The Systematization of Wisdom
Praj#2 in the Abhidharma

I. Origins of the Abhidharma
1. What is the Abhidharma? The Abhidharma is a comprehensive and precise systematization of the Buddha's teachings that developed within the first three centuries after his passing away.
2. Probably originated from the *matikas*, "matrixes," "outlines," numerical lists of technical terms. The lists of bare terms were expanded by adding definitions of the terms, and attempts were made to show the connections between different sets of terms. Eventually this project took off and became an enterprise in its own right. Thus it evolved into the technical system called Abhidharma.
3. When Early Sangha split into different schools, the separate schools developed the Abhidharma in their own way. Two surviving systems: Theravada and Sarvastivada.

II. The Dharma Theory
1. Distinctive feature of Abhidharma is analysis and classification. An attempt is made to analyze the teachings into minute detail and to classify them into elaborate structures.
2. A single philosophical principle gave direction to the entire project of systematization. This principle is the idea that *all the phenomena of experience are made up of a number of elementary constituents*. These are called *dharmas*, the ultimate realities behind the manifest phenomena, the basic building blocks of experience.
3. The *dharma* theory is "the cornerstone of the Abhidharma."
4. The definition and classification of these *dharmas* and the explanation of their inter-connections form the main subject matter of the canonical Abhidharma. The teachers of Abhidharma hold that the Abhidharma is the special domain of wisdom.

III. Three Important Types of Dharmas
1. "What must be known": five aggregates, twelve bases, eighteen elements.
2. "What is to be abandoned": the different classes of defilements (four taints, four types of clinging, five hindrances, seven tendencies, ten fetters, etc.).
3. "What must be developed": 37 aids to enlightenment (four foundations of mindfulness, four right efforts, five faculties, seven factors of enlightenment, noble eightfold path, etc.)
4. The "Abhidhamma Project": to collect these schemes into a systematic whole in which each item has a clearly defined position.
5. Example: Theravada system establishes four kinds of ultimate realities, citta (1 reality of 89 types), cetasikas (52), material phenomena (28), and Nibbana (1). Total of 82 dhammas.
6. Two important sides to the Abhidharma philosophy: analysis and correlation. The Abhidharma analyzes experience down into its constituent elements. It also develops a scheme of "conditional relations" to explain how each element functions as a condition for the others.
6. In Abhidharma Commentaries, a dharma is defined as a state that supports or maintains an "essence" or "intrinsic nature" (*sabh2va3 dh2rent1 ti dhamm2*).

7. The essence (*sabh2va*) of a dharma is determined by "plotting" it in terms of a fourfold defining device: its *characteristic* (*lakkha5a*, special quality); its *function* (*rasa*), how it operates or acts; its *manifestation* (*paccupa66h2na*), how it appears to us, how it engages us in experience; its *proximate cause* (*pada66h2na*), its special condition.

IV. The Application of Abhidhamma to the Development of Pa##2

1. Definition of *pa##2*: "Wisdom is the penetration of the essential nature of phenomena (*dhammasabh2vapa6ivedha*); its function is to dispel the darkness of delusion that conceals the essential nature of phenomena; it is manifested as non-confusion; its proximate cause is concentration" (Visuddhimagga).

2. The "soil of wisdom": study of the aggregates, sense bases, elements, noble truths, dependent origination.

3. "Purification of View" = Defining of Mentality & Materiality
One has to obtain a clear view of mental and material phenomena. One does this by discerning their precise characteristics.

(a) One who uses a jhana as the basis for developing insight, first enters the jhana, then emerges, and defines the jhana factors and associated mental states in terms of their characteristics, functions, etc. These are all grouped together as "nama," mentality. Next he discerns the "heart base" as the support for the mental process. Then he discerns the four primary elements, which are the support for the heart base. Then he discerns other types of material phenomena. All are grouped together as "materiality."

(b) One who proceeds to develop insight directly, without prior jhana attainment, begins with the four elements, defining them by way of their characteristic. One then defines the other types of material phenomena by way of their characteristics, until one sees all the material phenomena with their own characteristics. One then groups them all together as "materiality." Next the mental phenomena become apparent, and one defines them by way of their characteristics as "mentality." So one has now seen the entire "experiential field" in terms of mental and material phenomena, with their own characteristics.

4. "Purification by Overcoming Doubt" = Discernment of Conditions
Application of dependent origination to mental and material phenomena. One observes how mental and material phenomena arise and cease in dependence upon their specific conditions.

5. This leads into the insight contemplations of impermanence, suffering, and nonself.

V. Pa##2 in the Higher Stages of the Path

1. Distinction between "the wisdom of insight" (*vipassan2-pa##2*) and "the wisdom of the supramundane paths" (*magga-pa##2, lokuttara-pa##2*). Wisdom of insight contemplates impermanence, suffering, and selfless nature of the mental and material phenomena. This brings a series of insights, called "insight knowledges."

2. All formations appear as dangerous, suffering, worldly, affliction; Nibbana is understood to be safety, blissful, transcendent, without affliction.

3. When wisdom reaches its climax, the mind turns away from all conditioned phenomena and experiences Nibbana. This is the realization of the supramundane path (*lokuttaramagga*), followed by fruition (*phala*). In the Abhidhamma, this process is defined with very exact precision.

4. Precise determination of the defilements abandoned by each path.