

The Appearance of the Buddha is for the  
Welfare and Happiness of all Living Beings!



# **The Art of LIVING NOBLY AND HAPPILY**

by

**Dr. Mehm Tin Mon**

Professor, Mahā Saddhamma Jotikadhaja  
Adviser to the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Rtd.)

The Buddha's Teachings will guide you  
to live nobly and happily and to be reborn  
in blissful realms life after life till you  
attain Nibbāna.



## **The Art of LIVING NOBLY AND HAPPILY**

- Make the 'Right View' your guiding star to live wisely.
- The Art of Living is to live with 'Threefold Refuge' and 'Pañca Sīla'.
- 'Pañca Sīla' is the best character which is most essential in life.
- Pure morality can fulfil all your good wishes.
- Radiate 'Loving-Kindness' to make all living beings well and happy.
- 'Mindfulness of Breathing' will lead you to the highest mundane bliss called 'jhāna'.
- The best attainment in life is to become a 'Stream-Winner' through vipassanā meditation.

**Dr. Mehm Tin Mon**







# **The Art of Living Nobly and Happily**

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*Patron of International Pa-auk Forest*

*Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centres*

Most fortunate are we to come across  
Buddhism while it is shining brilliantly. Let us  
learn how to live most happily and most benefi-  
cially from the marvellous teachings of the  
Omniscient Buddha.

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**The Art of Living Nobly and Happily**

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*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambhuddassa*

## "INTRODUCTION"

As the 1969-76 year Medical Institute (1) students are going to celebrate a ceremony of paying obeisance to their noble teachers on January 15, 2017, as a symbol of their ruby anniversary auspicious celebration of their fortieth year of graduation in medical education, their leader, Dr. Nyunt Thein, comes to request me to give an honourable advice to them at the ceremony.

If I have to give an advice, I usually select a suitable teaching of the Buddha that will represent the best advice. So I contemplate what Dhamma speech will be beneficial to my educated doctor-students who are over 65 years old now.

*In Buddhism we have three most valuable and noblest jewels, known as 'the Noble Triple Gem', representing the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. If we can worship them most respectfully, we shall gain very great benefits right away.*

*Moreover, if they will observe the five precepts of Pañca Sila purely and diligently, they will possess*

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*the best moral character, and they will be in line with the art of living nobly and happily, gaining great marvellous benefits. As most people do not pay serious attention to the teachings of the Buddha, they lose great opportunity of rebirths in blissful realms again and again. I should advise my students to keep the noble Threefold Refuge and Pañca Sīla in their hearts very respectfully.*

*To live peacefully with moral minds by radiating loving-kindness to all living beings, and to reflect any attribute of the Buddha repeatedly, also supplement the art of living nobly and happily, gaining great merits of billions of good karmas every second. I shall remind them to do these guardian meditations without fail.*

Finally I shall persuade them to undertake meditation as taught by the Buddha in an International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsanā Meditation Centre in order to gain emancipation from suffering and to realize Nibbāna.

*To become a Noble Person as Stream Winner will be the best attainment in this life!*

## **The Art of Living Nobly and Happily**

- **To Live Nobly and Happily  
we need Knowledge**

Dear Students ... if you want to live nobly and happily, you need two kinds of knowledge. Mundane or worldly knowledge can make you prosperous and happy only for one existence. It cannot prevent you from being reborn in the woeful abodes after death.

*Only the supramundane knowledge taught by the Buddha can make you prosperous and happy in this existence and in every future existence, preventing you not to be reborn in woeful abodes.*

It can help you to attain human happiness, celestial happiness, brahma happiness up to the supreme happiness of Nibbāna. So make your two eyes bright by acquiring both knowledges.

- **The Appearance of the Buddha is for the  
Welfare and Happiness of all Living Beings**

Because of the appearance of the Buddha, three noblest and most precious jewels, namely, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha appear in



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the world. If you can enshrine these unique jewels in your heart by venerating them very respectfully, you will instantly become noble, serene and comely. Also you will become richer and happier than billionaires. Why?

Because the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha are the noblest objects of veneration, and as soon as you pay obeisance to them, you will develop billions of moral minds, producing billions of moral kammās. Kammās are the seeds of meritorious deeds that will remain in the mental stream. As each noble kamma can give rise to a blissful human or celestial existence, billions of moral kammās are much more valuable than billions of dollars.

*In order to enshrine the noblest Triple Gem in our hearts, we must know their virtues and how to venerate them most respectfully.*

• **Why Should we worship the Buddha?**

To become a Buddha, the Bodhisatta (Future Buddha) had to fulfil ten Perfections for four asaṅkheyyas (incalculable aeons) and one hundred thousand world systems. So he had accu-

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culated very great merit of noble deeds and uncountable noble karmas. When he could develop the highest morality, the highest mental concentration and the highest fourfold Path-Wisdom which totally eliminated all defilements (*kilesās*), his accumulated great merit produced Omniscient Wisdom (*Sabbāññuta-ñāṇa*), which made him a Fully Self-enlightened Buddha, together with many supernormal knowledges and supernormal powers.

*So the Buddha was truly the noblest person endowed with the noblest virtues, the highest wisdom, and the greatest supernormal knowledges and supernormal powers.* With his Omniscient Wisdom, he truly knew and understood all ultimate realities, all natural truths, all natural laws, that govern all psychophysical phenomena in the universe. So he could preach the right Dhamma (*his teachings*) which enlightened millions of human beings and celestial beings to become noble persons (*Ariyās*), who emancipated from the rounds of sufferings and could enjoy the matchless eternal peace and unique bliss

of Nibbāna right away.

In Rājagṛaha city an old Lady beggar, named Sandālī, was walking along the main road. As soon as the Buddha saw her in his vision, he knew that she would die soon and be reborn in a woe-ful abode as she had done no meritorious deeds. In order to help her to escape from woeful re-birth, the Buddha went on alms-round to meet her on the main road. As the Buddha looked so sublime, graceful and respectful, she paid hom-age to him, thus acquiring billions of good kammās. When the Buddha departed, she walked on and was butted to death by a cow with a calf. She was immediately reborn in a great mansion with one thousand female celestial attendants in Tāvātimsā realm.

In Sāvatthi city a miserly rich man's son, named Maṭṭhakundalī, a sixteen-year old boy, was inflicted with indigestion and yellow-skin fever. His stingy father did not call for a physi-cian; he gave treatment by himself. The boy's sick-ness became worse and serious. He moved the boy to the front room of his house so that the

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guests, who came to look at his son, would not see his many possessions; because he did not want to lend his possessions to others.

When the Buddha looked at the world in the morning with his divine eye, he saw Maṭṭhakundalī and he knew that the boy would die soon and be reborn in a woeful abode, because he had not done any meritorious deed.

On his alms-round the Buddha stopped at the gate of the rich man's compound. He sent out rays to the boy. The boy looked at the majestic, graceful Buddha, developed great reverence for the Buddha, and paid homage to the Buddha gladly. When the Buddha departed, the boy died and was reborn in Tāvātimsā realm.

When Maṭṭhakundalī deva looked down to earth, he saw his father weeping at his tomb in the cemetery. He came down and appeared in front of his father. He told his father that he became a celestial being, because he had the chance to pay homage to the Buddha just before he died. He persuaded his father to offer alms-food and other requisites generously to the Buddha and the



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Sam̃gha.

His father gladly agreed to do so. He went to Jetavanna Monastery to invite the Buddha and the Sam̃gha to have alms-food at his house the next day.

The news spread throughout the city. Many people came to see the miserly rich man making great offering. After the meal, the Buddha preached a suitable sermon. Eighty-four thousand people together with the rich man and Maṭṭha-kundaḷī became enlightened as noble persons.

So the Buddha and the Dhamma are the noblest objects of veneration. By just paying homage to the Buddha and listening respectfully to the Dhamma, we can acquire great merit and billions of powerful moral karmas, which will protect us from all dangers, including woeful rebirth, and will condition us to be reborn in blissful realms again and again.

• Why should we Worship the Dhamma?

The Teachings of the Buddha, called the Dhamma, are all natural truths, which have the power to drive away wrong views, to establish

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right views and right understanding, to develop wisdom as well as faith and confidence in the noblest Triple Gem, thus developing billions of powerful moral minds and moral karmas, which in turn will protect us from all dangers and provide us with uncountable good benefits.

*"Well expounded is the Dhamma by the Exalted One, to be self-realized, with immediate fruit, inviting investigation, leading on to Nibbāna, to be comprehended by the wise each for himself".*

*Majjhima Nikāya*

*The four Path-wisdoms, the four Fruition-wisdoms and Nibbāna, known as the Nine Supramundane Dhammas, can totally eliminate all defilements (kilesās), the causes of all sufferings, and they are completely pure, far away from defilements. So they are the noblest Dhammas. Those who realize the Nine Supramundane Dhammas also become the purest and noblest persons, and they can enjoy the eternal peace and unique bliss of Nibbāna with Arahatta fruition - attainment for ever.*

While the Buddha was preaching a sermon

by the side of Gaggarā lake in Campā country, a little frog from the lake came on land and listened to the Dhamma voice, respectfully. A cow-herd came by and put down his goad-stick accidentally on the head of the little frog, killing it. As the frog had been listening appreciatively to the Dhamma-voice with moral minds, a moral kamma immediately conditioned it to be reborn in Tāvātimsā realm.

As the frog-deva was reborn spontaneously immediately, he understood that the good merit of listening respectfully to the Dhamma-voice as a frog had given him celestial rebirth. So he came down to earth together with his celestial mansion and paid homage to the Buddha.

With his supernormal power the Buddha made the frog-deva and his celestial mansion visible to the dhamma audience. Then the Buddha asked the frog-deva who he was three times although he already knew about the frog-deva.

The frog-deva answered: "I was a little frog from this lake. While I was listening appreciatively to the Dhamma-voice of the Buddha, a

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cowherd came by, and put down his goad over my head, killing me. I was immediately reborn as a celestial being."

The audience was very much fascinated that even a frog became a celestial being after death due to the good merit of listening to the Dhamma. So they continued listening to the Dhamma attentively and respectfully. The Buddha continued preaching the sermon. At the end of the sermon, eighty-four thousand people and the frog-deva were enlightened as stream-winners.

When the Buddha delivered his first sermon, known as '*Dhamma-cakka Sutta*' (Turning the Wheel of the Dhamma) to the group of five ascetics (*Pañca Vaggi*), his voice spread out up to ten thousand world-systems. So many brahmās from ten thousand world-systems came to listen the sermon. At the end of the sermon, Venerable Koṇḍañña from the group of five ascetics and 180 million brahmās became enlightened as Stream-winners.

• **Why should we Worship the Saṃgha?**

The Saṃgha is the community of noble bhik-

khus (*Ariya Saṅgha*) headed by the Buddha. Worldling bhikkhus (*Sammuti Saṅgha*) observe 227 disciplinary rules in brief and over 90,000 million rules in detail very diligently, and also undertake the Noble Threefold Training of morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) enthusiastically to get enlightened as noble persons. So they also belong to the Saṅgha Community.

It is the Saṅgha who maintain all the Teachings of the Buddha in the original pure form by learning, teaching, practising and propagating them respectfully.

In *Velāma Sutta* the Buddha stated that it is more noble and more beneficial to give alms to the Saṅgha headed by the Buddha rather than to give alms to the Buddha alone.

*The noble Saṅgha is the incomparably most fertile field for all humans, devas and brahmās to sow the seeds of merit.*

At the time of Gotama Buddha a poor woman lived alone in a hut, watching over the paddy-field. She made popcorn for her daily con-

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sumption.

One day Venerable Mahā Kassapa rose from extinction attainment (*nirodha-samāpatti*) for seven days and looked at the world to see a place where he should go for alms. He saw the woman at the paddy-field. So he came to her and stood at a short distance from the hut.

The woman offered him all the popcorn she had made for that day, making a wish: "May this merit of mine help me to know the Dhamma that the Venerable knows."

The bhikkhu said: "May your wish be fulfilled", and departed. When the woman returned to the hut, a snake bit her. She died while reflecting gladly about her meritorious deed, and was immediately reborn in Tāvātimsā realm. As her celestial mansion was beautifully decorated with silver popcorn laces, she was known as *Lāzā-Devī* (Popcorn Celestial Lady).

In order to gain greater good merit, the celestial lady came down to the cave where Venerable Mahā Kassapa resided, cleaned the place and filled the water-pots with water.

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When Venerable Mahā Kassapa saw the Celestial Lady, he asked her to go out of the cave for it was against the Vinaya rule to have a lady in a monastery.

She flew up to the sky and wept, requesting him to let her do meritorious deeds. When the Buddha knew about the Celestial Lady weeping, he sent out rays and gave a short Dhamma talk. The lady became enlightened as a Stream-winner.

In this story the meritorious deed of donating popcorn to an Arahant gave rise to a celestial existence and a celestial mansion and also paved the way to be enlightened as a noble person.

*Make a wish to realize Nibbāna whenever you perform a meritorious deed.*

• **Keep Threefold Refuge most respectfully**

The noblest Triple Gem, comprising the Buddha, the Dhamma and the noble Saṅgha, are the noblest objects of veneration, endowed with the noblest attributes. They are totally free from all defilements and they can guide us to eliminate all defilements.

If we enshrine them in our hearts by respect-

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fully venerating them and taking refuge in them adorably, we also become noble, well protected from all dangers, and will not be reborn in woe-ful abodes after death.

*"By taking refuge in the noblest Three Gems, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, a man is free from all suffering".  
(Dhammapada 191, 192)*

*A person who worships and venerates the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha as Threefold Refuge is called a Buddhist. He is nobler than a person without Threefold Refuge.*

One can easily take Threefold Refuge by sitting respectfully in front of a Buddha Statue, raising the two palms together to the forehead, and recite as follows with great reverence and adoration.

*Buddhaṃ Saranaṃ gacchāmi*

I take refuge in the Buddha.

*Dhammaṃ Saranaṃ gacchāmi*

I take refuge in the Dhamma.

*Saṅghaṃ Saranaṃ gacchāmi*

I take refuge in the Saṅgha.

For the second time ..... for the third time .....



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By reciting the above Pāli repeatedly with great reverence, one can enshrine the Three Noble Gems in one's heart. Then one is safe from all dangers. Ghosts cannot cause any harm. If one recites the Pāli before taking food, one shall not be poisoned. If we plant trees while reciting that Pāli, the plants will grow well, being not inflicted by bacteria. If a pregnant woman recites that Pāli regularly, the baby gets the effect of Triple Gem and will be born safely.

A person, with Threefold Refuge well established in his heart and remembering and reflecting the noblest attributes of Triple Gem, will not be reborn in a woeful abode after death. He will be reborn either in the human realm or in a celestial realm, and he will be superior to other persons in ten aspects: in longevity, in beauty, in happiness, in retinue, in power, and in enjoying the five senses.

In Sri Lanka a poor man, named Damiḷa, had to watch a bridge at night. At daybreak he went out fishing until he got several fish. He gave the fish to his wife, who exchanged one-third of

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the fish with rice, another one-third with ghee and cooked the rest for their consumption.

They lived on for fifty years in this way and Damiḷa became old and bedridden with illness. A monk from the hill-monastery came as usual for alms-food. Damiḷa's wife apologized for she had nothing to offer. The monk guided Damiḷa to take Threefold Refuge and departed to continue his alms-round.

When the monk arrived at his monastery and sat down, a celestial being appeared in front of him, paying respect to him.

"Who are you?" asked the monk.

"I am Damiḷa who had just passed away and became a celestial being in upper Catumahārajika realm, because you had guided him to take Threefold Refuge. I came to thank you very heartily, Reverend Sir."

The good merit and the moral kamma acquired in taking Threefold Refuge were very powerful. They could overcome the accumulated bad kammās of fifty-years fishing to bear their good results at the time of death.

• **The Wonderful Benefits of Threefold Refuge**

One asāṅkheyya (incalculable aeon) and one hundred thousand world cycles ago, **Anomadassī Buddha** appeared in the world. A poor man, who looked after his two blind parents, could neither offer alms nor afford to listen to the sermon of the **Buddha**. However, he met one chief Disciple of the **Buddha**, named **Nisabha Thera**, and took **Threefold Refuge** with his guidance.

At that time the life-span of human beings was one hundred thousand years. As the poor man kept **Three Refuges** well established in his heart with great respect throughout his life, he accumulated uncountable billions of powerful moral kammās.

When he died, he was born as the **Sakka**, king of devas, in **Tāvātimsā** realm. During a very long period of one asāṅkheyya and one hundred thousand world cycles, he was reborn uncountable times in celestial realms and human realm,, but never was he born in woeful abodes.

Again wherever was he born, he was more outstanding than others. He was born as the **Sakka**

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for eighty existences, as the Universal Monarch for seventy-five existences, as kings and feudal lords for uncountable existences.

At the time of Gotama Buddha in the present world, he was reborn as a rich man's son in Sāvattthi city. At the age of seven years he was the leader of his play-mates. While they were playing, they went into a monastery. An Arahant guided them to take Threefold Refuge. As soon as the rich man's son had taken Threefold Refuge, he became an Arahant. He was well known as Tisaraṇagamaniya Thera.

The benefits of Threefold Refuge are amazingly very great and very noble!

(Apa. 1, 82, Apa.ṭha.2, 39)

• **The Art of Living Happily and Beneficially**

The art of living as directed by the Buddha is simple and clear.

*"Don't do all evil actions;*

*Do good actions completely;*

*Purify your mind totally;*

*This is the advice of all the Buddhas."*

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Knowledge is required to live happily and beneficially.

- What are the evil actions to be avoided?

*An action is evil if it causes harm to oneself or to another or to both and produces bad effects to both.*

There are ten evil actions which should be avoided by all means, because they give rise to strong immoral karmas which will produce woeful rebirth and woeful suffering for many existences.

- Ten Kinds of Evil Actions or  
Evil Conduct (*Ducaritas*)

(a) Three Bodily Evil Actions

- (1) Killing any living being, animal or man,
- (2) Stealing or robbing other's property,
- (3) Committing sexual misconduct.

(b) Four Verbal Evil Actions

- (4) Saying false speech or lying,
- (5) Slandering to make mischief between two persons,
- (6) Saying harsh and abusive speech,
- (7) Vain talk or gossiping.

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**(c) Three Mental Evil Actions**

(8) Covetousness or plotting to get other's property illegally,

(9) Ill-will or plotting to destroy other's life and property,

(10) Wrong view ignoring kamma and its result.

• **What are the good actions to be fulfilled?**

An action is good if it causes no harm to anyone and produces good effects to all.

There are ten basic moral actions (*Sucaritas*) which are the avoidance of ten evil actions.

For example, in avoiding killing a mosquito which bites us, we subdue *anger* by developing forbearance and loving-kindness, thus producing moral minds and moral kammas by many billions, which will produce great good results.

Similarly in avoiding stealing other's property, we subdue greed by developing greedlessness and goodwill, thus producing moral minds and moral kammas by many billions again.

**Three mental good actions are:**

(1) Absence of covetousness, that is, not

- plotting to get other's property illegally,
- (2) **Good will**, that is, not plotting to destroy other's life and property,
- (3) **Right view**, that is, believing in kamma and its effect.

We should also perform **Ten Bases of Meritorious Deeds** to accumulate good merits and good kammas as much as possible, and finally we should exert all our efforts to undertake the **Noble Threefold Training of Morality, Concentration and Wisdom** while we are having the best human existence at the time when the Teachings of the Buddha are flourishing very brilliantly.

- **The First Important Thing is to Know the Law of Kamma**

According to the Law of Kamma, all thoughts, speeches and actions which cause no harm to any living being including animals and producing good results to all are good meritorious deeds. And all thoughts, speeches and actions which cause harm to any living being and produce bad results to all are unwholesome, immoral, evil actions.

According to **Abhidhamma Commentary**, consciousness and its associated mental factors, that represent the mind, arise and perish one mind after another mind extremely rapidly at the rate of one thousand billions in one wink or one snap of the fingers. This phenomenon is very important.

When we kill a fowl or a fish, billions of immoral minds will arise and perish, leaving billions of immoral karmas in our mental stream. These karmas will be transmitted mind to mind to future existences as well, as there is no break of mental stream at the time of death, that is, soon after death-consciousness in one existence perishes, rebirth-consciousness of the next existence arises without any time-gap. So the many billions of bad immoral karmas will produce billions of woeful existences.

At the time of **Gotama Buddha**, a female Arahant, named **Dhamma Dinnā**, looked at her past existences with her supernormal power. She found that she was the wife of a Brahmin in one of her past existences. One day a close friend of the Brahmin came to their house, and the Brahmin



requested his wife to cook good food.

The wife killed a kid (young goat), which she reared at her house, by cutting its throat with a knife, and cooked its meat. The guest and her husband thanked her for good food.

Although her religious belief said that animals are created by an Almighty God for human consumption and there is no sin in killing them, yet she was born in the worst hell, called **Avici Hell**, where she was killed billions of times.

When she escaped from hell, she was reborn as animals as many times as there were hairs in the body of the kid that she had killed, and she was killed in the same way as she had killed the kid, that is, by being cut at the throat with a knife. *(Handbook on Buddhism printed by Religious Affairs Department)*

In science the Newton's Law said that "to every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." In psychophysical phenomena, we may say that an equal and opposite reaction comes a billion times."

In the story of **Tisaraṇagāmaṇiya** Thera

(page 24) we have seen that by keeping the Noble Threefold Refuge respectfully for a life time, the poor man, who looked after two blind parents, got so many powerful moral kammās that, during a very long period of one asaṅkheyya (incalculable aeon) and one hundred thousand world cycles, he was born again and again only in celestial realms and the human realm, even as the Sakka for eighty existences and as the Universal Monarch for seventy-five existences.

Therefore, in daily life we should understand the Law of Kamma correctly and acquire "the right view" (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). Only when we possess the right view, will our thoughts, our speeches, our actions and our livelihood be correct, and shall we possess the best moral character. Then we shall be reborn in blissful realms life after life.

If we do not understand and we do not take care of kamma and its result, we shall be living with the 'wrong view' (*micchā-diṭṭhi*). Then our thoughts, our speeches, our actions and our livelihood will be wrong and corrupted. After death, we shall be reborn in woeful abodes life after

life.

Therefore the person who correctly knows kamma and its result and another person who does not know kamma and its result are as far apart as the earth and the sky.

*The right view (sammā-diṭṭhi) causes unarisen wholesome deeds to arise, multiply the wholesome deeds that have already arisen, and will condition blissful existences to arise life after life after death. The right view has no equal in causing meritorious deeds to arise, in multiplying meritorious deeds that have arisen, and in conditioning blissful rebirths to arise in blissful realms.*

*The wrong view (micchā-diṭṭhi) causes unarisen immoral deeds to arise, multiply the immoral deeds that have already arisen, and will condition woeful rebirths to arise life after life after death. The wrong view has no equal in causing unarisen evil deeds to arise, in multiplying evil deeds that have already arisen, and in conditioning woeful rebirths to arise in woeful abodes.*

Thus only if one understands correctly kamma and its result, known as the **Law of Kamma**,

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and makes that right view as the guiding star, shall one be able to lead a happy and beneficial life.

• What is Kamma?

'*Kamma*' is a Pāḷi word, meaning 'volitional action or deed.' The Sanskrit equivalent of kamma is 'Karma'.

An action is accomplished either by bodily action, verbal action or mental action. The body, the hands and the mouth cannot move by themselves; they are moved by the mind through mind-born materialities (*cittaja-rūpa*). So all actions are actually performed by the mind.

In the higher teaching of the Buddha, called *Abhidhamma*, the Buddha described the 'mind' as a combination of *consciousness* (*citta*) and several *mental factors* (*cetasikas*). Consciousness is the leader and forerunner; mental factors depend on consciousness for their arising and manipulate consciousness in several ways. Consciousness and mental factors arise together, perish together and take the same sense-object. Because they are aware of a sense-object, they are collectively called 'mentality' (*nāma*). So 'mind'

is '*mentality*'.

The body is composed of 28 types of *ultimate materialities*, which are ultimate components of matter and which are not divisible further. They are collectively called '*materiality*' (*rūpa*).

According to Abhidhamma, only *mentality* and *materiality* exist in the whole universe, nothing else. Living beings are made up of *mentality-materiality* whereas inanimate things are made up of *materiality* alone.

*Mentality* consists of consciousness and 52 types of mental factors, which are not further divisible. So altogether there are 53 types of *ultimate mentalities* and 28 types of *ultimate materialities*, which are collectively called '*ultimate realities*' (*paramatthas*), which really exist in the universe.

• What are Ultimate Realities (*Paramatthas*)?

'*Ultimate realities*' are the ultimate components of living beings and inanimate things. They result from a correctly performed analysis of all living beings and inanimate things. They are called '*ultimate realities*' because they permit no

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further analysis.

'Ultimate realities' consist of 'ultimate mentalities', which are ultimate components of the mind, and 'ultimate materialities', which are ultimate components of the body and inanimate things.

Ultimate realities are so fine and so delicate that they cannot be detected by any scientific instruments. So they are not known by scientists, psychologists and philosophers. However, they can be observed and understood by the 'wisdom-eye' associated with the right concentration (*sam-mā-samādhi*) in vipassanā meditation.

Ultimate realities are of four kinds: consciousness, mental factors, materiality and Nibbāna,

1 'Consciousness' (*citta, viññāṇa*)

It is the awareness of a sense-object,

2 'Mental Factor' (*cetasika*)

Mental factors depend on consciousness for their arising and manipulate consciousness in several ways. They arise and perish together with consciousness, and they take the same sense-ob-

ject, which is taken by consciousness.

There are 89 types of combination of consciousness and mental factors in the brief method, and 121 types of combinations in the broad method. These various types of combination of consciousness and mental factors represent the various states of the mind.

### 3 'Materiality' (*rūpa*)

It is defined as that which changes form, colour or state owing to adverse or opposite physical conditions such as coldness and hotness.

Abhidhamma describes 4 primary elements or materialities and 24 derived materialities, which derive from primary elements. The four primary elements are:

- (1) *Pathavī* – the element of solidity with the characteristic of hardness and softness,
- (2) *Āpo* – the element of liquidity with the characteristic of cohesiveness and fluidity,
- (3) *Tejo* – the element of heat with the characteristic of hotness and coldness, and
- (4) *Vāyo* – the element of motion with the characteristic of pushing and supporting.

These primary elements do not arise individually; they always arise together as a material group together with the following four derived materialities.

- (5) *Vaṇṇa* – visible form or colour,
- (6) *Gandha* – smell,
- (7) *Rasa* – taste,
- (8) *Ojā* – nutriment.

The above eight materialities occur together as the smallest material group (*rūpa-kalāpa*) which is indivisible and named '*avinibbhoga-rūpa*' (indivisible materiality).

In all kamma-born material groups, *life-materiality* (*jīvita-rūpa*) is present in addition.

The material group consisting of eight *avinibbhoga-rupas* and *life-materiality* is called '*jīvita-navaka kalāpa*' (vital-nonad).

If we add one of the five *translucent materialities* (*pasāda-rūpas*) to *jīvita-nonad*, we get the *eye-decad*, the *ear-decad*, the *nose-decad*, the *tongue-decad* and the *body-decad*, which represent as the *eye-door*, the *ear-door*, the *nose-door*, the *tongue-door*, the *body-door*, respectively.



**Five Translucent Materialities** (*Pasada-rūpas*) are -

- (1) *Cakkhu-pasāda* – eye-translucent materiality,
- (2) *Sota-pasāda* – ear-translucent materiality,
- (3) *Ghāna-pasāda* – nose-translucent materiality,
- (4) *Jivhā-pasāda* – tongue-translucent materiality,
- (5) *Kāya-pasāda* – body-translucent materiality,

The bodies of living beings are made up of kamma-born materialities, mind-born materialities, heat-born materialities and nutriment-born materialities.

#### **4 Nibbāna** – extinction of suffering

It has the characteristic of '*Santi-lakkhaṇa*' - 'eternal peace and unique happiness', and it really exists in nature always as an ultimate reality. It is the ultimate goal of Buddhism. We cannot see it and realize it, because our mind is blinded by ten defilements. When these defilements are totally destroyed by the Fourfold Path-Wisdom, which can be developed by undertaking the Noble Threefold Training of morality, concentration and wisdom. Then we can realize Nibbāna and enjoy its eternal peace and unique

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happiness in this very life.

• **Ten Defilements (*Kilesās*)**

There are 14 unwholesome and immoral mental factors (*akusala cetasikas*), out of which ten are called 'defilements' (*kilesās*), because they defile, debase, inflict and burn the mind. They are the root-causes of all evil actions and all suffering in the world. They should be noted well, and don't allow them to arise in the mind.

1 *Lobha (taṇha, rāga) – greed, craving, attachment*

*Lobha* desires and craves for sensual pleasure, money, wealth, fame, power, etc., and get attached to them. It will never give up its intrinsic nature of craving however-much one may possess. The more one gets, the more it craves for. Because of greed, one commits stealing, cheating, robbing, sexual misconduct, covetousness and wrong view.

2 *Dosa (patigha, vyāpāda) – anger, hatred, illwill*

When *dosa* or anger arises in the mind, one becomes angry and blind and cannot think wisely. One is ready to commit evil actions in-

cluding murder. Anger is the most destructive element. Killing, torturing, harsh speech and ill-will are committed by anger. Not only inflated anger present in an angry person but also depressed anger present in a depressed person is destructive. Depressed anger gives rise to stress and strain, mental depression and mental tension, which in turn gives rise to many diseases.

### 3 *Moha (avijjā) – ignorance, delusion*

*Moha* blinds us not to see the true nature of sense-objects. Living beings are made up of mentality and materiality which are arising and perishing very rapidly. Non-living things are made up of ultimate materialities, which are arising and perishing very rapidly. So living-beings and non-living things have the characteristics of *impermanence (anicca)*, *suffering (dukkha)* and *not-self (anatta)*.

As *moha* blinds us not to see these true characteristics, it gives us the wrong vision or illusion that all living beings and inanimate things are *permanent (nicca)*, *pleasant (sukha)* and *self or person (atta)*.

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

There are eight important objects blinded by *moha* or *avijjā*. They are (1-4) four Noble Truths, (5) past existences, past five aggregates, past 12 bases, (6) future existences, future five aggregates and future 12 bases, (7) the front end and the rear end of present existence, present five aggregates and present 12 bases, (8) Paṭiccasamuppāda causal relations, including kamma and its effect.

4 *Māna* – *pride, conceit*

5 *Diṭṭhi* – *wrong view*

6 *Vicikicchā* – *Sceptical doubt* about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, the Training, past existences, future existences, the Law of Dependent Origination, and the Four Noble Truths.

7 *Thina* – *sloth, illeness*

8 *Uddhacca* – *restlessness*

9 *Ahirika* – moral shamelessness

10 *Anottappa* –moral fearlessness

Out of ten defilements, *lobha, dosa, moha, māna, diṭṭhi and vicikiccha* are called 'Latent defilements' (*Anusayas*). They always lie dormant in the mental dream of worldlings, who are not noble-persons (*Ariyās*). They are the seeds of defilements that lie dormant in the khandha-streams of beings life after life throughout the long *saṃsāra* (rounds of rebirths). They remain ready to come to the surface of the mind as real defilements when the sense-doors are in contact with sense-objects.

*This is the reason why the minds of worldlings are under the influence of defilements most of the time. Worldlings are living with immoral minds and enjoying sensual pleasure with immoral minds. When the energy of the good karmmas that produce their present existences are used up, they will die and will be reborn in woe-ful abodes.*

In *Nakhasīkha Sutta*, the Buddha placed a little amount of earth on his thumb-nail and asked

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the monks: "Bhikkhus, which do you think is more – the number of grains of earth on my thumb or the number of grains of earth in the whole earth?"

"Oh Bhante, the number of grains of earth on your thumb is very little, the number of grains in the whole earth is many million times more than the grains on your thumb", answered the monks.

"Very well, bhikkhus, you take note of this. When living beings die, if the number of beings who are born in the human realm and celestial realms amount to the number of grains on my thumb, the number of beings who are born in the woeful abodes will amount to more than the number of grains in the whole earth," said the Buddha.

The Buddha even said: "*Cattāro apāya saka gehā sadisā.*"

*"The four woeful abodes are the permanent homes of many beings."*

So to be born in the human realm is like taking a picnic. Very soon most of the people have to go back to their permanent homes of woeful abodes.

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Thus not to be reborn in woeful abodes is the most important matter for all of us. Once we are born in the woeful abodes, it is very very difficult to come out to the human realm again; it is more difficult than for the tip of a needle dropped from heaven to hit the tip of another needle held on earth.

Then what should we do? We should perform meritorious deeds regularly and heedlessly to accumulate good kammas by many billions so that we shall be reborn in blissful realms life after life until we realize Nibbāna.

• **Three Evil Roots of Immoral Minds**

*Lobha* (greed), *dosa* (anger) and *moha* (ignorance) are the leaders of immoral mental factors. They are regarded as the sources of all evil actions and all suffering.

They are called 'immoral roots', because they give rise to immoral minds with which we perform evil actions. When an evil action, like killing a fish or stealing other's property, immoral minds arise and perish by many billions, depositing many billions of bad kammas in our mental

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streams.

These bad karmas will follow us life after life, bearing results whenever they have the chance to do so. As a potent bad karma can give rise to a woeful existence, we shall be reborn in woeful abodes life after life.

*"If one speaks or acts with wicked immoral minds, because of that, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox." (Dhammapada 1)*

• **Ten Beautiful Mental Factors**

The number of beautiful mental factors is 25, which is more than the number of immoral mental factors. So if we can develop beautiful mental factors, we can suppress and overcome immoral mental factors. Some beautiful mental factors are described below.

1 *Saddhā* – faith and confidence in Triple Gem

When a Buddhist takes refuge in the noblest Three Jewels, his faith should associate with the wisdom of understanding the noblest attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha.

*Saddhā* is compared with the unique emerald



of the Universal Monarch. This emerald, when placed in warm dirty water, purifies and cools down the water instantly. Similarly, When *saddhā* arises in the mind, it drives away all defilements so that the mind becomes cool and pure.

*Saddhā* is also compared with the hand which can pick up jewels if one is lucky enough to be on a mountain full of jewels.

In reality one is more fortunate to be in contact with the teachings of the Buddha rather than to be on the mountain full of jewels, because one with *suddhā* can acquire billions of good kammās every second which are much more precious than jewels. As a man without hands cannot grab jewels, so also a man without *saddhā* cannot acquire good merit.

*Saddhā* is the leader of beautiful mental factors. If a person's *saddhā* is very strong, he will perform meritorious deeds most of the time, acquiring great merits. So "*Saddhā* is the most precious treasure that a person can possess," said the Buddha.

**2 *Sati* – mindfulness, attentiveness**

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*Sati* is mindful of things that are taking place. Its chief characteristic is 'not floating away'; that is, not to let things go unnoticed. When one is not mindful enough, one does not remember what one sees or hears; it is like empty pots and pumpkins floating away on the water-current.

One can recall past events with *sati*, and *sati* can be developed. When it is fully developed, one acquires the supernormal power of remembering one's past existences. *Sati* is most essential and most beneficial. If we are mindful of meritorious deeds, we get great merit every second.

*"Heedfulness is the path to the dead!ess  
(Nibbāna),*

*Heedlessness is the path to death.*

*The heedful do not die,*

*The heedless are like unto the dead."*

*(Dhammapada 21)*

3 *Hirī – moral shame*

"To be ashamed of performing evil actions: this is called moral shame."

4 *Ottappa – moral dread*

*Ottappa* is moral dread or fear to do evil, be-

cause it is aware of the manifold evil consequences.

*Hirī* and *ottappa* differentiates man from beast not to indulge in immoral acts such as sexual relations between mother and son or between father and daughter even at the time of very low civilization. So they are known as *Lokapāla Dhamma*, that is, the Guardian of the World.

**5 *Alobha* – greedlessness, non-attachment, generosity**

Greedlessness and non-attachment to sense-objects is the chief characteristic of *alobha*. As water-drops run off a lotus leaf without adhering to it, *alobha* runs off sensuous objects without adhering to them. In this sense *alobha* is like an Arahant who has no greed at all and does not regard anything to belong to him.

When one is not attached to one's possession, one can give away money and things to charity. Here *alobha* manifests itself as generosity.

*Alobha* is opposed to *Lobha* and can overcome *lobha*. It is a positive virtue involving active *altruism*. Greed makes one selfish whereas

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greedlessness makes one selfless and benevolent. We practise alms-giving (*dāna*) to develop *alobha*.

6 *Adosa – non-hatred, tolerance, loving-kindness*

*Adosa* is opposed to anger (*dosa*) and it can overcome *dosa*. It is not mere absence of hatred or aversion, but it is a positive virtue. It is the most constructive element where *dosa* is the most destructive element. We practise Pañca-sila and mettā-bhāvanā (loving-kindness) to develop *adosa*.

*Dosa* has the characteristic of roughness and cruelty whereas mildness and forgiveness are the chief characteristics of *adosa*. *Dosa* is like an enemy whereas *adosa* is like an agreeable good friend. *Adosa* manifests as 'tolerance' (*khantī*) in suppressing anger and consequently manifests as 'forgiveness', a very noble quality as the saying goes: "Forgiveness is divine." *Adosa* is also reflected as 'goodwill' for its nature of kindness and helpfulness.

When *adosa* turns its attention to living beings

wishing them to be well and happy, it is known as *mettā*, that is, loving-kindness, one of the most beautiful qualities leading to world-peace. Indeed we shall attain lasting world peace if everyone practises tolerance and loving-kindness.

7 *Amoha = Paññā – Wisdom or Knowledge*

*Paññā* or *Paññindriya* has the control over the understanding of things as they really are, that is, in the light of *impermanence (anicca)*, *suffering (dukkha)* and *not-self (anatta)*. Because it overcomes ignorance, it is called *amoha* (non-delusion of wisdom). Because it can remove the veil of *moha* from blinding man's mental eye and throws away the darkness cast by *moha (avijjā)*, it is called *vijjā (higher knowledge)*.

In Abhidhamma *paññā*, *ñāṇa* and *amoha* are synonyms. *Paññā* understands ultimate realities, past existences, future existences, kamma and its result, the Law of Dependent Origination and Four Noble Truths.

When purified and cultivated by concentration (*samādhi*), *paññā* assumes the powerful role of

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*abhiññā* (supernormal knowledge). When highly developed, *paññā* becomes a factor of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) under the name of *dhamma-vicaya* (investigation of the truth), and also a component of the Noble Eightfold Path under the name of *sammā-diṭṭhi* (right-view). The culmination of *paññā* is the Omniscient Wisdom of the Buddha.

8 *Karuṇā* – compassion, pity

9 *Muditā* – appreciative joy; rejoicing at some body's success or prosperity.

10 *Tatramajjhataṭṭā* = *Upekkhā* – equanimity, mental balance

There are four illimitables or boundless states or brahma-vihāras. They are *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekkhā*.

In practising any one of the four illimitables, we may concentrate our attention on a single person or on all living beings in the whole world. So they are named 'illimitables' or 'boundless states'.

In practising loving-kindness, we meditate: "May all living beings be happy and well", repeatedly.

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In cultivating compassion, we meditate: "*May all miserable beings be free from miseries*", repeatedly.

For exercising muditā, we rejoice on the prosperity of beings and meditate: "*May their gain be with them for a long time.*"

In practising *upekkhā*, we maintain a balanced mind and meditate: "*All beings are as they are conditioned by their kammās.*"

Anyone, who is pervading the whole world with loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy or equanimity is said to be living in the 'sublime abode' or 'brahma abode'. So the four illimitables are also known as '*brahma-vihāra*', that is '*sublime mode of living.*'

• **Three Good Roots of Moral Minds**

Among the ten beautiful mental factors mentioned above, *alobha* (greedlessness, non-attachment, generosity), *adosa* (non-hatred, tolerance, loving-kindness), and *amoha* (wisdom, knowledge) are three moral roots.

They give rise to moral minds with which we perform meritorious deeds. So they are called

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"moral roots". They oppose three immoral roots – *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha* – respectively.

*Alobha* overcomes *lobha* (greed) and *macchariya* (stinginess) to enable us to give our money in alms-giving and in charity. We practise alms-giving to develop '*alobha*'.

*Adosa* overcomes *dosa* (anger) to enable us to live happily with loving-kindness. We observe Pañca-sīla and radiate loving-kindness to develop '*adosa*'.

*Amoha* overcomes *moha* (ignorance) to know what is good and what is bad on the basis of kamma and its effect, to avoid ten evil actions and to develop ten moral actions, to undertake meditation to live happily and nobly.

When we perform a meritorious deed, moral minds arise and perish by many billions, depositing many billions of good kammas in our mental streams. These good kammas will follow us life after life, bearing results whenever they have the chance to do so. As a potent good kamma can give rise to a blissful rebirth, we shall be born in blissful realms life after life.



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*"if one speaks or acts with pure moral minds, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that never leaves us."*  
(Dhammapada 2)

• **How do Kammas arise?**

Suppose a mosquito bites your forehead. The *mind* knows it is painful and *anger* arises. Whenever *anger* or *greed* arises, *ignorance (moha)* also arises. Ignorance takes that 'I' and 'mosquito' really exist and that the mosquito bites me painfully. So *anger-rooted consciousness* or immoral minds arise.

You become angry, and anger demands to kill the mosquito, which bites you painfully. Anger makes consciousness and its associated mental factors harsh and cruel, but it cannot perform the killing action. It is *volition (cetanā)* that performs the killing action.

*Volition* is a neutral mental factor which associates with every consciousness. When it associates with *anger*, it becomes evil volition. (If it associates with loving-kindness it will become good volition.) Evil volition sets the intention to

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kill the mosquito, and prompts its concomitants (consciousness and mental factors that associate with volition) to perform their respective functions to accomplish the killing action. Consequently consciousness produces consciousness-born materiality (*cittaja-rūpa*) to move the hand to smash the mosquito. The mosquito dies.

• **Who kills the mosquito?**

Since the hand smashes the mosquito, is the hand the killer? The hand will say: "I am just materiality. I cannot move by myself. The consciousness moved me to smash the mosquito. I do not know what is being done." So the hand is not the real killer.

Then is the consciousness, which moved the hand, the killer? The consciousness will say: "I am just aware of the senses. I know the mosquito bites the forehead, and it is painful. But I have no intention to kill the mosquito. *Volition* prompted me to move the hand. So I just moved the hand." So consciousness is an accomplice, not the real killer.

Who is the real killer? It is *volition* since it sets

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the intention to kill the mosquito and acted on and prompted *consciousness* and other mental factors to perform their respective functions to accomplish the killing.

Since *volition* is responsible for organizing and accomplishing the killing action, it is identified with the killing action (*kamma*) and called '*kamma*' by the Buddha.

*"Cetanā haṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi."*

*"O monks, it is volition that I call kamma."*

*"Cetayittvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vacāya manasā."*

"Prompted by volition, one performs the action through body, speech or mind."

In smashing the mosquito to death, if one thousand billion anger-rooted consciousnesses arise and perish, the one thousand billion volitions, which associated with those immoral minds, also arise and perish, depositing their one thousand billion karmas in the mental stream of the smasher. At the time of death these karmas will be transmitted to the mental stream of the next existence as there is no break in mental stream at

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the time of death. So these immoral kammas will follow the doer life after life, bearing results whenever they have the chances to do so.

When a person performs meritorious deeds such as giving alms, observing moral precepts, or undertaking meditation, many billions of moral consciousnesses arise and perish, depositing many billions of moral kammas in the mental stream. These moral kammas also follow the person life after life, bearing results whenever they have the chances to do so.

• **Where do Kammas Exist?**

According to Abhidhamma Commentary, the minds in each person arise and perish extremely rapidly and incessantly one after another at the rate of about one thousand billions per eye-wink or per snap of the fingers. As kammas are transmitted from one mind to another continuously, it can be said that kammas exist in the mental stream of each person.

When an Arahant or a Non-returner (*Anāgāmī*) remained in *extinction-attainment* (*nirodha-samāpatti*) for seven days, his consciousnesses,

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mental factors and consciousness-born materialities are extinct for seven days. However, kamma-born materialities, heat-born materialities and nutriment-born materialities keep on arising and perishing continuously and incessantly. As kammas are not lost, they must also exist in the material stream. So we can say that kammas exist both in the mental stream and the material stream.

• **How does Kamma give rise to a new Existence?**

The Buddha described the rounds of rebirths of each individual in the Doctrine of Dependent Origination.

The rounds of defilements, namely, *avijjā* (ignorance), *taṇhā* (craving) and *upādāna* (grasping), prompt each individual to perform moral or immoral action.

Because of *ignorance*, a person thinks that a celestial being and celestial happiness really exist, and *craving* wants to attain them. Then *grasping* for a celestial existence prompts the person to do a meritorious deed. The moral minds which arise during the performance of the meritorious

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deed is called *saṅkhāra* (*kamma-formation*) and the moral *kammas* deposited in the mental stream is called *kamma-bhava* (*kamma-formation*).

When this moral *kamma* bears result to produce a celestial being, the round of defilements act as the supporting force again, just as the support of earth, water, air and sunlight are required for a mango-seed to produce a mango-plant.

So *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination) states that *avijjā*, *taṇhā*, *upādāna*, *saṅkhāra*, *kamma-bhava* are the present causes which give rise to a new future existence which comprises *viññāna* (consciousness), *nāma-rūpa* (mentality-materiality), *saḷāyatana* (6 internal bases), *phassa* (contact) and *vedanā* (feeling).

The *kamma* produces its results consisting of its resultant *consciousness* (*viññāṇa*) and associated *mental factors* (*nāma*) and *kamma-born materialities* (*rūpa*) throughout the whole new existence.

The continuous stream of resultant consciousness (*viññāṇa*) serves as *life-continuum* and the *mind-door*. The five *translucent materialities*

among kamma-born materialities serve as the *five sense-doors*, namely, the eye-door, the ear-door, the nose-door, the tongue door and the body-door. These five material sense-doors and the mind-door constitute *six internal bases* (*saḷāyatana*).

When six sense-objects come in contact with the six sense-doors respectively, cognitive series of consciousnesses together with *contact* (*phassa*) and *feeling* (*vedanā*) arise. Dependent on feeling, *craving* (*taṇha*) arises, and dependent on craving, *grasping* (*upādāna*) arises. When *taṇhā* and *upādāna* arise, *ignorance* (*avijjā*) also arises.

So the new *round of defilements* arises again. This new round of defilement will cause the new *round of kamma-formations* (*saṅkhāra, kamma-bhava*) to arise, and the new round of formations will then produce the new *round of resultants*, which constitute the next new existence.

#### • The Free and Just Law of Kamma

The Law of Kamma is a natural Law which states that karmas bear results naturally as they should and that they do not give favour to anyone. The Law of Kamma is not controlled by any

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Almighty Being. It operates freely and justfully in its own field.

Kamma is volitional action as well as the kamma properties or kamma-seeds produced during the volitional action.

When a person performs an evil action, many billions of immoral minds arise and perish during the action, depositing many billions of immoral kammas in the mental stream of that person.

When that person performs a good moral action, many billions of moral minds arise and perish during the action, depositing many billions of moral kammas in the mental stream of that person.

Just as a mango-seed gives rise to a mango-tree and mango-fruits, a good moral kamma can give rise to a blissful existence in the human or celestial realm and the riches therein. Similarly a bad immoral kamma will produce a woeful existence in a woeful abode together with woeful suffering.

In science we have a Newton's Law which states that to every action, there is an equal and oppo-



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site reaction. In the Law of Kamma, the equal and opposite reaction may come a billion times as billions of kammas are formed during an action.

So we have a saying: *"If you donate as much as a banyan seed, you will get the reward greater than a banyan tree."* Out of the many kammas that one acquires in the present life, some will bear results in the present existence, and some will bear fruits in subsequent existences until the last existence when one becomes an Arahant.

The left-hand chief disciple of Gotama Buddha, Venerable Mahā Moggallāna, had beaten to death his two blind parents due to the repeated persuasion of his wife in one of his past existences. For this heinous deed, he had to suffer in the worst Avīci hell for many years, and when he was reborn in the human realm, he was beaten to death for a hundred existences. In his last existence, although he was foremost among the Buddha's disciples in supernormal power, he could not stop those heinous kammas from bearing results; he was beaten to death by 500 thieves.

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We can state some of the Kamma Law as follows.

*"Sadisaṃ pākāṃ janeti"*

Kamma will produce results similar to it.

*"Yādisaṃ vappate bījaṃ tādisaṃ harate phalaṃ"*

As you sow the seeds so shall you reap the fruit.

*"Kālyāṇakāri kalyāṇaṃ pāpakāri ca pāpakāṃ"*

Who used to do good receives good.

Who used to do bad receives bad.

*"Sabbe sattā kammaṣṣakā kammaṃ satte vibhajjati."*

"All beings are the owners of their kammas; the kammas divide beings into lowness and excellence."

As the kammas done by the people in their past existences as well as in their present existences are different, their fates and fortunes are different from one another.

As the kammas are produced by the mind, if we control our minds, we can also control our kammas, and consequently our fates and fortunes

as well.

The principle of kamma and its effect is an important principle in Buddhism. One shall become a true Buddhist only when one understands kamma and its effect, believes it and has the right view.

One ought to understand how kammas arise and how they operate so that one shall be ashamed and scared to do immoral actions and willing and delighted to do meritorious deeds. One shall then become an upright person with good moral character and shall be able to create good fate and fortune for oneself.

*It is the precious news to learn that we can freely make use of the Law of Kamma as we like and we ourselves can control our fate and fortune.*

*The famous English play-writer William Shakespeare wrote: "I am the captain of my soul and the master of my fate."*

*We can now write: "I am the captain of my mind and the creator of my fate."*

To live wisely, happily and prosperously in blissful realms life after life throughout saṃsāra,

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we should make the knowledge of kamma and its result our guiding star and perform meritorious deeds willingly, joyfully and dilligently to accumulate good kammas and to purify our minds until we attain the supreme eternal bliss called Nibbāna.

• **The Art of Living to be reborn in Celestial Realms**

On his journey through villages and towns the Buddha came to **Veḷudvāra** village. The village leaders asked him: "Venerable sir, we have saved some money from our agricultural work. We want to live happily with our family with this money and we want to be reborn in a celestial realm after death. How should we live?"

*"O upright persons, you revere the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha respectfully, and abstain from committing three bodily evil actions, and four evil speeches. You live happily with your family and your wealth. When you die, you will be surely born in celestial realms."*

*(Veḷudvāreyaka Sutta)*

When the Buddha came to **Sālā** village, the

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Brahmins asked him: "Venerable Sir, when some people died, they were reborn in celestial realms. When some other people died, they were reborn in hells. What is the difference?

*"O Brahmins, when those, who lived justly died, they were reborn in celestial realms, and those who lived unjustly died, they were born in hells," said the Buddha.*

"What is justice and injustice?" asked the Brahmins.

"Justice is living with moral conduct, abstaining from ten courses of evil actions, leading to blissful rebirth in blissful realms. Injustice is living with immoral conduct, committing any one or more of ten courses of evil actions", replied the Buddha. *(Sāleyaka Sutta)*

• **Ten Courses of Evil Actions (Ducaritas)**

(a) **Three Immoral Evil Bodily Actions**

1 *Pānātipātā* – killing any sentient being,

2 *Adinnādānā* – stealing or taking other's  
property, unlawfully,

3 *Kāmesumicchācārā* – sexual misconduct or misuse of the senses.

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**(b) Four Immoral Evil Speeches**

4 *Mūsāvādā* – lying or speaking falsely,

5 *Pisūṇavācā* – slandering or breaking friendship  
between persons,

6 *Pharusavācā* – harsh or abusive speech,

7 *Samphappalāpā* – vain or frivolous talk.

**(c) Three Immoral Evil Mental Actions**

8 *Abhiṭṭhā* – covetousness; plotting to get other's  
property unlawfully,

9 *Vyāpāda* – ill-will, plotting other's life and  
property,

10 *Micchādiṭṭhi* – wrong view; taking that kamma  
and its effect do not exist.

Committing any one of the above evil actions  
is liable to be reborn in a woeful abode.

• **Ten Courses of Moral Good Actions**  
*(Sucaritas)*

An action, which is faultless and brings good  
results to all is called a moral good action. A  
faultless action means an action which causes no  
harm to any living being, to oneself or to others  
including animals. A moral action is a good con-

duct, so it is called "*succarita or kusalakamma-patha*".

Abstaining from ten courses of Immoral Evil Actions means ten courses of Moral Good Actions. According to *Sāleyaka Sutta*, we should abstain from all the ten courses of Immoral Evil Actions to escape woeful rebirth.

When we abstain from an evil action, moral minds and moral karmas arise by many billions. They will bear good results and blissful rebirths in blissful realms.

- **Observe Pañca Sīla Respectfully and Adorably**

According to the Advice of the Buddha in *Veḷudvāreyaka Sutta* and *Sāleyaka Sutta*, we should keep the Noble Threefold Refuge (*Tisarāṇa-gamaṇa*) and Observe Pañca Sīla very respectfully and adorably.

After getting up early from bed, we should wash our face and body and put on clean clothes. Then we should offer flowers, drinking water and breakfast to the Buddha.

1 Pay obeisance to the Buddha with the formula

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of asking permission to pay homage.

2 Ask for Pañca Sīla together with the noble  
Threefold Refuge.

3 Pay homage to the Buddha by reciting three  
times:

*"Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa."* (You can start from step 3 instead of step 1.)

4 Take Threefold Refuge by reciting:

*"Buddham saranam gacchāmi.*

*Dhammam saranam gacchāmi.*

*Samgham saranam gacchāmi.*

*Dutayampi ..... Tatiyampi ....."*

5 Undertake Pañca Sīla in Pāli and English:

(1) *Pānātipātā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I observe the precept of abstaining from killing any living being.

(2) *Adinnādānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I observe the precept of abstaining from taking what is not given by the owner.

(3) *Kāmesumicchācārā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*



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I observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct and misuse of the senses.

(4) *Musāvādā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I observe the precept of abstaining from lying, slandering, speaking harshly and vainly.

(5) *Surāmerayamajja pamā datthānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I observe the precept of abstaining from taking intoxicating drinks and drugs.

6 Recite the attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha respectfully.

7 Reflect for ten minutes the attribute of the Buddha "*Araham, Araham*", understanding that the Buddha is the noblest and most worthy of veneration.

8 *Radiate loving-kindness to all living beings and share merit: "I share my merit to all living beings; may all living beings obtain the share of my merit and be happy and well always".*

Note: Although in Pañca Sīla we are asked to abstain from three evil bodily actions and four evil speeches, we should understand that we have to abstain from three evil mental actions as well,

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because committing mental evil actions also produce potent bad karmas which give rise to woe-ful rebirths. In fact, among ten evil actions, wrong view produces the worst evil karmas. The reason is that a person with wrong view is ready to commit all ten evil actions.

When we undertake to abstain from stealing other's property, we should not plot to get other's property unlawfully. Also when we undertake to abstain from killing any living being, we should abstain from plotting to destroy other's life and property.

One special precaution to be taken is to avoid chatting with friends for a long time with pleasure for it amounts to breaking the seventh precept of '*samphappalāpā*'. In enjoying vain talk or frivolous talk, greed-rooted immoral consciousnesses arise by many billions, we forget to do meritorious deeds, and we waste our precious time.

We should live with moral minds to attain good karmas by many billions every second.

- **The marvellous great Benefits of  
Observing Pañca-sīla**

By observing Pañca Sīla, we prevent gross defilements (*Vītikkaṃa Kilesās*) not to arise in our minds. Therefore, our minds are free from gross defilements.

Again by avoiding three evil mental actions, we prevent moderate defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesās*) not to arise in our minds. Therefore, our minds are also free from moderate defilements.

As defilements defile, debase, inflict and burn the mind, when the mind is free from gross defilements as well as moderate defilements, the mind is pure, peaceful and blissful.

Again when we diligently observe Pañca Sīla, we abstain from all the ten evil actions, so we do not cause any harm to any living beings. Therefore, we are living very nobly, faultlessly and blamelessly, which amounts to the best way of leading a household life.

As we lead a pure, blameless and noble life, causing no harm to any living being, we allow all living beings to live happily without danger

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and without worry. So Pañca Sīla is called "*Abhaya Dāna*", and we are also free from four types of danger: the danger of being blamed by ourselves, the danger of being blamed by others, the danger of being punished by the ruler and the danger of being reborn in woeful abodes. So we can live very happily.

In *Ānāpāya Sutta*, the Buddha described four types of happiness:

- (1) *Atthi Sukha* – the happiness of possessing enough wealth which is sufficient for the whole life,
- (2) *Bhoga Sukha* – the happiness of spending one's money freely for all family's needs and for normal sensual pleasure,
- (3) *Ānāpāya Sukha* – the happiness of being free from debt,
- (4) *Anavajja Sukha* – the happiness of being free from all guilt, all sin, and all dangers including woeful rebirth.

Among the four types of happiness, *Anavajja sukha* is supreme, much higher than the other three types of happiness.

Thus, who ever want to enjoy supreme happiness as a house-holder, should diligently and adorably observe Pañca-sīla.

**The Buddha told Ānanda:** "The blameless, pure and noble morality is good till old age. It delights and pacifies the heart and makes the mind peaceful and blissful".

**The Buddha describes five benefits of pure morality to wealthy persons as follows.**

- (1) One with pure morality, because of his heedfulness, will attain great wealth.
- (2) His good fame spreads up to celestial realms and Brahma realms.
- (3) He can join any audience boldly, gracefully with his face fresh and cheerful.
- (4) He will die peacefully with clear mind without delusion.
- (5) He will be reborn in a celestial realm or human realm.

A person with pure morality embraces loving-kindness and tolerance; so his face is clear and cheerful. People and deities love him. Although

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he dresses simply, he looks dignified, graceful and worthy of respect. Morality itself is the most beautiful ornament.

Those without morality may wear very precious ornaments, but as their minds are defiled and debased by defilements, their faces appear stern and ugly. Although they spray expensive perfumes on their clothes, their body-sweat have unbearable foul smell. Deities and Brahmās like the body-smell of those with pure morality, which serves as the most fragrant perfume.

So, if we want to be really beautiful and graceful, we should beautify both our body and mind with pure morality.

The Buddha said: "All the wishes of a person with pure morality will be fulfilled, because his mind is pure and noble."

- What is the most important thing in a human life?

Both the Buddha and Western Scholars specify moral character to be the most important thing in life. Western scholars gave three statements:

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(1) *"When wealth is lost, nothing is lost."*

(2) *"When health is lost, something is lost."*

(3) *"When character is lost, everything is lost."*

We all are born with bare hands. We don't bring anything. If we have ability, we can work and get back the lost wealth again.

The Buddha also specified health to be more important than wealth. He said: *"Āroja paramā lābhā"*, meaning: *"To be healthy is the noblest gift."* So we should learn health-education since we were young, and take good care of our health.

When we lose moral character, we lose everything. So moral character is the most important thing in life. If a person becomes a drunkard, a thief, a robber or addicted to intoxicating drugs, he loses his good character, and becomes a source of danger to his family and to his community. If a person breaks his moral precepts or does not observe moral precepts, he will commit killing, stealing, cheating, lying, sexual misconduct, and all evil actions. He does not care to perform meritorious deeds. He will be kept in jail for a long time; so he is of no use to the country.

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As he accumulates billions of bad karmas, when he die, he will be reborn in woeful abodes for many existences. So he actually loses everything.

A person with pure morality, who does not cause any harm to any living being, respect parents, teachers and elders, and help the needy, maintains the best moral character. He will enjoy all the marvellous great benefits of keeping Pañca Sīla pure.

• **Ten Bases of meritorious Deeds**  
**which bear great benefits**

To do good actions completely, we should perform ten meritorious actions, known as 'Ten Bases of Meritorious Deeds.' These ten meritorious deeds produce so much great benefits that they should be performed by all means.

**(a) Three Dāna-group Meritorious Deeds**

- (1) *Dāna* = alms-giving or generosity,
- (2) *Pattidāna* = sharing one's merit to others,
- (3) *Patānumodana* = rejoicing others' merit by saying 'Sādhu'.

**(b) Three Sīla-group Meritorious Deeds**

- (4) *Sīla* = morality, observing 5, 8, 9 or 10 moral



precepts,

(5) *Appacāyana* = reverence to elders and holy persons,

(6) *Veyāvacca* = Volunteer service in whole some deeds.

(c) Four *Bhāvanā*-group Meritorious Deeds

(7) *Bhāvanā* = tranquillity meditation and Insight Meditation,

(8) *Dhammassavana* = Listening to the Dhamma,

(9) *Dhamma-desanā* = expounding the Dhamma,

(10) *Diṭṭhijjukamma* = straightening one's right view,

Which is the same as '*Sammādiṭṭhi*' = having the right view, *Diṭṭhijjukamma* should be included in all three groups.

### • *Dāna*-group Meritorious Deeds

1. *Dāna* = alms-giving is the easiest meritorious action, which should be done generously. Fulfilling ten Perfect Actions begins with alms-giving. As moral actions bear similar results a billionfold, if we donate one dollar to charity, we shall get a million dollars in every future existence. To make sure that we shall get every-

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thing we need in our future journey in the rounds of rebirths called '*Samsāra*', we should try to donate as much as possible.

No one becomes poor because of giving donation. Since meritorious actions start bearing similar results from the present existence, those who donate generously usually become richer in this very life.

Don't say that "I cannot donate, because I have no extra money." You can donate your food for breakfast and for lunch to the Buddha at home before you eat. You can also give volunteer service where people are making great offering.

At the time of Gotama Buddha there was a very poor couple, called "*Kākavaliya*", in Sāvatti city. They had no hut to live in; they just lived under a tree, making the great earth their bare bed. Mrs. Kāka worked as a domestic helper in a near-by house to get some rice. She boiled the rice in the morning for the couple to eat.

One morning Venerable Sariputtarā, after coming out of seven-days extinction-attainment, looked at the world where he should go for alms-

food, and the Kākavaliya couple appeared in his vision. So he went to their dwelling place.

The Kākavaliya couple were very delighted to see Venerable Sāriputtarā, and they gladly offered him all their rice-gruel, which was actually just enough for one person. In order to make their good merit greater, Venerable Sāriputtarā offered the rice-gruel to the Buddha, and the Buddha multiplied it with his supernormal power to be enough for all the 500 monks residing in Jetavanna monastery.

The Buddha and all the monks in Jetavanna monastery were contented with Kākavaliya's alms-food for that day. Although the couple's offering was worth a little, they got very great good merit as their *volition (cetanā)* and *faith and confidence (saddhā)* were very keen and strong. Within seven days the couple received pots full of gold and the couple become very rich.

The poor woman, later named Lāzā Devī, offered popcorn gladly to Venerable Mahā Kassapa, who also just came out of seven-days extinction-attainment, and she made a wish: "May

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I know the Dhamma that the venerable knows."

When she returned to the hut, she was bitten by a snake, she died and was reborn spontaneously as a celestial being in a great mansion in Tāvātimsā realm. She came down to clean the dwelling place of Venerable Mahā Kassapa to get more merit. But she was asked to go away by the venerable bhikku, and while she was weeping in the sky, she had the chance to listen to the Buddha's teaching, and she immediately was enlightened as Stream-Winner. (pp. 17, 18)

So the benefits of alms-giving are very great. Whenever we perform a meritorious deed, we should make the wish: *"May this good deed of mine leads me to realize Nibbāna soon."*

2. Pattidāna = sharing merit to others

After performing any meritorious deed, we should share the merit we have attained to all living beings: "I share my merit to all living beings. May all living beings obtain the share of my merit and be well and happy always."

While we are sharing merit, moral minds and moral karmas arise by many billions, and our

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good merit is multiplied many times. Those, who could rejoice our merit by saying '*Sādhu, Sādhu*', also attain great merit.

**3. Pattānumodana = rejoicing other's merit by saying '*Sādhu*'**

By saying '*Sādhu, Sādhu, Sādhu*' in appreciation of other's meritorious deeds, moral minds and moral karmas arise by many billions. Besides, we also receive a great share of the merit shared by others.

In Sāvattthi city Visākhā donated the great Pubbārāma monastery, worth 270 million gold coins, to the Buddha and shared merit to all living beings. A lady, who was present there, rejoiced the great donation and gladly said: "*Sādhu, Sādhu, Sādhu*", meaning "Well done! Well done!" When she died, she was born in a very grand, magnificent mansion in Tāvatisā realm.

• **Sīla-group Meritorious Deeds**

**4. Sīla = morality, observing 5, 8, 9, 10 moral precepts**

Morality is the beginning and foundation of all meritorious deeds. It represents the best way of

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living nobly, happily and beneficially. To live according to the advice of all the Buddhas, that is, to avoid evil, to do good and to purify the mind, we should live diligently with moral precepts, undertaking meditation regularly.

**5. Appacāyana = reverence to elders and holy persons**

Subduing our pride, we should pay respect to elders, parents, teachers, monks, nuns and those with great dignity. We get great merit by doing so. It is a great blessing to respect those worthy of respect. We should bend down our head in respect when we pass in front of them.

*A person, who is in the habit of constantly honouring and respecting the elders, can increase his four blessings – longevity, beauty, happiness and strength.*

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**6 Veyāvacca = volunteer service in wholesome deeds**

Giving volunteer service in wholesome deeds is more meritorious than alms-giving. Volunteer service in the affairs of Triple Gem, parents and

teachers amounts to *veyāvacca meritorious deed* as well as *character-morality (cāritta-sīla)*. If we perform the volunteer service with noble enthusiastic volition or intention, we shall gain great benefits.

During the time of Kassapa Buddha, in a monastery on the bank of Ganges river, a monk was sweeping the ground, putting the rubbish together. He asked a novice, who was playing near-by three times to throw away the rubbish into the river. The novice pretended not to hear, and kept on playing. The monk beat the novice's head with the long-handled broom.

The novice wept, scooped the rubbish into a basket, and went to the bank of the river. When he saw the tides and the waves coming up with great force, filling the whole bank of the river, he prayed and made a wish: "As the Gāṅges river is filled with great mass of water, may I possess great wisdom in my future existences. May I be able to ask very profound questions so that no learned persons could answer them."

The monk also came to the bank of the river.

When he heard the novice making a wish, he also made a wish: "As the great Ganges river is overflowed with great mass of water, may my mind is overflowed with great mass of wisdom in my future existences as the result of my great merit of observing bhikkhu-morality and performing *veyāvacca* meritorious deed. And may I be able to answer all the profound questions asked by the future learned person of the present novice."

When they passed away, they were reborn as celestial beings. Again when they passed away from celestial existences, the former novice was reborn as **King Miliṇḍa** with great wisdom, and the former monk was reborn as **Venerable Nāgasena**, who later became an Arahant with very profound wisdom. When they met each other, Venerable Nāgasena could answer all the questions asked by King Miliṇḍa. Their questions and answers were well known as '*Miliṇḍa Paññhā*,'"

• **Meditation-group Meritorious Deeds**

Sīla-group meritorious deeds produce greater merit than Dāna-group meritorious deeds whereas



Bhāvanā-group meritorious deeds give rise to the highest merit.

7. *Bhāvanā = Tranquillity-meditation and Insight-meditation*

We can undertake meditation at any place and at any time. As meditation produces the greatest benefits, we should do it as much as possible.

The Buddha teaches two basic types of meditation:

- (i) *Samatha-bhāvanā* = tranquillity meditation,
  - (ii) *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* = insight meditation.
- (i) '*Samatha*' means '*tranquillity*' which is the concentrated, unshaken, undefiled and peaceful state of mind. It is called '*calm*', because it calms down '*the five hindrances*' (*nīvaraṇas*) including passions.

In essence, '*samatha*' stands for the mental factor '*one-pointedness*' (*ekaggatā*), which unites consciousness and mental factors harmoniously and focuses them on a single sense-object. Tranquillity-meditation develops *mental concentration* (*samādhi*) by suppressing hindrances and other mental defilements not to arise in the mind. When

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the mind becomes pure, free from all defilements, the purity of the mind (*citta-visuddhi*) and the right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) is attained.

Then the mind becomes very peaceful, blissful and powerful. It radiates very brilliant and penetrative light, which enables meditators to see near and far away objects as well as the internal organs of themselves and others with closed eyes. It helps meditators to discern ultimate realities, comprising ultimate materialities, consciousnesses and mental factors, and define each of them with respect to its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause.

The knowledge of defining mentality-materiality (*Nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*) and the Knowledge of discerning the causes of mentalities and materialities (*Paccaya-puriggaha-ñāṇa*) are the pre-requisites for undertaking *insight meditation* (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*).

The Buddha taught forty subjects for undertaking tranquillity meditation. All these meditation subjects can give rise to the right concentra-

tion. Among them, 'mindfulness of breathing' (*Ānāpānassati*) is the foremost one, which is taught in all meditation centres. If we can meditate it as taught by the Buddha, it can give rise to four *rūpāvacara-jhānas* (*meditative absorptions*) in the four-jhānas method. Indeed, the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna* is the best concentration for undertaking insight meditation.

(ii) '*Vipassanā-bhāvanā*' is 'insight meditation', which is mainly reflecting on three characteristic marks of existence in many special ways to develop ten insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇas*). In essence, '*vipassanā*' stands for the *paññā-cetasika* (*wisdom*).

As all mentalities and materialities, which make up our bodies and minds, are arising and perishing extremely rapidly and incessantly, they possess the following three characteristics of existence.

- (i) *Anicca-lakkhaṇa* – the characteristic of impermanence;
- (ii) *Dukkha-lakkhaṇa* – the characteristic of suffering, because to be tortured continuously and

incessantly by the rapid dissolution and perishing of our cherished mentalities and materialities really means suffering;

(iii) *Anatta-lakkhaṇa* – the characteristic of not-self, because mentalities and materialities are arising and perishing very rapidly and incessantly as a matter of course; they will not happen as we like; there is no permanent entity which remains to be regarded as a *soul* or *atta*, and no *person* exists to be called "I".

These three characteristics of existence represent the object of vipassanā meditation.

In living nobly and happily, we keep the noblest Triple Gems and Pañca-sīla well established very diligently in our hearts, and we radiate loving-kindness and reflect on the attributes of the Buddha regularly in daily life. We should also perform alms-giving and other meritorious deeds as much as possible.

To live more nobly, more happily and more beneficially, we should undertake 'mindfulness of breathing' (*Ānāpānassati*) about one hour a day. The best time to meditate is early in

the morning when everything is still quiet. It is not difficult to do *Ānāpānassati*. As we are breathing all the time, we can take note of our in-breath and out-breath at any time and at any place. That is mindfulness of breathing.

- **The Practice of Mindfulness of Breathing (*Ānāpānassati*)**

There are four steps in doing *Ānāpānassati* systematically.

The meditator should sit comfortably either cross-legged or in any preferable posture on a mat or seat. He should keep his body and head erect while relaxing all his muscles. He should close his eyes well so that no light gets into the eye. He should always breathe normally, taking notice of the in-breath and the out-breath.

He should always keep his mind or awareness at the two nostrils, trying to be aware of the touching of the breath with the nostrils. If he focuses his attention on any one of the two nostrils, the touching of the breath around the nostril becomes more and more distinct gradually. Then he focuses his attention at the most distinct point of

touching, and try to be aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath by the gentle touch at the touching point, without following the breaths either inward or outward.

• **First step: Awareness of the In-breath and the Out-breath**

The first important step in mindfulness of breathing is to be constantly aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath by their gentle brushing either at the nostril or at the upper lip just below the nostril.

*Only if the meditator practises Ānāpānassati by establishing his mindfulness on the breath at the point of distinct contact with the in-breath and the out-breath, will the Ānāpānassati concentration and meditation be accomplished in him.*

(Visuddhi i, 271)

An important requirement is to focus his mind on his breath at the point of contact only, and not to follow the breath as it goes into the nostrils or it goes out of the nostrils. If he follows the breath, his mind will not be at the state of one-pointed-

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ness, and consequently his progress in developing the concentration will be delayed.

For the same reason he should not take note of any bodily sensation such as pain, itch or numbness that arises during meditation. Since the mind can be aware of only one thing at a time, the meditator will not be aware of anything else if he can focus his mind well on the meditation subject. If the pain becomes unbearable, he can change his posture to relieve the pain.

He must keep his mind constantly focused on the in-breath and the out-breath without allowing the mind to wander out to other sense-objects. In case, it has wandered out, he must bring it back to the meditation subject as soon as he notices it.

In case the meditating mind does not remain fixed calmly on the subject of the in-breath and the out-breath and is very restless, the counting method should be used as directed in Great Commentaries.

• **The Counting Method to Control the Mind**

If the mind is restless or wandering, he should

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count his breath as follows to control his mind.

1. 'In-breath, out-breath' – one,
2. 'In-breath, out-breath' – two,
3. 'In-breath, out-breath' – three,
4. 'In-breath, out-breath' – four,
5. 'In-breath, out-breath' – five.

He may count not less than five and not more than ten. He may count one to five, one to five, again and again. He should make a determination to keep his mind calmly fixed on the in-breath and the out-breath while counting from one to five, without letting the mind to wander away towards various external objects. He should not also allow any thought to arise or to come in.

As he reflects on the breath by counting, his meditative mind will gradually remain fixed calmly on the object of the in-breath and the out-breath by the power of the counting method.

When the mind remains calmly fixed on the meditation subject for about one hour continuously, he can stop counting, and continue to be aware of the breaths without counting. If he can focus his mind continuously on the in-breath and



the out-breath for one hour without counting at every sitting for meditation, he can proceed to the second step.

• **Second Step: Awareness of the Length of Breath**

While we are aware of the in-breath and the out-breath by their gentle brushing at the touching point of the breaths with the nostril or the upper lip, we also take note of the length of the in-breath and the out-breath. If we are breathing quickly, we take the length to be short; if we are breathing slowly, we take the length to be long.

The length of the in-breath should be equal to the length of the out-breath. This will greatly help the development of mental concentration. The meditator should always breathe normally. He should not intentionally make the breath either long or short.

The length of the breath should also be taken note in the third step. Generally the length of breath changes from time to time during the meditation. Whatever the length of breath may be, the in-breath and the out-breath should be equal in

length.

• **Third Step: Awareness of the Whole  
Breath**

When the meditator is calmly and firmly conscious of the length of breath for about one hour at every sitting for meditation, he should proceed to the third step. In the third step he should be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

He should not try to note thus: "This is the beginning, this is the middle, this is the end." Neither should he label the breath as 'beginning, middle, end.' If he tries to do so, he may jeopardize his concentration. If he cannot meditate without labelling, then he should just label as "in-breath, out-breath."

All he need to do is to be mindfully aware of the whole in-breath and the whole out-breath from the beginning to the end by the touch of the breath at the tip of the nostril or at the upper lip.

he should not follow the breath as it goes into the body or out of the body. He should not take the breath that touches the nostril as the begin-

ning, the breath that reaches the chest as the middle, and that which arrives at the navel as the end when he breathes in.

Similarly, when he breathes out, he should not regard the navel, the chest and the nostril as the points to mark the beginning, the middle and the end of the breath. He must focus his mind only on the breath that is touching the tip of the nostril or the upper lip, thus keeping the mind at one point, that is the point of contact.

• **Fourth Step: The Disappearance of the Breath**

As the meditator watches the in-going breath and the out-going breath to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the whole in-breath and the whole out-breath for many sittings, his breathing becomes more and more gentle and subtle. The gross in-breaths and the gross out-breaths gradually cease, and his consciousness arises with the subtle in-breath and the subtle out-breath as its object. And when that has ceased, it goes on arising with the successively subtler breaths as its object. How?

Suppose a man strikes a bronze-bell with an iron-bar. Immediately a loud sound arises, and his consciousness will arise with the gross sound as its object. Then when the gross sound has ceased, his consciousness will arise with the subtle sound as its object. And when that has ceased, his consciousness will go on arising with the successively subtler sound as its object. This is how it should be understood.

For while other meditation-subjects become clearer at each higher stage, *Ānāpānassati* does not. In fact, as he goes on developing it, it becomes more and more subtle for him at higher stages, and it even comes to the point at which it is no longer manifest or distinct.

If the breaths do not become subtle even when he can concentrate his mind on the whole breath clearly, being aware of the beginning, the middle and the end of the breath for one hour or more at every sitting, he should make a mental wish: "May my gross breath be calm", and strive on to be mindfully aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

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Gradually the breath will become smooth, subtle and calm by itself. He should not purposely make the breath calm and subtle; he will slowly gasp for air and become tired. He will jeopardize his concentration.

If the breath becomes subtle by itself and the mind is calm on it, most meditators, by the power of meditation, are no longer aware of the head, the nose and the body; there exist only the breath and the mind which is conscious of the breath. At that moment "I", "you", "he" cannot be found.

Then he will need more powerful mindfulness to concentrate his mind on that subtle breath very attentively. At that stage very powerful mindfulness that fixes the mind on the meditation subject and very powerful wisdom that clearly apprehends the subtle breath are very essential.

While he is striving so, sometimes the in-breaths and the out-breaths are no longer distinct. He can no longer find the breath which seems to disappear. In that case, he should fix his mind at the place where he has apprehended the breath, bearing in mind that he is still breathing.

As he gives his attention in this way, the breaths reappear after no long time. Then he keeps on fixing his attention on the whole in-breath and the whole out-breath by their gentle brushing at the touching point.

### • The Appearance of Meditation Signs

The natural in-breath and out-breath are taken as the **preparatory sign** (*parikamma-nimitta*). The grey dirty image like cigarette-smoke that appears at a certain degree of mental concentration is also regarded as the preparatory sign.

A white image like cotton or silk-cotton that appears at a higher degree of concentration is called the **acquired sign** (*uggaha-nimitta*). This is a general description. The image of other colours or shapes may also appear.

As the concentration rises the image may become very clear and bright like the evening star. This image is taken as the **counter-sign** (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*). Again this is a general description.

In **Visuddhi Magga** it is described that the meditation sign is not the same for all people. It

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appears to some producing a soft touch like cotton-wool, silk cotton or a breeze. To some the sign appears like a star, a ball of ruby or a ball of pearl; to some it has a harsh touch like a cotton seed, or a pin made of wood; to some it is like a long string, or a wreath of flowers, or a crest of smoke; to others it is like a spread out cobweb, a film of cloud, a lotus flower, a chariot-wheel, the disc of the moon or the disc of the sun.

The meditation sign appears differently in different people due to the difference in perception, for it is born of perception, originated by perception, sprung from perception. Therefore, it should be understood that when it appears differently, it is because of the difference in perception.

For a person, who had done *Ānāpānassati* in a previous life, the meditation sign starts to appear while he is focusing on the whole breath or while he is meditating on very subtle breath. But the initial sign is not stable and firm yet. So the meditator should ignore it and keep on focusing on the in-going breath and the out-going breath.

For most people, the meditation sign appears

while the meditator is focusing on the mild subtle breath which reappears after it has gone to be no longer distinct. Again the meditation-sign is usually not stable yet. The meditator should not pay attention to it; he should strive on to be mindful of the breath. When the breath and the sign become identical and indivisible, he is aware of the sign while he is trying to be aware of the breath and vice versa. This is the right form.

However, for some meditators the sign does not appear at the place where the breath touches the nostril or the upper lip. It appears a little further apart or about one foot from the tip of the nose. It may also appear on the forehead or in other places.

In this case the meditator should not pay attention to the sign. He should focus his attention on the breath at the point of contact. When his concentration attains full strength, the sign will appear at the point of contact and become indivisible from the breath.

#### • The Arising of Fourfold Jhānas

When the meditation sign and the breath are identical and indivisible, the meditator should fix



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his mind on the sign; and so from now on his development proceeds by way of fixing. He should put away extraneous aspects, and anchor his mind upon the in-breath and the out-breath.

From the time the counter-sign appears, his hindrances (*nīvaranās*) are suppressed, his defilements subside, his mindfulness is established and his mind is concentrated in access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

He should not give attention to the meditation sign for its colour. He should guard it as carefully as a king's chief queen guards the embryo of a universal monarch. He should make the sign grow and improve with repeated attention. When his mind remains fixed on the meditation sign for one hour, two hours, or more, he is said to attain the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*.

To make it sure, after coming out of the *jhāna*, he should look with closed eyes at his heart to see his life-continuum (*bhavaṅga-citta*), which will appear like a star. The life-continuum functions as the mind-door. The meditation-sign and the first *rūpāvacara jhāna* appears in the mind-

door. If he can discern the five jhāna-factors distinctly which associate with the first rūpāvacara jhāna, then it is sure that he attains the first rūpāvacara jhāna.

Then by focusing his mind on the meditation-sign without the first two jhāna-factors, namely *vitakka* and *vicāra*, he can develop the second rūpāvacara jhāna. Furthermore, by eliminating the third jhāna-factor, that is *pīti*, he develops the third rūpāvacara jhāna, and by again eliminating the fourth-jhāna-factor, that is *sūkha*, he develops the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna.

#### • Five Jhāna-factors

The five jhāna-factors are neutral mental factors which give rise to the jhāna when they are fully developed.

- (1) *Vitakka* = initial application of the mind to a sense-object; thought conception,
- (2) *Vicāra* = sustained application of the mind on the object by examining it again and again; discursive thinking,
- (3) *Pīti* = joy, rapture or interest,
- (4) *Sukha* = pleasant feeling,

(5) *Ekaggatā* = one-pointedness of the mind.

*Ekaggatā* unites consciousness and mental factors harmoniously and focuses them on one object. It prevents its concomitants from dispersion and fixes them on one object. It functions as 'mental concentration' (*samādhi*).

### • The Noble Eightfold Path

The Teachings of the Buddha are shining like the sun and the moon at the present time. Have you got any benefit from the Teachings of the Buddha?

Living in the general way by working for a living and enjoying sensual pleasure cannot guarantee that we shall escape woeful rebirth after death. The reason is that we are living with immoral minds, forgetting to do meritorious deeds.

We should be mindful about the Buddha's teaching in *Nakhasīkha Sutta* that most of the people will be reborn in four woeful abodes after death and only very few people will be reborn in the human realm and celestial realms. The Buddha even said that the four woeful abodes are the permanent homes of most living be-

ings.

So to escape woeful rebirth and to be reborn in a blissful realm is the most important matter for us.

How should we live happily and nobly in this life so that we shall be reborn in blissful realms continuously until we attain *Nibbāna*, the ultimate Goal of Buddhism?

We should live according to the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the only Path that leads to *Nibbāna*. This Path can be incorporated in our daily life as the first step. We have a saying: "A step a day, London is not far away."

The eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path can be classified as the Noble Threefold Training.

(a) Path-factors representing "Training of Wisdom"

1 *Samma-ditthi* = right view (*paññā-cetasika*)

2 *Sammā-saṅkappa* = right thought (*vitakka*)

(b) Path-factors representing "Training of Morality"

3 *Sammā-vācā* = right speech

(abstaining from four evil speeches)

4 *Sammā-kammanta* = right action

(abstaining from three evil actions)

5 *Sammā-ājīva* = right livelihood

(abstaining from wrong livelihood)

(c) Path-factors representing "Training of Concentration"

6 *Sammā-vāyāma* = right effort (*vīriya*)

7 *Sammā-sati* = right mindfulness (*sati*)

8 *Sammā-śamādhi* = right concentration (*ekaggatā*)

• **Explanation**

The right view represents wisdom which leads the way how to undertake "Threefold Training" correctly. It begins with the right view of kamma and its result and ends with the Fourfold Path-wisdom, which totally eliminates all defilements, the causes of all suffering, and realize Nibbāna.

The right thought is threefold, namely, (1) the thought of emancipation from sensuality, (2) the thought of loving-kindness to relieve all living beings from danger, and (3) the thought of compassion to relieve living beings from suffering.

The "Training of Morality" consists of three Path-factors, which amount to abstaining from four evil speeches, three evil bodily actions and the wrong livelihood. In leading the right livelihood, we must also abstain from four evil speeches, three evil bodily actions, and all other actions which will cause harm to living beings like trading in poison, weapons, intoxicating drinks and drugs, live animals for food, human beings, etc.

The morality which abstains from the above evil actions is called "*Ājīvaṭṭhamaka-sīla*", meaning "the moral practice having livelihood as the eighth precept." This morality is more or less the same as *Pañca-sīla*; both *sīlas* demand to abstain from ten evil actions or evil conduct to make sure that anyone who keeps the *sīla* well will not be reborn in a woeful abode after death.

Whenever we take *Pañca-sīla*, we take it together with Threefold Refuge to get great merit. In daily life, when we take Threefold Refuge and *Pañca-sīla* in the morning and keep them diligently the whole day, we are also undertaking

the Training of Morality of the Noble Threefold Training. It amounts to paying the greatest reverence to the Buddha, and the Buddha admired such people most. We are already living happily and nobly, enjoying the bliss of a blameless and sinless life by undertaking such training.

If we can also undertake *Ānāpānassati* meditation for one hour every day, and increase it slowly to two hours, three hours, and so on in a day, we are also undertaking the Training of Concentration of the Noble Threefold Training. If we can concentrate well on the in-breath and the out-breath for one hour at every sitting, we shall enjoy greater bliss for living with moral-minds associated with joy (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*).

When the meditator can focus his mind well on the in-breath and the out-breath, or better when he attains the access concentration, he should go to an International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centre to continue his meditation as taught by the Buddha.

In the meditation-centre, the meditator has to

observe higher morality by observing eight or nine precepts, abstaining from sensual pleasure also, because sensual pleasure is a hindrance to meditation.

With the guidance of the meditation-teacher in the centre, the meditator will be able to develop the fourfold rūpāvacara jhāna in Ānāpānassati meditation quickly. Then he attains the right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) and the purity of the mind (*citta-visuddhi*), ready to undertake vipassanā-meditation.

### • Undertaking Vipassanā Meditation

A person, who can develop the right concentration and the purity of the mind, is generally said to be half way on the road to Nibbāna. "If a person with jhāna-concentration undertakes vipassanā-meditation strenuously and correctly, he is already close to Nibbāna", said the Buddha.

#### \* *The Only Path to Nibbāna*

*The only path that leads to the attainment of purity, to the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, to the end of pain and*



*grief, to the entering of the right path, and to the realization of Nibbāna is the Noble Eightfold Path. (Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta)*

**\* The Perfect Path**

*Free from pain and torture is this path, free from groaning and suffering is this path; it is the Perfect Path.*

*(Majjhima Nikāya 139)*

*Among all paths this noble eightfold path, which leads to the ageless, painless, deathless Nibbāna, and which is free from danger, is the Noblest Path.*

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

The meditator, who has completed the four stages of purifying the mind, can now undertake vipassanā-meditation peacefully and happily in International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centre under the close guidance of the meditation teacher.

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

1 *Sammasana-ñāṇa* – the Knowledge of defining

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and contemplating mentality-materiality as impermanence, 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 *Sanikhārupekkhā-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.

*"Though one should live a hundred years without wisdom and mental concentration, yet better indeed, is a single day's life of one, who with wisdom and mental concentration is undertaking samatha-vipassanā meditation."* (Dhammapada 111)

*"Though one should live a hundred years without seeing and comprehending the arising and perishing of five aggregates of clinging, yet better indeed is a single day's life of one, who sees and comprehends the*

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*arising and perishing of five aggregates of clinging."* (Dhammapada 113)

### • Conclusion

*In conclusion the essence of the art of living nobly and happily is as follows.*

- 1 *Please keep Three Noblest Jewels or Triple Gem well established in your heart with great respect and adoration to get the greatest benefits of keeping Threefold Refuge. You will surely escape from woeful rebirth and enjoy blissful rebirth repeatedly until you are enlightened as an Arahant.*
- 2 *To live nobly and happily, we should completely avoid ten evil actions and keep Pañca-sīla totally pure to maintain the faultless, noblest and best moral character. Wear Pañca-sīla gladly and proudly as the most beautiful dress and the sweetest perfume. Remember that whatever a person with pure morality needs and wishes, the needs and the wishes will be fulfilled, because his mind is pure and noble.*
- 3 *To live happily and cheerfully with moral minds, "radiation of living-kindness"*

*(metta-bhāvanā) and "reflection of the Attribute of the Buddha" (Buddhānassati) should be practised in all places and at all times.*

*In this way you can accumulate powerful good karmas by many billions every second, and these karmas will condition you to be reborn in blissful realms life after life throughout the future rounds of rebirths (saṃsāra).*

- 4 To live more peacefully and more blissfully, please undertake mindfulness of breathing (Ānāpānassati) as taught by the Buddha for one hour a day.*
- 5 When the mind becomes tranquil and serene, increase the time of Ānāpānassati meditation to two hours, three hours, and so on, by reducing the time of watching television and chatting, etc. When the mind becomes well concentrated for one hour, two hours continuously at every sitting for meditation, please go to an International Pa-auk Forest Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centre and continue samatha-meditation under the guidance of the meditation-teacher to attain the fourfold jhāna. Then peacefully and*

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*happily undertake vipassanā-meditation to attain the first Path-consciousness and its Fruition-consciousness and become enlightened as a Stream-Winner.*

*It may take two months, three months, or more, never mind. It is the most important and most beneficial task to do and it is the most exciting and interesting time to experience.*

*Then you will attain the full benefits of the most marvellous teachings of the Buddha, and you can live on most happily for many world-cycles until you attain Anupādisesa Nibbāna!*

*"Though one should live a hundred years without morality and mental concentration, yet better indeed, is a single day's life of one, who with morality and concentration is undertaking samatha-vipassanā meditation."* (Dhammapada 110)

*"Better than absolute sovereignty over the whole earth, better than going to celestial realms and Brahma realms, better than even lordship over the worlds is to be a Stream-Winner."* (Dhammapada 178)

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*I am also living happily and peacefully, observing moral precepts and undertaking Buddhist meditation.*

*May all my students be happy and well always, and may all their good wishes be fulfilled.*

Dr. Mehm Tin Mon

7.7.2017







