Extraordinary Capacities in the Buddhist Path of Liberation

A Diachronic Study Based on the Theravāda Sources

Bryan De Notariis

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A Diachronic Study Based on the Theravāda Sources

Bryan De Notariis

Abstract

This book, based on the Author's doctoral dissertation, is a diachronic study on the final stages of the Buddhist path of liberation occurring in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2). These final stages of the path involve the development of extraordinary capacities, namely: the creation of a 'body made of mind' (*manomayakāya*), the capability to perform many kinds of psychophysical power (*iddhividhā*), and the achievement of higher knowledges (*abhiññā*). The latter consists of the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*); knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*); knowledge of the recollection of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*); knowledge of the fall and rise of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*); and, knowledge of extinction of the influxes (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*). This work will disclose the old context of these stages in the Pāli literature of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition aided by the evidence provided through the Vedic texts. Furthermore, the research addresses the Theravāda exegetical analysis of these stages which provides not only further insight into the topic, but also reveals how a Buddhist tradition developed some ideas over time. By focusing on the extraordinary capacities, the book tries to decipher their significance within the Buddhist path of liberation. At the same time, it highlights how these concepts have developed within the Pāli literature from their canonical exposition to their commentarial explanation. Indeed, an enhanced comprehension of the Pāli exegesis forms part of the study.

Keywords Theravāda Buddhism. Pāli. Meditation. Manomaya-kāya. Iddhi. Abhiññā. Veda. Upaniṣad. Abhidhamma. Aṭṭhakathā.

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When I was still a Bachelor student in Bologna, I proposed to my supervisor, Professor Saverio Marchignoli, a bachelor's thesis on the mind within Indian philosophies, starting from the Vedic texts and extending to an analysis of Sāṃkhya/Yoga, Buddhism, Jainism, and so on. Professor Marchignoli responded that the project was a bit too ambitious for a bachelor's thesis, and so he suggested I focus on just one tradition. Among these traditions, he randomly (or by the hand of fate) chose Buddhism. From that moment on, I probably became a Buddhologist. Therefore, my first thanks must go to Saverio Marchignoli.

Later, during my master's, I decided to pursue the study of Buddhism but felt that knowing Sanskrit was not enough to support my study to the depths I desired. Therefore, I decided to attend a Pāli language course held by Richard Gombrich at Oxford (under the aegis of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies). Professor Gombrich strongly influenced the topic of my master's thesis, suggesting that I translate the entire *Alagaddūpamasutta* together with its commentary, the *Alagaddasuttavaṇṇanā*. This experience established the intellectual trajectory that I would embark on in the following years, namely the study of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition through the analysis of Pāli sources. I have to give Richard Gombrich credit for giving me the foundation to be the Buddhologist that I am today.

My academic career then took me to Turin, where I earned my doctorate under the guidance of Professor Alberto Pelissero. I owe him the opportunity I gained to enter the research field. Those years of research during my doctorate were of fundamental importance both for my education and my growth as a scholar. Furthermore, since this book is based on my doctoral dissertation, the results presented here are mostly the result of the work throughout those years. Additionally, during my doctoral years I spent periods of my study at the University of Bristol, under the supervision of Professor Rupert Gethin. I can also attribute to him part of the intellectual trajectory I undertook in my doctoral thesis.

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Extraordinary Capacities in the Buddhist Path of Liberation

“There are only two ways to live your life.
One is as though nothing is a miracle.
The other is as though everything is a miracle”
Quote attributed to Albert Einstein

“The aim is to balance the terror of being alive
with the wonder of being alive”
Carlos Castaneda

“The Warrior of the Light is a believer.
Because he believes in miracles, miracles begin to happen”
Paulo Coelho

“A miracle is not the breaking of physical laws,
but rather represents laws which are incomprehensible to us”
Georges I. Gurdjieff

1 Introduction

Index 1.1 Gaps in the Prior Research and the Need for a Different Approach. – 1.2 The Contribution the Book Makes to the Present State of our Knowledge. – 1.3 Methodological Reflections. – 1.4 Outline of the Intervening Chapters.

This book is not only a study of some aspects of the Buddhist path of liberation as presented in the Theravāda sources, but also a study of some of these sources. The first aim is to enrich our knowledge concerning the final stages of an important early summary of the path, namely the creation of a special 'body made of mind' (*manomayakāya*),[1] the capability to perform many kinds of psychophysical power (*iddhividhā̆*),[2] and the achievement of higher knowledges (*abhiññā*), consisting of the following forms of knowledge:

1 For practical reasons, when I am not referring to a particular passage, I will often use the compound '*manomayakāya*', which is mainly used within post-canonical texts (see, for instance, Mp I 209). The tendency within the canonical texts is to not unify the terms '*manomaya*' and '*kāya*' in a single compound (e.g. *manomayaṃ kāyaṃ*; D I 77).

2 In this book, I am using the unorthodox form *iddhividhā̆*, since it is not clear if the stemmatic form is *iddhividha* (masculine/neuter) or *iddhividhā* (feminine) given that the compound is often declined according to cases which could support both readings. This is the case, for example, of *iddhividhaṃ*, which could grammatically be the singular accusative case of the masculine, feminine, and neuter, or also *iddhividhāya*, which could be a masculine singular dative or also a feminine singular instrumental, ablative, genitive, or locative (at least, it is possible to exclude the neuter). At other times, the texts seem to have chosen a specific stemmatic form, however there is not a complete consistency within the *Tipiṭaka*. For Instance, the alternative reading *iddhividhāyo* in D III 112 (see note 1 within the work) could grammatically be only a feminine plural nominative or accusative, just like the form *iddhividhāsu* (D III 112-13) could only be a feminine declined in the plural locative. However, other evidences provide a completely opposite interpretation, such as the compound *iddhividhañāṇa* (e.g. Tikap II 166; Paṭis I 111), which seems to support *iddhividha* as the correct reading and is corroborated by other passages that include the wording *iddhividhe ñāṇaṃ* (e.g. Paṭis I 111; Vibh 334), in which *iddhividha* is declined in the masculine/neuter locative singular (grammatically, it could also be a feminine vocative singular, but it would not fit the context at all).

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the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*); knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*); knowledge of recollection of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*); and, knowledge of the fall and rise of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*).[3] All these extraordinary capacities occur in a version of the Buddhist path of liberation adopted by the majority of the *sutta*s (discourses) in the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* (The Division with the Sections on Morality), the first section in the *Dīghanikāya* (The Collection of Long [Discourses]). In the Pāli texts of the Theravāda tradition, the full exposition of the path is only presented in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (The Discourse on the Fruits of the Ascetic Life; D 2) and it is abbreviated in the following *sutta*s. The version of the path provided by the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* is the canonical context considered in the present book. A proper understanding and appreciation of the *raison d'être* of these extraordinary capacities within the path is still a *desideratum* and, therefore, a worthwhile topic to delve into. The second aim is to understand how these concepts developed within the Pāli literature from their canonical exposition to their commentarial explanation. Commentaries, indeed, would form part of the third aim, namely, to improve our knowledge concerning the Pāli commentarial literature, a topic that is relatively young compared to the study of the canonical literature.

In the pursuit of these aims, the sources considered cover a wide period of time – over one thousand years. The ultimate limit is the actual Pāli commentarial literature that is from the V century AD onwards,[4] whereas the oldest sources are the Vedic texts, whose dating is a notoriously debated matter. For the scope of the present book, the Vedic texts aim to provide evidence for part of the Buddhist ideological and speculative background. Most of them, indeed, most likely predate the period in which the historical Buddha was preaching, namely approximately the V century BC.[5] This wide time span forced me to be selective, but – and although I cannot claim to have been exhaustive – I am confident that a good deal of relevant material on the analysed topics has been considered. Therefore, this book is, at least, 1) a starting point for the study of the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhā*, and the other *abhiññā*s, with particular reference to their relevance in the canonical Buddhist path and their diachronic developments; 2) an exploratory study on the ways in which the Pāli commentarial literature (and more broadly the Theravāda Buddhist exegesis) works; and, 3) incidentally, an assessment (or sometimes a reassessment) of the importance of some sources for the study of Indian Buddhism, in particular the Theravāda tradition, such as the Vedic texts and the **Vimuttimagga* (*Jiětuō dào lùn* 解脱道論; T 1648).

It might seem, *prima facie*, an overambitious task to write a book concerning two arguments (viz. extraordinary capacities and commentaries/exegesis) that may seem to require two discrete dissertations. On the one

3 As discussed below, the last *abhiññā* which concerns the knowledge of extinction of the noxious influxes (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*) is not part of the present study.

4 The V century AD could be the safest dating if Toshiichi Endo (2014, 106-9) is right in assuming 428-429 AD as the possible date of composition of the *Visuddhimagga*, the vanguard of the Pāli commentaries.

5 There is no scholarly consensus concerning the precise dates of the Buddha, although, in the words of Rupert Gethin: "a detailed examination of all the available data and arguments by scholars in recent years has resulted in a general tendency to bring the date of the Buddha considerably forward and place his death much nearer 400 BCE than 500 BCE." (1998, 14). Gethin is most likely referring to the contributions gathered in Bechert 1991-92.

hand, they actually deserve studies exclusively devoted to them individually. On the other hand, sometimes different topics are related to each other in ways that do not allow a separate treatment; and this seems to be the case. To be more specific, we may note that one who wishes to approach the study of Buddhist extraordinary capacities in a diachronic way cannot afford to not know how the commentarial literature and, broadly speaking, the exegesis works and has developed over time. However, the study of the Pāli commentarial literature is still in its earliest days and thus we still lack a standard approach to such literature. Approaching the problem from a different angle, we may note that one interested in the study of the commentarial literature may face the problem that commentaries are commentaries on something. To put it in other words, it is fair to assume that in the study of the commentarial literature, some other Buddhist topics would inevitably be involved, and usually when one spends a plenty of time on a topic there is an actual possibility that new insights into that topic may arise. This is especially true when the topic at stake is a neglected one. Therefore, this book is the result of synergic efforts to combine two studies that are interconnected. In general terms, the work attempts to answer the following questions: what picture of the Buddhist extraordinary capacities would emerge if we would study them with a diachronic approach? In doing this, what we can infer from the ways the commentaries provide the exegeses?

1.1 Gaps in the Prior Research and the Need for a Different Approach

The main reason to study the final stages involving the achievement of extraordinary capacities in the Buddhist path of liberation is that previous studies on the same Buddhist path have focused on other former stages (a detailed discussion is provided below in Chapter 2), overlooking the final ones. However, this book does not merely aim to fill a gap in existing studies but, in some respects, is a study entirely of its own. The former studies on this long and stereotyped Buddhist path of liberation were almost exclusively based on the study of the Pāli *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (= Sanskrit: *Śrāmaṇyaphalasūtra*) and parallel versions in other languages (such as Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan and Gāndhārī) belonging to other Buddhist traditions, rather than Theravāda. Thus, they were synchronic studies, giving pre-eminence to the comparison of parallel versions of the path treated as almost contemporary testimonies (notwithstanding some translations are late, they were presumably based on older and early versions), whereas this book opted for a diachronic approach and, therefore, aims to trace a line of development in a specific tradition: that of Theravāda.[6] Subsequently, it was not possible to follow a beaten path in pursuit of this research.

Generally speaking, the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă*, and the other *abhiññā*s received less systematic treatments if compared with other Buddhist doctrinal ideas (one can consider, for example, the incalculable

6 The use of the term Theravāda has been debated at length. In this regard, there are the recent worthy works of Gethin (2012) and Anālayo (2013; 2023a, 459-95). I use this term to gather under the same umbrella the tradition of the Pāli texts, both canonical and commentarial, and that represented by the Chinese **Vimuttimagga* (*Jiětuō dào lùn* 解脱道論; T 1648).

number of studies either on or that mention the four noble truths). This is due to some historical reasons. Modern scholars in the late XIX and early XX century engaged the task of recovering the historical Buddha[7] and the original Buddhism. It is reasonable to assume that these two tasks were strictly connected to each other. If there was a historical figure that really preached in ancient India, there should also be an original and historical message or doctrine that was preached. However, the search for a historical figure behind the character of the Buddha led scholars to deprive Buddhism of its mythological and supernatural features. The euhemeristic assumption that a historical truth acquired mythological features over time was inspired by the textual method used in the quest to find the historical Jesus.[8] If the discarding of fabulous material may seem quite reasonable in the task of outlining a historical biography, it is not necessarily so in outlining a doctrine or a thought. The Buddha, as a historical figure, lived in a historical context and period in which myths and beliefs in the supernatural proliferated. Therefore, the fact that some of them flowed into the Buddha's doctrine is not unreasonable but rather is coherent with the naturalistic fact that individuals are affected by their historical period and society. Notwithstanding what now might seem reasonable, the scholars that centuries ago engaged the modern study of Buddhism extended the demythologising trend applied to the study of the historical Buddha to its original teachings and ideas. Therefore, the renowned scholar Louis de La Vallée Poussin wrote that "[i]f we rightly understand the real character of Buddhism, what Buddhism ought to be according to its cardinal tenets, there is no possible connexion between Buddhism and magic", he later noted that "'historic Buddhism' is not, in every respect what Buddhism ought to be" (1908, 255). The latter phrase he wrote aimed to introduce the concept of *ṛddhi* (Sanskrit; Pāli: *iddhi*), namely "'superhuman' activities, which to some extent would be understood by Europeans as magical, and which are 'very good Buddhism'" (1908, 255). Louis de La Vallée Poussin acknowledges the practice of *iddhi*s as an actual part of the Buddhist tradition, but at the same time he somehow sees it as not conforming to the Buddhist final goal.[9] Regarding de La Vallée Poussin, it seems that in this case he constructed the Buddhist identity in opposition to the Vedic or Hindu one which was supposed to have a strong magical and supernatural nature.[10] Therefore, despite notable exceptions, the general trend that became established was

7 The Buddha's historicity is a topic that has recently received scholarly attention. In this regard, see Drewes 2017; 2023a; 2023b; Levman 2019; Wynne 2019; von Hinüber 2019; 2023.

8 "Earlier scholars had considered the legendary elements as an addition to a basis of historical facts; once freed from these legendary elements, the historical truth about the Buddha would become clear. It was usual to apply this method – called the subtraction method by La Vallée Poussin – before Senart's time and also after him. It was the same method of historical criticism that was developed by New Testament scholars for studying the life of Jesus" (de Jong 1997, 28).

9 "The only aim of the Buddhist monk is 'nirvāṇa to be attained in this life,' […] All the machinery of intellectual and moral life is organized with a view to this" (La Vallée Poussin 1908, 255).

10 We can deduce that from passages like: "[*a*] *fortiori*, in contrast with Vedism and Brāhmanism, Buddhism ignores all the magical theories connected with sacrifice, worship, or asceticism as a means of salvation. As for as every-day or trivial magic is concerned, its efficiency is acknowledged, but Buddhists are strictly forbidden to practise it" (1908, 255) and also "[w]hatever precautions the Order took to avoid all paganism and superstition, there is, nevertheless, a Buddhist magic. It was impossible to guard against Hindu infiltrations" (1908, 257).

that of neglecting these kinds of topic.[11] We can see a confirmation of this trend in Edward Conze's complaints, such as when he wrote that:

> There is so much that is eminently rational in Buddhism that the importance of the occult in it has often been underestimated, especially by modern European authors. (Conze 1953, 103)[12]

The fact that the study of what can be considered magical, mythological, supernatural, etc., was a neglected issue for a long period of time is a fact shared with the broader field of studies on Indian religions, in particular with the study of Yoga or, more broadly speaking, yogic practices and attainments.[13] In a miscellany volume edited by Knut A. Jacobsen, entitled *Yoga Powers: Extraordinary Capacities Attained Through Meditation and Concentration* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), it is stated in the very first page of the introduction that:

> This book is about a neglected topic in the research on yoga and South Asian meditation traditions: the yoga powers, the extraordinary capacities that, according to many South Asian religious traditions, are gained by the yoga practice of meditation and concentration. (Jacobsen 2012, 1)

In this book which aimed to fill a gap in the study of Indian religions, there is also a chapter written by Bradley S. Clough entitled *The Cultivation of Yogic Powers in the Pāli Path Manuals of Theravāda Buddhism* (= Clough 2012), in which the Buddhist extraordinary capacities are described drawing on material from the exegetical literature. Clough uses the same main sources adopted by the present dissertation, but does so following an antithetical approach, namely a synchronic one. Instead of paying attention to the differences between the accounts, he preferred to consider the similarities in order to write a descriptive survey for each individual power, synthesising the method to develop the power (mostly, and sometimes exclusively, drawing material from the *Visuddhimagga*) and implicitly assuming the existence of an 'archetypical' set of instructions, which is reflected in different ways by the sources. This approach can be useful to obtain an initial and superficial knowledge on the subject but hides the complexity behind the various layers of exegetical literature. Despite similarities in the many accounts concerning the same power, it is often not possible to reduce the exegesis to a single model on the basis of the multiple different interpretations reported by the exegetical literature. By way of example, in Clough's interpretation of the *iddhividhă* (2012, 79-87), the first power which concerns the multiplication of the body (*eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti*) is described in a handful of lines (2012, 84), silently adjusting the *Visuddhimagga*'s exposition, which, instead, is quite odd since it prescribes to enter in and go out from the

11 Remarkable exceptions are, for instance, Demiéville 1927; La Vallée Poussin 1931; Conze 1953; French 1977.

12 According to Luis O. Gómez (1977, 221), Edward Conze contributed positively to change the academic orientation of the subject.

13 In this regard, see Jacobsen 2012, 12-16 and De Notariis 2019a, 229-31 (I reused some of the arguments in the conclusion of the present work in § 10.1).

meditative absorption (*jhāna*) twice (see below § 7.4.4).[14] Another example that shows the tendency to avoid problematic evidence is Clough's treatment of the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* (2012, 89-90). This *abhiññā* is outlined only referring to the *Visuddhimagga*'s account, avoiding to even mention the fact that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* reports a completely different method (which involves the *paṭiccasamuppāda* 'dependent origination') to develop this higher knowledge (see below § 8.3, and especially 8.3.3). These examples also demonstrate the importance of how we look at the sources, especially in the case of the exegesis, which, in the Pāli commentarial literature above all, displays a high degree of complexity.

The study of the Pāli commentaries started later if compared with the study of the canon, quite simply because they were published later.[15] Their nature and the related issues entailed in the study of Buddhism will be discussed further in Chapter 5, where it is also highlighted that the study of these commentaries was typically niche Japanese research.[16] Here, it is just worth noting that the commentarial literature is a quite tricky *corpus* of texts, given that the final form that has come down to us belongs to the V century AD, whereas the material it contains may be much older than that period. Therefore, accentuating one characteristic or the other, the commentarial literature can be conceived as either a necessary and early source for the study of the canonical texts or, conversely, as a very late material containing a late exegesis which has definitely lost memory of the earlier historical context. In this book, we shall attempt to avoid either of these two extremes. The commentaries will be conceived as they are, namely a controversial collection of exegeses which might be potentially very old, but whose actual dating is hard to establish. Then, how can we study them, and how can we use them as a useful source for the study of the extraordinary capacities? There is a valid answer for both questions, namely we should observe how the commentaries 'behave' in providing the exegeses and interpretations. This plain approach will allow us to gather data in an unprejudiced way, drawing conclusions only after having compared the exegeses with each other, searching for recurring patterns or possible explanations for some given exegetical accounts.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that there is a widespread agreement among scholars in considering the extraordinary capacities attained during the Buddhist path of liberation as mere by-products or outcomes from the meditative practice, some of them with a soteriological meaning at best. To put it simply (I will deal more at length with this topic below in Chapter 2), the last one, the *āsavakkhayañāṇa* (the knowledge of extinction of the noxious influxes), is undoubtedly the most Buddhist since it involves the four noble truths,[17] whereas the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* and *cutūpapātañāṇa* are often

14 In this regard, Clough writes: "[f]irst is the ability to multiply ('Having become one, he becomes many…'). Taking the number of forms that one wishes to produce as the object of concentration, one enters the fourth *jhāna*, emerges, and resolves, 'Let me become a hundred,' for example" (2012, 84).

15 "By 1930 all five Nikāya were published and publication of the *Aṭṭhakathā*s had begun" (de Jong 1997, 27).

16 There are, of course, exceptions in more recent times, just as the studies of scholars such as Lance Cousins, Aruna Gamage, Rupert Gethin, Oskar von Hinüber, and Petra Kieffer-Pülz, to name but a few.

17 Concerning this *abhiññā*, see the preliminary material gathered in Appendix 1.

believed to be able to bring a knowledge with a soteriological significance. The *cetopariyañāṇa* is less relevant from a soteriological perspective, but it has often been highlighted that telepathy may help a teacher to understand the mind of a pupil (or a prospective one; cf. § 2.1). The Buddha often read the thoughts of other people to impart the most appropriate teaching according to the mental inclinations of his interlocutor. The significance and the importance of the *dibbasotadhātu* and the *iddhividhā̆* are still more doubtful, let alone those of the *manomayakāya*. In this regard, we still lack an explanatory theory that can give a reason for the existence and the significance of all these powers in the Buddhist path without overlooking, neglecting or delegitimising some of them.

1.2 The Contribution the Book Makes to the Present State of our Knowledge

This book is a study on the final stages in a version of the Buddhist path of liberation shared by a major part of the *sutta*s in the *Sīlakkhandhavagga*, and takes into account canonical sources as well as exegetical ones. In this regard, it aims to enrich our knowledge concerning some neglected stages and highlights how the meditational powers were considered a significant part of the path by the Theravāda exegetes, something that has been overlooked in many more recent studies. The book also argues that there may be a possible significance of the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhā̆*, and the other *abhiññā*s within the Buddhist path. There seems to be, indeed, an enhancement of the body, which is gradually divinised and freed from the bounds of the matter. A divine body allows the performance of extraordinary acts and feats, its senses – divinised as well – make possible an increased and expanded knowledge that brings truths of soteriological significance. Therefore, some of these findings have the potential to enrich our understanding of Buddhism as a whole. The gnostic element, here, is not a mere intellectual knowledge, but is a kind of knowledge that is personally gained, direct and experiential. With this in mind, the meditational powers would not only be mere meditative outcomes in the Buddhist path of liberation, but effective means to attain liberation. This is a good example of results that a detailed study of elements soft-pedalled by previous studies can provide. This de-emphasis to which these materials have been subjected has produced an imbalance in our understanding of Buddhism, which has often been unrealistically interpreted as a set of 'rational' practices, whereas, I argue, there is a divine dimension that is directly involved in pursuing the Buddhist soteriological goal.

In the pursuit of the analysis of the extraordinary capacities, the way through which the commentaries provide the exegeses has been noticed. Therefore, it seems that the commentaries were subjected to a process which has been called the 'interpretative accretion process' (see § 7.4.4.1) given that interpretations tend to accumulate over time, one upon the other, integrating the old with the new. This process could potentially underline many other commentarial accounts, but the analysis should be conducted on a case-by-case basis. At least, the book provides a non-judgemental method, a conceptual tool for using and understanding the commentarial literature that can be applied further in the future to other topics. A close reading of the commentarial accounts shows that it is also possible to propose

some conjectures concerning the lost sources used to write the actual Pāli commentaries. This kind of work is necessarily speculative, but nonetheless exciting and, perhaps, if conducted systematically, worthy and profitable.

Finally, the study is a first attempt to untangle the complexity behind the exegetical accounts on the extraordinary capacities. It does it highlighting both the differences and similarities in the expositions of the methods to perform these meditative powers. In the case of the *manomayakāya*, its early canonical connections with some Vedic texts (especially the Upaniṣads) have been demonstrated, a fact that makes it even more evident that from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* onwards there was a departure from the old canonical context. The diachronic analysis, from the canon to the commentaries, showed that Buddhaghosa's interpretation of the term '*karaṇḍa*' is untenable from a philological point of view. In addition, a likely reason has been found as to why he did it, and a possible source from which he borrowed the textual passage he uses to justify his position. Therefore, this case study demonstrates how it is both useful and necessary to apply a 'philology of ideas' to the study of the Pāli commentaries. This can shed new light not only on the reliability of the Pāli commentaries for the study of the early canonical texts, but also on the topics at stake, such as the *manomayakāya* in the present case. Similarly, the analysis of the *iddhividhā̆* and the other *abhiññā*s shows that each power requires such analysis on a case-by-case basis. Incidentally, in its pursual of analysis of the meditational powers, this book provides a useful collection of sources with some critical remarks on the accounts provided by them.

1.3 Methodological Reflections

> [T]he method one uses to try to find something out must always depend on the particulars of the case
>
> (Gombrich 2009, 92)

The method used in the present study has been, to some extent, flexible. The reason is that it was almost impossible to maintain the same method for everything; the sources themselves have driven this research in different directions. However, there is something that has never been abandoned, namely a diachronic approach. When referring to a 'diachronic approach' I mean the action of paying attention to the chronology of the sources, even if it is only a relative one. This does not mean to blindly establish the antiquity or modernity of ideas solely on the basis of the chronology of the texts. Especially as the Pāli commentaries warn us of this kind of approach. As it has been highlighted by some scholars,[18] the Pāli commentaries on the Abhidhamma may have accommodated material even more conservative than the earlier commentaries written by Buddhaghosa. This does not mean that a line of development is impossible to establish, but suggests that the task is not properly linear. A diachronic approach can help us to not yield to the temptation of assuming a *sine tempore* static tradition. The very fact that the sources have a different chronology makes the differences in the exposition a significant topic. The developments can, of course, be coherent

18 E.g. Cousins 1981, 38-9; 1992, 55-6; [2013/2014] 2015, 397-9 and Kim 1999, 10-12 (= 2023, 9-11).

with the previous tradition, but are developments nonetheless, in the same way that a new branch of a tree resembles the tree and the other branches, but is nonetheless a new one.

We should also be cautious not to fall into the trap of the 'reasonable exegesis'. What I mean by this is that when a reader does not understand a passage, they may often refer to the later exegesis to find a way to interpret it. What this reader will often find is a reasonable reading. However, the fact that an exegetical interpretation makes sense does not mean that it is the right one. The commentators were not unprepared exegetes, but learned monks of their time, probably among the most learned, if not the most; it is therefore unsurprising that a reasonable interpretation can be found. These learned monks, however, were not writing for a modern academic audience; their task was to keep the Buddhist doctrine alive. If we treat the Buddhist *corpus* of literature as a living organism, we can consider the commentarial literature as a tool to keep the organism competitive in its environment. It is the adaptive surface of the body of texts, malleable enough to react to the external forces. The Pāli Buddhist literature, indeed, as a living organism, has a more fixed kernel, and the major changes are detected in the younger strata, which would be the external part of a living body. If we consider the animal kingdom, it can be determined that there are some inner structures shared by many species which actually look very different from each other. The spinal column, for instance, is shared by mammals, snakes, fishes, birds, etc. Despite the outward differences among these animals, an inner structure survives over time. We may also note that another inner structure shared by animals is a 'tube structure'. The tube, in the human species, runs from the mouth to the anus. If we think about a very elementary form of life, such as a worm, we should admit that even if it is without the spinal column, the 'tube structure' still occurs. Equally, in Buddhist literature there are some structures which are more resilient than others. Some of them are, as highlighted by Rupert Gethin (1992), the *mātikā*s (lit. matrixes) and some other lists that can provide an inner structure for a text. Other parts of Buddhist literature which are quite fixed generally consist of some formulaic expressions, which are often called pericopes (following biblical scholarship). Taking the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* as an example, we may note that not only is the structure of the list of the Buddhist path of liberation quite regular among various Buddhist traditions exemplified by the Chinese and Sanskrit texts (Gethin 2020), but that the pericopes also show a high degree of fixity. Therefore, a diachronic study that focuses solely on Theravāda sources aims to trace a line of development within a specific tradition.

Given the huge number of sources, it was necessary to narrow the research field. Starting from the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, we studied its exegesis, which in turn has its own exegesis and so on. To summarise, the exegetical accounts which have over time gradually commented upon each other have been chosen with the aim of following an exegetical line. There are many reasons to justify this approach. First, we may note that this is the most natural way to approach this kind of literature. If a reader is reading text X and wants to know something more about the topic, they would then consult text Y commenting on X. If text Y involves difficulties, they would check text Z commenting on Y, and so on. It is less likely that the reader would instead check every single existing text. In the past, without our current software or lists of concordance, cross-searches could have been even more difficult. Of course, this does not mean that the sources were considered in isolation,

only that pre-eminence has been given to texts that comment on each other. Another reason is that if text Y is commenting on text X, we can assume that the exegetical explanation fits the context entirely. In the case of another exegetical account that is commenting on a similar topic in another text, we may wonder how much the explanation would fit our specific case. The same pericope in different contexts may involve different exegeses, given that any situation can have its own peculiarities and specificities.

This narrowing of the field allowed me to adopt an exhaustive approach. By an 'exhaustive approach', I mean exhaustive reading (and sometimes also translation, if necessary) of the passages involved. This is a particularly useful approach when we are dealing with an untranslated text. If we limit ourselves to read only what *prima facie* seems to fit the topic of our research, there occurs the situation in which you know what you have found but not what you are missing. This approach involves a lot of effort, is time-consuming, and might provide a large amount of translated material which, sometimes, does not even provide useful information concerning the research topic. However, I think that this is an intellectually honest approach, because it is not possible to predict in advance where and when the results will be discovered. It is like the Buddhist path of liberation, you can practice the prescribed instructions, but you do not know when and if the liberation will be reached, it just happens. If my reader glimpsed a slight criticism of the modern academic world, they would not be inaccurate in their observation. In our time, the motto is 'publish or perish', an attitude towards research that forces people to produce as many results as they can in the shortest possible time. However, innovative results from a creative work can hardly be produced – they can only be found. We can plan to achieve results from a mechanical work, not from a creative one. And when we are asked to find something new in texts older than two thousand years, to understand them, the task can hardly be mechanical, rather it should indeed be creative. Therefore, I can state that I have mechanically gathered the research material, I have read and translated it, made schemes and tables, but the new ideas, what is original in my work, arrived in unpredictable ways. In the passage between the ignorance and wisdom, there is always something magical, inexplicable.

1.3.1 Main Buddhist Sources

Turning again to the method, as revealed above, my approach to the sources was quite flexible because the sources themselves do not allow a blind systematic treatment. To put it in other words, a source that had a paramount importance in the analysis of a topic could turn out to be completely useless, or at least of little use, in the study of another topic. Therefore, in this study there is an underlying structure, which was then adapted according to the specific situation. This basic framework starts from the account in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, which received a quite innovative exegesis in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s account was factored into that of the **Vimuttimagga*. Furthermore, both the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and **Vimuttimagga* were considered by the *Visuddhimagga*'s exegesis. Complementary to the *Visuddhimagga* is the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* which is, together with the commentaries on the other principal Nikāyas,

conceived as an integrative work to the *magnum opus* of Buddhaghosa.[19] The *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*'s accounts concerning the *iddhividhă* and the other *abhiññā*s were inserted into Appendix 2, since they only comment on the similes. Furthermore, the commentary on the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* called the *Saddhammappakāsinī* has also been taken into account. These are not the only sources considered in the present study but are the sources on which I was able to apply an exhaustive approach. Other Pāli texts were considered as well, according to the particularity of each individual case. Since some texts have not yet been translated into a European language, I offer my own translations in the book. For the *Saddhammappakāsinī*, only some translated passages were presented in the book, mainly for two reasons: 1) the text is full of quotations from other texts already translated; 2) there were, concerning some topics, too many pages involved. It would be worth analysing the *Saddhammappakāsinī* from the point of view of the reuse of texts and intertextuality. Unfortunately, this kind of analysis would have exceeded the limits of the present study. Moreover, I also offer my own translations for texts already translated by other scholars, such as the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli 1982), *Visuddhimagga* (translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli [1956] 2011), *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi 1989). Concerning these texts, I do not regard my translations as an improvement, by contrast I have learned a good deal from the former translators. I have also translated the relevant sections of the **Vimuttimagga*, which were formerly translated by N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera (= Ehara et al. [1961] 1995) and more recently by Bhikkhu Nyanatusita (= Nyanatusita 2021). The latter translation has already corrected many mistakes made in the former one. I regard my translations as a slight improvement, if not for the beauty of the language, at least for the better interpretation I provide concerning some passages.

Especially with reference to the *iddhividhă* and the other *abhiññā*s, an arbitrary decision has been made. That is to say, it was decided to systematically analyse the method to implement the powers rather than the narratives that involve these extraordinary capacities. Nonetheless, some narratives were taken into account, just as the one involving the Cūḷapanthaka's story (§ 7.4.4.2). The extraordinary capacities analysed are part of stock passages which are adapted to many contexts and narrative frameworks. Therefore, taking into account the numerous narrative contexts would have been out of the limits of the present study. However, as highlighted by the works of Steven Collins (1982; 1998), narratives are important (and often overlooked) sources for the study of Buddhist doctrines. For this reason, the narrative climax of the Buddhist path of liberation will be analysed in Chapter 9.

Finally, we should note that, in some cases, the analysis of what we can call the pre-history of Buddhism provided interesting results. If the Buddhist secular history starts from the historical Buddha preaching, then in using the term 'pre-history' I mean whatever source can provide insight into some concepts or ideas that might have been part of the Buddhist historical background. In this study, I opted for the Vedic texts as a source material for the study of the Buddhist background. This approach was particularly fruitful in the case of the *manomayakāya*, given that there is

19 *majjhe hi Visuddhimagga esa catunnam pi āgamānaṃ hi* (Sv I 2); see von Hinüber [2013/2014] 2015, 361.

the lexical correspondence of the term *manomaya* between the Buddhist and Upaniṣadic sources. Notwithstanding the lack of a similar, straightforward correspondence for the *iddhividhā̆* and the other *abhiññā*s, the use of the Vedic texts contributes to the elaboration of some topics.

1.3.2 Limitations

The most obvious limitation, as mentioned above, concerns the wide period of time that the book covers. Therefore, I opted to study the extraordinary capacities in the context of an early and long version of the Buddhist path of liberation, and so I tried to be exhaustive at least with regard to the exegetical sources directly connected with it. In order to counterbalance the exegetical interpretation, the Vedic texts have been taken into account, providing a more balanced picture. We can consider the canonical evidence as analysed from two different perspectives, its past and its later interpretations:

Vedic Texts → Pāli Canon ← Exegesis

Surely, it would have been interesting to systematically consider the texts parallel to the Pāli *Sāmaññaphalasutta* to further investigate the original canonical context.[20] In this regard, sporadic references were made to the Chinese Dharmaguptaka *Cháng āhán jīng* 長阿含經 (T 1) and *Fóshuō jízhì guǒ jīng* 佛説寂志果經 (T 22; uncertain sectarian affiliation), and to the Sanskrit version preserved in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* (the latter especially), which is the last section of the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*. All this means that since the main Buddhist sources considered in the present study belong to the Theravāda tradition, the results should be primarily considered when referring to this Buddhist tradition as well.

An important omission in the present work is a careful study on the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*. This analysis would have involved an engagement in a full and detailed account of how Abhidhamma and commentarial sources understand the path (*magga*) and its fruit (*phala*) and the destruction of the *āsava*s (noxious influxes).[21] The *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, from a Buddhist point of view, is the most important among the *abhiññā*s, but from our point of view is the less marvellous in that it does not carry any capacity that is extraordinary in a secular sense. This *abhiññā* is the one that ostensibly carries a soteriological significance and, indeed, corresponds to the attainment of the Buddhist final goal. Therein it is the least controversial, given that its significance in the Buddhist path is apparent from both the Buddhists' and modern academics' points of view. With emphasis on the comprehension of the four noble truths and the absence of anything that can be regarded as magical or supernatural in our sense of the term, the *āsavakkhayañāṇa* may satisfy the view of those that see Buddhism as a 'rational' set of practices, perpetrating this early scholarly assumption. Instead, it is often forgotten that the *āsavakkhayañāṇa* is just the acme of a

20 In addition to the Pāli version, there are four Chinese versions, two complete Sanskrit versions and some Sanskrit fragments, one Tibetan version, and a Gāndhārī version which consists of the first half of the text (and, therefore, it unfortunately does not include the final stages of the Buddhist path of liberation). For a recent overview, see Allon 2024, 4-8.

21 In this regard, see the preliminary material gathered in Appendix 1.

path that involves less rational and more miraculous stages which are not regarded as less real or more imaginary than the final one.

Finally, the narratological approach was limited to only a few cases and certainly a wider and more comprehensive investigation of the narratives can be of some benefit. However, it is worth noting nonetheless as the extraordinary capacities mainly occur in the Buddhist texts in the form of stock passages and are adapted to many different narrative contexts. The present study is focused primarily on the analysis of these stock passages, namely of what is stable and fixed in other contexts. In this regard, it could be the starting point for future studies on the narratives involving meditative powers. Nonetheless, a narratological approach is not completely neglected since the book analyses some features of the Cūḷapanthaka's story (§ 7.4.4.2) and the sequence of the stages into the path from the narrative point of view (Chapter 9).

1.4 Outline of the Intervening Chapters

This book is divided in two parts. Part I (from Ch. 2 to Ch. 5) provides some preliminary remarks, introduces the most problematic sources and arguments before getting to the heart of the analysis. Since this book deals with many arguments and some of them are, from some points of view, controversial, I decided to provide some background information. Part I will start with the main protagonist of this book which contains the meditative powers at stake, namely the Buddhist path of liberation, its context and its studies. Successively, I will discuss some of my theoretical assumptions to use the Vedic texts in the study of the Buddhist canon. Thereafter, I will introduce the Abhidhammic doctrines of the 'consciousness process' (*cittavīthi*) and the 'momentariness' (*khaṇavāda*) to which a reader should be acquainted with in order to properly understand some later commentarial exegeses. Pāli commentaries, eventually, will be introduced and discussed. The logic structure is as follows: at first, the canonical context of the path is discussed, because it is the starting point; later its pre-history (Vedic texts); and to follow, its interpretations (Abhidhammic theories and commentaries). Part I is due to the need to explain my approach to the sources, which is not at all obvious, considering that commentaries are used by scholars in different ways, as are Vedic texts. I also regard it as important to make some brief historical digressions since I am convinced that the way we conceive the history of a given textual *corpus* profoundly influences our approach to it and the use we will make of it as well. Part II (from Ch. 6 to Ch. 9) analyses at length the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and the other *abhiññā*s, ending with an assessment of these extraordinary capacities in the path of liberation. In outline, the book proceeds as follows:

Chapter 2 aims to contextualise the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and the other *abhiññā*s according to the version of the path considered by the present study. It is highlighted how previous academic studies on the same long version of the Buddhist path have thus far avoided focusing on these stages, which could therefore conclude that this is essentially a neglected topic. One reason for this could be the tendency to gloss over their importance based on some rationalistic assumptions.

Chapter 3 argues for the importance of the early Brahmanical sources (especially the Upaniṣads) in the study of Indian Buddhism. After having

introduced the theme, the thorny problem of the relationship between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads is discussed with a particular reference to Johannes Bronkhorst's ideas (2007) that would overturn the standard relative chronology that would see some of the oldest Upaniṣads as predating the time of the historical Buddha and, then, as suitable sources to investigate the Buddhist background. Bronkhorst's arguments are rejected, and this paves the way for the use of these sources in the present study.

Chapter 4 introduces two Abhidhammic doctrines which should be considered in order to correctly understand some exegetical accounts. Namely, the doctrine of consciousness process (*cittavīthi*) and the doctrine of momentariness (*khaṇavāda*).

Chapter 5 initially discusses the word 'commentary' as a translation for the Pāli term '*aṭṭhakathā*', highlighting that 'commentary' covers a wider range of texts than '*aṭṭhakathā*'. Then, some reflections on the fact of being a commentary are presented, showing that a text is often called 'commentary' not only for its stylistic features, but also on the basis of other factors, such as the historical time or the authority that a tradition bestows it. Therefore, it would be better to consider the exegetical process as an ongoing process. Thereafter, some of the scholarly issues raised by the use of Pāli commentarial literature as a scholarly source for the study of the earlier canonical texts are discussed and, at the same time, the necessity of the Pāli commentaries for the study of the extraordinary capacities is highlighted.

Chapter 6 focuses on the first of the meditational powers, the creation of a body made of mind (*manomayakāya*). The chapter starts with a brief state of the art (§ 6.1) and introduces the canonical pericope that concerns the power (§ 6.2). Then, the interpretation of the compound '*manomaya*' is discussed (§ 6.2.1), as well as the translation and phrasing of the simile involving the reed (*muñja*) and the stalk (*isīkā*) (§ 6.2.2). After these preliminary remarks on the canonical account, the Vedic background (with particular reference to the Upaniṣads) is analysed (§ 6.3) and, consequently, a comparison between the Buddhist and Upaniṣadic context has been made (§ 6.3.1). Thereupon, it is analysed how the Theravāda tradition developed the interpretation of the *manomayakāya* (§ 6.4). In particular, it has been proved that the interpretation of the Pāli term '*karaṇḍa*' as the 'slough of the snake' (in place of the natural meaning of 'basket') made by Buddhaghosa is not consistent with the use of *karaṇḍa* in the preceding and contemporary sources. In order to corroborate this point, reasons for this kind of interpretation and its probable textual origin have been presented. The diachronic study paved the way for some conclusive reflections (§ 6.4.8) regarding the value of the commentaries as hermeneutical tools to understand the canon, given the tendency to accumulate innovations over time. Finally, it is argued that this case study can demonstrate the useful possibility to overturn the prevailing paradigm that would see the commentaries as useful sources to understand the canon, whereas the use of the canon to evaluate the commentarial literature is equally a profitable approach.

Chapter 7 analyses the list of various psychophysical powers (*iddhividhă*) achieved by the Buddhist yogin. It starts by introducing the canonical pericope of the *iddhividhă* (§ 7.1) and some reasons for the translation of *iddhividhă* as 'a variety of psychophysical powers' are provided (§ 7.2). Thereafter, the involvement of the body made of mind (*manomayakāya*) in the execution of the extraordinary capacities has been analysed, benefitting from the evidence provided by the Vedic texts and discussing some scholarly

views on the topic (§ 7.3). Then, each individual psychophysical power in the canonical pericope has been analysed in a diachronic way from the canonical account up to the commentarial exegesis (§ 7.4). The analysis of the first *iddhi*, namely the multiplication of the body (*eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti*), is particularly important for some results (§ 7.4.4). In this section, thanks to the evidence provided by the *Saddhammappakāsinī* – which shows that the exegetical literature is aware that it is providing additions – the way through which the commentaries and, more broadly speaking the exegesis, operate has been named the 'interpretative accretion process' (§ 7.4.4.1). Moreover, the Cūḷapanthaka's story shows the existence, in the exegetical sources, of an early connection between the first *iddhi* and the creation of a body made of mind (*manomayakāya*) which seems to also be corroborated by the early canonical literature (§ 7.4.4.2).

Chapter 8 considers the group of powers known as *abhiññā*s 'higher knowledges', comprising of the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*) (§ 8.1), knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others (*cetopariyañāṇa*) (§ 8.2), knowledge of recollection of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*) (§ 8.3), knowledge of the falling and arising of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*) (§ 8.4). The analysis is conducted through the diachronic approach already applied for the *manomayakāya* and *iddhividhā*. It is worth noting that the *abhiññā*s are systematically subjected to a kind of exegesis that involves the *cittavīthi* theory, but the implications will be analysed in the next Chapter (9). The chapter ends with a study on the similarities and differences in the use of the term 'divine' (Pāli: *dibba*; Sanskrit: *divya*/*daiva*) in both Buddhist and Upaniṣadic texts (§ 8.5). This last topic paves the way to the following chapter.

Chapter 9 makes use of what has been learnt from the study of the powers in the former chapters in order to evaluate their significance within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s Buddhist path of liberation. At first, it is discussed whether or not the stages (at least the final ones) in the Buddhist path should be regarded as connected to each other. It seems that they can only bolster each other but can hardly be understood as necessary prerequisites given the existence of many versions of the Buddhist path in which one or more stages are omitted (§§ 9.1 and 9.2). However, the existence of a narrative climax focused on the body's improvement in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s account has been highlighted (§ 9.3). Furthermore, a bold hypothesis has been put forward, namely that at the stage of development of the divine element of ear, all the physical senses are divinised (§ 9.3.1). A divine body and divine senses are, indeed, necessary to attain higher knowledges, which are significant soteriological truths attained by a direct experience, rather than merely intellectual. The nature of the knowledge attained by the divine senses is analysed through the lens of the *cittavīthi*, which indicates that the divine senses operate without being obstructed by matter, highlighting the progressive liberation of the mind from the bounds of matter (§ 9.4). Finally, the relationship between the extraordinary capacities and the state of *jhāna* is considered, discussing the position endorsed by Eviatar Shulman (2014) on the matter (§ 9.4.1).

Part I
Preliminary Remarks

2 The Buddhist Path of Liberation: Context, Academic Studies and Interpretations

Index 2.1 Scholarly Treatments and Interpretations.

The concepts of *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhǎ* and the other *abhiññā*s can occur either separated from each other in the Buddhist texts, or listed together in a sequence as part of the Buddhist path of liberation. The Nikāyas and Āgamas reflect a huge variety of schemes of this path and variations occur with reference to the number of stages involved.[1] Within the Pāli Nikāyas, a long exposition of the path is reported in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2), and in an abbreviated and/or modified form in the subsequent eleven *sutta*s (D 3-13). These *sutta*s, together with the *Brahmajālasutta* (D 1), are part of a section of the *Dīghanikāya* called the *Sīlakkhandhavagga*, which contains the first thirteen *sutta*s. Most of these *sutta*s have a parallel within the Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama*, which is extant in Chinese (T 1), and all of them have a parallel within the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrghāgama*,[2] which is partly extant in Sanskrit.[3]

1 In this regard, see Gethin 2020.

2 Strictly speaking, it is not certain whether the Sanskrit *Dīrghāgama* should be regarded as belonging to the Sarvāstivāda or Mūlasarvāstivāda, and therefore, scholars have adopted different conventions in addressing this *corpus* of texts. Rupert Gethin (2020, 7-8) used 'Sarvāstivāda' as a term of convenience, whereas Jens-Uwe Hartmann (2014, 140, n. 5) suggested the use of (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda to highlight the existence of an underlying ambiguity. Thus, my use of the term 'Mūlasarvāstivāda' is based on Bhikkhu Anālayo's recent treatment of the issue (2023a, 73-96) and its adoption in some recent scholarship (e.g. DiSimone 2019, 11, n. 2; 2024).

3 Although significant parts of the Sanskrit *Dīrghāgama* have not reached us since portions of the preserved manuscripts were either destroyed or are still missing, the *sūtra*s that constitute it are known due to the titles extant in some lists, called *uddāna*s. For a detailed discussion of *uddāna*s, see Hartmann 2004, 123-5.

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Table 2.1 This table is made in accordance with Hartmann, Wille 2014, 139-41; Anālayo 2014, 7-8; Bucknell 2014, 62-6; and, in particular, with Gethin 2020, 13

Theravāda *Dīghanikāya*	**Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* (*Cháng āhán jīng* 長阿含經; T 1)**	**Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrghāgama***
Sīlakkhandhavagga: 13 *suttas*	Section 3: 10 *jīng* 經	*Śīlaskhandhanipāta*: 23 *sūtras*
1 Brahmajālasutta	21 Fàndòng jīng 梵動經	47 Brahmajālasūtra
2 Sāmaññaphalasutta	27 Shāménguǒ jīng 沙門果經	44 Rājasūtra
3 Ambaṭṭhasutta	20 Āmózhòu jīng 阿摩晝經	35 Ambāṣṭhasūtra
4 Soṇadaṇḍasutta	22 Zhǒngdé jīng 種德經	33 Śroṇatāṇḍyasūtra
5 Kūṭadantasutta	23 Jiùluótántóu jīng 究羅檀頭經	34 Kūṭatāṇḍyasūtra
6 Mahālisutta		32 Mahallisūtra
7 Jāliyasutta		30 Maṇḍīśasūtra I
8 Kassapasīhanādasutta	25 Luǒxíngfànzhì jīng 倮形梵志經	46 Kāśyapasūtra
9 Poṭṭhapādasutta	28 Bùzhàpólóu jīng 布吒婆樓經	36 Pṛṣṭhapālasūtra
10 Subhasutta		42 Śukasūtra
11 Kevaddhasutta	24 Jiāngù jīng 堅固經	29 Kaivartisūtra
12 Lohiccasutta	29 Lùzhē jīng 露遮經	28 Lohityasūtra II
13 Tevijjasutta	26 Sānmíng jīng 三明經	45 Vāsiṣṭhasūtra
		25 Tridaṇḍisūtra
		26 Piṅgalātreyasūtra
		27 Lohityasūtra I
		31 Maṇḍīśasūtra II
		37 Kāraṇavādīsūtra
		38 Pudgalasūtra
		39 Śrutasūtra
		40 Mahallasūtra
		41 Anyatamasūtra
		43 Jīvakasūtra

The *Sīlakkhandhavagga* of the *Dīghanikāya* shares its name with a parallel section within the Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrghāgama*, namely the *Śīlaskhandhanipāta*. However, the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* is the first section of the *Dīghanikāya* and begins with the *Brahmajālasutta*, whereas the *Śīlaskhandhanipāta* is the final section of the Sanskrit *Dīrghāgama* and reports the *Brahmajālasūtra* at the very end. As noted by Hartmann (2004, 122), it makes sense to suppose that the sections were reversed intentionally. The Chinese Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* seems to have four sections without names, the third of which parallels the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* and *Śīlaskhandhanipāta*.

Table 2.2 See Hartmann, Wille 2014, 139. Here, I have accepted the correction made by Anālayo (2014, 8-9, n. 13) on Hartmann, Wille (2014, 139), the same emendation seems to have also been adopted by Gethin (2020, 11). The number of *sutta*s/*sūtra*s/*jīng* 經 contained in each section is reported in brackets

Comparison of sections		
Theravāda Dīghanikāya	Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* (*Cháng āhán jīng* 長阿含經; T 1)	Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrghāgama*
***Sīlakkhandhavagga* (13)**	Section 1 (4)	Ṣaṭsūtrakanipāta (6)
Mahāvagga (10)	Section 2 (15)	Yuganipāta (18)
Pāṭikavagga (11)	**Section 3 (10) parallel to *Sīlakkhandhavagga* and *Śīlaskhandhanipāta***	***Śīlaskhandhanipāta* (23)**
	Section 4 (1)	

The long version of the Buddhist path of liberation has attracted the attention of scholars since the XIX and XX centuries, and many works were either dedicated to analysing, or at least touched upon this topic, until recent times.[4] A full account on the path of liberation is provided in the *Dīghanikāya* within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* since it is the first *sutta* in the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* in which the list occurs, whereas in the following *sutta*s it is reported in an abbreviated form. The full account of the list, indeed, occurs in distinct texts within the Chinese and Sanskrit *Dīrghāgama* because the order of texts was arranged differently. Therefore, the first text in the Chinese Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* in which the list occurs is the text parallel to the Theravāda *Ambaṭṭhasutta*, namely the *Āmózhòu jīng* 阿摩晝經 (T0001.01.0083c03-86c16);[5] whereas in the Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrghāgama*, the full list appears in *Lohityasūtra I*, a parallel *sūtra* to the Theravāda *Lohiccasutta*.[6] For the present research, the Theravāda

4 As early as the English translation of the *Dīghanikāya* made by T.W. Rhys Davids in 1899, the existence of a scheme repeated in many *sutta*s within, but also outside of, the *Dīghanikāya* has been highlighted (Rhys Davids 1899, 59-61). The same path of liberation was used by Frauwallner ([1953] 1973, 129-35) to explain the Buddhist way of liberation within his influential *History of Indian Philosophy* (*Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*). See also Gethin 2020, 8-9. Notable further works, either on this topic or those that at least take it into account, are Schmithausen 1981; Griffiths 1983; Bucknell 1984; Meisig 1987; MacQueen 1988; Manné 1995; Yit 2004; Somaratne 2016; Shulman 2017; Gethin 2020; Shi 2021; Ben-David 2024.

5 See MacQueen 1988, 179-80; Yit 2004, 39; Gethin 2020, 12.

6 See Yit 2004, 45; Melzer 2010, 20; Gethin 2020, 14. The Sanskrit *Lohityasūtra I* has been edited by Choi (2015).

Sāmaññaphalasutta is the main reference, nevertheless some comparison with the Dharmaguptaka and Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions can help to clarify or scrutinise some points.[7]

The path of liberation within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* runs from D I 62 to D I 85 and could be, in a partially arbitrary way, divided into twenty items or stages:[8]

Table 2.3 Stages of the Buddhist path of liberation

Buddhist path of liberation (D I 62-85)	
Stage	**Description**
1 *tathāgato loke uppajjati* (§ 40; D I 62)	Appearance of a Tathāgata in the world
2 *pabbajati* (§§ 41-2; D. I, 62-3)	A householder, having heard the doctrine, gains faith and converts to the life of Buddhist monks
3 *sīla-sampanna* (§§ 43-63; D I 63-70)	The monk lives in accordance with the Buddhist moral rules
4 *indriyesu guttadvāro* (§ 64; D I 70)	The monk guards his senses (the five physical senses plus the mind)
5 *sati-sampajañña* (§ 65; D I 70-1)	The monk is mindful and fully aware in all his activities
6 *santuṭṭha* (§ 66; D I 71)	The monk is content with his frugal life
7 *vivittaṃ senāsana bhajati* (§ 67; D I 71)	The monk finds a secluded dwelling
8 *pañca-nīvaraṇa-pahāna* (§§ 68-74; D I 71-3)	The monk abandons the five hindrances
9 *paṭhamajjhāna* (§§ 75-6; D I 73-4)	The monk attains the first meditative absorption
10 *dutiyajjhāna* (§§ 77-8; D I 74-5)	The monk attains the second meditative absorption
11 *tatiyajjhāna* (§§ 79-80; D I 75)	The monk attains the third meditative absorption
12 *catutthajjhāna* (§§ 81-2; D I 75-6)	The monk attains the fourth meditative absorption
13 *ñāṇa-dassana* (§§ 83-4; D I 76-7)	The monk discovers that the body is impermanent and that the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is dependent on it
14 *manomayakāya* (§§ 85-6; D I 77)	The monk creates from the physical body another body made of mind

7 As I had not access to Choi 2015, the comparison with the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition will be based on the Sanskrit version of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (= *Śrāmaṇyaphalasūtra*) extant within the *Saṅghabhedavastu*, which reports a full account of the Buddhist path of liberation. As reported by Hartmann and Wille (2014, 142-3), the edition of the texts of the Sanskrit *Dīrghāgama* is ongoing through Master or Doctoral theses, so they are not yet readily available.

8 Other kinds of classification were provided in Rhys Davids 1899, 57-9; Griffiths 1983, 52-3; Meisig 1987, 39; MacQueen 1988, 279-80; Manné 1995, 9-12; Yit 2004, 16-17; Gethin 2020, 16. My classification is in line with those also made by Yit and Gethin, although I have made some minor changes to terminology.

Stage	Description
15 *iddhividhǎ* (§§ 87-8; D I 77-9)	The monk develops various kinds of psychophysical miraculous powers
16 *dibbasotadhātu* (§§ 89-90; D I 79)	The monk develops the divine ear and so he is able to hear sounds both human and divine, far or near
17 *cetopariyañāṇa* (§§ 91-2; D I 79-81)	The monk is able to comprehend the mind of other people
18 *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* (§§ 93-4; D I 81-2)	The monk is able to remember his previous lives
19 *cutūpapātañāṇa* (§§ 95-6; D I 82-3)	The monk is able to observe the rebirth of beings in an inferior or superior plane of existence according to their *kamma*
20 *āsavakkhayañāṇa* (§§ 97-8; D I 83-5)	The monk knows all noxious influxes are destroyed and achieves liberation

According to the above subdivision of the Buddhist path of liberation, *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhǎ*, and the other *abhiññās* are the last seven stages (14-20) of the path.

2.1 Scholarly Treatments and Interpretations

It is worth noting that among the scholars who have analysed some stages in greater detail, no one focused on the last stages of the path except Schmithausen (1981) who, however, still only considered the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*. Meisig (1987) provides a synoptic edition and translation of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*/*Śrāmaṇyaphalasūtra* comparing five different versions of the texts as well as comparing the variants of the path (1987, 53-80). Griffiths analysed only seven stages in detail, namely 4, 5, 9-13 (1983, 60-88) making a comparison with other occurrences within the Nikāyas, whereas Yit analysed in detail the first eight stages (1-8), comparing them also with the Āgamas (2004, 93-266), and summarising the others (9-20) in an appendix (2004, 326-44). It may be possible that the last stages were disregarded due to a certain kind of preconception. For instance, regarding the last stages of the path concerning miraculous performances, Manné (1995, 21-3) refers to them by just quoting Lee Siegel's *Net of Magic: Wonders and Deceptions in India* (1991), and so addressing them as mere deceptions. Furthermore, comparing the *Dīghanikāya*'s exposition of the path with a version extant in the *Majjhimanikāya*, Manné seems to regard the latter as more authentic, solely on the basis of the fact that it involves fewer extraordinary activities, and that some of the few involved might be rationally explicable:

> The M[ajjhima]N[ikāya] version lacks most of the paranormal or transpersonal powers [...] past life work forms an increasing part of the modern therapeutical experience in the work of therapists of different theoretical allegiances: knowing something about one's former lives seems to be useful for solving problems in the present life. This section

> of the M[ajjhima]N[ikāya] is more plausible than the same section of the D[īgha]N[ikāya] version. (Manné 1995, 26-7; square brackets mine)[9]

Manné also believed that this stereotyped account of the path of liberation was "clearly propaganda. It is the advertisement for the Buddha's method and its results, and means for final victory in debates" (1995, 29-30) and thereafter wondered: "[w]as the Buddha then cynical, offering magic and non-Buddhist states as part of his message just to convert followers? I think not. He knew his Teaching was hard to grasp and subtle" (1995, 30). The latter is a questionable assumption since there is no *a priori* reason to think that these kinds of magical and miraculous performances were not originally part of the Buddhist Doctrine given that the ancient Indian cultural *milieu* – see e.g. Vedic tradition, *Yogasūtra*, and Jain tradition – is full of these occurrences.[10] Manné's attempt to interpret the accounts related to the meditative powers as a mere propaganda is part of the many ongoing attempts of interpretation that, deliberately or not, dismiss the value and the importance of these powers. For instance, we find that Bhikkhu Anālayo wrote in more recent times that:

> These instances leave little doubt that the ability to exercise supernatural powers is an integral part of early Buddhism. Nevertheless, such abilities are not seen as central to Buddhist practice. In fact, the supreme type of achievement among the six higher knowledges, *aññā* [sic., most likely *abhiññā*], is the gaining of full awakening, which is reckoned far superior to any supernatural feat. (Anālayo 2017a, 574-5; square brackets mine)

Even when fully recognised as early elements of Buddhism, extraordinary capacities are not considered key aspects. In the same vein, some scholars recognise the existence and widespread presence of these powers, and in an attempt to bestow to these accounts a certain degree of veracity, ended up relegating them to the mere sphere of imagination. In this regard, Rune Johansson suggested that "[s]ome of the supernatural forms of knowledge (*abhiññā*) may be understood as ideations interpreted as *real*" (1969, 48). A similar way of thinking – *mutatis mutandis* – seems to be expressed in more recent times by Steven Collins when, concerning the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, he writes that:

9 In more recent times, a similar position has been endorsed by Somaratne, who defines the *Majjhimanikāya*'s version as a 'standard version', and the *Dīghanikāya*'s one as an 'extended version' (2016, 359), sustaining a non-Buddhist status for some developments, such as the *iddhividhǎ* (2016, 372).

10 Similarly, Gethin argued that it is not implausible that the Buddha could have genuinely believed in the myth of creation within the *Aggaññasutta* (D 27) and other accounts regarded as mythological by modern scholars. He writes that: "there would seem to be no a priori reason why we should assume that an ascetic wandering the plains of northern India in the fifth century B.C.E. should share the same common sense and notions of plausibility that modern scholars do. Why should the Buddha not have genuinely thought that the world and society evolved after beings fell from the realm of radiance as described in the *Aggaññ*a *Sutta*, or that in a previous life he had lived as a great king in a city made of silver, gold, and other precious gems? The suggestion that he did think such things cannot just be dismissed as intrinsically historically implausible" (Gethin 2006, 66-7). Furthermore, Gethin (2001, 97-101) also highlights that in the Theravāda canonical literature the Buddha does not reject the practice of *iddhi*s *per se*, but only their display.

> From an external academic perspective, this whole account of the memory of former lives cannot be a phenomenological description of Buddhaghosa's or anyone else's experience of memory: it is rather an imaginative projection. (2009, 518)

Therefore, we might assume that either a negative preconception discouraged the undertaking of careful studies on these final stages of the path, or that the lack of studies resulted in unflattering interpretations. The most positive widespread interpretation ascribes the power to bring knowledge with a soteriological significance to some of the extraordinary capacities.[11] The *āsavakkhayañāṇa*'s soteriological significance is self-explanatory since this *abhiññā* is not only the most important, but also involves the comprehension of the four noble truths and the achievement of liberation.[12] The other two *abhiññā*s whose soteriological significance has been extensively suggested are the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* and *cutūpapātañāṇa*, which, together with the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, are referred to in some texts as the 'three knowledges' (*tisso vijjā*).[13] Remembering one's own past existences and seeing the falling and arising of beings is a way to directly experience the existence of the round of rebirths called *saṃsāra* and the law of karma that influences this process and directs beings in higher or lower conditions.[14] The *cetopariyañāṇa* has a less apparent soteriological significance, but as demonstrated by Bradley Clough ([2010] 2011, 419-23), it can nonetheless contribute some important knowledge (partly also soteriological) and can be a useful teaching tool of the Buddha to understand the mental dispositions of pupils.[15] Concerning the *dibbasotadhātu* and *iddhividhā̆*, their importance and significance is limited, let alone the *manomayakāya*, which was carefully studied by very few scholars (see below § 6.1). In this regard, the words of Bradley Clough epitomise what I regard as an optimistic (but nonetheless still limited) view, concerning the *dibbasotadhātu* and *iddhividhā̆*, in which at least a sort of significance is recognised:

11 Notably, there is an attempt to interpret the final stages in the Buddhist path of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* made by Radich (2007, 255-66) that would bestow a more active participation and importance to these powers in the process to attain liberation (it is especially interesting the involvement of the *manomayakāya*, which is often neglected). However, I am not acquainted with any other work that has seriously taken into account Radich's theory and, therefore, it is an interpretation *sui generis*.

12 Rhys Davids (1899, 59) states that only the *āsavakkhayañāṇa* is exclusively Buddhist among the fruits of the homeless life in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. A similar point of view is sustained by Demiéville: "[d]es six *abhijnà*, seule la sixième a un caractère proprement bouddhiq" (1927, 290).

13 This categorisation will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

14 For more details, see below for § 8.3 concerning *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* and § 8.4 concerning *cutūpapātañāṇa*. Demiéville (1927, 293) sustained that among the six *abhiññā*s only the last three were considered *vijjā*s because they were the only ones with a transcendent utility. Scholars, such as Jayatilleke (1963, 466) and Kalupahana (1975, 106; 1987, 71), clearly gave prominence to the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* and *cutūpapātañāṇa* among the *abhiññā*s. Radich (2007, 259-60) also argues that the practitioner, thanks to the meditative powers, directly knows the *saṃsāra*, while Fiordalis (2008, 116) suggests that the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* and *cutūpapātañāṇa* provide a confirmation of the Buddhist doctrine, and at the same time support the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*. Anālayo (2008, 91-3) suggests that these higher knowledges enable the practitioner to gain insight into the mechanism behind the operation of *saṃsāra*. Clough ([2010] 2011, 423-8; 2012, 95) also sustains the soteriological significance of these two *abhiññā*s.

15 Some Fiordalis' works (2008; [2010] 2011) also deal at length with the telepathy known as *ādesanāpāṭihāriya*, highlighting as it is an important part of some narratives.

> Although some of the *abhiññā*s, particularly *iddhi* and divine ear, could not always be seen as highly valuable in and of themselves, they certainly could function at least as reliable signs of progress along the path of meditation practice, as indications that that one is transcending the normal limits of the phenomenal world to which one is bound. (Clough [2010] 2011, 432)

What Clough writes concerning the *dibbasotadhātu* is quite informative regarding the importance of the lack of understanding and full comprehension of a power in determining the role of that power within the Buddhist tradition:

> Unlike the other *abhiññā*s, its role and usage in Buddhist epistemological and soteriological schemes is unclear. Except from the point that the ability to hear sounds from other realms might confirm the Buddhist cosmological teaching of the existence of beings in these realms (the Buddhist worldview of the five or six destinies), it does not really serve to verify key Buddhist teachings, the way the other *abhiññā*s do. (Clough [2010] 2011, 418-19)[16]

From the above quotations from Clough's article, we can deduce that at least the *iddhividhă* and *dibbasotadhātu* still lack a full comprehension and explanation satisfactory enough to effectively integrate these two powers with the other ones. There would be greater problems if we would consider the existence of the *manomayakāya* and the fact that it should have its *raison d'être* in the Buddhist path of liberation. Therefore, given that not only the study of these final stages was, for the most part, neglected, but their interpretation can reasonably be widely improved, the first aim of the present book will be to shed new light on these elements in the hope that this could offer insight on their significance into the path. The stages analysed are from the *manomayakāya* (number 14 in the above Table 2.3) to the *cutūpapātañāṇa* (number 19). The last stage (i.e. *āsavakkhayañāṇa*) is not treated in the present book, although some useful material on it is gathered in Appendix 1. The analysis has benefited from previous studies concerning the path of liberation. Furthermore, the Vedic background will be analysed in order to better understand the context of formation. Among the Vedic texts, particular attention will be paid to the Upaniṣads, which are among the closest Vedic texts to the Buddhist canon, not only in terms of chronology but also in terms of the speculative arguments considered. For this reason, some preliminary remarks on the Vedic texts and their relationship with Buddhism will be discussed in the next chapter.

16 Clough writes a similar statement for the *iddhividhă*: "[t]hese supernormal powers [i.e. *iddhi*s] are therefore more important for what they signify, which is the attainment of a certain important level of soteriological success in practice (namely realization of the fourth *jhāna* of meditative absorption, the state which enables one to cultivate these powers), than they are as powers in and of themselves" (Clough [2010] 2011, 415; square brackets mine). Concerning the *iddhividhă*, Somaratne even states that "there is nothing Buddhistic about this skill" (2016, 372).

3 The Use of Vedic Texts for the Study of Buddhism with a Particular Reference to the Upaniṣads

Index 3.1 Buddhists, brāhmaṇas and Vedic Texts: Some Historical Remarks. – 3.2 The Difficulty in Defining Buddhism and the Upanisads' Relationship. – 3.3 Conclusive Remarks.

In the diachronic study of Buddhism, the use of Vedic texts is a way to further scrutinise some topics. Most Vedic texts arguably predate the arising of Buddhism and therefore may represent, to a certain extent, the pre-history of Buddhism. This means that if we find some ideas or concepts in the Vedic texts that also occur in Buddhist texts, we can try to use the former to understand the latter, especially since some of the Vedic texts are closer to the Buddhist canon than some exegetical texts, such as the Pāli commentaries. The most striking example in the present book concerns the study of the *manomayakāya* given that the term '*manomaya*' is quite widespread in the Vedic texts (especially Upaniṣads), whereas the *manomayakāya* is neglected by the official Theravāda Abhidhamma, which is the first exegetical systematic elaboration of the Buddhist teachings. The first exegesis is the treatment of the *manomayakāya* in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, a quasi-Abhidhammic text that postdates the closure of the Abhidhammapiṭaka and thus was included in the *Khuddakanikāya*.[1]

1 See von Hinüber 1996, 59-60. For more details concerning the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s dating, see below § 6.4.1.

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In the history of Buddhist studies, the relationship between Buddhism and Vedic texts – especially the later ones, namely the Upaniṣads – has never been plain and, therefore, this chapter will provide some background presuppositions for the use of these sources in the present work. After some historical discussion, I will proceed to analyse the relationship between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads and, in particular, I will consider the theories of Johannes Bronkhorst as expressed in his *Greater Magadha* (= Bronkhorst 2007) since they may affect my basic assumptions. Bronkhorst's ideas would overturn, or at least undermine, the standard relative chronology that would see at least some of the early Upaniṣads predating the arising of Buddhism.

3.1 Buddhists, brāhmaṇas and Vedic Texts: Some Historical Remarks

Buddhism, just as any historical phenomenon, is the product of a specific cultural environment. In the case of early Buddhism, this environment is represented by the northern area of ancient India. This area did not only see the proliferation of ascetic movements – of which Buddhism played a part of together with Jainism and Ājīvikism – but also hosted another religious group, that of the Brāhmaṇas. Although the geographical focus of the oldest Vedic text, the *Ṛgveda*, is to the west (esp. Punjab and Afghanistan) and that of Buddhist texts is further to the east (Ganges valley), late compositions such as the Brāhmaṇas[2] and early Upaniṣads covered a wider northern area, sometimes even close to some Buddhist sites.[3] Therefore, it is not unusual to find within the Pāli Buddhist texts the compound *samaṇa-brāhmaṇa*, which provides us, from a Buddhist perspective, a panoramic view of the ancient Indian religious environment, which is thus composed of wandering ascetics (*samaṇa*) and the brāhmaṇas. The oldest Brahmanical cultures can be found expressed through texts produced in the so-called Vedic period: the earliest period of Indian history for which we have textual records. This period is conventionally around 1500-500 BC (see Jamison and Witzel 2003, 65). Here, I refer to 'Vedic texts' as the texts written in this period (which can oscillate for a few centuries), thus using the term 'Vedic' and other derivatives in a broad sense. It goes without saying that this use of the term 'Veda' is conventional, because what is called 'Veda' was composed of different texts across different periods. This topic falls within the problem concerning the definition of what the Vedic canon is (as far as the term 'canon' can be applied to the Vedic *corpus* of texts).[4] In some old texts, such as the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, there is reference to the three Vedas (e.g. *trayeṇa vedena*; ŚB 5.5.5.10 or also *trayī vidyā*; ŚB 1.1.4.3) which indicates that only the *mantra*s were considered 'Vedas' at that time. These *mantra*s are the verses (*ṛc*), sacrificial formulae (*yajus*), and melodies (*sāman*), and were collated within collections (Saṃhitā) called,

2 In this book, I will use 'brāhmaṇa' to designate the religious group and 'Brāhmaṇa' to refer to the literary genre of ritual exegesis in prose, which is part of the Vedic *corpus* of texts.

3 The location of the Vedic texts is treated by Witzel (1987). Some Vedic texts were composed quite close to Kosala (= Sanskrit: Kośala), the birthplace of the Buddha. In this regard, see e.g. Staal 2008, 311 and Bausch 2018.

4 On this topic see, for instance, Carpenter 1994; Holdrege 1994; Witzel 1997; Ferrara 2012.

respectively: *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Sāmaveda*.[5] Another kind of *mantra* is the *atharvāṅgiras* or *atharvan*, which flowed into the Saṃhitā called *Atharvaveda*. The latter was considered in later times as the fourth Veda (e.g. *ātharvaṇaṃ caturtham*; CU 7.1.2-4; 7.2.1; 7.7.1). Interestingly, there are mentions of a tripartite collection of Vedas within the Pāli Buddhist texts through the notion of 'three knowledges' (*tisso vijjā*, often also in the adjectival form *tevijja* 'having three knowledges', which is equivalent to the Sanskrit *traividya*).[6] Furthermore, within the *Dīghanikāya* it is said that the brāhmaṇa Ambaṭṭha was "a student [of the Vedas], one who knows the *mantra*s, one who has gone to the further end of the three Vedas" (*ajjhāyako mantadharo tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū*; D I 88);[7] the Pāli commentary specifies that the three Vedas are the *Ṛgveda*, *Yajurveda*, and *Sāmaveda*.[8] However, when the three knowledges are the ones of the Buddha and/or monks and nuns, the meaning is different. In this latter case, the three knowledges are what in another classification would correspond to the last three *abhiññā*s of the six-*abhiññā*s (*chaḷabhiññā*) classification, namely: 1) the knowledge of recollection of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*); 2) the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) or the knowledge of the fall and rise of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*); and, 3) the knowledge of extinction (*khayañāṇa*) of the influxes (*āsava*).[9] This is expressed in various forms within the canon. In the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, for instance, it is stated that:

> One who knows the past abode and sees heavens and states of decline, who then has attained the destruction of [future] rebirths, he is a sage who has perfected his higher knowledges; with these three knowledges he becomes a brāhmaṇa who has the three knowledges; I define him one who has the three knowledges, not the other who repeats what has been repeated.[10]

5 This seems supported by CU 3.1-3, see Bronkhorst 1989, 126.

6 See Sn 594, 595, in which the brāhmaṇa Vāseṭṭha proclaims himself a *tevijja* (one who has three knowledges).

7 The passage continues presenting the *itihāsa*s 'traditional stories' as the fifth Veda (*itihāsa-pañcamānaṃ*; D I 88). According to Bronkhorst (1989, 129-32), passages like this one in Buddhist texts evidence a tradition which counts up to five Vedas. Nonetheless, prominence is clearly given to the first three Vedas in Buddhism.

8 *tiṇṇaṃ vedānan ti Irubbeda-Yajubbeda-Sāmavedānaṃ* (Sv I 247 = Pj II 447; Mp II 261). There are other commentarial passages that share a similar understanding. Therefore, it is stated, for instance, that "one who has got perfection with reference to the knowledges (*vijjā*) of the brāhmaṇas, he would be one who has gone to the further end of the three Vedas" (*tattha ca brāhmaṇāṃ vijjāsu nipphattiṃ gato,* ***tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū*** *siyā*; Th-a III 169 ad Th 1171), or also that "Ambaṭṭha thought: 'The knowledges (*vijjā*) are, for sure, the three Vedas […]'" (*Ambaṭṭho cintesi: vijjā nāma tayo vedā* […]; Sv I 267). For the equivalence of the Pāli *tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū* (e.g. D I 88) with the Sanskrit *vedapāraga*, see Norman 1992, 198 and SED s.v. "veda".

9 A concise account concerning the definition of 'three knowledges' occurs within the Abhidhamma: *vijjā ti tisso vijjā – pubbenivāsānussati ñāṇaṃ vijjā; sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇaṃ vijjā āsavānaṃ khaye ñāṇaṃ vijjā* (Dhs 234; I replaced *pubbenivāsānussativiññāṇaṃ* with Be *pubbenivāsānussati ñāṇaṃ*). A commentarial example is: ***tisso vijjā*** *ti pubbenivāsadibbacakkhu-āsavakkhayapaññā* (Ps III 343). As it is possible to note, the terms *cutūpapātañāṇa* and *dibbacakkhu* may be interchangeable.

10 *pubbenivāsaṃ yo vedī saggāpāyañ ca passati | atho jātikkhayaṃ patto abhiññāvosito muni | etāhi tīhi vijjāhi tevijjo hoti brāhmaṇo | taṃ ahaṃ vadāmi tevijjaṃ nāññaṃ lapitalāpanan ti* || (A I 165, 167-8). The translation of *lapitalāpana* is in accordance with the commentarial explanation at Mp II 265: ***na aññaṃ lapitalāpanan*** *ti yo pan' añño tevijjo ti aññehi lapitavacanamattam eva lapati*.

This passage is followed by another passage that highlights once more how 'having three knowledges' (*tevijja*) is a concept understood in a different way by Buddhists and brāhmaṇas. Indeed, a brāhmaṇa himself admits that the Buddhist three knowledges are far better than the Brahmanic ones:

> "O brāhmaṇa, it is in this way that one has the three knowledges according to the discipline of the Noble". "O dear Gotama, one has the three knowledges of the brāhmaṇas in one way, but in another way one who has the three knowledges according to the discipline of the Noble. O dear Gotama, and the one who has the three knowledges of the brāhmaṇas is not worth a sixteenth part of the one who has the three knowledges according to the discipline of the Noble".[11]

Turning again to the topic of the Vedic texts, it is worth noting that the closest texts to the Buddhist canon – not only in terms of chronology but also in terms of speculative arguments considered – are the Upaniṣads.[12] Therefore, particular attention will be paid to these texts. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest or establish a distinct separation between the Upaniṣads and other Vedic texts. Some of the earlier Upaniṣads are, indeed, sections of other late Vedic texts and so their existence as independent texts is the result of a modern periodisation.[13] Therefore, although the oldest Upaniṣads will be taken into account more systematically, the other older Vedic texts will be consulted if needed in order to avoid a sharp and artificial separation from the Upaniṣads, allowing the continuity existing within the Vedic tradition to emerge, if present. The use of Upaniṣadic material in the study of Buddhism would raise the issue concerning the relationship between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads, a topic that is worthy of further analysis.

3.2 The Difficulty in Defining Buddhism and the Upaniṣads' Relationship

As Jan W. de Jong rightly wrote "[s]ince 1881 much has been written on the relations between the *Upaniṣads* and Buddhism, but without clear results" (1997, 33). In some ways, de Jong's statement is still valid and, therefore, if this was a contentious issue during the period between the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century, we should admit that it still remains a very popular and relevant topic of discussion today. In the 'Middle Period (1877-1942)' of Buddhist studies,[14] some scholars – such as Sir Monier Monier-Williams and Thomas W. Rhys Davids – recognised some influences of the

11 *evam eva kho brāhmaṇa ariyassa vinaye tevijjo hotī ti. aññathā bho Gotama brāhmaṇānaṃ tevijjo aññathā ca pana ariyassa vinaye tevijjo hoti. imassa ca bho Gotama ariyassa vinaye tevijjassa brāhmaṇānaṃ tevijjo kalaṃ nāgghati solasiṃ* (A I 168).

12 Although the historical founder of Jainism, Mahāvīra, was a contemporary of the Buddha and predeceased him (Dundas [1992] 2002, 24), the Jaina scriptures that came down to us belong mostly to one sect, the Śvetāmbara, and seem to be redacted in a later period than the Buddhist sources. Moreover, another Jaina sect, the Digambara, even claims that the original textual tradition has most definitely been lost (Dundas [1992] 2002, 60-85).

13 In this regard, see Cohen 2008, 5-9; Ferrara 2012, 30; Cohen 2018a, 27-8; Killingley 2018, 69, 71.

14 According to the arbitrary periodisation made by de Jong (1997, 27).

Upaniṣads on Buddhism.[15] Other scholars were more cautious when they approached the topic. Hermann Oldenberg recognised the influence of the Brahmanic culture on Buddhism, though he is more reluctant in recognising that Buddhists might have been aware of the Upaniṣadic texts.[16] Louis de La Vallée Poussin, for instance, wrote that "[s]ur les rapports des Upanishads et du vieux Bouddhisme, on s'en tient à des opinions arbitraries" ([1909] 1925, VII),[17] whereas he later affirmed that the Upaniṣads were not known by Buddhists.[18] An intermediate position might be represented by Przyluski and Lamotte who wrote that "[l]e Bouddhisme et l'Upaniṣad se sont développés parallèlement pendant une longue suite de siècles […] le Bouddhisme et l'Upaniṣad n'ont pas manqué de réagir l'un sur l'autre" (1932, 141).[19] Signe Cohen (2018b) recently discussed the relationship between the Upaniṣads and early Buddhism, suggesting that scholars are mainly divided in two factions: 1) scholars who think that there are no reasons to believe that the early Buddhists were acquainted with the Upaniṣads; and 2) scholars who assume that early Buddhism was influenced by the Upaniṣads. Among the first group, it is possible to find authors such as Horsch (1968) and Chandra (1971) who preferred to believe that similarities between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads are better explained as the result of sharing the same cultural *milieu*. This kind of approach, nonetheless, never discouraged comparison between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads. This is exemplified by Reat, who suggests, on the basis of the fact that both traditions share similar goals and that the doctrine of karma and rebirth seems to be absent in the oldest

15 Monier-Williams, for instance, wrote: "[t]he Buddha, like all Indians, was by nature a metaphysician. He had great sympathy with the philosophy of the Upanishads" (1889, 104-5). Influences of the Upaniṣads on Buddhism were also hypothesised by Rhys Davids: "it is certain from the details given in our Suttanta that there were then current in Northern India many other philosophic and theosophic speculations besides those the priests found it expedient to adopt, and have preserved for us in the Upanishads. And who can doubt but that some, if not all of them, may also have had their influence on the new doctrine?" (1899, XXVI).

16 Oldenberg, though recognises a geographical distance between the homeland of Brahmanical thinkers (North-West India) and the places in which the Buddha wondered according to the Buddhist literature (East India), wrote that: "[o]f course, influences of Brahmanic speculation touched naturally the east also quite early […] [a]s a matter of fact, the eastern lands appear in the entire Buddhistic literature to be full of Brahmanas" ([1915] 1997, 186). Oldenberg also assumed a time frame between the Upaniṣads and Buddhism: "[c]ompared with the older layers of the Upaniṣads, it is absolutely sure that even the first beginnings of the Buddhistic literature are of later origin, in fact, of much later origin" ([1915] 1997, 186). It appears, however, that Oldenberg was more sceptical regarding a textual influence: "[o]f all the texts in which the Brahmanical speculations as to the delivering power of knowledge are contained, perhaps not even one was known except by hearsay to the founder of the Buddhist community of believers" ([1881] 1882, 52-3). Jan W. de Jong summarised Oldenberg's position in this way: "Oldenberg believed that the Buddhists had probably not known the brahmanical texts; still, he did not hesitate to state that Buddhist had inherited from Brahmanism not only many of its important dogmas but also the general tone of religious thought and sentiments" (1997, 33). The ideas of Oldenberg were accepted by Thomas ([1933] 1953, 90-1), who was contested, however, by Jayatilleke (1963, 65).

17 Quoted also by de Jong (1997, 33). Louis de La Vallée Poussin provided a bibliography of his time in Louis de La Vallée Poussin 1930, 165-7.

18 See de La Vallée Poussin 1927, 12, who was also cited by Gombrich (1990, 13; 1992, 162; [1996] 2006, 14).

19 It is doubtful whether this position was also really maintained by Lamotte since his contribution within the article seems to concern only the arrangement and translation of some passages. Przyluski, indeed, wrote that "[l]es textes ont été établis et traduits par M. Lamotte. Je suis seul responsable des développements qui les accompagnent" (Przyluski and Lamotte 1932, 142).

Vedic texts, that "the *Upaniṣadic* Buddhist doctrines may be diverging interpretations of a non-*Vedic* rebirth tradition" (1977, 163).[20] The strongest argument for this position is that it is difficult to find direct evidence of the Upaniṣads within Buddhist texts.[21] However, from the end of the XX century onwards, a specific attitude seems to have established among scholars concerning the relationship between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads. The discovery of some connections and allusions to the Vedic texts in the Buddhist literature led scholars to consider the Vedic context in a more systematic way. In the nineteen-eighties, for instance, Kenneth R. Norman argues in a seminal article (1981) that the exposition of the concept of no-self (*anattan*) in the *Alagaddūpamasutta* (M 22) is nothing more than a reply to the theory of *ātman/brahman* unity (theory of the equivalence between macrocosm and microcosm), as explained in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* and *Chāndogyopaniṣad*. Hence, it is possible to observe in the nineteen-eighties and nineteen-nineties a proliferation of works that highlight connections between Buddhism and Vedic texts, including the Upaniṣads.[22] This new confidence in the relationship between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads can be described through the words of Richard F. Gombrich, who has always taken into account the historical context in which Buddhism was born and developed:

> Only a generation ago, scholars were still unaware of evidence that the Buddhist Canon contained allusions to non-Buddhist texts. The Buddhist commentarial tradition does not mention any such allusions, so scholars could continue to maintain that although the Buddha had some knowledge of Vedic doctrine and practices, he did not seem to know any Vedic texts. Recent research, however, has found several clear allusions: a couple to Vedic hymns, and several to the oldest Upanishads, especially the *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka*. This intertextuality, as it is nowadays known, both helps us better to understand the Buddha's meaning, since we can see what he was arguing against, and more generally vindicates the antiquity of the texts, since the later generations who commented on them had lost sight of this historical context. (Gombrich [1988] 2006, 20)

20 This statement makes clear that at the base of the controversy concerning the relationship between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads there are also other unresolved issues of Indology, such as the origin of the karma and rebirth theory, a theory shared by both Buddhism and the Upaniṣads. In this regard see, for instance, Flood 1996, 85-6.

21 This was not a problem for all scholars as demonstrated by Nakamura, who states: "we find in the earliest Buddhist sources no reference to the name Upaniṣad nor to branches of study immediately concerning the Upaniṣads. We conclude, therefore, that the Upaniṣads were known to these early Buddhists merely as part of the Veda, without special value being attached to them" (1955, 75).

22 Remarkable articles in the nineteen-eighties are, for instance, Bhattacharya (1980) who discussed similarities in Buddhist phrasing, such as the Pāli phrasing *diṭṭhaṃ sutaṃ mutaṃ viññātaṃ* (M I 135), which resembles Upaniṣadic passages, such as *ātmani khalv are dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāte idaṃ sarvaṃ viditam* (BU 4.5.6). Parallelisms between the Vedic ritual and Buddhist practice were detected by Oguibenine (1983), while Falk (1988) analysed how the Vedic ritual is reflected within the Pāli texts. An influential work that contextualises Buddhism starting from its historical context is Gombrich [1988] 2006. Gombrich ([1988] 1990) also noted similarities between the composition of the Buddhist canon and the Vedic texts, suggesting that the Pāli *sutta* derived from the Vedic *sūkta* (this view is, however, rejected by von Hinüber 1994: 132, who also provides earlier examples of this claim in his footnote 28) and that the Pāli *suttānta* deliberately resembles *vedānta*. Gombrich also wrote important contributions in the nineteen-nineties, such as in Gombrich 1990; 1992; [1996] 2006.

This new state of affairs encouraged scholars to search for parallelisms and connections between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads,[23] analysing how Buddhism adopted a Brahmanical terminology;[24] how Upaniṣadic ideas influenced the Buddhist speculation;[25] parallelisms in particular phrasings or wordings;[26] and, later on, how the literary and narrative shape of the Upaniṣads may have affected the narrative frame of some Buddhist texts.[27] The most obvious direction of influence, in the case of these similarities, was from the Upaniṣads to Buddhism, since the oldest Upaniṣads (esp. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* and *Chāndogyopaniṣad*) are regarded as predating Buddhism.[28] As a matter of fact, if an earlier date for the older Upaniṣads is maintained, all these similarities are better explained as Buddhist references to the Upaniṣadic texts than as loans from a common shared substratum. Therefore, it is worth noting in this regard what Alexis Sanderson wrote about a similar problem encountered when comparing Buddhist Tantric texts with Śaiva scriptures:

> The problem with this concept of a "religious substratum" or "common cultic stock" is that they are by their very nature entities inferred but never perceived. […] Derivation from this hidden source cannot therefore be the preferred explanation for similarities between these specific traditions unless those similarities cannot be explained in any other way. (Sanderson 1994, 92-3)

However, this idyllic state of affairs was soon interrupted in 2007 by Johannes Bronkhorst with the publication of his *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden, Boston: Brill), a work that aimed to turn the tide. Bronkhorst, indeed, argued that "some portions of the early Upaniṣads […] were composed more or less at the time of the Buddha, or later" (Bronkhorst 2007, 258). This, of course, may affect the way in which similarities between Buddhism and the Upaniṣads are interpreted. As a matter of fact, without certainty of at least a relative chronology, it would be more difficult to establish a direction of influence and, therefore, a Buddhist

23 "The work of identifying traces of other brahmanical terminology in Buddhism continues, and scholars are currently devoting time to considering the echoes of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads which can be heard in some of the Buddha's teachings, e.g. in the Aggaññasutta of the Dīgha nikāya. There are certainly more features common to Buddhism and Jainism which await detection" (Norman 1997, 168).

24 A brief overview is provided by Norman (1992). Collins (1993, 311) described the exploration of how far Brahmanism and heterodox traditions (which include Buddhism) share the same language and vocabulary as one of the most pressing tasks of Indology.

25 First among all is the Buddhist concept of *anattan*, as sustained by some scholars, e.g. Collins (1982, 97); Gombrich ([1996] 2006, 14-17); Gethin (1998, 133-9).

26 Some parallelisms were traced, for instance by Gombrich (1990, 15) who directly relates back to the theory explained by Norman (1981).

27 One of the most striking cases is provided by Black (2011). However, it appears that it is not only the Upaniṣads that may have affected Buddhist literature, but that some Buddhist narratives were seemingly modelled on the basis of Vedic prose of the Brāhmaṇas (see von Hinüber [2006] 2008, 196). Parallelisms between ṚV 10.129 and the *Aggaññasutta* have also been discussed by Lindtner (1997-98, 217-24). For similarities between the *Sagāthavagga* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* and the Vedas in form and content, see von Hinüber 2020.

28 Olivelle (1998, 12-13) dates *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* and *Chāndogyopaniṣad* around the VII-VI centuries BC, and *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, *Aitareyopaniṣad*, and *Kauṣītakyupaniṣad* around the VI-V centuries BC.

influence on the Upaniṣads cannot be ruled out. However, the arguments of Bronkhorst did not completely convince the critics,[29] and some reactions against his ideas soon arrived, especially concerning the new dating of the older Upaniṣads and their partial overlap with the early Buddhist texts.[30] The new periodisation suggested by Bronkhorst is counterintuitive for many reasons, and it does not provide justification for some striking features. For instance, if the texts partially overlap each other, why would we find in the Buddhist texts that there is often mention of brāhmaṇas and Brahmanical ideas, whereas within the older Upaniṣads there is no mention of Buddhism? Should we not expect an Upaniṣadic reaction to Buddhism? Of course, we should expect it, and this does seem to occur within a later text, such as the *Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad*. Therefore, in *Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad* 2.4 the word *nirātman* 'without a self' (variant reading: *niśātman*) can be found, an odd occurrence which might be inspired by the Buddhist *anattan* 'no-self' given that in the same verse the word *śūnya* 'empty' also occurs, another term widely used within Buddhist texts.[31] A strategy used to justify Brahmanical references within Buddhist texts is based on diminishing the value of the oral transmission of these texts. The reasoning behind this assumption is that if the oral transmission of texts is not reliable, we can assume that there were interpolations and so this may justify the presence of Brahmanical references, which could be later additions. Hence, Bronkhorst wrote:

> It is frequently pointed out that according to the Ceylonese tradition canonical texts were not written down until the first century BCE, which leaves several centuries between the first composition of at least some of these texts and their fixation in writing. During this long period they were preserved orally; the reliability of this oral tradition cannot be verified. (2007, 208)[32]

There are many misconceptions in a statement like this one. The basic bias is that of an unreliable transmission in the case where an oral transmission is assumed. This has been done without citing any work

29 See, for instance, the reviews of Cort (2007); Neelis (2008); Sarao (2008); Fynes (2011); Wynne (2011); Lubin (2015). Even Lubin, who seems the most enthusiastic, wrote: "I have not been convinced on every point" (2015, 99).

30 Witzel (2009) discussed the idea that the late Vedic texts may overlap to some extent with Buddhist texts – as Bronkhorst's work (2007) would imply – and highlighted how, on the basis of historical, archaeological, and textual evidence, there should be a time gap between the late Vedic and early Buddhist texts. Wynne (2010) discussed the attempt made by Bronkhorst to date the *Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa* (chapters 3-4 of *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*) later than the Buddha (cf. Bronkhorst 2007, 237-8). Wynne (2010, 207-9) showed that Bronkhorst's argument demonstrates only that the *Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa* was not included in the Vedic *corpus* before or during the Buddha's life, whereas its creation and circulation as an independent text could safely have taken place in a period which is previous to – or at least contemporary with – the Buddha's life. Notably, according to Wynne (2011, 1-2), this was Bronkhorst's main argument in trying to establish a later date of the Upaniṣads.

31 See Pande 1957, 575-6; Cohen 2018b, 78. For other Buddhist reference in the *Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad*, see Jayatilleke 1963, 66-8.

32 A similar assumption was also made by Schlieter (2012), a scholar who seems to take seriously the new periodisation outlined by Bronkhorst. In fact, Schlieter writes: "[a]s Buddhist texts were transmitted orally for at least 150 years, and the canonical scriptures were finalized even later, a significant amount of the Buddhist depictions of Brahmins and the 'ideological system of Brahmanism' might have been conceptualized and inserted at a much later date" (2012, 138).

related to the oral transmission of the Buddhist texts.[33] Another fallacy is the so called *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, namely since the reliability of the oral transmission cannot be proved (this is, of course, questionable), the oral transmission itself is used to corroborate the main argument, almost assuming that it was not a reliable transmission. Bronkhorst tried to support his statement, but with a wrong example. He wrote that:

> [T]he Assalāyana Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (M[ajjhima]N[ikāya] II p. 149) refers to the Greeks (*yona*), which suggests that the passage which contains this reference was composed after – perhaps long after – the conquests of Alexander the Great, and therefore perhaps a century or more after the death of the Buddha. (Bronkhorst 2007, 209; square brackets mine)[34]

However, *contra* Bronkhorst, there are reasons to believe that people from North-West India had already come into contact with the Greeks of Asia Minor at the time of Darius I (522-486 BC) and, indeed, the Persian word *yauna* (Pāli: *yona*; Sanskrit: *yavana*), which indicates the Ionian Greeks, actually occurs in an inscription of Darius I. The Sanskrit form *yavana* is also found within the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini (ca. the IV century BC). Moreover, in the year 480 BC when the Persian King Xerxes attempted an invasion of Greece, an Indian contingent of archers was present within his army. These Indians may have brought with them information about Greeks when they returned to their homeland.[35] These examples demonstrate that there is no need to await the invasion of Alexander to expect references to the Greeks. Finally, the degree of openness for the Pāli texts assumed by Bronkhorst cannot provide justification to some of their peculiarities. It was noted as early as the time of Rhys Davids ([1903] 1911, 174) that the Pāli discourses do not mention Aśoka, though the texts notably do not fail to mention other kings. Furthermore, the Pāli texts do not appear to have traces of Sinhalese dialects (Norman [1978] 1991, 34-7; 1997, 90). If the texts remained open to so many interpolations – as Bronkhorst's hypothesis would assume – until the I century BC it would be odd to not find any reference to one of the greatest rulers of India, who was also most likely the greatest supporter of Buddhism. It would also be strange, if so many modifications (as assumed by Bronkhorst) had occurred in Sri Lanka from the III century BC onwards (the date in which Buddhism arrived in Sri Lanka), that the Sinhalese language did not affect the texts in any way.[36]

In addition to investigating chronological issues, we should also wonder how we can understand a possible direction of influence on the basis

33 Among the works not even mentioned in the final bibliography, there are Gombrich [1988] 1990; Allon 1997a; Allon 1997b; Wynne 2004. Furthermore, perhaps an even improvisatory oral transmission does not necessarily allow the degree of changes assumed by Bronkhorst: "[t]o be clear, orality does not necessarily imply fluidity and a performative expression of texts that is different from their fixed versions. But it does recommend that performances did not reduce only to fixed recitation, and that 'transmission' is a complicated idea" (Shulman 2025, 165).

34 There is also mention of this view in Bronkhorst 2011, 35-6.

35 For a more detailed account, see Sircar [1951] 1960, 101-2; Halbfass 1991, 199-202; Anālayo 2009a; 2011, 552, n. 116; 2012, 245-6.

36 The lack of references to Aśoka and to Sinhalese dialects in Pāli texts is highlighted also by Wynne (2007, 4).

of appropriateness of a similar passage in each tradition. If we assume that a particular tradition is the original source of a particular passage (e.g. metaphor, story, etc.), we would expect that in this particular tradition the passage would have full sense and perfectly fit the context. On the other hand, in the instance where the passage is borrowed, we might expect to find some inconsistencies, or at least we would not be able to fully understand why it is formulated in a particular way. Good examples are some Upaniṣadic echoes within the *Brahmajālasutta* (D 1) detected by Richard Gombrich (1990, 13) in a section concerning the reason why some people believe that the world and the soul are partly eternal and partly not (D I 17-18). Gombrich shows that it reiterated, in a satirical form, the creation myth of *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.4.1-3. However, this idea of Gombrich is rejected by Bronkhorst (2007, 217-18). He stated that:

> The Brahmajāla Sutta certainly knows the idea of Brahmā as creator god, who creates because he is lonely, but one cannot seriously maintain that this belief was the exclusive property of one passage in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. (2007, 218)

Bronkhorst also warns not "to exaggerate the importance of superficial similarities" (2007, 218). I think that this similarity is not so superficial and meaningless. There is a peculiarity in this story, which is present within both Buddhist and Upaniṣadic accounts, namely that the first being felt fear. It is worth noting that this feature fits very well with a certain Vedic and Upaniṣadic *modus operandi*. In this regard, the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (1.4.2) stated: "this one [i.e. the first being] became afraid, for this reason one who is alone becomes afraid".[37] In addressing this passage, Carlo Della Casa (1973, 37) highlights that there is an inversion of the logical process, because the cause is seen as a consequence since the observation of the particular case (the fear of the lonely person) should precede the general statement about the fear of the first being.[38] Similar cases, in which there is an inversion of the logical process, appear elsewhere in the account (see *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.4.1-3) and also appear in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 9.5.1.16-17 and *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 1.2.3 (Della Casa 1973, 37, n. 10). However, this overturning of the logical process cannot be found within the *Brahmajālasutta*'s account (D I 17-18) in which the fear due to the loneliness of the first primordial being is not compared with the same situation experienced by the common person. Thus, the 'fear' is a common feature of both accounts,[39] but within the Upaniṣadic account it is also a mythological device to explain fear due to loneliness; it is an etiological tool. The presence of fear is fully understandable in the Upaniṣadic text because

37 *so 'bibhet tasmād ekākī bibheti* (BU 1.4.2).

38 "La convinzione dell'esistenza d'una realtà stabilita è alla base del travestimento mitologico per cui la causa è vista come conseguenza, ché logicamente l'osservazione del fatto particolare (la paura di chi è solo) dovette precedere l'affermazione generale della paura dell'Uno" (Della Casa 1973, 37).

39 I should strictly acknowledge that *Brahmajālasutta*'s account (D I 17-18) uses different vocabulary (viz. *paritassanā*; the PED [s.v. "paritassati"] suggests that, phonetically, it is from the Sanskrit *paritṛṣyati* [= *pari-√tṛṣ*], but probably in meaning it is from the Sanskrit *pari-√tras*) from the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.4.2 (viz. *abibhet*, *bibheti*, *bhaya*, from √*bhī*). However, the close parallel is reinforced by the use of *anabhirati* (D I 17) and *na ramate* (BU 1.4.3), both of which mean 'not delighting'.

it is significant, whereas in the Buddhist account it could be facultative and so its presence only makes complete sense in light of the Upaniṣadic passage.

3.3 Conclusive Remarks

Given that I see no reason to accept Bronkhorst's new periodisation, I will proceed assuming the classical periodisation as my working hypothesis, namely, I will assume that the oldest Upaniṣads (esp. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* and *Chāndogyopaniṣad*) predate Buddhism. The recent findings concerning the similarities of narratives and some literary tropes will also be taken into account. It seems, indeed, that not only ideas, but also the mode of expression of some Upaniṣads influenced the Buddhist discourses.[40] This is particularly evident in Buddhist discourses such as the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2)[41] and the *Ambaṭṭhasutta* (D 3),[42] both of which, perhaps unsurprisingly, belong to the *Sīlakkhandhavagga*, which seems to include the earliest stratum of the *Dīghanikāya*.[43]

With more secure presuppositions in adopting Vedic texts and the Upaniṣads in particular to investigate early Buddhism,[44] we shall move towards the exegetical sources. In this regard, the Abhidhamma is the first methodical attempt to systematise the canonical material. Although the exegetical sources in the present book will be mostly Pāli commentaries, some ideas in them originate from within the Abhidhamma or are, at least, presented by using an Abhidhammic way of exposition. Indeed, I will argue later (see Chapter 5) that I regard the exegesis as an ongoing process. For this reason, the next chapter deals with some doctrines which originated during the development of the Abhidhamma that will be assumed and considered by the commentarial exegeses. These doctrines are the doctrine of momentariness (*khaṇavāda*) and the doctrine of the consciousness process (*cittavīthi*).

40 "Many scholars note that the Upaniṣads have influenced early Buddhism. Yet similar to how Upanishadic philosophy is characterized in general, the influence of the Upaniṣads on early Buddhism is described as taking place in the hermetically sealed realm of ideas. The early Buddhist texts, however, like the Upaniṣads, use both narrative and dialogue to present the message of the Buddha's teachings. Furthermore, there are a number of specific literary tropes and narrative situations that are quite similar […] These similarities suggest that one of the major influences of the Upaniṣads on the early Buddhist texts is the mode of presentation" (Black 2007, 174).

41 In this regard, see Deussen [1897] 1980, 475; Gotō 2005, 71, n. 4; Black 2007, 70-4; 2011, 158, n. 31.

42 See the study of Black (2011), who spotted similarities between the narratives involving the Buddhist character of Ambaṭṭha and the Upaniṣadic character of Śvetaketu.

43 See Norman 1983, 32. As noted in Chapter 2, all thirteen *sutta*s within the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* have a parallel within the Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrghāgama* in the corresponding section called *Śīlaskandhanipāta* (Bucknell 2014, 64-5). It is also worth noting that the Sanskrit Mūlasarvāstivāda *Dīrghāgama* is also divided into three sections (see Table 2.2, Chapter 2), but the first two of them are fundamentally different from those of the *Dīghanikāya*, whereas, as stated by Hartmann, "the third, named *Śīlaskandha* in Sanskrit and *Sīlakkhandha* in Pāli, shares not only the name, but also the basic arrangement" (2004, 121). Assuming an increasing differentiation and diversification of texts over time due to the split of Buddhism into different schools, these details make the supposed antiquity of the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* even more probable.

44 Concerning the use of the concept of 'early Buddhism' in the present book, see below § 6.4.

4 Some Abhidhammic Developments: The Doctrine of Momentariness and the Consciousness Process in Pāli Literature

Index 4.1 The Doctrine of Momentariness. – 4.2 The Doctrine of the Consciousness Process. – 4.3 Conclusive Remarks.

In the development of Buddhist literature, the Abhidhamma reflects the need to organise the scattered teachings of the Buddha and to provide an exposition of the Doctrine with a sense of unity and consistency. The re-elaboration of the early canonical materials aims to present the Buddhist doctrine in light of a new register of language that is supposed to convey the ultimate meaning. Therefore, the Buddhist tradition itself makes distinctions between the method of exposition used by the *sutta*s, and that of the Abhidhamma. The latter, indeed, is said to provide teachings in a way that is called *nippariyāya*, namely 'without *pariyāya*'. The term *pariyāya* indicates an allegorical or parabolic way to put things (*pari-√i*, lit. 'going around'), and therefore implies a peculiar explanation based on the context, namely *ad hominem*, whereas *nippariyāya* expresses an abstract, general, literal and more 'universal' way to present the teachings since it is decontextualised from an audience.[1] These two styles of expositions are often referenced in Pāli commentaries and are used to explain apparent inconsistencies in the scriptures (e.g. As 154, 222). Incidentally, this suggests that the commentarial literature is not totally detached from the Abhidhammic speculations, and so a basic acquaintance with the Abhidhamma's style and doctrines should be reasonably considered

1 Concerning *pariyāya* and *nippariyāya*, see Ronkin 2005, 26; Gombrich [1996] 2006, 65; 2009, 9; Heim 2015, 152-3; De Notariis 2022a, 214-15.

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a precondition to properly understand the Pāli commentaries, or at least some of their exegeses. Indeed, it would not be possible to understand the *Visuddhimagga*'s treatment regarding the *iddhividhă* and *abhiññā*s without considering how Pāli literature developed the Abhidhammic doctrine of the consciousness process (*cittavīthi* or *vīthicitta*) and how it became connected with the doctrine of momentariness (*khaṇavāda*; Sanskrit: *kṣaṇavāda*).[2] The doctrine of momentariness concerns the idea that phenomena (Sanskrit: *saṃskṛta*, *saṃskāra*, *dharma*), which constitute both the mental and physical world, can come into being and disappear within just one moment (*khaṇa*; Sanskrit: *kṣaṇa*). It does not concern so much the passage of time or the existence of time, but rather the construction of temporal experience (Ronkin 2010, 350). The doctrine of the consciousness process, instead, concerns the process that takes place in the mind when a psychophysical event happens, or, to put it better, how the mind changes according to a predetermined pattern. In this chapter, the two doctrines will be briefly introduced in order to provide some background information that will prove useful when these two doctrines are involved in the commentarial exegeses.

4.1 The Doctrine of Momentariness

On the doctrine of momentariness there are two extensive reference works that are in some ways complementary. The first study is essentially the PhD thesis of Alexander von Rospatt (1995) who predominantly analysed the textual sources of North Buddhist schools, and so he did not provide a full account of how the doctrine took place in Theravāda texts. This gap was filled by the PhD thesis of Wan Doo Kim (1999), recently published as a monograph (= Kim 2023), who analysed the doctrine of momentariness with its origin and development within the Theravāda tradition. The elaboration of a theory concerning the mental activity as a series of consciousness processes could seem, according to mainstream theory, a by-product of the doctrine of momentariness as it was accepted by the Theravāda school. In my opinion, there could be evidence to argue that the relationship between the doctrines of momentariness and consciousness process was more nuanced than hitherto recognised.[3]

Concerning the doctrine of momentariness, it is possible to find within the *Kathāvatthu* – probably the earliest source that attests a sort of debate about the nature of these moments – an interesting rejection. It rejects the idea that material entities last the same period of time as a mental phenomenon:

> "Are all phenomena (*dhamma*) momentary as one mental moment (*ekacittakkhaṇika*)?"
> "Yes!"
> "[So, do you think that] the great earth, the great ocean, the mount Sineru which is the king of mountains, water, fire, wind, grass, sticks, and a forest tree last (*saṇṭhāti*/*saṇṭhanti*) a mental unit (*citta*)?"

2 In this regard, see De Notariis forthcoming-a.

3 I exposed my reasons in an Appendix in my PhD thesis, which has been revised and published as De Notariis forthcoming-a.

"No, it should not be said in that way".[4]

Alexander von Rospatt (1995, 19) suggests that this passage might imply that at that time the Theravādins had not already accepted the momentariness of all phenomena. However, as suggested by Kim (1999, 106 = 2023: 95-6), it seems more likely an indication that mental and material phenomena are not equally short-lasted, and thus material entities change more slowly than mental phenomena.

Although it is not stated so clearly, the rapid change of the mind has already been attested within the Pāli *sutta*s. Therefore, the Buddha claims that he does not see any phenomenon that changes more quickly than the mind.[5] Moreover, in the *Assutavatasutta* (S II 94-5) the temporary lasting of the physical body is compared with the rapid change of the mind. The body is seen to last for one year, for two years… for a hundred years,[6] whereas the mind arises in a way and ceases in another way by day and night, just as a monkey that passes from one branch to another in a forest.[7] The characteristic of the changeability of the mind complies with the doctrine of momentariness, but *how* it changes is a matter that falls within the scope of the consciousness process. The fact that material and mental phenomena have not the same duration and that mental phenomena are shorter than material ones led to speculation about the duration ratio of a material phenomenon compared to a mental one. As early as the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (II century AD onwards),[8] it is possible to find a doctrine that claims that in the time of one material phenomenon there are three mental phenomena.[9] In this case, the ratio of material to mental phenomena would be 1:3. According to Kim (1999, 145 = 2023, 131), the **Mahāvibhāṣā*'s theory of three moments that circulated among ascetics could be an early stage of the theory developed by the Theravādins. Both the *Kathāvatthu* and the **Mahāvibhāṣā* suggest a period in which the theory of momentariness was debated among Buddhist schools. Another school, that of the Vātsīputrīya-Saṃmatīyas, believed that only the mental phenomena were momentary, whereas the material ones (except flames and sounds) were non-momentary (see von Rospatt 1995, 37-9). The accepted ratio of material to mental phenomena in Theravāda's

4 *ekacittakkhaṇikā sabbe dhammā ti? | āmantā. | citte mahāpaṭhavī saṇṭhāti, mahāsamuddo saṇṭhāti, Sineru pabbatarājā saṇṭhāti, āpo saṇṭhāti, tejo saṇṭhāti, vāyo saṇṭhāti, tiṇakaṭṭhavanappatiyo saṇṭhantī ti? | na h' evaṃ vattabbe – pe –* (Kv 620).

5 *nāhaṃ bhikkhave aññaṃ ekadhammam pi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ lahuparivattaṃ yathayidaṃ cittaṃ yāvañ c' idaṃ bhikkhave upamā pi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaṃ cittan ti* (A I 10).

6 *dissatāyaṃ bhikkhave cātumahābhūtiko kāyo ekam pi vassaṃ tiṭṭhamāno dve pi vassāni tiṭṭhamāno* […] *vassasatam pi tiṭṭhamāno* (S II 94).

7 *seyyathāpi bhikkhave makkaṭo arāññe pavane caramāno sākhaṃ gaṇhati taṃ muñcitvā aññaṃ gaṇhati. evam eva kho bhikkhave yad idam vuccati cittam iti pi mano iti pi viññāṇam iti pi taṃ rattiyā ca divasassa ca aññad eva uppajjati aññam nirujjhati* (S II 95).

8 The dating is only tentative since it is based on the controversial date of the Kuṣāṇa king Kaniṣka. In this regard, see von Rospatt 1995, 25-6, n. 38; Buswell and Jaini 1996, 110-12; Willemen, Dessein and Cox 1998, 148-9, 229-39; Kim 1999, 110, n. 266 (= 2023, 99, n. 268).

9 T1545.27.0787c22-0788a9 translated by von Rospatt (1995, 35-6, n. 61). This passage discusses the refutation of a doctrine attributed to some ascetics (*samaṇa*; Sanskrit: *śramaṇa*; Chinese: *shāmén* 沙門), who believed that during the time of a material phenomenon, three mental phenomena rise and pass away. This theory is presented in two typologies: 1) the theory of mixed origination; 2) the theory of succession. These theories were analysed in Kim 1999, 124-7 (= 2023, 112-15).

early post-canonical texts is either 1:16 or 1:17; the latter is the one adopted by the later Abhidhamma manuals such as the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* of Anuruddha. A different duration of material and mental phenomena is also a good expedient adopted by Theravādins to avoid a representational theory of perception (*sākāra-jñāna-vāda*), namely the theory that claims that existing things are perceived indirectly in a particular form (*ākāra*). Therefore, being on the side of a non-representational theory (*nirākāra-jñāna-vāda*), the Theravādins believed in the existence of a direct perception of existing things without any mediating form (*ākāra*). This is possible, allowing the material *dhamma*s to last long enough for the mind to know them. A different strategy was adopted by the Sarvāstivādins, who, claiming that a past momentary material *dharma* still exists, allowed a present mental moment to know the materiality.[10]

4.2 The Doctrine of the Consciousness Process

The doctrine of the consciousness process concerns the mind flow patterns according to specific psychophysical events. The basic assumption is that the mind will follow a specific pattern of stages according to some stimuli and thus there is a sort of natural order (cf. *citta-niyāma* in As 274), an unvarying sequence of predetermined mental states conforming to a certain situation. As highlighted by Lance Cousins (1981), the first signals of this doctrine are already present in some Abhidhammic works, such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and *Paṭṭhāna*, whereas more detailed and comprehensive presentations occur in the Pāli commentaries and late Abhidhamma manuals. These accounts have some important variations that would allow some speculation regarding the development of such a doctrine. However, for the sake of this study concerning the exegeses on the extraordinary capacities, it is important to pay attention to the systematic and concise exposition of the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, which is, in principle, quite close to some *Visuddhimagga*'s exegeses on the *iddhividhă* and *abhiññā*s, which will be later analysed.

In developing a doctrine concerning the consciousness process, Buddhists, to some extent, also elaborated an epistemological doctrine, given that the paradigmatic process is the sensory perception. In particular, the texts use the sensory process of seeing as a model, presenting a schema that is supposed to be roughly the same for the other physical senses. The process in its shortest and among the oldest accounts (e.g. Sv I 194) counts up to seven stages: *bhavaṅga* 'life-continuum', *āvajjana* 'adverting', *dassana* 'seeing', *sampaṭicchana* 'receiving', *santīraṇa* 'investigating', *votthapana* 'determining', and *javana* 'impulsion'. In a more developed classification (**Vimuttimagga*, T1648.32.0449b06-08) we find an additional stage: *tadārammaṇa* 'registration'. Moreover, later accounts even emphasise that the stages are believed to last for one or more moments and the entire mental process endures sixteen (e.g. Vism 614) or seventeen (e.g. Abhidh-s

10 I am grateful to Rupert Gethin, who pointed out to me the connection of the doctrine of momentariness with more general arguments among Indian schools of philosophy about what we exactly perceive. The terms *sākāra-jñāna-vāda* and *nirākāra-jñāna-vāda* are not emic to the Theravāda tradition but can be described, in the words of Kellner and McClintock (2014, 430), as 'doxographical labels'. These are, indeed, terms typical of some later Buddhist, and more generally Indian, philosophical speculations.

18) moments, which are tantamount to one moment of materiality, and thus a moment of materiality endures enough to be grasped by the mind. In order to understand in a practical way what happens during these stages, we shall consider the Buddhist simile of the mango fruit. The simile occurs in an old version without *tadārammaṇa* at As 270-1, and in a more developed version including *tadārammaṇa* at Abhidh-s-mhṭ 110-11. Here, the latter is translated as follows:

> A certain man, it seems, was sleeping at the foot of a mango tree in fruit with his head covered. When a mango fruit fell near him, he was woken by the sound. He removed the cloth from his head, opened his eyes, and saw it [i.e. the fruit]; he took it, squeezed it, smelled it, [then] knowing its ripe condition, ate it, swallowed what was in his mouth together with the saliva (*semha*),[11] and then he went back to sleep right there.
>
> In this context, the time of sleeping is like the time of *bhavaṅga*. The time when the fruit falls down is like the time when the object strikes the sensitivity [of the physical senses]. The time of awaking through the sound is like the time of adverting (*āvajjana*). The time when he sees after having opened his eyes is like the time of the activity of the eye-consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*). The time of taking [the fruit] is like the time of receiving (*sampaṭicchana*). The time of squeezing is like the time of investigating (*santīraṇa*). The time of smelling is like the time of determining (*voṭṭhapana*). The time of eating is like the time of impulsion (*javana*). The time of swallowing what is in the mouth together with the saliva is like the time of registration (*tadārammaṇa*). The time of going back to sleep is like the time of going back to the *bhavaṅga*.[12]

The simile illustrates the process. The state of sleeping parallels the inactive mode of the consciousness known as *bhavaṅga*, but when an object enters into the field of perception (i.e. when a fruit falls) the man awakes, interrupting the previous inactive stage; an action which parallels the stage of *āvajjana* ('adverting'). Then, the action of seeing ('*dassana*'), which is performed by the *cakkhuviññāṇa* ('eye's consciousness'), occurs and it is like the man that sees the fallen fruit. The process is not yet completed. Three stages occur, *sampaṭicchana* ('receiving'), *santīraṇa* ('investigating'), *voṭṭhapana* ('determining') and are like taking, squeezing and smelling the fruit: three actions that help the man to know that the fruit is ripe (and then ready to be eaten). The man eats the fruit, and this is like the stage of *javana* ('impulsion') in which there is actual enjoyment of the object. Thereafter, the

11 Since *semha* literally means 'phlegm', I understand it in this context as 'saliva', meaning the phlegm located in the throat, just as in Wujastyk 2008, 220.

12 *eko kira puriso phalitambarukkhamūle sasīsaṃ pārupitvā niddāyanto āsanne patitassa ekassa ambaphalassa saddena pabujjhitvā, sīsato vatthaṃ apanetvā, cakkhuṃ ummīletvā, disvā, ca taṃ gahetvā, madditvā, upasiṅghitvā, pakkabhāvaṃ ñatvā, paribhuñjitvā, mukhagataṃ saha semhena ajjhoharitvā, puna tatth' eva niddāyati.*
tattha purisassa niddāyanakālo viya bhavaṅgakālo. phalassa patitakālo viya ārammaṇassa pasādaghaṭṭanakālo. tassa saddena pabujjhanakālo viya āvajjanakālo. ummīletvā olokitakālo viya cakkhuviññāṇappavattikālo. gahitakālo viya sampaṭicchanakālo. maddanakālo viya santīraṇakālo. upasiṅghanakālo viya voṭṭhapanakālo. paribhogakālo viya javanakālo. mukhagataṃ saha semhena ajjhoharanakālo viya tadārammaṇakālo. puna niddāyanakālo viya puna bhavaṅgakālo (Abhidh-s-mhṭ 110-11).

man swallows the last morsels together with the saliva before going back to sleep; these actions are like the last stage, viz. *tadārammaṇa* ('registration'), which precedes the act of going back to the inactive mode of *bhavaṅga*. In the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, the process that involves the five senses is called the 'five-door process' (*pañcadvāravīthi*) and the only stage that can change is the arising of the eye's consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*) that performs the function of seeing (*dassana*), which can be substituted with the ear's consciousness that performs the function of hearing and so on. The process that involves the mental sense is referred to in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* as the 'mind-door process' (*manodvāravīthi*). In its full length, namely, in the case of manifestation of a clear (*vibhūta*) object in the range of mind-perception, this process occurs in the following manner:

But if a clear object comes in the field of perception in the mind-door, then [occurs] vibration of *bhavaṅga* (*bhavaṅgacalana*), adverting to the mind-door (*manodvārāvajjana*), and at the end of the *javana*s two registration (*tadārammaṇa*) resultants occur, then there is the relapse into *bhavaṅga*.[13]

The steps designated by the passage are: *bhavaṅgacalana* → *manodvārāvajjana* → *javana* → *tadārammaṇa*. It is worth noting that this passage, compared to the previous account, is shorter and so there is a direct transition from the stage of adverting (*āvajjana*) to the *javana* stage.[14]

A particular application of the mind-door process (*manodvāravīthi*) is the explanation of what happens during the attainment of the *jhāna* state:

> But during the occurrence of the *javana*s in the absorption (*appanā*), there is no distinction between clear and unclear [object], in the same way [there is not] the arising of the registration (*tadārammaṇa*). In this context, one out of the eight *javana*s of the sense sphere connected with the knowledge arises and ceases four or three times in the succession of 'preparatory work' (*parikamma*), 'access' (*upacāra*), 'conformity' (*anuloma*), 'change of lineage' (*gotrabhu*) and, immediately following, whatever *javana* among the twenty-six *javana*s, which are sublime or supramundane, in the fourth of fifth [moment] depending on the circumstances, descends upon the process of absorption according with the application [of the mind]. Thereafter, at the end of the absorption, there is the relapse into *bhavaṅga*.[15]

13 *manodvāre pana yadi vibhūtam ārammaṇaṃ āpātham āgacchati, tato paraṃ bhavaṅgacalana-manodvārāvajjana-javanāvasāne tadārammaṇapākāni pavattanti. tato paraṃ bhavaṅgapāto* (Abhidh-s 19).

14 Furthermore, to put it more precisely, in the five-door process (*pañcadvāravīthi*) the action of adverting is performed by the *kiriyamanodhātu*, whereas in the mind-door process (*manodvāravīthi*) the action of adverting to the mind-door is performed by the (*ahetuka-*) *kiriyamanoviññāṇadhātu*, which performs the function of determining (*voṭṭhapana*) in the five-door process. Evidence to the two different *dhātu*s involved in the processes occurs in Vism 458. In this regard, see also Gethin 1994, 17, n. 19. A reference to the *kiriyamanoviññāṇadhātu* performing the function of determining (*voṭṭhapana*) in the five-door process occurs in Vism 21.

15 *appanājavanavāre pana vibhūtāvibhūtabhedo natthi. tathā tadārammaṇuppādo ca. tattha hi ñāṇasampayutta-kāmāvacarajavanānam aṭṭhannaṃ aññatarasmiṃ parikammopacārānuloma-gotrabhunāmena catukkhattuṃ tikkhattum eva vā yathākkamaṃ uppajjitvā niruddhe tadanantaram eva yathārahaṃ catutthaṃ pañcamaṃ vā chabbīsati mahaggata-lokuttara-javanesu yathābhinīhāravasena yaṃkiñci javanaṃ appanāvīthim otarati. tato paraṃ appanāvasāne bhavaṅgapāto va hoti* (Abhidh-s 19).

I mentioned this particular application of the consciousness process within the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* since there is also an interesting account in the *Visuddhimagga* (that will be analysed later at § 7.4.4) and the terminology involved is connected with that used in the explanation of extraordinary capacities. Indeed, we will see how the attainment of the extraordinary capacities resembles the action of entering in the state of *jhāna*.

4.3 Conclusive Remarks

Reviewing the doctrine of momentariness and the doctrine of the consciousness process is also a way to deal, in a broader sense, with the Abhidhamma. These two doctrines involve the world of the infinitely small, the first concerning the temporal existence of phenomena, and the latter concerning the necessary and irreducible mental stages in some processes (especially the act of knowing through a physical or mental sense). As it may be noted, the language involved is rather technical. This means, for example, that a reference to this technical terminology in an exegetical text would recall a wide range of metaphysical ideas, theories and doctrines. In particular, the use of the consciousness process in the explanation of an extraordinary perception can help to better understand the difference between this perception and a normal or ordinary one from the point of view of the Buddhist metaphysics. Conversely, its oversight can easily lead to a misrepresentation of the real message conveyed in the text. Let us consider, for example, how Bradley Clough understood the stage of adverting to the mind door (*manodvārāvajjana*) in the commentarial exegesis of the *dibbasotadhātu*:

> In this state, one resolves, 'divine ear element will now arise.' Taking any sound as its object, another yogic power called 'mind-door adverting' (*mano-dvāra-ajjanam* [sic., *mano-dvāra-āvajjana*]) arises. (Clough 2012, 87; square brackets mine)

As we know from the expositions of the consciousness process, the *manodvārāvajjana* is not, strictly speaking, a yogic power since it also occurs in the ordinary mental process, namely when a mental object enters the range of perception of the mind-door. What is potentially interesting is that a mind-door process (*manodvāravīthi*) is involved, that is to say, the act of hearing is purely mental.[16] Therefore, a proper understanding of some Abhidhamic doctrines seems necessary for a proper understanding of the commentarial exegesis. Now, we shall finally contextualise the Pāli commentaries among the Buddhist literature and their importance for the study of the extraordinary capacities.

16 This topic will be analysed in § 9.4.

5 Pāli Commentarial Literature

Index 5.1 The Problem of Being a Commentary. – 5.2 Pāli Commentaries: A Problematic, Albeit Necessary, Research Source. – 5.3 Conclusive Remarks.

> Studies in Pāli commentarial literature are relatively a new area of research even in the field of Theravāda Buddhist studies. Why the Pāli commentaries have been neglected for serious research undertakings as a collective source-material, can be ascribed to several reasons. One of them is certainly a lack of their translation into modern languages. (Endo 2013, XIII)

The words of Toshiichi Endo are still relevant and the commitment of scholars in this field, although increased, still remains limited. Commentaries are a kind of exegesis, but a detailed understanding of the degree of reliability of this literature as a hermeneutical tool to interpret the canon is still a *desideratum*.

The study of commentarial literature started relatively late compared to the study of canonical sources. In the beginning, there was the pioneering work of E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, a doctoral thesis published in 1946 which dedicates the first forty-two pages to introducing commentaries as the main source for the reconstruction of the history of Buddhism in ancient Ceylon. After some years, two other works were published (in the form of doctoral theses), which focused mainly on the study of commentaries. The first one is the work of F. Lottermoser, entitled *Quoted verse passages in the works of Buddhaghosa* (1982), followed two years later by the work of S. Mori, *Study of the Pāli Commentaries: Theravādic Aspects of the Aṭṭhakathās* (in Japanese, with an English summary).[1] These works certainly laid the groundwork for the future study of the commentaries, a field of study that flourished, especially in Japan, subsequently providing

1 The original Japanese title is *Pāli Bukkyō-chūshaku-bunken no Kenkyū: Aṭṭhakathā no Jyōzaku-teki Yōsō* (Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin, 1984).

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some valuable works in English[2] as well as some other works which are unfortunately only in Japanese.[3]

For the scopes of the present work, this chapter will discuss the concept of 'commentary', which is often used to translate the Pāli term '*aṭṭhakathā*', highlighting how the exegetical process was an ongoing process, not limited to the commentaries of the V century AD. Moreover, the importance of the commentarial literature and some scholarly approaches will be considered, and the necessity of the commentaries in the analysis of the extraordinary capacities will be highlighted.

5.1 The Problem of Being a Commentary

What a commentary is or what we should consider a commentary are questions that are not easy to answer. What is commonly translated in English as 'commentary' is the Pāli word '*aṭṭhakathā*', a term that can be roughly translated as 'exposition of meaning(s)', given that it is composed of the word *aṭṭha* (sometimes *attha*) 'meaning, sense, significance' and the word *kathā* 'talk, story, exposition'.[4] However, Japanese scholars consider 'commentary', as part of the '*aṭṭhakathā* literature', a huge group of texts that do not necessarily include works that comment upon other works, or works that define themself as *aṭṭhakathā* (including the term in their title). Therefore, according to Japanese scholars, a list of Pāli commentarial literature would contain:

1. direct commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka* plus the compendium called *Visuddhimagga*;
2. some other important commentaries, such as the *Nettippakaraṇaṭṭhakathā*, *Catubhāṇavāraṭṭhakathā*, and the *Vinayasaṅgahaṭṭhakathā*;
3. chronicles and narratives, such as *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvaṃsa*, *Sīhaḷavatthuppakaraṇa*, and *Sahassavatthuppakaraṇa*;
4. abhidhammic summary works (e.g. *Abhidhammāvatāra*, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*), grammatical works (e.g. *Abhidhānappadīpikā*, *Kaccāyanasāra*), works related with poetry (e.g. *Jinālaṅkāra*, *Vuttodaya*).[5]

This above list is still coherent with the interpretation of the term '*aṭṭhakathā*' as opposed to the term '*pāli*', indicating the canonical text(s) (Norman 1983, 1). The opposition between canon and commentaries shows all its limitations as an interpretative tool when we consider the existence of texts such as the *Niddesa*. The *Niddesa* is a canonical text (*pāli*) that comments upon two *vagga*s and one *sutta* of the *Suttanipāta* (another canonical text), and so it can be defined, at least considering its structure, as an *aṭṭhakathā*, even though,

2 A special mention must go to the seminal works of Mori (1989a) and Endo (1997; 2013).

3 For a review of the most important works in Japanese on the topic updated to the year 2007, see Mori 2007.

4 Endo (2013, 3-4) discusses in more detail the problem of the interpretation of the term '*aṭṭhakathā*'. The texts that define themself as *aṭṭhakathā*s are silent concerning the formation of the term '*aṭṭhakathā*' and often the so-called sub-commentaries (*ṭīkā*) alone provide some definitions of the term.

5 This is the classification provided by Mori (1984, 1-2) reported into English by Endo (2013, 3).

strictly speaking, is not so, and indeed it has its own *aṭṭhakathā* (*Niddesa-aṭṭhakathā* = *Saddhammapajjotikā*).[6] This fact highlights that for the Buddhist tradition, the term *aṭṭhakathā* does not only indicate the function of the text as being a commentary and so to clarify the meaning, but indicates primarily that the text is not part of the older stratum of texts considered canonical, regarded as *Buddhavacana* 'the word of the Buddha'.[7] Other canonical texts contain, indeed, what is in effect commentary: the *Vinaya* has its *padabhājaniya*; *Vibhaṅga* has sections which function as exegeses such as the *suttantabhajājaniya*, *abhidhammabhajājaniya*, *pañhāpucchaka*; *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* has its final section which serves as a commentary and is called either *atthuddhārakaṇḍa* (As 6) or *aṭṭhakathākaṇḍa* (As 409) (Dhs 234-64, see Norman 1983, 99); and there is finally the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* in which "[i]n most cases, a sūtra is first presented and then explained" (Frauwallner 1995, 87). Here, we have seen that the fact of being an *aṭṭhakathā*, namely a text that explains the meaning [of other texts], does not entirely cover the range of meanings that our conception of the word 'commentary', or the expression 'exegetical work', may cover. Thus, it would only be appropriate to further discuss the topic.

What is a commentary? A tautological definition is that a commentary is a literary work that comments upon another literary work. This definition is not totally useless since it highlights that there should be something worthy of being commented on. This latter work can be referred to as the 'original text' or what the Indian traditions often call the 'root (*mūla*) text', namely a work from which something else originates. Commenting on a text is an option among others to review, explore, and generally speaking, 'deal' with an original text. Here, it is worth citing the words of St. Bonaventure (13th century) about the *modus facendi librum* (method of making a book):

> There are four ways of making a book. Sometimes a man writes others' words, adding nothing and changing nothing; and he is simply called a scribe [*scriptor*]. Sometimes a man writes others' words, putting together passages which are not his own; and he is called a compiler [*compilator*]. Sometimes a man writes both others' words and his own, but with the others' words in prime place and his own added only for purposes of clarification; and he is called not an author but a commentator [*commentator*]. Sometimes a man writes both his own words and others', but with his own in prime place and others' added only for purposes of confirmation; and he should be called an author [*auctor*]. (Passage quoted in Burrow 2008, 31; see also Freschi 2015, 94)

In the above excerpt, the commentator is the one who gives pre-eminence to the original work, but provides the addition of some other words for the sake of clarification. Therefore, a commentary implies an addition that may occur only with the aim of clarifying the original text, but may also have the aim of modifying it. However, the original work provides a crucial matrix to the commentary. The commentary is, indeed, strictly connected with the original work upon which it comments. This fact, according to B. Smith

6 Whereas we know that a commentary upon another commentary is usually called *ṭīkā*.

7 The term does not only indicate the words spoken by the Buddha, but "sometimes it means what the Buddha would have said, had he been there, or sayings about the Buddha, or sayings in accordance with the Buddha's teaching" (Norman 1997: 136).

(1991, 1), influences the structure of the commentary to mirror the same structure and expository order of the original text.[8] Now we know something more about the commentary, namely that it is a literary work that, following an original work, makes some additions on it. Given that the additions may have an effect on the reception of the original text, we may also say that a commentary may attempt to modify or affect the reader's understanding of an original text. As some scholars point out,[9] a commentary is also a useful tool in India to introduce innovations, because the claim of originality would have diminished the authority of the author(s). However, in the case of the production of early Buddhist commentarial literature, it makes more sense to follow, in particular, one among the many observations that B. Smith made about the commentaries, namely that a commentary is "a device which enables the transmission of the textual force or content of an object text from one age or culture or group to another" (1991, 2). The correct transmission of the Buddha's doctrine was a problem present from the very beginning of the Buddhist tradition. Endorsing an emic perspective, we may even assume that it was a problem which also occurred when the Buddha was still alive.[10] However, the first disciples had the good fortune of being able to turn directly to the Buddha or to some of his closest followers to seek clarification, just as it is recommended by the textual tradition:

> O monks, when you understand the meaning (*attha*) of what I said, then you could memorise it, but when you do not understand the meaning of what I said, then you should ask me or the learned monks.[11]

At that time, a factor that could have influenced understanding could be the linguistic one. For example, in the *Araṇavibhaṅgasutta* (M III 230-7), the Buddha provides seven synonyms for the word 'bowl'. Considering the multilingual environment of early India (a situation still prevalent today), linguistic problems were likely among the major challenges faced by early Buddhists. Therefore, it is no wonder then if the commentary on the *Pātimokkha*, one of the texts that is supposed to be among the oldest,[12] elucidates the meaning of the text for the most part through synonyms and clarification of terms. In fact, the very name of this commentary, namely *padabhājaniya*, means 'Analysis of words'.

The nature of the commentary as a tool which enables the transmission of the Buddhist canon from one age or culture or group to another is also

8 There are some differences between a commentary and a work of secondary literature: "[w]here a commentary is of its nature oriented around the text of some given object work, a work of secondary literature is standardly oriented around ideas and arguments, the latter conceived at what may be some distance from their specific original formulations. The commentary may, certainly, deal with the arguments of its object text. But it will follow an order of exposition that is determined not, in the first place, by the content of these arguments, but rather by the order of the text itself, and it will strive to do justice to this text as a unitary object to be taken as a whole" (Smith 1991, 1-2).

9 See Preisendanz 2008, 606-8 and Freschi 2015, 97-9.

10 The following reasoning remains valid even if we replace the figure of the historical Buddha with a generic group of early Buddhists.

11 *bhikkhave yassa me bhāsitassa atthaṃ ājāneyyātha tathā naṃ dhāreyyātha, yassa ca pana me bhāsitassa atthaṃ na ājāneyyātha ahaṃ vo tattha paṭipucchitabbo ye vā pan'assu viyattā bhikkhū* (M I 134).

12 See von Hinüber 1996, 9-12; 1998; Norman 1983, 18; 1997, 43, 149; Kieffer-Pülz 2020-21, 157-61.

demonstrated by the treatment that the commentarial literature had when it was transmitted in Sri Lanka:

> The commentary [to the *Dīghanikāya*], from the beginning, was recited by five hundred masters [monks], and re-recited later. So, it was brought by the master Mahā-Mahinda to the island of the Sīhaḷas, where it was rendered into the Sīhaḷa language for the benefit of the inhabitants of the island.[13]

The existence of the possibility that a commentary could be translated into another language highlights another important characteristic of the commentarial literature, namely that it was a more fluid and dynamic literature than the canonical one. If, on the one hand, the canonical texts do not seem to have traces of Sinhalese dialects (although, according to the tradition, Buddhism was brought to Sri Lanka in the III century BC),[14] on the other hand, the commentaries were not only translated into the Sinhalese language, but a commentarial tradition was even started in Sri Lanka, and this was an open *corpus* of texts until the III century AD.[15]

The very existence of a *corpus* of commentarial literature in an early period should make us more confident about an early existence of another *corpus* of texts that was fixed or, at least, quite strict. This latter *corpus* of texts is what we normally know as the Buddhist canon. The exegetical activity, indeed, presupposes a fixed material with which it is not possible to intervene. In this regard, Jonathan Z. Smith writes that:

> Where there is a canon, it is possible to predict the *necessary* occurrence of a hermeneute, of an interpreter whose task is continually to extend the domain of the closed canon over everything that is known or everything that exists without altering the canon in the process. (Smith 1982, 48)

Concerning the Buddhist literature, we may note that a hermeneutic process started quite early, not only thanks to texts like the *Niddesa* or the *padabhājaniya* of the *Pātimokkha*, but also through some texts that aimed to systematise and explain in a more objective way the teaching of the Buddha. The *corpus* I am referring to is the so called Abhidhamma literature. In the words of Rupert Gethin:

> The term *abhidharma* (Pali *abhidhamma*) means approximately 'higher' or 'further' Dharma. In many ways the extant works of 'the basket of Abhidharma', the third part of the ancient canon of Buddhist scriptures, can be seen as continuing the process of systematization already evident in the Nikāyas. That some form of commentary and interpretation formed part of Buddhism almost from its inception is indicated by certain of the sūtras in the Nikāyas. […] But it is the Abhidharma *par excellence* that represents the earliest attempt to give a full and systematic statement of the Buddha's teaching on the basis of what is contained in his discourses. (Gethin 1998, 47-8)

13 *aṭṭhakathā ādito vasisatehi pañcahi yā saṅgītā anusaṅgītā ca pacchā pi Sīhaḷadīpaṃ pana ābhatā 'tha vasinā Mahā-Mahindena ṭhapitā Sīhaḷabhāsāya dīpavāsīnaṃ atthāya* (Sv I 1 = Ps I 1; Spk I 1; Mp I 1), this passage is quoted also by Endo (2013, 11-12).

14 See Norman [1978] 1991, 34-7; 1997, 90.

15 See Mori [1988] 1989.

The exegetical process was then an ongoing process, and the Pāli commentarial literature of the V century AD onwards is only the acme of a process that worked in the background for centuries. This process also had its milestones; each Abhidhammic text, for example, is an end point in itself, or the Abhidhamma collection in its whole marks a boundary. The Abhidhamma, indeed, was included among the canonical texts and then became closed at a certain point. Therefore, when we consider the Theravāda exegesis, we should be aware that the actual Pāli commentarial literature is only the tip of the iceberg. Starting from a basic kernel, new strata were added. The most recent stratum is the most malleable and tender, but gradually becomes crystallised, and when it turns into a fixed state, a new stratum is added. As time goes on, new layers overlap the old ones, making the latter more and more fixed. What was conceived as a commentary on an authoritative text in the past can itself become an authoritative text in the future which will require, in turn, a commentary. This, for instance, happened quite clearly in the Vedic tradition. As Timothy Lubin (2019) highlighted, the Brāhmaṇa texts are, for a large extent, commentaries of the *mantra*s. Nonetheless, they came to be considered as *śruti*, the Vedic revelation, namely primary texts rather than secondary. Therefore, we may note that not only the stylistic features of an *oeuvre* make it a commentary, but also the historical time.

The study of the exegesis is, therefore, a dynamic task since it should take into account periods in which the textual material was floating, despite that what came down to us is a fossilised version belonging to a certain historical time. Therefore, since the Pāli commentaries are a crystallised record in the exegetical process, we shall see how their value as a hermeneutical tool for the study of the Pāli canon is ambiguous, but their use is nonetheless necessary concerning some topics.

5.2 Pāli Commentaries: A Problematic, Albeit Necessary, Research Source

The actual Pāli commentaries are works usually dated from the V century AD onwards,[16] which, however, are supposed to have preserved older material. The claim made by the commentarial literature to be the result of an exegesis that was started centuries ago, even potentially started at the time of the Buddha, is problematic. We do not really know when it started. What we do know is that there are, at least, two recognisable strata of texts, named by Sodo Mori (1989b, 3-4) 'Indic older elements' and 'Sri Lankan newer elements'. These 'elements' are based upon historical and geographical data[17] which, however, provides little information about the chronology of certain types of exegesis. If, for instance, in a given piece of exegesis, historical or

16 Cousins ([2013/2014] 2015, 390-1) even suggests the IV century AD as dating.

17 According to Mori the most ancient Indian characteristics can be recognised from: 1) quotations from Indian texts (*Tipiṭaka*, *Milindapañha*, *Nettipakaraṇa*, *Petakopadesa*, etc.); 2) presence of Indian characters (the Buddha himself, followers, disciples, kings, Aśoka and his contemporaries etc.); 3) names of kingdoms, cities, rivers, mountains and, in general, Indian places. In a similar way, the more recent Sinhalese characteristics are exposed: 1) quotations from the literature of the *Sīhaḷaṭṭhakathā* (originated in Sri Lanka); 2) presence of people from ancient Sri Lanka (monks, kings, believers, ministers, etc.); 3) names of cities, areas, villages, rivers, mountains, monasteries and, in general, places in Sri Lanka. See Mori 1989b, 3-5.

geographical data do not occur, it would be difficult to even establish an approximate chronology. Furthermore, even if we find in a textual passage 'Indian elements', is it really safe to backdate the passage at stake to a period before the arrival of Buddhism in Ceylon? Although the answer may depend on the specific situation, generally speaking, we can answer in a negative way. The reason is that we cannot exclude *a priori* the existence of a network which would connect the island of Ceylon with the Indian mainland. Not only do we have the proof of a movement of texts from the north to the south and *vice versa*,[18] but also of people. The South Indian mainland could have played an important role in the development of Theravāda. As Oskar von Hinüber ([2013/2014] 2015, 356-8) highlights, not only was Buddhaghosa of South Indian origin, but also some of the people (three monks and one layman) who requested Buddhaghosa to compose the commentaries on the four principal Nikāyas had connections with South India.

Therefore, one of the major problems in dealing with Pāli commentarial literature is that, quite often, it is difficult to establish an approximate dating for the exegetical material recovered. The scholar is, indeed, in a sort of limbo. Since, theoretically, the Buddhist exegetical efforts started quite early, potentially even during the time of the Buddha, it would seem likely to find in the commentaries quite ancient interpretations. On the other hand, the final form in which the commentaries reached us is through compositions belonging to the V century AD, whose authors (who may have had the functions of compilers, redactors, editors and critics) could have affected it in ways that we do not know. Although the commentaries are based on older sources, we do not know to what extent they are faithful to them, given that we do not even have a single example of these older sources. What we can be sure of is that the authors were people belonging to their own historical time that were writing for an audience historically (and perhaps also geographically) determined. The Pāli commentarial literature is not a literature created for us. The Pāli commentaries are not speaking with us, but we are just eavesdropping on a conversation that they had with their old audience. Their purpose is to determine the Theravāda doctrine (especially the one of the Mahāvihāra)[19] at the time of their composition. The Pāli commentaries have their own agenda that is not the same as the academic scholar's one. Therefore, we have to listen to what they have to say, but trusting them only partially. The ambiguous value of the Pāli commentaries as a hermeneutical tool is reflected by the various positions that scholars had towards them. As soon as the first edition of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* was published in 1886, Thomas W. Rhys Davids identified the importance of the commentary as an auxiliary tool to understand the canonical *Dīghanikāya*:

18 The *Milindapañha*, for instance, was a text of North Indian origin (Norman 1983, 111) which found its own way into the Theravāda tradition. The **Vimuttimagga*, *contra*, was a text belonging to the Theravāda tradition (see Cousins 2012, 87) that arrived somehow in China, and that now survives in its entirety only in the Chinese version (*Jiětuō dào lùn* 解脱道論; T 1648).

19 Almost all the Theravāda material we have is from the Mahāvihāra tradition (a notable exception is the **Vimuttimagga*, which is reasonably assumed as deriving from the Abhayagiri tradition; see Cousins 2012). However, we have no reason to believe that the other Sri Lankan sub-sects (viz. Abhayagiri and Jetavana) had a different canon (in this regard, see Bechert 1992, 96; Cousins 2012, 99; Anālayo 2013, 225, n. 43), whereas the authors of the actual Pāli commentaries overtly claim connections with the Mahāvihāra tradition, e.g. *Mahāvihāravāsīnaṃ desanānayanissitaṃ* | *Visuddhimaggaṃ bhāsissaṃ* (Vism 711); see Gethin 1998, 254; 2012, 14-17 and von Hinüber [2013/2014] 2015. This implies that the exegetical material is mainly an expression of the Mahāvihāra's understanding of the Buddhist canonical material.

> In the Dīgha we have the most essential points of Buddhism, the details of Arahatship, not only set out in full, but compared with the Brahman ideal on the one hand and with the ordinary morality of good layman on the other. The exposition is enforced from every variety of point of view, and with a wealth of illustration that renders it as interesting to the student of contemporary life as to the student of Buddhist ethics. On both sides – on the ethical terms and on the names of things in use in daily life – we are in constant want of Buddhaghosa's learning to help us to understand the exact meaning of what is said. For these reasons we have determined to give, as an auxiliary to our edition of the text of the dialogues, the text also of the whole of his commentary upon them. (Rhys Davids [1886] 1968, VII)

We may note that the importance of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, in the words of Rhys Davids, depends upon the contribution it can make to understanding the canonical text. It is not treated as an important text in itself. It has a relative importance, in the sense that its importance is related to the existence of another text. A more circumspect position is the one adopted in the present time by Richard Gombrich, who detected some systematic shortcomings in the commentarial literature that may affect the interpretation of the canon. The first one is the homogenisation of the tradition, that is the tendency of levelling out the discrepancies. The other two are the literalism and the loss of the historical context:

> This homogenization is the first of three systematic defects which I find in the Pali exegetical tradition. The second is excessive literalism, a failing that the Buddha himself foresaw and warned against. Once the texts had been formulated, their words were carefully preserved. Sometimes too much was read into them, and a technical significance was ascribed to some quite normal and innocent expression […] The third deficiency in the commentaries, from our point of view, is that they have largely lost the memory of the Buddha's historical context. (Gombrich 2009, 107)

Notwithstanding the warnings Gombrich provides in dealing with commentaries and, generally speaking, with exegetical texts, we should admit that the understanding of some topics depends upon the exegesis. As Rupert Gethin (2004, 202-3) highlighted, the method of how to practice meditation is not revealed in early texts (such as the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*), but the scholar should rely upon later, and often exegetical, texts. In the case of the procedure to develop the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s, the situation is even worse. These extraordinary capacities often appear in early canonical texts in stock passages, a fact that does not lend further insight on the topic. Moreover, we may note that meditation was quite a common practice that is popular still today, whereas the attempt to develop these powers would sound a bit naïve to the people of our time.[20]

20 At least, for the non-Buddhists. The beneficial effects of the meditation practice are, instead, recognised by both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. An example is the increasing practice of meditation in many fields of contemporary knowledge. In this regard, Giuliano Giustarini writes that "[i]n the past 50 years, Buddhist ideas and meditative techniques have been more and more applied in various fields including cognitive psychology, management, military training, post-traumatic clinical cases, self-help remedies, peacemaking strategies, environmental and sociological issues, etc." (2018, 1225).

We do not know about the state of affairs in the past, but we may note that at least the displaying of the capabilities to lay people was forbidden,[21] and then we may wonder if there were potential disincentives from focusing too much on these powers. Alternatively, or simultaneously, we may assume that the development of the extraordinary capacities was a kind of esoteric knowledge that was then transmitted secretly.[22] This might imply that the various kinds of information concerning the development of these powers that can be detected in our sources are only the tip of the iceberg. Although we cannot completely exclude the possibility that secret texts, or the materials related to the marvellous capabilities, were included in the actual Pāli commentaries. In any case, the exegetical works, and the Pāli commentaries in particular, are not only necessary, but are also the only sources that we have to detect the ancient method to develop extraordinary capacities.[23]

5.3 Conclusive Remarks

Hopefully, this chapter has shed light on some issues inherent to Pāli commentarial literature, which play a role when we evaluate the reliability of the exegetical information it provides. Nevertheless, the commentaries resulted to be fundamental sources for the diachronic study of the extraordinary capacities. Therefore, the commentaries will be both sources for the diachronic study of the extraordinary capacities and an object of research in itself. Given that their value for the understanding of the canonical material is debated, the approach adopted to use the commentaries as sources and simultaneously study them consists of gathering all exegetical accounts on the specific topic, highlighting differences and similarities. In this way, we refrain ourselves from limiting to *a priori* value judgement, using the commentaries according to their intrinsic nature of potentially valuable sources that still need a conclusive and overall systematic assessment. It is an impartial observation of how the commentaries 'behave' in providing exegeses. In the final analysis, it is almost impossible to reach an absolute and definitive truth on the nature of the commentaries considering the limitations of the present work. However, it will be noted that the existence of a recurring pattern not only helps us to evaluate the exegetical accounts referring to the canonical material, but also provides a basic commentarial behavioural pattern that can be useful when considering future studies.

21 "O monks, the miracle of the *iddhi*s which is something beyond [the average reach of] human beings should not be shown to the householders" (*na bhikkhave gihīnaṃ uttarimanussadhammaṃ iddhipāṭihāriyaṃ dassetabbaṃ*; Vin II 112).

22 Gethin (2004, 212, esp. n. 19) highlighted that the Buddhist texts mention some 'secret-books' (*gūḷha-gantha*), that have not been yet recovered.

23 More recent sources studying the extraordinary powers are provided by the so called 'Esoteric Theravāda', to which Kate Crosby (2020) has relatively recently dedicated a book. These wondrous elements not only occur but are also well integrated in what has been defined as 'Pre-modern Theravāda meditation', namely the *borān kammaṭṭhāna* (translatable as 'ancient meditation'). This meditative tradition, although older than many modern practices, does not, however, seem to be reflected in the most ancient textual testimonies, thus leaving us with doubts about its potential relevance to our object of study in terms of methodology. However, evidence from the Esoteric Theravāda could suggest us that elements considered magical or extraordinary are not mere relics of an ancient past but still survive in some corners of society and play a part in modern and contemporary religious discourses and spiritual practices.

What I am referring to will be named the 'interpretative accretion process' in Chapter 7 (§ 7.4.4.1).

With the present chapter, Part I of the book, which introduces some preliminary remarks, ends. The background information provided so far will be tacitly assumed in Part II, which concerns the main core of the book. Therefore, I hope the information provided thus far in Part I should justify my direct approach and handling of the sources. This approach directly derives from the way I conceive the history of some *corpora* of texts (viz. Vedic texts and Pāli commentaries) and some doctrines (viz. *khaṇavāda* and *cittavīthi*). At the same time, Part I strengthens the theoretical premises and reasons to undertake the study of the extraordinary capacities in the way in which it will be done. May the reader forgive me if only now the main topics of the book will be treated, but I am convinced that the preparation for a race is as important as the race itself, if not more.

Part II
The Study of *Manomayakāya*, *Iddhividhā*
and the Other *Abhiññā*s

6 *Manomayakāya*

Index 6.1 Introduction. – 6.2 Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile) and Analysis of Some Elements. – 6.3 The Vedic Background with Particular Reference to the Upaniṣadic Context. – 6.4 From the Canon to the Commentaries. – 6.5 General Conclusions.

6.1 Introduction

The term *manomayakāya* can be translated as 'mind-made body', 'body made of mind', or 'body consisting of mind'. This notion is quite problematic because it appears in a wide range of different contexts. I found only few works within academic literature which are truly and extensively focused on the concept of *manomayakāya*, or even more broadly on the term *manomaya*.[1] One of the first most compelling contributions on this topic is that of Sue Hamilton (1996, 138-68), who skilfully presents an overview of the relevant canonical Buddhist sources with a sharp comparison with the Vedic texts. What emerged from Hamilton's study is that the concept of *manomaya* is rather enigmatic because it is a compound which could be interpreted in grammatically different ways and appears in different contexts.[2] A second important contribution is that of Michael David Radich (2007, 224-87), a brilliant study which, however, does not unfortunately consider Hamilton's work among the secondary literature. Radich provides another set of contexts in his research on the mind-made body (*manomayakāya*). He states that there are nine different contexts which can be gathered in three macro-groups:

1 An old and short reference can be found in Eliade 1958, 165. Other brief and valuable references are in Swearer 1973, 447-9; Reynolds 1977, 378-9 (however, references are scattered throughout the paper); Johansson 1979, 34-9; Harvey 1993, 36; 1995, 91-2; Guang 2009; Agostini 2010; Radich 2010; Anālayo 2016; 2021a; 2021b; Shulman 2021.

2 Hamilton (1996, 139-40) discussed the term *manomaya* in four different contexts: (1) the context in which *manomaya* is used to indicate a particular ontology, such as in the first and second verse of the *Dhammapada* (in this regard, see Agostini 2010); (2) the context in which the term *manas* indicates the mental sense (*manodhātu*), the sixth sense; (3) the context in which *manomaya* is used as a metaphorical synonym for the cosmological level of the world of form (*rūpadhātu*); and (4) the context in which meditators create a body made of mind when they achieve a certain level of meditation.

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(1) Buddhist practice and attainment; (2) cosmology; and (3) views of other schools (Radich 2007, 228).[3] Later, there occurs a paper by Sumi Lee (2014), who begins her study by introducing the previous research on the concept of *manomaya* in Pāli sources; however, she focused her research primarily on the Mahāyāna texts, adding no further material for the study of Theravāda Buddhism. Since the 2018, I have published a series of studies that, directly or tangentially, concern the study of the *manomayakāya*.[4] Additionally, a contemporary practice involving the development of the *manomayakāya* is described by Potprecha Cholvijarn (2023).

Within this present research, the main focus will be on the *manomayakāya* attained during the path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2), although the other contexts in which *manomayakāya* or *manomaya* occur will also be considered whenever appropriate. Therefore, the canonical pericope of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* will be first analysed (§ 6.2), followed afterwards by a detailed analysis of the meaning of the compound '*manomaya*' (§ 6.2.1) and some of the according similes will be provided (§ 6.2.2). This preliminary study of the canonical context will be completed and enriched with the evidence provided by the Vedic texts and the comparison between Buddhist and Upaniṣadic materials (§ 6.3). Thereafter, a thorough analysis, from the canon to the Pāli commentaries, will be undertaken (§ 6.4), mainly focusing on the interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa*.

6.2 Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile) and Analysis of Some Elements

The creation of a new mind-made body is not only the fourteenth element of the twenty elements of the path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, but also appears within a sub-list of twelve attainments which are some fruits of the ascetic life. The elements of this latter sub-list are separated from each other with a phrase which indicates that the list is hierarchic, or in other words, the elements are listed from the lowest to the highest: "O great king, this also is a visible fruit of the homeless life which is more advanced and exalted than the previous one".[5] In the story, a monk, after having fulfilled the basic requirement of the morality, practised self-restraint in various

3 Within the nine contexts recovered by Radich (2007, 229), the *manomayakāya* occurs as: (1) the mental body which was developed at an advanced stage in the path of liberation; (2) the *post-mortem*'s destination for disciples who achieved a certain level of fulfilment; (3) the body through which the Buddha visits the Brahmā's world; (4) the body used by the Buddha on one occasion to go to a disciple to teach him; (5) a rebirth that seems promised even to extremely generous lay people; (6) the form in which some deities are embodied in certain heavens; (7) the form in which some beings were embodied in the initial part of an aeon (Pāli: *kappa*; Sanskrit: *kalpa*); (8) an object among a group of objects of identification that can be mistakenly confused with the self (*attan*); and (9) one of the seven nihilistic views rejected by the Buddha in the *Brahmajālasutta*. It is worth noting that the *manomayakāya* takes on different connotations outside of the Pāli texts. For instance, it could be the medium through which the transmigration process operates, as can be seen from the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* (Lee 2014, 70).

4 De Notariis 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2021; 2022b; 2025; forthcoming-b. Relevant parts from these works have been included in the present book.

5 *idam pi kho mahā-rāja sandiṭṭhikaṃ sāmaññ-phalaṃ purimehi sandiṭṭhikehi sāmaññ-phalehi abhikkantataraṅ ca paṇītataraṅ ca* (e.g. D I 77).

ways and lived a mindful life,[6] abandons the five hindrances (*pañca-nīvaraṇa*) and enters progressively within the meditative absorption states until the attainment of the fourth level of absorption (*catutthajjhāna*). Subsequently, the monk is able to know and see (*ñāṇa-dassana*) the difference between body (*kāya*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*)[7] and, after that, he is able to create a new mind-made body (*manomayakāya*). This creation is followed by three similes whose aim is to better illustrate the nature of this attainment. The episode is thus narrated:

> **Basic Formula**
> When the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained impassibility, he directs and turns the mind (*citta*) in order to create a body made of mind (*manomaya*). He creates from this body another body which has a form, made of mind, with all limbs and [bodily] parts, without defect of any faculty.[8]
>
> **Simile**
> Just as, O great king, a man were to draw out from a reed a stalk. He might think: "This is the reed, this is the stalk; the reed is one thing, the stalk is another one, nevertheless from a reed a stalk was drawn out". Just as, O great king, a man were to draw out a sword from a scabbard. He might think: "This is the sword, this is the scabbard; the sword is one thing, the scabbard another one, nevertheless from a scabbard a sword was drawn out". Just as, O great king, a man were to pull out a snake from a basket (*karaṇḍa*).[9] He might think: "This is the snake, this is the basket; the snake is one thing, the basket another one, nevertheless from a basket a snake was pulled out".[10]

6 For a recent discussion concerning the role of morality and mindfulness in the Buddhist path, see Ben-David 2024.

7 "When the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained impassibility, he directs and turns the mind for the sake of knowing and seeing (*ñāṇa-dassana*). He knows thus: 'This is my body (*kāya*) which has a form, consists of the four great elements, born of mother and father, is maintained by rice and junket, has the inherent quality of impermanence, is subjected to erosion, abrasion, breaking, destruction, and this is my consciousness (*viññāṇa*) which is leaned on it, bounded to it'" (*so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneǰjappatte ñāṇa-dassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. so evaṃ pajānāti: ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo odana-kummāsupacayo anicc-ucchādana-parimaddana-bhedana-viddhaṃsana-dhammo, idañ ca pana me viññāṇaṃ ettha sitaṃ ettha paṭibaddhan ti*; D I 76). On the possible significance of this description of the physical body and how it relates with the body made of mind, see De Notariis 2025; forthcoming-b.

8 *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneǰjappatte mano-mayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. so imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbaṅga-paccaṅgiṃ ahīnindriyaṃ* (D I 77).

9 Here, I translate *karaṇḍa* without following Buddhaghosa's interpretation, who understands it as the snake's slough (***karaṇḍā*** *ti idam pi ahi-kañcukassa nāmaṃ*; Sv I 222). I will discuss my reasons below (§ 6.4).

10 *seyyathā pi mahā-rāja puriso muñjamhā isīkaṃ pavāheyya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ muñjo ayaṃ isīkā, aññо muñjo aññā isīkā, muñjamhā tv eva isīkā pavāḷhā ti. seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja, puriso asi kosiyā pavāheyya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ asi ayaṃ kosi, aññо asi aññо kosi, kosiyā tv eva asi pavāḷho ti. seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ ahi ayaṃ karaṇḍo, aññо ahi aññо karaṇḍo, karaṇḍā tv eva ahi ubbhato ti* (D I 77).

Afterwards, the monk is able to perform many kinds of psychophysical power (*iddhividhă*), he develops the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*), the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] (*cetopariyañāṇa*), the knowledge of recollection of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), and the knowledge of the fall and rise of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*). Finally, he obtains the knowledge of extinction (*khayañāṇa*) of the influxes (*āsava*), attains insight into the four noble truths, and achieves liberation.

In this exposition concerning the creation of a mind-made body, it is not explained what its use and function is. Perhaps, since the concept pre-dates Buddhism, it was part of a common knowledge and so was taken for granted.[11] Moreover, some terms involved do not have a unique interpretation. Generally speaking, the action of translating is itself an interpretative act which is not without problem. Hence, it seems appropriate to better analyse the translation of some more ambiguous terms.

6.2.1 Interpretation of the Compound '*Manomaya*'

On the basis of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s passage, it is not clear whether *manomaya*[12] should be translated as 'made of mind', 'made through the mind', or 'made in the mind'. Buddhaghosa comments upon the compound understanding the term *manas* according to the instrumental case.[13] However, an interpretation according to the genitive case would be supported by a widespread use of the term '*-maya*' at the end of compounds, with the meaning of 'made of', 'consisting of' (PED s.v. "maya"). Finally, given that within a compound the first term is never inflected, the locative case ('made in the mind') cannot be *a priori* ruled out. Among scholars, only Sue Hamilton discussed the grammatical interpretation of this compound. In this regard, Hamilton writes:

> *Maya* can mean 'consisting of', 'made' or 'originating'. So, if taken as a genitive *tappurisa*, the compound can mean 'consisting of/made of the mind'; 'originating in the mind' if taken as a locative *tappurisa*; or

11 Radich (2007, 234-5) pointed out that the episode which portrays Udāyin, who contradicts Sāriputta since he believes that the gods who have a mind-made body are just those that are formless (*arūpin*) and made of perception (*saññāmaya*) (A III 192-4), would highlight that the doctrine of *manomayakāya* was part of a common knowledge. Udāyin's point of view was wrong because the gods who are *manomaya* are not formless (*arūpin*): they have a form (*rūpin*) (e.g. *devā rūpino manomayā* [...] *devā arūpino saññāmayā;* M I 410, as also quoted by Hamilton 1996, 153). In another canonical passage, the doctrine of the creation of a mind-made body seems taken for granted. In the *Janavasabhasutta* (D 18), Janavasabha is glad that the number of gods is increasing (in comparison to the number of *asuras*) because there appeared in the Heaven gods who had lived the holy life under the Blessed one (*ye te bhante devā Bhagavati brahmacariyaṃ caritvā* [...]; D II 208). In this *sutta* there is no mention of the term *manomaya*, however, it is reported within the *Vinaya* that when Kakudha (the attendant of Moggallāna) died, he arose in a mind-made body (Vin II 185) and the mind-made body is the body of certain gods as it is stated, for instance, in the *Brahmajālasutta* (D I 17). Therefore, we stay with Radich (2007, 235) in claiming that it is possible to recover from the Pāli canonical texts an inner coherence which connects the reports of the term *manomaya* within different episodes.

12 This subsection is mostly based on De Notariis 2018, 182-8.

13 "*manomaya* means 'created through the mind'" (*manomayan ti manena nibbattitaṃ*; Sv I 222). A similar explanation is also provided by Buddhaghosa when the term occurs within the *Brahmajālasutta* (D I 34). On this occasion, the commentator wrote: "*manomaya* means 'created by the *jhāna*-mind'" (*manomayo ti jhānamanena nibbatto*; Sv I 120).

> 'made by the mind' if taken as an instrumental. In effect the locative and instrumental have the same meaning: that the mind is the cause of something else coming to be. The genitive meaning, on the other hand, indicates that the stuff of something is the mind, and its concern with *what* something is means that it is an ontological interpretation of the compound. (Hamilton 1996, 138-9)

Apparently, Hamilton divides the possible interpretations in two groups: 1) the mind which is the cause of something, interpreting the term *manas* according to either the instrumental or locative case; 2) the mind which is the substance of something, interpreting the term *manas* in an ontological way according to the genitive case. This double subdivision has been pivotal within Hamilton's study. In fact, from her work, a constant commitment emerges in demonstrating that, on the one hand, the mind is an agent and is the cause of something, and, on the other hand, an ontological discontinuity does not exist between different states or levels of existence. This way of proceeding led Hamilton to understand *manas* according to the instrumental case (the mind as an agent), to the detriment of the genitive case (the mind as an ontology).[14] However, a stricter textual analysis may provide a different interpretation.

A first criticism to the instrumental interpretation of the compound concerns the fact that there would be no need to specify that the new body is created through the mind. At the beginning of the formulaic passage, indeed, it is stated that "he [the monk] directs and turns the mind (*citta*) in order to create a mind-made (*manomaya*) body".[15] Therefore, it would already be clear that the means through which this new body comes into existence is the mind (*citta*). Comparing this passage with the previous one in which the monk clearly knows the difference between his physical body (*kāya*) and the consciousness (*viññāṇa*), a certain analogy can be noted. Once the practitioner becomes aware of his body, he states: "This is my body (*kāya*) which has a form, consists of the four great elements, born of mother and father" (*ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo*; D I 76). Thereafter, when the monk creates a new mental body, it is reported that "he creates from this body another body which has a form, made of mind" (*aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ*; D I 77). In both passages, the bodies are initially described using the term *rūpin*, which means 'endowed with a form'. The first passage goes on to state that the body 'consists of the four great elements' (*cātum-mahā-bhūtiko*) and that it is 'born of mother and father' (*mātā-pettika-sambhavo*), while in the second passage the body is *manomaya*. In another context, Buddhaghosa comments upon the compound '*cātum-mahā-bhūtiko*' stating that *cātum-mahā-bhūtiko ti cātu-mahā-bhūta-mayo* (Sv I 120), using the term '*-maya*' at the end of the compound to underline that it is 'made of'. It may seem, *prima facie*, that in the first passage the body has a form and consists of the four great elements (*rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko*, equivalent to *rūpī *cātum-mahā-bhūta-mayo*), while in the second passage the new body has a form and consists of mind (*rūpiṃ manomayaṃ*), understanding *manomaya* as 'made of mind'. However,

14 Hamilton, commenting on the episode that concerns the creation of the *manomayakāya* in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, writes: "[i]ts existence, therefore, is not *in* the mind or *of* the mind, but it is a body created *by* the power of the mind" (1996, 157).

15 *manomayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* (D I 77).

this does not sufficiently clarify the situation since the term *manomaya* could also be compared with *mātā-pettika-sambhavo* 'born of mother and father'. Just as in the first passage the physical body originated from parents (*mātā-pettika-sambhavo*), in the same way, in the second passage, the body has not ordinary origins, but it is self-produced thanks to the [own] mind (*manomaya*). It might be possible that the compound *manomaya* conveys both meanings simultaneously, and so this new body is made through the mind and consists of mind as well.

A glance into the Upaniṣads (a more careful analysis will be provided below in § 6.3) may sustain the hypothesis that would read *manas* inflected in the genitive case rather than the instrumental one. In fact, the term *manomaya* in the Upaniṣads should be understood ascribing the genitive case to the term *manas*. This interpretation is particularly clear, for instance, in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.4.5:

> The self (*ātman*), indeed, is the *brahman*, it is made of consciousness, made of mind, made of vital breath, made of seeing, made of hearing, made of earth, made of water, made of wind, made of empty space, made of shininess and darkness, made of desire and absence of desire, made of anger and absence of anger, made of justness and injustice; it is made of everything. Precisely for this reason, it is said 'made of this, made of that'.[16]

Additionally, the Monier-Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* seems to indicate this as the only way to read the compound.[17] This passage would make absolutely no sense if it were translated by interpreting the first members of the various compounds formed with *-maya* to the second member according to the instrumental case. In this case, one should admit that the *ātman*/*brahman* is created by something, but this is conceptually unacceptable. Therefore, the genitive case should be preferred; *pace* Hamilton who, commenting upon some passages, attempts to reject an interpretation according to the genitive case, stating that "it appears that there is no ontological discontinuity between levels of existence" (1996, 148).[18] The lack of ontological discontinuity is compared to ice, water, and

16 *sa vā ayam ātmā brahma vijñānamayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaś cakṣurmayaḥ śrotramayaḥ pṛthivīmaya āpomayo vāyumaya ākāśamayas tejomayo 'tejomayaḥ kāmamayo 'kāmamayaḥ krodhamayo 'krodhamayo dharmamayo 'dharmamayaḥ sarvamayaḥ | tad yad etad idaṃmayo 'domaya iti* (BU 4.4.5).

17 "[C]onsisting of spirit or mind, spiritual, mental" (SED s.v. "mano"), indicating the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* and Upaniṣads as references.

18 Hamilton tries to neglect an ontological difference in order to reject an interpretation of the term *manas* according to the genitive case. Interestingly enough, Hamilton translated the Upaniṣadic compounds ending in *-maya* with calques that leave the interpretation undetermined. For instance, she translated BU 4.4.5 (translated above by me) in this way (e.g. consciousness-made, mind-made, breath-made, sight-made, hearing-made, etc.), although in the end she admits: "made of all" (Hamilton 1996, 145). This choice of translation is in agreement with the use of English speakers to translate *manomaya* as 'mind-made', an unexceptionable translation from the formal point of view since it is an almost perfect calque of the compound. Hamilton, regarding the Upaniṣadic passage, writes that "[t]his passage clearly indicates an absence of ontological discontinuity between the different things of (or by) which one is made and implies that in identifying with Brahman one identifies with everything" (1996, 145). Even assuming that there is not an ontological discontinuity, the instrumental interpretation is quite odd, and therefore Hamilton tries to suggest the interpretation according to the instrumental case in brackets with 'or by'.

steam, which would be nothing but three different ways of existing, for the same element, within a density spectrum (see Hamilton 1996, 150). However, although there is ontological continuity between the various states of existence of the same element, I think it is undeniable that we can say, by convention, that one thing is 'composed of water' and another is 'composed of ice'. It could be said that although ultimately there is no substantial difference, the apparent manifestation of these states of existence (ice, water, steam) presents them to the ordinary experience as different. Using philosophical categories which are typical of the Buddhist speculation, it can be said that there is no difference in an absolute sense (*paramattha*), but there is difference only in the relative plane (*vohāra*). Since language is a purely conventional tool for describing apparent reality, it goes without saying that a substantial non-discontinuity on the ontological level does not invalidate an interpretation according to the genitive case since, apparently, the substances in play would seem different.[19]

Now, after having exposed some evidence in favour of an interpretation according to the genitive case, it must be said that the fact that the compound is interpreted according to the instrumental case in the Pāli commentaries cannot be ignored.[20] In fact, as already mentioned above (§ 5.1), word elucidations were among the first ways of commenting, and it could be argued that the very action of commenting was indeed a need already present at the dawn of Buddhism. The *Pātimokkha*, for example, was included within the canon accompanied by an elucidation of the terms word by word (*padabhājaniya*). Another example of the importance of commentary in ancient Buddhism is the *Niddesa*, the commentary on two *vagga*s and a *sutta* of the *Suttanipāta*, which was included within the canon (Norman 1997, 149-50). Therefore, it cannot be excluded that the commentary interpretation of the compound is ancient, also in light of the fact that it is shared by several commentaries.[21] Furthermore, the interpretation according to the instrumental case would seem to be also present in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu: "it is defined as '*manomaya*' by the fact of being produced by the mind alone, due to the fact that it does not come into being through something external as, for example, the seed, the blood, etc." (*sa eva manonirjātatvāt manomaya uktaḥ | śukraśoṇitādikaṃ kiñcid bāhyam anupādāya bhāvāt*; Abhidh-k-bh 153).

This scenario reveals that within what is the most ancient context, that is the Upaniṣadic one, the interpretation that emerges is that *manas* is to be understood as inflected according to the genitive, while the interpretation

19 Even Harvey has argued for an ontological non-discontinuity between body and mind: "[w]hile *nāma* is centred on *citta* and *rūpa* is centred on the 'four great elements', there is no dualism of a mental 'substance' versus a physical 'substance': both *nāma* and *rūpa* each refer to clusters of changing, interacting process" (1993, 39). However, he also stated that "non-normal patterns of interaction between mind and body are found in the cases of development of the 'mind-made' body […] these non-normal cases are dependent on the power of meditation to bring about transformations in the normal pattern of *nāma-rūpa* interaction" (1993, 40).

20 See, for instance, *jhānamattena* [Be *jhānamanena*] *nibbattattā manomayā* (Sv I 110); *manomayo ti jhānamanena nibbatto* (Sv I 120); *manomayan ti manena nibbattitaṃ* (Sv I 222); *manomayan ti manena nibbattitaṃ* (Ps III 263); *manomayan ti manena nibbattitaṃ* (Mp I 209); *jhānamanena nibbattitakāyo tena manena katattā manomayakāyo nāma* (Paṭis-a II 666). Here, it is worth noting that by 'mind' the Pāli commentaries seem to specifically understand '*jhāna*', as a sort of mind developed or born from meditation.

21 It is also emphasised by Norman (1989, 51) that some interpretations of the commentaries are as ancient as the canonical ones.

provided within the much later Buddhist commentarial literature is an interpretation according to the instrumental case. The truth is that from the canonical text, as it has been previously shown, it is possible to infer both inflections. The only element that would seem to tip the scales in favour of an interpretation according to the genitive case is the fact that the new mental body is created after raising awareness into the transience of the physical body. Therefore, it would seem to have been created in contrast to the latter. In this regard, the treatment of a body called '*manomaya*' within another supposedly ancient Buddhist collection of texts, namely the *Saṃyuttanikāya* (The Collection of Connected [Discourses]), is certainly noteworthy.

The passage at stake (i.e. S V 282-4) tells of an episode set in Sāvatthī that sees as protagonist the disciple Ānanda, who approaches the Buddha. As usual, he pays homage to him and sits on one side. Once he had sat down beside him, he asked him: "O Lord, does the Blessed one recall having approached the world of Brahmā by the psychic power, with a body made of mind?" (*abhijānāti nu kho bhante Bhagavā iddhiyā manomayena kāyena Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā*; S V 282). The Blessed one replies in the affirmative and therefore Ānanda pursues him with another question: "O Lord, but does the Blessed one recall having approached the world of Brahmā with a body which consists of the four great elements (*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*), by the psychic power (*iddhiyā*)?" (*abhijānāti kho pana bhante Bhagavā iminā cātumahābhūtikena kāyena iddhiyā Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā*; S V 282). The Buddha replies affirmatively again, provoking a reaction of astonished surprise from Ānanda.[22] The possibility of levitating up to the world of Brahmā is due to the unification of body and mind. It is stated that the Buddha "concentrates the body in the mind and the mind in the body",[23] thereafter he dwells in this state of unification which involves bodily perceptions of pleasure and lightness.[24] This practice makes the body lighter, more malleable, more workable, more luminescent, just like an iron ball heated for a whole day would become lighter, more malleable, more workable, more luminescent.[25] As a result "the body, without difficulty, ascends from the earth to heaven".[26] The contrast present in this passage concerns the materiality of the body, therefore, probably, the material of which it is formed. A mental body is opposed to the material body composed of the four great elements. The physical body, more solid and coarser, is lightened by the union with the mind which therefore appears to be endowed with a more subtle materiality, capable of 'diluting' the heaviness of physicality.[27] In

22 *tayidam bhante bhagavato acchariyaṃ ceva abbhutaṃ ca* (S V 283).

23 *kāyam pi citte samādahati cittam pi ca kāye samādahati* (S V 283).

24 *sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca kāye okkamitvā viharati* (S V 283).

25 *kāyo lahutaro ceva hoti mudutaro ca kammaniyataro ca pabhassarataro ca. seyyathāpi Ānanda ayoguḷo divasaṃ santatto lahutaro ceva hoti mudutaro ca kammaniyataro ca pabhassarataro ca* (S V 283). It is worth noting a parallel with the description of the mind of the practitioner who has overcome the fourth state of meditative absorption (*catutthajjhāna*) in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. In fact, in this text (D I 76), this mind is described using various terms including the state of malleability (*mudu-bhūta*) and the appropriateness to operate or work (*kammaniya*). The same terms also appear in the simile of the heated iron sphere, recalling to the mind the concept of 'ascetic ardour' (*tapas*). Just as the heat warms the metal sphere making it malleable, in the same way the ascetic ardour confers ductility to the mind.

26 *kāyo appakasireneva pathaviyā vehāsam abbhuggacchati* (S V 283).

27 This passage led Johansson to assert that "[t]he idea is probably that the mind (*citta*) is thin and light; by mixing it well with the body the combination will become less heavy" (1979, 38). On the concept of 'lightness', see De Notariis 2022b, 404-9.

this narrative, there is an opposition between different body densities. The commentary on this passage is taken from the *Sāratthappakāsinī*,[28] which glosses the sequence '*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*' stating that the term *cātumahābhūtika* (composed of the four great elements) is to be understood as *cātumahābhūta-maya* using *-maya* at the end of the compound to indicate the composition of the matter of which the physical body is constituted. The comment carries on its elucidation emphasising that the characteristics of such a body are the heaviness (*bhārika*) and weight (*garuka*), thus highlighting the most peculiar characteristic of this body: the coarseness.[29] Moreover, the commentary avoids glossing the term '*manomaya*', for which commentaries usually report the interpretation according to the instrumental case. I think this omission is not accidental because, as a rule, the commentary definition of *manomaya* is a dissolution of the compound that involves attribution to the first member (*mano*/*manas*) of the instrumental case. In fact, this interpretation would have been difficult to sustain in this context.

From the analysed elements, there would seem to emerge a certain difficulty to completely exclude the genitive from the interpretation of the compound *manomaya*, despite that the interpretation according to the instrumental case would seem to be the one that has been affirmed over time. The latter is well attested in the commentaries and could have its harbinger in a late canonical use of *-maya*, that is to say in the case of the wisdom (*paññā*) produced by reflection (*cintāmaya*), by hearing (*sutamaya*), and by development (*bhāvanāmaya*).[30] In conclusion, I am inclined to hypothesise a gradual transition in which the canonical texts still represent an intermediate step in this interpretative shift, as exemplified by Figure 6.1.

Genitive in the Upaniṣads	Buddhist canonical texts in Pāli	Instrumental in the Buddhist commentaries

Figure 6.1 Diachronic representation of the grammatical interpretation of the term *manas* within the compound *manomaya*. English version of the picture reported in De Notariis 2018, 188

With a new insight concerning the meaning of the compound '*manomaya*', we shall consider some interpretative problems involved in the translations and formulation of the canonical simile.

28 The passage at stake is Spk III 260-1.

29 The Pāli term which is usually translated as 'gross' is *oḷārika* (Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit: *audārika*, starting from the Sanskrit word *udāra*; BHSD s.v. "audārika"). Often in the texts, it occurs in connection with what is composed of the four great elements. For example, a gross self consisting of the four great elements is mentioned within the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*: *oḷārikam kho ahaṃ bhante attānaṃ paccemi rūpiṃ cātummahābhūtikaṃ kabaliṅkārāhāra-bhakkhan ti* (D I 186). A physical body, composed of the four great elements, which is also coarse (*odārika*<*audārika*), occurs within the Sanskrit version of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (known as *Śrāmaṇyaphalasūtra*) that reached us within the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins: *ayaṃ mama kāyo rūpi* o>dārika<ś cāturmahābhūtikaḥ* (SBhV II 245).

30 The oldest canonical occurrence is, most likely, in the quasi-Abhidhammic *sutta* called *Saṅgītisutta* (D III 219). A proper in-depth Abhidhammic treatment of the topic is provided in Vibh 324-5, which seems to be the base for further exegetical treatments, i.e. Sv III 1002 and Vism 439. Additionally, it is certainly interesting to consider Gethin's discussion (2001, 222-3) of the occurrences in the *Peṭakopadesa* and *Nettippakaraṇa*.

6.2.2 Notes on the Similes: Problematic Translations

Now, the translation of a couple of terms (*muñja* and *isīkā*) will be discussed, focusing on modern translations, the Buddhist world view, and the use of these terms within some Vedic texts.[31]

The terminology used in the presentation of the similes involves many difficulties. Here, I will deal with the first pair of elements, namely *muñja* and *isīkā*, whereas I will later discuss the problem concerning the translation of the term *karaṇḍa*, which is paired with the term *ahi*, since it requires a more detailed analysis (see below § 6.4).

My rendition of the pair of terms, *muñja* and *isīkā*, which I translate respectively as 'reed' and 'stalk', is not the only possible rendition. One of the first translation strategies adopted is to interpret the term *isīkā* as 'reed' and the term *muñja* as the sheath that covers it. This rendering was adopted, for instance, by Rhys Davids in his translation of the *Dīghanikāya* in 1899: "Just, O king, as if a man were to pull out a reed from its sheath" (1899, 88).[32] A more recent interpretation is that of Rupert Gethin, who still interprets the term *isīkā* as 'reed', but translates the word *muñja* as 'reed grass': "It is as if, your majesty, a man were to draw out a reed from reed grass" (2008, 31).[33] These two translations might imply a slightly different interpretation of the extraction process. In fact, on the one hand we have a reed stripped of its sheath, while on the other hand we might understand that there is a single reed extracted from a multiplicity of reeds.[34] In the pursuit of trying to consider how the process of extracting the *manomayakāya* could be understood, it may be worth interpreting *muñja* as a 'reed' and *isīkā* as a 'stalk'. In support of this hypothesis there is a definition found in the recent Pāli dictionary (*A Dictionary of Pāli*) written by Margaret Cone, who, among the various definitions, interprets the term *isīkā* as the inner part of the reed or stem which could be used to fabricate an arrow.[35] Such a use of the term is also reported within the *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* for the Sanskrit equivalent *iṣīkā*.[36] Assuming that someone has to skin a reed or extract something from it, that something will probably have a function. In the following example of

31 This paragraph is based on De Notariis 2018, 188-94.

32 This reading derives from the interpretation of the same simile reported in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.16: *yatheṣīkā vimuñjā syād*. The passage clearly states that the reed (*iṣīkā*) is deprived of its sheath (*vimuñja*). This interpretation of the two terms was maintained in the subsequent translation made by Walshe (1995, 104).

33 Gethin's translation seems very faithful to the interpretation of the PED (s.v. "muñja"), which sees precisely the term *muñja* as a type of grass, assuming that this term implies a collectivity (just as the term 'grass' in Italian [i.e. erba] implies a set of blades of grass). Therefore, the term *isīkā* would indicate the single element. This interpretation in connection with the simile is also reflected in a Pāli commentary, which glosses the word *muñja* in this way: *muñjamhā 'ti muñjatiṇamhā* (Paṭis-a II 666), highlighting through the term '*tiṇa*' that *muñja* is a type of grass.

34 I should specify that Rupert Gethin informed me that he does not understand the process of extraction differently from Rhys Davids and he meant, rather, that a single reed is extracted from a single blade of reed grass. Therefore, I want to inform the reader of Gethin's real understanding, although I maintain his translation as an example of possible translation that can lead the reader to another understanding of the process of extraction. Also see my corrigenda (De Notariis 2021, 14).

35 "[T]he inner part of a reed or stalk (used as an arrow)" (DOP s.v. "isīkā").

36 "*Halme* werden häufig besprochen und als Zaubermittel, namentlich als Pfeile" (SW s.v. "iṣīkā"). Even the *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* mentions, with less references, this use of *iṣīkā* (SED s.v. "iṣīkā").

the sword extracted from the sheath, it is obvious that between the sword and the sheath, only the first is usable. The sheath – as well as the basket (*karaṇḍa*) in the case of the snake (*ahi*) – serves only as a container, as a cover for what really counts. One could then wonder about the value of the snake in the case of the pair consisting of the snake (*ahi*) and basket (*karaṇḍa*). The snake in the basket could be, for example, the work tool of snake charmers. The aforementioned beggars used these trained ophidians in order to earn money. An account of this practice has come down to us in the *Samantapāsādikā*, the Pāli commentary on the *Vinaya*. In fact, this commentary, illustrating the meaning of the term *apada* (snake; lit. 'the one without feet'), states:

> Among snakes (*apada*), that which is called *ahi* is a kept snake (*gahitasappa*) which belongs to somebody, such as snake charmers (*ahiguṇṭika*), etc. When cause [such a snake] to play they earn half (*aḍḍha*) or a quarter (*pāda*) of a *kahāpaṇa*.[37]

The extraction of the body made of mind also represents an extraction of something of value from its coarser container: the physical body.

The fact that things could have multiple levels of density or depth and that these levels in turn could have different uses or a different importance is attested in both Buddhism and the Upaniṣads. Hamilton, in her work, has drawn attention to how some things or elements may have three modes of existence. The scholar mentions *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 6.5.1-4, which identifies three modes of existence for food (*anna*), water (*āpas*) and fire (*tejas*): a coarse state (*sthaviṣṭa*), a middle state (*madhyama*) and a more subtle and refined state (*aṇiṣṭa*) (Hamilton 1996, 146). Similarly, it can be observed that this way of categorising the world was also known by Buddhism as, for example, the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* (The Discourse to Poṭṭhapāda; D 9) demonstrates. In this narrative, Poṭṭhapāda postulates (D I 185-6) the existence of three types of self (*attan*), which are gradually rejected dialectically by the Buddha: the gross self (*oḷārika*), the self made of mind (*manomaya*), and the formless self (*arūpin*). The very fact that things can have multiple levels or layers also implies that the various parts can have a certain value or a certain use, and one is not comparable to the other. A good example of this last statement is the simile of the heartwood that appears inside both the *Mahāsāropamasutta* (The Great Discourse of the Simile with the Heartwood; M 29) and the *Cūḷasāropamasutta* (The Brief Discourse of the Simile with the Heartwood; M 30). In these two texts, it is explained how the various achievements should not be confused with the final goal, just as the heartwood of the tree should not be confused with other more external parts. In the *Cūḷasāropamasutta*, the simile expressed reviews the various parts or layers of which a tree is made up of, highlighting how everything that is not heartwood is fundamentally not useful for achieving what one had set to make with the heartwood:

> O brāhmaṇa, just like a man in need of heartwood, who looks for the heartwood, who wanders in search of the heartwood, after having passed

37 *apadesu ahi nāma sassāmiko ahiguṇṭhikādīhi gahitasappo. yaṃ kīḷāpento aḍḍham pi pādam pi kahāpaṇam pi labhanti* (Sp II 362). The *kahāpaṇa* is a copper coin which has a square form (PED s.v. "kahāpaṇa").

> just a large erect tree with heartwood, ignoring the heartwood, ignoring the sapwood, ignoring the inner bark, ignoring the outer bark, after having cut and picked up branches and foliage, went away thinking: "It is the heartwood!" Having seen him, a man with good sight would say precisely: "This good man certainly did not know the heartwood, he did not know the sapwood, he did not know the inner bark, he did not know the outer bark, he did not know branches and foliage so, indeed, this good man in need of heartwood, who looks for the heartwood, who wanders in search of the heartwood, after having passed just a large erect tree with heartwood, ignoring the heartwood, ignoring the sapwood, ignoring the inner bark, ignoring the outer bark, after cutting and taking branches and foliage, goes away thinking, 'It is the heartwood!' He will not achieve his purpose that required heartwood using his heartwood [in this case: branches and foliage]".[38]

From this simile, we can infer a division of the tree according to various levels. The most important part, the heartwood (*sāra*), is also the innermost part. Figure 6.2 shows the various layers that make up the tree as it was described within the simile.

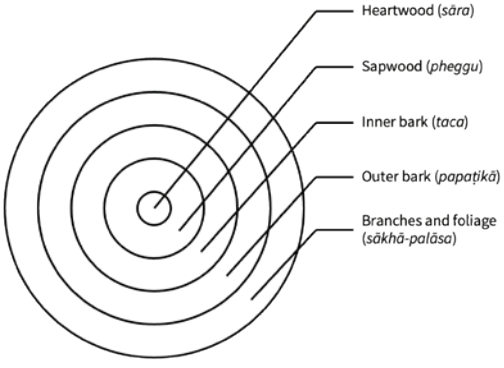

Figure 6.2 Tree layering described in the *Cūḷasāropamasutta* (M 30). English version of the picture reported in De Notariis 2018, 193

This taxonomic subdivision of the tree shows a way of conceiving things that is analytical, which divides and discriminates between the parts involved because not all of them have the same value. Going deep to search for the true essence is a way of investigating the reality already present in the Upaniṣads, which testify to a search for the vital principle within natural phenomena and

38 *seyyathā pi brāhmaṇa puriso sāratthiko sāragavesī sārapariyesanaṃ caramāno mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato atikkamm' eva sāraṃ atikkamma phegguṃ atikkamma tacaṃ atikkamma papaṭikaṃ, sākhāpalāsaṃ chetvā ādāya pakkameyya sāran ti maññamāno; tamenaṃ cakkhumā puriso disvā evaṃ vadeyya: na vatāyaṃ bhavaṃ puriso aññāsi sāraṃ na aññāsi phegguṃ na aññāsi tacaṃ na aññāsi papaṭikaṃ na aññāsi sākhāpalāsaṃ, tathā h' ayaṃ bhavaṃ puriso sāratthiko sāragavesī sārapariyesanaṃ caramāno mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato atikkamm' eva sāraṃ atikkamma phegguṃ atikkamma tacaṃ atikkamma papaṭikaṃ sākhāpalāsaṃ chetvā ādāya pakkanto sāran ti maññamāno, yañ-c' assa sārena sārakaraṇīyaṃ taṅ-c' assa atthaṃ nānubhavissatī ti* (M I 198).

the nature of the individual (water, wind-breath, fire).[39] This *modus operandi* characterised by observation and hierarchical classification still persists in Buddhism, which maintains it in its vision of the world and cosmos.[40]

Turning again to the problem of how translating the terms *muñja* and *isīkā* – after having mentioned what could be the vision of the world that underlies this simile – the translation choices could be divided into two macro groups: 1) the extraction of a singularity (*isīkā*) from a plurality (*muñja*); and 2) the extraction of a part (*isīkā*) from a single whole (*muñja*). In the first case, *muñja* is a set of elements and *isīkā* is a single element; in the second case, *muñja* is a single element and *isīkā* is a part of it. A glance into the Vedic texts reveals that there is not a univocal interpretation. In *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.16 the *muñja* is described as something that can be taken from the *isīkā*/*iṣīkā*: *yatheṣīkā vimuñjā syād*. In another passage, i.e. *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 6.3.1.26, the god Agni, moving away from the gods, enters a reed (*muñja*): *agnir devebhya udakrāmat sa muñjam prāviśat*, from the cavity (*suṣira*). Frequently, *muñja* would seem to be a term used as a singular noun, just as indicating a single stalk of *muñja*, and not as a plural one indicating *muñja* grass. In fact, in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 6.6.2.15, for example, when the '*muñja* grass' is meant, the term *muñja* is inflected in the plural form: "this body, indeed, is precisely the cauldron of fire (*ukha*), the womb (*yoni*) is the grass (*muñjāḥ*)" (*tadvā ātmaivokhā | yonir muñjāḥ*). The term *isīkā*/*iṣīkā* also seems to have similar connotations. One can observe how *iṣīkā*, within *Atharvaveda* 7.56.4, has the connotation of 'single stalk': "You [serpent] who here, sinuous, without joints, without limbs, make the faces twisted and deformed, may you, O Brahmaṇaspati, straight them out like a reed (*iṣīkā*)" (*ayaṃ yo vakro viparur vyaṅgo mukhāni vakrā vṛjinā kṛṇoṣi | tāni tvaṃ brahmaṇas pate iṣīkām iva saṃ namaḥ*).[41] In fact, in *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 5.24.3 the plural use of *iṣīkā* is emphasised by the term '*tūla*' (tuft) in the compound '*iṣīkā-tūla*' which, therefore, designates a 'tuft of reeds'.

It would seem, therefore, that the interpretation that sees *muñja* as a single element and *isīkā* as a part of it, probably the most important part, should be preferred. Another reason why the translation of *muñja* as a single reed should be preferred lies in the fact that in the remaining two similes from a single object (i.e. the sheath, and the basket) another single object is extracted (i.e. the sword, and the snake). Therefore, if one has to extract from the reed (*muñja*) its important and valuable part, this part could really be the 'stalk', which would then translate the term *isīkā*. This translation could also conceptually include the interpretation that sees *isīkā* as 'reed' and *muñja* as 'sheath'. This is possible considering that the stalk is the

39 Frauwallner ([1953] 1973, 36-61) provides an exposition of how the vital principle is sought among these elements. Della Casa (1973, 35-6) highlights the different approaches of these first truth seekers: some of them were observers of natural phenomena; others focused on the nature of the individual; for others, there was a parallel progression of the observation of man and the cosmos; finally, there were those who attributed the qualities of knowledge and intelligence, proper to the individual principle, to the cosmic principle.

40 The subdivision of the Buddhist cosmos is based on three levels of progressive rarefaction: 1) the world of desire (*kāmadhātu*); 2) the world of form (*rūpadhātu*); and 3) the world of non-form (*arūpadhātu*), see Gombrich 1975, 133-4. For an overview of the Buddhist cosmos, see below Table 6.1 at § 6.3.1.3.

41 For the interpretation of *saṃ-√nam*, literally 'to bend together', with a meaning indicating 'to straighten out', see Whitney [1905] 1962, 426.

preponderant part of the reed and so extracting the stalk from the reed may represent the pruning of the stalk from the various offshoots or outgrowths of the plant.[42]

6.2.3 Summary

So far, the interpretation of some terms has been highlighted, namely the compound *manomaya* and the pair of *muñja* and *isīkā* occurring in the simile which illustrates the extraction of something from its container. Starting with the compound *manomaya*, we may note how both the exegetical Buddhist tradition and Sue Hamilton interpreted the first term (*manas*) of the compound *manomaya* as inflected into the instrumental case. However, it has been highlighted that there could be good reason to sustain a canonical reading of *manas* inflected into the genitive case. Furthermore, the gradual shifting over time of the grammatical interpretations of the compound *manomaya* would suggest that there may have also been a diachronic development for the interpretation of the body (*kāya*) that is *manomaya*, viz. the *manomayakāya*.

The terms *muñja* and *isīkā* resulted to be difficult to interpret, as they often take on slightly different meanings depending on the context. The interpretative proposal that has been presented perceives *isīkā* as the essential part of the reed that acts as a support, namely the stalk. This can also have its intrinsic usefulness as a main component for the creation of an arrow. Consequently, the *muñja* can be considered as the whole reed, namely the stalk with its offshoots (in a broad sense, it is also the sheath that covers the stalk). The extraction of the *isīkā* from the *muñja*, together with the other similes, makes clear that what has value is to be found beyond the external rind. These similes would highlight how, beyond a grosser body (*kāya*), there is another body (the *manomayakāya*) more rarefied, but likewise real and, perhaps, even more valuable.

6.3 The Vedic Background with Particular Reference to the Upaniṣadic Context

The concept of *manomaya* appears within the Upaniṣads often in connection with the concept of *ātman*, the latter is frequently vaguely translated as 'self'.[43] To be more specific, the notion of *manomaya* often appears listed as one of the constituent parts of the *ātman* in an intermediate position. Indeed, it is stated in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.5.3: "this is what this self is made of; it is made of speech, it is made of mind, it is made of breath".[44] Moreover, the concept of *manomaya* appears in more sophisticated lists such as, for instance, in the already quoted *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.4.5:

> The self (*ātman*), indeed, is the *brahman*, it is made of consciousness, made of mind, made of vital breath, made of seeing, made of hearing,

42 Further reflections on an odd wording of a passage in the simile are provided in Appendix 3.

43 This section is mainly based on my previous work (De Notariis 2019b, 56-72).

44 *etanmayo vā ayam ātmā | vāṅmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaḥ* (BU 1.5.3).

> made of earth, made of water, made of wind, made of empty space, made of shininess and darkness, made of desire and absence of desire, made of anger and absence of anger, made of justice and injustice; it is made of everything. Precisely for this reason, it is said 'made of this, made of that'.[45]

However, this list should not be considered as a single list, but rather as a combination of lists, since the sequence of earth-water-wind-space could be considered a separate list. Indeed, in the Mādhyandina recension of the same passage, the list of elements composes of space, wind, fire, water and earth,[46] which is a widespread list of five elements. Furthermore, the sequence that includes the *ātman* made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*), made of mind (*manomaya*), and made of breath (*prāṇamaya*) can be likewise considered a separate list. This last list, which is composed of three elements, appears as the core of another list, which is composed of five elements within the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*.[47] This text exhibits five types of *ātman* which reside one inside the other like a Russian nesting doll and seem to come forth from the densest element to the subtlest. These five kinds of *ātman* are made (*-maya*) of different substances: food (*anna*), breath (*prāṇa*), mind (*manas*), consciousness (*vijñāna*), and bliss (*ānanda*). The list is hierarchic: the most inferior type of *ātman* is listed first and is also the grossest element; the last element is the subtlest and best type of *ātman*. Any element is better than the previous one. For instance, in *Taittirīyopaniṣad* 2.3.1, it may be observed that the *ātman* made of mind is preferred to the *ātman* made of breath:

> Other than this very self made of breath (*prāṇamaya*), is the self made of mind (*manomaya*) which is inside it and permeates it. This very [self] has exactly the form of a man; its form of a man is the imitation of the form of a man [of the previous one and so on].[48]

It is significant that this *ātman* has a manlike form, a fact which is echoed within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* when it is stated that the new mind-made body has all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabbaṅga-paccaṅgin*). It is worth noting that what Olivelle (and others) translates as 'self' seems to be an actual level of embodiment in this context. This list of five *ātman*s which could be reached progressively is summarised at the end of the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* (3.10.4-5):

45 *sa vā ayam ātmā brahma vijñānamayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaś cakṣurmayaḥ śrotramayaḥ pṛthivīmaya āpomayo vāyumaya ākāśamayas tejomayo 'tejomayaḥ kāmamayo 'kāmamayaḥ krodhamayo 'krodhamayo dharmamayo 'dharmamayaḥ sarvamayaḥ | tad yad etad idaṃmayo 'domaya iti* (BU 4.4.5). Olivelle (1998, 121) has oddly reversed in his translation the term 'made of breath' with the term 'made of sight'. I translated the terms according to the Sanskrit text. See also above (§ 6.2.1).

46 *ākāśamayo vāyumayas tejomaya āpomayaḥ pṛthivīmayaḥ*; end notes in Olivelle 1998, 519.

47 See, for instance, TU 2.8.1 = TĀ 8.8.5; TU 3.10.5 = TĀ 9.10.5.

48 *tasmād vā etasmāt prāṇamayāt | anyo 'ntara ātmā manomayaḥ | tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ | sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva | tasya puruṣavidhatām anvayaṃ puruṣavidhaḥ* (TU 2.3.1). The self made of food (*annamaya*) is nothing but the human body (TU 2.1.1). The self made of breath (*prāṇamaya*) is inside the self made of food and so it has the same form, namely the human shape and this also applies to the following selves. It seems as if the physical body functions as a mould for the inner and subtler embodiments.

> The one who is in this man and the one who is in that sun, both are one and the same. He who knows in this way, after having departed from this world, passes through the self (*ātman*) made of food (*annamaya*), then the self made of breath (*prāṇamaya*), then the self made of mind (*manomaya*), then the self made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*), then the self made of bliss (*ānandamaya*); he has nutrition at will, has the form he desires, and traverses these worlds.[49]

The concept of *manomaya*, within the Upaniṣadic passages mentioned so far, appears in connection with the concept of *ātman*, and as an element centrally located in some lists. In particular, within the five-element list in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, it is exactly in the centre of the list as an intermediate step between the grossest element (food) and the subtlest (bliss).

Another characteristic of *manomaya,* which appears in the Upaniṣads, is the luminosity or brightness that is, indeed, connected with an *ātman* or a *puruṣa* made of mind. For instance, it is stated in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 5.6.1:

> Made of mind (*manomaya*) is this person (*puruṣa*), he has the essence of the light (*bhāḥsatya*), he dwells within the heart, he is like either rice or barley. He is the lord of everything, the supreme ruler of everything, he rules over all, over everything.[50]

In this passage, it is clear that this person (*puruṣa*) – which is, in this context, a synonym of *ātman*[51] – made of mind and consisting of light (*bhāḥsatya*), attains mastery over the material world. In a similar way, it would seem that the monk in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, after he created a new mind-made body, is able to perform magical acts through the development of a variety of psychophysical power (*iddhividhă*), showing a mastery of the matter thanks to the control over the constituent elements. The monk, for example, "dives into the earth and emerges from it as if it were water",[52] proving that he is not subject to matter anymore, he is instead able to control it.

49 *sa yaścāyaṃ puruṣe | yaścāsāvāditye | sa ekaḥ || sa ya evaṃvit | asmāl lokāt pretya | etam annamayam ātmānam upasaṅkramya | etaṃ prāṇamayam ātmānam upasaṅkramya | etaṃ manomayam ātmānam upasaṅkramya | etaṃ vijñānamayam ātmānam upasaṅkramya | etam ānandamayam ātmānam upasaṅkramya | imāṁl lokān kāmānnī kāmarūpy anusañcaran* (TU 3.10.4-5). The passage is the same in TU 2.8.1.

50 *manomayo 'yaṃ puruṣo bhāḥsatyas tasminn antar hṛdaye yathā vrīhir vā yavo vā | sa eṣa sarvasyeśānaḥ sarvasyādhipatiḥ sarvam idaṃ praśāsti yad idaṃ kiñca* (BU 5.6.1). It is also similar to this passage CU 3.14.2, in which the self made of mind is said to have an appearance which is luminous (*bhārūpa*).

51 In the Upanisads, it is possible to often find the term *puruṣa* used in place of *ātman*. An *ātman* that is a *puruṣa* occurs, for instance, in BU 1.4.1: *ātmaivedam agra āsīt puruṣavidhaḥ*. A treatment concerning the relationship between the *ātman* and the male body (notably, the word *puruṣa* refers to the male of human species, and so it is also connected with the male body) is provided by Black (2007, 133-50).

52 *paṭhaviyā pi ummujja-nimmujjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake* (D I 78). This *iddhi* is analysed below at § 7.4.7.

6.3.1 Comparison between Buddhist and Upaniṣadic Contexts

The analysis of the Upaniṣadic references has revealed that the concept of *manomaya* appears – within the Upaniṣads – in conjunction with the concept of *ātman*. Moreover, it is often found in hierarchical lists as an element centrally located and, sometimes, it is characterised by brightness or luminosity. In what follows, some Buddhist *sutta*s will be considered, in order to show how the pre-Buddhist characteristics of the Upaniṣadic *manomaya-ātman* survived in Buddhist texts. Particular reference will be paid to the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2), *Poṭṭhapādasutta* (D 9) and *Brahmajālasutta* (D 1).

6.3.1.1 *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2), and the Centrality

The central position of the notion of *manomaya*, within the hierarchical list of *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, could be compared with the position of the same notion in a *Sāmaññaphalasutta* list. The mind-made body appears in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* when the monk, after having cultivated morality and achieved meditative absorptions, attains awareness about the impermanence of the physical body, and so he creates a new mind-made body. However, this mind-made body is not the ultimate goal and, therefore, the monk will attain liberation only after the destruction of all the noxious influxes. The different attainments listed in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* are hierarchical. The list is developed from the lowest attainment to the highest. This is demonstrated by the ending words which divide the attainments from each other: "O great king, this also is a visible fruit of the homeless life which is more advanced and exalted than the previous ones".[53] This phrase marks the transition from one element to another within a list that consists of twelve attainments:

1. the attainment of the first level of absorption (*paṭhamajjhāna*);
2. the attainment of the second level of absorption (*dutiyajjhāna*);
3. the attainment of the third level of absorption (*tatiyajjhāna*);
4. the attainment of the fourth level of absorption (*catutthajjhāna*);
5. the monk knows and sees (*ñāṇa-dassana*) the difference between body (*kāya*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*);
6. the creation of the mind-made body (*manomayakāya*);
7. the monk is able to perform the many kinds of psychophysical power (*iddhividhā*);
8. the development of the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*);
9. the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] (*cetopariyañāṇa*);
10. the knowledge of recollection of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*);
11. the knowledge of the fall and rise of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*);
12. the knowledge of the extinction of the influxes (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*).

In this hierarchical list, the creation of the mind-made body is in sixth position, which is a central position. It could not be exactly in the centre because twelve is an even number, but it could not be more central than this. As already noted above (§ 6.3), in the hierarchical list of the *ātman*s, within

53 *idam pi kho mahā-rāja sandiṭṭhikaṃ sāmaññ-phalaṃ purimehi sandiṭṭhikehi sāmaññ-phalehi abhikkantataraṅ ca paṇītataraṅ ca* (e.g. D I 77).

the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, which is composed of an odd number of elements, the notion of *manomaya* is exactly central:

Five kinds of *ātman* (*Taittirīyopaniṣad* 3.10.4-5)				
Made of food (*annamaya*)	Made of breath (*prāṇamaya*)	Made of mind (*manomaya*)	Made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*)	Made of bliss (*ānandamaya*)

The three elements which are the core of this list also appear in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.4.5 and another list of three elements can also be found in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.5.3:

***Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.4.5**		
Made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*)	Made of mind (*manomaya*)	Made of breath (*prāṇamaya*)
***Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.5.3**		
Made of speech (*vāṅmaya*)	Made of mind (*manomaya*)	Made of breath (*prāṇamaya*)

Seemingly, when the concept of *manomaya* is present within lists, it is located in the central position; it is higher than some elements of the list, but lower than others. Thus, it might so far seem, that the central position which characterises the notion of *manomaya* is shared by Buddhism and the Upaniṣads. This will become even more evident in the next analysis of the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*.

6.3.1.2 *Poṭṭhapādasutta* (D 9), and the Connection with the Buddhist *Attan* (= Sanskrit: *Ātman*)

Another characteristic of the concept of *manomaya* noticed in the Upaniṣads was its connection with the concept of *ātman*. It is probably for this reason that in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* three kinds of *attan* (= Sanskrit: *ātman*) are proposed by Poṭṭhapāda which are refuted dialectically by the Buddha:

1. the gross (*oḷārika*) *attan*;
2. the mind-made (*manomaya*) *attan*;
3. the formless (*arūpin*) *attan*.

In this context, as well as in the Upaniṣads and *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the concept of *manomaya* appears located in a central position within a hierarchical list, which develops from the grossest element to the most rarefied. The gross *attan* is described through terms which are very close to the terms used to describe the physical body (*kāya*) within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. It was stated in this text by the meditator: "This is my body which has a form, consists of the four great elements, born of mother and father, is maintained by rice and junket".[54] In the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, it is stated by Poṭṭhapāda: "O Lord, I postulate a gross *attan* which has a form, consists of the four great

54 *ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo odana-kummāsupacayo* (D I 76).

elements, feeds on solid food".[55] In both passages the subjects have a form (*rūpin*), consist of the four great elements (*cātummahābhūtika*), and feed on food (*odana-kummāsupacaya/kabaliṅkārāhāra-bhakkha*).[56] Subsequently, there appears something described as *manomaya*: in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* appears the mind-made body, whereas in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* appears the mind-made *attan*. In both texts, what is mind-made is described as having all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabbaṅga-paccaṅgin*) and without defect of any faculty (*ahīnindriya*).[57] The high degree of similarity concerning the *manomaya*'s phrasing in these two *sutta*s is probably the reason that led some scholars to suppose that the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* may have borrowed the model of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*.[58] However, a simpler explanation to justify the presence of the three kinds of *attan* and their refusal by the Buddha is that the text was created in a historical context in which different ideas about the composition of the *ātman/attan* were circulating.[59] Among various kinds of *ātman*, a mind-made *ātman* is indeed well attested in the Upaniṣads. The similarity between the terms used by both Buddhist texts may be due to the fact that the Buddhist canon is the result of an oral tradition, which tends towards simplification.[60] Another reason to justify the similarities may be that there is no substantial difference between the body (*kāya*) and the *attan*. What I would like to demonstrate now is that the Buddhist notion of the body connected to the concept of *manomaya* was influenced by a Vedic idea of *ātman*.

Although *ātman* often means 'breath' or 'soul',[61] the meaning 'body/trunk' is attested early on in Vedic texts.[62] In some passages, for instance, *ātman* seems to designate the vital body in opposition to the death body (*śarīra*), just as in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.2.6-7:

55 *oḷārikam kho ahaṃ bhante attānaṃ paccemi rūpiṃ cātummahābhūtikaṃ kabaliṅkārāhāra-bhakkhan ti* (D I 186).

56 Here, it is worth remembering that the term *oḷārika* (gross) is not present within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* account, however, it appears in the description of the physical body within a Sanskrit version of this account extant in the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins: *<*ayaṃ mama kāyo rūpī* o>dārika<ś cāturmahābhūtikaḥ* (SBhV II 245). See also above (§ 6.2.1).

57 D I 77 and D I 186.

58 Pande (1957, 89) supposed that a first stratum of the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* contains references to *oḷārika* and *manomaya* only, and he claims that this opposition is present also in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. Radich (2007, 248) believes instead that these two *sutta*s convey two different soteriological visions, but he states also: "[i]t is almost as if D[īgha]N[ikāya] 9 is deliberately attempting to hijack the model of D[īgha]N[ikāya] 2 and harness it to the polemical exposition of a new or alternative model" (Radich 2007, 244; square brackets mine).

59 In this regard, see Frauwallner [1953] 1973, 36-61, in which there is an exposition of the attempts to find the vital principle among natural phenomena and the individual nature.

60 To put it in other words, it is feasible that when texts are orally transmitted their memorisation is better facilitated if there is a high rate of passages with verbatim repetitions. Allon is right to say that "Verbatim Repetition obviously represents the greatest aid to memory. The greater the percentage of a text that is verbatim repetitive the easier it is to learn and remember" (Allon 1997b, 52).

61 See SED s.v. "ātman", that would suggest some derivations variously connected with the act of breathing: *√an-* 'to breathe', *√at-* 'to move', *√vā-* 'to blow'. See also s.v. "tman" in SED: "vital breath".

62 I am strongly indebted with Werner Knobl who was the first to draw my attention to this particular meaning for the term '*ātman*'. He was also so kind to send me some references from the Vedic texts.

> So, when his vital breaths had departed, his corpse [*śarīra*] began to bloat. His mind, however, still remained within his corpse.
>
> Then he had this desire: "I wish that this corpse of mine would become fit to be sacrificed so I could get myself a living body (*ātman*)!" (translation of Olivelle 1998: 39; square brackets mine).[63]

This passage conveys an opposition between *ātman* and *śarīra,* which seemingly already occurs in some Brāhmaṇa texts, such as in *Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa* 1.2:

> This he places in his own body [*ātman*], in these immortal life-breaths. This being placed in his own body does not perish.
>
> Now when the mind passes away, when the breath, sight, hearing, [speech], then it enters these fires. Thereupon they throw after (these life-breaths) also this body [*śarīra*, i.e. the corpse] of his in these fires. (translation of Bodewitz 1973, 20; square brackets mine)[64]

However, the body as a whole is not the only physical interpretation of the concept of *ātman* since there are some passages in which *ātman* appears with the meaning of 'trunk' of the body, in contrast to the limbs (*aṅga*) as, for instance, in *Maitrāyaṇīsaṃhitā* 1.11.6: "the man belonging to Prajāpati is seventeenfold: the four limbs, the neck with head, the trunk (*ātman*), speech as seventh, the ten breaths" (*saptadaśaḥ puruṣaḥ prājāpatyaś | catvāry aṅgāni śirogrīvam ātmā vāk saptamī daśa prāṇā*); sometimes in a metaphorical way, just as in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 9.5.2.16: "the Sacrificer (*yajamāna*) is the trunk (*ātman*) of the sacrifice, the priests (*ṛtvij*) are its limbs" (*ātmā vai yajñasya yajamāno 'ṅgāny ṛtvijo*); and in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 12.2.3.6: "the Viṣuvat is the trunk (*ātman*) of the year, the months are its limbs" (*ātmā vai saṃvatsarasya viṣuvān aṅgāni māsāḥ* […]). Other times, the trunk (*ātman*) is opposed to the wings (*pakṣa*) and tail (*puccha*), such as in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 7.2.2.8: "he only ploughs the trunk (*ātman*) [of the altar fire], not the wings and tail" (*sa vā ātmānam eva vikṛṣati | na pakṣapucchāny* […]); and in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 7.3.1.44: "he puts it on the trunk (*ātman*) [of the altar], not on the wings and tail" (*tā ātmannevopadadhāti na pakṣapuccheṣu* […]). It is possible that the composers of these Buddhist texts had in mind this idea of *ātman*. Therefore, in Buddhist texts when the body is *manomaya,* it is also with all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabbaṅga-paccaṅgin*), and what is *manomaya* within the Upaniṣadic texts, is the *ātman*. Moreover, the mind-made *attan* within the Buddhist texts is also described as endowed with all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabbaṅga-paccaṅgin*). The Buddhist tradition describes the mind-made *attan* in the same way as it describes the mind-made body (*kāya*). It is likely that this overlap of meaning

63 *tat prāṇeṣūtkrānteṣu śarīraṃ śvayitum adhriyata | tasya śarīra eva mana āsīt || so 'kāmayata medhyaṃ ma idaṃ syād ātmanvy anena syām iti* (BU 1.2.6-7). On this passage, see De Notariis 2018, 178, n. 2.

64 *tad ātman nidhatta eṣv amṛteṣu prāṇeṣu | tad asyātman nihitaṃ na pramīyate | tad yadā vai manaḥ utkrāmati yadā prāṇo yadā cakṣur yadā śrotraṃ yadā vāg etān evāgnīn abhigacchanti | athāsyedaṃ śarīram eteṣv evāgniṣv anupravidhyanti* (JB 1.2). Cf. Jurewicz 2019, 51-2, in which '*ātman*' is translated as 'himself'. I assume that the translations 'in his own body' and 'in himself' are almost equivalent in this context.

led the first composers of Buddhist texts to specify that the body is with all limbs, in order to avoid misunderstanding. In our idea of 'body', it is implied that a body has limbs, so when we use the word 'body', we have no need to specify that the body is with limbs. However, it seems that it was not the same for early Buddhist redactors.

6.3.1.3 *Brahmajālasutta* (D 1), a Hidden Centrality

A refusal of a mind-made *attan* also appears in the *Brahmajālasutta*, when the Buddha refutes seven kinds of nihilist doctrine. Even on this occasion, the notion of *manomaya* is preceded by grosser elements, and followed by subtler elements. The first nihilistic doctrine concerns an *attan* which has a form, consists of the four great elements, and is born of mother and father (*attā rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo*; D I 34). The second nihilistic doctrine concerns an *attan* which is divine, has a form, belongs to the sense-sphere, and feeds on solid food (*attā dibbo rūpī kāmāvacaro kabaliṅkārāhāra-bhakkho*; D I 34). After that, there appears the third nihilistic doctrine which regards an *attan* which is divine, has a form, mind-made, with all limbs and [bodily] parts, and without defect of any faculty (*attā dibbo rūpī manomayo sabbaṅga-paccaṅgī ahīnindriyo*; D I 34). Subsequently, the last four nihilistic doctrines, which are forms of *attan* more rarefied, are displayed: the *attan* which has realised the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*); the *attan* which has realised the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*); the *attan* which has realised the sphere of nothingness (*akiñcaññāyatana*); and the *attan* which has realised the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*). The first kind of *attan* of this list of seven nihilistic doctrines is comparable to the physical body. Therefore, it is described identically to the physical body within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. This *attan* has a form, consists of the four great elements, and is born of mother and father: *rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo* (D I 34 = D I 76). The second *attan* is divine, but it is still part of the sense-sphere (*kāmāvacara*). This sphere of existence constitutes the first level of a hierarchy of consciousness and is followed by the form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*) and the formless-sphere (*arūpāvacara*). This system of a hierarchy of consciousness parallels the basic structure of the cosmos: the sense world (*kāmadhātu*); the form world (*rūpadhātu*); and the formless world (*arūpadhātu*).[65] The sense world is inhabited by human beings (*manussa*) – a fact that is described in the first nihilistic doctrine – and by some classes of gods:[66] Gods of the Four Great Kings (*cātummahārājika*), Thirty-Three Gods (*tāvatiṃsa*), Yama Gods (*yāma*), Contented Ones (*tusita*), Those who delight in creation (*nimmāṇa-ratin*), Those who have authority on others' creation (*paranimmita-vasavattin*), which are the subjects of the second nihilistic doctrine. Subsequently, there is the third *attan*, which is

65 In this regard, see Gethin 1997, 192-3.

66 In the *kāmadhātu* there are also categories of beings which are lower than the human being condition: Anti-Gods/Demons (*asura*), Departed Ones/Hungry Ghosts (*petti-visaya*), Animals (*tiracchānayoni*), Hellish Beings (*niraya*). However, it is clear that the list of the seven nihilistic doctrines starts from the grossest *attan* moving towards more rarefied *attan*s, and this suggests that the term 'divine' (*dibba*) in the second nihilistic doctrine refers to beings which are higher than the human condition.

likewise divine, has a form and is also mind-made. This third *attan* is higher than the second *attan* which belongs to the sense-sphere (*kāmāvacara*) but is lower than the following four *attan*s which reach the formless states, and so they belong to the formless-sphere (*arūpāvacara*). It seems safe to say that the third *attan* can be placed in the form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*), which is higher than the sense-sphere, and lower than the formless-sphere.[67] Therefore, as S. Hamilton (1996, 153-4) noted, the gods which have a form also have a mind-made body, whereas the gods who do not have a form are made of perception.[68] In Buddhaghosa's commentary it is also stated that *rūpa* and *arūpa deva*s are generated by *rūpa* and *arūpa jhāna*s.[69] Moreover, there is textual evidence which demonstrates that one who is reborn with a mind-made body has obtained a higher rebirth than the gods who feed on solid food.[70] These testimonies agree with the fact that the second and third nihilistic doctrine both concern a divine (*dibba*) *attan*, but the *attan* of the second nihilistic doctrine feeds on solid food, whereas the *attan* of the third doctrine is mind-made. It would seem that the list of seven nihilistic doctrines has a counterpart within both Buddhist cosmology and psychology. These correspondences are better shown in Table 6.1 which illustrates how the exposition of the seven nihilistic doctrines is actually influenced by the basic setting of the cosmos, and by the possible mental states of a person.

Table 6.1 Comparison of the *Brahmajālasutta*'s account with the Buddhist cosmology and psychology. The exposition of both the thirty-one realms of existence and the psychological states is borrowed from Gethin 1997, 195, excluding the elements which are not useful to the present discussion. Gethin schematised the thirty-one realms according to the following Pāli sources: Abhidh-s 22-4; Vibh 422-6; Vism 205-7, 236-44 (= Vism Ae 7.40-4, 8.29-65); Sv-pṭ I 217. A similar scheme also occurs in Gethin 1998, 117-18 with some minor variations that do not affect the present issue. See also Collins 1998, 298-9 and De Notariis 2024, 39

67 A mind-made *attan* is placed within the state of existence of the form (*rūpabhava*) – which is between the state of existence of sensual pleasure (*kāmabhava*) and the state of existence of formless (*arūpabhava*) – by the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* commenting on a *Poṭṭhapādasutta*'s passage: *manomaya-attabhāva-paṭilābhena paṭhama-jjhāna-bhūmito paṭṭhāya Akaniṭṭha-brahma-loka-pariyosānaṃ rūpa-bhavaṃ dassesi* (Sv II 380).

68 *devā rūpino manomayā* […] *devā arūpino saññāmayā* (M I 410).

69 *manomayā ti jhānacittamayā. saññāmayā ti arūpajjhānasaññāya saññāmayā* (Ps III 122).

70 *atikkamm' eva kabaliṅkārāhārabhakkhānaṃ devānaṃ sahavyataṃ aññataraṃ manomayaṃ kāyaṃ upapanno* (A III 192). The food has a particular value in Indian asceticism: "[t]he food code of ascetics has both a cosmological and a soteriological dimension and meaning. The progression of the ascetic withdrawal from the food effort is a mirror image of the progression of cosmic evolution, an evolution produced by the human involvement in the food effort" (Olivelle 1995, 202). Further thoughts on the significance of food are expressed in De Notariis 2025; forthcoming-b.

Cosmology		*Brahmajālasutta*	Psychology	
WORLD (*dhātu*)	**REALM (*bhūmi*)**	**THE *ATTAN*S described in the seven nihilistic doctrines (D I 34-5)**	**MENTAL STATE**	
Formless World (*arūpadhātu*)	*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* (Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception)	7° nihilistic doctrine: the *attan* which has realised the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*)	Formless Attainments (*arūpa-samāpatti*)	Formless-Sphere Mind (*arūpāvacara*)
	akiñcaññāyatana (Sphere of Nothingness)	6° nihilistic doctrine: the *attan* which has realised the Sphere of Nothingness (*akiñcaññāyatana*)		
	viññāṇañcāyatana (Sphere of Infinite Consciousness)	5° nihilistic doctrine: the *attan* which has realised the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*)		
	ākāsānañcāyatana (Sphere of Infinite Space)	4° nihilistic doctrine: the *attan* which has realised the Sphere of Infinite Space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*)		
World of Pure Form (*rūpadhātu*)	*akaniṭṭha* (Highest Gods) *sudassin* (Beautiful Ones) *sudassa* (Good-Looking Ones) *atappa* (The Serene) *aviha* (The Durable) *asañña-satta* (Unconscious Beings) *vehapphala* (Great Fruit)	3° nihilistic doctrine: *attan* which is divine, has a form, mind-made, with all limbs and [bodily] parts, without defect of any faculty (*attā dibbo rūpī manomayo sabbaṅga-paccaṅgī ahīnindriyo*)	4° *jhāna*	Form-Sphere Mind (*rūpāvacara*)
	subha-kiṇha (Full Splendour) *appamāṇa-subha* (Measureless Splendour) *paritta-subha* (Limited Splendour)		3° *jhāna*	
	ābhassara (Radiant Ones) *appamāṇābha* (Measureless Luminosity) *parittābha* (Limited Luminosity)		2° *jhāna*	
	mahābrahmā (The Great Brahmā) *brahma-purohita* (Brahmā's Ministers) *brahma-pārisajja* (Brahmā's Retinue)		1° *jhāna*	
World of the Five Senses (*kāmadhātu*)	*paranimmita-vasavattin* (Those who have authority on others' creation) *nimmāṇa-ratin* (Those who delight in creation) *tusita* (Contented Ones) *yāma* (Yama Gods) *tāvatiṃsa* (Thirty-Three Gods) *cātummahārājika* (Realm of the Four Great Kings)	2° nihilistic doctrine: *attan* which is divine, has a form, belongs to the sense-sphere, feeds on solid food (*attā dibbo rūpī kāmāvacaro kabaliṅkārāhāra-bhakkho*)	8 skillful states of mind motivated by non-attachment, friendliness and wisdom (*kusala-citta*)	Sense-Sphere Mind (*kāmāvacara*)
	Human Being (*manussa*)	1° nihilistic doctrine: *attan* which has a form, consists of the four great elements, born of mother and father (*attā rūpī cātum-mahā-bhūtiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo*)		
	asura (Anti-Gods/Demons) *petti-visaya* (Departed Ones/Hungry Ghosts) *tiracchānayoni* (Animals) *niraya* (Hellish Beings)		12 unskillful states of mind motivated by attachment aversion and delusion (*akusala-citta*)	

Thus, it seems safe to state that in both *Poṭṭhapādasutta* and *Brahmajālasutta* there is a mind-made *attan* at an intermediate level which is refuted. In the case of the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, the mind-made *attan* is placed between the gross (*oḷārika*) *attan* and the formless (*arūpin*) *attan*, whereas in the *Brahmajālasutta,* it appears as the third element within a list of seven nihilistic doctrines refuted by the Buddha. A more detailed analysis reveals that the list of seven nihilistic doctrines has parallels with the Buddhist cosmology and psychology, showing that the mind-made *attan* is always located in an intermediate state – the world of form (*rūpadhātu*) or the form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*) – placed between the sense world (*kāmadhātu*) or sense sphere (*kāmāvacara*), and the formless world (*arūpadhātu*) or formless-sphere (*arūpāvacara*). Therefore, it is possible to state so far that the concept of *manomaya* is an intermediate element within lists in both Buddhism and the Upaniṣads. In all Buddhist *sutta*s analysed it appears in a middle position and is the same in all Upaniṣadic lists examined also. Another characteristic of *manomaya* that has been revealed is its connection with the concept of *ātman/attan*. In the Upaniṣads, sometimes the *ātman* (= *puruṣa*) is *manomaya* (e.g. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 5.6.1), other times, *manomaya* is used to describe one of the constituent parts of the *ātman* (e.g. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.5.3), and sometimes, even, it is an intermediate density level in a list of layers to be crossed progressively (e.g. *Taittirīyopaniṣad* 3.10.4-5). On the other hand, Buddhism – which is famous for its denial of the existence of an *attan* (doctrine of *anattan*) – when it presents the notion of *manomaya* in connection with the word *attan*, treats it as something which should be rejected or surpassed. However, some characteristics of the Upaniṣadic *manomaya-ātman* survived in the Buddhist description of the mental body, the latter being described in terms that resemble the first. Thus, we shall consider some further similarities.

6.3.1.4 Luminosity

Another characteristic worthy of analysis is the property of brightness or luminosity, which seems to belong to the notion of *manomaya*. In the Upaniṣadic context, luminosity may be a corollary of the fact that *manomaya* appears in connection with the concept of *ātman* (= *puruṣa*), which has brightness as its own characteristic. In *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 5.6.1, luminosity is indicated by the term '*bhās*': *manomayo' yaṃ puruṣaḥ bhāḥ* […]; in a similar way, there is the term '*bhās*' in *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 3.14.2, within the compound '*bhārūpa*': *manomayaḥ prāṇaśarīro bhārūpaḥ* […].

Interestingly, the characteristic of luminosity, in connection with the notion of *manomaya,* is also present in some Buddhist *sutta*s, without implying any connection with the term *ātman/attan*, although a kind of embodiment is implied. Within the *Dīghanikāya* it is told in three *sutta*s that at the beginning of an aeon (*kappa*) there were beings born in the Realm of Radiance that had a mind-made body and were self-luminous (*sayyam-pabha*). This episode appears within a pericope in three *Dīghanikāya*'s *sutta*s: *Brahmajālasutta* (D 1), *Pāṭikasutta* (D 24), and *Aggaññasutta* (D 27). The pericope varies slightly in each text in order to fit the specific context.[71] It is present, for instance, within the *Brahmajālasutta* in this form:

71 It is very typical of the pericopes to be adapted to the context with the most minimal changes, cf. Anālayo 2007, 8.

> There is a time, o monks, when after a long lapse of time, at a certain point, this world contracts. When the world contracts beings are, as a rule, born in the Realm of Radiance. There, they are mind-made, feeding on joy, self-luminous, moving through the atmosphere, abiding splendidly, thus they remain for a long and lasting period of time.
>
> There is a time, o monks, when after a long lapse of time, at a certain point, this world expands. When the world expands the empty palace of Brahmā appears. Then, a certain being, from exhaustion of the lifespan or from the exhaustion of merits, after falling from the division of the Radiant ones (*Ābhassara-kāya*), arises in the empty palace of Brahmā. There, he is mind-made, feeding on joy, self-luminous, moving through the atmosphere, abiding splendidly, thus he remains for a long and lasting period of time.[72]

The characteristic of luminosity is conveyed by the compound '*sayyam-pabha*' (self-luminous). In this compound, the Pāli term '*pabha*' (adjectival form of *pabhā*, see PED s.vv. "pabha" and "pabhā") has a parallel with the Sanskrit term '*pra-bhā*' which, in the same way, has the meaning of 'light', 'splendour', and 'radiance' (SED s.v. "pra-√bhā"). Another term that is in connection with the brightness is '*subhaṭṭhāyin*' (abiding splendidly), which was translated into English by T.W. Rhys Davids as "continuing in glory" (1899, 30-1), by M. Walshe as "glorious" (1995, 75-6), and into Italian by F. Sferra as "dimoranti nella gloria […] dimorante nella gloria" (2004, 288-9). The term '*subha*' (Sanskrit: *śubha*), within the compound, is connected simultaneously with a range of meanings ranging from 'shining' and 'bright' to 'beautiful' and 'welfare' (PED s.v. "subha"). The translation 'glory/glorious/gloria' recalls in our culture – at least in my opinion – a Christian background, whereas the meaning of the compound seems to just describe a state of wellness, which is conveyed by the metaphor of light.[73]

6.3.1.5 Atmosphere

Finally, there is a further characteristic relating to the body of beings inhabiting the Realm of Radiance whose translation made by scholars could hide an implicit reference to the Vedic worldview. The term in question is '*antalikkha-cara*', which was translated by T.W. Rhys Davids as

72 *hoti kho so, bhikkhave, samayo yaṃ kadāci karahaci dīghassa addhuno accayena ayaṃ loko saṃvaṭṭati. saṃvaṭṭamāne loke yebhuyyena sattā Ābhassara-saṃvaṭṭanikā honti. te tattha honti manomayā pīti-bhakkhā sayaṃ-pabhā antalikkha-carā subhaṭṭhāyino, ciraṃ dīghaṃ addhānaṃ tiṭṭhanti.*
hoti kho so, bhikkhave, samayo yaṃ kadāci karahaci dīghassa addhuno accayena ayaṃ loko vivaṭṭati. vivaṭṭamāne loke suññaṃ Brahma-vimānaṃ pātu-bhavati. ath' aññataro satto āyukkhayā vā puñña-kkhayā vā Ābhassara-kāyā cavitvā suññaṃ Brahma-vimānaṃ upapajjati. so tattha hoti manomayo pīti-bhakkho sayaṃ-pabho antalikkha-caro subhaṭṭhāyī, ciraṃ dīghaṃ addhānaṃ tiṭṭhati (D I 17).

73 This paragraph might enlarge our comprehension concerning the "propensity among Theravāda and Dharmaguptaka reciters to improve on early discourse passages by introducing imagery related to fire and luminosity" (Anālayo 2017b, 11-12). Therefore, since the luminosity seems to be connected with the concept of *manomaya* in both Buddhist and Upaniṣadic texts, if it appears together with this concept, it should be considered an original feature of the text, and not a later addition.

"traversing the air" (1899, 30-1), by M. Walshe as "moving through the air" (1995, 75-6), and by F. Sferra as "eterovaghi [...] eterovago" (2004, 288-9). These translations follow the interpretation provided by the *Pali-English Dictionary* for the compound '*antalikkha-cara*': "walking through the air" (PED s.v. "antalikkha"). However, the term '*antalikkha*', has the corresponding Sanskrit term '*antarikṣa*' which means 'atmosphere', that is the intermediate space between heaven and earth.

Atmosphere appears as a median element between heaven and earth in the tripartite subdivision of the cosmos. It is possible to recover from the *Ṛgveda* – our oldest Indian text record – two basic views about the composition of the cosmos: 1) a bipartite one, consisting of sky (*Dyaus*) and earth (*Pṛthivī*); and 2) a tripartite one, consisting of earth, atmosphere and sky. The tripartite division of the cosmos is mostly known to us through the *vyāhṛti*-formula, i.e. *bhūr*, *bhuvaḥ*, *svar*, but in the *Ṛgveda*, a way to express it is through the image of the two world-halves (*rodasī*), with the atmosphere (*antarikṣa*) in the middle.[74] Terms used to designate the tripartition are various since the tripartite cosmos is found throughout the Vedic literature. Therefore, it is possible to also recover some kinds of tripartition of the cosmos within the Upaniṣads in which the atmosphere is a central element – between earth and sky – designated with the term '*antarikṣa*'. This tripartition appears, for instance, in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 3.1.10:

> He conquers the earthly world (*pṛthivīloka*) through the invitatory hymn (*puronuvākyā*), the intermediate world (*antarikṣaloka*) through the hymn of the sacrifice (*yājyā*), the heavenly world (*dyuloka*) through the hymn of glorification (*śasyā*).[75]

Within this passage, the tripartite division of the cosmos consists of *pṛthivī* (earth), *antarikṣa* (atmosphere) and *dyu* (sky). Another example is *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 5.14.1:

> There are eight syllables: *bhū-mi* (earth), *an-ta-ri-kṣa* (atmosphere), *dy-au* (sky). Eight syllables, indeed, are also one of the feet (*pada*) of Gāyatrī and, therefore, this is the same of that. The one who has the knowledge of this very foot/verse (*pada*) would conquer as far as these three worlds.[76]

These few quoted examples demonstrate the persistence of a tripartite subdivision of the cosmos in the Vedic literature. This cosmological view conveys a meaningful term *antarikṣa* located in an intermediate position, where the atmosphere is an intermediate space between earth and sky.

74 See, for instance, *rodasī antarikṣaṃ* (ṚV 1.73.8; 5.85.3; 10.88.3; 10.139.2). Another way used to mention the tripartite division is, for example, *dyāvāpṛthivī antarikṣaṃ* (ṚV 1.115.1; 4.14.2). It is interesting to remember that the bipartite division of the cosmos, as stated by Kirfel (1920, 3) and reconfirmed by Gombrich (1975, 112), seems to be older than the tripartite division. The complementary pair of sky and earth, *Dyāvāpṛthivī* (in the dual), is an Indo-European heritage which counterposes the Mother Earth (feminine) to the Father Heaven (masculine). The latter appears, indeed, at the vocative form of *Dyaus Pitar*, which corresponds with *Jupiter* in Latin and *Zeus Pater* in Greek (see Gombrich 1975, 112).

75 *pṛthivīlokam eva puronuvākyayā jayaty antarikṣalokaṃ yājyayā dyulokaṃ śasyayā* (BU 3.1.10).

76 *bhūmir antarikṣaṃ dyaur ity aṣṭāv akṣarāṇi | aṣṭākṣaraṃ ha vā ekaṃ gāyatryai padam | etad u haivāsyā etat | sa yāvad eṣu triṣu lokeṣu tāvad dha jayati yo 'syā etad evaṃ padaṃ veda* (BU 5.14.1).

Thus, it remains to be seen to what extent it is possible to claim that there is a connection between the Upaniṣadic *antarikṣa* and the use of the corresponding term *antalikkha* within the Pāli texts. The concept of *manomaya*, found within the Buddhist texts, has been demonstrated to have some characteristics in common with the same concept which occurs in the Upaniṣads. Unfortunately, the Upaniṣadic term *antarikṣa* does not appear – as far as I know – to be closely related with the concept of *manomaya*. However, it is possible to assume that there exists, within the Upaniṣads, a connection between the atmosphere (*antarikṣa*) and the mind (*manas*), or, at least, that such a connection does not prove to be entirely unreasonable for the Upaniṣadic worldview. In this regard, *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.5.4 stated that: "the three worlds are really these: this very world is the speech, the intermediate world (*antarikṣa*) is the mind (*manas*), the world up there is the breath".[77] In this passage, a connection between *manas* and *antarikṣa* has been made explicit, allowing us to assume that the mind-made beings of the Pāli texts are described to move (-*cara*) in the *antalikkha* not by chance.

That is why the translation of the term *antalikkha* with 'atmosphere' would highlight that these mind-made beings are moving in an intermediate state between earth and sky, which is part of a common Indian background. Once again, it appears that the characteristic of centrality is connected with the concept of *manomaya*, but in this case it is a spatial type of centrality based on a cosmological model. This interpretation is consistent with the typical Buddhist cosmological interpretations formerly mentioned, which concern the tripartition of the cosmos in *kāmadhātu*, *rūpadhātu*, and *arūpadhātu* and position the notion of *manomaya* within the world of form (*rūpadhātu*), which is the intermediate state. Therefore, the connection between the concept of *manomaya* and the atmosphere (*antarikṣa/antalikkha*) could be interpreted as a residual influence caused by a previous cosmological view. This residual influence is due to the tendency of Indian cosmology to not abandon the old theories or ideas in favour of new ones, but rather to preserve the coexistence of the old and new ideas side by side.[78]

6.3.2 Summary

The comparison between the Buddhist and Upaniṣadic texts has shown that the Buddhist concept of *manomaya* shares strong similarities with its Upaniṣadic equivalent. Many characteristics of *manomaya* seem to better fit the Upaniṣadic context than the Buddhist one, at least because some of them are apparent in the first and hidden, or at least less evident, in the latter. The Buddhist connection of *manomaya* with the *attan* in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* is hardly explainable without considering the importance that speculations about the *ātman* held in the Upaniṣads as well as the wide semantic range of meanings of the Upaniṣadic *ātman*. In Buddhist texts, what is *manomaya* is usually a body (*kāya*), which is one of the meanings that *ātman* can have in Vedic texts, namely 'body' or 'trunk of a body'. The characteristic of centrality, namely that *manomaya* is centrally located in some Upaniṣadic

77 *trayo lokā eta eva | vāg evāyaṃ loko mano 'ntarikṣalokaḥ prāṇo 'sau lokaḥ* (BU 1.5.4).

78 Gombrich (1975, 111) compares the complexity of the Indian cosmology with the Indian system of social organisation of the castes, which is likewise developed through a system of inclusion and aggregation of practices and customs in the course of time.

lists of elements, is, somehow, hidden in the *Brahmajālasutta* and survives in the connection of *manomaya* with the cosmological dimension of *rūpadhātu*, which is the intermediate world between the sense world (*kāmadhātu*) and the formless world (*arūpadhātu*). The intermediate world in the Vedic texts is often called *antarikṣa* ('atmosphere'; = Pāli: *antalikkha*) and, unsurprisingly, some *manomaya* beings are said to move in the atmosphere (*antalikkha-cara*). Luminosity is, in the Upaniṣads, an attribute of *ātman*, and *manomaya* beings in higher cosmological realms are likewise luminous.

Therefore, the Buddhist *manomaya* hardly emerges from out of the blue, but does resemble the earlier Upaniṣadic testimonies. Moreover, if we consider that the *manomayakāya* – as we will see in the next section – did not receive any treatment or elaboration from the first Abhidhammic exegesis, it would be safe to assume that it was an exogenous element, more in connection with the Vedic background, rather than the Buddhist scholasticism. Now, with a new insight concerning the ancient context of the *manomayakāya*, we shall see how it has developed over time.

6.4 From the Canon to the Commentaries

When we usually discuss Buddhism, we have to consider a complex system of beliefs which may have evolved throughout the centuries.[79] As Buddhists usually claim: "all compounded things are impermanent" (*sabbe saṃkhārā aniccā*; Dhp 277). From a certain point of view, it is possible to state that the *corpus* of Buddhist scriptures is also something that can be called '*saṃkhāra*'. As Richard Gombrich (2009, 139-41) pointed out, this word means both the process and the result of a process. The Buddhist literature was certainly the result of a process.[80] Its texts were composed and transmitted orally for several centuries, and during this process it may be possible that either some concepts were changed, whether deliberately or not, or if some material became fixed enough to not allow further modifications, some additions on that material in the form of a further exegesis occurred. The Buddhist literature available to us in this present day is the result of that process. The main aim of this section will be to trace the steps of development of a concept, that is to say, the *manomayakāya*, the body made of mind. These steps will display changes over time.

In order to recover the history of a particular concept we need to isolate it, tracing a line of development throughout the centuries. For the purpose of a diachronic study, it would be optimal to take a concept which is old enough to date back to early Buddhism and, at the same time, a concept which is not too scattered, in order to allow us to narrow its evolution. I mentioned the necessity of a concept dating back to early Buddhism because a study focused on the development of something needs to know the starting point of its own subject of study. An early Buddhist concept may have parallels

79 With the word 'complex', I do not mean that all Buddhist concepts are hard to grasp, but I would like to point out that some concepts might be connected with others in ways that are not always clear or immediately obvious. Norman (1981), for instance, showed that the refutation of the doctrine expressed with the phrase *so loko so attā* should be understood as an Upaniṣadic reference. This could be an example of how some Buddhist concepts or doctrines could have been influenced by their source context.

80 This development process has not always been linear, in this regard see De Notariis 2022a.

in texts contemporary to, or older than, the Buddhist texts and therefore may allow a more reliable reconstruction of how a concept was understood within the older stratum of the canon. Without an evident starting point, it is difficult to identify a development, as developments are not always linear. In the midst of developments, a later exposition could be closer to the original meaning of the concept than an older one, so strictly speaking it would be more like a restoration. Thus, a clear-cut starting point would be optimal.

In this regard, the concept of *manomayakāya* is a perfect subject of study. Based on the textual parallels with other Buddhist traditions which have survived in Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan translations, we have no reason to believe that the *manomayakāya* was not an element present in early Buddhism.[81] This could be valid even for the *iddhividhă* and the other *abhiññā*s. In using the controversial label 'early Buddhism', we should take into account the warnings advanced by Peter Skilling (2022, 219-22), who highlighted, *inter alia*, "[t]he term *early Buddhism* is frequently invoked without any serious attempt to define it, and it is not entirely clear exactly what it is" (220). Thus, as the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and the other *abhiññā*s occur not only in the Pāli Nikāyas but also in a similar fashion in the Āgamas, I will use the label 'early Buddhism' in the present book. Additionally, given that the canonical context is also analysed in light of the pre-Buddhist Upaniṣadic evidence, I see no reason not to regard the picture that emerges as among the earliest *recoverable* forms of Buddhism.

However, the results of the following analysis should be considered significant for the study of Theravāda Buddhism, although it cannot be ruled out that they may also be relevant to the study of early Buddhism. The starting point will be the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s exposition of the *manomayakāya*, which will be followed by other accounts in later texts which refer to the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s exposition. The latter is considered here as the *locus classicus* for, at least, the Theravāda tradition.

6.4.1 The Relative Chronology of the Texts

As scholars of Buddhism know very well, there is a problem with the dating of texts in Buddhist studies. Often, both the absolute and the relative chronology remain doubtful. However, the peculiar narrowing of the research to the *manomayakāya* pericope allows a reliable identification of the relative chronology. In fact, this pericope is quite, but not extremely, widespread within the Pāli literature, thus enabling a more detailed analysis of the sources. Most of these sources will also be used in the study of the *iddhividhă* and *abhiññā*s and, therefore, this discussion on chronology will underpin their analysis.

The starting point will be the already mentioned *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the best candidate to embody the *locus classicus* of this pericope. However, it is not the only text in which this pericope occurs. In fact, other *sutta*s in the *Sīlakkhandhavagga* (from D 3 to D 12) include the pericope in their narration,

81 In this regard, see especially Gethin 2020; Anālayo 2021a.

but only in an abbreviated form.[82] Another *sutta* which includes the pericope is the *Mahāsakuludāyisutta* (M 77). However, this *sutta* does not seem to be the actual place of origin of the pericope either. As a matter of fact, this *sutta* has a parallel with the Chinese version of the *Madhyamāgama*,[83] which does not report the detailed exposition of different kinds of aspects of the Buddhist path which contains the creation of a new body made of mind, along with three similes to better explain it. Moreover, as Bhikkhu Anālayo pointed out, the excessive length of the exposition within the *Mahāsakuludāyisutta* does not seem appropriate to a *Majjhimanikāya*'s text, but instead seems more likely to be a later interpolation. Therefore, Bhikkhu Anālayo wrote that:

> Due to this detailed exposition, the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* has become a rather long discourse that would perhaps find a more fitting placement in the *Dīgha-nikāya*, instead of being included among discourses of "middle length". In sum, this whole exposition in the *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* gives the impression of being an expansion of what originally would have only been a reference to the destruction of the influxes or to the three higher knowledges. (Anālayo 2011, 424)

Therefore, we can maintain that the earliest context to embody this long version of the Buddhist path of liberation is the *Dīghanikāya* (and *Dīrghāgama*, as the Chinese and Sanskrit texts would attest), and the evidence provided by *Mahāsakuludāyisutta* is better understood as a borrowing from that collection of texts.[84] With regard to the Theravāda tradition, the version of the path has come down to us in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*.

Finally, there is another short reference to this pericope within the *Aṅguttaranikāya* (A I 24) which reports a brief allusion to the pericope claiming that Cullapanthaka (alternative reading of Cūḷapanthaka), among the disciples of the Buddha, is the preeminent one in the mind-made body creation (*etad aggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ manomayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimminantānaṃ*; A I 24). However, the allusion is very brief and presupposes a previous explanation of what a mind-made body is.

The references to the *manomayakāya* pericope discussed so far are from the first four Nikāyas: *Dīgha-*, *Majjhima-*, *Aṅguttara-*, *Saṃyutta-* (the latter makes no reference to the pericope, only to the body made of mind used to travel up to the *Brahmaloka*; see S V 282). The last Nikāya worthy of consideration is the *Khuddakanikāya*. I am discussing it separately from the other Nikāyas because the *Khuddakanikāya* is a very heterogeneous collection of texts which varies in relation to the content and composition

82 In this case, it could be difficult to discuss a *locus classicus* in the absolute sense. Therefore, as reported by MacQueen (1988, 179-80), within the Chinese version of the Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama*, this pericope is reported in full in the *Āmózhòu jīng* 阿摩晝經 (= Pāli: *Ambaṭṭhasutta*, D 3) because it is the first *sutta* in the Chinese collection in which this pericope appears, whereas it is shortened in the other texts. Within the Mūlasarvāstivāda's canon, the pericope appears in the *Lohityasūtra* (Sanskrit; Pāli: *Lohiccasutta*, D 12) as pointed out by Melzer (2010, 20; and quoted also in Gethin 2020, 14, n. 24). However, it is possible to assume that the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* is the best candidate to embody the *locus classicus* of this pericope within the *Dīghanikāya* of the Theravādins, at least because it is reported in full in this discourse only.

83 In this regard, see Anālayo 2011, 423.

84 It was highlighted by Bucknell (2014) that there could have been a transference of discourses between *Dīrgha-* and *Madhyama-āgama*, and *Dīgha-* and *Majjhima-nikāya*. This might indicate the existence of a certain fluidity between these two collections of texts.

period. Among these texts, the only text which includes the pericope in its entirety is the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, quoting it, in all likelihood, from the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. Another text which refers to a creation of a mind-made body is the *Niddesa* – in both the *Mahā-* and *Culla-niddesa*s (Nidd I 340 and Nidd II 209) – which presents a very odd exposition of the *manomayakāya* which is not in line with any other (see Appendix 4). The dating of both texts is problematic, and it is not yet very clear. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is dated by Oskar von Hinüber to the II century AD,[85] and by Anthony Kennedy Warder from the 349 BC (Mahāsaṃghika Schism) to the II century BC (with few minor additions after this date),[86] while for the *Niddesa,* the situation is even worse. Therefore, Oskar von Hinüber (1996, 59) requested a re-examination of the *Niddesa* question. It is not yet clear if the *Niddesa* is earlier or later than the period of Aśoka, but it seems safe to assume that it cannot be later than the I century BC (date of the supposed writing down of the canon).[87] However, despite a lack of an absolute chronology, both texts quote directly and freely from the early strata of the canon (i.e. the first four Nikāyas).[88] Kenneth R. Norman (1997, 143) draws attention to the *Dīpavaṃsa* (Dīp 5.36), which states that the Mahāsaṃghika rejected the *Parivāra*, Abhidhamma, *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Niddesa*, and parts of the *Jātaka*. He interprets the event assuming that these texts did not exist before the Schism, and therefore their composition should be dated later than the second *saṅgīti*.

It is worth noting that the *manomayakāya* pericope has no place within the Theravāda Abhidhamma,[89] thus it seems to have escaped the new systematisation accomplished by the Abhidhammic texts. However, I should underline that the *Dīghabhāṇaka*s ('the reciters of the *Dīgha*[*nikāya*]') ascribed the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* to the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*.[90]

85 Oskar von Hinüber (1996, 60) follows Frauwallner's hypotheses concerning the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* presented in Frauwallner 1971, 106 = 1995, 42 and Frauwallner 1972, 124-7 = 1995, 87-9.

86 Warder 1982, XXXVIII-XXXIX. It is noteworthy that Cousins, in his review of von Hinüber (1996), seems to support Warder's hypothesis. He states that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* cannot be the last of Abhidhamma's works because it seems "unaware of the later development of the canonical Abhidhamma" (Cousins 1998, 155).

87 The tradition reports that the decision to write down the canon was taken after the discovery that there was only one monk alive who remembered the *Niddesa* (Sp III 695-6; this episode is quoted also in Norman 1983, 87 and von Hinüber 1996, 59). It cannot be excluded that in the future the date of the writing down of the canon traditionally accepted by scholars may be refuted or at least re-discussed. In this regard, see the attempt of Cousins (2013), recently taken up by Wynne (2018).

88 The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* seems, at the beginning, an expansion of the *Dasuttarasutta* (Warder 1982, XXXIII-XXXIV; see also Norman 1983, 87) and it presupposes a large part of Suttantas (Warder 1982, XXXIV-XXXV). Referring to the *Niddesa*, von Hinüber wrote that "Nidd[esa] occasionally quotes directly from the canon […] it is, however, certain that Nidd[esa] does not belong to the old canonical texts and that also a date after Aśoka does not seem unlikely" (1996, 59; square brackets mine).

89 The only reference to the concept of '*manomaya*' is within the *Vibhaṅga*, in a passage which does not mention it directly (Vibh 384) but quotes D I 34 (which involves a mind-made self), replacing *dibbo rūpī manomayo* with *dibbo rūpimayo* (however, *dibbo rūpī manomayo* is actually the reading in Be, cf. De Notariis 2021, 12 n. 6).

90 This fact is attested in Sv I 15, quoted also by Adikaram (1946, 27) and Norman (1983, 9). Moreover, Warder referring to Upatissa's work, the **Vimuttimagga*, wrote that: "[i]t is curious that four passages which appear to be direct quotations from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* are referred to by Upatissa as 'in the *Abhidhamma*'" (1982, XL).

An early exegetical occurrence of *manomayakāya* is in the Chinese text entitled *Jiětuō dào lùn* 解脱道論 (T 1648), which is more commonly referred to as **Vimuttimagga*.[91] This text is believed to have been written by a monk called Upatissa (= Sanskrit: Upatiṣya) in either India or Sri Lanka, and there was a long debate among scholars concerning the geographical origin of the text and the original language in which it was written.[92] It was initially thought to be an Abhayagiri text, however the school affiliation has been a point debated among scholars, although an origin within the Abhayagiri school seems to be the most likely so far.[93] The text is extant in its Chinese translation made in the sixth century AD, more precisely 515 AD,[94] during the Liang 梁 dynasty (502-587 AD) by a person known as *Sēng-qié-pó-luó* (僧伽婆羅),[95] and a part of it has been preserved in Tibetan.[96] In spite of its late translation, the text is reasonably older than the sixth century and, indeed, the Pāli *Visuddhimagga* seems to be aware of it.[97] Regarding the Indian composition of the text, there is no exact information, but it should predate the *Visuddhimagga*, and Bapat (1937, LV) even suggests to date the **Vimuttimagga* around the I-II century AD on the basis of the comparison with the *Peṭakopadesa* and *Nettipakaraṇa*. Kim (2018) suggests that the **Vimuttimagga* was composed not later than 200 AD on the basis of the comparison with the occurrences of the term '*bhavaṅga*' within the *Milindapañha* (Kim 2018, 756) and *Paṭṭhāna* (Kim 2018, 757, 769).

91 Whereas the literal translation of the Chinese title would correspond in Sanskrit to *Vimuktimārga-śāstra* or *Vimuktimārga-nirdeśa*, see Anālayo 2009b, 2, n. 3 and Nyanatusita 2021, 5.

92 Hypotheses concerning the geographical origin of the **Vimuttimagga* have fluctuated between various geographical areas: Sri Lanka or Cambodia (e.g. Nagai 1917-19, 70), India (e.g. Bapat 1937, LIV-LV), North India (e.g. Norman 1991, 48). Some scholars were interested to not rule out a Sri Lankan origin, criticising the Indian origin (e.g. Ehara et al. [1961] 1995, XXXVII-XLII), whereas Crosby (1999) criticised the methodology used to establish either an Indian or a Sri Lankan origin. Concerning this problem, Cousins wrote that "[w]e should however ignore suggestions that this [i.e. **Vimuttimagga*] might be a work produced outside Ceylon, if this means in a tradition not derived from Ceylon. It is clearly in the Ceylon *abhidhamma* tradition and we have no evidence that such ideas were current in other schools" (2012, 87). Cousins is certainly right in pointing this out, and, indeed, his statement is corroborated by the recent observations of Kim, who wrote that the **Vimuttimagga* "is the only text, except for Pāli texts, that discusses the cognitive process based on the concept of *bhavaṅga* which is known to be closely related to Sri Lankan Theravāda" (2016, 941). Moreover, as pointed out by Cousins (1981, 22), Schmithausen (1987, 7-8), Gethin (1994, 31) and more recently by Kim (2018, 754), Vasubandhu wrote within his **Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* (*Dàshèng chéngyè lùn* 大乘成業論; T 1609) that *bhavaṅga* originated among the *Tāmraparṇīya*(*-nikāya*), and "*Tāmraparṇīya* refers to, or is at least closely related to Sri Lankan Theravāda tradition" (Kim 2018, 754-5). According to Nyanatusita, the **Vimuttimagga* could well have been composed in Sri Lanka (2021, 25) and its language may have been Pāli (2021, 20-4). A different position concerning the original language of the **Vimuttimagga* is expressed by Willemen (2023).

93 The attribution of the **Vimuttimagga* to the Abhayagiri sect was questioned by Norman (1991) and Crosby (1999). Recently, Cousins (2012) tried to re-establish this connection. On the school affiliation, see also Nyanatusita 2021, 16-20.

94 Following Skilling 1994, 173 and n. 1 and Nyanatusita 2021, 106.

95 There seems to be a bit of confusion concerning the original name of the Chinese translator, in this regard see Skilling 1994, 171-2 for the alternative options. Skilling seems to prefer 'Saṃghabhara' among all renditions, whereas Nyanatusita (2021, 103-4) prefers 'Saṃghapāla'.

96 The Tibetan text entitled **Vimuktimārgadhutaguṇanirdeśa* was edited by Sasaki (1958) and Bapat (1964). This text corresponds to the third chapter of the **Vimuttimagga* and a recent translation is provided by Nyanatusita (2021, 752-67). Moreover, extracts from the **Vimuttimagga* were recovered by Skilling (1987, 7) within the **Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaviniścaya* (chapters 13-15) and a recent translation is provided by Nyanatusita (2021, 768-822). See also Skilling 1993, 135-41 and Anālayo 2009b, 2, n. 4.

97 As noted by Norman (1983, 120); von Hinüber (1996, 124); Anālayo (2009b); Nyanatusita (2021, 6-9).

Therefore, it would be safe to assume a wide span of time to date the text that could be from the I-II century AD to the IV-V century AD (period in which, presumably, Buddhaghosa, the author of *Visuddhimagga*, lived).[98] I would also suggest that this span of time could be slightly reduced assuming that the *Mahāvaṃsa* is right to report that Buddhaghosa came to Ceylon during the reign of King Mahānāma, which is dated, according to Kenneth R. Norman (1983, 130, n. 217), at the first half of the V century, perhaps 409-431 AD. Since the *Visuddhimagga* was the first work composed by Buddhaghosa,[99] it would make sense to believe not only that at the first half of the V century the **Vimuttimagga* already existed, but also that it had already become famous enough to serve as a model to the composition of the *Visuddhimagga*.[100] Therefore, assuming that at the beginning of the V century the **Vimuttimagga* was a well-established text within the Buddhist cultural *milieu*, it would make sense to suppose that it was already in existence within the IV century.[101]

Later texts which will also be taken into account are the *Visuddhimagga* and commentaries. The *Visuddhimagga* predates the actual Pāli commentaries. It is stated within the introduction of the commentaries of the first four Nikāyas that they will not deal again with the issues already explained within the *Visuddhimagga*.[102] Moreover, it is not unusual to find within the commentaries the recommendation to check within the *Visuddhimagga* in order to obtain further information.[103] The author of the *Visuddhimagga* and of the commentaries of some principal works of the canon[104] is, presumably, Buddhaghosa, who could be roughly dated between the IV and V centuries.[105] The commentaries, which will be taken into account, will be the ones on the texts already mentioned. In this regard, there is an exegetical interpretation of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, within the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (= *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*), in a section called *Sāmaññaphalasuttavaṇṇanā* (Comment on

98 It seems safe to assume that Buddhaghosa could not be later than 489 AD, a date in which a Chinese translation of the *Samantapāsādikā* was made (Norman 1983, 130; von Hinüber 1996, 103). Oskar von Hinüber (1996, 103) proposed a span of time for Buddhaghosa's dates of about 370 to 450 AD.

99 A conjectural hypothesis concerning the date of composition of the *Visuddhimagga* was formulated by Endo (2014, 106-9), who suggested as a possible date 428-429 AD.

100 Nagai suggested that "[t]he Visuddhi-magga, which hitherto has been considered to be entirely his [i.e. Buddhaghosa] own work, is in reality a revised version of Upatissa's Vimutti-magga" (1917-19, 80). The same idea is endorsed also by von Hinüber (1996, 124) and Anālayo (2009b, 3).

101 On the date of composition, see also Nyanatusita 2021, 44-9.

102 *iti pana sabbaṃ yasmā Visuddhimagge mayā suparisuddhaṃ vuttaṃ tasmā bhīyo na taṃ idha vicārayissāmi* (e.g. Sv I 2).

103 E.g.: ***yaṃ kiñci rūpan*** *ti ādīni Visuddhimagge Khandhaniddese vitthāritān' eva* (Ps II 114); *so Visuddhi-magge Buddhānussati-niddese vutto yeva* (Sv I 34).

104 The tradition ascribes the authorship of many commentaries to Buddhaghosa, whereas the modern scholarship is more sceptical concerning the authorship of some texts. Buddhaghosa's authorship of the commentary on the *Pātimokkha* and some *Kuddhakanikāya* commentaries (viz. Pj I, Dhp-a, Pj II, [commentarial sections of the] Ja, Ap-a) is problematic and his authorship of the Abhidhamma commentaries and the commentary on the *Vinaya* is severely questioned. Therefore, the safest authorships ascribed by the tradition are one of the *Visuddhimagga* and ones of the four principal Nikāyas. In this regard, see Gethin 2012, 3, n. 5 and von Hinüber [2013/2014] 2015, 361-5.

105 A later chronicle, the *Mahāvaṃsa*, states that Buddhaghosa came to Ceylon during the reign of King Mahānāma (according to Norman 1983, 130, n. 217: first half of the V century perhaps 409-431 AD; according to von Hinüber 1996, 102: 409-431/349-371 AD; however, as pointed out by Cousins 1998, 156, von Hinüber also erroneously maintained a double chronology after the reign of Mahāsena, this means that only 409-431 AD is correct).

the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*). This comment, concerning the creation of the mind-made body, appears identical in Ps III 263. The passage within the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* will be compared with a parallel passage of the younger *Paramatthajotikā II* (= *Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā*).[106] Moreover, the later commentary on the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* named *Saddhammappakāsinī* will be considered as well, analysing the comment on the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s passage which reports the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s pericope. The *Saddhammappakāsinī* is not Buddhaghosa's work, but was written by a monk named Mahānāma who finished it around the VI century.[107]

The relative chronology of the texts which has just been presented could be summarised in Figure 6.3.

Sāmaññaphalasutta
the *locus classicus* within the Pāli canon.

↓ → *Niddesa*
uncertain dates but it was likely closed before the I century BC (Norman 1983, 84-7).

Paṭisambhidāmagga
according to von Hinüber (1996, 60) II century AD; according to Warder (1982, XXXVIII-XXXIX) it was composed from the 349 BC to the II century BC.

↓

**Vimuttimagga*
is certainly later than the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.
It is dated from the I-II century AD to the IV-V century AD.

↓

Visuddhimagga
is the first work of Buddhaghosa whose lifespan was estimated by von Hinüber (1996, 103) 370-450 AD It could be possible to say loosely that he lived between the IV and V centuries.

↓

Sumaṅgalavilāsinī (= *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*)
for a relative chronology of Pāli commentaries,
see von Hinüber 1996, 148-9.

↓ → *Paramatthajotikā II*
is slightly later than *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, but it is earlier than *Saddhammappakāsinī*. For a relative chronology of Pāli commentaries, see von Hinüber 1996, 148-9.

Saddhammappakāsinī (= *Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā*)
the commentator Mahānāma finished writing it in the VI century.
The dates proposed are 516 AD (Warder 1982, XLIV supported by Norman 1983, 132) or 559 AD (von Hinüber 1996, 144).

Figure 6.3 Chronology of the texts

106 For the position of the *Paramatthajotikā II* among the Pāli commentarial literature, see the relative chronology made by von Hinüber (1996, 148-9). Moreover, as further proof of its lateness, it is possible to state that the language of the *Paramatthajotikā II* shows characteristics common to the younger commentarial literature, such as the use of the quotative *āha* preceded by an active present participle, see Kieffer-Pülz 2014, 66.

107 The colophon of the *Saddhammappakāsinī* states that the text was completed three years after the death of King Moggallāna. Based on that, Warder, attributes 496-513 AD as the date for Moggallāna I, and suggests 516 AD as the date of completion of the work (see Warder 1982, XLIV, also supported by Norman 1983, 132). Oskar von Hinüber (1996, 144) assuming Moggallāna as Moggallāna II (537-556/477-496), supposed as the date of conclusion of the work 559 or 499. However, a double chronology is wrongly assumed by von Hinüber, therefore, only 559 is right (see Cousins 1998, 156, quoted also by Kieffer-Pülz 2015b, 44, n. 43).

6.4.2 The Context of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2): The *Locus Classicus*

The creation of a new mind-made body appears in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* within a list of twelve attainments which are some fruits of the ascetic life. In the story, a monk, after having fulfilled the basic requirement of the morality, enters progressively within the meditative absorption states until the attainment of the fourth level of absorption (*catutthajjhāna*). Subsequently, the monk is able to know and see (*ñāṇa-dassana*) the difference between body (*kāya*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and, after that, he is able to create a new mind-made body (*manomayakāya*). This creation is followed by three similes whose aim is to better illustrate the nature of this attainment. Afterwards, the monk is able to perform many kinds of psychophysical power (*iddhividhă*), he develops the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*), the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] (*cetopariyañāṇa*), the knowledge of recollection of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), the knowledge of the fall and rise of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*). Finally, he obtains the knowledge of extinction (*khayañāṇa*) of the influxes (*āsava*), attains insight into the four noble truths, and achieves liberation.

In this exposition concerning the creation of a mind-made body, it is not explained what its use and function is. Perhaps, since the concept predates Buddhism, it was part of a common knowledge and so was taken for granted. Therefore, the compound '*manomaya*' is also present within the Upaniṣadic texts and, as I have argued above (§ 6.3), the high number of common features shared by the concept of *manomaya* within the Buddhist texts (in particular within the *Sīlakkhandhavagga*) and its equivalent in the Upaniṣads allows us to hypothesise about common ancient contexts. In particular, there is one characteristic, shared by both Buddhist and Upaniṣadic texts, which is especially significant for the purposes of the present section. This characteristic is the centrality of the term *manomaya* within hierarchical lists. In the Upaniṣads, it appears central, for instance, within *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1.5.3: "this self (*ātman*) is made of these [constituents]: it is made of speech, it is made of mind (*manomaya*), it is made of breath" (*etanmayo vā ayam ātmā | vāṅmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaḥ*). In *Taittirīyopaniṣad* 3.10.4-5 it appears in a list which develops from the grossest element to the most rarefied. The list exhibits five kinds of self and each of them is made (*-maya*) of a different substance: food (*anna*), breath (*prāṇa*), mind (*manas*), consciousness (*vijñāna*), and bliss (*ānanda*). In this list, the self made of mind appears exactly in the central position. The characteristic of centrality is also well attested within the *Sīlakkhandhavagga*'s discourses, and so within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* as well. Therefore, the text lists twelve attainments and the creation of a body made of mind is reported as the sixth attainment. Since the list is composed of an even number of elements, the *manomaya* body could be no more central than this. The characteristic of centrality appears on other occasions within the *Sīlakkhandhavagga*'s

discourses.[108] With this in mind, it will be possible to observe how the creation of the body made of mind developed in the later Pāli Buddhist texts. Since there was not a very and proper new elaboration in the extant Abhidhamma literature, the first text that presents significant changes with regards to the mind made body is the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.[109]

6.4.3 *Paṭisambhidāmagga*: The First Significant Developments

The mind-made body is treated chiefly within the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* in a chapter called 'Treatise on Psychic Powers' (*Iddhikathā*). The chapter is composed of a question-answer system and one of the first questions is about how many psychic powers there are (*kati iddhiyo*?). The answer is 'ten' (*dasa*) and, after a while, it is asked what they are (*katamā dasa iddhiyo*?). Thus, ten powers are listed in response:

1. psychic power of resolution (*adhiṭṭhānā iddhi*);
2. psychic power of transfiguration/transformation (*vikubbanā iddhi*);
3. psychic power of the mind-made [body] (*manomayā iddhi*);
4. psychic power of expansion of knowledge (*ñāṇavipphārā iddhi*);
5. psychic power of expansion of concentration (*samādhivipphārā iddhi*);
6. psychic power of the Nobles (*ariyā iddhi*);
7. psychic power that arises from Karmic results (*kammavipākajā iddhi*);
8. psychic power of the meritorious (*puññavato iddhi*);
9. psychic power made by sciences (*vijjāmayā iddhi*);
10. psychic power by succeeding by means of a right practice regarding various cases (*tattha tattha sammāpayogapaccayā ijjhanaṭṭhena iddhi*).[110]

In this list, the concept of *manomaya* has lost the central position it had retained in lists within the early Buddhist canonical material and Upaniṣads. It was listed in hierarchical lists, but here it seems that there is no hierarchy at all among these *iddhi*s. Therefore, the list appears as a re-elaborated exposition of the concept of '*iddhi*' which includes old and new elements. The way in which the old element of the *manomaya* is listed shows that there is

108 It is evident, for instance, within the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* (D 9) in which three kinds of self appear: 1) the gross (*oḷārika*) self; 2) the mind-made (*manomaya*) self; 3) the formless (*arūpin*) self (D I 185-6). The centrality also occurs in a less evident context, such as in the *Brahmajālasutta* (D 1) in which there is a list of seven nihilistic doctrines (D I 34-5) that should be rejected. As I have already argued (§ 6.3.1.3), there is a connection between the seven nihilistic doctrines with the Buddhist cosmology, and what is *manomaya* within this account is connected with the world of the pure form (*rūpadhātu*), the intermediate level between the lower sense world (*kāmadhātu*) and the higher form-less world (*arūpadhātu*).

109 However, as previously stated, it might be possible that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* was considered an Abhidhamma text in the past. Moreover, it is a work which seems to include features of both canonical texts and Abhidhammic texts. Therefore, it is stated by Arnold C. Taylor that: "the traditional opening, *Evaṁ me sutaṁ*, occurs, fairly frequently, and explains the formal inclusion of the Paṭisambhidāmagga in the Sutta-pīṭaka. I say 'formal,' because in essence the book is wholly Abhidhammistic" (1907, IV). What seems certain regarding the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, using the words of C.A.F. Rhys Davids, – also in light of the present study – is that it is "of no small significance for interpreting the history of the Canon" (1908, 590).

110 Paṭis II 205. The same list also appears in a chapter called 'Treatise on Powers' (*Balakathā*) in Paṭis II 174.

a lack of the ancient original context in which it had the peculiar – but not always evident – characteristic of centrality, which is now definitively lost. The addition of new elements is also demonstrated, for instance, by the psychic power made by sciences (*vijjāmayā iddhi*). This power is in connection with the *vijjādhara*s (literally '[people] who know [magical] sciences')[111] that, as written by A.K. Warder, are not so commonly in connection with *iddhi*s in the other *Tipiṭaka* texts.[112] The *vijjādhara*s (Sanskrit: *vidyādhara*) became famous after being mentioned in Guṇāḍhya's novel (*Bṛhatkathā*) for which Warder suggested as dating the II century BC.[113] Then, it seems that this exposition of the ten *iddhi*s is nothing more than a summary made by mixing old and new elements.

Later, the ten *iddhi*s are explained in succession, one by one. At this point, it is clear that the reference text from which the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* draws the definition of *manomayā iddhi* was, probably, the pericope reported in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. Therefore, when it is asked, "What is the psychic power of the mind-made [body]?" (*katamā manomayā iddhi*?), the answer is a quotation of the periscope that occurs in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (Paṭis II 210-11 = D I 77). However, the mind-made body appears in another previous occurrence, namely within the explanation of the first psychic power: the psychic power of resolution (*adhiṭṭhānā iddhi*). This *iddhi* is explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* quoting what the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* explains as the many kinds of psychophysical powers (*anekaviditaṃ iddhividhaṃ*; Paṭis II 207 = D I 78). In the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, these kinds of *iddhi* show that the meditator has attained mastery over matter and so he is no longer bound by the limitations of the physical world. He is able to multiply his physical form or return to a single unit, he can become invisible or visible, he can pass through physical obstacles, he can sink into the earth and walk on water, he can fly through the air, he can touch the moon and sun and, lastly, he can exercise bodily power as far as the Brahmā world. This last ability, namely the possibility to go as far as the Brahmā world, involves the creation of a mind-made body in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. It is narrated that "in front of Brahmā, he creates a material form (*rūpa*) which is mind-made, with all limbs and [bodily] parts, without defect of any faculty".[114] This particular use of the *manomayakāya* does not appear in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, nor does it appear in the entire *Dīghanikāya*. It seems borrowed from the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, from a chapter called 'The Connected [Discourses] on the Bases of Psychic Powers' (*Iddhipādasaṃyutta*). In this passage, it is recounted that Ānanda, after having approached the Buddha, asked: "O

111 This is evident from some passages such as "wizards, having whispered a spell, go to the sky" (*vijjādharā vijjaṃ parijapetvā vehāsaṃ gacchanti* [...]; Paṭis II 213).

112 Warder wrote that he recovered a quotation from the *Jātaka* connected "with a 'science' giving invisibility" (1982, XXXVII). However, there are also some references in the *Apadāna* (e.g. Ap II 441: *vijjādharo tadā āsiṃ antalikkhacaro ahaṃ* [...] "then, I was a wizard, moving within the atmosphere..."), which would require a further analysis. The evidence provided in the *Apadāna* is quite close to the description of the wizards moving in the ether (*ākāsa*) and atmosphere (*antalikkha*) as provided in Paṭis II 213. Therefore, though the *Kevaddhasutta* (D I 213) provides evidence of a *vijjā* called Gandhārī, through which it is possible to perform the classical *iddhividhā*, the *vijjāmayā iddhi* seems to be more in connection with a late text, such as the *Apadāna*, than with *Kevaddhasutta*'s account.

113 Warder 1982, XXXVII; for more details concerning this dating see Warder 1974, 118-19.

114 *so tassa Brahmuno purato rūpaṃ abhinimmināti manomayaṃ sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ ahīnindriyaṃ* (Paṭis II 209).

Lord, does the Blessed one recall having approached the world of Brahmā by the psychic power (*iddhiyā*), with a mind-made body (*manomayena kāyena*)?".[115] The Buddha answered affirmatively. It is noteworthy that in this text, unlike the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the word *iddhi* is connected with the concept of the mind-made body (*manomayakāya*). This connection is also implied in the fact that a mind-made body is mentioned in a chapter focused on *iddhi*s: the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta*.

Another example concerning this connection can be found in the *Theragāthā*:

> Having known my own intention,
> the Master, who is unequalled in the world,
> approached me by the power (*iddhiyā*),
> with a body made of mind (*manomayena kāyena*).[116]

Taking into account these references (i.e. the *Saṃyuttanikāya* and *Theragāthā*), it might seem possible to assume that in an early stratum of Theravāda Buddhism, the *manomayakāya* was also considered an *iddhi* and this would legitimate the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s interpretation. However, I will now argue that the *Saṃyuttanikāya* and *Theragāthā* have only the proximity of the two terms in common with the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, because the use of them is certainly different.

In order to shed light on the issue, it is necessary to carefully analyse the context in which the two concepts (*iddhi* and *manomayakāya*) are related grammatically to each other in both texts. It is possible to note, *prima facie*, that the terms agree with each other differently. In the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* there is the form '*manomayā iddhi*' in which the term *manomaya* is used in an adjectival way, and therefore it agrees with the term *iddhi*, which is inflected in the nominative feminine case. In this context, the term *manomaya* is clearly an adjective of the term *iddhi*, the latter is used in a very technical way in this text. The situation is very different in the *Saṃyuttanikāya*. In this text, there is the following wording: *iddhiyā manomayena kāyena*. The word *manomaya*, in this case, agrees with the word *kāya* inflected in instrumental masculine whereas *iddhi* is an instrumental feminine. Since they are inflected in the same case (instrumental), '*iddhiyā*' and '*manomayena kāyena*' might be connected. Basically, there could be two possible translations for the passage *abhijānāti nu kho bhante Bhagavā iddhiyā manomayena kāyena Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā* (S V 282):[117]

1. "O Lord, does the Blessed one recall having approached the world of Brahmā by the psychic power (*iddhiyā*) which is the mind-made body (*manomayena kāyena*)?". This is a 'characterising interpretation', in which the mind-made body characterises the psychic power, in other words, the mind-made body is the specific psychic power used by the

115 *abhijānāti nu kho bhante Bhagavā iddhiyā manomayena kāyena Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā* (S V 282).

116 *mama saṃkappam aññāya satthā loke anuttaro | manomayena kāyena iddhiyā upasaṃkami* || (Th 901). This passage is also quoted at A IV 235 and Ap I 235.

117 It may be worth noting that this is one of the few passages in the Pāli canon in which it is possible to recover an absolutive (or gerund) ending in *-itā* (or *-ittā* in the Sinhalese manuscripts), rather than the widespread form *-itvā*. In this regard, see von Hinüber 1992, 135-6.

Buddha. This means that, in this interpretation, the mind-made body is a kind of psychic power.

2. "O Lord, does the Blessed one recall having approached the world of Brahmā by the psychic power (*iddhiyā*), with a mind-made body (*manomayena kāyena*)?". This is a 'non-characterising interpretation', in which the mind-made body is not closely related to the psychic power.

The difference between the two translations lies in the interpretation of '*manomayena kāyena*' as characterising '*iddhiyā*', or as separated from it in the translation by a comma. This ambiguity is clarified by a parallel passage, within the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, which immediately follows the problematic passage.

Ānanda, after the first question concerning the visit to the Brahmā world with a mind-made body, asked another question, which is in Pāli: *abhijānāti kho pana bhante Bhagavā iminā cātumahābhūtikena kāyena iddhiyā Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā* (S V 282). This question is essentially identical to the previous one, but in place of the mind-made body (*manomayena kāyena*) there is a body which consists of the four great elements (*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*). Theoretically, it might raise the same problem that was previously awakened about the translation of the first considered passage. It could happen because '*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*' and '*iddhiyā*' are inflected in the same grammatical form: instrumental. However, in this case, there are no doubts that the correct interpretation is what was defined above as a 'non-characterising interpretation'. Therefore, it is not possible to assume that the body which consists of the four great elements is a type of psychic power, because it is just a way to describe the physical body.[118] Since it is the natural body, it is in no way related with extraordinary or superhuman activity. Then, the passage should be translated: "O Lord, but does the Blessed one recall having approached the world of Brahmā with a body which consists of the four great elements (*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*), by the psychic power (*iddhiyā*)?", the answer given by the Buddha was affirmative. This second passage sheds light on the previous one because they are closely related to each other. Therefore, the passages illustrate that the Blessed one is able to go to the Brahmā world with both a mind-made and physical body. The parallelism between these two passages also indicates that the first passage should be translated following the 'non-characterising interpretation'.[119]

It would seem that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* applied to the *Saṃyuttanikāya*'s text, which has been defined by Richard Gombrich as 'scholastic literalism'.[120] Therefore, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* interprets the juxtaposition of the term

118 The physical body which consists of the four great elements appears, for instance, within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* as separate from the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (D I 76).

119 Bhikkhu Bodhi, in his translation of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* (2000, 1741), translates the passage in the correct way.

120 "[U]nintentional literalism has been a major force for change in the early doctrinal history of Buddhism. Texts have been interpreted with too much attention to the precise words used and not enough to the speaker's intention, the spirit of the text. In particular I see in some doctrinal developments what I call scholastic literalism, which is a tendency to take the words and phrases of earlier texts (maybe the Buddha's own words) in such a way as to read in distinctions which it was never intended to make" (Gombrich [1996] 2006, 21-2).

iddhi with the mind-made body in a more relevant way than it really is, wrongly attributing a connection between them in that context.[121] Moreover, it is also worth noting that the ability to fly could be an *iddhi,* but it is not necessarily connected with a mind-made body, such as in the *Dhammapada* (Dhp 175), in which the ability of geese to fly is also called *iddhi*.

But, could we really assume that the *Saṃyuttanikāya* inspired the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s reading? To corroborate this assumption, it is worth noting that the connection of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* with the *Saṃyuttanikāya*'s text is also supported by another passage which appears in both texts with some differences in the exposition. The passage concerns the unification of mind and body which as a result has perceptions of pleasure and lightness.

Table 6.2 The verb *samādahati* in the *Saṃyuttanikāya* means 'putting together', and the verbs *pariṇāmeti* and *adhiṭṭhāti* in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* mean, respectively, 'to make change into' and 'to fix into'. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s passage seems an expansion of *Saṃyuttanikāya*'s passage

***Saṃyuttanikāya* V 282**	***Paṭisambhidāmagga* II 209**
Tathāgato **(1)** *kāyam pi citte samādahati* **(2)** *cittam pi ca kāye samādahati* **(3)** *sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca kāye okkamitvā viharati*	*sace so iddhimā cetovasippatto dissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gantukāmo hoti,* **(1)** *kāyavasena cittaṃ pariṇāmeti, kāyavasena cittaṃ adhiṭṭhāti; kāyavasena cittaṃ pariṇāmetvā kāyavasena cittaṃ adhiṭṭhahitvā* **(3)** *sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca okkamitvā dissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gacchati.* *sace so iddhimā cetovasippatto adissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gantukāmo hoti,* **(2)** *cittavasena kāyaṃ pariṇāmeti, cittavasena kāyaṃ adhiṭṭhāti; cittavasena kāyaṃ pariṇāmetvā cittavasena kāyaṃ adhiṭṭhahitvā* **(3)** *sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca okkamitvā adissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gacchati*

It would seem that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s textual passages that concern the concept of *manomayakāya* are a patchwork of other passages reassembled and reinterpreted. A similar case is that analysed by David V. Fiordalis (2008, 125-6), who highlights that the description of the behaviour of the mind-made body (which reproduces the actions of the creator, see Paṭis II 209-10) is also similar to the behaviour of the replica created by the Buddha in the account of the twin miracle (Paṭis I 125-6).[122] This suggests that different accounts conflated and canonical materials were reused to create new and original expositions. However, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s use of the *manomayakāya* is not a blind reuse. This kind of reuse modifies the original characteristics of the *manomayakāya* which, on the one hand, loses

121 A more explicit connection can be found, however, in the history of Cūḷapanthaka (§ 7.4.4.2).

122 The twin miracle also appears, for instance, in Dhp-a III 213-14 (for a discussion regarding this account, also see Fiordalis 2008, 99), Sv I 57, and in the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins (SBhV I 156-7).

the characteristic of centrality and, on the other hand, is inserted within the list of *iddhi*s.[123]

6.4.4 **Vimuttimagga*: A First Method

The concept of *manomayakāya* in the **Vimuttimagga* inherits the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s innovations. Moreover, the **Vimuttimagga* further adds methodological instructions to create such a mental body. At first, the *manomayakāya* occurs in an exposition that resembles the canonical one:

> What is the *iddhi* (變) produced by the mind (意所作; *manomaya*)? The meditator creates from this body another body, made by the mind (意所造; *manomaya*),[124] with all bodily parts (一切身分; *sabbaṅga*, cf. *sabbaṅgapaccaṅga*) and faculties (諸根; *indriya*, cf. *ahīnindriya*).[125] This is called 'the *iddhi* produced by the mind' (意所作).[126]

Later, the **Vimuttimagga* presents an account with a set of instructions to develop the power, also referring to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s indication to use this mental body to move up to the Brahmā world:

> Then, the meditator who desires to develop the *iddhi* (變) of the *manomaya* (意所造), having mastered the mind in this way, cultivates the *iddhipāda*s, enters the fourth *jhāna* and serenely emerges from it. He pays attention (作意 = *manasikaroti*) inwardly, inside the body: "[Let it be] like an empty pot". The meditator pays attention in this way: "Within my own empty body, [let there be] a creation (變化 = *nirmāṇa*)[127] conditioned according to the will". He adverts (轉 = *āvajjati*)[128] "Let me accomplish accordingly", having adverted he resolves (受持 = *adhiṭṭhāti*) with the knowledge "Let me accomplish accordingly". Having paid attention in this way, in a similar way (隨相似), by means of this suitable method (以此方便) he creates many creations (變化). Having created a creation,

123 The concept of 'reuse' was recently studied with reference to Indian texts. See, for example, the introductory works of Freschi (2015), Freschi and Cantwell (2016), Freschi and Maas (2017).

124 Notably, the **Vimuttimagga* seems to use two slightly different wording to translate *manomaya*: 意所作 and 意所造. Nyanatusita translates the locution 隨意所造 as "according to his wish" (2021, 514).

125 Cf. *idha bhikkhu imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimminātī rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ ahīnindriyaṃ* (Paṭis II 211) and *so imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimminātī rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbaṅga-paccaṅgiṃ ahīnindriyaṃ* (D I 76). Notably, in another passage the **Vimuttimagga* provides a translation of *sabbaṅgapaccaṅga* and *ahīnindriya* closer to the canonical formulation: "with all limbs and bodily parts" (一切身分具足 = *sabbaṅgapaccaṅga*), "without defect of any faculties" (諸根不少 = *ahīnindriya*), see T1648.32.0442c29.

126 云何意所作變？彼坐禪人從此身化作餘身，隨意所造，一切身分，諸根具足。此謂意所作變。(T1648.32.0441b06-08).

127 Nyanatusita translates as "miraculous transformation" (2021, 527).

128 Ehara et al.'s translation ([1961] 1995, 218) does not recognise that the Chinese character 轉 is the rendition of *āvajjati*. This way to understand the character 轉 will be apparent in the case of the **Vimuttimagga*'s accounts about the *iddhi*s (see, for instance, § 7.4.6). Nyanatusita (2021, 527) rightly understands 轉 as a rendition for *āvajjati*.

> he moves (行).[129] If the meditator with the created body desires to go to the Brahmā world, in front of the Brahmā world he creates his own body which is similar to the physical form of Brahmā.[130] [The form is] created by the mind (意所造 = *manomaya*),[131] with all limbs and bodily parts (一切身分具足 = *sabbaṅgapaccaṅga*), without defect of any faculty (諸根不少 = *ahīnindriya*).[132] If the possessor of psychic power (神通人) walks back and forth there, then the created person (所化人) also walks back and forth;[133] if the possessor of psychic power sits, lies down there, emits smoke, flames, if he asks a question, if he answers, then the created person also sits, lies down, emits smoke, flames, asks a question, answers. This is the creation (變化 = *nirmāṇa*) made by the psychic power (神通所造 = **iddhimaya*); the created person is created accordingly.[134]

In this passage, for the first time we find a practical method to create a mind-made body. The methodology to develop the *manomayakāya* involves the use of two key terms in their Chinese rendition: *āvajjati* (轉) and *adhiṭṭhāti* (受持). These are verbal forms, but they also exist as nouns (*āvajjana* and *adhiṭṭhāna*). In a preliminary and narrow definition, the first term, *āvajjati*, indicates the action of 'adverting' or 'turning [the mind]' towards something, just like one would 'take aim' before shooting, or warming up before a sprint.[135] The second term, *adhiṭṭhāti*, is a formal resolution through which an assertion becomes real.[136] This terminology will often occur later in

129 The phrasing 作變化已成行 (T1648.32.0442c27) is translated by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 218) as: "[t]hereafter he engages himself in various activities". This translation misses the connection of the logogram 行 with the three kinds of movement (三行) that will occur later in the text: 於是三行步行風行心行 (T1648.32.0442b20). In this regard, see below (§§ 7.4.9 and 7.4.11).

130 Slightly different from the Pāli *so tassa Brahmuno purato rūpaṃ abhinimmināti* (Paṭis II 209).

131 Nyanatusita translates the locution 隨意所造 as "created according to his wish" (2021, 527), but the passage is clearly paralleling the Pāli phrasing (see footnote below).

132 Cf. *manomayaṃ sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ ahīnindriyaṃ* (Paṭis II 209).

133 Cf. *sace so iddhimā caṅkamati, nimmito pi tattha caṅkamati* (Paṭis II 209).

134 爾時坐禪人欲起意所造變, 如是心得自在, 修如意足, 入第四禪安詳出。於其身內作意, "猶如空瓶"。彼坐禪人如是作意: "於空自身內隨其所樂爲變化"。"隨其當成" 轉, 已轉以智受持: "隨其當成"。如是作意, 成隨相似, 以此方便多作變化。作變化已成行。若坐禪人以所化身欲向梵世, 於梵世前即化自身如梵形。隨意所造, 一切身分具足, 諸根不少。若神通人於此逍遙, 彼所化人亦復逍遙。若神通人於此若坐臥, 現出煙焰, 若問若答, 彼所化人亦坐, 亦臥, 亦出煙焰, 亦問, 亦答。是其神通所造變化; 彼所化人亦以隨作如是等。(from T1648.32.0442c22 to T1648.32.0443a04). The final Chinese passage 是其神通所造變化; 彼所化人亦以隨作如是等 (T1648.32.0443a03-04) is translated by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 218) as "[b]ecause that made form springs from supernormal power, it does so". Nyanatusita translates: "Whatever the one who possesses supernatural power and who has performed the miraculous transformation does, that created person also does" (2021, 528). I translated it as "this is the creation (變化 = *nirmāṇa*) made by the psychic power (神通所造 = **iddhimaya*); the created person is created accordingly".

135 In Paṭis-a II 589 it seems to be almost a synonym of *manasi karoti* (to pay attention): *obhāso dhammo 'ti obhāsaṃ āvajjatī 'ti ayaṃ obhāso maggadhammo phaladhammo 'ti vā taṃ taṃ obhāsaṃ manasi karoti*.

136 Paṭis-a I 345, for instance, highlights that this action involves the determination that something is in a determined way: "let it be so" (*evaṃ hotu*): *adhiṭṭhātī 'ti evaṃ hotū ti adhiṭṭhāti*. For a review of the definitions of *adhiṭṭhāna* and its Sanskrit and Tibetan cognate terms, see Eyre 2023, 9-20. A definition that fits well with many cases in the present book is the following: "*Adhiṭṭhāna* is then the ability to select a specific course of action and then follow through with its enactment" (Eyre 2023, 10). Some interesting observations on *adhiṣṭhāna* (Sanskrit) are provided by Tournier (2014), who also refers to some other academic studies (2014, 8 n. 22).

the analysis of the methodology to develop the *iddhividhă* and the other *abhiññā*s. We will consider these terms in more detail as they may have some nuances and, furthermore, their use is not always consistent. Turning to the method to create the mental body, we may note that the physical body is first considered empty, and only then is it possible to fill the empty body with a creation. The text goes on to describe the use of the *manomayakāya* in the act of reaching the Brahmā world. The innovative set of instructions occurs also in the *Visuddhimagga*, which further enriches the exegesis.

6.4.5 *Visuddhimagga*: Further Developments

The concept of *manomayakāya* within the *Visuddhimagga* is strongly influenced by the modification introduced by the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and **Vimuttimagga*. Almost all references to the term *manomaya* within the *Visuddhimagga* were confined to Chapter XII, called *Iddhividhāniddesa* (Explanation of the Variety of Psychophysical Power).[137] The list of the ten *iddhi*s of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* also appears within this chapter (Vism 378) and, subsequently, the *manomayā iddhi* is briefly illustrated:

> The power handed down in this way: "Now, the monk creates from this body another body which has a form, mind-made", is called the psychic power of the mind-made [body] because it occurs through the completion of another mind-made body inside the body.[138]

In this passage, it is specified that the new body is created inside the physical body. This detail – already present in the **Vimuttimagga* – will be fundamental in the following explanation which regards the method to create the mind-made body:

> The one who desires to implement the mind-made [body] after having emerged from the meditative absorption which forms a basis, having adverted to the body in the way already explained, he resolves: "Let it be hollow!" and it becomes hollow. Then, having adverted to another body inside this [body], after the preparatory work, he resolves in the way already explained: "Let there be another body inside this [body]!" then he draws it out like a stalk from a reed, like a sword from a scabbard, like a snake from a basket/slough (*karaṇḍā*)[139] […] and in this case, just as the stalk etc. are similar to the reed etc., in the same way the

137 Other short references to the concept of *manomaya* within the *Visuddhimagga* are in Vism 202, in which it is listed as one of the eight knowledges (*aṭṭha vijjā*), and in Vism 419, quoting D III 90.

138 *idha bhikkhu imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayan ti iminā nayena āgatā iddhi sarīrabbhantare aññass' eva manomayassa sarīrassa nipphattivasena pavattattā manomayā iddhi nāma* (Vism 379).

139 In this passage the term '*karaṇḍa*' is oddly feminine because it is inflected in the ablative feminine (*karaṇḍāya*; it could also formally be a masculine dative, however, the passage requires an ablative), whereas in the same simile within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, it is clearly masculine: *ayaṃ ahi ayaṃ karaṇḍo* (D I 77). Moreover, I reported a double translation for *karaṇḍa* because, on the one hand, I will argue that the original meaning is 'basket', but, on the other hand, Buddhaghosa clearly understands it as the 'slough' of the snake (see Sv I 222, translated below at § 6.4.6).

> mind-made form is similar to the possessor of psychic power; the simile has been said in order to point out that. This is the psychic power of the mind-made [body].[140]

It seems, from this passage, that the one who wants to create a mind-made body should first empty the physical body. The empty room is then filled with the new body which is mind-made. Subsequently, he pulls out the new body and this extraction is explained through three similes. The physical body is used as a matrix or a mould and therefore the new mind-made body – that is the creation – is essentially identical to the mould which created it. The method to create the mind-made body also influences its appearance. This passage shows the creation process and so emphasises the similarity, which will be the cause of further development.

6.4.6 *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*: A Stretched Interpretation

The *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, commenting on the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s passage which recounts the creation of the mind-made body, demonstrates serious consideration of the idea that similarity between the creation and the creator exists:

> The created form is certainly similar to the possessor of psychic power in all these manners: if the possessor of psychic power is white, this [creation] too is white; if he has not perforated ears (*aviddha-kaṇṇa*),[141] this [creation] too has not perforated ears.[142]

This idea of similarity has influenced the interpretation of the three similes. Just as the created form is similar to the creator, in the same way what is extracted should be identical to its receptacle. This similarity is explained briefly with reference to the first two similes: the extraction of the stalk from a reed and the sword from a scabbard. Whereas instead, the explanation of the last simile is certainly longer than the previous ones. The commentator is struggling to show the similarity for the third simile due to the term '*karaṇḍa*', which, evidently, does not fit very well with the principle of equality supported so far. Here, I have translated the passage to which I refer:

> The passage that starts with '**[Just as, O great king, a man were to draw out] from a reed a stalk (*muñjamhā isīkaṃ*)**' is, overall, a triple simile which was indeed enunciated in order to show the condition of similarity. The stalk is, indeed, similar to the reed and is inside it; even

140 *manomayaṃ kātukamo pana pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya, kāyaṃ tāva āvajjitvā vuttanayen' eva: susiro hotū ti adhiṭṭhāti, susiro hoti. ath' assa abbhantare aññaṃ kāyaṃ āvajjitvā parikammaṃ katvā vuttanayen' eva, adhiṭṭhāti tassa abbhantare: añño kāyo hotū ti, so taṃ muñjamhā īsikaṃ viya kosiyā asiṃ viya, karaṇḍāya ahiṃ viya ca abbāhati.* [...] *ettha ca yathā īsikādayo muñjādīhi sadisā honti, evaṃ manomayarūpaṃ iddhimatā sadisam eva hotī ti dassanatthaṃ etā upamā vuttā ti. ayaṃ manomayā iddhi* (Vism 406).

141 Piercing the ears could be also a religious ceremony (SED s.v. "karṇa").

142 *iddhimatā nimitta-rūpaṃ hi sace iddhimā odāto tam pi odātaṃ, sace aviddha-kaṇṇo tam pi aviddha-kaṇṇan ti evaṃ sabbākārehi tena sadisam eva hoti* (Sv I 222).

> **the sword (*asi*)** is similar to **the scabbard (*kosī*)**. A curved sword is sheathed in a curved scabbard, the one extended in an extended one.
>
> **The '*karaṇḍa*'**, this as well is the name for the covering of the snake (*ahi-kañcuka*), it is not the name for a bamboo basket (*vilīva-karaṇḍaka*) because the covering of the snake is certainly similar to the snake. In this regard, although the passage **'[just as] a man were to pull out a snake from a *karaṇḍa* (*puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya*)'** is shown as the fulfilment of a removal by means of a hand, however the removal of this should be interpreted as made through the mind. He loathed his old skin, just like this snake who was established in its particular state of birth, leaning inside a branch or inside a tree, its physical body is destroyed through a vigour called 'the practise of ejection of the body from the skin'. In the same way, he gives up the casing (*kañcuka*) spontaneously (*sayaṃ*) through four actions; It is not possible to extract something else from it. Therefore, this has been said in connection with the mental extraction, it should be understood in this way. Then, the body of the monk is similar to the reed etc., the created form (*nimitta-rūpa*) is similar to the stalk etc., this is the application of the simile.[143]

In this passage, the commentator expresses awareness that the term '*karaṇḍa*' could be interpreted as a bamboo or reed basket. So, he specifies that it is not a basket made of bamboo or reed (*vilīva-karaṇḍaka*). But, what does the term '*karaṇḍa*' really mean? At first sight, the *Pali-English Dictionary* gives, as a translation for this term, two options: (1) a basket, (2) the slough of a snake.[144] To justify the interpretation of this term as 'the snake's slough', the dictionary quotes the commentarial passage translated above (Sv I 222). Also, the more recent dictionary, *A Dictionary of Pāli*, edited by Margaret Cone, reports these two translations.[145] However, checking within the Monier-William's *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, it results that there are no references for the interpretation of '*karaṇḍa*' as 'snake's slough', since only the definition of 'basket' is attested.[146] Finally, it is possible to observe that it is reported in *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* that the meaning 'slough' is wrongly assumed by the commentary.[147] In fact, within the *Tipiṭaka*, the term '*karaṇḍa*' seems to only have the meaning of 'basket'. I recovered the

143 ***muñjamhā isīkan*** *ti ādi upamā-ttayam pi hi sadisa-bhāva-dassanattham eva vuttaṃ. muñja-sadisā eva hi tassa anto isīkā hoti,* ***kosiya****-sadiso yeva* ***asi****. vaṭṭāya kosiyā vaṭṭaṃ asim eva pakkhipanti, patthaṭāya patthaṭaṃ.*
karaṇḍā *ti idam pi ahi-kañcukassa nāmaṃ na vilīva-karaṇḍakassa nāmaṃ ahi-kañcuko hi ahinā sadiso va hoti. tattha kiñcāpi* ***puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyyā*** *ti hatthena uddharamāno viya dassito, atha kho citten' ev' assa uddharaṇaṃ veditabbaṃ. ayaṃ hi ahi nāma sañjātiyaṃ ṭhito kaṭṭh-antaraṃ vā rukkh-antaraṃ vā nissāya tacato sarīraṃ nikkaḍḍhana-payoga-saṃkhātena thāmena sarīraṃ khādamānaṃ viya purāṇa-tacaṃ jigucchanto ti imehi catūhi kāraṇehi sayam eva kañcukaṃ jahati, na sakkā tato aññena uddharituṃ. tasmā cittena uddharaṇaṃ sandhāya idaṃ vuttan ti vedītabbam. iti muñjādi-sadisaṃ hi imassa bhikkhuno sarīram, isīkādi-sadisaṃ nimitta-rūpan ti idam ettha opamma-saṃsandanaṃ* (Sv I 222).

144 PED s.v. "karaṇḍa".

145 DOP s.v. "karaṇḍa". This dictionary as well quotes Sv I 222.

146 SED s.v. "karaṇḍa".

147 CPD s.v. "karaṇḍa".

references excluding those for the equivalent term '*karaṇḍaka*' for which the translation as 'slough' has never been attested by the dictionaries.[148]

Table 6.3 '*Karaṇḍa*' in the *Tipiṭaka*

'*Karaṇḍa*' in the *Tipiṭaka*	
Texts	**References**
Vinaya	---
Dīghanikāya	*seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya* […] (D I 77, and the other *Dīghanikāya*'s *sutta*s in which the pericope is repeated verbatim)
Majjhimanikāya	*seyyathāpi pan', Udāyi, puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya* […] (M II 18)
Saṃyuttanikāya	---
Aṅguttaranikāya	---
Khuddakanikāya	*seyyathāpi vā pana puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya* […] (Paṭis II 211); *tumbake ca karaṇḍe ca kārayiṇ tadanucchave* (Ap I 303); *tumbake ca karaṇḍe ca datvā buddhe gaṇuttame* (Ap I 313)
Abhidhamma	*karaṇḍāya nikkhipenti* (Kv II 563)

The term '*karaṇḍa*' is used mainly within the pericope which explains the creation of a mind-made body. There are no reasons to assume the meaning 'slough', except for the commentarial explanation. It is evident within the *Apadāna* that the terms '*karaṇḍa*' and '*karaṇḍaka*' are used as synonyms: *tumbake ca karaṇḍe ca* (Ap I 303), *tumbake ca karaṇḍake ca* (Ap I 313). Moreover, there is a simile, within the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, which is modelled on the base of the simile of extraction within the *Dīghanikāya*:

Table 6.4 A comparison between the similes of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and *Dīghanikāya*

***Paṭisambhidāmagga* I 145**	***Dīghanikāya* I 77**
Just as there would be a jewel (*maṇi*) put in a box (*karaṇḍaka*), a man would say: "This is the jewel, this is the box; the jewel is one thing, the box another one, but this very jewel is in this box".	Just as, O great king, a man were to pull out a snake (*ahi*) from a basket (*karaṇḍa*). He might think: "This is the snake, this is the basket; the snake is one thing, the basket another one, nevertheless from a basket a snake was pulled out".
seyyathāpi maṇi karaṇḍake pakkhitto assa, tamenaṃ puriso evaṃ vadeyya ayaṃ maṇi ayaṃ karaṇḍako, aññо maṇi aññо karaṇḍako, so kho panāyaṃ maṇi imasmiṃ karaṇḍake ti	*seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ ahi ayaṃ karaṇḍo, aññо ahi aññо karaṇḍo, karaṇḍā tv eva ahi ubbhato ti*

148 In this regard, see the s.v. "karaṇḍaka" in PED; DOP; and CPD.

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s simile concerns a jewel (*maṇi*) within a box (*karaṇḍaka*). It is worth noting that although this simile resembles, in its grammatical construction, the *Dīghanikāya*'s pericope regarding a snake pulled from a *karaṇḍa*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* did not hesitate to use roughly the same word in an identical metaphorical framework to specifically designate a box. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa* as the skin of the snake had not yet been developed at the time of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

Finally, we must take into accounts these two pieces of evidence: 1) the use of the term '*karaṇḍa*' in connection with the meaning 'slough' has not been found, except for the commentarial interpretation; 2) by contrast, there is indeed use of the term '*karaṇḍa*' with the meaning of 'basket' in connection with a snake. The latter reference is from the *Vinaya*'s commentary, the *Samantapāsādikā*:

> Among snakes (*apada*), that which is called *ahi* is a kept snake (*gahitasappa*) which belongs to somebody, such as snake charmers (*ahiguṇṭika*), etc. When cause [such a snakes] to play they earn half (*aḍḍha*) or a quarter (*pāda*) of a *kahāpaṇa*, they also give them up, but only having gained gold and money do they give them up. They, after having gone to the seating space of some monks, after putting down the basket of snakes (*sappa-karaṇḍa*), fall asleep or go somewhere. Then, if a monk, with the intention of stealing, touches the basket (*karaṇḍa*), this is a misdemeanour (*dukkaṭa*); if he moves it, this is a grave offence (*thullaccaya*); if he takes it away from its place, it is an offence worthy of expulsion (*pārājika*). And, if he, after having opened the basket (*karaṇḍaka*), grasps the snake to the neck, this is a misdemeanour (*dukkaṭa*); if he pulls it out (*uddharati*), this is a grave offence (*thullaccaya*); and if he, having straightened the snake, pulling it out from the flat surface of the basket, sets it free even for a mere tip of a hair, this is an offence worthy of expulsion (*pārājika*).[149]

It is worth noting that the verb used by the commentary to state that the snake is pulled out from the basket is '*uddharati*'; the same verb is used in the optative form within the *Dīghanikāya*'s pericope (*ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya*; D I 77).

Then, there are not many reasons to assume that the word '*karaṇḍa*' means 'slough'. However, there is still another question that should be clarified. Was the commentarial explanation of the pericope invented by the commentator, or might that have been borrowed from another source? In this regard, I found a commentarial explanation which, commenting on a different situation, uses a simile concerning a snake which abandons its old skin. The text is the late commentary on the *Suttanipāta*, the *Paramatthajotikā II*. Here, I provide the translation of the passage which comments on the *Uragasutta*:

149 ***apadesu*** *ahi nāma sassāmiko ahiguṇṭhikādīhi gahitasappo. yaṃ kīḷāpento aḍḍham pi pādam pi kahāpaṇam pi labhanti. muñcantāpi hiraññaṃ vā suvaṇṇaṃ vā gahetvā 'va muñcanti. te kassaci bhikkhuno nisinnokāsaṃ gantvā sappakaraṇḍaṃ ṭhapetvā niddāyanti vā katthaci vā gacchanti. tatra ce so bhikkhu theyyacittena taṃ karaṇḍaṃ āmasati dukkaṭaṃ, phandāpeti thullaccayaṃ, ṭhānā cāveti pārājikaṃ. sace pana karaṇḍakaṃ ugghāṭetvā sappaṃ gīvāya gaṇhati dukkaṭaṃ, uddharati thullaccayaṃ, ujukaṃ katvā uddharantassa karaṇḍatalato sappassa naṅguṭṭhe kesaggamatte mutte pārājikaṃ* (Sp II 362). A piece of this passage was quoted above in § 6.2.2.

Abandoning the **skin (*taca*)** which is called **old (*purāṇa*)** because it belongs to an old time, [and it is called] **deteriorated (*jiṇṇa*)** because of its withering state, [the snake] gives it up in four ways: (1) remaining in its own kind (*sajātiyaṃ ṭhito*), (2) while loathing (*jigucchanto*), (3) in reliance (*nissāya*), (4) through vigour (*thāmena*). Its own kind (*sajāti*) is the name for the kind of a snake, whose nature is to be long, for snakes do not pass beyond their kind in five behaviours: (1) rebirth, (2) passing away, (3) going into hibernation, (4) mating with their own species, and (5) removing the deteriorated skin. Hence, when it gives up the skin, it then gives up, only remaining in its own kind, and while it remains in its own kind, it gives it up while loathing. 'While loathing' means when it is half freed, half unfreed it hangs on, then while feeling tormented it gives it up. And while loathing in this way, in reliance on the gap between sticks, roots, or rocks it gives it up. And while giving it up relying [on this gap], it gives up the skin having generated endeavour, made an effort, vigorously bending its tail and spreading its hood while exhaling. Having done it, the snake can go wherever it wants. In just the same way a monk, desiring to abandon this and the other shore, gives them up in four ways: (1) remaining in his own kind (*sajātiyaṃ ṭhito*), (2) while loathing (*jigucchanto*), (3) in reliance (*nissāya*), (4) through vigour (*thāmena*). His own kind (*sajāti*) means the morality (*sīla*) of the monk, because of the statement 'born in a noble lineage', and for this reason it says: "a man, established in morality, is wise […]" (S I 13). Then, remaining in his own kind in this way, the monk, by seeing danger everywhere, loathes (*jigucchanto*) this and the far shore in the form of his own and other existences, which produce suffering like an old worn out skin; he relies on (*nissāya*) the good friend; he produces extraordinary vigour (*thāma*) in the form of right effort (*sammāvāyāma*); dividing the day and night into six parts he strives and struggles in the way stated as "walking and sitting during the day he purifies the mind of obstructive thoughts (*āvaraṇīyehi dhammehi*)" (A I 114); like the snake bending its tail, he folds his legs; like the snake exhaling, he too strives with unyielding effort; like the snake spreading its hood, he produces an expansion of his knowledge; finally like the snake its skin, he gives up this and the far shore. And once he has given them up, like a snake that has given up its skin, he too as one who has laid down his burden goes where he wants, to the element of

Nibbāna which is without residue of fuel.[150]

The similarity between *Paramatthajotikā II* and *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* poses some theoretical problems. If, on the one hand, the commentary on the *Suttanipāta*, the *Paramatthajotikā II*, seems later than the commentary on the *Dīghanikāya*, namely the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, on the other hand, the commentarial explanation made by the *Paramatthajotikā II* is much clearer and more appropriate to the context than *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*'s explanation. Therefore, the passage in *Paramatthajotikā II* comments on the first verse of the *Suttanipāta* which actually concerns a simile of a snake who abandons its old slough (*urago jiṇṇam iva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ*; Sn 1), whereas the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* comments upon a passage which concerns an extraction of a snake from a *karaṇḍa* which is realistically – as has been previously demonstrated – a basket (*ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya*; D I 77). Both texts describe how the snake gives up its skin and they state, with different words, that it gives up the skin through four actions (*imehi catūhi kāraṇehi*; Sv I 222), or in fourfold ways (*catubbidhena*; Pj II 13). The *Paramatthajotikā II*, unlike *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, states clearly what the fourfold ways are: *catubbidhena jahāti*: (1) *sajātiyaṃ ṭhito* (2) *jigucchanto* (3) *nissāya* (4) *thāmenā ti* (Pj II 13). Successively, the *Paramatthajotikā II* explains each point in detail, whereas the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* does not. The different way of exposition is also reflected by the lexicon. Therefore, both texts recount that the snake, in order to give up its skin, leans on something. The *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* reports that the snake leans inside a branch or inside a tree (*kaṭṭh-antaraṃ vā rukkh-antaraṃ vā nissāya*; Sv I 222), whereas the *Paramatthajotikā II* states that the snake leans inside a branch or among roots or among rocks (*daṇḍantaraṃ vā mūlantaraṃ vā pāsāṇantaraṃ vā nissāya*; Pj II 14). Then, it can be questioned how the similarity and differences between these texts can be interpreted. The answer lies in the method used to compose the Pāli commentaries which have come to us. The commentaries are the result of

150 *so jajjarabhāvena **jiṇṇaṃ** cirakālatāya **purāṇañ** cā ti saṃkhaṃ gataṃ **tacaṃ** jahanto catubbidhena jahāti: sajātiyaṃ ṭhito jigucchanto nissāya thāmenā ti. sajāti nāma sappajāti dīghattabhāvo, uragā hi pañcasu ṭhānesu sajātin nātivattanti: up(a)pattiyaṃ cutiyaṃ vissatthaniddokkamane sakajātiyā methunapatisevane jiṇṇtacāpanayane cā ti, – yato, yadā tacaṃ jahāti, tadā sajātiyaṃ yeva ṭhatvā jahāti, sajātiyaṃ ṭhito pi ca jigucchanto jahāti. jigucchanto nāma, yadā upaḍḍhaṭṭhāne mutto hoti upaḍḍhaṭṭhāne amutto olambati, tadā naṃ aṭṭiyanto jahāti, evaṃ jigucchanto pi ca daṇḍantaraṃ vā mūlantaraṃ vā pāsāṇantaraṃ vā nissāya jahāti. nissāya jahanto pi ca thāmaṃ janetvā ussāhaṃ karitvā viriyena vaṃkaṃ naṅguṭṭhaṃ katvā passasanto ca phaṇaṃ katvā jahāti, evaṃ jahitvā yena-kāmaṃ pakkamati. evam evaṃ ayam pi bhikkhu orapāraṃ jahitukāmo catubbidhena jahāti: sajātiyaṃ ṭhito jigucchanto nissāya thāmenā ti. sajāti nāma bhikkhuno ariyāya jātiyā jāto ti vacanato sīlaṃ, ten' eva cāha sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño ti, evam etissaṃ sajātiyaṃ ṭhito bhikkhu taṃ sakattabhāvādibhedaṃ orapāraṃ jiṇṇaṃ purāṇatacam iva dukkhaṃ janentaṃ tattha tattha ādīnavadassanena jigucchanto kalyāṇamitte nissāya adhimattaṃ sammāvāyāmasaṃkhātaṃ thāmaṃ janetvā divasaṃ caṃkamena nisajjāya āvaraṇīyehi dhammehi cittaṃ parisodhetī ti vuttanayena rattindivaṃ chadhā vibhajitvā ghaṭento vāyamanto urago viya vaṃkaṃ naṅguṭṭhaṃ pallaṃkaṃ ābhujitvā urago viya passasanto ayam pi asithilaparakkamatāya vāyamanto urago va phaṇaṃ karitvā ayam pi ñāṇavipphāraṅ janetvā urago va tacaṃ orapāraṃ jahāti, jahitvā ca urago viya jahitataco yena-kāmaṃ ayam pi ohitabhāro anupādisesanibbānadhātudisaṃ pakkamati* (Pj II 13-14). I owe to Rupert Gethin so many corrections on this passage that I feel the merits for this translation are entirely his, while the remaining errors are mine.

a work of compilation and editing from older sources.[151] For instance, E.W. Adikaram, in his pioneering work, listed twenty-eight ancient sources to which commentators often refer to as authorities (1946, 10). Another list of between thirty-five and forty sources is provided by S. Mori.[152] A reasonable way to interpret the connection between the two explanations is that they come from a common source. Perhaps the original source was really a comment on the first verse of the *Suttanipāta*[153] – which actually concerns a snake who abandons its skin – that was borrowed by the commentator of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* in order to write the interpretation of the term '*karaṇḍa*' as a term to designate the snake's slough. The commentator summarised the passage because it was not its original context, so he borrowed only the necessary. This hypothesis would also explain the reason why some identical concepts are expressed using different words. The tradition claims that when the commentaries arrived in Sri Lanka they were translated into the language of the inhabitant of the island.[154] Successively, Buddhaghosa translated the commentaries from the *Sīhaḷa* language into a more suitable language: the Pāli language.[155] If the original source was in a language other than Pāli, this would justify the different translations.[156] The two commentaries were, indeed, written on two different occasions.

Therefore, we can say so far that *karaṇḍa* straightforwardly means 'basket', and that *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*'s suggestion that it means 'slough' is artificial. Clearly, *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* knows that *karaṇḍa* generally means basket (it says so). So, the question is: why the suggestion that it means 'slough'? There are two possibilities: (1) there is an old and lost usage of *karaṇḍa* in the sense of slough; or, (2) the commentator has another motive. Concerning the first case, no use of *karaṇḍa* in the sense of slough has been recovered, whereas in the latter case the obvious reason is that he wants to bring out how the form of the *manomayakāya* matches the form of that from which it is drawn. The commentator then adapts an existing commentarial account of a snake sloughing of its skin unconnected with

151 However, it would be overly simplistic to consider the commentators as mere inert redactors. Recent studies have highlighted the commentators' own contribution in writing commentaries. Endo, for instance, regarding the commentator Buddhaghosa, writes that: "Buddhaghosa fulfilled the role of a commentator not by simply discarding unnecessary repetitions and writing mistakes in the old commentaries, but by using his knowledge of Buddhism as the standard tool to critically edit them" (2013, 208). A similar statement was written by von Hinüber: "Buddhaghosa as a commentator also acted as a text critic, when he carefully checked the wording of the texts" ([2013/2014] 2015, 371).

152 Mori 1984: 145-6, quoted by Endo (2013, 20, n. 16), who claims he detected thirty-five sources. However, according to Kim 1999, 7, n. 19 (= 2023, 6, n. 19), the sources detected by Mori are as many as forty.

153 The connection of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* with the *Suttanipāta* is revealed by the commentarial use of the wording '*purāṇa-tacaṃ*' which is equivalent to the '*tacaṃ purāṇaṃ*' of the *Suttanipāta*, a wording form which seems to be confined only to this text.

154 *aṭṭhakathā ādito vasisatehi pañcahi yā saṅgītā anusaṅgītā ca pacchā pi Sīhaḷadīpaṃ pana ābhatā 'tha vasinā Mahā-Mahindena ṭhapitā Sīhaḷabhāsāya dīpavāsīnaṃ atthāya* (Sv I 1).

155 *apanetvāna tato 'haṃ Sīhaḷabhāsaṃ manoramaṃ bhāsaṃ | tantinayānucchavikaṃ āropento vigatadosaṃ* (Sv I 1).

156 In addition to the fourfold procedure to give up the old skin, which is conveyed differently by the two commentaries (Sv I 222: *imehi catūhi kāraṇehi*; Pj II 13: *catubbidhena*), I would like to draw attention to the action of 'leaning on'. The first object on which the snake leans is roughly the same: *kaṭṭh-antaraṃ* (Sv I 222), *daṇḍantaraṃ* (Pj II 14). Both terms are connected with the wood and refer to the limbs of the tree.

manomayakāya. He found such an exegetic account in the old commentary on the *Suttanipāta*, which comments on a snake who abandons its old slough (*urago jiṇṇam iva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ*; Sn 1) and which survives in the actual form of the *Paramatthajotikā II* (i.e. Pj II 13-14). It is worth noting that Buddhaghosa's emphasis on the *manomayakāya* having the same form as the body from which it is drawn fits well with the old Upaniṣadic *manomaya-ātman* (e.g. TU 2.3.1). However, this fact (i.e. the similarity) is echoed in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* most likely when it is stated that the new body made of mind has all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabbaṅga-paccaṅgin*). Moreover, I argued in § 6.2.2 that the similes aim to highlight the extraction of something of value from its container and, therefore, there would be no need to believe the Buddhaghosa's forced interpretation. Now, I would like to discuss the only record I have found that might seem to contradict my theory concerning the interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa*.

6.4.6.1 Snakes Freed from the Old Skin in Brāhmaṇa Literature

As previously stated, within the Buddhist *Tipiṭaka*, the term *karaṇḍa* is only used to designate a basket, and the interpretation as the slough of the snake is only found within the commentary (Sv I 222). However, it should be pointed out that there is an example within the Brāhmaṇa literature concerning a simile of a snake which is freed from its skin just as a stalk (*iṣīkā*) is freed from its reed (*muñja*). This simile appears in almost the same form within the *Gopathabrāhmaṇa*, *Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa*, and *Kauṣītakibrāhmaṇa*. Let me take as an example the formulation that occurred in the *Gopathabrāhmaṇa* (2.4.6):

> Just as a snake is freed from its old skin, or a stalk from its reed, so in the same way they get rid of all evil.[157]

Since in the Brāhmaṇa texts the simile of the snake (*ahi*) freed from its skin (*tvac*) is in conjunction with the simile of the stalk (*iṣīkā*) freed from the reed (*muñja*), it might be argued that there is a connection with the Buddhist texts. The Buddhist account presents the simile of a stalk (*isīkā*) drawn out from a reed (*muñja*) followed by the similes of a sword (*asi*) drawn out from a scabbard (*kosi*) and a snake (*ahi*) pulled out from a *karaṇḍa*. Keeping in mind the Brāhmaṇa's passage, it could at first be tempting to suppose that the term *karaṇḍa* means 'slough'. However, a more careful analysis reveals that this interpretation is not well supported. Indeed, it is possible to note that in the Sanskrit text the word used to denote the 'slough' is *tvac*, whereas in the Buddhist text the word *karaṇḍa* would have been used. Nevertheless, in Pāli there is the word *taca*, etymologically equivalent to the Sanskrit *tvac*, which was indeed used to denote the slough of the snake within the Pāli canon.[158] Moreover, the two similes imply two different actions. In the

157 *tad yathāhir jīrṇāyās tvaco nirmucyeteṣīkā vā muñjād evaṃ haivaite sarvasmāt pāpmanaḥ saṃpramucyante.* Cf. *Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa* 2.134 and *Kauṣītakibrāhmaṇa* 18.5.19-21. A simile concerning the rooting up of a stalk from the reed in order to explain the liberation from evil can be also found in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.16. Similar passages are also discussed by Killingley (2018, 64).

158 E.g. *urago jiṇṇam iva tacaṃ purāṇaṃ* (Sn 1).

Brāhmaṇa's passage, the snake (*ahi*) is freed (*nirmucyeta*; middle optative form) from the slough (*tvac*), whereas in the Buddhist passage, the snake (*ahi*) would be pulled out (*uddhareyya*; optative form) from the *karaṇḍa*. In the Vedic simile, the snake sheds its skin by itself; whereas, if we take Buddhaghosa interpretation seriously, someone literally skins the snake, which is actually quite an unrealistic reading. In another commentary, as I have already pointed out, (Sp II 362) a snake (*sappa*) is pulled out (*uddharati*) from a basket (*karaṇḍa*). It seems that these similes were part of a common *milieu*, and their nature was very ductile since they could be used to illustrate different meanings and could be mixed together in different combinations.[159] Last but not least, it is worthy to note that the interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa* as the slough of the snake is almost a *hapax*, since it only appears in a commentarial passage reported in Sv I 222 (= Ps III 263). Hence, on the basis of these observations, it seems that the best interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa* when occurring in the Pāli canon is, indeed, 'basket'.[160]

6.4.7 *Saddhammappakāsinī*: A Melting Pot of Ideas

The last reference which should be analysed is the commentarial explanation concerning the pericope of the creation of a mind-made body in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. In this passage (Paṭis-a II 666), there are further small innovations mixed with interpretations taken from the texts previously analysed. In Table 6.5, I divide and translate the passage in order to highlight the new and old ideas used for the composition of the commentarial explanation.

159 The use of the same similes for different purposes was pointed out by Norman ([1976] 1991, 101-2) who, however, interprets the *Dīghanikāya*'s passage (D I 77) following Rhys Davids' interpretation (1899, 87-8), which is based on the commentarial explanation. The fact that the similes could be mixed together in a different combination is demonstrated, for instance, by *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.16, which only presents the rooting up of a stalk from the reed; or, it is also evident from a passage in the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* (see *Suttāgame* I 137). The *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* is a Jaina text in which there is a simile concerning a sword drawn from a scabbard combined with the simile of the stalk drawn from reed in order to illustrate the same concept; see also the translation made by Jacobi ([1895] 1964, 340).

160 For this reason, it would be better to change the nickname "'snake slough' pericope" given by Radich (2007, 233) to the passage that presents the creation of the body made of mind.

Table 6.5 *Saddhammappakāsinī* II 666

***Saddhammappakāsinī* II 666**	**Critical notes and references**
In reference to the interpretation of the knowledge concerning the psychic power of the mind-made [body]: with reference to the passage that begins with: "**He creates from this body another body**", a monk possessing psychic power desires to perform the psychic power of the mind-made [body] after having emerged from the meditative absorption which forms the base, whose object is the space *kasiṇa*,[1] and having adverted to his own material body in the way already explained, he resolves, "Let it be hollow", and it becomes hollow. Then, having adverted to another body inside this [body] by means of the earth *kasiṇa*, after the preparatory work, he resolves in the way already explained, and another body exists inside him. He, pulling it out from the mouth, places it outside [his body]. *manomayiddhiñāṇaniddese:* ***imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimminātī*** *ti ādīsu iddhimā bhikkhu manomayiddhiṃ kātukāmo ākāsakasiṇārammaṇa-pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya attano rūpakāyaṃ tāva āvajjitvā vuttanayen' eva susiro hotū ti adhiṭṭhāti. susiro hoti. atha tassa abbhantare paṭhavīkasiṇavasena aññaṃ kāyaṃ āvajjitvā parikammaṃ katvā vuttanayen' eva adhiṭṭhāti. tassa abbhantare añño kāyo hoti. so taṃ mukhato abbhitvā*[2] *bahi ṭhapeti.*	This passage is based on Vism 406 with some additions. The passage, within the *Visuddhimagga*, in which it is recounted how to create a mind-made body, is increased through the addition of the *kasiṇa*s. It is also highlighted that this mind-made body is pulled out from the mouth. Even this latter detail is an addition.
Now, this [text], making known the meaning through similes, started to say '**just as** […]'. In this connection, '**from a reed (*muñjamhā*)**' means from a reed grass (*muñjatiṇamhā*). '**One who were to draw out a stalk (*īsikaṃ pavāheyya*)**' means 'one who were to pull out a top sprout (*kaḷīraṃ luñceyya*)'. '**From a scabbard (*kosiyā*)**' means 'out of a scabbard (*kosakato*)'. '***Karaṇḍā*** (ablative masculine)' it means '*karaṇḍāya* (ablative feminine)', the meaning is: 'from the covering which is the old skin (*purāṇatacakañcukato*)'. And in this occurrence, '**he would pull out (*uddhareyya*)**' should be understood as its removal by the mind. Indeed **a snake (*ahi*)**, established in its own kind, relying on the gap between sticks or trees, with vigour – referring to the effort of drawing out its body from the skin – and while loathing its old skin as something devouring its body, in these four ways gives up its slough by itself. *idāni tam atthaṃ upamāhi pakāsento* ***seyyatthā 'pī*** *ti ādim āha. tattha:* ***muñjamhā*** *ti muñjatiṇamhā.* ***īsikaṃ pavāheyyā*** *ti kaḷīraṃ luñceyya.* ***kosiyā*** *ti kosakato.* ***karaṇḍā*** *ti karaṇḍāya, purāṇatacakañcukato ti attho. tattha ca:* ***uddhareyyā*** *ti citten' ev' assa uddharaṇaṃ veditabbaṃ.* ***ahi*** *nāma sajātiyaṃ ṭhito kaṭṭhantaraṃ vā, rukkhantaraṃ vā nissāya tacato sarīranikkaḍḍhanapayoga-saṅkhātena thāmena sarīraṃ saṅkhādamānaṃ viya purāṇaṃ tacaṃ jigucchanto, imehi catūhi kāraṇehi sayam eva kañcukaṃ jahāti.*	The explanation of the similes is borrowed from Sv I 222. Nevertheless, there are some additions. The commentary specifies that the *muñja* is a sort of grass (*tiṇa*). It also states that the *īsikā* is the top sprout (*kaḷīra*) of the reed grass, *kosī* 'scabbard' is *kosaka* 'scabbard', and that the term *karaṇḍā* (ablative masculine) is a synonym of *karaṇḍāya* (ablative feminine).
In this case, just as the stalk etc. are similar to the reed etc., in the same way the mind-made form is similar in all qualities to the possessor of psychic power, the simile has been purposefully used to highlight this. *ettha ca yathā īsikādayo muñjādīhi sadisā honti, evam idaṃ manomayaṃ rūpaṃ iddhimato sabbākārehi sadisam eva hotī ti dassanatthaṃ imā upamā vuttā ti.*	This passage too is based on Vism 406, with the addition of '*sabbākārehi*' and the substitution of the pronoun '*imā*' in place of '*etā*'.

***Saddhammappakāsinī* II 666**	**Critical notes and references**
"The possessor of psychic power approached with a mind-made body" (Th 901, with '*iddhimā*' in place of '*iddhiyā*'), in this passage the body created by a mind which performs supernatural knowledges is called a mind-made body. "He is reborn in a certain mind-made body" (A III 50), in this passage the body is produced by a mind which performs meditative absorption states; because it was created by this mind it is called a mind-made body. But in the present passage the body is produced by a mind which performs supernatural knowledges; because it was created by this mind it is called mind-made body. If someone asks, "This being so, [even] when [a body is] made by the power of resolution and the power of transformation is it called a mind-made body?" Certainly, it is, but in the present context, having defined those [two powers] separately according to the differences between them and because they are designated as 'the power of resolution and the power of transformation', it is only the creation that comes from within that is called a mind-made power. *manomayena kāyena iddhimā upasaṅkamī ti ettha abhiññāmanena katakāyo manomayakāyo nāma. aññataraṃ manomayaṃ kāyaṃ upapajjī ti ettha jhānamanena nibbattitakāyo tena manena katattā manomayakāyo nāma. idha pana abhiññāmanena uppāditakāyo tena manena katattā manomayakāyo nāma. evaṃ sati adhiṭṭhāniddhiyā, vikubbaniddhiyā ca, kato manomayakāyo nāma hotī? ti ce: hoti yeva. idha pana tāsaṃ visuṃ visuṃ visesena visesetvā adhiṭṭhāniddhi, vikubbaniddhī ti ca vuttattā abbhantarato nimmānam eva manomayiddhi nāma.*	The same quotations are also included within the *Manorathapūranī* (Mp I 209). The *Saddhammappakāsinī*'s author borrowed some canonical passages in order to state that there are some different kinds of mind-made body. Successively, the commentator seems also to assert that the psychic power of the mind-made body is involved when the psychic power of resolution and the psychic power of transformation are performed. This idea, which concerns a sort of synergy among powers, is not entirely new. Indeed, a passage in the *Visuddhimagga* seems to suggest a similar kind of interconnection: "Among these ten psychic powers, the word 'many kinds of psychic powers' is only conveyed by the psychic power of resolution. However, both psychic powers of transformation and of mind-made body should be expected according to this meaning" (*iti imāsu dasasu iddhīsu iddhividhāyā ti imasmiṃ pade adhiṭṭhānā iddhi yeva āgatā. imasmiṃ pan' atthe vikubbanā manomayā iddhiyo pi icchitabbā eva*; Vism 384).

1 Among the meditation objects there are the so called *kasiṇa*s (= Sanskrit: *kṛtsna*; literally 'totality/entire'), usually ten in number. They consist of four elements, four colours, space, and consciousness. The last two items are replaced in some texts by light and limited space.

2 In the translation, I amended '*abbhitvā*' with '*abbūhitvā*'.

It is worth noting that this exegesis is the result of former innovations which have been attested in other and older texts. This commentarial explanation claims to interpret a *Paṭisambhidāmagga* passage (Paṭis II 210-11), but includes later developments and changes concerning the pericope of the creation of a mind-made body. These developments occur only in texts such as the *Visuddhimagga* and *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*. This fact naturally leads us to wonder to what extent a later interpretation is suitable and useful in order to recover the exact meaning of the root text. It appears that there is not a direct link which connects the root text to the commentary. Therefore, the commentary on the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* appears as the result of a process in which the developments are accumulated, reshaped, and presented again in a new form.

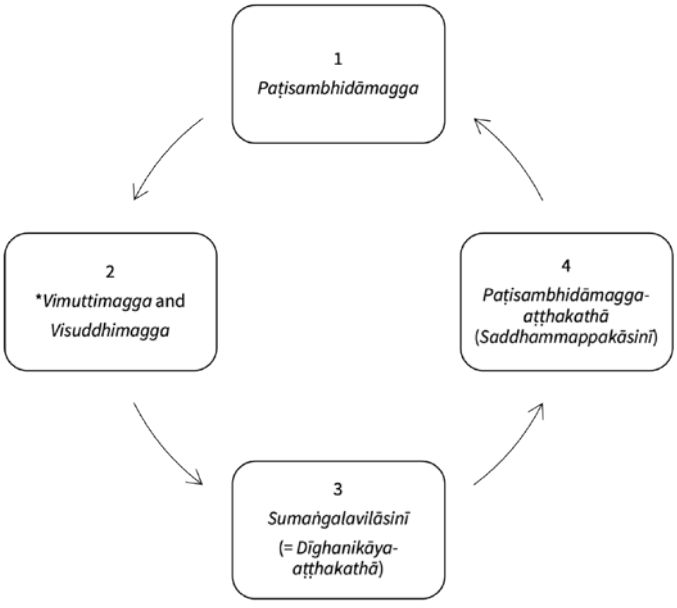

Figure 6.4 Representation of the circle of influences. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* influenced the**Vimuttimagga*, *Visuddhimagga* and *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, which influenced the composition of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s commentary, which could influence our understanding of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*

Figure 6.4 highlights that the first text influences the following texts but, at the end, the interpretation of the root text is influenced by the result of the influences which itself has produced. This process makes the task to recover the original meaning of a concept a very hard and dynamic task, and shows the need for a diachronic approach to Buddhist studies.

6.4.8 Conclusion of the Diachronic Study

The present chapter has tried to recover the development of the interpretation concerning the creation of the body made of mind (*manomayakāya*) within Pāli Buddhist literature. The analysis started from the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s exposition and continued with the expositions found in later texts. The first and most influential developments were found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. This text shows that the concept of *manomaya* has lost the central position it had within lists in the early canonical materials and in the Upaniṣads. Moreover, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* interprets the *manomayakāya* as a sort of psychic power (*iddhi*). This interpretation was probably due to an over scholastic and literalistic understanding of a *Saṃyuttanikāya* passage (S V 282), in which the term *manomaya* is close to the term *iddhi*. The innovations found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* were inherited by the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, which in turn add new material. The latter illustrates the process through which the body made of mind is created, and it emphasises the similarity between the creator and the new creation. This similarity influenced the exegesis made by the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* since it affected

the interpretation of the three similes. In this text, for the first time, it is stated that the term '*karaṇḍa*' is the slough of the snake, in spite of its common meaning of 'basket'. However, this translation is not supported by the early canonical texts, and it seems that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* was also unaware of this interpretation. Therefore, it reports a simile (Paṭis I 145) concerning a jewel (*maṇi*) inside a box (*karaṇḍaka*), which resembles, in the grammatical construction, the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s simile (D I 77) concerning a snake (*ahi*) pulled out from a basket (*karaṇḍa*). It was also noted that the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*'s passage, through which the term *karaṇḍa* was interpreted as the slough of the snake, resembles a passage in the *Paramatthajotikā II*, a late commentary on the *Suttanipāta*. An explanation that could justify the presence of both similarities and differences between the two commentarial passages is that both passages are derived from a common source. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the actual Pāli commentaries were written on the base of common sources. Finally, the *Saddhammappakāsinī*'s account has been analysed and resulted to be composed, for the major part, by former innovations with some minor additions. This led to the problem concerning the reliability of the commentarial literature. Therefore, to what extent it is possible to trust a comment on a text if this comment is made up by passages of texts later than the commented text? This question is problematic since the process through which the commentaries were written and the ways in which they used to comment are still far from clear. However, in the case concerning the creation of the body made of mind (*manomayakāya*) it is possible to infer a certain *modus operandi*, exemplified by the following scheme:

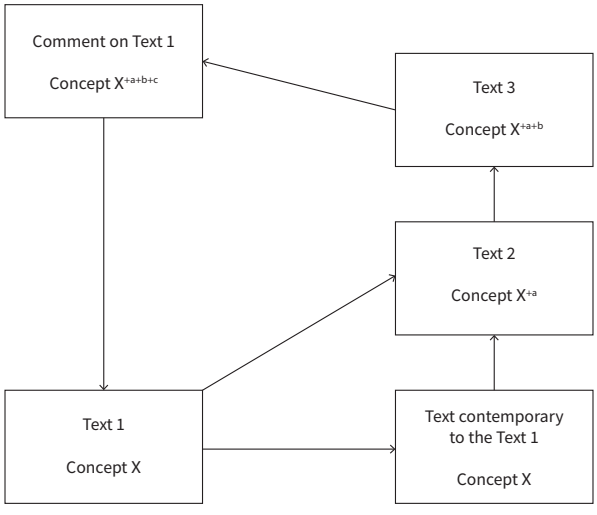

Figure 6.5 This scheme shows how Concept X becomes more complex and detailed over time. This pattern of development could be applied to the relationship between the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* and *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, and between *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s account and its commentarial explanation in the *Saddhammappakāsinī*

This scheme exemplifies that the commentarial explanation was built up by small innovations accumulated over time, and finally a Concept X in a Text 1 became the Concept X^{+a+b+c}. However, the additions 'a', 'b', and 'c' are recorded only in texts later than Text 1. Although these small innovations could seem trivial and also coherent with the original concept, the interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa* as the slough of a snake seems to depend on these former innovations, nonetheless. Since in texts later than the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* the similarity between the creation (the body made of mind) and the creator was emphasised, the author of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* stated that the three similes were enunciated in order to show the condition of similarity (*upamāttayam pi hi sadisa-bhāva-dassanattham eva vuttaṃ*; Sv I 222). It goes without saying that the common meaning 'basket' for the Pāli word *karaṇḍa* did not fit very well with the assumption that similes should illustrate the similarity. Therefore, the commentator provides a long exposition to argue that the term *karaṇḍa* means 'slough', whereas, with regard to the other two similes, the commentator limits himself by just mentioning that what is drawn out is identical to its receptacle (*muñja-sadisā eva hi tassa anto isīkā hoti, kosiya-sadiso yeva asi*; Sv I 222).

In conclusion, without denying the great importance that the commentarial literature has had and still has for our understanding of Buddhism, I think that we still lack a full comprehension of what the commentarial literature really is. When we consider the relationship between the canon and the comment, the most immediate picture that we conceive is the use of the comment to understand the canon. What I have shown in this study is that it is possible to overturn the prevailing paradigm and, therefore, the use of the canon to understand the commentarial literature is a similarly valuable approach.

6.5 General Conclusions

This chapter highlights that is not always possible to uncritically accept the commentarial exegesis concerning a concept with ancient roots such as the *manomayakāya*. The process of knowing and understanding should take into account different angles of interpretations. In this case, the evidence provided by the Vedic background, which was a more ancient and probably original context of some kinds of mental embodiment, was of paramount importance. The very term '*manomaya*' has not a plain interpretation, and despite that the exegesis is unanimous in translating it as 'made through the mind' or 'made by the mind' (considering the first term of the compound, i.e. *manas*, inflected in the instrumental case), there is evidence both from the Buddhist canon and Vedic texts that a translation like 'made of mind' (*manas* inflected in the genitive case) cannot be completely disregarded. In some cases (e.g. S V 282), namely when the mental body occurs in contraposition to the gross and heavy physical body made of the four great elements (*cātumahābhūtika*), the *manomayakāya* really seems to represent a body that, since it is made of mind, is lighter, thinner and overall better than the coarse body. Indeed, if the interpretation of the similes formulated in the present study is correct, the similes aim to further highlight that the new mental body is the inner valuable part which can be extracted from the physical body. This interpretation of the similes is, in some ways, in opposition to the commentarial interpretation provided by Buddhaghosa, who assumes

that the similes aim to highlight the similarity between the original physical body and the mental body. This assumption led Buddhaghosa to understand *karaṇḍa* as the 'slough' of the snake (*ahi*), deliberately overlooking the ordinary and always accepted meaning of 'basket'. Buddhaghosa's interpretation that sees the similes highlighting the similarity between the physical and mental bodies may seem, *prima facie*, derived from the Upaniṣadic understanding of many levels of embodiment, such as in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, in which increasingly subtler inner selves (*ātman*) have the human form because the previous one had it, and so on (until reaching the physical body, the external stratum).[161] It might be so, but nonetheless, *karaṇḍa* as the 'slough' of the snake is an *hapax* in Buddhist literature and is not attested in Sanskrit (as far as I know) with such a meaning. Moreover, we are not really acquainted with Buddhaghosa's, and broadly speaking early commentators', knowledge of Upaniṣadic doctrines and their propensity to refer to them, either tacitly or openly. We can only but note that the later sub-commentarial literature ostensibly makes reference to the Upaniṣads. An example is the *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā*, which refers to the reciters of the Vedas (*vedavādin*) who preach the doctrine of the five selves (*attan*). This is nothing more than the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*'s doctrine of the five selves (*ātman*).[162] Turning to the interpretation of *karaṇḍa*, we may note that even if Buddhaghosa's interpretation might seem to be derived from Upaniṣadic doctrines, and the concept of *manomaya* in the canon resulted to be very close to the Upaniṣadic one, this does not mean that we should blindly accept every interpretation coherent with the Vedic *milieu*. To better explain: interpretation should be conceived as the result of a synergetic work of many sources, and the work of hermeneut is to establish the best interpretation based on the evidence gathered. In the case of *karaṇḍa*, the interpretation of the canonical similes and the philological analysis of the exegetical sources point out that Buddhaghosa's reading of *karaṇḍa* as the 'slough' of the snake is forced and linguistically unjustified. Furthermore, even the Chinese translation of this simile in the Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* would not support Buddhaghosa's understanding: "It is like someone taking a snake out of a basket (篋)".[163] Indeed, the word *qiè* 篋 clearly indicates something along a 'basket' (cf. s.v. "篋" in DDB). Whether Buddhaghosa invented the 'snake's slough' interpretation or inherited it from older sources is a matter probably unsolvable. What seems likely is that the textual passage he used to justify his reading had its original exegetical context in the commentary on the *Suttanipāta* (Pj II 13-14). Therefore, the study of the *manomayakāya* highlights how it would be essential to promote a 'philology of ideas' in the field of Buddhist studies. Only when cross-referencing the sources can we have a clearer picture of a concept like the body made of mind whose meaning and significance have never been made explicit in the texts. This can only be done by balancing the data, namely improving our knowledge of the canonical context through the evidence provided by both its past (e.g. Vedic background) and its future developments (exegesis).

161 *sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva | tasya puruṣavidhatām anvayaṃ puruṣavidhaḥ* (TU 2.3.1).

162 *annamayo pāṇamayo manomaya ānandamayo viññāṇamayo ti pañcadhā attānaṃ vedavādino vadanti* (Sv-pṭ I 202). Notably, this passage occurs in the *ṭīkā* when it comments on the *aṭṭhakathā*'s exegesis on a *Brahmajālasutta*'s passage involving the *manomayakāya*.

163 又如有人篋中出蛇 (T0001.01.0085c20-21).

Concerning the Pāli commentarial literature and broadly speaking the exegesis, we can begin noting that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* departs from the older canonical account of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. Indeed, not only has the concept of *manomaya* lost the central position it held in lists within early Buddhist canonical materials and the Upaniṣads, but the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* introduces many innovations. The text reworks the canonical material (esp. from the *Dīghanikāya* and *Saṃyuttanikāya*) and in doing so alters the understanding a reader could draw by only considering the earlier canonical material. The other exegetical works considered in the chronological order gradually add further material, without rejecting the previous exegetical accounts, but integrating them with new information. This pattern is certainly interesting and, as we will see further in the book, is not a one-off case. The very fact that exegetical works provide new information over time should make us aware that the interpretation of a given concept might have changed over time as well. However, since the Pāli commentaries were based on older sources that have not reached us, there could be reasonable doubt that new information came from these older sources as well. That is to say, in the case of two texts, one younger and one older, if the younger text provides an exegetical account on a given concept similar to the older text, but it further adds new information, we cannot rule out *a priori* that it did not make use of the same old sources. Therefore, since generally speaking, we do not have an *a priori* rule to apply in the evaluation of the commentarial philological contribution to the interpretation of early texts, we should evaluate any piece of exegesis on a case-by-case basis. This could be undertaken by questioning the exegetical texts, namely putting the right questions to the commentaries in the process of analysis. The questions to which I am referring are as such: is the exegesis at stake from old sources? Was the exegesis at stake originally elaborated for the passage to which it is referring to, or was it borrowed from elsewhere? Is this interpretation introducing innovations? Therefore, the use of the commentaries can be valuable in the study of early Buddhism as long as we are able to pose the right questions to the exegeses and to analyse them until we are able to answer to these questions, or at least to admit that we are not in fact able to fully answer. A similar reasoning, of course, can be applied in the use of the Vedic sources for the study of Buddhism, and this is the reason why I regard the process of interpretation as dynamic; a scholar should always move forward from one source to another and back again, over and over again, until the perfect balance among the sources and the interpretations is found.

Finally, summarising some conclusions from this chapter, we can state that the Buddhist *manomayakāya* is an ancient and exogenous concept, not exclusively Buddhist but part of the Indian *milieu*. It escaped the first and early process of systematisation and, therefore, the first exegesis it received (viz. from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*) already shows a high degree of innovation. The later exegeses (commentaries) further add details and explanation. There occurs the description of the method to perform a creation of a mental body. This set of instructions is a kind of exegesis that will also occur for the other extraordinary capacities (as we will see in the next chapters). More relevant from a philological point of view is the interpretation of the similes, in particular the extraction of a snake from a basket. This gave us the opportunity to reflect on the reliability of the commentarial exegesis. If the pattern of accumulation of details over time would be confirmed, could we really trust an interpretation that clearly introduces innovations?

For instance, can we understand a concept X like X^{+a+b+c}, where 'a', 'b' and 'c' are new information gradually introduced by the exegetical literature? In some cases, to believe or not to believe the exegesis would be based on the propensity of the reader to trust this literature. However, in other cases – such as the interpretation of *karaṇḍa* – this chapter has shown that is possible to conduct a thorough analysis on some issues, and so a reliable evaluation of some exegetical accounts is possible, it simply depends on how much effort one wishes to invest.

7 *Iddhividhă̆*

Index 7.1 Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile). – 7.2 The Terminology Reconsidered. – 7.3 The Vedic Background with Particular Reference to the Upaniṣadic Context. – 7.4 From the Canon to the Commentaries. – 7.5 Conclusion on the *Iddhividhă̆*.

After the *manomayakāya*, the *iddhividhă̆* is probably the second most controversial category among the extraordinary capacities. Just as the term '*manomaya*', the term '*iddhi*' is quite problematic and, therefore, after the introduction of the canonical pericope (§ 7.1), the reasons to adopt the compound *iddhividhă̆* and translate it as 'a variety of psychophysical power' will be discussed (§ 7.2). Unlike the *manomayakāya*, for the *iddhividhă̆* I have not found a corresponding meaningful term in the Vedic texts to systematically search for and analyse. However, this does not mean that there are no linguistic similarities at all. By way of example and suggestion for future studies, the first *iddhi* concerns the multiplication of the body, a performance that is described by the phrasing *eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti* (D I 78) "having been one, he becomes many" and, similarly, cosmogonic myths in the Upaniṣads deal with a primordial being that multiplies itself: *bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti* (CU 6.2.3). This linguistic similarity is even more striking if we compare the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* with the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*.[1] When we consider the sequence of the stages in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s Buddhist path of liberation, we may note that after the creation of the *manomayakāya* the practitioner attains the ability to perform psychophysical feats: the so called *iddhi*s. The first among these powers is the capability to multiply the physical body. Similarly, we can note that the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, after the presentation of the five levels of inner embodiments (among which there is a *manomaya-ātman*), reports a significant passage:

1 A wider comparison between Buddhism and *Taittirīyopaniṣad* has been presented in De Notariis forthcoming-b, which also includes the analysis of the common narrative pattern incorporated in the present book (and which will be exhibited shortly). Further observations on the relevance of the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* for the study of Buddhism were made in De Notariis 2025, 56-9.

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> He desired: "Let me be many! Let me get progeny!" So, he developed ascetic fervour, and once developed, he emanated everything.[2]

In the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, we thus find the same narratological pattern: after a kind of shifting from denser levels to subtler ones, the practitioner can multiply himself. In Buddhism, the levels of embodiments are simplified, there are only two: the coarse physical body and the subtler body made of mind. Notably, the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* reports the Sanskrit expression *bahu syāṃ*, which resembles in its structure and meaning the Pāli *bahudhā hoti*. Therefore, we may wonder whether it is really by chance that the first power in the Buddhist canonical list of *iddhi*s is the multiplication of the body.[3]

Another linguistic similarity concerns the *iddhi* of becoming manifested or concealed, which is conveyed by the phrasing *āvibhāvaṃ tirobhāvaṃ* (D I 78), a couple of terms echoed by the Upaniṣadic *ātmata āvirbhāvatirobhāvau* (CU 7.26.1).

In the present chapter, the Vedic texts have been used to examine the speculative idea sustained by some scholars that would see the body made of mind (*manomayakāya*) as the base of and tool with which to perform *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s (§ 7.3). This is a means of investigating the interconnections among the extraordinary capacities. Finally, the exegetical accounts concerning the *iddhividhă* will be analysed (§ 7.4), treating each power individually. The study of the first *iddhi* will involve the Cūḷapanthaka's story (§ 7.4.4.2), which provides the opportunity to inquire into possible connections between the power of the multiplication of the body and the *manomayakāya*. Generally speaking, the diachronic study from the canon to the commentaries of the *iddhividhă* will be predominantly focused on the analysis of the method to perform these powers. Therefore, we shall start with the canonical pericope that introduces our object of study.

7.1 Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile)

The performance of the *iddhividhă* is the fifteenth of the twenty elements of the path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, according to our classification (see Chapter 2). The pericope runs as follows:

> **Basic formula**
> When the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained impassibility, he directs and turns the mind to the variety of *iddhi*s. He experiences a variety of *iddhi*s in many ways: having been one he becomes many, having been many he becomes one, he becomes manifested, he becomes concealed, he goes beyond walls, ramparts, mountains not sticking to them just as he were in the ether, he sinks into and emerges from earth just as he were in the water, he walks on the water without sinking in it just as he were on the earth, he goes cross-legged through the ether just as he were a winged bird, he touches and strokes with the

2 *so 'kāmayata | bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti | sa tapo 'tapyata | sa tapastaptvā | idaṃ sarvamasṛjata* (TU 2.6.1; see also TU 3.4.1).

3 A possible connection between the *manomayakāya* and the first *iddhi* was also suggested by Gombrich (1974, 228), without mentioning the Upaniṣadic evidence.

hand the sun and the moon which have so great power and splendour, he exercises bodily power as far as the Brahmā world.[4]

Simile
Just as, O great king, an adroit potter or a potter apprentice would make and produce with well-prepared clay precisely the earthenware product that he wanted. Just as, O great king, an adroit ivory worker or an ivory worker apprentice would make and produce with well-prepared ivory precisely the ivory product that he wanted. Just as, O great king, an adroit goldsmith or a goldsmith apprentice would make and produce with well-prepared gold precisely the golden product that he wanted.[5]

As it might be noted, I left the term *iddhi* untranslated. The reason lies in the controversial nature of this Pāli term, to which no English term perfectly corresponds (see PED s.v. "iddhi"). Therefore, the next section will serve as a reconsideration of the issue of translating *iddhi*, in an attempt to find a satisfying solution.

7.2 The Terminology Reconsidered

Among the various Indian terms used to denote extraordinary capacities achieved through meditation or yogic practice, the Buddhist term '*iddhi*' in Pāli language (Sanskrit: *ṛddhi*) is particularly interesting.[6] In fact, this term is often connected with other kinds of achievements which are not extraordinary or miraculous in our sense of the term. King Mahāsudassana, for instance, was endowed with four *iddhi*s: beauty, long life, good health, and he was beloved by brāhmaṇas and householders (D II 177-8). The young

4 *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneǰjappatte iddhi-vidhāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. so aneka-vihitaṃ iddhi-vidhaṃ paccanubhoti – eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti, āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asaǰjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi ākāse, paṭhaviyā pi ummuǰja-nimmuǰjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake, udake pi abhiǰjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi paṭhaviyaṃ, ākāse pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā pi pakkhī sakuṇo, ime pi candima-suriye evaṃ mahiddhike evaṃ mahānubhāve pāṇinā parimasati parimaǰjati, yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena va saṃvatteti [vasaṃ vatteti]* (D I 78). Anālayo (2016, 15, n. 16) prefers the alternative way of breaking words *vasaṃ vatteti* in place of *va saṃvatteti* in the last phrase. The first should be preferred because: (1) it is supported by the Sanskrit parallel (*vaśe vartayati*; SBhV II 246); (2) this is clearly how the commentaries read the passage (Vism 401); (3) it makes better sense syntactically.

5 *seyyathā pi mahā-rāja dakkho kumbha-kāro vā kumbhakārantevāsī vā suparikammakatāya mattikāya yaṃ yad eva bhājana-vikatiṃ ākaṅkheyya taṃ tad eva kareyya abhinipphādeyya. seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja dakkho danta-kāro vā dantakārantevāsī vā suparikammakatasmiṃ dantasmiṃ yaṃ yad eva danta-vikatiṃ ākaṅkheyya taṃ tad eva kareyya abhinipphādeyya – seyyathā pi pana mahā-rāja dakkho suvaṇṇa-kāro vā suvaṇṇakārantevāsī vā suparikammakatasmiṃ suvaṇṇasmiṃ yaṃ yad eva suvaṇṇavikatiṃ ākaṅkheyya taṃ tad eva kareyya abhinippādeyya* (D I 78).

6 Jacobsen (2012, 2-3) provides a list of some Sanskrit terms used in India to indicate extraordinary powers. In the *Yogasūtra*, words such as *jñāna*, *aiśvarya*, *siddhi* are used, as well as *vibhūti*; in *haṭhayoga* the word *guṇa* is often used; in some Tantric Śaiva texts appears *guṇāṣṭaka*; in Buddhism, in addition to *ṛddhi*/*iddhi*, we find that *abhijñā* (Pāli: *abhiññā*), *adhiṣṭhāna* (Pāli: *adhiṭṭhāna*), and *vikurvaṇa* (Pāli: *vikubbana*) are frequently used; in Digambara Jainism *ṛddhi* is common; whereas Śvetāmbara Jainism prefers *labdhi*. In this regard, there is a small clarification to be made: Jacobsen wrote in his exposition that "[i]n Mahāyāna Buddhism *iddhi*/*ṛddhi* is often replaced by *adhiṣṭhāna* and *vikurvaṇa*" (2012, 3), however I should specify that the equivalent Pāli terms *adhiṭṭhāna* and *vikubbana* are also commonly used in Pāli texts, at least from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* onwards.

Gotama, during his life as a prince, was endowed with some materialistic *iddhi*s: a beautiful garden with lotus ponds, pleasant garments, different houses for different seasons, and good food (A I 145). *Iddhi* is also the craft of a hunter (M I 151-2) and the ability of the hunted animal to escape (M I 155). The ability of geese to fly is also called *iddhi* (Dhp 175). This term could also mean a sort of richness since its opposite (*aniddhi*) means 'poor', 'poverty' (DOP s.v. "iddhi").[7] It is worth noting that although *iddhi* is a term used to refer to extraordinary capacities, it has an incredibly broad range of applications. So, it is not surprising that there are many kinds of translations, each of which stresses a different aspect of the term. According to the etymology, the root *√ṛdh*, from which the cognate Sanskrit term *ṛddhi* derives, means 'to grow, increase, prosper, succeed'.[8] Therefore, it is common to find *iddhi* translated as 'accomplishment' and 'success' (e.g. Gombrich 1997, 176; Gethin 2011, 221), or it is remarkable the eclectic 'wondrous gifts' by Rhys Davids (1899, 88). These translations could be applied when the term is referring to the extraordinary capacities achieved through meditation and the translator wants to remain close to the etymological root of the term. Other translation attempts try to contextualise the term a little more when it occurs in passages involving extraordinary performances. The result consists of expressions such as 'psychic powers' (PED s.v. "iddhi"), 'supernatural accomplishment' (DOP s.v. "iddhi"), and 'superhuman quality or characteristic' (Fiordalis [2010] 2011, 386, n. 13). So, it seems that there are two different kinds of possible translations: 1) the etymological translation, which tries to convey as many meanings as possible at the same time; and 2) the contextualising translation, which primarily stresses the context in which the term appears. However, there might be a solution to avoid the situation in which the translator has to take an arbitrary decision. This solution is not applicable to all occurrences of the term *iddhi*, but only to the passages in which it introduces the basic formula describing some varieties of extraordinary abilities. A person who develops these abilities is able to multiply his physical form or return to a single unit, can become invisible or visible, can pass through physical obstacles, can dive in the earth and walk on the water, can fly through the air, can touch the moon and sun and, lastly, can exercise bodily power as far as the Brahmā world (e.g. D I 77-8). This basic formula is not introduced by the term *iddhi*, but rather by the compound *iddhividhā̆* (e.g. *so aneka-vihitaṃ iddhi-vidhaṃ paccanubhoti*; D I 78). So, checking all occurrences of the compound *iddhividhā̆* within the *Tipiṭaka*, it is possible to state that in almost 100% of the cases this compound is in connection with the basic formula describing the extraordinary capacities.[9] This might solve in part the ambiguity due

7 Various applications of the term *iddhi* in different contexts are also mentioned by Rhys Davids (1899, 88, n. 4); Fiordalis (2008, 123-4); French (1977, 43-4); Gethin (2011, 221). See also the s.v. "iddhi" in PED; DOP; and CPD.

8 SED s.v. "√ṛdh".

9 *Iddhividh** in the *Tipiṭaka*:

1. *iddhividhaṃ*: D I 78 (D 2; abbreviated in D 3-8, 10-12); D I 212-13; D II 213; D III 112; D III 281; M I 34; M I 69; M I 494; M II 18; M III 11; M III 98; S II 121; S II 126; S II 212; S V 264; S V 267; S V 271; S V 274-5; S V 276; S V 280; S V 282; S V 283-4; S V 286 (*paṭhamānanda*); S V 286 (*dutiyānanda*); S V 287 (*paṭhamabhikkhū*); S V 287 (*dutiyabhikkū*); S V 288; S V 289; S V 303; A I 170-2; A I 255; A I 258; A III 17; A III 28; A III 82; A III 280; A III 425-6; A IV 421; A V 199; Paṭis I 111; Paṭis II 207; Paṭis II 227; Mil 359;
2. *iddhividhañāṇaṃ*: Tikap II 166;

to the action of translating. Therefore, unlike the term *iddhi*, the compound *iddhividhā̆* does not have a wide range of applications because it is used in only one context. This context concerns the extraordinary capacities and so a 'contextualising translation' could be applied to *iddhividhā̆*, which, however, does in this case include all possible meanings and applications of the term (namely only one). Obviously, there is still a certain degree of arbitrariness in translating the compound since it contains the term *iddhi*, but at any rate it has a univocal context. The translation itself is an enterprise that conveys a certain degree of arbitrariness and it often constrains the translator to make a choice within a range of possible translations. One possible option is to translate *iddhividhā̆* as 'a variety (*vidhā̆*) of psychophysical powers (*iddhi*)'. I like this translation because the reference to the psychic component highlights the fact that this is an action made through the mind: "when the mind is concentrated in this way […] he directs and turns the mind to the variety of psychophysical powers" (*so evaṃ samāhite citte* […] *iddhi-vidhāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*; D I 77-8, see also below at § 9.2). I also think that the word 'power' is particularly appropriate, considering it as the ability to do something or to act in a particular way.[10] The psychic component is involved in the *abhiññā*s as well, since they are likewise performed through the mind, whereas the word power is definitely more appropriate for *iddhi*s, since, as it will be shown, for the *abhiññā*s it may seem reasonable to highlight the cognitive characteristic. Therefore, one of the most peculiar characteristics of the *iddhividhā̆* conceived as meditation attainments is that the emphasis is on the physical performance and experiential factors. *Iddhi*s, in this context, are something that one can experience: *paccanubhoti* (D I 78). Another peculiarity concerns the fact that the power which is a product of the mental activity involves a body (*kāya*); this fact might justify the adjective "psychophysical". The word *kāya* occurs in the last phrase of the stock passage, which was handed down in two variants (although the first seems likely to be an editorial misreading by the editor):

1. *yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena va saṃvatteti* "he goes even with the body as far as the Brahmā world";
2. *yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena vasaṃ vatteti* "he exercises bodily power as far as the Brahmā world".

3. *iddhividhañāṇassa*: Dukap 10; Dukap 42; Dukap 43; Dukap 62; Dukap 75; Dukap 76; Dukap 96; Dukap 97; Dukap 112; Dukap 127; Dukap 140; Dukap 159; Dukap 182; Dukap 210; Dukap 226; Dukap 251; Dukap 270; Dukap 296; Dukap 329; Dukap 343; Tikap II 154; Tikap II 156; Tikap II 157; Tikap II 165; Tikap II 166;
4. *iddhividhañāṇāya*: Paṭis I 111;
5. *iddhividhā*: Nett 149;
6. *iddhividhāya*: D I 77-8 (D 2; abbreviated in D 3-8, 10-12);
7. *iddhividhāyo*: alternative reading at D III 112 (note 1) in place of *iddhiyo*;
8. *iddhividhāsu*: D III 112-13;
9. *iddhividhe*: Paṭis I 2; Paṭis I 111; Vibh 334.

10 Fiordalis, for instance, prefers the translation 'superhuman power' since the term *iddhi* is sometimes glossed with *uttarimanussa-dhamma* (2008, 122; [2010] 2011, 386, n. 13), he also wrote his reasons against the translation 'psychic power' (2008, 123), which I have already discussed in De Notariis 2019a, 238. Regarding *uttarimanussa-dhamma*, which, according to Fiordalis, "can be translated more literally as a superhuman quality or characteristic" ([2010] 2011, 386, n. 13), I would suggest that a more literal translation could be 'things/qualities which are beyond [the average reach of] human beings'. In fact, since these acts are performed by human beings, they are not, strictly speaking, out of the reach of all human beings, but just of most of them.

The first variant would seem, at first, to involve the body only with regard to the performance of going up to the Brahmā world. However, the other performances that precede this last one can certainly involve, somehow, the body: a monk can multiply his body or reduce it to a single unit, can become visible or invisible, can overpass physical obstacles, can walk on water or sink into the earth, he can fly, or he can touch the sun and the moon. The second variant seems to summarise the whole stock passage, highlighting that the corporeal power can reach the Brahmā world, implying that the whole stock passage is dealing with a bodily power. It is worth noting that from the stock passage is not clear if the body (*kāya*) is only the physical one or if it might be mental (*manomaya*). As the *Saṃyuttanikāya* would remind us, the Buddha was able to go to the Brahmā world with both the physical body (*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*, lit. the body composed of the four great elements) and the body made of mind (*manomayena kāyena*).[11] The *Vibhaṅga* provides some synonyms for *iddhi* which clearly indicate the connection of *iddhi* with the field of corporeal experience, such as '*phusanā*' and '*sacchikiriyā*'.[12] The word *phusanā* is connected with the verb *phusati* 'to touch' (PED s.v. "phusanā"), and the word *sacchikiriyā* with the verb *sacchikaroti*, which means 'to experience' in the sense of 'to see with one's eyes' (PED s.v. "sacchikaroti"). The record provided by the **Vimuttimagga* corroborates the hypothesis that would see a preeminent corporeal dimension involved in the concept of *iddhi*. In fact, when in the **Vimutimagga* the five *abhiññā*s (*wǔ shéntōng* 五神通) are listed, the *iddhi*s are called *shēntōng* 身通 which can be literally translated as the 'power (通) of the body (身)' or the 'physical (身) power (通)' (T1648.32.0441a27).

In this regard, translations such as 'psycho-kinetic activity' adopted by Jayatilleke (1963, 422), or 'psychokinesis' by Kalupahana (1975, 104), seem to comply, to some extent, with my reading but I think they are a little misleading. The word 'kinetic' indicates a kind of movement (most likely a physical one) which is in agreement with some North Indian Buddhist sources offering some classifications of *iddhi*/*ṛddhi* which stress the act of moving. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* reports that "there are three kinds of spiritual activity (神用): 1) transportation of the body (運身); 2) resolve (勝解); 3) speed of mind (意勢)".[13] Similarly, with its commentary (*bhāṣya*), the *Abhidharmakośa* subdivides (Abhidh-k-bh 424-5) the *ṛddhi*s into two categories one of which concerns the movement (*gamaṇa*) and the other the act of creating (*nirmāṇa*). The first category involves a threefold way of displacement (*gatistridhā*) which consists of the classification of *ṛddhi*s provided by the **Mahāvibhāṣā,* namely: 1) transportation of the body (*śarīravāhinī*); 2) resolve (*ādhimokṣikī*); 3) speed of mind (*manojavā*).[14] These sources testify that the act of moving is quite a widespread action, but is unable to cover the whole range of power that the word *iddhi*/*ṛddhi* encompasses. Even in the story of Cūḷapanthaka we find an example of an *iddhi* power that does not involve, specifically, a

11 *abhijānāti nu kho bhante Bhagavā iddhiyā manomayena kāyena Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā* […] *abhijānāti kho pana bhante Bhagavā iminā cātumahābhūtikena kāyena iddhiyā Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā* (S V 282).

12 The full passage is *iddhī ti: yā tesaṃ dhammānaṃ iddhi samiddhi ijjhanā samijjhanā lābho paṭilābho patti sampatti phusanā sacchikiriyā upasampadā* (Vibh 217).

13 復有三種神用: 一運身, 二勝解, 三意勢。(T1545.27.0725b23-24).

14 For a discussion on these sources, see Fiordalis 2008, 129-32.

movement: "when a clean bit of rag was created through the psychic power (*iddhi*) […]".[15]

Therefore, a translation such as 'psychophysical power' for *iddhi* in the context of the Buddhist path of liberation in which the practitioner attains some meditational powers can be of some convenience. It is descriptive enough of the kinds of performance involved, but at the same time, it somehow remains a generic category. 'Psychophysical' can indicate both the human mind (psycho-) and body (-physical), meaning the individual and microcosmic dimensions of being in the world and, simultaneously, suggests orders of reality. 'Physical' can refer to the body but can also indicate the tangible and material reality. Similarly, we may argue that there is a dimension of being which is purely mental. Correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm have been often highlighted in the field of Buddhist studies,[16] and what is attained at the individual meditative level can have a cosmological rebound. The *manomayakāya* is, indeed, a body created through a mind (*citta*) purified by the meditative practice and also the way of existence of some beings in certain cosmological realms, such as the gods known as the Radiant ones (*ābhassara*) in the cosmological world of form (*rūpadhātu*), which corresponds, on a psychological level, to the four *jhāna*s belonging to the so-called form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*).[17] Therefore the term 'psychophysical' can be understood as referring to the individual mind and body involved in such practices and, simultaneously, the mental and physical dimensions in which such performances can occur.

Hence, having shed some light on the meaning and translation of *iddhi*/*iddhividhă* in the context of this study, we will explore how the use of the Vedic texts will help us to gain some valuable insight into a scholarly issue.

7.3 The Vedic Background with Particular Reference to the Upaniṣadic Context

The *iddhi*s[18] are marvellous performances made through the power of a mind trained in meditation.[19] Since in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* the performance of *iddhi*s is preceded by the creation of the body made of mind (*manomayakāya*), some scholars argue that the performance of extraordinary capacities is realised through this mental body.[20] However, the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* does not explicitly state it, and this assumption seems to be based on the fact that the body made of mind is created before attainment of the ability to

15 *iddhiyā abhisaṅkhataṃ parisuddhaṃ pilotikakhaṇḍaṃ* (Paṭis-a II 658).

16 In this regard, see the often-quoted work of Gethin (1997).

17 See De Notariis 2019b, 66-70. We can also consider a passage in the *Majjhimanikāya* (already quoted at § 6.3.1.3), which clearly states that "gods which have a form are mind-made" (*devā rūpino manomayā*; M I 410) and its commentary which specifies that "mind-made means made through the mind in meditative absorption" (*manomayā ti jhānacittamayā*; Ps III 122).

18 This paragraph is mainly based on part of my previous article, see De Notariis 2019a, 240-5.

19 This will be more thoroughly discussed later in § 9.2.

20 This opinion is supported by Swearer (1973, 449); Harvey (1993, 36); Hamilton (1996, 162-3); Radich (2007, 257); Clough ([2010] 2011, 417); Lee (2014, 67); Buswell, Lopez (2014, 528) Anālayo (2016, 16).

perform *iddhi*s.[21] This argument, however, could be subject to the logical fallacy named *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, namely the assumption that what happens before is the cause of what follows after. As a matter of fact, the temporal connection does not necessarily imply a causal one. However, it should be noted that on the one hand, many steps of the path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* seem to be connected with each other, such as the elimination of the five hindrances (*pañca-nīvaraṇa*) which seems to lead to the attainment of the first level of meditative absorption (*paṭhamajjhāna*) (D I 73). Yet, on the other hand, some steps are not directly influenced *prima facie* by each other, such as the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] (*cetopariyañāṇa*) which is not attained thanks to the previous one, the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*).[22] Obviously, the *iddhi*s and the other *abhiññā*s could be considered in a very scholastic and synchronic way as only one step, the *chaḷabhiññā*, but this interpretation would not take into account the fact that this classification might have not yet been developed when this passage was composed, since the word '*abhiññā*' does not even appear within this *sutta* with this kind of meaning.[23] Moreover, there is a paradox, namely that later texts regard the creation of the mind-made body as an *iddhi* (e.g. Paṭis II 205 and Vism 378), and not a requisite to perform *iddhi*s. In conclusion, it is likely that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the extraordinary capacities are performed through the body made of mind since it is not clearly stated what its function is.[24]

21 This is the argumentation, for instance, of Radich (2007, 257) and partly of Anālayo (2016, 16), although the latter presents it as a possibility (as he restated in Anālayo 2021b. Cf. my rejoinder in De Notariis 2021).

22 However, later in Chapter 9, I will highlight a possible connection of the stages from a narrative point of view which involves a crescendo.

23 All these attainments are listed in a section that could be a "coherent and separate work, which occurs in many other sutras both in the Pali and non-Pali traditions" (MacQueen 1988, 179). The term '*abhiññā*' occurs in the phrasing *sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti* (D I 62), but here it is just a short form of the absolutive *abhiññāya* (from the verb *abhijānāti*). Finally, I should specify that I do not rule out the possibility that the stages – or at least some of them – in the path of liberation are connected to each other (see below Chapter 9), but I think that more nuanced interpretations should be considered as well. In fact, even other stages such as the practice of the monk to be mindful and fully aware in all his activities (*sati-sampajañña*; D I 70-1) and the fact that the monk becomes content with his frugal life (*santuṭṭha*; D I 71) are not strongly linked to each other. Another instance is when the monk finds a secluded dwelling (*vivittaṃ senāsanaṃ bhajati*; D I 71), he does this endowed with (*samannāgata*) many factors earlier developed, not just the previous one. These examples highlight that it is too simplistic to assume that a stage is developed only on the basis of the previous one.

24 This is also evident from the way in which scholars have asserted that the *iddhi*s are performed by means of the body made of mind. I will consider by way of example three recent works. Hamilton wrote that: "though it is not explicitly stated in the text, it would appear that it is the mind-made body which is subsequently directed by the mind to perform the *iddhis*, use its divine hearing and seeing, have insight into the minds of others, and recall former existences, and ultimately eradicate the *āsavas*" (1996, 162-3). The fact that this statement is not certain is due to the modal verb 'would', which implies that Hamilton considered it a possibility and not a certainty. Radich wrote that "[n]ow, I suggest that, though the text never explicitly says so, there is a clear implication here that the sequence we have just rehearsed is a sequence of *necessary prerequisites* for the elaboration of each successive step on the path […] it is only on the basis of this thorough and clear-sighted disillusionment with the fleshly body that it is possible to elaborate the *manomayakāya*; it is only on the basis of the elaboration of the *manomayakāya* that it is possible to attain the superpowers" (2007, 257). As previously stated, this argument could be affected by the logical fallacy named *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Lee wrote, concerning the body made of mind, that "[t]his special body has the ability to perform many supranormal activities" (2014, 67), without providing any reference or justification for this statement. In brief, it seems that there was a deficiency in past academic research on this topic.

A solution to this problem may require further attention and consideration of the Vedic texts, whose descriptions of extraordinary capacities are likely earlier than Buddhist ones. A very interesting example is found in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* in a passage that deals with a self (*ātman*) which is "the person made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*) among the breaths, the brightness inside the heart" (*vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdy antarjyotiḥ puruṣaḥ*; BU 4.3.7). This self is able to move in the intermediate world, which is an oneiric state that connects this world with the other world:

> He, being common to both worlds, moves across them, just so he contemplates them, just so he oscillates [among] them. Thus, having fallen asleep, he goes beyond this world, these forms of death.[25]

The oneiric state is the intermediate state between this world and the other:

> For this or that person there are indeed two states: this [world] and the state of the other world. The state of dream is the third and it is the junction point. Staying in this rendezvous point, he looks at both states: this [world] and the state of the other world.[26]

In this dreamlike state, this person made of consciousness displays the creative power of the mind[27] and so is able to manipulate matter to create objects and parts of the landscape:

> When he falls asleep, having taken away the matter of this entire world, having taken apart from his own, having created by his own, he dreams with his own splendour, with his own light. Then this person becomes his own light. In that place there are no chariots, there are not what is yoked to chariots (i.e. horses), there are no roads. Then he emits chariots, what is yoked to chariots, and roads. In that place there is no happiness, delight, gladness. Then he emits happiness, delight, gladness. In that place there are no ponds, tanks, and rivers. Then he emits ponds, tanks, and rivers. Hence, he is the creator.[28]

This passage is also quoted by Sue Hamilton, who seems to suggest that, all in all, *vijñānamaya* and *manomaya* could be synonyms to indicate the subtle body (*liṅgaśarīra*) in the early Upaniṣads.[29] However, it seems that she has

25 *sa samānaḥ sann ubhau lokāv anusaṃcarati dhyāyatīva lelāyatīva | sa hi svapno bhūtvemaṃ lokam atikrāmati mṛtyo rūpāṇi* (BU 4.3.7).

26 *tasya vā etasya puruṣasya dve eva sthāne bhavata idaṃ ca paralokasthānaṃ ca | sandhyaṃ ṭṛtīyaṃ svapnasthānam | tasmin sandhye sthāne tiṣṭhann ete ubhe sthāne paśyatīdaṃ ca paralokasthānaṃ ca* (BU 4.3.9).

27 As it was pointed out by Hamilton (1996, 147).

28 *sa yatra prasvapity asya lokasya sarvāvato mātrām apādāya svayaṃ vihatya svayaṃ nirmāya svena bhāsā svena jyotiṣā prasvapiti | atrāyaṃ puruṣaḥ svayaṃjyotir bhavati || na tatra rathā na rathayogā na panthāno bhavanti | atha rathān rathayogān pathaḥ sṛjate | na tatrānandā mudaḥ pramudo bhavanti | athānandān mudaḥ pramudaḥ sṛjate | na tatra veśāntāḥ puṣkariṇyaḥ sravantyo bhavanti | atha veśāntān puṣkariṇīḥ sravantīḥ sṛjate | sa hi kartā* (BU 4.3.9-10).

29 After arguing that in the Upaniṣads there is a subdivision of reality according to three modes of existences (quoting CU 6.5.1-4, see Hamilton 1996, 146), she writes, with reference to the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*'s passage: "[i]n this context, the term *manomaya* is not used to describe the intermediate level of sleep/dream, but three levels are nevertheless indicated. […]

underestimated the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*'s account in which the *vijñānamaya* self is a level more rarefied than the *manomaya* self. In fact, in this text it appears in a list which develops from the grossest element to the most rarefied (e.g. TU 3.10.4-5). The list exhibits five kinds of self and each of them is made (*-maya*) of a different substance: food (*anna*), breath (*prāṇa*), mind (*manas*), consciousness (*vijñāna*), and bliss (*ānanda*). Hamilton (1996: 146) proposes the existence of a theory in the Upaniṣads according to which reality and human existence is divided into three modes of existence; she relies upon the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* only to reinforce her argument, since the central part of the list of the five kinds of self (*prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijñānamaya*) resembles a list found in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.4.5 (*vijñānamaya*, *manomaya*, *prāṇamaya*).

Moreover, it may seem that in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*'s passage – in which the person made of consciousness is able to move in an intermediate oneiric world between this world and the other – *vijñānamaya* has a very peculiar application. What I am arguing here is that in this passage the word *vijñāna* was not used to indicate the mind by chance. In this regard, within another *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* passage concerning a dialogue between Ajātaśatru and Gārgya, the one who is able to move in the oneiric state is, indeed, a person (*puruṣa*) made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*):

> Ajātaśatru told him: "When he has fallen asleep, this person made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*), having taken consciousness by means of consciousness of these vital functions (*prāṇa*), settles down in the empty space inside the heart. When he takes these [functions], then this person is called 'sleeping'. The vital breath is seized, seized is the speech, seized is the sight, seized is the hearing, seized is the mind (*manas*). Wherever he roams into the dream, these worlds become his own, he becomes also a great king or a great brāhmaṇa, he settles in high and low [worlds]. Just as a great king, having seized the population (*jānapada*), would roam wherever he wants in his own country (*janapada*), exactly in the same way he, having seized the vital functions (*prāṇa*), roams by himself wherever he wants in his own body".[30]

Once again, in this latter passage, which concerns the oneiric world, a person made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*) is involved. One might be tempted to speculate about an equivalence between the terms used to indicate the 'mind': *citta*, *manas*, and *vijñāna*. Buddhist texts, indeed, often lack a clear distinction between these terms. In the *Saṃyuttanikāya* there is even a passage which states directly the equivalence of these terms: *cittaṃ iti pi mano iti pi viññānaṃ iti pi* (S II 94; quoted also in C.A.F. Rhys Davids 1914, 17). Moreover, Buddhaghosa also accords in a specific context the same meaning to these expressions used to designate the mind: *viññāṇaṃ, cittaṃ, mano*

In the early *Upaniṣads*, it is the terms *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya* (and possibly dreams) which suggest the subtle self" (Hamilton 1996, 147).

30 *sa hovācājātaśatruḥ | yatraiṣa etat supto 'bhūd ya eṣa vijñānamayaḥ puruṣas tad eṣāṃ prāṇānāṃ vijñānena vijñānam ādāya ya eṣo 'ntar hṛdaya ākāśas tasmiñ chete | tāni yadā gṛhṇāty atha haitat puruṣaḥ svapiti nāma | tad gṛhīta eva prāṇo bhavati | gṛhītā vāk | gṛhītaṃ cakṣuḥ | gṛhītaṃ śrotram | gṛhītaṃ manaḥ || sa yatraitat svapnyayā carati te hāsya lokāḥ | tad uteva mahārājo bhavaty uteva mahābrāhmaṇaḥ | utevoccāvacaṃ nigacchati | sa yathā mahārājo jānapadān gṛhītvā sve janapade yathākāmaṃ parivartetaivam evaiṣa etat prāṇān gṛhītvā sve śarīre yathākāmaṃ parivartate* (BU 2.1.17-18).

ti atthato ekaṃ (Vism 452). However, although these terms are sometimes synonyms, it seems that in Buddhist texts they frequently also have specific applications. In the partial investigation made by Johansson[31] it is shown how *citta*, *manas*, and *viññāṇa* have some attributes in common, but also differ in some aspects (Johansson 1965, 209).[32] For instance, in the Pāli canon the term *manas* is only used to indicate that a body (*kāya*) is made of mind: *manomaya*. Alternative options such as **citta/ceto-maya* and **viññāṇamaya* are not attested within neither the canon nor its commentaries.[33] This could also be the case in the examined Upaniṣadic passages, wherein the mention of a person made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*) might reveal a specific way to indicate the personification or embodiment which acts in the oneiric state. It is worth noting that this person seizes the vital functions and among them there is also the **mind (*manas*)**: *tad gṛhīta eva prāṇo bhavati* | *gṛhītā vāk* | *gṛhītaṃ cakṣuḥ* | *gṛhītaṃ śrotram* | ***gṛhītaṃ manaḥ*** (BU 2.1.17). Therefore, *vijñāna* and *manas* should not be regarded as synonyms in this context since they carry out different functions.

So, if *vijñānamaya* and *manomaya* are not perfect synonyms it would seem that to demonstrate that the extraordinary performances were really made through the body made of mind, we should find a direct reference to it. In this regard, it might be useful to quote a passage from the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, a text probably older than the Upaniṣads. The text states:

> He should meditate on the *ātman* which is made of mind (*manomaya*), whose body is vital breath, with a luminous appearance (*bhārūpa*), with an ethereal essence, which has the form it desires, which is swift as thought, which has the desire of the truth, which supports the truth, which consists of all odours, which consists of all tastes, which extends and pervades throughout the whole regions, which is speechless, which is disinterested.[34]

This self made of mind exhibits mastery of physical matter, since it 'has the form it desires' (*kāmarūpin*), it is endowed with a super-velocity since it 'is swift as thought' (*manojavas*), and also 'extends and pervades throughout the whole region' (*sarvā anu diśaḥ prabhūtaṃ sarvam idam abhyāptam*);

31 I wrote 'partial' since Johansson stated that: "[a]s this is not a statistical investigation, no completeness was aimed at, but an attempt was made to include as many different contexts as possible: I aimed at semantic completeness" (1965, 166).

32 It seems that although these terms correspond to different mental functions, they are also strongly connected to each other. Therefore, Swearer writes: "in the Pāli suttas the terms *citta*, *mano*, and *viññāṇa* were used either synonymously or as essentially related aspects of the same empirical consciousness" (1972, 258). Years later, a similar statement was written by Somaratne: "[i]n sum, *citta*, *manas* and *viññāṇa*, though notionally, can separately be identified on the basis of their specific mental functions, though the three are aspects of the same mind" (2005, 201). On this argument, also see Skorupski 2014, 54-5.

33 It is remarkable that the term *viññāṇamaya* is found in late sub-commentarial literature, such as in the *purāṇaṭīkā* of the *Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*, in which, however, it appears in a passage which is an Upaniṣadic quotation: *annamayo pāṇamayo manomaya ānandamayo viññāṇamayo ti pañcadhā attānaṃ vedavādino vadanti* (Sv-pṭ I 202). The sub-commentary refers here to the doctrine of the five kinds of *ātman* presented in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, oddly inverting *ānandamaya* and *viññāṇamaya*.

34 *sa ātmānam upāsīta manomayaṃ prāṇaśarīraṃ bhārūpam ākāśātmānaṃ kāmarūpiṇaṃ manojavasaṃ satyasaṃkalpaṃ satyadhṛtiṃ sarvagandhaṃ sarvarasaṃ sarvā anu diśaḥ prabhūtaṃ sarvam idam abhyāptam avākkam anādaraṃ* (ŚB 10.6.3.2).

basically, it is free to move wherever it wants, such as the monk who performs *iddhi*s "goes beyond walls, ramparts, mountains unattached by them just as he was in the ether" (*tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati*; D I 78).

This *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*'s passage shows an *ātman* made of mind (*manomaya*) which is endowed with extraordinary capacities, just like the person made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*) in the oneiric state within the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*'s passage. So, it would seem that *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya* could actually represent similar functions, although the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*'s account and the peculiar presence of the person made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*) in the accounts concerning the oneiric state do not allow them to be regarded as perfect synonyms. It could be stated that at least part of the Vedic tradition would justify a connection between an *ātman* made of mind and the acquisition of capacities that are extraordinary. Therefore, the linguistic similarity of the term *manomaya* among distinct traditions reveals some shared features, though the contexts in which it occurs should always be carefully analysed in order to avoid a levelling of its function and use within different Indian traditions and different contexts within the same tradition. Now, shall we continue our analysis with the exegetical accounts on the *iddhividhǎ*.

7.4 From the Canon to the Commentaries

> Immediately after the consciousness of resolution,
> he becomes [in a certain way]
> according to the resolution
>
> *saha adhiṭṭhānā yathādhiṭṭhitaṃ eva hoti*;
> (Vism 390)
>
> This becomes just what one desires
>
> *yaṃ yaṃ icchati, taṃ tad eva hoti*;
> (Vism 394)

In order to better analyse the development of the *iddhividhǎ*, it may be useful to treat each element in the list of these various psychophysical powers separately. But, how many powers are listed? Unfortunately, it is not so easy to find an answer since the *iddhi*s are not explicitly divided within the root text. Therefore, it is possible to find different opinions among scholarly treatments of this topic. For instance, Fiordalis (2008, 124) divides the *iddhi*s involved into a list of eight items, the *Pali-English Dictionary* counts up to ten *iddhi*s (PED s.v. "iddhi"), Gethin (2001, 82, n. 6) suggests that the list within the Nikāyas implies only seven *iddhi*s, whereas the *Visuddhimagga* takes *āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ* as involving a distinct *iddhi*. I divide the list into eight elements as follows:

> (1) *eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti,* (2) *āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ* (3) *tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi ākāse,* (4) *paṭhaviyā pi ummujja-nimmujjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake,* (5) *udake pi abhijjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi paṭhaviyaṃ,* (6) *ākāse pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā pi pakkhī sakuṇo,* (7) *ime pi candima-suriye evaṃ mahiddhike evaṃ mahānubhāve pāṇinā parimasati parimajjati,* (8) *yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena va saṃvatteti/vasaṃ vatteti*.

7.4.1 Some Preliminary Remarks Concerning the Exegeses

The exegeses of the *iddhividhă* occur in Paṭis I 111; Paṭis II 207-10; **Vimuttimagga* (T1648.32.0442a23-c05); Vism 373-406; Sv I 222-3 (translated in Appendix 2); Paṭis-a I 343-51; Paṭis-a II 656-63 (translated in Appendix 5). The exegeses are chronologically (and often logically) connected to each other in the following way:

1. Paṭis I 111 → **Vimuttimagga* → Paṭis-a I 343-51

2. Paṭis II 207-10 → **Vimuttimagga* → Vism 373-406 → Sv I 222-3 → Paṭis-a II 656-63

The second sequence of exegeses is the most interesting since it involves the long explanation reported in the *Visuddhimagga*. But how do we know that these exegeses are linked to each other? We know this because the *Visuddhimagga*'s starting point is, indeed, the list of ten *iddhi*s present in Paṭis II 207-10, Sv I 222-3 refers directly to the *Visuddhimagga* and Paṭis-a II 656-63 is the comment upon Paṭis II 207-10. Although the second sequence of exegeses is the one mainly treated in the present work, the first sequence is also worthy of consideration, especially the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s account.

7.4.2 Paṭis I 111 on the *Iddhividhă*

The account in Paṭis I 111 seems to have influenced the **Vimuttimagga* explanation. A particular emphasis on the development of the 'bases of psychic powers' (*iddhipāda*) occurs in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s account, which does not occur in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, but is quite common in the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*.[35] The text begins with a question to which an answer will follow.

> How is it that understanding (*paññā*) by way of approaching both perceptions of pleasure and lightness by determining (*adhiṭṭhāna*) body and mind to be one is knowledge of the *iddhividhă*?[36]

A connection between the *iddhipāda* and the *iddhividhă* is highlighted: "He develops the bases of psychic powers [...] He, with the mind developed in this way, purified, cleaned, directs and turns the mind to the variety of *iddhi*s".[37] The text basically borrows the treatment of the *iddhividhă* from the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, then, presents a similar kind of exegesis for the *abhiññā*s,[38] which will be essential for the treatment of the *abhiññā*s in the present work, considering that there is no other exposition of the *abhiññā*s in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. However,

35 *evaṃ bhāvitesu kho bhikkhu catusu iddhipādesu evaṃ bahulīkatesu anekavihitam iddhividham paccanubhoti* (S V 264).

36 *kathaṃ kāyaṃ pi cittaṃ pi ekavavatthānatā sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca adhiṭṭhānavasena ijjhanaṭṭhe paññā iddhividhe ñāṇaṃ?* (Paṭis I 111).

37 *iddhipāda bhaveti* [...] *so tathā bhāvitena cittena parisuddhena pariyodātena iddhividhañāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* (Paṭis I 111).

38 See below Chapter 8.

concerning the *iddhividhā*, the sequence of exegeses which includes Paṭis II 207-10 has been preferred, given that it consists of a quite long and detailed exposition.

7.4.3 Paṭis II 207-10 and the *Visuddhimagga*: An Overview

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (at Paṭis II 207-10) behaves like a real commentary. Therefore, after having quoted the canonical text, it comments upon each single phrase. The comment follows more or less the same structure in commenting on each *iddhi* except for the last one, which receives a longer explanation. The basic structure is as follows:

1. The text provides a method to perform the *iddhi* under analysis. This explanation is sometimes preceded by an explanation of the terms involved, or the explanation of the method to perform the *iddhi* contains itself an enrichment of the terminology involved.

2. The text often mentions a simile or a story to better explain the power.

The same commentarial method of exegesis seems to have also been adopted by the *Visuddhimagga*, which, however, splits the first item of the above list into two discrete phases:

1. A brief explanation of the phrasings which compose the *iddhividhā* basic formula and/or analysis of the terms one by one.

2. Explanation of the method used to perform the *iddhi* power.

3. Narration of stories (often even canonical) in which the *iddhi* power would be involved (even if it is not explicitly mentioned). If a story is not reported, supplementary material to better understand the *iddhi* at stake is anyway present.

Table 7.1 Exegetical explanation of the *iddhividhā* in the *Visuddhimagga*

Visuddhimagga* explanation of the *iddhividhā			
	Brief explanation of the passage and/or analysis of the terms	**Explanation of the method used to perform the *iddhi* power**	**Narration of stories (often even canonical) in which the *iddhi* power would be involved (even if it is not explicitly mentioned), or supplementary material to better understand the *iddhi* at stake**
(1) *eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti*	Vism 384	Vism 384-7, in particular at 386-7 and 389-90	Cūḷapanthaka's story in Vism 387-9
(2) *āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ*	Vism 390	*āvibhāva*: Vism 390; *tiro-bhāva*: Vism 392-3	*āvibhāva*: story of the Blessed one who performs the miracle in Vism 390-2 + Sri Lankan story in Vism 392; *tiro-bhāva*: in Vism 393-4, the main stories are the one concerning the Blessed one, and the one of the Elder Mahinda; there are many references to the canon and other commentaries
(3) *tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi ākāse*	Vism 394	Vism 394	Report of a wrong view of the monk Tipiṭaka-Cūḷābhaya in Vism 394-5
(4) *paṭhaviyā pi ummujja-nimmujjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake*	Vism 395	Vism 395, mainly quoting Paṭis II 208	Report of some variations of the transformation of the earth into water in Vism 395-6
(5) *udake pi abhijjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi paṭhaviyaṃ*	Vism 396	Vism 396	Report of some variations of the transformation of the earth into water in Vism 396
(6) *ākāse pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā pi pakkhī sakuṇo*	Vism 396	Vism 396-7	It is stated that a monk who wants to travel in the space should attain the divine eye; there is a report of a different opinion stated by another Elder (maybe the monk Tipiṭaka-Cūḷābhaya) in Vism 397
(7) *ime pi candima-suriye evaṃ mahiddhike evaṃ mahānubhāve pāṇinā parimasati parimajjati*	Vism 397-8	Vism 398 is mainly the explanation given in Paṭis II 208-9	Report of a different opinion stated by the Elder Tipiṭaka-Cūḷābhaya. In order to understand better this opinion, it is narrated the story in which Mahā-Moggallāna defeats the snakes' king Nandopananda in Vism 398-401, plus the variation of this power and the example of several hundred thousand monks that see the moon into different vessels in Vism 401
(8) *yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena va saṃvatteti/vasaṃ vatteti*	Vism 401	The method is provided by commenting on Paṭis II 209-10: *dūre pi santike adhiṭṭhāti* […] at Vism 402 and in other passages after some stories at Vism 404-5. There occurs also a question asked by a monk concerning the way to go with an invisible body which is followed by an answer (it is clearly involved the doctrine of *cittavīthi*)	There are many stories starting from the one concerning the Blessed one in Vism 402-4

It seems that the kernel of what would be the commentarial structure of the *Visuddhimagga* was already present within the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. Bearing in mind these preliminary remarks on the exegetical macrostructure, we shall start with the analysis of the *iddhividhā* one by one.

7.4.4 (1) *eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti*; Detailed Analysis on the Multiplication of the Body

The exposition of this power within the canonical literature is expressed by a very brief statement: *eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti* (e.g. D I 78). This statement is taken on by the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and expanded:

> **Having been one, he becomes many**. Naturally one, he adverts to multiplicity, he adverts to a hundred, or a thousand, or a hundred thousand. Having adverted, he resolves with the knowledge "Let me be many", and he becomes many. Just as Cūḷapanthaka having been one becomes many, so in the same way the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, having been one becomes many.
>
> **Having been many, he becomes one**. Naturally many, he adverts to the unity. Having adverted, he resolves with the knowledge "Let me be one", and he becomes one. Just as Cūḷapanthaka having been many becomes one, so in the same way the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, having been many becomes many.[39]

As previously noted, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* basically expands the phrasing, providing some details concerning the method to perform the power, and mentions a narrative which is supposed to include the *iddhi* at stake. The method to perform the power is a very basic one, it consists of only two steps. At first, the performer should turn (the mind) towards the expected result, and then secondly expresses a formal resolution which will turn to be true:

(1)	he adverts to multiplicity	+	(2)	he resolves with the knowledge "Let me be many"	=	he becomes many
	bahulaṃ āvajjati			*ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti bahulo homī ti*		*bahulo hoti*

In this regard, the *Visuddhimagga* introduces, at first, a method which is almost the same, just slightly expanding the wording:

> *tattha pakatiyā eko* (1) *bahukaṃ āvajjati, sataṃ vā sahassaṃ vā satasahassaṃ vā āvajjitvā* (2) *ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti bahuko homī ti.* (Vism 378)
>
> In this context, naturally one (1) he adverts to the multiplicity, having adverted to hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands (2) he resolves with the knowledge "Let me be many".

39 ***eko pi hutvā bahudhā hotī*** *ti. pakatiyā eko bahulaṃ āvajjati, sataṃ vā sahassaṃ vā satasahassaṃ vā āvajjati; āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti bahulo homī ti, bahulo hoti. yathāyasmā Cūḷapanthako eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, evamevaṃ so iddhimā cetovasippatto eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti.* ***bahudhā pi hutvā eko hotī*** *ti. pakatiyā bahulo ekaṃ āvajjati; āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti eko homī ti, eko hoti. yathāyasmā Cūḷapanthako bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti, evamevaṃ so iddhimā cetovasippatto bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti* (Paṭis II 207).

The *Visuddhimagga*, however, also provides a slightly different basic method as an answer to the question: "how does he do it [i.e. the *iddhi* of the multiplication of the body]" (*kathaṃ panāyam evaṃ hoti?*; Vism 384):[40]

> (1) ***Iddhiyā catasso bhūmiyo, cattāro pādā, aṭṭha padāni, soḷasa ca mūlāni*** (Paṭis II 205) *sampādetvā* + (2) *ñāṇena adhiṭṭhahanto.* (Vism 384)

The second stage here is identical to the second stage in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, with just slightly different wording, whereas the first stage, however, seems quite dissimilar. The first stage is prescribing to first accomplish (*sampādetvā*) the four grounds (*catasso bhūmiyo*), four bases (*cattāro pādā*), eight steps (*aṭṭha padāni*) and sixteen roots (*soḷasa ca mūlāni*) of the power.[41] These groups of things that should be accomplished are listed at the beginning of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s *Iddhikathā* and are said to lead to the attainment of the *iddhi*s (Paṭis II 205-6). Therefore, the *Visuddhimagga* compares the initial part of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s *Iddhikathā* with the initial part of the basic canonical formula. As a result, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, the canonical statement "when the mind is concentrated in this way" (*evaṃ samāhite citte*; D I 78) is the equivalent of the accomplishment (*sampādetvā*) of the four grounds, the four bases, the eight steps, and sixteen roots, reported within the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*:

> And, according to preference, this meaning is already established by the phrasing '**when the mind is concentrated in this way**' (D I 78), but, for what begins with the first *jhāna* etc., it is stated again in order to indicate the condition of grounds, bases, steps, and roots of the psychic power. And the first [method] is the one given in the *sutta*s, this one [is given] in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. Then, the meaning of both is stated again for the sake of clarity.[42]

It seems that there is an attempt to reconcile the canonical explanation with the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s one. This might mean that Buddhaghosa recognises a difference between the *sutta*s and *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. In fact, the *Visuddhimagga*'s exposition of the method of performing the power is not only quite different and longer than the one expounded in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, but is also a little odd as it is expounded more than once with different formulations. The basic *Paṭisambhidāmagga* process composed of *āvajjati* + *adhiṭṭhāti* was subjected to a more detailed exegesis. The process in the *Visuddhimagga* is expounded as follows in what we can call Method 1:

> **Resolving with the knowledge**. He – having accomplished these factors consisting of grounds, bases, steps, and roots of his own psychic power – having attained the *jhāna* that is the foundation of the higher

40 I followed the reading of Be and Vism Ae, whereas Ee reads *kathaṃ panā 'yam etaṃ hoti?*

41 The four grounds are the four *jhāna*s (Vism 384), the four bases are the four *iddhipāda*s (Vism 385), the eight steps are the four *iddhipāda*s each one considered as two steps (Vism 385-6), the sixteen roots are the state of imperturbability of the mind through sixteen modes (Vism 386).

42 *kāmañ c' esa attho* ***evaṃ samāhite citte*** *ti* (D I 78) *ādinā pi siddho yeva, paṭhamajjhānādīnaṃ pana iddhiyā bhūmipāda-pada-mūlabhāvadassanatthaṃ puna vutto. purimo ca suttesu āgatanayo; ayaṃ Paṭisambhidāyaṃ. iti ubhayattha asammohatthaṃ pi puna vutto* (Vism 386).

> knowledges (*abhiññā*), after having emerged [from it], if he desires [to be] a hundred: "Let me be a hundred, let me be a hundred!", having done the preparatory work (*parikamma*), having attained again the *jhāna* that is the foundation of the higher knowledges, after having emerged [from it], he resolves (*adhiṭṭhāti*). He verily becomes a hundred immediately after the *adhiṭṭhānacitta* (resolution-consciousness).[43]

In addition, there would be another exposition which we will call Method 2:

> Then, in this context as well '***āvajjati***' is said precisely on account of the preparatory work (*parikamma*).[44] '***āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti***' is said on account of the knowledge of the higher knowledges, that is why he adverts to multiplicity. Then, he also attains [the *jhāna*] at the end of these consciousnesses of the preparatory work (*parikammacitta*). Having emerged from the attainment (*samāpatti*), having adverted again to "Let me be many", after this, he resolves with only one knowledge belonging to the higher knowledges (*abhiññāñāṇa*), which comes to be called '*adhiṭṭhāna*', on account of the fact that it brings [the process] to completion (*sanniṭṭhāpanavasena*), which arises between the three or four preceding consciousnesses (*pubbabhāgacitta*) that occurred. Here, the meaning should be understood in this way.[45]

These two methods can be compared with the short method set out in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and schematised in Table 7.2.

Here, some details are worthy of consideration. The words '*āvajjati*' and '*parikamma*' seem interchangeable or equivalent,[46] although *āvajjati* is used on one occasion after the *parikamma*: *parikammacittānaṃ avasāne samāpajjati. samāpattito vuṭṭhahitvā puna bahuko homī ti āvajjitvā* (Vism 387). This latter passage is quite odd for another reason, namely that it relates the phrase '*bahuko homi*' to '*āvajjati*', whereas in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is related to '*adhiṭṭhāti*': *ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti bahulo homī ti* (Paṭis II 207). Another controversial point is, in my opinion, the presence of the word '*puna*' that should indicate either that the process of entering in and going out from the *jhāna* occurs twice or that the text is providing another similar explanation for the same phenomenon.[47] In this regard, it would seem that the commentary on

43 ***ñāṇena adhiṭṭhahanto*** *ti svayam ete iddhiyā bhūmipāda-padamūlabhūte dhamme sampādetvā abhiññāpādakaṃ jhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya, sace sataṃ icchati, sataṃ homi sataṃ homī ti parikammaṃ katvā puna abhiññāpādakaṃ jhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya adhiṭṭhāti adhiṭṭhānacittena sah' eva sataṃ hoti* (Vism 386-7).

44 Cf. *yadi evaṃ āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhātī ti paṭisambhidāvacanaṃ kathan ti āha yampī ti ādi.* ***tatrā pī*** *ti paṭisambhidāyam pi.* ***āvajjatī*** *ti bahukaṃ āvajjatī ti idaṃ pāṭhapadaṃ* ***parikammavasen' eva vuttaṃ****, na āvajjanavasena* (Vism-mhṭ II 21).

45 *tatrā pi* ***āvajjatī*** *ti parikammavasen' eva vuttaṃ.* ***āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhātī*** *ti abhiññāñāṇavasena vuttaṃ, tasmā bahukaṃ āvajjati. tato tesam pi parikammacittānaṃ avasāne samāpajjati. samāpattito vuṭṭhahitvā puna bahuko homī ti āvajjitvā tato paraṃ pavattānaṃ tiṇṇaṃ catunnam vā pubbabhāgacittānaṃ anantarā uppannena sanniṭṭhāpanavasena adhiṭṭhānan ti laddhanāmena eken' eva abhiññāñāṇena adhiṭṭhātī ti evam ettha attho daṭṭhabbo* (Vism 387).

46 *tatrā pi* ***āvajjatī*** *ti parikammavasen' eva vuttaṃ* (Vism 387); ***āvajjatī*** *ti bahukaṃ āvajjatī ti idaṃ pāṭhapadaṃ* ***parikammavasen' eva vuttaṃ****, na āvajjanavasena* (Vism-mhṭ II 21); ***āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhātī ti*** *evaṃ parikammaṃ katvā abhiññāñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti* (Paṭis-a II 657).

47 "*tu, kiṃ tu, paraṃ tu, punar,* and the like share the meaning 'but' and often introduce a slightly different idea or (more strongly) a modification or correction of what has been said before" (Tubb, Boose 2007, 257).

Table 7.2 Comparison among the various methods to perform the multiplication of the body

Comparison among the various methods to perform the multiplication of the body										
Paṭisambhidāmagga										
bhūmipāda-padamūlabhūte	*āvajjati*									*adhiṭṭhāti*
Visuddhimagga Method 1										
bhūmipāda-padamūlabhūte dhamme sampādetvā	*abhiññāpādakaṃ jhānaṃ samāpajjitvā*	*sataṃ homi sataṃ homī ti*	*parikammaṃ katvā*	*abhiññāpādakaṃ jhānaṃ samāpajjitvā*						*adhiṭṭhāti*
Visuddhimagga Method 2										
			parikammacittānaṃ avasāne	*[jhāna] samāpajjati*	*bahuko homī ti āvajjitvā*	*pubbabhāga-citta*	*pubbabhāga-citta*	*pubbabhāga-citta*	*pubbabhāga-citta*	*adhiṭṭhāti*

the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* understands the process assuming two attainments of the *jhāna*: "here, having done the preparatory work, the attainment of the *jhāna* which serves as foundation is not stated again. Whatever is not stated [here], then [it is stated] in the commentary (*aṭṭhakathā*)".[48] Finally, it is worth noting that in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s account the access to the *jhāna* does not occur,[49] whereas in the *Visuddhimagga* it seems to be a central stage. In order to fully understand the presence of the *jhāna* stage within the method to perform the power, it is useful to consider another text, namely the **Vimuttimagga*. So, the method to perform the power is reported in the **Vimuttimagga* in the following way:

> Through the *iddhi* (變)[50] [he becomes] either a hundred or a thousand or a hundred thousand (lit. a myriad, viz. 10.000, 萬), etc. He enters the fourth *jhāna* and serenely emerges from it, immediately after he resolves (受持 = *adhiṭṭhāti*) with the knowledge "Let me be many" and becomes many, just as Arahant Cūḷapanthaka [did].[51]

This text clearly highlights the necessity to attain the *jhāna* and to emerge from it, a fact that does not occur in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, but is well attested in the *Visuddhimagga*. As will be highlighted later (in Chapter 9), the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* already explains how the *iddhi*s are achieved on the basis of the mind trained in the fourth *jhana*. However, the early canonical account does not establish a necessary sequence through a clear statement which declares that the power is performed immediately after the emergence from the *jhāna*. Furthermore, the **Vimuttimagga* identifies the *iddhipāda*s ([四]如意足) as a prerequisite to perform these marvellous abilities:

> How *iddhi* (變) is developed? Here a monk cultivates the *iddhipāda* (如意足) which is endowed with forces of endeavour and with concentration due to the desire to act (欲 = *chanda*), concentration due to the effort (精進 = *viriya*), concentration due to the mind (心 = *citta*), concentration due to the investigation (慧 = *vīmaṃsā*).[52]

48 *ettha parikammaṃ katvā puna pādakajjhānasamāpajjanaṃ na vuttaṃ. kiñcā-pi na vuttaṃ, atha kho Aṭṭhakathāya* (Paṭis-a II 657). Here, the quotation from the '*aṭṭhakathā*' is actually a quotation from the *Visuddhimagga* (387).

49 The *jhāna*s are mentioned in the *catasso bhūmiyo* (Paṭis II 205), albeit they seem, here, prerequisites and not stages.

50 This term is quite difficult to translate because, on the one hand, the **Vimuttimagga* states that it is a synonym of the term that actually could be the translation of *iddhi*, namely 身通: "the term 身通 means 變" (身通者變義; T1648.32.0441a28). On the other hand, in the **Vimuttimagga* there are ten 變, a fact that would resemble the ten *iddhi*s of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and *Visuddhimagga*. Radich (2007, 273) also found the term hard to translate. In my interpretation, we should understand 身通 as *iddhi* in contexts in which the term is opposed to *abhiññā* (= 神通), whereas 變 is the rendition of *iddhi* when more specific kinds of *iddhi* are involved, such as the *adhiṭṭhāna iddhi* (受持變). In effect, we cannot ignore the fact that the **Vimuttimagga* seems to translate the Pāli *aneka-vihitaṃ iddhi-vidhaṃ* (D I 78) through the phrasing 不一種變 (T1648.32.0442a24), namely "many (不一種 = *aneka-vihitaṃ*) varieties of psychophysical power (變 = *iddhi-vidhaṃ*)".

51 或一百或一千或一萬等以變。入第四禪安詳出，次第以智受持："我當多"成多，如小路阿羅漢。(T1648.32.0442a29-b02).

52 問云何當起變？答此比丘修欲定勝行相應如意足，精進定，心定，慧定。(T1648.32.0441c17-19).

It seems that all accounts are sharing the same macrostructure, which is, however, formulated in a slightly different way within the accounts. This macrostructure may be expressed as follows: 1) the attainment or development of some prerequisites; 2) a preparatory phase; 3) a resolution that will result in the performance.

Table 7.3 Macrostructure of the multiplication of the body in the sources

	MACROSTRUCTURE		
	Attainment or development of some prerequisites	**Preparatory phase**	**Resolution that will result in the performance**
Paṭisambhidāmagga	*catasso bhūmiyo, cattāro pādā, aṭṭha padāni, soḷasa ca mūlāni*	*āvajjati*	*ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti bahulo homī ti*
****Vimuttimagga***	*iddhipādas* ([四]如意足)	He enters the fourth *jhāna* and serenely emerges from it (入第四禪安詳出)	He resolves (受持 = *adhiṭṭhāti*) with the knowledge "Let me be many" and becomes many (以智受持: "我當多" 成多)
Visuddhimagga	*catasso bhūmiyo, cattāro pādā, aṭṭha padāni, soḷasa ca mūlāni*	*āvajjana/parikamma*: entering into and emerging from the fourth *jhāna* twice, he adverts to the multiplicity	*adhiṭṭhāti*

It would seem that the *Visuddhimagga* in its 'preparatory phase' is combining the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s and **Vimuttimagga*'s accounts together since it mentions both *āvajjana* (*Paṭisambhidāmagga*) and the *jhāna* (**Vimuttimagga*): *samāpattito* [i.e. the *jhāna*] *vuṭṭhahitvā puna bahuko homī ti āvajjitvā* (Vism 387). *Jhāna* occurs under the guise of the word *samāpatti*, which indicates a '[meditative] attainment'.

The occurrence of the *jhāna* stage is not meaningless, and an analysis of what happens in the cosmological and psychological levels might be useful to better understand some stages of the process. It is evident from the account that there is a shifting between different cosmological/psychological levels, and the access to a higher level allows the marvellous phenomena to take place. The desired result becomes the object of the mind which enters the fourth *jhāna*, the object in the fourth *jhāna* is just the mental reflex (*nimitta*) of the object, which turns again into the normal object when the meditator comes out from the *jhāna* state and, although it was initially a mental object, it gains a sort of objectivity and so comes into existence in some ways. The *Visuddhimagga* makes clear what the object is in some stages of the process, and the comparison with its *ṭīkā* would reveal an odd process. The text states that:

> In this context, the consciousness of the *jhāna* which serves as foundation (*pādakajjhānacitta*) has the sign (*nimitta*) as object. But the consciousnesses of the preparatory work (*parikammacittāni*) have hundred as objects or thousand as objects [...] Also the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*, likewise, has hundred as object or thousand as object in this way. This

> [the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*],[53] is like *appanācitta*, which immediately follows the *gotrabhū* which arises once only, as stated previously, and belongs to the fourth *jhāna* in the sphere of the pure form (*rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānika*).[54]

The *ṭīkā* specifies that:

> '**Having performed the preparatory work**': he emerges from the *jhāna* which serves as foundation, making here the preparatory work, thinking only with the consciousness of the *kāmāvacara* starting as "Let it be hundred", and then there is adverting (*āvajjana*).[55]

This data results in the following chart portraying the implications of the alternation of the stages on the cosmological level:

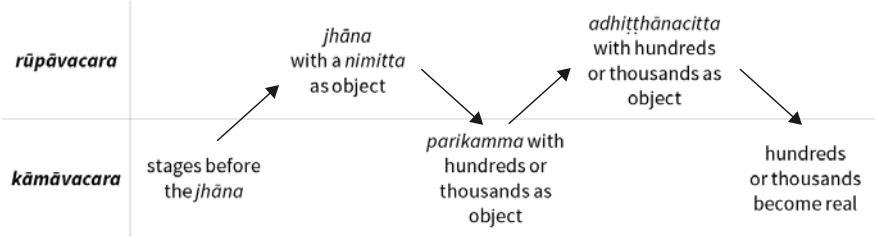

Figure 7.1 Alternation of the stages on the cosmological level

The *adhiṭṭhānacitta* seems to be equivalent to the *jhāna*, but interestingly enough it has the same object of the *parikamma*. It is as if the *adhiṭṭhānacitta* takes the object of the preparatory work and brings it up to the *rūpāvacara*, the divine realms – which are from a cosmological point of view the realms of the gods, realms that are also connected with the *manomayakāya*.[56] After the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*, the same object magically becomes a reality in our world, in the *kāmāvacara*. This parallelism between the *jhāna* (in which the *appanācitta* arises) and the *adhiṭṭhānacitta* can help us to understand the reason why the *Visuddhimagga* states that the arising of the *adhiṭṭhānacitta* is preceded by three or four past mental moments, namely the *pubbabhāgacitta*s 'the preceding consciousnesses'. These mental moments would be three or four, so adding the *adhiṭṭhānacitta* it would result in a maximum number of five mental moments. Here, to understand the significance of these five mental moments, it is worth considering the *Visuddhimagga*'s explanation of how the *jhāna* is achieved, occurring in the *Paṭhavīkasiṇaniddesa* (Explanation of

53 ***taṃ*** *adhiṭṭhānacittaṃ* (Vism-mhṭ II 21).

54 *tattha pādakajjhānacittaṃ nimittārammaṇaṃ. parikammacittāni satārammaṇāni vā sahassārammaṇāni vā* [...] *adhiṭṭhānacittam pi tath' eva satārammaṇaṃ vā sahassārammaṇaṃ vā. taṃ pubbe vuttaṃ appanācittam iva gotrabhū anantaraṃ ekam eva uppajjati rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānikaṃ* (Vism 387).

55 ***parikammaṃ katvā*** *ti pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya kāmāvacaracittena sataṃ homī ti ādinā cintanam ev' ettha parikammakaraṇaṃ, tath' āvajjanam eva ca āvajjanaṃ* (Vism-mhṭ II 20).

56 Although there are *kāmadhātu deva*s and *rūpadhātu deva*s (= *brahmā*s), only the latter are more openly connected with the *manomayakāya* (in this regard, see above Table 6.1 in § 6.3.1.3).

the Earth *kasiṇa*; IV chapter). This explanation involves the consciousness process theory (which was discussed in Chapter 4). The account is as follows:

> [Then knowing:] "Now the absorption will succeed!" (*idaṃ appanā ijjhissati*), having interrupted the *bhavaṅga*, making the earth *kasiṇa* the object, which is established through the method [of repeating] "Earth! Earth!", the adverting in the mind door (*manodvārāvajjana*) arises. Thereafter, only four or five *javana*s impel on this object, at their end one *rūpāvacara* [*javana* occurs], the rest [of them] belongs to the *kāmāvacara* [...] Avoiding repetitions,[57] here the first is the *parikamma*, the second is the *upacāra*, the third is the *anuloma*, the fourth is the *gotrabhu*. Or also, the first is the *upacāra*, the second is the *anuloma*, the third is the *gotrabhu*. The fourth or fifth [as appropriate] is the mental moment of absorption (*appanā cittaṃ*).[58]

Therefore, in this account describing how to enter into the *jhāna* (from the perspective of the consciousness process theory) there is an *appanācitta* preceded by three or four moments (i.e. *parikamma*, *upacāra*, *anuloma*, *gotrabhu*), whereas in the methodology to develop the first *iddhi* there is an *adhiṭṭhānacitta* preceded by three or four *pubbabhāgacitta*s. The parallelism is even more evident if we consider another couple of elements. First, the access to the *jhāna* state is attained through a kind of repetition: 'Earth! Earth!', in the same way the *adhiṭṭhānacitta* is preceded by another kind of repetition: '*bahuko homi*'. Second, the parallelism is strengthened by the *Visuddhimagga* itself, which reports that "this [i.e. *adhiṭṭhānacitta*] is like *appanācitta*, which immediately follows the *gotrabhū* which arises once only, as stated previously, and belongs to the fourth *jhāna* in the sphere of the pure form (*rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānika*)".[59]

It seems that there is actually equivalence between the action of entering into an absorption state and the performance of the power:

[...]	(*parikamma*)	*upacāra*	*anuloma*	*gotrabhu*	*appanācitta*
[...]	(*pubbabhāgacitta*)	*pubbabhāgacitta*	*pubbabhāgacitta*	*pubbabhāgacitta*	*adhiṭṭhānacitta*

Figure 7.2 Comparison between the attainments of the absorption state and *adhiṭṭhānacitta*. Note: since there can be either four or five moments, the stages in brackets are omitted in the case of the occurrence of only four *javana*s

The presence of the *pubbabhāgacitta* is only justified by the comparison with the action of entering into the *jhāna* state. An in-depth analysis of the relationship between the extraordinary capacities and the state of *jhāna* will be provided in § 9.4.1.

57 Here, I followed Ñāṇamoli's ([1956] 2011, 579, n. 35) interpretation of the compound *agahitaggahaṇa*.

58 *idāni appanā ijjhissatī ti bhavaṅgaṃ upacchinditvā paṭhavī paṭhavī ti anuyogavasena upaṭṭhitaṃ tad-eva paṭhavīkasiṇaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanam uppajjati. tato tasmiṃ yev' ārammaṇe cattāri pañca vā javanāni javanti, tesu avasāne ekaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ, sesāni kāmāvacarāni,* [...] *agahitaggahaṇena pan' ettha paṭhamaṃ parikammaṃ, dutiyaṃ upacāraṃ, tatiyaṃ anulomaṃ, catutthaṃ gotrabhu. paṭhamaṃ vā upacāraṃ, dutiyaṃ anulomaṃ, tatiyaṃ gotrabhu, catutthaṃ pañcamaṃ vā appanā cittaṃ* (Vism 137-8).

59 *taṃ pubbe vuttaṃ appanācittam iva gotrabhū anantaraṃ ekam eva uppajjati rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānikaṃ* (Vism 387).

7.4.4.1 *Saddhammappakāsinī*: Further Additions and Justifications

The *Saddhammappakāsinī* specifies the *kasiṇa* involved during the performance of this *iddhi*: "having attained the fourth *jhāna* that is the foundation of the higher knowledges and has the earth *kasiṇa* as object […]".[60] The *kasiṇa* used is the earth *kasiṇa* (*paṭhavikasiṇa*). It is worth noting that the specification of the *kasiṇa* involved is a kind of exegesis that occurred also for the *manomayakāya* (Paṭis-a II 666, see § 6.4.7).

A further interesting point is that the *Saddhammappakāsinī* provides conciliation between the short and long methods used to perform the psychophysical power. The *Saddhammappakāsinī*, indeed, comments upon the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* using the innovations reported in the later *Visuddhimagga*. Since the two versions of the process differ from each other in terms of length and detail, it seems that it was felt necessary to justify the existence of the two different expositions. Therefore, the commentary states that:

> As when it is said "Having eaten, he lies down (*bhuñjitvā sayati*)", the meaning is not that "Having not drunk the beverage, having not washed the hands, he lies down immediately after eating", but what is said is that "Although there are other closely following activities in the interval [between the two actions], he lies down after having eaten". Here also it should be understood in this way. For although the first is the attainment of the *jhāna* which serves as foundation, this was not stated in the text (*pāli*).[61]

Here, there is, it seems, a process that could be defined as an 'interpretative accretion process', in which a simple topic (i.e. *eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti*) collects, during the centuries, more sophisticated explanations, which, however, need to be justified. This is consistent with the findings of the chapter concerning the *manomayakāya* (see Chapter 6). In this context, the commentator tries to explain the reason why the canonical version is shorter than the *Visuddhimagga*'s one. Therefore, he suggests that the *Visuddhimagga*'s explanation was already included in the canonical text, although it was not explicit. This means that the commentator does not see the *Visuddhimagga*'s explanation as a modification, but only as a further specification.

7.4.4.2 Notes on the Cūḷapanthaka's Story: Is there a Hidden Continuity with the Canonical Tradition?

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* makes use of the Cūḷapanthaka's story as an example of the multiplication of the body. A similar mention occurs in the **Vimuttimagga*, which ascribes the power of multiplication to the Arahant (阿羅漢) Cūḷapanthaka (小路).[62] The *Visuddhimagga* provides the full story of Cūḷapanthaka (Vism 387-9) and so does the *Saddhammappakāsinī* (Paṭis-a II 657-60, see Appendix 5). These accounts seem to connect this kind of *iddhi*

60 *paṭhavikasiṇārammaṇaṃ abhiññāpādakaṃ catutthajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā* (Paṭis-a II 657).

61 *yathā bhuñjitvā sayatī ti vutte pānīyaṃ apivitvā, hatthadhovanādīni akatvā bhuttānantaram eva sayatī ti attho na hoti, antarāsannesu pi aññesu kiccesu bhutvā sayatī ti vuccati; evam idhā-pī ti daṭṭhabbaṃ. paṭhamaṃ pādakajjhānasamāpajjanam pi hi pāliyaṃ avuttam evā ti* (Paṭis-a II 657).

62 如小路阿羅漢 (T1648.32.0442b02).

with the creation of a body made of mind. To be more specific, it seems that the multiplication of the body is nothing more than the creation of many mind-made bodies. The *Saddhammappakāsinī* seems quite explicit about it since it states that "he became one who has attained *manomaya*[*-kāya*] and *jhāna*s (*manomaya-jhāna-lābhin*), he became able to become many after having been one, and one after having been many".[63] Successively, after having finished narrating the story, the *Saddhammappakāsinī* goes on to write:

> Other monks, having created a body made of mind (*manomaya*) through the resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*), create three or four [mind-made bodies]. Having made only many identical ones, they create [creations that] do only a type of action. But the Elder Cūlapanthaka turning [the mind] (*āvajjana*) only once, created a thousand of monks. He did not make two people identical and they did not perform only one type of action. For this reason, he has become the foremost among the monks who create a body made of mind.[64]

This last passage seems to refer to the canonical account of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, in which it is stated that Cūḷapanthaka is the foremost among the disciples of the Buddha in creating a mind-made body.[65] The connection between the creation of the mind-made body and the psychophysical power (*iddhi*) of either multiplying the physical form or returning to a single unit could also be supported by the reported account in the canonical *Theragāthā* (557-66). This seems to be a shorter version of the story found in the *Visuddhimagga* and *Saddhammappakāsinī*. In the *Theragāthā* as well, Cūḷapanthaka creates one thousand copies of himself.[66] Therefore, although a more direct reference to the *manomayakāya* in the Cūḷapanthaka's story occurs in the post-canonical literature, the character of Cūḷapanthaka was already connected with the *manomayakāya* as early as the canonical literature. It might be possible that this story already existed during the period of formation of the first canonical texts, but it was transmitted in a less authoritative channel and was officially embedded only later. Therefore, it is possible to find a full canonical account within the *jātaka* called *Cullakaseṭṭhijātaka* (Ja I 114-23).[67] The *Jātaka*'s account reports the same verses which occur in the *Theragāthā* in which copies of Cūḷapanthaka are created (Ja I 118 = Th 563). So, it actually makes sense to understand the *Aṅguttaranikāya* (A I 24) in the light of the *Jātaka*'s account. However, we should recognise that the connection with the *manomayakāya*

63 *so manomaya-jhānalābhī hutvā eko hutvā bahudhā, bahudhā hutvā eko bhavituṃ samattho ahosi* (Paṭis-a II 659).

64 *aññe bhikkhū adhiṭṭhānena manomayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimminitvā tayo vā cattāro vā abhinimminanti. bahuke ekasadise yeva ca katvā nimminanti ekavidham eva kammaṃ kurumāne. Cūlapanthakatthero pana ekāvajjanen' eva bhikkhusahassaṃ māpesi! dve 'pi jane na ekasadise akāsi na ekavidhaṃ kammaṃ kurumāne. tasmā manomayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimminantānaṃ aggo nāma jāto* (Paṭis-a II 660).

65 *etad aggaṃ bhikkhave mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ manomayaṃ kāyaṃ abhiniminnantānaṃ yadidaṃ Culla-panthako* (A I 24).

66 *sahassakkatthum attānaṃ nimminitvāna Panthako | nisīdi ambavane ramme yāva kālappavedanaṃ* (Th 563).

67 For additional references, see Malalasekera 1974, 897-8.

is only explicit in post-canonical literature, whereas in canonical literature it was, perhaps, taken for granted.

7.4.5 (2) *āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ*

Concerning this *iddhi*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* does not provide any explanation regarding the method used to perform the power. It only provides clarifications for the terms *āvibhāva* and *tirobhāva*:

> **Becomes manifested (*āvibhāva*)**, it is not veiled by something, not covered, exposed, evident.
>
> **Becomes concealed (*tirobhāva*)**, it is veiled by something, it is covered, hidden, enclosed.[68]

The explanation of the method to perform the power is reported in the *Visuddhimagga*:

> Then, the possessor of psychic power who desires to make a manifestation, illuminates (*ālokaṃ karoti*) the darkness, or exposes what is covered, makes perceivable what is not perceivable. How? He, who desires to make visible – although covered or being distant – himself or another, having emerged from the *jhāna* which serves as foundation, having adverted in this way: "Let this condition of darkness become bright" or "Let what is covered become exposed" or "Let what is not perceivable become perceivable". Then, having done the preparatory work, he resolves in the way already explained. Immediately after the resolution, he becomes [in a certain way] according to the resolution. Others, although being distant, see; he also, desiring to see, sees.[69]

The method can be summarised as follows:

68 ***āvibhāvan*** *ti. kenaci anāvaṭaṃ hoti appaṭicchannaṃ vivaṭaṃ pākaṭaṃ.* ***tirobhāvan*** *ti. kenaci āvaṭaṃ hoti paṭicchannaṃ pihitaṃ paṭikujjitaṃ* (Paṭis II 207).

69 *tatrā 'yaṃ iddhimā āvibhāvaṃ kātukāmo andhakāraṃ vā ālokaṃ karoti, paṭicchannaṃ vā vivaṭaṃ anāpāthaṃ vā āpāthaṃ karoti. kathaṃ? ayaṃ hi yathā paṭicchanno pi dūre ṭhito pi vā dissati, evaṃ attānaṃ vā paraṃ vā kātukāmo pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya: idaṃ andhakāraṭṭhānaṃ ālokajātaṃ hotū ti vā: idaṃ paṭicchannaṃ vivaṭaṃ hotū ti vā: idaṃ anāpāthaṃ āpāthaṃ hotū ti vā āvajjitvā parikammaṃ katvā vuttanayen' eva adhiṭṭhāti, saha adhiṭṭhānā yathādhiṭṭhitaṃ eva hoti. pare dūre ṭhitā pi passanti, sayam pi passitukāmo passati* (Vism 390). The explanation of *tirobhāva* is almost the same: "But he who desires to make a concealment, darkens the light, or covers what is uncovered, or makes not perceivable what is perceivable. How? He, who desires to make invisible – although not covered or being close – himself or another, having emerged from the *jhāna* which serves as foundation, having adverted in this way: 'Let this condition of luminosity become dark' or 'Let what is not covered become covered' or 'Let what is perceivable become not perceivable'. Then, having done the preparatory work, he resolves in the way already explained. Immediately after the consciousness of resolution, he becomes [in a certain way] according to the resolution. Others, although being close, do not see, he also, desiring to not see, does not see" (*tirobhāvaṃ kātukāmo pana ālokaṃ vā andhakāraṃ karoti, appaṭicchannaṃ vā paṭicchannaṁ, āpāthaṃ vā anāpāthaṃ karoti. kathaṃ? ayaṃ hi yathā appaṭicchanno pi samīpe ṭhito pi vā na dissati, evaṃ attānaṃ vā paraṃ vā kātukāmo pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya: idaṃ ālokaṭṭhānaṃ andhakāraṃ hotū ti vā, idaṃ appaṭicchannaṃ paṭicchannaṃ hotū ti vā, idaṃ āpāthaṃ anāpāthaṃ hotū ti vā āvajjitvā parikammaṃ katvā vuttanayen' eva adhiṭṭhāti; saha adhiṭṭhānacittena yathādhiṭṭhitam eva hoti. pare samīpe ṭhitā pi passanti, sayam pi apassitukāmo na passati*; Vism 392-3).

having emerged from the *jhāna* which serves as foundation	+	having adverted in this way: "Let it be X"/ having done the preparatory work	+	he resolves in the way already explained
pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya		[X *hotu*] *āvajjitvā/parikammaṃ katvā*		*vuttanayen' eva adhiṭṭhāti*

The **Vimuttimagga* treatment of this *iddhi* is connected with the next *iddhi* and, therefore, we will examine this exegetical evidence below. Concerning the *Saddhammappakāsinī*, the text does not provide further useful information (Paṭis-a II 260-1).

7.4.6 (3) *tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi ākāse*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> Naturally (at first), he is one who has obtained the attainment (i.e. meditative absorption: *samāpatti*) through the space *kasiṇa* (*ākāsakasiṇa*), he adverts (*āvajjati*) beyond walls, ramparts, mountains; after having adverted, he resolves with the knowledge "Let there be space!" [and so] there is space. He goes beyond walls, ramparts, mountains unattached[70] by them. Just as men who naturally are not possessors of psychic powers go unattached when [the place] is not obstructed and enclosed by something, so in the same way the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, goes beyond walls, ramparts, mountains unattached by them.[71]

Visuddhimagga:

> Then, for one who desires to go in this way, having attained the [*jhāna* produced by the] space *kasiṇa* (*ākāsakasiṇa*), emerged, adverted to wall, or rampart, or also to certain mountain such as Sineru and the Cakkavāḷa mountains, through the preparatory work which was done, he should resolve "Let there be space". The space really exists. It becomes hollow for him who wants to descend or ascend; it becomes perforated for him who wants to go penetrating. He goes there freely.[72]

**Vimuttimagga*:

> This meditator, having practiced the space (虛空) *kasiṇa* (一切入), enters the fourth *jhāna* and serenely emerges from it. Having adverted (已轉 =

70 In the translation of this term, I followed Be: *asajjamāno*.

71 *pakatiyā ākāsakasiṇasamāpattiyā lābhī hoti, tirokuṭṭaṃ tiropākāraṃ tiropabbataṃ āvajjati; āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti ākāso hotū ti, ākāso hoti. so tirokuṭṭaṃ tiropākāraṃ tiropabbataṃ āvajjamāno* [Be *asajjamāno*] *gacchati. yathā manussā pakatiyā aniddhimanto kenaci anāvaṭe aparikkhitte asajjamānā gacchanti, evamevaṃ so iddhimā cetovasippatto tirokuṭṭaṃ tiropākāraṃ tiropabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati, seyyathāpi ākāse* (Paṭis II 208).

72 *evaṃ gantukāmena pana ākāsakasiṇaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya kuḍḍaṃ vā pākāraṃ vā Sinerucakkavāḷesu pi aññataraṃ pabbataṃ vā āvajjitvā kataparikammena: ākāso hotū ti adhiṭṭhātabbo, ākāso yeva hoti; adho otaritukāmassa uddhaṃ vā ārohitukāmassa susiro hoti; vinivijjhitvā gantukāmassa chiddo. so tattha asajjamāno gacchati* (Vism 394).

> *āvajjitvā* = 成轉 = *āvajjitvā*)[73] to go beyond walls, ramparts, mountains, he resolves (受持 = *adhiṭṭhāti*) with the knowledge "Let there be space" and the space is attained. This yogin in space goes beyond walls, ramparts, mountains, he moves unattached as he would be in space.[74]

It would seem that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Visuddhimagga*, and **Vimuttimagga* transmitted the same method to perform this specific *iddhi*. Furthermore, the same terminology seems to also be involved. The comparison is summarised in the following table:

Table 7.4 Comparison of sources

	***Jhāna* attained through the space *kasiṇa* (*ākāsakasiṇa*/虛空一切入)**	***Āvajjati*/*āvajjitvā*/已轉成轉**	***Adhiṭṭhāti*/*adhiṭṭhātabbo*/受持**
Paṭisambhidāmagga	He is one who has obtained the attainment (i.e. meditative absorption: *samāpatti*) through the space *kasiṇa* (*ākāsakasiṇa*)	He adverts (*āvajjati*) beyond walls, ramparts, mountains	He resolves with the knowledge "Let there be space!" [and so] there is space
***Vimuttimagga**	Having practiced the space (虛空) *kasiṇa* (一切入), enters the fourth *jhāna*	Having adverted (已轉 = *āvajjitvā* = 成轉 = *āvajjitvā*) to go beyond walls, ramparts, mountains	He resolves (受持 = *adhiṭṭhāti*) with the knowledge "Let there be space" and the space is attained
Visuddhimagga	Having attained the space *kasiṇa* [*jhāna*]	He adverted to wall, or rampart, or also to certain mountain such as Sineru and the Cakkavāḷa mountains	Through the preparatory work undertaken, he should resolve "Let there be space". The space really exists

Concerning these three accounts we can note that the use of *parikamma* in the *Visuddhimagga* (*kataparikammena*) is reasonably referring to the previous stages, namely the attainment of the *jhāna* and the action of adverting (*āvajjati*). Moreover, it seems that the **Vimuttimagga* connects this *iddhi* with the one that is previous in our subdivision of *iddhi*s, namely the ability to become manifested or concealed (*āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ*):

> What does 'he becomes manifested (或現 = *āvibhāva*)' mean? [It means]

73 This is translated by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 215) as "[i]n going along". In my interpretation, the character 轉 indicates *āvajjati*/*āvajjana*, just as in the phrasing *zhuanjiàn-xīn* 轉見心 (T1648.32.0449b07-08), which reports two stages, *āvajjana* (轉) and *dassana* (見), of the consciousness process as expressed in the **Vimuttimagga* (the passage seems to be corrupted as it should be 轉心見心; in this regard, see Kim 2018, 758). It is also possible that the phrasing 已轉成轉 is the equivalent of *āvajjati āvajjitvā* (this seems to be the reading also adopted in Nyanatusita 2021, 524), although both characters 已 and 成 seem to indicate a past or a completed action. I am basing my reading on the Paṭis II 208 *tirokuṭṭaṃ tiropākāraṃ tiropabbataṃ* ***āvajjati; āvajjitvā*** *ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti ākāso hotū ti, ākāso hoti*; and Vism 394 *kuḍḍaṃ vā pākāraṃ vā Sineru-cakkavāḷesu pi aññataraṃ pabbataṃ vā* ***āvajjitvā*** *kataparikammena: ākāso hotū ti adhiṭṭhātabbo, ākāso yeva hoti*. It may be possible that there was an inversion of characters as in 成轉。已轉 (T1648.32.0442c25), in which 成 is a verb which refers to the former phrase, 轉 is *āvajjati* and 已轉 is *āvajjitvā*.

74 彼坐禪人, 如是以修行虛空一切入, 入第四禪安詳出。徹過壁徹過牆徹過山已轉成轉, 以智受持: "此當成虛空" 已成虛空。彼坐禪人於虛空徹過壁徹過牆徹過山, 行不障礙猶如虛空。(T1648.32.0442b05-09).

> 'to open (開)'. What does 'he becomes concealed (或不現 = *tirobhāva*)' mean? [It means] 'to not open (不開)'. The meditator opens what is not open, and he goes beyond walls, ramparts, mountains.[75]

It seems that the passage implies that the meditator is able to create a breach or an opening in the physical obstacle. This might explain why the *Visuddhimagga* states: "it becomes hollow for him who wants to descent or ascent; it becomes perforated for him who wants to go penetrating" (*adho otaritukāmassa uddhaṃ vā ārohitukāmassa susiro hoti*; *vinivijjhitvā gantukāmassa chiddo*; Vism 394). Furthermore, this passage would highlight that the **Vimuttimagga* endorsed a different and otherwise unknown exegesis of the canonical *āvibhāvaṃ tiro-bhāvaṃ* (cf. § 7.4.5).

Concerning the *Saddhammappakāsinī*, the only further information detected regards the *kasiṇa* involved. The text specifies that only the space *kasiṇa* is allowed to develop this power (*idha ākāsakasiṇass' eva vuttattā tattha-bhāvitam eva jhānaṃ ākāsakasiṇassa paccayo hoti, na aññaṃ*; Paṭis-a II 661).

7.4.7 (4) *paṭhaviyā pi ummujja-nimmujjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> Naturally, he is one who has obtained the attainment (i.e. meditative absorption: *samāpatti*) through the water *kasiṇa* (*āpokasiṇa*), he adverts (*āvajjati*) to the earth (*paṭhavī*). Having adverted, he resolves with the knowledge "Let there be water!" [and so] there is water. [Then,] he sinks and emerges from the earth. Just as men who naturally are not possessors of psychic powers sink and emerge from the water, so in the same way the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, sinks and emerges from the earth as if it were water.[76]

Visuddhimagga:

> He attains the [*jhāna* produced by the] water *kasiṇa* (*āpokasiṇa*) – desiring to perform in this way – and emerges [from the *jhāna*]. Having determined (*paricchinditvā*) "Let the earth in this quantity become water", having done the preparatory work, he should resolve precisely in the way already explained. Therefore, immediately after the resolution the quantity of earth determined (*paricchinna*) becomes water, then he sinks and emerges.[77]

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75 或現者何? 義開。或不現者何? 義不開。彼坐禪人不開令開, 徹過壁徹過牆徹過山。(T1648.32.0442 b09-11). Nyanatusita (2021, 523-4) translates T1648.32.0442b09-11 before T1648.32.0442b05-09.

76 *pakatiyā āpokasiṇasamāpattiyā lābhī hoti, paṭhaviṃ āvajjati; āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti udakaṃ hotū ti, udakaṃ hoti. so paṭhaviyā ummujjanimujjaṃ karoti. yathā manussā pakatiyā aniddhimanto udake ummujjanimujjaṃ karonti, evamevaṃ so iddhimā cetovasippatto paṭhaviyā ummujjanimujjaṃ karoti, seyyathāpi udake* (Paṭis II 208).

77 *evaṃ kātukāmena āpokasiṇaṃ samāpajjitvā uṭṭhāya: ettake ṭhāne pathavī udakaṃ hotū ti paricchinditvā parikammaṃ katvā vuttanayen' eva adhiṭṭhātabbaṃ; saha adhiṭṭhānena yathā paricchinne ṭhāne pathavī udakam eva hoti, so tattha ummujjanimmujjaṃ karoti* (Vism 395).

**Vimuttimagga*:

> He sinks in and emerges from the earth as if it were water. Thus, the meditator, through the mind cultivated in the water *kasiṇa*, enters the fourth *jhāna*. He emerges serenely and adverts (轉) to a delimited (作隔 = *paricchinna*) [amount of] earth, he resolves with the knowledge "Let there be water". The meditator sinks and emerges from earth as if it were natural water.[78]

It is worth noting that the *Visuddhimagga* quotes the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* as canonical evidence for the method used to perform the power (*tatrā 'yaṃ pāḷi*; Vism 395), quoting Paṭis II 208, although its exegesis is strongly connected with the **Vimuttimagga* account. Both *Visuddhimagga* and **Vimuttimagga* prescribe to delimit the portion of earth on which the power will be applied. The *Visuddhimagga* states: "having determined 'Let the earth in this quantity become water'" (*ettake ṭhāne pathavī udakaṃ hotū ti paricchinditvā*), whereas the **Vimuttimagga* reports "he emerges serenely and adverts to a delimited (作隔) [amount of] earth" (安詳出轉地作隔). My translation from the Chinese passage is based on the fact that the character 隔 can mean something like *parichinna*.[79] The method used to perform this specific *iddhi* seems to be the same in all three texts:

entering the *jhāna* through the water *kasiṇa* and emerging from it (N.B. the act of emerging from the *jhāna* does not occur in Paṭis)	+	he adverts to the earth	+	he resolves with the knowledge "Let there be water!"	=	there is water
āpokasiṇaṃ samāpajjitvā uṭṭhāya		*paṭhaviṃ āvajjati*		*ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti udakaṃ hotū ti*		*udakaṃ hoti*

Paradoxically, the method explained in the *Visuddhimagga* is less clear than in the other texts. The *Saddhammappakāsinī* does not provide further useful information and quotes the *Visuddhimagga* almost *verbatim* (Paṭis-a II 661 does not mention the power and Paṭis-a I 349 quotes the Vism).

7.4.8 (5) *udake pi abhijjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi paṭhaviyaṃ*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> Naturally, he is one who has obtained the attainment (i.e. meditative absorption: *samāpatti*) through the earth *kasiṇa* (*paṭhavīkasiṇa*), he adverts (*āvajjati*) to the water (*udaka*). Having adverted, he resolves with the knowledge "Let there be earth!" [and so] there is earth. [Then,] he walks on the water without sinking in it. Just as men who naturally are

78 於地令作出沒猶如在水。彼坐禪人如是, 以心修行水一切入, 入於第四禪。安詳出轉地作隔, 以智受持: "此當成水"。彼坐禪人於地成出沒猶如性水。(T1648.32.0442b12-15).

79 See Hirakawa 1997, 1216 and DDB s.v. "隔" . Nyanatusita translates: "Emerging mindfully from it, he adverts to earth, demarcates [an area of earth]" (2021, 524).

> not possessors of psychic powers go on the earth without sinking in it, so in the same way the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, goes on the water without sinking in it as if it were in the earth.[80]

Visuddhimagga:

> He attains the [*jhāna* produced by the] earth *kasiṇa* (*pathavīkasiṇa*) – desiring to go in this way – and emerges [from the *jhāna*]. Having decided "Let the water in this quantity become earth", having done the preparatory work, he should resolve precisely in the way already explained. Therefore, immediately after the resolution the quantity of water decided becomes earth, then he goes.[81]

**Vimuttimagga*:

> Thus, the meditator, through the mind cultivated in the earth *kasiṇa*, enters the fourth *jhāna*. He emerges serenely and adverts (轉) a delimited (作隔) [amount of] water, he resolves with the knowledge "Let there be earth" and there is earth. The meditator goes on the water not obstructed, as if it were going on natural earth.[82]

The *Saddhammappakāsinī* does not provide further useful information and quotes the *Visuddhimagga* almost *verbatim* (Paṭis-a II 661 does not mention the power and Paṭis-a I 349-50 quotes the Vism). This *iddhi* resembles the previous one, inverting the earth with the water.

7.4.9 (6) *ākāse pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā pi pakkhī sakuṇo*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> Naturally, he is one who has obtained the attainment (i.e. meditative absorption: *samāpatti*) through the earth *kasiṇa* (*paṭhavīkasiṇa*), he adverts (*āvajjati*) to the space (*ākāsa*). Having adverted, he resolves with the knowledge "Let there be earth!" [and so] there is earth. He walks, stands, sits, and lies down in the empty space, in the atmosphere. Just as men who naturally are not possessors of psychic powers walk, stand, sit, and lie down on the earth, so in the same way the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, walks, stands, sits, and

80 *pakatiyā paṭhavīkasiṇasamāpattiyā lābhī hoti, udakaṃ āvajjati; āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti paṭhavī hotū ti, paṭhavī hoti. so abhijjamāne udake gacchati. yathā manussā pakatiyā aniddhimanto abhijjamānāya paṭhaviyā gacchanti, evamevaṃ so iddhimā cetovasippatto abhijjamāne udake gacchati, seyyathāpi paṭhaviyaṃ* (Paṭis II 208).

81 *evaṃ gantukāmena pana pathavīkasiṇaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya: ettake ṭhāne udakaṃ pathavī hotū ti paricchinditvā parikammaṃ katvā vuttanayen' eva adhiṭṭhātabbaṃ; saha adhiṭṭhānena yathā paricchinnaṭṭhāne udakaṃ pathavī yeva hoti, so tattha gacchati* (Vism 396).

82 彼坐禪人如是, 以心修行地一切入, 入第四禪。安詳出轉水作隔, 以智受持: "此當成地" 已成地。彼坐禪人於水行不障礙, 如行性地。(T1648.32.0442b16-19).

lies down in the empty space, in the atmosphere as if it were a winged bird.[83]

Visuddhimagga:

He attains the [*jhāna* produced by the] earth *kasiṇa* (*paṭhavīkasiṇa*) – desiring to perform in this way – and emerges [from the *jhāna*]. If he desires to go seated, having determined an area of the size of a sofa, having done the preparatory work, he should resolve precisely in the way already explained. If he desires to go lying down [should determine an area of] the size of a bed. If he desires to go on foot [should determine an area of] the size of a road. Then, having determined an area in this way, he should resolve precisely in the way already explained: "Let it be earth". Immediately after the resolution, it becomes earth.[84]

**Vimuttimagga*:

He goes in the space as a winged bird (飛鳥). In this context, there are three kinds of movement: 1) movement on foot, 2) movement on air, 3) movement through the mind. Then, the meditator attains the concentration with the earth *kasiṇa*, resolves (受持 = *adhiṭṭhāti*) for a path in the space and goes on foot. Or if [the meditator] attains the concentration with the air *kasiṇa*, he resolves for the air and so just as cotton wool he goes on air. To move by mind, he suffuses mind and body with perceptions of pleasure and lightness (或樂想或輕想 = *sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca*). With the body permeated [by these perceptions], the body becomes buoyant, and he goes through the mind-movement just as a winged bird. Like this is the movement through the mind.[85]

The account in the **Vimuttimagga* reports three kinds of movement. The first one (viz. movement on foot) is the one also treated in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, whereas the other two (viz. movement on air and movement through the mind) seem to recall the canonical account in the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta* (S V 282-4). Here, I report an example:

Just as, Ānanda, a tuft of cotton wool or wadding, which is light, supported by the wind, with little difficulty, from the earth rises up into the sky, so in the same way, Ānanda, on the occasion when the Tathāgata unifies the body in the mind and the mind in the body, he dwells having reached perceptions of pleasure and lightness in the physical body, on that

83 *pakatiyā paṭhavīkasiṇasamāpattiyā lābhī hoti, ākāsaṃ āvajjati; āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti paṭhavī hotū ti, paṭhavī hoti. so ākāse antalikkhe caṅkamati pi tiṭṭhati pi nisīdati pi seyyaṃ pi kappeti. yathā manussā pakatiyā aniddhimanto paṭhaviyā caṅkamanti pi tiṭṭhanti pi nisīdanti pi seyyaṃ pi kappenti, evamevaṃ so iddhimā cetovasippatto ākāse antalikkhe caṅkamati pi tiṭṭhati pi nisīdati pi seyyaṃ pi kappeti, seyyathāpi pakkhī sakuṇo* (Paṭis II 208).

84 *evaṃ kātukāmena pana pathavīkasiṇaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya, sace nisinno gantum icchati, pallankappamāṇaṃ ṭhānaṃ paricchinditvā parikammaṃ katvā vuttanayen' eva adhiṭṭhātabbaṃ; sace nipanno gantukāmo hoti mañcappamāṇaṃ; sace padasā gantukāmo hoti maggappamāṇan ti evaṃ yathānurūpaṃ ṭhānaṃ paricchinditvā vuttanayen' eva: pathavī hotū ti adhiṭṭhātabbaṃ; saha adhiṭṭhānena pathavī yeva hoti* (Vism 396-7).

85 行於虛空猶如飛鳥。於是三行: 步行, 風行, 心行。於是坐禪人得地一切入定, 於虛空受持道路以步行。若得風一切入定, 受持風如綿縷如風行。以心行令滿身心, 或樂想或輕想。以著身, 身已輕, 以心行, 行如飛鳥。如是以心行。(T1648.32.0442b19-24).

occasion the Tathāgata's body with little difficulty, from the earth rises up into the sky.[86]

This passage can be compared with the **Vimuttimagga* account in order to highlight the similarities between the two accounts:

Table 7.5 Comparison between the **Vimuttimagga* and *Iddhipādasaṃyutta*

Vimuttimagga	***Iddhipādasaṃyutta* (S V 284)**
Just as cotton wool he goes on air 如綿縷如風行 (T1648.32.0442b22).	A tuft of cotton wool or wadding, which is light, supported by the wind, with little difficulty, from the earth rises up into the sky (*tūlapicu vā kappāsapicu vā lahuko vātupādāno appakasireneva pathaviyā vehāsam abbhuggacchati*).
To move by mind, he suffuses mind and body with […] 以心行令滿身心 (T1648.32.0442b22-23).	He unifies the body in the mind and the mind in the body (*kāyaṃ pi citte samādahati cittam pi kāye samādahati*).
Perceptions of pleasure and lightness. With the body permeated [by these perceptions] […] 或樂想或輕想。以著身 (T1648.32.0442b23).	He dwells having reached perceptions of pleasure and lightness in the physical body (*sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca kāye okkamitvā viharati*).
The body becomes buoyant and he goes through the mind-movement just as a winged bird 身已輕, 以心行, 行如飛鳥 (T1648.32.0442b23-24).	The body, with little difficulty, from the earth rises up into the sky (*kayo appakasireneva pathaviyā vehāsam abbhuggacchati*). Notably, there is also the phrasing: "the body becomes even lighter" (*kāyo lahutaro ceva hoti*; S V 283).

The comparison might indicate that the account in the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta* (S V 282-4) actually reports a method to perform the powers or that, at least, the **Vimuttimagga* drew material from this or a similar account to compose its exegesis.[87]

It is also worth analysing another passage reported in the *Visuddhimagga*:

> And the monk who desires to go in the space should be also one who possesses the divine eye. Why? There may be in between mountains, trees, etc. originated by temperature (*utusamuṭṭhāna*) or envious *nāga*s, *supaṇṇa*s, etc. create them; so, the purpose is to see them. But after seeing them what should be done? Having attained the *jhāna* that is the foundation, having emerged from it, having done the preparatory work thus: "Let there be space", he should resolve. But the Elder [Tipiṭaka

86 *seyyathāpi Ānanda tūlapicu vā kappāsapicu vā lahuko vātupādāno appakasireneva pathaviyā vehāsam abbhuggacchati evam eva kho Ānanda yasmiṃ samaye Tathāgato kāyaṃ pi citte samādahati cittam pi kāye samādahati sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca kāye okkamitvā viharati tasmim Ānanda samaye Tathāgatassa kayo appakasireneva pathaviyā vehāsam abbhuggacchati* (S V 284).

87 See also De Notariis 2022b, 404-9.

> Cūḷa-Abhaya][88] said: "O Friend(s), what is the purpose to have attained the [meditative] attainment? Is his mind not concentrated? Then, all areas on which he resolves: 'Let it be space', it, therefore, becomes space". Although he spoke in this way, the method already explained in the miracle of [going beyond] walls should be followed, nevertheless. Moreover, he should become one who has obtained the divine eye for the purpose of descending in a suitable space (*okāsa*). Therefore, if he descends in an unsuitable space (*anokāsa*), such as a bathing ford or a village gate, he would be visible to the crowd. For this reason, having seen with the divine eye and abstained from an unsuitable space, he descends in a suitable space.[89]

According to this passage, the development of the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) would seem to be a prerequisite to perform this specific *iddhi*. This fact would indicate that for Buddhaghosa *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s are not developed in sequence. So, we can infer that Buddhaghosa did not regard the path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* as a progressive list of attainments, or at least he did not regard *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s as stages developed on the basis of the previous stage within the list (this stage is treated in more detail below at § 9.2). Another interesting part of this passage regards the fact that the monk should use the divine eye to find in advance a suitable place (*okāsa*) to descend by flying. This need is justified by the text stating that "if he descends in an unsuitable space (*anokāsa*), such as a bathing ford or a village gate, he would be visible to the crowd" (*sace anokāse nahānatitthe vā gāmadvāre vā orohati, mahājanassa pākaṭo hoti*; Vism 397). In this regard, it is worth remembering the *Vinaya* rule that forbids to the monks to show the miraculous power of the *iddhi*s to the lay people: "O monks, the miracle of the *iddhi*s which is something beyond [the average reach of] human beings should not be shown to the householders".[90] It would seem, indeed, that the use of the divine eye is necessary in order to not break the monastic rule.

The *Saddhammappakāsinī* does not provide further useful information (Paṭis-a II 661 barely mentions the power and Paṭis-a I 350 quotes the Vism).

7.4.10 (7) *ime pi candima-suriye evaṃ mahiddhike evaṃ mahānubhāve pāṇinā parimasati parimajjati*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> Here, the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, either sitting or lying down, adverts to the moon and sun. Having

88 According to Vism-mhṭ II 27.

89 *ākāse gantukāmena ca bhikkhunā dibbacakkhu-lābhinā pi bhavitabbaṃ. kasmā? antare utusamuṭṭhānā vā pabbatarukkhādayo honti, nāgasupaṇṇādayo vā ussuyantā māpenti nesaṃ dassanatthaṃ. te pana disvā kiṃ kātabban ti? pādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya: ākāso hotū ti parikammaṃ katvā adhiṭṭhātabbaṃ. thero pan' āha: – samāpatti-samāpajjanaṃ, āvuso, kimatthiyaṃ? nanu samāhitam ev' assa cittaṃ, tena yaṃ yaṃ ṭhānaṃ: ākāso hotū ti adhiṭṭhāti, ākāso yeva hotī ti. kiñcāpi evam āha, atha kho tirokuḍḍapāṭihāriye vuttanayen' eva paṭipajjitabbaṃ. api ca okāse orohanattham pi iminā dibbacakkhu-lābhinā bhavitabbaṃ. ayaṃ hi sace anokāse nahānatitthe vā gāmadvāre vā orohati, mahājanassa pākaṭo hoti; tāsmā dibbacakkhunā passitvā anokāsaṃ vajjetvā okāse otaratī ti* (Vism 397).

90 *na bhikkhave gihīnaṃ uttarimanussadhammaṃ iddhipāṭihāriyaṃ dassetabbaṃ* (Vin II 112).

adverted, he resolves with the knowledge "Let it be at hand (*hatthapāsa*)" and it becomes at hand. He, either sitting or lying down, handles, touches and strokes with the hand the sun and the moon. Just as men who are not naturally possessors of psychic powers handles, touches and strokes whatever physical form at hand, so in the same way the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, either sitting or lying down, handles, touches and strokes with the hand the sun and the moon.[91]

Visuddhimagga:

But here, if he desires to touch them, sitting or lying down, he resolves: "Let it be at hand". He either touches [them] through the power of resolution when they, after having come, stay at hand just as a fruit of Palmyra tree released by the stalk, or after having extended the hand. But when he is extending, does he extend what is animate (*upādinnaka*)? Or what is inanimate (*anupādinnaka*)?[92] He extends what is inanimate (*anupādinnaka*) for the sake of what is animate (*upādinnaka*). In this regard, the Elder Tipiṭaka-Cūḷanāga said: "O Friend(s), but does not what is animate (*upādinnaka*) become big and small as well? Is it not that when a monk comes out from a keyhole, etc., then what is animate (*upādinnaka*) becomes small? When he makes his body big, then does he not become big, just as in the case of Elder Mahā-Moggallāna?".[93]

**Vimuttimagga*:

He touched with the hand the sun and moon, which have so great power and might.[94] The meditator is a possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, having cultivated the mind in this way, enters the fourth *jhāna*, emerges serenely and touches with the hand the

91 *idha so iddhimā cetovasippatto nisinnako vā nipannako vā candimasūriye āvajjati; āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti hatthapāse hotū ti, hatthapāse hoti. so nisinnako vā nipannako vā candimasūriye pāṇinā āmasati parāmasati parimajjati. yathā manussā pakatiyā aniddhimanto kiñcid eva rūpagataṃ hatthapāse āmasanti parāmasanti parimajjanti, evamevaṃ so iddhimā cetovasippatto nisinnako vā nipannako vā candimasūriye pāṇinā āmasati parāmasati parimajjati* (Paṭis II 208-9).

92 According to the exegetic understanding, *upādiṇṇaka* is matter (*rūpa*) in one's body that is produced by one's *kamma*; *anupadiṇṇaka* is matter that is not produced by *kamma* (for further details see Karunadasa 1967, 103-7). Concerning *upādiṇṇaka*, "[t]he idea to be conveyed is that of the material-form of the physical body, in other words 'organic matter', which owes its peculiar mode to the effect or ripening of the past clining (*upādāna*) that constituted action (*kamma*). In the Commentaries the body is also called 'action-born' (*kammaja*, *karaja*). Stones, trees, etc. are called *anupadiṇṇa*(*ka*)" (Ñāṇamoli 1978, 63, n. 51). Therefore, in this regard I see the contraposition between the organic matter (animate) and the physical matter (inanimate).

93 *yadi pana idh' eva nisinnako vā nipannako vā parāmasitukāmo hoti: hatthapāse hotū ti adhiṭṭhāti, adhiṭṭhānabalena vaṇṭamuttatālaphalaṃ viya āgantvā hatthapāse ṭhite vā parāmasati, hatthaṃ vā vaḍḍhetvā, vaḍḍhentassa pana kiṃ upādinnakaṃ vaḍḍhati? anupādinnakan ti? upādinnakaṃ nissāya anupādinnakaṃ vaḍḍhati. tattha Tipiṭaka-Cūḷanāgatthero āha: – kiṃ pan' āvuso upādinnakaṃ khuddakam pi mahantam pi na hoti? nanu yadā bhikkhu tāḷacchiddādīhi nikkhamati, tadā upādinnakaṃ khuddakaṃ hoti, yadā mahantaṃ attabhāvaṃ karoti, tadā mahantaṃ hoti, Mahā-Moggallānattherassa viyā ti* (Vism 398).

94 The Chinese passage 如是神通, 如是神力 is the equivalent of *evaṃ mahiddhike evaṃ mahānubhāve* (D I 78) and is translated by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 216) as: "[i]n the (greatness of) supernormal power and might". Oddly, Nyanatusita translates "such is his great power, such is his great might" (2021, 525), although it is clear from the Pāli passage that the adjectives refer to the sun and moon and not to the meditator. Remarkably, the Chinese rendition of *mahiddhika* seems to be 神通, which in other parts of the **Vimuttimagga* is used to translate *abhiññā* (see 五神通; T1648.32.0441a27).

> sun and the moon. He resolves with the knowledge "Let it be at hand" and it becomes at hand. The meditator, either sitting or lying down, touches and strokes with the hand the sun and the moon.[95]

Given that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* does not specify any *kasiṇa*, in the *Visuddhimagga* it is written that there is not any specific *kasiṇa* attainment.[96] This is sustained also by the *Saddhammappakāsinī* (Paṭis-a II 661). The *Saddhammappakāsinī* does not provide further information on this power.

The *Visuddhimagga* narrates a method to perform this power that seems to involve the enlargement of the sun and the moon (the *anupādinnaka* 'inanimate' things). The text specifies that it is not the body of the meditator (the *upādinnaka* 'animate') that becomes bigger. However, before this explanatory passage, there is a phrase that would suggest the existence of another method that can be adopted in order to touch the sun and the moon. That is the possibility to go, perhaps either with the physical body or with the mind-made body, up to the sun and the moon to touch them. The *Visuddhimagga* introduces this possibility as follows: "if he desires to go and touch [the sun and the moon], he goes and touches".[97] This method seems to be the application of the previous *iddhi*, namely the power to go through the ether as a winged bird, to the task of touching the sun and the moon. This case portrays that there were disputes about how these powers actually came into being. Exegetes seem to ask questions such as: "What actually happens when the text says that the monk touches the sun and the moon?" "Does the monk touch the sun and the moon by extending his arm?" "Does he bring the sun and the moon within his reach of touch?" "Does he go to them and touch them?", etc. These powers were, therefore, the object of theoretical investigation and one could almost argue that they were taken seriously.

7.4.11 (8) *yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena va saṃvatteti/vasaṃ vatteti*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

> He exercises the bodily power as far as the Brahmā world. If the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, desires to go to the Brahmā world, although far he resolves on closeness "Let it be close" and it becomes close, although close he resolves on farness "Let it be far" and it becomes far; although many he resolves on the paucity "Let it be few" and it becomes few, although few he resolves on the abundance "Let it be many" and it becomes many; he sees the form of Brahmā through the divine eye, he hears the sounds of Brahmā through the divine ear, he understands the mind of Brahmā through the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others]. If the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, desires to go to the Brahmā world with a visible body, he changes the mind according to the body, he fixes the mind according to the body; having changed the mind according to the body, having fixed the

95 行已手摸日月，如是神通，如是神力。彼坐禪人有禪人有神通，得心自在，以是修行心，入第四禪，安詳出，手*摸日月。以智受持："此當成近手"彼成近手。彼坐禪人，或坐或臥，以手*摸捫日月。(T1648.32.0442b24-29).

96 *n' atth' ettha kasiṇasamāpattiniyamo* (Vism 398).

97 *svāyaṃ yadi icchati gantvā parāmasituṃ, gantvā parāmasati* (Vism 398).

mind according to the body, having reached perceptions of pleasure and lightness he goes to the Brahmā world with a visible body. If the possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, desires to go to the Brahmā world with an invisible body, he changes the body according to the mind, he fixes the body according to the mind; having changed the body according to the mind, having fixed the body according to the mind, having reached perceptions of pleasure and lightness he goes to the Brahmā world with an invisible body. He creates, in front of Brahmā, a physical form which is made of mind, with all limbs and [bodily] parts, without defect of any faculties. If the possessor of the psychic power walks up and down, then the creation as well walks up and down; if the possessor of the psychic power stands, then the creation as well stands; if the possessor of the psychic power sits, then the creation as well sits; if the possessor of the psychic power lies down on the bed, then the creation as well lies down on the bed; if the possessor of the psychic power emits smoke, then the creation as well emits smoke; if the possessor of the psychic power flames, then the creation as well flames; if the possessor of the psychic power expounds the Doctrine, then the creation as well expounds the Doctrine; if the possessor of the psychic power asks a question, then the creation as well asks a question; if the possessor of the psychic power answers to the asked question, then the creation as well answers to the asked question; if the possessor of the psychic power stands in front of Brahmā, talks with him, enters into a conversation with him, then the creation as well stands in front of Brahmā, talks with him, enters into a conversation with him; therefore, whatever the possessor of the psychic power does, verily, the creation does the same.[98]

Visuddhimagga:

The text explains the method commenting upon the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*:

In this context, '**although far he resolves on closeness**' [means that] having emerged from the *jhāna* which serves as foundation, he adverts to

98 *yāva Brahmalokā pi kāyena vasaṃ vattetī ti. sace so iddhimā cetovasippatto Brahmalokaṃ gantukāmo hoti, dūre pi santike adhiṭṭhāti santike hotū ti santike hoti, santike pi dūre adhiṭṭhāti dūre hotū ti dūre hoti; bahukam pi thokaṃ adhiṭṭhāti thokaṃ hotū ti thokaṃ hoti, thokam pi bahukaṃ adhiṭṭhāti bahukaṃ hotū ti bahukaṃ hoti; dibbena cakkhunā tassa Brahmuno rūpaṃ passata, dibbāya sotadhātuyā tassa Brahmuno saddaṃ suṇāti, cetopariyañāṇena tassa Brahmuno cittaṃ pajānāti. sace so iddhimā cetovasippatto dissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gantukāmo hoti, kāyavasena cittaṃ pariṇāmeti, kāyavasena cittaṃ adhiṭṭhāti; kāyavasena cittaṃ pariṇāmetvā kāyavasena cittaṃ adhiṭṭhahitvā sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca okkamitvā dissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gacchati. sace so iddhimā cetovasippatto adissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gantukāmo hoti, cittavasena kāyaṃ pariṇāmeti, cittavasena kāyaṃ adhiṭṭhāti; cittavasena kāyaṃ pariṇāmetvā cittavasena kāyaṃ adhiṭṭhahitvā sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca okkamitvā adissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gacchati. so tassa Brahmuno purato rūpaṃ abhinimmināti manomayaṃ sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ ahinindriyaṃ. sace so iddhimā caṅkamati, nimmito pi tattha caṅkamati; sace so iddhimā tiṭṭhati, nimmito pi tattha tiṭṭhati; sace so iddhimā nisīdati, nimmito pi tattha nisīdati; sace so iddhimā seyyaṃ kappeti, nimmito pi tattha seyyaṃ kappeti; sace so iddhimā dhūpāyati, nimmito pi tattha dhūpāyati; sace so iddhimā pajjalati, nimmito pi tattha pajjalati; sace so iddhimā dhammaṃ bhāsati, nimmito pi tattha dhammaṃ bhāsati; sace so iddhimā pañhaṃ pucchati, nimmito pi tattha pañhaṃ pucchati; sace so iddhimā pañhaṃ puṭṭho visajjeti, nimmito pi tattha pañhaṃ puṭṭho visajjeti; sace so iddhimā tena Brahmunā saddhiṃ santiṭṭhati sallapati sākacchaṃ samāpajjati, nimmito pi tattha tena Brahmunā saddhiṃ santiṭṭhati sallapati sākacchaṃ samāpajjati; yañ ñad eva hi so iddhimā karoti, taṃ tad eva hi so nimmito karotī ti. ayaṃ adhiṭṭhānā iddhi* (Paṭis II 209-10).

> the farness of either the gods' world or the Brahmā world [thus:] "Let it be close"; having adverted, having done the preparatory work, he attained again [the *jhāna*] and resolves with the knowledge "Let it be close" and it becomes close. This is the method also concerning the remaining passages.[99]

The method seems to be as follows:

emerging from the *jhāna* which serves as foundation	+	he adverts to the target in order to change it (this act seems to be defined as 'preparatory work')	+	he attains again [the *jhāna*]	+	he resolves with the knowledge "Let it be Y"	=	it becomes Y
pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya		[X] *āvajjati* (= *parikamma*) [Y *hotu*]		*puna samāpajjitvā*		*ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti* [Y *hotu*]		[Y] *hoti*

This method resembles the one exposed to the multiplication of the body, in which the meditator enters into and emerges from the *jhāna* twice (see above § 7.4.4).

**Vimuttimagga*:

> The body rises up to the Brahmā world. The meditator is a possessor of psychic powers, who has attained mastery over the mind, and goes to the Brahmā world at will. Having cultivated the mind with the four *iddhipāda*s, although far he resolves on closeness, although close he resolves on farness, although many he resolves on the paucity, although few he resolves on the abundance. He sees the form of Brahmā through the divine eye, he hears the sounds of Brahmā through the divine ear, he understands the mind of Brahmā through the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others]. The meditator has three kinds of movements, but he goes to the Brahmā world through two movements. This is the teaching of the power of resolving (受持變 = *adhiṭṭhāna iddhi*) [explained] in full.[100]

My translation of this **Vimuttimagga*'s passage significantly differs in some points from the one made by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 216-17). For instance, I assume that the Indian form behind the Chinese translation of 如是四如意足, 以如是修行心 (T1648.32.0442c01-02) was something like **ye cattāro iddhipādā, tehi bhavetvā*. This is supported by textual passages such as: *so imesu catūsu iddhipādesu cittaṃ paribhāvetvā* (Paṭis I 111). My translation highlights the influence of Paṭis I 111 on the **Vimuttimagga*, whereas the expression is less common in the *Visuddhimagga*. I should also highlight that the translation by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995) does not make any sense and so it strongly requires a revision. In the former translation, after having

99 *tattha* ***dūre pi santike adhiṭṭhātī*** *ti pādakajjhānato vuṭṭhāya, dūre devalokaṃ vā Brahmalokaṃ vā āvajjati: santike hotū ti, āvajjitvā parikammaṃ katvā puna samāpajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti: santike hotū ti santike hoti. esa nayo sesapadesu pi* (Vism 402).

100 起身乃至梵世。彼坐禪人有神通得心自在, 樂行梵世。如是四如意足, 以如是修行心, 於遠受持近, 於近受持遠, 或多受持少, 或少受持多。以天眼見梵天色, 以天耳聞梵天聲, 以他心智知梵天心。彼坐禪人三行, 以二行, 行於梵世。是法於一切受持變 (T1648.32.0442b29-c05).

declared that the meditator can reach the Brahmā world, it is stated that "[t]hese are the four bases of supernormal power. By training the mind thus, he resolves […]" (Ehara et al. [1961] 1995, 216). However, this is wrong since the action of reaching the Brahmā world or the other *iddhi*s are, at the very most, *iddhividhā̆* and not *iddhipāda*s. Therefore, it would make sense to assume a relative-correlative construction for 如是 […] 以如是. Furthermore, in having to hypothesise the Indian form which underpins the Chinese translation, it would seem that *bhavetvā* or something similar is the best choice to translate 修行. Nyanatusita's translation is closer to my interpretation: "with such [development of the] four bases of supernormal power, and with such development of mind" (2021, 525), although in mine it is clearer that the cultivation of mind concerns the *iddhipāda*s.

Another important correction concerns the passage 彼坐禪人三行, 以二行, 行於梵世 (T1648.32.0442c04-05), which I have translated as: "the meditator has three kinds of movements, but he goes to the Brahmā world through two movements". This passage was translated in English as: "That yogin has three formations. He goes to the Brahmā's world through two formations" (Ehara et al. [1961] 1995, 216) and "The meditator, having three formations, goes to Brahmā's world through two formations" (Nyanatusita 2021, 526). Moreover, footnote 4 of Ehara et al. specifies that 'formations' is the translation of *sankhārā*, an interpretation somewhat supported by Nyanatusita (2021, 526 n. 45). Nonetheless, these interpretations are not entirely convincing. Therefore, it makes more sense to assume that the characters 三行 indicate the three kinds of movement just as in T1648.32.0442b20: 於是三行步行風行心行 "In this context, there are three kinds of movement: 1) movement on foot, 2) movement on air, 3) movement through the mind". Furthermore, the **Vimuttimagga* states that the meditator goes to the Brahmā world with two kinds of movement and in the *Visuddhimagga*'s section concerning the power to go up to the Brahmā world it is written that:

> And when he goes, if he wishes, he can go by walk after having created a path in the space through the power of the earth *kasiṇa*. If he wishes, he can go through the air just as a tuft of cotton wool after having resolved for the air through the power of the air *kasiṇa*.[101]

This passage resembles the first two kinds of movement exposed in the **Vimuttimagga* in the section concerning the possibility to go through the space as a winged bird:

101 *evaṃ gacchanto ca sace icchati, pathavīkasiṇavasena ākāse maggaṃ nimminitvā padasā gacchati. sace icchati vāyokasiṇavasena vāyuṃ adhiṭṭhahitvā tūlapicu viya vāyunā gacchati* (Vism 404).

Table 7.6 Comparison between the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*

Vimuttimagga	***Visuddhimagga* 404**
Then the meditator attains the concentration with the earth *kasiṇa*, resolves for a path in the space and goes on foot 於是坐禪人得地一切入定, 於虛空受持道路以步行 (T1648.32.0442b20-21).	He can go by walk after having created a path in the space through the power of the earth *kasiṇa* (*pathavīkasiṇavasena ākāse maggaṃ nimminitvā padasā gacchati*).
Or if [the meditator] attains the concentration with the air *kasiṇa*, he resolves for the air and so just as cotton wool he goes on air 若得風一切入定, 受持風如綿縷如風行 (T1648.32.0442b21-22).	He can go through the air just as a tuft of cotton wool after having resolved for the air through the power of the air *kasiṇa* (*vāyokasiṇavasena vāyuṃ adhiṭṭhahitvā tūlapicu viya vāyunā gacchati*).

Interestingly enough, it seems that in the account concerning the possibility of rising up to the Brahmā world, the *Visuddhimagga* reports in full the two kinds of movement that are only mentioned within the parallel passage in the **Vimuttimagga*. However, the **Vimuttimagga* reports all three kinds of movement in the account which concerns the possibility to go through the space as a winged bird (§ 7.4.9), whereas the *Visuddhimagga* does not mention them at all. It seems to me that both texts borrowed this passage from a common source, which may be the *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*.[102] The reasons for this hypothesis are as follows:

1. The *Visuddhimagga* in its *Iddhividhāniddesa* shows to make use of the *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā* to explain what a meditator should do in case the expected marvellous performance does not succeed the first time (Vism 387; see below § 7.5). This is evidence that in the old *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā* there was a treatise concerning *iddhi*s (notably, it seems that the same account is not reported in the actual *Sāratthappakāsinī*).
2. The three kinds of movement in the **Vimuttimagga*, as it has been already shown above (§ 7.4.9), are connected with an account in the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta* (S V 284). This account that involves the unification of the body in the mind and *vice versa*, and the reaching of perceptions of pleasure and lightness, occurs only in the *Saṃyuttanikāya* among the four principal Nikāyas (*Dīgha-*, *Majjhima-*, *Saṃyutta-*, *Aṅguttara-*). This allows us to assume that a comment on this passage was originally part of the *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*.
3. The *Visuddhimagga* reports the account concerning the kinds of movement, whereas the **Vimuttimagga* just mentions it and does not report it when the *Visuddhimagga* does. These facts allow us to assume that the *Visuddhimagga* did not borrow the account from the **Vimuttimagga*, but from another source, and the fact that the

102 Here, I do not mean the actual Pāli commentary known to us also as *Sāratthappakāsinī*, but the old commentary (*sīhaḷa-aṭṭhakathā*) that served as a source for the writing down of the actual Pāli commentary. Concerning the problem of the names of the commentaries, see Endo 2013, 8. Therefore, in what follows, I will use *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā* for the lost commentary that served as a source, whereas the *Sāratthappakāsinī* is called *Saṃyutta-aṭṭhakathā*.

> *Visuddhimagga* reports two kinds of movement that are the first two kinds of movement exposed in the **Vimuttimagga* would allow us to think that the source was the same.

The exegesis of the *Saddhammappakāsinī* (Paṭis-a II 656-63) can be found translated in full in Appendix 5. We may note that the commentary seems to suggest many methods to perform the power. It is possible, indeed, to physically go to the Brahmā world, using the power of resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*). Alternatively, it is possible to remain in the sitting position of meditation and communicate with Brahmā using the *abhiññā*s. Moreover, it is mentioned that it is possible to send a creation (*nimmita*). Finally, the *Saddhammappakāsinī* reports a query (Paṭis-a II 662-3), asking if the practitioner goes to the Brahmā world by himself (viz. with the physical body) or if he sent a creation (*nimmita*; viz. sent a *manomayakāya*). An Elder answered that he does as he likes, but what has been handed down is the first, probably referring to the short description of the *Dīghanikāya*, according to which the practitioner exercises bodily power. Thus, in this way, the commentary provides a justification of the expanded explanation provided by *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

7.5 Conclusion on the *Iddhividhā̆*

At first, this chapter has highlighted that when in the Buddhist texts the pericope occurs concerning some extraordinary performances, the term *iddhividhā̆* (rather than the plain *iddhi*) is always involved. Therefore, *iddhividhā̆* is less ambivalent than *iddhi*, since it occurs in only one context. Its translation can be something like 'a variety (*vidhā̆*) of psychophysical powers (*iddhi*)', considering that 'power' indicates the ability to do something, a performance, which is 'psychophysical' because it is an act that involves the body (*kāya*) and is produced through the action of the mind (*citta*). Furthermore, the thorny problem concerning the involvement of the body made of mind (*manomayakāya*) in the execution of the extraordinary capacities has been analysed. Although many scholars sustained that these kinds of marvellous performances were thought to be performed through the body made of mind, no one provided strong evidence to support this thesis. A glance into the Vedic texts that deal with similar topics has shown that it could be reasonable to believe that the body made of mind is involved in these kinds of extraordinary performances. However, it should be stressed that this does not mean that the use of the body made of mind is mandatory to perform these extraordinary acts. In the *Saṃyuttanikāya* (i.e. S V 282), the Buddha can go up to the Brahmā world with either the body made of mind (*manomayena kāyena*) or the physical body (*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*). A possible interconnection among powers is also highlighted by the Cūḷapanthaka's story. The cross reference of the literary records has shown that when Cūḷapanthaka performs the first *iddhi* of the multiplication of the body he creates mind-made bodies (*manomayakāya*). Although this is only made explicit in the exegetical literature, there is evidence that would suggest that this interconnection could have already been in existence at the time of the canonical texts. Therefore, this could be a good example of how the exegetical literature made explicit something implicit. Here, in the process of adding information, the exegetical literature reported the story of Cūḷapanthaka which could have also already been in existence, however,

it would have been transmitted only orally and in a less authoritative channel as well as in connection to a more performative context.[103] This case study shows a virtuous interaction between canon and commentaries in reconstructing the reliability and antiquity of a story. Turning to the diachronic study of the *iddhividhă*, it must be specified that the analysis of Cūḷapanthaka's story was part of the diachronic analysis of the first *iddhi*, the multiplication of the body (*eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti*), and was a short digression from the main purpose of the section. Indeed, the analysis of the *iddhividhă* from the canon to the commentaries has been mainly narrowed to some relevant accounts concerning the methodology to perform the powers. The first *iddhi*, the multiplication of the body, involved some difficulties, which were due to the idiosyncratic exegetical formulation of the *Visuddhimagga*. The analysis showed the involvement of part of the consciousness process doctrine (*cittavīthi*) and allusions to the Buddhist cosmology; the result was an exegetical account that underlined the transformative power of the fourth *jhāna*. It is interesting to note that despite how the exegesis provides explanations involving both the microscopical (i.e. *cittavīthi*) and macroscopical (i.e. cosmology) levels, it does not really explain how it is possible that these supernatural feats can occur. From the analysis of the *Visuddhimagga*'s account, it seems that the meditator brings the object of meditation, which is the expected result, up to the divine realm, called *rūpāvacara*, and this act ensures that the expected result would then become real in the humankind realm, which is part of the *kāmāvacara*. How this is possible, however, is not explained. After the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*, which seems to have the same nature of the *jhāna* and belongs to the *rūpāvacara*, the desired feat almost magically becomes real in the *kāmāvacara*, in our world. It is like the meditator's act of getting in touch with the subtler and more rarefied divine realm of the *rūpāvacara* (which corresponds to the cosmological *rūpadhātu*, the realm with mind-made gods) would provide access to some of the divine power, which can be – metaphorically for us but factually from the perspective of the Buddhist narrative – brought down to our coarser world. The body made of mind, *manomayakāya*, belongs to that same rarefied level of existence, the *rūpadhātu*, and thus it may make sense that, before being able to perform extraordinary psychophysical feats in this world, the meditator must come into contact with its own body belonging to another and higher divine realm. What seems clear is that in the performance of these extraordinary capacities there is an interaction between different levels of existence which conflate one into the other; the boundaries between different realms of existence get blurred.[104]

Turning to a more general overview of the exegetical accounts, the comparison between the sources highlighted both differences and similarities in the expositions of the method to perform *iddhividhă*. On the one hand, we have the similarities which might lead us to believe that the sources are recounting the same method. This is exemplified by the third *iddhi* (*tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati seyyathā pi ākāse*), for which the same method is prescribed in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*,

103 On the performance of narrative, see for instance Brancaccio 2022.

104 A study on the boundaries between the human and divine worlds that blend in relation to festive activities is provided in De Notariis 2024.

**Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*. In this case, we even find the use of *āvajjati/āvajjitvā* (已轉成轉) in the **Vimuttimagga*, which often omits it. On the other hand, there are sometimes so many differences in the expositions that might lead us to believe that the methods recounted in the sources are different. This is exemplified by the fact that on some occasions the *Visuddhimagga* seems to prescribe a double entrance in the *jhāna* state. This is the case for two *iddhi*s: the first (*eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti*) and the eighth (*yāva Brahma-lokā pi kāyena vasaṃ vatteti*). In the case of the latter, given the paucity of information in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and **Vimuttimagga* concerning the method, we would have difficulties in determining whether the *Visuddhimagga* is moving a step further away from previous sources, or whether it is just providing an ancient exegesis. However, in the case of the *iddhi* concerning the multiplication of the body (the first one), a departure from the previous sources is quite clear since they report the full process with only one occurrence of the action of entering into the *jhāna*. Therefore, we may wonder why the *Visuddhimagga* enlarged the exposition. The definitive answer probably lies in the sources used by Buddhaghosa to write it, although the *Visuddhimagga* itself provides some hints to construct a hypothesis. In this regard, there indeed occurs a prescription about what the practitioner should do in the case that the method to perform *iddhi*s does not provide the expected results:

> If he does not succeed (*ijjhati*) in this way, having done again the preparatory work (*parikamma*), having attained also for the second time [the *jhāna* that is the foundation of the higher knowledges], emerged, he should resolve a second time. Therefore, it is stated within the *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*: "He continues to attain [the *jhāna*] once, twice".[105]

This passage provides evidence that an older source (i.e. the *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*) preserved an account in which the action of entering into the *jhāna* more than once is significant. As it has already been highlighted in the section concerning the eighth *iddhi* (§ 7.4.11), the lost *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā* was reasonably an exegetic source used by Buddhaghosa to write his treatise on the *iddhi*s. Then, perhaps we may assume that the methods used to perform *iddhi*s with a double entering into the *jhāna*, is the result of a reshaping of older sources in which some accounts prescribing multiple attainments of the *jhāna* state (like the one cited above) are conflated with the basic method to perform the *iddhi*s.

Furthermore, in the *Visuddhimagga* we find a lexicon change that might affect the comprehension. The *kasiṇa*s, for instance, are used metonymically to indicate the *jhāna* state attained through them. The *Visuddhimagga* also makes extensive use of the word *parikamma*, which does not occur in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and **Vimuttimagga*'s accounts. The term seems to be mostly used as a synonym for *āvajjana*. In the case of the fourth *iddhi* (*paṭhaviyā pi ummujja-nimmujjaṃ karoti seyyathā pi udake*), for instance, the *Visuddhimagga*'s explanation seems to be even less clear than the previous ones, since it loses the stage of *āvajjana*, replacing it with *parikamma*. The term *āvajjana* seems, however, to survive in the **Vimuttimagga*: "adverts

105 *sace evaṃ na ijjhati, puna parikammaṃ katvā dutiyam pi samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya adhiṭṭhātabbaṃ. Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathayaṃ hi ekavāraṃ dvevāraṃ samāpajjituṃ vaṭṭatī ti vuttam* (Vism 387).

(轉 = *āvajjati*) a delimited [amount of] earth" (轉地作隔; T1648.32.0442b14).[106] The **Vimuttimagga* turned out to be, in fact, a source of paramount importance for understanding the Theravāda process of developing psychophysical powers. It connects the canonical explanation of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* with the more elaborated version provided by the *Visuddhimagga*. It testifies, for instance, to a narration of the process in which the action of entering into and exiting from the *jhāna* state is explicitly included. Generally speaking, the **Vimuttimagga* often provides justification of some *Visuddhimagga* statements, showing that they are actually based on older sources and are not a mere addition by Buddhaghosa. Moreover, the comparison between the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga* reveals that these two texts can provide complementary information for the study of the Theravāda exegesis. An example is the three kinds of movement to travel in the air. The list of the three movements (三行) is only given in full in the **Vimuttimagga*'s account concerning the sixth *iddhi* (*ākāse pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā pi pakkhī sakuṇo*), but the kinds of movement are also attested within the *Visuddhimagga*, which, however, does not provide the full list when it mentions some of them.[107] Cross-checking data, it would seem reasonable to believe that the two texts had independently drawn material from a third source, which was most likely the old and nowadays lost *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*. This would demonstrate that the **Vimuttimagga* should be taken into account in the study of the Pāli commentarial literature, and more generally in the diachronic study of the Theravāda exegesis.

Finally, we should highlight that this chapter on the *iddhividhǎ* also reconfirms a tendency already noted in the previous chapter concerning the *manomayakāya*, namely the propensity of the commentarial literature to increasingly add exegetic material over time. It has been decided to provide it with a name: the 'interpretative accretion process'. During this process, the innovations are seen, from an emic point of view, as further specifications, despite the fact that they can deeply affect the actual interpretation of a topic. Notwithstanding the presence of innovations, we may note that the inner structure of the method remains the one provided by the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, which once again proves to be a key text in the exegetical development of Theravāda Buddhism.

106 Cf. "having decided (*paricchinditvā*) 'Let the earth in this quantity become water', having done the preparatory work (*parikammaṃ katvā*) […]" (*ettake ṭhāne pathavī udakaṃ hotū ti paricchinditvā parikammaṃ katvā*; Vism 395).

107 Incidentally, we found reference of a movement towards the world of Brahmā also in the **Vimuttimagga*'s account concerning the *manomayakāya* (see § 6.4.4). This, I suppose, is referring to the movement through the mind (心行) given that the description of that kind of movement (see **Vimuttimagga*'s account at § 7.4.9) resembles the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s account (§ 7.4.11) in which the meditator creates, in front of Brahmā, a physical form which is made of mind.

8 *Abhiññā*

Index 8.1 Element of the Divine Ear (*Dibbasotadhātu*). – 8.2 Knowledge by Comprehension of the Minds [of Others] (*Cetopariyañāṇa*). – 8.3 Knowledge of Recollection of Former Existences (*Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*). – 8.4 Knowledge of the Fall and Rise [of Beings] (*Cutūpapātañāṇa*). – 8.5 *Abhiññā*s: The Vedic Background of the Buddhist Use of the Term 'Divine'. – 8.6 Conclusion on the *Abhiññā*s.

The term *abhiññā* derives from a Sanskrit *abhi-√jñā* and, therefore, its Sanskrit equivalent is *abhijñā*. It is worth noting that the word *abhiññā* does not appear within the exposition of the extraordinary capacities in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* as a technical term. In the *Dīghanikāya*, we find the term used in this sense in the *Dasuttarasutta* (D 34), a late canonical text in which a reference to the six *abhiññā*s occurs (*cha abhiññā*; D III 281). In the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the term *abhiññā* occurs in the phrasing *sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti* (D I 62), but here it is just a short form of the absolutive *abhiññāya*, from the verb *abhijānāti*, having, in this context, the meaning of 'knowing by experience'. Further occurrences of the verb *abhijānāti* in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* have the meaning of 'recalling' or 'remembering'.[1] In its technical sense, the term *abhiññā* could be literally translated as 'super-knowledge' since the prefix *abhi-* often means an intensification (PED s.v. "abhi-") and the root *√jñā* means 'to know'. However, this translation might sound a bit naive or unsophisticated, so the rendering 'higher knowledge' will be adopted. It is worth noting that the term could have another less specific meaning related to the action of knowing, namely 'to know fully'.

1 "'Do you remember, great king, that this question has been put to other samaṇas and brāhmaṇas?' 'I do remember, Lord, that this question has been put to other samaṇas and brāhmaṇas" (*abhijānāsi no tvaṃ mahā-rāja imaṃ pañhaṃ aññe samaṇa-brāhmaṇe pucchittho ti* [Be *pucchitā ti*]? *abhijānām ahaṃ bhante imaṃ pañhaṃ aññe samaṇa-brāhmaṇe pucchitā ti*; D I 51).

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This meaning occurs, for instance, in the *Suttanipāta*, a text that, according to some scholars, would display the older strata of the Pāli language.[2]

When Pāli texts speak about the 'six higher knowledges' (*cha abhiññā*), *iddhi*s are included, albeit, it might be argued, *iddhi*s have their own specificity that differentiates them slightly from other *abhiññā*s in terms of outputs. What seems to differentiate *iddhi*s from the other *abhiññā*s is that the *iddhi*s result in a physical performance, whereas the *abhiññā*s result in a new knowledge (*ñāṇa*).[3] A similar distinction is made also by Jayatilleke (1963, 422-3), who distinguishes between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'. In the exposition of the *iddhi*s it is stated that the monk can multiply himself, can disappear or appear at will, and can achieve freedom of movement and mastery of natural elements. In the expositions of other *abhiññā*s, on the other hand, a new knowledge of something is attained: knowledge of sounds, knowledge of other minds, knowledge of recollection of former existences, knowledge of the fall and rise of beings according to their *kamma*, and, eventually, knowledge of extinction of the noxious influxes. However, a connection of the *iddhi*s with the semantic range of 'knowledge' cannot be completely ruled out. In some canonical classifications, *iddhi*s are one of the *vijjā*s (e.g. D I 100) or one of the *paññā*s (e.g. D I 124), and both *vijjā* and *paññā* are associated with the action of knowing, as they respectively mean 'science/practical knowledge' and 'wisdom/insight'.[4] This may indicate that the experiential characteristic of *iddhi*s can, somehow, lead to or be connected with 'knowledge' in broad terms. This might justify the inclusion of the *iddhividhă* in the list of the *abhiññā*s.[5]

Next, in order to better understand the *abhiññā*s and the kinds of knowledge they can bring, this chapter will present the canonical pericopes and main exegetical accounts adopted in the present study. Each *abhiññā* will be presented, at first, through its textual sources and the exegetical method to develop it will be discussed. According to the circumstances, other topics will also be involved. These arguments or issues either arise from the plain reading of the sources or are considered as a point of interest for the general aims of the book and as well as for the following chapter. Finally, from the point of view of the Vedic texts, the chapter (at § 8.5) analyses the concept of 'divine' (*dibba*), which is involved in some extraordinary capacities, viz. the 'element of the divine ear' (*dibbasotadhātu*) and the 'divine eye' (*dibbacakkhu*). This topic will, to some extent, introduce the next chapter (9) concerning the assessment of the extraordinary capacities in the path

2 See Gómez [2010] 2011, 515, n. 5 for some references of this use of the term *abhiññā* in the *Suttanipāta*. Some scholars who considered the *Suttanipāta* part of the older stratum of the Buddhist texts are Nakamura ([1980] 1987, 44-6) and Hirakawa (1990, 77). However, not all scholars agree about the supposed antiquity of the *Suttanipāta*; in this regard, see, for instance, de Jong 1991, 7; 1997, 97-8 and Cousins 2013, 18-19.

3 It should be pointed out that the commentarial literature tried to ascribe the term *ñāṇa* to the *iddhividhă* (e.g. Sv I 222-3), however, the term *ñāṇa* was already naturally connected with four of the other *abhiññā*s (e.g. *cetopariya-ñāṇa*, *pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*, *cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*, *āsavakhaya-ñāṇa*) and in the other one, the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*), it is easy to understand why it could be considered a *ñāṇa*, since it results in a kind of knowledge: the knowledge of sounds divine or human; far or near. The oldest references to the compound *iddhividha-ñāṇa* occur mainly in Abhidhammic works, such as the *Paṭṭhāna* (e.g. Tikap II 166) or in the semi-Abhidhammic *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (e.g. Paṭis I 111).

4 See s.vv. "vijjā" and "paññā" in PED.

5 The above considerations are mostly taken from my previous work: De Notariis 2019a, 235-9.

of liberation. The latter chapter will bring the process of divinisation a step further, claiming a greater importance in the path of liberation.

8.1 Element of the Divine Ear (*Dibbasotadhātu*)

> The term divine here [is used] because
> of similarity to the 'divine'
>
> *dibbasadisattā dibbā*
> (Vism 407)

The element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*) is a divine version of the hearing function and, as such, allows the one who develops it to hear sounds outside the range of normal hearing perception. As already noted in § 2.1, this *abhiññā* has not been perceived as particularly valuable in itself within previous scholarship. In this chapter, we will demonstrate how the Theravāda tradition understood the process of developing it, and how the latter seems to imply a sort of extension of the effect of the *jhāna* state.

Basic formula
He hears, with the element of the divine ear which is purified and beyond the human one, both sounds, divine and human, distant and close.[6]

Simile
Just as, great king, a man in the middle of a main road would hear the sound of a drum, a tambour, a trumpet, a cymbal, and also a kettledrum. He might think: "This is the sound of a drum", "This is the sound of a tambour", "This is the sound of a trumpet, a cymbal, and also a kettledrum". Precisely in the same way, great king, when the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained impassibility, the monk directs and turns the mind to the divine ear.[7]

8.1.1 Textual Material for the Study of the *Dibbasotadhātu*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

The text introduces the exegesis with the following question:

6 *so dibbāya sotadhātuyā visuddhāya atikkanta-mānusikāya ubho sadde suṇāti, dibbe ca mānuse ca, ye dūre santike ca* (D I 79). Here and in the following *abhiññā*s pericopes, I omitted the introductory phrase: *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte* **[specific power inflected in dative/genitive]** *cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*.

7 *seyyathā pi mahā-rāja puriso addhāna-magga-paṭipanno so suṇeyya bheri-saddam pi mutiṅga-saddam pi saṅkha-paṇava-deṇḍima-saddam-pi. tassa evam assa: bheri-saddo iti pi, mutiṅga-saddo iti pi saṅkha-paṇava-deṇḍima-saddo iti pi. evam eva kho mahārāja bhikkhu evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte dibbāya sota-dhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* (D I 79).

> How is it that the understanding (*paññā*) concerning the full immersion in the signs of sounds in their difference and unity through the pervasion of applied thought is the knowledge of purification of the ear element?[8]

The text prescribes to develop, at first, the *iddhipāda*s (*iddhipādaṃ bhāveti*; Paṭis I 112). Consequently, it prescribes to apply the mind to various sound-signs (e.g. *dure pi saddānaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikaroti*; Paṭis I 112). Then, the mind is defined as cultivated and able to be applied to the knowledge of purification of the ear element (*so tattha bhāvitena cittena parisuddhena pariyodātena sotadhātuvisuddhiñāṇāya*; Paṭis I 112).

Visuddhimagga:

> In this context, 'with the element of the divine ear', the term divine here [is used] because of similarity to the divine. For the gods have the element of ear purified and divine which is able to catch a [sound] object even if far since it is free from impurities, is unobstructed by bile, phlegm, blood, etc.; it is created thanks to their result of good conduct. And the monk's element of ear devoted to knowing, which was developed by the power of mental culture and energy, is, indeed, of such quality, which is divine because it has similarity to the divine one. Moreover, it is divine because it is attained through divine dwelling and because of its reliance on divine dwelling.[9]

Method:

> The monk attains the absorption which is the basis of the *abhiññā*s and emerges. Through the mind in its preparatory-work concentration, the gross sound in the distance, which is in the normal range of hearing, such as the lion in the forest, should be adverted to [...] beginning with all the gross sounds in this way, the subtle sounds should be successively adverted to. The sound-sign (*saddanimitta*) of the sounds from the eastern direction should be considered (*manasikātabba*) [...], the sound-sign of the gross and subtle sounds should be considered. These sounds are also evident to his mind in its normal state, but they are much more evident to his mind in its preparatory-work concentration. He gives attention to his sound-sign in this way: "Now the divine element of ear will arise", so having taken a certain object among these sounds, the mind-door-adverting (*manodvārāvajjana*) arises. After its cessation, either four or five *javana*s will impel (*javanti*), the first three or four of them are of the sense sphere and they are called 'preparatory work' (*parikamma*), access (*upacāra*), conformity (*anuloma*), change of lineage (*gotrabhu*); the fourth or fifth is the absorption mind (*appanācitta*) which belongs to

8 *kathaṃ vitakkavipphāravasena nānattekattasaddanimittānaṃ pariyogāhane paññā sodadhātuvisuddhiñāṇaṃ?* (Paṭis I 112).

9 *tatra dibbāya sotadhātuyā ti ettha dibbasadisattā dibbā. devānaṃ hi sucaritakammanibbattā pittasemharuhirādīhi apaḷibuddhā upakkilesavimuttatāya dūre pi ārammaṇaṃ sampaṭicchanasamatthā dibbappasādasotadhātu hoti. ayañ cā pi imassa bhikkhuno viriyabhāvanābalanibbattā ñāṇasotadhātu tādisā yevā ti dibbasadisattā dibbā. api ca dibbavihāravasena paṭiladdhattā attanā ca dibbavihārasannissitattā pi dibbā* (Vism 407 = Ud-a 201 and Paṭis-a I 353; a similar explanation concerning the divine eye occurs in Vism 423; Ud-a 73; It-a II 27; Nidd-a II 376; Sp I 162-163; Paṭis-a I 53).

> the fourth absorption of the form sphere (*rūpāvacara*). In this context, the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) which arises together with the absorption mind (*appanācitta*) should be known as 'the element of the divine ear'.[10]

The method seems to be as follows:

he attains the absorption which is the basis of the *abhiññā*s and emerges	+	preparatory work, giving attention to gross and subtle sounds	+	mind-door-adverting arises	+	four or five *javana*s impel	=	the last *javana* is the absorption mind and the concomitant knowledge is the 'element of the divine ear'
abhiññāpādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya		*parikamma*		*manodvārāvajjana*		*cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti*		*appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dibbasotadhātū ti*

After entering and emerging from the *abhiññāpādakajjhāna* (the absorption which is the basis of the *abhiññās*), a sound is taken as object and the mental process that occurs resembles the entering in a *jhāna* state. Once the divine ear is attained, there is no need to attain the state of *jhāna* anymore:

When the *abhiññā* is attained in this way, he hears through the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of the *abhiññā* the sounds which are within the range of space touched by the object (*ārammaṇa*) of the absorption which is the basis (*pādakajjhāna*), without attaining again the absorption which is the basis.[11]

**Vimuttimagga*:

> Who develops the divine ear? How should it be developed? One who has attained mastery over the fourth *jhāna* [through] eight and two *kasiṇa*s,[12] from his own natural [i.e. physical] ear he develops the element of the divine ear (天耳界).

10 *tena bhikkhunā abhiññāpādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya parikammasamādhicittena paṭhamataraṃ pakatisotapathe dūre oḷāriko araññe sīhādinaṃ saddo āvajjitabbo* [...] *evaṃ sabboḷārikatopabhuti yathākkamena sukhumasaddā āvajjitabbā. tena puratthimāya disāya saddānaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ* [...] *oḷārikānam pi sukhumānam pi saddānaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ. tassa te saddā pākatikacittassā pi pākaṭā honti, parikammasamādhicittassa pana ativiya pākaṭā. tass' evaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikaroto: idāni dibbasotadhātu uppajjissatī ti tesu saddesu aññataraṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati; tasmiṃ niruddhe cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti, yesaṃ purimāni tīṇi, cattāri vā parikamma-upacārānuloma-gotrabhu-nāmakāni kāmāvacārāni, catutthaṃ pañcamaṃ vā appanācittaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ. tattha yaṃ tena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dibbasotadhātū ti veditabbā* (Vism 407-8).

11 *evaṃ adhigatābhiñño esa pādakajjhānārammaṇena phuṭṭhokāsabbhantaragate pi sadde puna pādakajjhānaṃ asamāpajjitvā pi abhiññāñāṇena suṇāti yeva* (Vism 408).

12 Cf. Nett 89 and As 400, quoted by Nyanatusita (2021, 529 n. 53).

Has he attained mastery over the four *jhāna*s [in the] *rūpadhātu*?[13] Yes, he develops it from there.[14] He also develops [it in] the four *jhāna*s.

How should it be developed? The beginner meditator cultivates (修) in this way, he attains through the mind mastery over the four *iddhipāda*s. He enters the fourth *jhāna* and serenely emerges from it, thereafter basing upon the element of his own natural ear if there is a distant sound he pays attention (作意; *manasikaroti*) to the sound sign (聲相; *sadda-nimitta*), or if there is a close sound he pays attention to the sound sign, if there is a gross sound he pays attention to the gross sound sign, or if there is a subtle sound he pays attention to the subtle sound sign, if there is an eastern sound he pays attention to the sound sign, he does the same for every direction. The meditator, with the mind developed (修行; *bhāvita*), purified and brightened (清白; *parisuddha*, *pariyodāta*) in this way, directs and turns the mind to the purified element of ear. The meditator through the divine element of ear which is purified and beyond the human one, hears both sounds, divine and human, distant and close.[15] In this regard, the ancient teachers (先師; *porāṇakatthera*) said: "The beginner meditator, at first, hears the sound of creatures living in his own body (自身衆生聲; *sadehasannisitapāṇakasaddā* in Vism 407), thereafter he hears the sound of creatures outside the body, then he hears the sound of creatures in any abode, proceeding in this way he increases the attention (作意; *manasikāra*)". It is also said: "The beginner meditator, initially, is not able to hear the sound of creatures living in his own body. For what reason? Because he cannot hear subtle sounds, through his natural ear he cannot perceive these [sound] objects. The beginner meditator [can hear] distant sounds of a conch, a drum, etc., these sounds have his own natural ear as basis". Through the knowledge of the divine ear (天耳智; *dibbasotañāṇa*) he should pay attention to the sound sign, he has to develop the knowledge of the divine ear [to hear] either subtle or gross sounds, either distant or close sounds; [he can do that] only with an ear which is a divine ear.[16] Here, the beginner meditator should not pay attention to the extremely fearful [sounds]. For what reason? Because [otherwise] he may long for desirable things called desirable sounds,[17] because the fearful sounds are said terror and the ear is frightened of knowing it. This [i.e. the divine ear] occurs with respect of three kinds of

13 Nyanatusita (2021, 529 n. 54) rightly points out how the **Vimuttimagga* discriminates between the 'fourth *jhāna*' (第四禪) and the 'four *jhāna*s' (四禪), although in this case he does not apply his own observation: "Why is the material sphere [the basis for this knowledge]? When he has achieved mastery in the fourth jhāna it can be given rise to" (2021, 529).

14 These questions and answers were translated by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 219) as follows: "[h]ow is the form element of the fourth meditation, *jhāna*, set free? It occurs then", specifying in the footnote that the questions and answers are not clear.

15 The Chinese passage 彼坐禪人如是以修行心清白, 以耳界清淨, 令心行增長。彼坐禪人以天耳界清淨過人耳聞兩聲, 所謂天聲人聲, 或遠或近。(T1648.32.0443a20-22) is the translation of *so tattha bhāvitena cittena parisuddhena pariyodātena sotadhātuvisuddhiñāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti, so dibbāya sotadhātuyā visuddhāya atikkantamānusikāya ubho sadde suṇāti, dibbe ca mānuse ca, ye dūre ca santike ca* (Paṭis I 112). This correspondence was not noted by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 219) and, therefore, the previous translation sounds a bit odd. Nyanatusita (2021, 529 n. 55) only refers to D I 79.

16 In my translation of 唯天耳應取, I opted for the alternative reading of 耳 in place of 取.

17 In my translation of 於可受聲應説欲愛, I opted for the alternative reading of 愛 in place of 受.

> object: limited object, present object, external object.[18] If the own natural ear would be lost, the divine ear element would also be lost. Here, when the hearer/disciple has attained sovereignty (自在), he hears the sound of a thousand world-systems, Paccekabuddhas [hear] more; Tathāgatas have no limit.[19]

Saddhammappakāsinī:

The *Saddhammappakāsinī* reports a detail that occurred in the **Vimuttimagga*, but was omitted in the *Visuddhimagga*. This piece of information concerns the fact that "if the own natural ear would be lost, the divine ear element would also be lost".[20] Then, it is interesting to find similar information (although with some differences) in the *Saddhammappakāsinī*:

> [People] say: "The divine ear arises only for one who has a natural [i.e. physical] ear, not for the deaf. Although when the natural ear is destroyed subsequently, the divine ear is not destroyed".[21]

The reason why the physical ear is necessary, at least at the beginning of the process, is evident: the practitioner should pay attention (*manasikaroti*) to the sound sign (*saddanimitta*), which can of course only be acquired through the physical ear. The statement in the *Saddhammappakāsinī* is presented as a quotation (*iti vadanti*) and so may be from a marginal group (see Kieffer-Pülz 2015a, 434). It is noteworthy that the **Vimuttimagga* says that if the natural ear is lost the divine ear is also lost, while the *Saddhammappakāsinī* holds that once the divine ear is developed it is not lost even if the natural ear is lost. This highlights the presence of differing interpretations in the Theravāda exegetical texts.

8.1.2 Notes on the Process

The process prescribed to develop the divine ear in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is quite short and consists of only two stages which will result in the development of the divine ear:

18 Cf. *dibbasotadhātuñāṇaṃ paritta-paccuppanna-ajjhatta-bahiddhārāmmaṇa-vasena catūsu ārammaṇesu pavattati* (Vism 430).

19 問天耳誰起? 云何當起? 答八一切入, 彼二一切入, 於第四禪得自在, 從自性耳起天耳界。復說云何色界於四禪得自在? 是其能起。復說於四禪亦起。問云何當令起? 答初坐禪人如是修, 四如意足以心得自在。入第四禪安詳出, 次第依自性耳界, 若遠聲作意聲相, 或近聲作意聲相, 若大聲作意大聲相, 若細聲作意細聲相, 若東方聲作意聲相, 如是於一切方。彼坐禪人如是以修行心清白, 以耳界清淨, 令心行增長。彼坐禪人以天耳界清淨過人耳聞兩聲, 所謂天聲人聲, 或遠或近。於是先師說: "初坐禪人先聞於自身衆生聲, 從此復聞身外衆生聲, 從此復聞依所住處衆生聲, 如是次第作意增長"。復說: "初坐禪人不能如是先聞自身衆生聲。何以故? 不能聞細聲,以自性耳非其境界。初坐禪人遠螺鼓等聲, 彼聲依自性耳"。以天耳智應作意於聲相,令起天耳智或細聲, 或大聲, 或遠聲, 或近聲。唯天耳應取。於是初坐禪人不應作意於最可畏。何以故? 於可受聲應說欲愛, 於可畏聲應說驚怖耳畏智。彼成三事:小事, 現在事, 外事。若失自性耳, 天耳界亦失。於是得聲聞自在, 聞千世界聲, 從彼緣覺最多, 如來聞無數 (T1648.32.0443a12-b06).

20 若失自性耳, 天耳界亦失 (T1648.32.0443b04).

21 *dibbasotaṃ pakatisotavato yeva uppajjati, no badhirassa. pacchā pakatisote vinaṭṭhe pi dibbasotaṃ na vinassatī ti vadanti* (Paṭis-a I 353).

he develops the bases of psychic power	+	he applies the mind to various sound-signs	=	he develops the element of the divine ear
*iddhipāda*s		*manasikaroti*		*dibbasotadhātu*

Furthermore, it is possible to notice that these two stages seem to be in connection with the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s introduction to the *dibbasotadhātu* pericope.[22] It may seem that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is rephrasing the older account.

Table 8.1 *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s development of some patterns

Development of *iddhipāda*s	The mediator pays attention (*manasikaroti*) to the sound signs
so imesu catūsu iddhipādesu cittaṃ paribhāveti paridameti ***muduṃ karoti kammaniyaṃ*** (Paṭis I 112), cf. *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese* ***mudu-bhūte kammaniye*** *ṭhite ānejjappatte* […] (D I 79)	After the meditator paid attention to the sound signs, the text reports that *so tattha bhāvitena cittena parisuddhena pariyodātena* ***sotadhātuvisuddhiñāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*** (Paṭis I 112), cf. ***dibbāya sotadhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*** (D I 79)

It seems that the cultivation of the *iddhipāda*s makes the *citta* malleable (*mudu*) and workable (*kammaniya*) and that the action of paying attention (*manasikaroti*) to the sound signs helps to make the mind cultivated (*bhāvita-citta*) and allows the practitioner to direct and turn the mind to the knowledge of purification of the ear element (*sotadhātuvisuddhiñāṇa*), which will result in the development of the divine ear. This might imply that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is silently providing an exegesis to the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s pericope and so the method to perform this *abhiññā* is nothing but the expansion and modification of the canonical introductory passage we found in the *Dīghanikāya*.

A similar version of the method to develop the divine ear is provided by the **Vimuttimagga*, which, however, adds a further stage between the cultivation of the *iddhipāda*s and the action of paying attention (作意; *manasikaroti*) to the sound signs. The new stage is the action of entering into the *jhāna* and emerging from it:

*iddhipāda*s	+	he enters the fourth *jhāna* and serenely emerges from it	+	basing upon the element of his own natural ear, if there is a distant sound, he pays attention (作意; *manasikaroti*) to the sound sign (聲相; *sadda-nimitta*)	=	*dibbasotadhātu*

The action of entering into the *jhāna* and emerging from it is also present in the *Visuddhimagga*'s account. The *Visuddhimagga*, moreover, not only

22 *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte dibbāya sotadhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* (D I 79).

adds new details, but also analyses the whole process through the lens of the consciousness process and the doctrine of momentariness. In the *Visuddhimagga*, there is no emphasis on the development of the *iddhipāda*s, although the text refers to the explanation given in the *Iddhividhāniddesa* concerning the canonical phrasing *so evaṃ samāhite citte*,[23] showing that the development of some prerequisites was assumed. The text maintains the action of entering into the *jhāna* and emerging from it and adds the action of adverting (*āvajjati*) to the sound (*sadda*) before the action of paying attention (*manasikaroti*) to the sound sign (*saddanimitta*). Thereafter, a mental process which resembles the one described for the attainment of the absorption of the *jhāna* (see § 4.2) occurs.

Table 8.2 *Visuddhimagga*'s process

Description of the process	***Visuddhimagga* 408**
Entering into the *jhāna* and emerging from it	*abhiññāpādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya*
Through the mind in its preparatory-work concentration […] he should advert to the sound	*parikammasamādhicittena* […] *saddo āvajjitabbo*
Paying attention to the sound sign	*saddanimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ*
Arising of the mind-door-adverting	*manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati*
Either four or five *javana*s impel (*javanti*)	*cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti*
Together with the last *javana*, which is the *appanācitta*, a knowledge arises which is the element of the divine ear	*tena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dibbasotadhātū ti veditabbā*

It is possible to understand from the *Visuddhimagga* explanation that the divine ear is a kind of hearing which is more mental than physical. The microscopical analysis through the lens of the consciousness process shows that it does not involve the ordinary perception of a physical object through a sensory organ, but the process is a mental process (i.e. 4-5 *javana*s in place of 7, and the absence of the stages called *sampaṭicchana*, *santīraṇa*, *votthapana*). To be more precise, the process resembles the one used to access the *jhāna* state (and, indeed, it culminates with the achievement of an *appanācitta*). In this case, the *saddanimitta* (sound sign) is taken as the object to access the *jhāna*, proving to have the same function that the *kasiṇa*s had in the case of the development of the *iddhividhă*. Interestingly enough, the process deviates from the one used for the *iddhividhă*, in which the marvellous action is performed after emerging from the *jhāna*. In the case of the development of the divine ear, it really seems that the *abhiññā* at stake is an extension of the effect of the *jhāna* state. During the absorption in the *jhāna*, there occurs an uninterrupted sequence of *javana*s.[24] The *javana* is a peculiar stage in the consciousness process connected with the culmination

23 ***so evaṃ samāhite citte*** *ti ādīnaṃ attho vuttaneyen' eva veditabbo* (Vism 407).

24 *cittaṃ sakiṃ bhavaṅgavāraṃ chinditvā, kevalam pi rattiṃ kevalam pi divasaṃ tiṭṭhati, kusalajavanapaṭipāṭivasen' eva pavattati* (Vism 126).

of the action of knowing, so much so that the *javana* is called the 'knower' (識者速心; T1648.32.0449b02) by the **Vimuttimagga*. On the same point, the remark given by Lance Cousins is interesting: "very clear perceptions involve a higher proportion of *javana* moments, while less clear perceptions (as in dreams or at the margins of attention) involve a lower proportion" (1973, 123). Just as in the *jhāna* there is an uninterrupted sequence of *javana*s, in the same way the divine ear, once attained, is maintained without entering into the *pādakajjhāna* (the *jhāna* which serves as foundation) again: "when the *abhiññā* is attained in this way, he hears the sounds which are inside the space touched by the *pādakajjhāna*'s object with the *abhiññāñāṇa* without attaining again the *pādakajjhāna*".[25] It is like the meditator is able to bring the amplified power of knowing which is connected with the *jhāna* (and so with the *rūpāvacara*) in the present world, within the *kāmāvacara*.

8.2 Knowledge by Comprehension of the Minds [of Others] (*Cetopariyañāṇa*)

> The light should be extended by the monk, and he should look, through the divine eye, for a mind, after having seen the colour of the blood existing in dependence on the physical heart of the other [person]
>
> *tena bikkhunā ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā dibbena cakkhunā parassa hadayarūpaṃ nissāya vattamānassa lohitassa vaṇṇaṃ passitvā cittaṃ pariyesitabbaṃ*
> (Vism 409)

The knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] (*cetopariyañāṇa*) is often conceived as a sort of telepathy. However, if we wanted to describe in modern New Age terms what Buddhist sources actually relate to us, we would say that one who develops the *cetopariyañāṇa* is comparatively akin to one who sees the colours of the aura of another person. The colours are determined by the mental state of the person and so, by extension, we can say that this *abhiññā* involves mind-reading. As we will see, the Buddhist tradition also conceived the possibility that the ones who develop this *abhiññā* can directly grasp the thoughts of another person. A tacit assumption seems to imply that the mind, which is subtle, can manifest itself in a perceptible form, which is not actually perceptible with the physical senses, but only with more subtle (or let us say 'divine') senses.

25 *evaṃ adhigatābhiñño esa pādakajjhānārammaṇena phuṭṭhokāsabbhantaragate pi sadde puna pādakajjhānaṃ asamāpajjitvā pi abhiññāñāṇena suṇāti yeva* (Vism 408).

8.2.1 Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile)

Basic formula

He knows with the mind the ways of thought of other beings, of other individuals:
when the mind is with passion he knows: "The mind is with passion",
when the mind is without passion he knows: "The mind is without passion",
when the mind is with hatred he knows: "The mind is with hatred",
when the mind is without hatred he knows: "The mind is without hatred",
when the mind is with delusion he knows: "The mind is with delusion",
when the mind is without delusion he knows: "The mind is without delusion",
when the mind is gathered he knows: "The mind is gathered",
when the mind is scattered he knows: "The mind is scattered",
when the mind is of great excellence he knows: "The mind is of great excellence",
when the mind is not of great excellence he knows: "The mind is not of great excellence",
when the mind is with a superior he knows: "The mind is with a superior",
when the mind is without a superior he knows: "The mind is without a superior",
when the mind is concentrated he knows: "The mind is concentrated",
when the mind is not concentrated he knows: "The mind is not concentrated",
when the mind is released he knows: "The mind is released",
when the mind is unreleased he knows: "The mind is unreleased".[26]

Simile

Just as, great king, a woman, or a man, or a young and youthful [boy], who is fond of finery (*maṇḍana-jātika*), contemplating the image of his or her own face either in a mirror that is purified, cleaned, or in a clean bowl of water, would know when [the face] is with blemishes: "[The face] is with blemishes", when [the face] is without blemishes: "[The face] is without blemishes". Just in the same way...[27]

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26 *so para-sattānaṃ para-puggalānaṃ cetasā ceto paricca pajānāti –*
sa-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-rāgaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
vīta-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-rāgaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
sa-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-dosaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
vīta-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-dosaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
sa-mohaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-mohaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
vīta-mohaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-mohaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
saṃkhittaṃ vā cittaṃ saṃkhittaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
vikkhittaṃ vā cittaṃ vikkhittaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
mahaggataṃ vā cittaṃ mahaggataṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
amahaggataṃ vā cittaṃ amahaggataṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
sa-uttaraṃ vā cittaṃ sa-uttaraṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
anuttaraṃ vā cittaṃ anuttaraṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
samāhitaṃ vā cittaṃ samāhitaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
asamāhitaṃ vā cittaṃ asamāhitaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
vimuttaṃ vā cittaṃ vimuttaṃ cittan ti pajānāti,
avimuttaṃ vā cittaṃ avimuttaṃ cittan ti pajānāti (D I 79-80).

27 *seyyathā pi, mahā-rāja itthī vā puriso vā daharo vā yuvā maṇḍana-jātiko ādāse vā parisuddhe pariyodāte acche vā udaka-patte sakaṃ mukha-nimittaṃ paccavekkhamāno sakaṇikaṃ vā sakaṇikan ti jāneyya akaṇikaṃ vā akaṇikan ti jāneyya, evam eva kho mahā-rāja bhikkhu evaṃ*

8.2.2 Textual Material for the Study of the *Cetopariyañāṇa*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

The text introduces the exegesis with the following question:

> How is it that the understanding (*paññā*) concerning the full immersion of consciousness behaviours in their multiplicity and unity through the visibility (*pasāda*) of dispositions (*indriya*)[28] caused by the pervasion of three minds is the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others]?[29]

The development of the four *iddhipāda*s is recommended in an abbreviated form. Then, the meditator is able to know:

> This form is originated by the disposition to feel pleasure, this form is originated by the disposition to feel grief, this form is originated by the disposition to feel equanimity.[30]

Thereafter, with the mind cultivated in this way (*so tathā bhāvitena cittena*; Paṭis I 113), according to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, it is possible to perform the *cetopariyañāṇa* as it is exposed in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*.

Visuddhimagga:

> But how should this knowledge be produced? This is indeed accomplished through the power of the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), which is its preparatory work (*parikamma*). Then, the light should be extended by the monk, and he should look, through the divine eye, for a mind, after having seen the colour of the blood existing in dependence on the physical heart of the other [person]. When, indeed, a mind with pleasure occurs, then there is a red [colour] similar to the fruit of the Banyan-fig; when a mind with grief occurs, then there is a dark [colour] similar to the fruit of the Jambu-tree; when an equanimous mind occurs, then there is a bright [colour] similar to the sesamum-oil. Therefore, he should reinforce the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] through the looking to the mind having seen again and again the colour of the blood into the heart of another [person in this way:] "This physical form is originated by the disposition to feel pleasure, this form is originated by the disposition to feel grief, this form is originated by the disposition to

samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneǰǰappatte ceto-pariyañāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti (D I 80). Regarding this simile, see Anālayo 2020a, 1637.

28 Here, and in the following passages, I translate *indriya* as 'disposition', which seems to me to be in accordance with PED's definition (s.v. "indriya") in the context which involves 'moods of sensation', namely when it is in compound with *sukha-*, *dukha-*, *somanassa-*, *domanassa-*, *upekkhā-* (D III 239). See also PED (s.v. "domanassa"), in which *domanass-indriya* is translated as 'the faculty or disposition to feel grief'.

29 *kathaṃ tiṇṇaṃ cittānaṃ vipphārattā indriyānaṃ pasādavasena nānattekattaviññāṇacariyā-pariyogāhaṇe paññā cetopariyañāṇaṃ?* (Paṭis I 113).

30 *idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhitan ti* (Paṭis I 113). See D III 239 and Vibh 123 for *somanassa-domanassa-upekkhā indriya*.

feel equanimity" (cf. Paṭis I 113; similar, but not identical). Only when it is reinforced in this way, does he gradually understand all thoughts in the *kāmāvacara*, *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara*, passing over to a mind from another mind, even without seeing the physical heart. And this is also said in the *aṭṭhakathā*: "One who desires to know the mind of another in the formless realm, whose physical heart does he see? Whose alteration of faculty does he examine? No one's. The range of influence of the possessor of psychic power is this, namely, wherever the mind he adverts is, he knows the mind consisting of sixteen [mental states].[31] But this explanation is with reference to the one who has not yet engaged in [the practice of this knowledge]".[32]

**Vimuttimagga*:[33]

Who develops the knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others? How should it be developed? He, who attains mastery over the fourth *jhāna* [caused by] the light *kasiṇa*, attains the divine eye to arise the knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others. How should it be developed? The beginner meditator develops (修; *bhāveti*) the four *iddhipādas*[34] in this way and with the mind that is mastered, purified, brightened, that has

31 These are the mental states reported in the canonical pericope.

32 *kathaṃ pan' etaṃ ñāṇaṃ uppādetabban ti? etaṃ hi dibbacakkhuvasena ijjhati, taṃ etassa parikammaṃ, tasmā tena bikkhunā ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā dibbena cakkhunā parassa hadayarūpaṃ nissāya vattamānassa lohitassa vaṇṇaṃ passitvā cittaṃ pariyesitabbaṃ. yadā hi somanassacittaṃ pavattati, tadā rattaṃ nigrodhapakkasadisaṃ hoti; yadā domanassacittaṃ pavattati, tadā kāḷakaṃ jambupakkasadisaṃ; yadā upekkhācittaṃ pavattati, tadā pasannatilatelasadisaṃ. tasmā tena: idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhānaṃ, idaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhānaṃ, idaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhānan ti parassa hadayalohitavaṇṇaṃ passitvā passitvā cittaṃ pariyesantena ceto pariyañāṇaṃ thāmagataṃ kātabbaṃ. evaṃ thāmagate hi tasmim anukkamena sabbam pi kāmāvacaracittaṃ rūpāvacarārūpāvacaracittañ ca pajānāti cittā cittam eva saṅkamanto vinā pi hadayarūpadassanena. vuttam pi c' etaṃ aṭṭhakathāyaṃ: āruppe parassa cittaṃ jānitukāmo kassa hadayarūpaṃ passati, kass' indriyavikāraṃ oloketī ti? na kassaci iddhimato visayo esa, yadidaṃ yattha-katthaci cittaṃ āvajjanto soḷasappabhedaṃ cittaṃ jānāti. akatābhinivesassa pana vasena ayaṃ kathā ti* (Vism 409).

33 One of the main problems in translating this passage is that the Chinese text lacks any reference to the blood (*lohita*) inside the physical heart (*hadayarūpa*), which is the one that is coloured by the mental states (*hadayarūpaṃ nissāya vattamānassa lohitassa vaṇṇaṃ passitvā*; Vism 409, translated above). Another problem is that if we compare the Chinese text with the Pāli parallels, the character 色 sometimes seems to translate the Pāli term *rūpa* (physical form), and other times the term *vaṇṇa* (colour). At least on one occasion the character 色 clearly translates the term *rūpa*, namely in the following Chinese passage: 此色從喜根所起, 此色從憂根所起, 此色從捨根所起 (T1648.32.0443b13-14), which is the translation of the following Pāli passage: *idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ* (Paṭis I 113). On another occasion, the character 色 clearly translates the Pāli term *vaṇṇa*, namely in the following Chinese passage: 若與喜根相應心現起, 意色如酪酥色 (T1648.32.0443b14-15), which is connected with the Pāli: *lohitassa vaṇṇaṃ passitvā cittaṃ pariyesitabbaṃ. yadā hi somanassacittaṃ pavattati, tadā rattaṃ nigrodhapakkasadisaṃ hoti* (Vism 409, translated above). In the Pāli passage, the term *vaṇṇa* does not occur when the term 'red' (*ratta*) is mentioned, but it is implied due to the previous phrase (*lohitassa vaṇṇaṃ passitvā*). Moreover, if we consider that the **Vimuttimagga* lacks any reference to the blood, in addition to the fact that 色 could mean 'colour', we come to the conclusion that it is the mind (意) that changes colour (色) (e.g. 意色如酪酥色; T1648.32.0443b14-15) when, for example, the mind (心) associated with the disposition of joy occurs. Perhaps, the Chinese text understands 色 as a kind of coloured materiality, or a colour conveyed by a sort of subtle matter. Nyanatusita (2021, 530-2) systematically translates 色 as 'colour'.

34 Cf. *iddhipādaṃ bhāveti, so imesu catūsu iddhipādesu cittaṃ paribhāveti paridameti* [...] (Paṭis I 113).

obtained impassibility,[35] enters [through] the light *kasiṇa* into the fourth *jhāna* and serenely emerges from it. Initially, he should fill his body with the light. He sees through the divine eye his own physical heart (心意色 = *hadayarūpa*),[36] and in dependence on the physical form the *manoviññāṇa* (意識) occurs.[37] He knows according to the reality through the changing of his own mind, the changing of the physical form seen: "This form (色) is produced from the faculty of pleasure (喜; *somanassa*), this form is produced from the faculty of grief (憂; *domanassa*), this form is produced from the faculty of equanimity (捨; *upekkhā*)".[38] If the faculty of joy occurs, the mind (心) associated with it arises, the colour of the mind (意色)[39] is like the sour milk or curd. If the faculty of grief occurs, the mind associated with it arises, the manifestation (成) is the purple colour (紫色). If the faculty of equanimity occurs, the mind associated with it arises, the manifestation is the colour of honey. If the passion (愛欲; *rāga*) occurs, the mind associated with it arises, the manifestation is the yellow colour. If the hatred (瞋恚; *dosa*) occurs, the mind associated with it arises, the manifestation is the black colour. If the delusion (無明; *moha*) occurs, the mind associated with it arises, the manifestation is the muddy colour. If the knowledge/wisdom (智; see below at § 8.2.3, n. 53) associated with faith (信) occurs, the mind associated with it arises, the manifestation is the white colour.[40] The meditator, in this way, through the changing in his own body distinguishes the changing in colour. Then, through the light he should fill other [people's] bodies (他身) and through the divine eye he sees other physical hearts (心意色 = *hadayavatthu*). He, through the changing of the mind, distinguishes the changing of the physical form, through the changing of the physical form he distinguishes the changing of the mind. Having distinguished in this way he generates the knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others. Having generated the knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others, he discriminates

35 My translation of 初坐禪人如是修四如意足, 以心得自在, 清白不動入光一切入 (T1648.32.0443 b09-10), is quite different from the one by Ehara et al.: "[t]he new yogin having acquired the bases of supernormal power and having got control of the mind, enters the light *kasiṇa* which is pure and immovable" ([1961] 1995: 220). Ehara et al. considered 清白不動 as adjectives for the light *kasiṇa*, whereas I considered them as adjectives for the mind (心). I interpret 清白 as *parisuddha* and *pariyodāta*, and 不動 as *ānejjapatta*, considering the existence of the widespread passage *so evaṃ samāhite citte* ***parisuddhe pariyodāte*** *anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite* ***ānejjappatte***, commonly in connection with the *iddhividhā̆* and *abhiññā*s. Notably, the adjective 'immovable' used in connection with the light *kasiṇa* by Ehara et al. does not make much sense. Nyanatusita (2021, 530) translates 清白 only as 'pure'.

36 Here, I have considered the following evidence: *tena bikkhunā ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā dibbena cakkhunā parassa hadayarūpaṃ* (Vism 409). Notably, the *Visuddhimagga* directly introduces the observation of the physical heart of another person without mentioning the observation of one's own physical heart. The observation of the physical heart of another person will occur below in the **Vimuttimagga*.

37 The Chinese 此依色意識起 (T1648.32.0443b12) seems to resemble the Pāli *yaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññāṇadhātu ca vattanti* (Vism 256). See below at § 8.2.3 for the full translation of the Pāli passage.

38 Cf. *idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ* (Paṭis I 113).

39 An alternative translation for 意色 can be 'mental form'.

40 See *saddhācaritassa kaṇikārapupphavaṇṇaṃ, paññācaritassa acchaṃ vippasannaṃ anāvilaṃ paṇḍaraṃ parisuddhaṃ niddhotajātimaṇi viya jutimantaṃ khāyati* (Vism 256, translated below at 8.2.3).

without the changing of the physical form,[41] he grasps only the object of the mind (心事).[42] The meditator, with the mind developed (修行; *bhāvita*), purified and brightened (清白; *parisuddha*, *pariyodāta*) in this way, when the mind is with passion he knows: "The mind is with passion", when the mind is without passion he knows: "The mind is without passion", if the mind is with hatred he knows: "The mind is with hatred", if the mind is without hatred he knows: "The mind is without hatred".[43] In this way, one who has the knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others could know everything.

In this context there are eight objects: limited object, exalted object, path object, measureless object, past object, future object, present object, and external object. The other thoughts of the ones freed from the noxious influxes (無漏; *khīṇāsava*) are not in the range of perception of the ordinary person. The thoughts of beings in the formless realm are only in the field of knowledge of the Buddhas. If the disciple attains sovereignty, he knows a one thousand world-system.[44] Paccekabuddhas know more than this. Tathāgatas have no limit.[45]

Saddhammappakāsinī:

The *Saddhammappakāsinī* provides a piece of exegesis that highlights that the act of knowing the state of someone else's mind is performed in a hierarchical way, according to the level of spiritual development:

Thus, the monk who has attained the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] fully knows the mind consisting of sixteen [mental states]. But the ordinary people do not know the mind that concerns either the paths or the fruits (*maggaphalacitta*) of the Noble ones; and

41 Cf. *vinā pi hadayarūpadassanena* (Vism 409).

42 Nyanatusita translates 唯取心事 (T1648.32.0443b23) as "only takes the mind as object" (2021, 531).

43 The Chinese phrasing 或有愛心知: "有愛心", 或無愛心知: "無愛心", 若有瞋恚心知: "有瞋恚心", 若無瞋恚知: "無瞋恚心"。(T1648.32.0443b24-26) clearly resembles the canonical Pāli passage *sa-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-rāgaṃ cittan ti pajānāti, vīta-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-rāgaṃ cittan ti pajānāti, sa-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-dosaṃ cittan ti pajānāti, vīta-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-dosaṃ cittan ti pajānāti* (D I 79-80). In this regard, it is difficult to understand why Ehara et al. rendered the first part as "[i]f a certain individual has the heart of loving-kindness, he (the yogin) knows that that individual possesses the heart of loving-kindness" ([1961] 1995, 221), understanding 有愛 as 'loving-kindness' and so as the Pāli '*metta*/*mettā*' in place of '*sa-rāga*'.

44 Ehara et al.: "[i]f the hearer gains freedom, he knows the thoughts (of beings) of a thousand world-systems" ([1961] 1995, 221). However, it is worth noting that the translation of 得自在 as 'gains freedom' seems to be inappropriate in connection with the term 聲聞, which is the equivalent of the Pāli *sāvaka*. The PED (s.v. "sāvaka") tells us that the *sāvaka* is "never an arahant", the *arahant* is, indeed, the one who actually gains freedom.

45 問他心智誰能起? 云何應起? 答光一切入於第四禪得自在, 得天眼起他心智。云何應起? 者初坐禪人如是修四如意足, 以心得自在, 清白不動入光一切入於第四禪安詳出。從初以光令滿其身。以天眼見其自心意色, 此依色意識起。如是知, 以自心變見色變: "此色從喜根所起, 此色從憂根所起, 此色從捨根所起"。若與喜根相應心現起, 意色如酪酥色。若與憂根相應心現起, 成如紫色。若與捨根相應心現起, 成如蜜色。若與愛欲相應心現起, 成如黃色。若與瞋恚相應心現起, 成如黑色。若與無明相應心現起, 成如濁色。若與信相應及智相應心現起, 成如清色。彼坐禪人如是, 以自身變, 分別色變。爾時以光令滿他身, 以天眼見他心意色。彼以心變分別色變, 以色變分別心變。如是分別起他心智已, 起他心智除色變分別, 唯取心事。彼坐禪人如是以修行心清白, 或有愛心知: "有愛心", 或無愛心知: "無愛心", 若有瞋恚心知: "有瞋恚心", 若無瞋恚知: "無瞋恚心"。如是一切可知他心智者。其事八: 小事, 大事, 道事, 無量事, 過去事, 未來事, 現在事, 外事。彼無漏他心非凡夫境界。生無色處衆生心, 唯佛境界。若聲聞得自在, 知一千世界心。從此緣覺最多。如來無量 (T1648.32.0443b07-c02).

> even the Noble ones that are inferior do not know the mind that concerns either the paths or the fruits of [people] superior [to them]; but superior ones know the mind of the inferior ones.[46]

This kind of exegesis also occurs in other commentaries and sub-commentaries.[47]

8.2.3 Notes on the Process

It is possible to note that the process in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is not really expounded since the text, at first, prescribes the development of the *iddhipāda*s and, successively, states *evaṃ pajānati* 'he knows in this way', without explaining the method of knowing. It is only stated that he knows: "this form is originated by the disposition to feel pleasure, this form is originated by the disposition to feel grief; this form is originated by the disposition to feel equanimity".[48] Thereafter, the text lists the canonical sixteen kinds of *citta*s of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s pericope. Later texts, such as the **Vimuttimagga* and the *Visuddhimagga*, introduce the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu* = *tiānyǎn* 天眼) as a necessary tool to gain this kind of knowledge. The **Vimuttimagga* states that, at first, the practitioner should use the divine eye to see his own physical heart, starting to learn how each colour in his own body is associated with a mental state. Thereafter, he can use the divine eye to see the physical heart of other people, understanding the mental state associated with it. It is like the method used is a kind of

46 *iti cetopariyañāṇalābhī bhikkhu soḷasappabhedam 'pi cittaṃ pajānāti. puthujjanā pana ariyānaṃ maggaphalacittaṃ na jānanti; ariyā 'pi ca heṭṭhimā uparimānaṃ maggaphalacittaṃ na jānanti, uparimā pana heṭṭhimānaṃ cittaṃ jānanti* (Paṭis-a I 355).

47 Although this kind of explanation does not seem to occur in the *Visuddhimagga*, there is mention in the *Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā*: "the Noble who is superior or equal fully knows only the mind of the inferior and equal" (*tam pi hi uparimo, sadiso vā ariyo heṭṭhimassa, sadisassa ca cittam pi pajānāti eva*; Vism-mhṭ II 42). This exegesis occurs also in the commentaries of the principal Nikāyas: "in this context, an ordinary person who has attained the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] knows only the mind of the ordinary people; not the Nobles' one. And also among the Nobles the inferior one does not know the mind of the superior, but the superior knows the mind of the inferior. Among them, the Sotāpanna attains the attainment of the fruit of the state of *sotāpatti*, the Sakadāgāmin… the Anāgāmin… the Arahant attains the attainment of the fruit of the state of *arahant*; the superior does not attain the inferior, because their [i.e. belonging to the Ariyans] inferior attainment occurred only there" (*tattha puthujjano cetopariyañāṇalābhī puthujjanānaṃ yeva cittaṃ jānāti, na ariyānaṃ. ariyesu pi heṭṭhimo uparimassa cittaṃ na jānāti, uparimo pana heṭṭhimassa jānāti. etesu ca sotāpanno sotāpattiphalasamāpattiṃ samāpajjati, sakadāgāmi anāgāmi arahā arahattaphalasamāpattiṃ samāpajjati, uparimo heṭṭhimaṃ na samāpajjati. tesaṃ hi heṭṭhimā heṭṭhimā samāpatti tatra vatti yeva hoti*; Mp II 271 = Sv III 887). I understand the last part of this quotation following the sub-commentarial interpretation: ***tesan** ti ariyānaṃ. heṭṭhimā heṭṭhimā samāpatti bhummantarappattiyā paṭippassaddhikappā, ten' āha **tatra vatti yeva hotī** ti, na uparibhūmivatti* (Sv-pṭ III 87). Finally, we may note that there is a similar passage in the commentary on the *Vibhaṅga*: "the ordinary person who has attained the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] knows only the mind of the ordinary people; not the Ariyans' one. The Sotāpanna [knows only the mind] of the Sotāpanna and ordinary person. The Sakadāgāmin [knows only the mind] of the Sakadāgāmin and two inferior [states]. The Anāgāmin [knows only the mind] of the Anāgāmin and three inferior [states]. The Khīṇāsava knows everyone's [mind]" (*cetopariyañāṇalābhī pana puthujjano puthujjanānaṃ yeva cittaṃ jānāti, na ariyānaṃ. sotāpanno sotāpannassa ceva puthujjanassa ca. sakadāgāmī sakadāgāmino ceva heṭṭhimānañ ca dvinnaṃ. anāgāmī anāgāmino ceva heṭṭhimānañ ca tiṇṇaṃ. khīṇāsavo sabbesam pi jānāti*; Vibh-a 372).

48 *idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhitan ti* (Paṭis I 113).

inference, based on a direct knowledge of the own body. The *Visuddhimagga* omits the direct observation of the own body and prescribes the use of the divine eye directly to another body. What is observed is the colour of the blood in the physical heart (interestingly, the **Vimuttimagga* does not mention the blood). The idea behind it is that the mental states can directly influence the colour of the blood, and so through the divine eye the meditator can understand the mental states by just observing the colour of the blood. This account is probably based on the understanding of the body physiology and of the function of the heart at that time. As it was pointed out by P. Olivelle:

> Indians, just as all other humans before William Harvery's [sic.] (1578-1657) discovery of blood circulation in 1628, were unaware of the physiological function of the heart and about its role in the circulation of blood. (Olivelle 2006, 52)

It is possible to find, indeed, an interesting account in the *Visuddhimagga* that concerns the description of the heart (*hadaya*):

> **The heart (*hadaya*)** is the fleshly heart (*hadayamaṃsa*). Concerning the colour (*vaṇṇa*): it is red, having the colour of the back of a lotus leaf. Concerning the shape (*saṇṭhāna*): it has the shape of a lotus bud which is turned upside down with the outer petals removed, it is smooth outside, and it is like the internal part of the *kosātakī* fruit inside. For people who have wisdom (*paññavant*), it is slightly expanded (or blossomed, *vikasita*), for people who have a dull wisdom (*mandapaññā*) it is only a bud (*makuḷita*), and inside it has a hollow which has the established measure of a *punnāga*'s seed, where a half measure of a handful (*pasata*) of blood is contained, both the *manodhātu* and the *manoviññāṇadhātu* occur, based on it (i.e. the blood). This (i.e. the blood) is red for one who has a passionate temperament, black for one who has a hateful temperament, like water for washing meat for one who has a delusional temperament, vetch (red lentils) soup for the one who has a reflective temperament, the colour of the *kaṇikāra*'s flower (i.e. yellow) for the one who has a faithful temperament, it is clear, bright, unstained, white-pale, purified, it appears brilliant like a natural stone cleaned by water, for the one who has a wise temperament.[49]

This account too highlights that the colour of the blood inside the heart is influenced by the mental states. This description of the heart is not totally innovative, given that it certainly has some elements in common with the description of the Upaniṣadic heart (*hṛdaya*). It is possible to find in the

49 ***hadayan*** *ti hadayamaṃsaṃ. taṃ vaṇṇato rattaṃ padumapattapiṭṭhivaṇṇaṃ; saṇṭhānato bāhirapattāni apanetvā adhomukhaṃ ṭhapitaṃ padumamakulasaṇṭhānaṃ, bahimaṭṭhaṃ, anto kosātakīphalassa abbhantarasadisaṃ, paññavantānaṃ thokaṃ vikasitaṃ, mandapaññānaṃ makuḷitam eva, anto c' assa punnāgaṭṭhi patiṭṭhānamatto āvāṭako hoti, yattha addhapasatamattaṃ lohitaṃ saṇṭhāti, yaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññāṇadhātu ca vattanti. taṃ pan' etaṃ rāgacaritassa rattaṃ hoti, dosacaritassa kāḷakaṃ, mohacaritassa maṃsadhovana-udakasadisaṃ, vitakkacaritassa kulatthayūsavaṇṇaṃ, saddhācaritassa kaṇikārapupphavaṇṇaṃ, paññācaritassa acchaṃ vippasannaṃ anāvilaṃ paṇḍaraṃ parisuddhaṃ niddhotajātimaṇi viya jutimantaṃ khāyati. disato uparimāya disāya jātaṃ. okāsato sarīrabbhantare dvinnaṃ thanānaṃ majjhe patiṭṭhitaṃ. paricchedato hadayaṃ hadayabhāgena paricchinnaṃ. ayam assa sabhāgaparicchedo, visabhāgaparicchedo pana kesasadiso yeva* (Vism 256-7).

Chāndogyopaniṣad that the heart has the shape of a lotus (*puṇḍarīka*) and it has an empty space (*ākāśa*) inside: "now, precisely in this fort of brahman, there is a small lotus, which is a dwelling, inside it there is a small empty space, you should search what is inside it, this, indeed, you should try to recognise".[50] The term *hṛdaya* occurs only two verses later: "as much as this [outer] space is this space inside the heart".[51] This account has more similarities with the **Vimuttimagga*'s account than with the parallel passage in the *Visuddhimagga* concerning the *cetopariyañāṇa*. There are more mental states associated with colours, there is the *manoviññāṇadhātu* (= *yìshì* 意識),[52] there are the mental states of *paññā* (= *zhì* 智 'wisdom')[53] and *saddhā* (= *xìn* 信 'faith').

However, it seems that this is the method prescribed for the beginners. The **Vimuttimagga* reports that after the development of the *cetopariyañāṇa*, "he [viz. the meditator] discriminates without the changing of the colour, he grasps only the object of the mind (心事)".[54] Hereon, the *Visuddhimagga* states that the meditator gradually understands the other mind "even without seeing the physical heart".[55] This is because the *Visuddhimagga* believes that the meditator, after having developed the basic method prescribed, "gradually understands all thoughts in the *kāmāvacara*, *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara*".[56] In this regard, the **Vimuttimagga* appears to have a stricter view, stating that "the thoughts of beings in the formless realm (無色處 = *arūpāvacara*) are only in the field of knowledge of the Buddhas".[57] As the *Saddhammappakāsinī* highlights, the mind that is possible to know is the one belonging to beings on the same level of spiritual development, or inferior.

Notably, the *Visuddhimagga* does not report an analysis of the process according to the consciousness process theory. However, this account is supplied shortly by another commentary, namely the *Atthasālinī*, and by the later commentary on the *Visuddhimagga*, namely the *Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā*, in another longer version:

Atthasālinī:

> The possessor of psychic powers who desires to know another mind turns [the mind]. The turning [of the mind], having taken an object of the present moment, ceases together with it. Thereafter, there are four or five *javana*s. The last one is the *iddhicitta*, (psychic power consciousness)

50 *atha yad idam asmin brahmapure daharaṃ puṇḍarīkaṃ veśma daharo 'sminn antarākāśaḥ | tasmin yad antas tad anveṣṭavyaṃ tad vāva vijijñāsitavyam iti* (CU 8.1.1).

51 *yāvān vā ayam ākāśas tāvān eṣo 'ntarhṛdaya ākāśaḥ* (CU 8.1.3). See Sugunasiri 1995, 417 and Olivelle 2006, 57-8.

52 In this regard, see also: *manodhātu-manoviññāṇadhātūnaṃ nissayalakkhaṇaṃ* ***hadayavatthu,*** *tāsaṃ yeva dhātūnaṃ ādhāraṇarasaṃ, ubbahanapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, hadayassa anto kāyagatā-satikathāyaṃ vuttappakāraṃ lohitaṃ nissāya sandhāraṇādikiccehi bhūtehi katūpakāraṃ utucittāhārehi upatthambhiyamānaṃ, āyunā anupāliyamānaṃ, manodhātu-manoviññāṇadhātūnañ c' eva taṃ-sampayuttadhammānañ ca vatthubhāvaṃ sādhayamānaṃ tiṭṭhati* (Vism 447).

53 The character 智 is often the Chinese translation of *ñāṇa*, but in this context, considering the *Visuddhimagga*'s evidence, it makes sense to understand it as the rendition of *paññā*.

54 除色變分別, 唯取心事 (T1648.32.0443b23).

55 *vinā pi hadayarūpadassanena* (Vism 409).

56 *anukkamena sabbam pi kāmāvacaracittaṃ rūpāvacarārūpāvacaracittañ ca pajānāti* (Vism 409).

57 生無色處衆生心, 唯佛境界 (T1648.32.0443b29).

> the rest of them belong to the *kāmāvacara* […] the *iddhicitta* only knows another mind, not the other [*citta*s].[58]

Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā:

> As to the yogin who desires to produce the knowledge of comprehension of the minds [of others], after having done a proper endeavour, endowed with the eight limbs of the fourth *jhāna* in the *rūpāvacara* through the method explained above [in the text], he is one who has obtained the knowledge of the divine eye, he extends the light, with the divine eye, through the vision of the colour of the blood of another [person] that circulates depending on the physical organ of the heart, he defines through the method: "Now, his consciousness is concomitant with *somanassa* (pleasure)" or "is concomitant with *domanassa* (grief)" or "is concomitant with *upekkhā* (equanimity)"; he attains the *jhāna* that is the foundation and emerges from it, he should do the preparatory work [as follows:] "I know his consciousness!". He repeatedly attains the *jhāna* that is the foundation, even one hundred times, even one thousand times, and emerges from it; he should follow [the method] in this way. When he has followed the method of seeing the colour of the blood in the heart through the divine eye in this way, at that moment the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] will arise; he takes as object the mind defined that occurs then, [and so] the mind-door-adverting (*manodvārāvajjana*) arises. After its cessation, either four or five *javana*s impel (*javanti*), the first three or four of them are of the sense sphere and they are known as *parikamma*, etc., the fourth or fifth is the absorption mind (*appanācitta*) which belongs to the fourth *jhāna* of the form sphere (*rūpāvacara*). In this context, the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) which arises together with the absorption mind (*appanācitta*) is **the knowledge of comprehension of the minds [of others]**. Wherever the preparatory work is made, the other mind being comprehended and understood clearly by the personal experience, manifests [itself], just as the physical form for the knowledge of the divine eye and the sound for the knowledge of the divine ear.[59]

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58 *iddhimā parassa cittaṃ jānitukāmo āvajjati. āvajjanaṃ khaṇapacccuppannaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā ten' eva saha nirujjhati. tato cattāri pañca javanāni. yesaṃ pacchimaṃ iddhicittaṃ sesāni kāmāvacarāni* […] *iddhicittam eva parassa cittaṃ jānāti na itarāni* (As 421). I should specify that the context here, strictly speaking, is a technical discussion of the notion of time rather than the manner of knowing another's state of mind.

59 *cetopariyañāṇañhi uppādetukāmena yoginā heṭṭhā vuttanayena rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānaṃ aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgataṃ abhinīhārakkhamaṃ katvā dibbacakkhuñāṇassa lābhī samāno ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā dibbena cakkhunā parassa hadayamaṃsapesiṃ nissāya pavattamānassa lohitassa vaṇṇadassanena idāni imassa cittaṃ somanassasahagatan ti vā domanassasahagatan ti vā upekkhāsahagatan ti vā nayaggāhavasena pi vavatthapetvā pādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya imassa cittaṃ jānāmī ti parikammaṃ kātabbaṃ. kālasatam pi kālasahassam pi punappunaṃ pādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya tatheva paṭipajjitabbaṃ. tass' evaṃ dibbacakkhunā hadaya-lohitavaṇṇadassanādividhinā paṭipajjantassa idāni cetopariyañāṇaṃ uppajjissatī ti yaṃ tadā pavattatī ti vavatthāpitaṃ cittaṃ, taṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati, tasmiṃ niruddhe cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti. tesaṃ purimāni tīṇi, cattāri vā parikammādisamaññāni kāmāvacarāni, catutthaṃ, pañcamaṃ vā appanācittaṃ rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānikaṃ. tattha yaṃ antena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, idaṃ* ***cetopariyañāṇaṃ****. taññi yatthānena parikammaṃ kataṃ, taṃ parassa cittaṃ paccakkhato paṭivijjhantaṃ vibhāventameva hutvā pavattati rūpaṃ viya ca dibbacakkhuñāṇaṃ, saddaṃ viya ca dibbasotañāṇaṃ* (Vism-mhṭ II 41-2).

The process is a mind-door process, similar to the ones prescribed for the divine eye and the divine ear. Just as the other mental processes that resemble the process to enter in the *jhāna*, the last mental moment is the one that belongs to the *rūpāvacara* and carries the higher knowledge at stake. It seems that the process prescribes to enter into the *jhāna* taking the consciousness known through the divine eye as object. The divine eye provides the meditative object and, therefore, we can say that the *cetopariyañāṇa* involves a sort of sensory experience (which involves the divine version of the physical sense). In this regard, it would be worth analysing other kinds of telepathy in the Pāli canon to check whether there are some hints of other sensory activities involved.

8.2.4 Many Kinds of Telepathy

According to Jayatilleke (1963, 439-40), two kinds of telepathy can be found in the Pāli canon. The *cetopariyañāṇa* in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* would imply that "only the general character of another's mind is known in telepathy" (Jayatilleke 1963, 439). However, another kind of telepathy can also be found in the *Kevaddhasutta* (D 11), in which it seems that something more than the general character of another's mind is known. It is stated that through the so called *ādesanāpāṭihāriya*, the miracle of telepathy, "the monk reveals the mind (*citta*), the mental states (*cetasika*), reflections (*vitakkita*), thoughts (*vicārita*) of other beings, of other individuals".[60] In another *sutta*, the Buddha is said to know precisely the thought of another person: "then, the Blessed one understood with the mind the specific thought in the mind of the young brāhmaṇa Kāpaṭika".[61] Furthermore, the miracle of telepathy known as *ādesanāpāṭihāriya* is described in A I 170-1 (cf. D III 104) as performed in four ways: 1) by observing some tells, body language signals (*nimitta*); 2) by hearing from other humans, non-humans (i.e. spirits),[62] deities; 3) by hearing the sub-vocal sound produced by the diffusion of thought (*vitakkavipphārasadda*);[63] 4) knowing with the mind, encompassing the mind of one who has reached the concentration (*samādhi*) that is *avitakka* (without applied thought) and *avicāra* (without sustained thought).[64] In this account,

60 *bhikkhu parasattānaṃ parapuggalānaṃ cittam pi ādisati cetasikam pi ādisati vitakkitam pi ādisati vicāritam pi ādisati: evam pi te mano ittham pi te mano iti pi te cittan ti* (D I 213).

61 *atha kho Bhagavā Kāpaṭikassa māṇavassa cetasā ceto parivitakkam aññāya* (M II 169).

62 ***amanussānan*** *ti yakkhapisācādīnaṃ* (Mp II 269).

63 Cf. Kv 413-14. In this regard, the commentary does not seem very reliable: ***vitakkavipphārasaddan*** *ti vitakkavipphāravasena uppannaṃ vippalapantānaṃ suttappamattādīnaṃ saddaṃ* (Mp II 269). See Bodhi 2012, 1647, n. 425. An Abhidhammic treatment of *vitakkavipphārasaddha* is described by Karunadasa (2010, 196-7).

64 The passage *api ca kho avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhiṃ samāpannassa cetasā ceto paricca pajānāti* (A I 171 = D III 104) was variously translated in the past. Rhys Davids translates: "but when achieving concentration, without attention applied on occasion of sense, one then knows intuitively the thoughts of another" (1921, 99). Walshe translates: "when one has attained a state of mental concentration without thinking and pondering, by divining another's thoughts in one's mind" (1995, 419). Bhikkhu Bodhi translates: "but with his own mind he encompasses the mind of one who has attained concentration without thought and examination and he understands […]" (2012, 264). The differences in the translations are due to divergent interpretations of *samāpannassa*; it is sometimes interpreted as a kind of genitive absolute construction (Rhys Davids and Walshe) and sometimes as connected with *ceto* (Bodhi). In my translation, I followed the evidence provided by the canonical passage *so para-sattānaṃ para-puggalānaṃ cetasā ceto*

some types of 'mental reading' would seem to involve a sort of sensory experience, just as the observations of the bodily signals (*nimitta*), or the hearing of a sound of humans, non-humans and deities (*manussānaṃ vā amanussānaṃ vā devatānaṃ vā saddaṃ sutvā*; A I 171).[65] This may partly explain the reason why in the later exegesis the power of encompassing the other mind involves the use of the divine eye. This is also a clue that the last stages of the Buddhist path of liberation were not considered by the exegesis as connected to each other in the temporal sequence of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. The divine eye would occur later in the canonical list, but according to the post-canonical expositions it is also needed to develop the *cetopariyañāṇa*. Anyway, the sequentiality of the stages will be analysed better in the next chapter (§ 9).

8.3 Knowledge of Recollection of Former Existences (*Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*)

'**Recollection of former existences (*pubbe nivāsānussati*)**', the memory through which he remembers the former existence, this one is the recollection of former existences. The knowledge associated with this memory (*sati*) is 'the knowledge' (*ñāṇa*).

pubbe nivāsānussatī *ti yāya satiyā pubbe nivāsaṃ anussarati, sā pubbe nivāsānussati. ñāṇan ti tāya satiyā sampayuttañāṇaṃ*
(Vism 410)

Concerning this *abhiññā*, there are some notable works. It is worth mentioning the article of Paul Demiéville (1927), who made a comparison between the Nikāyas and Āgamas' materials; another probably not very famous contribution is the chapter dedicated to the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* in the PhD thesis of Nigel Tetley (1990, 98-123); finally, there is the very good article of Steven Collins (2009), who not only analysed the *Visuddhimagga*'s exposition of this *abhiññā*, but he also made some important remarks regarding the *Visuddhimagga* itself.[66]

Before turning to the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*'s pericope, I would just like to briefly discuss some remarks on the translation of '*anussati*' made by Tetley. In this regard, he writes:

> There is a problem in translating '*anussati*' as 'remembrance' or 'recollection' by virtue of the fact that these English words refer to the psychological phenomenon of memory – i.e. the retention of beliefs about past events – whereas '*anussati*' has other connotations. The PED (p. 45)

paricca pajānāti (D I 79), in which the terms inflected in the genitive case (*para-sattānaṃ para-puggalānaṃ*) are connected with *ceto*.

65 Also see Anālayo (2020a; 2020b), who discusses the Buddhist practice of mindfulness in relation to the external contemplation of mind, which would allow us, at least to some degree, to understand the mental states of other people.

66 Tangential to our discussion, we might consider the work of Gregory Schopen (1983) on what in Sanskrit is called *jātismara* (remembrance of [past] lives). However, following Anālayo 2023b, 12, the notion of *jātismara* should not conflate with that conveyed by the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*. Furthermore, readers interested in contemporary cases of people claiming to remember past lives should read Anālayo 2018.

> [PED s.v. "anussati"] says that '*anussati*' is found primarily in the context of a particular practice of mindfulness: *anussati-ṭṭhānāni* (subjects of recollection). There are six *anussati-ṭṭhānāni*: recollection of the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Saṃgha*, *sīla* (morality/virtue), *cāga* (generosity), *devatā* (the gods). […] Thus, '*anussati*' may well be more accurately translated as 'thinking over' as in thinking over an idea (such as the qualities of the Buddha) rather than 'recollection' in the sense of the recollection of the past events. (1990, 354, endnote 22; square brackets mine)

Here, there is the bias of considering the *anussati* of the *anussati-ṭṭhānāni* and the one in the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* as having the same meaning. The two actions are of course different. The first one is a kind of meditative contemplation, whereas the second one is a recollection of something experienced in the past. What makes the difference is the interpretation of the prefix *anu-* of the word *anussati*. Concerning the *anussati* as the meditative practice, it is written in the *Visuddhimagga* in the chapter called *Cha-anussati-niddesa* (Explanation of the Six Recollections) that "the *sati* which arises again and again is the *anussati*" (*punappunaṃ uppajjanato sati yeva anussati*; Vism 197). The term *punappuna* (again and again) is referring to the prefix *anu-*, indicating the repetitiveness of the action. The same interpretation applied to the term *anussati* in the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* would not seem appropriate at all. A better way to interpret *anu-* in the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* is to consider its connection with verbs of motion, indicating a direction of movement that could be either 'from the front backward' or 'from the back forward' (PED s.v. "anu"). In the case of the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* we may say that it is an action of knowing that is directed towards the past, it is a retrospective knowledge. Alternatively, we may consider the fact that the previous lives are remembered one after the other, in a kind of sequence, and this is also one of the meanings that the prefix *anu-* can have.[67] Therefore, there is enough evidence to discard the remarks made by Tetley, who, incidentally, decided nonetheless to maintain the contested translation.[68]

8.3.1 Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile)

> **Basic formula**
> He remembers the manifold past abodes in this way: one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many contracted aeons, many expanded aeons, many contracted and expanded aeons. "I was there, I had this name, this family, this caste, this food, I had experienced this happiness and this pain, I had this end of life. I[69] disappeared from that place and arose there. Also, there I was, I had this name, this family, this caste, this food, I had experienced this happiness and this pain, I had this end of

67 "[E]ach by each, orderly, methodically, one after another" (SED s.v. "anu").

68 "Throughout the present doctoral thesis, however, I shall use the terms 'recollection' and 'remembrance' for '*anussati*'" (Tetley 1990, 354, endnote 22).

69 I followed the suggestion given to me by Giuliano Giustarini to read '*so ahaṃ*' in place of '*so*'.

life. I disappeared from there and arose here". Thus, he remembers the manifold past abodes in all their modes and in detail.[70]

Simile
Just as, great king, a man would go from his own village to another village, and also from this village to another village, and also from this village would return exactly to his own village. He may think: "I went from my own village to that village, then in this way I stood, sat, spoke, was silent, and also from this village I went to that village, then in this way I stood, sat, spoke, was silent, from this village I returned exactly to my own village".[71]

8.3.2 Textual Material for the Study of the *Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

The text introduces the exegesis with the following question:

> How is it that the understanding (*paññā*) concerning the full immersion of *dhamma*s which results according to a cause through the pervasion of *kamma* in its multiplicity and unity is the knowledge of recollection of former existences?[72]

Then, the mediator should cultivate the four *iddhipāda*s (it is reported in an abbreviated form into the text) and with that cultivated mind, it is possible to know that:

> When this occurs, this [successively] occurs, because of this, this one comes into being, in other words: caused by ignorance (*avijjā*) as condition, there are formations (*saṅkhāra*); caused by formations as condition, there is consciousness (*viññāṇa*); caused by consciousness as condition, there is mind-matter (*nāmarūpa*); caused by mind-matter as condition, there is the sixfold sphere of perception (*saḷāyatana*); caused by the sixfold sphere of perception as condition, there is the contact (*phassa*); caused by the contact as condition, there is feeling (*vedanā*); caused by the feeling as condition, there is craving (*taṇhā*); caused by craving as condition, there is the substratum of clinging (*upādāna*); caused by the substratum

70 *so aneka-vihitaṃ pubbe-nivāsaṃ anussarati seyyathīdaṃ ekam pi jātiṃ dve pi jātiyo tisso pi jātiyo catasso pi jātiyo pañca pi jātiyo dasa pi jātiyo vīsatim pi jātiyo tiṃsam pi jātiyo cattārīsam pi jātiyo paññāsam pi jātiyo jāti-satam pi jāti-sahassam pi jāti-satasahassam pi aneke pi saṃvaṭṭa-kappe aneke pi vivaṭṭa-kappe aneke pi saṃvaṭṭa-vivaṭṭakappe. amutrāsiṃ evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evam-āhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkhapaṭisaṃvedī evam-āyu-pariyanto. so tato cuto amutra upapādiṃ. tatrāpāsiṃ evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evamāhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkha-paṭisaṃvedī evam-āyu-pariyanto. so tato cuto idhūpapanno ti iti sākāraṃ sa-uddesaṃ aneka-vihitaṃ pubbe nivāsaṃ anussarati* (D I 81).

71 *seyyathā pi mahā-rāja puriso sakamhā gāmā aññaṃ gāmaṃ gaccheyya, tamhā pi gāmā aññaṃ gāmaṃ gaccheyya, tamhā pi gāmā sakaṃ yeva gāmaṃ paccāgaccheyya. tassa evam assa: ahaṃ kho sakamhā gāmā amuṃ gāmaṃ agañchiṃ, tatra evaṃ aṭṭhāsiṃ evaṃ nisīdiṃ evaṃ abhāsiṃ evaṃ tuṇhī ahosiṃ, tamhā pi gāmā amuṃ gāmaṃ agacchiṃ, tatrāpi evaṃ aṭṭhāsiṃ evaṃ nisīdiṃ evaṃ abhāsiṃ evaṃ tuṇhī ahosiṃ, so 'mhi tamhā gāmā sakaṃ yeva gāmaṃ paccāgato ti* (D I 81-2).

72 *kathaṃ paccayapavattānaṃ dhammānaṃ nānattekattakammavipphāravasena pariyogāhaṇe paññā pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇaṃ?* (Paṭis I 113-14).

> of clinging, there is the existence (*bhava*); caused by the existence as condition, there is birth (*jāti*), caused by the birth as condition, there is decay and death, and sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief, trouble arise. In this way there is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.[73]

This is basically the exposition of the 'dependent origination' (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Thereafter, according to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, it is possible to apply the cultivated mind to the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*.

Visuddhimagga:

The *Visuddhimagga*'s account, as highlighted by Collins (2009, 510-11), starts with a word-commentary on the canonical passage. The explanation of the word *anussarati* 'he remembers' introduces two ways of remembering: 1) *khandhapaṭipāṭi* 'succession of aggregates'; 2) *cutipaṭisandhi* 'death-rebirth'.[74]

These two ways of remembering are not, *prima facie*, easy to interpret. The *cutipaṭisandhi* method should be inferred and it is a way of remembering from the death to the rebirth. The ordinary disciples (*pakatisāvaka*) and the great disciples (*mahāsāvaka*) remember using both methods: *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi*.[75] The foremost disciples (*aggasāvaka*), on the other hand, do not use the *khandhapaṭipāṭi* method.[76] Therefore, the method used by the foremost disciples, as described in the text, is reasonably the description of the *cutipaṭisandhi*:

> They proceed along only through the *cutipaṭisandhi* in this way: having seen the death in one's own existence, they see the rebirth. Again, having seen the death on another [one's own existence], [they see] the rebirth.[77]

If we want to believe the sub-commentary, the *cutipaṭisandhi* is a direct connection between the death and the rebirth without lingering on what there is in-between:

73 *imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imass' uppādā idaṃ uppajjati, yadidaṃ – avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ, nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ, saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparideva-dukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti, evaṃ etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti* (Paṭis I 114).

74 "'He remembers' (*anussarati*) [means] he remembers/moves (*sarati*), following [the methods] either by means of the succession of aggregates (*khandhapaṭipāṭi*) or death-rebirth (*cutipaṭisandhi*)" (*anussaratī ti khandhapaṭipāṭivasena cutipaṭisandhivasena vā anugantvā anugantvā sarati*; Vism. 411). The term *sarati* can mean either 'to remember' (from the root √*smṛ*) or 'to move' (from the root √*sṛ*), see PED s.vv. "sarati[1]" and "sarati[2]".

75 *pakatisāvakā khandhapaṭipāṭiyā pi anussaranti cutipaṭisandhivasena pi sankamanti, tathā asīti mahāsāvakā* (Vism 411).

76 *dvinnaṃ pana aggasāvakānaṃ khandhapaṭipāṭikiccaṃ n'atthi* (Vism 411).

77 *ekassa attabhāvassa cutiṃ disvā paṭisandhiṃ passanti, puna aparassa cutiṃ disvā: paṭisandhin ti evaṃ cutipaṭisandhivasen' eva sankamantā gacchanti* (Vism 411).

> '**Through the *cutipaṭisandhi***' [means] that having seen the death of an individuality of himself or of another, does not touch anything in-between, and by grasping only the rebirth link [he proceeds].[78]

The *khandhapaṭipāṭi* can be only understood by a brief reference found in the *Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā*: "the succession of aggregates (*khandhapaṭipāṭi*) is the regular progression (*anukkama*) of aggregates. It starts from the death and goes in an irregular order (*uppaṭipāṭi*)".[79] Therefore, both methods seem to have the same temporal direction, namely towards the past. However, Collins (2009, 511) highlights the existence of two temporal directions that he calls 1) *paṭiloma*, from present to past; and 2) *anuloma*, from past to present.

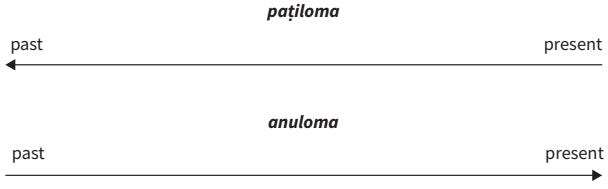

Figure 8.1 Temporal directions of remembrance

According to Collins (2009, 514), both *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi* would be *paṭiloma* ways to go back to the past, whereas the actual remembrances are attained thanks to the biographical narrative order called *anuloma*. This is particularly evident in the canonical account which would present a method from the past to the present preceded by a jump in the past. The account involves three lives in which the last one is the present life:

> [**Life 1**] I was there, I had this name, etc. […] I had this end of life. I disappeared from that place and arose there. [**Life 2**] Also there I was, I had this name, etc. […] I had this end of life. [**Life 3**] I disappeared from there and arose *here*.[80]

The last life (Life 3) is the present life; this is confirmed by the expression *idhūpapanna* 'arose here (i.e. in the present existence)'. This is also corroborated by the simile of the man who goes from its own village to other villages and, in the end, comes back to his own village:

> I went from my own village [**Life 3**] to that village [**Life 1**], then in this way I stood, sat, spoke, was silent, and also from this village I went to

78 ***cutipaṭisandhivasenā*** *ti attano, parassa vā tasmiṃ tasmiṃ attabhāve cutiṃ disvā antarā kiñci anāmasitvā paṭisandhiyā eva gahaṇavasena* (Vism-mhṭ II 46).

79 *khandhapaṭipāṭi khandhānaṃ anukkamo. sā ca kho cutito paṭṭhāya uppaṭipāṭivasena* (Vism-mhṭ II 45), see also Collins 2009, 514.

80 *amutrāsiṃ evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evam-āhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkhapaṭisaṃvedī evam-āyu-pariyanto. tatrāpāsiṃ evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evamāhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkha-paṭisaṃvedī evam-āyu-pariyanto. so tato cuto idhūpapanno ti iti sākāraṃ sa-uddesaṃ aneka-vihitaṃ pubbe nivāsaṃ anussarati* (D I 81).

> that village [**Life 2**], then in this way I stood, sat, spoke, was silent, from this village I returned exactly to my own village [**Life 3**].[81]

In the canonical account there is, at first, a kind of jump from the present to a past life and, successively, the progressive return to the present. This account can be schematised as follows:

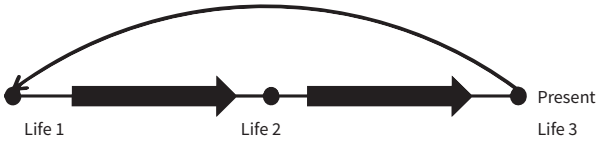

Figure 8.2 Canonical directions of the remembrance

The difference between the two methods, viz. *cutipaṭisandhi* and *khandhapaṭipāṭi*, seems to be one of bigger steps, jumping backwards from the death moment straight to the previous rebirth moment at the beginning of that life.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, in order to achieve this *abhiññā*, at first (Vism 412-13), the practitioner should undertake a method called *parikammasamādhiñāṇa* 'knowledge due to the concentration during the preparatory work' (or, alternatively named: *atītaṃsañāṇa* 'knowledge of the past') to remember his own *paṭisandhi*. This is done by remembering in a reverse order (*paṭilomakkamena*; Vism 412) the own life from the moment of sitting down (to perform the practice of recollecting) to the rebirth-linking (*paṭisandhi*) in the present existence, the first connection with the current existence after the death in the former one. The method prescribed to recollect the past is quite similar to the methods used to perform extraordinary capacities in general. The *Visuddhimagga* states that the practitioner "should attain the four *jhāna*s in succession, and emerged from the fourth *jhāna* which is the basis of the *abhiññā*s, he should advert to the last [act] among all [acts] which is the sitting down; thereafter [should advert] to the preparation of the sit [and so on]".[82] This method is actually able to improve the memory of the practitioner. The text acknowledges that it is possible to remember the own life also without doing this practice, but this practice makes the remembrance even more evident: "this much [remembrance] is also evident to the natural mind, but it is much more evident to the mind concentrated in the preparatory work".[83] The text prescribes to repeat the practice, in case it does not work.[84] The recollecting

81 *ahaṃ kho sakamhā gāmā amuṃ gāmaṃ agañchiṃ, tatra evaṃ aṭṭhāsiṃ evaṃ nisīdiṃ evaṃ abhāsiṃ evaṃ tuṇhī ahosiṃ, tamhā pi gāmā amuṃ gāmaṃ agacchiṃ, tatrāpi evaṃ aṭṭhāsiṃ evaṃ nisīdiṃ evaṃ abhāsiṃ evaṃ tuṇhī ahosiṃ, so 'mhi tamhā gāmā sakaṃ yeva gāmaṃ paccāgato ti* (D I 81-2).

82 *paṭipāṭiyā cattāri jhānāni samāpajjitvā abhiññāpādakacatutthajjhānato vuṭṭhāya sabbapacchimā nisajjā āvajjitabbā; tato āsanapaññapanaṃ* [...] (Vism 412).

83 *ettakaṃ pana pakaticittassa pi pākaṭam hoti, parikammasamādhicittassa pana ativiya pākaṭam eva* (Vism 412).

84 *sace pan' ettha kiñci na pākaṭaṃ hoti, puna pādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya āvajjitabbaṃ* (Vism 412).

of the own life should be performed until the moment of rebirth, which was preceded by the moment of death that belonged to the previous life. This is the most critical point in the process since the passage between one life and another occurs. The practitioner recollects "until his own *paṭisandhi* in this existence, adverting until there he should advert to the *nāmarūpa* which occurred at the moment of death (*cutikkhaṇe*) in his previous existence".[85] This is done by removing (*ugghāṭetvā*) the *paṭisandhi* in order to take the *nāmarūpa* at the moment of the death as object.[86] Then, the text explains what happens from the point of view of the consciousness process doctrine:

> When the *paṭisandhi* of this monk is surpassed, having taken the *nāmarūpa* occurred at the moment of death as object, the adverting to the mind door (*manodvārāvajjana*) arises, and when it ceases, having taken it as object, four or five *javana*s impel. The rest is like the method said before, the firsts [*javana*s] are called *parikamma*, etc., and are of the *kāmāvacara*. The last is the *appanācitta* belonging to the fourth *jhāna* of the *rūpāvacara*. Then, the knowledge that arises together with this [*appanā*]*citta* is called *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*.[87]

The monk enters into meditation by taking his past psychophysical complex (*nāmarūpa*) as an object, he practically meditates on himself, but of a different historical period.

**Vimuttimagga*:

> Who develops the knowledge of recollection of former existences? How many knowledges of recollection of former existences are there? How is it developed? One who has the mind that is mastered in the fourth *jhāna* [through] eight and two *kasiṇa*s, is able to develop the knowledge of recollection of former existences.
>
> Moreover, why is the realm of form (色界; *rūpadhātu*) the locus (處) [of development]?[88] Because he has the mind that is mastered in the fourth *jhāna* and precisely there he develops it. It is also said that it is developed in the four *jhāna*s.
>
> How many kinds of recollection of former existences are there? There are three kinds of recollection of former existences: 1) produced by many grasps (持); 2) birth-made; 3) attained by cultivation (修行). In this context, produced by many grasps [means]: with four ways [he produces] recollection of former existences: 1) one grasps well the sign (相; *nimitta*); 2) one sees the counterpart sign (分相; *paṭibhāganimitta*); 3) one purifies

85 *yāva imasmiṃ bhave attano paṭisandhi, tāva āvajjantena purimabhave cutikkhaṇe pavattitanāmarūpaṃ āvajjitabbaṃ* (Vism 412-13).

86 *paṭisandhi ugghāṭetvā cutikkhaṇe nāmarūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ kātuṃ* (Vism 413).

87 *yadā pan'assa bhikkhuno paṭisandhiṃ atikkamma cutikkhaṇe pavattitanāmarūpam ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati, tasmiñ ca niruddhe tad-ev' ārammaṇaṃ katvā cattāri pañca vā javanāni javanti. sesaṃ pubbe vuttanayen' eva purimāni parikammādi nāmakāni kāmāvacarāni honti. pacchimaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ appanācittaṃ. tadā 'ssa yaṃ tena cittena saha ñāṇaṃ uppajjati, idaṃ pubbe nivāsānussatiñāṇaṃ nāma* (Vism 413).

88 Alternative translation: "why is [it developed] in the realm of form?".

the faculties; 4) one grasps the previous births. These are the four ways of the recollection of former existences [called] produced by many grasps. Recollecting seven previous births is the best among these. [Birth-made means:] deities, *nāga*s, and *garuḷa*s, because of their birth they have the recollection of former existences. Recollecting fourteen previous births is the best among these. The one attained by cultivation is [through] the development of the *iddhipāda*s.

How should the recollection of former existences be developed? The beginner meditator develops (修; *bhāveti*) the four *iddhipāda*s in this way, with faith he has attained mastery [over the mind], [with the mind] purified, brightened, that has obtained impassibility. Thereafter, having sat in the designed seat, he remembers (憶) everything he has done with the body, mind, or speech, all the duties undertaken in the whole day. In the same way, [he remembers] what he has done in the night. In the same way, [what he has done] in one day, in two days, he remembers everything he has done up to a month in the systematic order (次第; *anuloma* or *anulomakkama* [?]).[89] In the same way, what he has done in two months, in the same way what he has done up to a year in the systematic order. In the same way, what he has done in two years, three years, one hundred years. In the same way, he remembers everything he has done up to the beginning of [the present] birth.[90] At this time, the mind and the mental factors of the remote past manifest themselves, the successive birth's mind and mental factors [occur] in the present life: "Based on the mind and mental factors of the previous [birth], he attained the [present] birth". With the occurring of the continuity of consciousness, he clearly observes the causes and conditions (因緣; *hetu-paccaya*), he contemplates the stream of consciousness (識流轉; *viññāṇasota*): the two [births] are linked and uninterrupted, the birth in this world (世), the birth in that world.[91] This meditator with the mind developed, purified and brightened in this way, remembers the manifold past abodes in this way: one birth, two births, three births, four births, etc., just as for everything. The beginner meditator, after having remembered in full his present life, if he is not able to remember [further] births, he should not give up the effort and should develop the *jhāna* again. Having well developed the *jhāna*, he should get mastery (自在) like the action of polishing a mirror.[92] Having well attained the sovereignty (得自在), he clearly remembers the past (初). Then, when he has succeeded in recollecting, if he starts again from one life [etc.] the mind that accomplished the recollection is manifested, which is the most

89 Vism 412 has *paṭilomakkama*; cf. Bapat 1937, 90 for *paṭipāṭi*. Nyanatusita (2021, 533) translates 次第 as 'gradually'.

90 Nyanatusita (2021, 533 and n. 68) translates 初生 as 'preceding birth'. It is worth noting that the ratio of the act of remembering and the remembrance can probably not be 1:1, otherwise a thirty-year-old meditator would take thirty years to remember their whole life. Perhaps, either the meditator remembers only some highlights of their life or the mental time of recollection is accelerated compared to physical time.

91 Nyanatusita (2021, 533) rightly highlights this as the passage is echoed by D III 105: *purisassa ca viññāṇasotaṃ pajānāti, ubhayato abbocchinnaṃ idha loke patiṭṭhitañ ca paraloke patiṭṭhitañ ca*.

92 Interestingly, this simile is usually used to describe the *cetopariyañāṇa* (see above § 8.2.1).

pleasant (樂). [Even] having seen [through] a suitable method,[93] he cannot remember the rebirths in animal conditions, and he cannot remember rebirths in *arūpa*(-realms) and in unconscious [conditions][94] because of the natural absence of thought.[95] In [doing] this, the venerable Sobhita (*shūpíduō* 輸毘多)[96] is the most excellent. The knowledge of recollection of former existences is of seven kinds: limited, exalted, measureless, past, internal, external, internal-external. [If] in the past the path and the fruit were attained, [then] the country or the village should be remembered. This successful perception of the past is the knowledge of recollection of former existences. Thence, the knowledge that remembers the continuity of aggregates (陰相續; = *khandhapaṭipāṭi* [?]; cf. *khandhasantāna*, Vism 414) is the knowledge of recollection of former existences. Followers of other schools (外道; *titthiya*) remember forty aeons, they are not able to remember beyond it, because of their lack of bodily power. The noble hearers remember ten thousand aeons (lit. a myriad, 萬). Great hearers know more. Paccekabuddhas [know] much more. The Tathāgatas [even more] than that. The Sammasambuddhas, [remember] their own and the other's former existences, activities, dwellings, everything. The rest of the people remember only their own previous life, few remember other's former existences. Sammasambuddhas remember everything as they want. The rest of the people remember [only] in a systematic order (次第; *anuloma* or *anulomakkama* [?]; *paṭipāṭi* cf. Bapat 1937, 90). Sammasambuddhas either entering in the *samādhi* or without entering in the *samādhi*, and even without entering in the *samādhi*, always remember. The rest of the people [remember] only entering in the *samādhi*.[97]

Saddhammappakāsinī:

Paṭis-a I 364-76 is almost the same as Vism 411-23. The first part of Paṭis-a (I 356-64) is the exegesis of the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, the 'dependent origination'. The fact that phenomena are connected to each other, caused by each other,

93 Nyanatusita (2021, 534) translates 彼最樂已見方便 as "Having seen the means, he becomes very glad".

94 For the passage 及無色生及無想生不可想 (T1648.32.0444a01-02), I adopted the variant reading 憶 in place of 想.

95 Alternatively, as translated by Nyanatusita (2021, 534): "because there is no perception [in those birth]". The term 性 can correspond to both *pakati* 'nature' or *jāti* 'birth'.

96 It does not appear in the *Visuddhimagga*, but occurs in Sv II 408 (translated below at § 8.3.3).

97 問憶宿命智誰能起? 幾種憶宿命智? 云何應起? 答八一切入二一切入於第四禪心得自在, 是其能起憶宿命智。復説云何色界處? 答於第四禪心得自在, 是其能起。復説於四禪得起。幾種憶宿命? 答三種憶宿命: 一者多持生, 二者生所造, 三者修行所成。於是多持生者: 以四行憶宿命智: 善取彼相故, 見彼分相故, 諸根分明故, 攝彼性故。此四行多持生憶宿命。於彼最勝彼憶七宿命。諸天諸龍諸鳳凰, 以生所成憶宿命。於彼最勝憶十四宿命。修行所成者, 修如意足。問云何應起憶宿命? 答初坐禪人如是修四如意足, 以信得自在, 清白至不動。從現坐處, 於一日所作事, 或以身, 或以意, 或以口, 憶一切事。如是於夜所作。如是一日, 二日, 次第乃至一月憶彼一切事。如是二月所作事。如是次第乃至一年所作事。如是二年, 三年, 百年所作事。如是乃至初生所作事, 憶彼一切。爾時久遠過去心心數法有後生, 心心數法現生: "依初心心數法得生"。以心相續生, 現觀因緣, 憶識流轉: 兩俱不斷, 於此世生, 於彼世生。彼坐禪人如是以心修行清白, 憶宿命不一種: 如是一生, 二生, 三生, 四生, 等, 如是一切。初坐禪人於此生已憶一切, 若坐禪人不能憶彼生, 彼不應捨精進, 更重令起禪。已起禪善哉, 令自在, 如磨鏡法。善哉已得自在, 現憶如初。於彼成憶, 若自從一生, 出彼心成憶, 彼最樂。已見方便, 不可憶畜生生, 及無色生及無想生不可想, 無想性故。長老輸毘多於彼最勝。憶宿命智七種: 小, 大, 不應説, 過去, 内, 外, 内外。於過去已所得道果, 或國或村當憶。彼成過去想憶宿命智。從智憶陰相續憶宿命智。從此外道憶四十劫, 過彼不能憶, 身無力故。聖聲聞憶一萬劫。從此最大聲聞。從彼最大緣覺。從彼如來。正遍覺自他宿命及行及處一切。餘唯憶自宿命, 少憶他宿命。正遍覺隨其所樂憶一切。餘次第憶。正遍覺若入三昧, 若不入三昧, 若不入三昧常憶。餘唯入三昧 (T1648.32.0443c03-044a12).

serves as a doctrinal parallel to the memory of previous lives. This life, in fact, is causally connected to the previous one and so on backwards, arguing in favour of an interdependent co-production of lives. An original piece of exegesis is quoted below in the following paragraph.

8.3.3 Notes on the Process

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, interestingly, connects the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* with the *paṭiccasamuppāda*. The account starts quoting the phrasing *imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imass' uppādā idaṃ uppajjati* (Paṭis I 114). This phrasing, according to Shulman (2008, 307), is always in connection with the *paṭiccasamuppāda*.[98] Then, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* presents an exposition of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* in twelve links. This connection between *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* and *paṭiccasamuppāda* seems to not be a common one, although it is not entirely original, given that in M II 32 there is a connection between the phrasing *imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imass' uppādā idaṃ uppajjati* and the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* (notably, the connection is also with the *cutūpapātañāṇa*). It is worth noting that both the **Vimuttimagga* and the *Visuddhimagga* do not take into account the *paṭiccasamuppāda* during their exegesis, thus the *Saddhammappakāsinī* is our only source to understand this connection. The text, at its very beginning, explains that:

> Concerning the analytic explanation of the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*: [the passage] starting with '**he knows in this way (*evaṃ pajānāti*)**' is said for the sake of showing the process of the production of this [knowledge], of the one who wishes to produce the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, who has the mind completely developed in the four *iddhipāda*s. Because he has seen the *paṭiccasamuppāda* in succession, he sees the collection of the fruits which belongs to the present, which is [composed of] *viññāṇa*, *nāmarūpa*, *saḷāyatana*, *phassa*, *vedanā*, *saṅkhāta*. He sees the collection of causes, which are called defilements of the *kamma*, and which are his condition in the previous existence; he sees, indeed, the collection of fruits, which is his condition in the previous existence; he sees the collection of causes, which is his condition in the third existence. In this way, he sees the series of births through a perception similar to the *paṭiccasamuppāda*. The attention (*manasikāra*) in the *paṭiccasamuppāda*-way is, indeed, very helpful for the sake of [understanding the] *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*.[99]

98 In this regard, we may also note that the *Saddhammappakāsinī* corroborates this point: "in this context, 'when there is this, this occurs; from the arising of this, this arises' is an expression indicating the analytic explanation of the *paṭiccasamuppāda*" (*tattha: imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imass' uppādā idaṃ uppajjatī ti idaṃ paṭiccasamuppādaniddesassa uddesavacanaṃ*; Paṭis-a I 356).

99 *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇaniddese:* ***evaṃ pajānātī*** *ti ādi catūsu iddhipādesu paribhāvitacittassa pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇaṃ uppādetukāmassa taduppādanavidhānadassanatthaṃ vuttaṃ. kamato hi paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passitvā viññāṇa-nāmarūpa-saḷāyatana-phassa-vedanā-saṅkhātaṃ paccuppannaṃ phalasaṅkhepaṃ passati. tassā ti tassa paccayaṃ purimabhave kammakilesa-saṅkhātaṃ hetusaṅkhepaṃ passati, tassa paccayaṃ purimabhave yeva phalasaṅkhepaṃ passati, tassa paccayaṃ tatiyabhave hetusaṅkhepaṃ passati. evaṃ paṭiccasamuppādadassanena jātiparamparaṃ passati. evaṃ bahūpakāro pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇassa paṭiccasamuppādamanasikāro* (Paṭis-a I 356). This passage seems to not have any other parallel in the Pāli commentaries.

In this account, it seems that the *paṭiccasamuppāda* is useful to understand the causes (*hetu*) that led to obtain some fruits and that are the condition (*paccaya*) that will result in something else. Here, it is worth noting that this fact seems to be mentioned in the **Vimuttimagga*: "with the occurring of the continuity of consciousness, he clearly observes the causes and conditions (因緣; *hetu-paccaya*), he contemplates the stream of consciousness (識流轉; *viññāṇasota*)".[100]

Concerning the method to perform the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, the *Saddhammappakāsinī* suggests that the action of paying attention (*manasikāra*) to the *paṭiccasamuppāda* is involved. The occurrence of the act of paying attention recalls the outline of the method presented for the *dibbasotadhātu*, in which it was prescribed to pay attention (*manasikaroti*) to the various sounds, after having developed the *iddhipāda*s. Then, it is possible to outline the method as follows:

Paṭisambhidāmagga

he develops the bases of psychic power	+	he pays attention to the 'dependent origination'	=	he develops the knowledge of recollection of former existences
*iddhipāda*s		*paṭiccasamuppāda* (according to the Paṭis-a is *paṭiccasamuppādamanasikāra*)		*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*

The **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, as previously stated, do not consider the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, and they present their own method to develop the remembrance. Both texts prescribe starting from the sitting position and remembering, in progression, the previous actions until the meditator recalls the moment of birth. Then, he is able to reconnect with his previous birth. The *Visuddhimagga* described the method, which consists of achieving the fourth *jhāna* and, emerging from it, adverting to the last action, and working backwards until the *paṭisandhi*. The method is called *parikammasamādhiñāṇa* 'knowledge due to the concentration during the preparatory work' or *atītaṃsañāṇa* 'knowledge of the past'. This method has these names just because he is able to produce a kind of knowledge that belongs to the *kāmāvacara* and not to the *rūpāvacara* (*taṃ rūpāvacaraṃ sandhāya na yujjati*; Vism 413).[101] The reason is that it brings back memories of the present life, which takes place in the *kāmāvacara*. The difference between the *parikammasamādhiñāṇa* and *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* can be schematised as follows:

100 以心相續生, 現觀因緣, 憶識流轉 (T1648.32.0443c22-23).

101 See also *rūpāvacaraṃ adhippetaṃ na yujjati parikammasamādhiñāṇassa kāmāvacarabhāvato* (Vism-mhṭ II 49).

Parikammasamādhiñāṇa

he should attain the four *jhāna*s in succession, and emerged from the fourth *jhāna*	+	he should advert to the last [act] among all [acts] which is the sitting down, gradually recollecting his life until the moment of rebirth.	=	he recollects his rebirth linking
fourth *jhāna*		*āvajjana*		*paṭisandhi* (= **kāmāvacara-ñāṇa*)

Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa

he should surpass his rebirth-linking	+	he takes the mental and physical make-up he had at the moment of death as object	+	the adverting to the mind door arises	+	four or five *javana*s impel	=	the last *javana* is the absorption mind belonging to the fourth *jhāna* of the *rūpāvacara*
paṭisandhiṃ atikkamma		*cutikkhaṇa* (*nāmarūpam ārammaṇaṃ katvā*)		*manodvārāvajjana*		4/5 *javana*s		*appanācitta* (= **rūpāvacara-ñāṇa*)

Although the **Vimuttimagga* and the *Visuddhimagga* present roughly the same method, the two texts differ in some details. When the meditator has remembered the beginning of his life, in the *Visuddhimagga* the *nāmarūpa* which occurs at the moment of the death is taken as object, whereas in the **Vimuttimagga* the meditator recollects his previous mind and mental factors (心心數法; = *citta-cetasika*; T1648.32.0443c21). In both texts, it is written that if the meditator is unable to recollect his past life, he should train in the *jhāna* again and again. This action is compared in the **Vimuttimagga* to the action of polishing a mirror, whereas the *Visuddhimagga* provides the woodcutter simile (*kaṭṭhaphāla*; Vism 413). Interestingly enough, a mirror simile occurred in the canonical account of the *cetopariyañāṇa* (D I 80). Another difference concerns the distinction between the ways of remembering. The *Visuddhimagga* reports two ways: *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi*, highlighting its concern to make distinctions. Then, in the account concerning the recollection of the life until the *paṭisandhi*, the *Visuddhimagga* underlines that the meditator remembers in the reverse order (*paṭilomakkama*; Vism 412). In the same account, the **Vimuttimagga* states that the meditator remembers in a way called *cìdì* 次第 (T1648.32.0443c17) a term that indicates the sequentiality and that could correspond to *anuloma* (the opposite of *paṭiloma*), *anulomakkama*, or maybe also to *paṭipāṭi*.[102] In this context, I would not assume that the **Vimuttimagga* is presenting a theory in opposition to the *Visuddhimagga*'s one (i.e. *paṭiloma* vs *anuloma*), but the term *cìdì* 次第 is, most likely, not used in a technical way, but more generally it may indicate that the meditator gradually remembers in an ordered sequence until the beginning of his current life. Besides, it is hard to establish whether the **Vimuttimagga* knows the distinction between the two ways of remembering (*khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi*). There is only one suspicious term, namely *yīn xiāng xù* 陰相續 (T1648.32.0444a05), which can be translated as 'continuity of aggregates'. This term may potentially be the translation of the *khandhapaṭipāṭi*, or also of *khandhasantāna* (Vism

102 Hirakawa 1997, 672, see also DDB s.v. "次第".

414). The term only occurs once in the **Vimuttimagga*'s passage, whereas the *Visuddhimagga* often mentions *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi*.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, six kinds of people remember the former existence: followers of other schools, ordinary disciples, great disciples, foremost disciples, Paccekabuddhas, Buddhas.[103] These people, however, use different methods, can remember a different amount of time, and are described through different similes. All this information may be schematised as follows:

Table 8.3 The ways of remembering of six kinds of people

***Visuddhimagga* 411-12**				
	How far back is it possible to recollect with memory?	**Method of recollecting**	**What kind of light does the vision look like?**	**Similes which describe the way in which this power is performed**
Followers of other schools (*titthiya*)	40 *kappas*	*khandhapaṭipāṭi*	Like the light of a glow-worm (*khajjūpanakappabhā-sadisa*)	Blind men (*andha*)
Ordinary disciples (*pakatisāvaka*)	100 *kappas*	*khandhapaṭipāṭiyā pi anussaranti cutipaṭisandhivasena pi saṅkamanti*	Like the light of a lamp (*dīpappabhāsa-sadisa*)	Log bridge (*daṇḍakasetugamana*)
Great disciples (*mahāsavaka*)	100.000 *kappas*	*khandhapaṭipāṭiyā pi anussaranti cutipaṭisandhivasena pi saṅkamanti*	Like the light of a firebrand (*ukkāpabhāsa-sadisa*)	Walking bridge (*janghasetugamana*)
Foremost disciples (*aggasāvaka*)	1 *asaṅkheyya* + 100.000 *kappas*	*cutipaṭisandhivasen' eva saṅkamantā gacchanti*	Like the light of the *osadhī* star (*osadhitārakappabhā-sadisa*)	Cart bridge (*sakaṭasetugamana*)
Paccekabuddhas	2 *asaṅkheyya* + 100.000 *kappas*	*cutipaṭisandhivasen' eva saṅkamantā gacchanti*	Like the light of the moon (*candappabhā-sadisa*)	Great walking road (*mahājanghamaggagamana*)
Buddhas	No limits	*yaṃ yaṃ ṭhānaṃ icchanti, taṃ taṃ pākaṭam eva hoti*	Like the light of the autumnal sun's disk adorned with thousands of rays (*rasmisahassa-paṭimaṇḍita-saradasuriya-maṇḍila-sadisa*)	Great cart road (*mahāsakaṭamaggagamana*)

From this account, it would seem that the so-called *titthiya*s 'followers of other schools' and followers of the Buddhist tradition (*pakatisāvaka*, *mahāsavaka*, *aggasāvaka*) make use of a different method to recollect the

103 *imaṃ hi pubbe nivāsaṃ cha janā anussaranti; titthiyā, pakatisāvakā, mahāsavakā, aggasāvakā, Paccekabuddhā, Buddhā ti* (Vism 411).

former existences. However, it is worth noting that there is at least one canonical evidence (a *Saṃyuttanikāya*'s passage) in which this difference seems to not occur: "O monks, whichever samaṇas or brāhmaṇas remember many former existences, they remember all these five *khandha*s of attachment or one among them".[104] Here, a kind of method seems to be the same for all samaṇas or brāhmaṇas, that is to say for all the religious practitioners (Tetley 1990, 120). The only counterargument to this reading is provided by the commentary on the canonical passage, which would ascribe this recollection to the practice of *vipassanā*, neglecting its status of being an *abhiññā*.[105] However, the recollection of former existences is not exclusively a Buddhist practice, but could actually be something developed by samaṇas or brāhmaṇas, as demonstrated by the *Dīghanikāya*: "O monks, in this world a certain samaṇa or brāhmaṇa […] remembers many former existences".[106] In light of the *Dīghanikāya*, it is possible to suspect that the *Saṃyuttanikāya*'s passage (S III 86) is also referring to the *abhiññā* called *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, and the recollection of *khandha*s might be part of it, in spite of the commentarial claims.[107] Perhaps, it might also be possible that a passage like this has influenced the *Visuddhimagga*'s exposition which involves the *khandhapaṭipāṭi*, given that the *Saṃyuttanikāya*'s passage also involves the recollection of the *khandha*s.

Incidentally, the fact that the followers of other schools (*titthiya*) can only remember through the *khandhapaṭipāṭi* method provides the only reasonable justification to establish the *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi* dichotomy. This is apparent in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, which contains a passage that displays the inherent limitations of the *khandhapaṭipāṭi*:

> The followers of other schools (*titthiya*) who hold the doctrine of *kamma* (*kammavādin*) and have reached the highest state remember [past lives] by the succession of the aggregates (*khandhapaṭipāṭi*), [but] when they lose the succession (*paṭipāṭi*), they cannot [remember]. While remembering by succession, when they reach a [cosmological] unconscious state (*asaññabhava*), they do not see the activity of the aggregates (*khandhappavatti*);[108] they are like birds that have flown into a net, or like cripples or those who are lame. Having stopped there, they hold the view: "That is all there is, there is nothing beyond this". Therefore, the followers of other schools' recollection of former existences is like the way the blind go about using the tip of a stick. For just as the blind go about only when there is the tip of a stick to hold, but when there is no stick they sit in the same place, in the same way followers of

104 *ye hi keci bhikkhave samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā anekavihitaṃ pubbenivāsaṃ anussaramānā anussaranti || sabbe te pañcupādānakkhandhe anussaranti etesaṃ vā aññataraṃ* (S III 86).

105 ***pubbenivāsan*** *ti, na idaṃ abhiññā-vasena anussaraṇaṃ sandhāya vuttaṃ, vipassanā-vasena pana pubba-nivāsaṃ anussarante samaṇa-brāhmaṇe sandhāy' etaṃ vuttaṃ. ten' ev' āha* ***sabbe te pañcupādānakkhandhe anussaranti, etesaṃ vā aññataran*** *ti* (Spk II 289).

106 *idha bhikkhave ekacco samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā* […] *anekavihitaṃ pubbe nivāsaṃ anussarati* (D I 13). In this regard, see Demiéville 1927, 287 and Tetley 1990, 101, 112-13.

107 The commentary seems, indeed, to take the canonical mention of the *khandha*s as referring to a *vipassanā* practice (*ten' ev' āha* ***sabbe te pañcupādānakkhandhe anussaranti, etesaṃ vā aññataran*** *ti*; Spk II 289).

108 The sub-commentary specifies that the *khandha*s at stake are the mental ones (viz. *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*): ***khandhapavattan*** *ti vedanādikhandhappavattiṃ* (Sv-pṭ II 3).

> other schools can remember only by the succession of aggregates, but cannot do it without that succession. Even disciples only remember by the succession of aggregates and when they arrive at a [cosmological] unconscious state (*asaññabhava*), they do not see the activity of the aggregates (*khandhappavatti*). Although this is the case, they think in this way: "The aggregates of beings, who are running in the circle of transmigration, do not have a time of non-existence, but they continue to exist in the unconscious state (*asaññabhava*) for five hundred aeons". Passing over this length of time, they keep following the method taught by the Buddhas and remember further, just like the venerable Sobhita.[109] But the two foremost disciples and Paccekabuddhas remember [past lives] by contemplating death and relinking (*cutipaṭisandhi*). Buddhas do not use the function of death and relinking, they see whatever state of existence they desire to see.[110]

This passage clearly highlights how the followers of other schools adopt a (wrong) view (*diṭṭhi*), according to which they had no other existences earlier than their birth in the cosmological unconscious state called *asaññabhava*. This is due to the fact that they remember through the succession of aggregates (*khandhapaṭipāṭi*), and in this state of existence, even the mental *khandhas* do not occur. Therefore, it is most likely not possible to recover any memory of it. The followers of other schools arrive at the conclusion that there is nothing more than this state of existence (*ito paraṃ n' atthi*). This might indicate either that they have a narrowed view of the cosmos or that they believe their own existence started there.

Turning again to the **Vimuttimagga*, we may say that there is, *in nuce*, the classification of the six kinds of people, but with less people and less items. Notably, the **Vimuttimagga* also starts claiming that "followers of other schools (外道 = *titthiya*) remember forty aeons".[111] Given the presence of this sort of classification that will be fully developed only in the *Visuddhimagga*, we may wonder if the following account would imply a distinction between two ways of remembering: "Sammasambuddhas remember everything as they want. The rest of the people remember in a systematic order (次第)".[112] Therefore, we cannot exclude that the two ways of remembering were already in existence, at least in a rudimentary stage, in the **Vimuttimagga*. Finally, we may note that the only *raison d'être* for the existence of the *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi* dichotomy is that

109 A reference to the venerable Sobhita also occurs in the **Vimuttimagga*, see above at § 8.3.2.

110 *ye agga-ppattā kamma-vādino titthiyā te khandha-paṭipāṭiyā anussaranti, paṭipāṭiṃ muñcitvā na sakkonti. paṭipāṭiyā anussarantā pi asaññabhavaṃ patvā khandha-ppavattiṃ na passanti, jāle patitā sakuṇā viya kuṇṭhā viya paṅguḷā viya ca honti. te tattha ṭhatvā: ettakam eva, ito paraṃ n' atthī ti, diṭṭhiṃ gaṇhanti. iti titthiyānaṃ pubbenivāsānussaraṇaṃ andhānaṃ yaṭṭhi-koṭi-gamanaṃ viya hoti. yathā hi andhā yaṭṭhi-koṭi-ggāhake sati yeva gacchanti, asati tatth' eva nisīdanti, evam eva titthiyā khandha-paṭipāṭiyā ca anussarituṃ sakkonti, na paṭipāṭiṃ vissajjetvā sakkonti. sāvakā pi khandha-paṭipāṭiyā va anussaranti, asaññabhavañ ca patvā khandha-ppavattaṃ na passanti. evaṃ sante pi te: vaṭṭa-saṃsaraṇaka-sattānaṃ khandhānaṃ abhāvakālo nāma n' atthi, asaññabhave pana pañca kappa-satāni pavattantī ti, tattakaṃ kālaṃ atikkamitvā buddhehi dinnanaye ṭhatvā parato anussaranti, seyyathā pi āyasmā Sobhito. dve agga-sāvakā pana Paccekabuddhā ca cutipaṭisandhiṃ oloketvā anussaranti. buddhānaṃ cutipaṭisandhikiccaṃ n' atthi, yaṃ yaṃ ṭhānaṃ passitukāmā honti, taṃ tad' eva passanti* (Sv II 408).

111 從此外道憶四十劫 (T1648.32.0444a06); cf. *tattha titthiyā cattālisaṃ yeva kappe anussaranti* (Vism 411).

112 正遍覺隨其所樂憶一切。餘次第憶 (T1648.32.0444a10).

of establishing distinctions between the various practitioners, especially between the Buddhist ones and the followers of other schools.

8.4 Knowledge of the Fall and Rise [of Beings] (*Cutūpapātaññāṇa*)

The action (*kamma*) assigns beings
to inferior or superior states

kammaṃ satte vibhajati yad idaṃ hīnappaṇītatāya
(M III 203)

The knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings] (*cutūpapātaññāṇa*), together with the former *abhiññā*, has an often-recognised soteriological function. Through the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) the functioning of the process of rebirth is observed, also displaying how it works according to the law of *kamma*. Although the *cutūpapātaññāṇa* and the *dibbacakkhu* seem to conflate at a certain point, I argue that the two should be kept separate, the first being the actual higher knowledge, and the second a mere instrument to gain it.

8.4.1 Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile)

Basic formula
He sees beings with the divine eye which is purified and beyond the human one; he knows beings falling and rising, reaching according to their *kamma* low [existences], excellent [existences], good conditions, bad conditions, good destinies, bad destinies.[113] "These venerable beings are endowed with the bad conduct of the body, endowed with the bad conduct of the speech, endowed with the bad conduct of the mind, speaking evil of the Nobles, having a wrong view, acquiring *kamma* through the wrong view. Because of the destruction of the body, they arose after death in an inferior destination, in a bad destiny, in a place of suffering, in a hell. Or else, these venerable beings are endowed with the good conduct of the body, endowed with the good conduct of the speech, endowed with the good conduct of the mind, not speaking evil of the Nobles, having a right view, acquiring *kamma* through the right view. Because of the destruction

113 I should highlight that the passage *so dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti* can have a different translation (which is more in line with the ones commonly adopted): "With the divine eye which is purified and beyond the human one, he sees beings passing away and arising; he knows how beings are inferior, excellent, of beautiful appearance, disagreeable, fortunate, unfortunate, according to their *kamma*". My translation is an attempt to bring out a new interpretation of some elements of this pericope on the basis of the results found in the present chapter. I assume a more metaphorical interpretation for *cavamāne upapajjamāne* than the commonly accepted 'dying and being born', which affects the interpretation of the series of adjectives *hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate*. My translation is, therefore, tentative and aims to present the passage in a new light. The Chinese translation of the Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* is as follows: "Through the divine eye, which is purified, he sees beings disappearing and arising in good and bad conditions according to [their] karma" (以天眼淨盡見衆生所爲善惡隨業受生; T0001.01.0086b27-28). While the *Fóshuō jízhì guǒ jīng* 佛説寂志果經 presents almost a calque of the Pāli passage: "He sees human beings dying/falling and arising, excellent and inferior, beautiful and disagreeable, reaching good destinies, bad destinies" (見人沒生, 善惡, 好醜, 歸善道惡道; T0022.01.0275c14-15).

> of the body, they arose after death in a good destiny, in the heaven world". Thus, he sees, with the divine eye, which is purified and beyond the human one, the beings; he knows beings falling and rising, reaching according to their *kamma* low [existences], excellent [existences], good conditions, bad conditions, good destinies, bad destinies.[114]
>
> **Simile**
> Just as, great king, if there is a lofty palace in the middle of a crossroads and there a standing man equipped with [good] sight would see men entering into the house [or] leaving it, wandering the way and roads,[115] sitting in the middle of the crossroads. He would think: "These men are entering into the house [or] leaving it, wandering the way and roads, sitting in the middle of the crossroads".[116]

8.4.2 Textual Material for the Study of the *Cutūpapātañāṇa*

Paṭisambhidāmagga:

The text introduces the exegesis with the following question:

> How is it that the understanding (*paññā*) with reference to seeing the appearance of forms in their variety and unity through illumination is the knowledge of the divine eye?[117]

At first, as for the other *abhiññā*s, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* prescribes to cultivate the four *iddhipāda*s (this is reported in an abbreviated form). Then, the text quotes a passage which occurs in the *Dīghanikāya*. In this latter text, however, the passage is not directly connected with the *dibbacakkhu*, but is exposed in response to a question: "And how, friend, the development of concentration (*samādhi-bhāvanā*) cultivated and practised frequently leads to the attainment of knowledge and vision (*ñāṇa-dassana*)".[118] The passage at stake goes as follows:

114 *so dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti: ime vata bhonto sattā kāya-duccaritena samannāgatā vacī-duccaritena samannāgatā mano-duccaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ upavādakā micchā-diṭṭhikā micchā-diṭṭhi-kamma-samādānā. te kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapannā. ime vā pana bhonto sattā kāya-sucaritena samannāgatā vacī-sucaritena samannāgatā mano-sucaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ anupavādakā sammā-diṭṭhikā sammā-diṭṭhi-kamma-samādānā, te kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ saggaṃ lokaṃ upapannā ti. iti dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti* (D I 82-3).

115 The commentary would suggest amending *vīthi sañcarante* with *vīti-sañcarante*.

116 *seyyathā pi mahā-rāja majjhe siṅghāṭake pāsādo, tattha cakkhumā puriso ṭhito passeyya manusse gehaṃ pavisante pi nikkhamante pi rathiyā vīthi sañcarante pi majjhe pi siṅghāṭake nisinne. tassa evam assa: ete manussā gehaṃ pavisanti ete nikkhamanti ete rathiyā vīthi sañcaranti ete majjhe siṅghāṭake nisinnā ti* (D I 83).

117 *kathaṃ obhāsavasena nānattekattarūpanimittānaṃ dassanaṭṭhe paññā dibbacakkhuñāṇaṃ?* (Paṭis I 114).

118 *katamā ca āvuso samādhi-bhāvanā bhāvitā bahulī-katā ñāṇa-dassana-paṭilābhāya saṃvattati* (D III 223).

> He gives attention (*manasikaroti*) to the perception of light and fixes his attention (*adhiṭṭhāti*) on the perception of the day: "Just as the day is, so the night is; just as the night is, so the day is". Then, with a mind clear and unveiled, he develops a luminous mind.[119]

Thus, according to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, with the mind cultivated in this way, the meditator can attain the *cutūpapātañāṇa*.

Visuddhimagga:

The *Visuddhimagga*'s account starts with an analysis of the words occurring in the canonical account. Among them, there is also the explanation of *dibba*, which resembles the one provided for the *dibbasotadhātu*.[120] Notably, the soteriological function of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is highlighted since the text states that "it [viz. the divine eye] is purified because it is the cause of the purification of view through seeing the fall and rise" (*cutūpapātadassanena diṭṭhivisuddhihetuttā visuddhaṃ*; Vism 423).[121] A wrong application of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* can lead to the development of wrong views, namely the 'annihilationist-view' (*ucchedadiṭṭhi*) and the 'view that new beings appear' (*navasattapātubhāvadiṭṭhi*).[122] This is not the first case in which a wrong application of an *abhiññā* may influence philosophical and doctrinal positions.[123] Thereafter, the *Visuddhimagga* comments upon the canonical passage *cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti* (D I 82), pointing out that this passage is about two different functions: the *dibbacakkhukicca* (function of the divine eye) and the *yathākammūpagañāṇakicca* (function of the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma*): "in this context, with the former [part] starting with '***cavamāne***', the *dibbacakkhukicca* is explained; and with this [rest of the] sentence the *yathākammūpagañāṇakicca* [is explained]".[124] Thus, the text illustrates how the monk first performs the action of seeing through the *dibbacakkkhu* and then through the action of paying attention (*manasikaroti*) can attain the knowledge of the *yathākammūpaga*:

> Here, the monk having extended the light downward, in the direction of the hells, sees hellish beings, who are experiencing great suffering. This vision is precisely the function of the divine eye (*dibbacakkhukicca*). He pays attention in this way: "After doing what action do these beings experience this suffering?" Then, the knowledge that has the action as object arises in him: "After having done this!". Likewise, having extended the light upward, in the direction of the worlds of the gods, he sees beings

119 *ālokasaññāṃ manasikaroti divāsaññāṃ adhiṭṭhāti yathā divā tathā ratti, yathā ratti tathā divā, iti vivaṭena cetasā apariyonaddhena sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ bhāveti* (Paṭis I 115; cf. D III 223).

120 Cf. Vism 407 and Vism 423, see below § 8.4.3.

121 In another context *diṭṭhivisuddhi* is equated with the *ñāṇadassana*: *ettha diṭṭhivisuddhī ti ñāṇadassanaṃ kathitaṃ* (Sv III 984).

122 *yo hi cutimattam eva passati, na upapātaṃ, so ucchedadiṭṭhiṃ gaṇhāti. yo upapātamattam eva passati, na cutiṃ, so navasattapātubhāvadiṭṭhiṃ gaṇhāti* (Vism 423).

123 Cf. the treatment of the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* in D I 13 discussed above at § 8.3.3.

124 *tattha purimehi **cavamāne** ti ādīhi dibbacakkhukiccaṃ vuttaṃ; iminā pana padena yathākammūpagañāṇakiccaṃ* (Vism 424).

> in the Nandana grove, Missaka grove, and Phārusaka grove, who are experiencing great attainments. This vision is precisely the function of the divine eye (*dibbacakkhukicca*). He pays attention in this way: "After doing what action do these beings experience this attainment?" Then, the knowledge that has the action as object arises in him "After having done this!". This is called the *yathākammūpagañāṇa*.[125]

Thereafter, the *Visuddhimagga*, continuing its analysis of words, introduces a narrative commenting upon the phrasing *ariyānaṃ upavādakā* 'speaking evil of the Nobles'. The story is about the *kamma* which is similar to the one with immediate result (*ānantariyasadisa*) that is produced by reviling the Noble ones (Vism 425-6). Only after this narrative and further analysis of words does the *Visuddhimagga* introduce the method to develop the divine eye. The practitioner should attain the dwelling place of the access *jhāna* (*upacārajjhānagocara*), choosing one among the *kasiṇa*s of fire (*tejas*), white (*odāta*), and light (*āloka*). Then, he should extend the *kasiṇa* until he is able to see whatever is in the area covered by the extended *kasiṇa* (Vism 427-8). At the very end of the paragraph, there occurs an explanation of the process through the lens of the consciousness process:

> Then, this is the *dibbacakkhu*'s sequence of arising: having taken a visible form as object in the way explained, the mind-door-adverting (*manodvārāvajjana*) arises, when it ceases, having taken a visible form as object, all should be understood as the previous method: "Either four or five *javana*s will impel (*javanti*)". Here also, the *pubbabhāgacitta*s are with *vitakka* and *vicāra* and belong to the *kāmāvacara*, in the end there is the consciousness that accomplishes the aim, which belongs to the fourth *jhāna* and to the *rūpāvacara*. The knowledge conascent with that is called '**knowledge of the fall and rise of beings**' (***sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇaṃ***) and also '**knowledge of the divine eye**' (***dibbacakkhuñāṇaṃ***).[126]

**Vimuttimagga*:

> Who develops the divine eye (天眼)? How many kinds of divine eye are there? How is the divine eye developed? One who has attained mastery over the fourth *jhāna* [through] the light *kasiṇa* (光明一切入) as object, or the nine conditions of light or the five conditions of light,[127] having a natural eye, he only develops [it].

125 *idha bhikkhu heṭṭhā nirayābhimukhaṃ ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā nerayike satte passati mahādukkham anubhavamāne. taṃ dassanaṃ dibbacakkhukiccam eva. so evaṃ manasikaroti: kin nu kho kammaṃ katvā ime sattā etaṃ dukkhaṃ anubhavantī ti? ath' assa idaṃ nāma katvā ti taṃ kammārammaṇaṃ ñāṇaṃ uppajjati. tathā upari devalokābhimukhaṃ ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā Nandanavana-Missakavana-Phārusakavanādīsu satte passati mahāsampattiṃ anubhavamāne; tam pi dassanaṃ dibbacakkhukiccam eva. so evaṃ manasikaroti: kin nu kho kammaṃ katvā ime sattā etaṃ sampattiṃ anubhavantī ti? ath' assa: idaṃ nāma katvā ti taṃ kammārammaṇaṃ ñāṇaṃ uppajjati. idaṃ yathākammupagañāṇaṃ nāma* (Vism 424-5).

126 *tatrā 'yaṃ dibbacakkhuno uppattikkamo, vuttappakāram etaṃ rūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā, manodvārāvajjane uppajjitvā niruddhe, tad-eva rūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā, cattāri pañca vā javanāni uppajjatī ti sabbaṃ purimanayen' eva veditabbaṃ. idhā 'pi pubbabhāgacittāni savitakkasavicārāni kāmāvacarāni, pariyosāne atthasādhakacittaṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ, tena sahajātaṃ ñāṇaṃ* ***sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇan*** *ti pi* ***dibbacakkhuñāṇan*** *ti pi vuccatī ti* (Vism 429).

127 The passage 答光明爲九或, 光明爲五或 (T1648.32.0444a13-14) is not clear, and it is not translated by Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 224).

How many kinds of divine eye are there? There are two kinds of divine eye, the one that is created thanks to the result of the *kamma* (業果報所; = **kammavipākanibbatta*, cf. *sucaritakammanibbatta*; Vism 423),[128] the one that is created by the mental culture (修行所; = **bhāvanānibbatta*, cf. *viriyabhāvanābalanibbatta*; Vism 423).[129] Then, the treasure [finding] divine eye[130] is developed thanks to the results [of the *kamma*], he can see in a treasure if there is a jewel or not. The one that is created by the mental culture [means the one created by] cultivating the four *iddhipāda*s.

How is the divine eye developed? The beginner meditator develops (修; *bhāveti*) the four *iddhipāda*s in this way and with the mind that is mastered, purified, brightened, that has obtained impassibility, enters [through] the light *kasiṇa* into the fourth *jhāna*, he pays attention to the perception of light (光想; *ālokasaññā*) and resolves upon the perception of the day (日想; *divāsaññā*): "The day is like the night, the night is like the day". With a mind unobstructed and unveiled, he develops a mind that is radiant.[131] This meditator develops his own mind that has attained a luminosity undimmed by obstacles that surpasses the sunlight. The meditator, having developed the mind in this way, with the light fills [the body] inwardly and pays attention (作意; *manasikaroti*) to the physical forms. It is not [called] the divine eye when [the meditator] with the knowledge fills the light; [but] it is said to be the divine eye when [the meditator] with the knowledge sees the luminous forms inwardly (内光明色).[132] The meditator, with the divine eye which is purified and beyond the human one (人眼; *maṃsacakkhu*), sees beings passing away (終) and arising (生), reaching according to their *kamma* low [existences], excellent [existences], good conditions, bad conditions, good destinies, bad destinies.[133] Here, if one desires to develop the divine eye, he should destroy these defilements,[134] that are: doubt (疑; *vicikicchā*), wrong mindfulness (不正憶; **micchāsati*, cf. *amanasikāra* in M III 158), sluggishness and sleepiness (懈怠睡眠; *thīnamiddha*), pride (慢; *māna*), wrong delight (邪喜), slanderous talk (惡口), an excessive vigour (急疾精進; *accāraddhaviriya*), too little vigour (遲緩精進; *atilīnaviriya*), too much talk

128 Cf. *jātassa kho pana bhikkhave Vipassissa kumārassa kamma-vipākajaṃ dibbaṃ cakkhuṃ pātur ahosi, yena sudaṃ samantā yojanaṃ passati divā c' eva rattiñ ca* (D II 20).

129 Nyanatusita (2021, 536) translates 業果報所 as *kammavipākaja* and 修行所 as *bhāvanāmaya*, which are terms which occur at Sv II 56 and Sv II 453.

130 Here, I follow Nyanatusita 2021, 536 n. 77 in reading 典藏 as either a corruption or synonym of 寶藏.

131 *ālokasaññāṃ manasikaroti divāsaññāṃ adhiṭṭhāti yathā divā tathā ratti, yathā ratti tathā diva, iti vivaṭena cetasā apariyonaddhena sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ bhāveti* (Paṭis I 115 = D III 223). Ehara et al. ([1961] 1995, 224, n. 4) and Nyanatusita (2021, 536 n. 79) provide D III 223 as the only reference for the Chinese passage. However, it makes more sense to assume that the **Vimuttimagga* borrowed the passage from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* for at least two reasons: 1) In both **Vimuttimagga* and *Paṭisambhidāmagga* the passage is preceded by the development of the *iddhipāda*s, whereas the fact is not reported in D III 223; 2) The passage is connected with the *dibbacakkhu* only in the **Vimuttimagga* and *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, but not in D III 223.

132 Alternative translation: "colour of the light inwardly".

133 *so dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti* (D I 82).

134 The *dibbacakkhu* is said to be 'free from defilements' (*upakkilesavimutta*; Vism 423).

(多語), manifold perception (種種想; *nānattasaññā*), excessive meditation upon forms (最觀色; cf. *atinijjhāyitattaṃ kho me rūpānaṃ* in M III 160).[135] When only one of these defilements occurs, if he develops the divine eye, he would lose concentration. Then, if the concentration is lost, the light is also lost, and the possibility to see forms is lost as well. Therefore, these defilements should be well destroyed. If, having destroyed these defilements, he does not attain mastery in concentration, because of the lack of mastery the divine eye attained is weak. The meditator with a weak divine eye knows a faint light, the vision of forms is also weak. For this reason, the Blessed one said: "When my concentration is limited, my eye is limited; with my limited eye I know a faint light, my vision of forms is limited. When my concentration (三昧; *samādhi*) is immeasurable, my divine eye is immeasurable; with my immeasurable divine sight I know an immeasurable light, my vision of forms is immeasurable".[136] Here, the beginner meditator should neither desire the forms nor be afraid of and fear forms, thus it was said. The divine eye has five kinds of object, namely: limited object, present object, internal object, external object, internal-external object. Four knowledges arise with the divine eye as basis: 1) the knowledge of the future (未來分智; *anāgataṃsañāṇa*); 2) the knowledge of the ownership of *kamma* (自所作業智; *kammassakatañāṇa*); 3) the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma* (如行業智; *yathākammūpagañāṇa*); 4) knowledge of *kamma*'s results (業果報智; *kammavipākañāṇa*).[137] Here, with the knowledge of the future, he knows the form that will arise in the future. With the knowledge of the ownership of *kamma*, [when] he sees the *kamma* created by another person, [he knows that] because of this *kamma* the person will go to this destination. With the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma*, [when] he sees the destinies in which people arise, he knows that with such *kamma* such person would have had such a previous birth. With the knowledge of *kamma*'s results he knows how he reached this situation, how he reached this destination, how he reached these defilements, how he reached [the consequence of] action (方便), this *kamma* will ripen, this *kamma* will not ripen, this *kamma* will lead to experience so much, this *kamma* will lead to experience so little. Here, when the hearer has attained sovereignty

135 This list of defilements corresponds, in principle, to a canonical one at M III 158-60. There is no full correspondence between the Pāli and Chinese list and a possible explanation for some changes which occur in the Chinese translation is provided by Nyanatusita (2021, 537 n. 82).

136 *yasmiṃ kho samaye paritto samādhi hoti, parittam me tamhi samaye cakkhu hoti; so 'haṃ parittena cakkhunā parittañ c' eva obhāsaṃ sañjānāmi parittāni ca rūpāni passami. yasmiṃ pana samaye apparitto me samādhi hoti, appamāṇaṃ me tamhi samaye cakkhu hoti; so 'haṃ appamāṇena cakkhunā appamāṇañ c' eva obhāsaṃ sañjānāmi appamāṇāni ca rūpāni passami* (M III 161).

137 This knowledge according to Vism 602 is the domain of the Buddha and it is not shared by other disciples.

(自在), he sees a thousand world-systems. Paccekabuddhas see more than this. Tathāgatas see without limit.[138]

Saddhammappakāsinī:

The text borrows almost everything from the *Visuddhimagga*. It also has some borrowings from the Sv III 1007 (see Paṭis-a I 377).

8.4.3 Notes on the Process

Concerning the exegesis of this *abhiññā,* we may note that the description of the *dibbacakkhu* is quite similar to the one regarding the *dibbasotadhātu*. This fact is quite intuitive since both are an improvement of a sensory function. Similarities are especially evident when the term *dibba* in the *dibbacakkhu* and *dibbasotadhātu* is defined in the *Visuddhimagga* and when the description of the divine process of perceiving from the lens of the consciousness process is exposed.

138 問天眼誰起? 幾種天眼? 云何能起天眼? 答光明爲九或, 光明一切入事, 於第四禪得自在, 有眼性是其所能起。幾種天眼者? 答二種天眼, 業果報所成, 修行所成。於是典藏天眼從果報所成, 是以得見寶藏或有珠或無珠。修行所成者, 修行四如意足。云何能起天眼者? 初坐禪人如是修四如意足, 以心得自在清白至不動, 光一切入, 入第四禪, 作意光想, 及日想受持: "此日如夜, 此夜如日"。以心無礙無所著, 現修行心成有光明。彼坐禪人修行其心成有光明, 無闇障礙, 過日光明。彼坐禪人如是心修行, 以光明令滿於內, 作意色形。以智令滿光明, 彼非天眼。以智見內光明色, 此謂天眼。彼坐禪人以天眼清淨過人眼見衆生或終, 或生, 或麁或妙, 或善色, 或醜色, 生於善趣, 生於惡趣, 如業所作, 如是一切衆生。於是若能起天眼, 此煩惱彼所應斷, 所謂: 疑, 不正憶, 懈怠睡眠, 慢, 邪喜, 惡口, 急疾精進, 遲緩精進, 多語, 種種想, 最觀色。此煩惱以此一一成就, 若令起天眼, 其定成退。若其定退光明亦失, 見色亦失。是故彼煩惱善哉應斷。若已斷此煩惱, 若復不得定自在, 以不自在天眼成小。彼坐禪人以小天眼知少光明, 見色亦小。是故世尊說: "是時我小定, 是時我小眼。我以小眼知少光明, 我見小色。是時我無量三昧, 是時我無量天眼。我以此無量天眼, 我知無量光明, 我見無量色。於是初坐禪人非可愛色非可畏怖色, 如初說過。天眼五種事所謂: 小事, 現事, 內事, 外事, 內外事。依天眼生四智: 未來分智, 自所作業智, 如行業智, 業果報智。於是以未來分智, 於未來色當起知之。以自所作業智, 見他人所造業, 以此業此人當往彼趣。以如行業智, 見人生趣, 以此業此人先生此知之。以業果報智, 至此時, 至此趣, 至此煩惱, 至此方便, 此業應熟, 此業不應熟, 此業應多受, 此業應少受知之。於是聲聞得自在, 見一千世間。從此緣覺見最多。如來見無量。(T1648.32.0444a13-b22).

Table 8.4 Comparison between the *dibbasotadhātu* and *dibbacakkhu*

Dibbasotadhātu	*Dibbacakkhu*
Definition of *dibba* *tatra **dibbāya sotadhātuyā** ti ettha dibbasadisattā **dibbā**. devānaṃ hi sucaritakammanibbattā pittasemharuhirādīhi apaḷibuddhā upakkilesavimuttatāya dūre pi ārammaṇaṃ sampaṭicchanasamatthā dibbappasādasotadhātu hoti. ayañ cā pi imassa bhikkhuno viriyabhāvanābalanibbattā ñāṇasotadhātu tādisā yevā ti dibbasadisattā **dibbā**. api ca dibbavihāravasena paṭiladdhattā attanā ca dibbavihārasannissitattā pi **dibbā**;* (Vism 407)	**Definition of *dibba*** ***dibbenā** ti ādisu pana dibbasadisattā dibbaṃ. devatānaṃ hi sucaritakammanibbattaṃ pittasemharuhirādīhi apaḷibuddhaṃ upakkilesavimuttatāya dūre pi ārammaṇasampaṭicchanasamatthaṃ dibbaṃ pasādacakkhu hoti; idañ cā pi viriyabhāvanā balanibbattaṃ ñāṇacakkhu tādisaṃ evā ti dibbasadisattā dibbaṃ. dibbavihāravasena paṭiladdhattā attanā ca dibbavihārasannissitattā pi dibbaṃ* (Vism 423) In addition, there is: *ālokapariggahena mahājutikattā pi dibbaṃ; tirokuḍḍādigatarūpadassanena mahāgatikattā pi dibbaṃ. taṃ sabbaṃ saddasatthānusāren' eva veditabbaṃ* (Vism 423)
Consciousness process *tass' evaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikaroto: idāni dibbasotadhātu uppajjissatī ti tesu saddesu aññataraṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati; tasmiṃ niruddhe cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti, yesaṃ purimāni tīṇi, cattāri vā parikamma-upacārānuloma-gotrabhu-nāmakāni kāmāvacārāni, catutthaṃ pañcamaṃ vā appanācittaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ. tattha yaṃ tena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dibbasotadhātū ti veditabbā* (Vism 408)	**Consciousness process** *tatrā 'yaṃ dibbacakkhuno uppattikkamo, vuttappakāram etaṃ rūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā, manodvārāvajjane uppajjitvā niruddhe, tad-eva rūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā, cattāri pañca vā javanāni uppajjatī ti sabbaṃ purimanayen' eva veditabbaṃ. idhā 'pi pubbabhāgacittāni savitakkasavicārāni kāmāvacarāni, pariyosāne atthasādhakacittaṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ, tena sahajātaṃ ñāṇaṃ **sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇan** ti pi **dibbacakkhuñāṇan** ti pi vuccatī ti* (Vism 429)

In the paragraph 8.1, devoted to the *dibbasotadhātu*, it was noted that the **Vimuttimagga* stressed the importance of having the natural or physical ear in order to develop the divine one, whereas the *Visuddhimagga* was silent about it and a similar piece of information was only provided by the *Saddhammappakāsinī*. Therefore, it is no wonder that, also concerning the *dibbacakkhu*, the **Vimuttimagga* mentions the natural eye as the starting point: "having a natural eye, he only develops [it]".[139] Even in this case the *Visuddhimagga* does not mention it, nor does it seem that the *Saddhammappakāsinī* mentions it either. However, it is possible to find a reference to the need of having a natural or physical eye in order to develop the divine eye in the *Milindapañha*. The account is about a dilemma that stems from the fact that King Sivi,[140] after having donated his eyes to a beggar, attains a divine eye:

> Venerable Nāgasena, you say: "The eyes were donated to the beggar by the King Sivi, and although he was blind, divine eyes arose [in him]". But

139 有眼性是其所能起 (T1648.32.0444a15).

140 Cf. *Sivijātaka* (Ja IV 401-12).

> this utterance is wrong, blameworthy, faulty. It is said in a *sutta*: "There is no arising of the *dibbacakkhu* when the causes are removed, without a cause, without a basis".[141]

From this passage it is clear that the fact that a blind man can attain a divine eye is quite odd since in an untraced canonical passage[142] it is clearly stated that the divine eye requires a basis, understood as the physical eye in this context. This piece of information agrees with what we know about the *dibbasotadhātu* and with what we can find about the *dibbacakkhu* in other Pāli commentaries.[143] The relationship between the physical eye and the divine eye was also a point of controversy, as it is demonstrated by the *Kathāvatthu*, which reports the controversial idea that the physical eye, when supporting a [particular] *dhamma*, is the divine eye (*maṃsacakkhuṃ dhammupatthaddhaṃ dibbacakkhuṃ hotī ti*; Kv 251). After having given some logical reasons to not regard the *maṃsacakkhu* and the *dibbacakkhu* as the same eye, the *Kathāvatthu* remarks that the Buddha clearly spoke of more than one eye, just as in the *Itivuttaka*.[144]

As we may note, strictly speaking, this *abhiññā* would concern the knowledge of the fall and rise of beings (*sattānaṃ cutūpapāta-ñāṇāya*; D I 82), whereas the *dibbacakkhu* is a mere tool through which the knowledge is attained (*so dibbena cakkhunā*; D I 82). However, as early as the time of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, this particular *abhiññā* started to be called *dibbacakkhuñāṇa*.[145] Then, it is no wonder that someone started to identify the canonical exposition of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* with the *dibbacakkhu*. Therefore, the *Kathāvatthu* (256-8) reports the controversial idea that would see the *dibbacakkhu* corresponding with the knowledge of the *yathākammūpaga*. The *Kathāvatthu*, indeed, in order to demonstrate that the *yathākammūpagañāṇa* is not the *dibbacakkhu*, quotes a canonical passage from the *Therāgathā* which concerns the venerable Sāriputta and mentions, interestingly, the *dibbacakkhu* and the *cutūpapāta* as two different items:

> My hearing was not in vain, I am liberated, without any *āsava*.
> Not for the past abodes, nor for the divine eye (*dibbassa cakkhuno*),
> nor for the psychic power of comprehending the minds [of others], nor for the fall and rise [of beings] (*cutiyā upapattiyā*),
> nor for the purification of the ear element; there is not my longing [for such things].[146]

141 *Bhante Nāgasena, tumhe evaṃ bhaṇatha: Sivirājena yācakassa cakkhūni dinnāni, andhassa sato puna dibbacakkhūni uppannānīti. etam-pi vacanaṃ sakasaṭaṃ saniggahaṃ sadosaṃ. hetusamugghāte ahetusmiṃ avatthumhi na-tthi dibbacakkhussa uppādo ti sutte vuttaṃ* (Mil 119).

142 The passage is noted as untraced by Rhys Davids (1890, 179, n. 4) and Horner (1969, 167, n. 2), I have not been able to find it either.

143 E.g. *pakati-cakkhumato eva hi dibba-cakkhu uppajjati* (It-a II 28).

144 *maṃsacakkhu dibbacakkhu paññācakkhu anuttaraṃ | etāni tīṇi cakkhūni akkhāsi purisuttamo* || (It 61).

145 Paṭis I 2 and Paṭis I 114-15.

146 *tam me amoghaṃ savanaṃ, vimutto 'mhi anāsavo | n' eva pubbenivāsāya na pi dibbassa cakkhuno || cetopariyāyaiddhiyā cutiyā upapattiyā | sotadhātuvisuddhiyā paṇidhī me na vijjati* || (Th 996-7).

The *Kathāvatthu* illustrates the possibility that Sāriputta attained the knowledge of the *yathākammūpaga* even without the *dibbacakkhu* (*adibbacakkhuko dibbacakkhuṃ appaṭiladdho*; Kv 257). The term *yathākammūpaga* occurs in the *cutūpapātañāṇa*'s pericope in the phrase *yathākammūpage satte pajānāti* (D I 82), which is also the most common occurrence in the Pāli canon.[147] The existence of the term *yathākammūpaga* in combination with *ñāṇa* and used in other contexts, started in texts such as the *Paṭṭhāna* (e.g. Tikap III 321) and *Kathāvatthu* (e.g. Kv 256). Between the *dibbacakkhu* and the *yathākammūpaga*, it might seem that, from the point of view of the **Vimuttimagga*, it is the latter one that would better convey the specific function of the *cutūpapātañāṇa*. The **Vimuttimagga* states that: "with the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma* (如行業智; *yathākammūpagañāṇa*), [when] he sees the destinies in which people arise, he knows that with such *kamma* such person would have as much as such arising".[148] This definition seems to summarise what the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is. The **Vimuttimagga*, however, clearly uses the term '*dibbacakkhu*' (= *tiānyǎn* 天眼) to refer to this *abhiññā*, just like the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. This nomenclature affair involves a reflection about what is really meant for *cutūpapātañāṇa*.

According to the later exegesis (especially the *Visuddhimagga*), the *cutūpapātañāṇa* may be described as the result of the application of the *yathākammūpaga*'s function to what is seen through the *dibbacakkhu*. Nonetheless, the *Visuddhimagga* has no problem when describing the development of the power through the lens of the consciousness process doctrine in stating that the goal is achieved with the ultimate consciousness of the process and that "the knowledge conascent with that is called '**knowledge of the fall and rise of beings**' (***sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇaṃ***) and also '**knowledge of the divine eye**' (***dibbacakkhuñāṇaṃ***)".[149] In other words, the *Visuddhimagga* equates the *cutūpapātañāṇa* and *dibbacakkhuñāṇa*. We may wonder why in the oldest canonical text *cutūpapātañāṇa* is used in place of *dibbacakkhuñāṇa* (although the right question is why *dibbacakkhuñāṇa* replaced *cutūpapātañāṇa*). First of all, we may note that the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is more descriptive than *dibbacakkhuñāṇa*. The *cutūpapātañāṇa* is the 'knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings]', whereas the *dibbacakkhuñāṇa* is the 'knowledge attained through or by means of the divine eye'. *Dibbacakkhuñāṇa* does not convey the kind of knowledge that is reached, but only the medium through which it is generated.

Now, I should point out that my translation of the compound '*cutūpapāta*' as 'fall and rise' is not well supported by the commentarial literature. A common exegetical explanation for *cutūpapāta* in the commentaries is that it means *cuti-paṭisandhi*, a terminology used in the consciousness process doctrine to indicate the moment of death and rebirth-linking.[150] This explanation may seem a little scholastic and also limited, given that the

147 An exception is Sn 587: *yathākammūpage nare*.

148 以如行業智, 見人生趣, 以此業此人先生此知之 (T1648.32.0444b17-18).

149 *tena sahajātaṃ ñāṇaṃ* ***sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇan*** *ti pi* ***dibbacakkhuñāṇan*** *ti pi vuccatī ti* (Vism 429).

150 For the connection of *cutūpapāta* with *cutipaṭisandhi*, see for instance: ***etad ānuttariyaṃ bhante sattānaṃ cutūpapāta ñāṇe*** *ti Bhante yā pi ayaṃ sattānaṃ cuti-paṭisandhi-ñāṇa-desanā, sā pi tumhākaṃ yeva anuttarā* (Sv III 895); ***cutūpapāta-ñāṇaṃ*** *cuti-paṭisandhi-cchādakaṃ tamaṃ vijjhati* (Sv III 1006); ***cutūpapāte ñāṇan*** *ti cutiya ca upapāte ca ñāṇaṃ. idam pi sattānaṃ*

canonical material would show a more sophisticated range of meanings. For the sake of clarity, I should say that I do not deny that the meaning of death and rebirth is implied in the compound *cutūpapāta*. Of course, it is implied. Nonetheless, I suggest that the compound, as proper name for this *abhiññā*, does not merely convey this meaning, but on the contrary communicates a more sophisticated image. Shall we consider the canonical evidence in which the terms of the compound *cutūpapāta* occur together with another couple of terms, namely *āgati* 'coming back' and *gati* 'going away': e.g. *āgatiñ ca gatiñ ca cutiñ ca uppattiñ ca* (D I 162).[151] Noticeably, both these nouns indicate the rebirth and death through the metaphor of motion. Another case in which a metaphor of motion is involved in the *Dīghanikāya* is as follows: "beings course through, flow, fall, arise".[152] This, I argue, is the same in the case of *cuti*/*cuta* and *upapāta*. The terms, together with the meaning of death and rebirth, convey the image of a shifting from one condition to another.[153] This is especially evident if we think about the choice of *cuti*/*cuta* to indicate the death. As a matter of fact, the word *cuti*/*cuta* in *cutūpapāta* relates to the verb *cavati*, which can indicate 'to die', but with a particular emphasis on the change of condition. This is evident, for instance, in the account in which the Buddha was still a Bodhisatta, a Buddha-to-be, who lived among the group of the Tusita gods: "mindful and fully aware, Ānanda, the Bodhisatta fallen (*cavitvā* = gerund of *cavati*) from the Tusita division and descended into the mother's womb".[154] Here, the death implies a change or a shifting from a celestial condition to an earthly one. The ambiguity of the term *cuti*/*cuta* is reflected also by the many Chinese renderings of the term in this context. The term *cavamāne* in the Pali expression *satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne* (D I 82) is variously translated in the Chinese *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s parallels. In the *Cháng āhán jīng* 長阿含經 is translated with *sǐ* 死 (見生死; T0001.01.0086b26-27), whereas in the *Fóshuō jízhì guǒ jīng* 佛説寂志果經 is translated with *mò* 沒 (見人沒生; T0022.01.0275c14-15). In the **Vimuttimagga* is translated with *zhōng* 終 (見衆生或終或生; T1648.32.0444a27). Concerning *upapajjamāne*, the translation is always *shēng* 生. The value of this evidence is to show the various strategies adopted by Chinese translators to render a term that means 'to die' with an additional image. Although all Chinese translations highlight the meaning of 'to die', the translation with *mò* 沒, for instance, also conveys a shifting in the downward direction since the character 沒 means also 'to sink', and is indeed composed of the radical *shuǐ* 水 'water'.

cutipaṭisandhicchādakaṃ tamaṃ vijjatī ti pi vijjā. taṃ tamaṃ vijjhitvā sattānaṃ cutipaṭisandhiyo viditā pākaṭā karotī ti viditakaraṇaṭṭhenā pi vijjā (As 408).

151 The same expression can occur through many different formulations: e.g. *āgati gati cuti upapatti* (A III 54) and *cutūpapātaṃ jānāmi sattānaṃ āgatiṃ gatiṃ* (Th 917).

152 *sattā sandhāvanti saṃsaranti cavanti upapajjanti* (D I 14). See also ***te ca sattā sandhāvanti**, ito aññattha gacchantī ti attho* (Sv I 105).

153 Death, conceived as a 'motion' or a 'departure', is expressed in English, for instance, through the locution 'to pass away', which is one of the many ways to metaphorically address such an important moment of life. This has been recognised by Lakoff and Turner, who write: "There is a metaphorical conception of death as departure that can be expressed in many different ways, such as 'passing away,' 'being gone,' and 'departing.' [...] Life and death are such all-encompassing matters that there can be no single conceptual metaphor that will enable us to comprehend them" (1989, 2).

154 *sato sampajāno, Ānanda, Bodhisatto Tusitā kāyā cavitvā mātu kucchiṃ okkami* (M III 119).

Thus, we may wonder whether the terms *cuti*/*cuta* and *upapāta* would indicate only death and rebirth. These two meanings are certainly involved, but nonetheless the imagery of motion could allow a bolder interpretation. Thus, considering the position of ***cavamāne upapajjamāne*** in the Pāli passage, we may note as it is in-between two phrases with a final verb:

> 1) *so dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati* ***cavamāne upapajjamāne***, 2) *hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti*.

If we assume that the right interpretation is death and rebirth, we should also recognise that the two words inflected in the present middle participle are not located in the expected position in the phrase, namely before the final verb *passati*. Therefore, we may advance the hypothesis that the central positioning may be due to the fact that the expression *cavamāne upapajjamāne* could be interpreted as belonging either to one or the other phrasings or is perhaps referring to both, as what in Sanskrit poetry is called *śleṣa*: a figure of speech where two separate meanings merge into a single expression.

Then, we may wonder what the canonical texts wanted to convey through the *cutūpapātañāṇa*'s pericope. Did they want to highlight the existence of a divine eye? The evidence seems to point the other way, given that the divine eye is not created there but is a mere instrument (we may wonder at which point of the path it was created and this topic will actually be analysed in the next chapter). There are, indeed, some similarities between the *cutūpapātañāṇa*'s account and two other Upaniṣadic accounts involving the oneiric state (i.e. BU 4.3.7-38 and 2.1.16-20). The comparison may highlight the pre-Buddhist elements, which in turn could be at the core of the canonical pericope.

8.4.4 The Upaniṣadic Oneiric State and the Buddhist *Cutūpapātañāṇa*

As previously discussed (§ 7.3), in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, during the oneiric state, a person made of consciousness (*vijñānamaya*) is able to perform activities that are beyond the common human capacities. The freedom of movement and the creative power of the mind found in this passage resemble the marvellous actions performed by a monk who experiences *iddhi*s.[155] However, within the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*'s account there is a detail that is less striking, but likewise interesting. In *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 4.3.7-38 there is often reference to the fact that the person made of consciousness, standing in the place between this world and the other world, sees both evils and joys (*pāpmana ānandāṃś ca paśyati*; BU 4.3.9) and later, indeed, it is repeated many times that this person has seen the merit (*puṇya*) and demerit (*pāpa*) (*dṛṣṭvaiva puṇyaṃ ca pāpaṃ*; e.g. BU 4.3.15). The terms *puṇya* and *pāpa*, which have been translated as 'merit' and 'demerit', are a little controversial. Indeed, in this regard Bodewitz stated, "[i]n post-Vedic texts in which *puṇyam* is mentioned together with *pāpam*, good and bad actions in general (and their resulting merits and demerits) are definitely

155 This paragraph is based on my previous work, see De Notariis 2019a, 251-6.

meant" (2013, 44). This implies that the interpretation of *puṇya* and *pāpa* as 'merit' and 'demerit' is not valid for all passages in the Vedic texts, but mainly for the post-Vedic texts. So, in spite of the fact that Bodewitz found some Upaniṣadic passages in which *puṇya* and *pāpa* refer to good and bad activities and their results (e.g. BU 3.2.13, see Bodewitz 2013, 47), he asserted that:

> B[ṛhad]Ā[raṇyaka]U[paniṣad] 4, 3, 15; 4, 3, 22 and 4, 3, 34 have *puṇyam* and *pāpam* as the objects of an other verb than *kar*, namely the verb 'to see'. In the state of dreams one sees (i.e. experiences) good and evil, which have nothing to do with moral distinctions but refer to pleasant and unpleasant experiences. (Bodewitz 2013, 47; square brackets added)

The Upaniṣadic verses quoted are part of the oneiric account. In this passage, Bodewitz interprets the verbs denoting 'to see' (in the cases mentioned, *dṛṣṭvā* is used, a gerund form from the root √*dṛś*) with the meaning 'to experience'. Bodewitz also stated that the good and evil experienced "have nothing to do with moral distinctions but refer to pleasant and unpleasant experiences", whereas the Upaniṣadic passage seems to indicate exactly the opposite, since it specifies that what one sees in that state does not follow him (*sa yat tatra kiñcit paśyaty ananvāgatas tena bhavati*; BU 4.3.15).[156]

Therefore, in analysing the Sanskrit text, it is possible to note that the verses 4.3.15-17[157] repeat almost the same phrasing with reference to three different states:

1. the serenity (*samprasāda*, i.e. the mental state during the deep sleep);
2. the dream (*svapna*);
3. and the waking condition (*buddhānta*).

However, it is possible to note that the phrase "whatever he sees there, he is not followed by it" (*sa yat tatra kiñcit paśyaty ananvāgatas tena bhavati*) occurs only for the first two states that are related to the act of sleeping, whereas it does not occur in the third one, the waking state. This may indicate that whatever one 'sees' in the waking state, he is 'followed' (*anvāgata*) by it, whereas if he had been in the other two states, he would not have been followed (*ananvāgata*) by it. It would seem that actually the verb 'to see' may convey the meaning of 'to experience' (as Bodewitz stated), and that these experiences have no results if they take place during sleep (i.e. not follow), but they do get results if they take place in the waking state (i.e. follow). So, the person made of consciousness sees/experiences actions that may

156 Later the text states that one is not followed by merit and demerit: *ananvāgataṃ puṇyenānanvāgataṃ pāpena* (BU 4.3.22).

157 *sa vā eṣa etasmin* ***saṃprasāde*** *ratvā caritvā dṛṣṭvaiva puṇyaṃ ca pāpaṃ ca punaḥ pratinyāyaṃ pratiyony ādravati svapnāyaiva | sa yat tatra kiñcit paśyaty ananvāgatas tena bhavati | asaṅgo hy ayaṃ puruṣa iti | evam evaitat yājñavalkya | so 'haṃ bhagavate sahasraṃ dadāmi | ata ūrdhvaṃ vimokṣāyaiva brūhīti ||*
sa vā eṣa etasmin ***svapne*** *ratvā caritvā dṛṣṭvaiva puṇyaṃ ca pāpaṃ ca punaḥ pratinyāyaṃ pratiyony ādravati buddhāntāyaiva | sa yat tatra kiñcit paśyaty ananvāgatas tena bhavati | asaṅgo hy ayaṃ puruṣa iti | evam evaitat yājñavalkya | so 'haṃ bhagavate sahasraṃ dadāmi | ata ūrdhvaṃ vimokṣāyaiva brūhīti ||*
sa vā eṣa etasmin ***buddhānte*** *ratvā caritvā dṛṣṭvaiva puṇyaṃ ca pāpaṃ ca punaḥ pratinyāyaṃ pratiyony ādravati svapnāntāyaiva* (BU 4.3.15-17).

or may not have results according to the state in which these actions are experienced (waking or sleeping state). In the Buddhist text, the monk sees (*passati*) the different kinds of rebirths of beings. On the one hand, there is the observation of actions meritorious and not (Upaniṣadic account), and, on the other hand, there is the observation of the results of the actions of others (Buddhist account). The action of seeing/experiencing (Sanskrit: *paśyati*; Pāli: *passati*) is an action that takes place in the mind in both the Upaniṣadic oneiric state and Buddhist account, but this does not imply that the experience is devoid of objectivity. Within the Upaniṣadic account, it is stated that the person made of consciousness sees/experiences merit and demerit in the dreamlike state and in deep sleep, as well as in the waking state. It seems from BU 2.1.18 that the oneiric experience is something that occurs inside the body, but, as W. Doniger stated:

> The fact that the dream exists only inside the body of the dreamer does not, however, imply that it is unreal, as such a dichotomy (inside vs. outside, private vs. public) might imply in Western thinking. (1984, 15)[158]

Within the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s exposition of the *cutūpapātañāṇa*, it is not clear how to develop the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), nevertheless it is clear that the action of the mind is implied.[159] The instructions to perform this *abhiññā* are provided only by the *Visuddhimagga*. As previously noted (§ 8.4.2), in this text (Vism 427-9), it is explained that one who wants to develop the divine eye should achieve the dwelling place of the access *jhāna* (*upacārajjhānagocara*) using the meditative object called *kasiṇa*, choosing one among the three *kasiṇa*s of fire (*tejas*), white (*odāta*), and light (*āloka*), and should mentally extend it without getting the full absorption (*appanā*).[160] Among these three *kasiṇa*s, the light *kasiṇa* is the best for this kind of performance.[161] The text continues stating that it is possible to see visible forms into the range of extension of the *kasiṇa*.[162] The objects seen through the divine eye are probably mental images, which are as much real as the objects seen with the physical eye:

> In this context, when this form – inside the belly, belonging to the heart-base (*hadayavatthu*), under the surface of the earth, beyond walls, mountains, and ramparts, or in another sphere of existence (*paracakkavāḷa*) – which does not come into the range of perception of the fleshly eye of the monk, reaches the range of perception of the eye of

158 For an overview concerning the concept of 'dream' within Vedic texts, see Pellegrini 2011, 11-29.

159 This can be inferred from the following stock phrase: *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* (D I 82). For more details, see below at § 9.2.

160 *tejokasiṇaṃ odātakasiṇaṃ ālokakasiṇan ti imesu tīsu kasiṇesu aññataraṃ āsannaṃ kātabbaṃ; upacārajjhānagocaraṃ katvā vaḍḍhetvā upetabbaṃ, na tattha appanā uppādetabbā ti adhippāyo* (Vism 427-8).

161 *imesu-ca pana tīsu ālokakasiṇaṃ yeva seṭṭhataraṃ* (Vism 428).

162 *vaḍḍhitaṭṭhānassa anto yeva rūpagataṃ passitabbaṃ* (Vism 428).

> knowledge (*ñāṇacakkhu*), and it is as seen with the fleshly eye; then the divine eye has arisen.[163]

In this regard, it is worth remembering that since in Buddhism the mind (*manas*) is considered a sense, namely the sixth sense, the nature of the mind's experience is not different from the other sensory experiences.[164]

In both Upaniṣadic and Buddhist accounts, the observation/experience is mental, but it does not mean that it is not real. Moreover, in both accounts it seems that the karmic theory (definitely within the Buddhist account and most likely in the Upaniṣadic one) is involved. Finally, in order to support this hypothesis that would read a connection between the two accounts, it is worthy to highlight a couple of dichotomous elements present in both traditions.

Starting with the Buddhist exposition of the *cutūpapātañāṇa*, it is possible to note that through the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), the rebirth of beings in an inferior or superior plane of existence according to the *kamma* is observed. The text provides a list of opposite pairs: *cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte, suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe, sugate duggate* (D I 82). With this phrasing, it may indicate the possibility of falling (*cavamāna*) in negative conditions (*hīna*, *dubbaṇṇa*, *duggata*), or rising (*upapajjamāna*) in positive conditions (*paṇīta*, *suvaṇṇa*, *sugata*).[165] The negative conditions *par excellence* are rebirths in hells, whereas the positive conditions are rebirths in heavens. The *kamma* is clearly understood as a sort of natural law, which acts automatically at the moment of death, leading to the following rebirth. It may make sense to consider the verb *cavati* as indicating a fall from one state to another[166] and the verb *upapajjati* indicating an ascent towards more elevated states,[167] in addition to the common translation of 'dying and being born'.

Similar dichotomous elements are present in another Upaniṣadic passage (BU 2.1.16-20) that involves a person made of consciousness within the oneiric state. In this passage, it is stated that this person *uccāvacaṃ nigacchati* (BU 2.1.18). Since the compound *uccāvaca* means high (*ucca*/*uccā*) and low (*avaca*) without specifying anything else, it is not immediately clear how to translate it. The expression 'high and low' could refer to high and low regions (see, for example, Olivelle 1998, 63), states, worlds. However, it could also indicate high and low conditions (e.g. in the Śaṅkara's comment on this compound: *utāpy uccāvacam uccaṃ ca devatvādy avacaṃ ca tiryaktvādi,*

163 *tattha yadā tassa bhikkhuno maṃsacakkhussa anāpāthagataṃ anto kucchigataṃ hadayavatthunissitaṃ heṭṭhā pathavītalanissitaṃ tirokuḍḍapabbatapākāragataṃ paracakkavāḷagatan ti idaṃ rūpaṃ ñāṇacakkhussa āpāthaṃ āgacchati, maṃsacakkhuno dissamānaṃ viya hoti, tadā dibbacakkhu uppannaṃ hoti* (Vism 428-9).

164 See Johansson 1969, 48; Clough [2010] 2011, 417; 2012, 86. Johansson wrote about the *abhiññā*s that "[s]ome of the supernatural forms of knowledge (*abhiññā*) may be understood as ideations interpreted as *real*" (1969, 48).

165 As previously noted (§ 8.4.1), this is by no means the only possible interpretation of this phrasing.

166 See s.v. "cavati" in DOP and BHSD.

167 As stated by the PED (s.v. "upapajjati"), the etymology of *upapajjati* is a bit controversial since it is not really clear if it derives from *upa-√pad* or from *ud-√pad*. The dictionary, therefore, highlights as *upap-* and *upp-* are almost written in the same way in Sinhalese script. In any case, both prefixes could indicate an upward direction (s.vv. "upa-" and "ud-" in PED).

uccam ivāvacam iva ca nigacchati; BUBh ad 2.1.18).[168] In spite of possible translations, and likewise the Buddhist account, it is possible to observe that it involves a movement or a shift and a settlement (*ni-√gam*) in a higher situation or in a lower one. It may be possible that these two translations are not mutually exclusive because in order to visit another realm one could assume the life conditions of this realm. This seems to occur sometimes in the Buddhist texts, which state often that one of the characteristics of some gods in certain realms is to have a body made of mind (*manomaya*) (e.g. D I 17), and so it is no wonder that in S V 282 it is stated that the Buddha can visit the world of Brahmā with both the physical body and the body made of mind (*manomaya*).

Drawing conclusions from this analysis, it is possible to state that:

1. Buddhist and Upaniṣadic accounts seem to involve the karmic theory, although in the Buddhist account it is more evident than in the Upaniṣadic passages.
2. The action of 'seeing' is involved in both traditions and the experience is as much in the mind as it is real. Observing the process of rebirth through the workings of the law of *kamma* through the divine eye is not dissimilar from seeing merits and demerits in the dream: both are actions that take place in the mind, one during meditation and one during sleep. In these cases, the action of seeing is a mental action, which, in the Buddhist case, implies being a spectator, and, in the Upaniṣadic account, implies an all-pervasive experience.
3. Similar dichotomous elements are present in both traditions. The Buddhist text may indicate the possibility of falling (*cavamāna*) in negative conditions (*hīna*, *dubbaṇṇa*, *duggata*), or rising (*upapajjamāna*) in positive conditions (*paṇīta*, *suvaṇṇa*, *sugata*). The Upaniṣadic account involves a movement or a shift and a settlement (*nigacchati*) in high (*ucca*/*uccā*) and low (*avaca*) regions, states, worlds, or conditions (*uccāvacaṃ nigacchati*; BU 2.1.18).[169]

8.4.5 The Canonical Concern and the Buddhist Exegesis

The elements in common with the Upaniṣadic accounts which can contribute to this discussion are the presence of the topic of *kamma* and the dichotomous elements. Positive and negative conditions are reached according to the *kamma*, the *saṃsāra* of beings is seen as an ethical arena regulated by the karmic rules. The main point of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* does not consist solely of seeing death and rebirth, but the observation of the movement of beings in the universe is certainly involved. The death and rebirth in the *cutūpapātañāṇa*'s account is a dynamic action and not a static one and, indeed, a metaphor of motion is involved, as it has already been highlighted (§ 8.4.3). I think that it is possible to state that the use of the

168 The text formatting has been slightly edited. This interpretation could also be coherent with the fact that the previous phrase states that the person made of consciousness may become a great king or a great brahmin (i.e. he experiences a very good and high condition): *tad uteva mahārājo bhavaty uteva mahābrāhmaṇaḥ | utevoccāvacaṃ nigacchati* (BU 2.1.18).

169 It is worth noting that the Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* also seems to emphasise the attainment of good and bad conditions: "Through the divine eye, which is purified, he sees beings disappearing and arising in good and bad conditions according to [their] karma" (以天眼淨盡見衆生所爲善惡隨業受生; T0001.01.0086b27-28).

term '*dibbacakkhu*' to designate the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is a case of metonymy, a figure of speech that consists of the use of the name of one object or concept for that of another to which it is related. This convention was already started in the canonical text, when, for instance, the *tevijja*s are mentioned:

> I know the former existence, the divine eye is purified,
> I reached the highest goal; the teaching of the Buddha has been accomplished.[170]

Other times, however, the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is replaced by the action of seeing heavens and states of decline (*saggāpāya*):

> One who knows the past abode and sees heavens and states of decline (*saggāpāya*),
> then he has attained the destruction of [future] rebirths, he is a sage who has perfected his higher knowledges,
> with these three knowledges he has three knowledges, he is a brāhmaṇa.
> I define him one who has the three knowledges, not the other who utters and mutters [mere words].[171]

This can also be a case of metonymy, which was less fortunate than the previous one. These heavens and states of decline are clearly higher or lower conditions, and we know very well that it is "the action (*kamma*) that assigns[172] beings to inferior or superior states" (*kammaṃ satte vibhajati yad idaṃ hīnappaṇītatāya*; M III 203). Therefore, it seems that this *abhiññā* would regard the observation of the functioning of the ethical cosmos. The death and rebirth are not the main point, since we already know through the ordinary experience that beings die and are born. The process of dying and being born being ethically regulated is the major concern.

The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, however, focuses its exegesis on the *dibbacakkhu*, connecting the creation of the divine eye with another canonical passage that concerns the *ñāṇa-dassana* (i.e. D III 223). Then, it is of no wonder that on another occasion the commentarial literature explains the compound *ñāṇadassana* as "the vision (*dassana*) called knowledge (*ñāṇa*) which is [from] the divine eye" (*ñāṇadassanan ti dibbacakkhubhūtaṃ ñāṇasaṃkhātaṃ dassanaṃ*; Mp IV 143). The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* introduces a method to develop the divine eye that consists of, at first, paying attention (*manasikaroti*) to the perception of light (*ālokasaññā*) and later to fix the attention (*adhiṭṭhāti*) on the perception of the day (*divāsaññā*). These two actions are performed in the sequence *manasikaroti* + *adhiṭṭhāti*, as it is suggested by the exegetical interpretation ***divā saññā adhiṭṭhātī*** *ti evaṃ manasikatvā divā ti saññāṃ ṭhapeti* (Sv III 1007 = Paṭis-a I 377). The action conveyed by *adhiṭṭhāti* seems to be a formal resolution aimed at equating the brightness of the day with that of the night (*yathā divā tathā ratti, yathā ratti tathā divā*; Paṭis I 115 = D III 223), bringing light into the darkness. The

170 *pubbenivāsaṃ jānāmi, dibbacakkhuṃ visodhitaṃ | sadattho me anuppatto, kataṃ buddhassa sāsanaṃ* || (Th 332).

171 *pubbenivāsaṃ yo vedī saggāpāyañ ca passati | atho jātikkhayaṃ patto abhiññāvosito muni | etāhi tīhi vijjāhi tevijjo hoti brāhmaṇo | taṃ ahaṃ vadāmi tevijjaṃ nāññaṃ lapitalāpanan ti* || (A I 165, 167-8).

172 See s.v. "vi-√bhaj" in SED.

Visuddhimagga presents a slightly different kind of process based on the work on *kasiṇa*s. The *kasiṇa*s involved are the ones connected with the light or luminosity, namely: fire (*tejas*), white (*odāta*), and light (*āloka*). Given that, according to the exegesis, the *dibbacakkhu* is a knowledge based upon light (*āloka*) (*dibba-cakkhuṃ āloka-nissita-ñāṇaṃ*; Sv III 1003); it is unsurprising that the *kasiṇa* of light itself is the best among the *kasiṇa*s recommended to develop the divine eye. The practitioner should not attain the absorption (*appanā*), but has to stop at the level of access (*upacāra*), and there he should extend the *kasiṇa*. This, however, is only the development of the divine eye and, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, it only provides the vision of beings in heavens and hells. The reasons that lead beings to experience punishments or rewards is still hidden. Attaining the *yathākammūpagañāṇa* is the only way to know that. In order to attain it, the practitioner should ask himself why beings are experiencing such results. This very action of paying attention (*manasikaroti*) to the question produces the arising of a knowledge that has the [past] *kamma* as object (*taṃ kammārammaṇaṃ ñāṇaṃ uppajjati*; Vism 424). Therefore, we have as a result:

divine eye	+	knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma*	=	knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings]
dibbacakkhu		*yathākammūpagañāṇa*		*cutūpapātañāṇa*

The **Vimuttimagga*, at first, mentions the work on the *kasiṇa*s, stating that the *dibbacakkhu* is attained by "one who has attained mastery over the fourth *jhāna* [through] the light *kasiṇa*s".[173] Thereafter, it states that there are two divine eyes, one created thanks to the result of the *kamma* (業果報所) and one that is created by the mental culture (修行所). The latter is the one that receives the exegetical explanation. The text reports that it involves "the cultivation of the four *iddhipāda*s",[174] and successively the meditator "enters [through] the light *kasiṇa* into the fourth *jhāna*, he pays attention to the perception of light (光想; *ālokasaññā*) and resolves upon the perception of the day (日想; *divāsaññā*): 'The day is like the night, the night is like the day'".[175] Concerning this passage, it is worth noting that the text is borrowing the passage from the canon (Paṭis I 115 = D III 223), making some additions. New information is, indeed, the fact that the meditator performs the action of paying attention to the perception of light, after having entered the fourth *jhāna* attained through the light *kasiṇa*. We will find similar information in a more developed way in the *Visuddhimagga*, which uses the light *kasiṇa* to develop the divine eye, and also the dwelling place of the access *jhāna* (*upacārajjhānagocara*) should be achieved. Thereafter, the **Vimuttimagga* prescribes that the meditator "with the light fills [the body] inwardly and pays attention (作意; *manasikaroti*) to the physical forms. It is not [called] the divine eye when [the meditator] with the knowledge fills the light; [but] it is said to be the divine eye when [the meditator] with the knowledge

173 光明一切入事, 於第四禪得自在 (T1648.32.0444a14-15).

174 如是修四如意足 (T1648.32.0444a19-20).

175 光一切入, 入第四禪, 作意光想, 及日想受持: "此日如夜, 此夜如日"。(T1648.32.0444a20-22).

sees the luminous forms inwardly (内光明色)".[176] This piece of information is something new, and it seems echoed in the *Visuddhimagga*, which describes the possibility to observe the physical forms (*rūpa*) that are not in the range of perception of the physical eye, but are "inside the belly, belonging to the heart-base (*hadayavatthu*), under the surface of the earth [etc.]".[177] The first item on the list is the physical form inside the belly (*anto kucchigataṃ*). We may wonder if the form inside the belly of the *Visuddhimagga* is the same form that is seen inwardly in the **Vimuttimagga*. Certainly, the form inside the *hadayavatthu* can also be considered a form seen inwardly, and to see forms inside the *hadayavatthu* is the method presented in the exegesis of the *cetopariyañāṇa*. These clues may point to the existence of an old exegetical account that prescribed to develop the divine eye concentrating, at first, on the physical forms inside the body.

Turning to the comparison of the various exegetical explanations, we may summarise that:

dibbacakkhu* in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga

development of the *iddhipāda*s (in an abbreviated form)	+	to pay attention (*manasikaroti*) to the perception of light (*ālokasaññā*) and later to fix the attention (*adhiṭṭhāti*) on the perception of the day (*divāsaññā*) (from D III 223)

dibbacakkhu* in the **Vimuttimagga

development of the *iddhipāda*s	+	*Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s method plus some additions	+	to pay attention (作意; *manasikaroti*) to the physical forms inwardly

cutūpapātañāṇa* in the *Visuddhimagga

development of the *dibbacakkhu* through a work on *kasiṇa*s (Vism 427-9), plus explanation according to the *cittavīthi* doctrine	+	development of the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma* (*yathākammūpagañāṇa*), paying attention (*manasikaroti*) to the vision provided by the *dibbacakkhu*

Remarkably, the *Visuddhimagga* claims that the *dibbacakkhu* is called *cutūpapātañāṇa*.[178] However, it would be somewhat scholastic to equalise these two terms since neither the *dibbacakkhu* covers the whole range of meanings of the *cutūpapātañāṇa*, nor does the *cutūpapātañāṇa* vis-à-vis the *dibbacakkhu*. The canonical account of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* would involve the knowledge of the karmic actions behind the results. This knowledge is conveyed in the *Visuddhimagga* by the *yathākammūpagañāṇa*, which is called a *paribhaṇḍañāṇa* 'an accessory knowledge' (Vism 429). However, if we think about the soteriological meaning of the canonical *cutūpapātañāṇa*'s account, it would seem quite an important part of the passage. Moreover,

176 以光明令滿於内, 作意色形。以智令滿光明, 彼非天眼。以智見内光明色, 此謂天眼。(T1648.32.0444 a24-26).

177 *anto kucchigataṃ hadayavatthunissitaṃ heṭṭhā pathavītalanissitaṃ* (Vism 428).

178 *sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇan ti pi dibbacakkhuñāṇan ti pi vuccatī ti* (Vism 429); *cutūpapātañāṇasankhātaṃ dibbacakkhu* (Vism 429).

according to the *Visuddhimagga* itself, the *dibbacakkhu* is also involved in the achievement of the *cetopariyañāṇa* (Vism 409). Therefore, strictly speaking, the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is not the *dibbacakkhu*, but something that you can know through it. Hence, the *dibbacakkhu* used to mention the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is a metonymic use. Probably, the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is the best *ñāṇa* that a practitioner can achieve with the *dibbacakkhu*, so it became the *par excellence* use of the *dibbacakkhu*.

8.4.6 A Note on the Range of Knowledge of the *Dibbacakkhu*

Here, it would be interesting to check what the commentarial literature states about the range of perception of the *dibbacakkhu* in the Buddhist cosmos. This may highlight some inconsistencies in the exegesis. Starting with the commentarial explanation of some verses in which the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is referred to metonymically as *saggāpāyañ ca passati* "sees heavens and states of decline" (A I 165),[179] the Ee commentary on it states: ***saggāpāyañ ca passatī*** *ti cha kāmāvacarena va brahmaloke cattāro ca apāye passati* (Mp II 265). This passage is reported with better word breaks in Be: ***saggāpāyañ ca passatī*** *ti cha kāmāvacare nava brahmaloke cattāro ca apāye passati*, which would mean that "he sees six *kāmāvacara*s [worlds], nine *brahmaloka*s and four states of decline". This passage would still agree with the evidence provided by the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, which reports that: "but concerning the formless worlds, the divine eye does not have an action field" (*āruppe pana dibba-cakkhussa gocaro natthī ti*; Sv I 224). However, when the same verses are commented on in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, it is reported that: "he sees with the divine eye both the heaven that has twenty-six *devaloka*s and the state of decline that is fourfold" (*chabbīsatidevalokabhedaṃ saggañ ca catubbidhaṃ apāyañ ca dibbacakkhunā passati*; Dhp-a IV 233). This statement is problematic, because in order to count twenty-six heavens from the state of humankinds upward, we should also include the formless states (*arūpa*), which were excluded by the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*. *Rūpa* is the object of the eye (*cakkhu*), and so we might actually wonder what one could see in a place where there is no form (*a-rūpa*). Therefore, the range of knowledge of the *dibbacakkhu* can be summarised, according to these two pieces of evidence, as follows:

179 The verses are dealing with the *tevijja*s, and therefore the passage also mentions the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* (*pubbenivāsaṃ yo vedī*) and the *āsavakkhayañāṇa* (*atho jātikkhayaṃ patto*).

Table 8.5 The range of knowledge of the *dibbacakkhu* in some commentarial sources. The shades of grey indicate how far the commentary ascribes the influence of the *dibbacakkhu* within the Buddhist cosmos

***Dibbacakkhu*'s range of perception in the Buddhist cosmos**				
World (*dhātu*)	**No.**	**Realm (*bhūmi*)**	**Mp II 265**	**Dhp-a IV 233**
Formless World (*arūpadhātu*)	26	*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*		26 *devalokas*
	25	*akiñcaññāyatana*		
	24	*viññāṇañcāyatana*		
	23	*ākāsānañcāyatana*		
World of Pure Form (*rūpadhātu*)	22	*akaniṭṭha*		
	21	*sudassin*		
	20	*sudassa*		
	19	*atappa*		
	18	*aviha*		
	17	*asaññ*a-*satta*		
	16	*vehapphala*		
	15	*subha-kiṇha*	9 *brahmalokas*	
	14	*appamāṇa-subha*		
	13	*paritta-subha*		
	12	*ābhassara*		
	11	*appamāṇābha*		
	10	*parittābha*		
	9	*mahābrahmā*		
	8	*brahma-purohita*		
	7	*brahma-pārisajja*		
World of the Five Senses (*kāmadhātu*)	6	*paranimmita-vasavattin*	6 *kāmāvacaras*	
	5	*nimmāṇa-ratin*		
	4	*tusita*		
	3	*yāma*		
	2	*tāvatiṃsa*		
	1	*cātummahārājika*		
	0	Human Being (*manussa*)		
	1	*asura*	4 *apāyas*	4 *apāyas*
	2	*petti-visaya*		
	3	*tiracchānayoni*		
	4	*niraya*		

The above table exemplifies how the commentaries could provide diverging interpretations for the same topic, presenting different standpoints, and thus testifying how tradition was not necessarily unanimous.

Notwithstanding the exegetical controversies, it is interesting to note how some *abhiññā*s can help the practitioner to interact with the cosmos. What is divine becomes within reach of the human being, who in turn can acquire something divine. And this fact is, to some extent, still in connection with the Vedic world.

8.5 *Abhiññā*s: The Vedic Background of the Buddhist Use of the Term 'Divine'

On the basis of the formulation of some of the Buddhist *abhiññā*s, it is possible to detect both change and continuity with Vedic thought.[180] In this regard, it is interesting to consider the 'element of the divine ear' (*dibbasotadhātu*) and the 'divine eye' (*dibbacakkhu*) mentioned within the *abhiññā* called the 'knowledge of the fall and rise of beings' (*cutūpapātañāṇa*). The point of interest is the Pāli adjective *dibba* (Sanskrit: *divya* or *daiva*), which means 'divine' and allows one to discover a certain connection with the Upaniṣads and Vedic texts. In the Buddhist passage the divine eye was developed through the action of the mind (see below § 9.2), and it is also possible in a passage of the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (8.12.5) to detect a connection between the divine eye and the mind:

> Then, one who understands: "Considering this", which is the self; the mind is his divine (*daiva*) eye. This, indeed, enjoys – seeing with the mind, with the divine eye – these desires (*kāma*), which are in the world of *brahman*.[181]

In other Upaniṣadic passages it is possible to find that the adjective 'divine', connected with some faculties, produces marvellous results, such as in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (1.5.18-20):

> From fire and earth, divine (*daivī*) speech enters him. This very divine speech by which whatever one says, it happens.
>
> From sky and sun, divine mind enters him. This very divine mind by which one becomes one who has happiness and therefore does not suffer.
>
> From waters and moon, divine breath enters him. This very divine breath, which moving or resting, does not waver nor receives harm.[182]

It is also attested that a natural manifestation, namely the thunder, could be considered a divine voice, most likely the voice of the sky (*div*/*dyu*) which is divine (*daivī*):

> Just this, the divine voice, the Thunder, repeats: "Da! Da! Da!". Be tamed (*dāmyata*)! Donate (*datta*)! Be compassionate (*dayadhvam*)! One should yearn for the same triad: self-control (*dama*), donation (*dāna*), compassion (*dayā*).[183]

180 This paragraph is based on my previous work, see De Notariis 2019a, 245-50.

181 *atha yo vededaṃ manvānīti sa ātmā | mano 'sya daivaṃ cakṣuḥ | sa vā eṣa etena daivena cakṣuṣā manasaitān kāmān paśyan ramate ya ete brahmaloke* (CU 8.12.5).

182 *pṛthivyai cainam agneś ca daivī vāg āviśati | sā vai daivī vāg yayā yad yad eva vadati tat tad bhavati || divaś cainam ādityāc ca daivaṃ mana āviśati | tad vai daivaṃ mano yenānandy eva bhavaty atho na śocati || adbhyaś cainaṃ candramasaś ca daivaḥ prāṇa āviśati | sa vai daivaḥ prāṇo yaḥ saṃcaraṃś cāsaṃcaraṃś ca na vyathate 'tho na riṣyati* (BU 1.5.18-20).

183 *tad etad evaiṣā daivī vāg anuvadati stanayitnur da da da iti | dāmyata datta dayadhvam iti | tad etat trayaṃ śikṣed damam dānam dayām iti* (BU 5.2.3). I suspect that this Upaniṣadic passage is echoed in the *Dīghanikāya*: *tiṇṇaṃ kho me idaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ kammānaṃ*

These examples make clear that although the higher knowledges (*abhiññā*) are extraordinary capacities more properly Buddhist, their exposition is, in some ways, still in connection with the late Vedic thought. Furthermore, it would be possible to state that the sensory faculties were connected with the terms *'deva'* and *'devatā'* because of the Vedic tendency to establish analogies and connections between different realms of existence. From the time of the *Ṛgveda*, as attested for instance by the very famous *Puruṣasūkta* (ṚV 10.90), the Indian tradition established correspondences between human body and cosmos, which are respectively the microcosm and the macrocosm. Regarding these kinds of correspondences already present in the *Ṛgveda* (although not systematically worked out as in later texts), the mundane or microcosmic level is called *adhyātma*, whereas the cosmic one is *adhidevata* or *adhidaiva* and the level of sacrifice is *adhiyajña* (Jamison, Brereton 2014, 23-4). Such correspondences were often called *bandhu* 'bond', and they were also of great importance for later Vedic texts, such as Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads.[184] It is possible to find a good example of how these correspondences work at the very beginning of the *Aitareyopaniṣad*. The account starts with the creation of the worlds by the self (*ātman*), who was alone in the beginning. Thereafter, he created a man (*puruṣa*)[185] and this creation is reported as the creation of the bodily parts, to which functions and cosmic divinities correspond. The creation of the bodily parts begins after he had extracted the man from the waters,[186] made him solid (*amūrchayat*) and instilled heat into him (*abhyatapat*).[187] The first part of the body to be listed was the mouth, from which speech and fire came out: "the mouth (*mukha*) hatched like an egg, from the mouth [came out] the speech (*vāc*), from the speech [came out] the fire (*agni*)" (*mukhaṃ nirabhidyata yathāṇḍam mukhād vāg vāco 'gniḥ*; AU 1.1.4). So, a bodily part (*mukha*, 'the mouth') is associated with a function (*vāc*, 'speech'), and with a divinity (*agni*, 'fire'). This schema is repeated for other parts of the body, functions, and deities, resulting in the following correspondences (AU 1.1.4):

vipāko, yenāhaṃ etarahi evaṃ mahiddhiko evaṃ mahānubhāvo, seyyathīdaṃ dānassa damassa saṃyamassa (D II 186).

184 In this regard, see Gonda 1965; Olivelle 1998, 24; Smith 1998, 78-81; for a list of other terms used to indicate connections, see Smith 1998, 78, n. 134.

185 With the word 'man', the male of human species to which the word *puruṣa* refers to in Vedic contexts is meant (for more information, see Killingley 2006, 80). In this context, this translation is incontrovertible since among the created bodily parts there will be also the penis (*śiśna*).

186 Since *udbhya* 'from out of these' is an ablative plural, Connolly wrote that "the *puruṣa* was derived from all the worlds created by the self and not just from the waters" (1997, 32). However, it should be highlighted that 'waters' is also plural, so it seems that the text allows more than one interpretation.

187 *so 'dbhya eva puruṣaṃ samuddhṛtyāmūrcchayat || tam abhyatapat* (AU 1.1.3-4).

mouth (*mukha*)	nostrils (*nāsikā*)	eyes (*akṣi*)	ears (*karṇa*)	skin (*tvac*)	heart (*hṛdaya*)	navel (*nābhi*)	penis (*śiśna*)
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
speech (*vāc*)	breath (*prāṇa*)	sight (*cakṣus*)	hearing (*śrotra*)	body-hair (*loman*)	mind (*manas*)	digestive breath (*apāna*)*	semen (*retas*)
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
fire (*agni*)	wind (*vāyu*)	sun (*āditya*)	directions (*diś*)	plants (*oṣadhi*) and trees (*vanaspati*)	moon (*candramas*)	death (*mṛtyu*)	waters (*ap*)

Figure 8.3 Correspondences in the *Aitareyopaniṣad*. For the translation of the term *apāna* in this context, see Brown 1919, 109; Connolly 1997, 32; Pelissero 1998, 107. Anyway, it should be specified that the translation of *apāna* is a contentious issue

Fire, wind, sun, directions, plants and trees, moon, death, and waters are named 'deities' in the *Aitareyopaniṣad*, i.e. *devatā*.[188] These deities, once they were created, after having sprung from the primordial *puruṣa*, plummeted into a great chaotic mass of water (*arṇava*) and so they requested: "identify for us a dwelling in which once established we can eat food".[189] A cow and a horse were offered to these deities, but they were deemed inadequate abodes. Thereafter, a man (*puruṣa*) was offered, which meets the expectations and any deity, after having become the respective faculty, enters in its physical *locus* within the body. For instance, "the fire, after having become speech, enters the mouth".[190] Accounts, just like the one described in the above exposition of the *Aitareyopaniṣad* (1.1-2), show that there is something divine behind the activity of the physical organs according to the Vedic thought. A divine and cosmic power underlies the normal functioning of the human body and a series of correspondences aim to identify at which part of the human body a certain divinity is allocated and which function it performs.[191] It is worth noting the strongly established idea that, among the faculties, the mind (*manas*) is regarded as divine. Therefore, besides the aforementioned passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (1.5.19), in which a mind that is divine appears (e.g. *daivaṃ mano*), as early as the *Ṛgveda* there occurs a mind which is divine: *kavīyamānaḥ ka iha pra vocad devam*

188 *tā etā devatāḥ sṛṣṭā* (AU 1.2.1).

189 *āyatanaṃ naḥ prajānīhi* | *yasmin pratiṣṭhitā annam adāma* (AU 1.2.1).

190 *agnir vāg bhūtvā mukhaṃ prāviśat* (AU 1.2.4). Connolly (1997, 32) seems to consider as *devatā* also the functions such as speech (*vāc*), breath (*prāṇa*), etc. However, the subject that enters into the dwelling is *devatā*, understood as the deity transformed into the faculty. In this regard, it is written that "[the *ātman*] said to them [*tā*(*ḥ*) = *devatā*]: 'enter in your respective dwelling!'" (*tā abravīd yathāyatanaṃ praviśateti*; AU 1.2.3) and so the one which enters (*pra-√viś*) is the deity (e.g. fire, i.e. the *devatā*), after having become the faculty (e.g. speech).

191 There are, in the Upaniṣads, many other lists of faculties with respective deities that differ from the list in the *Aitareyopaniṣad* taken into account in terms of faculties, functions, deities and the correspondence between these. However, the underlying thought is the same. More Upaniṣadic lists, with a particular reference to pentads and their relationship with *Sāṃkhya*, have been analysed by Killingley (2006).

manaḥ kuto adhi prajātam (ṚV 1.164.18).[192] The mind is even called in the late *Praśnopaniṣad* the supreme deity and is the place in which the other faculties are grouped together during the sleep.[193] It is this deity (*deva*) who experiences dreams.

In Buddhism, the sensory faculties are connected with a divine sphere (*dibba*) only when the aim is to indicate that they are able to operate beyond the normal physical boundaries. A connection with a power able to affect and interact with the universe is maintained by the mind and, therefore, extraordinary capacities such as *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s are developed only after a mental purification and cultivation.[194] In this regard, it could be useful to highlight that the canonical Buddhist texts might represent an initial stage in the process of departure from the Vedic understanding of the sensory faculties. This process culminates in the late Theravāda exegesis, which developed a mechanistic explanation of the sensory faculty process (in this case the process of seeing), which does not leave any room for the idea that the sensory process is still in connection with cosmic powers or divinities:

> When the thought "I will look ahead!" arises, together with this same thought the wind element (*vāyo-dhātu*) caused by the thought, which generates the information (*viññatti*),[195] arises. Thus, through the diffusion of the wind element due to the action of the thought, the lower eyelid sinks down and the upper eyelid jumps up; there is not anyone who opens it through a mechanism. Then the eye-consciousness, which performs the function of seeing, arises. This is the discernment that here is called 'Full comprehension through non-delusion' (*asammohasampajañña*).[196]

It is as if the mental thought generates the electric impulse (*vāyodhātu*),[197] which causes the eye to open through the eyelid shift and, after that, the sight consciousness arises and allows the individual to see.

192 Jamison and Brereton translate this passage as follows: "Showing himself to be a poet, who will proclaim this here: from whence has divine thought been born?" (2014, 356). This kind of reference also appears within other Vedic texts, such as the *Atharvaveda* and *Vājasaneyisaṃhitā* (i.e. AV 1.1.2 and VS 34.1), see Wijesekera [1944] 1994, 155-6.

193 "[The faculties] all converge in the mind, which is the supreme deity" (*evaṃ ha vai tat sarvaṃ pare deve manasy ekībhavati*; (PU 4.2).

194 This is expressed by the following stock passage: "when the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained impassibility, he directs and turns the mind to the variety of *iddhi*s" (*so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneǰjappatte iddhi-vidhāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. so aneka-vihitaṃ iddhividhaṃ paccanubhoti*; D I 78). This will be discussed below at § 9.2.

195 On the concept of '*viññatti*', see Harvey 1993, 34-5 and Karunadasa 2010, 189-98 who translates it as 'intimation'.

196 *ālokessāmī ti pana citte uppajjamāne ten' eva cittena saddhiṃ citta-samuṭṭhānā vāyo-dhātu viññattiṃ janayamānā uppajjati. iti citta-kiriya-vāyo-dhātu-vipphāravasen' eva hetthimaṃ akkhi-dalaṃ adho sīdati, uparimaṃ uddhaṃ laṅgheti. koci yantakena vicaranto* [Be *vivaranto*] *nāma n' atthi. tato cakkhu-viññāṇaṃ dassana-kiccaṃ sādhentaṃ uppajjatī ti evaṃ pajānanaṃ pan' ettha asammoha-sampajaññaṃ nāma* (Sv I 194); I emended *vāyo-dhātu-viññattiṃ* with *vāyo-dhātu viññattiṃ* on the basis of the parallel passages in Ps I 262; Spk III 191; Vibh-a 356; and I translated Be *vivaranto* in place of Ee *vicaranto*.

197 See Harvey 1993, 35, for the comparison of *vāyodhātu* with the modern concept of electrical discharge in the nerves. See also Killingley 2006, 103, endnote 15, who interprets *vāyu* as a kind

So, it was noted that in Buddhism some faculties (seeing, hearing) may become divine if the mind is properly trained. This would seem a residue of the Vedic conception of the human being in its relationship with the cosmos. Thus, since an old correlation between physical body parts, functions and deities is well attested in the Upaniṣads, the emerging tendency towards the new development occurring in Buddhism could be traced back to the Upaniṣadic texts, in which the adjective 'divine' is attributed to some faculties when they perform a particular function beyond the normal human reach, or even non-human (e.g. BU 1.5.18: "divine speech is that which makes whatever one says happen", or when the voice of a thunder is called divine, i.e. BU 5.2.3). Therefore, the Buddhist use of the term 'divine' (*dibba*) to indicate extraordinary sensory faculties did not come out of the blue but was instead in connection with ideas circulating in the ancient India cultural milieu.

8.6 Conclusion on the *Abhiññā*s

The exegetic elaboration of the *abhiññā*s is less systematic when compared with the treatment of the *iddhividhă*. Each higher knowledge requires its own method; despite this, we cannot neglect the presence of some similarities. Among the most meaningful ones, there is the fact that the most significant parts of the *abhiññā*s were also analysed from the perspective of the consciousness process doctrine by the *Visuddhimagga* (except the *cetopariyañāṇa* which received this kind of exegesis in the *Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā*). A similar kind of exegesis is significantly absent in the **Vimuttimagga*, despite that its exegesis has often had a structure similar to the one adopted by the later *Visuddhimagga*. I believe the absence is meaningful because on some occasions the **Vimuttimagga* makes use of the Abhidhamma categories in its analysis of the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s,[198] and also exhibits awareness of the existence of the consciousness process doctrine. The great absentee could be either due to voluntary omission by the **Vimuttimagga*'s redactor, or to the fact that the consciousness process doctrine was not yet a fully developed and/or a widespread doctrine worthy of being applied to topics other than the sensory perception.[199]

of shock, the motion or the kinetic energy. The quality of 'motion' was actually represented by *vāyo* in early Buddhist analysis of material phenomena, in this regard see Anālayo 2021c, 216 and Anālayo et al. 2022, 2705.

198 Here, I am especially referring to the types of objects that the mind involved in the execution of the extraordinary capacities can have. The idea behind it is that an episode of *citta* must have an object (*ārammaṇa*). Objects are of different types and can be classified according to certain sets of categories. Taking the *dibbasotadhātu* as an example, we find that: "the knowledge of the divine element of ear occurs with reference to four objects: limited, present, internal, external" (*dibbasotadhātuñāṇaṃ paritta-paccuppanna-ajjhatta-bahiddhārāmmaṇa-vasena catūsu ārammaṇesu pavattati*; Vism 430). We find this kind of exegesis concerning the *dibbasotadhātu*, *cetopariyañāṇa*, *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, and *cutūpapātañāṇa* at Vism 429-35, and concerning the *vipassanāñāṇa* (= *ñāṇadassana*, Sv I 220), *manomayañāṇa*, and *āsavakkhayañāṇa* at Sv I 227. The **Vimuttimagga* provides a similar kind of exegesis at the end of each treatment of the extraordinary capacities. There are some differences between the categories listed in the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, in this regard see Bapat 1937, 86-91. Probably, the earliest Abhidhamma explanation of these categories is found in Dhs 185-ff.

199 On the history of the consciousness process, see De Notariis forthcoming-a.

Having gathered the major textual references for each *abhiññā*, further attention has been paid to the comparison of the accounts, with a particular focus on the process used to develop each higher knowledge. Here, I will only report some noteworthy results, and for their full expositions I will refer to the paragraphs which follow the presentation of the textual sources for each *abhiññā*.

The first *abhiññā* considered, the *dibbasotadhātu*, reveals to have received an exegesis that is, somewhat, similar to that received by the first *iddhividhā* (*eko pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā pi hutvā eko hoti*; cf. § 7.4.4). In fact, the simple explanation of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is expanded in later texts, and the presence of the stage of entering into and emerging from the *jhāna* in the *Visuddhimagga* can be explained in light of the similar account occurring in the **Vimuttimagga*. In the case of the *dibbasotadhātu*, the *abhiññā* seems to be an extension of the *jhāna*'s effects. Similarly, the exegesis on the power of the multiplication of the body seems to suggest that the meditator goes to a higher cosmological level, which makes the desired miraculous performance possible, and brings back to reality the magical power of this heavenly area of the cosmos. The meditator, going to the fourth *jhāna*, which according to the Buddhist worldview equates divine regions of the cosmos, comes back bringing with him a divine ear, which is also the ear of the gods.[200]

The *cetopariyañāṇa*, according to the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, is developed through a method that involves the use of the *dibbacakkhu*. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, remarkably, does not provide any method to develop this kind of *abhiññā*. The textual sources have highlighted how the subtle-physiology and the actual natural physiology are involved in the exegesis of this *abhiññā*. The physical heart is the dwelling place of the mind. The description of the heart having the shape of a lotus resembles the Upaniṣadic heart which, however, is the dwelling place of the *ātman*.[201] The mind can affect the colour of the blood inside the heart, this can be seen through the *dibbacakkhu* and it is therefore possible to understand the changing of the mind thanks to the changing in colour of the blood. The use of the *dibbacakkhu* may be due to some other canonical accounts in which the telepathy seems to involve a sort of sensory experience (viz. either natural or supernatural hearing or sight).

The *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* has different development methods. In the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, the method involves the attention on the dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppādamanasikāra*). In the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, instead, the method involves a recollection from the present moment until the moment of the (re-)birth in the present existence. The meditator should try to pass from the moment of the birth to the moment of the death occurred in the previous existence. Particular attention has been paid to the two ways of remembering in the *Visuddhimagga* (viz. *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi*), wondering whether they were already formulated in the **Vimuttimagga*. There are some hints about their presence, but it is difficult to establish a definitive answer. These two ways of remembering may be an exegetical device to establish distinctions between

200 *devānaṃ hi* […] *dibbappasādasotadhātu hoti* (Vism 407).

201 E.g. *eṣa ma ātmāntarhṛdaye* (CU 3.14.3). Notably, this *ātman* in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* is made of mind (*manomaya*).

the various practitioners, especially between the Buddhist ones and the followers of other schools.

The *cutūpapātañāṇa* was subjected to a longer analysis when compared with the other *abhiññā*s. The exegetic equivalence between the *cutūpapātañāṇa* and *dibbacakkhu* has been analysed, suggesting that the use of the term '*dibbacakkhu*' to designate the *cutūpapātañāṇa* is a metonymic use. Therefore, a comparison with the Vedic texts has been made. This comparison highlighted some similarities between the Upaniṣadic accounts involving the oneiric state and the *cutūpapātañāṇa*, especially the involvement of the karmic theory, the action of seeing, the movement in higher or lower conditions. Some of these elements would corroborate the importance of the name '*cutūpapātañāṇa*', which conveys, better than *dibbacakkhu*, the meaning of an observation of beings' movement up and down in the cosmos through the action of *kamma*. Moreover, a further analysis showed that accounts involving the method to develop the divine eye seem to suggest that something was lost in the instructions, namely that one of the first steps to develop the divine eye consisted of paying attention to the physical forms inside the own body. Finally, an inconsistency in the exegetical sources has been noted concerning the range of action of the divine eye.

A final glance into the Vedic texts highlighted similarities and differences of the use of the term 'divine' (Pāli: *dibba*; Sanskrit: *divya*/*daiva*) in both Buddhist and Upaniṣadic texts. The term 'divine' is used to designate two enhanced sensory faculties: the divine ear (*dibbasota*) and the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*). It appears that this use of 'divine' is still in some ways connected with the Vedic one, but certainly shows a development (which was already beginning in the Upaniṣads) according to which a faculty is called 'divine' when it performs a function in a way that is beyond its typical use. Within the Vedic thought, all faculties are connected with a divine power, whereas in Buddhism it seems that this connection with a power which is able to affect the reality was maintained only by the mind, which, we might argue, once purified, can improve the range of action of the normal faculties (i.e. seeing and hearing). The later Theravāda exegesis has indeed developed a mechanistic explanation in order to explain the sensory process (e.g. the process of seeing), showing that there was a trend of a progressive abandonment of the idea that there is a magical or divine power behind the functioning of the senses (and other faculties), at least in their ordinary functioning. Nonetheless, divine senses were retained in Buddhism, and in the next chapter we will show their possible significance and implication.

9 Assessment of *Manomayakāya*, *Iddhividhā̆* and the other *Abhiññās* in the Buddhist Path of Liberation

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> The Elder Phusamitta dwelling at Kurundaka said: "O friend, for sure the mind of the fourth *jhāna* which is the foundation of the higher knowledges is necessarily both malleable and fit for work".
>
> *Kurundakanivāsi-Phusamittatthero panāha: ekantaṃ mudu c' eva kammaniyañ ca nāma abhiññāpādakacatutthajjhānaci ttam eva āvuso ti*
> (Mp I 59)

> When the mind is endowed with these eight qualities in this way it becomes capable of being guided to directly experience by higher knowledges the things that should be directly experienced by higher knowledges
>
> *evaṃ aṭṭhangasamannāgataṃ cittaṃ abhinīhārakkhamaṃ hoti abhiññāsacchikaraṇīyānaṃ dhammānaṃ abhiññāsacchikiriyāya*
> (Vism 377)

9.1 The *Manomayakāya*, *Iddhividhā̆* and Other *Abhiññā*s in the Path

The Buddhist path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* gives the impression of being a paradigmatic account, which, however, does not provide clear instructions of how to perform what it prescribes. Concerning the meditation practice, Rupert Gethin writes that "if one set off into the forest with only a copy of the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* as one's guide, it is doubtful that one would make very much progress in one's meditation

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practice" (Gethin 2004, 202). This is also valid for what concerns the method to develop the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s, given that a full range of instructions are only provided by later texts, not before the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* elaboration.[1] Furthermore, not only the method of developing, but also the significance of the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s are absent in the account of the Buddhist path. The only *abhiññā* that has a clear Buddhist connotation is the last one, the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, in which the insight into the four noble truths is achieved. This is, according to the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the best among the fruits of the ascetic life, while it might seem to us, from a secular point of view, the least marvellous. However, we should not forget that the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* is presenting a path that is supposed to lead to liberation. This reminds us of the soteriological purpose of the account. Therefore, we may wonder if the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s as well have a soteriological significance within the path. In this regard, it is worth considering the fact that not all of these elements are present in the various Buddhist accounts of the path of liberation.[2] On the one hand, it may be stated with Clough that "it must be pointed out that a thorough reading of the Pāli Nikāyas reveals that the *abhiññā*s were not always deemed a necessary part of the path to *nibbana*" ([2010] 2011, 414).[3] On the other hand, the last three *abhiññā*s, generally called 'three knowledges' (*tisso vijjā*), are often part of the accounts that narrate the awakening of the Buddha himself.[4] It is worth noting that the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s version is probably one among the most inclusive accounts, if not the most, concerning the Buddhist path of liberation. Other accounts, compared with the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s one, omit some stages and one of the most omitted is the creation of a *manomayakāya*.[5] If stages can be omitted, this might indicate that they are not mandatory, but it would be better to understand them as ideal type stages. And by that, it means that the prescriptive account of the Buddhist path of liberation describes only an ideal path that could be in reality, and according to needs, quite flexible and adaptive. The adaptive characteristic of the path is not a mere hypothesis, but is evidence supported by the many accounts that would present a different list of stages. This fact would affect the view that would see the various stages of the path as necessary prerequisites. As previously highlighted (§ 7.3), the logic of this concatenation of prerequisites led scholars to maintain that the practice of the extraordinary capacities was due to the development of the *manomayakāya*. I have demonstrated that in the Vedic thought as well, the development of a mental embodiment can have the extraordinary capabilities as an outcome. However, I have

1 It would be fair to wonder whether some passages in the early canonical texts, and especially in the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, could represent a first elaboration of a method to develop these capabilities. E.g. "he unifies the body in the mind and the mind in the body" (*kāyaṃ pi citte samādahati cittam pi kāye samādahati*; S V 284). A detailed analysis of this part of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* is required for the future, while for some remarks see De Notariis 2022b, 404-9.

2 See Gethin 2020, in which it is highlighted as the stages occur differently in the various accounts (see especially the tables in Gethin 2020, 18, 23, 32, 36, 37, 44, 47).

3 Supported also by Gómez ([2010] 2011, 515).

4 E.g. *Bhayabheravasutta* (M 4), *Mahāsaccakasutta* (M 36), *Verañjasutta* (A IV 172-9).

5 This can be inferred from the detailed account of the various versions of the path in the Nikāyas and Āgamas (Gethin 2020).

also highlighted that it should be stressed that this does not mean that the use of the body made of mind is mandatory to perform these extraordinary acts. It is attested, for instance in the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, that the Buddha was able to go to the Brahmā world (i.e. the last *iddhi*) with both the physical body (*cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*, lit. the body composed of the four great elements), and the body made of mind (*manomayena kāyena*).[6]

9.2 From What are the *Manomayakāya*, *Iddhividhā̆* and Other *Abhiññā*s Developed?

According to the canonical accounts, at the base of the development of the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhā̆* and other *abhiññā*s there seems to be the development of the *jhāna*s. All the stages that follow the development of the fourth *jhāna* in the Buddhist path of liberation (viz. from *ñāṇa-dassana* to *āsavakkhayañāṇa*) begin with the stock phrase:

> When the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained impassibility, he directs and turns the mind [**to develop a specific power**].[7]

Therefore, it would seem that all the stages from the *ñāṇa-dassana* to *āsavakkhayañāṇa* have the same state of mind as the basis. This idea is not completely new, but seems to be sustained also by Rupert Gethin.[8] Furthermore, it seems to also be the exegetical interpretation of the Theravādins to some extent. This is noticeable from the evidence provided by the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*. The commentary, at the end of the comment on the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, lists ten knowledges (*dasañāṇa*) that are supposed to correspond to the stages from the *ñāṇa-dassana* to *āsavakkhayañāṇa*:

> Ten knowledges are expressed so far: 1) *vipassanā-ñāṇa*; 2) *manomaya-ñāṇa*; 3) *iddhividha-ñāṇa*; 4) *dibbasota-ñāṇa*; 5) *cetopariya-ñāṇa*; 6) *pubbenivāsa-ñāṇa*; 7) *dibbacakkhu-ñāṇa*, which has the double knowledge

6 *abhijānāti nu kho bhante Bhagavā iddhiyā manomayena kāyena Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā* […] *abhijānāti kho pana bhante Bhagavā iminā cātumahābhūtikena kāyena iddhiyā Brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā* (S V 282).

7 *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte* **[specific power inflected in dative/genitive]** *cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*.

8 "In the account of the gradual path the state of mind reached by the practice of the fourth *jhāna* is one that is characterized as concentrated (*samāhita*) thoroughly purified (*pārisuddha*) and cleansed (*pariyodāta*), stainless (*anaṅgaṇa*), without defilements (*vigatūpakkilesa*), sensitive (*mudubhūta*), workable (*kammaniya*), steady (*ṭhita*), unshakable (*āneñja-ppatta*). Such a state of mind can be applied to mastery of various meditational powers [i.e. *iddhi*s] […] it can be applied to developing various higher knowledges [i.e. *abhiññā*s]" (Gethin 2019, 180; square brackets mine), and also "[i]t seems clear that in broad terms Buddhaghosa's conception of the development of insight reflects the canonical account of the gradual path where the state of mind developed in the fourth *jhāna* is then applied to the development of various knowledges, culminating in the liberating knowledge of the destruction of the defiling tendencies (*āsava*)" (Gethin 2019, 195). See also Gethin 1998, 185-6; 2011, 219-20.

> of: 8) *yathākammūpaga* and 9) the knowledge of the future (*anāgata*) accomplished through the power of the divine eye; 10) *āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*.[9]

With the term *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* clearly refers to the *ñāṇa-dassana*.[10] The commentary, moreover, mentions two additional knowledges based on the stage of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* (which is called *dibbacakkhuñāṇa*): *yathākammūpagañāṇa* and *anāgataañāṇa*. These two further knowledges demonstrate that the exegesis recovered in the *Visuddhimagga* and in the **Vimuttimagga* (with some variations) is taken into account in this context as well. This account highlights that the stages after the fourth *jhāna* are possible outcomes of the application of a particular state of mind.[11] However, in another commentarial passage, it seems that these knowledges find support one upon the other. The passage is part of the commentary on the *Kūṭadantasutta* (D 5), wherein the Buddha explains to the brāhmaṇa Kūṭadanta more profitable sacrifices (*yaññ*a) than the bloody ones that Kūṭadanta wanted to perform. *Yaññ*a, indeed, corresponds to the Sanskrit *yajña*, the so-called 'sacrifice', which in Vedic culture often involved the use of violence. The story repeats the path of liberation found in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* in an abbreviated form and the commentary comments upon it as follows:

> The *vipassanāñāṇa* too – because the one who practices it, having found support in the qualities which are the perfections of the fourth *jhana*, is not in distress, then – involves little exertion (*appaṭṭha*) and injury (*appasamārambha*); but because of the [usual] absence of the happiness similar to the happiness derived from the *vipassanā*,[12] it is of great fruit; and because of the sacrifice (*pariccāga*) of the defilements which are enemies, it is a sacrifice (*yaññ*a). The *manomayiddhi* too – because the one who practices it, having found a support in the *vipassanāñāṇa*, is not in distress, – is without exertion and injury; because of its ability to create a physical form similar to one's own, it is of great fruit; and because of the sacrifice of defilements which are one's own enemies,[13] it is the sacrifice. The knowledges beginning with *iddhividha* too – because one who practices them (viz. the *iddhi*s), having found a support in the knowledges beginning with *manomaya*, is not in distress – are without exertion and injury; and because of the abandoning of the defilements which are each one's enemies, they are a sacrifice. But among these, *iddhividha* should be understood as of great fruit, because of its ability to reveal the manifold appearances and transformations; *dibbasota* because of its ability to hear sounds of gods and humans; *cetopariyañāṇa*

9 *ettāvatā vipassanā-ñāṇaṃ manomaya-ñāṇaṃ iddhividha-ñāṇaṃ dibba-sota-ñāṇaṃ ceto-pariya-ñāṇaṃ pubbe-nivāsa-ñāṇaṃ dibba-cakkhu-vasena nipphannaṃ anāgataṃ yathākammūpaga-ñāṇa-dvayaṃ dibba-cakkhu-ñāṇaṃ āsava-kkhaya-ñāṇan ti dasa-ñāṇāni niddiṭṭhā honti* (Sv I 227).

10 *idha pana* ***ñāṇa-dassanāya cittan*** *ti idaṃ vipassanā-ñāṇaṃ ñāṇa-dassanan ti vuttaṃ* (Sv I 220).

11 This seems to also be confirmed by Mp I 59 and Vism 377, which are the epigraphs of this chapter.

12 "The [commentary] says '*vipassanā* brings much joy and delight for the mind of the one gifted with *vipassanā*' [referring to] '***vipassanā…pe…abhāvā***'" (*vipassanā vipassakassa anappakaṃ pītisomanassaṃ samāvahatī ti āha* ***vipassanā…pe…abhāvā*** *ti*; Sv-pṭ I 438).

13 Here, I followed the reading *attano paccanīka* in Be.

> because of its ability to know the sixteen kinds of consciousness of others; *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* because of its ability to recollect the states [of existence] as desired; *dibbacakkhu* because of its ability to see physical forms as desired; *āsavakkhayañāṇa* because of its ability to accomplish the happiness derived from the excellent and sublime path.[14]

Seemingly, in this passage the *vipassanāñāṇa* is based on the *jhāna*'s qualities (*catutthajjhāna-pariyosānesu guṇesu patiṭṭhāya*), the *manomayañāṇa* is based on the *vipassanāñāṇa* (*vipassanā-ñāṇe patiṭṭhāya*), and the *iddhividhañāṇa* and the following *ñāṇa*s, respectively, are based on the *manomayañāṇa* and the following respective *ñāṇa*s (*manomaya-ñāṇādīsu patiṭṭhāya*). The text, however, does not specify if the preceding *ñāṇa* is an essential prerequisite or whether it may just bolster the development of the following one. The latter seems to be the right interpretation, given that many stages are often omitted in the accounts of the Buddhist path of liberation. However, despite the variance of the stages involved in the various Buddhist accounts of the path, we cannot ignore the existence in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s Buddhist path of liberation of a narrative climax focused on the body's improvement.[15]

9.3 The Body in the Final Stages of the Path

> Ideas about extraordinary embodiment are not merely proposed, they are *celebrated*; they present not merely 'an' alternative, but much better alternative. […] Such perfected bodies, then, are often at the very center of what a given tradition has to say about embodiment, particularly about its existential or salvific significance
> (Radich 2016, 22)

In the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the body seems, indeed, the main character of the story and also the connecting element of many stages. Starting from the attainment of the *jhāna*s, an increasingly refined joy permeates the body. This physicality of contentment starts from the first *jhāna*:

> He (the monk) drenches, completely fills, permeates, saturates this very body with joy and happiness born of seclusion, there is not any [single

14 *vipassanā-ñāṇam pi, yasmā catutthajjhāna-pariyosānesu guṇesu patiṭṭhāya nibbattento na kilamati tasmā appaṭṭhaṃ appa-samārambhaṃ, vipassanā-sukha-sadisassa pana sukhassa abhāvā mahapphalaṃ, paccanīka-kilesa-pariccāgato yañṇ̃o. manomayiddhi pi, yasmā vipassanā-ñāṇe patiṭṭhāya nibbattento na kilamati tasmā sā appaṭṭhā appa-samārambhā, attano sadisa-rūpaṃ nimmāna-samatthatāya mahapphalā, nappaccanīka-kilesapariccāgato* [Be *attano paccanīka*] *yañṇ̃o. iddhi-vidhañāṇādīni pi, yasmā manomaya-ñāṇādīsu patiṭṭhāya nibbattento na kilamati tasmā appaṭṭhāni appa-samārambhāni, attano attano paccanīka-kilesa-ppahānato yañṇ̃o. iddhi-vidhaṃ pan' ettha nānāvidha-vikubbana-dassana-samatthatāya, dibba-sotaṃ deva-manussānaṃ sadda-savana-samatthatāya, cetopariyañāṇaṃ paresaṃ soḷasavidha-cittajānana-samatthatāya, pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇaṃ icchit-icchita-ṭṭhāna-samanussaraṇa-samatthatāya, dibba-cakkhu icchit-icchita-rūpa-dassana-samatthatāya, āsava-kkhaya-ñāṇaṃ atipaṇīta-lokuttara-maggasukha-nipphādana-samatthatāya mahapphalan ti veditabbaṃ* (Sv I 307).

15 A similar attempt to analyse the connections among the final stages of the path is provided by Radich (2007, 255-66). I have found very intriguing his hypothesis that would see the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhā̆*, and the other *abhiññā*s as necessary for liberation in terms of means of knowledge, to touch with the body (*kāyena phusitvā*) the spiritual truths. I think that what follows is somewhat in line with Radich's theory.

point] of the whole body which is not suffused by the joy and happiness born of seclusion.[16]

The accounts of other *jhāna*s follow the same structure, changing some details. The second *jhāna* has joy and happiness born of concentration (*samādhija*),[17] the third *jhāna* has only happiness without joy (*nippītika*),[18] and in the fourth *jhāna* the monk suffuses the body with the purified mind, which is cleansed.[19] Here, it is worth referring to the passage in the *Iddhipādasaṃyutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* in which body and mind are put together (e.g. *kāyaṃ pi citte samādahati cittam pi kāye samādahati*; S V 283), and perceptions of pleasure and lightness in the physical body are reached (e.g. *sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca kāye okkamitvā*; S V 283). Turning back to the Buddhist path of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, we may note that after the achievement of the fourth *jhāna*, the stage of the *ñāṇa-dassana* (= *vipassanāñāṇa* in the commentary) occurs. During this stage, a sort of gnosis arises; the monk reaches awareness of the relationship between mind and body. He discovers that the body is impermanent and that the consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is attached to it. Then, there seems an actual enhancement of the body that is followed by the manifestation of some marvellous bodily capabilities. The next stage, indeed, concerns the creation of the body made of mind (*manomayakāya*), a kind of body that is also owned by some gods in some realms.[20] Thereafter, the monk is able to perform many psychophysical powers (*iddhividhă*) and even to get in touch with deities, since he is able to go as far as the Brahmā world. According to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, the monk in the Brahmā world even enters in conversation with the god Brahmā (Paṭis II 209-10). It might be argued that a real divinisation of the body occurs, the monk reaches a kind of divine condition, and is equated with the gods themselves. Therefore, the monk develops the divine ear (*dibbasota*), which is also, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, the kind of ear that is owned by the deities (Vism 407). Here, I would like to put forward a hypothesis that might seem, at first, a little bold, but which actually is quite reasonable. What I want to argue is that, at least during the stage in which the divine ear is developed, the divinisation of all the physical senses occurs.

9.3.1 Divinisation of the Physical Senses: *Dibbasotadhātu* and *Dibbacakkhu*

The only senses that, according to the texts, are divinised are the ear (*sota*) and the eye (*cakkhu*). These two senses are, not by chance, the most occurring sense faculties in the Upaniṣads. That is, whilst in the Upaniṣads there are lists of faculties in which physical senses occur, mostly only the ear/hearing

16 *so imam eva kāyaṃ vivekajena pīti-sukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa vivekajena pīti-sukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti* (D I 73).

17 *so imam eva kāyaṃ samādhijena pīti-sukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa samādhijena pīti-sukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti* (D I 74).

18 *so imam eva kāyaṃ nippītikena sukhena abhisandeti parisandeti paripūreti parippharati, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa nippītikena sukhena apphuṭaṃ hoti* (D I 75).

19 *so imam eva kāyaṃ parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena pharitvā nisinno hoti, nāssa kiñci sabbāvato kāyassa parisuddhena cetasā pariyodātena apphuṭaṃ hoti* (D I 75-6).

20 E.g. D I 17; D III 84-5; see Radich 2007, 240-2.

(*śrotra*) and the eye/sight (*cakṣus*) are listed.[21] In the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s Buddhist path of liberation, after the stage in which the monk develops many psychophysical powers (*iddhividhă*), only the development of the divine ear is listed. The *dibbacakkhu* occurs in the account of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* and later texts (*Paṭisambhidāmagga*, **Vimuttimagga*, *Visuddhimagga*, and often commentaries) mostly refer to this stage using the *dibbacakkhu* in a metonymic way. However, the *dibbacakkhu* is used in the canonical account as a mere instrument to achieve this kind of knowledge. It has not been reported anywhere that the *dibbacakkhu* is created during the stage of the *cutūpapātañāṇa*. Then, when is the *dibbacakkhu* developed? A way to answer to this question involves looking at the evidence that would attest the use of the *dibbacakkhu*. A suggestive account is reported in the *Visuddhimagga*'s exposition of the *cetopariyañāṇa*. The text clearly states: "how should this knowledge (i.e. *cetopariyañāṇa*) be produced? This is indeed accomplished through the power of the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*)".[22] Relying on this exegetical account, we should assume that the *dibbacakkhu* had already been developed before the *cetopariyañāṇa*. Otherwise, it could hardly be used as a tool to obtain this higher knowledge. Still relying on the exegetical sources, we may note that the description of the *dibbacakkhu* is quite similar to the one that concerns the *dibbasotadhātu*.[23] This means that, in principle, the *dibbasota* and the *dibbacakkhu* are not different, but are only the divine version of the ear and the eye. From a soteriological point of view, however, the *dibbacakkhu* brings forth a kind of knowledge which is more pregnant with soteriological relevance (viz. the *cutūpapātañāṇa*). In the Buddhist path of liberation there seems to be a kind of escalation of soteriological significance, culminating in the achievement of liberation. However, before being able to get this kind of knowledge, the practitioner should boost his own physical means of knowledge, the senses. He had already enhanced his mind, which is the easiest thing to change. As the Buddha is reported to have said: "O monks, I do not see any other thing that once has been cultivated frequently becomes malleable (*mudu*) and workable (*kammañña*) as the mind (*citta*)".[24] Thereafter, the practitioner uses his own mind to achieve a new kind of gnosis about himself, the very nature of the body, and the relationship between his body and mind (*ñāṇa-dassana*); he can create a new mental body (*manomayakāya*); he becomes able to perform marvellous actions (*iddhividhă*); he becomes able to know what normally is precluded (*abhiññā*). The first step towards this knowledge is the divinisation of the sensory way of knowing. A knowledge that is, at least partly, based on the sense functions is also the *cetopariyañāṇa*. The way in which the *dibbacakhu* is involved in this *abhiññā* has been already

21 Concerning the translation of *śrotra* and *cakṣus*, see Killingley 2006: 80. Some examples of Vedic texts in which lists of faculties include only the sensory functions of hearing and sight are: ṚV 10.90.13-14; ŚB 9.2.2.5; ŚB 10.1.3.4; ŚB 10.5.2.20; BU 1.3.2-7; BU 1.4.17; BU 3.2.13; BU 6.1.7-14; CU 3.18.2; CU 4.3.3; TU 1.7.6 (+ *tvac* 'touching'); AU 1.1.4; KauU 2.3 (Killingley 2006, 105 n. 35 reports that there is the variant reading *ghrāṇa* 'smell' in place of *prāṇa*, which is, incidentally, the one adopted by Olivelle 1998); KauU 2.14; KeU 1.1; KeU 1.2; KeU 1.3; KeU 1.5-9. This list is not comprehensive; it only aims to highlight as the occurrence of solely hearing and sight is a recurring pattern.

22 *kathaṃ pan' etaṃ ñāṇaṃ uppādetabban ti? etaṃ hi dibbacakkhuvasena ijjhati* (Vism 409).

23 Cf. Vism 407 with Vism 423 and Vism 408 with Vism 429, see also above in § 8.4.3.

24 *ahaṃ bhikkhave na aññaṃ ekadhammam pi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ bhāvitaṃ bahulīkataṃ mudu ca hoti kammaññañ ca yathayidaṃ cittaṃ* (A I 9).

highlighted. However, it may sound a bit striking that also the function of hearing could be involved. To be more precise, there is evidence that not only the normal function of hearing is involved, but also an extraordinary one; just like not only a divine eye can be involved, but also a normal one. The miracle of telepathy known as *ādesanāpāṭihāriya* at A I 170-1 (cf. D III 104) is performed in four ways: 1) by observing some signs, thanks to body language signals (i.e. through the normal observation, the physical eye should be involved); 2) by hearing from other humans, non-humans (i.e. spirits), deities (the physical or a supernormal ear should be involved); 3) by hearing the sub-vocal sound produced by the diffusion of thought (a supernormal kind of hearing should be involved); and 4) knowing with the mind, encompassing the mind of one who has reached the concentration (*samādhi*) that is *avitakka* (without applied thought) and *avicāra* (without sustained thought) (if we assume that this stage is the equivalent of the one reported in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s, this is the one that involves the *dibbacakkhu*). Therefore, we may say that at the basis of the telepathy or mind-reading there is a refined use of the sense faculties, although this *abhiññā* does not seem to have a soteriological function. At this point of the path, it seems that the practitioner, through the enhancement of the body, is able to move in the physical world at will through the power of the *iddhividhǎ*, his senses are divine and so able to perceive everything, even the other thoughts (N.B. according to Indian thought, the mind is the sixth sense). Thereafter, through the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, he can use his *sati*[25] to move in the past space-time continuum.[26] The phraseology of this *abhiññā* makes clear that this knowledge concerns the understanding of *saṃsāra*. The canonical account emphasises the sequentiality of rebirths, when one dies in one place will be reborn in another one: *tato cuto amutra upapādiṃ* […] *so tato cuto idhūpapanno* (D I 81). This is precisely the definition of *saṃsāra* provided by the *Milindapañha*:

> The king said: "Venerable Nāgasena, what you call '*saṃsāra*', what is it?". "What is born here, great king, dies truly here; what died here somewhere else arises; what is born there, dies truly there; what died there somewhere else arises. In this way, great king, the *saṃsāra* is".[27]

25 "'**Recollection of former existences (*pubbe nivāsānussati*)**' is the memory (*sati*) through which he remembers (*anussarati*) the former (*pubbe*) existence (*nivāsa*)" (***pubbe nivāsānussatī*** *ti yāya satiyā pubbe nivāsaṃ anussarati*; Vism 410). According to the *Milindapañha*, *sati* arises in sixteen ways (*soḷasahi ākārehi mahārāja sati uppajjati*; Mil 78) (according to Horner 1969, 108 n. 1, seventeen ways are given). The first of these ways is called *abhijāna* 'knowing by experience', and the *Milindapañha* explains it as follows: "When, great king, both the venerable Ānanda and the lay follower Khujjuttarā, or some others who have remembrance of [former] (re-) births, remember the [former] (re-)birth, thus *sati* arises from knowing by experience (*abhijāna*)" (*yathā mahārāja āyasmā ca Ānando Khujjuttarā ca upāsikā ye vā pan' aññe pi keci jātissarā jātiṃ saranti, evaṃ abhijānato sati uppajjati*; Mil 78-9).

26 In the *Milindapañha* (82), the remembrance of some business undertaken in the past in another city is compared with a monk who possesses psychic powers (*iddhimant*) and thus can go as far as the Brahmā world very quickly. In the account, when the king remembers something he has done in the city of Alasanda, which is a distant two hundred *yojana*s from the place where the dialogue took place, the monk Nāgasena congratulates him as if he had had actually travelled that distance. See *kīva dūro mahārāja ito Alasando hotī ti. dumattāni bhante yojanasatānīti. – abhijānāsi nu tvaṃ mahārāja tattha kiñcid-eva karaṇīyaṃ karitvā saritā ti. – āma bhante, sarāmī ti. – lahuṃ kho tvaṃ mahārāja gato si dumattāni yojanasatānī ti* (Mil 82).

27 *rājā āha: Bhante Nāgasena, yaṃ pan' etaṃ brūsi: saṃsāro ti, katamo so saṃsāro ti. – idha mahārāja jāto idh' eva marati, idha mato aññatra uppajjati, tahiṃ jāto tahiṃ yeva marati, tahiṃ*

This fact is also confirmed by the exegetical explanation provided by the **Vimuttimagga*, in which it is reported that during the implementation of this *abhiññā*, the practitioner "contemplates the stream of consciousness (識流轉; *viññāṇasota*): the two [births] are linked and uninterrupted, the birth in this world, the birth in that world".[28] During the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, the working of *saṃsāra* is observed with regard to the personal experience. In the next *abhiññā*, the *cutūpapātañāṇa*, the working of *saṃsāra* is observed with regard to the other beings. The future condition of existence is observed according to the *kamma* (*yathākammūpaga*). This *abhiññā* as well is achieved through an enhanced sensory faculty, namely the *dibbacakkhu*. It might seem *prima facie* that the only *abhiññā* that does not make use of an enhanced sensory faculty is the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, in which, however, we may note that the faculty of memory (*sati*) goes beyond the normal reach of the human memory. It brings the meditator back to the first-hand experiences of his past, experiences that, we might suppose, were the result of sensory perceptions. Moreover, *sati* as a mental function could be regarded, to some extent, as a sense faculty, assuming that the mind itself is the sixth sense.

The last *abhiññā*, the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, left outside the present book, is the most Buddhist among all *abhiññā*s since it is a final insight into the very nature of suffering and the noxious influxes that pollute the mind. Then, when the meditator knows and sees in this way (*evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato*; D I 84) he achieves the liberation. The text seems to refer to a type of knowledge that is not merely intellectual (*jānato*), but is also experiential (*passato*), hypostatizing it through the reference to the action of seeing. The sight is probably the sensory perception *par excellence*, and so the best candidate to embody the experiential knowledge.[29]

From the textual evidence, we have found that, on the one hand, the stages after the development of the fourth *jhāna* are quite flexible, given that they are omitted in other accounts of the path in the Pāli canon. The stages that follow the fourth *jhāna* are all based on the state of mind that results from the meditative practice. Therefore, even if the stages may bolster each other, it could be argued that the basis for the development of each stage is only the fourth *jhāna*. On the other hand, we have noted that from a narrative point of view there is a growing climax that regards the enhancement of the body. Divine senses seem to underlie the majority of the higher knowledges. Therefore, it seems that in order to achieve knowledges that transcend the ordinary experience, the practitioner should develop extraordinary senses. The long account of the Buddhist path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* can have, indeed, its *raison d'être*, despite the existence of shorter versions.[30] The theoretical nature of the extraordinary perception (and, generally

mato aññatra uppajjati; evaṃ kho mahārāja saṃsāro hotī ti (Mil 77).

28 憶識流轉: 兩俱不斷, 於此世生, 於彼世生 (T1648.32.0443c23-24).

29 Just to give a few examples, we may note that the account of the sensory perception, from the point of view of the *cittavīthi* doctrine, is more often exposed using the visual perception as an example (see Vism 21; Abhidh-s 18). Another example can be the word *sacchikiriyā*, which is connected with the verb *sacchikaroti*, which means 'to experience' in the sense of 'to see with one's eyes' (PED s.v. "sacchikaroti"). Finally, it is worth highlighting that the Buddhist Doctrine itself, the Dhamma, is described with the adjectival compound *ehipassika*, which is composed of two imperatives *ehi* 'come!' and *passa* 'see!'. Then, the Dhamma has, literally, the characteristic of 'come and see', that means it is approachable to the experiential knowledge.

30 *Pace* some authors who sustained that shorter versions of the path occurring in the *Majjhimanikāya* were more 'authentic'. In this regard, see § 2.1.

speaking, of extraordinary capacities) can be understood thanks to the exegetical accounts that describe how the knowledge is reached from the point of view of the *cittavīthi* doctrine.

9.4 Extraordinary Perception and Powers in the Light of the *Cittavīthi* Doctrine

Before analysing what the *cittavīthi* doctrine may tell us about the extraordinary perception, it is worth remembering how the ordinary perception of a sensory stimulus is conceived. The ordinary perception is seen as the interaction between the physical sensory organ and the mind. This is evident from a *Visuddhimagga* passage in which a statement from the ancient teachers (*porāṇa*) is quoted:

> But the Ancients said: "The eye does not see the form, because it is without mind (*acittakattā*), the mind does not see [the form], because it is without eye (*acakkhukattā*); but when there is the coming together of the [sense-]door and object, he sees by means of the consciousness which has the eye-sensitivity as basis".[31]

This example shows the interdependence of eye and mind. Neither of them can see a physical form alone. In the case of a *dibbacakkhu* or a *dibbasota* as well, the physical organ is necessary. The role of the physical sensory organ, however, is relegated to that of basis. It seems to be fundamental only for what concerns the process of obtaining the divine sense. Here, it is worth remembering the evidence of the *Saddhammappakāsinī*:

> [People] say: "The divine ear arises only for one who has a natural [i.e. physical] ear, not for the deaf. Although when the natural ear is destroyed subsequently, the divine ear is not destroyed".[32]

From this passage it is clear that the physical sensory organ is necessary in the first step to develop the divine ear, but not to keep using it. The reason behind it lies in the method prescribed to achieve it. The meditator should pay attention (*manasikaroti*) to the ordinary sounds, an action that would be definitely impossible for the deaf. The same applies to the *dibbacakkhu*. In order to develop it, the exegetical texts prescribe a preparatory work on luminous *kasiṇa*s. The *kasiṇa*s prescribed are all connected with the luminosity: fire (*tejas*), white (*odāta*), and light (*āloka*) (Vism 427-8). In order to perceive a *kasiṇa*, which could be an artefact or a natural phenomenon, intuitively, we need the physical eye. The physical sensory organ is then necessary for the development, but not for the use of the divine sense itself.

The process described in the light of the *cittavīthi* doctrine makes clear that it is not a common sensory perception – as one that results when a physical form comes into contact with the eye-door – but is a mental process, which notably resembles one that occurs in the achievement of a *jhāna*. In

31 *porāṇā pan' āhu: cakkhu rūpaṃ na passati acittakattā, cittaṃ na passati acakkhukattā; dvārārammaṇasanghaṭṭe pana cakkhu-pasādavatthukena cittena passati* (Vism 20).

32 *dibbasotaṃ pakatisotavato yeva uppajjati, no badhirassa. pacchā pakatisote vinaṭṭhe pi dibbasotaṃ na vinassatī ti vadanti* (Paṭis-a I 353). This passage is also quoted above in § 8.1.2.

the words of Cousins, the mind-door process "describes the situation of the individual who is absorbed in thought or memory without any direct perception of his sensory environment" (1981, 27). However, in the case of an extraordinary perception, the knowledge that is supposed to originate, according to the emic perspective, is not mere imagination but is objective and may concern the external world. The *Visuddhimagga* specifies that the *dibbacakkhu* is used to perceive forms which do not come into the range of perception of the fleshly eye, and it lists potential forms to perceive, which are in all respects real forms: "inside the belly, belonging to the heart-base, under the surface of the earth, beyond walls, mountains, and ramparts, or in another sphere of existence".[33] Normally, the mind does not see because it is something that is without eye (*cittaṃ na passati acakkhukattā*; Vism 20), but in the case of a divine eye, it can do it. With the *dibbacakkhu* and the *dibbasota*, the mind can see and hear without being limited by the matter. Similarly, the absence of limitation from the matter occurs also during the performance of *iddhi*s, in which, for instance, the monk can go beyond walls, ramparts, mountains, unattached by them (*tiro-bhāvaṃ tiro-kuḍḍaṃ tiro-pākāraṃ tiro-pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati*; D I 78). There is a progressive liberation of the mind from the bounds of the matter. This will result in the extinction of the noxious influxes, which is described in a common stock passage as liberation of the mind (*ceto-vimutti*):

> The monk, because of the extinction of the noxious influxes, he stays in this immanent condition (*diṭṭhe va dhamme*),[34] having known, experienced, reached by himself the liberation of the mind (*ceto-vimutti*) and by insight (*paññā-vimutti*) that is without noxious influxes.[35]

In summary, the analysis of how extraordinary perception is possible through the lens of the *cittavīthi* doctrine makes clear that perception is no longer bound to the fetters of materiality. The final attainment of liberation is revealed in advance by the gradual liberation attained by the body and sensory organs. Furthermore, the microscopical analysis of the *cittavīthi* doctrine not only highlights that the process is mental, but is also *jhāna*-like (see §§ 7.4.4 and 8.1.3). This point requires further elaboration.

9.4.1 Extraordinary Capacities and the State of *Jhāna*: Canonical and Exegetical Evidence

The fact that the extraordinary capacities succeed in a *jhāna*-like state demands discussion of some ideas of Eviatar Shulman (2014), whose work

33 *anto kucchigataṃ hadayavatthunissitaṃ heṭṭhā pathavītalanissitaṃ tirokuḍḍapabbatapākāragataṃ paracakkavāḷagataṃ* (Vism 428).

34 'Immanent condition' is an attempt to translate the Pāli expression *diṭṭhe va dhamme*, which is often translated as 'in this world', 'in the phenomenal world', 'in the present existence' (see PED s.vv. "dhamma" and "diṭṭha"). Given that *dhamma* is a difficult word to translate, the expression could be literally rendered as 'in what is visible'. I regard here 'visible' as something that can be experienced and, therefore, I translate it as 'immanent' in the sense of 'what is within the limits of possible experience' (opposite to 'transcendent'). The *dhamma* here indicates the 'state of being immanent', so the 'immanent condition'.

35 *bhikkhu āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto-vimuttiṃ paññā-vimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati* (D I 156).

put forward some interpretations relevant to our analysis. Shulman, indeed, bestows to the experience a prominent importance in the early Buddhist thought which is consistent with the findings of the present chapter. He writes, concerning the early Buddhist philosophy, that it was "both a description of and a prescription for meditative experience" (2014, X). This 'meditative experience' was, according to Shulman, both at the base of the Buddhist teachings[36] and part of the process of liberation.[37] In particular, he emphasises the importance of the fourth *jhāna*. Indeed, he sustains that the liberation of the Buddha himself occurred through the experience of the three knowledges (*tisso vijjā*) – namely the last three stages of our Buddhist path – in the fourth *jhāna*.[38] Shulman, apparently following Schmithausen (1981, 216),[39] believes that the three knowledges arise in the very state of the fourth *jhāna*. In my mind, this is questionable for at least two reasons. First, Shulman sustains his position with an argument that is not really conclusive. After admitting that "it is also possible that the understandings arise after the emergence from the *jhāna*" (2014, 21, n. 45), Shulman quotes a personal communication from Anālayo, who believes that there is an emergence from the *jhāna*, and then writes that:

> The short passage between the description of the attainment of the fourth *jhāna* and the arising of the three understandings – *so evaṃ samāhite citte* ("then when my concentrated mind was…" […]) – clearly states that the mind is in *samādhi*. The *so evaṃ* - being thus" – suggests that what is now being described is happening in the state just described, i.e. in the fourth *jhāna*. (Shulman 2014, 21, n. 45)

The passage quoted by Shulman is the abbreviation of a stock passage that precedes the arising of the three knowledges:

> When the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained impassibility, he turns the mind to the knowledge of recollection of former existences.[40]

This passage is from the *Bhayabheravasutta* (M 4), which reports the autobiographical account of the Buddha's awakening. In this text, only the three knowledges occur. However, a similar passage precedes the development of the extraordinary capacities also in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*:

> When the mind is concentrated in this way, purified, cleaned, unblemished, deprived of impurities, malleable, fit for work, steadfast, having attained

36 "The early Buddhist teachings were first of all verbalized reflections on meditative events" (Shulman 2014, X).

37 "[A]wakening was perceived as a philosophical perception and not as a philosophical understanding, which was experienced in the deep meditative state of *jhāna*" (Shulman 2014, XI).

38 For the full discussion, see Shulman 2014, 16-32.

39 See Shulman 2014, 21, n. 45.

40 *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇāya cittaṃ abhininnāmesiṃ* (M I 22).

impassibility, he directs and turns the mind [**to develop a specific power**].[41] (See also above § 9.2)

This detail is relevant here because Shulman was interpreting this passage in a context in which only three knowledges were produced. Therefore, in this narrowed context, it could actually seem likely that a meditator in a seated position with a concentrated mind can give rise to the emerging of some sort of knowledge.[42] However, if we consider that the same stock passage precedes the pericope concerning the *iddhividhă*, the interpretation provided by Shulman sounds less convincing. The psychophysical powers are, indeed, physical performances or feats, not information that somehow arises in the mind. To some extent, psychophysical powers are also regarded as knowledges (*ñāṇa*) in the Abhidhamma and commentarial literature,[43] but it is not possible to disregard the evidence that would highlight that the *iddhi*s were regarded as real feats and not only a mere product of the imagination. This is particularly evident when we consider the *iddhipāṭihāriya*, the display (*pāṭihāriya*) of miraculous powers (*iddhi*). The very word '*pāṭihāriya*' involves the notions of 'display' and 'spectacle' and thus involves an audience.[44] Therefore, *iddhi*s are not only mere acts that happen in the meditator's mind, but are also special performances that can be shown.[45] These performances also involve a certain degree

41 *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte* **[specific power inflected in dative/genitive]** *cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*.

42 This is not, however, without problem. Indeed, even Shulman (2014, 25) noted that the three knowledges entail a sort of verbalisation, which is, however, supposed to be absent in the fourth *jhāna*.

43 See above the introductory part of Chapter 8 and De Notariis 2019a, 235-9.

44 On *pāṭihāriya*, see Gethin 2001, 98-101, and note 84 and Fiordalis 2008, 47-55. Moreover, see Vin II 112 in which monks are forbidden to display such powers in front of lay people.

45 I should highlight that there are examples in the Buddhist tradition that would suggest that the *iddhi*s were also experienced in a sort of meditative state or visualisation. In the *Mahāvastu* the Buddha-to-be touches the moon and the sun when he is seated cross-legged in the hermitage (*svayam āśrame paryaṃkena niṣaṇṇo candramaṇḍalaṃ ca sūryamaṇḍalaṃ ca pāṇinā parāmṛṣati*; Mvu I 284, see also Vism 401 in which many monks affect and influence the moon and the sun but these latter remain unaffected in the reality). An often-quoted passage in the **Vimuttimagga* seems to suggest that the loss of the meditative state during a levitation would not produce real effects, as if the meditator is doing it in his mind only: "is it possible that the meditator in the empty sky would lose the meditative state (禪; perhaps = *jhāna*; see the discussion below) and from the empty sky he would fall down to the earth? Not at all! He arises from the meditation seat and if he travels far and loses [the meditative state] he returns to the meditation seat" (問彼坐禪人於虛空或從禪退, 彼從虛空轉當落地耶? 答不然! 是從其先坐處起, 若遠行退者還至先坐處; T1648.32.0442a20-22). These passages are quoted also by Anālayo (2016, 16). The interpretation that would see *iddhi*s experienced in sorts of meditative trances seems to also be endorsed by Dieter Schlingloff (2018, 1-9), who writes that "[t]he canonical explanations of the legal texts, however, leave no doubt that such faculties originally referred to trance experiences and not to displays of magical powers" (2018, 2), later describing the *iddhi*s as "psychic experiences that arise in this fourth state of trance [viz. the fourth *jhāna*]" (2018, 4; square brackets mine). However, it seems to me that Schlingloff's argument (2018, 2-3) is based on the fact that the *Vinaya* (Vin I 96-7) speaks about the prohibition to lay claims of having attained *uttari-manussa-dhamma*s and that this broadly indicates many kinds of meditation attainment (and not only *iddhi*s; concerning *uttari-manussa-dhamma*, see also Gethin 2001, 99, n. 75). Schlingloff emphasises the phrasing *suññāgāre abhiramāmīti* (Vin I 97), as indicating the act of choosing a proper place to meditate (cf. D I 71), thus suggesting that the text originally referred to the practice of meditation. Although interesting, this argument does not seem, at least to my mind, definitive. In the Buddhist texts there are likewise examples that would indicate that the *iddhi*s would have real effects, just as when the Buddha goes to the Brahmā's

of movement, such as when the meditator walks on the water, and indeed I am unsure whether the mobility fits well with the still state of *jhāna*. In summary, since it is not possible to state in an absolute sense whether the *iddhi*s were mere visualisations or were regarded as real feats given the existence of evidence in support of both views, the explanation that would see the *iddhi*s developed in the *jhāna* seems implausible if they are to be considered as real performances.

The second reason that can lead one to be sceptical concerning Shulman's position concerns the exegetical literature. In this regard, Shulman clearly writes that the latter is not part of his research sources.[46] However, from the **Vimuttimagga* onwards, it is clear that the Theravāda tradition conceived the action of emerging from the *jhāna* state as part of the process to develop *iddhividhǎ* and *abhiññā*s.[47] This fact is so endemic that it would certainly demand attention, even if it is attested only in texts later than the ones analysed by Shulman. Interestingly, despite that the **Vimuttimagga* prescribes the entrance into and emergence from the *jhāna*, at least on one occasion it raises the issue of the consequences of losing the meditative absorption (禪) during a levitation (問彼坐禪人於虛空或從禪退; T1648.32.0442a20). Concerning the power of levitation, the *Visuddhimagga* clearly mentions the emergence: "he attains the [*jhāna* produced by the] earth *kasiṇa* (*paṭhavīkasiṇa*) – desiring to perform in this way – and emerges [from the *jhāna*]".[48] In this regard, we can assume from the **Vimuttimagga*'s evidence that the meditator who is performing levitation is in a sort of meditative state (禪), although we may wonder whether it is really the fourth *jhāna*, which is often referred to in the **Vimuttimagga*'s exegesis of the extraordinary capacities as 第四禪 (e.g. T1648.32.0442b26). What is clear is that the text assumes the presence of a meditative state which is at least similar to the *jhāna*. Therefore, concerning the issue of whether or not the meditator is in the state of *jhāna* during the execution of extraordinary capacities, we can endorse the suggestion of Peter Harvey (2018a, 25; 2018b, 295), according to whom the mind could "step *slightly* aside from such a state [i.e. the fourth *jhāna*], while retaining its qualities, to focus on attending to the knowledges" (2018b, 295; emphasis in the original, square brackets mine). This seems the best solution to interpret the fact that the exegetical texts prescribe the actions of entering into and emerging from the *jhāna*, and also describe through the *cittavīthi* doctrine the process of performing extraordinary capacities as a mental process similar to the act of entering into *jhāna*. The mind seems to be in an altered state similar, but not identical, to the fourth *jhāna*. This possibility can be inferred even from the canonical texts. The *Mahālisutta* (D 6) testifies to the possibility to perceive divine (*dibba*) forms and sounds in a particular type of

world with the own physical body (S V 282), or when the Buddha is said to be able to prolong his lifespan through the mastery of the *iddhipāda*s (D II 103; see Kv 456-8 which uses *iddhibala* in the context of prolongation of life). Let alone that these powers were subjected to legislative regulation and occur in many accounts as visible feats, just as when a monk levitates in order to take a sandalwood bowl, an act that led to the regulation of these kinds of miraculous display (Vin II 110-12).

46 "[C]ommentarial and Abhidhammic materials will generally be not treated as well as they reflect a later stage in which the discourses were subject to doctrinal classification" (Shulman 2014, 59).

47 This is quite evident from the primary sources I quoted and translated in Chapters 7 and 8.

48 *evaṃ kātukāmena pana pathavīkasiṇaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya* (Vism 396).

samādhi, which is not strictly said to be the state of *jhāna* (D I 152-3).[49] Divine forms and sounds seem likely to be perceived through divine eyes and ears and this would point to the fact that there is no need to assume specifically the *jhāna* state, although the state involved is not so different according to the exegesis.

9.5 Conclusion: Balancing the Data

Finally, trying to draw conclusions from the gathered data, we may note that the Buddhist path of liberation seems to have a double facet. On the one hand, there is the narrative climax, in which an escalation of the body's improvement occurs. On the other hand, there is what we can call 'the pragmatic use' of the Buddhist path of liberation. By the 'pragmatic use' I mean the fact that the path is malleable enough to allow the omission of some stages according to the circumstances and the contexts. If we consider the path from the point of view of a practitioner, we may note that the only stage that really matters is the last one, the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*. However, there are some accounts that even omit the *āsavakkhayañāṇa*, presenting short versions of the path, which probably fit a peculiar narrative context.[50] The path of liberation presented by the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* seems to be the most exhaustive version of the path. Then, we may wonder whether the long version was the result of a synthesis of the short versions or whether the short versions are abbreviated forms of the long one. A definitive answer would involve a further study on the many versions of the path, but certainly we can note that in the short versions we may partly lose the narrative crescendo of the body's improvement. This narrative climax may actually have its own coherence from the viewpoint of a gradual divinisation of the body, which would, however, be partially lost in the shortened forms. Therefore, it is difficult to establish whether the stages in the path are autonomous or whether they are linked to each other. The exegetical texts as well provide ambiguous hints. As noted above, the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* seems to suggest that the stages can, at least, bolster each other (Sv I 307). However, in the *Visuddhimagga* we find the prescription of developing the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) before performing the *iddhi* consisting in the capability to fly like a winged bird (Vism 397), despite the fact that the *iddhi*s are developed before the *abhiññā*s in the canonical accounts of the path. Therefore, it may be relevant to note that at that point of the path, a divine body made of mind had already been created. Indeed, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*'s exposition of the *iddhi* which concerns the capability to travel up to the world of Brahmā suggests that the divine senses of the *abhiññā*s are used to communicate with Brahmā. What we may conclude is that the path is a gradual, ideal type of path, coherent in its entirety, and valid in its partitions.

The *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s long version of the path could suggest a process of divinisation of the body, whose senses are divinised as well. Therefore, the meditator becomes acquainted with the divine realms through the practice of *jhāna* meditation. This practice is transformative and, indeed,

49 This was noted by Harvey (2018a, 20).

50 E.g. D 25 and M 107, see the tables in Gethin 2020, 23, 32.

also affects the meditator's body. Hence, the knowledges the meditator gains are attained through enhanced senses, which were described as divinised all together, at least at the stage of the development of the divine ear. We might even wonder whether the senses were already divinised at the stage of development of the body made of mind, which is a divine body. As noted above (and also in § 7.4.9), in Vism 397 the *dibbacakkhu* is used during the performance of an *iddhi*. This might, however, seem to affect the hypothesis that would see all the senses divinised during the stage of the *dibbasotadhātu* (which is later than the *iddhividhă*). Although, rather than it being mandatory for the mechanical execution of the power of flying, the use of the *dibbacakkhu* seems to be a formalistic expedient to not break the *Vinaya*'s rule that forbids one to display such powers to lay people. This does not exclude, however, that the hypothesis remains valid according to which as one obtains a divine body, divine senses develop simultaneously.

The analysis of the extraordinary perceptions through the lens of the *cittavīthi* doctrine highlights that these perceptions are completely mental, in the sense that a physical support (e.g. the fleshly eye) is required only at the beginning for the preparatory work, but not to keep using the power. Furthermore, it is a perception attained through a mental process that resembles the entrance into the *jhāna*. The state in which the meditator performs the extraordinary capacities seems indeed to be quite similar, although not identical to the *jhāna* state. We can wonder whether this may indicate, as suggested above in the chapter on the *iddhividhă* (see § 7.5), that the boundaries between different realms of existence get blurred, and different levels of existence conflate one into the other, allowing a human being on earth to be and act like a god of the heaven. As far as I know, the Buddhist path of liberation is not usually regarded as a process of divinisation nowadays, but this does not mean that it was not so in the past. Therefore, this study suggests the existence of an actual divine dimension in the pursuing of the Buddhist path of liberation.

10 Conclusion

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10.1 Some General Thoughts on How Things Currently Stand, and How They Perhaps Should Stand, according to the Literary Evidence

This research, contrary to the usual approach to the Buddhist path of liberation, has analysed the final stages. A conventional approach to the Buddhist path of liberation would consist of dealing with the stages, starting from the first up until the last one. There is, of course, an evident benefit in doing so, namely that it is possible to analyse its gradual progress from the very beginning. What is less evident is that usually a researcher has a limited amount of time for pursuing research, and starting full of optimism from the very beginning, probably, as the time goes on, will start to abandon the idea of analysing all stages. The action of narrowing the research in order to respect a deadline is something that many researchers, if not all, have experienced at least once in their career. This fact highlights a risk for academic research in general, namely that if we all start from the same point, some topics will receive much more attention than others. Indeed, as noted at the beginning of the book (§ 2.1), studies on the Buddhist path of liberation mainly focused on the early stages, while extraordinary capacities are the final stages of the path and remained de facto neglected.

In the case of the extraordinary capacities, a further widespread bias might have affected the propensity among scholars to consider them as their object of research. As Rupert Gethin writes:

> The attempt to marginalize the practice of miraculous powers in the earliest Buddhist texts must be considered a feature of Buddhist modernism, and related to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century preoccupation

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> with recovering a historical Buddha congenial to the rationalist and ethical sensitivities of certain Buddhist apologists. (Gethin 2011, 223)

This, of course, is not only a problem that concerns Buddhist studies, but it seems to be shared with the broader field of Indian studies. For instance, it was noted by David G. White that the third chapter of the *Yogasūtra*, which deals with the supernatural powers of yogis, "has historically been the least studied portion of that text, in spite of the fact that it comprises over one fourth of the entire work" (2012, 61). The poor academic consideration of the extraordinary capacities is, indeed, not supported by the textual evidence.

In the case of Buddhism, we find that in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhā̆* and the other *abhiññā*s are even greater achievements than the *ñāṇa-dassana*, which is equated with the *vipassanā* by the commentarial literature.[1] It is therefore noteworthy that *vipassanā*, both as a subject of study and as a Buddhist practice, has certainly received more attention thus far. There is, indeed, not any *a priori* reason to believe that the extraordinary capacities were not an integrated part of early Buddhist thought. It seems rather that we overlook what we do not like. Eager to find signs of philosophy, rationalistic thought and similar sorts of things, we emphasise these topics to the detriment of others.[2] To some extent, this is a kind of appropriation of the Buddhist doctrine, not unlike the Western appropriation of Yoga. I wonder how many Yoga teachers in the West say to their pupils that they will achieve extraordinary capacities by practising Yoga. I would anticipate that not many do, despite that this is what the oldest text on Yoga states. The tendency, it seems to me, is that a tradition takes from another tradition what seems to fit its values and beliefs, without hurting the common-sense. Then, unsurprisingly, Yoga is nowadays recommended to stay fit, regardless of the higher purpose that the practice aims.[3]

Scholars are, of course, part of a tradition that may drive individuals to conform to its values, beliefs, etc., and then they may be subjected to the same biases that a tradition has towards another one. However, scholars interested in Buddhism, dealing with textual sources, should not fail to recognise the widespread presence of extraordinary capacities in the Buddhist texts. These marvellous abilities are as much real for Buddhists as anything else we can find in the canonical texts and exegetical literature. As something that really exists, they need a legal regulation. Therefore, the monastic code, the *Vinaya*, contains some rules to regulate the performance and the attitude towards them. Hence, in the *Cullavagga* section of the *Vinaya*, the Buddha forbids monks to exhibit and flaunt the superhuman miracle of powers in front of lay people (Vin II 112). On another occasion, it is stated that claiming to have experienced phenomena beyond [the average

1 *idha pana* ***ñāṇa-dassanāya cittan*** *ti idaṃ vipassanā-ñāṇaṃ ñāṇa-dassanan ti vuttaṃ* (Sv I 220).

2 "The promoters of the study of Indian philosophy often saw it as their job to emphasize the rational in Indian traditions against a Eurocentrism that saw rationality and philosophy mainly as an exclusively Western phenomenon" (Jacobsen 2012, 14).

3 My father, for example, was advised to practice Yoga and Pilates to relieve back pain, whereas we can hardly imagine ancient yogins suggesting such a practice primarily for this worldly purpose.

reach of] human beings (*uttari-manussa-dhamma*)[4] when this is not true is an offence that results in expulsion from the monastic order (Vin III 91). As it has been analysed, the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă*, and the other *abhiññā*s are an integrated part of the ideal type of Buddhist path of liberation in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. The exegetical literature has even handed down to us a method to develop them. Then, how can we claim that they are of little value? An old attempt to claim this was put forward by T.W. Rhys Davids, who seems to interpret the *Kevaddhasutta* (D 11) as a proof that the Buddha condemned the practice of wonders and miracles. However, more recent studies have demonstrated that the Buddha only argues against the displays of the *iddhi*s as valuable means to arouse faith in people without confidence in the Buddhist doctrine because they would see them as mere tricks.[5] The rejection of the exhibition of extraordinary capacities is only made in comparison with the exposition of the Doctrine; the latter should be certainly preferred. However, the extraordinary capacities are not rejected *in toto*. If we conceive the path of liberation as a transformative path, we cannot fail to note that in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, from a narrative point of view, there seems to be a gradual enhancement of the corporeality, which would result in a real divinisation of the body. This is not the final goal, but a part of the path. Perhaps, not a necessary part, considering the various accounts that omit many final stages, but nevertheless not a negative one. On the contrary, the extraordinary capacities may represent the gradual liberation from matter, applying the power of the mind trained in meditation, and resulting in the final liberation of the mind itself. Moreover, some of them can actually be actively involved in the process of liberation. Therefore, the first aim of the book concerned the in-depth study of these final stages of the Buddhist path of liberation. The terms of the analysis were dictated by the second aim, which concerned the development of these final stages over time. To pursue this research, a third aim has been involved, namely, to improve our knowledge concerning the Pāli commentarial literature, a pivotal *corpus* of texts for a diachronic study. We shall, at first, consider the results that pertain to the study of the exegesis and, later, the individual analysis of the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s will be presented. Finally,

4 This category, although it includes *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s, does not concern them exclusively, as *uttari-manussa-dhamma*s are defined as any meditation, including ordinary *jhana*. In this regard, also see Gethin 2001, 98-9.

5 In this regard, see Gethin 2001, 97-101 on Rhys Davids 1899, 272-84. On the *Kevaddhasutta*, see also Gómez 1977, 221-2; [2010] 2011, 517-18; Granoff 1996, 83-5; Fiordalis 2008, 31-4; [2010] 2011, 385-9; 2012, 100-1; Clough [2010] 2011, 413-14. It seems to me that since Gethin (2001, 98) highlighted that the use of the adjective 'rationalistic' adopted by Gómez is likely derived from Rhys Davids, and so brings with it a sort of bias, Fiordalis feels the need to defend the use of this adjective. In this regard, he writes that "[t]he passage does indeed seem to rationalize the wondrous in one sense, and that is by classifying it" ([2010] 2011, 385, n. 12) and also "[t]hus, Luis Gómez may be accurate in characterizing the *Kevaṭṭa-sutta* as 'rationalistic' in at least two senses. First, teaching the Dharma is valued over displays of superhuman power and telepathy, and second, the wondrous is embedded in a scholastic ratiocination on the various types of wonder and the different sources of superhuman power, which effectively reduces wonder to knowledge" (2012, 100-1). It seems to me that rather than being a 'rationalistic *sutta*', the *Kevaddhasutta* shows the pragmatic attitude of the Buddha. The Buddha's mission regarded the teaching of the Dhamma, so he undoubtedly values the teaching of the Dhamma over everything. The *Kevaddhasutta*, actually, not only suggests that the Buddha believed in the possibility of developing psychophysical powers and the mind-reading through meditation, but that similar powers could also be developed making use of a sort of esoteric science, namely through the spell Gandhārī (*gandhārī nāma vijjā*; D I 213), and through talismans (*maṇiko nāma vijjā*; D I 214). Therefore, it seems to me that the *sutta* is definitely not 'rationalistic' in our sense of the term.

the extraordinary capacities will be considered together as the final stages of the Buddhist path.

10.2 Pāli Commentaries and, Broadly Speaking, Theravāda Exegesis

The study of the Pāli commentaries ended to conflate in the broader study of the Theravāda exegesis, given that the exegetical process resulted to be an ongoing process. The observation of how commentaries and exegetical texts 'behave' in providing explanations led us to note the existence of a recurrent pattern. The exegetical texts tend to accumulate innovations and present them as further specifications in a quite systematic way. This process of accumulation of innovations and subsequent justification has been called the 'interpretative accretion process' (§ 7.4.4.1). This is certainly not the only way in which the commentaries work, but it is the preeminent one found so far in this study. Moreover, this pattern prompts us to wonder whether we can trust an interpretation that clearly introduces innovations. To be more specific, can we understand a concept X like X^{+a+b+c}, where 'a', 'b' and 'c' are new information gradually introduced by the exegetical literature? Generally, it would be better to not accept anything blindly, even because the philological analysis of the exegetical interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa* (§ 6.4) proved that it is sometimes possible to reach a satisfactory evaluation of a given piece of exegesis. The quest of finding the right interpretation is naturally connected to the way in which we understand the Buddhist doctrines. Therefore, I suggested the necessity of adopting a 'philology of ideas' (§ 6.5) through which we can evaluate the original meaning and later developments of a canonical concept or idea through the analysis of both its past (e.g. Vedic background) and its future developments (exegesis). In fact, the exegesis of the term *karaṇḍa* is a case in which the commentarial interpretation was philologically forced, but in the present book there are other instances that would prove the value of the commentarial literature. The study of Cūḷapanthaka's story (§ 7.4.4.2), for example, would highlight a positive interaction between commentaries and canonical sources, in which the latter seem to confirm the version of the first. Still, other cases even seem to demonstrate that exegetical sources have handed down differing and competing interpretations. That is the case of the *dibbacakkhu*'s range of knowledge, which is different in the *Manorathapūraṇī* (*Aṅguttaranikāya-aṭṭhakathā*) and *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* (§ 8.4.6). Therefore, we cannot but recognise the complexity of the exegetical literature and the necessity of dealing with exegetical material on a case-by-case basis.

Considering the value of some texts taken individually for the study of the Buddhist doctrine, we can see how commentaries such as the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* and *Saddhammappakāsinī* had an unsystematic and sporadic usefulness. The *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* turned out to be of paramount importance for the study of the *manomayakāya*, but marginal for the study of the *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s. While the *Visuddhimagga* provided exegeses to the canonical formulae of the extraordinary capacities, the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* limited itself to commenting on the explanatory similes, often through a terminological explanation, that is, a word-by-word exegesis. In this context, the complementarity between the *Visuddhimagga* and *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* is evident, although in the case of the *manomayakāya* it has

been observed that the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* provides not only complementary but also supplementary information. The *Saddhammappakāsinī* has proved to be largely a repetitive text, although occasionally it has provided fragments of original exegesis. The **Vimuttimagga* also turned out to be a text of paramount importance, which should certainly be taken into consideration more by future research.

Furthermore, we might note how the exegetical literature is imbued with the Abhidhamma's expository style. In particular, a proper understanding of the Abhidhammic doctrine of the consciousness process (*cittavīthi*) was of a paramount importance in our analysis. The necessity to analyse an Abhidhammic topic in order to properly understand the exegetic accounts of the commentaries is a fact that should not be underestimated. The different layers of Buddhist literature are not separate entities but instead communicate with each other. The exegesis is not something that belongs exclusively to the commentarial literature, but it is possible to find it throughout the entire Pāli Buddhist literature. Therefore, studies on the Pāli commentarial literature should consider the sources that precede the commentaries in order to understand how the commentaries reach a certain kind of exegesis on a certain topic. Then, Rhys Davids' wish in editing the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* ([1886] 1968, VII; see above § 5.2) that the commentary would have brought new insight in the comprehension of the canonical *Dīghanikāya* can be overturned to some extent. The commentaries themselves need to be properly understood and this task starts from the early canonical accounts, continuing along the later literature up to the actual Pāli commentaries of the V century AD onwards. Commentaries cannot only be sources to investigate something else, they should also be regarded as an object of study. Then, I suggest consideration of the Pāli exegesis from a holistic point of view, in its diachronic development over time. The Pāli literature is a transmitted *corpus* of texts, a body of knowledge which is an expression of the Theravāda Buddhist culture. Then, in the words of the great evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins: "[c]ultural transmission is analogous to genetic transmission in that, although basically conservative, it can give rise to a form of evolution" ([1989] 2006, 189). This is, indeed, the way in which I think we should consider the Theravāda tradition, namely a basic conservative tradition that, nonetheless, for the very fact that it was (and still is) a living tradition, it was (and still is) subjected to evolution.

10.3 Extraordinary Capacities: *Manomayakāya*, *Iddhividhă* and Other *Abhiññā*s

The analysis of the final stages of the path of liberation proved to be fruitful, also considering that they seem to be quite ancient elements. The comparison with the Vedic texts, in the case of the *manomayakāya*, has highlighted how Buddhist texts tacitly maintain some elements that characterise the notion of *manomaya*, especially in the Upaniṣads. The fact that the *manomayakāya* did not receive any elaboration from the first texts of the Abhidhamma suggests that it is an exogenous element. The *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s receive greater exegetical attention only later, with the advent of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. Despite the fact that the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* belongs to the *Kuddhakanikāya*, it is possible to consider it as an Abhidhammic text, at least in spirit. Concerning

the diachronic development of the extraordinary capacities, it was decided to follow two slightly different lines of research. On the one hand there is the *manomayakāya*, and on the other hand the *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s.

10.3.1 *Manomayakāya*

In the case of the *manomayakāya*, it was possible to start from the Vedic background, given the existence of the term '*manomaya*' in the Vedic texts (especially the Upaniṣads), and then continue with the canon and its subsequent exegesis. What is *manomaya* in the Buddhist early canonical texts has strong similarities with its Upaniṣadic equivalent, while from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* onward there is a clear departure from the Vedic texts. Particular attention was paid to the exegetic interpretation of the term *karaṇḍa*, which does not seem to be supported in any way by canonical sources and Upaniṣadic literature. This particular exegesis would seem to support a specific reading of the explanatory simile of the *manomayakāya* and, therefore, a peculiar interpretation of the extraction process. From the point of view of the third aim of the book, that is the study of commentarial literature, it was possible to notice how the exegesis was built through an accumulation of innovations, which appear to start from a given text, and influence the later texts' understanding of the topic commented upon. These slight changes guide the development and evolution of the *manomayakāya*, resulting in an exegetic interpretation that is difficult to infer from the canonical coeval and older texts. Therefore, in this case, it is clear that, at the present state of our knowledge, the study of extraordinary capacities and the study of commentarial literature cannot be separated. We cannot blindly accept the exegeses, but equally we cannot blindly disregard them. Commentaries contain some in-depth material concerning the *manomayakāya*, but the antiquity and reliability of that material is far from clear. In the case of the *manomayakāya*, for some aspects, the canonical context seems to be closer to the Vedic background than the Buddhist exegesis itself. Some results combined together may seem to indicate that the *manomayakāya* was a sort of 'state of being' or a subtler level of embodiment. Indeed, the very term '*manomaya*' could either mean 'made through the mind' or 'made of mind' or could maybe even mean both at the same time. The interpretation 'made of mind' would suggest that the materiality of which the new body is created is a subtler kind of materiality: a mental one. The canonical similes, could, indeed, indicate that the mental body is inside the physical body, compared with which is a more valuable part. Similarly, in Vedic texts there is a subtler mental embodiment that is *manomaya*, which has some apparent characteristics that still survive in Buddhism. It is centrally located within some lists, is luminous, is connected with the *ātman* (which is, in these contexts, a body or the trunk of the body). Moreover, it also seems that, in Buddhist texts, gods with bodies made of mind are not connected with the atmosphere (*antalikkha*) by chance, but rather this connection seems to be a residual influence from the Vedic cosmological view. Therefore, rather than being a peculiar Buddhist concept, the *manomayakāya* relates Buddhism to the ancient Indian religious environment and highlights the existence of some underlying background ideas which were never made explicit or fully explained. Therefore, the *manomayakāya* could represent evidence of a period when Buddhism was still in dialogue with its religious environment,

whereas, when the systematic organisation of the Abhidhamma started, priority was given to the tenets which were distinctively Buddhist, because the Abhidhamma is a work made by Buddhists for Buddhists. However, the case of Cūḷapanthaka's story (§ 7.4.4.2) reminds us that there could be some ancient aspects of the *manomayakāya* that are more properly Buddhist. This, of course, is something worthy of further analysis. The story of Cūḷapanthaka highlights that not only could there be a connection between different meditative powers, namely the first *iddhi* concerning the multiplication of the body and the body made of mind,[6] but also that Buddhism might have incorporated the *manomayakāya* with a new facet unknown before. Therefore, future research on the *manomayakāya* is certainly desirable.

10.3.2 *Iddhividhă* and Other *Abhiññā*s

Concerning the *iddhividhă* and other *abhiññā*s, it was decided to proceed taking into consideration the method prescribed by the exegesis to develop these capacities. A thorough investigation on the Sanskrit terminological equivalents to the Pāli terms has not been pursued, although the comparison with the Vedic texts has, nevertheless, brought useful results for the study of these topics (see § 7.3; § 8.4.4; § 8.5).

Especially, from the *iddhividhă* onwards, the **Vimuttimagga* resulted to be a fundamental source for the diachronic reconstruction of the Theravāda exegesis. The first basic method to develop these psychophysical powers (found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*) is a set of instructions which fundamentally consist of the prescription of initially developing some prerequisites. Consequently, a mental change (*āvajjana*) and a formal resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*) should then occur. Although this method is the substratum of all exegeses, the various accounts are characterised by the differences in the smaller details. Starting from the **Vimuttimagga*, access into the state of *jhāna* and the act of emerging from it are included in the reports, and a similar narrative style is maintained in the *Visuddhimagga*. The latter text seems to also suggest a double access into the state of *jhāna* for some *iddhi*s, a fact that could be due to the influence of some other exegetic accounts on the classical exegesis, which merged together during the reworking of Buddhaghosa, giving rise to this particular report. The analysis of the exegetical accounts showed that it is not always possible to reduce the interpretation to a single model. The presence of multiple and differing exegetical accounts makes the quest for an archetypical set of instructions quite an artificial task, in the sense that on the basis of the bare exegetical accounts, the archetypical set of instructions can sometimes emerge only if forced to do so. The exegetical accounts are sometimes so different that in order to find the underlying common bulk, we should assume in advance that it exists, because it is hard to infer from the plain analysis of the sources. At times, however, the exegeses provide almost the same method to develop the power, such as in the case of the third *iddhi* (§ 7.4.6). Therefore, it would seem reasonable to state that the exegetical understanding of these powers should be safely appreciated only on a case-by-case basis, paying

6 Concerning a possible connection between *iddhividhă* and *manomayakāya* from a Vedic point of view, see also § 7.3.

attention to similarities and differences, simultaneously balancing change and continuity.

Concerning the *abhiññā*s, the same research methodology adopted for the *iddhividhă* was followed. Although, for the majority of the *abhiññā*s there is a method to develop them which underpins all accounts over time; from a diachronic point of view, one cannot fail to note that there have been changes and additions. In some cases, it can be said that the exegesis was, in some ways, revolutionary. In the case of the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*, there is a sharp contrast between the method exposed in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and that exposed in the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*. Regarding the *cetopariyañāṇa*, we cannot fail to note that the method is not exposed in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, but we must first wait for the testimony of the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*.

The analysis of the method to develop each *abhiññā* provided interesting results, some of which also have important implications for the comprehension of the significance of such higher knowledges in the path of liberation. This is the case, for instance, of the *cetopariyañāṇa* (§ 8.2). Its exegesis presented a method to develop it that involved the use of the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) and a further glance into the canon highlighted that there is early evidence that sensory perception is involved in the performance of telepathy (viz. either natural or supernatural hearing or sight). This fact highlights the involvement of divine senses in the achievement of some higher knowledges, a kind of data that resulted to be useful in the assessment of the extraordinary capacities in the Buddhist path of liberation and in advancing the hypothesis that there is a process of divinisation of the body and senses, and that the latter are all already divinised during the stage of the development of the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*). This is also corroborated by the analysis of the *cutūpapātañāṇa* (§ 8.4). This *abhiññā* is also referred to as *dibbacakkhu*, but this latter term has proved to be a metonymic use and the *dibbacakkhu* resulted to be the mere instrument through which such higher knowledge is attained.

Some other results of the study of the *abhiññā*s highlight the complexity of the exegetical literature, to which we can only but surrender. I mean that sometimes the exegetical accounts display such a degree of change that we can only admit that we are facing either diverging or alternative interpretations and that some additions occurred over time. The study of the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa* (§ 8.3) has been a good example of the aforementioned possibilities. Not only does the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* provide a different exegesis from that of the **Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga*, but the *Visuddhimagga* makes extensive reference to two ways of remembering (viz. *khandhapaṭipāṭi* 'succession of aggregates' and *cutipaṭisandhi* 'death-rebirth). It is difficult to establish whether or not these two ways of remembering were already formulated in the **Vimuttimagga*, but even if so, the *Visuddhimagga* amply relies on these categories in a way unattested before. The only *raison d'être* for the existence of the *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi* dichotomy resulted to be that of establishing distinctions between the various practitioners, especially between the Buddhist ones and the followers of other schools.

Finally, we may note that the exegetical explanations, through the perspective of the Abhidhamma method of analysis, may enrich our comprehension of Buddhism as a whole and provide fresh insights on the role of meditation in the path of liberation. The exegesis of the first *iddhi*,

the multiplication of the body (§ 7.4.4), and that of the element of the divine ear (*dibbasotadhātu*) (§§ 8.1.2 and 8.1.3) would highlight through the lens of the consciousness process (*cittavīthi*) doctrine that in the process of performing *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s the meditator gets in touch with the divine realm of the *rūpāvacara*. The latter is also the realm in which the meditator abides in the state of *jhāna* and that, in its corresponding cosmological sphere (i.e. *rūpadhātu*), hosts the gods whom have a body made of mind (*manomayakāya*). It seems, indeed, that the whole process aims to bring to our world the divine power existing in some rarefied realms of existence, which are over our sense-sphere of existence (*kāmāvacara* and *kāmadhātu*, respectively from a psychological and cosmological perspective). From an Abhidhammic point of view, the marvellous performances resemble the entrance in the state of *jhāna*, although strictly speaking are not performed in the state of the fourth *jhāna*, which occurs before as a sort of pre-requisite (see § 9.4.1). The state in which the meditator performs the extraordinary capacities seems indeed to be quite similar, although not identical, to the *jhāna* state. Therefore, this *jhāna*-like state may suggest that the extraordinary capacities could be interpreted as some sort of tangible and concrete jhānic applications. In this case, we see how the inner psychological world is connected with the broader cosmological dimension and, at the same time, brings effects in the real world of the everyday experience. There is an interaction between the microcosm (psyche) and macrocosm (cosmos), and this interaction is possible through meditation. In that sense, we can say that meditation mediates different levels of existence, and the reality is both determined by the outside and objective world as well as by the inner world. A mind trained in meditation can access inner psychological states as well as higher cosmological realms. This process is transformative, in the sense that can affect the physical body, and, therefore, a mental body which resembles that one of the gods has been created, many psychophysical feats can be performed and divine senses are attained.

10.4 Extraordinary Capacities as Final Stages of the Buddhist Path

In Chapter 9, the *manomayakāya*, *iddhividhǎ*, and the other *abhiññā*s were considered within the Buddhist path, investigating their function and meaning. In this regard, the presence of a narrative climax has been identified which would seem to indicate a progressive divinisation of the body. A speculative hypothesis has been put forward that would see the divine eye created simultaneously with the divine ear (and, perhaps, with the other divine senses). In other words, it has been hypothesised that the stage in which the divine ear is developed, actually corresponds to the divinisation of all the physical senses, including also the eye. In fact, there was also an extensive involvement of the sensory perception for the other analysed *abhiññā*s. This perception resulted to be extraordinary, and has therefore often been conveyed by the so-called divine senses. What makes the senses divine is the mind, which is the only one sense that is connected with a power capable of affecting reality (§ 8.5). Hence, the *manomayakāya*, being a mental body, is also, by extension, divine. The mind is what is divine in humankind, and it can divinise the body and so also the senses, the means of knowledge. If once mankind turns its eyes to the heavens and

attributes to what is up there, what is wonderful in the world and in itself in Buddhism, the attention is turned inside. Mankind finds within itself the transformative force that is not only able to interact with the outside world but is also capable of transforming it. The mind has this transformative power, through which it can free itself. Now, I hope the reader would allow me an impromptu:

> Buddhism is thus a tale of redemption,
> where a human being can train their mind to free itself,
> passing from protagonist to spectator,
> free is the mind and those who helped it to free itself.

This reading of the Buddhist path of liberation would suggest that it is quite unrealistic to regard Buddhism as only a rationalist body of practices and ideas. Rather, it seems that at least part of the tradition retains a connection with forces beyond the ordinary world and experience and conceived the path of liberation as a process of interactions with these forces. The meditator, through meditation, establishes a connection with the higher realms; this contact is transformative, and the physical and limited body is transformed, as well as the senses. The meditator's own experience radically changes and, it could be said, they are then able to know things *on earth as it is in heaven*. Therefore, experience takes on a preeminent role in the path of liberation, and this kind of experience is extraordinary and related to the meditative practice. This can lead us to a more balanced understanding which would more seriously consider the mystical or magical aspects of the Buddhist doctrine.

Finally, we cannot but recognise the narratological crescendo of the Buddhist path. The meditator, once they have developed a divine body, gains a sort of freedom of movement and mastery over the matter. They are able to know everything in the universe through divine senses, know the minds of others, and even know things from the past. It is like the meditator is able to expand themself spatially and temporally into the universe, reaching the apex of a cosmological dimension. But, in the end, they return back to their own mind, knowing that they are free from the noxious influxes: "During liberation, there is the knowledge '[The mind] is liberated'" (*vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam iti ñāṇaṃ hoti*; D I 84). The text passes from a cosmic to a more intimate and private dimension, replacing the opulent list of exceptional feats with a more personal experience. The latter, if compared with the astonishing miraculous feats, almost conveys a sense of normality, as it does not seem to be anything special, although according to Buddhists it is the best among the fruits of the ascetic life. Therefore, I want to conclude with a pertinent verse from Lucio Dalla, a polymath songwriter born in Bologna (like me) on the 4th of March (like me) in 1943, who used to sing these words:

> But the exceptional feat, believe me,
> is to be normal.
> Ma l'impresa eccezionale, dammi retta,
> è essere normale
> (Lucio Dalla, *Disperato erotico stomp*)

Appendix

1. Materials for the Study of the Knowledge of Extinction (*Khayañāṇa*) of the Noxious Influxes (*Āsava*): Canonical Pericope and Commentarial Exegesis

A1.1. Pericope (Basic Formula + Simile)

Basic formula
He knows according to reality: "This is suffering"; he knows according to reality: "This is the origin of suffering"; he knows according to reality: "This is the cessation of suffering"; he knows according to reality: "This is the path which leads to the cessation of suffering"; he knows according to reality: "These are the noxious influxes"; he knows according to reality: "This is the origin of the noxious influxes"; he knows according to reality: "This is the cessation of the noxious influxes"; he knows according to reality: "This is the path which leads to the cessation of the noxious influxes". When he knows and sees in this way, the mind is freed from the noxious influx of the sensual desire, is freed from the noxious influx of the existence, is freed from the noxious influx of the ignorance, in the liberation there is the knowledge "[The mind] is liberated", he knows: "The birth is exhausted, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done was done, from this life there will be not another one".[1]

1 *so idaṃ dukkhan ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, ime āsavā ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ āsava-samudayo ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ āsava-nirodho ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ āsava-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā ti yathā-bhūtaṃ pajānāti. tassa evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato kāmāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati bhavāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati avijjāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati, vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam iti ñāṇaṃ hoti, khīṇā jāti vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ nāparaṃ itthattāyā ti pajānāti* (D I 83-4).

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Simile
Just as, great king, in a valley among mountains there is a lake of water which is transparent, pure, undisturbed. There, a man equipped with [good] sight, standing on the shore, would see oyster shells, gravel and pebble, a shoal of fish, which are moving or staying. He would think: "This lake of water is transparent, pure, undisturbed, in this place there are oyster shell, gravel and pebble, a shoal of fish, which are moving or staying".[2]

A1.2. Translation of *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* I 224-7

'**When the mind is concentrated in this way (*so evaṃ samāhite citte*)**', in this case, the mind of the fourth *jhāna* which is the basis of the *vipassanā* should be understood.

'**To the knowledge of extinction of the noxious influxes (*āsavānaṃ khaya-ñāṇāya*)**' means 'for the sake of arising of the knowledge of extinction of the noxious influxes'. Here, the extinction of the noxious influxes is called path (*magga*), fruit (*phala*), Nibbāna, dissolution (*bhaṅga*). Here [in passages like] "knowledge concerning the extinction [and] the knowledge concerning the non-arising" (D III 214 and D III 274) the path (*magga*) is called 'the extinction of the noxious influxes'. Here [in passages like]: "he is an ascetic because of the extinction of the noxious influxes" (M I 284) it is the fruit (*phala*). Here [in passages like]:

One who always contemplates the faults of others,
who always feels like complaining |
his *āsava*s increase,
he is far from the extinction of the noxious influxes || (Dhp 253)

It is the Nibbāna. Here [in passages like]: "extinction of the noxious influxes, which is their decay (*vaya*), breaking (*bheda*), impermanence (*aniccatā*), disappearance (*antaradhāna*)" (cf. Nidd I 266) it is the dissolution (*bhaṅga*). And here it refers to the Nibbāna, but the path of the *arahant* (*arahatta-magga*) is also appropriate.

'**Directs the mind (*cittaṃ abhinīharati*)**' he makes the *vipassanā*-mind bend towards it, converge on it.

Concerning the passage which starts in the following way: '**he [knows according to reality:] "This is suffering" (*so idaṃ dukkhaṃ*)**', **[225]** he knows according to reality, through the comprehension of the characteristics and essential properties, the whole truth concerning suffering: "[There is] this much suffering, but not beyond this". [He knows] the craving (*taṇhā*) which produces this suffering: '**This is the origin of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo*)**'. When both (viz. suffering and arising of suffering) reach the state that once is attained ceases, this is the Nibbāna, their non-manifestation: '**This is the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho*)**'. And the noble path that leads to this [i.e. the cessation]: '**This**

2 *seyyathā pi mahā-rāja pabbata-saṅkhepe udaka-rahado accho vippasanno anāvilo, tattha cakkhumā puriso tīre ṭhito passeyya sippi-sambukam pi sakkhara-kaṭhalam pi maccha-gumbam pi carantam pi tiṭṭhantam pi. tassa evam assa: ayaṃ kho udaka-rahado accho vippasanno anāvilo, tatr' ime sippi-sambukā pi sakkhara-kaṭhalā pi maccha-gumbā pi caranti pi tiṭṭhanti pī ti* (D I 84).

is the path which leads to the cessation of suffering (*ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāmiṇī paṭipadā*)'. This is the meaning of 'he knows according to reality, through the comprehension of the characteristics and essential properties'.

Having shown the truths in such a form, showing them again figuratively [in terms of] defilements (*kilesa*), He [i.e. the Buddha] said [the passage which starts from] '***ime āsavā***'.

'**When he knows and sees in this way (*tassa evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato*)**' [it means] when this monk knows and sees in this way. He [i.e. the Buddha] explains the path (*magga*) which has reached perfection (*koṭippatta* [maybe synonym of Nibbāna]) in conjunction with the [practice of] *vipassanā*. '**From the noxious influx of the sensual desire (*kāmāsavā*)**' means 'from the noxious influx of the sensual desire (*kāmasāvato*)'.

'[The mind] is freed (*vimuccati*)'; by this [phrase], He [i.e. the Buddha] shows the moment of the path (*maggakkhaṇa*); by this [phrase] '**in the liberation (*vimuttasmiṃ*)**', He shows the moment of the fruit (*phalakkhaṇa*); and by this [phrase] '**there is the knowledge: "I am liberated" (*vimutt' amhī ti ñāṇaṃ hoti*)**',[3] [He shows] the knowledge of reviewing; by [the phrase] starting as '**the birth is exhausted (*khīṇā jāti*)**' [He shows] its plane [i.e. the plane of the reviewing knowledge]. For when the one who has the noxious influxes destroyed reviews [his liberated-status] through this knowledge, he knows 'the birth is exhausted, etc.'

[Query:] which of his births is exhausted? How does he know [that]? It is not the past birth that is exhausted, because it was exhausted previously; not the future [birth], because of the non-existence of the striving concerning the future; not the present [birth], because of [its] being in existence [right now]. **[Reply:]** the one which would arise because of the absence of the path is the birth consisting of the one, four or five *khandha*s, in one, two or five constituents of being [respectively]; this one has been exhausted through the reaching of the characteristic of not coming into existence caused by the development of the path. The one who has abandoned the defilements for the sake of developing the path, reviewing that, he knows knowing: "The lasting *kamma* concerning the absence of defilements is incapable of rebirth in future".

'**It has been lived (*vusitaṃ*)**' it means lived (*vuttha*), dwelt (*parivuttha*). '**Holy life (*brahmacariyaṃ*)**' means holy life in the path. Seven people in training dwell in the state of holy life together with the virtuous ordinary person, the one who has the noxious influxes exhausted has lived in these stages. Therefore, contemplating his own dwelling in the state of holy life, he knows: '**The holy life has been lived (*vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ*)**'.

[226] '**What had to be done was done (*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*)**'. With reference to the four truths, the sixteen-kind of function has been accomplished through the path by means of exact knowledge (*pariññā*), abandoning (*pahāna*), experiencing (*sacchikiriya*), developing (*bhāvanā*)[4] [of the four truths]. The defilements that should be abandoned are abandoned precisely by each path; the meaning is that the root of suffering is extirpated. The virtuous ordinary person, etc., indeed, does this work; the one who has

3 N.B. in the canon the phrasing is different.

4 See Vibh 426-7 and Gethin 2001, 122.

exhausted the noxious influxes has already done it. Therefore, reviewing his own duty he knows: '**What had to be done was done (*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*)**'.

'**From this life there will be not another one (*nāparaṃ itthattāya*)**', he knows: "Here there is not again for me the obligation of developing the path for the sake of the present existence, or the existence in sixteen-functions or the destruction of defilements". Otherwise, '***itthattāya***' means 'from this existence', because of this arrangement he knows: "I do not have now from the continuity of the existing aggregates another continuity of aggregates. But these five aggregates, which were fully known, endure as trees whose roots were cut off, they cease to exist through the cessation of the last [moment of] consciousness, like fire without fuel; they will go to the indefinable state".

'**In a valley among mountains (*pabbata-saṅkhepe*)**' in the summit of a mountain (*pabbata-matthaka*). **'Undisturbed (*anāvilo*)'** free from mud (*nikkaddama*).

'Oyster and shells' means '**oyster-shell (*sippi-sambukā*)**', 'gravel and pebble' means '**gravel and pebble (*sakkhara-kaṭhalaṃ*)**'.

'A shoal of fish, a multitude (*ghaṭa* following Be)' is '**shoal of fish (*maccha-gumbaṃ*)**'.

'**Staying or moving (*tiṭṭhantam pi carantam pi*)**'. In this place gravel and pebble remain still, other things are moving or remaining still.

"But when from time to time they are standing, sitting, walking, according to the moving: 'these cows are moving', and others are also defined as 'moving'". Accordingly, gravel and pebble only remain still, then it is said that "the other couple is also remaining still", **[227]** and with reference to the other couple which is moving, it is said that "gravel and pebble also is moving".

In this context, the moment of clarification (*vibhūta-kāla*) of the four noble truths of the seated monk who directed the mind to the extinction of the noxious influxes should be regarded as the moment of clarification of the man equipped with [good] sight who sees oyster-shells, etc., standing on the shore.

Ten knowledges (*ñāṇa*) are expressed so far as: 1) *vipassanāñāṇa*; 2) *manomayañāṇa*; 3) *iddhividhañāṇa*; 4) *dibbasotañāṇa*; 5) *cetopariyañāṇa*; 6) *pubbenivāsañāṇa*; 7) *dibbacakkhuñāṇa*, which has the double knowledge of: 8) *yathākammūpaga* and 9) the knowledge of the future (*anāgata*) accomplished through the power of the divine eye; 10) *āsavakkhayañāṇa*. The clarification of their object should be known. In this context, the *vipassanāñāṇa* has an object of seven kinds: limited, exalted, past, future, present, internal, external. The *manomayañāṇa* makes an object which is only a mere form-sphere creation it is: limited, present, and external. The *āsavakkhayañāṇa* has an object which is measureless, external, and unclassifiable. The [other] kinds of object of the remaining [knowledges] are reported in the *Visuddhimagga*.

2. The *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* on the *Iddhividhă* and the Other *Abhiññā*s

Sumaṅgalavilāsinī on the *iddhividhă*:

> In this context, the skilful **adroit potter** should be regarded as the monk who has attained the knowledge of the *iddhividhă*. **The well-prepared**

clay should be regarded as the knowledge of the *iddhividhă*. The action of making an **earthenware product** as desired should be regarded as the transformation (*vikubbana*) of the monk.

*tattha cheka-**kumbha-kārādayo** viya iddhividha-ñāṇa-lābhī bhikkhu daṭṭhabbo. **suparikamma-katamattikādayo** viya iddhividha-ñāṇaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ. icchit-icchita-**bhājana-vikati**-ādi-karaṇaṃ viya tassa bhikkhuno vikubbanaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ.* (Sv I 222-3)

Sumaṅgalavilāsinī on the *dibbasotadhātu*:

In the simile of the divine element of ear, since a long road in the wilderness is fearful, frightening, it is not possible for one who is anxious and apprehensive to determine "This is the sound of a drum, this is the sound of a tambour", therefore not having made reference to the wilderness, indicating a peaceful road, he says, "**Set out on a long road**". For, having placed a cloth on the head, going slowly along a road that is not frightening and safe, he easily determines sounds of the aforementioned kinds. The time those sounds are clear to him should be regarded as like the time when both the divine and human sounds, differentiated as distant and close, are clear to the yogin.

*dibba-sota-dhātu-upamāyaṃ yasmā kantāraddhānamaggo sāsaṅko hoti sappaṭibhayo tattha ussaṅkita-parisaṅkitena ayaṃ bheri-saddo, ayaṃ mutiṅga-saddo ti na sakkā vavatthāpetuṃ, tasmā kantāra-gaṇhaṃ akatvā khemaṃ maggaṃ dassento **addhāna-magga-paṭipanno** ti āha. appaṭibhayaṃ hi khemaṃ maggaṃ sīse sāṭakaṃ katvā saṇikaṃ paṭipanno vutta-ppakāre sadde sukhaṃ vavatthāpeti. tassa tesaṃ saddānaṃ āvibhūta-kālo viya yogino dūra-santikabhedānaṃ dibbānañ c' eva mānussakānañ ca saddānaṃ āvibhūta-kālo daṭṭhabbo.* (Sv I 223)

Sumaṅgalavilāsinī on the *cetopariyañāṇa*:

The simile of the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others]: **young (*daharo*)** means tender (*taruṇa*). **Youthful (*yuvā*)** means endowed with youth. **Fond of finery (*maṇḍana-jātiko*)** means although he is young, he is not indolent and does not have dirty clothes and a dirty body, and then he is naturally fond of ornaments. Having taken a bath two or three times per day, he has the habit of using ornaments and dressing with clean cloths, this is the meaning. **[The face] is with blemishes (*sakaṇika*)** means it has defect, with some blackheads, flaws, blemishes on the face, boils, etc. In this context, it should be known in this way: when he contemplates his face image, the facial defect is evident to him, in the same way after having directed the mind to the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others], the mind of sixteen kinds of others becomes evident to the seated monk.

*ceto-pariya-ñāṇa-upamāyaṃ **daharo** ti taruṇo. **yuvā** ti yobbanena samannāgato. **maṇḍanaka-jātiko** ti, yuvā pi samāno na ālasiyo na kiliṭṭha-vattha-sarīro, atha kho maṇḍanapakatiko. divasassa dve tayo vāre nahāyitvā suddha-vattha-paridahana-alaṅkāra-karaṇa-sīlo ti attho. **sakaṇikan** ti, kātilaka-vaṅga-mukhadūsi-piḷakādīnaṃ aññatarena sadosaṃ. tattha yathā*

tassa mukha-nimittaṃ paccavekkhato mukha-doso pākaṭo hoti, evaṃ cetopariyañāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharitvā nisinnassa bhikkhuno paresaṃ soḷasa-vidhaṃ cittaṃ pākaṭaṃ hotī ti veditabbaṃ. (Sv I 223)

Sumaṅgalavilāsinī on the *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*:

The simile of knowledge of recollection of former existences: since it is the actions done that day which are evident, only the three villages gone to that same day are mentioned. In this context, the one who possesses the knowledge of recollection of former existences should be understood as a man who visited the triad of villages. Three existences should be understood as the three villages. The manifestation of the action performed in the three existences to the seated monk after having directed the mind to the knowledge of recollection of former existences should be understood as the manifestation of the action performed during the day in the three villages to the man.

pubbe-nivāsa-ñāṇa-upamāyaṃ taṃ divasaṃ kata-kiriyā pākaṭā hotī ti taṃ divasaṃ gata-gāma-ttayam eva gahitaṃ. tattha gāma-ttayaṃ gata-puriso viya pubbe-nivāsa-ñāṇa-lābhī daṭṭhabbo. tayo gāmā viya tayo bhavā daṭṭhabbā. tassa purisassa tīsu gāmesu taṃ divasaṃ kata-kiriyāya āvibhāvo-viya-pubbe-nivāsāya cittaṃ abhinīharitvā nisinnassa bhikkhuno tīsu bhavesu kata-kiriyāya āvibhāvo daṭṭhabbo. (Sv I 223)

Sumaṅgalavilāsinī on the *cutūpapātañāṇa*:

Divine eye simile: **'Wandering the way'** (***vītisañcarante*** [Be: ***vīthiṃ sañcarante***]) means that they are moving to and fro. The reading is also *vidicarante* [Be: *vīthiṃ caranteti*] ('wandering the way'); this is the meaning. In this context, the physical body (*karaja-kāya*) of the monk should be understood as the lofty palace at a crossroads in the middle of a city. The monk standing who has attained precisely this divine eye is like the man equipped with [good] sight standing in the lofty palace; those entering into the mother's womb by way of relinking (*paṭisandhi*) are like those entering into the house; those leaving the mother's womb are like those leaving the house; the beings who are circulating here and there are like those overpassing the road; the beings who are reborn here and there in the three states of existence are like those sitting in the middle of the crossroad, before an open-space; the time when the beings who are reborn in the three states of existence become manifested to the monk sitting with the mind directed to the knowledge of the divine eye should be understood as the time when these men become manifested to the man standing in the terrace of the lofty palace. And this was said for the sake of the ease of instruction, but concerning the formless worlds, the divine eye does not have an action field.

dibba-cakkhu-upamāyaṃ ***vītisañcarante*** *ti* [Be: ***vīthiṃ sañcarante*** *ti*] *aparāparaṃ carante. vidicarante ti pi pāṭho* [Be: *vīthiṃ carantetipi pāṭho*]*. ayam eva attho. tattha nagara-majjhe siṅghāṭakamhi pāsādo viya imassa bhikkhuno karaja-kāyo daṭṭhabbo. pāsāde ṭhito cakkhumā puriso viya ayam eva dibba-cakkhuṃ patvā ṭhito bhikkhu, gehaṃ pavisantā viya paṭisandhivasena mātukucchiṃ pavisantā, gehā nikkhamantā viya*

mātukucchito nikkhamantā, rathikāya vītisañcarantā viya aparāparaṃ saṃsaraṇaka-sattā, purato abbhokāsa-ṭṭhāne maṇjjhe siṅghāṭake nisinnā viya tīsu bhavesu tattha tattha nibbatta-sattā, pāsāda-tale ṭhita-purisassa tesaṃ manussānaṃ āvibhūtakālo viya dibba-cakkhu-ñāṇāya cittaṃ [abhi-] nīharitvā nisinnassa bhikkhuno tīsu bhavesu nibbatta-sattānaṃ āvibhūta-kālo daṭṭhabbo. idañ ca desanā-sukhattham eva vuttaṃ, āruppe pana dibba-cakkhussa gocaro natthī ti. (Sv I 224)

3. The Odd Inversion of the Ablative and Instrumental Cases

An interesting point concerning the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s simile is an odd inversion of the order of words that does not change the meaning but does stimulate further reflections.[5] First of all, when dealing with oral literature, some scholars argue that the repetitions of parts of the text are one of the best tools to facilitate the memorisation of texts and their transmission.[6] It is therefore possible that the oral nature of the Buddhist texts has strongly influenced the formal elements present in them.[7] In fact, as Bhikkhu Anālayo (2007, 8) highlights, when the same topic occurs in both the positive and negative form, the sentence in the positive form is repeated with the same words and in the same formulation, adopting only the minimum change necessary to confer a negative meaning; the same thing happens for the pericopes, namely formulaic expressions that constitute a unity of complete meaning, which are used in different texts and adapted with the minimal possible changes to any specific occasion. Given that there is a principle of economy in the structure of the composition of texts, it is of some interest to note that the form in which the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* contains the three similes is not perfectly identical. The Pāli text, in most cases, tries to respect this principle of economy. Hence, the major changes are often due to the need to make adjectives and verbs agree with nouns, which are the only ones that actually change. The only change that is difficult to justify[8] concerns the

5 Appendix 3 is based on De Notariis 2018, 195-8.

6 On this topic, Allon writes that: "Verbatim Repetition obviously represents the greatest aid to memory. The greater the percentage of a text that is verbatim repetitive the easier it is to learn and remember" (1997b, 52).

7 A brief account concerning the formal elements used to facilitate the act of memorising is provided by Sferra, who writes that the *bhāṇaka*s 'reciters' "per ricordare gli insegnamenti, si sarebbero giovati delle ripetizioni, ma anche di *stock-phrases*, di liste (*mātikā*), di indici dei contenuti (*uddāna*), della disposizione in progressione numerica (il caso più eclatante è quello dell'*Aṅguttaranikāya*), delle allitterazioni, della composizione nominale di termini opposti mediante la a privativa in funzione di cerniera, e, infine, del cosiddetto Waxing Syllables Principle e cioè l'espediente per cui le parole sono ordinate secondo un numero crescente di sillabe" (2011, 100). An extensive study concerning the stylistic features of the Pāli texts is provided by Allon (1997a). I should highlight that not all scholars endorse such a view of a fixed oral transmission of texts in early periods. In this regard, see the recent overview provided by Shulman (2025, 163-8). Notwithstanding the conundrum concerning the early oral transmission, some stylistic features are nonetheless present in Pāli texts and thus the ensuing discussion will be relevant at least concerning the latter.

8 There is also a change in the verbs used. While for the first two pairs the combination '*pavāheyya*' and '*pavāḷhā/o*' (depending on the gender of the noun with which they agree) is used, the combination '*uddhareyya*' and '*ubbhato*' is used for the last pair, i.e. snake/basket. Probably the action of pulling out a snake from the basket is not felt as identical to the action of extracting a sword or a stalk, just as if we have to extract a flower or a mineral from the ground we use two different verbs: 'to mine' the mineral and 'to pick' the flower.

position taken by the names of what is extracted (stalk '*isīkā*', sword '*asi*', snake '*ahi*') and of the containers from which it is extracted (reed '*muñja*', scabbard '*kosī*', basket '*karaṇḍa*'). In fact, the first pair, composed by reed and stalk, is expressed with the phrasing *muñjamhā isīkaṃ* "from the reed the stem [is extracted]", while the other two pairs are inverted: *asi kosiyā* "the sword [is extracted] from the sheath", *ahiṃ karaṇḍā* "the serpent [is removed] from the basket". In the first pair, the ablative is used first and is then followed by the accusative, while in the other two pairs the accusative is written first followed then by the ablative.

An explanation could be that the couple '*muñjamhā isīkaṃ*', with first the ablative and then the accusative, was drawn from a context common to that of *Kaṭhopaniṣad* 6.17,[9] in which the formulation *muñjādiveṣīkaṃ* (without sandhi '*muñjāt iva iṣīkaṃ*') occurs. In this passage, indeed, the ablative occurs first, and then the accusative. The formulation, in both texts, differs from the older one recorded in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 4.3.3.16,[10] which reports *yatheṣīkām muñjād vivṛhed*, a phrasing in which the accusative precedes the ablative. Although this inversion of cases may seem an insignificant detail, it should not be forgotten that these minor changes in the composition of the text may have implications which, at first sight, may seem irrelevant, but which, if carefully analysed, can provide new insights.[11] The impression is that in dealing with similes which have a flexible nature, these can then

9 According to Olivelle 1998, 13, *Kaṭhopaniṣad* is the oldest Upaniṣad among a group of Upaniṣads (which consists of: *Īśā*, *Śvetāśvatara* e *Muṇḍaka*) that probably were created during the last centuries before the beginning of the Common Era.

10 The same simile occurs in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 5.1.2.18.

11 A similar example can be taken from the *Ariyapariyesanasutta* (The discourse of the noble research; M 26), in which the encounter of the Buddha-to-be (namely a Bodhisatta) with the two masters is reported: Āḷāra Kāmāla and Uddaka Rāmaputta. In the two episodes the plot is more or less the same: the Bodhisatta goes first to one teacher then to the other to learn the doctrine. After having learned it well, the masters recognise that he has learned it completely and they offer him to stay and lead the group of disciples, but the Buddha-to-be finds these teachings unsatisfactory and distances himself from them. Doctrinally, the Bodhisatta, at first, finds the 'sphere of nothingness' (*akiñcaññāyatana*) taught by Āḷāra Kāmāla unsatisfactory and, subsequently, the 'sphere of neither-perception-nor-no-perception' (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*) taught by Uddaka Rāmaputta suffered the same fate. The two episodes are narrated in a sequence and form which are identical; the only doctrinal difference concerns the spheres of meditative absorption. Obviously, the other necessary change is the name of the masters to whom the future Buddha goes. However, the report of the event presents details that have nothing to do with the doctrinal message, but are merely descriptive of the episode. In fact, Skilling noted: "the main difference is one of tense change: while in the account of the first meeting Āḷāra Kālāma is spoken of in the present tense, in the account of the second meeting Uddaka Rāmaputta is spoken of in the present, but Rāma is spoken of in the aorist or past tense. This tense makes it clear that Uddaka Rāmaputta and Rāma are not one and the same person […] but that Uddaka is the disciple, either the spiritual or real son (*putta*) of the deceased teacher Rāma" (1981-82, 99). The episode was used by Wynne (2005, 62-5) to show that the Buddhist tradition made a deliberate effort to remember that, when the episode was told, Āḷāra Kālāma was alive, Rāma was dead and Rāmaputta had not yet realised the doctrine that he taught (but had been realised by Rāma, his father, in the past). This would seem to indicate that, in addition to the will to transmit a doctrinal message, there was also the effort to hand down a historical account.

be applied to various contexts.[12] These similes were part of a shared *milieu* and it is not to be excluded that in a given period they acquired a stereotyped form of expression that was, therefore, inserted verbatim within the Buddhist oral literature, giving rise to this singularity. In fact, what can be inferred from texts later than the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* is that this ablative and accusative inversion was not normality. An excellent example occurs within the *Visuddhimagga*. In this text (Vism 406), within a few of lines, the simile is mentioned twice. The second time it is cited, it appears as a quotation from the canon and, therefore, it is quoted word by word, maintaining the odd ablative/accusative inversion.[13] However, the first time the simile occurs, it is paraphrased by the commentator: *so taṃ muñjamhā īsikaṃ viya kosiyā asiṃ viya, karaṇḍāya ahiṃ viya ca abbāhati* (Vism 406). It is worth noting that, in conditions of wider compositional freedom, an author of the calibre of Buddhaghosa, with an undisputed knowledge of the Pāli language, amended the exposition of the three similes by conforming the position of the ablative and accusative. Thus, if on the one hand the sensitivity of an expert connoisseur of the language seems, let us say, hurt by this inversion of cases, on the other hand the commentator shows a certain care in the re-use of the canonical material that is mentioned verbatim. An adjustment of the ablative and accusative position is also present in the Sanskrit version of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (*Śrāmaṇyaphalasūtra*) occurring within the *Saṅghabhedavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins. In this text, we can see how the simile is reported more regularly: *muñjād iṣikām āvṛhyāt* […] *karaṇḍād ahim āvṛhyāt* […] *koṣād asim āvṛhyāt*.[14] It should also be noted that in the Sanskrit version a single verb is used for all three of the similes to indicate the extraction (*contra* the Pāli version). However, when Sanskritised texts are compared with the equivalent Pāli texts, it is not always possible to systematically claim that the Sanskrit version is the wrong one (Norman 1997, 103).

The singularity of this ablative and accusative inversion found in the Pāli texts and the treatment it received from the *Visuddhimagga* reveals a certain fidelity in the transmission of the canonical text. How this singularity came into being can only be subject to conjecture. Assuming that this phrasing arose in the period of the oral transmission, the parallelism

12 Part of this simile is also present in a Jain text: the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*. The passage in which it occurs was translated by Jacobi: "Those who maintain that the soul is something different from the body, do not see the following (objections): […] 'As a man draws a sword from the scabbard and shows it (you, saying): "Friend, this is the sword, and that is the scabbard," so nobody can draw (the soul from the body) and show it (you, saying): "Friend, this is the soul, and that is the body." As a man draws a fibre from a stalk of Muñja grass and shows it (you, saying): "Friend, this is the stalk, and that is the fibre;"" ([1895] 1964, 340). The simile is used in this case with another meaning. The use of this simile in different contexts is also discussed by Norman ([1976] 1991, 102).

13 The passage is introduced by '*tena vuttaṃ*', which often introduces a quotation from the root text (*mūla*) or from another canonical text (Kieffer-Pülz 2015a, 439-41).

14 *tadyathā puruṣo* ***muñjād iṣikām āvṛhyāt****; taṃ cakṣuṣmān puruṣo dṛṣṭvā jānīyād <ayaṃ muñja iyam iṣikā, muñjād iṣikām āvṛhatīti evam e>va*sa tasmat kāyāt mānasaṃ vyutthāpyānyaṃ kāyam abhinirmimīte rūpiṇaṃ manomayam avikalam ahīnendriyam; tadyathā puruṣāḥ* ***karaṇḍād ahim āvṛhyāt****; taṃ cakṣuṣmān puruṣo dṛṣṭvā jānīyād ayaṃ karaṇḍaḥ ay<am ahiḥ, karaṇḍād ahim āvṛhatīti; evam eva sa> tasmāt kāyāt mānasaṃ vyutthāpyānyaṃ kāyaṃ abhinirmimīte rūpiṇaṃ manomayam avikalam ahīnendriyam; tadyathā puruṣāḥ* ***koṣād asim āvṛhyāt****; taṃ cakṣuṣmān puruṣo dṛṣṭvā jānīyād ayaṃ koṣo'yam asiḥ kośād asim āvṛha<tīti; evam eva sa tasmāt kāyāt māna>saṃ vyutthāpyānyaṃ kāyam abhinirmimīte rūpiṇaṃ manomayam avikalam ahīnendriyam* (SBhV II 246).

with *Kaṭhopaniṣad* 6.17 could be relevant and the later adjustment would be due to a process of trivialisation. From this point of view, it might seem a classic case of *lectio difficilior potior*.[15] In fact, it makes more sense to assume that it was the tradition preserved in Sanskrit that adapted a version that presented difficulties, rather than assuming that the Pāli tradition affected an already linear and symmetrical exposition. Whether or not this hypothesis is true, the *Visuddhimagga* nevertheless demonstrates that once the Pāli version of the text reached a stable form, there was particular care in passing it down without amending it.

4. The Odd Exposition of the *Niddesa*

The creation of a mind-made body appears within both *Mahā-* and *Culla-niddesa*s, in a passage which is almost identical in the two texts (Nidd I 340 and Nidd II 209). Now, I will take into account the *Mahāniddesa*'s version. The explanation provided by the *Niddesa*, in which a mind-made body appears, regards the first word of Sn 915. Since the verse starts with *pucchāmi taṃ Ādiccabandhuṃ* […], the *Mahāniddesa* begins its explanation by illustrating various kinds of questions (*pucchā*), introducing them three at a time. The body made of mind appears within the question regarding the query of the creation (*nimmita*):

> What is the question from a creation? The Blessed one creates a form which is mind-made, with all limbs and [bodily] parts, without defect of any faculties. This creation, having approached the Buddha who is the Blessed one, asks a question. The Blessed one answers to it. This is the question from a creation.[16]

What is unusual in this account is the behaviour of the mind-made body creation. We do not really know what the function of the mind-made body is and the method to attain it is not explained in the early canonical texts, only in later texts.[17] What is surprising is that the *Niddesa* seems to describe a mind-made body which becomes independent from its creator, and so it is able to ask questions to the creator. In this report, creation and creator appear as two independent entities which could have a sort of dialogue. The most widespread relationship between creation and creator, according to what is possible to extrapolate from the other Pāli texts, is exactly the opposite. The creation seems to be dependent on the creator, mirroring his actions. This is evident, for instance, within the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*

15 This principle of textual criticism has often been used by Gombrich (e.g. 1990, 8-9; [1996] 2006, 11-12; 2009, 217, endnote 27).

16 *katamā nimmitapucchā? yaṃ bhagavā rūpaṃ abhinimmināti manomayaṃ sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ ahīnindriyaṃ, so nimmito buddhaṃ bhagavantaṃ upasaṅkamitvā pañhaṃ pucchati, bhagavā tassa visajjeti; ayaṃ nimmitapucchā* (Nidd I 340). On the creation (*nimmita*) in the *Niddesa*, see Skilling 2020, 724-5.

17 This fate is shared with the psychophysical powers (*iddhividhā̆*) and the higher knowledges (*abhiññā*). Clough ([2010] 2011, 418; 2012, 78-9) notes that only the later manuals provide some information concerning the techniques that should be used to attain these abilities. In particular, the technique to create a mind-made body is reported in the **Vimuttimagga* (from T1648.32.0442c22 to T1648.32.0443a04) and Vism 406 (see §§ 6.4.4 and 6.4.5); see also Clough (2012, 83).

where an explanation concerning a passage which states the possibility to go as far as the Brahmā world wielding bodily mastery can be found (*yāva Brahmalokā pi kāyena vasaṃ vatteti*; Paṭis II 209). The last part of this explanation concerns the possibility of going to the Brahmā world with an invisible body, after having changed the body in accordance with the mind.[18] Therefore, it is stated that:

> He creates, in front of Brahmā, a physical form which is made of mind, with all limbs and [bodily] parts, without defect of any faculties. If the possessor of the psychic power walks up and down, then the creation as well walks up and down; if the possessor of the psychic power stands, then the creation as well stands; if the possessor of the psychic power sits, then the creation as well sits; if the possessor of the psychic power lies down on the bed, then the creation as well lies down on the bed; if the possessor of the psychic power emits smoke, then the creation as well emits smoke; if the possessor of the psychic power flames, then the creation as well flames; if the possessor of the psychic power expounds the Doctrine, then the creation as well expounds the Doctrine; if the possessor of the psychic power asks a question, then the creation as well asks a question; if the possessor of the psychic power answers to the asked question, then the creation as well answers to the asked question; if the possessor of the psychic power stands in front of Brahmā, talks with him, enters into a conversation with him, then the creation as well stands in front of Brahmā, talks with him, enters into a conversation with him; therefore, whatever the possessor of the psychic power does, verily, the creation does the same.[19]

This account reflects the mainstream attitude concerning the relationship between the creator and mind-made creation in the Pāli texts. The *Niddesa* shows a mind-made body's behaviour, which is unexpected if compared with this latter passage. In order to shed light on the odd account, it is useful to note *where* it appears and *what* it regards.

First of all, starting with the location of the account, it is possible to observe that it appears in a canonical text which is, however, a commentary. Although the *Niddesa* was included in the canon, and so at a certain point it did not receive any more changes, it is possible to suppose that, as a commentarial text, it suffered from a sloppier transmission and was more open to interpolations. The later Pāli commentarial texts, written from Buddhaghosa onwards, show that the commentarial literature was used to include stories which were not regarded as canonical within the Pāli

18 *cittavasena kāyaṃ pariṇāmetvā cittavasena kāyaṃ adhiṭṭhahitvā sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca okkamitvā adissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gacchati* (Paṭis II 209).

19 *so tassa Brahmuno purato rūpaṃ abhinimmināti manomayaṃ sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ ahinindriyaṃ. sace so iddhimā caṅkamati, nimmito pi tattha caṅkamati; sace so iddhimā tiṭṭhati, nimmito pi tattha tiṭṭhati; sace so iddhimā nisīdati, nimmito pi tattha nisīdati; sace so iddhimā seyyaṃ kappeti, nimmito pi tattha seyyaṃ kappeti; sace so iddhimā dhūpāyati, nimmito pi tattha dhūpāyati; sace so iddhimā pajjalati, nimmito pi tattha pajjalati; sace so iddhimā dhammaṃ bhāsati, nimmito pi tattha dhammaṃ bhāsati; sace so iddhimā pañhaṃ pucchati, nimmito pi tattha pañhaṃ pucchati; sace so iddhimā pañhaṃ puṭṭho vissajjeti, nimmito pi tattha pañhaṃ puṭṭho vissajjeti; sace so iddhimā tena Brahmunā saddhiṃ santiṭṭhati sallapati sākacchaṃ samāpajjati, nimmito pi ti tattha tena Brahmunā saddhiṃ santiṭṭhati sallapati sākacchaṃ samāpajjati; yaṅ ñad eva so iddhimā karoti, tan tad eva hi so nimmito karotī ti* (Paṭis II 209-10, quoted also in Vism 402).

canon (and so they were omitted), but were considered canonical in other traditions.[20] Therefore, the commentarial literature could have been a useful tool to include in the Pāli literature texts and ideas that, at first, were not considered orthodox.

Secondly, it is also important to consider that the *Niddesa*'s passage concerns a concept, namely 'the body made of mind',[21] which has not one single interpretation. The concept of *manomaya*, for instance, is also connected with the concept of 'intermediate existence' (*antarābhava*) in some Buddhist traditions.[22] However, as Lee (2014, 70-1) pointed out, the *antarābhava* does not appear within the Pāli canon as an individual topic. Since there could be other employments of the concept of 'mind-made body', it might be possible that the *Niddesa*'s account reports a trace of an ancient interpretation of this concept which was rejected by the mainstream Theravāda tradition (represented by the Pāli canon), and so it only found place within a commentarial text (in this case an ancient one, but still a commentary).

An account similar to the one reported in the *Niddesa* is found in another commentary, the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*.[23] In this account, the Buddha, after having performed the twin miracle (*yamaka-pāṭihāriya*; alternative form: *yamaka-pāṭihīra*), having seen that there is no one able to ask another question, creates a copy of himself (*nimmitabuddha*) and engages in a dialogue with this creation (*nimmita*):

> Since the Teacher, with the mind [focused] on the assembly, did not see anyone capable to ask another question, he created a Buddha's replica; the replica asked a question and the Teacher answered. In the time of walking up and down of the Blessed one, the replica performs another [action] such as standing etc. In the time of walking up and down of the replica, the Blessed one performs another [action] such as standing etc.[24]

In spite of the fact that the word *manomaya* does not appear in this account, it is undeniable that the account follows the same pattern of the *Niddesa*. Therefore, both passages involve the Buddha, who creates a new entity (*nimmita*) which is able to ask questions to the Buddha himself, and the

20 See Norman 1997, 140.

21 It does not appear within the *Niddesa* the term *kāya* (body) but in its place is the term *rūpa* (form). However, it is not unusual that the term *rūpa* might have the meaning of 'body' (as, for instance, within the compound *nāma-rūpa*). Moreover, the wording of the passage (*yaṃ bhagavā rūpaṃ abhinimmināti manomayaṃ sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ ahīnindriyaṃ*; Nidd I 340) follows the standard formulation which explains the creation of the body made of mind (*so imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbaṅga-paccaṅgiṃ ahīnindriyaṃ*; D I 77). Finally, if it were not a body, there would be no need to state that it is with all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabbaṅgapaccaṅga*), without defect of any faculty (*ahīnindriya*).

22 This connection appears, for example, within the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* written by Vasubandhu: "**mind-made, desiring to come in existence, Gandharva, intermediate existence and coming into being**; thus *antarābhava* is uttered with these expressions by the Blessed one" (***manomayaḥ saṃbhavaiṣī gandharvaś cāntarābhavaḥ | nirvṛttiś ca*** *antarābhavo hy ebhir abhidhānair ukto bhagavatā*; Abhidh-k-bh 153).

23 In this regard, see Fiordalis [2010] 2011, 401-2.

24 *Satthā pana tasmiṃ samāgame attano manaṃ gahetvā aññaṃ pañhaṃ pucchituṃ samatthaṃ adisvā nimmitabuddhaṃ māpesi, tena pucchitaṃ pañhaṃ Satthā vissajjesi. Bhagavato caṅkamanakāle nimmito ṭhānādīsu aññataraṃ kappesi, nimmitassa caṅkamanakāle Bhagavā ṭhānādīsu aññataraṃ kappesi* (Dhp-a III 216).

Buddha answers these questions. Another characteristic of this creation is that it behaves differently from the Buddha: when the Buddha walks, for instance, the creation remains seated. A similar passage in which a creation (*nimmita*) acts differently from the Buddha is present in Paṭis I 126 in a section concerning the exposition of the twin miracle (*yamaka-pāṭihīra*). Therefore, the creation of a Buddha's replica seems a very important event in the narration of the twin miracle, so much so that some authors argued that the name 'twin miracle' is not due to the double appearance of fire and water, but is due to the ability of the Buddha to create a double of himself.[25] This replica created by the Buddha acts differently from the one created by the monk, according to the interpretation found in Paṭis II 209-10 on the exposition of the *iddhividhă* present within the *Dīghanikāya*.

It would certainly be interesting to search more systematically in the future, within texts of other Buddhist traditions, if there is another mental creation that can acquire independence from its creator, acting as a separate entity.[26] In Theravāda tradition, it seems that only a creation made by a Buddha can be independent from its creator. In this regard, there is an interesting passage in the *Visuddhimagga* that clearly highlights the particular status of a Buddha's creation: "the creation of a Buddha does whatever the Blessed one does, and it does other [things] according to the Blessed one wishes".[27]

5. Translation of *Saddhammappakāsinī* II 656-63

[656] [The author of the commented text] says in the beginning: '**What is the power of resolution? (*katamā adhiṭṭhāna iddhi*?)**'. In this context, the meaning of the words indicated was explained only with reference to the analytic interpretation of the knowledge of the variety of psychophysical powers. '**Here the monk (*idha bhikkhu*)**', the monk with reference to this teaching. By all means, it [i.e. the text] illustrates the non-existence of the performer of the variety of psychophysical powers elsewhere [i.e. in another context]. The explanation (*niddesa*) of these two words is the meaning (*attha*) explained above. And, therefore, **[657]** he is endowed with factors consisting of grounds, bases, steps, and roots of the psychic power, and within the *Visuddhimagga* (374-ff.), both the state of having a mind completely tamed (*paridamitacittatā*) through fourteen or fifteen methods, and the state of having a mind which has become malleable and workable (*mudukammaññakatacittatā*) by means of passing through the predominant [elements] one by one starting with the impulse (*chanda*), etc., and through the state of mastering, starting with the adverting (*āvajjana*), etc. are explained. The monk who is endowed with factors beginning with grounds, etc., is also defined in this way: "one who is perfected in previous

25 This theory is sustained, for instance, by Foucher (1917, 156-7) and more recently by Strong ([2004] 2007, 177).

26 Guang 2009, 402, for instance, reports an account taken from a Chinese translation of the **Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* in which a Buddha has created another Buddha who lived his life independently. Furthermore, a good deal of references concerning 'creations' among various Buddhist traditions and sources have been provided by Skilling (2020).

27 *Buddhanimmito pana yaṃ yaṃ Bhagavā karoti, taṃ tam pi karoti, Bhagavato rucivasena aññam pi karoti* (Vism 405).

lives (*pubbayoga*)[28] and powerful, who has a virtue starting with the higher knowledges obtained only through the attainment of the state of *arahant* which is a fortune due to the previous lives".

"**He adverts to multiplicity (*balulaṃ āvajjati*)**", having attained the fourth *jhāna* that is the foundation of the higher knowledges and has the earth *kasiṇa* as object, emerged [from it], if he desires [to be] hundred, he adverts through making the preparatory work "Let me be hundred, let me be hundred!". "**Having adverted, he resolves with the knowledge (*āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti*)**" having done the preparatory work in this way, he resolves with the knowledge of the higher knowledges. Here, having done the preparatory work, the attainment of the *jhāna* which serves as foundation is not stated another time. Although it is not stated [in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*], [it is stated] in the commentary (*aṭṭhakathā*):

> Then, in this context as well '***āvajjatī***' is said precisely on account of the preparatory work (*parikamma*). '***āvajjitvā ñāṇena adhiṭṭhāti***' is said on account of the knowledge of the higher knowledges, that is why he adverts to the multiplicity. Then, he also attains [the *jhāna*] at the end of these *parikammacitta*s. Having emerged from the attainment (*samāpatti*), having adverted again to "Let me be many", after this, he resolves with only one higher knowledge (*abhiññāñāṇa*), which comes to be called '*adhiṭṭhāna*', on account of the fact that it brings [the process] to completion (*sanniṭṭhāpanavasena*), which arises between the three or four preceding consciousnesses (*pubbabhāgacitta*) that occurred. Here, the meaning should be understood in this way. (Vism 387)[29]

As when it is said "Having eaten, he lies down (*bhuñjitvā sayati*)",[30] the meaning is not that "Having not drunk the beverage, having not washed the hands, he lies down immediately after eating", but what is said is that "Although there are other closely following activities in the interval [between the two actions], he lies down after having eaten". Here also it should be understood in this way. For although the first is the attainment of the *jhāna* which serves as foundation, this was not stated in the text (*pāli*). Therefore, he becomes a hundred only together with the knowledge of the resolution (*adhiṭṭhānañāṇa*). This is also the method with reference to a thousand etc. (cf. Vism 387)

> If he does not succeed (*ijjhati*) in this way, having done again the preparatory work (*parikamma*), having attained also for the second time [the *jhāna* that is the foundation of the higher knowledges], emerged, he should resolve a second time. Therefore, it is stated within the *Saṃyuttaṭṭhakathā*: "He continues to attain [the *jhāna*] once, twice". In this context, the consciousness of the *jhāna* which serves as foundation (*pādakajjhānacitta*) has the sign (*nimitta*) as the object. But

28 See *pūrvayoga-saṃpanna* within the s.v. "pūrvayoga" in BHSD.

29 It is interesting that the *Saddhammappakāsinī* attributes to a commentary (*aṭṭhakathā*) a quotation from the *Visuddhimagga*. There are probably two possible explanations: 1) the term '*aṭṭhakathā*' is commonly used within the *Saddhammappakāsinī* to indicate the *Visuddhimagga*; 2) the quotation was taken from an ancient source used by both Buddhaghosa (to write the *Visuddhimagga*) and Mahānāma (to write the *Saddhammappakāsinī*).

30 Undetected quotation.

> the consciousnesses of the preparatory work (*parikammacitta*) have hundred as objects or thousand as objects in this way. And these are with reference to the appearance, not to the concept. Also the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*, likewise, has hundred as object or thousand as object in this way. This [the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*],[31] is like *appanācitta*, which immediately follows the *gotrabhū* which arises once only, as stated previously, and belongs to the fourth *jhāna* in the sphere of the pure form (*rūpāvacaracatutthajjhānika*). (Vism 387)

'**Just as the venerable Cuḷapanthaka having been one, he becomes many (*yath' āyasmā Cuḷapanthako eko 'pi hutvā bahudhā hoti*)**' was said in order to point out a physical witness of this state of multiplicity (cf. Vism 387). But, here, the present tense (*vattamānavacana*) is used because of the nature of doing it in the way of the Elder, and because it was the time in which he was alive. **[658]** Thus, it should be understood. Also on the occasion [of the phrasing:] '**he becomes one (*eko hoti*)**', this is indeed the method. Then, this is the plot (*vatthu*):

[Beginning of the story]

There were two Elders who were said to be brothers and received the name 'Panthaka' since they were born on the street (*pantha*). The eldest among them, Mahāpanthaka, became a monk and reached the state of *arahant* together with the [four] discriminations (*paṭisambhidā*).[32] After having become an *arahant*, he made Cūlapanthaka become a monk. He gave him this stanza:

> Just as the [red] redolent Lotus Kokanada
> would blossom in the morning not without its fragrance,
> see He who emits rays from all members (Aṅgīrasa)[33] while shines,
> like the sun blazing in the atmosphere.

He was not able to learn it in four months. Then, the Elder said: "You are incapable regarding this teaching, go away from here!". At this time, the Elder was the food assigner. Jīvaka Komārabhacca, having taken a perfumed ointment and a garland, went by himself to the Mango Grove (*ambavana*), revered the Teacher, listened to the Doctrine (*Dhamma*), paid homage to the One endowed with ten powers (*Dasabala*), approached the Elder and said: "O Sir, tomorrow, after having taken five hundred monks headed by the Buddha, take alms in our house!". Yet, the Elder answered: "With exception of Cūlapanthaka, I consent to the remaining ones". Having heard thus, Cūlapanthaka became even more dejected. The morning of the following day he went away from the monastery, remained at the gateway of the monastery despairing because of his affection to the teaching. The Blessed one, having seen his qualification for the spiritual attainments (*upanissaya*), approached him and asked: "Why are you despairing?". He told him what had happened. The Blessed one, touching his head with the hand which has a palm marked by the [characteristic mark of the] wheel, [said]: "O Panthaka,

31 Since this is a quotation from the *Visuddhimagga*, I followed its *ṭīkā*: see ***taṃ*** *adhiṭṭhānacittaṃ* (Vism-mhṭ II 21).

32 It is worth noting that the commentary is commenting on the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

33 Cf. *sabbe aṅgato rasmīnaṃ nikkhantattā aṅgīrasā* (Sv III 963).

do not despair! One who is not able to learn by heart my teaching is not called 'incapable'". He takes him by the arm, enters in the monastery, and makes him sit in front of the perfumed room (*gandhakuṭī*). When a clean bit of rag was created through the psychic power (*iddhi*), he said: "O Panthaka, sit down wiping this rag with the hand [saying]: 'Removing dirt, removing dirt'". He gave him a bit of rag and when the time [for the dinner] was announced, he went, surrounded by the group of monks, to the house of Jīvaka and sat down on the designed seat. Wiping in this way, his bit of rag became stained and gradually became dark. He got this perception: "This is a cleaned bit of rag, there is not fault (*dosa*) here, but there is fault leaning on the selfhood (*attabhāva*)". He made the knowledge descending on the five aggregates and cultivated insight (*vipassanā*). Then, the Blessed one emitted splendour, and the form became visible just as he was seated in front [of him, i.e. Cūlapanthaka], thereafter he uttered these enlightening stanzas:

> **[659]** Passion (*rāga*) is dirt (*rajas*), which is not called dust (*reṇu*),
> this 'dirt' is a synonym for 'passion'.
> The monks having abandoned this dirt,
> dwell in the teaching of the one who is without dirt
> Hatred (*dosa*)…
> Delusion (*moha*)…
> For he who has a superior intellect, who is zealous,
> for the sage, the one who trains in the paths of the sages,
> there are no sorrows, such as for him
> who is pacified and always mindful. (Vism 388, except the last four verses)

When the stanzas were concluded, the Elder attained the state of *arahant* together with the [four] discriminations (*paṭisambhidā*). He became one who has attained *manomaya* [*kāya*] and *jhāna*s (*manomaya-jhāna-lābhin*), he became able to become many after having been one, and one after having been many. Only through the *arahant* path he came to know the three baskets and the six higher knowledges (*abhiññā*). Although Jīvaka offered consecrated water to the One who is endowed with ten powers (*Dasabala*), the Teacher covered the bowl with his hand. "Why Lord?" Jīvaka asked. He answered: "O Jīvaka, there is a monk in the monastery". Then, the man ordered: "Go! Having taken the Noble, come back quickly!". The Elder Cūlapanthaka, just because of the arrival of this man, since he had the desire to make known his extraordinary state of the attainment to the brother, created a thousand monks, each one different to the other and for each one he made a difference through a different ascetic occupation and a different arrangement of robes, etc.[34] The man went, he saw many monks in the monastery and when he came back reported: "O Lord, there were many monks in the monastery, I did not see the Noble that should be summoned".

Jīvaka questioned the Teacher. [Jīvaka] having told him [i.e. to the monk] the name [of Cūlapanthaka] sent him forth again. He went [to the monastery] and asked [to the monks]: "O lords, which one is called Cūlapanthaka?" At once, a thousand mouths replied: "I am Cūlapanthaka, I am Cūlapanthaka". He went [back] again and said: "Since I heard everybody saying [to be] Cūlapanthaka, I do not know which one I should summon". As Jīvaka penetrated the truth, he

34 Here, I followed Be: *cīvaravicāraṇādisāmaṇakakammaṃ*.

knew in this way: "The monk is one who possesses psychic power". Then, the Blessed one said: "Go and after having taken the edge of the garment of the first one that you see, bring back him saying that the Teacher invites him". He went and did in this way. Instantly, all creations disappeared. He let him go, he performed the bodily needs such as washing the face, etc., he went as soon as possible and sat down on the designed seat (cf. Vism 389). At that moment, the Teacher took the offered water, made his meal, made the Elder Cūlapanthaka tell a discourse about the Doctrine (*Dhamma*) which blesses the meal. **[660]** The Elder told a discourse about the Doctrine, whose duration is either that of a long or an intermediate text (*Dīgha-Majjhimāgamappamāṇa*).

[End of the story]

Other monks, having created a body made of mind (*manomaya*) through the resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*), create three or four [mind-made bodies]. Having made only many identical ones, they create [creations that] perform only one type of action. But the Elder Cūlapanthaka, turning [the mind] (*āvajjana*) only once, created a thousand of monks. He did not make any two people identical and they did not perform only one type of action. For this reason, he has become the foremost among the monks who create a body made of mind (cf. A I 24).

> But many other creations, having not been defined, are identical to the possessor of psychic powers. Standing and sitting down, etc., speaking and in silence, etc. Whatever the possessor of psychic powers does, [the creations] do the same. But if he desires to create different forms (*nānāvaṇṇa*), some in the young age, some in the middle, some in the old age, some with long hairs, some half shaved, some shaved, some with mixed hairs (perhaps half grey; *missakakesa*), some with a half red robe, some with a yellow robe, or if he is one who wants [them] to perform manifold [actions] such as preaching the words [of the scriptures], expounding the Doctrine, intoning, asking questions, answering questions, boiling the dye, sewing and washing the robe, then having emerged from the *jhāna* that is the foundation, having done the preparatory work in this way "Let all these monks be in the young age", having attained again [the *jhāna*], emerged from it, he should resolve. The strongly desired kinds [of creations and actions] occur only together with the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*.
>
> This is the method concerning '**having been many, he becomes one (*bahudhā 'pi hutvā eko hoti*)**'. But this is the difference: '**naturally many (*pakatiyā bahuko*)**' [means that] there are many [replicas] naturally created within the time of the creation. And having created the condition of abundance for this monk he thought: "Having been again one, I will walk up and down, I will study, I will ask a question", or meanwhile, because of the moderation of desires, [he might think]: "This monastery has few monks, if some [people] would arrive [would ask] whence all these many identical monks are from. They will think of me: 'Certainly, this is the luminous power of the Elder!'". He attained the *jhāna* that is the foundation wishing "Let me be one" and emerged from it, having done again the preparatory work "Let me be one", he attained and emerged [from the *jhāna*] and should resolve "Let me be one". He becomes one only together with the *adhiṭṭhānacitta*. But when one does not do it in this way, he becomes one by himself because the time [of the creations] has been limited [in advance]. (Vism 389-90)

Selecting [first] the word '**manifested (*āvibhāvaṃ*)**', the meaning is defined as the state of evidence of the word '*āvibhāvaṃ*' through the phrase '*kenaci anāvaṭa*' because of being defined 'it is not veiled by something (*kenaci anāvaṭaṃ hoti*)'. The remaining part of the reading conveys '*karoti*' through the word '*hoti*'. Being evident is, indeed, when the manifestation is made (*āvībhāve kate*). '**It is not veiled by something (*kenaci anāvaṭaṃ*)**', it is not veiled by something such as a wall, etc., it is without obstacles. '**Not covered (*appaṭicchannaṃ*)**', it is not covered on the top. This is **exposed (*vivataṃ*)** because of the state of not being veiled (*anāvaṭattā*),[35] is **evident (*pākaṭaṃ*)** because of the state of not being covered (*appaṭicchannaṃ*).

[661] '**Concealed (*tirobhāvaṃ*)**', he becomes encased (*antarika*). It is **hidden (*pihitaṃ*)** since it is veiled by an obstacle. It is **enclosed (*paṭikujjitaṃ*)** since it is **covered (*paṭicchannaṃ*)** by a covering (*paṭicchādana*).

'**Through the attainment of the space *kasiṇa* (*ākāsakasiṇasamāpattiyā*)**' through the attainment of the fourth *jhāna*, which is produced with the restriction of the space *kasiṇa*. **An attainer (*lābhin*)** is an attainer since he has the attainment (*lābho assa atthi*). '**Where there is not enclosure (*aparikkhitte*)**', in a region without enclosure everywhere for anyone. Here, given that only the space *kasiṇa* was mentioned, the *jhāna* is developed only in this way; the space *kasiṇa* is the foundation, not another [*kasiṇa*]. This should be regarded in this way. Later (*upari*), only the *jhāna* that has an object such as the water *kasiṇa*, etc. should be regarded; not another one. He adverts to the earth, water… space… adverts to the natural form of the earth, water, and space. '**In the atmosphere (*antaḷikkhe*)**' illustrates the state of the empty space that is distant (*dūrākāsabhāva*), from the earth to the sky (*ākāsa*). Having not established a limitation to a [particular] *kasiṇa* regarding the stroking of the moon and sun, and because it is stated without a peculiar distinction that '**the possessor of psychic powers who has attained mastery over the mind (*iddhimā cetovasippatto*)**', there is not, here, limitation on the attainment of [a meditative absorption caused by a specific] *kasiṇa*. This should be known in this way.

'**Sitting or lying down (*nisinnako vā nipannako vā*)**', with these [terms] 'seated, laid down', indeed, two postures (*iriyāpatha*) are expressed, and also the others. '**Let it be at hand (*hatthapāse hotu*)**', let it be close to the hand (*hatthasamīpe hotu*) ('Let it be on the hand side' is another reading). This is said on account of the one who desires to perform in this way. He, having gone in that place, raises the hand, touches. '**He touches (*āmasati*)**' [means] he slightly (*īsakaṃ*) touches (*phusati*). '**He touches (*parāmasati*)**' [means] he strongly (*bāḷhaṃ*) touches (*phusati*). '**He strokes (*parimajjati*)**' [means] he touches (*phusati*) everywhere (*samantato*). '**Material object (*rūpagata*)**' is only the object that stays within hand's reach.

'**Although far, he resolves on closeness (*dūre pi santike adhiṭṭhāti*)**', having emerged from the *jhāna* that is the foundation, he adverts to the world of the gods (*devaloka*) or to the world of Brahmā (*brahmaloka*) [and he resolves:] "**Let it be close! (*santike hotu*)**". Having adverted, made the preparatory work, attained again [the *jhāna*], emerged, he resolves with the

35 I followed Be *tadeva anāvaṭattā* ***vivaṭaṃ***, whereas Ee has *tad eva āvaṭattā* ***vivaṭaṃ***.

knowledge "Let it be close!" and **it becomes close (*santike hoti*)**. This is also the method for the other passages.

But, having explained the transformation of the distance into vicinity with regard to the one who desires to go to the world of Brahmā (*brahmaloka*), although it is not helpful for the journey to the world of Brahmā, he said "**although close (*santike pi*)**", showing the extraordinary state of succeeding (*ijjhamāna*) through this psychic power. In this context, there is not only the performance [of becoming] many or [becoming] few, but also whatever he desires – such as "Let what is not sweet become sweet"[36] – all these [desires] are successful for the possessor of psychic powers.

Another interpretation: '**Although far, he resolves on closeness (*dūre pi santike adhiṭṭhāti*)**', when there is the far world of Brahmā, he resolves on closeness of the human world. **"Although close, he resolves on farness (*santike 'pi dūre adhiṭṭhāti*)"**, when there is the close human world, he resolves on the farness of the world of Brahmā.

'**Although many he resolves on the paucity (*bahukam 'pi thokaṃ adhiṭṭhāti*)**', if many brāhmaṇas come together, due to the great egotism, they lose [their good] visual and hearing conducts. Having withdrawn in the same place visual and hearing conducts, although many, he resolves on the paucity. '**Although few he resolves on the abundance (*thokam 'pi bahukan ti adhiṭṭhāti*)**', if **[662]** he desires to go with a great retinue, being few due to the loneliness, having resolved on many themselves, he goes having a great retinue. Here, the meaning should be understood in this way. When it is so fourfold, there is benefit concerning the journey to the world of Brahmā.

'**He sees this physical form of Brahmā with the divine eye (*dibbena cakkhunā tassa Brahmuno rūpaṃ passati*)**'; remaining here, after having extended the light, he who desires to see the physical form of Brahmā, sees the physical form of Brahmā with the divine eye. Therefore, remaining precisely here, **he hears the sound of Brahmā** who is speaking **with the divine element of ear, he knows the mind of Brahmā with the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others] (*dibbāya sotadhātuyā brahmuno* bhāsamānassa *saddaṃ suṇāti, cetopariyañāṇena tassa brahmuno cittaṃ pajānāti*)**. '**Visible (*dissamānena*)**' [means that it] is seen by the eye. '**He changes the mind according to the body (*kāyavasena cittaṃ pariṇāmeti*)**'; he changes the mind according to the physical body. With the *pādakajjhānacitta* 'he changes the mind according to the physical body' he puts it on the body. [When] light perception belongs to the body, the journey is slow; the journey through a [physical] body is, indeed, slow. '**He fixes (*adhiṭṭhāti*)**' this is a synonym of it [i.e. *pariṇāmeti*], the meaning is 'he puts together (*sanniṭṭhāpeti*)'. '**Having reached perceptions of pleasure and lightness (*sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca okkamitvā*)**', having reached, entered into, experienced, attained perceptions of pleasure and lightness concomitant with the *iddhicitta* which has the support of the *jhāna* that is the foundation (*pādakajjhānārammaṇa*). The perception of happiness (*sukhasaññā*) is called the perception associated with the equanimity (*upekkhāsampayuttasaññā*). Therefore, equanimity is defined as the peaceful (*santa*) happiness. The perception (*saññā*) should also be understood as light (*lahu*) because it is freed from oppositions such as

36 I followed Be: *amadhuraṃ madhuran ti ādīsu pi*.

the initial application of the thought (*vitakka*), etc., and the five obstacles (*nīvaraṇa*). The body of one who reaches [these perceptions] becomes light just as a cotton wool. He is like a cotton wool thrown by the wind and, lightly, **he goes to the world of Brahmā with a visible body (*dissamānena kāyena Brahmalokaṃ gacchati*)**. And, when he is going, if he desires, after having created a road into the space through the power of the earth *kasiṇa*, he goes on foot. If he desires, having created a lotus in the space for each foot through the power of the earth *kasiṇa*, he goes on foot lying the foot on the various lotuses. If he desires, having resolved upon the wind through the power of the wind *kasiṇa*, he goes through the wind just as a cotton wool. Moreover, here, only the desire to go is the limit (*pamāṇa*). Therefore, when there is the desire to go in this way, one who has made the mental resolution goes visible as thrown by the force of resolution just as an arrow thrown by the force of a bow.

'**He changes the body according to the mind (*cittavasena kāyaṃ pariṇāmeti*)**', having taken the physical body, he put it on the *pādakajjhānacitta*, it follows the mind and the journey is quick; indeed, the mind's movement is quick. '**Having reached perceptions of pleasure and lightness (*sukhasaññañ ca lahusaññañ ca okkamitvā*)**' [he reached perceptions of] pleasure and lightness concomitant with the *iddhicitta* which has the support of the physical body (*rūpakāyārammaṇa*). The remaining part should be understood in the way already explained. But there is only the mental journey (*cittagamana*). When it was asked: "When he is going in this way, with an invisible body (*adissamānena kāyena*), does he go at the arising moment of his *adhiṭṭhānacitta*? Or [does he go] in the moment of stability or in the moment of dissolution?" An Elder answered: "He goes in all three moments". [It has been asked:] "But does he go by himself or he send a creation?" **[663]** He does as he likes. But here, only the journey made by himself is handed down.

'**Mind-made (*manomayaṃ*)**', it is mind-made because it is created by the mind in resolution (*adhiṭṭhānamana*). '**Has all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabbaṅgapaccaṅgaṃ*)**', it is endowed with all limbs and [bodily] parts (*sabba-aṅgapaccaṅgavant*). '**Without defect of any faculty (*ahīnindriyaṃ*)**' this is said due to the configuration of the eyes, ears, etc., but there is not sensitivity concerning the created form. '**If the possessor of psychic powers walks up and down, the creation as well walks up and down (*sace so iddhimā caṅkamati, nimmito 'pi tattha caṅkamati*)**' is said with reference to the creation of the disciple(s). But the creation of the Buddha does whatever the Blessed one does, and also does something else according to the thought of the Blessed one.

'**He emits smoke… he flames (*dhumāyati… pajjalati*)**' through the power of the fire *kasiṇa*. The three [situations] starting from '**he preaches the Doctrine (*dhammaṃ bhāsati*)**' [occurred when there was something] not explained in detail. '**He stands (*santiṭṭhati*)**'; having met up, he stands (*saṅgamma tiṭṭhati*). '**He talks (*sallapati*)**'; having met up, he talks (*saṅgamma lapati*). '**He enters into a conversation (*sākacchaṃ samāpajjati*)**'; he makes a conversation on account of giving answers and rejoinders each other. And in this case, only the possessor of psychic powers that stays here sees the physical form with the divine eye, hears the sound with the divine element of ear, knows the mind with the knowledge by comprehension of the minds [of others], and also, he who stays here, remains together with that Brahmā, talks to him, enters into a conversation

with him, he also has the resolution such as "Although far, he resolves on closeness, etc.", and although he goes to the world of Brahmā with a visible or an invisible body; so far he has not yet exercised the bodily power. When he undergoes the explained variety [of powers] through the method "He creates, in front of Brahmā, a physical form etc.", at this point he exercises the bodily power. The remaining part has been said in order to show the part before the exercising of the bodily power. **This (*ayaṃ*)** much is the **success of resolution (*adhiṭṭhānā iddhi*)**.

Abbreviations

A	*Aṅguttaranikāya*
Abhidh-k-bh	*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*
Abhidh-s	*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*
Abhidh-s-mhṭ	*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha-mahāṭīkā* (*Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*)
Ap	*Apadāna*
Ap-a	*Visuddhajanavilāsinī* (*Apadāna-aṭṭhakathā*)
As	*Atthasālinī*
AU	*Aitareyopaniṣad*
AV	*Atharvaveda*
Be	Burmese edition
BHSD	Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary (see Edgerton [1953] 1993)
BU	*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*
BuBh	*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad-bhāṣya*
CPD	Critical Pāli Dictionary (see Trenckner et al. 1924-2011)
CU	*Chāndogyopaniṣad*
D	*Dīghanikāya*
DDB	Digital Dictionary of Buddhism
Dhp	*Dhammapada*
Dhp-a	*Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*
Dhs	*Dhammasaṅgaṇi*
Dīp	*Dīpavaṃsa*
DOP	Dictionary of Pāli (see Cone 2001; 2010)
Dukap	*Dukapaṭṭhāna*
Ee	European edition (= Pali text society's edition)
It	*Itivuttaka*
It-a	*Paramatthadīpanī* (*Itivuttaka-aṭṭhakathā*)
Ja	*Jātaka*
JB	*Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa*
KauU	*Kauṣītakyupaniṣad*
KeU	*Kenopaniṣad*

Kv	*Kathāvatthu*
M	*Majjhimanikāya*
Mil	*Milindapañha*
Mp	*Manorathapūraṇī* (*Aṅguttaranikāya-aṭṭhakathā*)
Mvu	*Mahāvastu*
Nett	*Nettipakaraṇa*
Nidd I	*Mahāniddesa*
Nidd II	*Cullaniddesa*
Nidd-a II	*Saddhammapajjotikā* (*Cullaniddesa-aṭṭhakathā*)
Paṭis	*Paṭisambhidāmagga*
Paṭis-a	*Saddhammappakāsinī* (*Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā*)
PED	Pali-English Dictionary (see Rhys Davids and Stede [1921-25] 2015)
Pj I	*Paramatthajotikā* I (*Khuddakapāṭha-aṭṭhakathā*)
Pj II	*Paramatthajotikā* II (*Suttanipāta-aṭṭhakathā*)
Ps	*Papañcasūdanī* (*Majjhimanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*)
PU	*Praśnopaniṣad*
ṚV	*Ṛgveda*
S	*Saṃyuttanikāya*
ŚB	*Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*
SBhV	*Saṅghabhedavastu*
SED	Sanskrit-English Dictionary (see Monier-Williams 1899)
Sn	*Suttanipāta*
Sp	*Samantapāsādikā* (*Vinaya-aṭṭhakathā*)
Spk	*Sāratthappakāsinī* (*Saṃyuttanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*)
Sv	*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (*Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā*)
Sv-pṭ	*Purāṇaṭīkā* on *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (*Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā-ṭīkā*)
SW	Sanskrit-Wörterbuch (see Böhtlingk and Roth [1852-55] 1990)
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (大正新修大藏經)
TĀ	*Taittirīyāraṇyaka*
Th	*Theragāthā*
Th-a	*Paramatthadīpanī* (*Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā*)
Tikap	*Tikapaṭṭhāna*
TU	*Taittirīyopaniṣad*
Ud-a	*Paramatthadīpanī* (*Udāna-aṭṭhakathā*)
Vibh	*Vibhaṅga*
Vibh-a	*Sammohavinodanī* (*Vibhaṅga-aṭṭhakathā*)
Vin	*Vinaya*
VS	*Vājasaneyisaṃhitā*
Vism	*Visuddhimagga*
Vism Ae	*Visuddhimagga* American edition
Vism-mhṭ	*Visuddhimagga-mahāṭīkā* (Be)

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Index

The following index lists relevant technical terms and names in Pāli (P.) and Sanskrit (Skt.), serving also as a glossary. Verbs are listed under the third person singular of the present indicative and translated in the infinitive form: e.g. adhiṭṭhāti 'to resolve'; nouns are given in their stem form.

A

abhijñā
Skt.; = P. abhiññā;
'higher knowledge'
27n, 123n, 165

abhiññā
P.; = Skt. abhijñā;
'higher knowledge'
3, 4n, 5, 8, 8n, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 25, 26, 27, 27n, 28, 31, 42, 44, 56, 89, 102, 103, 122, 123n, 125, 126, 128, 128n, 133, 138, 140n, 154, 155n, 161, 165, 166, 166n, 167, 167n, 169, 172, 173, 174, 185, 190, 198, 198n, 208, 209, 213, 213n, 214n, 216, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 231n, 233n, 235, 237, 239n, 242, 243, 246, 247, 248, 264n

abhiññāñāṇa
P.; 'knowledge belonging to the higher knowledges'
138, 138n, 169n, 174, 174n, 268

abhiññāpādakajjhāna
P.; 'meditative absorption which is the foundation of the higher knowledges'
169, 169n, 173

ādesanāpāṭihāriya
P.; 'miracle of telepathy'
27n, 184, 236

adhiṣṭhāna
Skt.; = P. adhiṭṭhāna; 'resolution'
102n, 123n

adhiṭṭhāna
P.; = Skt. adhiṣṭhāna; 'resolution'
96, 97, 102, 102n, 114, 123n, 132, 133, 133n, 138, 138n, 140n, 145, 145n, 146n, 149n, 151n, 152n, 155n, 157n, 158, 161, 251, 267, 268, 271, 275

adhiṭṭhānacitta
P.; 'resolution-consciousness'
138, 138n, 141, 142, 142n, 143, 146n, 162, 269, 269n, 271, 274

adhiṭṭhānamana
P.; 'mind in resolution' 274

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adhiṭṭhānañāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of resolution' 268
adhiṭṭhāniddhi
P.; 'power of resolution' 114
adhiṭṭhāti
P.; 'to resolve'
100, 101, 102, 102n, 104n, 113, 136, 136n, 137, 138, 138n, 139, 140, 141, 146n, 147n, 148, 148n, 149, 149n, 150, 151n, 152, 152n, 154n, 155n, 157n, 158n, 163n, 202, 202n, 204n, 216, 268, 272, 273
ahi
P.; 'snake'
63n, 70, 71, 71n, 103n, 105, 105n, 106, 107, 107n, 111, 113, 116, 118, 262
ahīnindriya
P.; 'without defect of any faculty'
63n, 79, 81, 83, 97n, 101, 101n, 102, 102n, 264n, 266n, 274
ākāsakasiṇasamāpatti
P.; 'attainment [of a meditative absorption] through the space kasiṇa'
147n, 272
ākāsānañcāyatana
P.; 'sphere of infinite space'
81, 83, 220
akiñcaññāyatana
P.; 'sphere of nothingness'
81, 83, 220, 262n
āloka
P.; 'light/brightness'
146, 146n, 174, 177n, 178n, 183n, 203, 203n, 213, 217, 238
ālokasaññā
P.; 'perception of light') 202n, 204, 204n, 216, 217
anāgata
P.; 'future'
232, 232n, 258
anāgataṃsañāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of the future' 205
anāgataññāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of the future' 232
ānanda
P. and Skt.; 'bliss'
75, 95, 130, 211
ānandamaya
P. and Skt.; 'made of bliss' 76, 76n, 78, 118n, 131n,
anattan
P.; = Skt. anātman; 'no-self'
34, 35n, 36, 84
aṅga
P. and Skt.; 'limb' 80
anna
P. and Skt.; 'food'
71, 75, 95, 130
annamaya
P. and Skt.; 'made of food'
75n, 76, 78, 131n
antalikkha
P.; = Skt. antarikṣa; 'atmosphere'
85, 85n, 87, 88, 97n, 250, 272
antalikkhacara
P.; 'moving through the atmosphere'
85, 88, 97n
antarābhava
P.; 'intermediate existence'
266, 266n
antarikṣa
Skt.; = P. antalikkha; 'atmosphere'
86, 87, 88
anuloma
P.; 'conformity/narrative order from past to present'
46, 143, 168, 189, 192, 193, 196
anulomakkama
P.; 'systematic order'
192, 193, 196
anupādinnaka
P.; 'inanimate'
155, 155n, 156
anussarati
P.; 'to remember'
185, 187n, 188, 188n, 189n, 197, 197n, 198n, 199n, 236n
anussati
P.; 'remembrance/recollection'
185, 186, 186n
āpokasiṇasamāpatti
P. 'attainment [of the meditative absorption] through the water kasiṇa' 149n
appanā
P.; '[meditative] absorption'
46, 46n, 143, 143n, 213, 213n, 217
appanācitta
P.; 'absorption mind'
142, 143, 168, 169, 169n, 173, 183, 183n, 191, 191n, 196, 207, 269

ārammaṇa
P.; 'object'
45n, 46n, 142n, 143n, 144n, 168n, 169, 169n, 171n, 183n, 191n, 196, 203n, 207, 217, 225n

arūpa
P.; 'non-form/formless'
82, 83, 193, 219

arūpadhātu
P.; 'formless world'
73n, 81, 83, 84, 87, 88, 96n, 220

arūpāvacara
P.; 'formless-sphere'
81, 83, 84, 177, 182

arūpin
P.; 'one who is formless'
64n, 71, 78, 82n, 84, 96n

asaññabhava
P.; 'unconscious state' 198, 199

āsava
P.; 'noxious influx'
14, 31, 31n, 64, 95, 128n, 208, 231n, 232n, 233n, 239n, 255n, 256, 257

āsavakkhayañāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of extinction of the noxious influxes'
4n, 8, 14, 25, 27, 27n, 28, 77, 219n, 225n, 230, 231, 233, 237, 243, 258

atītaṃsañāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of the past'
190, 195

ātman
Skt.; = P. attan; 'self/embodiment/vital body/trunk of the body'
34, 66, 74, 75, 76, 76n, 77, 78, 79, 79n, 80, 80n, 84, 87, 111, 117, 118, 121, 129, 131, 131n, 222, 223n, 225, 226, 226n

attan
P.; = Skt. ātman; 'self/embodiment/vital body/trunk of the body'
62n, 71, 78, 80, 81, 81n, 82, 82n, 83, 84, 87, 118

aṭṭhakathā
P.; 'exposition of meaning(s)/commentary'
16, 50, 50n, 53n, 93, 94, 110n, 118, 118n, 131n, 140, 140n, 160n, 177, 219, 248, 266, 268, 268n

āvajjana
P.; 'adverting/turning the mind'
44, 45, 45n, 46, 46n, 47, 102, 138n, 141, 142, 142n, 145, 148n, 163, 183n, 196, 251, 267, 271

āvajjati
P.; 'to advert/to turn the mind'
101, 101n, 102, 102n, 104n, 113, 136, 136n, 137, 138, 138n, 139, 141, 146n, 147, 147n, 148, 148n, 149, 149n, 150, 151, 151n, 152n, 155n, 158n, 163, 164, 173, 177n, 183n, 268

āvibhāva
P.; 'becoming manifested'
122, 123n, 132, 135, 146, 146n, 148, 149, 272

avicāra
P.; 'without sustained thought'
184, 184n, 236

avitakka
P.; 'without applied thought'
184, 184n, 236

B

bhārūpa
Skt.; 'luminous appearence'
76n, 84, 131, 131n

bhavaṅga
P.; 'life-continuum'
44, 45, 45n, 46, 46n, 92, 92n, 143, 143n, 173n

Brahmā
P.; proper name of a god
38, 62n, 68, 83, 85, 97, 98, 99, 102, 103, 123, 124, 125, 126, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 164n, 214, 215, 231, 234, 236n, 241n, 243, 265, 272, 273

Brahmaloka/brahmaloka
P. and Skt.; 'world of Brahmā/world of brahman'
68, 90, 98, 98n, 99, 100, 126n, 157n, 158n, 219, 220, 221n, 231n, 265, 265n, 272, 273, 274

brahman
Skt.; 'ultimate reality'
34, 66, 74, 221

Buddhanimmita
P.; 'creation of a Buddha'
267n

C

cakkhuviññāṇa
P.; 'eye-consciousness'
45, 45n, 46

cātumahābhūtika
P.; 'composed of the four great elements'
63n, 65, 68, 69, 78n, 81, 83, 99, 117, 126, 126n, 161, 231, 231n

catutthajjhāna
P.; 'fourth meditative absorption'
24, 63, 68n, 77, 95, 144n, 183n, 190n, 229, 233, 233n

catutthajjhānika
P.; 'belonging to the fourth meditative absorption'
169n, 191n, 203n, 207

cetasika
P.; 'mental factors'
184, 196

cetopariyañāṇa
P.; 'knowledge by comprehension of the minds of others'
4, 9, 17, 25, 27, 64, 77, 95, 128, 157n, 174, 176, 176n, 180n, 182, 183n, 184, 192n, 218, 219, 224, 225, 225n, 226, 232, 233n, 235, 252, 260, 273

cetovasippatta
P.; 'one who has attained mastery over the mind'
100, 136n, 147n, 149n, 151n, 152n, 155n, 157n, 272

cetovimutti
P.; 'liberation of the mind' 239

chaḷabhiññā
P.; 'six higher knowledges'
31, 128

citta
P.; 'mind/consciousness'
42, 44, 63, 65, 67n, 68n, 83, 127, 130, 131n, 140, 161, 172, 180, 183 184, 191, 224n, 225n

cittavīthi
P.; 'consciousness process'
15, 16, 17, 39, 42, 58, 135, 162, 218, 237n, 238, 239, 242, 244, 249, 253

Cuḷapanthaka/Cūlapanthaka/ Cūḷapanthaka
P.; proper name of a monk
13, 15, 17, 90, 100n, 122, 126, 135, 136, 140, 144, 145, 161, 248, 251, 269, 270, 271

cutikkhaṇa
P.; 'moment of death'
191, 191n, 196

cutipaṭisandhi
P.; 'death-rebirth/death-relinking'
188, 188n, 189, 189n, 190, 196, 197, 198, 199, 199n, 209n, 210n, 226, 252

cutūpapātañāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings]'
4, 8, 17, 25, 27, 27n, 28, 31, 31n, 64, 77, 95, 194, 200, 201, 202, 208, 209, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 218n, 219, 220, 221, 225n, 227, 232, 235, 237, 252, 260

D

daiva
Skt.; = P. dibba; 'divine'
17, 221, 221n, 227

dassana
P.; 'seeing/vision'
44, 45, 46, 148n, 203n, 216, 224n, 233n

dhamma
P.; = Skt. dharma; 'phenomenon'
42, 43n, 44, 208, 239n, 241n, 247n

Dhamma
P.; 'Doctrine'
186, 237n, 247n, 269, 271

dharma
Skt.; = P. dhamma; 'phenomenon' 42, 44

dhātu
P.; 'element' 46n

dibba
P.; = Skt. divya/daiva; 'divine'
17, 81n, 82, 166, 202, 206, 207, 208n, 217, 219, 221, 224, 225, 227, 232n, 233n, 242, 259, 260
dibbacakkhu
P.; 'divine eye'
31, 31n, 154, 154n, 166, 176, 180, 183n, 200, 201, 203, 203n, 204n, 207, 208, 208n, 209, 213, 214, 214n, 216, 216n, 217, 218, 218n, 219, 220, 221, 226, 227, 231, 233, 234, 235, 237, 238, 239, 243, 244, 248
dibbacakkhukicca
P.; 'function of the divine eye'
202, 202n
dibbacakkhuñāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of the divine eye'
183n, 201n, 203, 203n, 207, 208, 209, 209n, 218n, 232, 258
dibbasota
P.; 'divine ear'
171n, 227, 231, 232, 234, 235, 238, 238n, 239
dibbasotadhātu
P.; 'element of the divine ear'
4, 9, 17, 25, 27, 28, 47, 64, 77, 95, 128, 166, 166n, 167, 169, 169n, 173, 206, 207, 208, 220, 221, 224, 225n, 226
dibbasotadhātuñāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of the divine element of ear' 171n, 225n
dibbasotañāṇa
P.; 'knowledge of the divine ear'
170, 183n, 258
diṭṭhivisuddhi
P.; 'purification of view' 202n
divāsaññā
P.; 'perception of the day'
202n, 204, 204n, 216, 217
divya
Skt.; = P. dibba; 'divine'
17, 221, 227
domanassa
P.; 'grief'
176n, 178, 183, 183n
domanassacitta
P.; 'mind with grief'
177n
domanassindriyasamuṭṭhāna/ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhita
P.; 'originated by the disposition to feel grief'
176n, 177n, 178n, 180n
dutiyajjhāna
P.; 'second meditative absorption'
24, 77

G

gotrabhu
P.; 'change of lineage'
46, 46n, 142, 142n, 143, 143n, 168, 169n, 207, 269

H

hadaya
P.; = Skt. hṛdaya; 'heart'
181, 183n
hadayamaṃsa
P.; 'fleshly heart'
181, 181n, 183n
hadayarūpa
P.; 'physical heart'
174, 177n, 178, 178n
hadayavatthu
P.; 'heart-base/physical heart'
178, 182n, 213, 214n, 218, 239n
hṛdaya
Skt.; = P. hadaya; 'heart'
76n, 130n, 181, 223

I

iddhi
P.; = Skt. ṛddhi; 'psychic power'
6, 17, 26n, 28, 28n, 57n, 68, 76n, 96, 97, 97n, 98, 98n, 99, 100, 101, 101n, 103n, 104n, 114, 115, 121, 122, 122n, 123, 123n, 124n, 125n, 126, 126n, 127, 127n, 128, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 137n, 138n, 140, 140n, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 154, 156, 157n, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 166, 211, 223n, 224, 224n, 231, 231n, 232, 233n, 239, 241, 242n, 243, 244, 247, 251, 252, 253, 267, 270

iddhicitta
P.; 'psychic power consciousness'
182, 273, 274

Iddhikathā
P.; 'Treatise on Psychic Powers'
96, 137

iddhimant
P.; 'possessor of psychic power'
100, 102n, 104n, 113, 114, 136n, 146n, 147n, 149n, 151n, 152n, 155n, 157n, 177n, 183n, 236n, 265n, 272, 274

iddhimaya
P.; 'made by the psychic power'
102, 102n

iddhipāda
P.; 'bases of psychic powers'
101, 133, 133n, 137n, 140, 141, 158, 158, 159, 168, 170, 172, 173, 176, 177, 177n, 180, 187, 192, 194, 194n, 195, 201, 204, 204n, 217, 218, 242n

Iddhipādasaṃyutta
P.; 'The Connected [Discourses] on the Bases of Psychic Powers'
97, 133, 152, 153, 160, 230n, 234

iddhipāṭihāriya
P.; 'display of miraculous powers'
57n, 154n, 241

iddhividhă
P.; 'many kinds of psychophysical power'
3, 3n, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 42, 44, 56, 64, 76, 77, 89, 95, 97, 103, 121, 122, 124, 125, 127, 132, 133, 134, 135, 159, 166, 166n, 173, 178, 230, 231, 232, 232n, 233, 234, 235, 241, 242, 244, 225, 226, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 244, 258, 259, 264, 267

Iddhividhāniddesa
P.; 'Explanation of the Variety of Psychophysical Power'
103, 160, 173

ijjhati
P.; 'to succeed'
163, 163n, 177n, 235n, 268, 273

indriya
P.; 'faculty/disposition'
101, 176, 176n

isīkā
P.; = Skt. iṣīkā; 'stalk'
16, 63n, 70, 70n, 73, 74, 104, 105n, 111, 117, 262

iṣīkā
Skt.; = P. isīkā; 'stalk'
70, 70n, 73, 111

J

javana
P.; 'impulsion'
28n, 44, 45, 45n, 46, 143, 143n, 168, 169, 169n, 173, 174, 182, 183, 183n, 191, 191n, 196, 203, 203n, 207

jhāna
P.; 'meditative absorption'
8, 8n, 17, 46, 46n, 47, 64n, 67n, 82, 83, 101, 127, 137, 137n, 138, 138n, 139n, 140, 140n, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 146n, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 155, 157, 158, 162, 163, 167, 169, 170, 170n, 172, 173, 177, 183, 184, 190, 191, 195, 196, 203, 213, 216, 217, 225, 226, 229, 231, 231n, 232, 233, 234, 237, 238, 239, 240, 240n, 241n, 242, 243, 244, 251, 253, 256, 268, 270, 271, 272

K

kāmadhātu
P.; 'world of desire'
73n, 81, 81n, 83, 84, 87, 88, 96n, 142n, 220, 253

kāmarūpin
Skt.; 'one who has the desired form' 76n, 131, 131n

kāmāvacara
P.; 'sense-sphere'
46n, 81, 83, 84, 142, 143, 143n, 162, 174, 177, 182, 183, 183n, 191, 191n, 195, 196, 203, 203n, 207, 219, 220, 253

kamma
P.; = Skt. karma/karman; 'action'
25, 155n, 166, 187, 194, 199, 199n, 200, 200n, 201n, 203, 204, 204n, 209, 214, 215, 216, 217, 226, 227, 237

kammaniya/kammañña
P.; 'workable'
68n, 172, 231n, 235, 267

kammārammaṇa
P.; 'action as object' 203n, 217

karaṇḍa/karaṇḍaka
P.; 'basket/snake's slough (exceptionally)'
10, 16, 62, 63, 63n, 70, 71, 103, 103n, 104, 104n, 105, 105n, 106, 106n, 107, 109, 110, 111, 113, 116, 117, 118, 120, 248, 250, 262, 263

karma
Skt.; = P. kamma; 'action'
27, 33, 34n, 200n, 215n

kasiṇa
P.; 'totality/entire'; a meditation object
113, 114, 143, 144, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 156, 156n, 159, 160, 163, 169, 173, 177, 178n, 191, 203, 204, 213, 217, 218, 238, 242, 268, 272, 274

kāya
P.; 'body'
3n, 63, 63n, 65, 74, 77, 78, 80, 85, 87, 95, 98, 121, 125, 126, 127, 131, 145, 161, 201n, 260, 266n, 270

khaṇa
P.; = Skt. kṣaṇa; 'moment' 42

khaṇavāda
P.; = Skt. kṣaṇavāda; 'doctrine of momentariness'
15, 16, 39, 42

khandhapaṭipāṭi
P.; 'succession of aggregates'
188, 188n, 189, 189n, 190, 193, 196, 197, 198, 199, 226, 252

khandha
P.; 'aggregate(s)'
198, 198n, 257

khīṇāsava
P.; 'one who is free from the noxious influxes'
179, 180n

kiriyamanodhātu
P.; 'functional mind element' 46n

kiriyamanoviññāṇadhātu
P.; 'functional mind consciousness element' 46n

kṣaṇa
Skt.; = P. khaṇa; 'moment' 42

kṣaṇavāda
Skt.; = P. khaṇavāda; 'doctrine of momentariness' 42

L

lahusaññā
P.; 'perception of lightness'
100, 133n, 152, 153, 153n, 157n, 234, 265n, 273, 274

liṅgaśarīra
Skt.; 'subtle body' 129

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maṃsacakkhu
P.; 'fleshly eye/physical eye'
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manas/mano
P. and Skt.; 'mind'
43n, 47, 61n, 63n, 64, 65, 66, 66n, 67, 69, 74, 75, 87, 87n, 95, 117, 130, 131n, 178, 184n, 201n, 214, 221n, 223
manasikāra
P.; 'action of paying attention'
170, 194, 195
manasikaroti
P.; 'to pay attention'
101, 168, 169n, 170, 171, 172, 173, 195, 202, 202n, 203n, 204, 204n, 207, 216, 217, 218, 238
manodhātu
P.; 'mind element'
61n, 178n, 181, 181n, 182n
manodvārāvajjana
P.; 'adverting to the mind-door'
46, 46n, 47, 143, 143n, 168, 169, 169n, 173, 183, 183n, 191, 191n, 196, 203, 203n, 207
manodvāravīthi
P.; 'mind-door process'
46, 46n, 47
manomaya
P. and Skt.; 'made of mind/mind-made'
3n, 14, 16, 29, 61, 61n, 62, 63, 63n, 64, 64n, 65, 65n, 66, 66n, 67, 67n, 68, 69, 71, 74, 74n, 75, 75n, 76, 76n, 77, 78, 79n, 80, 81, 82n, 83, 84, 85n, 87, 88, 90, 91n, 95, 96, 96n, 97, 97n, 98, 98n, 99, 101, 101n, 102n, 103, 103n, 104n, 111, 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 118n, 119, 121, 126, 126n, 127, 129, 129n, 131, 131n, 132, 145, 145n, 157n, 161, 214, 215, 226n, 231, 231n, 232, 232n, 233, 233n, 249, 250, 263n, 264n, 265n, 266, 266n, 270, 274
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P.; 'body made of mind/mind-made body'
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P.; 'knowledge [of the body] made of mind'
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P.; 'mind-made form' 104n
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P.; 'mind-made power/psychic power of the mind-made [body]' 113, 114, 232, 233n
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P.; 'matrix' 11, 261n
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P. and Skt.; 'made of'
64, 65, 66, 66n, 69, 75, 95, 130, 131
mudu
P.; 'malleable'
63n, 68n, 123n, 167n, 172, 172n, 176n, 178n, 213n, 224n, 229, 231n, 235, 235n, 240n, 241n, 267
muñja
P. and Skt.; 'reed/reed grass'
16, 63n, 70, 70n, 73, 74, 104, 104n, 105n, 111, 111n, 113, 117, 262, 263n

N

nāmarūpa
P.; 'mind-matter'
67, 187, 188n, 191, 191n, 194, 194n, 196, 266n

ñāṇa
P.; 'knowledge'
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ñāṇa-dassana
P.; 'knowing and seeing'
24, 63, 63n, 77, 95, 201n, 202n, 215, 216, 225n, 231, 232, 234, 235

nānattekattasaddanimitta
P.; 'signs of sounds in their difference and unity' 168n

nānattekattaviññāṇacariyāpariyogāhaṇa
P.; 'full immersion of consciousness behaviours in their multiplicity and unity'
176n

navasattapātubhāvadiṭṭhi
P.; 'view that new beings appear'
202

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P.; 'sphere of neither-perception-nor-no-perception'
81, 83, 220, 262n

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P.; = Skt. nirvāṇa
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P.; 'sign/created'
104n, 105, 105n, 141, 170, 172, 184, 191, 268

nimittārammaṇa
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142n

nimmita
P.; 'creation'
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Skt.; = P. anattan; 'without a self'
36

nirmāṇa
Skt.; 'creation'
101, 102n, 126

nirvāṇa
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O

odāta
P.; 'white/bright'
104n, 203, 213, 217, 238

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P.; 'gross'
69n, 71, 78, 79n, 84, 96n, 169n

P

pādakajjhāna
P.; 'meditative absorption which serves as foundation'
104n, 113, 142n, 146n, 147, 154n, 158, 158n, 169, 169n, 174, 174n, 183n, 190n

pādakajjhānacitta
P.; 'the consciousness of the meditative absorption which serves as foundation'
141, 142n, 268, 273, 274

pādakajjhānārammaṇa
P.; 'object/support of the meditative absorption which serves as foundation'
169n, 174n, 273

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P.; 'attainment of the meditative absorption which serves as foundation' 140n, 144n

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P.; 'five-door process' 46, 46n

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P.; 'wisdom'
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178n, 181n
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P.; 'purified'
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pariyodāta
P.; 'cleansed/brightened'
63n, 123n, 133n, 167n, 168, 170, 170n, 172, 172n, 175n, 178n, 179, 213n, 224n, 231n, 234n, 240n, 241n
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82n

rūpadhātu
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P.; 'physical body/material body'
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sabbaṅgapaccaṅga/sabbaṅgapaccaṅgin
P.; 'with all limbs and [bodily] parts'
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This volume presents a diachronic study of the final stages of the Buddhist path of liberation as presented in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (D 2). Focusing on 'extraordinary capacities' – the 'body made of mind' (*manomayakāya)*, the capability to perform many kinds of psychophysical power (*iddhividhă*), and the achievement of higher knowledges (*abhiññā*) – the work deciphers their significance within the soteriological journey. By collecting evidence from the Pāli canon, the Vedic corpus, and later Pāli exegesis, the research traces the evolution of these meditative powers. This rigorous analysis of Pāli literature reveals how the Theravāda tradition re-envisioned human potential and refined its doctrinal framework over time. It offers a vital contribution to our understanding of the historical and philological development of Buddhist thought.

Bryan De Notariis received a PhD from the University of Turin (Italy), with a dissertation on the extraordinary capacities developed in the Buddhist path of liberation, analysing both canonical and commentarial sources of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition. Later, he was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy) to study grape wine in the Gandhāra area through the analysis of literary sources, followed by a second fellowship focusing on nonhuman animals in Indian literature.

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