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# **THE NOT-SELF (ANATTA) DOCTRINE AND VIPASSANĀ**

by

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**Only if you perform Vipassanā Meditation by the  
Buddha's Way, can you get rid of personality-  
belief and get enlightened as a stream-winner to  
live most happily, enjoying eternal peace and  
unique bliss of Nibbāna.**

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(1)The Not-Self (*Anatta*) Doctrine and Vipassanā

*Dr. Mehm Tin Mon's Dhamma Series No.62***The Not-Self (*Anatta*) Doctrine and Vipassanā****CONTENTS**□ **SYNOPSIS**

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*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambhuddassa*

## THE NOT-SELF (ANATTA) DOCTRINE AND VIPASSANĀ

### "SYNOPSIS"

- **The Concepts of Creator God, Self and Soul**

As man's mind is defiled and debased by *defilements* (*kilesās*) and his vision is blinded by ignorance (*avijjā*), he cannot penetratively see the true nature of sense objects; he can see only outside appearances of living beings as **concepts** (*paññāntis*) which appear in his mind. According to these **concepts**, he regards man, woman, person, cat, dog, etc., to really exist. He also thinks that a '**self**' or '**ego**' with the capacity to see, to know, to feel, to think, to act, etc., exists in each person.

Again in his ignorance, weakness, fear and desire, and in order to protect the 'self' for safety and to preserve the 'self' for ever, man conceived of an "**Almighty God**" or "**Mahā Brahmā**" or "**Paramatta**" who created the world and all living beings together with a permanent 'soul', 'ego' or 'jiva-atta' in each person. According to some



religions, each person has such a separate soul which can think, act, enjoy, etc., and which, finally after death, lives eternally either in heaven or hell according to the judgement of its creator. According to others, *jīva-atta* migrates from one existence to another until it becomes totally pure to be united with *Parama-atta* for ever.<sup>1,2</sup>

- **Truly Omniscient Buddha Could See and Know Ultimate Realities that Really Exist in the Universe**

The truly Exalted Omniscient Buddha, with his supernormal divine eye, could see all beings in one hundred thousand crores of world systems and also the ultimate materialities and the ultimate mentalities, which are the ultimate components of body and mind, in all those living beings. But he did not see Creator God or Creator Brahmā, neither did he see any permanent entity that can be called a soul, ego or *atta*.<sup>3</sup>

Thus in Buddhism, Creator, Soul, *Atta* do not exist. What really exist in the whole universe and in living beings are 28 types of **materialities** (*rūpa*) and 53 types of **mentalities** (consciousness +52

types of mental factor, collectively called "*nāma*".) Our bodies are made up of ultimate materialities produced by four causes – viz, *kamma*, *citta* (consciousness), *utu* (heat), *āhāra* (nutriment). Our minds are composed of consciousness and several mental factors and cognitive consciousnesses and associated mental factors are produced by the contact between six sense-doors and six types of sense objects. Rebirth-consciousness, life-continuum and death-consciousness are produced by the *kamma* which produces the present existence.

Ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities are collectively called "**ultimate realities**" (*paramatthas*). They are so subtle that they cannot be detected by science instruments. Thus they are unknown to scientists, psychologists and philosophers. Yet they can be clearly observed and known in *vipassanā* meditation.

### • **Three Characteristics of Existence**

Ultimate realities arise and perish extremely rapidly and incessantly; so they have the characteristic of **impermanence** (*anicca*), **suffering** (*dukkha*) and **not-self** (*anatta*), which are known as "**three**

**characteristics of existence".** The not-self characteristic is known only in the Buddha's dispensation. It is not known outside Buddhism, because it is covered up by compactness of mentalities-materialities. The Buddha gave the guidance how to break down or penetrate this compactness with wisdom to see the not-self characteristic clearly in vipassanā meditation.

- **The *Anatta* Doctrine and Two Basic Wrong Views**

The anatta-doctrine teaches that self, soul, ego, personality or any other self-identity do not exist either in the body and mind or outside of them. The belief that self is identical with soul or *atta* is called the wrong view of self-illusion (*atta-diṭṭhi*). The belief that self is identical with any one of the five aggregates of grasping is called personality-belief (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*).

As these two basic wrong views give rise to thousands of other wrong views and produce harmful thoughts of selfishness, selfish desire, craving, attachment, pride, conceit, anger, hatred, they are

the sources of all problems and troubles in the world from personal conflicts to world wars. Again in combination with bad karmas, they produce woeful rebirths life after life in woeful abodes.

- **To get rid of self-identity and personality-belief is most Important**

According to the Buddha's teaching, to get rid of self-identity and personality-belief is most important and most urgent. These wrong views can be totally eliminated only by the attainment of the Path of Stream-entry (*Sotāpattimagga*).<sup>4</sup>

Tranquillity meditation and insight meditation including the development of *Jhāna* concentration, discerning and defining ultimate realities, verification of the causal relations of Dependent Origination and the fourfold *anupassanās* are being taught in full strictly in accord with the teachings of the Buddha in order to be enlightened to Four Noble Truths in this very life in International Paauk Forest Buddha *Sāsana* Meditation Centres in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tai Wan, U.S.A., etc.. All are invited to come and meditate free of charge.

## "MAIN PAPER"

### • Introduction

To know whether 'self', 'soul' or 'atta' really exists or does not exist in living beings and in the whole universe, we must know what really exist and what do not really exist in the universe.

**The truly omniscient Exalted Buddha**, with his supernormal divine eye and omniscient wisdom saw and know ultimate realities consisting of ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly in living beings. He did not see any Creator God and any permanent entity which can be called 'self', 'soul', 'ego' or 'atta' either within the bodies and minds of living beings or outside them in the universe.

Therefore, **the important doctrine of 'not-self', 'no-soul', 'no-ego' or 'no-atta' exists only in Buddhism.** As no one beside the Exalted Buddha could see and know ultimate realities, which really exist in living beings and in the whole universe, by rational thinking, logical reasoning, free thinking or by scientific investigation, **the 'Not-self' or 'Anatta' Doctrine does not exist outside Buddhism.**

- **Conventional Realities and Ultimate Realities**

In his higher teaching called *Abhidhamma*, the **truly Omniscient Buddha** described two kinds of realities.

Living beings and inanimate things are **Conventional Realities**. All people can see them and know them by their sense-perceptions; so they are regarded to really exist. Using the names given to them such as man, woman, human, person, cat, dog, animal, house, table in conversation amounts to **Conventional Truths**.

In keeping pure morality, we should not cause any harm to any living being and we should radiate loving kindness and compassion to all living beings to get great merit. However, when living beings are divided or analysed into their components, they disappear. So they exist as concepts (*paññatti*) which appear in our minds, but **they don't exist in the ultimate sense as irreducible realities**.

**Ultimate Realities** (*Paramatthas*) which really exist in nature are of four kinds: *citta*, *cetasika*, *rūpa*, *Nibbāna*.

**Citta** : consciousness which is aware of sense

objects.

**Cetasika** : mental factors (52 kinds) which depend on consciousness for their arising and perishing together; minds are the combinations of consciousness and various mental factors which are collectively called **mentality (nāma)**.

**Rūpa** : materiality (28 kinds); it cannot know, feel, think, etc.; it changes colours, shape, etc., on account of heat and cold.

**Nibbāna** : eternal peace, cessation of craving, anger, ignorance, and emancipation from all suffering.

- **What Really Exist in the Universe and Living Beings**

What really exist in the universe and living beings are *citta*, *cetasika*, *rūpa* or in other words 28 types of ultimate materialities and 53 types of mentalities (consciousness + 52 mental factors).

Materialities and mentalities are collectively called "**ultimate realities**" or "**formations**" or

**"conditioned things"** (*saṅkhāra*), because they are produced by natural causes and conditions.

**The causes which produce materialities** are *kamma*, *citta*, *utu* (heat) and *āhāra* (nutriment).

**The causes which produce mentalities** as minds are reproductive *kamma*, six internal bases (6 sense-doors) and six external bases (6 types of sense-objects). When a sense object (visible object) strikes and appears at a sense-door (eye-door), if attention (*manasikāra*) is also present, a series of consciousness or minds arise to be aware of the sense-object.

Now ultimate materialities and mentalities are so subtle that they cannot be seen and detected even with the help of science instruments. So they are not known to scientists, psychologists, and philosophers. **To know them is most important, because all psychophysical phenomena are occurring in terms of ultimate realities** just as physical or chemical reactions are occurring in terms of electrons, protons and neutrons, which are material groups comprising 8 ultimate materialities.<sup>4</sup>



- **Who could really See and Know Ultimate Realities**

With the help of his supernormal power of divine eye and omniscient wisdom, the Exalted Buddha could see all living beings in a hundred thousand crores of world systems known as "the Field of Authority" (*Ānākhetta*) of a Buddha. When he contemplated the true nature of those beings living in each universe and belonging to three passages of time (past, present, future), he came to know full well that no matter how numerous devas, humans and Brahmās were in a single universe, only mentalities and materialities were arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly and they could be reduced to twelve factors of Dependent Origination as ultimate realities as shown in Table 2.

Accutally we don't need divine eye and omniscient wisdom to see ultimate realities and define each of them by its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause. **Bodhisatta Siddhattha** practiced skillfully to develop the eight *jhāna* attainments and on the night of his full enlightenment as the Buddha under the Bodhi tree,

he developed the fourth *rūpavacan jhāna* and came out of it in the first watch of the night.

At that time his mind-continuum was completely pure; it appeared glittering and radiated very bright penetrative light. As soon as he inclined his mind towards the **supernormal knowledge of former existences**, that supernormal knowledge called ***pubbenivāsānussati-abhiññā*** arose in him easily.<sup>3,5</sup>

Through this supernormal knowledge, he recollected and saw all his uncountable past existences, past activities and events up to the existence when he was **Sumedha** the hermit, who attained the **Prophecy of Buddha Dipaṅkara** to become a future Buddha four asaṅkheyya (*acons*) and one hundred thousand world cycles ago.

**He could also see the phenomena of mentalities and materialities arising and perishing continuously throughout the countless rounds of past existences. Indeed in all abodes and at all times the phenomena of mentalities and materialities arising and perishing were in a continuous state of flux like the flame of an oil lamp or like the current of a river.**<sup>5</sup>

Thus in **Samādhi Sutta**,<sup>6</sup> the Buddha urged bhikkhus to develop the right concentration, preferably the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna*, to see and know the ultimate realities and the Four Noble Truths as they really are.

According to the experience of our International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana meditators, when they can develop the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna*, their minds become very pure and very powerful, radiating very brilliant penetrative light. With the help of this light, they can see penetratively the internal organs in their bodies as well as in other's bodies and with closed eyes they could see objects in front of them as well as very far away objects.

• **Systematic Purification of the Mind**

According to **Rathavinā Sutta**<sup>7</sup> and **Visuddhi Magga**,<sup>8</sup> the mind should be purified systematically in seven stages:

1. **Sīla-visuddhi** – purification of morality,
2. **Citta-visuddhi** – purification of the mind by developing the right concentration,

3. ***Diṭṭhi-visuddhi*** – purification of view,
  4. ***Kaṅkhāvitarāṇa-visuddhi*** – purification by overcoming doubts,
  5. ***Maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi***  
– purification by knowledge and vision of the Path and Not-Path,
  6. ***Paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi***  
– purification by knowledge and vision of the way,
  7. ***Nāṇadassana-visuddhi*** – purification by knowledge and vision.
- **Defining Ultimate Materialities<sup>9</sup> to develop the Purification of View**

According to the above instruction, after developing pure morality and pure mind, the meditator should undertake the purification of view. For this purpose he should perform the meditations of "**defining materialities**" (*rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*) and "**defining mentalities**" (*nāma-kammaṭṭhāna*) according to the instruction of the Buddha in Visuddhi Magga.

For the purpose of defining materialities, the Buddha taught "**the meditation of defining the four primary elements**" (*Catudhātuvavatthāna*).

To undertake this meditation, the meditator first discerns the twelve characteristics of the four primary elements—viz. hardness, softness, roughness, smoothness, heaviness and lightness for the element of extension (*pathavī*), cohesiveness and fluidity for the element of cohesion (*āpo*), hotness and coldness for the element of heat (*tejo*) and supporting and pushing for the element of motion (*vāyo*).

The procedure is: starting from a place in his body where hardness is distinct, the meditator discerns the characteristic of hardness in every part of his body. He repeats this procedure to discern the remaining eleven characteristics one after another. He should begin with the easier ones: e.g., pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, hotness, coldness, cohesiveness and fluidity.

When all the characteristics are distinct, he should rearrange the order in conformity with the order given in the discourse, that is in the order: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness (for *pathavī*), cohesiveness and fluidity (for *āpo*), hotness, and coldness, (for *tejo*)

and supporting and pushing (for *vāyo*).

He practices to discern all the 12 characteristics of 4 primary elements in the said order repeatedly in his whole body until he can discern all of them almost simultaneously. He then concentrates his attention on the 12 characteristics until very bright and penetrative light radiates from his mind. This indicates the attainment of the **neighbourhood concentration**.

As he keeps on focusing on the 4 elements (12 characteristics), first a grey colour, then a white colour, and then a clear mass like a block of ice or glass generally appears. This clear mass represents translucent materialities (*pasāda-rūpas*) in the whole body. When he penetratively discerns the four primary elements in the clear mass, the mass breaks down into very tiny particles of material groups (*rūpa-kalāpas*), which are comparable with electrons and protons in size.

He continues to discern the four primary elements in the material groups with his wisdom as he has discerned them in his body. Then he discerns all derived materialities one by one in the material groups. He then defines each ultimate

materiality by its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause. After discerning and defining the materialities internally in himself, he also discerns and defines the materialities externally in others.

• **Defining Ultimate Mentalities<sup>10</sup>**  
**(*Nāma-Kammaṭṭhāna*)**

*Abhidhamma Saṅgaha* (the Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma)<sup>10</sup> describes that **life-continuum** (*bhavaṅga-cittas*) serves as the **mind-door**, and that past, present, future sense-objects including consciousness, mental factors and ultimate materialities can appear in the mind-door and can be observed by mind-door cognitive consciousnesses. So ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities can be observed by mind-door cognitive consciousnesses which are associated with the *jhāna* concentration.

In order to discern and define ultimate mentalities, they should be observed in the six sense-doors in terms of cognitive series of consciousness. According to *Abhidhamma Commentary* a visible object appears in the eye-door and the mind-door simultaneously, a sound appears in the

ear-door and the mind-door simultaneously, and so on.

So the meditator first develops the *jhāna* concentration until bright and penetrative light is radiated. He observes the eye-door (*cakkhu-pasāda*) and the mind-door (*bhavaṅga-citta* depending on heart-base in the heart) together, and observes a visible object striking the two doors simultaneously. Then he discerns the cognitive series of consciousness that arises at the eye-door as follows.<sup>11</sup>

-Bh-"Tī-Na-Da-Pa-Ca-Sp-St-Vo-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-  
Ja-Ja-Td-Td"-Bh-

Bh = <i>bhavaṅga stream</i>	= life-continuum,
Tī = <i>atīta-bhavaṅga</i>	= past-bhavaṅga,
Na = <i>bhavaṅga-calana</i>	= vibrating bhavaṅga,
Da = <i>bhavaṅgu-paccheda</i>	= cut-off bhavaṅga,
Pa = <i>pañcadvārāvajjana</i>	= five-door directing consciousness,
Ca = <i>cakkhu-viññāṇa</i>	= eye-consciousness; it sees the object,
Sp = <i>sampaticchana</i>	= receiving consciousness,



Vo = *Votṭhapana* = manodvārāvajjana; it  
determines sense-object,  
Ja = *javana* = impulsive consciousness;  
it enjoys the taste of sense-object,  
Td = *tadārammaṇa* = registering consciousness;  
it continues enjoying object,  
Bh = *bhavaṅga* stream = life-continuum flows on.

Similar cognitive series arise at the ear-door, the nose-door, the tongue-door, the body-door.

After the termination of each of the above five door cognitive series, several **consequent mind-door cognitive series** occur, taking the past sense-object in order to investigate the detailed features of the sense-object.

• **Independent Mind-door Cognitive series** also arises when a subtle sense-object appears at the mind-door directly.

Clear object:

-Bh-"Na-Da-Ma-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Td-Td"-Bh-

Not clear object:

-Bh-"Na-Da-Ma-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja-Ja"-Bh-

The symbols have the same meanings as described earlier.

'Ma' stands for *manodvārāvajjana* = determining consciousness.

'Td' will be absent for sense objects of fairly great intensity; it arises only when *kāma*-sense object of very great intensity and *kāma-jāvanas* are arising in *kāma*-persons.

After discerning each consciousness in each cognitive series by the characteristic of the consciousness, the meditator investigates the mental factors which associate with each consciousness, He investigates whether the characteristic of *phassa* making contact between the consciousness and the sense-object is present or not in each consciousness to know whether *phassa* is present or not. Next he investigates whether the characteristic of *vedanā*, i.e., the sensation or feeling is present or not in each consciousness. In this way he can discern all the mental factors, which associate with each consciousness.

### • **Knowledge of Defining Mentality-Materiality**

After discerning the ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities internally in oneself and externally in others, each materiality and each men-

tality are defined by their respective characteristics, functions, manifestations and proximate causes which are described in "The Essence of Visuddhi Magga, Volume II."<sup>12</sup>

**The knowledge of defining each consciousness, each mental factor, and each ultimate materiality by means of their respective characteristics, functions, manifestations and proximate causes is known as "*Nāma-rūpa pariccheda-ñāṇa*" - "the Knowledge of Defining Mentality-Materiality." This knowledge is the land-mark of the "Purification of View" (Ditṭhi-Visuddhi).**

• **Three Characteristics of Existence**

The meditator can also observe that all ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities are arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly. According to Abhidhamma Commentary, billions of minds or mentality arise and perish in every second, and the life span of materiality is seventeen times the life-span of mentality.

Thus ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities have the characteristic of:

1. *Anicca-lakkhaṇa* – the characteristic of

impermanence,

2. *Dukkha-lakkhaṇa* – the characteristic of suffering,

3. *Anatta-lakkhaṇa* – the characteristic of not-self.

*Anatta* or *no-soul* or *not-self* is the crux of Buddhism. Since living beings are composed of only ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities, which are arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly, and no permanent entity that can be called 'self', 'soul', 'ego', 'personality', 'jīva-atta' or 'atta' is present, all existences also have the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and not-self, which are known as "**three characteristics of existence**" (*tilakkhaṇa*).

All ultimate realities are formless, shapeless, and they arise and perish very rapidly and incessantly. So they have the characteristic of ***impermanence (anicca)***.

What is not permanent is unsatisfactory and to be tortured incessantly by the dissolution and perishing of mentality-materiality really amounts to ***suffering (dukkha)***.

Moreover, as mentality-materiality are formless, shapeless, and they arise and perish very rapidly and incessantly, no permanent entity to be taken as 'person', 'personality', 'self', 'soul', 'ego', *jīva*, 'atta' really exists. This absence of 'self', 'soul', or 'atta', etc., is called 'not-self' (*anatta*) characteristic.

If a meditator can discern these three characteristics clearly and contemplates ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities in terms of them in various ways, he will be able to develop ten insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇas*) and attain Nibbāna.

The Buddha advised in Dhammapada as follows: "*Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccātī yadā paññāya passati; Atha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā.*"

*Transcient are all conditioned things: when this, with insight wisdom, one discerns and contemplates, then one is disgusted with suffering; this disgusting is the cause for the attainment of Nibbāna.*

*Painful are all conditioned things: when this, with insight wisdom, one discerns and contem-*

*plates, then one is disgusted with suffering; this disgusting is the cause for the attainment of Nibbāna.*

*All ultimate realities are without a soul: when this, with insight wisdom, one discerns and contemplates, then one is disgusted with suffering; this disgusting is the cause for the attainment of Nibbāna.*

*(Dhammapada 277, 278, 279)*

***"Whether Perfect Ones (Buddhas) appear in the world or whether Perfect Ones do not appear in the world, it still remains a firm condition and immutable fact and fixed law, that all formations (mentalities-materialities) are impermanent, that all formations are subject to suffering, that everything is without a self."***

- **Ultimate Realities are Known only in Buddhism**

Ultimate realities consisting of ultimate materialities, consciousness, mental factors and Nibbāna are known in detail only in Buddhism. They are not known outside Buddhism, because no one can know them by rational thinking, free thinking,

logical reasoning, scientific investigation as they cannot be detected by any science instruments.

Scientists could divide atoms into electrons, protons and neutrons in the twentieth century, and could explain physical reactions, nuclear reactions in terms of the atomic theory and electronic theory. Consequently science progresses tremendously with the invention of nuclear reactors, hydrogen bombs, computers, televisions, ipads, iphones, etc.

But electrons, protons, neutrons are not ultimate materialities: they are material groups consisting of 8 ultimate materialities. And scientists and psychologists do not know what the mind really is, because the mind cannot be detected by science instruments up till now.

They even think that the **brain** is functioning as the mind. This is not correct, because the brain is just materiality; it cannot think, feel or know anything.

**Professor Sir John Eccles**, the most prominent Neurologist in the United Kingdom, performed a special research on the brain and remarked: "*The study on the structure of the brain reveals that the*

*brain is a kind of computer run by a ghost. The ghost here means something that cannot be detected by instruments which are used to detect material things.*"<sup>13</sup>

That ghost is actually the mind. Not only the brain is a kind of computer, but also the mind is a kind of great supercomputer which can store up billions of data including all our knowledges and experiences in our uncountable past existences. The Buddha could read the minds of people to know the actions they have done in their uncountable past existences. **Besides, the mind controls our thoughts, speeches and actions; so it controls the whole world.**

**The Buddha knew the defilements (*kilesās*) which are immoral mental factors and the basic causes of all our suffering and all evil actions. He also knew how to develop our beautiful mental factors, including the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, in order to eliminate all those bad defilements in our minds so that we can enjoy the eternal peace and unique happiness of Nibbāna for ever.**



**The Buddha could explain all psychophysical phenomena occurring in all living beings and in the whole universe in terms of ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities. All the teachings of the Buddha and Buddhism are natural truths based on ultimate realities. *In discovering ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities, it is actually the great discovery of Ultimate Science by the Buddha.***

- **The Doctrine of *Anatta* Exists only in Buddhism**

The three characteristics of existence, namely, *impermanence (anicca)*, *suffering (dukkha)* and *anatta (not-self)*, are the objects of vipassanā meditation. Without knowing them clearly, vipassanā meditation including dhammānupassanā cannot be done properly.

Only when can we successfully analyse mind and body systematically into their ultimate components called ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities and then define each ultimate reality by means of its characteristic, function, manifestation and

proximate cause, can we know the ultimate realities that exist in us definitely as well as their three characteristics of existence.

**Now the third characteristic of *not-self* (*anatta*) is most difficult to discern and to know clearly, because it is covered up by the compactness of mentality and materiality. This compactness (*ghana*) is of four kinds.**

1. ***Santati-ghana*** – mentality and materiality arise one after another due to causes very quickly and continuously without any gap in between. So we think that only one mentality or one materiality exists.
2. ***Samūha-ghana*** – mentality and materiality never arise singly; they always arise in groups such as minds and material groups. Each mind consists of one consciousness and several mental factors. Each material group consists of 8, 9, 10 different materialities. They appear as one unit and one kind.
3. ***Kicca-ghana*** – the components of each mind and each material group have different functions. If we don't know these different functions, we

think that they perform just one function as a single unit.

4. **Ārammana-ghana** – eye-consciousness and all the mental factors which associate with it see the same visible object. If we cannot discern the different functions performed by different components, we take eye-consciousness and mental factors as one entity.

Thus it is very important to analyse each mental group (mind) and each material group (*rūpa-kalāpa*) into their ultimate components to know the ultimate realities definitely and also the absence of 'self', 'soul', 'ego', 'jīva', 'atta' and any other self-identity.

*The not-self or anatta characteristic is not distinct and not known, because it is covered up by compactness as group or person. If the compactness can be broken down or analysed with wisdom, the not-self characteristic becomes clear and evident as it really is.*<sup>14,15</sup>

The doctrine of 'anatta', 'not-self', 'no-soul', 'non-ego', 'egolessness' exist only in Buddhism, because only the Exalted Omniscient Buddha knew it and taught it clearly and unreservedly.

The *Anatta* Doctrine teaches that neither within the body and mind, nor outside them, can be found anything that can be regarded as 'self', 'soul', 'ego', '*atta*' or any other permanent self-identity. Whosoever does not penetrate this impersonality of all existences, and does not comprehend that in reality only the phenomena of arising and perishing of mentalities and materialities exist in the whole universe; he will not be enlightened to the four Noble Truths and will not realize *Nibbāna*.<sup>16</sup>

*Thus it is said in Visuddhi Magga, XVI:*

*"Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found;*

*The deeds are, but no doer of the deeds is there;*

*Nibbāna is, but no man that enters it;*

*The Path is, but no traveler on it is seen".*

• **The Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta,**<sup>17</sup>

**"the Discourse on the Characteristic of Not-self"**

After his full enlightenment as an Exalted Buddha, the Buddha preached and taught his first discourse known as **"Turning the Wheel of**

**Dhamma"** (*Dhamma-cakka-pavattana Sutta*) to the group of five ascetics called **Pañca-Vaggī** for five days. On each day one of them was enlightened as a Stream-winner. When the Buddha called them "*Ehi Bhikkhus*", they all became bhikkhus fully equipped with robes and alms-bowls.

On the sixth day the Buddha preached his second discourse known as "the Discourse on the Characteristic of Not-self" (*Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta*) to them. At the end of the discourse, they all became Arahants (Perfect Persons). So the *Anatta-lakkhaṇa Sutta* is very powerful.

### • **The Concept of Creator and Soul**

As the mind of man is defiled and debased by defilements and his vision is blinded by ignorance (*avijjā*), he does not know the true nature of sense-objects. As he can see living beings and inanimate things, he believes that all these things including himself really exist.

As he does not know the workings of the mind in combination with the body, he thinks that a 'self' or 'soul' or 'ego' or 'atta' or any other self-identity is present in each individual, and it is this 'self'

which thinks, acts, enjoys, suffers, etc.

**Based on this concept of 'self', two ideas are psychologically deeply rooted in man: self-protection and self preservation.** In his ignorance, weakness, fear and desire, he needs these two things to console himself. So he conceived of a **Creator God** or **Mahā Brahmā** or **Parama-atta** who creates the world and all living beings together with a permanent '**soul**' or '**jīva-atta**' within an individual.

According to some religions each person has such a separate soul, which commands all the person's actions and enjoys all the fruits of the actions, which, finally after death, lives eternally either in heaven or hell in accordance with the judgement of the Creator. According to some other religions, the soul or atta migrates from one existence to another to produce reincarnation in many new existences until it is totally purified to be finally united with Mahā Brahmā or Parama-atta, the Creator.<sup>1,2</sup>

- **How to Develop the Outlook on Self-identity beyond the Concept**

With his supernormal divine eye, the Exalted

Buddha could see all beings in one hundred thousand crores of world systems, yet he did not see any God or Mahā Brahmā or Parama-atta, who could create the world and living beings. Again he could penetratively see all mentalities and materialities arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly in those beings; but he never saw a permanent soul or ego or atta in any individual.

***In Buddhism the belief identifying 'self' with 'soul' or 'atta' is called the wrong view of 'self-illusion', and the belief identifying 'self' with any one of the five aggregates of grasping is called 'Personality-belief'.***

Such a wrong view makes one very selfish and egoistic, producing harmful thoughts of 'I', 'my', 'me', 'mine', selfish desires, craving, attachment, anger, hatred, ill-will, pride, conceit and other defilements. It is the source of all problems and troubles in life and in the world from personal conflicts to world-wars.

How many of us have ever pondered deeply over the statement made by the British Prime Minister William Gladstone:

**"Selfishness is the greatest curse of the human race".**

One dreadful thing about personality-belief or self-illusion is that it can couple with bad karmas to produce woeful rebirths in woeful abodes life after life. A well known meditation teacher, Mogoke Sayadaw, called it **"a ticket to hell"**.

According to the Buddha's teachings, to get rid of 'personality-belief' or 'self-illusion' is most important and most urgent in life. It is as urgent as putting out the fire on one's head when the head is on fire, or as removing the spear and treating the wound in one's chest when the chest is impaled by a spear.

In the fourth stage of purification of the mind by transcending doubts pertaining to past existences, present existence, and future existences, the meditator must discern penetratively and know clearly the causal relations of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), which will be described soon.

In International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centres, a meditator is asked to discern



his three past existences and his future existences as much as he can see. Then he correlates one cause for one effect as well as five causes for five effects according to the causal realtions of Dependent Origination pertaining to his three past existences, his present existence and his future existences.

Then he can observe the whole series of the arising and perishing mentalities and materialities extending from his most past existence to his last future existence that he has discerned.

When the Bodhisatta looked at his past existences up to the existence of **Sumedhā** with his supernormal knowledge of former existences called *Pubbenivāsānussati-abhiññā*, he could also see the phenomena of mentalities and materialities arising and perishing continuously throughout his countless rounds of past existences. Indeed in all abodes and at all times the phenomena of mentalities and materialities arising and perishing were in a continuous state of flux as a long chain of mentality-materiality or as the stream of a river.<sup>5</sup>

**So a meditator may identify his self or personality with the long chain or stream of his arising and perishing mentalities and materi-**

**alities throughout his past existences up to the present existence beyond the concept of a permanent self, soul, ego or atta.**

In the rounds of rebirths and deaths explained by the Doctrine of Dependent Origination, there is no permanent '**soul**' or '**atta**', which migrates from one existence to another; only the twelve factors, which are mentalities and materialities, really exist. Thus when the meditator can penetratively and clearly discern the causal relations of Dependent Origination pertaining to his three past existences, present existence, and future existences, he can get rid of the concept of a permanent 'self', 'soul' or 'atta'.

When the meditator continues to undertake vipas-sanā-meditation, develops ten insight knowledges and becomes enlightened as a stream-winner, he can totally eliminate all wrong views including 'personality-belief', 'self-illusion', and 'self-identity of soul, ego and atta'.

- **Purification of the Mind by Overcoming Doubts**<sup>18,19</sup>

After defining ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities internally and externally, the meditator

must further discern the causes which give rise to mentality and materiality to dispel doubts and wrong views about creation concepts.

Visuddhi-magga describes four causes which produce materiality; they are **Kamma, citta, utu (heat) and ojā (nutriment)**. See Table 1.

**Table 1 The Production of Materiality by four Causes**

= RŪPA = ARISING AND DISSOLUTION OF MATERIAL PHENOMENA		
	<p>Arising of rūpa:</p> <p>Starts to form at Patibandhikā, goes on forming incessantly at every minor instant.</p> <p>First formed at arising instant of first bhavaṅga; incessantly formed at arising instant of successive cittas.</p> <p>First formed at the existing instant of Patibandhikā citta. Then incessantly formed at every minor instant.</p> <p>Startling from the existing instant of the combination of internal and external oja it is formed incessantly at every minor instant.</p>	<p>Dissolution of rūpa:</p> <p>Last formed at the 17<sup>th</sup> citta reckoned backward from Cuti; last kammaja rūpa dissolves when cuti dissolves.</p> <p>Last formed at the arising instant of cuti citta; this last citta ja rūpa lasts for 16 cittaṅga moments after death.</p> <p>Continues to be formed till the corpse is reduced to bones and then to dust.</p> <p>Last formed at the dissolving instant of cuti citta; will last for 56 minor instants after death.</p>
<p>Series of citta</p> <p>Patibhava bhava bhava bhava bhava bhava</p> <p>Kammaja rūpa</p> <p>Citta ja rūpa</p> <p>Uru ja rūpa</p> <p>Ahara ja rūpa</p> <p>diffuses with internal oja</p> <p>paśaka + with blood</p>	<p>Arising of rūpa:</p> <p>Starts to form at Patibandhikā, goes on forming incessantly at every minor instant.</p> <p>First formed at arising instant of first bhavaṅga; incessantly formed at arising instant of successive cittas.</p> <p>First formed at the existing instant of Patibandhikā citta. Then incessantly formed at every minor instant.</p> <p>Startling from the existing instant of the combination of internal and external oja it is formed incessantly at every minor instant.</p>	<p>Dissolution of rūpa:</p> <p>Last formed at the 17<sup>th</sup> citta reckoned backward from Cuti; last kammaja rūpa dissolves when cuti dissolves.</p> <p>Last formed at the arising instant of cuti citta; this last citta ja rūpa lasts for 16 cittaṅga moments after death.</p> <p>Continues to be formed till the corpse is reduced to bones and then to dust.</p> <p>Last formed at the dissolving instant of cuti citta; will last for 56 minor instants after death.</p>

The **Kamma**, which gives rise to a new existence, produces its resultant consciousness one after another from the moment of conception till death. The first resultant consciousness serves as 'rebirth-consciousness, subsequent resultant consciousnesses function as life-continuum (*bhavaṅga-cittas*), and the last re-

sultant consciousness serves as death-consciousness.

This reproductive kamma also produces **kamma-born materiality (*kammaja-rūpa*)** at every submoment starting from the moment of conception.

**Mind-born materiality (*cittaja-rūpa*)** is first produced at the arising moment of the first *bhavaṅga-citta* and continues to be formed at every arising moment of subsequent *cittas* for the whole life.

**Heat-born materiality (*utuja-rūpa*)** is first formed from the existing moment of rebirth-consciousness and continues to be formed at every submoment for the whole life. The *tejo* present in every material group reaches the existing moment after one arising moment; from the existing moment it produces heat-born materiality at every submoment.

The eaten food is digested in the stomach and the nutriment diffuses with blood throughout the body. Starting from the existing moment of the combination of internal nutriment and external nutriment, new **nutriment-born materiality (*āhāraja-rūpa*)** is produced at every submoment till the perishing moment of death-consciousness.

- **The Doctrine of Dependent Origination (Paṭiccasamuppāda)**<sup>20,21</sup>

The **Buddha** reminded **Ānandā** that living beings have to undergo the rounds of rebirths and deaths, because they do not understand properly and penetratively the causal relations of Dependent Origination.

Also in Visuddhi Magga and Abhidhamma Commentary, it is clearly stated thus:

***"There is no one, even in a dream, who has emancipated from the round of misery without the ability to break through the Paṭiccasamuppāda causal relations of the Saṃsāra machine with his wisdom sword which has been sharpened on the sacred whetstone of concentration."***

Thus the causal relations of Paṭiccasamuppāda must be discerned and verified with insight wisdom to clarify the following 16 doubts and dispel all wrong views.

There are 5 kinds of doubt about past existences: "Was I born in the past? Was I not born in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in

**Table 2 Paṭiccasamuppāda Causal Relations for Three Existences**

3 Periods	12 Factors	20 Modes
Past	1 <i>Avijjā</i> (ignorance) 2 <i>Saṅkhāra</i> (kamma-formations) 3 <i>Viññāṇa</i> (Consciousness) 4 <i>Nāma-rūpa</i> (mentality-materiality) 5 <i>Saḷāyatana</i> (6 internal bases) 6 <i>Phassa</i> (Contact) 7 <i>Vedanā</i> (feeling)	<i>Kamma-bhava</i> (Kamma-process) 5 Causes: 1,2,8,9,10
Present	8 <i>Taṇhā</i> (Craving) 9 <i>Upādāna</i> (Grasping) 10 <i>Kamma-bhava</i> (Kamma-formations)	<i>Upapatti-bhava</i> (Rebirth-process) 5 Effects: 3,4,5,6,7
Future	<i>Upapatti-bhava</i> (Rebirth-process) 11 <i>Jāti</i> (Rebirth) 12 <i>Jarā-marāṇa</i> (Ageing and Death) <i>Soka, Parideva, Dukkha,</i> <i>Domanassa, Upāyāsā sambhavanti</i>	<i>Kamma-bhava</i> (Kamma-process) 5 Causes: 1,2,8,9,10  <i>Upapatti-bhava</i> (Rebirth-process) 5 Effects: 3,4,5,6,7

the past? Having been what, what was I in the past?"

There also exist 5 kinds of doubt about future existences: "Shall I be born in the future? Shall I not be born in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?"

Again there exist 6 kinds of doubt about the present: "Am I existing? Am I not existing? What am I? How am I? From what existence comes this existence? What existence will follow the present existence?"

**As shown in Table 2, the essential statement of the Doctrine is:**

1. *Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*

Dependent on ignorance arise kamma-formations;

2. *Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññānaṃ*

Dependent on kamma formations (in past life) arise resultant consciousnesses (in present life);

3. *Viññāna-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ*

Dependent on resultant consciousnesses arise mentality-materiality;

4. *Nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷāyataṇaṃ*

Mentality-materialist causes six internal bases (sense-doors) to arise;

5. *Salāyatana-paccayā phasso*

Dependent on 6 sense-doors arise contact (between sense object and consciousnesses);

6. *Phassa-paccayā vedanā*

Contact causes feeling to arise;

7. *Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā*

Feeling causes craving to arise;

8. *Taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ*

Craving causes grasping to arise;

9. *Upādāna-paccayā bhavo*

Grasping causes rebirth-producing kamma (*kamma-bhava*) and rebirth-process (*upapaṭṭi-bhava*) to arise;

10. *Bhava-paccayā jāti*

Rebirth-producing kamma (in present life) causes rebirth (in future life) to arise;

11. *Jāti paccayā jarā-maraṇaṃ soka parideva dukkha dommanassa upāyāsā sambhavanti.*

Dependent on rebirth arise ageing-death, worry, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. (When ageing-



death, worry, lamentation, pain, grief, despair arise, *avijjā* (ignorance) arises again to produce another round.)

**Note:** The above statement describes one cause for one effect. In real life, many causes can produce many effects.

• **Five Causes Produce Five Effects**

In Table 2, *avijjā* and *saṅkhāra* (factors 1,2) are the past causes for the present effects (factors 3,4,5,6,7).

Now *avijjā* is defilement, and *taṇhā*, *upādāna* are also defilements; they arise together in the same greed-rooted consciousness. So they can be taken together. Similarly both *saṅkhāra* and *kammabhava* are kamma-formations, and so they can be taken together also.

Thus we can say: "The past five causes (1, 2, 8, 9, 10) give rise to the five present effects (3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

Again *taṇhā*, *upādāna*, *kamma-bhava* (8,9,10) are the present causes for future existence = *upapattibhava*. As explained above, if we take 8,9,10 we should include 1,2; so we again get the five present

causes (1,2,8,9,10) for the arising of future existence, "*upapatti-bhava*" which is rebirth-process (3,4,5,6,7). The genesis of this future existence is '*jāti*', the ageing of future existence is '*jara*' and the death of future existence is '*maraṇa*'.

• **The Rounds of Rebirths in Terms of Three Rounds**

1. Round of defilements (*Kilesā-vaṭṭa*) = *avijjā, taṇhā, upādāna*.
2. Round of Kamma (*Kamma-vaṭṭa*) = *kamma-bhava, saṅkhāra*.
3. Round of Resultants (*Vipāka-vaṭṭa*) = *viññāṇa, nāma-rūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā (upapatti-bhava), jāti, jarā-maraṇa*.

The round of defilements will always give rise to the round of kamma, which in turn gives rise to the round of resultants. And *vedanā, jarā-maraṇa* in the round of resultants again give rise to the round of defilements.

When we can discern penetratively and comprehensively the causal relations of Dependent Originations, we know definitely why we are born again and again without the creation of any Creator

and any Soul. We can also dispel all the 16 doubts mentioned above and the wrong views such as "the view of uncausedness" (*ahetuka diṭṭhi*) which believes in the arising of living beings without any cause, "the view of the wrong cause of existence" (*Visamahetuka-diṭṭhi*) which believes in the creation of living beings by a Creator, "the view of inefficacy of action (*Akiriya-diṭṭhi*)", "the view of nihilism" (*Naṭṭhika-diṭṭhi*), "the view of eternity of the Soul or Ego" (*Sassata-diṭṭhi*) and "the view of annihilation of the Soul or Ego" (*Uccheda diṭṭhi*).

As there are no person, no self and no soul, we don't need a Creator to create a person, a self or a soul.

- **Life-problems which cannot be answered**

There are many life-problems which no one can answer. For example, **Leo Tolstoy**, the well-known Russian writer and religious philosopher, who won the **Nobel Prize** with his greatest novel "*War and Peace*", pondered deeply over some life-problems: "Why was I born? How did I come into existence? Why am I alive? What is the most important thing to do in life? Shall I be reborn again

after death? What kind of existence shall I become? These questions are certainly very important. As I cannot find the answers to these questions, I feel that the place I am standing on collapses."

The Buddha gave the answers to these questions very rationally in the Doctrine of Dependent Origination, which had been verified by direct observation by millions of Noble Persons (*Ariyās*). Nowadays many meditators could verify satisfactorily in meditation in International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centres. Of course, the most important thing to do in this life is to undertake the Noble Threefold Training in one of these centres right away!

### • **Abandoning Sceptical Doubt**

The 8 kinds of Sceptical Doubt (*Viccikicchā*) are also abandoned in observing and verifying the causal relations of Dependent Origination.

The doubts are:

1. The doubt about the Buddha.
2. The doubt about the Dhamma.
3. The doubt about the Saṅgha.
4. The doubt about kamma and its result.

5. The doubt about past existences.
6. The doubt about future existences.
7. The doubt about the front-end and the rear-end of the present existence.
8. The doubt about the causal relations of Dependent Origination.

When the meditator can eliminate wrong views and all the doubts temporarily, he becomes a **Junior Stream-winner** (*Cūḷa-Sotāpanna*).

• **Meditation on Discerning Paṭiccasamuppā Causal Relations**

According to the instruction given in Visuddhi Magga Commentary:

(1) The past five causes—viz., *ignorance (avijjā)*, kamma-formations (*saṅkhāra*), craving (*taṇhā*), grasping (*upādāna*) and kamma (*Kamma-bhava*) — must be investigated and discerned clearly, and the arising of present five effects—viz., resultant consciousnesses (*viññāṇa*), mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*), six internal bases (*saḷāyatana*), contact (*phassa*) and feeling (*vedanā*) — due to the past five causes must be observed vividly with wisdom by insight meditation.

(2) The present five causes—viz., ignorance, *kamma-formations*, craving, *grasping*, and *kamma* – must be discerned next, and the arising of the five future effects – viz., resultant consciousnesses, mentaliy-materiality, six internal bases, contact and feeling – due to present five causes must be observed clearly with wisdom by insight meditation.

Herein, the causes of Dependent Origination constitute the truth of the cause of suffering (*Samudaya-sacca*) and the effects of Dependent Origination constitute the truth of suffering (*Dukkha-sacca*).

Therefore, the meditator must observe with wisdom:

- (1) The arising of the present truth of suffering due to the past truth of the cause of suffering,**
- (2) The arising of the future truth of suffering due to the present truth of the cause of suffering.**

*In order to correlate the past causes with the present effects and the present causes with the future effects, we should know the mental and material phenomena in the past, in the present and in the future.*

How can one know the past mental and material

phenomena which have already perished, and the future phenomena which do not arise yet?

Well, the ability of the concentrated mind is marvellous. We have learnt about *pubbenivāsānussati-abhiññā* which can recollect thousands of one's past lives and *anāgataṃsaññā* which can know one's future existences.

In the case of insight meditation, we need not go to the *Abhiññā* stage and we do not have *Abhiññā* – the power of which we could make use of, but if we have the right concentration and the knowledge to characterize the mental phenomena and the material phenomena both internally and externally, then we can trace the stream of arising and perishing of mentality and materiality backward to past lives. This method is mentioned in ***Samyutta Nikāya*** (II.71 Myanmar), in *Khajjaniya Sutta*, and it is being practised satisfactorily in Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centres.

In Pa-auk Forest Meditation Centres, the meditator performs some meritorious deeds at the pagoda by offering lighted candles and flowers. He characterises the mental and material phenomena

which arise during this performance. He then goes to the meditation hall, develops concentration, discerns his mentality-materiality, and traces the series of mentality-materiality backward to the previous time of performing meritorious deed and again analyses the mental and material phenomena at that time. If he observes the same results as he has noted before, he is assured that he can characterise the near past mentality-materiality.

After that he can go on tracing the series of mentality-materiality backward until he can discern the mentality-materiality at the time of conception in his mother's womb.

So now he knows the present five effects pertaining to the present existence: rebirth-consciousness and its associated mental factors, kamma-born materiality including the sense-bases (*pasāda-rūpas*), the contact of the sense-base with the sense-object, and the resultant feeling.

Then he goes on tracing the series of mentality-materiality backward in the immediate past existence, the important events and the actions done in that existence. He can actually observe his past



existence, the important events and the actions done in that existence.

Then he focuses his mind on the mentality-materiality which arose at the time of near-death when the near-death sign appeared. From this sign, he discerns the kamma-formations and the kamma which produced the present existence,. He can also discern the three supporting forces, that is *ignorance, craving and grasping*, from their accompanying consciousness which arose at the time when the near-death sign appeared.

Next he tries to discern whether the past five causes gave rise to the present five effects. He can see the arising of the five effects due to the five causes, if they represent the true cause-effect relation. He also feel convinced that the past existence was his real existence.

Then he traces the series of mentality-materiality backward in the first past existence until he discerns the rebirth-consciousness, its associated mental factors, the kamma-born materiality, the internal sense-bases, the contact of consciousness with the sense-object and the resultant feeling.

He then proceeds tracing the series of mentality-materiality in the second past existence that gave rise to the five effects in the first past existence. If he is successful, he can proceed to find the cause-effect relation of the third past existence and the second past existence.

• **He must also discern the cause-effect relation of the present existence with the future existence.** So he offers food to the Buddha, making a wish what he wishes to become in the next existence. If he wishes to become a celestial being, then thinking the celestial existence to really exist is *ignorance* (*avijjā*), the desire to become a celestial being is *craving* (*taṇhā*), and clinging to that desire is *grasping* (*upādāna*). His wholesome consciousness and volition for offering food to the Buddha are *kamma-formations* (*saṅkhāra*) and the *kamma* seed deposited in the mental stream is *kamma-bhava*. So now he has developed the five causes for conditioning a new existence to arise.

Then he develops the concentration till it radiates very bright light and intently tries to observe the new existence which will arise due to the five present

causes. Usually the new existence which he has wished for appears vividly. He discerns the *rebirth consciousness* (*viññāṇa*), its associated *mental factors* (*nāma*), the *kamma-born materiality* (*rūpa*), the six internal *sense-bases* (*saḷāyatana*), the *contact* (*phassa*) of consciousness with the sense-object, and the resultant feeling (*vedanā*) at the moment of rebirth of the new existence.

He then tries to observe whether the present five causes give rise to the future five effects. If they are true cause-effect relation, he can observe the arising of five future effects due to the present five causes. He continues to discern the cause-effect relation of the first future existence with the second future existence in a similar way, and so on until he can observe no more future existence.

So now he has successfully discerned the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* causal relations of his past three existences, the present existence and the future existences in terms of five causes and five effects.

He further discerns the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* causal relations from one existence to another in terms

of one cause and one effect. Then the could see the Paṭiccasamuppāda causal relations of these existences extending in a continuous chain of mentalities-materialities arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly.

Thus the stage of the **Purity of view** and the **Purity by Transcending Doubts** are attained.

- **The Knowledge of Discerning the Causes of Mentality-Materiality**

The Landmark of the stage of Purity by Transcending Doubts is *Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa* = the knowledge of discerning the causes of mentality and materiality.

- **The Importance of Developing Two Basic Knowledges for Vipassanā Meditation**

The Knowledge of Defining Ultimate Mentalities and Ultimate Materialities (*Nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*) and the Knowledge of Discerning the Causes of Mentality and Materiality (*Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*) are very important. They are the basic knowledges for vipassanā meditation and they constitute the foundation for the arising of ten insight knowledges (*Vipassa-*

*nāññāṇas*). They are not included in *vipassanā-ññāṇas*, because they do not contemplate the three characteristics of existence.

### • **Vipassanā Meditation**

Vipassanā is concerned with the last three stages or purification of the mind:

- 1 Purification by knowledge and vision of the Path and Not-path,
- 2 Purification by knowledge and vision of the way,
- 3 Purification by knowledge and vision.

The field of *vipassanā* includes 18 real ultimate materialities (*niphanṇa-rūpas*), 81 mundane consciousnesses and 52 mental factors.

Vipassanā is concerned only with Ultimate materialities and Ultimate mentalities according to the statement:

***"Paññattim̐ ṭhapetvā aniccādi ākārena vividham̐ passatīti vipassanā"***

***"Setting aside all concepts, only ultimate materialities and ultimate mentalities are defined and contemplated in various special ways in terms of three characteristics of existence, namely, impermanence, suffering and***

***not-self. So it is called 'Vipassanā.'***

Some meditation teachers say that just by meditating on one materiality or one mentality will lead to the realization of Nibbāna. That is not the Buddha's way.

Some teachers again say, in vipassanā meditation, we should pay attention only to the present mentality-materiality whatever appears in our bodies and minds. That is also not the Buddha's way.

According to **Abhidhamma Commentary (1.271) and Visuddhimagga Commentary (2.300)**:

- 1 meditating on materialities alone will not lead to Path-wisdom;
- 2 meditating on mentalities alone will not lead to Path-wisdom;
- 3 meditating on only five internal aggregates will not lead to Path-wisdom;
- 4 meditating on only five external aggregates will not lead to Path-wisdom;
- 5 According to instructions in **Visuddhimagga** (Mahāsī 4.282-283), **Paṭisambhidā Pāli** (51-

52), **Samyutta Pāli** (2.258), **Mūlapannāsa Commentary** (1.281) one must meditate on all internal materialities and mentalities, all external materialities and mentalities, all mundane ultimate materialities and mentalities, which represent the causal relations of Dependent Origination, pertaining to the past, to the present and to the future.

**Vipassanā Meditation the Buddha's Way and as it is carried out in International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centres** is described briefly in my two books:

- (1) *Meditation the Buddha's Way*, pages 67-103,
- (2) *The Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma*, Third Edition, pages 291-321, and quite in detail in the following book:
- (3) *The Essence of Visuddhi Magga*, Volume II, by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, pages 273-350.

When Vipassanā meditation is carried out correctly and systematically, the following ten insight knowledges will arise one after another.

• **Ten Insight Knowledges (Vipassanā-ñāṇas)**

- 1 ***Sammasana-ñāṇa*** – the Knowledge of defining and contemplating mentality-materiality as imper-

manence, suffering and not-self in many special ways.

- 2 **Udayabbaya-ñāṇa** – the knowledge that comprehends distinctly the mentality-materiality at the genetic moment as well as at the perishing moment together with the three characteristics of existence.
- 3 **Bhaṅga-ñāṇa** – the knowledge of discerning the rapid and incessant dissolution of mentality-materiality.
- 4 **Bhaya-ñāṇa** – the knowledge of discerning the fearful nature of all formations (Mentality-materiality) which appear as terror.
- 5 **Ādīnava-ñāṇa** – the knowledge of realization of the fault and unsatisfactoriness in all formations as they arise and perish very rapidly and incessantly.
- 6 **Nibbidā-ñāṇa** – the knowledge of feeling bored and disgusted with all formations as they are known to be with fault and unsatisfactoriness.
- 7 **Muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa** – the knowledge of the desire for deliverance from all formations in the 31 planes of existence.



- 8 **Paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa** – the knowledge of exertion for deliverance by reinvestigating all formations in the 31 planes of existence in terms of three characteristics of existence.
- 9 **Saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa** – the knowledge of equanimity towards all formations in the 31 planes of existence.
- 10 **Anuloma-ñāṇa** – conformity knowledge which conforms to the functions of truth both in the nine preceding insight knowledges and in the 37 factors of enlightenment that follow.

When *Anulomañāṇa* arise, the following Path-absorption cognitive series also arises, enlightening the meditator to the four Noble Truths and to become a Noble Person (*ariyā*).

- **Path-Absorption Cognitive Series (Magga Appanā Vithi)**

*Manda Paññā*

-Na-Da-Ma-Pa-U-Nu-Go-Mag-Pha-Pha-Bha-

*Tikkha Paññā*

-Na-Da-Ma-U-Nu-Go-Mag-Pha-Pha-Pha-Bha-

Na = *Bhavaṅga-calana* = vibrating life-continuum,

Da = *Bhavaṅgu-paccheda* = cut-off bhavaṅga,

Ma = *Manodvārāvajjana* = determines object to  
be good or bad,

Pa = *Parikamma* = preparation for the arising of  
Magga,

U = *Upacāra* = proximity of Magga,

Nu = *Anuloma* = adaptation or connection,

Go = *Gottrabhu* = the citta that cuts the worldling-  
lineage to form the ariya-  
lineage (ariya = holy),

Mag = *Magga citta* = Path-consciousness,

Pha = *Phala citta* = fruition consciousness,

Bha = *Bhavaṅga citta* = life-continuum.

### • Path-Wisdom and Fruition-Wisdom

As gottrabhu points the way to Nibbāna, Magga-citta and Phala-citta follow immediately taking Nibbāna as their object. The wisdom associated with Magga and Phala are called *Magga-ñāṇa*: (Path-wisdom) and *Phala-ñāṇa* (Fruition-wisdom) respectively.

The Path-wisdom, though it arises just once, is

very powerful. It simultaneously accomplishes four functions, namely,

- 1 comprehension of the Truth of Suffering,
- 2 eradication of craving which is the Cause of Suffering,
- 3 realization of Nibbāna and
- 4 full development of the eight constituents of the Path.

• **Review-Wisdom (*Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāna*)**

After the Magga-vīthi, five *paccavekkhaṇa vīthis* normally arise. By these vīthis, the review-wisdom (1) reflects on the Path, (2) reflects on the Fruit, (3) reflects on Nibbāna he has realized, (4) reflects on defilements annihilated, and (5) reflects on defilements to be annihilated.

• **Sixteen Knowledges in Series**

Up to now, the meditator has developed 16 knowledges – viz.,

*Nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa, Paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa, ten vipassanā-ñāṇas, Gottrabhu-ñāṇa, Magga-ñāṇa, Phala-ñāṇa, Paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa.* These Knowledges are the Landmarks on the Path to Nibbāna.

## • **Conclusion**

With the help of his supernormal Divine Eye and Omniscient Wisdom, the Exalted Buddha could see and know clearly that in all living beings the series of ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities are arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly like the flame of an oil lamp or like the current of a river. In the advanced state of vipassanā meditation, meditators can also observe ultimate mentalities-materialities arising and perishing in this way.

In the flame of an oil lamp, the flame from the burning of a drop of oil arises and disappears, and another flame from the burning of another drop of oil arises and disappears, and so on, without any gap in between. So we think that there is just one flame burning continuously.

In the current of a river, the water at a point flows out and new water flows in continuously. As the water in that point changes continuously, the water at all points of the river also changes continuously. So as the water changes all the time, the river also changes all the time. Thus philosophers say: "**A man cannot go into a river twice**". However,

we don't notice the change. So we think that the same river keeps flowing all the time.

Similarly as the ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities that make up a person arise and perish at every moment, they keep changing all the time. Old mentalities and materialities arise and perish completely and new mentalities and materialities arise and perish completely again without any separation in time. So we can say that a person dies at every moment and is being born at every moment without any time gap. That a person dies at every moment is called "**khaṇika-marāṇa**". But we think that the same person remains alive all the time.

Therefore, man, woman, I, you, etc., do not exist in the ultimate sense; what really exist in the ultimate sense are only ultimate mentalities and ultimate materialities which keep arising and perishing very rapidly and continuously. And as no permanent entity remains, no permanent 'self', 'soul', 'ego', 'atta' or any other 'self-entity' exists; this phenomenon is known as '**anatta-characteristic**' or '**not-self doctrine**'.

The Buddha said; "*Atta samā pemaṃ natthi*",

*"Everyone loves himself or herself most."*

It is so, because worldlings think 'I' exist. So the wrong view of '**self-illusion**' (*atta-diṭṭhi*) or '**personality-belief**' (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), thinking that 'I' exist, makes one very selfish, egoistic, giving rise to numerous self-desires, extreme greediness, anger, self-problems, self-troubles from self-quarrels up to world-wars, and woeful rebirths.

Thus to get rid of 'self-illusion' or 'personality-belief' is most urgent and most important, and so to undertake **the noble threefold training including vipassanā** enthusiastically and strenuously as taught by the Buddha is also most urgent and most important.

When you get enlightened to the Four Noble Truths and become a **Stream-winner**, you can live most peacefully and most happily enjoying the eternal peace and unique bliss of Nibbāna as much as you like. You can also enjoy sensual pleasure for seven existences, and then you will become an Arahant (Perfect Person) in due course to enjoy Nibbāna bliss for ever.

Please come to the International Pa-auk Forest

Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centre for meditation without delay.

With best wishes!

Dr. Mehm Tin Mon

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