CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABHIDHARMA PITAKA
Abhidharma (Pali Abhidhamma) is the title given to the collection of Buddha's philosophical discourses on transcendental knowledge arranged in a scholastic method and in a specific and systematic way. Traditionally it is the name given to the Third Collection (or Piṭaka) of the Buddhist canonical texts. It is regarded as 'the first production of Buddhist philosophy' which when thoroughly studied and practised leads one to the attainment of Nirvāṇa which a Buddhist yearns for.

'Abhidharma' is a compound word. It is formed with two words 'abhi' and 'dharma'. The prefix 'abhi' has been employed here in the sense of special, great, excellent, supreme, peerless, preponderance or pre-eminence. It conveys almost the same meaning or sense as we find in the expressions like 'aticehattam' (the pre-eminent sunshade), 'atidhvaja' (the pre-eminent flag), 'atirāja (the king par excellence), atideva' or 'abhideva' (the peerless God), 'atibrahma (the supreme Brahman), and so on. The word 'dharma' (Pali 'dhamma'), on the other hand, conveys a variety of meanings like 'religion' 'doctrine' 'law', 'virtue', 'nature', 'truth', 'the norm' 'morality', 'righteousness', 'conduct' and the like. In the

1. 'atirekavisesaṭṭhādipako hi ettha abhisaddo' —DhsA. P.2.
Pali canon, the word is used in the sense of scriptural Texts (pariyatti), root-condition (hetu) or instruction (desanā), quality and virtue (guṇa), absence of an entity or soul (nissattanijjīvataḥ), and the like. But in the case of 'Abhidharma', however, the word is used in the sense of Pariyatti or Scriptures or Discourses as a body handed down through an unbroken line of succession — the Philosophy, Wisdom and Truth (or phenomenological perception as well as of ontological and introspective perceptions) as propounded by Buddha in his Śūtras (Pali suttas) or discourses as distinct from the Vinaya and the Abhidharma as well as from various legends and commentaries composed and developed on them. So, according to Buddhaghosa, the well-known Pali commentator, when the term 'abhi' is prefixed to 'dharma', it conveys the idea of some higher, special, peerless, excellent, deep and subtle 'dharma' which excels and is distinguished by

1. In the Pali passages like - 'dhamman pariyāpunāti suttam geyyanti' (studies the dhamma; the sutta and the Geyya) - 'dhamma' means Pariyatti or scriptures; 'hetumhi mānām dhammapatiṣambhidā' (knowledge of root-condition is the analysis of dhamma) — here dhamma means hetu or root-condition or cause; 'na hi dhammo adhammo ca ubho Samavipākino' (dhamma and adhamma do not bear equal fruit) — here 'dhamma' means guṇa or virtue or good quality; 'Tasmā kho pāna samaye dhammā honti' (at the time of consciousness coming into existence there occur dhammas) and 'dhammāsu dhammātupassī vihara-ti' (he abides watchful over certain dhammas) — here 'dhamma' means 'nissatta-nijjīvataḥ' absence of an entity or a living soul'.

several qualities like growth (Vuddhi), proper attributes (salakkhaṇa), reverence (Pūjita), clear differentiation (Paricchinnā) and surpassing worth (adhika) from the Dharma

1. DhsA.19 - Buddhaghosa gives a practical explanation of the term 'Abhidharma' saying that the prefix 'abhi' conveys as many as five different meanings, viz.:

(i) Vuddhi (growth),  
(ii) Salakkhaṇa (proper attributes),  
(iii) Pūjita (reverence),  
(iv) Paricchinnā (clear differentiation) and (v) Vuttadhika (surpassing worth).

As for example:

The expression like "he develops the means for rebirth in the Rūpa-world; he lives diffusing one quarter of the globe with thoughts of love and compassion" illustrates Vuddhi;

the expression like 'visible object, audible object' etc. illustrates salakkhaṇa;

the expression like "things pertaining to trainee (sekho), things pertaining to adept (asekho) and things transcendental etc" illustrates Pūjita;

the expression like "this is touch (sparśa), that is feeling (vedanā) etc" illustrates paricchinnā; and the expression like "states sublime, states immeasurable, states incomparable etc." illustrates Vuttadhika.

"Yam ettha vuddhimanto salakkhaṇa pūjita
Paricchinnā
Vuttadhikā ca dhammā abhidhammo tena
akkhāto" - DhsA. 19.
In other words, Abhidharma means merely the expansion, enlarged treatment, exposition in detail of the Dharma i.e. sūtras. For instance, the philosophical terms like Pañcaskandha, Āyatanas, Dhātus, Indriyas, Satyas, Pratītyasamutpāda etc. have merely been classified in the Sūtras while in the Abhidharma-pitaka they have been explained elaborately and systematically in a scholastic method. Though, however, in many cases these terms have not been properly defined and explained in the Abhidharma, they have been described by a number of synonyms and brought into all possible combinations considered from different points of view. The fundamental difference between sūtra and Abhidharma, therefore, lies in the fact that the former is conventional, partial and enumerative, while the latter is absolute, comprehensive and positive.

Mrs. Rhys Davids, however, is of opinion that the Abhidharma is not a positive contribution to the philosophy of early Buddhism, but an analytic, logical and methodological elaborations of what was already given in the sūtra - discourses.

2. Geiger, W., Pali Lit. & Lang, P. 23.
3. ERE, I, P. 19.
But this also should not be overlooked that apart from the sūtras, in the Abhidharma also are found so many new ideas and thoughts depending upon which the later Hinayāna Buddhist schools established their own standpoints.¹

Vasubandhu, the author of the Abhidharmakośa, however, defines Abhidharma as pure and immaculate wisdom (Prajñā) accumulated as a result of learning and listening to discourses (Śrutamāyī), of reflection (cintāmāyī) and of contemplation or practice (bhāvanāmāyī) followed by the dharma like mind (citta), mental faculties (caittas) etc. In other words, Abhidharma is so called as it confronts and faces (abhīmukha) the dharma which is the object of supreme knowledge to realise Nirvāṇa, or as it confronts the proper and common characters of the Dharmas. ²

Asaṅga, a distinguished teacher of the Yogācāra school, enumerates four excellent qualities which make the Abhidharma rank foremost in the whole Buddhist literature. He maintains that Abhidharma is so called as it leads one towards Nirvāṇa (Abhimukhataḥ), as it classifies the dharma in different groups to make the attainment of perfect emancipation easier (Abhīksyāt) as it refutes the controversial views regarding the nature of reality and comes

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¹ Watanabe, Dr. B., Thoughts, Literature and Monasteries in Earlier Buddhism, P. 135.
² "Prajñāmalā śāntacarābhidharmaḥ", Kosā 1/2, 4.
to a definite conclusion (abhibhāvagatito) and as it follows
the path of the dharma i.e. Sūtra (abhigamyaḥ suṭrārtha). But
the Mahāvibhāṣāsāstra, however, gives different views as to the
implication of the term "Abhidharma" offered by many other
Abhidharma-scholars. They are as follows:

According to the Abhidharmikas, Abhidharma is so called
as it enables us to investigate and discriminate the natures of
phenomena and go deep into them. Vasumitra, however, opines that
Abhidharma is so called as it helps us in studying and practising
the principal tenets expounded in the sūtras and also in realising
- thereby the ultimate goal i.e. Nirvāṇa. Ghoṣaka is of the above
view. Bhadanta's exposition, however, differs in this regard. He,
however, holds that Abhidharma itself is a collection of pure and
impure dharmas arranged and classified in a systematic method.
Pārśva is of the view that Abhidharma is so called as it deals
with ultimate, excellent and infallible wisdom (Prajñā). The
Dharmaguptakas and Ven. Buddhadeva hold that Abhidharma is so
called as it predominates over the Dharma (sūtra). The Mahīṃśasakas
have maintained that Abhidharma is so called as its sphere of
knowledge ably illuminates the phenomena of the universe. But the
Dārṣṭāntikas opine that Abhidharma is so called as in importance
its position is next to Nirvāṇa, the supreme amongst all things.

1. "abhīmukhato' thābhīksyād abhibhāvagatito
   abhidharmas ca,
   abhigamyaḥ suṭrārtha etenety abhidharmah"
   - Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṅkāra, xl/3.
2. Encyclopaedia of Buddhism (E.B.), Ceylon, p. 40.
The Śabdavāda theory, is, however, peculiar at the same time reasonable. According to this theory, the term *abhi* is not a prefix (upasarga), but it is a combination of two syllables 'a' and 'bhi', the former designating removal while the later designating discrimination. For, if we make an analysis of the subject-matters of Abhidharma, we find that Abhidharma acts as a guide in removing all sorts of fetters which are the roots of all sufferings. It also wisely discriminates the technical and philosophical terms so that one can easily understand their true implication. Thus it is called Abhidharma. Lastly, the views of Buddhapālita and Vāmalabdha are, no doubt, peculiar. Buddhapālita states that the prefix 'abhi' means 'appearance' and Abhidharma is so called as it 'causes various factors of supreme knowledge to appear.' Vāmalabdha, on the other hand, states that the prefix 'abhi' means 'veneration' and therefore, Abhidharma is so called as it is both venerable and honourable.

From the above, we may conclude as follows:

1. Abhidharma and the Abhidharma literature are not the one and the same, the former indicating some 'special treatment of the Dharma' as found in the Nikāyas dealing specially with psycho-logico-eschatological and cosmographical matters, while

1. The prefix 'abhi' of the term 'Abhidharma' serves the same purpose as the prefix 'adhi' does in combination with Śīla, citta and Prajñā (adhiśīla means 'higher morality', adhicitta means 'higher thought' and adhiprajñā means 'higher wisdom').
the latter indicating a literary compilation or composition of the former (i.e. Abhidharma) for which some specific, extra-ordinary and highly scholastic and systematic method has been followed, and which has been done independently in different Buddhist schools and in different periods.

2) Unlike the sūtras, the Abhidharma literature has followed a purely non-discursive (nippariyāya-desanā) style and it has used 'a very select and precise, and, therefore, thoroughly impersonal terminology which is decidedly technical in meaning and function'.

We, however, propose to deal with the first part of this chapter with the Abhidharma — its origin and development, its subject-matter and the like, while the second part will cover the growth and development of the Abhidharma literature in different periods.

There are divergent views as to the origin and development of the Abhidharma (Dharma par excellence). The traditional accounts in Pāli have however, ascribed its authorship to the Buddha himself. It is said that the Abhidharma was inspired by the earnest aspiration for enlightenment (Bodhi) and was matured through five hundred and fifty previous births of the Buddha. It was realised by the Buddha, in his present and last

birth, at the foot of the Bodhi-tree at Bodhí-Gaya on the full-moon day of Víśakha and it was further reflected upon and analysed thoroughly by the omniscient Buddha during his week's stay at the Ratanaghara in the neighbourhood of the Bodhi-tree. It was preached by the Buddha continuously for three months among the Gods of the Tāvatiṃsā heaven (realm of the thirty-three gods) while he visited the same six to seven years after his enlightenment to meet with his deceased mother, queen Māyā. In this world, it was first received by Sāriputra (Sāriputta) the generalissimo of the Law, who again gave it some textual order without spoiling the original beauty of the sacred doctrine of his Master and preached the same to his five hundred disciples. It was thereafter handed down successively by Bhaddaji, siddhī, Piyājī, Piyāpāla, Piyadassī, Kosiyaputta, Siggava, Sandeha, Moggaliputta, Visudatta, Dhammiya, Dāsaka, Sonaka, Revata and others up to the time of the Third Buddhist council held at Pāṭaliputra under the patronage of king Asoka and thereafter it was preserved through oral tradition by their pupils. From India it was subsequently taken to Ceylon by Mahinda, Iddhiya (or Itṭhiya), Uttiya, Bhaddanama and Sambala Theras. In Ceylon it was preserved

1. Buddha's mother, queen Māyā, died seven days after his birth and according to traditions, she was born in the Tāvatiṃsā heaven.
2. There is an interesting account in the Atthasālinī as to where and how did Sāriputra receive the Abhidharma discourses from the Buddha.
3. Dhs A. 17.
4. Dhs A. 32.
through the succession of teachers and their pupils till it was finally put to writing there during the reign of Vaṭṭa-gāmani Abhaya (circa 29 - 17 D.C.), though not necessarily in its present form.¹ Buddhaghosa, the well known exegesis, has given us the above traditional accounts as to the authorship of the Abhidharma. But it is difficult to say if all of them are genuine and authoritative. In the Atthasālinī, the commentary of the Dhammasaṅgani, Buddhaghosa himself points out that even in the early days of Buddhism the ascription of the Abhidharma to the Buddha was questioned.² But the opponents' views were criticised and refuted by the then orthodox bhikkhus. He has also referred to the Mahāgosiṅgasutta of the Majjhimanikāya to show that the Abhidharma is "Buddhavacana"

The opponents however, further argued that had the Abhidharma been preached by the Buddha, there would have been an introduction thereto just as in many thousands of the suttas we find an introduction as "One day the blessed one was staying at Sāvatthī, and the like." In order to refute this argument, the orthodox bhikkhus said thus: "The Abhidharma is not the province of others; it is the province of the Buddhas only. Such a discourse as the Abhidharma can be taught by the Buddhas only. Therefore, there is no need for an introduction to

1. "abhidhammam paṭibāhanto imasmim Jinacakke ṗhāram deti, sabbāññutāññam paṭibāhati, satthu vesārajaññam ativatteti, sotukāmam parisamā visaṃvādeti, ariyamagge āvaraṇam bandhati, atṭhārasaṃ bhādakaravatthu Sanskhīmm sandissati, ukkhepaniyakkamma-nissayakkamma-tajjanīyakkamma-mmāraho hoti" — Dhs.A, 29. — "He who prohibits (the teaching of) Abhidhamma gives a blow to the wheel of the conqueror, denies omniscience, subverts the Teacher's knowledge full of confidence, deceives the audience, obstructs the path of the Ariyas, manifests himself as advocating one of the eighteen causes of dissension in the Order, is capable of doing acts for which the doer is liable to be excommunicated or admonished or scorned (by the Order), and should be dismissed."

Moreover the Elder Tissabhuti of Maṇḍalārāma cited the Padesavihāra sutta of the Saṁyuttanikāya (v.12) to set forth an introduction to Abhidharma. The Elder Sumanadeva, resident in a village, tried to persuade his listeners about the Buddha’s authorship of the Abhidharma and said that the Abhidharma too does not go without introduction. Abhidharma has got an introduction, he said, which is as follows:

“At one time the Blessed One lived among the gods on the Paṇḍukambala rock at the foot of the paricchattaka tree in the Tavatīṃsa heaven. Then the Blessed One preached the Abhidharma to the Tavatīṃsa gods saying thus: ‘Kusalā dhammā, akusalā dhammā, avyākatā dhammā’ etc.\(^1\)

Again the Buddha’s preaching of the Abhidhamma in the Tavatīṃsa heaven also had been questioned. The opponents argued that had the Tathāgata preached in the heaven continuously for three months then how could he sustain his body dependent on material food? But the orthodox ones replied that at that time too the Buddha nourished his body with

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material food. Everyday, before the time of his taking meal, he used to come down to the Anotatta Lake, take his bath there, beg his alms in the Uttarakuru, partake of his meal on the shore of the Anotatta and take midday rest in a nearby sandalwood forest. During the time of his midday rest, Sariputra went to him everyday, served the Buddha and sat aside. Then to him the Buddha gave the Abhidharmakosa lore saying; "Sāriputta, so much doctrine has been shown to-day".

In order to show that the Abhidharmakosa was Budhavacana and also to establish its antiquity, Buddhaghosa has divided its development into three periods: 1. Dūrenidāna (beginnings in the remote past) covering the time from Dīpankara down to the Buddha's birth in the Tusita abode; 2. Avidūrenidāna (beginnings in the not very remote past) covering the time of the Buddha's descent from the Tusita abode to the attainment of Bodhi; and 3. Santikenidāna (beginnings in the present) beginning with a verbal introduction as, "At one time the Blessed one lived among the Tāvatimā gods on the Pañḍukambala

1. Dhs-A, P.16.
rock at the foot of the Paricchattaka tree. There the Blessed one related the Abhidharma discourse to the Tāvatimsa gods.

Buddaghosa is further of the view that the Abhidharma was rehearsed along with the Sūtra and Vinaya in the first Buddhist Council held at Rājagaha immediately after the Mahāparinirvāṇa of the Buddha.

The Kāśmira-Vaihāsikas also admit that the Abhidharma was preached by the Buddha. But unlike the Thājavādins and the Ābhidharmikas, they maintain that the Buddha preached his Abhidharma-discourses here and there to different persons at different occasions. Later on these discourses were collected by the Arhats and Śrāvakas like Kātyāyanī-putra (in his Jñānaprasthāṇa), Vasumitra (in his Prakaraṇapāda).

In support of the aforesaid traditional accounts, some western scholars too have ascribed the fundamental Abhidharma doctrine to the Buddha himself. But a few others do not argue in this regard. According to them, the Abhidharma was neither preached by the Buddha nor by his direct disciples like Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and the like. They argue that the traditional accounts have been invented in order to give more authority to the Abhidharma doctrine which, as Winternitz\(^1\) states, contains definitions and

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1. Hist. Ind. Lit. 11, P. 165.
classifications of Buddhist technical and philosophical terms with endless series of synonyms having neither originality nor profundity of thought.

Opinions still differ as to the authorship and origin of the Abhidharma.

The Suttanipāta, the verse portions of the Jātakas and the like, which are generally recognised as the earliest authentic texts of early Buddhism do not mention the term "Abhidharma". But the Nikāyas, namely Dīghanikāya (III/267), Majjhimanikāya (I/214, 218) and Aṅguttaranikāya (I/214, 267, 288, 290; III/106, 107, 392; IV/267, V/19, 139, 217), the term has been used to show the distinct techniques for analysing the dhammas.

This term appears in the Vinaya (I/14, 64, 98; IV/144, 344; V/181) too for a number of times. The Niddesa, a latter Canonical text refer to both the terms Abhidhaya and Abhidhammika. In some other later works of the Khuddakanikāya, in the early pali commentaries and chronicles, the term 'Abhidhaya' is increasingly used in its literary sense to refer to the Abhidharma treatises.

1. "Suttantaṃ ca Abhidhammaṃ ca Vinayaṃ cāpi kevalam-" Ap, p.44
   cf. abhidhammoṭṭhi sattappakaranāni-Dhs-Ap.3;
   abidhammaḥ chappakaranam - Dpv, Verse 37.
Thus we see that in its earlier usage, the Abhidharma refers largely to the special doctrine and sometimes possibly to the distinct techniques employed by it. (M.1/472; A.1/214; Vin.1/98). Miss. I.B. Horner holds that the word 'Abhidharma' occurring in the Sūtra and Vinayapiṭakas had been intended to stand for something more than usually complete grasp of mastery of them due to further study and reflection. Here is a relevant question why did the early Buddhist scholars feel the necessity of this 'further study and reflection'. From the internal evidences we find that while expounding his doctrines the Buddha depended largely on circumstances.

The form and contents of his discourses therefore, varied largely according to the time, occasion and nature of the audience. As a result, many of his discourses were fragmentary and concise, and therefore, to disciples and audience of lesser intellect, there were misunderstood. The necessity thus arose for providing their further study and reflection, explanation and elucidations.

1. I.H.Q. vol. XVII, p.299
The highly distinguished disciples of the Buddha such as Sariputta, Moggallana, Ananda, Mahākaccāna, and the like, rendered their service in the domain of their study. They used to expound the discourses of the Buddha of and on to the monks and nuns of mediocre intellect.

Thus from the Nikāyas we come to know that the Thera Mahākaccāna, at the repeated request of the bhikkhus, expounded in great detail the meaning of the heads of discourse laid down by the Buddha in the Madhupinda-sutta of the Majjhimanikāya. He also expounded the Madhura-sutta, mahākaccāna-bhaddekaratta-sutta and uddesa-vibhaṅga-sutta of the Majjhimanikāya. Thera Sariputta expounded the Sangiti-sutta and the Dasuttara-sutta of the Dighanikāya, Sammāditthi-sutta, Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta, Mahāvedalla-sutta of the Majjhimanikāya, and Patisambhidāmagga of the Khuddakaniyā. Thera Mahā-moggallāna expounded the Anumāna-sutta, of the Majjhimanikāya. Thera Ānanda expounded the Subha-sutta of the Dighanikāya to the brahmin pupil Subha soon after the Buddha's Mahāparinirvāṇa. He also expounded the

1. It is said in the commentary of the Patisambhidāmagga that this work was preached by Sariputta to Ānanda who recited it before the council. - Patis-A, p.9.
Atthakanāgarasutta, Sekha-sutta, Sandaka-sutta, Bāhitikasutta, Gopakamoggallāna-sutta, and Ānanda-bhaddekaratassutta of the Majjhimanikāya, Thera Udāna expounded the ghotamukha-sutta of the Majjhimanikāya. There Anuruddha expounded the Anuruddhasutta of the Majjhimanikāya. There Dhammadinnā expounded the Cula-vedalla sutta of the Majjhimanikāya on certain psychological terms to the layman Visākha. Among the suttas mentioned above some of them were expounded even after the Buddha's Mahāparinibbāna viz. Subha-sutta, Madhurasutta, Ghotamukha-sutta and the Gopakamoggallāna-sutta. Not only with regard to the sutta-discourses but also with regard to the disciplinary rules, confusion arose among the disciples. In many occasions therefore, even the disciples had to explain and elucidate the disciplinary rules laid down by the Buddha. Thus, the necessity of further explanation and elucidations of the Buddha's discourses resulted to the growth of two new branches of study, one called the Abhivinaya for the detailed exposition of the entire Vinaya rules and the other, the Abhidhamma for the elucidation of the sutta-discourses.

1. Dīgha, III/267; Majjhima 1/472; Vin 1/64 (quoted in the Atthasālīnī, p.20); Milinda, 344 (S.B.E. vol. XXXVI, 237n); see I.B. Horner, Abhidhamma Abhivinaya, IHQ XVII, 1941, p.291-310.
The distinguished disciples then directed their attention to their new branches of study (i.e. Abhidhamma and Abhivinaya), specialised the subjects and came to be known as Matikadhara. But subsequently when the Abhivinaya also became the theme of study for the Vinayadhara (experts in the discipline), the term 'Matikadhara' was confined to Abhidharmah specialists only who were previously known as Dhammakathikas (preachers of the doctrine). Later on, then the Abhidharma specialist known as Matikadhara, came to be known as Abhidharmikas. It should be mentioned here that scholars like Geiger, Winternitz, Keith and the like have come to this conclusion that the Matikas (or tabulated summaries) (of the psycholo-gico-eschatological conceptions treated in the Suttapitaka) formed the nucleus of the Abhidharma's...

1. Digha 11/125; Anguttar 117; Vin(mahāvīra II/21; X/1,2; Cullav I/11, 1; XII/1, gf; 2,1.
2. This term is also found in the inscriptions El ii/83f; I A/xxi/226fff; SBB II/xii f; ZDMG x/1 58f. In the Buddha's own life time, there were monks like Punnā mantānīputta, nuns like Dhammadinna and layman like Cittagahapati, who were famed as Dhammakathikas—EB p.66.
If it is taken for granted that the Matikas (Skt. māṭikās) were subsequently worked to the admission that the formation of the Abhidharma started from the Buddha's own time as well as from the time of his immediate disciples, and its development continued in different periods until it became recognised as a separate literature and took its final shape as the existing Abhidharma-pitaka. In support of the above view we may refer to the early canonical texts. Let us, for example, take the Śāriputarassakuti and the Dāttarassakuti of the Dīghanikāya. There two suttas, expounded by Śāriputta, the generalissener of the Law, who died before the Buddha, can be fairly compared with the Matikas of the Abhidharma, given in the

1. Geiger, PD 118f; Winternitz, Hist, Ind. Lit.

vol II/11, 166; Keith, Budd. Phil. 4th ed, p.22

- In the Sanskrit Buddhist texts the word is used directly for the Abhidharma (Pitaka) -Divy p.18, 337; MSV III/122; Prat. 520.

Dr. Kern, Manual etc, p.3, 104; Oldenberg and Rhys Davids, SBE, XIII/273; Mrs. Rhys Davids, Buddhist Manuals etc, 2nd ed. p. ix, cv-xii.
introductory chapter of the Dhammasaṅgani, the first book of the Abhidhamma-pitaka. In the Sangītsutta, there is a Matika of 227 kinds of Dharmas presented in the numerical order of the groups of one, two, three, etc. up to the groups of ten covering 903 dharmas in all.

In the Dasuttara sutta, too, the dharmas have been divided into the groups of ones, pairs, triads etc. up to tens, as in the Sangītsutta, and in addition the nature of these dharmas also has been discussed. These two suttas, therefore, mark the beginning of the Abhidharma literature. Dr. Rhys Davids has rightly observed that "All that we know is that each of them forms a sort of thematic index to the doctrines scattered through the four Nikāyas. In the two features they have in common, of catechism as a monologue by the catechumen...they become practically Abhidhamma rather than Sutta-pitaka". In the latter period the Sarvāstivādins produced an independent Abhidharma treatise called "Sangītiparyāya" which is also entirely based on the Sangīti-sutta. Dr. Keith

1. Jaini; ibid, p. 36-37.
however, believes that it was the Sarvāstivādin example which induced the Vibhajyavādins to develop a separate Abhidharma. Dr. Takakusu also has furnished the fact that the Chinese translation of the "Sāṅgītītiparyāya" attributed this sūtra to Sāriputra. In the Majjhimanikāya, there are so many other suttas, in which too we find the germ of the actual Abhidharma. The Mahāsukuludāyasutta deals with 37 Bodhipakkhiya dharmas (things pertaining to enlightenment), eight Vimokkhas (Deliverances), eight Abhibhāyanatas (stages of mastery), ten Kasiṇāyatanas (kasiṇa-spheres), four Jhānas (meditations) and six Abhūññās (higher spiritual powers). The Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta deals with the four satipaṭṭhānas (applications of mindfulness) and the four Ariyasaṅgatas (noble truths). The Mahāniśanasutta deals with the 12 factors of the Paṭicca-samuppāda (Dependent origination). The Bahudhatukās-sutta deals with 41 dhātus (elements). The Chachakka sutta deals with six sense organs, six sense objects, six kinds of

1. Buddhist Philosophy etc, 4th ed. P. 24 n
touch, six kinds of perception, six kinds of craving, and the like. Moreover, in the Vibhaṅgavagga of the Majjhimanikāya there are some Vibhaṅga-suttas which also are devoted to the exposition of similar such items. These topics are more or less common in almost all Abhidharma works in Pali and Sanskrit. In the Sānyuttanikāya also we find so many suttas which deal with topics which may be compared with the Matikas of the Abhidharma. For example, the Nidāna-sāmyutta deals with Paṭicca-samuppāda, the Dhammasāmyutta with all sorts of elements (dhātus), the Khandha-Sāmyutta with the five aggregates (Rūpa, Vedanā, Saññā, saṅkhāra and Viññāna), the Salāyatanasāmyutta with āyatanas (spheres), the Sāriputta Sāmyutta and the Moggallāna-Sāmyutta with Dhyānas in the Rūpa and Ārupyadhātus, the Asaṅkhata-sāmyutta with the exposition of Nibbāna and the Mahāvagga of the Sāmyuttanikāya deals mainly with the 37 Bodhipakkhiya dhammas. Here comes the Āṅguttaranikāya which also refers to various terms occurring in the Abhidharma Pitaka. We find herein that the dhammas scattered all over the other Nikāyas find repetition here in an artificial group of numbers from one to eleven. As it follows the method of
numerical order while expounding the dharmas, it comes much closer to the Abhidharma treatises and according to Winternitz it may be designated as "a forerunner of the Abhidhammapiṭaka". Furthermore, the Niddesa and the Patiśambhidāmagga of the Khuddakanikāya may, directly, be regarded as the Abhidharma books rather than as sūtras. The method and style adopted in the books while explaining the clauses and the technical terms are entirely of the Abhidhamma nature. Their contents and forms also fairly agree with those of the early Abhidharma treatises. The Niddesa serves as an example to show as to how the sacred texts were explained and clarified even in ancient times. The often repeated use of synonyms for a word, the explanation of the doctrinal terms with quotations from the early Canonical texts, and the like, illustrate the Abhidhammic tendency of the book. Moreover, the term "abhidharmīka" appears first in this very book. The Patiśambhidāmagga, on the other hand, deals with thirty doctrinal problems of early Buddhism, in three large sections namely, A) ānāna, ditthi, ānāpāna, indriya, vimokkha, gati, kamma, vipallāsa, magga and mandaṇeyya, B) yuganaddha, saccā, bojjaṅga,

1. Hist. of Ind. Lit. Vol. II P.66
metta, viraga, patisambhida, dhammacakka, lokuttara, bala and suññata, and C) mahapannna, iddhi, abhisamaya, viveka, cariy, pithariya, samasisa, satipatthana, vipassana and mlik. All these doctrinal problems are treated here in the form of questions and answers, a style peculiar to the Abhidharma works. From the above we may presume why the Niddesa and the Patisambhidamagga are regarded as the intermediate literature between the sutra and the Abhidharma pitakas. Upatissa, the author of the Vimuttimagga, also regarded them as the Abhidharma books and frequently quoted from them (e.g., Ps 1/46-47; Nd 1/42) using the clause "the Abhidhamma says" or "it is said in the Abhidhamma". Buddhaghosa thus has rightly observed that the Abhidhamma is a Pitaka by Pitaka-classification, Khuddakanikaya by Nikaya-classification, Veyyakaran by part-classification and it contributes a few thousand units of texts by the classification of textual units.

1. Bapat, Vimuttimagga etc. P. 4,74,125.
From what has been seen before we may hold that the
tendency towards collecting, classifying and elaborating
the advanced and higher doctrinal matters (viz. khandhas,
āyatanas, dhātus, saccas, indriyas, paticcasamuppāda,
kammas, kilesas, maggas, jhānas, vimokkhas, abhibhāyatanas,
kasiṇas, bodhipakkhiya-dhammas, and the like) scattered
all over the Nikāyas grew in the time of the Buddha
himself and his immediate disciples (6th to 5th century
B.C.) like Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Mahākaccāna, Ānanda,
and the like. The collective name for all these doctrinal
matters is "Abhidharma" and in almost all the Abhidharma
works, in Pali and Sanskrit, these matters are, in essence,
common. Now, as the supreme Buddha was the very first
to understand and preach these doctrinal matters, the
original Abhidharma has been ascribed to him. After
his Mahāparinirvāṇa such Ābhīdharmic tendency was
developed still further. His disciples, skilled in the
field, who later on came to be designated as "Ābhīdham-
mikas"¹ devoted themselves to the special study of
the subject. The specialisation in the field of Abhi-
dharma thus continued and was maintained by the unbroken

¹ Abhidhammam adhito ābhīdhammiko = Saddaniti (H.W.Smith),
786, 809; Kaccāyanavutti (Ceylonese edition), 80/.—
— One who has specialised in the study of the Abhidhamma.
"A group of Ābhīdhammikas was known as Ābhīdhammika-
gañña" Vism.(HOS)76.
line of teachers (acariyaparamparāya). In their specialisation, the Ābhidhammikas of the early period followed the method of analysis which helps us to know the participial nature of phenomena, whereas the Ābhidhammikas of the latter period followed the method of synthesis too in addition to the method of analysis, which gives insight into the dynamic function, as well as the cause for the separate identity of the same phenomena. Such specialisation ultimately gave rise to a peculiar literary style to Ābhidharma, as a result of which the fundamental Ābhidharma literature grew, and in course of time it took its final shape as the Ābhidharmapiṭaka.

**ABHIDHARMA LITERATURE AND THE ABHIDHARMA PIṬAKA:**

We have already discussed about the origin of the Abhidharma. Let us now deal with the history of the growth and development of the Abhidharma literature in various schools of Buddhist thought.

Tradition records that within two to three centuries after the Buddha's mahāparinirvāṇa, the history of

1. Illustrated in the Dhammasaṅgani, Vibhaṅga etc.
2. Illustrated in the Patthāṇa and Yamaka.
Buddhist thought saw the development of more or less eighteen to twenty-six schools or sects which sprang up in succession from the two main branches of Buddhism—Theravāda and Mahāsaṅghika. All these schools had their own peculiar characteristics according to the main branch from which they originated, and whether conservative or progressive all tried in their own way to render explicit what was implicit in the discourses of the Buddha, and also to explain its logical significance.

Their controversy however, no longer remained in the rules of discipline only for which actually the Buddha's Saṅgha was first split into two—Theravāda and the Mahāsaṅghika—within a hundred years after his Mahāparinirvāṇa; it gradually turned towards the finer points of psychology, logic and philosophy found in the Buddha's discourses. But even in the interpretation of this branch of doctrine, divergence of opinion grew

1. This divergence of opinion grew most probably for the following reasons:

1) Complete isolation of the Buddhist centres or monasteries due to geographical expansion of early Buddhism;

2) doubts as regards the "actual words" of the Buddha (Buddhavacana) as these had not yet been put to writing; and

3) competitive tendency among the schools to make themselves superior to others.
among the schools which ultimately gave birth to a good number of Abhidharma works. But unfortunately most of these books in original are now lost; only a few of them are preserved in the Chinese and Tibetan translations. The seven principal books of the Pāli Abhidhamma are, however, available in original and intact.¹

THE FUNDAMENTAL ABHIDHARMA LITERATURE

The fundamental Abhidharma treatises are those which were included in the canon of various schools. The commentaries and the manuals were however, excluded. To the Buddhists of the world now the seven principal Abhidharma books in Pāli of the Theravāda school and the seven principal Abhidharma books in Sanskrit of the Sarvāstivāda school are regarded as the sacred and fundamental Abhidharma literature.²

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¹ The texts extant in the Ceylonese, Burmese, Thai, Cambodian and Laotian versions are in complete agreement excepting some minor spellings and grammatical forms.

² This discriminatory arrangement, however, is not followed in the scriptures of all Buddhist schools. For instance, in the scriptures in Chinese translation, even the commentaries, sub-commentaries and manuals on the fundamental Abhidharma treatises are equally ranked with the fundamental ones - E.B. p.38.
The seven principal books of the Pali Abhidhamma, the authorship of which goes to the Buddha himself, are generally found in the following order: Dhammasangani, Vibhaṅga, Dhātukathā, Puggalapāṇīṇatti, Kathāvatthu, Yamaka and Paṭṭhana. They belong to the Theravāda (Sthaviravāda) school of the Hinayāna branch of Buddhism.

_Dhammasaṅgani_ - The Dhammasaṅgani, "compendium of Dhammas", constitutes the nucleus of the whole Abhidhamma pīṭaka in Pāli. It is a "Buddhist manual of psychological ethics" and as the title suggests it enumerates the dhammas (mind, mental states and physical elements) by way of classification and definition, question and answer. The mind, mental attributes and the physical elements, which form the basic themes of the Abhidhamma, are treated here from the ethical or Karmical standpoint. The book begins with a Māṭikā (list or tabulated summary) consisting of 122 groups- 22 Tikas (i.e. dhammas divided under three heads) and 100 Dukas (i.e. dhammas divided under two heads). This is followed by the enumeration of 89 citta-dhamma (the mind itself), cetasika or mental attributes associated with each mind-consciousness and rūpadhamma (physical elements).
As regards to its contents the Dhammasaṅgani may be compared to the Vijñānakāya and the Dhātukāya - the two Abhidharma texts of the Sarvastivādins.

Vibhaṅga - The Vibhaṅga, "Classification", is almost like a supplementary work to the Dhammasaṅgani. But in its 18 sections (Vibhaṅgas) it deals with the exposition of the Buddhist psychological ethics in a more scholastic method than that of the Dhammasaṅgani. All the 18 sections of the book are complete in themselves and are independent of each other. Most of the sections again expound the dhammas - khandha, āyatana, dhātu, indriya, and the like, in three methods - in the Sutta-method, Abhidhamma method and the Pañha-pucchaka method (i.e. explaining the dhammas by way of questions and answers). So far as the sutta-method of explanation is concerned, the Vibhaṅga may be compared with the Dhammakhandha of the Sarvāstivādins. Dr. B. C. Law however, is of opinion that the Vibhaṅga agrees with the Pravaraṇapāda of the Sarvāstivādins.

Dhātukathā - The Dhātukathā, "Discourse on elements", consists of 14 chapters dealing, by way of questions and answers, with the relation of all psychical phenomena to

aggregates (khandhas), bases (āyatana), and elements (dhātus). The Dhammas enumerated in the Dhatukathā are 125 in number. In method it quite resembles the Dhatukāya and the Prakaranapāda of the Sarvāstivādins.

Puggalapānatti - The Puggalapānatti "Description of Human Individuals", is a short treatise treating with different types of puggalas (individuals), ordinary as well as super. It follows the Āṅguttara-method of explanation and most of its contents have parallels in the Sangīti-sutta of the Dīghanikāya and some of the suttas of the Āṅguttaranikāya. To some extent it corresponds to the Pudgala-chapter of the Aprasānaka-bhūga of the Sāriputra-Abhidhammasāstra.

Kathāvattu - The Kathāvattu, "Points of controversy", is traditionally ascribed to the Tissa Moggaliputta, president of the 3rd Buddhist council held at Pātaliputta under the patronage of king Asoka. In 23 chapters the book...

1. 5 Khandas, 12 Āyatana, 18 Dhātus, 4 Saccas,
   22 Indriyas, 12 Factors of Paṭiccasamuppāda, 4
   Satiputthānas, 4 Sāmappadānas, 4 Iddhipādas, 4 Jhānas,
   4 Appamāṇāyos, 5 Indriyas, 5 Ālayas, 7 Āṭānas,
   8 Māggas, Phassa, Vedana, Sanna, Ātanā, Citta, Adhimokkha,
   and Manasikāra.
discusses 217 doctrinal items of the various schools of Buddhist thought. The various views represented in this book include those of the Vajjiputtaka, Sammitiya, Sabbatthivāda, Mahāsaṅghika, Kassapīya, Andhaka, Pubbaseliya, Aparaseliya, Rājagirika, Siddhatthika, Gokulika, Bhaddayānika, Mahiśāsaka, Uttarāpathaka, Hetuvāda, Vetulyavāda etc. The book is written in dialogues but arranged without any systematic order.

Yamaka - The Yamaka, "The book of pairs", consists of 10 chapters dealing with the problems of classification and subordination, appearance and disappearance of all dhammas, discussed pair by pair in the form of question and answer. It is a difficult work unintelligible to beginners who have no deep knowledge of the Abhidhamma doctrine. The book is so called on account of its double-grouping of exposition. According to Dr. Winternitz this book has been composed to dispel any doubts which might arise after the first 5 books of the Abhidhamma pitaka.

Patthana - The patthana, "Book of the causal relationship" or the Mahāpakaraṇa, "The great treatise", is a gigantic work consisting of 6 volumes viz. Tikapatthana, Dukapatthana, Dukatikapatthana, Tikadukapatthana, Tikatikapatthana and
and Dukadukapatṭhāna. The Book reduces all phenomenal relations into 24 Paccayas (conditions) or universal methods and considers all phenomena of the universe from every angle with the aid of these conditions. It has some resemblance to the Śāriputra-Abhidharmaśāstra, in which ten conditions (Pratyayas) are discussed and to the Jñānaprasthānaśāstra and the Abhidharmakosa in which 4 conditions and 6 causes are discussed.

The seven Sanskrit books of the fundamental Abhidharma belong to the Sarvāstivāda school of the Hinayāna branch of Buddhism. Unlike the seven Pali Abhidhamma books, these are attributed to human authors. The seven books are as follows:

i) Jñānaprasthāna of Kātyāyanīputra
ii) Prakaraṇapāda of Vasumitra
iii) Vijnānakāya of Devaśarma or Devaśema
iv) Dharmaśākandha of Śāriputra or Maudgalyāyana
v) Prajñāptiśāstra of Maudgalyāyana or Kātyāyanī
vi) Dhātukāya of Pūrna or Vasumitra
vii) Saṅgītiparyāya of Mahākausthila or Śāriputra.

The Sanskrit originals of these books are lost. They are all extant in the Chinese translations. The Prajñāptiśāstra only is available in the Tibetan version.

1. A survey of these books will be given in the following Chapter.
In the list of the important Sanskrit Books of the Abhidharma, The Śāriputra-abhidharma-sastra may also be included. We are not yet positive as to which school it belongs to. It contains a synoptical collection of the other fundamental Abhidharma works.¹

The Abhidharma-samuccayakārika of Saṅghatrīta is also regarded as the fundamental Abhidharma book of the Cāmātiya school. A palm-leaf manuscript (in 26-27 leaves) of this has been discovered by Prof. G. Tucci in Tibet.²

Apart from these, the Mahāsākās, the Kāśyapiyas and the Dharmaśyaktas also had their own Abhidharma books which are now lost. We however, do not find any Abhidharma book belonging to the Mahāsaṅghikas. But in their Vinaya, the Mahāsaṅghikas frequently refer to the words "Abhidharma" as well as "mātrākā."² The Sautrāntikas who take only the

1. A survey of these books will be given in the following Chapter.
2. Comae, E., Buddhist thought in India, p. 124.
3. The Dharmaśyaktas, a branch of the Sarvāstivādins, had a peculiar Abhidharma pitaka which is quite different from the existing Abhidharma collections. In their Vinaya text (popularly known as the Dharmaśyaktavinaya), there is an account of the First Buddhist council where Ananda after reciting the Agamas is said to have recited the Abhidharma pitaka consisting of 5 sections viz. Sasaścandaśaviveka, Asasaścandaśaviveka, Samyoga, Prayoga and Sthāna. - Thomas E. F. History of Buddhist Thought, p. 276-278; Lamotte, p. 198; JA 1916, II 20, 38.
4. Lamotte, p. 199.
sūtras as the standard,\(^1\) on the other hand, do not recognise the Arthaviniścayasūtra and the like to be the Abhidharma texts.\(^2\) But actually the Arthaviniścayasūtra, though begins with the words "evam maya śrutam" in the sūtra-manner, is of Abhidharmic nature and deals entirely with the Buddhist technical and philosophical categories.

From the Hsiu-en-Tsang's itinerary (A.D. 639), however, we came to know that he learns the Abhidharma of the Saṃmitīya school in the Parvata country in the north-east of Multan on the eastern side of the river Sindhu and that of the Mahāsaṅghika school at Dhanakatāka (Amaravati)\(^3\) in south India. But when he returned to China, he took with him 15 books of the Saṃmitīya school and 15 books of the Mahāsaṅghika school. He also took 14 books of the Theravāda school, 22 books of the Mahāsāsaka, 19 books of the Kāśyapiya, 42 books of the Dharmaguptaka and 67 books of the Sarvāstivāda school.

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1. Ye śūtraprāmāṇikā na tu āśṭraprāmāṇikāh - Vyākhyā, p. 11.
2. Sūtra-visēṣā eva hy Arthaviniścayādayo' bhidharmasamājā - ibid.
3. Dhanakatāka has been identified with Amaravatī - Dutt, S, Buddhist monks and monasteries of India, p. 135.
But he translated into Chinese only the philosophical books of the Sarvástiváda. I-tsing however, in his itinerary, records that at that time in India only the four schools (the Mahásáṃghika, the Sthaviraváda, the Mūlasarvástiváda and the sammitiya), which represented the existing eighteen schools of Buddhism, had their individual Tripitaka.

PROBABLE TIME OF COMPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPAL ABDHARMA TREATISES

Speaking properly it is very difficult to determine the date of compilation of the principal Abhidharma books. From the internal evidences of the books (both in Pali and Sanskrit), this much we learn that these books were not produced in a short time, but there was a considerable growth of thought and doctrine. It is however, presumable that they did not take their final shape so long as the principal sects of Buddhism had not established themselves fully. We have mentioned above that the process of branching and sub-branching of the major sects covered about two to three hundred years after the

2. Kögen Mizuno, E.B., p. 35.
= 40 =

Buddha's Mahaparinirvāṇa. During this period the Abhidharma books of each school probably got standardised - their prototype however being existing even earlier. Oldenberg therefore, has rightly remarked that the period between the council of Vaisālī and that of Pātaliputra saw the development of the Abhidharma literature.

So far as the Pali Abhidhamma pitaka is concerned, Buddhaghosa however, is of opinion that its seven books including the Kathavatthu, are to be regarded as Buddhavacana (the words of the Buddha). It is said that the Buddha himself preached the seven Abhidharma books in the Tāvatīṃsa heaven. As regards the Kathavatthu attributed to Moggaliputta Tissa, tradition records that the Buddha himself laid down its table of contents (nātikā) that two hundred and eighteen years after his mahāparinirvāṇa, Tissa, Moggali's son, seated in the midst of one thousand bhikkhus would elaborate the Kathavatthu to the extent of the Dīghanikāya bringing together five hundred orthodox and five hundred heterodox suttas.¹

¹ Cf. Dipavamsa VII/40-41.
So, as Tissa, Moggali's son, expounded the Kathavatthu (247-250 B.C.) not by his own knowledge but according to the table of contents laid down, as well as by the method given by the Buddha, the entire book may be regarded as Buddhavacana. Thus traditionally the authorship of the whole Abhidharma pitaka goes to the Buddha himself. This traditional account has been corroborated by the statement made by Buddhaghosa that as Buddhavacana the Abhidhamma-pitaka was rehearsed at the first Buddhist council held at Rajagaha immediately after the Buddha's Mahāparinirvāṇa. But most of the scholars have expressed their grave doubts as to the authenticity of the above tradition. They maintain that though the matters dealt with in the Abhidhamma-pitaka are found in the Buddha's own discourses yet the Abhidhamma pitaka, as we are having now, took its considerable shape after a gradual development of at least two hundred and fifty years after the Buddha's Mahāparinirvāṇa. From the Kathavatthu

1. Dhs. A. P. 27; Huien-Tsang also has attributed the compilation of the Abhidharma pitaka to Kāsyapa, the president of the 1st Buddhist council. E. Lamotte has cited various evidences in favour of this fact - Histoire du Buddhism, p. 188.
which was compiled by Thera Tissa, son of Moggali (Maudgali) during the reign of king Asoka (273 B.C. – 232 B.C.) the great patron and adherent of the Buddhist community, however, we get some clue to solve the problem of determining the age of the Abhidhamma pitaka. It is found that the Kathavatthu quotes passages from the Dhammasaṅgani and Vibhaṅga and also refers to the subjects treated in the Paṭṭhāna. We may therefore, conjecture that before the 3rd century B.C. the Abhidhamma pitaka was partially compiled and took its final shape in the subsequent period the lower limit of which should not be extended so far down towards the close of the 1st century B.C. when it was put to writing in Ceylon under the patronage of king Vattagāmani Abhaya (circa 29 B.C. – 17 B.C.). The textual evidence of the Milindapañha (1st cent. A.D.) also confirms this statement, as it has referred to the seven texts of the Abhidhamma pitaka by name and as the words "Tepitaka".

1. From the inclusion of the Vetulyaka sect's (2nd century A.D.) heresy in the Kathavatthu, Dr. Keith forms the opinion that the Kathavatthu was still open to additions in the 2nd century A.D.-Keith, Buddhist Phil. p. 23.

and "piṭakattaya" appear in the book for a number of times.\textsuperscript{1} As to the Chronology of the seven books of the Pāli Abhidhamma Pitaka is concerned, the scholars unanimously regard the Dhammasaṅgani as the first book which was followed by the other six. It is younger than the Nikāyas and older than the Kathāvatthu (450 B.C. \textsuperscript{= 447 B.C.}). Mrs. Rhys Davids has carefully examined the form and content of the book and has come to the conclusion that it was finally composed in about 385 B.C.\textsuperscript{2} Dr. E. C. Law more or less, agrees with her contention and places the book in the first-third of the 4th century B.C.\textsuperscript{3} The Vibhaṅga is nothing but a continuation and expansion of the Dhammas dealt with in the Dhammasaṅgani. The difference of the two books lies in the method of treatment only. It is, therefore, regarded as the second book of the Abhidhamma piṭaka. Now comes the Dhutukathā which according to Nyānatiloka was compiled on the foundation of the Vibhaṅga. It is a compilation of the Pre-Asokan age.\textsuperscript{4} It describes, by way of questions

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Ibid, P. 18, 21, 348.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics, P.xviii f.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Hist. Pali Lit. I, P.305.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Perēra,C.A., Forword to "The Guide Ehrough etc.", P.1.
\end{itemize}
and answers, the relation of all phenomena (dharma) to khandhas, āyatanas and Dhātus classified and explained in the Vibhanga. The puggalapaññatti is a compilation of the post-Nikāya and the pre-Asokan age. It has no concern with the study of the Dhammas as in the other three books mentioned above. But it furnishes us with new materials which the compilers of the previous books did not include in their respective books thinking that they do not fall in the system of Abhidhamma proper. It describes and classifies individuals (puggalas) from Puthujjana to Sammāsambuddha according to their ethical qualities. Its spirit and style, definitions and classifications are definitely of the Abhidharmic nature. The book, therefore, has unanimously been placed in the fourth numerical order.¹ Here comes the kathāvatthu. Traditionally it occupies the fifth place. But as it has been finally compiled in the 3rd Buddhistic Council of Pātaliputra held approximately in 246 B.C.,² some scholars regard it as the 7th and latest book of the Abhidhamma pitāka.³

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1. Only Dr. Rhys Davids inclines to rank it as the earliest book - Buddhist India, 8th ed., p.84.
2. Davids, Mrs. Rhys., Intr. Points of Contro., p.XXXI.
Some others are however, of opinion that it is the 3rd Book.¹

The Yamaka, a book of applied logic² has been regarded as the 6th book of the Abhidhamma pitaka. It gives a logical explanation of all the fundamental doctrinal concepts. It is therefore, undoubtedly a later work and Dr. Winternitz³ observes that it was compiled "to dispel any doubts which might still arise after the first five books of the Abhidhamma". Mahāthera Ledi Sadaw also holds the same view and remarks that the Yamaka was intended to clear up the difficulties left by the Kathāvatthu.⁴ The Paṭṭhāna or the Mahāpakaraṇa is traditionally recorded as the 7th and latest book of the Abhidhamma-pitaka. In the Chinese recension of the Samantapāsādikā however, it occupies the 5th place.⁵ In this treatise are enumerated the 24 conditions (Paccayas) which show that the worldly phenomena "are not isolated entities, but, in reality, constitute a cosmos in which

² Davids, Mrs. Rhys, "Yamaka", Intro. p.XVIII.
⁴ Yamaka, P.T.S.1913. Dr. Keith however maintains that Dhātu-kathā, Puggalapaññatti and Yamaka have been compiled after the compilation of the Kathāvatthu - Bud. Phil. 23.
⁵ Lamotte, P.189.
the smallest unity conditions the rest of it, and
is also being conditioned in return.  
This theory of conditions became very famous in later Buddhism when Buddhists tried to suppose a condition for everything that exists. Dr. Watanabe, therefore, thinks that this tendency of naive realism ultimately led to the famous thought "All things exist" (sarvam asti), the fundamental Sarvāstivāda doctrine which formed one of the major controversial points discussed in the Kathāvatthu. On the other hand, Mrs. Rhys Davids forms an opinion that some doctrinal matters treated in the Patthāna are found in the Kathāvatthu itself. We should, therefore, be inclined to think that the Patthāna was compiled at least before the Kathāvatthu and chronologically therefore, it should occupy the fifth place which also agrees with the chronological table given in the Chinese recension of the Samantapāsādikā.

Let us now deal with the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma pitaka. Dr. Takakusu is our best authority in this field who

2. Watanabe, p.133.
3. Points of controversy, Intro, pp.XXIX-XXX.
has thoroughly gone through the Chinese translations of the treatises and has given a dissertation of the same in the Journal of the Pali Text Society, London, 1906. From his dissertation we can form a very clear idea of the books. But we cannot come to a satisfactory conclusion so long as the books from Chinese are made accessible to us in translation. Any way from the sources so far available to us, this much we know that not only as regards their number, but also as regards their titles, to some extent, the seven Abhidharma treatises of the Sarvāstivādins agree with their Pali counterparts. But as regards the form and content the two are in no way identical, although Dr. Takakusu thinks that most probably one set has been modelled on the other. Dr. Winternitz, again does not agree with the view and holds an opinion that both the sets had a common source, probably, the lost Magadhi Canon. Dr. Keith, on the other hand, thinks that the Sarvāstivāda-Abhidharma pitaka was "possibly at first written in some Prakrit, but later on certainly in Sanskrit."

1. JRAS, 1905, p. 160.
He also maintains that Saṅghadeva and Dharmapriya brought the Jñānaprasthāna from Kashmir (A.D.383) possibly in a pali-like dialect, while Hiuen-tsang used a Sanskrit version when translating it in 657 A.D.¹ In the Takakusu's article also we find that the names of some chapters of the Jñānaprasthāna are given in a dialect akin to Pali. It therefore, seems that the certain Abhidharma texts of the Sarvāstivādins were composed in the lost Māgadhi dialect within 300 years after the Buddha's Mahāparinirvāṇa when the headquarter of the school still remained in Central India. Although in order to make their source more authoritative the Sarvāstivādins have ascribed some of their Abhidharma treatises to some direct disciples of the Buddha, yet this much can be presumed that the treatises were not composed during the life-time of the Buddha. They were also not composed in one and the same period² and must have taken their final shape gradually in the course of centuries; and most probably when the Sarvāstivādins went from Central

¹. *Budd. Phil*, 4th edition, p.154
   Cf. Kimura, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, P.7 : "The Buddhist monk Vinīta Deva of 8th century A.D. makes a statement like this : The Sarvāstivādins used Sanskrit, the Mahāsāṅghikas Prākrit, the Sammitiyas Apabhramśa and the Sthaviravādins used Paisāči".

². Murti, T.R.V., The Central Philosophy of Buddhism 2nd ed. P. 68
India to North-west and lived in the Kāśmīra-Gandhāra regions where they finally established themselves, they used Sanskrit for their later Abhidharma treatises. 

It is also very difficult to give a definite chronology to the books of which one is regarded as the 'body' while the other six as the 'feet' (pāda). Because the sources that we have and the traditions that have come down to us do not agree with each other. The traditional Sanskrit list of the books is as follows:

1. Jñānaprasthāna
2. Prakaranapāda
3. Viṃśānapāya
4. Dharmaskandha
5. Prajnāptiśāstra
6. Dhatukāya
7. Saṃgītiparyāya

The list given in Chinese differs to a certain extent which is as follows:

1. Kōgen Mizuno however, presumes that most of the seven treatises were produced in Central India before the Sarvāstivāda school began to flourish in North-west India - E.B., p.69.
2. Abhidhamakośavyākhya, Yasomitra - p. 11.
3. JPTS. 1905.
1. Jñānapraśthāna
2. Dharmaśakandha
3. Sāṅgītīparyāya
4. Vijnānakāya
5. Dhatukāya
6. Prakaraṇapāda
7. Prajñāpātisāstra

Buston, however, gives the Tibetan traditional list which is as follows:

1. Dharmaśakandha
2. Prajñāpātisāstra
3. Dhatukāya
4. Vijnānakāya
5. Jñānapraśthāna
6. Prakaraṇapāda
7. Sāṅgītīparyāya

The Mahāvyutpatti however, gives a list of six works only with the omission of the Vijnānakāya, which is as follows:

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2. Sec. 65, p. 87-96.
This disagreement in the lists leads us to a confusion about the chronology of the books. Yet from the writings of modern scholars like Dr. Takakusu, Dr. B. C. Law, Dr. B. Watanabe, Dr. A. C. Banerjee, Dr. E. Lamotte and Dr. Kōgen Mizuno, we may venture to give a possible chronology to the books. From the internal evidence of the books, it seems that the Dharmaskandha or "the conglomeration of Dharmas" was composed first. Its purpose and style

1. J.P.T.S. 1905, p. 82-118; E.R.E.XI, p. 198 ff
3. Thoughts, Literature and monasteries in Earlier Buddhism - p. 150-156.
7. Bu-ston also ranks it as the first book.
agree to a large extent with the Pali Vibhaṅga.\(^1\)

Though not comprehensive yet it is the Sarvāstivādins' first attempt in collecting their fundamental doctrinal matters. In the colophon of the book too it has been stated that the Dharmaskandha is the most important Abhidharma works and it is the fountain-head of the Sarvāstivāda philosophy.\(^2\) It is older than the Saṅgītīprārāyaṇa as the latter occasionally quotes passages from it. Here comes the Saṅgītīprārāyaṇa or "Rehear/method"\(^3\) in which the doctrinal matters have been arranged mechanically in numerical order, one to ten, for the sake of rehearsal. The book was composed perhaps to enable monks to easily commit to memory and recite the doctrinal matters collected in the Dharmaskandha and the Saṅgīti-Sūtrānata of the Dirghāgama. Dr. Takakusu

3. The Mahāvyutpatti list also ranks it as the second book.
thinks that most probably it was compiled by Mahakaushthila (a famous Sarvastivada teacher) after the session of the second Buddhist council of Vaisali and later on it was ascribed to Sariputra as both in the Saṅgītā-sūtrānta and the Saṅgītāparyāya, Sariputra had been the narrator.

The Viśānaka-vyāva or "Group (of subjects) on consciousness" may be ranked as the third book. According to the Tibeto-Chinese catalogue the book was compiled by Sthavira Devasarmā one hundred years after the Buddha's Mahāparinirvāṇa. In this book an attempt is made to clearly express for the first time the most characteristic doctrine in the Sarvastivāda, viz. "All things exist in the three states of time". The book also refutes the theory of "Ego" (Pudgala) and describes first the theory of four

1. The Sanskrit list also agrees with the view.
Pratyayas. The Dhatukaya or "Book discussing mental elements" is the fourth book in which thirty caitasika -dharmas (mental concomitants) have been discussed for the first time, viz., 10 mahābhūmikadharmas, 10 Kusala-mahābhūmika-dharmas and 10 Upakusāmahābhūmikadharmas. This classification, though incomplete, was a forerunner of later classifications of caitasikas. Next comes the Prakaraṇa-pāda or "Book of Exposition" in which for the first time the categories of the Abhidharma have been classified into five, viz., Rūpa, citta, caitasika, citta-viprayukta-dharma and asamskrta. With the five-member classification of the existing things some developed and rationalistic approach, which is comparatively of later origin, began among the Sarvāstivādin Ābhidharmaikas. It also classifies the caitasikas into forty, i.e. 10 Kusala-mahābhūmikadharmas are added to the thirty caitasikas described in the Dhātukāya. This also shows that this book is later than the Dhātukāya, and in it doctrines explained in the previous Abhidharma books are all brought together.
The Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra or "Book of instruction" occupies the sixth place. It seems that only the Hetu-prajñāpāramitā section of which translation is available in Chinese was the original text. Later on another book entitled "Lokaprajñāapti - Abhidharmaśāstra" was compiled by some unknown author and it was translated by Paramārtha in Chinese in 557 - 568 A.D. Dr. Takakusu thinks that the "Lokaprajñāapti - Abhidharmaśāstra" treats of the subject which the Prajñāaptiśāstra omitted either by mistake or on purpose and fills the gap admirably. From the above we may infer that the present Tibetan version of the Prajñāaptiśāstra which deals with three concepts - Loka, Hetu and Karma, is perhaps a later production (7th century A.D. at least) and undoubtedly it has utilised the matters of both the original "Prajñāaptiśāstra" (with Hetu-Prajñāpti only) as well as the "Lokaprajñāpti - Abhidharmaśāstra". As Buddhism was introduced in Tibet in the 7th century A.D., so no literary production on Buddhism, therefore, might have taken place before that date. The Prajñāaptiśāstra

deals with some popular creed, cosmological and secular matters, the qualities of a Bodhisattva and a Buddha, and the like, which also undoubtedly prove its later origin. Because cosmological and secular matters are the subjects of popular Buddhism and on the other hand those unending Buddhological and Bodhisattvological speculations grew in the later phase of Buddhism. Next comes the Jñānapraśthāna or "The Course of Knowledge" compiled by Kātyāyaniputra. In this book, almost all the topics discussed in the previous six Abhidharma treatises are treated as a whole. The author of this treatise has very wisely brushed aside the unnecessary and spurious portions which have appeared in the previous treatises and has elaborated the principal doctrines dealing with the philosophical concepts of the school which are treated partially in the previous books, and thus has given a definite and concrete shape to the Sarvāstivāda doctrines. So it might be the reason why in the fourth Buddhist council under Kaniska the Jñānapraśthāna was recognised as the container of the authentic and comprehensive doctrine of the Sarvāstivāda school and composed an elaborate commentary called "Vibhāṣā" or "Mahāvibhāṣā" on the same and thus gave a strong foothold to the Sarvāstivāda doctrine.
In the age of manuals and commentaries many Abhidharma books were composed in Sanskrit. Among them mention may be made of "The Mahāvibhāṣā or "Vibhāṣā" compiled in Kāśmīra during the time of Kaniska by Vasumitra, Ávaghoṣa and 500 Arhats, "The Abhidharma - hṛdayaśāstra" by Dharmaśrī of about 200 A.D., "The Abhidharmahṛdayasūtra" by upaśānta, "The Abhidharmakośasūtra" by Vasubandhu, "The Nīyāṇusāraśāstra" and "The Samayapradīpikā" by Saṅghabhadrā, "The Abhidharmāvatāra" of Skandhila, Saṅghabhadrā's teacher, "The Amṛtaśāstra" by Śrīghoṣaka, "The Samayabhedyāvacakrāśāstra" by Vasumitra (250-350 A.D.), and the like.¹

In the same age many Abhidharma books were composed in Pāli also in the Theravāda Buddhist countries. Mention may be made of the following:-(i) Vimuttimagga of Upatissa. It is the authentic Abhidharma treatise of

¹. These books will be discussed in the second chapter of this work.
the Abhayagiri-vihāra sect of Ceylon. This book was
definitely composed about a hundred years prior to Buddha-ghosa (5th century A.D.). The book is divided into 12 chapters: (i) Niṭāna, (ii) Silappericcheda, (iii) Dhutāna, (iv) Samādhīpariccheda, (v) Kalyāṇamittapariyesana, (vi) Cariyā-pariccheda, (vii) Kammathāna-pariccheda, (viii) Kammadvāra, (ix) Pañca-abhiṭṭhā, (x) Paññāpariccheda, (xi) Pañca-upāya, and (xii) Sacca-pariccheda. The Pāli original of this book is now lost, only its Chinese version entitled "cie-to-tao-lun"¹ is available. Dr. P.V. Bapat however, has made a comparative study of the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga in his "Vimuttimagga and Visuddhimagga"² and has come to the conclusion that "Buddhaghosa had upatissa's book Vimuttimagga before him and that he, taking the frame work of Upatissa's Vimuttimagga, amplified it with his scholastic erudition and composed his work Visuddhimagga, which has certainly far outshone Upatissa's Vimuttimagga".³

¹. Nanjio, No. 1293.
². Published from Poona. 1937.
³. "Vimuttimagga and Visuddhimagga", Intro P. lviii.

Recently another book has been published from Ceylon entitled "Vimuttimagga" (in Pāli) which seems to be composed entirely on the basis of Dr. Bapat's book.
ii) The *Visuddhimagga* of Acarya Buddhaghosa.

It was composed in the first half of the fifth century A.D. It is divided into 23 chapters. It contains "the best explanations of the doctrine of the Abhidhamma given minutely and coherently". Three commentaries of the fundamental books in Pali are also ascribed to Buddhaghosa. These are: 

a) The *Atthasālinī*, the commentary on the *Dhammasaṅgani*,

b) the *Sammohavinodanī*, the commentary on the *Vibhaṅga*, and
c) the *Pañcappakara-natthakathā*, the commentary on the remaining 5 books of the Abhidhamma pitaka. 

iii) the *Abhidhamma-avatāra* of Buddhodatta is a manual of the Abhidhamma and it is an indispensable book for monks professing the Abhidhamma.

It consists of 24 chapters of which sixteen are entirely in verse, one entirely in prose and seven in a mixture of prose and verse. It is rather an abridgement of the *Visuddhimagga*. Another Abhidhamma book is also ascribed to Buddhodatta. It is the "Rūparūpavibhāga", in prose. It was intended for the use of the beginners. 

iv) The *Visuddhimagga-ṭīkā*, a commentary on Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* and the "Paramattha-prakāśini", a sub-commentary on Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the books.

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of the Abhidhammapitaka, were composed by Dhammapāla, the elder. v) The Saccasāṅkhepa of Dhammapāla, the younger, is a small text in prose. It is suitable for the beginners. vi) The Mahāvīcchedani by Kassapa of Ceylon, vii) The Nāmarūpa-samāsa by some Khema, and viii) the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha of Anuruddha of the 10th century are also important treatises. The Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha is divided into 9 chapters. The book represents the highest peak of the doctrinal development of Abhidharma. The Paramattha-vinicchaya and the Nāmarūpa-pariccheda are also ascribed to Anuruddha. These were written in verse and were intended for the beginners. ix) The Nāma-cara-cūpaka of Saddhammajoti-pāla (Capa) of Burma marks the foundation of the Abhidhamma study in Burma on and from the 12th century A.D. Another book is also ascribed to him. This is the Visuddhimagga-gañthipāda which gives explanation on difficult words of the Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa. x) The Abhidhamma-mūlātīka, by a certain Ānanda (Vanaratana Tissa), otherwise known as Paramatthapakāsini or Sattābhidhamma-gandha-atṭhakathāya Mūlātīka, is an exegesis on the whole Abhidhamma Pitaka in Pali. xi) The Abhidhamma-

anutīkā by Dhammapāla, the pupil of Ānanda Vanaratana Tissa was written to supplement the original Abhidhamma-mūlatīkā. It is otherwise known as Līnatthaavatāna.¹

xii) The Perānatīkā by Vimalabuddhi is a commentary on the "Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha" of Anuruddha.²

xiii) The Abhidhammatthavibhavānī by Śumangala Ācariya (12th century) a pupil of Vimalabuddhi³ is a sub-commentary on the "Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha". The Abhidhammatthaviśakā, a commentary on the "Abhidhammāvatāra" is also ascribed to the same author. xiv) The Abhidhammatthapānjarasattāna by Vimalabuddhi, the younger, of the 14th century explains some passages of the Abhidhamma.⁴

In the production of these commentaries, sub-commentaries, manuals and compendia on the Abhidhamma, the Theras of Ceylon and those of South India, particularly

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2. Sāsanavamsa, P.T.S., p.34.
those belonging to the country of Cola, vied or cooperated with each other. In the latter period, however, the Theras of Burma also took some active part in this field of work. But in all the ages the position of the Theras of Ceylon was unique and unrivalled.

Lastly, from the history of development of the extensive Abhidharma Literature, in Pali and Sanskrit, as shown above, this much we can say, as Dr. B. M. Barua and Dr. N. Dutt observe, that "the rise of the eighteen sects and schools of thought was rather a sign of health than that of distemper, rather a clear proof of the increased vitality and power of expansion and adaptability of Buddhism than that of its stagnation and death." 2