

Theravada Confusion of *Jīvitindriya* by Grouping It under Two Categories; *Cetasika* and *Rūpa Dharmās*

Ilukewela Dhammarathana Thero

Jīvitindriya (mental life-faculty) is a significant term used in Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda sources of Abhidharma. Although, the term *jīvita* is found in the Pali suttas, the technical term *jīvitendariya* is mostly found in the Abhidhamma *Piṭaka* (Jaini 247).¹ In *Jīvitindriya* Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya, the three faculties; femininity, masculinity and vitality are stated (S.N., v. 204).² As P.S. Jaini suggests, when the early Buddhist sources are taken into consideration, the Mahāvedalla Sutta (M.N., i. 295)³ would be the Sutta that caused the origin of *Jīvitindriya* in Abhidharma (Jaini 247).⁴ In the Sutta, the terms; *āyu* and *usma* are given. Out of the two terms, the former is more commonly used signifying life-duration.

The *Mahāvedalla-sutta* (M.N., i. 295)⁵ of the *Majjhika-nikāya* contains a conversation between Ven. Mahākotṭhita and Ven. Sāriputta on the mutual relation of the mind and mental concomitants. In this conversation, a question is asked on the basis of stability of the five *indriyas*. Ven. Sāriputta replies that stability is on account of *āyu*.⁶ The latter says *āyu* depends on *usmā*⁷ and *usmā* depends on *āyu*.⁸ Since *usmā* is also a part of the body, the *āyu* and *usmā* are inter-dependent like the flame and the light of a lamp.⁹ The light is

¹ Jaini, P.S. (2001), Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies, Motilal Banarsidass, p.247

² *Jīvitindriya* sutta, S.N. v, PTS, p.204

Tiṇimāni, bhikkhave, indriyāni. Katamāni tīni? Itthindriyaṃ, purisindriyaṃ, jīvitindriyaṃ. Imāni kho, bhikkhave, tīni indriyāni.

³ Mahāvedalla Sutta, M.N. 1, PTS, p.295

⁴ P.S. Jaini, Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies, Motilal Banarsidass, 2001, p.247

⁵ Mahāvedalla Sutta, M.N. 1, PTS, p.295

⁶ *pañcimāni āvuso indriyāni. seyyathidaṃ cakkhuindriyaṃ sotindriyaṃ ghānindriyaṃ jīvhindriyaṃ kayindriyaṃ. imāni kho āvuso pañcindriyāni āyuṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhanti.*

⁷ *āyu usmaṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhanti.*

⁸ *usmā āyuṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhanti.*

⁹ *telappadīpassa jhāyato acciṃ paṭicca ābhā paññāyati, ābhaṃ paṭicca acci paññāyati, evameva kho āvuso āyu usmaṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhati. usmā ca āyuṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhatī ti.*

seen by the help of flame, the flame is seen on account of the light (M.N., i. 295).¹⁰ The stability of *āyu* and *usmā* is stated in the Sutta in relation to the five sense faculties, not to the five aggregates. Therefore, P.S. Jaini suggests that there is no indication here to show the place of *āyu* in the traditional formula of the five *khandhas* (Jaini 245).¹¹

It seems that to elucidate this point, a further question is raised whether the *āyusaṃkhāras* (constituents of life) are identical with feelings (i.e. *vedanā*). Ven. Sāriputta says that they are not identical, for, if they were, a person undergoing the trance called *saññā-vedayitanirodha* will not rise again from that trance (ibid.).¹² Consequently, if *āyu* is identical with any of them, it will also cease to be, resulting in the death of the yogin. If *āyu*, *usmā* and *viññāṇa* leave the body (*kāya*), there remains the corpse (ibid.).¹³ Further, the difference between the death and the *saññā-vedaita-nirodha samāpatti* is given in the Sutta. The death means the disappearance of *kāya-saṃkhāra*, *vacī-saṃkhāra*, *citta-saṃkhāra*, *āyu*, *usmā*, senses while the *saññā-vedaita-nirodha samāpatti* means the disappearance of the *kāya-saṃkhāra*, *vacī-saṃkhāra*, *citta-saṃkhāra*, and the stability of *āyu*, *usmā*, senses (ibid. 296).¹⁴ In other words, when a person dies, three things abandon him, viz. the *āyu*, the *usmā* and the mind (*viññāṇa*). In the case of a person who has undergone the above *samādhi* the *āyu* and *usmā* still exist (ibid.).¹⁵ P.S. Jaini suggests:

It appears from this passage that the Sutta recognizes *āyu* as a factor which stabilizes the five *indriyas*, but does not include it in any of the *nāma-*

¹⁰ *Imāni kho āvuso pañcendriyāni āyumaṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhantīti... āyu usmaṃ paṭicca tiṭṭhantīti... Seyyathāpi... Mahāvedalla Sutta, M.N. 1, PTS, p.295*

¹¹ P.S. Jaini, Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies, Motilal Banarsidass, 2001, p.247

¹² *Te ca kho āyu-saṃkhārā abhiviṃsu te vedaniyā dhammā, na-y-idaṃ saññā-vedayita-nirodhaṃ samāpannassa bhikkhuno vuṭṭhānaṃ paññāyetha* (ibid.).

¹³ *Ydā kho, āvuso, imaṃ kāyaṃ tayo dhammā jahanti - āyu usmā ca viññāṇaṃ; athāyaṃ kāyo ujjhito avakkhitto seti, yathā kaṭṭhaṃ acetananti.*

¹⁴ *yvāyaṃ, āvuso, mato kālaṅkato tassa kāyasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacīsaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, cittasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, āyu parikkhīṇo, usmā vūpasantā, indriyāni paribhinnāni. yo cāyaṃ bhikkhu saññā-vedaita-nirodhaṃ samāpanno tassapi kāyasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacīsaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, cittasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, āyu na parikkhīṇo, usmā avūpasantā, indriyāni vipadannāni. p.296*

¹⁵ *Yadā kho panāvuso imaṃ kāyaṃ layo dhammā jahanti: āyu usmā ca viññāṇaṃ, athāyaṃ kāyo ujjhiyo seti yathā kaṭṭhaṃ acetanaṃ ti. ... yvāyaṃ ... mato ... yo cāyaṃ ... saññāvedayita-nirodhaṃ samāpanno, imesaṃ kiṃ nānākaraṇaṃ ti? Yvāyaṃ mato ... tassa ... āyu parikkhīṇo, usmā vūpasantā ... yvāyaṃ ... samāpanno tassa ... āyu aparikkhīṇo, usmā avūpasantā ...* (ibid.).

khandhas. Its inclusion in the latter group would also go against the recognition of an existence called *asāñña-bhava* which consists of only the *rūpa-khandha*. Nor could it be included in the *rūpa-khandha*, for in the *arūpa-loka*, in the absence of any *rūpa*, its operation will be impossible. Various speculations regarding its inclusion in the formula of the five *skandhas* can be treated to the above Sutta and to the problems that arise on account of recognizing these two existences, one wholly material and another wholly mental. The Theravādins solved this problem by postulating two *jīvitendriyas* (i.e. *āyu*), one physical (*rūpa*) and another mental (*arūpa*). Their Abhidhamma includes the former in the *upādāyarūpas*, and the latter in the *saṃkhāra-khandha* (ibid. 19).¹⁶ The beings of the *asañña-bhava* and the *arūpa-bhava* live their life-span on account of these two dharmas, respectively. The beings of other existences possess both kinds of the *jīvitendriya* (ibid. 248).¹⁷

According to the aforesaid facts, it is clear that the *jīvitindriya* is a later addition made to the Abhidhamma in Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda. However, the term, *jīvitindriya* found in Saṅgitta Nikāya should be examined (S.N., v. 204).¹⁸ In *Jīvitindriya Sutta*, three *indriyas* are given; the faculty of male, female and life. Considering the term, *jīvitindriya*, the commentarial explanation is given as ‘that which gives the life’ (S.N.A., iii. 237).¹⁹ In that sense, *jīvitindriya* is identical with life. Therefore, in relation to early Buddhism we can identify that the probability of continuing the life would be done by the *jīvitindriya*.

To identify the characteristics of *Jīvitindriya*, the interpretations given in the canon are to be examined.

Dhammasaṅgani suggests that there is life-faculty which causes, the progress, support and continuation of the life (*āyu*) (Dhammasaṅgani, 11-20).²⁰ The fact given in *Jīvitindriya*

¹⁶ *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ jīvitindriyaṃ? Yo tesaṃ rūpīnaṃ dhammānaṃ āyu ṭhiti ... jīvitaṃ ...* (Dhammasaṅgani, 635). *Yo tesaṃ atūpīnaṃ dhammānaṃ āyu ... jīvitaṃ* (ibid., 19).

¹⁷ P.S. Jaini, Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies, Motilal Banarsidass, 2001, p.248

¹⁸ *Jīvitindriya sutta*, S.N. v, PTS, p.204

... tīṇimāni ... jīvitindriyaṃ....

¹⁹ S.N.A., iii, PTS, p.237

jīvite indaṭṭhaṃ karotīti jīvitindriyaṃ

²⁰ Dhammasaṅgani, p. 11,20,

Sutta is quite similar to this interpretation. However, Dhammasaṅgaṇī introduces two *jīvitindriyas*; (ibid. 126)²¹

1. rūpa-jīvitindriya
2. non-rūpa-jīvitindriya

This is the place where the Canon begins to introduce two *Jīvitindriyas*. The two terms found in Mahāvedalla Sutta could also be applied here. The term *āyu* found in the Sutta could be compared with *non-rūpa-jīvitindriya* and *usma* with *rūpa jīvitindriya*. As *āyu* is away from the ordinary senses while *usma* is sensible, the two *jīvitindriyas* given here also perform the same task. This is explicitly given in the statement in Kathāvatthu discussing the stability of *jīvitindriya* of those who are in the *nirodha samāpatti* but not the *rūpa-jīvitindriya* (Kathāvatthu 396).²²

Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā, however, suggests quite different opinion on *jīvitindriya* regarding what the killing is. It says that in conventional sense, it is life, but in ultimate sense, it is *jīvitindriyaṃ* (D.N.A. i. 69).²³ This suggests the similarity and dissimilarity between the life and *jīvitindriya*. The similarity is that it is the same thing both life and *jīvitindriya* because it causes the life. The dissimilarity is that in relation to the conventional form of language, it is the life, but in ultimate sense it is *jīvitindriya*.

The *jīvitindriya* is stated under different numbers of *indriyani* in Dhammasaṅgaṇi as:

Eight-fold: *saddhindriyaṃ, vīrindriyaṃ, satindriyaṃ, samādhindriyaṃ, paññindriyaṃ, manindriyaṃ, somanassindriyaṃ, jīvitindriyaṃ* (Dhammasaṅgaṇī, 19).²⁴

Nine-fold: *chakkhuindriyaṃ, sotindriyaṃ, ghānindriyaṃ, jīvhindriyaṃ, kāyindriyaṃ, itthindriyaṃ, purisindriyaṃ, jīvitindriyaṃ. yañca rūpaṃ na indriyaṃ* (ibid. 132 / Vibhaṅga 14).²⁵

yo tesam arūpīnaṃ āyu ṭhiti yapaṇā yāpanā irīyanā vattanā pālanā jīvitam jīvitindriyaṃ

²¹ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 126

atthi rūpaṃ jīvitindriyaṃ, atthi rūpaṃ na jīvitindriyaṃ

²² Kathāvatthu p.396

nirodham samāpannassa atthi jīvitindriyaṃ, no ca vata re vattabbe - natthi rūpajīvitindriya'nti.

²³ Dīghanikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Sīlakkhandha Vagga Aṭṭhakathā) 1, 69

pāṇoti cettha voharato satto, paramattho jīvitindriyaṃ.

²⁴ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 19

²⁵ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 132 / Vibhaṅga 14

Ten-fold: *chakkhuindriyaṃ, sotindriyaṃ, ghānindriyaṃ, jivhindriyaṃ, kāyindriyaṃ, itthindriyaṃ, purisindriyaṃ, jīvitindriyaṃ. na indriya rūpaṃ atthi sappatighaṃ, atthi appatighaṃ* (ibid).²⁶

Twenty-two-fold: *chakkhuindriyaṃ, sotindriyaṃ, ghānindriyaṃ, jivhindriyaṃ, kāyindriyaṃ, manindriyaṃ, itthindriyaṃ, purisindriyaṃ, jīvitindriyaṃ, sukhindriyaṃ, dukhindriyaṃ, somanassindriyaṃ, domanassindriyaṃ, upekkhindriyaṃ, saddhindriyaṃ, virindriyaṃ, satindriyaṃ, samādhindriyaṃ, paññindriyaṃ, adaññātāññssāmītindriyaṃ, aññindriyaṃ, aññātāvindriyaṃ* (Vibhaṅga 121).²⁷

Further, Dhammasaṅgaṇī explains the process how the wholesome consciousness (kusala Dhamma) arises. Within the process, how the *jīvitindriya* causes the continuity of life is explained.

01. A consciousness accompanied by pleasure (*somanassasahagataṃ*) comes because of whatever object such as form, sound, odour, taste, touch, thought (*dhammārammaṇa*) (Dhammasaṅgaṇī 08).²⁸
02. There arise contact, feeling, perception, volition, consciousness (ibid.),²⁹ initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness and one-pointed-ness (ibid.).³⁰
03. The faculties; faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, mind, pleasure, **life** (ibid.).³¹
04. Right view, right thought, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration (ibid.).³²

²⁶ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 132 / Vibhaṅga 14

²⁷ Vibhaṅga, p.121

²⁸ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 08

yasmiṃ samaye kāmāvacaraṃ kusalaṃ cittaṃ uppannaṃ hoti somanassasahagataṃ ñāṇasaṃpayuttaṃ rūpārammaṇaṃ vā saddhārammaṇaṃ vā gandhārammaṇaṃ vā rasārammaṇaṃ vā phoṭṭhabbārammaṇaṃ vā dhammārammaṇaṃ vā yaṃ yaṃ vā panārabbha.

²⁹ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 08

tasmiṃ samaye phasso hoti, vedanā hoti, saññā hoti, cetanā hoti, cittaṃ hoti.

³⁰ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 08

vitakko hoti, vicāro hoti, pīti hoti, sukha hoti, cittassekaggatā hoti

³¹ Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 08

saddhindriyaṃ hoti, viriyindriyaṃ hoti, satindriyaṃ hoti, samādhindriyaṃ hoti, paññindriyaṃ hoti, manindriyaṃ hoti, somanassindriyaṃ hoti, jīvitindriyaṃ hoti.

³² Dhammasaṅgaṇī p. 08

sammādiṭṭhi hoti, sammāsaṅkappo hoti, sammāvāyāmo hoti, sammāsamādhi hoti.

05. The powers of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, shyness, regret (ibid.).³³
06. Non-greed, non-hatred, non-ignorance, non-covetousness, non-cruelty, right view (ibid.).³⁴
07. Shame, fear, tranquillity of mentality, tranquillity of mind, lightness of mental states, lightness of mind, pliancy of mental states, pliancy of mind, adaptability of mental states, adaptability of mind, proficiency of mental states, proficiency of the mind, rectitude of mental states, and rectitude of mind (ibid.).³⁵
08. Finally, there arises mindfulness, intelligence, insight, energy and calmness which are related to the immaterial (ibid.).³⁶

At the third stage of this category, *jīvitindriya* arises and causes the origin of wholesome thoughts.

The Theravāda enumeration of *āyu* in the *rūpa-khandha* looks rather far-fetched. Mahāvedalla Sutta (M.N., i. 295)³⁷ specifically raises the whole problem with reference to five *indriyas*, i.e. the five senses, and not matter in general. ‘Death’ these spoken of reference not to a corpse but to a personality, i.e. a being led by his karma in different destinies (*gati*) or existence (*nikāya-sabhāga*) such as *naraka* (hell), *tiriyañca* (animal), *preta* (spirit), *manuṣya* (human), and *deva* (god). P.S. Jaini suggests as follow.

The *āyuh* thus was directly related to karma or *cetanā* and not the *rūpa-skandha*. This seems to be the main reason for a criticism of the *rūpa-jīvitendriya* by Pubbaseliyas and Sammitīyas recorded in *Kathāvatthu*

³³ Dhammasaṅgani p. 08

saddhābalaṃ hoti, viriyabalaṃ hoti, satibalaṃ hoti, samādhibalaṃ hoti, paññābalaṃ hoti, hitibalaṃ hoti, ottappabalaṃ hoti..

³⁴ Dhammasaṅgani p. 08

alobho hoti, adoso hoti, amoho hoti, anabhijjhā hoti, abyāpādo hoti, sammādiṭṭhi hoti.

³⁵ Dhammasaṅgani p. 08

hiri hoti, ottappaṃ hoti, kāyapassaddhi hoti, citta-passaddhi hoti, kāyalahutā hoti, cittalahutā hoti, kāyamudutā hoti, cittamudutā hoti, kāyakammaññatā hoti, cittakammaññatā hoti, kāyapāguññatā hoti, cittapāguññatā hoti, kāyayujjukatā hoti, cittayujjukatā hoti

³⁶ Dhammasaṅgani p. 08

sati hoti, sampajñāṃ hoti, samatho hoti, vipassanā hoti, paggaḥo hoti, avikkhepo hoti, ye vā pana tasmīṃ samaye aññepi atthi paṭiccasamuppannā arūpino dhammā - ime dhammā kusalā.

³⁷ M.N. 1, PTS, p.295

(Kathāvatthu Aṭṭhakathā, iii. 10).³⁸ They held that the *jīvitendriya* was essentially an *arūpa-dharma*. But these schools, as well as the Vaibhāṣikas, were equally committed to the theories of the *asaṃjñā* and *arūpa-bhavas*, and hence could not include the *jīvitendriya* in the *nāma-skandha*. They, therefore, included it in their *viprayukta* category, distinct from both the *citta* and *rūpa* (Jaini 248).³⁹

The Visuddhimagga enumerates the 24 kinds of derived matter: *cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāṇa*, *jivhā*, *kāya*; *rūpa*, *sadda*, *gandha*, *rasa*; *itthindriya*, *purisindriya*, *jīvitindriya*; *hadaya-vatthu*; *kāyaviññatti*, *vacīviññatti*; *ākāsa-dhātu*; *rūpassa-lahutā*, *rūpassa-mudutā*, *rūpassa-kammaññatā*; *rūpassa-upacayo*, *rūpassa-santati*, *rūpassa-jaratā*, *rūpassa-aniccatā*, and *kabaḷikāro-āhāro* (Atthasālinī, iv. 112).⁴⁰

A few of the so-called *nipphanna-rūpas* can also be placed in the category of the *anipphanna*. The *jīvitindriya*, for instance, does not consist of a separate *rūpa*, but is only a name given to the life of matter. The *itthindriya* and *purisindriya*, two ‘material qualities of sex’ can be treated as different aspects of the *kāya*.⁴¹ The last *nipphanna-rūpa*, called *kabaḷikāro āhāro* (edible food) is also not a separate entity but only a name given to the material quality of nutrition.

Classification given in Sāriputrābhidharma on five skandhas should be investigated here.

1. Citta-saṃprayukta – *vedanā-skandha* and *saṃjñā-sakandha*
2. Not citta-saṃprayukta – *rūpa-skandha*
3. Neither citta-saṃprayukta nor not citta-saṃprayukta - *viññānā-skandha*
4. Either citta-saṃprayukta or not citta-saṃprayukta – *saṃskāra-skandha*

³⁸ Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā, viii, p.10.

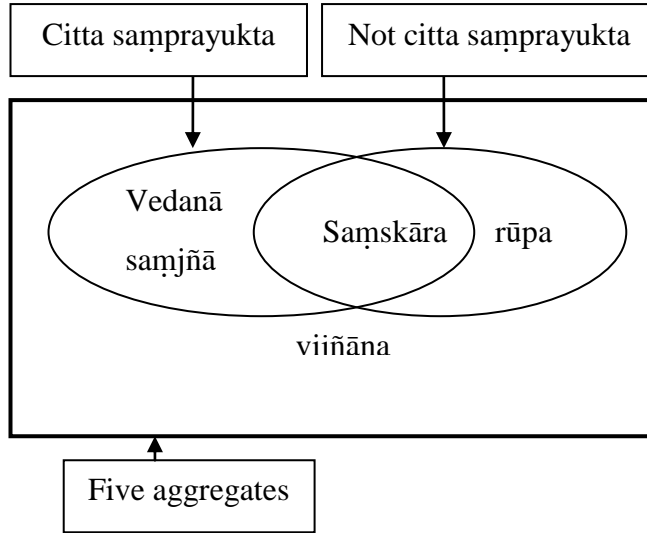
Tattha yesam jīvitindriyaṃ nāma citta-viprayuttho arūpo-dhammo, tasmā rūpa-jīvitindriyaṃ natthūti laddhi, seyyathāpi Pubbaseliyānañceva Sammitīyānaṃ ca.

³⁹ P.S. Jaini, Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies, Motilal Banarsidass, 2001, p.248

⁴⁰ Of these only 23 are enumerated in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*. The *hadaya-vatthu* is a later addition by the commentators. See *Aṭṭhasālinī*, iv, 112.

⁴¹ Cf. *Vṛtti* on kā. 73)

Kāyendriya-pradeśa eva hi kaścit strī-puruṣendriyākhyam labhate...



Here, the problem arises with the *saṃskāra skandha* since it is the subject matter. What is the *saṃskāra-skandha* which is not *citta-samprayukta*? That is *saṃskāra-sakandha* which is not *caitasika-jāti*, etc, up to *nirodha-samāpatti*.

The Abhidharmakośa of Vasubandhu states what the *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāras* are.

*viprayuktāstu saṃskārāḥ prāptyaprāptiḥ sabhāgatā /
āsaṃjñikaṃ samāpattiḥ jīvitam lakṣaṇāni ca //35//*

The not-associated "with the mind-stuff" are the *prāpti*, the *aprāpti*, the *sabhāgatā*, the *āsaṃjñika*, the two concentrations, the life, the characters, the *nāmakāya*, etc., and what is of this type (Subhadra & Jayaswal 334).⁴²

Ghoṣaka enumerates the following 17 *saṃskāras*: (1) *prāptiḥ*, (2) *asaṃjñi-samāpattiḥ*, (3) *nirodha-samāpattiḥ*, (4) *asaṃjñi-āyatanam*, (5) *jīvitendriyam*, (6) *nikāya-sabhāgatā*, (7) *sthāna-prāptiḥ*, (8) *vastu-prāptiḥ*, (9) *āyatana-prāptiḥ*, (10) *jātiḥ*, (11) *jarā*, (12) *sthiṭiḥ*, (13) *anityatā*, (14) *nāma-kāyaḥ*, (15) *pada-kāyaḥ*, (16) *vyañjana-kāyaḥ*, (17) *prthagjanatvam*.

With the development of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma Vasubandhu systematized the Abhidhamma composing Abhidharmakośabhāṣya enumerating 14 number of *cittaviprayuktasaṃskhāra dharmas* (conditionings disjoined from thought) as follows.

- i. *prāpti* (acquisition)
- ii. *aprāpti* (non-acquisition)
- iii. *nikāyasabhāga* (group homogeneity)
- iv. *āsaṃjñika* (ideationlessness)
- v. *āsaṃjñi-samāpatti* (ideationlessness attainment)

⁴² The Abhidharmakośa of Vasubandhu, Dr. Subhadra Jha, Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute Patna, 1983, p. 334

- vi. *nirodha-samāpatti* (cessation attainment)
- vii. *jīvitendriya* (vital faculty)
- viii. *jāti-lakṣaṇa* (production-characteristic)
- ix. *sthiti-lakṣaṇa* (duration-characteristic)
- x. *jarā-lakṣaṇa* (deterioration-characteristic)
- xi. *anityatā-lakṣaṇa* (impermanence-characteristic)
- xii. *nāma-kāya* (words)
- xiii. *pada-kāya* (phrases)
- xiv. *vyañjana-kāya* (syllables)

Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma categorizes the *jīvitindriya* in a new category, *Cittaviprayuktasaṃskhāras*, which does not come under the categories of *citta*, *cetasika* or *rūpa*. Therefore, the categorization made by the Sarvāstivādins inspecting on *āyu* and *usma* found in early Buddhism could be shown as the acceptable modification.

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