

# THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

(Higher Level)  
Volume I



Published by  
Department for the Promotion and  
Propagation of the Sāsana

S.E. 2545

M.E. 1363

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**Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato  
Sammāsambuddhassa**

# **The Teachings of the Buddha (Higher Level)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Teachings of the Buddha (Basic Level)**

**“The Teachings of the Buddha (Basic Level)”** which was written by the advisers of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Union of Myanmar, was published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in July 1994. The advisers wrote this book with the intention of making it a text-book for teaching Buddhist Myanmar Culture to young students of primary and middle schools.

In this book the fundamental teachings of the Buddha that every Buddhist should learn

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and practice are described. A Buddhist who learns and practises those basic lessons given in the book will become an ideal Buddhist with a good and firm foundation.

The first essential requirement for every Buddhist is to learn and understand as much as possible the facts about the Buddha whom they worship. When the virtues of the Buddha are well understood, the faith and reverence in the Buddha will be predominated by knowledge and understanding. With this knowledge and understanding he can answer well when he is asked: "Why the Buddha is worshipped and revered?"

Then only one will be a person who understand and can describe in detail what type of teacher, the Buddha is among many religious teachers in the world.

"The Teachings of the Buddha (Basic Level)", which was originally written in Myanmar, has been translated into English by the Advisers of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs for the sake of interested persons who would like to study it in English.

Introduction

## The Teachings of the Buddha (Higher Level)

The Advisers of the Ministry of Religious Affairs also wrote "The Teachings of the Buddha (Higher Level)" so that high-school students, university students, and middle aged persons can study and learn the Buddhist Myanmar culture at a higher level.

In this book emphasis is laid on the ethical aspects of the Doctrine (Dhamma) such as giving away in charity, morality and meditation. The lessons in the book will be introduced to learners briefly.

In Chapter (1), the ten noble Perfections, the distinguished types of wisdom, the characteristic bodily marks of the Buddha, the eight great victories of the Buddha are described. These remarkable attributes of the Buddha are not mentioned in "The Teachings of the Buddha (Basic Level)."

When one learns these remarkable attributes of imaginary God, that he is a historic personage who became fully enlightened after fulfilling all the requirements and practising the Noble Eightfold Path successfully. By reflecting on the thirty-two characteristic bodily marks of the



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Buddha, one also realizes that the Buddha is a peerless benefactor, who sacrifices more than anyone else and exemplifies an ideal figure in performing all meritorious deeds. So one can develop reverence and emulation for the Buddha in oneself.

In Chapter(2) the explanation of the attributes of the Triple Gem (The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha), the method of reflecting on the attributes of the Triple Gem and its benefits, the method taking refuge in the Triple Gem together with the historical background of worship are described quite completely. The reason is that it is very important to attain "a truly correct way of taking refuge" (apaṇṇaka-saraṇa) in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha.

As the number of people who are interested in Theravāda Buddhism and who are being converted into Buddhism is increasing nowadays, it is very necessary to know the way how to become a real Theravāda Buddhist.

Besides, as it is said that "The first step in becoming a Buddhist is taking refuge in Triple Gem", it will be observed that the Three Refuges are very important in becoming Buddhists. When one becomes a Buddhist, one is known

as "Lay disciple" (Upāsakā). So the morality of a lay disciple, the qualifications of a lay disciple and the causes of ruin of a lay disciple, and the Do's and Don'ts for a Buddhist can be studied with great interest in this chapter.

In Chapter(3) "Kamma and its result" is described. Since one can become a Buddhist only if one understands and believes in Kamma and its results, this chapter is very important for Buddhists. Therefore every Buddhist should try to understand Kamma and its results as much as possible.

But Kamma is of very various types. Much needs be said about it. Thus, in this chapter, Kamma and how Kamma bears its result, how living beings die and how rebirth takes place are described quite completely so that those who study this chapter will understand the principle of Kamma well. Besides whether the next existence and an eternal soul(atta) exist or not is discussed from the point of view of Buddhist Philosophy (Abhidhamma); so it will help those who are searching for the truth and those who do not have a clear view about their traditional beliefs.

Then only one will rely on oneself rather than rely on an uncertain and invisible Almighty

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Being; and thus one attains a good foundation of reliance and can avoid excessive selfishness in everything. One would wish to undertake the best task (meditation) while one lives at a time when the Buddha's teaching flourishes. One will also discern exactly what to do for the benefit of oneself and of others.

In Chapter(4) ten meritorious deeds and alms-giving are described. It is very important for every Buddhist to know all the ten meritorious deeds. The essence of Buddhism is practical application. In the ten meritorious deeds, the practical application of alms-giving, morality and meditation (Dāna, SīLa, Bhāvanā) are included. So, when one studies the ten meritorious deeds, one understands thoroughly all the practical applications which a Buddhist should perform.

When you study the description on alms-giving you will understand the meaning of alms-giving, the various types of alms-giving, the benefits of alms-giving and stories related to alms-giving. So the volition for giving alms and for helping others will arise strongly in your mind. Moreover, as you discern what should be the attitude in alms-giving, which is the more

beneficial charity, you know how to perform alms-giving in the most effective way.

Only then will you become satisfactory benefactors who have given away hard-earned wealth to the Sāsana and to humanity for their everlasting welfare.

In Chapter(5) the moral precepts for laymen are described quite completely. As the moral precepts prescribe how to control one's bodily actions and verbal actions they represent the Buddhist ethics. In Buddhism the moral precepts which control bodily and verbal actions are more important and more beneficial than alms-giving which does not involve the control of bodily and verbal actions. Those who study this chapter will understand perfectly the completeness and the defects of morality, the purity and the impurity of morality, and the great benefits of morality. With this knowledge the earnest desire for observing the moral precepts will arise in one, and one knows well how to keep one's morality intact without any defect.

In this way we can expect righteous sons and daughters with strong morality to arise successively to lead the country of the future age.

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Chapter(6) describes the various methods of meditation. This is the time when tranquillity and insight meditations are widely practised not only in Myanmar but also in many parts of the world.

The methods of meditations described in this Chapter are very basic and they will help those who are already meditating as well as those who wish to take up meditation practice. Especially the four guardian meditations (Caturārakkha-Kammaṭṭhānas), which should be practised by every meditator, are described in this chapter.

Only then those who are will born as Buddhists, who are Buddhists just in name, and ordinary Buddhists, who just believe in Kamma and its result (Kammassakata-Sammādiṭṭhi), will be raised to the states of Buddhists who understand mind and matter, and cause and effect by themselves (Vipassanā-Sammādiṭṭhi). They will be firmly established in Buddhism.

Chapter(7) describes the higher doctrine (Abhidhamma) which is suitable for the higher level. As the higher doctrine describes in detail the ultimate realities in nature, it should be learned and understood by every Buddhist.

Only when one understands the higher doctrine will one become a basically firm Buddhist

with an unshakable conviction. So the higher doctrine (Abhidhamma) is presented in this chapter in such a way as to suit the higher level students.

After studying this chapter one will be able to reflect on what one says and does daily, how one keeps one's attitude, what one realizes from one's meditation, and the interesting nature of psychophysical phenomena and compare them the Buddha's higher doctrine.

In Chapter(8) the powerful Pāli-chanting Verses are collected. At the present time chanting the Pāli Verses taught by the Buddha is practised as a meritorious deed by the majority of Buddhists. This meritorious deed can bring benefits such as warding off present dangers and enemies, presenting future dangers and enemies from materializing, increasing one's gains and promoting one's standing and prestige. There are many stories illustrating these benefits in Buddhist cannons. There are also many example from personal experience nowadays.

Thus for those who want to recite the Pāli-chanting verses just for mere chanting or for chanting as meditation by deep reflection on their meanings and essences, some traditionally recited Pāli verses are selectively collected and represented here.

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Thus the people who are struggling every-day for their living can use them as reliable companions and weapons for success in everything and for guarding them from danger.

In Chapter(9), the history of the propagation of Buddhism is presented. Buddhism first appeared in the middle region (Majjhima-desa) of India. From there Buddhism has spread to all parts of the world. Myanmar, is among the countries where Buddhism has spread. The form of Buddhism that has come to Myanmar is Theravāda Buddhism. Buddhists should know the history of the religion which they profess. So the history of the propagation of Buddhism and the arrival of Theravāda Buddhism to Myanmar are described here by referring to stone-inscriptions and the texts on the history of Buddhism to enable earnest Buddhists to study them readily.

Thus, they will understand what other faiths and beliefs have infiltrated into pure Theravāda Buddhism and how these alien beliefs can be warded off. So, being aware of the long history of the ups and downs of Buddhism, they will have the good chance to maintain and propagate the pure form of Buddhism.

Chapter(10) presents Buddhist culture. Buddhist culture comprises bodily culture, verbal culture and mental culture which have derived from the practice of the Buddha's teachings in daily life. This culture exists in the form of moral duties, homilies, and customs in Myanmar.

By following these moral duties and written homilies, the Myanmar should maintain their uniquely cultured behaviours, social dealings and peaceful attitude for ever. In order to accomplish this objective, the Buddhist Culture has been described in this chapter.

In chapter(11) an introduction to the Pāli Alphabets in Myanmar and Roman characters is described. A student of Buddhism should be able to read pāli correctly. This systematically to read the pāli writings in Myanmar script correctly, to translate the pāli passage in Myanmar script into English, and to read the pāli writing in Roman characters.

### The Objective of this Book

Reliable historical evidences show that the people of Myanmar have always lived peacefully according to the Buddhist teachings, the Buddhist view and the Buddhist culture.



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In olden days the children in Myanmar traditionally learned the Buddhist literature and culture in monasteries. Historical evidences point out that even in the Pyu era, which is earlier than the Pagan era, both boys and girls, from 7 to 20 years of age, had their heads shaven and stayed in monastries to acquire monastic education. Nowadays the state is giving support for the revival of monastic education.

Even the British colonial government did not neglect the strong tradition of Myanmar culture and education. So the government prescribed school-texts for teaching Buddhist lessons in primary, middle and high schools. From the time Myanmar gained her independence till the academic year of 1966-67, new text-books on Buddhist lessons were prescribed and taught in schools twice a week regularly.

These books, that is "The Teachings of the Buddha (Basic, Higher and Advanced level)," have been written with the main objective to fill up the gap in the good tradition of compulsory teaching of Buddhist literature and culture. It is our earnest hope that objective will materialise when conditions favourable. We are glad to see at present that these books are being used in Buddhist culture classes

conducted throughout Myanmar during summer vacations and also in officer training classes which are being conducted occasionally.

At present the Government of the Union of Myanmar is making an all-out effort to bring about physical and mental development equally in the whole country.

“The Teachings of the Buddha (Higher Level)” has now been translated into English by the Advisers of the Ministry of Religious Affairs with the help of translation officers from the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana:

- (1) Daw Yi Yi Myint
- (2) Daw Wah Wah Swe
- (3) Daw Sandar Tun.

We like to express our thanks to the Minister for Religious Affairs U Aung Khin, the Deputy minister for Religious Affairs U Aung Ko, the Director General for Religious Affairs Dr. Myo Myint, the Director General for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana U San Lwin, and the Assistant Director of D.P.P.S. U Ko Ko Myaing for their kind help to provide every facility required for translation of this book.

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We should also like to thank Daw Mya Tin, M.A., Former Head of Geography Department, Institute of Education, Yangon; Chairman of the Editorial Committee, of the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana editorial committee and U Tin U, B.A, B.L, Editor of the Editorial Committee, of the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsana, for kindly reading the translated manuscript and making valuable suggestions for this book.

We also have to record a special debt of gratitude to "Thar-Htu-Pyant" computer group, U Myint Myat Soe and colleague..

**1st July, 1999**

**Advisers**

**Ministry of Religious Affairs**

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3. Dr. Mehm Tin Mon.
4. U Bo Maung
5. U Aung Khine
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# **The Course of Practice to become a Buddha**

## **1**

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Myanmar Buddhists unshakably believe in the Three Gems--the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. They recite in Pāli the attributes of these three Gems as much as they can. They also reflect on the numerous supreme attributes of the Buddha while they are reciting.

The Buddhists do not believe and accept the incomparable power, glory, wisdom and the attributes of the Buddha by mere blind faith. They have to look for the collaborative authority in the texts. And they are not yet contented with the authority of the texts; they also have

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to look for the course of practice undertaken by the Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be), and undertake the practice themselves as much as possible. Only then would they acquire the true conviction associated with self-realization.

The attributes of a Buddha are so numerous that even if the Buddha himself were to describe them throughout the entire period of his Buddhahood without preaching other discourses, the attributes would not be exhausted.

The Buddha did not attain Buddhahood endowed with so numerous attributes by easy means; nor by the unanimous election of his followers. He was neither a prophet nor a representative of an Almighty God. He attained it by his own selfless and strenuous efforts in his many past existences, and the course of practice that he had undertaken was precisely and fully described in the texts.

The Bodhisatta, even in his existence as the hermit Sumedha, although he could liberate himself from saṃsāra by becoming a disciple of the Buddha Dīpaṅkarā, took the aspiration to become a Buddha himself in order to save all beings.

Thus after receiving the prophecy from the Buddha Dīpaṅkarā that he would become a Buddha in the future, he began to undertake the course of practice for becoming a Buddha consisting of fulfillment of the ten perfections (Pāramīs), the five great sacrifices and the threefold noble practice.

The selfless, relentless and steadfast fulfilment of the perfections and sacrifices in the countless lives of the Bodhisatta is so difficult and strenuous that an average person would not even dare to think of it.

All the countless and incomparable meritorious deeds that the Bodhisatta had accumulated yielded their combined results in his last existence as Prince Siddhattha. Consequently, the final results of the wholesome Kamma were complete in every respect.

Prince Siddhattha came of a high and noble family. He led a comfortable and luxurious life. His power and glory was so great that he could become a Universal Monarch ruling the whole universe. His physical appearance, endowed with thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks, was marvellous and uniquely graceful.

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When he renounced the world and practised the tranquillity and insight meditation, he realized the Four Noble Truths and attained Buddhahood endowed with the supreme knowledge of omniscience called Sabbaññutañña. He also attained all supernatural powers. From that moment he became a Peerless Perfect One who was unsurpassed by anyone in all the three worlds of men, devas and brahmas.

The more the selfless meritorious deeds for the welfare of mankind one performs, the greater the good results one enjoys. This is the law of causal relations. Since the Bodhisatta performed the greatest amount of unsurpassed meritorious deeds, he enjoyed the greatest benefits in his final existence.

#### *The Ten Perfections*

The Bodhisatta was the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Māyādevī. At the age of thirty-five years, he attained the Supreme Enlightenment and became a Buddha. As a Buddha he was revered not only by men but also by powerful devas and brahmas.

The Buddha attained the Buddhahood, worthy of special veneration by men, devas

and brahmas, not by the strenuous effort he exerted in the present life alone, but also by his continuous steadfast effort for four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh of world cycles beginning from the time he made the aspiration for Buddhahood in the presence of the Buddha Dīpaṅkara. There are three kinds of Bodhisatta:

1. Paññādhika Bodhisatta, (wisdom predominant Bodhisatta)
2. Saddhādhika Bodhisatta, (faith predominant Bodhisatta)
3. Viriyādhika Bodhisatta. (effort predominant Bodhisatta)

### *Paññādhika Bodhisatta*

Becoming a Buddha means attaining the knowledge of Arahatta Magga and Omniscience (Sabbāññuta-ñāṇa). To attain these supreme knowledges the Bodhisatta must have a mental make-up in which wisdom (paññā) is predominant. This means that whenever he fulfils the ten perfections in his countless existences, wisdom plays a dominant role, predominating over faith (saddhā) and effort (viriya). By so doing, his wisdom becomes more and more developed life after life until he finally attains Full Enlightenment and Omniscience.



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A Paññādhika Bodhisatta has to fulfil Perfections for four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles in order to attain Buddhahood.

### *Saddhādhika Bodhisatta*

All Saddhādhika Bodhisattas believe that they can become Buddhas by fulfilling perfections, and faith (saddhā) is predominant in their mental make-up. Whenever they fulfil perfections, faith plays a greater role than wisdom and effort. They have to fulfil perfections for eight asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles in order to attain Buddhahood.

### *Viriyādhika Bodhisatta*

Viriyādhika Bodhisattas are those who rely solely on their effort (viriya) in striving to become a Buddha. Whenever they fulfil perfections, effort plays a greater role than wisdom and faith. They have to fulfil perfections for sixteen asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles in order to attain Buddhahood.

The three kinds of Bodhisatta differ from one another according to their desire and aspiration, but on attaining Buddhahood, they are

neither more virtuous nor less virtuous than the others. One cannot become a Buddha earlier than the specified period mentioned above. Only after fulfilling the perfections for the specified period can one's wisdom become fully developed and matured to the level of Omniscience.

Since the time taken to fulfil perfections in order to become a Buddha is extremely long, it is very very difficult to come across a time when a Buddha appears in the world. There are numerous worlds in which no Buddha appears at all. Depending on the appearance and non-appearance of the Buddhas, the worlds are differentiated as follows:

- (a) Sārakappa = the world in which only one Buddha appears;
- (b) Mandakappa = the world in which two Buddhas appear;
- (c) Varakappa = the world in which three Buddhas appear;

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- (d) Sāramandakappa = the world in which four Buddhas appear;
- (e) Bhaddakappa = the world in which five Buddhas appear;
- (f) Suññakappa = the world in which no Buddha appears.

### *Pāramī (Perfection)*

Bodhisattas are called "Parama"-wise and noble Persons, because they normally accomplish their noble task of fulfilling the Ten Perfections. The ten noble deeds such as charity, morality, etc., to be practised and fulfilled by the Bodhisattas are called the "Ten Perfections" The Ten Perfections are:

- (1) Dānapāramī = the perfection in charity,
- (2) Sīlapāramī = the perfection in morality,
- (3) Nekkhammapāramī = the perfection in renunciation,
- (4) Paññāpāramī = the perfection in wisdom,

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- (5) **Vīriyapāramī** = the perfection in effort,
- (6) **Khantīpāramī** = the perfection in patience,
- (7) **Saccāpāramī** = the perfection in truthfulness,
- (8) **Aditthānapāramī** = the perfection in resolution,
- (9) **Mettāpāramī** = the perfection in loving-kindness,
- (10) **Upekkhāpāramī** = the perfection in equanimity.

Fulfilling the above perfections by sacrificing the external properties apart from one's body is called minor perfections (Pāramī); fulfilling by sacrificing one's limbs and other organs of the body is called middle perfections (Upapāramī), fulfilling by sacrificing one's life is called major perfections (Paramattha-Pāramī). Thus there are ten perfections and thirty varieties of perfections.

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### *Dānapāramī*

Of the ten perfections, the perfection of charity is the one to be fulfilled first. Charity makes the heart soft and gentle. The one who performs the act of charity can readily keep the moral precepts and undertake tranquillity meditation as well as insight meditation. Without charity it will be hard to attain happy existences in the round of rebirths. Even if one attains a happy existence, it will be hard to be blessed with material wealth. Without material wealth, it will be hard to give away money and things in charity towards others.

Ordinary people differentiate their donees as inferior, ordinary and superior, and when they perform the act of charity, they make a wish: "May this act of charity help me to be reborn as human beings or celestial beings and to enjoy human luxury and celestial luxury." This kind of charity is known as *vaṭṭanissita-dāna*, meaning the charity that causes rebirth repeatedly in the round of rebirth.

On the other hand, the *Bodhisattas* do not differentiate their donees, and when they perform the act of charity they only wish for the attainment of Omniscience, i.e. *Sabbāññutañña*.

As the Bodhisatta Sumedha had made the solemn resolution to fulfil the perfection of charity, he gave away in charity not only inanimate possessions and royal luxuries but also animate possessions such as his wives, sons, daughters, physical organs and even his own life in his countless existences in the long period of four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles.

## 2. *Sīlapāramī*

In *Sīlapāramī*, 'sīla' means "good behaviour" or "keeping bodily actions and verbal actions properly" or "good performance". The physical and verbal actions of a person who observes the moral precepts are not in disarray. Morality serves as the foundation for the development of all meritorious deeds.

Thus on account of its ability to keep the physical and verbal actions gentle, mild and in proper order, and its ability to serve as the foundation for the development of all meritorious deeds, this kind of conduct is known as 'sīla' (morality).

Since Bodhisatta Sumedha had made the firm resolution to become a Buddha, he

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fulfilled the perfection of morality by observing five precepts, eight precepts, etc., for four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles. He fulfilled this perfection constantly by safeguarding his morality at the risk of his life just as the yak (cāmari) protects its tail hair even at the risk of its life and as the mother jay protects her eggs even at the risk of her life.

### 3. *Nekkhammapāramī*

“Nekkhamma” means ‘renunciation’ which is of two kinds: (1) emancipation from the round of existences (saṁsāra) and (2) emancipation from sense-desires (kāma). The former is the result and the latter is the cause. Only when the emancipation from sense-desire has been achieved through practice can one gain emancipation from saṁsāra.

Sense-desires are again of two kinds: kilesā kāma and vatthukāma. Kilesākāma is the desire (lobha) to enjoy worldly pleasure. Vatthu kāma means all desirable material objects. Nekkhammapāramī means the striving to free oneself from these two kinds of Kāma.

In order to practise the perfection of renunciation, one has to renounce worldly

pleasures and take up an ascetic life. The Bodhisatta fulfilled the perfection of renunciation for four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles in his numerous existences.

#### 4. *Paññāpāramī*.

Wisdom means the knowledge in arts, sciences and philosophy, the skill in all theories and practices which can bring about the welfare of all beings, and the ability to discriminate between cause and effect.

There are seven ways of developing wisdom-

- (1) Asking questions frequently to the wise,
- (2) Keeping the mind and the body clean,
- (3) Keeping faith, effort, etc, well balanced,
- (4) Avoiding the unwise,
- (5) Associating with the wise,
- (6) Pondering deeply on difficult problems,
- (7) Always desiring for wisdom while lying down, sitting, standing or walking.



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When wisdom takes a predominant role in performing multifarious functions, it is known as *Vimāṅsādhīpati*, one of the four predominant conditions. That wisdom is of three kinds: (1) wisdom acquired from hearing (*Sutamaya paññā*), (2) the wisdom acquired from thinking (*Cintāmayapaññā*), (3) the wisdom acquired at the time of *jhāna* and *phala*. Based on *sutamaya paññā* and *cintāmayapaññā*, *bhāvanāmayapaññā*, the *Bodhisatta* strived for the attainment of mundane psychic power (*lokīyajhāna abhiññā*). Then he strived for the attainment of *lokīyabhāvanāmayapaññā* until he reached *saṅkharupekkhā vipassanāñāṇa*. Because he wanted to work for the welfare of all beings, the *Bodhisatta* fulfilled the perfection of wisdom only up to the state of *saṅkharupekkhāñāṇa* before he attained Buddhahood.

### 5. *Vīriyapāramī*

The *Bodhisatta*, in fulfilling the perfections, strived to his utmost to such a state that his blood and flesh dried up and only his skin, sinews and bones remained.

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In order to accomplish a task, whatever difficulty and obstruction may arise, one does not step back with fear or hesitation, but strives on to overcome all the difficulties until the goal is reached. Striving steadfastly without slackening in effort and perseverance is called fulfilling the perfection of effort. The steadfast strenuous effort which is noble and righteous is called the right effort (*sammāvāyāma*). In fulfilling the perfection of effort, one has to develop this right effort until it is perfect.

Right Effort (*sammāvāyāma*) is also known as Right Exertion (*sammappadhāna*), which is the endeavour to put away the evil that has arisen in the past, to abstain from the evil that has not arisen yet, to strive for the arising of the good which has not yet arisen, and to develop the good that has already arisen.

Following the ways of a hunting lion, a Bodhisatta while fulfilling the perfection of effort, does not make less effort for ordinary tasks nor put forth more energy for more arduous ones. He always makes the same maximum exertion, whether the task is small or great.

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In every existence in the past, the Bodhisatta never hesitated but always boldly strived to solve all problems, whether personal or public, which he came across.

### 6. *Khantīpāramī*

Khantī means patience. One should neither be elated when meeting with pleasant objects nor be upset when encountering unpleasant objects. Khantī has the nature of the absence of hatred. Worry, bad temper, despair and fear do not arise when one is patient. There is no practice nobler than being patient. Being patient is the noblest practice.

Patience can bring about the most peaceful victory. Thus the Bodhisatta fulfilled the perfection of patience for countless existences.

### 7. *Saccāpāramī*

Saccā is truth. To tell the truth and to abstain from telling lies under any circumstance is called fulfilling the perfection of truthfulness. The main characteristic of truthfulness is speaking honestly and correctly.

The perfection of truthfulness is more significant than other perfections. In the perfection of truthfulness, there is special power which can immediately accomplish one's desire or aspiration by one's asseveration of truth.

The Bodhisattas fulfilled the perfection of truthfulness at the risk of their lives in every existence. They entirely refrained from telling lies. In the Mahāsutasoma Jātaka, it is stated thus: "Of all the tastes in the world, the taste of truth is most excellent. And there is an old saying concerning truthfulness: "When people tell the truth, the power of truth makes grains and fruits nutritious and also grass and creepers have medicinal potency."

In the era when truth prevails, right speech immediately can bring the good effect one desires. Also, falsehood can bring the evil effect immediately.

### *8. Adhiṭṭhānapāramī*

The perfection in resolution means the performance of one's intended task with firm and unshakable decision, no matter whatever difficulties and obstructions one encounters. In making the resolution one must practise as the

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horn of a rhinoceros, which has but one horn, not two. It means that one adheres to one's resolution steadfastly and firmly, and never wavers.

Some people nowadays use "Saccā-adhiṭṭhāna" as one word. But in reality, 'Saccā' is one and 'Adhiṭṭhāna' is another. 'Saccā' is called asserveration of truth and resolution. Asserveration of truth means declaring solemnly the truth based on some truthful fact, whether it is good or evil. Resolution means the performance of the task one has resolved to do till completion. The Bodhisatta, in fulfilling the perfections such as charity and morality strived to accomplish his task according to his decision only after he had made his resolution.

### 9. *Mettāpāramī*

Mettā means loving-kindness or having the desire to bring about the welfare of others. It is different from the love with attachment such as the love between men and women (Taṇhāpema). Loving-kindness has the nature of pure and noble goodwill (adosa), and it is also called the sublime state of mind (Brahmavihāra). One, who can cultivate loving-kindness, is said

to be living in the sublime abode. So, the Bodhisatta, in his many previous existences, fulfilled the perfection of loving-kindness to his utmost for four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles.

### **10. Upekkhāpāramī**

Upekkhā means putting one's mind in equanimity. It means maintaining a neutral attitude towards pleasant and unpleasant things without bias towards either of them. Upekkhā-pāramī is the perfection to be fulfilled with a balanced attitude without leaning towards any of the two extremes of love and hatred.

The Bodhisatta fulfilled the perfection of equanimity by maintaining a neutral attitude towards such feelings as love, hatred, happiness or unhappiness which arises in his mind.

### **How to Fulfill the Perfections**

In fulfilling the ten perfections and their thirty modes, the Bodhisatta did not fulfill just one perfection in one existence. In whichever existence he was born, he fulfilled all the

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perfections of charity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, etc., as much as possible. In some existences, he fulfilled ordinary perfection (Pāramī); in some existences he fulfilled superior perfections (Upa-pāramī); and in some existences he fulfilled excellent perfections (Paramatthapāramī).

Even in fulfilling the perfection of charity, he was unequalled by anyone in making the five great sacrifices (Pañcapariccāga). In fulfilling these perfections, he strived in accordance with three kinds of noble practice (three cariyas), which will be described later.

### The Five Great Sacrifices

The Bodhisatta, in fulfilling the perfection of charity, morality, etc., for four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles, made very difficult sacrifices which could not be even imagined by ordinary persons. As he made these great sacrifices with noble intention, they are called the five great sacrifices (Pañcamahā-pariccāga). In making the great sacrifices, his only aim is to attain Omniscience, because the aspiration to

attain Omniscience is based on his great desire to save beings from the suffering of the round of rebirths (Saṃsāra). Therefore these sacrifices are called Mahāpariccāga, the Great Sacrifices which can be made only by noble persons with their noble aim.

These five great sacrifices are:

- (1) the sacrifice of valuable possession, one's kingdom and royal properties (Dhanapariccāga);
- (2) the sacrifice of sons and daughters (Puttapariccāga);
- (3) the sacrifice of one's wife (Bhariyapariccāga);
- (4) the sacrifice of one's eyes, ears, and limbs (Aṅgapariccāga); and
- (5) the sacrifice of one's own life (jīvitapariccāga).

### *Dhānapariccāga*

Of the five great sacrifices, the sacrifice of one's possessions is the easiest. In order to acquire wealth and properties, one has to work



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day and night enduring great sufferings and miseries. To give away these possessions generously with a pure and clean conviction is not easy to be done by ordinary persons. Also, the sacrifice of one's own kingdom and royal properties is a very difficult deed. Nevertheless, Bodhisattas give away even their kingdoms and royal possessions to those who ask for them many times in their countless existences. In his existence as King Mahāsīlava, the Bodhisatta generously handed over his kingdom to King Kosala who wanted to possess his kingdom.

### *Puttapariccāga*

Making the sacrifice of sons and daughters is more difficult than the sacrifice of one's own properties and one's own kingdom. Bodhisattas, like all parents, love their children very dearly as much as their own lives. As the aspiration to attain the Omniscience was so strong and ardent, the Bodhisatta, in many existences made the sacrifice of his sons and daughters to those who came to ask for his children. In his life as King Vessantarā, the Bodhisatta offered his son

Jālī and daughter Kaṇhājina to the brahmin Jūjakā. He was stricken with sorrow when he saw the brahmin Jūjakā treat his children very cruelly by beating and scolding them in his presence. However, he fulfilled his perfection by making the sacrifice because his aspiration to attain the Omniscience was very strong.

### *Bharyapariccāga*

Bharyapariccāga means making the sacrifice of one's wife. Making the sacrifice of one's adorable and beloved wife is an extremely difficult one. According to the nature of human beings one does not want others to even stare at one's wife. The Bodhisatta also loves his wife much in the same way. Even though the Bodhisatta loves his wife very dearly, he fulfilled the perfection of sacrificing of his wife without hesitation for the sake of attainment of Omniscience. In his life as King Vessantarā, he generously and readily offered his wife, Queen Maddīdevī, to Sakka, the king of devas, who disguised himself as an old brahmin.

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*Angapariccāga*

The above three great sacrifices are extremely difficult for ordinary human beings to do. However, as the objects given away in charity are not part of one's body, it is comparatively easy to give them away. As for sacrificing one's body organs such as eyes, ears, and limbs, it is certainly more difficult. Everybody strives to improve his health and strength, and to make himself clean and good-looking. Everybody loves his body and is attached to it. In fact one's own body is the most desirable body and taking out the eyes, cutting off the ear and the limbs for offering is certainly very difficult for ordinary persons. As for the Bodhisatta, in his many existences, if his sacrifice would produce some benefit to others or if someone should ask for some part of his body, he would willingly offer these things without hesitation and fear. If he could attain Omniscience by his sacrifice, he would willingly make the sacrifice. In his existence as King Sivi, the Bodhisatta offered both his eyes. When he was born as a leader of monkeys, the Bodhisatta, in order to fulfil his perfection, sacrificed his body by allowing his fellow monkeys to cross over his body as a bridge.

### *Jīvitapariccāga*

In practising the five great sacrifices, the most difficult one is Jīvitapariccāga. When one makes the sacrifice of one's own properties, one's wife and children, which are external sacrifices, it may be thought that the Bodhisatta could make those offerings because his life was not involved, that he willingly offered his wife and children who were dependent on him in order that he could attain Omniscience, and that such sacrifices were made for his own benefit. However, if we consider the fact that he could sacrifice his body and life without the slightest attachment to them, we can say that such criticism on the Buddha is groundless. To attain the Omniscience is his only ardent aspiration.

When he was born as the wise rabbit Sasapaṇḍita, he jumped into the fire to offer his life to the old brahmin (the king of devas in disguise) who asked for his flesh. In his existence as the deer Nigrodha, he offered his life for the sake of saving the life of a mother deer. On taking into account all the perfections he had fulfilled in his countless previous existences in the course of four asaṅkhyeyyas and one lakh world cycles, the numbers of eyes he

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had offered surpasses the number of stars in the sky, the amount of blood he had shed in offering is greater than the amount of water of the oceans; and the total quantity of his own flesh he donated surpasses the size of the earth. Such great and enormous sacrifices were made with the sole object of attaining Omniscience.

If he could attain Omniscience, he would sacrifice anything including his own life. Only when he attained Omniscience, would he be able to save the people in the best way.

In this manner, the Bodhisatta practised the five great sacrifices in order to attain Omniscience.

### *The Three Noble Practices*

The Bothisatta, in fulfilling the perfections in his many existences, performed them in accordance with the three Practices as his main objectives. These three practices are called three Cariyas. They are:-

- (1) Lokatthacariyā = the noble practice for the welfare of all beings;

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(2) **Nātatthacariyā** = the noble practice for the welfare of his relatives;

(3) **Buddhatthacariyā** = the noble practice for becoming the fully-enlightened Buddha who can save all beings from suffering and Saṃsāra.

The Bodhisatta, performed these three Noble Practices whenever he fulfilled the perfections in his every existence.

***Lokatthacariyā***

According to the practice of Lokattha-cariyā, the Bodhisatta always worked for the welfare of all beings including human beings.

In ancient times, King Aṅgati took the wrong view of brahmanas, and committed the five kinds of evil conduct--killing, stealing others' properties, committing sexual misconduct, telling lies and taking intoxicating drinks and drugs. All the people in his country did not observe the five precepts, and their morality deteriorated. Even when Princess Rusā, the

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daughter of King Aṅgati, preached the dhamma to her father in order to convert him to the right view, her father did not accept her preaching. So she made a solemn wish for some celestial being to come and admonish her father. Then the hermit Nārada, who was the Bodhisatta, appeared in front of the king and preached the dhamma to him. Only then the king and his people took the right view and kept the five precepts. In this way, the Bodhisatta strived for the welfare of all beings.

### *Nātatthacariya*

According to the practice of Nātatthacariyā, the striving of the Bodhisatta for the welfare of relatives can be seen in his existence as the king of crows. A brahmin, who was angered by a crow for discharging excrement upon him as he was going to the king's assembly, planned to revenge the crow by destroying the lives of all crows.

When the skin of the king's elephant was burnt by fire, the king asked this brahmin whether he had the medicine to cure the elephant. On this occasion, the brahmin, in order to accomplish his malicious revenge, told

the king thus: "The crow's fat is most suitable to cure the burn of the elephant." So the king ordered his servants to kill crows and take the fat out of their bodies. Thus there was a great slaughter of crows, but never was any fat found on them. So they went on killing crows till the dead bodies of crows lay in heaps everywhere.

A great fear arose among crows. The Bodhisatta crow felt it was his duty to save the lives of his kinsfolk. So he risked his own life by going to the king and explaining to him that crows have no fat by nature. The task of slaughtering crows stopped due to the Bodhisatta's right and brave appeal.

In this manner, the Bodhisatta performed the noble practice aiming at the welfare of his relatives in his many past existences. He carried on this noble practice when he became a Buddha. When his relatives quarrelled over the water of Rohini river and were ready to fight one another, the Buddha went to them and stood in the sky by his psychic power, and preached to them the sermon of peace. The two sides of his relatives became reconciled with each other, escaped from bloodshed and gained peace and happiness.





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By this supernormal knowledge, the Buddha recollects all his past existences and events in the endless numbers of worlds and universes.

2. **Dibbacakkhuñāṇa**= the knowledge of divine power of sight.

By this divine power of sight, the Buddha can see everything, small and large, near and far, hidden or exposed, just like devas or better than devas. Also, the Buddha can see beings who are about to die, who have just been conceived in their mothers' wombs, beings who will be reborn in the thirty-one planes of existences, and the wholesome deeds as well as the unwholesome deeds which determine the destination of sentient beings.

3. **Āsavakkhayañāṇa**=the knowledge of the extinction of moral intoxicants.

The moral intoxicants (āsavas) are of four kinds. **Kāmāsava** is the first moral intoxicant, representing greed or attachment (lobha), which makes one crave for or attached to sensual pleasures and sense objects.

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**Bhavāsava** is the second moral intoxicant, also representing (lobha), which makes one crave for or attached to ecstatic absorptions (jhānas), and rebirth in brahṃa existences.

**Ditṭhāsava** is the third moral intoxicant, representing wrong view (ditṭhi), which makes the right appear as wrong, and the wrong as right.

**Avijjāsava** is the fourth intoxicant representing ignorance (moha) which prevents one from seeing the wrong as wrong and the right as right.

### Eight Supernormal Knowledges

#### (Eight Vijjās)

The first three supernormal knowledges are as described above.

4. **Vipassanāñāṇa** = Insight Knowledge which discerns the three characteristic marks of mind and matter.

By this supernormal knowledge, the Buddha knows that all beings are made up of mind

and matter, that mind and matter arise and dissolve incessantly and are therefore impermanent; that they are just suffering (*dukkha*) because of their incessant arising and dissolving and that they have the nonself characteristic as they arise and dissolve of their own accord beyond one's control.

5. *Manomayiddhiñāṇa* = the knowledge of the power of creation by mind.

By this supernormal knowledge, the Buddha, after developing the fourth ecstatic absorption (*Pāḍakajhāna*), makes a solemn wish to let his body become hollow. Then he again develops the *Pāḍakajhāna* and, without eliminating his natural body, he creates a new body which is identical to himself.

6. *Iddhividañāṇa* = the knowledge of psychic power.

By this supernormal knowledge, the Buddha performs miracles such as from being one, he becomes many; and from being many, he becomes one; he makes himself visible or invisible; he makes what is near to be far away and what is far away to be near; he makes the hidden to be exposed and the exposed to be

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hidden; he plunges into the earth, walks on water; travels and sleeps in space; and he creates various forms and figures as he wishes.

7. **Dibbasotañāṇa** = the knowledge of  
divine power of  
hearing

By this supernormal knowledge, the Buddha hears the voices spoken far away, very soft voices and all other voices just like devas or better than devas.

8. **Cetopariyañāṇa** = the knowledge of  
knowing the minds of  
others

By this supernormal knowledge, the Buddha knows discriminatively with his own mind all thoughts occurring in the minds of others.

## Ten Knowledges

(Ten Nāṇas)

1. **Thānāṭhāna** = the knowledge of  
**kosallañāṇa** knowing correctly  
whether it is reasonable  
or not.

three types of obstruction (defilements, unwholesome kamma results and heinous deeds). After knowing that they are free from these three types of obstruction, and that they deserve to be liberated from the round of rebirths, the Buddha uses this fourth knowledge to comprehend the aggregates, sense-bases and the different elements present in the beings.

5. Nānādhimuttikañāṇa=the knowledge of comprehending the different inclinations, dispositions and desires of beings.

The Buddha uses this knowledge to ascertain exactly whether their mental faculties (faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom) are mature or not.

6. Indriyaparopariyattañāṇa=the knowledge of comprehending the maturity and immaturity of mental faculties in beings.

The Buddha, in order to preach suitable discourses to beings, uses this knowledge to

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see exactly and completely whether their mental faculties (faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom) are mature or not.

7. **Jhānavimokkhasamādhī=samāpattiñāṇa**=the knowledge of knowing the defilement, purity, decline, and development of the jhāna, magga, samādhī and samāpatti.

The Buddha uses this incomparable supreme knowledge when he knows that such and such beings, even though they are far away, have highly-developed faculties which can lead them to attain jhāna, magga and phala.

8. **Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa**=the knowledge of knowing many former existences of oneself and others.

The Buddha, after seeing beings with highly developed faculties by the knowledge of jhanāvimokkha-samādhīsamāpattiñāṇa, uses this

Through this knowledge, the Buddha knows those beings who can be liberated or those who cannot be liberated from the four āsavas or those who can become arahats or those who cannot. The Buddha uses this knowledge in looking at a person to find out whether he has the defilements which obstruct the attainment of jhāna, magga and phala and whether he is deep-seated in wrong views (niyatamicchā-diṭṭhi) or not.

2. Kammavipākāñāṇa = the knowledge of knowing the past, present and future actions and their results

The Buddha uses this knowledge in order to ascertain precisely whether a being has the unwholesome kamma-result such as being born with rebirth consciousness which is without a good root or with two good roots which obstruct the attainment of jhāna, magga and phala or not.

3. Sabbatthagāmini = the knowledge of paṭipadāñāṇa knowing practices that lead to the corresponding



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planes of existence  
and also the middle  
Path that leads to  
Nibbāna.

The Buddha uses this knowledge in order to ascertain exactly and completely whether a being has committed one of the five heinous deeds (Pañcānantariya-kammas), such as killing one's mother, which obstruct the attainment of jhāna, magga and phala.

4. Anekadhātūnānā = the knowledge of knowing correctly the five aggregates (khandhas), the twelve sense bases (āyatanaṣ) and the eighteen elements (dhātus) which make up animate beings as well as the various elements that make up inanimate objects.

By looking at beings with the three knowledges mentioned above (1, 2, 3), the Buddha knows whether they are free from the

Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa, in order to know accurately about the former existences of beings.

9. Cutūpapātañāṇa = the knowledge of knowing beings who are about to die and beings who have been just conceived in their mothers' wombs. (This knowledge is included in Dibbacakkhuñāṇa.)

The Buddha uses this knowledge in order to know beings who are about to die and beings who have been just conceived in their mothers' wombs.

10. Āsavakkhayañāṇa = the knowledge called arahatta maggañāṇa (the fourth path consciousness) which brings about the extinction of all moral intoxicants.

The Buddha, with the power of this knowledge, extinguishes the four āsavas--kāmāsava (lobha), bhavāsava (lobha), diṭṭhāsava (diṭṭhi),

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avijjāsava (moha) together with their mental tendencies.

*Catuvēsārajjāṇāṇa (Fourfold Valorous Knowledge)*

The knowledge by which the Buddha can proclaim a bold utterance concerning the following four factors in the presence of an audience is called *Catuvēsārajjāṇāṇa*. When the Buddha proclaimed thus:

- (1) I have known all dhammas,
- (2) I have freed myself from moral intoxicants (āsavas),
- (3) These things (dhammas) are detrimental to one in one's striving for higher wisdom of jhāna, magga and phala,
- (4) These dhammas certainly lead one to complete extinction of the round of rebirths,

No one, deva or brahma can contradict these proclamations. This knowledge is called the Fourfold Valorous Knowledge. Owing to this wisdom, the Buddha is the most valorous one in all the three worlds.

### *Maggañāṇa (Path Knowledge)*

The Knowledge by which all defilements together with tendencies of the past can be discarded absolutely is called Maggañāṇa.

When the Bodhisatta practised and developed Mahāvajira Insight Meditation at dawn on the full-moon day of vesakha, there arose three million six hundred thousand crores of Mahāvajira Insight Knowledge.

No matter how numerous humans, devas and brahmas live in a hundred thousand crores of world systems, they could be reduced to twelve factors of Paṭiccasamuppāda, the Doctrine of Dependent Origination, as the ultimate reality, namely: ignorance (avijjā), volitional activities (saṅkhāra), consciousness (viññāṇa), mind and body (nāmarūpa), six sense-bases (saḷāyatana), contact (phassa), sensation (vedanā), craving (taṅhā), clinging (upādāna), existence (bhava)<sup>1</sup>, rebirth (jāti), and death (jarāmaraṇa).

The Bodhisatta knew well that he had to contemplate only these twelve factors. When he contemplated the true nature of human beings,

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1. bhava : i.e. Kamma bhava which may be translated as Kammic causal process leading to further existence.

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devas and brahmas living in a hundred thousand crores of world systems, he came to know that there are a hundred thousand crores of each of the twelve factors, viz; a hundred thousand crores of ignorance, a hundred thousand crores of volitional activities, etc; the total number of these factors then becomes one million and two hundred thousand crores.

Like a man who cut and cleared a thick jungle tangling bushes and undergrowth, sharpened his sword again and again on the whetstone, the Bodhisatta also, in order to clear away the thick jungle and bushes of defilements(kilesa) numbering one thousand and five hundred, repeatedly sharpened the sword blade of Mahāvajīra Insight knowledge, his personal weapon, on the whetstone of Ānāpāna Fourth Jhāna attainment (i.e, repeatedly getting absorbed in that Jhāna). Then he contemplated each of the Factors of Dependent Origination, numbering one million two hundred thousand crores by reflecting on their characteristics of impermanence (Anicca Lakkhaṇā), unsatisfactoriness (Dukkha Lakkhaṇā) and insubstantiality (Anatta Lakkhaṇā).

When the Bodhisatta contemplated each of the factors of Paṭiccaṣamuppāda numbering one

million two hundred thousand crores with three Insight Nāṇas, namely, Insight Knowledge of Impermanence (Anicca Vipassanāñāṇa), Insight knowledge of unsatisfactoriness (Dukkha Vipassanāñāṇa) and Insight Knowledge of Insubstantiality (Anatta Vipassanāñāṇa), there were altogether three million six hundred thousand crores of knowledges. Those knowledges are called Mahāvajira Insight knowledge.

Then, the Bodhisatta entered upon the Ānāpāna Fourth Jhāna and again concentrated his mind on the five Khandha aggregates with the higher Vipassanā-ñāṇa such as Udayabbayañāṇa, Bhaṅga-ñāṇa, etc. Finally, he reached the three kinds of conformity to the function of truth (Saccānulomañāṇa), namely, preliminary impulsion (parikamma), access impulsion (upaccāra) and conformity impulsion (anuloma).

Having dispelled the darkness of ignorance (avijjā) and delusion (moha) which hide the Four Noble Truths, he attained the First Path Knowledge, Sotāpatti Magga which follows Gotrabhū-ñāṇa, the knowledge of overcoming worldly ties and changing over to noble lineage. Then the Bodhisatta continued practising Insight Meditation and easily attained the three higher Path-Knowledges, namely,

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**Sakadāgāmi Magga, Anāgāmi Magga and Arahatta Magga.**

Out of these Four-knowledges, by the Sotāpatti Magga the Bodhisatta abandoned the three fetters; namely, the illusion of self (Sakkāyadiṭṭhi), doubt or uncertainty (Vicikicchā) and belief in the efficacy of rites and rituals outside the Ariyā Path of eight constituents (Sīlabbataparāmāsa).

By the Sakadāgāmi-magga he abandoned the grosser elements of sense-desire (Kāmarāga) and ill will (Byāpāda or dosa).

By the Anāgāmi-magga he completely uprooted the subtle elements of kāmarāga and byāpāda (dosa).

By the Arahatta-magga he completely discarded all the remaining fetters; namely, craving for fine material existence (rūparāga), craving for non-material existence (arūparāga), conceit (māna), restlessness (uddhacca) and ignorance (avijja).

Therefore, Path-knowledge means knowledge comprising four maggas by which all defilements together with tendencies of the past (vāsanā) are discarded absolutely.

No sooner had the Bodhisatta attained Arahatta magga than he attained Omniscience (Sabbaññutañāṇa) along with the four Analytical Knowledges (Paṭisambhidāñāṇa), the Sixfold Unique Knowledge (Āsādhāraṇañāṇa), and the Fourteenfold Knowledge of a Buddha (Buddhañāṇa). Attainment of Sabbaññutañāṇa, in fact, is the attainment of Buddhahood, supreme amongst sentient beings of the three worlds.

### *Phalañāṇa (Fruition-Knowledge)*

The Knowledge that extinguishes the defilements eradicated by the Path Knowledge is called the Fruition-knowledge.

The Fruition-knowledge comprises Sotāpatti-phala, Sakadāgāmi-phala, Anāgāmi-phala, and Arahatta-phala that extinguish the defilements eradicated by the four Path-knowledges step by step. It represents the 'pañña' cetasika that accompanies the four Fruition-knowledges.

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***Paccavekkhaṇāñāṇa (Retrospective-knowledge)***

The Retrospective Knowledge is the knowledge that reflects on the Path-knowledge, the Fruition-knowledge, etc., which one has just attained.

In insight meditation, when one attains Path-knowledge, Fruition-knowledge follows instantly. Soon after that the Retrospective knowledge arises five times reflecting on

- (1) Sotāpatti Path-knowledge,
- (2) Sotapatti Fruition-knowledge,
- (3) Nibbāna, the object of Sotāpatti Path-knowledge and Sotāpatti Fruition-knowledge,
- (4) the defilements uprooted by Sotāpatti Path-knowledge, and
- (5) the remaining defilements not yet uprooted by Sotāpatti Path-knowledge.

Similarly after the arising of the Sakadāgāmi-magga and Phala and the Anāgami-magga and Phala, the fivefold Retrospective-knowledges arise respectively reflecting on the respective Path-knowledge, Fruition-knowledge, etc.

But after the arising of the Arahatta-magga and Phala, the Retrospective-knowledge arises only four times reflecting on

- (1) Arahatta Path-knowledge,
- (2) Arahatta Fruition-knowledge,
- (3) Nibbāna, the object of Arahatta Path-knowledge and the Arahatta Fruition-knowledge, and
- (4) the defilements uprooted by Arahatta Path-knowledge.

There is no defilement left to be scrutinised by the Retrospective-knowledge because there is no defilement left uneradicated by Arahatta Path-knowledge.

### ***Sabbaññutañāṇa (Omniscience)***

The knowledge that knows all the dhammas that should be known is called the Sabbaññutañāṇa.

The Buddha attained the Omniscience (Sabbaññutañāṇa) as soon as he attained Arahatta Path-knowledge.

With Sabbaññutañāṇa, the Buddha knew exactly the discourse he had to preach, the

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method to deliver the discourse and the inner tendency of the listener.

Although Nibbāna is realized by all Arahats, and Pacceka-Buddhas (Lesser Buddhas), Pacceka Buddhas do not know all the dhammas that should be known. They do not know the discourse and the inner tendencies of the listeners.

### *Asādhāraṇāṇāṇa (The Six Specific Knowledges)*

The Knowledge which belongs only to the Buddhas, and not to Arahats and Pacceka Buddhas, is called the Specific Knowledge of the Buddhas. There are six Specific Knowledges.

(1) *Indriyaparopariyattaṇṇāṇa* = the Knowledge that knows the maturity of the sense faculties of individuals,

(2) *Asayānusayaṇṇāṇa* = the Knowledge that knows the latent desire and the dispositions of individuals.

By this Knowledge, the Buddha knew that such and such beings believed in eternalism (*Sassataditṭhi*), such and such beings believed

in annihilation (Ucchedaditthi) and such and such beings were overwhelmed by such and such latent defilements (anusaya kilesā).

(This Knowledge is the same as the Nānādhimuttikañāṇa)

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By the Indriyāparopariyattañāṇa and Asayānusayañāṇa the Buddha completely knew the maturity of the faculties as well as the inner tendencies of beings and expounded the dhamma compatible with these qualities. These two Knowledges are called the Buddha's eyes (Buddha cakkhu).

(3) Yamakapāṭihāriyañāṇa—the Knowledge of performing the Twin Miracles of water and fire.

By this Knowledge, the Buddha displayed the Twin Miracles of water and fire on these occasions:

- a. once at the Mahābodhi Tree in order to dispel the conceit and doubts of devas and brahmas,

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- b. once at the first visit to Kapila-vatthu in order to dispel the conceit of Sakyan Kinsmen,
- c. once in Sāvatti near the white mango tree which bore fruits on the day it was planted by the gardener Kaṇḍa in order to dispel the conceit of ascetics, and
- d. once at the assembly of the people who gathered to watch the Buddha dispel the challenge of Pāthikaputta.

(4) Mahākaruṇāsamāpattiñāṇa = The Knowledge based on the Buddha's compassion on all beings which arises while dwelling in the Mahākaruṇāsamāpatti.

The Buddha dwelt in this samāpatti for two million four hundred thousand crores of times everyday at dawn and in the evening.

(5) Sabbaññutañāṇa = (This Knowledge has been described earlier.)

(6) Anāvarenañāṇa = the Sabbaññutañāṇa itself is known as

Anāvaraṇa-nāṇa on account of its ability to know everything without obstruction.

The Buddha strived for the welfare of beings relentlessly utilizing these Knowledges as the occasion arose throughout the forty-five years of his missionary period. Therefore, it is clear that the Buddha is the incomparable benefactor of the world.

### *Paṭisambhidāñāṇa*

It is the Analytical Knowledge which can discriminate the meaning and the nature of his utterances on the Dhamma (i.e. Pāḷi) as well as the structure and grammar of languages. It is of four kinds:-

(1) Atthapaṭisambhidā = Analytical Knowledge of the meaning of Pāḷi and the consequences of everything.

(2) Dhammapaṭisambhidā = Analytical Knowledge of

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the nature of dhamma through the medium of Pāḷi, and also into the causes of everything.

(3) Niruttipaṭisambhidā = Analytical Knowledge of the structure, the grammar, the syntax of every language including the Māgadha language.

(4) Paṭibhānapaṭisambhida = Comprehensive Knowledge of the nature of the above three knowledges.

*Fourteen Buddhañāṇas*

The Fourteen Buddhañāṇas comprise four Paṭisambhidāñāṇas and ten Dasabalañāṇas.

## The Major Characteristic Marks of the Buddha

### *Treatise of Mahā purisa lakḥaṇā*

The treatise on the physical marks of a Great Man (Mahāpurisalakkhaṇā) is a famous one. This treatise describes the distinct marks of Noble persons as: "A man endowed with such and such physical marks is the Lesser Buddha (Pacceka Buddha) etc."

### *The Brahmin who recognized the Buddha by Characteristic Marks*

On one occasion, the Buddha, followed by five hundred bhikkhus, made a journey to Kosala, the country of the Kosalans, in order to dispel the misconceptions of the beings worthy of liberation from the round of rebirth in the brahmin village known as Icchānaṅgala. He stayed in the Icchānaṅgala wood near the village.

When the brahmin Pokkharasāti, who was appointed as the Lord of Ukkatṭhā by King Pasenadi Kosala, heard about the attributes of the Buddha, he also wanted to pay homage to



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the Buddha. But there were many imposters like Pūraṇakassapa, Makkhaligosaḷa, etc., who claimed themselves to be Buddhas. The brahmin wanted to know whether the sage residing in Icchānaṅgala wood was the genuine Buddha endowed with the major characteristic marks of a Great Man according to the Mahāpurisa lakkhaṇā Treatise, or not. So he sent his pupil, Ambaṭṭha, to make inquiries about the Buddha.

According to the Mahāpurisa lakkhaṇā Treatise, there are altogether thirty-two Major Characteristic Marks of a Great Man. In this Treatise, it is definitely stated that a man who is endowed with these thirty-two Major Marks, will become a Universal Monarch if he remains a householder or he will become a self-enlightened Buddha if he renounces the world. The brahmin told his pupil to make careful observations whether Gotama Buddha was fully endowed with these characteristic marks or not.

The youth Ambaṭṭha together with his friends went to the Buddha and examined the characteristic marks present in the Buddha. He reported to his teacher that Gotama Buddha was perfectly endowed with all the thirty-two

characteristic marks of a Great Man as described in Mahāpurisalakkhaṇa-Treatise.

As soon as the brahmin heard about the good news, he quickly made an arrangement for the preparation of food and drinks to be offered to the Buddha and his disciples. Then he went to the Icchānaṅgala wood by chariot. When he reached there he himself inspected and checked the Buddha's physical marks again. He could see thirty characteristic marks clearly but he could not observe the remaining two characteristic marks, namely, the male-organ and the tongue. So he still had doubts about the Buddha.

### *Demonstrating the two Characteristic Marks by the Buddha's Power*

The Buddha knew about the brahmin's suspicion and so, with his power, he made the brahmin behold his male organ being concealed in a sheath. Then he demonstrated the length of his tongue by stroking the two ears with it; he demonstrated the tenderness of his tongue by touching and stroking the two nostrils with it and he demonstrated its breadth by covering the whole surface of the forehead with it.

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*The Appearance of the Characteristic Marks in accordance with Good Deeds*

When the brahmin Pokkharasāti saw the perfect Major Marks of the Buddha vividly and completely, he was overjoyed. He was not satisfied with paying homage to the Buddha again and again. He spoke in praise of the Buddha muttering: "This indeed is a great noble man! He's an incomparable Self-Enlightened Buddha in the three worlds". The brahmin, however, did not know why such distinguished marks appeared in the Buddha.

Not only the brahmin Pokkharasāti but others also did not know exactly why the thirty-two marks of a Great Man appeared.

**The Thirty-two Major Marks**

The thirty-two Major Marks of a Great Man always appear on the body of a person who will certainly become a truly Self-Enlightened Buddha. It was to ascertain these facts that the brahmin Pokkharasāti had made inspections whether these major marks were present in the Buddha. Here are the detailed explanations of the cause of the thirty-two Marks as expounded by the Buddha in Lakkhaṇa Sutta.

*(1) The Mark of the Soles*

The Buddha had perfectly flat soles like those of the golden footwear; they touched the ground evenly when he trod on the ground. This was the particular mark present in the Universal Monarch and the Buddha.

On account of the meritorious deeds performed steadfastly without any hesitation in his numerous past existences, the Buddha possessed this mark.

*(2) The Mark of the Circles*

On the soles of the Buddha's feet the wheel appeared with a thousand spokes, rims, and hubs together with 108 figures.

On account of supplementing his donations with many other gifts in his numerous past existences the Buddha possessed this mark.

*(3) The Mark of the Heels*

The Buddha had long heels. On account of abstaining from taking others' lives in his numerous past existences, the Buddha possessed this mark.

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*(4) The Mark of the Fingers and Toes*

The Buddha had long and tapering fingers and toes. On account of abstaining from taking others' lives in his numerous past existences, the Buddha possessed this mark.

*(5) The Mark of the Palms and Soles*

The Buddha had soft, tender and smooth palms and soles.

On account of supporting others with four objects of support (Saṅgaha-vatthu)<sup>1</sup> in his numerous past existences, the Buddha possessed soft, tender and smooth palms and soles.

*(6) The Mark of the Hands and Feet*

The Buddha had fingers and toes like the round golden posts of palace windows without any space between one finger and another as well as between one toe and another.

On account of supporting others with four objects of support (Saṅgaha-vatthu)<sup>1</sup>, he possessed this mark.

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1. Saṅgaha vatthu: objects of support consist of generosity (dāna), pleasant speech (piyavācā), benevolence (attha cariya) and impartiality (samanattatā).

**(7) *The Mark of the Ankles***

The Buddha had slightly high ankles.

On account of giving good advice to others to better their lives in his numerous past existences, the Buddha possessed slightly higher and dust-free ankles.

**(8) *The Mark of the Legs***

Like the husk that covers the barley or the paddy seed, the muscles of the Buddha's legs evenly encase the shin bones making the legs round and beautiful like those of an antelope known as enī.

On account of imparting all his knowledge in arts and sciences to all his pupils without holding back anything, the Buddha possessed this mark.

**(9) *The Mark of the Hands*  
*Proportional to the Height***

The Buddha had slender proportionate hands which were well proportional to his height; he could touch and stroke his knees while standing and without bending his body.

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On account of showing recognition to his followers according to their qualifications in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(10) The Mark of the Male Organ*

The Buddha had the male organ concealed in a sheath.

On account of bringing reunion to estranged persons by making one overlook another's fault and striving for the preservation of unity among the united ones and taking delight in their unity in his numerous past existences, the Buddha possessed this mark.

*(11) The Mark of the Complexion*

The Buddha had fair and golden complexion.

The Bodhisatta showed very little anger. If he felt angry, he calmed down quickly. He rarely felt anxiety (Upāyāsa). He also donated fine and smooth clothing. On account of these acts of merit, he possessed this mark.

**(12) *The Mark of the Skin***

The Buddha had soft and smooth skin on which no dust or dirt could collect.

On account of approaching the wise recluses and brahmins and having discussions with them how not to have any dust of demerit in his thought-processes in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

**(13) *The Mark of the Follicle***

On the body of Buddha, each body-hair grows in each follicle.

On account of abstaining from telling lies but keeping up the practice of always telling the truth, the Buddha possessed this mark.

**(14) *The Mark of the Body-hairs***

The Buddha had body-hairs with their tips curling upward as if they were looking up at the Buddha's face in devotion.

On account of giving advice to others to better their lives in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

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*(15) The Mark of the Upright Body*

The Buddha had the upright body like a brahma's.

On account of abstaining from taking others' lives in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(16) The Mark of the Fullness of the Flesh*

The Buddha had the fullness of the flesh at seven places of his body, namely, the two insteps, the two backs of the hands, the two shoulders and the neck.

On account of donating different kinds of delicious food in sufficient amounts to others in his numerous past existences, the Buddha possessed this mark.

*(17) The Mark of the Front of the Body*

The Buddha had a well-developed body like the front part of a lion.

On account of his strong desire for the welfare of human beings, and his constant thought about the progress of the people in terms of conviction (saddhā), morality (sīla), knowledge

(suta), truthfulness (dhamma), giving alms (cāga), wisdom (paññā), and welfare and progress of his followers, the Buddha had the mark of a well-developed body of a great man like the front part of a lion.

*(18) The Mark of the Back of the Body*

The Buddha had a full and well-developed back of the body extending from the waist to the neck without any trace of spinal furrow in the middle.

On account of striving for the welfare of human beings in his numerous existences, he possessed this mark.

*(19) The Mark of the Rounded Body*

The Buddha had a symmetrically proportioned body like the circular shape of a banyan tree; his height and the compass of his arms are of equal measurement.

On account of giving recognition to his pupils according to their qualifications in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

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*(20) The Mark of the Neck*

The Buddha had a proportionately round neck.

On account of wishing for the welfare of others in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(21) The Mark of the Taste-carrying Nerves*

The Buddha had seven thousand taste carrying nerves with their tips touching one another at the throat, making the taste of the food as tiny as a sesamum seed spread throughout the whole body.

On account of abstaining from hurting other beings with stick, sword or other weapons in his countless past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(22) The Mark of the Jaw*

The Buddha had a well-developed jaw like that of a lion. It resembles the shape of the moon shining on the twelfth waxing night of the month.

On account of abstaining from frivolous talk in his numerous past existences he possessed this mark.

*(23) The Mark of the Forty Teeth*

The Buddha had twenty upper teeth and twenty lower teeth, making a complete set of forty teeth.

On account of abstaining from any mischievous speech, bringing reunion to estranged persons and maintaining the unity of those who were united in his numerous past existences, the Buddha had the marks of the teeth numbering exactly forty.

*(24) The Mark of the Even Teeth*

The Buddha had an evenly set teeth like pieces of mother-of-pearl uniformly cut by a saw.

On account of abstaining from wrong livelihood and earning his living by right livelihood, avoiding various dishonest means like using deceptive scales, avoiding any trickery or cheating, abstaining from taking others' lives and destroying towns and villages, the Buddha

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had the marks of the evenly set teeth like pieces of mother-of-pearl uniformly cut with a saw.

*(25) The Mark of the Closely Fitted Teeth*

The Buddha had the closely fitted teeth like diamonds tightly fixed in a row on a gold plate.

On account of bringing harmony to those who were separated in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(26) The Mark of the four Eye-teeth*

The Buddha had four eye-teeth as white and brilliant as the morning star.

On account of earning his living by right livelihood in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(27) The Mark of the Tongue*

The Buddha had a long, tender, wide and reddish tongue.

On account of abstaining from harsh and abusive words and speaking only sweet,

pleasant and polite words in his numerous past existences, he possessed the mark of the long, tender, wide and reddish tongue.

*(28) The Mark of the Voice*

The Buddha had a voice endowed with eight qualities. It is clear, pleasant, intelligible, pleasing to the ear, cohesive, not going beyond the audience, deep and resonant.

On account of speaking only sweet, pleasant and polite words in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(29) The Mark of the Eyes*

The Buddha had dark eyes with the colour of the pupils similar to that of the butterfly-pea flower.

On account of never looking at others with protruding eyes nor squinting at another person nor looking stealthily but viewing others kindly, honestly and calmly in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

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*(30) The Mark of the Eyelashes*

The Buddha had eyes with soft and tender eyelashes growing in a row like those of a new-born calf.

On account of looking at others with kind eyes honestly and calmly in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

*(31) The Mark of the Hair  
between the Two Eyebrows.*

The Buddha had a white hair in the middle of the two eyebrows which was as pure and bright as the morning star, as soft as the cotton wool. It was two cubits long when stretched; it coiled back clockwise with the tip curling upwards when released from the hand.

On account of abstaining from telling lies and keeping up the practice of telling the truth for a long time, he possessed this mark.

*(32) The Mark of the Thin Layer  
of Flesh on the Forehead*

The Buddha had a thin layer of flesh like a gold headband on the forehead. It appeared naturally since his birth.

On account of leading the multitudes in performing ten kinds of good conduct, giving alms, keeping moral precepts and sabbath precepts, and attending on parents in his numerous past existences, he possessed this mark.

### *The Power of the Marks*

The Buddha expounded the Lakkhaṇa Sutta in order to make the devas, human beings and brahmas who paid homage to him know how such and such special marks appeared in him on account of such and such merits he performed for the welfare of all beings.

When the brahmin Pokkharasāti beheld the thirty-two marks of a Great Man in the Buddha with his own eyes, he accepted him as the Self-Enlightened Buddha and paid homage to him with much reverence. So the brahmin, out of great conviction invited the Buddha to have alms-food at his house. Next morning he offered alms-food to the Buddha and the bhikkhus at his house. On this occasion the Buddha delivered an appropriate discourse. On hearing the discourse, the brahmin became a Stream-winner (Sotāpanna), and his children, wife and retinue became lay-devotees of the Buddha.



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Thus by reading these thirty-two marks of Great Man of the Buddha, everyone should revere the Buddha as the incomparable one who had always abstained from committing evil deeds, done what was good and had purified his mind completely. Taking Buddha as the ideal person, one should perform the meritorious deeds as much as possible.

Also in sculpturing the statues of the Buddha and in paying homage to these statues, everyone should bear in mind these unique virtues of the Buddha.

### The Eight Great Victories

#### (1) *The Great Victory over Devaputta Māra*

The Buddha's first Great Victory is the victory over Devaputta Māra. It was on the fullmoon day of Kason (May) in the year 103 Mahā Era that the Bodhisatta repulsed the army of Devaputta Māra.

The Bodhisatta, sitting in a cross-legged posture on the invincible throne (pallaṅka), made the firm resolution: "Let my flesh and blood dry up and let only my skin, nerves and bones remain! Never shall I unfold this

cross-legged posture." At that time, Devaputta Māra of Vasavattī celestial realm knew that the Bodhisatta would gain Buddhahood on that day. He thought to himself thus: "Siddhattha is striving to escape from my three spheres of influence. I can't give him any opportunity to escape from my domain". So he marched with a great army to fight the Bodhisatta. Māra's soldiers were so numerous that the whole universe was crowded with them. The troops in various frightening forms, armed with different kinds of weapons, marched towards the Bodhisatta. Devaputta Māra himself, also armed with various weapons in his one thousand hands, rode on his elephant, Girimekhalā. The battle cries of the marching troops rumbled like thunder in all directions.

At that moment, Sakka was blowing his two hundred-cubit-long Vijayuttara conch; Mahākāla, the Dragon king, was chanting verses in praise of the Bodhisatta and Brahma Sahampati was holding the white umbrella over the Bodhisatta as a token of paying homage to the Bodhisatta.

However, when Māra's army approached, the Bodhisatta was alone as those three had fled to suitable places. Māra ordered his men

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to attack the Bodhisatta from the rear as they did not dare to attack the incomparable Bodhisatta from the front. Then the Bodhisatta thought to himself thus: "Māra and his numerous troops come to attack me. Neither my parents nor relatives are by my side. I have to rely on my Ten Perfections which I have cultivated for a long time. I shall defend them with the power of these Perfections." Thinking so, the Bodhisatta contemplated on his Ten Perfections.

Māra raised a violent cyclone in the direction of the Bodhisatta so that the latter would surrender his Invincible Throne. That cyclone was violent enough to crush forests, villages and towns. Yet it could not ruffle the edge of the Bodhisatta's robe because of the power of the Ten Perfections.

Then Māra attempted to kill the Bodhisatta by drowning him, and so he made the rain fall in torrents. Nevertheless, even the edge of the Bodhisatta's robe did not get wet. Thereafter, Māra created showers of stones, weapons, flames, hot ashes, sand-storms and mud flows one after another. However, Māra was incapable of harming and frightening the Bodhisatta. Next he created deep darkness so that the Bodhisatta would be scared away from the throne. That darkness again was not an effective attack.

Seeing that all his attacks were in vain, Māra commanded his men by shouting: "Seize Siddhattha. Kill him. Drive him away." He himself riding on his elephant, Girimekhala, and holding various dreadful weapons, shouted to the Bodhisatta: "Hey, Siddhattha, get off from that throne. That throne is mine, not yours!"

The Bodhisatta, in reply, said: "Māra, you have not fulfilled the Ten Perfections, nor have you exercised the Three Noble Practices, nor have you performed the five Great Sacrifices. I am the only one who has fulfilled all these. So this invincible throne does belong to me, not to you."

On hearing the words of the Bodhisatta, Māra lost his temper and threw his various weapons at the Bodhisatta. Māra's troops also threw their weapons at the Bodhisatta. However, all these weapons proved to be of no effect. At last the Bodhisatta said: "This throne did not arise on account of the merit of your charity. There is no witness to prove that this throne appeared on account of your charity." Māra asked his troops to bear witness to him. His followers shouted that they bore witness to Māra's charity. The Bodhisatta put out his

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right hand, and, pointing to the great earth, said thus: "This throne appeared as the result of my Perfections. Let alone the Perfections accumulated in my various past existences, even the seven great charities made in my life as Vessantarā, caused this great earth to tremble seven times. This Great Earth is my witness." At that moment the great earth, in order to bear witness to the Bodhisatta's Perfections, trembled violently, causing loud thunderous sounds to appear. Māra and his followers were frightened and they fled in disarray.

After the Bodhisatta had repelled Māra's armies, dragons, garudas, devas and brahmas shouted: "Devaputta Māra has been defeated. The Bodhisatta has won a great victory." They offered scented flowers and perfumes to the Bodhisatta and celebrated his victory in great joy.

### (2) *The Great Victory Over The Wandering Ascetic Saccaka*

The ascetic Saccaka, the teacher of the Licchavi princes of Vesāli, was a son of the Niganthas. He learnt five hundred views from each of his parents. He used to debate about

religious beliefs, and proclaimed himself to be a sage. There was no one who did not tremble when criticized by him. Even those who declared themselves to be Buddhas would be struck dumb and became helpless when questioned by him.

When he heard of the doctrine of Insubstantiality (Anatta) of the Buddha through Thera Assaji, he decided to have a debate with the Buddha about this doctrine. So he declared in the convention of the Licchavi princes as follows: "Come, Princes, I am going to have a debate with Samaṇa Gotama over his anatta doctrine today. I will make Gotama humble and shaken just like a lamb seized and shaken by a strong man. Come quickly, Princes."

After inviting the Licchavis, ascetic Saccaka went to Kuṭāgāra pinnacled monastery in Mahāvana forest. When he came to the monastery, he greeted the Buddha, took a suitable place and then asked the Buddha's permission to discuss the doctrine of Anatta. Then he began the discussion with the question. "Gotama, what do you preach to your disciples?"

The Buddha replied: "Saccaka, I preach to my disciples that all corporeality, sensation,

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perception, volitional activities and consciousness are impermanent, uncontrollable and insubstantial.”

Then Saccaka said, “Gotama, all seeds and plants grow and flourish depending on the earth. Besides, all actions are done in dependence on the earth. Likewise, all merit or demerit arise depending on a substantial entity called “atta” which is the combination of corporality, sensation, perception, volitional activities and consciousness”. In saying so, he rejected the doctrine of insubstantiality(anatta). In other words, he asserted that corporality, sensation, perception, volitional activities and consciousness were permanent, controllable and substantial.

The Buddha asked him again: “Do you mean that corporality, sensation, perception, volitional activities and consciousness are controllable and substantial?” He answered, counting on the audience to be on his side. “Yes, I mean that they are controllable and substantial. Not only I but all these people also mean so.”

When the Buddha asked him to tell his own view, not others' view, he professed as before. Next the Buddha asked him: “Saccaka, I shall ask you. Do King Ajātasattu and King

Kosala have the authority to kill any one, to take other's property, or to banish any one from their countries?" As he answered that they had the authority to do so, the Buddha continued: "Saccaka, you've told me that you control and possess your body and your body is substantial. Then can you command your body to be as you wish?"

Now Saccaka realized his difficult situation. If he said he could command his body, the Licchavi princes might ask him to make himself handsome like them. Unless he could make so, it would amount to supporting the doctrine of Insubstantiality or non-self. So he said nothing. The Buddha asked him again to reply, and still, he remained silent. Finally the Buddha said with compassion: "Saccaka, do answer now. It is not the time to be silent. One's head will be split into seven pieces, if one does not answer after being asked by the Buddha three times".

At last, Saccaka did not dare to remain silent. He said: "Gotama, I cannot command my body to be in this form, or that form."

In the same way, he had to admit that sensation, perception, volitional activities and



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consciousness were also impermanent, uncontrollable and insubstantial.

(3) *The Great Victory  
over Ciñcamāṇavikā*

• Ciñcamāṇavikā was a female disciple of the heretics who lived in Sāvatti. She was a graceful lady with fair complexion. Moreover she was full of cunning.

When the Buddha appeared in the world, the influence and material gains of the heretics declined as the light of a firefly becomes insignificant under the sunlight. So they conspired to bring disgrace to the Buddha, and used Ciñcamāṇavikā as a decoy to defame him.

By the time people came back from Jetavana monastery, after listening to the Buddha's teachings, Ciñcamāṇavikā, holding flowers and fragrant essence, pretended to go to the monastery. When others asked her, she gave a mischievous answer to cause miscomprehension, saying, "Does it matter to you wherever I go?"

She spent the night at a heretic's quarter near Jetavana monastery and returned to the city early in the next morning as if she

returned from Jetavana monastery after spending the night there. Some people who went to the monastery early in the morning to pay obeisance to the Buddha asked her where she had come from. She gave the same enigmatic answer. In this way, Ciñcamāṇavikā kept on pretending for over a month. Then she said that she returned from the fragrant chamber of the Buddha after staying with him for the night. And three or four months later, she wrapped her belly with rough cloth and covered it with her outer garment so that she looked like a pregnant woman. She told the people whom she met in the city that she lived together with Gotama and became pregnant.

After eight or nine months, she fastened a curved wooden block in her belly so that she appeared to be in her late pregnancy. She beat her insteps with the jaw bone of an ox so that they might get swollen.

One day, while the Buddha was giving a discourse, she stood in front of the throne and charged the Buddha with irresponsibility for failing to look after her and to make preparations for her to give birth to her child conveniently. The Buddha, then, stopped his discourse and replied calmly: "Well,

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Ciñcamāṇavikā, only you and I know the truth of your words."

"Yes, ascetic, because of the affair that only you and I know, I have become pregnant," said Ciñcamāṇavikā.

In that moment, due to the power of the Buddha's Perfections, a strong wind lifted her garment upwards exposing the wooden block, which was unwrapped instantly, and it fell down onto her insteps, cutting her toes. When the people drove her out of the monastery, she was swallowed up by a fissure appearing in the earth.

(4) *The Great Victory  
over the Demon Ālavaka*

The demon, Ālavaka, lived in his own celestial abode at a banyan tree near Ālavi. He was a demon of great power, who was very conceited and ferocious. He possessed a special weapon in the form of a fabulous white robe. When he threw it up into the sky, there would be no rain for twelve years; if he let it fall on the earth, all plants would die and never grow again in twelve years; if he threw it into the sea, the sea would dry up, and if he threw it

at a mountain as big as Meru, the mountain would break into pieces. He never paid respect and obeisance to any ascetic and even to his parents. He had the permission of the deva-king, Vessavaṇa, to kill and eat anyone who came into the area covered by the shade of his banyan tree at noon.

Once the King of Āḷavī happened to rest under the banyan-tree, on returning from hunting deer alone. But the demon spared the King's life as the latter promised to send a human being and a pot of rice to the demon every day. On reaching the palace, the King, at the suggestion of the Mayor, sent a prisoner, who was sentenced to death, to the demon every day.

When no prisoner was left in the prison, the king let his men put some jewels on the road and arrested the person who picked up those jewels. And the person was sent to Āḷavaka with a pot of rice as before. Then no one dared to pick up jewels on the road. Next the king, after consulting with his ministers, forced people to give up their young babies, one of whom was to be sent daily to the demon.

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After twelve years there was no child left, except the king's own son, to be sent to the demon. The King ordered his men to snatch Prince Ālavaka from his queen, and to send the prince to the demon the next day.

On that evening, the Buddha went alone to Ālavaka's abode in order to admonish him. At that time Ālavaka was at the meeting of demons, and the Buddha waited for him, sitting on his throne. The demon Gadrabha, the door-keeper, informed Ālavaka of the Buddha's visit. The two demons, Hemavata and Sātāgiri, seeing the Buddha giving a discourse to Ālavaka's demon attendants at his abode, also told him to pay homage to the Buddha. Once he heard the news he became furious, and he stamped his right foot on the Kēlāsa mountain. Many stone slabs fell off from the mountain. Standing at the peak of the mountain, he shouted out his name loudly; "It's me, Ālavaka". The whole world shook in fear at his shout.

When he reached his residence, he found his wives and attendants listening to the Buddha's teaching, and so he became more furious. So he sent a violent storm to kill the Buddha. But the storm was of no avail. He made the rain fall heavily so that the Buddha would be

drowned. His attempt was again in vain. Furthermore, he caused the showers of stones, weapons, fire, hot ash, sand, and mud-flows to fall one after another on to the Buddha. But all these did not hurt the Buddha. So finally he created a thick darkness to frighten the Buddha. However, the Buddha was neither frightened nor harmed by all these attacks.

Then Ajavaka led a demon army with various weapons. The troops marched towards the Buddha, assuming various frightening forms and making loud roars. However, the demon-troops dared not go near the Buddha just as flies dare not rest on a red-hot ironrod.

Ajavaka charged the Buddha incessantly in several ways until it was beyond midnight, yet he could not defeat the Buddha. Thus he used his last weapon, Dussāvuda, the fabulous white robe.

The special weapon, Dussāvuda, flew towards the Buddha like thunder and lightning amidst smoke and fire. Nevertheless, when it got near the Buddha it became an ordinary piece of rug. Ajavaka could not understand why. Then an idea flashed upon him that he failed on account of the power of loving-

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kindness which the Buddha radiated upon all beings. So he decided to destroy that power of the Buddha by accusing the Buddha thus: "Oh, Saṁaṇa Gotama, why do you trespass on my residence without my permission? Get out of my residence now."

The Buddha, realizing that a violent person could never be admonished violently, he went out readily. Āḷavaka thought that he made a mistake in attacking the Buddha who could be persuaded easily. So he became mild and gentle. But in order to test the Buddha whether he was really humble, he again gave the order: "Saṁaṇa Gotama, get into my residence again." Again, the Buddha complied with the command. The Buddha went out of and entered the residence three times as commanded. But on the fourth time, knowing Āḷavaka's intention to seize the Buddha's legs and throw him to the other bank of the Gaṅga River, he refused to leave the residence.

Thereupon, Āḷavaka planned to ask the Buddha questions and throw him away to the other bank of the Gaṅgā River if he could not answer the questions. The parents of Āḷavaka learnt some doctrinal questions and answers from Kassapa Buddha, and they passed this

knowledge on to Āḷavaka. As time passed by he could remember only the questions and forgot the answers. So he wrote the questions so that he would not forget them. These were very profound questions and they could be answered only by the Buddha. Āḷavaka had asked these questions to some ascetics who came to look at his grand mansion. When they were at a loss to give correct answers, Āḷavaka seized their legs and threw them away to the other bank of the Gaṅgā River. So now he demanded the Buddha to answer his questions.

First he asked: "Oh, Samaṇa Gotama, what is the best treasure in this world? What is the practice that brings happiness? What is the most delicious taste, and what kind of livelihood is the noblest?"

The Buddha answered immediately: "In this world, Āḷavaka, to have faith in the Three Gems and in Kamma and its results is the best treasure; the practice of the ten meritorious deeds can bring happiness; telling the truth is the most delicious taste; and living on the knowledge which brings forth benefits in the present and the future existences is the noblest."



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The Buddha proceeded to answer his other questions. While listening to the answers, which were given with compassion and loving-kindness, Ājavaka became calm and gentle and finally he was enlightened as a Stream-winner (Sotāpanna).

Early in the next morning the King's men came to the demon and handed Prince Ājavaka to him. He was ashamed to accept the offer in the presence of the Buddha, so he offered the prince to the Buddha. Later the prince grew into a rich man, named Hatthājavaka, who practised the four Types of Saṅgaha Dhamma<sup>1</sup> and worked for the promotion and propagation of Sāsana.

In this way, the Buddha managed to subdue the ferocious demon Ājavaka. The people of Ājavī and eighty four thousand human beings, devas and brahmas were liberated from the round of rebirths.

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F.N. Saṅgaha Dhamma: This means helping others with gifts (dāna), and with pleasant speech (piyavācā), being benevolent (attacariyā) and being impartial (Samanahattatā)

(5) *The Great Victory over Aṅgulimāla*

Aṅgulimāla was the son of the brahmin Bhaggava, the chief counsellor of King Kosala, and his wife Mantānī. On the night of his birth, all weapons in the country glittered unusually. The same phenomenon happened in the king's chamber and so the king, being frightened, could not sleep well.

The child's father, the chief counsellor, looking up to the constellations in the sky, knew that his son would become an evil person when he came of age. The next day, the king asked the chief counsellor what these omens portended. The latter replied, "Your Majesty, you need not worry about this omen. A baby boy was born to me yesterday. The omen means that my son will become an evil person when he grows up." The king again asked, "Will he do evil deeds alone or in a group?"

"He will do evil deeds alone. Would you please get rid of that baby?" replied the chief counsellor. But the king permitted him to bring up the baby well because he believed that the boy would not be so harmful to him and to the public if he did evil deeds alone. The boy was named Ahimsaka.

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When Ahimsaka came of age, he studied under the teacher of Takkasilā. He helped in all the household duties of his teacher's wife. Moreover, he used to behave pleasantly. So he became the favourite of the teacher and his wife. Thereupon, other students became jealous of Ahimsaka and spread rumour that Ahimsaka was having an affair with the teacher's wife. At first the teacher did not believe the viscious calumny. However, when he heard this slander again and again he became suspicious of Ahimsaka and decided to kill him. So he sent for Ahimsaka and said: "Ahimsaka, your education will be complete only when you have cut off one thousand right-hand fingers and presented them to me."

In compliance with his teacher's words, Ahimsaka went into the Jalina forest, waylaid travellers and killed them, taking their right-hand fingers. He put the fingers on the boughs of trees and they were carried away by crows and vultures. So the number of fingers would not easily add up to one thousand. Therefore he made the fingers into a garland and hang it around his neck. Hence he was known as Aṅgulimāla (who wears a garland of fingers around his neck).

Beacuse of the great danger caused by Aṅgulimāla, people were scared to go through the forest where Aṅgulimāla stayed. So even men went in groups of forty or fifty when they had to go through the forest. However, they were all killed by Aṅgulimāla. Later on, there was no one who dared to go there. Aṅgulimāla then went to the nearby villages, broke open the houses by kicking the doors, killed the people and cut off their right fingers. Therefore, poeple migrated from small villages to large villages. When they did not feel secure anywhere, they reported to King Koṣaḷa about Aṅgulimāla and requested the king to arrest him. So the king gave the order to recruit soldiers to form an army to arrest Aṅgulimāla.

Aṅgulimāla's mother heard the news and she went into the forest to inform her son.

On that day, Aṅgulimāla waited in the forest with the resolution to kill anyone he met first as he needed only one more finger to make up one thousand in number. Meanwhile the Buddha, knowing that Aṅgulimāla would be guilty of the most heinous deed if he killed his mother also went into the forest.

On seeing his mother coming into the forest first, Aṅgulimāla chased her and at that

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moment the Buddha stood between them. So, Aṅgulimāla pursued the Buddha. In fact, he was strong enough to catch even running elephants or horses or deer. But he could not catch up with the Buddha because the Buddha used his supernormal powers to keep the distance between him and Aṅgulimāla as far as ever.

Being tired and all in sweat, he stopped suddenly and said: "Oh bhikkhu, stop." The Buddha replied: "Aṅgulimāla, I have already stopped. You are the one to stop." Aṅgulimāla could not understand what the Buddha meant, so he said: "Oh, bhikkhu, you said you have stopped even though you are going. On the other hand, you told me to stop though I have already stopped. What do you mean?"

"Aṅgulimāla, I do not kill any living being. I have already given up weapons such as stick, spear and sword. So I shall not run in the round of existences. But you still persecute and kill people. Thus you shall have to run in the round of existences", replied the Buddha.

Aṅgulimāla had heard about the Buddha before. On hearing the Buddha's reply he realized that he was face to face with the

Buddha. He was delighted, thinking: "The Buddha has come to this forest to salvage me." He thought over his actions and realized at once that he had done wrong. So he put all his weapons down and knelt before the Buddha, paying homage to him. He also requested the Buddha to take him into the Order of the Bhikkhus.

He became a bhikkhu as soon as the Buddha said, "Come bhikkhu." He practised insight meditation and became an arahat.

### (6) *The Great Victory Over Nāḷāgiri*

Nāḷāgiri was a very ferocious elephant. It consumed eight pots of alcohol every day and used to stamp on human beings.

Devadatta had harboured a grudge against the Buddha with regard to the conferment of the right and the left chief disciples. He wanted to kill the Buddha and be the leader of the Saṅgha (Order of bhikkhus). First, he sent archers to kill the Buddha, but this plan failed. Secondly, he dislodged a huge rock from the top of Gijjhakūta Mountain. But the rock did not hit the Buddha; nevertheless, it caused a

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small chip of rock to fly to the big toe of the Buddha causing a slight bruise. Thirdly, with the permission of King Ajātasatthu, he asked the mahout to give sixteen pots of alcohol to the ferocious elephant Nāḷāgīri and send it after the Buddha when he came into Rājagaha city.

The people of Rājagaha, who knew Devadatta's plan, waited on buildings, trees and house-tops to see how the Buddha would subdue the wild elephant.

When the Buddha came into Rājagaha with his disciple bhikkhus in procession, Nāḷāgīri the wild elephant was set free to attack the Buddha. It ran to the Buddha, with its tail and trunk raised, destroying houses and carts on its way.

Venerable Sāriputta and the eighty great disciples asked the permission from the Buddha to drive away the elephant. But the Buddha did not permit them to do so. His younger brother, Ananda, who loved and respected the Buddha so much, went and stood in front of the Buddha at the risk of his own life. The Buddha asked him to move away three times. But the

Venerable Ānanda still stood before the Buddha, so the Buddha removed him by his psychic power.

Meanwhile a frightened mother with a suckling baby dropped her baby between the Buddha and the elephant. Nāḷāgīri chased that woman first. However, as it could not catch her, it turned towards the baby.

The Buddha suffused the elephant with all his loving-kindness which he usually disseminated all over the world. Then he said to the animal gently: "Nāḷāgīri, you have been given sixteen pots of alcoholic drink to kill me, not to kill others. So come to me."

Now, Nāḷāgīri felt the power of the Buddha's loving-kindness in its heart. And it also saw the splendid appearance of the Buddha on account of the most benevolent love, the most pleasant voice and the most remarkable appearance of the Buddha, the animal's temper calmed down and it became docile.

Nāḷāgīri put his trunk down. It advanced slowly towards the Buddha and knelt down at his feet. The Buddha put his hand on Nāḷāgīri's head and admonished the elephant to



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disseminate loving-kindness towards others and not to do evil deeds.

Onlookers shouted joyfully in praise of the Buddha's marvellous performance. They threw their ornament and jewels at Nāḷāgīri. The elephant was almost covered with the ornaments and jewels. Since that time Nāḷāgīri came to be known as Dhanapāla.

Nāḷāgīri paid homage to the Buddha. It went backward slowly and returned to its stable.

(7) *The Great Victory over Nandopananda Dragon*

Nandopananda was the king of celestial dragons. By his supernatural power he could assume a very huge form. He could kill other animals by emitting strong fumes blazing fire and violent hot nasal breath. Being a holder of wrong view, he had no respect for the Triple Gem.

One day, in order to enjoy a feast of drinks, he was seated with great pomp and formality on his celestial throne. A white umbrella was placed over him, and his retinue of dragons including female dancers of various ages attended on him.

That morning, when the Buddha looked at the world with his knowledge of Great Compassion, he found Nandopanada who should be liberated from the round of rebirths. So he went to Tāvatiṃsa celestial realm together with five hundred bhikkhus, passing over Nandopananda and his retinue.

On seeing the Buddha and the bhikkhus, Nandopananda said angrily: "These ascetics used to pass over our heads on going to Tāvatiṃsā. Now, they drop dust from their feet on us as they go up to Tāvatiṃsa. I shall not allow them to go now." He got up from his throne and went to Mount Meru. He assumed the form of a huge dragon and wound Mt. Meru with his body in seven coils. He covered the Tāvatiṃsa abode with his big hood, creating darkness all over Tāvatiṃsa.

When Mount Meru, the seven surrounding mountains, Tāvatiṃsa celestial abode, Vejayantā mansion with tiered roof and the Sakka's flag were not visible, the Venerable Raṭṭhapāla asked the Buddha for the reason. When the Buddha revealed the true cause to them, Venerable Raṭṭhapāla, Venerable Bhaddiya, Venerable Rāhulā, etc., asked for permission to subdue the dragon. The Buddha turned down their

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request. However, when the Venerable Moggallāna asked for permission, the Buddha assented.

Venerable Moggallāna transformed himself into a dragon much larger than Nandopananda. Then he wound himself around Mount Meru in fourteen coils. He placed his huge hood over the dragon's hood and pressed it against Mt. Meru. When Nandopananda emitted strong fumes and a blaze of fire, Moggallāna emitted stronger fumes and a larger blaze of fire. The fumes and the blaze of fire emitted by Nandopananda did not harm the Venerable Moggallāna whereas the former was burnt and hurt by the latter's.

When Nandopananda knew who his enemy really was, he asked Moggallāna to assume his original bhikkhu form. So Venerable Moggallāna changed himself into the bhikkhu form. Then he went into the dragon's left ear and went out of the right ear, and again he went into the right ear and came out of the left ear. Similarly, he entered the head through the nostril and came out of the ears of the dragon king. Besides he entered the dragon's belly through his mouth and walked up and down in it.

While he was demonstrating thus, the Buddha warned him: "Be careful, Moggallāna, that dragon is very powerful." Venerable Moggallāna replied: "Venerable Sir, I have proficiently practised the four bases of psychic powers in five skilful ways. Hence I can subdue thousands of dragon kings like Nandopananda."

While Ven. Moggallāna was walking inside the dragon's belly, Nandopanada thought of chewing him up when he came out. So he asked Venerable Moggallāna to come out of his belly. No sooner did the bhikkhu come out than the dragon blew out very hot nasal breath to the bhikkhu. However, Moggallāna protected himself by being absorbed in the fourth jhāna.

Although other bhikkhus could exercise many miraculous powers, only the Buddha and Venerable Mahāmoggallāna could protect themselves against such violent hot nasal breath. Thus the Buddha permitted Moggallāna to subdue Nandopananda.

Then Venerable Moggallāna, assuming a garuḷa-form, made a strong storm break out. When the dragon fled in fear, he chased the

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dragon closely. As the dragon knew that he could not escape, he assumed the form of a young man and said: "Venerable sir, I take refuge in you." Then he paid homage to the thera respectfully. Venerable Moggallāna took him to the Buddha. Nandopananda took refuge in the three Gems in the presence of the Buddha. In this way Nandopananda became a devotee of Three Gems.

(8) *The Great Victory  
Over Baka Brahma*

Baka Brahma was a great brahma who lived in the abode of first jhāna. His power and influence spread throughout the ten thousand universes. He was the brahma of great fame with a large retinue. He had been in the brahma realm so long that he did not remember his previous lives. As a result he came to believe that he and the brahma realm were indestructible, indissoluble, firm and eternal. In other words he held the wrong view of Eternalism (Sassatamicchāditti).

At that time, the Buddha was staying at the foot of a sal tree, in Suboga forest near

Ukkathā town. Knowing the Baka Brahma's thoughts, the Buddha went to the Brahma realm to admonish him. On seeing the Buddha, Baka Brahma greeted him and told him about his belief. At that time many brahmas came to listen to them. The Buddha commented on the brahma's wrong view thus: "Oh, Brahmas, Baka Brahma is very stupid. He says what is impermanent, permanent; what is unstable, stable; what is dissoluble, indissoluble; what is imperfect, perfect; and what is not eternal, eternal. He also says that no new beings are born, grow old, die or are reborn in the brahma world in spite of the fact that new brahmas are being born and old brahmas are passing away. Furthermore, although the higher brahma realms and the phenomena of liberation such as Path-consciousness, its Fruition and Nibbāna do exist, he said that they did not exist."

Baka Brahma refused to accept the Buddha's words, and reasserted his point of view. He added, "Bhikkhu, there are samaṇas and brahmaṇas of long ago who knew whether there were other places of liberation other than this body and this brahma world. But you will not find other places of liberation".

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The Buddha then explained: "Baka Brahma, there are many other planes of existence besides this first-jhāna realm. You were reborn here in this first-jhāna realm after your demise from the Ābhassarā brahma realm. You have forgotten that realm as you have been here so long, but I can see that."

Moreover, the Buddha retold the practices that Baka had undertaken in his past existences, the meritorious activities he had done and his past existences in the Vehapphala realm, the Subhakiṇṇhā realm, the Ābhassarā realm and the human world. On hearing these accounts, Baka Brahma could recall his past existences.

In addition, the Buddha also explained to him the Four Basic Primary Elements as well as all microphysical phenomena and their impermanence, unsatisfactory and insubstantial nature. He also explained the concept of Nibbāna. Baka Brahma could no longer assert his doctrine of eternalism, nor could he argue with the Buddha. But, as he wanted to cover up his defeat, he proposed to the Buddha to compete in terms of psychic power.

“Bhikkhu, I shall make myself invisible to you. You try to find me”, said Baka Brahma. But he could not make himself invisible as the Buddha blocked his psychic power. Baka Brahma created great darkness to make him invisible. However, the Buddha dispelled that darkness by his psychic power. At last Baka Brahma went into his mansion and hid under a wishing tree (Padesā tree). But all those present in the gathering could still see him. Not knowing what to do, he sat down meekly. He felt embarrassed as other brahmas laughed at him.

The Buddha said: “Baka Brahma, if you can't make yourself invisible, I shall make myself invisible”. So saying, the Buddha disappeared from the gathering of brahmas. No one could see the Buddha. Nevertheless his voice could be heard as he preached as follows: “Oh, brahmas, understand that all beings who are born in the sense-sphere, fine material sphere and non material sphere are subject to ageing, illness, decay and death. I also see beings who are seeking liberation but are on the wrong way and being reborn incessantly in the thirty-one planes of existence. So I never held the view that all beings and things are permanent.



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I have severed the craving for all existences with the knowledge of the four Path-consciousness."

The brahmas heard the pleasant voice of the Buddha preaching to them, but they could not see him. On hearing the discourse, many brahmas realized the four Noble Truths and were liberated from the round of rebirths. Baka Brahma himself admired the Buddha and discarded his wrong view.

### The Lesson of the Eight Great Victories

Many lessons can be drawn from the eight Great Victories of the Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings.

To state briefly, the animate world is very large, and there are more invisible beings than visible beings, more stupid beings than wise beings. When some of the stupid beings possess great strength, authority and power, they become very dreadful and dangerous.

Especially devas, dragons and ogres of immense authority and power, on account of their intense greed, wrong view, anger and

conceit, gave trouble even to the Buddha and his disciples who were striving for the welfare of all beings.

Also in the human world, excessive greed, jealousy, stinginess and calumny are very dreadful. *Aṅgulimāla*, for example, from being a good man, became a murderer and a menace to the Kosala kingdom because of calumny. So also in Buddhist history, the ugliest incidents sprang up from greed, jealousy and stinginess.

The grudge of Venerable Devadatta was an example of such events. In a past life, Devadatta, a seller of coloured glass-balls, harboured a grudge against the other seller, the Bodhisatta, for the latter's acquirement of a valuable gold cup by exchanging it with coloured glass-balls. He harboured this grudge for many existences until his last existence. When the Buddha conferred the positions of left and right chief disciples to Venerable Mahāmoggallāna and Venerable Sāriputta, his grudge came to a climax and burst. He attempted to assassinate the incomparable Buddha several times with the help of King Ajātasattu.

Again some heretic masters and their followers conspired out of jealousy to defame the Buddha using ignorant women as decoys.

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Worldlings, paying no regard to the law of kamma, even though they are not worthy, wish to attain high positions even as high as the highest position of the Enlightened One on account of their intense greed. Due to this greed and their abysmal ignorance, they continued to commit the most unpleasant offences such as slandering and defaming others. We can find unpleasant manifestations of greed, anger, conceit, wrong view, envy and jealousy of worldlings even in the Great Chronicle of the Buddha.

Summing up, the eight Great Victories of the Buddha are the magnificent achievements made by the most Exalted One who employed no other weapon than his great compassion and loving-kindness to conquer his enemies.

The great lesson that we can draw from these Great Victories is that forbearance and loving-kindness represent the best weapon to conquer all injustices and offences.

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## Elaboration of the Attributes of the Triple Gem

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#### *The Nine Attributes of the Buddha*

The followers of the Buddha were once called 'Holders of right view'. Now, they are called the 'Buddhists'. Buddhists should know the attributes of the Triple Gem in detail so that they will come to lead a pious life. At the Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pyi-myo, King Kyansittha left a stone-pillar with the inscription: "There is no one, except the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, who can convey to all sentient beings genuine happiness in this very life as well as in future existences and lead them to Nibbāna."

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The Buddha fulfilled the ten perfections so much so that these accumulated perfections were incomparable and incalculable. To make it clear, if all the merits performed by all sentient beings living in this world were multiplied by one hundred, the resultant merits cannot still match the merits of the Buddha. How great is the Buddha's perfections!.

The perfections fulfilled in four asaṅkhyeyyas and ten thousand world cycles must bear their fruits to the utmost in the life of Prince Siddhātha for it was the last existence of the Buddha. As the result of these combined effects, he was completely endowed with the best virtues in every respect.

Out of these attributes, the following nine are the chief attributes which should always be borne in mind by every Buddhist.

### The Nine Attributes of the Buddha

Itipi so bhagavā - Arahaṃ

- Sammāsambuddho

- Vijjācaraṇa sampanno

- Sugato

- Lokavidū
- Anuttaro purisadammasārathi
- Satthā devā manussānam
- Buddho
- Bhagavā

### 1. The Attribute of Araham

#### *Meaning*

Araham = the Buddha who is worthy of special veneration by all beings, human beings, devas and brahmas.

#### *Explanation*

The complete meaning of "Araham" is as follows:

- (a) Araham = the Buddha who has completely detached himself from all defilements,
- (b) Ara-ham = the Buddha who has eliminated all defilements,
- (c) Ara-ham = the Buddha who has destroyed the spokes of the wheel of Saṃsāra,

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- (d) Araham = the Buddha who is worthy of special veneration,
- (e) A-raham = the Buddha who never commits evil deeds even in seclusion.

### *Attribute Signifies Quality*

Being mindful of the attributes of the Buddha and reflecting on any one of the attributes of the Buddha is called Buddhānussati. Cultivating or repeatedly contemplating the attributes is called bhāvanā.

Every precious gem whether mundane or supramundane has good qualities. The invaluable rubies, such as Jotirasa (that illumines in the dark) and Manomaya or Icchāsaya (that can fulfil one's wishes) although they are only inanimate gems, are highly valued and much desired by everyone.

Out of all the precious gems, the Triple Gem--the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha--are the most noble. These Triple Gem are worthy of veneration by all beings. When one takes refuge in the Buddha, one will be protected from all dangers and will be free from all sufferings.

What is the chief attribute which characterises the Buddha as the ideal and the noblest person who is worthy of special veneration by all beings?

*Arahant Means Buddhahood*

In the world as there is existence, there is non-existence and as there is ceaseless going round, there is its cessation. Every sentient being has to go through life after life in the whirlpool of Saṃsāra. In Abhidhammā sense, Saṃsāra is a long chain of correlations of the five aggregates or the twelve bases or the eighteen elements which arise and dissolve incessantly according to the Law of Dependent Origination. The ten defilements with ignorance (avijjā) and craving (taṇhā) as their root are the causes of the round of rebirths. The defilements serve as the spokes, the rim and the hub of the wheel of Saṃsāra. In order to stop and destroy the wheel of Saṃsāra, these defilements which serve as the spokes, the rim and the hub must be destroyed.

In order to liberate himself from the round of rebirths, the Bodhisatta fulfilled the Ten Perfections repeatedly and finally he became fully



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enlightened because he could destroy all the defilements by the four Path Knowledges. Like gold which is purified a thousand times so that it is absolutely pure and bright, the Buddha also became the purest and the noblest person who was endowed with the attribute of Arahant.

The most important quality of a noble person who deserves the veneration of all human beings, devas and brahmas is nothing but the liberation from all defilements. If one is not free from defilements by oneself, one cannot guide others to liberate themselves from defilements.

In this world there are many other Gods who tell others that they will take them to the ever-joyful abode while they themselves are still floating in the whirlpool of saṃsāra. Their apostles (messengers) praise the infinite attributes of their Gods.

The attribute of "Arahant" is one and only touchstone for testing true Buddhahood.

### *The Good Field without any Weed*

Only the Buddha and Arahats can completely eliminate defilements, numbering ten in brief and one thousand and five hundred in

detail, by the Arahatta-path knowledge. But arahats cannot extinguish their innate tendencies of the past. Only the Self-Enlightened Buddha can extinguish all defilements together with their innate tendencies completely. So the Buddha is perfectly pure and incomparable, worthy of special veneration by all human beings, devas and brahmas.

The seeds grown in weed-and-grass-free fertile fields will develop well, grow well and bear plentiful fruits. If one wants to enjoy plentiful fruits and flowers, one should sow the seeds in such good land. In the same way, one can gain great benefits by sowing the seeds of merit in the Buddha whose mind is completely free from all defilements, resembling the fertile, weed-free field.

The Buddha, like the incomparable fertile field, can fulfil the wishes of all to their utmost satisfaction, if they sow the seeds of merit in him.

Hence, Arahant means the attribute of the Buddha who is worthy of special veneration by all human beings, devas and brahmas.

## 2. The Attribute of Sammāsambuddha

### *Meaning*

Sammāsambuddho = the Buddha who truly comprehends by himself all the dhammas that should be known.

### *Sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*

The term "Sabbaññuta-ñāṇa" is the concise form of "Sabbāsabbaññuta-ñāṇa." The first 'Sabba' means to know all dhammas that should be known. The next 'sabba' means to know the beginning, the middle and the end of all that should be known, and to teach the dhamma in accordance with the tendencies of the listeners. Sabbaññuta-ñāṇa has three characteristics. By this ñāṇa, One knows--

- (1) all that should be known completely,
- (2) all the methods suitable for delivering the various discourses,
- (3) the faculties and tendencies of the people who deserve to be liberated from the round of rebirths.

By utilizing this ñāṇa, the Buddha had strived for all beings to be liberated from the round of rebirths until he attained Mahā parinibbāna at the age of eighty.

### *Five Neyyadhamma*

As it has been mentioned by the Buddha and verified by modern science, the number of universes is uncountable and infinite. Also in each universe, the number of beings is uncountable and infinite. Though there are infinite numbers of universes, and living beings, the basic dhammas which constitute all these universes and beings are just five: They are known as five Neyyadhamma. (Neyya=that should be known + dhamma = principle). The five Neyyadhammas are:

- (1) Saṅkhāra = consciousness, mental concomitants and nīpphanna rūpa,
- (2) Vikāra = five mutable material qualities (vikāra rūpa),
- (3) Lakkhaṇa = four characteristics of material phenomena (lakkhaṇa rūpa),

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- (4) Paññatti = the conventional concepts, and terms such as human being, deva, brahma, elephant, horse, etc and
- (5) Nibbāna = the extinction of craving

According to these five Ñeyyadhamma, there are nothing but conventional concepts and ultimate realities - viz, mental phenomena (consciousness and mental concomitants), physical phenomena (nippanna-rūpas) and Nibbāna.

In knowing these dhammas, the Buddha does not know them wrongly but correctly and well. Again, in knowing them correctly and well, he knows them penetratively by himself without the help of any teacher. Therefore, the Bhagavā is known as Sammāsambuddha who knows by himself all that should be known.

### 3. The Attribute of Vijjācaraṇa saṃpanna

#### *Meaning*

Vijjācaraṇasaṃpanno = The Buddha who is proficient in three supreme knowledges, eight supreme knowle-

ages and fifteen perfect practices of morality.

### *Explanation*

The Buddha is the venerated teacher and noble leader of all beings. To be a leader, his words and actions must be in harmony. He must say as he does and he must do as he says. The Buddha possesses the supernormal wisdom as well as perfect noble practices.

'Vijjā' means the supreme knowledge that can discriminate the right from the wrong and 'caraṇa' means the moral conducts and practices that must be followed for the attainment of Nibbāna. Although one possesses wisdom, one cannot gain genuine happiness, if one cannot undertake the noble practice. And again if one undertakes the noble practice but has not the wisdom, one cannot follow the right path. The Buddha possesses both these two qualities of wisdom and practice.

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**Vijjā=Supreme Knowledge**

It is dually divided into three kinds and eight kinds as described below.

*Three Supreme Knowledges*

(1) Pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa = Knowledge that can recall past existences as well as past experiences;

(2) Dibbaeakkhuñāṇa = Knowledge that can see distant things as well as very tiny things, like divine eyes.

(3) Āsavakkhayañāṇa = Arahatta Path Knowledge that can eradicate all defilements and mental intoxicants.

These three knowledges play important roles for the Buddhas. They are referred to by their initial letters as 'Pu', 'Di', 'Ā'.

### *Eight Supreme Knowledges*

1. Vipassanāñāṇa = Insight Knowledge that can realize that all mind and matter are impermanent (anicca), suffering (dukkha) and insubstantial (anatta),
2. Cetopariyañāṇa = Knowledge that can read the minds of others (It is also called Paracittavijānana ñāṇa),
3. Manomayiddhiñāṇa = Knowledge that can create any corporeal figure at one's will,
4. Dibbasotañāṇa = Knowledge that can hear distant sounds and very soft voices like divine ears,
5. Iddhividhañāṇa = Knowledge that can create miraculous powers such as plunging into the earth, flying into the sky, etc.

When these five knowledges are added to the above-mentioned three knowledges there are altogether eight knowledges.



***Caraṇa=Fifteen Perfect Practices of Morality***

Caraṇa means the perfect practice that one must follow for the attainment of Nibbāna. There are fifteen practices. They are:-

(1) Sīla = Observing morality;

(2) Indriyaśamvara = Controlling the faculties of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind to be tranquil in order that greed (lobha) and anger (dosa) do not arise on seeing or hearing anything;

(3) Bhojanemattaññūtā = Being moderate in eating;

(4) Jāgariyānuyoga = Living and sleeping mindfully and having moderate sleep;

(5) Saddhā = Believing in the existence of merit, demerit, the

- consequences of the merit and demerit, the Triple Gem and the future round of rebirths;
- (6) Hirī = Being ashamed to commit evil;
- (7) Ottappa = Having fear to commit evil;
- (8) Suta = Possessing wide knowledge;
- (9) Vīriya = Making efforts in doing good deeds;
- (10) Sati = Having repeated mindfulness on meritorious deeds;
- (11) Paññā = Knowing the true nature of conditioned phenomenon of mind and matter;
- (12) First Jhāna = Having five jhāna factors: vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, ekaggatā,

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- (13) Second Jhāna = Having three jhāna factors: pīti, sukha, ekaggatā;
- (14) Third Jhāna = Having two jhāna factors: sukha and ekaggatā;
- (15) Fourth Jhāna = Having two jhāna factors: upekkhā and ekaggatā.

### (4) The Attributes of Sugata

#### *Meaning*

- Sugata = (1) The Buddha who has attained Buddhahood after fulfilling the Perfections as former Buddhas.
- (2) The Buddha who has gone to Nibbāna after following the right path.
- (3) The Buddha who speaks only what is true and beneficial.

#### *Explanation*

Since the time he received the prophecy of Dīpaṅkarā Buddha that he would become a Buddha in the future, the Bodhisatta had

fulfilled the Ten Perfections for the welfare of all sentient beings. He never took wrong views, avoided them with steadfast mindfulness, always kept up the practice righteously and walked along the right path to become a Buddha. On account of these merits he was endowed with the attribute of Sugata.

After attaining Buddhahood, he avoided the two extremes of eternalism and annihilationism and steadfastly walked along the Middle Path, i.e. the noble Eightfold Path towards Nibbāna. On account of this merit also he was designated with the attribute of Sugata.

In the world, there are six kinds of speech. They are:-

- (1) the speech that is untrue, unbeneficial and disliked by others;
- (2) the speech that is true but unbeneficial, and disliked by others;
- (3) the speech that is true and beneficial, but disliked by others;
- (4) the speech that is untrue and unbeneficial, but liked by others;
- (5) the speech that is true, unbeneficial and liked by others;

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(6) the speech that is true, beneficial and liked by others.

Out of this six, the third and the sixth are good. The Buddha mostly speaks that is true, beneficial and liked by others. He occasionally makes a speech, that is true and beneficial but disliked by others, at the proper time. Thus, the Bhagavā is known as Sugata, because he always speaks what is true, and beneficial to others.

### (5) The Attribute of Lokavidū

#### *Meaning*

Lokavidū = The Buddha who knows the three worlds.

#### *Explanation*

There are three worlds, namely; satta-loka, okāsa-loka, and saṅkhāra-loka. The animate world which is made up of all living beings is called satta-loka. The inanimate world which forms the habitat of living beings and consists of thirty-one planes of existence is called okāsa-loka. The conditioned world which consists of

the sum of conditioned mental and physical phenomena is called saṅkhāra-loka.

In the animate world, there consist of not only human beings but also miserable beings of niraya, tiracchāna, peta and asūrakāya as well as celestial beings of devas and brahmas. There are countless numbers of human beings, devas, brahmas and other miserable beings. The Buddha knows the name, lineage and personal appearance of each being as well as the desire, tendency, character and faculty of each individual. He also knows who deserves the liberation from Saṁsāra. Thus he can deliver the discourse according to the character and tendency of each being.

The inanimate world, okāsa-loka, consists of an infinite number of universes; each universe being made up of thirty-one planes of existence. Thus the inanimate world includes all the abodes of sentient beings, the mass of air, the mass of water, the mass of earth, planets, stars, moons, suns, etc. The Buddha knew all these infinite inanimate worlds.

Out of these worlds the conditioned world is the most difficult to understand. The animate world and the inanimate world can be seen by ordinary eyes and supernormal eyes(dibbacakkhu).

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Only the Omniscient Buddha could know well the conditioned world. The aggregates of mind and matter are conventionally termed as individual person, animal, man, woman, deva, brahma, tree, wood, mountain, town, village, etc. When the mind and matter are put aside or when they come into cessation, nothing will be left.

As a matter of fact, material phenomena are merely aggregates of the four Primary elements; namely, earth, water, air, and fire, together with their material qualities. Such an aggregate of matter is called the corporeal group (rūpakalāpa). The Buddha knew the arising, the existing and the passing away of the four elements and their qualities in each unit of the corporeal group in detail. There exist the mental phenomena of consciousness and mental concomitants within the body of what is conventionally called a living being which is made up of units of material groups. The mental phenomena are so subtle and profound that the people with only worldly wisdom cannot realize them. The Buddha completely knows the rise and fall of all mental phenomena comprising contact, sensation, etc.

Thus the Bhagavā is known as Lokavidū, because he knows all the three worlds; namely,

the animate world, the inanimate world and the conditioned world.

## 6. The Attribute of Anuttaro purisadammasārathi

### *Meaning*

Anuttaro purisadammasārathi = The Buddha who is incomparable in taming those who deserve to be tamed.

### *Explanation*

The Buddha is incomparable in taming the wild and cruel human beings, devas and animals who deserve to be tamed.

There is no other person in the world who can surpass the Buddha in the virtues of morality, concentration, wisdom, emancipation (Arahattaphala), Retrospective knowledge emancipation (vimuttiñāṇadassana). The Buddha is the incomparable one endowed with these great virtues.

In this world, there are so many persons who take pride in their lineage, glory, virtues, strength, supernormal powers, worldly



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knowledge, and sovereignty and force, torture and oppress others. The Buddha dispelled their wrong views and conceit and tamed them and turned them into cultured, and gentle person.

He also tamed wild and violent dragons like Nandopananda, wild elephants like Nālāgiri, ferocious demons like Ājavaka. He also used various supernormal powers such as loving-kindness to admonish such haughty and superstitious persons as Anḅgulimāla, Saccaka, Ambaṭṭha, Pokkharasāti, Soṇadaṇḁa, and Kūṭadanta and such devas and brahmas as Māra and Baka and converted them into holders of right views.

Therefore, the Bhagavā is known as Anuttaro purisadammasārathi, because he is the incomparable charioteer who is well-adapted in taming those who deserve to be tamed.

### 7. The Attribute of Sathā devamanussānam

#### *Meaning*

Sathā devamanussānam= The Buddha who leads the way and is the teacher of all men, devas and brahmas.

### *Explanation*

Long long ago, a wise leader of the traders who travelled by cart in deserts as well as through forests where many wild beasts such as lions, leopards, tigers, and many thieves and robbers roamed about and where the supply of water and provisions was scarce, was able to lead his followers to safety. In the same way, the Buddha can lead men, devas and brahmas from the whirlpool of saṃsāra which is full of such sufferings as birth, ageing, sickness, death, grief, lamentation, separation from beloved ones, association with those one dislikes, to Nibbāna where there is no suffering but everlasting perfect peace.

In this world, it is difficult to have a good intelligent leader. According to one Jātaka story, there was once a group of traders and carters led by a foolish leader who was the rival of a wise leader. They did not understand the tricks of the demons living in the desert. They were foolish enough to follow the stupid leader and finally came in ruin. The wise leader the Bodhisatta knew how to go through the route safely and how to overcome difficulties while travelling. Therefore, all his followers were free from dangers and reached their destination without

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any hitch. All Bodhisattas themselves made the arduous journey first and then pointed out the safe way to his followers. Therefore, the Bhagavā is known as Sathādevamanussānam because he can show all men, devas and brahmas the way to Nibbāna.

### 8. The Attribute of Buddha

#### *Meaning*

**Buddho** = The Buddha who knows and teaches the four Ariya Truths.

#### *Explanation*

The Buddha becomes fully enlightened by himself on attainment of the Four Ariya Truths and also makes others enlightened.

The Buddha is one who penetratively knows the Four Ariya Truths by himself and teaches others to realize them.

The four Ariya Truths are the Ariya Truth of Suffering (Dukkha-Sacca), the Ariya Truth of the Cause of Suffering (Sāmuḍaya-sacca), the Ariya Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (Nirodha-sacca) and the Ariya Truth of the Path

leading to the Cessation of Suffering (Magga-sacca). The Buddha knows these Four Ariya Truths penetratively, by himself.

*(1) The Ariya Truth  
of Suffering*

A being is made up of five aggregates - the aggregate of corporeality, the aggregate of sensation, the aggregate of perception, the aggregate of volitional activities and the aggregate of consciousness. Because of these aggregates, all of us always have to struggle for food, shelter and clothing. The Buddha sees the whole world as a mass of suffering. Birth is suffering; ageing also is suffering; ailment also is suffering, death also is suffering; association with those one dislikes also is suffering, separation from beloved ones also is suffering; not to get what one desires also is suffering; to dislike what one gets also is suffering; grief, lamentation, bodily pain, mental distress, agony are also suffering. All the five aggregate arise and dissolve incessantly all the time. So they are impermanent, transient and fleeting. What is not permanent is not satisfactory and being tortured incessantly by the dissolution of the five aggregates is real

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suffering. What cannot be controlled by oneself, what is not conforming to one's wishes, what is not 'I', 'person', 'self', 'ego' or 'soul' is known as 'non-self' (anatta). So in brief, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering. The Buddha thoroughly discerned the Ariya Truth of Suffering and expounded this Truth so that others also should realize this Ariya Truth.

### *(2) The Ariya Truth of the Cause of Suffering.*

One, in search of the origin of suffering, will find craving or greed (lobha) as the cause. Craving is of three kinds.

- (1) craving for and becoming attached to pleasures of the senses (Kāma taṇhā),
- (2) craving for and becoming attached to continued existence, either the present sensual existence, or higher rūpa or arūpa existences (bhava taṇhā),
- (3) craving for and becoming attached to non-existence (vibhava taṇhā).

Craving, desiring and longing for sensual pleasure and sense objects are the causes of suffering. When we crave for more wealth and

higher position, that craving or thirst brings about suffering; the struggle to attain those objectives brings about suffering; dissatisfaction with what one acquired brings about suffering. This craving or thirst can never be satisfied. Like the salt-water it cannot quench one's thirst, the more one gets, the more one craves for. Pursuing after wealth and position causes suffering; safeguarding the properties one has acquired causes suffering; and the loss of these properties or one's position also causes suffering. So long as the craving is not eradicated one cannot liberate oneself from the mass of sufferings. Therefore, craving is the origin of suffering and is called *Samudaya sacca*. The Buddha thoroughly discerned the Ariya Truth of the cause of suffering and expounded this Truth so that others also realize and eliminate craving which constitutes the Ariya Truth of the Cause of Suffering.

### *(3) The Ariya Truth of the Cessation of Suffering*

The Buddha knew that *Nibbāna* is the extinction of all sufferings. Only the noble ones (*ariyās*) can understand the profundity of *Nibbāna*. All existences in the thirty-one planes, are

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subjected to birth, ageing, sickness and death, and so they are suffering. Wherever there is existence, there is mind and matter and as mind and matter are impermanent, unsatisfactory and insubstantial (non-self), there is suffering. When craving, the builder of new existences, is eliminated, all sufferings will cease for ever. This is called Nibbāna or Nirodha-saccā. The Buddha thoroughly discerned the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and expounded this Truth so that others also realize this Ariya Truth.

*(4) The Ariya Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering*

The one and only path leading to Nibbāna is the Ariya Path of eight constituents. The eight constituents of the Ariya Path are:-

- (1) Right View = Sammā ditṭhi;
- (2) Right Thinking = Sammā saṅkappa;
- (3) Right speech = Sammā vācā;
- (4) Right Action = Sammā kammanta;
- (5) Right Livelihood = Sammā Ājīva;
- (6) Right Effort = Sammā Vāyāma;

(7) Right Mindfulness = *Sammā Sati*; and

(8) Right Concentration = *Sammā Samādhi*.

The Buddha admonished beings to develop these eight constituents of the Ariya Path.

The Ariya Path of Eight Constituents is the one and only true way to *Nibbāna* which is free from the round of rebirths. There is no other path. Therefore it is evident that one cannot attain *Nibbāna* merely by saying prayers or paying homage to the mighty gods. One has to tread the Ariya Path by oneself to get to *Nibbāna*. The Ariya Path is also called the Middle Way (*Majjhimapaṭipadā*), steering clear of the two extremes. The Buddha thoroughly discerned the Ariya truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering and expounded this truth so that others can develop the eight constituents of the Path and realize this Ariya Truth.

*Sammā vāca*, *sammā kammanta* and *sammā ājiva* constitute the training of Morality; *sammā vāyama*, *sammā sati* and *sammā samādhi* constitute the Training of Concentration and *sammā diṭṭhis* and *sammā saṅkappa* constitute the Training of Wisdom.

The Buddha thoroughly discerned the Ariya Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of



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Suffering and expounded this Truth so that others can develop the eight constituents of the Path and realize this Ariya Truth.

The eight constituents of the Ariya Path are not to be practised individually. When one contemplates the three characteristics of mind and matter, one is said to be developing the constituents of the Noble Path.

Only the Self-Enlightened Buddhas know the four Ariya Truths thoroughly and make others know the Ariya Truths as well. So the Bhagavā is known as "Buddho".

### 9. The Attribute of Bhagavā

#### *Meaning*

Bhagavā = The Buddha who is the most Exalted One.

#### *Explanation*

The Buddha is endowed with infinite glory in his final existence as the result of the ten perfections he had fulfilled in his numerous past existences. The Buddha extinguished the five evils (māras), namely, the defilements (Kilesa

māra), the five aggregates of existence (Khandha māra), volitional activities, both good and evil that tend to produce rebirth (Abhisankhāra māra), the Evil deva, the death dealing deva (Devaputta māra) and Death (maccu māra). He attained the analytical knowledge of five aggregates, six sense-bases, eighteen elements and four ariya truths. He also taught others analytically to understand these dhammas well. He repeatedly experienced and contemplated these Supramundane Dhamma. Owing to these virtues, the Buddha is known as Bhagavā.

The Attribute of 'Bhagavā' is generally explained as the six great qualities of glory so that ordinary people may understand this attribute and revere the Bhagavā all the more. The main theme is that he has completely abstained from all evil, has performed all good deeds and he teaches others to abstain from all evil and to do all good deeds in the same way as he has done.

The six great qualities of glory of the Buddha are Mastery of one's mind (Issariya), Knowledge of the nine Supramundane Dhamma (Dhamma), Fame and Following (Yasa), Noble

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Splendour of Appearance (Siri), Power of Accomplishment (Kāma) and Energetic Effort (Payatta).

*Issariya*

The glory of the Buddha's mastery of his mind is of eight kinds.

- (1) The power of creating his body as minute as an atom (aṇimā),
- (2) The power of travelling through space as swift as the mind (laghimā),
- (3) The power of creating an incomparably great form (Mahimā),
- (4) The power of getting to the desired place unhindered in a short moment (Patti),
- (5) The power of creating various forms in a short moment (Pākamma),
- (6) the power of controlling his mind as well as the minds of others (Īsitā),
- (7) The power of attaining jhāna in a short moment (Vasitā), and
- (8) The power of accomplishing everything as soon as he wishes (Yatthakā-mā Vasāyitā).

### *Dhamma*

The knowledge of the four Paths, the four Fruitions and Nibbāna that eradicates all defilements is called the glory of Dhamma.

### *Yasa*

The glory of the actual fame of the Bhagavā that spreads through the ten thousand world systems is called the glory of Yasa.

### *Sirī*

The noble splendour of appearance of the Bhagavā which commands admiration and adoration of all beings is called the glory of Sirī.

### *Kāma*

The power of accomplishing whatever he desires instantly is called the glory of Kāma.

### *Payatta*

The Buddha always strived for the welfare of all beings and this energetic effort is called the glory of Payatta.

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Because the Bhagavā possesses infinite glory, infinite merit (through the Ten Perfections), infinite wisdom and infinite power, he is known as Bhagavā.

### The Story Illustrating the Attributes of the Buddha

#### *The Story of a Wealthy Man, Anāthapiṇḍika*

Paying homage to the Buddha, reflecting on the virtues of the Buddha, paying mental devotion to the Buddha who is endowed with major marks and minor marks of a Great Man, etc., are called Buddhānussati bhavanā. If a person steadfastly concentrates his mind on Buddhānussati bhāvanā, he will be overwhelmed with delightful satisfaction. Owing to the reflection on the virtues of the Buddha, he will be free from the hindrances such as (Lobha), anger (dosa), etc. and will feel happy bodily and mentally. His mind will be active and pure. If he keeps on contemplating on the arising and perishing of his delightful satisfaction stage by stage or on the arising and perishing nature of mind and matter, he will attain Arahatta phala. (The method

of reflection on the virtues of the Buddha will be explained later on.)

It was the time when the Buddha was spending his second rains retreat period at the city of Rājagaha that the rich man from Sāvatti, Anāthapiṇḍika, went to his brother-in-law Visāla of Rājagaha, to sell his locally produced goods, loaded in five hundred carts. At a distance of about one yojanā before arriving at Rājagaha, Anāthapiṇḍika sent a message about his arrival in advance as usual to his brother-in-law.

At that time Visāla could not welcome his brother-in-law as usual because he was engaged in the preparation of alms-food to be offered to the Buddha and his disciples.

Also Anāthapiṇḍika, expecting the welcoming of Visāla, continued his journey. Only when he reached Rājagaha, he discovered that Visāla was very busy indeed.

When Anāthapiṇḍika asked Visāla why he was so busy Visāla explained to him that he was busy not because of the preparations for a wedding reception nor for preparations of a feast to the King but for the offering of alms-food to the Buddha and his disciples:

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No sooner had he heard the word 'Buddha' unexpectedly, Anāthapiṇḍika was relieved of his tiredness and became extremely delighted. He was so overwhelmed with delight that he asked Visāla up to three times if he had uttered the word "Buddha" and Visāla replied that he did so.

Then Anāthapiṇḍika told Visāla that it was very difficult in this world even to hear the word "Buddha" and requested to let him see the Buddha just now. Visāla told him to visit the Buddha the next day as it was too late already. His desire to pay homage to the Buddha was so strong that Anāthapiṇḍika forgot everything even to have dinner and to do business. He went up the seven storeyed pinnacled hall and lay down on his bed, muttering "The Buddha, the Buddha". He could not fall into deep sleep; he remained half asleep and half awake. Whenever he was awake, he thought of the Buddha. It was still dark. As he reflected on the virtues of the Buddha repeatedly, his mind became calm, concentrated and saturated with joy and the rays of light emanated from his body. Due to these rays of light, he thought that it was dawn and got up three times. When he woke up for the third time, he saw all the doors of the house

were open. So he came down to the ground floor, went out of the house and walked along the main road. When he reached Sivaka, the city gate, he found that it was already open. He went out of the gate and stepped into the cemetery. Rājagaha was a densely populated city. According to the custom of those days dead bodies were left unburied in the cemetery. When Anāthapiṇḍika stumbled over the corpses, he got frightened and the light emanating from his body disappeared. The whole place became pitch dark. The foul smell of the corpses made him more and more frightened and disgusted. Having goose-flesh, Anāthapiṇḍika wanted to return home. Then the guardian deva of Sivaka cemetery encouraged him saying: "Dear friend, the value of one lakh elephants, one lakh horses, one lakh chariots and one lakh damsels is not as valuable as one-sixteenth of a step of a man who goes to the Buddha to pay homage to him. Go on, my friend. It's of great benefit."

When Anāthapiṇḍika heard these words, he was encouraged, thinking that he had some companions. Fear and dread abated and he again reflected on the virtues of the Buddha. On account of this, the darkness disappeared and light rays reappeared. So he went on, and when

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he saw the corpses and heard the sounds of howling dogs he felt frightened again. As soon as he felt frightened the rays of light disappeared and it became dark again.

So, he thought of going back again. At every time he thought of going home he heard the encouraging words of deva Sivaka. And so he went on and on. Finally, at early dawn, he reached Sītavana grove where the Buddha resided.

The Buddha was walking up and down meditating in the open air. When the Buddha saw Anāthapiṇḍika coming, he sat at a suitable place.

At that time, suddenly a strange idea flashed upon Anāthapiṇḍika. He pondered: "I am mostly known as Anāthapiṇḍika because I give food to the destitutes. If he is a true Buddha, he will greet me by calling me by my own name".

When he approached the Buddha, the Buddha greeted him with calm and clear voice; "Come, Sudatta." Anāthapiṇḍika felt pleased and happy. Then he listened to the discourse given by the Buddha. At the end of the discourse, he became a Stream-winner.

He invited the Buddha and his disciples to come to Sāvatti. When he knew that the Buddha accepted his invitation, he went back to Sāvatti and built the splendid monastery known as Jetavana monastery at a great cost. He donated the monastery to the Buddha and became a lay disciple of the Buddha, and a well-known patron of the Buddha Sāsana.

And all these marvellous events began with Anāthapiṇḍika's deeply reflecting on the virtues of the Buddha.

### The Six Attributes of the Dhamma

- Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo
- Sanditthiko
- Akāliko
- Ehipassiko
- Opaneyyiko
- Paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi

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1. The Attribute of Svākkhāta

*Meaning*

Svakkhāto = The Dhamma well expounded by the Bhagavā.

Savākkhāto Dhammo = The ten dhammas comprising four path-consciousnesses, four fruitions, Nibbāna and Tipiṭaka are well expounded by the Bhagavā.

*Explanation*

The dhamma is excellent at the beginning, at the middle and at the end. It is complete in letter and meaning, it is perfectly complete without the need to add or subtract anything; and it fully prescribes the noble practice which leads to a life of Purity.

The three virtues of the Dhamma may be noted thus. The Dhamma has three aspects--learning, practice and realization. When one

listens or learns the dhamma, one will be pleased and delighted as one understands the meaning of the teachings. At the time of listening one will be calmed because one is free from grief, lamentation, pain, distress and despair. For some persons defilements such as greed, clinging, craving and hatred are expelled temporarily. If one is intelligent enough one will be able to grasp the opportunity to strengthen one's faith, to enlarge one's knowledge, and to find something reliable and dependable. This describes how Dhamma is excellent at the beginning.

The Dhamma is not only to be learned as philosophy but it is to be practised in the course of one's daily life. We can realize the virtues of it only when we put it into practice. Even if one moral precept can be observed well the observer of the precept as well as others will be free from danger and will enjoy peace and happiness. As more moral precepts are observed well, the benefits will be greater. Furthermore, if tranquillity meditation and Insight Meditation can be undertaken systematically the defilements can be suppressed for longer periods and greater peace and happiness can be experienced. This describes how the Dhamma is excellent at the middle.

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The more we practise the Dhamma, the more we realize the Truth. Finally, one will be enlightened to the four Ariyā Truths and attain Magga, Phala and Nibbāna. Then one will enjoy the ultimate peace and happiness. This describes how the Dhamma is excellent at the end.

Thus the Dhamma is excellent at the beginning while one listens or studies it; it becomes better at the middle while one practises it and it becomes best at the end when one realizes the four Ariyā Truths and enjoys the ultimate peace and happiness. Thus is the Dhamma endowed with the three virtues.

The Venerable Ānanda once expounded on the attribute of "Svākkhāta". On one occasion the Venerable Ānanda was dwelling at the Ghositārāma monastery in Kosambi. A householder of Ājīvaka sect approached him and asked;

"Venerable Sir, whose dhamma is well expounded; who follow the right practice in this world, and who have done well in this world?"

Then Venerable Ānanda did not give the direct answer, but put a question to the householder; "Certain people teach others to abandon

lust, anger and ignorance. What do you think of their dhamma? Is it well-expounded or not?"

The householder replied that the dhamma was the well expounded one.

The Venerable Ānanda continued, "Well, householder, certain people take up the practice to abandon lust, anger and ignorance. Do they follow the right practice or not?" The householder answered that those people followed the right practice.

The Venerable Ānanda went on asking: "Well, householder, certain people have abandoned lust, anger and ignorance, have cut off their roots and made impossible for a new growth. Have they practised well or not?"

The householder answered that they had practised well. Venerable Ānanda, at last, said that the householder had already answered his questions by himself. Being delighted, the householder replied. "Venerable Sir, you've answered my questions without extolling your own belief or disparaging other's.

## 2. The Attribute of Sandiṭṭhika

### *Meaning*

Sandiṭṭhiko = being seen and realized vividly by oneself, not by hearsay.

Sandiṭṭhiko Dhammo = The Dhamma comprising the four Paths, the four Fruitions and Nibbāna can be seen and realized vividly by oneself, not by hearsay, if one practises it.

### *Explanation*

The Dhamma expounded by the Buddha can be seen and realized by oneself. If one practises it, one would attain the Path, the Fruition and Nibbāna. It is not that kind of Dhamma which has to be accepted by hearsay.

Once one studies and practises the dhamma, one will understand it penetratively according to the extent of one's efforts. At the time of

practising, one will realize the nature of mind and matter. Moreover one will be calmed when one can concentrate one's mind on the nature of mind and body. Therefore one will see how the Dhamma preached by the Buddha is conducive to peace and happiness.

Take the example of making charity, we feel delighted when we see that the donees appreciate our offerings.

Besides, it is evident in this very life that the more one gives away, the more one gains. Similarly, we will gain the benefit of observing the precepts without any breach or stain in the present life. In observing the precepts, as the defilements are prevented from arising, one gains happiness immediately, one is free from all dangers and all one's wishes will be fulfilled.

Another meaning of sandiṭṭhika is that the Doctrine is worth studying and practising to those who want to be free from suffering and to be happy in life. It is obvious that the Buddha's Doctrine is not the kind of doctrine to be approached by mere speculation and conjecture. It is to be followed and practised with conviction and intellect.



### 3. The Attribute of Akālika

#### *Meaning*

Akāliko = Conducive to immediate, good result.

Akāliko dhammo = The Dhamma is the kind of doctrine which is conducive to immediate result to those who practise it.

#### *Explanation*

Akāliko means being liable to bring about immediate result. This attribute specially refers to the arising of Fruition immediately after the arising of the Path-consciousness. This attribute indicates the arising of the four fruitions immediately after the arising of the four Path-consciousnesses. The path consciousness is the cause and fruition is the result. The Path consciousness eliminates the defilements and the fruition cools down the heart burning defilements bringing about perfect tranquillity.

So also one giving alms and observing precepts will have peace and happiness. While

practising meditation, the defilements such as craving, anger and ignorance are eliminated. As one lessens the defilement--Loba, dosa, ignorance, etc. temporarily, one enjoys peace and happiness immediately. Bringing about this immediate result is the attribute of "Akālika".

This attribute guarantees the attainment of Nibbāna, the summum bonum of the Buddhists, in this very life unlike other religions which guarantee the attainment of eternal bliss only after one's death and the final judgement of a Supreme Being.

#### 4. The Attribute of Ehipassika

##### *Meaning*

Ehipassiko

= Worthy of the admiration of those who have practised and seen the dhamma so much so that they will unfailingly invite others to practise and see the dhamma for themselves.

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Ehipassiko Dhammo = Because the Dhamma comprising four Path-consciousnesses, four Fruitions, and Nibbāna exist distinctly in pristine purity like the full moon in the cloudless sky, one should invite others to come and practise the Dhamma so that they can see the Dhamma by themselves.

*Explanation*

The Buddha's doctrine is so distinct, so pure and so perfect that it is worthy of inviting others to study and practise it. The Buddha did not urge people to believe his Teaching blindly. He only invited and urged them to practise his Teaching and see the result for themselves.

When one encounters a wonderful scene, one is not satisfied with having seen it alone; one usually invites one's close friends to see it also. Similarly, when a person achieves the

Path-knowledge and enjoys the wonderful bliss of the Fruition knowledge, he feels so delighted that he wants to invite his beloved ones to practise the Dhamma so that they can enjoy the wonderful bliss also.

The following accounts stated by the Buddha such as that a devoted person can become an Anāgāmi or Arahant within seven days or seven months or at the most seven years if he practises strenuously according to the Dhamma, that if he is far advanced in the fulfilment of perfections, he will attain enlightenment in a half-day; that the practice leading to the elimination of all defilements and the noble persons who are truly liberated from the suffering of saṃsāra exist only in Buddhism. All this testify to the attribute of Ehipassika.

## 5. The Attribute of Opaneyyika

### *Meaning*

Opaneyyiko = worthy of being perpetually borne in mind.

Opaneyyiko Dhammo = The Dhamma comprising the four

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Path-consciousnesses, the four Fruitions and Nibbāna, when realized once in one's mind, can extinguish all the flames of Apāya and Saṁsāra, so one should practise to attain these Supramundane Dhammas even in the situation when one's clothes are on fire or one's hair is in flames. These Supramundane Dhammas are worthy of being perpetually borne in mind.

*Explanation*

No other doctrine can surpass the Buddha's Dhamma in bringing about good results. Only by this Dhamma could one attain the Path, the Fruition and Nibbāna. These dhamma can

terminate all sufferings and lead one to eternal bliss. There are no other doctrines superior to these Dhammas. Therefore, the Buddha always exhorted beings to practise the Dhamma till they realize the Supramundane Dhammas without fail. These Supramundane Dhammas have never arisen in worldlings (Puthujjanas). If they are to arise just once in the mind of a person, that person will never be cast into the four lower abodes. So he should practise the Dhamma in order to attain the Supramundane Dhammas, even if his head is on fire or his breast is impaled with a spear.

The pain caused by the burning hair or the impaling spear lasts only one life whereas the pain caused by the fire and the spear of defilements will last uncountable lives.

So the Buddha advised people to practise the Dhamma immediately in order to eliminate the egoistic wrong view before they try to extinguish the fire on their heads or to remove the spear from their breasts.

All beings are born with demeritorious Dhamma such as greed in their mental makeup. They therefore must endeavour to be free from these demeritorious Dhammas by developing

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generosity, morality, tranquillity and wisdom. These meritorious practices are also worthy of being borne in mind because they enable one to gain the Path, the Fruition and Nibbāna. Those who perpetually practise Insight meditation cannot stop meditating once they have enjoyed the wonderful sensation of peace and happiness. This also demonstrates the attribute of Opaneyyika.

Strictly speaking, this attribute of Opaneyyika applies to Magga, Phala and Nibbāna. The supreme bliss of Nibbāna, being unmatched by any other bliss, should be borne in mind perpetually.

## 6. The Attribute of Paccattam vedittabba

### *Meaning*

Paccattam vedittabbo = can be experienced  
in one's own mind  
at will individually  
by the Ariya.

Viññūhi = noble persons who  
have been enlight-  
ened to the four  
Ariyā Truths.

Paccattam veditabbo viññūhi = The Dhamma comprising Magga, Phala and Nibbāna can be experienced in one's own mind at will individually through Fruition consciousness by the noble persons who have been enlightened to the four Ariyā Truths.

### *Explanation*

An ariya can reflect now he has reached the stages of magga and phala by his retrospective knowledge (Paccavekkhanāñāṇa). He can also enjoy the bliss of Nibbāna by dwelling in the attainment of Fruition (Phalasangāmi). These Path, Fruition and Nibbāna are realised and experienced by those who have already attained them. They cannot be shared with others. It is impossible for a pupil to enjoy the bliss of the attainment of Fruition of his teacher. Nor can he realize the Nibbāna that his teacher has attained.



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Therefore, the Dhamma is not that kind of doctrine which claims that a person can be salvaged by a Creator. The Dhamma does not encourage a person to rely on others for his own liberation. One must rely on one's own Dhamma which one attains by one's own practice. That Dhamma will bear witness how blissful it is. Thus, the Dhamma is reasonable, practical and worthy of reliance.

Charity (dāna), morality (sīla) and meditation (bhāvanā) may be taken to be included in this attribute of paccattaṃ veditabba. According to the Law of Kamma, one shall enjoy the fruits of one's good deeds. If one wishes to enjoy the benefits of charity, morality and meditation, one should practise them oneself.

Only then one will realize by oneself how delightfulness, happiness, peace and tranquillity arise due to the purity of the mind freed from greed, hatred, delusion and other defilements. The bliss of Nibbāna cannot be understood by those who have never attained it. It can be understood only by noble persons or ariyas who are enlightened to the four Ariyā Truths. The first ariyā, that is Sotāpanna, will enjoy the bliss of Nibbāna whenever he wishes with his Sotāpatti Fruition consciousness; the second ariyā, that is

Sakadāgāmi, will enjoy the bliss of Nibbāna whenever he wishes with his Sakadāgāmi Fruition consciousness, etc. This is the way how the Dhamma is experienced by each individual according to his own capacity.

### Stories Demonstrating the Attributes of the Dhamma

#### *Story of Dhāmmika, the lay disciple*

At Sāvattī, there were five hundred virtuous lay disciples, each of whom had a following of five hundred lay disciples. The leader of the lay disciples had seven sons and seven daughters. Each of them used to offer rice-gruel and food by tickets, fortnightly food, food by invitation, food on the fasting day, food for guest bhikkhus and offerings for bhikkhus who observed the rains-retreat period. All the children followed the example of their father in the performance of good deeds. Thus, the virtuous lay disciple with his wife and fourteen children habitually offered sixteen units of rice-gruel by tickets and so on. In this way, the lay disciple with his wife and children became virtuous, good in conduct and devoted to charity.

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Later he fell ill and his vitality was on the decline. Intent on listening to a religious discourse, he sent a request to the Buddha to depute eight or sixteen bhikkhus. The Buddha did so. The bhikkhus came and sat round his bed on the specified seats. He told them. "Revered Sirs, as I am weak in strength it is difficult for me to go and see you. Would you please recite a sutta to me?" Thereupon the bhikkhus asked, "Well devotee, which sutta would you like to listen to?" He mentioned the Satipaṭṭhāna which he said was the sutta which had never been neglected by any of the Buddhas. The Bhikkhus recited it beginning with "O bhikkhus, this is the one and the only path for the purification of the minds of beings."

At that instant, from six celestial realms there descended six chariots, each measuring one hundred and fifty yojanas, and each yoked with one thousand horses and adorned with all kinds of decoration. Said each of the deities from those chariots, 'we will take you to our celestial abode; and added, "O man, just as one takes a gold vessel after the clay pot is broken, take this rebirth so that you may enjoy yourself in our celestial world! Not liking to be interrupted in the hearing of the religious discourse, the

lay-devotee said, "Please wait awhile, please wait awhile." The bhikkhu thought that he was speaking to them and kept silent. Thereupon, his sons and daughters cried aloud and said, "Formerly our father was never satisfied with listening to a religious discourse, but now after sending for the bhikkhus and requesting them to recite, he himself is stopping them. After all, there is no one who is not afraid of death. Saying this is not the proper time", and the bhikkhus rose and left the place.

After a short while the lay disciple regained consciousness and asked his sons why they were weeping. They replied: 'Father, you sent for the bhikkhus and while listening to a religious discourse, you yourself stopped them. We cried as we thought that there was no one who was not afraid of death'. He enquired, 'But where are the revered bhikkhus?' They answered. 'The bhikkhus said, "It is not the proper time", rose up and left! He told them: 'My children, I was not talking to the revered ones'. They asked, "Then, with whom were you speaking, father?" "From six heavenly worlds the deities brought six decorated chariots, and while remaining in the air they called out to me saying "Come and enjoy yourself in our

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celestial world", and with them I was speaking." Then being asked, 'Father, where are the chariots? We do not see them', he replied: 'Will you get me a garland of flowers?' "Yes, Father". "Which celestial world is delightful?" "Father, the Tusita celestial world, the abode of all the Bodhisattas and the parents of the Buddhas, is delightful'. He said: 'Well then, throw the garland saying "Let this hang on the chariot that has come from the Tusita celestial realm." They did so. It struck to the pole of the chariot and remained hanging in the air. That only the people saw, but not the chariot. The lay disciple asked "Do you see the garland?" and being answered in the affirmative he said. "This garland is hanging on the chariot which has come from the Tusitā celestial world. Be not worried. If you wish to be reborn in the same place with me, do meritorious deeds in the same way as I have done". So saying, he passed away and was seated in the chariot.

When the bhikkhus reached the monastery, the Buddha asked them, "Bhikkhus, did the lay disciple listen to the religious discourse?" They replied: "Yes, Venerable Sir, but he interrupted us in the middle of the discourse saying, "Please wait." Then his children cried aloud and we

saying "This is not the proper time," got up from our seats and left the place." "Bhikkhus, he was not talking to you; but from six celestial realms came the deities bringing six decorated chariots and called the lay disciple to them; not wishing to interrupt the discourse, he was speaking to them". "Is it so, Venerable Sir?" "Yes, bhikkhus." Being questioned by the bhikkhus as to where he was reborn, the Buddha replied. "Venerable Sir, having enjoyed himself here in this world amidst his kinsmen, now again immediately after passing away is he reborn in the realm of joy?" "True, bhikkhus, virtuous people, be they householders or recluses, rejoice everywhere". So saying, the Buddha uttered this stanza;

Idha modati pecca modati

Katapunno ubhayattha modati,

So modati so pamodati

disvā kammavisuddhim attano

*Dhammapada, V. 16.*

"A person who has done meritorious deeds rejoices here in this world as well as in the next. He rejoices in both places. He rejoices, and rejoices all the more observing the purity of his own deeds."

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Therein, *katapunno* means a person who performs various kinds of meritorious deeds. Reflecting "Verily, I have not done any evil, on the other hand I have done good", he enjoys himself in this life on account of his good deeds and after death he rejoices as a result of the good deeds he has done. Thus, indeed, he enjoys in both worlds. Reflecting on the purity of his own deeds (*kammavisuddhi*) the accomplishment of his meritorious action, the lay disciple rejoices here in this existence before his death, and after passing away also he rejoices all the more indeed in the next existence.

After the verse was spoken, many persons became Stream-winners and so on. The religious discourse became beneficial to the multitude.

*The Story of Frog Deva*

While the Bhagavā was teaching the Dhamma to the inhabitants of the city of Campā on the bank of the Gaggarā Lake, it seems, a frog came to be strongly attracted by the clear and mellow voice of the Buddha as he was teaching the Dhamma. A cowherd who was standing leaning on a stick inadvertently put his stick on

the frog's head and crushed it. The frog died and was straightaway reborn in a gilded divine palace twelve leagues broad in the Tāvātimsā realm. He found himself there, as if waking up from sleep, amidst a host of celestial nymphs, and he exclaimed "So I have actually been reborn here. What deed did I do?" When he sought for the reason, he found it was no other than his appreciation of the voice of the Buddha. He went at once to the Bhagavā and paid homage at his feet. Though the Bhagavā knew about it, he asked him.

"Who now pays homage at my feet,

'Shining with glory of success;

'Illuminating all around

'With beauty so outstanding?

'In my last life I was a frog.

'The waters of a pond my home;

'A cowherd's crook ended my life,

'While listening to your Dhamma.'

The Bhagavā taught him the Dhamma whereupon eighty-four thousand creatures gained penetration to the Dhamma. (Vimānavatthu)



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The stories of Subrahmā and Paṭācārā also prove the attributes of the Dhamma. (Subrahma Samyutta)

Subrahma, a devaputta of Tāvatisā, one day went to the Nandana Park with one thousand nymphs. Five hundred of them sat with him under the Pāricchattaka-tree, while the others climbed the tree, from which they threw garlands and sang songs. Suddenly, all of them vanished and were born in avīci niraya. Subrahma, discovering their destiny and investigating his own, found that he would also be reborn in avīci niraya after seven days. Full of grief, he sought the Buddha for consolation. The Buddha told him that the only path out of sorrow is by way of wisdom, renunciation and restraint. At the end of the Buddha's discourse he became a Stream-winner.

The above-mentioned stories illustrate some examples of the attributes of the Dhamma. They prove that the Dhamma brings immediate good result at the instant of hearing. Where can we find the Dhamma so practical, so beneficial and so reasonable other than Buddhism?

### *Story of Five-hundred Bats*

In the time of Kassapa Buddha, five hundred bats lived in a cave. Two bhikkhus used to walk to and fro inside the cave reciting the Abhidhamma Pāḷi. The bats did not know what are meritorious and demeritorious deeds. But they apprehended the sign in the voice of the two monks and listened to the recitation of the Dhamma attentively. For this merit, they became devas when they died.

In the life-time of Gotama Buddha, they became disciples of the Venerable Sāriputta. As the result of their past merit they were the first to listen to Abhidhamma Piṭaka and became the bearers of Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

The stories of Subrahma and Paṭācārā also prove the Attributes of the Dhamma. Deva Subrahma was awfully frightened when he knew that his five hundred female-attendants were cast into avīci niraya and that he himself would be thrown into the same niraya. He went to the Buddha and listened to the dhamma attentively. Paṭācārī who was almost insane because of the worries she experienced at the death of her husband and her sons also approached the Buddha. The grief and lamentation of these two

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persons were dispelled when they met the Buddha and listened to his teaching. While listening they contemplated the discourse and thus they became free from all defilements.

The above mentioned stories provide some examples of the attributes of the Dhamma. They prove that the Dhamma brings immediate good result at the instant of hearing. Where can we find the Dhamma so practical and so beneficial other than Buddhism?

### Nine Supreme Attributes of the Saṅgha

1. Suppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho
2. Ujuppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho
3. Nāyappaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho
4. Sāmicippaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaśaṅgho  
Yadidaṃ cattāri purisayugāni  
aṭṭhapurisa-puggalā, esa bhagavato  
sāvakaśaṅgho
5. Āhuneyyo
6. Pāhuneyyo
7. Dakkhineyyo
8. Añjali karaṇīyo
9. Anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassa.

## 1. The Attribute of Suppaṭipanna

### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā practise well the threefold training of morality, concentration and wisdom.

### *Explanation*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā endeavour to eradicate ignorance, lust and anger, and so they are called the well-practised noble bhikkhus.

As they are well taught by the incomparable teacher of men and devas, they are endowed with the noble practice.

Once the Buddha said: "Ānanda, undertake the practice regarding me as your friend; don't practise regarding me as your enemy. Then you'll be prosperous and happy throughout your life."

Anyone who abides by the teaching and the disciplines of the Buddha is the one who regards him as a friend. On the other hand, anyone who does not follow his teachings and disciplines is the one who regards him as an

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enemy. Therefore, the Ariya disciples who follow the Buddha's instructions strictly and strenuously at the risk of their lives are endowed with the virtue of Suppaṭipanna.

### 2. The Attribute of Ujuppaṭipanna

#### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā undertake the practice of the threefold training of morality, concentration and wisdom honestly and unswervingly.

#### *Explanation*

Ujuppaṭipanna means the one who follows the straight way but not the crooked or wrong way; it also means the one who practises honestly without any deceit and pretension.

The Ariya disciples of the Buddha avoid the two extremes, namely, self-indulgence and self-mortification. They take the straight way called the middle way, become enlightened and are revered by people.

Moreover, the noble Saṃghas do not conceal their faults nor pretend to be innocent

(māyā); neither do they pretend to possess the virtue which they do not really possess (Sāthēyya). They dedicate their lives to the realization of the truth and practise very honestly and righteously. As they are free from deceit and pretension while they are following the middle path, they will be certainly very honest and sincere when they become Ariyas.

### 3. The Attribute of Nāyappaṭipanna

#### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā undertake the practice of the threefold training of morality, concentration and wisdom with the sole intention of realizing Nibbāna.

#### *Explanation*

The noble disciples of the Buddha abandon all worldly happiness and strive solely for the realization of Nibbāna. They long for nothing but the bliss of Nibbāna.

Those who keep aside the pursuit of Nibbāna and for the sake of worldly happiness, strive for worldly gains and fame through improper means, will induce deterioration of morality,

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concentration and wisdom. Because of this improper conduct, the Sāsana is also debased. The path to Nibbāna is quite the opposite of the path to worldly happiness.

The disciples who dedicate themselves to the realization of Nibbāna - the ultimate goal of Buddhism - understand that their goal will not materialize without the threefold training of morality, concentration and wisdom and so never let their practices be violated. They make every endeavour to achieve their goal. Therefore, the Ariya Saṅgha, who have realized Nibbāna as they have ardently wished for, are endowed with the attribute of Nāyappaṭipanna.

### 4. The Attribute of Sāmicippaṭipanna

#### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā undertake the noble practice so that they will be worthy of veneration, reverence and devotion by men, devas and brahmas.

#### *Explanation*

The Ariyā saṅghas practise well so that they deserve the respect, the donation of their devotees.

Lay devotees offer food, robes, monastic dwellings, medicines and medicinal requisites to the Saṃgha, generously. They raise their hands and devotion to the Saṃgha, welcome the Saṃgha and perform other acts of veneration to the Saṃgha. The saṃgha must also practise well to be worthy of such offerings and veneration. The more virtuous the receiver, the more benefits the giver gains. Thus, the Ariya Saṃgha always try to uphold their morality and practice so that their devotees will gain much benefit.

The Buddha has pointed out to the Saṃgha that the way to make use of the offerings of the devotees beneficially without waste is to emancipate themselves from defilements by cultivating loving-kindness and practising Insight-meditation. This implies that morality alone cannot make the benefit of offering alms great. A bhikkhu who lacks in morality is just wasting the offerings of the devotees.

Thus the Ariya Saṃghas who possess morality, concentration and wisdom so that they are worthy of the respect, the devotion and the service of the lay disciple, are endowed with the attribute of Sāmicippaṭipanna.

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## 5. The Attribute of Āhuneyya

### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagava are worthy of receiving offerings brought even from afar.

### *Explanation*

The Ariya Saṅghas, being well endowed with morality, concentration and wisdom, are worthy of receiving the offerings brought even from afar. The devotees who make such offerings will gain much benefit.

In other words, as they are endowed with the four attributes mentioned earlier, they can help their devotees to gain great benefit from their offering and veneration to the Ariya Saṅgha. That is why they are worthy of the offerings brought even from afar.

The scent of flowers such as sandalwood, Spanish jasmine, periwinkle and blue lotus spreads only around them. The reputation of the virtues of Ariya Saṅgha spreads throughout the whole world and up to the celestial realms. So not only human beings but also devas and brahmas

come and worship these virtuous Saṃghas. For example, Sakka and his wife, Sūjā, assuming the form of an old poor couple, came and offered alms-food to the Venerable Mahākassapa.

On a fullmoon night, the Buddha and his disciples were on a certain plain. While sitting amongst his disciples, the Buddha looked at them and was gratified to see that no immoral persons were included among his disciples and that they were all virtuous persons. Then he said, "This assembly of Ariya Saṃgha will enable their devotees to gain much benefit from their offerings to the Saṃgha. It is very difficult for worldlings to come across such an assembly of Ariyā Saṃgha. The people even from very far-away places should come and make a devotional offering to them.

## 6. The Attribute of Pāhuneyya

### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā are worthy of receiving offerings specially set aside for guests.

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*Explanation*

We usually set aside choice items of food and drinks for our guests. The Ariya Saṅghas are worthy of receiving such choice food set aside for guests.

We shall gain little benefit for treating our worldly guests with good food and drinks. But we can benefit much from offering food to the Ariyā Saṅgha. In fact, the merits received from offering the four requisites to the Ariyā Saṅgha are immeasurable. The more virtuous the Saṅghas, the more merit we gain.

Moreover, we can come across ordinary, (i.e, laymen) guests any time whereas we can come across the Saṅgha only in the Buddha's time. So we can venerate the Saṅgha only when a Buddha appears in the world. Therefore, it is very hard to meet the Ariyā Saṅghas who are special guests in Saṃsāra. The ordinary human beings cannot be compared with the Ariyā Saṅgha in morality and other virtues. There are no guests as noble as the Ariyā Saṅgha in this world. As we should offer the special offerings to the noble disciples of the Bhagavā, they are said to be endowed with the attribute of Pāhuneyya.

## 7. The Attribute of Dakkhiṇeyya

### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā are worthy of receiving offerings donated for well-being in future existences.

### *Explanation*

Dakkhiṇa means the offering donated with the belief that it conveys good results in future lives. The offering dedicated to persons who have passed away is also called dakkhiṇa.

The Saṅgha who can make the benefits of such offering as great as expected by the donors are known as dakkhiṇeyya. It means that Saṅghas can fulfil the wish of the donors to enjoy happiness and prosperity in this life as well as in future lives. As the persons without morality and other virtues cannot offer the benefits desired by the donors, they are not worthy of receiving such an offering called dakkhiṇa. On the other hand, the Ariyā Saṅghas are endowed with morality and other virtues and so they can fulfil the wish of the donors to receive great benefits from their offerings to the Saṅgha. Thus they are said to be endowed with the attribute of Dakkhiṇeyya.

## 8. The Attribute of Añjalikaraṇīya

### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā are worthy of receiving the obeisance of the whole world.

### *Explanation*

The Buddha's disciples practise the three-fold training of morality, concentration and wisdom. Immense good results can be gained by paying obeisance to the Ariyā Saṃgha.

People acquire different official positions, qualifications and wisdom on account of the difference in their abilities and efforts. As a rule, people of inferior positions, qualifications and wisdom show respect and regard to those who are superior. Also young people pay respect to old people. Even when the respectable persons pass away, the rest pay respect to their photographs or statues. If we look at the formation of the Universe, the smaller planets have to obey the gravitational force of larger planets. Thus those, who say without the knowledge of these natural laws that "Man needs not show respect to man" are really very stupid.

We respect the elders and the Saṃghas because they possess the virtues which should be respected. Of the many virtues of the Saṃgha, even the single virtue of morality excels the virtues of all worldlings. So the Saṃgha should be respected by the whole world even for that single virtue of morality. To point out just in brief the morality of the Saṃgha:-

1. In the rules and regulations promulgated by the Buddha, the Saṃghas have to abide by 227 disciplinary rules in brief, and these rules amount to 99,805,036,000 rules in detail. (Pātimokkhasaṃvara-sīla).
2. They control the faculties of six senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind so that defilements do not arise in these faculties. (Indriya saṃvara-sīla)
3. They earn their living according to the disciplinary rules prescribed by the Buddha. (Ājivapārisuddhi-sīla)
4. They make use of alms-food, robes, monastery, medicines and medicinal requisites with proper contemplation so that defilements do not arise (Paccaya-sannissita-sīla) in them.

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Only when they properly observe these four kinds of morality, they are said to be established in Catupārisuddhi-sīla, and only then can they develop concentration and wisdom.

We can see from the above descriptions that how difficult it is for the saṃghas to fulfil even the single virtue of morality. There also are certain practices and special training in morality Dhutinga which enhance catupārisuddhi-sīla. Thus they are unmatched by anyone in the world in respect of morality, they are truly noble and virtuous. The Saṃgha strive to develop the virtues of morality, concentration and wisdom not only for their benefits but also for the welfare of the whole world by their attributes of Āhuneyya, Pāhuneyya, Dakkhiṇeyya and Añjalikaraṇīya.

At the time of the Buddha a child, named Dīgāvu, who had a life-span of only seven days managed to live up to one hundred and twenty years because he had the chance of paying homage to the Buddha and the Ariyā Saṃgha who were endowed with morality, concentration and wisdom.

After trying to realize the attributes of the Saṃgha and the benefits of paying homage to

the Saṅgha, one should not respect them lightly, but one should pay obeisance to them seriously with fivefold manner of contact, when one remains sitting, and with joined palms raised to the forehead, bending the body slightly forward, when one remains standing. The Ariya Saṅgha are thus endowed with the attribute of Añjalikaraṇiya.

### 9. The Attribute of Anuttaramī Puññakhettaṃ Lokassa

#### *Meaning*

The noble disciples of the Bhagavā are the incomparably fertile field for all to sow the seeds of merits.

#### *Explanation*

The devotees of every religion perform the act of charity by giving alms. But, only the offering to noble persons, who are endowed with morality, bear great benefits.

Giving out of charity is like sowing seeds. If we sow our seeds in fertile field, we shall reap a good harvest. Similarly, if we make offerings to virtuous and noble persons we shall



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gain great merit. The Ariyā Saṃgha are like the incomparable fertile field which can be utilized by the whole world. What we need is to choose good seeds. The better the seed, the greater the harvest. The resultant merit will be superb if one donates to Ariya Saṃgha out of conviction, keen volition and wisdom. Thus, the ariya Saṃgha are the unique fertile field for all to sow the seeds of merit. So they are endowed with the attribute of Anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ Lokassa.

The nine attributes mentioned above are those of the Ariya Saṃghas. However, the worldling-bhikkhus (samuti-saṃghas) are striving to become Ariya-Saṃgha by undertaking the trainings in morality (Catupārisuddhi-Sīla), concentration and wisdom. So the worldling-bhikkhus are also called "Saṃgha". They resemble the Ariya-Saṃgha in conduct (morality) and in the clarity of view (sammā ditṭhi). They differ from the Ariya Saṃgha only in the degree of perfection. As they are in close relationship with one another, they are also taken as the disciples of the Buddha. When we pay obeisance to the Saṃghas, we should pay homage only to the nine attributes of the Ariya-Saṃgha, without having any regard whether they are worldling-bhikkhus or Ariya-Saṃghas.

### A Story Demonstrating *the Attributes of the Saṃgha*

We perform charity in the hope of getting merit in our present and future lives. To gain benefit from our act of charity, the following three factors are essential.

- (a) the donor must be motivated by keen volition, at the three stages of the good deed.
- (b) the offertories must be obtained by fair means, and
- (c) the donee must be one endowed with good morality and practice.

Even though the first two factors are fulfilled, if the third factor is lacking, the donor will not get as much benefit as he expects.

The story of a woeful ghost called Cūlaseṭṭhi is a good example. It took place during the reign of Ajātasattu. The king could not sleep because of his heinous deed of killing his father. One night, as he was strolling on the verandah, he saw a woeful ghost (peta) traveling in the sky. The ghost was bony and naked. He had his head shaved. Thus the king, taking him to be a bhikkhu asked, "Oh bhikkhu, where

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are you going? Why are you travelling in the dead of night? Is there anything I can do for you?"

The peta replied, "Your Majesty, I was a rich man of Bārāṇasī in my previous life. I did not believe in the three Sacred Gem, nor did I do any good deed. I enjoyed worldly pleasures. When I died, I was reborn as a peta. I am only skin and bone as I have nothing to eat. I am not a bhikkhu as you think. I'm on my way to Andhakavinda where Anulā, my daughter in my previous life, lives. She is going to give a feast dedicating to her parents and grand parents and she has invited me. Please allow me to go."

Ajātasattu felt sorry to hear the peta's story. So he asked the latter to drop in on his return from his daughter. He also promised to help the peta.

When the peta came to his daughter's house, he found that she was offering a great feast to the brahmins, the leaders of the religious sect, whom her ancestors had been worshipping. Petas cannot receive food and clothing offered by human beings. Only when they can rejoice in others' merits, can they receive food and clothing. Again in rejoicing in the merits, they can

only get the merits bestowed by persons who have offered food and clothing to noble persons endowed with good morality and practice.

Thus the peta, Cūlaseṭṭhi, though he went there with great expectation, did not gain any merit, nor did he have anything to eat or drink; so he had to return in vain. On his way back, he dropped in at Ajātasattu's palace and said, "Your Majesty, there was no person of good morality in the feast offered by my daughter. As only immoral persons have enjoyed the feast, I did not gain any benefit from my daughter's offering. The king encouraged him, "Don't worry, my friend. I'll help you. What can I do for you.?"

"Your Majesty, would you please donate alms-food, drinks and robes to the Buddha or his disciples on behalf of me and share the merit with me," requested the peta. The king offered to the Saṅgha as the peta requested. The peta appreciated the merit of the king by saying "Well done." For this meritorious deed, he was immediately reborn as a celestial deva. He appeared before the king and said words of praise to the attribute of "Anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ Lokassa" of the Saṅgha. He also thanked the king and added, "Your Majesty, you can

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see how great is the benefit of rejoicing in the merit gained by offering to the Saṅgha. Now I have no equal. I can get whatever I want, and I am enjoying great happiness. Please allow me to go to the celestial abode now."

When the Buddha learnt about the event through his disciples, he delivered a discourse on "Culasetṭhi peta" in confirmation of the event and also in praise of the attributes of the Saṅgha.

Similarly by reading the peta stories mentioned in Khuddaka-nikāya, one can understand how greedy persons, jealous persons, persons who bear false witness, bribe takers, persons who pass judgement unfairly, and other wrongdoers have to suffer greatly for their evil deeds. Only in the Teaching of the Buddha, is there a way to free them instantly from these impoverished conditions. No other god or creator or learned person, except the Saṅgha endowed with Dakkhineyya, Anuttaraṃ puññakkhetanā Lokkassa" can set them free from those sufferings.

In fact, the peta stories furnish evidence as to how great the benefit of offering to the

Buddha and his disciples is. Therefore the people of Sāvatti offered the four requisites to the Buddha and the Saṅgha in dedication to their late parents and relatives for many months at the time that the Buddha preached the discourse on offerings dedicated to the dead.

At that time, even those who did not believe in Buddhism gained the merit of such offering. At present, those who become petas after death communicate through dreams to their living relatives as their relatives are frightened or possessed by them, so that their relatives make offerings to the Saṅgha and share the merit with them. There are many instances in which the petas are freed from their miserable existences because their relatives, including non-Buddhists, comply with their requests.

The virtues of the Saṅgha and Sāsana are so great that even the dead can enjoy the benefits accruing from offerings to the Saṅgha and to the Sāsana. Indeed the virtues of the Triple Gem are so profound that they are beyond description.

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*How to Reflect on the  
Attributes of the Triple Gem*

There are three compulsory tasks to perform daily for every good Buddhist. These tasks are-

1. Dāna = charity
2. Sīla = morality
3. Bhāvanā = meditation

Many good Buddhists usually perform acts of charity and morality. But they seldom undertake the practice of meditation. All good Buddhists ought to perform regularly the above three tasks. The goal of all good Buddhists is to attain Nibbāna. The practice of meditation is absolutely essential in the training for achieving this noble goal. Thus one should not be contented only with the performing acts of charity and morality, but should meditate regularly.

In the practice of meditation, there are two kinds — tranquillity meditation (samatha bhāvanā), and insight meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā). Reflecting repeatedly on the attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha means one is undertaking the tranquillity meditation.

Before undertaking the meditation on the attributes, one must learn by heart and understand thoroughly each Pāḷi word and its meaning describing the respective attributes. After that one should follow the procedure prescribed for meditation.

1. Selecting the place for meditation - The practice of meditation (reflection on the attributes) is a mental practice. So, the place for meditation should be an isolated, quiet place free from environmental disturbances.
2. Observing the moral precepts - Before reflection on the virtues one must observe the moral precepts. One can observe either five precepts or eight precepts or ten precepts. One must maintain one's precepts in pristine purity without



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any breach of the precepts.

3. Dedicating oneself to the Buddha - After observing the moral precepts, one must dedicate oneself to the Buddha by saying the Pāli words or their meanings as follows: "Imā haṃ bhagavā attabhāvaṃ tumhākaṃ pariccajāmi", Venerable sir, I relinquish this my person to you during my practice of meditation."

4. Practising meditation - While practising the meditation, one may sit cross-legged or in any other decent convenient posture. In order to be able to meditate for a long time, one should sit upright and be relaxed.

5. Reflecting on the virtues - One may reflect on either one attribute or all the nine attributes of the Buddha from Arahant to Bhagavā. One should not express the attributes verbally. One must reflect mentally on the attributes repeatedly without allowing the mind to wander away to any other object.

In the treatise of Nibbānamaggadīpanī it is stated that one must reflect on and cultivate the attributes of the Buddha by reciting mentally: 'Arahant, Arahant ...' visualising the real living Buddha sitting cross-legged on the golden throne at the foot of the Bodhi tree. In reflecting on the attribute 'Arahant' there are three ways to recite it such as 'Arahant, A-rahant, Ara-hant'. But one should reflect just on one way which one prefers in order to prevent distraction of the mind. In the same way, one must reflect as much as possible on only a single meaning of one's choice when reflecting on other attribute of the Buddha.

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Thus, while one is reflecting repeatedly on a particular attribute, there is no chance for lust (Rāgā), anger (Dosa) and ignorance (Moha) to arise in one's mind. His reflective mind focusses directly, on the attribute of the Buddha. Since his mind is free from sloth, torpor, skeptical doubt and hindrances, it remains absorbed in the attribute. Moreover, the initial application of the mind (vitakka) and sustained application of the mind (vicāra) will arise as one keeps the mind reflecting and pondering on the attribute repeatedly.

In the mind of one who is reflecting on the attributes of the Buddha repeatedly the delightful satisfaction or rapture (pīti) and serenity (passaddhi) will gain in strength gradually so that his mind and body become serene, producing bliss and happiness in one's whole self. Again the serenity and happiness in mind and body give rise to concentration, focussing his mind on the attribute of the Buddha.

One should reflect repeatedly on only one attribute before one attains steadfast concentration, for, only then, one's mind becomes tranquil and the desired concentration is attained easily.

Although the five jhāna-factors, namely, initial application of the mind (vitakka), sustained

application of the mind (vicāra), delightful satisfaction or rapture (pīti), bliss or happiness (sukha) and one-pointedness of the mind (ekaggatā) arise simultaneously by reflecting on the attributes of the Buddha, they cannot be developed to the first jhāna level as the concentration is not strong enough to give rise to ecstatic absorption due to the sublimity and profundity of the attribute of the Buddha. As the concentration can be developed only to the proximity of jhāna concentration, it is called proximate concentration (Upacāra-Sammādhi).

By achieving one of this proximate concentration, one can undertake insight meditation that enables one to attain the four Path-Consciousnesses step by step.

### *The Benefits of Reflection on the Attributes of the Buddha*

Although only the proximate concentration is attained by reflecting on the attribute of the Buddha (Buddhānussati), one should not think little of it.

- Even the rapture or delightful satisfaction (pīti) acquired by Buddhānussati is

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superior to the luxuries of the Universal Monarch.

- Of the forty subjects for tranquillity meditation, the meditation upon the attributes of the Buddha is the one that can fulfil every wish of the meditator.
- The practice of meditation upon the attributes of the Buddha (Buddhānussati bhāvanā) is the most powerful and effective force in developing mindfulness (sati), wisdom (paññā), conviction (saddhā), and other virtues.
- One, who reflects on the attributes of the Buddha being free from defilements, and the Buddha's special qualities being present in him, he becomes worthy of veneration just like a shrine or a perfumed chamber and he is one respected by many.
- One, who reflects on the attributes of the Buddha feels as if he were living together with the Buddha. So he has moral fear and moral dread to commit evil, both bodily and verbally.

In conclusion, in the whole world, only the Buddha is the incomparable One having all

supreme attributes and the ability to overcome all kinds of danger. For this reason, the Buddha is venerated by the whole world. So, the benefits to be enjoyed by the person who reflects on the attributes of the Buddha are innumerable.

Therefore, every meditator should practise the reflection on the attributes, as a basic foundation before performing other kinds of meditation. In addition to the reflection on the attribute, one should also undertake:

meditation on loving kindness;

meditation on repulsiveness of the body,

meditation on death.

The above four subjects of meditation are to be practised first by all meditators before performing insight meditation. These subjects of meditation are called four Caturārakkha dhammas. It means four guardians, guarding one like great walls on four sides.

Therefore everyone, young and old, who wants to gain peace, happiness and great merit, should practise the reflection on the virtues of the Buddha.

## Taking Refuge in the Three Gems

### *Various Kinds of Devotional Refuges(Saraṇa)*

Since the beginning of the world, human beings have been looking for various devotional refuges because they were frightened by great fires, great floods, rumbling of the earth, earthquakes, thunders, diseases and other dangers. When they found enormous trees, forests, mountains they took them as their devotional refuges. Again, when they found powerful natural forces such as roaring river, wide seas and oceans, they worshipped them out of fear.

Later on, they worshipped mighty wild animals such as lions, leopards, tigers, horses and dragon-snakes. From worshipping such visible objects, they looked for some more powerful object of veneration, and so they worshipped the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars and divinities. Then they worshipped the guardian spirits of forests, mountains, rivers, creeks, seas, oceans, fire, water and wind. They also worshipped various kinds of deities such as god of glory, god of love, god of providence and god of destruction. These spirits and deities are created by their own imagination.

They celebrated various seasonal festivities in veneration of the dedication to spirits and deities. They offer and oblate food, drinks, flowers, cloth, scents. Then they supplicate, invoke, pray and worship the deities. This practice develops to incantation, recitation and chanting in the form of religious rites and rituals.

When religion, culture and philosophy were developed, they began to believe in a Supreme Creator, a god of providence and a Supreme Destroyer, and so they take refuge in them. This practice gives rise to the Doctrine of Trinities. The devotees devote themselves submissively to the trinitarian Divinities by sacrificing animate as well as inanimate offertories.

So the devotees begin to sacrifice horse, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and even human beings. Some people even sacrifice their own sons, their own wives and their own lives to the Supreme Deities.

Thinking that the deities are superior to human beings, and they dwell in the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars and in heavenly gardens, the devotees desire to be born there after death.



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They upgraded their refuges gradually from material things to spiritual things, from spiritual things to eternity, from the earth to the heaven. These are belief of ancient beings looking for their refuge based on their fear.

Such imaginary refuges are not real refuges which can yield perfect security and which can ward off all dangers and all suffering that the devotees are facing at present and will be facing in the future. The Buddha has expounded comprehensively the development of worship in various stages and pointed out that the real refuge for all beings are only the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha - the Three Gems. Only this form of taking refuge in the Three Gems can certainly save all beings from dangers.

### *The Meaning of Saraṇa*

Relating to the act of taking refuge, it is necessary to understand the word "Saraṇa" is generally known as "refuge" which should be borne in mind for ever. The original meaning of the word Saraṇa is killing, eradicating, destroying all fears, all dangers and all sufferings.

"Saraṇa" means bringing happiness and welfare by protecting one from all dangers. It is

generally rendered as protector, or refuge. Therefore the complete meaning of the word saraṇa may be given as follows;

"Saraṇa means the noblest refuge because it can bring welfare and protect one from all dangers." Again, it should be noted that the Three Gems — the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha are also our refuges (that gives us protection).

- The Buddha admonished all beings to avoid evil deeds and to do what is good by showing us the principles of Cause and Effect, he also showed us how the Dhamma protects us from all dangers and gives peace and happiness to all beings. Therefore, the Buddha is the real and noble refuge.
- To one who wanders in the round of Saṃsāra, the Dhamma can bring alleviation and liberation from all fears and all dangers to one who follows the teachings of the Buddha, by observing the five precepts, etc. Therefore, the Dhamma is the real and noble refuge.
- The Saṅgha preaches the teachings of the Buddha (on behalf of the Buddha)

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for the welfare of all beings. He himself practises according to the Dhamma as an example to his lay disciples. Therefore, the Saṅgha is the real and noble refuge (saraṇa).

There is no other refuge in this world like the Three Gems that can protect and save all beings from all dangers. Therefore, only the noble Three Gems are the supreme refuge for all beings.

### *The Meaning of Saraṇagamaṇa*

'Saraṇa' means "refuge or shelter" and "gamaṇa" means "believe in or go and take refuge in. Thus 'Saraṇagamaṇa' means to go and take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha with clear comprehension, predominated by unshakable conviction and wisdom.

For taking refuge in the Triple Gem, one's mind should be perfectly clear, i.e. free from the wrong view (diṭṭhi), sceptical doubt (vicikacchā) delusion in the virtues of the Triple Gem (Saṃmoha) and misbelief (asaddhiya). Furthermore, one must believe firmly that "the Triple Gem" is the real refuge which can ward off all kinds

of dangers including the danger of being reborn in the miserable realms.

Some worldling and children take refuge in the Triple Gem with a clear comprehension but have no knowledge of Kamma and its result. This is called *Nāṇavipayutta Saraṇagamaṇa* in the Pāḷi Texts. On the other hand, the ariyas and learned worldlings takes refuge in the Triple Gem with clear comprehension accompanied by the knowledge of Kamma and its result. This is called *Nāṇasamṗayutta Saraṇagamana* in the Pāḷi Texts.

### *Professing to be a Buddhist*

Taking refuge in the Triple Gem by reciting "Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Saṃghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi" with conviction and wisdom in front of a Buddha statue or a pagodas or a bhikkhu is the first step to become a Buddhist. If there is no Buddha statue, pagoda or bhikkhu, one may take refuge in the Triple Gem by oneself by reciting the above formula. Being established in the Triple Gem is the first step to become one established in the right view. So it is very important. The recitation of the above formula can be in any

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language. But reciting in Pāḷi, the words of the Buddha (Buddha bhāsita) is more effective and more beneficial to one who take refuge in the Triple Gem. In taking up the life of a Buddhist one needs not be ceremonious, one may just recite the Pāḷi words silently without any ceremony and without letting other people know about it. Conviction is more important than holding a ceremony.

As the Myanmar saying goes: "Nothing can be gained without paying a reasonable price" the genuine sacred refuge cannot be gained without the right conviction and the right understanding. We should begin with Conviction first. Then we shall find more and more to believe in. But Buddhism does not insist on believing blindly. It encourages one to investigate with intelligence what one has put one's faith in. Only then can one attain the right view (sammādiṭṭhi). In order to gain the right view one has to associate with wise persons (Sappūrisūpanissaya), one has to listen and study the Pāḷi Texts (Saddhammasavana), one has to ponder carefully and reasonably (yoniso-manasikāra), and one should avoid dogmatism and favouritism.

The above mentioned facts help one to gain the right view. Blind faith is the foolish belief

which amounts to a kind of demerit. It is different from true conviction (Saddhā). Indeed conviction can straighten one's view. Therefore both wisdom and conviction are factors which straighten up one's view, and so they are known as 'diṭṭhijukamma'.

Thus conviction associated with wisdom is the most precious possession of a human being in this world. The term 'faith' (or Conviction) used in Buddhism is quite different from the term 'faith' used outside the Buddha's Teaching (Sāsana).

### *Important Points in Conversion to Buddhism*

In the present day all over the world, many people are being converted to Buddhism. So, the principle of "Saraṇagamaṇa" should be understood thoroughly.

In the time of the Buddha, the Buddha permitted a person to be ordained a bhikkhu simply by reciting the Saraṇagamaṇa formula and establishing oneself in the Three Gems. Up to the present time, permission is still given to become a novice by just reciting the

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Saraṇagamaṇa formula. If one cannot pronounce the Saraṇagamaṇa correctly, one will not become a novice. In professing to be a Buddhist, one should also recite the Saraṇagamaṇa formula in Pāḷi. Even if one is not familiar with the Pāḷi words, one will gain a lot of benefits by reciting "Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃgacchāmi" frequently.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, there is no other merit greater than the merit gained from converting a non-Buddhist to Buddhism: and also by merely taking refuge in the Three Gems one will not be cast into the four miserable realms. The Buddha also pointed out repeatedly that a holder of wrong view will certainly be reborn either in niraya or in the animal world, and therefore there is no demerit greater than clinging to wrong view.

However, the Buddha never said that one should believe only in Buddhism and not in any other religion. He just pointed out the rational and reasonable way. He advised the Kalāmas, who were bewildered with several concepts and views, to judge the truth of a doctrine by observing the benefits they would enjoy from practising the doctrine by themselves.

Moreover, Upāli, a wealthy man, a main supporter of Niganthanāṭaputta, the founder of Jainism, debated with the Buddha concerning their respective views. When Upāli came to know that his view was wrong, he begged the Buddha to accept him as a lay disciple. Instead of welcoming Upāli's readily, the Buddha reminded him thus: "Upāli, a well-known man like you should not decide hastily and do what you wish to do instantaneously, you should take time to think carefully before you decide to do something."

Thus Buddhism never forces anyone to accept its doctrine blindly; it allows everyone to make use of his own wisdom to decide freely what he should believe in. So, merely reciting "Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi" in order to become a lay disciple of the Buddha, is not sufficient. One should have clear understanding and strong belief.

When non-Buddhist want to be ordained as members of the Saṅgha Order, they are not permitted to do so immediately. They have to wait for four months as observers to study the practice and customs of Buddhism and at the same time to purify and strengthen their view. This is called "Titthiyaparivassa" in Pāli.



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In the time of the Buddha the brahmin Soṇadanda, who took refuge in Triple Gem and accepted the life of a lay disciple in the presence of the Buddha without clear understanding and clear vision, encountered many difficulties in his life. After conversion to Buddhism, one should be able to promptly rise from one's seat by way of welcome and pay respect to elder bhikkhus. One should be able to perceive this act of paying respect as an act of merit and auspiciousness.

The brahmin Soṇadanda newly admitted into Buddhism did not understand this practice. Being a well-known elder, a rich man and a leader of the brahmins, he was worried that people might disparage him for paying homage to the Buddha who was of the age of his grandson. So he begged the Buddha to permit him to perform the following actions and recognize them as signifying acts of respect. He said: "If I raise my joined palms while I am in the audience, please regard it as the act of rising from my seat by way of welcoming you and paying respect to you; if I take off my headwear, please regard this as an act of homage on my part to you with a bowed head; if I raise my whip while I am driving my chariot, please

regard it as an act of paying respect to you after alighting from the chariot; if I remove my umbrella from over my head, please regard this as an act of obeisance to you."

The brahmin Soṇadanda did not attain any special insight for the lack of a clarity of vision in his conversion to Buddhism.

In the initial stage of taking refuge in the Triple Gem soon after conversion to Buddhism, most people do not have much knowledge of forms and procedures of religious practice. So it is satisfactory enough if they possess sincere faith. If one firmly believes that only the Triple Gem and no other refuge can ward off all the dangers and sufferings that one will encounter in the endless round of Saṃsāra, there will be no difficulty for one to study and extend one's knowledge of the Dhamma.

#### *Four Ways of taking Refuge in the Triple Gem*

In the present, although the people recite "Buddhaṃ Saranaṃ gacchāmi, etc." three times as it is done in novitiation, during the time of the Buddha, there were four ways of taking

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refuge in the Triple Gem for declaring oneself as a Buddhist.

1. One can take the refuge in the Triple Gem by reciting thus: "From this day onward, I have submitted myself to the Buddha, to the Dhamma and to the Saṅgha." It is called in Pāli "Attasanniyyā-tana Saraṇagamaṇa."
2. One can also take refuge by reciting thus: "From this day onward regard me as a lay disciple who has taken refuge only in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha." It is called in Pāli "Tapparāyaṇasaraṇa." This was the way followed by the deva-ogre, Aḷāvaka and the deva-generals Hemavata and Sātāgiri.
3. One can also take refuge by reciting thus: "From this day onward regard me as a disciple of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha". It is called in Pāli "Sissabhāvūpagamana saraṇagamaṇa." This method was resorted to by the youth Upāli, the future Mahākassapa Thera.
4. One can also take refuge by reciting thus: "From this day onward, regard me

as a devotee who worships, rises from the seat as a token of respect, raises his joined palms to the forehead and pays respect only to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the the Saṅgha. This is called in Pāli "Paṇipāta saraṇagamaṇa"

This method was followed by persons like the Brahmin Brahmāyu who revered the three Gems very devotedly.

*Whether or not Saraṇagamaṇa is established*

As taking refuge in the Triple Gem differs in four ways depending on the manner of saying and behaving, it should be considered whether or not Saraṇagamaṇa is established whenever one pays respect and homage to the Triple Gem and whether or not Saraṇagamaṇa is destroyed whenever one pays respect and homage to a person outside of the Teaching (Sāsana).

Paying homage to one's elder relative, paying homage out of fear, paying homage to one's teacher, and paying respect to elders do not amount to taking refuge in the Triple Gem; they represent paying homage according to social duties.

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Now paying homage to kings and rulers out of fear, paying homage and offering to spirits to ward off the dangers caused by them, and giving respect to a teacher who professes a different religious faith, also do not mean taking refuge in them. The establishment of Saraṇagamaṇa in oneself is not destroyed by paying homage to the spirits.

With regard to the establishment or destruction of Saraṇagamaṇā on account of paying respect and homage, one should not conclusively say that Saraṇagamaṇa is established only when one pays respect and homage to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha as the highest objects of veneration, but Saraṇagamaṇa is not established if one cannot regard them as the highest objects of veneration. Therefore, in worshipping devas and others, the Saraṇagamaṇa will be destroyed only if one regards them to be worthier of veneration than the Triple Gem.

Thus, the establishment or destruction of Saraṇagamaṇa depends mainly on one's regard and recognition of the Triple Gem as the highest objects of veneration.

### *Defiling of One's Saraṇagamaṇa*

Ignorance of the virtues of the Triple Gem, having sceptical doubts about the Triple Gem and having misconceptions of the virtues of the Triple Gem are the three causes that defile Saraṇagamaṇa.

Any disrespectful action or manner towards pagodas, Buddha images, Buddhist temples, shrines, Dhamma books, and other Sacred objects, as well as listening to the discourse without respect, living disrespectfully or talking rudely and noisily in the vicinity of pagodas and Buddha images amount to the ignorance of the Sacred Triple Gem, and so they all defile Saraṇagamaṇa.

### *Destruction of Saraṇagamaṇa*

The Saraṇagamaṇa, once established in oneself, is destroyed completely when one converts into another faith or when one dies. The destruction of Saraṇagamaṇa on account of one's death bears no evil consequences. However, the destruction of Saraṇagamaṇa due to a change of one's faith bears evil consequences, and thus it is called a blameworthy destruction of Saraṇagamaṇa.

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An ariya's Saranagamaṇa is not destroyed on account of death, it always exists in his subsequent existences.

### *Sharing of the Merit of Saranagamaṇa with the Deceased*

When a Buddhist passes away, his relatives take refuge in the Triple Gem near his corpse and share the merit with him.

The main purpose of this custom is to share the merit of Saranagamaṇa with the deceased. This custom is practised for the benefit of the deceased for he will acquire a lot of merit if he is in a state where he can rejoice and share in the merit. This custom is carried out not for the purpose of establishing Saranagamaṇa in the dead person as some people tend to believe, because the corpse, being devoid of consciousness can no longer take refuge in the Triple Gem.

However, should the deceased be reborn as a hungry miserable being (Peta), he can not only rejoice and share in the merit but can also take refuge in the Triple Gem. Similarly, the petas who have been our former relatives and friends in the long cycle of rebirth can also enjoy the

same benefit. Thus, the act of sharing the merit of Saraṇagamaṇa is a good custom for it is the best final assistance one could give to a deceased Buddhist on his last journey.

Traditional custom of putting coins, money, utensils, articles, food and drinks in the coffin and praying together for the deceased to be reborn in a good existence as it is being practised outside the Buddha-sāsana bear no good results. Thus the act of sharing the merit of Saraṇagamaṇa by the relatives, friends, sons and daughters of the deceased is the best final assistance to the one who has departed.

- Taking refuge in the Three Gems in the presence of the Buddha and bhikkhus on behalf of her baby in her womb like the mother of Prince Bodhi.
- Giving out of charity on behalf of the children and making them raise their joined palms to the forehead as the mark of obeisance to the Triple Gem like the parent of Prince Dighāvu,
- Holding the ceremony of feeding his sons after paying homage to the Triple Gem like king Kākavaṇṇatissa, the father of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi and Saddhātissa,



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- Introducing religious knowledge to sons and daughters like the rich man Anāthapiṇḍika who gave money as an incentive to his son Kāḷa every time he observes the moral precepts,
- on account of this foresight of parents, Excellence is gained by a young Buddhist in the initial stage of his life. This is the Excellence attained by a Buddhist at the beginning of his life. Taking refuge in the Triple Gem throughout his whole life constitutes the second Excellence in the life of a Buddhist. Gaining merit at the final stage of his life due to the sharing of merit by dutiful sons and daughters constitutes the third Excellence. Thus the life of a Buddhist is made up of three stages of Excellence. It is very fortunate indeed to attain the life of a Buddhist.

*The Benefits of Being A Buddhist*

If one takes refuge in the Three Gems and one is a true Buddhist one cannot be reborn in the four lower realms. This is reiterated many times by the Buddha in his various discourses.

Not only is he not reborn in the four lower realms he will also excel in ten qualities over other devas when he is reborn as a deva. The ten qualities are: longevity, fine physical appearance, physical and mental well being, good companionship, power and enjoyment of the five senses.

The Buddha preached in the Velāma Sutta that a Buddhist who has established himself in the Triple Gem will enjoy more benefit than a person who makes unlimited and incomparable offerings.

The prince Ajātasattu was in a state of great agitation for his heinous offence of killing his father. If he dies, he will be certainly reborn in niraya. After he had the chance of paying homage to the Buddha and taking refuge in the Three Gems, he became peaceful and calm. As a wise supplication or appeal changes a death-sentence to a life sentence, the act of taking refuge in Triple Gem changed the destiny of the prince Ajātasattu from being reborn in Mahāvīci (the lowest in eight nirayas) to being reborn in Lohakumbhī (iron cauldron hell). His faith in the Three Gems was unexcelled among the worldlings. He even supported the first Great Buddhist Council. In future, he will be a lesser

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Buddha (Pacceka Buddha) by the name of Vijiṭṭhāvī, on account of his great merit of taking refuge in The Triple Gem.

One who takes refuge in the Three Gems can enjoy eight benefits in his every future existence. These benefits are:-

1. Being honoured and venerated by many people;
2. Being endowed with great wisdom;
3. Having influence on others to conform to one's wish;
4. Having great wealth;
5. Having a fair golden complexion;
6. Being loved and respected by many people;
7. Having good and loyal friends;
8. Having great fame.

Taking refuge in the Triple Gem is the gateway to the Middle Path that leads to liberation from the round of rebirths, and it is the initial Excellence of being a Buddhist. The benefits described above illustrate the Excellence in the middle stage, and to be finally liberated from Saṃsāra represents the final Excellence of being a Buddhist.

## A Story Illustrating the Benefits of Saraṇagamaṇa

### *The True Refuge and The Right Way*

The following events are very notable in connection with the Saraṇagamaṇa. Anāthapiṇḍika's persuading others to take refuge in the Three Gems is a very good example. The complete story runs as follows.

While the Buddha was dwelling in Jetavana monastery in Sāvatti, the rich man Anāthapiṇḍika used to bring his friends of other faiths (Anātittiya) whenever he went to the Jetavana monastery. Just as the rich man did, his friends also respectfully brought flowers, candles, joss sticks, and other offerings, and offered them to the Buddha and the bhikkhus.

When they saw his graceful appearance and pleasant manners, and heard his rational discourse free from the two extremes, they delightedly accepted his teachings as they were men of intelligence. They abandoned their old beliefs, rites and rituals, and took refuge in the Triple Gem. Not only were they converted in groups into Buddhism, they also regularly performed the Buddhist duties such as listening

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to the Dhamma, observing moral precepts and keeping Sabbath.

When the Buddha went from Sāvatti to Rājagaha and stayed there for seven or eight months, these friends of Anāthapiṇḍika again reverted to their original views. When the Buddha returned to Sāvatti, they again followed the Buddha's teaching on account of the persuasion of Anāthapiṇḍika. When the rich man reported this matter to the Buddha, the latter described the various kinds of refuge taken by people in the past.

O lay disciple, in the past, people worshipped forests, mountains, rivers, etc, for fear of various dangers and natural disasters. As these refuges cannot protect them from various dangers, they can neither escape from present dangers nor from being reborn in the lower realms.

One, who takes refuge in the Supreme Triple Gem, i.e., the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, will not be reborn in apāya (miserable realms), he will be reborn in the deva world when he dies. Taking refuge in the Triple Gem is the main supporting factor to realize the four Noble Truths and become an ariya. This indeed,

is the safe refuge, this is the best refuge. Having come to this refuge, one is liberated from all evil consequences of existence (dukkha).

“O lay disciples, in the past, human beings, having wrong thoughts and wrong beliefs, took wrong refuge and relied on foolish leaders, so they were led astray while travelling in the desert and there met with great disaster and death.”

When the Buddha said so, the rich man Anāthapiṇḍika requested the Buddha to tell the whole story. So, the Buddha narrated the Apanṇaka jātaka the story of a caravan crossing a desert. In this story a caravan of five hundred merchants travelled across a desert under the guidance of a foolish leader. They were beguiled by ogres, threw away their drinking water and were devoured by the ogres. Another caravan of five hundred merchants made the journey under the guidance of a wise leader. They were not beguiled by ogres, and they could cross the desert safely.

On hearing the Apannaka-jātaka, the friends of Anāthapiṇḍika, who had wavered in faith, realized who should be their leader and whose advice they should follow. The Buddha preached

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not only on charity and morality but also on the threefold training-morality (silā), concentration (sammādhī), wisdom (paññā) the Noble Eight-fold Path that surely leads to peace and happiness.

The Buddha is the One who shows the way accurately after he has experienced himself. So, the Buddha is honoured by the term "Sattthādevamanussānam" as the chief charioteer guiding going around the cycle of birth and death (saṁsāra).

All friends of Anāthapiṇḍika, who are taking other views, listened to the teachings of the Buddha and not only gained true refuge but also became enlightened by attaining sotapattimagga. As the result of this enlightenment, they became ariyas.

### Qualities and Duties of Lay Disciples

(Upāsaka, Upāsikā)

The word Upāsaka means lay disciples who take refuge in the Three Gems, Everyone, old or young, who takes refuge in the Triple Gem

is called 'Upāsaka', and if one is a female, she is called "Upāsikā.

The role of lay disciples in promoting and propagating the Sāsana is very important. The duty of the Saṃgha is to promote and propagate the Sāsana by teaching and preaching the Dhamma (Dhammānuggaha) and the duty of the lay disciple is to support the Saṃgha with the four requisites (Paccayanuggaha). So the Saṃgha and the lay disciples are mutually dependent. The disciple should be able to go through thick and thin along with the Saṃgha (Samāna-sukha-dukkha). They should be able to share their properties equally with the Saṃgha without any discrimination (Appaṭivibhattabhogī), They should be always ready to support the Saṃgha, they should be like a well supplying fresh water all the time.

When the causes for the decline of Sāsana appear, a lay disciple should not remain unconcerned he should join hands with the Saṃgha to uplift the Sāsana. When disunity among the saṃgha arises, he should render his service to bring about the reconciliation among the saṃgha. In Kosambhi lay disciples forcibly brought about the unity among the Saṃgha by withholding their support to the Saṃgha.



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At the time of the Buddha, there were ideal male lay disciples such as the rich man Citta, Hatthaka Ajāvaka, Uggata, and female lay disciples such as Visākhā, Khujjuttarā, Nandamātā. Even when parents admonished their children, they used to say: "My son, if you live in human society, you must strive to be one just like the rich man Citta; if you live as a bhikkhu, you must strive to be one just like the Venerable Sāriputta; "My dear daughter, if you live in human society, you must strive to be one just like Khujjuttarā; and if you live as a bhikkhuni, you must strive to be one just like Khemātherī."

The Buddha relied on lay disciples equally as he relied on bhikkhus and bhikkhunis for his future Sāsana. The Buddha assigned appropriate responsibility to them. The bhikkhu, the bhikkhuni, the Upāsaka and the Upāsikā are called the four persons who support and promote the Sāsana. We should not forget that lay disciples have responsibilities just as bhikkhus and bhikkhunis do.

In performing the affairs of the Sāsana, there are some tasks which are not proper to be performed by bhikkhus due to the rules of discipline for bhikkhus laid down by the Buddha. Those tasks should be performed by lay disciples.

### *The Morality of Lay Disciples*

A novice must abide by the discipline of a novice, a monk must abide by the discipline of a bhikkhu and a lay disciple must abide by the morality of a lay disciple.

During the time of the Buddha, the Sakkyan prince Mahānāma asked the Buddha to describe the morality of lay disciples. The Buddha replied to him thus: "A lay disciple must observe the five precepts, i.e. abstaining from killing any living being, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from telling lies, abstaining from committing sexual misconduct, and abstaining from taking intoxicating drinks and drugs."

According to this discourse, the five precepts represent the morality of lay disciples. One cannot be a lay disciple if one cannot observe the above five precepts. To be a well qualified lay disciple, one should observe the five precepts steadfastly just as one keeps his lower garment tightly on the body.

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*The Livelihood of A Lay Disciple*

A lay disciple should be endowed not only with morality but also have faultless means of earning his living. The Buddha has advised the lay disciples to abstain from the following five immoral means of livelihood:-

- (1) Selling and buying weapons,
- (2) Selling and buying human beings,
- (3) Selling and buying meat,
- (4) Selling and buying intoxicating drinks and drugs,
- (5) Selling and buying poison.

The above five means of livelihood are designated as immoral for they harm oneself as well as others. A lay disciple should make the right livelihood such as farming, and trading in commodities which do not harm oneself and others.

*Noble and Ignoble Lay Disciples*

The following five basic factors will make a lay disciple ignoble:

1. Having no faith and conviction in the Triple Gem,

2. Having corrupted morality,
3. Believing that unusual exciting things and news portend good luck (if they see, hear, smell, taste or touch pleasant things, they believe that these are blessings)
4. Believing only in unusual things which they take as mundane blessings and not believing in Kamma and its result,
5. Giving alms and paying homage to persons outside the Buddha's Sāsana prior to giving alms and paying homage to persons worthy of respect within the sāsana.

The person who cannot keep the five moral precepts and who leads an impure livelihood is called an ignoble lay disciple. He is also known as medicant lay disciple (Upāsakā caṇḍāla), defiled lay disciple (Upāsakamala), inferior lay disciple (Upāsakapatikitha).

By considering the above five causes in reverse, the person who can keep the five moral precepts and who leads a pure livelihood is called a noble lay disciple. He is also known as a lay disciple (Upāsakaratanā), padumā lotus lay disciple (Upāsakapaduma); pundarika lotus disciple (Upāsaka pundarika).

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*The Seven Causes of Decline  
for a Lay Disciple*

The seven causes which debase a lay disciple are described in Anguttara Nikāya Pāli as follows:

1. Failing to see bhikkhus and pay homage to them,
2. Forgetting to listen to the discourse,
3. Failing to observe the moral precepts,
4. Showing less respect to bhikkhus,
5. Listening to the discourse with the intention of criticizing and finding fault,
6. Looking for noble persons worthy of receiving alms outside the Buddha's Teachings,
7. Performing meritorious deeds outside the Sāsana prior to the Saṅgha within the Sāsana.

*The Ten Qualities of  
a Lay Disciple*

We should also note the ten qualities of a lay disciple as described by the Venerable Nāgasena to King Milinda.

1. To stand by the bhikkhus in times of prosperity or adversity,
2. Living under the guidance influence of the Teachings of the Buddha,
3. Supporting the bhikkhus in accordance with one's means,
4. Striving for the promotion and propagation of the Sāsana when one learns that the Sāsana is deteriorating,
5. Having the right view,
6. Disbelieving that unusual exciting things and news portend good luck,
7. Taking refuge in no other teacher except the Buddha even at the risk of one's life,
8. Controlling his bodily and verbal actions,

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9. Living in harmony with other lay disciples without any feeling of jealousy, envy, deceit and conceit,
10. Taking refuge in the Triple Gem, i.e. the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha.

One must strive to be endowed with the morality, the livelihood and the qualities mentioned above so that one may become a good lay disciple, as desired by the Buddha for the future in the interest of the Sāsana.

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## Kamma and Its Results

# 3

### *The Definition of Kamma*

Kamma is a Pāli word meaning action. It is of three kinds:-

- (1) Bodily action (Kāyakamma),
- (2) Verbal action (Vacīkamma), and
- (3) Mental action (Manokamma).

Cetanā (volition) is the main source of kamma, the word cetanā is a special term in Buddhism, the definite meaning of which cannot be rendered into any other language. Cetanā is the main cause of every action bodily, or verbal or mental which may be good or evil. Nothing can be accomplished without cetanā.



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Cetanā is also the motivating force for the mind. The Kamma arises depending on the driving force of cetanā. The greater the cetanā, the stronger the kamma. Cetanā is an extremely subtle reality. So it is very difficult to understand cetanā correctly. But it is that subtle cetanā which motivates the mind. In performing an action, cetanā stimulates the mind, i.e., consciousness and its concomitants to perform their respective roles to accomplish the action, because cetanā precedes every action and it is solely responsible for the accomplishment of the action, cetanā is called the action or kamma by the Buddha.

The term "Kamma" is the name of bodily, verbal and mental actions. But as these actions are accomplished due to cetanā and the main cause cetanā is called kamma.

"Cetanā haṃ bhikkhave kammanṃ vadāmi", said the Buddha, meaning, "O' bhikkhus, the Tathāgata calls "cetanā" as 'kamma'. The intensity of kamma depends on the force of cetanā. Cetanā is of three kinds--pubba-cetanā, muñca-cetanā and apara-cetanā. Pubba-cetanā exerts the initial force to perform the action, Muñca-cetanā is the force involved while performing

the action, and *Apara cetanā* continues to exert the force after performing the action.

The results of an action will be effective only when the action is performed in conformity with the three kinds of *cetanā*. If one of these *cetanas* is weak or absent the *kamma* becomes weak and its results will also be less effective.

To achieve success in this world, *kamma*, wisdom and effort are essential. Of these three, wisdom and effort are prominent, and so people recognize the importance of their roles. As *kamma* and its results are difficult to understand, there are people who do not believe in them. Those who claim to be non-believers are in fact performing *Kammic* actions everyday in contradiction to their own belief.

All people are occupied with their own work all the time. They receive their earnings in accordance with their work. There are two kinds of work or action--the good and the evil. Those who commit crimes are punished by means of fines, flogging, imprisonment or hanging according to the law. Those who perform good deeds earn money, property, status or power. So, people have to suffer or enjoy the consequences of good or bad *kamma* everyday.

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Therefore, it is obvious that kamma and its results do exist in the world. One cannot deny or object to the existence of kamma and its results.

### *Strong and Persistent Power of Kamma*

The nature of kamma is subtle, the power of kamma is very strong. People think that after they have performed an action, the action dissolves and disappears, leaving nothing behind. But it is not so. Although the action has been completed, the energy of cetanā arising at the time of action does not vanish. It remains dormant in the mental stream.

Although the time taken in throwing a stone into a lake is very short, the ripples caused by the force of the falling stone will continue to rise and fall for a long time.

Although the rain stops within a few hours, the cooling effect caused by the rain drops which have permeated into the soil does not vanish immediately. And again, since the grass growing in the rainy season disappears in the hot season, one may think that nothing is left behind. But actually, as seeds are left in the ground grass will grow again in the next rainy

season. Thus, on account of seeds, grass appears season after season giving rise to an unending cycle of seeds and grass.

The power of the seeds of kamma is more subtle than that of the seeds of grass. It will not decay, dissolve and disappear in hundreds of world systems and will endure for ever. At the opportune moment the seed of kamma will bear fruit even after a lapse of a number of world systems. In the Abhidhamma (Paṭṭhāna the seventh book) this kamma is called Nānākkanika kamma.

All beings will remain heirs to their respective kammās, until the time when the power of the kammās, which they have performed in previous countless existences (that have no beginning) are eliminated by Four Path Knowledges (Ariya Maggas). They will have to enjoy or suffer the good or bad results of their kammās; this is called Kammavaṭṭa. Therefore, good Buddhists should take great care in their thought, words and deeds so that they may not commit even the slightest of evil actions.

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*Past Kamma*

The word 'kamma' comprises present kamma as well as past kamma. Due to kamma and its results all beings have to be reborn again and again. No one knows the beginning of the round of rebirths (saṃsāra) because it is very very long. In such an endless round of rebirths, all beings have been performing various actions existence after existence. The actions one is performing at the present moment are called 'Present Kamma' and the actions performed in previous existences as well as the actions performed previously in this existence are called 'Past Kamma'. Most of the kammās bear their fruits throughout the saṃsāra. Only a few kammās bear all their fruits within the period of one existence and so the fruits of kamma are spread throughout the full long period of the Saṃsāra. Thus, some of the kammās of past existences produce their results in this present existence. According to the law of kamma all beings enjoy or suffer the results of their kammās. The past kammās were performed by oneself in one's past existences and so one has to enjoy or suffer their results now and will also have to enjoy or suffer in the future.

The past kamma really exists. But no one can gain success if he relies solely on past kmmas and not perform any good action in the present existence.

Those who believe in Issaranimmāna vāda that is creator concept which holds the views that all animate and inanimate things are created and controlled by a Creator, do not accept the existence of past kmmas. They believe that the good and the bad that they encounter in this existence depend on the will of the creator, and that they get what the creator gives them and they eat what the creator feeds them. They also believe that whatever kmmas they may perform they will not produce any results and that they will enjoy or suffer as willed by the Creator.

They casually accept that "if we do good, we will enjoy the good benefits and if we do evil, we will suffer the evil consequences". But they believe that the results of these actions entirely depend on the creator and the creator controls the kamma.

On the other hand, there are those who devotedly believe in past kmmas. This wrong view is called "Pubbekatahetu diṭṭhi" in Pāli. According to this view all good and bad effects

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that one is enjoying or suffering at present are solely the results of past karmas. They also believe that entirely due to past karma they will not become prosperous in this existence however hard they may try. Therefore, such people do not make any effort to improve their lot and they become failures in life.

While some people are trying to verify the existence of past karmas, there are also people who believe that neither the round of rebirths, nor the past existences nor the future existences nor the results of merit and demerit exist in this world. They also believe that events occur without cause, that there is no creator, nor past karma, and that everything arises and ceases automatically and that there is no future existence after this existence. This belief discards both the cause and the effect.

On examining the above wrong views, we will find that the followers of these wrong views lack in mindfulness, good volition, diligence and good-will in their mental streams. In reality, successful people in the present life are crowned with success only through their steadfast mindfulness, wisdom, good volition, diligence and good-will. No one can gain success without making any effort.

In reality, the merits and demerits that the people enjoy and suffer arise on account of depending on the combination of past kmmas as well as the present kmmas. The actions performed in this life are called the present kmmas and those performed in past existences are called past kmmas. The past existences and the present existences differ only in time. Both the present and past kmmas are actions performed by ourselves.

### *The Past Kamma and the Present Kamma*

Buddhists believe in kamma and its results, Kamma includes both the past kamma and the present kamma. On account of the good past kamma, one attains the human existence and is endowed with good looks. If the past kamma is not good, one will not be reborn in the human world but in one of the nether worlds. After attaining the human existence due to a good past kamma, we must make use of the present-kamma with wisdom and effort to achieve success and prosperity in this life. No one can succeed without these three factors. If one only depends on the past kamma, without putting reliance on present kamma, wisdom and effort,



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one cannot gain success. If we step on thorns with the absolute blind faith in our good kamma, we shall be pierced by the thorns. If we jump into the fire with the belief that our good past kammās will prevent us from burning, we shall be burnt.

Unlike the inhabitants of the four miserable realms and the celestial realm, the inhabitants of the human realm do not have to suffer or enjoy only the results of past kammās. They can use their knowledge and make effort to perform good kammās so as to improve their life-conditions. The present kamma means every action performed in this very life through knowledge and effort.

In addition to good past kammās, the four conditions for success (saṃpatti cakka) must also be fulfilled.

They are:

1. (Gatisaṃpatti) good destination,
2. (Kālasaṃpatti) appropriate time,
3. (Upadhisāṃpatti) good looks and fine personality,
4. (Payogasaṃpatti) strenuous effort.

If one solely relies on the kamma and never makes any effort based on intellect, one will not gain success. Even the Buddha cannot save this kind of person who lacks Payogasampatti.

Thus, the efforts based on intellect and diligence in this very life are called present kammas. The basic condition for success in this life is past kamma. If one does not receive the support of past kamma, one cannot succeed in life in spite of one's intelligence and knowledge. Sometimes one may enjoy only the meagre result of effort. All human beings must always make efforts intelligently and diligently since they are fortunate enough to be born in the human world. Only then can they enjoy the results of their kamma, knowledge and effort to the fullest extent.

### *Types of Kamma*

The past kamma is of three types: very strong kamma, fairly strong kamma and weak kamma. In the present kammas also, there are three kinds: striving to improve the present conditions by making use of kamma, wisdom and effort harmoniously, striving just to maintain the present conditions and not striving even to maintain

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the present conditions. On account of a very strong past kamma one is reborn as a human-being among good parents and teachers. If one makes a good effort to improve the present condition in life by keeping kamma, knowledge and effort well balanced then one will become a high-ranking official or a wealthy man or an educated person.

If a person makes fair attempts just enough to maintain the present situation, then he will become only a middling though he is born of good parents on account of his good past kamma. On the other hand, if that same person does not make any effort in this present life, he will become an inferior and poor person. Depending on the efforts made in the present life, there appears three kinds of sons namely: the son superior to his parents (atijāta-putta), the son equal to his parents (anujāta-putta), and the son inferior to his parents (avajāta-putta). So we cannot rely on only the past kammās.

On account of a fairly strong past kamma, one is born into an ordinary family, but if one makes strenuous efforts in the present life one will become a man of high rank, great wealth or wisdom. If this person makes only medium efforts, he will become only a middling. If he is

lazy and makes no effort, he will become a poor man.

In the same way, although one is born in a poor family due to his past poor kamma, if he makes good efforts, he can be prosperous in the present existence. If he makes only fair efforts, just enough to maintain his present status, he will remain as poor as before. If he does not make any effort in the present existence, he will become a very poor man or a beggar.

One day, the Buddha, while residing at the Jetavana Monastery of Sāvathī, told the Venerable Ānanda thus: "Ānanda, look at that couple of beggars! Once they were the son and the daughter of rich men of Sāvathī. They did not care to acquire any knowledge when they were young. They married young and squandered the wealth of their parents. After their parents' demise, they did not make use of their present kamma, knowledge and effort. Instead of striving to preserve their wealth they misused all of it and became beggars.

If they had made attempts for their welfare in their early life, they would have become persons of great wealth in Sāvathī, or if they had renounced worldly pleasures and practised

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insight meditation, the husband would have become an Arahāt and the wife an Anāgāmi. Or if they could have reflected on their life correctly in their middle age and exerted efforts in worldly affairs, they would have become a fairly rich couple, or if they renounced worldly pleasures and practised insight meditation the husband and wife would become Anāgāmi and Sakadāgāmi respectively. Or, if they became repentant in their old age and made some effort in worldly affairs, they would have become a couple of average status, or if they turn to insight meditation, they would have become Saka-dāgāmi and Sotapanna respectively. However they failed to make any effort throughout their life and so they have now become "beggars."

On account of our good past kamma, we now attain the human existence which is one of the Five Rare Opportunities (Dullabha). It is a great opportunity to become a human being. Besides we have also attained the rare opportunity of meeting with the Buddha-Sasanā.

Therefore, we must incessantly strive for the development of present good kamma with the right view on kamma (Kammassakatāsammā-dīṭṭhi) during this rare occasion of the Buddha's Teaching (Sāsanā).

### *Good Kamma and Right View*

Everyone should comprehend the true nature of kamma exactly, correctly and completely. All good kamma and bad kamma bring about their full results, if the volition is strong at the three stages, namely; the volition that arises before the action (Pubba-cetanā), the volition that arises at the time of action (Muñca-cetanā) and the volition that arises after the action (Aparacetanā). Kamma will remain effective and will produce good or bad results in the endless round of existences of an individual throughout the long Saṃsāra. This fact implies that everyone can create his or her own destiny. In order to accumulate good kammās, correctness of view (ditṭhijukamma) is of paramount importance to all beings. Only the person with the right view will realize the benefits of kamma, by doing good actions bodily, verbally and mentally. As the results of these good actions, that person will be reborn either as a human being or as a celestial being.

On the other hand, those who are wrong viewers, do not believe in and accept the Law of Kamma and its results. So they make mistakes repeatedly in their deeds, words and thoughts. Because of their evil actions, they will

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be reborn in miserable realms again and again. They will also face with various miseries and difficulties. Therefore, the Buddha preached that "Of all evils, having a wrong view is the most heinous one". Wrong view is the main cause of all evil actions.

### *Kamma, The Only Refuge*

The Buddha gave a discourse on kamma to the headman of Asibandhakaputta Village while he was residing in the Mango grove of the wealthy man Pāvārika, in the town of Nālandā. The headman asked the Buddha thus: "Venerable Sir, the Brahmins of Pacchabhūmi said that they could send the dead to deva realms and brahma realms. Can you also do the same?"

The Buddha replied thus: "When you throw a stone slab into water, it will never float in water but sink. Just like a stone slab sinking in water, evil doers will always be cast into miserable realms. On the other hand, when you break a pot of butter in deep water, the butter will never sink, but rise and float on water. Just like the butter floating on water, good doers will always be reborn in happy existences. No Brahma, nor god, and nor Creator can make

beings miserable or happy. No prayers can fulfil the wishes of beings.

It is evident that all beings have only their actions (kamma) to rely on. Parents cannot be punished for the crime committed by their children.

The nature of kamma is deep and profound. Only when one is endowed with good past and present kammās, one will be successful in life. The past kamma is what one did in the past and so it belongs to one. Even though one is endowed with good past kamma and the present kamma together with effort guided by wisdom is necessary to achieve great success, The past kamma cannot be changed; but we can be successful in life with the support of present good kammās.

In accordance with the Buddha's teachings one makes one's kamma the main original base with the right view and support it with wisdom and diligence. Only then will one become outstanding and successful. With appropriate time and opportunity, one will become a truly great man.



## Kusala Kamma and Akusala Kamma

### *Kusala Kamma*

Kamma (action) is of two types--meritorious action (kusala kamma) and demeritorious action (akusala kamma). Kusala kamma is of four categories: Kāmāvacara-kusala kamma, Rūpāvacara kusala kamma, Arūpāvacara kusala kamma, and Lokuttarā kusala kamma. Kāmāvacara kusala kamma bears its results in the sense sphere, Rūpāvacara kusala kamma in the fine-material sphere, Arūpāvacara kusala kamma in the non-material (formless) sphere. The results become effective in accordance with the attainment of Jhānas. Lokuttarā kusala kamma bears its result as the Supramundane Fruition. This result takes effect in accordance with the wisdom.

Kāmāvacara kusala kamma is of ten kinds: three bodily actions, four verbal actions and three mental actions. These ten actions are called ten kinds of good conduct (sucarita). Kusala means blameless wholesome action producing beneficial results. These ten good conducts can help one to be reborn in human world or celestial realms. Because they serve as ways of getting to good destinations, they are called as

"Kusala kamma patha". Of the ten meritorious actions; the mental action of holding the right view, i, e, believing in kamma and its results, is the most important basic kamma.

### *Akusalakamma*

Akusala kamma is also of ten kinds: three bodily actions, four verbal actions and three mental actions. Akusala means blameworthy, faulty and unwholesome actions producing detrimental results. Since these actions are not wholesome, they are called evil kinds of conduct (ducarita). They can lead one to be reborn in the four miserable realms. Because they serve as ways of getting to miserable realms, they are called "Akusala kamma patha."

Of the ten kinds of evil conduct, killing living beings (pāṇātipāta), harsh speech (pharussavācā) and ill will (byāpāda) arise due to anger (dosa), sexual misconduct (kāmesumicchacāra), covetousness (abhijjhā) and wrong view (micchādiṭṭhi) arise due to greed (lobha); and theft (adinnadāna), lying (musāvāda), slander (pisuṇavācā), vain talk (samphappalāpavācā) arise due to anger (dosa) and greed (lobha).

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Among the akusala kammās, having the wrong view, i.e. not realizing and not believing in the kamma and its results is the most heinous action. Akusala kamma is not as strong as kusala kamma. For the arising of kusala and akusala kamma, the Kāmassakatā-ñāṇa is the basis. The knowledge that kamma is one's own property, and that there is no creator of the world except one's own kamma, is called Kāmassakatāñāṇa. Only when one realises and believes in this way, one is said to possess the right view: kāmassakatā sammādiṭṭi.

On account of the difference in the results produced by kusala and akusala kammās, there arise differences in the life of beings: some are long-lived while others are short-lived, some are beautiful while others are ugly, some are rich while others are poor, some enjoy blissful existences but some suffer woeful existences.

Any of the kusala and akusala kammās may be performed in four ways:-

- (1) by personally doing it,
- (2) by urging others to do it,
- (3) by encouraging others to do it by telling them the benefits of such action,

- (4) by being pleased with what others are doing or consenting to others' actions.

Therefore ten kinds of kusala kamma as well as the ten kinds of akusala kamma can be multiplied by these four ways resulting in forty kinds of sucarita and forty kinds of ducarita. For whatever actions one may have done personally or urged or encouraged or consented, one shall have to bear the good or bad consequences just the same.

*Dvihetuka, Tihetuka, Ukkaṭṭha  
and Omaka Kusala Kamma*

It is very important to perform a meritorious action in a correct and systematic way. The time of performing a meritorious action such as giving out of charity (dāna), observing morality (sīla) or practising meditation (bhāvanā) is divided into three periods or moment namely the period before performing the action (pubba), the moment actually performing the action (muñca) and the moment after performing the action (apara).

At the time of performing the action (muñca kāla) it is important that the doer should

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understand the significance of kamma and its results, i.e. kāmmissakata-nāṇa. The action performed with kammassakatā-nāṇa is called "Tihetuka-kusala kamma". On the other hand, if one performs a meritorious action without such understanding, this action is called "Dvihetuka-kusala kamma". Generosity (alobha), good-will (adosa) and wisdom (amoha) are three moral roots which serve as three major causes for the arising of an action.

If one performs a charitable deed out of generosity, without any attachment to the offerings, alobha hetuka arises. If one feels happy and pleased with one's charity and radiates loving-kindness to the donees, adosa hetuka arises. If one does the meritorious action with the understanding and believes in kamma and its results, amoha hetuka arises. On the other hand, if one performs the meritorious action of charity, morality or meditation without the understanding of kammassakatā-nāṇa, only two moral roots, aloba and adosa, arise. Such an action is called "Dvihetuka-kusala kamma".

If one feels worried or unhappy concerning with one's charitable action before making the donation, and if one has regrets after doing it, one's action will be accompanied by akusala

cittas and that kusala kamma becomes an inferior kusala kamma known as "Omaka kusala kamma". This kamma is of two kinds: Tihetuka omaka kusala kamma and Dvihetuka omaka kusala kamma.

If one feels glad before performing the meritorious action of charity, morality or meditation, and also feels happy on reflecting it after performing the action, one's action will be surrounded by kusala cittas. This kind of action is called superior kusala kamma known as "Ukkattha kusala kamma". It is of two kinds: Tihetuka Ukkattha kusala kamma and Dvihetuka Ukkattha kusala kamma.

On account of tihetuka ukkattha kusala kamma, one will be reborn in the human world or celestial realms as a human being or a celestial being of high status endowed with Bhavasampatti. As one also enjoys riches and luxuries of superior quality, one is said to be endowed with Bhogasampatti. One will also be a man of great wisdom, glory and genius. One may also become an Ariya, a noble person who attains Jhāna, Magga, Phala and realizes the four Noble Truths.

Tihetuka omakakusala kamma brings the same benefits as dvihetuka ukkattha kusala kamma.

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On account of these kusala karmas; one will be reborn as a dvihetuka person. One will be endowed with Bhogasaṃpatti because of one's charity and endowed with Bhavaṃpatti because of one's morality. But one cannot realize the ariya dhamma such as Jhāna, Magga and Phala because one lacks the innate wisdom called Amohahetuka at birth.

On account of dvihetuka omaka kamma one will be reborn in the human world or the celestial realms. Although one will be reborn as a human being, one will be a man of inferior faculties such as a deaf and dumb person, a stammerer, a duffer, an insane person, a sexually pervert person of uncertain or of both genders, etc. They are born as disabled persons.

Therefore, it is very important to perform the meritorious actions of charity, morality and meditation correctly and systematically. Only then will one fully enjoy the benefits of one's action.

It is difficult to be reborn as a human being who is endowed with the understanding of kamma and its results while one is adrift in the stream of saṃsāra. One will not be able to enjoy the superior benefits without understanding the Kammasakatāñāṇa however much one may

perform meritorious deeds. The kusala kamma performed by those who hold wrong views and those who do not believe in kamma and its results never produce the benefits of Tihetuka ukkattha kusala kamma. They will become noble ones. Ariyās, only if they perform the meritorious deeds with the comprehension of kamma and its results.

Therefore, one can fully enjoy the best benefits of a meritorious action only when one understands well kamma and its results and when one's action is accompanied by kusala cittas before and after the action.

### *Four Kinds of Kamma according to its Function*

Based on the particular function of such kamma, kamma is classified into four kinds, namely; Janaka kamma, Upatthambhaka kamma, Upapīḷaka kamma and Upaghātaka kamma.

#### *Janakakamma*

A reproductive kamma which conditions the future rebirth is called janaka kamma. But it cannot continue producing its results at pavattikāla, i.e., the time from conception to death. During



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this period, other kammās produce their results. A mother gives birth to her child. The wet-nurses look after the child. In the same way, janaka kamma conditions the birth and future rebirth like a mother while other kammās look after the being all the time from conception to death like wet-nurses.

It is also said that janaka kamma is connected with both kusala and akusala kammās and as such it will not only condition rebirth but also its results from conception till death.

*Upatthambhākakamma*

Supportive kamma is called Upatthambhāka kamma. It cannot condition the rebirth but can give support to the arising of kusala as well as akusala kamma in the lifetime of being. Because a person has performed meritorious deeds in the past, he is reborn in a happy existence. (Janaka kamma)

That person repeatedly performs meritorious deeds in that happy existence (Upatthambhāka kamma). Owing to these kusala kammās, that person enjoys great wealth in that happy existence for many years. This is how kusala upatthambhāka kamma gives support to one.

A person has performed the demeritorious deeds in the past. Owing to this akusala janaka kamma one will be reborn in miserable existence. Also in that existence one performs demeritorious deeds again and again. With the support of these akusala kammās one will suffer in the miserable existence for many years. This is how akusala Upatthambhaka kamma gives support to one.

Upatthambhaka helps beings to bear the consequences of both meritorious and demeritorious deeds and also to prolong the results.

### *Upapīḷakakamma*

A counteractive kamma is called "Upapīḷakā kamma".

Upapīḷaka kamma obstructs, interrupts and counteracts the results of Janaka kamma. It does not allow kusala or akusala kamma to bear results for a long time. While enjoying the good results of kusala kammās, an akusala kamma arises as Upapīḷaka kamma and obstructs these results. In the same way, while suffering the bad results of akusala kammās, akusala kamma arises as Upapīḷaka kamma and obstructs these results.

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Just like a tree destroyed by someone with a stick or a knife cannot grow anymore, the kusala kamma interrupted by akusala kamma and the akusala kamma interrupted by kusala kamma while producing their respective results cannot bear their results anymore.

The akusala kamma performed by Bhikkhu Sunakkhatta obstructs his kusala kamma. He was a Bhikkhu who had attained Dibbacakkhuñāṇa, the supernormal power of sight like divine eyes. When he maligned the Buddha, his Dibbacakkhuñāṇa disappeared.

Once in Rājagaha at the time of the Buddha, there was a man named Vātakāḷaka who earned his living as a royal executioner for fifty years. While he was performing his duty, he was not allowed to wear new clothes, fragrant flowers and to use perfumes; he did not have time to have proper meals or to take regular baths. He had to live filthily for years. In due course, he retired from his job. On the very first day of his retirement, he told his wife to prepare special milk-rice for him and he went to the river to bathe. He washed his hair, had a bath, wore new clothes and applied unguents. On his way home he met the Venerable Sāriputta.

He felt happy to meet the venerable therā on the day of retirement from his filthy and inferior profession. So he invited the therā to his house, and offered milk-rice to him. After having his meal the Venerable Sāriputta gave a discourse rejoicing in Vātakāḷaka's meritorious deed.

When the therā returned, he accompanied the therā for some distance and came back to his house contemplating the therā's discourse. On the way home he was gored to death by a cow with a newly delivered calf. Due to his kusala kamma he was reborn in Tāvātimsa celestial realm. Here, the bad consequences of his akusala kammās, i.e, his actions of killing criminals were interrupted by his kusāla kamma, i.e, his actions of offering alms-food to a bhikkhu and contemplating the Dhamma. Therefore, the executioner Vātakāḷaka was reborn in a good destination.

### *Upaghātaka kamma*

Kamma which destroys the weak existing kamma (janaka kamma) as well as its results and allows its own resultants to take place is called "Upaghātaka kamma". It is also called

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“Upacchedaka kamma”. The akusala kamma, which arises when someone is enjoying the good results of kusala kamma, not only cuts off these good results but also destroys the kusala kamma. In the same way the kusala kamma, which arises when someone is suffering from the bad results or akusala kamma, not only cuts off these evil results but also destroys the akusala kamma. This is the power of Upacchedaka kamma.

As he had committed patricide, King Ajātassattu was liable to be reborn in Mahāvīci niraya, the nethermost of the eight nirayas, and suffer miserably for hundreds of years. But he became a lay disciple of the Buddha and listened to the Buddha's discourses. This kusala kamma weakened his past akusala kamma. So he was reborn only in the Lohakumbhiya niraya instead of Mahāvīci niraya. This is how Upaghātaka kusala kamma destroys akusala kamma.

Aṅgulimāla, the notorious murderer, would be surely reborn in the miserable realms after his death because he had killed many human beings. But later, he had a chance to meet the Buddha, listen to the discourse preached by the Buddha and practise insight meditation. So he

attained the Arahatta magga-ñāṇa, and became an Arahāt. Due to the Arahattamagga-ñāṇa, the Supra-mundane kusala, upaghātaka kamma, arose and totally destroyed his past akusala kamma.

Thus, Upaghātaka kamma can destroy the other kammās. It can also cut off their results. It can bear its own results.

### *Four kinds of Kamma according to the Priority of Bearing Results*

Kamma is of four kinds according to the priority of bearing results. They are Garuka kamma, Āsanna kamma, Āciṇṇa kamma and Kaṭattā kamma.

#### *Garuka kamma*

Garuka kamma means serious or weighty kamma. It may be either good or bad. It is so strong that it will certainly produce its results in the next existence. The powerful mental absorptions called jhānas, (Mahaggata kamma), belong to good weighty kamma. The five heinous deeds which certainly bear results after death (Anantariya kamma) and the permanent false view (Niyatamicchāditti kamma) belong to bad weighty kammās.

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There are altogether nine good weighty kammas: the five rūpāvacara-kusala kammas: the first jhāna, the second jhāna, the third jhāna, the fourth jhāna and the fifth jhāna, and the four arūpāvacara kusala kamma: ākāśānañcāyatana jhāna, viññānañcāyatana jhāna, ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna, and Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana jhāna. One who has attained one of these jhānas and maintains it till his death will surely be reborn in the Brahma realm corresponding to that jhāna. These jhanās are called kuśala garuka kammas because they are strong enough to produce good results at death.

On the other hand the five ānantariya kammas and niyatamicchādiṭṭhi kamma are bad weighty kammas. Ānantariya kamma means the heinous deed that sends one to niraya. It is of five kinds, namely, matricide (mātughātaka), patricide (pitughātaka), killing an arahat (arahantaghātaka), wounding a Buddha (Lohituppādaka) and causing schism in the Saṅgha (Saṅghabheddaka). Because there are five kinds, they are also called pañcānantariya kamma.

When one intentionally kills one's parents, whether one knows them to be one's parents or not, one will suffer the evil results of pañcānantariya kamma. If one's parents are

animals or if oneself is an animal, the killing of one's parents cannot be regarded as ānantariya kamma but one will have to suffer the evil consequences which are almost as effective as these of ānantariya kamma. Killing an arahat and wounding a Buddha are also called ānantariya kamma.

Even though causing a schism in the saṅgha is concerned with monks only, those laymen and novices, who cause a schism in the Saṅgha, will have to suffer very serious evil consequences.

If one's attempts to cause a schism in the order of Bhikkhus are successful, one has committed the Saṅghabhedaka kamma.

When one commits any one of the pañcānantariya kamma, one is sure to be reborn in avīci niraya after one's death. Out of these five heinous deeds, Saṅghabhedaka kamma is the most serious. It can make one suffer in avīci niraya throughout the Āyukappa. Destruction of pagodas and Bodhi trees are also included in Lohituppādaka kamma and their evil results are as heinous as those of wounding a Buddha.

The evil results of the five heinous deeds decrease in this order. Saṅghabhedaka, Lohituppādaka, arahantaghātaka, mātughātaka and



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pitughātaka. If one's father is more virtuous than one's mother, pitughātaka becomes more serious than mātughātaka. A person who clings to the wrong view will also be surely reborn in niraya after his death.

### *Āsanna kamma*

Āsanna or Death-proximate kamma is that which one does or remembers just before death. Some meritorious and demeritorious actions (kṣāla and akusala kamma), performed earlier before death, which one might have forgotten may come back to one's memory at the dying moment. Although this action has been done by oneself in the former time, it makes its appearance to oneself at the dying moment. For this reason this kamma is called Āsanna Kamma. Those meritorious actions such as listening to discourses, observing moral precepts, practising meditation, as well as those demeritorious actions such as killing, harming others, stealing, lying and committing adultery, which are performed by oneself just before death, belong to Āsanna Kammās.

### *Āciṇṇa Kamma*

Āciṇṇa Kamma is the habitual action which is performed and remembered constantly. Those who earn their livings by killing or stealing throughout their lives are performing demeritorious Āciṇṇa-Kamma. Those who practise alms-giving, morality and meditation constantly are accumulating meritorious Āciṇṇa Kamma.

If, after performing an immoral action, one always remembers it, worries about it, and grieves over it, one is also acquiring demeritorious Āciṇṇa-Kamma. Similarly, if one performs a moral action, remembers it and rejoices in it repeatedly, one is increasing one's meritorious Āciṇṇa kamma.

Although Āciṇṇa Kamma is stronger by nature than Āsaṇṇa Kamma, Āsanna Kamma is more important in conditioning the rebirths because it is close to Maraṇasannajovīthi. For illustration, a cowherd keeps his cattle in the cattle-pen for the night. An old and weak cow has to sleep near the gate because of its slow movements. In the morning when the gate is opened, although young strong bulls try to come out first, the old cow nearest the gate walks out first. Similarly, although Āciṇṇa Kamma is a

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strong one, Āsanna-Kamma bears its results in the next existence because of its proximity to the death-consciousness.

Due to the Kamma which has the chance to condition the next birth, one of the following three objects always presents itself through one of the six sense doors: - Kamma, Kammanimitta, Gatinimitta. This object, which appears in one of the sense-doors, is called the Kamma-related object (maranāsanna-nimitta). This object initiates a cognitive series of consciousness called maranāsannaṅṅovīthi.

*Kaṭattā Kamma*

All actions, which were performed in the past and not included in the afore-mentioned three Kammas: Garuka Kamma, Āsaṅṅa Kamma, Āciṅṅa Kamma, are called Kaṭattā Kamma. Kaṭattā Kamma included the actions performed in this life as well as the actions performed in past lives. So there is nobody who is free from Kaṭattā Kamma. When the first three types of Kamma are absent, Kaṭattā Kamma will condition the next rebirth.

*Four Kinds of Kamma with respect to the Time of bearing Results*

With respect to the time of bearing its results, the Kamma are divided into four classes:-

1. *Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya Kamma*
2. *Upapajja Vendaniya Kamma*
3. *Aparāpariya Vendaniya Kamma*
4. *Ahosi Kamma*

1. *Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya Kamma* is the immediately effective kamma which bears results in the present existence.

When meritorious or demeritorious actions are performed, impulsive consciousness occurs seven-times. The volition which accompanies the first impulsive consciousness is known as *diṭṭhadhammavedaniya kamma*. This kamma will produce its results in this very existence.

As the first impulsive consciousness has no other impulsive consciousness prior to it and it is not supported by other impulsive consciousness, it is weak, and it cannot condition the next rebirth. It can bear results only in the present existence. Among the meritorious kammās, those kammās which coincide with the

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following four conditions will bear the results within seven days:-

- (1) The recipient of offering is an arahat or anāgāmi,
- (2) The volition of the donor at three stages of offering are strong,
- (3) The offerings have been acquired by lawful means,
- (4) The donation is made at the time when the recipient (arahat or anāgāmi) has just arisen from Nirodhasamāpatti (i.e. state of cessation).

The poor man Mahāduka became a rich man immediately after offering alms-food to the Buddha Kassapa. The Kākavaliya couple also became rich within seven days after offering rice-porridge to Arahāt, Sāriputta. In the case of demeritorious actions, Nanda, the cattle-slaughterer cut the tongue of a living ox and had it roasted. While he was eating it he lost his tongue and died and was reborn in Avīci Niraya. Ciñcamānavikā, the wicked woman, who falsely accused the Buddha for personal harassment. For this serious evil action, she was beaten by the audience and swallowed by the earth and was reborn in avīci niraya.

### *Upapajjavedanīya Kamma*

Upapajjavedanīya Kamma means subsequently effective kamma which bears fruit in the next (second) existence. It is the volition present in the seventh impulsive consciousness of the cognitive series. In performing meritorious actions such as the performance of charity (dāna), morality (sīla), and meditation (bhāvanā); and demeritorious actions such as killing and stealing, the impulsive consciousness arises seven times and only when the seventh impulsive consciousness which is the final impulsive consciousness arises, the action is accomplished. The former impulsive consciousnesses support the seventh impulsive consciousness. Therefore, the seventh impulsive consciousness is strongest and consequently the volition accompanied by that impulsive consciousness has the chance to bear fruit in the next existence.

### *Aparāpariyavedanīya Kamma*

Aparāpariyavedanīya Kamma means indefinitely effective Kamma which bears fruit from the third existence (if we start counting from this existence) till the last existence when the person realizes Nibbāna. It is the volitions which

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accompany the middle five impulsive consciousnesses. These volitions have the potential to bear fruit from the third existence till the last existence when one attains Nibbāna. The power of the kammās is exhausted only when it has produced its effect to the utmost. So long as the kamma does not have the chance to fruitify, its potential power remains latent.

### *Ahosi kamma*

Ahosi Kamma is ineffective and futile kamma which comprises both meritorious and demeritorious kammās which could have produced their effects in this existence or in a subsequent existence, but do not have the chance to operate, because the conditions are not favourable.

In the case of performing the actions which can bear the fruits immediately in the present existence, if only one action which is put to effect with full force under complete condition bears the fruits, the remaining actions have no chance to bear the fruits. And thus, these actions are called Ahosi Kamma. In the case of performing the Upapajjavedaniya-Kamma, if one of the actions bears the fruit by way of conditioning the next rebirth, other actions

cannot do so. But they can bear the fruit during one's lifetime of proceeding result (Pavatti). Otherwise they can be called Ahosi Kamma;

For example one who commits the five heinous actions will be reborn in niraya due to the serious action done by himself. The remaining actions become Ahosi Kamma. Out of the eight jhāna-samāpatti which are the actions pertaining to the Rūpa and Arūpa spheres only one jhāna-Samāpatti can bear the fruits of conditioning the next rebirth. The remaining seven jhānasamāpatti become Ahosi Kamma.

Although Aṅgulimāla had committed many demeritorious actions, these demeritorious actions cannot bear any effect and become Ahosi Kamma because his supreme meritorious action, attainment of Arahattamaggañāṇa, Lokuttara Kusala Kamma, eliminates all demeritorious actions.

### Kamma and Cakkavāḷa Niyāma (The Kamma and the Law of the Universe)

We know that in the inanimate world, the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, the universe, forests, mountains, the earth, the water, various trees and planets are contending with



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each other for power. In the same way, we can know that the kammās contend with each other. We also know that all things exist, grow, appear and disappear depending on their genetic power and natural power.

Also the appearance, existence, and disappearance of water, earth, trees and natural environment such as cold season, hot season, rainy season, day and night do not happen haphazardly. Their natural processes, their appearance and disappearance occur in an orderly manner depending upon their genetic power and natural power. They are called the natural law of the genetic process (Bijaniyāma), and natural law of the seasonal process (Utuniyāma).

Because human beings are not intelligent enough to understand exactly the intricate process of the inanimate world, they put the responsibility on supernormal beings. In fact, men has first created a supernormal being in his mind before supernormal beings can create human beings.

Just as one can see how the natural phenomena like the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, the universe, forests, mountains, the earth, the water, various trees and plants exist and produce the effects by contending with one another for power. We should also know how all Kammas bear the results by contending with one another. Just as the flowering and bearing of fruit of various plants are conditioned by seasonal changes so also kammas bear their results strictly in accordance with the Law of Kamma.

Again, just as the entire inanimate world in the universe stands in their respective places according to their actions, beings are reborn in the thirty-one planes of existence according to the power of action (Kammaniyāma) done by themselves. No one can go or live as they wish. Kamma carries out its duties strictly. It always produces its results in the right places at appropriate times. It never makes any mistake in producing its results with respect to time and place. This description relating to kamma shows only a fraction of the profundity of the Buddha Abhidhamma.

*Four Kinds of Kamma Classified according to the Resultant Abode*

(The Disposition of Kamma in thirty-one Planes of Existence)

There are four kinds of kamma classified according to the abodes where they bear their respective results. They are:-

1. Akusala Kamma;
2. Kāmāvacara Kusala Kamma;
3. Rūpāvacara Kusala Kamma, and
4. Arūpāvacara Kusala Kamma.

The eleven Akusala Kammās (excluding uddhacca-sampayuttacitta) produce akusala-vipāka upekkhā-santīraṇa citta which forms the apāya paṭisaṅghi in the four apāya abodes. All the twelve akusala cetanās, at pavatti-kāla, produce seven akusala vipāka cittas in the eleven sensuous sphere (Kāma-bhūmi) and in the fifteen fine material sphere (Rūpa-bhūmi) excluding Asaññasatta realm.

Kāmavacara Kusala Kamma produces rebirth consciousness in seven Kāma sugati-realms. At pavatti-kāla, it produces results in eleven Kāma realms and fifteen Rūpa realms excluding

Asaññasatta realm. Rūpāvacara Kusalakamma produces the rebirth-consciousness in the Rūpabrahma realm. At pavatti-kāla, it also produces its results in this realm.

Arupāvacara Kusala Kamma can produce the rebirth-consciousness in non-material realm (Arūpabrahmā bhūmi). At pavatti-kāla it also produces its results in this realm.

Kāmāvacara Kusalakamma momentarily eliminates all the defilements (tadaṅgapahāna). Rūpāvacara Kusala and Arūpāvacara Kusala Kamma eliminate hindrances (Nīvaraṇas), which hinder the attainment of emancipation (vikkham-bhanapahāna).

Besides, these Kusalakammas, Maggakusala Kammas which are Lokuttarā kusala kamma completely eliminate defilements (Samucchedapahāna). They produce the fruits of Lokuttarāphala.

The resultant abodes of these Kusala-kammas are miserable realms (Apāya bhūmi), sensuous sphere (Kāmasugati bhūmi), fine material sphere (Rūpāvacara bhūmi), non material sphere (Arūpāvacara bhūmi).

## Miserable Realms

Apāya bhūmis are miserable realms, devoid of happiness where there is little chance to do meritorious deeds, which can bring three kinds of bliss, viz. human bliss, deva bliss and Nibbānic bliss.

The four miserable realms are the realms of continuous suffering (nirayas), the animal world (Tiracchāna), the realms of miserable beings burning with thirst and hunger (peta), unpleasant demon plane and the realms of miserable beings suffering pain with pleasurable intervals (Asurakāra).

### *Niraya*

Niraya is the abode without happiness and full of miseries. It has eight levels which exist below the human world. These abodes are Sanjiva, Kālasutta, Saṃgāta, Roruva, Mahāroruva, Tāpana, Mahātāpana and Avici. And there are also many other nirayas. The creatures in Niraya suffer from various miseries until their evil kamma is exhausted. They have very little chance to perform meritorious deeds. Therefore, when we are born as a human being, we must avoid evil

deeds and perform the meritorious deeds earnestly.

### *Tiracchāna*

There are different kinds of animals living on land, in water and in air. All these creatures living in contradiction to the attainment of magga and phala are called Tiracchāna. They have no specific place apart from the human world.

### *Peta*

Petas are beings tortured by hunger and thirst all the time. They have no specific plane of their own but they live in the forest, mountains, rivers, streams, cemeteries, etc. Some petas have to eat left-overs of cooked rice, cooked meat, phlegm, spittle, excrement, etc. Some petas are subject to various kinds of miseries.

### *Asurakāya*

Asurakāya are beings who lack happiness and courage. They have no place of their own but generally live on sea-shores, or on the banks of rivers, etc. There are some Asurakāra who have to live without taking any food for the

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whole period of the appearance of one or two Buddhas. As a result of their demeritorious deeds it sometimes happens that when some petas and asurakāras go down into the Gaṅgā river to drink, water disappeared.

### Seven Abodes of Kāmasugati

Seven abodes where Kāmāvacara kusalakamma bears their results are called Kāmasugati bhūmi. They are human abode and six celestial abodes.

#### *Human World*

Man is called "Manussa" in Pāli, because of his reasoning strong will power. He can do demeritorious action even to the extent of committing heinous deeds like killing his own parents, etc. On the other hand, he can do good deeds and cultivate the right practice until he attains enlightenment. When carrying out one's good deeds, one has to keep these three, viz. action (kamma), wisdom (ñāṇa) and effort (viriyā) in balance to be successful. In the world of human beings, every one is subject to both pain and pleasure, failure and success.

### *The six Deva Realms*

Beings are reborn in deva world as a result of their meritorious actions. The six deva realms are Catumahārājika, Tāvatiṃsā, Yāmā, Tusīta, Nimmānarati, Paranimmita-vasavatti.

#### *Catumahārājika*

Catumahārājika is the deva realm where the four great kings, viz. Dhatarāṭha, Virūhaka, Virūpakkha, Kuvera and reign. In this abode various devas, viz. guardian deities of the earth, the guardian deities of trees, celestial ogre, demon, water demon and heavenly musicians (gandhabbas) reside. One day in Catumahārājika deva realm is equal to 50 years in the human world. Their celestial life-span is 500 years.

#### *Tāvatiṃsā*

Tāvatiṃsā is the celestial abode where thirty-three leaders of devas led by Māgha (Sakka), the king of the celestial beings reign. A day in Tāvatiṃsā is equal to 100 years in the world of human beings. Their life-span is 1000 celestial years. The Cuḷāmaṇi cetiya is situated in this abode. The sacred hair of Bodhisatta and the



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right eye-toothrelic of the Buddha are enshrined in this cetiya.

### *Yāmā*

Yāmā is the celestial abode where there is only happiness and no misery. Devas of this abode enjoy all kinds of celestial pleasures all the time. Suyāma is the chief deva of this abode. A day in Yāmā is equal to 200 years in the world of human beings. Their life span is 2000 celestial years.

### *Tusitā*

Tusitā is the abode where celestial beings live happily. The chief deva is Santisita. A day in Tusitā is equal to 400 human years. Their life span is 4000 celestial years.

### *Nimmānarati*

Nimmānarati is the celestial abode of those who delight in their creation of things of pleasure whenever they wish to enjoy themselves in a greater degree than what they are then enjoying. Whereas the previously mentioned devas

of the four abodes have just their own spouses to enjoy themselves, the devas of Nimānarati can create various kinds of appearances, sounds, etc to enjoy themselves as much as they wish. A day in Nimmānarati is equal to 800 years in the world of human beings. Their life span is 8000 celestial years.

### *Paranimmitavasavattī*

Paranimmitavasavattī is a celestial abode of those who take delight in celestial pleasures created for them by others. A day in Paranimmitavasavattī is equal to 1000 years in the world of human beings. Their life span is 16000 celestial years.

As a result of past meritorious actions, all male devas always have the looks of a twenty-years old and female devas have the looks of a sixteen-years old. All of them are beautiful and they never have broken teeth nor grey hair, nor defective hearing nor poor eyesight. Their bodies are always pure and there is no excrement inside their body because they have celestial food only once a week. Depending upon different past meritorious Kamma, there will be difference in acquirement of such things

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as gardens, mansions, wishing trees, sons, daughters, wives, retinue, with one another. All devas take delight in sensual pleasures by various means during the whole of their respective life spans.

Thus, all eleven planes comprising the four miserable realms (Apāya), the human world and the six celestial realms are called the eleven sensuous planes (Kāma bhūmis).

### *Rūpāvacarabhūmi*

When a meditator attains firm concentration, he will be free from defilements, hindrances (nīvaraṇa). Then as he continues his practice of insight meditation, he attains the first jaṇṇa having five factors--viz. initial application of the mind (vitakka), sustained application of the mind (vicāra), delightful satisfaction (pīti), bliss or happiness (sukha) and one pointedness of the mind (ekaggatā). Of the associates of Jhāna consciousness (jhāna citta)--viz. chanda, citta, vīriya and paññā--one usually become predominant (adhipati). Depending on the quality of this predominant factor, the Jhānas are differentiated as inferior (paritta), moderate (majjhima) and superior (pañita). If a meditator's power or

quality of predominant factor is inferior, the attainment of his jhāna is called Paritta jhāna. If his power or quality of predominant factor is moderate, the attainment of his jhāna is called Majjhimajhāna. If his power or quality of predominant factor is superior, the attainment of his jhāna is called Panītajhāna. When a meditator attains first jhāna and dies in the stage of Paritta jhāna, he will be reborn as a Brahma in Brahmāpārisajjā bhūmi. His life span is one-third of Asaṅkheyya kappa.

When a meditator attains first jhāna and dies in the stage of Majjhima jhāna, he will be reborn as a Brahma in the realm of Brahma's ministers (Brahma-purohitā realm). His life span is half of Asaṅkheyya kappa.

When a meditator attains first jhāna and dies in the stage of Panītajhāna, he will be reborn as a Brahma in the realm of great Brahma (Mahābrahmā). His life span is one Asaṅkheyya Kappa.

When a meditator attains second jhāna and third jhāna and dies in the stage of paritta, he will be reborn as a Brahma in parittābhābhūmi. His life span is two world-cycles.

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When a meditator attains second jhāna and third jhāna and dies in the stage of majjhima, he will be reborn as a Brahma in Appamāṇābhā bhūmi. His life span is four world-cycles.

When a meditator attains second jhāna and third jhāna and dies in the stage of pañita, he will be reborn as a Brahma in Ābhassarā bhūmi. His life span is eight world-cycles.

When a meditator attains fourth jhāna and dies in the stage of paritta, he will be reborn as a Brahma in Parittā-subhā bhūmi. His life span is 'sixteen' world-cycles. When a meditator attains fourth jhāna and dies in the stage of majjhima, he will be reborn as a Brahma in Appamānasubhā bhūmi. His life span is sixty-four world-cycles.

When a meditator attains fifth jhāna and dies, he will be reborn in Vehapphala bhūmi. If he contemplates repeatedly his fifth jhāna with the mind of repulsiveness on mental phenomena and on the nature of matter (Rūpa), as he desires, he will be reborn in Asaññasatta bhūmi where there is matter only. His life span in Vehapphala bhūmi and Asaññasatta bhūmi is five hundred world-cycles in each.

### *Five Suddhāvāsa bhūmi*

If a non-returner (Anāgāmi) passes away, he will be reborn in five Suddhāvāsa bhūmis only. The life span of a Brahma in Avihābhūmi is one thousand world-cycles. The life-span of a Brahma in Atappā bhūmi is two thousand world cycles.

The life span of a Brahma in Sudassā bhūmi is four thousand world-cycles. The life span of a Brahma in Sudassī bhūmi is eight thousand world-cycles. The life span of a Brahma in Akaniṭṭha bhūmi is sixteen thousand world-cycles.

### *Arūpavacara bhūmi*

Having realized the repulsive nature of corporeality physical phenomena (Rūpa), with his mind hankering after mental phenomena (Nāma), the meditator continues his insight-meditation. Having realized the repulsive nature of corporeality (physical phenomena, rūpa) with his mind hankering after mental phenomena (Nāma), the meditator continues his insight meditation. If a meditator who has attained Ākāsa-nañcāyatana jhāna passes away, he will be reborn in the realm of infinite space (Ākāsa-nañcāyatana bhūmi).

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His life span is twenty thousand world-cycles and he will only have consciousness. He will not possess any material quality. If a meditator who has attained *viññānañcāyatana jhāna* passes away, he will be reborn in the *Viññānañcāyatana bhūmi* as an *Arūpa Brahma*. His life span is forty thousand world-cycles. If a meditator who has attained *Ākiñcaññāyatana jhāna* passes away, he will be reborn in the *Ākiñcaññāyatana bhūmi* as an *Arūpa Brahma*. His life span is sixty thousand world-cycles. If a meditator who has attained *Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana jhāna* passes away, he will be reborn in *Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana bhūmi* as an *Arūpa Brahma*. His life span is eighty four thousand world cycles.

### Notes on Rebirth and Death

#### *Death*

*(the four ways of  
the coming of death)*

All beings have to die through any one of these four ways of death. These are death due to the expiration of the life span (*Āyukkhaya maraṇa*), death due to the expiration of the Reproductive Kammic force (*Kammakkhaya maraṇa*), death due to the expiration of both the

life span and kammic force (Ubhayakkhaya maraṇa), death due to the intervention of a destructive Kamma (Upacchedaka maraṇa).

The four ways of death may be likened to the four ways by which a lighted oil lamp may be extinguished.

1. Āyukkhaya maraṇa is death due to the expiry of life span even before expiry of the Kammic force. It is like the flame which goes out as there is no more wick left in the lamp to burn.
2. Kammakhaya maraṇa - is death due to the exhaustion of Kammic force even before the expiration of life span just like the flame which goes out due to exhaustion of oil in the lamp.
3. Ubhayakhaya maraṇa - is death due to expiration of both life span and Kammic force, just like the flame which goes out due to the exhaustion of both wick and oil.
4. Upacchedaka maraṇa - is death due to the intervention of destructive



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Kamma (Upaghātaka Kamma) done in the past or in the present existence, even though both life span and Kammic force have not yet come to the end. One may meet with unfortunate death like the death due to epidemic disease, to accident, to natural disaster like fire and flood or one may even die at the hands of others.

It is just like the flame which goes out when the wind blows suddenly and puts out the light although the wick and the oil still remain.

### *Seeing signs at dying moments*

When one is at the dying moment due to any kind of death mentioned above he may see one of three signs--kamma object (Kamma), sign of kamma (Kamma-nimitta), sign of destiny (Gati-nimitta). As there are many actions done by beings in their daily life, any one of meritorious or demeritorious kamma--objects may come to the mind of a dying person. This appearance of evil or good kamma is called seeing the sign of kamma (Kamma-nimitta).

Any one of the six-sense objects-viz. visible object, sound, odour, taste, tangible object and mind object which are experienced at the time of performing one's action is Kamma-nimitta. The sense objects which occur in performing meritorious and demeritorious actions such as pagodas, monasteries, shrines, flowers, light, flesh or meat, animals, weapons, etc., are called Kammanimitta. Seeing these objects in the mind-door of a dying person is called seeing the Kammanimitta.

Gatinimitta is a sign of place where one is to take birth. A dying person may see objects concerning his new life, such as utensils and retinues that he may come to possess in his new life. If a dying person is to be reborn in human world, he will see the mother's womb in his mind-door. If he is to be reborn in Niraya, he will see signs of hell fire, cauldron filled with molten metal, a denizen of hell, vultures, hell hounds, crows, etc. If he is to be reborn in peta realm he will see forests, mountains, rivers, etc. If he is to be reborn in the celestial world, he will see celestial mansion, celestial beings, celestial vehicles, celestial garden, celestial wishing trees, etc. Seeing these signs through one's mind-door is called Gatinimitta.

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These Kamma, Kāmmanimitta and Gatinimitta are seen in the minds, eyes of the dying person depending upon his past meritorious action or demeritorious actions. If he has performed good actions in the past, he will see good signs and so he will have pure and meritorious mind-continuum. If he has performed evil action in the past, he will see evil signs and so he will have impure and demeritorious mind-continuum.

Thus an experienced nurse can guess the destination of a dying patient by looking at his face. The three types of nimitta usually appear as a result of actions done by one; but on the other hand, these nimittas can also change for better ones, if friends and relatives who might be near him remind him of his or her meritorious deeds. Thus following the example of the King Duṭṭhāgāmani, one may read out the list of daily meritorious deeds done by a dying person. A dying person should recall meritorious actions done by himself; he should also practise insight meditation and tranquillity meditation. Other persons near the dying, one may perform meritorious actions such as reciting Buddha's Pāḷi verses, common prayers, protective verses (paritta), hitting the triangular brass gong, offering flowers, and offering lights to the

Buddha so that the dying person would hear, see and remember these various meritorious actions. Such actions as weeping, speaking vain talks, quarreling must not be done near a dying person.

The death-consciousness of a dying person is inclined to linger around the signs of his sense-object. If a dying person will be reborn in a good destination, the good signs of sense-objects relating to meritorious actions arise at the dying moment. At this moment, the dying person's face is clear and happy. If a dying person will reach a bad destination the evil signs of sense-object relating to demeritorious actions arise at the dying moment. At this moment the dying person's face is full of dread and fear. In some cases a horrible loud noise might come out from his mouth.

On seeing a dying person with his attention being fixed on evil signs, those near him should divert his attention on an evil sense-object to a good sense-object of destination. The service of a good companion is essential for the dying person at the dying moment so as to enable him to be reborn in a good destination.

A dying person is grasping whatever signs that appear in his mind-door at the dying

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moment. His mind is inclined to new existence in which he will be reborn, just as the traveller inclines towards his trip that he will make. Although the action that will produce next rebirth is an old one done in a previous existence, it appears to the dying person as if he were doing that action at the present moment. This kind of appearance is not created by anyone, but it appears as the result of Kammic force done by himself.

Death impulsive-consciousness (Marana-saṅgajavana) arises five times in the stream of consciousness of a dying person at the moment of death-proximate. As soon as the fifth impulsive consciousness has arisen, the death-consciousness (cuticitta) arises. This death-consciousness dissolves together with kamaja-rūpa (corporeality produced by Kamma). No sooner have cuticitta and kamaja-rūpa dissolved together than the present existence also dissolves. This time of dissolution represents the death-moment. Soon, the corporeality produced by consciousness (cittaja-rūpa) and the corporeality produced by nutrition (ahāraja-rūpa) also dissolve together. Then the life of a being comes to an end.

### ***Rebirth***

Immediately after the dissolution of the death-consciousness, the rebirth-consciousness arises, joining the new existence with the old one. This consciousness is called Paṭisandhi-citta. As soon as the rebirth-consciousness arises, the new existence of a being also begins. There is no lapse of time. Rebirth-consciousness arises, depending upon a heart base (hadaya-vatthu) which has arisen simultaneously with (rebirth-consciousness) as a result of kammic force.

The life of a sentient being with a rebirth-consciousness (Paṭisandhi-citta). After the dissolution of this rebirth-consciousness (bhavaṅgacitta), the same rebirth-consciousness appears sixteen times with the name of life continuum (bhavaṅga). After the rebirth-consciousness has arisen and dissolved the same type of consciousness arises and dissolves incessantly from the time of conception till death (Pavatti Kāla) under the name of life continuum (bhavaṅga citta) because it is the factor responsible for continuation of existence. The bhavaṅga citta arises and dissolves between the two cognitive series of consciousness (vīthi).

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Rebirth-consciousness also takes one of the sense-objects of action (Kamma), sign of kamma (Kamma nimitta), sign of destiny (gati-nimitta) which was brought by death-consciousness.

For all beings, birth-consciousness appears neither without cause nor by the will of some creator (God), it is the result of Kāmma which one has done in the previous existence. Sentient beings do meritorious and demeritorious actions associated with ignorance and rooted in craving.

Therefore, ignorance (avijjhā), craving (taṇhā), meritorious (kusala), demeritorious (akusala) actions are causes that produce rebirth consciousness. When Kamma, Kāmmanimitta, Gatinimitta appear, ignorance covers the fault of the object. Craving (taṇhā) likes, and receives the sense-object and it makes rebirth-consciousness to incline towards the object. Thus a fresh existence arises.

All living beings appear and disappear continuously together with death-consciousness (cuti-citta), rebirth-consciousness (Paṭisandhi citta) throughout the cycle of births and deaths (saṃsāra). When various sense-objects strike the sense bases of the consciousness, cognitive series (of consciousness) (vīthi) arises. After the

dissolution of cognitive series of consciousness, life continuum(bhavaṅga) take over continuously.

In this case mind and matter of past existence do not reappear in the present new existence. It is just a fresh set of mind and matter appearing in the new existence. Nevertheless these mind and matter of present existence are not related to the kammic forces of past existence. They arise again due to avijjhā and taṅhā of one's past existence. The arising of mind and matter in the new existence is like the arising of an echo, lighting oil-lamp and stamping a rubber seal. When a person shouts in a forest or in a valley he will hear an echo of his shout. This echo is not his original shout. Similarly, in the case of an oil-lamp, the new flame of the oil-lamp is not the original one. The original flame does not become less by lighting a new oil-lamp. Nevertheless, the new flame cannot arise without the help of the original flame. In the same way, when a rubber seal or a block is stamped on papers, there images or letters appear on the papers. The images or letters are not those of the original rubber seal or block. Nevertheless they cannot appear without the help of the original rubber seal or block.



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In the same way, the mind and matter of the past existence cannot follow one to the new existence. Thus, the death-consciousness and birth-consciousness of past and present existences appear and disappear throughout the saṃsāra because of the Kammic-force of ignorance, craving and volitional activities.

### *Four Modes of Conceiving*

Depending on the four modes of conceiving of beings Paṭisandhi may be divided into four kinds:- Saṃsedaja, Aṇḍaja, Jalābuja, Opapātika. Saṃsedaja paṭisandhi means conceiving of beings in moisture, filth, flower, fruit or the hollow of a tree trunk. For example, insects and such human beings as queen Padumavadi, etc are born with Saṃsedaja paṭisandhi.

Aṇḍaja paṭisandhi means conceiving of beings from an egg. Birds, fishes, etc. are example of Aṇḍaja paṭisandhi.

Jalābuja paṭisandhi means conceiving of beings in a mother's womb. Human beings, dogs, cows, etc., are examples of Jalābuja paṭisandhi.

Opapātika paṭisandhi means rebirth in the form of a full grown-up person. Devas, brahmas,

inhabitants of niraya are examples of Opaṭātika paṭisandhi.

### *Eternal Soul and Future Existence*

According to the Buddha's philosophy, the incessant round of rebirths is called Saṃsāra. The Buddha does not accept the creed that a soul leaves the present mind and matter and reincarnates itself in a future existence. This soul never dissolves but remains forever. According to this belief, the self or ego (atta) or soul is reborn in a new life as a new being by leaving the old body or the old life. The soul or ego never dies or disappears and always exists as an eternal soul.

In the time of the Buddha, a chieftain named Pāyāsi held the view that there is no world after this, no fruits of actions and no rebirth. Therefore, he tested repeatedly in order to find out how the soul departs from the body by executing criminals in an enclosed room. And he professed that he had never seen a soul departing from the body.

In the view of non-Buddhists, there are various views as to whether there is a soul or ego or not, and whether there is another new

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soul in the future existence or not. They also believe that they enjoy and suffer good or bad experiences in life according to the decision of a certain supernatural being.

According to these views, there is no new life and Saṃsāra after one's death. Nevertheless, even among those who have no faith in new life and saṃsāra, some scholars and researchers have made researches and confirmed that there are some persons who vividly remember their past existences. So the Buddha's philosophy of birth and death gives much support to the non-Buddhist scholars and researchers with free thinkings.

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Ten Meritorious Deeds

**Ten Meritorious Deeds**  
(Puññakriyā Vatthu)

**4**

The meritorious deeds which should be performed for the happiness and prosperity of all beings are called puññakriyā vatthu. There are ten kinds of meritorious deeds. They are:-

- (1) Dāna = generosity or giving in charity;
- (2) Sīla = morality;
- (3) Bhāvanā = meditation; cultivation of the mind;
- (4) Apacāyana = paying due respect to those who are worthy of respect;

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- (5) *Veyyāvacca* = service; beneficial acts; helping others in performing good deeds;
- (6) *Pattidāna* = sharing merits with others after doing some good deeds
- (7) *Pattānumodana* = rejoicing in others' meritorious deeds and saying 'well-done!'
- (8) *Dhammassavana* = listening well to the Doctrine;
- (9) *Dhammadesanā* = teaching the Doctrine;
- (10) *Diṭṭhijukamma* = straightening one's view  
(having faith in kamma and its results).

### *Dāna*

*Dāna* means giving away something as a gift or donation. If one performs the charitable act with keen volition before, during and after the time of giving, without any attachment to

the things which are being offered, and with a firm belief in kamma and its results, that kind of dāna is indeed greatly beneficial dāna. Owing to one's dāna, one will be endowed with riches throughout the round of rebirths.

### *Sīla*

Sīla means restraining one's bodily and verbal actions, maintaining good moral conduct. One who observes morality avoids doing evil actions either physically or verbally. All human beings should observe the five moral precepts well just as they wear their nether garments well. It is essential that everyone be endowed with good morality. So everyone should observe the five moral precepts. For other higher moral precepts (Uposatha sīla), the more one can observe them, the greater the benefits will be. The merit of morality surpasses that of charity. One who is endowed with morality will be reborn in fortunate existences throughout the round of rebirths.

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#### *Bhāvanā*

Bhāvanā means contemplating the attributes of the Buddha and practising tranquillity or Insight meditation. The practice of meditation is more beneficial than the performance of charitable acts or the observance of moral precepts. It is necessary to have a calm and tranquil mind to practise meditation, because it is cultivated through mental action. This time of the Buddha Sāsana is the opportune time for all human beings to contemplate the attributes of the Buddha (Buddhānussati bhavanā) and cultivate loving-kindness (Mettā bhavanā). It is of great benefit to practise tranquillity meditation (samatha bhāvanā) and insight meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā). Only at the time when the Buddha's Teaching flourishes do the people have the chance to contemplate the three characteristics of impermanence (Anicca), suffering (Dukkha) and unsubstantiality of sentient beings (Anatta). The practice of meditation (bhāvanā) even for a short time can bear more benefits than practising dāna and sīla for a long time. Therefore, everyone should practise tranquillity meditation (Samatha bhāvanā) as well as insight meditation (Vipassanā bhāvanā) to gain great merit and to make his life worthwhile.

### *Apacāyana*

Apacāyana means paying due respect to those who are worthy of respect. The Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, parents, teachers, those who are older, more dignified and more virtuous than oneself, those who practise meditation and those who make strenuous effort for the development of their nation, the Buddha's Teaching and their country, are worthy of respect. Everyone should pay them due respect by giving a warm welcome when they come, paying respect to them with joined palms raised to the forehead, paying homage to them, walking respectfully before them, bending slightly forward, etc. All these actions denote apacāyana. One who is endowed with apacāyana is loved by everyone and will be prosperous and successful in this very life. He will also be reborn in a good destination after death.

### *Veyyāvacca*

Veyyāvacca means helping others in performing good deeds. Attending on those who are worthy of respect in a small way or in a big way, helping one's friends in their affairs, offering one's seat and helping persons worthy



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of respect while one is travelling, helping the sick and the aged, cleaning monasteries, houses, localities, pagodas and Bodhi Trees, repairing roads for the welfare of passers-by, building bridges, placing water-pots on stands for everyone to drink, and building rest-houses, etc., are called *Veyyāvacca*.

#### *Pattidāna*

*Pattidāna* means sharing one's merits with others after doing some good deeds. One who has performed some meritorious deeds should share one's merits with others so that they may also gain the same benefit. By doing so, without decreasing one's own merit, others will also get the same benefit. One must share one's merit with the King of Death (Yama) for he always questions those who reach niraya whether they had performed some meritorious deeds in their past existences in order to enable him to send them to good destination. Besides, one has to share one's merits with one's parents, grand parents, and all sentient beings living in the thirty-one planes of existences.

*Pattānumodanā*

Pattānumodanā means rejoicing in others' meritorious deeds and saying 'well-done' when one sees, hears or knows them. When one rejoices in others' meritorious deeds happily and earnestly, one will acquire a great deal of good kamma which will bear good results in many future existences. Even when one cannot perform meritorious deeds by oneself, one can say "well-done" "(sādhu)" joyfully and sincerely to other's good deeds. The acts of sharing one's merit and rejoicing in others' good deeds resemble the act of lighting a candle from another lighted candle. The flame of the lighted candle does not lose any of its brightness, and it enables other candles to get similar flames and burn brightly. In the same way, one who shares his merit with others, will not lose any of his merit, while he helps others who rejoice in his merit to gain the same benefits as he does.

When miserable beings (petas) rejoice and say 'well-done' (sādhu) to the merits shared out to them, these acts of merit can bear fruits immediately. Various celestial beings and miserable beings such as Paradattūpajīvī petas and Vemānika petas, who sustain their lives on

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others' giving, can enjoy the bliss and happiness of good merit as soon as they say 'well-done' to other's meritorious deeds. The case of King Bimbissāra and the petas who were his relatives in former existences clearly illustrates that sharing of merit is beneficial to those who have passed away. Therefore, one who performs meritorious deeds should share one's merit with all, especially, with one's relatives who have passed away.

*Dhammassavaṇa*

Dhammassavana means listening well to the Doctrine, i.e, listening with proper attention to the discourses, which can give both mundane and supramundane benefits, Dhammassavana really means listening to the discourses that can lead one to liberation from the round of rebirths. It is a very rare opportunity to listen to the discourses delivered by the Buddha. It is described as one of the five Rare Occasions (Sadhmassavanam dullabham). Therefore, listeners should pay proper attention and listen respectfully to the teachings of the Buddha for the Buddha appears in this world only once in aeons of time.

### *Dhammadesanā*

Dhammadesanā means teaching the Doctrine to others. Expounding, writing, distributing and teaching the discourses preached by the Buddha to others, with proper attention, regardless of gain and fame, denote dhamma-deśanā. According to the Buddha's words, "Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti", meaning that "the benefits accruing from expounding the Doctrine to others surpass the benefits obtained from any other form of donation". All devotees should therefore strive to teach the Doctrine to others.

### *Diṭṭhijukamma*

Diṭṭhijukamma means straightening one's view or having faith in kamma and its results. It is of paramount importance for all beings to have the right view. Perceiving, accepting and believing in the ten subjects of right view (dassavatthuka) mean diṭṭhijukamma. So, to have the right view, one should understand the ten subjects of right view. They are:-

- (1) believing that there is benefit in giving alms (atthi dinnam);

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- (2) believing that there is benefit in making great sacrificial offerings (atthi yiṭṭham);
- (3) believing that there is benefit in making small sacrificial offerings (atthi hutam);
- (4) believing that there is fruit (phala) and resultant (vipāka) of good or bad action (atthi sukatadukkaṭānam kammānam phalam vipāko);
- (5) believing that there is present existence (atthi ayaṃ loko);
- (6) believing that there is future existence (atthi paro loko);
- (7) believing that there is the consequence of good or bad deeds performed towards one's mother (atthi mātā);
- (8) believing that there is the consequence of good or bad deeds performed towards one's father (atthi pitā);
- (9) believing that there are beings who arise as fully grown up persons without parents (atthi sattā opapātikā); and

- (10) believing that there are samaṇas and brahmaṇas in the world who have good morality, who realize with the special wisdom the truth relating to the present and future existences and who can preach the Doctrine to others (atthi loke samaṇabrahmaṇa sammaggata sammā paṭipanna). Those who believe in the ten subjects of right view are called good sons and good daughters with the right view.

All beings, having faith in kamma and its result, and abandoning the ten subjects of wrong view, as well as the creator concept, and worldly concepts such as relying on astrological or magical potencies, should perform meritorious actions for the welfare of this world as well as for attaining happy existences in the future. It is of vital importance and great benefit to all beings to have the knowledge of the right view on kamma and its results. By performing good actions with this knowledge, one will be reborn in happy existences, will possess great wealth and will realize Nibbāna, which is the extinction of existences. Of all evil deeds, holding the wrong views is the most grievous one. Those who hold wrong views very firmly cannot

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be liberated from the round of rebirths even if they have the opportunity to listen to a discourse preached by the Buddha. These holders of wrong views will remain as the tree stumps of *samsāra* (*samsāra kñānuka*) for ever. So, all beings must strive to become holders of right view.

### Charity

#### *The Meaning of Charity*

The volition that one wants to give away or offer one's possession to others in charity is called *dāna*, and the offerings that one makes also denotes *dāna*.

Charitable deeds arise depending on one's volition. Unless one is motivated, one will never give away one's possession in charity. Therefore, volition is the main force of charity and it also is called *dāna*. Charity done with keen volition can bring great benefit to the donor. The objects of offerings also help in the accomplishment of charitable deeds. If there is no object of offering, no charitable deed can be done. So the objects of offering also denote *dāna*.

In the Buddha's Teaching, charity (dāna), morality (sīla) and mental cultivating (bhāvanā) are of vital importance. Dāna is the foundation of all Perfections. It is the Perfection in Dāna that all Bodhisattas fulfil prior to other Perfections. Dāna also resembles a package of provision for one who roams about the round of rebirths. A person who has performed a great deal of charitable deeds will become a man of great wealth and high station in whatever existence he will be reborn. Even when in his last existence, he realizes Nibbāna, he will realize it more comfortably than one who lacks in charitable deeds. One should not neglect dāna because one can rely on it not only in the present life but also in future existences. If one performs charitable deeds with a correct attitude in proper and systematic way, one will realize Nibbāna and be free from the round of rebirths at the earliest.

The practice of dāna had already existed in various forms long before the appearance of the Buddha. In those days, in compliance with the teachings of Brahmanas, the people, expecting better future existences, killed human beings and animals and made sacrificial offerings thinking that their offering was dāna.



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The custom of these sacrificial offerings was widespread at that time. The people killed a hundred goats, a hundred cows, a hundred human beings, etc., to make dreadful sacrificial offerings known as *satapadiyittha*.

Kings and rich men killed various kinds of animals and made sacrificial offerings in competition with one another. They also believed that their offerings were the most excellent donation.

At the time of the Buddha, he told the people not to make such sacrificial offerings, and explained to them the evil consequences of these offerings. He also gave discourses on charity explaining how to perform charitable deeds in order to gain great wealth as the result of their acts of charity. Since that time, the Brahmanas have abstained from taking others' lives and finally they are converted into vegetarians.

On expounding discourses on charity, the Buddha told donors not to destroy any life for their offerings, and not to make extravagant donations. He also told donees frequently to receive offerings only as much as they really need. He also said that one should donate only

one-fourth of one's possessions. The Buddha did not want donors to make their donations in an ostentatious manner because extremely lavish donations can cause extreme hardship to the donors.

Especially the Buddha urged people to make charitable deeds that could have everlasting benefits to the Buddha Sāsana and also to the whole world. If one performs charitable deeds as a habitual action, and keeps on making such charity as a routine duty, one will enjoy greater benefits. Wise elders of olden days used to make efforts so their descendants would keep on performing these everlasting charities regularly from one generation to another.

After the rich man Anāthapiṇḍika had passed away, one of his grand daughters lived in poverty. But she made strenuous effort daily to keep up the traditional practice of performing charitable deeds. She invited one bhikku and offered alms-food daily because she could not afford to offer alms-food to many bhikkus. In order to do so she herself picked up grains left in the field just after harvest, sold the grains, and offered alms-food to a bhikkhu daily. In this way, she was able to maintain the

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charitable duty of her ancestor in spite of her poverty.

There are many other charitable deeds which can be performed bodily depending on one's capacity and diligence. Charitable actions such as regular offerings of alms-food, water and lights to the Buddha and the bhikkhus, the setting up of pots of drinking water on wayside stands for travellers to drink, are invaluable habitual charities which can be performed only by those who are endowed with diligence and keen volition.

Myanmars of olden days generously performed everlasting charitable deeds such as planting trees, constructing rest-houses, digging wells and ponds, and building roads and bridges for public use. In planting trees, they planted perennial trees such as coconut trees, jack-fruit trees and toddy-palms not for their benefit but for the benefit of later generations. Such charitable deeds will produce good results for ever.

The benefits of dāna are numerous. If dāna is made in a proper way, it can give rise to supreme, wholesome kamma associated with three moral roots (Tihetuka ukkaṭṭha kusala kamma). The dāna, done generously with the

comprehension of kamma and its result with keen volition at the three stages of the good deeds, is a good friend for one throughout the long journey in saṃsāra.

*Volition at the three Stages  
of the good Deeds and the  
Characteristics of Dāna*

Volition (cetanā) is of paramount importance in performing charitable deeds. No charitable deed will arise, if there is no generous volition. Cetanā is of three kinds, namely, pubba, muñca and apara. The volition that arises at the time of offerings is called muñca-cetanā, which is the true essence of Dāna.

Before performing dāna, one collects offerings pondering: "I'm going to perform a charitable deed, the mundane and supramundane benefits of which will accompany me life after life". This kind of volition is called pubba-cetanā.

While performing dāna, one gives the offerings to donees pondering: "I'm getting the invaluable seed of merit from the objects that are of no real value." This kind of volition is called muñca-cetanā.

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After performing dāna, one reflects repeatedly on one's donation pondering: "I've already performed a charitable deed which is praised by the wise, "Well-done, well-done!" This kind of volition is called *apara-cetanā*.

The dāna performed with these three kinds of volition can yield numerous benefits. It is very important for the donor to be endowed with these three types of volition.

Moreover, to make alms-giving yield great benefits, the donee must also be endowed with certain qualities. He must be free from lust or trying to be free from lust, he must be free from anger or trying to be free from anger. He must be free from delusion or trying to be free from delusion. The donees who have already discarded lust, anger and delusion or those who are still making attempts to be devoid of lust, anger and delusion are the most worthy donees whilst the others are ordinary donees. Thus both donor and donee should be endowed with their respective qualities.

Therefore, to accomplish an act of charity, four factors; namely, donor, donees, object of offering and volition, must be present. Only if the object of offering is obtained lawfully, will the donation be of great benefit.

The extent of the benefits of dāna are immeasurable just like water in the ocean which cannot be measured with cups and pots.

### *Categories of Dāna*

There are several varieties of dāna. But in reality, these dānas can be divided into three classes according to the Buddha's Teachings. They are dāna according to Suttanta-desanā, dānas according to Vinaya-desanā and dānas according to the Abhidhamma-desanā.

There are ten kinds of dāna according to Suttanta-desanās or as found in the Buddha's discourses. They are-

- (1) Anna dāna = offering of cooked rice and other kinds of food;
- (2) Pāna dāna = offering of drinking water or beverages;
- (3) Vattha dāna = offering of robes or clothing;
- (4) Yāna dāna = offering of footwear and other items that can be used in travelling;

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(5) Māladāna = offering of flowers;

(6) Gandha dāna = offering of scented woods and fragrant solids;

(7) Vilepana dāna = offering of unguents and perfumes;

(8) Seyyā dāna = offering of beds, couches, bedding, etc;

(9) Āvāsa dāna = offering of monasteries, rest-houses, ordination halls, religious halls, etc., and

(10) Padīpeyya dāna = offering of lights.

There are four kinds of dāna according to Vinaya-desanās, i.e., as prescribed in the Rules of Discipline for Bhikkhus. They are:-

(1) Cīvara dāna = offering of robes;

(2) Piṇḍapāta dāna = offering of alms-food;

(3) Senāsana dāna = offering of monasteries, beds, dwelling places;

- (4) Bhesajja dāna = offering of medicines.

There are six kinds of dāna according to Abhidhamma-desana. They are:-

- (1) Rūpa dāna = offerings that have a decent appearance;
- (2) Sadda dāna = offerings that have an agreeable sound;
- (3) Gandha dāna = offerings that have an agreeable smell;
- (4) Rasa dāna = offerings that are wholesome in taste;
- (5) Phoṭṭhabba dāna = offerings that have an agreeable touch such as robes, monasteries; and
- (6) Dhamma dāna = teaching the Dhamma and other ways of spreading the Dhamma.



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The Buddha expounded in general the first ten kinds of dāna set out according to Suttanta desanā in general without making any distinction in the type of donee. He expounded the next. Four kinds of dāna set out according to the suttantavinaya, as the dāna to be made only to those who continually observe moral precepts. Therefore, the dāna according to Vinayadesanā will yield greater benefits than the dāna according to Suttanta-desanā. In offering dānas according to Abhidhammā-desanā, one should reflect on the ultimate realities, rather than on conventional aspects, with regard to the six sense-objects. So this type of dāna represents the supreme type of dāna that will bear the greatest benefits among the three categories of dāna.

However, if the donee, the object of offering and the volition are pure and faultless, any dāna will yield great benefits.

The Buddhist text describes dāna in groups of two, three, four, etc., depending on the nature of donor, donee, object of offering, the manner and the time of donation.

### *Dāna in Pairs*

Offering four bhikkhu requisites--alms-food, robes, monastic dwellings and medicines--is called *Āmisa dāna*. Expounding, writing and teaching the dhamma preached by the Buddha to others is called *Dhamma dāna*. The offering of the dhamma resembles the offering of *Nibbāna* which is deathless. So *Dhamma dāna* surpasses all other *dānas*.

If one differentiates the objects of offering and the donees as inferior or superior when giving in charity, that *dāna* is called *Vicita dāna*. One should also give priority to donate to educational institutes, health-foundations and social-welfare organizations which really promote national causes and the *Buddha-sāsana*. The Buddha always speaks in praise of such charity. The offering without discriminating the objects of offering and the donees is called *Avicita dāna*.

The donation which is made with the wish to enjoy worldly pleasures and luxuries, is called *Vaṭṭenissita dāna* for it has the effect of lengthening *Sam̐sara*. On the other hand, the donation which is made with the aspiration of realizing *Nibbāna*, has the effect of terminating suffering. So it is called *Vivaṭṭanissita dāna*.

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If an offering is made after killing chickens, pigs or fish, and cooking their meat, that offering is mixed with demeritorious actions. So it is called Sāvajja dāna. The blameless offering which does not involve killing others' is called Anavajja dāna.

The offering which is prepared and offered personally by oneself is called Sāhatthika dāna whilst the offering which is prepared and offered by others on one's behalf is called Ānatthika dāna.

After one had carefully prepared the objects of offering, one offers them with due respect and reverence to the donees and with the belief in kamma and its result; that offering is called Sakkacca dāna. Donating the object of offering without proper preparation, and without due respect and reverence to the donees is called Asakkacca dāna.

If alms giving is done with the comprehension of kamma and its result, it is called Nāṇasampayutta dāna. If not, it is called Nāṇavippayutta dāna.

If one offers something after being urged by others, that offering is called Sasankhārika dāna. Making a donation generously out of

one's keen volition and conviction is called *Asañkhārika dāna*.

Offering the four bhikkhu requisites--alms-food, robes, monastic dwelling, and medicines--is called *Vatthu dāna*. Giving protection to animals from being killed or harmed is called *Abhaya dāna*.

Building and donating pagodas, monasteries, rest-houses, wells, ponds, roads, bridges, etc., which will last and remain beneficial to many for a long time, is called *Thāvara dāna*. Donating offerings such as alms-food and robes, which can be used for a short time, is called *Athāvara dāna*.

The daily offering of alms-food, water, flowers, and lights to the Buddha as well as the offering of alms-food to bhikkhus every morning is called *Nibaddha dāna*. If one makes such offerings occasionally only when one can afford, it is called *Anibedda dāna*.

The charity performed at an appropriate time to suit the place and the occasion, such as offering *Wazo* robes at the beginning of the Buddhist rains-retreat period, *kathina* robes at the end of the Buddhist rains-retreat period;

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and the necessities for sick or travelling bhikkhus, is called *kāla-dāna*. If the charity is performed not at a proper time but at any time one wishes, such charity is called *Akāla dāna*.

Donating what is left behind after one's use or what is of inferior quality is called *Ucchiṭṭha dāna*. Donating the offerings of superior quality before one's use is called *Anucchiṭṭha dāna (Agga dāna)*.

An offering which is given to a specified person or individual is called *Puggalika dāna*. The charity dedicated to the Saṅgha is called *Samghika dāna*. Here, the Saṅgha means all the bhikkhu disciples of the Buddha and the noble ones called ariyas. One must pay attention to the Order of bhikkhus as a whole without thinking of any individual bhikkhu in particular in order to accomplish *Samghika dāna*.

#### *Fourteen Kinds of Puggalika Dāna*

The Buddha enumerated the benefits of the various types of *Puggalika dāna* as follows.

There are altogether fourteen types of individuals as donee; namely, the Buddha, the lesser Buddha (*Pacceka Buddha*), one who has

attained Arahatta-phala (Arahat), one who has attained Arahatta-magga, one who has attained Anāgāni-phala (Anāgāmi), one who has attained Anāgāmi-magga, one who has attained Sakadāgāmi-phala (Sakadāmi), one who has attained Sakadāgāmi-magga, one who has attained Sotāpatti-phala (Sotāpanna), one who has attained Sotāpatti-magga, the recluse who has attained supernormal powers outside the Buddha's Teaching (Sāsana), the worldling who keeps moral precepts, the worldling with no morality, and animals.

The meritorious deed of offering a meal to an animal may bear benefits which enables one to enjoy longevity, good looks, happiness, great strength and great wisdom for one hundred existences. Donating a meal to a person with no morality will bear the same results for one thousand existences whereas offering a meal to a person with morality will produce the same results for one lakh existences. Again, offering a meal to a recluse with supernormal powers will bear similar benefits for ten-lakh million existences, and offering a meal to one who has attained Sotāpattimagga will produce similar benefits for countless numbers of existences. Offering a meal to Noble Ones (Ariyas), the

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lesser Buddha and the Buddha can produce infinite benefits for infinite existences.

Only if one makes donation to an immoral person with a connivance towards that person's misdeed, such donation is a blameworthy one. But if one donates something to such a person without discriminating the type of donee and without a connivance towards a donee's misdeed, such donation is blameless.

#### *Seven Kinds of Saṃghika-dāna*

There are seven kinds of Saṃghika-dāna. They are:-

- (1) Offering to the Buddha and his male and female disciples, bhikkhu and bhikkhuni Saṃgha at the time of the Buddha;
- (2) Offering to bhikkhu and bhikkhuni-Saṃgha after the demise of the Buddha;
- (3) Offering only to the bhikkhu-Saṃgha,
- (4) Offering only to the bhikkhuni-Saṃgha

- (5) Offering to those pointed out by the bhikkhu and bhikkhuni Saṃgha regarding them as the Saṃgha,
- (6) Offering to those pointed out by the bhikkhu-Saṃgha, regarding them as the Saṃgha, and
- (7) Offering to those pointed out by the bhikkhunī-Saṃgha regarding them as the Saṃgha.

With respect to Saṃghika-dāna there is only one kind of Saṃgha. The Saṃgha cannot be differentiated into good or bad Saṃgha. The noble disciples (ariyas) cannot be differentiated as inferior and superior. All the members of Saṃgha are noble. Therefore, if one dedicates to the Saṃgha and offers to the members of the Saṃgha without any discrimination of the persons, that offering is called Saṃghika-dāna. The Saṃgha member, who is in front of the donor, is representative of the whole Saṃgha, so even though he may be wicked, since the original donee Saṃgha is noble, the offering is a noble Saṃghika-dāna.



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*Dāna in groups of three*

In giving alms, if the four predominant factors such as zeal (chanda), consciousness, energy and (wisdom) are inferior and weak, or if one longs for the wealth and happiness of human or celestial beings, that offering is called Hīna-dāna (inferior offering).

If the offering is made with modest or fairly strong predominant factors or if it is performed with the aspiration to become an arahat (Sāvaka bodhi or Pacceka Buddha), it is called Majjhima-dāna (middle offering).

If the charity is performed with superior predominant factors or with the aspiration to attain Omniscience (Sammā-Sambodhiñāṇa), it is called Paṇīta dāna (superior offering).

In the world one usually uses superior things and give inferior things to one's subordinates. In the same way, if one offers to donees things which are inferior to the things one uses, that offering is called Dāna-dāsa.

Offering things which are as good as the things which one uses is called Dāna-sahāya.

Offering things which are superior to the things which one uses is called Dāna-pati, Dāna-jettaka or Dāna-sāmi.

*Dāna in Groups of Four*

- Cīvara dāna = offering of robes  
Piṇḍapāta dāna = offering of alms-food  
Senāsana dāna = offering of monastic dwellings  
Bhesajja dāna = offering of medicines, and medicinal requisites

*Dāna in Groups of Five*

Five kinds of Kāla-dānas

- (1) Offering requisites to guest-bhikkhus
- (2) Offering requisites to travellers
- (3) Offering requisites to the sick
- (4) Offering performed at the time of starvation
- (5) Offering the first crops and fruits obtained through one's labour to the bhikkhus of high morality

*Five kinds of Mahā-dānas*

The five moral precepts themselves are called five mahā-dānas. One who observes the

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moral precept of abstaining from killing others, one who performs Abhaya dāna, because he will be harmless towards living beings. In the same way, observing the five moral precepts and protecting living beings from danger mean giving security and peace to the beings. So observing the five moral precepts is called the five great offerings (Mahā-dānas).

#### *Six Everlasting Meritorious Deeds*

- (1) Ārāmaropa dāna = Setting up gardens and orchards for public use
- (2) Vanaropa dāna = Planting shady trees and fruit trees for public use
- (3) Setukāraka dāna = Building roads and bridges.
- (4) Papā dāna = Providing drinking water on the way-sides
- (5) Udapānadāna = Digging wells and ponds for public use

- (6) *Upassaya dāna* = Donation of monastic dwellings, rest houses, hospitals, clinics, etc.

These six kinds of *dāna* can produce everlasting benefits to many beings, and the meritorious deeds of a donor of any one of these *dānas* will increase all the time, and he will be reborn in a celestial realm in his next existence.

### *Nine Kinds of Adhammika-dāna*

1. Persuading a donor to offer his objects of offering intended by him to be given to the Saṃgha of one monastery to the Saṃgha of another monastery.
2. Persuading a donor to offer to a pagoda the objects of offering intended by him to be given to the saṃgha.
3. Persuading a donor to give to an individual the objects of offering intended by him to be given to the Saṃgha.

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4. Persuading a donor to offer to a certain pagoda the objects of offering intended by him to be offered to another pagoda.
5. Persuading a donor to offer to the Saṃgha the objects of offering intended by him to be offered to a pagoda.
6. Persuading a donor to give to an individual the objects of offering intended by him to be offered to a pagoda.
7. Persuading a donor to give to a person the objects of offering intended by him to be given to another person.
8. Persuading a donor to offer to a pagoda the objects of offering intended by him to be given to a certain person.
9. Persuading a donor to offer to the saṃgha the objects of offering intended by him to be given to a certain person.

All the above offerings are called Adhammika-dāna because they are not

performed in accordance with the dhamma as there is discrimination with respect to persons and sects. If one persuades a donor in a righteous manner to offer the things which he has originally intended to be given to a certain Saṃgha, pagoda or person, to another Saṃgha, pagoda or person, or if one directs the donor in order to gain greater merit without discrimination in person, or if the donor himself realizes the truth and changes his mind to offer the things which he has originally intended to be given to a certain donee to another donee, or if one points out a suitable donee because the donor has requested one to do so, or if one directs the donor to offer his objects of offering to another donee because one does not know his original intention, those offerings cannot be called as Adhammika-dāna.

### *Ten Kinds of Improper Charity*

1. Majja dāna - offering intoxicants,
2. Samajja dāna - donating for staging a show or a play,
3. Itthi dāna - offering a woman for sexual enjoyment,

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4. Usabha dāna - letting off a bull into the midst of a herd of cows,
5. Citta kamma dāna- donating pornographic pictures and paintings,
6. Sattha dāna - offering weapons,
7. Visa dāna - giving poison,
8. Saṅkhalika dāna - offering iron fetters,
9. Kukkuṭasūkarādāna-offering poultry and pigs,
10. Tulākūṭa māṇakūṭadāna - offering defective balances and incorrect measuring baskets.

Although these ten kinds of offering are not included in dāna, some may have offered these things. If one offers these things, he will be reborn in a woeful abode. So we should be careful to abstain from offering these ten kinds of improper charity.

#### *The Benefits of Alms-giving*

One who gives to charity will attain the following benefits:

1. He is admired and adored by many people.
2. Virtuous donees will approach him for alms.
3. His good fame will spread far and wide.
4. He can join the gathering of any class of people without fear and hesitation.
5. He will be reborn in a celestial abode on his death.

Moreover, he will be the first to be honoured by noble arahats. The arahats will approach him first for collecting alms. So he will have the chance to be the first to offer alms-food first and the first to listen to the discourses.

Furthermore, the donee will enjoy special benefits such as longevity, good looks, great strength, great wisdom, fame and following, happiness and freedom from sorrow, freedom from miseries and danger, freedom from diseases. He will be honoured by devas and men; he will have a chance to live happily together with his loved ones.

Charity softens the hearts of both the donor and the donee. It can make uncultured persons cultured. It can settle all matters successfully.



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It can make others listen to one's words. It can bring about the worldly riches of a Universal Monarch (cakkavattī), King of gods (Sakka) or brahma and the supramundane benefits of gaining Sāvakaṇāṇa, Pacceka Bodhiṇāṇa, or Sammā sambhodhiṇāṇa. It can help in attaining jhāna, Magga, Phala and realizing Nibbāna.

The benefits mentioned above are just a few. The benefits of alms-giving are so numerous that they cannot be mentioned in detail. No one except the Buddha can understand all the benefits of giving to charity.

Therefore, everyone should make great efforts to give to charity.

#### *Greatly Beneficial Charity and Less Beneficial Charity*

While the Buddha was dwelling at the Jetavana monastery in Sāvathī, the female lay devotee, Nandamātā, who lived in Velukantati city was offering alms-food to the Saṅgha headed by the two chief disciples of the Buddha. On seeing this greatly beneficial offering with his divine eye, the Buddha

delivered the discourse on charity which can bring great benefits. A greatly beneficial charity is accompanied with six factors, three factors pertaining to the donor and three factors pertaining to the donee:-

1. The donor is delighted before giving to charity;
2. His consciousness and volition are keen and clear while he is giving to charity;
3. He is delighted after giving to charity.

Three factors pertaining to the donee:-

4. The donee is free from attachment (rāga) or he is striving to be free from it;
5. The donee is free from hatred (dosa) or he is striving to be free from it;
6. The donee is free from bewilderment (moha) or he is striving to be free from it.

The Buddha proclaimed that the charity which is endowed with the above six factors can bear infinite benefits. If one of the six factors is missing, the charity will bear less benefits, and consequently it is called less

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beneficial charity. Moreover, the charity which is endowed with the following four factors can bring great benefits immediately. So it is also called greatly beneficial charity. The four factors are:

1. The things to be offered are procured or earned by righteous means.
2. The conviction and volitions of the donor are keen and clear before, during, and after the offering.
3. The donee must be an arahat or anāgāmi.
4. The donee must have just arisen from dwelling in his attainment of absorption in cessation (Nirodhasamāpatti).

The charity endowed with these four factors is called greatly beneficial charity because it produces its great benefits in this very life. Some examples are Puṇṇa, the rich man, Kākavaliya, the rich man and the flower seller Sumana, etc. If one of the four factors is missing, the ability to bear benefits is reduced, and the charity is denoted as the less-beneficial charity.

Moreover, the offering endowed with the following Five Kinds of factors is called greatly beneficial charity. They are;

1. The donor must be endowed with morality and good conduct.
2. The donee also must be endowed with morality and good conduct.
3. The objects of offering must be things acquired by honest means (dhammiya-laddha)
4. The conviction and volitions of the donor are keen and clear before, during and after the offering.
5. The donor must be one who is endowed with firm belief in Kamma and its results.

*The Charity Which resembles Sotapanna*

The charity, which resembles Sotapanna and which bears great benefits, is as following:-

1. The name of the donor is written on a piece of paper and the monk chosen by lot is offered alms-food. This kind of alms-giving is called Salākabatta dāna.

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2. Pakkhikabatta dāna is the charity which is performed by one who has kept eight moral precepts on Buddhist fasting days.
3. The charity of offering robes to monks at the beginning of the Buddhist rains-retreat period.
4. The charity of donating wells and ponds.
5. The charity of donating monastic dwellings, religious halls, and public rest-houses.

The donor of this kind of charity just like a Sotāpanna, will never be reborn in woeful abodes, he will always be reborn in blissful abodes. So this kind of charity is also called greatly beneficial charity (dāna).

*The Difference in Merits of the Charities Performed Inside and Outside the Buddha Sāsana.*

With regard to the greatly beneficial charity and the less beneficial charity, the offerings given inside and outside the Buddha Sāsana should be considered seriously.

In the world the people of all nations and religions are performing charitable acts in

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accordance with their respective belief. Some people develop keen and generous volitions before and during the offering, but their volitions after the offering are defective. These people on their death are reborn as rich human beings, but they lack the desire to enjoy good food, beautiful clothings, costly utensils, and other riches. They are not inclined to enjoy luxurious goods. Even if they are thus inclined to, they may lose their riches unexpectedly.

Some people perform their offerings with keen and clear volitions before, during and after the offering. When their charity bears fruits, they can enjoy their riches in the first period, the second period and the third period of their lives. Nevertheless, only if a person performs his charitable deeds with the comprehension of Kamma and its result (Kāmmasakatā ñāṇa) will he gain the benefit of being reborn with superior rebirth - consciousness endowed with three moral roots (tīhetuka patisandhi).

In performing meritorious deeds with Kammassakata-ñāṇa and threefold wholesome volitions, there are again two kinds of meritorious deeds--those performed inside the Sāsanā and those performed outside the Sāsanā. There are many examples. Once a brahmin called

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Ekasātaka donated his only upper garment to Vipassī Buddha. He was immediately honoured with many upper garments. An old brahmin donated milk rice and a piece of cloth to Venerable Sāriputta. When he died, he was reborn as a rich men's son. At the age of seven, he became a novice with the name Tissa. When he went out again begging for rugs to be offered to monks who needed them for the cold season, he was offered one thousand woolen rugs on one round. These describe the great benefits produced by charity inside the Sāsanā.

The best illustration, which describes the difference in the benefits produced by charity inside and outside the Sāsanā, is provided by the two celestial beings, Aṅkura and Indaka.

#### The Two Celestial Beings, Aṅkura and Indaka

The Buddha went to Tāvātimsa to preach Abhidhammā to devas and brahmas headed by Santusita. The deva Indaka arrived there and took his place on the right side of the Buddha. Then the deva Aṅkura arrived and sat on the left side of the Buddha. Whenever powerful

devas and brahmas arrived there, the deva Inkura had to move back to make room for them. When the Buddha started delivering his discourse, Indaka had to sit at a place twelve leagues (yojanas) away from the Buddha.

But the deva Indaka did not have to move; he remained at the place where he had initially sat close to the Buddha. After delivering the discourse the Buddha asked Añkura about this matter. Añkura recounted his own story, comparing the benefit of the charity performed inside the Sāsanā and the charity performed outside the Sāsanā.

At the time after the Sāsanā of Buddha Kassapa had disappeared, the future deva Añkura was the youngest son named Añkura among the eleven sons of King Mahāsāgara who ruled over the Kingdom of Uttaramadhurājika. When Añkura grew up, he earned his livelihood by trading. One day, the prince Añkura travelled across a desert with 500 carts loaded with commodities. They lost their way in the desert, and encountered great trouble for they were short of food. At that time a certain deva who lived in a banyan-tree in the desert, appeared before him in person. This deva possessed the supernatural powers of creating



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whatever he wished and letting the created things flow out of his right first finger. He possessed this power, because he had pointed out to donees the place where alms were being given.

This deva who felt grateful to the prince Añkura for the latter had helped him in his previous life, created all the things which the prince wanted. The prince loaded five hundred carts with the things and treasures given by the deva, and returned to his native place.

Thenceforth, the prince performed for ten thousand years a great act of charity by giving away food and things to thousands of people. As a consequence of this charitable deed, on his death he was reborn in the celestial abode, Tāvataṃsa, as a deva named Añkura.

Although the prince Añkura had performed a great act of charity for a long time, he had the chance to donate only to people who were not endowed with good morality as it was the time outside the Sāsanā. It is like planting seeds in an infertile field; and therefore the yield of the crops is very poor.

As for deva Indaka he had been a youth named Indaka at the time of Gotama Buddha.

He offered only one spoonful of alms-food to the venerable Anuruddha, who was an arahat. On his death, he was reborn in the celestial abode as deva Indaka. As the result of his meritorious action in the time when the Sāsana was flourishing, he became a very powerful deva. The very noble donee in the person of venerable Anuruddhā, the arahat, resembles a very good fertile field. Planting a good seed of meritorious deeds in this field produces wonderful results. The deva Indaka surpassed the devā Aṅkura. The former enjoyed a longer life, had more retinues, possessed better appearance, greater wealth and greater power, and enjoyed the pleasure of five senses better than the latter.

Thus the charity performed in the time when the Sāsana is flourishing is the greatly beneficial charity. The charity performed outside the Sāsana and the charity performed by non-Buddhists inside the Sāsana belong to less beneficial charity.

### *The Charity of the Brahmin Velāma*

Once, the Bodhisatta was the son of a court brahmin who officiated royal ceremonies and advised the King. The son was named

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**Velāma.** When he was at the age of sixteen, he went to Takkasīlā together with the son of the King of Bārāṇasī. The Bodhisatta became a reliable student as he could learn quickly what the teacher taught. The teacher frequently let him teach the prince on his behalf.

After they had completed their learning, the Prince of Bārāṇasī and Velāma returned to Bārāṇasī. The prince was crowned as King, and Velāma became a court brahmin. One day Velāma opened his warehouses and looked at the great amount of treasures which had been collected for seven generations. He thought of making grand charity which would strike the whole of the Southern Island continent with awe.

Then he told the King about his idea. He ordered his men to make tripod-stands for cooking in long rows, on the bank of the Gangā river. He asked them to build warehouse and store rice, cooking oil, butter, honey, etc. He let his men go around towns and villages, beating drums and announcing: "From this day onward anybody may come to Velāma's alms-giving ceremony, enjoy food and drinks and take any article he needs." The Brahmin Velāma dressed

himself fully, and holding the golden jar filled with the ceremonial water, he solemnly said thus: "If there are virtuous donees worthy of receiving my donation, may the water from the jar flow out, otherwise may the water from the jar not flow at all and he over-turned the jar but no water flowed out from the jar.

The Bodhisatta understood that the whole world had come to be worthless for there was not a single virtuous donee who was worthy of his donation. Nevertheless, he did not allow himself to be unhappy. He again held the jar and poured out the water, solemnly saying: "If the conviction and the volition of the donor are pure, may the water flow out and remain on the ground." The water flowed out and remain on the ground. From that time onward he made his offering everyday such as offering gruel in the morning, lunch at lunch-time and dinner at dinner-time.

This offering ceremony was so thoroughly arranged that there was no problem as to whether certain things were available and some other things were not available; and whether certain things were available at fixed times. In fact all things were available at all times.

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Brahma Velāma donated eighty-four thousand golden bowls full of silver coins, eighty-four thousand silver bowls full of gold coins, eighty-four thousand copper bowls full of silver coins, eighty-four thousand elephants decorated with golden trappings, eighty-four thousand vehicles decorated with the pictures of animals, eighty-four thousand cows, eighty-four thousand women adorned with jewellery, millions of very soft cotton blankets, etc. As for food and drinks, anyone who needed them could take as much as he liked.

Although he made this very great and grand donation, there was no noble donee who was worthy of receiving his noble offering. All the donees were those who did not even observe the five moral precepts. Infact, it was a donation performed outside the Buddha Sāsanā and consequently it did not bear great benefits.

With respect to the greatly beneficial offerings, the Buddha said as follows.

The offering of only one meal to a Stream-winner (Sotāpanna) brings more benefit than the great charity performed by the brahmin Velāma. Again, offering only one meal to a Once-returner(Sakadāgāmi) brings more benefits

than giving meals to one hundred Stream-winners (Sotapanna). Similarly, offering to a Non-returner (Anāgāmi) brings greater benefits than offering to one hundred Once-returners (Sakadāgāmi). Similarly, offering to an arahat brings more benefits than offering to one hundred Non-returners (Anāgāmi), offering to a lesser Buddha brings greater benefits than offering to one hundred arahats, offering to a Buddha brings more benefits than offering to one hundred lesser Buddhas, offering to the Buddha and his disciples brings more benefits than all previous offerings. The donation of a monastery intended for all bhikkhus coming from all directions, brings still greater benefits.

Thus the people all over the world perform various kinds of alms-giving according to their respective custom and religious beliefs. All of them, except Buddhists, give away their money and property with a worldly outlook of social welfare. They offer with the main intention of becoming rich and prosperous in the present life as the result of their offering. In reality the charity can bring great benefits not only in the present life but also in many future existences. When one performs charity, one can enjoy

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great benefits only when one's giving is accompanied with threefold noble volition, the knowledge of Kamma and its result (Kammassakatāñāṇa), and the opportunity to donate to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. This opportunity that exists only in the Buddha's Sāsana.

Therefore all Buddhists should make their provisions for the journey through saṃsāra by performing their charity in the correct way during the Buddha Sāsana.

#### *Morality Is More Beneficial Than Charity*

Although it is true that giving alms can bring great benefits, morality is more beneficial than charity. A person can gather more benefit by taking refuge in the Triple Gem--the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha with devotion rather than by giving alms. Again better than just merely taking refuge in the Triple Gem is to observe the five moral precepts together with the refuge in the Triple Gem.

*Meditation Is More  
Beneficial Than Morality*

Morality is a practice of controlling bodily and verbal actions. Mental action can be most beneficial as well as most heinous, as the case may be among the three kinds of actions. Thus meditation, which can calm the mind, is more beneficial than observing moral precepts.

Cultivating loving-kindness just for a moment as fleeting as the duration of milking a cow once or smelling a fragrant perfume once, can bring more benefits than keeping the moral precepts. Again reflecting on the nature of impermanence of the five aggregates repeatedly for a short moment as fleeting as the snapping of one's fingers can bring more benefits than cultivating loving-kindness.

Of the three kinds of meritorious deeds--dāna, sīla and bhāvanā--sīla can bring more benefit than dāna, bhāvanā can give more benefit than sīla. As these three can bring such benefit, good Buddhists should always strive to perform deeds of merit relating to dāna, sīla and bhāvanā.



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Offering Alms-food, Flowers,  
Water, Lights

*Offering Alms-food*

I most reverentially make this offering of alms-food, which is of good appearance, good smell and good flavour, to the Cetiṃyas<sup>1</sup> (viz. Dhātu cetī, Dhamma cetī, Uddhissaka cetī and Paribhoga cetī) as representing the compassionate Buddha, who is endowed with the Nine Supreme Attributes and who is worthy of veneration by human beings, devas and brahmas. Owing to my deeds of merit may I attain Maggañāṇa, Phalañāṇa and realize Nibbāna which leads to the cessation of Four Āsavas (moral intoxicants).

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1. Cetiṃyas: Dhātu cetiyas which are the Buddha's relics and the stupas or edifices where any one of these relics are enshrined; Dhamma cetiyas which are the books and palm-leaves, etc., on which the Buddha's teachings are recorded and the stupas or edifices where these are enshrined; Uddhissaka cetiyas which are the images and statues of the Buddha; and Paribhoga cetiyas which include the Buddha's personal belongings, such as water strainer, girdles, robes and alms-bowl; also the edifices where any one of these are enshrined; as well as the Bodhi tree where the Buddha attained Enlightenment.

### *Offering Flowers*

I most reverentially make offerings of these flowers which are beautiful and fragrant to the cetiyas (viz. Dhātu cetī, Dhamma cetī, Uddhissaka cetī and Paribhoga cetī) as representing the compassionate Buddha, who is endowed with the nine Supreme Attributes and is worthy of veneration by human beings, devas and brahmas.

Owing to my deeds of merit may I attain Maggañāṇa, Phalañāṇa and realize Nibbāna which leads to the cessation of Four Āsavas (moral intoxicants).

### *Offering Water*

I most reverentially make offerings of this clear and cool water to the cetiya (viz. Dhātu cetī, Dhamma cetī, Uddhissaka cetī and Paribhoga cetī) as representing the compassionate Buddha, who is endowed with the nine Supreme Attributes and is worthy of veneration by human beings, devas and brahmas.

Owing to my deeds of merit may I attain Maggañāṇa, Phalañāṇa and realize Nibbāna which leads to the cessation of Four Āsavas (moral intoxicants).

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### *Offering Lights*

I most reverentially make offerings of light which is colourful and can eliminate darkness to cetīyas (viz. Dhātu cetī, Dhamma cetī, Uddhissaka cetī and Paribhoga cetī) as representing the compassionate Buddha, who is endowed with the nine Supreme Attributes and who appeared in the three worlds by eliminating the darkness of ignorance with the knowledge of Omniscience.

Owing to my deeds of merit may I attain Maggañāṇa Phalañāṇa and realize Nibbāna which leads to the cessation of Four Āsavas (moral intoxicants).

### Stories Illustrating the Benefits of Charity

Once, the governor of Pāyāsi made an alms-giving ceremony. In this ceremony, he let the youth Uttara manage the donation on his behalf. Although Uttara had to perform on behalf of the Governor of Pāyāsi, he managed the ceremony to the best of his ability as if it were his own donation. When they died, the governor of Pāyāsi was reborn as a deva in the

celestial realm of Catumahārājika, where as the youth Uttara was reborn as a deva in the Tāvātimsā celestial realm.

One day, an arahat named Gavampati went to the celestial realm. First, he went to Serisaka celestial building, situated in Catumahārājika celestial realm. In this building, he saw the deva who was once the governor of Pāyāsi. This deva said: "Venerable Sir, in my previous life I was the governor of Pāyāsi. When making my donation, I did not make the offerings with due respect; I do not make my offerings personally with my own hands; I gave my offerings as if throwing them away. As a result, I was reborn in this inferior Catumahārājika celestial realm living alone with no retinue. But the youth Uttara made the offering on my behalf respectfully, personally and wonderfully to awe others. As a result, he was reborn in Tāvātimsā realm which is more splendid than my celestial abode. Venerable Sir, when you return to the human world, please preach and admonish the people to make their offerings respectfully and personally with their own hands, and not to give their offerings carelessly as if they are being thrown away."

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When the arahat Gavampati returned to the human world he preached and admonished the people just as the deva had requested him. The people followed his advice and many were reborn in Tāvatisa realm on their death.

#### *Bākula, the Donor of Medicines*

The ascetic Bākula-to-be was one who attained supernormal powers at the time of Buddha Anomadassī. One day, the Buddha Anomadassī suffered from flatulence. On hearing this matter, the ascetic gathered in Himavartā medicinal plants such as tubers, bulbs and roots, which could cure the Buddha's stomach trouble. He prepared a kind of medicine from the herbs and offered it to the Buddha. The Buddha Anomadassī was immediately relieved from stomach trouble after taking the medicine. The ascetic approached the Buddha and made a wish thus: "As the result of offering medicine to the Buddha Anomadassī, may I be free from all diseases in all my future existences, and may not my body contract an ailment even for a moment."

As the result of offering medicine to the Buddha, he was reborn repeatedly only in the

human world or celestial realm. Finally, he was reborn in the human world as the youth named Bākula. After enjoying worldly pleasures for eighty years, he was ordained as a bhikkhu. He practised the Ariyā Path of Eight Constituents and, not long afterward, he became an arahat, the perfect one. As he was completely free from any disease, he was conferred the title of Etadagga--the best and incomparable one in enjoying good health. He lived without any ailment till the age of one hundred and sixty years; he then realized Parinibbāna. Because his wish to be free from all diseases was fulfilled, he was designated as "the one who is free from any disease or ailment."

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Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato  
Sammāsambudhassa

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