

AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
ABHIDHAMMA

Two Essays

An Introduction to the Abhidhamma

Abhidhamma Notes

by Jill Jordan and Richard Giles

Abhidhamma and Practise

by Nina van Gorkom

This book is printed for free distribution

*Dhamma Study Group
Bangkok*

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to the
Abhidhamma

May this gift of Dhamma, dedicated to Sister Sudhamma (Pauline Ofner, 1927-1979) who introduced the donors to the Path, along with constant reminders to 'Be Mindful Now', be a blessing to all.

“Better than a thousand useless words, is one useful word hearing which, one attains peace.”

DHAMMAPADA 100

PREFACE

The Abhidhamma is the higher teaching of the Buddha. It contains the essentials of the Buddha Dhamma without the need for conventional terminology. It deals directly with those elements which constitute the exact nature of our existence, and all questions of a conventional nature are left aside. This should not deter one from plunging into the Abhidhamma however. Once begun, the Abhidhamma can lead us on to a better understanding of the practise of insight (*vipassanā*).

A study of the Abhidhamma can be of immense value to us in coming to terms with the nature of life and understanding it in the way of momentary events. It is made clear that life exists as moments only. The past moments have gone, they cannot be made to come back. The future has not yet come, so it does not yet exist. The present moment is now and is all that really exists. Through the study of Abhidhamma the moments of life are analysed into their respective factors of consciousness, mental factors and the objects of consciousness. Wholesome moments are distinguished from unwholesome moments in such a way that we can understand the difference between the two and thus enable us to develop more wholesomeness in life. The Abhidhamma enables us to see the difference between all the different moments of life—to know that the moment of seeing is different from the moment of hearing, that hearing is different from thinking about what we hear, that tasting is not the same moment as smelling, that even the taste is not the same as the tasting, and so on. The Abhidhamma assists us to understand this momentariness of life. Life is but a moment, conditioned by past moments, arising for an instant then passing away again to be followed by the next moment's arising. Two consecutive moments are never the same.

These two essays have been published in book form to assist those interested in the Buddha's teachings to attain a general understanding of the Abhidhamma and to aid in encouraging those who wish to pursue further this part of the Buddha word. This volume contains two essays of a general nature, a suggested reading list for further study and an appendix of the paramattha

dharmas (absolute realities). Then a series of addresses around the world for obtaining information and assistance.

The first essay was written as an introduction to the topic of Abhidhamma for a tertiary Comparative Religious Study class in Adelaide, South Australia. The second essay was written as an introductory article for a Dhamma publication in Holland. They both hope to provide a general knowledge of the Buddha's teaching as contained in the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka of the Pali Canon.

We should apply ourselves to the study of all parts of the Buddha's teaching contained in the Pali Canon—to the Vinaya (the books of discipline for the Sangha), to the Suttas (the books of discourses) and to the Abhidhamma. Our own clarification of the teachings through reading, wise consideration and contemplation will be of much benefit to us and to all others who come into contact with us. As we understand more and more the Buddha's teaching, we will be more kind, more considerate and more harmless (in the true sense of causing no harm) to all our fellow beings. It is hoped that this small introductory book will help to develop that understanding.

New Year, 1980

Dhamma Study Group,
Bangkok.

ABHIDHAMMA NOTES

by

Jill Jordan and Richard Giles

What is Abhidhamma ?

Abhidhamma is a word from the Pali language, the language in which the Theravadin records of the teachings of the Buddha have been recorded and passed down to the present day. The word is composed of two parts, 'abhi' meaning 'higher' or 'greater' and 'dhamma' which means 'reality' or 'truth' (it can be loosely translated as to mean 'everything which is real'). So the word 'Abhidhamma' means the 'higher truth' or the higher teaching.

The Abhidhamma itself is a collection of seven books of teachings. It is the third of the three sections of the Pali Canon (the collected teachings of the Buddha in the Pali language). The three sections are:—

1. the Vinaya Piṭaka—the rules of discipline for monks and nuns of the Sangha (the order).
2. the Suttanta Piṭaka—the collections of discourses, stories and verses delivered by the Buddha and his disciples.
3. the Abhidhamma Piṭaka—the philosophical and analytical summation of the teachings.

The Abhidhamma consists of seven books. These books are named as follows:—

1. the Dhammasaṅgani—the enumeration of all mental and material phenomena.
2. the Vibhaṅga—the book of treatises of all phenomena.
3. the Dhātukathā—the discussion of the groups, bases and elements of existence.
4. the Puggalapaññatti—the description of individual types of persons.
5. the Kathāvatthu—the discussion of points of controversy with schismatic sects.
6. the Yamaka—the book of pairs of questions.

7. the Paṭṭhāna—the book of origination, conditionality and dependence of all the phenomena of existence (this is the largest and the most important Abhidhamma work).

The books of the Abhidhamma then, analyse in minute detail the mental states and material states that comprise what we call our life and what we call the world. In the Abhidhamma analysis there is no mention made of persons, places or objects. This is because they do not exist in the ultimate sense. They are only mere conventional names and labels for the purposes of identification and communication. In reality, all that exists is only material phenomena and mental phenomena. The Pali word for mentality is 'nāma' and the word for materiality is 'rūpa'. That which we call a person, place or thing is in fact just different types of mental and material phenomena occurring one after another with extreme rapidity and giving the appearance of a coherent and lasting whole. Through the examination of the Abhidhamma it is made clear that there are no coherent and lasting wholes, just many different moments of reality following on one after another and that what we call 'the world' is in fact a succession of these momentary phenomena.

Just as the word 'chariot' is but a mode of expression for axle, wheels, chariot-body, pole and other constituent members, placed in a certain relation to each other, but when we come to examine the members one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no chariot. And just as the word 'house' is but a mode of expression for wood and other constituents of a house, surrounding space in a certain relation, but in the absolute sense there is no house. And just as the word 'fist' is but a mode of expression for the fingers, the thumb, etc., in a certain relation, but when we come to examine the parts one by one we discover that in the absolute sense there is no fist; in exactly the same way the words 'living being' and 'ego' are but a mode of expression for the presence of the five attachment groups but when we come to examine the elements of being one by one, we discover that in the absolute sense there is no living being there to form a basis for such figments as 'I am' or

‘I’; in other words that in the absolute sense there is only mentality and materiality (nāma and rūpa).

(from ‘The Path of Purity by Buddhaghosa)

The Abhidhamma also divides all the phenomena of consciousness into moral or skillful types, immoral or unskillful types, types which are the direct result of past causes and neutral types which produce no effect. Through this examination of consciousness one establishes also a moral and harmonious way to live so as to benefit oneself and others in the course of life. Ultimately through Abhidhamma one comes to understand reality as it is so that ignorance of the true nature of reality can be eliminated forever and there is no more cause for going on.

The History of the Abhidhamma.

The seven books of the Abhidhamma were written down in print in approximately 25 B.C. Previous to this the entire Pali Canon had been committed to memory in verse form by groups of monks from 70 years after the Buddha’s death in 547 B.C. Of the seven books, the first, second and seventh are the oldest and were recited as they stand today at the Second Council of Arahants held in the first quarter of the 4th Century B.C. The third, fourth and sixth were completed by the time of the Third Council of Arahants in about 250 B.C. and the fifth book (the Points of Controversy) dates from the Third Council. They were introduced to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) through the arrangement of the son of King Asoka, ruler of all India, shortly after the Third Council. From that time on they were considered completed and not subject to alteration in any way. Unaltered copies of the entire Canon have existed in Sri Lanka until the present day.

The teachings of the Abhidhamma it is said were first taught to the Buddha’s mother and residents of some of the heavenly realms during a period of three months in the seventh year after the Buddha’s enlightenment. The Buddha also taught the Abhidhamma to Sāriputta, one of his chief disciples and the man renowned as the second wisest person alive at the time. His wisdom was second only to the Buddha’s. Sāriputta in turn taught the Abhidhamma to the monks under his instruction, whose role it was to memorise and master it. In this way the seven books of the Abhidhamma have come down to us intact.

The Teaching of the Abhidhamma

To attempt to deal with the entire teachings of the Abhidhamma in such a small space is a difficult task. So only a short outline will be attempted here.

There are two kinds of absolute realities (paramattha dhammas). They are mental phenomena (*nāma*) and physical or material phenomena (*rūpa*). *Nāma* experiences something. *Rūpa* does not experience anything. When we see, for example, then seeing is a type of *nāma*; it experiences the object of seeing which is colour, visible object or visible data. Visible data is a type of *rūpa*. It does not experience anything (this being the characteristic of *rūpa*). The same goes for all of our five senses—seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling all experience an object. The object of the experience (e.g., visible data) is *rūpa*, which does not experience anything. We can then understand that seeing and visible data are not the same thing. The same goes for hearing and sound, tasting and flavour, etc. Also, each type of *nāma* and *rūpa* are different from each other. Seeing is not hearing. They do not occur together, they occur at different moments, although we are under the impression that they do occur together. The same follows for the rest of the five senses. Further, each type of *nāma* or *rūpa* cannot occur by itself, they can only exist in conjunction with other types of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

Nāma (mentality) is divided into 3 kinds. Two kinds of *nāma* are conditioned and the third kind is unconditioned. The four kinds of absolute realities are then:

1. consciousness (*citta*)
2. mental factors or mental formations (*cetasikas*)
3. materiality (*rūpa*)
4. *nibbāna*

Nibbāna is the one kind of unconditioned reality. It is not matter, it is not a place where one goes, it has no form or shape or solidity, it is not something that one unites with. It is a mental phenomena, but it is different from consciousness and mental factors. It is unconditioned. That means that there are no causes which make it arise. It does not begin and it does not end. It does not experience anything, but it can be the object of experience. It is experienced by supra-mundane consciousness, i.e.,

the consciousness that contains fully developed wisdom. It is also important to note that it cannot be understood intellectually. It can only be directly experienced when wisdom has been sufficiently developed.

The other kinds of *nāma* and *rūpa* are all conditioned, i.e., they all arise because of past and present causes. They are all conditioned by one another.

Citta (consciousness) is of 89 different types. Cittas are divided into four categories:

1. Moral or skillful consciousness (*kusala citta*)-21 types
2. Immoral or unskillful consciousness (*akusala citta*)-12 types
3. Resultant consciousness (*vipāka citta*)-36 types
4. Inoperative consciousness (*kiriya citta*)-20 types.

Moral consciousness is divided according to whether it is accompanied by pleasant or indifferent feeling, with wisdom or without wisdom and prompted or unprompted. The other 13 types of moral consciousness are nine of the meditative states and four of the consciousnesses which experience *nibbāna*. Examples of the first 21 would be moments of generosity toward other beings, moments of restraint from lying, killing or stealing, moments of respect for wise people, moments of insight into the true nature of things or moments of meditative absorption practising tranquility meditation.

There are 12 types of immoral or unskillful consciousness. They are also divided according to which feeling they are accompanied by, whether they arise with or without wrong views (of reality) and whether they are prompted or unprompted. Those types of immoral consciousness arising with attachment are accompanied by pleasant or indifferent feeling while the two arising with aversion (either prompted or unprompted consciousness) are accompanied by unpleasant feeling. There are two types of ignorance accompanied by indifferent feeling, one with doubt and one with restlessness. Examples of immoral consciousness would be when we get angry, when we are bored, when we are depressed, when we are absorbed in beautiful things, when we kill or steal or lie to people or when we are restless.

There are 36 types of resultant consciousness (i.e. the result of previous skillful or unskillful deeds). When we see, hear, taste, smell or touch pleasant or unpleasant objects it is result. Also there are again 9 types of resultant consciousness experienced in the meditative states, and 4 types which arise at the moments of experiencing nibbāna.

There are finally 20 types of inoperative consciousness. Inoperative means that they have no effect in terms of cause and result. They occur in the sense-door and in thought processes of enlightened beings and again in 9 of the meditative states.

Citta is the chief mental phenomena of experience. So in seeing, for example, the function of the moment of seeing (citta) is to see the object. Citta is the chief experiencer.

The other category of nāma is the cetasikas (or mental formations). These mental factors arise accompanying each moment of experience (each citta). There is not one moment of experience occurring without at least some of them. Their function is to add to the experience each in their own way. Each cetasika or mental factor has its own special characteristic by which it is recognised and function which it performs. For example, the characteristic of conceit is haughtiness and self-praise is its function.

There are 52 different types of cetasikas. Some examples of them are feeling, perception (or memory), contact, intention, attention, effort, interest, desire-to-do, restlessness, attachment, conceit, hate, envy, awareness, confidence, detachment, balance of mind, concentration, kindness, compassion. They arise with each moment of consciousness in groupings of certain types. For example, kindness and hate cannot occur together at the same moment, restlessness and balance of mind cannot occur together, compassion and conceit cannot occur together, etc. There are seven of these mental factors which occur with every moment of consciousness:—they are contact, feeling, perception (or memory), intention, concentration, psychic life and attention. They are called the universal cetasikas. There are 6 particulars (i.e. they occur with particular states of consciousness), there are 14 immoral factors, 19 beautiful factors, 3 abstinences, 2 illimitables (compassion and sympathetic joy) and one further factor, wisdom or knowledge.

The final category of absolute realities is material phenomena or rūpa. There are 28 classes of rūpa, 16 being classified as subtle and 12 as gross. There are the four great elements:—

1. element of earth, or solidity
2. element of water, or cohesion
3. element of fire, or temperature
4. element of wind, or motion

The four great elements always arise with those rūpas which are known as the derived rūpas. The derived rūpas are the physical sense-organs of eye-sense, ear-sense, taste-sense, etc., and the sense-objects of colour, sound, smell and flavour. Other examples of rūpa are the male or female characteristic, heart-base, nutritive essence (food), space, lightness, bodily intimation, speech intimation, etc. All that matter consists of is these 28 different types of rūpa in different combinations.

Whenever we see, hear, taste, smell or touch an object, that experience, as was mentioned before, is resultant-consciousness (vipāka-citta). It is the result of a deed performed at some time in the past. The area of cause and result (kamma and vipāka) is most important in Abhidhamma. To sort out experience into cause and result can cast our lives into a much clearer perspective.

The Buddha enumerated ten types of moral and skillful action and ten types of immoral or unskillful action through body, speech or mind. Moral action, whenever performed, will always bring a pleasant result at some time in the future. Immoral action will always bring an unpleasant result. The ten immoral actions are:—

1. killing
2. stealing
3. sexual misconduct
4. lying
5. slandering
6. rude speech
7. frivolous talk
8. covetousness
9. ill will
10. wrong view

These ten types of action whenever performed, no matter what the justification that we make for them, are always immoral actions and capable of producing an unpleasant result. This means that abortion, mercy-killing, insect destruction, tax-dodging, abusive speech, etc., are all immoral actions. It is current in this society and has been in many societies throughout history for men and women to justify certain deeds which they consider in their best interests (for example, to take the lives of other people in wars) but in fact, the Buddha pointed out that destruction of other being's lives is never to the welfare of oneself or the other being. The justification for killing is just thinking, but the actual moment of killing is always immoral and never to anybody's benefit. We have unpleasant moments in our lives and we have pleasant moments. We have sickness, disease, accidents, our husbands or wives leave us, people sometimes abuse us, they misrepresent us, our electrical gadgets break down, our bodies wear out, our children leave us. We meet friendly people, we receive gifts, we have a strong body, we have good eyesight, we have a beautiful partner, we live in a pleasant house with beautiful children. All of these things happen to us because of deeds performed at some time in the past, we don't know when. We live our lives around the pleasant results that we wish to receive. We want a nice house, we want peace and quiet, we want responsive politicians, we want respectful children, we want an excellent record collection, we want to see only the best films, we look forward to delicious, well-prepared food. But these things come to us only because of moral deeds we have performed in the past. The only way to receive more of this is not to climb over the next man, not to cheat on tax, not to lie about our qualifications, not to abuse other people, but to be kind, respectful, generous, honest and upright in character. The Buddha taught quite clearly that it is deeds in the past that determine our life situation right now.

There are ten types of moral actions:

1. generosity
2. restraint (from lying, killing, etc.)
3. mental development (tranquility and insight)
4. respect (for teachers, parents, the Buddha, etc.)

5. service (being helpful)
6. sharing of merit (with beings in other planes)
7. rejoicing in others' merits
8. listening to Dhamma
9. teaching Dhamma
10. straightening one's views (understanding)

Some of these ten types of actions are ones that are not very popular these days. Respect for teachers and parents, and for other's opinions, is something we don't practise very much. Sharing of merit is not practised at all in western countries today. It is something difficult for us to understand since we don't admit the existence of other realms of beings. The last three types are concerned with the teaching of Buddha-dhamma. When we teach, listen and understand sincerely then this is a moral action.

Kamma (or karma) can also be understood more precisely as the cetasika or mental factor called intention (cetana). There is intention arising with every moment of consciousness as it is a universal mental factor. When intention is strong enough to motivate deeds through body or speech then the intensity of intention (cetana) is stronger. When intention motivates one of the ten types of moral or immoral actions through body, speech or mind then it is called kamma because it is strong enough to produce a result at some time in the future.

Birth and death are dealt with in minute detail in the Abhidhamma. The Buddha taught that life or existence is a cyclic process with beings dying and passing on to other existences according to their moral and immoral deeds. This is different from other teachings containing the principle of rebirth which maintain that a being can never be born into a more unpleasant existence than their present one. The Buddha maintains that life, far from being necessarily progressive, can for many beings be a destructive and downward process. He likens it to a wheel turning around and around with no end to it. Beings are ever repeating mistakes or performing deeds due to their ignorance of the way things are which will bring them more and more unhappiness in the future.

The Buddha enumerated 31 planes of existence through which beings continually pass according to their deeds. There are 4 woeful or unhappy planes, the human plane, 6 planes of angels

(or devas) and 20 planes of brahmas or gods. Existence in all of these planes has one thing in common, it is temporary, it does not last. A being born into any plane of existence has to eventually pass out of it and be reborn elsewhere. So then heaven is not the end of it all, it is only one plane of existence from which a being must eventually fall again to a lower existence. Life in the heavenly planes is of course exceedingly pleasant and blissful and lasts for a long, long time compared to human existence.

The lower unhappy planes consist of the hell realms in which there is constant suffering, the realm of titans where beings are constantly fighting one another, the realm of unhappy ghosts where beings wander about in empty landscapes without food or drink or wander about (after their death as a human being) following family and friends or homes they once lived in, unable to communicate with the people they knew, and dependent upon those humans who remember them for food and drink. Finally, the animal realm which is all the birds, animals, insects, fish, etc., that we see or don't see about us. We all pass back and forth through these realms continuously from happy to unhappy and back again, round and round without end.

The Buddha also explained that there has been no beginning to this wheel, to the round of births, and there will be no end as long as there is ignorance of the true nature of life.

A world without end is this round of birth and death. No beginning can be seen of those beings hindered by ignorance, bound by craving running through the round of birth and death. Just as if a man should chop up all of the straws, boughs, twigs and leaves in India and piling them together should lay them in a heap, square by square, saying: 'This is my mother, this is the mother of that mother of mine',—still unsupplied would be the mother's mothers of that man. Nay, to supply them all, the straw, boughs, twigs and leaves in this India would come to an end and be used up, ere this were done.

(from *The Grouped Discourses*, ii, 178)

The details of the death process at the time at which a being dies and takes rebirth elsewhere in another life are as follows. In the last thought process before death a deed performed somewhere

in the past surfaces (it can be from this life or any other life) and becomes the object of that thought process. If there is no deed strong enough at that moment, it will instead be a habitual thought pattern of some sort that becomes the object of that last thought process. Then according to our reaction to that deed or thought, whether it be a wholesome reaction or an unwholesome reaction (kusala or akusala) we will be born in a happy realm if it is wholesome or an unhappy realm if it is unwholesome. For example, if we killed somebody during this life and that deed is the object of thought at that last moment and we react to it with regret or aversion then that is an unwholesome reaction. The following moment is called death-consciousness (cuti citta). That is the last moment of life. The next moment is called birth-consciousness (patisandhi citta) and that is the first moment of life for the new being. When the last process was unwholesome then the rebirth is in an unhappy plane, say as a dog. That patisandhi citta will be the moment of conception in the womb of the mother.

We have no control over this process. We cannot determine where we will be born next. We cannot arrange things so that at our death the right things will occur to us and we will obtain a happy rebirth. Whatever persons surround us or help us they cannot determine our last thought process. It depends upon deeds in the past what happens to us at death. It is further deeds that determine our body, the family we are born into, whether we will be wealthy or not, whether we will die at an early age; everything that we experience is because of deeds in the past. You can see then how important an understanding of moral and immoral deeds is. Without this understanding beings wander through life sometimes doing the most atrocious things to each other. All of this happens through ignorance of the true nature of the law of cause and effect.

The process by which one comes to understand the truth is also explained in the Abhidhamma. There are four stages of enlightenment. These four stages are called, first the stream-winner, second the once-returner, third the never-returner and fourth the fully-enlightened one. At the first stage, a being has eliminated the first three fetters which bind one to the wheel of existence. These three fetters are *wrong view* (which is an

incorrect view of the way things are, i.e., that there is a self, that there really are permanent people and things rather than just momentary physical and mental phenomena), *doubt* (about the truth of the Dhamma) and *adherence to rule and ritual* (that there is a method or a technique or something which one performs that will lead one to enlightenment). Streamwinner (sotāpanna) means one has entered the stream to final enlightenment and that there are no more conditions to be born in a lower plane than that of a human being. A once-returner (sakadāgāmi) lessens his attachment and aversion. He is called once-returner because he can return only once more to the human plane. A never-returner (anāgāmi) eliminates two further fetters, these being *sense-desire* and *aversion*. He has no more desire for sense-objects and no more dislike for unpleasant things. The never-returner does not return to the human plane again. If he dies as an anāgāmi, he is born into a god realm where he attains final enlightenment. The last stage is the fully enlightened one (the arahant). He has eliminated the last five fetters which bind him to the wheel of existence. They are *attachment to existence in the form-god realms*, *attachment to existence in the formless-god realms*, *conceit*, *restlessness* and *ignorance*. Because of the first of these two fetters beings are born into the god realms. When they are eliminated there is no more desire for any existence at all. There are then, ten fetters which bind us to the wheel of existence.

What happens to an arahant when he dies? He has eliminated all unwholesome tendencies from his character including the desire to go on being born. Having become enlightened during this life, he will die at the time when his lifespan has expired. Since there is no more desire to go on, when the last moment of life for the arahant finishes it is not followed by another rebirth consciousness. When we die, it is immediately followed by another moment (of the next life); when an arahant dies, that is all. No more experience. No more rebirth. This is called by the Buddha the only true peace.

There are three more aspects which should be discussed—the Law of Dependent Origination, the three basic characteristics of existence and the Four Noble Truths.

Dependent Origination is the Buddha's explanation of how states of existence come to be and how they condition each other. States arise dependent on each other in this way —

Dependent on ignorance arises karmic activities

Dependent on karmic activities arises consciousness

Dependent on consciousness arises mind and matter
(nāma-rūpa)

Dependent on mind and matter arise the six-fold bases
(the 5 senses and thinking)

Dependent on the six-fold bases arises contact

Dependent on contact arises feeling

Dependent on feeling arises craving

Dependent on craving arises grasping

Dependent on grasping arises becoming

Dependent on becoming arises birth

Dependent on birth arises decay, death, sorrow, lamentation,
pain, grief and despair

Thus arises the whole mass of suffering.

We can see then that at the root of it all is ignorance. That is defined as ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths state that:

1. Life is unsatisfactory or suffering (dukkha).
2. Suffering arises because of desire.
3. There is a path leading to the cessation of suffering.
4. The path leading to the end of suffering is the Eightfold Path.

When one does not understand these truths directly one is subject to continual rebirth in the wheel of existence. The Eightfold Path which is the way leading to the end of suffering is these eight factors:— Right Understanding, Right Thoughts, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration.

It could be pointed out that the Eightfold Path is often taught as a 'path' which one follows by developing each of the factors piece by piece until they are all perfected. In the Abhidhamma it is made clear that the Eightfold Path is in fact only momentary phenomena like everything else. The Eightfold Path is not a 'whole path' which one follows, but at the moment that a whole-

some moment of wisdom (the wisdom that understands the true nature of things) arises then it is accompanied by the Eightfold Path factors as mental factors (*cetasikas*). Five of these factors accompany every moment of true wisdom. The whole eight occur together only at the moments of enlightenment.

Finally, the Buddha also explained that there are three things characterising all elements of existence:— this is, they are *dukkha* (they are unsatisfactory, there is no lasting satisfaction in them), they are *anicca* (they are impermanent, they do not last even for a moment) and they are *anattā* (there is not a lasting person, self or something in anything, they are all empty of self).

What is Happening Right Now ?

You may wonder what is the point of all these classifications. Are they of any use to one in coming to understanding the truth of the way things are ? When the Abhidhamma enumerates lists of types of consciousness and lists of types of matter this is so that one can understand that this is all that there really is right now. We sit and we talk and we think and we move about but we do not realise that our sitting and talking and thinking, etc., are in fact conditioned by many different things. When we sit down how do we know that we are sitting ? You may say, “Well it’s obvious, isn’t it ?” But ‘sitting’ is known because of different experiences through the body-sense and the eye perhaps, and we remember that these experiences when occurring all together are conventionally known as sitting. It is, in fact, a type of (body-sense) consciousness which experiences hardness through the body, seeing which sees and memory which remembers what we are doing. Body-sense, seeing and memory are all types of *nāma* which are conditioned. They are each different and each have different functions. Hardness is a type of *rūpa* (matter). It cannot know anything about anything. Hardness is not a seat. ‘Seat’ or ‘chair’ are conventional labels we give to other sets of experience through different senses. None of these experiences is a person sitting. Each is different. Each experience occurs at a different moment. So in reality no ‘person’ exists who is ‘sitting’ on a ‘chair’. There are just different realities occurring one after another through different senses. This may still not

seem clear, but perhaps if we apply this knowledge to all of our life, we can see that pain, for example, is just unpleasant result (of deeds in the past), that the aversion to pain is just *nāma*, that the unpleasant feeling when there is pain is also just *nāma*. When people insult us, it is just sound appearing through the ear. It is only when we see and hear 'things' which we don't like that we have all our problems, worries, strife and woe. To understand Abhidhamma is to understand that there is just seeing, hearing, thinking, touching, tasting, etc., but no *person* in them. This knowledge as it develops, ultimately brings us release from this unsatisfactory wheel of existence.

To finish, a quote from 'The Path of Purity' by Buddhaghosa, a book recognised as the greatest written summary of the Theravadin teachings in existence today:

As long as a man is vague about the world,
About its origin, about its ceasing,
About the means that lead to its cessation,
So long he cannot recognise the truths.

ABHIDHAMMA AND PRACTICE

by

Nina van Gorkom

What is the cause of all misery and sorrow in the world? We read in the 'Kindred Sayings' (Vol. I, Ch. III, iii, par. 3, The World) that King Pasenadi asked the Buddha:

'How many kinds of things, lord, that happen in the world, make for trouble, for suffering, for distress?'

The Buddha answered:

'Three things, sire, happen of that nature. What are the three? Greed, hate, and delusion:—these three make for trouble, for suffering, for distress.'

In the Buddha's time defilements were the cause of all sorrow and suffering and this is also true for today. It is true for all times. Only those who are perfected have no more sorrow and suffering.

The Buddha taught the solution to all problems: the eradication of all unwholesomeness through the development of right understanding; right understanding of all phenomena of our life.

Is the eradication of our defilements really the solution to all problems in the world? Is it not a selfish attitude to be solely occupied with the eradication of one's own defilements, and even more, is it possible to eradicate defilements?

We cannot eradicate the defilements of others, "we" cannot even eradicate our own defilements. But when right understanding has been developed, it is right understanding which can gradually eradicate defilements. But this may take many lives.

At this moment we are full of ignorance as to the phenomena of our life. We usually seek only ourselves and we serve our own interests. How could we then really serve other people? Detachment from 'self' is only possible through right understanding of the phenomena of our life. Through right understanding there will be less unwholesomeness in life and more wholesomeness, such as loving-kindness and compassion. Thus, the development of right understanding should be our first aim.

The Buddha taught that all phenomena which arise, fall away immediately, they are impermanent. What is impermanent cannot be true happiness and thus it is 'suffering' (dukkha). Phenomena are not self, and they do not belong to a self, they are 'not-self' (anattā). At this moment we have wrong view of reality. We do not see things as they are: impermanent, 'suffering' and not self. We believe that we see the impermanence of things, but we have only theoretical understanding of impermanence. In reality we do not experience the arising and falling away of phenomena as it occurs now, and at each moment.

Our body is impermanent, but we are so attached to it. We all see a change in the body after some time, when we become older, but in reality our body changes each moment of our life. What we take for 'our body' are only different physical phenomena which arise and then fall away immediately.

We are so attached to our mind, our 'soul', our ambitions, our pleasures. But what we take for our mind, our soul, are in reality many different mental phenomena which change all the time. We are attached to the idea of 'my mind', but where is it? Is it thinking? But thinking is never the same, we think now of this, now of that. There is thinking now, but it is always changing. Is feeling something which lasts? Feeling is sometimes pleasant, sometimes unpleasant, and sometimes there is indifferent feeling. Each moment feeling is different. There is no mind, there are only ever-changing mental phenomena which do not belong to a self. The Buddha taught us to develop right understanding of all the changing phenomena in our daily life and this is the essence of his teachings. Thus we can gradually become detached from the self and develop more wholesomeness.

We come to know the Buddha's teachings through the 'Three Collections' of the Vinaya (Book of Discipline for the monks), the Suttanta and the Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma teaches us in detail about all mental phenomena and physical phenomena. The Abhidhamma teaches us in detail about all wholesome moments of consciousness and all unwholesome moments of consciousness, and is this not valuable? If we do not know about these moments of consciousness how could we develop

wholesomeness? Often we take for wholesome what is actually not wholesome. For example, we think that there is unselfish love while there is actually attachment to people. The study of the Abhidhamma can help us to develop more understanding of the different moments of consciousness.

We may wonder whether a precise knowledge of the phenomena of life is necessary. Does this not make our life unnecessarily complicated? The Abhidhamma teaches about realities. The different moments of consciousness change so rapidly and they are all different. We cannot catch them, but the study of the different moments of consciousness which occur will help us to develop right understanding of our life.

We believe that a self exists, sees, hears and thinks, we believe that a self lives and dies. We believe that other people exist. This is a wrong view of reality. What we take for self are only ever-changing phenomena. In reality there is no 'I', no 'he'. We spend our life dreaming about things which do not exist. Our wrong view causes us suffering. We have expectations about ourselves and others and if these do not come true we suffer from frustrations. We are afraid of death and we do not know what will happen to the 'self' after we have died. It would be a great gain if we could see our life as it really is—only changing phenomena. Then we could face with right understanding old age, sickness and death.

The Abhidhamma teaches us that all phenomena in ourselves and around ourselves are only two kinds of realities:

mental phenomena, or *nāma*,
physical phenomena, or *rūpa*.

Nāma experiences or knows something, *rūpa* does not know anything.

What we take for self or person are only changing phenomena, *nāma* and *rūpa*. But, we may wonder, is the world not full of people, animals and things? We see them, we touch them, we live with them. If we see them as only changing phenomena, *nāmas* and *rūpas*, does this vision estrange us from the world, from our fellow men?

When we think about old age, sickness and death, we will understand that life, that all people, are impermanent. But there is impermanence at each moment, each phenomenon which arises falls away immediately. This does not mean that these phenomena are not real. Love is real, but it falls away immediately, and it does not belong to a self who could be master of it. We can have the intention to be kind, but we cannot force ourselves to kindness. When things are not the way we want them to be we may become angry, in spite of ourselves, as we say. This shows us that phenomena are anattā, not self. Anger is real, but it falls away immediately. Love, hate, wisdom, generosity, all these things are real, but there is no self which could be master of them, they are anattā.

Does not everybody have his own personality? There is nothing lasting in a man, not even what we call his character. There are ever changing moments of consciousness which arise and fall away. There is only one moment of consciousness (citta) at a time, and it falls away immediately after it has arisen, but it is succeeded by a next moment. Thus our whole life is like a chain of moments of consciousness. Each moment of consciousness which falls away conditions the next moment of consciousness and thus it is possible that our good and bad moments today condition our inclinations in the future. Generosity today or anger today conditions generosity or anger in the future. A moment of right understanding now conditions right understanding in the future, and thus it is possible to develop wisdom. Although each moment falls away we can still speak of an 'accumulation' of experiences in each moment of consciousness, and we can call this character. But we should not forget that the mental phenomena we call character do not last and that they do not belong to a self.

We do not become estranged from life and from our fellow-men when we see both ourselves and others as nāma and rūpa which are impermanent and not self. We would rather that there is no impermanence, no death, but that is not possible. It is better to know the truth about life than to mislead ourselves with regard to the truth. When there is less clinging to the concept of self we will be able to act with more unselfishness

and thus we can be of more help to others and we can perform our duties with more wholesomeness.

In reality there are only *nāma* and *rūpa* which are impermanent and not self. *Nāma* experiences or knows something, *rūpa* does not know anything. Seeing, hearing, thinking, love, hate, these are all experiences, they are *nāmas*. Sound, hardness or softness are *rūpas*, they do not experience anything. Both *nāma* and *rūpa* are realities which we experience time and again, they are real for everybody. We do not have to name them in order to experience them; they can be directly experienced when they present themselves, at this moment.

We see and hear the whole day, but we know so little about these realities. Seeing is an experience through the eyes and it is different from thinking of what we see. Hearing is an experience through the ears and it is different from thinking of what we hear. Since the different moments of consciousness succeed one another so rapidly we believe that we can see and hear or see and think all at the same time. However, there is only one moment of consciousness at a time which experiences one object and then falls away immediately.

We are attached to all *nāmas* and *rūpas*. We are, for example, attached to seeing and to what we see, but what is actually seeing and what is visible object? We should know seeing and visible object as they are. We think that we see a person but seeing sees only what appears through the eyes: the visible. A person could not contact the eye-sense. When we pay attention to the shape and form of something there is no seeing, but thinking. Thinking of a person is another moment of consciousness which cannot occur at the same time as seeing.

At first we may find it strange that seeing only sees visible object and not a person. We find it strange because we actually cling to the concept of a person who exists, who stays, at least for some time. But this is not the truth.

When we look at what we call a 'person', seeing sees only what is visible, visible object. Visible object is not a person, it is a kind of *rūpa* which falls away immediately, although we do not realize it. At the moment of seeing only visible object is

experienced, no other reality such as solidity. It is true that the rūpa which is visible object does not arise alone, it arises together with other rūpas such as solidity and temperature. Visible object could not arise if there were no solidity and other rūpas arising together with it. However, only one reality can be known at a time; it can be known when it appears through the appropriate doorway. Realities can be experienced one at a time through eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body-sense and mind, through these six doors. The moment of consciousness which experiences visible object does not experience sound or hardness (solidity). When we touch what we call a 'human body' hardness may appear through the body-sense. The hardness which is experienced is not a body, it is only hardness, a rūpa which is experienced through the body-sense and it falls away again, although we do not realize it. Since we always cling to the concept of a person or the human body we fail to see them as different elements which do not stay, even for a second. We are always attached to people and to self and this causes us sorrow.

We do not only cling to the concept of a person but also to the concepts of things such as a house or a tree and we believe that they exist, that they can stay. In reality there are only different elements which arise and fall away. Our life is actually one moment of consciousness which experiences one object and this moment falls away immediately. Then another moment arises. The object which is experienced does not stay either, it falls away.

The development of a more precise knowledge of realities which appear one at a time is the only way to gradually eliminate ignorance and wrong view about them. If we learn to be aware of the characteristic of visible object when it appears we will know that it is only a rūpa appearing through the eye-sense, not a person. If there can be awareness of hardness when it appears we will know that it is only a rūpa appearing through the body-sense, not a person or a thing. We should not try to avoid thinking of people or things, thinking is a reality, it arises. However, we should know that the concepts which are objects of our thinking are not realities; they are different from nāma and rūpa which can be experienced one at a time through the appro-

priate doorways. We form up concepts because of a combination of many different experiences which we remember.

Nāma and rūpa are 'ultimate realities', paramattha dhammas; they are realities which can be directly experienced by everybody, without there being the need to think about them. We do not have to think of sound or hardness in order to experience them. They are real for everybody and they can be experienced when they appear. Person, animal, tree or house are not paramattha dhammas, they are concepts.

We may find it difficult to accept that nāma and rūpa are realities and that concepts such as people, animals and things are not realities. Gradually we may be able to prove to ourselves that life is actually one moment of experiencing one object through one of the six doors. Thus, life is nāma and rūpa which arise because of conditions and fall away again. Time and again there are objects impinging on the different doorways. When there is a pleasant object attachment is bound to arise, and when there is an unpleasant object, aversion. Defilements have been accumulated and they can arise at any time so long as they have not been eradicated. Defilements are nāmas which arise because of conditions. When there is no right understanding of nāma and rūpa we will only have a superficial knowledge of both ourselves and others. We will have a wrong understanding of cause and effect in life. Don't we blame others for our own unhappiness? The real cause of unhappiness is within ourselves. Right understanding of the different nāmas and rūpas which appear is the only way to have less defilements and thus to have less sorrow in life.

Nāmas and rūpas can be experienced now. There are seeing and hearing time and again but we may never have been aware of them. Still, it is necessary to know them as they are. Seeing is not thinking. Seeing sees and it does not think. When we close our eyes we may think of many things but we cannot see. When we open our eyes something appears which did not appear when our eyes were closed. There is seeing, and seeing sees visible object. Seeing does not see a man or a tree.

The development of insight is a kind of study of *nāma* and *rūpa* through the direct experience of them. *Nāmas* and *rūpas* which appear one at a time should be 'studied' with mindfulness, but each moment of study is extremely short, since mindfulness does not last, it falls away. However, gradually a clearer understanding of realities can be accumulated. *Nāma* and *rūpa* are the objects of this 'study with mindfulness', not people, animals or things. Wherever we are there are in reality only *nāma* and *rūpa*, such as seeing, hearing, the visible object, sound or hardness. Instead of clinging to them or having aversion towards them we can know them as they are. When we realize that our life is actually only *nāma* and *rūpa* which arise because there are conditions for their arising, we can become more patient, even in difficult situations.

Mindfulness (*sati*) is *nāma* which arises with a wholesome moment of consciousness. We cannot induce mindfulness whenever we want it, but it can arise when there are the appropriate conditions. All *nāmas* and *rūpas* in our life arise only when there are the appropriate conditions, not because of our will. The condition for right mindfulness is intellectual understanding of what *nāma* and *rūpa* are: realities which appear through the six doorways. *Nāma* and *rūpa* which appear now—thus, realities, not ideas—are the objects about which right understanding should be developed. When we read in the Buddhist scriptures time and again about the realities which appear through the six doors or we listen to talks about *nāma* and *rūpa*, and we understand what we read or what we hear, then the intellectual understanding can condition the arising of mindfulness. Even one moment of mindfulness is valuable because it can condition another moment later on and thus right understanding can grow. The development of insight is the highest form of wholesomeness, it is the only way to eradicate attachment, aversion and ignorance.

Mindfulness of the *nāma* or *rūpa* which appears now is the way to develop insight. When one believes that one does all one's actions in a day with thoughtfulness but there is no awareness of *nāma* and *rūpa*, it is not the development of insight. When one, for example, follows what one's hands and feet are doing in a day one does not learn anything about *nāma* and *rūpa*, about what is real, about impermanence.

In the development of insight we do everything as usual, but in our daily life there can be mindfulness of a *nāma* or a *rūpa*, a moment of 'study with mindfulness', study through the practice. When my husband takes my hand, there is, as we say, a 'human contact'. What are the realities? There is attachment and this is real, we do not have to try to suppress it. There can, in a very natural way, be study with mindfulness of a *nāma* or a *rūpa*. What appears through the body-sense? Not a person, not my husband. Heat or cold, hardness or softness can appear through the body-sense. We do not have to think about it, it can be directly experienced. Through mindfulness we can prove that no person is experienced through the body-sense, that a person does not exist. There is no person, only different *nāmas* and *rūpas* appearing one at a time, and they do not stay. Clinging to people brings sorrow; eventually I will have to take leave from my husband, nothing is permanent. Through the development of insight, clinging to the concept of a person who exists can be eradicated.

When there is more right understanding of *nāma* and *rūpa* we will have a different view of the events of our life. We like to make plans but often things do not happen the way we would like them to. Our good and bad deeds (*kamma*) are the causes in our life which bring their results in the form of pleasant and unpleasant experiences. When we understand that our life is *nāma* and *rūpa* which arise because of their own conditions, not because of our will, we will be less attached to pleasant results and less inclined to blame others for unpleasant things we experience. There are only *nāma* and *rūpa* and we are not master of them. Through the development of insight we will become more patient, we will have more loving-kindness and compassion. Thus, the development of insight is to the benefit of other people as well.

APPENDIX

The Paramattha Dhammas

According to the teaching of the Buddha there exist certain realities which constitute the realness of the phenomena of life and there are concepts which are just thoughts, ideas, figmentations, illusions, etc., with which we concern ourselves most of the day. The purpose of this appendix is to list and briefly explain the realities (paramattha dhammas). The term 'paramattha dhammas' means absolute realities. That is, these realities exist and there are no other realities.

The paramattha dhammas are divided first into two kinds. There are mental phenomena (or mentality) known as 'nāma' in the Pali language and there are physical phenomena (or materiality) known as 'rūpa' in Pali. Nāma has the function of experiencing something while rūpa cannot experience anything. That is, it is through mentality that we experience things and it is both mental phenomena and material phenomena that is experienced. So there are two kinds of realities:

1. nāma (mentality)
2. rūpa (materiality).

The paramattha dhammas can be further divided in four ways:

1. citta (a moment of consciousness or a moment of experience),
2. cetasika (mental factors accompanying consciousness),
3. rūpa (material phenomena),
4. nibbāna (the unconditioned reality).

The first three of these four realities are called conditioned. That is because they all arise from causes, they are all conditioned by other occurrences. The fourth type, nibbāna, is the unconditioned reality. It is not caused by any other thing. It does not arise and it does not cease. All the other realities arise and cease continuously, so they do not last. Our lives consist of phenomena which are constantly arising and ceasing. So we cannot hold onto, own or keep anything in reality.

Of the four-way division of realities, *citta*, *cetasika* and *nibbāna* are types of nāma (mentality) and the fourth, *rūpa*, is materiality.

The paramattha dhammas can be further divided by way of the five types of aggregates or groups (*khandhas*) into which they fall. These five khandhas are the aggregates of our daily existence. All conditioned *nāmas* and *rūpas* can be classified under the five khandhas:—

1. *rūpa-khandha*—which is all material/physical phenomena,
2. *vedanā-khandha*—which is feeling (*vedanā*),
3. *saññā-khandha*—which is perception or memory (*saññā*),
4. *saṅkhāra-khandha*—which is fifty mental factors (*cetasikas*),
5. *viññāṇa-khandha*— which is all the types of *cittas*.

The first of the group of aggregates is known as *rūpa-khandha* and consists of all the material elements of existence. For example, hardness, temperature, pressure, colour, smell, taste are all types of *rūpa-khandha*. All aspects of the body can be classified under *rūpa*.

The second is *vedanā-khandha*. This comprises several types of feeling, viz., pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling and indifferent feeling. Feeling is a mental factor (*cetasika*). There are also two other types of feeling, the pleasant bodily feeling and unpleasant bodily feeling. The first three are mental feeling and the last two are bodily feelings.

The third is *saññā-khandha*. *Saññā* is the mental factor (*cetasika*) known as memory or perception. *Saññā* marks the object of experience so that it can be recognised now and in the future.

The fourth is *saṅkhāra-khandha*. This comprises the other fifty *cetasikas* which arise with the moment of experience (*citta*). (see ‘*cetasikas*’ enumerated later.)

The fifth is *viññāṇa-khandha*. This comprises all types of moments of experience (*citta*). All types of *citta* are classified under this khandha.

The khandhas are called the ‘groups of grasping’. This means that we cling to, or grasp at these aggregates as belonging to a self. As long as we take them for self we do not understand them as they really are, just paramattha dhammas, just conditioned realities.

Citta is the first of the four types of paramattha dhammas. It is also the fifth group of aggregates. The word 'citta' is derived from the root 'cit', to think. Citta is that which is the chief in experiencing an object. There are many different types of citta. They are divided four ways according to whether it is—

1. consciousness pertaining to the sense sphere (kāmvāvacara citta),
2. consciousness pertaining to the form sphere (rūpāvacara citta),
3. consciousness pertaining to the formless sphere (arūpāvacara citta),
4. supramundane consciousness (lokuttara citta).

The four categories of consciousness are classified according to whether they are wholesome or skillful (kusala citta), unwholesome or unskillful (akusala citta), the result of deeds (kamma) in the past (vipāka citta) or neutral consciousness with no effect (kiriya citta).

- There are
- 1) in the sensuous sphere 54 types of consciousness,
 - 2) in the form sphere 15 types of consciousness,
 - 3) in the formless sphere 12 types of consciousness,
 - 4) in the supramundane 8 types of consciousness.

This totals 89 types of consciousness in all (see later; citta can be also classed as 121 different types).

In the sensuous sphere there 12 types of akusala cittas (unwholesome consciousness) that have roots:—

a.) cittas rooted in attachment (i.e. with their base or foundation in attachment):

- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. citta, unprompted | } connected with | } accompanied by pleasant feeling. | |
| 2. citta, prompted | | | wrong view |
| 3. citta, unprompted | } not connected | | |
| 4. citta, prompted | | | with wrong view |
| 5. citta, unprompted | } connected with | | } accompanied by indifferent feeling. |
| 6. citta, prompted | | | |
| 7. citta, unprompted | } not connected | | |
| 8. citta, prompted | | | |

- b.) cittas rooted in ill-will or aversion :
- | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|
| 9. citta, unprompted | } | accompanied by unpleasant
feeling, connected with ill-will. |
| 10. citta, prompted | | |
- c.) cittas rooted in delusion or ignorance :
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 11. citta, connected with doubt | } | accompanied by
indifferent feeling. |
| 12. citta, connected with restlessness | | |

There are 18 types of rootless consciousness:—

- a.) cittas which are unwholesome results:
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. body-consciousness | } | accompanied by indifferent
feeling. |
| 2. ear-consciousness | | |
| 3. nose-consciousness | | |
| 4. tongue-consciousness | | |
| 5. eye-consciousness | | |
| 6. receiving-consciousness | } | accompanied by
indifferent feeling. |
| 7. investigation-consciousness | | |
- b.) cittas which are wholesome results:
- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 8. body-consciousness | } | accompanied by indifferent
feeling. |
| 9. ear-consciousness | | |
| 10. nose-consciousness | | |
| 11. tongue-consciousness | | |
| 12. eye-consciousness | | |
| 13. receiving-consciousness | } | accompanied by
indifferent feeling. |
| 14. investigating-consciousness | | |
| 15. investigating-consciousness | | accompanied by pleasant
feeling. |
- c.) functional (kiriya) cittas :
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 16. five sense-door adverting consciousness | } | accompanied
by pleasant
feeling. |
| 17. mind-door adverting consciousness | | |
| 18. smile-producing consciousness
(of an arahant) | | |

There are 24 types of beautiful (sobhana) cittas of the sensuous sphere:—

- a.) cittas which are wholesome consciousness (kusala):
- | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 1. citta, unprompted | } | associated with
wisdom
dissociated with
wisdom | } | accompanied
by pleasant
feeling. |
| 2. citta, prompted | | | | |
| 3. citta, unprompted | | | | |
| 4. citta, prompted | | | | |

- | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 5. citta, unprompted | } | associated with | } | accompanied
by indifferent
feeling. |
| 6. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
| 7. citta, unprompted | } | dissociated with | | |
| 8. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
- b.) cittas which are wholesome result (kusala vipāka) :
- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 9. citta, unprompted | } | associated with | } | accompanied
by pleasant
feeling. |
| 10. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
| 11. citta, unprompted | } | dissociated with | | |
| 12. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
| 13. citta, unprompted | } | associated with | } | accompanied
by indifferent
feeling. |
| 14. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
| 15. citta, unprompted | } | dissociated with | | |
| 16. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
- c.) cittas which are neutral (kiriya) :
- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 17. citta, unprompted | } | associated with | } | accompanied
by pleasant
feeling. |
| 18. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
| 19. citta, unprompted | } | dissociated with | | |
| 20. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
| 21. citta, unprompted | } | associated with | } | accompanied
by indifferent
feeling. |
| 22. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |
| 23. citta, unprompted | } | dissociated with | | |
| 24. citta, prompted | | wisdom | | |

There are 15 types of form sphere consciousness (rūpāvacara citta) of the meditative absorptions: —

- a.) cittas which are wholesome consciousness:
1. first jhāna citta with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
 2. second jhāna citta with sustained application, joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
 3. third jhāna citta with joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
 4. fourth jhāna citta with happiness and one-pointedness.
 5. fifth jhāna citta with equanimity and one-pointedness.
- b.) cittas which are resultant consciousness:
6. first jhāna resultant citta with initial application,

sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.

7. second jhāna resultant citta with sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
 8. third jhāna resultant citta with joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
 9. fourth jhāna resultant citta with happiness and one-pointedness.
 10. fifth jhāna resultant citta with equanimity and one-pointedness.
- c.) cittas which are neutral (kiriya) consciousness:
11. first jhāna kiriya citta with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
 12. second jhāna kiriya citta with sustained application, joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
 13. third jhāna kiriya citta with joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
 14. fourth jhāna kiriya citta with happiness and one-pointedness.
 15. fifth jhāna kiriya citta with equanimity and one-pointedness.

There are 12 types of formless sphere consciousness (arūpāvacara citta) of the higher meditative absorptions:—

- a.) cittas which are wholesome consciousness:
1. jhāna citta dwelling on the 'Infinity of Space'.
 2. jhāna citta dwelling on the 'Infinity of Consciousness'.
 3. jhāna citta dwelling on 'Nothingness'.
 4. jhāna citta dwelling on 'Neither Perception nor Non-perception'.
- b.) cittas which are resultant consciousness:
5. resultant jhāna citta dwelling on 'Infinity of Space,
 6. resultant jhāna citta dwelling on 'Infinity of Consciousness'.
 7. resultant jhāna citta dwelling on 'Nothingness'.
 8. resultant jhāna citta dwelling on 'Neither Perception nor Non-perception'.

c.) cittas which are functional (kiriya) consciousness:

9. kiriya jhāna citta dwelling on 'Infinity of Space'.
10. kiriya jhāna citta dwelling on 'Infinity of Consciousness'.
11. kiriya jhāna citta dwelling on 'Nothingness'.
12. kiriya jhāna citta dwelling on 'Neither Perception nor Non-perception'.

There are 8 types of supramundane consciousness (lokuttara citta). These are the cittas of one who is experiencing the unconditioned reality, nibbāna:—

a) cittas which are supramundane path consciousness (mag-gacitta):

1. sotāpanna path consciousness.
2. sakadāgāmi path consciousness.
3. anāgāmi path consciousness.
4. arahatta path consciousness.

b) cittas which are resultant supramundane consciousness (phalacitta):

5. sotāpanna fruit consciousness.
6. sakadāgāmi fruit consciousness.
7. anāgāmi fruit consciousness.
8. arahatta fruit consciousness.

Thus there are 89 different types of citta which can be experienced—12 unwholesome cittas, 21 wholesome cittas, 36 resultant cittas and 20 functional cittas. In the sensuous sphere there are 54 types of citta, in the form sphere 15 types, in the formless sphere 12 types and in the supramundane sphere 8 types.

These different classes of cittas can also be divided into 121 types according to if the cittas of the path and fruit of Sotāpanna consciousness, Sakadāgāmi consciousness, Anāgāmi consciousness and Arahatta consciousness are accompanied by the jhāna factors of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth jhāna. Thus there are 16 additional types of maggacitta and 16 additional types of phalacitta.

The mental factors (cetasikas) which accompany moments of citta are of 52 different kinds. Of these 52, they are subdivided according to their natures into seven classes.

First there are the 7 universals (sabbacittasādhāranā). They accompany every single moment of citta and thus are called universals:

1. contact (phassa)
2. feeling (vedanā)
3. perception (saññā)
4. volition or intention (cetanā)
5. one-pointedness (ekaggatā)
6. psychic-life (jīvitindriya)
7. attention (manasikāra)

Then there are the 6 particular cetasikas, so called because they associate with only particular types of consciousness. They associate with either the wholesome or unwholesome cittas. They are called pakiñṇaka in Pali.

1. initial application (vitakka)
2. sustained application (vicāra)
3. determination (adhimokkha)
4. effort (viriya)
5. interest (pīti)
6. desire-to-do (chanda)

Next are the 14 unwholesome cetasikas (akusala cetasikas). They make up all the akusala moments of consciousness.

1. ignorance (moha)
2. lack of moral shame (ahirika)
3. lack of fear of unwholesomeness (anottappa)
4. restlessness (uddhacca)
5. attachment (lobha)
6. wrong view (diṭṭhi)
7. conceit (māna)
8. aversion (dosa)
9. envy (issā)
10. stinginess (macchariya)
11. regret (kukkucca)
12. sloth (thīna)
13. torpor (middha)
14. doubt (vicikicchā)

Next are the 19 beautiful cetasikas (sobhanasādhāranā) so called because they are common to all morally beautiful moments of consciousness.

1. confidence (saddhā)
2. mindfulness (sati)
3. moral shame (hiri)
4. fear of unwholesomeness (ottappa)
5. disinterestedness (alobha)
6. amity (adosa)
7. equanimity (tatramajjhataṭṭā)
8. composure of mental states (kāyapassadhi)
9. composure of mind (cittapassadhi)
10. lightness of mental states (kāya-lahutā)
11. lightness of mind (citta-lahutā)
12. pliancy of mental states (kāya-mudutā)
13. pliancy of mind (citta-mudutā)
14. adaptability of mental states (kāya-kammaññatā)
15. adaptability of mind (citta-kammaññatā)
16. proficiency of mental states (kāya-paguññatā)
17. proficiency of mind (citta-paguññatā)
18. rectitude of mental states (kāya-ujukatā)
19. rectitude of mind (citta-ujukatā).

There are the 3 abstinences (virati cetasikas):

20. right speech (sammā vācā)
21. right action (sammā kammanta)
22. right livelihood (sammā ājīva)

The two cetasikas called the illimitables (appamaññā), so called because their objects are without limit:

23. compassion (karunā)
24. sympathetic joy (muditā).

And finally the last sobhana cetasika:

25. wisdom (paññā).

Thus there are 25 morally beautiful cetasikas (sobhana cetasikas) arising in various combinations in the wholesome states of consciousness. And a total of 52 different cetasikas that can arise in groups with the citta.

We now come to the classification of matter. Rūpa or material phenomena consists of 8 basic constituents which compose all

matter. These are known as the 'eightfold group' (suddhatṭhaka-kalāpa). These consist of the four great elements (mahābhūta) and four more derived from them (upādāya-rupa).

1. solidity (paṭhavi)
2. cohesion (āpo)
3. temperature (tejo)
4. motion (vāyo)

and the derivatives:

5. colour (vaṇṇa)
6. smell (ghāndhā)
7. taste (rasā)
8. nutriment (ojā).

There are a further 20 types of matter, all of which are also derived rupas:

9. eye organ (cakkhu)
10. ear organ (sota)
11. nose organ (ghāna)
12. tongue organ (jivhā)
13. body organ (kāya)
14. male and female characteristic—2 rūpas (bhāva-rūpas)
15. heart base (hadayavatthu)
16. material life-principle (rūpa-jīvita)
17. space (pariccheda)
18. bodily intimation (kāya-viññatti)
19. speech intimation (vacī-viññatti)
20. sound (sadda)
21. lightness (lahutā)
22. plasticity (mudutā)
23. adaptability (kammaññatā)
24. growth (upacaya)
25. continuity (santati)
26. decay (jarāta)
27. impermanence (aniccatā).

These are all the different types of rūpa. The fourteenth type, male and female characteristic, is of two types which makes a total of 28 rūpas.

Thus concludes the appendix containing the classification of the varieties of nāma and rūpa (mental phenomena and material phenomena). There are 89 (or 121) types of consciousness, 52 different mental factors and 28 types of matter. The Buddha explained that these are the sum total of conditioned realities. There is one type of unconditioned reality and that is called nibbāna (in Sanskrit, nirvāna). Nibbāna is described as the 'deathless', the 'cool', the 'incomparable', the 'peaceful'. It is the end of craving, the goal of the Buddha's teachings.

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