



A STUDY OF ABHIDHAMMA PITAKA IN BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

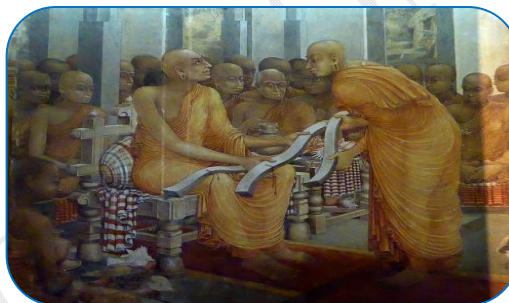
Kesarananda¹ and Dr. M. Bharani²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Annamalai University.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Annamalai University.

ABSTRACT :

A study of Abhidhamma Pitakain Buddhist Philosophy is to introduce the Buddha's philosophy (Buddha's Abhidhamma). In the teaching of Tri-Pitakas (Three Baskets), there are such as Vinaya-Pitaka (the code of monastic discipline), Sutta-Pitaka (the Discourse), Abhidhamma-Pitaka (the analytic doctrine of the Buddha's philosophy). Abhidhamma-Pitaka is the most difficult and the highest teaching of the Buddha, the third great division of the Pitaka. It is immense accumulation of efficiently organized, arranged and ordered Doctrines of the Buddha, speaking to the core of His educating. Abhidhamma means Higher Teaching or Special Teaching; it is unique in its abstruseness, analytical approach, immensity of scope and conduciveness to one's liberation. By understanding the Buddhist philosophy and turning this study into personal by meditation and direct intellectual intuition of reality, then one can develop of insight into three characteristics of existence (impermanence, satisfactoriness, and non-self).



KEYWORDS : Abhidhamma, Pitaka, Philosophy, Paññatti.

INTRODUCTION:

Etymologically the term "Philosophy" is derived from the Greek term *Philo & Sophia*, which means "Love of Wisdom" (*Philo* Love + *Sophia* Wisdom). Philosophy is the oldest and original discipline. Philosophers call it as the mother of the entire first and the science of all science. In Sanskrit, Philosophy is known as "*Darshana*" which mean knowledge of reality. In *Pali*, Philosophy is known as *Abhidhamma* (*Abhidhamma Pitaka*) which mean according to *Pali*, commentary *Abhi* a *Pali* term, which means great, excellent, sublime, distinct, marvelous, preponderant, etc. The prefix '*Abhi*,' like '*Ati*,' is used in the sense of preponderance and distinction. *Dhamma* is called *Abhidhamma*, because it excels and is distinguished by several qualities from the other *Dhamma*. The word *Pitaka* means a receptacle a vessel or a basket. The word *Pitaka* is usually translated as basket. There are three *Pitaka* or Baskets. They are *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Sutta Pitaka*, and *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. The researcher is going to describe *Abhidhamma Pitaka* or Buddhist philosophy here. *Abhidhamma* is very hard to translate this word into English actually.

It is ultimate teaching in contrast to conventional teaching in *Sutta* (Discourse) *Pitaka*. In *Sutta Pitaka* the Buddha used conventional terms- like 'I', 'you', 'a person', and 'a woman'. Without these conventional terms we cannot speak at all. We cannot communicate with other people at all

because we live in this conventional world. So, in the *Sutta Pitaka*, the Buddha taught conventional terms. But in *Abhidhamma Pitaka* most of the terms used are not conventional terms but terms of ultimate reality. They are different. They are almost no person, no man, and no woman in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. We will find five aggregates, bases, element, Four Noble Truths and so on. Although the subject may be the same, the way of presentation is different.

We are not a man. We are not a woman. We are five aggregates, so five aggregates are doing right now. A group of five aggregates are talking. Other five aggregates are listening. For example, like a car or motor bike, combined with so many things became a car or motor bike. So, people also combined with five aggregates became human being. That is something like *Abhidhamma*. The terms used are of ultimate realities and not of convention in *Abhidhamma*. These realities are taught in many different ways. The realities, those are accepted as realities, are four in number which called *Paramattha Dhamma*. *Paramattha* means immutable or abstract things. *Dhamma* means which bear their necessary nature, or they are supported by conditions, or they are supported according to their necessary nature. So, there is four *Paramatthas Dhamma* or ultimate reality.

- *Citta* = Mind or consciousness of the senses or awareness of an object.
- *Cetasika* = Mental states or mental concomitants.
- *Rūpa* = Matter or material quality.
- *Nibbāna* = Salvation or extinction of defilements and suffering; absolute lasting peace.

In these four, mind and matter are minutely analyzed. A person is composed of mind and matter. Mind is again composed of *Citta* which translated as consciousness, and *Cetasikas* which is translated mental factors. What we called mind is a group of two things - *Citta* and *Cetasika*.

There are 89 or 121 types of minds (*Cittas*). Mind is divided into 89 or 121 types of consciousness. Mental factors (*Cetasikas*) are divided into 52. Mind is minutely analyzed and described in Buddha's philosophy (*Abhidhamma*). Matter (*Rūpa*) is also treated in detail. There are 28 material properties taught in Buddha's philosophy. Their number or enumeration, their causes, and how they are grouped together in groups, how they arise, how they disappear in one given life. All these things are taught in Buddha's philosophy (*Abhidhamma-Pitaka*). In *Abhidhamma* what are ultimate realities is taught, that is, consciousness (*Citta*), mental factors (*Cetasika*), matter (*Rūpa*), and Salvation (*Nibbāna*).

Abhidhamma Piṭaka in Buddhist Philosophy

According to Myanmar monk venerable Sayadaw U Thitila said 'it is philosophy in as much as it deals with the most general causes and principles that govern all things.' So, it can be called a philosophy. We can find in it causes and principles that govern all things. It is an ethical system because it enables one to realize the ultimate goal, Salvation (*Nibbāna*). There are no ethical teachings in *Abhidhamma* actually. There are no teachings like we are not to do this or that; we are to refrain from this. There are no such teachings in *Abhidhamma*. But when it describes consciousness, it begins with what is unwholesome. It goes to consciousness of sensuous sphere. Then it goes to higher states of consciousness called fine material-sphere consciousness. Then again it goes to immaterial-sphere types of consciousness. And ultimately it goes to superabundance consciousness. It goes from one spiritual stage to another. So, it can be called ethics. Because it deals with the working of the mind with thought processes and mental factors it can be called a system of psychology. It is really a system of psychology because it deals with mind, matter, consciousness, mental factors and material properties. Therefore, *Abhidhamma* is generally translated as psycho-ethical philosophy of Buddhism'. The researcher wants to call it just *Abhidhamma*. The researcher thinks that is better. *Abhidhamma approach covers a wide field of study, comprising of scientific and manufactured strategies for examination, depicting and characterizing minutely the constituent pieces of totals, grouping them under very much arranged*

heads and all around masterminded frameworks, lastly setting out conditions in which they are identified with one another.

Two Kinds of Truth

Conventional Truth (*Sammuti-Saccā*) and Ultimate Truth (*Paramattha-Saccā*) are also recognized in the *Abhidhamma* according to which only four categories of things, namely: mind (consciousness), mental associations (concomitants), materiality and Salvation (*Nibbāna*) are classified as the ultimate truth; all the rest are viewed as obvious truth. When we utilize such articulations as "I", "you", "man", "lady", "individual", "singular", we are talking about things which don't exist as a general rule. By utilizing such articulations about things which exist just in assignment, we are not lying; we are only an evident truth, making utilization of ordinary language, without which no correspondence will be conceivable. Yet, a definitive truth is that there is no "individual", individual" or "I" as a general rule. There exist just totals (Khandhas) made up of corporeality, mind (awareness) and mental concomitants. These are genuine in that they are not simply assignments; they really exist in us or around us.

Two Kinds of Concept

The conventional truth is also called *Paññatti* which is translated as concept. There are two kinds of concept (*Paññatti*). The first is called *Nāma-Paññatti* which means name or mind, mental phenomena. But here it means name. Therefore *Nāma-Paññatti* means name concept. Name concept means just names given to objects. These names make things known. The word *Paññatti* has two meanings. One is active and the other is passive. *Paññatti*(concept) means something that makes some other thing known. When we say a car, the name a car makes the real car known. By the word car we know the real thing, a vehicle with four wheels and so on. So *Paññatti* here means something that makes some other thing known, a name that makes things known. *Nāma-Paññatti* is names given to objects. There are thousands and thousands of name concepts (*Nāma-Paññattis*).

The second one is called *Attha-Paññatti* which means thing concept. That means the objects conveyed by the names or concepts. That means the objects presented by these names. They are called concept (*Paññatti*) because they are made known. Here we get the passive meaning of the word concept (*Paññatti*). Sometimes it is good to have two meanings to a word. Sometimes it is confusing because it can mean both things. So, we have to understand in which meaning it is used in a given context. In the word thing concept (*Attha-Paññatti*), the word *Paññatti* means something which is made known, something which is made known by a name concept (*Nāma-Paññatti*), by the name. Let us take the example car again. We have the name car. And we have the thing which we call a car. That thing is thing concept (*Attha-Paññatti*). The name car is name concept (*Nāma-Paññatti*). In most cases there are always these two concepts together - name concept (*Nāma-Paññatti*) and thing concept (*Attha-Paññatti*). A house – the name house is name concept (*Nāma-Paññatti*). The real house – the house itself is thing concept (*Attha-Paññatti*). A man – the name man is name concept (*Nāma-Paññatti*). The person, the man is thing concept (*Attha-Paññatti*). In most cases we can get both name concept and thing concept for these things.

Concept (*Paññatti*) is Timeless

These are called concepts. Concepts are said to be out of time, beyond time, timeless. We cannot grasp it in our hands. For example, a name, a name is a name. We cannot say a name arises, stays for sometimes and disappears. A name is a name because it is in our minds. They are products of mental construction. We think of them as something and then we use that designation. Since it is said to exist only in our minds, it actually has no reality, no existence. That is why, it cannot be said that concept is past, or concept is present, or concept is future. It is beyond this time frame. That is why, Concept (*Paññatti*) is said to be timeless.

Let us see another example, we can understand more with names. We give a name to a child. We call it by that name. But we cannot say when that name first came into being. And then when people use that name it seems to exist. When people forget that name, it seems to disappear. Later on, somebody will come and say there was such a person by this name perhaps a hundred years ago. We then remember that name again. So that name which is a concept is beyond time. It is not present, not past and not future. So, it is timeless.

How the Buddha Taught Abhidhamma

Abhidhamma is a vast literature. Buddha taught *Abhidhamma* the fourth week after His enlightenment, while setting in the midst of the gods from the ten thousand world-systems, at the *Paṇḍukambalā* stone at the foot of the *Pāricchataka* tree in *Tāvātimsā*, making His mother His chief witness who died seven days after His birth was as a God (*Deva*), as a deity in another heaven called *Tāvātimsā* Heaven, taught the Law, passing from one them to another in hundred, a thousand, and hundred thousand divisions. This can be taken to mean that the Buddha, by intense concentration, transcended the earth-bound mentality and rose mentally to the world of the deities, a feat made possible by his attainment of higher powers (*Abhiññā*) through utmost perfection in mental concentration. The Buddha taught non-stop for three whole months because the Buddha spoke very fast. During the time an ordinary person speaks one word the Buddha could speak 128 words. Having preached the *Abhidhamma* to the deities, he returned to earth, that is, to normal human consciousness, and preached it to the Venerable Sāriputta, the Arahāt disciple most advanced wisdom. While the Buddha preached the Sāriputta, there was no difference between the Supreme Buddha and the created Buddha as regard their rays, voice, or words. Now Sāriputta, having learnt the Law taught (by the Teacher) preached it to five hundred monks, his own pupils.

What is important is the essence; it is this one should try to experience for oneself. The question is also raised whether the *Abhidhamma* is essential from *Dhamma* practice. The answer to this will depend on the individual who undertakes the practice. People are very in their levels of understanding and spiritual development. Ideally all the different spiritual faculties should be harmonized, but some people are quite content with devotional practice based on faith, while others are keen on developing penetrative insight. The *Abhidhamma* is most useful to those who want to understand, who want to know the *Dhamma* in depth and detail. It aids the development of insight into the three characteristics of existence (impermanence, un-satisfactoriness, and non-self). It will be found useful not only during the periods devoted to formal meditation, but also during the rest of the day when one engaged in various chores. When one experiences realities, then one is deriving benefit from the study of the *Abhidhamma*.

In brief, *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka* is more preponderant, more sublime and more marvelous than *Suttanta-Piṭaka* in the sense. The *Abhidhamma* is the sphere of the omniscient *Buddhas*, but not the sphere of others. The Supremely Enlightened One was the first to know the *Abhidhamma*. While sitting under the Bodhi-tree he penetrated the *Abhidhamma*. He became the Buddha.

(1) *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka* contains more *Dhamma* groups (*Dhammakkhandhas*) than *Suttanta-Piṭaka* and *Vinaya-Piṭaka*. (*Abhidhamma* consists of 42000 *Dhammakkhandhas* whereas *Suttanta-Piṭaka* and *Vinaya-Piṭaka* contain 21000 *Dhammakkhandhas* each.)

(2) Buddha used more numerous methods in expounding *Abhidhamma* than when he taught *Suttanta-Dhamma*.

(3) In *Abhidhamma* Buddha analyzed mind and matter in minute detail in terms of the ultimate realities known as *Paramatthas*. These *Paramatthas* will be explained at the end of this chapter.

The Seven Books of Buddhist Philosophy (AbhidhammaPiṭaka)

There is a consensus of opinion among teachers that the *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka* is divided into seven books.

1. *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* = Book Scheme of Classification
2. *Vibhaṅga* = Book of Analysis
3. *Dhātukathā*= Book of Explanation about Elements
4. *Puggalapaññatti* = Book of Classification of Individual
5. *Kathāvatthu* = Book of Subject of a Discussion
6. *Yamaka*= Book of Define and Analyze the Inter-relationship
7. *Paṭṭhāna* = the Great Book

Dhammasaṅgaṇī

The Dhammasaṅgaṇī is the first book of the Abhidhamma, and the Paṭṭhāna, the last book, are the most vital of the seven treatises of Abhidhamma, giving as they do the pith of the whole Abhidhamma. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī counts all the Dhammas (wonders) with an investigation of the awareness (Citta) and its corresponding mental elements (Cetasikas). Having listed the marvels, they are masterminded into different classes to draw out their definite nature, work and common relationship both inside (in our very own being) and with the outside world.

Vibhaṅga

The second book of the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga, together with the main book of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the third book of Dhātukathā, shapes a firmly related establishment for the best possible and profound comprehension of the Buddha's Dhamma. While Dhammasaṅgaṇī gives a 10,000 foot perspective in general Tika and Duka bunches with further precise courses of action under characterized heads, Vibhaṅga and Dhātukathā give a closer perspective on those parts of those gatherings bringing out moment subtleties.

Be that as it may, it doesn't outfit total data about these Dhammas. It is Vibhaṅga which gives full learning concerning them, expressing the careful idea of each Dhamma, its constituents and its relationship to different Dhammas. The Vibhaṅga is separated into eighteen sections each managing a specific part of the Dhamma, its full examination and examination concerning gatherings and classes pursues indistinguishable framework from in Dhammasaṅgaṇī. Vibhaṅga may in this way be viewed as reciprocal to the Dhammasaṅgaṇī.

Dhātukathā

In spite of the fact that this third book of Abhidhamma-Piṭaka is a little treatise, it positions with the initial two books framing a critical set of three, which must be totally processed for the total comprehension of the Abhidhamma, Vibhaṅga, the second book, has one complete section dedicated to the examination of Dhātu, however the topic of Dhātu is important to the point that this treatise is committed to it for an intensive thought. The technique for examination here is not the same as that utilized in the Vibhaṅga. *Dhātukathā* studies how the *Dhamma* listed in the *Tikas* and *Dukas* of the *Mātikā* are related to the three categories of *Khandha*, *Āyatana* and *Dhātu* in their complete distribution. These are discussed in fourteen forms of analytical investigation which constitute the fourteen chapters of *Dhātukathā*.

Puggalapaññatti

Abhidhamma is primarily worried about the investigation of unique facts in total terms. In any case, in portraying the Dhammas in their different perspectives, it is beyond the realm of imagination to expect to keep to supreme terms as it were. Definitely, ordinary terms of regular language must be utilized so as to keep the lines of correspondence open by any means. Abhidhamma states that there are two primary kinds of regular use; the main sort is worried about terms which portray things that really exist in all actuality and the second sort depicts things which have no presence as a general rule.

The initial three books of the Abhidhamma research the outright truth of the Dhamma in an arranged arrangement of point by point investigation utilizing such terms as Khandha, Āyatana, Dhātu, Sacca and Indriya. These are female horse assignments which express things that exist actually and can in this manner be named customary utilization of the principal type alluded to above. To the second classification of traditional use have a place such articulations, for example, man, lady, deva, individual and so forth., which have no presence in actuality, yet by and by are fundamental for the correspondence of musings.

Kathāvatthu

Kathāvatthu, as *Puggalapaññatti*, falls outside the normal arrangement of the Abhidhamma. It doesn't straightforwardly manage the intricate idea of the Dhamma. It is mostly worried about wrong perspectives, for example, "individual exists; self exists; jīva exists" which were pervasive even in the Buddha's time; or wrong view, for example, "Arahat falls from Arahatship" which emerged after the Mahā-Parinibbāna of the Buddha.

Around two hundred and eighteen years after the Mahā-Parinibbāna of Gautama Buddha there were inside and out eighteen organizations, all professing to be devotees of the Buddha's instructing. Of these just the Theravādins were genuinely conventional, while the rest were all dissident. The head Asoka start expelling the debased components from the request with the direction and help of the senior Moggaliputtatissa who was as practiced Arahat. Under his course, the request held for a long time due to discords and nearness of false priests in the request.

As they get together, the admired Moggaliputtatissa clarified purposes of perspectives, made up of five hundred customary articulations and five hundred proclamations of different perspectives, so as to contend the wrong perspectives that had crawled into the Saṅgha and that may later on emerge. He pursued the heads of talks, *Mātikā*, illustrated by the Buddha himself and broke down them in detail into thousand proclamations of perspectives. This accumulation of explanations of perspectives was recounted by one thousand chose Theras who framed the Third Great Council, to be fused into the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka. The style of accumulation of this treatise is very not quite the same as that of different treatises, composed for what it's worth as exchange between two nonexistent debaters, one holding heterodox perspectives on various factions and the other speaking to the standard perspectives.

Yamaka

The *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, the *Vibhaṅga* and the *Dhātukathā* examine the world of reality, named *Saṅkhāra-loka*. *Puggalapaññatti* and *Kathāvatthu* manage creatures and people which likewise exist in their own universe of clear reality, known as *Satta-loka*. Where the Dhamma of *Saṅkhāra-loka* and beings of the *Satta-loka* co-exist is termed *Okāsa-loka*. *Yamaka* embarks to characterize and break down the interrelationship of Dhammas and Puggalas as they exist in these three universes.

This is practiced as sets of inquiries, which gives it the title of *Yamaka*. The coherent procedures of change (*Anu-loma*) and complete reversal (*Paṭi-loma*) are connected to decide the full ramifications and restrictions of a term in its association with the others. Any ambiguous components of a term (*Saṁsaya*) are evaded by appearing, such course of action of inquiries, how different implications of the term don't fit in a specific setting.

Paṭṭhāna

Paṭṭhāna, the seven and last book of the Abhidhamma, is known as the *Mahā-Pakāraṇa*, the "Incomparable Book" declaring the preeminent position it involves and the tallness of greatness it has ventured in its examinations concerning a definitive nature of all the Dhammas known to mankind. In *Mahā-Pakāraṇa*, which are described about twenty four *Paccayas* (Relation) i.e., *Hetu-Paccayo* The relation by way of root, *Ārammaṇa-Paccayo* The relation of object, *Adhipati-Paccayo*

The relation of dominance, *Anantara-Paccayo* The relation of contiguity, *Samanantara-Paccayo* The relation in immediate contiguity, *Sahajhāta-Paccayo* The relation of coexistence, *Aññamañña-Paccayo* The relation of reciprocity, *Nissaya-Paccayo* The relation of dependence, *Upanissaya-Paccayo* The relation of pre-existence, *Purejāta-Paccayo* The relation of pre-existence, *Pacchājāta-Paccayo* The relation of past-existence, *Āsevana-Paccayo* The relation of habitual recurrence, *Kamma-Paccayo* The relation of action, *Vipāka-Paccayo* The relation of effect, *Āhāra-Paccayo* The relation of food, *Indriya-Paccayo* The relation of control, *Jhāna-Paccayo* The relation of willful concentration on object, *Magga-Paccayo* The relation of path, *Sampayutta-Paccayo* The relation of association, *Vippayutta-Paccayo* The relation of dissociation, *Atthi-Paccayo* The relation of presence, *Natthi-Paccayo* The relation of abeyance, *Vigata-Paccayo* The relation of absence, *Avigata-Paccayo* The relation of continuance. These are called *Mahā-Pakāraṇa* (the height of excellence). These above are the brief of the seven books of the *AbhidhammaPiṭaka*.

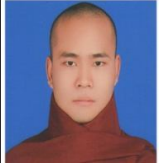
CONCLUSION

The study of the Buddhist Philosophy (*Abhidhamma*) can prevent the wrong ideas about the development of the Buddha's Path. The realities of our life, including out defilements, should be understood as non-self. So long as people talk defilements for self or mine they cannot be eradicated. The direct understanding of realities as non-self is the condition for not doing evil, for cultivating the good and for purifying one's mind.

Philosophy is the never-ending thirst for knowledge. It is a method of thinking. However, if people really need experience a spiritual goal, the absolute peace and happiness they are possible and always available to them. If, one makes the effort to find them and one has to get to know things as they are really which is the subject dealt with in Buddhist Philosophy (*Abhidhamma*). By studying the four *Abhidhamma* and turning these studies into personal experience by meditation, and direct intellectual intuition of reality, then one can reach the liberation knowledge that gives the lasting peace. In *AbhidhammaPiṭaka* when people experience the four realities (mind, mental factor, matter and Salvation) then they are deriving benefit from the study of the *Abhidhamma*. A comprehensive knowledge of the *Abhidhamma* is further useful to those engaged in teaching and explaining the *Abhidhamma* to others and can able to understand the correct way of the brief or basic of *Abhidhamma-Pitaka*.

REFERENCES:

1. *A Manual of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha)*, (Tr.) Nārada Thera, Yangon: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2009.
2. *Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha)*, (Tr.) Bhikkhu Bodhi, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2006.
3. *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I & II, (Ed.) G.P. Malalasekera, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Private Limited, 2002.
4. Guenther, Herbert V., *Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1974.
5. Mehm Tin Mon, *The Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma*, Yangon: Mihm Tay Zar Mon Yadanar Min Literature, 1995.
6. *Pali English Dictionary (Eds.)* T.W. Rhys Davids & William Stede, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas Publishers Private Limited, 1997.
7. Rhys Davids RAS, *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, London: Pāli Text Society, 1900.
8. Shwe Zan Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, London, Pali Text Society, 1956.
9. Silanandabhivamsa, *Abhidhamma Lecture*, Yangon: Myanmar Piṭaka Association, 1990.
10. *The Expositor (Aṭṭhasālinī)*, (Tr.) Pe Maung Tin, London: Pāli Text Society, 1976.



Kesarananda
Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Annamalai University.

LBP PUBLICATION