇa* is co-emergent with Life. Co-emergent also, of course, means that once the city is broken down, i.e., at the break-up of the body (*kāyassa bheda*), *Viññāṇa* becomes co-terminus as well, i.e., comes to be broken down. This, then, means that it is a fresh face of *Viññāṇa* that emerges with each new life form. By contrast, *Citta* is the contractor that carries the building material to build the next city. With *Viññāṇa* making its appearance on the shoulders of *Citta*, so to speak, in the new given life, *Citta* can be seen to be quickly ousted from Mayorship - pity, how ungrateful, reduced to playing second fiddle to *Viññāṇa*. But if *Citta* loses its dominance at mm 02, it earns it freedom to be the monkey mind, monkeying around with the Thirsts in full Ignorance for the rest of life.

One of the clearest and specific usages of the terms relating to death and Rebecoming, we can, then, see here again that the three minds are distinguishable from each other but only contextually.

## 2.7 Cloud on *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* Dissipated

While, then, each of *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa* can be seen to be both M-Simplex and M-Complex, we may also understand them as overlapping. That is to say that while each carves out its own territory, they also share a common core as well, as captured in the Figure 13 below:



**Fig. 13: Overlapping Model of *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa***

We can now see the potential basis for the confusion around the three terms *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa*, both in the Pali original as well as in translation. Indeed our discussion, characterizing each as both an M-Simplex and an M-Complex, but also sharing a common core, perhaps may seem to be only confirming the confusion. But let us revisit the line quoted at the beginning:

“Whatever it may indeed be, oh Bhikkhus, it is called Citta, it is called Mano, it is called Viññāṇa” (*yañca kho etaṃ bhikkhave, vuccati cittaṃ itipi mano itipi viññāṇaṃ itipi*).

Interestingly we have the same verbal formula elsewhere in relation to the Dhamma itself. Speaking to Ven. Ananda, the Buddha says,

“It is possible, Ananda ... This is a designation for this Noble Eightfold Path: ‘the divine vehicle’, and ‘the vehicle of Dhamma’ and ‘the unsurpassed victory in battle’.(*imasseva kho etaṃ ānanda ariyassa aṭṭhangikassa maggassa adbhivacanam brahmayānam itipi dhammayānam itipi anuttaro sangāmaṃ vijayo itipi*) (SN V.1.4 (4)).<sup>64</sup>

Ven. Ananda had seen Brahmin Jānussoṇi departing in an all-white chariot drawn by mares... People, having seen this, said: ‘Divine indeed, sir, is the vehicle....’ And so he was now asking the Buddha, “Is it possible, venerable sir, to point out a divine vehicle in this Dhamma and Discipline?” The above is the Buddha’s answer. As can be seen, then, the Buddha is using the three variants as ‘designations’ (*adbhivacanam*) for the same phenomenon.

Though similar in structure, the Buddha’s (latter) answer to Ananda may not be similar to the one relating to the mind (former). While the designations in the latter refer to the same phenomenon, with no variations, namely, the Noble Eightfold Path, the reference in the former is to three variants of the same phenomenon - Mano, Citta and Viññāṇa. Let us then try a rather mundane example. Let’s say someone were to ask, “What is Buddhism?”, could we not, e.g., say, “The Training Principles are Buddhism, meditation is Buddhism, Homage to the Triple Gem is Buddhism”? To think of another mundane example, let’s say you’re showing the Atlas of the World to your seven-year old, and turning the page, you say, “Oh, this is Asia”. “What’s Asia?”, asks the child. You answer, “China is Asia, Japan is Asia, India is Asia”. While the three countries, along with a host of other countries together make up the land area Geographers call Asia, they do not all share with each other all the features - climate, political system, economic system, languages, poverty, literacy, longevity, happiness, etc. So it certainly doesn’t mean that by each of them refers to an identical country! Language provides a final example: Mandarin is Chinese, Cantonese is Chinese, Hakka is Chinese. Yet while speakers of the three dialects, each an L-simplex, in adjoining Cantons, towns, cities and/or village, may understand each other, the further they are away from each other geographically, the more difficulty there will be communicat-



ing with each other, even though they are part of the L-complex called Chinese.

We end up with a clarification on the use of terms by Prof. Warder, author of *Indian Buddhism* (1970):

As an example of a system of terms, we have the different kinds of object, often confused in modern writings. The real (*vatthu*) is external, independent. The sense object (*visaya*) is the visible and dependent. The support (*ālambana*, see under *viññāṇa* above) is the object of consciousness, not external at all but mental. These three have to be carefully distinguished. (Warder, 2013, 9).

Now perhaps we could understand the Buddha's line relating to the mind, "Whatever it may indeed be, oh Bhikkhus, it is called *Citta*, it is called *Mano*, it is called *Viññāṇa*". Firstly each of them relates to the 'mind' (*nāma*) component of the 'mindbody' (*nāmarūpa*). To that extent, working in tandem with, and in cooperation with each other, and indeed overlapping, they all chip in to ensure that the reality, or the phenomenon, called mindbody, or sentient being (*sattā*), keeps going from conception to death (not counting *Samsāra* here). But each of them also has its own function - as *Mano* the R-Mind, *Citta* the J-Mind and *Viññāṇa* the E-Mind, labeled here hopefully with technical and scientific precision. But it is not in this specific sense, but rather in the non-technical, and generic, sense, and non-detailed context, that the Buddha says that whatever it is, it is called *Citta*, it is called *Mano*, it is called *Viññāṇa*. Each would serve just fine in that general context. We may then say that there is no contradiction in using each of them both as a non-discriminate invariant morpheme, as well as discriminate variant morphemes with semantic overlap.

It was noted above how the perceived confusion in a line like the above comes to be confounded in translation. That, of course, is because English, or any other Western language in particular, has no parallel concepts. Our function-related labeling of *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* - R-Mind, J-Mind and E-Mind, hopefully overcomes the issue of having no parallels in English, or any other given language. 'Receiving', 'Judging' and 'Executive' are general enough in any given language, the native term clear enough to capture the meaning, retaining semantic exactitude.

### 3. Concluding Comments

Our exploration of the functions of *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* is certainly not comprehensive, but rather indicative (any PhD students out



there looking for a topic?). But it is also hoped that it is detailed and extensive enough to help sort out the confusion in the minds of the student of Buddhism. Simply put, the question to be asked is, “Is the term used in a specific and/or localized context, or is it in a generic and non-technical sense where one or more of them could be used interchangeably?”.

By way of an example, we may take the Buddha’s words in the Rohita Sutta quoted above: *apī cāhaṃ āvuso imasmiṃ yeva byāmamatte kaḷebare sasaññimhi samanake lokañca paññāpemi...*<sup>65</sup> . In “... *sasaññimhi samanake...*” here, it is ‘*Mano*’ (*sa* + *manake* < *Mano*), and neither *Citta* nor *Viññāṇa*, that comes to be used. However, *Mano* needs to be first understood here as the equivalent of *nāma*, in contrast to a physical *kalebara*, literary meaning a ‘body’ (PED), given that perception can’t possibly refer to anything other than a living being<sup>66</sup>. The difference between a ‘dead body’ (*mata kalebara*) and a ‘living body’ in the persona of a meditator in jhanic meditation, e.g., is precisely that – the latter is living, which means breathing, having body heat and still with an unelapsed life-span. However, *Mano* here also refers to R-Mind, since it is through this – one of the six senses, that the stimulus is received, J-Mind playing no role at all here, while E-Mind plays only a secondary supporting function. This, then, would be a good example of how the context comes to be critical in understanding if a term has been used in a generic sense or a specific sense.

As can be seen from the above example, the answer to the Question whether a usage is generic or specific can only come *following* an exploration. However, that would be the question to be had at the back of the mind in trying to figure it out. Good luck, then, with your exploration(s)!<sup>67</sup>

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## FUGURES

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- Fig. 7: Stimulus Data Stored under Each Sense-Consciousness
- Fig. 8: Characterization of the Triune Mind in terms of Function
- Fig. 9: Functional Analysis of the 17 Mindmoments in Abhidhamma in Relation to the Five Aggregates in Sutta
- Fig. 10: Triune Mind as M-Complex
- Fig. 11: *Citta*, *Viññāṇa* and *Mano* in Death and Life
- Fig. 12: Chronological Ordering of *Citta*, *Viññāṇa* and *Mano* at Point of Relinking /Becoming (Conception) as per the Con-Coor Principle
- Fig. 13: Overlapping Model of *Citta*, *Mano* and *Viññāṇa*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Except when they occur in the Pali original, or is in a quotation, ‘Mind’ here, and later *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa* are in capitals, to identify it as the topic of the discussion, a practice that will be followed throughout the paper.

<sup>2</sup> The alpha order here, it may be noted, is congruent as between both Pali and English, a rare occurrence indeed!

<sup>3</sup> You will find the Pali original used in this paper many a time when the translation does not help make the point.

<sup>4</sup> The same idea is captured slightly differently elsewhere: *Yañca kho idam vuccati cittaṃ ti vā mano ti vā viññāṇaṃ ti vā...* (DN I.21).

<sup>5</sup> “There are, monks, certain devas called Corrupted in Mind [*Mano*]. They spend an excessive amount of time regarding each other with envy. By this means their minds [*Citta*] are corrupted... (Walshe tr., 1995, 77).

<sup>6</sup> “*Cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ loke... sotavīññāṇaṃ loke... ghānavīññāṇaṃ loke... jivhāvīññāṇaṃ loke... kāyavīññāṇaṃ loke... manovīññāṇaṃ loke... piyarūpaṃ sātārūpaṃ, etthesā taṇhā uppajjamānā uppajjati, ettha nivisamānā nivisati.*” (DN 2.9). This, as can be seen, is in relation to the senses.

<sup>7</sup> See fn 6.

<sup>8</sup> The full religious and academic credentials are used in this paper in an attempt to restore the Buddhist tradition of respecting the Sangha, and the European and Asian tradition of respecting scholars and scholarship, but now lost in North America. While the titles will not be used in relation to lay scholars throughout the study, each reference to the scholars is kindly to be understood as including the credential(s). But when it comes to the Sangha scholars, we shall continue to use the title ‘Ven.’ each time, in deference to the Buddhist tradition, as well as to the writer’s personal sensibility, of always being respectful of the Disciples of the Buddha. References to names in relation to published material will, however, show just the name. If all this violates the Chicago Manual of Style, one can only say that paradigms, like every other phenomena, are subject to change, this happening when creative minds begin to see cracks in them.

<sup>9</sup> The page references in relation to *Mano*, *Citta* and *Viññāṇa*, in that order, are as follows:

- Bodhi, Tr. 2000, p. 769;
- Davids, 1899, p. 34;
- Jayatilleka, 1963, pp. 507, 422, 518;
- Karunadasa, 2010, pp. 70, 70, 68;
- Rahula, 1959, p. 65;
- Walshe, 1995, p. 78.

- <sup>10</sup> Thanks to the British colonial occupation of Sri Lanka for a century or more, Sinhala scholars have come to have an excellent command of English, it being not only the language in the Academy but even in their day to day conversation among themselves, switching to their mother tongue, Sinhala, among themselves informally and with non-English speakers, mostly in a personal and/or domestic context. Hence the choice of Ven. Rahula, and Professors Jayatilleke and Karunadasa as representative of non-native English speaking scholars.
- <sup>11</sup> Though not taken up here, what it points to is the difficulty in translating Buddhist concepts, regardless of whatever language they are being translated into – Chinese, French, German, Japanese, etc. Sinhala, it may be noted here, may be an exception, given that Sinhala grew in the womb of Pali and Buddhaddhamma introduced 2200 years ago by Arahant Mahinda, and maintaining an unbroken Theravada Buddhist tradition. See Ven. Rahula, 1966 for a study.
- <sup>12</sup> While approaching the Buddha's Teachings from the perspective of Western Science may make some readers uneasy, the writer comes with the experience of the benefit of Western Science paving the way to an understanding of the *Aggañña Sutta* (DN 27). See Sugunasiri, 2014 for a study.
- <sup>13</sup> With no more than one Stream of Consciousness generated at any given mind-moment, a stimulus acting on another sense, at the very *next* mindmoment, begins the process of generating a new Stream of Consciousness.
- <sup>14</sup> See Bodhi, Gen. Ed., 1999, p. 151 ff. for a discussion upon which this discussion is based.
- <sup>15</sup> Both the Pali and the English terms are original to the writer (Sugunasiri, 2014, 101, fn. 67), seeking to capture the concept generically, the 'facilitating condition' identified for each of the senses as per the Commentaries, and the *Abhidhammattha sangaha* text, as in Bodhi (1999), offering no generic term.
- <sup>16</sup> In Pali, *atimahantam*, *mahantam*, *parittam*, *atiparittam*. This explains why we don't hear a faint sound of a buzzing bee, or have difficulty remembering the name of someone briefly encountered at a party, or riding a bike, missing an odour of a passing human or fauna / flora, etc.
- <sup>17</sup> See later for an explanation.
- <sup>18</sup> The Pali terms in relation to the 17 mindmoments are as follows: 00. Life-Continuum Consciousness [LCC] (*bhavanga*); 01. Past LCC (*atīta bhavanga*); 02. (LCC) Vibration (*bhavangacalana*); 03. (LCC) Arrest (*bhavangupaccheda*); 04. Adverting at sense doors (*dvārāvajjana*) (as per the writer's variation, see later); 05. Cognition at a single sense door (*ekadvāraparijanana*) (again as per the writer's variation, see later); 06. Reception (*sampañicchana*); 07. Investigation (*santīraṇa*); 08. Determination (*voṭṭhapana*); 09 – 15 Impulsion (*javana*) and 16 – 17 Registration (*tadārammaṇa*).
- <sup>19</sup> The use of stars in the figure to identify sub-moments is from Bodhi, 1999.

- <sup>20</sup> While the texts, talking just about the visible senses, show this as ‘five door adverting’ (*pañcadvārāvajjana*), we propose the term *dvārāvajjana* ‘adverting at the door’, allowing a context of all six senses, including the mind-sense.
- <sup>21</sup> The Buddha talks about four types of food: solid food (*kabalīkāhāra*), contact food (*phassāhāra*), volition food (*manosañcetanāhāra*) and consciousness food (*viññāṇāhāra*) (SN 12.11).
- <sup>22</sup> It is to be noted that the characterization quoted here is given by Ven Bodhi in relation to *citta* and not *mano*.
- <sup>23</sup> The text shows the term *Viññāṇa* here, in its compound form - *cakkhuvīññāṇa*, *sotavīññāṇa*, etc. This is somewhat confusing, in that *cakkhuvīññāṇa*, e.g., is also the end product of the process of seeing an object, following the 17 mind-moments. This is a point we shall come to. Hence it may be better to replace *Viññāṇa* with a term like *parijānana*\*, the asterisk indicating ‘not in texts in this context’. Literally meaning ‘knowing around’, it suggests an initial cognition by the given sense, again including the mind-sense. While PED also shows *sañcetanā* as a variant of *parijānana*, we avoid it since it has other connotations.
- <sup>24</sup> This, of course, would be old hat for users of the standard table or wall phone in the olden days. It may worth noting that, in fact, the part of the phone picked up off the base and held to the ear is indeed called the ‘receiver’.
- <sup>25</sup> It is to be noted that in places, as e.g., in the Abhidhamma, *rāga* is replaced by *lobha* “all varieties of greed ranging from intense passion or cupidity to subtle liking or attachment” (Bodhi, 1999, 33). But we prefer the more direct term *rāga*.
- <sup>26</sup> *Rāga*, as in the above footnote, means “intense passion or cupidity”. *Dosa* likewise covers a wide range, from burning hatred to a mild dislike, entailing also anger to a high or low degree. *Moha* entails the whole gamut from ignorance of mundane reality, like the blind men’s take on the elephant, taking a rope to be a snake, etc., to transcendental issues such as the concept of god and soul. Given that sentient beings continue to have the characteristics of passion, hatred and delusion until coming by the experience of Arahant hood, they need to be understood as being relative. Thus e.g., while a layperson (*puṭhujjana* ‘masses’) may have extreme passion re a given stimulus and less so re a different stimulus, a streamwinner (*sotāpanna*) may have a minor passion, given that only the first three of the obscurants (*nīvaraṇa*), namely, ‘myself view’ (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), ‘doubt’ (*vicikicchā*) and ‘other-stomaching the vows of self-discipline’ (*sīlabbataparāmāsa* < *sīla(b)* + *bata* + *para* + *āmāsa*), as in my literal translation, or ‘attachment to rite and ritual’ in the standard version.
- <sup>27</sup> While ‘Stream of Consciousness’ relates only to the mind dimension of mind-body (i.e., *nāma* of *nāmarūpa*), *bhavanga*, literally ‘limb of being’ or ‘limb of becoming’, is taken here as referring to both mind and body. The implication is that it is not only the mind that comes to undergo a change process following upon a stimulus impacting, but the body, too.

- <sup>28</sup> A secondary impact, at mm 02, in the context of the cell phone in the hand, can be said to be in relation to the ear, when the vibration is heard. Now we have two senses active – touch and hearing. However, if the cell phone had been on the table, of course, there would be only a single sense, namely the ear, that would be impacted upon.
- <sup>29</sup> This, of course, has to be understood as being in relation to the senses – eye-*viññāṇa*, ear-*viññāṇa*, nose-*viññāṇa*, tongue-*viññāṇa*, body-*viññāṇa* and mind-*viññāṇa*, to use half-baked, or mixed, labels, even though the stimulus will be now part of only one of the six sense-*viññāṇa*, given that it is along one of the six sense *viññāṇa* that the stimulus had made the swift run.
- <sup>30</sup> This is as captured elsewhere in the title of a work by this author, *You're What You Sense* (Sugunasiri, 2001).
- <sup>31</sup> By now, of course, there has been many a loss as well, when some of the cells present at the beginning of the process may have died out, thanks to the workings of 'change' / 'impermanence' (*anicca*).
- <sup>32</sup> 'Asoulity' is the author's translation of *anattā*, literally meaning 'not' (*na*) 'soul' (*attā*) (*na* + *a-* > *an*). See Sugunasiri, 2011, for the fuller discussion.
- <sup>33</sup> Ven. Bodhi translates *niyāma* as 'lawful order'. While this certainly is the standard English usage, 'lawful' smacks of a legality if also a theism. Hence my preference for 'regular order', as e.g., in 'regular features' (as in Webster's). Ven. Buddhadatta's *English-Pali Dictionary* (1979) gives *niyamānugata* as a translation of 'regular'. While the term 'regular' is bereft of the idea of legality, it captures the sense of 'norm', 'standard', etc.
- <sup>34</sup> Explaining that "the totality of speech habits of a single person at a given time constitutes an idiolect" (Hockett, 1958, p. 321), the Professor further explains that "the resulting set of idiolects constitutes what we shall call an L-simplex" (323).
- <sup>35</sup> The stages of this process, namely, Mano/Citta/Viññāṇa, can be understood, in terms of communication theory, as 'encoding, consolidation, storage, recall retrieval' <<http://www.human-memory.net/processes.html>>.
- <sup>36</sup> 'Segmenting' is a concept from Linguistics, and means "how an utterance is heard and divided" (Gleason, 268-9).
- <sup>37</sup> "In the larynx are the *vocal cords*. In their quiescent state, these are relaxed and relatively far apart, leaving a passage so wide that air can pass through almost noiselessly. Speech sounds produced with the cords in this position are *voiceless* ... The vocal cords can be stretched taut, with little space between them, but so held that the passing air stream forces itself through and the cords into vibration, like a reed. This vibration is *voice*, or *voicing*, and speech sounds which involve voicing are *voiced*" (italics in original) (Hockett, 1958, 64-65). Thus e.g., /p/ is voiceless, /b/ is voiced. Likewise the pairs /t/ and /d/, /k/ and /g/, and /c/ and /j/.



- <sup>38</sup> There is no entry for *ṇa* (with retroflex *ṇ*) [or *ṇha*] in PED. In Sanskrit, *ṇa* (masc.) has several meanings: ‘knowledge’, ‘certainty’, ‘ascertainment’; ‘ornament’; ‘water-house’; ‘a bad man’; ‘gift’, but also ‘the sound of negation’, none of which are found in any published texts, but are as listed by Lexicographers (Monier-Williams, 431), the retroflex *ṇ* being possibly morphophonemically conditioned by the preceding alveopalatal phoneme *ṇ*.
- <sup>39</sup> The asterisk is to be taken to mean ‘does not exist’.
- <sup>40</sup> The association of *Citta* with *hadaya* is so strong that the 5<sup>th</sup> c. commentator Ven. Buddhaghosa even locates consciousness in the heart (‘Cardiac theory’ as I call it), though, as shown elsewhere (Sugunasiri, 1995), it is not the view of the Buddha who locates consciousness in the whole body (‘Pancorporeal theory’, as I have come to call it now).
- <sup>41</sup> Translation as in Walshe, 1995, 104.
- <sup>42</sup> This is my puerile adaptation from contemporary North American usage, 7/24, to mean, in relation to a business like a grocery store, ‘open all day, 7 days of the week’.
- <sup>43</sup> It needs to be noted that this characterization relates to the average person’s mind. See Bodhi, 1999, 175 ff. for variations in relation to the ‘swift run’.
- <sup>44</sup> *Imasmiṃ sati... idaṃ hoti, imass’upādā idaṃ uppajjati; imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati* (MN III.63).
- <sup>45</sup> The relationship is actually even deeper. “Thus I understand”, Darwin wrote, “how a flower and a bee might slowly become, either simultaneously or one after the other, modified and adapted in the most perfect manner to each other, by continued preservation of individuals presenting mutual and slightly favourable deviations of structure.” (cited in Zimmer, 2001, 192).
- <sup>46</sup> It is called a ‘Principle’ since it explains the nature of reality, as e.g., the Law of Thermodynamics in Western Science. But it is to avoid the theistic connotations of ‘the Law’ that the term ‘Principle’ is used.
- <sup>47</sup> See Sugunasiri, 1995 for a lengthy treatment, although the labels ‘Pancorporeal theory of Consciousness’, ‘Cardiac theory ...’ and ‘Encephalic theory ...’ are newly introduced here.
- <sup>48</sup> This is a topic of current research interest for the present writer.
- <sup>49</sup> The translation here, with thanks, is from Ven. Bodhi (Bodhi, 2000, 1252).
- <sup>50</sup> But there is a caveat. And that is that, according to the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, the above analysis entailing all three Minds relates only when a stimulus is either ‘very great’ (*atimahantaṃ*), ‘great’ (*mahantaṃ*) or slight (*paritta*). But when it comes to a ‘very slight’ (*atiparitta*) stimulus, it takes all of the first 15 mm for it to find its sauntering way through the sense-door, so that there is no time left for ‘Receiving’, ‘Determination’ or ‘Swift run’, all functions of *Citta* as we have seen. At the very end of the process, namely at mm 16-17, there comes to be ‘vibration’, a function that takes place at mm 02 (see Ven. Bodhi,



1999, 159-162 for a detailed treatment). But the case of a very slight stimulus doesn't take away from the tripartite process of the standard stimulus.

- <sup>51</sup> We show Citta, Mano and Viññāṇa without italics here and hereafter, since each of them has now taken on the status of a 'technical' term in the English language, appearing in association with the English translations 'Exit' and 'Relinking'. Writing them as 'Exit Mind' and 'Relinking Mind' would obliterate exactly the point being made here, since the present exercise is precisely to see each of the dimensions of the mind in their distinct, and in that sense, technical role. But when the terms occur as in the Pali original, they will be italicized.
- <sup>52</sup> As per the Abhidhamma, the moment of death produces less than 17 mm, but we shall not go into this detail here, the 00-17 simply symbolizing the final mind-moment. Interested readers may go to Bodhi, 1999, for the details.
- <sup>53</sup> "The death consciousness is the last citta to occur in an individual existence; it is the citta which marks the exit from a particular life" (Bodhi, 1999, 124). That is to say there is no '*cuti mano*'\* or '*cuti viññāṇa*'\*, the star meaning 'does not exist in the context'.
- <sup>54</sup> This is as in the *Dhammapada* line, *manopubbaṅgamā dhammā* (Dh 1).
- <sup>55</sup> I am indebted to Prof. Kalupahana for this critical point (Kalupahana, 1991, 47).
- <sup>56</sup> As clarified to Bhikkhu Sati by the Buddha (*mahātāṇhāsankhaya Sutta* (MN 38)), this is to be understood as being conditioned.
- <sup>57</sup> It may be noted that this is at odds with the view of Ven. Bodhi, based in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* analysis, that "in any single life, it is the same type of consciousness that performs the three functions of rebirth-linking, life-continuum and death" (Bodhi, 1999, 125).
- <sup>58</sup> We know this is a form of sentient life since it is said to be mind-based (*manomayā*) and fed on happiness (*pītibhakkhā*).
- <sup>59</sup> See Sugunasiri, 2014, 43 ff. and elsewhere (see Index under Big Bang) for a detailed characterization of the process in relation to Western Science.
- <sup>60</sup> While the Thirst here relates only to the gustatory sense, it is one of the 'Sense Thirsts' (*kāma taṇhā*). The other two – 'Thirst to be' (*bhava taṇhā*) and 'Thirst to be not' (*vibhava taṇhā*), can be said to be already there by definition. Had there been no 'Thirst to be' (necessarily in tow with the 'Thirst to be not'), there would have been no birth, i.e., 'Rebecoming'.
- <sup>61</sup> See Sugunasiri (2014) for an interpretation.
- <sup>62</sup> It needs to be noted that there is no suggestion here of an *immediate* becoming or an *inevitable* human birth following upon a human death. That remains a forthcoming topic of research of the author.
- <sup>63</sup> The Pali line goes, *avijjāpaccayā samkhārā, samkhārapaccayā viññāṇa, viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatana*.

<sup>64</sup> A similar pattern can be found in relation to the ‘breath meditation’ (*āṇāpāṇasatisamādhi*), characterized as a ‘noble dwelling, a divine dwelling, the Tathāgata’s dwelling’ (Bodhi, tr., 2000, 1778) (*ariyavihāro itipi, brahmavihāro itipi, tathāgatavihāro itipi*). The Buddha has just come out of a three-month retreat, and is talking to the Bhikkhus about how they should respond if asked what the Buddha has been practicing during the retreat (SN V.II, 11(1)).

<sup>65</sup> ‘It is in this one fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I make known the world...’

<sup>66</sup> Though *kalebara*, as in *cadaver* in English, also means ‘dead body’, here the reference is to the body. It is this ambivalence that makes Ven. Bodhi translate it as ‘carcass’ in the earlier *SN* translation (Bodhi, 2000, p. 158) and as ‘body’ in the later *AN* translation (Bodhi, 2012, p. 435).

<sup>67</sup> I wish to thank the peer reviewer of the paper, as well as Dr. Bryan Levman for their critical comments.

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## **Terms, concepts and translations introduced in the paper**

### **English**

1. Autonomous Spiritual System (ASPS) (p.31).
2. a.t.a.: ‘also translated as’ (p. 35).
3. Cardiac Theory of Consciousness (p. 27).
4. Con-Coor Principle: ‘Conditioned Co-origination Principle’ (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) (p. 27).
5. Encephalic Theory of Consciousness (p. 27).
6. ‘Myself view’ (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) (p. 44).
7. ‘Other-stomaching the vows of self-discipline’ (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*) (p. 44).
8. Pancorporeal Theory of Consciousness (p. 27).

### **Pali**

9. *Ekadvāraparijaṇana* ‘Cognition at a single sense door’ (p. 43).
10. *Parijaṇana* ‘cognizing’ (p. 12).
11. *Upatthambakapaccaya* ‘Facilitating condition’ (p. 10).