

What Does Abhidhamma mean to us?

Lecture (2)

Getting to know our mind (part 1) &

Revision of Lecture (1)

Sayalay Dr. Yuzana Nyani

25 October 2020

Summary of Lecture (1): Textual analysis

✓ Buddha's teachings – **dhamma & vinaya**

❑ *vinaya* (**disciplines**) for **morality** (*sīla*)

#authority; admonition; restraint

❑ *suttanta* (**discourses**) for **concentration** (*samādhi*)

conventional term; temperament; dispel wrong view

❑ *abhidhamma* (**ultimate teaching**) for **wisdom** (*paññā*)

ultimate terms; true nature; mind & matter

✓ 3 baskets - text to be learned (*piṭaka*)

❑ mutual correlation for understanding & practice

Historical background

- ✓ Abhidhamma– **authority** or **domain** of the Buddha
(*Buddha visaya, Buddha gocara*)
- ✓ taught for 3 months to deities in the *Tāvatiṃsa* celestial abode as a token of gratitude to former mother
- ✓ **3 versions**
 - taught to the deities by the Buddha – in great details
 - taught to Ven. Sāriputta by the Buddha – in brief
 - taught to his disciple 500 monks by Ven. Sariputta – neither brief nor details

Contents of Abhidhamma

Two main topics & Two kinds of truth (*sacca*)

1) *paññatti* – includes names & things

- refer to concept, conceptual thought, conventional expression, mental construction
- conventional truth (*sammuti sacca*)
- **Nature:** changes designation when form or substance changes.
- used for status, obligation of human society, morality, conditions of success in life, etc.

Four ultimate truth (*paramattha sacca*)

- 1) consciousness – *citta*
- 2) mental states, mental factors, mental qualities, mental properties, mental constituents (*cetasika*)
- 3) material qualities, material properties, matter (*rūpa*)
- 4) ultimate peace, liberation from craving (*nibbāna*)
 - Nature of ultimate reality – never changes, real forever
 - expounded for wisdom of realization and liberation
 - consciousness and mental states constitute mind (*nāma*).
 - consciousness, mental states and matters are conditioned (*saṅkhata*)& *nibbāna* is unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*).

Fourfold analysis of the nature of ultimate realities

- 1) characteristics (*lakḥaṇa*) primary feature, salient quality, distinguishing mark of a particular state
- 2) function (*rasa*) its performance of a concrete task (*kicca*) & achievement of a goal (*sampatti*)
- 3) manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*) the way it presents itself within experience, resultant appearance
- 4) proximate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*) principal condition upon which it depends, concurrent footing

Fourfold analysis of consciousness

- 1) characteristics – knowing of an object (*vijānana*)
- 2) function – forerunner (*pubbaṅgama*) of mental states, presides over them and accompanied by them
- 3) manifestation – the way it appears in meditator's experience is as a continuity of processes (*sandhāna*)
- 4) proximate cause - mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*) as consciousness cannot arise alone in the absence of mental states and material phenomena

Classification of consciousness

- ✓ Consciousness can be classified in various ways.
 - classification on ethical basis & type (*jāti*).
- *akusala* - unwholesome, immoral, demeritorious, unskillful, bad, evil
- *kusala* – wholesome, moral, meritorious, skillful, good
- *akusala vipāka* – result of unwholesome
- *kusala vipāka* – result of wholesome
- *kriya/ kirya* – functional

Nature of *akusala* & *kusala*

- ✓ *akusala* - faulty & with bad result (*sāvajja dukkhavipāka*)
- ✓ *kusala* - faultless & with happy result (*anavajja sukhavipāka*)
 - ✓ causes contemptible (*kucchita*) states
 - to shake (*salayanti*)
 - to tremble, to waver, and be destroyed
 - ❑ healthy (*ārogya*)
 - ❑ faultless, blameless (*anavajja*)
 - ❑ skillful (*cheka*)
 - ❑ with happy results (*sukha vipāka*) (Ref: *Expositor*)

Unwholesome consciousness (*akusala citta*)

- ✓ Unwholesome consciousness is accompanied by
- ✓ 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala hetu*) or 3 poisons:
 - greed, attachment (*lobha*),
 - hatred, anger (*dosa*),
 - delusion, ignorance (*moha*).
- ✓ unwholesome in the sense of
 - mentally unhealthy,
 - morally blameworthy &
 - productive of painful results

Wholesome consciousness (*kusala citta*)

- ✓ Wholesome consciousness is accompanied by
- ✓ 3 wholesome roots (*kusala hetu*) :
 - non-greed or generosity (*alobha*),
 - non-hatred or loving-kindness (*adosa*),
 - non-delusion or wisdom (*amoha*).
- ✓ wholesome in the sense of
 - mentally healthy,
 - morally blameless (*ana, vajja*) &
 - productive of pleasant results (*sukkha, vipāka*)

some criteria to judge good & bad

- ✓ constructive or positive/ destructive or negative
 - Is the action constructive or positive to oneself, family & the environment?
 - Is the action destructive or negative as above?
- ✓ result
 - does it produce painful results to oneself or others?
 - does it produce happy results to oneself and others?
- ✓ regret
 - Is it regretful after the action is done?
 - Is it not regretful after the action is performed?