

The Keynote Speech

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JĪVITAVIDYĀ

Asian Theories of Life-Science: A Brief Account with reference to Life-circles (Jīvitacakra): A Practical Guide to Buddhist Āyurvedic Counselling and Psychiatry

Introduction

According to Asian religions and philosophical traditions, life is not a direct line but a circle. This is a very important view of life as far as social harmony is concerned. Unfortunately the modern society considers life as a direct line and does everything for the progress of material gain. It does not care about the past or around. The Sarvāstivāda Buddhist tradition holds the view that there is no difference in connection with the essence of things in the three periods of time. Past, present and future are inter-connected in essence. The one who holds this view pays attention always to the past and the future. Accordingly he/she naturally tends to perform his/her duties towards beings in the past and future. At present almost all people, except few, think and act for their own selfish gain. As a result a number of problems such as environmental pollution, wars, economic problems, unemployment problems, mental illnesses: stress, loneliness, phobia, depression, religious conflicts etc. have come into being in the modern world. The circular view of life is one of the most successful method of counselling to eliminate such problems. With this view in mind I have collected some circles of life conditions mentioned in Buddhism, Hinduism, Āyurveda and Astrology and commented on them in brief for the sake of readers. This aspect can be developed as the science of life for the future studies and everyone should learn this as a part of his/her education.

ASIAN THEORIES OF LIFE-SCIENCE (JĪVITAVIDYĀ): A BRIEF ACCOUNT WITH REFERENCE TO LIFE-CIRCLES

Life of human beings is conditioned by many causes which are related not only to this life but also to the former lives. Many Asian religions believe in rebirth and Kamma or Karma (volitional actions) which plays an important role in determining the good or bad condition of lives in each existence. So the life is always circular and it does not exist as a direct line. Past, present and future of lives are inter-related due to various causes and conditions. Further each Asian religion introduces aims and a goal of life. The present life-style should be arranged in order to match with those aims and the goal of life. The methodology to be followed in this regard is called “Sīla” (moral behavior). The aims and the goal is summarized in the following stanza of Dhammapada.

Ārogyaparamā lābhā - physical well-being

Santuṭṭhiparamaṃ dhanam - mental well-being

Vissāsaparamā ñāti - social well-being

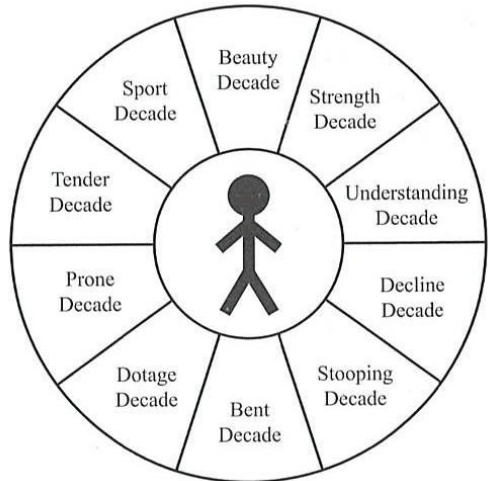
Nibbānam paramaṃ sukham - spiritual well-being¹

Among the aims of life, physical health, mental happiness and the social harmony are the most important factors and they represent every success of life. Therefore, the ancient scientists have made life-circles to explain the various causes and conditions and their logical relationship for the success of achieving those aims and goals. These causes and conditions are connected with various aspects of life such as social life, economic life, political life, spiritual life and environmental life etc. The following life-circles indicate such aspects and their causal relationship to various factors.

1. Buddhist classification of the stages of physical life from birth to death.

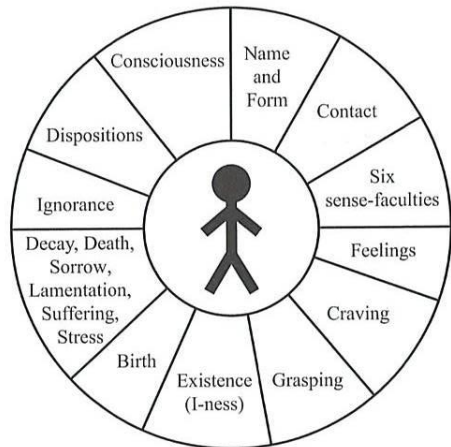
1. Tender decade
2. Sport decade
3. Beauty decade
4. Strength decade
5. Understanding decade
6. Decline decade
7. Stooping decade
8. Bent decade
9. Dotage decade
10. Prone decade²

Total – 100 years



2. Buddhist classification of the stages of Psycho-physical evolution.

1. Ignorance
2. Dispositions
3. Consciousness
4. Name and form
5. Six sense-faculties
6. Contact
7. Feelings
8. Craving
9. Grasping
10. Existence (I-ness)
11. Birth
12. Decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, stress³



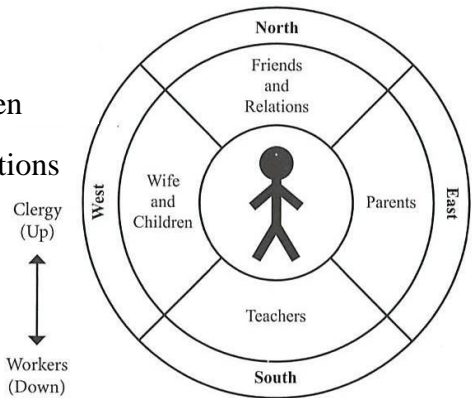
According to the Buddhist teachings the beings are wandering in the existence until the realization of final goal Nibbāna in which all defilements based on greed, hatred and delusion are eliminated completely.

These defilements are the main causes of rebirth and death circle in various existences. The beings are ignorant of suffering, causes of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (four noble truths). The first limb of the circle represents this state as ignorance. Due to the ignorance beings accumulate good and bad volitions (Dispositions) which cause the arising of consciousness in a new rebirth. Consciousness produces feelings, perceptions and physical body in the mother's womb (name and form). In this physical body (foetus) arise six sense-faculties – eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin and mind.

Six senses, when the child is born, **contact** with external sense-objects: forms sounds, smell, taste, temperature and mental objects. The contact between senses and sense-objects create **feelings**. Feelings create **craving** and they are grasped mentally and kept as parts of personality (**existence** or **I-ness**). Either the concept of I-ness or the self-concept brings rebirth in a new existence. Birth gradually leads to **death** through **decaying**. And this process of birth, decay and death creates the mass of suffering such as sorrow, lamentation, and stress.

3. Life circle of social structure

- East - parents
- South - teachers
- West - wife and children
- North - friends and relations
- Down - workers
- Up - clergy ⁴

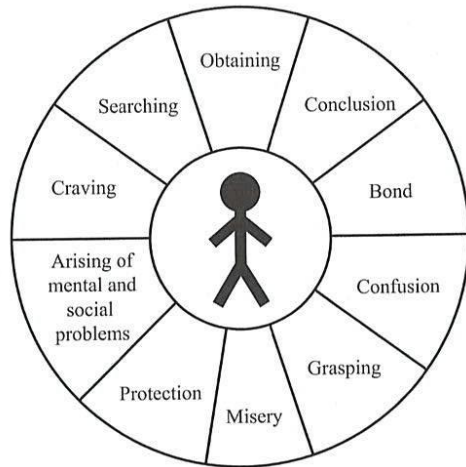


The above classification of social structure reveals the social relationships of the person in any given society. The Sigālovāda sutta clarifies obligations, duties and privileges of the person in connection with the social institutions in which he or she leads the life. Social harmony means nothing but the balance of these duties and privileges.

It is important that each social group possesses five duties towards the other groups.

4. The circle of the origin and evolution of psychological problems leading to social conflicts.

1. Craving
2. Searching
3. Obtaining
4. Conclusion
5. Bond
6. Confusion
7. Grasping
8. Misery
9. Protection
10. Arising of mental and social problems.⁵



People in need search for many things motivated by craving. Sometimes they are unable to get them but sometimes they obtain what they need (obtaining). After obtaining they come to conclusion about what they obtained. The conclusion leads them to bind with the object that obtained. Once a person is tightly bound with a certain thing he/she is ignorant about the outer world and become confused. Confusion leads him/her to grasp the object. Once the object is grasped blindly he/she thinks that the objects belong only to himself/herself which is called misery. Driven by misery they protect the object and in this endeavor

they have to fight, argue, tell lies, kill others etc. and innumerable number of personal, social and mental problems come into being.

5. Circle of the process of successful communication Counselling for Mental and Cognitive Therapy

i. Three steps:

Tadaṅga – Temporarily

Vikkhambhana – for a certain period of time

Samuccheda – for complete recovery

ii. Order of communication

The patient should come to the following mental levels gradually through counseling

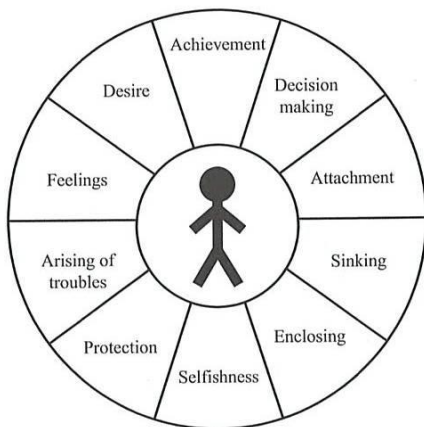
- Normal level of mind (preparedness of mind) – be able to understand what counselor says (kallacitta).
- Mental flexibility (muducitta).
- Suppression of five hindrances
 - ★ Suppression of sloth and torpor (thīnamiddha) by taking a suitable object into mind (vitakka).
 - ★ Suppression of doubt (vicikicchā) by constant reflection over the object (vicāra).
 - ★ Suppression of hateful ideas (vyāpāda) by developing zest (pīti), conceptual happiness related to dispositions of the five aggregates.
E.g. by confirming good results.
 - ★ Suppression of distortion and repentance (uddhacca – kukkuccha) by developing good and happy feelings (sukha).
 - ★ Suppression of strong attachment to sensual pleasures (kāmacchanda) by developing one-pointedness of mind (cittassekaggatā)
- Elated mentality (udaggacitta), directed towards the end or top

- Delighted mind(pahaṭṭhacitta)
- Workable mind (kammaniyacitta)
- Immovability of mind (āneñjappatta)

After the mentality of the patient develops up to above mentioned level by means of gradual speech or advice (ānupubbīkathā) the counselor should start the direct analysis or advisory conversation related to the real problem of the patient.

The mental problems may belong to different levels of strength:

- i. Feelings (vedanā)
- ii. Desire or hate (taṇhā)
- iii. Achievement of desire or hate (lābha)
- iv. Decision making of the achievement (vinicchaya)
- v. Attachment to the decision (chandarāga)
- vi. Sinking into the decision (ajjhosāna)
- vii. Enclosing the decision (pariggaha)
- viii. Selfishness or envy of the decision (macchhariya)
- ix. Protection of the decision (ārakkham)
- x. Arising of troubles as a result of protecting the decision. E.g. hating, fear , arguments, lying, tale-bearing, confusion, stress, depression, anxiety, loss of contact with reality, phobias, hysteria, obsessive compulsive disorders, harsh words, useless talks, delusion, hallucinations, inability to distinguish reality from fantasy, schizophrenia, etc.



Example:

Five grasping groups are the basis of all mental disorders. Compare the following definition of schizophrenia with the five aggregates:

Disturbance of the mind, of perception thoughts and feelings (Mental Illness, p.37)

Mind - viññāṇa

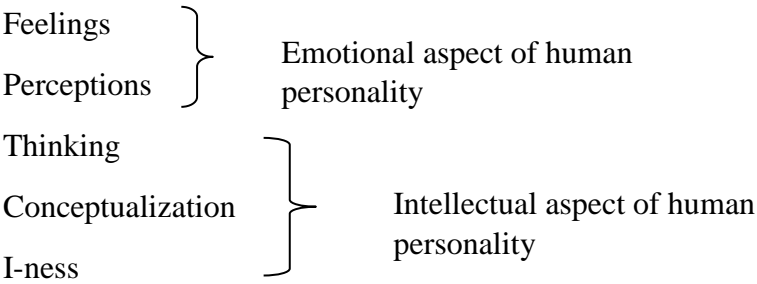
Perception - saññā

Thoughts - vitakka, saṅkhāra

Feelings - vedanā

Rūpa - form - five senses are the basis for all the mental aspects mentioned above.

Feelings are compared to the illness in Buddhism and almost all mental disorders possess some kinds of relationship with feelings.



Development of compassionate feelings removes emotional problems (karuṇā) and Development of wisdom about the reality of the world removes intellectual problems (paññā).⁶

The success of communication depends on its underlying methodology. The Buddha's method of communication has been successful over 2000 years and it is still relevant to any society in the modern world. The Buddha welcomes any person friendly with soothing words. He speaks looking directly at the face, does not show unfriendly marks on his face and speaks first before the guest and later he talks in accordance with the steps of gradual talk. It consists of the following aspects:

1. Importance of meritorious deeds
2. Importance of moral training
3. Happiness of being born in heavenly states
4. Impermanent nature of sensual pleasures
5. Bad effects of sensual pleasures
6. Lower status of sensual pleasures
7. Mental confusion caused by sensual pleasures
8. Importance of being free from sensual pleasures

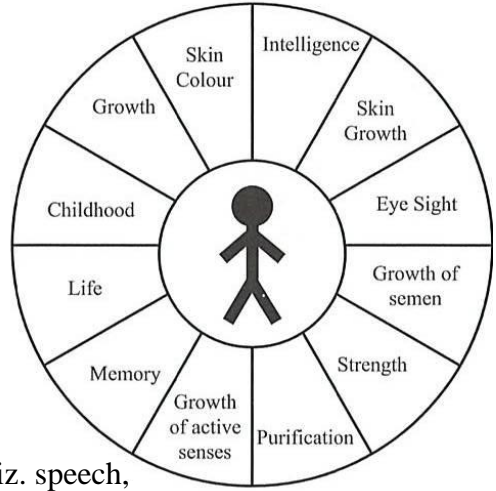
Up to this stage, as a result of gradual talk the hearer's mind reaches the following level.

1. Suitable minded
2. Soft-minded
3. Mind free from hindrances : sloth and torpor, doubt, ill-will, distorted mind and repentance, attachment to sensual pleasure
4. Upward minded
5. Happy minded
6. Active minded
7. Motionless minded

The relevant message is communicated after the hearer's mind reaches the above seven stages.

6. Āyurvedic life-circle:

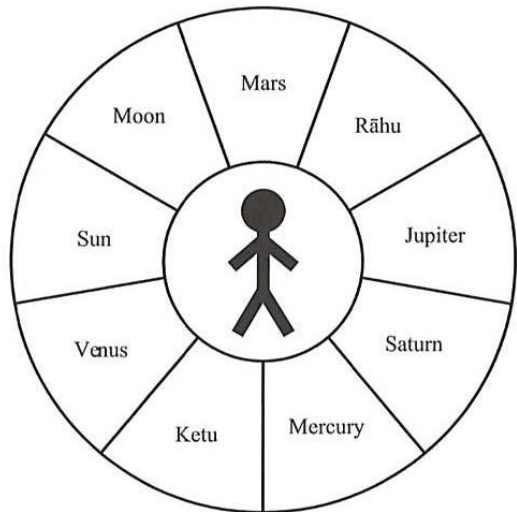
1. Childhood
 2. Growth
 3. Skin colour
 4. Intelligence
 5. Skin growth
 6. Eye sight
 7. Growth of semen
 8. Strength
 9. Purification
 10. Growth of active senses viz. speech,
hand, organ: male/female, anus, feet, mind
 11. Memory
 12. Life⁷
- Total – 120 years



The above circle is given in accordance with the gradual growth of the physical body.

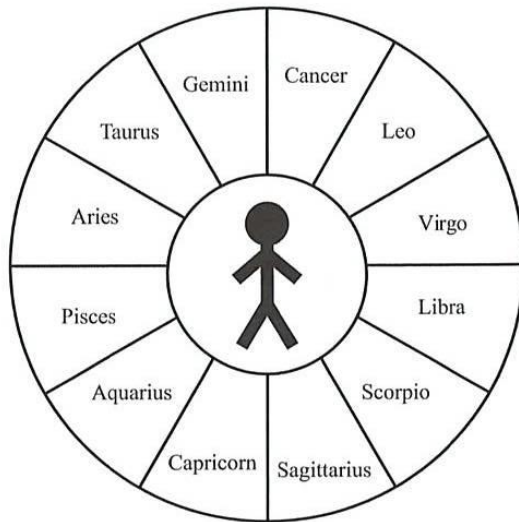
7. Astrological Life-circle:

1. Sun – 6 years
 2. Moon – 10 years
 3. Mars – 7 years
 4. Rāhu – 18 years
 5. Jupiter – 16 years
 6. Saturn – 19 years
 7. Mercury – 17 years
 8. Ketu – 7 years
 9. Venus – 20 years
- Total – 120 years⁸



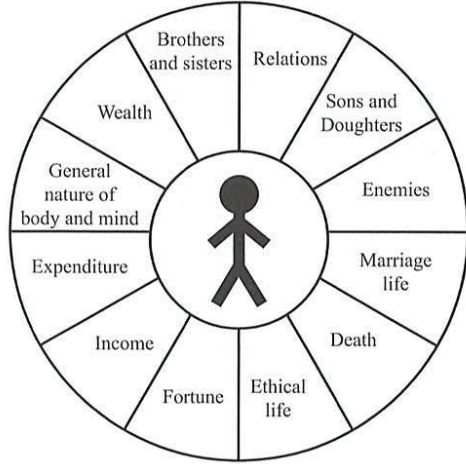
In astrology the life-span of a person is counted 120 years. This period of time is sub-divided into nine in accordance with the nine planets, as shown above. These are called “daśā”. Each “daśā” is connected with three “nakṣatras”. These are the 27 “nakṣatras” in astrology which are the divisions of 360 degrees of the circle of the space in which planets move. Further 360 degrees of the circle of space that covers the earth is divided into 12 “rāśis” consisting 30 degrees each. The “rāśicakra” is given below:

1. Aries
2. Taurus
3. Gemini
4. Cancer
5. Leo
6. Virgo
7. Libra
8. Scorpio
9. Sagittarius
10. Capricorn
11. Aquarius
12. Pisces ⁹



The “rāśis” of a horoscope indicate various aspects of life. One’s “rāśi” is calculated in accordance with his or her time, place, country and area of birth. The “rāśi” facing the east at the time of birth is considered one’s “rāśi”. Mainly the twelve aspects of the twelve houses of a horoscope are as follows:

1. General nature of body and mind
2. Wealth
3. Brothers and sisters
4. Relations
5. Sons and daughters
6. Enemies
7. Marriage life
8. Death
9. Ethical life
10. Fortune
11. Income
12. Expenditure¹⁰



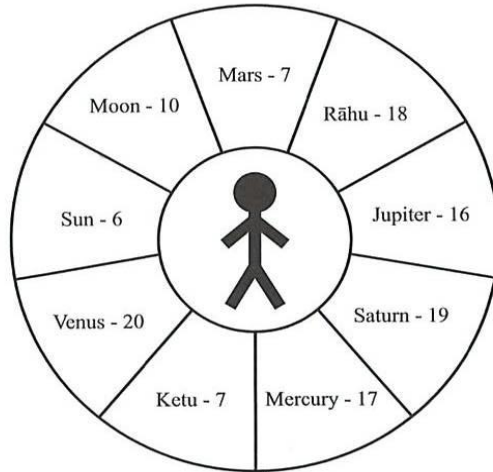
It should be emphasized that each aspect represents a large number of other aspects related to one's life.

The “nakṣatras” connected with each “daśā” are given below:

1. Sun	<table border="0" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Kati</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Uturupal</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Uturusala</td></tr> </table>		Kati		Uturupal		Uturusala	}	6 years
	Kati								
	Uturupal								
	Uturusala								
2. Moon	<table border="0" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Reheṇa</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Hata</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Suvāṇa</td></tr> </table>		Reheṇa		Hata		Suvāṇa	}	10 years
	Reheṇa								
	Hata								
	Suvāṇa								
3. Mars	<table border="0" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Muvasirisa</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Sita</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Denata</td></tr> </table>		Muvasirisa		Sita		Denata	}	7 years
	Muvasirisa								
	Sita								
	Denata								
4. Rāhu	<table border="0" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Ada</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Siyāvasa</td></tr> <tr><td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px;"></td><td style="padding-left: 5px;">Sā</td></tr> </table>		Ada		Siyāvasa		Sā	}	18 years
	Ada								
	Siyāvasa								
	Sā								

5. Jupiter	┌ ├── └─	Punāvasa Visā Puvaputupa	} 16 years
6. Saturn	┌ ├── └─	Puṣa Anura Utrapuṭupa	} 19 years
7. Mercury	┌ ├── └─	Deṭa Aslisa Revati	} 17 years
8. Ketu	┌ ├── └─	Asvida Mā Mula	} 7 years
9. Venus	┌ ├── └─	Beraṇa Puvapal Puvasaḷa	} 20 years

11

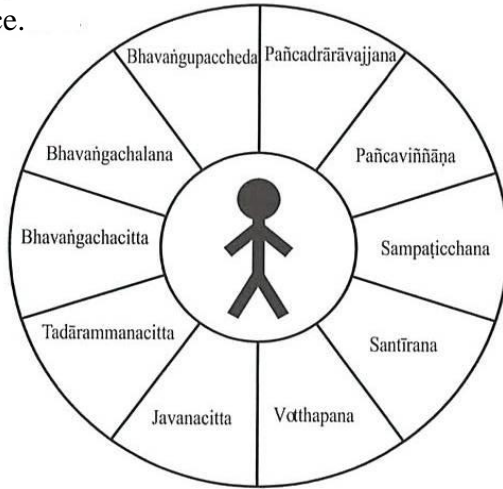


The nakṣatra which is connected with one's time of birth determines one's "daśā". His/her life starts with that "daśā". The horoscope mentions the rest of the time of "daśā" he/she has to spend in the future.

Depending on that period of time we can calculate and identify his/her present “daśā”. The planets influence the person in various ways according to their existence of the houses at the time of birth.

8. Circle of perception (Psychological)

1. Bhavaṅgacitta – sub-conscious state or dreamy state of mind
2. Bhavaṅgacalana – vibration of bhavaṅga when a sense organ contacts an object
3. Bhavaṅgupaccheda – breaking of bhavaṅga process
4. Pañcadvārāvajjana – stimulation of the relevant sense-organ
5. Pañcaviññāṇa – arising of mental awareness in relation to the object and the relevant sense faculty
6. Sampaṭicchana – accepting the object mentally
7. Santīraṇa – investigation consciousness about the object
8. Votthapana – determining consciousness about the object
9. Javanacitta – experiencing the object, consciousness arises and vanishes rapidly seven times
10. Tadārammanacitta – concerning the same object the relevant consciousness arises and vanishes two times registering the experience.



According to Theravāda Abhidhamma, to take place the birth of a being in mother's womb a surviving consciousness (gandhabba) related to former birth should be present in addition to other physical requirements. This consciousness is called "bhavaṅgacitta" – linking consciousness which links the former birth with the present new birth. The same bhavaṅga continues up to the death as a process. The sense-faculties of a person are created in the embryo in accordance with the karmic force embedded into the bhavaṅga. Further the life-span, gender etc. are also determined by bhavaṅga. However after the birth the person contacts the outer world with his senses. This process of perception takes place in a circular way and it is presented above. In short it is as follows:

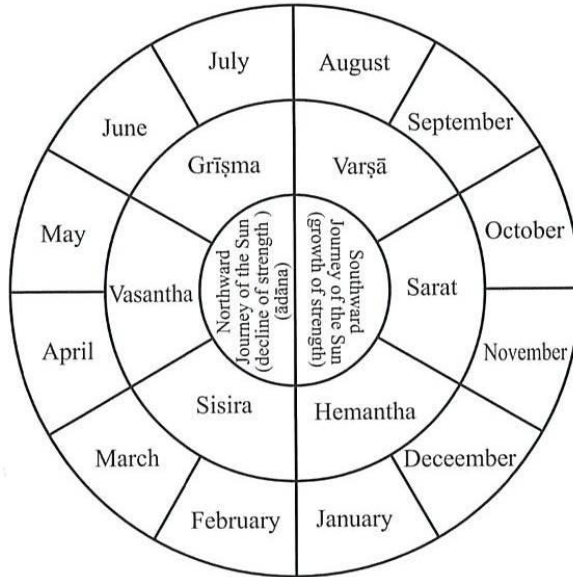
At the time without any sense-perception, bhavaṅga continues as a process of moments of conciseness. Once an object contacts any of the senses, the bhavaṅga vibrates and the next moment it breaks. Immediately after the break the bhavaṅga is directed towards the relevant sense-faculty and this moment is called "stimulating the sense faculty". Next to that a mental awareness arises in connection with the relevant object. Now the types of consciousnesses arise accepting, examining, and determining the object. After this stage there arise seven thought moments experiencing the object. Finally two thought moments arise and vanish registering the experience and again bhavaṅga continues until another perception takes place. This process occurs rapidly and such several processes may exist within a few seconds. The following table indicates this process with a simile.

Thought – moment

Simile

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. stream-consciousness (bhavaṅga) | a sleeping person under a tree with ripen fruits |
| 2. contact between the sense organ (the eye) and the sense-object (fruit) | falling of the fruit |
| 3. recollecting | awaking with the sound of falling fruit |
| 4. eye-consciousness | opening eyes and looking at the fruit |
| 5. receiving consciousness | taking the fruit |
| 6. investigating consciousness | squeezing the fruit |
| 7. determining consciousness | smelling the fruit |
| 8 to 14. Javana or experiencing consciousness | eating the fruit |
| 15. and 16. registration consciousness | swallowing the fruit with saliva |
| 17. stream-consciousness exists again | sleeping again ¹² |

9. Astrological Circle of Seasons Indicating Decline and Growth of Strength of Beings

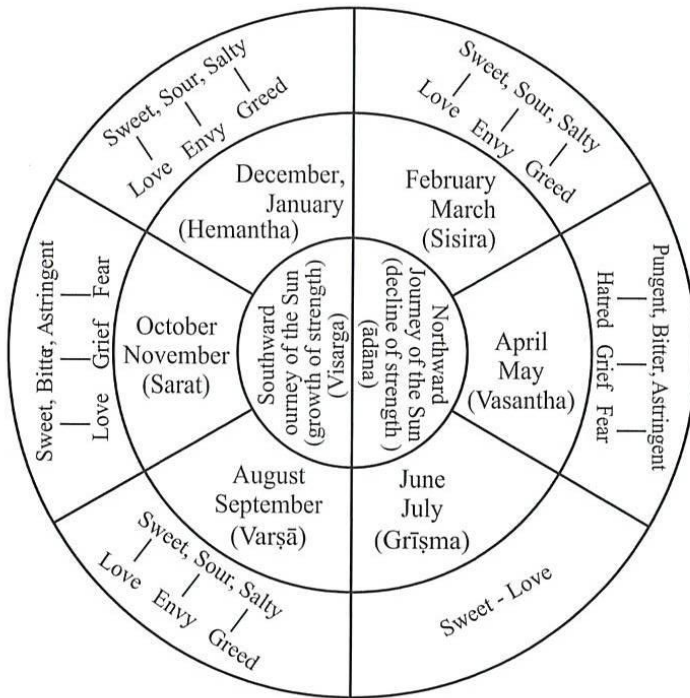


According to Astrology the rotation of the Sun throughout the year has been divided into two periods consisting six months each. The first half is called Northward journey of the Sun from February to July. This comparison of Astrological and English calendar is not completely matching. It should be considered a rough calculation. The second half is called Southward journey of the Sun from August to January. In the first half the sun rotates very close to the earth and in this hot season the strength of beings declines due to the hot temperature.

In the second half the sun gradually goes away from the earth and environment becomes cooler. As a result the strength of beings grows because the digestive power increases in this season.

10. Astrological circle of seasons indicating the relationship of seasons with tastes and psychological factors

Each season connects with different tastes and the tastes are related to mental factors. In order to prevent and eliminate illnesses we have to take foods and drinks as well as manage behavior in accordance with the tastes and climate. Further we have to follow meditational practices in order to calm down the mental condition.



11. Āyurvedic circle of the connection between the three humours and the six tastes

The six tastes are related to the three humours and all kinds of illnesses arise due to the imbalance of three humours viz. Air (vāta), Bile (pitta) and phlegm (kapha). The foods and drinks should be taken to balance the humours which increase in various ways during different seasons.

The tastes and the humours:

Humours	-	Tastes	
Air (vāta)	-	Bitter	} increase
		Astringent	
		Pungent	
Bile (pitta)		Salty	} decrease
		Sour	
		Sweet	} increase
		Sour	
		Pungent	
	Salty		
Phlegm (kapha)		Bitter	} decrease
		Astringent	
		Sweet	
		Sweet	} increase
		Salty	
	Sour		
	Pungent	} decrease	
	Bitter		
	Astringent		

12. Āyurvedic circle of psychological problems

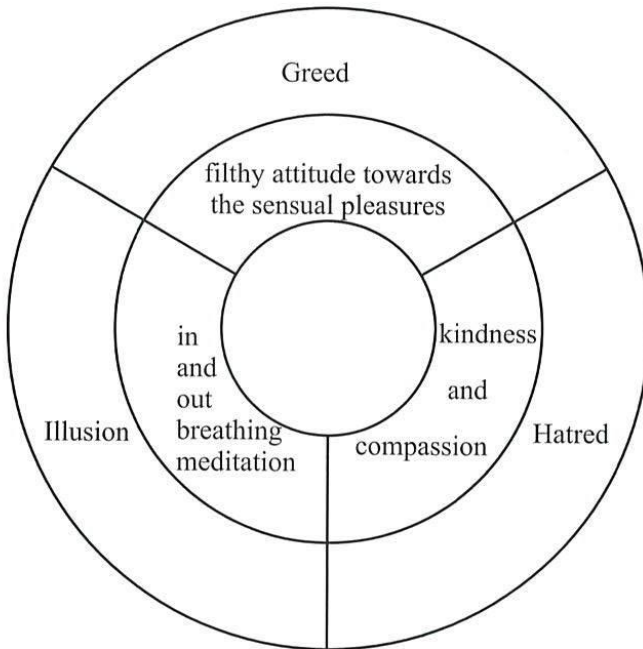
According to Āyurveda all mental illnesses arise in connection with the three elements viz. Sattva, Rajas, Tamas. These three aspects can be roughly compared with greed, hatred and delusion respectively taught in Buddhism.

The following meditational subjects can be practiced in order to minimize the three mental aspects which are the basis of all mental problems.

Greed - filthy attitude towards the sensual pleasures

Hatred - kindness and compassion

Illusion- in and out breathing meditation



End Notes:

1. Dhammapada, tr.Ven. Narada Thera, Taiwan, 1993, p.177
2. The Path of Purification, Tr. Bhikkhu Nanamoli, Sri Lanka, 1956, p.721
3. Visuddhimagga, PTS, p. 529
4. Dīghanikāya, III, PTS, p.189
5. Dīghanikāya, II, PTS, p.220
6. Sumanapala Galmangoda, A Practical Guide to Buddhist Āyurvedic Counselling and Psychiatry, Colour Creations, Kadawatha, 2015, p.10
7. Śārngadharasamhitā, tr. Dr. Āryadasa Kumarasingha, Dept. of Educational Publication, Colombo, 1962, p.31
8. Apa Almanac -2016-2017, Colombo
9. ibid
10. Bhāvaprakāśa, Tr. Y.A. Harmanis Appuhami, Colombo 1949, p.2
11. Apa Almanac -2016-2017
12. Sumanapala Galmangoda, An Introduction to Theravāda Abhidhamma , Buddhist Research Society, Singapore, 1998, p.137

See also:

- David Frawley, Āyurvedic Healing, Delhi, 1992
- Mādhavanidāna, tr. Āryadasa Kumarasingha, Dept. of Āyurveda, Colombo, 1994
- A Practical Approach to Mental Illness, Its Causes and Treatment, Singapore Association for Mental Health, Singapore, 1988
- Sumanapala Galmangoda, Buddhist Āyurvedic System of Psychiatry and Counselling, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, 2014