

CONDITIONAL RELATIONS (PATTHANA)

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"The Buddha expounded the Abhidhamma in the Tavatimsa World of the Devas. After He completed the Yamaka, which forms the Sixth Book of Abhidhamma Pitaka, He continued with the Patthana where various methods, deep and wide as the ocean, were provided."

- Venerable U. Narada, Mula Patthana Sayadaw (Originator of Abhidhamma Charts) of Rangoon, Burma.

What is Patthana?

According to Venerable Mula Patthana Sayadaw, Patthana (Conditional Relations) deals with the 22 Triplets and 100 Couplets of the Dhammasangani. All the ultimate realities, both singly and in combinations, with reference to the 24 conditions to show how the causes and their effects are related.

In the methods of the Four Noble Truths and Dependent Origination, only the manifested causes and effects are considered. But in Patthana, the forces that bring about the relations between the causes and effects are also taken into account and it is with these forces that this subject is primarily concerned. Hence statements such as "Visible object-base is related to eye-consciousness element and its associated states by object condition" are met within the Text. This means that the visible object-base, a state as the condition, is related to the eye-consciousness element and its associated states, the states as the conditioned, by the force of object condition or the conditioning force of object. Although the states, as causes and effects, have to be unavoidably mentioned, stress is laid on the underlying forces that bring about the relations between them.

Namo Tassa Bhagavatho Arahatho Samma Sambuddhassa (Homage to The Blessed One, Worthy, and Fully Self-Enlightened...)

Vichitta Mathi Gambhira-Manantha Naya Mandithan

Pattanan Sammasanthassa-Wimala Mitha Buddhiya,

Yassa Deha Nikkhaminsu-Subha Jabbanna Ransio

Neela Peetha Ratta Setha-Manjitha Pabassara,

Than Lokanathathan Sugathan-Dhammancha Jina Sevithan

Sangha Niranganan Settang-Namami Sirasa Daran.

(The Buddha's body and mind were so purified when he pondered on the Book of Relations - Patthana, the seventh treatise of the Abhidhamma, that six coloured rays emitted from his body. I pay homage with my head to the Fully Self-Enlightened and Blessed One. I pay homage with my head to the Dhamma (teachings) of the Blessed One and I also pay homage with my head to the Sangha (Disciples of the Buddha).)

By chanting this Pattana Dharma, there are many worldly and transcendental blessings. Recitation of this dharma leads to attaining sharp knowledge in this life as well as in future lives, getting rid of all defilements, and attaining Chatupatisambhida Gnaana in the next life.

Many drivers in Burma recite this dharma to avoid accidents. Some businessmen also recite the dharma for the development of their business activities. Also, there are many people in that country who use this dharma to avoid accidents, to escape from enemy dangers, to improve their economic status, to fulfill their hopes, and to get protection from deities. This Pattana dharma is used for protection and development.

Therefore, let everyone try to make their lives successful by reciting this great dharma daily that gives many blessings!



Ven. Deniyaye Upasama Thera

success, prosperity, good health, peace and harmony. Chanting and listening to the Patthana also helps us to repeat our reflections on them, preventing our minds from unwholesome and evil tendencies related to greed, hatred and delusion. Chanting Patthana guide us to reflect on the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha and thus gain true understanding of the path to Peace and Happiness.

"Listening to Patthana can even bring the animal to nibbana." Referring to the story about the hanging bats in a cave where a monk was meditating and reciting the Patthana, Venerable Thera said that there were 500 wild bats living in certain dark cave during Kassapa Sammasambuddha's time. Two Theras, having lived in the cave too, recite Abhidhamma scriptures, questioning each other, discuss about Abhidhamma. These bats, though not knowing human language, caught the voice of recitation and listened to it. Every day the two Theras recite Abhidhamma, these bats stop all their activities and listen to the voice attentively and grow fond of it. Eventually, these 500 bats died. Immediately they were reborn as 500 mighty Devas. These 500 glorious Devas, when they investigate their cause of rebirth, find out that it was the Abhidhamma recitation that caused this Heavenly rebirth. It was due to their acquired interest and faith in that Abhidhamma voice, instill peace and merits in their minds. There in heaven, these 500 Devas make an aspiration that in their coming lives, they shall fulfill the Paramitas and become the Receivers and Masters of Abhidhamma teachings taught by the Buddha. Eventually after many lives, they were reborn as 500 disciples of Arahant Sariputta Thera. Having learned Abhidhamma from Arahant Sariputta Thera, these 500 disciples attained Arahantship and since then preserved the Abhidhamma teachings.

"If we can recite the Patthana, we can concentrate on all things. Normally, we are thinking about this or that. And we are quite occupied with our work load, job related things, and emotions, but when we recite the Patthana we can focus on the nature of the dhamma, the conditions, and if we do good deeds we will get good returns or things like that. And also, we feel secure, during the recitation and after the recitation," Ven. Thera said.

Patthana belongs to the "higher teachings" of the Buddha, the Abhidhamma of Theravada Buddhism. The term "Patthana" (Pali) is composed of the prefix "pa," various, and "thana," cause or condition; thus, Patthana means "various causes or conditions," or "a system of relations." Patthana is usually translated as "conditional relations."

According to Theravada tradition, the essence of the Abhidhamma was formulated by the Buddha during the fourth week after his Enlightenment. The fourth week, the Buddha spent in a jeweled chamber (Rathana - ghara) contemplating the intricacies of the Abhidhamma. Buddha's body and mind were so purified when he pondered on the Book of Relations, Patthana the seventh treatise of the Abhidhamma, which six coloured rays emitted from his body.

The Abhidhamma stands as an essential pillar of classical Theravada Buddhist thought. The Abhidhamma Pijaka, one of the divisions of the Pali Canon recognized by Theravada Buddhism as the authoritative recession of the Buddha's teachings. This canon was compiled at the three great Buddhist councils held in India in the early centuries following the Buddha's demise: the first, at Rajagaha, convened three months after the Buddha's Parinibbana by five hundred senior monks under the leadership of the Elder Mahakassapa; the second, at Vesali, a hundred years later; and the third, at Pataliputra, two hundred years later. The canon that emerged from these councils, preserved in Pali, is known as the Ttripitaka, the three "baskets" or collections of the teachings. The first collection, the Vinaya Pitaka, is the book of discipline, containing the rules of conduct for the bhikkhus and bhikkhunis—the monks and nuns—and the regulations governing the Sangha, the monastic order. The Sutta Pitaka, the second collection, brings together the Buddha's discourses spoken by him on various occasions during his active ministry of forty-five years.

And the third collection is the Abhidhamma Pitaaka, the "basket" of the Buddha's "higher" or "special" doctrine. This third great division of the Pali Canon bears a distinctly different character from the other two divisions. Whereas the Suttas and Vinaya serve an obvious practical purpose, namely, to proclaim a clear-cut message of deliverance and to lay down a method of personal training, the Abhidhamma Pijaka presents the appearance of an abstract and highly technical systemization of the doctrine. The collection consists of seven books: the Dhammasangani, the Vibhanga, the Dhatukatha, the Puggalapanatti, the Kathavatthu, the Yamaka, and the Patthana. Unlike the Suttas, these are not records of discourses and discussions occurring in real-life settings; they are, rather, full-blown treatises in which the principles of the doctrine have been methodically organised, minutely defined, and meticulously tabulated and classified. Though they were no doubt originally composed and transmitted orally and only written down later, with the rest of the canon in the



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first century B.C., they exhibit the qualities of structured thought and rigorous consistency more typical of written documents.

The Patthana, the "Book of Conditional Relations," is probably the most important work of the Abhidhamma Pitaka and thus is traditionally designated the "Great Treatise" (mahapakaraoa). Gigantic in extent as well as in substance, the book comprises five volumes totaling 2,500 pages in the Burmese-script Sixth Council edition. The purpose of the Patthana is to apply its scheme of twenty-four conditional relations to all the phenomena incorporated in the Abhidhamma matrix. The main body of the work has four great divisions: origination according to the positive method, according to the negative method, according to the positive-negative method, and according to the negative-positive method.

"Hetupaccayo, arammanapaccayo, adhipatipaccayo, anantarapaccayo, samanantara-paccayo, sahajatapaccayo, annaamanna-paccayo, nissayapaccayo, upanissayapaccayo, purejatapaccayo, pacchajatapaccayo, asevanapaccayo, kammapaccayo, vipakapaccayo, aharapaccayo, indriyapaccayo, jhanapaccayo, maggapaccayo, sampayuttapaccayo, vippayuttapaccayo, atthipaccayo, natthipaccayo, vigatapaccayo, avigatapaccayoti."

THE TWENTY FOUR MODES OF CONDITIONAL RELATIONS

1. Hetu-paccayo - root condition
2. Arammana-paccayo - object condition
3. Adhipati-paccayo - predominance condition
4. Anantara-paccayo - proximity condition
5. Samanantara-paccayo - contiguity condition
6. Sahajata-paccayo - co-nascence condition
7. Arammana-paccayo - mutuality condition
8. Nissaya-paccayo - support condition
9. Upanissaya-paccayo - decisive support condition
10. Purejata-paccayo - pre-nascence condition
11. Pacchajata-paccayo - post-nascence condition

12. Asevana-paccayo - repetition condition

13. Kamma-paccayo - karma condition

14. Vipaka-paccayo - karma result condition

15. Ahara-paccayo - nutriment condition

16. Indriya-paccayo - faculty condition

17. Jhana-paccayo - jhana condition

18. Magga-paccayo - path condition

19. Sampayutta-paccayo - association condition

20. Vippayutta-paccayo - dissociation condition

21. Atthi-paccayo - presence condition

22. Natthi-paccayo - absence condition

23. Vigata-paccayo - separation condition

24. Avigata-paccayo - non-separation condition.

Each of these in turn has six subdivisions: origination of triads, of dyads, of dyads and triads combined, of triads and dyads combined, of triads and triads combined, and of dyads and dyads combined. Within this pattern of twenty-four sections, the twenty-four modes of conditionality are applied in due order to all the phenomena of existence in all their conceivable permutations. Despite its dry and tabular format, even from a "profane" humanistic viewpoint the Patthana can easily qualify as one of the truly monumental products of the human mind, astounding in its breadth of vision, its rigorous consistency, and its painstaking attention to detail. To Theravada belief, it is the most eloquent testimony to the Buddha's unimpeded knowledge of omniscience.

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