

DHAMMACAKKAPPAVATTANA SUTTA

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

THE VENERABLE
MAHASI SAYADAW

Translated by U Ko Lay

Sponsored by
Mr & Mrs Lee Lee Kim & family
&
SukhiHotu Dhamma Publication



SukhiHotu Dhamma Publication
1998

DHAMMACAKKAPPAVATTANA SUTTA

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION BY
SUKHI HOTU SDN BHD



1A-2 FIRST FLOOR, MAYANG PLAZA
JALAN SS26/9, TAMAN MAYANG JAYA
47301 PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR
MALAYSIA

TEL 03 7062833 FAX 03 7062733

42V JALAN MATANG KUCHING
11500 AIR ITAM, PENANG
MALAYSIA

TEL 04 8277118 FAX 04 8277228

[EMAIL SUKHIHOTU@QUANTRUM.COM.MY](mailto:SUKHIHOTU@QUANTRUM.COM.MY)

FIRST PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF
THE UNION OF BURMA,
DECEMBER 1981

REPRINTED IN KUALA LUMPUR – 1000 COPIES (1987)

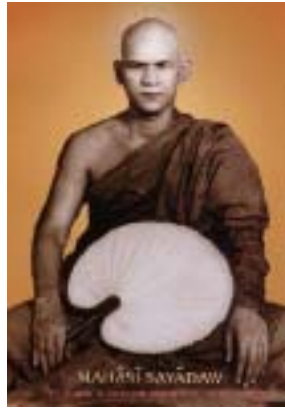
THIS REVISED EDITION (1ST PRINTING) – 3000 COPIES (1998)

COVER: PHOTOGRAPH OF A PAINTING (ARTIST UNKNOWN)
IN A TEMPLE IN THAILAND.

PRINTED BY MAJUYAYA INDAH, SELANGOR

BOOK LAYOUT AND COVER ART DESIGN BY JOTIKA
SPECIAL CREDIT – REBECCA TAM, NG CHEN CHEN & DOREEN LIM

ISBN 983-9382-12-8



The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw
as a Questioner
at the Sixth Council in Myanmar, 1954

PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH BY THE SAME AUTHOR

- 1 ARIYAVASA SUTTA
- 2 FUNDAMENTALS OF VIPASSANA MEDITATION
- 3 LOKADHAMMA SUTTA
- 4 TO NIBBANA VIA THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH
- 5 PRACTICAL BASIC EXERCISES
- 6 PRACTICAL VIPASSANA MEDITATION EXERCISES
- 7 VIPASSANA – SPIRITUAL INSIGHT
- 8 ANATTALAKKHANA SUTTA
- 9 BHARA SUTTA
- 10 BIOGRAPHY OF MAHASI SAYADAW
- 11 CULAVEDALLA SUTTA
- 12 BHARA SUTTA
- 13 HEMAVATA SUTTA
- 14 MAHASI ABROAD 1
- 15 MAHASI ABROAD 2
- 16 MALUNKYAPUTTA SUTTA
- 17 ON THE NATURE OF NIBBANA (NIBBANAPATI SAMYUTTA KATHA)
- 18 PURPOSE OF PRACTISING KAMMATTHANA MEDITATION
- 19 PATICCASAMUPPADA
- 20 PURABHEDA SUTTA
- 21 SAKKAPANHA SUTTA
- 22 SATIPATTHANA VIPASSANA MEDITATION – CRITICISM & REPLIES
- 23 SAMMAPARIBBAJANIYA
- 24 SALLEKHA SUTTA
- 25 SATIPATTHANA VIPASSANA MEDITATION
- 26 SILAVANTA SUTTA
- 27 TUVATAKA SUTTA
- 28 VAMIKA SUTTA
- 29 BRAHMA VIHARA DHAMMA

CONTENTS

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

CHAPTER ONE

PREFACE TO THE DISCOURSE	15
THE DATE OF THE DISCOURSE	18
THREE KINDS OF INTRODUCTIONS	19
BODHISATTA AND WORLDLY PLEASURES	21
THE IGNOBLE QUEST	21
THE NOBLE QUEST	22
THE RENUNCIATION OF THE BODHISATTA	24
MAKING HIS WAY TO ĀLĀRA, THE GREAT ASCETIC	25
TAKING INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HOLY SAGE ĀLĀRA	26
REASSURING WORDS	27
APPROACHING THE SAGE UDAKA	29
PRACTISING EXTREME AUSTERITIES IN URUVELA FOREST	32
THREE SIMILES	32
EXTREME AUSTERITY OF CRUSHING THE MIND WITH THE MIND	34
JHANIC ABSORPTION OF RESTRAINING THE BREATH	35
EXTREME AUSTERITY OF FASTING	36
MARA'S PERSUASION	38

RIGHT REASONING	40
ABSORPTION IN FIRST JHĀNA WHILE AN INFANT	41
RESUMPTION OF MEALS	42
THE ENLIGHTENMENT	44
EXTREME AUSTERITY IS A FORM OF SELF-MORTIFICATION	47
CONSIDERING THE QUESTION OF GIVING THE FIRST SERMON	48
MISSING THE PATH AND FRUITION BY SEVEN DAYS	50
MISSING THE GREAT CHANCE BY ONE NIGHT	51
JOURNEY TO GIVE THE FIRST SERMON	52
MEETING WITH UPAKA, THE NAKED ASCETIC	52
TRUTH IS NOT SEEN WHEN BLINDED BY MISCONCEPTION	54
ARRIVAL AT ISIPATHANA	56
THUS THE BLESSED ONE CONTINUED	62

CHAPTER TWO

SENSUOUS GRATIFICATION IS BASE AND VULGAR	65
DIṬṬHADHAMMA NIBBĀNA VĀDA	67
A LOW, COMMON PRACTICE	68
NOT THE PRACTICE OF THE NOBLE ONES	68
NOT TENDING TO ONE'S WELFARE (ANATTA SAMHITO)	69
CAN HOUSEHOLDERS INDULGE IN SENSUOUS PLEASURES?	71
FOUR KINDS OF INDULGENCE IN WORLDLY ENJOYMENTS	71
PRACTICE OF SELF-MORTIFICATION	72

METHODS OF SELF-MORTIFICATION	73
THE NIGANDA SCRIPTURE	74
PHYSICAL SUFFERING	76
PROFITLESS EFFORT	76
WRONG INTERPRETATION OF SELF-MORTIFICATION	78
MISCONCEPTION REGARDING CONTEMPLATION ON FEELING	80
THE VIEW OF A TEACHER	80
THE MIDDLE PATH – THE PRACTICE AND THE BENEFIT	84
HOW TO AVOID THE TWO EXTREMES	86
ANTIDOTE FOR INDIGESTIBLE FOOD	86
HOW VISION AND KNOWLEDGE ARE DEVELOPED	88
HOW VISION AND KNOWLEDGE APPEAR STEP-BY-STEP	89
KNOWLEDGE DEEPENS THROUGH PRACTICE	91
THE COMMENTARY EXPLANATION	92
STARTING FROM ANY STEP ACCORDING TO THE DEFINITIONS OF THE TEXTS	93
THE KILESAS ARE CALMED	95
WRONG BELIEF IN THE PRACTICE SĪLABBATAPARĀMĀSA DIṬṬHI	96
TEMPORARY PUTTING AWAY	97
ARISING OF SUPER-KNOWLEDGE	99
PENETRATIVE INSIGHT	101
REALIZATION OF NIBBĀNA	101

CHAPTER THREE

PAVĀRAṆĀ	105
ELABORATION ON THE EIGHTFOLD PATH	107
THE PATH OF RIGHT SPEECH	108
THE PATH OF RIGHT ACTION	110
THE PATH OF RIGHT LIVELIHOOD	111
SEEKING WEALTH THROUGH UNLAWFUL MEANS IS WRONG LIVELIHOOD	113
SEEKING WEALTH IN CONSONANCE WITH MORAL LAW IS RIGHT LIVELIHOOD	113
THE PATH OF RIGHT EFFORT	114
THE PATH OF RIGHT MINDFULNESS	118
WHETHER THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH WAS SERMONIZED IN DETAIL OR NOT	119
HOW TO PRODUCE VIPASSANĀ SATI, INSIGHT MINDFULNESS	122
EXPLANATION ON INSIGHT MOMENTARY CONCENTRATION (VIPASSANĀ KHANĪKA SAMĀDHI)	123
PROPER INSIGHT KNOWLEDGE ONLY BY MINDFUL NOTING	126
NO INSIGHT WITHOUT MINDFULNESS	127
THE PATH OF RIGHT CONCENTRATION	129
ASSERTION THAT VIPASSANĀ CANNOT DEVELOP WITHOUT JHĀNA	130
THE PATH OF RIGHT VIEW	134
KAMMASSAKATA SAMMĀDIṬṬHI	136
THE PATH IN THREE STAGES	139

HOW JHĀNA-LĀBHIŚ DEVELOP INSIGHT	142
CONTEMPLATION ON MISCELLANEOUS VOLITIONAL ACTIVITIES (PAKIṆṆAKA SAṆKHĀRA METHOD)	144
BEGINNING OF VIPASSANĀ MAGGA	146
HOW VIPASSANĀ SAMĀDHI MAGGAS ARE DEVELOPED	147
HOW VIPASSANĀ PAÑÑA MAGGAS ARE DEVELOPED	147
THE PATH OF RIGHT THOUGHT (SAMMĀ SAṆKAPPA MAGGA)	149

CHAPTER FOUR

TRUTH OF SUFFERING (DUKKHA SACCA)	152
CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DISPARITY	153
ACCURATE PĀLI TEXT ON DEFINITION OF DUKKHA SACCA	156
THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS	157
JĀTI DUKKHA – SUFFERING OF NEW BEGINNING (REBIRTH)	159
VIPARINĀMA DUKKHA	161
SAṆKHĀRA DUKKHA	162
PATICHANNA DUKKHA	163
APATICCHANNA DUKKHA	164
PARIYAYA DUKKHA	164
NIPPARIYAYA DUKKHA	164
MISERY IN A MOTHER’S WOMB	165
SUFFERING OF BIRTH	167
SUFFERING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF LIFE	167

JARĀ DUKKHA – SUFFERING BECAUSE OF AGEING	168
MARAṆĀ DUKKHA – DEATH AS SUFFERING	170
SOKA DUKKHA – SORROW AS SUFFERING	171
PARIDEVA DUKKHA – LAMENTATION AS SUFFERING	172
DUKKHA – PHYSICAL PAIN	173
DOMANASSA – GRIEF AS SUFFERING	174
UPAYASA – DESPAIR AS SUFFERING	174
SUFFERING FROM ASSOCIATION WITH THE HATEFUL	175
SUFFERING FROM SEPARATION FROM THE BELOVED	176
SUFFERING FROM NOT GETTING WHAT ONE WANTS	177
SUFFERING FROM THE FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING	178
THE UPĀDĀNAKKHANDHĀS AT THE MOMENT OF SEEING	179
FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF HEARING	182
FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF SMELLING	183
FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF EATING	184
FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF TOUCHING	186
FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF THINKING	189
SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THE FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING	194
UPĀDĀNA AND UPĀDĀNAKKHANDHA	196

CHAPTER FIVE

SAMUDAYA SACCA	202
THE STORY OF SAMPEYA NAGA KING	204
THE STORY OF QUEEN UPARI	206
HOW FRESH REBIRTH TAKES PLACE	214

IN BRAHMA LAND HE SHINES BRIGHT; IN PIG'S PEN, TOO, HE FINDS DELIGHT	218
THE STORY OF SAMANA DEVA	226
ATTACHMENT TO WIFE LEADS TO REBIRTHS AS A SNAKE, A DOG, OR A COW	239
A DHAMMA-TEACHING SAYADAW	242
BORN A BUFFALO FOR THE SUM OF FORTY KYATS?	243
NGA NYO'S SMALL MEASURE OF RICE	245
TERRIBLE LIFE NOW AS A DEMON, NOW AS A COW	248
REGAINING HUMAN LIFE AFTER BEING A COW AND A DOG	249
EVEN REBIRTH AS A CROWING LIZARD IS POSSIBLE	250
KĀMA TAÑHĀ	251
BHAVA TAÑHĀ	253
VIBHAVA TAÑHĀ	255

CHAPTER SIX

NIRODHA SACCA	261
HOW CESSATION OF CRAVING IS BROUGHT ABOUT	264
MAGGA SACCA – THE TRUTH OF THE PATH	269
EXPOSITION ON THE RIGHT VIEW (SAMMĀ DIṬṬHI)	270
MEDITATION ON THE FOUR TRUTHS	270
HOW MUCH SUTAMAYA, (KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HEARING)?	274
DEVELOPMENT OF PUBBABHĀGA MAGGA, OTHERWISE CALLED VIPASSANĀ MAGGA	279

NĀMA AS DISTINCT FROM RŪPA, EXAMPLE GIVEN BY THE BUDDHA	280
ABSTENTIONS DURING VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION	287
KNOWLEDGE OF THE FOUR TRUTHS THROUGH VIPASSANĀ ÑĀṆA	289
HOW THE FOUR TRUTHS ARE COMPREHENDED THROUGH ARIYA MAGGA ALL AT THE SAME TIME	291
VIPASSANĀ IS ALSO A CONSTITUTENT OF THE NIRODHAGĀMINI PATIPADĀ	293

CHAPTER SEVEN

SACCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO DUKKHA SACCĀ	296
KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO DUKKHA SACCĀ	303
KATA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO DUKKHA SACCĀ	307
SACCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO SAMUDAYA SACCĀ	311
KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO SAMUDAYA SACCĀ	315
ANUSAYA KILESA ACTUALLY EXISTS	319
KATA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO SAMUDAYA SACCĀ	322
SACCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO NIRODHA SACCĀ	323
KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO NIRODHA SACCĀ	324
KATA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO NIRODHA SACCĀ	326
SACCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO MAGGA SACCĀ	326
KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO MAGGA SACCĀ	328
KATA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO MAGGA SACCĀ	332

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHEN THE BUDDHA DID NOT ADMIT TO ENLIGHTENMENT	337
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF BUDDHAHOOD	341
CONCLUDING STATEMENT	343
MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION	345
HIGHER KNOWLEDGE FOR THE LISTENERS TO THE TEACHING	345
RECORDS OF THE SAṄGHĀYANĀ, THE FIRST GREAT COUNCIL	349
HOW THE VENERABLE KOṄḌAÑÑĀ ATTAINED HIGHER KNOWLEDGE WHILE LISTENING TO THE DISCOURSE	350
HOW MAGGA ÑĀṄA IS DUST-FREE AND STAINLESS	352
MAGGA NANA EVOLVES OUT OF VIPASSANĀ ÑĀṄA	354
WAS NOT MAGGA ÑĀṄA ATTAINED BY APPRECIATION OF THE DISCOURSE?	358
ACCLAMATION BY THE DEVAS AND BRAHMAS	359
THE EARTHQUAKE AND APPEARANCE OF SHINING LIGHTS	361
FERVENT UTTERANCE OF JOY BY THE BLESSED ONE	361
THE VENERABLE AÑÑĀSI KOṄḌAÑÑĀ'S REQUEST FOR ORDINATION	362
NOT EASY TO GIVE UP ONE'S TRADITIONAL BELIEFS	363
CITTA, THE WEALTHY MAN AND NĀṬAPUTTA	367
DEVELOPING DEVOTIONAL INSPIRATION	369
ORDINATION BY 'EHI BHIKKHU'	369

BEINGS WHO ATTAINED A HIGHER KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HEARING THE FIRST SERMON	370
HIGHER KNOWLEDGE ATTAINED ONLY AFTER ACTUAL PRACTICE	371
SYSTEMATIC GUIDANCE AND PRACTICE IN THE EARLY PERIOD OF THE SASANA	372
MERE LISTENING TO THE DISCOURSE IS NOT SUFFICIENT, ACTUAL PRACTICE IS NEEDED	375
HOW THE VENERABLE VAPPA, ETC., STROVE FOR ATTAINMENTS	377
SIX ARAHATS INCLUDING THE BLESSED ONE	379
THE GREAT CONCLUDING PRAYER	380



Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhasa

Reverence to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the Supreme
Enlightened One.



CHAPTER ONE

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE NEW MOON DAY OF TAWTHALIN, 1324, BURMESE ERA.

PREFACE TO THE DISCOURSE

Today is the New Moon day of Tawthalin. Starting from today, we will expound the First Sermon of the Blessed One, namely the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, commonly known as the Great Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma.

Being the First Sermon ever delivered by the Blessed One, it is the most ancient and the most straightforward of His Teachings. Rare is the person, amongst the laity of this Buddhist country of the Union of Burma, who has not heard of this discourse. Numerous are those who have committed this Sutta to memory. There are in almost every town and village, religious groups under the name of 'the Wheel of Dhamma Reciting Society', devoted to group recitation of the Sutta and listening to it. Buddhist followers regard this Sutta with great esteem and veneration as it was the First Dispensation of the Blessed One.

There are now in existence numerous *Nissaya* or other forms of translation, explaining and interpreting the Pāli version of the Sutta in Burmese, but there is scarcely any work which explicitly shows what practical methods are available from the

Sutta and how they could be utilized by the ardent, sincere meditators who aspire to gain the Path and its Fruition.

We ourselves have expounded this Sutta on numerous occasions, emphasizing its practical application to meditation. We formally opened this (Rangoon) Meditation Centre with a discourse of this Sutta and have repeatedly delivered the Sermon here. Elsewhere too, wherever a meditation centre was newly opened, we always employed this Sutta as an inaugural discourse.

The Buddhist Canon has three main divisions – the three Baskets or *Ti Pitaka* in Pāli:

1. the *Sutta Pitaka* or the Sermon Basket
2. the *Vinaya Pitaka* or the Discipline Basket
3. the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* or the Analytical and Philosophical Basket.

The Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma is included in the Sutta Pitaka which is made up of the five Nikāyas, namely:

- i. the *Digha Nikāya*
- ii. the *Majjhima Nikāya*
- iii. the *Samyutta Nikāya*
- iv. the *Anguṭṭara Nikāya*
- v. the *Khuddaka Nikāya*.

The Samyutta Nikāya is divided into five groups known as *Vaggas*:

- a. *Sagāthāvagga*
- b. *Nidānavagga*

- c. *Khandavagga*
- d. *Salāyatanaṅgavagga*
- e. *Mahāvagga*.

The Mahāvagga is divided again into twelve subgroups such as Maggasamyutta, Bojjhaṅgasamyutta, Satipaṭṭhānasamyutta, etc, the last of which being Saccasamyutta.

The Wheel of Dhamma appears as the first discourse in the second *vagga* of the subgroup Saccasamyutta, and it was recited as such in the proceedings of the Sixth Great Council. In the Sixth Great Council edition of the Ti Pitaka, it is recorded on pages 368 – 371 of the third volume of the Samyutta Pitaka. There the introduction to the Discourse reads: *‘Evaṃ me sutam, ekaṃ samayaṃ... Thus have I heard. At one time...’*

These were the introductory words uttered by the Venerable Ānandā when interrogated by the Venerable Mahākassapa at the First Council, held just over three months after the passing away of the Blessed One. The Venerable Mahākassapa said to the Venerable Ānandā:

“Friend Ānandā, where was the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta delivered? By whom was it delivered and on whose account? And how was it delivered?” The Venerable Ānandā answered, “My Lord, Venerable Mahākassapa. Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was staying at the Sage’s Resort, the Pleasance of Isipatana (where Pacceka Buddhas and Enlightened Ones alighted from the sky), in the deer sanctuary, in the township of Benares. Then the Blessed One addressed the group of five bhikkhus, “These two extremes,

Bhikkhus, should not be followed by one who has gone forth from the worldly life.”

THE DATE OF THE DISCOURSE

This introduction lacks a definite date of delivery of the Discourse. As in all other Suttas, the date was mentioned merely as “Once” or “At one time”. A precise chronological data as to the year, the month and the date on which each Discourse was delivered would have been very helpful. But chronological details would appear to be an encumbrance to committing the Suttas to memory and to their recitation. Thus, it is not easy to place a precise date for each of the Suttas.

It should, however, be possible to determine the exact date on which the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta was delivered, because it was the First Sermon of the Blessed One and also because reference could be made to internal evidence provided in other Suttas and the Vinaya Pitaka – the Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment on the night of the full moon of Kason in the year 103 of the Great Era. Then He preached this Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta in the early evening on the full moon day of the following Wāso. This year is 1324 of the Burmese Era, and it is exactly 2506 years since the Buddha’s final Parinibbanā. Taking into account His 45 years of Dispensation before Parinibbanā, it totals up to 2551 years. Thus, it was on the First Watch of the full moon of Wāso 2551 years ago that this First Sermon was delivered by the Blessed One. Western scholars regard this estimation as 60 years too early.

According to their calculation, the First Sermon was preached only 2491 years ago. As the event of the Turning of the Wheel took place in the East, we would rather go by the oriental calculation and regard the First Sermon as being taught 2551 years ago.

The deer park, in which the deer were given sanctuary, must have been a forested area with deer roaming about harmlessly. At present, however, the area has been depleted of forest trees and has become an open plain with cultivated patches surrounding human habitations. In ancient times, Paccekabuddhas travelled in space by supernatural powers from the Gandhamādana Mountain and descended to earth at this isolated place. Likewise, the Enlightened Ones of the dim past came here by magical flights and alighted on the same spot to preach the First Sermon. Hence, the name Hermitage or the Sage's Resort.

The Introduction to the Sutta says the Blessed One preached the First Sermon to the group of five bhikkhus while he was staying in the pleasure of the deer sanctuary in the township of Benares. That is all the information that could be obtained from the introductory statement, which is bare and inadequate. It needs some elaboration and we propose to provide one by drawing materials from other Suttas also.

THREE KINDS OF INTRODUCTIONS

The introduction to a Sutta explains on whose or what account the Sutta was taught by the Buddha. Introductions are of three kinds:

- a. The introduction which gives the background story of the remote distant past. This provides an account of how the Bodhisatta, the future Buddha, fulfilled the perfections required of an aspirant Buddha – beginning from the time of prophecy proclaimed by Dīpankara Buddha to the time when he was reborn in the Tusitā Heaven as a king of the devas named Setaketu. There is no need nor time to deal more with this background story of the distant past.
- b. The introduction touching on the background story of the intermediate period. This deals with the account of what passed from the time of existence in the Tusitā Heaven to the attainment of full enlightenment on the Throne of Wisdom. We shall give attention to this introduction to a considerable extent.
- c. The introduction which tells of the recent past, just preceding the teaching of the Dhammacakka Sutta. This is what is learnt from the statement “Thus have I heard. At one time...” quoted above.

We shall now deal with relevant extracts from the second category of introductions, drawing our materials from Sukhumāla Sutta of Tika Nipata, Aṅguttara Nikāya, Pasarāsi or Ariyapariyesana Sutta and Mahāsaccaka Sutta of Mūlapaṇṇāsa, Bodhirājakumara Sutta and Saṅgārava Sutta of Majjhimapaṇṇāsa, Pabbajjā Sutta, Padhāna Sutta of Suttanipāta, and many other Suttas.

BODHISATTA AND WORLDLY PLEASURES

After the Bodhisatta had passed away from Tusitā Heaven, he entered the womb of Mahāmāyā Devi, the principal queen of King Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu. The Bodhisatta was born on Friday, the full moon of Kason in the year 68 of the Great Era, in the pleasure-grove of Sal trees called the Lumbini Grove and was named Siddhattha. At the age of sixteen, he married Yasodharā Devi, daughter of Suppabuddha, the Royal Master of Devadaha. Thereafter, surrounded by forty thousand attendant princesses, he lived in enjoyment of kingly pleasures in great magnificence.

He was thus wholly given over to sensuous pleasure amidst pomp and splendour. One day he came out to the royal pleasure grove for a garden feast and merry-making accompanied by attendants. On the way to the grove, the sight of a decrepit, aged person gave him a shock and he turned back to his palace. On a second occasion, he saw a sick and diseased person and he returned greatly alarmed. When he set forth for the third time, he was agitated in his heart on seeing a dead man and hurriedly retraced his steps. The alarm and agitation felt by the Bodhisatta were described in the Ariyapariyesana Sutta.

THE IGNOBLE QUEST

The Bodhisatta pondered thus: 'When oneself is subject to old age, to seek and crave for what is subject to old age is not befitting. And what are subject to old age? Wife and children, slaves, goats and sheep, fowls and pigs, elephants, horses,

cattle, gold and silver, all objects of pleasures and luxuries, animate and inanimate, are subject to old age. Being oneself subject to old age, to crave for these objects of pleasures, to be enveloped and immersed in them is not proper.

‘Similarly, it does not benefit one, when oneself is subject to disease and death, to crave for sensual objects which are subject to disease and death. To go after what is subject to old age, disease and death (what is not befitting and proper) constitutes an Ignoble Quest (*Anariyapariyesana*).

‘Being oneself subject to old age, disease and death, to go in search of that which is not subject to old age, disease and death constitutes a Noble Quest (*Ariyapariyesana*).’

THE NOBLE QUEST

The Sutta below describes the Bodhisatta himself engaging at first in ignoble quests:

“Now Bhikkhus, before my Enlightenment while I was only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, being myself subject to birth, I sought after what was also subject to birth; being myself subject to old age, I sought after what was also subject to old age.”

This was a denunciation or stricture of the life of pleasure he had lived with Yasodharā amidst the gay society of attendant princesses. Then, having perceived the wretchedness of such life, he made up his mind to go in search of the Peace of Nibbana which is free from birth, old age, disease and death.

He said, "Having perceived the wretchedness of being myself subject to birth, old age, it occurred to me it would be fitting if I were to seek the incomparable, unsurpassed Peace of Nibbana, free from birth, and old age."

Thus, it occurred to the Bodhisatta to go in quest of Nibbānic Peace, which is free from old age, disease and death. That was a very laudable aim and we shall consider it further to see clearly how it was so.

Suppose there was someone who was already old and decrepit, would it be wise for him to seek the company of another man or woman who, like himself, was aged and frail, or of someone who, though not advanced in age, yet would surely turn old in no time? No, not at all judicious.

Again, for someone who was himself in declining health and suffering, it would be quite irrational if he were to seek companionship in another who was ill and afflicted with painful disease. Companionship with someone, who though enjoying good health presently would soon be troubled with illness, would not be prudent either. There are even those who, hoping to enjoy each other's company for life, get into wedlock and settle down. Unfortunately, one of the partners soon becomes a bedridden invalid, imposing on the other the onerous duty of looking after the stricken mate. The hope of a happy married life may be dashed when one of the partners passes away, leaving only sorrow and lamentation for the bereaved one. Ultimately, each of the couple would be faced with the misery of old age, disease and death.

Thus it is extremely unwise to go after sensual pleasures which are subject to old age, disease and death. The most noble quest is to seek out what is not subject to old age, disease and death. Here, at this meditation centre, it is a matter for gratification that the devotees, monks and laymen, are all engaged in the noblest quest – the quest for the unageing, the unailing and the deathless.

The Renunciation Of The Bodhisatta

On his fourth excursion to the pleasure-grove, the Bodhisatta met a monk. On learning from the monk that he had gone forth from a worldly life and was engage in meritorious pursuits, it occurred to the Bodhisatta to renounce worldly life, become a recluse and go in search of what is not subject to old age, disease and death. When he had gained what he had set out for, his intention was to pass on the knowledge to the world so that other beings would also learn to be free from misery of being subjected to old age, disease and death. A noble thought, a noble intention indeed!

On that same day and at about the same time, a son was born to the Bodhisatta's consort Yasodharā Devi. When he heard the news, the Bodhisatta murmured, "An impediment (*rāhulā*) has been born, a fetter has been born." On learning of this remark, the Bodhisatta's father, King Suddhodana, named his newborn grandson Prince Rāhulā (Prince Impediment), hoping that the child would indeed prove to be a fetter to the Bodhisatta and become a hindrance to his plan for renunciation.

But the Bodhisatta had become averse to the pleasures of the world. That night he remained unmoved, unsoled by the amusements provided by the royal entertainers and went into an early slumber. The discouraged musicians lay down their instruments and went to sleep there and then. On awakening in the middle of the night, the sight of recumbent, sleeping dancers repulsed the Bodhisatta and made his magnificent palace apartment seem like a cemetery filled with corpses.

Thus at midnight the Bodhisatta went forth on the Great Retirement riding the royal horse, Khandaka, accompanied by his courtier, Channa. When they came to the river Anomā, he cut off his hair and beard while standing on the sandy beach. Then after discarding the royal garments, he put on the yellow robes offered by the Brahma God, Ghantikara, and became a monk. The Bodhisatta was only twenty-nine then, an age most favourable for the pursuit of pleasures. That he renounced with indifference the pomp and splendour of a sovereign and abandoned the solace and comfort of his consort, Yasodharā, and retinues, at such a favourable age while still blessed with youth is really awe-inspiring.

MAKING HIS WAY TO ĀLĀRA, THE GREAT ASCETIC

At that time the Bodhisatta was not yet in possession of practical knowledge of leading a holy life so he made his way to the then famous ascetic Ālāra who was no ordinary person.

Of the eight stages of mundane *jhānic* attainments, Ālāra personally mastered seven stages up to the *jhāna* consciousness dwelling on Nothingness (*akiñcaññayatana jhāna*) and was imparting this knowledge to his pupils.

Before the appearance of the Buddha, such teachers who had achieved *jhānic* attainments served as trustworthy masters giving practical instructions on methods of attainments. Ālāra was famous like a Buddha in those times. The Theravada literature was silent about him. However, in *Lalitavistara*, a biographical text of the northern School of Buddhism, it was recorded that the great teacher had lived in the state of Vesali and that he had three hundred pupils learning his doctrine.

TAKING INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HOLY SAGE, ĀLĀRA

How the Bodhisatta took instructions from the holy sage Ālāra was described thus: “Having gone forth and become a recluse in pursuit of what is holy and good, seeking the supreme, incomparable Peace of Nibbāna, I drew to where Ālāra Kālāma was and addressed him thus: ‘Friend Kālāma, I desire to lead the holy life under your doctrine and discipline.’ When I had thus addressed him, Ālāra replied, ‘The Venerable friend Gotama is welcome to remain in this teaching. Of such a nature is this dhamma that in a short time an intelligent man can realize for himself and abide in possession of what his teacher has realized as his own.’” After these words of encouragement, Ālāra gave him practical instructions on the doctrine.

REASSURING WORDS

Ālāra's statement that his dhamma, if practised as taught, could be realized soon by oneself as one's own was very reassuring and inspired confidence. A pragmatic doctrine is trustworthy and convincing only if it could be realized by oneself and in a short time. The sooner the realization is possible, the more heartening it will be. The Bodhisatta was thus satisfied with Ālāra's words and this thought arose in him: "It is not by mere faith that Ālāra announces that he has learned the dhamma. Ālāra has surely realized the dhamma himself, he knows and understands it."

That was very true. Ālāra did not cite any texts as authority. He did not say that he had heard it from others. He clearly stated that what he knew personally he had realized it himself. A meditation teacher must be able to declare his conviction boldly like him. Without having practised the dhamma personally, without having experienced and realized it in a personal way, to claim to be a teacher in meditation, to preach and write books about it after just learning from the texts on meditation methods is most incongruous and improper. It is like a physician prescribing medicine not yet clinically tested and tried by him, and which he dared not administer on himself. Such preachments and publications are surely undependable and uninspiring.

But Ālāra taught boldly what he had realized himself. The Bodhisatta was fully impressed by him and this thought

arose in him: “Not only Ālāra has faith, I also have faith. Not only Ālāra has energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, I also have them.” Then he strove for the realization of that dhamma which Ālāra declared that he himself had learned and realized. In no time, the Bodhisatta learned the dhamma which led him as far as the *jhānic* realm of Nothingness.

He then approached Ālāra Kālāma and enquired of him whether the realm of Nothingness, which the latter had claimed to have realized it himself and lived in possession of, was the same stage as what the Bodhisatta had now reached, Ālāra replied, “This is as far as the dhamma leads, of which I have declared that I have realized and abide in its possession, the same stage as friend Gotama has reached.” Then he uttered these words of praise, “Friend Gotama is a supremely distinguished person. The realm of Nothingness is not easily attainable yet Friend Gotama has realized it in no time. It is truly wonderful. Fortunate are we that we should light upon such a distinguished ascetic companion as your Reverence. As I have realized the dhamma, so have you realized it, too. As you have learnt it, so have I learnt to the same extent as you. Friend Gotama is my equal in dhamma. We have a large community here. Come, friend, together let us direct this company of disciples.

Thus Ālāra, the teacher, recognized the Bodhisatta, the pupil, as completely equal to himself and honoured him by delegating to him the task of guiding one hundred and fifty pupils, which number was exactly half of all the disciples Ālāra had.

But the Bodhisatta stayed at the centre only for a short time. While staying there this thought came to him: “This doctrine does not lead to aversion, to abatement and cessation of passion, to quiescence for higher knowledge and full enlightenment nor to Nibbāna, the end of sufferings, but only as far as the attainment to the realm of Nothingness. Once there, a long life of 60,000 world cycles follows, and after expiring from there, one reappears in the Karma existences and goes through the sufferings again. It is not the doctrine of the undying that I am looking for.” Thus becoming indifferent to the practice which led only to the *jhānic* realm of Nothingness, the Bodhisatta abandoned it and departed from Ālāra’s meditation centre.

APPROACHING THE SAGE UDAKA

After leaving Ālāra’s place, the Bodhisatta was on his own for some time, pursuing the supreme path of tranquility to reach the undying state of Nibbāna. Then the fame of Udaka or Rāmaputta (the son of Rama or disciple of the sage Rāma) reached him. He drew to where Udaka was and sought to lead the religious life under the dhamma and discipline of the sage Rāma. His experiences under the guidance of Udaka, how Udaka explained to him the dhamma, how the Bodhisatta was impressed with the doctrine and practised it, how he realized the dhamma and recounted to Udaka what he had gained, were described in almost exactly the same words as before.

We have, however, to note carefully that Udaka or Rāmaputta, as his name implied, was a son of Rāma or a disciple of Rāma. The sage Rāma was accomplished in going through all the eight stages of *jhāna* and reaching the highest *jhānic* realm of Neither Perception nor Non-perception. However, when the Bodhisatta reached Udaka, the old sage Rāma was no more. Therefore, in asking Udaka about Rāma's attainments, he used the past tense '*pavedesi*'. "How far does this doctrine lead concerning which Rāma declared that he had realized it for himself and entered upon it?"

Then there is the account of how this thought occurred to the Bodhisatta: "It is not only Rāma who had faith, industry, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. I also have them." There is also this passage where it was stated that Udaka set him up as a teacher. "You know this doctrine and Rāma knew this doctrine. You are the same as Rāma and Rāma was the same as you. Come, friend Gotama, lead this following and be their teacher." And again the passage where the Bodhisatta recounted, "Udaka, the disciple of Rāma, although my companion in the holy living, set me up as his teacher."

These textual references make it apparent that the Bodhisatta did not meet with the sage Rāma, but only with Rāma's disciple Udaka who explained to him the doctrine practised by Rāma. The Bodhisatta followed the method as described by Udaka and was able to realize the stage of Neither Perception nor Non-perception. Having learnt the doctrine himself and realized and entered upon the realm of Neither Perception

nor Non-perception like the sage Rāma, he was requested by Udaka to accept the leadership of the company.

It was not mentioned in the literature of the Theravadins as to where Udaka resided and how big his following was, but Lalitavistra, the biography of the Buddha of the northern Buddhism, stated that Udaka's centre was in the district of Rajagaha and that he had a company seven hundred strong. It is to be noted that at the time of meeting with the Bodhisatta, Udaka himself had not yet attained the *jhānic* realm of neither Perception nor Non-perception. He explained to the Bodhisatta only what stage Rāma had achieved. So when the Bodhisatta proved himself to be the equal of his master by realizing the stage of neither Perception nor Non-perception, he offered the Bodhisatta the leadership of the whole company. According to the *Ṭikā* (Sub-commentary), Udaka later strove hard, emulating the example set by the Bodhisatta and finally attained the highest *jhānic* stage of neither Perception nor Non-perception.

The Bodhisatta remained as a leader of the company at the centre only for a short time. It soon occurred to him: "This doctrine does not lead to aversion, to absence of passion nor to quiescence for gaining knowledge, supreme wisdom and Nibbāna, but only as far as the realm of Neither Perception nor Non-perception. Once there, a long life of 84,000 world cycles is enjoyed only to come back again to the existence of sensual pleasures and be subjected to much suffering. This is not the doctrine of the Undying that I long for." Then, becoming indifferent to the doctrine which leads only to the realm

of Neither Perception nor Non-perception, he gave it up and departed from Udaka's centre.

PRACTISING EXTREME AUSTERITIES IN URUVELA FOREST

After he had left Udaka's centre, the Bodhisatta wandered about in Magadha, searching on his own for the peerless path of tranquility, the Undying Nibbāna. During his wanderings, he came to the forest of Uruvela near the big village of Senanigamā. In the forest he saw the clear, flowing river Neranjara. Perceiving thus a delightful spot, a serene dense grove, a clear, flowing stream with a village nearby which would serve as an alms resort, it occurred to him: "Truly, this is a suitable place for one intent on effort", and he stayed on in the forest.

At that time the Bodhisatta had not yet worked out a precise system of right struggle. Austerity practices were, of course, widely known and in vogue throughout India then. Concerning these practices, three similes came to the mind of the Bodhisatta.

THREE SIMILES

A log of snappy wood freshly cut from a sycamore tree and soaked in water cannot produce fire by being rubbed with a similar piece of wet sappy wood or with a piece of some other wood. Just so, while still entangled with objects of sensual desires such as wife and family, while still delighting in passionate pleasures and lustful desires are not yet quieted within

him, however strenuously someone strives, he is incapable of wisdom, insight and incomparable full awakening. This was the first simile that occurred to the Bodhisatta.

Even if the sycamore log is not soaked in water but is still green and sappy, being freshly cut from the tree, it will also not produce any fire by friction. Just so, even if he has abandoned the objects of sensual desires such as wife and family and they are no longer near him, if he still delights in thoughts of passionate pleasures and lustful desires still arise in him, he is incapable of wisdom, insight or full awakening. This is the second simile.

According to the Commentary, this simile has a reference to the practices of Brahma dhammika ascetics. Those Brahmins led a holy ascetic life from youth to the age of forty-eight when they went back to married life in order to preserve the continuity of their clan. Thus, while they were practising the holy life, they would have been tainted with lustful thoughts.

The third simile concerns dry sapless logs of wood not soaked in water. These logs of dry wood will kindle fire when rubbed against one another. Similarly, having abandoned objects of sensual desires and weaned himself of lustful thoughts and cravings, he is capable of attaining wisdom, insight and full awakening, whether he practises extreme austerity or whether he strives painlessly without torturing himself.

EXTREME AUSTERITY OF CRUSHING THE MIND WITH THE MIND

Of the two methods open to him according to the third simile, the Bodhisatta considered following the path of austerity. “What if now with my teeth clenched and my tongue cleaving the palate, I should press down, constrain and crush the naturally arising thought with my mind.”

The Pāli text quoted here corresponds with the text in the Vitakka Saṅḍhāna Sutta, but the method of crushing the thought with the mind as described in the Vitakka Saṅḍhāna Sutta was one prescribed by the Buddha after attaining enlightenment. As such, it involves banishment of any lustful thought which arises of its own accord by taking note of its appearance as an exercise of Vipassanā meditation in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and other similar texts. The method of crushing the thought with the mind as described here refers to the practical exercises performed by the Bodhisatta before he attained the knowledge of the Middle Path and is, therefore, at variance with the Satipaṭṭhāna method.

However, the Commentary interpretation implies suppression of evil minds with moral minds. If this interpretation were correct, this method, being concordant with Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and other texts, would have resulted in Enlightenment for the Bodhisatta. Actually, this method led him only to extreme suffering and not to Buddhahood. Other austerity practices taken up afterwards also led the Bodhisatta merely into wrong paths.

Austerity practice followed by the Bodhisatta at that time appeared to be somewhat like that of mind annihilation being practised nowadays by followers of a certain school of Buddhism. During our missionary travels in Japan, we visited a large temple where a number of people were engaged in meditation exercises. Their meditation method consists of blotting out a thought whenever it arises. Thus emptied of mind (mental activity), the end of the road is reached, namely, Nothingness, i.e. Void. The procedure is as follows: young Mahayana monks sat cross-legged in a row, about six in number. The master abbot went round showing them the stick with which he would beat them. After a while, he proceeded to administer one blow each on the back of each meditator. It was explained that while being beaten it was possible that the mind disappeared altogether, resulting in Nothingness. Truly a strange doctrine. This is in reality annihilation of thought by crushing with mind, presumably the same technique employed by the Bodhisatta to crush the thought with the mind by clenching the teeth. The effort proved very painful for him and sweat oozed out from under his armpits, but no superior knowledge was attained then.

JHĀNIC ABSORPTION OF RESTRAINING THE BREATH

Then it occurred to the Bodhisatta: "What if I control respiration and concentrate on the breathless *jhāna*?" With that thought, he restrained the in-breathing and out-breathing of the mouth and nose. With the holding of respiration through

the mouth and nose, there was a roar in the ears due to the rushing out of the air just like the bellows of a frog making a roaring noise. There was intense bodily suffering, but the Bodhisatta was relentless. He held the in-breathings and out-breathings, not only of the mouth and nose, but also of the ears. As a result, violent winds rushed up to the crown of the head, causing pains as if a strong man had split open the head with a mallet, as if a powerful man were tightening a rough leather strap round the head. Violent winds pushed around in the belly causing misery like being carved up by a sharp butcher's knife. And there was intense burning in the belly as if roasted over a pit of burning coals. The Bodhisatta, overcome physically by pain and suffering, fell down in exhaustion and lay still. When the deities saw him lying prone, some of them said, "The monk Gotama is dead." Other deities said, "The monk Gotama is not yet dead, he is dying." Again other deities said, "The monk Gotama is neither dead nor dying. He is just lying still, dwelling in the state of Arahatsip." In spite of all these painful efforts, no higher knowledge was gained.

EXTREME AUSTERITY OF FASTING

So it occurred to the Bodhisatta: "What if I strive still harder, entirely abstaining from food?" Knowing his thoughts, the deities said, "Please, Lord Gotama, do not entirely abstain from food. If you do so, we shall instill heavenly nourishment through the pores of your skin. You shall remain alive on that." Then it came to the Bodhisatta: "If I claim to be completely

fasting and these deities should instill heavenly nourishment through my pores and I should thus be sustained, that would be for me a lie." The Bodhisatta rejected the deities offer saying that he refused to be injected with divine nourishment.

Then he decided to take less and less nourishment, only as much bean soup as the hollow of a hand could hold. Living on about five or six spoonfuls of bean soup each day, his body reached the state of extreme emaciation. The limbs withered, only skin, sinews and bones remained. The vertebrae became exposed in uneven lumps and protuberances. The widely dispersed bones jutted out, presenting an ungainly, ghastly appearance just as in the paintings of the Bodhisatta undergoing extreme austerity. The gleam of the eyes shrunk down in their sockets, looked like the reflection from water sunk deep in the well. The scalp had shrivelled up like a green, soft gourd withered in the sun. The emaciation was so extreme that if he attempted to feel the belly skin, he encountered the spinal column; if he felt for the spinal column, he touched the belly skin. When he attempted to evacuate the bowel or make water, the effort was so painful that he fell forward on the face, so weakened was he through this extremely scanty diet.

Seeing this extremely emaciated body of the Bodhisatta, the people said, "The monk Gotama is a black man." Others said, "The monk Gotama has a brown complexion." Again others said, "The monk Gotama has the brown-blue colour of the torpedo fish." So much had the clear, bright, golden colour of his skin deteriorated.

MĀRA'S PERSUASION

While the Bodhisatta strove hard and practised extreme austerity to subdue himself, Māra came and addressed the Bodhisatta persuasively in beguiling words of pity, "Friend Gotama, you have become very thin and assumed an ungainly appearance. You are now in the presence of death. There is only one chance left in a thousand for you 'to live'. Oh, Friend Gotama! Try to remain alive. Life is better than death. If you live, you can do good deeds and gain merits."

The meritorious deeds mentioned here by Māra have no reference whatsoever to the merits accruing from acts of charity and observance of precepts, practices which lead to the path of liberation nor to merits which result from development of Vipassanā Insight and attainment of the Path.

Māra knew of only merits gained by leading a holy life abstaining from sexual intercourse and by worshipping the holy fires. These practices were believed in those times to lead to a noble, prosperous life in future existences. However, the Bodhisatta was not enamoured of the blessings of existences and he replied to Māra, "I do not need even an iota of the merits you speak of. You should go and talk of the merit to those who stand in need of it."

A misconception had arisen concerning this utterance of the Bodhisatta that he was not in need of any merits, that is 'meritorious deeds are to be abandoned, not to be sought for nor

carried out by one seeking release from the rounds of existence like the Bodhisatta'. A person once approached me and sought elucidation on this point. I explained to him that when Māra was talking about merit, he did not have in mind the merits which accrued from acts of charity, observance of precepts, development of insight through meditation or attainment of the Path. He could not know of them. Nor was the Bodhisatta in possession then of precise knowledge of these meritorious practices; it is only that the Bodhisatta was then engaged in austerity exercises taking them to be noble ones. Thus, when the Bodhisatta said to Māra 'I do not need any merit', he was not referring to the meritorious practices that lead to Nibbāna, but only to such deeds as were believed then to assure one of pleasurable existences. The Commentary also supports our view. It states that in saying 'I do not need any merit', the Bodhisatta meant only the merit which Māra spoke of, namely, acts of merit which are productive of future existences. It can thus be concluded that no question arises of abandonment of meritorious practices which will lead to Nibbāna.

At that time, the Bodhisatta was still working under the delusion that austerity exercises were the means of attaining higher knowledge. Thus, he said, "This wind that blows can dry up the waters of the river. So while I strive strenuously, why should it not dry up my blood? And when the blood dries up, bile and phlegm will run dry. As the flesh gets wasted too, my mind will become clearer: mindfulness, concentration and wisdom will be more firmly established."

Māra was also under the wrong impression that abstention from food would lead to liberation and higher knowledge. It was this anxiety that motivated him to coax the Bodhisatta away from following the path of starvation. With the same wrong notion, a group of five ascetics waited upon him, attending to all his needs, hoping that this abstemious practice would lead to Buddhahood as they intended to be the first recipients of the sermon on liberation. It is clear, therefore, that it was a universal belief in those days that extreme self-mortification was the right path which would lead to Enlightenment.

RIGHT REASONING

After leading the life of extreme self-mortification for six years without any beneficial results, the Bodhisatta began to reason thus: "Whatever ascetics or brahmins in the past had felt painful, racking, piercing feelings through practising self-torture, it may equal this, my suffering, not exceed it."

"Wherever ascetics or brahmins in the future will feel painful, racking, piercing feelings through the practice of self-torture, it may equal this, my suffering, not exceed it; whatever ascetics or brahmins in the present feel painful, racking, piercing feelings through the practice of self-torture, it may equal this, my suffering, not exceed it. But, by this gruelling asceticism I have not attained any distinction higher than the ordinary human achievement; I have not gained the Noble One's knowledge and vision which could uproot defilements. Might there be another way to Enlightenment apart from this path of torture and mortification?"

Then the Bodhisatta thought of the time when, as an infant, he sat alone under the shade of a rose-apple tree, entered and absorbed in the first *jhānic* stage of meditation while his royal father, King Suddhodhana, was busily engaged in ceremonial ploughing of the fields nearby. He wondered whether this first *jhānic* method would be the right way to the Truth!

ABSORPTION IN FIRST JHĀNA WHILE AN INFANT

The Bodhisatta was born on the full moon of Kason (April). It appeared that the royal ploughing ceremony was held sometime in Nayon or Wāso (May or June) a month or two later. The infant child was laid down on a couch of magnificent clothes under the shade of a rose-apple tree. An enclosure was then formed by setting up curtains round the temporary nursery with royal attendants respectfully watching over the royal infant. As the royal ploughing ceremony progressed in magnificent pomp and splendour, with the king himself partaking in the festivities, the royal attendants were drawn to the splendid scene of activities going on in the nearby fields. Thinking that the royal infant had fallen asleep, they left him lying secure in the enclosure and went away to enjoy themselves in the festivities. The infant Bodhisatta, on looking around and not seeing any attendant, rolled up from the couch and remained seated with his legs crossed. By virtue of habit-forming practices through many lives, he instinctively started contemplating on the incoming, outgoing breath. He was soon established in the first *jhānic* absorption characterised by five features, namely, thought conception, discursive thinking, rapture, joy and concentration.

The attendants had been gone for some time now. Lost in the festivities of the occasion, they were delayed in returning. When they returned, the shadows thrown by the trees had moved with the passage of time, but the shade of the rose-apple tree under which the infant was left lying was found to have remained steadfast on the same spot. The infant Bodhisatta was sitting motionless on the couch. King Suddhodana, when informed, was struck by the spectacle of the unmoving shadow of the rose-apple tree and the still, sitting posture of the child. In great awe, he made obeisance to his son.

The Bodhisatta recalled the experience of absorption in the respiration *jhāna* he had gained in childhood and he thought, “Might that be the way to Truth?” Following up on that memory, there came the recognition that respiration *jhāna* practice was indeed the right way to Enlightenment.

The *jhānic* experiences were so pleasurable that the Bodhisatta thought to himself: “Am I afraid of (trying for) the pleasures of *jhāna*?” Then he thought: “No, I am not afraid of (trying for) such pleasures.”

RESUMPTION OF MEALS

Then it occurred to the Bodhisatta: “It is not possible to attain the *jhānic* absorption with a body so emaciated. What if I take some solid food as I used to take? Thus nourished and strengthened in body, I’ll be able to work for the *jhānic* state.” Seeing him partaking of solid food, the group of five ascetics misun-

derstood his action. They were formerly royal astrologers and counsellors who had predicted, at the time of his birth, that he would become an Enlightened Noble One, a Buddha.

There were eight royal astrologers at the court then. When asked to predict what the future held for the royal infant, three of them raised two fingers each and made double pronouncements that the infant would grow up to be a Universal Monarch or an Omniscient Buddha. The remaining five raised only one finger each to give a single interpretation that the child would most undoubtedly become a Buddha.

According to the *Mūla Paṇṇāsa Commentary* (Vol.2, p.92), these five court astrologers forsook the world before they got enchained to the household life and took to the forest to lead a holy life, but the *Buddhavaṃsa Commentary* and some other texts stated that seven astrologers raised two fingers each giving double interpretations while the youngest Brahmin, who would in time become the Venerable Kondañña, raised only one finger and made the definite prediction that the child was a future Buddha.

This young Brahmin, together with the sons of four other Brahmins, had gone forth from the world and banded together to form 'The Group of Five Ascetics', awaiting the Great Renunciation of the Bodhisatta. When news reached them later that the Bodhisatta was practising extreme austerities in the Uruvela Grove, they journeyed there and became his attendants, hoping 'when he has achieved Supreme Knowledge, he will share it with us. We will be the first to hear the message'.

When the five ascetics saw the Bodhisatta partaking solid food, they misunderstood his action and become disappointed. They thought: “If living on a handful of pea soup had not led him to higher knowledge, how could he expect to attain that by eating solid food again?” They misjudged him; thinking that he had abandoned the struggle and reverted back to the luxurious way of life to gain riches and personal glory. Thus, they left him in disgust and went to stay in the deer sanctuary in the township of Benares.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The departure of the five ascetics afforded the Bodhisatta the opportunity to struggle for final liberation in complete solitude. The *Mūla Paṇṇasa* (Vol. 2, pg. 192) gives a description of how, working alone with no one near him for a full fortnight, seated on the throne of Wisdom (under the tree of Enlightenment), he attained Omniscience, the Enlightenment of a Buddha.

The Bodhisatta had gone forth at the age of twenty-nine and spent six years practising extreme austerity. Now at the age of thirty-five, still youthful and in good health, within fifteen days of resumption of regular meals, his body had filled up as before and regained the thirty-two physical characteristics of a Great Being. Having thus built up strength and energy again through normal nourishment, the Bodhisatta practised the in-breathing, out-breathing meditation and remained absorbed in the bliss of the first *jhāna*, which was characterized by thought-conception, discursive thinking, rapture, joy and

one-pointedness of mind. Then he entered the second state of the *jhāna*, which was accompanied by rapture, joy and concentration. At the third state of the *jhāna*, he enjoyed only joy and one-pointedness of mind and at the fourth stage, equanimity and clear mindfulness (one-pointedness).

Early on the full moon day of Kason (April) in the year 103 of the Great Era, i.e. 2551 years ago, counting back from the year 1324 of the Burmese Era, he sat down under the Bo Tree (the Bodhi Tree) near the big village of Senanigāma awaiting the hour of going for alms food. At that time, Sujātā, the daughter of a rich man from the village, was making preparations to give an offering to the tree-spirit of the Bo tree. She sent her maid ahead to tidy up the area under the spread of the holy tree. At the sight of the Bodhisatta seated under the tree, the maid thought the deity had made himself visible to receive their offering in person. She ran back in great excitement to inform her mistress.

Sujātā put the milk rice which she had cooked early in the morning in a golden bowl worth a hundred thousand pieces of money. She covered the same with another golden bowl. She then proceeded with the bowls to the foot of the banyan tree where the Bodhisatta remained seated and put the bowls in the hand of the Bodhisatta, saying, “May your wishes prosper like mine have.” So saying, she departed.

Sujātā, on becoming a maiden, had made a prayer at the banyan tree: “If I get a husband of equal rank and same caste with myself and my first born is a son, I will make an offer-

ing.” Her prayer had been fulfilled and her offering of milk rice that day was intended for the tree deity in fulfillment of her pledge. However, later when she learnt that the Bodhisatta had gained Enlightenment after taking the milk rice offered by her, she was overjoyed with the thought that she had made a noble deed of the greatest merit.

The Bodhisatta then went down to the river Neranjara and had a bath. After bathing, he made the milk rice offered by Sujātā into forty-nine pellets and ate it. The meal over, he discarded the golden bowl into the river saying: “If I am to become a Buddha today, let the bowl go upstream.” The bowl drifted upstream for a considerable distance against the swift flowing current, and on reaching the abode of the snake king, Kala, sank into the river to lie at the bottom with the bowls of the three previous Buddhas.

Then the Bodhisatta rested the whole day in the forest glade near the bank of the river. As evening fell, he went towards the Bo tree, meeting on the way a grasscutter named Sotthiya who gave him eight handfuls of grass. In India holy men used to prepare a place to sit and sleep on by spreading sheaves of grass. The Bodhisatta spread the grass under the tree on the eastern side. Then with the solemn resolution “Never from this seat will I stir until I have attained the supreme and absolute wisdom”, he sat down cross-legged on the grass cover facing east.

At this point Māra made his appearance and contested for the seat under the Bo tree with a view to oppose the Bodhisatta’s

resolution and prevent him from attaining Buddhahood. By invoking the virtues he had accumulated through the ages, fulfilling the Ten Perfections such as Charity, etc., he overcame the molestations set up by Māra before the sun had set. After thus vanquishing Māra, in the first watch of the night through *jhānic* meditations, the Bodhisatta acquired the knowledge of previous existences; in the middle watch of the night, the divine eye; and in the last watch of the night, he contemplated on the law of Dependent Origination followed by development of Insight into the arising and ceasing of the five aggregates of grasping. This Insight gave him in succession the knowledge pertaining to the four Holy Paths, resulting finally in full Enlightenment or Omniscience.

Having become a fully Enlightened One, he spent seven days on the Throne of Wisdom under the Bo tree and seven days each at six other places, forty-nine days in all, enjoying the bliss of the fourth state of Fruition (Fruits of Arahatsip) and pondering long upon his newly found system of Law (Dhamma).

EXTREME AUSTERITY IS A FORM OF SELF-MORTIFICATION

The fifth week was spent under the goatherd (*Ajjapāla*) Banyan tree and while there he reflected on his abandonment of the austerity practices: "Delivered am I from the austerity practices which cause physical pain and suffering. It is well that I'm delivered of that unprofitable practice of austerity. How delightful it is to be liberated and have gained Enlightenment."

Māra, who was closely following every thought and action of the Buddha, ever alert to accuse him of any lapses, immediately addressed the Buddha: “Apart from the austerity practices, there is no way to purify beings; Gotama has deviated from the path of purity. While still defiled, he wrongly believes he has achieved purity.”

The Buddha replied: “All the extreme practices of austerity employed with a view to achieve the Deathless (the Immortal State) are useless, unprofitable much as the cars, paddles and pushing poles are useless on land, on the sand banks. Fully convinced that they are unprofitable, I have abandoned all forms of self-mortification.”

The Commentary also mentions that extreme practices such as scanty diet, scanty clothing, constitute self-torture. That extreme austerity is a form of self-mortification should be carefully noted here for better comprehension of the Dhammacakka Sutta when we deal with it.

CONSIDERING THE QUESTION OF GIVING THE FIRST SERMON

Having spent seven days each at seven different places, the Buddha went back to the goatherd’s banyan tree on the fiftieth day. Seated under the tree, he considered: “To whom should I best teach the doctrine first? Who would quickly comprehend the Dhamma?” Then it occurred to him: “There is Ālāra Kālāma who is learned, skilled and intelligent. He has long been a person having but little dust of defilement in the eye

of the wise. What if I teach the doctrine to Ālāra Kālāma first? He would quickly comprehend this Dhamma.”

It is significant that the Buddha had tried first to seek out someone who would understand his teaching quickly. It is of utmost importance to inaugurate new meditation centres with devotees who are endowed with faith, zeal, industry, mindfulness and intelligence. Only such devotees as are in possession of these virtues can achieve penetrative Insight quickly and become shining examples for others to follow. Devotees lacking in faith, zeal, industry, mindfulness and intelligence or enfeebled in mind and body through old age can hardly be source of inspiration to others.

When we first launched on teaching the Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation, we were fortunate in being able to start off with three persons (my relatives actually) endowed with unusual faculties. They acquired the knowledge of awareness of arising and passing away (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*) within three days of practice and were overjoyed with seeing lights and visions accompanied by feelings of rapture and bliss. Such speedy attainments of results have been responsible for the worldwide acceptance and dissemination of the Mahasi Vipassanā Meditation technique.

Thus, it was that the Buddha thought of teaching his first sermon to someone who would quickly grasp it and when he considered Ālāra Kālāma, a deity addressed him: “Lord, Ālāra Kālāma had passed away seven days ago.” Then knowledge and vision arose to the Buddha that Ālāra had indeed

passed away seven days ago and had, by virtue of his *jhānic* achievements, attained the Sphere of Nothingness (Akiñcañ-ñayatana Brahma Plane – the State of Immateriality).

MISSING THE PATH AND FRUITION BY SEVEN DAYS

“Great is the loss to Ālāra of Kālāma family,” bemoaned the Buddha. As Ālāra was developed enough, he would have readily understood the teaching of the Buddha. He could have gained the Path and attained Arahatsip instantly, but his early death had deprived him of this opportunity. In the Sphere of Nothingness, where only mental states exist without any forms, he could not have benefitted even if the Buddha had gone there and taught him the Dhamma. The life span in the Sphere of Nothingness is also very long, being sixty thousand world cycles. After expiry there he would appear again in the human world, but would miss the teachings of the Buddhas. As a common worldling he would do the rounds of existence, sometimes sinking to the nether world to face great sufferings. Thus the Buddha bemoaned that the loss of Ālāra was very great.

Even nowadays there are people, who are deserving of higher attainments, but pass away without an opportunity of hearing the Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation practice as expounded by us, or having heard the Dhamma thus taught but had not yet made the effort to put it into practice. The good people assembled here now to hear what we are teaching should see care-

fully that such rare opportunities for their upliftment not be thrown away.

MISSING THE GREAT CHANCE BY ONE NIGHT

Then the Buddha thought of teaching the first sermon to Udaka, son (pupil) of the great sage Rāma. Again a deity addressed the Buddha: “Lord, Udaka Rāmaputta passed away last night.” The knowledge and vision arose to the Buddha that the hermit Udaka had indeed died the previous night in the first watch and by virtue of his *jhānic* achievements had attained the state of neither Perception nor Non-perception (Nevasaññānasaññāyatana Brahma Plane). This sphere is also a state of immateriality, a formless state and its life span extends to eighty-four thousand world cycles. This is the noblest, the loftiest of the thirty-one planes of existence, but the Dhamma cannot be heard there. On appearing again in the human world, Rāmaputta could instantly attain Arahathship if he could but listen to the Dhamma because he was already so highly developed. Unfortunately, he would not get such an opportunity again, having missed it by dying one night too early. The Buddha was thus moved again to utter in pity: “Great is the loss to the hermit Udaka, the son (pupil) of the great sage Rāma.”

Then the Buddha thought again to whom he should give his first sermon. The group of five Bhikkhus appeared in his divine vision and he saw them living then in the deer Sanctuary in the township of Benares.

JOURNEY TO GIVE THE FIRST SERMON

The Blessed One set out for Benares. Some previous Enlightened Ones had made the same journey by means of miracles. Our Lord Gotama Buddha, however, proceeded on foot for the purpose of meeting the naked ascetic Upaka on the way, to whom he had something to impart.

The Buddhavamsa Commentary and the Jataka commentary state that the Blessed One started on the journey on the full-moon of Wāso. As the deer Sanctuary in Benares was eighteen *yojanas* (142 miles) away from the Bo Tree and the Blessed One made the journey on foot, the distance could not have been covered in one day unless done miraculously. It would be appropriate, therefore, if we fixed the starting date on the sixth waxing of Wāso.

MEETING WITH UPAKA, THE NAKED ASCETIC

The Blessed One had not gone far from the Bodhi Tree on the way to Gāya (six miles) when he came upon the naked ascetic Upaka, a disciple of the great leader Naṭaputta of the Naked Sect. On seeing the Blessed One, Upaka addressed him, “Your countenance, friend, is clear and serene; your complexion is pure and bright. In whose name have you gone forth? Who is your teacher? Of whose teaching do you profess?” The Blessed One replied:

*Sabbābhibhā sabbaviduhamasami
Sabbesu Dhammesu anupalitto*

Sabbiñjaho tanhākkhaye vimutto
Sayaṃ Abiññaya kamuddiseyyaṃ.

I am one who has overcome all...
(while common worldlings are affected by what is seen or heard, ending up in suffering, the Blessed One transcends all and remains serene, countenance clear).

Who knows all,
I am one who has overcome all,
I am detached from all things;
Having abandoned everything, obtained emancipation,
By the destruction of desire.
Having by myself gained knowledge,
Whom should I call my master?

The Blessed One made known his status more emphatically as follows:

<i>na me ācariyo atthi</i>	I have no teacher,
<i>sadiso me na vijjati</i>	One like me is not,
<i>sadevakasmiṃ lokasmin</i>	In the world of men and gods,
<i>natthi me paṭipuggalo</i>	None is my counterpart.

Upon this Upaka wondered whether the Blessed One had gained the Arahatsip. The Buddha replied:

<i>Ahaṃ hi arahā loke</i>	I, indeed, am the Arahatsip in the world
<i>Ahaṃ satthā anuttaro</i>	The teacher with no peer,
<i>Ekomhi Sammāsambuddho</i>	The sole Buddha, supreme, enlightened

Sitibhūtosami Nibbuto

All passions extinguished,
I have gained Peace, Nibbāna.

Upaka then asked the Blessed One where he was bound for and on what purpose. “To start in motion the Wheel of Law, I go to the Kāsis’ town. In the world of blind beings, I shall beat the drum of the Deathless,” replied the Blessed One. Upon this Upaka queried: “By the manner in which you profess yourself, are you worthy to be an infinite Conqueror?” And the Buddha said:

*Mādisā ve jinā honti, Ye pattā Āsavakkhayaṃ
jitā me papakā Dhammā, Tasamāhamupaka jino.*

“Those are the Conquerors who, like me, have reached the extinction of cankers. I have vanquished all thoughts, ideas, notions of evil (sinfulness). For that reason, Upaka, I am a Jina, a Conqueror, a victorious One.”

Upaka belonged to the sect of naked ascetics under the leadership of Naṭaputtā who was addressed by his disciples as Jina, the Conqueror. The Blessed One in his reply explained that only those who have really extinguished the cankers, eradicated the defilements, like him, are entitled to be called a Jina.

TRUTH IS NOT SEEN WHEN BLINDED BY MISCONCEPTION

After this declaration by the Blessed One that he was truly an infinite Conqueror, the naked ascetic Upaka muttered: “It may be so, friend,” shook his head and giving way to the Blessed One, went on his journey.

It is important to note carefully this event of Upaka's meeting with the Buddha. Here was Upaka coming face to face with a truly Enlightened One, but he did not realize it. Even when the Blessed One openly confessed that he was indeed a Buddha, Upaka remained skeptical because he was holding fast to the wrong beliefs of the naked ascetic sect. In these days too, there are people who follow wrong paths, refuse to believe when they hear about the right method of practice. They show disrespect to and talk disparagingly of those practising and teaching the right method. Such misjudgments arising out of false impression or opinion should be carefully avoided.

Even though he did not evince complete acceptance of what the Buddha said, Upaka appeared to have gone away with a certain amount of faith in the Buddha, as he came back to the Buddha after some time. After leaving the Buddha, he later got married to Capa (Chawa), a hunter's daughter, and when a son was born of the marriage, he became weary of the household life and became a recluse under the Blessed One. Practising the Buddha's teaching, he gained the stage of Once-returner, the Anāgāmi. On passing away, he reached the Realm of Suddavāsa Avihā, (Brahmā World), where he soon attained Arahatsip. Foreseeing this beneficial result which would accrue out of his meeting with Upaka, the Blessed One set out on foot on his long journey to Benares and answered all the questions asked by Upaka.

ARRIVAL AT ISIPATHANA

When the group of five ascetics saw the Blessed One at a distance coming towards them, they made an agreement amongst themselves saying, "Friends, here comes the monk Gotama who had become self-indulgent, given up the struggle and gone back to a life of luxury; let us not pay homage to him nor go to greet him and relieve him of his bowl and robes. However, as he is of noble birth, we will prepare a seat ready for him. He will sit down if he is so inclined."

As the Blessed One drew near to them, they found themselves unable to keep to their agreement because of his illustrious glory. One went to greet him and receive the bowl, the second one took the robe and the third one prepared the seat for him. Another brought water to wash his feet while the other arranged a foot stool. But they all regarded the Blessed One as their equal and addressed him as before by his name Gotama and irreverently with the appellation "my friend". The Blessed One sat on the prepared seat and spoke to them:

"Bhikkhus, do not address me by the name Gotama nor as friend. I have become a Perfect One, worthy of the greatest reverence. Supremely accomplished like the Buddhas of yore, fully Enlightened. Give ear, Bhikkhus, the Deathless has been gained, the Immortal has been won by me. I shall instruct you and teach you the Doctrine. If you practise as instructed by me, you will in a short time, and in the present life, through your own direct knowledge, realize, enter upon and abide in Arahantship, the Nibbāna,

the ultimate and the noblest goal of the Holy life for the sake of which clansmen of good families go forth from the household life into homeless one.”

Even with this bold assurance, the group of five Bhikkhus remained incredulous and retorted thus: “Friend Gotama, even with the abstemious habits and stern austerities which you practised before, you did not achieve anything beyond meritorious attainments of ordinary men (you were not able to transcend human limitations... *uttarimanussadhamma*) nor attain the sublime knowledge and Insight of the Noble Ones which alone can destroy the defilements. Now that you have abandoned the austerity practices and are working for gains and benefits, how will you have attained such distinction, such higher knowledge?”

This is something to think over. These five Bhikkhus were formerly court astrologers who were fully convinced and had foretold, soon after his birth, that the young Bodhisatta would definitely attain supreme Enlightenment. But when the Bodhisatta gave up privation and stern exertions, they had wrongly thought that Buddhahood was no longer possible. It could be said that they no longer believed in their own prophecy. They remained incredulous now that the Blessed One declared unequivocally that he had won the Deathless, had become a fully Enlightened One, because they held to the wrong notion that extreme austerity was the right way to Enlightenment. Likewise, nowadays, too, once a wrong notion has been entertained, people hold fast to it and no amount of showing the truth will sway them and make them believe. They even turn

against those who attempt to bring them to the right path and speak irreverently and disparagingly of their well-wishers. One should avoid such errors and self-deception.

With great compassion and pity for the group of five Bhikkhus, the Blessed One spoke to them thus: “Bhikkhus, the Perfect One like those of yore is not working for worldly gains, has not given up the struggle, has not abandoned the true path which eradicates the defilements; he has not reverted to luxury” and declared again that he had become a Perfect One, worthy of great reverence, supremely accomplished and fully Enlightened. He urged them again to listen to him.

A second time, the group of five Bhikkhus made the same retort to him. The Blessed One, realizing that they were still suffering from illusion and ignorance, and out of pity for them gave them the same answer for the third time.

When the group of five Bhikkhus persisted in making the same remonstrance, the Blessed One spoke thus: “Bhikkhus, ponder upon this. You and I are not strangers. We had lived together for six years and you had waited upon me while I was practising extreme austerities. Have you ever known me speak like this?” The five Bhikkhus reflected on this. They came to realize that he had not spoken thus before because he had not attained Higher Knowledge then. They began to believe that he must have acquired the Supreme Knowledge now to speak to them thus. They replied respectfully, “No, Reverend Sir. We have not known you speak like this before.”

Then the Buddha said, “Bhikkhus, I have become a perfect one worthy of the greatest respect (*Arahan*), supremely accomplished like the Buddhas of yore (*Tathāgata*), by my own effort I have become fully Enlightened (*Sammāsambuddho*), have gained the Immortal, the Deathless (*anātamadhigatam*). Give ears, Bhikkhus, I shall instruct you and teach you the Doctrine. If you practise as instructed by me, you will in no time and in the present life, through your own direct knowledge, realize, enter upon, and abide in Arahantship, the Nibbāna, the ultimate and the noblest goal of the Holy life for the sake of which clansmen of good families go forth from the household life into the homeless one.” Thus the Blessed One gave them the assurance again.

The five Bhikkhus got into a receptive mood then and prepared themselves to listen respectfully to what Buddha would say. They awaited with eagerness to receive the knowledge to be imparted to them by the Blessed One.

What we have stated so far constitutes relevant events selected from the Intermediate Epoch of Introductions.

We now come to the Recent Past, introduced by the words “Thus have I heard”, which gives an account of how the Blessed One began to set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma by giving the first Sermon.

The time was the evening of the full moon of Wāso 2551 years ago as counted back from this Burmese era 1324. The sun was about to set but still visible as a bright, red sphere; the moon,

bright yellow, was just coming up in the eastern skies. The Commentary on the Mahāvagga Saṃyutta mentions that the first sermon was given while both the sun and the moon were simultaneously discernible in the sky.

The audience consisted of only the five Bhikkhus from the human world, but the Brahmās numbered 18 crores, and the devas, according to the Milinda Pañhā, innumerable. Thus when the five Bhikkhus together with Brahmās and devas, who were fortunate enough to hear the first Sermon, were respectfully awaiting with rapt attention, the Blessed One began teaching the Dhammacakka Sutta with the words: “*Dve me, Bhikkhave, antā pabbajitena na sevitabbā.*”

“Bhikkhus, one who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in these two extreme parts (portions, shares) which will be presently explained (*Ime dve anta*).”

Here, *anta* according to the Commentary interpretations, connotes grammatically *koṭṭhāsa* or *bhāga* which means share or portion or parts of things. However, in view of the doctrine of the Middle Path taught later in the Sermon, it is appropriate also to render *Anta* as extreme or end. Again, “part or portion of things” should not be taken as any part or portion of things, but only those parts that lie on the two opposite ends or extremes of things. Hence, our translation as two extreme parts or portions. The Singhalese or Siamese commentaries render it as *lanaka koṭṭhasa* meaning ‘bad portion’ or part, somewhat similar to the old Burmese translation of “bad thing or practice.”

Thus it should be noted briefly first that “One who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in two extreme parts or practices.”

Katame dwe. Yo cāyaṃ kāmesu kāmasukhalīkānuyogo – hino, gāmmo, pothujjaniko, anariyo, anatthasaṃhito. Yo cāyaṃ attakilamathānuyogo – dukkho, anariyo, anatta-saṃhito.

What are the two extreme parts or practices? Delighting in desirable sense-objects, one pursues sensuous pleasure, makes efforts to produce such pleasures and enjoys them. This extreme part (practice) is low (bad), vulgar being the habit of village and town folks; common and earthly, being indulged in by ordinary common worldlings; not clean, ignoble, hence not pursued by the Noble Ones; profitless and not pertaining to the true interests one is seeking after. Such pursuit after sensuous pleasures is one extreme part (practice) which should be avoided.

Pleasurable sight, sound, smell, taste and touch constitute desirable sense-objects. Taking delight in such objects of pleasure and enjoying them physically and mentally, one pursues after these sensuous pleasures. This practice, which forms one extreme part is low, vulgar, common, ignoble and unprofitable and should not, therefore, be followed by one who has gone forth from the worldly life.

The other extreme part or practice which is concerned with attempts to inflict torture on oneself can result only in suffering. Abstaining from food and clothing which one is normally used to is a form of self-torture and is unprofitable. Not being clean

nor noble, this practice is not pursued by the Noble Ones. Neither does it pertain to the true interests one is seeking after. Thus practice of self-mortification, the other extreme part of practice, should also be avoided. Avoiding these two extremes, one arrives at the true path known as the Middle Path.

THUS THE BLESSED ONE CONTINUED

*“Ete kho, Bhikkhave, ubho ante anupāgamma majjhimā paṭipadā
Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī, ñāṇa karaṇī,
upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya saṁvattati.”*

Bhikkhus, avoiding these two extreme parts, the Blessed One had gained the Supreme Knowledge of the Middle Path, which produces vision, produces knowledge and leads to tranquility (stilling of defilements), higher knowledge and Nibbāna, the end of all suffering.

Avoiding the two extremes,
Rejecting wrong paths,
The Middle Path is reached.

Walking this true Path,
Enlightenment is gained,
Nibbāna realized.

How the Middle Path, which is also known as the Eightfold Path, produces vision, knowledge and how it leads to tranquility and Enlightenment will be dealt with in our sermon next week.

May all you good people present in this audience, by virtue of having given respectful attention to this great discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma together with its Introductions, be able to avoid the wrong path, namely, the two extremes and follow the Noble Eightfold Middle Path, thereby gaining vision and higher knowledge which will soon lead to the realization of Nibbāna, the end of all sufferings.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

CHAPTER TWO

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE 6TH WAXING OF THADINGYUT, 1324, BURMESE ERA.

This discourse was delivered by us – beginning on the New Moon of Tawthalin – with the introduction, which had taken most of our time. We could deal only with the opening lines of the Sutta. Today, we will pick up the thread from there.

“Dve me Bhikkhave antā pabbajitena na sevittabbā.”

“Bhikkhus, one who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in these two extreme parts (things, practices)” – which will be presently explained.

And why shouldn't he indulge in these? Because the main purpose of one who has gone forth from the worldly life is to rid himself of such defilements as lust and anger. This objective could not be achieved by indulging in the two extreme things, for they will only tend to promote further accumulations of lust and anger.

What are the two extreme things (parts, practices)? Delighting in desirable sense-objects, pursuing and enjoying sensuous pleasures constitute one extreme practice. This practice is low, vulgar, being the habit of village and town folks, indulged in by ordinary common worldlings, not pursued by the Noble Ones, ignoble, unclean, not tending to the true interests one

is seeking after. Such pursuit after sensuous pleasures is an extreme (part) practice which should be avoided.

There are five kinds of desirable sense-objects, namely: pleasurable sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. In brief, all the material objects, animate or inanimate, enjoyed by people in the world.

Delighting in a seemingly pleasurable sight and enjoying it constitute practice and pursuit of sensuality. Here the sense object of sight means not merely a source of light or colour that comes into contact with the seeing eye, but the man or woman or the whole of the object that forms the source or origin of that sight. Similarly, all sources of sound, smell, and touch – whether man, woman or instrumental objects – constitute sensuous objects. As regards taste, not only the various foods, fruits and delicacies, but also men, women and people who prepare and serve them are classified as objects of taste. Listening to a pleasant sound, smelling a sweet fragrant smell are as sensuous as enjoyment of good, delicious food, the luxury or a comfortable bed or physical contact with the opposite sex.

SENSUOUS GRATIFICATION IS BASE AND VULGAR

Delighting in sensuous pleasures and relishing them is to be regarded as a vulgar practice because such enjoyments lead to formation of base desires, which are clinging and lustful. It tends to promote self-conceit, with the thought that no one else is in a position to enjoy such pleasures. At the same time,

one becomes oppressed with thoughts of avarice, not wishing to share the good fortune with others or overcome by thoughts of jealousy, envy, anxious to deny similar pleasures to others.

It arouses ill-will towards those who are thought to be opposed to oneself. Flushed with success and affluence, one becomes shameless and unscrupulous, bold and reckless in one's behaviour, no longer afraid to do evil. One begins to deceive oneself with false impression (*moha*) of well-being and prosperity. The new informed worldling (*puthujana*) may also come to hold the wrong view of living soul or *atta* to entertain disbelief in the resultant effects of one's own actions, Kamma. Such being the outcome of delighting in and relishing of sensuous pleasures, they are to be regarded as low and base.

Furthermore, indulgence in sensual pleasures is the habitual practice of lower forms of creatures such as animals, *petas*, etc. The Bhikkhus and Samaṇas, belonging to the higher stages of existences, should not stoop low to vie with the lower forms of life in the vulgar practice of base sensuality.

Pursuit after sensuous pleasures does not lie within the province of one who has gone forth from the worldly life. It is the concern of the town and village folks who regard sensual pleasures as the highest attributes of bliss; the greater the pleasures, the greater the happiness. In ancient times, rulers and rich people engaged themselves in the pursuit of sensual pleasures. Wars were waged, and violent conquests made, all for the gratification of sense-desire.

In modern times too, similar conquests are still being made in some areas for the same objectives. But it is not only the rulers and the rich who seek sensual pleasures, the poor are also arduous in the pursuit of worldly goods and pleasures. As a matter of fact, as soon as adolescence is reached, the instinct for mating and sexual gratification makes itself felt. For the worldly householder veiled from the Buddha Dhamma, gratification of sense desires appears to be indeed the acme of happiness and bliss.

DIṬṬHADHAMMA NIBBĀNA VĀDA

Even before the time of the Buddha, there were people who held the belief that heavenly bliss could be enjoyed in this very life (*Diṭṭhadhamma Nibbāna Vāda*). According to them, sensual pleasure was indeed blissful; there was nothing to surpass it. And that pleasure was to be enjoyed in this very life. It would be foolish to let precious moments for enjoyment pass, waiting for bliss in a future life, which does not exist. The time for full gratification of sensual pleasure is now, this very life. Such is the *Diṭṭhadhamma Nibbāna Vāda* – Heavenly bliss in this very life. This is one of the 62 wrong views (*Micchāditṭhi*) expounded by the Buddha in the Brahmajāla Sutta of Sīlakkhandā in the Dīgha Nikāya.

Thus, enjoyment of sensual pleasure is the preoccupation of town and village people, not the concern of the recluses and Bhikkhus. For them, to go after sense desires would mean reverting to the worldly life which they have denounced. People show great reverence to them, believing they are leading a

holy life, undisturbed by worldly distractions or allurements of the opposite sex. People make the best offer of food and clothing to the recluses, denying these to themselves, often at the sacrifice of the needs of their dear ones and their family. While living on the charity of the people, it would be most improper for Bhikkhus to seek worldly pleasures just like the householders.

In addition, Bhikkhus renounce the world with a vow to work for release from the sufferings inherent in the rounds of re-birth and for the realization of Nibbāna. It is obvious that these noble ideals cannot be attained by the Bhikkhus if they go after sensual pleasures in the manner of householders. Thus, one who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in delightful sensuous pleasures.

A LOW, COMMON PRACTICE

The majority of people in the world are ordinary common folks engaged only in seeking the means of living and enjoying sensuous pleasures. There are only a few, who can rise above the common crowd, who can see the Dhamma and live a holy life. It is not for them to indulge in coarse, worldly pleasures, which is the main concern of the lower class of beings.

NOT THE PRACTICE OF THE NOBLE ONES

Enjoyment of worldly pleasures is not the practice of the Noble Ones (Ariyas). One may ask here why the Ariyas like Visākhā, Anāthapindika and Sakka, the king of celestial beings, who

had already reached the first stage of the Noble Life (*sotāpanna*) engaged themselves in pursuit of sensuous pleasures. In *Sotāpannas*, lust and passions are not yet overcome; there still lingers in them the incipient perception of agreeableness of carnal pleasures (*sukha saññā*). This point is illustrated in *Anguttara* by the example of a person who is fastidious in the habits of cleanliness, seeking shelter in a filthy place filled with excrement to avoid attack by an elephant in must.

This defiling, coarse habit being ignoble and unclean should be avoided by recluses and Bhikkhus.

NOT TENDING TO ONE'S WELFARE (ANATTA SAMHITO)

This practice does not tend to one's own welfare or well-being. In the common popular view, making money and accumulating wealth, establishing a family life with retinues and a circle of friends, in short, striving for success and prosperity in this world, appears indeed to be working for one's own welfare.

Actually, however, such worldly success and prosperity do not amount to one's own well-being. One's true interest lies in seeking ways of overcoming old age, disease, and death and attaining release from all forms of suffering. The only way to escape from all forms of suffering is through development of morality (*sīla*), mental concentration (*samādhi*) and Insight, wisdom (*paññā*). Only these, namely, *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* are to be sought in the true interest of oneself.

Pursuit of sensual pleasures cannot lead to the conquest of old age, disease, death or all forms of suffering. It only tends to breach morality codes, such as non-commitment of illegal sexual conduct. Seeking worldly amenities through killing, theft or deceit also amounts to violation of moral precepts. Not to speak of physical actions, the mere thought of enjoyment of sensual pleasures prohibits development of mental concentration and wisdom and thus forms a hindrance to the realization of Nibbāna, cessation of all sufferings.

Failure to observe moral precepts is a sure step to the four nether worlds of intense suffering. It is to be noted, however, that maintenance of moral character alone without simultaneous development of *samādhi* and *paññā* will not lead to Nibbāna. It only encourages rebirth repeatedly in happier existences, where, however, manifold sufferings such as old age, disease and death are still encountered again and again.

Recluses and Bhikkhus, having renounced the world, with the avowed purpose of achieving Nibbāna, where all sufferings cease, should have nothing to do with pursuits of sensuous pleasures that only obstruct development of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

To recapitulate, enjoyment of sensuous pleasures is low and vulgar, being the preoccupation of common people of low intelligence, unclean, ignoble; and is not practised by the Noble Ones. It is detrimental to progress in *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* and thus works against the true interest of those intent on achievement of the unaged, undeceased, the deathless – Nibbāna.

CAN HOUSEHOLDERS INDULGE IN SENSUOUS PLEASURES?

The text only says that ‘one who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in sensuous pleasures’. The question, therefore, arises whether ordinary householders who remain amidst the worldly surroundings could freely pursue sensuous pleasures without any restraint. Since the gratification of sense desires is the pre-occupation of common people, it would be pointless to enjoin them from doing so. But the householder intent on practising the Noble Dhamma, should advisedly avoid these pleasures to the extent necessary for the practice. Observance of the five precepts requires abstaining from commitment of sins of the flesh. Likewise, possession of worldly goods should not be sought through killing, theft or deceit.

FOUR KINDS OF INDULGENCE IN WORLDLY ENJOYMENTS

In Pāsādika Sutta of Pathika Vagga, Digha Nikāya, the Buddha had stated four kinds of indulgence in worldly enjoyment.

“Sunda, in this world there are some foolish, ignorant people who promote their own enrichment by the slaughter of animals – cattle, pigs, chicken, fish. This practice constitutes the first form of indulgence in worldly enjoyment.

Theft, dacoity and robbery constitute the second form of indulgence in worldly enjoyment while deceitful means of earning one’s livelihood constitute the third. The fourth form of indulgence embraces other means besides these three, by which worldly wealth is gained.”

The Sutta stated that Buddha's disciples, Bhikkhus, were free from these indulgences. Lay people, in observing the eight precepts and ten precepts have to maintain chastity and abstain from partaking of food after midday, dancing and singing, all these being forms of sensuous pleasure.

When one is engaged in meditation practices, one has to forego all kinds of sensuous enjoyment just like the Bhikkhus who have gone forth from the worldly life because they tend to hinder the development of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. A meditator, even if he is a layman, must not, therefore, indulge in worldly enjoyment.

This should suffice regarding one form of extreme practice, namely, indulgence in worldly enjoyment.

PRACTICE OF SELF-MORTIFICATION

The practice of self-mortification, which forms the other extreme practice results only in self-torture and suffering. It is not the practice of the Noble Ones, hence ignoble, unclean and does not tend to one's own welfare and interest. This extreme practice should also be avoided.

Self-mortification which leads only to suffering was practised by those who held the belief that luxurious living would cause attachment to sensual pleasures, and that only austerity practices such as denying oneself sense-objects such as food and clothing would remove the sense desires. Then only the eternal peace, the state of the unaged, undiseased, the death-

less could be achieved. Such was the belief of those who practised self-mortification.

METHODS OF SELF-MORTIFICATION

Good Bhikkhus cover themselves with robes and clothings for decency and to shield themselves from heat and cold, from insects, flies and mosquitoes. But self-mortifiers go about without any clothing – when the weather is cold, they immerse themselves under water; when hot, they expose themselves to the sun, standing amidst four fire-places, thus subjecting themselves to heat from five directions. This is known as five-fold penances by heat.

They have no use for regular beds, lying on the naked ground for resting. Some of them resort to lying on prickly thorns covered only by a sheet of clothing. There are some who remain in a sitting posture for days while others keep standing only, neither lying nor sitting down. A form of self-infliction is to lie hanging down, suspended from a tree branch by two legs; to stand straight on one's head in a topsy-turvy posture is yet another.

Whereas it is the normal habit of good Bhikkhus to assuage hunger by partaking of food, some self-tormentors completely cut off food and water. There are some who eat on alternate days only while others eat once in two days, three days, etc. Some practitioners abstain from food for 4 days, 5 days, 6 days, 7 days; some even for 15 days on end. Some reduce their

meal to just one handful of food while others live on nothing but green vegetables and grass or on cow excrement.

(In Lomahaṃsa Sutta, Ekanipāta Commentary, it is stated that the Bodhisatta himself followed these practices in one of his existences, 91 world-cycles, ago. He realized his mistakes when he saw signs of future miserable life as death approached. By abandoning the wrong practices, he managed to attain the deva world.)

All such self-imposed penances constitute self-mortification (*at-takilamathānuyoga*). These practices were followed by Nigaṇḍa Nāṭaputta sects long before the time of the Buddha.

The present day Jains are the descendants of the Nigaṇḍa Nāṭaputta. Their practice of self-mortification was commonly acclaimed and well-thought of by the multitude in those days. Hence, when the Bodhisatta gave up austerity practices and resumed partaking of normal meals, his intimate colleagues, the group of five Bhikkhus forsook him, misjudging that the Bodhisatta had given up the right practice, right exertion (*padhānavibbhanta*) and that he would not attain Enlightenment.

THE NIGAṆḌA SCRIPTURE

According to the scriptures of the Nigaṇḍa, emancipation from the sufferings of *saṃsāra* (rounds of rebirth) is achieved by two means:

1. Restraint (*saṃvara*) – This method consists restraining sense-objects such as sight, sound, smell, taste,

touch from entering their body as it is their belief that they will conjoin with the atman (*atta*) to produce fresh kamma, which will in turn form new life (existence).

2. Annihilation of results of past kamma through torturous penance (*nijjara*) – Their belief is that results of past misdeeds (*akusala kamma*) are expiated and redemption obtained by submitting oneself to self-mortification.

The Buddha asked of the naked ascetics who were practising self-mortification, “You state that you go through physical sufferings to exhaust the results of *akusala kamma* of past existences, but do you know for certain that you had indeed committed unvirtuous acts in previous existences?” Their reply was in the negative. The Buddha further questioned them whether they knew how much *akusala kamma* they had done previously; how much of it they had expiated through self-mortification, and how much of it remained. The replies were all in the negative – they did not know.

Then the Buddha explained to them that in order to give them the seed of intellectual advancement, it was fruitless to practise torturous penance, not knowing if there were any past misdeeds or know how much they had expiated.

The Buddha stated further that those who were trying to absolve themselves from their past misdeeds through self-torture may truly have committed large amounts of *akusala* deeds.

The Bodhisatta previously adopted extreme measures of practice not with a view to expiate his past misdeeds, if any, but thinking that they would lead to higher knowledge. However, after five years of strenuous efforts, as stated above, and realizing that extreme practice would not lead to knowledge or insight and wondering whether there was another way that would lead to his cherished goal, he abandoned the practice of self-mortification.

PHYSICAL SUFFERING

Practice of self-torture results only in physical suffering, but it was regarded by naked ascetics as being holy. In order to spare their sensibilities, as explained in the Commentary to the Paṭisambhidā (2nd vol., p.215), the Buddha did not denounce the practice as being low or base, nor was it described as vulgar, not being practised by ordinary village folk, nor as common because ordinary common people did not indulge in them.

The Buddha described the method simply as painful, unclean and ignoble, not being followed by the Noble Persons.

PROFITLESS EFFORT

Practice of extreme torture also does not pertain to the true interests one is seeking. Not only that, it is not concerned with higher ideals of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. It does not contribute anything to mundane advancements. Being a profitless effort,

resulting only in physical suffering, the austerity practices may even prove fatal to the over-zealous practitioner. It is utterly profitless.

Before the appearance of the supremely Enlightened Buddha, it was widely held throughout India, the Middle Country, that self-mortification was a noble, holy practice (training) which truly led to liberation (from evil effects of bad kamma). The group of five Bhikkhus also held that view.

However, the Buddha said that the extreme practice, being unclean and ignoble, produced only suffering and was not indulged in by Noble Persons. It did not pertain to the interests one was seeking. The Buddha, therefore, clearly advised those who had gone forth from the worldly life to avoid them (not to indulge in them).

A definite pronouncement regarding unworthiness of extreme practice was necessary at that stage because not only was it universally held that 'only self-mortification would lead to higher knowledge', the group of five Bhikkhus also accepted this belief. As long as they held fast to this view, they would not be receptive to the doctrine of the Noble Eightfold Path. Hence, the open denunciation by the Buddha that self-mortification was profitless leading only to physical suffering.

The first extreme portion (practice) gives free rein to mind and body and is, therefore, to be regarded as too lax or yielding. A (free) mind not controlled by meditation (concentration or insight) is liable to sink low into pursuits of sensuous plea-

asures. It is learnt that some teachers are teaching the practice of relaxing the mind, giving it a free rein, but the mind is such that it requires constant guard over it. Even when constantly controlled by meditations, the mind wanders forth to objects of sensual pleasures. It is, therefore, obvious that left by itself, unguarded by meditation, the mind will surely engage itself in thoughts of sensual pleasures.

The second extreme portion or practice inflicts suffering on oneself through denial of normal requirements of food and clothing. It is too rigid, unbending, depriving oneself of ordinary comfort and is thus to be avoided too.

WRONG INTERPRETATION OF SELF-MORTIFICATION

A wrong interpretation as to what constitutes self-mortification is being made by some teachers in contradiction to the teaching of the Buddha. According to them, earnest, tireless effort required for meditation amounts to self-mortification. This view is diametrically opposed to the exhortation of the Buddha who advised strenuous, unrelenting exertion (labour) even at the sacrifice of life and limb to attain concentration and insight.

‘Let only skin, sinew and bone remain. Let the flesh and blood dry up. I will exert incessantly until I achieve the Path and Fruition I work for.’ “Such must be the resolute firmness of determination with which the goal is to be pursued”, the Buddha counselled.

Thus, strenuous, relentless efforts in meditation practices for achievement of concentration and Insight should not be misconstrued as a form of self-torture. Leaving aside meditation practices, even keeping of precepts which entails some physical discomfort is not to be regarded as a practice of self-mortification. Young people and young novices suffer from pangs of hunger in the evenings while keeping the eight precepts, but as fasting is done in fulfilment of the precepts, it does not amount to self-mortification.

For some people, the precept of abstaining from taking life is a sacrifice on their part; they suffer certain disadvantages as a consequence. But as it constitutes the good deed of keeping the precept, it is not to be viewed as a form of self-mortification. In the Mahādhamma Samādāna Sutta of Mūla Paṇṇāsā, the Buddha explained that such acts of sacrifice at the present time are bound to produce beneficial results in the future. The Buddha said: “In this world, some people abstain from taking life, causing some physical and mental sufferings to themselves. They take up the right view (of not killing) for which they have to suffer physically and mentally. These people thus voluntarily go through suffering to keep the precepts at the present time. After passing away, they will attain the higher abodes of the devas. These ten meritorious deeds are known as good practices which produce beneficial results in the after-life through suffering in the present.

Thus, any practice which promotes *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* is not profitless, not self-mortification which is to be indulged in,

but beneficial and is in line with the Middle Path which should certainly be followed. It should be definitely noted that a practice which does not develop *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* but results merely in physical suffering constitutes self-mortification.

MISCONCEPTION REGARDING CONTEMPLATION ON FEELING

There are some who hold the view that contemplation on pleasant feeling constitutes indulgence in sensuous pleasure (first extreme) while contemplation on painful feeling (suffering) constitutes self-mortification (second extreme). Thus, they believe that one should avoid both of them and engage only in contemplating equanimity. This is certainly an irrational misconception, not supported by any textual authority.

The Buddha had definitely stated in the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta that pleasant feeling, painful feeling as well as equanimity are all objects for contemplation. The same statement was repeated in many other Suttas. Thus, it should be definitely noted that any object which falls under the category of Five Groups of Grasping is a legitimate object for meditational contemplation.

THE VIEW OF A TEACHER

A lay meditation teacher is reported to have stated, “While engaged in the practice of meditation, if after taking up any posture, one begins to feel tired, painful or benumbed, hot or unpleasant in the limbs, one should at once change the pos-

ture. If one persists in practice of mindfulness in spite of the unpleasant sensations or tiredness, one is actually engaged in self-torture.”

This statement is made apparently taking into consideration the welfare of the meditator. Nevertheless, it must be said that it is unsound and ill-advised. In the practice of concentration or Insight Meditation, patience or self-control (*khanti samvara*) plays an important role – it is an important factor for the successful practice of concentration or Insight Meditation. One-pointedness of mind can be achieved only through patiently bearing some bodily discomforts. It is within the experience of anyone who has practised meditation in earnest that continual changing of posture is not conducive to development of concentration. Therefore, unpleasant physical discomfort has to be borne with patience. The self-control practised thus is not self-mortification inasmuch as the goal being not mere suffering, but for promotion of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* in accordance with the wishes of the Buddha.

The Blessed One desired, if possible, an even more relentless effort to achieve the Noblest Fruit of Arahantship by one continuous sitting, uninterrupted by change of posture. In the Mahā Gosīṅga Sutta of Mūla Paṇṇāsa, the Blessed One stated: “A Bhikkhu meditates after making a firm resolution ‘Unclinging, I will remain seated, without changing the crossed-legged position until the *āsava*s (taints) have been removed’. Such a Bhikkhu is an adornment to the Gosīṅga monastery in the forest of Ingyin trees, a valuable asset to the forest abode.”

Thus, to state that patient contemplation of painful feelings is a form of self-torture is to denounce those yogis who are following the instruction of the Buddha. It also amounts to rejection of the Buddha's words and discourages the effort of yogis who could achieve concentration and insight only through patient bearing of pain brought about by motionless posture.

Note: Bhikkhus, in this teaching, a Bhikkhu after well considering, patiently puts up with cold, heat, hunger, thirst, attack by insects and reptiles, effects of wind and sun, accusation and abuses, painful discomfort which arises, painful suffering which is violent, sharp, unbearable, unpleasant, hateful, fearful, (which may even endanger his life). Beneficial results of such patient toleration of heat, cold, hunger, thirst, attacks of insects, insults, physical discomfort, are non-appearance of taints, impurities, suffering and burning which would surely make their appearance if not borne with patience.

It should be noted seriously that the Blessed One advised in this Sabbhasava Sutta to bear with pain or suffering which is severe enough to cost even one's life. In the Commentary to the Sutta, it is mentioned that the Elder Lomasa Naga persisted in his meditation practice even when enveloped by snowflakes while sitting in the open, around about the full moon of January/February. He overcame the cold surrounding him, without giving up his meditation posture simply by contemplation of the intense cold of the Lokantarika region of the Purgatories. Such examples of forbearance while en-

gaged in meditation examples abound in numerous stories mentioned in the Suttas.

Thus, comparatively mild forms of pain such as stiffness of limbs, heat sensation, etc. should be borne with patience, without changing the original meditation posture. If possible, persistence should be maintained even at the risk of one's life as it will promote self-control (*khanti samvara*), concentration and insight.

If, however, discomforting pains and sensations reach unbearable magnitude, the body position may be changed, but very slowly and gently so as not to disturb mindfulness, concentration and insight.

Thus, practices which are not concerned with promotion of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, but are taken only for mere suffering are definite forms of self-torture. On the other hand, arduous efforts, however painful and distressing, if made for the development of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, do not constitute self-mortification. It must be definitely taken as the Middle Path or the Noble Eightfold Path put forward by the Blessed One.

The Blessed One himself, after avoiding the two extreme practices, namely, the indulgence in sensual pleasures, which is too lax and self-mortification, which is too rigid, had by following the Middle Path reached Buddhahood and gained Enlightenment.

THE MIDDLE PATH – THE PRACTICE AND THE BENEFIT:

*Ete Kho, Bhikkhave, ubho ante anupagamma majjhimā paṭipadā.
Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā – Cakkhukaraṇi, Ñāṇakaraṇi,
upasamāya, abhiññāya, Sambodhāya, Nibbānāya Saṁvattati.*

The Blessed One continued: “Bhikkhus, avoiding these two extreme practices, the Tathāgata (the Master) has gained the penetrative knowledge of the Middle Path which produces vision and foremost knowledge and tends to calm, to higher knowledge, penetrative insight and realization of Nibbāna.”

With these words, the Blessed One let the group of Five Bhikkhus know that after giving up the two extreme practices, he had found the Middle Path by means of which he had personally gained vision, knowledge, tranquility, etc.

For a full thirteen years from the age of sixteen to the age of twenty-nine, he had indulged in sensuous pleasures, the path of extreme laxity. At the age of twenty-nine, he had given up the lax way of living by going forth from the worldly life. Then for six years he had practised extreme austerity through self-mortification. After six years of rigorous training, he had not gained any higher knowledge; he had not benefited in any way from the training and he realized that he had pursued the wrong path.

Accordingly, he gave up the austerity practices and resumed partaking of normal meals in order to fortify his physical strength to work for *jhānic* attainments through breathing ex-

ercises. The resumption of meals was a well-considered action taken purposely to enable him to engage in meditation exercise on breathing, which is part of the Middle Path. As the food was taken in moderation in a mindful manner, it should not be regarded as enjoyment of sensory pleasure. Nor was it self-mortification, there being no suffering through denial of food. Thus, it was definitely the Middle Way, unrelated to the two extreme practices.

On regaining physical strength through partaking of normal meals, the Blessed One worked for and won the four *jhānic* attainments. These *jhānic* concentrations are precursors to the Path of the Ariyas (*pubba bhāga magga*), or foundation for Insight Meditation and thus constitute Right Concentration, one of the steps of the Middle Path or the Noble Eightfold Path. Based on this foundation of Right Concentration, the Blessed One, with his fully concentrated mind, developed Insight and Right Understanding. In this way, he found out personally the four Noble *Magga* or the Noble Eightfold Path – not through rigorous abstention from material food nor through enjoyment of sensual pleasures (*kāmasukhallika*), but by following the Middle Course. Therefore, he stated: “Bhikkhus, avoiding these two extreme practices (portions), the Tathāgata had gained the penetrating knowledge of the Middle Path.” By this he meant that he had gained the knowledge of the Middle Path, which is neither too lax nor too rigorous, by abandoning the two wrong practices, namely, *kāmasukhallika*, which is too lax and *attakilamatha*, which is too austere.

Too extreme paths are wrong,
They are to be avoided.
The Middle is the Right Path.

HOW TO AVOID THE TWO EXTREMES

Of the five sense objects, namely, sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, those objects which would not violate observance of Precepts or which would be helpful to the practice of Dhamma may be enjoyed. Eating food which should be normally eaten, wearing clothes which should be normally worn, contribute to easeful practice of Dhamma, thus avoiding the extreme austerity of self-mortification.

Necessary material goods such as food, clothing, medicine and shelter (dwelling place) should be used, accompanied either by reflective contemplation or practice of concentration or insight meditation. Every time contact is made with the five sense objects, they should be noted as objects of insight meditation. By adopting a reflective mood or noting these sense objects as objects of insight meditation, partaking of necessary food, clothes, etc. does not develop into enjoying them with delight or pleasure, thereby avoiding the other extreme of indulgence in sensuous pleasures. Therefore, the Blessed One declared: "Having avoided these two extreme practices (parts), I have come to understand the Middle Path."

ANTIDOTE FOR INDIGESTIBLE FOOD

Adopting reflective contemplation or practising Insight Meditation amounts to development of mindfulness, concentration,

insight, which are steps in the Noble Eightfold Path. It is like taking antidotes after eating unsuitable, indigestible food. A convalescent, after a serious illness, has to be careful with his diet. He has to avoid the wrong kind of food which might be harmful. If he could not resist the temptation to eat unsuitable, indigestible food, he has to take digestive medicine to counteract the harmful effects of the food he has eaten. In this way, he could satisfy his desire to eat what he wants and, at the same time, avoid getting the bad effects of it.

Similarly, by contemplating on the material goods we have utilized or noting them as objects of meditation, we have prevented the partaking of them from developing into sensuous enjoyment of them.

For the yogi who notes everything he sees, hears, contacts, cognizes, and understands the nature of impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality in every phenomenon that arises and vanishes, greed (*lobha*) and hatred (*dosa*) concerning objects he sees, hears, etc. cannot develop in him. Every time he partakes of the four essential material goods, namely, food, clothing, medicines and shelter, if he keeps on noting his feelings, no defilements can develop in connection with these material objects.

Thus, he can make use of essential material goods for comfortable living, and at the same time avoid the development of delight and pleasure in them through the practice of reflective contemplation and Insight Meditation. In this manner, the two extremes are avoided. Practising reflective contempla-

tion and insight meditation at the time of partaking of food, etc. amounts to the practice of the Middle Path.

With this practice of the Middle Path, which keeps noting every object that appears at the six sense doors, thereby knowing their true nature, vision will arise, the eye of wisdom will open up, leading to the realization of Nibbāna. Such are the benefits that accrue from following the Middle Path. The Buddha continued to explain: “The Middle Path, understood penetratingly by the Tathāgata, produces vision, produces knowledge.”

HOW VISION AND KNOWLEDGE ARE DEVELOPED

Whoever practises the Middle Path, the Noble Eightfold Path, in him vision is produced, knowledge is produced. Here, vision and knowledge connote the same meaning. Dhamma is seen so clearly as if by eyesight, hence vision.

Vision and knowledge cannot arise through indulgence in sensuous pleasure nor through self-torture. They appear only by following the Eightfold Path. Development of vision and knowledge is very important. In the teaching of the Buddha, meditation is practised for the purpose of developing the Eightfold Path.

When the Eightfold Path is developed, the true nature of matter and mind is clearly discerned as if seen by the eyes. The arising and vanishing of matter and mind is also discerned truly as it occurs. The impermanent, suffering and

insubstantial nature of all material and mental phenomena also becomes very clear, not through reading nor listening to the teacher, but intuitively by self-experiencing it. Finally, the nature of Nibbāna, namely, quiescence of all physical and mental formations, cessation of suffering in the rounds of existence will be clearly seen and fully realized as one's own experience.

It is important to scrutinize whether such personal realization has been attained.

HOW VISION AND KNOWLEDGE APPEAR STEP BY STEP

To the yogis engaged in Vipassanā Meditation, which takes note of *rūpa* and *nāma* at the time of each arising and vanishing, appearance of vision and knowledge is very clear and vivid. At the beginning of meditation, although the yogi takes note of the rising and falling of the abdomen, sitting, touching, seeing, hearing, every time each phenomenon occurs, no extraordinary knowledge is gained as his power of concentration is not established yet.

After the lapse of a few days, the mind becomes tranquilized and his power of concentration grows. The mind practically stops wandering forth to other sensual objects. It remains rivetted on the chosen object of meditation, namely *rūpa* and *nāma*, as they arise. At that time, the distinction between *rūpa* (the object of awareness) and *nāma* (the mental quality that takes note of it) becomes very pronounced.

At the start of the meditation exercise, the yogi can hardly distinguish between the physical phenomenon of the rising and falling of the abdomen and the mental act of noting the phenomenon. He remains under the impression that these separate phenomena are one and the same. As the power of concentration increases, *rūpa* (the object of awareness) becomes automatically differentiated with every note-taking from *nāma* that takes note of it. They appear separately, unmixed.

The knowledge arises then that this body is made up of only the *rūpa* and *nāma*. There is no live entity in it, only the two elements of material object and the knowing mind existing together. This knowledge appears not through imagination, but as if it is presented on the palm of the hand; hence, it is described also as vision, i.e. as if seen by the eyes.

As *samādhi* (the power of concentration) increases, understanding arises – there is seeing because there is eye and sight (object) to be seen; there is hearing because there is ear and sound; bending because of the desire to bend; stretching because of the desire to stretch; movement because of the desire to move; there is liking because of ignorance about the reality (not knowing what reality is); there is craving, attachment because of liking; and craving motivates action which in turn gives rise to beneficial or baneful results.

Then, as *samādhi* continues to grow, it is vividly seen that the object of awareness and the act of noting it arise and vanish, arise and vanish as if under one's own eyes. Thus, the yogi will come to know very clearly himself that nothing is perma-

nent, everything is unsatisfactory, suffering, and that there is only ungovernable, uncontrollable phenomena without any individual or ego entity.

When he has fully developed this *anicca, dukkha, anatta nāma*, knowledge about the impermanent, suffering, insubstantial nature of things, he will realize Nibbāna, the cessation of all *sankhāras* of *rūpa* and *nāma*, all suffering, through the knowledge of the *Ariyāpatha* – the *ariya magga ñāṇa*, which constitutes the higher vision, higher knowledge.

Thus, the yogi who keeps note constantly of the *rūpa* and *nāma* as they arise in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, becomes personally convinced that the Eightfold Path produces vision and knowledge as stated in the discourse.

It is clear that such direct personal experience of truth (about *anicca, dukkha, anatta*) which constitutes higher knowledge, cannot be gained just by learning the Abhidhamma texts and pondering over its contents. No higher knowledge will arise by mere reflection on the text. In time, when reflective contemplation is neglected, even the texts will go out of memory because it is only superficial knowledge gained through exercise of intellect, not through personal realization.

KNOWLEDGE DEEPENS THROUGH PRACTICE

If the Path is practised to gain direct personal experience, it is usual that knowledge deepens as time goes on. Once Venerable Ānandā paid a visit to the monastery of the Bhikkhu-

nis, who recounted to him that the Bhikkhunis of the monastery dwelt practising the four Satipaṭṭhānas and that their knowledge of Dhamma deepened with the passing of time. Ānandā agreed and said, “It is usually so.”

When later Ānandā reported this account to the Blessed One, the Blessed One said, “Truly so, Ānandā, if any Bhikkhu or Bhikkhuni dwelt in the practice of the four Satipaṭṭhāna, it could be definitely believed that they would come to know more deeply and more of the Noble Truths than they had before.

THE COMMENTARY EXPLANATION

The Commentary explained that the knowledge gained at first was concerned with the discernment of the four Great Elements of Matter, whereas the later enhanced knowledge arose out of discernment of the derived elements (*upāda rūpa*).

Similarly, knowledge about all the material elements (*rūpa*) is followed by the contemplation and discernment of Mental Elements (*nāma*). Likewise, knowledge about *rūpa* and *nāma* is followed by discernment about their cause.

Knowledge about the cause, which gives rise to *rūpa* and *nāma* is followed by discernment of the three characteristics of their impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality.

Thus, the knowledge which arises first leads on to the Noble super-knowledge later on. In the practice of *kāyānupassanā*, according to the Sotāpanna Sutta, one begins with noting

material forms while in the process of going, standing, sitting, lying, bending, stretching, moving, etc. This amounts to taking note of the characteristics of the wind element (*vāyo*) – namely, its quality of pushing, stretching and moving, etc. Only after thoroughly understanding the nature of the great elements, can one discern the workings of the derived elements such as eyes, sight, ear, sound, by noting seeing, hearing, etc. Having mastered the nature of all the material forms, attention is next given to the arising of mind and mental formations. In this way, superior knowledge appears step by step in consequential order.

STARTING FROM ANY STEP ACCORDING TO THE DEFINITIONS OF THE TEXTS

Having learnt the definition and description of *rūpa*, *nāma*, etc., from the Abhidhamma texts, one can start from the derived elements (*upāda*) instead of from the great fundamental elements. It is possible too to begin with *nāma* before investigating *rūpa*. Putting aside *rūpa* and *nāma*, one can start considering Causes and Effects according to the Law of Dependent Origination or contemplating the phenomena of arising and vanishing; or the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality.

Some say that it is a slow process to begin with the knowledge of differentiation between *nāma* and *rūpa* (*nāma-rūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*). It would be much quicker to begin with the awareness of constant arising and vanishing of *nāma* and *rūpa*

(*udayabbhaya ñāṇa*) and *bhaṅga ñāṇa*. They even say they prefer the quicker method.

But studying *nāma* and *rūpa* and their definitions and descriptions from the texts and beginning to contemplate on them, starting from wherever one desires, will not give rise to true vipassanā Insight. Consequently, the arising of a later knowledge superior to the precedent one in accordance with the Teaching cannot be experienced this way. Just as a student increases the retentive power of the text he has learnt by rote by repetitive recitation, so also such practice will help only to remember the definitions and descriptions of *nāma* and *rūpa*. No extraordinary insight will result from such practice.

It has come to our knowledge that at a well-known meditation centre, attempts were made to go through the whole series of various stages of knowledge development just by following the stages step by step as they have learnt from the texts. After reaching the stage of *sankharupekkha-ñāṇa* (knowledge acquired by reflecting upon the formations of existence) difficulty was encountered when they come to *anuloma* and *gotrabhu magga phāla-ñāṇa* stages. So they had to go back right to the beginning. This is an instance to show that vipassanā Insight cannot be realized through shortcuts.

By practising meditation in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and developing the Middle Path or Eightfold Path, one is bound to experience deeper superior knowledge after each precedent knowledge as stated in the Dhammacakka sutta: Vision arose, knowledge arose.

THE KILESĀS ARE CALMED

The Middle Path also leads to calm, the tranquilization of *kilesās*. In a person who develops the Eightfold Path, the *kilesās* remain tranquilized. *Vipassanā magga* produces momentary calmness while the *ariya magga* brings about a complete annihilation of *kilesās*.

Indulgence in sensuous pleasures does not at all lead to the cessation of *kilesās*. Rather, it helps to develop more and more of them. Once it is given in to the temptation for enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, craving for repeated gratification results. Coming into possession of one sense-object leads to desire to possess more and more. One craving develops more and more craving. There is no end to it.

You have only to take the example of the rich people of the developed countries. They have everything they need. Yet they are never satisfied. There is no end to their desires. It is quite obvious, therefore, that practice of sensuous indulgence does not promote cessation of *kilesās*. It only causes their multiplication.

Self-mortification practices also do not tend to terminate *kilesās*. The practitioners of this method may hold the belief that exposure to extreme cold, extreme heat and strict fasting tend to remove the *kilesās*. In fact, it is one's lowered vitality, as a result of extreme practices, that keeps the *kilesās* in check temporarily. During serious illness or suffering from painful diseases, when the physical strength is at a low ebb, *kilesās* remain dormant. But after the illness, once normal health and

strength is regained, desires for sensual gratification make their appearance as usual.

Thus, after coming out of the practice of self-mortification, or stopping the practice for some time, when vitality returns, *kilesās* also return as before. Even while self-mortification is being practised, although gross *kilesās* remain suppressed, fine, subtle *kilesās* continue to arise. There will arise desires for comfortable living, free from discomfort and pain of the practice. There is bound to arise too *kilesās* of the wrong view of self – ‘I am doing the practice’, the wrong view of conceit – ‘No one can do such practice’ and the wrong belief in practice – ‘that it will lead to liberation’.

WRONG BELIEF IN THE PRACTICE – SĪLABBATAPARĀMĀSA DIṬṬHI

Holding a wrong practice as a right practice is called *Sīlabbataparāmāsa*, wrong belief in the practice. According to the teaching of the Buddha, apart from the Noble Eightfold Path, which leads to the development of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, all other practices are wrong practices and taking them as right practices amounts to wrong belief in the practice.

Not seeing the Truth,
Keeping aside the Path,
Hoping for lasting happiness,
T’is wrong belief in practice.

Everything that appears at the six doors of the senses constitutes the five Groups of Grasping, namely, *rūpa* and *nāma*, the Truth of Suffering. Meditating on *rūpa* and *nāma* is practising

the Path by which the Four Noble Truths will be understood. Believing in and practising any other method which keeps aside the *magga* Path and which does not lead to understanding the Four Noble Truths, is wrong belief in the practice (*sīlabata parāmāsa ditṭhi*).

There are people who are preaching that “It is not necessary to practise meditation nor to observe the precepts (*sīla*). It is sufficient to listen to sermons and learn by heart the nature of *rūpa* and *nāma*.” It will be necessary to consider whether such views amount to *silabbata parāmāsa*. In our opinion, such preachments amount to teaching wrong view in practice as this method excludes the three disciplines of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *vipassanā* insight.

A *sotāpanna*, being well-established in the knowledge of the right *vipassanā* practice, is not liable to hold the wrong view of *sīlabbata parāmāsas*. In future existences, there is no danger of him falling into this wrong belief. This is calming the *kilesā* by virtue of the Noble Path.

TEMPORARY PUTTING AWAY

When a sense object under contemplation is noted as impermanent, suffering, insubstantial, the defilements of mind (*kilesās*) which would accrue by wrongly holding them as permanent, pleasant, and substantial, would have no chance to arise. This amounts to temporary putting away of *kilesā*, just as light dispels darkness by virtue of mutually opposing nature, as explained in the *Visuddhi Magga*.

This is how *kilesā*, lying dormant in the sense object (*āram-manānusaya*) which would have risen if not noted, is removed by means of a fraction of vipassanā insight. Wise people should ponder well over this illustration given in the Visud-dhi Magga.

If, as some people hold, contemplating the knowledge acquired by mere learning (*suta-maya-ñāṇa*) leads to vipassanā, the question arises which *kilesā* lying dormant in which sense objects is eradicated by that vipassanā insight. It would be difficult to answer that question in the absence of a definite object of awareness.

For the yogi who, following the Satipaṭṭhāna method, observes the *rūpa* and *nāma* in the process of their formation, there are definite objects of awareness to take note of. At the same time, there are also objects of awareness that escape his notice. Thus, he can eradicate the *kilesās* lying dormant in the objects he has noted, while those lying dormant in the objects he has failed to note remain uneradicated. The answer is very simple for him.

After eradicating temporarily the *kilesās* lying dormant in the objects noted by him, there remain in the yogi latent *kilesās* which are removed only by the *ariyā magga*. Thus the first stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) has reached the stage where he has eradicated personality-belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), perplexity (*vicikicchā*) and wrong view in practice (*silabbata*) and all defilements which are liable to cause rebirth in regions of purgatory. In the *sagadagāmi*, all the coarse forms of lust and ill-will are

eradicated. The *anagami* becomes free from finer forms of lust and ill-will while the arahat is fully liberated from all forms of defilements.

In this way, *vipassanā magga* and *ariya magga* are capable of either putting away *kilesās* temporarily or uprooting them permanently. The Blessed One had this fact in mind when he said that the Middle Path leads to calm, tranquility (*upasamāya saṃvattati*).

ARISING OF SUPER-KNOWLEDGE

The Middle Path also leads to super-knowledge (*abhiññāṇa saṃvattati*). *Abhiññāṇa* is akin to vision or knowledge but its effect is more pronounced; hence it is mentioned separately. The Four Noble Truths become known by virtue of this super-knowledge in consequence of *vipassanā magga* and *ariyā magga*. The *vipassanā magga* developed beforehand enabled the *vipassanā ñāṇa*, which is developed later, to know the Four Noble Truths. Actually, only the Truth of Suffering or the Group of Grasping (*upādānakkhandā*) which happens to be noted in the course of meditation is concerned here.

Nāma and *rūpa* or the truth of suffering is seen as impermanent, as suffering or non-self. Every time they are seen thus, there is no chance for craving and clinging to make their appearance. Thus, there is liberation from craving and clinging. It is called *pahānabhisamāya*, knowing *samudāya* by abandonment, though not by realization.

Every time *rūpa* and *nāma* become subjected to his awareness, the meditator is free from ignorance, *avijjā*, that could lead him to the wrong path. Being thus free from *avijjā*, he is free from the ills of *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*. This is temporary cessation of ills, *tadaṅga nirodha saccā*. This temporary cessation of ills is realized by *vipassanā* at every instance of noting, but not as its object of contemplation.

Every act of awareness develops *vipassanā magga*, headed by *sammādiṭṭhi*. This is called *bhāvanabhisamaya*, knowing *vipassanā magga sacca* by developing it in oneself. This knowledge is achieved, though not by contemplating at the moment of noting, but having it developed in oneself, it could be clearly perceived through reflection. Knowing the Truth of Suffering through noting the phenomenon of *nāma* and *rūpa* leads simultaneously to the knowledge of the three remaining truths, also. This is knowing the four truths by means of special *vipassanā nāma*. Hence, the Middle Path is said to produce super knowledge of the truths, *abhiññā*.

Furthermore, it also causes arising of special *ariya magga ñāṇa*. As *vipassanā ñāṇa* attains full maturity, Nibbāna is realized and *ariya maggas* developed. Then the four truths become known as they should be known by means of *ariya magga ñāṇa*. For this reason too, the Middle Path is said to give rise to *abhiññā*.

PENETRATIVE INSIGHT

The Middle Path also leads to penetrative Insight (*sambodhāya saṃvattati*). *Abhiññā* means super-knowledge about Vipassanā Insight and *ariya magga ñāṇa*, which was not previously developed. *Sambodha* refers to penetrative Insight. Things hidden behind big curtains or thick walls become visible when these barriers are shattered asunder or windows are opened. Likewise the Four Noble Truths are kept hidden behind *avijjā*, which takes note of that which is wrong but covers up that which is right. By developing the Eightfold Path through meditation exercises, Truths which were not known before become apparent through *Vipassana ñāṇa* and *ariya magga ñāṇa*. Thus *avijjā* has been penetrated and Noble Truths become known by means of penetrative insight.

It is quite obvious that *kāmasukhallika* and *attakilamatha* practices can never give rise to super-knowledge nor penetrative insight (*abhiññā* nor *sambodha*).

REALIZATION OF NIBBĀNA

Finally, the Middle Path, the Eightfold Noble Path, leads to the realization of Nibbāna (*nibbāna saṃvattati*). Penetrating to the Four Noble Truths by means of the *arahatta magga ñāṇa* amounts to realization of Nibbāna. But as Nibbāna is the final and the noblest goal of those who work for liberation from the rounds of suffering it was mentioned again as a separate attainment by the Blessed One.

By developing the Eightfold Noble Path, penetration of the Four Noble Truths will be attained by means of *ariya magga*; finally Nibbāna will be realized through the *Arahattaphala*. Having thus realized Nibbāna, the last conscious moment of Parinibbāna will not lead to new existence for new forms of mind and matter. It is the cessation of all suffering. In this way, the Eightfold Path leads to realization of Nibbāna, cessation of all sufferings.

To summarise the benefits that will be derived from practising the Middle Path:

1. Avoid sensual pleasures.
2. Avoid self-mortification.
3. Avoid both extremes, being wrong paths.
4. The Middle Path is the right one.
5. Following the right path, Insight will be developed and Nibbāna realized.

Benefits that will accrue from following the Middle Path have been exhaustively expounded. They represent the highest goal aimed at by persons working for liberation from the sufferings of the rounds of existence. There is nothing more that they should need.

It now remains only to know what constitutes the Middle Path. In order to explain the Path, the Blessed One started with a question in accordance with the traditional way of those times.

*Katamā ca sā, bhikkhavā, majjhima patipadā
Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā – Cakkhukaraṇi,*

*Nānakarāṇi, upasamāya, abhiññāya, Sambodhāya,
Nibbānā ya Saṃvattati?*

What Middle way, Bhikkhus, understood by the Tathāgata, produces vision, produces knowledge and leads to calm, super-knowledge, penetrative insight, Nibbāna?

The answer was supplied by the Blessed One Himself:

*Ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo – Seyya thidam;
Sammādiṭṭhi, Saṃmāsaṅkappo, Sammāvācā, Sammākammanto,
Sammājīvo, Sammāvāyama, Sammāsati, Sammāsamādhi.*

Only this, the Noble Eightfold Path (the Blessed One pointed out the Path, as if by pointing a finger at visible objects or holding them in the palms of his hands) namely:

<i>Sammā Diṭṭhi</i>	–	Right View
<i>Sammā Saṅkappa</i>	–	Right Thought
<i>Sammā Vācā</i>	–	Right Speech
<i>Sammā Sammanta</i>	–	Right Action
<i>Sammā Ājīva</i>	–	Right Livelihood
<i>Sammā Vāyama</i>	–	Right Effort
<i>Sammā Sati</i>	–	Right Mindfulness
<i>Sammā Samādhi</i>	–	Right Concentration

These constitute the Eightfold Path, the Middle Path, which when fully understood by the Tathāgata produces visions, produces knowledge and leads to calm; super-knowledge, penetrative insight, Nibbāna.

The definition of the Middle Path has now been given. Elaborate exposition of this Eightfold Path will have to wait until next week.

By virtue of having given respectful attention to this great Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, may all you good people present in this audience be able to avoid the wrong path, namely, the two extremes and follow the Noble Eightfold Middle Path, thereby gaining vision and higher knowledge which will lead to the realization of Nibbāna, the end of all suffering.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

CHAPTER THREE

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE FULL MOON DAY OF THADINGYUT, 1324, BURMESE ERA.

Today is the Full Moon day of Thadingyut, 1324 B.E. Buddhist monks have observed Vassa (the rains retreat) for three months since the first day after the Full Moon of Wāso. Today is the last day of the three months retreat. During the Vassa period of three months, monks are enjoined not to make overnight journeys except for special reasons approved by the Buddha. They can leave their residence for up to seven days for such special reasons. At the termination of tonight, starting from early dawn tomorrow, the Vassa period of three months comes to an end. Monks can, henceforth, move about freely for overnight journeys.

PAVĀRAṆĀ

Accordingly, monks who have business to attend to elsewhere are leaving the residence tomorrow. On the eve of their departure, that is this evening, they have to perform the Pavāraṇā service. It is a ceremony in which a monk invites (requests) criticism from his brethren in respect of what has been seen, heard or suspected about his conduct. There may be lapses or faults which one may not be aware of oneself but are noticed by others. If any fault or error has been committed unwittingly, the other monks of the assembly can point it out now

and suitable corrective measures can thus be taken. Making necessary amends in consequence of criticisms constitutes observance of discipline leading to purification of conduct or *sīla* (*sīla visuddhi*). Only when purification of *sīla* is assured, one starts practising meditation for the attainment of purification of mind (*citta visuddhi*) and purification of view (*ditṭhi visuddhi*).

This practice of inviting criticisms (*Pavāraṇā*) is highly conducive to maintenance of purity in the Buddha's Dispensations (*Buddha Sāsana*) and to high spiritual attainments such *jhāna* and *magga phala*. It is for this reason that the Buddha had laid down this code of discipline, requiring formal invitation to the Sangha for criticism when there are five Bhikkhus in residence on the Full Moon day of Thadingyut, or to one another if there are less than five Bhikkhus. This is a code of discipline which a Bhikkhu of good faith should pay great heed to and in conformity with it one should earnestly invite criticism concerning one's conduct and behaviour. If any criticism is forthcoming, it should be warmly welcomed in the spirit in which it is given and necessary atonements should be made accordingly.

It is just like having pointed out by a friend a smudge or stain on one's face when one is about to leave for a social function or a public gathering. The friendly intimation is received with appreciation and the smudge on the face is removed in time to avoid derision and sniggering in public. One is thankful to the friend for having the kindness to point out the stain on one's face. Likewise, the Bhikkhu should welcome with gratitude any fault of his being pointed out by the brethren and attend to

its removal. This practice is essential for maintenance of purity in the Buddha's Teaching. Not just following the tradition as a mere formality but with the truly sincere wish to eradicate one's own fault and short-comings, the Bhikkhu should invite criticisms from his brethren and welcome them. At the same time, he should in turn offer criticisms to other Bhikkhus if he happens to see any faults in them. By thus pointing out each other's faults and making sincere efforts to remove them, the holy life can be maintained in a state of faultless purity. That was the reason behind the Buddha's laying down of this code of discipline for the Bhikkhus.

Today, fifty Bhikkhus who have resided together during the Vassa period have assembled in the hall to make formal requests to the Sangha for criticism. Each Sangha member has participated in this Pavāraṇā service which has taken nearly an hour. We have come here straight from the Sangha Assembly to continue with the Discourse held last week.

ELABORATION ON THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Last week, we dealt with only the headings of the Middle Path, otherwise called the Eightfold Path. We shall now elaborate on them.

<i>Sammā Diṭṭhi</i>	–	Right View
<i>Sammā Saṅkappa</i>	–	Right Thought
<i>Sammā Vācā</i>	–	Right Speech
<i>Sammā Kammanta</i>	–	Right Action

<i>Sammā Ājiva</i>	–	Right Livelihood
<i>Sammā Vāyama</i>	–	Right Effort
<i>Sammā Sati</i>	–	Right Mindfulness
<i>Sammā Samādhi</i>	–	Right Concentration

The Eightfold Path can be summarised under three groups, namely, *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood form the *sīla* group or *maggā*. By practising Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood, *sīla maggā* is established. *Samādhi maggā* is made up of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. By practising them, *samādhi maggā* is established. Right View and Right Thought belong to *paññā maggā*. Developing Right View and Right Thought leads one to *vipassanā paññā* (Knowledge of Insight), *maggā paññā* and *phala paññā* (Knowledge pertaining to Transcendental Path and Fruition), that is, wisdom pertaining to both mundane and supra-mundane levels. We shall describe each of these *maggas* in detail, emphasising the practical aspects.

THE PATH OF RIGHT SPEECH

“What, Bhikkhus, is Right Speech? It is avoidance of telling lies, avoidance of slandering, avoidance of harsh, abusive language, avoidance of frivolous talk or useless chatter. Bhikkhus, avoidance of these four evil speeches is called Right Speech.”

In this definition given by the Buddha, abstinence or avoidance constitutes Right Speech. Thus, it should be noted that, even when an occasion arises for one to utter false speech,

slander, abuse or useless chatter, if one restrains oneself from doing so, one is then establishing the practice of Right Speech. In reality, Right Speech is *sammāvācā virati*, one of the fifty-two kinds of *cetasika* (mental concomitants), a member of the class of Abstinenances. However, when one refrains from false speech, etc., one will be engaged only in talks which are truthful, gentle and beneficial, promoting harmony. The essential point here is that abstinence from false speech, etc., amounts to doing good deeds of observing the *sīlas*. One who takes the vow of refraining from false speech in observance of the five, eight or ten precepts has to refrain at the same time from the three evil vocal acts of slandering, abusing and idle talk, too.

In addition, whenever one sees, hears, smells, touches or thinks, if one realizes by contemplation the real nature of impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality concerning these sense-objects, no defilement which would cause utterance of wrong speech can arise. This amounts to temporarily putting away *anusaya kilesā* (latent defilements), including wrong speech, by means of Vipassanā.

As the knowledge of Insight, *Vipassanā-ñāṇa*, gets fully developed, Nibbāna is realized through *ariya magga ñāṇa*, knowledge pertaining to the Noble Transcendental Path. When that happens, wrong speech will have been completely put away by virtue of *sammāvācā virati* of the Transcendental Path. *Vissuddhi Magga Commentary*, therefore, states that *Sotāpatti Magga*, the First Path, dispels false speech; *Anāgāmi Magga*, the Third Path, dispels slandering and abusive language. Here, 'by speech or language' means volition (although it is possible

to utter harsh language unaccompanied by volition). *Arahatta magga*, the Fourth Path, dispels frivolous talk or useless chatter. (It should be understood here, however, that all kinds of lying, slandering and abusive language, which would have caused rebirths in realms of misery (*apāyagamaniya pisu, pharu, sampha*) have already been got rid of by the First Path.) The Path of right speech (*sammāvācā magga*) has, therefore, to be followed until all the Four Transcendental Paths have been completely established. To summarise:

- a. To utter false speech, slander, abuse and useless chatter is indulgence in wrong speech.
- b. Avoidance of wrong speech is right speech.

THE PATH OF RIGHT ACTION

“What, Bhikkhus, is Right Action? It is the avoidance of killing, avoidance of stealing, and avoidance of unlawful sexual intercourse. Bhikkhus, avoidance of the said three evil physical deeds is Right Action.”

Here too, in the definition of Right Action given by the Buddha, avoidance of the three evil physical acts constitutes Right Action. Thus, when an occasion arises for one to commit killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, if one restrains oneself from committing them, one is establishing the practice of Right Action. For example, just scaring away and not killing the mosquito which is biting you amounts to Right Action. Similarly, it should be understood with regard to avoidance of stealing or avoidance of sexual misconduct.

An explanation is needed here as to what constitutes unlawful sexual intercourse. There are twenty kinds of females with whom no male person should have sexual intercourse. Any male who has sexual intercourse with such persons as are under the protection of father, mother, brothers, sisters, relatives, clan elders, colleagues in meditation or a married woman or a betrothed girl, commits the evil deed of sexual misconduct. A married woman or a betrothed girl, having sexual relations with another man, also commits this evil deed. Avoidance of such evil deeds is Right Action. To summarise:

- a. Killing, stealing and sexual misconduct are wrong actions.
- b. Avoidance of these evil deeds is Right Action.

The Path of Right Action should be developed by observance of the moral precepts. It should be developed too by practising Vipassanā until the four *ariya maggas* (Transcendental Paths) have been completely established.

THE PATH OF RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

Committing three evil acts by deeds and four evil acts by words in order to earn a living constitutes wrong livelihood. Avoidance of these evil deeds in earning one's livelihood means following the Path of Right Livelihood.

“What, Bhikkhus, is Right Livelihood? In this Teaching, the noble disciple avoids a wrong way of living, gets his livelihood by a right way of living. This is called Right Livelihood.”

Wrong livelihood is earning one's living through unlawful, unwholesome means such as killing and stealing. The three evil acts by deeds and four evil acts by words amount only to wrong action (*micchā kammanta*) and wrong speech (*micchā vācā*) when they have no connection with earning one's livelihood. They do not form wrong livelihood. Thus, for instance, killing flies, mosquitoes, insects, snakes or an enemy through anger or hatred amounts to an evil act of deeds, a wrong action, but not wrong livelihood. Killing animals such as poultry, pigs, goats or fish for the market or for one's own table definitely constitutes wrong livelihood.

In general, stealing and robbery are motivated by economic reasons. These will, therefore, be classed as wrong livelihood. When, however, the reason is not economic but revenge or habit, these deeds constitute merely wrong action. Illicit sexual intercourse usually has nothing to do with earning a livelihood, but seduction of women and ruining them purposely for employment in carnal trade are, of course, wrong livelihood.

Lying is just wrong speech when not motivated by economic reason. However, when falsehood is employed in commercial transactions or in law courts to promote business, it amounts to wrong livelihood. Similarly, slandering, devoid of economic interest, is wrong speech, but nowadays false charges or denunciatory remarks are common methods employed to bring discredit to the rival party and as they are mostly concerned with business, they may be regarded as wrong livelihood. Harsh speech or abusive language is rarely employed in busi-

ness transactions and is, therefore, usually just wrong speech. Modern novels, fictions, stories, plays and dramas, cinemas, may be regarded mostly as means of wrong livelihood. Such wrong ways of earning livelihood (by means of killing, stealing and lying) are deeds which are bereft of moral principles maintained by upright people.

SEEKING WEALTH THROUGH UNLAWFUL MEANS IS WRONG LIVELIHOOD

One who observes the five precepts has to avoid the above seven evil ways of earning a livelihood. In the *ājivaṭṭhamaka sīla*, avoidance of wrong livelihood is included as one of the factors of the eight precepts. Thus, avoiding the wrong means of livelihood and earning one's livelihood in accordance with the moral principles of upright people constitutes Right Livelihood.

SEEKING WEALTH IN CONSONANCE WITH MORAL LAW IS RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

Here again, just like *sammā vācā* and *sammā kammanta*, Right Livelihood (*sammā ājiva*) is also a practice of avoidance (*virati cetasika*). Therefore, avoidance of wrong livelihood is to be regarded as Right Livelihood. Right Livelihood should be developed by observance of precepts. It should be developed too by Vipassanā meditation until the *virati* factor of the path is fulfilled. For further elaboration on Right Livelihood, reference may be made to our discourse on Sallekha Sutta, vol. II.

These three factors – Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood – belong to the *sīla* group of the Eightfold Noble Path. We shall now proceed to discuss the constituents of the *samādhi* group.

THE PATH OF RIGHT EFFORT

“What, Bhikkhus, is Right Effort? Here, in this Teaching, a Bhikkhu incites his will for the non-arising of the evil, unwholesome things that have not yet arisen and he makes effort, puts forth his energy, exerts his mind and perseveres. He incites his will to abandon, overcome the evil, unwholesome things that have already arisen and he makes effort, puts forth his energy, exerts his mind and perseveres. He incites his will for the arising of wholesome, profitable things that have not yet arisen and he makes effort, puts forth his energy, exerts his mind and perseveres. Further, he incites his will to maintain the wholesome, profitable things that have already arisen and not to let them go out of his memory but to bring them to growth, to maturity and to the full perfection of development (*bhāvanā*) and he makes effort, puts forth his energy, exerts his mind and perseveres.” Such endeavour is called Right Effort, as explained in detail by the Blessed One himself. What it means is this:

1. Effort to prevent unarisen unwholesome things from arising. Whenever one notices, hears or sees evil acts of killing, stealing, lying being done by others, one must strive hard to put oneself above these unwholesome acts. It is just like trying to safeguard oneself

against contagious diseases such as influenza, etc., in times of epidemics.

2. Effort to dispel, to overcome the evil, unwholesome things that have already arisen. These unwholesome things are of two kinds:
 - a. *vitakkama akusala* – responsible for evil deeds or words such as killing, stealing or lying, which one may have already committed and *pariyuṭṭhāna akusala*, which gives rise to thoughts of lust and sensuous desires.
 - b. *anusaya akusala* – which has not yet arisen but lying dormant, and will arise as and when an opportunity offers.

Of these two kinds, *vitakkama akusala* is dispelled or put away by *sīla* training. Meticulous observance of *sīla* automatically puts away the evil deeds and words arising out of *vitakkama akusala*. Evil thoughts of lusts and desires belonging to *pariyuṭṭhāna akusala* are dispelled by *samatha vipassanā* (concentration and insight meditation).

Anusaya akusala may be momentarily put away by Vipassanā (insight meditation). *Anusaya* defilements can be entirely got rid of, rooted out, only when *ariya magga ñāṇa* (knowledge pertaining to the Noble Path) is attained. It is with this view of completely uprooting this *anusaya* defilement that Vipassanā meditation should be practised. This point is subtle and deep and can be fully grasped only by those who have practised Vipassanā meditation effectively and adequately.

3. Efforts to bring out wholesome things which have not yet arisen. *Dāna* (alms giving), *sīla* (observance of precepts), *samatha bhavana* (practice of concentration meditation), *vipassanā bhāvanā* (practice of insight meditation) are all different forms of meritorious deeds. One should make one's best effort to perform any of these meritorious deeds which one has not fulfilled as yet.

Some persons are distorting the true teaching of the Buddha by stating that meritorious deeds will result in prolonging the *saṃsāra* (the rounds of existences). According to them, *kusala* (meritorious deed) is *saṅkhāra* (volition action) that is conditioned by *avijjā* (ignorance). In accordance with the doctrine of *paṭicca-samuppāda* (law of dependent origination) which says '*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇā*' (conditioned by *saṅkhāra*, there arises the rebirth consciousness), *kusala saṅkhāra* (meritorious deeds) will cause the arising of rebirth consciousness. Hence, *kusala* acts must be abandoned. Such assertion definitely contradicts the true meaning of the Buddha's teaching and is highly misleading.

As a matter of fact, if *kusala* acts were to be given up, one would be left entirely with *akusala* acts which would not only prolong the rounds of existences but surely would lead to the four nether worlds. The real cause for ceaseless rounds of rebirths is rooted in defilements of *avijjā* and *taṇhā* (craving). And these defilements can be removed by *kusala* acts which should, therefore, be performed with a view to eradicating these defilements. A simple meritorious act can cause rebirth

in a good abode (*sugati*) where Dhamma can be heard and practised to become a noble person (*ariya*), thus escaping from the sufferings of the nether worlds and rounds of existences. The story of the Frog Deity serves to illustrate this point. The Frog Deity was a frog in his previous existences when he happened to hear a discourse given by the Blessed One. Without understanding a word of the discourse, the frog listened to it with respectful attention and complacency, for which good deed he was reborn in the *deva* world. As a *deva*, he gained the opportunity of listening to the Buddha's Teaching again, by virtue of which he attained the stage of *sotāpanna*.

Thus effort should be made to bring out any form of wholesome things which have not yet arisen, especially the meritorious deeds which would lead to the *Ariya* Path. Every time such effort is made, there develops the Path of Right Effort.

4. Effort to maintain the wholesome things that have already arisen and to develop them to maturity and full perfection. This is plain enough. A yogi noting everything at the moment of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing, is actually making effort to prevent, to deny opportunity to evil, unwholesome things from arising. It also means endeavouring to remove, to eradicate the unwholesome things that have already arisen. The yogi is at the same time striving to develop the higher stage of *vipassanā kusalas* and *Ariya* Path, merits which have not yet arisen. He is also striving to maintain and to bring to perfection the *vipassanā kusalas* which have already arisen.

Thus, every time one is noting each phenomenon as a meditation exercise, one is developing the path of the Right Effort or the four *sammappadhānas*, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Effort to prevent non-arisen *akusalas* from arising.
2. Effort to get rid of *akusalas* that have already arisen.
3. Effort to promote, to cause to arise *kusalas* which have not yet arisen.
4. Effort to maintain, develop and to bring to perfection *kusalas* which have already arisen.

These are called the four *sammappadhānas*, the four great efforts.

Every time one is engaged in the good deeds of *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā*, one is developing the path of Right Effort or the four great efforts. Especially so when one performs these deeds with a view to escaping from the sufferings of the cycle of *saṃsāra*. The meritorious deed of Vipassanā meditation is, needless to say, part and parcel with the path of Right Effort. Striving to do good deeds is Right Effort.

THE PATH OF RIGHT MINDFULNESS

“What, Bhikkhus, is the path of Right Mindfulness? In this Teaching, a Bhikkhu dwells contemplating on the body (material aggregates), which is impermanent, painful, uncontrol-

lable, ugly, unpleasant, perceiving it merely as impermanent, painful, uncontrollable, ugly, unpleasant corporeality or material aggregates. To perceive thus, he dwells intensely ardent, mindful and rightly comprehending, having overcome covetousness and grief (*domanassa*) for the world of corporeality or the world of the five aggregates; such covetousness and grief for them are liable to arise unless rightly comprehended.

He dwells contemplating on the feelings merely as feelings, impermanent, painful, uncontrollable, etc. He dwells contemplating on the mind, noting it merely as a process of thinking and of consciousness, impermanent, painful, uncontrollable, etc. He dwells contemplating on the mind-objects, noting them merely as phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc., impermanent, painful, uncontrollable, etc. To perceive thus, he dwells intensely ardent, mindful and rightly comprehending having overcome covetousness and grief for the world of feelings, the world of mind, the world of mind-objects, in other words the world of the five aggregates. Bhikkhus, being mindful thus so as to comprehend rightly is called Right Mindfulness." These are the Buddha's words elaborating on the path of Right Mindfulness.

WHETHER THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH WAS PREACHED IN DETAIL OR NOT

In the Dhammacakka sutta, as we find it today, the Eightfold Path is just mentioned in the form of a heading. When this Dhammacakka discourse was first given by the Buddha, did

the Venerable Kondañña together with *brahmās* and *devās* who attained to higher knowledge then, understand the mere words of the heading 'right mindfulness? That it meant 'the four foundations of mindfulness' by means of which the nature of the body, the feeling, the mind and the mind-objects (*dhamma*) are clearly comprehended? Did they also understand that 'taking note of bodily actions, every feeling, every mental phenomenon, every thought on mind-objects' constitutes right mindfulness? And that this Right Mindfulness should be developed by taking note of every physical and mental phenomenon?

This is a moot point which needs to be pondered upon. For unless they had a clear comprehension about it, they would not be able to develop Right Mindfulness. And in the absence of Right Mindfulness, attainment to higher knowledge of the noble path and fruition is an impossibility.

Two considerations are possible here. The first one is that the Venerable Kondañña and the *brahmās* and *devās* who were already fully ripe with uncommon, unique *pāramis*, destined for final liberation, on just hearing the words 'right mindfulness', at once understood that they should take note of every bodily action, etc., and develop the path of Right Mindfulness. They accordingly did so and in this way attained to higher knowledge.

The second consideration is that when the discourse was first given, for clear understanding by his audience the Blessed One elaborated on the headings of the Noble Eightfold Path

and expounded also on the four foundations of mindfulness. However, at the time of the First Council, the Dhammacakka Sutta, the Noble Eightfold Path as such and as a component of the Four Noble Truths, was recited in its condensed form i.e. of a heading only; there being in existence separate expositions or exegeses on them in other suttas. It may be asked whether there are similar cases of other suttas being recited in condensed form at the First Council. The answer is 'yes'. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta in Mūla Paṇṇāsa is a condensation of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, only the first portion of which was recited at the time of the First Council. But now at the proceedings of the Sixth Great Council, the missing portions of the suttas had been filled up and recorded although the latter portions of the sutta were not mentioned in the commentary to Mūla Paṇṇāsa. Similarly, some long suttas belonging to some other Nikayas were recorded in condensed form in Khuddaka Nikāya.

Thus, it may be taken here that expositions on Right Mindfulness given at the time of the discourse were left out and the sutta recited compendiously during the First Great Council. As such the question need not arise as to how the deeper, detailed meaning of the Noble Eightfold Path could be known from its mere title. Nowadays, the four foundations of mindfulness which I have just recited is well-known by many. And there is the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta itself which supplies elaboration on the summarised title of the Noble Eightfold Path. There exist also many commentaries on this sutta. Yet, in spite of them, there are only a few who know how to develop the path of Right Mindfulness. Therefore, we are personally of

the opinion that the Blessed One had actually expounded the path in full detail when he was giving the first discourse for the benefit of many.

Here, it must be firmly noted that the path of Right Mindfulness is the four foundations of mindfulness. How this path should be developed is provided in the Pāli text just quoted. This Pāli text is exactly the same as the summarised introductory passage to the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Finding this compendious account not adequate for full understanding, one can have recourse to deep study of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta itself.

According to the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, *kayānupassanā* (contemplation of the body) may be carried out in two ways – either by contemplation of respiration, *ānāpāna*, that is watching the in-breath and out-breath, or contemplating the 32 constituent parts of the body such as head hair, body hair, etc. The commentary states that these two sections of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta are meditation objects which can produce *samatha appanā jhāna* (fixed concentration or absorption). The remaining 19 sections of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta are meditation objects producing Access concentration (*upacāra kammathāna*). By *upacāra kammathāna*, is meant Insight Meditation (*vipassanā kammathāna*) which produces only access concentration.

HOW TO PRODUCE VIPASSANĀ SATI, INSIGHT MINDFULNESS

One is only required to select any of the meditation objects mentioned in the remaining 19 sections for developing the

path of Insight Mindfulness, *vipassanā sammāsati magga*. In accordance with *gacchanto vā gacchāmiti pajānāti*, as mentioned in the section on body postures, while walking, the body movements involved in the act of walking should be noted. While standing, sitting, lying down, the body movements involved in each action should, likewise, be noted. In accordance with *yatha yatha va pana*, etc., while sitting, for example, if there are other minor body postures involved, they should also be noted carefully. Here, special attention should be paid to the grammatical tense employed in *gacchanto vā gacchāmiti*, etc. It refers definitely to noting the present action only. Therefore, it should be thoroughly understood that learning by rote and pondering upon the types of corporeality, as enumerated, in the Abhidhamma texts, does not amount to contemplation of the body with mindfulness, *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*.

In addition, as mentioned in the section on Mindfulness with clear comprehension, *sampajañña* paths, all body movements involved in going forward or going back, looking straight on or looking askance, bending or stretching the limbs, should be noted.

EXPLANATION ON INSIGHT MOMENTARY CONCENTRATION (VIPASSANĀ KHAṆIKA SAMĀDHI)

According to the section on 'Attention given to Elements' (*dhatumanasikāra pabba*), note should also be taken of the Four Great Primaries as they arise and manifest. Visuddhi Magga explicitly states that when the hindrances are completely overcome by contemplating on the Four Great Primaries, access

concentration arises. This access concentration, as explained in the Great Subcommentary of Visuddhi Magga, is not in the neighbourhood of any *appanā samādhi* (absorption concentration) and, as such, is not a true Access concentration. Nevertheless, since it is akin to access concentration in its capacity in overcoming the hindrances and producing tranquility, it assumes the name of access concentration by virtue of identity in capacities.

For purposes of Insight Meditation (*vipassanā*), we have used the term *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi*, Insight Momentary concentration to describe the said concentration. Some people find it difficult to understand this usage and criticize its use. They maintain that Insight Vipassanā cannot be developed by means of momentary concentration. They argue that if it were possible, monastic students studying the scriptures should be able to acquire Insight knowledge. We could accept this view if the students' concentration were strong enough to dispel the hindrances and if, at the same time, they were contemplating on the phenomenon of *rūpa* and *nāma* at the moment of their arising in accordance with the Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. But it is quite plain that concentration involved in recitation of and reflection on the scriptures which students have learnt by heart is not intense enough to overcome the hindrances, nor are they taking note of the phenomena of *nāma* and *rūpa* at the moment of their arising. Our critic is, therefore, obviously not conversant with correct practices of Vipassanā.

In Visuddhi Magga, *vipassanā khaṇika* concentration is mentioned as *khaṇika cittakaggatā*. In its sub-commentary, it is re-

ferred to as *khaṇamattahitiko samādhi*, etc. Thus, based on the authority of the Commentary and the sub-commentary, we have employed the term *Vipassanā Khaṇika Samādhi* to describe the concentration which is by virtue of identity, access concentration. Once these explanations are well understood, confusion will surely cease in the minds of our critics.

As stated above, if contemplation of corporeality is accomplished by taking note of them as they arise, in accordance with the section on body postures, clear comprehension and attention to elements (*iriyapatha*, *sampajaññā* and *dhatumanasikāra*), Access concentration which may be termed *vipassanā khaṇika* concentration is developed. And together with it, Insight knowledge (*Vipassanā ñāṇa*), which is also known as *Vipassanā Sammādiṭṭhi*, Insight of Right View, is also developed. These are then *Sammā Sati Magga*, *Sammā Samādhi Magga* and *Sammā Diṭṭhi Magga*, otherwise called the Foundation of Mindfulness with regard to contemplation of body, *kāyānupassanā satipatthana*.

With regard to the above statement that 'Attention to Elements' is an object of meditation for Access Concentration, we have the authority of the Visuddhi Magga which mentions this meditation object as *Catudhātuvaṅṅavathāna*. Also, no doubt should be entertained about our assertion that contemplation of body postures and clear comprehension leads to Access Concentration because the commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta definitely confirms them to be meditation objects for Access Concentration.

In addition, according to the section on Contemplation of Feelings, etc., mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of the mind, and mindfulness of mental objects (*dhammas*) at the moment of their arising will lead to development of access concentration and Insight Knowledge. Therefore, the Visuddhi Magga gives at the beginning of the chapter on Purification of Views, a description of how a person who begins practising bare insight straightaway contemplates the Four Primary Elements followed by discernment of 18 elements, 12 bases (*ayatanas*), 5 aggregates and of *rūpa* and *nāma*. This is in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha as provided in the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, etc.

By now, having heard the above explanations and considerations, it should be possible to understand how to develop the path of Right Mindfulness in conformity with the sutta discourses of the Blessed One. And having thus understood, one should be able to determine whether mere recitation of and reflection on what one has learnt from the scriptures instead of mindfully noting the body, the feeling, the mind and the mental objects at the moment of their arising, leads to the true path of Right Mindfulness. It is plain also that in the absence of the proper path of Right Mindfulness, the proper path of Vipassanā Right View (*vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi magga*) can never be established.

PROPER INSIGHT KNOWLEDGE ONLY BY MINDFUL NOTING

In order to further strengthen our argument, we will quote a passage from the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna commentary, namely:

*Yasama pana kaya vedanā citta-dhammesu kinci dhammaṃ
anamāsītava bhāvanā nāma natti. Tasamā tepi imināva
ṃaggena sokaparideva samatikkhantati veditabba.*

(Commentary to Sutta Mahāvā)

There is no such thing as development of insight knowledge, knowledge pertaining to the noble path, without contemplation of any of the meditation objects, namely, body, feelings, mind and mental objects (*dhammas*). Therefore, it should be realized that the minister Santati and Patasra Therī (who were said to have attained the higher knowledge of the noble path and fruition in the course of hearing a discourse on dhamma) had overcome their sorrow and lamentation through the practice of the path of the four foundations of mindfulness.

NO INSIGHT WITHOUT MINDFULNESS

The commentary is very clear on this point. It is not just listening to the teaching but contemplation on any of the objects, body, feelings, mind and mental objects that helped them to attain higher knowledge. Without contemplating on any of them, it is impossible to develop insight knowledge or knowledge pertaining to the noble path and fruition. It is very clear, therefore, that mere learning of the definition and classifications of *nāma* and *rūpa*, and reflecting on them without actually noting them as they arise within one's body, one will never develop the proper path of Right View, i.e. Insight knowledge or knowledge pertaining to the noble path.

Here, Right Mindfulness alone will not bring about the desired objective. Having achieved Right Mindfulness, it is only by comprehending the truth as it really is that the desired end is attained. Therefore, in the summarised introduction to the Satipaṭṭhāna just cited above, it is mentioned ‘to have ardent mindfulness with clear comprehension’. In the exposition of this summarised introduction, such terms as *pajānāti*’ (to know in different ways) or *samudaya dhammānupassi* (to know the cause of arising and ceasing) are employed.

We have thus summarised this path of Right Mindfulness as follows: to develop Right Mindfulness, there must be ardent mindfulness with clear comprehension...

1. Clear comprehension of every body movement.
2. Clear comprehension of every action of the mind.
3. Clear comprehension of every feeling – good, bad or indifferent (whichever becomes manifest).
4. Right comprehension of every mental object (*dhamma*) as it appears.

We have taken considerable time to discuss in detail the path of Right Mindfulness as it is very important for the understanding of many people. We shall proceed now with consideration of the path of Right Concentration. For that, we shall confine ourselves only to the most essential points of the Teaching concerning the path of Right Concentration. To recite all the expositions on the subject would be covering too wide a scope, hard to be grasped by those with limited knowledge.

THE PATH OF RIGHT CONCENTRATION

“What, Bhikkhus, is Right Concentration? Here, in this Teaching, the Bhikkhu who is detached from all desires (greed) and other unwholesome things, enters into the first stage of absorption which is accompanied by thought-conception (thinking), and discursive thinking (investigation), is filled with rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*). Born of detachment from evil thoughts, he enters into the four stages of *jhāna*. The concentration involved in the four stages of *jhāna* is defined as the path of Right Concentration.

Here, *jhāna* means not allowing the mind to wander about but having it fixed on a single object to remain tranquilized. According to the suttas, there are four types of *jhānas*:

1. The five factors, namely:

vitakka – directing the mind towards an object, or thinking of the meditation object, *vicāra* – repeated investigation on the object which has manifested, *pīti* – rapture or thrilling joy, *sukha* – happiness or pleasant feeling, *ekaggatā* – one-pointedness of calm mind constitute the first *jhāna*.

2. After the fading away of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, only three factors remain – *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggata* – to form the second *jhāna*.
3. Then, without *pīti*, the two factors – *sukha* and *ekaggatā* – constitute the third *jhāna*.

4. In the fourth *jhāna*, *sukha* is replaced by *upekkhā* (equanimity) so that *upekkhā* and *ekaggatā* form the two factors of the fourth *jhāna*.

These four types of *jhānas* may be higher *lokiya* (mundane) *jhānas* also known as *rupavacara* and *arupa-vacara jhānas* or *lokuttarā* (supramundane) *jhāna* accompanied by the noble path consciousness. The *lokuttarā jhāna samādhi* is the path of noble Right Concentration proper; the *lokiya jhāna samādhi* may be classed as the path of Right Concentration if it forms the basis for the development of Vipassanā.

ASSERTION THAT VIPASSANĀ CANNOT DEVELOP WITHOUT JHĀNA

Hanging on to this statement of ours, some say that Vipassanā can be developed only after achieving purification of mind through attaining *jhānic* concentration. Without *jhānic* concentration, purification of mind cannot be brought about. Consequently, Vipassanā cannot be developed. This is a one-sided dogmatic view. That access concentration in the neighbourhood of *jhāna*, having the capacity to suppress the hindrances, can help attain the purification of view, leading thus to the development of Vipassanā; that by so developing, attainment can be made up to the stages of *Arahattaphāla*; that there are many who have achieved thus, are explicitly stated in the Visuddhi Magga, etc. In the Sutta Pāli canons, for instance, in the Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, etc., there is very clear teaching that *Arahattaphāla* may be achieved by contemplation of such objects as body postures, etc., which can cause only access concentration to come about. The Anussatithāna Sutta of the

Anguttara Pāli canon states that the *samādhi* which develops out of recollections of virtues of the Blessed One, etc., is adequate enough to be used as a basic concentration for the development of higher knowledge up to the state of Arahatsip. The commentaries which expound on the section on clear comprehension also definitely affirm that *pīti* can be aroused by recollecting just on the virtues of the Blessed One and the Sangha; and that the *pīti* so aroused can be meditated upon as being perishable, as being impermanent resulting subsequently in attainment of *Arahattaphāla*.

These authorities state further that the innumerable people by lakhs, millions and crores who became liberated during the course of discourses given by the Buddha were not skilled in *jhānas*. It is most probable that many of them were unequipped with *jhāna* attainments. But they must have achieved purification of mind, because their minds were then described as responsive, tender, free from hindrances, exultant and pure. Commentaries clearly mention that it was at such opportune moments that the Blessed One delivered the most exalted, sublime discourses on the Four Truths which only the Buddha alone could expound. Commentaries clearly state that his audience attained higher knowledge as a consequence of listening to such deliverances.

In view of such consideration, definitions given in the teachings on Right Concentration in terms of the four *jhānas* should be regarded as a superlative method of description. The access concentration, although described in an inferior way, may also be taken as the right concentration which can accomplish

the purification of mind. The said access concentration has the same characteristics of suppressing the hindrances as the first *jhāna*. They are similar too in having the same five factors of *jhāna*, namely *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā*. Consequently we take it that the Blessed One had included both the proper access concentration and the nominal access concentration under the category of the first *jhāna* as an inferior way of definition.

Jhāna means closely observing an object with fixed attention. Concentrated attention given to a selected object of meditation such as respiration for tranquility concentration gives rise to *samatha jhāna*; whereas noting the characteristic nature of *rūpa*, *nāma* and contemplating on their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality brings about *vipassanā jhāna*. We have given the following summarised note for easy memory:

1. Close observation with fixed attention is called *jhāna*.
2. There are two types of *jhāna*: *samatha jhāna* and *vipassanā jhāna*.
3. Fixed attention to develop only tranquility is called *samatha jhāna*.
4. Contemplating on the three characteristics constitute *vipassanā jhāna*.
5. There are three kinds of *samādhi* (concentration): momentary, access and absorption (or fixed) concentration.

The momentary concentration mentioned above refers to the fairly calm state before access concentration is attained in the

course of meditating upon tranquility meditation objects (*samatha kammathāna* objects) and also to the *vipassanā samādhi*. As explained above, of these two, the *vipassanā samādhi* is also called access concentration because it has the same characteristic of suppressing the hindrances as access concentration. When Vipassanā concentration becomes strongly developed, it can keep the mind well-tranquilized just like the absorption concentration. This has been clearly borne out by the personal experiences of the yogis practising Satipaṭṭhāna meditation.

Therefore, in the Mahā Tika, the sub-commentary to the Visuddhi Magga, we find: 'True, *khaṇika cittakaggata* is (*vipassanā*) *samādhi* which lasts for only the duration of the moment of each arising. When *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi* occurs uninterrupted with *nāma* and *rūpa* as its meditative objects, maintaining tranquility in a single mode at a stretch and not being overcome by opposing defilements, it fixes the mind immovably as if in absorption *jhāna*.

Accordingly, a person engaged in Vipassanā meditation and intent on developing himself up to the path and fruition stage, should endeavour, if possible, to reach the first *jhāna* or the second, the third, the fourth or all the four *jhānas*. And when having any of them, he should train himself to maintain them and be skillful with them. Failing, however, to reach the *jhānic* stage, he should strive to bring about the access concentration in the neighbourhood of the *jhāna*.

The *vipassanā yānika*, on the other hand, who begins with contemplation on *nāma* and *rūpa* such as the four primaries,

should try to become established in *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi* which is capable of suppressing the hindrances just like the access concentration. When fully established thus, the series of insight knowledge will arise beginning with the analytical knowledge concerning *nāma* and *rūpa* (*nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*). Thus *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi* and access concentration are also to be regarded as the path of Right Concentration.

We have dealt fairly comprehensively with the path of Right Concentration. We shall now proceed to elaborate on the path of knowledge (*paññā*).

THE PATH OF RIGHT VIEW

“What, Bhikkhu, is Right View? Bhikkhus, there is such a thing as knowledge of the Truth of suffering, such a thing as knowledge of the Truth of cause of suffering, knowledge of the Truth of extinction of suffering, knowledge of the Truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. Such knowledge is called the Right View.”

In short, knowing the Four Truths as they really are is the path of Right View. This should be developed as explained above in the methods of development of Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. Further elucidation will be provided here for clear understanding.

There are five types of Right View according to the commentary to the Anguttara Nikaya, namely:

1. *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi*
2. *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*
3. *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*
4. *magga sammādiṭṭhi*
5. *phala sammādiṭṭhi*

Uparipaṇṇāsa mentions also five types similar to the above, but instead of *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*, there is *paccevekhaṇa sammādiṭṭhi*. Combining the two lists, we have the following six types of Right View:

1. *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi*
2. *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*
3. *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*
4. *magga sammādiṭṭhi*
5. *phala sammādiṭṭhi*
6. *paccavekkhaṇa sammādiṭṭhi*

In the above list, *phala sammādiṭṭhi* is the right view that accompanies the four *phala* states which are the results of four Noble Paths. Attainment of the knowledge of the four Noble Paths is spontaneously followed by knowledge of the Fruition. There is nothing special to be done to attain the knowledge of Fruition. In addition, *paccavekkhaṇa sammādiṭṭhi* is self-reflection that comes also spontaneously after attainment of the Path and Fruition. No effort is needed to bring it about. One should strive only for the first four types which we will elaborate accordingly.

KAMMASSAKATA SAMMĀDIṬṬHI

Kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi means belief in and acceptance of the view that there is kamma and there is resultant effect of that kamma. Any action is kamma and this action produces good or bad results. For instance, doers of evil deeds reap evil consequences. Criminals have to face for their crimes, punishment, the lightest of which may be condemnation or reproof by society. Abusive language is bound to be replied with abusive language; a stern look charged with ill-will will be returned with a stern, forbidding look; while a happy smile begets a happy smile. A friendly greeting is sure to be rewarded with amiable friendliness.

A well-behaved child, having acquired good education in his young days, will grow into a prosperous, successful adult. Following a lucrative trade or industry leads to wealth and prosperity; unprofitable endeavours such as gambling surely lead to ruin. Such instances of good or bad retribution following good or evil actions are within our daily experiences.

Throughout the endless cycle of *saṃsāra*, this law of kamma prevails – good action leading to good results, evil action leading to bad consequences. As a result of evil deeds done in past existences, one has to suffer evil consequences such as short span of life, various ailments, ugliness, poverty, and lack of followers or attendants in the present life. Evil acts such as killing, torturing, stealing, robbing, lying, etc., done in this life will bear fruits in future existences – being born in inferior planes accompanied by similar evil retribution.

As a result of good deeds done in previous existences, good results come to fruition in the present life and one enjoys longevity, free from ailments, endowed with beauty, wealth and attended upon by many followers. Avoiding evil acts of killing, torturing, stealing, robbing and being well-disposed to good deeds of generosity, help and service to others, one is reborn in higher existences, enjoying the fruit of these good deeds.

Good results from good actions and bad results from evil acts are evident realities. Belief in these realities is *kammassakata dit̥thi*, which means the right view that one's own kamma is one's own property.

This belief or the right view is not brought about by one's own penetrative intuition like the insight knowledge. It is mere acceptance of the view based on faith in the words of the elders and scriptures after weighing up the evidence of known instances and their credibility. This right view is included in the list of ten meritorious deeds and is known as meritorious right view, *sucarita sammādit̥thi*. The wrong view which denies existence of kamma and its results, in spite of their reality, is *micchādit̥thi*; it is classed as one of the ten demeritorious deeds and is termed demeritorious wrong view, *ducarita micchādit̥thi*. Reference may be made to the second volume of our discourse on Sallekha Sutta for further elucidation on *ducarita micchādit̥thi*.

1. Wrong view which denies the reality of kamma and its results in *ducarita micchādit̥thi*.

2. Right view which accepts the reality of kamma and its results is *sucarita sammādiṭṭhi*.

Sucarita sammādiṭṭhi, otherwise called *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi*, forms the root of all good actions. Based on this root, evil deeds are avoided and simple good deeds such as *dāna* and *sīla* can be performed. The meritorious deeds of tranquility meditation and insight meditation can also be cultivated. For this reason, this *sammādiṭṭhi* and *sīla* are stated to be the preliminaries to the good deeds of *samādhi* and *paññā*.

“Bhikkhu, since you have asked for a brief teaching on meditation which you wish to practise in solitude, I urge you to work first for the purification of those dhammas which form the starting point for development of *samādhi* and *paññā*. And what are these preliminary requirements? They are purified *sīla* and straight view.

Bhikkhu, when you have purified your *sīla* and maintained the straight view, then leaning on your *sīla* and standing on it, you may go on to developing the four foundations of mindfulness in three modes: contemplating on internal objects, contemplating on external objects, and then contemplating on internal and external objects.”

From these words of the Blessed One, it is obvious that *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi* and *sīla magga* are preliminary foundations which have to be set up before a yogi starts practising meditation. It is clear also that for the development of Vipassanā, *jhāna samādhi* and *upacāra samādhi* are prerequisites to

achieving the initial purification of mind. Further, it is evident that in order to establish *ariya magga*, *vipassanā magga* otherwise called *pubbabhāga magga*, which is precursory to it, must be developed first. We have, therefore, described the full Path in three stages:

1. basic *mūla magga*
2. *pubbabhāga vipassanā magga*
3. *ariya magga*

*Basic, precursor, Ariya Paths,
Developing them leads to Nibbāna.*

THE PATH IN THREE STAGES

Good Buddhists are in the habit of wishing for speedy realization and attainment of Nibbāna whenever they accomplish any meritorious deed. The *summum bonum* will not, of course, be attained immediately by their mere wishing. It will be attained only in one of the higher planes which they will reach by virtue of their good deed; and then only if they actually practise developing the Eightfold Noble Path. So, why wait until future existence? Why not start now and work for liberation in this very life? And how may liberation be achieved?

Liberation may be achieved by developing the Eightfold Noble Path which must be preceded by its precursor, namely, the *pubbabhāga vipassanā magga*. However, to develop the *magga*, basic requirements must first be fulfilled, that is the development of *kammassakata magga*, the three *sīla magga* and *samādhi magga*.

For people who take refuge in the Buddha's dispensation, *kam-massakata sammādit̥ṭhi* has already been established. As to the *sīla magga*, if the laity is not yet already established in it, they may accomplish it by observing the precepts on the eve of starting meditation practices. If a Bhikkhu yogi entertains any doubt about the purity of his *sīla*, he should, at the very outset, strive for its purification by undergoing the *parivarsa* and *manatta* punishments. If he happens to possess impermissible properties, he should discard them and gain purity by confession of his offence. After thus ensuring the purity of his *sīla*, the Bhikkhu should strive for attainment of one, two, three or all four *jhānas*. If unable to do so, he should work to gain at least the access concentration in the neighbourhood of *jhāna*. If he cannot work separately for the *jhānic* concentration, he must try to achieve the *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi* (which has the same characteristics of suppressing the hindrances as in access concentration) by contemplation on the four primaries, etc. This does not involve establishment of concentration (*samādhi*) as such, but by keeping close awareness of the true nature of *nāma*, *rūpa*, Vipassanā concentration automatically arises. But by having the attention dispersed over many objects or having it fixed on objects which are not easily discernable, concentration takes a long time to come about. Keeping to limited objects which can be distinctly noted will facilitate and hasten the development of concentration.

Therefore, we are instructing our yogis to start with noting *vāyo dhātu*, the characteristics of which are stiffness, pressure,

motion becoming evident in the region of the abdomen. As the abdomen rises, note 'rising', as it falls, note 'falling'. Begin by noting just these two motions, rising and falling, but this does not comprise all that has to be done. While noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, if thinking arises, note that too as 'thinking' and then go back to noting rising and falling. If some painful feeling appears in the body, note that too. When it subsides or when it has been noted for some time, go back to rising and falling. If there is bending, stretching or moving of the limbs, you must note 'bending', 'stretching' or 'moving'. Whatever bodily movement there is, you have to note it. Then revert to the 'rising' and 'falling' of the abdomen. When you see or hear anything clearly, note 'seeing' or 'hearing' for some moments and then return to 'rising' and 'falling'.

By thus taking note of every phenomenon attentively, the mind becomes distinctly calm and concentrated. At every moment of awareness, the object observed (*rūpa*) will appear separately from the mind (*nāma*) that cognizes it. It is the beginning of development of special *vipassanā ñāṇa* (insight knowledge) which distinguishes *nāma* from *rūpa* by virtue of the concentrated, calm mind. This was the special insight knowledge referred to by the Blessed One when he said, "*cakkhu karaṇi ñāṇa karaṇi*,... (vision arose, insight arose...) etc." Bhikkhuni theras meant the same thing when they uttered, "*Pubbenāparam visesaṃ sañjānanti*... (preceding knowledge is superseded by the knowledge following it)."

HOW JHĀNA-LĀBHIS DEVELOP INSIGHT

If the yogi strives hard in the manner stated above until attainment of *jhāna*, the knowledge that accompanies the *jhānic* concentration is *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*, which is not noteworthy for purposes of Vipassanā. What is noteworthy is *jhāna* concentration which is useful for purification of mind and as *jhānic* basis for Vipassanā meditation. Employing the *jhāna* one has attained as a base, the yogi emerges from the *jhānic* state and starts contemplating on the mental states involved at the moment of *jhānic* attainment, namely, *vita-kka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā*, *phassa*, *cetanā*, *manasikāra*, etc. These mental states become very clear to him, so also the physical states on which *jhāna* depends. Each moment of their existence presents itself clearly, followed at once by its dissolution. He knows easily that because of the incessant passing away, it is just an impermanent, unsatisfactory and ego-less phenomenon.

The yogi alternately goes into *jhānic* state and emerges from it to contemplate on the mental and physical phenomena involved in it. While he repeats this alternate performance several times, the *vipassanā maggas* become strongly developed, soon leading to the realization of Nibbāna. The possibility of such realization is described thus in the *Jhāna sutta*, Navaka Nipata of Anguttara Pāli text: “Bhikkhus, in this Teaching, the Bhikkhu enters and stays in the first *jhāna*. When he rises from that state, he contemplates on the physical body, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness that exist

during the *jhānic* moment and he sees them as transitory, painful and insubstantial. Seeing thus he stays with the Vipassanā knowledge so gained and attains the *Arahatta phala* state, the cessation of all *asavas*.”

This is how a *jhāna-lābhi* attains the Ariyan Path by Vipassanā meditation on *jhānic* mind and mental concomitants, and *nāma*, *rūpa* phenomena that actually have arisen and passed away in his own body-continuum. Here, serious consideration should be given to the fact that it is not mere reflection on what one has learnt from books, but actually watching and seeing the phenomena of arising and perishing away of *rūpa* and *nāma* as it actually happens inside his body-continuum.

Therefore, it is obvious that just as *jhāna-lābhis*, after entering into and rising from *jhānic* states, have to meditate on the arising and passing away of mental states, etc., that have actually occurred in the immediate preceding moment, so also yogis not endowed with *jhāna*, or *a-jhāna-lābhis*, have to contemplate on the arising and passing away of sensuous desires, etc., as they happen in the immediate preceding moments.

It is indeed very clear. Therefore, *a-jhāna-lābhis* should note firmly that true *vipassanā ñāṇa* cannot be developed by mere reflection on book knowledge learnt by rote; it can be developed only by watching closely every action of touching, thinking, hearing, seeing, smelling, in one’s own body-continuum and discerning the phenomena of their arising and passing away as it happens in the immediate preceding moment.

CONTEMPLATING ON MISCELLANEOUS VOLITIONAL ACTIVITIES
(PAKIṆṆAKA SAṄKHĀRA METHOD)

There is another method of meditation employed by *jhāna-lābhis*. He enters into the *jhānic* states and arising from them, he meditates, as already explained, on *jhānic* mind and mental states, and *rūpa*, whatever becomes easily discernible. He then gives his attention to acts of touching, seeing, hearing, as they occur. This is known as contemplation on miscellaneous volitional activities, and is the same method employed by *sudda vipassanā yānikas* (yogis devoid of *jhānic* attainments). The difference lies in his utilizing his *jhānic* attainments as a base for insight meditation and in the ease in which he can accomplish the task of contemplating *rūpa*, *nāma*, wherever they make their appearance, by virtue of the sound base of his *jhānic* concentration. These are the only differences between the two methods.

When fatigue overtakes the yogi from contemplating on the miscellaneous objects that appear at the sense-doors, he reverts back to the *jhānic* state. After gaining recuperation there, he goes on with the contemplation of *rūpa* and *nāma* wherever they appear. In this way, based on his *jhāna*, he develops *vipassanā ñāṇa* until it is strong enough to lead him to realization of Nibbāna through *ariya magga ñāṇa*.

This method of contemplation is described in an exposition on Dwedhavittakka sutta in the commentary to Mula Paṇṇāsa as follows:

“In these words the Buddha talked about the time when the Bodhisatta developed insight meditation based on *jhāna*. Truly, when both *samādhi* and *vipassanā* of a yogi are not yet fully mature, if he sits very long developing insight meditation, fatigue overwhelms him, there is burning sensation in the body as if flames are bursting, sweat oozing out from the armpits, he feels as if hot steamy gas is rushing forth from the top of his head. The tortured mind twitches and struggles. The yogi reverts to the *jhānic* state to reduce the mental and physical strain to get relief from them, and thus refreshing himself, he returns to the task of meditation. By sitting long at it he again fatigues himself. Then he seeks relief once more by re-entry into the *jhānic* state. Indeed, he should do so. Entering the *jhānic* state is greatly beneficial to Vipassanā meditation.

This is how miscellaneous volitional activities are used as objects for meditation starting with *jhāna*, which the yogi maintains as his base. Yogis, not endowed with *jhāna*, contemplate only on the miscellaneous volitional activities such as touching, thinking, hearing, seeing, etc. When fatigue overtakes them while doing so, they cannot, of course, seek relief by entry to *jhānic* state. They revert to the limited objective of noting the rise and fall of the abdomen. By limiting the object of meditation, mental and physical fatigue and strain are alleviated.

Thus refreshed, they go back to the continuous observation of the miscellaneous volitional activities. In this way, when *vipassanā samādhi ñāṇa* becomes strengthened, the yogi can engage himself in continuous meditation day and night with-

out physical or mental discomfort or distress. The meditative objects seem to arise in the mind of themselves. With effortless mindfulness, the process of knowing the reality as it is flows on smoothly. The truth about *anicca, dukkha, anatta* dawns upon him spontaneously. As this knowledge gains pace and gathers speed, both the sense-objects and the knowing mind plunge into the state of dissolution and cessation. This is rushing headlong into the Nibbāna by means of the Noble Path, *ariya magga*. We have summarised, therefore, that

*Basic, precursor, Ariya paths,
Developing them leads to Nibbāna.*

BEGINNING OF VIPASSANĀ MAGGA

As has been stated above, of the three stages of the path, the basic path comprising of *kammassakata sammāditṭhi* and *sīla* has to be accomplished before the start of the meditation practices. A *samatha yānika* yogi has to develop *samatha samādhi* as his base first before he starts on Vipassanā meditation, either of the two basic paths, access concentration or absorption concentration. *Suddha vipassanā yānika*, on the other hand, accomplishes this basic *samādhi magga* while contemplating on the four primaries, etc., by virtue of fixed attention being placed on every sense-object under contemplation. Then the mind does not wander to other objects. When solely occupied with the task of contemplation, the mind gets purified and after this purification of mind, every act of contemplation is development of *vipassanā magga*.

HOW VIPASSANĀ SAMĀDHI MAGGAS ARE DEVELOPED

Effort which is put forth to take note of each phenomenon of rising, falling, sitting, touching, thinking, knowing, feeling hot, feeling painful, constitutes *sammā vāyama magga*. Mindfulness placed on bodily actions, feelings, mind and mental-objects involved in the practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is *sammā sati magga*. Having the mind fixed on the sense-object under contemplation is *sammā samādhi*, which is also called *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi*. These three paths, namely, *sammā vāyama*, *sammā sati* and *sammā samādhi* are the three constituents of *samādhi magga*.

HOW VIPASSANĀ PAÑÑA MAGGAS ARE DEVELOPED

Knowing the sense-object under contemplation according to its true nature is *sammā diṭṭhi magga*. Just after attaining the purity of mind, knowledge, which is capable of distinguishing the sense-objects from the knowing mind, arises. This clear knowledge of discerning *nāma* and *rūpa* distinctly as they really are constitutes the Purification of View. This is followed by discernment of the nature of cause and effect while in the course of contemplation. There is bending because of the desire to bend, stretching because of the desire to stretch, movement because of the desire to move. One sees because there is the eye and the object to see. One hears because there is the ear and the sound to hear. There is wealth because of good kamma, etc., thus discerning clearly the law of cause and effect as it truly is.

As meditation continues, the yogi discerns with each noting the origination as well as the dissolution of every phenomenon. This results in his realization of the truth of impermanence with respect to both the sense-object and the knowing mind. This phenomenon of incessant arising and passing away without any break leads to the conviction that it is all fearful suffering, unpleasant suffering, mere insubstantiality, not amenable to one's will or control. Such clear conviction constitutes the path of right view, *sammādiṭṭhi magga*.

Therefore, the Buddha had said that knowledge of the real truth of suffering is the path of right view. When the truth of suffering is discerned at every contemplation by means of the three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the task of comprehending the remaining three truths is accomplished. How this is accomplished will be dealt with later in the section on *magga saccā*.

Bending the mind to know the true nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*, their origination and dissolution by way of the three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* constitutes *sammā saṅkappa*, the path of right thought. The two paths of right view and right thought are grouped together as the path of insight, *paññā magga*.

The three paths of right concentration, explained before, when added to these two paths of insight, form the five paths which are classified as *kāraṅka maggas* (task force *maggas*). These *maggas* are responsible for accomplishing the task of noting

and knowing every phenomenon. Hence, they are termed the *kāraṅka maggas* – task force *maggas* – in the commentary.

The *sīla magga*, comprising of right speech, right action and right livelihood, have been established even before meditation starts and they remain firm, getting purer during the course of meditation. With these three *maggas*, the combined total of eight *maggas* known as the *pubbabhāga maggas* are being developed with each noting of every phenomenon.

THE PATH OF RIGHT THOUGHT – SAMMĀ SAŅKAPPA MAGGA

We have now dealt elaborately with the seven categories of the Path. We shall now proceed with consideration of the remaining one, the Path of right thoughts, *sammā saṅkappa*.

“What, Bhikkhus, is right thought? Thoughts on freedom from sensuous desires, lusts,... *nekkhama saṅkappa*; thoughts on non-killing, on non-desire for killing, thoughts of wishing well to others... *abyāpāda saṅkappa*; thoughts on non-cruelty, on giving protection out of pity... *avihiṃsa saṅkappa*. These three modes of thoughts are known as right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*).”

All thoughts of good deeds such as performance of meritorious acts, seeking ordination (entering monkhood), listening to discourses on dhamma, and practising dhamma, are factors of renunciation, *nekkhama saṅkappa* (for details see our Discourse on Sallekha Sutta, Vol.2).

*Pabbajja pathamaṃ jhānaṃ, nibbānañca vipassanā
Sabbepi kusalā dhammā, nekkhammanti pavuccare.*

According to the above verse, it is clear that practising Vipassanā meditation fulfills the *nekkhamma saṅkappa* factor of *sammā saṅkappa*. Thoughts of non-killing and wishing well to others form *abyāpāda saṅkappa*. Especially when *Metta bhavana* is developed, this factor of *abyāpāda saṅkappa* is being fulfilled. Thoughts of consideration and mercy form *avihiṃsa saṅkappa*, which is especially fulfilled while engaged in *karuṇa bhāvanā*.

In the course of Vipassanā meditation, as no thought of killing nor cruelty with respect to the sense-object under contemplation gets the opportunity to arise, it should be considered that these two factors of *sammā saṅkappa* are fulfilled with every act of noting. But, the thought involved in Vipassanā meditation is not intentional exercise of deliberate cogitation or conceiving. It is just slight bending of the mind or giving direction to it toward perceiving the true reality of *rūpa* and *nāma*, the nature of their origination and dissolution and the truth concerning *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

We have discoursed fully on the *mūla magga* as well as on the Eightfold *vipassanā magga*, otherwise called *pubbabhāga magga*. When the *vipassanā magga* is fully developed, it gets transformed into *ariya magga* leading to the realization of Nibbāna. Therefore, *pubbabhāga magga* may be called the forerunner heralding the *ariya magga* which follows it. In other words, they form the first and last parts respectively of the same continu-

ous Path. To attain the *ariya magga* which forms the last part of the Path, the initial portion of it, namely the *vipassanā magga*, has to be accomplished first. In this manner, the last stage of the Path, the *ariya magga*, will develop by itself.

To give an illustration, if a person wants to jump across a stream, he should come running to it with speed and jump. Once he has taken the jump, no more effort need be exerted by him. He will land automatically on the other side of the stream. Developing the *vipassanā magga* may be likened to the approach to the stream with speed and jumping. Landing on the other side of the stream is comparable to the realization of *ariya magga* in consequence of the momentum gained from the *vipassanā magga*. Therefore, we summarise again, by reciting:

*Basic, precursor, Ariya paths,
Developing them leads to Nibbāna.*

and end the discourse here today.

May all you good people in this audience, by virtue of having given respectful attention to this great Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, be able to develop the Middle Path, otherwise called the Noble Eightfold Path and by means of the Path and Fruition according as you wish, attain Nibbāna, the end of all sufferings.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE 8TH WANING OF THADINGYUT, 1324, BURMESE ERA

For the past eight weeks, we have been expounding the Dhammacakka, dealing with definitions and explanations of the two extreme parts (practices), how the Blessed One had discarded these two extreme practices and come upon the middle Path, otherwise called the Noble Eightfold Path, by means of which vision arose, insight arose in him. We have also explained how the Path leads to the calming of the defilements, and to the higher knowledge which gives penetrative insight into the four Truths and to realization of Nibbāna. We have given, too, comprehensive exposition on the Eightfold Path and how it may be developed. We shall now start considering the Four Noble Truths which the Blessed One penetrated by adopting the Middle Path, otherwise known as the Noble Eightfold Path.

TRUTH OF SUFFERING – DUKKHA SACCĀ

Idāṃ kho pana. Bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariya-saccaṃ: jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā vyādiṇi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhaṃ, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yaṃ piccaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ, samkhittena pañcupādānakkhandā dukkhā.

This Pāli passage which gives definition and enumeration of the *dukkha saccā*, is quoted from the Dhammacakka Sutta now extant. The sentence '*vyādipi dukkhā*' in this passage appears to be extraneous, not being found in the Pāli definitions of *dukkha saccā* provided in other suttas. At the same time, the words '*soka parideva dukkha domanassu-pāyasā pi*' which come after '*maranaṃ pi dukkhaṃ*' in other suttas are missing in the existing text of Dhammacakka Sutta. There exists this disagreement between Dhammacakka Sutta and other suttas in the definition of *dukkha saccā*.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DISPARITY

Sārattha Dīpanī, a sub-commentary on Vinaya, has made the following critical remarks on the disparity of the sutta texts mentioned above. The sentence '*vyādipi dukkha*' does not appear in the detailed definition of *dukkha saccā* given in the Vibhanga of Abhidhamma Pitaka. Accordingly, Visuddhi Magga, in giving the comprehensive definition of *dukkha saccā*, does not include this sentence which exists only in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta text. A careful investigation should be made as to why this sentence appears only in Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta and not in any other suttas. It went on to state: "Again, in the comprehensive definition of *dukkha saccā* in the Vibhanga of Abhidhamma, the words *soka parideva dukkha domanassupāyasa pi dukkha* come immediately after *maranaṃ pi dukkhaṃ*. These words are missing in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. Why it should be so should also be closely examined."

The author of the sub-commentary did not seem too happy over these various definitions in the texts. He did not, therefore, give any exposition on these words '*vyādīpi dukkha*' which are not present in other suttas and on which the commentary remained silent. We had taken up the suggestion made by the author of the sub-commentary to conduct an enquiry into these differences and had made the following findings as to how these differences had come about.

It cannot be that the Buddha had given consistent definition of *dukkha saccā* in every discourse on the subject. We have come to the conclusion that the Theras, the Vinaya-bearers who made a specialised study of vinaya, not being equally well-versed in matters pertaining to suttas and abhidhamma, had caused the insertion of the words '*vyādīpi dukkha*' and the deletion of the words '*soka parideva dukkha domanassupāyāsapi dukkha*' in the Dhammacakka discourse in the Mahavagga Pāli Text of the Vinaya Pitaka. Their version of the Dhammacakka thus appears in the Vinaya differently from the Sutta and Abhidhamma Pāli Canons.

Our conclusion is based on the consideration that the commentaries on Sutta and Abhidhamma, which give expositions on the short definition of *dukkha saccā*, do not provide any explanatory note on *vyādīpi dukkha*. But on *soka parideva dukkha domanassupāyāsa pi dukkha* and on the fact that the comment arises, the sub-commentaries make no mention of the differences in the Pāli texts.

The author of the sub-commentary, Sārattha Dīpanī, was a venerable thera who lived during the reign of King Prakkama

Bāhu between A.D. 1153 and and A.D. 1186. Counting back from B.E. 1324, it was about 700 or 800 years ago. The commentators and the sub-commentators from the Venerable Buddhaghosa down to the Venerable Dhammapāla lived about 1300 to 1600 years ago. These ancient commentators and sub-commentators who wrote exegeses on the Dhammacakka sutta of Sacca Samyutta in the Samyutta Mahāvagga of the Pāli Canon, did not make any mention of the disparity in the texts. Their silence was simply because of the fact that the Dhammacakka Sutta as it existed then was no different from those given in the Pāli text of other Suttas and Abhidhamma.

However, by the time the author of the sub-commentary, Sārattha Dīpanī, came upon the scene about 500 years later, the disagreement had cropped up between the various Pāli texts which he duly discovered. He, therefore, strongly urged for a critical examination and close investigation of the cause of variance in the texts.

Are we to take it that the Buddha gave at the very first discourse a definition of *dukkha saccā* which is different from other versions? If we do, it would amount to holding the view that the Buddha started off at the first discourse with one definition of *dukkha*, then changed it later to a different version. This kind of view would be highly improper. A proper method of consideration would be that the Buddha, whose knowledge of all things is unimpeded, being blessed with *sabbaññuta ñāṇa*, had given the same definition consistently throughout, but that later on, Vinaya-bearers, owing to defective intelligence and memory, had caused these discrepancies

to creep into the texts in the course of handing them down from generation to generation. Instances of textual discrepancies are well known in modern times. The commentary and sub-commentary texts are found to vary from country to country. It is obvious that such disagreements were not present in the original texts, but developed only in later periods.

After careful scrutiny as set out above, we have come to the conclusion that other texts are accurate and that the Dhammacakka sutta, now extant, has in its section on the definition of dukkha saccā, supplemental words of 'vyādhi pi dukkho' while the words 'soka paridava dukkha domanassapāyāsa pi dukkha' are missing. Our conclusion is also based on the consideration that 'vyāhi-illness' is comprised in the word dukkha of the larger sentence of 'soka parideva dukkha domanassapāyāsa pi dukkha', whereas 'soka', etc., are not embraced by the term 'vyādi'.

We, therefore, believe that the texts bearing 'soka parideva dukkha domanassapāyāsa pi dukkha' without the words 'vyādhi pi dukkho' are accurate and accord with the canonical teachings of the Buddha. We have engaged in the above scrutiny of the varying texts as we intend to use the following version in our discourse because we believe it to be accurate.

ACCURATE PĀLI TEXT ON DEFINITION OF DUKKHA SACCĀ

Idaṃ kho pana, Bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ, ariyasacchaṃ, jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā maraṇampi dukkhaṃ, soka parideva dukkha domanassapāyāsapi dukkha, appiyehi, sampayog

*dukkho, piyehi vip̄payogo dukkho. Yam̄piccam̄ na labnati,
tampi dukkhami Saṃkhitte na pañcupādāṇakkhandā dukkhā.*

“Bhikkhus, what I am going to teach presently is the Noble Truth of Suffering or the real suffering which the ariyas should know. The new becoming (birth) is also suffering; getting old (ageing) is also suffering; death is also suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are also suffering; association or connection with unlovable persons and objects or hateful persons and objects is also suffering; separation from lovable person and objects is also suffering; desiring to get and not getting it, that desire or craving is also suffering (commentary on Sutta Mahāvā); or alternatively, desiring to get and not getting what one does not want is also suffering (Vibhanga sub-commentary). In short, the five aggregates which form the object of attachment or the group of *nāma-rūpa* which clings to the notion of I, mine, permanence, satisfactoriness (*sukha*), self, are indeed suffering.”

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Many systems of religious beliefs exist in the world, each expounding its own view of what it considers to be the essence of Truth. The teachings in other systems of religions are not based on personal realization of Truth, but merely on speculative thinking. Their followers accept such teachings not through personal experience either but only on faith. All such teachings which fall outside of Buddhism are comprised in sixty-two kinds of wrong beliefs enumerated in the Brahma-jāla Sutta by the Blessed One.

Speculation does not have a place in the Buddha's Teachings. The Truth he taught was discovered by himself through his own insight. The Four Noble Truths he taught with their definitions had been gained through his superior penetrative insight, developed by following the Middle Path, otherwise called the Noble Eightfold Path which, as stated above, leads to higher knowledge producing penetrative Insight. These Four Noble Truths are:

1. *Dukkha saccā* The Truth of Suffering,
2. *Samudaya saccā* The Truth of the Origin of Suffering,
3. *Nirodha saccā* The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering,
4. *Magga saccā* The Truth of the Path or the Way
 leading to the Cessation of Suffering.

It is most essential to know these Four Truths. Only with the apprehension of the Truth of Suffering may suffering be avoided, for which the cause of suffering must also be known. Again, in order to achieve cessation of suffering, there must be knowledge of what constitutes real cessation of suffering. Finally, the extinction of suffering cannot be brought about without knowledge of the practical way of accomplishing it. Hence, knowledge of the Four Truths is indispensable.

Having come upon these four essential Truths, the Buddha enumerated them in their sequence. The first Truth dealt with was the Truth of Suffering, which he described as:

1. New becoming (rebirth)
2. Getting old (old age)
3. Death

4. Sorrow
5. Lamentation
6. Physical pain
7. Grief
8. Despair
9. Association with hateful ones
10. Separation from loved ones
11. Not getting what one wants
12. The five groups of grasping (clinging)

This is the translation of the Pāli passage quoted above.

1. JĀTI DUKKHA – SUFFERING OF NEW BECOMING (REBIRTH)

By new becoming (rebirth) is meant the dissolution of *nāma*, *rūpa* at the last moment in the last existence and after death, the first moment of genesis of new *nāma-rūpa* in the new existence as conditioned by kamma. The first genesis serving as a connecting link with the past life is termed *paṭisandhe* (linking conception) in the initial formation of fresh *nāma* and *rūpa*. If this formation takes place in a mother's womb, we have womb conception (*gabbhaseyaka paṭisandhe*), which may be of two types: *andhaja paṭisandhe* (oviparous) – when the conception takes place in an egg in the womb; and *jalabuja paṭisandhe* (viviparous) – when the embryo freely develops in the womb until birth takes place.

Womb conception, according to Buddhist scriptures, has its origin in the semen and blood of the parents. Western medical science holds the view that conception results from the union

of father's sperm and mother's ovum. The two views may be reconciled by taking it that the father's sperm and mother's blood are involved in conception. This union of sperm and blood of parents, leading to the formation of resultant new *nāma* and *rūpa*, constitutes what is known as rebirth, which may take place either in states of woe (*apāya*) or in the human world, as conditioned by past *akusala kamma* or *kusala kamma* respectively.

Conception in moisture-laden media such as moss, etc. (*sansedaja*), represents the coming into existence of some larvae, etc. Beings not visible to human eyes such as deities, demons, ghosts and denizens of the woeful states assume spontaneous re-birth or autogenesis known as *opapātika* conception, with knowing mind and physical body completely developed.

In all these four types of conception, the first moment of conceiving or genesis definitely constitutes *jāti*, beginning of new existence. No suffering or pain as such exists at the first moment of genesis. Since this first arising or origination of life serves as a basis for later appearance of physical pain and mental suffering throughout the whole of the ensuing existence, *jāti* is termed 'suffering'. It is like putting one's signature on a document as a guarantor of some questionable transactions. There is no trouble, of course, at the time of signing the instrument of the transactions, but as it is certain to give rise to later complications, the act of signing the document amounts to involvement in dreadful trouble or in other words 'suffering'. For further elucidation, suffering may be classified under seven categories:

1. *Dukkha-dukkha*
2. *Viparināma dukkha*
3. *Saṅkhāra dukkha*

These three form one group.

4. *Paticchanna dukkha*
5. *Apaticchanna dukkha*

These two form another group.

6. *Pariyāya dukkha*
7. *Nippariyāya dukkha*

These two form the third group.

Of these seven types, bodily pains, aches and discomfort are a form of suffering just as worry, misery, unhappiness and sadness constitute another form. The two forms combine to make the first type of suffering... *dukkha-dukkha*. Its nature is suffering, its name is suffering. Hence, it is *dukkha-dukkha*, dreaded by every sentient being.

1. Mnemonic note: *unendurable physical and mental suffering is dukkha-dukkha*.

VIPARINĀMA DUKKHA

Pleasurable physical sensations arising from agreeable tactile impressions are known as *kāya sukha*; joyful states of mind arising from reviewing pleasant sense-objects are known as *cetasika sukha*. These two forms of happy states please everyone, every creature. All beings go after these two happy states day and night, even to the extent of risking their lives. When

these are attained, their happiness knows no bounds. Nevertheless, while they are rejoicing with blissful contentment, if the sense-objects which have given them much intense delight and enjoyment disappeared or was destroyed, great would be their agitation, followed by intense distress.

When the wealth they have accumulated in the form of gold, money or property suddenly is lost through one reason or another, when death or separation come to one's beloved member of the family, spouse or children, intense grief and distress ensue, which may even cause mental derangement. Thus, these two forms of happiness, *kāya sukha* and *cetasika sukha*, are also a type of suffering known as *viparināma dukkha* (suffering because of change). While they last, they may appear very enjoyable, only to be replaced by extreme grief and despair when they vanish. Hence, they are *dukkha* all the same.

2. Mnemonic note: *Happiness arising from physical comfort and mental joy is called viparināma dukkha.*

SAÑKHĀRA DUKKHA

The ordinary everyday scene which one sees, hears or comes into contact with, indifferent sense-objects, inspires neither a feeling of pleasure or well-being nor of pain or unpleasantness. This neutral, medial condition which by its nature is neither painful nor pleasurable is termed equanimous feeling (*upekkhā vedanā*). This neutral equanimity does not, however, exist permanently. It needs constant maintenance of necessary condi-

tions for continuity of this medial state. This implies laborious effort which, of course, is *dukkha*. Hence, this equanimous feeling, neither painful nor pleasurable, is termed *saṅkhāra dukkha*. In addition to this equanimous feeling, all the other formations of *nāma* and *rūpa* of the mundane sphere are also called *saṅkhāra dukkha* as they need constant conditioning.

3. Mnemonic note: *Equanimous feeling and nāma, rūpa formations of the mundane sphere are called saṅkhāra dukkha.*

Feeling of happiness also requires constant conditioning for its maintenance and as such should be classified as *saṅkhāra dukkha*, but the commentators left it out of this classification as it had been given a separate name of *viparināma dukkha*. Nevertheless, it should be regarded as *saṅkhāra dukkha* too since it is very plain that considerable application is needed for its maintenance.

The three types of *dukkha* explained above should be well understood as a complete grasp of these types will help in understanding the Truth of Suffering.

PATICCHANNA DUKKHA

Physical ailments such as earache, toothache, headache, flatulence, etc. and mental afflictions arising out of unfulfilled desire, burning rage, disappointments, miseries and worries are called 'concealed suffering' (*paticchanna dukkha*) because they are known only to the suffering individual and become known to others only when intimated by them. As such, suf-

fering is not openly evident, it is also called 'unevident non-apparent suffering' (*apataka dukkha*).

APATICCHANNA DUKKHA

Physical affliction such as from sword cuts, spear thrusts or bullet wounds is not hidden but quite apparent and openly evident. It is, therefore, called 'exposed suffering' (*apaticchanna dukkha*) or 'evident suffering' (*pakata dukkha-dukkha*).

PARIYAYA DUKKHA

All formations of *rūpa* and *nāma* which can give rise to physical and mental afflictions are not, in essence, suffering but as they are the basis of suffering of one form or another, they are known as *pariyāya dukkha*, quite dreadful in view of the suffering which will surely arise from them. As in the example just given, it is dreadful like giving one's guarantee to a transaction by signing a bond for which recompense has to be made later.

NIPPARIYAYA DUKKHA

This *dukkha-dukkha* type of suffering is intrinsic. There is no beating about the bush as to its action, and it is, therefore, known as 'direct suffering' (*viparināma dukkha*).

Of these seven types of *dukkha*, *jāti* or taking birth in a new existence comes under *pariyāya dukkha* according to the above classification. All kinds of suffering in hell such as subjection

to millions of years of incineration by hell-fires, tortures by the hell-keepers, arise because of birth in hell as a consequence of past *akusala kamma*. All kinds of suffering in the realm of *petas* such as starvation, scorching fires for millions and millions of years arise because of birth in that realm as a consequence of *akusala kamma*. Hardships and troubles in the animal kingdom suffered by animals such as cattle, elephants, horses, dogs, pigs, chickens, birds, goats, sheep, insects, etc. arise because they happen to take birth in animal existence.

Human misery characterised by scarcity of essentials for living such as food, clothing, etc. is brought about by the fact of taking birth in the human existence. Even when well-provided for as in the case of affluent people, there is no escape from suffering, inflicted on them in the form of physical and mental distress due to illness and disease or unfulfilled desire, fear of oppression by the enemies, ageing, etc. All these miseries come about because of *jāti* in the human world. Being thus, the foundation for all the sufferings that ensue throughout the whole span of life, taking birth in a particular existence, *jāti*, is regarded as *dukkha*.

MISERY IN A MOTHER'S WOMB

When one takes conception in a mother's womb, one comes into being in the disgusting womb which is situated between the stomach, filled with undigested food, and the rectum, the receptacle for excreta, faeces and urine, depending on one's body substance on the parents' sperm and blood. Very loath-

some indeed! The very thought of having to stay in the filthy mass of the sperm and blood is revolting and nauseating. And there is no knowing whether one has descended into a human womb or the womb of a cow or a dog.

A dhamma-teaching thera of 20 or 30 years ago used to recite a verse 'Dhamma cradle, Emerald cradle' in the course of his sermons. The verse gave a description of various kinds of cradles ranging from emerald-studded golden cradles for royal infants to the miserable wicker baskets of poverty-stricken families. In one stanza of the verse was the query 'Ageing is gradually creeping. For which cradle are you heading?' This question is quite apt since after ageing finally comes death. And if craving (*tanhā*) still remains, death will inevitably be followed by rebirth in a new existence. Even if one is reborn in the human plane, one is bound to start life in one cradle or another. The question is 'Which kind of cradle?' Emerald studded golden cradles await those with an abundance of wholesome kammās; while those burdened with unwholesome kammās will head straight for a wicker basket in a wretched home. The verse was an exhortation urging people to do meritorious deeds for assurance of a high class cradle in their next existence.

We would also urge you now just to ponder a while on the question of which mother's womb you are destined. And to become mindful of the dreadful suffering attendant upon birth and work for cessation of the cycle of rebirths. Even if one cannot strive for complete liberation yet, at least endeavour for security against lowly destinations.

What we have described now is how one is faced with dreadful suffering of rebirth from the moment of descent into the mother's womb. Then, during the period of gestation for nine or ten months, other sufferings follow. When the mother suddenly moves, sits down or stands up, the extreme suffering one undergoes is like a kid being whirled around by a drunkard or a snake's young fallen into the hands of a snake charmer. The young creature in the womb of a modern mother, much given to athletic exercises, is likely to be subjected to more intense sufferings. When the mother happens to drink something cold or swallow anything hot or acid, his suffering becomes a real torture.

SUFFERING AT BIRTH

In addition, it is said that obstetric pains of a mother at childbirth could be so excruciating as to prove even fatal; the child's agony could be no less and could prove fatal, too. The pain that arises after birth when his delicate body is taken in by rough hands, washed and rubbed with rough clothes, is like scrapping the sore spots of a very tender wound. The pains described so far relate to suffering gone through from the moment of conception to the time of birth.

SUFFERING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF LIFE

Thereafter, there will of course be distresses and discomforts such as stiffness, heat, cold, itch, while he is still too young to alleviate them himself by changing of postures through

moving, shaking, sitting or standing. Innumerable difficulties are bound to follow when he grows up and comes face to face with the problems of earning a living. He will become subjected to diseases and illnesses, maltreatment and oppression by others.

One goes through all these sufferings simply because one happens to take a new existence. Accordingly, *jāti* (rebirth) being the foundation of all the miseries of the whole existence, is defined as *dukkha* by the Buddha. A careful consideration will confirm the accuracy of this definition. Rebirth is really dreadful – like signing a document which will later give rise to complications. Thus, *jāti* is *dukkha* because of its dreadfulness. To summarise, the physical and mental afflictions are occasioned (arise) because of *jāti* in each existence. Only when there is no more rebirth will there be total release from these inflictions. Thus the Blessed One had taught that the very origination of new existence, *jāti*, is suffering.

Mnemonic notes:

1. *Dukkha is encountered in every existence.*
2. *No jāti, no dukkha.*
3. *Therefore, origination of new existence (jāti) is dukkhā.*

2. JARĀ DUKKHA – SUFFERING BECAUSE OF AGEING

Ageing means becoming grey-haired, toothless, wrinkled, bent, deaf and poor in eyesight. In other words, decay which has set in, very recognizably, in the aggregates of *nāma* and *rūpa* of a particular existence. However, the ageing of the *nāma* components of the body is not so apparent. Indications of it

such as failing memory and dotage become noticeable, usually to close associates, only when one gets very old.

The physical ageing goes on throughout life quite unmistakably, but becomes very noticeable only when one advances in age and is no longer youthful. The under ten-year-old age group does not have the same body as those older. There is continuous change in physical appearance. The above twenties and thirties age group assumes an appearance quite different from that of younger days. These changes are indications of the ageing that is taking place. Here, by ageing (*jarā*) we mean decaying in the sense of getting grey-haired, etc., which is clearly discernible.

Jarā (ageing) is concerned with just the static moment (*thiti*) of the aggregates of *nāma* and *rūpa* and has no essence of pain or suffering as it is. Because of ageing, there occurs failing of vital force in the whole system of the body, impairment of eyesight and hearing, wearing out of the sense of smell and taste, undermining of physical strength, growing unattractiveness, loss of youthfulness, loss of memory and intellectual power, disrespect and contempt on the part of young people (being addressed as old fogey, grand sire, granny, etc.), being treated as a drag on society. Such disabilities, of course, give rise to physical and mental suffering. Since it forms the source of physical and mental suffering, the Buddha had said that *jarā* (ageing) is fearful *dukkha*. People are really afraid of old age. They are forever seeking ways and means of stemming the advent of old age. But all in vain. Decay sets in inexorably with grey hair and loss of teeth, etc. That ageing is

such a dreadful *dukkha* is so plain that we need make no further elaboration on it.

3. MARAṆĀ DUKKHA – DEATH AS SUFFERING

Death means the extinction of *jivita nāma, rūpa*, or the life principle which has been in ceaseless operation since the time of conception as conditioned by individual kamma in a particular existence. Referring to this, the Buddha had said, '*sabbe byayanti maccuno*' – all mortals are in constant fear of death. Death as conditioned by birth, death by violence, death by natural causes, death from termination of the life-span, death from exhaustion of wholesome kammic results are all synonymous terms describing the same phenomenon of extinction of the life principle, *jivita nāma, rūpa*.

Death means just the moment of dissolution of the *jivita nāma, rūpa* and is not by itself pain or distress. However, when death comes, one has to abandon the physical body and leave behind one's dear and near ones, relatives and friends, together with all of one's own properties. The thought of leaving the present existence is very frightening and every mortal is seized with fear of death. Uncertainty as to which existence one is bound for after death causes great fear too. Because of its fearsome, dreadful nature, the Buddha had described death as *dukkha*.

According to the commentary, wicked men burdened with unwholesome past, see on their death-bed the evil deeds they did or signs of their foul deeds or signs of the *apāya* state

in which they are doomed to take rebirth, all of which give them intense mental anguish. Good men with accumulation of wholesome karmas suffer too as they dwell on approaching death because they cannot bear to part from all that they hold dear, beloved ones and property.

As death draws near, all mortal beings are subjected to severe attacks of diseases and illnesses which rack the body with unbearable pain. Death, being the basis of all such physical and mental pain, has thus been named *dukkha* by the Blessed One.

4. SOKA DUKKHA – SORROW AS SUFFERING

Soka, sorrow is the worrying and the state of being alarmed in one affected by loss of relatives, etc:

1. When loss of relatives occurs through burglary, robbery, insurgency, epidemics, fire, flood or storm, the misfortune is termed *ñativyāsana*;
2. When destruction of property or possessions is occasioned by king's action (government), theft or fire disaster, it is known as *bhogavyāsano*;
3. Deterioration in health and longevity brought about by pernicious illness or disease is called *rogavyāsano*;
4. Lapses in morality is *sīlavyāsana*; and
5. Deviation from the Right View to the Wrong View is *ditṭhivyāsana*.

Sorrow with intense worry and alarm is felt especially when one is bereaved of loved ones such as husband, wife, sons and

daughters, brothers, sisters, etc., or when disastrous economic misfortune befalls one. This *soka*, sorrow is, strictly speaking, *domanassa vedanā* (a displeasurable feeling) and as such is intrinsic suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*). Overwhelming distress occasioned by sorrow is liable to cause pyrosis or heartburn which may contribute to premature ageing and even death. Being a basis for other physical pain, too, *soka* is fearsome and is, therefore, named *dukkha* by the Blessed One.

Everyone is in fear of sorrow. Capitalizing on this fear, many books have been written on the subject of 'freedom from sorrow', but the real freedom from sorrow may be achieved only through the practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. By developing the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, complete freedom from sorrow can be enjoyed as exemplified by the minister Santati and Paṭāsāra Theri. At present times, too, distressed persons, some having lost husbands or others troubled by business failures, have come to our meditation centre to practise the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. Day by day, their sorrow diminished gradually and finally complete freedom from sorrow comes to them.

5. PARIDEVA DUKKHA – LAMENTATION AS SUFFERING

Lamentation is the material quality of sound produced by wailing on the part of one affected by loss of relatives or property. Absent-mindedly and hysterically the distressed one clamours, proclaiming the virtues of the dead and the quality of the lost property or denouncing the enemy or agency responsible for his disaster.

In the abstract sense, lamentation is the material quality of sound and, therefore, not suffering in essence. However, such wailing and hysterical proclamations produce physical discomfort and pain. The Buddha had, therefore, declared *parideva* (lamentation) as *dukkha*. To cry is to be subjected to pain which is suffering or *dukkha* in Pāli.

6. DUKKHA – PHYSICAL PAIN

Physical discomforts in the body such as stiffness, feeling hot, aches, tiredness, itch, etc. are suffering. These physical pains are true intrinsic suffering called *dukkha-dukkha*, which everyone knows and is afraid of. Even animals such as dogs, pigs, fowls or birds run for safety at the slightest hint of getting beaten or shot at because they too are afraid of physical pain. That physical pain is suffering needs no elaboration. It is important to know that *vyādhi* (sickness or disease) comes under this category of *dukkha* (physical pain). Physical pain is generally followed by mental distress, which is a cause of mental pain too, and it is named *dukkha* (dreadful suffering).

If physical pain is mindfully noted in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna method, mental pain is averted. Only physical pain is felt then. The Blessed One spoke in praise of this practice by which mental pain is averted and one suffers only physical pain. Permitting mental suffering to arise by failing to make note of the physical pain is denounced by the Buddha. “It is like,” he said, “attempting to remove the first thorn which is hurting by pricking it out with another thorn, when the

second thorn breaks and remains embedded in the flesh. One then suffers two pains, one from the first thorn and the additional pain from the second thorn.” This illustration deserves careful consideration.

7. DOMANASSA – GRIEF AS SUFFERING

Domanassa (grief) denotes mental agony such as displeasure, solicitude (anxiety), misery, sadness, fear, etc. *Domanassa* is also intrinsic suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*). All mortal beings are well-acquainted with it and fear it, which therefore needs no elaboration. *Domanassa* not only oppresses the mind, but may also torture the body. When one is fiercely gripped by grief, one goes about dejectedly without sleep or food for days on end, with the consequent impairment of health and even advent of death. It is truly a formidable *dukkha* from which only *anagamis* and *arahats* are exempt. Individuals who practise Satipaṭṭhāna meditation can overcome grief if they make strenuous effort of noting it as it arises. In this way, they can reduce the pain or grief to a considerable extent even if they cannot overcome it completely.

8. UPĀYĀSA – DESPAIR AS SUFFERING

Upāyāsa (despair) is ill-humour or resentment produced by excessive mental agony in one affected by loss of relatives, etc. (*nativyāšana*). It causes repeated bemoaning over the loss resulting in burning of the mind and physical distress. *Upāyāsa* is,

therefore, *dukkha*, suffering because of the intense burning of the mind and physical pain accompanying it. People, accordingly, recognize this state of despair as a fearsome *dukkha*.

The commentary illustrates the differences between *soka* (sorrow), *parideva* (grief) and *upāyāsa* (despair) as follows:

Sorrow is like cooking oil or dye-solution in a pot over a slow fire. Lamentation is like its boiling over when cooking over a quick fire. Despair is like what remains in the pot after it has boiled over and is unable to do so anymore, going on cooking in the pot till it dries up.

9. SUFFERING FROM ASSOCIATION WITH THE HATEFUL

Association with the hateful is meeting with disagreeable beings and *saṅkhāra* formations. Such meeting is not itself unbearable, but when one meets with disagreeable beings or undesirable objects, reaction sets in at once in the form of mental disturbance and physical discomposure. As it serves as a cause of mental and physical distress, association with the hateful is designated by the Buddha as *dukkha* (dreadful suffering). The world in general also recognizes such encounters as undesirable suffering. Some people may go to the extent of making a wish (praying) not to have the misfortune of encountering undesirable persons or things in their succession of existences. However, in a world where pleasantness and unpleasantness co-exist, one has to face both according

to circumstances. One's wish may be fulfilled, if at all, only partially by having less occasions to face unpleasant people and objects.

The important thing is to endeavour to meet unpleasant situations with correct mental attitude. The best course of action is to revert to the practice of Satipaṭṭhāna, that is, noting incessantly so that the mental process stands at the stage of just 'hearing', 'seeing', etc. When unpleasurable sensations are felt in the body, mental distress must be averted by continuous noting of 'touching', 'knowing', 'pain', etc.

10. SUFFERING FROM SEPARATION FROM THE BELOVED

Separation from the loved is to be parted from agreeable beings and saṅkhāra formations. Such separation is not itself a painful feeling. However, when separation from beloved ones (husbands, wives, children) takes place, by death or while still alive, or when parted from one's treasured possessions, mental agony sets in at once. It may even develop into sorrow, lamentation and despair. One is bound to be overwhelmed with grief under such circumstances. As it promotes such various mental afflictions, the Blessed One had called the separation from the loved ones and desirable objects *dukkha* (dreadful suffering). The world also recognizes such separation as painful suffering. Some even make the wish to be always together with their loved ones throughout the succession of existences. Such wishes may be fulfilled when there is sufficient good kamma.

The family of the millionaire, Mendaka, comprising his wife, his son and daughter-in-law together with their servant girl, once made such a wish – to be always together in future existences – by offering food to a Paccekabuddha. As a result of this good kamma, their wish became fulfilled and they were born together forming the same group of five at the time of our Buddha. However, such kind of wish tends to promote clinging fetters and is very inappropriate for the individual with the firm resolve of complete release from the sufferings of *samsara*.

11. SUFFERING FROM NOT GETTING WHAT ONE WANTS

This suffering for not getting what one wants or suffering that arises out of desire for some unobtainable object. Without practising and developing the Eightfold Path, the desire comes to the beings, 'Oh, that we were not subjected to becoming (birth), ageing, disease and death. Oh, that we were not subjected to sorrow and lamentation, etc.' These desires, of course, will not come about by mere wishing, and not getting what one wants causes mental anguish. Therefore, the Buddha had described such desires as *dukkha* (dreadful suffering). Here, the object of one's desire is not limited to Nibbāna only, which is free from birth, ageing, etc., but is meant to include also the worldly doings and wealth which cannot be attained just by mere desiring. Not getting them as desired is also *dukkha*.

12. SUFFERING FROM THE FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING

The eleven types of suffering starting from suffering of birth (*jāti*) to suffering of not getting what one wants (*icchitalābha dukkha*) arise only because there are the five groups of grasping (*upādānakkhandā*); they arise dependent on these five groups. In short, therefore, these five groups of grasping are the truth of suffering.

The aggregates of material and mental formations which form the objects of clinging or grasping are called *upādānakkhandā*, groups of grasping. These five groups of grasping are made up of:

1. The group of material forms
2. The group of feeling
3. The group of perception
4. The group of mental concomitants
5. The group of consciousness

All sentient beings exist as such only with these five groups forming their substantive mass. They cling to their body which is merely an aggregate of material forms, regarding it as 'I, 'my body', 'permanent', etc. Hence, the group of material form is called the group of grasping.

The mental states, made up of consciousness and mental concomitants (*cetasikas*), are also grasped at, taking them to be 'I, 'my mind', 'it is I who think', 'permanent', etc. So the mental states (*nāma*) are also known as groups of grasping. This is how attachment occurs in the groups of *rūpa* and *nāma* as a whole.

THE UPĀDĀNAKKHANDĀS AT THE MOMENT OF SEEING

To consider each separate phenomenon in detail, the *upādānakkhandā* is conspicuous every time one sees an object. Likewise, the *upādānakkhandā* is prominent on every occasion of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, imagining (thinking). At the moment of seeing, the seeing eyes, the object of sight and consciousness of seeing are quite conspicuous. In this consciousness of seeing are comprised pleasant or unpleasant feeling of seeing, perception or recognition of the object seen, making effort and bending the mind to accomplish the act of seeing and the knowledge that an object is just seen.

People who cannot practise insight meditation or those practising insight meditation who have not yet advanced to the stage of appreciating the nature of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, remain attached to the eye, object of sight, etc. They regard the clear eyesight as 'I', as 'my eye' and 'permanent'. When they see the body and limbs, the attachment arises, 'I see my own body; this is my hand, it exists permanently.' Seeing other people, they appear as a person, a creature, enduring, lasting. Because of such arousal of attachment to them material forms of eye and object of sight are termed *rūpa-upādānakkhandā*.

In addition to pleasant feeling or unpleasant feeling in seeing an object, there is also neutral feeling which is not elaborated separately here due to space constraint. What is concerned with wholesome neutral feeling is included in pleasant feeling; what is concerned with unwholesome neutral feeling is included in unpleasant feeling. Both pleasant and unpleasant

feelings give rise to attachment: 'It is I', 'It is my feeling', it is everlasting', 'I feel well', 'I feel terrible'. Causing attachment in this way, pleasant or unpleasant feeling on seeing an object, is called *vedanā-upādānakkhandha*.

On perceiving an object, attachment arises in this way too: 'I recognize it', 'I don't forget it'. So it is termed the grasping group of perception (*saññā-upādānakkhandā*).

Exercising the will to see an object is called *cetanā* (volition). In the vocabulary of the text, it is termed incitement, exhortation, or urging, but will or volition expresses its meaning quite clearly. *Manasikāra*, which goes along with *cetanā*, is pondering or bending the mind towards an object. Then there is *phassa* (contact) which comes into play too, but as *cetanā* and *manasikāra* are the predominating factors, we will mention only these two. There is also attachment towards them as 'I' or 'enduring'. Hence, these two mental concomitants of willing and bending the mind involved in an act of seeing are named *sañkhara-upādānakkhandha*. By *sañkhara* is meant conditioning. In the case of seeing, it means bringing about conditions to accomplish the act of seeing.

Just knowing that an object is seen is eye-consciousness, which is also attached to 'as I see, I know', the seeing 'I' is everlasting. Because of the possibility of such attachment, consciousness is called *viññāṇa-upādānakkhandā*.

To recapitulate:

1. At the moment of seeing, the eye and object of sight are *rūpa-upādānakkhandā*.

2. Feeling pleasant or unpleasant is *vedanā-upādānakkhandā*.
3. Recognizing or remembering the object is *sañña-upādānakkhandā*.
4. Exercising the will to see and turning the attention on the object is *saṅkhara-upādānakkhandā*.
5. Just knowing that an object is seen is *viññana-upādānakkhandā*.

To note seeing as ‘seeing’ every time an object is seen is to enable one to see the said five groups of *rūpa* and *nāma* as they really are, and having seen them, to remain at the stage of just seeing and not to become attached to them as ‘I’, ‘mine’, ‘permanent’, ‘pleasant’, ‘good’, etc.

To understand the purpose of noting every phenomenon, we have provided the following aphorism.

Fundamental principles of vipassanā meditation practice:

1. By contemplating what, is vipassanā meditation developed?
By noting the five aggregates, which may cause attachment, as they really are.
2. When and for what purpose should they be noted?
They should be noted at the moment of arising to cut off attachment.
3. Failing to note them at the moment of arising opens the way to attachment to them as ‘permanent’, ‘pleasant’ or ‘self’.

4. Noting the five aggregates every time they arise dispels attachment. Thus, clear insight as to their impermanence, unsatisfactoriness or suffering is developed.

In (3) above, 'at the moment of arising' means at the moment of seeing, hearing, etc. In (4) above, 'every time they arise' connotes every act of seeing, hearing, etc., as it happens.

FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF HEARING

At the moment of hearing, obviously there is the ear which can hear easily; there is also sound which is quite audible and consciousness which knows that a sound has been heard. In this consciousness of hearing is comprised pleasant or unpleasant feeling of hearing, perception of the sound, willing, exertion and turning the mind towards the object of sound to accomplish the act of hearing and just knowing that a sound has been heard.

People who have not the opportunity to practise mindfulness and, therefore, have no knowledge of reality as it truly is, become attached to all phenomena (*dhammas*) prominent at the moment of hearing as 'I, 'mine', etc. Because of the liability of such attachments, the ear and the material body of sound are known as *rūpa-upādānakkhandā*. The pleasant or unpleasant feeling of hearing is *vedanā-upādānakkhandā*. The perception of sound is *saññā-upādānakkhandā*. Exercising the will to see an object and turning the mind towards it is *saṅkhara-*

upādānakkhandā. Just knowing that a sound has been heard is *viññāṇa-upādānakkhandā*. To recapitulate:

1. At the moment of hearing, the ear and the sound are *rūpa-upādānakkhandā*.
2. The pleasant or unpleasant feeling of hearing is *vedanā-upādānakkhandā*.
3. Recognizing or remembering the sound is *saññā-upādānakkhandā*.
4. To will hearing the sound and turning the attention towards it is *saṅkhara-upādānakkhandā*.
5. Just knowing that a sound has been heard is *viññāṇa-upādānakkhandā*.

To note hearing as 'hearing' every time a sound is heard is to enable one to see the said five groups of *rūpa* and *nāma* as they really are and having heard the sound, to remain at the stage of just hearing and not become attached to it as 'I', 'mine', 'permanent', 'pleasant', 'good', etc.

FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF SMELLING

At the moment of smelling, there is clearly the material body of the nose; there is also the smell and the consciousness which knows the smell. In this consciousness of smelling is comprised the pleasant or unpleasant feeling of smelling, recognition of the smell, exercising the will to smell and to turn the attention towards the object of smelling, and knowing of the smell.

Failure to note smelling as ‘smelling’ and to see the phenomenon of smelling as it truly is results in attachment to it as ‘I’, ‘mine’, etc. Because of the possibility of such attachment, the nose, the smell and the consciousness of smell are known as *upādānakkhandhas*. To recapitulate:

1. At the moment of smelling, the nose and the smell are *rūpa-upādānakkhandha*.
2. The pleasant or unpleasant feeling of smelling is *vedanā-upādānakkhandha*.
3. Recognizing and remembering the smell is *saññā-upādānakkhandā*.
4. Exercising the will to smell and turning the mind towards the smelling object is *saṅkhara-upādānakkhandha*.
5. Just knowing of the smell is *viññāṇa-upādānakkhandha*.

To note smelling as ‘smelling’ every time a smell is smelt is to see the said five groups of *rūpa* and *nāma* as they really are, and having smelt the smell, to remain at the stage of just smelling and not to become attached to it as ‘I’, ‘mine’, ‘pleasant’, ‘unpleasant’, ‘good’, etc.

FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF EATING

At the moment of knowing the taste through eating, there is clearly the tongue, the taste and the consciousness of the taste. In this consciousness of the taste is comprised the pleasant or unpleasant feeling of the taste, recognition or remem-

bering the taste, exercising the will and turning the attention towards the object to accomplish the task of eating and just knowing of the taste.

Failure to note eating as 'eating' at the moment of eating and to see the phenomenon of eating as it truly is, results in attachment to it as 'I', 'mine', etc. Because of the possibility of such attachment, the tongue, the taste, and the consciousness of taste are known as *upādānakkhandhas*.

To recapitulate:

1. At the moment of eating, the tongue and the taste are *rūpa-upādānakkhandha*.
2. The pleasant or unpleasant feeling of taste is *vedanā-upādānakkhandha*.
3. Recognizing or remembering the taste is *saññā-upādānakkhandha*.
4. Exercising the will to taste and turning the attention towards the object of taste is *saṅkhara-upādānakkhandha*.
5. Just knowing of the taste is *viññāṇa-upādānakkhandha*.

While eating the food, preparing a morsel of the food in the hand, bringing it up and putting it in the mouth, and chewing it; all these actions are concerned with knowing the sensation of touch; knowing the taste on the tongue while chewing the food, however, is consciousness of the taste. Thus, noting the taste on every occasion of eating the food has to be carried out to see as they really are, the five groups of *nāma* and

rūpa, which manifest themselves at the time of tasting and to remain at the stage of just tasting so that no attachment to it as 'I, 'mine', 'permanent', 'pleasant', 'good', etc. can arise.

FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF TOUCHING

The sense of touch encompasses a wide field. Throughout the whole body of a person, wherever flesh and blood are in good condition, is diffused *kāyapasāda-rūpa*, the sentient surface which gives the sense of touch. Both inside the body (in the flesh, in the blood, in the muscles, in the bones, etc.) and outside the body (on the skin) this sensitive principle lies spread out not leaving an area the size of a pin-point.

Wherever this sensitive principle exists, the sense of touch may be felt. At the moment of touching, the sensitive principle which has the ability to seize the material tactile body is prominent. It becomes evident as the site of impact but not as any form or shape. Likewise, the sensitive parts of the ears, nose and tongue become evident as sites of impact where sense of hearing, smell and taste are developed.

Also prominent at the moment of impact is the material tactile body which may be any of the three elements: *pathavi*, *tejo* or *vayo*. The hardness, roughness, smoothness and softness one feels is *pathavi*; the heat felt or the warmth or cold is *tejo*; stiffness, pressure or motion is *vayo*. Such sensations of touch

may arise as a result of friction between different elements in the body; or through contact, outside the body, with clothing, bedding, seats, earth, water, wind, fire or heat of the sun. Such impacts produce very vivid sensations of touch. The consciousness of touch comprises of pleasant or unpleasant feeling, perception of the impact, exercise of the will and bending of the mind to accomplish the act of touching and just knowing that a contact has been established. The feeling of pleasure or unpleasantness is especially vivid. Physical pain is the feeling of suffering (*dukkhavedanā*) which arises through disagreeable contacts.

Failure to be mindful at the moment of touch and to see the reality as it truly is, results in the development of attachment as ‘I, ‘mine’, etc., towards all those objects which become prominent at the time of touching. Accordingly, the site of touch, the sentient surface (sensitive principle), the feeling of touch and knowing that a contact has been made, are called *upādānakkhandhas*.

Mnemonic note:

1. *At the moment of touching, the sentient surface and the impact of the touch are rūpa-upādānakkhandhas.*
2. *The pleasant or unpleasant feeling of touch is vedana-upādānakkhandha.*
3. *Recognizing or remembering the touch is saṭṭā-upādānakkhandha.*
4. *Exercising the will and turning the attention to accomplish the act of touching is saṅkhara-upādānakkhandha.*
5. *Just knowing that a contact has been made is viññāṇa-upādānakkhandha.*

Practice of noting the bodily postures such as going, standing, sitting, sleeping, bending, stretching, moving, rising and falling, etc. is made just to be mindful of these Groups of Grasping. When noting these body postures, the specially perceptible element of *vāyo* which causes stiffness, pressure and motion, is seen as it truly is, just a material body (*rūpa*) without any power of cognition. The knowing mind which takes note of the body postures is also seen as it truly is, consciousness (*nāma*) which cognizes an object. Thus at every occasion of noting, there is always a pair: *rūpa* (the object) which is taken note of and *nāma* (the knowing mind which takes note of it). After perceiving his fact exactly and clearly, there follows the knowledge of cause and effect. There is the 'going posture' because of the desire to go. Then, perceiving clearly that *rūpa* (the object noted) and *nāma* (the knowing mind) arise and vanish, arise afresh and vanish again at the very moment of noting, realization comes to the yogi that these phenomena are transient, painful, distressing and are happening according to their own nature and are, therefore, not controllable (*anatta*). Because of this realization or conviction, there is no longer any attachment on going, standing, sitting, etc., as 'I, or 'mine'.

This is how attachment is cut off in accordance with the Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta which says: "There is no more attachment to anything of the world, namely, the material body or the five aggregates." To be thus free from attachment, mindfulness on the body, the feeling, the mind and the mental objects has to be developed.

Painful feelings such as stiffness, feeling hot, aching, itching, etc., become evident at the location of impact. Failure to note the distress as it occurs and to see its true nature results in attachments: I feel stiff, I feel hot, I feel painful, I am distressed. It is to avoid such attachments that mindful noting of the distressful feeling has to be made to realize its true nature. Continuous and close watching of the painful feelings will reveal clearly how painful feelings of stiffness, hotness, aches appear to come up afresh in the body one after another in succession. Then personal conviction will come that these painful feelings exist for a moment only and then vanish and that they are, therefore, of impermanent nature. They are no longer grasped at as I, mine, permanent. One becomes free from attachments. Hence, this need for mindful note taking.

FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING AT THE MOMENT OF THINKING

Mental activities such as thinking, imagining are very extensive in scope and of frequent occurrence. In waking moments, the mind is almost constantly active. Even in the absence of any attractive, pleasant objects in one's surroundings, imagination creates them to appear as if in real existence. The hindrances, namely, sensual desires, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, skeptical doubts are concerned with such mental activities. So are the thoughts or reflections on lust, ill-will and cruelty (*kāma vitakka*, *vyāpāda vitakka* and *vihimsa vitakka*). Unless these mental activities are mindfully noted as they occur, they are liable to be identified as self (*atta*), a living

entity. Hence, it is very important to note each mental activity as it occurs.

When carefully analysed, mental activities are also five aggregates of grasping (*upādānakkhandhas*). Thinking may be accompanied by a happy feeling (*somanassa*) or an unpleasant feeling (*domanassa*); or thinking may arise accompanied by neither pleasant or unpleasant feeling, but a neutral feeling (*upekkhā vedanā*). When there is no mindfulness on these three types of feelings as they occur, they are liable to be grasped at as 'I feel pleasant, I feel fine, I feel miserable, I feel bad. I feel neither pleasant nor unpleasant'. For this liability of causing such attachments, these three types of feelings are known as *vedanā-upādānakkhandha*.

Then, there is also evident *saññā* (sense-perception) which recognizes the object on which the mind is dwelling. This *saññā* is especially pronounced when trying to remember facts to speak about or when engaged in making calculations in checking accounts. Concerning this *saññā*, wrong notions may arise 'I remember. I have good memory'. Hence, it is called *saññā-upādānakkhandha*.

At the moment of thinking or exercising imagination, there comes into noticeable action, *phassa* (clear awareness of the presence of the object), *vitakka* (mental inclination towards the object), *manasikāra* (fixing the attention on the object), *cetanā* which incites and urges, 'Let it be this wise, let it be that wise'. The role of *cetanā* is especially pronounced when, for instance, an important matter happens to come up in the mind in the dead of night

and it cannot be attended to. The driving urge of *cetana* 'go now and tell him' is very prominent. That immoral thoughts are accompanied by *lobha, dosa*, etc., and moral thoughts by *alobha, adosa, amoha, saddhā, sati*, etc., is clearly discerned.

The mental concomitants *phassa, cetanā* and *manasikāra* are inciting agents responsible for arising of thoughts (ideas, imagination, concepts) one after another in succession. They are also at the back of every act of speaking and body movements such as going, standing, sitting, sleeping, bending, stretching, etc. The incitement, the urge concerned with each mental, vocal or physical activity is *sañkhāra* which conditions an act by prompting, inducing, directing, etc. This conditioning role of *sañkhāra* may result in its being identified as a person or a living entity and wrongly cleaved to as 'I'. The notion 'I think, I speak, I go, I do' is wrong attachment to this conditioning *sañkhāra*. Such attachment is known as clinging to *kāraṅkata* (attachment to performing-self). Therefore, the *sañkhāras*, namely, *phassa, cetanā, manasikāra*, etc., are called *sañkhāra-upādānakkhandha*.

Then at the moment of thinking, there is also evident consciousness of the act of thinking. Burmese people regard consciousness and mental concomitants together as just mind (*citta*). This consciousness of the act of thinking is very commonly viewed as soul, ego (*atta*) for which reason consciousness is also known as *viññāṇa-upādānakkhandha*.

In addition, at the moment of thinking, the material body which provides the base for thinking is also so evident that

the uninformed people believe it is the material body which is thinking. For this reason, the material body which provides the base for thinking is known as *rūpa-upādānakkhandha*.

The object of thought may be material (*rūpa*), mental (*nāma*), or name, idea, notion, concept (*paññāti*). These also serve as objects of attachment. The material object belongs to *rūpa-upādānakkhandha*. The mental object is classified under the four categories of the *nāma-upādānakkhandha*. *Paññāti* may be included in the material or mental group of grasping, whichever it corresponds with. For instance, in 'yaṃ picchaṃ na labhati, tampi dukkhaṃ' (not getting what one wants is suffering), not getting what one wants is neither material nor mental; just *paññāti*. The commentarial note in Mula Tika on this point says that the desire for the unattainable should be taken as *dukkha*.

We have made a complete analysis of the five groups of grasping which become evident at the moment of thinking. To recapitulate:

1. The material body which forms the basis of thinking at the moment of thinking is *rūpa-upādānakkhandha*.
2. The pleasant or unpleasant feeling of thinking is *vedanā-upādānakkhandha*.
3. Recognizing or remembering the object of thought is *saññā-upādānakkhandha*.
4. Mental urging and inclination to accomplish the act of thinking, saying or doing is *saṅkhara-upādānakkhandha*.

5. Just being conscious of thinking is *viññāṇa-upādānakkhandha*.

It is very important to realize the true nature of thought by being mindful of it every time thinking occurs. Failing to take note of it and thus failing to recognize its real nature will lead to attachment to it as 'I', 'mine', 'permanent', 'pleasant', 'good', etc. The majority of people in these days are almost constantly clinging to these mental objects. Such attachments give rise to active processes for becoming, in accordance with *upadanapaccayo bhavo* of the Law of Dependent Origination, *Paticca Samuppāda*. And in every state of new becoming, there awaits old age, disease, death, followed by sufferings of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

If, however, mindfulness is developed on each occurrence of a thought, its real nature of impermanence, painfulness and insubstantiality (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) will become evident. Having thus known its true nature, no attachment to it arises. Hence, no active processes for new becoming take place. And when there is no new becoming, the mass of suffering represented by old age, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, etc., is completely eliminated. This cessation of suffering as a result of mindfulness on each thought as it occurs is momentary. But, if the practice of noting every thought is continued, gaining temporary cessation on each noting, by the time the *ariya magga* becomes fully developed the mass of suffering will have been completely eradicated. Thus, while being occupied with the exercise of noting 'rising', 'falling', 'sitting', 'touching',

if any thought or idea intervenes, it should be noted as 'thinking' or 'idealizing'.

The detailed analysis we have made above will demonstrate clearly that what becomes prominent at the six moments of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching and thinking are merely five groups of grasping. To common people who cannot practise this exercise of noting, at the moment of seeing, the subject which sees is obviously some substantial body; the external object which is seen is also obviously a woman, a man, a substantial body. Likewise, with the phenomena of hearing, etc. In reality, however, there is no such substance or mass to form a physical body. Only the five groups of grasping. Nothing exists except at the six moments of seeing, hearing, etc. They become evident only at the six moments and what become evident then are also just the five groups of grasping.

SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THE FIVE GROUPS OF GRASPING

Dreadful sufferings of new becoming, old age, death, sorrow, grief, etc. arise because of the five groups of grasping. So long as these five groups of grasping exist, dreadful sufferings of becoming, getting old, death, etc. will persist. Therefore, the five groups of grasping are themselves dreadful suffering. In short, because there is physical body (*rūpa*), physical and mental sufferings dependent upon *rūpa* arise. Because there is the knowing mind (*nāma*), physical and mental sufferings

based on it arise. Therefore, *rūpa* and *nāma*, constituting the five groups of grasping, are dreadful sufferings.

In other words, the unbearable physical and mental distresses are dreadful intrinsic sufferings known as *dukkha-dukkha*. Everyone fears them. Thus, *dukkha vedanā* (feeling of pain), otherwise *upādānakkhandha*, is the real Truth of Suffering.

Pleasant sensations in the body and mind are agreeable, delightful, enjoyable while they last, but when they vanish, they are replaced by discomfort, dissatisfaction which, of course, is suffering. This kind of suffering, known as *viparināma dukkha*, comes about through change or conversion from a pleasant state or condition to something different and is terrible. To the Ariyas, the Noble Ones, pleasant sensations are like the ogress who bewitched people with her beauty and turned them mad. For them, pleasant sensations are dreadful *upādānakkhandhas* all the same and constitute the real Truth of Suffering. At the same time, pleasant sensations are transitory and require constant conditioning effort to maintain the status quo. This, of course, is irksome and is, therefore, to the wise real *dukkha*.

The remaining *upekkhā vedanā*, the neutral feeling and the *upādānakkhandhas* of *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa* and *rūpa* are always in a state of flux, transitory and, therefore, to the Noble Ones also dreadful. As death awaits constantly, having to rely on the impermanent *upādānakkhandhas* for physical substance (mass or support) is dreadful, like living in a building which shows signs of collapsing at any moment.

The transitory nature of the *upādānakkhandha* requires constant effort at conditioning for the maintenance of the status quo. This *saṅkhara dukkha*, the troublesome task of conditioning, is also dreadful. Therefore, to the Noble Ones, not only the pleasant or unpleasant feelings, but the remaining *upādānakkhandhas* are also dreadful truths of suffering.

As all the five groups of grasping are regarded by the Noble Ones as really terrible suffering, the Blessed One had said in conclusion of the definition of the Truth of Suffering: “In short, the five groups of grasping, otherwise called *nāma* and *rūpa* which could cause such attachments as ‘I, ‘mine’, ‘permanent’, ‘blissful’, ‘self’, ‘ego’ are just dreadful sufferings.”

UPĀDĀNA AND UPĀDĀNAKKHANDHA

Now we will describe the difference between *upādāna* and *upādānakkhandha*. *Upādāna* means tenaciously clinging or grasping of which there are four types:

1. *Kāmupādāna*:
grasping of sense-desires – It is the attachment born of craving for sensual desires.
2. *Diṭṭhupādāna*:
grasping of false views – It is the attachment to the view that there is no kamma and the result thereof; there is no after-life, no Supreme Buddha, no Arahant. All other wrong views, apart from *attādiṭṭhi* and *silābata*, *parāmāsa diṭṭhi*, are known as *diṭṭhupādāna*.

3. *Silabbatupādāna*:
grasping of mere rites and ceremonies, ritualism – It is the practice of certain rituals or ceremonies which have nothing to do with understanding of the Four Noble Truths nor development of the Eightfold Path, with the belief that they will lead to release from suffering of *samsāra*, and to permanent peace, free from old age, disease and death. It is a brand of *micchādiṭṭhi*, holding what is wrong as right.
4. *Attavādupādāna*:
grasping of the theory of soul – It is the attachment to the belief in soul, ego, a living entity. It is the same as the wrong view of personality belief (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) and self (*attadiṭṭhi*).

Of the four types of grasping, *kāmuṇupādāna* is clinging to sensual desires, craving for them. The remaining are all various kinds of wrong views. Therefore, we can summarise (1) two kinds of grasping (*upādāna*): wrong view and craving for sense desires.

There are thus two kinds of attachments (*upādānas*) – one arising out of desire for pleasurable senses and the other because of wrong views. The objects of such attachments (*upādānas*) consist of the aggregates of *rūpa* and the aggregates of *nāma* and are known as *upādānakkhandha*. Summarising, we have (2) objects which can cause attachments as ‘I’, ‘mine’, are *upādānakkhandha* (groups of grasping).

The attachment as ‘I’ is *attadiṭṭhi*, the wrong view of self, which opens the way to the remaining two wrong views. When at-

tachment arises out of desire, the objects of desire which may not even belong to one, are grasped at as if they are one's own. The Pāli texts describe how this desire leads to the possessive grasping in these words: '*Etam mama...* This is mine.' We have summarized in mnemonics (2) above this Pāli text description of possessive grasping.

The aggregates of *nāma*, *rūpa* which can cause attachment through wrong belief as self, living entity or possessive clinging as 'mine' are called aggregates of grasping (*upādānakkhandhas*). The mental aggregates which cannot give rise to clinging through desire or wrong view are called just *khandhas* (aggregates) and not *upādānakkhandhas* (aggregates of grasping). Such mental aggregates are the supra-mundane *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* of the four Paths and the four Fruitions. They constitute merely aggregates of feeling, aggregates of perception, aggregates of formations and aggregates of consciousness and are not classed as aggregates of grasping (*upādānakkhandhas*).

The mundane types of material body, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* we have repeatedly mentioned above are the aggregates which incite attachment and are, therefore, called aggregates of grasping, namely, (3) *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*.

The mundane aggregates of *rūpa*, *nāma* are the material bodies and *rupavacara citta* and *cetasikas* which become manifest at the six doors of senses to a person of no *jhānic* attainments

every time he sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches or thinks. To a person of jhanic attainments, *rūpavacara* and *arupavacara jhāna cittas* also become manifest at the mind's door in addition to the above aggregates. All these five groups of grasping are the Truths of suffering which form suitable objects for Vipassanā meditation. The Blessed One later described them as dhammas which should be understood exactly and rightly through Vipassanā Insight, through knowledge of the Path. In the third part of our discourse, we had defined *sammāditthi* Path as the knowledge of Truth of Suffering, i.e. the knowledge which accrues from contemplation on these five groups of grasping.

Here, it must be stressed that these *rūpa, nāma* groups of grasping should be personally realized as the real truth of suffering by clearly perceiving their nature of arising, vanishing, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, insubstantiality by observing mindfully *rūpa-upādānakkhandha* (eye and sight, ear and sound, etc.) and *nāma-upādānakkhandhas* (eye consciousness, ear consciousness, etc.) when they manifest themselves at the six doors of senses on every occasion of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking.

It is a matter of gratification that some yogis of this centre have seen reality as it is by the practice of mindfulness in accordance with Satipaṭṭhāna method, i.e. taking note of every manifestation as it occurs at each of the six doors of senses. They should congratulate themselves that they have come to know the Dhamma as taught by the Blessed One: 'In short,

the five groups of grasping are suffering' and strive all the more strenuously to attain more complete knowledge. To recapitulate, we shall go over again the mnemonics of the 12 types of the Truth of Suffering.

1. New becoming is also suffering.
2. Ageing is also suffering.
3. Death is also suffering.
4. Sorrow is also suffering.
5. Lamentation is also suffering.
6. Physical pain is also suffering.
7. Grief is also suffering.
8. Despair is also suffering.
9. Association with hateful ones is also suffering.
10. Separation from loved ones is also suffering.
11. It is futile to wish for freedom from ageing, disease and death and all kinds of suffering without developing the Eightfold Path; that wish will never be fulfilled. Thus wishing to get something which is unattainable is also suffering. In the mundane world, too, to hanker after what is not attainable is also suffering.
12. To summarise, the 11 types of suffering described above, the five aggregates which can incite attachment as 'I', 'mine', are really the Truth of Suffering.

We have fairly fully dealt with the definition and enumeration of the Truth of Suffering and have taken some time over it. We shall end the discourse here for today.

May all you good people in this audience, by virtue of having given respectful attention to this great Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, be able to develop the Middle Path, otherwise called the Noble Eightfold Path, by contemplating on the five groups of grasping, the Truth of Suffering which should be clearly and completely understood, and by means of the Path and Fruition according to your wish, attain and realize soon Nibbāna, the end of all sufferings.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE NEW MOON DAY OF THADINGYUT, 1324, BURMESE ERA.

Last week on the 8th waning day of Thadingyut when we gave the discourse on the fourth part of the Sutta, we had dealt with the exposition on the Truth of Suffering. Today, we will go on with the exposition of the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. First, we shall go over again the headings of the Four Truths:

1. *Dukkha saccā* the Truth of Suffering
2. *Samudaya saccā* the Truth of the Origin of Suffering
3. *Nirodha saccā* the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
4. *Magga saccā* the Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering

As explained in the fourth part of the discourse, after defining the Truth of Suffering which he had personally discovered by penetrative insight, the Blessed One went on to give the definition of the Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

SAMUDAYA SACCA

*Idaṃ kho pana, Bhikkhave, dukkha-samudayo ariya saccam:
Yayaṃ taṇhā ponobhavikā nandirāgasahagatā tatra tatrābhi-
nandini... seyathidaṃ, kāmatāṇhā, bhavataṇhā, vibhavataṇhā.*

“Bhikkhus, what I will presently teach is the Noble Truth concerning the origin of suffering or the Truth which Noble Ones should know. There is this hunger, this craving which gives rise to fresh rebirth and is bound up with pleasure and attachment (or has the nature of pleasure and attachment); seeks delight, finds gratification now here, now there, everywhere. What is this *taṇhā* (craving)? It is the three kinds, namely, *kāmatāṇhā* (sensual craving, desire for enjoyment of sensuous pleasures), *bhavataṇhā* (craving for eternal existence, holding the eternity belief), *vibhavataṇhā* (craving for non-existence (self-annihilation)), believing that there is nothing after death. These three kinds of craving are the Truth of the Origin of Suffering.”

The Truth of the Origin of Suffering, i.e. craving, is the causal agency responsible for all kinds of suffering, already explained, starting from the suffering of fresh becoming to suffering of the five aggregates of grasping. To eliminate suffering, it is essential to know the cause of suffering. It is like making a diagnosis to know the cause of an ailment so that it may be cured. The Blessed One had personally penetrated to this truth of the cause of suffering and had consequently entirely eradicated suffering by removing its cause. The *samudaya saccā* is nothing but *taṇhā*, craving for hunger. It is like feeling thirsty or hungry. *Taṇhā* is thirst or hunger for sense objects.

The craving for sense objects gives rise to fresh becoming (*ponobhavikā*). So long as one remains in the grip of this *taṇhā*, continuous rebirths will take place. We shall discuss how

fresh rebirths take place later in the discourse. This *tanhā* finds pleasure in sense objects and clings to them. Like oil or dye solution that remains absorbed on any surface it happens to come into contact with, *tanhā* is delighted with seemingly pleasant sense objects and holds onto them tenaciously. This *tanhā* finds gratification here, there, everywhere. There is never any boredom or monotony in the pursuit of pleasure. Any seemingly pleasurable sense object, wherever it presents itself gives delight.

In the human world, life in the lower strata of society may be anything but attractive or pleasant to people of higher station. Unfortunately, there are people (who are born into poor circumstances) still enjoying their lives wherever they may be. Likewise, to the human mind, animal life is unpleasurable, repulsive, horrible. To assume the physical body of a snake or an insect is an abominable thought for a human being. Yet, if rebirth takes place in an animal world, a being is quite pleased with his physical body and finds delight in its life. It is because of the nature of *tanhā* which finds gratification in every existence, in every sense object, wherever it may be. The Blessed One had, therefore, described *tanhā* as finding pleasure here, there, in every existence, in every sense object. This is well-illustrated by the stories of Sampeya Naga king and Queen Upari.

THE STORY OF SAMPEYA NAGA KING

In one existence, the Bodhisatta was born into a poor family in the vicinity of the river Sampa. Envious of the life of plea-

sure enjoyed by the Sampeya Naga king, the Bodhisatta engaged himself in the good deeds of giving alms and observing the precepts. As a result, when he passed away he was reborn spontaneously in the realm of the Nagas and found himself seated on the throne of the Sampeya Naga king in the full shape and form of a Naga being. The Naga is a species of snake. To be reborn as a snake from the human existence is really frightful and abominable. The Bodhisatta, looking at his repulsive, horrible new form, reflected thus: 'As a result of my good deeds of charity and observance of morality, I could have been reborn in any of the six realms of the devas, but because I had wished for the pleasures of the Naga king, I am reborn into this world of reptiles. Oh! To die would be better than to live the life of a snake'. He even played with the idea of committing suicide.

Meanwhile, a young Naga female by the name of Sumana gave a signal to other young Naga females to commence entertaining their new king. The young Naga females, assuming the appearance of beautiful devis and goddesses, started singing and dancing and playing various musical instruments. Seeing the beautiful goddesses entertaining him with song, dance and music, the Sampeya Naga king imagined his Naga abode to be the palace of the kind of the gods and felt very pleased. He also took on the appearance of a god himself and joined the female Nagas in their revelry with much delight.

However, being a Bodhisatta, he easily regained the sense of reality and resolved to be born again as a human being so that he could further promote his *pāramis*, the virtuous quali-

ties of alms-giving, keeping precepts, etc. In pursuance of this resolution, the Sampeya king later came to the human world and sought solitude in a forest, and kept observance of the moral precepts.

The point we wish to make in this story of the Sampeya Naga king is that from the human point of view, the body of a reptile is horrible, repulsive. At the initial stage of the Naga life, the Bodhisatta also viewed his new life with horror and revulsion, but the sight of the attractive female Nagas brought about a change in his outlook, which kept him revelling and delighting in the Naga existence as if it were the home of gods. It is *tanhā* which seeks delight here, there, everywhere rebirth takes place that made the Bodhisatta enjoy his Naga life after the initial revulsion. There was also the wish he had made, while he was a poor man in the human world, for the pleasurable life of a Naga king. This wish or craving was also *tanhā* which landed him in the realm of the Nagas, in accordance with the words of the Blessed One: '*Ponobhavikā... gives rise to new birth*'.

THE STORY OF QUEEN UPARI

Queen Upari was the chief queen of King Assaka, who once ruled over the country of Kasi at its capital Patali. She was said to be of great beauty. Ancient kings used to select the most attractive maidens of their kingdom to become their queens. Consequently, all their queens were noted for their charm and loveliness. Queen Upari was outstanding amongst them

because of her raving beauty and enchantment. Bewitched by her alluring comeliness, King Assaka had lost his heart to her.

Much adored by the monarch and while still in the prime of her beauty and charm, Queen Upari went to the gods' abode. Now, 'to go to the abode of the celestial beings' is a Burmese cultural usage to denote the death of a royal personage. Likewise, 'flying back' means the passing away of a Buddhist monk, a mere cultural usage. A dead person finds rebirth in an existence as conditioned by *kamma*, the previous volitional activities. As it happened, Queen Upari, in spite of the saying according to the cultural usage that 'she had gone to the gods' abode', actually made her rebirth in the abode of the lowly beetles.

With the passing away of his adored queen, King Assaka was consumed by fiercely burning fires of sorrow and lamentation. He caused the corpse of the queen embalmed in oil, to be placed in a glass coffin and kept underneath his bedstead. Overwhelmed by grief, the king lay on the bed without food or sleep, wailing, moaning over the loss of his beloved queen. The royal relatives and his wise ministers tried to console him and give him solace by reminding him of the nature of impermanence and conditionality of existence, all to no avail. The corpse in the coffin, being embalmed in oil, would remain well-preserved just like being treated with chemical preservatives of modern times. The queen would therefore appear to the king as if she was lying, sleeping in the coffin. The sight of the corpse acted like fuel to his burning sorrows and lamentations which continued to consume him for seven days.

At that time, the Bodhisatta was a hermit, endowed with *abhiññā* (supernormal *jhānic* powers) living in the forest of the Himalayas. He happened to scan the whole world using his *abhiññā* and saw King Assaka in the throes of intense sorrow. He knew also that no one but himself could save the king from his misery. He then made his way to the royal garden of King Assaka by means of his *jhānic* powers.

There a young Brahmin came to meet the hermit who asked him about King Assaka. The young man told him how the king was being overwhelmed by grief and requested him to save the king. “We do not know the king, but if he came and asked us, we could tell him about his wife’s presence existence”, replied the hermit. Thereupon, the young man went to the king and said, “Great Sir, a hermit endowed with celestial eye and celestial ear has arrived in the royal garden. He claims he could show the present existence of the departed queen. It would be worthwhile to go and see him.”

Upon hearing this, the king immediately took off for the royal garden in a carriage. On arrival, the king paid respectful homage to the hermit and addressed him, “Reverend Sir, is it true that you claim to know the present existence of the queen Upari?” When the hermit admitted his claim, the king wanted to know where she was reborn.

“Oh, great King, Queen Upari took delight in her beauteous appearance and was very vain about it. She had spent her time engaged only in beautifying herself to make herself more alluringly attractive, forgetting all the while to perform merito-

rious deeds, to give alms and observe moral precepts. As a result, she has passed over to a lowly existence. She is presently reborn as a female cow dung beetle in this very garden,” the hermit told the whole story very frankly.

Persons favoured by fortune enjoying privileges of wealth, family, education, rank, physical beauty, etc., are prone to exhibit haughtiness in their dealings with others. Shrouded in their own vanity and self-esteem, they become neglectful in their performance of meritorious deeds. Humility plays no part in their make-up. The Blessed One had taught in the Culakammavibhaṅga Sutta that such vain, glorious, haughty persons are liable to land up in lowly inferior rebirths. On the other hand, unpretentious persons who show humility and pay reverential respects to those deserving of homage will be reborn in noble families.

Queen Upari of our story was extremely beautiful and, being the chief queen of the ruling monarch, was of very high status in life. She had her head turned by these pre-eminent qualities and looked down with contempt on those she should have shown respect. For such unwholesome attitudes and actions, it may be presumed she was reborn a lowly, female cow dung beetle. On hearing this account of the rebirth of his beloved queen, King Assaka promptly rejected it, saying “I don’t believe it.”

The hermit replied, “I can show you the female beetle and make her talk, too.” The king replied, “All right. Please do and make her talk, too.” The hermit, using his supernatural

powers of *abhiññā* made a vow for both the male and female beetles to make their appearance before the king.

When the male and female beetles emerged from the heap of cow dung into the presence of the king, the hermit said, “Oh King, the female beetle which is following from behind was your chief queen Upari devi. Having abandoned you, she is now trailing the male cow dung beetle wherever it goes. Oh King, have a good look at the female beetle who was lately your chief queen Upari.”

The king refused to believe the hermit. “I can’t believe that such an intelligent being as my queen Upari was reborn as this female beetle,” said the king.

True, for those who do not quite believe in the laws of *kamma* and its resultant effect, who do not understand the principles of conditionality or causal relationship as explained in *Paticca Samuppāda*, it would be difficult to accept that a being of the human world should have gone down so low as to become a mere beetle. Even in these days of *sasanā* when the Buddha’s teachings are widely prevalent, there are some people holding the view that ‘when man dies, he cannot descend into an existence inferior to that of a human being’. So it is not surprising that during the dark ages when the Buddha’s dispensation was yet unheard of, such stories of reincarnation were received with scepticism.

Nevertheless, according to the teachings of the Buddha, for so long as one has not yet attained the status of an *ariya*, one can descend from the human world or the celestial realm into the

four lower states of existence. Conditioned by bad *kamma* and the mental reflex just before death, rebirth may take place in the lower order of beings. On the other hand, conditioned by good *kamma* and wholesome mental attitude on the threshold of death, ascent may be made from an inferior sphere of existence into the higher realm of human and celestial beings.

There is the story of a Bhikkhu named Reverend Tissa who developed attachment to his saffron robes when he was about to die. As a consequence, he was reborn a body louse making his home on those very robes. There is another story of a frog who met its death while listening to a discourse by the Buddha. He became a celestial being in Tavatimsa celestial abode. These are examples which serve as evidence of various transformations at the time of rebirths.

However, King Assaka, not having heard of such discourses, could not accept that his queen had become a female beetle. Accordingly, he refused to believe it. The hermit, therefore, proposed that he would make the female beetle talk. The king accepted the proposal. Thereupon, the hermit made the vow using his supernatural powers to have the conversation between him and the female beetle, comprehensible to the king and his audience.

“Who were you in your past life?” the hermit asked.

“I was the chief queen Upari of King Assaka,” replied the female beetle.

“What now, female beetle, do you still love King Assaka or do you love only this cow dung beetle?”

To which the female beetle gave the reply: “True, King Assaka was my husband in my past life. At that time, I used to roam about in this garden in the company of King Assaka, enjoying the five sense-pleasures of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. But, now that I am in the new existence, I have nothing to do with King Assaka.”

The commentarial version of the female beetle’s reply is as follows: ‘In my present existence, I could relish killing King Assaka and with the blood from his throat, wash the feet of the cow dung beetle who is my present beloved husband.’ This commentarial exposition makes the beetle’s reply sound very harsh and unfeeling, but as she was talking in the presence of her dear husband, the male beetle, it is natural that she wanted to please him. We can easily see in everyday life many conspicuous examples of estrangement between ex-husbands and wives, who get separated not through death but in this very life on grounds of incompatibility, and examples of loving tenderness heaped on their new partners in life. The remarks in the commentary appears, therefore, to be quite in order.

The Jātaka Pāli texts describe the female beetle’s reply thus: ‘Reverend Sir, I who had loved King Assaka had roamed about in this garden many a time together with King Assaka who had loved me and who was my beloved husband then, enjoying each other’s company. But now, the joys and troubles of the present new life have obscured, covered up the joys and troubles of the old life. The new joys and troubles have tran-

scended the old joys and troubles. I love my present husband, the male cow dung beetle, more than I did King Assaka.”

The commentary exposition of the words ‘love more than’ makes interesting reading. It says ‘love more than’ means ‘love hundred times more, love one thousand times more’, indicating the intensity of love in favour of the new husband.

King Assaka was greatly distressed to hear the harsh, unfeeling words of estrangement from the lips of the female beetle. He thought to himself: ‘I had loved and adored her so much. I could not betake myself to throw away her dead body. Yet she had become so antipathetic and nasty to me.’

He felt so disgusted with his old queen Upari that he ordered, even while sitting there, “Go and have that woman’s body removed.” Then, having bathed and washed himself, the king went back to the palace. He made another court lady his chief queen and carried on ruling over his country wisely. The hermit, Bodhisatta, after giving good advice to the king, went back to the Himalayan sanctuary.

The moral from this story is that queen Upari, while in the human world, had taken delight in being a human person, and a queen at that. She would never have even dreamt of being reborn a female beetle. But in accordance with her past *kamma*, when she was reborn a female beetle, she at once took to the life and delight in the physical body of a beetle. She esteemed and adored the physical body of the male beetle a hundred times, a thousand times more than that of King Assaka.

That she felt quite at home in her lowly existence as a cow dung beetle is due to *taṇhā* (craving) which finds delight everywhere. That is why the Buddha had said, “*Tatra tatrā-bhinandini*” – *taṇhā* has the tendency to delight wherever it finds rebirth.

Reborn as a dog, it takes delight in a dog’s existence; reborn as a pig, as a fowl, there is always delight in each existence. Even having been born as children of affluent parents of upper social class, there are cases of them sinking down to poverty-stricken existences and yet enjoying their lives therein. Some of them even resisted the efforts of their parents to take them back into the fold of the family since they found their new life quite enjoyable. It is *taṇhā* again which gives them pleasure wherever they are, delighting in whatever sense object presents itself.

HOW FRESH REBIRTH TAKES PLACE

We shall now deal with *ponobhavikā* (tendency to give rise to new births) which we had earlier postponed.

Since *taṇhā* has the nature of delighting and clinging, a being finds delight in whatever existence it is born into and enjoys any sense-object that presents itself. Because it finds its existence so delightful and pleasurable, there comes the wish for this existence to remain everlasting, stable and for pleasurable objects to be enduring and lasting. In endeavouring to maintain them as one wishes, volitional activities come into play.

These *kammas* or volitional activities, which may be wholesome or unwholesome, are the cause of rebirths in new existences.

Thus, when a person is about to die, one or the other of these meritorious or demeritorious *kammas* may present itself before his mind's eye. Or, it may be a *kamma-nimitta*, a symbol of the *kamma* (which is any sight, sound, smell, taste, touch or idea which had obtained at the time of the commission of that *kamma*). Or, *gati-nimitta*, a sign of destiny, that is a sign of the next existence where he is destined to open his new life in consequence of the said *kamma*. The *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* or *gati-nimitta* which presents itself to the dying person is tenaciously grasped at because of *taṇhā* and cannot be dispelled from his mind. Just like the shadow of a mountain thrown by the evening sun falls on the surface of the land and covers it, so also these sense-objects of *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* or *gati-nimitta* which present themselves at the sense-doors completely occupy his mind. These sense-objects are tenaciously held by the *marāṇasaññā-javana*, otherwise called *abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa*.

(Note on page 273 of the original Burmese book)

In accordance with the Teaching, *kammaṃ khettaṃ, viññāṇaṃ bijaṃ, taṇhā sincho'* of Angutara Pāli Canon, Tika Nipāta, for the appearance of *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* (birth-consciousness) of new becoming, meritorious or demeritorious *kamma* serves as a field in which it may grow. *Abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa* serves as the seed for the growth of the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, and *taṇhā*, which delights in every sense-object in every existence, may be likened to the moisture or water element (which promotes its growth). Here, *abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa* (that conditions new

becoming) is, according to the commentary, consciousness accompanying the volitional *kamma*, *cetana*. In the same way it arises together with the first volitional *kamma*, so also it accompanies the later *kamma* activities and as such, consciousness which appears later should also be designated *abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa*. Particularly, *maraṇasaññā javana* consciousness which takes as its object *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* and *gati-nimitta* should be called the *abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa* because it is from this *maraṇasaññā javana* consciousness that *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* arises. In addition, in the same way a seed germinates only when it comes into contact with water element, moisture, the seed of consciousness receiving support and encouragement by *taṇhā* which accompanies or precedes it in close proximity, tenaciously holds onto *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* or *gati-nimitta* as its object and gives rise to *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*.

Then, immediately after the dissolution of the death-moment, aggregates of *rūpa*, *nāma*, *paṭisandhi citta*, the birth consciousness, holding onto the *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* or *gati-nimitta* as its object, arises at a new site in a new existence complete with its physical base upon which it depends. With each consciousness arises also its mental concomitants, *cetasikas*. The *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, the re-linking consciousness is followed by *bhavaṅga* consciousness, the life-continuum, which goes on continuously throughout life as prescribed by one's own kammic energy. The arising of new existence is brought about by two factors: one's own *kamma* and *taṇhā*. Without *taṇhā*, however, *kamma* by itself cannot bring about new becoming.

(Note on page 275 of the original Burmese book)

For an Arahāt, his past meritorious deeds will come to good fruition before his death, *parinibbāna*. Multifarious gifts gained by Venerable Sivali, perfect health enjoyed by Venerable Bakula, are examples of good fruition. His demeritorious deeds will, however, bear bad fruits as, for instance, lack of alms-food for Venerable Losakatissa, or the fate met by the Venerable Moggalana who was cudgelled to death by felons. These *kammas*, however, do not have any more potentialities for causing fresh rebirths as they are devoid of *taṇhā*. Lacking the support and encouragement of *taṇhā* at the time of *maraṇasaññā*, the *abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa* cannot arise and, hence, no rebirth. For this reason, only *taṇhā* is attributed to be the cause of fresh existence... *ponobhavikā*.

Therefore, *taṇhā* forms the root cause of fresh becoming. For this reason, the Blessed One had pinpointed *taṇhā* to be the cause of new existence... *ponobhavikā*. These are the words which the Blessed One had used in the very first discourse to teach the existence of after-life. In spite of this clear teaching, there is a group of people who maintain that ‘the Blessed One taught only about the present existence. He did not touch on future life.’ We could not be sure whether these people were attempting to associate the Buddha’s teaching with *uccheda vada*, the theory of annihilation, a very misguided effort we must say! In reality, however, so long as *taṇhā* endures, through failure to develop the Eightfold Path, or even if developing, not being fully advanced in accomplishment, so long this *taṇhā* will continue to serve as the cause for fresh existence.

When the Eightfold Path has been fully accomplished and *arahatta* path and fruition attained, *taṇhā* will be completely eradicated and there will be no more rebirth. Thus, when exercising retrospection on attainment of enlightenment as a Buddha or an Arahant, the thought always occurs to the Noble Ones: *'Ayaṃ antima jāti, natthi dani ponabhavoti...* This is the last existence. There is no more rebirth.' This reflection is also included in the later section of the Dhammacakka Sutta. Such reflections make it obvious that unless *taṇhā* is completely rooted out, continuous fresh existences, new becomings are inevitable.

How this *taṇhā* brings on repeated rebirths will now be illustrated by a few stories. There are thousands of stories illustrating this fact, but it will suffice to take three stories from the Pāli commentaries and four or five from the modern period.

IN BRAHMA LAND HE SHINES BRIGHT;
IN PIG'S PEN, TOO, HE FINDS DELIGHT

At one time, the Blessed One went into Rājagiri for almsround. On seeing a young female pig, the Blessed One smiled. Noticing the white radiation which shone forth from the teeth of the Buddha, the Venerable Ānandā knew that the Buddha was smiling. Accordingly, he asked: "What has caused Sire to smile?"

The Blessed One pointed out the young female pig to Ānandā and said, "See that young female pig? She was a young

woman in human existence during the dispensation of Kakusanda Buddha. When she died, she was reborn a hen in the neighbourhood of a monastic feeding hall. The small hen fell victim to an eagle. But earlier she happened to have heard the recitation by a yogi Buddhist monk of a meditation subject which aroused in her wholesome thoughts. By virtue of these merits, the small hen was reborn as a princess named Ubbari in a royal family. The princess Ubbari later left the household life and became a wandering mendicant. Residing in the mendicants' residence she happened one day to gaze at the maggots in the latrine. The worms served as an object for meditation (contemplation of ugliness of worm-infested corpse or contemplation of a white object) by which she attained the first *jhāna*. When she passed away, she was reborn a Brahma in the first *jhānic* Brahma world. On expiry from the Brahma world, she became the daughter of a rich man in the human world which she left again only to be born a pig now. I saw all these events which made me smile."

On hearing this story of repeated births in various existences, Venerable Ānandā and other monks became greatly alarmed and agitated with religious emotion. The Blessed One stopped going on alms-round and while still standing on the roadway, started teaching the dhamma in six verses, the first one of which stated:

*Yathāpi mūle anupaddove dalhe,
chinnopi rukho punareva rūhati
evampi taṇhā nusaye anuhate
nibbattati dukkhamidaṃ punappunaṃ*

‘If the main roots of a tree remain undamaged and in good condition, even when the upper branches are cut off that tree will grow again developing new buds and shoots. Likewise, if there remain defilements (lying dormant) which are not yet eradicated by *ariya magga*, this suffering of rebirth will arise time and again successively.’

What is conveyed by this verse is this: ‘During her existence as princess Ubbari, she renounced the world to become a wanderer. By practising meditation, she attained the first *jhāna* which could dispel or put away by *vikkhambhana pahāna* (elimination by discarding) only the defilements of *pariyutthana* class, i.e. craving for sensual pleasure which appears as sensuous thoughts at the mind’s door. By means of *vikkhambhana pahāna*, *jhāna* can put away the defilements only to a certain distance for a certain period of time. Thus, she was able to dispel the craving for sensual pleasure when she attained the first *jhāna* and later in the Brahma world. But when she was born again in the human world as the daughter of a wealthy man, the craving for sensual pleasure reappeared because it had not been rooted out by the *ariya magga*. The *bhava taṇhā* (craving for existence), of course, persisted even when she had attained the *jhāna*. Because the latent defilements had not been completely uprooted, she had to descend from the Brahma world, through the human world, into a pig’s existence. So long as the craving persists, repeated rebirths will take place in this way in various existences.’

In reference to this story of descent from the Brahma world to a pig’s existence, ancient Sayadaws had left an aphorism,

‘In Brahma land, she shines bright; in pig’s pen, too, she finds delight’. But it is not possible to be reborn as a pig straight from the Brahma world, nor as any other animal nor in the realms of *petas* (starving ghosts) nor in the states of misery. By virtue of the *upacāra bhāvanā*, the access meditation, proximate to the *jhāna* previously attained, rebirth can take place only as a human being or in the celestial abode. The young female pig of the above story also passed through human life where she was born as the daughter of a wealthy man. It is quite possible that she landed in a pig’s existence after being the daughter of a wealthy man because of the bad *kamma* she had committed then, in being haughty and insolent to those she should have shown respect.

When the young female pig died, she was reborn in a royal family of Suvāṇṇabhūmi, which is generally taken to be the country of Thaton. Some scholars, however, take Suvāṇṇabhūmi to be the Sumatra island, relying on the bronze inscriptions made by the King Devapala about 1500 Buddhist Era.

From being a princess of Suvāṇṇabhūmi, she passed over to Varanasi, India, as a woman. She then became a woman in Varānasi, south-east of Bombay. From there, she was reborn the daughter of a horse-merchant in the seaport town of Supparaka, north-west of Bombay. Next, she became the daughter of a shipowner at the port of Kavira in the south-easternmost part of the Indian peninsular. This is the coastal district inhabited by the Tamil people, formerly called Damila. After that life, she was reborn in the family of a government official

at Anuradha or present day Sri Lanka. Her next life was as a daughter of a rich man named Sumana, from Bhokkanta, a village south of Anuradha. She took the same name as her father, Sumana. Later her father left that village and settled down in the Mahāmuni village of the Dighavapi District. One day, a minister of the king Duṭṭhagāmini, named Lakundala Atimbara, happened to visit the Mahamuni village on certain business. Upon seeing the young lady Sumana, he fell madly in love with her. He married her with great pomp and ceremony and carried her off to his village, Mahāpunna.

The Venerable Mahā Anuruddha, who resided at the monastery of Taungsun, happened to visit her village for alms-round. While waiting for offerings of almsfood at the gate of Sumana’s house, he saw Sumana and said to his monk followers: “Bhikkhus, how wonderful, what a marvel! The young female pig of the Blessed One’s time is now the wife of the minister Lakundaka Atimbara.”

On hearing this exclamation, Sumana, the wife of the minister, developed *jatissara ñāṇa* (knowledge of previous existences). With the help of this faculty, she recalled to her mind the previous existences she had passed through. In consequence, she became agitated with fear at the prospect of repeated births in the cycle of existences. Asking permission from her minister husband, she went to a bhikkhuni monastery and got herself ordained. After ordination, she listened to the discourse on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta at Tissa Mahā Vihāra monastery. Practising mindfulness meditation in accordance with the sutta, she

became a *sotapanna*, well-established as a stream-winner in the first stage of the Path and Fruition. Then, when king Dutthagamini came to the throne, she went back to her native village, Bhokkanta, where at the Kalla Mahā Vihāra monastery she heard the discourse on Asivisopana Sutta which enabled her to attain the fourth stage of the Fruition and became an Arahat, completely free from influxes, passions.

Going over the thirteen existences of Sumana thoughtfully and mindfully, one could get aroused with religious emotion. When the young woman at the time of the Kakusanda Buddha died, she left behind her family, possessions and her own physical body. The bereft family and friends would have grieved over her death. She became a hen. What a frightful thought, a human being to be reborn a hen! That hen would have a family and friends, too. She met with a terrible death, from decapitation, when an eagle seized her and struck her fiercely with its beak. There is consolation, however, that she was reborn a princess for the merit accrued from having heard a discourse on meditation. The hen would not, of course, know anything of the dhamma, but as she had given devout attention to the discourse, certain merit would have accrued to her for which she was reborn a princess. Listening to a dhamma discourse is thus very beneficial and fruitful.

It is a matter of gratification that she became a Brahma after being a princess by virtue of her *jhānic* attainments. It is gratifying too that from the Brahma world she was reborn in the human world into a wealthy family. But it is very distressing

to know that she left behind her family, friends and possessions reluctantly to be reborn a female pig. It is really frightful to think of descending to human plane from the Brahma world and to sink further still into the animal kingdom as a pig. This should be enough to excite alarm and religious emotion because so long as the noble *ariya magga* has not been established, anyone is liable to find himself landed in lowly states of existence. It was with the intention of arousing religious emotions and exhorting the bhikkhus to take to dhamma in all earnestness that the Blessed One had told them the account of the female hen's succession of existences.

How the young female pig met her death was not mentioned in the texts, but it could be presumed that she was slaughtered by her breeder as in modern times. The young female pig must have had a family and friends which she left behind, causing grief to them. It was comforting that she was reborn afterwards as a human being in six places from Suvanṇabhūmi to Anurādha. But in each of these existences, every time she departed from one life there must have been considerable suffering from sorrow, lamentation and grief for her and her dear ones. That she finally became Bhikkhuni Sumana Theri is the most heartening part of the story.

The cause of the succession of her existences, departing from one life to be reborn in another is *taṇhā* or *samudaya saccā*, the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. Other people who are not yet rid of *taṇhā* will likewise go through the cycle of rebirths, dying from one life to be reborn in another. It is ex-

tremely important, therefore, to get established in the practice of the Noble Ariyan Path in order to eradicate *taṇhā*, otherwise called the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. Sumana Therī first heard the discourse on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Then she practised mindfulness in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna method which helped her attain the status of *sotapanna* (the stream-winner). Then, hearing the Asivisopana Sutta, she devoted herself more ardently to the practice and attained Arahatta Fruition to become a female Arahata. *Taṇhā*, otherwise *samudaya*, was completely eradicated from her. Therefore, there would be no more rebirth for her and she would be enjoying peace after her *parinibbana*.

Sumana Theri, therefore, declared to her colleagues that she would fully pass away (*parinibbhuto*) after the *ayusaṅkhāra*, the vital principle for her present existence had become exhausted. Thereupon, her colleagues, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis requested of her the story of her existences. “I was a human woman at the time of the Kakusanda Buddha. When I died from there, I became a hen. I was killed by an eagle which broke off my head and devoured me. Then I became a princess in the human world...” she continued to recount her past existences until the time of her final existence at Bhokkanta village. She concluded, “Thus have I passed through thirteen existences encountering the ups and downs, vicissitudes of life in each existence. In this last existence, being wearied of the cycle of rebirths, I have become an ordained bhikkhuni and finally attained Arahatahip. I urge all of you, my righteous *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*, to put forth your endeavour

mindfully to become fully accomplished in *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*." Then she passed away, causing religious agitation in the minds of her audience, consisting of men, women, *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*. This story of the young female pig is fully described in the commentary to the Dhammapada.

THE STORY OF SAMANA DEVA

Even if one were engaged in meditation practice to dispel *taṇhā*, *samudaya saccā* until one became fully developed in the knowledge of the path, *taṇhā* could still give rise to rebirth. This fact is borne out by the story of a deva named Samana.

During the lifetime of the Buddha, a certain young man, having established faith in the dispensation of the Buddha, got himself ordained and stayed with his preceptor for five *vassa* periods. He performed all the major and minor incumbent duties for his *upajjhāya* and learnt thoroughly the two codes, *dve matikā* of Pātimokkha discipline for the bhikkhus. He also mastered the procedure for purifying himself from serious as well as trifling offences. Then, taking a meditation object of his choice, he departed to a solitary abode in the forest and devoted himself incessantly to the practice of meditation.

His efforts at meditation were very strenuous. Even at midnight, which the Blessed One had allowed as the time for rest and sleep, he continued with the practice. Thus striving day and night and getting enervated by lack of sufficient nourishing food, he was suddenly seized with a cutting pain, a para-

lytic stroke which ruptured the spinal nerve causing him instant death. He was meditating while walking and thus said to have passed away in the course of performing the duties of a bhikkhu.

According to the commentary, if any bhikkhu passes away while engaged in walking up and down the cloister walk or standing leaning against the leaning post, or sitting or lying down at the head of the cloister walk with the double robe on his head, he is said to 'die in harness'. A bhikkhu is also said to 'die in harness' if he passes away in the course of preaching a sermon, particularly on liberation from the chain of existences.

As the bhikkhu of our story was engaged in meditating while walking up and down the cloister walk, we could take it that he passed away while he was contemplating the *nāma, rūpa* of the body postures in accordance with the teaching in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. Although he had put in a great deal of effort in the practice of meditation, he passed away without attaining the *arahatta magga* because he was not yet fully endowed with supporting acts of perfections (*pārāmis*) necessary for such attainments.

Complete eradication of *taṇhā* is not possible unless *arahatta magga* has been attained. That this bhikkhu had not yet developed even up to the stage of the stream-winner will become clear later. Therefore, because of *taṇhā* which can cause rebirth (*ponobhavikā*) he was reborn in the celestial abode of Tāvatisā.

A magnificent celestial palace awaited him in consequence of the merit he had acquired in the practice of meditation. By spontaneous rebirth, he appeared, as if just awakened from sleep, at the entrance of the palace, a celestial being resplendent in full celestial attire.

At that moment, about one thousand celestial princesses who had been awaiting the arrival of the master of the palace said, "Our Lord has arrived. Let us entertain him." They gathered around him, holding musical instruments in their hands to welcome him joyously. The deva lord of the palace, however, did not even realize that he had taken a new existence in a new world. He was under the impression that he was still a bhikkhu of the human world. On the sight of the celestial damsels, he took them to be female visitors to his monastery. He covered up his bare left shoulder with the upper garment and remained seated, his eyes lowered, assuming a very dignified and reserved pose.

Realizing at once that the new being must have been a bhikkhu in his previous existence, the celestial ladies addressed him, "My lord, this is the abode of the celestial beings. It is not the time to be observing the code of bhikkhu discipline. It is the occasion for enjoyment of celestial pleasures." But he continued maintaining solemn reserve and dignity. "This *deva* has not realized that he has become a celestial being in the realm of the devas. Let us drive home this fact to him by our welcoming revelries." So saying, the celestial damsels started playing the musical instruments accompanied by songs. The deva all the more tightened his retiring disposition, maintain-

ing his dignified solemnity, thinking that the female visitors had come to his forest abode to abandon themselves to frivolous merriment.

Whereupon the celestial ladies brought out a body-length mirror and placed it in front of the *deva*. On seeing his reflection in the mirror, he finally realized that he had left the bhikkhu's existence and taken rebirth in the celestial land. The Samana deva was greatly perturbed then. He reflected: 'I did not take up meditation to be reborn in this celestial land. My object was to attain the most profitable goal of Arhatta fruition, but I am now like a boxer who entered the boxing competition aiming at the championship gold medal but was awarded only a bundle of turnips.' Extremely agitated in mind, he thought: 'The celestial pleasures are easily attainable. The lifetime of an Enlightened One is a rare occasion. To hear the teaching of the Buddha and to attain the *ariya magga* is of utmost importance. By wallowing in the celestial pleasures, there is the danger of losing the opportunity of meeting the Buddha.' So without taking the trouble of entering the palatial building, he repaired hastily to the presence of the Buddha while the restraining *sīla* he had observed as a bhikkhu still remained intact. His celestial damsels also accompanied him as they were anxious not to lose sight of him. On reaching the presence of the Buddha, he addressed him: "Most Venerable Blessed One. In what manner will it be possible to avoid and proceed along past the Nandavana garden otherwise known as the Mohana garden, the grove of stupidity because it serves to encourage foolish behaviour in the celestial beings who visit it, where thousands of female ce-

lestial beings indulge in singing and yodelling, where numerous demons, goblins and spirits haunt.”

Here the deva referred to the celestial females as demons and goblins and to the Nandavana garden as the grove of stupidity because he was still in a repulsive mood towards sensual pleasures as a consequence of his intense efforts at Vipassanā meditation. The commentary explanation of the deva’s query as to ‘how to proceed’ was that he was requesting the Blessed One for guidance on vipassana which provides access to the *arahatta phala*.

The Buddha reflected on all the circumstances concerning the deva and taught him the Noble Eightfold Path in three verses:

1. *Ujuko nāma so magga
abhaya nāma sa disā
ratho akujano nāma
dhammacakkehi samyuto.*

“Oh deva, who is anxious to flee, the straight path for a quick escape is the Eightfold Path of Vipassanā you had already trod while a bhikkhu.”

Here, we have given, for the benefit of the present audience, the explanatory meaning of the first line in the verse which just says ‘the straight path is that path’. That bare translation would have been quite incomprehensible to this audience, but to the *deva* who looked as if he had come straight from the monastery, where he had devoted himself to meditation, the meaning was quite clear.

The commentary exposition is as follows: On giving meditation training to someone not yet established in *sīla*, etc., the Blessed One always advised him, “Purify your *sīla* (moral conduct), develop mindfulness and concentration, straighten out your views on *kamma* and its resultant effects,” and directed the yogi to get firmly established in these fundamental practices initially. To one already engaged in meditation, he instructed him only in *vipassanā*, the proximate to the *arahatta magga*. The deva was already practising meditation exercises and his *sīla* remained unimpaired. It was only the *ariya magga* that he needed to accomplish, having already developed its precursor *pubba magga vipassanā* Path. Thus, in order to instruct him in *vipassanā*, the Blessed One taught him the three verses.

In this commentary exposition, the fact of his *sīla* remaining unimpaired even after he had passed over from a bhikkhu’s existence to that of a celestial being, should be well-noted. It means that having not breached any of the precepts such as killing, stealing, sexual relationships, etc., he still continued to maintain his *sīla*. It should be understood, therefore, that even without the formal vow of keeping the precepts, *sīla* remains unimpaired if one abstains from evil deeds which one should not commit. It should also be noted that these verses taught *vipassanā*.

As we had explained above, ‘the best and straightest way of quick escape from the Nandavana garden of the celestial world with its celestial females is the *vipassanā* path which he had trod while he was a Bhikkhu’.

Regarding the next query on the danger-free place of refuge, the Buddha said, “The danger-free place of refuge is that sanctuary, namely, Nibbāna, which you had aspired to as a bhikkhu.” This means that he had to strive on until he attained Nibbāna.

As to what type of vehicle should be employed to make the passage, the Blessed One said, “For a silent escape with no one becoming aware of it, you need a silent carriage which is the Vipassanā two-wheeler fitted with two wheels of physical exertion and mental exertion.”

The mental effort involved in noting every physical activity is known as *cetasika vīriya* (mental exertion). When noting the bodily actions of going, standing, sitting, the physical effort required to maintain the body in respective postures is called *kāyika vīriya* (physical exertion). Meditation while lying down involves only mental exertion, not physical exertion. Here, as the use of a two-wheeler with wheels of mental exertion and physical exertion was advised, it must be taken to mean the vipassanā meditation which requires heedful noting of walking, standing and sitting. Thus, to ride on the grand carriage of the *vipassanā magga* fitted with two wheels of physical exertion and mental exertion, we must be engaged in mindful noting while occasionally walking up and down. That is to say, we must note ‘walking’, ‘raising’, ‘stepping forward’, ‘dropping’ as prescribed in the discourse on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, namely, *gacchanto vā gacchāmiti pajānāti*.

While striving thus, as the concentration gets strengthened, the yogi will come to distinguish with each noting, the *rūpa*

which causes stiffness and moves, from *nāma*, the mental act of noting it. As the concentration gets still further strengthened, the yogi will come to distinguish the cause from the effect. He knows: 'Because of the intention to go, there appears the physical process of going, because there is the object to know, there is knowing. With further progress, the arising of such a phenomenon for a moment... the intention to go, the physical process of going, the noting mind... followed by its dissolution is clearly perceived as if it is grasped in one's own hand. It is realized plainly then that what arises momentarily only to vanish soon is not permanent; that what arises and vanishes incessantly is fearsome suffering. The yogi will also comprehend clearly that the phenomena are occurring of their own accord, following nobody's will and, therefore, *anatta*, not subjected to anyone's control. Then the heedful noting should continue while standing or sitting occasionally.

The silent carriage mentioned here is a reference to the horse-drawn vehicles of ancient days. Some carriages are by themselves noiseless, but when burdened with many passengers or heavy loads, are liable to produce creaky sounds. However, the '*magga* vehicle' is able to carry an unlimited number of passengers without producing any sound. Sometimes, while listening to the teachings of the Buddha, passengers numbering eighty-four thousand rode on this '*magga* vehicle', piloted by '*vipassanā magga*' which transported them noiselessly to their final destination, Nibbāna. Thus this carriage was admired as a noiseless vehicle. Intimation was in this way given by the Buddha to the deva that it would be possible to make

his silent escape, without letting the celestial females know, by means of this transport.

2. *Hīri tassa apalambo, satyassa parivaranam,
dhammaham sarathim byuhi, sammāditṭhi pure javam.*

Hīri, sense of shame and horror of committing evil deeds, serves as the leaning board of seats on the carriage without which passengers are liable to fall backwards when the carriage moves. The 'magga vehicle' has excellent leaning boards of *hīri* and *ottappa*.

The meditating yogi feels repulsed and horrified at the possible arising of unwholesome thoughts concerning some objects which he may have missed in his heedful noting. It is like the revulsion one feels towards coming into contact with filth after having a nice, clean bath. The conscientious concern (solicitude) for non-arising of unwholesome thoughts and revulsion towards them is termed *hiri* or otherwise sense of shame. There is also fear of unwholesome thoughts leading to evil actions which will yield unwholesome resultant effects, and hinder escape from *samsāra* (the cycle of existences). This fear of evil deeds and its unwholesome consequences is termed *ottappa*.

Because of this sense of shame (*hīri*) and fear of evil deeds (*ottappa*), the yogi devotes himself in a reverential attitude to the task of noting every physical and mental phenomenon without missing any. In this way, *magga* path is kept developing with each passing moment. This is like the manner in which the leaning boards of the carriage prevent the passengers from fall-

ing backwards, maintaining them in their positions. That is the reason why the Blessed One had termed *hīri* and *ottappa* as the leaning boards of the *vipassanā magga* vehicle.

Then the Blessed One went on to explain how mindfulness is like the covering drapery or the awning of the *magga* vehicle. In the same way, the shielding awning fitted to a carriage guards against the danger of stones or sticks being thrown in. Mindfulness of every mental and physical phenomenon, as it arises, keeps oneself secure from the danger of demeritorious deeds. Therefore, the four foundations of mindfulness such as the contemplation of the body, etc., are termed the covering drapery of the *magga* vehicle.

The Blessed One continued: “I call the right view pertaining to *ariya magga* ‘*ariya magga sammādiṭṭhi*’, preceded by *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* (the right view pertaining to *vipassanā*) the driver of the carriage.”

Of the six kinds of right views, namely, *kammasakata sammādiṭṭhi*, *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*, *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*, *magga sammādiṭṭhi*, *phala sammādiṭṭhi* and *paccavekkhaṇā sammādiṭṭhi*, the right view concerning the Fruition (*phala sammādiṭṭhi*) is the resultant effect of the *magga*. Similarly, *paccavekkhaṇā sammādiṭṭhi* (the right view concerning recollectedness) is the reflective knowledge which appears after attainment of the Path and Fruition. Therefore, it needs no particular effort to develop it. *Kammasakata sammādiṭṭhi* (the right view concerning *kamma* and its effect) has to be established even before one starts the practice of meditation. The right view concerning *jhāna* is re-

lated to the purification of mind which is the base for *vipassanā*. Thus, the proximate knowledge which has to be developed for the promotion of right view concerning the *ariya magga* is the right view concerning *vipassanā*. When the *vipassanā* knowledge is fully developed, knowledge of *ariya magga*, otherwise called the right view concerning the *magga*, arises spontaneously. It is just like a royal procession coming along after the roads have been cleared by the police and military escorts. Therefore, it is said that *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* proceeds, followed by *ariya sammādiṭṭhi*. While engaged in Vipassanā meditation, *vipassanā ñāṇa* leads the way for the development of other maggas. At the moment of attainment of *ariya magga*, *magga ñāṇa* gives the lead to other maggas. For this reason, the Buddha had called the *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* and *ariya magga sammādiṭṭhi*, the drivers of the carriage.

The last verse runs as follows:

3. *Yassa etadisanyanam, Itthiya purisassa vā,
sa ve etena, yanena nibbānasseva santike.*

‘Any woman or man possessing this eightfold *magga* vehicle can get to the presence of Nibbāna by means of the vehicle.’

In accordance with this last verse, the owner of the eightfold *magga* vehicle, irrespective of sex, is definitely bound to ‘reach’ Nibbāna. So it is very clear that anyone desirous of reaching Nibbāna must develop *ariya magga* based on the *vipassanā magga*.

It is common knowledge that in this mundane world, the owner of some form of transport is able to reach the required destination by using it. However, just having the knowledge of the mechanism of the transport without actually possessing it will not get anyone anywhere. Likewise, by just knowing how to enumerate the various types of *rūpas* and *nāmas*, or the different kinds of *maggas*, no one can reach Nibbāna. It must be definitely noted that only by coming into possession of the *vipassanā magga* vehicle through contemplation of the actual arising and dissolution of *nāma* and *rūpa* and riding on the carriage of the Eightfold Path, can one reach Nibbāna. The three verses explained above are summarised as follows:

1. The straight path is *magga*, the destination is Nibbāna, free from danger.
2. Fitted with two wheels of energetic efforts, the *magga* carriage is silent.
3. *Hīri* and *ottappa* serve as the leaning board while mindfulness forms the drapery and awnings of the carriage.
4. *Magga ñāṇa* preceded by *vipassanā ñāṇa* is the driver of the carriage.
5. Owners of such a carriage may be either men or women.
6. One may ride comfortably in it to reach Nibbāna.

After teaching the three verses, the Buddha also gave the discourse on the Four Noble Truths which we shall discuss again when we come to the section on the Truth of the path, *magga saccā*.

The deva Sumana, while listening to the discourse, reflected on the meditation practices of his former existence. Although he had not been able to attain to higher knowledge as a bhikkhu in spite of strenuous efforts at meditation, in the existence of a deva whose physical body was free from impurities, in no time he was able to develop successive *vipassanā ñāṇas* step by step until he attained the Path and Fruition of the first stage and realized Nibbāna, thus becoming a *sotapanna* (stream-winner).

The main point which this story of Sumana deva has brought home is that although the bhikkhu had been engaged ardently in vipassana meditation, as *ariya magga*, which could cut off the *taṇhā* had not yet been attained, this *taṇhā*, otherwise called *samudaya saccā*, had after death caused rebirth in the new existence of a celestial being. The story also pointed out how *ariya magga* could be developed and how as a deva higher knowledge could be attained with ease.

Another point brought out in the story is that if attachment lingers on in an individual or an object, *bhava taṇhā* (craving for existence) is likely to cause rebirth in the vicinity of such a person or object. How attachment to an object will lead to renewed existence in close proximity to it is borne out by the well-known story of Bhikkhu Tissa who died with great craving for his robes and consequently was reborn in the form of a body louse on those very robes.

Now we shall deal with the account of how attachment to one's wife had caused rebirth as a snake, a dog and a cow.

ATTACHMENT TO WIFE LEADS TO REBIRTHS
AS A SNAKE, A DOG, OR A COW

There lived in a village in Sri Lanka, a man who was misbehaving with the wife of his elder brother. The woman was more passionately attached to her paramour than to her lawful husband. She, therefore, instigated her lover to get rid of his elder brother. The man remonstrated, "Woman! Don't ever talk like that," but after she had repeated her evil suggestions for three times, the lover asked, "How would I go about it?" She replied, "You go with an axe and wait for him at the riverside near the big caper tree. I'll send him there." Thereupon, the man proceeded there and lay in wait for his elder brother, hiding amongst the branches of the tree.

When the husband came back from work in the forest, the wife made a show of loving affection for him and fondly brushing his hair said, "Your hair needs cleaning, it is too dirty. Why not go and shampoo it at the riverside near the big caper tree?" Happy with the thought 'my wife is very tender with her affections for me', he went accordingly to the bathing place at the riverside. He was preparing to wash his hair, bending his head down, when his younger brother came out from the hiding place and cruelly chopped his head off with the axe.

Because of the clinging attachment to his wife, he was reborn a green snake (a rat snake, according to Sri Lankan scholars). Still attached to his wife, the snake took to dropping himself down from the roof of the house upon the woman. Realizing

that the snake must have been her former husband, she caused it to be killed and removed. Even after passing away from the snake's existence, his attachment for his former wife still remained strong and he was reborn a dog in his old house. As a dog he was still clinging to his former wife, following her everywhere even when she went to the forest. People made derisive remarks, 'The hunter woman with the dog is going out. Wonder where she is headed for?' The woman asked her lover again to kill the dog.

His attachment still intense and persisting, the dog was reborn a calf in the same house. The young calf also followed her everywhere, drawing laughter and ridicule from the people again, 'Look, the cowherd has come out. Wonder which pasture her cattle are going to graze in?' Again the woman asked her man to kill the young calf, but his tenacious attachment to his wife caused rebirth again, this time in her womb.

In the human world which he regained, he was born endowed with *jātissara ñāṇa* (faculty of recalling previous existences). Exercising this faculty, he went over the past four existences and was greatly distressed when he came to know that they were all terminated at the insistence of his former wife. "What an irony to have taken rebirth in the womb of such an enemy," he lamented.

He would not let his mother, the enemy, touch him. Whenever the mother tried to hold him, the baby cried vociferously. So the grandfather had to take over the task of bringing up

the child. When the child reached the age when he could speak, the grandfather asked him, “My dear child, why do you cry when your mother tries to hold you?” “This woman is no mother to me. She is my enemy who killed me in four successive existences.” So saying, he recounted to his grandfather the story of his previous lives. On hearing this sad tale, the old man wept embracing the child and said, “Come, my poor grandchild, let us get away. I see no gain in staying here.” They went away and stayed in a monastery where both of them received ordination and in time, through practice of meditation, were able to attain *arahatta* path and fruition and gained Arahatsip.

The moral to be drawn from this episode is that attachment gives rise to repeated new existence at the very location of that attachment. This story clearly bears out the truth of the teaching, *ponobhavikā*, ‘attachment brings about fresh existences’. After the existences of a snake, a dog, a calf, and meeting violent death in each, in the last life of a human being when he attained Arahatsip, the *taṇhā* was completely extinguished. There would be no more rebirth for him and he would be free from all forms of suffering.

It would be well to take to heart the moral of this story and strive for freedom from all suffering through the practice of vipassana meditation. There would be no end of quoting similar stories from the Pāli texts and commentaries. Let us now come to the experiences and episodes met with in modern times.

A DHAMMA-TEACHING SAYADAW

From 1291 to 1301 B.E. we were resident at Taikwine monastery of Moulmein. At that time there was a dhamma-preaching Sayādaw of great repute. At the traditional feeding ceremony, a week after the death of a lawyer donor of his, he gave the following sermon at the merit-sharing service for the departed one.

“This life of mine is transitory, but my death is truly permanent. I must die inevitably. My life will end only in death. Life alone is impermanent; death, on the other hand, is definitely stable, permanent.”

This contemplation on death was used as the theme of his sermon. We were present on the occasion of that ceremony and had heard his sermon personally. Within a few days after this event, we heard the sad news of the demise of the dhamma-preaching Sayādaw. We had thought then that he would have passed away contemplating on death as he had preached only a few days ago. We heard that the Sayādaw had met a violent death at the hands of assassins who had stabbed him with a dagger.

About three years later, a certain young boy from Mergui came to Moulmein accompanied by his parents. He had been worrying his parents, asking them to take him to Moulmein. On arriving at the monastery of the former Sayādaw, the boy informed his parents that in his previous existence he was the presiding Sayādaw of that monastery. He could tell every thing about the monastery and whatever he said was found

to be true. He remembered all the leading monks from the nearby monasteries and addressed them by names he had used to call them previously.

When the name of a certain man, a close disciple of the late Sayādaw, was mentioned, the boy replied, "Afraid, afraid." When questioned what he was afraid of, he recounted how that man in association with some persons had stabbed him to death, how he had run away from them, and coming to the river bank and finding a boat, he made his escape riding on the boat. Later, arriving at the village on the Mergui coast, he said he entered the house of his present parents.

The visions he saw of how he had fled from his assassins, how he found a boat on the river bank, how he took a ride on it and came to the house of his parents, were all *gati nimittas* (signs of destiny) which had appeared to him at the approach of death. This is also a notable incident which confirms the fact that attachment brings forth new existence.

BORN A BUFFALO FOR THE SUM OF FORTY KYATS?

In a certain town in Monywa district, there lived a man who was engaged in the business of money-lending during the British regime. He asked for the return of a loan from a certain farmer who replied he had already repaid the money he had borrowed. The moneylender repeatedly insisted that the farmer had not yet repaid the loan. Finally, he declared, "May I become a buffalo in your house if I had really asked for a double payment of the forty kyats which you said you had

already returned.” With this oath, he pressed again for the return of his loan. The poor farmer was thus forced to make knowingly a double settlement of the loan he had taken.

Soon after, the moneylender passed away. And there was born in the house of the farmer, who had made a double payment of his loan, a young buffalo. Guessing that the moneylender had made a rebirth in his house as a buffalo, the poor farmer called out to the young buffalo, “Sayā, Sayā, please come,” in the same way he used to address the old moneylender. The young buffalo answered his call and came to him. Believing now that the old moneylender had really become a buffalo in his house according to his oath, the farmer started to talk about this incident. Thereupon, the daughter of the departed moneylender went to court suing the poor farmer for defaming her father.

The judge who heard the case sent for the appellant, the defendant and the young buffalo together with witnesses for both sides. In the court, the farmer called out ‘Saya, Saya, please come’ to the buffalo in the same way he used to address the moneylender. The buffalo responded to his call by coming to him. The moneylender’s daughter used to address her father as ‘Shi, Shi’. In the court when she said ‘Shi, Shi’, the buffalo went to her. The judge came to the conclusion that the poor farmer was making an honest statement (without any intention of defamation) and accordingly discharged the case.

From this story it is not hard to believe that a human being may be reborn a buffalo. It is plain, therefore, that *taṇhā* will

cause rebirth. It should be observed also that swearing a false oath is liable to land one in dire calamity.

NGA NYO'S SMALL MEASURE OF RICE

There was a village of about 400 houses called Chaungyo, ten miles north-west of Taungdwingyi. Two young men of the village, Nga Nyo and Ba Saing, who were friends, earned their living by going around villages selling betel leaves. Coming back one day from the rounds, Ba Saing was short of rice. He borrowed a small measure of rice from Nga Nyo to cook his dinner. After dinner, while they made their way back to the village leisurely in the moonlit night, poor Ba Saing was bitten by a poisonous snake and met instant death. It was sometime between 1270 and 1280 B.E. when the two friends were about the age of twenty or so.

Probably because he clung to the thought of the loan of the small measure of rice, at the time of his death, he was born a cockerel in Nga Nyo's house. Nga Nyo trained it to become a fighting cock and entered it in fighting competitions. The first three competitions were won by Nga Nyo's cock, which unfortunately lost the fourth fight because its opponent happened to be older and stronger than itself. Nga Nyo expressed his disappointment and anger by holding his cock by its leg and thrashing it against the ground. Bringing the half-dead cock home, he threw it down near the water-pot where Nga Nyo's cow came and touched it with her lips (as if expressing her sympathy).

The poor cock died afterwards and took conception in the womb of the cow. When the calf had grown up considerably, it was bought for four kyats by his friends for a feast which Nga Nyo would also join. While they were butchering the calf and cutting up the meat in preparation for their feast, a couple from Taungdwingyi, a clerk and his wife, happened to arrive on the scene. Expressing her sympathy for the calf, the clerk's wife said, "If it were my calf, I wouldn't have treated it so cruelly. Even if it had died a natural death, I wouldn't have the heart to eat its flesh. I would just bury it."

Sometime afterwards, a son was born to the clerk's wife. The child remained without speech till he was seven when, one day his father told him, "Son, do utter some words and talk to us. Today is payday. I'll buy and bring back some nice clothes for you." Keeping his promise, the father came back in the evening with some pretty garments for his son. He said, "Here, Son, these beautiful clothes are for you. Do speak to us now." The boy then uttered, "Nga Nyo's measure of rice."

The father said, "Son, just talk to us. Not only a measure, but a whole bag of rice – we will pay back the loan for you." Thereupon the boy said, "If so, put the bag of rice on the cart. We will go now to settle my debt." After putting a bag of rice on the cart, they set off on their journey. The father asked the son, "Now, where to?" The child directed his father to drive towards the north of Taungdwingyi. Eventually they came to Chaungyo village when the son said, "That's it. That's the village," and kept directing his father through the village lanes

until they came to Nga Nyo's house. Upon enquiring whether it was indeed U Nyo's house, U Nyo himself confirmed it by coming out from the house. As he approached the cart, the child hailed him, "Hey Nga Nyo, do you still remember me?" The elderly man was offended to be rudely addressed as 'Nga Nyo' by a mere child, the age of his son, but became pacified when the clerk explained, saying, "Please do not be offended, U Nyo. This child is under some strange circumstances."

When they got into the house, the boy began, "So, Nga Nyo, you don't remember me? We were once together going round the villages selling betel leaves. I borrowed a small measure of rice from you. Then I was bitten by a poisonous snake and died before I could return the loan. I then became a cockerel in your house. After winning three fights for you, I lost the fourth fight because my opponent was much stronger than I was. For losing that fight, you beat me to death in anger. Half dead, you threw me down near the water pot and a cow came and kissed me. I took conception in her womb and was reborn a cow. When I became a heifer, you all killed me to eat. At that time a clerk and his wife, who are now my father and mother, came nearby and had expressed sympathy for me. After my death as a cow, I was born as a son to my present father and mother. I have now come to repay my debt of the measure of rice."

All that the child recounted was found to be true by U Nyo who wept, feeling repentant for all the ill-treatment he had meted out to his former friend.

With this story we want to stress again that unless *taṇhā* has been rooted out, repeated rebirths in new existences are unavoidable.

TERRIBLE LIFE NOW AS A DEMON, NOW AS A COW

About 1300 B.E., there was resident in the Payāgyi monastery of Mandalay a student bhikkhu called U An Seinna. He was of good build, clear complexion and full of faith in the dhamma. He was a good student, too, devoting himself wholeheartedly to the study of Pitaka literature. One day, while washing the almsbowl he addressed his colleagues, “I urge you to take care, Revered sirs, to be of good behaviour while you are living on the almsfood of the donors. I am living a heedful life, having had the personal experiences of three existences.”

One of his colleagues was curious and asked him about his previous lives. He recounted thus, “I passed away from human life to become a female demon. I suffered terribly in that life, having scarcely anything to eat, no decent place to live in, roaming here and there to look for a resting place. From a female demon, I became a draught cow. I was herded into the same pen with a team mate, whose nostrils were running with putrid nasal fluid. As its nasal smell was becoming unbearable, I goaded it to keep it away from me and the owner beat me up thinking I was bullying the other cattle, domineering over it. When I passed away from that existence, I regained human life and becoming agitated with religious emotion, have now taken to the life of a bhikkhu.”

This story also serves to emphasise the fact that as long as *taṇhā* persists, rebirth is inevitable. It also shows what a horrible life is that of demon and how, handicapped by the inability to communicate, a cow is liable to be misunderstood by man and could be subjected to maltreatment consequently. These accounts should serve to cause terror and incite religious emotions in us.

REGAINING HUMAN LIFE AFTER BEING A COW AND A DOG

About 1310 B.E. the head Sayādaw of a village monastery in Monywa district was shot to death by a rebel leader who accused the Sayadaw of 'ill-treating' his underling. The Sayādaw is now in human existence, a bhikkhu again. We hear that he had even passed some of the scriptural examinations. This bhikkhu recounted, "I became a cow after being shot to death, then a dog and now a human being again." To go down from the level of a bhikkhu in human life to that of a cow, a dog, is very degrading, If *taṇhā* remains uneradicated, it is possible to go down the ladder of existence further still. There is the instance of Bhikkhu Tissa who became a body louse in the time of the Buddha. Thus realizing that anyone with *taṇhā* remaining uneradicated (*ditṭhi* and *vicikicchā* also still intact) is liable to be subjected to rebirths, it is essential to strive for complete eradication of *taṇhā* or in the very least, to work for elimination of *ditṭhi* and *vicikicchā*.

EVEN REBIRTH AS A CROWING LIZARD IS POSSIBLE

In about 1323 B.E. there appeared in Pha Aung We village near Daik-u, a strange young child who said that he was previously the presiding monk of the Ywā Waing village about two miles away. The child was intelligent with a good retentive memory. When taken to the monastery which he said he was resident in, he appeared to know all the articles in the building and was able to identify each object by recalling the name of its donor. What he said was found to be all true. He said he had become a crowing lizard in the monastery when he died as the presiding monk. As the crowing lizard, he met his death when he leapt across from the monastery to a palm tree nearby. He missed the tree and fell to the ground breaking his thigh. The injury caused him death. When he died, he rode along on the cart of a farmer from Pha Aung village who had his field near his monastery and stayed in the house of the farmer. What he said about riding on the cart was the appearance of *gati nimitta*, sign of destiny as death approached.

This story should also cause the realization that with *taṇhā* still lingering, fresh existence could arise and taking fright from this realization, one should develop *ariya magga* to rid oneself of *taṇhā*. The reason why we bring out these evidential stories of modern times is because there are some people who maintain that there is no such thing as afterlife. Some are undecided and perplexed, not being able to conclude whether there is afterlife or not. In spite of clear accounts of renewed existences in the scriptural literature, many are sceptical of

what was written of ancient times. In order to provoke faith in *kamma* and its resultant effects and belief in afterlife and to remain steady with such conviction, we have brought out these stories. Similar stories abound, which we can produce, but enough has been said to accomplish our aim.

As stated above, because *taṇhā* can cause rebirths, the Blessed One had taught, “This hunger, this thirst, the craving gives rise to fresh rebirth and bound up with pleasure and lust, finds ever fresh delight now here, now there.” He also gave the enunciation of this *taṇhā*. What is this craving? Firstly, there is this thirsting desire for sensual pleasures. Secondly, there is attachment to the belief of eternality. Thirdly, there is holding onto the view that there is nothing after life. These three types of craving are the Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

KĀMA TAṆHĀ

Of these three types, *kāma taṇhā* is craving for pleasurable sense-objects, whether one’s own or belonging to other persons. Craving which arises on seeing a beautiful object of sight is *kāma taṇhā*. Here, object of sight relates not only to appearance, colour, etc., but to the whole form or body of man or woman which serves as the basis of the sight, the clothes worn and other objects pertaining to him or her. Likewise, pleasurable sound and sound objects, delightful smell and its source, delicious taste and food producing the taste, men and women who prepare and serve the delicious food, tactile sensations of rapture and objects producing such sensations – all

these constitute objects of pleasure, and craving for them is termed *kāma taṇhā*. In short:

1. *desire or craving for any pleasurable sense object is kāma taṇhā.*

Wishing to be born a human being, a celestial being, wishing to be born a man or a woman; longing to enjoy the sensual pleasures as a human being, as a celestial being, as a man or a woman – all these cravings are also *kāma taṇhā*. Therefore, we say that taking delight in any pleasurable thought or object is *kāma taṇhā*.

On seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching a sense object, if one considers it to be pleasant, a liking is at once developed for it. Thinking it to be pleasant amounts to *avijjā*, which covers up the true nature of the sense object and gives rise to false views about it. *Avijjā* takes what is transitory to be permanent; what is suffering because of incessant arising and vanishing, to be pleasant; takes mere physical and mental phenomena which are not soul nor living entity as soul or living entity; considers one's own physical body or other people's bodies which are repulsive and disgusting as beautiful and pleasing.

Thus thinking what is unpleasant to be pleasant, liking is developed for it; and liking it and desiring it lead to craving which drives one into activities for the fulfilment of that craving. Such volitional activities are the *kammas* and *saṅkhāras* which are responsible for formation of new aggregates of *nāma* and *rūpa* of the new existence. As such, each instance of

liking or desiring a sense object amounts to venturing into a new round of becoming.

Influenced by the *taṇhā*, *abhisankhāra* consciousness, otherwise called *maraṇa saññā javana* tenaciously holds onto the *kamma*, *kamma nimitta* or *gati nimitta*, the three signs which appear as death approaches. Because of this tenacious clinging to the objects seen at death's door, the moment after death consciousness vanishes, *paṭi sandhe* (relinking consciousness) arises holding onto the last seen objects to give rise to new birth. Hence, this *taṇhā* is described as *ponobhavikā*... liable to give rise to new birth.

BHAVA TAṆHĀ

According to the Commentary, *bhava taṇhā* is the *taṇhā* that is accompanied by *sassata diṭṭhi* (wrong view of eternalism). Here, *bhava* means becoming or being. Hence, *bhava taṇhā* is craving based on the belief in the permanence and stability of existence. *Sassata diṭṭhi* is holding to the wrong view that the soul or the living entity does not die or dissolve away – although the coarse physical body perishes, the soul, the living entity is not subjected to dissolution. It enters into a new body and remains there. Even if the world crumbles and breaks up, it remains eternally permanent and never perishes.

Religious faiths outside of the teachings of the Buddha mostly hold this view of eternalism. Some of them believe that, after death, man remains permanently in heaven or suffers eternal damnation in hell according to God's wish. Others take the

view that a being migrates from one existence to another according to *kamma* and exists permanently. And again, others believe that a being exists eternally changing from one life to another on a prescribed set course.

In short, any belief that holds the view that 'soul or living entity moves on without dissolution to new existences' is *sas-sata ditṭhi*, wrong belief of eternalism. For instance, a bird on a tree flies away to another tree when the first tree falls. When the second tree falls, it flies to a third tree. Likewise, the soul or living entity, on the dissolution of a gross body or form on which it is dependent, moves on to another coarse body, itself remaining everlasting, cannot be destroyed.

Tañhā accompanied by the wrong view of eternalism is termed *bhava tañhā* (craving for existence). This *tañhā* takes delight in the view that the soul or living entity is permanent, enduring. This 'I', which has been in permanent existence since eternity, feels the sensations and will continue feeling them. Believing thus, it takes delight in every object seen, heard, touched or known and also in the objects which one hopes to come to enjoy in the future. It wishes to enjoy a prosperous happy life now and in the future, to be born in good, happy existences; wants to enjoy in the coming existences the rich life of human or celestial beings. Some wish to be born always a man, some a woman. All these are *bhava tañhā*.

Every time craving arises for sense objects which are presently available or for the existence one is in now, or in looking forward to the existence one wishes to be in, because of

this *taṇhā*, a conditioning influence or potential power is being built up for the arising of a new life. That is why the Buddha taught *ponobhavikā*... liable to give rise to new birth. We have summarised thus:

2. *Craving for existence with the notion that it is eternal is bhava taṇhā.*

VIBHAVA TAṆHĀ

In the term *vibhava taṇhā*, *vibhava* means non-becoming, non-being, annihilation of existence. Craving for the view 'that there is existence only while alive, that there is nothing after death', is termed *vibhava taṇhā*. This is the *taṇhā* which is accompanied by the wrong view of non-existence (*uccheda ditṭhi*) which holds that 'nothing remains after death; there is complete annihilation'. It is the doctrine preached by Ajita, the leader of a sect during the Buddha's time. His teaching runs thus:

An individual is made up of the four Great Primary elements. When he dies, the earth element of his body goes into the mass of the earth element that exists in the inanimate external bodies. (What this means is: The element of earth which had manifested itself as hardness or coarseness while in the living body, merges itself with the inanimate external earth element, the earth element of the dead body. In time, it turns into material earth (*pathavi rūpa*) which is again converted into the earth element of trees and plants, etc.)

The water element of the living body flows into the inanimate mass of water (that is to say the wetness or fluidity of the dead becomes the moisture or fluidity of the mass of water).

The fire element of the living body merges with the mass of inanimate external heat and the living air element flows into the mass of inanimate external air. All knowing faculties (organs of senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, etc.) move over into space (Nihilists holding the *uccheda* view do not recognise separate existence of eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc. They hold the view that the material forms of the eye, ear, etc., themselves see, hear, taste, touch, etc. *Mana*, otherwise called the *indriya*, itself thinks. They explain the cessation of consciousness in terms of the six faculties of sense which, according to them, merge with space or disappear into space...)

Be he a fool or a wise man, when he dies he completely disappears. Nothing is left after death. The fool does not suffer in a new existence for his past misdeeds. The wise man does not get a new existence in which he enjoys the fruits of his good *kammas*. After death everything disappears.

These, then, are some of the teachings of Ajita, who holds the view of nihilism. This ideology may be readily accepted by those who are reluctant to avoid evil or to do good. As it is postulated by this ideology that there is no life, nothing exists after death, it amounts to the admission that there is life before death. This question may arise then: What is that that exists before death? The answer according to their line of reasoning could only be that it is the living self (*atta*) or being

(*satta*). Thus, although Ajita maintained that an individual is made up of the four great primaries, it must be said that for him, *atta* or *satta* exists. Because of this attachment to self, holders of this view argue that instead of wasting time in doing good deeds for the forthcoming existences, full opportunity should be taken of the present moment for the enjoyment of pleasures. The craving accompanied by this nihilistic view that nothing remains after death, everything is destroyed, is termed *vibhava taṇhā*. To summarise:

3. *Craving which arises accompanied by nihilistic view is vibhava taṇhā.*

This *vibhava taṇhā* likes the idea that after death, existence is annihilated without any special effort. The reason is that one who holds this view shrinks from the practice of meritorious deeds and does not abstain from doing evil deeds. The evil deeds committed are also innumerable. If new life occurs after death, these evil deeds will bear unwholesome fruits which, of course, they cannot relish. Only if nothing happens after death and there is no new existence, their misdeeds will be expunged; they will have to bear no responsibility for them and escape scot free from all consequences of their evil actions. Hence, this great appeal for this nihilistic ideology.

At the same time, holding that the time for enjoying is now, the present life before death, they are too eager to go after any desirable objects of pleasure. Consequently, they go all out in the pursuit of what they consider to be pleasurable. This

ardent pursuit of pleasure leads to commission of *kammas* and *saṅkhāras*, every act of which contributes to the formation of new life.

And every time there is delight in, and enjoyment of pleasures of the present life, impulse of this *taṇhā* is imparted to the stream of consciousness, life-continuum. Consequently, *javana* consciousness, proximate to death, otherwise called the *abhisankhāra viññāṇa*, holds on to the death signs, namely, *kamma*, *kamma nimitta* and *gati nimitta*. While holding on to these objects, when death comes with death consciousness, rebirth consciousness arises for a new existence conditioned by any of the three signs. Thus, the man afflicted with *uccheda diṭṭhi* is reborn, whether he likes it or not, in a new existence, because of his *taṇhā*, craving for pleasurable objects. And his new existence is very likely to be in inferior and miserable states because he had developed nothing but evil deeds previously.

The Buddha had taught, therefore, that this type of *taṇhā*, namely, *vibhava taṇhā*, also gives rise to new existence, *ponobhavikā*. Thus all the three types of craving, *kāma taṇhā*, *bhava taṇhā* and *vibhava taṇhā* lead to new life and suffering. Therefore, we have summarised:

4. *True cause of suffering lies in the three taṇhās.*

The abovementioned three *taṇhās* are the origin of sufferings starting from *jāti* (birth) to *upādānakkhandhā* (the groups of grasping) and are, therefore, termed *samudaya saccā*, the Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

As to where these *taṇhās* arise and take root, the Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta states: 'Wherever in the world, there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this *taṇhā* (craving) arises and takes root.'

Here, 'craving arises' means actual arising of the craving because of delightful and pleasurable things. This is known as *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa*. By 'taking root' is meant that, failing to contemplate on the impermanent nature of pleasurable things, craving for them lies dormant, taking root, to arise when favourable circumstances permit. This latent craving, lying dormant in sense-objects which escape being contemplated on, is known as *ārammaṇanusaya*. Vipassanā meditation eradicates this defilement.

The delightful and pleasurable things from which craving arises are described elaborately in the Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and may be summarised as:

1. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind... the six doors of senses.
2. Visual objects, sound, smell, taste, bodily impressions and mind objects... the six objects of senses.
3. Eye consciousness, ear consciousness, etc... six types of consciousness.
4. Six types of sense impressions, contacts... six *phassas*.
5. Six types of feeling born of sense impressions, etc.

These delightful and pleasurable things should be contemplated on in the practice of meditation. Failing to recognize them as impermanent, unsatisfactory, etc. through heedful

noting will result in their becoming the breeding grounds for craving. These two types of craving, namely, *anusaya taṇhā* (the dormant craving) for the pleasurable objects which have escaped being noted as they really are at the time of seeing, hearing, etc., and *pariyuṭṭhāna taṇhā*, which has arisen from the pleasurable things, constitute the noble Truth of origin of suffering such as birth, etc. This fact should be thoroughly understood and remembered.

We have explained the Truth of the Origin of Suffering sufficiently. We must end our discourse on it here.

May all you good people present in this audience, by virtue of having given respectful attention to this Great Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, be able to dispel temporarily or eradicate completely the craving, otherwise called the Truth of the Origin of Suffering, by incessant contemplation and through whatever path and fruition you have chosen, achieve speedy realisation of Nibbāna, the end of all sufferings.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

CHAPTER SIX

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE FULL MOON DAY OF TAZAUNGMON, 1324, BURMESE ERA.

Today is the full moon of Tazaungmon. It used to be a great holy day marked with festivities in central India at the time of the Buddha, being the end of the months of the rainy season and the end of the year according to the tradition of that time. In Burma, we celebrate the day with the festival of lights and by paying homage to the Blessed One.

We shall discuss today *Nirodha Saccā*, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and *magga saccā*, the Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering as taught in the Dhammacakka Sutta. We shall recite now the titles of the four Noble Truths:

1. *Dukkha saccā* the Truth of Suffering
2. *Samudaya saccā* the Truth of the Origin of Suffering
3. *Nirodha saccā* the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
4. *Magga saccā* the Truth of the Path leading to the
Cessation of Suffering

NIRODHA SACCĀ

Idaṃ kho pana, Bhikkhave, dukkha nirodho ariya saccam. Yo tassā yeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho cāgo paṭṭhissaggo mutti anālayo.

“Bhikkhus, what I am going to teach now is the Noble Truth of extinction of suffering, the real truth which Nobles Ones should know. It is the complete fading away and cessation of that hunger, that craving without remainder, its forsaking and giving up, relinquishing, letting go, release and abandoning of the same craving.”

The truth of extinction of suffering is the cessation of craving (*samudaya saccā*) otherwise called the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. By virtue of *vipassanā ñāṇa* and *ariya magga ñāṇa*, that craving gets no opportunity to arise and vanish. It is like darkness being dispelled by sunlight. When *arahatta magga ñāṇa* appears, the craving has no chance to arise and gets extinguished entirely. With the cessation of *taṇhā*, the aggregates of *nāma*, *rūpa* for new life cannot make their appearance and completely cease to exist. This non-arising or cessation of *taṇhā* is termed the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. Cessation of *taṇhā* by virtue of *arahatta magga ñāṇa* is complete, total extinction of *taṇhā* and the noblest and highest form of extinction.

There are inferior forms of cessation. For instance, cessation by virtue of the *anāgāmi magga* which completely extinguishes only *kāma taṇhā* (the craving for sensuous pleasures), cessation by the *sagadagāmi magga* which eliminates only the grosser forms of *kāma taṇhā*, cessation by virtue of *sotāpatti magga* which removes the *kāma taṇhā* that will give rise to rebirth in the nether worlds. These cessations are concerned with only partial extinction of *taṇhā* and may be regarded as inferior types of *nirodha saccā*. Then, there is another form

of cessation which comes about through meditating on the nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality. During the period of contemplation on them, *taṇhā* gets no opportunity to arise and, hence, there occurs temporary cessation of *taṇhā*. It may be regarded as cessation by half measures of *taṇhā* by means of partial development of *vipassanā ñāṇa*. Every time one is engaged in Vipassanā meditation, it may be said that one is realizing the temporary cessation of *taṇhā*.

The Pāli texts provide the following expositions of the truth of cessation of craving by answering the question ‘where may this craving be discarded, where may it be extinguished?’ “Wherever in the world there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this craving may be discarded, there it may be extinguished.”

Here, delightful and pleasurable things mean, as explained previously, the six doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; six sense objects of visual sight, sound, smell, taste, bodily impression and mind; six *viññāṇas* of eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc. For further details, reference may be made to the text and translation of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

Discarding and extinguishing are somewhat alike in meaning. Similarly, *cāgo* (abandoning, giving up), *patinissaggo* (giving up, forsaking, rejection), *mutti* (release, freedom, emancipation), *analayo* (aversion, doing away with)... all connote the same meaning as *nirodha* (cessation, annihilation).

HOW CESSATION OF CRAVING IS BROUGHT ABOUT

When the yogi by noting 'seeing' at the moment of sight becomes convinced of the true nature of impermanence, suffering and *anatta* (non-self), he will not be blinded by the delusion of permanence, happiness and self in the sense doors and sense objects such as eye, visual object, eye-consciousness, etc., He is momentarily free from *avijjā* (ignorance or delusion). Having seen reality as it is and being free from delusion, no pleasurable feeling arises towards these objects. This is then the temporary cessation or fading away of craving. Through the fading away of craving, *upādāna* clinging, *kāma* and *sañkhāra* which come trailing after it cannot arise. Consequently, *viññāṇa*, *nāma rūpa*, *saḷāyatana*, *phassa* and *vedanā*, the unwholesome resultants of *kamma* and *sañkhāra*, cannot appear. This is how craving together with suffering are momentarily extinguished, that is called momentary cessation or momentary Nibbāna.

In a similar manner, the yogi, by noting 'hearing', 'smelling', 'ear-consciousness', 'nose-consciousness', etc., at the moment of hearing, smelling, etc., becomes convinced of the true nature of impermanence, suffering and non-self with respect to ear, sound, nose, taste, etc. He will be free from delusion of permanence, happiness or self in connection with these objects. Thus, there will be momentary cessation of craving and suffering, otherwise called momentary Nibbāna.

Through *vipassanā* which promotes temporary cessation as higher knowledge is developed, Nibbāna is realized by means

of *sotāpanna ñāṇa*. *Sotāpanna ñāṇa* extinguishes *kāma taṇhā* which can give rise to rebirth in the states of woe. Therefore, the yogi becomes fully liberated from miseries of *apāya*, the nether world and sufferings of more than seven existences in good states of the sensuous sphere (*kāmasugati*). This is then extinction of suffering as a result of extinction of craving, but it must not be regarded that *sotāpanna magga phala* takes the cessation of craving as its object of contemplation. It dwells merely on cessation as a result of complete extinction of suffering inherent in the aggregates of *nāma, rūpa*.

When Nibbāna is realized by means of *sagadāgami ñāṇa*, grosser forms of sensuous craving together with sufferings of more than two existences in the sensuous planes are extinguished. When Nibbāna is realized through *anāgāmi ñāṇa*, subtle forms of sensuous cravings and sufferings of more than one existence in *rūpa loka* (fine material sphere) or in *arūpa loka* (non-material sphere) are extinguished. These are also extinction of suffering as a result of extinction of craving. In these paths also, the mind dwells merely on cessation consequent upon the complete extinction of sufferings inherent in the aggregates of *nāma, rūpa*.

When Nibbāna is realized through *arahatta magga ñāṇa*, all forms of craving and all kinds of suffering are completely eradicated. This is also extinction of suffering as a result of extinction of craving. We can summarise:

1. *When craving is eradicated, suffering is extinguished.*

Only when craving is completely eradicated, is true liberation from suffering achieved. Escape from suffering obtained through other means is not true liberation, but just temporary relief, because in due course there is recurrence of suffering. For example, take stretching the limbs to relieve stiffness due to bending. The ache is temporarily removed through stretching, only to return as tiredness. Likewise, stiffness due to prolonged sitting may be relieved by standing up or walking about only to be replaced soon by fatigue. When one is assailed by hunger, the suffering may be relieved by partaking of some food, but the trouble will start again after a lapse of a few hours. Illness or disease may be cured with suitable medical treatment, but other ailments are bound to arise sooner or later to start giving trouble again.

Difficult circumstances of living may be solved by engaging in suitable employment or business which may prove so successful and prosperous that one may come to occupy a very high position in one's profession or become a very rich man. Yet with the vicissitudes of life, one may fall down from the high position or become poverty-stricken. Even if the whole of life has been smooth and just plain sailing, one inevitably faces suffering at the time of death. As a result of meritorious deeds such as giving alms, observing moral precepts, one may be reborn a human being in happy prosperous circumstances or one may be born as a powerful celestial king. Yet when the wholesome effects of previous good deeds become exhausted, a return to miserable existences is inevitable. If one strives for a happy and long existence by means of the

rūpa jhāna and *arūpa jhāna* of the concentration meditations, one may indeed attain the *rūpa brāhma* world and *arūpa brāhma* world where one may live happily for many world cycles. The wholesome merits of the *jhānas* will become exhausted when the time comes. Then one faces the possibility of descending once again into miserable lower existences, as for instance, the experience of the young female pig mentioned in the chapter on *samudaya saccā*.

Thus, unless craving is completely eradicated, no form of liberation is a guaranteed, true liberation. Complete and permanent liberation from all kinds of suffering is achieved only when craving has been entirely extinguished. Thus the Buddha taught '*tassayeva taṇhāya asesā virāga nirodhā*', that eradication, extinction of *taṇhā* is the truth of cessation of suffering.

This is in accordance with the doctrine of dependent origination which states that when the causative conditions such as ignorance, etc., cease, their resultant effects, *saṅkhāras*, etc., also cease. Thus in the Anguttara Pāli text, it is taught: "What, Bhikkhus, is the noble truth of cessation of suffering? Through the total fading away and extinction of ignorance (which has been dealt with in connection with *samudaya saccā*) *saṅkhāras kamma* (formations) are extinguished; through the extinction of *saṅkhāras kamma*, the resultant *viññāṇa* for new existence is extinguished; through the extinction of *viññāṇa*, the mental and physical existences are extinguished; through the extinction of mental and physical existences, *salāyatana* (the six organs of senses) are extinguished; through the extinction

of six organs, *phassa* (sensorial impressions due to contact between sense organs and sense objects) are extinguished; through extinction of sensorial impressions, *vedanā* (feeling of sensations) is extinguished; through extinction of feeling, craving is extinguished; through extinction of craving, clinging (attachment) is extinguished; through the extinction of clinging, process of becoming is extinguished; through extinction of process of becoming, rebirth is extinguished; through extinction of rebirth, death and decay, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are extinguished. Thus takes place the extinction of this whole mass of mere suffering, which is neither soul entity nor does it have any connection with *sukha* (happiness). This, bhikkhus, is called the noble truth of extinction of this mass of mere suffering.”

In the above text, the sequence of cessation, for example, through extinction of ignorance, *kamma* formations are extinguished, is given in a serial order to demonstrate the correlation of each cause with its effect. But the important point to note is that once the ignorance fades away, vanishes, all its resultant effects such as *saṅkhāra*, etc., become extinguished.

The Pāli words *nirodha* or *nirodho* in the texts connote cessation only, not the place of cessation nor the condition of cessation. Although commentaries mention *nirodha* figuratively as a place of cessation or condition of cessation, it must be carefully observed that its true meaning is non-arising of inter-related conditions of cause and effect such as *avijjā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa*, etc., their total cessation, annihilation, cutting

off, in other words the Noble Truth of cessation of suffering or Nibbāna.

We have sufficiently dealt with the truth of cessation of suffering. For further details, reference may be made to the book 'Concerning Nibbāna'. We shall now go on to exposition of the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering.

MAGGA SACCA – THE TRUTH OF THE PATH

Idaṃ kha pana, Bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhagāmini patipadā ariyaṃ saccam. Ayaṃeva ariyo at̐thingikomaggo. Seyathidaṃ sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappo, sammā vāca, sammā kammanto, sammā ājīvo, sammā vāyamo, sammā sati, sammā sāmādhi.

“Bhikkhus, what I am going to teach now is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering. And, what is this Path? It is the Noble Eightfold Path, namely: Right View (Understanding), Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.”

We have dealt with *magga saccā*, the truth of the Path, fairly fully before. We propose now to go over some of those which need emphasising. Of the eight categories of the Path, *sammā diṭṭhi* and *sammā saṅkappa* constitute the *paññā* (wisdom) group; *sammā vāca*, *sammā kammanta* and *sammā ajīva* the *sīla* (ethical conduct) group; *sammā vāyama*, *sammā sati* and *sammā samādhi*, the *samādhi* (mental discipline) group.

We need not elaborate again on the path of *sīla* (ethical conduct or morality) nor on the path of *samādhi* (concentration). Of the wisdom group, the path of *sammā diṭṭhi* (the Right View) needs no further exposition. Accordingly, we quote the following exposition on the Right View given by the Blessed One.

EXPOSITION ON THE RIGHT VIEW (SAMMĀ DIṬṬHI)

“What, Bhikkhus, is the Right View? Bhikkhus, to understand suffering or the Truth of Suffering; to understand the origin of suffering or the Truth of the Origin of Suffering; to understand the cessation of suffering or the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering; to understand the path leading to the cessation of suffering or the Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering; this is called Right View.”

This, then, is the definition of the Right View given by the Blessed One. Briefly, it is knowing according to reality the four Truths and understanding them rightly as they should be understood. The commentary version of its exposition is as follows:

MEDITATION ON THE FOUR TRUTHS

‘Meditation on the four Truths was taught, prefaced by the words understanding of the four Truths.’ Of these four Truths, the first two, namely, the Truth of Suffering and the Truth

of the Origin of Suffering are concerned with *vaṭṭa* (evolution or the round of existence). The last two, namely, the Truth of Cessation of Suffering and the Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering, are concerned with *vivaṭṭa* (devolution or going out of the round of existence). The yogi bhikkhu employs only the first two Truths, the *vaṭṭa saccā* as objects of meditation and not the last two truths of *vivaṭṭa saccā*.

(It means that the yogi bhikkhu contemplates on the first two mundane truths in his Vipassanā meditation; he does not dwell on the last two supra-mundane truths which are not suitable subjects for meditation. Indeed, it is not possible to meditate on them. Why so? The sub-commentary states that these supra-mundane truths are beyond the ken of the ordinary common worldlings.)

Indeed it is true that ordinary common worldlings cannot have for their objects of meditation, *magga* and *phala* (the path and fruition) nor is Nibbāna within their range of vision and knowledge before they attain the stage of *gotrabhū* in meditation. *Gotrabhū* consciousness arises only after *anuloma ñāṇa* when *vipassanā ñāṇa* becomes fully developed; immediately after *gotrabhū* comes the realisation of the Path and Fruition. Therefore, it is obvious that a common worldling is not in a position to take for his object of meditation the true Nibbāna nor the path and its fruition. Thus, it must be carefully noted that any instruction or teaching to start off with meditation on Nibbāna is totally wrong.

The question can arise whether Nibbāna may not be taken as an object for meditation on tranquility (*upasamā nupassanā*). Contemplation on the attributive qualities of Nibbāna such as *virāga* (being devoid of lust) may be adopted as concentration meditation to gain concentration or tranquility. But this exercise is taken solely for the purpose of achieving one-pointedness of mind; it is not to immediately realize the noble path and fruition. In any case, this meditation exercise is most appropriate only for those Noble Ones who have already realized Nibbāna and not for the ordinary common worldlings. Thus it is definitely a mistaken practice to try to achieve the path and fruition by dwelling on Nibbāna from the very start.

The yogi bhikkhu learns from his teacher briefly that the five aggregates are the Truth of Suffering and craving is the Truth of Origin of Suffering. Or, he may learn more comprehensively that the five aggregates consist of *rupakkhandhā*, *vedanakkhandhā*, *saññakkhandhā*, *saṅkhārakkhandhā*, *viññakkhandhā*. And *rupakkhandhā* means the four primary elements and *upādārūpas*, their derivatives, etc. Thus, learning about the first two truths briefly or comprehensively from his teacher, he recites them repeatedly and contemplates on them in his meditation. With regard to the last two truths, the bhikkhu just hears from his teacher that the Truth of cessation of suffering and the Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering are desirable and laudable (this means that it is sufficient just to hear about these two supra-mundane truths and bend the mind towards them).

That bhikkhu, acting in the way described above, penetrates through to the four Truths simultaneously and comprehends them. He fully grasps of the four Truths simultaneously through insight. By *paṭiveda* (penetrative knowledge) he comprehends that suffering is to be rightly and well-understood; that craving is to be abandoned, eradicated; that *nirodha* (cessation) is to be realized and that the path is to be developed. By *abhisamaya* (insight) he fully grasps that suffering is to be rightly and well-understood; that craving is to be abandoned, eradicated; that *nirodha* (cessation) is to be realized and that the path is to be developed.

As described above, before he attains the path, the bhikkhu yogi's knowledge of the two truths, namely, the Truth of Suffering and the Truth of the Origin of Suffering, comes about by learning, and hearing from his teacher, by questioning and repeated recitation and by mastering it through penetrative reflection (the first four processes of acquiring this knowledge constitute merely studying the scriptures; grasping through penetrative reflection only amounts to insight by Vipassanā meditation). The knowledge concerning the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and the Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering is acquired only by hearing about them. After vipassanā meditation, at the moment of realization of the Ariya path, the first three truths are fully grasped by having accomplished the task of knowing rightly and well the Truth of Suffering, the task of abandoning the origin of suffering and the task of developing the path leading to the cessation of suffering. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is fully grasped by actual realization.

Thus, in accordance with the commentary, initially it is sufficient to know only from hearing that the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and Truth of the Path leading to Cessation of Suffering are desirable and laudable, and to bend the mind towards them. It is clear, therefore, that no effort is needed to contemplate particularly on these two truths. Knowledge about the first two truths should, however, be acquired both by hearing about them as well as by developing insight on them through meditation.

HOW MUCH SUTAMAYA (KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HEARING)?

As stated in the commentary we are quoting, it is sufficient to know only that the five aggregates are the Truth of Suffering, that craving is the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. Here, the five aggregates are the five aggregates of clinging (*upādānakkhandhā*) mentioned in this sutta. We have fully explained above that they are the objects which present themselves at the time of seeing, hearing, etc. We have also dealt comprehensively with the Truth of the Origin of Suffering in the section concerned. Knowing these two truths through hearing amounts to knowing the law of dependent origination in a brief manner. In the great sub-commentary on *Vissuddhimagga*, it is definitely stated that what the Venerable Assaji taught, namely, *ye dhamma hetuppabhavā...* The perfect one has told to cause, of causally arisen things... constitutes in brief the whole law of dependent origination.

The commentary on *Vinaya Mahāvagga* affirms also that by the words '*ye dhamma hetuppabhavā*', the Venerable Assaji was

teaching the five aggregates, otherwise called the Truth of Suffering. And by the words '*tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgata aha*', he was teaching the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. Thus, it is clear that having learnt briefly by hearing about the *dukkha saccā* and *samudaya saccā*, one has also learnt in a brief manner the Law of Dependent Origination. Those who are preaching that Vipassanā meditation is not feasible unless one has mastered the law of dependent origination supported by tables and circular diagrams are, therefore, going against these words of the commentary and sub-commentary and causing great harm to *paṭipattisāsanā*.

In the Cula Taṇhāsaṅkhāya Sutta of the Mūla Paṇṇāsa Pāli Canon, we find the following regarding the brief knowledge to be acquired by learning (*suta*): "Oh, king of the devas, in this teaching, the bhikkhu has heard that it is not fit nor proper to hold the view that all dhammas are permanent, pleasant and self."

It means that if the bhikkhu has ever heard of the fact that the five *khandhas* of the *nāma*, *rūpa* which present themselves at the six doors of the senses every time there is seeing, hearing, etc., are not proper to be regarded as permanent, pleasant, self; that they are transitory, subject to suffering and not self, then he has sufficient brief knowledge, *suta maya ñāṇa*, to proceed to engage himself in meditation.

Thus the Buddha continued: "Then that bhikkhu, who has learnt that much by hearsay, knows by contemplation and actual experience all dhammas." Then the Blessed One taught

how to attain by meditation the knowledge of differentiation between *nāma* and *rūpa*, the *nāmarupapariccheda ñāṇa*, etc. We have summarised the above thus:

1. All dhammas are transient, subject to suffering and non-self.
2. That much is sufficient knowledge acquired by hearing (*suta*).
3. Enough to enable, through meditation, to differentiate the *nāma* from *rūpa* of the aggregates.
4. And to recognise their nature of impermanence and unsatisfactoriness.

1 and 2 above indicate sufficiency of brief knowledge of *suta maya ñāṇa* (to proceed to the practice of meditation). 3 shows how by noting every action of seeing, hearing, etc., at the moment of occurrence, knowledge is gained which enables one to distinguish between *nāma* and *rūpa*, *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa* and to know the cause of phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc., *paccayapariggaha ñāṇa*. These two kinds of knowledge are called *abhiññā paññā*, being the *ñātapariññā* of the three *pariññās*. By 4 is meant full knowledge of all the dhammas and insight into their nature of impermanence, suffering and non-self, in accordance with '*sabbaṃ dhammaṃ abhiññāya, sabbaṃ dhammaṃ parijānāti*'. This constitutes the profound knowledge of *tirana pariññā* and *pahāna pariññā*.

The main point we wish to emphasise here is that having just learnt through hearing that all dhammas are impermanent, suffering and non-self, one has enough *suta maya ñāṇa* to pro-

ceed to endeavour for attainment of *arahatta magga phala*. Thus the assertion that, without a comprehensive knowledge of the law of dependent origination, meditation should not be practised, goes against this Pāli text of Culatanhāsankhaya Sutta, causes demoralisation in those bent on the practice of meditation and is detrimental to the prosperity of *paṭipatti sāsana*.

If, according to their proposition, meditation could be practised only after thoroughly mastering the law of dependent origination together with its explanatory circular diagrams, etc., some people who have no time nor chance to study the law of dependent origination or are slow in learning it comprehensively, are liable to lose the opportunity of gaining the path or fruition even if they are endowed with *paramis* (sufficient conditions and qualifications) to attain them. To cite an example, during the time of the Blessed One, one bhikkhu by the name of Culapantaka found it difficult to memorise a verse of only 45 letters although he tried it for four weeks. To learn the whole law of the dependent origination extensively would thus have been an impossible task for him. Yet the same bhikkhu attained Arahantship, accomplished in *jhāna abhiññā*, supernormal knowledge, and vision by practising for one morning only the meditation exercise prescribed by the Buddha.

We would like to take this opportunity, while giving the discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, of cautioning those good, learned persons to refrain from making assertions which may discourage and demoralise those engaged in or bent upon the practice of meditation.

If one needs to strive all alone in the practice of meditation, no doubt one needs to have learnt extensively all about the aggregates, the bases, the elements, the Truths, the faculties, and the Law of Dependent Origination. But if one is going to work under the guidance of a good, virtuous, learned and wise teacher, all that one needs to know is that all *dhammas* are impermanent, subject to suffering, insubstantial and non-self. It is also sufficient if he has learnt through hearing that a worldling individual is governed by two mundane truths of causal relations (cause and effect) namely, the five aggregates, which is the Truth of Suffering, and craving, which is the Truth of Origin of Suffering.

The majority of the Buddhists of Burma can be taken to be already equipped with this much knowledge; even if not, they can pick this up just before starting meditation or during the course of meditation by listening to the sermons of his meditation teacher. There should be no wavering or uncertainty on this score of *suta maya ñāṇa*. All that is required is to start practising meditation in accordance with the instructions given by the reliable, virtuous, learned and wise teacher.

As to how to launch into the practice of insight meditation, it has been described in our third discourse. To recapitulate, the practice consists of developing the path in three stages: basic, precursor, *Ariyan Path*. Developing them leads to Nibbāna.

Mūla magga, the basic path, is made up of *kammassakata sammā diṭṭhi*, *sīla* and *upacāra samādhi* or the *appanā samādhi* which we have already dealt with fully before. As to the first factor,

kammassakata sammāditṭhi, the majority of the Burmese Buddhists have already been established in this faith since childhood. With regard to *sīla magga*, if the lay yogi is not established in it yet, he can accomplish it by observing *sīla* just before taking up the practice of meditation. The Bhikkhu yogi should purify his *sīla* by confessional processes if he entertains any doubt about the purity of his *sīla*. As for accomplishment of *samādhi*, the yogi should take up a *samatha* exercise such as *ānāpāna* and practise on it until attainment of *jhāna* or *upacāra samādhi*. If time or opportunity do not permit, the yogi can begin contemplating on the four primary elements by means of which *vipassanā khaṇika samādhi*, which is akin to *upacāra samādhi*, may be attained. This *samādhi* dispels the hindrances so that purification of mind may be achieved. This is a brief description of how *mūla magga* is established.

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBBABHĀGA MAGGA, OTHERWISE CALLED VIPASSANĀ MAGGA

After developing the *mūla magga* as described above, the yogi starts observing the reality of the Truth of Suffering, otherwise called *upādānakkhandhā*, by taking continuous note of the phenomena of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, at the time each phenomenon occurs. Full accounts on *upādānakkhandhā*, together with how failure to note them and see them as they really are leads to clinging to them as *nicca*, *sukha* and *atta* and how on seeing their true nature through heedfulness, attachment to them is extinguished, have already been propounded in Part Three as well as in Part Four of these discourses.

When *samādhi* becomes fully established, one becomes aware with every noting of the arising and vanishing of *nāma* and *rūpa* and their true nature of impermanence, suffering and egolessness. How such awareness is developed may be explained thus: While noting each action of rising, falling, sitting, touching, bending, stretching, lifting, stepping forward, moving, resting, the yogi begins to recognize the knowing mind as distinct from the material body. This discernment is *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa*, knowledge of distinguishing *nāma* from *rūpa*, the initial basis for the developing of *vipassanā ñāṇa*. The Blessed One had described how this knowledge may be developed by giving the example of a ruby in *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta* of *Majjhima Paṇṇāsa*.

NĀMA AS DISTINCT FROM RŪPA, EXAMPLE GIVEN BY THE BUDDHA

A precious gem named *Veluriya*, which has a thread of either brown, yellow, red, white or light yellow colour placed in it, is taken in the palm of the hand for observation. A man with good eyesight is able to distinguish the gem from the thread; he can see clearly the coloured thread embedded in the body of the gem. Likewise, the yogi is able to differentiate the knowing mind from the object to be known; he knows also the knowing mind (consciousness) rushing out towards the object to be known. In this simile, the material object is like the precious gem, the knowing mind is like the thread.

And like the thread embedded in the gem, the knowing mind plunges towards the object. Thus the differentiation between *nāma* and *rūpa* is illustrated by the simile. It should be carefully observed that in the simile there is no mention of knowing as to how many types of *rūpa*, how many types of mind and mental concomitants, etc. are involved. It mentions only distinguishing the knowing mind from the material objects known.

Again in Visuddhimagga, we find the following description of how *nāma* becomes evident to the observing yogi. 'For the yogi having discerned by such and such a method, the nature of *rūpa*, then in proportion as *rūpa* becomes quite distinct, disentangled and clear to him so the non-*rūpas*, the *nāmas* that have *rūpas* as their object, becomes plain and evident of themselves, too.' Further, we find in Visuddhimagga: 'It is when supported by *nāma* that *rūpa* arises; it is when supported by *rūpa* that *nāma* arises. When *nāma* has the desire to eat, to drink, to speak and to adopt a posture, it is *rūpa* that eats, drinks, speaks and adopts a posture.' In these passages from Visuddhimagga, mention was made regarding enumeration of different categories of *nāma* and *rūpa*; only what will be actually experienced is described. It is plain, therefore, that mere reflection on different categories of *nāma* and *rūpa* will not result in true *nāmarūpaparicchedañāṇa*. True *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa* is developed only when the knowing mind and the material object to be known could be separately recognised while observing the phenomenon of arising and vanishing of *nāma* and *rūpa* as it occurs.

Ability to distinguish *nāma*, the knower from *rūpa*, the known, constitutes *sammā ditṭhi*, the Right View. Although it may have been learnt from books that *nāma*, the knowing mind, is separate from the material body, prior to taking up of the meditation practice and at the initial stage of the practice, the yogi cannot distinguish the knowing mind and the material body through actual experience. Only at the stage when the *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa* is developed that the distinction between these two comes forth spontaneously. When noting the phenomenon of thinking or painful feeling as it occurs, the yogi discerns separately the thinking mind and the material object or painful feeling and location of pain on the body. This discernment of *nāma* as distinct from *rūpa* is knowing reality as it truly is, that is the Right View. The yogi becomes convinced then that there is only material body and the knowing mind; apart from them, there is no such thing as the living substance or entity. This is also knowing reality as it truly is, the Right View.

As the power of concentration becomes further developed, while noting rising, falling, sitting, touching etc., he comes to realize that he touches because there is the material body to touch; he sees because of eye and sight object, hears because of ear and sound, bends because of desire to bend. He realizes also that he does not know the reality because he fails to take note of the phenomenon as it occurs; he develops liking because he does not know the true nature; he develops attachment because he likes. He then knows that when he has developed attachment, he becomes engaged in activities such

as doing or talking. These activities of doing and talking produce resultant effects, good resultants when the action has been wholesome, bad resultants when the action has been unwholesome. In this way he gains the knowledge of cause and effect to the extent of his previous *pārami* attainments. This again is knowing the reality as it is, the Right View.

As his concentration becomes further strengthened during the course of noting rising, falling, sitting, touching, seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, stiff, feeling hot, feeling painful, he discerns clearly the origination of the object as well as its dissolution, the beginning and end of each phenomenon. He becomes convinced through personal experience that every phenomenon is impermanent; it arises into being only to vanish away instantly. He realizes also that incessant arising and ceasing constitute fearful *dukkha* and that what is not subjected to anyone's control, anyone's will is not self. This knowledge is also the Right View of knowing what reality is.

As the power of concentration gets still more developed, although the yogi is noting the acts of rising, falling, sitting, bending, stretching, lifting, moving forward, dropping, he is no longer aware of the objects in their various shapes and forms such as the body, stomach, the limbs, etc. He notices only the rapid succession of phenomena of dissolution. He perceives the swift passing away of the object of awareness as well as the noting mind and comes to vivid realization of the real nature of impermanence, fearful suffering and insubstantiality, non-self. The object of awareness passes away the

instant it makes its appearance and there is no *atta* to fasten one's attachment onto. The knowing mind also dissolves away so fast that there is no *atta*, nothing to hold on to. Thus, with every noting there is developed the knowledge of the true nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality. All these constitute the Right View.

From the time the knowledge, regarding the distinction between *nāma* and *rūpa*, is developed to the stage of the development of the *vipassanā* Right View (*sammā diṭṭhi*), there has been bending of the mind toward perceiving the reality as it is. This constitutes Right Thought. There is involved, too, Right Concentration to keep the mind fixed on the right object and Right Mindfulness to be aware of it. All the while, the yogi is engaged in one of the four foundations of mindfulness: contemplation of the body postures, the feelings, the mind and mental objects. He does the contemplation with an effort which is, therefore, the Right Effort.

Thus, whenever a yogi is engaged in meditation, there are involved five paths, three from the *samādhi* group: *sammā vāyama*, *sammā samādhi*, *sammā sati*, and two from the *paññā* group: *sammā diṭṭhi* and *sammā saṅkappa*. These five paths are connectively involved in each act of heedful noting, knowing. The commentary has named them the *kāraka maggas*, the working *maggas*, so to say. In addition, there are also involved the three *maggas* of the *sīla* group: *sammā vāca*, *sammā kammanta*, *sammā ājiva*, by way of preserving the precepts intact and by way of fulfilling the abstentions.

And this is how such involvement takes place: the Vipassanā yogi starts observing the precepts even before he starts meditation and keeps them pure. During the course of meditation, *sīla* remains unpolluted, its purity is maintained. If anything then, it may be said that *sīla* gets more and more pure.

Thus, with three *sīla maggas* added to the five in the previous groups, a yogi is developing altogether eight *maggas* at each instance of noting and knowing the phenomenon. Mahā Sa-lāyatanika Sutta of Upari Paṇṇāsa Pāli text gives the following description of how the eight *maggas* are developed: “Bhikkhus, when the eye is seen as it truly is (at the instant of noting), when visual objects, eye consciousness, visual contact and feeling that arises due to eye contact, are seen as they truly are, then no liking is developed for the eye, visual objects, eye consciousness, etc. Seeing the eye, visual objects, etc., as they truly are and not developing liking and attachment for them but seeing only revulsion in them, the *upādānakkhandhās* (which may have arisen through failure to note) get no opportunity to materialize and craving for these objects also ceases, gets annihilated.

“The view of such a person is the Right View; his thoughts are Right Thoughts; his efforts are Right Efforts; his mindfulness is Right Mindfulness; his concentration is Right Concentration. Even before he starts meditation, the yogi is well-established in Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. It is in this way that the yogi becomes established in the Eight-fold Noble Path.”

This is a brief account in the Buddha's words of how the Eightfold Noble Path is developed when the yogi discerns what should be known at the moment of seeing; the true nature of the five dhammas involved, namely, the eye, visual objects, etc. For a detailed description, reference may be made to the original Mahā Salāyatanika Sutta of the Upari Paṇṇāsa Pāli text.

The commentary states that the Eightfold Noble Path becomes established at the moment of achieving the *ariya magga*. This may be taken as a superior form of interpretation. We would like, however, to take the view that the text meant here *vipassanā magga* instead of the *ariya magga*, which is the goal to be achieved by accomplishment of the *vipassanā magga*. This interpretation of ours will be found to be in accord with the fact that knowledge as to the true nature of the eye, visual object, eye consciousness, visual contact and feeling, is come by only through Vipassanā meditation. *Ariya magga*, on the other hand, does not take the eye, visual object etc., as its object; it accomplishes only the function of knowing.

In a similar manner, by taking note of the phenomena of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, the five dhammas which become prominent at the respective moment of occurrence could be known, and the Eightfold Path developed accordingly.

What has been explained so far relates to involvement of the *sīla magga* by way of maintaining it unpolluted at the moment of Vipassanā meditation.

ABSTENTIONS DURING VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION

There is no opportunity to commit wrong speech such as lying with regard to the *nāma rūpa* objects whose reality is being seen at the moment of noting them. Just consider for a moment. What is the necessity of telling a lie about an object which one does not like nor dislike, having seen its true nature of impermanence and cessation after dissolution? Similarly, no occasion arises to slander, to talk frivolously, in short, to commit wrong speech in connection with that object. Likewise, there is no question of committing wrong acts such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct nor engaging in wrong livelihood. Thus, every time reality is seen while noting, *sammā vāca* which is abstinence from *micchā vaca*, *samma kammanta* which is abstinence from *micchā kammanta*, and *sammā ājiva* which is abstinence from *micchā ājiva* are accomplished with reference to the object under review. It is in this way of abstinence that the *sīla magga*, namely, the *sammā vāca*, *sammā kammanta* and *sammā ājiva* are involved in the development of the path of Right View.

Thus, on each occasion of noting rising, falling, sitting, touching, thinking, feeling of stiffness, feeling hot, feeling painful, hearing, seeing, etc., the right view is being developed together with the Eightfold Path. Of the four Truths, the Truth of Suffering is that which should be rightly and well understood. And the Truth of Suffering is the five aggregates of grasping, which become prominent at the six doors of senses at each instant of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing, etc. Therefore,

the Truth of Suffering would be rightly and well understood by taking note of each phenomenon at the six doors. Every time the Truth of Suffering is developed by taking note of seeing, hearing, etc., the Eightfold Path, which is the *dhamma* to be developed, becomes developed.

Thus, contemplation on the Truth of Suffering by taking note of seeing, hearing, etc., develops the Eightfold Path. In order to develop the Eightfold Path, the Truth of Suffering must be contemplated on by taking note of seeing, hearing, etc. The Truth of Suffering, which becomes evident by taking note of seeing, hearing, etc., during the course of vipassana meditation, *pubbabhāga magga* is *ārammana*, the object which must be rightly and well understood. *Magga saccā*, the Truth of the path, which must be developed to understand the Truth of Suffering, is *ārammanika*, which must be well-developed.

It must be carefully understood that only by contemplating on *dukkha saccā* is the Eightfold Path developed. And only when *vipassanā magga* is accomplished is Nibbāna realized.

We have to reiterate that *dukkha saccā* is *ārammana*, the object and the knowing path is the *ārammanika*. Such reiteration is necessary because assertions are being made contrary to the teachings of the Buddha and detrimental to the prosperity of *sāsana* that 'contemplation on objects of suffering such as *rūpa, nāma, saṅkhāra* will result in perceiving only suffering; Nibbāna should be contemplated on for achievement of peace, happiness'.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE FOUR TRUTHS THROUGH VIPASSANĀ ÑĀṆA

By taking note of all phenomena that occur at the six doors and knowing them to be merely of the nature of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality, is understanding the Truth of Suffering. Thus, with every instance of taking note, *pahānapaṭiveda* (the task of gaining penetrative insight as to the understanding of the Truth of Suffering) is accomplished.

Having seen the true nature of impermanence, etc., of each phenomenon by taking note of them, no opportunity arises for liking or craving for these *rūpa nāma* objects. This is momentary eradication of craving, the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. Thus, with every instance of taking note, *pahānapaṭiveda* (the task of gaining insight as to the eradication of the cause of suffering) is accomplished. Here, insight is gained not by observing the object; it is just knowing the fact of eradication, abandoning.

With the cessation of craving, *upādāna*, *kamma*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa* and *nāma rūpa*, otherwise called *kilesā vaṭṭa*, *kamma vaṭṭa* and *vipāka vaṭṭa* which will follow in its trail, get no opportunity to arise. Temporarily they are inhibited. This momentary Nibbāna, otherwise called *nirodha*, is achieved by means of *vipassanā*. Thus *vipassanā ñāṇa* is developed by the momentary cessation, *nirodha*, similar to realization by the *ariya magga*. But the achievement comes about not by direct observation of the object; it is just an accomplishment of temporary cessation at each instance of taking note. This is called *sacchikiriya pa-*

ṭiveda, gaining penetrative insight as to cessation by realizing it, knowing about it through *vipassanā*.

With every act of observing, the Eightfold Path headed by *vipassanā* Right View is developed inside oneself. This is *bhāvanāpaṭiveda*, gaining insight as to development. This knowledge, however, does not come about by direct observation; as it is experienced personally, reflective consideration will reveal that development has taken place within oneself.

Thus, as explained above, at each instant of noting and knowing, *dukkha saccā* is rightly and well-understood; this is true *pariññāna paṭiveda*. *Samudaya saccā* is momentarily inhibited; this is *pahāna paṭiveda* (accomplishment of insight through abandonment). Momentary *nirodha* is realized through cessation; this is *sacchikiriya paṭiveda*. And *vipassanā* path is developed; this is *bhāvanā paṭiveda* (insight through development). Thus the four Truths are comprehended at every instance of noting: the Truth of Suffering by observing the object; *samudaya*, *nirodha* and *magga* are accomplished by abandoning, realizing and developing.

In this way, the *vipassanā magga* comprehends the four Truths as they should be comprehended and when they become fully accomplished and mature, the *ariya magga* appears and Nibbāna is realized. At that moment of path appearance, the *ariya magga*, headed by Right View, is fully established. The *ariya magga* makes its appearance only once. By this single appearance, it accomplishes the tasks of eradicating the *kilesas* (defilements) which should be eliminated – *samudaya saccā*; of under-

standing rightly and comprehensively the Truth of Suffering – *dukkha saccā*; and also that of developing the *magga saccā*. In this way, it is said that the Right View of *ariya magga* comprehends the four Truths all at once.

HOW THE FOUR TRUTHS ARE COMPREHENDED THROUGH ARIYA MAGGA ALL AT THE SAME TIME

This is how it comes about. When *nirodha saccā* (otherwise called Nibbānic peace) is comprehended through actual realization, the task of comprehending the Truth of Suffering is accomplished by recognising that the mundane *rūpa*, *nāma* and *saṅkhāra* which arise and perish incessantly are indeed painful, suffering. Having recognised them as mere embodiment of suffering, there can be no liking, craving or attachment for them.

Abandonment of *taṇhā* takes place in four stages. By virtue of attaining the first path, *taṇhā* that would lead to states of misery and *taṇhā* that would cause rebirth for more than seven times in *sugati* (the sensuous happy plane) cannot arise. By virtue of the second path, grosser forms of sensuous craving and *taṇhā* that will cause rebirth for more than twice in *kāma sugati* are removed. The third path eradicates the subtler forms of craving. By virtue of the fourth path, *rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga*, otherwise called craving for existences, cannot arise. It must be noted that the craving for existence that still persists in the persons of *anāgāmi* status is not accompanied by *sassata diṭṭhi*, the wrong view of eternalism.

Such non-arising of craving amounts to accomplishment of comprehension by way of abandoning. With regard to the *ariya maggas*, as they are experienced in the person of oneself, comprehension is accomplished by way of development. Therefore, the commentary says: ‘Concerning the three truths of *dukkha*, *samudaya* and *magga*, comprehension is accomplished by way of full and right understanding (*pariññā*); by way of abandoning (*pahāna*); and by way of developing (*bhāvanā*).’

As explained above, *ariya magga ñāṇa*, through knowing *nirodha saccā* by realizing it, accomplishes the task of comprehending the three remaining truths. Likewise, *vipassanā ñāṇa*, by contemplating on and knowing *dukkha saccā*, accomplishes the task of comprehending the three remaining *saccās* as well.

We have summarised these in the following mnemonics:

1. *When magga sees one of the four truths.*
 2. *It accomplishes comprehension of all four.*
- (Penetrative insight for all four established.)

When *vipassanā magga*, which is developed to contemplate on and know the Truth of Suffering, becomes fully strengthened, eightfold *ariya magga* becomes established and rushes into Nibbānic *dhātu*, where all sufferings connected with physical and mental *saṅkhāra* objects as well as all sufferings in connection with the *saṅkhāra* of the knowing mind, cease.

1. *With cessation of craving comes the cessation of suffering.*
2. *True path realizes this cessation.*

Cessation of craving is accompanied by cessation of all sufferings of the aggregates. Therefore, at the moment of establishment of the *ariya magga*, the object of contemplation is not just the cessation of craving but the cessation of all sufferings of the aggregates. What is taught in the teaching 'about cessation of craving' must be understood to include 'cessation of all sufferings of the *saṅkhāras*' because only 'cessation of all sufferings of the *saṅkhāras*' constitutes real Nibbāna, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. Therefore, Nibbāna has been defined as the cessation of all *saṅkhāras*. Thus, establishment of the *ariya magga* is evident only in the sense of having arrived at the stage where all *nāma*, *rūpa* and *saṅkhāras* cease to exist, become void.

VIPASSANĀ IS ALSO A CONSTITUENT OF THE NIRODHAGĀMINI PATIPADĀ

Because it leads to the cessation of all *saṅkhāra* suffering, the *ariya magga* has been given the full title of '*dukkha nirodhā gāminī paṭipadā ariya saccā*, the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. But without *vipassanā magga*, by itself it cannot attain Nibbāna, where all sufferings cease. In accordance with one's previous *pāramis* (attainments of perfection), only after one has practised *vipassanā* (insight meditation) many times, many hours, many days, many months, with the momentum derived from *vipassanā*, the *ariya magga*

appears as if it has emerged out of the *vipassanā magga* itself. It is for this reason that the *vipassanā magga* is called the *pubbabhāga magga*, precursor to the *ariya magga* which should be regarded as the ultimate goal. Although the path is viewed then as consisting of two sections, the forerunner and the ultimate goal, its development is brought about as one continuous process of endeavour. Hence, Sammohavinidani commentary states that *vipassanā magga* should be regarded as a basic constituent part of the *nirodhagāminī paṭipadā*: ‘The said eight *maggas* are the supramundane *ariya magga* with eight constituent parts. This *ariya magga* together with the mundane *vipassanā magga* should be enumerated as (constitute) the *dukkhanirodha gāminī paṭipadā*.’

What is meant here is: Although *magga saccā* of the Four Noble Truths is a supra-mundane *magga*, it cannot arise by itself without *vipassanā magga*, otherwise called *pubbabhāga magga*. Only after developing the *vipassanā magga* and when *vipassanā ñāṇa* is fully accomplished does the *ariya magga* appear. Therefore, the *ariya magga* together with its precursor *vipassanā magga*, which has to be developed as an initial step, is called *dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipadā*.

We have summarised thus:

1. Mūla, pubba, ariya – *three noble paths*.
2. *Developing them leads straight to Nibbāna*.

We have adequately dealt with the truth of the path. We shall accordingly terminate the discourse here.

May all you good people in this audience, by virtue of having given respectful attention to this great discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, be able to develop the *vipassanā magga*, otherwise called the *pubbabhāga magga* together with the *ariya magga*, otherwise called the *magga saccā*, and as a consequence attain soon the *nirodha saccā*, otherwise called Nibbāna, the end of all suffering.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE FULL MOON DAY OF TABAUNG, 1324, BURMESE ERA.

The series of our discourse on the Dhammacakka Sutta was disrupted after the last lecture given on the full moon day of Tazaungmon as we had been visiting other centres. On the full moon day of Tabaung, we shall resume our discourses on the Dhammacakka Sutta. In Part Six, we had dealt with *magga saccā*. Today, we shall go on considering *saccā ñāṇa* (the knowledge that it is the Truth), *kiicca ñāṇa* (the knowledge that a certain function with regard to this truth has to be performed), and *kata ñāṇa* (the knowledge that that function with regard to the Truth has been performed).

SACCĀ ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO DUKKHA SACCĀ

Idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe nanussutesu dhammesu, cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This is the *ariya* Truth of Suffering; or this is the Truth of Suffering which *ariyas* should perceive. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before (by me), there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

This is how knowledge that it is the truth arises with regard to the Truth of Suffering. We have enunciated in the earlier discourses the Truth of Suffering as birth is suffering, etc. We shall reiterate a little to make it clearer. The word 'This' in 'This is the Truth of Suffering' refers to various categories of suffering starting with *jati* (birth), and ending with *upādānakkhandhas* (the groups of grasping). Here, the essential item is *upādānakkhandhas*, which is mostly understood as learnt from books. Few are those who understand it as a personal experience, which of course is the main thing. We shall go over this again to point out how *upaddanakkhandha* could be understood as a personal experience.

Whatever becomes prominent at every instant of sitting, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking constitutes *upādānakkhandha*. The *Ariyas* see in these objects only fearsome pain and suffering; ordinary common people view them otherwise. They do not consider them as embodiments of trouble and suffering, but as pleasant and wholesome. They think it pleasant to see beautiful sights, to hear what they want to hear and to listen to sweet, sonorous voices. Likewise, it is pleasant for them to smell sweet fragrances, to sample delicious food and to enjoy a delightful sensation of touch as the most delightful. Beings of the sensuous plane consider the sensation of touch as the most delightful. It is a delight, too, to indulge in fantasies and daydreams. It would be terrible for them, a great loss, if everything including their daydreams were to vanish all at once. As a matter of fact, all that is seen, heard, etc., are *upādānakkhandhas*, the Truth of Suffering. Vipassanā meditation is practised in order to bring home this Truth

of Suffering, by realizing the true, fearsome nature of impermanence, etc., due to incessant arising and perishing.

As for the Blessed One, having fully accomplished the *vipassanā magga*, he had seen the best, the noblest bliss of all, the Nibbāna, by virtue of attaining the *arahatta magga ñāṇa*. And having seen the foremost and the noblest bliss of the Nibbāna, he saw in the *upādānakkhandhas* only fearsome pain and suffering. This perception came to him, not after hearing about it from others, not from the practices he had learnt from the ascetics Ālāra and Udaka. This came about by direct personal knowledge after he had developed the Noble Eightfold Path. That is the reason why he declared: “Concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, etc.”

With these words he professed also that he had indeed become a *sammā sambuddha*, the most enlightened one who had sought and found the truth by virtue of personal realization and direct knowledge, unaided by instructions or guidance from any source. Such an open profession was indeed necessary. In those days, self-mortification such as abstaining from taking food, etc., practised by Nigandas, was greatly esteemed as a holy, noble practice. The group of five bhikkhus themselves were earlier under the impression that it was so. Thus only when the Blessed One openly declared that ‘he had come upon the practice and knowledge, not through hearing from others, nor through speculation, ratiocination, but by his own realization, by personal experience and direct knowledge’, that his audience became convinced of his having gained supreme enlightenment, having become a true Buddha.

To gain direct intuitive knowledge without outside assistance is the exclusive domain of Enlightened Buddhas and Pacceka Buddhas only. The disciples of the Blessed One had reached such a stage of realization and knowledge only by listening to the teachings of the Buddha and cultivating them through practice. Nowadays, too, such knowledge, if desired, may be acquired by developing it through practice in accordance with the teachings enshrined in suttas such as the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, etc. Thus, by practising as taught in these suttas, the *upādānakkhandhas* will be seen as they truly are, namely, mere suffering and pain. The Buddha's proclamation was intended also to provoke the group of five bhikkhus to make the effort to see the true nature of the *upādānakkhandhas*.

In the Buddha's profession mentioned above, the development of extraordinary knowledge was described as 'vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, penetrative insight arose, light arose', five descriptions given for a single form of knowledge. The Samyutta commentary states: "vision, knowledge, etc., are synonyms, meaning the same thing, knowledge. Because of the faculty of seeing, knowledge is termed vision; because of the faculty of knowing, it is termed knowledge; because of the faculty of knowing analytically in several ways, it is termed wisdom; because of knowing penetratively, it is termed penetrative insight; because of faculty of shedding light, it is termed light."

The Paṭisambhidā Magga Pāli canon explains these terms similarly. The Pāli word *cakkhu* conveys the idea of seeing, hence

vision. Various Pāli words are employed for the purpose of conveying the desired meaning or concept to different audiences, the commentary explains. Thus, to describe the knowledge which sees clearly as with the physical eye, it is termed vision. To give an illustration, a man who has been blind for several years regains his eyesight through the application of the right medicine or an operation by an eye specialist. He did not see anything before treatment; now he sees everything clearly. Likewise, before the yogi has developed *vipassanā ñāṇa* or *ariya magga ñāṇa*, he has been under the delusion that the five groups of grasping, which represent suffering, are wholesome and pleasant, but when by constant noting, at the moment of seeing, hearing, *vipassanā ñāṇa* becoming strengthened, the yogi realizes clearly that the phenomena of seeing, hearing, otherwise called *upādānakkhandhas*, are really awesome suffering because of their nature of incessant arising and perishing. It is like gaining eyesight after being blind. With development of *ariya magga ñāṇa*, his realization of the true nature of suffering will be even sharper. Thus, because it sees clearly as if by the eye, this knowledge is termed vision.

With regard to '*ñāṇam udapādi*, knowledge arose'; *ñāṇa* is a Pāli term connoting knowing, hence knowledge. As to '*paññā udapādi*, wisdom arose', Paṭisambhidā Magga states that *paññā* is a Pāli term connoting knowing analytically in various ways. In connection with *vipassanā* practice, while taking note of rising, falling, etc., *rūpa* and *nāma* are known separately as stiff movement and knowing mind. Uninitiated persons cannot experience this distinction in their person.

The yogi also can differentiate the cause from effect. He knows every fresh arising distinct from its vanishing. He knows that because of incessant arising and perishing, the aggregates are impermanent, awesome suffering; and they rise and perish of their own accord, not subjected to anyone's control. He knows clearly thus that they are not self but mere insubstantiality. His is not a vague, indistinct, blurry knowledge, just a glimmering, but a distinct, clear, definite comprehension as if observed in the palm of the hand. Such knowledge is described as knowing analytically in various ways; hence, wisdom.

In '*vijjā udapādi*', *vijjā* is a Pāli word meaning penetration. It should not be confused with the word '*vijjadhara*', a person accomplished in mantras, who is described in books as having the power of flying through space. Here, *vijjā* denotes not a person but penetrative faculty; hence, penetrative insight.

Penetrative insight is a subtle state, hard of understanding. Here, we must relate an incident which happened about the year 1300 B.E. During a discussion we had with a presiding Sayādaw of our village, we happened to inform him that *paññā* arose while taking note of the phenomenon of arising and perishing at the moment of its occurrence. The Sayādaw could not accept this kind of cognition as *paññā*. He maintained that *paññā* is that which is penetrative; only knowing penetratingly is *paññā*. When asked how should one bring about 'knowing penetratingly', he hesitated for some moments and then pronounced, "Well, knowing penetratingly is knowing penetratingly."

‘Knowing penetratingly’ is derived from the Pāli word *pa-tiveda*, penetrating through. It is akin to ‘*sambodhāya*, in order to know penetratingly’ as explained in Part Two of our discourse. Hidden by a screen or a wall, objects cannot be seen. But when a hole is made in the screen or a window in the wall is opened, objects become visible through these openings. Likewise, this knowledge penetrates through the veil of *moha* (delusion). At first, under cover of delusion, what is seen, heard, etc., is not seen nor known as impermanent, suffering, egoless; it is believed to be *nicca*, *sukha* and *atta* being veiled by *avijjā*, *moha*, ignorance and delusion. When *vipassanā ñāṇa* becomes strengthened, clear knowledge arises as if the veil of delusion has been pierced through. Such cognition is termed knowing penetratingly. The Blessed One had declared that such penetrative insight had arisen in him.

According to Paṭisambhidā Magga Pāli text, in ‘*aloko udapādi*, light arose’. *Aloko* (light) is just a term used to denote lighting up, to make bright, to illumine. Here, light does not mean just ordinary light or luminosity seen by the human eye. It refers to the knowledge which discerns all phenomena clearly, distinctly. Previously, the true nature of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* are not seen nor known, as if they are shrouded in darkness. When *vipassanā ñāṇa* and *ariya magga ñāṇa* have been developed, their true nature becomes apparent. Such cognition is, therefore, metaphorically described as ‘light arose’.

This single form of extraordinary knowledge was described in five ways: vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetrative insight, light in order to facilitate clear understanding on the part of

various types of audience. This teaching is designed to meet the requirements of the listeners. It is just like our employing two or three synonyms in place of a single word so that our audience may catch the meaning of what we say through one alternative word or the other.

The Pāli words and their meanings we have explained above are all concerned with *saccā ñāṇa*. We have sufficiently dealt with *saccā ñāṇa* now. We shall go on to *kiCCA ñāṇa*, the function or action which should be accomplished with regard to the Truth of Suffering.

KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO DUKKHA SACCĀ

*Taṃ kho paṇidan dukkaṃ ariya saccam parineyanti me,
Bhikkhave, pubbe annusutesu dhammesu, cakkhum udapādi,
ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.*

“This *ariya* Truth of Suffering is to be rightly and well understood. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before by me, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

This is how knowledge had arisen as to what should be done with regard to the *Ariyan* Truth of Suffering. It should be carefully noted that the function to be performed with regard to this truth is to comprehend it rightly and well, to understand it completely. For the yogi who aspires to attainment of *ariya* path and fruition, Nibbāna, it is incumbent upon him to strive to grasp the Truth of Suffering rightly and well, that is, he

should understand each of the separate constituents of this truth fully, starting from *jāti* to *upādānakkhandha*.

In the constituent parts of this Truth of Suffering such as *jāti*, etc., the essential factor is the five groups of grasping. By knowing these five groups of grasping as they really are, the task of comprehending the Truth of Suffering rightly, fully and well is accomplished. Therefore, Mahāvagga Saccā Saṃyutta Pāli text states: ‘What, Bhikkhu, is the Truth of Suffering? It should be answered that the five groups of grasping constitute the Truth of Suffering.’

We have given a detailed exposition on the five groups of grasping in the fourth section of our discourse. Whatever appears at the six doors of senses, at the time of seeing, hearing, etc., constitutes the five groups of grasping. These should become personal experience by taking note of every phenomenon at the six doors as they occur. Through such efforts the nature of coarseness, roughness, smoothness, softness and *pathavī dhātu* should be personally experienced; so also the cohesiveness, the fluidity and moistness of the *āpodhātu*; the hotness, coldness and warmth of the *tejodhātu* and stiffness, pressure and motion of the *vāyodhātu* should be personally experienced. All these should be separately and exactly understood through personal experience. How this is to be effected has been fully explained before. Briefly, it consists of giving concentrated attention to the sensation of touch that becomes apparent at any spot on one’s body. One of the four primary elements will announce its existence then through its intrinsic natural characteristics.

After knowing the four great primary elements, when taking note of seeing, hearing, etc., the physical base on which seeing, hearing, etc., depends, the material objects of sight and sound, the mental aggregates of consciousness together with their concomitants become apparent. At each noting of the phenomenon of 'rising, falling, sitting, touching, knowing, feeling stiff, feeling hot, feeling painful, hearing, seeing', the yogi personally perceives the fresh arising followed by instant perishing of both the objects of awareness as well as the noting mind. Thus, the yogi knows definitely that (*huvā abhāvato aniccā*) it is impermanent because it perishes after each arising; he knows that (*udayabbhaya paṭipīlanatṭhena dukkhā*) it is awesome suffering because it oppresses by incessant arising and passing away; he knows that (*avasa vattanaṭṭhena anattā*) it is not *atta* (self), amenable to control because it happens on its own accord, not subjected to one's will. Personal knowledge gained in this way by keeping watch of the phenomena of arising and vanishing and noting the characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* is knowing the Truth of Suffering comprehensively, rightly and well (*pariññeyya*).

The Blessed One came to the realization, without having heard from anybody that the Truth of Suffering, otherwise called the *upādānakkhandha*, which is actually arising and vanishing, should be comprehensively, rightly and well understood. Hence, the statement '*pubbe ananusu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi*', etc.... concerning things unheard of before by me, vision arose, etc.! As for the disciples like Venerable Kondañña, etc., realization came only after hearing the dhamma from

the Blessed One or from the other disciples of the Buddha. In spite of the definite statement in the Dhammacakka Sutta that the Truth of Suffering should be comprehensively, rightly and well apprehended (*pariññeyya*), some people consider it unnecessary to realize the Truth of Suffering or *upādānakkhandha* by taking note of the phenomenon of rising and vanishing, which is actually happening. They take it that just learning from hearsay about *rūpa* and *nāma* and about *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* will serve the purpose. We can only express our sorrow and sympathy for such people.

Kicca ñāṇa is then the realization that the Truth of Suffering, otherwise the *upādānakkhandha*, should be fully, rightly and well understood through personal observation. It is knowing what function should be performed concerning the Truth of Suffering. This realization comes before the attainment of the *ariya magga*. Even before a yogi starts the practice of meditation, he must realize that he has to know comprehensively the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* by taking note when seeing, by taking note when hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking. He must be aware of this task, too, while practising *vipassanā*. Only then can he devote full attention to the arising and dissolution of *upādānakkhandha* and develop *vipassanā ñāṇa* completely. Our disciples, Satipaṭṭhāna yogis, have accomplished this function required by *kicca ñāṇa* since the time of taking instructions from us on meditation procedures, having learnt then that whatever appears at the instance of seeing, hearing, etc., should be carefully noted. Also while taking note, even if the yogi does not know at first what should be noted, he soon comes to know what is to be ob-

served. This discernment is the *kicca ñāṇa*, knowing the function to be performed.

We have given much time to this *kicca ñāṇa* because it is really very important to know its significance. Now, enough having been said about it, we shall proceed to the *kata ñāṇa*.

KATA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO DUKKHA SACCĀ

*Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhaṃ ariya saccam pariññatanti me,
Bhikkhave, pubbe ananussu tesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi,
ñāṇam udapādi, pana udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.*

“This *ariya* Truth of Suffering has been fully, rightly and well understood. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before (by me), there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

Being aware of the Truth of Suffering, otherwise the *up-ādānakkhandha* by taking note of seeing, hearing, etc., and constantly knowing *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* constitutes *vipassanā ñāṇa*. By *vipassanā ñāṇa* alone, however, the function of *pariñña*, that is, the task of fully and rightly comprehending is not yet completely accomplished. Perception as *nicca*, *sukha* and *atta* is still possible concerning those objects which fail to be noted. It is only when *vipassanā ñāṇa* is fully accomplished and *ariya magga ñāṇa* becomes developed that Nibbanic peace is experienced. And only when *ariya magga ñāṇa* becomes developed and Nibbanic peace is experienced can it be said that knowledge of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* is complete and lasting. This

is the accomplishment of the task of fully, rightly comprehending the Truth of Suffering.

Even then the *sotapatti ñāṇa* is not yet adequate to fully accomplish this task. Only by realizing the *arahatta magga ñāṇa*, can it be said that the Truth of Suffering has been rightly and completely understood, a full hundred per cent. For the Blessed One, the task had been fully accomplished since the time of gaining *arahatta* path and Fruition and attainment of Enlightenment. Hence, he proclaimed that the task of fully understanding the Truth of Suffering had been completed. Vision, etc., arose; that task had been completed and nothing remained to be done.

The yogis presently engaged in the practice of meditation also have this purpose in view: to fully and rightly understand the Truth of Suffering and ultimately to complete the task of fully understanding by attaining the *arahatta magga* and *phala*. After attaining the *arahatta magga* and *phala* at last, the realization will come to them, through retrospection, that the task has been fully accomplished.

We have now dealt with all the three *ñāṇas*: *saccā*, *kicca* and *kata ñāṇa* with regard to the Truth of Suffering. Concisely:

1. Discerning at the moment of seeing, hearing, etc., all the phenomena of origination and dissolution is real suffering, the Truth of Suffering, constitutes *saccā ñāṇa*.
2. Discerning that this Truth of Suffering should be rightly and fully understood by heedful noting constitutes *kicca ñāṇa*.

3. Knowing through retrospection that the Truth of Suffering has been rightly and fully understood constitutes *kata ñāṇa*.

Of the three *ñāṇas*, *saccā ñāṇa* appears while being engaged in vipassanā meditation when the yogi realizes that the phenomena of origination and dissolution are mere suffering. This takes place prior to the advent of *ariya magga*. At the moment of *ariya magga* (seeing the peace of Nibbāna) too, this *ñāṇa* arises by realizing the Truth of Suffering in all the phenomena of arising and dissolution. Even after the advent of *ariya magga*, this *ñāṇa* is evolved by retrospection. Thus, *saccā ñāṇa* is the knowledge of the Four Truths that arises before, after and at the moment of *ariya magga*. Actually what is realized at the moment of *ariya magga* is only *nirodha saccā*, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. The remaining three truths are said to have been realized by having accomplished *paṭiveda* (made up of *pariñña*, *pahāna* and *bhāvanā*), the task of knowing by penetrative insight.

With regard to the Truth of Suffering, the moment realization dawns on the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, the function of knowing that unceasing *rūpa* and *nāma* are suffering is accomplished. Accordingly, the *ariyas* (especially the arahats) who have attained the *ariya* path and Fruition, know by reflection that the ceaseless *rūpa* and *nāma* are all suffering. Therefore, it is said that the task of penetrative insight (*paṭiveda*), knowing the nature of suffering fully and rightly, is accomplished at the moment of the path. While practising the vipassanā, this knowledge about suffering arises by actually noting the phenomena

of origination and dissolution. This is knowing the *dukkha saccā* rightly and well, otherwise called *pariñña paṭiveda*.

As for *kiṅka nāṇa*, that is, realization that the Truth of Suffering should be comprehended rightly and well, it must be achieved in advance of the attainment of *ariya magga*. Only by having prior knowledge of what functions are to be performed can these functions be performed for attainment of *ariya magga*.

In the case of the Truth of Suffering, it must be well understood at an early stage that it is necessary to perceive distinctly the nature of *anicca* by taking note of the phenomena of origination and dissolution which are apparent in the aggregates at the time of each occurrence. Only with this prior understanding will the necessary task of observing the phenomena be performed, and the *ariya magga* developed after attaining the full maturity of *vipassanā*. With regard to *samudaya*, *nirodha* and *magga saccā*, such prior knowledge as to the functions to be performed with regard to each truth is indispensable. Then only can the *ariya magga* be developed.

Thus, long before attainment of *magga*, there must be realization that the Truth of Suffering should be fully apprehended rightly and well; that *samudaya* should be abandoned; that the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering should be realized and that the Truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering should be developed. Knowledge as to which function is to be performed with regard to each truth must, therefore, precede by far the advent of the *magga*.

The knowledge that these functions have been performed comes only after the attainment of *arahatta* path and Fruition through reflection that the holy life has been lived (*vusitaṃ brahmacāriyaṃ*); what has to be done has been done (*katamṃ karaniyaṃ*). *Kata ñāṇa* is that knowledge which knows that what has to be done has been done.

Through realization of *nirodha*, the *arahatta magga* has performed three other tasks also, namely, fully and rightly understanding the Truth of Suffering, abandoning *samudaya* and developing the path. It is *kata ñāṇa* that knows that all these four functions have been performed.

The above concise statements about *saccā ñāṇa*, *kicca ñāṇa* and *kata ñāṇa* have been made in accordance with Mulatika sub-commentary on Kathavatthu. We have adequately dealt with the three *ñāṇas* with regard to the Truth of Suffering. We shall go on to the three *ñāṇas* with regard to the Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

SACCĀ ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO SAMUDAYA SACCĀ

Idaṃ dukkhasamudayo ariya saccamṃ ti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhumṃ udapādi, ñāṇamṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This is the noble Truth of origin of suffering; this is the Truth about origin of suffering which *ariyas* should know. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before (by me), there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

In the passage above 'This' refers to *kāma taṇhā*, *bhava taṇhā* and *vibhava taṇhā* which have already been explained. How suffering originates from them is as follows: *Kāma taṇhā* finds delight in objects of sensual pleasures which have to be searched and worked for. Some people undergo intense sufferings, even to the extent of losing their lives, while in pursuit of the objects of their desires. Any attempt to curb the craving which has arisen also results in suffering and unhappiness. To look and work for things which are not easily attainable is also suffering. The task of looking after the acquired wealth and property is very onerous. Smokers and betel leaf eaters suffer difficulty when they run short of their objects of desire. People addicted to drinking and opium smoking will feel much worse under similar circumstances.

Man is born alone. While young, he leads a single life happily free from encumbrances. When he grows up, he feels the need for a companion. Instigated by *kāma taṇhā*, he begins to look for one. When he aims for the unattainable he ends up in misery. If at last his wish is fulfilled by getting the companion he needs, the trouble soon starts when they find themselves incompatible. Even when there is concord and harmony in the marriage, trouble appears when one of the partners happens to be struck by a serious illness. Attending to a sick person is a difficult task. In time, death comes to one of the partners, leaving the other in the throes of lamentation and suffering. It is plain that all these sufferings are rooted in *taṇhā*.

But the majority of beings are under the delusion that this *taṇhā* is the source of happiness. They consider it a bliss to

enjoy the pleasures of various sensual objects. When *tanḥā* is not aroused in the absence of any pleasurable objects or sensations, life becomes dull and monotonous for them. To pay visits to monasteries or temples is irksome; to listen to sermons on Vipassanā meditation is utterly boring. On the other hand, entertainment shows such as cinemas and shows provide joy, delight and merriment. Thus this *tanḥā* is carefully nurtured by hunting for all available objects of desire. These frantic pursuits after pleasure are made in the belief that they lead to joy and happiness. People believe in this way for no other reason than the ignorance which misguides them.

However, what appear to be pleasant and delightful are, in reality, awesome and horrifying because of their nature of incessant arising and perishing. There is never any surfeit of sense pleasures since *tanḥā* is insatiable. Even after days, months and years of enjoying the pleasure, *tanḥā* remains unsatisfied. Hence, their constant and anxious pursuits after pleasure so that their enjoyment may not be disrupted. When at last, the stock of pleasurable objects and sensations becomes exhausted, great dissatisfaction is endured. This is a short account of how *tanḥā* gives rise to trouble and suffering in the present life.

But the real cause of suffering lies in the fact that this *tanḥā* is responsible for repeated rounds of rebirths. Pleasurable sights and sounds excite delight and craving and this craving gives rise to attachment. Because of attachment, effort has to be put forth for its fulfilment. This constitutes *saṅkhāra*, *kāma bhava*. Because of such activities in fulfilment of desires and

because the *javana* consciousness of the death moment, otherwise called the *abhisankhāra vinnana*, which gets its impetus from *taṇhā*, holds on to the object which appears then, rebirth consciousness arises immediately after the death consciousness. From the moment of rebirth consciousness in the new existence, it may be said that all the troubles and tribulations with regard to new life have begun. All these troubles from the moment of rebirth consciousness have their roots in *taṇhā*. As for Arahats in whom *taṇhā* has been eradicated, they do not encounter anymore sufferings of new existence. Thus, *kāma taṇhā* is the real cause of sufferings such as birth, etc., the *samudaya saccā*.

Enthusiasts who aspire for *rūpabhava* and *arūpabhava* strive for attainment or *rūpavacara jhāna* and *arūpavacara jhāna* respectively. By virtue of such *jhānic* attainments, they are reborn in the realms of *rūpa Brahmas* and *arūpa Brahmas*. As *Brahmas*, they are free from sufferings of physical pains as well as mental afflictions. Their life span is also measured in terms of world cycles. From the worldly point of view, their life may be deemed as one of happiness. But when their life span is terminated, they face death and suffer the agonies of death, *maraṇa dukkha*. They suffer mental distress, too, for not having the wish of immortality fulfilled. After death, too, troubles and tribulations await them in *kāma* existence to which they are destined. Thus, *bhava taṇhā*, craving for existence in the Brahma world is also really the Truth of Suffering.

Craving for non-existence after death is also cause of suffering because it encourages evil deeds in this life. Instead of

shrinking from evil actions the nihilists go to any length in pursuit of them wherever available and take delight in them. Because of such *akusala kammās*, they are reborn in the four nether worlds for many existences and undergo the woes and miseries of these existences. It is very plain, therefore, that this *vibhava taṇhā* (craving for non-existence) arising out of the nihilist view of life is definitely the Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*samudaya saccā*).

The Buddha, who had realized that these three *taṇhās* are the root cause of suffering, declared how he had seen them: “The vision, which saw that this is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, had arisen in me.” Knowing this is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering is *saccā ñāṇa*. The *saccā ñāṇa* which knows this truth arises both before and after the advent of *ariya magga*. At the moment of the Path, the function of knowing the truth is accomplished, too, by way of relinquishing or abandoning (*pahāna paṭiveda*). To summarise, that which knows the four Truths before, after, and at the moment of *magga* is *saccā ñāṇa*.

KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO SAMUDAYA SACCĀ

Taṃ kho paṇidam dukkhasamudayo ariyasaccam pahātābbaṃ me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This *ariya* Truth of the Origin of Suffering should be abandoned. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

If freedom from suffering is desired, the origin of suffering must be eliminated. For example, in order to effect cure of a disease, the root cause of the malaise must be eradicated by administration of suitable medicine. Burmese physicians diagnose the cause of a disease in terms of disorders in the blood, wind, bile and phlegm, climate, food, etc. Western physicians trace the cause to various disease carrying germs. When such causes of disease have been duly diagnosed and then eradicated through proper medical treatment, complete cure of the disease is effected. Likewise, *saṃsāric* suffering of repeated rebirths in the rounds of existence may be avoided by removing its root cause, which is *taṇhā*, the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. Therefore, this truth is regarded as that which should be given up, *pahātabba dhamma*.

How is abandonment to be effected? It is most essential to know it. 'Let *taṇhā* not appear, let it not arise; I shall keep my mind as it is, free from *taṇhā*. I shall have only *taṇhā*-free mind.' Will it be possible to maintain such a state of mind? People believing in the possibility of doing so should actually try to attain this state of mind and see how long they can maintain it. Will not the married man be harassed by thoughts of love and tenderness for his wife and erotic emotion that demand fulfilment? Will there not arise craving for a smoke or a chew of the betel leaves, or for relishing a good meal? And how about the yearning for possession of wealth and property? These questions cannot be easily disposed of by brushing them aside, arguing that they are concerned with mere trifles, just natural and routine affairs of no importance.

We have to suffer the arising of such *taṇhās* only because we cannot subdue them. But the fact remains, and this should be seriously borne in mind, that *taṇhā* being a *pahātabba dhamma* should be eradicated when possible.

Actually, there are three kinds of *taṇhā* which need elimination:

1. Craving that motivates physical and vocal actions.
2. Craving that excites the mind to revel in imagined delights and fantasies.
3. Craving which is lying dormant awaiting an opportune moment to manifest itself.

Of the three, the craving that motivates physical and vocal deeds is classified as *vitikkhama kilesā* (the defilements which can be eradicated by *sīla*). A person who is preserving the precepts meticulously does not steal anything belonging to others, even if he feels he wants it; does not commit sexual misconduct (one who observes the *brahmā cariyā* precept does not indulge in any sexual practice); does not lie and abstains from intoxicating drinks or drugs. In this way, he keeps himself from *vitakkama kilesā*. This is how craving is eliminated by means of *sīla*.

Craving which manifests itself in imaginative delights and pleasures is classified as *pariyuṭṭhana kilesā* (the defilements which can be eradicated by *samadhi*, the concentrated mind). If one is constantly engaged in the practice of one of the meditation subjects such as *ānāpāna*, one keeps oneself free from thoughts of desire for and imaginings about sensuous objects. Unless thus absorbed in one of the meditation exercises, if the

mind were left free, on its own, it would engage itself in thinking about desirable sense-objects, yearning mostly for sensual pleasure. If someone believes that he could keep his mind just as it is free from craving for sensual pleasures, he does not know his own mind.

As a matter of fact, even while occupied incessantly with meditation, before the power of concentration gets strengthened, *kāma vitakka* (thoughts of sensuous pleasures) keep on coming up. Only when *jhānic* concentration is attained through practice of concentration meditation are thoughts of grosser types of sensual pleasures brought to cessation, but even then, only for the duration of *jhānic* absorption. This is how *samādhi* removes the craving for sensual pleasures by *vikkhambhana pahāna*, putting it away at a distance.

Bhava taṇhā (craving for existence) and *vibhava taṇhā* (craving for non-existence) persist even in the person of *jhānic* attainments. They remain with some of the brahmas, too. Therefore, *bhava taṇhā* and *vibhava taṇhā* cannot be eradicated by *samatha* concentration. It goes without saying then that ordinary persons uninitiated in concentration and meditation are not free from the craving for their own life and existence. However, such uninstructed people are not aware that their delight in life and existence is *taṇhā* (craving) or *kilesā* (defilement). They even teach the extreme wrong view that ‘mind can be kept as it is free from defilements. And mind free from *kilesā* is Nibbāna.’ This is definitely going against the teaching of the Buddha.

The craving which has not actually arisen yet, but will appear when right conditions prevail is called *anusaya kilesā* (latent defilement). This is of two kinds:

1. *ārammana nusaya* – the potential defilement which lies latent in the sense objects;
2. *santāna nusaya* – the potential defilement lying dormant in oneself (in the continuum of the aggregates).

There may be objects which manifest themselves at the moment of seeing or hearing but are not noted then as impermanent, etc. On retrospection, however, *kilesā* can arise in connection with them. Such *kilesā* is known as *ārammana nusaya*. *Arammana nusaya kilesā* can be put away by *vipassanā ñāṇa*, but *vipassanā* can remove only the *kilesā* that may arise in the objects which are being contemplated on. The potential defilements remain unaffected in the objects which escape contemplation.

The *kilesā* which has not yet been eradicated by *ariya magga* and is awaiting an opportune moment to arise in the continuum of aggregates of a person is known as *santāna nusaya*. This defilement can be removed only by means of the *ariya magga ñāṇa*. It is to facilitate elimination of the *santāna nusaya* by *ariya magga* that *vipassanā bhāvanā* has to be developed.

ANUSAYA KILESA ACTUALLY EXISTS

In spite of definite statements in the sutta and abhidhamma texts regarding the existence of *anusaya kilesā*, some people

are going round making assertions that there is no such thing as *anusaya kilesā*; it is only through mental retentiveness that *kilesās* arise. This is utter irreverence shown towards the teachings of the Buddha.

Just consider for a moment. In pre-adolescent children, craving for sensual pleasure in the form of taking delight in the opposite sex has not yet manifested itself. It is not because they are devoid of *kilesā*, but because the moment is not yet opportune for this *kilesā* to arise. It is lying dormant in them, waiting to come up when right conditions prevail. It is common knowledge that on reaching adolescence, the mere sight and sound of the opposite sex at once arouse sexual desires in them. It just happens instantaneously and not because they have previously seen or heard about its occurrence and kept it in mind. Actually, it happens because there is *anusaya kilesā* lying dormant in these youths and it now finds an opportunity to arise.

Again, let us take the case of some people who have had implicit faith in the Triple Gem, namely, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. But when influenced by teachers of other religions, they begin to entertain doubts (*vicikicchā*) about the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Some even change their faith to embrace wrong views (*micchādiṭṭhi*). Doubts and wrong views arise in them not because of mental retentiveness but because they have been lying dormant in them all the time; they have not been removed yet by the *ariya magga*.

The *Ariyas* of the Buddha's time had their doubts and wrong views eliminated by *sotāpanna magga* so that no teacher, not even Sakka or Mara could influence them to embrace wrong views, to entertain doubts about the Triple Gem. It was because the dormant defilements in them, *santāna nusaya*, had been removed by the *ariya magga*.

The good people who have this opportunity of hearing the discourse on the Dhammacakka should definitely bear in mind that there lie lurking in them defilements just waiting for an opportune moment to arise and that this craving, which is the real cause of suffering, should be eliminated by *ariya magga* through developing *vipassanā bhāvanā*.

Knowing that this is the dhamma which should be eradicated is *kicca ñāṇa* with regard to the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. This *kicca ñāṇa* which knows what should be done with respect to *samudaya saccā* should be developed prior to the advent of the *ariya magga*. Thus, *kicca ñāṇa* is advanced knowledge of what should be known, what should be abandoned, what should be realized and what should be developed. To the Blessed One, this *kicca ñāṇa* had appeared without him having heard it. Therefore, he admitted: "This is the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering which should be abandoned. Thus, Oh, Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light." Then the Blessed One continued to explain how he had accomplished the task of abandoning.

KATA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO SAMUDAYA SACCĀ

Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhasamudayo ariya saccam pahinanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering has been abandoned. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

This is an account of how retrospection on the completion of the task of abandonment took place after he had abandoned what should be abandoned, the craving otherwise called *samudaya saccā*. This knowledge of completion of the task that should be performed is known as the *kata ñāṇa*.

What is specially noteworthy in respect of *samudaya saccā* is that four *ariya maggas* cognize Nibbāna by realizing it. At the first instance of such cognition, craving which will lead to the states of woe and misery becomes eliminated; at the second instance, grosser forms of craving for sensuous pleasure (*kāma taṇhā*) get abolished. On the third occasion, the subtler forms of this *kāma taṇhā* disappear. All the remaining *taṇhās* are completely eradicated when Nibbāna is cognized for the fourth time. Such eradication of *taṇhā* is termed knowing *samudaya saccā* by the four *ariya maggas* or *pahāna paṭiveda* (penetrative insight by virtue of abandoning). The act of abandoning or eradicating constitutes knowing what should be known by the *ariya magga*. Thus, *samudaya saccā* is that which should be abandoned. This abandonment is *pahāna paṭiveda*.

This *kata ñāṇa* is also quite important. The goal of practising meditation is really the removal of defilements together with this *taṇhā*. Attainment of higher knowledge, accomplishment of what should be done, is complete and assured only when this *taṇhā* and defilements are eradicated. It is essential to scrutinize oneself to see whether one is really free of this *taṇhā* and defilements. Even if the lowest stage of attainment (*sotāpanna*) is claimed, craving which prompts *akusala kamma* that leads to the nether worlds should have been removed; one should be free also of craving which may instigate infringement of the five precepts. The delight and pleasure accompanied by craving for the wrong view that there is a living entity, a self, should have been discarded. Only when one is fully liberated of all these cravings, the claim of *sotāpanna* attainment may be sustained; otherwise it should be observed that no claim for any attainment is admissible.

We have fully dealt with the three *ñāṇas*, *saccā*, *kicca* and *kata*, with regard to the *samudaya saccā*. We shall go on considering the three *ñāṇas* concerning the *nirodha saccā*.

SACCĀ ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO NIRODHA SACCĀ

Idaṃ dukkhanirodho ariyasaccanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhum udapādhi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

‘This’ in the above passage of the text refers to ‘the complete cessation of *taṇhā*, otherwise called *samudaya saccā*’, which had already been explained. When *taṇhā* is abolished, all sufferings of the *nāma, rūpa, saṅkhāras* cease. The Buddha said that the *saccā ñāṇa*, which knows that this cessation (*nirodha saccā*) is the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, had arisen in him. This *saccā ñāṇa* arises before and after *ariya magga* and is realized at the moment of the path.

As to how this knowledge arises before the path, the disciples acquire this *ñāṇa* through learning from others, that is, on hearsay. The Blessed One, however, had gained this knowledge by his own intuition even prior to attainment of *sotāpatti magga*. Thus, he said: “Concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, etc.” At the moment of *ariya magga*, this *saccā ñāṇa* is the same as *ariya magga ñāṇa* which cognizes Nibbāna by realization.

KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO NIRODHA SACCĀ

Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodho ariya saccam saccikatabbanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering which should be realized. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

This *ñāṇa* (knowledge) which knows that *nirodha saccā*, namely the *nibbānam*, the cessation of *taṇhā*, is that which should be realized. It is known as *kicca ñāṇa* since it is the knowledge that knows what function is to be performed with respect to *nirodha saccā*.

And this is how realization takes place: at the moment of full and firm establishment of *saṅkhārupekkha ñāṇa*, while observing one of the phenomena of origination and dissolution, the pace of cognition gets faster and faster until the *saṅkhāra* objects under contemplation as well as the knowing consciousness plunge into a state of cessation where all *saṅkhāra* sufferings come to an end. At the time of realizing the cessation of all conditioned things, *taṇhās* also come to a cessation. Thus, cessation of *taṇhā* is termed *nirodha saccā*, which is cognized by *ariya magga* through realization. Such cognition is known as *sacchikiriya paṭiveda* (penetrative insight by realization).

Nirodha saccā is the truth to be realized. Such realization is known as *sacchikiriya paṭiveda*.

The purpose of taking note of every instance of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing is to accomplish the task of *sacchikiriya paṭiveda* through realising *nirodha saccā*. The Buddha had accomplished the function of *sacchikiriya paṭiveda* by realization of Nibbāna through *arahatta magga phala* on the 'unconquered throne' at the foot of the Bo tree. He continued to recount how he had developed the *kata ñāṇa* which retrospected on the completion of the task, as follows.

KATA ÑĀṄA WITH REGARD TO NIRODHA SACCĀ

Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodho ariya saccaṃ sacchikatanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering which has been realized. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

This is an account of how retrospection on the completion of the task took place after he had realized *nirodha saccā* by means of *arahatta magga phala ñāṇa*. We shall deal next with the three *ñāṇas* in respect of *magga ñāṇa*.

SACCĀ ÑĀṄA WITH RESPECT TO MAGGA SACCĀ

Idaṃ dukkhanirodhagaminī paṭipeda ariyasaccamti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This is the Noble Truth of the practice that reaches the cessation of suffering or that leads to the cessation of suffering. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

This *saccā* has a long name but the commentaries shorten it as just *magga saccā*, the Truth of the Path. We shall use the short title in our discourse.

Knowing that the Noble Eightfold Path is the practice, the Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering, peace of Nibbāna, is called *saccā ñāṇa*. This *saccā ñāṇa* arises before, after and at the moment of *ariya magga*.

The disciples of the Buddha, who had not yet attained the *ariya magga*, learnt of this *magga saccā* only from hearing about it. Common worldlings have not yet realized, as personal experience, the *ariya magga saccā*. The commentaries say: '*Magga saccā* is a dhamma to be desired, to be aspired after and to be appreciated'. Learning thus through hearing, the mind should be bent towards it. The preliminary task with respect to *magga saccā* is accomplished just by bending the mind towards it. Likewise, with regard to *nirodha saccā*, otherwise called Nibbanā which common worldlings cannot perceive, the commentaries say that it requires only to bend the mind towards it as dhamma to be desired, to aspire after, to be appreciated, by which act the preliminary function to be performed for *nirodha saccā* is accomplished.

It must, therefore, be remembered that *ariya magga saccā* need not be thought of and contemplated on; likewise Nibbāna needs no prior contemplation nor thinking about. As for the Buddha, just as he had previously arrived at the knowledge of the *nirodha saccā* through intuitive insight, he also gained knowledge of this *magga saccā* through intuition. That is why he said in admission that 'concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, etc.'

At the moment of *ariya magga*, only *nirodha saccā*, otherwise peace of Nibbāna, is perceived by realization. *Magga dhammas* realized in this way actually appear in the person and as such the task of developing them in the person is accomplished. This is known as *bhāvanā paṭiveda* (knowledge by development). Thus *magga saccā* should be developed in the person and this development is *bhāvanā paṭiveda*.

What is meant here is that when *ariya magga* appears in the person, it amounts to seeing the *ariya magga*; it also means the task of knowing it is accomplished at the same time. As the *ariya magga* has been developed in the person, retrospection will reveal it very clearly. However, it is not possible to develop the *ariya magga* straight away. One must begin by developing the *pubbabhāga magga* as the first step. For this reason, *vipassanā* also is to be regarded as a correct practice that leads to *nirodha* (cessation). We have already mentioned above in Part VI how Sammonavinodani commentary also recommends that *vipassanā* should be regarded as such.

KICCA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO MAGGA SACCĀ

*Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariya saccam
bhāvetabbanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu,
cakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi
aloko udapādi.*

“This is the Noble Truth of the path that leads to cessation of suffering and this has to be developed. Thus, Oh Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in

me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

Knowing that *magga saccā* is a dhamma that should be developed within oneself is called *kicca nāṇa*; it is the knowledge that knows what should be done with respect to *magga saccā*. What should be done with respect to *dukkha saccā*? It should be fully and rightly comprehended. What should be done with respect to *magga saccā*? It should be developed within one’s own self. This must definitely be remembered.

That *magga saccā* is the dhamma that should be developed was taught for the first time by the Buddha in this Dhammacakka Sutta. Thus to develop *magga* is to practise for the attainment of Nibbāna in accordance with the wishes of the Blessed One. However, the practice cannot be started with development of *magga saccā* straight away. One must start with *pubbabhāga magga*, otherwise called *vipassanā magga*. In order to develop *ariya magga saccā* then, one must begin with developing *vipassanā magga*.

In order to develop this *pubbabhāga* or *vipassanā magga*, *dukkha saccā* must be contemplated on. *Dukkha saccā* means *upādānakkhandha* which has been extensively explained in Part IV. Contemplating on the aggregates that appear at every instant of their arising, there is developed first the knowledge of distinction between the object of awareness and the knowing mind. This is followed by understanding the law of cause and effect. As one proceeds, one comes to know the nature of flux, the constant arising and passing away of *nāma* and

rūpa. Since it arises only to perish in the next moment, it is unstable, impermanent, pure suffering; not self, because it arises and vanishes on its own accord. Personal realization of these realities is *sammādiṭṭhi*. It has been explained before that when *sammādiṭṭhi* is developed, *sammāsaṅkappa* and other *maggas* are also developed. How to develop these *maggas* has also been described before.

Briefly, it consists first in noting any of the sensations of touch one experiences. In order to simplify the practice, we have recommended starting with contemplation of the phenomenon of rising and falling of the abdomen. While in the process of observing the rising and falling of the abdomen, the yogi may happen to start thinking about something else. He should make a note of such thoughts, too, as they arise. He should also note the painful sensations such as stiffness, feeling hot, feeling painful, itching, etc., as they arise. Changing of bodily movements should also be noted as they occur. Attention should also be given to any extraordinary thing, seen or heard. Thus, while observing every phenomenon, at every instant of noting, knowledge of reality as it is, *sammādiṭṭhi* and *vipassanā maggas* will be developed. When *vipassanā* becomes fully established, the Eightfold *ariya magga* is evolved. Thus, contemplating on the actual phenomenon of the aggregates (the *dukkha saccā*), amounts to development of the Eightfold Noble Path. To recapitulate:

1. Only by developing the *pubbabhāga*, otherwise called *vipassanā*, may *ariya magga* be attained.

2. To develop *vipassanā magga*, the phenomena of seeing, hearing (*dukkha saccā*) should be carefully observed.
3. At every instance of noting the phenomenon of seeing, hearing (*dukkha saccā*), the Eightfold Noble Path is developed.

Therefore, we have composed the mnemonics:

*Basic, precursor, ariya paths,
Developing them leads to Nibbana.*

Some people had been under the wrong impression that the purpose is served by acquiring a book-knowledge of the phenomena of the aggregates and the nature of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, etc. Only when they have practised meditation in accordance with Satipaṭṭhāna meditation and gained extraordinary experiences, do they begin to see their mistakes. They openly state their realization then, that unless they engage themselves in the actual practice of watching the phenomena of seeing, hearing, etc., at the instant of their occurrence, the *pariñña kiccā* (the function of fully and rightly understanding the *dukkha saccā*) remains unaccomplished; the task of developing the Eightfold *magga* also remains uncompleted. These are the admissions made by learned people well-versed in the scriptures. They have, by personal experience, come to understand the right way for higher attainments.

The Buddha's teaching embodied in this Dhammacakka Sutta 'that Eightfold Path is the dhamma which has to be developed by contemplating on the phenomena of *nāma* and *rūpa* at the

moment of their occurrence', should be noted with all seriousness. It should be carefully and steadfastly remembered too that knowing the function concerning the *magga saccā* is *kicca ñāṇa*; that this *ñāṇa* should be acquired from learning by hearing prior to the advent of *ariya magga*; that only then can *vipassanā magga* be developed by observing the actual phenomena of *upādānakkhandha* or *dukkha saccā* at the time of their occurrences; that only by developing the *vipassanā magga*, the *ariya magga* (otherwise called *bhāvetabba magga saccā*) can be developed and Nibbāna realized.

KATA ÑĀṆA WITH REGARD TO MAGGA SACCĀ

Taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariya saccam bhavitanti me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananusutesu dhammesu, cakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, aloko udapādi.

“This is the Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering and this has been developed. Thus, Oh, Bhikkhus, concerning things unheard of before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom; there arose in me penetrative insight and light.”

This is the admission by the Blessed One of how *kata ñāṇa* had arisen through retrospection of having accomplished the development of *magga sacca* until attainment of *arahatta magga*. The three *ñāṇas*, namely, *saccā*, *kicca* and *kata* with respect to the four Truths have now been completely explained in twelve ways, that is fourfold of three *ñāṇas*.

To recapitulate these twelve ways:

1. Knowing the four Truths before, after and at the moment of *magga* is *saccā ñāṇa*.

Knowing that this is the Truth of Suffering, this is the Truth of the Origin of Suffering, this is the Truth of cessation, this is the Truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering, is *saccā ñāṇa*. This *ñāṇa* appears also in advance of the *magga*. For the disciples, *saccā ñāṇam* in respect of *nirodha saccā* and *magga saccā* is acquired before *magga*, only by *sutamaya*, hearsay. *Nirodha saccā* is perceived also through realization at the moment of *magga*. The remaining three *maggas* are perceived at the moment of *magga* by accomplishing the tasks of fully and rightly understanding, giving up and developing, that is, by accomplishing the three functions (*tisu kiccato*), as the commentaries say. How these are perceived after the attainment of *magga* is very clear and needs no elaboration.

2. Prior knowledge of what should be known, what should be abandoned, what should be realized and what should be developed is *kicca ñāṇa*.

‘That *dukkha* should be fully and rightly comprehended, *samudaya* should be abandoned, *nirodha* should be realized and *magga* should be developed within oneself. Knowing them constitutes *kicca ñāṇa* which knows what should be done in respect of the four Truths. This *ñāṇa* arises before vipassanā meditation starts as well as during the time of vipassanā practice prior to the advent of *ariya magga*.

3. Knowing that the necessary function has been accomplished is *kata ñāṇa*.

In mundane affairs, there is knowledge of completion when the task to be done has been done. Likewise, when the four functions of rightly comprehending, giving up, realizing and developing have been performed, this fact is known through retrospection. This is known as *kata ñāṇa*, knowledge of completion of what has to be done.

What we have described are the twelve kinds of *ñāṇas* made up of four kinds of *saccā ñāṇas*, four kinds of *kiCCA ñāṇas* and four kinds of *kata ñāṇas*. Of these twelve, it is of utmost importance to know clearly how *saccā ñāṇa* arises and the four functions to be performed. We shall briefly go over them again:

1. *Dukkha saccā* should be rightly and fully comprehended; such comprehension is known as *pariññā paṭiveda*.
2. *Samudaya saccā* should be abandoned; such abandonment is known as *pahāna paṭiveda*.
3. *Nirodha saccā* should be realized; such realization is known as *sacchikiriya paṭiveda*.
4. *Magga saccā* should be developed in oneself; such development is known as *bhāvanā paṭiveda*.

At the moment of *magga*, only *nirodha saccā* is perceived through realization. The remaining three truths are perceived through completion of the required tasks by *pariññā paṭiveda*,

pahāna paṭiveda, and *bhāvanā paṭiveda* respectively. Therefore, the commentary says: 'The three truths are known by the completion of the tasks and *nirodha* by realization.'

5. When *magga* sees one of the four truths.
6. All the four *paṭivedas* are accomplished.

Just as with the *ariya magga*, at the moment of practising *vipassanā* too, by observing *dukkha saccā* alone as the object, the task of knowing the remaining three *saccās* is also done. It happens in this manner: The sense object which is being perceived through meditation as embodiment of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* cannot arouse *taṇhā* which would take delight in it under the delusion of *anicca*, *sukha*, *atta*. This is *tadanga pahāna paṭiveda*, the temporary abandonment of *taṇhā*. The *avijjā* (delusion) which would misapprehend the observed object as *nicca*, *sukha* and *atta*, as well as the *saṅkhāra*, *vinnana*, etc., gets no opportunity to arise and ceases consequently. This is realization through temporary cessation, *tadanga nirodha*. *Vipassanā magga* which perceives everything as *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* is being developed at every instant of awareness. This is *bhāvanā paṭiveda*. Thus, while practising *vipassanā* meditation by knowing *dukkha saccā* through contemplation, the remaining three truths are perceived by completion of the tasks of *pahāna*, *sacchikiriya* and *bhāvanā paṭivedas*. Thus, it may be said that all four truths are perceived at the same time.

We have come to the conclusion of the consideration of twelve ways of perceiving the four truths in four folds of three *ñāṇas*. We shall stop here today.

May all you good people present in this audience, by virtue of having given respectful attention to this great discourse on the turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, be able to fully and rightly understand the Truth of Suffering (*dukkha saccā*), etc., by contemplating on the phenomena of hearing, seeing, etc., and, through whatever path and fruition you have chosen, achieve speedy realization of Nibbāna, the end of sufferings.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE WHEEL OF DHAMMA

DELIVERED ON THE FULL MOON DAY OF NHAUNG TAGU, 1324, BURMESE ERA.

Our series of lectures on Dhammacakka given at this Hall of Glass was disrupted during our visits to Myitkyina and Bhamo. In our last lecture on the full-moon day of Tabaung, we had dealt with twelve kinds of *ñāṇa*, *saccā*, *kiṅka* and *kata*, three each for the four Truths. Today, we will give an account of when the Buddha did not admit to as well as when he did admit attainment of Enlightenment.

WHEN THE BUDDHA DID NOT ADMIT TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Yāvakivañca me, Bhikkhave, imesu catusu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākaraṃ yathāhhutaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ na suvisuddhaṃ ahosi, neva tavāhaṃ, Bhikkhave, sadevake loke samārake sabrahamake sassamaṇabrahmaṇiyā pajāya, sadevamanussāya anuttaraṃ sammāsambhodiṃ abhisambudhoti paccaññāsīmi.

“As long, Oh Bhikkhus, as my knowledge of reality and insight regarding the four Noble Truths in three aspects and twelve ways was not fully clear to me, so long did I not admit to the world with its devas, maras and brahmas, to the mass of beings with its recluses, brahmins, kings and people, that I had understood, attained and realized rightly by myself the incomparable, the most

excellent perfect enlightenment, in other words, the perfectly enlightened supreme Buddhahood.”

Sammāsambodhi is the *arahatta magga ñāṇa* which is attained only by the Buddhas. The Buddhas gain this *arahatta magga ñāṇa* intuitively by their own efforts without any instruction from others. By this *ñāṇa*, they rightly and perfectly know everything because with it arises simultaneously the *sabba-ññuta ñāṇa* which knows everything. Therefore, this exclusive *arahattamagga ñāṇa* of the Buddhas is known as *sammāsambodhi*; *sammā* being rightly, *sam* is by oneself and *bodhi* means knowledge, knowledge rightly known by self. For Pacceka Buddhas, their *arahattamagga ñāṇa* is known only as *saṃbodhi*, self-known knowledge without the qualifying *sammā* (rightly). The *arahattamagga ñāṇa* of the disciples is simply known as *bodhi*, knowledge, enlightenment without the qualifying *sammā* and *sam*.

The *arahattamagga ñāṇa* that had arisen to the Buddhas was known by themselves and rightly. Hence, it is called *sammāsambodhi*. With this *ñāṇa* arises simultaneously *sabbanuta ñāṇa*, which knows all dhammas. After having acquired this faculty of knowing everything, Buddhahood which knows all dhammas was attained. Therefore, this *sammāsambodhi ñāṇa* is regarded as the knowledge responsible for attainment of Buddhahood. Thus, in the above passage, the Buddha said that he had not yet admitted attainment of *sammāsambodhi ñāṇa* which would give rise to Buddhahood.

For how long did he withhold this admission of Buddhahood? It was stated that he withheld it for as long as his knowledge

of the four Truths in three aspects of *sacca*, *kicca* and *kata ñāṇa* for each truth, as explained earlier, was not fully clear to him. To fix a definite time limit, it meant that the admission was withheld till early dawn of the day after the full-moon day of Kason, just before he attained the *arahattamagga*.

By the pronouncement of non-admission until then, he made it clear that it was out of the question for him to make the claim of Buddhahood during the earlier period when he was engaged in extreme austerities.

In the above passage, three aspects mean *sacca*, *kicca* and *kata ñāṇa* for each of the four Truths. By twelve ways is meant the total number of *ñāṇas* evolved for all the four Truths, fourfold of these three *ñāṇas*. *Arahattamagga ñāṇa* together with these twelve *ñāṇas* which appeared before and after it is *yathābhuta ñāṇa*, knowledge of seeing reality as it is. For as long as this *yathābhuta ñāṇa* was not fully clear to him, for so long the Blessed One withheld admission of having attained Buddhahood, perfect enlightenment, *sammāsambodhi*.

To the query 'Amidst whom was this admission withheld?', it may be answered. 'In this world.' In this world, there are powerful devas of sharp intellect; there are also *maras* who are antagonistic to the teaching, as well as *brahmas*, more powerful and more intelligent than the *devas* and *maras*. Had attainment of Buddhahood been claimed before his knowledge of the four Truths was fully clear to him, it would have been difficult for him to give satisfactory replies and answers to questions, inqui-

ries, disputations that would be raised by these *devas*, *maras* and *brahmas*. Keeping aside these *devas*, *maras* and *brahmas* who were not in close association with the human beings, there were in the human world, on the surface of the earth, recluses and ascetics known as *samaṇas* and *brahmaṇas*. There were also kings popularly designated as *devas*, and the common people. It would have been difficult, too, to reply to the investigative enquiries and queries they might happen to make. There were living in those days leaders of religious sects, such as Puraṇa Kassapa, who claimed to know all about the past, the present and the future. When learned people, recluses and laymen began to scrutinize their claims, these religious leaders had been found to fall far short of their claims. Had Buddha pronounced his Buddhahood before actual attainment of *sammāsambodhi ñāṇa*, he could also have faced a similar predicament.

At one time, even Buddha was confronted by King Pasenadī Kosala who, taking advantage of his kingly position, subjected the Buddha to a searching examination. “Oh Gotama, do you also claim to understand, achieve, realize the incomparable, perfect Enlightenment, otherwise the Buddhahood?” In those days, the leaders such as Purana Kassapa, etc., used to make bold claims of Buddhahood to the common people, but when examined by King Pasenadī Kosala, they faltered in their claims. “When even elderly leaders of religious sects hesitate to claim Buddhahood, you, Oh Gotama, who are much younger in age and less experienced in religious life, do you really admit that you have become a Buddha?” the king persisted in his enquiries by repeating the question.

The Buddha being, as he was, a true Buddha, was able to give satisfactory answers to the king. Fully convinced of the Buddha's supreme attainments, King Pasenadī Kosala took refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and became a disciple of the Buddha from that time. Having in mind such people who might examine and investigate him, he said, "I did not declare yet to the world with its *devas*, *maras* and *brahmas* and to the mass of beings with recluses and *brahmaṇas*, kings and people that I had attained Buddhahood."

With these words the Buddha let it be known that for so long as he had not become a true Buddha, he should not have claimed to. Accordingly, he did not. But when the time came to pronounce his Buddhahood, he did pronounce it. And this is how he made his declaration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BUDDHAHOOD

*Yato ca kho, Bhikkhave, Imesu catūsu ariyasaccesu evaṃ
tiparivattaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhutaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ
suvisuddhaṃ ahosi, athahaṃ, Bhikkhave, sadevake loke samā-
rake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrahmaṇiya pajāya sadevamanussāya
anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambuddhoti paccaññāsīṃ.*

"But when, Bhikkhus, my knowledge of reality and insight regarding the Four Noble Truths in three respects and twelve ways became fully clear to me, I declared to the world with its *devas*, *maras* and *brahmas*, to the mass of

beings with its recluses, *brahmaṇas*, kings and people that I had understood, attained and realized rightly by myself the incomparable, the most excellent perfect enlightenment, in other words, the perfectly enlightened supreme Buddhahood.”

What he declared in the above passage was that only when his *yathābhuta ñāṇa*, knowledge of seeing reality as it truly is, was fully clear in twelve ways derived from three *ñāṇas* of *saccā*, *kicca* and *kata* with respect to each of the four Truths, did he admit to attainment and realization of the incomparable, the most excellent perfect Enlightenment, the perfectly enlightened supreme Buddhahood. This declaration was made not just to that region, that part of the world, but to the whole universe with its powerful *devas* of sharp intellect, with its *maras* hostile to the true Teaching, and with its more powerful and more intelligent *brahmas*. It was meant also for the whole of the human world with its learned recluses and brahmanas, with its kings and peoples.

This declaration was an open invitation to any doubting *devas*, *māras* or *brāhmas* or to any doubting recluses, *brahmaṇas*, kings or wise lay persons to investigate, scrutinize his claim; and a guarantee to give satisfactory answers to all their searching enquiries. This is indeed a very bold, solemn declaration not made impetuously or impulsively without due verification, but only after he had scrutinized and reassured himself by retrospection that he had really attained Buddhahood.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Ñāṇañānca pana me dassamaṃ udapādi “akuppā me vimutti, ayamantimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo” ti.

“Indeed, knowledge and vision arose in me; unshakeable is my deliverance, my liberation from defilements is achieved by means of *arahattamagga* and *phala*; not just *vikkhambhana*, putting away *kilesa* to a distance as by *rūpa jhāna* or *arūpa jhāna*. It is remainderless, rootless eradication of *kilesa*, a liberation which causes complete calm again. (He knew, therefore, by reflection that the deliverance was unshakeable, indestructible.) This is the last existence; now there is no more rebirth for me. Oh Bhikkhus, such knowledge and vision had arisen in me,” he concluded.

In this concluding statement, the words ‘unshakeable is my deliverance’ means that his deliverance is not like that obtained by virtue of *rūpa jhāna* and *arūpa jhāna* which may be destroyed again. The individual who has obtained the stage of *rūpa jhāna* and *arūpa jhāna* is free from *kilesas* such as *kāmacchanda* (sensual desire), *vyāpāda* (ill-will), etc. These *kilesas* remain calm, suppressed in him, but when his *jhānic* attainments deteriorate, sensual desires, ill-will, etc., make their appearance again. These *jhānas* only put away the *kilesas* to a distance (*vikkhambhana*). The deliverance won by the Buddha was of the *samuccheda vimutti* type, which completely eradicated *kilesas* without remainder, and of the *patipassadi vimutti* type, which again calmed down and tranquilized the potency

of these defilements. *Samuccheda vimutti* is deliverance by *arahatta magga ñāṇa*, which eradicates without remainder all *kilesas*, whereas *patipassadi vimutti* is deliverance by means of *arahatta phala ñāṇa*, which calms down again the potency of all *kilesas*. These deliverances remain steadfast and indestructible. Hence, the Blessed One reflected, 'Unshakeable is my deliverance.'

Moreover, having eradicated *taṇhā*, otherwise called *samudaya saccā*, by means of *arahatta magga*, the Blessed One was free from *taṇhā* which could cause new becoming. For beings still saddled with *taṇhā*, after passing away from one existence, they are reborn in the next, holding onto, as objects, one of the signs, *kamma*, *kamma nimitta*, *gati nimitta*, which appears to them as death approaches. There is always rebirth, a new existence, for beings not yet devoid of *taṇhā*.

The Bodhisatta had also passed through many rounds of rebirths in successive existences. Thus, at the beginning of Buddhahood, the Blessed One had reflected: 'Seeking in vain – for the house-builder Taṇhā had repeatedly framed and built this house of fresh existences, *khandha*, because I was not equipped with good vision of *arahatta magga ñāṇa* (*aneka jāti saṃsāraṃ sandhāvissaṃ*) – I had hastened through many rounds of rebirths, cycles of existences. Now, with the attainment of *sabbaññuta ñāṇa* together with *arahatta ñāṇa*, I have found you. Oh builder, Taṇhā, never again shall you build this house, my *khandha*.'

In this manner, the Blessed One had given an account of his retrospection. Although fresh existence was no more possible

for the Blessed One in the absence of *taṇhā*, he still had to live the present life which had been brought forth by *taṇhā* before its eradication. With retrospection insight, he said, 'This is my last existence. Now there is no more rebirth for me.' These are the concluding words of the Dhammacakka Sutta.

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

Careful study of the Dhammacakka Sutta, beginning with the words '*dve me, Bhikkhave, anta pabbajitena na sevitabba*' and ending with the words '*āyamanti mā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavoti*', reveals that it deals with the path trodden by the Blessed One, the dhammas he had discovered and how he had discovered them. As to the practical details of the path, there was little mention of them in a direct way; only the opening lines 'should not indulge in the two extremes' convey some sort of practical instructions to follow. It is, therefore, a matter for consideration how the early disciples attained the higher knowledge of the path and fruition, by what practical methods and in which manner they attained their goals. We shall explain this matter now.

HIGHER KNOWLEDGE FOR THE LISTENERS TO THE TEACHING

In the discourses taught by the Buddha, although there were no precise instructions, such as 'practise in this way; bear in mind in this manner', it must be regarded that they contain exhortations and guidance as to what should be followed and

what should be avoided. According to the ancient masters, 'every word of the Buddha carries an injunction'. To illustrate:

Asevanā ca bālānaṃ, paṇḍitanañca sevanā.

Pujā ca pujaniyānaṃ, etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ.

This verse in the Maṅgala Sutta gives only the enunciation of the three blessings, namely, 'Not to associate with the ignorant, to associate with the wise, to honour those who are worthy of honour, this is the noblest blessing'. In this verse, there is no direct exhortation regarding with whom one should dissociate, associate or honour. Nevertheless, it should be taken as an exhortation. Likewise, we do not find any direct exhortation or injunction in the Dhammacakka Sutta. The Blessed One simply said, 'Avoiding the two extreme practices, I have discovered penetratingly the Middle Way.' This should be regarded as meaning, 'Like me, you must avoid the two extremes and follow the practice of the Middle Path.'

In stating 'The Middle Path leads to vision, etc.', it should be taken to imply, 'If you develop the Middle Path, vision will arise in you, too; higher knowledge will come to you, you will gain benefits until realization of Nibbāna'. In giving the enunciation of the Eightfold Path, it should be taken as giving instructions for promoting *sīla*, *samādhi* and *magga* paths.

Then, the definition of *dukkha saccā* must be regarded as instructions to make an effort to understand *dukkha saccā* comprehensively. Likewise, it must be understood that what was taught as *samudaya saccā* was an instruction to remove it; as

are *nirodha saccā* and *magga saccā* instructions to develop the *magga saccā* in oneself and realize the *nirodha saccā*.

Afterwards, the teaching of the four *saccā ñāṇa* must be regarded as an exhortation to strive to attain the four *saccā ñāṇas* with regard to the four Truths; when he taught about four *kicca ñāṇas*, it was instruction to understand the Truth of Suffering by contemplating on the phenomenon of *anicca*, etc. This is indeed very obvious. When he described it as dhamma which should be rightly and fully comprehended, it is very clearly meant that effort should be made to achieve complete and rightful understanding of *dukkha saccā*. *Dukkha saccā* has already been explained previously to consist of *jāti*, etc., up to *upādānakkhandhas* which manifest themselves in oneself when seeing, hearing, etc. Thus, it is understandable that it means contemplation of the nature of *anicca* by noting every instance of seeing, hearing, etc.

‘*Magga saccā* is the path to be developed’ means development by noting each phenomenon of seeing, hearing, etc. Similarly, ‘*samudaya* should be eliminated’ means craving should be put away by contemplating on the Truth of Suffering. ‘*Nirodha saccā* should be realized’ means that after fully understanding the Truth of Suffering, through contemplation and developing the *vipassanā magga*, ultimately *nirodha saccā* will be realized.

When the Buddha told them how he came to know what should be known by developing the Middle Path, also called the Eightfold Path, his audience could understand that they too would come to know what should be known by develop-

ing the Middle Path. It is just like a person recounting how he was cured of the disease he was suffering from by taking a certain effective medicine. Persons having the same disease will realize that they could also cure their disease by the same medicine.

The Buddha's audience at that time was made up of people who were already accomplished in *pāramis* to attain higher knowledge by hearing the first sermon of the Buddha. They were in a position to understand what he meant. Accordingly, it could be taken that they contemplated on the Truth of Suffering at the moment of occurrence, developing *vipassanā ñāṇa* in successive stages, and ultimately realized Nibbāna by means of the four *ariya maggas*.

There is no doubt that the good people forming this audience could also, by contemplating on the Truth of Suffering, by taking note of the phenomenon of rising and vanishing, come to know the four Truths as they should be known and realize the higher knowledge of the *ariyan* path and fruition.

Understanding the sermon in the manner I have just explained, one member of the audience at the first sermon of the Blessed One, the Venerable Koṇḍañña, noting all the phenomena of hearing, knowing, feeling of devotion and pleasure, feeling glad, touching, seeing, that appeared to him at the time of rising, developed *vipassanā magga* and realized *sotāpatti* path and fruition. How he realized them will be the subject of our discussion later.

Eighteen crores [1 crore = 10 million] of *brahmas* likewise achieved similar realization. According to Milinda Pāli text, innumerable *kāmaṅvācara* devas also meditated in a similar way and attained the higher knowledge of the *ariya* path and fruition. Because all the beings who were developed sufficiently to receive the dhamma had attained higher knowledge and because he had completely covered all the dhammas he should teach, the Blessed One brought his sermon to conclusion with the words just quoted above. The reciters at the First Council had recorded this account of the termination of the sermon and how the group of five bhikkhus were gladdened by the sermon in these words.

RECORDS OF THE SAṄGHĀYANĀ, THE FIRST GREAT COUNCIL

*Idamavoca Bhagavā, attamanā pañcavaggiyā Bhikkhu
bhagavato bhāsitam abhinanduntī.*

Thus spoke the Blessed One, starting with '*dve me, Bhikkhave, antā pabbajitena na sevītabba'* and ending with '*naṭṭhi dāni punabbhavoti'*, and the group of five Bhikkhus greatly rejoiced, welcomed the words of the Blessed One with delight.

Then the Theras of the first Council also recorded how the Venerable Koṇḍañña attained the higher knowledge.

*Imasamiñca paññā veyyakaraṇasamin bhaññamāne āyasamato
Koṇḍaññassa virajan vitamalaṃ dhammacakkuṃ udapādi...
yaṃ kiñci samudaya dhammam, sabbam taṃ nirodha imam ti.*

‘It is worthy of special note that while this discourse was being expounded or has just been expounded, the dust-free, stainless eye of dhamma, otherwise *sotāpatti magga ñāṇa* arose to the Venerable Koṇḍañña. Everything that has the nature of arising has the nature of ceasing.’”

Briefly, this record stated that the Venerable Koṇḍañña became a *sotāpanna* (stream-winner) by attainment of *sotāpatti* path and fruition. When did it happen? He attained it while the Blessed One was ‘expounding the discourse’. This is the precise translation of the grammatical tense as given in the text, namely, *bhanamane, bhaniyamane*. The Sāratta Dipani sub-commentary reproduced the same tense, but Patisambhidā commentary preferred to take the perfect tense, past tense proximate to the present tense, *bhanite*, meaning ‘after being expounded’. We have similarly rendered it as ‘has just been expounded’.

HOW THE VENERABLE KOṆḌAÑÑA ATTAINED HIGHER KNOWLEDGE WHILE LISTENING TO THE DISCOURSE

The Venerable Koṇḍañña could have developed the Eightfold Path and attained the *ariya magga phala* while the Blessed One was enunciating on the Middle Way, otherwise the Eightfold Path, during the discourse. When he heard about the four Noble Truths, too, he could have contemplated on it knowing what should be known and attained the higher knowledge of *magga phala*. Especially, when he heard that the Truth of Suffering should be fully comprehended and *magga* should be developed, it is very probable that he could have contemplated

on the Truth of Suffering, otherwise the *upādānakkhandhas* and by developing the *vipassanā magga*, attained the higher knowledge of *sotāpatti* path and fruition.

As for contemplating on suffering, by noting the sound of dhamma at every instant of hearing it, he would have come to know the reality as it is and the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, and in this way developed the Eightfold Path. When deep appreciation for the meaning of the discourse arose, it could be contemplated upon. Devotional appreciation of the dhamma and for the voice that delivered it could be noted, too, as it occurred. Rejoicing that came after appreciation, the thrill of joy (*pīti*) that accompanied it could all be contemplated upon. It is quite probable that *pīti* was taken as an object for contemplation. It was mentioned in the Pāli text that at the moment when the mind was feeling fit and prepared, soft and tender, free from hindrances, elated and exultant, full of faith and devotion, hearing the discourse on the four Truths, many had attained to higher knowledge. The Eightfold Path could also be developed by taking note of what is taking place in the body, the sensations of sufferings or pleasure felt in the body, and by contemplating on the act of paying respectful homage to the Buddha.

Seeing, hearing, etc., mentioned above with respect to the *nāma* and *rūpa* presently arising are not just *paññatti*, mere terms or names; they are *paramattha dhammas* (ultimate realities) which actually exist, which actually occur. *Upādānakkhandhas* are such realities. The *dukkha saccā* which should be fully comprehended is also a reality, *paramattha dhamma*. When, in

accordance with the teaching that *dukkha saccā* should be fully comprehended, every phenomenon is noted, *dukkha saccā* is fully comprehended through understanding the nature of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. On each occasion of understanding in this way, craving which may arise because of the notion of *nicca*, *sukha* and *atta*, gets eliminated, having no opportunity to arise. This, then, is momentary abandonment of *samudaya*.

Delusion or ignorance with respect to the object under contemplation, together with *kilesa*, *kamma* and *vipāka* that may arise in connection with it, vanish and come to cessation too with each noting. This is momentary cessation achieved with each noting by virtue of having accomplished it. It goes without saying that *vipassanā maggas* are being developed at each moment of observation. In this way, by noting what was seen, heard, etc., the Venerable Koṇḍañña developed vipassana which knows the four Truths as they should be known and attained the *sotāpanna* path and fruition while he was listening to the discourse on Dhammacakka. In other words, he became a *sotāpanna* by realizing the *sotāpatti magga* and *phala* just at the end of the discourse.

HOW MAGGA ÑĀṆA IS DUST-FREE AND STAINLESS

The *sotāpanna ñāṇa* attained by the Venerable Koṇḍañña was praised in the sutta as being dust-free and stainless. It would be profitable to consider how this *sotāpanna ñāṇa* was dust-free and stainless. Sāratta Dīpanī sub-commentary states: It is dust-free, being free from the dust and dirt of *rāga* (lust)

which would lead to the nether worlds; stainless, being free from defilements of *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*. This is a figurative description of *kilesas* which are eliminated by *sotāpatti magga*, but Patisambhidā Magga commentary considers both dust as well as defilements as *raga*, etc. Lust (*rāga*) tends to conceal, to cover up and, hence, is likened to dust. Again, lust is likened to impurities or defilements because it spoils or brings destruction.

Another consideration arises here. Does 'being free from dust and defilements' mean (a) arising of the eye of dhamma, otherwise *magga ñāṇa*, unaccompanied by dust and defilements; or (b) not hindering or interfering with *magga ñāṇa* so that Nibbāna could not be seen? *Magga*, however, has no association with *kilesas*. It is obvious, therefore, that it has no reference here to unaccompaniment of dust and defilements. Thus, 'being free from dust and defilements' should be understood in the sense of 'not hindering or interfering with *magga ñāṇa* so that Nibbāna could not be seen'.

This is how hindrance is overcome. In spite of vipassana meditation, Nibbāna is not yet seen by means of *sotāpanna ñāṇa* whilst *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā* (which should be eliminated by *sotāpatti magga*) and *rāga* (which leads to the nether world) remain in force. It is just like the inability to see because of the cataract in the eye. But, when *vipassanā ñāṇa* becomes fully accomplished and strengthened, the *diṭṭhi*, *vicikicchā* and *rāga* which would lead to the nether world would get weakened; they can no longer hinder so as to conceal the Nibbāna, just as the layer of cataract which gets thinner can no longer completely cover up the eyesight. Then *sotāpanna magga ñāṇa* can

see through and realise the *Nibbanā*. Such capacity to perceive through and realize the *Nibbāna* is described as ‘being free from dust, *virāga*; free from stains, *vitamala*’.

Magga ñāṇa eradicates only after *vipassana* has done its utmost to eliminate.

The above interpretation falls into conformity with the figurative description of the ‘eye of dhamma’ and with the exposition in the *Visuddhimagga* and *Mahāṭika* which state that supramundane *magga ñāṇa* eradicates without remainder only those *kilesas* which have been weakened to the utmost by the mundane *vipassanā ñāṇa*.

MAGGA ÑĀṆA EVOLVES OUT OF VIPASSANĀ ÑĀṆA

It should be especially noted here that supramundane *magga ñāṇa* does not come forth from nowhere. As successive consciousness arises out of preceding consciousness, *magga ñāṇa* can also be said, by way of unity, to have arisen out of *vipassanā ñāṇa*. Thus, defilements such as *diṭṭhi*, *vicikicchā*, etc., which have been debilitated by the power of *vipassanā ñāṇa* can no longer keep the *Nibbāna* hidden from view. ‘By being dust-free and stainless’ is meant this inability of *rāgas*, etc., to keep the *Nibbāna* hidden anymore.

Brahmāyū Sutta of *Majjhima Paṇṇāsa* describes the three lowers *maggas* as the eye of dhamma. In the *Cularāhulovada Sutta* of *Uparisa Paṇṇasa*, all the four paths and fruitions are described as the eye of the dhamma. When, therefore,

these higher attainments are stated to be dust-free and stainless', it means that *kama*, *raga* and *vyapada* are so weakened by virtue of *vipassanā ñāṇa* that they could not keep the Nibbāna hidden from view. We have taken the trouble of delving deeply into these points so as to make it easily comprehensible that *ariya magga ñāṇa* does not arise out of nowhere, but evolves only from *vipassanā ñāṇa* by virtue of sufficing conditions in nature, *pakatupanissaya*.

The question arises then: how does this *dhamma cakkhu*, otherwise the *sotāpatti magga ñāṇa* arise? This *ñāṇa* arises by perceiving that 'everything that has the nature of arising has the nature of passing away'. There are two modes of perceiving in this manner. At the moment of developing *udayabhaya ñāṇa*, seeing the phenomenon of origination and instant dissolution, realization comes that what arises passes into dissolution. This is perception by means of *vipassanā ñāṇa*. When *sankharupakkhā ñāṇa* is fully established, while noting the continuous process of dissolution of *rūpa* and *nāma*, a stage is reached when (volitional activities of) *nāma*, *rūpa* and *sankharas* appear to get dissolved into a state of complete cessation. This is perceiving the peaceful bliss of Nibbāna by actually realizing it, when all the phenomena of constant arising come to complete cessation. This is perception by means of *ariya magga ñāṇa*.

The eye of dhamma, otherwise called *sotāpatti ñāṇa*, is developed by the second kind of perceiving. For this reason, attainment of *sotāpatti magga* is clearly indicated when all volitional activities of *nāma* and *rūpa* get dissolved into a state of com-

plete cessation. Once realized by *sotāpanna ñāṇa*, the knowledge that perceives that ‘everything that arises gets dissolved’ remains firm, unshakeable. Hence, Cularāhulovada Sutta describes the realization of all the four *magga ñāṇas* in the same words. ‘The dust-free, stainless eye of dhamma arose: everything that has the nature of arising has the nature of passing away.’

All *nāma-rūpa* cease when Nibbāna becomes the object of *magga ñāṇa*.

Quoting Cūḷaniddesa commentary which states, ‘By means of *sotāpatti magga*, these five *akusala* consciousnesses come to cessation: four consciousnesses connected with wrong view (*ditthigata sampayutta*) and one consciousness accompanied with doubt (*vicikicchāsahagutta*)’. A certain person is going around teaching and writing, attempting to refute the statement ‘at the moment of *sotāpatti* path and fruition, all *nāma-rūpa saṅkhāras* are perceived to have ceased’. He seems to hold that *sotāpatti* path and fruition has as its object only the cessation of the five *akusala* consciousnesses brought about by *sotāpatti magga*. This is a very wrong view for the simple reason that Nibbāna is not partial cessation of *akusala* nor cessation in parts of *nāma rūpa dhammas*. As a matter of fact, Nibbāna means complete cessation of three *vattas*, namely, *kilesa*, *kamma* and *vipāka*, the complete cessation of all *nāma rūpa saṅkhāras*, all compounded things. Thus, to the question ‘what has *ariya magga* as its object?’ The reply would be that it has Nibbāna as its object and Nibbāna is, as just explained, complete cessa-

tion of all conditioned *nāma* and *rūpas*. Thus, the assertion ‘at the moment of attainment of *sotāpatti* path and fruition, one perceives only the coming into cessation of the sense-object known as well as the knowing mind’ is a factual statement of what is actually observed.

A careful study of Ajita Sutta in the Parāyana Vagga on which the exposition was given in the said commentary to Cuḷanid-
desa Pāli text, will reveal the statement therein: ‘At this peace of Nibbāna all *nāma rūpa* cease’. Furthermore, if questioned, ‘Is Nibbāna, which is the object of *sotāpatti magga*, the same Nibbāna which is the object of the higher *maggas*?’ The answer would be ‘Yes, the same, there is no difference’. If *sotāpatti magga* were to have the five *akusala* consciousnesses as its object, and the other *maggas* have as their objects the cessation of respective consciousnesses they have eradicated, would the objects of four *maggas* be four different Nibbānas? There is, however, no such difference and it is obvious, therefore, that all four *maggas* have as their objects the one and only Nibbāna.

For the reasons we have stated above, it is a totally wrong view to hold that ‘*sotāpatti magga* must have only the cessation of the five *akusala* consciousnesses as its object’.

We have digressed from the main discourse to make some critical remarks about certain wrong assertions. We must now come back to the original topic by recounting the meaning of the Pāli text: “While this discourse was being expounded or has just been expounded, the dust-free stainless eye of dhamma, otherwise *sotāpatti magga ñāṇa*, arose to the Vener-

able Koṇḍañña that ‘everything that has the nature of arising has the nature of ceasing’”.

WAS NOT MAGGA ÑĀṆA ATTAINED BY APPRECIATION OF THE DISCOURSE?

Here is a point for argument. Is it not a fact that in the passage just quoted, there is no mention of the Venerable Koṇḍañña engaging in the practice of *vipassanā*? It mentions only that the eye of dhamma or *sotāpatti magga* was developed while the Blessed One was expounding the dhamma or had just finished expounding the dhamma. Could it not be that the *sotāpatti magga ñāṇa* was developed through appreciation of and delight in the discourse? In that case, all the elaboration about how Koṇḍañña engaged himself in the practice of vipassana meditation is really redundant. This is the point for argument.

The elaborations are not redundant at all. In the Dhammacakka Sutta itself, it is definitely stated that the Eightfold path should be developed. In addition, the commentary exposition of *sammādiṭṭhi* states that *dukkha saccā* and *samudaya saccā* should be understood by contemplating on them. There are also statements that *ariya magga ñāṇa* is developed only when *pubbabhāga magga*, otherwise called *vipassanā magga*, is fully accomplished. It is also definitely stated that without contemplating on any of the four subjects of meditation, namely, body, sensation, mind and dhamma, no *vipassanā paññā* nor *magga paññā* could be attained (Part III of this discourse refers). Pāli

texts also clearly state that *sammāsati magga* could arise only by developing the fourfold mindfulness.

Because of these reasons, there can be no arising of *ariya magga* without developing the *vipassanā magga*. These elaborations are given to facilitate understanding how *vipassanā* could be developed while listening to the discourse. It must be taken, therefore, that by adopting one of the methods of meditating, as explained above, the Venerable Koṇḍañña had attained instantly the *sotāpatti magga* and *phala*.

After describing how the Venerable Koṇḍañña attained the *sotāpatti magga ñāṇa*, the Theras of the first council went on to describe the manner in which the Dhammacakka Sutta was acclaimed.

ACCLAMATION BY THE DEVAS AND BRAHMAS

*Pavatti te ca pana Bhagavatā dhammacakke bhummā devā
saddamanussavesuṃ, Etaṃ bhagavatā Varaṇasiyaṃ Isipatane
Migadaye anuttaraṃ dhammacakkaṃ pavattitaṃ appaṭi
vattiyaṃ samaṇena vā brahmaṇena vā devena vā mārena
vā brahmunā va kenaci vā lokasaminti.*

What is worthy of special note is that when the Blessed One had set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma (according to the commentary, the Wheel of Dhamma means *paṭiveda ñāṇa*, penetrative insight and the knowledge of what and how to impart the dhamma (*desana ñāṇa*); by the teaching of the Dhamma-

cakka Sutta, it amounts to setting in motion this Wheel of Dhamma). In other words, when the Blessed One had given the discourse on the Dhammacakka Sutta, the Bhuma devas, the earth-bound devas, proclaimed in one voice:

“The incomparable Wheel of Dhamma has been set in motion (the incomparable discourse on the Dhammacakka has been given) by the Blessed One at Isipatana, the deer sanctuary in the township of Vārāṇasi; a motion which no recluse nor *brahmana* nor any *deva* nor *mara* nor *brāhma* nor any other being in the world can reverse or prevent.”

Having heard this proclamation by the Bhumadevas, the Catumahārājika devas and the devas in the upper realms of Tāvatiṃsa, Yāma, Tusita, Nimmānarati, Paranimittavasavati and the Brahmas, all proclaimed in one voice:

“The incomparable Wheel of Dhamma has been set in motion (the incomparable discourse on the Dhammacakka has been given) by the Blessed One at Isipatana, the deer sanctuary in the township of Vārāṇasi, a motion which no recluse nor *brahmaṇa* nor any *deva* nor *māra* nor *brāhma* nor any other being in the world can reverse or prevent.”

Itiha tena khaṇena tena muhuttena yāva brahmalokā saddo abbhuggacchi.

“Thus, in an instant, in a moment, the voice of proclamation went forth up to the world of the brahmas.”

THE EARTHQUAKE AND APPEARANCE OF SHINING LIGHTS

*Ayañca dasasahassi lokadhātu saṃkampi sampakampi
sampavedhi. Appamāno ca ulāro obhāso loke paturahasi
atikkamma devānaṃ devānubhāvam ti.*

“The entire cosmos of the thousand worlds shook in upward motion, quaked in upward and downward motion, and trembled in four directions. An immeasurable sublime radiance, caused by the mighty *desanā* (teaching), surpassing even the majestic, divine radiance of the *devas* appeared on earth.”

FERVENT UTTERANCE OF JOY BY THE BLESSED ONE

*Atha kho Bhagavā imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi: Aññāsi vata bho
Koṇḍañña, aññāsi vata Koṇḍañño'ti. Iti hidaṃ āyasamato
Koṇḍaññassa aññāsi Koṇḍañño tveva nāmaṃ ahosi'ti.*

Then, just after delivering the discourse, just after the appearance of the eye of dhamma or *sotāpatti magga ñāṇa* to the Venerable Koṇḍañña, the Blessed One made this joyous utterance:

“Oh, friends, indeed Koṇḍañña has understood. Indeed, Koṇḍañña has understood. Thus, it was because of this joyous utterance that the Venerable Koṇḍañña had won the name of Aññāsi Koṇḍañña, the one who has understood. Here ends the Discourse on the Dhammacakka Sutta.”

The concluding passage recited above marks the termination of the Dhammacakka Sutta as recorded in the Pāli Canon of Mahā Vagga Saṃyutta. On reflection at the conclusion of the discourse, the Blessed One perceived that the Venerable Koṇḍañña had attained the higher knowledge of *sotāpatti magga phala*. So joyously he made the utterance, “Indeed, Koṇḍañña has perceived, Koṇḍañña has perceived”. It was in reference to this utterance that the Venerable Koṇḍañña became commonly known as Aññāsi Koṇḍañña.

According to the Saṃyutta Pāli text, the Dhammacakka Sutta ends here, but the Vinaya Pāli text continued on from there giving an account of how the Bhikkhu Sangha came into existence. We shall relate this account now.

THE VENERABLE AÑÑĀSI KOṆḌAÑÑA’S REQUEST FOR ORDINATION

*Atha kho āyasmā aññāsi Koṇḍañño diṭṭhadhammo patta-
dhammo divitadhammo pariyogāḷhadhammo tiṇṇavicikicco
vigatakatthamkattho vesārajappatto aparappaccayo satthu-
sāsane bhagavantam etadvoca, “labheyyaṃ bhante
bhagavato santike pabbajjam labheyyaṃ upasampadanti”.*

After the Blessed One had made the joyous utterance, the Venerable Koṇḍañña made the following request in these words: “Lord (*Bhante*), may I have leave to take up the ascetic life as a novice (*pabbajjam*) in the presence of the Buddha; may I receive (ordination) admission into the Buddha’s Order (*upasampadam*).”

NOT EASY TO GIVE UP ONE'S TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

The Venerable Koṇḍañña must have previously embraced some kind of traditional religious belief. To give up this old belief and desire admission into the Buddha's Order could not have come about with mere ordinary faith. In modern times, it is no easy matter for people of other faiths to join the Buddha's Order after accepting Buddhism. For some people, not to say putting on the yellow robes, to take refuge in the Three Gems and keep the precepts for the purpose of practising meditation is a difficult task.

Apart from the Venerable Koṇḍañña, the remaining four of the group appeared to be indecisive regarding admission into the Buddha's Order. Why then did Koṇḍañña seek permission to join the Buddha's Order? The answer is that Koṇḍañña had become possessed of virtue and qualities which are described by such epithets as *diṭṭhadhammo*, etc.

Fully invested with such virtues as *Diṭṭhadhammo*, etc., Koṇḍañña made the request having seen the dhamma (*diṭṭhadhamma*). He had seen *nirodha saccā* of the four Truths, that is, he had realized Nibbāna. Then, having seen the peace of Nibbāna, he saw the constant arising and vanishing of conditioned *nāma rūpa* as awesome suffering. He perceived, too, that the craving which took delight in them was the true cause of suffering. He realized at the same time that *magga saccā* consisting of *sammādiṭṭhi*, etc., was the true path that would lead to the peace of Nibbāna. Realizing thus the four Truths himself, firm confidence that the Buddha himself had also realized the four Truths arose. Such confidence is known as *aveccappasada ñāṇa*,

knowledge born of complete faith. It is like the confidence a patient places in his physician, whose treatment has effectively cured him of his disease. Thus, for having seen the four truths exactly as expounded by the Buddha, Koṇḍañña had made the request for monkhood.

Ditṭhadhamma (having seen): to indicate that it means seeing with the eye of knowledge and not by physical eye, it is qualified by *pattadhammo* (having arrived, attained, reached); to connote arriving through knowledge and not by any other means; it is qualified again by *vidhitadhammo* (having clearly known). To assure that such knowledge is not just partial or fractional but complete, the qualifying word *pariyogaladhamma* is mentioned, which means dive into, penetrate into, conveying that he had penetrated fully into all aspects of the dhamma. All these words reflect the richness of the Pāli vocabulary of those days.

It is very important to see, to know by one's own knowledge, the Four Noble Truths. Without knowing the real truth yet, mere profession of the Buddhist faith will not have removed all doubts about the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Misgivings on them may appear under certain circumstances. Doubts may arise also with regards to the practice of *sīla*, *samādhī* and *paññā* one is pursuing. By knowing what should be known by oneself, one may become free from scepticism to a certain extent.

The yogi who practices noting every instance of seeing, hearing, meeting, knowing, etc., knows when the power of concentration gets strengthened, knows the object observed (*rūpa*)

separately from the knowing mind (*nāma*). Then he knows through his own experience that seeing takes place because there is the object and the eye; there is the act of going because of the desire to go. Because he fails to note the object, he wrongly takes it to be pleasant, thinking it pleasant, he takes delight in it. Because of delight, he craves for it. To satisfy the demands of his craving, he has to exert himself to suitable actions. All these become his own knowledge through personal experience. He also knows he faces difficulties and bad situations because of bad *kamma*; he enjoys good things because of good *kamma*. When his knowledge grows to this extent, he can become free of doubts as to whether there is soul, living entity or creator.

When he continues with the practice, he perceives the objects of *nāma rūpa* arising and vanishing even while he is observing them. He becomes convinced, while continuing with the noting, of their nature of impermanence, dreadful suffering and their being not self, not subject to control. This singular perception strengthens his confidence that ‘the Buddha who had given this discourse must have realized the Truth himself; he must be a true Buddha; his teachings are true and the Sanghas who are practising his teachings are true Sanghas engaged in the right practice’.

Then comes the stage when all conditioned *nāma* and *rūpa* dissolve into a state of complete cessation. This is realizing personally the peace of Nibbāna, in other words *nirodha saccā*. Simultaneously, the three remaining Truths are realized by virtue of having accomplished the tasks of fully and rightly

comprehending *dukkha*, abandoning *samudaya*, and developing *magga* in oneself. Knowing the four Truths as they should be known, his confidence and faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha becomes firmly rooted, unshakeable. His confidence in the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* also gets firmly established. With firmly rooted confidence and faith, *vicikiccha* (sceptical doubts) are well overcome. The Venerable Koṇḍañña had seen the four Truths himself and, thus, had left all uncertainties behind, *tiṇṇavicikiccho*. For this reason, too, he made the request to the Buddha for ordination. When he was free from doubts and scepticism, he became free from wavering, irresolution, indecision (*vigatakatamkato*) which is synonymous with *tiṇṇa*, *vicikiccho*. He had made the request for this reason, too.

Furthermore, he made the request to the Buddha because he had acquired courage of conviction in the teaching *vesāra japatto*, courage born of knowledge of the Truth and also because he had become quite independent of the others, *aparāpacayo*, in the matter of the doctrine of the teacher, having acquired personal knowledge of it.

Most followers of various religious faiths in the world are dependent on others in the matter of their beliefs, being ignorant about them themselves. Some worship the deities of trees, forests and mountains because the practice has been handed down from generation to generation by ancestors of the family. No one has seen nor met those beings. Some worship the king of devas, brahmas or gods of heaven. No one has the personal knowledge of these objects of worship. People take on trust

what was told to them by their parents, teachers, etc. Amongst the people of the Buddhist faith, too, prior to attainment of what should be known, they are dependent on elders, parents and teachers in the matter of their beliefs. When some knowledge has been gained by one's own effort, by means of practice of concentration meditation or vipassana meditation, self-confidence may be gained to a certain extent. When the stage is reached for attainment of *jhānas*, path and fruition, one has the personal knowledge of these attainments and the belief in them is no longer dependent on others.

CITTA, THE WEALTHY MAN AND NĀṬAPUTTA

At the time of the Buddha, there lived a certain wealthy man by the name of Citta, who had attained the stage of the *anāgami* path. One day, he happened to arrive at the place of Nāṭaputta, the leader of the Nigaṇḍa sect. The sect leader, Nāṭaputta, was worshipped as a supreme God by the followers of Jainism and was also known as Mahāvira. He was quite well-known since before the Enlightenment of the Buddha. Nāṭaputta addressed the rich man Citta, "Well, your teacher Gotama is said to have taught that there is *jhāna samādhi* free from *vitakka*, and *vicāra*. Do you believe so?"

Citta, the wealthy man, replied, "I acknowledge there is *jhāna samādhi* free from *vitakka* and *vicāra*, not because of my faith in the Buddha." The great teacher Nāṭaputta made a wrong interpretation of this reply. He thought the rich man had replied that he had no faith in the Buddha. So he told his followers, "Look, Oh disciples, the rich man Citta is very straight-

forward and honest. What he did not believe in, he said he did not believe in. Well, this matter is really unbelievable. It's impossible, just like trying to catch the air with a net, or to arrest the swift flowing waters of the Ganges with the fist or the palm of the hand. It's impossible to get free from *vitakka* and *vicāra*."

On hearing this wrong interpretation, the rich man Citta asked the great teacher Nāṭaputta, "Which is nobler, knowing or believing?" Nāṭaputta replied, "Knowing is of course nobler than believing." The rich man Citta retorted then, "I can attain anytime I wish the first *jhāna* with *vitakka* and *vicāra*; the second *jhāna* free of *vitakka* and *vicāra*; also the third *jhāna* free from *piti* and the fourth *jhāna* devoid of *sukha*. In this matter of saying 'there is *jhāna samādhi* unaccompanied by *vitakka* and *vicāra*' when I am experiencing personally the *jhāna samādhi* not accompanied by *vitakka* and *vicāra*, is there any need for me to rely on other noble persons, samanas, for my belief?"

In this story, the rich man Citta, who had experienced personally *jhāna samādhi* unaccompanied by *vitakka* and *vicāra*, had no need to rely on others for believing this fact. Likewise, Koṇḍañña, who had personal experience of the four Truths was not dependent on others on the matter of Buddha's teaching on the Eightfold path and *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. For thus personally knowing them, without depending on others, he asked the Buddha for admission to his Order. This passage is so inspiring and stimulates so much devotion that we shall recite it once again in full, complete with translation.

DEVELOPING DEVOTIONAL INSPIRATION

When the Blessed One had made the joyous utterance, the Venerable Aññāsi Koṇḍañña, having seen the dhamma, that is the Four Noble Truths, having attained, reached the Four Noble Truths, having clearly understood the Four Noble Truths, having penetrated through the Four Noble Truths, leaving uncertainty behind, having overcome all doubts, being free from wavering, irresolution, having acquired the courage of conviction with respect to the Teaching of the Buddha (not being afraid to face the enquiry as to why one has changed faith), having the personal knowledge of the dhamma, not dependent on others with regard to the Teaching, made the request to the Buddha for leave to take up the life of *samaṇera*, *samaṇa*, novice and monk, in the presence of the Buddha.

This record by the Theras of the First Council, describing the Venerable Koṇḍañña's request, gives details of his qualifications and attainments to establish his eligibility for admission to the Order, develops in the reader intense devotional inspiration. The more one knows the dhamma, the more intensely one feels this devotional inspiration.

When the Venerable Koṇḍañña made the request in the above manner, the Blessed One permitted him to join the Order in these words.

ORDINATION BY EHI BHIKKHU

“Ehi Bhikkhū” ti Bhagavā avoca, “svākkhāto dhammo cara brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāyā” ti. Sāva tassa āyasaṃ upasampadā ahosi’ti.

First, the Blessed One said, “Come, Bhikkhu, join my order.” Then he said, “Well taught is the Dhamma. Come and practise the holy life of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* for the sake of the complete ending of suffering.” This invitation by the Blessed One, saying ‘Come, Bhikkhu’ constitutes the act of ordination, and accordingly Koṇḍañña became a Bhikkhu of the Buddha’s Order.

Venerable Koṇḍañña was at that time already an ascetic, a *samana*, but not of the Buddha’s Order. Therefore, he asked for admission to the Buddha’s Order from the Blessed One who permitted him to do so by saying ‘*Ehi Bhikkhu.*’ This is acknowledgment by the Blessed One of his entry to the Buddha’s Order. Thus, the Venerable Aññāsi Koṇḍañña had become a disciple of the Buddha as a member of the Buddha’s Order.

BEINGS WHO ATTAINED A HIGHER KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HEARING THE FIRST SERMON

At the time of delivery of the Dhammacakka Sutta, there were only five members of the human world, the group of five Bhikkhus, who heard the first sermon. And of them, only one single person, the Venerable Koṇḍañña, attained to higher knowledge. But it is stated in the Milinda Pañña Pāli Text that eighteen crores of brahmas and innumerable *kāmāvacara devas* attained to the higher knowledge then.

At that time, only the Venerable Koṇḍañña had sought entry to the Buddha’s Order and became a *samaṇa* disciple of the

Buddha. The remaining four, namely, the Venerables Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji had not yet done so. Their hesitation may be accounted for by the fact that they were not fully accomplished yet in personally knowing the dhamma like the Venerable Aññāsi Koṇḍañña. They were still deficient in the courage of conviction with respect to the Buddha's teaching. But by virtue of hearing the Dhammacakka Sutta discourse, they had developed *saddhā*, faith in the teaching. Therefore, from the time of hearing the discourse, these four were being engaged in the practice of meditation under the guidance of the Blessed One. Vinaya Maha Vagga Pāli Canon gives the following account of how they practised meditation and how they came to see and realize the dhamma.

HIGHER KNOWLEDGE ATTAINED ONLY AFTER ACTUAL PRACTICE

After the Venerable Koṇḍañña had been admitted to the Order, the Blessed One gave guidance and instructions on the practice of the dhamma to the remaining four members of the group. Being thus guided and instructed by the Blessed One, the dust-free, stainless eye of dhamma rose to the Venerable Vappa and Bhaddiya 'that everything that has the nature of arising, has the nature of passing away'.

When the eye of dhamma opened and they became *sotapanas*, the Venerables Vappa and Bhaddiya requested the Blessed One for admission to the Order and the Blessed One accepted them into the order by saying "*Ehi Bhikkhu...*"

SYSTEMATIC GUIDANCE AND PRACTICE IN THE EARLY PERIODS OF THE SASANA

The Mahā Vagga Pāli text, continued.

After the Venerables Vappa and Bhaddiya had been thus admitted to the Order by the '*Ehi Bhikkhu*' ordination, the Blessed One gave instructions on dhamma and guidance to the remaining Venerables, Mahānāma and Assaji, without going on the rounds for alms-food in person. Three Bhikkhus went out for almsfood and all six, including the Blessed One, sustained themselves on whatever food was brought back by the three. Being thus guided and instructed by the Blessed One on the practice of the dhamma, the dust-free, stainless eye of dhamma arose to the Venerables Mahānāma and Assaji that 'everything that has the nature of arising, has the nature of passing away'. And these Venerables Mahanama and Assaji, having seen the dhamma, having reached, having clearly understood, having penetrated through to the dhamma, leaving uncertainty behind, having overcome all doubts, being free from wavering, irresolution, having acquired the courage of conviction with respect to the Teaching of the Buddha, having the personal knowledge of the dhamma, not depending on others with regard to the Teaching, made the following request to the Blessed One.

"Lord (*Bhante*), may we have leave to take up the ascetic life as novices in the presence of the Buddha; may we receive ordination (admission to the Buddha's Order, *upasampadam*)."
And the Blessed One replied, "Come, Bhikkhus. Well taught is the dhamma. Come and practise the holy life for the sake of com-

plete ending of suffering.” This invitation by the Blessed One constituted the act of ordination and accordingly the Venerables Mahānāma and Assaji became Bhikkhus in the Order of the Buddha.

In the Pāli text of the Vinaya Mahāvāgga, it is mentioned that the four Bhikkhus attained higher knowledge in two groups of two each, whereas its commentary states that they attained higher knowledge one by one, which is stated as follows: ‘It should be understood that the eye of dhamma arose to the Venerable Vappa on the first waning day of Wāso, to the Venerable Bhaddiya on the second waning day, to the Venerable Mahānāma on the third waning day, and to the Venerable Assaji on the fourth waning day respectively.’

Furthermore, it should be specially noted that all this while, the Blessed One had remained in the monastery without going out for alms-food, ready to render assistance to the four Bhikkhus in removing the impurities (obstacles) and complications (difficulties) that might arise to them in the course of practising meditation. Every time impurities (obstacles) arose in the Bhikkhus, the Blessed One went to their aid travelling through space and removed them. On the fifth waning day of Wāso, the Blessed One gathered all the five Bhikkhus together and instructed them by giving the discourse on the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta.’

In the above account in the commentary, the statement about the Buddha’s travelling through space to remove the impurities (obstacles) reveals the urgent nature of assistance needed by the meditating Bhikkhus. At the present time, too, it would

be beneficial if meditation teachers could constantly attend on the yogis and give guidance.

The Pasarasi Sutta of the Mūla Paṇṇasa gives the following account on the subject. ‘Bhikkhus, when I gave instructions to the two Bhikkhus, the three Bhikkhus went around for alms-food. The group of six of us lived on the food brought back by the three Bhikkhus. When I gave instructions to the three Bhikkhus, the two Bhikkhus went around for alms-food. The group of six of us lived on the food brought back by the two Bhikkhus. Then, being thus instructed and guided by me, the group of five Bhikkhus, having in themselves the nature of arising in new existence, and seeing danger and wretchedness in fresh rebirths, searched and endeavoured for the noblest, Supreme Nibbāna, free from fresh rebirth and accordingly had attained the Supreme Nibbāna which is free from rebirth, free from yoga, attachment to rebirth.’ In this way, the Blessed One stated that the five Bhikkhus had attained the *arahatta phala*.

The commentary on this Sutta has this to say. ‘The Blessed One remained in the monastery ready to go and assist the Venerable Vappa, etc., in removing the impurities that arose in the course of their meditation. Whenever impurities and complications arose in them, the Bhikkhus came to the Blessed One and asked of him (informed him of their difficulties). The Blessed One himself also went to where the Bhikkhus were sitting in meditation and removed these impurities. Thus, without going out on alms-round, living on the almsfood brought to them and following the instructions given by the Blessed

One, the Bhikkhus went on meditating. Of these Bhikkhus, the Venerable Vappa became *sotāpanna* on the first waning day of Wāso, the Venerable Bhaddiya on the second, the Venerable Mahānāma on the third and the Venerable Assaji on the fourth waning day of Wāso; the five Bhikkhus were assembled to one group and the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta was taught to them by the Blessed One. At the end of the discourse on the Suttas, all five Bhikkhus attained Arahatsip.’

MERE LISTENING TO THE DISCOURSE IS NOT SUFFICIENT,
ACTUAL PRACTICE IS NEEDED

According to the Vinaya and Sutta Pāli texts, the attainment was described as being achieved in two groups of two Bhikkhus each, whereas the commentary gave a detailed description of how individual Bhikkhus attained *sotāpanna* stage on separate days. That was the only difference between the Pāli text versions and the commentary version. It was not just by listening to the discourse, but only after actual practice that they attained *sotāpanna*. They did not go out for alms-round but worked continuously day and night. The Buddha himself stayed all the time in the monastery, ready to go to their assistance and give guidance. On these points, there is agreement in all versions.

It is very plain, therefore, that the Venerable Vappa began working in the evening of the full-moon day of Wāso and attained *sotāpanna* on the first waning day for having striven as instructed and guided by the Blessed One, not just by listening to the discourse. The Venerable Bhaddiya had to strive for

about two days and attained *sotāpanna* on the second waning day; the Venerable Mahānāma for about two days and attained *sotāpanna* on the third waning day; Venerable Assaji had to strive for about four days to attain *sotāpanna* on the fourth waning day of Wāso. All of them had to put in great efforts for their attainments, they achieved *sotāpanna* not by listening to the discourse but by working for it strenuously under the close supervision and guidance of the Blessed One himself. This fact is very plain.

Venerable Bhikkhus of the group of five, such as the Venerable Vappa, etc., were no ordinary persons. It was said that they were the royal astrologers who had foretold the future of the Bodhisatta at the time of his birth. Some commentaries, however, said that they were the sons of these court astrologers. They were singular individuals who had given up household life and become recluses while the Bodhisatta was still in his teens. They were also endowed with remarkable intelligence, able to grasp easily the teaching of the Buddha. Were *sotāpanna* attainable by mere listening to the dhamma, they were the persons who would have realized it without having to strive strenuously for it for one day, two days, etc. The Blessed One would not have to urge them to endeavour earnestly; he would merely have taught them once to become *sotāpannas* and, if necessary, would have repeated the teaching twice or thrice, etc. Instead, he required them not just to listen to the dhamma but to practise meditation strenuously. His reason for doing so was quite obvious; on reflection, he knew them to belong to the *neyya* class of individuals, who need to practise under guidance.

Assertions are being made nowadays that 'no concentration meditation nor Vipassanā meditation is necessary to reach the mere stage of *sotāpanna*; appreciating and understanding what is taught by the teacher is enough to gain this stage'. These assertions only serve to discourage and dissuade the practice of *samatha* and Vipassanā meditation. It must first be noted that these views are groundless and are causing great disservice and harm to the spread of Paṭipatti Sāsanā. It must be firmly noted too that believers and followers of such views will find the path to Nibbāna closed to them.

HOW THE VENERABLE VAPPA, ETC., STROVE FOR ATTAINMENTS

The Venerable Vappa, etc., of the group of five Bhikkhus, strove hard for attainments by developing within himself the Eightfold Path as taught in the Dhammacakka Sutta. And the Eightfold Path was developed, as described in detail earlier, by taking note of the phenomenon of seeing, hearing, etc., which is constantly occurring in oneself, so as to completely and rightly comprehend the Truth of Suffering, the *up-ādānakkhandha*.

The yogi, who first begins noting incessantly on the arising of *nāma rūpa* as it happens, may find himself troubled with wandering thoughts and imagination. Especially for the learned and instructed, scepticism and doubts are liable to arise. For some, unbearable pains will develop intensely in their bodies. Objects of strange vision and signs may distract them, giving them high opinions of themselves (with wrong conclusions as to their achievement). Some may hear whispering noises

in their ears or get demoralised through sloth and torpor. Progress may also be retarded through imbalance between *saddhā* and *paññā* (faith and knowledge) or between *samādhi* and *virīya* (concentration and effort). In the absence of concentrated effort, *samādhi ñāṇa* (one-pointedness of mind) may not be evolved.

At the stage of *udayabhaya ñāṇa* when strange phenomena such as light, *pīti*, *sukha* and peculiarly intense mindfulness appear, it is generally noted that the yogi may become self-opinionated as to his own attainments. When such distractions, defilements, difficulties arise in the course of meditation, it becomes necessary for the teacher of meditation to give guidance and help to remove them. In the absence of a teacher to guide and help him, the yogi's efforts at meditation may prove futile. That was the reason why the Blessed One waited in readiness without going out on the alms-round to give guidance while the Venerable Vappa, etc., were engaged in meditation.

With such guidance and assistance, the Venerable Vappa gained *sotāpatti magga phala* after about a day's effort. When he gained further realization of the four Truths, he became established in *diṭṭha dhamma* virtues and qualifications, etc. Knowing the truth personally, all doubts about the Teaching vanished. There came the courage of conviction, ready to face any questioning concerning the Teaching. Having established his eligibility thus, he requested of the Blessed One admission to the Order. And the Buddha acceded to his request by the welcoming words '*Ehi Bhikkhu*'.

The Venerables Bhaddiya, Mahanama and Assaji also attained *sotāpatti magga phala*, and having left uncertainty behind, gaining the courage of conviction in the dhammas, requested on the second, third and fourth waning days of Wāso, respectively, admission to the Order. And the Buddha ordained them by saying, '*Ehi Bhikkhu.*'

On the fifth waning day of Wāso, the Blessed One assembled all five Bhikkhus together and taught them the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta. At that time, while listening to the discourse, all five Bhikkhus contemplated on the *upādānakkhandha* and developed the *vipassanā maggas* by virtue of which they all attained Arahatship.

SIX ARAHATS INCLUDING THE BLESSED ONE

Tena kho pana samayena cha loke arahanto hon'ti.

Thus recorded the compilers of the First Great Council in the Vinaya Mahavagga Pāli Canon. 'At the time, after the Anatta Lakkhana Sutta had been delivered, there were six arahats, including the Buddha, in this world, a really wonderful, unprecedented event.'

Let us now bring to a close this series of discourses on the Dhammacakka Sutta by having our minds on these accomplished Venerable Ones, the six Arahats, and giving them our reverential homage: 'We, the disciples of the Blessed One, bow with clasped hands to pay our homage and adoration with a deep sense of reverence to the Buddha, together with the group of five Bhikkhu Arahats who, having eradicated the

kilesas, had become fully Accomplished Ones, two thousand five hundred and fifty-one years ago on the fifth waning day of Wāso, in the deer sanctuary, near Vārāṇasi.’

THE GREAT CONCLUDING PRAYER

May all you good people in this audience, by virtue of having given respectful attention to this great discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma, otherwise called the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, which has been delivered with full elaboration in eight parts on eight occasions, from the new moon day of Tawthalin to the full-moon day of Hnaung Tagu of 1324 B.E., be able to avoid the extremely relaxed path of indulgence in sensuous pleasures as well as the extremely austere path of self-mortification. And, by developing the Middle Path, otherwise called the Noble Eightfold Path, may you become accomplished in *pariññāpaṭiveda*, *pariññābhisamaya* (fully and rightly comprehending the Truth of Suffering), in *pahānapaṭiveda*, *pahānabhisamaya* (abandoning of the Truth of the Origin of Suffering), in *sacchikiriyapaṭiveda*, *sacchikiriyabhisamaya* (realization of the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering), and in *bhāvanāpaṭiveda*, *bhāvanābhisamaya* (developing the *magga saccā* in oneself) and very soon attain Nibbāna, the end of all sufferings.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

THIS IS THE END OF THE GREAT DISCOURSE ON THE DHAMMACAKKA SUTTA.