

# Abhidhamma Senior

04/2001 Write a short note on Rupa paramattha and enumerate the 28 rupas under different species.

Rupa paramattha is one of the 4 paramatthas (ultimate realities) taught in the Abidhamma. The others are citta, cetasika and Nibbana.

The Buddha analysed the so-called being as made up of five groups or aggregates (pancakkhandha) :

- I. Rupa (matter)
- II. Vedana (feeling)
- III. Sanna (perception)
- IV. Sankhara (mental states)
- V. Vinnana (consciousness)

Cetasika, one of the paramattha, is a group of 52 mental factors consisting of vedana (feeling), sanna (perception) and sankhara (mental states).

Rupa paramattha or ultimate realities, are things which exist by reason of their own intrinsic nature (sabhava). These are the dhammas : the final, irreducible components of existence. These ultimate realities, which result from a correctly performed analysis of experience, admit of no further reduction, but are themselves the final terms of analysis, the true constituents of the complex manifold of experience. In the Abhidhamma, the 28 rupa paramattha as enumerated are the dhammas, the final and irreducible true constituents of experience.

In contrast to paramattha, we have the conventional realities (sammuti) which refer to ordinary conceptual thought and conventional modes of expression like man, woman, animals, and everyday things that constituent our unanalysed picture of the world.

The 28 rupa paramattha are :

- I Great Essentials (Mahabhutam)
  1. Earth element (pathavi-dhatu)
  2. Water element (apo-dhatu)
  3. Fire element (tejo-dhatu)
  4. Air element (vayo-dhatu)
- II Sensitive phenomena (pasada-rupa)
  5. Eye-sensitivity (cakkhu)
  6. Ear-sensitivity (sotam)
  7. Nose-sensitivity (ghanam)
  8. Tongue-sensitivity (jivha)
  9. Body-sensitivity (kayo)
- III Objective phenomena (gocara-rupa)
  10. Visible form (rupam)

- 11. Sound (saddo)
- 12. Smell (ghando)
- 13. Taste (raso)
- \*Tangibility – made up of earth, fire & air elements

IV Sexual phenomena (bhava-rupa)

- 14. Femininity (itthatam)
- 15. Masculinity (purisattam)

V Heart phenomena (hadaya-rupam)

- 16. Heart base (hadayavatthu)

VI Life phenomena (jivita-rupam)

- 17. Life faculty (jivitindriyam)

VII Nutritional phenomena (ahara-rupam)

- 18. Nutriment (kabalikaro aharo)

These first 18 rupas are concretely produced matter. The remaining 10 are non-concretely produced matter.

VIII Limiting phenomena (pariccheda-rupam)

- 19. Space element (akasa-dhatu)

IX Communicating phenomena (vinnatti-rupam)

- 20. Bodily intimation (kaya-vinnatti)
- 21. Vocal intimation (vaci-vinnatti)

X Mutable phenomena (vikara-rupam)

- 22. Lightness (lahuta)
- 23. Malleability (muduta)
- 24. Wioldiness (kammannata)

XI Characteristics of matter (lakkhana-rupam)

- 25. Production (upacayo)
- 26. Continuity (santati)
- 27. Decay (jarata)
- 28. Impermanence (aniccata)