

# The Study Of Theravada Abhidhamma and Discussion

Conducted by – Ven.Paññādhikālaṅkāra

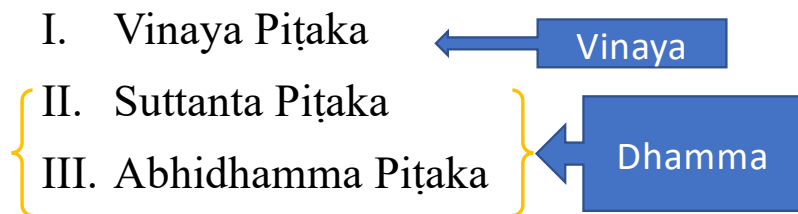
# Recommended Books

- **A comprehensive Manual Of Abhidhamma** – by Bhikkhu Bodhi
- **A Manual Of Abhidhamma** – By Nārada Mahāthera, Kandy, BPS, 1980
- **“Abhidhamma in daily life”** Ashin Janakābhivamsa.
- **Handbook Of Abhidhamma Studies (I,II,III)** – Ven. Sayardaw U Sīlānanda
- **Fundamental Abhidhamma** – (I,II) Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa

# Introduction to Abhidhamma

- The Origin Of abhidhamma
- Dhamma and Abhidhamma
- What are the contents taught in the Abhidhamma?
- Texts & Learning process to understand Abhidhamma

## *Tipiṭaka Pāli* texts Three ‘**Baskets**’ or **collections** of the teachings



**Suttanta** and **Abhidhamma** are collectively called **Dhamma** (which is the work of Ven. Ānanda) at the First Buddhist council.

### The *Tipiṭaka* –

The three ‘**Baskets**’ or **collections** of the teachings

- **Vinaya Piṭaka** — the collection of discipline, containing the rules of conduct for the bhikkhus (monks) and bhikkhunis (nuns), and the regulations governing the Sangha, the monastic order.
- **Suttanta Piṭaka** — the collection of discourses on various occasions during the Buddha’s ministry work of forty-five years.
- **Abhidhamma Piṭaka** — the collection of ‘higher’ or ‘special’ doctrines of the Buddha

(*Abhidhamma Piṭaka* – A Profound teaching among the Three-*piṭakas*)

## *Five Nikāya texts* - ‘Collection’ of the teachings

- 1) *Dīgha-nikāya* — the collection of Long Discourses, (3)
- 2) *Majjhima-nikāya* — the collection of Middle Length Discourses, (3)
- 3) *Samyutta-nikāya* — the collection of Kindred / Miscellaneous Discourses, (3)
- 4) *Aṅguttara-nikāya* — the collection of Gradual / Numerical / Discourses, (3)
- 5) *Khuddaka-nikāya* — the collection of Minor Discourses  
{(Vinaya – (5), Abhidhamma – (12), }

*(ṭhapetvā caturo p’ete, Nikāye Dīgha-ādike :*

*Tadaññaṃ Buddhavacaṇaṃ, Nikāyo Khuddhako mato” (Vi-com.I / Aṭṭhasālinī -26)*

“The rest of the word of the Buddha excluding these four Nikāya such as Dīgha should be understood as *Khuddhaka-Nikāya*”.

Thus, the whole *Vinaya-Piṭaka* and the whole *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka* are belong to the Khuddhaka-nikāya.

# The Seven Abhidhamma Texts

The Abhidhamma comprises seven texts, viz.,

- (1) *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* — the Explanation of Dhammas, Enumeration of Phenomena
- (2) *Vibhaṅga* — the Book of Analysis,
- (3) *Dhātukathā* — the Speech on the Elements,
- (4) *Puggalapaññatti* — the Designation of Individuals,
- (5) *Kathāvatthu* — the Points of Controversy,
- (6) *Yamaka* — the Book of Pairs, and
- (7) *Paṭṭhāna* — the Book of Conditions.

This is the list that is widely accepted in the *Theravāda* tradition.

*Kathāvatthu* is a work of Thera Moggaliputta Tissa – 218 (263) years after the Buddha's *parinibbāna* at the time of Emperor Asoka. (234 years – U Sīlānanda Sayardaw – Handbook of Abhidhamma Studies- I)  
(Abhi – 12 books – 4981 pages)

# The Authorship of Abhidhamma –

**Who is the author? -** The Buddha

- The complete teaching of Abhidhamma was taught at the **Tāvātimsā Deva realm** (Realm of thirty-three Gods), to the *Devas* and *Brahmas*.
  - The Buddha, in the fourth weeks after His enlightenment, contemplated the complete set of Abhidhamma, in the jewel house (*Ratanāghara*) in the northwest direction of Bodhi-tree.
  - Beginning with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, seven books of *Abhidhamma* are contemplated in turn. {The *Aṭṭhasālinī* }
- While investigating the first six books, His body did not emit rays. But while the book of *Paṭṭhāna* is contemplated the Buddha's body emits the ray as the result of the working of Omniscience (*Sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*). {The *Aṭṭhasālinī* }

**Two conclusions –**

taught by the Buddha himself,

and later development

## Who brought Abhidhamma to the human world?

- 1) During these days of teaching Abhidhamma in *Tāvatiṃsa*, the Buddha briefly taught Ven. *Sāriputta* (one of the chief disciples) about what He had taught in the deity world in every morning.
- 2) Ven. Sāriputta thus learnt the Abhidhamma from the Buddha and taught his Bhikkhu pupils.
  - In this way, Abhidhamma was introduced into human world.
  - the Abhidhamma taught to the deity is **in great detail** and
  - the Abhidhamma retold by Ven. Sāriputta is **in a concise form**.



## Three Versions / Modes Of Abhidhamma Teaching

- ❖ **Large / complete version**— taught to the gods by the Buddha  
- at the Tāvatiṃsa deva realm

(to gratitude to mother— to let the beings understand the gratitude of parents etc.,)

- ❖ **Concise version** — taught to the Ven. Sāriputta by the Buddha  
- on the bank of the lake, *Anotatta*.

- ❖ **Medium version** — taught to 500 pupils by Ven.Sāriputta  
(Neither too large nor too small)

(The last version is the one which was recorded in the First Buddhist Council and what we have now)

(In this way, during the *Vassa* (*rain retreat*) of seventh year after the Buddha's enlightenment, in 109 Mahā Era, the three versions of Abhidhamma teaching appeared simultaneously in the human world and *deva* realms)

## Why is it called Abhidhamma?

*Abhidhamma* is a **unique / higher** teaching

– which explains dhammas **in detail** and **in an analytical way**.

(It explains the dhammas in more detail than *Suttanta*.)

The teaching of **Abhidhamma** covers the whole universe

(referring to the underlying ultimate nature of things and beings.)

It can be considered as Universal Education.

❖ **Abhidhamma** is not only a theory –

but subject to be experienced by human knowledge

*Abhidhamma* = ‘which exceeds and is distinguished from the dhamma (sutta teaching)’

(*Abhi* – (having the sense of preponderance and distinction,  
(excelling or distinguished)

*Dhamma* – the teaching of Sutta)

# Abhidhamma & Sutta teachings

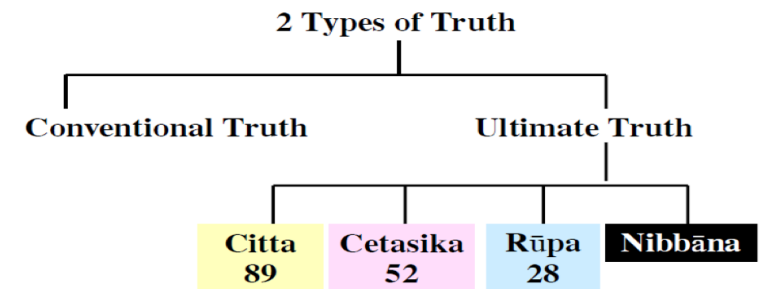
## **(Intro-Guide through the Abhidhamma Pitaka)**

- In the Suttas, the doctrines are more or less explained in the words of the philosophically incorrect ‘conventional’ everyday language (*Vohāra-vacana*) understood by anyone, while the *Abhidhamma*, on the other hand, makes use of purely philosophical terms true in the absolute sense (*paramattha-vacana*)
- Thus the Suttas often speak of individuals and persons, of ‘I,’ ‘you,’ and ‘self,’ even of the rebirth of a self, etc., as if such so-called individualities really existed. The Abhidhamma, however, treats of realities (paramattha-dhamma), i.e. of psychical and physical phenomena, which alone may be rightly called realities, though only of momentary duration, arising and passing away every moment.

# Contents in Abhidhamma Teachings

1. **The conventional truth** — something that is true in conventional sense,
2. **The ultimate truth** — something that is true according to ultimate sense.

- **The conventional truth** — not exist in the ultimate sense, but can be true in conventional sense (beings, house, table etc.,)
- **The Ultimate truth** = Ultimate realities – (exist in the nature, can be approved by characteristic, function, manifestation, proximate cause. )



In the ‘absolute sense’ (*paramattha*), there does not exist any real, self-dependent, permanent ‘entity,’ no such thing as the so-called ‘ego,’ but only this ever-changing process of conditionally arising and passing phenomena. Hence, the whole Abhidhamma has to do on with the description, analysis, and elucidation of such phenomena.

(Into- Guide through Abhidhamma Pitaka)

# The Dhamma taught in the *Abhidhamma* – (*Abhidhammattha*)

Five topics – expounded in the Abhidhamma texts:

1. *Citta* - (consciousness),
2. *Cetasika* - (mental factors/ states / concomitants),
3. *Rūpa* - (matter),
4. *Nibbāna* - (a state of freedom from attachment) and
5. *Paññatti* - (concept).

*Paramattha* - the Ultimate and absolute truth

- 1) Consciousness    2) Mental factors.    3) Matters    4) Nibbāna    (~~5) Paññatti~~)

# Realities in Two Types Of Truths (Saccā)

Sammuti.saccā (Conventional Truth)	Paramattha.Saccā (Ultimate Truth)			
Names (of things and beings)	1-Consciousness	2-Mental Factors	3-Matter	4-Nibbāna
	Aggregates of Mentality		Aggregate of Materiality	
	Five Aggregates ( <i>Paññcakkhandha</i> )			(Not included under the classification of Aggregate)
	Conditioned reality ( <i>Saṅkhata-dhātu</i> )			Unconditioned reality ( <i>Asaṅkhata-dhātu</i> )

**Paramattha** - *the* Ultimate and absolute truth

The Ultimate truths are free from bias or partiality.

In essence, being constant, steadfast and unchanging is *Paramattha*, the Ultimate and absolute truth.

# The Ultimate reality – (*Paramattha*)

**Paramattha** - *the* Ultimate and absolute truth

The Ultimate truths are free from bias or partiality.

In essence, being constant, steadfast and unchanging is *Paramattha*, the Ultimate and absolute truth.

**Four kinds** of Ultimate reality :

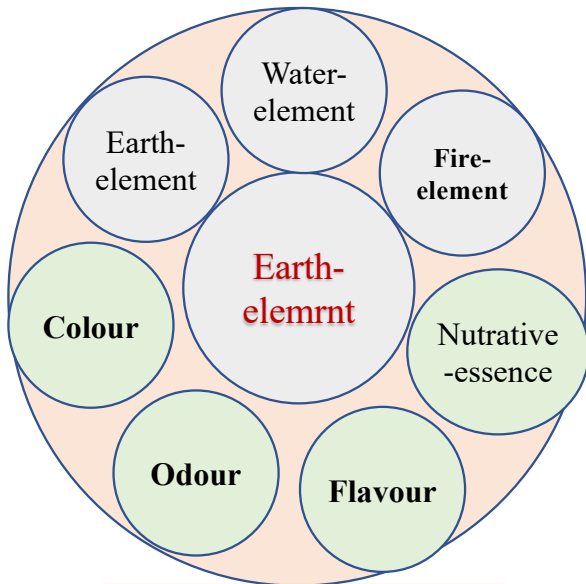
- 1) Consciousness (*citta*), – basic awareness of an object
- 2) Mental factors (*cetasikas*),
- 3) Matter / material phenomena (*rūpa*) and
- 4) Ultimate peace (*Nibbāna*) .

The Ultimate realities (*Paramatthas*) can also be classified (**into three**) as :

1. *Rūpa* – Matter
2. *Nāma* – combination of - consciousness (*citta*) and mental factors (*cetasikas*), and
3. *Nibbāna*, the absolute reality of Nibbāna is the unconditioned element.

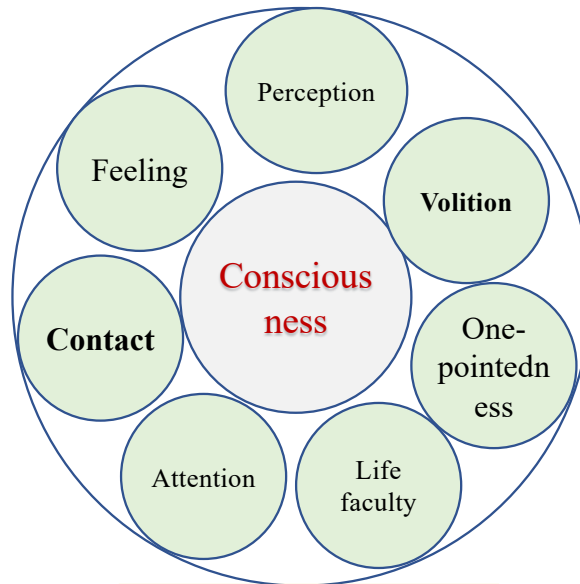
# The **body of materiality** (*Rūpa-kāya*) and the **body of mentality** (*Nāma-kāya*).

The smallest group of materiality consists of eight phenomenon:



A group of Materiality

The smallest group of mentality also consists of eight phenomenon:



A group of Mentality





# Text = *Abhidhammattha.saṅgaha*

## “Abhidhammattha.saṅgaha”

- Author – Ācariya Anuruddha  
(From southern India)
- Between – 10 and 11 AD
- Type – commentary – (concise / compendium)
- English Translations
- Aung, Shwe Zan Aung and Rhys Davids, C.A.F – **Compendium Of Philosophy:** PTS, 1910, 1979.
- **A Manual Of Abhidhamma** – By Nārada Mahāthera, Kandy, BPS,1980
- **A comprehensive Manual Of Abhidhamma** – by Bhikkhu Bodhi

What is explained in this book?

All the theoretical analysis of mind and matter finally converges upon the practice of meditation, and the practice culminates in the attainment of the supreme goal of Buddhism, the liberation of the mind by non-clinging.)

(Com.M.A -P.20)

# Outline Of Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha

*Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* is composed of 9 chapters

– Enumeration , detail analysis, concise notes (explanation),

First six chapter come with the Enumeration , detail analysis of *Paramatthas*

*Ch-1* – **the compendium of consciousness** – defines and classifies the 89 and 121 types of consciousness

*Ch-2* – **the compendium of mental factors** – enumerates 52 *Cetasikas*, mental factors (concomitants of consciousness), defines the relationship between Citta and Cetasika by two means – the method of association (*Sampayoganaya*), and the method of inclusion or combination(*Saṅgahanaya*)

*Ch-3* – **the compendium of Miscellaneous** – classifies types of consciousness along with their factors with respect to six categories: (Root, feeling, function, door, object, and base)

*Ch-4* – **the compendium of Cognitive process** – explores the nature of the cognitive process

*Ch-5* – **the compendium of Passive flow or process** – freed flow(of Consciousness) –

*Ch-6* – **the compendium of Matter** – enumerates the 28 types of material phenomena, classifies them in various ways, and explain their modes of origination.

It also describes the occurrence of material processes in the different realms of existence and concludes with a short section on the *Nibbāna*.

## Outline Of Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha (2)

*Ch-7* – **the Compendium of Categories** – arranges the ultimate realities **into a variety of categorical schemes** that fall under four broad beadings:

*Ch-8* – **the Compendium of Conditionality** – is introduced to two alternative approaches to conditionality **(i)** One is **the method of dependent arising**  
**(ii)** The other is **the method of Paṭṭhāna**, with its twenty-four conditional relations.  
**concludes** with a brief account of concepts (Paññatti),

*Ch-9* – **the Compendium of Meditation Subject** – surveys and condensed all the methods of concentration and insight meditation  
(explained in the stages of progress in meditation,  
the four types of enlightened individuals and  
the attainments of fruition and cessation. )

## Abhidhamma literature Commentaries on Abhidhamma

The commentaries were written to explain the profound teaching of Abhidhamma texts.

- *Mahā aṭṭhakathā* - the first commentary

(Indian origin and was brought to Sri Lanka island by Ven. Mahinda)

Then Ven. Buddhaghosa condensed *Mahā aṭṭhakathā* and translated it into Pāli.

Ven. Buddhaghosa's commentaries are translated into three texts:

(1.) *Atthasālinī*, the commentary on *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*,

(2.) *Sammohavinodanī*, the commentary on *Vibhaṅga*, and

(3.) *Pañca-pakaraṇa aṭṭhakathā*, the commentary on the other five texts.

- *Mūlaṭīkā*, (sub-commentary on the new commentary ) - by Ven. Ānanda.

- *Anuṭīkā* (to explain *Mūlaṭīkā* - advocating the opinion of Ven. Buddhaghosa, which was rejected in *Mūlaṭīkā*) - Ven. Dhammapāla

## *Abhidhammatṭha-vibhāvinī*

(A commentary Of Abhidhammatṭha-saṅgaha)

- The work of Sumaṅgalasāmi

Known as “Ṭīkā-Kyaw” = “the Famous Ṭīkā” in Myanmar,

During the Konbaung period (1753-1885) there have been some *Abhidhammic* scholars whom criticize *Vibhāvinī*. They asserted that *Vibhāvinī* is full of mistakes.

Although it is so, *Vibhāvinī* continues to maintain its popularity among those who study *Abhidhamma* in Myanmar.

- *Ledi Sayadaw*, a great teacher of *Abhidhamma*, wrote a book named *Paramatthadīpanī*, a commentary on *Abhidhammatṭha.sangaha* in 1897.

It is considered one of the most important book in the history of *Abhidhamma*.

*Paramatthadīpanī*, the critique of *Vibhāvinī*

*It* made several unfavourable comments about the opinion of *Vibhāvinī* and presented innovative ideas. *Ledi Sayadaw* pointed out some opinions were mistakenly informed in *Vibhāvinī*. And it is full of grammatical, logical and philosophical mistakes.

## Aspiration & Sharing Merit

*Iminā Puññakammena ..... mā me bālasamāgamo.....,  
Sataṃ samāgamo hotu ..... yāva Nibbānappatīyā  
Idaṃ me puññaṃ āsavakkhayā'vahaṃ hotu.  
Idaṃ me puññaṃ ..... Nibbānassa paccayo hotu.  
Mama puññabhāgaṃ sabbasattānaṃ bhājemi.  
Te sabbe.....me samaṃ.....puññabhāgaṃ labhantu.  
Sādhu... Sādhu... Sādhu*



By this action of merit, .....May I not be associated with fools!,  
May I be associated with the wise until the attainment of Nibbāna.  
May my (this) merit bring about the cessation of taints (as a result)!  
May my (this) merit be the condition for (the achievement of) Nibbāna.  
I share my portion of merits with all beings.  
May all of them achieve my portion of merit evenly.

**Well-done Well-done Well-done**