

## INTENTION (Cetana)

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Bhikkhus, internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise on account of ignorance, either when mindful of the body and bodily intentions, mindful of words and verbal intentions or when mindful of thoughts and intentions.

Bhikkhus, one intends bodily intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Others intend bodily intentions for him, and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Mindful and aware one intends bodily intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Without mindful awareness one intends bodily intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

Bhikkhus, one intends verbal intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Others intend verbal intentions for him, and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Mindful and aware one intends verbal intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Without mindful awareness one intends verbal intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

Bhikkhus, one intends mental intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Others intend mental intentions for him, and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Mindful and aware one intends mental intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Without mindful awareness one intends mental intentions for oneself and on account of them, arises internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

Bhikkhus, these things are affected by ignorance, with the complete cessation of ignorance, that body on account of which internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise is no more. Those words on account of which internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise are no more. The mind on account of which internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise is no more. The field on account of which internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise is no more. The object on account of which internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise is no more. The sphere on account of which internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise is no more. The management on account of which internal pleasant and unpleasant feelings arise is no more.

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*“Kāye vā, bhikkhave, sati kāyasañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ. Vācāya vā, bhikkhave, sati vacīsañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ. Mane vā, bhikkhave, sati manosañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ avijjāpaccayāva.*

*Sāmaṃ vā taṃ, bhikkhave, kāyasañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ. Pare vāssa taṃ, bhikkhave, kāyasañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharonti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ. Sampajāno vā taṃ, bhikkhave, kāyasañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ. Asampajāno vā taṃ, bhikkhave, kāyasañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ.*

*Sāmaṃ vā taṃ, bhikkhave, vacīsañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ; pare vāssa taṃ, bhikkhave, vacīsañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharonti; yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ; sampajāno vā taṃ, bhikkhave, vacīsañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ; asampajāno vā taṃ, bhikkhave, vacīsañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ.*

*Sāmaṃ vā taṃ, bhikkhave, manosañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ; pare vāssa taṃ, bhikkhave, manosañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharonti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ; sampajāno vā taṃ, bhikkhave, manosañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ; asampajāno vā taṃ, bhikkhave, manosañkhāraṃ abhisāṅkharoti, yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ.*

*Imesu, bhikkhave, dhammesu avijjā anupatitā, avijjāya tveva asesavirāganirodhā so kāyo na hoti yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ, sā vācā na hoti yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ, so mano na hoti yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhaṃ, khettaṃ taṃ na hoti ... pe ... vatthu taṃ na hoti ... pe ... āyatanaṃ taṃ na hoti ... pe ... adhikaraṇaṃ taṃ na hoti*

*yaṃpaccayāssa taṃ uppajjati ajjhataṃ sukhadukkhanti.*

[AN 4.171 - Cetanā sutta](#)

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"**Intention**, I tell you, is kamma. Intending, one does kamma by way of body, speech, & intellect.

"And what is the cause by which kamma comes into play? Contact is the cause by which kamma comes into play.

[AN 6.63 Nibbedhika Sutta](#)

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"What one intends (**ceteti**), what one arranges, and what one obsesses about: This is a support for the stationing of consciousness. There being a support, there is a landing [or: an establishing] of consciousness. When that consciousness lands and grows, there is the production of renewed becoming in the future.

[SN 12.38 - Cetana Sutta](#)

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"Monks, intention for forms is inconstant, changeable, alterable. Intention for sounds... Intention for smells... Intention for tastes... Intention for tactile sensations... Intention for ideas is inconstant, changeable, alterable.

[SN 25.7 - Cetana Sutta](#)

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Even if he does not reflect matter from self, he reflects a material self, those reflections are **intentions**. From what do those **intentions** originate, take birth and increase? Craving arises to a not learned ordinary man on account of feelings born from the contact of not knowing and intentions rise from craving. Thus monks those **intentions** are impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. Craving is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. Feelings are impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. Contact is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen, and ignorance too is impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen. Monks, seeing and knowing thus the uninterrupted desires get destroyed.

ETC...

[SN - Khajjanīya \(Tatiyo\) Vagga - 21. 2. 3. 9. Pārileyya - \(a.k.a. SN 22.81\)](#)

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"Thus kamma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The **intention** & aspiration of living beings hindered by ignorance & fettered by craving is established in/tuned to a lower property. Thus there is the production of renewed becoming in the future.

*Iti kho ānanda, kammaṃ khettaṃ, viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ, taṇhā sineho. Avijjānīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsaññojanānaṃ hināya dhātuyā **cetanā** patiṭṭhitā, patthanā patiṭṭhitā. Evaṃ āyati.*

*Punabbhavābhiniḅbatti hoti.*

Etc...

[AN 3.77 - Bhava Sutta](#)

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"And what are fabrications? These **six classes of intention** — intention with regard to form, intention with regard to sound, intention with regard to smell, intention with regard to taste, intention with regard to tactile sensation, intention with regard to ideas: these are called fabrications. From the origination of contact comes the origination of fabrications. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of fabrications. And just this noble eightfold path is the path of practice leading to the cessation of fabrications...

[SN 22.56 - Parivatta Sutta](#)

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"And what is **name-&-form**? Feeling, perception, **intention**, contact, & attention: This is called name. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements: This is called form. This name & this form are called name-&-form.

[SN 12.2 Paticca-samuppada-vibhanga Sutta](#)

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"Monks, there are these four nutriments for the maintenance of beings who have come into being or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. Which four? Physical food, gross or refined; contact as the second, **intellectual intention (manosañcetanā)** the third, and consciousness the fourth.

Cattārome bhikkhave āhārā bhūtānaṃ vā sattānaṃ ṭhitiyā sambhavesīnaṃ vā anuggahāya. Katame cattāro? Kabaliṅkāro āhāro oḷāriko vā sukhumo vā, phasso dutiyo, **manosañcetanā** tatiyā, viññānaṃ catutthaṃ.

[MN 38 - Mahatanhasankhaya Sutta](#)

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"Just as — when there is dye, lac, yellow orpiment, indigo, or crimson — a dyer or painter would paint the picture of a woman or a man, complete in all its parts, on a well-polished panel or wall, or on a piece of cloth; in the same way, where there is passion, delight, & craving for the nutriment of physical food... contact... **intellectual intention**... consciousness, consciousness lands there and increases. Where consciousness lands and increases, there is the alighting of name-&-form. Where there is the alighting of name-&-form, there is the growth of fabrications. Where there is the growth of fabrications, there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. Where there is the production of renewed becoming in the future, there is future birth, aging, & death, together, I tell you, with sorrow, affliction, & despair.

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"And how is the nutriment of **intellectual intention** to be regarded? Suppose there were a pit of glowing embers, deeper than a man's height, full of embers that were neither flaming nor smoking, and a man were to come along — loving life, hating death, loving pleasure, abhorring pain — and two strong men, having grabbed him by the arms, were to drag him to the pit of embers. To get far away would be that man's intention, far away would be his wish, far away would be his aspiration. Why is that? Because he would realize, 'If I fall into this pit of glowing embers, I will meet with death from that cause, or with death-like pain.' In the same way, I tell you, is the nutriment of intellectual intention to be regarded. When the nutriment of intellectual intention is comprehended, the three forms of craving [for sensuality, for becoming, and for non-becoming] are comprehended. When the three forms of craving are comprehended, I tell you, there is nothing further for a disciple of the noble ones to do.

[SN 12.63 - Puttamansa Sutta](#)

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'Having **intentionally done** — with body, with speech, or with mind — an action that is to be felt as pleasure, one experiences pleasure. Having intentionally done — with body, with speech, or with mind — an action that is to be felt as pain, one experiences pain. Having intentionally done — with body, with speech, or with mind — an action that is to be felt as neither-pleasure-nor-pain, one experiences neither-pleasure-nor-pain.

[MN 136 - Maha Kammavibhanga Sutta](#)

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(Being) sensitive to pleasure & pain otherwise than through contact: that isn't possible.

"When there is a body, pleasure & pain arise internally with bodily intention as the cause; or when there is speech, pleasure & pain arise internally with verbal intention as the cause; or when there is intellect, pleasure & pain arise internally with intellectual intention as the cause.

[SN 12.25 - Bhumija Sutta](#)

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## Cetana I - Intention I

1. I heard thus. At one time the Blessed One lived in the monastery offered by Anāthapiṇḍika in Jeta's grove in Sāvatti.

2. "Monks, you intend, mentally arrange and with it persistently fill the mind. Consciousness settles there, with that sign. When consciousness settles in that manner it grows for rebirth again and again in the future. With rebirth again and again in the future, there arise decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress again and again in the future.

3. "Monks, you do not intend, do not arrange mentally yet the mind is persistently filled. Consciousness settles there, with that sign. When consciousness settles in that manner it grows for rebirth again and again in the future. With rebirth again and again in the future, there arise decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress again and again in the future.

4. "Monks, you do not intend, do not arrange mentally and the mind is not persistently filled. Consciousness does not settle there, with a sign. When consciousness does not settle in that manner it does not grow for rebirth again and again in the future. Without rebirth again and again in the future, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress do not arise again and again in the future.

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"Monks, you intend, mentally arrange and with it persistently fill the mind. When conscious of the sign, consciousness settles there, with that sign. When consciousness settles and grows name and matter pursue it.

3. "On account of name and matter, the six spheres. On account of the six spheres, contact. On account of a contact, are feelings ... re ... craving ... re ... holding ... re ... being ... re ... birth. On account of birth arise decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. Thus rises the complete mass of unpleasantness.

4. "Monks, you do not intend and do not arrange yet the mind is persistently filled. When conscious of the sign, consciousness settles there, with that sign. When consciousness settles and grows name and matter pursues it.

5. "On account of name and matter, the six spheres. On account of the six spheres, contacts. On account of contacts are feelings ... re ... craving ... re ... holding ... re ... being ... rebirth. On account of birth arise decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. Thus rises the complete mass of unpleasantness.

6. "Monks, when you do not intend, do not arrange, the mind does not get filled up persistently with a sign, for consciousness to settle. When consciousness does not settle and grow name and matter does not pursue it. With the cessation of name and matter, the six spheres cease. With the cessation of the six spheres contacts cease. With the cessation of contacts feelings ... re ... craving ... re ... holding ... re ... being ... rebirth. With the cessation of birth cease decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. Thus cease the complete mass of unpleasantness."

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1. I heard thus. At one time the Blessed One lived in the monastery offered by Anāthapiṇḍika in Jeta's grove in Sāvatti.

2. "Monks, you intend, mentally arrange and with it, persistently fill the mind. When conscious of the sign, consciousness settles there, with that sign.

3. "When consciousness settles and grows there is an inclination. When there is an inclination there is coming and going. When there is coming and going there is disappearing and appearing. When there is disappearing and appearing there is birth, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. Thus rises the complete mass of unpleasantness.

4. "Monks, you do not intend, do not arrange mentally, yet the mind is persistently filled. When conscious of the sign, consciousness settles there, with that sign.

5. "When consciousness settles and grows there is an inclination. When there is an inclination there is coming and going. When there is coming and going there is disappearing and appearing. When there is disappearing and appearing there is birth, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress.

"Thus rise the complete mass of unpleasantness.

6. "Monks, when you do not intend, do not arrange mentally and the mind is not persistently filled. Not

conscious of a sign, consciousness does not settle.

7. "With consciousness not settling and not growing there is no inclination. When there is no inclination there is no coming and going. When there is no coming and going there is no disappearing and appearing. When there is no disappearing and appearing there is no birth, decay, death, grief, lament, unpleasantness, displeasure and distress. Thus cease the complete mass of unpleasantness.

[SN > Abhisamaya Samyutta > Kalārakhattiya Vagga](#) > 12.4.8. Cetana I & II & III - (a.k.a SN 12.38/39/40)

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There are these four kinds of nutriment for the maintenance of beings that already have come to be and for the support of those seeking a new existence. What four? They are physical food as nutriment, gross or subtle; contact as the second; **mental volition (intellectual intention)** as the third; and consciousness as the fourth.

Cattārome, āvuso, āhārā bhūtānaṃ vā sattānaṃ ṭhitiyā, sambhavesīnaṃ vā anuggahāya. Katame cattāro? Kabaḷīkāro āhāro oḷāriko vā sukhumo vā, phasso dutiyo, **manosañcetanā** tatiyā, viññāṇaṃ catutthaṃ.

[MN 9 - Sammaditthi Sutta](#)

[MN 38 - Mahātanhāsāṅkhaya Sutta](#)

[SN 12.12 - Moliyaphagguna Sutta](#)

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"When there is a body, pleasure & pain arise internally with bodily intention as the cause; or when there is speech, pleasure & pain arise internally with verbal intention as the cause; or when there is intellect, pleasure & pain arise internally with **intellectual intention** as the cause.

Kāye vā hānanda, sati kāyasañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṃ sukhadukkhaṃ. Vācāya vā hānanda, sati vacīsañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṃ sukhadukkhaṃ. Mane vā hānanda, sati **manosañcetanāhetu** uppajjati ajjhattaṃ sukhadukkhaṃ avijjāpaccayā ca.

[SN 12.25 Bhumija Sutta](#)

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'In the same way, I tell you, is the nutriment of **intellectual intention** to be regarded. When the nutriment of intellectual intention is comprehended, the three forms of craving [for sensuality, for becoming, and for non-becoming] are comprehended. When the three forms of craving are comprehended, I tell you, there is nothing further for a disciple of the noble ones to do.

Evameva khvāhaṃ, bhikkhave, **manosañcetanā**hāro daṭṭhabbo'ti vadāmi. Manosañcetanāya, bhikkhave, āhāre pariññāte tisso taṇhā pariññātā honti. Tisu taṇhāsu pariññātāsu ariyasāvakassa natthi kiñci uttari-karaṇīyanti vadāmi.

[SN 12.63 Puttansa Sutta](#)

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'This first jhana is fabricated & **intended (thought out)**. Now whatever is fabricated & intended is inconstant & subject to cessation.'

*Idampi kho paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ abhisāṅkhatam **abhisāñcetaṃ**, yaṃ kho pana kiñci abhisāṅkhatam abhisāñcetaṃ tadaniccam nirodhadhamanti pajānāti.*

[MN 52 - Atthakanagara Sutta](#) - 2

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"Bhikkhus, this body is not yours, nor does it belong to others. It is old kamma, to be seen as generated and fashioned by **thought out intention**, as something to be felt."

"Nāyaṃ, bhikkhave, kāyo tumhākaṃ napi aññesaṃ. Purāṇamidaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ abhisāṅkhatam **abhisāñcetaṃ** vedaniyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ.

**SN 12.37**

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"Now what, monks, is old kamma? The eye is to be seen as old kamma, **fabricated & intended (thought out)**, capable of being felt. The ear... The nose... The tongue... The body... The intellect is to be seen as old kamma, fabricated & willed, capable of being felt. This is called old kamma.

"And what is new kamma? Whatever kamma one does now with the body, with speech, or with the intellect: This is called new kamma.

Katamañca, bhikkhave, purāṇakammaṃ?

Cakkhu, bhikkhave, purāṇakammaṃ **abhisāṅkhatam abhisañcetayitam** vedaniyaṃ daṭṭhabbam ... pe ... jivhā purāṇakammā abhisāṅkhatā abhisañcetayitā vedaniyā daṭṭhabbā ... pe ... mano purāṇakammo abhisāṅkhato abhisañcetayito vedaniyo daṭṭhabbo. Idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, purāṇakammaṃ.

Katamañca, bhikkhave, navakammaṃ?

Yaṃ kho, bhikkhave, etarahi kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā, idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, navakammaṃ.

[SN 35.145 - Kamma Sutta](#)

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"But, bhikkhus, when one does not intend, and one does not plan, and one does not have a tendency towards anything, no basis exists for the maintenance of consciousness.

Yato ca kho, bhikkhave, no ceva ceteti no ca pakappeti no ca anuseti, ārammaṇametaṃ na hoti viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā.

**SN 12.38-39**

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"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention? Right intention, I say, is twofold: there is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions, and there is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? The intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, and the intention of non-cruelty: this is right intention that is affected by taints...ripening in the acquisitions.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The thinking, thought, intention, mental absorption, mental fixity, directing of mind, verbal formation in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right intention that is noble...a factor of the path.

**[MN 117](#)**

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#### Notes:

verbal root 'cit' ('to perceive').

Thought out intention > abhisañcetayati (derived from the root ci [citta]).

Intellectual intention > manosañcetana

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Right "intention" is in fact right resolve (*samma sankappa*).