

Khandhavimutti
 &
 Samangidhamma

By

Venerable Ācariya Mun Bhūridatta Thera

Translated from the Thai original by

Bhikkhu Paññāvaḍḍho

FOREST DHAMMA OF



WAT PA BAAN TAAD

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TITLE: Khandhavimutti and Samangidhamma

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ISBN 974-619-130-6

FIRST PRINTING: June 2004

PRINTER: Darnsutha Press Co.,Ltd.

WAT PA BAAN TAAD WEBSITE: www.luangta.com (Thai, English & German)

INTRODUCTION

While Venerable Ācariya Mun was staying in Wat Sapatumwan in Bangkok in the year 1930 approximately, he composed the booklet "*Khandhavimutti and Samangidhamma*". This booklet is written in Thai in a semi-poetical form and it displays the teaching of the Buddha in an unusual but refreshing way.

Both at the beginning and at the end the author points out that this is a teaching by way of wisdom. There is little about *samādhi* or *jhāna* in this booklet and it may rightly be called a wisdom teaching.

I have translated an English version with many corrections and "re-thinks" and I believe that this translation follows the intended meaning of the author. I have made no attempt to follow the poetical manner of the original text for I don't claim to have any special ability as a poet. So I have tried to present the meaning that the author intended in a prose form, but I'm afraid that I may in due course see more hidden and deeper meanings in this text.

I have heard that there are some people who dispute that this was written by Ācariya Mun, the well known and great teacher. They say that there was another Ācariya Mun in the same Wat at the same time. It is possible that this may be true, but the text which was written at that time by hand was quite clearly signed with the name "*Phra Bhūridatto (Mun), Wat Srpratumwan, the Author*". It seems hardly likely that two Bhikkhus should have this unusual name at the same place and time.

Bhikkhu Paññāvaddho
 Wat Pa Baan Taad
 May, 2004



KHANDHAVIMUTTI & SAMANGIDHAMMA

Namatthu Sugatassa Pañca Dhammakhandhāni

I humbly bow down and raise my hands in praise of the Venerable Sugata, the Supreme Teacher, the Sakya Muni, the Supremely Self-Enlightened Lord Buddha – and of the Venerable Nine Navalokuttarā Dhammas, and the Ariya Sangha Sāvaka.

Here I will speak of the Dhamma khandhas in brief by way of satipaññā.

THERE WAS ONCE A MAN who loved himself and whose thoughts were fearful of suffering. Wanting happiness and freedom from fear and danger he wandered about. He said that “wherever *sukha* is, there I want to go”, but he wandered about for a long time. His character was such that he loved himself and was very afraid of death, and he truly wanted to get free from old age and death.

One day he came to know the truth and abandoned *samudaya* (the cause of suffering) and all the many “*sankhāras*”. He then came to a cave of joy where *sukha* did not disappear and the cave was like unto his physical body.

He gazed all round this cave with joy, *dukkha* collapsed and he was completely at ease. He knew in himself that his former fear had diminished and he looked back and forth as though there was a hill in front of him. Should he go and tell his former friends all about it? He feared that they would reckon he was mad. To put up with living alone and finding out about the way of calm, which means stopping the process of thinking and not associating with others, this is better than wandering about in an unseemly, boastful manner. For one would soon receive flattery and blame which would just create disturbance and trouble.

THERE WAS ANOTHER GOOD MAN, afraid of death and full of apprehension who came searching and he spoke frankly and made one feel sympathy for him. He asked saying, "You have done a lot of striving and put forward much effort, in all this time have you seen the true Dhamma which the heart longs for, or not?"

Eh! How does he know my mind?

That good man wanted to stay with him as his follower, so he said "Good good.¹ I give you my blessing and I will show you the way to a mountain cave of happiness where there is no *dukkha*. In other words, *kāyagatāsati bhāvanā*. Enjoy it and admire it to cool your heart and it will cure all your trouble and turbulence. It is the path of the *ariyavaṁsa*. But whether you go along it or not, I am not going to force you nor speak deceptively in fun, for what I say will be the truth".

Then he gave him some riddles to answer and the first riddle was:

What is "rawerng"?²

HE GAVE THE ANSWER. Runs fast! Which means that the nature of *viññāna* (consciousness) is to be quick, going in a line following a train of thought. *Saññā* (memory) acts immediately without doubt or hesitation and the heart which dwells inside runs back and forth. *Saññā*³ which is strongly attached to external things deceives the *citta*, making it restless and distracted, wandering afar searching. It deceives one that those things are true when in fact they are like magical conjuring tricks.

QUESTION 2. Who gets totally free from all five *khandhas*?

ANSWER. The heart of course! It gets free and dwells alone. Not being caught up, attached or involved in anything and having done away with the poison of possessive attachment, it is finished with delusion and dwells one and alone. Then the deceits of *saññā* can no longer cause delusion.

¹ This would seem to refer to the first man, above.

² Not a Thai word, in Cambodian it means "to whirl around".

³ *Saññā*: memory and all its functions.

QUESTION 3. In that which is called death, who are they that die and where?

ANSWER. The *sankhāras* are the ones that die, destroying the results of *kamma*.

QUESTION 4. What is it that makes one go on revolving in the round of *samsāra*?

ANSWER. The tricks of *saññā* lead one to go on whirling about. Trusting *saññā*, and wrongly thinking gladly of going from this realm of existence to another realm and so going round and round, the *citta* being completely forgotten and memory of it being shut out entirely so that even by striving to find Dhamma one doesn't see it.

QUESTION 5. Who defines and who determines what are *dhammas*?

ANSWER. The heart defines and the heart determines them by going to the lord, their chief – *saññā* – and no other. For it thinks that this is good, grasps evil and forces one to be attached to love and hate.

QUESTION 6. Eat once then no more searching to eat?

ANSWER. This is the end of wanting to look and know and there is no further concern to see what the future holds for what was disorderly has been cured. The heart then sits unmoving on its throne and all longing has been dispersed.

QUESTION 7. The four sided pond brimful of water?

ANSWER. Dhamma is the end of desires coming from doubt, clean and free from blemish and there is no fear or danger. In this, *saññā* is extracted and *sankhāra khandha* causes no trouble, so the heart is full and overflowing without any lack. All is quiet and still in the *citta* and there are no doleful thoughts. This is something one should admire and be glad about at all times. For even if one has been in contact with the ten thousand heavens, it is not the equal of knowing the truth, discarding the *sankhāras* and the ending of desire, which are really valuable and important.

Then memory remains just memory without getting in the way and the heart is not obsessed with anything, its struggles having come to an end. It is as if one were looking at the image of one's face

in a mirror, but without any thought associated with *saññā*, because *saññā* is the same kind of thing as that image.

Don't be seduced by the attractions of the world (*sankhāra* things) for the heart moves and takes hold of the heart that is not free. It moves enough for one to know for sure that this has happened because of the change that takes place. This heart is the impermanence of the heart and it must know the five *khandhas* in their different types when the *citta* changes.

Before I understood this, I was deluded, believing that *saññā* was the heart and that there was an inside and an outside. Now my heart is the chief and it doesn't expect any support from one or any *saññā* for it is not possessive. In all things, whether they arise or cease I have no need to be possessive nor to guard against the group called *saññā*.

[It is like going up to the top of a very high mountain and looking at the world below and seeing all living beings.

A NOTE OF EXPLANATION: Being extremely high and seeing one's own story from the beginning right up to the present is the whole path (*magga*), like a stairway.]⁴

QUESTION 8. Does the water rise and fall in accordance with that state of truth (*saccaṅga*)?

ANSWER. One cannot rectify the changes that take place in the *sankhāras*. In the normal way, *kamma* which has been made has no intentional malice against anyone. But trying to push it away or hold on to it is stupid and a form of evil in the *citta*. One must not think of going against the normal nature of things (*sabhāva*) which are in themselves true. If good and evil, which arise in various circumstances have been discarded from oneself and are not entangled with one's *sankhāras*, one is cool and peaceful. But when one knows the truth one is bound to throw out the *sankhāras*, which are always changing about. For having seen them and become wearied of them, one can let go of them easily and there is no need to force this. Then the natural state is a peaceful heart which no longer accepts their reality.

⁴ The section in brackets [...] was overwritten in the original text, whether by way of changing it or deleting it is uncertain. It is also rather difficult to decipher what has been written.

QUESTION 9. The five duties, are they complete?

ANSWER. The *khandhas* are divided up into five (sense) bases of the *sankhāras* and each group has its duty which is its business and it cannot take on any other work, being fully loaded already. They cannot accept even the highest blessings and praise which make for happiness, nor blame of the worst kind in which one loses everything. Altogether they accord with their true natural state and in all eight⁵ kinds, the heart does not turn and become involved with them because *rūpa khandha* cannot avoid old age and illness. But the *nāma-khandhas* get no rest, like an engine, because they receive the results of the *kamma* that has been done. Good things make them glad and gain heart, bad things disturb and agitate the heart and create incessant thought, like a fire burning in the *citta* which is tarnished and dull. Thoughts arise of themselves of love and anger – but who's to blame? Wanting never to grow old or die – but can anyone do this? Such things are just not possible and all one has are vain wishes, like not wanting to let the *citta* wander about getting to know things, but wanting it to remain as “one” in the hope of making a refuge of impassivity. But the *citta* is by nature changeable and never fixed and unmoving, although *saññā* can sometimes remain for a while.

If one can ‘know into’⁶ the normal state of all five *khandhas*, the heart will be bright and clean and free from all blemish – this is the end of the story. So if one can know in this way it is very good, because one sees truly and draws away, free – which is the end of the way. Then one doesn't oppose what is natural and one accords with the truth and whether one is rich or poor, all things and possessions both external or internal and good or evil must cease, fade away and be forgotten. One cannot grasp anything in the way the heart intends, for the heart is the instability of the heart and it moves restlessly, but one can watch it and catch onto it and know it, and this brings great contentment. The small obscures the large and knowing does not penetrate and in this way the *khandhas* totally obscure Dhamma. Looking at the *khandhas* in dullness one doesn't

⁵ Eight kinds: refers to the 8 *lokadhammas*: Gain, loss. Honour, dishonour. Happiness, misery. Praise, blame.

⁶ Ruuthao – “to penetrate and know” – to be up to or on to. As in, “I knew what he was up to”.

see Dhamma for the dust.⁷ As for Dhamma being greater than the *khandhas* – that can't be seen.

QUESTION 10. Have – have not, not have – have. What is that?

ANSWER.⁸ Here I am stuck and I cannot think of any way to answer. Please point out the meaning of it to me clearly and the answer of this riddle.

THE ANSWER: Wherever there is birth or coming into being there is that which “has existence” in various ways in accordance with laws of cause and effect. Then it ceases and “has not”. Thus it is obvious that animals and people accord with the first part of the question: “have – not have”.

The latter part of the question, “not have – have”, is Dhamma which is deep and profound and whoever gets there has reached the goal. This “has not” *sankhāras*, and “has” Dhamma which is firm and stable. There! That's it! The single Dhamma – true solitude. Dhamma which is “The One”, unchanging, beyond birth in all realms, the supreme calm. Then if there is any emotional disturbance of the heart, it's not accepted and is thrown out, quenched, quiet, still and clear to the heart. The heart then withdraws from all addiction and is cured of all passion and all wanting is completely uprooted dispersing all doubt.

As for being entangled with the five *khandhas*, this dies away and draws to a close, and that which had made one whirl about in the three realms of the universe is broken and destroyed. Then even the greatest desires are thrown out and fall away. Love ceases and is completely cured ending the poison of possessiveness and all troubles are cured and cease as the heart would wish.

QUESTIONER: Please point out other different ways of the heart which are “samudaya” (the cause of suffering) of the *citta*, which are against Dhamma.

ANSWER. *Samudaya*, the cause of suffering is very extensive. But bringing it down to its essentials, it is love that forces the heart to

⁷ Dust – as the Lord Buddha said, “There are few who have little dust in their eyes to see Dhamma”.

⁸ From here on the questioner and the questioned change places. The pupil now asks the questions and the teacher answers.

long for the *khandhas*. If Dhamma had stayed eternally with the *citta*, separate and apart, *samudaya*, the cause of suffering, could never have been. You must keep this in mind concerning the way of the *citta* and there is no need to go whirling around incessantly thinking until you go mad. For in whoever the Dhamma does not dwell unshakeably and gladly attached, his heart falls into *samudaya*, the cause of suffering, longing for a body. To put it briefly, *dukkha* and Dhamma are constantly in the *citta*. Take this in (and work on it) until you have sought out and experienced the truth of it for yourself. Then you will be entirely cool and peaceful and however much *sukha* or *dukkha* you have you will not be afraid. Doleful things, which means *samudaya*, the cause of suffering, will steadily diminish and will go towards what is good. If you get the meaning⁹ of this you will be close to curing your troubles, enough for you to get some rest and respite to search out and find the path of escape.

The *citta* which knows Dhamma forgets the *citta* which is attached to “dust”, and the heart always knows the Dhamma which is *sukha* and the *khandhas* which are truly *dukkha*. Dhamma is bound to be Dhamma and the *khandhas* are bound to be the *khandhas*, that’s all, and what is called “cool peace the dispersal of troubles”, means the withdrawal of the *citta* from the wrong way to which it is firmly attached. But as for the *sankhāra khandhas*, they are void of *sukha* and are truly *dukkha*, because they are bound to grow old, be sick, and die one day inevitably.

If the *citta* knows the supreme Dhamma, the *citta* withdraws from wrong things which cause depression and harm, bad things which are severe and serious faults of the heart. Seeing Dhamma displayed clearly extracts all of these things which are bad and which poison the heart. Then the *citta* sees Dhamma in abundance which is free from fault. When one meets the Dhamma which strips off all agents of lust, one has *sati*, one is not involved, one’s love for the *khandhas* is destroyed and all pleasure in them ends. This is the end of all “dust” and the end of anxiety and concern. So then, if one wants to think there’s no reason why one shouldn’t do so according to one’s natural inclinations.

⁹ Ruuthao – see footnote No. 6 on page 12.

QUESTIONER: When one doesn't prevent returning, one doesn't listen and turbulence and trouble are free to go on, should one be able to know that evil has arisen? Because in truth it has.

ANSWER. Evil can arise because of ignorance. If one can close the door against stupidity it will be very peaceful and evil of all kinds will disappear. One can't put up with it, so throw it out!

The *khandhas* in all things incline to *dukkha* and never to *sukha*. Formerly I was dull and stupid, as though I had gone into a dark cave. Wanting to see Dhamma took hold of my heart but without any real purpose. I took hold of memory assuming that it was the heart, until I became addicted and obsessed in admiring memory and fondling it. I did it for a long time and this false use of memory blinded me and wouldn't let me see. So I went astray playing with the five *khandhas* – it was pitiable – raising myself up to boast that I was free. I went about bullying and criticising others who were my friends, which was quite useless. Going around looking at the faults of others is what arose in my heart. Like making a fire to burn myself which was bound to make me dull and dirty. For whoever is right or wrong and good or evil is so for themselves alone, but as for one's own heart, one must try to be guarded and set up carefulness. Don't let evil things come and whirl around in you. You should be endowed with merit and right action which bring contentment. Then if one sees others do evil things, oneself remains good.

It is the defilements (*ragi*) which seize the *khandhas* with firm intention and having grasped them one is bound to be really troubled because of old age and death. Repeatedly the evil *kilesas* hot and steamy gather and enter, stirring up trouble, full of love and anger, obviously blameworthy things, together with strong fear, a heavy heart and tormenting thoughts. Time after time the five¹⁰ objects of desire come enticingly, making displays of all kinds of things to show their power because one has grasped the five *khandhas* as one's own. Then it is hardly possible for one to get free from *dukkha* and danger.

If you already know your own faults then don't waste time. Look at the characteristics of the *sankhāras*, which are always impermanent

¹⁰ The five objects: probably refers to the 5 sense objects.

and get used to this. You will then probably come to admire the Dhamma that is the single and solitary *citta*. That “impermanence” refers to the heart which is disturbed by memory. When seen, keep on looking at it and stay with it as it changes. Then as soon as all external objects (*ārammaṇa*) die away completely, Dhamma appears and as soon as Dhamma is seen the disturbance of the *citta* disappears. That *citta* is not attached to anything else and this truth is the end of the “door”.¹¹

Whether one knows the method of the heart in this way, or not, if one “penetrates and knows”¹² impermanence, the first free *citta* arises. This is probably the original *citta* which is truly unchanging and knowing the original *citta* frees one from all falsehood without doubt.

But if one goes outward at the end of that *citta* it is immediately wrong. What is called darkness is because of the *citta* thinking possessively of good and this possessive *citta* is at the end of the *citta* which thinks outwardly.

The first *citta* is good when Dhamma appears and doubt disappears. Then there is the seeing of Dhamma which is excellent and above all worlds. As for one’s previous thinking, searching and whirling around seeking, it all stops, stripped bare and one has reached the end.

But one still has *dukkha* in that one must lie down and sleep and eat food and do whatever is necessary. But the heart is tamed and close to the original *citta* and in thinking it does not go searching. It is natural for the *citta* that it must think, but as soon as it feels the first free *citta* in distress it withdraws into silence and stillness away from that disturbance which is causing trouble. It is also normal for the *saṅkhāras* to arise, but they also disappear in a similar way, in fact all such things steadily diminish until none of them are left.

Beware of the heart when memory becomes subtle for it’s likely to force the *citta* to be attached to passivity. The heart is the impermanence of the heart, look at this and see it all the time until you get used to it. When you reach the culmination of it, if you know in yourself the “music” of the heart – which is just like magical

¹¹ “Door”, probably refers to “shutting the door” at the start of this question.

¹² Ruuthao – see footnote No. 6 on page 12.

tricks that the Lord called “*vipassanupakilesā*”,¹³ transformations of state, which are false even though they appear to be true – knowing arises by itself and it is given the name of “seeing”. But it’s not like hearing and understanding at the level of asking questions, and thinking over, pondering and analysing *rūpa-nāma* are also not seeing for oneself. Knowing spontaneously arises in oneself, but it’s not the “music” of thinking which knows the original *citta*, the first *citta* free of torment. The original *citta* knows in itself for certain that the nature of the *sankhāras* is that of incessant change. In this, there is no process or manner which goes to look at or know anything, nor is it knowing for the purpose of making a claim. The *citta* probably knows the *citta* itself because of the restless fire¹⁴ and the *citta* knows the restless change and the *citta* is attached to it and cannot get free from it, for in truth they are one and the same thing. This *citta* has dual characteristics which are known as “*saññā* leading it into attachment”.

That impermanence is oneself fixing on another, then the heart knows its own deterioration and freedom is obscured. The heart then becomes insipid and dry and it loses the taste of being free from doubt. Its search into those things which are about one, both externally and internally is broken and all one’s aspirations wither and die away. Then anger and love and things which make the heart heavy go forth.

But the desires of the heart can stop, thereby curing the trouble and torment and freeing all heaviness of heart and complaints. Like rain sprinkling over it, the heart is refreshed from the exhaustion of the irritable heart. The heart is cool because it doesn’t have to go about with concern for others. Knowing the first *citta* in the present frees one from torment. All good and evil are then of no great concern and they must die away as well as all defilements. Live quietly! The first *citta* is not concerned about the affairs of the *citta*, having ended all thought and concern. There’s no need to fuss and be busy, nor to be careful. Just lie down or sit quiet and free and dwell in the original *citta*.

¹³ *Vipassanupakilesā* – distracting phenomena which interfere with insight (*vipassanā*).

¹⁴ The restless fire, probably refers to the defilements (*kilesā*).

QUESTIONER: You have pointed out the Path (*Magga*) for me to hear showing the principles sharp and clearly. You are skilled in displaying points with a very broad scope and very brightly. But there is still another aspect of the heart which is not freed from *samudaya* (the cause of suffering). It would be good if you please point it out in a special way.

ANSWER. *Samudaya* (the cause of suffering) is the longing of love and if this obsession is very strong it creates births anew which one has no desire to stop and escape from. In the lower levels this means that the five sensual desires are defiled. In the higher levels the Lord pointed to the longing for *jhāna* as being *samudaya*.

If then one takes up and acts on the tendencies that are in one's *citta*, it will be the story of obsessive thinking in *sankhāra* (*khandha*), being obsessed in everything in the same way as it has been for ages. Then one turns to virtue to develop the *citta*, but in the wrong way so that it often breaks up into wild and distracted thought. Then before long one becomes obsessed in bad ways without realising that they are shameful. Those things that one emotionally likes, one admires and becomes obsessed with them. Obsessed until one forgets oneself with no fear of danger. Obsessed in looking at the faults of others full of evil, but one's own faults one doesn't see! "Why so?" However many faults other people have they don't make oneself fall into hell at all. But one's own faults which are sorry and doleful don't need to be many to bring back *vipāka* (the results of *kamma*) for one to fall into the greatest hell. Try to see your own faults all the time so as to make your heart used to giving up those faults. This will probably make you admire *sukha* which is free from *dukkha* and danger. When you see your own faults clearly you must hurry to cut them off and get rid of them, for it's no use dawdling and thinking about getting rid of them without acting.

In regard to always wanting good without ceasing, this is the basis of *samudaya*, the cause of suffering. It is a great fault and the fear of not being good is very strong. Good and not good are strong poisons in the *citta*. It's like taking the wrong remedy when one has a fever, the disease is made much worse by such things which are harmful. Dhamma doesn't become clear because of wanting good – this is fundamental. If the desire for good is strong it is bound to

drag the *citta* about, making it think and wander about in turbulent ways until the heart deteriorates and everything becomes increasingly doleful. This great fault makes one go further and further away from the Dhamma which is true.

QUESTIONER: When you point out *samudaya* – the cause of suffering – here, my heart is afraid and when I hear the underlying essence it tends to be confusing and very involved. But when you point out *Magga* – the Path – it goes to my heart, I can't hold any more and throw the rest out and withdraw into stillness in the calm heart. That's the end of it.

THIS IS CALLED: "*Khandhavimutti Samangidhamma*" which is always present. It neither goes or comes and is a natural state (*sabhāva dhamma*) which is true and singular and neither moves about restlessly to keep going nor loses its substance and meaning.

This is the end of the matter – that's all.

Whether this is right or wrong,
you must use wisdom to think and look and know.

Phra Bhūridatta (Mun)
Wat Srapratumwan
The Author.

GLOSSARY

Ārammaṇa: Foundation or supporting condition. That which supports the mind and mental conditions. In the Thai language it means 'emotions'.

Ariyavaṃsa: This word has several meanings, but here it means the 4 classes of people that have gained the Paths – which are the Path of *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmin*, *Anāgāmin* and *Arahant*.

Bhāvanā: Meditation and training in Buddhism.

Bhikkhu: A monk, usually in reference to Buddhism. One who lives on donated food.

Citta: That fundamental nature of a person which is not within the *khandhas* but greatly influences them and is often referred to as the "heart". At death, the *khandhas* all break up and dissolve but the *citta* does not depend on anything material and it does not die. The *citta* is where the truth (Dhamma) and the defilements (*kilesas*) dwell.

Dhamma: The ultimate Dhamma is *Nibbāna*. The *Buddha-Dhamma* is the teaching and codes of conduct of the Buddha. Dhamma can also mean "nature" as in the nature of a dog or of a tiger.

Dukkha: All that is unpleasant and painful.

Jhāna: Exalted states of meditative absorption.

Kamma: Actions of mind, speech or body done with volition create *kamma*, the results of which arise as "*vipāka*" when the conditions are right.

Kāyagatāsati: Contemplation of the body with mindfulness.

Khandha: A heap or group, usually referring to the five *khandhas* as body, feeling, memory, thought/imagination, and consciousness.

Kilesā: The defilements based upon greed, hate, and delusion that soil, stain or defile the heart making it impure and dirty. The usual list includes: greed, hate, dullness and stupidity, conceit, opinionatedness, uncertainty, mental torpor, restlessness, no sense of shame in doing wrong, no sense of fear of the consequences of doing wrong.

Kusala: Skilful acts of mind, speech or body which are good and truly beneficial.

Magga: The Path. Meaning the 8 Fold Path and also the Paths of attainment leading to *Nibbāna*.

Nāma: The four mental *khandhas*: feeling, memory, thought and consciousness.

Navalokuttarā: The 9 Ultimate Dhammas: the 4 Paths and the 4 Fruitions of the Paths and *Nibbāna*.

Paññā: Wisdom.

Rūpa: Form. Usually the physical body as in *rūpa khandha*.

Sabhāva: The natural condition and state of anything.

Sakya: The race of people from whom the Buddha came.

Saṃsāra: The universe, both physical and covering all the realms from the hells to the highest *Brahma* gods.

Samudaya: The uprising, usually of *dukkha*. This is the second of the Four Noble Truths.

Sankhāra: Everything which is composed of parts and pieces.

Saññā: Memory.

Sati: Mindfulness.

Sukha: The pleasant, happy, contented.

Viññāṇa: Consciousness.

Vipāka: The result of *kamma*. See *kamma* above.