
DEFINITIONS OF RIGHT CONCENTRATION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The present article examines definitions of right concentration in early Buddhist discourse from a comparative perspective, in order to discern stages in their historical development. Based on the historical-critical perspective established in this way, the main proposal is that the definition of right concentration by way of listing the four absorptions appears to reflect a later stage in textual evolution. It would follow from this that the view, according to which the ability to attain absorption forms a necessary condition for progress to stream-entry, is not a reflection of the earliest stages of Buddhist thought in the way these emerge from the extant textual sources.

Key Words

Absorption, Awakening, Concentration, *dhyāna*, Eightfold Path, *jhāna*, *samādhi*, Stream-entry.

The Four Absorptions as Right Concentration

The implications of right concentration as the eighth factor of the noble eightfold path have been and still are a matter of concern and continuous discussion in Theravāda circles. Simply stated, the question is to what degree the ability to attain absorption, either the first or all four of them, is required for reaching stream-entry. Such discussions often take as their point of departure the definition of right concentration by way of listing the four absorptions.

Based on a digital search of the Pāli canon, however, it appears that this definition is only found in three instances among the Pāli discourses. In addition to these three, a fourth passage of relevance describes the *cultivation* of right concentration by way of the four absorptions and by way of reviewing. My survey begins with the three instances of the *definition* of right concentration and then turns to the fourth instance regarding its *cultivation*. The first of the three occurrences that define right concentration by listing the four absorptions occurs in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*. The relevant part proceeds in this manner:¹

Monastics, and what is right concentration? Monastics, here secluded from sensual desires and secluded from unwholesome states, with application and sustaining, with joy and happiness born of seclusion, a monastic dwells having attained the first absorption. With the stilling of application and sustaining, being without application and without sustaining, with inner confidence, unification of the mind, and joy and happiness born of concentration, one dwells having attained the second absorption. And with the fading away of joy one dwells equipoised, mindful, clearly knowing and, experiencing happiness through the body, one dwells having attained the third absorption, being one whom noble ones designate as ‘one who dwells happily with equipoise and mindfulness.’ With the abandoning of happiness

¹ DN 22 at DN II 313,12: *katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsamādhī? idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vivicc’ eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati, sato ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti, yaṃ taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti: upekkhako satimā sukhavihārī ti tatiyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. sukhasa ca pahānā dukkhasa ca pahānā pubb’ eva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthagamā adukkhamasukhaṃ upekkhāsati paṭisuddhiṃ catutthajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammāsamādhī.*

and the abandoning of pain and with the previous disappearance of pleasure and displeasure, with neutrality and purity of mindfulness and equipoise, one dwells having attained the fourth absorption. Monastics, this is called right concentration.

This definition of right concentration occurs in a section of the discourse that can confidently be identified as a later addition.² It forms part of a detailed analysis of the four noble truths that is an obvious instance of Abhidharma thought appearing in later portions of the early discourses. The Burmese and Siamese editions add this whole section to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* as well.³ The Chinese parallels to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* (and thereby also to the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta*) do not have a contemplation of the four noble truths at all. Comparative study makes it safe to conclude that the appearance of this topic is already a late element. The detailed exposition that includes the definition of right concentration by way of the four absorptions is in turn a subsequent stage of textual evolution.

The second instance where a Pāli discourse defines right concentration by listing the four absorptions is the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*.⁴ This Pāli discourse has three parallels extant in Chinese, which are found in the *Madhyama-āgama*, the *Ekottarika-āgama*, and in the form of an individual translation. Out of these, the *Ekottarika-āgama* version simply mentions “right concentration” as a factor of the eightfold path, without providing any further

² See, e.g., Winternitz 1920/1968: 51, Bapat 1926: 11, Thomas 1927/2003: 252, Barua 1971/2003: 369-371, and Anālayo 2014: 91-100.

³ Anālayo 2011a: 90 note 328.

⁴ MN 141 at MN III 252,10.

explanation.⁵ The *Madhyama-āgama* discourse, however, gives a rather detailed exposition:⁶

What is right concentration? It is reckoned to be when a noble disciple is mindful of *dukkha* as ‘this is *dukkha*’, of its arising as ‘this is its arising’, of its cessation as ‘this is its cessation’, or when being mindful of the path as ‘this is the path’; or else on contemplating what was done formerly, or training to be mindful of all formations, or seeing the danger in all formations, or seeing Nirvāṇa as peace, or when being free from attachment and mindfully contemplating a wholesome liberation of the mind.

Herein, if the mind is established, established in absorption, established accordingly, without distraction, without being scattered, being collected, stilled, and rightly concentrated, this is called right concentration.

The individual translation offers a comparable definition.⁷ In this way, these two parallels consider right concentration from the viewpoint of the quality of collectedness of the mind that is present during specific times of meditative contemplation. When considered in conjunction with the *Ekottarika-āgama* version, it becomes evident that none of the parallels to the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta* defines right concentration by listing the four absorptions.

⁵ EĀ 27.1 at T II 643b24: 正定.

⁶ MĀ 31 at T I 469b24: 云何正定? 謂聖弟子念苦是苦時, 習是習, 滅是滅, 念道是道時, 或觀本所作, 或學念諸行, 或見諸行災患, 或見涅槃止息, 或無著念觀善心解脫時, 於中若心住, 禪住, 順住, 不亂, 不散, 攝, 止, 正定, 是名正定. A translation of this part can also be found in Bingenheimer et al. 2013: 246.

⁷ T 32 at T I 816c14: 何等為, 賢者, 直正定? 若, 賢者, 道德弟子, 苦為念苦, 習為念習, 盡為念盡, 道為念道, 意止故, 不動, 不走, 已攝止故意念在一, 是名為直正定; 亦觀持宿命, 亦從得解意念, 見世間行悔, 攝, 止, 度世, 無為, 見可如, 得無所著, 從解脫因緣意向觀所意止, 正安一, 不惑, 不走, 攝止, 念定在二念, 是名為直正定.

The third instance where a listing of the four absorptions can be identified among Pāli discourses as a way of defining right concentration occurs in the *Vibhaṅga-sutta* found in the *Magga-saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*.⁸ The *Vibhaṅga-sutta* has a parallel in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* and in an individual translation. The relevant part in the *Saṃyukta-āgama* version offers the following definition:⁹

What is right concentration? It is reckoned to be the establishing of the mind in the absence of distraction, it being firm, collected, tranquil, concentrated, and mentally unified.

The individual translation proceeds in a similar way by listing qualities of a concentrated mind.¹⁰ Hence in these two versions the spotlight is on the collected quality of the mind, expressed with a series of synonyms. Unlike the parallels to the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta* found in the *Madhyama-āgama* and in an individual translation, the definitions provided here do not relate concentration to particular times of meditative contemplation of the four truths or insight-related themes. As a result, with this type of definition the relationship to the four noble truths is no longer self-evident.

Similar to the case of the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta*, in the present case, too, the parallels to the *Vibhaṅga-sutta* do not have a listing of the four absorptions. In this way, none of the three occurrences in Pāli discourses that define right concentration by equation with the four absorptions finds support in a similar listing in the extant parallel versions. The *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta* does include the quality of being established in absorption among various synonyms for concentration, but other parallel versions proceed without such a reference.

⁸ SN 45.8 at SN V 10,5.

⁹ SĀ 784 at T II 203a15: 何等爲正定? 謂住心不亂, 堅固, 攝持, 寂止, 三昧, 一心.

¹⁰ T 112 at T II 505a20: 第八諦定爲何等? 生死意合, 念止, 相止, 護已止, 聚止, 不可爲, 不作所有罪, 不墮中庭, 是名爲諦定.

The Four Absorptions and Reviewing

As mentioned above, the fourth occurrence of relevance is a Pāli discourse that presents five ways of cultivating right concentration (here additionally qualified as “noble”). After describing the four absorptions and their bodily experience, the discourse in question, found in the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, continues by presenting the reviewing sign as another instance of right concentration as follows:¹¹

Monastics, it is just as if someone were to review another; standing were to examine one who is sitting or sitting were to examine one who is lying down. Monastics, in the same way the reviewing sign is well grasped by a monastic, well given attention to, well taken up, well penetrated with wisdom. Monastics, this is the fifth cultivation of noble five-factored right concentration.

Although the precise implications of the reference to the “reviewing sign” (*paccavekkhaṇānimitta*) are not spelled out in the discourse itself, it obviously does not correspond to the attainment of one of the four absorptions listed earlier, otherwise it would not have been introduced as a fifth way of cultivating *samādhi*. The comparison with someone observing another person in a particular bodily posture supports the impression that the type of *samādhi* described here is not of the absorptive type.

This *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse has a parallel in a Sanskrit fragment, which has preserved parts of the description of the four absorptions and their bodily experience. It also has preserved the designation of the fourth absorption as the fourth instance of a five-factored concentration, and it has a remnant of the description of the fifth type of *samādhi*, corresponding to the reviewing sign in

¹¹ AN 5.28 at AN III 27,16: *seyyathā pi, bhikkhave, añño'va aññaṃ paccavekkheyya, thito vā nisinnaṃ paccavekkheyya, nisinno vā nipannaṃ paccavekkheyya, evaṃ evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno paccavekkhaṇānimittaṃ suggahitaṃ hoti sumanasikataṃ sūpadhāritaṃ suppaṭividdhaṃ paññāya. ariyassa, bhikkhave, pañcaṅgikassa sammāsamādhissa ayaṃ pañcamā bhāvanā.*

the Pāli discourse.¹² The most noteworthy difference that emerges from the fragments, to the extent to which these have preserved the discourse, is that in this version the topic of discussion appears to be just “concentration” in general, rather than “*right* concentration” .

Another discourse relevant to the passage translated above from the *Āṅuttara-nikāya* is an individual Chinese translation that parallels the *Dasuttara-sutta*. By way of presenting a background to this discourse, I first need to survey the relevant parts of the *Dasuttara-sutta* and its parallels.

A bare reference to the reviewing sign occurs as the fifth item in a reference to five-factored right concentration in the *Dasuttara-sutta*. The actual listing includes the reviewing sign, in addition to which this discourse mentions concentration that is suffused by joy (*pīṭi*), happiness (*sukha*), the mind (*ceto*), and light (*āloka*).¹³ Hence, this reference to “right concentration” comes without being overtly related to the set of four absorptions.

In a subsequent section, the *Dasuttara-sutta* also describes a five-fold knowledge in relation to right concentration. Under this heading, the discourse lists *samādhi* that is happy now and has happy results, *samādhi* that is noble and unworldly, *samādhi* that is not practiced by the unworthy, *samādhi* that is peaceful, etc., and finally *samādhi* attained to and emerged from with mindfulness and clear comprehension.¹⁴ This reference to “right concentration” also does not explicitly list the four absorptions.

¹² Waldschmidt et al. 1971: 253, SHT III 990R7: (*parisuddhena cittena parya*) *vadātena āryasya pañcāṅgikasya samādhē-evaṃ cat(urthā bhāvanā)*, and SHT III 990R8: *bhavatī sumanasikṛtaṃ sujuṣṭaṃ supratividdhaṃ*.

¹³ DN 34 at DN III 277,25: *pañcāṅgiko sammāsamādhi: pīṭipharaṇatā, sukhapharaṇatā, cetopharaṇatā, ālokaparaṇatā, paccavekkhaṇanimittaṃ*.

¹⁴ DN 34 at DN III 278,24, introduced as *pañcāñāṅiko sammāsamādhi*.

The *Dasuttara-sutta* has parallels in Sanskrit fragments, a discourse in the *Dīrgha-āgama*, and an individual translation (the last being the one of relevance to the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* passage). The Sanskrit fragments have preserved parts of a similar description of a fivefold knowledge related to right concentration, additionally qualified as “noble”. This description also covers *samādhi* that is happy now and in future, etc., although it differs from the *Dasuttara-sutta* in the sequence in which these are listed.¹⁵ Thus this version also does not list the four absorptions.

The *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel has a counterpart to five-fold knowledge in relation to concentration, which is also qualified as “noble”.¹⁶ The description corresponds to the *Dasuttara-sutta* and its Sanskrit fragment parallel, in the sense of listing *samādhi* that is happy now and in future, etc., with the notable difference that such concentration is not explicitly reckoned to be of the “right” type. In line with its parallels, this version also does not mention the four absorptions.

The parallel extant as an individual translation just lists five types of concentration. Four of these are the bodily experiences of the four absorptions, wherefore this is the only parallel to the *Dasuttara-sutta* that corresponds in content to the above-translated passage from the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse. The fifth type of concentration in this version is also closely similar to the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse, even to the extent of comparing the practice of the reviewing sign (相思惟) to a standing person who contemplates someone seated or a seated person who contemplates someone lying down.¹⁷ The passage in question differs from the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourse translated

¹⁵ Mittal 1957: 69, introduced as *āryaḥ pañcajñānikāḥ sam(yaksamā)dhi(h)*. Here the qualification “right” is found in a part supplemented by the editor.

¹⁶ DĀ 10 at T I 53c24, introduced as 賢聖五智定.

¹⁷ T 13 at T I 234c20: 譬如住人觀坐人，坐人觀臥人，道弟子行如是，受行相思惟熟受，以熟受，熟念，熟事，熟受，道弟子是五種定，是為第五行。

above insofar as it describes types of “concentration”, not types of “*right* concentration”.

In this way, the fourth instance among Pāli discourses that relates right concentration to the four absorptions, found in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, does not receive support from relevant discourses preserved in other transmission lineages. In the case of the earlier surveyed three Pāli occurrences that define right concentration by equation with the four absorptions, the extant parallel versions do not bring in absorption. In the present case, the direct parallel extant in Sanskrit fragments and a similar description found in an individual translation paralleling the *Dasuttara-sutta* do mention the four absorptions, but then they do not reckon their exposition to provide a definition of “right” concentration.

Although the qualification “right” could easily have been added or lost during oral transmission, the context does not require concentration to be qualified as “right” or as “noble”, as the four absorptions and the reviewing sign would fit a listing of five types of cultivating *samādhi* as such. This makes it more probable, although not certain, that the additional qualifications, found only in the Pāli version, are the less original reading.

Be that as it may, the three discourses clearly agree on presenting the four absorptions together with the reviewing sign as forms of “concentration”. This means that their conception of concentration, be it explicitly qualified as right or not, includes the four absorptions but is not confined to them. The agreement between the three versions in this respect invites considering the rationale that might have informed grouping together the four absorptions and the reviewing sign. Assembling the four absorptions into a set, as was the case with the instances surveyed earlier, is a self-evident procedure. The addition of the reviewing sign, however, might at first sight seem unexpected.

According to the *Vibhaṅga*, an early work in the Theravāda Abhidharma collection, the reviewing sign stands for a form of

reviewing undertaken after having emerged from absorption attainment.¹⁸ This helps to relate the reviewing sign to the formulation of the four absorptions, as their description reflects what would emerge through such review of the respective absorptive experience.

The description of each absorption highlights the key characteristics and mental factors responsible for its attainment and persistence.¹⁹ A review of the attainment of any of the four absorptions would be concerned with precisely these characteristics and factors. It would reveal if application and sustaining were present or else were absent, if joy was present and whether it was born of seclusion or born of concentration, and so on. When viewed from this perspective, an element of continuity can be discerned between the reviewing sign (if understood along the lines of the explanation provided in the *Vibhaṅga*) and the description of the four absorptions. In the present case this is even more evident, as the bodily experience of the absorptions is also taken into account, thereby providing further details evident on reviewing.

Discerning this element of continuity in turn provides an important perspective on the significance of descriptions of the four absorptions. The issue at stake here need not be only a matter of concentrative expertise enabling their attainment, but could also be the analytical attitude that is so characteristic of early Buddhist thought. In particular, conditionality stands out prominently, in terms of discerning the conditions responsible for a particular concentrative experience.

¹⁸ This is the position taken in Vibh 334,6.

¹⁹ On the significance of these standard descriptions of the four absorptions see also Anālayo 2019.

Endowment with the Other Path Factors as Right Concentration

As noted above, the *Dasuttara-sutta* employs the term “right concentration” in a description that does not involve a listing of the four absorptions.²⁰ In fact, another four Pāli discourses can be identified which explicitly define right concentration without referring to the four absorptions. The type of definition found in these four instances mentions unification of the mind that is equipped with the other seven path factors. One such occurrence in the *Janavasabha-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* reads as follows:²¹

[The seven factors are] right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness. Sirs, when unification of the mind is endowed with these seven factors, then, sirs, it is called noble right concentration that is ‘with its supports’ and ‘with its endowments’.

This description of right concentration features in a listing of inspiring and praiseworthy qualities and teachings of the Buddha. The above passage serves as an exemplification of his teaching abilities, here in particular in relation to right concentration. The *Janavasabha-sutta* has parallels in the *Dīrgha-āgama* and in an individual translation. The *Dīrgha-āgama* version proceeds in this way:²²

The Tathāgata is well able to teach analytically the seven endowments of concentration. What are the seven? [They are]

²⁰ The same holds for the Sanskrit fragment parallel, on adopting the supplementation of “right” by the editor; see above note 15.

²¹ DN 18 at DN II 216,33: *sammādiṭṭhi, sammāsaṅkappo, sammāvācā, sammākammanto, sammā-ājīvo, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati, yā kho, bho, imehi sattah’ aṅgehi cittassekaggatā parikkhatā, ayaṃ vuccatī, bho, ariyo sammāsamādhi sa-upaniso iti pi saparikkhāro iti pi ti.*

²² DĀ 4 at T I 36a5: 如來善能分別說七定具。何等爲七？正見，正志，正語，正業，正命，正方便，正念。是爲如來善能分別說七定具。

right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness. These are the seven endowments of concentration which the Tathāgata is well able to teach analytically.

The individual translation differs insofar as it lists all eight path factors, including right concentration, as endowments of concentration.²³ None of the two parallels qualifies concentration as “noble”. Moreover, the *Dīrgha-āgama* version does not refer to “right” concentration. Another difference of less importance is that the Pāli version stands alone in glossing concentration with “unification of the mind”, *cittassekaggatā*.

I will return below to a tendency for the qualification “noble” to be added in various contexts. As far as the absence of the qualification “right” in the *Dīrgha-āgama* discourse is concerned, this appears to be of relatively little significance, as the same is implicit in the context. Concentration endowed with the other seven path factors, each of which is qualified as “right”, can safely be assumed to be also of the “right” type, even when this is not explicitly stated. As already mentioned, the Pāli version’s employment of “unification of the mind” instead of “concentration” also does not appear to carry much significance, as the two terms are near synonyms and thus convey the same basic meaning.

The second occurrence of this type of definition can be observed in the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta*, where the corresponding statement serves as the theme of the whole discourse.²⁴ The *Mahācattārīsaka-*

²³ T 9 at T I 216a14: 有八正道法，彼佛，如來，應供，正等正覺，悉知，悉見。何等爲八？謂正見，正思惟，正語，正業，正命，正精進，正念，正定。如是八正道，即是三摩地受用法。

²⁴ MN 117 at MN III 71,16.

sutta has a parallel in the *Madhyama-āgama* and another parallel in a discourse quotation in Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*. The *Madhyama-āgama* discourse begins by announcing noble right concentration with its seven factors, followed by offering this explanation:²⁵

What are its seven [factors]? [They are] right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness. If, based on arousing these seven factors, on being supported by them, and on being endowed with them, the mind progresses well and attains unification, then this is reckoned noble right concentration with its arousing, with its supports, and with its endowments.

The quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* proceeds similarly, with the difference that it does not qualify such right concentration to be “noble”, a qualification it only applies to the eightfold path.²⁶ Hence in this case, again, the qualification “noble” is not shared by all of the parallels.

Of further interest is the remainder of the two parallels to the *Mahācattārisaka-sutta*. Both differ from the Pāli discourse in providing yet another definition of right concentration in the later part of their exposition, which the context shows to be a later

²⁵ MĀ 189 at T I 735c4: 云何爲七? 正見, 正志, 正語, 正業, 正命, 正方便, 正念。若有以此七支習, 助, 具, 善趣向心得一者, 是謂聖正定, 有習, 有助, 亦復有具。

²⁶ Up 6080 at D 4094 nyu 44a2 (with its equivalent in Q 5595 thu 83b1): *dge slong dag 'phags pa'i lam yan lag bdun po 'di dag ni yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyu dang yan lag tu gyur pa ste. bdun gang zhe na? 'di lta ste, yang dag pa'i lta ba dang, yang dag pa'i rtog pa dang, yang dag pa'i ngag dang, yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha' dang, yang dag pa'i 'tsho ba dang, yang dag pa'i rtsol ba dang, yang dag pa'i dran pa ste. dge slong dag 'phags pa'i lam yan lag bdun 'di rnam kyis yongs su sbyangs shing yongs su sbyang ba byas pas sems rtse gcig par gyur pa 'di ni yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin zhes bya'o.*

addition.²⁷ Here the *Madhyama-āgama* lists the four absorptions,²⁸ whereas the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* quotation provides a series of synonyms for concentration.²⁹ This passage in the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta* is the only instance I have been able to locate in the four Chinese *Āgamas* where right concentration is defined by listing the four absorptions (although such identification is found in an individual translation that is a parallel to the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*).³⁰

The remaining two occurrences, where Pāli discourses define the path factor of right concentration by referring to unification of

²⁷ Anālayo 2011a: 661: “in all versions right concentration has already been defined as one-pointedness of the mind endowed with the other seven path factors, while right effort and right mindfulness have been defined as the effort and the mindfulness required for establishing the right manifestations of the other path factors. Hence, it seems redundant to treat these path factors once more. Moreover, whereas in regard to the earlier path factors the Chinese and Tibetan versions invariably conclude each treatment by highlighting the cooperative action of right view, right effort, and right mindfulness, the same is absent from their exposition of the remaining three path factors. Nor do they provide a contrast to wrong manifestations of these path factors. The Chinese and Tibetan versions also differ in the definitions they employ ... [all of] this makes it highly probable that the additional treatment of these three path factors was added during the process of transmission, with the reciter(s) supplying the ‘missing’ parts, perhaps even unintentionally, from the standard treatment of this subject found elsewhere in the discourses.”

²⁸ MĀ 189 at T I 736b16: 云何正定? 比丘者離欲, 離惡不善之法至得第四禪成就遊, 是謂正定.

²⁹ Up 6080 at D 4094 *nyu* 46a7 (with its equivalent in Q 5595 *thu* 86a5): *yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin gang zhe na? gang yang sems gnas pa dang, rab tu gnas pa dang, mngon par gnas pa dang, rang bzhin du gnas pa dang, mi g.yeng ba dang, yang dag par sdud pa dang, zhi gnas dang, ting nge 'dzin dang, sems rtse gcig pa ste. 'di ni yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin zhes bya'o*. A set of synonyms for concentration in the context of a definition of mundane right concentration can also be found in SĀ 785 at T II 204a8 (comparable but not identical to the definition of right concentration in SĀ 784, quoted above in note 9). SĀ 785 shares with MN 117 the distinction of path factors into mundane and supramundane types; see in more detail Anālayo 2014: 136-140.

³⁰ T 6 at T I 187c16.

the mind that is equipped with the other seven path factors, are discourses in the *Samyutta-nikāya* and the *Anguttara-nikāya* of which no parallel appears to be known.³¹ Hence nothing further can be said from a comparative perspective.

In principle, the absence of parallels weakens the strength of the claim such discourses can have to be representative of early Buddhist thought. Such a claim would be stronger if parallels agree with their presentation. At the same time, this does not completely undermine their value. Due to the vagaries of oral transmission, the absence of parallels is a natural occurrence and does not in itself imply that the discourse in question must be late.³²

Insight Meditation and Right Concentration

Another passage of relevance to exploring the significance of right concentration can be found in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, which has a parallel in the *Samyukta-āgama* and another parallel in a discourse quotation in Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā*. The main topic of the discourse is the cultivation of knowledge and vision in relation to the six sense-spheres. Once such knowledge and vision have been established, the practitioner can be considered as endowed with five path factors, including right concentration. The relevant passage in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* reads:³³

The view of one [who knows and sees] as it truly is, that is one's right view; the intention of one [who knows and sees] as it truly

³¹ SN 45.28 at SN V 21,12 and AN 7.42 at AN IV 40,21.

³² For a case study in support of this suggestion see Anālayo 2018.

³³ MN 149 at MN III 289,2: *yā yathābhūtaṃ dīṭṭhi sā 'ssa hoti sammādīṭṭhi; yo yathābhūtaṃ saṅkappo svāssa hoti sammāsaṅkappo; yo yathābhūtaṃ vāyāmo svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo; yā yathābhūtaṃ sati sā 'ssa hoti sammāsati; yo yathābhūtaṃ samādhi svāssa hoti sammāsamādhi.*

is, that is one's right intention; the effort of one [who knows and sees] as it truly is, that is one's right effort; the mindfulness of one [who knows and sees] as it truly is, that is one's right mindfulness; and the concentration of one [who knows and sees] as it truly is, that is one's right concentration.

The *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* explains that the three path factors of right speech, action, and livelihood had been developed earlier. Its *Madhyama-āgama* parallel presents the matter similarly:³⁴

One who has knowledge in this way and vision in this way is called one who cultivates the fulfilment of right view, right intention, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

The quotation in the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* proceeds likewise, with the difference that it also includes right speech among the path factors that come into being through such knowledge and vision in relation to the six sense-spheres.³⁵

A presentation that is at least to some extent comparable to what emerges from the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels, insofar as it also involves a reference to right concentration in the context of insight meditation, can be found in a discourse in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*. This discourse, of which no parallel is known, describes contemplating with right wisdom any instance of the five aggregates as not self, a form of practice explicitly related to

³⁴ SĀ 305 at T II 87b29: 作如是知，如是見者，名為正見修習滿足，正志，正方便，正念，正定。

³⁵ Up 4060 at D 4094 ju 205a1 (with its equivalent in Q 5595 tu 233b8): *de de ltar shes shing de ltar mthong na 'phags pa'i lam yan lag brgyad sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur te. yang dag pa'i lta ba sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur zhing yang dag pa'i rtog pa dang, yang dag pa'i ngag dang, yang dag pa'i rtsol ba dang, yang dag pa'i dran pa dang, yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin sgom pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur te.* As already noted in Anālayo 2011a: 842 note 112, it follows that in Up 4060 only right action and livelihood need to have been developed earlier.

right concentration.³⁶ Another discourse without parallel, found in the same *Aṅguttara-nikāya* collection, indicates that being able to endure the objects of the five senses enables establishing right concentration.³⁷ These passages give the impression of taking as their starting point a notion of right concentration that is not confined to the attainment of the four absorptions, in line with what emerges from the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels.

The same holds for a discourse in the *Madhyama-āgama*, according to which hearing the teachings attentively can lead to gaining right concentration, which in turn enables attaining liberation.³⁸ This discourse has a parallel in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, which does not explicitly mention concentration, let alone right concentration, in its description of progress from hearing to liberation (the last qualified as “right”).³⁹ This difference of course undermines the strength of the *Madhyama-āgama* passage. It is nevertheless worth mention here, as it shows that references to right concentration in contexts that do not have an evident relationship to absorption (in line with

³⁶ AN 4.196 at AN II 202,10: *sammāsamādhi, sālha, ariyasāvako yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ ... yā kāci vedanā ... yā kāci saññā ... ye keci saṅkhārā ... yaṃ kiñci viññānaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhataṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbaṃ viññānaṃ n’etaṃ mama, n’eso ’ham asmi, na m’ eso attā ti evaṃ etaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passati.*

³⁷ AN 5.113 at AN III 138,1: *bhikkhu khamo hoti rūpānaṃ, khamo saddānaṃ, khamo gandhānaṃ, khamo rasānaṃ, khamo phoṭṭhabbānaṃ. imehi kho, bhikkhave, pañcahi dhammehi samannāgato bhikkhu bhabbo sammāsamādhiṃ upasampajja viharitun ti.*

³⁸ MĀ 119 at T I 609a18: 賢聖弟子兩耳一心聽法。彼兩耳一心聽法已，斷一法，修一法，一法作證。彼斷一法，修一法，一法作證已，便得正定。賢聖弟子心得正定已，便斷一切姪，怒，癡；賢聖弟子如是得心解脫。

³⁹ AN 3.67 at AN I 198,27: *ohitasoto sa-upaniso hoti. so sa-upaniso samāno abhijānāti ekaṃ dhammaṃ, pari jānāti ekaṃ dhammaṃ, pajahati ekaṃ dhammaṃ, sacchikaroti ekaṃ dhammaṃ. so abhijānanto ekaṃ dhammaṃ, pari jānanto ekaṃ dhammaṃ, pajahanto ekaṃ dhammaṃ, sacchikaronto ekaṃ dhammaṃ sammāvimuttiṃ phusati.*

the *Mahāsaḷāyatānika-sutta* and its parallels) are not a feature of *Āṅguttara-nikāya* discourses only. In fact, in the present case it is precisely the *Āṅguttara-nikāya* version that does not have such a presentation.

Bare Listings of the Path Factors

Based on the above survey of passages, it seems possible to reconstruct an outline of the apparent historical development in conceptions of right concentration. For such reconstruction, of particular interest is the *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel to the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta*.

In general terms, the *Ekottarika-āgama* collection combines early and late material.⁴⁰ The present case seems to fall into the category of early material, evident in particular in a distinctly archaic feature of this discourse: it does not qualify the four truths as “noble”, instead only using this qualification in relation to the eightfold path. This feature can be evaluated in the light of a suggestion by Norman (1982/1984: 386), made in the context of his study of formulations employed to describe the four noble truths in the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. According to his findings, in some contexts the compound *ariya-saccāni* or just the qualification *ariya* were added during oral transmission. Comparative study in general does point to an apparent proliferation of the qualification “noble”, which appears to have made its way into various contexts, a tendency evident also in some of the passages surveyed above.⁴¹

From the viewpoint of the *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel to the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta*, it seems that at an earlier stage the discourse might indeed have just given a bare listing of the path factors. Needless to say, titles of Pāli discourses can be rather late, and

⁴⁰ Anālayo 2016.

⁴¹ Anālayo 2006a.

the same holds for their allocation to a particular Pāli *Nikāya*.⁴² Therefore it is quite possible that the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta* received the title of being an “analysis of the truth” and that it was considered to be a discourse of medium length only after it had undergone some development and was for this reason allocated to the collection of middle-length discourses.

The assumption that an early stage conceptions of the eightfold path just involved references to right concentration without further elaborations would explain why many early discourses just mention the eight path factors without offering detailed definitions of what they stand for. An example in case is the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, which according to the traditional account was the first teaching delivered by the Buddha. The discourse reports that its delivery led to the stream-entry of Koṇḍañña, one of the five listeners present on that occasion. Gombrich (2009: 103f) comments on the discourse itself that

the ‘first sermon’ that has come down to us is chock full of metaphors and technical terms which the Buddha at that stage had not yet explained ... the disciples who made up the original audience could have had no idea what the Buddha was talking about when he used these terms.

A case in point would be a reference to the five aggregates of clinging, found in the formulation of the first truth of *dukkha*. For someone not yet acquainted with Buddhist doctrine, such reference would not have been immediately self-evident and can safely be expected to require some explanation.

⁴² Anālayo 2011a: 106: “title variations occur with considerable frequency not only between Pāli and Chinese versions of a discourse, but even between Pāli versions of the same discourse found in different *Nikāyas*, or between different Pāli editions of the same discourse. This suggests that the title of a discourse was relatively open to change at least during the early stages of transmission.” The comparatively late nature of allocation to a collection is evident from differences in the distribution of parallel versions to Pāli discourses in the *Āgamas*. This can be seen, for example, in surveys of parallels to *Majjhima-nikāya/Madhyama-āgama* discourses, see Anālayo 2011a: 103-1055 and Bucknell 2017.

At the same time, however, at least the basic teaching of the four truths must have been intelligible, otherwise Koṇḍañña could hardly have attained stream-entry on just hearing it. This would presumably apply also to the bare listing of path factors, given in the discourse.⁴³

Such bare listing conveys the basic notion that the path of practice involves eight factors which are to be cultivated in conjunction. This much is fairly self-evident and also meaningful, especially when given in the context of an exposition of the four truths, whose formulation appears to reflect an ancient Indian scheme of medical diagnosis.⁴⁴ This should have been intelligible, without further exposition. In other words, it seems fair to assume that at least these elements would have been comprehensible to someone in the ancient Indian setting who had as yet no familiarity with Buddhist doctrine and that they could therefore have functioned as triggers for Koṇḍañña's insight leading to his attainment of stream-entry.

In this way, the bare enumeration of the path factors found frequently in the discourses could have originally been a self-sufficient pointer to the path of practice as the fourth truth. Here the first two path factors of view and intention are informed by the basic diagnostic perspective of the four truths, thereby providing the needed directive for ethical conduct in the form of speech, action, and livelihood. The same diagnostic perspective stands in the background of cultivation of the mind, which takes the form of making an effort, establishing mindfulness, and cultivating concentration. In this setting, right concentration emerges quite naturally as an integral component of the path of practice.

⁴³ SN 56.11 at SN V 421,13; for translations and a study of the Chinese parallels see Anālayo 2012 and 2013a.

⁴⁴ Anālayo 2011b.

Contextualizing Right Concentration

On the assumption that a bare listing of the eight path factors would have been an intelligible way of presentation that conveyed in particular the need for right concentration to be cultivated in collaboration with the other path factors, it will be hardly surprising if this need at times found a more explicit expression. This would explain the definitions of right concentration on which the parallel versions, surveyed above, agree, for which reason they can be considered earlier than those which are not supported by parallels. This quality of comparative earliness would hold for the definitions found in the *Janavasabha-sutta* and its parallels as well as at the outset of the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta* and its parallels.⁴⁵ Judging from what is common to these discourses, such comparatively early definitions just concern the seven other path factors as endowments of right concentration.

The qualification of concentration endowed in this way as “noble”, found in only some of these versions, might reflect a slightly more evolved stage of this type of definition, in line with a general tendency in the discourses to add the qualification “noble” in various contexts. In the present setting, this addition seems to foreshadow a concern with concentration at the moment of deep insight and realization that becomes evident in some of the other definitions surveyed above.

Already with the Pāli version of this type of definition, another feature becomes discernible which also acquires more prominence subsequently, namely the employment of near-synonyms for concentration. At this point, however, such employment just involves the single notion of “unification of the mind” .

⁴⁵ Keeping in mind that the *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel to the *Janavasabha-sutta* does not explicitly qualify concentration as “right”, although the same is clearly implied by the context.

Analytical Approaches to Right Concentration

A subsequent stage of development appears to be reflected in the listing of the four absorptions. This can safely be considered a more evolved stage in conceptualizations of right concentration, given that none of the cases containing just this listing finds confirmation in the parallels. Moreover, one such instance in a Pāli discourse, namely the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, and another such instance in a *Madhyama-āgama* discourse, namely the parallel to the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta*, are indubitably late additions. The same would also hold for the case of the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta*, at least as long as it is granted that, as argued above, its *Ekottarika-āgama* parallel appears to reflect an earlier stage in textual development.

The idea of providing a more detailed analysis of right concentration is fully in line with a general tendency in Buddhist thought to make things ever more explicit and offer increasingly meticulous explanations. The four absorptions occur regularly in the discourses and, as mentioned above, their formulation embodies a basic principle of early Buddhist mental analysis. Eschewing any tendency to metaphysical speculation in relation to the experience of deep absorption, the chief principle in such mental analysis is to draw attention to the specific mental factors that are responsible for concentrative experiences. This analytical undercurrent, with its highlight on the conditionality of absorption, would have made the standard description of the four absorptions an obvious choice for fleshing out the significance of right concentration.

Moreover, detailed expositions of the other path factors for the most part involve sets of three or four items (right livelihood being the only exception). With the precedent set by the *four* truths as right view, the *three* right intentions, the *four* right types of speech, the *three* right modes of action, the *four* right efforts, and the *four* establishments of mindfulness, the *four* absorptions are a natural fit in such a context.

The appeal of this type of understanding of right concentration can be seen in later exegesis. The *Vibhaṅga* employs the list of the four absorptions in its exposition of the fourth truth (*sacca*) and again later in its exposition of the same topic under the heading of the path (*magga*).⁴⁶ Here the *Vibhaṅga* quite naturally follows the lead of the ‘*Saccavibhaṅga*’-*sutta* and the ‘*Vibhaṅga*’-*sutta* in the ‘*Magga*’-*saṃyutta*. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, a work found in the fifth *Nikāya*, similarly adopts the list of the four absorptions in its exposition of the fourth truth.⁴⁷ These passages would explain the predominance of this particular definition in later Theravāda tradition.

In addition, an increasing interest in the relationship of the path factors to the moment of awakening could easily have led to reading the qualification “noble”, applied in Pāli discourses to alternative definitions of right concentration, as conveying supramundane nuances.⁴⁸ On such a reading, the definition of right concentration by way of attainment of the four absorptions would naturally appear to be the one relevant for progress to the breakthrough to awakening, whereas the definition by way of concentration cultivated in conjunction with the other seven path factors could appear to be mainly relevant to the consummation of such progress.

Another trend in the evolving analyses of right concentration would have found its expression in detailed listings of various synonyms. An example is the *Madhyama-āgama* parallel to the *Saccavibhaṅga-sutta*, which applies such a listing of synonyms to specific times of insight-related contemplation, including insight into each of the four truths.

⁴⁶ Vibh 105,28 and 236,8 (both definitions are according to the methodology of the discourses, *suttantabhājanīya*, as distinct from the methodology of the *Abhidharma*).

⁴⁷ Paṭis I 41,34.

⁴⁸ See in more detail Brahmāli 2007.

Other examples would be the *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Vibhaṅga-sutta* and the later part of the *Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā* quotation that parallels the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta*. Particularly noticeable is that, with this type of instances, the relationship of right concentration to the other seven path factors and to the four truths no longer finds explicit mention (which also holds for listings of the four absorptions). The *Samyukta-āgama* parallel to the *Vibhaṅga-sutta* in particular does not mention the four truths at all, as its exposition of right view rather takes the alternative form of affirming the value of giving and the law of karma, etc.⁴⁹ Perhaps the perspective of the four truths was so much taken for granted that a definition of right concentration could be given by just providing a register of synonyms for *samādhi*.

Implications for the Progress to Awakening

The development suggested above implies that the equation of right concentration with the four absorptions appears to be an evolved stage in the development of definitions of the eighth path factor. This certainly does not in any way imply a devaluation of the cultivation of absorption. In fact, the present essay is only concerned with the attainment of stream-entry. The role of absorption for progress to full awakening would require a study on its own.⁵⁰

At least as far as stream-entry is concerned, however, it seems clear that the ability to attain absorption is not required. Nevertheless, a requirement would be that the mind is free from the hindrances. Two Pāli discourses without parallel indicate that the presence of the hindrances will prevent the mind from becoming “rightly concentrated” and hence make it impossible to gain the destruction

⁴⁹ SĀ 784 at T II 203a4: 何等爲正見? 謂說有施, 有說, 有齋, 有善行, 有惡行, 有善惡行果報, 有此世, 有他世, 有父母, 有眾生, 有阿羅漢善到, 善向, 有此世他世自知作證具足住: 我生已盡, 梵行已立, 所作已作, 自知不受後有。

⁵⁰ I hope to undertake a comparative study of this topic on another occasion.

of the influxes.⁵¹ Although these discourses speak of the destruction of the influxes (*āsava*), the same requirement would apply already to stream-entry, given that the standard account of its attainment indicates that the person in question had a mind free from the hindrances.⁵²

In this way, inasmuch as stream-entry stands for entry into the “stream” of the noble eightfold path,⁵³ it can involve forms of right concentration that fall short of absorption attainment, as long as the hindrances are kept at bay. That the fulfilment of right concentration is not a question of mastering a particular level of absorption is in fact already fairly evident in the *Mahāsaḷāyatanika-sutta* and its parallels. These agree that insight meditation in relation to the six sense-spheres forms sufficient ground for considering the concentration thus cultivated to be of the right type. Here “right concentration” is not a matter of attaining absorption, but has a more general sense that is in line with the broad compass of the meaning of the term *samādhi* in the early discourses.⁵⁴

⁵¹ SN 46.33 at SN V 92,24 and AN 5.23 at AN III 16,20 state, in relation to a state of mind in which a hindrance is present: *na ca sammā samādhiyati āsavānaṃ khayāya*. A comparable expression can be found in SĀ 1247 at T II 342a9: 不得正定，盡諸有漏，in which case the parallel AN 3.100 at AN I 254,29 speaks just of *samādhi* (in its treatment of the positive case when obstructions have been overcome). AN 3.100 and SĀ 1247 share with SN 46.33 and AN 5.23 a description of refining gold to illustrate cultivation of the mind (on which see Anālayo 2017b: 25f), so that the passage in SĀ 1247 is distantly related to SN 46.33 and AN 5.23. In DN 18 at DN II 216,13 the cultivation of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* leads to the mind becoming rightly concentrated, *sammā samādhiyati*, but the corresponding part in the parallel DĀ 4 at T I 36a2 does not refer to right concentration (T 9 proceeds differently here and is therefore not directly relevant to this point; see also Anālayo 2013b: 18 note 26).

⁵² See, e.g., MN 56 at MN I 380,1: *vinīvaraṇacittam* and its parallel MĀ 133 at T I 630c5: 無蓋心.

⁵³ SN 55.5 at SN V 347,26: *ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo soto*, and its parallel SĀ 843 at T II 215b18: 流者謂八聖道.

⁵⁴ See Anālayo 2006b.

Hence there is a need for a revision of the position taken by Thanissaro (1996/1999: 248), for example, that “evidence from the canon supports ... that the attainment of at least the first level of jhana is essential for all four levels of Awakening” . In fact, some reports of the attainment of stream-entry in the early texts give the impression of involving individuals who may not have meditated at all previously, let alone been proficient in attaining absorption.⁵⁵

Another and related problem to be taken into account is that the attainment of absorption on its own hardly suffices for being qualified as “right” concentration.⁵⁶ This supports the suggestion made above, in that the rationale for defining right concentration by way of the four absorptions would have been a concern with the analytical approach their description conveys rather than with levels of concentrative depth required for their attainment.

The two teachers of the Buddha, Ājāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, must have been quite proficient in absorption attainment.⁵⁷ Yet, due to their lack of right view, their concentrative mastery would probably not suffice for considering them to have been in the possession of “right” concentration. Again, the *Brahmajāla-sutta* and its parallels survey various speculative views, a considerable number of which have their source in meditative experiences related to absorption attainment.⁵⁸ Such attainments could hardly be instances of “right” concentration.

⁵⁵ See Anālayo 2003: 80 note 63. In evaluating such passages, it needs to be kept in mind that the notion of absorption evident in the early discourses appears to refer to rather profound and deep meditative experiences that required considerable expertise; see Anālayo 2017a: 109-175.

⁵⁶ Needless to say, the suggestion by Arbel 2017: 200 that *jhāna* “attainments mark the moment when a practitioner becomes ‘noble’ (*ariya*), although not necessarily an arahant” is not an adequate reflection of early Buddhist thought. For a more detailed reply to several of Keren Arbel’s conjectures see Anālayo 2016b and 2020.

⁵⁷ See Anālayo 2017c: 32-50.

⁵⁸ Anālayo 2009.

In this way, the key requirement for concentration to fulfil its function as the eighth path factor in leading to stream-entry lies in its cultivation in conjunction with the other path factors. The same understanding also underlies passages that depict a sequential build-up of the eight path factors, with the preceding seven leading up to right concentration. An example in case is the *Mahācattārīsaka-sutta* and its parallels. The *Madhyama-āgama* version presents the matter as follows:

Right view gives rise to right intention, right intention gives rise to right speech, right speech gives rise to right action, right action gives rise to right livelihood, right livelihood gives rise to right effort, right effort gives rise to right mindfulness, and right mindfulness gives rise to right concentration.⁵⁹

The Pāli and Tibetan parallels proceed similarly.⁶⁰ As the three versions of this discourse also show the collaboration of right view, right effort, and right mindfulness in cultivating other path factors, the sequential listing given by them could not imply that the path factors have to be strictly developed one after the other. Instead, it is probably best understood to convey the same sense of collaboration and mutual interdependency of the eight path factors that also emerges from the definition of right concentration as being based on the other seven path factors.

In sum, for concentration to become “right”, it requires the diagnostic perspective afforded by right view. Building on this diagnostic

⁵⁹ MĀ 189 at TI 735c8: 正見生正志, 正志生正語, 正語生正業, 正業生正命, 正命生正方便, 正方便生正念, 正念生正定.

⁶⁰ MN 117 at MN III 76,1: *sammādiṭṭhissa, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo pahoti, sammāsaṅkappassa sammāvācā pahoti, sammāvācassa sammākammanto pahoti, sammākammantassa sammā-ājīvo pahoti, sammā-ājīvassa sammāvāyāmo pahoti, sammāvāyāmassa sammāsati pahoti, sammāsatissa sammāsamādhī pahoti*, and its parallel Up 6080 at D 4094 *nyu* 46b1 (with its equivalent in Q 5595 *thu* 86a6): *de la yang dag pa'i lta ba las yan dag pa'i rtog pa skye bar 'gyur zhing, yang dag pa'i ngag dang, yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha' dang, yang dag pa'i 'tsho ba dang, yang dag pa'i rtsol ba dang, yang dag pa'i dran pa dang, yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin 'byung bar 'gyur ro.*

perspective and corresponding intentions, ethical conduct in its three dimensions needs to be streamlined accordingly. Based on this foundation, the effort to emerge from what is unwholesome and cultivate what is wholesome needs to collaborate with the establishing of mindfulness in building the required environment for concentration to flourish. It is in this way that any concentration, no matter what level of absorptive strength it may have, can turn into right concentration.

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i>
D	Derge edition
DĀ	<i>Dīrgha-āgama</i> (T 1)
DN	<i>Dīrgha-nikāya</i>
EĀ	<i>Ekottarika-āgama</i> (T 125)
MĀ	<i>Madhyama-āgama</i> (T 26)
MN	<i>Majjhima-nikāya</i>
Paṭis	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i>
Q	Peking edition
SĀ	<i>Samyukta-āgama</i> (T 99)
SN	<i>Samyutta-nikāya</i>
T	Taishō edition
Up	<i>Abhidharmakośopāyikā-ṭīkā</i>
Vibh	<i>Vibhaṅga</i>

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