

Path Factors

In the Compendium of Categories, the 4 ultimate realities can be analyzed into a total of 72 ultimate (or distinct) entities (vatthu dhamma).

1 Citta : This is regarded as one entity as all cittas have the same intrinsic nature which is to cognize an object.

52 Cetasikas : These are viewed as distinct ultimate entities as each cetasika has its own individual intrinsic nature.

18 Rupa : Only 18 concretely produced rupas are reckoned separately as individual entities.

1 Nibbana : By its essence, this is a distinct entity.

These 72 ultimate entities can be divided into 4 main categories according to how they are related :

1. The Compendium of Immoral Categories
2. The Compendium of Mixed Categories
3. The Compendium of Requisites of Enlightenment
4. The Compendium of the Whole

The Mixed Category (Missaka Sangaha) is so called because it includes wholesome, unwholesome and indeterminate factors together.

The Mixed Category is further divided into 7 sub-categories : roots, jhana factors, path factors, faculties, powers, predominates and nutriments.

In the Mixed Category, 12 Path Factors are listed, ie. there are 12 constituents of the Path. 'Magga' means 'path' and 'maggangas' used in this context means 'constituents of the Path' which can be wholesome or unwholesome.

Therefore, 'path' here means that which leads to a particular destination. The first 8 are wholesome and lead to blissful states and Nibbana. The last 4 are unwholesome and lead to woeful states.

The 12 Path Factors :

1. Right view / Samma ditthi

Wisdom / panna cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas, 8 maha kriya cittas and 26 appana javanas.

2. Right thought / Samma sankappa

Initial application / vitakka cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas, 8 maha kriya cittas and 26 appana javanas.

3. Right speech / Samma vacca

Samma vacca cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas and 8 lokuttara cittas.

4. Right action / Samma kammanta

Samma kammanta cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas and 8 lokuttara cittas.

5. Right livelihood / Samma ajiva

Samma ajiva cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas and 8 lokuttara cittas.

6. Right effort / Samma vayama

Energy / viriya cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas, 8 maha kriya cittas and 26 appana javanas.

7. Right mindfulness / Samma sati

Mindfulness / sati cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas, 8 maha kriya cittas and 26 appana javanas.

8. Right concentration / Samma samadhi

One-pointedness / ekaggata cetasika in 8 maha kusala cittas, 8 maha kriya cittas and 26 appana javanas.

9. Wrong view / Miccha ditthi

Wrong view / ditthi cetasika in 4 lobha mula ditthi sampayutta cittas.

10. Wrong thought / Miccha sankappa

Initial application / vitakka cetasika in 12 akusala cittas.

11. Wrong effort / Miccha vayama

Energy / viriya cetasika in 12 akusala cittas.

12. Wrong concentration / Miccha samadhi

One-pointedness / ekaggata cetasika in 12 akusala cittas.

26 appana javanas – 10 Rupavacara kusala and kriya cittas, 8 Arupavacara kusala and kriya cittas, 8 Lokuttara magga and phala cittas.

The 12 Path Factors can be reduced to 9 cetasikas :

1. Wisdom – Right view
2. Initial application – Right / Wrong thought
3. Energy – Right / Wrong effort
4. Mindfulness – Right Mindfulness
5. Ekaggata – Right / Wrong Concentration
6. Right speech (Virati)
7. Right action (Virati)
8. Right livelihood (Virati)
9. Wrong view (Ditthi)

Ditthi is the only exclusively unwholesome cetasika out of the 12 path factors.

There are no distinct path factors of wrong speech, wrong action and wrong livelihood, as these are simply unwholesome modes of conduct motivated by defilements.

There is no factor of wrong mindfulness as mindfulness is an exclusively wholesome cetasika absent in unwholesome cittas.

Of the 12 Path Factors, the first 8 are collectively found only in the 8 types of supramundane consciousness.

These 8 cetasikas correspond specifically to the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore, these lead either to the blissful states or eventually to Nibbana.