

## Arupavacara Citta (Jhana of the formless) –(12 )

There are **three** types of Arupavacara consciousness namely

1. Moral (Kusala)
2. Resultant (Vipaka)
3. Inoperative (Kriya)

### Moral (Kusala)

The Yogavacara, intending to rise higher gives up the Rupa Kammatthana of the Rupavacara, and obtains Jhana one by one on the four Arupas (formless) namely: -

1. Ananta Akasa (infinity of space)
2. Ananta Vinnana (infinity of consciousness)
3. Akincanna (nothingness)
4. Nevasanna Nasanna (a state in which cognition is so extremely subtle that it cannot be said whether it is or not).

- These stages of Jhanas are called Arupavacara Citta or consciousness of the formless.
- There are only two factors namely Upekkha and Ekaggata.

Hence there are four types of the Arupavacara Kusala consciousness, obtaining Jhanas on the above four formless objects.

1. Moral Jhana –consciousness dwelling on the ***infinity of space***.
2. Moral Jhana-consciousness dwelling on the ***infinity of consciousness***.
3. Moral Jhana-consciousness dwelling on ***nothingness***.
4. Moral Jhana-consciousness ***wherein cognition is so extremely subtle, that it cannot be said whether it is or is not.***

### Resultant (Vipaka)

There are four types of the resultant Jhana consciousness of the formless corresponding to the above moral ones.

### Inoperative (Kriya)

The Arhat obtains these types of Jhana-consciousness of the formless, but they yield no Vipaka. They are Kriya or inoperative.

***According to the objects of Jhana, there are four types of consciousness of the formless.***

***According to moral, resultant and inoperative types there are twelve in number.***

## **Arupavacara Cittas**

### **(Consciousness mostly experienced in Arupa-loka)**

There are **12** arupavacara cittas that are equally divided into three groups of kusala, vipaka and kriya cittas.

- Arupavacara kusala cittas (arupa-jhana moral consciousness)
- Arupavacara vipaka cittas (arupa-jhana resultant consciousness)
- Arupavacara kriya cittas (arupa-jhana functional consciousness)

### **Who are capable of developing Arupavacara kusala cittas?**

Persons who are not yet arahats may acquire the four-arupavacara kusala cittas. They can experience in the sense-sphere as well as in the immaterial sphere.

### **Who are capable of developing Arupavacara vipaka cittas?**

The four-arupavacara vipaka cittas are experienced in the immaterial-sphere only. They are the kamma-resultants of arupavacara kusala cittas. A person who acquires arupa-jhana and maintains it till his death will be reborn in the immaterial sphere.

### **Who are capable of developing Arupavacara kriya cittas?**

These cittas can arise only in arahats and can be experienced in the sense sphere as well as in the immaterial sphere.

### **What are the four Arupaloka (Formless Realms)?**

1. Akasanancayatana (age limit of 20,000 M.K. or aeons)
2. Vinnanancayatana (age limit of 40,000 M. K.)
3. Akincannayatana (age limit of 60,000 M.K.)
4. N'eva Sanna N'asannayatana (age limit of 84,000 M. K.)

### ***Just for your interest only?***

There are three kinds of kappas, namely antara kappa, asankheyya kappa, and maha kappa.

The interim period when the age-limit of human beings rises from ten to an indefinite time and then falls to ten again is known as an antara.

Twenty such antara kappas equal one asankheyya kappa literally an incalculable cycle.

Four asankheyya kappas equal one maha kappa.

## Immaterial-Sphere consciousness-12 Arupavacaracittani

- The person who has developed the five rupa-jhanas may go up the ladder of concentration to **arupa-jhanas**.
- In doing so he uses the concentration associated with the fifth jhana as his base.
- He has to reason about the unsatisfactoriness of the physical body and the troubles it develops on account of heat and cold, insect bites, hunger and thirst, diseases, old age and death.
- When he feels detached from the physical body and rupa, he first develops the fifth jhana by meditating on the patibhaga-nimitta of pathavikasina.
- He then comes out from the fifth jhana and though the patibhaga-nimitta exists in his vision, he neglects it and tries to concentrate on the infinite space (akasa) beyond it and meditates "Akasa, akasa" repeatedly.
- When his mild attachment (nikanti) for the patibhaga-nimitta disappears, the nimitta also suddenly disappears unfolding endless space.
- He continues to concentrate his mindfulness on this endless space; he goes on meditating "Akasa, akasa" till he reaches the first arupa-jhana.
- This jhana is called "**akasananca yatana kusala citta**" because it focuses on akasa.
- He continues his meditation on the akasananca yatana kusala citta, meditating "Vinnana, vinnana" repeatedly till he reaches the second arupa-jhana. This jhana is called "**vinnananca yatana kusala citta.**"
- To develop the third arupa-jhana he focuses his attention not on the akasanancaca yatana kusala citta but on nothingness, meditating "Nathi Kinci" (there is nothing whatsoever) repeatedly till he reaches the jhana. This jhana is called "**akincanna yatana kusala citta- akincanna also means "nothingness"**".
- By taking the third arupa-jhana consciousness as the object of meditation, he can further develop the fourth arupa-jhana. This jhana is called "**nevasanna-nasanna yatana kusala citta** which means "perception neither exists nor does not exist". It refers to the fact that the fourth arupa jhana consciousness is so subtle and refined that one cannot definitely say whether there is a consciousness or not. Consciousness is no longer noticeable at the stage of this jhana.
- All the four arupa-jhanas belong to the category of the fifth jhana because they are based on the fifth rupa-jhana. They all have only two jhana-factors, namely upekkha and ekaggata.
- **The five rupa-jhanas differ from one another in the number of jhana – factors whereas the four arupa-jhanas differ from one another in the objects of meditation.**

## **Immaterial-sphere consciousness (arupavacara cittani)**

- This sphere of consciousness comprises the cittas pertaining to the immaterial plane of existence (arupabhumi); four realms in which matter has been totally transcended and only consciousness and mental factors remain.
- Rebirth into these four realms comes about through the attainment of the arupajhanas, the four immaterial or formless absorptions, which are reached by developing concentration beyond the five jhanas of the fine – material sphere.
- The immaterial sphere consists of twelve cittas—the four wholesome cittas with which worldlings and trainees, the four resultants, which arise through rebirth in the immaterial realms, experiences the immaterial attainments and the four functional which occur to Arhants who enter upon the immaterial attainments.

## **The base of the infinite space (akasananca yatana)**

- To reach to this attainment a meditator who has mastered the fifth fine-material jhana based on a kasina object spreads out the counterpart sign of the kasina until it becomes immeasurable in extent.
- Then he removes the kasina by attending only to the space it pervaded, contemplating it as “infinite space”.
- Through repeated attention given in this way, there eventually arises in absorption a citta having as object the concept of infinite space (akasapannatti).
- This expression refers to the concept of infinite space, which serves as the object of the immaterial-sphere consciousness.
- Hence the word ayatana “base” has the sense of a habitat or dwelling for the citta of the jhana. It is also extended to the jhana itself.

## **The base of infinite consciousness(vinnananca yatana)**

- The consciousness that is said to be infinite is the consciousness of the first immaterial absorption.
- Since the first immaterial absorption has as its object the base or concept of infinite space, this implies that the consciousness, which pervades that space as its object also, partakes in its infinity.
- To reach this attainment, the meditator takes as object the consciousness of the base of infinite space, and contemplates it as “infinite consciousness” until the second immaterial absorption arises.

### **The base of nothingness (akincanna yatana)**

- The third immaterial attainment has its object the present non-existence, voidness or secluded aspect of the consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite space.
- By giving attention to the absence of that consciousness, the third immaterial absorption arises taking as its object the concept of non-existence or nothingness (natthibhava-pannatti) in respect of the first immaterial consciousness.

### **The base of neither perception nor non perception (n' evasannan asana yatana)**

- This fourth and final immaterial attainment is so called because it cannot be said either to include perception or to exclude perception.
- In this type of consciousness, the factor of perception (sanna) has become so subtle that it can no longer perform the decisive function of perception, and thus this state cannot be said to have perception.
- Yet perception is not altogether absent but remains in a residual form, thus it cannot be said not to have perception.
- Although perception alone is mentioned, all the other mental constituents in this citta also exist in a state of such extreme subtlety that they cannot be described as either existent or non-existent.
- The fourth immaterial absorption takes as its object the consciousness of the base of nothingness, the third immaterial absorption.

### **Summary of Immaterial –Sphere Consciousness**

***Immaterial-sphere consciousness is fourfold when classified by way of object.***

***When again divided by way of the wholesome, resultant and the functional it stands at twelve.***