

Immoral Mental Concomitants

Akusala Cetasikas

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There are 14 *cetasikas* which are ethically immoral. They may be divided into four sub-groups as follows.

1. ***Moha – catukka*** = *akusala - sadharana* (4)

(A group of four *cetasikas* headed by *Moha*)

- (1) **Moha** = *avijja* =delusion, ignorance, dullness
- (2) **Ahirika**=lack of moral shame, impudence
- (3) **Anottappa** =lack of moral dread, recklessness
- (4) **Uddhacca**=unrest, restlessness, distraction.

2. ***Lobha-tri*** = *papanca -dhamma* (3)

(A group of three *cetasikas* headed by *lobha*)

- (5) **Lobha**=*raga =tanha* =greed, attachment, sensuous desire
- (6) **Ditthi** =wrong view, evil opinion
- (7) **Mana**=conceit, pride

3. ***Dosa – catukka*** = Hateful ones (4)

(A group of four *cetasikas* headed by *dosa*)

- (8) **Dosa**=*patigha* =hatred, anger, aversion
- (9) **Issa**=envy, jealousy
- (10) **Macchariya**=avarice, stinginess, selfishness
- (11) **Kukkucca**=worry, scruples, remorse

4. End - tri=dull and wavering ones (3)

(The last three immoral *cetasikas*)

- (12) **Thina** =sloth
- (13) **Middha**=torpor
- (14) **Vicikiccha**=sceptical doubt, perplexity.

Explanation

(1) Moha

Moha is the ignorance of the true nature of sense-objects. All living and non-living things are made up of *nama* and *rupa* (mind and matter) which are endowed with the four common characteristics of *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), *anatta* (non-self) and *asubha* (loathsomeness).

As *moha* veils our mental eyes and shields us from seeing the true nature of things, we cannot see the extremely-rapid and incessant arising and dissolving of *nama* and *rupa* and the consequent four characteristics mentioned above. When we cannot see the true nature of things, we get confused and take the opposite characteristics to be true. So we see things as *nicca* (permanent), *sukha* (pleasant), *atta* (self or person) and *subha* (beautiful).

On account of this wrong vision of *moha*, a chain of undesirable consequences including sufferings and miseries arises one after another. Thus *moha* is like the director of a movie film; it directs everything but we are not aware of it as we cannot see the director on the movie-screen. It is indeed the primary root of all evils and sufferings in the world.

Moha is the leader of all the immoral *cetasika*. *Moha* and its three compatriots (*ahirika*, *anottappa* and *uddhacca*) associate with all immoral *consciousness*. So they are known as '*akusala - sadharana*.'

Because *moha* is opposed to insight or wisdom, it is known as '*avijja*.' *Moha* clouds our knowledge with regard to *kamma* and its consequences and the four Noble Truths.

(2) Ahirika

Ahirika urges a person not to be ashamed of committing immoral actions, speeches and thoughts.

In *Puggala -pannatti* (para.59) it is stated thus:

'Not to be ashamed of evil or unwholesome things: this is called lack of moral shame. As a village-pig does not feel loathsome in eating night-soil, so *ahirika* does not feel loathsome in committing evil deeds.

(3) Anottappa

Anottappa urges a person not to be afraid of committing immoral actions, speeches and thoughts.

In *Puggala -pannatti* (para. 60) it is Stated: "Not to dread what one should dread, not to be afraid of evil, unwholesome things: this is called lack of moral dread."

Anottappa is compared to a moth that is singed by fire. The moth, being unaware of the consequences, gets attracted by fire and plunges into the fire. In the same way *anottappa*, being unaware of the consequences, gets attracted, by evil, unwholesome things and plunges into evil deeds.

It is mentioned in *Anguttara Nikaya* (II. 6): "There are two sinister things, namely slack of moral shame and moral dread, etc." It should be noted that the recklessness due to *ahirika* and *anottappa* arises as a consequence of *moha* which clouds the mind and blinds the eye from seeing the results of evil deeds (*kamma*).

(4) Uddhacca

Uddhacca is the restless state of the mind which is compared to the disturbed state of a heap of ashes when hit with a stone.

As we cannot see our face in boiling water, a restless mind will not see the consequences of evil deeds. *Uddhacca* is also a follower of *moha* which makes the mind confused and let distraction (*uddhacca*) arise consequently.

(5) Lobha

Lobha is a strong desire for sensuous objects or *jhana* happiness. It will never give up this intrinsic nature of desiring however much one may possess. Even the whole wealth on earth cannot satisfy the desire of, *Lobha*. It is always on the look-out for something new.

Thus one cannot be truly happy if one cannot eliminate *Lobha*.

The second nature of *lobha* is attachment or clinging to sensuous objects or to *jhana* and *jhanahappiness*. This nature of attachment is compared with the sticky nature of monkey-catching glue. This glue is prepared by heating several kinds of sticky gum available in the forest to form a sticky paste.

The monkey-catcher applies this sticky mess of gum on the trunks of several trees. When sun-rays fall on the gum, spectra of various colours appear. A monkey, being curious, touches the gum with one paw which becomes firmly attached to the gum. In struggling to pull out this paw, the monkey pushes the tree with the other paw and also kicks the tree with both legs. So both paws and both legs are stuck to the gum.

Then the monkey tries to pull itself out by pushing the tree with its head. So the head is also stuck to the gum. The monkey - catcher may now come out from his hiding place and catches or kills the monkey easily.

Remember that worldly people are, being attached firmly by *lobha* to sense-objects as well as to their possessions. They cannot renounce the world and their worldly possessions including wives or husbands, sons and daughters. So they are being caught up by old age, disease and death life after life.

Lobha, together with its two great followers i.e., *ditthi* (wrong view) and *mana* (conceit), is responsible for extending the life cycle or the round of rebirth that is known as *samsara*. On account of this fact, *Lobha*, *ditthi* and *mana* are collectively, called '*papanca dhamma*'.

(6) Ditthi

Ditthi is usually translated as view, belief, opinion, etc. *Samma-ditthi* means right view and *miccha-ditthi* means wrong view. Here, as an immoral *cetasika*, *ditthi* is used in the sense of wrong view.

It has been explained above that *moha* clouds the mind and blinds the eye not to see things as they really are. It makes one see things as *nicca* (permanent), *sukha* (pleasant), *atta* (self or person) and *subha* (beautiful). Because of this wrong Vision, *lobha* clings or attaches to this 'self or person' and *ditthi* takes the wrong view that 'self' and 'person' really exist.

The most basic and universal wrong view is the 'personality-belief (*sakkaya-ditthi*) or 'ego-illusion' (*atta-ditthi*). *Sakkaya-ditthi* believes that this combination of mind and body is 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'man', 'woman', 'person', etc. *Atta-ditthi* believes in the existence of an 'atta or soul' or 'ego' or 'life-entity' in the body.

From this *sakkaya-ditthi* or *atta-ditthi* as well as from the ignorance due to *moha* there spring up thousands of wrong views. *Sakkaya-ditthi* is one of the ten fetters binding to existence. It is eliminated only on reaching the path of stream-winning (*sotapatti-magga*).

(7) Mana

Mana (conceit), like *ditthi*, is also a by-product of *moha* and *lobha*. *Moha* gives the wrong vision that 'persons' exist and that they are permanent, pleasant and beautiful. So *lobha* clings to these persons, especially the one represented by oneself.

Mana looks on this self-person as 'I am the best, I know most, I have no equals in the world'.

This conceit or pride is of three kinds: the equality-conceit (*mana*), the inferiority-conceit (*omana*) and the superiority-conceit (*atimana*). As the saying goes: 'pride will have a fall', pride or conceit is not a virtue to be proud of.

Mana is one of the ten fetters binding to existence. It vanishes completely only at the attainment of *arahatship*.

(8) Dosa

Dosa is translated as hatred, anger or aversion. It is the most destructive element in the world. It is more frightful than the atomic weapon. Of course, when someone pulls the trigger on the atomic weapon, he does so under the influence of *dosa*.

Normally, when one encounters with a desirable sense-object, clinging or attachment (*lobha*) arises, and when one encounters with an undesirable object, anger or aversion arises. The anger (*dosa*) destroys one first, before it destroys others.

Not only inflated *dosa* as the one present in an angry person but also depressed *dosa* as the one felt by a sad or depressed person are destructive. According to *Abhidhamma* the one who retaliates an insult is more foolish than the one who starts the insult.

(9) Issa

Issa has the characteristic of envying others' success and prosperity. As such it is objective, i.e., it looks not to oneself but to others.

(10) Macchhariya

Macchhariya has the characteristic of concealing one's property. It does not appreciate to share one's property or special privilege with others. It takes the form of stinginess when one is reluctant to give money for charity.

As mentioned in *Anguttara Nikaya* (IX, 49), there are five kinds of stinginess with respect to dwelling place, families, gain, recognition and knowledge. Contrary to *issa*, *macchhariya* is subjective. *Issa* and *macchhariya* make one unhappy without any inducement from others. One shall feel immediately happy if one can drive them away from one's mind.

(11) Kukkucca

Kukkucca has the characteristic of grieving over evil that is done and the good that is not done.

As it is useless to cry over spilt milk, it is of no use to repent or feel sorry about wrong doings.

Issa, *macchariya* and *kukkucca* are three companions of *dosa*. They arise separately because their lines of reasoning are different, but when one of them arises, it is always accompanied by *dosa*.

(12) Thina

Thina is the shrinking state of the mind like a feather before fire. When one is idle due to lack of *virīya* (effort), one is under the influence of *thina*. It is the sickness of *citta*.

(13) Middha

Middha is the morbid state of mental concomitants. When one feels inactive or inert, one is influenced by *middha*. It is the sickness of *cetasikas*.

Both *thina* and *middha* are opposed to *virīya*. Where there are *thina* and *middha*, there is no *virīya*.

(14) Vicikiccha

Vicikiccha is sceptical doubt about the Buddha, Dhamma, the Saṅgha, the Training; about things in past lives and future lives; about the Law of Causal Relations; and finally about the four Noble Truths.

Vicikiccha is one of the five Hindrances and is also included in the ten Fetters to existence. It disappears completely and for ever at Stream-entry.