



DHĀTU

(constituted, supportive (grasp-able) element)

[with a soupçon of desire behind it]

All the following suttas have parallels.

“If he wants, he hears—by means of the divine ear-element, purified and surpassing the human—both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far. He can witness this for himself whenever there is an opening.

So sace ākaṅkhati: ‘dibbāya sotadhātuyā visuddhāya atikkantamānusikāya ubho sadde suṇeyyaṃ dibbe ca mānuse ca ye dūre santike cā’ti, tatra tatveva sakkebhābhataṃ pāpuṇāti sati satiāyatane.

AN 3.101

What do you think, brahmin, is there an element or principle of initiating (ārabhadhātū) or beginning an action?”

“Just so, Venerable Sir.”

“When there is an element of initiating, are initiating beings clearly discerned?”

“Just so, Venerable Sir.”

“So, brahmin, when there is the element of initiating, initiating beings are clearly discerned; of such beings, this is the self-doer, this, the other-doer.

“What do you think, brahmin, is there an element of exertion (nikkamadhātū) ... is there an element of effort (parakkamadhātū) ... is there an element of steadfastness (thāmadhātū) ... is there an element of persistence (ṭhitidhātū) ... is there an element of endeavoring (upakkamadhātū)?”

“Just so, Venerable Sir.”

“When there is an element of endeavoring, are endeavoring beings clearly discerned?”

“Just so, Venerable Sir.”

“So, brahmin, when there is the element of endeavoring, endeavoring beings are clearly discerned; of such beings, this is the self-doer, this, the other-doer.

Taṃ kiṃ maññasi, brāhmaṇa, atthi ārabhadhātū’ti? “Evaṃ, bho”. “Ārabhadhātuyā sati ārabbhavanto sattā paññāyanti”ti? “Evaṃ, bho”. “Yaṃ kho, brāhmaṇa, ārabhadhātuyā sati ārabbhavanto sattā paññāyanti, ayaṃ sattānaṃ attakāro ayaṃ parakāro.

Taṃ kiṃ maññasi, brāhmaṇa, atthi nikkamadhātu ... pe ... atthi parakkamadhātu ... atthi thāmadhātu ... atthi ṭhitidhātu ... atthi upakkamadhātū”ti? “Evaṃ, bho”. “Upakkamadhātuyā sati upakkamavanto sattā paññāyanti”ti? “Evaṃ, bho”. “Yaṃ kho, brāhmaṇa, upakkamadhātuyā sati upakkamavanto sattā paññāyanti, ayaṃ sattānaṃ attakāro ayaṃ parakāro.

I have not, brahmin, seen or heard such a doctrine, such a view as yours. How, indeed, could one—moving forward by himself, moving back by himself—say ‘There is no self-doer, there is no other-doer’?”

Māhaṃ, brāhmaṇa, evaṃvādiṃ evaṃdiṭṭhiṃ addasaṃ vā assosiṃ vā. Kathañhi nāma sayaṃ abhikkamanto sayaṃ paṭikkamanto evaṃ vakkhati: ‘natthi attakāro natthi parakāro’”ti.

AN 6.38

“Friends, if he wanted to, a monk with psychic power (iddhimā), having attained mastery (vasippatta) of his mind (citta), could will that wood pile to be nothing but earth.

Why is that? There is earth-property in that wood pile, in dependence on which he could will that wood pile to be nothing but earth.

“If he wanted to, a monk with psychic power, having attained mastery of his mind, could will that wood pile to be nothing but water... fire... wind... beautiful... unattractive.

Why is that? There is the property of the unattractive in that wood pile, in dependence on which he could will that wood pile to be nothing but unattractive.”

“Ākaṅkhamāno, āvuso, bhikkhu iddhimā cetovasippatto amuṃ dārukkhandhaṃ pathavītveva adhimucceyya.

Taṃ kissa hetu? Atthi, āvuso, amumhi dārukkhandhe pathavīdhātu, yaṃ nissāya bhikkhu iddhimā cetovasippatto amuṃ dārukkhandhaṃ pathavītveva adhimucceyya. Ākaṅkhamāno, āvuso, bhikkhu iddhimā cetovasippatto amuṃ dārukkhandhaṃ āpotveva adhimucceyya ... pe ... tejotveva adhimucceyya ... vāyotveva adhimucceyya ... subhantveva adhimucceyya ... asubhantveva adhimucceyya.

Taṃ kissa hetu? Atthi, āvuso, amumhi dārukkhandhe asubhadhātu, yaṃ nissāya bhikkhu iddhimā cetovasippatto amuṃ dārukkhandhaṃ asubhantveva adhimucceyyā”ti.

AN 6.41

Again, the Tathāgata understands the world how it has come to be, with its numerous and diverse elements.

Puna caparaṃ, bhikkhave, tathāgato anekadhātuṃ nānādhātuṃ lokaṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.

AN 10.21

Venerable sir, I have gained the knowledge of a trainer. May the Blessed One instruct me further,' `Then Vaccha, you should develop two things further. Develop calm (samatha) and insight (vipassana). Vaccha, when calm and insight is developed, it conduces to experiencing the various elements.

“yāvatakaṃ, bhante, sekhena ñāṇena sekhāya vijjāya pattabbaṃ, anuppattaṃ taṃ mayā; uttari ca me bhagavā dhammaṃ desetū”ti.

“Tena hi tvaṃ, vaccha, dve dhamme uttari bhāvehi samathañca vipassanañca. Ime kho te, vaccha, dve dhammā uttari bhāvitā samatho ca vipassanā ca aneka dhātupaṭivedhāya saṃvattissanti.

MN 73

And the devatās from ten world systems had for the most part assembled in order to see the Blessed One and the Bhikkhu Saṅgha.

dasahi ca lokadhātūhi devatā yebhuyyena sannipatitā honti bhagavantaṃ dassanāya bhikkhusaṃghañca.

SN 1.37

This puppet is not made by itself, Nor is this misery made by another. It has come to be dependent on a cause, When the cause dissolves then it will cease.

As when a seed is sown in a field It grows depending on a pair of factors: It requires both the soil's nutrients And a steady supply of moisture.

Just so the aggregates and elements, And these six bases of sensory contact, Have come to be dependent on a cause (motive); When the cause (motive) dissolves they will cease.

Nayidaṃ attakataṃ bimbaṃ, nayidaṃ parakataṃ aghaṃ; hetuṃ paṭicca sambhūtaṃ, hetubhaṅgā nirujjhati.

Yathā aññataraṃ bījaṃ, khette vuttaṃ virūhati; pathavīrasañcāgamma, sinehañca tadūbhayaṃ.

Evaṃ khandhā ca dhātuyo, cha ca āyatanā ime; hetuṃ (Sk. √ णि hi) paṭicca sambhūtā, hetubhaṅgā nirujjhare”ti.

SN 5.9

The Blessed One sat cross-legged in the air above that brahma, having entered into meditation on the fire element.

Atha kho bhagavā tassa brahmuno upari vehāsaṃ pallaṅkena nisīdi tejodhātuṃ samāpajjitvā.

SN 6.5

"Whatever be the many desires and delights
That are always attached to the manifold elements,
The longings sprung from the root of unknowing:
All I have demolished along with their root.
"I am desireless, unattached, disengaged;
My vision of all things has been purified.
Having attained the auspicious supreme enlightenment
Self-confident, brahmin, I meditate alone."

*"Yā kāci kaṅkhā abhinandanā vā,
Anekadhātūsu puthū sadāsītā;
Aññāṇamūlappabhavā pajappitā,
Sabbā mayā byantikātā samūlikā.
Svāhaṃ akaṅkho asīto anūpayo,
Sabbesu dhammesu visuddhadassano;
Pappuyya sambodhimanuttaraṃ sivaṃ,
Jhāyāmaṃ brahma raho visārado"ti.*

SN 7.18

"Drunk on poetry, I used to wander
From village to village, town to town.
Then I saw the Enlightened One
And faith arose within me.
"He then taught me the Dhamma:
Aggregates, sense bases, and elements.
Having heard the Dhamma from him,
I went forth into homelessness.

*"Kāveyyamattā vicarimha pubbe,
Gāmā gāmaṃ purā puram;
Athaddasāma sambuddhaṃ,
Saddhā no upapajjatha.
So me dhammamadesesi,
khandhāyatanadhātuyo;
Tassāhaṃ dhammaṃ sutvāna,
pabbajim anagāriyaṃ.*

SN 8.12

And what, bhikkhus, is dependent origination?

‘With birth as condition, aging-and-death comes to be’: whether there is an arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas, that element still persists, the stableness of the Dhamma, the fixed course of the Dhamma, specific conditionality.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, paṭiccasamuppādo?

Jātipaccayā, bhikkhave, jarāmaraṇaṃ. Uppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ, t̥hitāva sā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā.

SN 12.20

Bhikkhu, the Venerable Sāriputta has thoroughly penetrated that element of the Dhamma by the thorough penetration of which, if I were to question him about that matter with various terms and with various methods for up to seven days and nights, for up to seven days and nights he would be able to answer me with various terms and with various methods.

Sā hi, bhikkhu, sāriputtassa dhammadhātu suppaṭividdhā, yassā dhammadhātuyā suppaṭividdhattā divasaṃ cepāhaṃ sāriputtaṃ etamatthaṃ puccheyyaṃ aññamaññehi padehi aññamaññehi pariyāyehi, divasampi me sāriputto etamatthaṃ byākareyya aññamaññehi padehi aññamaññehi pariyāyehi.

SN 12.32

And what, bhikkhus, is the diversity of elements?

The eye element, form element, eye-consciousness element; the ear element, sound element, ear-consciousness element; the nose element, odour element, nose-consciousness element; the tongue element, taste element, tongue-consciousness element; the body element, tactile-object element, body-consciousness element; the mind element, mental-phenomena element, mind-consciousness element.

Katamañca, bhikkhave, dhātunānattaṃ?

Cakkhudhātu rūpadhātu cakkhuviññāṇadhātu, sotadhātu saddadhātu sotaviññāṇadhātu, ghānadhātu gandhadhātu ghānaviññāṇadhātu, jivhādhātu rasadhātu jivhāviññāṇadhātu, kāyadhātu phoṭṭhabbadhātu kāyaviññāṇadhātu, manodhātu dhammadhātu manoviññāṇadhātu —idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, dhātunānattan’ti.

SN 14.1 & SN 41.2

[**SN 14.2** to **SN 14.25**] (<https://suttacentral.net/sn14>)

Bhikkhus, to whatever extent I wish, with the divine ear element, which is purified and surpasses the human, I hear both kinds of sounds, the divine and human, those that are far as well as near. Kassapa too, to whatever extent he wishes, with the divine ear element, which is purified and surpasses the human, hears both kinds of sounds.

Ahaṃ, bhikkhave, yāvade ākaṅkhāmi dibbāya sotadhātuyā visuddhāya atikkantamānusikāya ubho sadde suṇāmi, dibbe ca mānuse ca, ye dūre santike ca. Kassapopi, bhikkhave, yāvade ākaṅkhati dibbāya sotadhātuyā ... pe ... dūre santike ca.

SN 16.9

It is not the earth element, Kassapa, that causes the true Dhamma to disappear, nor the water element, nor the heat element, nor the air element. It is the senseless (stupefied, bewildered) people who arise right here who cause the true Dhamma to disappear.

Na kho, kassapa, pathavīdhātu saddhammaṃ antaradhāpeti, na āpodhātu saddhammaṃ antaradhāpeti, na tejodhātu saddhammaṃ antaradhāpeti, na vāyodhātu saddhammaṃ antaradhāpeti; atha kho idheva te uppajjanti moghapurisā [mogha - Sk. √ मुह् muh] ye imaṃ saddhammaṃ antaradhāpentī.

SN 16.13

I didn't approach the Blessed One by means of spiritual power, friend, nor did the Blessed One approach me by means of spiritual power. Rather, the Blessed One cleared his divine eye and divine ear element to communicate with me, and I cleared my divine eye and divine ear element to communicate with the Blessed One.

Na khvāhaṃ, āvuso, bhagavantaṃ iddhiyā upasaṅkamim; napi maṃ bhagavā iddhiyā upasaṅkami. Api ca me yāvatā bhagavā ettāvatā dibbacakkhu visujjhi dibbā ca sotadhātu. Bhagavatopi yāvatāhaṃ ettāvatā dibbacakkhu visujjhi dibbā ca sotadhātu"ti.

SN 21.3

The form element, householder, is the home of consciousness; one whose consciousness is shackled by lust for the form element is called one who roams about in a home. The feeling element is the home of consciousness ... (idem for the rest of the khandhas).

...

And how, householder, does one roam about homeless? The desire, lust, delight, and craving, the engagement and clinging, the mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies regarding the form element: these have been abandoned by the Tathagata, cut off at the root,

made like a palm stump, obliterated so that they are no more subject to future arising. Therefore the Tathagata is called one who roams about homeless. ... (idem for the rest of the khandhas).

Rūpadhātu kho, gahapati, viññāṇassa oko. Rūpadhāturāgavinibandhañca pana viññāṇaṃ ‘okasārī’ti vuccati. Vedanādhātu kho, gahapati, ...

...

Kathañca, gahapati, anokasārī hoti? Rūpadhātuyā kho, gahapati, yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā ye upayupādānā cetaso adhiṭṭhānābhinivesānusayā te tathāgatassa pahīnā ucchinnamūlā tālāvatthukatā anabhāvaṃkatā āyatimṃ anuppādadhammā. Tasmā tathāgato ‘anokasārī’ti vuccati. Vedanādhātuyā kho, gahapati ...

SN 22.3

Householder, through the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishment of desire, lust, delight, craving, engagement and clinging, mental standpoints, adherences, and underlying tendencies towards the form element, the mind is said to be well liberated. ... (idem for the rest of the khandhas).

Rūpadhātuyā kho, gahapati, yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā ye upayupādānā cetaso adhiṭṭhānābhinivesānusayā, tesam khayā virāgā nirodhā cāgā paṭinissaggā ‘cittaṃ suvimuttanti’ vuccati. ... Vedanādhātuyā... Etc.

SN 22.4

If, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu’s mind has become dispassionate towards the form element, it is liberated from the taints by nonclinging. If his mind has become dispassionate towards the feeling element ... (idem for the rest of the khandhas).

Rūpadhātuyā ce, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno cittaṃ virattaṃ vimuttaṃ hoti anupādāya āsavehi, vedanādhātuyā ... etc.

SN 22.45

Thus this way of regarding things and the notion ‘I am’ have not vanished in him. As ‘I am’ has not vanished, there takes place a descent of the five faculties - of the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, the body faculty. There is, bhikkhus, the mind, there are mental phenomena, there is the element of ignorance.

Iti ayañceva samanupassanā ‘asmī’ti cassa avigataṃ hoti. ‘Asmī’ti kho pana, bhikkhave, avigate pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ avakkanti hoti - cakkhundriyassa sotindriyassa ghānindriyassa jivhindriyassa kāyindriyassa. Atthi, bhikkhave, mano, atthi dhammā, atthi avijjādhātu.

SN 22.47

Bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu has abandoned lust for the form element, with the abandoning of lust the basis is cut off: there is no support for the establishing of consciousness. If he has abandoned lust for the feeling element ... (idem for the rest of the khandhas).

Rūpadhātuyā ce, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno rāgo pahīno hoti. Rāgassa pahānā vocchijjatārammaṇaṃ patiṭṭhā viññāṇassa na hoti. Vedanādhātuyā ce, bhikkhave ... etc.

SN 22.53

And how, bhikkhus, is a bhikkhu a triple investigator? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu investigates by way of the elements, by way of the sense bases, and by way of dependent origination.

Kathaṇca, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tividhūpaparikkhī hoti? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu dhātuso upaparikkhati, āyatanaso upaparikkhati, paṭiccasamuppādaso upaparikkhati.

SN 22.57

Whatever, bhikkhus, is the extent of the aggregates, the elements, and the sense bases, he does not conceive that, does not conceive in that, does not conceive from that, does not conceive, 'That is mine.'

Yāvatā, bhikkhave, khandhadhātuāyatanā tampi na maññeyya, tasmimpi na maññeyya, tatopi na maññeyya, taṃ meti na maññeyya.

SN 35.91

Householder, there exists the eye element, and forms that are agreeable, and eye-consciousness: in dependence on a contact to be experienced as pleasant, a pleasant feeling arises. There exists the eye element, and forms that are disagreeable, and eye-consciousness: in dependence on a contact to be experienced as painful, a painful feeling arises. There exists the eye element, and forms that are a basis for equanimity, and eye-consciousness: in dependence on a contact to be experienced as neither-painful-nor-pleasant, a neither- painful-nor-pleasant feeling arises.

(Idem for ear, ...etc.)

It is in this way, householder, that the diversity of elements has been spoken of by the Blessed One.

Samvijjati kho, gahapati, cakkhudhātu, rūpā ca manāpā, cakkhuviññāṇaṇca sukhavedaniyaṃ. Phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati sukhā vedanā. Samvijjati kho, gahapati, cakkhudhātu, rūpā ca amanāpā, cakkhuviññāṇaṇca dukkhavedaniyaṃ. Phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati dukkhā vedanā.

Samvijjati kho, gahapati, cakkhudhātu, rūpā ca manāpā upekkhāvedaniyā, cakkhuviññāṇaṇca adukkhamasukhavedaniyaṃ. Phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati adukkhamasukhā vedanā ... pe ... samvijjati kho, gahapati, jivhādhātu, ... etc.

SN 35.129

Venerable sir, it was said by the Blessed One: ‘It is in dependence on the diversity of elements that there arises the diversity of contacts; in dependence on the diversity of contacts that there arises the diversity of feelings.’ How is this so, venerable sir?”

“Here, householder, having seen a form with the eye, a bhikkhu understands an agreeable one thus: ‘Such it is!’ There is eye-consciousness, and in dependence on a contact to be experienced as pleasant there arises a pleasant feeling. Then, having seen a form with the eye, a bhikkhu understands a disagreeable one thus: ‘Such it is!’ There is eye-consciousness, and in dependence on a contact to be experienced as painful there arises a painful feeling. Then, having seen a form with the eye, a bhikkhu understands one that is a basis for equanimity thus: ‘Such it is!’ There is eye-consciousness, and in dependence on a contact to be experienced as neither-painful-nor-pleasant there arises a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.

“Further, householder, having heard a sound with the ear ... mind.

“Vuttamidaṃ, bhante, bhagavatā: ‘dhātunānattaṃ paṭicca uppajjati phassanānattaṃ; phassanānattaṃ paṭicca uppajjati vedanānānattan’ti. Kathaṃ nu kho, bhante, dhātunānattaṃ paṭicca uppajjati phassanānattaṃ; phassanānattaṃ paṭicca uppajjati vedanānānattan’ti? “Idha, gahapati, bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā ‘manāpaṃ itthetan’ti pajānāti cakkhuviññāṇaṃ sukhavedaniyaṇca. Phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati sukhā vedanā. Cakkhunā kho paneva rūpaṃ disvā ‘amanāpaṃ itthetan’ti pajānāti cakkhuviññāṇaṃ dukkhavedaniyaṇca. Phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati dukkhā vedanā. Cakkhunā kho paneva rūpaṃ disvā ‘upekkhāṭṭhāniyaṃ itthetan’ti pajānāti cakkhuviññāṇaṃ adukkhamasukhavedaniyaṇca. Phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati adukkhamasukhā vedanā.

Puna caparaṃ, gahapati, bhikkhu sotena saddaṃ sutvā ... pe ... manasā.

SN 35.130

I have made up this simile, bhikkhus, in order to convey a meaning. This is the meaning here: ‘The four vipers of fierce heat and deadly venom’: this is a designation for the four great elements—the earth element, the water element, the heat element, the air element.

Upamā kho myāyaṃ, bhikkhave, katā atthassa viññāpanāya. Ayañcettha attho - cattāro āsīvisā uggatejā ghoravisāti kho, bhikkhave, catunnetam mahābhūtānaṃ adhivacanaṃ - pathavīdhātuyā, āpodhātuyā, tejodhātuyā, vāyodhātuyā.

SN 35.238

I have made up this simile, bhikkhu, in order to convey a meaning. This is the meaning here: ‘The city’: this is a designation for this body consisting of the four great elements, originating from mother and father, built up out of boiled rice and gruel, subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to breaking apart and dispersal. ‘The six gates’: this is a designation for the six internal sense bases. ‘The gatekeeper’: this is a designation for mindfulness. ‘The swift pair of messengers’: this is a designation for serenity and insight. ‘The lord of the city’: this is designation for consciousness. ‘The central square’: this is a designation for the four great elements—the earth element, the water element, the heat element, the air element. ‘A message of reality (*according to how things have become*)’: this is a designation for Nibbāna. ‘The route by which they had arrived’: this is a designation for the Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view ... right concentration.”

Upamā kho myāyaṃ, bhikkhu, katā atthassa viññāpanāya. Ayañcettha attho: ‘nagaran’ti kho, bhikkhu, imassetam cātumahābhūtikassa kāyassa adhivacanaṃ mātāpettikasambhavassa odanakummāsūpacayassa aniccucchādanaparimaddanabhedanaviddhamsanadhammassa. ‘Cha dvārā’ti kho, bhikkhu, channetaṃ ajjhātikānaṃ āyatanānaṃ adhivacanaṃ. ‘Dovāriko’ti kho, bhikkhu, satiyā etaṃ adhivacanaṃ. ‘Sīghaṃ dūtayugan’ti kho, bhikkhu, samathavipassanānetam adhivacanaṃ. ‘Nagarassāmī’ti kho, bhikkhu, viññāṇassetam adhivacanaṃ. ‘Majjhe siṅghāṭako’ti kho, bhikkhu, catunnetam mahābhūtānaṃ adhivacanaṃ—pathavīdhātuyā, āpodhātuyā, tejodhātuyā, vāyodhātuyā. ‘Yathābhūtaṃ vacanan’ti kho, bhikkhu, nibbānassetam adhivacanaṃ. ‘Yathāgatamaggo’ti kho, bhikkhu, ariyassetam aṭṭhaṅgikassa maggassa adhivacanaṃ, seyyathidaṃ—sammādiṭṭhiyā ... pe ... sammāsamādhissā”ti.

SN 35.245

"Venerable sir, it is said, ‘the removal of lust, the removal of hatred, the removal of delusion.’ Of what now, venerable sir, is this the designation?"

"This, bhikkhu, is a designation for the element of Nibbāna: the removal of lust, the removal of hatred, the removal of delusion. The destruction of the taints is spoken of in that way."

Rāgavinayo dosavinayo mohavinayo’ti, bhante, vuccati. Kissa nu kho etaṃ, bhante, adhivacanaṃ: ‘rāgavinayo dosavinayo mohavinayo’”ti? “Nibbānadhātuyā kho etaṃ, bhikkhu, adhivacanaṃ: ‘rāgavinayo dosavinayo mohavinayo’ti. Āsavānaṃ khayā tena vuccati”ti.

SN 45.7

And what, bhikkhus, is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of energy and for the fulfilment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of energy?

There are, bhikkhus, the element of arousal, the element of endeavour, the element of exertion: frequently giving careful attention to them is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of energy and for the fulfilment by development of the arisen enlightenment factor of energy.

Ko ca, bhikkhave, āhāro anuppannassa vā vīriyasambojjhaṅgassa uppādāya, uppannassa vā vīriyasambojjhaṅgassa bhāvanāya pāripūriyā? Atthi, bhikkhave, ārambhadhātu nikkamadhātu parakkamadhātu. Tattha yonisomanasikārabahulīkāro—ayamāhāro anuppannassa vā vīriyasambojjhaṅgassa uppādāya, uppannassa vā vīriyasambojjhaṅgassa bhāvanāya pāripūriyā.

SN 46.2 & SN 46.51

"Bhikkhus, there may be alteration in the four great elements_ in the earth element, the water element, the heat element, the air element- but there cannot be alteration in the noble disciple who possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha. Therein this is alteration: that the noble disciple who possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the domain of ghosts . This is impossible .

Siyā, bhikkhave, catunnaṃ mahābhūtānaṃ aññathattaṃ—pathavīdhātuyā, āpodhātuyā, tejodhātuyā, vāyodhātuyā—na tveva buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgatassa ariyasāvakassa siyā aññathattaṃ.

SN 55.17

DHĀTU in SANSKRIT

The Sanskrit root is √ धृ **dhā**.

- To appoint, establish, constitute (Ṛg Veda - Śatapatha Br.).
- To seize, take hold of, hold, bear, support (Ṛg Veda - Atharva veda).
- To make, produce, generate, create, cause, effect, perform, execute (Ṛg Veda - Taittirīya Br - Śvetāśvatara Up).
- to accept, obtain, conceive (especially in the womb), get, take (Ṛg Veda - Atharva veda - Brāhmaṇa).

Dhāman: the inmates of a house or members of a family, class, troop, band, host (Ṛg Veda).

Dhāman: manner, mode, tone, form, appearance (Ṛg Veda).

Dhāmaśas: according to place or order (Ṛg Veda).

Dhārāgraha a cup filled from flowing (Kātyāyana śrauta sūtra).

Dhāraka a receptacle or vessel for anything (Suśruta)

Dhāraṇa holding, bearing, keeping (in remembrance), retention, preserving, protecting, maintaining, possessing, having (Taittirīya Ar.).

Abhinidhāna placing upon (or into) (Kātyāyana śrauta sūtra - Śatapatha Br. - Ṛg V - Taittirīya S.).

Addhātama quite manifest (Aitareya Āraṇyaka.).

Ādhāna the place in which anything is deposited or rests (Śatapatha Br.).

Etc.

धातु **Dhātu**:

- constituent part, ingredient (Ṛg Veda).

- layer, stratum (also dhāya) (Kātyāyana śrauta sūtra - Kauśika Sūtras).

Tridhātu : the triple world (Ṛg Veda).

Sudhātu: well-founded, secure (Ṛg Veda).

Ayugdhātu: having an odd number of elements or component parts (Kātyāyana śrauta sūtra).

.....

°तु **tu**

forms substantives of action or instrument - (and adjectives indicating possession).

Therefore, **Dhātu** might be considered as constituted elements making up a particular phenomena (e.g. world) - or just a primordial element (e.g. water).

A grounded manifestation of some kind.

Note that the grammarian Pāṇini (~6th~4th century BCE), had came up with a lexicon of Sanskrit verbal roots named **Dhatupatha** (dhātu : धातु - pāṭha : पाठ); where dhātu means "elements" or "verbal roots", and pāṭha means "lecture" or "lesson".

Note the common excerption "*sa naḥ stuto - vīravat dhātu gomat*" (RV. 1.190.8c, 7.23.6c; AV. 20.12.6c; GopBr. 2.4.2), usually translated as: "*May he thus praised - **make us** possessed of progeny and cattle*", denotes a certain form of "*desire and granting*".

It is not just an element, but it also includes the desire for that (existing) element.

Vīravat

avīra a-vīra - sonless

vīravat vīrá-vant - possessed of son (cf. Macdonell)

This underlying meaning of dhātu is also found in:

RV. 10.11.2c & AV. 18.1.19c

iṣṭasya madhye aditir ni dhātu no bhrātā no jyeṣṭhaḥ prathamo vi vocati

May Aditi accomplish all that we desire, and may our eldest Brother tell us this as Chief.

RV. 10.056.02a

tanūṣ ṭe vājin tanvaṁ nayantī vāmam asmabhyaṁ dhātu śarma tubhyam

Bearing thy body, Vajin, may thy body afford us blessing and thyself protection.

In the pre or post Buddha's KaṭṭUp. (definitely contemporary) many translators (like Radhakrishnan below) translate dhātu as "mind and the senses", which seems to imply desire.

KaṭṭUp.1.2.20

aṇor aṇīyān mahato mahīyān, ātmāsyā jantor nihito guhāyām: tam akraṭuḥ paśyati vīta-śoko dhātu-prasādān mahimānam ātmanaḥ.

Smaller than the small, greater than the great, the self is set in the heart of every creature. The unstriving man beholds Him, freed from sorrow, through tranquillity of the mind (mano) and the senses (he sees) the greatness of the self.

Finally, in the late PraśnaUp. (around the common era), Bṛhaspati is the one who grants dhātu (desire)

svasti no bṛhaspatir dadhātu.

द da [agt. dā] = who grants.

Therefore, there seems to be an underlying meaning of "desire to be granted" beneath the usual definition of dhātu as "element or constituted elements making up a particular phenomena" - (might it be sort of elemental (mahābhūtāna rūpa), or constituted of more of these elements (upādāya), or else).

A dhatu might just be a desirably graspable dhamma. While a dhamma is being just a causally conditioned phenomena, from the khandhas.

"He (the Sambuddha) then taught me the Dhamma:
Aggregates, field of experiences, and elements".

*So me dhammamadesesi,
khandhāyatanadhātuyo*

SN 8.12
