A survey of the use of the term *vedanā* (“sensations”) in the Pali Nikāyas

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For my parents, Ivor and Patricia Salkin.

... When the mind’s free
The body’s delicate.

*King Lear* III. iv.11-12
Acknowledgements

Many people have made this thesis possible. I owe a great debt to all my teachers and to all those who helped me in diverse other ways.

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Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, or which has been previously submitted for any degree or diploma. It contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Sean Salkin
**Abbreviations used in this thesis**

The abbreviations of the titles of Pali texts are those adopted by the *Critical Pali Dictionary*.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td><em>Critical Pali Dictionary</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>M. Monier Williams, <em>Sanskrit-English Dictionary</em></td>
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Introduction

This thesis takes as its starting point certain statements made by the meditation teacher S.N. Goenka, of which the following is typical:

[W]hatever arises in the mind, the Buddha discovered, will be accompanied by a physical sensation. Hence, whether the meditator is exploring the mental or the physical aspect of the phenomenon of “I”, awareness of sensation is essential.

This discovery is the unique contribution of the Buddha, of central importance in his teaching. Before him in India among his contemporaries, there were many who taught and practised sīla [morality] and samādhi [concentration]. Paññā [wisdom] also existed, at least devotional or intellectual wisdom: it was commonly accepted that mental defilements are the source of suffering, that craving and aversion must be eliminated in order to purify the mind and to attain liberation. The Buddha simply found the way to do it.

What had been lacking was an understanding of the importance of sensation. Then as now, it was generally thought that our reactions are to the external objects of sense--vision, sound, odour, taste, touch, thoughts. However, observation of the truth within reveals that between the object and the reaction is a missing link: sensation. The contact of an object with the corresponding sense door gives rise to sensations; the saññā assigns a positive or negative valuation, in accordance with which the sensation becomes pleasant or unpleasant, and one reacts with craving or aversion. The process occurs so rapidly that conscious awareness of it develops only after a reaction has been repeated many times and has gathered dangerous strength sufficient to overpower the mind. To deal with the reactions, one must become aware of them at the point where they start; they start with sensation, and so one must be aware of sensations. The discovery of this fact, unknown before him, enabled Siddhattha Gotama to attain enlightenment, and this is why he always stressed the importance of sensation.¹

¹ S.N. Goenka, The Discourse Summaries, Talks from a Ten-day Course in Vipassana Meditation, Igatpuri, India, Vipassana Research Institute, 1997, p.58.
In this striking statement Goenka gives paramount importance to sensations, which is his translation of the Pali term *vedanā*. This thesis is an exploration of the use of the term *vedanā* in the Pali Nikāyas. The first chapter focuses on passages in which *vedanā* features in descriptions of practices which lead to liberation from suffering. The second chapter is an extension of the first, studying the use of the term *vedanā* in passages dealing with the causal sequence which has profound soteriological significance, the *paṭicca-samuppāda* (“dependent origination”).

The third chapter looks at passages in the Nikāyas which deal with mental and physical aspects of *vedanā*. Goenka places great emphasis on the role that bodily sensations play in the meditation technique that he teaches:

> Vipassanā means a special kind of vision: observation of the reality within oneself. This is achieved by taking as the object of attention one’s own physical sensations. The technique is the systematic and dispassionate observation of sensations within oneself. This observation unfolds the entire reality of mind and body.²

This chapter examines texts from the Nikāyas which put *vedanā* in physical and mental contexts. It also places this issue in the broader context of descriptions of physical and mental aspects of other phenomena in the Nikāyas. Some attention is paid in this chapter to conflicting views of various Pali commentaries on these passages.

The fourth chapter surveys passages in the Nikāyas which highlight *vedanā* in their descriptions of the workings of kamma (Skt. karma).

An important preoccupation of this thesis is an examination of passages in the Nikāyas in which Pali terms related to *vedanā* play significant roles, in particular, the terms *vedayita*, *vedaniya* and the verb *paṭi-sam-vid*. In the second chapter we see how the verb *paṭi-sam-vid* seems to “stand in” for *vedanā* in certain presentations of the *paṭicca-samuppāda*. In the third chapter, it is noted that these terms occur in passages which

describe combinations of mental and physical events. They also play an important role in descriptions of the working of kamma, as seen in the fourth chapter.

A number of modern writers on the texts of the Nikāyas have commented on the importance of the role of *vedanā*. Thus Nyanaponika, translating *vedanā* as “Feeling”:

> Through actual experience it can thus be confirmed that the ever-revolving round of Dependent Origination (*pañicca-samuppāda*) can be stopped at the point of Feeling, and that there is no inherent necessity that Feeling is followed by Craving. Here we encounter Feeling as a key factor on the path of liberation, and, therefore the *Contemplation of Feeling* has, in Buddhist tradition, always been highly regarded as an effective aid on that path.³

To my knowledge, however, none of these writers has ever followed up comments like these with any kind of study of this term as it is used in the Nikāyas, let alone thorough, detailed and systematic study that the above statement would seem to call for.⁴

The writers who have made comments like these have strong connections with the Theravada tradition.⁵ Those western scholars who have written on the texts of the Pali Nikāyas from a critical point of view almost invariably make no indication that *vedanā* could have any special significance. Their preoccupations lie elsewhere. Commenting on the increasing number of monographs concerned with Buddhist thought in the last twenty-five years, R. Gethin notes that

> by far the majority gravitate towards those aspects of the Nikāya thought-world that immediately capture the imagination of the mind nurtured in the traditions of modern western philosophy: conditioned arising (*pañicca-samuppāda*), the absence of a substantial self (*anattā*), and *nibbāna*. In these scholars have seen reflections of some of the classic preoccupations of western philosophy such as causality, the logical contradictions of difference and identity involved in the

⁴ Nyanaponika’s book *The Contemplation of Feeling*, referred to in the above footnote, is not, as its title may imply, a thorough study of the use of the term *vedanā* in the Pali texts, but a translation of the Vedanāsamyutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya, as well as some extracts from other *sūtras*, with a brief introduction.
⁵ See for example those cited at the beginning of the second chapter of this thesis.
notion of change, the concept of the person and personal identity, and the metaphysics of the absolute. I do not wish to suggest that one is mistaken in seeing such reflections, but only that reflections can be misleading. The point is that in Buddhist thought discussion of *pañicca-samuppāda*, *anattā* and *nibbāna* is not pursued as an end in itself but subordinated to the notion of the spiritual path, which is hardly true of the discussion of causality, change and metaphysics in western thought. The danger is that we rather hastily translate the Nikāyas into terms that are more congenial to us without having first understood the original language.⁶

The important passages on *vedanā* in the Nikāyas come for the most part as part of descriptions of practices which in the terms of these texts lead to a cessation of *dukkha* ("suffering"). Western scholars have somehow overlooked the importance of the role *vedanā*, an importance which my survey of the use of this term clearly shows it has.

This thesis focuses on the texts of the Nikāyas. In her recent study, S. Hamilton explains why she chooses to use these texts as the focus for her research. Her comments apply also to my own situation:

I … wanted to see what the earliest Pali material had to say on the subject before it was significantly adapted or elaborated as the Theravāda tradition developed. This approach is not so much intended to suggest that there is a pre-Theravāda form of Buddhism as to look at the primary texts without reference to how the tradition has interpreted them in later material.⁷

She notes that she is aware that this approach is “somewhat controversial,”⁸ and in a later study she discusses the dangers of “synchronic essentialism”⁹.

In effect, this is synchronically analysing a large, ancient, and undatable collection of texts without taking into account how they in all probability

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⁸ Ibid., p.xxx.
changed over a period of time. While one can thus come up with what seem to be the “essentials” of what they say, it may be that because the material developed incrementally there was never a time when the tradition itself viewed it in quite that way. I do no see a way around this problem ... Having said that, given the way the Pali Buddhist texts were preserved and compiled I do not see how anyone could treat the Sutta Piñaka other than broadly synchronically. Any attempt to take into account a diachronic perspective would immediately render one vulnerable to far more serious criticism ...  

In this thesis I also treat the texts of the Nikāyas synchronically. For the most part I have only examined the Nikāyas, but there are a number of places where I have included some discussion of the views of the Pali commentators on certain passages.

One faces many difficulties when dealing with the texts of the Nikāyas. In discussing and analysing them, I am constantly reminded of some comments made by R. Gethin:

> We are faced not so much with a single finished canvas as with a bewildering array of sketches and detailed studies which it is impossible to take in at once. Their subject is seen from different angles and in various aspects; it is viewed from near and afar.  

My approach has been greatly influenced by the great German Indologist Wilhelm Halbfass. His sensitive approach to Indian texts has always struck me as worthy of imitation, though I fear that I often fail to fulfil the task that he outlines: 

> ... it is our first responsibility to understand the Indian statements. But this in itself is a complex and elusive process. It requires, first of all, much learning, familiarization and assimilation. We have to be able to translate the texts into our own languages; we have to listen to them as carefully and patiently as possible; we have to be aware of their traditional cultural context and background. But we also have to be aware of our own background... Mere familiarization and

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assimilation are not enough; this has to be supplemented by conceptual analysis and clarification. We are not just dealing with words.

The relationship and transition between familiarization and clarification is complex and elusive.12

The term vedanā is usually translated as “sensation” or “feeling”. For the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to use this term untranslated.

My translations of Pali passages in this thesis are heavily indebted to the translations of Pali texts done by the Rhys Davids, I.B. Horner, F.L. Woodward, K.R. Norman, Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ñāṇamoli and Maurice Walshe.

Chapter One: Vedanā and the soteriological practices described in the four principal Nikāyas

The first part of this chapter is devoted to an examination of passages from a number of suttas which give importance to vedanā in descriptions of soteriological practices. Three suttas from the Dīghanikāya will be studied, the Brahmajālasutta, the Mahānidānasutta and the Mahāparinibbānasutta. From the Majjhimanikāya, we will look at five suttas, the Cūla- and Mahā-taṇhāsaṅkhayasuttas, the Dīghanakhasutta (which is referred to in the Commentaries as the Vedanāpariggahanasutta), the Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta, and the Chachakkasutta. A number of suttas from the Saṁyuttanikāya will also be studied, including some from the section of that nikāya devoted to suttas on the topic of vedanā, the Vedanāsamyutta.

The Brahmajālasutta

The first sutta of the Dīghanikāya, the Brahmajālasutta, has a striking example of this usage of the term vedanā. The main part of this sutta describes various views, 62 in total, represented as being held by thinkers of the Buddha’s day. The 62 views are presented in groups, and after each group the following passage appears:

This, bhikkhus, the Tathāgata understands: These viewpoints thus grasped and adhered to will lead to such-and-such destinations in another world. This the Tathāgata knows, and more, but he is not attached to that knowledge. And being thus unattached he has experienced for himself perfect peace, and having understood as they really are the arising and passing away of vedanā, their attraction and danger and the escape from them, the Tathāgata is liberated without remainder.¹

¹ Tāviddam bhikkhave Tathāgato pajānāti: “Ime diṭṭhiṭṭhānā evam-gahitā evam-parāmaṭṭhā evam-gatikā bhavissanti evam-abhisamparāyā ti. Taṅ ca Tathāgato pajānāti, tato ca uttaritaraṃ pajānāti, taṅ ca pajānanaṃ na parāmasatī, aparāmasato āssa paccattāṃ yeva nibbuti viditā, vedanānaṃ samudayaṇaṃ ca atthagamāṇaṃ ca assadaṇaṃ ca ādinavaṇaṃ ca nissaraṇaṃ ca yathā-bhūtaṃ viditvā anupāda vimutto, bhikkhave, Tathāgato. DN I 16-17.
This passage occurs thirteen times\textsuperscript{2} and is an important structural element in this long *sutta*.

The term *vedanā* is given a privileged position in this key passage. The Buddha is represented as describing himself as completely enlightened (*anupādā vimutto*) when he has known as they are (*yathābhūtaṃ viditvā*) certain characteristics of *vedanā*.

In the introduction to his translation of this *sutta*, Bhikkhu Bodhi makes the following comments on this passage (he translates *vedanā* as “feeling”):

Not understanding the real causes for their adherence [to views], the theorists delight in the feelings that arise conditioned by the proclamation of their views. This generates more craving and clinging in turn, as attempts to recapture the pleasant feelings, and these maintain the continued revolution of the round of existence. Since the basic root of the round, and the origin of suffering, is craving, and craving is conditioned by feeling, the Buddha singles out feeling as the existential factor most requiring examination to bring the round to an end. Feeling is the “bait of the round” (*vaṭṭāmisa*) which will be swallowed when left unexamined, but will be discarded if the hook it conceals is detected. Ignorance of feeling means not seeing its origin, passing away, satisfaction, unsatisfactoriness, and the escape from it, --the five angles from which any mundane phenomenon must be inspected to gain insight into its real nature. In order to contrast the ignorance of the theorists with his own wisdom, in the refrain following each of the expositions of views, the Buddha specifies his own understanding of feelings under these five headings.\textsuperscript{3}

Bhikkhu Bodhi acknowledges the crucial role that *vedanā* plays in this process: “the Buddha singles out feeling as the existential factor most requiring examination to bring the round to an end.” I have not, however, been able to find any Pali text which refers to *vedanā* as *vaṭṭāmisa*.

\textsuperscript{2}DN I 6-17, 21-22, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 38 and 39.
The Mahānidānasutta

In the Dīghanikāya’s Mahānidānasutta the process of liberation is described with reference to sensations. This is done, however, in an unusual way, in a way which we do not find again in the Nikāyas. Here is the concluding section of the relevant passage:

From the time, Ānanda, when a bhikkhu no longer regards vedanā as the self, or the self as being impercipient (appātisamvedanā), or as being percipient (attā me vediyati) and of a nature to feel (vedanādhammo), by not so regarding, he does not cling to anything in the world. When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He understands: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”

Three ways of regarding (samanupassati) vedanā in relation to the self (atta) are given here. When they are avoided, there is liberation.

R. Gethin has described the centrality of the critique of self in the Nikāyas:

The Buddhist critique of self is directed at all theories or views of the self that imply some sort of unchanging self whether that self is conceived of as eternal, immortal, or merely subsisting unchanged for the duration of a particular lifetime, or any period of time. As Prof. Norman has shown, the refutation of the Upanishadic identification of the ātman with the world is the primary focus of the critique of self contained in the Alagaddaupama Sutta. Elsewhere Buddhist texts attack a whole range of views concerning the self.

In the preceding section of the Mahānidānasutta, the Buddha explains why each of these ways of regarding the self is incorrect. The first of these, the view that “vedanā is my self”, that is the identification of vedanā with an abiding self, is refuted on the ground

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4 Yato kho Ānanda bhikkhu n’eva vedanaṁ attānaṁ samanupassati, no pi appātisamvedanāṁ attānaṁ samanupassati, no pi “Attā me vediyati, vedanāḥdhammo hi me attā” ti samanupassati, so evaṁ asamanupassanto na kiñcī loke upādīyati, anupādīyam na paritassati, aparitassam paccattaṁ yeva parinibbāyati, “Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṁ brahma-cariyaṁ, kataṁ karaṇiyam, nāparaṁ itthattāyati” pajānāti. DN II 68
that *vedanā* is a changing phenomenon, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction.\(^6\) If the self is identified with *vedanā*, then the disappearance of the self has to be countenanced, which is out of the question for those who hold to the Upaniṣadic view of the self.

The second view holds that the self is not *vedanā*, that the self does not feel. This is refuted on the grounds that if nothing at all were felt, then there could not be the thought “I am”. The third view states that “*Vedanā* is not my self, but my self is not non-feeling, my self feels, my self is of the nature of *vedanā* (*vedanā-dhammo*)”. The refutation of this view seems to rest on the Buddha’s understanding that there is no *vedanā* in the state of full liberation--nibbāna. This view is expressed in various places in the Nikāyas. It is found in the reverse (*paṭiloma*) statement of the dependent-orgination formula. The term used for the cessation of *vedanā* in the reverse statement of the dependent-orgination formula is also used in the Buddha’s refutation here: “*vedanā-nirodhā*”. Identifying one’s self as “of the nature of *vedanā*” (*vedanā-dhamma*) cannot be correct in terms of the ultimate truth of a fully liberated person, because there is a state where *vedanā* ceases, that is nibbāna.

Steven Collins has given a useful summary of this passage:

> ... the Buddha asks “how many ways are there in which (a man can) regard self?”. His interlocutor, the monk Ananda, answers that there are three: feeling is regarded as identical with self, in the words “feeling is my self”; or the self is regarded as without feeling, “my self is insentient”; or neither of these things is the case but “my self feels, my self has the attribute of feeling”.

The Buddha declares that it is “not fitting” (*na kkhamati*) to regard the matter in any of these ways, for the following reasons. In the first case, where self and feeling are identical, he says that feeling is of three types, pleasant, painful, and neutral. With which is the self to be identified, since only one type can occur at any given time? All three types of feeling are impermanent, causally conditioned phenomena, so that in any case the self would have to be the same, subject to

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\(^6\) *vedanā aniccā sankhatā paṭiccasamuppanna khaya-dhammā* DN II 66
arising and decay. This is an idea so manifestly untenable for the Buddha as to receive no comment. In the second place, where the self was held to be insentient, the Buddha asks, “where there is no feeling at all, is it possible that one might say “I am”? Since this is not possible, the view is again “not fitting”.

In the third place, where the self is held to feel, or have the attribute of feeling, he asks a similar question: “where feeling is completely absent ... might one be able to say “this (is what) I am”? Here also, since this is not possible, the view is “not fitting”.

Liberation comes from not regarding *vedanā* and *atta* in any of these three ways (*so evaṃ asamanupassanto*).8

The Mahāparinibbānasutta

The third *sutta* of the second volume of the Dīghanikāya is the famous Mahāparinibbānasutta. This long *sutta* follows the last days and the passing away of the Buddha. Immediately after the description of the passing away of the Buddha, there is a series of four verses. The fourth is shown as being spoken by one of the leading disciples of the Buddha, Anuruddha:

There was no breathing in and breathing out for such a one with steadfast mind; unmoved, aiming at peace, the muni died.

With undisheartened mind he bore sensation; like the quenching of a lamp was the release of his mind.9

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8 The commentary on this passage explains these three statements in a rather curious way. It sees all five aggregates covered by the three statements, the first statement identifying the self with the *vedanā* aggregate, the second identifying the self with the aggregate of matter, or the body (*råpa*), and the third identifying the self with the aggregates of perception, *saṅkhāras* and consciousness. The commentary states that these last three aggregates are to be understood in the final statement “because they are associated with *vedanā*” (*vedanāsampayuttattā*). Sv II 505.

9 Nāhu assāsa-passāso ṭhita-cittaśa tādino.
Anejo santim ārabbha yaṃ kālam akāri muni
Asallīnena cittena vedanaṃ ajjhavāsayi:
Pajjotass’ eva nibbānam vimokho cetaso ahūti. DN II 157
The Buddha’s passing away is also, in these texts, the moment of his final liberation from suffering, his final entering of nibbāna which is free from suffering. This is the so-called parinibbāna. Here this moment of dying (kālam akāri) and of release (vimokho) is described along with the “bearing” or “enduring” (ajjhavāsayi) of vedanā.

Whether or not the term vedanā has the same meaning here as it does in the Brahmajālasutta, and whether or not it is playing the same role in the description of the soteriological process that we find in the Brahmajālasutta are important questions. To help us find answers to these questions we need to examine the context of these verses more closely. The final parinibbāna of the Buddha takes place in the sixth recitation section (bhāñavāra) of the Mahāparinibbānasutta. In the second recitation section, there is an episode which describes the Buddha falling sick which includes the following passage:

Now during the rainy season, a severe sickness arose in the Fortunate One, with sharp vedanā as if he were about to die. But the Fortunate One bore them mindfully, with understanding and without being disturbed.10

The term vedanā here refers only to unpleasant sensations experienced in sickness. There are a number of places in the Nikāyas where the term vedanā is associated with sickness. Generally speaking, it is not usually used in these contexts as part of a description of a soteriological process. However, the two terms that we find here describing the manner in which the Buddha bears these vedanās, sata (“mindful”) and sampajāna (“with understanding”), are both of vital importance in certain soteriological practices described in the Nikāyas. They are of particular importance in the two suttas on the establishing of mindfulness, the Satipaññhānasuttas, and at other places in the Nikāyas where the practice of the establishing of mindfulness is discussed.

In the fourth recitation section, the Buddha takes what is to be his last meal. After the meal he falls sick again, and the description here is almost identical with that given for his earlier illness, quoted above. So at this significant juncture in the narrative, we again

10 Atha kho Bhagavato vassūpagatassa kharo ābādho uppañji, bālhā vedanā vattanti māraṇanti. Tā sudām Bhagavā sato sampajāno adhvāseti avihāṁ aññam. DN II 99
find this combination of the bearing of \textit{vedanā}, and of being \textit{sata} (mindful) and \textit{sampajāna} (with understanding).

By the time Anuruddha’s verses come, immediately after the passing away of the Buddha, the cumulative effect allows us to interpret the “bearing of sensations” as a soteriologically important element in the description of the last moments of the Enlightened One which are given in those verses.\textsuperscript{11}

The Satipaṭṭhānasutta

The four establishings of mindfulness (\textit{satipaññhānas}) are amongst the most important of the soteriological practices described in the Nikāyas. They figure in the summary of the Buddha’s teaching known as the \textit{Bodhipakkhiyadhammas} (factors leading to Enlightenment), which are found at numerous places in the Nikāyas. There are two Satipaṭṭhānasuttas in the Nikāyas, one in the Dāghanikāya, the other in the Majjhimanikāya, differing in that one of the sections is considerably expanded in the former. The former is thus known as the Mahāsatipaññhānasutta (the Great Satipaṭṭhānasutta). They are the most detailed and comprehensive accounts of these practices in the Nikāyas.\textsuperscript{12} The soteriological aim of the establishing of mindfulness practices is described in unambiguous terms in the opening passage of the \textit{sutta} (D II 290): they are for the experiencing (or realisation) of nibbāna (\textit{nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya}). The four establishings of mindfulness are then briefly given in a formulaic phrase which is applied to each of them. The four are the observation of the body (\textit{kāyānupassanā}), the observation of \textit{vedanā} (\textit{vedanānupassanā}), the observation of the mind (\textit{cittānupassanā}) and the observation of mental phenomenon (\textit{dhammānupassanā}).

The body of the \textit{sutta} is divided into four sections, each treating one of the four establishings of mindfulness. The section devoted to the observation of \textit{vedanā} is relatively short, covering just one page, whereas the section on the observation of the body comes to seven pages and the one on the observation of mental contents sixteen

\textsuperscript{11} These verses of Anuruddha also appear in the Saṁyuttanikāya (SN I 2).
\textsuperscript{12} The references here will be to the Dīghanikāya version.
pages. The practice described is the knowing (pajānāti) by the bhikkhu of the type of vedanā that he is experiencing, according to certain categories. When he is experiencing pleasant (sukha) vedanā, he knows that he is experiencing pleasant vedanā. The same formula is given for unpleasant (dukkha) vedanā and for vedanā which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant (adukkhamasukha). This three-fold formula is then given two more times, the first for each of the three kinds of vedanā which is associated with greed (sāmisa), and then for each of the three as not associated with greed (nirāmisa).

The section on the observation of vedanā ends with a passage which is identical to the concluding passages for each section of the other three establishings of mindfulness, the only difference being that here we find the word vedanā whereas in the kāyānupassanā section we find the word kāya, in the cittānupassanā section we kind the word citta, etc. The practice described in this passage is not, therefore, specific to vedanā.

In the overall design of the sutta, the observation of vedanā does not receive any more emphasis than the three other practices. There are, however, other places in the Nikāyas where the practice of satipaṭṭhāna is given a special connection with vedanā.

The Satosutta (SN V 180):

The Satosutta gives a marked emphasis to the understanding of vedanā in connection with this practice. This is one of the short suttas in the Satipaṭṭhānasamīyutta, the section devoted to the four establishings of mindfulness in the Saṁyuttanikāya. The sutta begins with a phrase which introduces the two main elements of the practice, and then underlines the importance of this practice. The two elements are then briefly described:

Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu should remain mindful and with full understanding. This is my teaching to you.

And how, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu mindful? ...

And how, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu possessed of full understanding? Here, bhikkhus, the bhikkhu knows that vedanā arise, that they remain, and that they disappear. He knows that thoughts arise, that they remain, and that they
disappear. He knows that perceptions arise, that they remain, and that they disappear.\textsuperscript{13}

The description of the bhikkhu who is mindful (sato) is the same as the description of the four establishings of mindfulness at the beginning of the Satipaṭṭhānasuttas.\textsuperscript{14} The description of the bhikkhu who is possessed of full understanding (sampajāno) is not, however, found in those suttas, and it is here that vedanā plays an important role. The practice of one who is possessed of full understanding is described firstly as knowing the characteristic of impermanence of vedanā, and then of thoughts (vitakka), and of perceptions (saññā). Once again we find vedanā associated with the concept of impermanence in the description of a soteriological practice. The Buddha is represented as describing these practices as “my teaching to you [i.e. to the bhikkhus]” (ayam vo amhākam anusāsanā). There are numerous statements in the Nikāyas which represent the Buddha as stating that the main, indeed the sole, concern of his teaching is the soteriological.\textsuperscript{15} Here this teaching is said to be connected with the understanding of vedanā.

The short passage describing the arising, staying and passing away of vedanā, thoughts and perceptions occurs in a number of other places in the Nikāyas. In the Acchariyabhattadhammasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, Ānanda, the Buddha’s chief attendant, gives, in the presence of the Buddha, a list of the Buddha’s “wonderful and marvellous qualities” (acchariyā abbhutadhammā). These qualities are chiefly concerned with supernatural events which took place at the time of the birth of Gotama, and the description of them takes up most of the sutta. At the end of Ānanda’s account, the Buddha says to Ānanda that he should also remember another of his qualities, which he then gives in the following terms:

\textsuperscript{13} Sato bhikkhave bhikkhu vihareyya sampajāno, ayaṃ vo amhākam anusāsanā. Kathānāca bhikkhave bhikkhu sato hoti. ... Kathānāca bhikkhave bhikkhu sampajāno hoti. Idha bhikkhave bhikkhuno viditā vedanā upajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhattha gacchanti. Viditā vitakkā upajjanti ... Viditā saññā upajjanti ... SN V 180-81.
\textsuperscript{14} D II 290 and MN I 56.
\textsuperscript{15} For example, “Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering.” (Pubbe càhaü bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhan c’eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodham. MN I 140).
Here, Ānanda, the Tathāgata knows that *vedanā* arise, that they remain, and that they disappear.\(^\text{16}\)

The same is said for perceptions (*saññā*) and thoughts (*vitakka*) as in the passage quoted above which describes a bhikkhu who is possessed of full understanding. The passage is thus given a very marked emphasis in this *sutta*. As Bhikkhu Bodhi has noted in his translation of this *sutta*, “[t]his statement seems to be the Buddha’s way of calling attention to the quality he regarded as the true wonder and marvel.”\(^\text{17}\)

The Cūḷataṇḍhāsaṅkhayasutta

In the Majjhimanikāya there are two *suttas* about the “destruction of craving” (*taṇhā-saṅkhaya*), the 37th *sutta* of that collection, the Cūḷataṇḍhāsaṅkhayasutta (the Shorter Discourse on the Destruction of Craving), and the 38th, the Mahātaṇḍhāsaṅkhayasutta (the Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving). In both of these *suttas*, *vedanā* plays an important role in descriptions of the process of liberation. In the first, the setting is a mythological one. Sakka, the ruler of the gods, is represented as asking the Buddha to explain to him briefly (*sañkhittena*) how a bhikkhu is liberated by the destruction of craving. The reply is given as follows:

Here, ruler of gods, a bhikkhu has heard that nothing is worth adhering to. When a bhikkhu has heard that nothing is worth adhering to, he directly knows everything; having directly known everything, he fully understands everything; having fully understood everything, whatever *vedanā* he feels, whether pleasant or painful or neither painful-nor-pleasant, he abides observing impermanence in those *vedanā*, observing fading away, observing cessation, observing relinquishment. Observing thus, he does not cling to anything in the world. When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He understands: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been

\(^{16}\) *Idh’, Ānanda, Tathāgatassa viditā vedanā uppañjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatthaü gacchanti.* MN III 124.

lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.\textsuperscript{18}

The formula given to describe the enlightened bhikkhu is a standard one used to describe an arahant.

The role of vedanā in this process is clearly of great importance. Having fully understood all phenomena (sabbam dhamman), the bhikkhu observes four phenomena with regard to vedanā. Firstly he is described as abiding observing impermanence with regard to vedanā (so tāsu vedanāsu aniccānupassi viharati). He is thus applying one of the fundamental concepts of the thought world of the Nikāyas to vedanā. He also abides observing fading away (virāga), cessation (nirodha) and relinquishment (paṭinissagga) with regard to vedanā. Vedanā is the basis for all of these observations. The text goes directly from these observations to the description of the bhikkhu not clinging to anything in the world, and thus becoming liberated.

The significance of this passage is emphasized by being repeated twice further on in the sutta. It is also found in a sutta in the Aṅguttaranikāya\textsuperscript{19}, indicating that it was considered to be of some importance by the compilers of these texts.

The Mahātaññhāsaṅkhayasutta

The second of the pair of suttas on the destruction of craving, the Mahātaññhāsaṅkhayasutta, also gives much emphasis to vedanā in its description of the process of liberation. This remarkable sutta calls for a detailed analysis.

The passage relevant to the term vedanā occurs as part of a longer passage which begins by explaining the conditions for the conception of a child. The period of the mother’s

\textsuperscript{18} Idha devānaṁ inda bhikkhuno sutaṁ hoti: sabbe dhammā nālaṁ abhinivesāyā ti. Evañ-ce devānaṁ inda bhikkhuno sutaṁ hoti: sabbe dhammā nālaṁ abhinivesāyā ti, so sabbam dhamman abhijānāti, sabbam dhamman pariñānāti, sabbam dhamman pariñānāya yaṁ kañci vedanaṁ vedeti, sukham vā dukkham vā adukkhamasukkham vā, so tāsu vedanāsu aniccānupassi viharati, virāgānupassi viharati, nirodhānupassi viharati, paṭinissaggānupassi viharati; so tāsu vedanāsu aniccānupassi viharato... na kiñcī loke upādīyati, anupādīyati na paritassati, aparitassam paccattāmaṁ yeva parinibbāyati, “Khīnā jāti, vusitaṁ bruhamacariyaṁ, katiṁ karaniyaṁ, nāparaṁ itthattāyati” pajānāti. (MN I 251, also on p.254 and 255.)

\textsuperscript{19} AN IV 88
pregnancy, her giving birth to the child and her feeding it with her milk are then briefly
described. The text then goes on to explain two things which follow on from the growth
of the child and the “ripening” (paripāka) of his sense organs (indriya). The first is that
the child plays with various toys and at various games. We are even given some
examples of these: “with a toy windmill, with a toy cart, with a toy bow.”20 This whole
passage is quite remarkable: we are far from the abstractions of philosophers, but are
dealing with concrete, everyday reality.

The other situation specified as following on from the child’s growth and the
development of his sense organs is his enjoyment of the five “strands of sense-pleasures”
(kāmaguṇa). This leads into the sequence in which vedanā plays a key role. The
sequence is given twice. Firstly we have a description of the process by which suffering
arises, and then after that comes a description of the process by which suffering ceases,
the process of liberation from suffering. Each of these descriptions is six-fold in
structure; the first gives the following passage for the five physical senses and for the
mind:

> When he has seen a material shape through the eye, he feels attraction for
agreeable material shapes, he feels repugnance for disagreeable material shapes;
and he dwells without mindfulness aroused as to the body, with a mind that is
limited; and he does not comprehend that freedom of mind and that freedom
through intuitive wisdom as they really are, whereby those evil unskilled states of
his are stopped without remainder. Possessed thus of compliance and antipathy,
whatever vedanā he feels--pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant--he
delights in that vedanā, welcomes it and persists in cleaving to it.21

The person described in this passage dwells anupāṭṭhita-kāya-sati (“without mindfulness
aroused as to the body”). This is the negative form of the word upāṭṭhita-kāya-sati,
upāṭṭhita having the sense of “standing up ready, with attention fixed” (PED). It is in
this state that he develops attraction for the pleasant sense objects and repugnance for the

20 MN I 266
21 So cakkhuṁ rūpaṁ disvā piyarūpe rūpe sārājja tiññhati, appiyarūpe rūpe byāpajja tiññhati, anupāṭṭhitakāyasati ca
viharati parittacetaso, taṁ-ka cetovimuttim paṁhāvīmuttim yathābhūtam na-ppajjāti yath’ assa te pāpakā
akusalā dhammā aparītesā nirajjhanti. So evaṁ anurodhavirodham samappanno yam kaṁci vedanaṁ
vedeti, sukham và dukkham và adukkhamasukham và, so taṁ vedanaṁ abhinandati abhivadati aţjhosāya
tīţhati. MN I 266
unpleasant. This, then, is the base from which tanhā arises, the “thirst” which keeps the mind unbalanced and which is the cause of suffering (dukkha) as explained in the second Noble Truth. But the passage goes further, probing deeper into this phenomenon.

First comes another brief description of this condition: _so evaṃ anurodhavirodham samāpanno_. I.B. Horner translates this passage as “possessed thus of compliance and antipathy”, and notes that this phrase is explained in the Pali commentary as “attachment as well as hatred”. Thus it is a kind of summary of the preceding sentence with its description of one who feels attraction (sārajjati) and repugnance (byāpajjati). It is in this context that the text proceeds to make its important point about _vedanā_:

> whatever _vedanā_ he feels--pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant--he delights in that sensation, welcomes it and persists in cleaving to it.\(^{23}\)

The passage continues with an explanation of the result of this:

> From delighting in that _vedanā_, from welcoming it, from persisting in cleaving to it, delight arises; whatever is delight amid those _vedanā_, that is grasping; conditioned by grasping is becoming; conditioned by becoming is birth; conditioned by birth, old age and dying, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair come into being. Such is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.\(^{24}\)

The latter part of this passage belongs to the standard _pañicca-samuppāda_ formula.

The _sutta_ continues with a passage which is also found in the Sāmaññaphalasutta of the _Dīghanikāya_, and which recurs in many _suttas_ of the _Majjhimanikāya_. It describes the development of a disciple from the moment he acquires confidence in the Buddha’s teachings to his attainment of arahantship. The sequence follows its standard course up


\(^{23}\) _yam kañci _vedanaṃ _vedeti, sukham vā dukkham vā adukkhamasukham vā, so _tasmā _vedanaṃ _abhinandati abhivadatai _ajjhosaśa tiṣṭhati_. MN I 266

\(^{24}\) _Tassa _tasmā _vedanaṃ _abhinandato _abhivadato _ajjhosaśa _tiṣṭhato _upajjati _nandi, _yā _vedanāsu _nandi _tad-upādānam, _tass' _upādānapaccayā _bhavo, _bhavapaccayā _jāti, _jātipaccayā _jarāmaranam _sokaparidevadukkhandomanassupāyāsā _sambhavanti, _evam-etassa _kevalassa _dukkhakkhandhassa _samudayo _hoti_. MN I 267
until the description of the four jhānas. From this point we return to the subject matter of the passage immediately preceding this sequence, that is to kāya-sati, vedanā and the paticca-samuppāda. The sequence of psychological events is identical, but the sense is inverted, each sentence now being in the negative. Thus instead of the phrase

... he feels attraction for agreeable material shapes...

we find

... he does not feel attraction for agreeable material shapes...

Awareness of the body (kāya-sati) is now upāṭṭhita, (PED: “standing up (ready)”), whereas in the earlier passage it is anupāṭṭhita. This person no longer delights in vedanā (so taṁ vedanam nābhīnandati); the delight (nandī) in vedanā ceases:

yā vedanāsu nandī sā nirujjhati...

And from this point the reverse sequence of the paticca-samuppāda is given, ending with the usual formula:

Thus this entire mass of suffering ceases.

This is the goal of the Buddha’s teaching, the cessation of suffering, and in this sutta it is related directly and in detail to a practice connected with the awareness of vedanā.

The Dīghanakhasutta

The Buddha’s discourse to the wanderer Dīghanakha in the Majjhimanikāya, the Dīghanakhasutta, is of great significance for understanding the role of vedanā in the soteriological process. It seems that the ancient commentators on these texts understood

25 ... piyarāpe rāpe sārajjati.. MN I 266
26 ... piyarāpe rāpe na sārajjati... MN I 270
27 Ibid.
28 evam etassa kevalassa duxkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti, Ibid.
that *vedanā* is of great importance in this *sutta*, for they refer to it as the *Vedanāpariggahanasutta*, the Discourse on the Grasping of Sensation.\(^{29}\) The significance of the passage in which the soteriological process is described is underlined by some of the events in the narrative setting. Immediately after the Buddha has finished his address to Dīghanakha, we are told that Sāriputta had been standing behind the Buddha while the discourse was going on. Sāriputta is counted as one of the two chief disciples of the Buddha. This important personage is shown as thinking favourably of the discourse, and while he is doing this “his mind was liberated from the *āsavas* (defilements) by not clinging.”\(^{30}\) In a number of places in the commentaries, it is related that this is the moment when Sāriputta became an Arahant, while listening to this discourse of the Buddha’s on *vedanā*.

The first part of the passage on *vedanā* in this *sutta* is identical with a part of the section on *vedanā* in the Mahānidānasutta, examined above. This is the Buddha’s refutation of the first manner of regarding the self (*atta*) and *vedanā*, the identification of the self with *vedanā*. As in the Mahānidānasutta passage, the Buddha here begins by stating that there are three *vedanā*, pleasant, painful and those which are neither painful nor pleasant. Further on he characterizes each of these *vedanā* with a list of adjectives. For pleasant *vedanā*, for example, we find the following phrase (the Buddha addresses Dīghanakha as Aggivessana, which is probably his clan name):

> Pleasant *vedanā*, Aggivessana, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, vanishing, fading away and ceasing.\(^{31}\)

After this passage, the text of the Dīghanakhasutta departs from that of the Mahānidānasutta. The next passage in the Dīghanakhasutta describes the process by which a “noble disciple” (*ariyasàvaka*) becomes enlightened with this knowledge:

> Seeing thus, a well-taught noble disciple becomes disenchanted with pleasant *vedanā*, disenchanted with painful *vedanā*, disenchanted with neither-painful-nor-pleasant *vedanā*. Being disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through

\(^{29}\) Sv II 418, III 882 and Ps II 862, IV 87, Mp I 92, 321, also DīhA I 79; ThagA II 95
\(^{30}\) anupàdàya àsavehi cittaü vimucci MN I 501
\(^{31}\) Sukhà pi kho Aggivessana vedanà aniccà saïkhatà pañiccasamuppannà khayadhammà vayadhammà viràgadhammà nirodhadhammà (MN I 500)
dispassion [his mind] is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: “It is liberated”. He understands: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”

The final phrases of this passage are standard formulations for an enlightened person and are found throughout the Nikāyas. The earlier part of the passage places great emphasis on *vedanā* in this description of a practice which results in liberation from suffering.

The Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta

*Vedanā* plays a rather different role in a description of the process of liberation in the Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta of the Majjhimanikāya. Here an important passage on *vedanā* comes after the description of the process of liberation; it shows how the enlightened person responds to different *vedanā*.

This occurs as part of a long section which is a commentary on the first words of a short formula given near the beginning of the *sutta*: “one should not neglect wisdom.” The text asks, “And how, bhikkhu, does one not neglect wisdom?” Towards the end of the long passage which is the reply to this question comes the description of liberation, after a sequence in which a person comes to understand that the four “formless” (*arūpa*) states are conditioned (*saṅkhata*). One of the standard formulas to describe the process of liberation follows this:

He does not cling to anything in the world. When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He understands: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”

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32 Evam passaṁ ariyasāvako sukhāya pi vedanāya nibbindati, dukkhāya pi... nibbindaṁ virajjati, virāgā vimuccati, vimuttassāṁ vimuttaṁ - iti ānāṁ hoti: khīṇā jāti, vusitaṁ brahmañcariyaṁ, kataṁ karaṇiyaṁ nāparaṁ ithattāyati pajānāti. MN I 500
33 paṁhaṁ nappamajjeyya MN III 239
34 na kiṁci loke upādiyati anupādiyam na paritassati aparitassāṁ paccattaṁ yeva parinibbāyati: Khīṇā jāti vusitaṁ brahamacariyaṁ, kataṁ karaṇiyaṁ nāparaṁ ithattāyati pajānāti. MN III 244
Then comes the passage in which the way in which the enlightened person just described experiences *vedanā*:

If he feels a pleasant *vedanā*, he understands: “It is impermanent; there is no holding to it; there is no delight in it.” If he feels a painful *vedanā*, he understands: “It is impermanent; there is no holding to it; there is no delight in it.” If he feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant *vedanā*, he understands: “It is impermanent; there is no holding to it; there is no delight in it.” If he feels a pleasant *vedanā*, he feels it detached. If he feels a painful *vedanā*, he feels it detached. If he feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant *vedanā*, he feels it detached.35

Once again we find the association of impermanence, one of the key notions of the Nikāyas, and *vedanā*. Another important idea which we have seen associated with *vedanā* in the Mahātaṇhāsankhayasutta is also found here, that of not clinging (*anajjhosa*). And as in that *sutta* also, delight is not taken in *vedanā* (*anabhinandita*).

This significant passage on the “correct” way to respond to *vedanā* of different types is found in a number of other places in the Nikāyas. Its importance is in this way underlined. In one of the *suttas* of the Nidānasamgīta36 and one of the *suttas* of the Khandhasamgīta,37 it occurs, as it does in the D̄hātuvinbhāṅgasutta, after the “Birth is destroyed” (*khānā jāti*) formula which indicates that the bhikkhu is fully liberated. In one of the *suttas* of the fifth volume of the Saṅyuttanikāya,38 it occurs after a description of a bhikkhu who has developed a series of meditational stages know as the four *jhānas*, the four “formless states” and the cessation of perception and sensation (*saṅkāvedayitanirodha*). It also occurs in one of the *suttas* of the Vedaṇāsamgīta, the section of the Saṅyuttanikāya which is devoted to *suttas* on the topic of *vedana*.39

The Chachakkasutta

35 So sukhaṇ ce vedanaṁ vedeti, Sā aniccā ti pajānāti; Anajjhosaṁ ti pajānāti; Anabhinanditaṁ ti pajānāti. Dukkhaṇ ce vedanaṁ vedeti... So sukhaṇ ce vedanaṁ vedeti, visanuyutto nām vedeti; so dukkhaṁ ce vedanaṁ vedeti, visanuyutto nām vedeti. MN III 244.
36 SN II 82
37 SN III 126
38 SN V 319
39 SN IV 213
In the Chachakkasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, *vedanā* plays a key role in a passage which first describes how one does not make an end of suffering, and which then goes on to describe how one does this. Making an end of suffering is equivalent to attaining the goal of liberation, so this passage is of great significance to our study. The second part of this passage is as follows:

> When one is touched by a pleasant *vedanā*, if one does not delight in it, welcome it, and remain holding to it, then the underlying tendency to craving does not lie within one. When one is touched by painful *vedanā*, if one does not sorrow, grieve and lament, does not weep beating one’s breast and become distraught, then the underlying tendency to aversion does not lie within one. When one is touched by a neither-painful-nor-pleasant *vedanā*, if one understands as it really is the arising and passing away of *vedanā*, its attraction and danger and the escape from it, then the underlying tendency to ignorance does not lie within one.

Bhikkhus, that one shall here and now make an end of suffering by abandoning the underlying tendency to craving for pleasant *vedanā*, by abolishing the underlying tendency to aversion towards painful *vedanā*, by extirpating the underlying tendency to ignorance in regard to neither-painful-nor-pleasant *vedanā*, by abandoning ignorance and arousing knowledge--this is possible.

In this passage, the soteriological process is described in terms of *vedanā* and the “underlying tendencies” or “[latent] dispositions” (CPD) (*anusaya*). Certain types of *anusayas* are eradicated in relation to certain types of *vedanā*, and the result of this is the arising of knowledge (*vijjā*) and the end of suffering, that is, liberation.

The Puttamamaññasutta of the Nidānaasaññutta

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40 dukkhas’ antakaro bhavissatii n’etaṃ thānam vijjati MN II 285
41 So sukhāya *vedanāya* phūṭho samāno nābhīnandati nābhīvadati nājjhosāya tīṭhati; tassa rāgānusayo nānuseti. Dukkhaṃ *vedanāya* phūṭho samāno na socati na kilamati na paridevati na urattājim kandati na sammoham āpajjati; tassa pañīghānusayo nānuseti. Adukkhamasukkhaṃ *vedanāya* phūṭho samāno tassā *vedanāya* samudayaḥ ca atthangamaḥ ca adinavah ca nissaranāḥ ca yathabhūtam pajaṇati; tassa avijjānusayo nānuseti. So vata, bhikkhave, sukkhāya *vedanāya* rāgānusayaṃ pahāya dukkhaṃ *vedanāya* paṭīghānusayaṃ paṭīvinodetvā adukkhamasukkhaṃ *vedanāya* avijjānusayaṃ samāhanitvā avijjāṃ pahāya vijjāṃ uppādetvā diṭṭhe va dhamme dukkhaṃ *antakaro* bhavissatīti, thānam etam vijjati. MN III 286.
There is a short passage in a *sutta* of the Nidānasamīyutta which gives a great deal of emphasis to *vedanā* in the soteriological process.

When the three *vedanā* are well understood, I declare that there is nothing further which the noble disciple has to do.\(^{42}\)

The phrase “nothing further to be done” (*natthi kiñci uttarīṃ karāṇīyaṃ*) means that the noble disciple’s goal of full liberation has been reached.

Later in this *sutta* the same passage recurs, firstly with the words “the three cravings”\(^{43}\) replacing “the three *vedanā*”, and then with the words “name and form.”\(^{44}\) Thus according to this *sutta*’s account, the full comprehension of *vedanā* is one of three ways of achieving full liberation.

The Vedanā-samīyutta

Third sutta, Pahānena

The Vedanāsamīyutta of the Samīyuttani̊kāya is perhaps the most important source of information in the Nikāyas on the term *vedanā*. Many of its *suttas* describe aspects of the soteriological process. The third *sutta* of the Vedanāsamīyutta, the Pahānenasutta, puts great emphasis on the role of *vedanā* in its description of a practice of this type.

The *sutta* begins with a passage which is a kind of summary of the passage looked at above in the Chachakkasutta of the Majjhimanikāya in which the soteriological process is explained in connection with the “underlying tendencies” (*anusayās*). As in the Chachakkasutta, certain types of *anusayās* are eradicated in relation to certain types of *vedanā*, and it is said that the bhikkhu who eradicates these *anusayās* has made an end of suffering (*antam akāsi dukkhassa* SN IV 205).

This description occurs in a prose passage at the beginning of the *sutta*. This is followed by six lines of verse which repeat the same sentiment. The *sutta* then ends with another

\(^{42}\) तत्सु वेदनसु पारिहृताः सु आरियसोवकास्सा नात्ती किन्चि उत्तारिञ्च काराणियं यादां। SN II 99.
\(^{43}\) तिसो ताष्ठा, SN II 100
\(^{44}\) नामारिपा SN II 100
four lines of verse which are of great importance for understanding the role of vedanā in the soteriological process.

But when a bhikkhu who is ardent
does not neglect complete understanding,
Then that wise man fully understands
Vedanā in their entirety.

Having fully understood vedanā
He is free from āsava in this very life.
Firm in Dhamma’s ways, with the body’s breakup
The one who has knowledge cannot be reckoned. 45

Here we find terms from the description of the practice of the four establishings of mindfulness associated with the full comprehension (pariññā) of vedanā, and the result of this is described as full liberation. The bhikkhu “does not let go of” (na riñcati) sampajañña (“complete understanding”), one of the qualities described in the opening passage of the Satipaṭṭhānasutta. The term “ardent” (ātāpin) also appears in this part of the Satipaṭṭhānasuttas, and we find it again in this sutta. The bhikkhu thus has full comprehension of (parijañāti) all vedanās, and he is wise (paññita). In the final two lines, the bhikkhu, having fully understood vedanā (So vedanā pariññāya), is said to be free from the āsava. He is called “one who has knowledge” (vedagu) and at death he does not return to the finite world (sankha).

Fifth sutta, the Daṭṭhabbenasutta.

The last four lines of verse are repeated further on in the Vedanāsamyutta: they provide the concluding lines to the twelfth sutta of the collection, the Ākāsasutta. The final two lines are found again in the fifth sutta of the Vedanāsamyutta, the Daṭṭhabbenasutta.

45 Yato ca kho bhikkhu ātāpi, sampajaññhānaṁ na riñcati
Tato so vedanā sabbā, parijñānati paññito
So vedanā pariññāya, diṭṭhe dhamme anāsavo
Kāyassa bhedā dhammaṁṭho, sankhaṁ nopeti vedagū ti. SN IV 206
This *sutta* describes another way in which a bhikkhu can “make an end of suffering” in connection with *vedanā*:

> When a bhikkhu regards pleasant *vedanā* as suffering, painful *vedanā* as a barb, neutral *vedanā* as impermanence, such a one is called, bhikkhu, “rightly seeing”. He … has made an end of suffering.\(^{46}\)

The logic of seeing pleasant *vedanā* as suffering is explained, as we have noticed, in another *sutta* of the Vedanāsaññyutta (SN IV 216): pleasant *vedanā* is a source of suffering because it is, like all compounded things (*saññhāras*), subject to destruction, decay and change.

The Sallasutta.

The theme of unpleasant *vedanā* being a barb, mentioned in the Daññhabbenasutta, is elaborated upon in the next *sutta*, the Sallasutta. The term barb occurs in a simile which likens a person who is not a noble disciple experiencing an unpleasant *vedanā* and as a consequence becoming agitated to a person who is pierced by two barbs. The noble disciple, on the other hand, is pierced by only one barb: he feels the unpleasant *vedanā*, but his mind does not suffer as a result. The noble disciple is then described as not having aversion to unpleasant *vedanā* and thus eradicating the “underlying tendencies” (*anusaya*) associated with unpleasant *vedanā*; as not delighting in pleasant *vedanā* and thus eradicating the *anusayas* related to pleasant *vedanā*; and as understanding the impermanent nature of sensations which are neither pleasant nor unpleasant and thus eradicating the *anusayas* which are associated with them.

This is followed by a passage which we have encountered in the Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta of the Majjhimanikāya.

\(^{46}\) *Yato kho bhikkhave bhikkhuno sukhā vedanā dikkhato dīṭṭhā honti, dukkhā vedanā sallato dīṭṭhā hoti, adukkhamasukhā vedanā aniccata dīṭṭhā hoti, ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu sammaddaso... antam akāsi dukkhasā ti.* SN IV 207.
If he feels a pleasant vedanā, he feels it detached. If he feels a painful vedanā, he feels it detached. If he feels a neither-painful-nor-pleasant vedanā, he feels it detached.47

Here the soteriological import of the practice described in this passage is made explicit and unambiguous by a concluding sentence which is not found in the Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta. The Buddha is represented as stating

I say that this noble disciple is called “detached from birth, old age, death, grief, suffering, dejection and despair, detached from suffering”. 48

The phrasing of this sentence repeats the cadences of the previous passage which refer to the noble disciple as being detached from the various types of vedanā. The detachment from suffering that is mentioned here is, in the terms of the Nikāyas, the state of liberation.

Vedanā and the four noble truths

The first sutta of the Vedanāsaṁyutta

The first sutta of the Vedanāsaṁyutta is another which features vedanā in a description of soteriological practices. The first sutta is significant in this respect in two ways. It explains in four lines of verse how a bhikkhu becomes “free from craving” (nicchāṭa) and “fully liberated” (parinibbutta). Firstly the bhikkhu is described with the following line:

Concentrated, fully understanding, aware is the disciple of the Buddha.49

The terms “fully understanding” (sampajāno) and “aware” (sato), are key terms in descriptions of one of the important soteriological practice described in the Nikāyas, the four establishing of mindfulness.

47 So sukhā¤ ce vedanaü vedeti, visam̐Ru yutto na姆 vedeti; so dukkhaü ce vedanam vedeti, visam̐Ru yutto naam vedeti. SN IV 209.
48 Ayam vaccati bhikkhave ariyasāvako visaññhuto jātiyà jaràya maraõena sokehi paridevehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāyehi visaññhuto dukkhasmà ti vadāmi. SN IV 210.
49 Samàhito sampajāno sato buddhassa sāvako. SN IV 204.
The second connection that this *sutta* has with soteriological practices occurs in the next lines. Here we find “vedanā” used as a substitute for “suffering” (*dukkha*) in what is otherwise a rehearsal of the four noble truths. In many places in the Nikāyas the Buddha is represented as summarising his teachings as the four noble truths. They are stated in what is traditionally regarded as his first discourse, known as the Dhammacakkavattana-sutta (V I 10 and SN V 420). In a passage which first appears in the second *sutta* of the Dīgha Nikāya, the Sāmañña-phala-sutta, and which occurs subsequently in all of the remaining *suttas* of the first volume of the Dīgha Nikāya and in fifteen *suttas* of the Majjhima Nikāya, the realisation of the four noble truths is described as the highest goal of a bhikkhu’s practice. In this passage it is equated with complete liberation. The four noble truths are given in these *suttas* in the following terms:

He understands as it is “This is suffering”. He understands as it is “This is the arising of suffering”. He understands as it is “This is the cessation of suffering”. He understands as it is “This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering”.

In this first *sutta* of the Vedanāsāmyutta we find a parallel to the four noble truths, with the word suffering (*dukkha*) replaced by the word *vedanā*. The student of the Buddha, who has full understanding (*sampajāna*) and is aware (*sata*),

understands *vedanā*, and the arising of *vedanā*, and where they cease, and the path leading to (their) destruction.

The next line of the *sutta* states that because of the ceasing of sensations, the bhikkhu is liberated.

This first *sutta* of the Vedanāsāmyutta is thus of fundamental importance for understanding the significance of *vedanā* in the soteriological process. *Vedanā* is placed here in the context of what is regularly presented in the Nikāyas as the Buddha’s most

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50 So “*idaṃ dukkhan*” *ti yathābhūtām pañjānāti,* “*ayaṃ dukkhasamudayo*” *ti yathābhūtām pañjānāti,* “*ayaṃ dukkhanirodho*” *ti yathābhūtām pañjānāti,* “*ayaṃ dukkhanirodhaṁ pañipāda*” *ti yathābhūtām pañjānāti.* DN I 83-84.

51 *Vedanā ca pañjānāti, vedanānaṁca sambhavam Yattha cetā nirujjhanti, maggaṁca khayagāminā.* SN IV 204.
important statement concerning suffering and the way out of suffering, that is the four noble truths.

Group of four suttas in second chapter of the Vedanāsamyutta

Further into the Vedanāsamyutta, in its second chapter, there is a group of four suttas which follow the same model as the first sutta, that is, they would each be a presentation of the four noble truths except that the term suffering is replaced by sensation. These suttas are all in prose, differing thus from the first sutta. The central passage of these four suttas is identical. Firstly, the following questions are asked:

What is vedanā? What is the arising of vedanā? What is the ceasing of vedanā? What is the path leading to the ceasing of vedanā?53

Here we have a passage which follows the pattern in which the four noble truths are enunciated. In reply to the first question comes the following phrase:

There are these three vedanā, Ānanda: pleasant, painful and neutral vedanā.54

On one level, this may seem an unusual choice as a substitute for dukkha, especially the pleasant (sukha) vedanā and the vedanā which is neither painful nor pleasant (adukkhamasukha). This thought appears to have occurred to some of those listening to the Buddha’s discourses, for there is a sutta in the Vedanāsamyutta which deals with this question. Here a bhikkhu is represented as asking the Buddha how the Buddha’s phrase “whatever is felt is suffering”55 relates to the three vedanās, pleasant, painful and neither painful nor pleasant.

The bhikkhu’s noticing of the apparent discrepancy between the two teachings is praised by the Buddha. He then goes on to point out that all compounded things (sañkhāras) are

52 These are suttas number 15, 16, 17, and 18 (SN IV 219-23).
53 Katamā nu kho bhante vedanā, katamo vedanāsamatayo, katamo vedanānirodho, katamā vedanānirodhañgamini pañipadā. (SN IV 219-20)
54 Tissatsi imā Ānanda vedanā, sukhā vedanā dukkha vedanā adukkhamasukha vedanā. SN IV 220.
55 yam kihetvedaya tām dukkhamim SN IV 216, also found at MN III 208 and SN II 53, and cf. SN IV 205, lines 3-4.
impermanent (anicca), subject to destruction (khayadhamma), decay (vayadhamma), fading away (virāgadhamma), ceasing (nirodhadhamma) and change (vipariṇāmadhamma), and that it is for this reason that he declared that everything that is felt is suffering. Thus we are allowed to conclude that vedanās which are pleasant and neutral also fall into this category of compounded things, and are also suffering. In this respect vedanās of all kinds are a suitable substitute for the first noble truth of suffering in this passage which follows the model of the four noble truths.

The answers to the next two questions, “What is the arising of vedanā?” and “What is the ceasing of vedanā?” is connected with the place of vedanā in the paṭicca-samuppāda. In the paṭicca-samuppāda, vedanā is said to exist because of contact (phassapaccayā vedanā). Here a similar locution is used for the explanation of the arising of vedanā:

From the arising of contact is the arising of vedanā.56

The explanation of the ceasing of vedanā in these four suttas of the Vedanāsamyutta is identical to the description of the ceasing of vedanā in the reverse statement of the paṭicca-samuppāda. In both we find the phrase “From the ceasing of contact is the ceasing of vedanā” (phassanirodha vedanānirodho SN IV 220).

The response to the fourth question, “What is the path leading to the ceasing of vedanā?” is exactly the same as the standard description of the fourth noble truth, the path leading to the ceasing of suffering: it is the noble eightfold path (ariya atthaṅgika magga). Thus in these four suttas of the Vedanāsamyutta the most important soteriological teachings of the Nikāyas are given in terms of vedanā.

Group of three suttas in the third chapter of the Vedanāsamyutta

Further on again into the Vedanāsamyutta, in its third and final chapter, there is a group of three suttas (numbers 23, 24 and 25) which resemble the four that we have just looked at, except that in the middle of the presentation of the four “truths” of vedanā, the arising of vedanā, etc., there is a fifth element added. This comes after “the arising of vedanā”

56 Phassasamudayā vedanāsamudayo. SN IV 220.
(vedanāsamudaya), and is “the path leading to the arising of vedanā” (vedanāsamudayagāmini paṭipadā). These three suttas have the same pattern as the four of the second chapter, in that they are in a question and answer structure. The reply to the question “What is the path leading to the arising of vedanā” is given with one word: “craving” (taṇhā, SN IV 233). Taṇhā is of course a key term in the descriptions of soteriological practices that we find in the Nikāyas. In the classical expositions of the four noble truths, in what is represented as the Buddha’s first discourse, for example (SN V 421), or in the Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta (D II 308), craving is equated with the arising of suffering (Idaṁ kho pana bhikkhave dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam, yāyaṁ taṇhā... SN V 241), and the complete cessation of craving is said to be the cessation of suffering (Idaṁ kho pana bhikkhave dukkhanirodham ariyasaccam, yo tassā yeva taṇhāya aseṣavirāgaṇirodho... SN V 241).

The Pubbe¤àõasutta and the phrase “pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṁ udapādi”

The statements concerning vedanā that are found in these suttas are emphasised in a significant manner in the second sutta of this group, the Pubbe¤àõasutta, the 24th sutta of the Vedanāsaüyutta. The Buddha is represented as saying that before his enlightenment (pubbe me bhikkhave sambodhà), the questions that we find in the other suttas had occurred to him, that is, “What is vedanā?” etc. He then relates that the responses as given in the other suttas occurred to him. Finally, each of the elements of these passages are given in the following form:

At the thought, bhikkhus, “This is vedanā”, --in things not heard of before there arose in me vision, there arose in me knowledge, insight arose, wisdom arose, light arose.57

Passages which are parallel to this one appear in a few other places in the Nikāyas. It seems that this locution is reserved for important utterances. It appears, for example, in the Buddha’s first discourse, with “This is vedanā”, etc., replaced by “This suffering”, etc. It also appears in a sutta of the Dīghanikāya in which the Buddha is represented as

57 Imā vedanā ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṁ udapādi, ṃsaṁ upapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi. SN IV 233.
relating an account of the life of a former Buddha by the name of Vipassin. In this *sutta*,
the phrase comes after Vipassin’s discovery of the *pañicca-samuppāda*, which is
represented as the moment of his enlightenment. Here the passage begins, “At the
thought “Arising, arising”...” (*Samudayo samudayo ti...* DN II 33). This sequence is
repeated in seven *suttas* of the first chapter of the Nidānasamīyutta, which is the section
of the Saññyuttaniñāya concerned with the *pañicca-samuppāda* (*suttas* 4 to 10, SN II 5-
10.) The first six of these *suttas* deals with the realisation of the *pañicca-samuppāda*
by six former Buddhas, and thus their enlightenment. After their realisation of each causal
link in the *pañicca-samuppāda* comes the passage found in the account of the Buddha
Vipassin’s experience just mentioned. The seventh *sutta* uses the same terms to
describe, in the first person, the experience of Gotama the Buddha.

This same passage appears in a short *sutta* of the Satipaṭṭhasamīyutta of the
Saññyuttaniñāya, introduced by each of the four establishings of mindfulness. Thus for
the first we find “At the thought, bhikkhus, “This is the observation of the body with
regard to the body”, --in things not heard of before there arose in me vision...” (*Ayam
kāye kāyānupassanā ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi...*
SN V 178). The practices of the four establishings of mindfulness are, as we have seen,
of great importance amongst the soteriological practices of the Nikāyas. This formula,
then, seems to be used primarily in connection with realisations of great soteriological
significance. Its use here in the 24th *sutta* of the Vedānasamīyutta serves to underline the
significance of the practice of knowing *vedanā* in the same way that suffering is known
in the description of the four noble truths.

Aññuttaraniñāya sutta, AN I 176-77 (“Vediyamānassa ... idaŋ dukkhanti paññāpemi”)

In all there are nine *suttas* in the Vedānasamīyutta which present *vedanā* in the same
terms as suffering is presented in the four noble truths.58 There is another *sutta* of great
interest on this topic in the Aññuttaraniñāya. The passage which is of interest to our
enquiry begins with a statement of the first part of one of the standard presentations of
the *pañicca-samuppāda* formula found in the Nikāyas. At the term *vedanā*, however, it
takes a turn which is different from its usual enunciation:

58 Numbers 1, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25 and 28.
Conditioned by contact is *vedanā*. Now to him who has feeling, monks, I make known: This is suffering. I make known: This is the arising of suffering. I make known: This is the cessation of suffering. I make known: This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.\(^{59}\)

This passage also links *vedanā* and the four noble truths, but in a manner which is quite different to the manner in which this is done in the *suttas* of the Vedanāsāmyutta looked at above. After the statement of the cause of *vedanā*, instead of the next “link” in the *pañicca-samuppāda*, “conditioned by *vedanā* is craving” (*vedanāpaccayā taṇhā*), we find a phrase which begins with the present participle of the verb *vediyati*, a verb which is related to *vedanā*.

This passage seems to be saying that the feeling of *vedanā* is a preliminary requirement for a person to be taught one of the key soteriological doctrines of the Nikāyas, that is the doctrine of the four noble truths.

Other contexts in which *vedanā* is presented in the four noble truths formula

Returning now to the presentations of *vedanā* in a manner akin to that in which suffering is presented in the four noble truths which we noticed in the Vedanāsāmyutta, we must note here that there are other contexts in which we find *vedanā* presented in this manner. In these contexts it finds its place alongside a number of items which are given in the same four-fold pattern. There are several *suttas* in the Nidānasāmyutta in which this occurs.\(^{60}\) The other items in this case are the other members of the *pañicca-samuppāda*, with the exception of avijjā.\(^{61}\) So in these *suttas*, *vedanā* is given no special emphasis. It takes its place alongside ten other members of the *pañicca-samuppāda*, all of which are given in the pattern in which suffering is given in the exposition of the four noble truths. For example, we find “old-age-and-death” in the following presentation in *sutta* 13:

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\(^{59}\) *phassapaccayā vedanā*. *Vediyyamānassa kho panāham bhikkhave idam dukkhaṁ ṭi paṭīṇāpem, ayaṁ dukkhasamudayo ṭi paṭīṇāpem, ayaṁ dukkhanirdho paṭīṇāpem, ayaṁ dukkhanirodhaṁ māma paṭipadā ṭi paṭīṇāpem.*  AN I 176-77

\(^{60}\) *Suttas* 13, 14, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 65 and 82-93.

\(^{61}\) The Nidānasāmyutta is made up of *suttas* on the theme of the *pañicca-samuppāda*. 
They know old-age-and-death, they know the arising of old-age-and-death, they know the cessation of old-age-and-death, they know the path leading to the cessation of old-age-and-death.\(^{62}\)

This then is repeated for the ten following members of the *pañicca-samuppāda*, the final member, “ignorance” (*avijjā*), being omitted. In the Sāmmādiṭṭhisutta of the Majjhimanikāya, the same pattern with an added question and answer passage for each member (“What is old-age-and-death”, etc., (*Katamaṇ pan’āvuso jarāmaraṇam*, etc., MN I 49)), is found for all the members of the pañicca-samuppāda, including *avijjā*, and with the term “food” (*āhāra*) added at the beginning.

Similarly, there are several *suttas* in the Khandhasamyutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya (suttas 50, 56, and 57), as well as two in other parts of the Saṃyuttanikāya (SN III 257-58 and SN IV 386-87), which present each of the five aggregates which make up a person (the *pañcakkhandha*) in the same four-fold pattern in which suffering is presented in the exposition of the four noble truths. *Vedanā* is one of these aggregates, along with matter (*rūpa*), perceptions (*saññā*), volitional activities (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*). So in these *suttas* as well, *vedanā* is not given any special emphasis which would distinguish it from the other aggregates.

There is one sutta in the Aṅguttaranikāya in which the treatment of *vedanā* parallels that seen in the above passages:

> And when the noble disciple thus knows *vedanā*, their origin, variety, fruit, ending, and the steps leading thereto; he knows this penetrative holy life as *vedanā*’s end.\(^{63}\)

Here we have the same pattern in which suffering is presented in the exposition of the four noble truths with two more items added: the noble disciple also knows the variety (*vemattata*) of *vedanās* and the result (*vipāka*) of *vedanās*. The soteriological

\(^{62}\) *jarāmaraṇam pajāṇanti, jarāmaraṇasamudayam pajāṇanti, jarāmaraṇanirodhapajāṇanti, jarāmaraṇanirodhagāminīṁ paṭipadaṁ pajāṇanti.* SN II 15

\(^{63}\) *Yato ca kho bhikkhave ariyasaṅvāka evaṁ vedanā pajāṇati, evaṁ vedanānaṁ niidānasambhavaṁ pajāṇati, evaṁ vedanānaṁ vemattataṁ pajāṇati, evaṁ vedanānaṁ vipākaṁ pajāṇati, evaṁ vedanānirodhaṁ pajāṇati, evaṁ vedanānirodhagāminipaṭipadaṁ pajāṇati, so imaṁ nibbedhikam brahmacaryam pajāṇati vedanānirodhaṁ.* AN III 412-13.
significance of knowing all of these is underlined by the final phrase in which this practice is describe as being the “mode of living of Brahma” (brahmacariya). Elsewhere in the Canon, brahmacariya is described as being “for completely making an end of suffering” (sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāya Vin.i.12). The PED gives as part of its definition of this term the following phrase: “in Buddhist sense the moral life, holy life, religious life, as way to end suffering....”

The *sutta* in which this passage appears also has the same formula repeated for a number of other phenomena. These are sense pleasure (*kāmā*), perception (*saññā*), the āsavas (defilements), karma (Pali *kamma*), and suffering (*dukkha*) (A III 410-17). So as with the suttas looked at above in which we find a similar treatment of *vedanā* alongside other members of the pañicca-samuppāda and of the five aggregates, *vedanā* is not being emphasised in any special way here.

The significance of the treatment of *vedanā* is appreciated by the consideration of the wider context. The treatment of *vedanā* in the four-fold pattern that we find in the Vedanāsāmyutta does not occur for any of the other members of the pañicca-samuppāda, nor for any of the other aggregates. Nowhere in the Nikāyas are they treated in this manner in isolation from the other members. *Vedanā* is unique amongst these terms in being presented on its own in the formulation that is associated with the four noble truths.

**Conclusion**

The passages studied in this chapter clearly give great emphasis to *vedanā* in their descriptions of soteriological processes. As far as I am aware, none of these passages have been grouped together and examined by those who have written on these texts. This survey shows that Goenka’s emphasis on *vedanā* in his meditation teachings have a firm basis in the texts of the Nikāyas.

When drawing conclusions from any study of passages in the Nikāyas, however, it is important to bear in mind the disparate nature of these texts. R. Gethin’s comments, quoted in the introduction to this thesis, are worth repeating here:
We are faced not so much with a single finished canvas as with a bewildering array of sketches and detailed studies which it is impossible to take in at once. Their subject is seen from different angles and in various aspects; it is viewed from near and afar.64

There are of course many sutta[s in the Nikāyas which make no mention of the term vedanā. This is not to say, however, that these sutta[s contradict the hypothesis that the correct understanding of vedanā is an important element in the path to liberation. The following chapter pursues this theme further in an investigation of the term vedanā as it is used in certain important causal schemas found in these texts.

64 Gethin, 1992, p.20.
Chapter Two: Vedanā and the paṭicca-samuppāda

A number of modern writers on the Pali texts have made remarkable comments about the importance of the role of the term vedanā in the descriptions of various causal sequences in the Nikāyas. Thus D. Kalupahana in his study of causality in Buddhism:

... up to the point of feeling or sensation one is governed by the causal pattern. But immediately after that begins deliberate activity, which can lead one either to subjection to the objective order of things, that is, to enslavement to things of the world, or to freedom from bondage to such things through the elimination of ego-consciousness.\(^1\)

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Nyanaponika has also given great emphasis to vedanā in this context. Here he translates vedanā as “Feeling”:

Through actual experience it can thus be confirmed that the ever-revolving round of Dependent Origination (paṭicca-samuppāda) can be stopped at the point of Feeling, and that there is no inherent necessity that Feeling is followed by Craving. Here we encounter Feeling as a key factor on the path of liberation …\(^1\)

Bhikkhu Bodhi also lays great stress on the crucial role of vedanā (again translated as “feeling”):

… a relationship of conditionality, unlike a necessitarian one, allows for a margin of freedom in responding to the condition. The place in the sequence of conditions where that margin takes on the greatest importance is the link between feeling and craving. It is at that brief moment when the present resultant phase has come to a culmination in feeling, but the present causal phase has not yet begun, that the issue of bondage and liberation is decided. If the response to feeling is governed by ignorance and craving, the round continues to revolve; if

\(^1\) Thera Nyanaponika, Contemplation of Feeling, Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 1983, p.2.
the response replaces craving with restraint, mindfulness and methodical attention, a movement is made in the direction of cessation.²

Having made these striking observations on the place of vedanā in certain causal sequences, it is surprising that none of these writers has looked in detail at the use of this term in such contexts in the Nikāyas. This chapter examines the use of the term vedanā in causal sequences such as the paṭicca-samuppāda in the Nikāyas.

The paṭicca-samuppāda is an important concept in the Nikāyas. In one of the suttas of the Majjhimanikāya it is equated with the dhamma (the teaching of the Buddha) itself:

He who sees the paṭicca-samuppāda sees the dhamma, he who sees the dhamma sees the paṭicca-samuppāda.³

An obvious place to begin our investigations of the textual accounts of the paṭicca-samuppāda is the Nidāna-saüyutta of the Saüyuttanikāya. This important section of the canon groups together suttas which deal with the concept of “cause” (nidāna). The first sutta, in reply to the question “what is the paṭicca-samuppāda?” gives the following statement, without any elaboration:

...conditioned by ignorance are the karma-formations; conditioned by the karma-formations is consciousness; conditioned by consciousness is psycho-physicality; conditioned by psycho-physicality are the six (sensory) spheres; conditioned by the six (sensory) spheres is contact; conditioned by contact is vedanā; conditioned by vedanā is craving; conditioned by craving is grasping; conditioned by grasping is becoming; conditioned by becoming is birth; conditioned by birth, ageing and dying, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair come into being. Such is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.⁴

³ Yo paṭicca-samuppādaṁ passati so dhammaṁ passati, yo dhammaṁ passati so paṭicca-samuppādaṁ passati. MN I 191
This sequence of twelve “links” is found in this form in many *suttas* of all four Nikāyas. A wide variety of translations and interpretations have been applied to these terms. The term *saïkhāra*, for instance, can be found in modern translations as any of the following: impressions, conformations, formations, disposition, aggregates, mental activities, volitional acts, composite-unity, pre-natal forces, co-operating forces, synthesis, karmic form-energy and affirmations. As A.L. Basham has noted, this series has been “commented on again and again by ancient and modern scholars, and perhaps not fully understood by anybody.” I do not intend to provide a commentary on this series here. Rather I will attempt to elucidate the role of just one of the terms of the sequence, *vedanā*. This will of course entail some discussion of the terms in its immediate vicinity, and some comments on the series as a whole. I will also attempt to place the discussion found in the *suttas* on *vedanā* and the *paṭicca-samuppāda* in the broader context of the teachings of the Nikāyas. As R. Gethin has put it, “In their own terms, the Nikāyas teach but two things: *dukkha* [“suffering”] and the cessation of *dukkha*.” And he adds, significantly, that “in the Nikāyas the processes and means that bring about the cessation of *dukkha* are conceived of primarily in terms of spiritual practice and development.”

With reference to the *paṭicca-samuppāda*, Gethin has some relevant comments upon which I will elaborate in this chapter: “... in Buddhist thought discussion of *paṭicca-samuppāda*... is not pursued as an end in itself but subordinated to the notion of the spiritual path...”

An important aspect of the presentation of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* quoted above is that not one of the terms of the sequence is given more emphasis than any other term. There are many *suttas*, however, which highlight one term or another, and there are quite a number of *suttas* which throw light on the term *vedanā* and on its place in the series.

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8 Ibid., p.19.
The Mahānidānasutta

When turning to the Dīghanikāya in our investigation of the paṭicca-samuppāda, the Mahānidānasutta (the Great Discourse on Causation) provides an obvious starting point. Rhys Davids, in the introduction to his historic 1910 translation of this sutta made the following comments:

The doctrine of paṭicca-samuppāda--that all dhammā (phenomena physical and mental) are paṭiccasamuppannā (happen by way of cause) finds in the following Suttanta the fullest exposition accorded to it throughout the Piṭakas.9

This discourse is occasioned by some comments on the paṭicca-samuppāda by Ānanda, the Buddha’s attendant. Ānanda claims that the paṭicca-samuppāda appears clear to him, and the Buddha reprimands him for underestimating its significance before proceeding with his exposition. This response could well serve as a warning to any exegetist working on this series.

The sutta continues with the Buddha giving an outline of the series, first in the manner of a catechism, and then in the standard version which is used in the first sutta of the Nidāna-saṁyutta, quoted above. There is, however, an important difference: three of the twelve terms of the Nidāna-saṁyutta sequence are missing. They are avijjā, saṅkhāra and saḷāyatana. These “omissions” do not, however, affect the place of the term vedanā in the sequence; the terms preceding and following vedanā remain the same. As in the first sutta of the Nidāna-saṁyutta, the first two presentations of the paṭicca-samuppāda series in this sutta do not lay emphasis on any particular term or terms of the series. All are presented in a uniform, undifferentiated manner.

The sutta continues with a third presentation of the paṭicca-samuppāda series in a third format. And on this occasion a strong emphasis is given to the vedanā link. This third presentation proceeds by giving a short explanation of each term in the series. The usual progression of terms is followed, beginning with jāti, up until vedanā. From vedanā, however, the description of the causal sequence turns back on itself to again describe the

relationship between taõhà and vedanà. This now leads into a new sequence of causation. In the standard paõicca-samuppàda series, the existence of upàdàna is dependent on taõhà. Instead, in this passage, the next phrase is “taõhmaü paõicca pariyesanà” (“craving conditions seeking”), which in turn gives rise to the following series:

seeking conditions acquisition, acquisition conditions decision-making, decision-making conditions lustful desire, lustful desire conditions attachment, attachment conditions appropriation, appropriation conditions avarice, avarice conditions guarding of possessions, and because of guarding of possessions there arise the taking up of stick and sword, quarrels, disputes, arguments, strife, abuse, lying and other evil unskilled states.  

The text then continues with a reiteration of the new series in reverse order, in an expanded formula which emphasizes the dependence of each element of the series upon the preceding element. Finally we come back to the term taõhà. And at this point a statement is made concerning the importance of the role of vedanà in the scheme of these sequences. In Pali it reads as follows:

Iti kho ānanda ime dve dhammà dvayena vedanàya eka-samosaraõà bhavanti.  

This phrase has presented some difficulties for translators over the years. T.W. Rhys Davids felt the need to include a few words in square brackets in his translation, in an attempt to make the meaning more clear.

“So, now, Ānanda, these two aspects [of craving] from being dual become united through the sensation [which conditions them].” 

Bhikkhu Bodhi, in his 1985 translation, offers a slightly different emphasis:

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10 pariyesanà paõicca lâbho, lâbhaü paõicca vinicchayo, vinicchayaü paõicca chanda-ràgo, chanda-ràgàm paõicca ajjhosànam, ajjhosànàm paõicca puriggaho, puriggahàm paõicca macchariyàm, macchariyàm paõicca ârakkho, ârakkhàdhihikaranàm dandàdana-satthàdana-kalaha-viggaha-vivàda-tuvantuva-pesuñña-musãvãdà aneke pãpakà akusalà dhammà sambhavanti. DN II 58-59
11 DN II 61
Therefore, Ānanda, these two phenomena, being a duality, converge into a unity in feeling.  

The phrase “vedanāya eka-samosaraṇa” puts strong emphasis on the term vedanā. The term samosaraṇa is a rather uncommon one. The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary notes that it means “coming together, meeting, union, junction”. A.K. Warder, in his Introduction to Pali, recommends that in order to elucidate key terms, the student should work “if possible from concrete everyday language... to the less obvious dialogues of the philosophers.” In a Śaṅkyuttanikāya sutta we find a passage where this term is used in just such an everyday context.

Just as, brethren, in a peaked house all rafters whatsoever go together to the peak, slope to the peak, join [samosaraṇa] in the peak, and of them all the peak holds chief place.

This vivid image gives an impression of the emphasis being placed on the term vedanā. Vedanā links the two sequences which are the subject of this section of the sutta. By viewing the two sequences side by side (fig. 1), we can see that both taṇhā and vedanā, amongst other terms, are common to them. And yet the above statement identifies vedanā as the point where the two come together. This pointed emphasis on vedanā will be more fully appreciated when we come to look at suttas which explore this junction in more detail. The current text, at this point, returns to its exposition of the standard paṭicca-samuppāda series.

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15 Seyyathā pi bhikkhave kūṭāgārassa yā kāci gopānasiyo sabbā ta kūṭāgamā kūṭaninnā kūṭasamosaraṇa kūtām tāsam aggam akkhāyati. SN III 156.
Mahānidānasutta:

1<sup>st</sup> sequence
consciousness (viññāna)
name-and-form (nāma-rūpa)
contact (phassa)
vedanā
craving (tanhā)
grasping (upādāna)
becoming (bhava)
birth (jāti)
old-age and death, etc. (jarā-maraṇā...)

2<sup>nd</sup> sequence
consciousness (viññāna)
named-and-form (nāma-rūpa)
contact (phassa)
vedanā
craving (tanhā)
seeking (pariyesāna)
acquisition (lābha)
decision-making (vinicchaya)
lustful desire (chanda-rāgo)
attachment (ajjhosāna)
appropriation (pariggaha)
avarice (macchariya)
guarding of possessions (ārakkha)
taking up of stick and sword, etc.
(dāṇḍādāna-satthādāna ...)

Following this exposition, the remainder of the sutta is not directly concerned with the paṭicca-samuppāda, but one term from the series is given some further attention in a long passage which discusses various “soul theories”; this is our term vedanā. This part of the sutta has been examined in detail in the first chapter of this thesis.

The Brahmajālasutta

The Dīghanikāya is counted as the first book amongst the collections of suttas of the Pali canon. Its first sutta, the Brahmajālasutta, lays strong emphasis on vedanā and discusses it in relation to the paṭicca-samuppāda. The main body of the sutta is an exposition of sixty-two of the views or philosophies (diṭṭhis) which were prevalent in the Buddha’s day, and their relationship to the Buddha’s realization. Following this detailed exposition, which occupies some twenty-six pages in the Pali Text Society edition,<sup>16</sup> is a

<sup>16</sup> DN I 13-38.
section which the editors of that edition have headed as the “Summary”\(^\text{17}\). Each of the sixty-two views are here stated three times, grouped in their various categories (or rather the holders of these views are listed as proclaiming their views), qualified in a different way each time. Finally, all of these view-holders are listed in relation to the \textit{paṭicca-samuppāda}, which is here stated for the first time, in a shortened version. Thus, the sixty-two \textit{diṭṭhī} are presented in five “rounds”: firstly with their particulars detailed, and then three times in the “summary” and finally with reference to the \textit{paṭicca-samuppāda}. The first four rounds, in fact, bring us closer and closer to the final presentation, and what we see here is a kind of evolution of the \textit{paṭicca-samuppāda}.

The relationship of the various views to the Buddha’s realization in the first round is expressed in the following terms:

> This, bhikkhus, the Tathāgata understands: These viewpoints thus grasped and adhered to will lead to such-and-such destinations in another world. This the Tathāgata knows, and more, but he is not attached to that knowledge. And being thus unattached he has experienced for himself perfect peace, and having understood as they really are the arising and passing away of \textit{vedanā}, their attraction and danger and the escape from them, the Tathāgata is liberated without remainder.\(^\text{18}\)

This passage appears in identical form thirteen times, as a foil to the various and manifold doctrines. In the previous chapter we noted the important role that \textit{vedanā} plays in this passage.

The repeated passage of the second round presents some problems of translation and interpretation (Maurice Walshe comments that the difficulty of translating Pali is sometimes considerable, “even when one thinks one knows the meaning!”\(^\text{19}\)):
This passage is repeated thirteen times, each time in relation to a different group of samaña-brāhmaṇas and their respective diṭhis.

T.W. Rhys Davids and Walshe offer slightly different interpretations through their translations. Rhys Davids, whose translation of the Dīghanikāya was the work of a pioneer, proposes the following:

Of these, brethren, those recluses and Brahmans who are Eternalists, who in four ways maintain that the soul and the world are eternal... that opinion of theirs is based only on the personal sensations, on the worry and writhing consequent thereon, of those venerable recluses and Brahmans, who know not, neither perceive, and are subject to all kinds of craving.\(^21\)

Walshe gives:

Thus, monks, when those ascetics and Brahmins who are Eternalists proclaim the eternity of the self and the world in four ways, that is merely the feeling of those who do not know and see, the worry and vacillation of those immersed in craving.\(^22\)

The key word in the current context is *vedayitaḥ*, and the key issue is whether or not it can be equated with the term *vedanā* of the paṭicca-samuppāda. Its role in the sentence also needs to be considered, and through this consideration I find myself at variance with both of the above renderings. The PED gives *vedayita* as the past participle of the verb *vedeti*, which is explained in a separate entry as having a twofold meaning:

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\(^{20}\) DN I 39


either intellectually “to know” (cp. *veda*), or with reference to general feeling “to experience” (cp. *vedanā*). For the present tense two bases are to be distinguished, viz. *ved* used in both meanings; and *vediy* … used only in meaning of “experience”.23

*Vedayita* is closely related to the second form, and thus to the second part of the twofold meaning, which this dictionary compares to the *pañicca-samuppāda* term *vedanā*.

Childers’ *Dictionary of the Pali Language*,24 an older work but one still held in high repute (first published in 1875; “old but still important”, comments Warder25) approaches this term from a different angle, but reaches a similar conclusion. Under the definition of *vidati*, which is given as “to know, to ascertain”, we read that “there is a curious form “*vediyati*”, often contracted to *vedeti*, which is used in the sense “to feel, experience”.” And further on: “from “*vediyati*” we have the participle of the perfect passive, neut. “*vedayitam*”, sensation, feeling.” The PED gives in its entry for “*vedayita*” only its meaning as an adjective, but here we find it as a noun. In Pali, as Warder has pointed out, “the distinction between “substantives” and “adjectives” is not absolute, a good many words being used in both functions”.26 He gives *vedayita* as a neuter noun meaning “sensation, experience” in the vocabulary of this book.

It is as a noun that we can find similarity between this word and the *vedanā* link of the *pañicca-samuppāda*. Rhys Davids, one of the editors of the PED, gives in his translation of the passage under examination, the adjectival meaning of *vedayitam*, which he renders as “based... on the personal sensations”. Walshe has it as the noun, which seems to be clearer in the context of the sentence: surely it relates directly, as an accusative noun, to the preceding nouns in the genitive. These *samaṇa-brāhmaṇas* are being described as “*ajānatam apassatam*” (not knowing, not seeing) of “*vedayitam*”, in contrast to the Tathāgata who has properly understood (“*yathābhūtaṃ viditvā*”) the characteristics of *vedanā*, as described in the previous round.

25 *Introduction to Pali*, p.383.
The final nominative in this sentence is the compound “paritasita-vipphanditam” (Rhy David’s “worry and writhing”), and this relates to the immediately preceding compound noun in the genitive (“taṇhā-gatānaṇī”). This genitive is an attribute of the genitive “samaṇa-brāhmaṇaṇī” found earlier in the sentence. As a rule attributes immediately follow the word to which they relate, but here we find the nominative vedayitaṇī between the main group of genitive nouns and this one. In Pali, according to Warder, “departures from the usual word order in prose indicates emphasis, strong emotion”.27 Thus we find the term taṇhā (“craving”) thrown into relief, and it is this term, central to the Buddha’s exposition of his realization in innumerable suttas, which follows the term vedanā in the paṭicca-samuppāda series.

Maurice Walshe’s translation of this phrase seems to be gaining more credibility as we proceed. There is, however, one important aspect in which I feel it is lacking, and where Rhys Davids seems to come closer to what the real meaning may be. Walshe gives equal weight to the two words not in the genitive in this phrase (vedayitaṇī and paritasita-vipphanditaṇī):

“that is merely the feeling of those..., the worry and vacillation of those...”

Yet it seems that they perform quite different roles in the sentence. Vedayitaṇī is grammatically subordinate to the two present participles which qualify samaṇa-brāhmaṇaṇī, namely ajānataṇī apassataṇī. “What is felt” is what they do not know or see. On the other hand, the nominative paritasita-vipphanditaṇī relates to the whole clause, with an idiomatic relationship to the nouns in the genitive. Warder explains this idiom thus:

A construction with a possessive genitive is very often equivalent to an English construction with the verb “to have”. (In Pali “to have” is hardly ever expressed by a verb but almost always by the genitive case.)... idaṁ assa hoti, literally “of him there is this”, “he has this”.28

28 Ibid., p. 56.
So the two words *vedayitam* and *paritasita-vipphanditam* are in a definite sequence, together with the intervening compound in the genitive (*taṇhā-gatānaṃ*). If we equate the phrase *paritasita-vipphanditam* (“worry and vacillation”) with *domanassa* (“distress... mental pain... unpleasant state of mind” (PED)), which appears as one of the defining terms for *dukkha* (“suffering”) in the *paṭicca-samuppāda*, then we have the kernal of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* expressed in this round of explanation of the invalidity of the sixty-two *diṭṭhis*. The *samaṇa-brāhmaṇas*, not knowing, not seeing *vedanā*, involved in craving (*taṇhā-gatā*), acquire this suffering. What we see here then, is an adumbration of the significant central section of the *paṭicca-samuppāda*: *vedanā*—craving (*taṇhā*)—suffering (*dukkha*).

The third “round” is presented with a similar summarized version of the sixty-two views presented in groups, each of which is qualified in the same terms. This time we find the phrase “*tad api phassa-paccayā*” at the end of each group of views, which Walshe gives as “that is conditioned by contact”. This is the first usage in this *sutta* of the term “*paccaya*” (“condition” or “cause”), the term which connects the “links” in the standard presentation of the *paṭicca-samuppāda*. Both here and in the standard version of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* the term *paccaya* is declined in the ablative case, indicating cause, a usage common in philosophical statements.\(^{29}\)

This term is compounded with the word *phassa* (contact). The significance of the term here is its place in the *paṭicca-samuppāda*, immediately preceding the term *vedanā*, which has been the basis of the elaborations of the first two rounds. So we take one step back in the *paṭicca-samuppāda* after the foreshadowing of the forward part of the chain in the preceding round. We are witnessing a kind of working out of the *paṭicca-samuppāda*, an evolutionary process that we do not see in the many standard presentations of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* given in the Nikāyas.

In the fourth round the wording becomes more emphatic. This categorical statement follows each of the groups of *diṭṭhis* which are arranged in the same way as they are in the previous two rounds:

\(^{29}\) Warder, 1984, p. 89.
... te vata aṇṇatra phassā paṭisāṃvedissantīti n'etaṃ ṭhānaṃ vijjati.\textsuperscript{30}

For this Walshe gives:

That all of these (Eternalists and the rest) should experience that feeling without contact is impossible.\textsuperscript{31}

And Rhys Davids in a similar vein:

That they should experience those sensations without contact, such a condition of things could not be.\textsuperscript{32}

Both of them capture the emphatic nature of the idiom “n'etaṃ ṭhānaṃ vijjati” (“this is impossible”, “it is not the case”). More significantly, both of them use a similar choice of words to express the verb paṭisāṃvedissanti. The root of this verb (paṭi-saṃ-vid) is defined by Warder as meaning “feel, experience”, and the PED uses the same words in its entry for paṭisāṃvedeti (as well as “undergo” and “perceive”). Yet both of our translators choose to use a verb and an object to render this verb: “experience that feeling” (Walshe) and “experience those sensations” (Rhys Davids). “Feeling” and “sensation” are two words that both of them commonly use to translate the Pali term vedanā. This term can be construed as being related to the root vid of the verb in question. Rhys Davids and Walshe have both chosen to extrapolate the noun vedanā from the verb paṭi-saṃ-vid, and in doing so they have connected this passage with the paṭicca-samuppāda, of which vedanā is one of the key terms.

Each of the successive rounds of the Brahmajālasutta moves closer and closer to the final form of the paṭicca-samuppāda. The emphatic

... te vata aṇṇatra phassā paṭisāṃvedissantīti n'etaṃ ṭhānaṃ vijjati

\textsuperscript{30} DN I 43.
\textsuperscript{31} Op. cit., p. 89.
\textsuperscript{32} Op. cit., p. 53.
of this round can be read in this light as adumbrating the phassa-paccayā vedanā link of the paṭicca-samuppāda Moreover, this phrase implies that there can be no vedanā without phassa. This looks forward to the further elaboration of the paṭicca-samuppāda, not found in this sutta, in which it is stated that

\[ \text{phassa-nirodhā vedanā-nirodho.}^{33} \]

That is “with the cessation of contact, sensations cease”.

The fifth and final round is much shorter than any of the preceding ones. All of the theorisers are listed in one sentence which ends with the following phrase in Walshe’s translation:

\[ \ldots \text{they experience these feelings (paṭisamvedenti) by repeated contact through the six sense-bases; feeling conditions craving; craving conditions clinging; clinging conditions becoming; becoming conditions birth; birth conditions ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, sadness and distress.}^{34} \]

Rhys Davids and Walshe again translate paṭisamvedenti with verb and object. Walshe continues with his “experience these feelings”. They are somewhat vindicated by the phrase which immediately follows this verb (“tesaṃ vedanā-paccayā taṇhā”), which Rhys Davids translates in an accurate, literal manner, which reads however rather clumsily: “To them on account of the sensations arises craving …” The verb paṭi-samvid is thus directly linked with the term vedanā, of which the word “sensations” is a translation. And from there the rest of the paṭicca-samuppāda unfolds, as found verbatim in many other passages of the Pali canon.

The phrase preceding the term paṭisamvedenti is also of much interest in our study of the evolution of the paṭicca-samuppāda in this sutta:

\[ \ldots \text{chahi phassāyatanehi phussa phussa paṭisamvedenti...} \]

33 Found, amongst many other places, at DN II 35.
34 ... sabbe te chahi phassāyatanehi phussa phussa paṭisamvedenti, tesaṃ vedanā-paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ, upādāna-paccayā bhava, bhava-paccayā jāti-paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanass’ upāyāsā sambhavanti. DN I 45.
It is the compound phassàyatanā which commands our attention. The phassa is the same “contact” which played such an important role in the previous two rounds. Āyatana is a new term for this sutta and is found immediately preceding phassa in the standard setting of the paṭicca-samuppāda as saḷāyatana. Sal is a variant form of the word cha, which we find here in the Brahmajālasutta in the instrumental case, meaning “six”. The word āyatana literally means “sphere” or “region”, and the six āyatana refer to the six spheres of perception, that is the five physical senses and the mind, and their corresponding objects: eye and visual objects; ear and sound; nose and odour; tongue and taste; body and touch; and mind and objects of the mind, that is thoughts of all kind. The compound is related to the verb paṭisāṃvedenti by the use of an instrumental case ending (phassāyatanehi). Thus we see foreshadowing of the section of the paṭicca-samuppāda which precedes the term vedanā: saḷāyatana—phassa—vedanā.

We see in this passage an exposition of the paṭicca-samuppāda in a manner quite unlike the standard formula which we find in so many suttas. The usual setting is to indicate avijjà (ignorance) as the base of the “this entire mass of suffering” (etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo), and then upwards through sankhāra, viññānaṃ, nāma-rūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā, and from there onwards as we find it in this passage of the Brahmajālasutta. Instead we find that the furthest back that the workings of dependent origination are expounded is some kind of combination of phassa and saḷāyatana. The effect of this is to highlight the vedanā link of the paṭicca-samuppāda: “phussa phussa paṭisāṃvedenti”, repeatedly or continuously experiencing vedanā, which results in taṇhā (craving) and ultimately in dukkha. This emphasis on vedanā in the last round harks back to the first round, in which the Buddha’s enlightenment is described in terms of his understanding of the characteristics of vedanā.

The entire sutta is a kind of lead-up to this “first, partial, exposition of dependent origination (paṭicca-samuppāda) in the Canon”, in which we see various elements of it in embryonic form. And, as we have seen, a great deal of emphasis is given to vedanā and to terms related to it (vedayita and paṭisāṃvedeti) in the description of this process.

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35 For example, in the first fifteen sutta of the second volume of the Samyutta-nikaya.
36 Walshe, op. cit., p. 543, note 88.
The **Mahātaṇhāsankhayasutta**

The *pañicca-samuppāda* forms the subject matter of a number of suttas of the Majjhimanikāya. One of the most interesting of these is the well-known Mahātaṇhāsankhayasutta (the Great Discourse on the Destruction of Craving). In the first portions of the *sutta*, we find several statements of the standard, twelve-member *pañicca-samuppāda* formula, in which each link is presented in an undifferentiated manner, no one member being emphasised more than another. The later part of the *sutta*, which places great emphasis on the term *vedanā* in its description of a soteriological practice, has been examined in the first chapter of this thesis. The following passage is the point at which the description of a certain way of reacting to *vedanā* leads into the cycle of suffering that is the *pañicca-samuppāda*:

…whatever *vedanā* he feels--pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant--he delights in that sensation, welcomes it and persists in cleaving to it. … From delighting in that *vedanā*, from welcoming it, from persisting in cleaving to it, delight (*nandī*) arises; whatever is delight amid those *vedanā*, that is grasping; conditioned by grasping is becoming; conditioned by becoming is birth; conditioned by birth, old age and dying, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair come into being. Such is the arising of this entire mass of suffering.37

The terminology is exactly the same as that used in the standard exposition of the *pañicca-samuppāda*, except that in place of “craving” (*taṇhā*) we here find the term *nandī*, “joy, enjoyment, pleasure, delight” (PED).

The statement of the contrary state of affairs, when “mindfulness of the body” (*kāya-sati*) is in place (*upaññhita*), places similar emphasis on *vedanā*. The person described no longer delights in *vedanā*; the delight (*nandī*) in *vedanā* ceases:

57 *yam kañci vedanān vedetī, sukham vā dukkhaṁ vā adukkhamasukhaṁ vā, so taṁ vedanān abhinandati abhivadatio aṭṭhasaya ittiṉhato uppaññhato nandī, yā vedanāsū nandī tad-upādānam, tass’ upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā járamaranaṁ sakaparidevadukkhadomanasupāyāsā sambhavanti, evam-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhaṁā samudayo hoti. MN I 266-7
58 *so taṁ vedanān nābhīhandaṁ* MN I 270
And from this point the reverse sequence of the *paṭicca-samuppāda* is given, ending with the usual formula “Thus this entire mass of suffering ceases.”\(^{40}\)

The centrality of *vedanā* to this process has been commented upon by Bhikkhu Bodhi. At the phrase “he does not delight in that *vedanā,*”\(^{41}\) he notes in his translation, that “[t]his statement reveals that the chain of dependent origination is broken at the link between feeling and craving. … if one does not delight in feeling, craving will not have the opportunity to arise and set off reactions of like and dislike that provide further fuel for the round, and thus the round will come to an end.”\(^{42}\)

The point of departure for the Mahātanāthaśāṅkhayasutta is the opinion of a certain bhikkhu named Sāti on the nature of *viśñāna* ("consciousness") and the Buddha’s rebuttal of this opinion. David Kalupahana has summarized this part of the *sutta* in the following manner:

> This discourse contains the famous “Sāti’s heresy”, namely, the assumption that, to explain the possible continuity of human life after death, there ought to be a mysterious psychic agent that remains unchanged. The Buddha’s application of the principle of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) to account for any form of continuity is highlighted.\(^{43}\)

The Buddha states that *viśñāna* is “generated by conditions” (*paṭicca-samuppanna*). He further indicates that there are six types of *viśñāna*, each of which is conditioned by one of the six senses (*manas*, the mind, is counted as one of these) and the object with which it comes in contact. Thus for visual consciousness:

\(^{39}\) MN I 270  
\(^{40}\) *evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.* MN I 270  
\(^{41}\) *so tam vedanam nabhimandati* MN I 270  
\(^{42}\) MLDB, pp.1232-3, note 414  
If consciousness arises because of the eye and material shapes, it is known as visual consciousness.  

The Nidāna-saṃyutta, sutta 43, SN II 72

The first part of this account of the nature of the different kinds of viññāṇa plays an important role in a number of suttas which deal with parts of the paṭicca-samuppāda and in which vedanā is highlighted as an important link in the causal sequence. The 43rd sutta of the Nidāna-saṃyutta displays this sequence in its most basic form. First comes the description of consciousness that we encountered in the Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhayasutta:

Visual consciousness arises because of eye and material shapes...  

The union of these three is described as “contact” (phassa). In the standard formulation of the paṭicca-samuppāda, “contact” leads to vedanā. Here also we find the usual phrase describing this connection:

from the condition of contact is vedanā.  

After this comes a statement of the next link, with the usual phrasing:

from the condition of vedanā is craving.  

Here, though, the sequence is broken off. Instead of the four terms which usually follow “craving” (taṇḍhā) (upādāna, etc.) the passage ends abruptly with a short concluding phrase:

This, bhikkhus, is the arising of suffering.

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44 Cakkhu-ca paṭicca rūpe ca upappijati viññāṇam, cakkhuviññāṇan-t’eva saṅkham gacchati. MN I 259
45 Cakkhuṁ ca paṭicca rūpe ca upappijati cakkhuviññāṇan SN II 72
46 tiṇṇam saṅgati phasso SN II 72
47 phassapaccayā vedanā
48 vedanāpaccayā taṇṭhā.
49 Ayaṁ kho bhikkhave dukkhassa samudayo. SN II 72
The same sequence is then repeated for the five remaining sense faculties.

This brief description of the arising of suffering (*dukkha*) is of great significance in understanding the place of *vedanā* in the scheme of things in these texts. The arising of *dukkha* is equated here with the central crux of the *pañicca-samuppāda*. The *pañicca-samuppāda* is in fact reduced to three elements: *phassa*, *vedanā*, and *taõhā*. The arising of the first of these comes about in an involuntary manner. The meeting of eye, material shape and visual consciousness is a mechanical process over which the individual does not have any control. To appreciate the full significance of the remaining two elements, we have to turn to the second section of the *sutta*, in which the Buddha teaches, as he announces in the first lines of the *sutta*, the disappearance (*atthaṅgama*) of *dukkha*.

The “*atthaṅgama*” section begins in an identical manner to the first section on the arising (*samudaya*) of *dukkha*. After the phrase “from the condition of *vedanā* is craving” (*vedanāpaccayā taõhā*), however, we find the following:

> From the complete cessation of craving comes the cessation of grasping...\(^{50}\)

This leads into the so-called *paṭiloma* (reverse order) statement of the remainder of the *pañicca-samuppāda*, in which the cessation (*nirodha*) of one member of the sequence is said to be the cause for the cessation of the next. This culminates in the cessation of *dukkha*, its disappearance (*atthaṅgamo*). The turning point is thus *taõhā*, which is dependent on *vedanā*. This re-formulation of the *pañicca-samuppāda*, to include elements from the usual *anuloma* (“forward order”) exposition as well as the *paṭiloma* exposition in one sequence, is quite striking. A phrase very similar to that which usually begins the *paṭiloma* version--*Avijjàya tveva asesavirāganirodha* (“from the complete cessation of ignorance...”) --is here found in the middle of the causal sequence, with the word “craving” (*taõhā*) substituted for “ignorance” (*avijjà*). So the process which is described as leading to suffering in the first half of the *sutta* does not necessarily lead to suffering, for the same process also begins the sequence found in the second half. The key to the stopping of one process and the starting of the other must therefore be found amongst those terms which constitute the “turning point”:

\(^{50}\) Tassàyeva taõhāya asesavirāganirodha upādānanirodho... SN II 72
from the condition of *vedanā* is craving; from the complete cessation of craving comes … 

We will look again at this Nidānasaññyutta sutta in the next section of this chapter, which takes as its point of departure two causal sequences described in the Chachakkasutta of the Majjhimanikāya.

The Chachakkasutta.

Throughout the Nikāyas we find the *pañicca-samuppāda* presented as a kind of list, in which no one member is given any more emphasis than any other. There are, however, many *suttas* where some members of this sequence appear in contexts which highlight certain features of the sequence. The Chachakkasutta of the Majjhimanikāya is one such *sutta*. We have already noticed in the previous chapter that this *sutta* gives emphasis to *vedanā* in a description of a soteriological process. There are two features which indicate that this *sutta* is to be regarded as especially important. The Buddha is represented as speaking the following phrase in the opening lines:

> Bhikkhus, I shall teach you the Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing; I shall reveal a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure, that is, the six sets of six.

The description of the Dhamma (the Buddha’s teaching) and the “holy life” (*brahmacariya*) that occurs in this passage is found in many places in the *suttas*. It is, however, only here that it introduces one of the Buddha’s discourses. Here it is, in fact, identified with the discourse.

The closing lines of this *sutta* also indicate that it is of special importance. It is related there that while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of sixty bhikkhus became

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51 *vedanāpaccayā taṇhā; tassāyeva taṇhāya aseṣavirāganirdhā...* SN II 72

52 *Dhammaṁ vo, bhikkhave, desissāmi adikalyāṇaṁ majjhe kalyāṇaṁ, pariyośaṁ kalyāṇaṁ sātthaṁ sabyaṭṭhaṁ kevalapapiṇṇaṁ parisuddhaṁ brahmacariyaṁ pakāsāṁ, yadidaṁ cha chakkāṁ. MN III 280*
liberated from the āsavas (defilements). 53 There are only a few other suttas in the Nikāyas which end with formulas which are similar to this. Amongst them are those suttas which are considered by the tradition to be the second and third discourses of the Buddha. 54

There are two important passages in the Chachakkasutta which are related to the place of vedanā in the paṭicca-samuppāda and which recur in many other suttas in the Nikāyas. The first of these includes three of the elements which occur sequentially in the middle part of the paṭicca-samuppāda. They are contact (phassa), vedanā, and craving (taṅhā). The following passage introduces this section of the discourse:

The six internal bases should be understood. The six external bases should be understood. The six classes of consciousness should be understood. The six classes of contact should be understood. The six classes of vedanā should be understood. The six classes of craving should be understood. 55

These six groups of six, the chachakka of the title of the sutta, are then explained in more detail. The six internal bases are explained as the five senses and the mind. The six external bases are the objects of these senses, that is, forms, sounds, odours, etc., and objects of the mind. The six types of consciousness are those that arise when each of the senses comes in contact with its respective external object, and when the mind comes in contact with a thought. Each of these types of consciousness is said to be dependent (paṭicca) upon the sense organ and its object. The six types of contact are said to be the meeting (saṅgati) of each of the sense organs, their respective object, and the resultant consciousness. From each of these six types of contact result the six types of vedanā. And from each of these six types of vedanā comes the six types of craving. When this “sixth six” is described, we have the whole sequence:

53 imasmiṁ kho pana veyyākaranaṁ bhaññamāne saṭṭhimattānaṁ bhikkhūnaṁ anupādāya āsavhei cittāni vimuccimṣu MN III 287
54 SN III 68 and SN IV 20
55 Cha ajjhattikāni ayatanāni veditabbāni, cha bāhirāni ayatanāni veditabbāni, cha viññānakāyā veditabbā, cha phassakāyā veditabbā, cha vedanākāyā veditabbā, cha taṅhākāyā veditabbā. MN III 280
Dependent on eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises; the meeting of the three is contact; with contact as condition there is vedanā; with vedanā as condition there is craving.\(^{56}\)

This passage is repeated for each of the remaining four senses and their objects, and for the mind and mental objects. It is clear that this passage focuses on the central portion of the *pañicca-samuppāda*; the position of vedanā, immediately preceding craving, is thus highlighted.

This passage appears imbedded in three *suttas* of the Nidānasamīyutta, and these same three *suttas* are found again, repeated without any change, in the Saładatnasamīyutta. Before we examine these *suttas* in detail, let us note that the fact that they appear in the Nidānasamīyutta makes it clear that this passage is related to the *pañicca-samuppāda* sequence, for the Nidānasamīyutta is made up of *suttas* which have as their subject the *pañicca-samuppāda*.

Suttas 43, 44 and 45 of the Nidānasamīyutta\(^ {57}\) are the same, respectively, as *suttas* 106, 107 and 113 of the Saładatnasamīyutta,\(^ {58}\) and all of them contain the causal sequence found in the Chachakkasutta which is quoted above. The first *sutta* in each group has the title “Suffering” (Dukkha), and in it the Chachakkasutta sequence, repeated for each of the five sense doors and for the mind, is followed by the brief phrase “This, bhikkhus, is the arising of suffering.”\(^ {59}\) The first noble truth is, of course, expressed by the single word dukkha (“suffering”), and it is the escape from this suffering which is the goal of the Buddha’s teaching. Understanding the nature of suffering is essential for this task, so the description found in this *sutta*, in only a few words, of the human predicament, is of great interest. The process which we first saw described in the Chachakkasutta is here thrown into sharp relief, and within this process, vedanā plays a key role.

The second half of the *sutta* describes the “disappearance of suffering” (*dukkhassa atthagamo*). In this section the sequence as quoted above from the Chachakkasutta is

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\(^{56}\) *Cakkhu ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppaṇjati cakkhuviṁñāṇaṁ, tīṇṇaṁ saṃgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā.* MN III 282

\(^{57}\) SN II 71-75

\(^{58}\) SN IV 86-88, 90-91

\(^{59}\) *Ayaṁ kho bhikkhave dukkassa samudayo,* SN II72 = SN IV 86
again found, but after the term “craving” (ṭaṇhā), it is stated that there is the cessation (nirodha) of craving, and this leads into a statement of the cessation version of the paticca-samuppāda (as found at SN II 1-2 and at many other places in the Nikāyas), from the term taṇhā onwards.

The second sutta in this group of three, in both the Nidānasamīyutta and the Saḷāyatanasamīyutta, is called “the World” (Loka), and it begins with a statement by the Buddha that he will teach the arising (samudaya) and the disappearance (atthagama) of the world. The first part of the sutta, which describes the arising of the world, begins with the passage quoted above from the Chachakkasutta, but after the term “craving” (taṇhā), it proceeds to the phrase “with craving as condition there is clinging” (taṇhāpaccayā upādānam) and follows on with the remainder of the paticca-samuppāda in its usual form. The second half of the sutta is identical to the second half of the previous sutta. We thus find here a more thorough combination of the sequence from the Chachakkasutta and the paticca-samuppāda.

In the Nidānasamīyutta, the third sutta in this group follows on immediately from the previous two, but in the Saḷāyatanasamīyutta four other suttas intervene between the second and the third suttas of this group. The two suttas also have different titles in the different collections: in the Nidānasamīyutta it is called, after the name of the place where it was delivered, Āṭṭika; in the Saḷāyatanasamīyutta it is called “Listening” (upassutī), for reasons which will become clear. Otherwise, these two suttas are identical. The central part of these suttas is identical to the second sutta of each group, “The World”. It is only the “frame” which is different. A short narrative is added at the end of the sutta60, in which it is said that a certain bhikkhu was standing nearby listening to this sutta. The Buddha notices him, and asks him if he heard this discourse on the Dhamma (dhammapariyāya). When he answers in the affirmative, the Buddha tells him that he should memorize, master, and bear in mind the discourse. He tells him that it is connected with his welfare (atthasaṁhitto), and related to the fundamentals of leading a good life (ādibrahmacariyako). Similar words of emphasis occur after only three other suttas in the Nikāyas.61 We thus find the combination of the sequence from the Chachakkasutta and the paticca-samuppāda highlighted here in a significant manner.

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60 SN II 75 = SN IV 91
61 MN III 192, 200 and AN IV 166
We find, thus, the short sequence from the Chachakkasutta, which features the term *vedanā* in a central position, emphasised in various ways. Firstly there is the repetition of these *suttas* in which it appears. It is common to find material from one Nikāya repeated in another. As far as I can tell, however, the repetition of entire *suttas* in different books within one Nikāya is rare. This is what we find here, with the same *suttas* found in two places within the Samyuttanikāya. And secondly, the Chachakkasutta passage is emphasised in the third *sutta* in these groups by the framing story.

The first Chachakkasutta sequence and the Saūyuttanisaṃyutta

There are two *suttas* in the Saūyuttanisaṃyutta which feature the sequence from the Chachakkasutta in a version which stops short at the term *vedanā*:

Dependent on eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises; the meeting of the three is contact; with contact as condition there is *vedanā*.  

The first of these two *suttas* is introduced by the phrase “I will show you, bhikkhus, a teaching for the comprehension of all attachment,” and the second, in a similar vein, by the phrase “I will show you, bhikkhus, a teaching for the exhausting of all attachment.” Even though the sequence has been abbreviated, *vedanā* keeps its place in these *suttas* which teach the comprehension and exhausting of all attachment.

The second Chachakkasutta sequence

As mentioned above, the Chachakkasutta of the Majjhimanikāya contains two elements which are related to the place of *vedanā* in the *pañicca-samuppāda*, and which are found repeated, sometimes in slightly different guises, in many other places in the Nikāyas. We now move on to the second of these, which is closely related to the first. As with the

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63 *Cakkhu ca pañicca rāpe ca uppaññati cakkhuviññāna, tiñña samāgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā. SN IV 32-33.
64 *Sabbupādanapariññāya vo bhikkhave dhammaṁ desissāmi* SN IV 32
65 *Sabbupādanaparyādānāya vo bhikkhave dhammaṁ desissāmi* SN IV 33
first passage, this one is repeated for each of the five sense doors and their objects, and for the mind and mental objects:

Bhikkhus, dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises; the meeting of the three is contact; with contact as condition there arises [a feeling] felt (vedayitam) as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant.66

In this passage it is not vedanā which exists with contact as its cause, as in the first passage; instead it is vedayita, be it pleasant, painful or neutral, which arises (uppajjati).

As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, the term vedayita is closely related to vedanā: its sense is usually “what is felt or experienced”, or simply “feeling, experience”.

This passage leads into a passage which shows two ways of responding to vedanā which is pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. The first does not allow an end to be made of suffering; the second, which we examined in the previous chapter, does allow the process of liberation to take place. So here we see the term vedayita taken up by the term vedanā.

The second Chachakkasutta sequence and the Mahāsālayatanikasutta, MN 149

This second sequence from the Chachakkasutta is also found in the sutta which follows on from it in the Majjhimanikāya, the Mahāsālayatanasutta. It appears, though, in a somewhat different shape:

Bhikkhus, when one does not know and see the eye as it actually is, when one does not know and see forms as they actually are, when one does not know and see eye-consciousness as it actually is, when one does not know and see eye-contact as it actually is, when one does not know and see as it actually is [the feeling] felt (vedayitam) as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact as condition, then one is inflamed by lust for the eye, for

66 Cakkhu¤ ca, bhikkhave, pañicca råpe ca uppajjati cakkhuvi¤¤àõaü, tiõõaü saügati phasso; phassapaccayå uppajjati vedayitam sukhaü và dukkhaü và adukkhamasukhaü và. MN III 285
forms, for eye-consciousness, for eye-contact, for [the feeling] felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact as condition.\textsuperscript{67}

Here the items in the sequence are presented in the form of a list, rather than in a sentence which details the causal connections between the various items. It is not said, for instance, that eye-consciousness is dependent upon (paṭicca) the eye and forms; nor is it said that contact (phassa) is the meeting (saṅgati) of the eye, forms and eye-consciousness. There is, however, one aspect of the causal nature of this sequence as presented in the Chachakkasutta which is retained, even in the list-like setting of this sutta: that is the connection between “contact” and vedayita. Instead of finding simply “that which is felt as pleasant, painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant” after “contact”, we find the following phrase:

... [the feeling] felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact as condition ...\textsuperscript{68}

After the passage from the Mahāsāḷāyatanasutta quoted above comes a phrase which indicates that for the person who is in the state of being inflamed by lust for eye, forms, etc., craving increases (taṅhā ... pavaḍḍhati). Thus, if we take vedayita as equivalent to vedanā, we have here a restatement of the central section of the paṭicca-samuppāda in which vedanā plays an important role, that is, “conditioned by contact is vedanā; conditioned by vedanā is craving” (phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṅhā).

This passage is repeated for the remaining sense doors and their respective objects, and for the mind and mental objects, and is then followed by a reverse statement of each of these, that is, when one knows and sees eye, forms, etc., then one is not inflamed with passion for them, and consequently craving is given up (taṅhā .. pahīyati).

The second Chachakkasutta sequence and the Saḷāyatanasamyutta

\textsuperscript{67} Cakkhaṁ, bhikkhave, ajānaṁ apassaṁ yathābhūtam, rūpe ajānaṁ apassaṁ yathābhūtam, cakkhuviññānaṁ ajānaṁ apassaṁ yathābhūtam, cakkhusampannaṁ ajānaṁ apassaṁ yathābhūtam, yam p’ idam cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitam sakāṁ vā dukkham vā adukkhhasukhām vā, tam pi ajānaṁ apassaṁ yathābhūtam ... cakkhusinā sārajjati rūpesu sārajjati ... MN III 287

\textsuperscript{68} idam cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitam sakāṁ vā dukkham vā adukkhhasukhām vā MN III 287
This second sequence from the Chachakkasutta also plays an important role in one of the largest sanûyuttas of the Sanûyuttanikâya, the Saûyatanasamûyutta (SN IV 1-204). This sanûyutta takes up about half of the fourth book of the Sanûyuttanikâya, the Saûyatanavagga. The second Chachakkasutta sequence occurs in 67 of the 207 suttas of the Saûyatanasamûyutta. One of these suttas is traditionally regarded as the Buddha’s third discourse.

The second Chachakkasutta sequence is treated in a variety of ways in the Saûyatanasamûyutta. In a number of places, the sequence is combined with an exposition of the Nikâyas’ three characteristics of existence, that is, impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha), and not-self (anatta). The 43rd sutta of the sanûyutta, for example, includes the following passage, which is repeated for each of the sense doors and for the mind:

All, bhikkhus, is impermanent. And what all is impermanent? The eye, bhikkhus, is impermanent. Forms are impermanent. Eye consciousness is impermanent. Eye-contact is impermanent. That which is felt (vedayitam) as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, which arises with eye-contact as condition, is impermanent.

This sutta is then repeated with “painful” (dukkha) replacing “impermanent”, and is then repeated again with “not-self” (anatta). Thus the second Chachakkasutta sequence is combined with some of the central themes of the Nikâyas. Similar combinations of this sequence with the “three characteristics” are found in suttas 76-78 and 146-148 of this sanûyutta.

Question-and-answer sequence

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70 Number 28, also at Vin I 34
72 SN IV 48-49
73 SN IV 33-35
The second Chachakkasutta sequence also appears a number of times in this *samyutta* in combination with another sequence which also plays an important role in other places in the Nikāyas. This sequence, which is in a question-and-answer format, provides some clarification of the “three characteristics”. The combination of these two sequences first appears in the 32nd *sutta* of this *samyutta*:

“Bhikkhus, what do you think? Is the eye permanent or impermanent?”
“Impermanent, venerable sir.”
“Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?”
“Suffering, venerable sir.”
Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change, fit to be regarded thus:
“This is mine, this I am, this is my self”?"
“No, venerable sir.”

These questions are then put in connection with forms, eye-consciousness, eye-contact, and “that which is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, which arises with eye-contact as condition”\(^{75}\); the answers are always the same. All of this is then repeated for the remaining sense doors and their objects, and for the mind and mental objects. This entire sequence is also found in *suttas* 62, 86, 89, and 149 of the Saḷāyatanasamyutta.

In this passage, *vedayita* (“feeling” or “experience”), which arises dependent on sense-door-contact or mind-door-contact, plays an important role, coming as it does as the final member of each sequence.

The question and answer sequence in which all of this is set is also used in other contexts in the Nikāyas. Most notably, it figures in analyses of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), which, in these texts, are said to constitute a human being, namely,

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\(^{74}\) Taṃ kim maññatha bhikkhave cakkhaṃ niccaṃ và aniccaṃ vá ti.
Aniccaṃ bhante.
Yam panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ và taṃ sukhaṃ vá ti.
Dukkhaṃ bhante.
Yam panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ viparināmadhammaṃ kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ. Etam mama eso ham asmi eso me attā ti.
No hetam bhante. SN IV 24-25

\(^{75}\) yam pidām cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ và dukkhaṃ và adukkhaṃ asukhaṃ và. SN IV 25
body (rūpa), vedanā, perception (saññā), saṅkhāras, and consciousness (viññāna). The opening section of the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya is a long narrative which covers the Buddha’s awakening, and the events which followed it; the discourse which it records as the second discourse of the Buddha, sometimes called the Anattalakkhaṇasutta, includes this question and answer sequence,76 repeated for each of the five aggregates. This same passage also appears several times in the Majjhimanikāya,77 and in many suttas of the Saṃyuttaniyakāya, including 22 of the 158 suttas of the Khandhasamuyutta,78 which is the section of the Saṃyuttaniyakāya which treats the five aggregates. Thus this question-and-answer formula plays an important role in the exposition of key concepts of Nikāyas, amongst which we surely must include the notion of “feeling” or “experience” (vedayita) which arises dependent upon contact at each of the sense-door and the mind. We can also note that the “vedayita” of the sequence found in the Saṃyutanasamuyutta overlaps with the vedanā of the five aggregates found in the same question-and-answer passages in the Khandhasamuyutta, as these two terms are closely related.

The Nandakovādasutta: a part of the second Chachakkasutta sequence and the question-and-answer sequence combined

There is another sutta in the Majjhimanikāya, the Nandakovādasutta, in which we find the first part of the second sequence from the Chachakkasutta which we have been discussing, in combination with the question-and-answer formula. Thus it is established that the eye, forms, and eye-consciousness, as well as the other sense doors and the mind, together with their objects and the resultant consciousness, are impermanent, suffering, and not to be considered as “I” or “mine”. Instead of proceeding, however, to eye-contact and then to “that which is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, which arises with eye-contact as condition”, this passage takes a different turn. The following view is expressed:

... would anyone be speaking rightly who spoke thus: “These six internal bases are impermanent and subject to change, but the pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant [feeling] that I experience (paṭisāṃvedemi) in dependence

76 Vin I 14
77 MN I 138, 282; III 19-20
78 SN III 49, 67, 88, 94, 104-5, 118, 120, 125, 138, 148, 152, 181-87
upon (*paṭicca*) the six internal bases is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change?\(^{79}\)

The answer is, of course, no. The phrase “I experience” is a translation of *paṭisaṃvedemi*. From the passage which follows on from this one and which explains the reason for the answer in the negative, it is clear that *paṭisaṃvedemi* is here being taken as a verbal equivalent of *vedanā*:

... each *vedanā* arises in dependence upon its corresponding condition, and with the cessation of its corresponding condition, the *vedanā* ceases.\(^{80}\)

Thus the term *vedanā* in this passage takes up the phrase “I experience pleasure, etc.” of the previous one. This sequence, beginning with the statement of the mistaken view of what one experiences, is then repeated for the six external sense bases (*bāhirā āyatanā*), that is, forms, noises, smells, etc.

The dependent nature of *vedanā* is strongly emphasised in the above passage. This dependence is further emphasised in the two similies which accompany these passages:

Now would anyone be speaking rightly who spoke thus: “While this oil-lamp is burning, its oil, wick and flame are impermanent and subject to change, but its glow is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change”?\(^{81}\)

Now would anyone be speaking rightly who spoke thus: “The root, trunk, branches, and foliage of this great tree standing possessed of heartwood are impermanent and subject to change, but its shadow is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change”?\(^{82}\)

\(^{79}\) *yo nu kho evam vadeyya: Cha kho ‘me ajjhattikā āyatanā, yañ ca kho cha ajjhattike āyatane paṭicca paṭisaṃvedemi sukhañ vā dukkhañ vā adukkhamasukhañ vā, tam niccaṁ dhuvaṁ sassataṁ avipariõāmadhammanni, --sammā nu kho so, bhagirinīyo, vadamāno vadeyyāti?... MN III 273*

\(^{80}\) *Tajjaü tajjaü, bhante, paccayaü pañicca tajjà tajjà vedanà uppajjanti. Tajjassa tajjassa paccayassa nirodhà tajjà tajjà vedanà nirajjhanti. MN III 273*

\(^{81}\) *yo nu kho, bhagirinīyo, evam vadeyya: Amussa telapadipassa jhāyato telam pi aniccaṁ avipariõāmadhammanā vattī pi aniccaṁ viparināmadhammannā acci pi aniccaṁ viparināmadhammanā, yā ca khvāssa ābhā sa nicca dhuva sassata avipariõāmadhammanā ti, --sammā nu kho so, bhagirinīyo, vadamāno vadeyyāti?... MN III 273*

\(^{82}\) *yo nu kho, bhagirinīyo, evam vadeyya: Amussa mahato rukkhassa tiṭṭhato sāravato mūlam pi aniccaṁ viparināmadhammanā khandho pi aniccaṁ viparināmadhammanā sakkāpalāsām pi aniccaṁ... MN III 273*
The substanceless nature of *vedanā* is also highlighted in these similies: like the glow from a lamp and the shadow of a tree, their existence is dependent on other factors.

The Nandakovādasutta thus has as its starting point the sequence that we first noticed in the Chachakkasutta, although here we find it in a list-like setting. Rather than moving from eye-consciousness to eye-contact, and from there to “that which is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, which arises with eye-contact as condition”, however, this *sutta* emphasises the dependence of *vedanā* on the sense doors and on their respective objects, and on the mind and mental objects.

The Chachakkasutta sequences and passages featuring the term “*nibbindati*”

Both of the sequences from the Chachakkasutta which include the terms *vedanā* and *vedayita* along with other terms from the *pañicca-samuppāda* are found in a setting which plays an important role in many places in the Nikāyas. We see the first sequence in this setting in the Chachakkasutta itself, with the first sentence of the following passage repeated for each of the other sense doors and their objects, and for the mind and mental objects:

> Seeing thus, bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple becomes indifferent to (*nibbindati*) the eye, indifferent to forms, indifferent to eye-consciousness, indifferent to eye-contact, indifferent to *vedanā*, indifferent to craving. ... Being indifferent, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated. When it is liberated, there comes the knowledge: “It is liberated.” He understands: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”

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83 *vippamaddhammañña, yā ca khvāssa chāyā sā niccā dhuvā sassatā avippamaddhammā ti, --sammā nu kho so, bhaginīyo, vadamāno vadeyyati?* MN III 274

83 *Evām passāṃ bhikkhave sutāva ariyassavako cakkhusminipi nibbindati, rāpesu pi nibbindati, cakkhuvi¤¤āe pi nibbindati, cakkhusamphasse pi nibbindati, vedānāya pi nibbindati, tañhāya nibbindati. ... Nibbindam virajjati, virāgā vimuccati, vimuttaśıṃmāṃ vimuttaṃ iti ānām hoti: Khāṇājāti, vusīsam brahmacariyaṃ, katāṃ karaniyaṃ, nāparaṃ itihattāyati pajānāti.* MN III 286-7
This passage comes as the conclusion to the Chachakkasutta, and follows on from the exposition of the two sequences discussed above. In two of the suttas of the Salāyatanasāmyutta a similar passage follows on immediately from a statement of a part of the first Chachakkasutta sequence in a form which makes clear its relation to the paṭicca-samuppāda:

Dependent on the eye and object arises eye-consciousness. The union of these three is contact. Dependent on contact is vedanā. So seeing, the well-taught noble disciple becomes indifferent to (nibbindati) the eye, to forms, to eye-consciousness, to eye-contact, and to vedanā. Being indifferent, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated.  

There are 28 suttas in the Salāyatanasāmyutta which have the second sequence from the Chachakkasutta in this setting, in the following form:

So seeing, bhikkhus, the well-taught noble disciple becomes indifferent to (nibbindati) the eye, to forms, to eye-consciousness, to that which is felt (vedayitaṁ) as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, which arises with eye-contact as condition.

The remaining senses and their objects, and the mind and mental objects, are presented in the same way. This is then followed by the formula which describes the process of liberation, as in the Chachakkasutta.

Amongst these 28 suttas of the Salāyatanasāmyutta, this passage provides the conclusion to all five of the suttas which feature the “three characteristics” question-and-answer formula discussed above. Another of these suttas with the second sequence in the

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84 Cakkhu¤-ca pañicca råpe ca uppajjati cakkhuvi¤¤àõaü, tiõõaü saïgati phasso, phassapaccayã vedanã. Evam-passaü bhikkhave sutavã artiyasåvako cakkhusnimpi nibbindati, råpesu pi nibbindati, cakkhuvi¤¤àõe pi nibbindati, cakkhusamphasse pi nibbindati, vedanãya pi nibbindati. Nibbindaµ virajjati, viràgã vimuccati. SN IV 32-34
85 Evam pañããµ bhikkhave sutavã artiyasåvako cakkhusnimpi nibbindati, råpesu pi nibbindati, cakkhuvi¤¤àõe pi nibbindati, cakkhusamphasse pi nibbindati, yam pidam cakkhusamphassapaccayã uppajjati vedayitaµ sukhaµ vá dukkhaµ vá adukkhamasukhaµ vá tasmiaµ pi nibbindati. SN IV 20 and passim.
86 suttas 32, 62, 86, 89, and 149
above setting is the one which is considered to be the Buddha’s third discourse, the Ādittasutta (“On fire”).

As with the question-and-answer formula, this formula with the verb *nibbindati* (“he becomes indifferent to”) is found in connection with other key concepts of the Nikāyas. In particular, it is used in combination with the five aggregates in the Majjhimanikāya and in many places in the Khandhasamyutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya. In this way, these sequences which we first find in the Chachakkasutta are placed amongst the central concerns of the Nikāyas.

There is another *sutta* in which this *nibbindati* formula is applied to the three *vedanās*, pleasant, painful, and neither-painful-nor-pleasant. This is the Dīghanakhasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, which has been examined in some detail in the first chapter.

The Anāthapiñḍikovādasutta, MN 143

The above analysis of the two sequences from the Chachakkasutta gives an overview of the place of *vedanā* in such causal sequences, and of their relationship to the *paṭicca-samuppāda*. We also saw that there are many *suttas* in the Nikāya in which we find passages which have much in common with the sequences found in the Chachakkasutta. There are, however, a number of sequences which are left out of this kind of classification, and which also include the term *vedanā*. The Anāthapiñḍikovādasutta of the Majjhimanikāya contains such a sequence. In it we find the following passage repeated numerous times:

> Then, householder, you should train thus: “I will not cling to the eye, and my consciousness will not be dependent on the eye”. Thus you should train.

This same phrase is then repeated for the remaining senses and for the mind. After that it is repeated for the objects of the senses and of the mind. Then it is repeated for

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87 SN IV 20
88 MN I 139 and MN III 20
89 MN I 500
90 *Tasmātīha te, gahapati, evaṃ sikkhitabbo: Na cakkhuñca upādiyissāmi, na ca me cakkhuṇissitañ viññānām bhavissati. Evaṃ hi te, gahapati, sikkhitabbo.* MN III 259
consciousness (viññāna) associated with each of the senses and with the mind, beginning with eye-consciousness (cakkhu-viññāna). Then it is repeated for contact associated with each of the senses and with the mind, beginning with eye-contact (cakkhu-samphassa). After that it is repeated for vedanā which is born from the contact at each of the sense doors and the mind, beginning with vedanā born of eye-contact (cakkhu-samphassajā vedanā).

Thus far the sequence of terms is the same as that found in the Mahāsālayatanasutta of the Majjhimanikāya⁹¹ and in many of the suttas of the Saḷāyatanasāṃyutta which we have looked at above, except that instead of having as its last element “that which is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact as condition,”⁹² we now have “vedanā born of eye-contact” (cakkhu-samphassajā vedanā).

In both cases, these phrases are repeated for the other sense doors and for the mind. The terms in all of these suttas are presented as a list. The only term which is stated to be causally dependent on the previous item in the list is vedanā, or vedayita, which is dependent on contact.

We have noticed that in some suttas this basic sequence extends further, to include the term that follows vedanā in the paṭicca-samuppāda, that is, craving (tanha).⁹³ Here in the Anāthapiṇḍikovādasutta, further items are added to the list, but in this case they are not directly related to the paṭicca-samuppāda. After “vedanā born of eye-contact” (cakkhu-samphassajā vedanā), comes a list of six elements (dhātu), namely, earth, water, fire, wind, space (ākāsa) and consciousness. Then comes a listing of the five aggregates, followed by the four formless jhānas, and by other groups.

Conclusion

This detailed study of the role of vedanā in causal sequences found in the Nikāyas shows that there are indeed passages in which this term is given marked emphasis, and that the striking statements quoted at the beginning of this chapter from the writings of

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⁹¹ MN III 287
⁹² yam p' idam cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitam sukham vā dukkham vā adukkhamasukham vā, MN III 287, etc.
⁹³ At MN III 280-82; SN II 71-75; SN IV 86-88, 90-91.
Kalupahana, Nyanaponika and Bhikkhu Bodhi do have a basis in the texts, especially when taken in conjunction with the passages explored in the first chapter of this thesis. In causal sequences of different kinds we find *vedanā* being given an important role. As far as I know, this thesis is the first study to explore this question in any detail.
Chapter Three: Physical and mental aspects of vedanā

Most modern commentators on the Pali texts take vedanā to be a purely mental phenomenon. The meditation teacher S.N. Goenka, however, emphatically stresses the physical nature of vedanā (“sensations”):

Equanimity must be practised at the level of bodily sensations in order to make a real change in one’s life. At every moment sensations are arising within the body. Usually the conscious mind is unaware of them, but the unconscious mind feels the sensations and reacts to them with craving and aversion. If the mind is trained to become fully conscious of all that occurs within the physical structure and at the same time to maintain equanimity then the old habit of blind reaction is broken. …

There are two aspects of the human phenomenon: material and mental, body and mind. One must observe both. But one cannot actually experience the body without awareness of what arises in the body, that is, sensation. Similarly, one cannot observe the mind separately from what arises in the mind, that is, thought. As one goes deeper in experiencing the truth of mind and matter, it becomes clear that whatever arises in the mind is also accompanied by a physical sensation. Sensation is of central importance for experiencing the reality of both mind and body, and it is the point at which reactions start. In order to observe the truth of oneself and to stop generating mental defilements, one must be aware of sensations and remain equanimous as continuously as possible.¹

The recent studies of S. Hamilton have also focused on the importance of the body in descriptions of the human phenomenon in the Pali texts:

As my description of the operating of the khandhas has shown, there is no idea of one being a body with a detachable psychological appendage: the body is intrinsic to the operating of the cognitive apparatus as a whole, which includes

the complexities of one’s emotional, appetitive, intellectual, psychological, aesthetic--and so on--make-up.²

Hamilton devotes very little space, however, to analysis of passages on vedanā. This chapter is a study of descriptions mental and physical aspects of vedanā found in the Nikāyas.

In a sutta of the Vedanāsaüyutta, the Buddha is represented as saying that vedanā can be understood according to a number of different classifications. The first of these states that “there are two vedanās ... in [the Buddha’s] way of expounding.”³ The text continues:

And what, bhikkhus, are the two vedanās? They are bodily and mental vedanās. These, bhikkhus, are called “the two vedanās.”⁴

Later in the same sutta five vedanās are discussed:

And what, bhikkhus, are the five vedanās? They are the faculties (indriya) of pleasure, pain, happiness, unhappiness, and indifference.⁵

No further information is given here concerning this manner of classifying vedanā, but we find a series of three suttas in the fifth volume of the Saüyuttanikāya which reveals that this manner of classifying is also connected with the physical and mental aspects of vedanā. In two of these suttas, these five faculties are equated with the commonly found three-fold classification of vedanā:

Now, bhikkhus, the faculty of pleasure and the faculty of happiness should be regarded as pleasurable vedanā. Likewise the faculty of pain and the faculty of unhappiness should be regarded as unpleasant vedanā. Likewise the faculty of

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³ dve pi mayā vedanā vuttā pariyāyena, SN IV 231  
⁴ Katamā ca bhikkhave dve vedanā. Kāyikā ca cetasikā ca, imā vuccanti bhikkhave dve vedanā. SN IV 231  
⁵ Katamā ca bhikkhave pañcavedanā. Sukhindriyaṁ dukkhindriyaṁ somanassindriyaṁ domanassindriyaṁ upekkhindriyaṁ imā vuccanti bhikkhave pañcavedanā. SN IV 231
indifference should be regarded as *vedanā* which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.\(^6\)

In all three of these suttas the first and second faculties (*sukhindriya* and *dukkhindriya*) are identified with bodily pleasure and bodily pain (*kāyikaṃ sukham, kāyikaṃ dukkham*); the second and third (*somanassindriya* and *domanassindriya*) with mental pleasure and mental pain (*cetasikāṃ sukham, cetasikāṃ dukkham*); and the fifth (*upekhindriya*) is identified with that which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant at either the bodily level or the mental level (*kāyikaṃ vā cetasikāṃ vā neva sātāṃ nāsātāṃ*).\(^7\)

The physical aspect of *vedanā*

**Sabbāsavasutta** passage

I wish to concentrate firstly on some passages which are primarily concerned with the physical aspect of *vedanā*. To begin, let us look at a group of passages which are thematically related to the passages from the Mahāparinibbānasutta which we noticed in the first chapter of this thesis. There the Buddha was described as “enduring” (*adhivāseti*) harsh *vedanā* in his final illness. The second *sutta* of the Majjhimanikāya can be taken as the *locus classicus* for the related passages. This is the Sabbāsavasutta in which āsavas (defilements) are classified according to the way in which they are to be abandoned (*pahātabbā*). The fourth of the seven types described are āsavas that are to be abandoned by enduring (*āsavā adhivāsanā pahātabbā*).\(^8\) The description of this process runs as follows:

> Here a bhikkhu, reflecting wisely, bears cold and heat, hunger and thirst, and contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things; he endures ill-spoken, unwelcome words and arisen bodily *vedanā* that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, distressing, and menacing to life.\(^9\)

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\(^6\) *Tatra bhikkhave yam ca sukhindriyam yam ca somanassindriyam sukhā sā vedanā datthabbā.* *Tatra bhikkhave yam ca dukkhindriyam yam ca domanassindriyam dukkāh sā vedanā datthabbā.* *Tatra bhikkhave yadidaṃ upethindriyam adukkhamasukhā sā vedanā datthabbā.* SN V 209-11

\(^7\) SN V 210 and 211

\(^8\) MN 1 7,10

\(^9\) *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu paṭissanākhā yoniso kho na hoti sītassa unhaṭṭā jīgacchāya pipāsāya damsamakasa-vatāṭapa-sirimsapassamphassanāṃ, duruttānaṃ durāgatānaṃ vacanapathānaṃ, uppannānaṃ sārūrānaṃ vedanānaṃ dukkhaṇānaṃ tippānaṃ kharānaṃ katuṇānaṃ asātānaṃ amanāpānaṃ*
The Pali word used to describe these *vedanās* as “bodily” is *sārīrika*, an adjective derived from the noun *sarīra*, meaning “body”. The term *kāyika*, which also means bodily, and which is used in the passages quoted above which describe the bodily and mental aspects of *vedanā*, is thus not used here. According to this passage, then, certain āsavas, which are not specified, as indeed they are not for any of the methods of “abandoning” which are described in this *sutta*, are abandoned when the bhikkhu endures severely painful bodily *vedanā*.

Bodily *vedanā* in the context of the practice of the satipaṭṭhānas

The Sabbāsavasutta passage in the Kāyatāsatisutta

Passages very similar to this occur in two other *suttas* of the Majjhimanikāya. The contexts in which these passages appear in these *suttas* are of considerable interest for this study. The first *sutta* is the Kāyatāsatisutta, the discourse on mindfulness of the body. The first part of this *sutta* is the same as the section of the Satipaṭṭhānasutta which describes the observation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*). The concluding section of the *sutta* is a description of ten benefits which can be expected from the practice of mindfulness of the body. The second of these is very similar to the passage quoted above from the Sabbāsavasutta.

There is, however, an interesting distinction between these passages. In the Sabbāsavasutta, the enduring of painful bodily *vedanā* is said to be a means of abandoning a certain type of āsava. In the Kāyatāsatisutta, the enduring of painful bodily *vedanā* is achieved by means of other practices. The dual role of enduring painful *vedanā* can be seen to be paralleled by some of the descriptions of *vedanā* which we noted in the first chapter. In that chapter, many examples were given of the role that *vedanā* plays in certain soteriological processes; and, as we saw, *vedanā* also plays a role in a description of a person who has achieved his or her soteriological goal which occurs a number of times in the Nikāyas. In the Majjhimanikāya, this description of a liberated person occurs in the Dhātuvibhangasutta:

*pāñaharānaṁ adhivāsakajātiko hoti*. MN I 10

10 MN III 89-92
If he feels a pleasant feeling, he understands: “It is impermanent; there is no holding to it; there is no delight in it.” ... If he feels a pleasant feeling, he feels it detached ...

In the Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta, of course, the context is broader. In the Kāyatāsatisutta, one who practises mindfulness of the body as described in the *sutta* is able to endure painful bodily *vedanā*. The passage from the Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta describes a person who is detached from *vedanā* which is pleasant, unpleasant and neither pleasant nor unpleasant. There is also no indication whether these *vedanās* are bodily or mental. There is, however, a broad similarity in the intent of these two passages: the result of spiritual practice is described in terms of *vedanā*.

The Sabbāsavasutta passage in the Dantabhūmisutta

The other *sutta* of the Majjhimanikāya in which we find the passage which includes the description of a bhikkhu who endures painful bodily *vedanā* is the Dantabhūmisutta. Here as well the context is of great significance. The middle section of this *sutta* is made up of a long description of the stages through which an elephant trainer takes a wild forest elephant in order to train it, and of a comparison of this with the way in which the Buddha trains a disciple. The Buddha’s training is part of a description which appears in a number of *suttas* in the Nikāyas, including all but one of the *suttas* of the first volume of the Dighanikāya. L. Schmithausen calls it the “stereotyped detailed description of the Path to Liberation”.

The standard pattern of this description is however interrupted in a manner which is not found in any of its other rehearsals. After the stage of overcoming the five “hindrances” (*nīvaraṇa*, namely craving (*abhiṣīhā*), aversion (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor

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11 So sukha¤ ce vedanaü vedeti, Sā aniccà ti pajànàti; Anajjhosità ti pajànàti; Anabhinanditā ti pajànàti. ... So sukha¤ ce vedanaü vedeti, visamyutto naµ vedeti .... MN III 244.
12 MN III 132-136
13 MN, eg. No. 27 = I 179 ff.; No. 51 = I 344 ff.; no.60 = I 412 f.; etc.; DN eg. I 62 ff., 171 ff., 206 ff., etc.; AN eg. 3.58 and 59 = I 163 ff.; 4.198 = II 208 ff.; 5.75 and 76 = III 92 f. and 100; etc.
(thīnamiddha), agitation (uddhaccakukkucca) and doubt (vicikicchā)) is described, instead of proceeding to a description of the four jhānas, as is usually the case, the text continues with the standard description of the four establishings of mindfulness. There then follows a short passage on the advantages of the practice of the four establishings of mindfulness, and soon after the stereotyped detailed description is resumed from the description of the second jhāna up to the realisation of the four noble truths and the destruction of the āsava. After this comes the passage quoted above from the Sabbāsavasutta, which includes the description of the bhikkhu who endures painful bodily vedanās.

We can thus establish a connection between the Kāyagatāsatisutta and the Dantabhūmisutta. Both of them contain in their concluding sections the passage which includes the description of a person who endures painful bodily vedanās. And both of them give importance to the practice of the establishings of mindfulness. In the case of the former, only the first of the four establishings of mindfulness is given, the observation of the body (kāyānupassanā), but that is given with all the detail that we find in the two Satipaññhānasuttas. In the latter, all of the four establishings of mindfulness are mentioned, but only in the summary formula which is found in the introductory section of the Satipaññhānasuttas. There seems, therefore, to be a connection between these two practices, the practice of enduring painful bodily vedanā and the practice of the establishings of mindfulness.

Sabbāsavasutta passage and the Mahāparinibbānasutta

In the first chapter of this thesis attention was drawn to a passage in the Mahāparinibbānasutta in which the Buddha is described as enduring (adhivāseti) vedanā.

Now during the rainy season, a severe sickness arose in the Fortunate One, with sharp vedanā as if he were about to die. But the Fortunate One bore them mindfully, with understanding and without being disturbed.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} Attha kho Bhagavato vassūpagatassa kharo ābādho uppañji, bālha vedanā vattanti māraṇantikā. Tā sudām Bhagavā sato sampajāno adhivāseti avihāññamāno. DN II 99
In this passage, *vedanā* is not described as being bodily *vedanā*. But nevertheless there are two important connections with the Sābhāsavasutta passage. The first is that *vedanā* in both passages is connected in some way with illness. The final illness of the Buddha is being described in the Mahāparinibbānasutta. The *vedanā* here is *māraṇantika*, or associated with *maraṇa*, death. In the Sābhāsavasutta passage, amongst the adjectives describing unpleasant bodily *vedanā* we find the term *pāna-hara*, which literally means “taking away life” (PED, sv). In both of these passages, this *vedanā* is endured patiently.

The other important theme that these passages have in common is their association with the practice of the four establishings of mindfulness. The Buddha is described in this passage from the Mahāparinibbānasutta with two of the key terms from the explanation of this practice, *sata* (mindful) and *sampajāna* (with understanding). As we have just seen, there are two *sutta*s in the Majjhimanikāya, the Kāyagatāsatisutta and the Dantabhūmisutta, which contain in their concluding sections the passage from the Sābhāsavasutta, and which give importance to the practice of the establishings of mindfulness.

Sābhāsavasutta passage and three *sutta*s from the Saṁyuttanikāya

There is a passage which appears in two *sutta*s of the Saṁyuttanikāya which combines elements of the Sābhāsavasutta passage and the Mahāparinibbānasutta passage in a significant manner:

Now at that time the Fortunate One’s foot was pierced by a stone splinter. Sorely indeed did the Fortunate One feel it, grievous the *vedanā* he suffered in the body, keen and sharp, acute, unpleasant and unwelcome. But he endured all this mindfully, clearly aware and without becoming distressed.16

The context in both cases is similar to that of our passage from the Mahāparinibbānasutta: something has happened to cause the Buddha unpleasant *vedanā*. And the last sentence in each passage is the same: the Buddha bears the *vedanā* with

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16 *Tena kho pana samayena Bhagavato pādo sakalikāya khato hoti. Bhūsā sudām Bhagavato vedanā vattanti sārīrikā vedanā dukkhā tibbā kharā kaṭukā asātā amanāpā. Tā sudām Bhagavā sato sampajāno adhivāseti avihaṁnamāno* SN I 27 and SN I 110
mindfulness and understanding. In this passage, though, the *vedanā* is described in a different way: it appears here as it does in the Sabbasavasutta, except that the final attribute, “taking away life” (*pānahara*) is missing. In the present discussion, the point to note is that the *vedanā* in this passage which bears close resemblance to the Mahāparinibbānasutta passage is specified as being bodily (*sārīrika*) *vedanā*.

In the first of these Sāmyuttanikāya *suttas*, it is then reported that the middle section of this passage was repeated six times by six divine beings (*devatās*), in connection with six different attributes of the Buddha. This middle section covers the key points that we have been discussing:

> He endures, mindful and discerning, the *vedanās* that have arisen in his body, keen and sharp, acute, unpleasant and unwelcome, and he is not distressed.\(^{17}\)

The practice of the establishing of mindfulness in connection with bodily *vedanā* is thus given particular emphasis here.

These elements are again combined in a *sutta* in the Anuruddhasamyyutta of the Sāmyuttanikāya. The bhikkhu Anuruddha is here described as being seriously ill. Some bhikkhus come to visit him, and ask how it is that the painful, bodily *vedanā* that have arisen\(^ {18}\) do not take hold of his mind and remain (*cittaṃ na pariśādāya tiṣṭhanti*). He replies that it is because his mind is well established in the four establishing of mindfulness. So once again we find bodily *vedanā* associated with the four establishing of mindfulness. In this context we may recall that it was Anuruddha who is described as uttering the verses which follow the passing away of the Buddha in the Mahāparinibbānasutta, which we looked at in the first chapter of this thesis. These verses refer to the Buddha’s enduring of *vedanā*: “With undisheartened mind he endured sensation.”\(^{19}\)

All of these passages highlight the role of bodily *vedanā* in connection with the practice of the establishing of mindfulness.

\(^{17}\) samuppanṇā sārīrikā *vedanā* dukkhā tībī kharā kaṭukā asātā amanāpā, sato sampajāno adhivāseti avihāñhamāno. SN I 28

\(^{18}\) uppanṇā sārīrikā dukkhā *vedanā* SN V 302

\(^{19}\) Asallīnena cīttena *vedanaṃ* aijhavāsayi DN II 157
Bodily *vedanā* in other contexts

The Sabbāsavasutta passage and two *suttas* from the Āguttaranikāya

The passages that we have been examining so far have been concerned with bodily *vedanā* and the establishing of mindfulness. There are, however, several passages in the Nikāyas which deal with bodily *vedanā* in other contexts. The passage quoted above from the Sabbāsavasutta, which includes the notion of enduring painful bodily *vedanā*, appears a number of times in the Āguttaranikāya.\(^{20}\) One of these occurrences is particularly noteworthy. In this *sutta*, a course of action is outlined which leads to ten desired states. The sixth of these desired states is that described in the passage quoted from the Sabbāsavasutta. The practice which is said to be the means of achieving each of these states is a kind of summary, albeit in a very generalized form, of some of the most important soteriological practices found in the Nikāyas:

... he should be one who fulfills the moral habits, who is intent on mental tranquillity within, whose meditation is uninterrupted, who is endowed with vision, a cultivator of empty places.\(^{21}\)

The last of the ten benefits which come from this practice, as listed in this *sutta*, is liberation (*vimutti*) which is free from the *āsava*s. The enduring of bodily *vedanā* thus finds itself amongst the most significant concepts and practices of the Nikāyas.

Another noteworthy occurrence of the last section of our Sabbāsavasutta passage, the section which describes the bearing of bodily *vedanā*, occurs in the Ātappasutta of the Āguttaranikāya.\(^{22}\) In this sutta three “grounds” (*ṭhāṇa*) on which energy is to be exerted are described. The first two of these are also found in descriptions of “right effort” (*sammāvāyāma*) as part of the noble eight-fold path and “right exertion” (*sammappadhāna*) as part of the thirty-seven factors leading to enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*). These are the effort to not allow evil states (*dhammas*) to arise

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\(^{20}\) AN II 118, 143, 153; III 163, 389; AN V 132

\(^{21}\) sīlesvā' assa paripūrakārī ajjhattaṁ cetosamatham anuyutto anirākatajñhāno vipassanāya samanāgato brūhetā suññāgāranaṇām AN V 131

\(^{22}\) AN I 153
and the effort to cause good states to arise. The third ground on which to apply effort, as described in this *sutta*, is for the bearing of painful bodily *vedanā* which has arisen. The description here is identical with the description of painful *vedanā* found in the Sabbāsavasutta passage quoted above. Here this passage is placed alongside items which figure prominently in the most important enumerations of soteriological practices found in the Nikāyas. The last sentence of the *sutta* underlines the high value placed upon these practices:

Now when a bhikkhu exerts himself on these three grounds, he is called “strenuous, wise, mindful, and for making a complete end of suffering”.\(^{23}\)

The bhikkhu here is described with one of the key terms from the practice of the establishing of mindfulness, *sata*. And he is also described as being one who is “for making a complete end of suffering” (*sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāya*), one of the descriptions of the goal of the Buddha’s teaching. So the bearing of painful bodily *vedanā* is here placed at the heart of the central concerns of the Nikāyas.

**Bodily *vedanā* in the Vedanāsāmyutta**

Our passage from the Sabbāsavasutta speaks of *vedanā* which is “arisen” (*uppanna*), “bodily” (*sārīrika*), “painful” (*dukkha*) and “taking away life” (*pāñahara*). These same words are used to describe *vedanā* in the verse section of one of the *suttas* of the Vedanāsāmyutta, the section of the Saṅyuttanikāya devoted to *suttas* dealing with *vedanā*. This is the Pāṭalasutta. The prose section of this *sutta* is also of great interest for our study of bodily *vedanā*. The word *pāṭāla* in the title of this *sutta* means cliff or abyss, and we are told that here it is a term for painful bodily *vedanā*.\(^{24}\) An ordinary person who has not heard the Buddha’s teaching (*assutavā puthujjano*) is described as becoming very upset when he comes into contact with painful bodily *vedanā*. It is said of him that he has not come out of the abyss (*pāṭāle na paccuññhāsi*), that he has not found safe ground (*gāḍha¤ca najjhagā*). The “noble disciple who has heard (sc. the

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\(^{23}\) *Ayañ vaccati bhikkhave bhikkhu ātāpī nipako sato sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāyā ti*. AN I 153

\(^{24}\) *sārīrikānañ kho etam bhikkhave dukkhānañ vedanānañ adhivacanañ yad idam pāṭālo*. SN IV 206
Buddha’s teaching)” (sutavā ariyasāvako) on the other hand, does not become upset in similar circumstances; he has come out of the abyss and found safe ground.

The verses which follow this prose passage repeat the main points of the prose, but add some terminology which is also found in the Sabbāsavasutta. As well as being “bodily” and “painful”, vedanā is now also “arisen” and “taking away life”. Furthermore, in the verse section, vedanā is described as being either “endured” (adhivāseti) or not endured, again using the same terminology as the Sabbāsavasutta.

Thus there are a large number of important passages in the Nikāyas which place marked emphasis on the physical aspect of vedanā.

Mental aspect of vedanā

There are far fewer references in the Nikāyas to vedanā which is explicitly mental (cetasika) than to vedanā which is explicitly bodily.

The Cūḷavedallasutta

Perhaps the most notable reference occurs in a passage in the Cūḷavedallasutta of the Majjhimanikāya in which the term sankhāra (“formations”) is being discussed. The lay disciple Visākha questions the bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā as to the number of sankhāras. She replies that there are three: sankhāra of the body (kāyasankhāra), sankhāra of speech (vacīsankhāra), and sankhāra of the mind (cittasankhāra). He then enquires as to the nature of these three, and is told that breathing in and out is a sankhāra of the body, that initial application of thought and sustained application of thought (vitakkavicāra) together is a sankhāra of speech, and that perception (saññā) and vedanā together is a sankhāra of the mind (saññā ca vedanā ca cittasankhāro). Visākha then asks for the reasons for these classifications. For the third sankhāra, Dhammadinnā tells him that perception and vedanā are both mental (cetasika), that these two phenomena are

25 MN I 301
“bound to the mind” or “dependent on the mind” (cittapatiibaddha), and for this reason they are classed as a sankhāra of the mind.\(^{26}\)

Curiously, however, it is in this same sutta that we find a definition of vedanā which states that there can be either a physical or mental aspect to vedanā:

> Friend Visākha, whatever is felt bodily or mentally as pleasant and soothing is pleasant vedanā.\(^ {27}\)

This is then repeated for unpleasant (dukkha) vedanā, and for vedanā which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant (adukkhamasukha).

Are we dealing here with a logical inconsistency in the texts, or is there another explanation? The fact that in the first passage vedanā is classed as a phenomenon (dhamma) which is “bound to the mind” or “dependent on the mind” (cittapatiibaddha) does not rule out the possibility of vedanā also being related to the body in some way. Another possible explanation is that certain types of vedanā may be related to the body. This at least is S. Hamilton’s view of the situation. In connection with the passage just quoted from the Cūlavaddalasutta,\(^ {28}\) she notes that vedanā “is experienced (vedayitam) either bodily or mentally”\(^ {29}\). She goes on to comment that “this analysis refers to different types of feeling and does not mean that all feelings have both physical and mental aspects”.\(^ {30}\)

The Mahāvedallasutta

Other passages in the Nikāyas which allow us to conceive of vedanā in terms which are primarily mental are even less conclusive. In the Mahāvedallasutta, which is the companion sutta to the Cūlavaddalasutta, whence we have drawn the above passages, we find further clues as to the status of vedanā. In particular, we find vedanā closely

\(^{26}\) Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā citta-paṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasañkhāro ti MN I 301

\(^{27}\) Yam kho āvuso Visākha kāyikaṃ vā cetasikaṃ vā sukham sātaṃ vedayitam ayam sukhā vedanā. MN I 302

\(^{28}\) MN I 302

\(^{29}\) S. Hamilton, Identity and Experience, London, Luzac Oriental, 1996, p.43; emphasis is Hamilton’s.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., p.44
associated with certain mental faculties. In the Cūḷavedallasutta we saw *vedanā* associated with perception (*saññā*), and these two described as “bound to the mind” (*cittapaṭibaddha*). In the Mahāvedallasutta we come across the following passage:

*Vedanā*, perception, and consciousness, friend -- these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the others in order to describe the difference between them. For what one feels, that one perceives; and what one perceives, that one cognizes.\(^{31}\)

*Vedanā* here seems to be classed as a purely mental phenomenon. Again, however, we find our view on this matter modified by other information from the same *sutta*. In the passage immediately preceding the one just quoted, the three phenomena -- perception (*saññā*), consciousness (*viññāna*) and *vedanā* -- are described in different terms. Part of these descriptions do little to clarify the meanings of the terms: they merely give the verbal forms related to each noun. For *vedanā*, for example, we find the Pali phrase *vedeti vedetāti kho āvuso, tasmā vedanā ti vuccati*.\(^{32}\) We could translate this as “one feels, one feels,” friend, therefore it is called “feeling.” “For consciousness (*viññāna*) we find “one cognizes, one cognizes,” friend, therefore it is called “consciousness” \(^{33}\); and for perception (*saññā*) “one perceives, one perceives”, therefore it is called “perception.” \(^{34}\)

The examples given after each of these etymological explanations, however, may throw some light on the subject. The example given for consciousness is as follows:

One cognizes: “[This is] pleasant”; one cognizes: “[This is] painful; one cognizes: [This is] neither-painful-nor-pleasant”.\(^{35}\)

The difference with the example given for *vedanā* is slight but significant:

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\(^{31}\) Yā c ’āvuso *vedanā* yā ca saññā yaḥ-ca viññānaṃ ime dhammā saṃsaṭṭhā no visaṃsaṭṭhā, na ca labbha imeśam dhammānaṃ vinibbhujitvā nānākaraṇaṃ pariṇāpetum. Yaṃ h āvuso vedeti tam sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti tam vijānāti, tasmā ime dhammā saṃsaṭṭhā no visaṃsaṭṭhā, na ca labbhā... *MN I 293*

\(^{32}\) *vijānāti vijānātītī kho āvuso, tasmā viññānan ti vuccati* *MN I 292*

\(^{33}\) *sañjānāti, sañjānātītī kho āvuso, tasmā saññā ti vuccati* *MN I 293*

\(^{34}\) *sukhan ti pi vijānāti, dukkhan ti pi vijānāti, adukkhamasukhan ti pi vijānāti*. *MN I 292*
One feels pleasure, one feels pain, one feels neither-pain-nor-pleasure.\textsuperscript{36}

In the case of consciousness, the object experienced--pleasure, pain, etc.--is followed by “\textit{ti}” in the Pali, indicating that the object is actually only thought of, or conceptualized. In the case of \textit{vedanā}, there is a direct experience of the object. The text does not elaborate on this point, but one could suppose that this direct experiencing could take place at either the mental or the physical level, or both.

\textit{Vedanā} and the term \textit{nāmarūpa}

Some more clues as to the mental or physical nature of \textit{vedanā} can be found in an examination of the term \textit{nāmarūpa}. The standard definition of this term in the Nikāyas includes the term \textit{vedanā} as a part of \textit{nāma}. In the Sammādiṭṭhisutta of the Majjhimanikāya, for example, we find the following passage:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Vedanā}, perception, volition, contact, and attention--these are called \textit{nāma}. The four great elements and the material form derived from the four great elements--these are called \textit{rūpa}.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

This seems to place \textit{vedanā} squarely in the field of mental events, and to contrast it with things of a physical nature. Indeed one sometimes finds \textit{nāma} translated as “mentality” in this context, and \textit{rūpa} as “physicality” or “materiality”. It is possible, however, that these translations have been influenced by usages of the terms \textit{nāma}, \textit{rūpa} and \textit{nāmarūpa} which are later than those found in the four (mainly) prose Nikāyas. These terms have a complex history. The literal meaning of \textit{nāma} is “name”. By the time of the early commentarial literature, in the context of the five aggregates (\textit{khandhas}), the term is regularly used to refer to the “four immaterial (\textit{arūpino} aggregates)--\textit{vedanā}, perception (\textit{saññā}), \textit{sañkhāra}, and consciousness (\textit{viññāna})--which is contrasted with the aggregate of matter (\textit{rūpa}). Some of this early commentarial literature has canonical status, such as the Niddesa, which is a commentary on parts of the Suttanipāta. Thus the

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{sukham pi vedeti, dukkham pi vedeti, adukkhamasukham pi vedeti}. MN I 293

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Vedanā saññā cetanā phasso manasikāro, idam vuccat āvuso nāmañ; cattāro ca mahābhūtanā catunnañ ca mahābhūtaññata upaññāya rūpañ, idam vuccat āvuso rūpañ}. MN I 53

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{cattāro arūpino khandhā}, Nd1 435 = Nd2 339
commentaries take nāmarūpa as a designation of the five aggregates, which together are given as a description of the functioning of an individual person.

In the four prose Nikāyas, however, the term nāmarūpa is not used as a designation of the five aggregates. The above passage, for instance, is taken from a sutta of which the purpose is in part to explain each of the members of the dependent origination schema (paṭicca-samuppāda). Now in this series, consciousness (viññāṇa) is said to give rise to nāmarūpa.⁴⁹ According to the commentarial classification, though, consciousness, as one of the five aggregates, is a part of nāmarūpa.

And while we do find other elements in the above definition of nāma which are from the aggregates without rūpa—that is perception (saññā), and in some places volition (cetanā) is equated with the saṅkhāras—there are some elements which are extraneous to this group. The most significant of these in the present discussion is the term “contact” (phassa). Contact is usually understood in the Nikāyas to have both a physical and a mental aspect. Indeed in the same sutta in which the above passage is found, six types of contact are listed, corresponding to the five physical senses and the mind.⁴¹ So we find “contact of the body” (kāyasamphassa) alongside “contact of the mind” (manosamphassa), as well as “contact of the eye” (cakkhusamphassa), etc. The term vedanā may well not be intended here in a purely mental sense. Vedanā, and nāma, may well include here physical as well as mental events.

⁴⁹ viññāṇasamudaya nāmarūpasamudayo, eg. MN I 53
⁴⁰ eg. SN III 60
⁴¹ MN I 52
We come now to look at those passages in the Nikāyas which are explicitly concerned with both the mental and the physical aspect of *vedanā*. The most significant of these is found in the Sallasutta of the Vedanāsamayutta. The soteriological significance of this *sutta* has already been referred to in the first chapter of this thesis. Here we will examine in detail what it has to say on the mental and physical aspects of *vedanā*. The theme, as announced in the opening lines, is the difference between an “ordinary person who has not heard (sc. the Buddha’s teaching)” (*assutavā puthujjano*) who feels pleasant, painful and neither-painful-nor-painful *vedanā*, and a “noble disciple who has heard (sc. the Buddha’s teaching)” (*sutavā ariyasàvako*) who feels pleasant, painful and neither-painful-nor-painful *vedanā*. The explanation of this is given firstly in terms of painful *vedanā*. The ordinary person who is “touched” (*puñño*) by painful *vedanā* is upset by this experience. We are told that he feels two *vedanās*, bodily (*kàyika*) and mental (*cetasika*).\(^{42}\) This is likened to a man whom people pierce with one arrow, and whom they then pierce with a second arrow. The noble disciple, on the other hand, when touched by painful *vedanā*, is not upset. We are told that he feels one *vedanā*, which is bodily, and that he does not feel a mental *vedanā*.\(^{43}\) Accordingly, the simile in this passage is of a man whom people pierce once with an arrow, but who is not pierced by them a second time. This view on the relationship between bodily *vedanā* and mental *vedanā* is not expressed in these terms at any other place in the Nikāyas. This passage in the Vedanāsamayutta is a clear description of a close relationship between physical and mental *vedanā* which has a bearing on the status of the noble disciple (*ariyasàvaka*). These two sentences could perhaps provide a key to the understanding of this relationship in the Nikāyas. Moreover, they occur in a *sutta* which is significant from the soteriological point of view as well, as shown in the first chapter.

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42 *so dve vedanā vediyati kàyikañ ca cetasikañ ca* SN IV 208

43 *so ekañ vedanam vediyati kàyikam, na cetasikam* SN IV 209
A study of passages which have a bearing on the Sallasutta passage: the Kakacūpamasutta (MN 21)

These phrases may be unique in the Nikāyas, but the theme of this passage is an important one which is found echoed in many places. Leaving aside for a moment the question of the mental and physical aspects of vedanā, let us take a look at some of the passages which have a bearing on the Sallasutta passage.

The best known description in the Nikāyas of a person whose mind is unaffected by physical discomfort is found in the Kakacūpamasutta of the Majjhimanikāya. The simile of the saw, from which this sutta takes its title, is also referred to in another Majjhimanikāya sutta as we will see below, as well as in a verse of the Theragāthā. It comes at the end of the sutta:

Bhikkhus, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching.

This is the classic statement of the case of one who experiences physical pain but is not affected by it at the mental level. Or, put in the terms of the Sallasutta, one could say that this person feels one vedanā, which is bodily, and he does not feel a mental vedanā.

The context of this dramatic statement is much more mundane than the statement itself. The sutta is about people who become upset over relatively minor matters. Firstly we hear of a bhikkhu who becomes angry and displeased and “raises a dispute” with others when they speak dispraise of the bhikkunīs (nuns) with whom he associates. The Buddha is represented as telling this bhikkhu that he should abandon any desires and any thoughts based on the household life, and that he should remain with a mind of loving-kindness (mettacitta). The Buddha also tells this bhikkhu that he should practice in the same way if the bhikkunīs with whom he has been associating are give a blow with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. And he should practice in the same way

44 Thag. 445
45 Ubhatodāndakena ce pi bhikkhave kakacena corā ocarakā aṅgamaṅgāni okanteyyum, tatrapi yo mano padāseyya na me so tena sāsanakaro. MN I 129
46 PED for adhikaraṇam pi karoti.
if he himself is spoken to in a dispraising way, or if he is given a blow with the hand, with a clod, with a stick, or with a knife. In this last instance, the bhikkhu is in effect, in the spirit of the Sallasutta, being told that he should feel only one unpleasant vedanā, the bodily, and not the mental: his mind should be unaffected by physical discomfort.

Later in the sutta the Buddha tells the bhikkhus of the kinds of speech that they may have addressed to them, and he tells them what their reaction should be:

When others address you, their speech may be timely or untimely; when others address you, their speech may be true or untrue; when others address you, their speech may be gentle or harsh; when others address you, their speech may be connected with good or with harm; when others address you, their speech may be spoken with a mind of loving-kindness or with inner hate. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train yourself thus: “Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. …”

And to further emphasise the point, the Buddha gives the simile of the saw, quoted above. After this, however, he returns to the topic of speech:

“Bhikkhus, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?” --

“No, venerable sir”.

The last verb in the Buddha’s phrase is familiar to us from passages that we looked at earlier in this chapter. Adhivāseti, meaning “he bears” or “he endures”, is used in conjunction with painful vedanā in the passage that we first noticed in the Sabbāsavasutta, and which recurs in many places in the Nikāyas. It is also found at

47 Kālena vā bhikkhave pare vadamānā vadeyyuṁ akālena vā; bhūtena vā bhikkhave pare vadamānā vadeyyuṁ abhūtena vā; saṭṭhenā vā bhikkhave pare vadamānā vadeyyuṁ phurasena vā; atthasaṁhitena vā bhikkhave pare vadamānā vadeyyuṁ anathasaṁhitena vā; mettacittā vā bhikkhave pare vadamānā vadeyyuṁ dosantarā vā. Tatrāpi kho bhikkhave evaṁ sikkhitabbaũ: Na c’eva no cittaũ vipariṁataṁ bhavissati na ca pāpiṁ vācaṁ niccāhāressāma hitānumkampī ca viharissāma... MN I 126-27

48 Imaṁ ca tumhe bhikkhave kakacūpamaṁ ovadaṁ abbhikkhaṇaṁ manasikareyyathi, passathā no tumhe bhikkhave taṁ vacanapathaṁ anuṇāū vā thūlaṁ vā yaṁ tumhe nādhivāseyyāthāti. -- No h’etaṁ bhante. MN I 129
significant junctures in the Mahāparinibbānasutta, again in connection with vedanā.

Here, though, it is used in connection with speech which one hears which is in some way unpleasant. This provides an interesting connection with the other sutta of the Majjhimanikāya in which the simile of the saw appears, the Mahāhatthipadopamasutta.

A study of passages which have a bearing on the Sallasutta passage: the Mahāhatthipadopamasutta (MN 28)

This discourse is represented as being given not by the Buddha, but by one of his leading disciples, Sāriputta. In it we find the following passage:

So then, if others abuse, revile, scold, and harass a bhikkhu, he understands thus:

“This painful vedanā born of ear-contact has arisen in me. This is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.” Then he sees that contact is impermanent, that vedanā feeling is impermanent, that perception is impermanent, that formations are impermanent, and that consciousness is impermanent. And his mind ... acquires confidence, steadiness and decision.49

Again we have an instance of speech which is to be endured. Here, however, the analysis of this phenomenon is taken to another level. The bhikkhu of this passage understands that from the contact (samphassa) of this speech, an unpleasant vedanā has arisen. This is the crucial step; the speech itself is not analysed, but its effect on the hearer. The nature of this vedanā is then further examined: it is understood to be dependent upon contact. The bhikkhu then “sees” (passati) that the contact is impermanent and that the vedanā is impermanent. Thus one of the key notions of the Nikāyas, with which these texts characterize all phenomena, is brought in at this juncture in the bhikkhu’s thought process. It is not said, however, that he experiences this as a thought: rather, he “sees” (passati) these elements as impermanent. This verb implies a direct experience of the phenomenon, rather than a conceptualization of it. The other mental aggregates (that is perception (saññā), the sankhārās, and consciousness

49 Tañ-ce āvuso bhikkhum pare akkosanti paribhāsanti rosenti vihesenti, so evaṃ pajānāti: Uppannā kho me ayaṃ sota-samphassajā dukkhā vedanā, sā ca kho paṭicca no appaṭicca, kiṃ paṭicca: phassaṃ paṭicca. So: phasso aniccā ti passati, vedanā aniccā ti passati, saññā aniccā ti passati, sankhārā aniccā ti passati, viññānāṃ aniccan ti passati. Tassa ... citāṃ pakkhandati pasīdāti santīṭhati adhimuccati. MN I 185-86
(viññāna) are also seen as impermanent. As a result of this process, the bhikkhu’s mind becomes calm. Sāriputta then quotes the simile of the saw.

Using the simile of the Sallasutta, we could say that the bhikkhu of this sutta is pierced by only one arrow. There is the unpleasant vedanā which comes about from having heard offensive speech, but, by the use of wisdom, he is able to keep his mind calm, that is, there is no unpleasant mental vedanā. This interpretation, however, is only possible if we understand the vedanā which comes from the contact of hearing (sotasamphassajā vedanā) as being bodily vedanā.

Now the sense of hearing is normally understood to operate independently of the body, except of course for the involvement of the parts of the body which make up the ear. It is usually understood as being largely a mental process, especially the process of hearing words which are understood as offensive. That this process involves the body in some way can be explained by interpreting the vedanā that is associated with hearing as having an aspect that is related to the body.

On the topic of bearing offensive speech, we may recall that this is associated with the bearing of painful bodily vedanā in the passage from the Sabbāsavasutta which we looked at above:

he endures ill-spoken, unwelcome words and arisen bodily vedanā that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, distressing, and menacing to life.\(^{50}\)

The “two vedanās” of the Sallasutta passage

The above passages from the Kakacūpamasutta and the Mahāhatthipadopamasutta show that the distinction that is made in the Sallasutta between a person who feels two vedanās when he or she feels a painful vedanā, that is, both bodily and mental, and a person who feels only the bodily vedanā on this occasion, echoes an important theme in the Nikāyas. The association of this theme with the analysis of vedanā into its physical and mental aspects puts the discourse onto a different level. The simile of the saw is a striking

\(^{50}\) duruttānaṃ durāgatānaṃ vacanapathānaṃ, uppannānaṃ sārīrikānaṃ vedanānaṃ dukkhānaṃ tippānaṃ kharānaṃ kaṭukānaṃ asatānaṃ amanāpānaṃ pāṇaharānaṃ adhivāsakajātiko hoti. MN I 10
image which is used by the Buddha to make the bhikkhus whom he is teaching realize the importance of not becoming upset by adverse events. The analysis of *vedanā* into mental and physical aspects, on the other hand, gives this process another dimension: now it can be understood without reference to the specific circumstances of the outside event.

The passage which follows these lines that we have been looking at from the Sallasutta are a description of a soteriological process in which *vedanā* plays a key role. This passage was pointed out in the first chapter. To briefly recapitulate, the noble disciple is described as not having aversion to unpleasant *vedanā* and thus eradicating the “underlying tendencies” (*anusaya*) associated with unpleasant *vedanā*; as not delighting in pleasant *vedanā* and thus eradicating the *anusayas* related to pleasant *vedanā*; and as understanding the impermanent nature of sensations which are neither pleasant nor unpleasant and thus eradicating the *anusayas* which are associated with them. In the context of this *sutta*, it is clear that in all of these cases the *vedanā* that is being referred to is *vedanā* at the physical level. *Vedanā* is here the first of the “barbs”, the physical barb, and the noble disciple does not experience the barb of mental *vedanā* which an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) does on this occasion. In this way he allows the soteriological process to take place.

Emphasis on bodily aspect of *vedanā* in the Ākāsasutta of the Vedanāsaṃyutta

The importance given to the physical aspect of *vedanā* in the Sallasutta may come as some surprise to a reader of these texts who is accustomed to the commentarial classification of *vedanā* as one of the four “immaterial” (*arūpino*) aggregates” which are contrasted with the aggregate of matter.

It is not, however, the only place in the Nikāyas where the “bodily” (*kāyika*) aspect of *vedanā* is emphasised. The twelfth *sutta* of the Vedanāsaṃyutta, the Ākāsasutta, is of great interest in this respect. The *sutta* begins with a simile: just as various types of winds blow in the sky, from various directions, of various strengths, etc., so various types of *vedanā*, that is pleasant *vedanā*, painful *vedanā*, and *vedanā* which is neither
pleasant nor painful, arise in this body (imasmiṃ kāyasmiṃ). This simile, which is given first in prose, is then given again in verse. The wording for our key terms is almost identical:

\[
\text{tathevimasmiṃ pi kāyasmiṃ, samuppajjati vedanā} \\
\text{sukhadukkhasamuppatti, adukkhamasukkhā ca yā.}
\]

So again we are told that vedanā arises “in this body” (imasmiṃ pi kāyasmiṃ).

These statements are then followed by four lines of verse which conclude the sutta, and which also occur as the final lines of another sutta of the Vedanāsaṃyutta, the Pahānenasutta. The last two lines we also find as the final lines of the Daṭṭhabbenasutta of the Vedanāsaṃyutta. We have already examined these lines in the first chapter, because they put great emphasis on the role of vedanā in the soteriological process. The wise person (paññīta) is said to have full comprehension of (parijānāti) all vedanās, and, having fully understood vedanā (so vedanā pariṇāya), to be free from the āsava. He is called “one who has knowledge” (vedagū), and at death he does not return to the finite world (saṅkha).

There are hardly any statements in the Nikāyas which give as much importance to vedanā in the description of a soteriological process as these which are found here, in this sutta which also contains one of the clearest statements of the physical aspect of vedanā.

The thirteenth sutta of the Vedanāsaṃyutta, also called the Ākāsasutta, repeats the prose section of the preceding sutta, so that the information that this sutta gives is that “vedanās arise in this body”. The fourteenth sutta of the collection, the Āgārasutta, also gives this information, but it uses a different simile to illustrate the point. Here, the various vedanā which arise in the body are compared to the various visitors who come to stay at a rest house: they may come from different directions, and they may be of

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51 imasmiṃ kāyasmiṃ vividhā vedanā uppajjanti, sukhā pi vedanā, dukkhā pi vedanā, adukkhamasukkhā pi vedanā uppajjanti. SN IV 218
52 SN IV 218
53 SN IV 206
54 SN IV 207
55 SN IV 219
various castes, nobles (khattiyas), brāhmans, etc. The central concern of these two suttas is therefore simply to highlight the fact that *vedanā* arises in the body. The soteriological dimension of the first Ākāsasutta is not found in these suttas.

Emphasis on bodily aspect of *vedanā* in the Gelaññasutta of the Vedanāsaũyutta

There is another *sutta* in the Vedanāsaũyutta which gives some information on the relationship between *vedanā* and the body. This is the seventh *sutta* of the collection, the Gelaññasutta. The first part of the *sutta* is concerned with describing a bhikkhu who is aware (sato) and who has complete understanding (sampajāno). These are key terms from the description of the practice of the establishing of mindfulness (*satipaññhāna*). The remainder of the *sutta* presupposes that the bhikkhu is possessed of these qualities. The *sutta* continues,

Now, bhikkhus, as that bhikkhu dwells aware, with complete understanding, earnest, ardent, strenuous, there arises in him *vedanā* that is pleasant, and he thus understands: “There is arisen in me this pleasant *vedanā*. Now that is dependent, not without cause. Dependent on what? Dependent on this very body.”

The relationship between *vedanā* and the body is given here in somewhat different terms than it is in the Ākāsasutta. *Vedanā* is here described as being dependent (pañicca) upon the body. In this section pleasant *vedanā* is being discussed. Further on in the *sutta* there is a parallel section dealing with painful *vedanā* and one dealing with *vedanā* which is neither pleasant nor painful. The ramifications of *vedanā* being dependent on the body are now taken up:

“Now this body is impermanent, compounded, arisen owing to something. It is owing to this impermanent body, which has so arisen, that pleasant *vedanā* has arisen as a consequence, and how can that be permanent?”

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56 Tassa ce bhikkhave bhikkhuno evam satassa sampajānassa appamattassa atāpino pahitattassa viharato uppajjati sukhā *vedanā*, so evam pajānātī. Uppannā kho me ayaü sukhā *vedanā*, sà ca kho pañicca no apañicca, kim pañicca, imaṁ eva kàyam pañicca. SN IV 211

57 ayaü kho pana kāyo anicco sankhato pañicca samuppanno, aniccaṁ kho pana sankhatam pañicca samuppannaṁ kāyam pañicca uppannā sukhā *vedanā* kuto niccā bhavissati. SN IV 211
Again, as we have seen in many places in the Nikāyas, *vedanā* is associated with the key notion of impermanence. This leads to the bhikkhu taking up a specific practice for which the body and *vedanā* are the base. This leads in turn to the abandoning of the “underlying tendencies” (*anusaya*) in relation to the body and to *vedanā*:

Thus he dwells contemplating impermanence in body and pleasant *vedanā*, he dwells contemplating their transience, their waning, their ceasing, the giving of them up. As he thus dwells contemplating impermanence in body and pleasant *vedanā*, contemplating their transience ... the underlying tendency to lust for body and pleasant *vedanā* is abandoned.58

In the Chachakkasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, one who abandons the *anusayas* is said to make an end of suffering.59 So we have here a very strong emphasis on *vedanā* and its relation to the body in the context of the description of a soteriological process.

This sutta has parallels with passages from other suttas in the Nikāyas, but there are also important aspects in which it is unique. The fact that it describes *vedanā* as being dependent (*pañicca*) on the body is particularly noteworthy. In the dependent origination sequence, *vedanā* is said to be dependent--and a closely related word, *paccaya*, is used--on contact (*phassa*). One of the passages from the Mahāhatthipadopamasutta that we looked at above is based on this *vedanā-phassa* link, and its similarity to and difference from our Gelaññasutta passage are striking. Let us look at them side by side. Here is the passage from the Gelaññasutta:

There is arisen in me this pleasant *vedanā*. Now that is dependent, not without cause. Dependent on what? Dependent on this very body. Now this body is impermanent.60

And now those from the Mahāhatthipadopamasutta:

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58 Ānāpānassathanīyavagga 1.1.4.
59 So kāye ca sukhāya ca vedanāya aniccānupassā viharati, vayānupassā viharati, virāgānupassā viharati, noridhānupassā viharati, pañinissaggānupassā viharati, tassa kāye ca sukhāya ca vedanāya aniccānupassino viharato vayānupassino viharato virāgānupassino viharato nirodhānupassino viharato pañinissaggānupassā viharato yo kāye ca sukhāya ca vedanāya rāgānusayo so paññāyati. SN IV 211-12.
60 Uppannā kho me ayañ ca sukhā vedanā, sā ca kho pañicca no pañicca, kim pañicca, imaṁ eva kāyam pañicca. ayam kho panā käyo anicco... SN IV 211
he understands thus: “This painful feeling born of ear-contact has arisen in me. This is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.” Then he sees that contact is impermanent, that feeling is impermanent ...61

The second example forms part of a brief narrative: we are given the hypothetical situation of a bhikkhu who is insulted, and we are shown the best way for him to deal with this. In the Gelaññasutta, on the other hand, the situation is not specified; the teachings here apply universally: we are shown how to make use of pleasant, painful, and neither-painful-nor-painful vedanā to abandon “underlying tendencies” (anusaya). And we are told that the way to do this is firstly by understanding the relationship of vedanā with the body.

The significance of the phrase “So kāyapariyantikaṃ vedanāṃ vediyamāno ...” in the Gelaññasutta

The bodily aspect of vedanā is referred to again in the Gelaññasutta. The following Pali phrase appears in the concluding paragraphs:

So kāyapariyantikaṃ vedanāṃ vediyamāno Kāyapariyantikaṃ vedanāṃ vediyāmīti pajānāti. SN IV 213

This phrase has elicited varying responses from translators over the years. Let us briefly survey their translations. (Some of these translations are of this phrase as it appears in other suttas). C.A.F. Rhys Davids arrived at the following, though it is difficult to see how she did so:

When he feels a feeling that his powers have reached their limit, he knows that he feels such a feeling. 62

61 so evaṃ pajānāti: Uppannā kho me ayaṃ sota-samphassajā dukkhā vedanā, sā ca kho paṭicca no appaṭicca, kim paṭicca: phassām paṭicca. So: phasso anicco ti passati, vedanā aniccā ti passati, saññā aniccā ti passati, sañkhārā... viññānam... MN I 185-86.

F.L. Woodward translated this phrase a number of times. On the earlier occasions he seems to have been influenced by C.A.F. Rhys Davids’ interpretation, giving, for example:

When he feels a feeling that his bodily endurance has reached its limit, he knows that he so feels.\textsuperscript{63}

On the last occasion that he translated it, however, he gives:

When he feels a feeling limited by body, he knows that he so feels.\textsuperscript{64}

He adds a footnote to this translation, stating that he is “not sure” that his earlier translation is right. He refers in this footnote to the Pali commentary on this text, which explains kāyapariyantikā as kāyaparicchinnā, which Woodward translates as “confined to the limits of the body ...”

The earlier translations seem to belong to a type which K.R. Norman refers to as “intuitive” translations.\textsuperscript{65} The translators have chosen their renderings because they believed that they have understood the entire passage, without looking closely enough at the individual words and phrases. In this case they seem to have been influenced by the fact that a few lines further on, the state after death (kāyassa bhedā uddhaṃ) of the bhikkhu, who is the subject of this passage, is described. The phrase kāyapariyantikā vedanaḥ, however, is not related to death or dying. The word pariyantika is given in the PED as a term which is used at the end of compounds, meaning “ending in, bounded or limited by”. In Sanskrit the cognate word paryanta seems to be used in a similar sense: Monier-Williams gives “bounded by”, “extending as far as”.\textsuperscript{66} The translation that Woodward later arrived at appears, therefore, to be closer to what the meaning of the Pali may be. R. Gombrich in a recent article paraphrases this phrase as “... if he has a

sensation co-extensive with his body ..., he feels it as such...”. It seems clear that the phrase कायपरियंतिकम्भः वेदना is giving a great deal of emphasis to the bodily aspect of वेदना. वेदना is here being identified with the body.

There are, however, two translations which have appeared since Woodward revised his original opinion on this phrase which seem to revert to the older, inaccurate interpretation. नानामोलि, whose translation of this passage was published after his death from the draft that he left, gives:

When he feels feeling of the body ending, he understands: “I feel feeling of the body ending.”

And Nyanaponika, in 1983, gives, in a similar vein:

When having painful feelings endangering the body, he knows: “I have painful feelings endangering the body.”

The translators who failed to arrive at a correct translation of this phrase were no doubt influenced by the context in which we find it; the text which follows this phrase a little later in the passage is concerned with what happens after death (कायस्सा भेदः). It could also be, however, that they were reluctant to identify वेदना with the body because they were influenced by the commentarial interpretation of वेदना as one of the formless aggregates (अरूपिनो खंडः).

Not all of the translations of the phrase कायपरियंतिकम्भः वेदना that we have looked at here are taken from translations of the गेलाङ्गासूत्ता of the वेदनासम्युत्ता. This phrase appears in a number of other places in the निकायस. The distribution of these appearances is of considerable interest. It occurs once in the माझ्घिमानिकाया, once in the अंगुत्तरानिकाया, and four times in the सम्युतनिकाया. Within the

68 नानामोलि, ed. Phra Khantiplào, A Treasury of the Buddha’s Discourses from the माझ्घिमानिकाया (Middle Collection), vol.ii, Wisemans Ferry, N.S.W., Wat Buddha-Dhamma, no date, p.64.
70 MN III 244-5
71 AN II 198
Sañyuttanikāya, it appears firstly in the Nidānasamñyutta,\textsuperscript{72} the main section of the second volume, devoted to texts dealing with the schema of dependent origination (\textit{pañiccasamuppāda}); then in the Khandhasamñyutta,\textsuperscript{73} the main section of the third volume, devoted to texts dealing with the five aggregates; then in the fourth volume, in the Vedanāsamyutta\textsuperscript{74}; and finally in the fifth volume, the Mahāvagga,\textsuperscript{75} in a section with texts on mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing (ānāpānasati). The first volume of the Sañyuttanikāya, from which this phrase is absent, is largely made up of verse suttas, which do not lend themselves easily to analysis of these kinds of terms.

The phrase is also absent from the Dīghanikāya, where we find texts of a rather different nature to those in the three other principal Nikāyas. Thus we find this phrase represented in most of the major groups of texts in the Nikāyas, and within the Sañyuttanikāya, where the texts are arranged according to their subject matter, we find it in each major subdivision except for the verse collection. It is possible that the fact that this phrase is distributed in such a manner points to it being considered of some significance by the compilers of these texts. In truth, though, we know little about the process by which these texts were compiled, and suggestions like this must necessarily remain speculative.

This phrase, which puts so much emphasis on the connection of \textit{vedanā} with the body, is embedded in the same passage on each of its appearances, and this passage is of great soteriological significance. This passage, which was examined in detail in the first chapter, puts emphasis on the understanding of the impermanent (\textit{anicca}) nature of \textit{vedanā}, and of the importance of remaining detached (\textit{visañyutto}) from \textit{vedanā}. In the context of the important role of \textit{vedanā} in the soteriological process described here, the phrase on the bodily nature of \textit{vedanā} takes on even greater significance. And in the Gelaññasutta of the Vedanāsañyutta, as we saw above, this passage follows on from one which explains how \textit{vedanā} is intimately connected with the body.

Emphasis on bodily aspect of \textit{vedanā} in the Dīghanakhasutta

\textsuperscript{72} SN II 82-83  
\textsuperscript{73} SN III 126  
\textsuperscript{74} SN IV 213  
\textsuperscript{75} SN V 319
Another *sutta* which was commented upon in the first chapter of this thesis in order to highlight the emphasis which is put on *vedanā* in a description of a soteriological process is also of some interest in terms of our understanding of the relationship between *vedanā* and the body as represented in these texts. This is the Dīghanakhasutta of the Majjhimanikāya. In this *sutta* we find the following description of the body:

> Now, Aggivessana, this body made of material form, consisting of the four great elements, procreated by a mother and father, and built up out of boiled rice and porridge, is subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to dissolution and disintegration.  

A passage very similar to this one is used in a number of places in the Nikāyas to explain the term which refers to the body in extended metaphors. For example, earlier on in the Majjhimanikāya, we find the term “ant-hill” (*vammīka*) used to refer to the body, and it is explained in the following manner:

> Bhikkhu, the ant-hill is a symbol for this body, consisting of the four great elements, procreated by a mother and father, built up out of boiled rice and porridge, and subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to dissolution and disintegration.

In other metaphors, the terms “boil”, “town”, and “chariot” are explained in exactly the same way. In other contexts as well, we find this passage used when reference is made to the body. This passage is, therefore, a kind of standard, paradigmatic description of the body in the Nikāyas.

The passage in the Dīghanakhasutta continues in the following manner:

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76 *Ayaṃ kho pan 'Aggivessana kāyo rāpi cātummahābhāti kāyāsu sādappasādappacayo aniccucchādāna-parimaddana-bhedanā-viddhammasanatthā naḥ.* MN I 500

77 *Vammīko ti kho bhikkhu imassetaṃ cātumahābhātikāsu kāyassa adhivacanan bhātikāsambhavass a aniccucchādāna-parimaddana-bhedanā-viddhammasanatthā naḥ.* MN I 144

78 SN IV 83 and AN IV 386

79 SN IV 194

80 SN IV 292

81 DN I 76, MN II 17, SN V 369-70
It should be regarded as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a dart, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as void, as not self.  

There follows a brief passage which states that if one views the body in the terms with which it is described here, desire towards the body will be abandoned. Immediately after this comes a blunt statement of the three vedanās:

There are these three vedanās, Aggivessana, pleasant vedanā, unpleasant vedanā, and vedanā which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

There is no preparation for this sudden change of topic. This same phrase, or phrases almost identical with it, occurs quite a number of times in the Nikāyas. When it does occur, it is either the subject matter of the entire sutta, as in many of the suttas of the Vedanāsaṁyutta; or it is related to the broader context of the sutta, as for example, in discussion of the place of vedanā in the dependent origination schema (paṭiccasamuppāda); or it is in a sutta which is concerned with enumerating various types of phenomena (dhamma), as in the Saṅgītisutta and the Dasuttarasutta of the last volume of the Dīghanikāya. Finding it suddenly cropping up as it does here without any preparation is quite unusual.

What we have in effect is a stark juxtaposition of a significant passage on the body with a significant passage on vedanā. For, as we have seen in the first chapter, the theme of vedanā is now developed: vedanā plays a central role in a description of a soteriological practice, so much so that the sutta has an alternative title in the commentarial literature, as the Vedanāpariggahanasutta, the Discourse on the Grasping of Vedanā. A significant feature of this passage is the emphasis on the impermanent nature of vedanā:

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82 aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato paraṇo palokato suññato anattato samanupassitabbo.  MN I 500
83 Tissa kho imā Aggivessana vedanā: sukhā vedanā dukkhā vedanā adukkhamasukhā vedanā.  MN I 500
84 See SN IV 204, ff.
85 SN II 53 and SN II 99
86 DN III 216 and 275
Pleasant *vedanā*, Aggivessana, is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, vanishing, fading away and ceasing.\(^{87}\)

Even though there is no explicit link made in the jump from a description of the nature of the body to that of the nature of *vedanā*, there is an important thematic link between these descriptions. That is the emphasis in both descriptions on impermanence, one of the key concepts of the Nikāyas. The body is “subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to dissolution and disintegration” (*aniccucchādana-parimaddana-bhedana-viddhamsanadhammo*). It “should be regarded as impermanent...” (*aniccato... samanupassitabbo*).

Bearing this connection in mind, and bearing in mind the juxtaposition of these two significant passages, one is tempted to conclude that the bodily aspect of *vedanā* is being emphasised in this *sutta*. This is not, however, stated explicitly, so any conclusions on this matter must remain conjectural.

Emphasis on bodily aspect of *vedanā* in the Mahātaṅhāsaṅkhayasutta

There is another *sutta* in the Majjhimanikāya which we have seen as giving an important role to *vedanā* in a description of a soteriological process, and which also implies a connection between the body and *vedanā*. This is the Mahātaṅhāsaṅkhayasutta. The relevant passage begins in this manner:

> When he has seen a material shape through the eye, he does not feel attraction for agreeable material shapes, he does not feel repugnance for disagreeable material shapes; and he dwells with mindfulness aroused as to the body, with a mind that is unlimited; and he comprehends that freedom of mind and that freedom through intuitive wisdom as they really are, whereby those evil unskilled states of his are stopped without remainder. Having abandoned thus compliance and antipathy, whatever *vedanā* he feels--pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant--he does not delight in that *vedanā*, does not welcome it and persist in cleaving to it.\(^{88}\)

\(^{87}\) Sukhā pi kho Aggivessana *vedanā* aniccā sankhatā paṭiccasamuppāṇā khayadhammā vayadhammā virāgadhammā nirodhadhammā (MN I 500)

\(^{88}\) Sukhā pi kho Aggivessana *vedanā* aniccā sankhatā paṭiccasamuppāṇā khayadhammā vayadhammā virāgadhammā nirodhadhammā (MN I 500)
Some key terms for our discussion can be extracted from this passage, without, I hope, distorting the overall sense of the passage. Let us look at two of the phrases from this passage side by side. Firstly:

he dwells with mindfulness aroused as to the body... (So... upaṭṭhitakāyatasī ca viharati ... MN I 270)

and then:

... whatever vedanā he feels--pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant--he does not delight in that vedanā, does not welcome it and persist in cleaving to it. (... yam kañci vedanam vedeti sukham vā dukkhāṁ vā adukkhamasukham vā, so taṁ vedanam nābhinandati nābhivadati nājjhosāya tiṭṭhati. MN I 270)

The practice which leads to the stage at which the person described in this passage is able to remain unaffected by vedanā which is pleasant, painful or neither-painful-nor-painful is a practice which in part at least is based on the body. This suggests that the bodily aspect of vedanā may have a role to play in the process described in this passage.

Vedanā exemplifies the link between mind and body in the Nikāyas

The interest that we find in the Nikāyas in pointing out the physical and mental aspects of vedanā echoes a broader theme. In a number of places, we find mental and physical aspects of various phenomena. The mind and the body are both given importance in the description of a number of practices. Sometimes we find this theme related in some way to the concept of vedanā. This theme seems to have presented some difficulties to the early commentators on these texts, for we find a certain amount of inconsistency in their treatment of it.
The following passage appears in several places in each of the four principal Nikāyas:

When he is glad, joy is born in him; in one who is joyous, the body becomes tranquil; one whose body is tranquil feels pleasure; in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.89

Gethin has made the following observations on this passage:

It is perhaps of some interest that passaddhi [“tranquillity”] is described in [this] ancient formula as being mediated through the body... Some form of movement from mind to body and back again is ... quite clearly indicated in the ancient formula concerned with the dynamics of pīṭi [“joy”] and passaddhi [“tranquillity”].90

It is indeed a remarkable description of a process in which mental and physical events both play important roles and interact with each other in important ways. Moreover, a term related to vedanā plays a role in this process. The phrase sukham vedeti (“he feels pleasure”) uses a verb which is cognate with the term vedanā. Extrapolating from the mental and physical aspects of vedanā that we have noticed in the above discussion, we can interpret the phrase sukham vedeti (“he feels pleasure”) as a link between the body (kāya) of the preceding phrase (“the body becomes tranquil,” kāyo passambhati) and the mind (citta) of the phrase which follows (“in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated,” sukhino cittam samādhiyati).

The commentaries, however, have different views on the meaning of this passage. The commentaries on the Dīghanikāya take kāya in this passage to mean the mind. They understand the term kāya as a way of saying nāmakāya, that is, in the terms of the commentaries, the four immaterial aggregates.91 Other commentaries, however, are less unequivocal. The commentary on this passage as it appears in the Majjhimanikāya

89 pamuditassa pīṭi jāyati, pīṭimanassa kāyo passambhati, passaddhakāyo sukham vedeti, sukhino cittam samādhiyati. DN I 73, DN III 241, 288; MN I 37, 283; SN IV 78-79, 351-58; SN V 156, 398; AN I 243-4; AN III 21-23, 285-87; AN V 329-34
91 Sv I 217 on DN I 73 nāmakāyo passambhāti and Sv III 1032 on DN III 241 kāyoti nāmakāyo paṭipassambhāti.
simply glosses kāya as kāya.\textsuperscript{92} This gives us little further information on how this commentary wants us to understand the term. It is possible that we are being asked to take kāya at face value, as meaning simply the physical body.

On its first appearance in the Aṅguttaranikāya, the commentary on that text has another interpretation of this passage: “‘the body becomes tranquil’ [means] the group of the mind (nāmakāya) and the group of matter (rūpakāya) are without agitation”.\textsuperscript{93} Interestingly, here the commentary seems to be taking kāya as meaning mind and body together, using its customary terminology of nāmakāya for the four immaterial aggregates and rūpakāya for the aggregate of matter, that is, the body. Later on in the Aṅguttaranikāya commentary, however, commenting on this same phrase, we find kāya glossed as nāmakāya only, that is, the group of mental aggregates.\textsuperscript{94}

When this passage appears in the Samyuttanikāya, as it does in numerous places, the commentary is silent on the term kāya. The term “whose body is tranquil” (passaddhakāyo), does, however, occur in a verse passage in the Mārasamyutta of the first volume of the Samyuttanikāya.\textsuperscript{95} And here we find yet another explanation of this term: “‘Whose body is tranquil’ [means] whose body is tranquil because of the tranquillising of the body of in- and out-breathing by the fourth jhāna”.\textsuperscript{96} This is related to another explanation of kāya that we find in the Nikāyas. In the Cūḷavedallasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, the lay disciple Visākha asks the bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā the meaning of the term kāyasānkhāra (“sānkhāra of the body”).\textsuperscript{97} She tells him that it means in- and out-breathing (assāsapassāsā). When he asks the reason that this definition is given, she says that it is because in- and out-breathing is bodily (kāyika), that these phenomena are “bound up with the body” (ete dhammā kāyapaṭibaddhā). So the commentary on the Samyuttanikāya appears not to take kāya in the term passaddhakāya to be the mental body, as some of the other commentaries do; it seems to understands kāya here as the physical body.

\textsuperscript{92} kāyo passambhatīti kāyo passaddho hoti vāpasantadaratho Ps I 174 on MN I 37
\textsuperscript{93} kāyo passambhatīti nāmakāyopi rūpakāyopi viśatadaratho hoti Mp II 357 on AN I 243
\textsuperscript{94} kāyoti nāmakāyo Mp III 230 on AN III 21
\textsuperscript{95} SN I 126
\textsuperscript{96} passaddhakāyoti catutthajjhānena assāsapassāsakāyassa passaddhatta passaddhakāyo Spk I 187
\textsuperscript{97} MN I 301
This survey of the commentarial interpretations of the term *passaddhakāya* reveals some tensions. They seem to stem from a reluctance to take the term *kāya* in this context at face value.

It is “one whose body is tranquil” (*passaddhakāya*) who “feels pleasure” (*sukham vedeti*). This allows us to speculate that the pleasure spoken of here may be related to the body. The text continues: “in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated” (*sukhino cittam samādhiyati*). Here, we may be tempted to speculate that the pleasure involved here is of a mental nature. Or we could take the two phrases together and conclude that “pleasure” (or “happiness”) in this context is of both a mental and a physical nature. The fact that the verb *vedeti*, related to *vedanā*, is used here, and that *vedanā* is shown in many places in the Nikāyas to have both a physical and a mental aspect, supports this third interpretation.

The commentaries are divided in their interpretation of the nature of pleasure in this context. The Dīghanikāya commentary and the Aṅguttaranikāya commentary say that it is both bodily and mental.\(^{98}\) The Majjhimanikāya commentary, on the other hand, specifies that “pleasure” in this passage is “mental pleasure”.\(^{99}\) It is curious to note that it is the Majjhimanikāya commentary, which does not define *kāya* in this passage as *nāmakāya* (mental group), which nevertheless represents “pleasure” only in mental terms. And it is the Dīghanikāya commentary, which sees *kāya* as being a mental phenomenon (*nāmakāya*), which explains “pleasure” as being both bodily and mental (*kāyikampi cetasikampi*). This seems to be further evidence of the confusion in the minds of the commentators on these questions.

Some kind of relationship between the mind and the body is described in other places in the Nikāyas as well, and examining these passages can help to put into perspective the question of the mental and bodily aspects of *vedanā*. The following passage bears some strong resemblances with the passage which we have just been looking at, and it too appears at numerous places in the Nikāyas:

\(^{98}\) Sv I 217 on DN I 73: *sukham vedetitā kāyikampi cetasikampi sukhāṁ vedeti*. Mp I 357 on AN I 243: *sukham vediyattā kāyikacetasikasukham vediyati*

\(^{99}\) Ps I 174 on MN I 37: *passaddhakāyo sukhanti evaṃ vāpasantakāyadararo cetasikañ sukhān paṭisamvedeti*
Tireless energy, o brahman, was aroused in me and unremitting mindfulness was 
established, my body was tranquil and untroubled, my mind concentrated and 
unified.\textsuperscript{100}

We find this passage in all of the Nikāyas except for the Dīghanikāya, and it occurs in 
several places in the Majjhimanikāya and the Aṅguttaranikāya. We also find it in the 
Itivuttaka.\textsuperscript{101} As with the previous passage, if we read kāya as the physical body here, 
the interaction between physical and mental events can be seen to be of great importance 
in this description of a spiritual practice. Some of the terms in this passage bear a very 
close resemblance to those in the passage examined above. Yet when we turn to the 
commentaries, we find that they explain these words quite differently. The term 
\textit{passaddho kāyo} ("my body was tranquil") is very nearly the same as the compound 
\textit{passaddhakāyo} found in the first passage. Yet the commentary on the Majjhimanikāya 
gives an explanation for it which is very different to that given by the commentaries for 
the term \textit{passaddho kāyo}. The passage from the Majjhimanikāya commentary is as 
follows:

\begin{quote}
"The body is tranquil" (means) by the production of tranquillity of mind and 
body, my body too was tranquil. In this connection, when the mind-body (nāma-
kāya) is tranquil the material-body (rūpa-kāya) is also tranquil, therefore without 
having made a distinction between the mind-body and the material-body, the 
phrase "the body is tranquil" is used.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

This commentary is making full use of the possibility of interpreting kāya as both a 
mental and a physical phenomenon.

The Aṅguttaranikāya commentary gives another interpretation of \textit{passaddho kāyo}, which 
is different again from any of the various explanations which the commentaries give for 
\textit{passaddhakāya}:

\begin{quote}
\textit{āraddhaṁ kho pana me brāhmaṁa viriyaṁ bhavissati asalliṇaṁ upaṭṭhitā sati asamuttaṁ passaddho kāyo asāraddho samāḥitaṁ citam ekaggaṁ tī.}
\end{quote} 
\textsuperscript{100} MN I 21, 117, 186, 189; SN IV 125; AN I 148, 282, AN II 14, AN IV 176; Itivuttaka, p.119-20 
\textsuperscript{101} Ps I 124 on MN I 21.
“The body is tranquil” (means) the mental group and the body born of action is tranquil, has its agitation calmed.  

Here, kāya, besides being described as the group of mental aggregates, is also called the “body born of action” (karajakāya), a term which we have not encountered in our examinations of the traditional exegeses of kāya. Whether this term is referring to a physical or a mental phenomenon is not immediately clear. In the Dīghanikāya commentary, however, it is clearly shown to be the physical body, firstly in a passage which relates it to the description of the body as “made of material form, consisting of the four great elements, procreated by a mother and father, and built up out of boiled rice and porridge”, and secondly in a passage which describes it as being the “four great elements”. The commentary on passaddho kāyo in the Itivuttaka is practically identical with this one from the Aṅguttaranikāya commentary.

So again we see here the commentaries interpreting the term kāya as both a physical and a mental phenomenon. The variety of commentarial interpretations of the term kāya in the phrases passaddhakāya and passaddho kāyo is of great interest in assessing the commentators’ views on how the Nikāya texts see the relationship between the mind and the body. Some of the commentaries do not allow kāya any physical aspect. When they do interpret kāya as being both physical and mental, they use a wide variety of expressions to describe this dual aspect.

Mental and physical aspects of descriptions of the “factor of awakening of tranquillity” (passaddhisambojjhango)

We come away from our survey of the commentaries’ opinions on the terms passaddhakāya and passaddho kāyo somewhat perplexed by their contradictions and their efforts to make what could appear to be a simple matter appear rather complicated. When we look into the Nikāyas, however, for more information on these terms, the situation seems to be somewhat clearer. The term passaddhi (“tranquillity”), a noun

103 passaddho kāyoti nāmakāyo ca karajakāyo ca passaddho vāpasantadaratho. Mp II 243 on AN I 148.
104 Sv III 722 on DN II 278: vatthu nāma karajakāyo, yam sandhāya vuttaṁ -- "iḍāheca pana me viṁśāţam ettha sitam ettha paṭibaddhan"ti. This is a reference to DN I 76 where consciousness is said to be bound to the body which is rāptī cātumāhābhūtikā mātāpēttikasambhavo...
Sv III 764 on DN II 291: karajakāyo nāma cattāri mahābhūtāni upādārūpaṇe ti (sic).
related to the perfect past participle passaddha, is found in a series known as the seven factors of awakening (bojjhaṅga). R. Gethin has commented on the significance of this series:

A statement to the effect that the Buddhist path consists essentially in the abandoning of the five hindrances, the development of the establishings of mindfulness and subsequent development of the awakening-factors is found several times in the Nikāyas: AN V 194-5 (cf. DN II 83 = III 101 = SN V 161; AN III 387; Nett 94).105

At a number of places we find a passage which describes the factors being developed in a sequential manner. The term tranquillity is preceded by “joy” (pīti) and is followed by “concentration” (samādhi). We can note in passing that this part of the series bears a close resemblance to the passage which we examined at the beginning of this section, which gives these terms in the following form:

joy (pīti) is born in him; in one who is joyous, the body becomes tranquil (passambhāti); one whose body is tranquil feels pleasure; in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated (samādhiyati).106

In a number of suttas which deal with the seven factors of awakening we find the following passage:

Of one who is joyous body is tranquil and mind is tranquil. Now, bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu who is joyous has body and mind tranquillized, then it is that the limb of wisdom which is tranquillity is established in him. ... Happy is he whose body is tranquillized. Of him that is happy the mind is concentrated.107

106 pīti jāyati, pītimanassa kāyo passambhāti, passaddhakāyo sukhāṁ vedeti, sukhino cittam samādhiyati.
DN I 73, etc.
107 Pītimanassa kāyo pi passambhāti, cittam pi passambhāti. Yasmiṁ samaye bhikkhave bhikkhuno pītimanassa kāyo pi passambhāti cittam pi passambhāti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṁ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti. ... passaddhakāyassa sukhāṁ hoti, sukhino cittam samādhiyati. SN V 68, cf. 332 and 338. MN III 86
Here we have a clear statement of the involvement of both mind and body in this process. Equally as clear are other statements found in the Bojjhangasaññutta of the Saṁyuttanikāya. The following passage occurs three times:

There are, bhikkhus, tranquillity of body and tranquillity of mind. Systematic attention thereto, if made much of, is this food for the arising of the limb of wisdom which is tranquillity if not yet arisen, or for its cultivation and fulfilment if already arisen.\textsuperscript{108}

Another passage from the Bojjhaṅgasaññutta gives a similar impression:

Now, bhikkhus, tranquillity of body, that is a limb of wisdom that is tranquillity. Tranquillity of mind, that also is a limb of wisdom that is tranquillity.\textsuperscript{109}

The calming of the body and the mind is also one of the benefits of the conscientious practice of mindfulness of the body (kāyagatā sati) mentioned in the Āguttaranikāya:

Bhikkhus, if one thing be practised and made much of, body is calmed, mind is calmed... What one thing? It is mindfulness centred on the body.\textsuperscript{110}

This context is particularly significant because the practice of mindfulness of the body is explicity concerned with the physical body--the term kāya in kāyagatā sati is never interpreted as the mental group (nāmakāya). From the context of these suttas there is no reason to think that anything other than the physical body is meant by kāya and anything other than the mind is meant by citta.

Once again, though, the commentaries give contradictory interpretations of these passages. The commentary on the Āṅguttaranikāya passage\textsuperscript{111} just quoted glosses kāya

\textsuperscript{108} Atthi bhikkhave kāyapassaddhi cittapassaddhi, tattha yonisamanasi洛克abhuñjiko ayam āhāro anuppannassa vā passaddhisambojjhangassa uppādīya uppannassa vā passaddhisambojjhangassa bhāvānāya pāripāryā. SN V 66, 104 & 107

\textsuperscript{109} Yad api bhikkhave kāyapassaddhi tad api passaddhisambojjhango yad api bhikkhave cittapassaddhi tad api passaddhisambojjhango. SN V 111.

\textsuperscript{110} Ekadhamme bhikkhave bhāvīte bhuṭkate kāyo pi passambhati cittaṃ pi passambhati ... Katamasmiṃ ekadhamme? Kāyagatā-satiyā. AN I 43

\textsuperscript{111} Mp II 79 on AN I 43
in the phrase “the body becomes tranquil” (kāyopi passambhati) as nāmakāyopi karjakāyopi, that is “the mental body and the body born of deeds”. This is the same gloss that this commentary gives on the term passaddho kāyo when it appears at AN I 148, as noted above. In that place, of course, the term citta (mind) is not mentioned in the text. Here the commentary makes no mention of the fact that the phrase kāyo pi passambhati is followed immediately by cittam pi passambhati. In fact, it has placed itself in a difficult position to give a coherent explanation for citta here, having already given “the mental body” as a part of its definition of kāya.

When the Saūyuttanikāya commentary gives its interpretation of the phrase “there are, bhikkhus, tranquillity of body and tranquillity of mind” (atthi bhikkhave kàyapassaddhi cittapassaddhi), we find an interpretation of these terms which we have not yet encountered:

“Tranquillity of the body” (means) tranquillity of the agitation of three aggregates. “Tranquillity of the mind” (means) tranquillity of the aggregate of consciousness.\(^{112}\)

This explanation is related to a passage which occurs a number of times in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the first book of the Abhidhamma. This passage is an explanation of kàyapassaddhi and cittapassaddhi: the first is explained as tranquillity of the aggregates of vedanā, perception (saññā) and the saṅkhāras, and the second as tranquillity of the aggregate of consciousness (viññāna).\(^{113}\) So the Saūyuttanikāya commentary explains kāya in this passage not as the “mental body” but as a particular aspect of the mental body, that is, as three of the four mental aggregates. The term citta (“mind”) is understood as referring to the fourth mental aggregate, consciousness (viññāna).

R. Gethin has made the following suggestive comments on the Dhammasaṅgaṇī passage:

\(^{112}\) kàyapassaddhãti tiõõaü khandhànaü darathapassaddhi. cittapassaddhãti viññãakkhandhassa darathapassaddhi. Spk III 141 on SN V 66, same as Spk III 170 on SN V 111

If one is to take this at face value, it seems to indicate that *vedanā*, *saññā* and *saṅkhāras* are seen as in some sense able to bridge the gap between mind and body. They are, as it were, what mediates one’s state of mind to the body, and vice versa.\(^{114}\)

These comments may not apply, however, to the passage from the *Saṅyuttanikāya* commentary. In the context of commentarial interpretations of similar passages, it seems, rather, that the commentary here is taking body (*kāya*) as the “mental body” (*nāma-kāya*), or at least as a part of the mental body (i.e. *vedanā*, *saññā* and *saṅkhāra*).

The commentary still has to explain *citta*, and rather than remain silent, as the commentary on the similar *Āṅguttaranikāya* passage does, it takes *citta* as the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāna*). It seems, however, that the *Saṅyuttanikāya* commentary’s analysis of *kāyapassaddhi* and *cittapassaddhi* is not entirely coherent, perhaps as a result of an unwillingness to take the term *kāya* at face value, as meaning the physical body. Indeed, the interpretation of “body” as *vedanā*, perception and the *saṅkhāras* and of “mind” as consciousness seems somewhat strained in view of the fact that a few lines earlier in the text we find mention of “bodily energy” (*kāyikam viriyaṃ*) and “mental energy” (*cetasikam viriyaṃ*), which the commentary is quite happy to interpret in a straightforward manner, that is with “body” taken as referring to the physical body, and “mind” as meaning simply the mind in a non-technical sense.\(^{115}\)

Nevertheless, Gethin’s comments are interesting and deserve consideration. His suggestion that *vedanā*, *saññā* and *saṅkhāras* “are, as it were, what mediates one’s state of mind to the body, and vice versa” seems especially true of the way that we have seen *vedanā* used in the *Nikāyas*. Gethin goes on to make the following observations:

The notion of the reciprocal nature of the relationship between mind and body is further brought out by the way in which in the *Dhammasaṅganī* (followed by the later *Abhidhamma*) tranquillity of body and mind forms a group with five other pairs of items. These are lightness (*lahutā*) of mind and body, softness (*mudutā*) of mind and body, readiness (*kammaññatā*) of mind and body, fitness (*pāguññatā*) of mind and body, straightness (*ujukatā*) of mind and body [Dhs 9].

\(^{114}\) R. Gethin, 1992, p.155.

\(^{115}\) Spk III 170 on SN V 111
The relationship that these factors bear to the body is underlined by the fact that precisely the same terminology in part is applied to the physical world. Among the twenty-seven varieties of rūpa distinguished by the Dhammasaṅgaṇī are lightness, softness and readiness of rūpa [Dhs 134, 144]. So what at one level seems to represent a quite straightforward observation of the relationship between body and mind is potentially a conception of some subtlety and precision.\textsuperscript{116}

These are certainly very interesting ideas; Gethin does not, however, explore them in any further detail. Let us return to the Nikāyas to see if these texts can help us in understanding these concepts. There are many other places in the Nikāyas where the body and the mind are shown as working together, apart from those that we have noticed in which this theme is treated in the context of “tranquillity” (passaddhi). It is worthwhile here investigating some of these passages because, as we have seen, the physical and mental aspects of vedanā are important characteristics of that phenomenon. An appreciation of the view that we find in the Nikāyas of the relationship between the mental and the physical may help us in our understanding of the nature of vedanā.

The expressions “the body with consciousness” (saviṃñāna-ka kāya) and “in this fathom-long body, along with its perceptions and thoughts” (imasmiṃ-eva vyāmamatte kaṭevare saññimhi samanake)

There are two pithy expressions, found in a number of places in the Nikāyas, which are used to refer to the human being as a combination of mind and body. The more common of these is the phrase saviṃñāna-ka kāya (“the body with consciousness”). It is found a number of times in each of the principal Nikāyas, except for the Dīghanikāya.\textsuperscript{117} The term viññāna (“consciousness”) seems to be used in this expression in a non-technical sense as referring to the mental activities of a person in general. As S. Hamilton puts it: “... saviṃñāna kāya (sic.) is a general expression which serves well in a situation where one wants to convey the meaning of the whole human being’s bodily and mental faculties”.\textsuperscript{118} As far as it goes, this is a perfectly adequate description of this expression.

\textsuperscript{116} R. Gethin, 1992, p.156.
\textsuperscript{117} MN III 18, 32, 36; SN II 252, 253 ; SN III 80 (twice); 103; 136-37, SN III 169-70; AN I 132 & 133, and AN IV 53.
It fails, however, to take account of the emphasis that this expression puts on the body in its description of a human being. In the expression “this body with its consciousness” the mental activities are based upon the body.

In the texts, this expression is always found in the locative: *imasmiṁ ca saviṅñānake kāye*. The body with its consciousness is described as the place where the “underlying tendencies” (*anusayas*) are eradicated. The use of the locative is reminiscent of the passage which we looked at above from the Ākāsasutta of the Vedanāsamyutta in which different kinds of *vedanās* are said to arise “in this body” (*imasmiṁ kāyasmiṁ*). This puts similar emphasis on the body in its description of a phenomenon which is associated both with the mind and the body.

The other important expression which refers to a person as composed of physical and mental activities is found only three times in the Nikāyas.

> Friend, in this very fathom-long body, along with its perceptions and thoughts, I proclaim the world to be, likewise the origin of the world and the making of the world to end, likewise the practice going to the ending of the world.\(^\text{119}\)

The image of the body here is striking in its vivid physicality: “this fathom-long body”. The term for body is not the usual *kāya*, nor the less common *sarīra*, but a term which is also used to refer to a dead body: *kaḷevara*. Indeed C.A.F. Rhys Davids, the first translator of this passage, rendered *kaḷevara* as “carcase”, not in the sense of a dead body but as a deprecating way of referring to a living body.\(^\text{120}\) The phrase also gives us a rough measure of this “thing”. And again, as in the previous expression, the mental activities are based on this body. C.A.F. Rhys Davids brings this out in a note which she gives to her translation which explains the literal meaning of the phrase: “this be-saṅgā-ed be-mano-ed carcase”.\(^\text{121}\) As with the previous expression, the connotations of the terms for the mental activities seem to be, in this context, quite general and non-technical; the commentary glosses *manus*, one of the words for mind, with another word.

\(^\text{119}\) *api khvāham āvuso imasmiṁeva vyāmamattae kaḷevare saṅgāhī samanake lokaṁ ca paññāpemi lokasamudayaṁ ca lokanirodhaṁ ca lokanirodhaṁ saṅgāṁ pañiṇipaddan ti*. SN I 62 (= AN II 48, 50)


for mind, *citta*. One is reminded of the Saüyuttanikåya passage which associates these terms, along with the term *viññāṇa*, which we found in the previous expression: “that which is called “*citta*”, “*manas*” and “*viññāṇa*”.

The expression *imasmīṇeva vyāmamatte kaḷevare saṁnimhi samanake* has other features in common with the expression *imasmīṇ ca saviññāṇake kāye*. Both of them clearly are in the locative case, making the body with its mental activities the locus of the action of the sentence. As noted above, there is a parallel with the description of *vedanā* arising “in this body” (*imasmīṇ kāyasmiṇī*) in the Ākāsasutta of the Vedanāsaṁyutta.

Another point to note concerning the passages where we find a human being described as a “fathom-long body with perceptions and thoughts,” is that the context is of the utmost importance from the point of view of soteriology. What we have here, in effect, with these four aspects of the “world” (*loka*), is a recasting of one of the central soteriological formulas of the Nikāyas, the four noble truths. The body with its mental activities is “where” the Buddha declares this form of the four noble truths. Whether we take the locative as a locative of reference or whether we take it in a more literal sense, the emphasis on the body in this important passage is striking. We have noted that *vedanā* is often described as having both mental and bodily aspects, and that it is associated with the four noble truths on numerous occasions in the Vedanāsaṁyutta. In the first chapter, we noted the significance of the following passage:

Now to him who has feeling, bhikkhus, I make known: This is suffering. I make known: This is the arising of suffering. I make known: This is the cessation of suffering. I make known: This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.

The term *vediyamānassa* of this passage is not only linked etymologically to the term *vedanā*, it must also be seen as standing in, as it were, for *vedanā* because the preceding passage is a presentation of the twelve-fold dependent origination schema (*pañicca*-
samuppāda) which stops short at the term before vedanā. The correspondence with our “fathom-long body” passage is striking. It is all the more so if we recall in this context the statement in the Ākāsasutta that the various vedanās arise “in this body” (imasmīṃ kāyasmiṃ vividhā vedanā uppajjanti). The overall picture from these passages is thus one in which the physical body plays a very significant role in representations of the Buddha’s soteriological strategy.

Passages which give equal emphasis to bodily and mental events

There are a number of suttas which appear to give equal emphasis to the body and the mind in certain aspects of their descriptions of soteriological practices. In the Bojjhaṅgasāmyutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya, the following passage is repeated for each of the six sense doors:

Herein, Kuṇḍaliya, a bhikkhu, seeing a delightful object with the eye, does not hanker for it, does not thrill thereat, does not develop lust for it. His body is unmoved, his mind is unmoved, inwardly well established and released. If with the eye he behold an object repulsive, he is not troubled by that, his mind is not unsettled or depressed or resentful because of that, but his body is unmoved, his mind is unmoved, inwardly well established and released.\footnote{Idha Kuṇḍaliya bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā manāpamā nābhijjhati nābhīhamsati na rāgam janeti, tassa thito ca kāyo hoti thitam cittaṃ ajjhātāṃ suasaṅhitaṃ suvimuttaṃ. Cakkhunā kho paneva rūpaṃ disvā amanāpamā na maṅku hoti, apatiṭhitacitto ādiśamānaśa avyāpannace tesaṃ, tassa thito ca kāyo hoti thitam cittaṃ ajjhātāṃ suasaṅhitaṃ suvimuttaṃ. SN V 74}

A passage in the Udāna uses similar terms:

With mind and body firmly set,
Standing, seated or lying down,
If a bhikkhu should set up mindfulness,
He’d win the prize in first and last.\footnote{Thītena kāyenā thītena cetāsā itīṭhām nissimo uda vā sayāno etāṃ satīṃ bhikkhu adhiṭṭhahāno labetha pubbāpariyāṃ visesāṃ. Ud. 61}
There are also passages which speak of both the mind and the body suffering:

... he meets with pain,
With pain of body, pain of mind. Tormented
By body that burns and mind that burns, alike
By day and night such live painfully.  

In a passage which is found a number of times in the Aṅguttaranikāya, there is a similar image of both mind and body burning, the cause in this case being a purely mental event:

... passion overwhelms his mind; in that state he burns in body, he burns in mind...  

Again in the Aṅguttaranikāya, both the body and the mind are said to be affected by craving, aversion and delusion (rāga, dosa, and moha) in the following passage, which is repeated for each of these:

“Would there not arise in that housefather or housefather’s son burning fevers of body or of mind that are born of lust so that, tortured by them, he would live unhappily?”  “They would arise, sir.”  

Here as well the image is of both body and mind burning.

These themes are treated somewhat more fully in a sutta of the Majjhimanikāya, the Mahāsalāyatanikasutta. The following passage is repeated for each of the sense doors:

Bhikkhus, when one does not know and see the eye as it actually is, when one does not know and see forms, when one does not know and see the eye-consciousness as it actually is, when one does not know and see the eye-contact

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127 kāya-dukkhaü ceto-dukkhaü dukkhaü so adhigacchati
dayhamānena kāyaṇa dayhmānena cetasā
128 ... rāgo cittaü anuddhaüseti. So rāgānuddhaṃsena cittena pariñayhat‘eva kāyaṇa pariñayhati cetasā.
AN III 95, 96, 98.
129 Api nu tassa gahapatissa và gahapatiputtassa và uppajeyyum rāgajā pariñāhā kāyikā và cetasikā và yehi so rāgajehi pariñāhehi pariñayhamāno dukkham sayeyyā ti. Evan bhante. AN I 1137
as it actually is, when one does not know and see as it actually is [the feeling] felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact as condition, then one is inflamed by lust for the eye, for forms, for eye-consciousness, for eye-contact, for [the feeling] felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact as condition.

When one abides inflamed by lust, fettered, infatuated, contemplating gratification, then the five aggregates affected by clinging are built up for oneself in the future; and one’s craving—which brings renewal of being, is accompanied by delight and lust, and delights in this and that--increases. One’s bodily and mental troubles increase, bodily and mental torments increase, one’s bodily and mental fevers increase, and one experiences bodily and mental suffering.\[^{130}\]

The image of both the body and the mind burning is found again in this passage, with two different terms used to describe this phenomena: *parîha*, as in the passage looked at above, and *santāpa*, from the verbal root *tap*, to burn. Also of great interest in the present context is the passage which leads into the description of pairs of bodily and mental phenomena. In this passage, which occurs very often in the Nikāyas with numerous variations, the term *vedayita* plays an important role. For a number of reasons, *vedayita* here must be very close in meaning to *vedanā*. The two words are clearly connected etymologically. And *vedayita* is here “caused by” (*paccayā*) the contact (*samphassa*) of the eye, just as *vedanā* is caused by contact (*phassa*) in general in the dependent origination schema (*pañicca-samuppāda*). Furthermore, *vedayita* is given in a three-fold classification of pleasant, painful, and neither pleasant nor painful, which is one of the standard classifications for the various types of *vedanā*. “Not knowing, not seeing the *vedayita* which results from the contact of the eye (and of the other sense organs)”, leads to attachment to this *vedayita*, and thence to craving, and thence to bodily

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\[^{130}\] *Cakkhuḥ, bhikkhave, ajānaḥ apassaḥ yathābhūtam, rūpe ajānaḥ apassaḥ yathābhūtam, cakkhuviṭṭhānaḥ ajānam apassaḥ yathābhūtam, yam p’idaṃ cakkhusampassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitam sukham vā dukkham vā adukkhamasukham vā, tam pi ajānaṃ apassaṃ yathābhūtam, cakkhusmiṃ sārajjati rūpesu sārajjati cakkhuhiṭṭhāne sārajjati cakkhusampasse sārajjati, yam p’idaṃ cakkhusampassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitam sukham vā dukkham vā adukkhamasukham vā tasmin pi sārajjati. Tassa sārattassa samyuttassa sammānākkhandhassa assādānapassino viharato āsātiṃ pañcupādānakkhandhā upacayam gacchhanti, tañha c’assa ponobhavikā nandīrāgasahagatā tatra tatrābhīhananditā, sā c’assa pavaḍḍhanti. Tassa kāyikā pi darathā pavaḍḍhanti, cetasikā pi darathā pavaḍḍhanti, kāyikā pi santāpā pavaḍḍhanti, cetasikā pi santāpā pavaḍḍhanti, kāyikā pi parīlahā pavaḍḍhanti, cetasikā pi parīlahā pavaḍḍhanti. So kaya-dukkham pi cetodukkham pi paṭīsāmyvedeti. MN III 287-88.*
and mental suffering. The final phrase used to describe this suffering brings us back once again to the theme of *vedanā*: “He experiences suffering of the body and suffering of the mind” (*So kāyadukkham pi cetodukkham pi paṭisāmvedeti*), which brings us in turn to the final important topics of this chapter: the verb *paṭi-sām-vid*, its relationship to the term *vedanā*, and its significance in descriptions of the relationship between the mind and the body.

Terms derived from *paṭi-sām-vid*, and their relationship to *vedanā*, and to physical and mental events

*Paṭi-sām-vid* is usually translated as “to experience” or “to feel”. The verbal root of this word, *vid*, is related to the term *vedanā*. Moreover, there are a number of passages in the Nikāyas which give strong indications that there are very close links between the ranges of meanings of the verb *paṭi-sām-vid* and the noun *vedanā*. In the second chapter of this thesis we saw that in a number of significant passages *paṭi-sām-vid* “stands in” for *vedanā* in statements of the dependent origination schema (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) which do not conform to the standard statement of that schema. We also find *paṭi-sām-vid* used together with the triad pleasant, painful and neither-painful-nor-painful (*sukha, dukkha, adukkhamasukha*), which is regularly associated with the term *vedanā* throughout the Nikāyas. In a *sutta* of the Majjhimanikāya, for example, we find the following:

Whatever this person experiences (*paṭisāmvedeti*), whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant, unwholesome states diminish in him and wholesome states increase.\(^{131}\)

Furthermore, this passage is paralleled by a passage further on in the *sutta* which is repeated for pleasant, painful and neither-painful-nor-painful, and which uses the term *vedanā* instead of the verb *paṭi-sām-vid*:

\(^{131}\) *Yaṃ kiñcāyam purisapuggalo paṭisāmvedeti sukham vā dukkham vā adukkkhamasukhaṃ vā, tassa akusalā dhammā pariḥāyanti kusalā dhammā abhivaḍḍhanti...* MN I 475 and cf. MN III 273.
Here, when someone feels a certain kind of pleasant *vedanā*, unwholesome states increase in him and wholesome states diminish...\textsuperscript{132}

Consider also the manner in which *paṭi-sam-vid* is paralleled by *vedanā* in the following passage from the Devadahasutta of the Majjhimanikāya:

... if, bhikkhus, the pleasure and pain which creatures experience *[paṭisamvedenti]* are due to what was previously done, certainly, bhikkhus, the Tathāgata was formerly a doer of deeds that were well done in that he now feels *[vedeti]* such cankerless pleasant *vedanā*.\textsuperscript{133}

In the Mahānidānasutta of the Dīghanikāya, we find the two terms in one phrase: “My self is not *vedanā*, my self does not feel *[apaṭisamvedano]*”.\textsuperscript{134} Because of these close connections between the term *vedanā* and forms derived from *paṭi-sam-vid*, an investigation of the role that forms derived from *paṭi-sam-vid* play in descriptions of the relationship between the mind and the body is warranted in the present context.

In the passage quoted above from the Mahāsalāyatanikasutta, *paṭi-sam-vid* is used in connection with both bodily suffering and mental suffering; the two are juxtaposed.\textsuperscript{135} There are also a number of passages in the Nikāyas in which *paṭi-sam-vid* is associated either with physical events or with mental events. Let us first take a look at those passages in which the physical aspect is most important. The following passage appears in the Samyuttanikāya:

Were he struck, lord, by but one arrow, he would because of that suffer *[paṭisamvediyetha]* pain *[dukkha]* and sorrow *[domanassa]*; what need to speak of being struck by three hundred.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{132} *Idh’ekaccassa eva rūpam sukham vedanam vediyato akusal dhamma abhiyatti kusaladhamma parihayanti...* MN I 475

\textsuperscript{133} *Sace bhikkhave sattā pubbekatahetu sukhadukkha paṭisamvedenti, addhā bhikkhave Tathāgato pubbesukatakamakkāri, yam etara eva rūpā anāsavā sukhā vedanā vedeti.* MN II 227

\textsuperscript{134} *na h’ eva kho me vedanā attā, appaṭisamvedano me attā,* DN II 66

\textsuperscript{135} *So kāya dukkhāṁ pi cetodukkhāṁ pi paṭisamvedeti.* MN III 287-88.

\textsuperscript{136} *Ekissa pi bhante sattiyā haṅhamāno tato nidānāṁ dukkhaṁ domanassaṁ paṭisamvediyetha ko pana vādā tihi sattisatehi haṅhamāno ti.* SN II 100
The two terms used here to describe the suffering caused by the arrow, *dukkha* and *domanassa*, are of some interest in the present discussion. These terms are glossed in the Mahāsatipaññhānasutta in a manner which once again reveals the interest that the Nikāyas have in the physical and mental aspects of various phenomena:

And what is pain (*dukkha*)? Whatever bodily painful feeling, bodily unpleasant feeling, painful and unpleasant feeling results from bodily contact, that, bhikkhus is called lamentation.

And what is sadness (*domanassa*)? Whatever mental painful feeling, mental unpleasant feeling, painful or unpleasant sensation results from mental contact, that, bhikkhus, is called sadness.¹³⁷

The mental nature of *domanassa* is clear from the term itself: *domanassa* is a formation from *manas* ("mind") with the prefix *du(r)*, implying difficulty or badness. This is made explicit in the above gloss. We also find the two terms *sukha* and *somanassa* paired in a similar way, and at SN V 209 they are described as bodily (*kāyika*) pleasure and mental (*cetasika*) pleasure respectively. This neat exegesis of these terms does not, however, fit with all the contexts in which they occur. In the passage quoted above from the Mahāsalāyatanasutta, for example, we find suffering (*dukkha*) specified as "suffering of the mind" (*cetodukkha*). In the above passage from the Saüyuttanikāya, the suffering (*dukkha*) that the person who is struck by an arrow would experience (*pañisaüvediyetha*) is clearly bodily suffering. At the same time he would experience mental suffering (*domanassa*).

*Paṭi-saṁ-vid* used in connection with mental events

We turn now to those passages which in which *paṭi-saṁ-vid* is used in the context of purely mental events. There are a number of places in which *paṭi-saṁ-vid* occurs with the phrase "mental suffering and distress" (*cetasikāṁ dukkham domanassam*).¹³⁸ The following passage occurs in two places in the Saüyuttanikāya; on each occasion it is

¹³⁷ Katamaññ ca bhikkhave dukkham? Yaṁ kho bhikkhave kāyikaṁ dukkham kāyikaṁ asātaṁ kāyasamphassajjāṁ dukkhaṁ asātaṁ vedayaṁ, idaṁ vuccati bhikkhave dukkhaṁ. Katamaññ ca bhikkhave domanassam? Yaṁ kho bhikkhave cetasikāṁ dukkhaṁ cetasikāṁ asātaṁ manosamphassajjāṁ dukkhaṁ asātaṁ vedayaṁ, idaṁ vuccati bhikkhave domanassam. DN II 306

¹³⁸ eg. AN I 157, AN I 216.
repeated five times to illustrate the breaking of each of the layperson’s “five precepts” (cf. AN III 203-5; 208-12):

That guilty dread, housefather, which he who kills begets in this very life, as a result of his killing; that guilty dread about the future life, which he who kills begets; that mental suffering and distress experienced [paṭisamvediyati] by him...

Paṭi-saṁ-vid is also used in connection with mental events without reference to the phrase “mental suffering and distress” (cetasikā dukkham domanassam). The following passage is from a sutta in the Majjhimanikāya which describes some of the Buddha’s students (sāvakas) who pay attention to his teaching, and others who do not. The Buddha remains balanced with both of these types of students:

With that the Tathāgata is not satisfied and experiences [paṭisamvedeti] no satisfaction, and he is not dissatisfied and experiences no dissatisfaction.

The Buddha does not experience (paṭisamvedeti) attamanatā (“satisfaction” or “pleasure”). This is another term which contains the word manas (“mind”), the first part of the compound being a past participle from ā-dā, “taken up”. The literal meaning of the term is thus “the state of one who has an up raised mind”. So here again paṭi-saṁ-vid is used in connection with mental activity.

The above passages give an overview of the use of the term paṭi-saṁ-vid in connection with mental and physical events.

Ānāpānasati and the description of mental and bodily events

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139 Yaṁ gahapati pāṇātipūtī pāṇātipatapaccayā diṭhadhammikam pi bhayaṃ verām pasavatī samparāyikam pi bhayaṃ verām pasavati, cetasikām pi dukkhaṃ domanassam paṭisamvediyati. SN II 68 & SN V 387-88

140 Tatra bhikkhave Tathāgato na c’eva attamanato hoti na ca attamanatām paṭisamvedeti, na ca anattamanato hoti na ca anattamanatām paṭisamvedeti. MN III 221

141 Cf. a similar usage at DN III 60, rājā... dibbe cakkaraide anantarhite anattamane ahosi, anattamanataṇ ca paṭisamvedesi.
There is a very important practice described in many places in the Nikāyas in which terms derived from paṭi-saṁ-vid play a significant role, and for which the above discussion will serve as a useful introduction, because the question of mental and bodily events is raised by this practice: this is the practice of the awareness of the incoming and outgoing breath (ānāpānasati). Descriptions of this practice occur in the Satipaṭṭhānasuttas of the Dighanikāya and the Majjhimanikāya. An entire sutta of the Majjhimanikāya, the Ānāpānasatisutta, is devoted to a full exposition of the practice and its relation to other important practices. In the Mahārāhulovādasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, the Buddha is represented as teaching this practice to his son, Rāhula, who had become a bhikkhu. And there is an entire section (saṁyutta) of the fifth volume of the Saṁyuttanikāya devoted to suttas dealing with this topic. The practice is also described in a sutta of the Aṅguttaranikāya.

The very name of the practice of ānāpānasati indicates that it is connected with both the body and with the mind. Breathing in and breathing out (ānāpāna) is clearly a physical function, and the awareness of this (sati) is a mental activity. In the Ānāpānasamyutta of the Saṁyuttanikāya which deals with this topic, there are, moreover, explicit references to the mental and bodily effects of this practice. In one sutta there is a description of Mahākappina, a senior bhikkhu, seated in meditation. The Buddha asks the bhikkhus if wavering (iṅjitatta) or shaking (phanditatta) of the body of this bhikkhu is ever seen. They reply that such things are never seen, whether he is sitting amid the Saṅgha or on his own. The Buddha goes on to make the following statement:

> It is by cultivating and making much of the concentration on in-breathing and out-breathing that there is no wavering or shaking of body, no wavering or shaking of mind.

The effects of the practice of ānāpānasati are here given in both physical and mental terms.

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142 DN II 291 and MN I 56
143 MN I 425
144 AN V 111
145 Ānāpānasatisamādhissa bhikkhave bhāvitattā bahulīkatattā neva kāyassa iṅjitattaṁ vā hoti phanditattaṁ vā, na cittassa iṅjitattaṁ vā hoti phanditattaṁ vā. SN V 316
In another *sutta* of this *samyutta* the Buddha explains the benefits, physical and mental, that he gained from this practice before he was fully enlightened, and he recommends that the bhikkhus practice in this way if they wish to experience similar benefits:

Formerly, bhikkhus, before I myself was enlightened with the perfect wisdom, and was yet a Bodhisattva, I used generally to spend my time in this way of living [that is, concentrated on *ānāpānasati*]. As I generally lived in this way, neither my body nor my eyes were fatigued, and my mind was freed from the āsavas.

Wherefore, bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu should desire: May neither my body nor my eyes be fatigued, and by not clinging may my mind be free from the āsavas, --he must give strict attention to this same intent concentration on in-breathing and out-breathing.\(^{146}\)

The third *sutta* of the Ānāpānasamyutta in which the body plays an important role is the Vesālīsutta. The sutta relates that on a certain occasion the Buddha gave a discourse on “the impure” (*asubha*). No details of this discourse are given, but it is related that after the Buddha had withdraw, requesting not to be disturbed for a fortnight, the bhikkhus tried to put the teachings of this discourse into practice with disastrous results:

As to this body, they worried about it, felt shame and loathing for it, and sought for a weapon [to kill themselves].\(^{147}\)

When the Buddha returned, and found out that the bhikkhus had misunderstood his teaching on the impure and interpreted it as revulsion for the body, he taught them mindfulness of in- and out-breathing. It is possible to see *ānāpānasati* here being considered as a corrective to the aversion for the body that the bhikkhus had developed.

*Descriptions of the practice of ānāpānasati*

\(^{146}\) Aham pi sudam bhikkhave pabbeva sambodhà anabhìsambuddho bodhisatto va samàno iminà vihàrena bahulaü viharàmi, tassa mayham bhikkhave iminà vihàrena bahulaü viharato neva kàyo kilamati na cakkhàna, anupàdàya ca me āsavehi cittaü vimuccati. Tasmà ti ha bhikkhave bhikkhu ce pi ñkànikkheyya Neva kàyo kilameyya na ca cakkhàna, anupàdàya ca me āsavehi cittaü vimucceyyà ti. Ayam eva ānāpànasatisamàdhi sàdhukam manasì kàtabbo. SN V 317

\(^{147}\) Te iminà kàyena attiyàmàna haràyamàna jìgucchamàna satthàhàrakam pariyesanti. SN V 320.
Let us turn now to the descriptions of the actual practice of ānāpānasati that we find in these texts. If the text is laid out in point form, the important role that the term paṭi-saṃ-vid plays is immediately evident. This also highlights the roles of bodily and mental functions in this practice:

1) Breathing in long, he understands: “I breathe in long”; or breathing out long, he understands: “I breathe out long”.
2) Breathing in short, he understands: “I breathe in short”. ...
3) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in feeling the whole body (sabbakāyapaṭiṣaṃvedi)”; he trains thus: “I shall breathe out feeling the whole body”.
4) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquillising the bodily formation (passambhaṭṭhaṃ kāyasāṅkhāraṃ).” ...
5) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in feeling rapture (pīta-paṭiṣaṃvedi).” ...
6) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in feeling pleasure (sukha-paṭiṣaṃvedi).” ...
7) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in feeling the mental formation (cittasaṅkhāra-paṭiṣaṃvedi).” ...
8) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquillising the mental formation (passambhaṭṭhaṃ citta-saṅkhāraṃ).” ...
9) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in feeling the mind (cittapaṭiṣaṃvedi).” ...
10) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in gladdening the mind”. ...
11) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in concentrating the mind”. ...
12) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in liberating the mind.”
13) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence.” ...
14) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in contemplating fading away.” ...
15) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in contemplating cessation.” ...
16) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment.” ...

148 dīghaṃ vā assasanto dīghaṃ assasāṃti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto dīghaṃ passasāṃti pajānāti. rassam vā assasanto rassam assasāṃti pajānāti... sabbakāya-paṭiṣaṃvedi assasissāṃti sikkhati, sabbakāya-paṭiṣaṃvedi passasissāṃti sikkhati... passambhaṭṭhaṃ kāyasāṅkhāraṃ assasissāṃti sikkhati... pīta-paṭiṣaṃvedi assasissāṃti sikkhati... sukha-paṭiṣaṃvedi assasissāṃti sikkhati... cittasaṅkhāra-paṭiṣaṃvedi assasissāṃti sikkhati... passambhaṭṭhaṃ citta-saṅkhāraṃ assasissāṃti sikkhati... cittapaṭiṣaṃvedi assasissāṃti sikkhati...
In the Ānāpānasatisutta and in several of the suttas of the Ānāpānasamyutta\(^\text{149}\) this presentation is followed by an exposition of the same sixteen items divided into four groups of four items each. Each of these groups is associated with one of the four establishings of mindfulness (satipāṭhānas): the first with the observation of the body (kāyānupassanā), the second with the observation of vedanā (vedanānupassanā), the third with the observation of the mind (cittānupassanā), and the fourth with the observation of mental phenomena (dhammānupassanā). In fact in some of these suttas, this second presentation of the sixteen items comes as the answer to the question “And how, bhikkhus, does mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfil the four establishings of mindfulness?”\(^\text{150}\) This system of classification is partly reflected in the Satipaṭṭhānasuttas themselves. The description of ānāpānasati there includes only the first four items of this list, and, in accordance with the above classification, is found in the section on the observation of the body (kāyānupassanā). The other sections, however, have no mention of ānāpānasati.

In the context of the present discussion, the first phrase to catch our attention in this first group is “He trains thus: “I shall breathe in feeling the whole body (sabbakāyapaṭṭisāṅvedī)”. Here paṭi-saṅ-vid is clearly used in the context of bodily activity. This expression seems to be saying that the bhikkhu is training himself to feel his whole body as he breathes in, and, in the following phrase, as he breathes out. If one takes into account here the connection between paṭi-saṅ-vid and vedanā, and the statement in the Vedānasamyutta that vedanā arises “in this body” (imasmiṁ kāyasmiṁ vividhā vedanā uppaṭṭanti), this interpretation seems quite plausible.

The commentaries almost invariably give very few comments on the practice of ānāpānasati; instead, they refer to the Visuddhimagga. The Visuddhimagga sees the

\[\text{abhippamodayaṁ cittaṁ assissāmīti sikkhati...} \]
\[\text{samādahāṁ cittaṁ assissāmīti sikkhati...} \]
\[\text{vinocayāṁ cittaṁ assissāmīti sikkhati...} \]
\[\text{aniccānupassā assissāmīti sikkhati...} \]
\[\text{virāgānupassā assissāmīti sikkhati...} \]
\[\text{nirodhānupassā assissāmīti sikkhati...} \]
\[\text{paṭinissaggānupassā assissāmīti sikkhati...} \]

MN I 425; III 82-83; SN V 311-41, passim.; AN V 111
\(^\text{149}\) Numbers 10, 13-16
\(^\text{150}\) Kathāṁ bhāvītā ca bhikkhave ānāpānasati kathāṁ bahulikatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti? MN III 83, cf. SN V 329, 334
above phrase in a quite different light. As we have noted in connection with other passages, there appears to be a reluctance on the part of the commentarial tradition to take the term kāya in its most straightforward meaning as the physical body. Here, despite the fact that we are in the section related to the observation of the body, which is explicitly the observation of the physical body of the person undertaking this practice, the Visuddhimagga interprets the term body (kāya) as the “in-breath body” and the “out-breath body.” The text’s “whole body” (sabbakāya) is understood in this interpretation as the “beginning, middle and end” (ādimaññhaparipiyosāna) of this “body of the breath” of which the meditator is to be aware.

The next item from this list of interest in our study is the fourth one. This phrase is paralleled by the eighth member of the list:

4) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquillising the bodily formation...”
(passambhayaṃ kāyaasaṅkhāram assasissāmīti sikkhati...)

8) He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquillising the mental formation...
“(passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāram assasissāmīti sikkhati...)

With these two phrases we see once again the concerns that these texts show for both the bodily and mental aspects of certain phenomena. The word passambhayaṃ (“tranquillising”) is the present participle of the verb passambheti, which is the causative form of the verb passambhati. This verb is related to the past passive participle passaddha (“tranquillized”) and the noun passaddhi (“tranquillity”). We have seen that the mental and physical aspects of these notions are mentioned in the texts, for example in the phrase “There is, bhikkhus, tranquillity of the body and tranquillity of the mind.”

There are five places in the Nikāyas in which the description of the practice of ānāpānasati, which includes of course items 4) and 8) quoted above, occurs in the same sutta as the phrase “the body becomes tranquil, the mind becomes tranquil, (there is) the awakening-factor of tranquillity”*. The parallels between these phrases is immediately apparent. In each of these suttas, a connection is explicitly made between the practice of

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153 assāsakāya and passāsakāya Vism. 273
154 Aththi bhikkhave kāyasaddhī cittasaddhī SN V 66, 104, 107
155 kāya pi passambhati cittam pi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhanto MN III 86; SN V 332, 338; and SN V 334 and 335, though here the text has been much abbreviated
ānānpānasati and the practice of the seven factors of awakening. The awakening-factor of tranquillity (passaddhisambojjhanga) is the fifth of these factors of awakening.

It seems, then, quite reasonable to pair the fourth and eighth items of the description of ānāpānasati, and to see in them a paralleling of physical and mental phenomena. There is, however, an obvious difference between the ānāpānasati phrases and the description of the awakening-factor of tranquillity: in the ānāpānasati setting we are dealing with the sañkhāra of the body (kāya) and the sañkhāra of the mind (citta); the passaddhisambojjhanga mentions only body (kāya) and mind (citta). The term sañkhāra is a notoriously difficult one to interpret. Paul Griffiths considers it to be “effectively untranslatable”.154 Sometimes its meaning is quite general, and in the present context it is possible to understand kāyasañkhāra and cittasañkhāra as bodily and mental activities in general.

The Visuddhimagga, however, again sees the matter differently. It understands kāyasañkhāra and cittasañkhāra in these phrases as having very specific meanings: for the Visuddhimagga, kāyasañkhāra is “in-breathing and out-breathing” (assāsapassāsā)155 and cittasañkhāra is “perception and vedanā” (saññā ca vedanā ca).156 These definitions are connected with a passage in the Cūḷavedallasutta of the Majjhimanikāya which we have had occasion to refer to earlier in this chapter. There kāyasañkhāra and cittasañkhāra are defined in just this manner. There are two points which support the Visuddhimagga’s interpretation. Firstly, understanding kāyasañkhāra as “in-breathing and out-breathing” in the context of a description of the practice of “mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing” seems to make perfect sense. Secondly, in those suttas where the ānāpānasati practice is divided into four groups corresponding to the four satipaṭṭhānas, cittasañkhāra occurs as a member of the group which belongs

155 The Visuddhimagga quotes from the Pañisambhidāmagga on this point: Katame kāyasañkhāra? Dīgham assāsu... passassākāyikā ete dhammā kāyaipaṭṭibaddhā kāyasañkhāra... PTS ed. of Vism, p.276.
156 The Visuddhimagga and the commentaries to the relevant passages in the Ānāpānasatisutta of the Majjhimanikāya (MA IV 141 on MN III 84) and the Ānāpānasamyutta of the Saṁyuttanikāya (SA III 271 on SN V 324) all quote from the Pañisambhidāmagga: “Perception and feeling belong to the mind, these things being bound up with the mind are mental formations” (Nañamoli) (saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā, ete dhammā cittaipaṭṭibaddhā cittasañkhāra) Paṭis. i.188. The Visuddhimagga also says “[t]he mental formation consists of the two aggregates of feeling and perception” (Nañamoli, p.310) (Cittasañkhāro ti vedanādayo dve khandhā) PTS ed. of VM, p.288.
to the practice of the observation of *vedanā* (*vedanānupassanā*). Understanding *cittasankhāra*, therefore, as “perception and *vedanā*” is a quite convincing explanation of the term.

One way in which this explanation falls short, however, is that it fails to make a complete correspondence between the description of *ānāpānasati* and the description of the three types of *saṅkhāras* found in the Cūḷavedallasutta because it does not account for one of these *saṅkhāras*, namely, the *saṅkhāra* of speech (*vacīsaṅkhāra*), which is explained in a metaphorical manner in the Cūḷavedallasutta as referring to modes of thinking (*vitakkavicāra*).

Nevertheless, the commentaries may well be justified in their interpretation of the terms *kāyasankhāra* and *cittasankhāra*, though we cannot rule out the possibility that the intention of the author(s) of the *sutta* passages was to parallel bodily activities in a general sense and mental activities in a general sense.

The Visuddhimagga quotes from the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, an exegetical work from the Khuddakanikāya, the fifth Nikāya, to give another interpretation of the term *kāyasankhāra*. This second interpretation appears to take the term to mean activities associated with the physical body in general, whereas the first interpretation specifies in-and out-breathing as *kāyasankhāra*. The passage quoted proceeds as follows:

> When there are such bodily formations [*sankhāras*] whereby there is bending backwards, sideways, in all directions, and forwards, and perturbation, vacillation, moving and shaking of the body, he trains thus “I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation”, he trains thus “I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation”. When there are such bodily formations whereby there is no bending backwards, sideways, in all directions, and forwards, and no perturbation, vacillation, moving and shaking of the body, quietly, subtly, he trains thus “I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation”, he trains thus “I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation”.

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157 Ņānamoli. Vism. viii.181 quotes Paṭisambhidāmagga, p.184-6

Yathārūpehi kāyasankhārāhehi kāyassa ānamanā, vinamanā, sannamanā, pañamanā, iñjanā, phandanā, calanā, kampanā passambhayāṁ kāyasankhārāṁ assaśissāṁ ti sikkhati, passambhayāṁ kāyasankhārāṁ passasissāṁ ti sikkhati. Yathārūpehi kāyasankhārhehi kāyassa na ānamanā, na vinamanā, na sannamanā,
The emphasis here is clearly on the physical body as a whole, which we may compare with *cittasankhāra* as referring to mental activities in general.

Thus descriptions of the practice of *ānāpānasati* reflect the interest that we find in the Nikāyas in mental and physical aspects of various phenomena.

**Conclusion**

This survey of descriptions of the mental and physical aspects of *vedanā* in the Nikāyas shows that the widely held assumption that *vedanā* is a purely mental phenomenon is not borne out by a close study of the texts. Furthermore, the interest that the texts show in describing both mental and physical aspects of *vedanā* reflects a general interest in the Nikāyas in mental and physical aspects of various phenomena.

Given the important role that *vedanā* plays in certain descriptions of soteriological practices and of causal sequences, as seen in the first two chapters of this thesis, the attempt made in this chapter to further our understanding of the nature of *vedanā* assumes considerable significance.

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Chapter Four: A survey of the use of the term *vedanā* in descriptions of the workings of kamma in the Nikayas

In certain characteristic descriptions of the results of *kamma* that are found in the Nikayas, the term *vedanā* features prominently. J. McDermott comments on one aspect of *kamma* in the following terms:

> The usual position of the Pāli Nikayas ... is that there are five possible courses, or realms of existence (*gati*), into which sentient beings may be born. These five courses, or destinies—as the term is often translated—are listed in ascending order as (1) *niraya*, purgatory or hell; (2) *tiracchānayoni*, brute creation, the realm of animals; (3) *pettivisaya*, the world of the shades; (4) *manussā*, men, human existence; (5) *devā*, the gods, heavenly existence.¹

He adds in a footnote that “these five *gatis* are listed at Dīgha-Nikāya 3.234; Aṅguttara-Nikāya 4.459; Majjhima-Nikāya 1.73...”.¹ In the last mentioned, a part of the Mahāsīhanādasutta, we find some elaboration on these states. For the first *gati*, the Buddha is represented as speaking in the following terms:

> And then later on, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I see that on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, in hell, and is feeling extremely painful, racking, piercing *vedanā*.²

The experiencing of the fruit of one’s actions is here explained in terms of the type of *vedanā* that one feels in one’s next life. Similarly, for the remaining four “destinies”, the state in which one is born is spoken of in terms of the *vedanā* which one feels (*vediyamāna*) in that state. For one reborn in the realm of animals (*tiracchānayoni*), the *vedanā* felt there is “painful, racking, piercing” (*dukkha tippā kaṭukā*). For one reborn in the “the realm of the departed spirits” (PED for *pettivisaya*) there is “abundantly painful” *vedanā* (*dukkhabhulà*). For one reborn amongst human beings, there is much

² *tam enaṁ passāmi aparena saṃayena dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānasakena kāyassa bheda param maraṇaṁ apāyaṁ diggatim vinipātaṁ nirayaṁ upapannaṁ ekantadukkhā tippā kaṭukā vedanā vediyamānaṁ.* MN I 74
pleasurable vedanā (sukhabahulā vedanā). And for one reborn in a “good destiny” (sugati), that is in heaven (sagga), there is only pleasant vedanā (ekantasukhā vedanā).

In a *sutta* of the Aṅguttaranikāya, these five destinies are listed in connection with a term which is related to the term vedanā—vedaniya. This comes as the reply to the question “And what, bhikkhus, is the diversity of kamma?”

There is action that is experienced (vedaniya) in hell, there is action that is experienced in the realm of animals, there is action that is experienced in the realm of the departed, there is action that is experienced in the world of humans, there is action that is experienced in the world of the gods.

This passage is especially noteworthy because it follows on immediately from one of the most remarkable statements on kamma/karma in Indian thought, in which the Buddha is represented as declaring that he says that kamma is “intention” (cetana). R. Gombrich has commented that this marks “a turning point in the history of civilisation” in its ethicizing of the universe.

The Kukkuravatikasutta and vedanā

So in these significant passages on the concept of kamma, vedanā and a term closely related to vedanā feature prominently. This happens again in another of the key passages on kamma in the Nikāyas. The following passage is found at a number of places; the locus classicus is its appearance in the *Kukkuravatikasutta* of the Majjhimanikāya. The Buddha is represented as addressing a certain Puṇṇa:

Puṇṇa, there are four kinds of action (kamma) proclaimed by me after realising them for myself with direct knowledge. What are the four? There is dark action with dark result; there is bright action with bright result; there is dark-and-bright

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3 Katamo ca bhikkhave kammānaṁ vemattatā? AN III 415
4 Atthi bhikkhave kammāṁ nirayavedaniyam, atthi kammāṁ tiracchānayonivedaniyam, atthi kammāṁ pittivisayavedaniyam, atthi kammāṁ manussalokavedaniyam, atthi kammāṁ devalokavedaniyam. AN III 415
5 Cetanāhaṁ bhikkhave kammāṁ vadāmi; cetayitvā kammāṁ karoti ... AN III 415
action with dark-and-bright result; and there is action that is neither dark nor bright with neither-dark-nor-bright result, action that leads to the destruction of action.  

Following this announcement of the theme, each of the four kinds of action are described. Firstly the “dark action” (kammaṃ kañhaṃ):

Here someone generates an afflictive bodily formation, an afflictive verbal formation, an afflictive mental formation. Having generated an afflictive bodily formation, an afflictive verbal formation, an afflictive mental formation, he reappears in an afflictive world. When he has reappeared in an afflictive world, afflictive contacts touch him. Being touched by afflictive contacts, he feels afflictive vedanā, extremely painful, as in the case of the beings in hell.  

As in the Mahāsīhanādasutta, the end result of an action (kamma) is expressed in terms of vedanā. Similarly, when the “bright action with bright result” (kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ) is explained, the result is given in terms of vedanā: the person who generates unafflictive bodily, verbal and mental formations subsequently reappears in an unafflictive world and feels vedanā which is unafflictive and extremely pleasant (ekantasukha), “as in the case of the Subhākiṇṇa devas”. And again, for action “which is both dark and bright” (kammaṃ kañhasukkhaṃ), that is for one who generates bodily, verbal and mental formations which are both afflictive and unafflictive, the result is reappearance in a world which is both afflictive and unafflictive where one feels vedanā which is both afflictive and unafflictive, vedanā which is a mixture of pleasure and pain (vokinnaṃ sukhadukkhaṃ), “as is the case of human beings and some gods and some beings in the lower worlds.”
Thus these three passages give a prominent role to \textit{vedanā} in the working out of kamma. The fourth passage, which describes action which leads to the destruction of action (\textit{kammañ kammakkhayāya saṇvattati}), makes no mention of \textit{vedanā}.\footnote{Cf. L. Schmithausen’s comments on this fourth category: “This Sutta not only makes black (bad), white (good) and mixed karma responsible for rebirth, but also establishes neither black nor white karma as a kind of counter-karma conducive to the destruction of ordinary, retributive karma,” in Ronald W. Neufeldt (ed.), \textit{Karma and Rebirth: post classical developments}, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1986, p.205.}

The term \textit{duggati-vedaniya}

In a phrase which occurs in many places in the Nikāyas, a person who sees with the divine eye (\textit{dibba cakkhu}) sees beings who have arisen “according to their actions” (\textit{yathā-kammūpage}) in “happy and unhappy destinations” (\textit{sugate duggate})\footnote{DN I 82, MN I 22, etc.}. In the Cūla-assapurasutta of the Majjhimanikāya the term \textit{vedaniya} is compounded with a similar term for “unhappy destination”--\textit{duggati}--in the Buddha’s following statement:

\begin{quote}
I, bhikkhus, say that if he does not follow the practice fitting for recluses, there is no getting rid of these stains on recluses, defects in recluses, faults in recluses, occasions for the sorrowful states, of what is to be experienced in an unhappy destination (\textit{duggativedaniya}).\footnote{... \textit{imesam kho aham bhikkhave samanamalānaṁ samanadosānaṁ samanākasaṭṭanaṁ āpāyikanāṁ thānānaṁ duggativedaniyānaṁ appahānaṁ na samanāsāmiçiptipadaṁ paṭipanno ti vadāmī. MN I 281}
\end{quote}

Of the five destinations into which one may be reborn in accordance with one’s kamma,\footnote{Compare the commonly occurring phrase \textit{yathā-kammūpage}, “according to their actions”, which is used in conjunction with \textit{sugate} and \textit{duggate},”happy and unhappy destinations” DN I 82, MN I 22, etc.} three are \textit{duggatis}, “unhappy destinations”. Here these \textit{duggatis} are “to be felt” or “to be experienced” (\textit{vedaniya}) by the ascetic (\textit{samaṇa}) who behaves wrongly.
Vedanā and kamma in the Devadūtasutta

In the Devadūtasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, the term vedanā is once again found in an account of the ripening of kamma. In this sutta the fate after death of a person who has conducted himself badly in body, speech and mind is related. He is reborn in hell (niraya), and led before King Yama, the god of death, by the warders of hell (nirayapālā). They address Yama:

Sir, this man had no respect for mother and father, recluses and brāhmins. He showed no deference to the elders of his clan. Let the king order his punishment.14

Yama admonishes the man, and when the admonishing is over and Yama falls silent, there follows a long description of the various tortures that are inflicted upon him by the warders of hell.15 After the description of each torture, two phrases recur. The second of these relates to the doctrine of kamma expounded in the Nikāyas: “Yet he does not do his time (kālam karoti) so long as that evil action has not exhausted its results”.16 The first phrase which follows the description of each torture introduces vedanā into this process: “there he feels painful, racking, piercing vedanā.”17 Thus once again we find the term vedanā used in an important account of the ripening of kamma.

In the Màratajjaniyasutta, also of the Majjhimanikāya, we find a description of the fate of the evil Dūsī, who attacked one of the disciples of a previous Buddha by the name of Kakusandha. He is reborn in the Great Hell (mahāniraya). We are told that this goes by a number of names: one of these is related to the term vedanā, Paccatta-vedaniya, variously translated as “the Separate Feelings,”18 and “the hell to be felt for oneself”.19 In the verse section of this sutta, it is said of the hell in which Dūsī suffers

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14 Ayām deva puriso ametteyyo apetteyyo asāmañño ... imassa devo daṇḍam paṇetā ti. MN III 179 = AN I 138.
15 MN III 182-86
16 na ca tāva kālam karoti yāva na tām pāpakammam vyantihoti. MN III 183-86 passim.
17 so tattha dakkhā so tiṇṇa katuṇkā vedanā vedeti MN III 183-86 passim.
that it has “one hundred stakes of steel, each with its own vedanā”\textsuperscript{20}. Dūṣī also suffers in another part of the Great Hell, and there he experiences vedanā called vuṭṭhānima. The exact significance of this last term is unclear. What is clear from this passage, however, is that vedanā plays an important role in the fruition of Dūṣī’s evil deeds.

In the Cūḷadhhammasamādānasutta of the Majjhimanikāya as well, painful vedanā is said to be experienced in hell (niraya) by religious men (samaṇa-brāhmaṇa) who indulge in sense pleasures.\textsuperscript{21} These “painful, racking, piercing vedanā” (dukkhā tippā kaṭukā vedanā) are used to illustrate the way of undertaking things (dhammasamādāna) which is pleasant now and ripens in the future as pain (paccuppannasukhaṁ āyatiṁ dukkhavipākaṁ).

Kamma which is diṭṭhadhamma-vedaniya, samparāya-vedaniya, etc. AN IV 382

We find the term vedaniya used repeatedly in connection with kamma in a dialogue between Sāriputta and a bhikkhu in the Aṅguttaranikāya. The bhikkhu puts the following question to Sāriputta:

How is it, reverend Sāriputta? Does one live the godly life under the Fortunate One in the hope: “May an action [whose result] is to be experienced here and now (kammaṁ diṭṭhadhammavedaniyaṁ) become an action [whose result] is to be experienced by me in the next life (kammaṁ samparāyavedaniyaṁ)”?\textsuperscript{22}

Sāriputta replies in the negative to this question. The bhikkhu puts nine more questions which all include kamma which is “to be experienced” (vedaniya) in various ways, which are all replied to in the negative. The second is the opposite of the first: “may an action [whose result] is to be experienced in the next life (kammaṁ samparāyavedaniyaṁ) become an action [whose result] is to be experienced by me here and now (kammaṁ diṭṭhadhammavedaniyaṁ).” The third and fourth questions combine vedaniya with terms which are often found in conjunction with vedanā, pleasant (sukha)

\textsuperscript{20} satam āsi ayosankā, sabbe paccattavedanā MN I 337
\textsuperscript{21} MN I 305
\textsuperscript{22} kin nu kho āvuso Sāriputta “yāṁ kammaṁ diṭṭhadhammavedaniyaṁ, taṁ me kammaṁ samparāyavedaniyaṁ hotā” ti etassa atthāya Bhagavati brahmacariyaṁ vussati ti? AN IV 382
and painful (dukkha); the third question has: “may an action [whose result] is to be experienced as pleasant (kammaṃ sukhavedaniyaṃ) become an action [whose result] is to be experienced by me as painful (kammaṃ dukkhavedaniyaṃ).” The fourth is the reverse of this. Thus we see in this sutta a significant combination of a discussion on the theme of the workings of kamma and the use of a term which is closely related to vedanā.

In the above passage the phrase “kamma which is to be experienced here and now” (kammaṃ diṭṭhadhammavedaniyaṃ) is found. In a sutta in the Majjhimanikāya the idea of kamma being experienced “here and now” (diṭṭhe va dhamme) is expressed with a verb formed from paṭi-saṃ-vid, rather than with the gerundive vedaniya:

You are experiencing (paṭisamvedesi) here and now the result of actions (kammassa vipākam) because of which you might have been tortured in hell for many years, for many hundred of years, for many thousand of years.23

The close connection between these terms is clear when passages like these are compared.

The term paṭi-saṃ-vid in descriptions of the working of kamma: the Devadūtasutta and the Makhādevasutta

Forms from paṭi-saṃ-vid are very often found in connection with the term vipāka, which literally means “fruit” and which is often translated as “result”, implying the result of one’s actions (kamma). This combination is so common that C.A.F. Rhys Davids, in her translation of a text studied below supplies the word “result” in square brackets where the text has only “he experiences” (so paṭisamvediyati).24 We see paṭi-saṃ-vid used in passages connected with expositions of the doctrine of kamma in the Devadūtasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, which as we saw above, also uses the term vedanā in this connection. Before the descriptions of the results of kamma which include the term

23 Yassa kho tvaü kammassa vipākena bahūni vassāni bahūni vassasatāni bahūni vassasahassāni niraye pacceyyāsi, tassa tva, brāhmaṇa, kammassa vipākaṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme paṭisamvedesi. MN II 104
vedanā, there occurs a passage in which Yama the god of death admonishes the evil-doer. Several times he tells this man:

... this evil action of yours was not done by your mother or your father, or by your brother or your sister, or by your friends and companions, or by your kinsmen and relatives, or by recluses and brahmins, or by gods: this evil action was done by you yourself, and you yourself will experience (paṭisamvedissasi) its result (vipākaṃ).25

Thus we see a verb from paṭi-saṃ-vid playing an important role in a description of the process of kamma.

Forms from paṭi-saṃ-vid are not used only in connection with the experiencing of the results of evil deed. As a part of a narrative passage in the Makhādevasutta of the Majjhimanikāya, a certain charioteer by the name of Màtali, who is about to take his king to an assembly of gods in his divine chariot (dibba yāna), addresses the king in the following manner:

But, great king, by which route shall I drive you: by that on which doers of evil experience (paṭisamvedenti) the results of evil actions, or by that on which doers of good experience (paṭisamvedenti) the results of good actions?26

The term paṭisamvedenti is used to express the experiencing of the results of actions (kammānaṃ vipākaṃ) both good and bad. The king replies to the charioteer “Drive me by both routes, Màtali” (ubhayen ’eva maṇ, Màtali, nehiṭi); and the commentary informs us that Màtali led the king first through the hell realm (niraya), and then he led him through the heavenly world (devaloka).

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25 Taṃ kho pana te etam pāpaṃ kammaṃ n’eva mātarā katāṃ na pitarā katāṃ na bhūtarā katāṃ na bhaginiyā katāṃ na māttāmaccehi katāṃ na nātisālohiṭhehi katāṃ na samaṇabrāhmaṇehehi katāṃ na devatāhi katāṃ; taya v’ etam pāpaṃ kammaṃ katāṃ; tvāḥ heva etassa vipākaṃ paṭisamvedissati. MN III 179-80

26 Api ca, mahārāja, katamena taṃ nemi. --yena vā pāpakammā pāpakāṇāṃ kammānaṃ vipākaṃ paṭisamvedenti, yena vā kalyāṇakammā kalyāṇānaṃ kammānaṃ vipākaṃ paṭisamvedentiti? MN II 80
The terms *pañi-sañ-vid* and *vedaniya* in descriptions of the results of kamma experienced in the present existence.

Forms from *pañi-sañ-vid* are not only found in connection with the experiencing of the fruits of kamma in subsequent lives; they are also used to describe the experiencing of these fruits in the present life. The following passage from a *sutta* in the Aṅguttaranikāya is repeated for acts (kamma) born of aversion (*dosā*) and for acts born of delusion (*mohā*):

> An act performed in lust, born of lust, originating in lust, arising from lust, has its fruit wherever one’s personal self (*attabhāva*) is reborn. Wherever that act come to fruition, there one experiences (*pañisañvedeti*) the fruit thereof in the present existence or when born into future existences.27

We looked above at a *sutta* from the Aṅguttaranikāya (AN I 134) which has an example of the term *pañisañvedeti* used in conjunction with the phrase “the result of one’s kamma” (*kammassa vipāka*). This same *sutta* concludes with a verse passage which includes the term *vedaniya*28 in the description of kamma experienced in this life:

> From lust or malice or delusion born,
> An action, great or small, performed by fools
> Just here (*idh’eva*) is felt (*vedaniya*): no other ground is seen [For its fulfilment].29

Similar terms are used in a verse in the Theragāthā:

> Whatever evil was done by me previously in other births,

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27 *Yam bhikkhave lobhapakataṁ kammaṁ lobhajāṁ lobhanidānaṁ lobhasamudayaṁ yath’ assa attabhāvo nibbattati tathā taṁ kammaṁ vipaccati, yathā taṁ kammaṁ vipaccati tathā tassa kammassa vipākaṁ pañisamvedeti diṭṭh’eva dhamme uppajje vā apare vā pariyyāye. AN I 134*

28 The text here has *vedaniya*. Both forms are found, without, apparently, any difference in meaning.

29 *Yam tena pakataṁ kammaṁ appam vā yadi vā bahum *Idh’eva taṁ vedaniyaṁ vatthum aññena na vijjati... AN I 136
that must now be experienced (idh’eva taṁ vedaniyam). No other basic cause exists.²⁰

A prose passage in the Āṅguttaranikāya uses these terms in a significant discussion of aspects of the process of kamma:

He comes to know thus: Whatever evil deed has been done by me here with this body born of action, all of that must be felt here (sabban taṁ idha vedaniyam); then it will not follow me and come to be hereafter.²¹

The term paṭi-sam-vid and the Āṅgulimālasutta

The Āṅgulimālasutta of the Majjhimanikāya has a particularly interesting example of the use of the term paṭi-sam-vid in connection with kamma. The following passage purports to describe an incident which occurred after the notorious murderer Āṅgulimāla had met the Buddha, ceased his life of crime, become a bhikkhu, and attained arahantship:

Then, when it was morning, the venerable Āṅgulimāla dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Sāvatthī for alms. Now on that occasion someone threw a clod and hit the venerable Āṅgulimāla’s body, someone else threw a stick and hit his body, and someone else threw a potsherd and hit his body. Then, with blood running from his cut head, with his bowl broken, and with his outer robe torn, the venerable Āṅgulimāla went to the Blessed One. The Blessed One saw him coming in the distance and told him: “Bear it, brahmin! Bear it, brahmin! You are experiencing (paṭisamvedesi) here and now the result of actions because of which you might have been tortured in hell for many years, for many hundred of years, for many thousand of years.”²²

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²⁰ Yaṁ mayā pakataṁ pāpaṁ pubbe aṁūsu jātisu, idh’eva taṁ vedaniyam, vaṭṭhu aṁūṁ na vijjati. Thag.81
²¹ So evaṁ pajānāti: Yaṁ kho me idha kiṁci pubbe iminā karajākāyena pāpakammanā kатаṁ, sabban taṁ idha vedaniyam, na taṁ anugaṁ bhavissati ti. AN V 300
²² Tena kho pana samayena aṁūna pi leţḍu kḥutto ayasmato Āṅgulimālassa kāye nipatati ... Adhivāsehi tvam, brāhmaṇa; adhivāsehi tvam, brāhmaṇa. Yassa kho tvam kammassa vipākena bahūni vassāni bahūni vassasatāni bahūni vassasahassāni nīraye pacceyyāsi, tassa tvam, brāhmaṇa, kammassa vipākena dīṭṭhe va dhamme paṭisamvedesiti. MN II 104
Besides noticing the use of the “experiencing” or “feeling” (pañi-sam-vid) of the results of actions, it is also worth noting that the Buddha tells Aṅgulimāla to “bear (it)” (adhivāsehi). As we have seen in the first chapter of this thesis, there are quite a number of passages in the Nikāyas in which we find the term adhivāseti (“to bear” or “to endure”), and other terms related to it, in connection with vedanā, and especially in connection with unpleasant physical vedanā. Here the word vedanā is not used, but clearly Aṅgulimāla has undergone an experience which is unpleasant both physically and mentally.

The phrase vado vedeyyo MN I 258

The use of forms derived from pañi-saṁ-vid in the context of discussion of the nature of kamma, and the combination of this usage with terms related to vedanā is found in a significant phrase which occurs in two of the suttas of the Majjhimanikāya. This phrase represents a view which is condemned by the Buddha. In the Mahāṭāṇṭāsāṅkhayasutta it is said to be spoken by the bhikkhu Sāti who uses it to qualify the consciousness (viññāna) which, according to him, “runs and wanders through the round of rebirth” (sandhāvati saṁsaratī):

Venerable sir, it is that which speaks (vado) and feels (vedeyyo) and experiences (pañi-saṁvedeti) here and there the result of good and bad actions.33

When this phrase occurs in the Sabbāsavasutta it qualifies the self (atta) in the last of a series of views on the self which are condemned by the Buddha; in this view the self is considered to be “permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change” and it is claimed that this self “will endure as long as eternity.”34

In the phrase which is common to both suttas, we again find pañi-saṁvedeti used in conjunction with the results of kamma. The subject of this phrase is consciousness or the self, and one of the points of interest in the phrase is the two unusual terms used to qualify the subject: consciousness or the self is said here to be vado vedeyyo. Both of

33 Yvāyaṁ bhante vado vedeyyo tatra tatra kalyāṇapāpakānaṁ kammānaṁ vipākaṁ pañi-saṁvedeti. MN I 258
34 nicco dhuvo sassato avipariṇāmadhammo sassatisamaṁ tath’eva ṭhassatīti MN I 8
these terms are used very rarely in the Nikāyas; indeed these appear to be the only occurrences of them apart from the use of vada in compounds. The commentaries on both of these passages gloss these two terms respectively as vadati (“it speaks”) and vedayati (“it feels”). It is the second term which concerns us here: it is clearly related to the verbal root vid, and to the noun vedanā. This consciousness or self which “feels” (vedeyyo) also “experiences” (paṭī-saṃ-vid) the results of kamma. A close connection is thus established between the terms vedeyyo and paṭī-saṃ-vid, and the doctrine of kamma.

Sā vedanā so vediyatīti ... SN II 23

Along with the term vedanā, verbal forms derived from paṭī-saṃ-vid are also used in conjunction with the concept of kamma at numerous places in the Nikāyas. The parallelism between the usage of these two terms in this context can be seen in two suttas of the Nidānasamīyutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya. In one of these, the Buddha is represented as saying that the following two phrases do not represent his views:

Sā vedanā so vediyatīti ... Aññā vedanā, aññā vediyatīti... 36

The meaning of these phrases is not immediately apparent. They can, however, be compared with two phrases which occur in a similar context in the sutta which immediately precedes this one. Again, the Buddha is represented as saying that he does not hold these views:

So karoti so paṭīsaṃvediyatīti ... Añño karoti añño paṭīsaṃvediyatīti ... 37

C.A.F. Rhys Davids, in her 1922 translation of this passage gives:

“One and the same person both acts and experiences [the result]”... “One acts, another experiences [the result].” 38

35 The PED does not notice this word.
36 SN II 23
37 SN II 20
She has clearly modelled her translation of the first quoted passage on this one:

The experience (\textit{vedanā}) and he who experiences [hereafter] (\textit{vediyati}) are one and the same. ... The experience and he who experiences [hereafter] are different one from the other.  

The noteworthy aspect of these two passages is the striking parallelism between the use of the term \textit{vedanā} and \textit{vediyati} in one, and the use of the terms \textit{karoti} and \textit{paṭisaṃvediyati} in the other. All of these terms are here used in a discussion of an aspect of the doctrine of kamma.

\textit{Loṇaphalasutta}, AN I 249 ff.

The term \textit{vedaniya} is also used to express the experiencing of kamma “in this life” in an important \textit{sutta} on kamma from the Aṅguttaranikāya, the \textit{Loṇaphalasutta}:

Now, for instance, there may be some trifling evil action of some person or other which may take him to hell. Or again there may be a like trifling evil action of some person or other which is to be experienced (\textit{vedaniya}) in this very life …

This follows on from an especially interesting use of the term \textit{vedaniya}. This same \textit{sutta} opens with two statements, the first of which “does not allow an opportunity for the utter destruction of suffering”; the second does allow this to happen:

1) Just as this man does a deed, so does he experience (\textit{paṭisaṃvediyati}) it.
2) Just as this man does a deed that is to be experienced (\textit{vedaniya}) so does he experience (\textit{paṭisaṃvediyati}) its fulfilment (\textit{vipāka}).

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Ibid., vol.ii, p.18.}
\item \textit{Idha bhikkhave ekaccassa puggalassa appamattakam pi pāpaḥ kammaḥ katan ca evam nirayam upaneti. Idha pana bhikkhave ekaccassa puggalassa tādīsam yeva appamattakam pāpaḥ kammaḥ katan ca diṭṭhadhamme c’ eva vedaniyaḥ hoti... AN I 249}
\item \textit{... yathā yathāyaṃ puriso kammaṃ karo ti tathā tathā paṭisaṃvediyati ti ... yathā yathā vedaniyaṃ ayam puriso kammaṃ karo ti tathāsa vipākaṃ paṭisaṃvediyati ti. AN I 249.}
\end{itemize}
Vedaniya is one of the key terms of the second statement. In the first, the man’s action (kamma) is not an action which is “to be experienced” (vedaniya), as it is in the second. The other difference between the two statements is that in the first the man experiences the action itself, whereas in the second it is specified that he experiences the result (vipāka) of the action.\textsuperscript{42}

An important distinction is being drawn here between an action that is “to be experienced” or “to be felt” (vedaniya), and an action that is simply an action. La Vallée Poussin, as long ago as 1913, made the following perceptive observations on these concepts:

The action of the body, of the voice or of thinking ... killing, stealing, etc., is not really an act (karman) in the Buddhist sense of the word, i.e., is not vedaniya, capable of being “felt”, pregnant with retribution, unless it is “perfect” or “finished” (abhisaṅkhata = abhisamśkrta), i.e., thought, reflected upon, or wished (abhisamścetayita).\textsuperscript{43}

For La Vallée Poussin, then, the term vedaniya plays an important role in its connection with kamma; it signifies that the “act” (kamma) which it qualifies is not just “to be experienced”, but is “pregnant (grosse) with retribution”. For this to be the case, the act must also be abhisāṅkhata, “constructed” or “formed.”

Old kamma and the terms vedaniya and vedanā

La Vallée Poussin’s observations come as part of a discussion of two similar passages from the Nikāyas. He gives a translation which conflates the two passages:

\textsuperscript{42} This distinction is explored further in certain Abhidhamma texts. W. Halbfass notes that “Kathāvatthu 7.10 establishes a sharp distinction between kamma and kammavipāka.” W.D. O’Flaherty, ed., \textit{Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions}, Berkely, University of California Press, 1980, p.296, note 95.

\textsuperscript{43} Louis de La Vallée Poussin, \textit{Bouddhisme, Études et matériaux, Théorie des douze causes}, Ghent, Université de Gand, 1913, p.9: “... l’action du corps, de la voix ou de la pensée, ... tuer, voler, etc., n’est vraiment un acte (karman) au sens bouddhique du mot, c’est-à-dire n’est vedaniya, capable d’être “sentie”, grosse de retribution, que si elle est “parfaite” ou “achevée” (abhisāṅkhata = abhisamśkrta), c’est-à-dire pensée, reflétée, ou voulue (abhisamścetayita).”
The body, the eye, the tongue … should be considered as being the old act, the act which is completed, reflected on, a cause of sensation …

The first passage is from the Nidānasāṁyutta of the Saṁyuttaniyāka:

The body, bhikkhus, is not your own, neither is it that of any others. It is to be viewed as action that is old, brought about and intentionally done, as a base for feeling (vedaniya).

The second is from the Cakkhumānaññanāsaṁyutta of the same nikāya.

The eye, bhikkhus, is to be viewed as action that is old, brought about and intentionally done, as a base for feeling (vedaniya).

This is then repeated for the other five sense doors, which includes the mind (mano) in the schema of the Nikāyas. In his translation, La Vallée Poussin renders vedaniya as “cause for sensation” (“cause de sensation”). Woodward in his 1927 translation gives “a base for feeling,” which I have followed in the above translations. Woodward indicates that he is following the commentary which on the Salāyatanasāṁyutta passages gives vedānāya vatthā, a “ground (or reason) for vedānā”, for vedaniya.

The term vedaniya is thus seen playing an important role in these significant passages on kamma. The theme of “old kamma” (purāṇa-kamma) occurs also in the Udāna in relation to the topic of this thesis. We find there a short sutta which labels certain types of painful vedānā as being “born from the result of old kamma”.

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44 [Ibid.], p.11: Le corps, l’œil, la langue … il faut le considérer comme étant l’acte ancien, l’acte parfait, réfléchi, cause de sensation.

45 Nāyam bhikkhave kāyo tumhākām na pi aṅgīsaṁ. Purāṇaṁ idam bhikkhave kammam abhisāṅkhetaṁ abhisāṅcetayitaṁ vedaniyaṁ daṭṭhabbaṁ. SN II 65.

46 Cakkhum bhikkhave purāṇaṅkammaṁ abhisāṅkhetaṁ abhisāṅcetayitaṁ vedaniyaṁ daṭṭhabbaṁ. SN IV 132

47 Spk II 402
Mindful and fully understanding, he bears without wavering *vedanā* which is born from the result of old kamma, painful, racking, sharp, piercing.\(^{48}\)

The Mahākammavibhaṅgasutta

The term *vedaniya* also plays a significant role in another important statement on kamma, the Mahākammavibhaṅgasutta, the Great Discourse on the Analysis of Kamma, of the Majjhimanikāya. A certain wanderer by the name of Potaliputta is shown as asking a bhikkhu the following question:

Friend Samiddhi, having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind, what does one feel (*vediyati*)?\(^{49}\)

The bhikkhu gives an unsatisfactory answer, and later the Buddha is asked for the proper way to answer this question. He replies in the following manner:

Having done an intentional (*saṅcetanikam*) action by way of body, speech, or mind [whose result is] to be felt as pleasant (*sukhavedanīyaṃ*), one feels pleasure (*sukham so vediyati*). Having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind [whose result is] to be felt as painful, one feels pain. Having done an intentional action by way of body, speech, or mind [whose result is] to be felt as neither-pain-nor-pleasure, one feels neither-pain-nor-pleasure.\(^{50}\)

This discussion of kamma has a number of points in common with the Saṃyuttanikāya passages which we have just been examining. Potaliputta asks about kamma which is “intentional” (*saṅcetanika*). The “old kamma” (*purāṇa kamma*) which is the body at SN II 65 and the six sense doors at SN IV 132, is “intentionally done” (*abhisaṅcetayita*; PED “raised into consciousness, thought out, intended, planned”). The connection between these terms and the term *vedaniya* is brought out by La Vallé-Poussin in his

\(^{48}\) *purānakammavipākajāṃ dukkhaṃ tippanā kharāṃ katūkaṃ vedanāṃ adhivāsento sato sampajāno avihāññamāno*. Ud. 21

\(^{49}\) *Saṅcetanikaṃ, āvuso Samiddhi, kammaṃ katvā kāyaṃ vācāya manasā, kim so vediyati?*. MN III 207

\(^{50}\) *Saṅcetanikaṃ, āvuso Potaliputta, kammaṃ katvā kāyaṃ vācāya manasā sukhaṃ so vediyati. Saṅcetanikaṃ, āvuso Potaliputta, kammaṃ katvā kāyaṃ vācāya manasā dukkhaṃ so vediyati. Saṅcetanikaṃ, āvuso Potaliputta, kammaṃ katvā kāyaṃ vācāya manasā adukkhamasukhaṃ so vediyati*. Mn III 209
paraphrase of the Samyuttanikāya passages, which is worth repeating here: “[t]he action of the body, of the voice or of thinking..., is not really an act... i.e., is not vedanīya, capable of being “felt”, pregnant with retribution, unless it is “perfect” or “finished” (abhisaṅkhata = abhisaṅskṛta), i.e., thought, reflected upon, or wished (abhisaṅcetayita).”\[51\]

The term vedaniya is used in a somewhat different way in this Majjhimanikāya passage than it is in the Samyuttanikāya passages: here it is qualified as either pleasant (sukha), painful (dukkha), or neither pleasant nor painful (adukkhamasukha). This corresponds to one of the standard classifications of vedanā which is commonly found in the Nikāyas. In fact, prior to the Buddha’s statement quoted above, the Buddha tells the bhikkhus that Potaliputta had been asking about the three vedanās.\[52\]

Curiously, though, when the term vedaniya is used again, later in the sutta, it is used in conjunction with sukha- and dukkha- only. These words occur in the final section, which is, according to the commentary, “the expounding of the knowledge of the great exposition of action”; the earlier part of the sutta is the “setting up of the outline for the purpose of presenting that exposition.” In this final section the following passage occurs:

Therein, Ānanda, as to the person who kills living beings, takes what is not given, misconducts himself in sensual pleasures, speaks falsehood, speaks maliciously, speaks harshly, gossips, is covetous, has a mind of ill will, and holds wrong view, and on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell: either earlier he did an evil action to be felt as painful (dukkhavedaniya), or later he did an evil action to be felt as painful, or at the time of death he acquired and undertook wrong view.\[53\]

\[51\] LVP, 1913, p.11.
\[52\] ādiso va, Ānanda, Potaliputta na paribbaṭjakena tisso vedanā pucchiṭṭā. MN III 208
\[53\] Tatr, Ānanda, yvāyaṃ puggalo idha pānātipāṭi hoti adinnādāyī hoti kāmesu micchācārī hoti mūsāvādi hoti pisudvāco hoti pharasuṇāvaco hoti samphappalāpī hoti abhijjhālā hoti vyāpanacitto hoti micchādīṭṭhi hoti, ... kāyasā bhedaṃ param maraṇā apayaṃ daggaṃ vinippaṭṭaṃ nirayaṃ uppajjati, pubbe va ’ssa taṃ katāṃ hoti pāpakammaṃ dukkhaveṇaṃ, raccā va ’ssa taṃ katāṃ hoti pāpakammaṃ dukkhaveṇaṃ, maraṇakāle và ’ssa hoti micchādīṭṭhi samattā samādiṇṇā. MN III 214
Here again the term *vedaniya* plays a key role in a passage which explains the working of kamma. An evil deed (*pàpakamma*) is “to be felt as painful” (*dukkhavedaniya*). Later on, a good deed (*kalyàõakamma*) is said to be “felt as pleasant” (*sukhavedaniya*). Other factors, however, come into play in the rebirth process, and even one who has done good deeds may, if he takes hold of wrong views at the time of death, be reborn in a lower realm. It is stated, however, that this person does experience the result of his deeds (*vipàkaü pañisamvedeti*) “in the present existence or when born into future existences.”

Another word related to *vedanà* (*pañisaüvedeti*) is used here to express the “experiencing” of the results on kamma.

*kammànaü ... appañisamviditvā ...* AN V 292.

We have noticed that in the last three *sutta* that we have examined, kamma is described as *vedaniya* (or *sukhavedaniya*, etc.) and as intentional (*sañcetanika*) or willed (*abhisàcetayita*). There is a series of three *sutta* in the Aṅguttaranikāya (AN V 292-301) in which kamma which is intentional (*sañcetanika*) is used in conjunction with a verbal form from *pati-saṁ-vid*:

> I, declare, bhikkhus, that of intentional (*sañcetanika*) deeds done and accumulated there can be no wiping out without experiencing (*appañisamviditvā*) the result thereof, and that too whenever arising, either in this same visible state or in some state hereafter. I declare, bhikkhus, that there is no ending of suffering as regards intentional deeds done and accumulated without experiencing (*appañisamviditvā*) the results thereof.

This passage is repeated five times in the course of the three suttas.

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54 *diñthe va dhamme ... uppajjaü và apare va pariyàye*. MN III 214
Conclusion

There is a great deal of complexity surrounding many of the passages on kamma in the Nikaayas. Many aspects of this question have not been touched on in this chapter. One thing I hope, though, has been made clear, and that is the fact that in many descriptions of the workings of kamma the term *vedanā* and terms related to it play a very significant role.
Chapter Five: Conclusion.

In chapter three of this thesis I made a brief study of an oft-quoted line from the Nikāyas:

Bhikkhus, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching.⁵⁶

I pointed out there that this is the classic statement of the case of one who experiences physical pain but is not affected by it at the mental level, and I tried to establish a connection between this statement and what we can glean of the Buddha’s teachings on *vedanā* as represented in the Nikāyas. Everyone who reads this statement must surely be struck by the extraordinary demands that it is making on a practitioner of the Buddha’s teaching: what kind of person would be able to remain balanced enough in a situation like this not to react with some negative emotion? If S.N. Goenka is correct in his understanding of the role of the objective observation of all kinds of physical sensations in the practice of the Buddha’s teaching, perhaps it is one who is an expert in such observation.

In all of the vast writings on Buddhist thought and literature, there has not been, as far as I am aware, a study of the use of the term *vedanā* in the Pali Nikāyas. The purpose of this thesis has been, therefore, to explore the use of this term *vedanā* in the Pali texts. This was done by focussing on a number of themes in connection with *vedanā*.

The first chapter focussed on passages in which *vedanā* features in descriptions of practices which lead to liberation from suffering. The passages studied in this chapter clearly give great emphasis to *vedanā* in their descriptions of soteriological processes. As far as I am aware, none of these passages have been grouped together and examined by those who have written on these texts. This survey shows that Goenka’s emphasis on *vedanā* in his meditation teachings has a firm basis in the texts of the Nikāyas.

⁵⁶ Ubhatodāṇḍakena ce pi bhikkhave kakacena cūra ocarakā ahgamaṅgāni okanteyyum, tatrāpi yo mano padūseyya na me so tena sāsanakaro. MN I 129
When drawing conclusions from any study of passages in the Nikāyas, however, it is important to bear in mind the disparate nature of these texts. R. Gethin’s comments, quoted in the introduction to this thesis, are worth repeating here:

We are faced not so much with a single finished canvas as with a bewildering array of sketches and detailed studies which it is impossible to take in at once. Their subject is seen from different angles and in various aspects; it is viewed from near and afar.\footnote{R. Gethin, \textit{The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhi-Pakkhiyā Dhammā}, Leiden, Brill, 1992, p.20.}

There are of course many \textit{sutta}s in the Nikāyas which make no mention of the term \textit{vedanā}. This is not to say, however, that these \textit{sutta}s contradict the hypothesis that the correct understanding of \textit{vedanā} is an important element in the path to liberation.

The second chapter was an extension of the first, studying the use of the term \textit{vedanā} in passages dealing with the causal sequence which has profound soteriological significance, the \textit{paṭicca-samuppāda} (“dependent origination”), and in other passages dealing with related causal sequences. This detailed study of the role of \textit{vedanā} in causal sequences found in the Nikāyas showed that there are indeed passages in which this term is given marked emphasis, and that the striking statements quoted at the beginning of the second chapter from the writings of three Buddhist scholars, Kalupahana, Nyanaponika and Bhikkhu Bodhi, do have a basis in the texts, especially when taken in conjunction with the passages explored in the first chapter of this thesis. In causal sequences of different kinds we find \textit{vedanā} being given an important role. As far as I know, this thesis is the first study to explore this question in any detail.

The third chapter looked at passages in the Nikāyas which deal with mental and physical aspects of \textit{vedanā}. Goenka places great emphasis on the role that bodily sensations play in the meditation technique that he teaches:

\begin{quote}
Vipassanā means a special kind of vision: observation of the reality within oneself. This is achieved by taking as the object of attention one’s own \textit{physical} sensations. The technique is the systematic and dispassionate observation of
\end{quote}
sensations within oneself. This observation unfolds the entire reality of mind and body.\footnote{W. Hart, \textit{The Art of Living, Vipassana Meditation as Taught by S.N. Goenka}, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1987, p.91. The italics are mine.}

This chapter examined texts from the Nikāyas which put \textit{vedanā} in physical and mental contexts. It also placed this issue in the broader context of descriptions of physical and mental aspects of other phenomena in the Nikāyas. This survey of descriptions of the mental and physical aspects of \textit{vedanā} in the Nikāyas showed that the widely held assumption that \textit{vedanā} is a purely mental phenomenon is not borne out by a close study of the texts. Furthermore, the interest that the texts show in describing both mental and physical aspects of \textit{vedanā} reflects a general interest in the Nikāyas in mental and physical aspects of various phenomena. Given the important role that \textit{vedanā} plays in certain descriptions of soteriological practices and of causal sequences, as seen in the first two chapters of this thesis, the attempt made in this chapter to further our understanding of the nature of \textit{vedanā} assumes considerable significance.

An important aspect of the third chapter is a detailed investigation of the conflicting views found in the Pali commentaries on many passages relating to the mind-body theme. The interest that we find in the Nikāyas in pointing out the physical and mental aspects of \textit{vedanā} echoes a broader theme: in a large number of places we find descriptions of mental and physical aspects of various phenomena. This theme seems to have presented some difficulties to the early commentators on these texts, for we find a certain amount of inconsistency in their treatment of it. For example, the following passage appears in several places in each of the four principal Nikāyas:

\begin{quote}
When he is glad, joy is born in him; in one who is joyous, the body becomes tranquil; one whose body is tranquil feels pleasure; in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated.\footnote{\textit{pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pīti manassā kāyo passambhati, passaddhakāyo sukham vedeti, sukhino cittam samādiyati}. DN I 73, DN III 241, 288; MN I 37, 283; SN IV 78-79, 351-58; SN V 156, 398; AN I 243-4; AN III 21-23, 285-87; AN V 329-34}
\end{quote}

It is a remarkable description of a process in which mental and physical events both play important roles and interact with each other in important ways. Moreover, a term related
to *vedanā* plays a role in this process: the phrase *sukham vedeti* (“he feels pleasure”) uses a verb which is cognate with the noun *vedanā*. We can interpret the phrase *sukham vedeti* (“he feels pleasure”) as a link between the body (*kāya*) of the preceding phrase (“the body becomes tranquil,” *kāyo passambhati*) and the mind (*citta*) of the phrase which follows (“in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated,” *sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati*).

The commentaries, however, have different views on the meaning of this passage. The commentaries on the Dīghaniṃkāya, for example, take *kāya* in this passage to mean the mind. They understand the term *kāya* as a way of saying *nāmakāya*, that is, in the terms of the commentaries, the four immaterial aggregates.60 Other commentaries, however, are less unequivocal. The commentary on this passage as it appears in the Majjhimaganiṃkāya simply glosses *kāya* as *kāya*.61 This gives us little further information on how this commentary wants us to understand the term. It is possible that we are being asked to take *kāya* at face value, as meaning simply the physical body. On its first appearance in the Aṅguttaraniṃkāya, the commentary on that text has another interpretation of this passage: “‘the body becomes tranquil’ [means] the group of the mind (*nāmakāya*) and the group of matter (*rūpakāya*) are without agitation”.62 Interestingly, here the commentary seems to be taking *kāya* as meaning mind and body together, using its customary terminology of *nāmakāya* for the four immaterial aggregates and *rūpakāya* for the aggregate of matter, that is, the body.

The commentaries are divided in their interpretation of the nature of pleasure in this context. The Dīghaniṃkāya commentary and the Aṅguttaraniṃkāya commentary say that it is both bodily and mental.63 The Majjhimaganiṃkāya commentary, on the other hand, specifies that “pleasure” in this passage is “mental pleasure”.64 It is curious to note that it is the Majjhimaganiṃkāya commentary, which does not define *kāya* in this passage as *nāmakāya* (mental group), which nevertheless represents “pleasure” only in mental

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60 Sv I 217 on DN I 73 *nāmakāyo passambhati* and Sv III 1032 on DN III 241 *kāyoti nāmakāyo patipassambhati*.
61 *kāyo passambhātī kāyo passaddho hoti vūpasantadāratho* Ps I 174 on MN I 37
62 *kāyo passambhātī nāmakāyopi rūpakāyopi viṣatadāratho hoti* Mp II 357 on AN I 243
63 Sv I 217 on DN I 73: *sukham vedetī kāyikampi cetasikampi sukham vedeti*. Mp II 357 on AN I 243: *sukham vediyattī kāyikacetāsikasukham vediyati*
64 Ps I 174 on MN I 37: *passaddhakāyo sukhati evaṃ vūpasantākāyadāratho cetāsikāṃ sukham paṭissamvedeti*
terms. And it is the Dīghanikāya commentary, which sees kāya as being a mental phenomenon (nāmakāya), which explains “pleasure” as being both bodily and mental (kāyikampi cetasikampi). This seems to be further evidence of confusion in the minds of the commentators on these questions. This confusion seems to stem from a reluctance to take the term kāya in this context at face value. The study in chapter three of the tension within the commentarial tradition of this important aspect of the interpretation of these key passages has not, as far as I am aware, been carried out prior this thesis. It may well constitute the most important contribution that this thesis makes to the furthering of our understanding of why it is that comparatively little attention has been payed to the study of the importance of the term vedanā in the Pali texts. At an early stage in the tradition, there seems to have arisen some confusion on these matters.

The fourth chapter surveyed passages in the Nikāyas which highlight vedanā in their descriptions of the workings of kamma (Skt. karma). There is a great deal of complexity surrounding many of the passages on kamma in the Nikāyas. Many aspects of this question have not been touched on in this chapter. The passages surveyed in this chapter do, however, show that in many descriptions of the workings of kamma the term vedanā and terms related to it play a very significant role.
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