

## The Abhidhammic Void Vered Lamm-Naon

The aim of the *Theravāda* early Canonical *Abhidhamma* (*Dhammasaṅgaṭī*, *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā*, *Paññhāna*), is not, contrary to prevalent assumptions, focused on just creating a more precise and categorical presentation of the *Sutta* doctrine. This paper will argue that its main purpose is to aid the Buddhist practitioner to achieve *jhāna* states, leading to awakening from ignorance (*avijjā*).

In concurrence with the methods presented in the *Suttas*, the *Abhidhamma* refines the decomposition of reality and deepens the description of the synthesis, that is, the relations between the various decomposed phenomena. However, compared to the *Sutta* method, the characteristic Abhidhammic language (*paramattha*) and style offers a unique tool for practice. That is, in the Abhidhammic language there are no I, mine, yours. There are only characterizations of phenomena (*dhammas*) we can experience directly, for example: anger, compassion, hate. The unique Abhidhammic language and style of presentation stripe the phenomena from the psychological story: My anger, your anger, and the anger I experience in different circumstances, have the same common distinctive characteristic, and this characteristic cannot be reduced any further. In this sense the *Abhidhamma* speaks the language of "ultimate reality". Unlike the *Sutta* which speaks on ultimate reality, the *Abhidhamma* describes the existence only from the ultimate reality point of view.

I will argue that the *Abhidhamma* is a perfected tool for the reason of its specific language and style, and its subject and scope of investigation. The *Abhidhamma* provides us with a comprehensive description of all possible states of consciousness and all possible relations between them. A description that is unparalleled in other Pali canon texts. The *Abhidhamma* describes the conciseness and the object it perceives as being one. There is no duality of observer and observed in the Abhidhammic description of the universe.

This paper suggests that when the Buddhist practitioner uses the *Abhidhamma's* ultimate point of view as a map for contemplation, it deepens his observation and concentration abilities, and his belief in the gross illusionary constructs is eradicated. The *Abhidhamma*, in its sophisticated way, uses our mental tendencies to characterize, classify and categorize, to lead us to the limits of thought.

On the other hand, I will point how the same Abhidhammic qualities (the refined decomposition and the detailed description), can become a trap for the practitioner; enhancing his attachment to the intellectual struggle to interpret and characterize reality.

I will further elucidate how using the *Abhidhamma* as a theoretical description, without utilizing it, translating and comparing its structures with the direct subjective

experience of reality, can easily turn our perception of this ingenious masterpiece as a mere tedious cataloging and sorting scholastic enterprise .