

## *Samsāra* and *Nibbāna* as Reflected in Rootless Thoughts

### Objective of the Research

Among 89 thoughts represented in Abhidhamma Rootless Thoughts are common to both ordinary individual (*puthujjana*) and to liberated noble person (*Arahant*). This article shows how these Rootless Thoughts signify the nature of ordinary person and perfectly liberated person, in other words how they represent the nature of cycle of existence (*samsāra*) and that of *nibbāna*.

Proper understanding of Buddhist psychology partly depends on clarity of comprehension of these Rootless Thoughts. However, rootless Thoughts appear to have been so much complicated to understand. This has sometimes caused misinterpretations of them. This article attempts to make these thoughts less nebulous in relation to their nature and functions.

### An Introduction to Rootless Thoughts

Rootless Thoughts (*ahetuka-cittas*) presented in the Abhidhamma (Appendix I) are a set of 18 possibilities of mind (*Compendium of Philosophy: 84*)<sup>1</sup> of the sentient being that do not produce future effects. Most of our thoughts are having the potential to procure desirable or undesirable future effects depending upon their moral nature. The law or efficacy of being productive of future results is called *kamma*. Thus these Rootless Thoughts are taught as *kammically* neutral or morally neutral. Rootless Thoughts are found in the Abhidhamma in three categories.

1. Immoral Resultant (Abbreviated below as IR) (seven in number)

Thoughts produced by unwholesome acts in the past.

2. Moral Rootless Resultant (Abbreviated below as RMR) (eight in number)<sup>2</sup>

Thoughts produced by wholesome acts in the past.

3. Rootless Inoperative (Abbreviated below as RI) (Three in Number)

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<sup>1</sup> Present author has not followed the exact wordings of this translation.

<sup>2</sup> As there is another category of Resultant Thoughts with *hetu* among Wholesome Thoughts these are specified as Rootless. Note that IR Thoughts are not specified so.