

By The Editorial Committee - Translation Section  
Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana  
Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar, 1995 supplied by  
<http://www.nibbana.com>

# INTRODUCTION TO DHAMMASANGANI

This introduction in a way may be regarded as a brief introduction to the Abhidhamma Pitaka as a whole. It is in two parts. The first part is about Abhidhamma and the second part is about Dhammasanghani.

---

## I

### **Abhidhamma**

The term 'abhidhamma' can be rendered literally as higher or special teaching of the Buddha. Abhidhamma is in fact a profounder treatment of the Teaching of the Buddha, dealing with ultimate realities, namely, mind (citta), mental concomitants (cetasika), matter or Corporeality (rupa), and Nibbana. Of these four, the first three are compounded and conditioned. Nibbana is the only ultimate reality which is un compounded and unconditioned. In this book, 'mind' and 'consciousness' are both used for citta. The term 'thought' includes both citta and cetasikas, i.e., mind (or consciousness) and mental concomitants.

The Buddha expounded his teachings with only one object, mainly, the attainment of Nibbana. But the presentation varies according to varying occasions and circumstances. In Suttanta discourses the Buddha takes into consideration the intellectual level of his audience and teaches the dhamma in conventional terms, making reference to peoples and objects such as I, we, he, she, man, women, cow, tree, etc. But in Abhidhamma, the Buddha makes no such concessions; he treats the dhamma entirely in terms of ultimate realities. He analyses every phenomenon into its ultimate constituents. All relative concepts such as man, mountain, etc., are reduced to their ultimate elements which are then precisely defined, classified, and systematically arranged.

Thus in Abhidhamma, compounded and conditioned things are expressed in terms of khandhas, mental and physical aggregates, ayatanas, sense-bases; dhatus, elements; indriya, faculties; sacca, fundamental truths and so on. Things denoted by conventional terms such as man, woman, etc., are resolved into ultimate components of khandhas, ayatanas, etc., and viewed as impersonal mental and physical phenomena, which are conditioned by various factors and are impermanent (anicca), subject to suffering (dukkha), and without an entity (anatta).

Having resolved all phenomena into ultimate components analytically in Dhammasangani and Vibhanga, Abhidhamma defines the conditional relations between the various constituent factors in Patthana, the last of its seven treatises. Thus Abhidhamma forms a gigantic edifice

of knowledge relating to the ultimate realities which, in its immensity of scope, grandeur, subtlety, and profundity can be properly expounded only by the Buddha.

It is true that the Suttanta Pitaka also contains discourses dealing with analytical descriptions and conditional relations of the five mental and physical aggregates. Where the need arises, subjects such as the five aggregates, sense-bases, etc., are mentioned in the suttas. But they are explained only briefly by what is known as the Suttanta Method of Analysis (Suttanta bhajaniya), giving bare definitions with limited descriptions. For example, khandhas, the five mental and physical aggregates, are enumerated as the aggregate of corporeality, the aggregate of sensation, the aggregate of perception, the aggregate of volitional activities, and the aggregate of consciousness. They may be dealt with somewhat more comprehensively; for instance, the aggregate of corporeality may be further defined as the corporeality of the past, the present or the future; the corporeality which is internal or external, coarse or fine, inferior or superior, far or near. The Suttanta Analysis does not usually go further than this.

But the Abhidhamma approach is more thorough, more penetrating, describing each corporeal or mental phenomenon in ultimate terms. For example, in the summarised presentation of the Abhidhamma known as Abhidhammatha Sangaha, compiled in Sri Lanka in the fifth century A.D. by the Venerable Anuruddha, consciousness is described as consisting of 89 kinds, mental concomitants as consisting of 52 kinds, corporeality as consisting of 28 kinds, and Nibbana as the single un compounded element (asankhata dhatu). According to the Abhidhamma Method of Analysis (Abhidhamma bhajaniya), each description can be amplified much further.

### The Seven Books of Abhidhamma

The Abhidhamma Pitaka is made up of seven treatises:

(i) The *Dhammasangani* contains detailed enumeration of all phenomena. The second part of this introduction gives a more detailed description of it.

(ii) *Vibhanga* consists of eighteen separate sections which give a detailed analysis of phenomena quite distinct from that of Dhammasangani.

(iii) *Dhatukatha* is a treatise which studies the dhammas analysed in Dhammasangani and Vibhanga, in fourteen ways of analytical investigation.

(iv) *Puggalapannatti* means the designation of individuals. In the first three books of Abhidhamma conventional terms are used to denote ultimate realities. Here in this book conventional terms are used not only to denote ultimate realities but also to denote things which do not exist in an ultimate sense. This is because the use of conventional terms is necessary for human communication.

(v) *Kathavatthu* is a series of dialectical discussions between the proponents of the orthodox Theravada school and those of the dissentient schools. For instance, One of the controversies involves arguments whether there are or there are not separate entities which may be termed individuals in a real sense. This involves a distinction between the truth of conventional usage (samuti sacca) and the truth of ultimate realities (paramattha sacca). Both the orthodox school and the dissentient schools quote from the Pali Canon in support of their

opinions. The views of the dissentient schools were refuted. These discussions with final refutations were recited at the Third Buddhist Synod as part of the Abhidhamma Pitaka. The treatise uses the method of exposition as laid down by the Buddha in anticipation of the controversies that would arise and so it is accepted as expounded by the Buddha.

(vi) *Yamaka* is a treatise which deals with ten subjects such as khandhas, ayatanas, dhatus. The method of treating these subjects is by means of questions in pairs such as questions in straight order and reverse order, questions of positive type and negative type. The main object of this treatise is to show inter-relationship between the three lokas (worlds), namely, satta loka (the world of beings), okasa loka (the 31 planes of existence) and sankharaloka (the world of conditioned) phenomena such as physical and mental aggregates sense-bases, elements.

(vii) *Pathana* deals exhaustively with the conditions which help bring about the arising of physical and mental phenomena. There are 24 such conditional relations which are expounded by way of tikas (triads) and dukas (dyads) as shown in Dhammasangani. The exposition is done in so comprehensive and detailed a manner that the book is called Mahapakarana, the Great Treatise.

### Tradition Regarding Exposition of Abhidhamma

According to tradition, the Buddha ascended to the Tavatimsa deva realm and expounded the Abhidhamma to an audience of devas which included the deva who in his previous life had been Queen Maya, the mother of the Buddha. In the human world the Buddha taught Abhidhamma to his Chief Disciple the Venerable Sariputta in a summarised form. The Venerable Sariputta taught what he had learnt from the Buddha to his 500 disciples. The Abhidhamma which we have now is in the form arranged by the Venerable Sariputta.

---

## II

### The Dhammasangani

Dhammasangani is the title given to the first book of the Abhidhamma Pitaka. The Pali word dhamma varies in meaning according to context; here as part of the term dhammasangani, dhamma means ultimate realities. Sangani means collecting together or complete enumeration. Thus Dhammasangani deals with collecting and enumerating the ultimate realities by the method of triads (tikas) and dyads (duka) as set out in its Matika. For instance, in such a phrase as 'kusala dhamma' or 'akusala dhamma', or abyakata dhamma' which occurs in the Dhammasangani, the word dhamma means ultimate realities.

### The Matika

The Dhammasangani begins with the Matika which is a list of subjects for analytical treatment in the text and grouped in triads and dyads. There are twenty-two ways of grouping the dhamma (ultimate realities) into triads (tikas) and a hundred ways of grouping it into dyads (dukas). Each triad consists of three categories which are related in some way and each dyad consists of two categories which also are related in some way.

Examples of triads:

(a) Kusala Tika

(i) Dhammas that are meritorious, kusala dhamma.

(ii) Dhammas that are demeritorious, akusala dhamma.

(iii) Dhammas that are neither meritorious nor demeritorious, abyakata dhamma.

(b) Vedana Tika

(i) Dhammas that are associated with pleasant sensation, sukhaya vedanaya sampayutta dhamma.

(ii) Dhammas that are associated with unpleasant sensation, dukkhaya vedanaya sampayutta dhamma.

(iii) Dhammas that are associated with sensation which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, adukkha masukhaya vedanaya sampayutta dhamma.

(c) Vipaka Tika

(i) Dhammas that are resultants, vipaka dhamma.

(ii) Dhammas that produce resultants, vipaka dhamma dhamma.

(iii) Dhammas that are neither resultants nor resultants producing, nevavipaka na-vipaka dhamma dhamma.

An example of dyads:

Hetu Duka

(i) Dhammas that are root causes of phenomena, hetu dhamma.

(ii) Dhammas that are not root causes, na hetu dhamma

Note:

There are six dukas which have a common factor, namely, hetu and which are put into a larger group or cluster called hetu gocchaka. There are altogether ten such large groups called gocchakas, each containing dukas which have a common factor.

Besides these, there are three separate groups of dukas where the dukas are not inter-related. These three groups are not called gocchakas.

The Dhammasangani Matika is the key to the Abhidhamma method of exposition..

In addition to the above Abhidhamma Matika, there is a list of 42 categories of dhamma entitled Suttantika Duka Matika. This Matika consists of dyads which can be traced to the Suttanta Pitaka. According to the Atthasalini Commentary, this was added by the Venerable Thera Sariputta in order to facilitate the study of Suttanta Pitaka.

### The Four Divisions, Kandas

The Dhammasangani is divided into four divisions:

(i) **Cittupada Kanda**, Division on Mind and Mental Concomitants. This division may be regarded as Book I of Dhammasangani.

(ii) **Rupa Kanda**, Division Concerning Corporeality. This division may be regarded as Book II of Dhammasangani.

(iii) **Nikkhepa Kanda**, Division of Summarised Analytical Statements about all the tikas and the dukas without elaborate treatment. This division may be regarded as Book III of Dhammasangani.

(iv) **Atthakatha Kanda** is a very short division but it is very important because it contains additional explanation of certain terms, by means of enumeration. This division may be regarded as Book IV of Dhammasangani.

Of the four divisions, the first two, namely, Cittuppada Kanda and Rupa Kanda, provide a full analysis of the first tika, namely, the Kusala Tika dealing with Kusala, Akusala and Abyakata Dhamma. They also serve as a basis for the analysis of the dhamma in the other tikas as well as the dukas.

#### (i) Cittuppada Kanda

##### Division on Mind and Mental Concomitants

The Division on Mind and Mental Concomitants is expounded in three parts in accordance with the kusala tika of the Matika, namely:

(a) Kusala Dhamma, Categories of Meritorious Thought.

(b) Akusala Dhamma, Categories of Demeritorious Thought.

(c) Abyakata Dhamma, Categories of Thought not Classified as Meritorious or Demeritorious.

In these three parts, meritorious thought is shown in relation to the various spheres of existence.

(A) Meritorious thought pertaining to the Sensuous Sphere.

(B) Meritorious thought pertaining to the Fine Material Sphere.

(C) Meritorious thought pertaining to the Non-material Sphere.

(D) Modes of meritorious thought which lead to three grades of existence in the respective spheres.

(E) Meritorious thought that leads to liberation from the three spheres of existence.

### **A: Meritorious Thought Pertaining to the Sensuous Sphere**

Of the above five kinds of meritorious thought, meritorious thought that leads to rebirth in the Sensuous Sphere is categorised into eight types of meritorious thought, such as the First Category of Meritorious Thought, the Second Category, up to the Eighth Category although the categories after the First Category are treated very briefly. The eight categories of meritorious thought are expounded in a pattern which consists of three sections or portions, namely, section on definition of dhamma factors; section containing grouping, classification and enumeration of dhamma factors; and section on Voidness.

#### **Section One:**

##### **Section on Definition of Dhamma Factors**

The dhamma factors which constitute the first Meritorious Thought, numbering fifty-six, are first listed and then defined in the section on the definition of dhamma factors. Of these,

18 dhamma factors occur only once in the list;

7 dhamma factors occur twice;

1 dhamma factor occurs 3 times;

2 dhamma factors occur 4 times;

1 dhamma factor occurs 6 times;

1 dhamma factor occurs 7 times;

Thus the list in this section in reality consists of only 30 dhamma factors.

(a) The 18 dhamma factors which occur only once in the list are:

1. phassa, contact;
2. sanna, perception;
3. cetana, volition;
4. vicara, sustained application of the mind;
5. piti, delightful satisfaction;
6. jivitindriya, faculty of vitality;

7. kaya passaddhi, equanimity of mental concomitants
8. citta passaddhi, serenity of mind;
9. kaya lahuta, quickness of mental concomitants;
10. citta lahuta, quickness of mind;
11. kaya muduta, malleability of mental concomitants;
12. citta muduta, malleability of mind;
13. kaya kammannata, preparedness (for good action) of mental concomitants;
14. citta kammannata, preparedness (for good action) of mind;
15. kaya pagunnata, soundness of mental concomitants;
16. citta pagunnata, soundness of mind;
17. kayujukata, rectitude of mental concomitants;
18. cittujukata, rectitude of mind.

The dhamma factors which occur more than once, occur either in a modified

(b) The 7 dhamma factors each of which occurs twice in the list are:

1. Citta (mind), as citta (mind) and as manindriya (faculty of mind).
2. Vitakka (initial application of mind), as vitakka (initial application of mind) and as samma sankappa (Right Thinking).
3. Saddha (conviction), as saddhindriya (faculty of conviction) and as saddhabala (power of conviction).
4. Hiri, being ashamed (to do evil), as hiri, being ashamed (to do evil) and as hiribala, power of being ashamed (to do evil).
5. Ottappa, fear (to do evil), as ottappa, fear (to do evil) and as ottappabala, power of fear (to do evil).
6. Alobha (non-greed), as alobha (non-greed) and as anabhijjha (non-covetousness).
7. Adosa (non-hatred), as adosa(non-hatred) and as abyapada (not having ill will).

(c) One dhamma factor which occurs 3 times in the list:

Vedana (sensation), as vedana (sensation), as sukha (happiness), and as somanassindriya (faculty of mental pleasantness).

(d) The 2 dhamma factors each of which occurs 4 times in the list are:

1. Viriya (endeavour), as viriyindriya (faculty of endeavour), as sammavayama (Right Effort), as viriyabala (power of endeavour) and as paggaha (endeavour).

2. Sati (mindfulness), as satindriya (faculty of mindfulness), as sammasati (Right Mindfulness), as satibala (power of mindfulness) and as sati (mindfulness).

One dhamma factor which occurs 6 times in the list:

Samadhi (concentration), as samatha (calm or tranquillity of mind), as cittassekaggata (one pointedness of mind), as samadhindriya (faculty of concentration), as samadhibala (power of concentration), as samma samadhi (Right Concentration) and as avikkhepa (non-distraction).

(f) One dhamma factor which occurs 7 times in the list:

Panna (wisdom), as pannindriya (faculty of wisdom), as sammaditthi (Right View as a constituent of the Ariya Path), as pannabala (Power of Wisdom), as amoha (non-bewilderment), as sammaditthi (Right View as a mental factor for good action), as sampajanna (clear comprehension) and as vipassana (insight).

This section on the definition of the dhamma factors contains two sub-sections which are termed (i) Exposition in Brief and (ii) Detailed Exposition.

The Exposition in Brief is made up of the following seventeen groups of dhamma factors:

1. Group of five headed by Phassa:

Phassa, contact;

Vedana, sensation;

Sanna, perception;

Cetana, volition;

Citta, thought.

2. Five Jhana factors:

Vitakka, initial application of the mind;

Vicara, sustained application of the mind;

Piti, delightful satisfaction;

Sukha, bliss or happiness;

Cittassekaggata, one-pointedness of mind.



### 3. Eight Faculties:

Saddhindriya, faculty of conviction;

Viriyindriya, faculty of endeavour;

Satindriya, faculty of mindfulness;

Samadhindriya, faculty of concentration;

Pannindriya, faculty of wisdom;

Manindriya, faculty of mind;

Somanassindriya, faculty of mental pleasantness;

Jivitindriya, faculty of vitality.

### 4. Five Constituents of the Ariya Path:

Sammaditthi, Right View;

Sammasankappa, Right Thinking;

Sammavayama, Right Effort;

Sammasati, Right Mindfulness;

Sammasamadhi, Right Concentration.

### 5. Seven Powers:

Saddhahala, power of conviction;

Viriyabala, power of endeavour;

Satibala, power of mindfulness;

Samadhibala, power of concentration;

Pannabala, power of wisdom;

Hiribala, power of being ashamed (to do evil);

Ottappabala, power of fear (to do evil).

### 6. Three Root Causes:

Alobha, non-greed;

Adosa, non-hatred;

Amoha, non-bewilderment.

7. Three mental factors for good actions:

Anabhijjha, non-covetousness;

Abyapada, not having illwill;

Sammaditthi, right view.

8. Two mental factors safeguarding the world:

Hiri, being ashamed (to do evil);

Ottappa, fear (to do evil).

9. Two factors of serenity:

Kayapassaddhi, serenity of mental concomitants;

Citta passaddhi, serenity of mind.

10. Two forms of quickness:

Kaya lahuta, quickness of mental concomitants;

Citta lahuta, quickness of mind.

11. Two forms of malleability:

Kaya muduta, malleability of mental concomitants;

Citta muduta, malleability of mind.

12. Two forms of preparedness:

Kaya kammannata, preparedness (for good action) of mental concomitants;

Citta kammannata, preparedness (for good action) of mind.

13. Two forms of soundness:

kaya pagunnata, soundness of mental concomitants;

Citta pagunnata, soundness of mind.

14. Two forms of rectitude:

Kayujukata, rectitude of mental concomitants;

Cittujukata, rectitude of mind.

15. Sati, mindfulness and Sampajanna, clear comprehension.

16. Mental cultivation:

Samatha, cultivation of calm;

Vipassana, development of insight.

17. Two forms of mental discipline:

Paggaha, endeavour;

Avikkhepa, non-distraction (of concentration).

## **Section Two**

### **Section Containing Grouping, Classification and Enumeration of Dhamma Factors**

The dhamma factors set out and defined in the first section are again grouped, classified or characterised and enumerated under twenty-three headings, such as Khandhas and Ayatanas. For instance, in this section only four Mental Aggregates are listed and explained. This section containing grouping, classification and enumeration of the dhamma factors which constitute the First Meritorious Thought is expressed in three ways, namely, exposition in brief, detailed exposition and additional explanation.

### **Section Three:**

#### **Section on Voidness**

This section makes clear that the dhamma factors are merely phenomena which arise because of the conjunction of cause and effect and they are subject to the law of impermanence and thus are utterly void of atta (individual entity, or Self, or Soul, or Ego). When this dhamma factor of voidness is added as another heading to the twenty-three headings mentioned in the section above, there are twenty-four headings in this section on voidness.

### **Further Comments on the Enumeration of Mental Factors**

It has been said above that fifty-six dhamma factor constitute the First Category of Meritorious Thought. There are two points to be made here. The first is that in the seventeen groups of dhamma factors mentioned above, the first group of dhamma factors, namely, the group of five dhamma factors headed by contact, is the most proximate cause for the arising of the meritorious thought; the second group which consists of the five factors of the first jhana is the most proximate cause for arising of the first group headed by contact. and so it goes on step by step till the seventeenth group. However, this is only an analytical view. The

actual fact is that there are thirty dhamma factors occurring as fifty-six items in the complete list and these arise simultaneously.

The second point to be made is that besides those fifty-six dhamma factors, there are also nine dhamma factors which may occur, wherever appropriate on the occasion of the arising of those fifty-six dhamma factors, thereby making up a total of sixty-five dhamma factors. These nine are denoted, by 'yevapana...dhamma in Pali.

They are:

1. Chanda - Desire
2. Adhimokkha - Decision, Choice
3. Manasikara - Attention
4. Tatramajjhata - Balance of mind, Equanimity
5. Karuna - Compassion
6. Mudita - Sympathetic joy
7. Sammavaca - Abstinence from evil speech
8. Sammakammanta - Abstinence from evil action
9. Samma-ajiva - Abstinence from evil livelihood

We have mentioned in the section on the definition of dhamma factors that, actually, there are only thirty dhamma factors. If we exclude the dhamma factor of mind from this list we get twenty-nine dhamma factors which are called cetasikas (mental concomitants), These twenty-nine mental concomitants together with the nine yevapanaka mental concomitants mentioned above constitute the thirty-eight meritorious mental concomitants that arise in the Sensuous Sphere.

In addition to these, there are fourteen demeritorious mental concomitants, and when these fourteen are added to the thirty-eight above, we have altogether fifty-two mental concomitants, as mentioned in the Abhidhammattha Sangaha, a compendium of the Abhidhamma.

### **B: Meritorious Thought Pertaining to the Fine Material Sphere**

Having dealt with the eight categories of Meritorious Thought pertaining to the Sensuous Sphere, the Dhammasangani deals with the Meritorious Thought pertaining to the Fine Material Sphere which in fact is jhana; the subject is dealt with under five main heads.

(i) *Kasina Jhana*, mental absorption resulting from intense concentration on a meditation device known as kasina.

(ii) *A bhikkayatana Jhana*, mental absorption resulting from mastery over object of concentration.

(iii) *Vimokkha Jhana*, mental absorption resulting from complete freedom from nivaranas or hindrances, as long as the jhana lasts,

(iv) *Brahmavihara Jhana*, mental absorption resulting from development and diffusion of Goodwill, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity.

(v) *Asubha Jhana*, mental absorption) resulting from intensive concentration on foulness of the dead body.

### Kasina Jhana

Of these five main heads, Kasina Jhana is further analysed as follows:

(a) Kasina Jhana resulting from contemplation of the Earth element, Pathavi kasina

(b) Kasina Jhana resulting from contemplation of the Water element, Apo kasina.

(c) Kasina Jhana resulting from contemplation of the Fire element, Tejo kasina.

(d) Kasina Jhana resulting from contemplation of the Wind element, Vayo kasina

(e) Kasina Jhana resulting from contemplation of the Blue colour, Nila kasina

(f) Kasina Jhana resulting from contemplation of the Yellow colour, Pita kasina.

(g) Kasina Jhana resulting' from contemplation of the Red colour, Lohita kasina.

(h) Kasina Jhana resulting from contemplation of the White colour, Odata kasina.

The object of the contemplation of the Kasinas is to attain jhana, mental absorption. There are five factors of jhana, viz., vitakka (initial application of the mind), vicara (sustained application of the mind), piti (delightful satisfaction), sukha (bliss) and ekaggakata (one-pointedness of mind). Depending on what factors are eliminated at each stage, the jhanas can be classified into two categories, i.e., the four-stage category and the five-stage category. In both categories, the first jhana has all five jhana factors. In the five-stage category, the factors of jhana are eliminated one at each stage starting from the second stage. In the four-stage category, the first two factors, vitakka and vicara, are eliminated in the second stage. In both categories, sukha is replaced by upekkha (equanimity) in the last stage.

### Four Modes of Endeavour in Jhana Practice

A jhana can be attained through one or other of four modes of endeavour. By which mode a person attains jhana depends on the degree of accumulation of experience and practice in developing jhana in previous existences and on the basic mental and moral level of the particular individual.

These four modes are:

(i) Jhana attained by difficult practice (dukkha patipada) and by slow acquisition of special understanding (dandhabhinna).

(ii) Jhana attained by difficult practice (dukkha patipada) and by swift acquisition of special understanding (khippabhinna).

(iii) Jhana attained by facile practice(sukkhapatipada) and slow acquisition of special understanding (dandhabhinna).

(iv) Jhana attained by facile practice(sukkhapatipada) and by swift acquisition of special understanding (khippabhinna).

#### **Four Kinds of Jhana Practice Differing in Degree of Sufficiency in Practice and in the Size of the Object of Concentration**

There is another set of four ways of jhana practice:

(i) Jhana with insufficient practice (paritta) for attainment of a higher jhana and with an object of concentration of limited size (paritta rammana).

(ii) Jhana with insufficient practice (paritta) for attainment of a higher jhana and with an object of concentration of unlimited size (appamanarammana).

(iii) Jhana with sufficient practice (appamana) fir attainment of a higher jhana and with an object of concentration of limited size (paritta rammana).

(iv) Jhana with sufficient practice (appamana) for attainment of a higher jhana and with an object of concentration of unlimited size (appamanarammana).

A jhana can be attained through any one of sixteen possible combinations resulting from the above two categories of jhana practice, namely, that based on mode of endeavour and that based op object of concentration.

#### **Abhibhayatana Jhana and Vimokkha Jhana**

Of the Five kinds of jhana mentioned above, Kasina jhana, Abhibhayatana jhana and Vimokkha jhana are different names given to the same rupavacara jhana which pertains to the Fine Material Sphere. The difference in names is due to the difference in circumstances of attainment, difference in object of concentration, and difference in characteristics. Thus, for example, a Pathavi kasina jhana is attained by contemplating the earth device, which represents as a whole, in its entirety, the Earth element. Abhibhayatana jhana is so called because of its mastery over the object of concentration. In Vimokkha jhana, complete release from defilements takes place in a distinct manner as long as the jhana lasts.

#### **Brahmavihara Jhana**

It is mental absorption resulting from development and diffusion of Goodwill, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity.

#### **Asubha Jhana**

It is mental absorption resulting from contemplation of ten repulsive objects.

But all these jhanas are uniformly characterised by the same jhana factors, viz., vitakka, vicara, piti, sukha and ekaggata.

#### The Five Factors of the First Jhana

The same fifty-six dhamma factors that constitute the Meritorious Thought pertaining to the Sensuous Sphere can be found in the Meritorious Thought pertaining to the Fine Material Sphere.

Of these fifty-six dhamma factors, five factors play an essential role in the development of the first jhana. These five factors are: vitakka vicara, piti, sukha and ekaggata.

**Vitakka** - Initial application of the mind on the object of attention, such as an earth device. It keeps the mind from wandering about by repeatedly directing the mind on the object of attention. It is opposed to and eliminates the hindrances of sloth and torpor (thina middha). It is the precursor of vicara.

**Vicara** - Sustained application of the mind. It keeps the mind steadfastly on the object of meditation. Vicara is Opposed to and eliminates the hindrance of uncertainty (vicikiccha)

**Piti** - Delightful satisfaction. It helps the meditator to take interest and find delight in the object of meditation and to be satisfied with it. Piti is the opposite of antipathy (byapada) and eliminates it. It is the precursor of sukha.

**Sukha** - Bliss or happiness. It is a kind of pleasant feeling. It is free from restlessness (uddhaca) and worry (kukkucca) and helps develop concentration.

**Ekaggata** - One-pointedness of mind. It is also known as samadhi, concentration. By keeping the mind firmly fixed on the object of meditation, it keeps away all sense-desire (kamacchanda). Ekaggata is opposed to and eliminates all sense-desire which cause excitement and agitation. Thus these five factors play an essential role in the attainment of jhana.

#### **C: Meritorious Thought Pertaining to the Non-material Sphere**

The Meritorious Thought pertaining to the Non-material Sphere consists of the following four jhanas:

- (i) Akasanancayatana Jhana, mental absorption in the concept 'Space is Infinite'
- (ii) Vinnanancayatana Jhana, mental absorption in the concept 'Consciousness is Infinite'.
- (iii) Akincannayatana Jhana, mental absorption in the concept 'Nothing is there'
- (iv) Nevasannanasannayatana Jhana, the jhana of neither Consciousness nor Non-consciousness.

(i) The yogi who is already established in the final stage of the Rupa Jhana can develop the first Arupa Jhana, if he wishes. At first he concentrates on the mental image of the kasina object which is the object of concentration he has had previously. Finally it is discarded and is replaced by space. He now concentrates on the concept 'Space is Infinite', this first Arupa Jhana is known as Akasanancayatana Jhana

(ii) To develop the Second Arupa Jhana, the yogi takes the first Arupa Jhana consciousness as the object of concentration. As the object of the first Arupa Jhana consciousness is the concept 'Space is Infinite', this first Arupa Jhana consciousness is also infinite. The second Arupa Jhana is attained by concentrating on the concept 'Consciousness is Infinite'. This is called Vinnanancayatana Jhana.

(iii) In Progressing to the third Arupa Jhana, the first Arupa Jhana Consciousness which has served as an object of concentration for the second Arupa Jhana has to be given up. Then, since even this first Arupa Jhana consciousness does not exist any more the concept of nothingness appears. This concept 'Nothing is there' is the object of concentration of this third Arupa Jhana known as Akincannayatana Jhana.

(iv) To reach the fourth Arupa Jhana, the concept 'Nothing is there' has to be given up. Then, since there is no other object of concentration, the third Arupa Jhana consciousness has to be taken as the object of concentration. Passing completely beyond the state of Nothingness, and concentrating on the third Arupa Jhana consciousness, the fourth Arupa Jhana is so subtle and refined that it is not easy to say whether there is consciousness or there is no consciousness. Hence this final stage of Arupa Jhana is termed Nevasannasannayatana Jhana, the jhana of 'Neither Consciousness nor Non-Consciousness'.

In the case of the four Rupa Jhanas, the five jhana factors of vitakka, vicara, piti, sukha and ekaggata are reduced in each successive stage; they thus differ from one another according to the number of jhana factors that accompany them. But the four Arupa Jhanas differ according to the object of concentration. The first and the third Arupa Jhanas have two pannatti (concepts) as their object: the concept of Infinity of Space and the concept of Nothingness. The second and the fourth Arupa Jhana consciousness have the first and the third Jhana consciousness respectively as their object.

#### **D: Modes of Meritorious Thought that Lead to Different Levels of Life in any Plane in the Three Spheres of Existence**

Besides the classification into kinds of Meritorious Thought pertaining to the Sensuous Sphere or to the Fine Material Sphere or to the Non-material Sphere, there is a further classification of different modes of Meritorious Thought which cause rebirth in different levels in any plane of existence in the three spheres, viz., the Sensuous Sphere, the Fine Material Sphere or the Non-material Sphere. This Meritorious Thought has the short technical name of "Meritorious Thought Pertaining to the Three Spheres of Existence" (tebhumaka)

This Meritorious Thought is classified into three modes, namely Inferior class Meritorious Thought, Medium class Meritorious Thought and Superior class Meritorious Thought. This can be paraphrased into "Meritorious Thought Which has inferior results or



medium results or superior results such as being born into a low level or a medium level or a superior level of life in a future existence."

The reason why there are these three different classes of results of a meritorious act, which on the surface is the same meritorious act, is to be found in the quality (i.e., strength or weakness) of the four dominant mental factors which accompany the meritorious thought. The four are:

(a) desire which is the dominant element of the meritorious thought during the performance of a meritorious act;

(b) effort which is the dominant element of the meritorious thought during the performance of a meritorious act;

(c) thought which is the dominant element of the meritorious thought during the performance of a meritorious act; and

(d) investigative knowledge which is the dominant element of the meritorious thought during the performance of a meritorious act.

Thus, in the case of a meritorious thought pertaining to the Sensuous Sphere, or the Fine Material Sphere, or the Non-material Sphere, if the dominant element involved in the exercise of that thought, whether it is desire or effort or thought or investigative knowledge, is inferior, or medium, or superior in terms of strength or weakness, the meritorious thought is of an inferior kind or of a medium kind or of a superior kind, having different effects.

This means that even if a meritorious thought leads to rebirth in the human plane, the person reborn may be born into low or inferior circumstances or level of life, or into moderate circumstances or into superior circumstances of life. The same holds true of meritorious thought pertaining to the Fine Material Sphere or to the Non-material Sphere. One may become a deva or a Brahma with an inferior status or a moderate status or a high status.

### **E: Meritorious Thought that Leads to Liberation from the Three Spheres of Existence**

Lokuttara kusala citta, Supramundane Meritorious Thought, is associated with Magga nana which enables beings to escape from the three spheres of existence.

#### The Arising of Magga Nana

When the mind becomes calm and collected, and firmly fixed on the khandha aggregates, there gradually arises a penetrating insight into the real nature of the complex of khandha aggregates. The reality is that this complex is constituted only of nama and rupa, which are mere mental and physical phenomena ceaselessly rising and disappearing, constantly in a state of flux. On discerning thus, there arises the realization of the insubstantiality the voidness, and the non-self nature of the complex of khandha aggregates and that there is nothing attractive or pleasing about it.

Repeated contemplation of this real nature of the khandha aggregates results in the arising of intuitive knowledge that the aggregates of nama and rupa represent the embodiment of

dukkha which no divine power is able to remove or banish. The spark of knowledge of the Path of Right View, sammaditthi magga nana, flashes in the mind leading to the realization that it is foolish to strive for the welfare and happiness of this complex of khandha aggregates which is a mass of unalloyed dukkha. Then for the first time in the whole of the cycle of existence, attachment to ones own khandha aggregates is eradicated. This eradication of attachment to the khandha aggregates is termed the relinquishing of the wrong view of Personality or Self, sakkaya ditthi. In addition to sakkaya ditthi, all other akusala dhammas which tend to lead to the realm of misery and woe are also simultaneously eliminated by this Sotapatti magga nana.

The second stage, the Sakadagami magga nana, weaken sensuous desire and ill will. This magga nana also has the effect of weakening the remaining defilement; as well.

The third stage, namely, the Anagami magga nana completely roots out sensuous desire and ill will.

This magga nana also has the effect of rooting out all the defilements that lead to the Sensuous Sphere.

The final stage, Arahatta magga nana, eradicates completely the remaining five defilements, viz., desire for the Fine Material Sphere, desire for the Non-material Sphere, conceit, restlessness and ignorance.

Just like a lamp that has exhausted its fuel, with the complete uprooting of all the defilements, there is no chance for the khandha aggregates to rise up again in a future existence. There is no more rebirth for an arahat.

All the four stages of magga nana are characterised by the arising of penetrating knowledge of the Four Ariya Truths:

(i) The complex of the khandha aggregates is the embodiment of the Truth of dukkha , Dukkha Sacca.

(ii) Attachment to the complex of the khandha aggregates is the Truth of the origin of dukkha, Samudaya Sacca.

(iii) The cessation of attachment to the khandha aggregates is the Truth of the cessation of dukkha, Nirodha Sacca.

(iv) The four magga nanas that remove the attachment to the complex of the khandha aggregates are the Truth of the Path, Magga Sacca.

The Lokuttara kusala citta is explained in the text in a variety of ways, first under the name of JHANA.

This is shown in great elaboration. Further there are also nineteen other names such as Magga and Satipatthana under which this citta may be propounded in exactly the same manner of elaboration as under the name jhana. Although these nineteen further nomenclatures are not stated in full, they are to be understood in full as in the case of 'jhana'. Please see paras 277 to 356 of the text. It may be noted here that Lokuttara kusala citta is

generally known under the name of Magga only, and the fact that it also goes under the name of Jhana or Satipatthana etc., is not widely known.

## (ii) Rupa Kanda

### Division Concerning Corporeality

Abyakata dhamma ( neither meritorious nor demeritorious dhamma) included vipaka (resultant), kiriya (non-causative action), rupa (Corporeality) and Nibbana. Out of these four dhammas only vipaka and kiriya are dealt with in the Cittuppada Kanda. Of the remaining two dhammas , Corporeality is dealt with in this division, Rupa Kanda.

Nibbana is left out from detailed consideration as it is unique by itself needing no analysis into sub-divisions.

### Different Methods of Exposition of Corporeality

There are eleven methods of Exposition of Corporeality.

In the first method, Corporeality is viewed as a whole and is described in forty-three expressions, each expression embodying a single characteristic.

In the second method, Corporeality is viewed as being of two kinds, e.g.,

- (a) dependent Corporeality,
- (b) non-dependent Corporeality.

There are 104 such sets.

In the third method, Corporeality is viewed as being of three kinds, e.g.,

- (a) Internal dependent Corporeality,
- (b) External dependent Corporeality,
- (c) External non- dependent Corporeality,

There are 103 such sets.

In the fourth method, Corporeality is viewed as being of four kinds, e.g.,

- (a) Dependent Corporeality which is the result of a deed.
- (b) Dependent Corporeality which is not the result of a deed,
- (c) Non-dependent Corporeality which is the result of a deed.
- (d) Non-dependent Corporeality which is not the result of a deed.

There are 22 such sets.

In the fifth method, sixth method, .. eleventh method, Corporeality is viewed as being of five kinds, of six kinds .... of eleven kinds respectively.

The number of different kinds of Corporeality as described above can be reduced to 27 by taking only one each of terms of identical nature. In the Abhidhammattha Sangaha 28 kinds of Corporeality are mentioned. But in the Dhammasahgani only 27 kinds of Corporeality are mentioned leaving out hadayavatthu.

### (iii) Nikkhepa Kanda

#### Division of Summarised Analytical Statements

Of the 22 tikas or triads, 100 dukas or dyads, and 42 Suttantika dukas as listed in the Matika the first two divisions Cittuppada Kanda and Rupa Kanda deal with one and only one category of the dhammas namely, the first tika of Kusala, Akusala and Abyakata dhammas. Cittuppada Kanda contains a thorough investigation into the nature, properties and functions of all mental phenomena that come under the headings of Kusala dhamma, Akusala dhamma and Abyakata dhamma; the Rupa Kanda is concerned with all physical phenomena or Corporeality under the heading of Abyakata dhamma.

The Nikkhepa Kanda, the third division, avoids the elaborate treatment of the first two divisions. While it gives, not too elaborately nor too briefly, summarised analytical statements of all the tikas and dukas so that their contents and significance may become fully comprehensible when this division is read together with the previous two divisions.

In general, all the tikas and dukas are treated in a condensed manner under the following eight heads in this division:

- (i) Classification by way of roots (mula)
- (ii) Classification by way of aggregates (khandha)
- (iii) Classification by way of doors (dvara)
- (iv) Classification by way of field of occurrence (bhumi)
- (v) Classification by way of meaning (attha)
- (vi) Classification by way of doctrinal interpretation. (dhamma)
- (vii) Classification by way of nomenclature(nama)
- (vii) Classification by way of grammatical gender (linga)

Of the first four, viz., mula, khandha, dvara and bhumi, only some apply to certain of the tikas and dukas, but not to all of them. The remaining four, viz., attha, dhamma, nama and linga, however, are applicable to all the tikas and dukas.

Some examples of classification under the eight heads in the Nikkhepa Kanda:

(i) Kusala Dhamma Summarised by Way of Roots (mula)

Kusala dhamma included in the Kusala Tika are shown by way of roots as absence of greed (alobha), absence of hatred (adosa), absence of bewilderment (amoha). Thus, Kusala dhamma which have been so elaborately expounded in the Cittuppada Kanda are shown as originating from just these three roots. It follows that the practical method of developing Kusala Dhamma is to eradicate greed, to eradicate hatred, to eradicate ignorance.

(ii) Kusala Dhamma Summarised by Way of Aggregates (khandha)

Further, it is explained in the text that Kusala dhamma are made up of the four mental aggregates, namely, the aggregate of Sensation (vedanakkhandha) the aggregate of Perception (sannakkhandha), the aggregate of Volitional Activities (sankharakkhandha) and the aggregate of consciousness (vinnanakkhandha). Thus the 21 kinds of Kusala citta and 38 kinds of mental concomitants explained in the Cittuppada Kanda are fully covered under this classification as follows:

(a) 21 Kusala citta (Aggregate of Consciousness)

(b) Vedana (Aggregate of Sensation)

(c) Sanna (Aggregate of Perception)

(d) the remaining 36 mental concomitants (Aggregate of Volitional Activities)

This second method deals not only with the roots from which the tree of Kusala Dhamma originates, but describes the whole tree.

(iii) Kusala Dhamma Summarised by Way of Doors (dvara)

The Kusala dhamma originating from the three roots, viz., alobha, adosa and amoha, are meritorious actions done through the media of the three doors, physical, verbal and mental. Therefore, 'Kusala dhamma' (meritorious, actions) is not just a technical term in the Pitaka text, but something which can arise out of what one actually does in one's daily life.

Although Nikkhepa Kanda is very brief compared to Cittuppada Kanda, it explains the terms of the Abhidhamma in such a way that a non-scholar can understand them. Just as a tree can be made known by describing its roots, its trunk, and its fruits, so the meaning of 'Kusala dhamma, meritorious actions, is made known by describing its roots (which stand for alobha, adosa, amoha), its trunk (which stands for mental aggregates) and its fruits (which stand for actions). 'Akusala dhamma' is also made known in the same way by describing its roots (which stand for lobha, dosa, moha), its trunk (which stand for mental aggregates), and its fruits (which stand for actions).

In the case of Abyakata dhamma, Vipaka is classified as the Sensuous Sphere resultant, the Fine Material Sphere resultant, the Non-material Sphere resultant and the Supramundane Sphere resultant, and further classified as the four resultant mental aggregates; Kiriya is classified as non-causative action in the Sensuous Sphere, non-causative action in the Fine

Material Sphere, and non-causative action in the Non- material Sphere, and further classified as the four non- causative aggregates. All Corporeality as well as Nibbana are in the Abyakata dhamma as they are neither meritorious nor demeritorious.

(iv) Vedana Tika Explained by Way of Field of Occurrence (bhumi)

The exposition of Vedana Tika, the triad of Sensation, which is not directly expounded in the Cittuppada Kanda and Rupa Kanda provides an example of classification by way of field of occurrence. Consciousness and mental concomitants, being the basis or the ground from which Sensation arises, are classified in this division according to the types of Sensation with which they are associated. Thus we have:

(a) Sukha Bhumi, Consciousness and Mental Concomitants from which arises Pleasant Sensation

(b) Dukkha Bhumi, Consciousness and Mental Concomitants from which arises Unpleasant Sensation;

(c) Adukkhamasuka Bhumi, Consciousness and Mental Concomitants from which arises Neither pleasant nor unpleasant Sensation.

The first type, Sukha Bhumi, is subdivided into Kamasukhabhumi (mental factors in the Sensuous Sphere which are associated with pleasure), Rupasukhabhumi (mental factors in the Fine Material Sphere which are associated with pleasure) and Lokuttarasukhabhumi (mental factors in the Supramundane Sphere which are associated with pleasure).

These types of Consciousness and Mental Concomitants are treated in this division only in a summary way, but they can be described more elaborately and fully following the pattern laid down in the Cittuppada Kanda.

Dukkkhabhumi, Consciousness and Mental Concomitants from which arises Unpleasant Sensation, is explained merely as Kamadukkkhabhumi, which according to the Cittuppada Kanda means Consciousness and Mental Concomitants of the Sensuous Sphere accompanied by mental and physical suffering.

Adukkhamasukhabhumi, Consciousness and Mental Concomitants from which arises Neither-pleasant- nor-unpleasant Sensation, is subdivided into four categories: Kamaupekkhabhumi, Rupa-upekkhabhumi, Arupa upekkhabhumi, and Lokuttara-upekkhabhumi. Kamaupekkhabhumi means mental factors in the Sensuous Sphere which are associated with equanimity. Rupa-upekkhabhumi means mental factors of the Fifth Jhana of the Fine Material Sphere which are associated with equanimity. Arupa-upekkhabhumi means mental factors of the Fifth Jhana of the Non-material Sphere which are associated with equanimity. And Lokuttara upekkhabhumi means mental factors of the Fifth Supramundane Jhana which are associated with equanimity.

(iv) Atthakatha Kanda

Division of Additional Elucidations

In the Matika of Dhammasangani there are 22 tikas, 100 dukas and 42 Suttantika dukas. Of these, the Kusala Tika, meritorious triad, is shown in detail in the Cittuppada Kanda and the Rupa Kanda. The other tikas and dukas together with the Kusala Tika are dealt with in a summarised way in the Nikkhepa Kanda. Thus the treatment of tikas and dukas can be said to be Complete in the first three divisions.

But, merely indicating for instance as in the Nikkhepa Kanda, the meaning of tikas and dukas may not be sufficient for a full understanding of some tikas and dukas without enumeration in detail. The enumeration of mind, mental concomitants and Corporeality can be found in the Cittuppada Kanda and Rupa Kanda, but they are Spread throughout these divisions, Therefore it is not easy for the student to know the enumeration of the categories in each tika or duka. This enumeration is done for some of the important tikas and dukas in the Atthakatha Kanda.

For instance, in the Nikkhepa Kanda, Consciousness and mental concomitants in Vedana Tika are treated collectively by way of bhumis (field of occurrence) or by way of khandhas (aggregates). But in the Atthakatha Kanda, we find that mental factors associated with pleasure, mental factors associated with mental and physical, suffering, and mental factors associated with equanimity are shown in detailed enumeration.

In the same way the Nikkhepa Kanda deals with the mental factors of the Vitakka Tika collectively and they are explained by way of field of occurrence and by way of aggregates. In the Atthakatha Kanda, the Vitakka Tika is elucidated by detailed enumeration of the mental factors associated with vitakka (initial application of the mind) and vicara (sustained application of the mind), the mental factors not associated with vitakka but only associated with vicara, and the mental factors not associated with both vitakka and vicara.

The same may be said of the treatment of the Arammana Tika. The Nikkhepa Kanda provides only the bare definition for some of the categories contained in the classification of these tikas, without giving the elucidation and enumeration of the mental factors involved. The Atthakatha Kanda treats them more fully, giving an enumeration of the mental factors of Consciousness and mental concomitants that are involved in each case. For example, in dealing with the Parittarammana Tika, the mental factors involved in the categories of (a) Sensual things which are the objects of attention, (b) Sublime things which are the objects of attention, (c) Nibbana which is the object of attention are enumerated in the Atthakatha Kanda.

It may be stated that the Atthakatha Kanda serves as an indispensable guide to the understanding of the Dhammasangani.

A draft of this Introduction based largely on the introduction to the Myanmar version of Dhammasangani, was made by U Ko Lay, Retired Vice Chancellor of Mandalay University who was then a Senior Editor.

This draft has been revised and edited by the Editorial Committee.

The Editorial Committee  
Translation Section

The Full Moon Day of

First Waso, 1355 M.E.

The Third Day of July, 1993.

---

Note (1): We have followed the Myanmar version in the arrangement and titling of chapter and section headings. In this we have benefited from the diagrammatic tables in the Introduction to the Myanmar version and from the elucidation of the diagrammatic tables by Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut, our Doctrinal Adviser.

Note (2): In the Attakatha Division the number of dhamma factors, enumerated according to contextual relevance, in each of the categories of the meritorious dhamma, the demeritorious dhamma, the Vipaka dhamma and the Kiriya dhamma, based on the Abhidhammattha Sangaha in each case is shown in brackets.

Note (3): The whole of Dhammasangani, consisting of 4 Divisions or Books, was translated by the late U Kyaw Khine, J.C.S. (Retired). The Cittuppada Kanda was translated by U Kyaw Khine with the assistance of U Shwe Mra, I.C.S. (Retired.), before the latter became the Chairman of the Editorial Committee, and of U Aung Thein Nyunt, B.A., Pathamagyaw Dhammacariya, and with the participation of Sayadaw The Venerable U Nyanika of Myaungmya (now an Aggamahlpaudita), in an advisory capacity. It was revised and edited by the Editorial Committee. The other Books or Divisions of Dhammasangani were translated by U Kyaw Khine with the assistance of Sayagyi Dhammacariya U Kyaw Htut, Doctrinal Adviser and U Hla Maung, Editor. Later, Sayagyi U Bo Maung, Dhammacariya, took the place of Sayagyi U Kyaw Htut.