

## DOES THE SOUND REACH THE EAR? AN EXAMINATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF 'SAMPATTA' AND 'ASAMPATTA' IN AṬṬHASĀLINĪ COMMENTARY

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One of the important tasks undertaken by later compilers of the Abhidhamma was to make categories of realities in an attempt to make the teachings of the Buddha more systematic and somehow complete. Besides employing many modes of classification to distinguish and characterize the four realities, namely consciousness (*citta*), mental states (*cetasika*), materiality (*rūpa*), and Nibbāna, that are already found in the Early Canonical Texts, new analysis and divisions were also introduced. While most of them are mere improvisations on the grounds already provided in the early canonical texts, some of them are obviously novel. One such classification with regard to material phenomena is to distinguish them on the basis of whether they can sense the stimuli or not. If they can sense, they are called *gocaragāhika* and if not *agocaragāhika*. The bases that can sense stimuli are classified further into whether their respective objects actually reach or impinge on them or not. Technically, those that reach are called *sampatta*, which is the primary subject examined in this paper. I argue that the concept of *sampatta* was developed from the notion of *paṭigha*, the coming together of sense bases and objects, which is found in early Buddhist texts. Support to this can be observed in an old commentary that existed prior to Ācariya Buddhaghosa's writings. Starting from Buddhaghosa's commentary, the eye and ear were not considered as bases that take the objects that reach them (*sampattaggāhi*). The post-canonical texts have merely tried to support this explanation. In this paper I examine the concept of '*sampatta*' and '*asampatta*' and argue that it was originally meant to explain the concept of '*paṭigha*', that all the five sense doors take the objects that reach them. The primary evidence to support this claim is found in an old commentary. In the canonical texts, the perception that arises at the five sense doors are called 'perception of impact' (*paṭighasaññā*), which suggests that the five bases and their respective objects 'strike' one another. In the old commentary, the term *sampatta* was used in the same sense. But at a later time, the term *sampatta* came to be used only for 'impingement' that arises at the nose, tongue, and body doors. In the early texts, the cognition of these three sense processes are collectively called *muta*. I will put forth the argument that the view presented by Buddhaghosa differs from the old commentary in that it considers *sampatta* as a synonym of the concept of *muta* and not *paṭigha*.

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