

# CONSCIOUSNESS

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## Part 1 – The Subjective Experience

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### WHO AM I ?

I am an Organism in an Environment. Two things are “happening” to me:

- I) METABOLISM : Life sustaining process;
- II) CONSCIOUSNESS : Experiencing the Environment through 5 physiological senses;

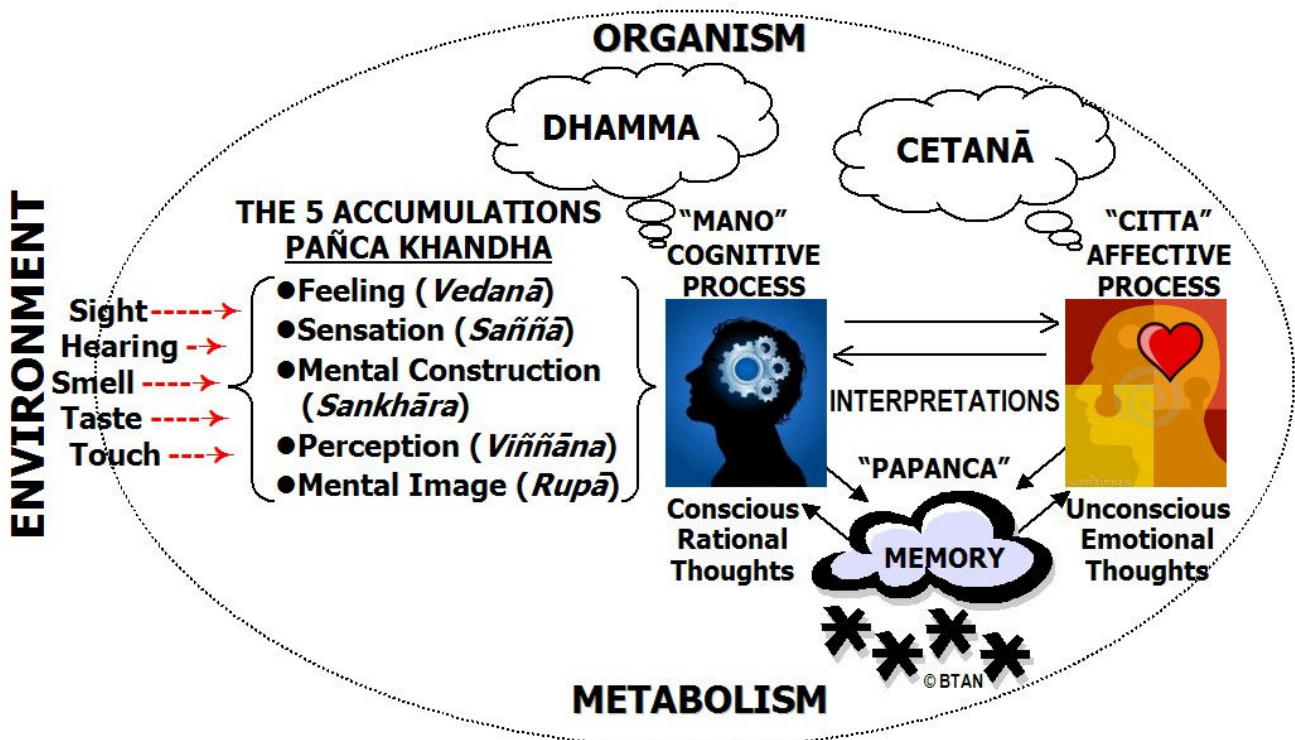
### OUR EVOLVING BRAIN

Our brain evolved over millions of years into 3 main layers:

1. Brain Stem (“Lizard Brain”):
  - Most primitive part formed at the top of the spinal chord – it governs autonomic (involuntary) physiological functions such as heart-rate, respiration, digestion, blood pressure, etc. to keep us alive;
2. Limbic System (“Leopard Brain”):
  - Middle layer relaying sensory information, memory, emotional arousal, and unconscious emotional reactions – our emotional command center;
3. Cerebral Cortex (“Learning Brain”):
  - Newest part processing perceptual awareness, attention system, language, logic, reasoning, learning & critical thinking, decision making, goal setting and planning.

## CONSCIOUSNESS

*The MIND as an activity of the Organism in an Environment*



## **MIND, MATTER & EXPERIENCE**

- There is no MATTER and there is no MIND
- There is only EXPERIENCE
- EXPERIENCE is an ACTIVITY
- The activity called "Experience" creates ENTITIES
- The 2 entities we create are the SUBJECTIVE SELF and the OBJECTIVE WORLD
- This brings about the concept of "BEING IN THE WORLD"
- We live under the delusion that there is a SUBJECTIVE MENTAL SELF (**Atta**) and there is an OBJECTIVE MATERIAL WORLD (**Loka**).
- All this is a product of the activity called "EXPERIENCE"
- We can only speak of the ARISING and CESSATION of this ACTIVITY called "EXPERIENCE"

## **REACTION TO STIMULUS**

Unconscious emotional reaction of the organism to stimulation gives rise to "tension in the body" which is unpleasant and uncomfortable (**Dukkha**)

This reaction is a chain reaction – a series of reactions:

- Perception (**Viññāṇa**)
- Cognition (**Mano**)
- Emotion – activity of mood / temperament (**Citta**)
  - Emotional Arousal – Intention to React (**Cetanā**)
- Release of Tension in Action (**Kamma**)
- Consequence of the Reaction (**Vipāka**)

## **STIMULUS-REACTION PROCESS**

In an untrained mind, we behave as "Stimulus-Reaction" organisms reacting unconsciously (irrationally) to stimulation from the environment:

