

Handout 3. Mental Factors

Ethically Variable Mental Factors

Universal Ethically Variable Mental Factors

	Pāḷi	Characteristic	Function	Manifestation	Proximate Cause
Contact/ Sense impression	<i>Phassa</i>	Mentally touching object	Impact/ impingement	Base + object + consciousness	Object in avenue of awareness
Feeling/ Sensation/Experience	<i>Vedanā</i>	Being felt	Experiencing object	Relishing of the Mental Factors	Tranquillity
Perception/ Recognition	<i>Saññā</i>	Perceiving object's qualities/ Noting	Recognizing/ Marking	Brief interpretation of object	Object as it appears
Volition/ Intention/Will	<i>Cetanā</i>	Coordinating	Accumulate kamma	Directing/ Organizing	Consciousness/ Mental Factors
One-pointedness/ Concentration	<i>Ekagattā</i>	Non-scattering/ Non-distraction	Uniting Mental Factors	Peace	Happiness
Attention/ Reflection	<i>Manasikāra</i>	Driving Mental Factors to object	Joining Mental Factors to object	Facing object	Object
Life faculty/ Vitality	<i>Jīvitindriya</i>	Ceaseless watching	Maintaining life	Establishment	Consciousness/ Mental Factors

Occasional Ethically Variable Mental Factors

	Pāḷi	Characteristic	Function	Manifestation	Proximate Cause
Initial application/ Thought	<i>Vitakka</i>	Directing mind onto object	Striking at object	Leading of the mind to object	Object
Sustained application/ Examination	<i>Vicāra</i>	Continued presence on object	Sustained application on object	Anchoring of Mental Factors on object	Object
Determination/ Commitment	<i>Adhimokkha</i>	Conviction/ Being convinced	Not groping	Decisiveness	A thing to be convinced about
Energy/ Effort/Exertion	<i>Viriya</i>	Supporting, exerting and marshalling	Supporting Mental Factors	Non-collapse	A sense of urgency
Zest/ Rapture/Enthusiasm	<i>Pīti</i>	Endearing	Refreshes body & mind	Elation	Mind & body (<i>nāmarūpa</i>)
Motivation/ Desire/Zeal	<i>Chanda</i>	Desire to act	Searching for object	Need for object	Object

Unwholesome Mental Factors

Universal Unwholesome Mental Factors

	Pāḷi	Characteristic	Function	Manifestation	Proximate Cause
Delusion/ Ignorance	<i>Moha</i>	Mental blindness, unknowing	Concealment of object's nature	Absence of right understanding	Unwise attention
Shamelessness/ Immodesty	<i>Ahirika</i>	No disgust over misconduct	Doing evil without shame	Not shrinking away from evil	Lack of respect for self
Recklessness/ Lack of moral dread	<i>Anottappa</i>	No dread over misconduct	Doing evil without dread	Not shrinking away from evil	Lack of respect for others
Restlessness/ Distraction/Wavering	<i>Uddhacca</i>	Excitement/ No mindfulness	Make the mind steady	Turmoil/ Whirling	Unwise attention

Occasional Unwholesome Mental Factors

	Pāḷi	Characteristic	Function	Manifestation	Proximate Cause
Attachment/ Greed	<i>Lobha</i>	Grasping an object	Sticking	Not giving up	Attachment to what leads to bondage
Wrong view/ Evil opinion	<i>Diṭṭhi</i>	Unwise conviction	Pre-assume/ Bias/Distort	Wrong belief	Unwillingness to listen to Dhamma
Conceit/ Pride	<i>Māna</i>	Haughtiness	Self-praise	Desire to advertise oneself	Greed disassociated from Wrong view
Aversion/ Anger/Hatred/Fear	<i>Dosa</i>	Ferocity/ Savageness	Burn up its own support (Heart-base)	Persecuting/ Injuring/ Offending	A ground for annoyance
Envy/ Jealousy	<i>Issā</i>	Aversion to other's prosperity	Dissatisfied with other's success	Aversion towards other's success	Other's success
Selfishness/ Stinginess	<i>Macchhariya</i>	Concealing one's success	Unwilling to share with others	Shrinking away from sharing	One's own success
Remorse/ Worry/Regret	<i>Kukkucca</i>	Subsequent regret, repentance	Sorrow over what has been done	Remorse/ Regret	Past unskillful kamma
Sloth/ Sluggishness	<i>Thīna</i>	Lack of driving power/No striving	Destruction of energy	Sinking of the mind	Drowsiness
Torpor/ Laziness	<i>Middha</i>	Unwieldiness	Closing the doors of consciousness	Drooping, nodding & sleepiness	Drowsiness
Doubt	<i>Vicikicchā</i>	Doubting/ Shifting about	Mental wavering	Indecisiveness/ Indecision	Unwise attention

Wholesome Mental Factors

Universal Wholesome Mental Factors

	Pāṭi	Characteristic	Function	Manifestation	Proximate Cause
Faith/ Confidence/Conviction	<i>Saddhā</i>	Placing faith/ Aspiring	Clarifying/ Purifying	Non-fogginess/ Lack of pollution	A worthy object
Mindfulness/ Attentiveness	<i>Sati</i>	Not floating away from object	Non- forgetfulness/ Non-confusion	Being “face to face” with object	Firm remembrance/ Four foundations
Conscience/ Shame/Scruples	<i>Hiri</i>	Disgust at misconduct	Not doing evil because of modesty	Shrinking away from evil	Self-respect
Fear of blame/ Moral dread	<i>Ottappa</i>	Dread of evil	Not doing evil because of dread	Shrinking away from evil	Respect for others
Non-attachment/ Non-greed	<i>Alobha</i>	No attachment to object	Not appropriating	Detachment	Wise attention
Non-aversion/ Non-anger	<i>Adosa</i>	Not opposing	Removing annoyance	Being pleasing/ Agreeableness	Wise attention
Equanimity/ Mental balance	<i>Tatra- majjhataṭṭā</i>	Promoting neutrality towards beings	Inhibiting partiality/ Seeing equality	No approval or resentment	Wise attention
2 x Tranquillity	<i>Passaddhi</i>	Quieting mental disturbances	Crushing mental disturbances	Neutrality/ Peacefulness	Consciousness/ Mental Factors
2 x Agility/ Lightness/Buoyancy	<i>Luhutā</i>	Opposing mental heaviness	Crushing mental heaviness	Oppose Sloth & Torpor	Consciousness/ Mental Factors
2 x Pliancy/ Elasticity/Malleability	<i>Mudutā</i>	Opposing mental rigidity	Crushing mental rigidity	Oppose Wrong view & Conceit	Consciousness/ Mental Factors
2 x Adaptability/ Workableness	<i>Kammaññatā</i>	Opposing mental unwieldiness	Crushing mental unwieldiness	Oppose Sense desire & Aversion	Consciousness/ Mental Factors
2 x Proficiency/ Skill	<i>Pāguññatā</i>	Healthiness/ Fitness/ Competence	Crushing mental unhealthiness	Oppose lack of Faith (no disability)	Consciousness/ Mental Factors
2 x Uprightness/ Rectitude	<i>Ujjukatā</i>	Mental uprightness	Crushing mental crookedness	Oppose hypocrisy & fraudulence	Consciousness/ Mental Factors

Occasional Wholesome Mental Factors

	Pāṭi	Characteristic	Function	Manifestation	Proximate Cause
Understanding/ Wisdom	<i>Paññā</i>	Penetrating intrinsic nature of object	Illuminate the object	Non-bewilderment	Wise attention
Compassion	<i>Karuṇā</i>	Promoting removal of other's suffering	Unable to bear other's suffering	Non-cruelty	Seeing helplessness
Sympathetic joy/ Altruistic joy	<i>Muditā</i>	Gladness at the success of others	Being unenvious at other's success	Elimination of aversion	Seeing the success of others
Abstinence from wrong speech	<i>Vaci-duccarita Virati</i>	Non-transgression by wrong speech	Shrink back from evil deeds	Abstinence from evil deeds	Faith , shame and fewness of wishes
Abstinence from wrong action	<i>Kāya-duccarita Virati</i>	Non-transgression by wrong action	Shrink back from evil deeds	Abstinence from evil deeds	Faith , shame and fewness of wishes
Abstinence from wrong livelihood	<i>Ājīva-duccarita Virati</i>	Non-transgression by wrong livelihood	Shrink back from evil deeds	Abstinence from evil deeds	Faith , shame and fewness of wishes

Composition of Thought Moments¹

Composition of Unwholesome Thought Moments (Thought Moments 1–12)

All of the Universal Ethically Variable Mental Factors: Contact, Feeling , etc.	Some of the Occasional Ethically Variable Mental Factors: Initial application, Sustained application , etc.	All of the Universal Unwholesome Mental Factors: Delusion, Shamelessness , etc.	Some of the Occasional Unwholesome Mental Factors: Attachment, Wrong view , etc.
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Composition of Ethically-neutral Thought Moments (Thought Moments 13–30)

All of the Universal Ethically Variable Mental Factors: Contact, Feeling , etc.	Some of the Occasional Ethically Variable Mental Factors: Initial application, Sustained application , etc.
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Composition of Wholesome Thought Moments (Thought Moments 31–89)

All of the Universal Ethically Variable Mental Factors: Contact, Feeling , etc.	Some of the Occasional Ethically Variable Mental Factors: Initial application, Sustained application , etc.	All of the Universal Wholesome Mental Factors: Faith, Mindfulness , etc.	Some of the Occasional Wholesome Mental Factors: Understanding, Compassion , etc.
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¹See Handout 4 for details.