



संस्कृति मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CULTURE



INTERNATIONAL ABHIDHAMMA DIVAS Śharada Pūrṇimā Celebration

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE on

The Relevance of Abhidhamma in Understanding
Buddhist Thought: Text, Tradition, and
Contemporary Perspectives

6th & 7th October, 2025

CALL FOR PAPER

Deadline: 30th Sep, 2025



Registration QR

Organised by:
**International Buddhist Confederation
& Gautam Buddha University**



International Abhidhamma Day Celebrations & Two Days International Conference



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CALL PAPERS

On International Abhidhamma Day Celebrations & Two-Day International Conference On

“The Relevance of Abhidhamma in Understanding Buddhist Thought: Text, Tradition, and Contemporary Perspectives”

International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) in collaboration with Gautam Buddha University (GBU), Greater Noida is celebrating the International Abhidhamma Day on the full moon day of Śharada Pūrṇimā on 6th & 7th October, 2025.

The wisdom of Buddha Dhamma has been preserved for centuries in the Tipiṭaka, the “Three Baskets.” Each of the three has its own character. The Vinaya Piṭaka lays out the rules that guide the daily life of monks and nuns. The Sutta Piṭaka carries the living words of the Buddha, spoken in sermons, parables, and conversations. The Abhidhamma Piṭaka, however, is something else entirely. It does not tell stories, nor does it prescribe conduct. Instead, it takes reality apart moment by moment, thought by thought, searching for the patterns that lie beneath. For this reason, it came to be known as the “higher teaching” (paramatthadesanā), a way of pointing past everyday speech to truths that are harder to see.

Buddhist tradition holds that seven years after his enlightenment, the Buddha ascended to the Tāvātimsa heaven (Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods) to teach the Abhidhamma (higher doctrine) to his mother, Queen Māyā, who had died soon after his birth and been reborn in that realm. This act was seen as a fulfillment of the Buddha’s obligation to repay his debt of gratitude to his mother by giving her the highest spiritual teaching. After the rains retreat and completion of the Abhidhamma teaching, the Buddha descended to earth at the city of Sankisa (Sankassa). According to legend, his descent was witnessed by humans and gods alike, symbolizing the merging of divine and earthly realms. In the Buddhist tradition, the Abhidhamma is preserved as the third section of the canon. It is made up of seven works, including the Dhammasaṅgaṇī, Vibhaṅga, Dhātukathā, Puggalapaññatti, Kathāvatthu, Yamaka, and Paṭṭhāna. Together, they describe existence in terms of four realities: citta (consciousness), cetasika (mental factors), rūpa (material phenomena), and nibbāna (the



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unconditioned). Other schools produced their own Abhidhamma texts as well. The greatest was Vasubandhu's Abhidhammakosa, which stood to influence Buddhist thinking in Central and East Asia.

In addition to philosophical legacy, Abhidhamma is also intended to instruct part of the ethical direction, organize meditation in practice and offer a system of interpretation of impermanence, suffering and being of selflessness. The peculiarity of the Abhidhamma is that it is still relevant; the analysis of consciousness and the mental conditions it provides in detail are often related to the fundamental questions of modern psychology and neuroscience. As a matter of fact, even before these subjects became the focus of the modern scientific research, Abhidhamma was already formulating questions about perception, subjectivity experience and cognition. Rather, the excellently contrary, the Abhidhamma belongs to the tradition: it is not an appendix to Buddhist writings. It has been an essential intersection of philosophy and practical discipline, providing lessons and techniques which still enlighten and respond to the issues of the current practitioners and philosophers.

Objectives

- To highlight the significance of Abhidhamma in understanding the core of Buddhist thought.
- To explore the philosophical, ethical, and psychological dimensions of Abhidhamma.
- To examine comparative approaches between Abhidhamma and modern sciences (psychology, AI, cognitive studies).
- To encourage interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives on Buddhist philosophy.
- To provide a platform for scholars, practitioners, and students to engage in critical discussion.

Sub-Themes

1. Doctrinal and Philosophical Foundations

The doctrine of ultimate realities (paramatthadhammas) is at the centre of the Abhidhamma. Even common words such as person or self are considered to be conventional whereas the Abhidhamma, rather, conceptualizes experience in four existences, namely citta, cetasika, rūpa, and nibbana.



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- Citta is the consciousness, bare moment of awareness.
- Cetasikas—mental factors or psychic factors.
- Rūpa refers to the material aggregate or physical domain governed by natural laws.
- Nibbāna is unique: the cessation of suffering and the unconditioned goal of the path.

The distinction of the Abhidhamma is that it pays so much attention to the mind. Rather than speculating on underlying material or other impractical principles, it examines experience in its actual course--moment by moment. Due to this, it is currently viewed by many as an early way of Buddhism psychology. We find much mention made of citta, the momentary awareness, which, in a flash is born and is gone. These are numerous and diverse, sometimes 89, sometimes 121, and are clustered together in various ways: by quality, by sphere of existence, by the role they are playing in knowing. Yet no citta stands alone. They are both embodied by cetasikas or the psychological factors of perceptions like feeling, intention or attention that permeates every moment of life. The view of seeing how these states come and pass, teaches the practitioners to know change, conditionality and absence of permanence. The Abhidhamma also, farther, gives the clue regarding how the mind can be trained. Mindfulness (*sati*) involves maintaining constant awareness; concentration (*samādhi*) involves collecting this into a centre. In the combination of these two, the mind becomes straight and clear, and the clarity leaves space through which an insight (*vipassanā*) comes to mind. The distinction lies in the fact that the Abhidhamma contextualizes all that in a broader context of morality and liberation whereby the goal is not only to be able to live with life but to surpass suffering. That is the reason why its ideas remain important. Psychological approaches based on mindfulness-based therapies, which are popular as methods to relieve stress and stabilize emotions, are directly inspired by this kind of view of attention. According to cognitive researchers, the similarity is drawn between the picture of mind given by Buddhists and the contemporary concepts of consciousness as a flow of events.

2. Abhidhamma in Interdisciplinary Perspectives

The Abhidhamma demonstrates that perception and thought occur within split seconds and almost as flash. The Abhidhamma explains consciousness rather similar: each citta emerges and disappears in short moments, and so on. Alongside it is the mental factors (*cetasikas*)—feeling, attention, intention—that



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shape experience. What science often measures in brain patterns, the Abhidhamma approaches from the inside, reminding us that lived experience cannot be reduced to mechanics alone. Some parallels also appear in the study of **Artificial Intelligence**. The Abhidhamma explains the flow of thought (*citta-vīthi*) in steps: contact, recognition, intention, and response. Machines process information in a similar sequence, even if they lack awareness. The comparison raises questions: if both people and machines run on conditions, where do we locate agency, responsibility, or identity? The Abhidhamma also speaks clearly about ethics. At its heart is intention (*cetanā*). A kind motive leads to good; an angry or greedy one leads to harm. This simple truth finds new relevance in debates today—in medicine, technology, and AI design—where responsibility and compassion must guide decision-making.

3. Comparative and Cross-Cultural Studies

While the Theravāda preserved its system in Pāli, other Buddhist traditions developed their own ways of analyzing reality, sometimes agreeing, sometimes taking very different paths. In the Theravāda approach, ultimate truth is explained through four categories, namely *citta* (consciousness), *cetasikas* (mental factors), *rūpa* (material qualities or form), and *nibbana* (unconditioned). The style is extremely analytical, almost psychological, attention to the momentary states, and the conditional connections between them. The Sarvāstivādins headed to a different direction. They postulated that dharmas are in the past, present and future (*sarvamasti*) leading to the ontological sounding of their philosophy. This system was subsequently arranged and criticized in the Vasubandhu's *Abhidhammakosa* of which it was the forerunner in Buddhist philosophy in much of Asia. The changes were once again due to the Yogācāra school. Based on previous techniques of the Abhidharma, but reworking it, Yogācārins able to teach that reality was simply consciousness (*vijñaptimātra*). Their concept of a “storehouse consciousness” (*ālaya-vijñana*) described how the seeds of karma are kept on through rebirth, which is a more comprehensive account of mental existence. All these diverse views provided rich soil to the Mahayana philosophy. Philosophers such as Nāgārjuna undermined the foundations of Abhidharma and developed the radical emptiness doctrine (*Sūnyatā*). Yogācāra and Abhidharma psychology was, meanwhile re-formulated by Yogācāra into radical novel configurations of awareness. What started as technical kind of classification turned out to be the launchpad of some of the most inventive ideas of Buddha Dhamma.



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4. Abhidhamma in Contemporary Relevance

What was once called attention, intention, and emotion by Abhidhamma is now the style of programmes in school, hospital and work places. The practices assist individuals to stabilize the mind, reduce stress, and perform more punctually. Vipassanā, or insight meditation, is also guided by the same insights within Buddhist circles as a reminder to practitioners that the hand of ethics and awareness always goes together. The focus on intention in the Abhidhamma makes it strikingly relevant to modern medicine, education and technology when it comes to the issue of artificial intelligence. According to the Abhidhamma, the moral value of any act lies in its intention; this theory can be translated into the best professional and personal practise. The claims of the Abhidhamma concerning the emphasis on rooted wholesome intentions (hetu, mūla) have a direct influence on the frameworks that highly value responsibility and compassion when making any decision.

Sub-Themes:

1. Doctrinal and Philosophical Foundations
2. Abhidhamma in Interdisciplinary Perspectives
3. Comparative and Cross-Cultural Studies
4. Abhidhamma in Contemporary Relevance

In this connection, we invite abstracts from Academicians, Research scholars, Buddhist practitioners, freelance scholars and budding researchers/students, who are working or intended to work in the field of Buddhist Studies/Buddhism and other Ancient Indian Traditions, on the above theme and related areas, are advised to submit an electronic copy of his/her abstract(s)/Full Papers on or before 30, September 2025 and Full Papers (Max. 4500- 5000 words limit). Abstracts (maximum word length 500) can be sent in MS word format to email: abhidhammaday2025@gmail.com Schedule of the conference for paper presentation will be communicated by October 1, 2025.



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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - RELATED ENQUIRY

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