

8 *Abhiññā*

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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 *abhiññās* occurs (*cha abhiññā*; D III 281). In the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the term *abhiññā* occurs in the phrasing *sayam 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).

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*), *iddhis* are included, albeit, it might be argued, *iddhis* have their own specificity that differentiates them slightly from other *abhiññās* in their outputs. What seems to differentiate *iddhis* from the other *abhiññās* is that the *iddhis* result in a physical performance, whereas the *abhiññās* 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 *iddhis* 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 *abhiññās*, 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 *iddhis* with the semantic range of ‘knowledge’ cannot be completely ruled out. In some canonical classifications, *iddhis* are one of the *vijjās* (e.g. D I 100) or one of the *paññās* (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 *iddhis* can, somehow, lead to or be connected with ‘knowledge’ in broad terms. This might justify the inclusion of the *iddhividhā* in the list of the *abhiññās*.⁵

Next, in order to better understand the *abhiññās* 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 *iddhividhā* (e.g. Sv I 222-3), however, the term *ñāṇa* was already naturally connected with four of the other *abhiññās* (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-mānuskāya ubho sadde suṇāti, dibbe ca mānuse ca, ye dūre santike ca* (D I 79). Here and in the following *abhiññās* 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 suneyya bheri-saddam pi mutiṅga-saddam pi saṅkha-paṇava-deṇḍīma-saddam-pi. tassa evam assa: bheri-saddo iti pi, mutiṅga-saddo iti pi saṅkha-paṇava-deṇḍīma-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 *iddhipādas* (*iddhipādaṃ bhāveti*; Paṭis I 112). Consequently, it prescribes to apply the mind to various sound-signs (e.g. *dūre 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 sotadhātuvisuddhiññāyā*; 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 *abhiññās* 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 *javanas* 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 sotadhātuvisuddhiññānaṃ?* (Paṭis I 112).

⁹ *tatra dibbāya sotadhātuyā ti ettha dibbasadisattā dibbā. devānaṃ hi sucaritakammanibbattā pittasemharuhirādīhi apaḷibuddhā upakkilesavimuttatāya dūre pi āramaṇaṃ sampaṭicchanasamatthā dibbappasādasotadhātu hoti. ayañ cā pi imassa bhikkhuno viriyabhāvanābalanibbattā ñānasotadhātu tādisā yevā ti dibbasadisattā dibbā. api ca dibbavihāravasena paṭiladdhattā attanā ca dibbavihārasannissittā 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 <i>abhiññās</i> and emerges	+	preparatory work, giving attention to gross and subtle sounds	+	mind-door-adverting arises	+	four or five <i>javanās</i> impel	=	the last <i>javana</i> is the absorption mind and the concomitant knowledge is the ‘element of the divine ear’
<i>abhiññāpādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya</i>		<i>parikamma</i>		<i>manodvārāvajjana</i>		<i>cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti</i>		<i>appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dībbasotadhātū ti</i>

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 *kaṣiṇas*,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 parikkamasamādhiccittena paṭhamataraṃ pakatisotapathe dūre oḷāriko araṇṇe sihādīnaṃ saddo āvajjitabbo [...] evaṃ sabbolārikatopabhūti yathākkamena sukhumasaddā āvajjitabbā. tena puratthimāya disāya saddānaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ [...] oḷārikānaṃ pi sukhumānaṃ pi saddānaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ. tassa te saddā pākatikacittassā pi pākaṭā honti, parikkamasamādhiccittassa pana ativiya pākaṭā. tass’ evaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikaroto: idāni dībbasotadhātu uppajjissatī ti tesu saddesu aññataraṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati; tasmim̐ niruddhe cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti, yesaṃ purimāni tīṇi, cattāri vā parikkamma-upacārānuloma-gotrābhū-nāmakāni kāmāvacārāni, catutthaṃ pañcamaṃ vā appanācittaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ. tattha yaṃ tena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dībbasotadhātū ti veditabbā (Vism 407-8).*

11 *evaṃ adhigatābhiñño esa pādakajjhānārammaṇena phutthokāsabbhantaragate 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 *jhānas* [in the] *rūpadhātu*?¹³ Yes, he develops it from there.¹⁴ He also develops [it in] the four *jhānas*.

How should it be developed? The beginner meditator cultivates (修) in this way, he attains through the mind mastery over the four *iddhipādas*. 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; *dibbasotañña*) 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 **Vimuttimaggā* discriminates between the ‘fourth *jhāna*’ (第四禪) and the ‘four *jhānas*’ (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 bhāvitenā cittena parisuddhena pariyodātena sotadhātuvisuddhiññāyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti, so dibbāya sotadhātuya visuddhāya atikkantamānūsikāya 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 於可受聲應說欲愛, 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 **Vimuttimaggā*, but was omitted in the *Visuddhimaggā*. 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 **Vimuttimaggā* 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。彼坐禪人如是修以修行心清白, 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 vinatṭhe pi dibbasotaṃ na vinassati 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
<i>iddhipādas</i>		<i>manasikaroti</i>		<i>dibbasotadhātu</i>

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 <i>iddhipādas</i>	The mediator pays attention (<i>manasikaroti</i>) to the sound signs
<i>so imesu catūsu iddhipādesu cittaṃ paribhāveti paridameti muduṃ karoti kammaniyaṃ</i> (Paṭis I 112), cf. <i>so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigaṭūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte [...]</i> (D I 79)	After the meditator paid attention to the sound signs, the text reports that <i>so tattha bhāvitena cittena parisuddhena pariyodātena sotadhātuvisuddhiññāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti</i> (Paṭis I 112), cf. <i>dibbāya sotadhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti</i> (D I 79)

It seems that the cultivation of the *iddhipādas* 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 (*sotadhātuvisuddhiññāna*), 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 **Vimuttimaggā*, which, however, adds a further stage between the cultivation of the *iddhipādas* 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:

<i>iddhipādas</i>	+	he enters the fourth <i>jhāna</i> 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; <i>manasikaroti</i>) to the sound sign (聲 相; <i>sadda-nimitta</i>)	=	<i>dibbasotadhātu</i>
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The action of entering into the *jhāna* and emerging from it is also present in the *Visuddhimaggā*'s account. The *Visuddhimaggā*, moreover, not only

²² *so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigaṭūpakkilese 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 *iddhipādas*, 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	<i>Visuddhimagga</i> 408
Entering into the <i>jhāna</i> and emerging from it	<i>abhiññāpādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vutthāya</i>
Through the mind in its preparatory-work concentration [...] he should advert to the sound	<i>parikkamasamādhicittena [...] saddo āvajjitabbo</i>
Paying attention to the sound sign	<i>saddanimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ</i>
Arising of the mind-door-adverting	<i>manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati</i>
Either four or five <i>javanas</i> impel (<i>javanti</i>)	<i>cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti</i>
Together with the last <i>javana</i> , which is the <i>appanācitta</i> , a knowledge arises which is the element of the divine ear	<i>tena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dibbasotadhātū ti veditabbā</i>

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 *javanas* in place of 7, and the absence of the stages called *sampañcchana*, *santiraṇa*, *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 *kaṣiṇas* had in the case of the development of the *iddhividhā*. Interestingly enough, the process deviates from the one used for the *iddhividhā*, 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 *javanas*.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 sakīṃ bhavaṅgavāraṃ chinditvā, kevalam pi rattiṃ kevalam pi divasaṃ tiṭṭhati, kusalajavanapaṭipāvisasen' 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 *javanas*, in the same way the divine ear, once attained, is maintained without entering into the *pāḍakajjhāna* (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 *pāḍakajjhāna*’s object with the *abhiññāñāṇa* without attaining again the *pāḍakajjhāna*”.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 lohitaṣṣa 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 pāḍakajjhānārammaṇena phutṭhokāsabbhantaragate pi sadde puna pāḍakajjhānaṃ 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

26 *so para-sattānaṃ para-puggalānaṃ cetasā ceto paricca pajānāti - sa-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-rāgaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vīta-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-rāgaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, sa-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-dosaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vīta-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-dosaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, sa-mohaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-mohaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vīta-mohaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-mohaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, saṃkhittaṃ vā cittaṃ saṃkhittaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vikkhittaṃ vā cittaṃ vikkhittaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, mahaggataṃ vā cittaṃ mahaggataṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, amahaggataṃ vā cittaṃ amahaggataṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, sa-uttaraṃ vā cittaṃ sa-uttaraṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, anuttaraṃ vā cittaṃ anuttaraṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, samāhitaṃ vā cittaṃ samāhitaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, asamāhitaṃ vā cittaṃ asamāhitaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vimuttaṃ vā cittaṃ vimuttaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, avimuttaṃ vā cittaṃ avimuttaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti (D I 79-80).*

27 *seyyathā pi, mahā-rāja itthi vā puriso vā daharo vā yuvā maṇḍana-jātiko ādāse vā parisuddhe pariyoḍāte acche vā udaka-patte sakaṃ mukha-nimittaṃ paccavekkhamāno sakaṇikaṃ vā sakaṇikaṃ ti jāneyya akaṇikaṃ vā akaṇikaṃ ti jāneyya, evaṃ eva kho mahā-rāja bhikkhu evaṃ*

8.2.2 Textual Material for the Study of the *Cetopariyañña*

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 *iddhipādas* 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 *cetopariyañña* 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 tñite ānejjappatte ceto-pariyaññāya 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-*, *dukkha-*, *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 tinnaṃ cittānaṃ vipphāratā indriyānaṃ pasādavasena nānattekattaviññānacariyā-pariyogāhaṇe paññā cetopariyaññaṃ?* (Paṭis I 113).

30 *idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhitam, idaṃ rūpaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhitam, idaṃ rūpaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhitam 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

**Vimuttimaggā*: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 *kaṣiṇa*, 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 nāṇaṃ uppādetabban ti? etaṃ hi dibbacakkhavasena ijjhati, taṃ etassa parikkammaṃ, tasmā tena bikkhunā ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā dibbena cakkhunā parassa hadayarūpaṃ nissāya vattamānassa lohitassa vaṇṇaṃ passivā cittaṃ pariyesitabbaṃ. yadā hi somanassacittaṃ pavattati, tadā rattaṃ nigrodhapakkasadisāṃ hoti; yadā domanassacittaṃ pavattati, tadā kālakaṃ jambupakkasadisāṃ; yadā upekkhācittaṃ pavattati, tadā pasannatilatelasadisāṃ. tasmā tena: idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhānaṃ, idaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhānaṃ, idaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhānaṃ ti parassa hadaya-lohitavaṇṇaṃ passivā passivā cittaṃ pariyesantena ceto pariyañānaṃ thāmagataṃ kātābbaṃ. evaṃ thāmagate hi tasmim anukkamena sabbam pi kāmāvacaracittaṃ rūpāvacarārūpāvacaracittaṃ ca pajānāti cittaṃ eva saṅkamanto vinā pi hadayarūpadassanena. vuttam pi c’ etaṃ aṭṭhakathāyaṃ: āruppe parassa cittaṃ jānitukāmo kassa hadayarūpaṃ passati, kass’ indriyavikāraṃ oloketi ti? na kassaci iddhimato visayo esa, yadidaṃ yattha-katthaci cittaṃ āvajjanto soḷasappabhedāṃ cittaṃ jānāti. akatābhīnivesassa 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 passivā*; 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 passivā cittaṃ pariyesitabbaṃ. yadā hi somanassacittaṃ pavattati, tadā rattaṃ nigrodhapakkasadisāṃ 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 passivā*). Moreover, if we consider that the **Vimuttimaggā* 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 *kaṣiṇa* 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 *mano-viññāna* (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 *kaṣiṇa* which is pure and immovable” ([1961] 1995: 220). Ehara et al. considered 清白不動 as adjectives for the light *kaṣiṇa*, 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 anāḅgane vigatūpakāse mudu-bhūte kammaniye ʔhite ānejjappatte*, commonly in connection with the *iddhividhā* and *abhiññās*. Notably, the adjective ‘immovable’ used in connection with the light *kaṣiṇa* 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 vaḅḅhetvā 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 manoviññādhātu ca vattanti* (Vism 256). See below at § 8.2.3 for the full translation of the Pāli passage.

38 Cf. *idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuḅḅhitam, idaṃ rūpaṃ domanassindriyasamuḅḅhitam, idaṃ rūpaṃ upekkhindriyasamuḅḅhitam* (Paḅis I 113).

39 An alternative translation for 意色 can be ‘mental form’.

40 See *saddhācaritassa kaṅkārappupphavaṅṅaṃ, paññācaritassa acchaṃ vippasannaṃ anāvilam paṅḅaram parisuddham niddhotajātimaṅ 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”, 若無瞋恚心知: “無瞋恚心”. (T1648.32.0443b24-26) clearly resembles the canonical Pāli passage *sa-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-rāgaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vīta-rāgaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-rāgaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, sa-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ sa-dosaṃ cittaṃ ti pajānāti, vīta-dosaṃ vā cittaṃ vīta-dosaṃ cittaṃ 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/metṭā*’ 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, 成如青色。彼坐禪人如是, 以自身變, 分別色變。爾時以光令滿其身, 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”, 若無瞋恚心知: “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。生無色處眾生心, 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 *iddhipādas* 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 *cittas* of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*’s pericope. Later texts, such as the **Vimuttimaggā* and the *Visuddhimaggā*, introduce the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu* = *tiānyān* 天眼) as a necessary tool to gain this kind of knowledge. The **Vimuttimaggā* 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 cetopariyañānalābhī 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 *Visuddhimaggā*, there is mention in the *Visuddhimaggā-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 cittaṃ pi pajānāti eva*; Vism-mḥ 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 cetopariyañānalābhī 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. tesam hi heṭṭhimā heṭṭhimā samāpatti tatra vatti yeva hoti*; Mḥ 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 paṭipassaddhikappā, ten’ āha tatra vatti yeva hoti 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]” (*cetopariyañānalābhī pana puthujjano puthujjanānaṃ yeva cittaṃ jānāti, na ariyānaṃ. sotāpanno sotāpannassa ceva puthujjanassa ca. sakadāgāmi sakadāgāmino ceva heṭṭhimānaṃ ca dvinnam. anāgāmi anāgāmino ceva heṭṭhimānaṃ ca tiṇṇam. khīṇāsavo sabbesam pi jānāti*; Vibh-a 372).

48 *idaṃ rūpaṃ somanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ domanassindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ, idaṃ rūpaṃ upekkhindriyasamuṭṭhitaṃ 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 Harvey'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 (*saṅṭhāna*): 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 (*makulīta*), 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 *manoviññādhātu* 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 rattamaṃ padumapattapiṭṭhivaṇṇaṃ; saṅṭhānato bāhirapattāni apanetvā adhomukhaṃ ṭhapitaṃ padumamakulasāṅṭhānaṃ, bahimaṭṭhaṃ, anto kosātakīphalassa abbhantarasadisāṃ, paññavantānaṃ thokaṃ vikasitaṃ, mandapaññānaṃ makulītaṃ eva, anto c' assa punnāgaṭṭhi patipṭṭhānamatto āvāṭako hoti, yattha addhapasatamattaṃ lohitaṃ saṅṭhāti, yaṃ nissāya manodhātu ca manoviññādhātu ca vattanti. taṃ paṇ' etaṃ rāgacaritassa rattamaṃ hoti, dosacaritassa kālakamaṃ, mohacaritassa maṃsadhovana-udakasadisāṃ, vitakkacaritassa kulathayūsavaṇṇaṃ, saddhācaritassa kaṇikārapupphavaṇṇaṃ, paññācaritassa acchaṃ vipasannaṃ anāvilamaṃ paṇḍaraṃ parisuddhaṃ niddhotajātimaṇi viya jutimantaṃ khāyati. disato uparimāya disāya jātaṃ. okāsato sarīrabbhantare dvinnaṃ thanānaṃ majjhe patipṭṭhitaṃ. paricchedato hadayaṃ hadayabhāgena paricchinnaṃ. ayam assa sabhāgaparicchedo, visabhāgaparicchedo pana kesasadisō 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 **Vimuttimaggā*’s account than with the parallel passage in the *Visuddhimaggā* concerning the *cetopariyañāna*. 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 **Vimuttimaggā* reports that after the development of the *cetopariyañāna*, “he [viz. the meditator] discriminates without the changing of the colour, he grasps only the object of the mind (心事)”.⁵⁴ Hereon, the *Visuddhimaggā* states that the meditator gradually understands the other mind “even without seeing the physical heart”.⁵⁵ This is because the *Visuddhimaggā* 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 **Vimuttimaggā* 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 Buddha”.⁵⁷ As the *Saddhammapakāsinī* 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 *Visuddhimaggā* 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 *Visuddhimaggā*, namely the *Visuddhimaggā-mahāṭṭhikā*, 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 *jāvanas*. The last one is the *iddhicitta*, (psychic power consciousness)

50 *atha yad idam asmin brahmapure daharam puṇḍarīkaṃ veśma daharo ’sminn antarākāśaḥ | tasmīn yad antas tad anveṣṭavyaṃ tad vā vijjñāsitavyaṃ 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, tāsāṃ yeva dhātūnaṃ ādhāraṇarasāṃ, ubbāhanapaccupaṭṭhānaṃ, hadayassa anto kāyagatā-satikathāyaṃ vuttappakāraṃ lohitaṃ nissāya sandhāraṇādīkiccehi bhūtehi katūpakāraṃ utucittāharehi upatthambhiyamānaṃ, āyūnā anupāliyamānaṃ, manodhātu-manoviññāṇadhātūnaṃ c’ eva taṃ-sampayuttadhammānaṃ ca vatthubhāvaṃ sādhamānaṃ tiṭṭhati* (Vism 447).

53 The character 智 is often the Chinese translation of *ñāṇa*, but in this context, considering the *Visuddhimaggā*’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 rūpāvacarārūpāvacaracittaṃ 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 [*cittas*].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 *javanas* 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

58 *iddhimā parassa cittaṃ jānitukāmo āvajjati. āvajjanaṃ khaṇapaccuppannaṃ āramaṇaṃ katvā ten’ eva saha nirujjhati. tato cattāri pañca javanāni. yesaṃ pacchimaṃ iddhiccittaṃ sesāni kāmāvacarāni [...] iddhiccittaṃ 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 *cetopariyañāṇāni uppādetukāmena yoginā heṭṭhā vuttanayena rūpāvacaracattutthajjhānaṃ aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgataṃ abhinīhārakkhamaṃ katvā dibbacakkuñāṇassa lābhī samāno ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā dibbena cakkhunā parassa hadayaṃsaṃsapesiṃ nissāya pavattamānassa lohitassa vaṇṇadassanena idāni imassa cittaṃ somanassasahagataṃ ti vā domanassasahagataṃ ti vā upekkhāsahagataṃ ti vā nayaggāhavasena pi vavatthapetvā pādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya imassa cittaṃ jānāmi ti parikkammaṃ kātappaṃ. kālasatam pi kālasahassam pi punappunaṃ pādakajjhānaṃ samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhāya tatheva paṭipajjitappaṃ. tass’ evaṃ dibbacakkuṇā hadaya-lohitavaṇṇadassanādividhinā paṭipajjantassa idāni cetopariyañāṇaṃ uppajjissati ti yaṃ tadā pavattati ti vavatthāpitaṃ cittaṃ, taṃ āramaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati, tasmimṃ niruddhe cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti. tesam purimāni tiṇi, cattāri vā parikkammādisamaññāni kāmāvacarāni, catutthaṃ, pañcamaṃ vā appanācittaṃ rūpāvacaracattutthajjhānikaṃ. tattha yaṃ antena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, idaṃ **cetopariyañāṇaṃ**. tañhi yatthānena parikkammaṃ kataṃ, taṃ parassa cittaṃ paccakkhato paṭivijjhantaṃ vibhāventameva hutvā pavattati rūpaṃ viya ca dibbacakkuñāṇaṃ, 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 *cetopariyañāna* 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 *cetopariyañāna* 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 cittaṃ pi ādisati cetasikam pi ādisati vitakkitaṃ pi ādisati vicāritaṃ pi ādisati: evaṃ pi te mano ittham pi te mano iti pi te cittaṃ ti* (D I 213).

⁶¹ *atha kho Bhagavā Kāpaṭikassa māṇavassa cetasā ceto parivittakam aññāya* (M II 169).

⁶² *amanussānaṃ ti yakkhapisācādānaṃ* (Mp II 269).

⁶³ Cf. Kv 413-14. In this regard, the commentary does not seem very reliable: *vitakkavipphārasaddan ti vitakkavipphārasena uppannaṃ vipalapanānaṃ sutappamattādānaṃ saddaṃ* (Mp II 269). See Bodhi 2012, 1647, n. 425. An Abhidhammic treatment of *vitakkavipphārasadda* is described by Karunadasa (2010, 196-7).

⁶⁴ The passage *api ca kho avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhiṃ samāpannaṃ 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 *samāpannaṃ*; 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 *cetopariyañña*. Anyway, the sequentiality of the stages will be analysed better in the next chapter (§ 9).

8.3 Knowledge of Recollection of Former Existences (*Pubbenivāsānussatiñña*)

‘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 nivāsānussati ti yāya satiyā pubbe nivāsaṃ
anussarati, sā pubbe nivāsānussati. ñāṇan
ti tāya satiyā sampayuttaññaṃ
(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 *pubbenivāsānussatiñña* 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 *pubbenivāsānussatiñña*’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 *pubbenivāsānussatiñña*. 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-ttḥānāni* (subjects of recollection). There are six *anussati-ttḥānāni*: recollection of the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Samḡha*, *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-ttḥānāni* 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. I⁶⁹ 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 *dhammas* 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 *iddhipādas* (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 seyyathidaṃ ekam pi jātiṃ dve pi jātiyo tisso pi jātiyo catasso pi jātiyo pañca pi jātiyo dasa pi jātiyo visatim pi jātiyo tiṃsam pi jātiyo cattārisam pi jātiyo paññāsam pi jātiyo jāti-satam pi jāti-sahassam pi jāti-satasahassam pi aneke pi samvaṭṭa-kappe aneke pi vivaṭṭa-kappe aneke pi samvaṭṭa-vivaṭṭakappe. amutrāsīṃ evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evaṃ-āhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkhapaṭisaṃvedī evaṃ-āyu-pariyanto. so tato cuto amutra upapādiṃ. tatrāpāsīṃ evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evamāhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkha-paṭisaṃvedī evaṃ-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 evaṃ assa: ahaṃ kho sakamhā gāmā amuṃ gāmaṃ agaṅchiṃ, tatra evaṃ atṭhāsīṃ evaṃ nisīdiṃ evaṃ abhāsīṃ evaṃ tuṅhī ahoṣiṃ, tamhā pi gāmā amuṃ gāmaṃ agacchiṃ, tatrāpi evaṃ atṭhāsīṃ evaṃ nisīdiṃ evaṃ abhāsīṃ evaṃ tuṅhī ahoṣiṃ, 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, saḷāyatanaṃpaccayā phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmaranaṃ 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*)” (*anussarati 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*” and “*sarati*”.

75 *pakatisāvaka khandhapaṭipāṭiyā pi anussaranti cutipaṭisandhivasena pi sankamanti, tathā asīti mahāsāvaka* (Vism 411).

76 *dvinnāṃ 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.

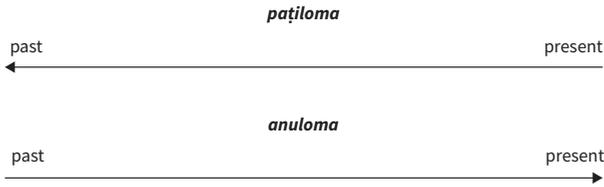


Figure 8.1 Temporal directions of remembrance

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 tasmim tasmim attabhāve cutim 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 *amutrāsīm evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evaṃ-āhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkhapaṭisaṃvedī evaṃ-āyu-pariyanto. tatrāpāsīm evaṃ-nāmo evaṃ-gotto evaṃ-vaṇṇo evamāhāro evaṃ-sukha-dukkha-paṭisaṃvedī evaṃ-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:

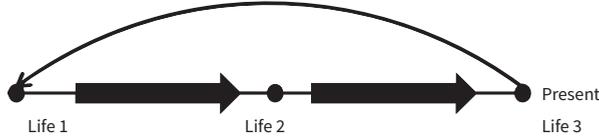


Figure 8.2 Canonical directions of the remembrance

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 *parikammasamādhīñāṇa* ‘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 *jhānas* in succession, and emerged from the fourth *jhāna* which is the basis of the *abhiññās*, 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 gāṃ amuṃ gāmaṃ agañchīm, tatra evaṃ aṭṭhāsīm evaṃ nisīdīm evaṃ abhāsīm evaṃ tuṇhī ahoṣīm, tamhā pi gāṃ amuṃ gāmaṃ agacchīm, tatrāpi evaṃ aṭṭhāsīm evaṃ nisīdīm evaṃ abhāsīm evaṃ tuṇhī ahoṣīm, so ‘mhi tamhā gāṃ sakam yeva gāmaṃ paccāgato ti (D I 81-2).*

⁸² *paṭipāṭiyā cattāri jhānāni samāpajjitvā abhiññāpādakacatutthajjhānato vuṭṭhāya sabbapacchimā nisajjā āvajjitabbā; tato āsanapaññapanam [...] (Vism 412).*

⁸³ *ettakaṃ pana pakaticcittassa pi pākāṭam hoti, parikammasamādhicittassa pana ativiya pākāṭam eva (Vism 412).*

⁸⁴ *sace pan’ ettha kiñci na pākāṭam hoti, puna pādakajjhānam 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 *javanas* impel. The rest is like the method said before, the firsts [*javanas*] 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 *pubbenivāsānussatiññā*.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 *kaṣiṇas*, 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 *jhānas*.

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 bhava attano paṭisandhi, tāva āvajjantena purimabhava cutikkhaṇe pavattitanāmarūpaṃ āvajjitabbaṃ* (Vism 412-13).

⁸⁶ *paṭisandhi ugghāṭetvā cutikkhaṇe nāmarūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ kātuṃ* (Vism 413).

⁸⁷ *yadā paṇ'assa bhikkhuno paṭisandhiṃ atikkamma cutikkhaṇe pavattitanāmarūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati, tasmīṃ 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 cittaṃ saha ñāṇaṃ uppajjati, idaṃ pubbe nivāsānussatiññāṇaṃ 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, *nāgas*, and *garuḷas*, 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 *iddhipādas*.

How should the recollection of former existences be developed? The beginner meditator develops (修; *bhāveti*) the four *iddhipādas* 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 abbochinnam idha loke paṭiṭṭhitañ ca paraloke paṭiṭṭhitañ ca*.

⁹² Interestingly, this simile is usually used to describe the *cetopariyañāna* (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 (*shūpīduō* 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; *tiṭṭhiya*) 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 *samādhī* or without entering in the *samādhī*, and even without entering in the *samādhī*, always remember. The rest of the people [remember] only entering in the *samādhī*.⁹⁷

Saddhammappakāsini:

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 *paṭicasamuppāda*, 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。復說云何色界處? 答於第四禪心得自在, 是其能起。復說於四禪得起。幾種憶宿命智? 答三種憶宿命智: 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。彼坐禪人如是修心修行清白, 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。長老輪毘多於彼最勝。憶宿命智七種: 小, 大, 不應說, 過去, 內, 外, 內外。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 *iddhipādas*. 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 uppajjati ti idaṃ paṭiccasamuppādaniddesassa uddesavacanam; Paṭis-a I 356*).

⁹⁹ *pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇaniddese: evaṃ pajānāti ti ādi catūsu iddhipādesu paribhāvitacittassa pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇam uppādetukāmassa taduppādanavidhānadassanattaṃ vuttaṃ. kamato hi paṭiccasamuppādam passitvā viññāṇa-nāmarūpa-saḷāyatana-phassa-vedanā-saṅkhātam paccuppannam phalasaṅkhepaṃ passati. tassā ti tassa paccayam purimabhava kammakilesa-saṅkhātam hetusaṅkhepaṃ passati, tassa paccayam purimabhava yeva phalasaṅkhepaṃ passati, tassa paccayam tatiyabhava 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.

Parikammasamādhīññā

<p>he should attain the four <i>jhānas</i> in succession, and emerged from the fourth <i>jhāna</i></p>	+	<p>he should advert to the last [act] among all [acts] which is the sitting down, gradually recollecting his life until the moment of rebirth.</p>	=	<p>he recollects his rebirth linking</p>
<p>fourth <i>jhāna</i></p>		<p><i>āvajjana</i></p>		<p><i>paṭisandhi</i> (= *<i>kāmāvacara-ññā</i>)</p>

Pubbenivāsānussatiññā

<p>he should surpass his rebirth-linking</p>	+	<p>he takes the mental and physical make-up he had at the moment of death as object</p>	+	<p>the adverting to the mind door arises</p>	+	<p>four or five <i>jāvanas</i> impel</p>	=	<p>the last <i>jāvana</i> is the absorption mind belonging to the fourth <i>jhāna</i> of the <i>rūpāvacara</i></p>
<p><i>paṭisandhim atikkamma</i></p>		<p><i>cutikkhaṇa</i> (<i>nāmarūpa ārammaṇaṃ katvā</i>)</p>		<p><i>manodvārāvajjana</i></p>		<p>4/5 <i>jāvanas</i></p>		<p><i>appanācitta</i> (= *<i>rūpāvacara-ññā</i>)</p>

Although the **Vimuttimaggā* and the *Visuddhimaggā* present roughly the same method, the two texts differ in some details. When the meditator has remembered the beginning of his life, in the *Visuddhimaggā* the *nāmarūpa* which occurs at the moment of the death is taken as object, whereas in the **Vimuttimaggā* 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 **Vimuttimaggā* to the action of polishing a mirror, whereas the *Visuddhimaggā* provides the woodcutter simile (*kaṭṭhaphāla*; Vism 413). Interestingly enough, a mirror simile occurred in the canonical account of the *cetopariyaññā* (D I 80). Another difference concerns the distinction between the ways of remembering. The *Visuddhimaggā* 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 *Visuddhimaggā* underlines that the meditator remembers in the reverse order (*paṭilomakkama*; Vism 412). In the same account, the **Vimuttimaggā* states that the meditator remembers in a way called *cidī* 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 **Vimuttimaggā* is presenting a theory in opposition to the *Visuddhimaggā*'s one (i.e. *paṭiloma* vs *anuloma*), but the term *cidī* 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 **Vimuttimaggā* 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 **Vimuttimaggā*'s passage, whereas the *Visuddhimaggā* often mentions *khandhapaṭipāṭi* and *cutipaṭisandhi*.

According to the *Visuddhimaggā*, 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

<i>Visuddhimaggā</i> 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 (<i>titthiya</i>)	40 <i>kappas</i>	<i>khandhapaṭipāṭi</i>	Like the light of a glow-worm (<i>khajjūpanakappabhā-sadisa</i>)	Blind men (<i>andha</i>)
Ordinary disciples (<i>pakatisāvaka</i>)	100 <i>kappas</i>	<i>khandhapaṭipāṭiyā pi anussaranti cutipaṭisandhivasena pi saṅkamanti</i>	Like the light of a lamp (<i>dīpappabhāsa-sadisa</i>)	Log bridge (<i>daṇḍakasetugamana</i>)
Great disciples (<i>mahāsavaka</i>)	100.000 <i>kappas</i>	<i>khandhapaṭipāṭiyā pi anussaranti cutipaṭisandhivasena pi saṅkamanti</i>	Like the light of a firebrand (<i>ukkāpabhāsa-sadisa</i>)	Walking bridge (<i>janghasetugamana</i>)
Foremost disciples (<i>aggasāvaka</i>)	1 <i>asaṅkheyya</i> + 100.000 <i>kappas</i>	<i>cutipaṭisandhivasen' eva saṅkamantā gacchanti</i>	Like the light of the <i>osadhī</i> star (<i>osadhitarakappabhā-sadisa</i>)	Cart bridge (<i>sakaṭasetugamana</i>)
Paccekabuddhas	2 <i>asaṅkheyya</i> + 100.000 <i>kappas</i>	<i>cutipaṭisandhivasen' eva saṅkamantā gacchanti</i>	Like the light of the moon (<i>candappabhā-sadisa</i>)	Great walking road (<i>mahājāṅghamaggagamana</i>)
Buddhas	No limits	<i>yaṃ yaṃ ṭhānaṃ icchanti, taṃ taṃ pākāṭam eva hoti</i>	Like the light of the autumnal sun's disk adorned with thousands of rays (<i>rasmisahassa-paṭimaṇḍita-saradasuriya-maṇḍila-sadisa</i>)	Great cart road (<i>mahāsakaṭamaggagamana</i>)

From this account, it would seem that the so-called *titthiyas* '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 *Samyuttanikāya*'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 *khandhas* 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 *Samyuttanikāya*'s passage (S III 86) is also referring to the *abhiññā* called *pubbenivāsānussatiññā*, and the recollection of *khandhas* 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 *Samyuttanikāya*'s passage also involves the recollection of the *khandhas*.

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 *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, 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 anekavihitam pubbenivāsam anussaramānā anussaranti || sabbe te pañcupādānakkhandhe anussaranti etesaṃ vā aññataram* (S III 86).

¹⁰⁵ *pubbenivāsan ti, na idaṃ abhiññā-vasena anussaraṇam sandhāya vuttam, vipassanā-vasena pana pubba-nivāsam anussarante samaṇa-brāhmaṇe sandhāy' etaṃ vuttam. ten' ev' āha sabbe te pañcupādānakkhandhe anussaranti, etesaṃ vā aññataran ti* (Spk II 289).

¹⁰⁶ *idha bhikkhave ekacco samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā [...] anekavihitam pubbe nivāsam 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 *khandhas* 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 *khandhas* at stake are the mental ones (*viz. vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna*): *khandhapavattan ti vedanādikhandhappavattim* (Sv-pt 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: “Sammāsambuddhas 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 muñcivā na sakkonti. paṭipāṭiyā anussarantā pi asaññabhavaṃ patvā khandha-ppavattiṃ na passanti, jāle patitā sakuṇā viya kuṇṭhā viya paṅgulā viya ca honti. te tathā thatvā: ettakam eva, ito paraṃ n’ atthi ti, diṭṭhiṃ gahhanti. iti titthiyānaṃ pubbenivāsānussaraṇaṃ andhānaṃ yaṭṭhi-koṭi-gamaṇaṃ viya hoti. yathā hi andhā yaṭṭhi-koṭi-ggāhake sati yeva gacchanti, asati tatth’ eva nisidanti, evam eva titthiyā khandha-paṭipāṭiyā ca anussarituṃ sakkonti, na paṭipāṭiṃ vissajjetvā sakkonti. sāvaka pi khandha-paṭipāṭiyā va anussaranti, asaññabhavaṃ ca patvā khandha-ppavattaṃ na passanti. evaṃ sante pi te: vaṭṭa-saṃsaraṇaka-sattānaṃ khandhānaṃ abhāvakālo nāma n’ atthi, asaññabhava pana pañca kappā-satāni pavattantī ti, tattakam kālam atikkamitvā buddhehi dinnanaye thatvā parato anussaranti, seyyathā pi āyasmā Sobhito. dve agga-sāvaka pana Paccekabuddhā ca cutipaṭisandhiṃ oloketvā anussaranti. buddhānaṃ cutipaṭisandhikiccaṃ n’ atthi, yaṃ yaṃ thānaṃ passitukāmā honti, taṃ tad’ eva passanti (Sv II 408).*

111 從此外道憶四十劫 (T1648.32.0444a06); cf. *tathā titthiyā cattāliṣaṃ 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] (*Cutūpapātañāṇa*)

The action (*kamma*) assigns beings
to inferior or superior states

kammaṃ satte vibhajati yad idaṃ hinappañitāya
(M III 203)

The knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings] (*cutūpapātañāṇa*), 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 *cutūpapātañāṇa* 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 *Āgama* 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 jízhi guō jīng* 佛說寂志果經 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 *Cutūpapātañña*

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 *abhiññās*, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* prescribes to cultivate the four *iddhipādas* (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 pañite suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti: ime vata bhonto sattā kāya-duccaritena samannāgatā vaci-duccaritena samannāgatā mano-duccaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ upavādakā micchā-diṭṭhikā micchā-diṭṭhi-kamma-samādānā. te kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapannā. ime vā pana bhonto sattā kāya-sucaritena samannāgatā vaci-sucaritena samannāgatā mano-sucaritena samannāgatā ariyānaṃ anupavādakā sammā-diṭṭhikā sammā-diṭṭhi-kamma-samādānā, te kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ saggaṃ lokaṃ upapannā ti. iti dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne pañite 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 siṅghātake pāsādo, tattha cakkhumā puriso thito passeyya manusse gehaṃ pavisante pi nikkhamante pi rathiyā vīthi sañcarante pi majjhe pi siṅghātake nisinne. tassa evam assa: ete manussā gehaṃ pavisanti ete nikkhamanti ete rathiyā vīthi sañcaranti ete majjhe siṅghātake nisinnā ti (D I 83).*

117 *kathaṃ obhāsavasena nānattekattarūpanimittānaṃ dassanaṭṭhe paññā dibbacakkhuññaṃ?* (Paṭis I 114).

118 *katamā ca āvuso samādhi-bhāvanā bhāvitā bahulī-katā ñāṇa-dassana-pañilābhāya samvattati (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 *cutūpapātañña*.

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 *cutūpapātañña* 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 visuddham*; Vism 423).¹²¹ A wrong application of the *cutūpapātañña* 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 *yathākammūpagaññakicca* (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 *yathākammūpagaññakicca* [is explained]”.¹²⁴ Thus, the text illustrates how the monk first performs the action of seeing through the *dibbacakkhu* and then through the action of paying attention (*manasikaroti*) can attain the knowledge of the *yathākammūpage*:

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 *ālokasaññam manasikaroti divāsaññam adhiṭṭhāti yathā divā tathā ratti, yathā ratti tathā divā, iti vivaṭena cetasā aparīyonaddhena sappabhāsam 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 *nānadassana*: *ettha diṭṭhivisuddhi ti nānadassanam kathitam* (Sv III 984).

122 *yo hi cutimattam eva passati, na upapātam, so ucchedadiṭṭhiṃ gaṇhāti. yo upapātamattam eva passati, na cutiṃ, so navasattapātubhāvadiṭṭhiṃ gaṇhāti* (Vism 423).

123 Cf. the treatment of the *pubbenivāsānussatiñña* in D I 13 discussed above at § 8.3.3.

124 *tattha purimehi cavamāne ti ādīhi dibbacakkhukiccam vuttam; iminā pana padena yathākammūpagaññakiccam* (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 *yathākammūpagañña*.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 *kaṣiṇas* of fire (*tejas*), white (*odāta*), and light (*āloka*). Then, he should extend the *kaṣiṇa* until he is able to see whatever is in the area covered by the extended *kaṣiṇa* (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 *javanas* will impel (*javanti*)”. Here also, the *pubbabhāgacittas* 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**’ (*dibbacakkhuññaṃ*).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 *kaṣiṇa* (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 mahādukkhaṃ anubhavamāne. taṃ dassanaṃ dibbacakkhukiccaṃ eva. so evaṃ manasikaroti: kin nu kho kammaṃ katvā ime sattā etaṃ dukkhaṃ anubhavanti ti? ath’ assa idaṃ nāma katvā ti taṃ kammārammaṇaṃ ñāṇaṃ uppajjati. tathā upari devalokābhimukhaṃ ālokaṃ vaḍḍhetvā Nandanavana-Missakavana-Phārusakavanādīsu satte passati mahāsampattiṃ anubhavamāne; taṃ pi dassanaṃ dibbacakkhukiccaṃ eva. so evaṃ manasikaroti: kin nu kho kammaṃ katvā ime sattā etaṃ sampattiṃ anubhavanti ti? ath’ assa: idaṃ nāma katvā ti taṃ kammārammaṇaṃ ñāṇaṃ uppajjati. idaṃ yathākammūpagaññaṃ 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 uppajjati ti sabbhaṃ purimanayen’ eva vedittabbaṃ. idhā ‘pi pubbabhāgacittāni savitakkasavicārāni kāmāvacarāni, pariyoṣāne atthasādhakacittaṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ, tena sahaḥjātamañ ñāṇaṃ sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇaṃ ti pi dibbacakkhuññaṃ 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 eye¹³⁰ 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 *iddhipādas*.

How is the divine eye developed? The beginner meditator develops (修; *bhāveti*) the four *iddhipādas* in this way and with the mind that is mastered, purified, brightened, that has obtained impassibility, enters [through] the light *kaṣiṇa* 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 (內光明色).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; *accāraddhaviṛiya*), too little vigour (遲緩精進; *atīlīnaviṛiya*), too much talk

128 Cf. *jātassa kho pana bhikkhave Vipassissa kumārassa kamma-vipākajam dibbam cakkhum pātur ahoṣi, 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 *bhāvanāmagga*, 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 *iddhipādas*, 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 paṇite 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; *anāgatamsañña*); 2) the knowledge of the ownership of *kamma* (自所作業智; *kammassakatañña*); 3) the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma* (如行業智; *yathākammūpagañña*); 4) knowledge of *kamma*'s results (業果報智; *kammavipākañña*).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 *yasmim̐ kho samaye paritto samādhi hoti, parittam me tamhi samaye cakkhu hoti; so 'haṃ parittena cakkhunā parittaṃ c' eva obhāsaṃ sañjānāmi parittāni ca rūpāni passami. yasmim̐ pana samaye apparitto me samādhi hoti, appamāṇaṃ me tamhi samaye cakkhu hoti; so 'haṃ appamāṇena cakkhunā appamāṇaṃ 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 Paṭiṣ-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, 光明爲五或, 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, 無間障礙, 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, 或龜或妙, 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。於是以前未來分智, 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*

<i>Dibbasotadhātu</i>	<i>Dibbacakkhu</i>
<p>Definition of <i>dibba</i> <i>tatra dibbāya sotadhātuyā ti ettha dibbasadisattā dibbā. devānaṃ hi sucaritakammanibbattā pīttasemharuhirādīhi apaḷibuddhā upakkilesavimuttatāya dūre pi ārammaṇaṃ sampaṭicchanasamattā dibbappasādasotadhātu hoti. ayañ cā pi imassa bhikkhuno viriyabhāvanābalanibbattā ñāṇasotadhātu tādisā yevā ti dibbasadisattā dibbā. api ca dibbavīhārasena paṭiladdhattā attanā ca dibbavīhārasannissittā pi dibbā; (Vism 407)</i></p>	<p>Definition of <i>dibba</i> <i>dibbenā ti ādisu pana dibbasadisattā dibbaṃ. devatānaṃ hi sucaritakammanibbattaṃ pīttasemharuhirādīhi apaḷibuddhaṃ upakkilesavimuttatāya dūre pi ārammaṇasampaṭicchanasamattā dibbaṃ pasādacakkhu hoti; idañ cā pi viriyabhāvanā balanibbattaṃ ñāṇacakkhu tādisaṃ evā ti dibbasadisattā dibbaṃ. dibbavīhārasena paṭiladdhattā attanā ca dibbavīhārasannissittā pi dibbaṃ (Vism 423)</i></p> <p>In addition, there is: <i>ālokapariggahena mahājutikattā pi dibbaṃ; tirokuḍḍādigatarūpadassanena mahāgatikattā pi dibbaṃ. taṃ sabbāṃ saddasatthānūsāren’eva veditabbaṃ (Vism 423)</i></p>
<p>Consciousness process <i>tass’ evaṃ saddanimittaṃ manasikaroto: idāni dibbasotadhātu uppajjissatī ti tesu saddeṣu aññataraṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā manodvārāvajjanaṃ uppajjati; tasmīṃ niruddhe cattāri, pañca vā javanāni javanti, yesaṃ purimāni tīṇi, cattāri vā parikamma-upacārānuloma-gotrabhu-nāmakāni kāmāvacārāni, catutthaṃ pañcamaṃ vā appanācittaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ. tatha yaṃ tena appanācittena saddhiṃ uppannaṃ ñāṇaṃ, ayaṃ dibbasotadhātū ti veditabbā (Vism 408)</i></p>	<p>Consciousness process <i>tatrā ’yaṃ dibbacakkhuno uppattikkamo, vuttappakāraṃ etaṃ rūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā, manodvārāvajjane uppajjitvā niruddhe, tad-eva rūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ katvā, cattāri pañca vā javanāni uppajjati ti sabbāṃ purimanayen’ eva veditabbaṃ. idhā ’pi pubbhāgacittāni savitakkasavicārāni kāmāvacārāni, pariyoṣāne atthasādhakacittaṃ catutthajjhānikaṃ rūpāvacaraṃ, tena saha jātaṃ ñāṇaṃ sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñāṇan ti pi dibbacakkhuñāṇan ti pi vuccatī ti (Vism 429)</i></p>

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 *Saddhammappakāsīnī*. 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 *Saddhammappakāsīnī* 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. *Sivjātaka* (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 passage¹⁴² 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] *dhmma*, 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 yācassa cakkhūni dinnāni, andhassa satto puna dibbacakkhūni uppannānī. etam-pi vacanaṃ sakasaṭaṃ saniggahaṃ sadosaṃ. hetusamugghāte ahetusmiṃ avatthumhi na-tthi dibbacakkhussa uppādo ti sutte vuttam* (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 paṇidhi 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 *cutūpapātañāna*'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 *ñāna* 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 *cutūpapātañāna*. The **Vimuttimagga* states that: “with the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma* (如行業智; *yathākammūpagañāna*), [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 *cutūpapātañāna* is. The **Vimuttimagga*, however, clearly uses the term ‘*dibbacakkhu*’ (= *tīānyān* 天眼) to refer to this *abhiññā*, just like the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*. This nomenclature affair involves a reflection about what is really meant for *cutūpapātañāna*.

According to the later exegesis (especially the *Visuddhimagga*), the *cutūpapātañāna* 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 ñānaṃ*) and also ‘**knowledge of the divine eye**’ (*dibbacakkhuñānaṃ*)”.¹⁴⁹ In other words, the *Visuddhimagga* equates the *cutūpapātañāna* and *dibbacakkhuñāna*. We may wonder why in the oldest canonical text *cutūpapātañāna* is used in place of *dibbacakkhuñāna* (although the right question is why *dibbacakkhuñāna* replaced *cutūpapātañāna*). First of all, we may note that the *cutūpapātañāna* is more descriptive than *dibbacakkhuñāna*. The *cutūpapātañāna* is the ‘knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings]’, whereas the *dibbacakkhuñāna* is the ‘knowledge attained through or by means of the divine eye’. *Dibbacakkhuñāna* 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 如行業智，見人生趣，以此業此人先生此知之 (T1648.32.0444b17-18).

¹⁴⁹ *tena sahaṅgataṃ ñānaṃ sattānaṃ cutūpapāte ñānaṃ ti pi dibbacakkhuñānaṃ ti pi vuccatī ti* (Vism 429).

¹⁵⁰ For the connection of *cutūpapāta* with *cutipañsandhi*, see for instance: *etad ānuttariyaṃ bhante sattānaṃ cutūpapāta ñāne ti Bhante yā pi ayaṃ sattānaṃ cuti-pañsandhi-ñāna-desanā, sā pi tumhākaṃ yeva anuttarā* (Sv III 895); *cutūpapāta-ñānaṃ cuti-pañsandhi-cchādakaṃ tamaṃ vijjhati* (Sv III 1006); *cutūpapāte ñānaṃ ti cutiya ca upapāte ca ñānaṃ. 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 jízhi guō jīng* 佛說寂志果經 is translated with *mò* 沒 (見人沒生; T0022.01.0275c14-15). In the **Vimuttimaggā* 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’.

cutipaṭisaṅghicchādakaṃ tamaṃ vijjati ti pi vijjā. taṃ tamaṃ vijjhitvā sattānaṃ cutipaṭisaṅghiyā viditā pākaṭā karoti 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 gacchanti 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 pañite 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 *cutūpapātañña*'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 *cutūpapātañña*'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 *Cutūpapātañña*

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 *iddhis*.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, *dr̥ṣṭvā* is used, a gerund form from the root *√dr̥ś*) 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 4.3.15-17¹⁵⁷ 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 samprasāde ratvā caritvā dr̥ṣṭvaiva puṇyaṃ ca pāpaṃ ca punaḥ pratinyāyaṃ pratīyony 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 dr̥ṣṭvaiva puṇyaṃ ca pāpaṃ ca punaḥ pratinyāyaṃ pratīyony 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 dr̥ṣṭvaiva puṇyaṃ ca pāpaṃ ca punaḥ pratinyāyaṃ pratīyony 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 *cutūpapātāñña*, 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 *kaṣiṇa*, choosing one among the three *kaṣiṇas* of fire (*tejas*), white (*odāta*), and light (*āloka*), and should mentally extend it without getting the full absorption (*appanā*).¹⁶⁰ Among these three *kaṣiṇas*, the light *kaṣiṇa* 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 *kaṣiṇa*.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 (*paracakkavāla*) - 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 t̥hite ānejjappatte pubbenivāsānussatiññāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti* (D I 82). For more details, see below at § 9.2.

160 *tejokasiṇaṃ odātakasiṇaṃ ālokaṣiṇaṃ ti imesu t̥su kaṣiṇesu aññataraṃ āsannaṃ kātappaṃ; upacārajjhānagocaraṃ katvā vaḍḍhetvā upetappaṃ, na tattha appanā uppādetabbā ti adhippāyo* (Vism 427-8).

161 *imesu-ca pana t̥su ālokaṣiṇaṃ yeva seṭṭhataraṃ* (Vism 428).

162 *vaḍḍhitatṭhānassa anto yeva rūpagataṃ passitappaṃ* (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 dubbhaṇṇe, sugate duggate* (D I 82). With this phrasing, it may indicate the possibility of falling (*cavamāna*) in negative conditions (*hīna, dubbhaṇṇa, 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 another¹⁶⁶ 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 Śāṅkara's comment on this compound: *utāpy uccāvacaṃ uccaṃ ca devatvādy avacaṃ ca tiryaktvādi*,

163 *tattha yadā tassa bhikkhuno maṃsacakkhussa anāpāthagataṃ anto kucchigataṃ hadayavatthunissitaṃ heṭṭhā pathavītanissitaṃ tirokuḍḍapabbatapāṅkaragataṃ paracakkavālagatan ti idaṃ rūpaṃ ñāṇacakkhussa āpāthaṃ āgacchati, maṃsacakkhuno dīssamānaṃ viya hoti, tadā dibbacakkhu uppannaṃ hoti* (Vism 428-9).

164 See Johansson 1969, 48; Clough [2010] 2011, 417; 2012, 86. Johansson wrote about the *abhiññās* 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-vpad* or from *ud-vpad*. 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.v. "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 *cutūpapātañāna* 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 *cutūpapātañāna*’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 *Dirghāgama* 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 *cutūpapātañña* 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 *tevijjas* 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 *cutūpapātañña* 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 assigns¹⁷² 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 ñāṇasaṃkhātamaṃ 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 adhiṭṭhāti 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 visodhitam | sadattho me anuppatto, kataṃ buddhassa sāsanaṃ ||* (Th 332).

¹⁷¹ *pubbenivāsaṃ yo vedī saggāpāyaṃ ca passati | atho jātikkhayaṃ patto abhiññāvoso muni | etāhi tīhi vijjāhi tevijjo hoti brāhmaṇo | taṃ ahaṃ vadāmi tevijjaṃ nāññaṃ lapitalāpanan ti ||* (A I 165, 167-8).

¹⁷² See s.v. “vi-*v*bhaj” in SED.

Visuddhimagga presents a slightly different kind of process based on the work on *kaṣiṇas*. The *kaṣiṇas* 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 *kaṣiṇa* of light itself is the best among the *kaṣiṇas* 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 *kaṣiṇa*. 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 *yathākammūpagañña* 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 <i>kamma</i>	=	knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings]
<i>dibbacakkhu</i>		<i>yathākammūpagañña</i>		<i>cutūpapātañña</i>

The **Vimuttimagga*, at first, mentions the work on the *kaṣiṇas*, stating that the *dibbacakkhu* is attained by “one who has attained mastery over the fourth *jhāna* [through] the light *kaṣiṇas*”.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 *iddhipādas*”,¹⁷⁴ and successively the meditator “enters [through] the light *kaṣiṇa* 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 (Paṭi 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 *kaṣiṇa*. We will find similar information in a more developed way in the *Visuddhimagga*, which uses the light *kaṣiṇa* 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 kucchigatam*). 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
iddhipādas
(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 *iddhipādas* + *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 *kaṣiṇas* (*Vism* 427-9), plus explanation according to the *cittavīthi* doctrine + development of the knowledge of what is reached according to the *kamma* (*yathākammapagañāṇa*), 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 *yathākammapagañāṇa*, 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。(T1648.32.0444 a24-26).

¹⁷⁷ *anto kucchigatam hadayavatthunissitam heṭṭhā pathavītanissitam* (*Vism* 428).

¹⁷⁸ *sattānam cutūpapāte ñāṇan ti pi dibbacakkhuñāṇan ti pi vuccatī ti* (*Vism* 429); *cutūpapātañāṇasankhātam dibbacakkhu* (*Vism* 429).

according to the *Visuddhimagga* itself, the *dibbacakkhu* is also involved in the achievement of the *cetopariyañña* (Vism 409). Therefore, strictly speaking, the *cutūpapātañña* is not the *dibbacakkhu*, but something that you can know through it. Hence, the *dibbacakkhu* used to mention the *cutūpapātañña* is a metonymic use. Probably, the *cutūpapātañña* is the best *ñña* 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 *cutūpapātañña* 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 *kāmāvacaras* [worlds], nine *brahmalokas* 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 *devalokas* and the state of decline that is fourfold” (*chabbīsati devalokabhedam saggāñ ca catubbidham apāyañ ca dibbacakkhunā passati*; Dhp-a IV 233). This statement is problematic, because in order to count twenty-six heavens from the state of humankind 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 *tevijjas*, and therefore the passage also mentions the *pubbenivāsānussatiñña* (*pubbenivāsaṃ yo vedī*) and the *āsavakkhayañña* (*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

<i>Dibbacakkhu's range of perception in the Buddhist cosmos</i>						
World (<i>dhātu</i>)	No.	Realm (<i>bhūmi</i>)	Mp II 265	Dhp-a IV 233		
Formless World (<i>arūpadhātu</i>)	26	<i>nevasaññānāsaññāyatana</i>		26 <i>devalokas</i>		
	25	<i>akiñcaññāyatana</i>				
	24	<i>viññāṇañcāyatana</i>				
	23	<i>ākāsānañcāyatana</i>				
World of Pure Form (<i>rūpadhātu</i>)	22	<i>akaniṭṭha</i>			9 <i>brahmalokas</i>	26 <i>devalokas</i>
	21	<i>sudassin</i>				
	20	<i>sudassa</i>				
	19	<i>atappa</i>				
	18	<i>aviha</i>				
	17	<i>asañña-satta</i>				
	16	<i>vehapphala</i>				
	15	<i>subha-kiṇha</i>				
	14	<i>appamāṇa-subha</i>				
	13	<i>paritta-subha</i>				
	12	<i>ābhassara</i>				
	11	<i>appamāṇābha</i>				
	10	<i>parittābha</i>				
	9	<i>mahābrahmā</i>				
8	<i>brahma-purohita</i>					
7	<i>brahma-pārisajja</i>					
World of the Five Senses (<i>kāmadhātu</i>)	6	<i>paranimmīta-vasavattin</i>			6 <i>kāmāvacaras</i>	26 <i>devalokas</i>
	5	<i>nimmāṇa-ratin</i>				
	4	<i>tusita</i>				
	3	<i>yāma</i>				
	2	<i>tāvatiṃsa</i>				
	1	<i>cātummahārājika</i>				
	0	Human Being (<i>manussa</i>)				
	1	<i>asura</i>	4 <i>apāyas</i>	4 <i>apāyas</i>		
	2	<i>petti-visaya</i>				
	3	<i>tiracchānayani</i>				
4	<i>niraya</i>					

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 *abhiññās* 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 *Abhiññās*: The Vedic Background of the Buddhist Use of the Term ‘Divine’

On the basis of the formulation of some of the Buddhist *abhiññās*, 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’ (*cutūpapātañña*). 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 *prthivyai cainam agneś ca daivī vāg āviśati | sāvai daivī vāg yayā yad yad eva vadati tad tad bhavati || divas cainam ādityāc ca daivaṃ mana āviśati | tad vai daivaṃ mano yenānandy eva bhavaty atho na śocati || adbhyaś cainam candramasāś ca daivaḥ prāna āviśati | sa vai daivaḥ prāno yaḥ saṃcaramś cāsaṃcaramś 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 trayam śikṣed damam dānam dayām iti* (BU 5.2.3). I suspect that this Upaniṣadic passage is echoed in the *Dighanikāya*: *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* (RV 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 yathāṅdam mukhād vāg vāco 'gñiḥ*; 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, seyyathidaṃ 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 samudhrtyāmūrchayat || tam abhyatapat* (AU 1.1.3-4).

mouth (<i>mukha</i>)	nostrils (<i>nāsikā</i>)	eyes (<i>akṣi</i>)	ears (<i>karṇa</i>)	skin (<i>tvac</i>)	heart (<i>hṛdaya</i>)	navel (<i>nābhi</i>)	penis (<i>śiśna</i>)
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
speech (<i>vāc</i>)	breath (<i>prāṇa</i>)	sight (<i>cakṣus</i>)	hearing (<i>śrotra</i>)	body-hair (<i>loman</i>)	mind (<i>manas</i>)	digestive breath (<i>apāna</i>)*	semen (<i>retas</i>)
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
fire (<i>agni</i>)	wind (<i>vāyu</i>)	sun (<i>āditya</i>)	directions (<i>diś</i>)	plants (<i>oṣadhi</i>) and trees (<i>vanaspati</i>)	moon (<i>candramas</i>)	death (<i>mṛtyu</i>)	waters (<i>ap</i>)

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 *Rgveda* there occurs a mind which is divine: *kavīyamānaḥ ka iha pra vocad devam*

188 *tā etā devatāḥ sṛṣṭā* (AU 1.2.1).

189 *āyatanam naḥ prajāñihi | 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(h) = devatā*]: 'enter in your respective dwelling!'" (*tā abravīd yathāyatanam 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 *Sāmkhya*, have been analysed by Killingley (2006).

manaḥ kuto adhi prajātam (RV 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 *iddhis* and *abhiññās* 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 manas ekibhavati*; (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 *iddhis*” (*so evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite ānejjappatte iddhi-vidhāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. so aneka-viṭaṃ iddhidivhaṃ 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 *ālokessāmi ti pana citte uppajamāne ten’ eva cittena saddhiṃ citta-samuṭṭhānā vāyo-dhātu viññattim 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 sādhettaṃ uppajjati ti evaṃ pajānaṇaṃ pan’ ettha asammoha-sampajaññaṃ nāma* (Sv I 194); I emended *vāyo-dhātu-viññattim* with *vāyo-dhātu viññattim* 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 *Abhiññās*

The exegetic elaboration of the *abhiññās* is less systematic when compared with the treatment of the *iddhividhā*. 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 *abhiññās* 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*, *iddhividhā* and other *abhiññās*,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-ajjhata-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 *cetopariyañña*, 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 *pubbenivāsānussatiñña* 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 *cutūpapātañña* was subjected to a longer analysis when compared with the other *abhiññās*. The exegetic equivalence between the *cutūpapātañña* and *dibbacakkhu* has been analysed, suggesting that the use of the term '*dibbacakkhu*' to designate the *cutūpapātañña* 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 *cutūpapātañña*, 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 '*cutūpapātañña*', 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.

