

***Acitta* in Early *Prajñāpāramitā*: Unconsciousness, Cessation Attainment, or Signlessness?**

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Abstract

The present article attempts to explore possible meaning(s) of what appears to be the earliest extant reference in Mahāyāna literature to the notion of *acitta*, found in a Gāndhārī manuscript of the text generally known as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

Introduction

The exploration in this article is part of a wider research project of reading early Mahāyāna *sūtras* from the viewpoint of relevant passages in *Āgama* literature.¹ In what follows, I begin with the passage in which the reference under discussion occurs, followed by briefly examining the attainment of unconsciousness and in considerably more detail the attainment of cessation in order to ascertain if these would fit the idea of *acitta* in this passage. Then I turn to the context of the passage under discussion in relation to the notion of a sign (*nimitta*) and its absence.

Although my discussion will be confined to references in texts belong to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* textual family, perhaps just a brief outlook on later tradition may be appropriate as

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¹ My use of the phrase “*Āgama* literature” is meant to comprise Pāli discourses, following a suggestion offered by Skilling 2024: 383, who points out that “[t]he Pāli counterpart of an *āgama* is called a *nikāya*, a corpus or body of texts, but Pāli tradition also recognized and used the synonym *āgama*. Thus, when we refer to the collections as a whole, regardless of their school affiliation, we can refer to them as *Āgamas* on the understanding that this includes the *Nikāyas*.”

a way of highlighting the significance of the basic notion under discussion. For this purpose, I have chosen the following quote from D. T. Suzuki (1949/1977: 28f), found in a monograph whose main title is *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind*:²

So long as the seeing is [of] something to see, it is not the real one; only when the seeing is no-seeing—that is, when the seeing is not a specific act of seeing into a definitely circumscribed state of consciousness—is it the ‘seeing into one’s self-nature.’ Paradoxically stated, when seeing is no-seeing there is real seeing; when hearing is no-hearing there is real hearing. This is the intuition of the Prajñāpāramitā. When thus the seeing of self-nature has no reference to a specific state of consciousness, which can be logically or relatively defined as a something, the Zen masters designate it in negative terms and call it ‘no-thought,’ or ‘no-mind,’ *wu-nien* or *wu-hsin*. As it is ‘no-thought’ or ‘no-mind,’ the seeing is really the seeing.

The *acitta* Passage

The passage at the heart of my present exploration stems from a Gāndhārī manuscript in Kharoṣṭhī script, belonging to the so-called “Split Collection.” The manuscript has preserved substantial portions of what in the Sanskrit version of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* are the first and fifth chapters.³ Radiocarbon dating places this manuscript in the environs of the first to early second century,⁴ which makes it the earliest currently known material testimony to textual versions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*

² As already noted by Yün-hua 1989: 37, the notion of ‘no-thought’ or ‘no-mind’ was “a Buddhist concept introduced to the Chinese from India.” Nevertheless, according to Nishihira 2014/2024: 19 the Chinese counterpart to *acitta*, in the form of the phrase 無心, “already existed in the Daoist philosophy before Buddhism was transmitted to China.”

³ In the version translated by Lokakṣema (and his team), the 道行般若經, T 224, the preserved parts correspond to the first and the third chapter. For a study of selected aspects of T 224 in the light of relevant *Āgama* passages see Anālayo 2025.

⁴ Falk 2011: 20 reports that the C14 dating gave “two-sigma ranges from AD 25–43 (probability 14.3%) and AD 47–147 (probability 81.1%),” adding that “[o]n palaeographic ground[s] a date in the first century AD would not surprise.”

Prajñāpāramitā textual family. By comparison, the earliest Chinese translation of a version of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, undertaken by Lokakṣema and his collaborators, was completed in the year 179.⁵ In my study of the *acitta* passage from the Gāndhārī manuscript, I will give priority to relating this to relevant material from Lokakṣema's translation, rather than attempting a comprehensive study of the different members of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* textual family, in order to stay with the earliest extant versions of the text.

The reference to be discussed features in what in all versions constitutes the beginning part of the first chapter; more specifically it occurs in the context of teachings on emptiness dispensed by Subhūti on behalf of the Buddha.⁶ In the present case, as in much of the remainder of the same chapter, Subhūti engages in a dialogue with Śāriputra. The relevant passage in the Gāndhārī manuscript proceeds as follows:⁷

[Subhūti said:] “That mind (Sanskrit *citta*), being tamed, is *acitta*.”

Then the venerable Śāriputra said to the venerable Subhūti: “[How is it, venerable] Subhūti, is there a mind such that this mind is *acitta*?”

When this was said, the venerable Subhūti said this to the venerable Śāriputra: “[How is it, venerable Śāriputra,] in the state that is *acitta*, are existence or nonexistence apprehended?”

[Śāriputra said:] “No, venerable Subhūti, this is not the case.”

⁵ T 2145 at T LV 47c₅; see Harrison 1993: 142.

⁶ On the choice of Subhūti for this role see Anālayo 2025: 29–35.

⁷ Falk and Karashima 2012: 34–36: *daṃtaṃ taṃ cito acito. asa hu aiśpa śāriputro aiśpa suhoti etad oca: ki + + + + bhūti asti taṃ cito yaṃ cito acito? evaṃvuto aiśpa suhūti aiśpa śāriputra[tra edadoya]: [ki] + + + + .. [ya acitada] tatra [astida] nastida va uvalabhāti? no hidaṃ ausa suhūti.* According to the conventions employed by the editors, square brackets indicate partially preserved letter(s), a double period a letter too poorly preserved to enable reconstruction, and round brackets letter(s) not preserved that can nevertheless be reconstructed from the context; plus signs convey how much of the same line has not been preserved due to loss of bark.

The key term in the above passage is Gāndhārī *acita*, Sanskrit *acitta*, which I have intentionally left untranslated. In his translation of this passage from the Gāndhārī manuscript, Salomon (2018: 348) renders the term as “no thought.” This follows the translation choice adopted by Conze (1973/1975: 84) for the corresponding Sanskrit passage.⁸

I hesitate to follow these precedents, as it seems to me that the connotations usually evoked by the term “thought”—even though in English usage this term can in principle be used to refer to the mind as such—risk banalizing the statement in question. A reference to “no thought” could be mistaken to convey that the issue at stake is just the absence of ordinary thinking activity. That much can already be achieved by developing just concentration. A state of mind beyond ordinary thinking activity, however, would not self-evidently be beyond apprehension in terms of existence and nonexistence. Instead, it would fall squarely within the category of a “concentrated mental state” listed in the instructions for the third *smṛtyupasthāna*, or establishment of mindfulness.⁹

The instructions for the third *smṛtyupasthāna* employ the same term *citta*, which has its Chinese counterpart in the character *xīn* (心), literally the “heart.” This Chinese rendering aptly captures a central connotation of *citta*, which is the heart-mind as the actual state or condition of the mind from the viewpoint of its emotional quality and intention-related orientation. In this sense, the usage of *citta* is to some degree distinct from another two terms used in early Buddhist literature to refer to the mind.¹⁰ One of these two is *manas*, which stands for what could perhaps be called the intellect-mind, being the agent of mental activity (as distinct from bodily and verbal activity) and constituting the sixth sense (in addition to

⁸ For the phrase under discussion see Wogihara 1932/1935: 38,₂₃: *tac cittam acittam*.

⁹ See MN 10 at MN I 59,₃₄ (= DN 22 at DN II 299,₂₃), MĀ 98 at T I 584a₉, and EĀ 12.1 at T II 569a₇. An exposition of *smṛtyupasthāna* in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* abbreviates the third *smṛtyupasthāna* and for this reason does not cover individual states of mind; see Kimura 2009: 80,₇, D 9 *ka* 237b₆ or P 731 *nyi* 241b₁, T 220 at T VII 487a₈, T 222 at T VIII 194a₂₁, and T 223 at T VIII 254b₁₄.

¹⁰ See also Johansson 1965, Hamilton 1996: 82–114, Somaratne 2005, and Brahmāli 2009: 49–54

the five physical senses). The other term is *viññāna* as the consciousness-mind, being predominantly a type of knowing by way of the six senses (the five physical senses and *manas* as the sixth), which continues as a flowing process of being conscious during life and from one life to the next. The distinctions proposed here concern nuances, as at times the three terms function as near-synonyms.¹¹ Nevertheless, *citta* stands out among these three terms for being the appropriate choice to designate a mind affected or unaffected by emotions as well as for what can be developed through meditation practice, and the translation “mind” seems in general preferable for *citta*.¹²

In the present context, however, translation challenges are not confined to *citta*, as a closely related problem is also how to render the negation *a*. In principle, *acitta* can be understood to convey the sense that the mental condition described is either “no mind” or else that it is “without mind.” The Tibetan version and the relevant passage in Lokakṣema’s translation opt for the latter interpretation, but several other Chinese translations belonging to the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* textual family instead reflect the former understanding.¹³ On adopting the latter interpretation,

¹¹ See, e.g., SN 12.61 at SN II 94,¹³ Chung and Fukita 2020: 113,¹ and SĀ 289 at T II 81c₇.

¹² Huifeng 2017: 205 uses “mindless” for the corresponding passage in Kumārajīva’s translation, T 227, as does Walser 2018: 136 for the version of this statement in Lokakṣema’s translation, T 224; see next note for the Chinese originals.

¹³ Karashima 2011: 4,⁴ (= T 224 at T VIII 425c₂₆): 有心無心; the same choice can be seen in T 226 at T VIII 508c₁₆: 心無心 and in the Tibetan version, D 12 ka 3a₃ or P 734 mi 3a₇: ‘*di ltar sems de ni sems ma mchis pa*, which thus adopts a *bahuvrīhi* reading of the key phrase. The alternative interpretation, however, informs other versions of this statement in T 220 at T VII 763c₁₈: 心非心性, T 220 at T VII 866a₁₀: 是心非心, T 225 at T VIII 478c₂₁: 是意非意, T 227 at T VIII 537b₁₄: 是心非心, and T 228 at T VIII 587b₁₄: 彼心非心. In addition to the difference between 非 and 無, reflecting different perspectives on the underlying Indic original as a *karmadhāraya* or a *bahuvrīhi*, another variation can be seen between 心 (usually: *citta*) and 意 (usually: *manas*). I am inclined to accord less importance to this latter variation evident in T 225, given that the earliest attested reference in the Gāndhārī manuscript is clearly to *cita*, that is, to Sanskrit *citta*.

which to my mind appears to be overall the more compelling one,¹⁴ *acitta* would refer to being “mindless,” “without mind,” “lacking a mind,” or perhaps, in order to relate the chosen translation more closely to the overall topic of emptiness, “devoid of mind.” In order not to prejudice my exploration, however, I will continue using the Sanskrit term *acitta*.

Several versions continue right after the above exchange with a reference to the luminous/pure nature of the mind. The absence of such a reference in the Gāndhārī manuscript and in Lokakṣema’s translation suggests such references to be later additions to the present passage.¹⁵ Since my concern in the present context is predominantly with the earliest extant formulation of *acitta*, I will for the time being leave this intriguing difference aside as a topic that deserves an exploration on its own.¹⁶

Before embarking on a survey of possible interpretations of the term *acitta* in the passage quoted above, I need to follow up an interesting suggestion by Wynne (2024: 20) that this passage, and the teachings that occur in close proximity to it, are “an obvious inheritance from Kaccāna,” leading him to the conclusion that “when the Prajñāpāramitā was first formulated, in Gandhāra and its surroundings, it occurred within a tradition closely associated with a Proto-Madhyamaka lineage stemming from Mahā-Kaccāna.”

¹⁴ I follow the reasoning offered in a comment on a comparable passage in the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* by Harrison 2006: 138 who notes that in this case, too, the Tibetan version opts “for the *bahuvrīhi* interpretation (X *med pa* or X *ma mchis pa*).” He explains that “[b]oth readings are grammatically possible: to say, for example, of the *lokadhātu* that it is *adhātu* could be legitimately construed as saying that the world-system (or world-realm, world-sphere, world-element, etc.) is not a system (or realm, sphere, etc.), or is a no-system, or is no system at all (here the *karmadhāraya*), or that it lacks a system, or there is no system in it (*bahuvrīhi*). However, in my view the *bahuvrīhi* reading is more cogent philosophically, and in this regard, I think the Tibetan translators have got it right.”

¹⁵ This has already been suggested by Zacchetti 2008: 139f in relation to such absence in T 224, a conclusion confirmed by the same type of absence in the Gāndhārī manuscript published in the meantime. The absence of such a reference to the luminous nature of the mind has also been noted by Karashima 2011: 4n25, Huifeng 2017: 205n26, and Wynne 2024: 19.

¹⁶ A discussion of this feature will be part of a study at present under preparation under the provisional title “From the Luminous Mind to Enlightenment.”

Now, if that had been the case, it could reasonably be expected that Mahākātyāyana would become a fairly prominent protagonist in early formulations of *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. Yet, he features only on a single occasion, found in the second chapter of the *Prajñāpāramitā* translated by Lokakṣema and his team, where he forms part of a group of *śrāvakas* who ask Subhūti a question.¹⁷ His extremely marginal role—a single occurrence compared to over 600 references to Subhūti (須菩提) in the translation by Lokakṣema (T 224)—gives the impression that he was not seen as a significant influence on early *Prajñāpāramitā* thought by those responsible for compiling and transmitting this text.

Wynne (2024: 15) supports his proposal by referring to a quote from the *Kātyāyanāvavāda* in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (15.7). In evaluating this quote, a minor circumstance relevant to my present concerns is that it quite explicitly attributes the teaching given in the *Kātyāyanāvavāda* on the need to avoid the two extremes of existence and nonexistence to the Buddha himself.¹⁸ Although Wynne (2024: 15 and 19) clearly has a point in relating this teaching to early *Prajñāpāramitā* thought—such as the reference to a non-apprehension of existence or nonexistence in the *acitta* passage quoted above—here, too, Mahākātyāyana has only a minor part to play, in this case by occasioning the teaching through an inquiry into right view.¹⁹ In other words, the indubitable profundity of the actual teaching does not automatically transfer to the personality portrayal of Mahākātyāyana, since its delivery could even be interpreted as conveying that he needed the Buddha’s clarifications to further his understanding in this respect. In fact, when he is on record for delivering teachings himself, these tend to be on relatively ordinary matters. Mahākātyāyana features

¹⁷ Karashima 2011: 48,₂ (= T 224 at T VIII 430a₁₅), with its Sanskrit counterpart in Wogihara 1932/1935: 161,₁₉ (nothing from this chapter has been preserved in the Gāndhārī manuscript).

¹⁸ The Sanskrit and Tibetan versions refer to “the Blessed One” and the Chinese to “the Buddha”; see de La Vallée Poussin 1913: 269,₆, Padmakara Translation Group 2008: 139,₉, and T 1564 at T XXX 20b₁.

¹⁹ SN 12.15 at SN II 17,₅, Chung and Fukita 2020: 167,₆, and SĀ 301 at T II 85c₁₉; explicit attribution to the Buddha also introduces quotations from this discourse in SN 22.90 at SN III 134,₂₈ and SĀ 262 at T II 66c₂₅, thereby confirming that this perspective was considered a significant aspect of the teaching.

repeatedly countering claims to innate superiority by brahmins,²⁰ in addition to which he teaches on the source of conflicts in the world,²¹ the six recollections,²² and the proper time for approaching an esteemed monk.²³

When Mahākātyāyana is associated with more profound teachings in *Āgama* literature, then such instances tend to involve something taught by the Buddha, with Mahākātyāyana in turn providing an analytical commentary. In such instances he features mainly as a commissioned commentator—he has been asked by others to provide an explanation and thus has not chosen the teachings on which he comments—so that here, too, the profundity of the Buddha’s teachings does not automatically transfer to the personality portrayal of Mahākātyāyana.

What emerges in such contexts appears to be above all his analytical skill, evident in how he executes his assignments, and this skill may well have earned him his place in listings of eminent disciples as foremost in providing an analysis.²⁴ Bodhi (1997: 223) explains that Pāli discourses portray Mahākātyāyana as an analyst who “most closely approximates to the Venerable Sāriputta,” differing from the latter in providing commentaries that are, “admittedly, a little dry” due to being “bare of the rhetorical devices utilized by other renowned exponents of the Dhamma”

²⁰ In MN 84 at MN II 84,¹⁰ and its parallel SĀ 548 at T II 142a₂₆ he gives a sustained teaching on the four classes (or proto-castes); in SN 35.132 at SN IV 117,¹⁰ and its parallel SĀ 255 at T II 63c₂ he rebukes arrogant young brahmins; and in AN 2.4.7 at AN I 67,³³ and its parallels SĀ 547 at T II 141c₂₃ and EĀ 19.9 at T II 595c₂ he reevaluates the need to pay respect to aged brahmins.

²¹ AN 2.4.6 at AN I 66,¹⁰ and its parallel SĀ 546 at T II 141b₂₈.

²² AN 6.26 at AN III 314,²⁰ and its parallels in a Sanskrit manuscript, Harrison 2007: 202, and in SĀ 550 at T II 143b₂₀. The same topic also comes up in an instruction attributed to him in SĀ 554 at T II 145b₁₂, repeated with a different recipient in SĀ 555 at T II 145c₁₇.

²³ AN 6.28 at AN III 321,²². The teachings listed here and in the preceding three notes provide more weighty evidence for his character portrayal in *Āgama* literature than the report in Ud 5.6 at Ud 58,₂ that he was the preceptor of a monk who had memorized the *Atthakavagga*.

²⁴ AN 1.14 at AN I 23,²⁵ and EĀ 4.2 at T II 557b₁₄ (see also EĀ 49.3 at T II 795c₁₅); for the full version of the respective statements see Anālayo 2011: 215.

(such as similes, parables, and stories). His somewhat schematic mode of analysis, often undertaken by way of the six senses,²⁵ could even be viewed as offering a reassuring domestication of elusive and thought-provoking teachings by bringing these more firmly into the orbit of standard doctrine. On such an interpretation, it would then appear to be due to his ability in this respect that he is asked so often to explain. In short, the way he is portrayed in *Āgama* literature places him on the side of proto-Abhidharma and commentarial exegesis rather than as in some way anticipating early *Prajñāpāramitā* thought.²⁶

The same pattern continues when, as noted by Bodhi (1997: 242), “the Theravāda tradition ascribes to him two exegetical treatises—the *Peṭakopadesa* and the *Nettipakaraṇa*—and an influential grammar of the Pāli language called the *Kaccāyana-Vyākaraṇa*.”²⁷ As pointed out by Norman (1983: 108) in a comment

²⁵ Analysis by way of the six senses features prominently in MN 18 at MN I 111,₃₁ and its parallels MĀ 115 at T I 604b₁ and EĀ 40.10 at T II 743b₁₁, in MN 133 at MN III 195,₂₄ and its parallel MĀ 165 at T I 697c₁₈, in MN 138 at MN III 225,₁₁ and its parallel MĀ 164 at T I 695a₁₀, and in SN 35.130 at SN IV 115,₁₃ and its parallel SĀ 553 at T II 145a₁₇; for the last case see also Or.15009/77, Nagashima 2009: 148. The same holds for SĀ 551 at T II 144b₉, whereas the explanation reported in its parallel SN 22.3 at SN III 9,₂₆ first takes up the five aggregates and then shifts to what is experienced through the six senses. The same pattern recurs when he reportedly relies on the scheme of the six senses in SĀ 552 at T II 144c₂₉ but instead on the five aggregates in its parallel SN 22.4 at SN III 13,₁₁. His comments in AN 10.26 at AN V 47,₃ and its parallel SĀ 549 at T II 143a₁₇ are in turn based on the *kaṣiṇas*, an instance where the teaching attributed to him does not seem to be particularly well related to the verse on which he comments. In AN 10.172 at AN V 257,₁₉ he is on record for relying on the ten pathways of action in his exegesis.

²⁶ An explicit indication to this effect can be found in the depiction of a gathering of senior disciples, each extolling qualities of his own, where in MĀ 184 at T I 727b₂₃ he speaks in praise of discussions on Abhidharma; see in more detail Anālayo 2011: 214f.

²⁷ Although his name features only in the title of the last work, the other two works explicitly refer to him as their source of authority; see Nett 1,₉ and Peṭ 3,₅. Notably, the association with him evident in the latter case may have a counterpart in the **Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (大智度論), T 1509 at T XXV 70a₂₀: 摩訶迦旃延, 佛在時, 解佛語作毘勒, which would then testify to the relevance of this aspect of his depiction in a textual tradition closely associated with *Prajñāpāramitā* thought.

specifically related to the *Peṭakopadesa*, attributing such a role to him aligns with his depiction in *Āgama* literature: Once “Kaccāna was renowned for his analytical powers, it is perhaps not surprising that a book entirely devoted to analysis should be attributed to him.” The same logic may well be at work when Sarvāstivādins consider him to have compiled their canonical Abhidharma treatise *Jñānaprasthāna*.²⁸

The various indications that emerge in this way put into perspective the final part of the proposal by Wynne (2024: 26) that in “early Prajñāpāramitā texts ... Proto-Madhyamaka themes were given a fresh rendering, which in the case of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* was dependent on the canonical tradition created by Kaccāna.” The above exploration shows that Mahākātyāyana, rather than being given a central role as an important source of inspiration, should indeed feature as just one of those who need Subhūti’s help to understand *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, similar in this respect to the part played by Śāriputra in the passage on *acitta* quoted above.

Unconscious Beings

In principle, the term *acitta* could be read literally to refer to some state of unconsciousness. In what follows, I will explore this possibility from the viewpoint of *Āgama* literature, which can reasonably be assumed to be about as close as we can get to the type of doctrinal background relevant to the early stage in the development of Mahāyāna thought and practice reflected in the Gāndhārī manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*.

A state of unconsciousness features in the *Pañcattaya-sutta* and its Tibetan parallel as a goal apparently aspired to by some ancient Indians.²⁹ Successful pursuit of this goal can be expected to result in rebirth in the celestial realm of unconsciousness, and those who are reborn in that condition are devoid of any form of conscious experience.³⁰ These unconscious beings appear to be

²⁸ T 1543 at T XXVI 771b₁₆.

²⁹ MN 102 at MN II 230,7, Skilling 1994: 326,5, and Or.15009/642 r₄-5, Kudo and Shono 2015: 445.

³⁰ AN 9.24 at AN IV 401,15. Abhidh-k 2.41, Pradhan 1967: 68,11, indicates that mind and mental factors have ceased for such unconscious beings; Vism

locked into the condition of being without consciousness for as long as their life in that particular realm lasts, as they pass away as soon as they experience a perception.³¹

The aspiration to become unconscious appears to be grounded in insight into the potentially problematic nature of perception. Yet, the attempted solution of advocating unconsciousness, *asaṃjñīvāda*, comes up for criticism by proponents of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*naīvasaṃjñī-nāsaṃjñīvāda*)—the promoted attainment being what the Buddha had reportedly reached during his pre-awakening apprenticeship under the guidance of Udraka Rāmaputra—for being a state of delusion.³² It seems probable that the Buddhist perspective on this attainment would have been similar, given that it features in an analysis of various views not only in the *Pañcattaya-sutta* and its parallel but also in the *Brahmajāla-sutta* and its parallels.³³ In other words, from an early Buddhist perspective the problem potentially posed by perception calls for the cultivation of wisdom combined with some form of perceptual training; the solution is not found by just avoiding perception through becoming unconscious.

In relation to the *acitta* passage under discussion, the attainment of unconsciousness does not seem to provide a good fit.

559₂₈ explains that these unconscious beings only possess the first out of the five aggregates, which is another way of expressing the same position.

³¹ DN 24 at DN III 33₂₅ and DĀ 15 at T I 69c₂₃. The suggestion by Polak 2011: 118 that “[t]he realm of non-percipient beings seems to correspond to *saññāvedayitanirodha*” appears to be based on a misunderstanding of a passage in DN 15 at DN II 69₂₁, which continues after the seven stations of consciousness by mentioning the *sphere* (not the realm) of unconscious beings, *asaññāsatāyatana*, and the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. The list is concerned with different types of experiences (including the experiences of being unconscious and of being neither perceptive nor imperceptive) rather than realms. This misunderstanding appears to combine with lack of awareness of explicit indications regarding the rebirth of attainers of *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha* given in AN 5.166 and its parallels MĀ 22 and Up 2038, quoted below note 60, which is clearly different from the realm of unconscious beings.

³² MN 102 at MN II 231₁₇ and Skilling 1994: 326₁₁.

³³ DN 1 at DN I 32₁₀, DĀ 21 at T I 92c₁₇, T 21 at T I 268c₁₅, Weller 1934: 50₃₄, T 1548 at T XXVIII 659b₂₄, and Up 3050 at D 4094 *ju* 150b₆ or P 5595 *tu* 173b₆.

A condition of delusion cultivated by non-Buddhist recluses and brahmins would not be appropriate in the overall context, as it would make little sense for Subhūti to present such a condition in positive terms when giving teachings to bodhisattvas on the perfection of wisdom.

Cessation Attainment

Another possible candidate for a literal understanding of the term *acitta* would be the cessation of perception and what is felt (*saṃjñāvedayitanirodha*), to which in what follows I refer to with the alternative and shorter terms “cessation attainment” or “attainment of cessation.” Given the complexity surrounding the information found in *Āgama* texts and later exegesis regarding cessation attainment, my exploration in what follows will have to be more detailed than in relation to the previous topic of unconsciousness.³⁴

The *Mahāvedalla-sutta* and its parallels extant in Chinese and Tibetan examine the differences between the condition of a dead corpse and the attainment of cessation. The parallels agree that the attainment of cessation differs from the case of being dead in that vitality has not come to an end, bodily heat has not dissipated, and the faculties are bright (according to the Pāli version) or not broken up (according to the parallels).³⁵

The Pāli terminology used in this context in the *Mahāvedalla-sutta* to qualify the faculties recurs elsewhere among Pāli discourses. For example, a wanderer who meets the recently

³⁴ Due to *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha* not being the main concern of the present article, I will not be able to provide a full coverage of the different interpretations and perspectives on this attainment articulated by various scholars, an undertaking that would require a separate article in its own right.

³⁵ MN 43 at MN I 296₂₁: *indriyāni vip̐pasannāni*, MĀ 211 at T I 791c₁₉: 諸根不敗壞, Up 1005 at D 4094 *ju* 8b₅ or P 5595 *tu* 9b₆: *dbang po gzhan du 'gyur ba dang ... mi 'gyur ro*. Up 1005 is strictly speaking a parallel to MN 44; the present case is part of a general tendency of topics to exchange place between what in the Sarvāstivāda and Theravāda reciter traditions are adjacent discourses that adopt a similar mode of presentation.

awakened Buddha notices that the latter has bright faculties.³⁶ The same effect is noticed by others when Śāriputra has just emerged from emptiness meditation or Aniruddha from cultivating the four establishments of mindfulness, *smṛtyupasthāna*.³⁷ Bright faculties can also become visible to others when someone has just heard a Dharma talk from the Buddha; examples involve Mahāmaudgalāyāna, who for this purpose has employed supernormal means, or an aging lay disciple who has reached the Buddha's presence by normal means and received a short instruction.³⁸ These examples show that such bright faculties are visible to an outside observer, presumably in the form of radiance of the eyes and perhaps also of the general facial appearance. The latter suggests itself from the circumstance that such references usually come together with noting a glowing complexion, which could not be confined to the actual sense faculties themselves. In the above instances, the one who has such bright faculties is clearly conscious and has just had some deep experience related to meditation or the teachings that must be responsible for the bright faculties.

The Pāli commentary on the *Mahāvedalla-sutta* explains the brightness of the faculties to result from the absence of any interaction with external objects during cessation attainment. Such interaction is comparable to a mirror at a crossroads that is covered by dust, whereas the brightness of the faculties finds illustration in a mirror that is placed inside a bag and thus protected from being dirtied. This interpretation is not readily applicable to the other cases mentioned above, as cultivating the four *smṛtyupasthānas* or hearing a short instruction from the Buddha, together with then immediately being asked about one's bright faculties and explaining what has led to this, are not situations that involve an absence of interaction with external objects. In the terms of the simile, these are not cases where the mirror is kept inside the bag. For the case of the aging lay disciple who has received a short instruction from the Buddha, the respective commentary in fact provides a different gloss on the expression. Notably, this commentary also shifts from conceiving of the faculties as five, as

³⁶ MN 26 at MN I 170,₃₅.

³⁷ MN 151 at MN III 293,₃₁ and SN 52.9 at SN V 301,₂₃.

³⁸ SN 21.3 at SN II 275,₁₈ and SN 22.1 at SN III 2,₆.

done in the commentary on the *Mahāvedalla-sutta*, to instead speaking of all six faculties, thereby including the mind.³⁹

This shift to a different mode of understanding of basically the same expression already hints at a substantial problem related to the nature of the attainment of cessation, which concerns whether the cessation of the two aggregates of feeling tones and perception implies a cessation of all mental aggregates. A reference to the brightness of the faculties, in view of what this conveys in other contexts, gives the impression that the mind has not completely disappeared.⁴⁰

The same problem comes to the fore with the Tibetan version of the comparison between a dead corpse and someone in cessation attainment, which states that in the latter case

³⁹ Spk II 250,²⁸: *indriyānī ti manocchatṭhānī indriyānī*. In contrast, Ps II 351,²⁹ (commenting on MN 43) takes basically the same phrase to intend only the five sense faculties, evident from its reference to the effect of external objects on the faculties, *bahiddhā ārammaṇesu pasāde ghaṭṭentesu indriyānī*, which would only be relevant to the five physical senses, and also from its concluding statement, Ps II 352,³, that with the attainment of cessation *pañca pasādā ativiya virocanti*. It is also worthy of note that a quote from MN 43 regarding the difference between a corpse and someone in cessation attainment, found in Vism 709,⁸, speaks of the latter's faculties not being broken up, *indriyānī aparibhinnānī* instead of *indriyānī vipphasannānī*. Nevertheless, the latter reading *indriyānī vipphasannānī* is found not only in MN 43 but also in a similar explanation of the difference between a dead corpse and someone in cessation attainment given in SN 41.6 at SN IV 294,²¹; in both cases the Asian editions available to me confirm the PTS edition's reading *vipphasannānī*. Moreover, the reading *indriyānī vipphasannānī* is the one reflected in the commentaries on MN 43 and SN 41.6, Ps II 351,²⁹ and Spk III 95,¹⁷. The formulation adopted instead in the *Visuddhimagga* recurs in Paṭi-a I 322,²¹, which also has the reading *indriyānī aparibhinnānī*. Would it be too far-fetched to envisage the possibility of a change of terminology evident in the latter two works, reflecting the circumstance that the idea of bright faculties does not sit too well with the Theravāda position that cessation attainment is completely devoid of the mind?

⁴⁰ What emerges in this way fits well with what Schmithausen 1987/2007: 18 identifies as probably representing the starting point of the *ālayavijñāna* notion, where a passage in the *Yogācārabhūmi* indicates that during cessation attainment the *ālayavijñāna* has not ceased [to be present] in the material sense-faculties, which are unimpaired; see Schmithausen 1987/2007: 276n146 and Delhey 2009: 207,⁷ (Sanskrit), 374,⁶ (Tibetan) and T 1579 at T XXX 340c₂₈ (Chinese).

consciousness has not departed from the body.⁴¹ A similar position regarding the attainment of cessation can be found in discourse quotations in the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* and the *Karma-siddhiprakaraṇa*, indicating that consciousness has indeed not departed from the body during cessation attainment.⁴² In relation to such a position, it could be noted that the term *saṃjñāvedayita-nirodha* as such only states the cessation of specific aspects of subjective experience in the form of perception—the ability to cognize and recognize—and the felt dimension of experience as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. It does not explicitly state that consciousness has ceased as well.

On evaluating the stipulation found in the Tibetan version from the viewpoint of the discourse itself, its indication fits the context. Prior to embarking on the present question, the parallels have defined the condition of being dead by stating that this involves the departure of vitality, bodily heat, and consciousness from the body.⁴³ In the present context of listing what distinguishes the condition of one who has attained cessation from that of a corpse, once vitality and bodily heat have already been mentioned as still present, it would be natural to continue by referring as well to the presence (or absence) of consciousness, given that this has just been mentioned in the preceding passage in a closely related context.⁴⁴ In other words, perhaps the reference to consciousness in

⁴¹ Up 1005 at D 4094 *ju* 8b₆ or P 5595 *tu* 9b₆: *rnam par shes pa lus las 'da' bar mi 'gyur ro*. Regarding the absence of any such reference in MN 43, Pieris 2003: 51 and 55 notes that this conveys “not textual ambiguity of any sort but the impression that the Sutta compilers have chosen to be silent with regard to this matter,” as “[t]o the question, ‘What happens to *viññāṇa* in the *nirodha* state?’ the answer implied in the Sutta seems to be: ‘No comments’!”

⁴² The former in Tatia 1976: 13,₁₄: *viññāṇaṃ cāsyā kāyāḍ anapakrāntaṃ bhavatī ti* and the latter in T 1608 at T XXXI 779b₇ or T 1609 at T XXXI 784a₅: 識不離身 and Lamotte 1936: 194,₅: *rnam par shes pa lus dang ma bral ba'i bar yin no* (the quote has been adjusted to the Wylie system): see also the 成唯識論, T 1585 at T XXXI 17c₂₆: 識不離身, and the survey in Schmithausen 1987: 398 (table VIII.1.5).

⁴³ MN 43 at MN I 296,₉, MĀ 211 at T I 791c₁₂, and Up 1005 at D 4094 *ju* 8b₂ or P 5595 *tu* 9b₂; the same set of three as defining the condition of a dead body recur, for example, in SN 22.95 at SN III 143,₄ and its parallel SĀ 265 at T II 69a₂₅.

⁴⁴ This has already been pointed out by Schmithausen 1987/2007: 20.

the Tibetan version was inspired by the preceding part of the discourse. This could even have happened in a somewhat accidental manner in the course of oral transmission.

From the viewpoint of early Buddhist doctrine in general, the resultant position is clearly problematic. According to the *Pañcattaya-sutta* and its Tibetan parallel, it is impossible to point out a manifestation of consciousness that occurs apart from the other aggregates.⁴⁵ This statement concords with the general perspective in early Buddhist literature, which as yet does not know of a type of consciousness comparable to the *ālaya-vijñāna*, usually translated as the “store-consciousness,” that could persist during cessation attainment.⁴⁶

In support of this assessment, I need to depart briefly from the topic of cessation attainment in order to examine the interesting suggestion that a precursor to the *ālaya-vijñāna* can be found in early Buddhist thought, namely consciousness as the third link in the standard presentation of dependent arising (*pratītya-samutpāda*).⁴⁷ This has been proposed by Waldron (2003: 12), according to whose assessment consciousness in dependent arising represents “viññāṇa as an underlying sentience which flows in an unbroken stream of mind throughout multiple lifetimes,” in contrast to “viññāṇa in terms of six modalities of cognitive awareness which momentarily arise in conjunction with discrete

⁴⁵ MN 102 at MN II 230,²⁸ Skilling 1994: 322,¹¹ and Or.15009/642 v₃–⁵, Kudo and Shono 2015: 445; for a quotation of this statement see also the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, Wogihara 1936: 668,¹⁰. The Pāli commentary, Ps IV 20,², explains this statement to imply that consciousness never occurs apart from the other three mental aggregates (it can occur apart from the first aggregate, as evident from the case of sentient beings reborn in an immaterial realm).

⁴⁶ See the discussion in Schmithausen 1987/2007: 18–33.

⁴⁷ Waldron 2003: 12 identifies a “distinction [that] is crucial to our reconstruction of the development of the *ālaya-vijñāna*,” in the form of “two ‘aspects’ of viññāṇa that are discernable in these early texts,” which “clearly foreshadow the bifurcation of viññāṇa (*vijñāna*) in the Yogācāra school into a subsisting, subliminal, and accumulating consciousness, represented by the *ālaya-vijñāna*, and the momentary, supraliminal forms of awareness.”

cognitive objects.”⁴⁸ The implication of this distinction, as stated explicitly in Germano and Waldron (2006: 38), is that consciousness as the third link in dependent arising “does not depend upon perceptual objects.” Here, “consciousness arises not in dependence upon transient conditions as ‘cognitive consciousness’ does, but upon enduring conditions ... that is, the *saṃskārā*.”

In evaluating this assessment, it is worthy of note that the *Vibhaṅga-sutta* of the *Nidāna-saṃyutta* offers a definition of each of the twelve links of dependent arising, and in the case of the third link of consciousness this definition refers to the six types of consciousness distinguished by way of the six senses, that is, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc.⁴⁹ Needless to say, the

⁴⁸ Apparently this position has as yet not been critically examined, given that twenty years later Waldron 2023: 197 again refers to the supposedly early Buddhist position involving a “disjunction between these two aspects of *viññāna*,” namely “the ongoing stream of consciousness that persists from one lifetime to the next and ... the transient moments of conscious awareness that arise depending on specific, ever-changing conditions”; see also Waldron 2023: 47, where he distinguishes the stream of consciousness from “the context of the five aggregates,” where “*viññāna* is cognitive awareness, an awareness of discrete objects.” Another, perhaps related problem regarding the nature of consciousness can be seen in the following statement in Waldron 2023: 56: “In early Buddhist analyses, perception involves two distinct processes: one deconstructive and one constructive. These dual cognitive processes are expressed by two terms: *viññāna* and *saṃjñā*. We see the deconstructive, or disjunctive, aspect in the term *viññāna*.” Yet, the early Buddhist analysis does not attribute an inherently deconstructive or disjunctive role to *viññāna*. The meditative perception of consciousness as a *kaṣiṇa*, for example, results in a thoroughly non-dual experience devoid of any trace of disjunction, and this experience—just as any other manifestation of consciousness—can in turn even become the basis for the *construction* of a sense of self; see MN 102 at MN II 229,¹⁵ and Skilling 1994: 316,¹. Conversely, *saṃjñā* can take on a deconstructive role, such as, for example, with the cultivation of perceptions of impermanence or of the absence of a self.

⁴⁹ SN 12.2 at SN II 4,⁴: *katamañ ca, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ? chayime, bhikkhave, viññāṇakāyā: cakkhaviññāṇaṃ, sotaviññāṇaṃ, ghānaviññāṇaṃ, jivhāviññāṇaṃ, kāyaviññāṇaṃ, manoviññāṇaṃ. idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, viññāṇaṃ* (correcting an obvious typo in the PTS edition: *chayime*), with a similarly worded parallel in EĀ 49.5 at T II 797b₂₅: 彼云何名為識? 所謂六識身是也。云何為六? 所謂眼, 耳, 鼻, 舌, 身, 意識, 是謂為識, found in a part of the discourse considered by Baba 2024: 31 to be early (the same holds for the passage from EĀ 49.5 mentioned below in note 54).

presence of eye-consciousness implies the presence of visible objects, just as ear-consciousness implies audible objects, and so on.⁵⁰ Waldron (2003: 14) is aware of this fairly straightforward indication in the *Vibhaṅga-sutta*, reasoning that “[a]lthough *viññāṇa* is glossed in this text as the six modes of sensory and mental cognitive awareness, in this place in the series it is usually considered a rebirth consciousness,” followed by referring to a passage in the *Mahānidāna-sutta* that describes the descent of consciousness into the mother’s womb. This passage is part of an explanation in the *Mahānidāna-sutta* regarding how the third link of consciousness conditions the fourth link of name-and-form, preceded by indicating that the latter stands for the conceptual and material dimensions of contact, that is, contact with perceptual objects. Right after depicting the descent of consciousness into the mother’s womb, the *Mahānidāna-sutta* continues by expounding

⁵⁰ Commenting on the standard indication that each of the six types of consciousness arises in dependence, *paṭicca uppajjati*, on the respective sense and its objects, Wijesekera 1964/1994: 103f explains that “[i]f in this formula the verb *uppajjati* is to be taken literally, then ‘cognitive consciousness’ must be regarded as arising *de novo* from the concourse (*saṃgati*) of the organ of sense and its object ... But a careful study of the early texts will show (e.g. *DN*, II 62) that what the formula probably meant was that the cognitive or perceptive process of *viññāṇa* begins to function when there is contact between the organ and the object of sense. It is obvious that the *viññāṇa* or consciousness that is said to ‘arise’ in each case of sense contact could not be something *created afresh* by the latter, for in that event, the Buddhist theory of perception would be identical with that of the materialistic schools which believed that consciousness is a mere by-product of matter. But with such a theory the Buddha is reported as having radically differed ... Moreover, there are several contexts in the Pali Canon which go to prove conclusively that *viññāṇa* is much more ‘profound’ a concept than to be regarded as a mere by-product of the interaction of the sense-organs and their objects.” In fact, the same phrase *paṭicca uppajjati*, related to each of the six senses and their respective objects, features in MN 10 at MN I 61,¹⁶ in relation to the arising of a fetter, *saṃyojana*. This obviously does not imply that the fetter is a mechanical result of, for example, the concourse of eye and forms. In that case, only the blind could reach freedom from such a fetter. Awakened ones still see forms with their eyes, and even those who are not yet awakened may at times see forms without giving rise to a fetter. In other words, references to the sense and its objects could hardly be meant to provide an exhaustive account of the conditions required for the arising of a fetter or a type of consciousness.

how the fourth link of name-and-form in turn conditions the third link of consciousness.⁵¹ This ensuing part serves to explain a statement made earlier in the *Mahānidāna-sutta*, found similarly in its parallels, according to which consciousness and name-and-form stand in a reciprocally conditioning relationship to each other.⁵² This confirms that consciousness as the third link in dependent arising also involves perceptual objects—evident in it being conditioned by name-and-form—which in turn decisively undermines its supposed role as a precursor to the *ālaya-vijñāna*.⁵³ In other words, the early Buddhist teaching on dependent arising

⁵¹ DN 15 at DN II 63,₁₈: *nāmarūpapaccayā viññānan ti*.

⁵² DN 15 at DN II 56,₃₁, DĀ 13 at T I 61b₂₀, MĀ 97 at T I 580a₁, T 14 at T I 243c₂, and T 15 at T I 845b₁₁.

⁵³ This much suffices to set aside the idea, proposed by Waldron 2003: 20, that “[p]erhaps the entire notion of the *ālaya-vijñāna* arose out of the ambiguities surrounding the early concept of *viññāna*.” The same unconvincing differentiation between two types of consciousness unfortunately also influences his analysis of the Abhidharma background to the arising of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, evident when Waldron 2003: 56f identifies a substantial conflict between a “synchronic analysis” and a “diachronic discourse,” both believed to “correspond closely to the two aspects of *vijñāna* we discerned in the early texts” and resulting in “the Abhidharma Problematic toward which the *ālaya-vijñāna* was addressed.” The problem appears to have been rather the emergence of the theory of momentariness, which according to von Rospatt 1995: 28 seems to have arisen too late for it to be adopted in canonical Abhidharma works (the discussion of “the Abhidharma context” in Waldron 2003: 46–87 relies mainly on the *Abhidharmakośa*, which due to its comparative lateness does not reflect early stages in the development of Abhidharma thought). Once everything, including consciousness, is believed to cease right away after it has arisen, it is indeed conceivable that a need arose to formulate more explicitly an element that accounts for continuity. Thus, as correctly noted by Waldron 2003: 54, an “analysis of experience in terms of such momentary dharmas raises a number of difficult conceptual problems.” This does not yet appear to have been an issue for early canonical Abhidharma works, however, and it also does not stand in any direct relationship to the early Buddhist conception of consciousness in dependent arising. In other words, the problem that the *ālaya-vijñāna* is supposed to solve according to, for example, the *Abhidharma-samuccayabhāṣya*, Tatia 1976: 12,₂, seems to emerge only after the period of early Buddhism reflected in *Āgama* literature, and even to all appearance after the period reflected in early canonical Abhidharma literature.

does not stipulate a form of consciousness that exists apart from, or in the background to, conscious experiences through the six senses.

In relation to my main topic of cessation attainment, the reciprocal conditioning relationship between consciousness and name-and-form can in turn be seen as offering the same basic indication as the *Pañcattaya-sutta* and its parallel, mentioned above. The first two factors of name are feeling tone and perception,⁵⁴ which are also the first two of the four immaterial aggregates. Once perceptions and what is felt cease in the attainment of cessation, there seems to be little scope left to posit a manifestation of consciousness, given that it depends on name-and-form and does not manifest apart from the other aggregates.

Nevertheless, even the fairly clear-cut doctrinal position found in early Buddhist texts that emerges in this way is not necessarily the final word on the case of *saṃjñāvedayitanirodha*, since a major challenge is to explain how emergence from its attainment takes place.

Emergence from Cessation Attainment

The *Cūḷavedalla-sutta* and its Tibetan parallel explain that emergence from cessation attainment occurs due to having made a determination to that effect prior to entering it.⁵⁵ This raises the question of how such a prior determination could have an effect over a more or less long interval if not only the explicitly mentioned perception and feeling tones have ceased, but by implication also consciousness. This problem reflects a significant difference compared to the condition of unconscious beings, as the attainers of cessation decide when emergence will take place, rather than being helplessly locked into that condition for the remainder of their lives. With a decision taken prior to entering

⁵⁴ SN 12.2 at SN II 3,₃₄ and EĀ 49.5 at T II 797b₂₈.

⁵⁵ MN 44 at MN I 302,₁₂: *pubbe va tathā cittaṃ bhāvitam hoti yan taṃ tathattāya upaneti ti* and Up 1005 at D 4094 *ju 9a₁* or P 5595 *tu 10a₁*: *sems sngon nyid du de lta de ltar yongs su sbyangs shing yongs su sbyang ba byas pa ji lta ji ltar de dang de la nye* (P: *re*) *bar gnas par 'gyur ro*. The formulation in both versions conveys the impression that it is indeed the role of the mind (*citta/sems*) to lead to emergence.

cessation attainment, some residual mental presence would seem to be required to track the passage of time during attainment and then, at the predetermined moment, initiate emergence from it.⁵⁶

Although early Buddhist thought does not subscribe to a theory of momentariness, a Pāli discourse advocates a clear distinction between the three periods of time—past, present, and future—in the sense that any instance of one of the five aggregates that is past should not be considered to be present (or future).⁵⁷ This would not leave much room for a Sarvāstivāda type of solution by presuming that the past in some form still exists in the present, without a need for some type of continuity during a period of even several days of being in cessation attainment that connects the prior determination to the eventual moment of effectuating emergence from it.⁵⁸

A *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Cūḷavedalla-sutta* avoids the difficulty of bringing in a form of prior determination by stating that emergence just takes place due to the body and the six sense-spheres, and due to the life faculty.⁵⁹ Yet, this implies that

⁵⁶ The difficulties involved here are reflected in the report in Abhidh-k II.44, Pradhan 1967: 72,²¹ of positions affirming or denying mental continuity during the attainment of cessation. A factor that may have contributed to attempts in later traditions to be more precise in this respect could be the circumstance that, as noted by Stuart 2013: 26, the actual “state of cessation did not lend itself to scholastic interpretation. A state devoid of the basic properties of the phenomenal realm does not allow for the type of phenomenological analysis that many early Indian Buddhist scholastics were prone to.” The inability to carry out a phenomenological analysis could perhaps have inspired an interest in at least defining more precisely what happens to the mind in cessation. The problems arising from such attempts at definition would then in turn have led, in the words of Hakamaya 1975: 41, to an increasing awareness “during the discussion of the problem whether *nirodha-samāpatti* is *sacittaka* or *acittaka*” that what provides the needed continuity “cannot be included in the traditional categories. This ... must be named by a new concept, that is *ālaya-vijñāna*, *ādāna-vijñāna* or *vipāka-vijñāna*.”

⁵⁷ SN 22.62 at SN III 71,¹⁹ no parallel appears to be known to this discourse.

⁵⁸ On the Sarvāstivāda position regarding the persistence of the past in the present see, e.g., Cox 1995: 136f, and on its application to the problem of emergence from cessation attainment Griffith 1986/1991: 60–63.

⁵⁹ MĀ 210 at T I 789b₆: 然因此身及六處緣命根，是故從定起， which following Schmithausen 1987: 342 and note 156 I take to be based on adopting a

the sixth sense-sphere, the mind, is in some way involved in bringing about emergence from cessation attainment; in other words, the sixth sense would have to be present during the actual attainment in order to bring about emergence from it.

An additional perspective on emergence from cessation attainment can be found in an *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse and its parallels. Śāriputra explains that an attainer of cessation who does not reach the final goal of full awakening will be reborn among celestials with a mind-made body and there be able to enter cessation and emerge from it.⁶⁰ According to the Pāli commentary,

formulation taken from a different context; for a similar position see T 1545 at T XXVII 780c₂₀ and T 1546 at T XXVIII 337b₁₇. The idea of a form of prior cultivation does occur in MĀ 210 at T I 789a₂₉, but only in relation to entering the attainment, 然本如是修習心. The parallels, MN 44 at MN I 301_{,35} and Up 1005 at D 4094 *ju* 8b₇ or P 5595 *tu* 9b₈, agree that this requires prior cultivation. A reference to a prior setting up of the mind that then leads to emergence from the attainment can be found in SĀ 568 at T II 150b₂₃: 然先已作方便心, 如其先心而起, parallel to SN 41.6 at SN IV 294_{,33} (which of course takes the same position as MN 44). The translation of this passage in SĀ 568 by Choong 2023: 108 as “[b]ut rather one’s mind has been so practiced, leading to the mind emerging” unfortunately does not do full justice to the original. Both instances of 先 are not reflected, and the same holds for 方便 and 如其. Problematic is also his assessment of a difference in the definition of immeasurable concentration or liberation of the mind, 無量三昧 or *appamāṇā cetovimutti*, where SĀ 567 at T II 149c₂₃ mentions only the first *brahmavihāra*, 慈, whereas the Pāli parallel SN 41.7 at SN IV 296_{,15} has all four *brahmavihāras*. Choong 2023: 104 considers the set of four *brahmavihāras* to be a later development from what earlier would have been “[t]he main teaching” with “one focus, *mettā*.” As convincingly argued by a reviewer quoted in Choong 2023: 104n39, “this difference may merely be a result of textual omission in the original manuscript and does not necessarily reflect an evolution” of the envisaged type; the occurrence of textual loss indeed manifests frequently in orally transmitted literature (see Anālayo 2022: 85–88) and thus needs to be taken into consideration. In line with a standard procedure, the other three *brahmavihāras* are often given only in abbreviation, which can more easily be lost. Here and elsewhere, it would have been preferable if the author had taken more seriously the reasonable suggestions offered by the peer reviewer.

⁶⁰ AN 5.166 at AN III 192_{,17} refers to the *manomaya kāya*, with parallels in MĀ 22 at T I 449c₁₂ in 意生天 and in Up 2038 at D 4094 *ju* 69a₂ or P 5595 *tu* 77a₆ in *yid las* (P: *la*) *byung ba’i lha’i lus*; see also the discourse quotation in the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, Wogihara 1932: 164_{,17}: *divye manomaye kāya upapadyate*.

the reference is to rebirth in the Pure Abodes,⁶¹ celestial realms in which only non-returners are reborn. The description provided by Śāriputra, which meets with repeated objections by another monk but eventually receives endorsement from the Buddha, implies that emergence from cessation is possible even in the absence of a human body. It follows that such a body does not necessarily provide an element of continuity between the decision to emerge, taken prior to cessation attainment, and successful emergence from it.

The problem of adequately explaining emergence can be illustrated with the example of the Theravāda tradition, which since the time of the *Kathāvatthu* has taken the firm position that the attainment of cessation is devoid of any form of mind.⁶² The *Visuddhimagga* accordingly defines cessation attainment as the non-occurrence of the mind (*citta*) and its mental factors (*cetasika*), followed by qualifying the one who has attained it as devoid of mind.⁶³ In relation to my main topic, from this viewpoint cessation attainment indeed deserves to be reckoned an *acitta* condition in a literal sense.

Difficulties with this stance manifest when the *Visuddhimagga* reports that emergence from cessation attainment can take place prior to the predetermined time if the attainer's presence is needed for a transaction by the monastic community or in relation to the Buddha.⁶⁴ It envisages two successive scenarios

⁶¹ Mp III 298,₁₁.

⁶² Kv 15.10 at Kv 519,₁₄.

⁶³ Vism 702,₂₁ defines the attainment of cessation as *cittacetasikānaṃ dhammānaṃ appavatti*, and Vism 708,₆₊₂₅ uses *acittaka* to qualify the one who attains it. The position taken by the Theravāda commentaries in this respect even goes so far as to assert that the *bhavaṅga citta* has ceased in the attainment; see Collins 1982: 246, Gethin 1994: 14n8, and Harvey 1995: 164.

⁶⁴ Vism 706,₃₀. Out of these two occasions, the *Vimuttimagga*, T 1648 at T XXXII 461b₁₈, only takes up the one related to the community, and that also only in the form of being summoned, thereby not envisaging that the attainer may become aware of this need even before being summoned; on the relationship between these two works see also Anālayo 2009. The differences that emerge in this way give the impression that the description in the *Visuddhimagga* could be reflecting a gradual elaboration that, to all appearances, took place despite the fairly evident conflict this creates with

for each of these two cases. The first is that the attainer has earlier determined to emerge should any of these two cases occur, and then indeed emerges. If that did not work and the community members or the Buddha sends a messenger, the attainer will emerge from cessation attainment as soon as the messenger stands within hearing range and conveys the summons.

Now, becoming aware of the fact that one's presence is required would require telepathic powers, as the attainer is not presently seated among the community or in front of the Buddha. At the time of entering cessation attainment, it is not yet clear when, if at all, one of these two occasions will arise. It follows that a form of telepathic monitoring would need to be undertaken continuously during those time periods when it is in principle possible that the community members or the Buddha will require the attainer's presence.

The alternative option to ensure timely emergence requires the ability to hear a summons communicated by another within earshot. This needs to combine with the capability to distinguish such a summons from anything irrelevant that someone in the vicinity may be saying. In other words, comparable to the case of telepathy, it would require some degree of continuous monitoring, here at the ear sense-door, to be able to identify when words spoken by someone else in the vicinity are actually summoning the attainer and require being acted on.

As both telepathy and such hearing-cum-understanding are instrumental in bringing about emergence, they have to happen prior to it. It follows that such activities are to be accomplished by an unconscious human body. Now, it is already challenging to explain the continuity within the attainer of a prior determination, if the attainment is indeed completely bereft of any presence of the mind, but these additional occasions for emergence even require some form of interaction with the external environment. How this is to be accomplished by an unconscious body remains a mystery to me.

adopting the clear-cut position that mind and mental factors are completely absent during the attainment.

It seems to me that the presentation in the *Visuddhimagga* testifies to a tendency toward exaggerating the nature and characteristics of cessation attainment. Now, it is in principle possible that such a tendency to exaggeration may have already exerted an influence earlier,⁶⁵ impacting in one way or another descriptions of what could perhaps have been intended simply as a particularly demanding or profound modality of arriving at an experience of Nirvana—be it its actual realization or else a fruition attainment—sharing with the latter the difficulty of fitting into neat categories an experience that is utterly beyond concepts and language.⁶⁶

Be that as it may, and leaving aside the additional scenarios regarding emergence envisaged in the *Visuddhimagga*, even just with the indications surveyed above, in the form in which these have been transmitted in *Āgama* literature, the situation is clearly not as straightforward as the case of unconscious beings, discussed in the prior part of my exploration. The decisive difference between these two alternatives relates precisely to emergence, which in the case of someone who is in cessation attainment results from a prior intentional decision and occurs within the same lifetime rather than being involuntary and confined to the time of passing away. In other words, considering unconsciousness an *acitta* condition appears considerably more straightforward than doing the same for the case of cessation attainment.

⁶⁵ Evidence for a tendency to promote a meditative condition of total cessation of sensory impact in competition with other traditions in the ancient Indian setting can be seen reflected in an episode in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* and its parallels, where the Buddha outdoes his former teacher Ālāra Kālāma in matters of meditative insentience; see DN 16 at DN II 131,²⁰ and the parallel versions Waldschmidt 1951: 272f (28.24), DĀ 2 at T I 19a₂₅, T 5 at T I 168b₁₃, T 6 at T I 183c₂₄, and T 7 at T I 198a₄. Gethin 2020: 64 even suggests “the inclusion of cessation in the scheme of the path” to be “part of an inclusivist strategy whereby meditation attainments regarded by non-Buddhist wanderers as the goal of the religious life are accommodated within an overall Buddhist scheme of the path.”

⁶⁶ Stuart 2013: 43 suggests “that the theory of the cessation of perception and feeling may have been one of the earliest ways that Buddhist practitioners attempted to make sense of the ineffable liberatory experience that was supposedly attained and taught by the Buddha.” For a survey of various passages relevant to the nature of the realization of Nirvana see Anālayo 2023: 65–138.

A similarity between these two attainments emerges in relation to my main topic, in so far as cessation attainment also does not appear to provide a good fit for the *acitta* passage under discussion. The problem is that the attainment of cessation seems to be closely related to the realization of stages of awakening. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the *Visuddhimagga* agree in considering cessation attainment to be beyond the range of worldlings and only accessible to noble ones,⁶⁷ that is, those who have made significant progress along the stages envisaged in early Buddhist literature as leading toward becoming an arhat. This would make the attainment of cessation quite irrelevant to bodhisattvas, who in the different versions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* are encouraged to avoid the pitfall of pursuing the path to becoming an arhat and should rather stay firm in their aspiration to become Buddhas in the future. Lokakṣema's translation depicts in detail Māra's attempts to divert bodhisattvas from their course and make them succumb to the attraction of the paths to becoming an arhat (or a Pratyekabuddha).⁶⁸ Subhūti would be playing into the hands of Māra if, when teaching bodhisattvas the perfection of wisdom, he would promote the attainment of cessation as relevant to their quest.

The Context of the *acitta* Passage

The above examination of the two cases of unconsciousness and cessation attainment makes it in my view improbable that a literal reading of the term *acitta* does justice to the *Prajñāpāramitā* passage under discussion.⁶⁹ As a next step in my exploration, I examine in more detail the context in which this reference occurs, beyond the few indications given at the outset of the present article. As mentioned above, Subhūti has been asked by the Buddha to expound the perfection of wisdom to bodhisattvas. In reply, after a short interlude that serves to establish his credentials by clarifying

⁶⁷ Abhidh-k II.43, Pradhan 1967: 70,¹⁵ and Vism 702,²² (which specifies that such noble ones need to be non-returners or arhats).

⁶⁸ Karashima 2011: 234,⁸ (= T 224 at T VIII 447a₁₂).

⁶⁹ Herewith I proceed beyond the framework adopted by Walser 2018: 190–221 in his detailed discussion of the *acitta* passage.

the central role of the Buddha's power behind whatever he is going to teach,⁷⁰ Subhūti proclaims that he neither finds nor apprehends what is named "a bodhisattva," hence how should he teach the perfection of wisdom to a bodhisattva that cannot be found or apprehended?⁷¹

Needless to say, this is not a rejection of the teaching task he has just received, but much rather is in itself his act of teaching. In other words, Subhūti right away clarifies that perfecting one's wisdom calls for insight into the ultimately empty nature of all phenomena, the insight that their existence cannot really be apprehended. The same term also features in the exchange regarding *acitta*, according to which existence and non-existence cannot be apprehended in that condition of the mind. Attwood (2022: 129f) points out that "Subhūti does not make metaphysical observations on the *nature* of bodhisattvas or even on the nature of phenomena," as "the Buddha and Subhūti are not talking about metaphysics in *Aṣṭa* [= *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*], they are talking about sensory experience ceasing to register. That is to say that, here and throughout, they are talking about epistemology." This appears to be indeed the main thrust behind the *acitta* passage as well, which in addition to the philosophical dimension of going beyond affirmations of existence and nonexistence also appears to have an epistemological dimension.

After in a way embodying the perfection of wisdom in his reply and pointing this teaching directly at the sense of identity of the bodhisattvas in his assembly, Subhūti next addresses possible emotional repercussions of his revelation. He points out that a bodhisattva whose mind (Sanskrit *citta*) does not get depressed, does not turn away, and does not become frightened is the very bodhisattva to be instructed.⁷² In this way, Subhūti explains, bodhisattvas are established in the perfection of wisdom, yet bodhisattvas should nevertheless not conceive of themselves as

⁷⁰ See also Anālayo 2025: 324n141.

⁷¹ Falk and Karashima 2012: 40: *bosisatvo ṇama ṇa vedami ṇa uvalahami, aviṇḍamaṇa aṇua + .. [ma] bosisatvo prañāparamidaḥ anuśaṇi?*

⁷² Falk and Karashima 2012: 34: *saye he bosisatvasa eva + + + + [u]vadiśamaṇa cito ṇa oliati ṇa viparapriṭhibhavati ṇa saṃtraso avajati eṣa yeva + + + + + [paramidaḥ a]nuśaṇi.*

bodhisattvas. After asking the rhetorical question why this is so, in reply Subhūti comes out with the statement under discussion, according to which “that mind, being tamed, is *acitta*.”

The context makes it most straightforward to take the reference to “that mind” to intend the mind mentioned earlier, namely the mind of a bodhisattva who does not become frightened.⁷³ In other words, the present passage seems to continue the same deconstruction found earlier in relation to the notion of being a bodhisattva, but now applied to the mind of a bodhisattva who does not become frightened. As soon as this condition of the mind has received recognition for being a highly commendable implementation of the perfection of wisdom, due to being able to remain balanced with the deconstruction of the notion of being a bodhisattva, Subhūti immediately targets that mind for deconstruction as well.

A peculiarity of the Gāndhārī version is that it qualifies “that mind” as “tamed” (Sanskrit *dānta*), a qualification not found in the other versions.⁷⁴ Although this receives no support from the

⁷³ In Lokakṣema’s translation the passage on being afraid has just a bodhisattva as its subject, rather than the mind of a bodhisattva. Nevertheless, a reference to the mind occurs next in Karashima 2011: 4₃ (= T 224 at T VIII 425c₂₅) in the following form: 心不當念是菩薩。何以故? 有心無心。 Thus, the idea of being a bodhisattva should not be entertained in one’s mind, *citta*/心, and this then leads, via a rhetorical question about the reason for that, to the statement under discussion. In this case, the relationship between the earlier reference to a *citta*/心 that does not entertain ideas contrary to emptiness and the first *citta*/心 in the *acitta* passage is not entirely straightforward, as the latter passage begins with 有心 rather than 是心 or 彼心, found in some parallels (see above note 13). In most of the parallels, the passage on being afraid already refers to the mind. Notably, several versions refer to the *bodhicitta*; for a comparative survey of this feature see Karashima 2011: 4n23. As an alternative reference point for “that mind,” the *bodhicitta* offers an even more powerful object for the *acitta* passage, as this then targets the foundational aspiration of becoming a bodhisattva. Although not found in the two earliest versions that form the mainstay of my study, this feature further supports reading the *acitta* passage in the light of the previous deconstruction of the notion of being a bodhisattva.

⁷⁴ Falk and Karashima 2012: 34: *daṃtaṃ taṃ cito*. Salomon 2018: 345 comments that, even though this qualification is not found in the parallel versions, “some other Perfection of Wisdom texts do refer in other contexts to a bodhisattva as having ‘controlled thoughts’ (*dāntacitta*).”

parallel versions, it nevertheless could be read as making explicit what is implicit in other versions where just a reference to “that mind” can be found, which holds for the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions as well as for several of the Chinese passages.⁷⁵ A mind that remains fearless when facing the thorough deconstruction proposed by Subhūti could indeed be expected to have gone through some process of taming, which would have prepared it to remain unshaken when confronted with the thoroughly empty nature of all phenomena, including the very notion of being a bodhisattva.

Lokakṣema’s translation proceeds similar to the Gāndhārī version of the *acitta* statement, in the form of an indication given by Subhūti in reply to a question by Śāriputra about the meaning of the *acitta* statement he has just heard. Subhūti explains this statement to refer to a mind that does not exist but also is not nonexistent, that one is neither able to apprehend nor is one able to know its abiding place.⁷⁶ The first part of this explanation confirms that *acitta* is indeed not to be taken literally as a reference to a mere absence of the mind. The inability to apprehend further confirms the relevance of reading the present passage in line with the preceding argument by Subhūti regarding the inability to apprehend a bodhisattva whom he could teach. Here, too, this is not an assertion of nonexistence but much rather of the ultimately empty nature of bodhisattvas, in order to undermine any reification of the notion of being a “bodhisattva.”

In a discussion not related to the present passage, Harrison (1978: 48) comments on the significance of references to ‘apprehending’ that “[t]his difficult term, common in *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, refers to that mode of cognition which views its objects as existing in themselves; to have such notions about those objects is tantamount to being attached to them.” This conveniently summarizes what appears to be the central thrust of Subhūti’s teaching. Paraphrasing what emerges in this way with the help of capitalization to express the problem of reification and employing

⁷⁵ See above notes 8 and 13.

⁷⁶ Karashima 2011: 5,₁ (= T 224 at T VIII 425c₂₆): 舍利弗謂須菩提：云何有心無心？須菩提言：心亦不有，亦不無，亦不能得，亦不能知處。

italics to highlight the key terminology, Subhūti's teachings could perhaps be summarized as follows:

Any *Bodhisattvas* cannot be apprehended. Those whose minds do not become afraid on hearing this are *bodhisattvas* fit to be instructed. Such instruction can clarify right away that their fearless *mind* is devoid of *Mind*. This is the perfection of wisdom.

Signs and Signlessness

In view of the above considerations, the term *acitta* appears to acquire its meaning as part of a deconstruction strategy meant to avoid reification. Nevertheless, the exchange between Subhūti and Śāriputra appears to be related to a particular experience of the mind. In order to explore what this could be, teachings given by Subhūti after the *acitta* passage seem to be an obvious choice. In the Gāndhārī manuscript, Subhūti continues to expound the need to avoid misconceiving in relation to the five aggregates, in that one should not take a stance on them or become established in them. This leads on to his clarification that each of the aggregates lacks an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*).⁷⁷ With this target of the rhetoric of emptiness established, Subhūti indicates that one who proceeds in form (etc.) proceeds in signs (*nimitta*).⁷⁸ The sign continues to play a role in this part of his exposition, which clearly is meant to discourage taking up the type of signs that are related to reification and the belief in an intrinsic nature, *svabhāva*. In other words, the problem of viewing objects as existing in themselves or as having some form of intrinsic nature needs to be dealt with at the very point where such notions arise, namely at the level of perception and its reliance on taking up signs.

Now, the sign, *nimitta*, is a basic component of the process of perception, standing for those features of what is experienced

⁷⁷ Falk and Karashima 2012: 52: *ruo yeva ausa śariputra virahido ruasvabhavēṇa eva vedāṇa saṃñā saṃkhara viñāṇo + + + + + [ri]putra virahido viñāṇasvabhavēṇa.*

⁷⁸ Falk and Karashima 2012: 56: *saye ruve carati + + + + + + + + + .. [n](i)[miti cara]ti.*

that enable recognition to operate.⁷⁹ However, signs are not innocent characteristics of phenomena in the world outside, but much rather come closely interwoven with subjective evaluations, even biases, that tend to operate in a manner that is often not noticed consciously. In this way, subjective presumptions are read into the data received through the senses, and this in turn confirms those presuppositions. In the present case, the problem appears to be, in particular, reification by way of the assumption that the objects of perception have an intrinsic nature.

This is the type of sign that Subhūti's deconstruction of the notion of a bodhisattva undermines, and the same concern appears to be informing the *acitta* passage. The perspective that emerges in this way would also concord with the notion of taming the mind, found in the Gāndhārī manuscript version. In early Buddhist literature, the idea of taming can refer to the exercise of sense restraint,⁸⁰ which can tame the innate tendency of the mind to be carried away by whatever happens to occur at the senses. The standard descriptions of sense restraint highlight the role in this respect of the sign, *nimitta*, which should not be grasped in a way that will trigger unwholesome reactions.⁸¹ In the present case, the

⁷⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the sign and related meditative practices and experiences see Anālayo 2023.

⁸⁰ Sn 516 relates cultivation of the (sense) faculties to reaching the stage of being tamed, *danta*. Although the term *danta* as such can occur in a range of different contexts, it features in AN 1.4.1–10 at AN I 6,²⁴ as a condition of the mind on a par with *gutta*, *rakkhita*, and *saṃvuta* (in contrast to the mind being *adanta*, *agutta*, *arakkhita*, and *asaṃvuta*). The same holds for the Sanskrit fragment parallel, Tripāthī 1995: 122, which contrasts the mind that is *adānta*, *agupta*, *araksita* and *asaṃvṛta* to it being *sudānta*, *sugupta*, *suraksita* and *susaṃvṛta* (with an additional contrast between *abhāvita* and *subhāvita*); see also SHT III 975, Waldschmidt, Clauwiter, and Sander-Holzmann 1971: 235. The same set of terms feature again and in explicit relationship to the six spheres of contact or faculties in SN 35.94 at SN IV 70,³ and its parallels SĀ 279 at T II 76a₂₁ and Up 7010 at D 4094 *nyu* 57b₃ or P 5595 *thu* 99b₄; see also SHT VI 1226.14Vc, Bechert and Wille 1989: 28. Perhaps another relevant instance would be Dhṛp 104c+d, where being tamed oneself, *attadanta*, features together with faring restrained, *saññatacāri*; for parallels see Patna *Dharmapada* 319c+d, Cone 1989: 187, and *Udānavarga* 23.4c+d, Bernhard 1965: 291.

⁸¹ See, e.g., MN 107 at MN III 2,¹⁴: *mā nimittaggāhī* and its parallel MĀ 144 at T I 652b₁₂: 然不受相.

notion of taming would apply specifically to the type of signs that are related to reification, in the absence of which the mind will indeed be able to face Subhūti's relentless deconstruction without succumbing to fear and agitation.

In principle, working with signs can take place at different levels of profundity. These can eventually issue in the cultivation of signlessness, a meditative condition when the mind is fully aware and wakeful but no longer processes the data of any of the senses, as it no longer takes up any sign. At this level, there is indeed no longer any possibility to apprehend existence or nonexistence. For the purpose of avoiding reification, however, that much is not necessary, as it would suffice to avoid the sign related to apprehending an inherent nature. At any rate, even the fully fledged condition of signless concentration would be a safe practice for bodhisattvas to cultivate, as it does not have a necessary relationship to the stages of awakening along the path to becoming an arhat. A discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel report that even a monastic adept at signless concentration may subsequently become so overwhelmed by defilements as to decide to disrobe,⁸² which in the ancient setting was considered a major misfortune and a clear reflection of having failed to gain a firm foothold on the path to becoming an arhat.

In this way, the passage on *acitta* from the Gāndhārī manuscript version could be read from the viewpoint of various ways of working with signs. On this reading, the mind can be tamed in such a manner that it can stay in a condition free from taking up either specific signs, such as those prone to stimulate the assumption of an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), or even any sign at all. When being in a condition of signlessness, the mind itself is beyond being apprehended, and there is no longer room for the ideas of existence or nonexistence, as these, too, require signs. In this way, a reading oriented toward the notion of signlessness may provide a meaningful perspective—which is of course just one among different possible perspectives and not in any way intended to present the final word on the matter—on the tantalizing reference to a mind that is *acitta*.

⁸² AN 6.60 at AN III 397,¹⁷ and MĀ 82 at T I 559a₂₆.

Conclusion

An exploration of the reference to a mind that is *acitta* in the earliest versions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* makes it probable that this term is not intended in a literal manner to refer to a state of unconsciousness or else to cessation attainment. The overall thrust of the teaching delivered by Subhūti in this part of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* appears to be about inculcating the need to refrain from reification, reflecting epistemological and soteriological concerns. In such a context, the reference to *acitta*—a term that could perhaps be translated as “lacking [an intrinsic nature of] the mind”—as a condition beyond apprehension of existence and nonexistence may have been inspired by, and related to, signless experiences.

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Abbreviations

Abhidh-k	<i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣya</i>
AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
D	Derge
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>
DN	<i>Dīgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
Kv	<i>Kathāvatthu</i>
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Mp	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
Nett	<i>Nettipakaraṇa</i>
P	Peking

Paṭis-a	<i>Saddhammappakāsinī</i>
Peṭ	<i>Peṭakopadesa</i>
Ps	<i>Papañcasūdanī</i>
PTS	Pali Text Society
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SHT	Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-nipāta</i>
Spk	<i>Sāratthappakāsinī</i>
T	Taishō (Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association)
Ud	<i>Udāna</i>
Up	<i>Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā</i>
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>

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