



PART 2 - ANSWERS

50 QUESTIONS ON BUDDHISM



JANUARY 1, 2025

Answers to 50 Questions on the Tripitaka

Vinaya Pitaka

1. **What are the 227 rules of the Bhikkhu Patimokkha?**

The Bhikkhu Patimokkha includes 227 rules designed to govern a monk's conduct. For example, a monk must not steal or lie. These rules ensure ethical behavior and harmony within the monastic community.

2. **What is the Bhikkhuni Patimokkha, and how does it differ from the Bhikkhu rules?**

The Bhikkhuni Patimokkha contains 311 rules, addressing specific challenges faced by nuns. For instance, Bhikkhunis have rules requiring mentorship from senior monks, which differs from Bhikkhus.

3. **Describe the significance of the Pārājika rules.**

These rules are the most serious, leading to expulsion if broken. For example, stealing or sexual misconduct results in permanent removal from the Sangha.

4. **What is the purpose of the Sanghadisesa rules?**

These rules address grave but reparable offenses, requiring confession and rehabilitation. For instance, forming inappropriate relationships is a Sanghadisesa offense.

5. **Explain the process of Upasampada ordination.**

Upasampada is when a novice monk becomes fully ordained. This involves taking vows before senior monks and agreeing to follow the monastic code.

6. **What is the Katina ceremony, and why is it important in monastic life?**

The Katina ceremony marks the end of the rainy retreat. Laypeople donate robes to monks, symbolizing mutual support between the monastic and lay communities.

7. **How is monastic discipline maintained within a Sangha?**

Discipline is upheld through regular recitation of the Patimokkha and community meetings to address issues.

8. **What are the roles of a Kammavācā during monastic decision-making?**

Kammavācā is a formal process for communal decisions like ordinations or resolving disputes. It ensures decisions are fair and follow Vinaya principles.

9. **Discuss the four requisites for monks and nuns.**

Monastics depend on four essentials: robes, food, shelter, and medicine. For example, lay supporters provide these necessities, maintaining a symbiotic relationship.

10. What is the role of the Vinaya Pitaka in preserving monastic harmony?

It provides rules that minimize conflicts, ensuring unity and discipline among monastics.

Sutta Pitaka

11. What are the Four Noble Truths, and why are they fundamental?

The Four Noble Truths address suffering, its origin, cessation, and the path to end it. For instance, mindfulness can reduce stress (Dukkha) by addressing its root cause.

12. Describe the Noble Eightfold Path in detail.

The path includes Right View, Intention, Speech, Action, Livelihood, Effort, Mindfulness, and Concentration. For example, avoiding harmful speech fosters better relationships.

13. Explain the teaching of Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppada).

This explains how phenomena arise due to conditions. For instance, craving leads to suffering, while its cessation leads to liberation.

14. What are the Five Precepts, and how do they apply to laypeople?

The Five Precepts guide ethical living: abstaining from harm, theft, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxicants. For example, avoiding alcohol promotes mindfulness.

15. What is the Dhammapada, and what type of teachings does it contain?

The Dhammapada is a collection of the Buddha's sayings, such as "Hatred does not cease by hatred but by love." This emphasizes resolving conflicts with compassion.

16. Which Sutta outlines the qualities of a good friend (Kalyāna Mitta)?

The Sigalovada Sutta defines a good friend as supportive, trustworthy, and wise. For example, a friend who advises against harmful behavior is invaluable.

17. Discuss the significance of the Sigalovada Sutta for householders.

This sutta provides guidance on relationships and social responsibilities, emphasizing respect and ethical living.

18. What does the Satipatthana Sutta teach about mindfulness?

It describes mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena. For example, being aware of your breath calms the mind during stress.

19. Explain the Maha Parinibbana Sutta and its importance in Buddhist history.

It records the Buddha's final teachings, emphasizing self-reliance: "Be a lamp unto yourselves."

20. What are the Jataka tales, and how do they relate to the Buddha's past lives?

Jataka tales narrate the Buddha's previous lives, showcasing virtues like patience and generosity. For example, Prince Vessantara's story illustrates selflessness.

Abhidhamma Pitaka

21. What is the Abhidhamma, and how does it differ from the Sutta Pitaka?

The Abhidhamma offers a systematic analysis of mind and matter, unlike the narrative style of the Sutta Pitaka.

22. Explain the concept of rupa (matter) and nama (mind) in Abhidhamma.

Rupa refers to physical elements, while nama refers to mental phenomena. For example, hunger (rupa) triggers thoughts of food (nama).

23. What are the four ultimate realities (Paramattha Dhamma)?

They include consciousness, mental factors, matter, and Nibbana, forming the basis of existence.

24. Describe the 52 mental factors (cetasika).

These include mindfulness, compassion, and greed. For example, mindfulness can counteract anxiety.

25. How does the Abhidhamma define consciousness (citta)?

Consciousness is the awareness of objects, arising and passing away instantly.

26. What is the Wheel of Life (Bhavachakra)?

It represents the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, driven by ignorance and craving.

27. Discuss the seven books of the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

These books delve into the mind, matter, and conditional relations, providing deep insights into reality.

28. What is the role of the Patthana in understanding conditional relations?

The Patthana analyzes how phenomena arise based on specific conditions, emphasizing interconnectedness.

29. How does the Abhidhamma explain the process of rebirth?

Rebirth occurs due to karmic energy, linking one consciousness to another.

30. What is the importance of meditation (bhavana) according to Abhidhamma?

Meditation develops concentration and insight, leading to the realization of ultimate realities.

31. What is the meaning of Paticca Samuppada (Dependent Origination)?

It illustrates how ignorance leads to the cycle of birth and death. For example, craving for material things perpetuates suffering.

32. How does the Abhidhamma explain Nibbana?

Nibbana is the ultimate reality, free from suffering and cycles of rebirth. It's like extinguishing a flame, representing peace.

33. What is the relationship between Karma and Vipaka in Abhidhamma?

Karma refers to actions, and Vipaka is the result. For instance, helping others (good karma) brings joy (positive vipaka).

34. How are the mind-moments analyzed in Abhidhamma?

Mind-moments arise and pass rapidly, highlighting impermanence. For example, joy experienced one second may turn to sorrow the next.

35. What role does mindfulness play in understanding Abhidhamma?

Mindfulness allows one to observe the mind's workings, fostering insight and reducing attachment.

36. What are the three marks of existence explained in the Abhidhamma?

Impermanence (Anicca), Suffering (Dukkha), and Non-self (Anatta) characterize all phenomena. For example, aging illustrates impermanence.

37. What is the difference between conventional truth and ultimate truth in Abhidhamma?

Conventional truth deals with everyday realities, while ultimate truth focuses on the underlying nature of phenomena.

38. How does Abhidhamma address the concept of non-self (Anatta)?

It demonstrates that no permanent self exists, as all phenomena are transient and interdependent.

39. What is the purpose of studying Abhidhamma?

It deepens understanding of reality, helping practitioners overcome delusion and attain enlightenment.

40. What are the three types of wisdom in Buddhism?

Sutta-maya (learning), Cinta-maya (reflection), and Bhavana-maya (meditation) wisdom. For instance, meditating on impermanence cultivates deep insight.

41. Explain the difference between wholesome and unwholesome mental states.

Wholesome states like compassion lead to positive outcomes, while unwholesome states like anger lead to suffering.

42. What is the role of faith (Saddha) in Abhidhamma?

Faith motivates practice, but it's balanced with wisdom. For example, faith in mindfulness practice inspires consistency.

43. How does the Abhidhamma categorize emotions?

Emotions are classified as wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral. For instance, generosity is wholesome, while jealousy is unwholesome.

44. What is the role of mental formations (Sankhara) in Abhidhamma?

Mental formations shape thoughts and actions, influencing karma. For example, habitual anger can lead to negative consequences.

45. How does Abhidhamma describe the process of perception?

Perception arises from contact between the sense organs and objects, leading

46. What is the significance of the seven factors of enlightenment (Satta Bojjhanga)?

These factors—mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity—lead to liberation. For instance, mindfulness serves as the foundation for developing other qualities.

47. How does the Abhidhamma explain the relationship between the physical body and the mind?

The mind and body are interdependent; mental states affect physical health and vice versa. For example, stress (mind) can manifest as headaches (body).

48. What are the four types of nutriment (Ahara) in Abhidhamma?

These include physical food, contact, volition, and consciousness. For instance, wholesome thoughts act as mental nourishment.

49. Explain the concept of Bhava (existence) in Abhidhamma.

Bhava refers to the state of existence determined by karma. For example, virtuous actions may lead to a favorable rebirth.

50. What is the importance of the practice of Vipassana meditation in Abhidhamma?

Vipassana reveals the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of phenomena, leading to wisdom and liberation.