
Basic Concepts in Buddhism:
Anicca (Impermanence)



“Whatever is composed is decomposable.”

Everything put together in nature or mind eventually separates. This is the universal law of Anicca.

Impermanence has three aspects:



Negative:
Losing earlier character.



Positive:
Acquiring new character.

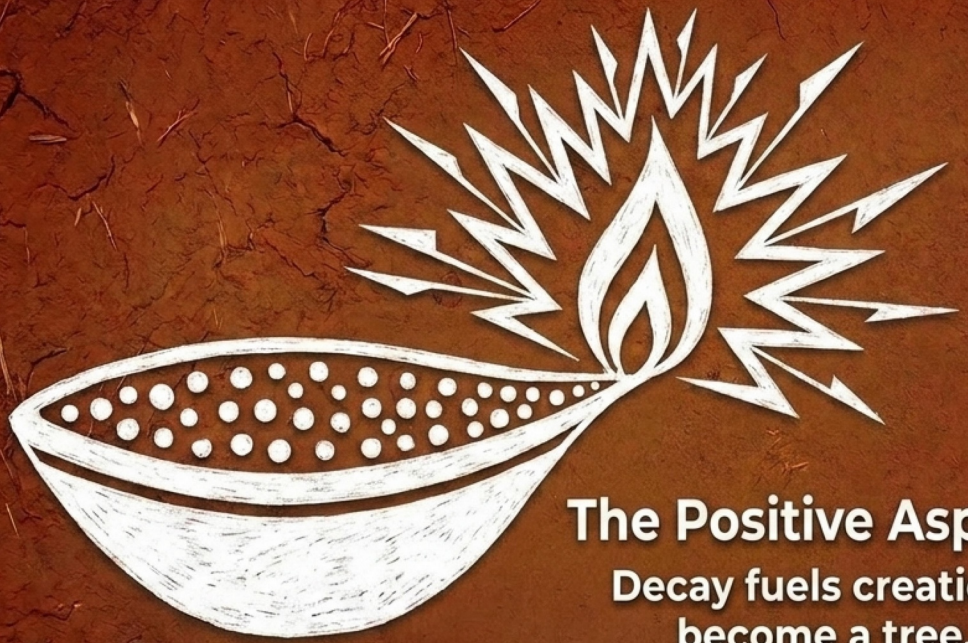


General:
Arising dependent on conditions.



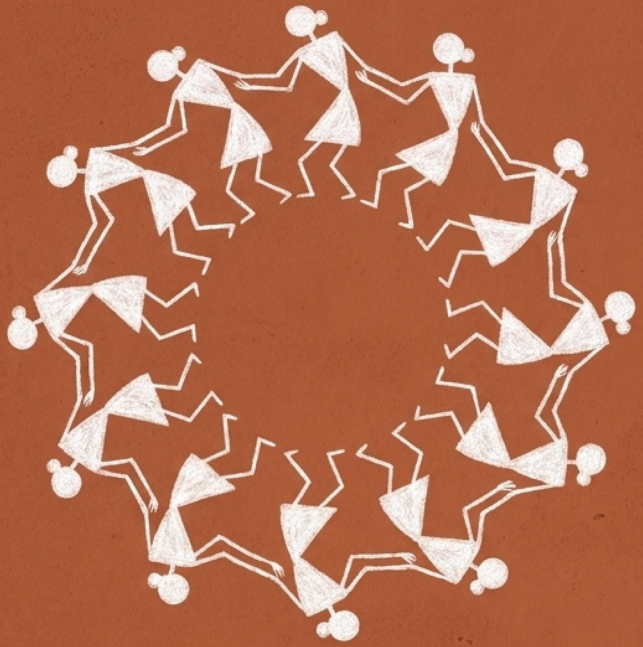
The Negative Aspect: Decay.

Change is always present, even if slow.
Mountains erode, cells die, unions dissolve.
What is joined must eventually separate.



The Positive Aspect: Becoming.

Decay fuels creation. A seed bursts to become a tree. A lamp burns oil to create light. Change is also growth.

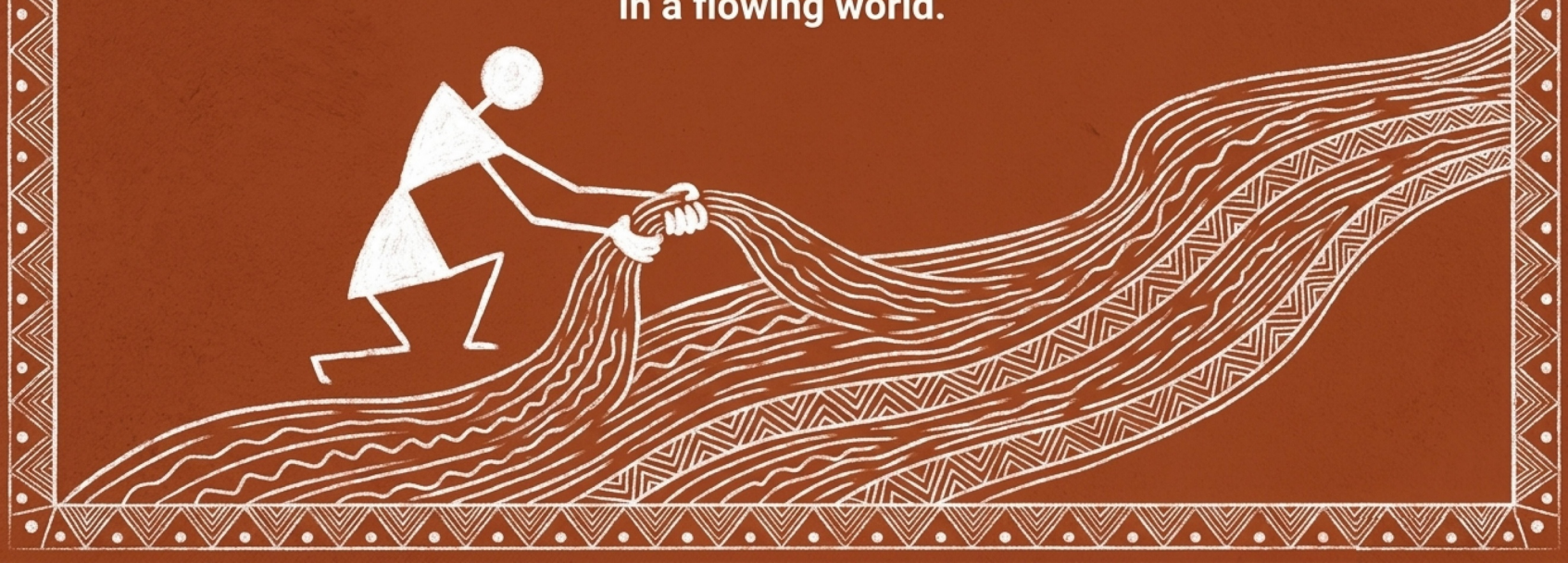


The General Aspect: Conditionality. Nothing exists independently. Phenomena arise only in dependence on other phenomena. There is death because there is birth.

The Illusion of Permanence.

If everything naturally changes, why do we suffer?

We suffer because the mind desperately seeks permanence in a flowing world.





Memory is not a storage box. It is an active process of grasping the past in the present. This grasping creates the illusion of a continuous “Self.”

Instincts are innate biological responses.

Rooted in greed, hate, and delusion,

they drive our basic, unthinking needs for survival, security, and reproduction.



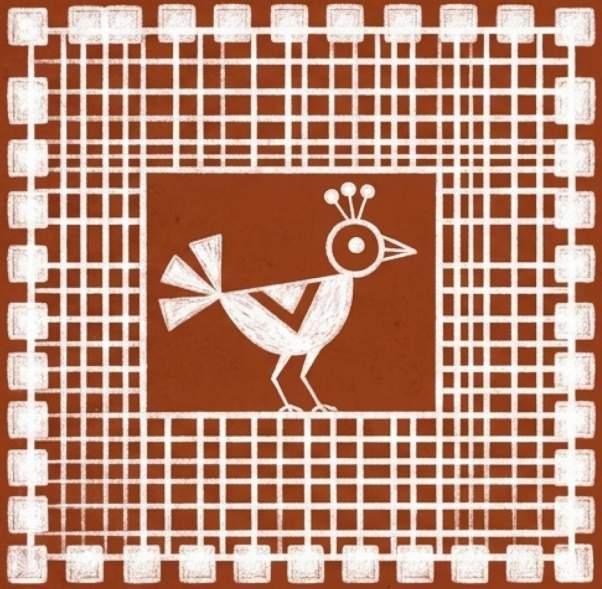
The Paradox.



Biology: Memory and instinct ensure our physical survival.



Psychology: They create clinging, craving, and the ‘ego.’ What keeps the body alive causes the mind to suffer.



Conflict arises when memory and instinct try to freeze time. We attempt to own experiences, resisting the natural, inevitable flow of decomposition.

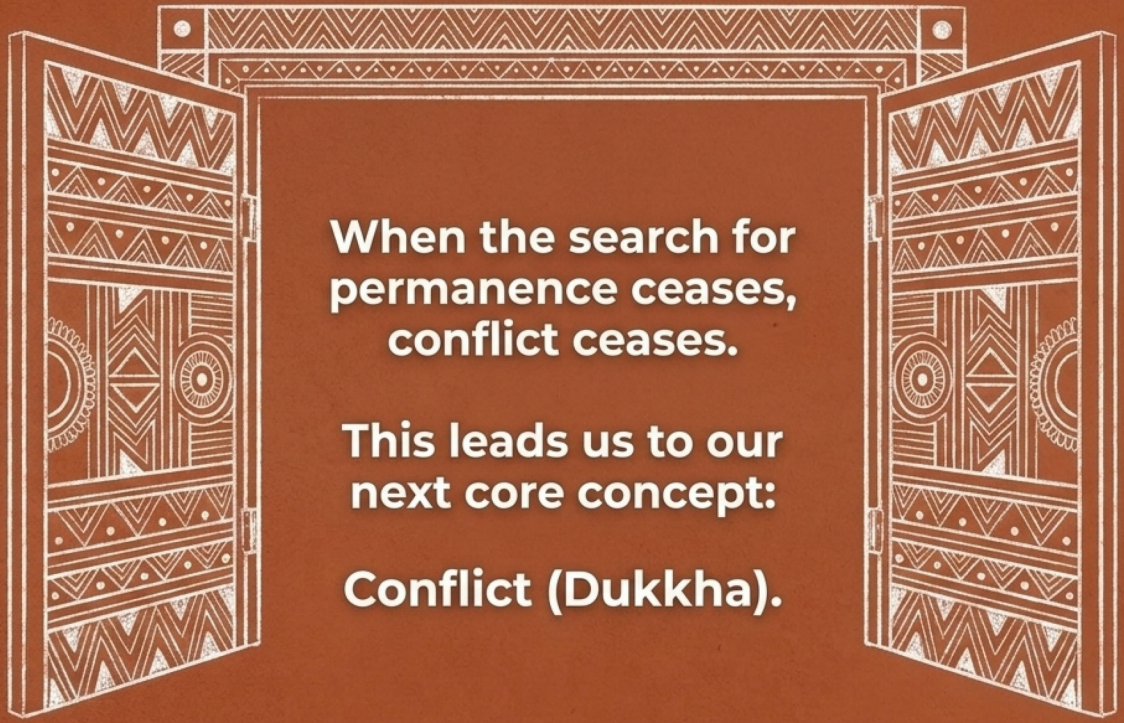


True Perception (Anicca Saññā).

Emancipation comes from truly seeing change. It is not looking for a hidden, permanent soul, but understanding that existence itself is a flowing process.

NotebookLM

A river must flow to be a river.
When we understand that impermanence is the essential nature of existence, the exhausted search for permanence spontaneously stops.



When the search for permanence ceases, conflict ceases.

This leads us to our next core concept:

Conflict (Dukkha).

Basic Concepts in Buddhism:
Sorrow and Conflict (Dukkha)





Dukkha is more than sorrow.

It is a deep, subjective inner conflict.

While physical pain is a bodily reality, true suffering is the mental resistance to what is.



Physical Discomfort: A bodily lack of ease (disease, injury).



Mental Conflict: A distorted mind opposing reality. Even perfect beings feel physical pain, but they do not experience mental conflict.

Where does opposition arise? From the ‘Ego.’

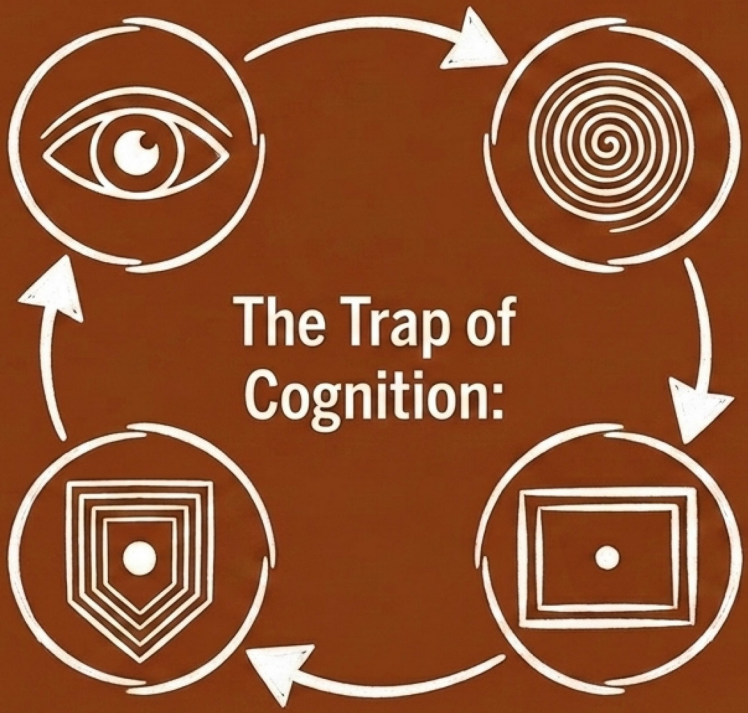
The ‘I’ is built entirely on attachments: property, titles, and achievements.

Any loss of these feels like a loss of ‘self.’





The ‘I’ demands permanence to survive.
It builds walls to project a secure future.
But reality is impermanent.
Conflict is born when the ‘I’ clashes with a changing world.



The Trap of Cognition:

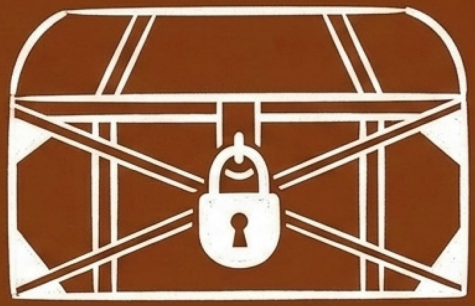
1. Senses contact the unknown.
2. Mind searches past memories.
3. Forces the new into old categories.
4. Rejects what doesn't fit to protect the ego.



Memory is the resistance to impermanence.

We rarely meet reality with an open mind.

Instead, we grasp the present through the heavily conditioned framework of the past.





The Ego Seeks:

Continuity, Security, Fixed Identity.

Reality Offers:

Impermanence, Constant Change, Dissolution.

Conflict exists only when impermanence is seen, but not wanted.

Why refuse this truth?
Fear.

We fear the void of ‘self.’

Without our constructed image—our hopes, fears, and conditionings—the ‘I’ ceases to exist.



The cure is direct insight.

Not logic, not striving, but clearly seeing distortions as distortions.

When the false image dissolves, fear vanishes.

Without fear, conflict ends.





To see impermanence without fear is to be free.

Without an ‘I’ trying to possess reality, every moment is a fresh awakening.

This is the true joy of creation.

Basic Concepts in Buddhism: Anatta (Non-Self)



The Illusion of the ‘I’ and the End of Conflict.



Existence, as we know it, is conflict.

This conflict arises from choice. Every choice is a mechanical response to memory, clinging to past experiences and seeking permanent security in an impermanent world.

In the pure moment of experience, there is no “I.”



But to preserve that experience, memory steps in. Memory creates a spectator—the “watcher.” This is how the illusion of a separate self is born.



Terrified of impermanence, the mind invents an elaborate defense.



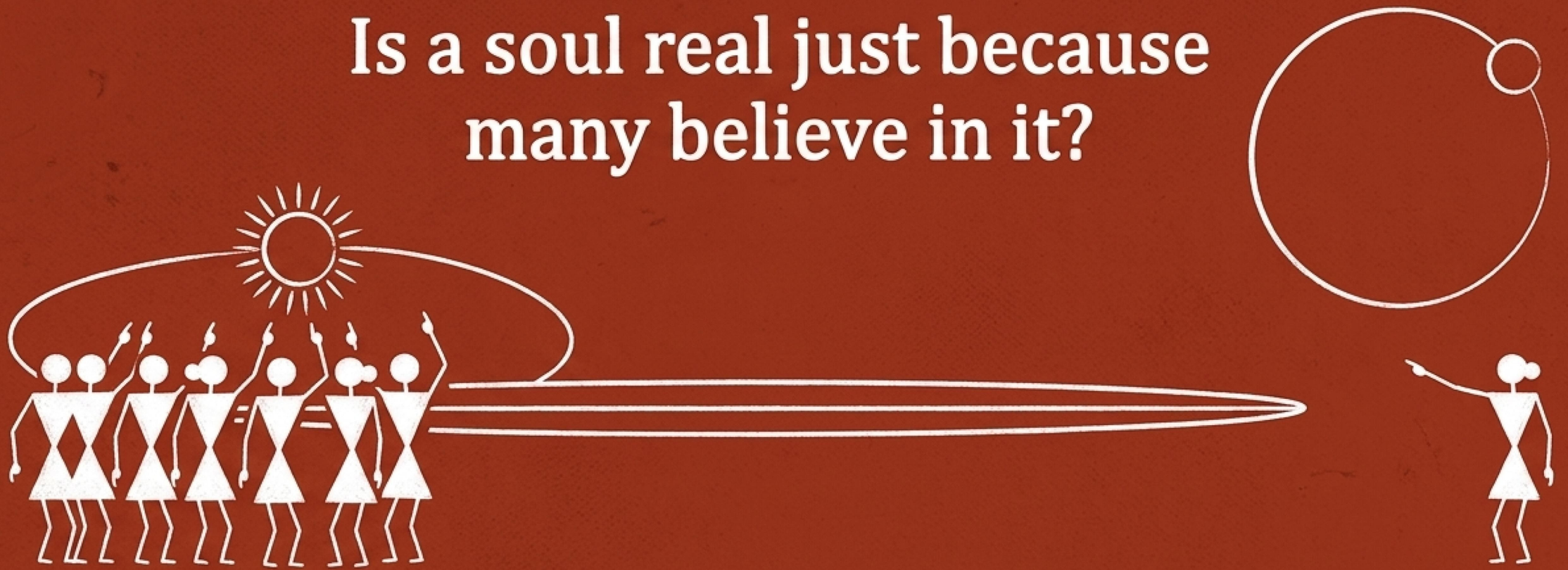
It creates the concept of an eternal entity, a ‘soul,’ to convince itself that ultimate security exists. It is an escape from the reality of constant change.

The Buddha examined sixty-two different schools of thought claiming to have discovered an essential soul.



He rejected them all as nets of wishful thinking. Argumentation and blind faith had superseded direct, unbiased understanding.

Is a soul real just because many believe in it?



History shows consensus is often false. Centuries ago, humanity universally agreed the sun moved around the earth. General opinion is never proof of truth.

Some argue that abstract concepts like truth or justice prove we have an immaterial soul.



But these ideas come from material experiences. They change over time and across cultures. They are conditioned, not eternal.

Even ‘free will’ does not prove a permanent soul.



Will only arises when choosing between opposites.
Because choice is influenced by conditioning, attraction, and repulsion, the will is neither independent nor permanent.

Non-self is not annihilation; it is direct seeing.



Break down the ‘being,’ and you find only body, feelings, perceptions, and consciousness. The Buddha found no permanent soul among them. None of this is ‘mine.”

There is no permanent ego-entity.



Instead, human life is a continuous flux. It is a process of action and reaction that rises and falls organically, much like waves in the ocean.



The Illusion of Self

Static, isolated, seeking permanence, defensive, driven by craving.



The Reality of Non-Self

Fluid, interconnected, embracing change, open, driven by action through understanding.

True understanding comes as a destructive flash of lightning.



It is dangerous to the ego. Direct insight destroys the ideal that allows the ‘I’ to continue. That is why the mind deeply fears it.

Do not escape conflict; welcome it as a teacher.



Conflict is not a problem to be solved, but a misunderstanding to be understood.
It reveals the mind desperately trying to maintain the ‘self.’

When you realize the non-existence of a permanent essence, you realize the non-existence of conflict.



Conflict requires opposition. Without a ‘self’ to defend, opposition dissolves entirely.

When the craving for ‘mine’ and the pride of ‘I am’ vanish, the delusion of self is quenched.



What remains is total freedom. Action becomes pure, unconditioned by any thought of self.

The Seed and the Harvest



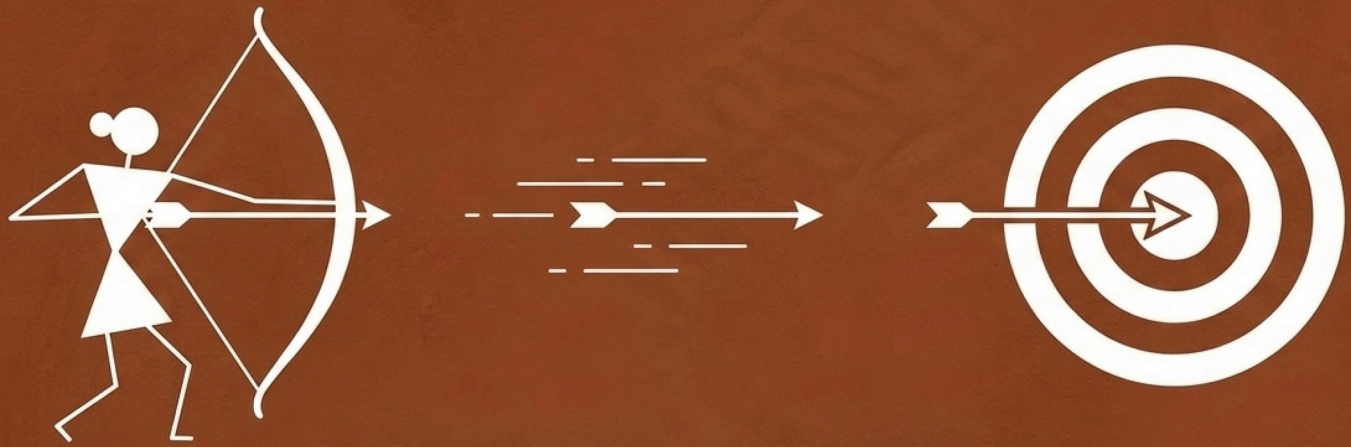
Basic Concepts in Buddhism: The Workings of Karma



Volition, O monks, is what I call action.

Karma is not absolute causality or a decree from a supreme law-giver.
It is purposeful activity. Every intentional thought is a seed planted in the mind.

The law of karma is not cause and effect,
but action and reaction.



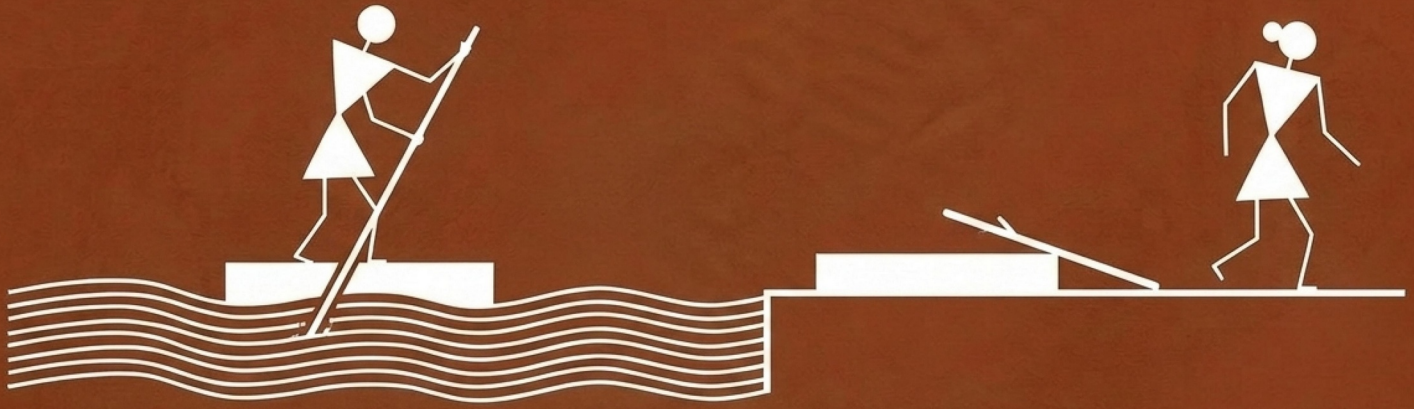
The purpose intended in the action gives color to the act.
The reaction is the inevitable psychological echo of the drawn bow.



The karmic effect of violence is not the physical injury.
It is the unwholesome state of hate permanently set up in the actor's mind.

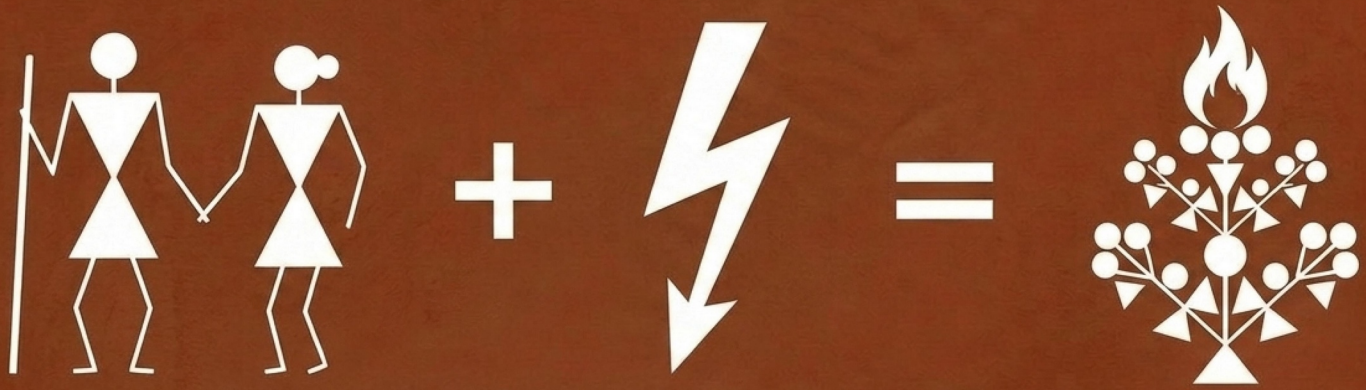
Action and reaction are psychologically inseparable.

Striving for an ideal future reinforces
the delusion of a permanent self.



Therefore, karma is merely a raft. Virtuous actions are useful for crossing
the river of existence, but must eventually be abandoned on the shore.

Biology alone does not create life.
Raw physiological materials require an igniting spark.



Previous karma is the lightning that fuses these dormant materials into a new, living flame.

Suitable Conditions



Unsuitable Conditions



Action seeks suitable conditions for expression.
Even the most fertile seed will not germinate without moisture. If conditions never align, the karmic potential simply expires. This is lapsed, inoperative karma.

Karma operates in four ways to shape existence:

1. **Reproductive:** Planting the initial seed.
2. **Supporting:** Watering the growing plant.
3. **Frustrating:** Weeds or animals hindering growth.
4. **Destructive:** An axe terminating the crop.








The inherent strength of a karmic seed dictates its yield:

- **Weighty:** Unavoidable, deeply rooted actions.
- **Habitual:** Actions strengthened by daily repetition.
- **Death-Proximate:** The final thought before the harvest.
- **Stored-up:** The accumulated reserve.



Reactions require time and environment to run their course.
The harvest arrives on its own schedule:

Immediately in this life, instantly upon the next rebirth,
Immediately in this life, instantly upon the next rebirth,
or delayed into subsequent existences.

The Complete Taxonomy of Karmic Seeds

Function	Strength	Timing
Reproductive, Supporting, Frustrating, Destructive	Weighty, Habitual, Death-Proximate, Stored-up	Same Life, Next Life, Subsequent, Lapsed



Karma is a building-up force of character.

Because you are entirely the embodiment of your own intentional actions,
you are not a victim of fate. You are the master of the harvest.



Basic Concepts in Buddhism:

The Spheres of Rebirth

Beyond Heavens, Hells, and the Ego



Not Transmigration.

Vedanta posits a soul migrating, like a caterpillar between leaves.



But Rebirth.

Buddhism teaches no-soul (*anatta*). Rebirth is simply a reaction—the ongoing ripple of a past action. No entity passes over.

Rebirth is Action Finding Rest.

Rebirth is not the effect of past action. It is the opportunity for past action to land. Like a falling stone meeting the ground, actions driven by greed, hate, or ignorance are reborn as reactions.



Clinging to to a Ghost.



Why desire a future life? Because we fear discontinuity. The ‘I’ is merely accumulated memory of past experiences. We cling to this dead ghost, desperately wanting it to continue into the unknown future.



The Cycle of Continuance.

Every action performed with craving re-creates the self. Intentional thought produces purposeful action. That action yields a result.

That result is Rebirth.

It is the ego projecting itself forward.

The Realms are Within.

Heavens and hells are not physical places awaiting us after death. They are psychological spheres—the manifold projections of our own ego, manifesting our inclinations, frustrations, and ambitions right now.





Apāya: The Sub-Human Level.

When human compassion is lost, unskilful actions find expression here. This is the misery of the miser, the endless conflict of rowdies, and the plain hell of frustrated ideals and burning hate.

Kāmaloka: The Sensate Worlds.

Driven by compassion, yet enslaved by the body. Happiness is sought through possessions, comfort, and sensory satisfaction. It brings human joy, but also the heavy burden of increasing expectation.





Rūpaloka: The Mental Spheres.

Disillusioned by sense-pleasures, one turns to moral discipline. Here, the mind transcends bodily cravings, absorbing itself in deep concentration (*jhāna*), purity, and spiritual ecstasy.

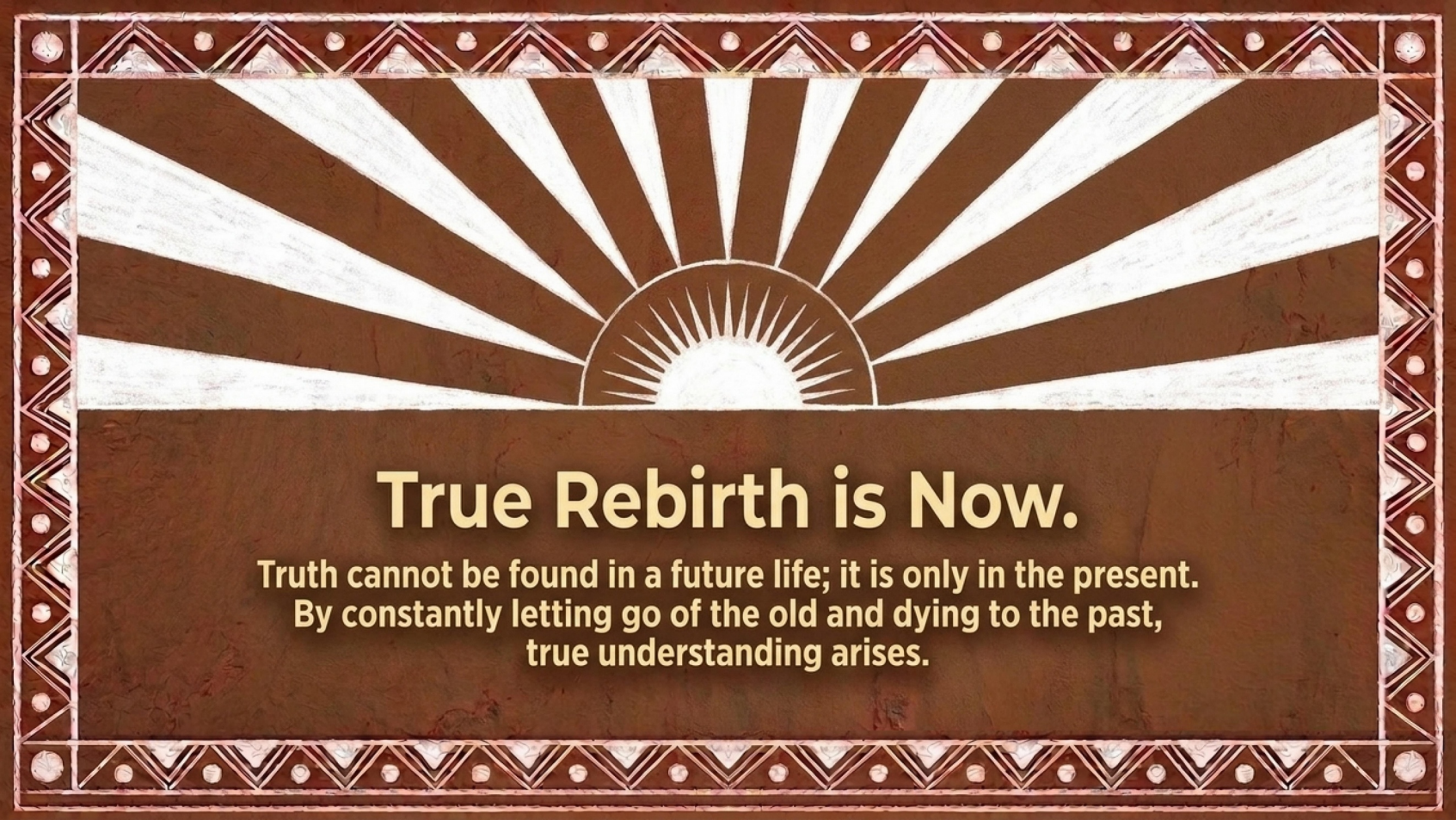
Arūpaloka: Utter Nakedness of Mind.

Life free from form and striving. In these states of formless concentration—infinite space and consciousness—individuality loses all meaning. The perception of unreality becomes fact.

The Golden Cage.

Even striving for heavenly rebirth is a trap. Systems of morality and spiritual discipline frequently just mold the mind to continue securely. The ego still refuses to truly die.




True Rebirth is Now.
Truth cannot be found in a future life; it is only in the present.
By constantly letting go of the old and dying to the past,
true understanding arises.

Basic Concepts in Buddhism: Ignorance.



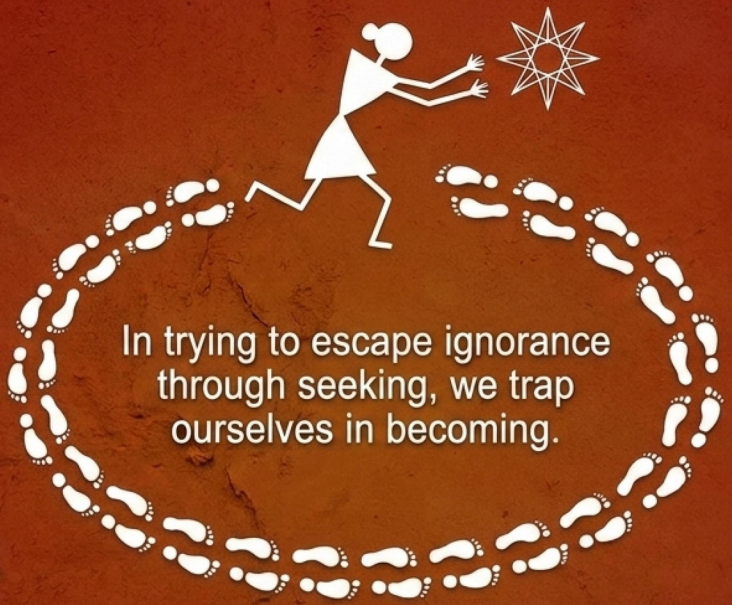
The illusion of the search, the burden of composition,
and the stillness of things as they are.



Ignorance is not a lack of worldly knowledge.

It is a failure to see what is.

Paradoxically, our very search for knowledge is driven by this ignorance. It is a desire to become, to attain, and to escape.

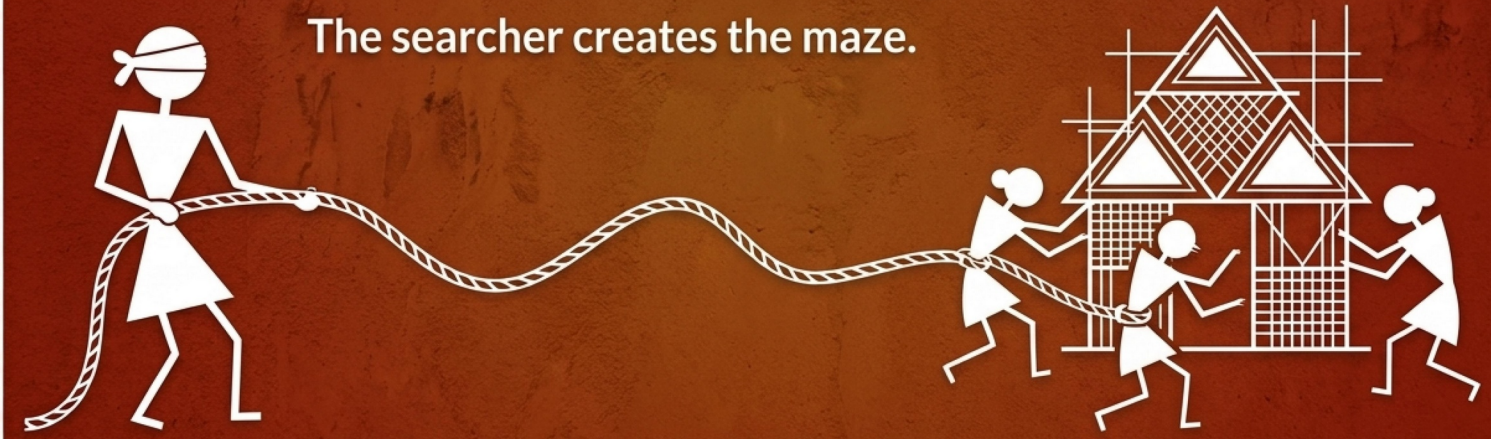


The thirst for knowledge easily becomes a thirst to create and continue.
Simple not-knowing transforms into a frantic search for action.

Ignorance creates Compositions (*Saṅkhāra*).

Because we do not see clearly, we desire. Because we desire, we build, fabricate, and compose new realities to satisfy that desire.

The searcher creates the maze.



A composition is anything made or put together. It is artificial: a combination, a fabrication, a joining of forces.

Its strength lies in its unity, giving the illusion of a single, solid reality.



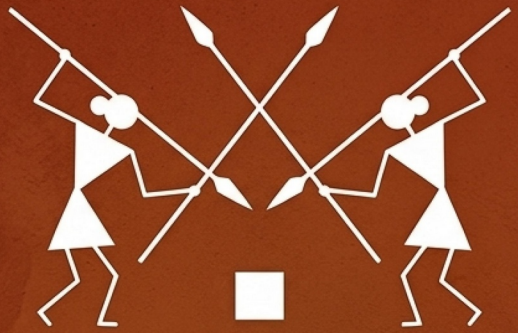

Every composed action is driven by intention—a goal to achieve a result.
Therefore, purposeful action is never truly free. It is chained to its intended reaction.
We compose our own heavy burdens.







We experience life in three ways:
1. The Actual: Conflict and ego.
2. The Ideal: Escaping the actual, searching for the absolute.
3. The Real: ‘Thusness.’ No search, no escape.



The Actual Life.

This is the life of conditionality, individuality, and personality.
It is the life of the ‘self’ in relationship to others.

Where there is this relationship, there is opposition and conflict.

NotebookLM

The Ideal Life.

This is a life of striving for realization.
We try to escape the conflict of the actual life
by searching for a higher Absolute.

But this is still the ego, sublimating itself.





The Real Life.

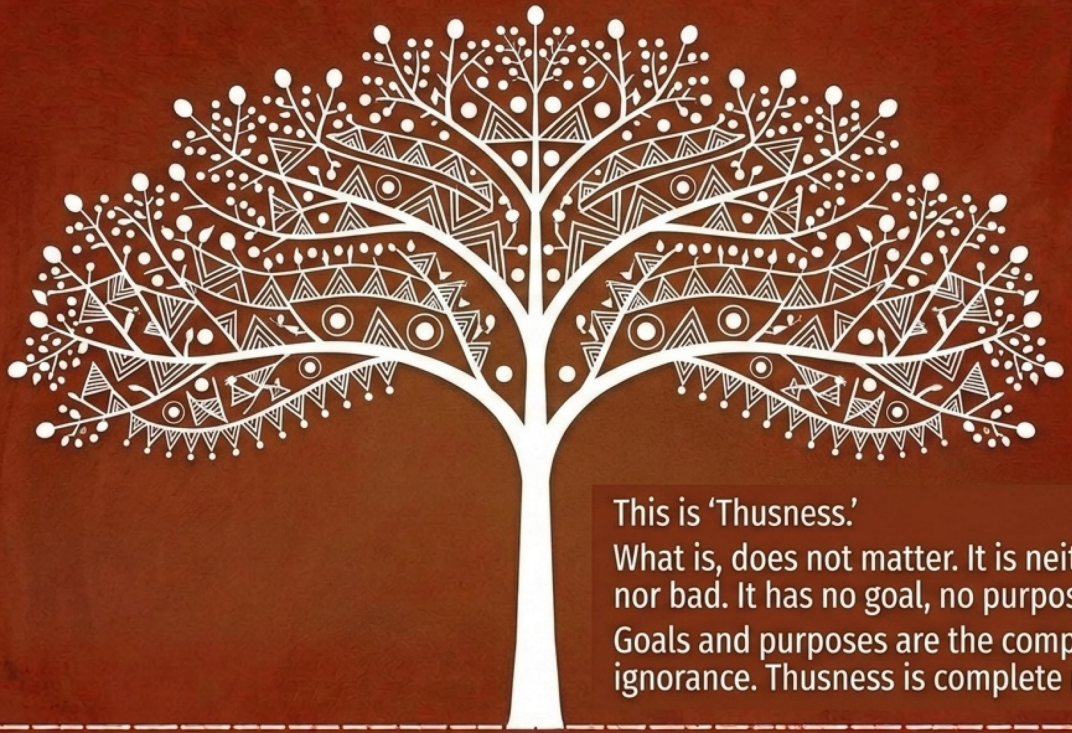
There is no more search for an ideal, no escape from the actual.
It is complete in itself. Without the relationship of opposition,
there is no conflict. There is no ‘self.’



The Buddha called himself Tathāgata: the one who has ‘gone the whole way.’

He was no longer a searcher.
He was the truth.

He experienced the ultimate reality of all things as they are.



This is ‘Thusness.’

What is, does not matter. It is neither good nor bad. It has no goal, no purpose.

Goals and purposes are the composites of ignorance. Thusness is complete in itself.

When ignorance is gone,
the search for wisdom ends.

All compositions are the
decompositions of a
searching mind.

When there is no search,
where is the searcher?





Enlightenment is insight into not-knowing.
When ignorance is truly seen as ignorance, that is the truth.
There is no goal to reach, and no walker on the road. Just seeing what is.



Saṅkhāra: The Formations of Mind

Basic Concepts in Buddhism



A concept notoriously difficult to translate.

Scholars suggest formations, synergies, or determinations. As the second link in Dependent Origination, formations arise from ignorance. But what exactly is a mental formation?



The microscopic anatomy of a single thought.

Before later commentators mapped 52 distinct mental constituents, early teachings defined a simple **four-stage evolution of thought**. **Saṅkhāra** is the crucial third step in this evolution.

The mind awakens and recognition begins.



1. Reception (Vedanā):
The mind senses physical contact, arousing from its unconscious stream.



2. Perception (Saññā):
The sense-doors open. Basic recognition occurs, though the full impact remains unapprehended.



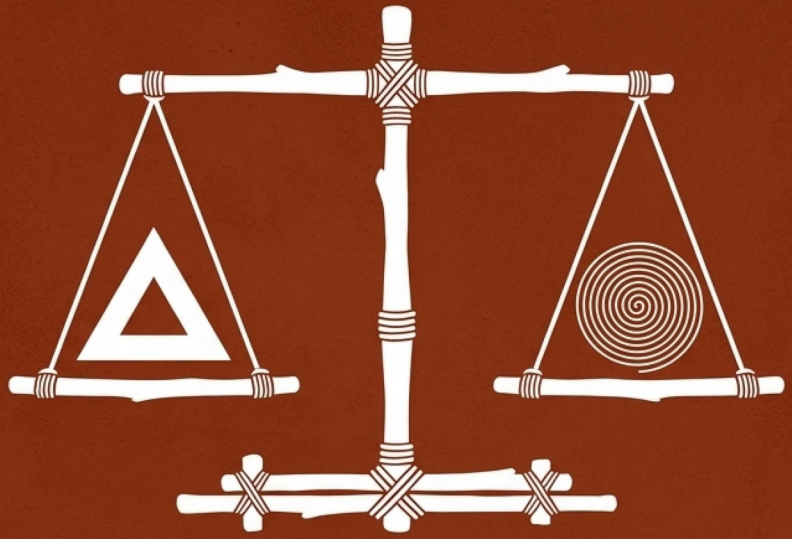
Volition forms a distinct concept.

3. **Formation (Saṅkhāra):** A concept forms. This is grasping without understanding. Here, volition (*cetanā*) dictates the specific character in and distinctive mark of this particular thought.



Awareness blossoms into full consciousness.

4. **Consciousness (Viññāṇa):** The final stage. Full awareness blossoms. Because the preceding formation injected volition, this final conscious state is now fully responsible for its reaction.



Volition is unequivocally equated with Karma.

Because Saṅkhāra carries volition (cetanā), it dictates our psychological reactions. The Buddha directly equated this volition with Kamma (Karma). Our mental formations literally construct our karmic reality.

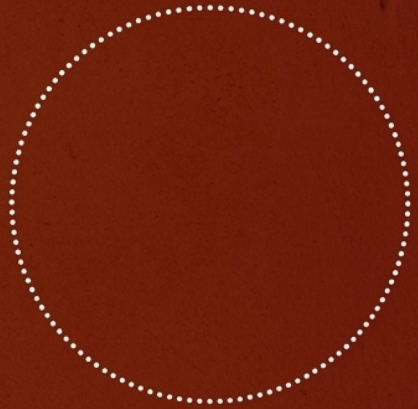
The universal law of conditioned existence.

The Formed (Saṅkhata)



Everything physical and mental.
All conditioned reality.

The Unformed (Asaṅkhata)

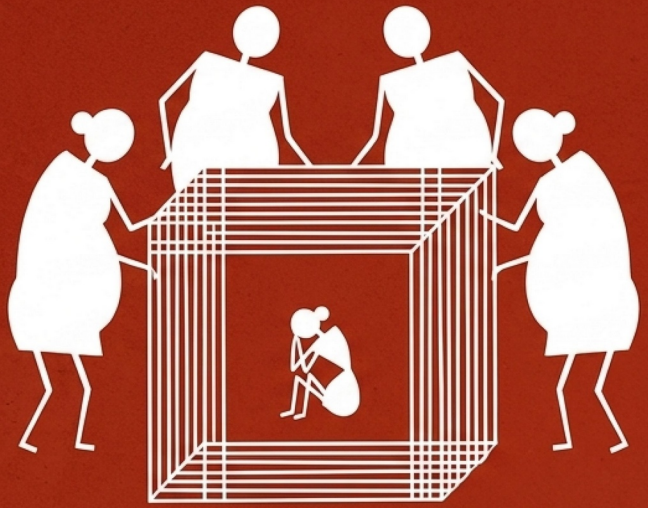


Only one element (dhātu) escapes this condition—Nibbāna.



Ignorance is a condition, not a cause.

Formations arise in dependence on ignorance (*avijjā*). Buddhism rejects spontaneous causation. Ignorance is merely the condition—the soil providing the opportunity for formations to grow.



Philosophy manifests as modern psychological complexes.

Formations are not just abstract. They are the compounds of inhibitions, taboos, and induced restraints. They act as self-protective defenses of a weak individual against an overbearing society.

The defensive self swings between two extremes.

Isolation



Violence



Formations manifest in two social extremes:
Isolation: Withdrawing in fear and opposition.
Violence: Bursting bonds to prove strength through the united, intimidating effort of the mass.



A fundamental refusal to see.

These psychological complexes stem from ignorance. This is not a simple absence of knowledge. It is a refusal to see, a fear to know. This refusal is itself a complex.



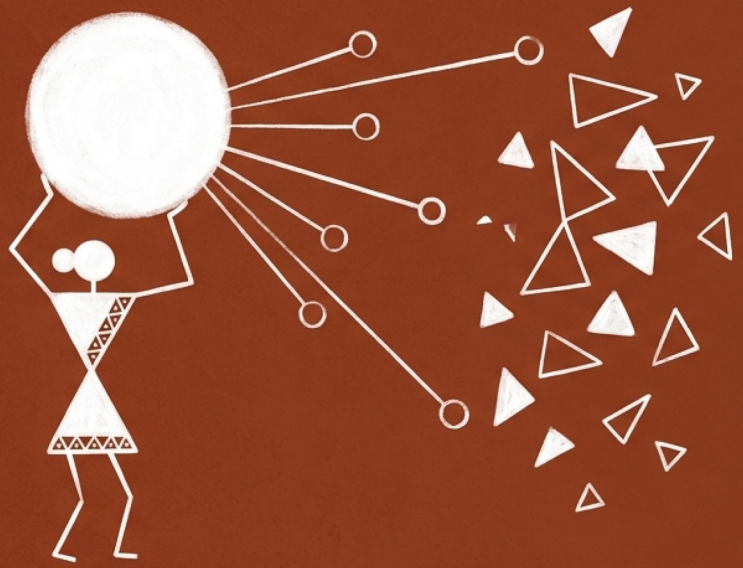
Awakening dissolves the conditioning source.

Mental sickness cannot be cured by fighting effects. It must be understood at its source.
Only an awakening of intelligence can bring pure insight and break the cycle of dependent origination.



The Cycle of a Single Thought

Exploring the continuous chain of consciousness, mind, and matter.



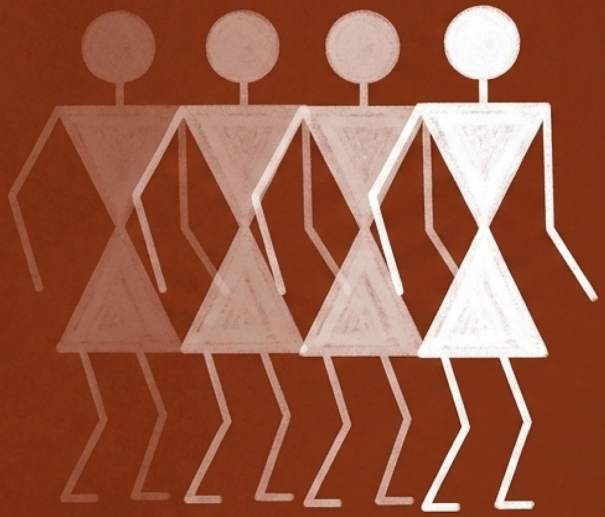
The Spark of Relinking Consciousness

Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa is the present effect of past conditions. This relinking consciousness gives form and identity (*nāma*) to matter (*rūpa*). Without it, past information is useless.

A Single Unit of Experience

Mind and body never act independently. They form a single unit of mentalised matter: *nāma-rūpaṁ*. Matter derives its psychological importance entirely from the observing mind.





The Illusion of a Permanent Subject

The ‘I’ exists only in memory. By wanting to retain an experience, thought freezes into a subject. Without this retention, the continuous ‘I’ cannot exist.

The Genesis of Individuality



Conceptualised matter is equated with birth (jāti).
It sparks the evolution of individuality through physical action, which is put into form by mental action.

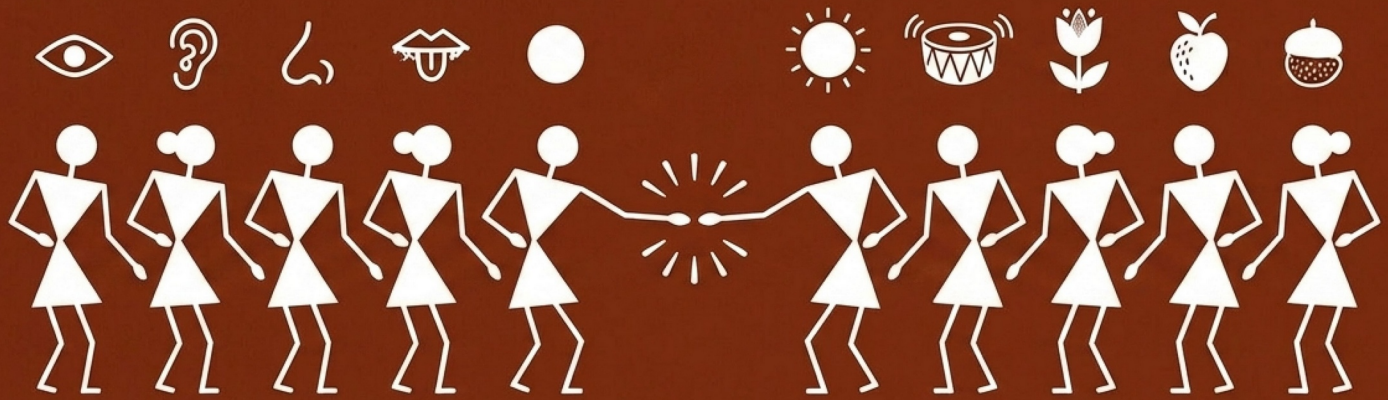


The Six Doors to the World

Dependent on mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa-paccayā*), the six senses arise (*saḷāyatana*). Eye, ear, tongue, nose, body, and mind navigate the external world of events.

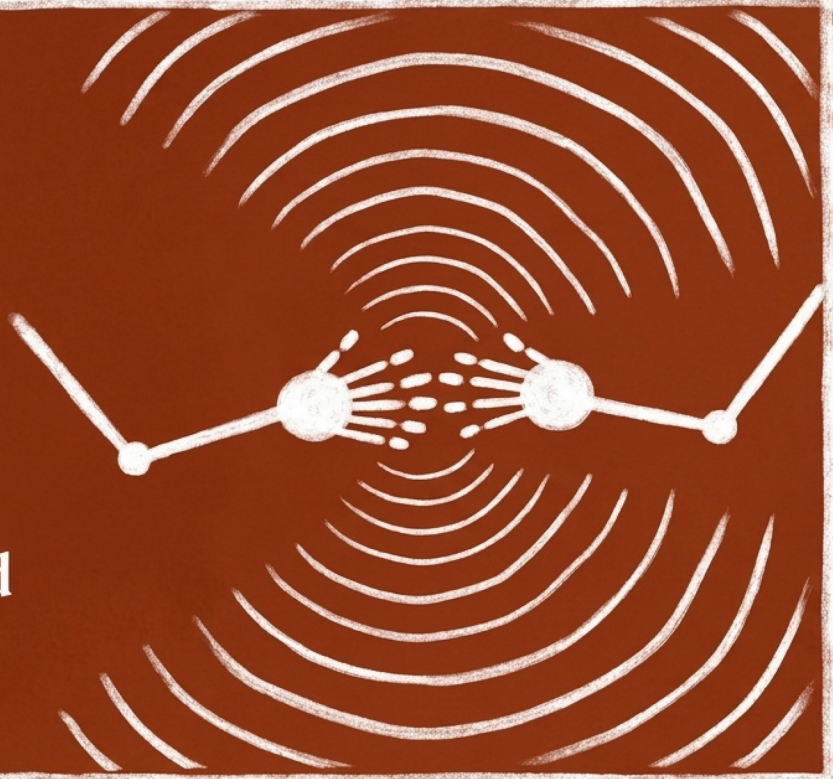
The Meeting Point of Contact

Thought connects internal senses with external events. This meeting point is contact. Dependent on the six senses arises contact (*saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso*).



The Arising of Sensation

From contact, feeling emerges. Dependent on contact arises sensation (phassa-paccayā vedanā). This is the subjective mind laying hold of objective matter.

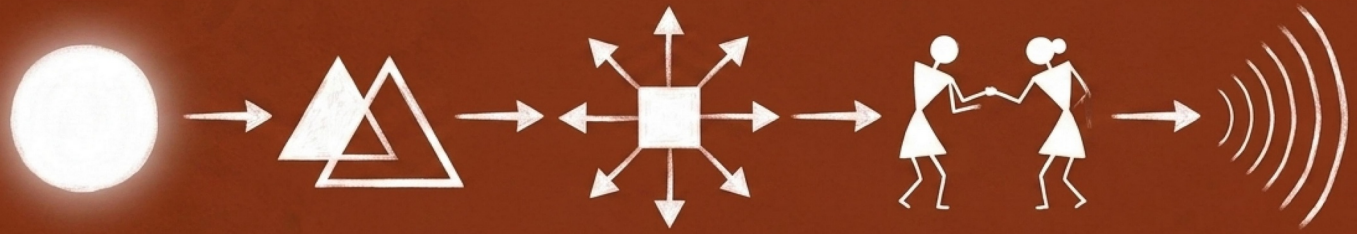




The Micro-Cycle of Existence

Birth (jāti), decay (jarā), and death (maraṇa) transcend a seventy-year lifespan. They form the complete cycle of a single, intentional act of thought.

The Continuous Chain of Mental Action



Viññāṇa → Nāma-rūpaṁ → Saḷāyatana → Phasso → Vedanā. This causal chain proves how mental action continuously gives form to our physical experience.



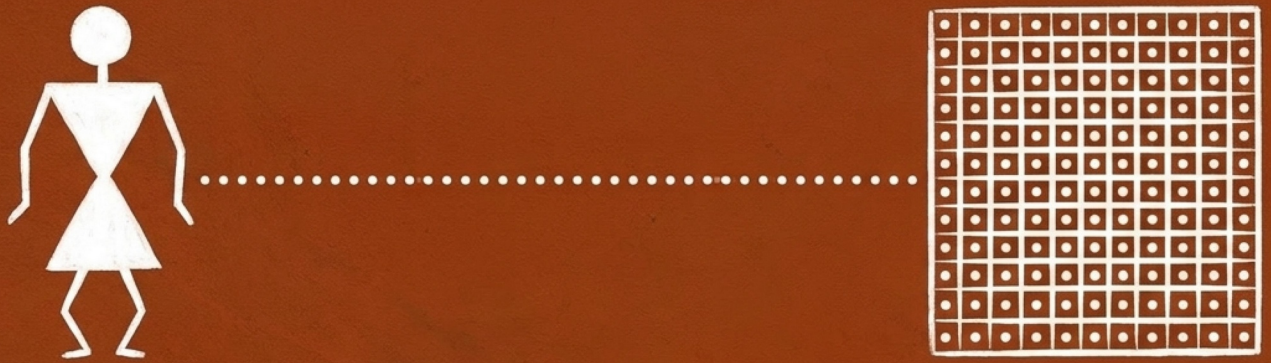
Basic Concepts in Buddhism: The Illusion of the Experiencer

From the process of experiencing to the cycle of becoming.

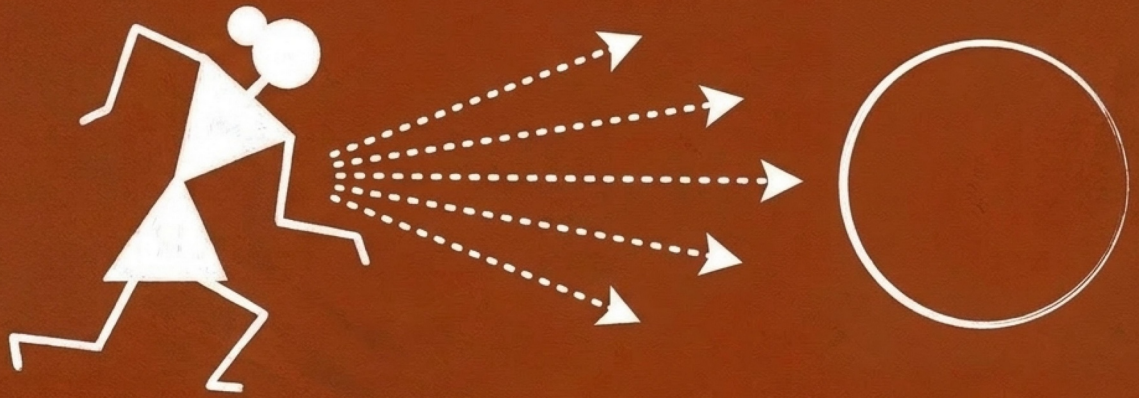
Experiencing is an active, continuous movement. Like a wave in the ocean, it has no separate identity or static individuality.



In the pure intensity of experiencing,
there is no division between subject and object.

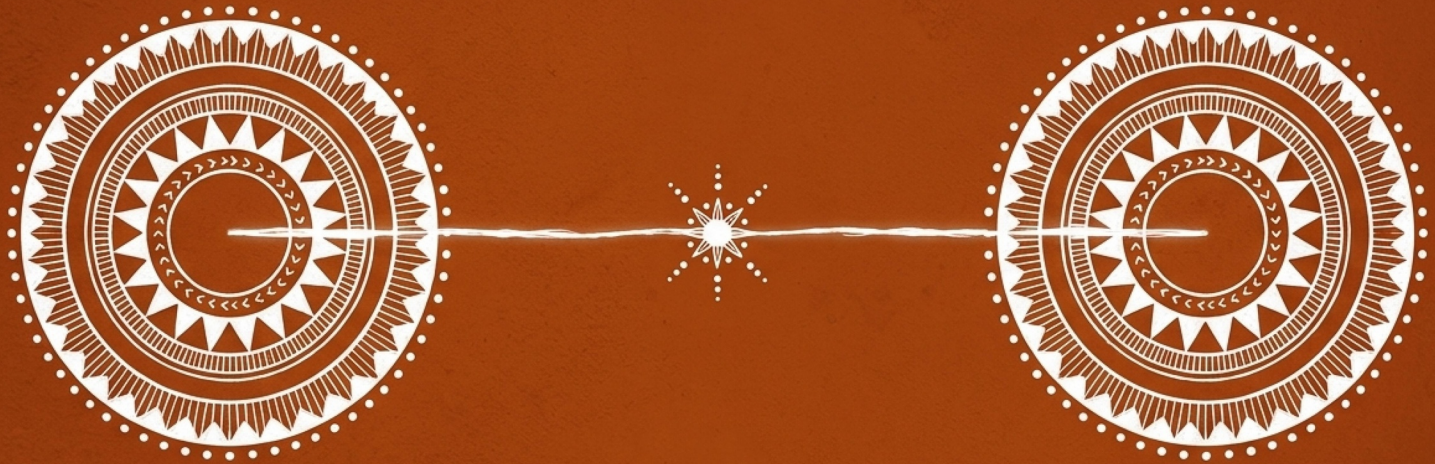


When experiencing ceases, it becomes a memory. This memory splits reality into an object (the past event) and a subject (the experiencer). We live in our memory, constructing an identity that seeks to continue.



The desire to possess past experiences creates a conscious will for the future.
This volition for continuity becomes the actor, born of its own action. It
It forms the vital link from the past, through the present, to the unborn future.

Dependent on past conditioning complexes arises relinking consciousness (paṭisandhi-viññāṇaṁ). It is the first thought in a new life.



It is not a soul or substance, but a present effect born of past causes.



The mind struggles with continuity without a core entity. Thus arose misconceptions: concepts of a permanent soul bearing the consequences of actions. This contradicts the essential Theravāda doctrine of insubstantiality (anatta).





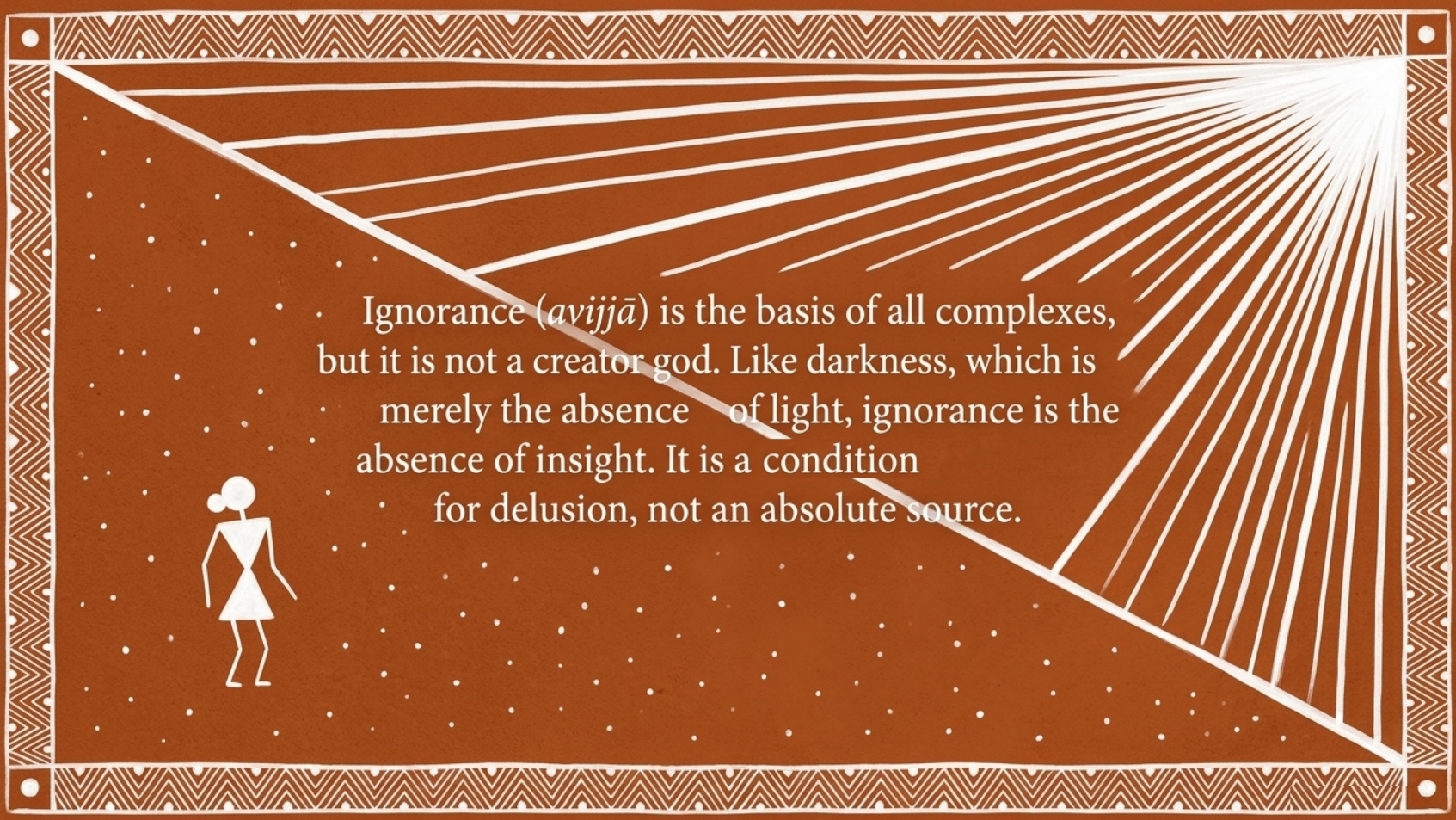
Theravāda: anatta (No-soul). Consciousness is conditional, fleeting, and insubstantial.

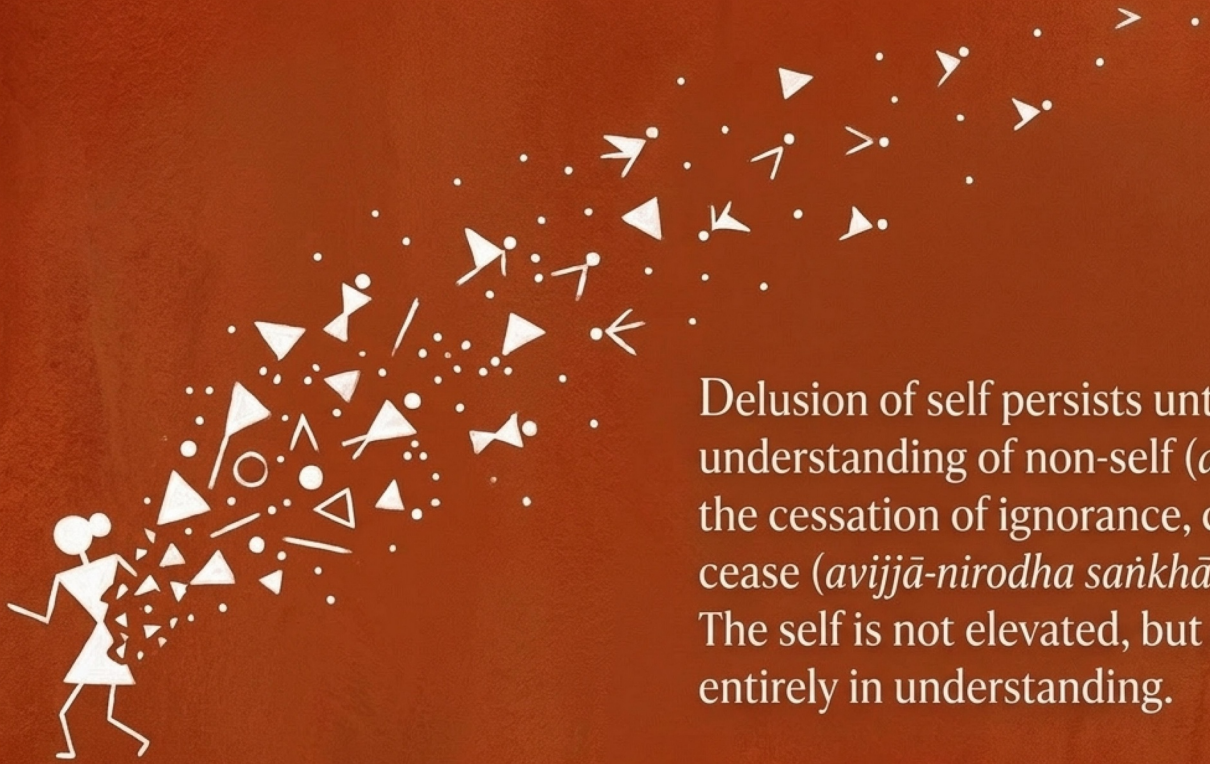
Later Schools: ālaya-viññāṇa (Storing consciousness). A persistent base carrying seeds through *saṁsāra*.

Original teachings reject any non-dissolving consciousness as an ultimate principle.



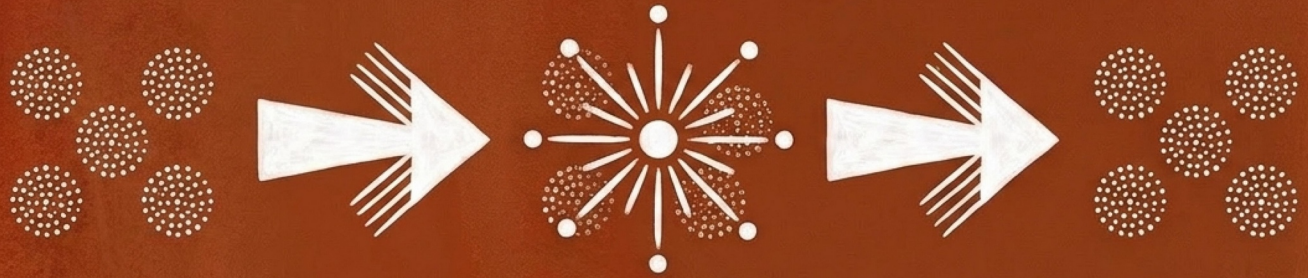
Unlike traditions with ultimate creative principles, Buddhism views existence as conditionally originated. Phenomena arise dependent on conditions and naturally cease when those conditions disappear. There is no absolute, universal creator entity.


Ignorance (*avijjā*) is the basis of all complexes, but it is not a creator god. Like darkness, which is merely the absence of light, ignorance is the absence of insight. It is a condition for delusion, not an absolute source.



Delusion of self persists until there is understanding of non-self (*anatta*). With the cessation of ignorance, complexes cease (*avijjā-nirodha saṅkhāra-nirodho*). The self is not elevated, but dissolved entirely in understanding.

Ignorance forms into thought, repeating across space and time.



- Past: Five conditions produce present effects.
- Present: Five effects become vitalized into five new conditions.
- Future: These produce five future effects.

A continuous, conditional flow.



Experiencing is fluid. Memory creates the illusion of an experiencer. Ignorance fuels the desire for continuity. Relinking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇaṁ*) bridges lifetimes.
The cycle rolls on—not as a soul, but as an ever-changing process.

Basic Concepts in Buddhism

The Crucial Juncture

Breaking the cycle of Saṁsāra



Past conditions create present effects.

If revitalised by new kamma, the wheel of Saṃsāra takes another turn. Future rebirth is guaranteed before previous kamma exhausts its energy.



The cycle breaks at a crucial juncture.

Dependent on the ending of sensation, there is the non-arising of craving (*vedanā-nirodha taṇhā-nirodho*). Present effects cease without becoming new causes.



Can there be sensation (*vedanā*) without craving (*taṇhā*)? Yes.

Sensation is a condition, not a law of creation. Mere feeling does not guarantee craving.



Sensations are merely the activities of the six senses.

They are the instruments, the soil. They are necessary for evolution, but they do not actively produce the effects.



Tired of quarrelsome monks, the Buddha retreated to the forest.

Experiencing fatigue and thirst, he asked Ānanda for drinking water and his outer robe to rest.



Need: Acts with purpose only for the immediate present.



Greed: Projects desire beyond immediate necessity into the future.

The Buddha's need did not grow into greed.



We cannot overcome greed through forced renunciation.

Resisting desire to overcome rebirth is an evasion. The seeking mind builds hurdles, then complains of the obstruction.



If sensation is not the obstacle, why does it become craving?

Because of clinging (*upādāna*) and becoming (*bhava*). We cling to sensations because through them, we can continue.



Sensation

Gratification

Rebirth

Continuance demands becoming, which is rebirth.

Without rebirth, there is no continuance. Without continuance, there is no motive to gratify the senses.



Without action, there is no actor. Without a search, there is no searcher.

Clinging is necessary for self-continuance, because without the “self,” there is no motive.

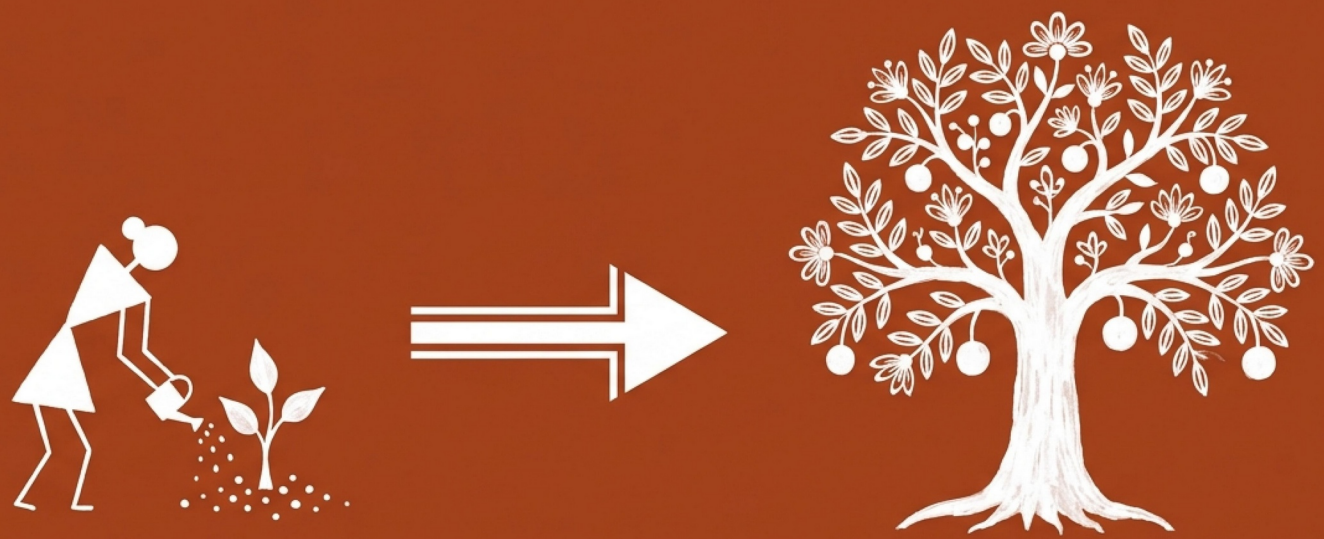


This “I”-concept is the ultimate motive of desire,
the object of clinging, the subject of becoming.

Only by ending this seeking can the wheel of Saṁsāra truly stop.

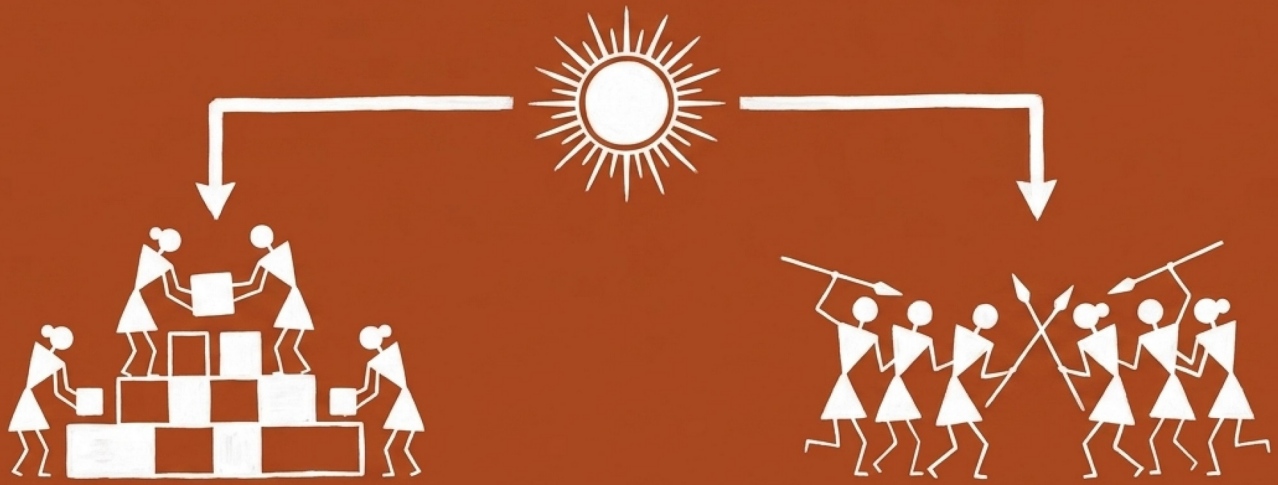


Basic Concepts in Buddhism: Understanding Bhāvanā



*Bhāvanā translates strictly to “to become,’ “to make grow,’ or ‘to develop.’ It is the deliberate cultivation of the mind—a methodical training directed toward a set goal.

Mind-culture seeks to expand mental power.

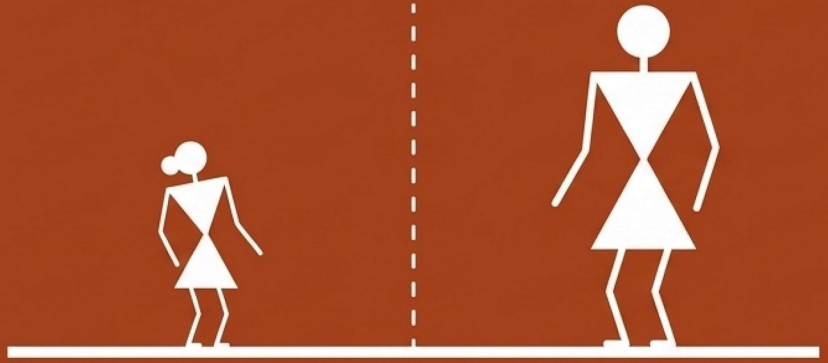


But power is inherently neutral. Its value depends entirely on its purpose—whether applied for healing or destruction.

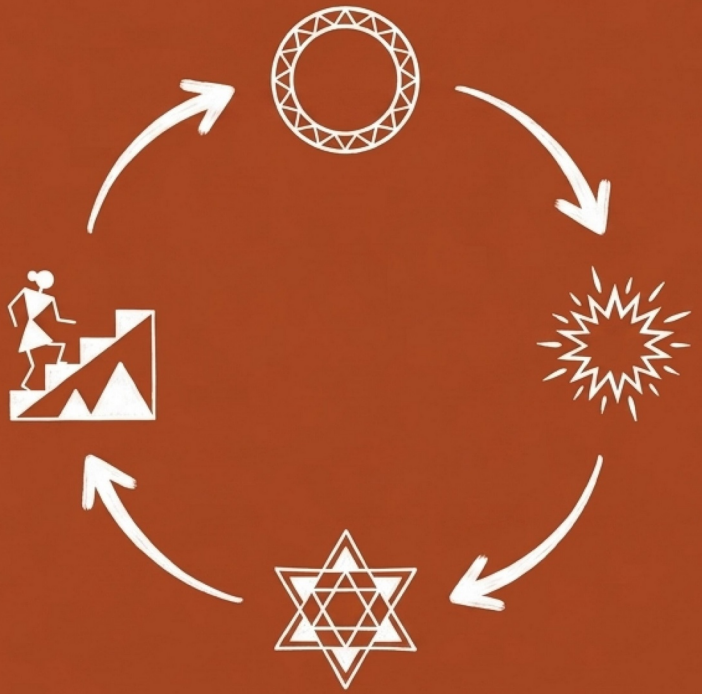


Understanding meditation as mind-culture, a vital question arises:
Why do we want to cultivate and increase the power of our mind?

The immediate answer:
We desire power because we feel uncontrolled and weak.



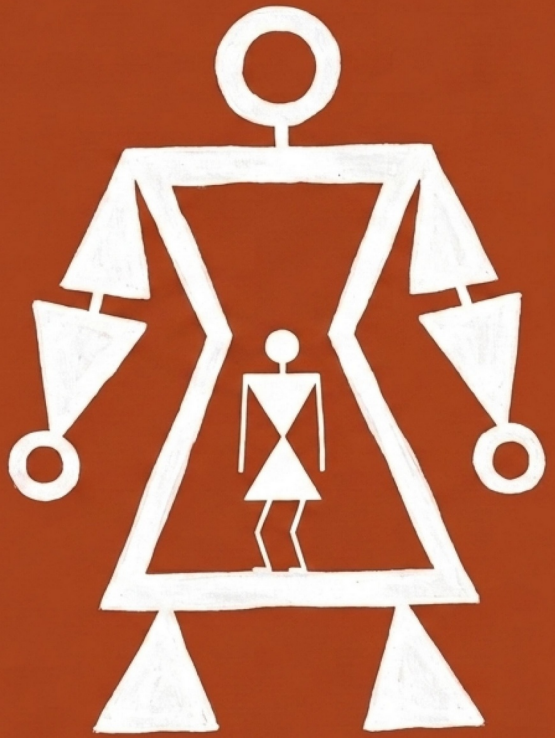
‘I am weak’ simply means ‘I am not as strong as he is.’
This realization is born solely from comparison.



The mechanism of desire:

A painful vacuum in the mind breeds desire.
Desire projects an ideal image.
We strive to fulfill that ideal through mind-culture.

When driven by this painful vacuum, mind-culture easily becomes self-culture. We seek power for the ‘self,’ the ego, or the the *super-soul*



This striving creates an industry. Meditation becomes a business of entrance fees, guru badges, and profit—all designed to control the uncontrolled and strengthen the weak.

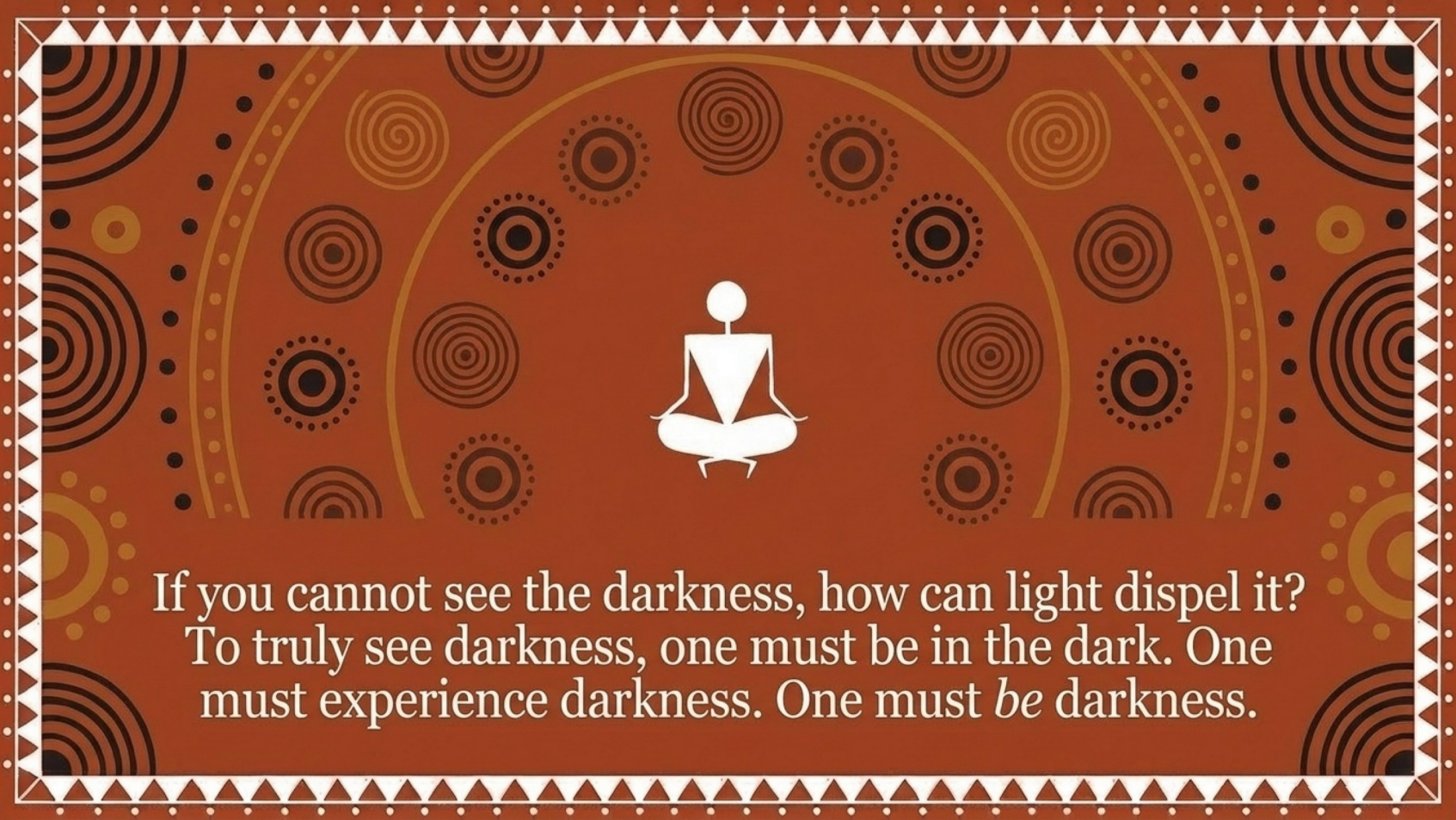


The ultimate ego trap: merging the deluded little ego into the ‘Super-Self’ or the Absolute. It is the culture of the ego striving to become God.



Subduing passions and replacing the actual with the ideal are simply forms of thought. It is the image-making mind attempting to build strength within its own wandering.


One wants to dispel darkness by bringing in light. But the more light one brings, the less darkness can be seen.


If you cannot see the darkness, how can light dispel it? To truly see darkness, one must be in the dark. One must experience darkness. One must *be* darkness.



Unprepared to face the void, we resist temptation. Virtue (*sīla*) becomes merely a stepping stone to mind-culture (*bhāvanā*)—a tool used to avoid the darkness rather than understand it.

Frantic Quest



Serene Understanding



True meditation requires abandoning the ego's quest for a 'Super-Self.' Instead of filling the painful vacuum with ideals, we must sit within the void and understand it.



Basic Concepts in Buddhism: *Bhāvanā*

Cultivation of understanding, not cultivation of self.

The Forking Paths: Samādhi and Vipassanā.

A visual map of Buddhist meditation, the search for tranquillity, and the ultimate realization of true freedom.



We stand at a fork.

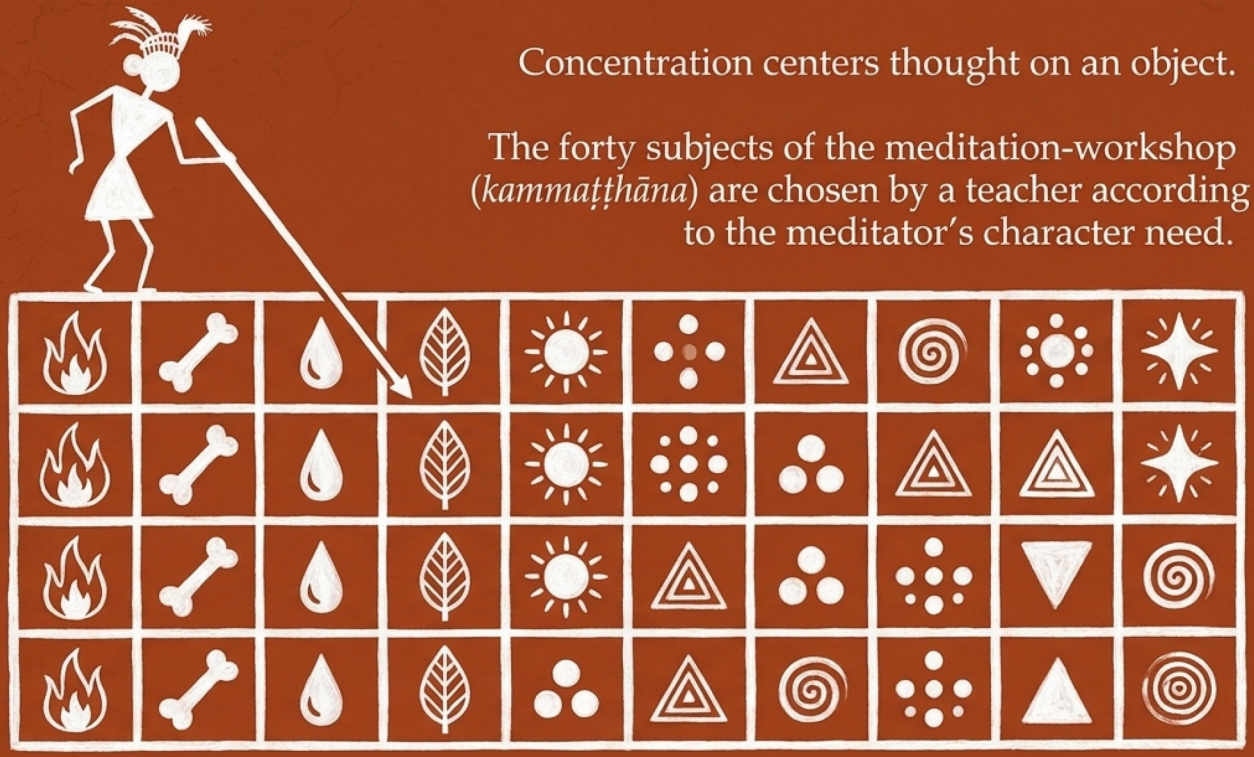


One path clears obstacles to see clearly (Samādhi). The other is seeing itself (Vipassanā). One does not lead to the other.

Why choose Concentration first? It promises peace.

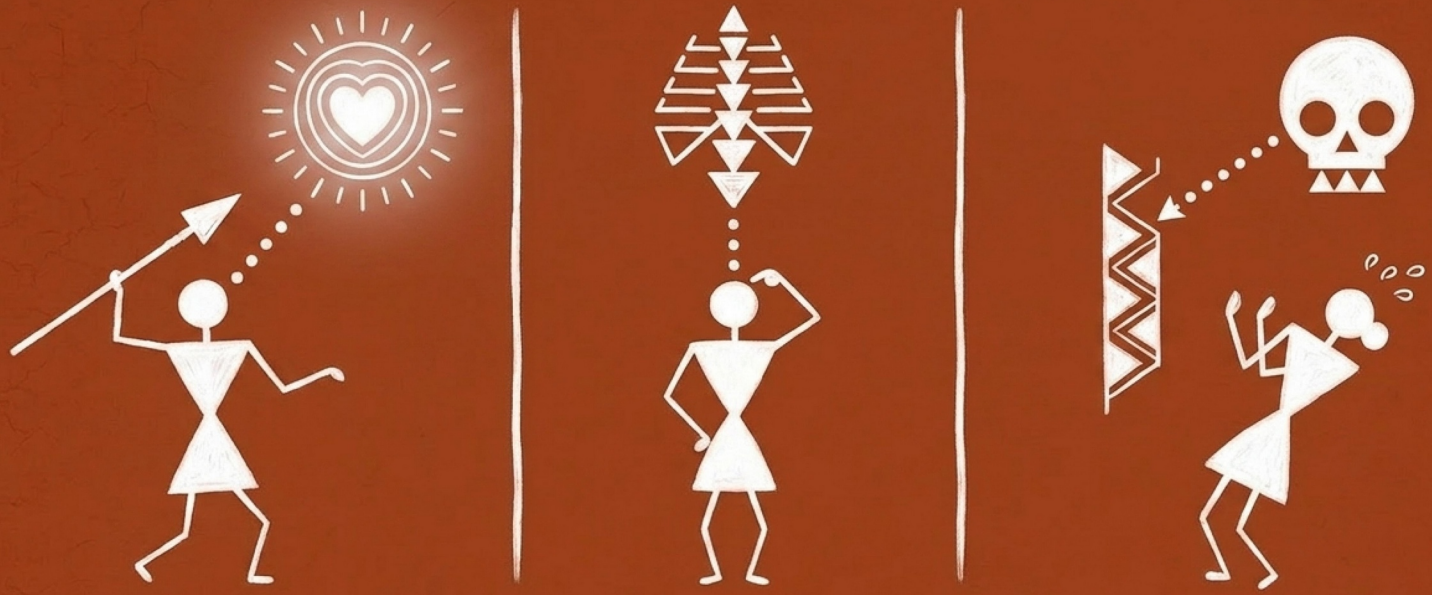
The Bodhisatta walked this path of tranquillity (*samatha-bhāvanā*) for six years, seeking an escape from the conflict of *saṁsāra*.





Concentration centers thought on an object.

The forty subjects of the meditation-workshop (*kammaṭṭhāna*) are chosen by a teacher according to the meditator's character need.



An aggressive mind heals through loving-kindness (*mettā*). An analytical focuses on anatomy. A timid mind avoids corpses. The breath calms all temperaments, whatever the cause of agitation.



Ten visual devices (*kasiṇa*) fix the mind in concentration.

These are *maṇḍalas*—physical appearances like clay, water, or fire, hiding a deeper mystical meaning within.

Concentration is a fixed pole.
The mind is a calf on a rope.



After tugging for freedom, it lies quietly by the post,
attaining one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*).



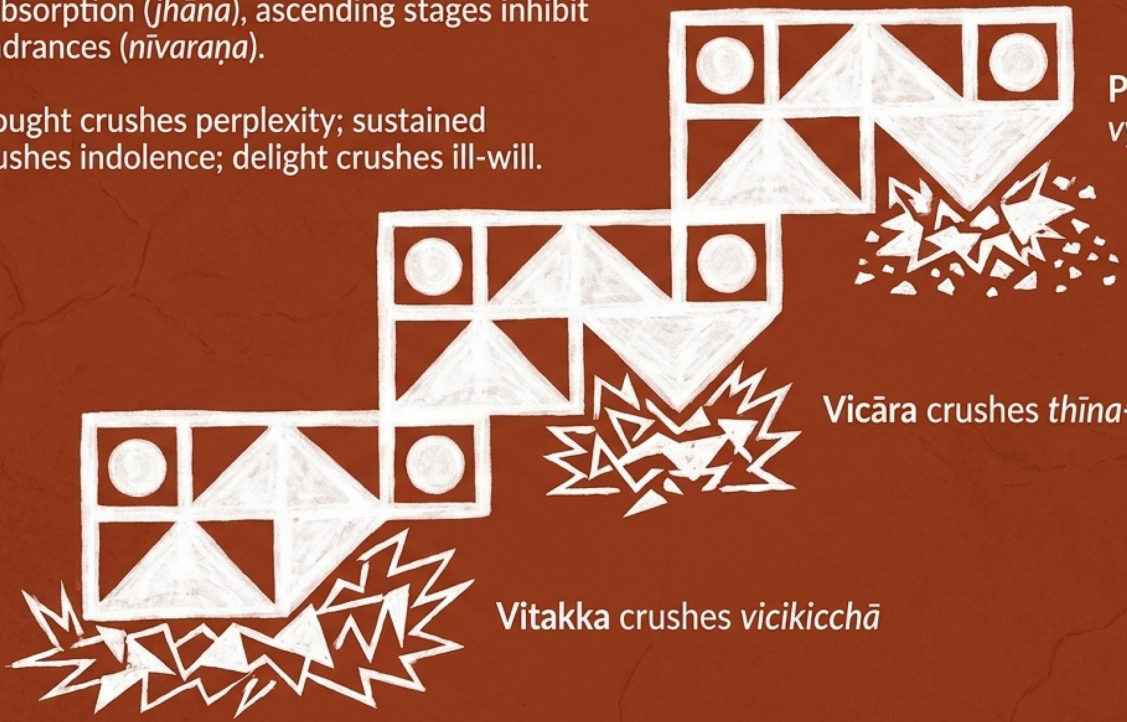
Access concentration (*upacāra*) circles the vicinity of the object.



Absorption (*appanā*) merges with it perfectly. The steady mind dwells peacefully, entirely fixed and immovable.

In mental absorption (*jhāna*), ascending stages inhibit the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*).

Applied thought crushes perplexity; sustained thought crushes indolence; delight crushes ill-will.



Pīti crushes *vyāpāda*

Vicāra crushes *thīna-middha*

Vitakka crushes *vicikicchā*

The summit is perfect equilibrium (*upekkhā*). Joy and grief are completely abandoned.



Yet, this ecstatic trance of well-being (*sukha*) is a temporary suppression of nature.

The Illusion of Escape.

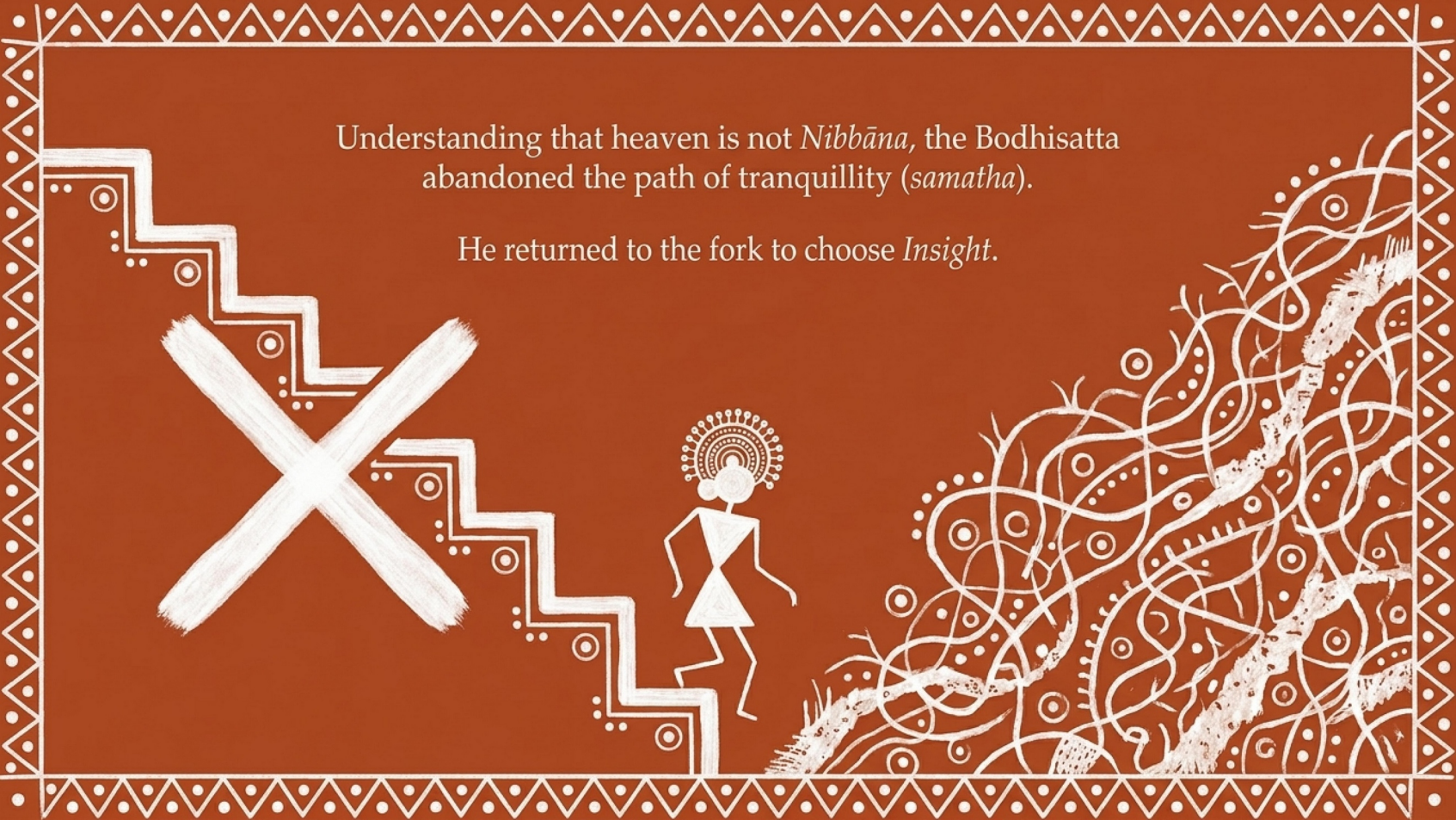


Tranquillity successfully suppresses mental hindrances. But because they are symptoms of an inner conflict, they remain waiting when concentration ceases.

Peace in escape is not true freedom.

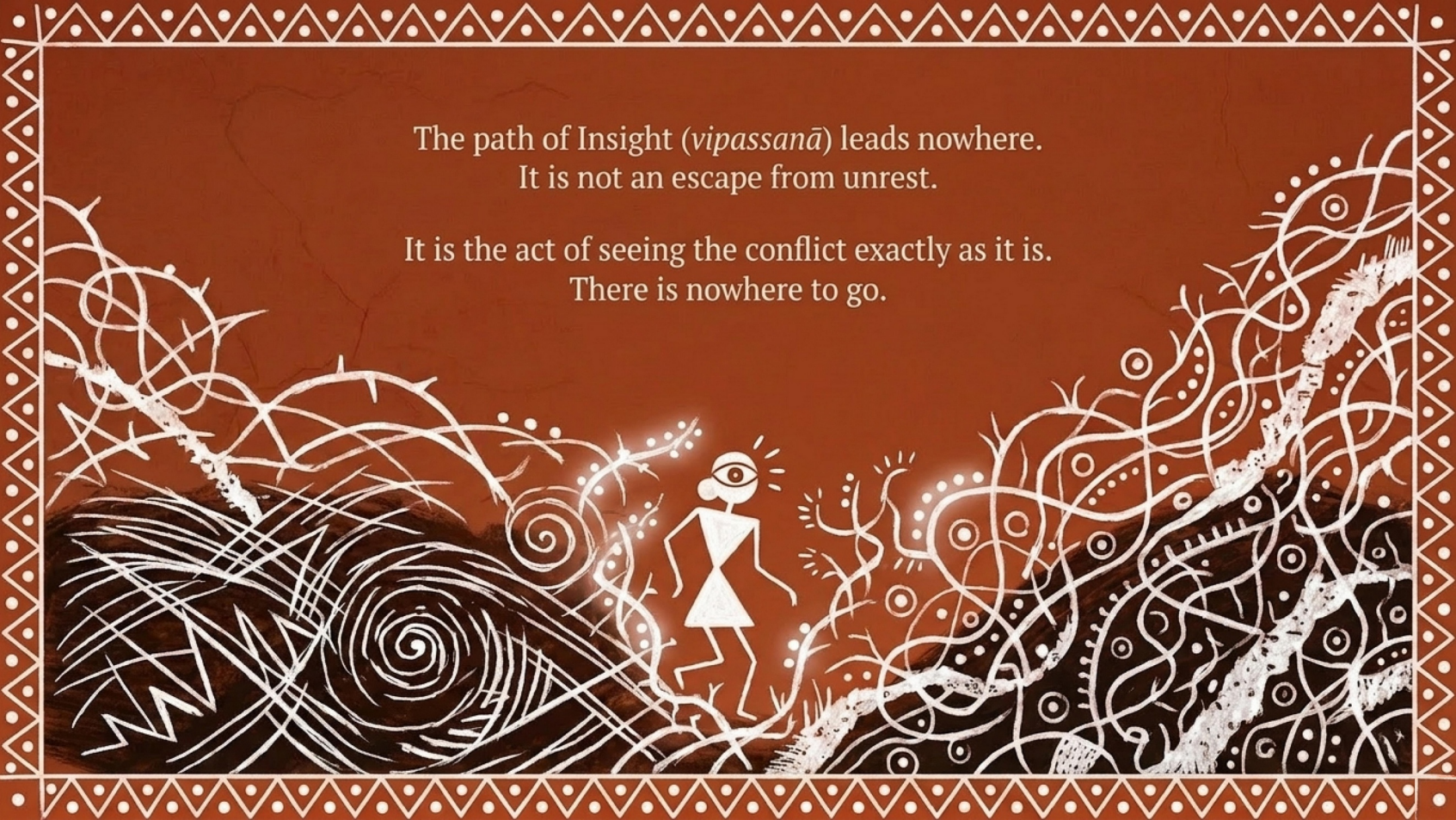
Understanding that heaven is not *Nibbāna*, the Bodhisatta abandoned the path of tranquillity (*samatha*).

He returned to the fork to choose *Insight*.



The path of Insight (*vipassanā*) leads nowhere.
It is not an escape from unrest.

It is the act of seeing the conflict exactly as it is.
There is nowhere to go.





Samādhi (Concentration)

Mechanism: Focussing on a centre.

Result: Tranquillity and mental absorption.

Direction: Going somewhere; an escape from conflict.



Vipassanā (Contemplation)

Mechanism: Seeing what is.

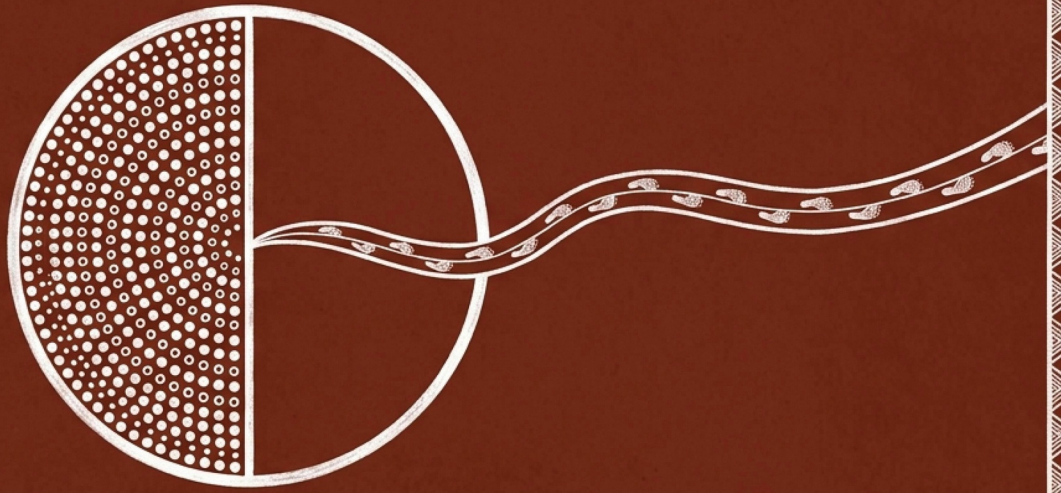
Result: True freedom.

Direction: Realising there is nowhere to go.

Basic Concepts in Buddhism

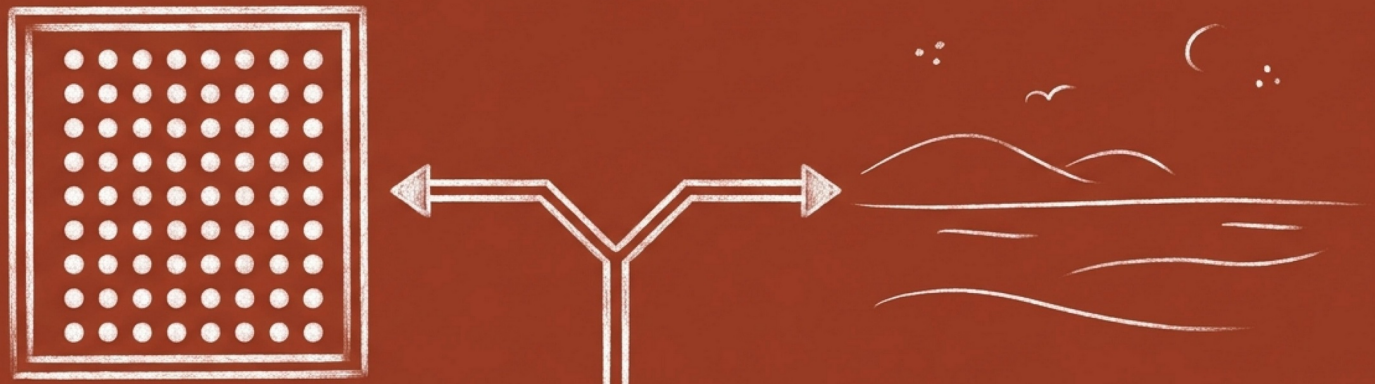
Beyond Concentration

The Path of Insight and Seeing Things as They Are



While concentration is a search for peace... there is another path.

The Divergence of Practice



Concentration (samādhi)

- Cultivates tranquility (samatha-bhāvanā)
- Relies on methods and goals
- Searches outside

Insight (vipassanā)

- Cultivates contemplative awareness
- No method, no means, no goal

How vs. Why



Knowledge (ñāṇa) asks How?

It understands mechanics and results.
It operates the world.



Wisdom (paññā) asks Why?

It investigates the truth of the question itself. It ends the search.

yathā bhūtaṁ pajānāti



To see and understand things as they are.

Not through a hypnotic device, but by looking directly at reality with uncolored sight (yathā-bhūta-ñāṇadassana).

The Refusal to See

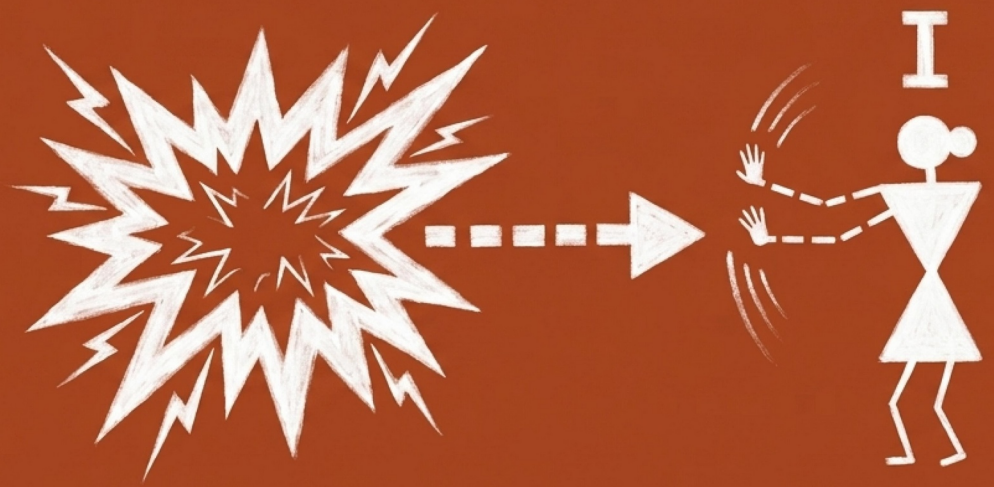


Is seeing difficult?

Yes, because we do not want to see.

We avoid looking inward because there is no pleasure in discovering who we are. We prefer the beauty of self-hypnosis over the reality of our own minds.

Experiencing Without an Experiencer



My anger is what is. But why am I hurt?
Conflict arises when the I stands in opposition. We try to become non-anger.
But without anger, there would be no I.

No Sublimation, No Escape

Concentration sublimates the undesirable, covering it with beautiful concepts.

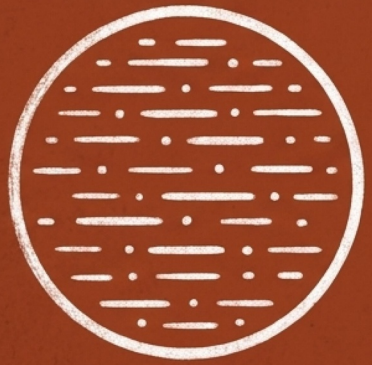
To see hate as hate is truth.



Insight (vipassanā) sees through the covering.

To convert hate into love is merely a mental projection.

The Flow of Renewal



To know life, one must know dying."
"Life must be new every moment, like a flowing river. Stagnation is a lake. Renewal requires discarding the old."
"Living is dying."

Psychological Death



A mind refusing to die to its attachments, preserving memories, and projecting the past onto the future is already dead.

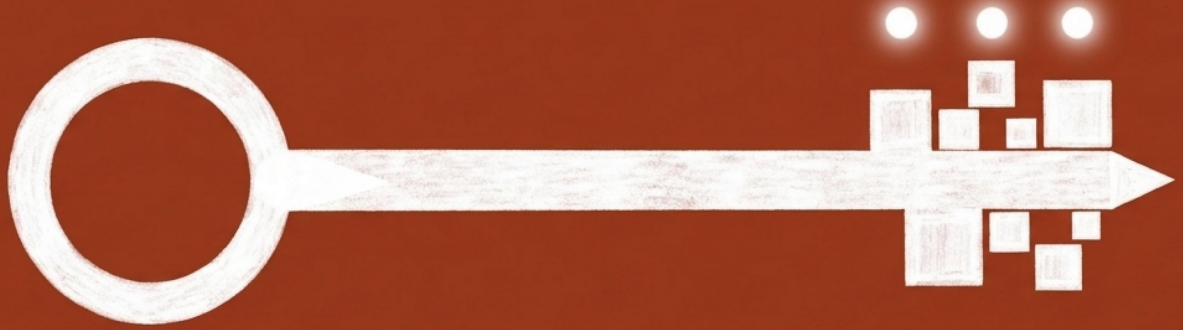
Death is the refusal to be born anew. It is the incapacity to let go of the self.

Living with the End



We crave continuity and fear the end.
To conquer fear, invite death close. Love it as a mother loves her child. Death is a falling away of all that thought has ever made.
To die today is true living.

The Key of Insight



A skeleton key unlocks the truth of reality. It is the contemplation (vipassanā) of the Three Characteristics.

There is no method. The objects for contemplation are always here; we only have to open our eyes.

Impermanence (anicca)



Everything is in constant flux.

Why is impermanence a problem?
Because it breaks down our security, our satisfaction, and our ideal of everlasting joy. The actual disturbs our ideal.

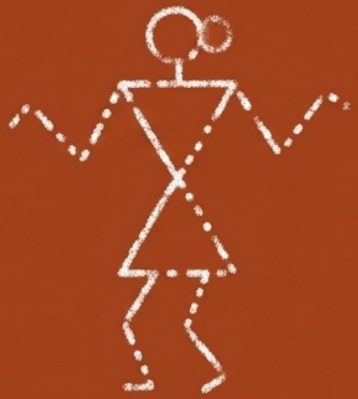
Conflict (dukkha)



Impermanence itself is not painful.
The conflict lies in our perception (*anicca-dukkha saññā*).

Like nettles that only burn when touched, conflict exists solely because our ideal approach demands permanence from the actual.

Non-Entity (anatta)



The self needs permanence to exist.

But this self is just a concept. See the emptiness of this conflict (dukkha-anatta saññā). Without a dependent self, impermanence remains, but the conflict dissolves.

Buddhism at its Best



Enlightenment comes when the false is seen as false.
May clinging be seen as fear,
May craving be seen as hope,
May change be seen as passing,
May conflict be seen as void.
For that is truth.