

# Goal for today:

1. How does concentration work from the perspective of the Abhidhamma?
2. To share a concentration meditation method I have been practicing for a long time.



# Abhidhamma (1)

At the heart of the Abhidhamma philosophy is the Pitaka, or the Three Baskets (Pali Canon, Theravada Buddhism)

1. Vinaya Pitaka- the Book of Discipline (rules of conduct)
2. Sutta Pitaka- the Buddha's discourses
3. Abhidhamma Pitaka- Higher or Special doctrine



The Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of seven books.

The information in this presentation comes from Abhidhammatha Sangaha, a Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma.

It is an abstract of the seven books.



# Abhidhamma (2)

The Abhidhamma Pitaka is a philosophy, a psychology and an ethical framework

- **A philosophy**

It proposes an ontology, a perspective on the nature of reality. This perspective is called the dhamma theory.

- **A psychology**

It aims at understanding the nature of experience, and thus the reality on which it focuses is conscious reality, the world as given in experience, comprising both knowledge and the known.

- **An ethical framework**

Mental states are distinguished on the basis of ethical criteria: the wholesome and the unwholesome, the beautiful factors and the defilements.

All three dimensions have their place in the cornerstone of the Buddha's teaching, the program of liberation based on the Four Noble Truths.



**We live with a wrong perception of reality.**

(Matthieu Ricard)



# Abhidhamma, ultimate reality (3)

According to the Abhidhamma, the ultimate reality consists of: matter, consciousness, mental components and an unconditioned element, **Nibbāna**.

**Matter**: the physical world such as visual objects, sound, the human body, etc. (**rūpa**)

**Consciousness (citta)**: the knowing of an object

**Mental components (cetasika)**: they colour consciousness.

**nama**

Examples are anger, doubt, desire, friendliness, compassion, etc. There are 52 cetasikas. Consciousness and mental components have the same object, they appear and disappear at the same time and they have the same physical base (like the heart)

**Nibbāna**: it is impossible to describe what it is, but what you can say is that all unwholesome citta's and cetasika's have been destroyed and can never arise again.



# Mental factors (Cetasikas) grouped on ethical division



Unwholesome mental components  
Restrict mental space  
(Akusala-cetasikas)



Restrict or Expand mental space  
depending on circumstances  
(Aññāsamāna cetasikas)



Wholesome mental components  
Expand mental space  
(Sobhana-cetasikas)

- 14. Ignorance (Moha)
- 15. Shamelessness (Ahirika)
- 16. Recklessness (Anotappa)
- 17. Restlessness (Uddhacca)
- 18. Desire (Lobha)
- 19. Unjust convictions (Dṭṭhi)
- 20. Pride, haughtiness (Māna)
- 21. Anger (Dosa)
- 22. Envy (Issā)
- 23. Stinginess (Macchariya)
- 24. Worry (Kukkucca)
- 25. Dullness (Thīna)
- 26. Sleepyness (Middha)
- 27. Doubt (Vicikicchā)

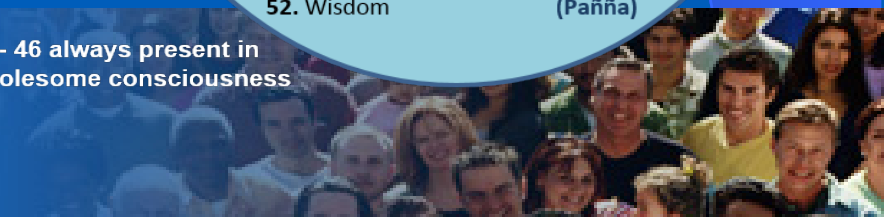
14 - 17 always present in unwholesome consciousness

Present in all consciousness:  
(Sabbacittasādhāraṇa)

- 1. Contact (Phassa)
- 2. Feeling (Vedana)
- 3. Perception (Sañña)
- 4. Intention (Cetanā)
- 5. Onepointedness (Ekaggatā)
- 6. Mental vitality (Jivitindriya)
- 7. Attention (Manasikāra)
- Sometimes present (Pakiṇṇaka):
- 8. Initial application (Vitakka)
- 9. Sustained application (Vicāra)
- 10. Decision (Adhimokkha)
- 11. Energy (Viriya)
- 12. Zest (Pīti)
- 13. Desire to act (Chanda)

- 28. Trust (Saddhā)
- 29. Mindfulness (Sati)
- 30. Shame (Hiri)
- 31. Afraid of doing wrong (Ottappa)
- 32. Generosity (Alobha)
- 33. Friendliness (Adosa)
- 34. Neutrality (balance) (Tatramajjhatatā)
- 35,36 Calm (antidote for restlessness and worry) (Passaddhi)
- 37,38 Lightness (antidote for dullness and sleepiness) (Lahuta)
- 39,40 Malleability (antidote for rigidity) (Mudutā)
- 41,42 Wieldiness (antidote for the rest of the hindrances) (Kammaññatā)
- 43,44 Proficiency (antidote for a lack of trust) (Pāguññatā)
- 45,46 Truthfulness (antidote for hypocrisy and fraude) (Ujjukatā)
- 47. Right speech (Sammāvācā)
- 48. Right action (Sammākamanta)
- 49. Right livelihood (Sammā-ājīva)
- 50. Compassion (Karunā)
- 51. Being glad for someone else (Muditā)
- 52. Wisdom (Pañña)

28 - 46 always present in wholesome consciousness



# Unwholesome cetāsikas



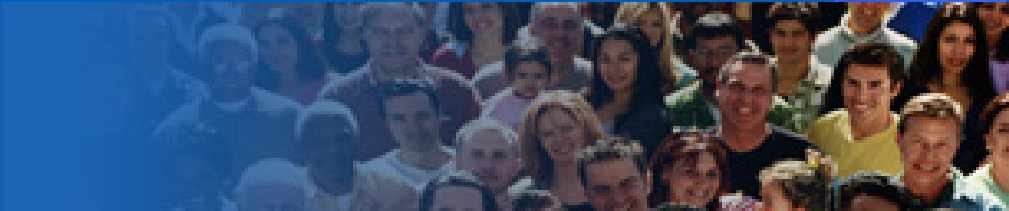
14-17 always present

- |                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| 14. Ignorance          | (Moha)       |
| 15. Shamelessness      | (Ahirika)    |
| 16. Recklessness       | (Anotappa)   |
| 17. Restlessness       | (Uddhacca)   |
| 18. Desire             | (Lobha)      |
| 19. Injust convictions | (Dīṭṭhi)     |
| 20. Pride, haughtiness | (Māna)       |
| 21. Anger              | (Dosa)       |
| 22. Envy               | (Issā)       |
| 23. Stinginess         | (Macchariya) |
| 24. Worry              | (Kukkucca)   |
| 25. Dullness           | (Thīna)      |
| 26. Sleepyness         | (Middha)     |
| 27. Doubt              | (Vicikicchā) |

Restrict mental space  
(Akusala-cetāsikas)

Hindrances (in blue) obstruct concentration (**samādhi**)

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# Unwholesome/wholesome cetasikas

*Present in all consciousness:  
(Sabbacittasādhāraṇa)*

- |                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Contact         | (Phassa)       |
| 2. Feeling         | (Vedana)       |
| 3. Perception      | (Sañña)        |
| 4. Intention       | (Cetanā)       |
| 5. Onepointedness  | (Ekaggatā)     |
| 6. Mental vitality | (Jivitindriya) |
| 7. Attention       | (Manasikāra)   |

*Sometimes present (Pakiṇṇaka):*

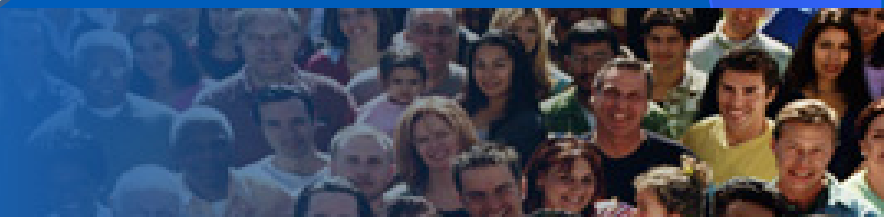
- |                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 8. Initial application   | (Vitakka)    |
| 9. Sustained application | (Vicāra)     |
| 10. Decision             | (Adhimokkha) |
| 11. Energy               | (Viriya)     |
| 12. Zest                 | (Pīti)       |
| 13. Desire to act        | (Chanda)     |



Variable towards mental space  
(Aññāsamāna cetasikas)

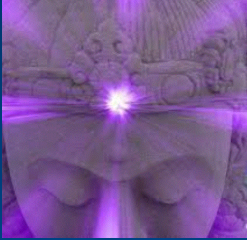
Components in blue are  
important for developing  
concentration (**samādhi**)

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# The main components that make up the concentration proces



Onepointedness (**Ekaggatā**) This is the essence of concentration, but this cetasika can't do the job alone. Counteracts desire



Initial application (**Vitakka**) Counteracts sloth and torpor



Sustained application (**Vicāra**) Counteracts doubt



Zest (**Pīti**) Counteracts anger



Happiness (**Sukha**) Counteracts worry and restlessness



# Initial application (Vitakka)



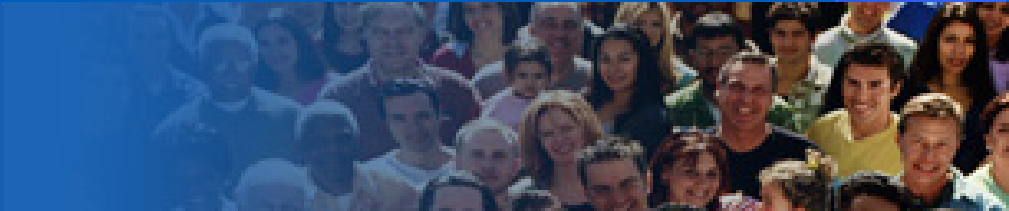
**Characteristic:** directing the mind onto the object

**Function:** to strike at and to thresh the object

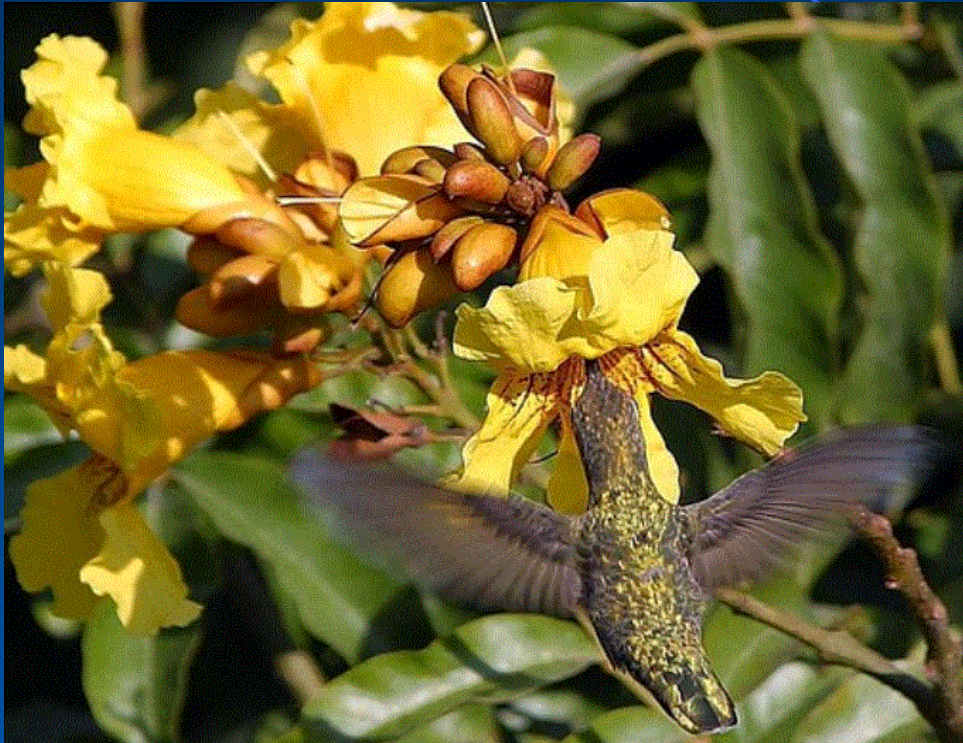
**Manifestation:** leading of the mind onto the object

**Proximate cause:** the object

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# Sustained application (Vicāra)



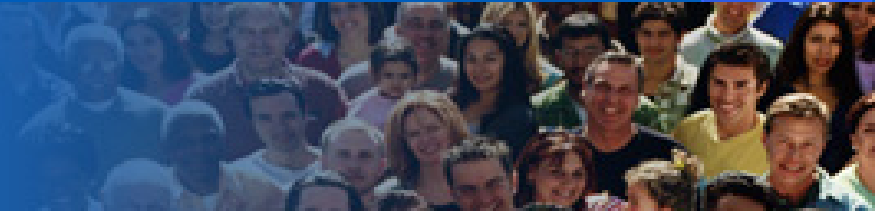
**Characteristic:** continued pressure onto the object

**Function:** sustained application of the associated mental phenomena to the object

**Manifestation:** anchoring of those phenomena in the object

**Proximate cause:** the object

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# The difference between zest and happiness



**Characteristic:** endearing  
**Function:** refresh mind and body  
**Manifestation:** elation  
**Proximate cause:** mind and body

**Characteristic:** experiencing a desirable object  
**Function:** partaking of the desirable aspect of the object  
**Manifestation:** mental enjoyment  
**Proximate cause:** tranquillity

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# Onepointedness (Samādhi)

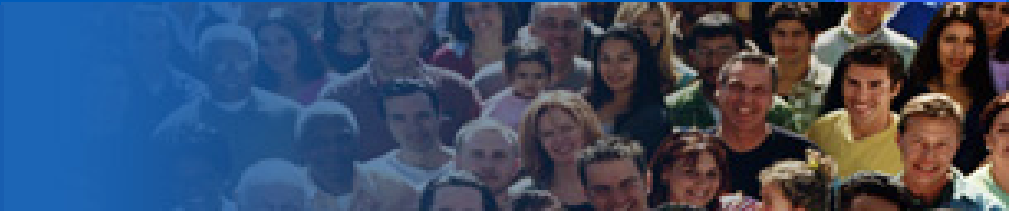


**Characteristic:** non-distraction

**Function:** unite the associated states

**Manifestation:** peace

**Proximate cause:** happiness



# Wholesome cetasikas



Expand  
mental space  
(Sobhana-  
cetasikas)

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 28. Trust  | (Saddhā)          |
| 29. Mindfulness  | (Sati)            |
| 30. Shame  | (Hiri)            |
| 31. Afraid of doing wrong                                  | (Ottappa)         |
| 32. Generosity   | (Alobha)          |
| 33. Friendliness   | (Adosa)           |
| 34. Neutrality (balance)                                   | (Tatramajjhatatā) |
| 35,36 Calm (antidote for restlessness and worry)           | Passaddhi)        |
| 37,38 Lightness (antidote for dullness and sleepiness)     | (Lahuta)          |
| 39,40 Malleability (antidote for rigidity)                 | (Mudutā)          |
| 41,42 Wieldiness (antidote for the rest of the hindrances) | (Kammaññatā)      |
| 43,44 Proficiency (antidote for a lack of trust)           | (Pāguññatā)       |
| 45,46 Truthfulness   | (Ujjukatā)        |
| 47. Right speech   | (Sammāvācā)       |
| 48. Right action   | (Sammākamanta)    |
| 49. Right livelihood                                       | (Sammā-ājīva)     |
| 50. Compassion   | (Karunā)          |
| 51. Feeling joy for someone                                | (Muditā)          |
| 52. Wisdom   | (Pañña)           |

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28-46 always  
present



# An untrained mind in daily life

Where  
are you  
going  
today?



I don't know, aks  
the horse.



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# Concentration Method Tamatha (1)

## What is it?

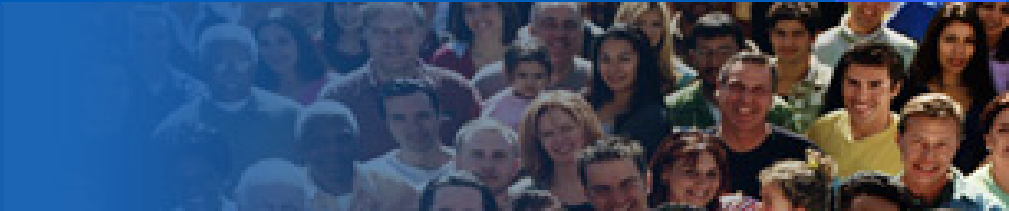
The development of concentration (**samādhi**) by listening to a sound.

## How is it practiced?

Listen to the sound 'buddho' which you make yourself. Buddho refers to the qualities of the Buddha. It is one of the 40 meditation subjects the Abidhamma has given to develop **samadhi**. At the same time you have a chain of beads in your hands which you turn smoothly through your hands. The beads helps you to stay with the proces in the here and now. You keep your eyes closed during meditation.

## What to do when your mind strays?

As soon as your mind strays from the sound and you become aware of it, you try to stop the other object mentally and go back to the listening proces. Of course you do that in a friendly manner towards yourself.

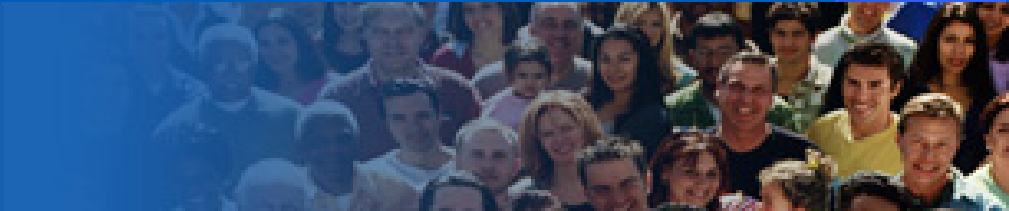




# Concentration Method Tamatha (2)

## The qualities of the Buddha

1. Free from any mental obstruction or impurity;
2. The Perfectly Enlightened One;
3. The Endowed One with Knowledge and Conduct;
4. The Well-gone One or The Well-spoken One;
5. The Knower of the Worlds;
6. The Incomparable Leader of men to be Tamed ;
7. The Teacher of Celestial and Human Beings;
8. The Enlightened One;
9. The Blessed One. He has full control over his own mind and body.



# Concentration Method Tamatha (3)

## Results when reaching concentration (**samādhi**)

1. The mind becomes crystal clear and experiences (complete) inner silence and peace. It is possible to have no thoughts at all during concentration. Cetasika's 28 t/m 46 (the beautiful ones) are activated.
2. The hindrances disappear temporarily (anger, desire, doubt, restlessness, worry, sloth and torpor).
3. The mind experiences a complete presence in the here and now.
4. Because the focus is on the qualities of the Buddha, the maximum level of concentration is access concentration (**upacāra**).



# Concentration Method Tamatha (4)

## Access versus Absorption concentration

### Access concentration (**upacāra-samādhi**)

The mind is able to stay on the chosen object but does not sink in it;

### Absorption concentration (**appanā-samādhi**)

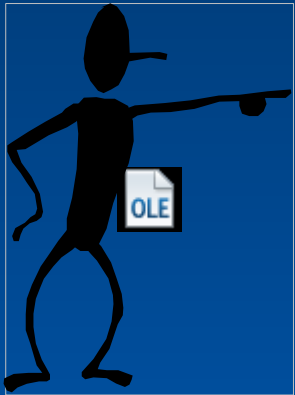
These are the **jhānas**, very high levels of concentration. The mind is completely absorbed in the chosen object;

The reason why only access concentration can be attained with this method is because the mind is practising conscious reflection on the different qualities and this endeavor demands an intense application of 'initial application' (**vitakka**).

This prevents concentration to reach the level of absorption.



# Demo Concentration Method



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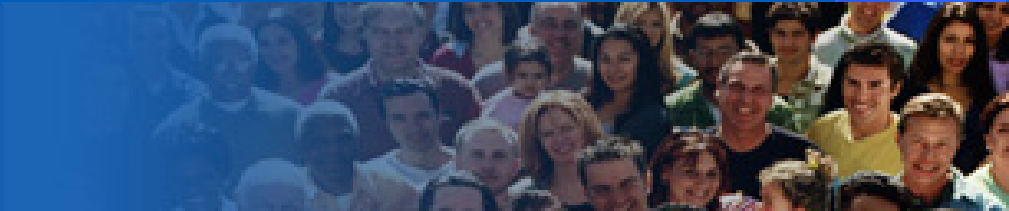
# Research

- Thought on research

If it is possible to see when there is desire or anger (for example) in the brain in a person who has not developed concentration and you compare this in the brain of someone who has developed concentration then according to the Abhidhamma there should be significant difference to notice.

(besides fycical differences like bloodpressure, breathrate, etc)

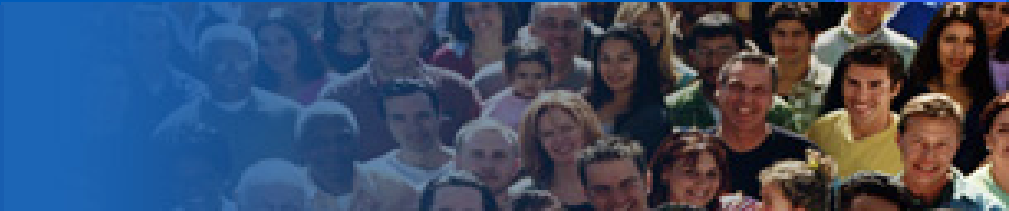
(besides repetative taskhandling, I think already been adressed in research)



# Questions?



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# 3. Wat gebeurt er tijdens een cognitief waarneemproces



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- 14. Ignorance
- 15. Shamelessness
- 16. Recklessness
- 17. Restlessness
- 18. Desire
- 19. Unjust convictions
- 20. Pride, haughtyness
- 21. Anger
- 22. Envy
- 23. Stinginess
- 24. Worry
- 25. Dullness
- 26. Sleepyness
- 27. Doubt

(**Moha**)  
(**Ahirika**)  
(**Anotappa**)  
(**Uddhacca**)

Present in all consciousness:  
(**Sabbacittasādhāraṇa**)

- 1. Contact
- 2. Feeling
- 3. Perception
- 4. Intention
- 5. One-pointedness
- 6. Mental vitality
- 7. Attention
- 8. Initial application
- 9. Sustained application
- 10. Decision

(**Ka**)  
(**Middhā**)  
(**Vicikicchā**)

Sometimes present (**Pakiṇṇaka**):  
(**Vitakka**)  
(**Vicāra**)

- 28. Trust
- 29. Mindfulness
- 30. Shame

(**Saddhā**)  
(**Sati**)

(**Hiri**)

(**Ottappa**)

(**Alobha**)

(**Adosa**)

(**Tatramajjhatatā**)

(**Passaddhi**)

(**Lahuta**)

(**Mudutā**)

(**Kammaññatā**)

(**Pāguññatā**)

(**Ujjukatā**)

(**Sammāvācā**)

(**Sammāvācā**)

31. Afraid of doing wrong

32. Generosity

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