

## APPENDIX

### *The Five Khandhas*

The Five *Khandhas* consist of the aggregates of body, feeling, memory, thought and imagination, and consciousness. It is difficult to appreciate the depth and subtlety of meaning within these five groups, so in order to give the reader some basis for contemplation, a list of similes is given. These similes were taught by the Buddha. They may be found in the section on the *Khandhas* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.

1. The body is likened to a lump of foam floating down the river Ganges.
2. Feeling is likened to rain falling into a puddle of water. As each raindrop falls, it causes a splash and a bubble which quickly bursts and disappears.
3. Memory is likened to a mirage seen in the desert. It has no substance to it; it is merely appearance.
4. Thought and imaginative thinking are likened to a plantain tree. When the outer layers of the trunk are peeled off, no substantial pith or hardwood is found inside.

5. Consciousness is likened to a magician who stands at the crossroads and displays all sorts of magical illusions, which are devoid of any real substance.

When talking about the *nāma khandhas* (mental groups), we tend to think of them as being separate things or entities; but, in fact, they are all aspects of the *citta*. It is therefore more correct to think in terms of the *citta* performing the functions of feeling, memory, thought or consciousness; for all of them are thoroughly dynamic, and so not static entities at all.

## Memory (*Saññā*)

It has become popular to translate the Pāli word *saññā* as “perception”, but this is a wrong translation. It seems probable that this misunderstanding stems from translations of parts of the *Ti-piṭaka* carried out in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by scholars who tried to fit Buddhist ideas into Western philosophical concepts. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines “perceive” as, ‘to apprehend with the mind, observe, understand; to apprehend through one of the senses’. And “perception” is defined as, ‘act, faculty of perceiving; intuitive recognition; (philos.) action by which the mind refers its sensations to external object as cause’.

The above definitions refer to complex processes that involve all of the mental *khandhas*, not just one. One function of the mental *khandhas* that has been ignored is ‘memory’. If *saññā* is not translated as memory, then where is memory in the *khandhas*? Throughout Thailand, *saññā* is always translated by

“kwam chum”, which means memory. This is universally accepted by both scholars and those who practice meditation.

Not enough thought has been given to the overwhelming importance of memory. Surely this should be clear to anyone who understands the devastating effect of Alzheimer’s disease in which the memory steadily diminishes until the unfortunate victim has no reference left from past experience and he becomes virtually an imbecile.

### *The Ascetic Practices (Dhutangas)*

The *Dhutangas* are ascetic practices that Buddhist monks voluntarily undertake. It must be understood that their purpose in every case is to counteract specific defilements (*kilesa*). So they are to be applied by each practitioner as and when he finds need for them.

1. Wearing robes that are patched and mended.
2. Wearing only the three principal robes and no others.
3. Getting ones food by going on the alms round.
4. Not omitting any house on the alms round.
5. Eating food only once a day, at one sitting.
6. Eating only out of the alms bowl.
7. Refusing to accept food offered after the alms round.
8. Living in the forest.
9. Living under a tree.
10. Living in the open; not at the foot of a tree, nor under a roof.
11. Living in a charnel ground.

12. Being satisfied with any available bed or resting place.
13. The sitter’s practice; in other words, sitting, standing or walking, but never lying down.

## *Ārammaṇa*

The word ‘*ārammaṇa*’ means: a foundation, a support or that on which something depends. But generally speaking, in this book, this ‘something’ refers to the state of mind and what flows out of it. As a supporting condition for mental states, the *ārammaṇa* may be an externally sensed object or an internal condition arising from feeling, memory, thought or consciousness.

Amongst those who practice the way of *kammaṭṭhāna*, the word *ārammaṇa* is often used to refer to an emotional mental state, either good or bad; although, to be strictly correct, it should refer to that which arouses or precipitates that mental state.

In the Thai language, the word *ārammaṇa*, pronounced “arom”, always means ‘the emotions’ in general. Sometimes in this book it also means the emotions.