

Abhidhamma Lessons for Students of the Yasodhara Dhamma School **(Summary from the Abhidhamma Textbooks “YMBA”) Senior Part 1 Class**

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What is Abhidhamma?

The word Abidhamma literally means, the higher or special teaching of the Buddha. It is the essence of the Buddha’s teaching. Abhidhamma presents the Buddha’s teaching in a systematic and analytical manner. It will help one to understand the unwholesome thoughts, mental factors and how they are gradually eliminated to achieve happiness and contentment at present life and finally attain Nibbana.

Difference between Sutta and Abhidhamma Pitaka

The Sutta Pitaka is a collection of the discourses of the Buddha delivered by the Buddha to various individuals and persons on different subjects at different places during the life Lifetime of the Buddha, after enlightenment up to Parinibbana. The Suttas explain the Dhamma in a language of common usage, using similes, illustrations, and anecdotes, while the Abhidhamma texts use a select terminology which is technical in nature and has definite, precise and specific meanings.

The Abhidhamma Pitaka is a summary of the discourses delivered by the Buddha in Thvatimsa heaven to his mother and thousands of other Devas and Brahmas who came there to listen to the Special discourse. This discourse took 3 months. Buddha gave a summary of his discourse daily to Ven. Sariputtha. He was able to teach it to 500 odd of his pupils who in turn taught to other Bikkus of that time. It is a systematic exposition of the Paramattha Dhamma – Ultimate Realities.

Abhidhamma teaches us that there are 2 kinds of Realities or Truths (Saccha)

1. **Conventional Truths** (Sammuti Saccha) used in everyday speech. (vohara vachana) They are mostly names given to identify objects. Eg. mango. ball, Perera, man etc.
2. **Ultimate or Absolute truths** (Paramattha Saccha) they actually exist and have their own intrinsic nature. They are the final elements of all phenomena, that cannot be further reduced.

Abhidhamma Pitaka explains mostly Absolute or **Ultimate Truths**, while Sutta Pitaka mainly deals with **Conventional** truths.

There are 4 types of Ultimate Realities (Paramattha) taught in Abhidhamma.

1. Citta - consciousness - 01 (89/121types)
2. Cetasika - mental factors - 52

3. Rupa - elements of matter - 28
4. Nibbana - the supreme happiness - 01

Note: Nibbana is the only unconditioned element. It is not caused by conditions. Hence Nibbana is called Assankatha Dhatu and it is permanent. Other 3 are caused by conditions. They are called sankatha and subject to change and decay.

Citta or Consciousness

Citta or Consciousness (Vinnana) is defined as, “the awareness of an object” or cognizing of an object. Common basic feature of conscious is the awareness of an object.

In Abhidhamma there are 89/121 types of Citta classified according to Planes of Existence as follows:

| <u>Names of Citta</u> | <u>No of Chitta</u> | <u>No of Planes</u> |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sense Sphere Consciousness or Kamavacara Citta | – 54 | 11 |
| Form or Fine Material SP Cons. or Rupavacara Chitta | - 15 | 16 |
| Formless or Immaterial Sp Cons. or Arupavacara Citta | - 12 | 04 |
| Supramundane Consciousness or Lokuttara Citta | <u>08 or 40</u> | 00 |
| Total number of Cittas | <u>89 or 121</u> | <u>31</u> |

(1) Kamavacara Citta

- Kamavachara Citta/Sense Sphere Consciousness are those that occur mostly to beings in the Kamavachara or sensuous planes, ie. Planes where beings enjoy through the 5 senses. There are 54 types of citta classified as Camavacara Citta/Sense Sphere Consciousness

The 11 Planes which the Beings are born with Sense Sphere Consciousness/Kamawacara Citta

- 04 Apayas – hells
 - 01 Human world
 - 06 Deva planes or Heavens where deities live
- 11 Total**

The 54 kamavacara citta or sense sphere (S.S) consciousness are classified as follows:

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| A. Unwholesome | or Akusala Citta | 12 |
| B. Rootless | or Ahetuka Citta | 18 |
| C. Beautiful | or Sobana Citta | 24 |
| Total | | <u>54</u> |

Akusala Citta

Akusala citta has the potency to give unwholesome vipaka(results) suffering any time afterwards

The 12 -Akusala Citta/ Unwholesome Citta

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| A. Rooted in greed | or Loba mula Citta | - 8 |
| B. Rooted in Anger | or Dosa mula Citta | - 2 |
| C. Rooted in ignorance | or Moha mula Citta | - 2 |
| Total | | <u>- 12</u> |

Sobana Citta/Beautiful Citta (wholesome Citta)

Sobana Citta are those in which the 24 Sobana Cetasika may arise and the 12 Akusala mental factors, (cetasika) do not appear. The akusala/unwholesome cetasika do not mix. The unwholesome mental factors are present only in unwholesome or immoral citta. The wholesome mental factors are present only in wholesome or moral citta.

Kusala Citta

alobha, adosa and amoha. Alobha can be understood as anti-lobha – it refers to generosity. Adosa can be understood as anti-dosa – it refers to goodwill. Amoha can be understood as anti-moha – it refers to wisdom. All the remaining cittas are based on wholesome roots.

Roots

Roots form the foundation of consciousness. The behavioral patterns of them will be motivated by the root. The 6 roots namely Greed, Hatred, Delusion, Non-Greed, Non-Hatred, Non-Delusion. The classifications of the consciousness as wholesome or unwholesome were based on the roots that support them. Root is a mental factor which establishes firmness and stability to the consciousness.

8 Sahetuka/ Citta/ Based with Roots

Based with roots, loba,(greed) dosa (hatred) and moha (delusion) and non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion

The 18 Ahetuka cittas/ Rootless Cittas/ Functional/ Vipaka Cittas

The Ahetuka cittas are so called because these cittas have neither the wholesome kusala roots nor do they have the unwholesome akusala roots. The cittas which are the result of past kamma (called vipāka cittas) and the cittas which are merely functional (called kiriya cittas) come under the ahetuka cittas. Ahetuka Citta are those without 6 roots, namely loba dosa, moha and alopa, adosa and amoha. (greed, anger and ignorant). Functional or kriya citta have no vipaka because they are rootless. They only do a function and do not have any karmic potency.

Hasituppada Citta/ Smile Producing Consciousness

Only Arahants have this Citta arising with joy or pleasant feeling.

The 2 Dosa Mūla Cittas

There are 2 dosa mūla cittas. These cittas have only domanassa vedanā – unpleasant mental feeling. They are rooted in dosa (dislike or ill-will) – that is why they are called dosa mūla cittas.

The 2 Moha Mūla Cittas

There are 2 moha mūla cittas.

These cittas have only upekkhā vedanā – neutral feeling.

They are rooted in moha (ignorance or delusion) – that is why they are called moha mūla citta.

One of the cittas is associated (sampayutta) with doubt or uncertainty(vicikicchā). The other citta is associated with restlessness(uddhacca).

Different Functions of the Consciousness

Functions are specific functions directed by the consciousness. There are 89 consciousness that perform fourteen separate functions. Imagine a factory that creates different products by sets of many workers. Every consciousness performs at least a single act while others are capable of serving in many capacities.

1. Patisandi Citta –Rebirth Linking

Patisandi Citta is the first citta which arises, after the death, at the time of rebirth. Bhavanga/life continuum is a repetition of the patisandi citta.

2.Bhavanga Citta - Life Continuum

3.Avajjana – Adverting

4. Dassana - Seeing

5. Savana - Hearing

6. Ghayana - Smelling

7. Sayana – Tasting

8. Phusana – Touching

9. Sampaticcana - Receiving

10. Santirana Citta - Investigating

Santirana citta is the investigating citta. Investigates an object

11. Vottapana Citta- Determining Determines how to react on the object

12. Javana Citta- Javana

Kusala or Akusala Citta arises here. Arises generally for seven consecutive times

13. Tadarammana Citta- Registration

Registering conscious

14. Chtui Citta - Death

Death of a living being is the last or the final function connected with the life process. According to Abhidhamma, the moment of death is the arising and passing away of the death consciousness (cuti citta)

(2). Rupavacara Citta/Form Sphere Consciousness

Rupavacara Citta/Form or fine Material Sphere Conscious occur to beings who develop Rupa Janas/Absorptions. These Citta are mostly pertain to the Rupa Bhumi or Fine Material Plane, which consists of 16 Brahma Loka These planes are where those who develop Rupa Janas are borne.

In this plane (Brahmaloka) gross matter is absent. Only a subtle residue of matter is present. Rebirth to this plane is possible only by attaining high meditative states called jhanas or absorptions. They are realized by a high level of concentration or one pointedness of mind or Samadhi, realized through Samatha or Tranquility meditation.

15 - Rupavacara Citta

There are 3 types of Rupavacara Citta or Fine Material Sphere Consciousness

1. Kusala Citta/Wholesome 05 Developed by putujjana (world lings) and Sekhas
2. Vipaka Citta/Resultant 05 Arise only in the Rupa Brahma or Form world
As pratisandi citta
3. Kriya Citta/Functional 5 Experienced only by Arahants who attend Janas

Total 15

(3) Arupavacara Citta/Formless Sphere Consciousness

Arupavacara Citta/Formless or Immaterial Consciousness occur to beings who develop Arupa/Immaterial Consciousness. Rebirth to this plane is possible only by attaining high meditative states called Arupa Janas/Absorbitions. In Arupalokas/Formless Sphere Planes, beings are born without material bodies. By the power of meditation only the mind exists.

There are 4 such planes,

Arupavacara Bhumi
(Name of plane in Plali)

Formless Sphere Plane
(English)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Akasanancayatana Bumi | Sphere of Infinite Space |
| 2. Vinnanancayatana Bumi | Sphere of Infinite consciousness |
| 3. Akincannayatana Bumi | Sphere of Nothingness |
| 4. Nevasanna nasannayatana Bumi | Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non – perception |

There are 12 Arupavacara Citta/ Formless Consciousness of 3 Types

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| A. Kusala/Wholesome | 04 |
| B. Vipaka/ Resultant | 04 |
| C. Kriya/ Functional | 04 |
| Total | 12 |

(4) Supramundane Consciousness – Lokuttara – Citta

These are Citta that a person gets when realizing the 4 stages of Sainthood (Arahat) Streme here denotes the Noble eight-fold path, which leads to Nibbana.

A stream entrant will definitely realize Arahatship, within 7 births if reborn in the Kamavacara Plane. A Sotapanna person is no longer an ordinary person, but called an ‘Arian’. He will not be reborn in any woeful plane, apaya. He is assured of reaching the final deliverance from suffering within 7 lives if reborn in Kamavacara Plane.

Sakadagamis will be reborn in the Kamavacara world only once.

Anagamis will not be reborn in the Kamavacara Planes but can be reborn in the Pancha Suddavasa, the 5 pure abodes in the Brahma Plane. Only Anagamis and Arahaths live in this plane.

Arahat will eliminate all defilements at the time of reaching the Arahatta Magga Citta and enjoy sopadisesa Nibbana and Khnda Parinibbana, at the time of the death.

Aryan is a person who has attained at least the Sotapanna Stage.

Worlding (Putujjana)

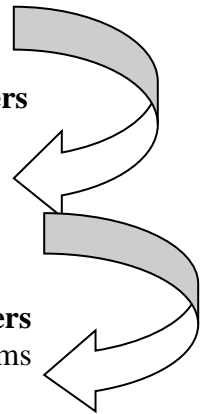
Any person who is still possessed of all the Ten Fetters binding to the round of rebirths and has not reached the First Stage of Saint Hood is called a worlding (Putujjana).

The 4 Stages of Sainthood:

1. **Stream entry Sovan or Sotapanna** Self illusion (sakkaya Ditthi), skeptical doubts (Vicikiccha) and adherence to heretical rights and rituals (Silabbata Paramasa) will be completely eliminated.
2. **Once returning Sakadagami** - Weakens the two fetters, Lust for Sense Desire, and Ill Will (malevolence)- Not totally free from Kamaraga and Vyapada.
3. **Non – returning Anagami** – Rooted out totally Sense desire and Ill Will
4. **Perfect Sainthood Arahatta** - Eradicates remaining five fetters such as, Rugaraga (Craving for birth in the world of form), Aruparaga (Craving for rebirth in the Formless Realm) Mana (Conceit), Uddhacca (Agitation) and Avijja (Ignorance).

Fetters Sanyojana – Mental Attachments

1. Self illusion (Sakkaya Ditthi) - Beings chained to the sensuous world
2. Skeptical doubts (Vicikiccha) **5 Lower Realms, 5 Lower Fetters**
3. Adherence to heretical rights and rituals (Silabbata Paramasa)
4. Sense desire
5. Ill Will
6. Rugaraga (Craving for birth in the world of form)
7. Aruparaga (Craving for rebirth in the Formless Realm)
8. Mana (Conceit) **5 Higher Realms, 5 Higher Fetters**
9. Uddhacca (Agitation) Beings confined to the Fine Material and Immaterial Realms
10. Avijja (Ignorance).



8 – Supramundane Consciousness – Lokuttara Citta

These 8 Citta are formed of 4 Magga Citta/Path and 4 Phala Citta/ Fruit, as follows:

4 Lokuttara Magga Citta

1. Sotapatti magga – citta
2. Sakadagami magga-citta
3. Anagami magga - citta
4. Arahatta magga – citta

4 Supramandane Wholesome Consciousness

- Path conscious of stream – entry
- Path consciousness of none returning
- Path conscious of non returning
- Path consciousness of Sainthood ArahathShip

4 Lokuttara Phala/ Fruit, Citta (Vipaka) 4 Supramundane Resultant Consciousness

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Sotapatti phala citta | - Fruit consciousness of Stream entry |
| 2. Sakadagami magga citta | - Fruit consciousness of once returning |
| 3. Anagami phala citta | - Fruit consciousness of non-returning |
| 4 Atahatta magga citta | - Fruit consciousness of Sainthood/Arahatship |

Each stage involves 2 types of citta, magga/path and phala/fruit

Magga Citta or Path consciousness is kusala citta and has function of eradicating the corresponding defilements, permanently- (samucchedapahana) Each Magga Citta arises only once and lasts only for one thought moment.

Phala Citta or Fruit Consciousness are Resultants or Vipaka Citta, which follow immediately after the magga citta.

The Pala Citta has the function of experiencing the degree of liberation made possible by the corresponding magga or kusala citta, Phala citta can arise later when an Aryan gets to Phalasamapatti.

Any being with Three hetuka kusala, (Those who are born with a patisandhi citta of non greed, non hatred and non delusion) developing insight meditation Vipassana Bhavana develops Wisdom to see things as they are and eliminates the defilements permanently. The Mahasatipattana Sutta explains 21 objects of Vipassana Bhavana etc.

They who develop Insight without obtaining Jhana, are called **Vipassanayanika or Sukka Vipassaka Yogis.**

One may also practice Tranquility meditation, Citta or Samata Bhavana, reach any of the 5 Jhana levels and proceed to do Insight meditation and attain Lokuttara Citta. They are called Samatayanik yogis. Samata Meditation controls the mind, citta and develops concentration, ultimately develops Samadhi and jhanas. They temporarily suppress the defilements, particularly the 5 Nivarana/ 5 Hindrances.

5 Jana Anga or Jana Factors

There are 5 important mental factors (Cetasika), present in the 1st Jhana citta. They suppress the 5 hindrances or nivarana. The functions of these 5 mental factors are as follows.

1. **Vitakko or Initial Application.** It directs the mind towards the object or lifting the mind to the object as bee flying to a flower.
2. **Vicaro or Sustained application** –moves round and examines the object, as a bee going round the flower. It observes the object over and over again by consciousness and concomitant mental factors.

3. **Piti or Joy or Zest** – creates an interest or delight of the object. (It is a precursor to Sukka).
4. **Sukha or pleasant** mental feeling or happiness.
5. **Ekaggata or one pointedness** of mind.

The Hindrances or Nivarana are suppressed by the Jana factors as follows.

Five Hindrances/Nivarana- Five Defilements

| In English | (In Pali) | <u>Restrained or inhibited by (Jana Anga)</u> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Sense desire or attachment | kamachchanda (Loba) | Ekaggata |
| 2. Hatred/Anger | Vyapada or patigha | Piti |
| 3. Sloth and Torpor | Tina – midda | Vitakko |
| 4. Restlessness and worry | Uddachcha – kukkuccha | Sukha |
| 5. Doubts | Vicikiccha | Vicaro |

The 15 Rupavacara Citta and 12 Arupavacara Citta are called **Mahaggata Citta**. These 2 with Lokuttara Citta are special types of citta, which normally do not arise, in the minds of ordinary persons. They arise only in the minds of beings who have sila (morality), at a very high level given up sensual pleasures and have developed their minds by samata meditation.

Samata or Citta Bavana – Calm/Tranquility Meditation leads only to Janas (absorptions) and abhinna (psychic super normal powers). Samata meditation helps to subdue mental hindrances. Vipassana Bhavana or Insight Meditation leads to Insight Wisdom and Nibbana. Sati or Mindfulness is developed according to Satipattana Sutta. When one is at excess to higher concentration level the mind is temporarily clear of defilements including the hindrances, one can proceed to realise the higher wisdom, without obtaining Janas, to see things as they are and realise **the three Signata, Aniccha (Impermanence), Dukka (Unsatisfactoriness) and Anatta** (No permanent entity or Soul, within ourselves and all around us). This wisdom finally leads one to the ultimate happiness, Nibbana.

Mental Factors (Cetasika)

The second ultimate Reality in the Abhidhammattha Sanga is the classification of mental factors or cetasika. The dhammas fifty-two in number which are associated with consciousness are called cetasikas or mental factors. Dhammas which are attached to or dependent on consciousness are cetasikas. Only a few accompany all the consciousness. Some of the factors arise in both wholesome and unwholesome consciousness. There are a few cetasikas that arise only in unwholesome consciousness while some other mental factors which are pure and beneficial arise with pure and wholesome consciousness.

The four characteristic features in Mental Factors (Cetasikas) are that.

1. These arise together with the consciousness simultaneously (Ekuppada)
2. When the consciousness perishes Factors too perish at the same time (Niroddha)
3. The particular object of a consciousness will be the object of the mental factors of that consciousness (Ekalambana)
4. The same base of the consciousness will serve as the base for all mental factors associated with the particular consciousness.

Objects are six-fold, namely.

Visible form 2, sound 3, smell 4, taste 5, tangibility (the three primary elements of earth, fire, and air or solidity, heat or cold, distension or pressure) 6. Dhamma or mental objects.

The Bases too are Six-fold, Namely.

1, eye base 2. ear base 3, nose base 4, tongue base 5, body base and 6, heart base

There are 52 Mental Factors /Cetasikas

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| (A), Ethically variable factors (annasamana cetasikas) | = 13 |
| These are further classified as | |
| (1) The universals (Sabbachitta Sadharana) | = 07 |
| (2) Occationals or particulars (pakihis nnaka) | = 06 |
| (B) Immorals or unwholesome factors | = 14 |
| (Akusala cetasikas) | |
| (C) Wholesome or beautiful factors | |
| (sobana cetasikas) | |
| | = 25 |
| | <u>Total = 52</u> |

(1) Ethically Variable mental Factors (Annasamana Cetasikas)

“Anna” is others, “Samana” means equal or common. Mental factors falling under this group are common to both wholesome and unwholesome consciousness. When these mental factors appear in different types of consciousness (akusaka and kusala citta) these factors take the form of Akusala and Kussala, etc; respectively.

(3) The Universals (Sabba Citta Sadharana)

Seven mental factors are common to all the consciousness. These factors perform the most fundamental functions without which any object could be discerned.

The 7 Mental Factors

1. **Contact (phassa)** The contact of or absorption of the visible form by the consciousness through the faculty of the eye. It arises simultaneously with the eye consciousness.

2. **Feeling (vedana)** Whether it is neutral or pleasant and pleasurable or unpleasant and painful is the outcome of the contact of the object with the respective base and the simultaneous arising of consciousness.

3. **Perception = (sanna)** Identification of different objects is made with the help of perception, a mental factor that arises in every citta, Once an object has been perceived, perception imprints a certain sign or mark so that it could be recognized easily in the future. The function of perception is to recognize what has been perceived in the past.

4, **Volition (cetana)** The mental factor which is prevalent in every consciousness is the driving force of all actions. While cetana acts as of its own as a guide leading a party to the expected destination it arouses the other mental factors to follow suit. The most important mental factor in the performance of Karma is Volition.

The role of volition in moral and immoral actions performed with the will of anyone can be easily followed.

In the classification of the five aggregates which constitute a being, the aggregates of feeling (vedana) and perception (sanna) are the mental factors discussed above as numbers two and three. The aggregate of sankara is the balance 52 mental factors out of which volition plays (cetana) the foremost role.

5. One pointedness (Ekaggata)

It is the mental factor that brings into focus the consciousness (citta) and mental factors (cetasikas) that arise simultaneously on a particular objectivity.

6. **Mental Life faculty (Jivitindriya)** Means life or vitality. It is the energy that helps the uninterrupted continuance of the five aggregates. It serves as one of the conditions to maintain life of a being.

Jivitindriya is two-fold

A, **Nama Jivitindriya- or mental faculty** – This mental factor is responsible for sustaining the psychic life of consciousness and the associated mental factors.

B, Rupa Jivitindriya- The other life faculty concerned with sustaining the life of physical matter (Rupadhamma) of a being that conditioned by past kamma

7, Attention (manasikara)

The characteristic of this dhamma is to cause to appear in the mind or bring on the associated mental factors to the surface.

When attention is coupled with wisdom It is called **Yoniso manasikaraya**. When it appears with ignorance it is termed as **Ayonisomanasikaraya**

Noble Learner (Seka)

A person who has attained the three Stages of Sainthood has not attained the Fruit of Arahant ship is called a Noble Learner (Seka).

Aseka

An Arahant is called one who has accomplished and perfected in Training.

Nibbana - Groups of Existence

Sopadisesa Nibbana

An Arahant who has extinguished the defilements but continues to live with the “Groups of Existence “remaining is said to be in **Sopadisesa** Nibbana.

Aupadisesa Nibbana

An Arahant on passing away is said to have entered **Anupadisesa** Nibbana (Nibbana without groups remaining)