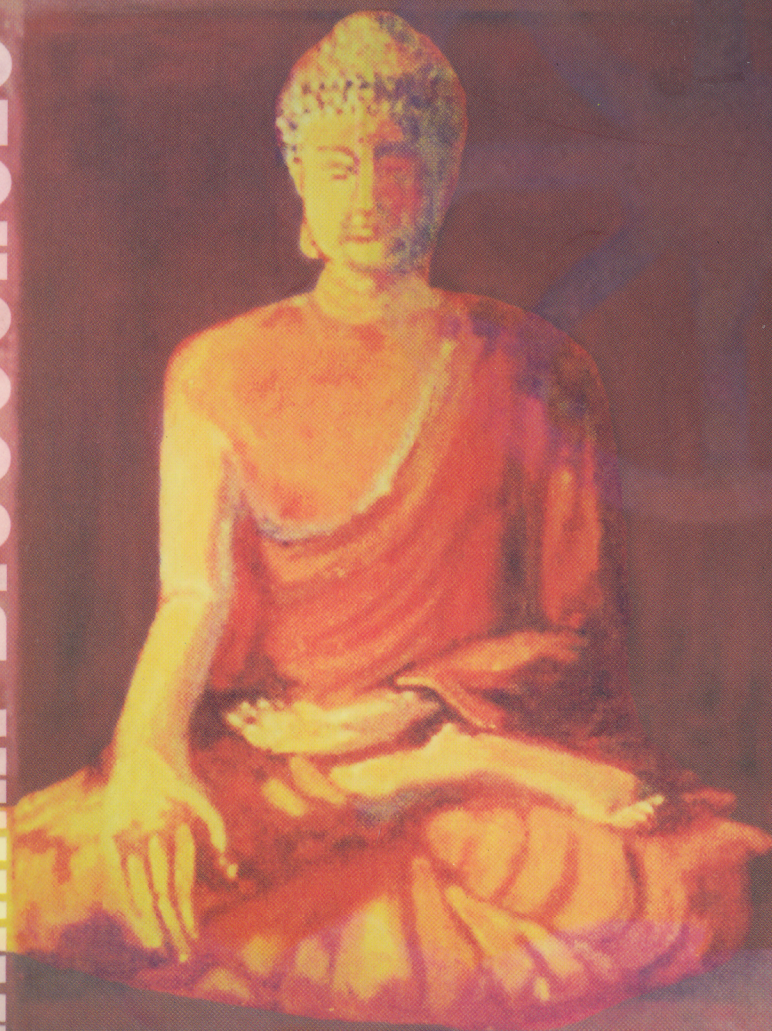


DHAMMA DISCOURSES

VENERABLE SAYADAW ASHIN JATILA

# DHAMMA DISCOURSES



BY VENERABLE SAYADAW  
ASHIN JATILA  
OF MAHASI MEDITATION CENTRE  
YANGON,  
MYANMAR



*Whose mind stands  
unmoving as a rock;  
Unattached to things  
that arouse attachment ,  
Unangered by things  
that provoke anger,  
How can suffering come  
to one whose mind has  
been cultivated thus ?*

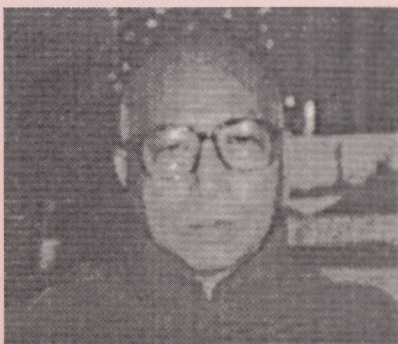
*-Buddha*

*"Friend Ananda, what is the cause and  
reason for the decline and non-decline of  
the true Dhamma ?"*

*"It is, friend, when these four founda-  
tions of mindfulness are not developed  
and cultivated that the true Dhamma  
declines. And it is when these four  
foundations of mindfulness are devel-  
oped and cultivated that the true  
Dhamma does not decline."*

*~ Samyutta Nikaya ,  
Satipatthanasamyutta,  
Sutta 23*





## Sayadaw U Jatila

U Panditabhivamsa , deputy of the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw . After the successful completion of the Vipassana Meditation course he returned to Sagaing Hills where he served as a Pali Lecturer at Pali University for three years .

In 1969 he went to Pyinmana, a town about 200 miles from Rangoon to organize a Mahasi meditation centre and served as the Kammatthanaya Nayaka Sayadaw of the Pyinmana Mahasi branch for twenty years . For the last 15 years he has been President of the All-Burma Mahasi Dhammakathil (Itinerant Dhamma Lecturers ) Association . He was elected Joint General Secretary of the All -Burma Mahasi Sangha Council in 1988.

At present , Venerable Sayadaw U Jatila is actively engaged as a member of the Government Council of Kammatthana cariyas in addition to his primary duty as a Meditation Instructor to foreign yogis in Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha , Rangoon .



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Venerable Sayadaw U Jatila was born in Kadaw village , Myingyan , Upper Burma , on 26th November 1935. His parents were U Mya Gyi and Daw Phwa Thit.

He began his basic education at the local monastery on attaining the age of seven under the tutelage of Sayadaw U Uttara and at the age of 10 he was initiated there as a Samanera ( novice ) receiving the name of Shin Jatila.

In 1953 he proceeded to the Sagaing Hills, a place noted for its prominence as a seat of Buddhist learning , and studied the Canonical texts and the Pali language under the able guidance of Venerable Vicarinda and other prominent teachers .

In that year he passed the Government Abhidamma Examination ( Lower Grade ) and in the following year he passed both the Middle Grade and Higher Grade , and Vinaya Examinations held by the Government.

Venerable Ashin Jatila received the higher ordination and was admitted in to the Bhikkhu Sangha on 24th July , 1955 . After ordination he continued his studies and passed three higher examination relating to the Canonical texts, held under the auspices of the Religious Affairs Ministry , winning the title Sasabadgaha Siripavara Dhamma-cariya ( Vinaya Paliparagu ) .

In 1966 he came to Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha and practiced intensive meditation under the guidance of the then Kammatthana-cariya . Sayadaw.



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YANGON, MYANMAR

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**In Memory of  
our beloved Teacher  
Most  
VENERABLE DR. K. SRI  
DHAMMANANDA NAYAKA MAHA THERA**

**18th Mar 1919 - 31st Aug 2006**



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Thanks also goes to all my Dhamma friends who have by one way or another helped in editing and preparing it for publication. Special thanks to my niece, Wendy Cheah and her son, Daryl Lim for providing the cover design.

Our sincere thanks also goes to The Chua Family who have spent great effort in retyping the whole text as well as improving the cover page.

To all our most generous donors, we really honour your most meritorious act in spreading the *Buddha-Dhamma*.

May you all be happy.

May you all be healthy.

May you all be free from suffering.

May you all attain the eternal bliss of Nibbana in the shortest possible time.

In the service of the *Buddha-Dhamma* with lots of Metta.

Nyanasiri



BUDDHA SASANA NUGGAHA ORGANIZATION  
MAHASI MEDITATION CENTRE  
YANGON MYANMAR

COMPILER'S PREFACE

People of this twentieth century are not easily satisfied with superficial answers given in their Religious Books or by their Elders over the problems confronting mankind in this transient world.

Quest for knowledge, book knowledge, scientific knowledge, religious knowledge, Vipassana Insight knowledge, enlightenment knowledge or any kind of knowledge unknown to them are topics of investigation for now and the present moment.

Satipatthana Vipassana Bhavana (insight meditation through mindfulness) is also a new field to which the Westerners are very much attracted.

The Venerable Mahasi Nayaka Sayadaw U Jatila Mahathera, the eminent Meditation master of Mahasi Meditation Centre, Yangon, Myanmar, undertook several memorable Dhammadhuta missions to America, Britain, Europe, Sri Lanka and South Korea.

The audience who heard the Venerable Mahasi Nayaka Sayadaw's Dhamma Talks on Vipassana Meditation were greatly interested to experience the Path of Enlightenment and Deliverance.

Since then many foreign meditators from all parts of the world have come to Mahasi Thathana Yeiktha (Meditation Centre) in Yangon for meditation and the burden of supervision of these meditators fell on the Venerable Nayaka Sayadaw U Jatila, the disciple to the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw.

Venerable Nayaka Sayadaw U Jatila has also to accept invitations from various countries for supervision of Retreats, sometimes comprising of 100 and over meditators at a time.

Venerable Nayaka Sayadaw U Jatila has to teach many meditators from the United States, U.K., France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Taiwan, China, F.R.G., Nepal, Malaysia, Japan, and Sri Lanka, etc.

These Dhamma Talks were delivered in Foreign Dhammadhuta missions and to foreign meditators at Mahasi Meditation Centre by Venerable Nayaka Sayadaw U Jatila.

We shall be greatly gratified if the foreign meditators who are not familiar with Myanmar language can benefit in some way from this series in their quest for the true Dhamma.

Hla Kyaing,  
President,  
Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization.

Yangon, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1998.





## Dhamma Discourses

### DHAMMA I

#### *Mahasi Vipassana Meditation Method*

The subject of today's Dhamma talk is *Vipassana* meditation method as expounded by the Most Venerable *Mahasi Mahathera, Aggamahapandita U Sobhana*, the founder of *Mahasi Meditation Centre*.

The Most Venerable *Mahasi Mahathera* had adopted a simple method of noting the rising and falling of the abdomen after he had studied, examined and assessed the authenticity of the various discourses from all the scriptures of Buddha's *Dhamma*.

For easy understanding of the *Dhamma* by the man-on-the-street, *Mahathera* had devised a method of questions and answers. The first question posed is: "What is to be contemplated to gain *Vipassana Nana*?"

The word *Vipassana* has come into vogue recently. Everybody quoted the word "*Vipassana*" very widely.

## Mahasi Vipassana Meditation Method

The word *Vipassana* means noting the impermanent characteristics of phenomena. By noting thus ten kinds of *Vipassana Nana* are achieved. They are *Sammasana Nana*, *Udayabbaya Nana*, *Bhanga Nana*, *Bhaya Nana*, *Adinava Nana*, *Nibbida Nana*, *Muncitu Kamyata Nana*, *Patisankha Nana*, *Sankharupekkha Nana* and *Anuloma Nana*. The total of these *Vipassana Nana* is ten.

Then the following question arises: "How do you categorize *Nama-Rupa Pariccheda Nana* and *Paccaya Pariggaha Nana*, the first two *Nanas* meditators experience at the beginning of the practice?" These two *nanas* are to be included as *Vipassana Nana* because the effect of the name is reflected in the cause.

Therefore, here, the ten *nanas* starting from *Sammasana Nana* and ending in *Anuloma Nana* can be counted directly as *Vipassana Nanas*. *Nama-Rupa Pariccheda Nana* and *Paccaya Pariggaha Nanas* are to be included into *Vipassana nana* indirectly.



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The alternative interpretation is in the word *Vipassana*. In Pali, the prefix "Vi" has no direct meaning; only *passana* has the direct meaning of contemplation. *Nama-Rupa Pariccheda Nana* is the knowledge that distinguishes between mind and matter.

*Paccaya Pariggaha Nana* is the knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect. *Sammasana Nana* is the knowledge of the impermanence, suffering and insubstantiality of mind and matter, and *Udayabbya Nana* is attained by perceiving the arising and passing away of all phenomena. The other way of counting is direct from *Nama-Rupa Pariccheda Nana* to *Anuloma* as *Vipassana Nanas*.

The method of counting is not so important. The important thing is how to master the *Vipassana bhavana*. So the answer to the first question of "What is to be contemplated to gain *Vipassana Nana*?" is the contemplation of (*upadanakkhandha*) the five groups of clinging. The simple answer to the question is contemplation of the groups of *Rupa* and

## Mahasi Vipassana Meditation Method

*Nama* which are liable to clinging (if not contemplated at the moment of arising). The five "groups of *upadanakkhandha*" or Groups of Clinging are:

- (1) *Rupakkhandha* (the Corporeality group)
- (2) *Vedanakkhandha* (the Feeling group)
- (3) *Sannakkhandha* (the Perception group)
- (4) *Sankharakkhandha* (the Mental-Formations group)
- (5) *Vinnanakkhandha* (the Consciousness group)

If the meditator does not realize that we human beings consist of these five groups (of existence), the belief in an Ego-entity of Personality such as *atta* or I or me, men or women, etc. as real is accepted with firm determination. Therefore these five *upadanakkhandhas* are to be contemplated with right view and right understanding.

How do meditators contemplate with right view? Do meditators have to look at themselves in the mirror? The contemplation of one's own body is what the meditators are practising now. When meditators are

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doing walking meditation, noting of left step, right step or lifting, moving, dropping and so forth are contemplating of one's own bodily action as instructed in *Satipatthana sutta* "*Gacchantova Gacchamiti, Pajanati*". When meditators note left step - stepping action is *rupa-upadanakkhandha*, feeling of good or bad is *vedana-upadanakkhandha*, taking note is *sanna-upadanakkhandha*, making effort to take step is *sankhara-upadanakkhandha*, and the knowing mind is *vinna- upadanakkhandha*. These constitute contemplation of the five groups of clinging. If the meditator does not contemplate in this right view, the meditator comes to think I am taking the steps, my legs are making steps, knowing the movement is I, which is mere illusion. This is clinging to the five groups of *upadanakkhandha*. When practising sitting meditation the meditator notes "sitting, touching, sitting, touching".

The sitting posture is *Rupakkhandha*, feeling of good or bad is *Vedanakkhandha*, making note is *Sannakkhandha*, making effort to note is



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*Sankharakkhandha*, and the knowing mind is *Vinnanakkhandha*.

When noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, the rising and falling of the abdomen is *Rupakkhandha*, feeling good or bad is *Vedanakkhandha*, making note is *Sannakkhandha*, making effort of breathing in is *Sankharakkhandha*, and the knowing mind is *Vinnanakkhandha*. These constitute contemplation of the five groups of clinging. The same applies to hearing, seeing, etc. Therefore, all the practices of noting left step, right step, lifting, moving, dropping, rising, falling of the abdomen, noting of hearing, seeing and so forth are contemplation of the five *khandhas*. This is regarded as "contemplation of the five *Upadanakkhandhas* with right view".

When practising walking meditation, noting left step, right step or lifting, dropping or lifting, moving, dropping is correct. When walking, if the meditators note *rupa, nama, rupa, nama*, etc, it is not necessary. It is wrong. Do not note as arising and passing away

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also. Just note the real action, the real movement at the time of occurring at the present moment. The other mental and physical phenomena are also to be noted from moment to moment.

"Why and when is the contemplation?" The first part says, "Why do meditators contemplate on the five khandhas?" Is the aim to get promotion? Is the aim to get an increase in salary? Is the aim to be healthy? The second part of the question deals with when meditators have to contemplate. Is it the past or the present or the future? The answer is - "To prevent clinging, contemplation must be done at the time of occurring".

If meditators contemplate at the time of rising, falling, moving, seeing, hearing, eating, then only the clinging can be prevented. In the *Satipatthana Sutta* it is said "*Kaye-Kaya nupassiviharati Atapi-Sampajano-Satima Vineyya Like-Abhijjha Domanassam*, etc". The meaning is - the meditator has to note the physical phenomena at the time of

## Mahasi Vipassana Meditation Method

occurring to prevent the formation of attachment, greed or anger.

The meditator has to note the mental phenomena at the time of occurring as well. If it is not noted at the time of occurring, greed, anger, and clinging to the mental phenomena will develop.

The same applies to feeling. The feeling should be noted at the time of occurring to prevent greed, anger and clinging in the feelings. The same applies to mental formations. Mental formations should be noted at the time of occurring to prevent development of greed, anger, clinging, etc. Therefore, why and when is the contemplation to be practised is answered as "to prevent clinging, greed and anger, all mental and physical phenomena should be contemplated at the moment of occurring or at the moment of arising".

"If one fails to contemplate at the moment of occurring, clinging will develop". For instance, when hearing a sound if one fails to note, attachment to



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the pleasant sound may develop. If one fails to contemplate on seeing, the clinging to the beautiful sight and handsome appearance may develop. Afterwards one may assume that these groups of *Khandhas* are good, beautiful and permanent. One also asserts that the hearing, the seeing is I, it belongs to me, etc.

To avoid such illusion one has to contemplate every occurrence of *Nama-Rupa* (mind and matter) so that the clinging will also disappear. So if the meditator notes every mental and physical phenomenon, he realizes that what arises inevitably passes away are *Rupa* and *Nama* and there will be no clinging. Therefore meditators should note every phenomenon from moment to moment at the time of occurring and dispel the belief in an Ego-entity or Personality.

If meditators contemplate as such they realize that everything is impermanent and full of suffering by their own insight knowledge. This does not imply that the meditator will realize insight knowledge immediately.

## Mahasi Vipassana Meditation Method

After contemplating for some time the meditator will first comprehend "Sabhava Lakkhana" (natural or unique characteristic) such as stiffness, tension, irritation, pain, etc. When meditators contemplate rising and falling they know the characteristics of the rising and falling process.

When meditators contemplate on the vedana (the feeling or sensation) they know the characteristics of sensation. If they do not contemplate, they will not know it.

After understanding "Sabhava Lakkhana" (natural or unique characteristics), then meditators will come to know "Sankhata Lakkhana" (the trio of moments) i.e. the beginning, the middle and the end.

After knowing the "Sankhata Lakkhana" meditators will come to know "Samanna Lakkhana" (common characteristics). When seeing a line of black ants from afar meditators will see only a line. When meditators observe properly they will see each insect moving one after another in a line. After close

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scrutiny they will find each insect has a head, waist and tail. So also in the beginning of the practice, meditators will know only the general features. When mindfulness matures meditators know the changing conditions from moment to moment.

After more practice, meditators come to know of the arising and passing away of phenomena. This is comprehension of the appearing and dissolving nature of objects. This knowledge leads to the conclusion that everything is impermanent. It is just the arising and passing away of phenomena. Such knowledge is "*Anicca Lakkhand*", the knowledge that observes, explores, grasps, or determines impermanence. At the same time meditators realize all that arise and immediately pass away are not worth cherishing and relying on and are therefore Suffering. This is *Dukkha Lakkhana*.

Another realization is that nothing happens in obedience to the meditators' will but only of its own accord. This is *Anatta Lakkhana*. Now one realizes

## Mahasi Vipassana Meditation Method

that the principles of *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anatta* are the main characteristics.

The last part of the answer is: "If clinging has disappeared the meditators are on the path of *magga* and finally realize *Nibband*".

After meditators have realized *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anatta* they accept the fact that there is no such thing as Ego-entity but changing conditions of *Nama-Rupa*.

After this realization, meditators proceed with their own contemplation and find that before actual physical movement, the intention precedes the act. Before taking a step, intention to take the step precedes the act. When sitting, the intention to sit precedes the act. By this the meditators come to realize the knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect.

After knowing the knowledge of cause and effect, meditators find the disappearance of phenomena

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after each noting. So meditators know all phenomena dissolve by themselves.

After discovering the dissolving characteristics, meditators successively become aware of the knowledge as misery, wearisomeness, disgust and desire for deliverance. The meditators strive for deliverance and with more deep practice achieve the knowledge that can view psycho-physical phenomena with equanimity.

At this stage the meditators have to spread noting of the touching points until the touching points contract or denumerise and no physical phenomenon remains to be noted. Meditators should not search for the disappearing of touching points but note the awareness as knowing, knowing. After some time the awareness becomes faster and faster and suddenly attains to the realization of cessation of all phenomenal processes.

The Buddha said: "All arising things dissolve by themselves." Meditators, after a long struggle of



## Mahasi Vipassana Meditation Method

noting the arising and passing away of physical and mental phenomena, come to realize the cessation and absence of the body mind *sankharas* of phenomenal process. This is the arising of *magga Nana*.

When meditators realize the disappearance of all clinging to the group of *upadanakkhandha*, they are on the path of *magga* and finally realize *Nibbana*.

This method of *Vipassana bhavana* is the only way and should be stored in one's memory forever. The Most Venerable *Mahasi Mahathera* gave instructions that *Vipassana* meditation should be practised whenever conditions are conducive. May I conclude this *Dhamma* Talk by requesting all our meditators to obey the noble instructions of the Most Venerable *Mahasi Mahathera* and by diligent practice of *Vipassana* meditation achieve the cessation of all *Sankharas* and attain *Nibbana*, the end of all sufferings.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu*

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### DHAMMA II

#### Dos and Don'ts for Meditators

The *Dhamma* Talk I am going to deliver today is about "Dos and Don'ts for the Meditators" or "What to do and What not to do". The aim of practising *Vipassana* Meditation is to gain *Nibanna*. To gain this Insight Wisdom (*Vipassana nana*) and the status of *sotapannahood*, the meditator must strive hard to overcome the three fetters of

- (1) Personality-belief
- (2) Sceptical doubt and
- (3) Attachment to rites and rituals before entry to the stream of *Nibanna* and he is called a stream-winner (*sotapanna*).

To achieve this *sotapanna* status four conditions have to be fulfilled.

The first is to have an experienced and competent teacher. The objective of *vipassana* meditation is not only to be happy in one or two existences but also to

## Dos and Don'ts for Meditators

be delivered from the sufferings of all the existences in *samsara* and to be free from *samsara* itself. So the most important thing for the gaining of *sotapannahood* is to have a good and competent teacher, the meditation master with a broader knowledge of Buddhist Scriptures and practical meditation experiences.

The second is that the meditator practising intensive meditation must listen to the instructions and the *Dhamma* Talks very carefully and attentively so that he may have a great help in the progress of *vipassana* insight meditation. If the meditator pays serious attention to his master and his *dhamma* discourses, he can have faith in the practice of *saddha* in Pali, and cannot go astray in erroneous ways. In very serious teaching there is theory and practice. On the practical side, the meditator practises walking, sitting, etc. meditation noticing or noting all physical and mental phenomena. He must be well versed in the theory side also. For example, according to the Buddha's teaching there are only mind and matter and cause and effect. Reading alone cannot lead to

## Dhamma Discourses

clear understanding but theory and practice done together will produce a clear understanding of the practice as well as the theory. To understand the deep Buddhist Philosophy and the philosophical aspect of the deep practice, the meditator must listen attentively to the *Dhamma* Talks. Then only can he grasp the Buddhist philosophy through practice which results the quick progress of his insight knowledge.

The third is to have an honest and straight forward character in reporting to the teacher. In the course of practice the meditator may sometimes have good noting and sometimes bad noting. In reporting the experiences, he has to report correctly to the teacher. The meditators in some cases report the good side of things they experience but usually fail to report plainly and frankly the bad side of things. Though the meditator may think that his sitting is not good but in the view of the teacher it may be the opposite. To achieve *vipassana nana*, insight knowledge, it is not always smooth practice. At the beginning, there is bound to be some difficulty as it

## Dos and Don'ts for Meditators

is a new field for most meditators. Only after some practice can there be a little good experience due to the development of some concentration. After that there will also be bad experiences which can have pessimistic effects on the meditators for quite a long time and in fact becomes only good towards the end of the practice.

When the meditator encounters these difficult stages, the teacher expects the meditator to report his bad experiences and seek his support and encouragement. Then only is there a chance to give correct advice for the development and progress of meditation practice. Hence it is very important for the meditators to report the bad side as well as the good side of his experience to the teacher very plainly, frankly and correctly.

The fourth is that the meditator must be industrious and diligent in his practice. He must always be alert and ready to notice or note with continuous effort as soon as he is awake from sleep. It is the main and primary duty of the meditator to note whatever



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phenomenon that occurs in his body and mind, in the sitting, in the walking, in every action he does physically and mentally. Even the minor physical movements, he has to look with awareness without missing whatsoever : moving of the hands, changing of clothes, etc. A meditator may in a hurry try to do two things at a time. It should not be done because he may miss noting all the actions and movements in detail. In eating also, the meditator must not eat absent-mindedly, that is, without awareness. He must notice all the movements cautiously with awareness without missing whatsoever in the *Satipatthana* Way. According to the late Most Ven. *Mahasi Sayadaw*, even going to the toilet has to be noted. Therefore, there is nothing which should not be noted. Every physical and mental phenomenon has to be noted carefully.

If there four factors are continuously fulfilled with sharp intention by the meditators, the achievement of *sotapannahood* is quite easy. To help the meditators in achieving these main objectives, the late Most Ven. *Mahasi Sayadaw* had also laid down

## Dos and Don'ts for Meditators

the rules of conduct to be followed by the meditators and also things to be avoided by them.

The first is the meditator must refrain from talking, eating and sleeping. Talking is a major retarding factor in the practice of meditation. It is better on no occasion to talk while practising intensive meditation. If unavoidably necessary, he must warn himself first and limit his talk, otherwise there can be no end to talking. Even in the talking, the meditator must note the intention to talk and the subject of talking. Next the meditator must eat less. He should never overeat. In eating the Buddha had admonished that the meditators must never eat to his stomachful but should leave at least about four or five morsels and fill the stomach with some liquid like water, soup, coffee or fluid of any kind. It is a great help in the practice of meditation. So the meditators should be very cautious of the way they eat.

Sleeping should be as little as possible to help in the practice of meditation. Out of twelve hours of the night, the holy ascetics of the older time slept only

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four hours and utilized the remaining hours for the practice seriously. Of course, there can be some argument that it can affect the health of the meditators. But for the meditators, even in the sitting meditation, they are in a way more or less restful and comfortable, regularly breathing, sitting still and it is more or less having a rest like sleeping and generating energy. Some meditators may have experienced refreshment of mind and body after one good sitting as if they have awakened from a good sleep. Therefore, intensive meditation with four hours sleep is without any disadvantage or detrimental to the health of the meditators and they should not have any anxiety about having four hours sleep in their daily schedule. I would like to relate my experience to the meditators when I first practised intensive meditation. I had practised without any sleep continuously for about fifteen days. After this practical experience of meditation, I was convinced that a fully-concentrated meditation without sleep for more than ten days is not detrimental to health. Here in this *Mahasi*

## Dos and Don'ts for Meditators

Meditation Centre, you will find many meditators lying awake during intensive meditation days.

The second is the effort. In practising intensive meditation, the meditator must have resolution, unshakable resolution that, "I must carry on this meditation with perseverance even if my flesh and blood dry up and skin, bones and sinews alone remain in my body. I will practise without stopping." This kind of steadfast resolution had to be made. When the meditator wants to successfully practise *vipassana bhavana*, insight meditation, the attachment to his own body must be disregarded. If the meditator has too much affection for or attachment to his body, the progress of insight knowledge will be very slow and it is very hard to achieve higher knowledge. On the eve of His Enlightenment night, Lord Buddha practised on the bank of the Neranjara River under the Bodhi Tree.

After eating the gruel offered by a woman devotee, the Bodhisatta made a firm resolution that whatever happened to his body, even if his flesh and blood

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dried up and only skin, bones and sinews remained he would not rise from his meditation until Buddhahood was achieved. When he practised with this unshakable resolve, in the first watch of the night, he had *dibbacakkhunana*, the divine eye that could see everything. In the morning watch, he achieved *asavakkhayanana*, the extinction of all *kilesa* (defilements) and after that he achieved Buddhahood and become the (Omniscient) Buddha. So being desirous of practising the teaching of Lord Buddha, all meditators in this *Mahasi* Meditation Centre should follow the path trodden by Lord Buddha, observing all four main requirements.

The third is that since the meditators are more or less purified persons, they should practise *satipatthana*, setting forth with mindfulness all the time. The meditators are persons full of effort, really indulging in the mindfulness practice all day long so that not a fraction of *kilesa*, defilement of any kind can attack or penetrate his mind and body. For example, if a person does not note the sound he hears, he will develop attachment to it if the sound



## Do's and Don'ts for Meditators

is pleasant. Therefore the meditator should always note as instructed by the teacher so that sound stays merely as sound and it cannot become attachment, cannot arouse anger, just pass away as sound.

It is also the same in the noting all the feelings and the phenomena arising at the sense-doors. The meditators can have no attachment, no *kilesa* (defilement) entering or penetrating into their mind and body. Thus the meditators are regarded here as following the path of arahats or Buddhas, as holy persons with noble hearts and purity of minds. They are entitled to or deserved to have *all* the *dana* food, robes and other requisites. To maintain this status, all meditators should seriously endeavour to note all physical and mental phenomena continuously all the time. If they note sometimes and rest sometimes, the concentration will rise up for some time and then fall down when they rest. When the teacher comes to appraise the meditator, he knows the meditator well. For example, there are persons with long-term illness who do not take medicine regularly. The

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doctors are reluctant to attend to such sick patients.

So also the meditation teachers are annoyed with such meditators who are not practising meditation regularly as instructed but on and off. So I would like to request all the meditators to be very earnestly diligent in the noting. As soon as the meditators open their eyes in the morning, they must be prepared to note everything, to be aware of mental and physical phenomena until they sleep in the night.

The fourth is that the meditator must act as if he is a sick person because a sick person cannot move very quickly in whatever he does. He walks slowly, eats very slowly and even talks very slowly. So in the case of the meditators, if he acts very slowly in whatever he does, he can notice and note all the mental and physical phenomena all the time without any break. Some may argue, oh, we cannot note slowly as the action is quick. It may be somewhat right at the beginning but if you acquire the habit of noting with mindfulness after some days of meditation, you will

## Dos and Don'ts for Meditators

find yourself always ready in the noting without any difficulty and you will be quite happy to do that. Some jobs should be done very quickly according to the situation. When you are crossing a busy road, you have to cross quickly otherwise you may be in danger. But when you are practising meditation in this *Mahasi* Meditation Centre where mindfulness is the main essential factor and if you are doing everything quickly you cannot note all your psycho-physical phenomena in detail. So the meditator should act like a sick person and try to note every action if he wishes quick progress of insight knowledge which will appear gradually and eventually.

The fifth is that the meditator should make persistent effort to make continuous noting of the objects without any lapses. One must note from the moment one wakes up in the morning until one falls asleep at night, not only in sitting and walking sessions but also in daily activities. When the moment to moment concentration is sustained, the meditator will be able to develop the progressive

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insight knowledge successfully within a reasonable time.

To include the *dhamma* talk for today, I would like to request all the meditators to follow the detailed instructions of the late Venerable *Mahasi Sayadaw* and obey all the four conditions to achieve the *sotapannahood* (stream-winner). Following these instructions, I hope all of you meditators will come to realize *Nibbana*, the cessation of all sufferings in the shortest possible time and in the easiest way.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu*

## The Most Important Matter in Life

### DHAMMA III

#### The Most Important Matter in Life

The subject of today's talk can be titled "The Most Important Matter in Life". Ordinarily, there are three kinds of business we have to face. Some are important business, some are more important and some are most important. Today's *dhamma* talk will be the most important business in life or the most important task. All kinds of sentient beings have different kinds of tasks to attend to and all tasks are important to them in their own priority.

If we survey the situations the world over, some countries are trying for unification. It is their priority because their country has been divided after the war. Some countries are engaged in the changing process of their political systems and it is a very important problem of the moment. Some countries are trying to negotiate to enter into a non-aggression pact with each other. Some countries are trying to uplift the economic condition of their

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country and it is their most important task of the moment.

In our society, the head of the family has the responsibility to provide for the education, health and economic well-being of their children. It is their most important task and duty. Our meditators here may have very important matters to attend to at home. In their respective views everything is important to them but we cannot define them as the most important one.

The Lord Buddha gave the definition of what is the most important business for all human beings. Buddha said, "Oh monks, for a person who is pierced by a spear in his chest, the most important thing for him is to take out the spear and get medical attention at once." (For a person whose hair is on fire, the most important thing for him is to extinguish the fire and get medical attention at once. Generally speaking these matters are for the present life.)



## The Most Important Matter in Life

But if we consider the future existence of *samsara* for all sentient beings, the most important thing is to dispel *sakkaya-ditthi*. *Sakkaya-ditthi* means personality-belief. If a family is facing health, education and economic problems, the head of the family will regard these as his most important business to solve first. But if an accident occurs at that time or somebody throws a spear that pierces his chest, then the health, education or economic problems are no longer important.

Or suppose a man has to go for a journey, the important business for him is to prepare for his trip. While he is preparing for his long journey, if his hair accidentally catches fire, his most important task of preparing for the journey becomes secondary for him. The most important task for him now is to extinguish the fire on his head and get medical help at once.

These are affairs of worldly beings or activities of present life. Lord Buddha said the most important thing for *samsara* (the cycle of being born and dying

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again and again) is to get rid of *sakkaya-ditthi* which is the erroneous view that there is a self or soul or *atta* existing all the time. Here I want to explain in detail about *sakkaya-ditthi*. "*Sak*" is one word; "*Kaya*" is another word. "*Sak*" is clear. "*Kaya*" means a group existence of *nama* and *rupa*. *Sakkaya* means clear existence of *nama* and *rupa*.

If that word says clear existence, there is unclear existence also. For instance, we are called men or human beings, that being is not in clear existence. If you ask a question - can you call the hair a human being? Can you call the bone a human being? Can you call the flesh a human being? None can be termed as human being. So you cannot say clearly that human being is in clear existence.

There is no such thing as human being if we define by way of Buddhist teaching. What we have is clear existence of *nama* and *rupa*. If we ask a question is hair *rupa* or matter? Yes, it is. Is bone or flesh or kidney or other human organs like heart *rupa*? Yes, it is *rupa*. The consciousness is called *nama* and it can

## The Most Important Matter in Life

be interpreted as mind. If we analyze human beings in that sense - there is only *rupa* which is physical body and *nama* which is the mind.

There is only *nama* or *rupa* but no men or women. So if we speak in the Buddhist concept, there is no self, no *atta*, no ego, no "I", no "me", no "mine" - only mind and body or only *nama* and *rupa*. There is no self-entity, there is no individual soul. So in the definition of human beings, we cannot say I or self. We cannot say this is me or mine, what we can say is that we have mind and matter, *nama* and *rupa*.

Commonly speaking among our human society, we refer to persons as men, women, etc. for identification. According to the field, there is no self, nor me, nor I but mind and matter-*nama* and *rupa* only. There is no self-entity or individual soul. In that definition of *Sakkaya*, it corresponds to "existing group" but does not imply any bad sense yet. Buddha and other holy persons of Ariyan status also have *Sakkaya*. Our meditators here themselves

## Dhamma Discourses

have *sakkaya*. It means that we are a group of existence of mind and matter.

When the *sakkaya* is combined with *ditthi*, the *sakkaya-ditthi* becomes erroneous view of existence of self as *atta*, as I, as personality-belief. In fact mind and matter is only *nama* and *rupa*. It cannot be expressed as belonging to me, to us. These groups of *khandhas* (a group of aggregates) will not obey our wishes, our commands but it is going on its own dhamma process. If this group of *khandhas* really belongs to us we can say, don't get old, don't get sick, don't die, it must listen to our commands. But this aggregate of mind and matter will not obey our commands. That is why we cannot say it is our body, our soul, our self, our ego or our self-entity.

The majority of human beings do not embrace this fact but believing it as their mind and their body. They are prepared to risk any danger and do mischievous acts, unwholesome acts for the benefits of this group of *khandhas*. Since they believe in the *atta* theory, they are willing to commit unwholesome

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acts or deeds, thinking they are doing it for the benefit of self, sons and daughters and relatives.

So he has to suffer for the misdeeds in this present life, like getting jail sentences etc. and also in the process of the cycle of rebirths, he will have miserable lives in the coming existences. The real culprit for their suffering in the present life and miseries in the coming *samsara* is, *sakkaya-ditthi*, the erroneous view of "personality-belief". That is why Lord Buddha preached that the most important task for all human beings is to dispel this *sakkaya-ditthi*, the belief in *atta*, self, ego. To overcome and dispel this *sakkaya-ditthi*, Buddha had expounded in many of his discourses how to reject this erroneous view.

To reject this *sakkaya-ditthi*, mindfulness is the only way. The method our meditators here are practising is *satipatthana vipassana*. What the meditators do everyday in their meditation practice-noting of rising and falling of the abdomen and in walking meditation lifting, pushing forward and dropping of the feet,

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etc. are for the main purpose of dispelling this *sakkaya-ditthi*.

The first step to dispel the erroneous view of the existence of self is to know clearly the difference between *nama* and *rupa* (mind and matter). In the beginning, meditators think rising and falling is me, taking steps is me, I am hearing, I am eating, I am exercising - things like that. He assumes he is doing everything. When his practice gradually matures, he comes to know there is no *atta*, no self, no ego, no self-entity but only mind and matter.

The first thing a meditator can differentiate is when the meditator takes the left step, taking is the physical action (*rupa*), noting of the step is mind (*nama*). So there is no ego, there is no self-entity but *nama* and *rupa* only. If the meditator is not conversant with the Buddhist terms he may not know this *nama* or *rupa* but he will know by his own experience taking of the step is the physical movement, noting of it is the mind, two different things. The same also applies to sitting meditation.

## The Most Important Matter in Life

The rising of the abdomen is physical and the noting of the movement is mental. The falling movement is the physical and the noting of the movement is mental.

The rising movement occurs because when a person breathes in, the air pushes up the abdomen and the movement of the abdomen is *rupa* and the noting mind is *nama* - these are two different kinds of functions. The falling movement of the abdomen is the physical phenomenon and the noting mind is the mental phenomenon.

On noting the hearing of sound, there must be three elements: the sound, the hearing consciousness and the ear. When a meditator practises *vipassana* meditation by contemplating all the phenomena that come in from the six sense doors and discovers that there is only mind and matter, he will be free from personality-belief and accept the fact that there is no *atta*, no ego and no soul. But the conviction is not strong enough to dispel *Sakkaya-ditthi* altogether. Total rejection comes only when the meditator



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attains *sotapatti magga* and *sotapatti-phala* (Path and Fruition of stream-entry).

There is a story of a Brahma (Heavenly being of the Brahma world) who approached Lord Buddha and expressed his opinion. "Lord Buddha, all sentient beings should strive to reject *Kama-raga* that comes from the five sense-doors by the practice of *jhana* and become Brahma like us. They should act at once like a person who is pierced by a spear in his chest should take out the spear and get medical attention or like a person whose head is on fire would extinguish the fire and get medical attention at once."

And there are two major ways of rejecting *Kama-raga*: the temporary rejection by the practice of *jhana* (absorption) meditation and the total rejection by *Anagami-magga*. Rejection by *jhana* is not totally free from *akusala* and is liable to revert to the *apaya* world when kusala merit expires. Total rejection of *Sakkaya-ditthi* by *sotapatti-magga* is more reliable and it closes the door to the *apaya*-world.

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Buddha felt compassion towards this Brahma because his statement was not in line with the absolute truth. Though a Brahma, he was still a *puthujjana* liable to get through the resultant effects of *kusala* and *akusala* deeds. At the end of the merit of his *kusala* deeds, he can be reborn in the *Apaya*-world (the four lower worlds) of the animal world, ghost-world, demon-world and hell. Only after he had rejected *Sakkaya-ditthi* by *Sotapatti-magga*, as we have explained in detail, will he be free from going down to the lower levels of existence.

So Buddha replied to the Brahma, that a person who had not dispelled *sakkaya-ditthi* could not expect to be enjoying the blissful existence of celestial beings forever as he had expressed. To dispel this *sakkaya-ditthi* totally, a person has to practise mindfulness (*sati*) *vipassana bhavana* meditation, the first *nana* (insight knowledge) meditators experience at the beginning of the practice is *nama-rupa pariccheda nana*, the knowledge that distinguishes between mind

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and matter. From then on step by step, realization of *vipassana nana* is achieved until *sotapatti-magga* is realized.

His first note of rising, falling, seeing, hearing and left step, right step or lifting, pushing forward, dropping, etc. in the walking meditation, carries a meditator to the discovery of noting mind "*nama*" and physical movement of the body "*rupa*". The discovery can be categorized into three kinds:-

- (1) Book knowledge
- (2) Common knowledge and
- (3) Practical knowledge by one's own experience

Book knowledge is superfluous. It elaborates 28 *rupas*, 89 *citta* (mind) and 52 *cetasika* (mental factors), etc.

Second is what common people say - mind and matter are quite simple. All things including trees, forests, mountains that have no consciousness is "*rupa*". They say the knowing consciousness is mind. In a way it is not wrong. But they say just what everybody hears

## The Most Important Matter in Life

from more educated people but it is not what he knows for himself.

Our meditators here, of course, come to know this mind and matter by their own personal experience while practising mindfulness in noting left step, right step or while sitting, rising, falling, etc. as explained above.

They come to know a pair of knowing consciousness and physical phenomenon at the moment of noting. At every moment of noting all kinds of occurrences and sensations that appear in one's six sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, the pair of (*nama* and *rupa*) mind and matter is clearly discovered.

On this personal discovery, meditators grasp no more in seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or thinking. They accept the absolute truth that there is no ego, no self-entity, no personality-belief and no soul but realises the impermanence, suffering and non-self nature of *nama* and *rupa* and reject

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*Sakkaya-ditthi*, the erroneous view of personality-belief.

By dispelling *Sakkaya-ditthi*, he is freed. When the meditator makes progress in his (or her) meditation, stage by stage the meditator reaches the cessation of all physical and mental phenomena and achieves *Sotapanna*, the Stream Winner.

May all our meditators sincerely practise "The Most Important Matter of Life" as preached by the Buddha and achieve *Nibbana*, the ultimate and absolute deliverance from all suffering and misery in the shortest time.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

### DHAMMA IV

#### Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

The subject of today's *Dhamma* Talk is "Contemplation of all phenomena from six sense-doors". When a person is engaged in *vipassana* meditation, he has to note all kinds of occurrences and sensations that appear in his six sense-organs. The six sense-organs are Eye, Ear, Nose, Tongue, Body and Mind.

When engaged in sitting meditation, the primary object of noting is the "rising and falling" of the abdomen and sitting posture and touching points. In noting touching points, a meditator has to spread the touching points from three, to five, to ten touch points, when spreading of the points becomes necessary to restrict the wandering mind.

In addition to the primary objects, the meditator has to note also all other phenomena that come to his

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six sense-organs. Noting of rising and falling of the abdomen is the primary object and it can be regarded as staying in one's own house when one is engaged in noting only "rising and falling". A person is at ease or at leisure when staying in his own home. When he has to learn lessons he has to go to school but he comes back to his home after school. A person has to go to market to buy edibles but he comes back to the house after buying what he needs. A person may go to the office to work but comes back to the house after office hours.

So also, "rising and falling" is like staying in one's house. While one is noting "rising and falling", if one hears a sound, one has to stop noting "rising and falling" and note the sound as "hearing, hearing". When the sound goes away, one has to go back to the "rising and falling" again. And when one sees things in one's vision, though one closes one's eyes, one has to note "seeing, seeing". When the vision goes away, one has to go back to noting "rising and falling".

## Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

If the vision does not go away for a long time, do not stay with "seeing, seeing" for long, but ignore it and go back to the rising and falling. When any kind of odour is scented, good or bad odour has to be noted and then go back to rising and falling. When tastes appear at the tongue, sweet or salty tastes have to be noted and then go back to rising and falling. When wandering mind sets in, note "wandering, wandering" or "thinking, thinking" and then go back to rising and falling. When there are aches and pains, heat and cold in the body, note the aches and pains, heat or cold and then go back to rising and falling.

If the pain persists the meditator can change the posture but it has to be done step by step and at the same time noting the process step by step. Please note first the intention to change, then "changing, changing", opening of eyes, movements of the hands, changing of the posture, straightening of the back, repositing of hands, closing of the eyes and so forth, without missing any movement. Then go back to the rising and falling of the abdomen. Be certain



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that rising and falling of the abdomen is the primary object of meditation.

But the meditator also has to note the sight seen, the sound heard, the odour scented, the tastes tasted, the body impressions felt and the consciousness of mind object. The meditator may ask why we should note all these phenomena from the six sense doors. The aim and object of the contemplation is to prevent greed, anger, etc. entering from these six sense-doors. *Vipassana* meditation is to dispel greed, anger and delusion from oneself.

In the *Satipatthana Sutta* it is said: "*vineyya loke abhijjha domanassam*". The meaning of these Pali words is greed and anger are liable to attack the *loka* of the *Upadanakkhandha* and by contemplating the phenomena only can it be dispelled and dissolved, from moment to moment. Contemplation of these phenomena is the only way to prevent greed and anger from attacking.

## Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

Greed and anger can enter only through the six sense-doors. In Pali, these six sense-organs are called "*Dvara*" which means a door. As doors are the entry points to enter a house so also greed, anger and delusion will enter into a person through the six sense-doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

Unless the doors are closed, especially at night time, thieves, insects, dogs or snakes may enter the house. To prevent such mishaps, the house doors have to be closed properly.

So also the meditators must close the six sense-doors to prevent greed and anger from entering. It means that one is to note every phenomenon that comes from the six sense-doors.

If the meditator hears a sound he must note "hearing, hearing". By noting thus greed and anger cannot enter through the ears. If the meditator ignores noting the pleasant sound it will cause attachment and the attachment to the sound will create anger.

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Greed and anger will induce *akusala* or unwholesome deeds. *Akusala* deeds are all those kammic volition and the mind and mental concomitants associated therewith which are accompanied either by greed (*Lobha*) and hate (*Dosa*) or merely delusion (*Moha*). The same with the eye-door. When the meditator sees anything, please note "seeing, seeing". The pretty sights can create greed and the ugly sights can create anger.

The same with the nose-door. Unless the meditator notes the odour, the good smell will create greed and the stinking smell will cause anger. The same with eating. Unless the meditator notes the taste, good taste will create greed and bad taste will create anger. Greed and anger will cause *akusala* deeds which will cause verbal and physical unwholesome acts.

Therefore, as the saying goes "prevention is better than cure"; all the phenomena must be contemplated to prevent the formation of greed and anger. On seeing sights, note "seeing, seeing". If you note the

## Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

visual objects thus, you may have no time to appreciate the good or the bad sight, just awareness of the visual object. If the meditator does not contemplate thus he will have attachment to the good visual objects, then clinging sets in or anger will develop because of bad visual objects - "*Ditthedittha Mattam Bhavissati*". The translation of this Pali word is, "visual objects when noted at the time of seeing will stay as only visual objects, creating no sensation and no attachment".

"*Sute sutamattam Bhavissati*". The translation of this Pali word is, "when a sound is noted at the time of hearing it stays only as a sound object". There is no time to create greed or anger. So no sensation, no attachment. The same applies to odours. If there is odour, note "smelling, smelling". There should be no time to differentiate between good or bad odour. In eating also, the meditator should note step by step the process of eating. Thus, greed or anger will be prevented. Body impressions or tactile objects should also be noted as and when experienced. There will be no good or bad feeling.

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*"Mute Mutamattam Bhavissati"*. The translation of this text is "odour, taste and tactile object will stay as they are without creating greed or anger if the meditator notes them at the time of occurrence. Mind objects or consciousness should also be noted at that moment as "knowing, knowing" and thus prevent the analyzing process so as not to create *lobha, dosa, moha* (greed, anger and delusion). This in Pali is *"Vinnate Vinnatamattam Bhavissati"*.

Therefore our meditators here are to note all phenomena that strike the six sense-doors. In other words, the meditators should not be satisfied and complacent by being able to note the rising and falling of the abdomen only. Contemplation of all arising phenomena from the six sense-doors is also called Pothila Precedent.

During the time of the Buddha, there was a very learned abbot by the name of Pothila Mahathera who was a renowned teacher of Scriptures. He taught to five hundred Sanghas from eighteen different Sects

## Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

of that time and was respected by his pupils. One day this Pothila Mahathera went to the monastery of Lord Buddha to pay respect to the Omniscient Buddha. But Lord Buddha greeted him, "*Ehi Tuccha Pothila* (Come! Useless Pothila), *Vanda Tuccha Pothila* (Bow down! Useless Pothila), *Nisida Tuccha Pothila* (Sit! Useless Pothila), *Yahi Tuccha Pothila* (Go! Useless Pothila)".

Pothila Mahathera reflected. Why did the Omniscient Buddha address him "Good for nothing Pothila" even though he was teaching scriptures to eighteen Sects of *Sanghas* with great success. Then he realized that he was only engaged in *Pariyatti*, the teaching Line but totally neglected *Patipatti*, the practical meditation *bhavana* Line. So he decided to remedy his shortcoming and stopped his teaching lessons. Taking three robes and an alms bowl, as was the custom for monks, he left for a meditation centre where *Patipatti* was practised with a firm determination to strive for the attainment of Arahatsip.

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Yes, it is the right decision. If a person wishes to learn Scriptures, it is best to go to a *Pariyatti* Centre where there are teachers, books and teaching facilities. If a person wishes to practise *vipassana bhavana*, it is best to go to a meditation centre where there are facilities for meditation, good meditation teachers for guidance and accommodation and companions, conducive for intensive meditation practice.

Pothila Mahathera went to a famous *Patipatti* Centre where the Abbot-in-charge and all the other monks of the centre as well as *Samaneras* (novices) had attained the most noble status of Arahathship. Pothila Mahathera first went to the most senior Abbot and sought guidance in the *Patipatti bhavana* meditation. On seeing the famous and learned Pothila Mahathera the Senior Abbot replied, "*Bhikkhu* Pothila, you are a very famous and learned monk with plenty of pupils all over the country. I dare not teach you as my student."

## Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

In a way, it was to dispel Ven. Pothila's conceit (*mana*) of being a learned and famous Abbot which could be a hindrance to the practice. So Pothila Mahathera requested the second and third senior monks in succession to guide him. But they also gave the same reply that since Ven. Pothila was a learned and famous abbot, they did not dare to accept him as a student. As he was being rejected, by all senior monks of the centre, he at last came to a young *samanera* who had also attained Arahatsip at a very young age.

Pothila Mahathera paid due respect to the young *samanera* and requested the meditation method and implored the *samanera* to accept him as his meditation pupil. The young *samanera* also refused at the first instance giving the same reason. But Pothila Mahathera insisted and pleaded and pledged to obey his instructions to the letter. The young *samanera*, wanting to test his word, showed him to a pond and asked him to go in. Pothila Mahathera at once respectfully obeyed and proceeded to the centre of the pond. As Pothila Mahathera stepped into the



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edge of the pond, his robes were wet up to the knees but he proceeded towards the deep water.

The young *samanera*, seeing that the famous abbot was quite amenable, decided to recall the Abbot from the pond and accept him as his pupil. To convince Pothila Mahathera the importance of noting all phenomena that come to the six sense-doors of human beings, he asked the senior abbot how he would catch the iguana which stayed in a mound with six holes. Pothila Mahathera replied that he would close five holes of the mound leaving only one hole open and catch the Iguana when it came out from the only hole open.

The *samanera* then expounded that all phenomena that come through the five physical sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body should be contemplated by the mind consciousness. By this way with the gradual development of *citta visuddhi* a meditator can achieve *magga phala nana*, the final goal of meditators.

## Contemplation of All Phenomena from Six Sense-Doors

Pothila Mahathera understood the instructions and out of the six sense-doors he opened the only door of mind consciousness and contemplated all the phenomena that came to the life physical sense-organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. By this correct meditation practice, Pothila Mahathera attained the cherished goal of Arahathship within a reasonable time. Therefore, contemplation of all phenomena from the six sense-doors is also called Pothila Precedent.

May our meditators follow the example of Pothila Mahathera by contemplating the visible object, audible object, olfactory object, gustatory object, tactile object and mind object in the correct way and strive for the attainment of *Magga* and *Phala* (Path and Fruition).

May all our meditators be able to practise intensively as instructed here and quickly realize the cherished goal of *Nibbana* in the easiest way.

*Sadhu!      Sadhu!      Sadhu!*

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### DHAMMA V

#### Your Body is the Place to Search for the Dhamma

The subject of today's *Dhamma* Talk is "your body is the place to search for the *Dhamma*". This is expounded by the Lord Buddha in the *Anguttara Pali* Text, *Rohitassa Sutta*. In this *sutta* Lord Buddha explained that a person could find the Four Noble Truths namely *Dukkha Sacca*, *Samudaya Sacca*, *Nirodha Sacca* and *Magga Sacca* in his own body.

1. *Dukkha Sacca* is the noble truth of suffering. Birth is suffering. Sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering, separated from loved ones, living together with unloved ones, unattainable wishes, etc. are sufferings.
2. *Samudaya Sacca* is the noble truth of the origin of suffering. It is the craving which gives rise to fresh rebirth and is bound up with lust and greed. It is the sensual craving (*kama-*

## Your Body is the Place to Search for the Dhamma

*tanha*), the craving for existence (*bhava-tanha*), the craving for non-existence or self-annihilation (*vibhava-tanha*). The belief in the existence of the persisting ego-entity, soul or personality existing independently of those physical and mental processes that constitute life and continuing even after death through eternity-belief (*sassata-ditthi*) that gives rise to *bhava-tanha*. *Bhava-tanha* is also (*Samudaya Sacca*) the noble truth of the origin of suffering.

The craving for non-existence or self-annihilation (*vibhava-tanha*) is caused by *Uccheda-ditthi*. This (*Uccheda-ditthi*) belief in the dissolution at death encourages persons to enjoy in *akusala* deeds since it believes that there are no resultant effects of merit or demerits after death. These three namely *Kama-tanha*, *bhava-tanha* and *vibhava-tanha* cause suffering and is called *Samudaya Sacca*.

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3. *Nirodha Sacca* is the noble truth of the extinction of suffering. This is the extinction of *Dukkha Sacca* and *Samudaya Sacca* which is realization of *Nibbana*. Everybody has to strive for achievement of this goal.
4. *Magga Sacca* is the noble truth of the Path leading to the extinction of suffering. It is the Noble Eight Fold Path which leads to the extinction of *Dukkha Sacca*, *Samudaya Sacca* and realization of *Nirodha Sacca*.

*Magga Sacca* are (a) *Samma-Ditthi* (Right view), (b) *Samma Sankappa* (Right thought), (c) *Samma Vaca* (Right speech), (d) *Samma Kammanta* (Right Action), (e) *Samma Ajiva* (Right livelihood), (f) *Samma Vayama* (Right Effort), (g) *Samma Sati* (Right Mindfulness) and (h) *Samma Samadhi* (Right Concentration). These eight factors of *Magganga* should be cultivated. Our meditators here by the practice of *Vipassana bhavana* is also cultivating these eight *magganga*.

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When a meditator practises walking meditation, when he takes a left step, knowing correctly that he is taking a left step is *samma-ditthi mangganga*, noting mind in the step-action is *samma vayama*, consciousness of every action is *samma-sati*, awareness in serial order of the noting mind and taking the step repeatedly is *samma-samadhi*. These are five *pubbabhaga maggas*. When meditators take the eight precepts, *Samma-vaca*, *samma-kammanta* and *Samma-ajiva* have been observed already.

Therefore, when a meditator practises walking meditation he cultivates eight *maggangas* in his noting of every step. In his noting of rising and falling of the abdomen he is also cultivating the eight *maggangas* from moment to moment. Repeated practice of such kind of *bhavana* in numerous moments is immersing oneself in the noble path of eight *maggangas*, by such intensive practice alone, a meditator can achieve extinction of *Dukkha* and *Samudaya Sacca* and realize *Nirodha Sacca* which is realization of *Nibbana*. Therefore the subject of our *Dhamma* Talk "Your body is the place to search for

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the *Dhamma*" is finding the Four Noble truths of *Dukkha Sacca*, *Samudaya Sacca*, *Nirodha Sacca* and *Magga Sacca*. Searching for the *Dhamma* is the intensive contemplation of one's own mental and physical phenomena.

In searching for the *Dhamma* it is very important to strike the correct method. In Buddha *sasana* there are three chapters namely *pariyatti*, *patipatti* and *pativeda*. Without *pariyatti*, *patipatti* cannot flourish and without *pariyatti* and *patipatti*, *pativeda* cannot be achieved. *Pariyatti* is like the embankment in building a pond. *Patipatti* is like water and *Pativeda* is the lotus flower. If there is no embankment, water cannot be retained and if there is no water there cannot be lotus flower.

Another example - *Pariyatti* is the formula of making medicine. *Patipatti* is the treatment and *Pativeda* is curing. If there is no formula there can be no treatment and if there is no treatment, there can be no cure. Therefore the correct method is the criteria to walk the right Path of *Pariyatti*, *Patipatti*

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and *Pativeda*. After finding the correct path, the second criteria is perseverance. If there is no perseverance or stamina, success cannot be achieved. Intensive practice with perseverance on the right path is searching for *Dhamma*.

What is the body? It is the aggregates of mind and matter (*nama* and *rupa*) including the perception (*Sanna*). The dimension of your body is about six feet in length and ten inches in width. Finding the *Dhamma* is what meditators experience during contemplation. Therefore, "Your body is the place to search for the *Dhamma*" means the realization of the Four Noble Truths by intensive contemplation of mental and physical phenomena of one's own body.

The source of this talk - "Your body is the place to search for *Dhamma*" is found in the *Anguttara* Pali Text. During Buddha's time while Buddha was residing in Jetavana Monastery in Savatthi Province, one being from the Brahma World by the name of *Rohitassa* came to Lord Buddha. He came at midnight and being a Brahma he had a body of shining lights



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and after paying respect to Lord Buddha, he sat in a suitable place and put a question to Lord Buddha.

"O Lord Buddha! Can a person go on foot to the end of the universe where there is no birth, no death, no old age and no decay?" Lord Buddha replied, "*Rohitassa Brahma*, the end of the Universe where there is no old age, no decay, no death and rebirth means *Nibbana* and to travel to *Nibbana* on foot is impossible and unreachable." Here *Rohitassa Brahma's* question was the end of *Okasa loka* and Buddha's answer was the end of *Sankhara Loka*. But Lord Buddha's answer is not contradictory to the question since the end of *Sankhara loka* can also be taken as the end of *Okasa loka*. *Rohitassa Brahma* said to Lord Buddha, "Lord Buddha, your Venerable's answer is very surprising and it is very extraordinary. It is a very good answer that the end of the Universe meaning *Nibbana* is unreachable by travelling on foot. May I relate an old episode? Once upon a time, I was the son of a hunter by the name of *Rohitassa* who became a recluse after forsaking the family life. I was leading the life of a hermit in

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the heart of the forest. I was endowed with supernatural powers and I could travel instantly by supernatural powers. If I may describe my ability, I could travel around the universe during the short time as an expert archer's swift arrow passed through a palm tree shadow; I could also take big strides. My steps could be so vast that my one step could reach from the East ocean bank to the West ocean bank. I had a very strong desire to travel to the end of the universe. So with the obsession of travelling to the end of the universe and endowed with the supernatural powers and my swiftness, I proceeded on my journey to the end of the world. Leaving aside time for food and toilets, I travelled for one hundred years with all the powers and swiftness at my command but without reaching the end of the *Okasa loka*. I died at the edge of one universe. After that journey and death, (without realizing my aim) I was born into the Brahma world and I am known as *Rohitassa Brahma*".

When he was born into the Brahma world he remembered his past and came to Lord Buddha and

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questioned Lord Buddha if it was possible to travel to the end of *Okasa loka* where there was no old age, no decay, no death and no rebirth etc. to verify his own experience. So Lord Buddha's answer that the end of *Sankhara loka* where there was no old age, no decay, no death and no rebirth could not be reached on foot confirmed his experience.

Buddha added that unless *Nibbana* was realized, there was no place where there was no old age, no decay, no death and no rebirth, so there were bound to be sufferings. *Rohitassa Brahma* was told that the end of all sufferings was realization of *Nibbana*. And the correct way to realize it was to search the *Dhamma* from one's own body. In this body alone *Dukkha Sacca*, *Samudaya Sacca*, *Nirodha Sacca* and *Magga Sacca* could be found.

*Dukkha Sacca* in brief is the five groups of *Khandhas*. What our meditators here practise is *Dukkha Sacca*. Noting of left step, right step is *Dukkha Sacca*. Rising and falling of the abdomen is *Dukkha Sacca*, seeing and hearing is also *Dukkha*

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*Sacca*. Before the meditation practice a meditator does not know these as *Dukkha Sacca* but regards them as sensual pleasures misled by *tanha* (craving). Eating, seeing, hearing, etc. are regarded as pleasures by an ordinary person before the practice of *Vipassana bhavana*. Not only seeing and hearing but all sensations from the five physical sense-organs are regarded as good and pleasurable and we become attached to these sensations.

The attachment is *Samudaya Sacca* which is craving (*tanha*). To lead to the extinction of *Dukkha Sacca* and *Samudaya Sacca*, a meditator has to cultivate *magga sacca*. The practice of *Vipassana bhavana* is cultivating *magga sacca*. Every noting by a meditator is cultivating *magga sacca*. By persistent noting of all mental and physical phenomena, a meditator gradually progresses in cultivating *magga sacca* and finally reaches a stage where all physical and mental phenomena cease to function. This is called realization of *Nibbana*. Such realization is achieved by the contemplation of mental and physical phenomena of one's own body and hence Lord Buddha

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had expounded, "Your body is the place to search for the *Dhamma*", the main topic of today's *Dhamma* talk.

Here we have to be cautious about some wrong deductions by some critics. They say, Lord Buddha had said that the Four Noble Truths of *Dukkha Sacca*, *Samudaya Sacca*, *Nirodha Sacca* and *Magga Sacca* are discovered in one's own body. Since the Four Noble Truths are in one's own body, no effort, no practice of anything is necessary. This premiss is not correct. Buddha's teachings are deep and difficult. Some of the teachings need correct interpretation by those who are conversant with *Dhamma*.

For example, a forest of "Teak" trees is called "Teak" forest. But it doesn't mean teak trees alone grow in this forest or there can be no "Teak" trees in other areas. Other species may also grow in a "Teak" forest. Second example is when the announcement is made that the President of a country has made an appearance, it does not mean the president alone. He has his assistants, his

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bodyguards and the whole of his retinue. But the most important person is the President and his destination alone is declared and that includes the whole retinue of his followers. This is called "*Padhana* method". There is also the *phalanumana* method. It is by knowing the effect one can find out the cause. When a stream is suddenly flooded with a great volume of water, one can deduce that there is heavy rain at the source of the stream. Flooding is the effect and raining at the source is the cause.

Third example is the *Attha panna* method. It is taking the meaning of the sentence. By examining the statement, "*Devadatta*" has full stomach without eating in the daytime. Though he does not eat in the daytime but he has a full stomach, it is to be deduced that he eats at night time. So also, when Lord Buddha said that the Four Noble Truths are in one's own body, it does not mean that the Four Noble Truths are in solid form in one's body. *Dukkha Sacca* and *Samudaya Sacca* can be found in the body but *maggā sacca* has to be cultivated. By cultivating the cause, contemplation of mental and physical

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phenomena, the effect is cessation and realization of *Nibbana*.

The subject of this talk is "Your body is the place to search for the *Dhamma*". In conclusion, if a meditator wants to know the Four Noble Truths of *Dukkha Sacca*, *Samudaya Sacca*, *Nirodha Sacca* and *Magga Sacca* he has to contemplate *nama* and *rupa* of his body. By contemplating the mental and physical phenomena of one's own body, finally one can realise cessation of suffering, *Nibbana*.

So may all our meditators as expounded by Lord Buddha in this *dhamma* "Your body is the place to search for the *Dhamma*" be able to contemplate on his own body and find the Four Noble Truths and realise the cessation of all suffering in the shortest possible time.

*Sadhu!      Sadhu!      Sadhu!*

## Four Types of People

### DHAMMA VI

#### Four Types of People

Today's *Dhamma* Talk is about "Four Types of People" as expounded by Lord Buddha to King *Pasenadi Kosala* of *Savatthi*, a province in India. Lord Buddha in his discourse explains that there are persons who go -

- (1) To darkness from darkness.
- (2) To brightness from darkness.
- (3) To darkness from brightness.
- (4) To brightness from brightness.

Lord Buddha further elaborated that:

Firstly a person is born in the lower strata of life, with an ugly appearance, poor health, bodily defects such as blindness, deafness, inarticulateness, deformation, etc., and has no food to eat, no clothes to wear, no house to dwell in and no medicine for health. Though born in such a miserable state, he has no repentance but indulges in unwholesome activities such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and



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taking intoxicants. He fails to observe moral purification. Committing such unwholesome deeds without repentance, he is no doubt, likely to be reborn in the nether worlds - as in hell, in the animal world or in the ghost worlds. Such type of a person is categorized as one who goes from darkness to darkness.

Secondly, a person is born poor with bodily defects as above. Though born miserable, he feels repentant and realises that due to his unwholesome activities done in the past existence, he is consequently born in such a miserable state and mends his mental attitudes. He observes unbroken morality, does all wholesome activities to his utmost ability, giving meritorious *danas* (generosity), etc. Moreover, he practises wholesome thoughts, speech and actions and totally abstains from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants. His status gradually rises or ascends higher and higher as one living on the ground to sitting on a chair, to riding on a horse, to riding on an ornamented elephant and then on to residing in a fully decorated house. Thus a

## Four Types of People

person who mends his ways understandingly is sure to achieve a better kind of existence with healthy and wealthy circumstances and may even land in the *deva* worlds. Such type of a person is categorized as one who goes to brightness from darkness.

Thirdly, a person born high of rich parents, endowed with good appearance, health and wealth without having to worry about food, clothing, dwelling and medicine and leads a luxurious life. Though born fortunate, he lacks morality, does not understand the benefits of wholesome thoughts, speech and actions and enjoys doing mischievous deeds such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants. Moreover, he is inconsiderate towards others and never cultivates sympathetic feelings. Committing such unwholesome activities throughout his life his status falls or descends gradually from the dwelling in the fully decorated house to riding on an ornamented elephant, to riding on a horse, to sitting on a chair and then falling onto the ground level. Such type of a person is categorized as one

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who goes to darkness from brightness. He is likely to be reborn in the nether world after death.

Fourthly, a person is born high of rich parents fully endowed with all the necessary requisites of life as above. Though he enjoys the higher standard of living, he is far-sighted, intelligent and realizes that his present status of richness and amenities of good life is due to his wholesome activities of his previous existence. So he carries on the meritorious way of giving charity to the needy, practising wholesome thoughts, speech and actions, observing morality, etc. He abstains from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants, is considerate to others and always cultivates sympathetic feelings towards others. Leading such a puritanical way of life, his status ascends or rises higher and higher as one living on the ground to sitting on a chair, to riding on a horse, to riding on an ornamented elephant and then on to residing in a fully decorated house and thus he is sure to be reborn in the higher *deva* worlds or at least in the human world at a higher influential position. Such

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type of a person is categorized as one who goes to brightness from brightness.

Now let me recall our present position. Here our meditators are well-to-do in the present life with normal health, wealth and intelligence as a result of the wholesome deeds of the previous existence. And also you are all endowed with a reasonably comfortable life and have a chance to be able to come to this *Mahasi* Meditation Centre where *Satipatthana Bhavana* insight meditation can be systematically studied and performed or practised under the guidance of experienced meditation masters. Thus you can all be regarded as achieving the brightness of life. To be always in this brightness, you should all strictly adhere to wholesome activities throughout your life-span. If you do indulge in both wholesome and unwholesome activities, you are not sure of your future destination whether it will be in brightness or darkness. It is as if you are dropping a piece of paper from a high tree, the paper can land on the ground or on the surface of water or on a thorny

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bush or in the mud. A person who is not an *ariya*, that is, one who has not attained *magga nana*, is never secure about this future existence. Only an *ariya* who has attained *magga nana* can be certain to be reborn in brightness.

Lord Buddha, in the introduction of the *Satipatthana Sutta*, said that only meditators practising the four divisions of *Satipatthana Vipassana Bhavana* or insight meditation namely,

- (1) Contemplation of the physical body (*kayanupassana*).
- (2) Contemplation of the feeling or sensation (*vedananupassana*).
- (3) Contemplation of the mind (*cittanupassana*).
- (4) Contemplation of the mind objects or conditions (*dhammanupassana*).

to the full extend with the utmost desire enthusiastically will be able to gain *magga nana* in this very existence. Thus our meditators should endeavour to the best of their abilities to achieve the noble full-fledged path knowledge *magga nana*.

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Therefore, it is advisable that since our meditators are fortunately born during the Buddha *Sasana* i.e. Buddha's Teachings, they should endeavour their utmost effort to attain *magga nana* through *vipassana* meditation as *vipassana* is available only during the Buddha *Sasana*. After attaining *magga nana*, all unwholesome activities are being surmounted by themselves and you are sure to achieve brightness: human world or heavenly world and hence due to the accumulation of wholesome deeds in many forthcoming existences, you will achieve the most cherished goal of *Nibbana*, the cessation of all sufferings. Thus with firm conviction, all meditators will surmount all unwholesome thoughts, speech and actions and achieve progress of insight knowledge through the stages of purification and strive hard for deliverance.

May all meditators be able to practise *Satipatthana Vipassana Bhavana* meditation steadfastly and continuously with perseverance and attain the perpetual peace of *Nibbana* in the shortest and the

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quickest way.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Dhamma Talk on Sampajanna

### DHAMMA VII

#### Dhamma Talk on Sampajanna

The subject of today's Dhamma Talk is "*kayanupassana*" (*Sampajanna pabba*). We shall try to explain contemplation on physical phenomena with full awareness or clear comprehension through personal experiences.

The main feature of *Satipatthana* is *Sati* (mindfulness). But there are four divisions and four characteristics and the dispelling method is of four kinds.

The four divisions of mindfulness are:-

- (1) *Kayanupassana* - Contemplation of the physical body
- (2) *Vedananupassana* - Contemplation of the feelings
- (3) *Cittanupassana* - Contemplation of the mind
- (4) *Dhammanupassana* - Contemplation of the mind objects



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or in other words:

- (1) Mindful noting of physical phenomena is *kayanupassana satipatthana*.
- (2) Mindful noting of feelings is *vedananupassana satipatthana*.
- (3) Mindful noting of wandering and thinking minds is *cittanupassana satipatthana*.
- (4) Mindful noting of mind objects like seeing, hearing, palpitation, pulsation, etc is *dhammanupassana satipatthana*.

To contemplate on the four characteristics which are:

- (1) *Anicca* - or impermanent character
- (2) *Dukkha* - or suffering character
- (3) *Anatta* - or (non-self) uncontrollable character.
- (4) *Asubha* - or loathsomeness character

To dispel by four methods which are:

- (1) To dispel *nicca* by *anicca* character
- (2) To dispel *sukha* by *dukkha* character
- (3) To dispel *atta* by *anatta* character

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(4) To dispel *subha* by *asubha* character

In *Kayanupassana* Buddha divides it into fourteen kinds: 1) *Anapana pabba* 2) *Iriya-patha pabba* 3) *Sampajanna pabba* 4) *Patikula manasikara pabba* 5) *Dhatu manasikara pabba* 6) *Navasivathika pabba*, which has nine parts, so altogether the total is fourteen.

- (1) *Anapana pabba* is contemplation of breathe-in, breathe-out.
- (2) *Iriyapatha pabba* is four positions of the body - standing, walking, sitting and lying.
- (3) *Sampajanna pabba* is noting of all physical phenomena with clarity of consciousness.  
[NOTE: Mahasi meditation method is based on (2) and (3)]
- (4) *Patikula manasikara pabba* is contemplating on the 32 parts of the body. They are: hair of head, hair of body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidney, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, gorge, faeces, brain, bile, phlegm,

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pus, blood, sweat, solid fat, tears, liquid fat, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.

- (5) *Dhatu manasikara pabba* is contemplating on the four physical elements (*mahabhuta*) popularly called earth, water, fire and wind.
- (6) *Navasivathika pabba* is the dead body contemplation that is called meditation subject of impurity (loathsomeness, foulness). This category consists of nine kinds of *Asubha Kammatthana* (nine kinds of loathsomeness of the dead body).

So *Kayanupassana Satipatthana* alone has fourteen chapters. Today's *Dhamma* talk will be on the third chapter called *Sampajanna pabba* (Clarity of consciousness, clear comprehension). It is not only contemplation of four positions of the body (standing, walking, sitting and lying) but clearly conscious is he in going and coming and clearly conscious in looking forward and backward, clearly conscious in eating, drinking, chewing and tasting, clearly conscious in discharging excrement and urine, clearly conscious in walking, standing, sitting, falling

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asleep and awakening, clearly conscious in speaking and keeping silent. Buddha had expounded in detail how to note the movements of the body.

When moving forward or backward, a meditator has to do so with clear consciousness (mindfulness). A meditator should not do forward or backward movements without knowledge (consciousness). A meditator has to note that movement he made with clear consciousness whether it is forward or backward. Normally meditators note forward movements alone, ignoring the backward movement. So note the movements as "moving forward, moving forward" and also "moving backward, moving backward".

When looking straight ahead or sideways, please note "stretching, bending". In the course of daily routine movements of drinking, eating there will be movements of bending, stretching of hand or body and so forth. All these movements are to be noted in detail.

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When monks are putting on robes, it should be done with clear consciousness. For a lay person also when engaged in wearing clothes, it should be done with clear consciousness. Meditators should not wear clothes while walking because two things cannot be done with clear consciousness at the same time. While doing walking meditation, if there is occasion to re-do the robes or make changes to the clothing, please stop walking and do your changes step by step, noting each step. For monks, taking additional double robe or taking or changing position of alms-bowl, etc. should only be done after stopping the walking movements. For a lay person, changes or remaking of clothing, etc. or even combing of the hair, etc. has to be done with awareness (noting) after he has stopped the walking.

When drinking, eating, chewing, tasting, it should be done only with clear comprehension. At the time of eating, looking at the dishes, taking of the spoon, collecting of the dishes, bringing the morsel of food to the mouth, chewing and so forth should all be noted. At the time of eating, the meditator should

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eat with downcast eyes keeping steady hand and note "chewing, chewing, swallowing, swallowing".

Even in discharging excrement and urine, it should be done with clear conscious noting so that nothing should be done unnoted. At the time of bathing, it should be done with clear conscious noting of all the steps leading to the bath, brushing of the teeth, applying of the soap to the body, splashing of water and so forth should all be noted in detail.

At the time of morning wash, all the detailed steps leading to the washing and the drying of the face with towels and so forth should also be noted. Awakening, sitting, standing, walking, stopping and so forth should also be noted in detail. At the time of sleeping do not just get into bed and sleep as a routine. Coming back to the room, opening of the lock, opening of the door, switching on the light, putting down the mosquito netting, taking out slippers, getting into bed, lying down, closing of eyes and then the rising, falling of the abdomen and so forth should be noted in clear comprehension.

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At the time of awakening the process of noting every physical and mental phenomenon is essential again. Start with the opening of the eyes, and then wanting to get up and getting up, going down from the bed stand, lifting the mosquito net, folding of the blankets and tidying the bed and so forth should be noted step by step.

When going to the washroom, start with the taking of towels, toothbrush and soap and then opening of the door, walking to the toilet room, etc. should all be noted step by step. In this way, a meditator will not miss anything from the time of awakening until the time of sleeping. The meditator will become a model meditator with very sharp mindfulness. Even if the meditator has to talk, do not talk absentmindedly. Try and talk with a clear comprehension and stop as soon as the required communication has been made. By these ways of mindful noting, *Sampajanna* is well observed.

There are four kinds of *sampajanna*:-

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1. Clarity of consciousness regarding assessing the purpose is *Satthaka Sampajanna*. When talking or engaging in some purpose whether it is beneficial or disastrous is to be considered. If there is personal benefit, it is acceptable. If there is no personal benefit but it is beneficial to other people, such kind of task is also acceptable.

The other criterion is if it is beneficial for the present, it should be acceptable or no benefit for the present but it can be beneficial in the future then such a purpose or task is acceptable and should be done. But if the task is not beneficial, neither for the present nor for the future, or if the task has no personal benefit nor is it beneficial to others, such a task should be discarded.

For a beginner meditator with progress in the practice, *saddha* (faith) develops and the meditator desires to give *dana* and services to the cause of religion, etc. These are not beneficial for



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his present practice, so such thoughts should be kept in abeyance.

2. The second criterion is: Even if a task is right or beneficial the suitability of the task is to be considered. Some people think that if a task is right and beneficial they do not want to wait for the suitability of purpose or time. Such kind of haste is not advisable.

Even right speech cannot be advantageous if spoken at the wrong time or to the wrong audience.

Buddha had laid down the criteria for making speech. There are six in number:

1. Right, beneficial and pleasing (to the audience)
2. Right, beneficial but not pleasing
3. Right, not beneficial but pleasing
4. Right, not beneficial and not pleasing
5. Wrong, not beneficial but pleasing
6. Wrong, not beneficial and not pleasing

## Dhamma Talk on Sampajanna

Out of the six only (1) and (2) are to be spoken. Even the second speech which is right, beneficial but not pleasing is to be spoken only at the appropriate time. Words to be used are also important. Some words which are civil in one locality can be rude in another locality. Some customs which are quite common to one nationality can be an insult to another nationality. So it is important to choose the right place, the right time and the right moment. Such kind of consideration is called *Sappaya Sampajanna*.

3. The third one is *Gocara Sampajanna*. It can be translated as domain. If it is one's own domain one can fight back the enemy with energy. Therefore meditators should stay in their own domain. The meditator's domain is the satipatthana field. Practising Satipatthana all the time is living in one's domain. If meditators go all out of their domain (i.e.) living without Satipatthana mindfulness they are liable to be attacked by lobha, dosa and moha (greed, anger and delusion).

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4. The fourth is *Asammoha Sampajanna*. The meaning of *asammoha* is knowing the truth without wavering or the undeluded conception of the activity concerned. Before practising *satipatthana* meditation a person with delusion knows as I walk, I take step, I sleep, I see and so forth. When the meditator practises *satipatthana* meditation by mindful noting of mental and physical phenomena, the meditator comes to know of *Nama* and *rupa*. Walking is *rupa* and knowing is *nama*.

Then before walking, intention to walk is the cause and walking is the effect. The meditator comes to know cause and effect.

After that the meditator discovers the dissolving and disappearing phenomena. Then the meditator comes to know about the impermanence of all mental and physical phenomena. With progress in the practice, the meditator comes to know *Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta dhammas*. This practical insight knowledge is gained through *Satipatthana bhavana* meditation only and is called *Asammoha*

## Dhamma Talk on Sampajanna

*Sampajanna*. When the meditator practises and observes the four *Sampajannas* (*Satthaka Sampajanna*, *Sappaya Sampajanna*, *Gocara Sampajanna*, *Asammoha Sampajanna*) with diligent mindful practice the meditator will at a reasonable time achieve *magga-nana* and *phala-nana* (knowledge of the path and knowledge of the fruition of the Path).

Therefore our meditators should try to embrace the teaching of the Buddha and practise accordingly to achieve the four *Sampajannas* and in due course experience the peaceful and blissful *Nibbana*, the cessation of all suffering in the easiest way.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Dhamma Discourses

### DHAMMA VIII

#### The Benefits of Meditation

The subject of today's *Dhamma* talk is "the benefits of meditation practice". Details of the benefits that can be derived through meditation practice is explained in this treatise. At one time, a certain *deva* (a celestial being) approached Buddha respectfully and expressed his views by way of verification. He said, "Lord Buddha, if I may express my opinion, I believe all sentient beings love their children the most. The richest man is a person who owns the most number of cattle. The sun's rays are the brightest light of the universe. Among the lakes which contain large volumes of water, the ocean is the biggest and widest." He expressed his views by making these four statements.

His statements look like conventional truth. Yes, people love their off-springs so much that they carry their children in their arms, on their shoulders and on their heads. Even if the children urinate or

## The Benefits of Meditation

excrete on them, they do not get angry or feel repulsive but shower more love and loving-kindness on them. So this *deva* deduced from these observations that sentient beings love their offsprings the most. His second observation is that the person who owns the largest number of cattle is the richest also seems practical since Buddha's native place is India where cattle is regarded with esteem and considered sacred. Hindu culture is non-meat eating and to get the required protein, milk is the source. Butter, yoghurt and cheese, etc. are extracted from milk to get nutrients for the population. Therefore, Hindus raise cattle in large numbers and the person who owns the largest number of cattle is regarded as the richest man.

His statement that the sun-rays are the brightest seems to be true because other lights such as electricity light, battery lights or other sources of light cannot be compared to sunlight in brightness. His statement that among the lakes the ocean is the widest and largest is also quite plausible and the appropriateness of these statements makes them

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look like conventional truths. Here we have to compare the differences in cleverness between normal knowledge of ordinary people and the Divine wisdom of the omniscient Buddha. After considering all the aspects of the *Deva's* words, Buddha replied the following counter-statements to the *Deva*.

- (1) Every sentient being loves oneself the most,
- (2) The richest man is the person who owns the largest quantity of grain (paddy),
- (3) The light of wisdom is the brightest,
- (4) The rain and spring water is the main source of water to the ocean.

Buddha explained the statements. All the assertions the *Deva* made were wrong when compared to Buddha's revelations.

Naturally people love their off-springs but a time may come when there are differences and their ways may part. One can see parents disowning their sons and daughters on various grounds. Dearest husbands and wives who love each other so much also divorce when there are differences. It is shown that they love to a certain degree but not to the utmost level

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as one loves oneself. Therefore, Buddha pointed out to the *Deva* that his statement that sentient beings love their off-spring most is not correct and that all beings love themselves most.

The second statement is also wrong because during the time of need or famine the most important material for survival is paddy (grain). It can even cause disasters, miseries and death if paddy is not available. It is true for all people, even for those who eat "chapatti" or bread because there are seven kinds of paddy (grain or cereal). They can be categorized as: paddy, barley, oats, corn, maize, millet and wheat. The person who owns the largest amount of paddy is the richest.

Sunlight from outside appearance seems to be brightest but it cannot give light to depths or deep caves. And it cannot give light to persons who are immersed in *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*. And the sunlight cannot make a person clever and good if he is bad and foolish. People can be taught to become good, clever and civilized by wisdom only. Therefore the



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light of wisdom is the brightest. The wise saying that "There is no light brighter than the light of wisdom" is very true.

The sea and oceans will not be filled if rain and spring water do not flow towards the ocean. The spring water and the rain water flow into the ocean by way of many small rivers and large rivers. The relevant assertion here is to prove the most important point that sentient beings love themselves the most. When a house is on fire, the person living in the house runs away from the house to save his own life. All sentient beings are seeking safety and comfort for themselves and they want to be rich and happy.

Therefore, the Buddha's word that every sentient being loves himself the most is the absolute truth. So if a person loves himself best how should he lead his life to get the utmost benefit?

Enjoying pleasurable sensual objects only will not amount to loving oneself in a proper way. The learned

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persons of previous generations had stated that only those persons who were not lazy to participate and take active part in *kusala*, *Dhammas*, could be regarded as persons loving themselves in the right way. If one loves oneself, one should take active part in wholesome deeds with heart and soul. In doing wholesome deeds it is important to have right view and correct faith also.

*Kusala* deeds must be innocent and it must result in good *kamma* benefits. One should not be lazy to do wholesome deeds. Giving alms *dana* is for one's own benefit. The receiver of *dana* is beneficial but the objective of *dana* is for the donor to get rid of his *lobha* (greed) by giving away his property with generosity and the receiver reciprocates the donor's loving kindness which is meritorious. Observing *sila* is also a wholesome deed.

To abstain from killing, stealing and not committing other evil actions and speeches is a *kusala* deed. It can check *lobha*, *dosa* and the resultant benefit is healthiness and longevity of life. Now for *panna*,

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*vipassana bhavana* is also a *kusala* deed. *Vipassana bhavana* is to prevent *lobha* and *dosa* arising from the six senses. So a person is free from *lobha* and *dosa* and enjoys purity of mind free from sorrow and anxiety.

The final goal of *bhavana* is to gain *magga nana*, *phala nana* and realization of *nibbana*, so it is the most desirable *kusala* deed. By practising *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* with heart and soul will only amount to loving oneself in the right way. The meditators here who are practising *vipassana* meditation also amount to loving themselves in the right way. Their very own practice is not for anybody else but for the benefit of themselves. *Dana*, *sila*, *samatha bhavana* (tranquility meditation) and *vipassana bhavana* (insight meditation) are all *kusala* deeds. But the degree of merit accrued is not the same.

*Dana* and *sila* are *kusala* deeds and the resultant benefits will be richness and happiness in the human world and *deva* world. Practising *samatha bhavana* will send one to the Brahma world where the Brahmas

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stay in *jhanic* bliss requiring no food or water or other nutrients. The life span of a Brahma is also very very long. But the defect of this Brahma world is that after that long and blissful life, a person can revert to the human world and the *apaya* world (i.e. animal world, ghost-world and hell).

*Vipassana bhavana*, if properly practised, can achieve the status where *sakkaya-ditthi* can be expelled altogether (i.e. reaching the Path of Stream-Nibbana) through the path of *magga* and *phala*. So among the four *kusala* deeds *vipassana bhavana* is the best. To summarize, *Dana* and *Sila kusala* deeds can give resultant benefits in the *deva* world and amongst human beings.

*Samatha bhavana kusala* deeds can have resultant benefits in the Brahma world. *Vipassana bhavana kusala* deeds can give *Nibbanic* bliss. Our meditators here are practising *vipassana bhavana* to achieve the cherished goal of *Nibbana*. A question can be asked at this stage. Can *Nibbana* be attained by practising meditation at the present time?

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Yes, one can realize *Nibbana* by practising *vipassana* meditation at the present time. Buddha himself had told ascetic Subhadda just before His *parinibbana* (final passing away). Buddha said: "Even after my passing away if all the devotees, whether they be monks or laymen, follow the instructions contained in my discourses and practise *vipassana* meditation in a proper perspective, there will be no scarcity of arahats at all times."

Here "practice in a proper perspective" means "persons after attaining *Udayabbaya Nana* (awareness of every new phenomena rapidly arising and passing away) will encourage other meditators or other friends to practise like him and if the same result is achieved then it can be regarded as practising in a proper perspective".

A meditator after proper practice achieves the status of cessation of mental and physical phenomena and he in turn encourages other meditators to try and reach the status of cessation of mental and physical phenomena. This then can be

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regarded as practising in a proper perspective. In our *Mahasi* Meditation Centre, the old meditator tries to help the new meditators so that they also realize what they themselves have achieved in their meditation practice. This also is leading a good Buddhist life and practising in a proper perspective.

If Buddhists obey the words of the Buddha and help one another in their *vipassana* meditation as Buddha had prophesied, there can be no disappearance of Arahats. If Arahats can be achieved at the present time, naturally *Anagami* persons, *Sakadagami* persons and *Sotapatti* persons will be existing at the present time. Therefore if meditators practise in proper perspective it is possible to reach the status of *Ariya-Puggala* at the present time without any doubt.

Even persons who are sick and have no ability to practise effectively now should not be discouraged because in "*Majjhimanikaya Maha Rahulovada Sutta Atthakatha*" it is stated that:

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- 1) Persons who have experience in meditation practice can achieve *Ariya puggala* status in one of the sitting practices during his lifetime at one time or another. Since they are familiar with meditation techniques, at the proper time and place when the conditions are conducive they know how to take the opportunity to engage in serious meditation and there is ample chance of attaining *magga* and *phala nana* at that moment. This is the first occasion the meditators get for fulfillment of their cherished goal.
- 2) If this does not materialize, there is still a second chance at the time when he is about to die. When nearing death, sentient beings look for solace and support because they are afraid to die. Every being is afraid of death. There are two kinds of beings who are not afraid of death.
  - a) One kind of being is four-fold: superhero, elephant-hero and bull-hero. They are not afraid of death because their *sakkaya-ditthi* is too strong.

## The Benefits of Meditation

b) There is a second group of persons who is not afraid of death. They are -

1. *Pacceka* Buddhas (Silent or Private Buddhas), *Anagami* persons, Arahats
2. And fully enlightened Buddhas because they have eliminated *sakkaya-ditthi* and they have also eliminated the fear-producing *dosa* (anger).

All other persons are afraid of death. Death is a fearful event because nobody is sure what will happen after death or where he is to be re-born, etc. When looking for support some look to their children, some look to their doctors, whoever is near them. But at the time of actual death no medicine is effective, no help from the children can be useful. The real support needed at the time of death is *Dhamma*. Those who have no experience in *Dhamma* or *bhavana* meditation will not know how to contemplate the *Dhamma*. The last resort is to lament for the children to help them from death.



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As a bird deprived of its wings cannot fly and becomes meat for dogs and cats, if human being does not know how to contemplate the *Dhamma* at the time of death he is liable to land in the *Apaya* world. But for those persons who have experience in meditation practice, they can contemplate the *vipassana bhavana* and there is a second chance for them to attain *magga* and *phala nana* and become *Ariya-puggala* just before the time of death. Suppose he has no chance to contemplate the *Dhamma* at the time of his death, his previous *vipassana bhavana* will not be wasted.

- 3) Though he did not become an *ariya-puggala*, the very fact that he died contemplating the *Dhamma* would prevent him landing in the *apaya* worlds and would certainly help him to become a Heavenly Being of the *Deva* world. He had a sure chance of meeting those Heavenly Beings who had practised *bhavana* meditation at the time of Gotama Buddha and by association with these pious Heavenly

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Beings he could have another chance to become an *Ariya-puggala*.

In the *Deva* world, the conditions are similar to the human world. As there are *Devas* seeking enjoyable sensual pleasures, there are *Devas* seeking the *Dhamma* and practising *vipassana bhavana* also. So when a person lands in the *Deva* world due to his contemplation of the *Dhamma* at the time of his death, he will associate with other pious *devas*. As a *Deva* world being, being more intelligent, he can become a *Deva Ariya* without much difficulty. This is the third chance of deliverance for those persons who have experience in meditation practice.

- 4) Supposing he fails to make the third chance of deliverance in the *Deva* world but through the cycle of "Round of Rebirth" of *Samsara* he may become a human being in the world where there is no Buddha and Buddha *Sasana*, the fact that he had practised *Vipassana bhavana*

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at various existences would result in his becoming a *Pacceka*-Buddha. A *Pacceka*-Buddha is an "Independently Enlightened one" outside of Buddha *Sasana*. Such a kind of *Pacceka*-Buddha is called separately or individually an Enlightened One. He comprehends the Four Noble Truths by his own efforts but has no capacity to proclaim the teaching effectively to others as a Universal Buddha (*Samma-Sambuddha*) and may be called a lesser Buddha. Womenfolk can also achieve manhood at that time and can aspire to become *Pacceka*-Buddhas.

- 5) Supposing he fails to attain this *Pacceka*-Buddhahood as the fourth chance, by dint of his previous meditation practice he can become an arahat easily during the time of the next coming *Sasana*. There is a precedent, during the time of Gotama Buddha, one "*Bahiya Darucariya*" who had previous meditation experience at the time of *Kassapa Buddha* for seven full days but achieved no

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*Ariya-Puggala* status. So during *Gottama* Buddha's time he became an arahat with one good sitting very easily and comfortably knowing the Four Noble Truths at once.

In conclusion, the practice of meditation (*bhavana*) is very beneficial and every meditator should endeavour not to miss the chance of engaging in *vipassana* meditation at this very moment.

By practising *vipassana bhavana* :

- (1) A person can achieve *magga* and *phala nana* at the first chance.
- (2) If he fails to achieve *ariya-puggala* at the first chance, he can succeed in achieving it at the time of dying as the second chance.
- (3) If he fails in the second chance, he can achieve *magga* and *phala nana* as a Heavenly Being of *Deva* world, as the third chance.

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- (4) If he fails at the third chance, he can achieve *Pacceka-Buddhahood* even outside of the Buddha *Sasana*.
- (5) If he fails on the fourth chance of becoming a *Pacceka-Buddha*, he can easily realize the Four Noble Truths and become an arahat in the coming Buddha *Sasana*.

Since the benefits of meditation are so great and sure of achievement, every meditator should make the greatest effort to practise *vipassana* meditation at the present time and may I conclude my *Dhamma* talk by wishing you all to quickly realize the cherished goal of *Nibbana* in the easiest way.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Importance of Balanced Faculties in Meditation

### DHAMMA IX

#### Importance of Balanced Faculties in Meditation

The subject of today's Dhamma talk is Importance of Balanced Faculties in Meditation. Five main faculties are mindfulness, concentration, effort (or energy), faith and wisdom. Out of these five faculties, concentration and effort, faith and wisdom should be equally balanced in meditation; over-emphasis of *saddha* (faith), *viriya* (effort) or *samadhi* (concentration) is not desirable. There is no over-emphasis in mindfulness (*sati*). The more emphasis on mindfulness, the better it is for the meditation practice.

There are four kinds of body positions in the meditation practice. They are standing, walking, sitting and lying. Out of these four, standing and walking practices encourage the developing or building up of *viriya* (effort or energy). Of course concentration is also included but the emphasis is

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more in development of *viriya* (effort). While standing, a meditator has to make an effort not to fall down. In walking also a meditator has to make a special effort to take one step after another while staying erect. Therefore we regard standing and walking meditation as more conducive to the development of *viriya* (effort).

Sitting and lying meditation practices are more conducive to the development of *samadhi* (concentration). In the sitting meditation posture there is no bodily movement and as the eyes are closed it encourages the development of *samadhi* (concentration). *Viriya* is there also but it plays a minor part. In the practice of the lying position the body posture of lying is keeping still and with the eyes closed it encourages the building up of concentration. Therefore we regard sitting and lying postures as having more emphasis on the development of concentration.

Therefore in the scriptures it is specifically mentioned that *Ariyas* (noble persons) uttered words

## Importance of Balanced Faculties in Meditation

of praise to those meditators whose meditation is balanced between concentration and effort as well as between faith and wisdom. A word of praise is appropriate because in actual fact, the progress of *vipassana bhavana* is achieved quickly only when concentration and effort, faith and wisdom are equally developed.

When you observe a bicycle the two wheels must be equally aired to have a good and swift motion. If one of the tyres is flat the movement of the bicycle is impaired. The same is with human beings. A person is only normal if his two eyes and two ears are functioning correctly equally. If one eye or one ear is defective he can see but the effectiveness is not as good as a person who has two good eyes. He can also hear but the hearing is not as good as a person who has two good ears. The same applies to two hands and two legs. If one of them is defective normal actions cannot be exercised as a person who has a good pair of hands and legs.



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For meditators also the progress of insight is normal and quick if concentration and effort, faith and wisdom are in proper balance. If not properly balanced it is mentioned in the scriptures that those who have more faith but less wisdom tend to believe in the wrong ways. *Saddha* is faith and believing in one thing is also faith. Having faith is good but blind faith is undesirable. They tend to believe in wrong views. They mistake wrong persons as holy. Even during the Buddha's time, there were persons who worshipped the nude persons thinking that such persons had shed their *lobha* and *dosa* by not wearing clothes. Some worshipped those who imitated the habits of dogs and bulls. Some worshipped persons whose garments were made of human hair or who adorned peculiar garments. The cause of such behaviour is, though they had faith, they had no wisdom to differentiate between right and wrong. They had no proper perspective that persons going in the nude had no sense of modesty. So how could they be regarded as persons of worthiness, to pay respect to, by the decent and intelligent population?

## Importance of Balanced Faculties in Meditation

Some could not see properly which persons could teach the right *Dhamma* and which persons were fakes and followed the wrong path, resulting in various kinds of miseries and some even lost their lives by following the fake Gods.

Such kinds of mishaps can happen to those persons who have ardent faith only but no wisdom to differentiate the right path from the wrong path. They can become the followers of imitation Buddhas, imitation *Dhammas* and imitation *Sangha*, easily.

There is a Myanmar saying that "Persons who have ardent blind faith only but lack wisdom can land in following the wrong path". And persons who are sharp and intelligent but have no ardent faith and honesty can become cunning and wicked. Our meditators may find some persons who have mastered book knowledge but are lacking in *saddha*, such persons have no generosity to give alms-*dana*, no intention of practising purity of mind-*sila*, no inclination of practising *vipassana bhavana*.

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Not only are they lacking in *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* but they also obstruct the paths of others who are pious and observe *dana* and *sila* by passing adverse remarks such as "Do not give *dana*, it will only prolong the miseries of *samsara*." They remark *dana* is an easy thing to do. If you wash your dishes and throw away the remains, the insects can eat the food and it is also *dana*. Of course it is a kind of *dana* but such kind of *dana* is inferior *dana* resulting only in an inferior kind of merit.

Such adverse remarks are made by cunning and wicked persons by obstructing the good ways of pious and generous folks. They also discourage those who are conventional in religious ways from going to monasteries to observe *sila* respectfully under the guidance of disciplined and pristine abbots. They make fun of such piety by remarking there is no need to go to a monastery to observe *sila*, one can stay at home and practise purity of mind, etc.

Even taking a solemn vow to observe *sila* in the presence of pristine abbots can sometimes be

## Importance of Balanced Faculties in Meditation

broken, such flippant observance at home by oneself is more liable to be discarded at will. He may commit killing or eat after midday without any restraint. Therefore observing *sīla* in front of a respectable teacher is liable to be more solemn and adherence is more reliable, respected, serious and advantageous.

So-called learned persons also make sarcastic remarks about *Vipassana bhavana* meditation. The line they take is: "Why should a person go to meditation centres? Didn't Buddha preach that contemplation of one's own body is *Dhamma* which can be done by oneself in one's own house?"

Every kind of undertaking or task needs a systematic approach and a good teacher to show the method or technique correctly. *Vipassana bhavana* meditation is one solemn task that needs the utmost preparation and correct guidance. In addition to these there should also be a place where there can be inspiration and Dhamma friends who will be encouraging one another.

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The environment is also very important. In a meditation centre the environment of quietude is the special feature and the time-table for repeated sitting and walking is a set rule. The environment, the atmosphere, the inspiration and noble features of a meditation centre cannot be found in one's own home. In all homes all worldly activities cannot be avoided and one will easily get involved in the daily routine of multifarious human affairs.

Therefore so-called learned persons make such remarks for the detriment of *bhavana* which they have no inclination to practise themselves. Our meditators here are also following the preaching of Buddha by contemplating the physical and mental phenomena almost all the time except for the resting period of four hours put aside for sleep.

There is a Myanmar saying: "Persons who are too learned but lack faith or conviction become cunning and wicked ". Therefore the wisdom and faith should be balanced in the practice of meditation to avoid undesirable effects and achieve systematic progress.

## Importance of Balanced Faculties in Meditation

We must believe in things which are reasonable and practical. The only thing is we should not follow any doctrine in blind faith. Every consideration must be made; pros and cons should be examined before believing in anything.

Those who are intelligent and have earnest *saddha* (faith or conviction) will become an asset to the populace. He will be a good friend to everybody living together and to society in general. This is the resultant benefit of having a balance of wisdom and faith. Concentration and effort should also be balanced. Concentration is one-pointedness of mind and effort is energy or vitality.

As explained at the beginning of this talk sitting and lying postures in meditation encourage the development of concentration. Standing and walking postures encourage *viriya* (effort or energy). Therefore our meditation schedule here is one hour sitting and one hour walking. If sitting alone is conducive to the progress of meditation the teachers will instruct the meditators to practise

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sitting all the time but it is not so. If over-emphasis is given to sitting alone there will be over-development of concentration.

In scriptural directions, it is mentioned that persons who over-emphasize concentration but lack in *virīya* tend to develop laziness, sloth and torpor. Meditators who practise sitting meditation and lying postures more but less walking tend to develop laziness, dullness and sleepiness. If such kinds of symptoms occur, a meditator should know it is over concentration. At the end of each progressive state of jhana some kind of sleepiness such as nodding of one's head very often tends to develop. The meditator should know he must increase *virīya*. Increasing *virīya* means increasing from four touching points to ten touching points and so forth and practise more walking. When *virīya* and concentration are balanced sloth and torpor can be overcome.

If the meditators practise more walking (in excess than required) but less sitting, over emphasis of *virīya* will set in. The symptom of over *virīya* is more

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wandering mind or day-dreaming in sitting practice. The meditator may not be aware of this at once but only after along time. In the walking also he can only note the steps at the beginning then lapse into wandering mind the rest of his walking meditation. The remedy is to increase concentration. By this way the meditator can balance his concentration and effort. During Buddha's time there was the example of a millionaire's son by the name of Sona. Being a millionaire's son he was very delicate and fragile. It was said the soles of his feet were covered by soft hair.

He decided to practise *bhavana* meditation with heart and soul and got ordained as a monk. After ordination the new monk Sona Thera thought: "I led a life of comfort and ease as a millionaire's son so I must now practise with zeal and perseverance without any regard to physical comforts." He practised walking meditation and since his foot was so fragile and smooth, blisters developed by walking on uneven ground. Even then he could not develop concentration. As he could not practise walking



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meditation, he crawled on his knees and hands. He tried so hard that the path of his walking meditation was covered by his blood. But since he did not achieve any *vipassana* nana, he became discouraged and thought: "I am not destined to see and realize the *Dhamma*" and was on the verge of giving up the practice altogether.

Buddha himself came to the walking path and enquired why it was covered with blood as if a butcher had carried out his job at the place. The bhikkhus related that the millionaire's son Ven. Sona's feet had bled by walking meditation. Buddha went to the new monk Ven. Sona and enquired whether he played the harp in his younger days. When Ven. Sona asserted that he could play the harp very well, Buddha asked him how he had managed to keep the strings of the harp so well to get good sound. Ven. Sona answered the strings had to be neither too loose nor too tight. So Buddha counselled him to act as playing his harp because too loose a string would warp and too tight a string would snap. In meditation practice following the middle path is

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the best way to achieve results. Buddha instructed Ven. Sona to practise walking and sitting evenly to have a balance of *viriya* and *samadhi*, to eat regularly and to use medicine when occasions called for. The new monk Ven. Sona obeyed Buddha's instructions. He used medicine to cure his blistered feet, he ate properly and practised *viriya* and concentration in an even way. In a reasonable time Ven. Sona realized *magga* and *phala nanas* and achieved the *Ariya-puggala* status.

May our meditators also practise evenly between concentration and effort and between wisdom and faith and realise the cherished goal of Nibbana, the end of all sufferings in the easiest and shortest way.

*Sadhu!      Sadhu!      Sadhu!*

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### DHAMMA X

#### The Basic Principles for All Buddhists

The subject of today's Dhamma talk is "The basic principles for all Buddhists". Buddha is the person who knows the ultimate truth of Four *Saccas* (The Four Noble Truths). To be called "Buddha", he needs to have two qualifications: (i) A Buddha Knows the Four Noble Truths by his own personal effort and intelligence and (ii) He knows how to teach others to know the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths are:-

- (1) *Dukkha Sacca* - The Noble Truth of Suffering
- (2) *Samudaya Sacca* - The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering
- (3) *Nirodha Sacca* - The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
- (4) *Magga Sacca* - The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

## The Basic Principles for All Buddhists

A person who knows these Four Noble Truths by his own wisdom and knows how to teach others the Four Noble Truths is called a "Buddha". Buddhists mean persons who believe, embrace and practise Buddha's teaching (or doctrine) wholeheartedly. We have here quite a number of people who claim to be Buddhists. They are traditional Buddhists who claim themselves to be Buddhists because they are born of Buddhist parents. They are not unshakable believers with firm convictions. They do not try to understand the real doctrine of Buddha but follow the general religious ceremonies as practised by their parents and relatives. Such persons do not have deep religious understanding and faith of a true Buddhist and they can be converted to other religions if circumstances are favourable to them.

Such traditional Buddhists who have no deep faith yet cannot claim that they have dissociated with the four *apaya* worlds forever. Therefore it is very important to become a real Buddhist with deep faith and a fair knowledge of the fundamentals of Buddhism. True Buddhists with deep faith means

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persons observing the three main features of Buddha's teachings. They are:-

- (1) Refraining from unwholesome actions (*akusala*)
- (2) Trying to do wholesome deeds (*kusala*) all the time
- (3) Keeping the mind pure and free from defilements (*kilesa*)

The following verse is more concise:

To refrain from all evil,  
To do what is good,  
To purify the mind,  
This is the teaching of all Buddhas.

What are *akusala* deeds?

*Akusala* deeds can be defined as deeds that are not innocent and that have bad resultants. For instance, taking others' lives. Killing itself is guilty. If human beings are killed, the guilt is more severe: not only guilt but the resultant effects are short life, poor conditions and low birth, etc. in future lives. Stealing is also an *akusala* deed. It is guilt in the present life

## The Basic Principles for All Buddhists

and the resultant effect is poor and miserable lives in future existences. Telling lies, slandering, foolish babble are also *akusala* speeches. Bad mental thinking, bad speech and bad deed are *akusala* actions. These acts are not innocent and have resultant bad *kammic* effects.

So Buddha preached to refrain from such acts. If a mother sees that her child is trying to play with sharp bamboo pieces or coins by putting them into the mouth, she will force out the things from the baby's mouth immediately. Or if a child tries to play by putting beans or seeds into the nose, the mother will force them out because she has good will to prevent harm coming to the child. But the child, not understanding the reason of such action, will cry or react angrily. The mother's action is with compassion, she wants to protect the child from harm. So also Buddha's prohibition to kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct, tell lies and commit other mental, verbal and physical *akusala* deeds such as slandering, rude speech and foolish babble is to prevent persons from bad resultant *kammic* effects.

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The second feature of a true Buddhist is to engage in *kusala* deeds all the time. *Kusala* deeds mean giving *dana* generously, observing pure *sila*, and practising *bhavana* meditation. *Kusala* deeds(wholesome) are innocent and give good *kammic* effects (results). Giving *dana* is innocent, not only innocent, the receivers of *dana* reciprocate with *metta* (loving-kindness) in the present life. It also accumulates *kamma* that ripens in the next birth and results in prosperity. Observing *sila* is also very laudable. By observing pure *sila*, a person is free from *lobha*, *dosa* (greed and anger) and attains longevity of life even in the present existence and in the coming existences.

Practising *metta-bhavana* is also meritorious and innocent. The benefit of *metta bhavana* is eleven fold:

- (1) peaceful sleep and
- (2) fresh awakening,
- (3) good dreams,
- (4) loved by people,
- (5) as well as devas,

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- (6) helped by devas,
- (7) free from dangers of fire, poison and weapons,
- (8) mental stability,
- (9) radiant and calm facial expression,
- (10) tranquility at the time of death,
- (11) achieve better birth after death, etc.

All these *kusala* deeds mentioned above are for the good resultant effects when a person is going through a round of rebirth (*samsara*). All of us are travellers of *samsara*, the continuous process of ever again and again being born, growing old, suffering and dying. This continuous process can only be stopped when a person achieves the status of Arahatsip.

Therefore before achieving Arahatsip, we need provisions for the long journey of *samsara*. Even for our travels from country to country, place to place, we need money, air-tickets, train-tickets and provisions, etc.; so also for the long ever-repeating journey of *samsara* we need all the commendable provisions. But we cannot take money, air-tickets,



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train-tickets, provision, from this life. The only provisions we can take is the meritorious deeds by giving *dana*. Observing *sila* and practising *bhavana*, which will give good resultant effects that will be the supporting comforts in the long journey of *samsara*. That is why Buddha preached to refrain from *akusala* deeds and engage in *kusala* deeds.

The third main feature of Buddha's teaching is keeping one's mind pure and free from *kilesa* (defilements). Generally people adhere to physical cleanliness. Morning, afternoon and evening or all day people wash their faces, bathe their bodies, change their clothes which are for physical tidiness and cleanliness. Very few people engage in purifying the mind to be free from defilements. Physical dirtiness cannot send a person to the *apaya* world. But impurity of mind can send a person to the four *apaya* worlds: the animal world, ghost-world, demon world and hell.

Meditators can all see the miseries of the animal world: cattle, horses, pigs, chicken and ducks, etc.

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They are suffering not because they failed to keep physical cleanliness but because they failed to keep purity of the minds and keep their minds free from *kilesas* in their previous existences. They had committed cruelties and other *akusala* deeds to produce resultant effects of present sufferings. By this we do not mean to say physical cleanliness is to be discouraged. People have to maintain cleanliness for their health but more important is to strive for purity of mind.

How to strive for purity of mind?

Buddha said: "*Ekayano ayam bhikkhave maggo sattanam visuddhiya.*" "O Monks, the only way that leads to attainment of purity of mind is *Satipatthana Dhamma.*" They are:-

- (1) *Kayanupassana Satipatthana*,  
-contemplation of physical body
- (2) *Vedananupassana Satipatthana*,  
-contemplation of the feelings
- (3) *cittanupassana Satipatthana*,  
-contemplation of the mind
- (4) *Dhammanupassana Satipatthana*,  
-contemplation of mind objects

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Practising the four divisions of *Satipatthana Dhamma* is the only way to purify the mind. When napkins are new they are clean and white. When people use them to wipe their hands and mouths they become dirty and they have to be washed with soap and water to remove the dirt. So also when the mind becomes impure due to *lobha, dosa* (greed, anger) the mind has to be purified by *Satipatthana Dhamma* soap and water. The characteristic function of the mind is to think and observe the sense and mental impressions (impression by sensorial reaction). Meditators are aware of their activities of going and coming by their mind consciousness. The mind is also very strange and peculiar. Meditators may argue that nowadays, strange things like the radio, radar, computer, television, satellite, rocket, atomic bomb and space shuttle, etc. have been invented and our present drawings and paintings are also peculiar and strange. But we have to assert that the mind is stronger than all these new scientific inventions or paintings because to create these new inventions, scientists have to think by using their minds first to invent the new commodities. Therefore the mind is

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stranger and more peculiar. In some ways the mind can be compared to water. To contain water it has to be stored in cups and pans, or in the farm lands, water can be retained only by embankments or earth mounds in the field. Similarly, the mind is to be kept in check by *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation. Otherwise, it will wander towards the five sensual pleasures unless it is restrained by *kusala dhammas*. Five sensual pleasures are good sights, good sound, good taste, good smell and good body sensations.

Originally, water is clear and pure. If lime is added, the water will become milky; if green colour is added, it will become green; if black powder is added, it will become black. So also the mind is originally pure but when influenced by *lobha, dosa* (greed and anger) it is tainted. Mind can also be compared to sculptured wood. A sculptor can carve dragons or demons out of wooden blocks. He can also carve images of handsome princes and pretty princesses, In puppet shows, the ugly and cruel characters are depicted by demons and dragons. In cultural dances, love and sympathetic actions come from princes and princesses, as the

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respective actors have to stay tuned to the characters of the various modes of sculptures.

When the sculptor carves the figures in a state of mind full of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, the carvings come out in the form of animals and demons or people of low and poor birth. They have to act the character they are carved for. If the sculptor carves the figures with mixed *kusala* and *akusala* mind, the images of human beings will be with deformed figures or of lower class *devas*. Such carvings being made in mixed *kusala* and *akusala* mind, the images of human beings will be with deformed figures or of lower class *devas*. Such carvings being made in mixed *kusala* and *akusala* mood, images of human beings or lower class *devas* come out in poor circumstances, disfigured and with incomplete limbs and legs. When the sculptor carves the figures with a mind full of *kusala Dhammas* the figures are pretty and handsome and the carvings themselves are higher class human beings and higher class *devas*. In the lifestyle they have to play in the life platform, it is higher class, rich and comfortable life conditions.

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The mind is also compared to the wild elephant of the forest. The wild elephant is not advantageous to human beings but only brings harm to people.

So wild elephants are not allowed to stay unless human beings tame them to become harmless and useful. They are lured into big trenches by tamed female elephant and kept without food and water. When they are weak and thirsty they are put into iron chains and gradually tamed by giving them small amounts of food and water at a time until they become tamed elephants for the use of human beings. As the wild elephants of the forest, the untamed mind takes enjoyment in good sensual pleasures of good sight, good sound, good taste, good smell and good body impressions. If we keep the mind in this *kilesa* field it will land in the four *apaya* worlds. To tame the wild mind, *saddha* and *chanda* should be used so as to bring the mind into trenches of *sila* and *bhavana*. By observing precepts not to kill, not to tell lies, etc. is putting the wild minds into the trenches for the taming process.

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The sensual pleasures have to be prevented. Therefore when a meditator is in intensive meditation, singing or listening to music, watching dancing and television, etc. have to be prohibited. Taking of food at all times of the day, taking an excessive amount of tasty food is also to be limited as in the process of taming the wild elephants. The mind should also be chained to the mindful training of *bhavana* meditation as wild elephants are chained in the trenches to be tamed. A tamed elephant becomes a valuable assets to the people; the tamed mind becomes the vehicle to carry the being to good and better existences of human or *deva* worlds. The mind which is like a wild elephant should be purified. When hands and legs become dirty with dust or mud they have to be washed with water. When the mind is impure, the purifying method is to contemplate all the physical and mental phenomena by diligent mindfulness.

By such mindfulness meditation the meditators will gain purity of mind and view by gradual stages from the knowledge that distinguishes between mind and

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matter or the knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect until the meditators attain the status of *sotapannahood*. Thereby purity of the mind is achieved. Then the three main features: To refrain from all evil, to do what is good and to purify the mind are automatically fulfilled and the person will become a true Buddhist. He will become an unshakable believer, dissociated from the four *apaya* worlds forever. He will be comfortable in the cycle of life until he achieves *Nibbana*, the end of all sufferings.

May I conclude my Dhamma talk today by calling all our meditators to follow the teachings of the Buddha to refrain from all evil, to do what is good and to purify the mind and achieve your cherished desire to attain *Nibbana* through *Magga* and *Phala Nana* in the easiest way and the quickest possible time!

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



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### DHAMMA XI

#### Three Kinds of Persons

The subject of today's Dhamma talk is the definition of Three Kinds of Persons. The aim of this talk is to help people to become clever and intelligent persons who will have two-sided visions on the problems of life.

Generally, in our world today people tend to pay more attention to material abundance and strive to get rich in the present life. Every person wants to be qualified to be named as a clever and good person. The title of clever and good person cannot be given to persons who know how to get rich and successful in this present life alone. In our Buddhist scriptures, "clever and good persons" are those who are not only wise enough to strive for the wealth and well-being of a single lifetime but also far-sighted enough to cultivate or invest in for the welfare of coming existences of *samsaric* cycle of rebirths.

### Three Kinds of Persons

Buddha expounded in his discourses that there are three kinds of persons as follows:

- (1) Persons with both eyes blind
- (2) Persons with one good eye and one blind eye  
(persons with one-sided vision)
- (3) Persons with two good eyes (persons who  
have two-sided visions)

Here the word "eye" is used as a metaphor. It does not mean to say the physical eye-organ of human beings. "Cleverness and wisdom" of human beings is symbolized as the eye here.

The Buddha asked, "O monks! Do you know who are persons with both eyes blind?"

Buddha used to put preliminary questions to prepare the audience for his answers. Buddha's questions can be categorized into five kinds:-

- (1) A question asked to solicit answer
- (2) A question asked to consult others' points of view
- (3) A question asked to determine others' wishes

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- (4) A question asked to test others' view points
- (5) A question asked to answer the question himself

Buddha's above question is of the fifth category - to answer the question himself, since Omniscient Buddha had infinite knowledge of *Dibbacakkhu* (the Divine Eye). It is one of the six Higher Powers achieved at the time of Enlightenment. They are:

- (i) *Iddhividha* (magical powers)
- (ii) *Dibbasota* (divine ear)
- (iii) *Cetopariya-nana* (penetration of the minds of others)
- (iv) *Pubbenivasa-nana* (recollection of former existences)
- (v) *Asavakkhaya-nana* (extinction of all defilements)

Buddha answered his own question:-

1. O Monks! Persons with both eyes blind means he is not successful in this present life. He has no economic impulse and does not know how to run a profitable business. He has no skill in handling money

### Three Kinds of Persons

matters to accumulate wealth. He has no energy (*virīya*) nor business acumen and is therefore poor and a failure in the present life. Nor is he wise and clever to invest for the benefit of *samsaric* round of rebirths. He cannot differentiate which action is meritorious and pure or which action is unwholesome and impure. He cannot understand *kusala* and *akusala* deeds. So he is a failure in the present and in the future also.

Such a human being is called a person with both eyes blind. Once, in Benares, a state in India, there was a rich man's son. When he was young, the parents looked after him well and since they were rich, the son was endowed with all the necessities of life. As he was the only son, the parents loved him without any limit. He was not educated but led an easy life of merry-making in pomp and grandeur. He became a spoiled child and knew nothing of the intricacies of life. When both his parents died, he had no ability to manage the business of his parents. Since he was uneducated and easygoing, he had no means of preserving the riches left by his parents. He had

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neither wisdom nor knowledge to invest for the future by organizing meritorious deeds but squandered all the riches left by the parents. Such beings are with both eyes blind (blind in two aspects).

2. The second category is a person with one good eye and one blind eye. Buddha asked again: "O Monks! What is meant by persons with one good eye and one blind eye?" Buddha himself answered, "O Monks! Some are clever in handling money matters and they can manage to multiply their wealth. Though they have business acumen, they lack in *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* (almsgiving, morality and mental development)."

They cannot differentiate between worthy and unworthy deeds. They do not know which deed is beneficial and pure, which one is dirty and unwholesome. Though they may be successful in business in this present life, due to lack of meritorious deeds, their next existence will be poor and degraded and they may even land in the four

### Three Kinds of Persons

lower worlds (*apaya*), namely: worlds of animal, ghost, demon and hell. Such kinds of human beings are persons with one good eye and one blind eye. We have many persons belonging to this category. Though they can be categorized as wealthy and successful in the present single life-time, they lack in the observance of *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* (almsgiving, morality and mental development). The majority of our present human beings can be included in this category.

3. Buddha put the third question. "O Monks! What kind of human beings are persons with good eyes?" (Persons who have two-sided vision). Buddha himself answered. "O Monks! Some are clever and intelligent in managing their business affairs. They know the technique of increasing their wealth. In short, they are successful and become very rich in their present life. And they are far-sighted enough to reason thus: Now I am rich and I have all the necessities of a comfortable life. But these riches cannot be relied upon as permanent. It can be destroyed by fire or by flood or by robbers or by bad and foolish heirs. In

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case of my death these riches will have to be abandoned." So with rightful thinking they invest in meritorious deeds such as *dana* and *sila* (alms-giving and observing morality). They abstain from committing unwholesome physical deeds or verbal speech. They also engage in contemplation of their physical body (in *vipassana* meditation). In other words, they know how to accumulate *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* in the present life. Riches and the physical body itself cannot be regarded as one's own property. Riches are prone to be exhausted one day and one's own body has to be surrendered to the law of death and decay (i.e. the inevitable law of impermanence).

Such a kind of human being, possessing the cleverness and wisdom to accumulate riches and wealth in the present life and at the same time wise enough to invest in meritorious deeds such as *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* for the next existence can be called persons with two good eyes (persons who have two-sided vision).

### Three Kinds of Persons

During Buddha's time in Benares, a general merchant by the name of Mahadhana was a shrewd businessman. When he came to know that there would be a great gathering for the Traditional Festival in the state of Savatthi, he collected an abundant supply of silk clothing, a common pink wear which was popular at that time at reasonable prices. He organized his subordinates with 500 bullock carts and proceeded to Savatthi. When they came to the bank of a river near Savatthi in the evening, they decided to break journey for the night, intending to cross the river the next day.

In the middle of the night, it rained heavily and the rain did not stop for seven whole days. The general merchant and his entourage of 500 bullock carts could not cross the river and were stranded on the other bank. When the rain stopped after seven days, Mahadhana, the merchant and his party crossed the river but to his dismay, the festival had ended and he could not find anybody to sell his merchandise of "pink clothing". He pondered over the situation and decided to stay on to sell his goods in the coming



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winter season since the transportation costs would be very high to carry the goods back to Benares. Even if he could not sell all his goods in the winter, he considered staying on to the summer and rainy seasons until his merchandise were all sold and he made a handsome profit. He made his travel plans accordingly.

On that same day Buddha came for alms round accompanied by his faithful assistant Ven. *Ananda*. Lord Buddha smiled on seeing Trader Mahadhana camping on the river bank. When Buddha smiled, fluorescent rays flashed from his holy teeth and Ven. *Ananda* knew at once that Buddha had smiled as the glowing light from his holy teeth brightened the environment. Ven. *Ananda* asked Buddha the reason for his smiling.

Buddha explained to Ven. *Ananda*, pointing out the Trader Mahadhana, that the Trader planned to stay on here for the whole winter, summer and even the next rainy season until his goods were all sold. But that man had only seven days to live. Buddha

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reiterated that all human beings made plans for buying, selling and staying on for a long time until they could make profits from their business enterprises but what they did not know was the ineluctable law of old age, sickness and death which would overwhelm them before their plans were realised. They were not counting this natural law nor were they aware of the ineluctable law of impermanence.

Ven. *Ananda* felt pity that Trader Mahadhana should die without having done any meritorious deeds and asked permission from the Buddha to caution the trader of his imminent tragedy. On attaining permission from Buddha he went into the camp of 500 bullock carts of Trader Mahadhana. On being welcomed by the trader's group, Ven. *Ananda* enquired who they were, what their plans were and why they were camping on the river bank. Trader Mahadhana explained how they came from Benares to Savatthi to sell pink silk clothing and how they were stopped for seven days because of heavy rain and how they missed the festival. They intended to

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stay for the winter, summer and rainy seasons also to sell their goods and make a profit. Ven. *Ananda* related how Buddha prophesied that Trader Mahadhana would live only for seven more days and not to commit plans of long duration. Ven. *Ananda* convinced the Trader that the words of Buddha never went wrong.

On realising the true situation, Trader Mahadhana asserted that all these properties and riches were of no value to him when he was dead. He said, "Before I die I want to offer *dana*, observe *sila* and practise *bhavana*." (Almsgiving, morality and mental development). So saying he invited Buddha and his followers to come to his camp of 500 bullock carts the next day for Alms *dana* through Ven. *Ananda*.

When Ven. *Ananda* brought the Buddha and the *Sangha* to the camp the next day, Trader Mahadhana and his entourage gave *alms-dana* and they themselves observed morality, *sila* and practised *bhavana* meditation for seven whole days. At the end of seven days, Trader Mahadhana, taking the alms

### Three Kinds of Persons

bowl of Buddha respectfully, accompanied the Buddha to his monastery. On his return to the camp, he died peacefully and went into existence in the *Deva* world, due to his meritorious deeds for seven days.

A person who possesses the cleverness and wisdom to earn riches and wealth for the present life and at the same time wise enough to practise *dana*, *sila*, *bhavana* for the next *samsaric* existence should be categorized as a person with two good eyes or who has two-sided vision.

Our meditators here are to be included in the category of persons with two good eyes who possess cleverness and wisdom to earn reasonable income for the present life but more important is their vision to consider with the wisdom eye to do *kusala* deeds of *sila* and *bhavana* for the benefit of *samsara* (round of rebirths) by coming to this retreat.

Surely our meditators belong to the third category of persons who have two-sided vision.

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Among the three categories:-

- (1) Person with both eyes blind,
  - (2) Person with one blind eye and one good eye,
- should not be associated with but a person with two good eyes or a person who has two-sided vision should be sought after as associates or friends.

May our meditators here possess cleverness and wisdom for the present life as well as for future existences and by their diligent practice of *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation achieve the perpetual peace of *Nibbana* in the shortest possible time.

May I conclude this Dhamma talk with best wishes to all our meditators here. May all beings be happy.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Five Qualities of a Meditator

### DHAMMA XII

#### Five Qualities of a Meditator

The *Dhamma* Talk for today is *Padhaniyanga*. Elements of Effort or qualities of a meditator. The five qualities are:

- (1) Faith
- (2) Health
- (3) Honest mind or outlook (Sincerity)
- (4) Industriousness (energy)
- (5) Knowing (wisdom) the arising and passing away of phenomenon.

- (1) Faith: The confidence in the practice of insight meditation is a very important factor and unless a person has an unwavering faith in the practice he can be overwhelmed by doubts. In the beginning part of the *Sutta*, Buddha propounded the advantages of the practice of *satipatthana Vipassana bhavana*.

- (a) Purification of mental defilements.
- (b) Overcoming of sorrow

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- (c) Overcoming of lamentation
- (d) Destruction of physical suffering
- (e) Destruction of mental suffering
- (f) Attainment of Path and Fruition
- (g) Realisation of *Nibanna*

In the middle part of the *sutta* Buddha expounded a detailed method of the practice. Buddha said: "If a meditator intending to practise *satipatthana* meditation, while moving, the meditator has to note all the characteristics of moving." Noting left step, right step or noting lifting, moving, dropping is noting the characteristics of the movement. When stopping, the meditator should note the stopping.

When sitting, the meditator must note to know the characteristics of sitting, when lying down the meditator should note the characteristics of lying. As rising, falling and touching are physical phenomena, bending and stretching are also physical phenomena. All these phenomena should be noted in detail as experienced personally and in the *sutta* it is

## Five Qualities of a Meditator

instructed how to note practically everything, without missing anything.

In the conclusion of the *Sutta* Buddha gave this guarantee. The tendency is to have more confidence and trust in guaranteed results. Buddha practically declared that "A meditator who practises according to the *Satipatthana sutta* instructions for 7 years can achieve the status of arahatship. If a meditator has remaining *Upadana* (craving) the meditator can achieve *Anagami* status. These are four kinds of clinging.

- (a) Sensuous Clinging (*kamupadana*)
- (b) Clinging to views (*ditthupadana*)
- (c) Clinging to mere rules and rituals (*silabbatupadana*)
- (d) Clinging to Personality Belief (*attavadupadana*)

Our meditators here may say 7 years is too long a period. How can we practise for 7 years? But Buddha gave exceptions. If 7 years is too long a period one can strive earnestly for 6 years, or 5 years, or 4



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years or 3 years or at least one year. Buddha gave guarantee of Arahatsip or *Anagami* status to those who practise according to the letter and spirit of *Satipatthana Sutta*.

Buddha gave another exception again. For those who think one year is too long a period, he can try for 7 months duration or 6 months or 5 months or 4 months or three months or 1 month and for those who have *Parami* (Perfection), for 15 days or even 7 days is sufficient to attain Arahatsip or *anagami* status. Of course achievement within 7 days or 15 days is quite rare and only those who have accumulated *Parami* (Perfection) in their previous existence are qualified for this short period.

Normally a matter of 2 or 3 months is needed for successful achievement. Buddha's teaching are most reliable and assured of positive results since he taught only what he had tested by His own experience. At the beginning of the *Satipatthana Sutta* the advantages are explained and in the middle

## Five Qualities of a Meditator

part the practical methods of meditation and in the final part the guaranteed results.

Therefore, the meditator should have absolute faith in the practice of Dhamma Buddha himself expounded the method only after he had personal experience and personal achievement, not on the theory of the philosophy.

The second factor is that the Teachers of *Satipatthana* meditation are not theorists but practical persons who had themselves gone through the Path. The third factor is to have confidence in one's own capability. Some have modest aims only thinking that they cannot achieve liberations in this present existence. In their view the practices are only undertaken to build Perfections (*Parami*) for future achievements. Such kind of thinking is defeatist thinking.

The fact that we became human beings in this Buddha *sasana* itself is a rare privilege to work for liberation. The fact that you all became interested in

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Buddha's *Dhamma* shows that you all must have some *Parami* (Perfection) formed from previous existence to come and practise *Vipassana* meditation at this competent centre in Myanmar where Buddha's original Teachings are maintained according to traditions.

Do not have doubts with regard to the ability of the meditation teachers. If you have doubts whether the teacher really knows the practice or not, whether the teacher is teaching the method by learning from books etc., will not help you in the achievement of the Path. The Teachers in this Mahasi Meditation centre have mastered the theory as well as the practical aspects of *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation.

To trace the source of Mahasi Meditation method it is of old tradition. During the reign of King Mindon (i.e. about 1850 A.D) there was a renowned meditation master by the name of Venerable Theelon Sayadaw. After him, his disciple Venerable U Minzutha Sayadaw from Mingun Monastery carried

## Five Qualities of a Meditator

on the tradition and later still Thaton Mingun Zetawan Sayadaw continued teaching the method, the founder of this Mahasi Meditation Centre, the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw Aggamahapandita was the disciple of the Venerable Thaton Mingun Zetawan Sayadaw. The Teachers in this centre were trained by the close supervision of the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw U Sobana Mahathera who was the most eminent meditation master of this century.

Therefore, all our meditators here should not have any doubt regarding the competency of their teachers. Then will it be an additional element in the progress of the meditator in following the Path. So the main criteria for progress of meditation is faith in the Buddha, faith in the Dhamma, faith in the teacher and confidence in one's own ability.

(2) The second quality or requirement is health of the meditator. Some do not take proper care of their health during intensive meditation. Some tend to indulge in excessive sitting hours. Some tend to

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eat less with the mistaken belief that eating less is conducive to meditation achievement. Such kind of behaviour is the source of poor health and poor health will not help the meditator. Therefore every meditator should take proper care of his health by eating a nutritive diet, by sticking to a balanced physical exercise to stay fit and energetic.

(3) The third quality or requirement is to have an honest mind and an honest outlook. Straightforwardness is one of the qualities required of a good meditator. Some meditators when reporting to the teacher are reluctant to report bad experiences and only report the good ones. By not reporting the true happenings the teacher is at a loss to determine the status of the meditator's progress. At some stage the meditators experience a pessimistic outlook, awareness of fearfulness, knowledge of misery, wearisomeness or disgust. Such kind of experience should be reported truthfully. Then only will the teacher know the real stage a meditator has reached or correct his practice if there was some error. If a teacher cannot give his

## Five Qualities of a Meditator

meditator proper guidance, the progress can be very slow. Do not exaggerate the good sitting and do not hide the bad sitting (i.e. straightforwardness).

(4) The fourth quality or requirement is industriousness. Buddha expounded that the achievement of *Nibbana* is not an easy matter. One has to put in one's utmost effort (*virīya*). The aim of meditation is deliverance from this cycle of *samsara*. The meditator is expected to be mindful of his physical and mental phenomena from his awakening time until his sleeping time.

By following this mindfulness diligently all the time, a meditator is regarded as industrious. By noting in such a way the meditator will come to know the true nature of *nama* and *rūpa* at the time of the happening or at the time of passing away. When the meditator practises walking meditation, left step, right step noting is *nama*, physical step is *rūpa*. When noting hearing, hearing, ear and sound is *rūpa* and hearing is *nama*; when noting rising and falling, rising and falling of the abdomen is *rūpa* and noting is *nama*. It means

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noting at the present moment of happening and passing away.

(5) By noting the present moment the true characteristics are realized. The meditator becomes aware of impermanence in the disappearing. The meditator comes to know that nothing happens as one wishes. Conditions are uncontrollable, arising and passing away by themselves, devoid of self-entity and are nothing but just phenomena of *Dhamma*.

By observing thus one experiences the dissolving or vanishing of both the object of noting and the noting itself and achieves *sammasana nana*. After *sammasana nana*, the meditator matures in his insight knowledge and *udayabhaya nana* appears. When this *nana* appears noting tends to become easy and comfortable without *vedana* (unpleasant feelings). One is likely to experience unusual visions of light; rapture and ecstasy are also likely to develop with the whole of one's body becoming light. Some even experience a certain degree of levitation. All these phenomena have to be noted as lifting, lifting, seeing, seeing, swaying, swaying, liking, liking and so forth. If

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the meditator has attachment to such kind of rapture or *piti*, it can lead to unnecessary delay.

In some cases the meditator feels the whole body erect and stone-like, having a cool and peaceful sensation all over the body. While such sensations occur, do not feel attached to them because they are only "*passaddhi*" (tranquility sensations). It is also to be noted as usual. If the meditator becomes attached to this *Passaddhi* feeling there will be no progress.

After that "*Adimokkha*" which can be translated as determination, can also develop, assuming one has now achieved good *Dhamma*, one has reached the stage of enlightenment and so forth.

Sometimes eagerness to give *dana* (alms) to the whole community, to preach *Dhamma* to friends and to propagate Buddha's *sasana* to one's own country overwhelms oneself. If the meditator succumbs to such eager motivations, the progress of the meditation can be retarded. Therefore in such a case the meditator must contemplate thus "Now is the



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time for my own progress and deliverance; I must postpone my eagerness to promote *Dhamma* to others for the time being," and note diligently.

Sometimes over-zealousness overwhelms the meditator and he is satisfied with his own energetic enthusiasm. Such a kind of eagerness should be discarded by noting diligently as "satisfaction, satisfaction", etc. At this stage after a long struggle with pain, restlessness and misery of *vedana* for a long time, the meditator will enjoy calmness, lightness of the body, tranquility of mind, etc. and he thinks he has attained enlightenment. But it is not as yet. This is "*suka*" which is one of the five factors of *jhanic* bliss or absorption.

Sometimes sharpness in knowledge, sharpness in sati (awareness) develops but the meditator should not get conceited. It is only the maturity of concentration. Another misleading development is "*Nikanti*" which is conceit in one's achievement of *Dhamma*. Sometimes the sharpness of mindfulness can foresee some events. When such forecast comes

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true, a meditator can be very pleased with his own achievement and can go astray from the Path. There can also be wrong path in the practice of *Vipassana* meditation. When the meditator experiences "*piti*", "*passaddhi*" and sharpness of *sati*, lightness of body, visions of light; calmness and tranquility of mind, these can elevate the meditator's spirits and the meditator thinks he has achieved special enlightenment so he stops practising.

If the meditator has attachment to such physical and mental pleasantness, then the meditator is on the wrong path. After taking heed of the teacher's advice, the meditator note all the physical and mental pleasantness diligently, the meditator will achieve the upper level of "*Udayabhaya nand*" and all the pleasantness will disappear. After passing this stage the meditator can be sure of gradual progress and will be freed from falling into the wrong path.

Therefore to avoid deviations from the right path, a meditator should be closely supervised by a teacher until he can very clearly understand the fifth quality

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or requirement of "knowing the arising and passing away of phenomena of his own body".

This completes the five qualities or requirements of a meditator. Therefore *Sayadaw* would like to end the *Dhamma* talk by wishing; "May our meditators here be able to fulfill the five qualities of faith, good health, straightforwardness, industriousness and knowing the arising and passing away of phenomena by insight wisdom, overcome the "*Amagga*" *Dhamma* and achieve *magga Dhamma* and attain the cherished goal of *Nibbana*, the end of all sufferings, the extinction of all cravings in the easiest way and in the shortest possible time."

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

Full results occur only when time is ripe

## DHAMMA XIII

### "Full results occur only when time is ripe"

The subject of today's *Dhamma* Talk is "Full results occur only when time is ripe". All sentient beings will reap the results of their wholesome or unwholesome deeds only when the time is ripe. Buddhist philosophy is "belief in *kamma*" and *kamma* is one's own action. According to *kamma* only, sentient beings are shaped in all different existences in the cycle of *samsaric* life. Lord Buddha expounded: "The only possession of all sentient beings is their own *kamma*. The cause of all happenings (whether good or bad) in this present life (effect) is one's own *kamma*. *Kamma* is the only relative, *kamma* is the only refuge of all sentient beings. The resultant *kammic* effect is the sole cause of all different destinies of all beings. And such good or bad full results occur only when the time is ripe."

The fundamental factor that causes wholesome or unwholesome actions and deeds is the mind.

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Therefore Buddha said: "Mind is the leading factor, every action follows as dictated by the mind. If a person acts and talks with good intentions, he will reap good results. It can be compared with the shadow. As the shadow always accompanies the person, the wholesome deeds will accompany the doer in his *samsaric* life. If a person acts or talks with bad intention, he will reap the bad results as the wheel follows closely behind the feet of the bull pulling a cart. The good or bad result will occur only when the time is ripe.

At one time King Milinda asked the learned Ven. Nagasena: "Venerable Nagasena, you said that good *kusala* deeds will result in good achievements. Since I am a practical man, I believe only when I can see for myself. Can the Venerable Sir show me the whereabouts of this good achievement? Is it one foot away or is it 3 feet away or 6 feet away?"

Venerable Nagasena answered the King in his own kind of language by posing questions. "Noble King, I also have a question to ask of you. Now have a look at

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this tree. The tree is quite mature, it enjoys enough water and the land seems to be fertile, can you give me the answer whether this tree will bear fruit?" The King replied, "Venerable Sir, this tree is mature and since it enjoys water and fertility of land it will surely give fruit." Venerable Nagasena followed up his question. "If you are sure this tree is going to bear fruit can you show me the fruits now? Where are they? Are they in the roots or are they in the trunks or in the leaves or the branches? I am also a practical monk. I believe what I see."

The King replied, "Venerable Sir, how can one show the fruits before it comes out? But I am sure that this tree will bear fruit when the time is ripe and the environment is correct." Venerable Nagasena then replied that the same is the case with the results of *kusala* and *akusala* deeds. One cannot yet show by pointing to the whereabouts of the resultant effects. But as the tree will give fruits when mature and conditions are correct, the results of good or bad deeds will surely occur when the time is ripe.

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The King then accepted the answer of Venerable Nagasena.

In some cases there can be doubts. Some people argue thus: "Our household is engaged in meritorious deeds such as *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana* but we have to face lamentations, pain, sadness and distress whereas the other house enjoys good health, prosperity and happiness despite the fact that they are committing unwholesome deeds. Do their unwholesome deeds give good result and our wholesome deeds give us bad results?" Of course such is not the case. Since the time is not ripe yet for their *akusala* deeds, they are still enjoying a good life. But when their *akusala* deeds mature and the time is ripe for the resultant effects their good life will suddenly change for the worst.

Buddha had said that those who committed unwholesome deeds might enjoy a good life before the ripe time came for the resultant effect of their unwholesome deeds. But when the time is ripe they are sure to face the full resultant effects of the

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unwholesome deed. The same thing can happen to those who practise good and wholesome deeds. Before the time is ripe they may face adversity in life but good results will occur due to their good deeds when the time is ripe and they can overcome the adversity and enjoy the good results of their wholesome deeds.

The aphorism to be accepted is that full results occur only when the time is ripe. *Akusala* deeds give bad results and *kusala* deeds give good results. *Akusala* or unwholesome deeds are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, etc. and *kusala* deeds or wholesome deeds are *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana*. Even in doing wholesome deeds, *Puthujjanas* "worldlings" do the deeds with good underlying motive and they become their *kamma*. But Buddhas, Arahats and Pacceka Buddhas (Independently Enlightened Ones) do good deeds without motives but to create good precedents. They do not have the objectives of a good life or good result for the act. Buddha may offer robes to Ven. Sariputta, Ven. Ananda may offer robes to Ven. Sariputta or other offerings by



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*Ariyapuggalas* to create good precedents, therefore good acts do not become good *kamma* for them.

When *Puthujjanas* (worldlings) do any wholesome deeds, their main aim is to achieve better life amenities or to attain better existences in coming *samsaric* lives. Such wholesome deeds, though they can be termed as *kusala* deeds, are somehow connected with desire elements (*kilesa* element), which in turn can result in good or bad results. Out of the two fields, if it turns out to be *akusala kamma*, bad results can occur, thus giving rise to lamentation and distress.

Due to mental and physical sufferings, one can land in the *Apaya* world, that is, animal world, ghost world, demon world and hell. The only remedy to avoid such kinds of bad results is to strive for *sotapatti magga* (to gain the status of a stream-winner). A person who has attained *sotapatti magga* can reject the bad resultant effects and thus can be free from landing in the four *apaya* worlds.

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A person who has rejected this *akusala kamma* can expect to enjoy the *kusala* alone. These *kusala kammass* will help to land him in the human world, *Deva* world or Brahma worlds (Heavenly Beings). In the eyes of *Puthujjana* (Worldlings) these achievements are good existences. But to *Ariya-puggala* (Noble Persons) these life existences are undesirable since its round of rebirths, this continuous process of being born, growing old, suffering and dying (*samsara*) is a vicious cycle.

*Ariya-puggalas* regard these *samsaric* lives as excrements of human beings. Excrements are disgusting whether the amount is small or big. So also *samsaric* lives are disgusting to the *Ariya-puggalas* even as heavenly beings. Therefore to reject all "Rounds of Rebirth" one has to strive for attainment of *arahatta-magga* (the one realizing the Path of Holiness). Once one has attained *arahatta-magga* all kinds of *kammass* are extinguished and there will be no more birth, old age and death (end of suffering). Until a person is free of *kammic* effect, he is liable to reap good effects for good

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deeds and bad effects for bad deeds when the time is ripe. Here let us relate the frightful chain of rebirths Ven. Ananda had to go through before he became the attendant of Lord Buddha.

At one time, the future Ven. Ananda was born into the family of goldsmiths. Being handsome and wealthy as a goldsmith he led the life of a playboy and committed sexual misconduct by having affairs with other persons' wives. When he died he landed again in the rich family by being born as the rich man's son. The resultant effect of this *akusala* deed of sexual misconduct had not ripened as yet and he led a normal life as a rich man's son. In this second life cycle he engaged in *kusala* deeds such as *dana*, *sila* and *bhavana*. When he died this time, the time was ripe for reaping the bad deeds he committed as a goldsmith and he landed in "Yoruva" hell and suffered a miserable life for a long time.

After "Yoruva" hell he landed in the animal world and became a he-goat. The he-goat was big and strong and was castrated and became a common plaything of

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the children in the village. When the he-goat grew old he was sent to the butcher to be killed for its meat. After that he became a male monkey. The leader of the monkey group was jealous of him and declaring that the new born male monkey was strong and healthy and could become a rival to him, he crushed the testicles of the young born and killed him. After being killed by the leader of the monkey group, he landed as a bull in the next life cycle.

As the bull was strong and healthy, the owners castrated the animal by crushing its testicles. It was a good beast of burden. When the bull became old and weak, it was sent to the butcher again. After that he was born as a human being of neuter gender (having no sexual organs). On the death of this miserable existence he was born as a celestial being as the wife of *Devas* and *Sakka* for five consecutive existences. At the end of five existences as a woman he was born as "Ruca" the daughter of King Engati. Because of unwholesome deeds (adultery) he committed as a wealthy goldsmith, the resultant bad *kamma* occurred and he suffered until the end of his

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birth as "Ruca", the King's daughter. After the life of the King's daughter "Ruca", the time ripened for good *kusala* deeds he did as a rich man's son and he was born as a celestial being (a male *Deva*), thus free from ill resultant effects for his unwholesome deeds. After being free from all evil resultant effects of his *akusala* deeds, he was born into the human world as a cousin of Prince Siddhattha, the future Buddha Gotama.

When Prince Siddhattha attained perfect Enlightenment and became Sammasambuddha (Universal Buddha), Ven. Ananda became a close attendant of the Omniscient Buddha. As a close attendant and being endowed with a very special intelligence and remarkable memory he was the only person fully conversant with all the 84,000 *dhammas* preached by Lord Buddha in his 45 years of Buddhahood.

When other *arahatta sangha* participants bantered Ven. Ananda that one of the 500 was still enmeshed with kilesa (defilements) he decided to practise until

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he achieved *arahatta-magga* before synod time. He practised *Satipatthana Vipassana bhavana* diligently for the whole day alternating between sitting and walking meditation. With the arrival of night time he became tired and when sloth and torpor overwhelmed him, he practised walking meditation until midnight but he did not achieve arahatship.

He wondered why he did not progress in his meditation in spite of the fact that Buddha himself predicted that he could attain arahatship if he practised diligently and intensively since he was fully endowed with *parami* (perfection). After midnight Ven. Ananda was very tired and thinking that he must relax a little he went towards his bedroom noting his walking steps and arriving at his bed noted standing. Standing and taking out his slippers were also noted, alighting onto his bed was also noted and afterwards noting his lying down posture as lying, he lowered his back and head towards the pillow. Before his head reached the pillow and when the feet were in the air free from the floor, Ven. Ananda attained realization

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of the three successive *maggas* of *sakadagami*, *anagami* and *arahatta*.

He became the only arahat who attained enlightenment, free of the four postures of meditation namely, walking, sitting, standing and lying, in Buddha Gotama Sasana. When Ven. Ananda became an arahat he shed all *kamma* and with no *kamma*, there could be no more "Process of Existence" i.e. *Bhava* in Pali. Ven. Ananda was a *Sotapanna* since his ordination and he had rejected *akusala* deeds already. On becoming an arahat he was free from all *kammass* and no more existences could arise again in this life cycle of *samsara*.

Now may all meditators, on knowing that full results of wholesome or unwholesome deeds occur when the time is ripe, strive to abstain from committing *akusala* deeds and do all *kusala* deeds. May I conclude this talk by calling our meditators to practise diligently and achieve *arahatta-magga* so that they can escape this Rounds of Rebirth (*Samsara*) and

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realize *Nibbana*, the end of all sufferings, in the quickest possible period.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



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### DHAMMA XIV

#### "Sila Vanta Sutta"

The subject of today's *Dhamma* Talk is "*Sila Vanta Sutta*" as mentioned in *Khandha Vagga Samyutta*. In this *sutta*, the detailed method of *Vipassana bhavana* is expounded. This *sutta* is very suitable for meditators as it clarifies meditation procedures. The questions were raised by Ven. Maha Kotthika and the answers were given by Ven. Sariputta Mahathera. At the time of compilation during the Buddhist synod, the *sutta* was edited in the most complete form, starting with the introduction.

It was explained thus: once upon a time Ven. Sariputta Mahathera and Ven. Maha Kotthika were staying together at the Isipatana Migadavana forest monastery in Benares Province. One afternoon, Ven. Maha Kotthika, after practising *Phala Samapatti*, visited Ven. Sariputta Mahathera. After exchanging a few compliments between the two *Mahatheras*, Ven. Maha Kotthika put a question to Ven. Sariputta

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Mahathera. Here we should know the qualifications of these two well-known Mahatheras. Ven. Sariputta Mahathera was the most learned and the chief disciple of Lord Buddha. Ven. Maha Kotthika was the most outstanding in *Patisambhida* (Analytical knowledge).

There are 4 *Patisambhidas*, namely :-

- (1) *Attha Patisambhida*
- (2) *Dhamma Patisambhida*
- (3) *Nirutti Patisambhida*
- (4) *Pathibhana Patisambhida*

(1) *Attha Patisambhida* means understanding the true meaning, purpose, result and functional consciousness of all the Teachings of Lord Buddha.

(2) *Dhamma Patisambhida* means understanding every cause producing result, the Noble Path, the spoken word that reflects in the law, any knowledge falling within the category concerned with the law.

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(3) *Nirutti Patisambhida* means understanding the knowledge of the language, corresponding to reality and the unfailing mode of expression concerning the language.

(4) *Pattibhāṇa Patisambhida* means understanding the analytical knowledge of Real Wit and can relate the Dhamma in flowery and beautiful terms so that everybody will understand the meaning easily. Among all the arahats who possessed the four *Patisambhidas*, Ven. Maha Kotthika is the greatest, after Lord Buddha. Both the *Mahatheras* were *Ariya-Puggala* (Noble Persons) who had realized the 8 stages of holiness (the 4 supramundane Path - *Magga* and 4 supramundane fruitions - *Phala*).

Therefore the questions and the answers recorded in this *sutta* are to be regarded as clarification of the *bhāvanas* from all aspects. These recorded answers could be regarded as precedents and references for the coming generations. Ven. Maha Kotthika's question is: "For a person who had fully observed the noble *sīlas*, what kind of *bhavana* should

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be practised?" the important wording here is "person who had fully observed the noble *silas*". He did not simply ask how a person should practise the *bhavana*. Therefore it is essential to note that a person who desires to practise *bhavana* must first of all fully observe the noble *Silas*. It is also mentioned in the *Sila Vanta Sutta* that general knowledge of the *Dhamma* is also necessary before a person undertakes to practise seriously.

What is the minimum requirement of the knowledge of Dhamma for that purpose? According to the late Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw, "If a person is generally familiar that all body-mind *sankharas* are *Anicca* (impermanent), *Dukkha* (suffering) and *Anatta* (egolessness), that person can be taught *vipassana bhavana*." Ven. Sariputta Mahathera's reply was - "A person who has fully observed the noble *silas* should contemplate the five *Upadanakkhandhas* (5 groups of body-mind processes)." They are :-

- (1) *Rupakkhandha* (the corporeality group)
- (2) *Vedanakkhandha* (the feeling)
- (3) *Sannakkhandha* (the perception)

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(4) *Sankharakkhandha* (the mental formation)

(5) *Vinnanakkhandha* (the consciousness group)

Contemplation of the five *Upadanakkhandhas* is what our meditators here are practising according to the instructions contained in the *Satipatthana Sutta*. When meditators note left-step & right-step, the movement of the legs is *Rupakkhandha* (the corporeality group) and the feeling of good and bad is *Vedanakkhandha* (feeling). Noting of the steps is *Sannakkhandha* (perception) and making effort to take the steps is *Sankharakkhandha* (mental-formation). The awareness of taking the steps is *Vinnanakkhandha* (consciousness). So these are the 5 *Upadanakkhandhas* (5 groups of body-mind processes). In summary, taking steps is *rupa* (matter) and noting the steps is *nama* (mind) and there is mind and matter only. In detail, it is 5 *Upadanakkhandhas* as mentioned above.

If meditators do not note the true nature of mind and matter, meditators may assume, "I am going, a person is going or a woman is going" and this belief is the wrong notion of ego entity. It is called *Upadana*

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(clinging). When meditators note the rising and falling of the abdomen, the same principle applies. The rising and falling of the abdomen is *Rupakkhandha*. The feeling of good or bad is *Vedanakkhandha*, noting the rising and falling is *Sannakkhandha*, making the effort to note rising and falling is *Sankharakkhandha*. The awareness of rising and falling is *Vinnanakkhandha*.

The same applies in seeing sight. The eye and the object is *Rupakkhandha*, the feeling of good or bad sight is *Vedanakkhandha*. Noting is *Sannakkhandha*, making the effort is *Sankharakkhandha* and the awareness is *Vinnanakkhandha*. Every noting is 5 *Upadanakkhandhas* but in brief the 5 *Khandhas* consist of *nama* and *rupa* only (mind and matter). If meditators are not aware of the true nature of these five *khandhas*, the meditators may think that there is an ego-entity as I, man, woman and such a notion is called *Upadana*. (*Upadana* means clinging). The 4 kinds of clinging are:

- (1) Sensuous clinging
- (2) Clinging to views

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- (3) Clinging to mere rules and rituals and
- (4) Clinging to personality-belief.

The answer given by Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera is to contemplate the five *Upadanakkhandhas*. What does one expect to find by contemplating the 5 *khandhas*? The answer is quite wide but if we draw the summary conclusion, contemplation is to be done until one realizes *Anicca*, *Dukkha* and *Anatta* (Impermanence, suffering and non-self characteristics). By such a kind of contemplation what kind of benefits can be obtained is the next question.

Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera answered: "*Thanam Kho Panetam, Avuso Vijati*". It means: "My Dhamma friend, Ven. Kothhika, a person who fully observes the noble *silas* and contemplates the *Upadanakkhandhas* (5 groups of body-mind processes), will gradually achieve the progress of *vipassana nana* like the knowledge that distinguishes between mind and matter, the knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect and the awareness of ever-new phenomena rapidly arising and

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passing away and so forth until one realizes the cessation of all mental and physical phenomena and finally achieves *sotapatti magga* and *phala* and become a full-fledged *sotapana ariya-puggala*.

When a person has finally achieved *sotapatti magga nana*, we have to verify by giving "*Adhitthand*" (making solemn vow or determination). What we usually ask to make a solemn determination is:-

- (a) "Let me reach the state of cessation of mental and physical phenomena for a long time." For a long time means for the whole 30 minutes or 45 minutes or one or two hours. When such a vow is successfully achieved the second vow we test is:
- (b) "Let me reach the state of cessation of all phenomena in the quickest time." When such a vow is successful, the meditator may not have to note very long. In a short period of time the "Cessation of all phenomena" is achieved easily. After that, the third vow we test is:
- (c) "Let me reach the cessation of all phenomena quite often". Some meditators are successful



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and reach the cessation of mental and physical phenomena quite often or every now and then. The fourth vow we test is:

- (d) "Let me reach the cessation status at this sitting" and "Let me not reach the cessation state during the next sitting".
- (e) The fifth vow of solemn determination (Adhitthana) we test is this: "After achieving cessation of mental and physical phenomena, let me regain consciousness at 8pm or 10am as the case may be, or let me regain consciousness in 30 minutes etc. Some meditators are quite successful in their solemn vows, some are not. The meditators should not be discouraged but try again and again until they are successful. After the verification process is successful and the achievement is certain the next step is to gain practice towards the upper level.

Here also Ven. Maha Kotthika raised a question again to Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera. "Venerable Sariputta, what should a person after attaining sotapatti-magga contemplate to achieve *Sakadagami-magga* (the Path

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of Once-Return). Sariputta Maha Thera answered: "Sotapanna person wishing to strive for *Sakadagami-magga* has to contemplate the same five *Upadanakkhandhas* (5 groups of body-mind processes)." The procedure for upper level is that a meditator has to make *Adhitthana* (a solemn determination) that "I forsake all previously acquired *Dhammas* and let me attain the higher *Dhammas* which I have not yet experienced." And the same method and the same practice is to be repeated.

Such a meditator does not fall back to the beginner's stage of *Nama-Rupa Pariccheda Nana*, etc. Usually he starts with the awareness of ever-new phenomena rapidly arising and passing away which is *Udayabbaya Nana*. From there the meditator passes through *Bhanga Nana*, *Bhaya Nana*, *Adinava Nana*, *Nibbida Nana*, *Muncitu Kamyata Nana*, *Patisankha Nana*, *Sankharupekka Nana* and *Anuloma Nana*, etc. etc. and finally reaches the cessation of all mental and physical phenomena and thus realizes *sakadagami-magga* and *phala nana*.

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After achieving thus, the same process of verification is applied by making *Adhitthanas* that is making a solemn vow or determination for cessation for a long time, cessation in the quickest time, cessation quite often and to regain consciousness at the required fixed time and so forth, until all verifications are successful. Ven. Maha Kotthika again enquired Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera how a *Sakadagami* person should practise to gain *anagami-magga* and *phala nana* (the Path of Non-Return).

Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera answered that a *Sakadagami* person wishing to achieve *anagami-magga* and *phala nana* should contemplate the same five *Upadanakkhandhas* (5 groups of body-mind processes). Such a *Sakadagami* person will usually start from *Udayabbaya Nana* and pass through the progressive stages of *Nanas* serially and attain *anagami-magga* and *phala nana* in due course. When *anagami-magga* and *phala nana* are attained a person has no more *kama-raga*, *vyapada* and *dosa* (*kama-raga* is sensual craving, *vyapada* is ill-will and *dosa* is anger). Therefore an *anagami* person will not enjoy

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family life, he will observe eight precepts perpetually. He has no more active anger nor passive anger. He will have no anxiety nor lamentations. The achievement of *anagami-magga* and *phala nana* have also to be verified by *Adhitthanas*. Making a solemn vow or determination for cessation for a long time, cessation in the quickest time, cessation quite often and regain consciousness at a fixed time, etc. till all the verifications are successful.

Ven. Maha Kotthika enquired again how an *anagami* person should practise if he wants to proceed for higher status. Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera answered that the *anagami* person wishing to achieve *arahatta-magga* (the Path of holiness) should also contemplate the same five *Upadanakkhandhas*. If the *anagami* person contemplates the same *Upadanakkhandhas* (5 groups of body-mind processes) by gradual progress of *Vipassana nanas*, he will attain arahatship in due course. When the *anagami* person contemplates the five *Upadanakkhandhas*, he will also revert to "*Udayabbaya nana*" and progress through the

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different stages of *vipassana nanas* and reach the *arahatta-magga* and *phala nana*.

The achievement of *arahatta-magga* and *phala nana* should have the same process of verification by giving "*Adhitthanas*" for cessation for a long time, cessation in the quickest time, cessation quite often and to regain consciousness at a fixed time and so forth till all verifications are successful. After verifying with those methods and the achievement is ascertained the *arahatta-magga* person (the one realizing the path of holiness) with continued practice will reach and enjoy *arahatta-phala* (The one realizing the fruition of holiness). But it needs continued practice to be able to reach and enjoy the supramundane fruitions (*phala*). The same principle applies to the other 3 supramundane Path (*magga*) winners.

The one realizing the Path of stream-winning (*sotapatti-magga*) cannot easily reach and enjoy *sotapatti-phala* (one realizing the fruition of stream-winning) if he has no continued regular practice. The

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one realizing the Path of Once-Return (*Sakadagami-magga*) cannot easily reach and enjoy *sakadagami-phala* (one realizing the fruition of Once-return) if he has no continued regular practice. The one realizing the Path of Non-Return (*anagami-magga*) cannot easily reach and enjoy *anagami-phala* (one realizing the fruition of Non-Return). It needs continued and diligent practice to overcome and totally dispel one's idiosyncrasies. Ven. Maha Kotthika again asked: "What *Dhamma* should a person after attaining arahatship contemplate?"

Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera answered: "Ven. Kotthika, a person after attaining arahatship will have to contemplate the 5 *Upadanakkhandhas* also. A person who has attained arahatship cannot attain the higher status of *Pacceka-Buddha* (Independently enlightened one) or *Sammāsambuddha Khandhas* but he will enjoy blissful *Dhamma* during his present lifetime. By his continued and diligent practice of the five *khandhas* he can enjoy supramundane fruition (*phala*) at his will with ease and since he has expelled his idiosyncracies totally, he will have no contact

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with all wordly affairs and be free from all sufferings connected with *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

To conclude, a person who has *sila* and *suta*, a general knowledge of the *Dhamma*, can attain *sotapannahood* by contemplating the five *Upadanakkhandhas* and by repeated performance of the same process he can achieve the *Sakadagami*-state, *anagami*-state and *arahatta*-state in successive achievements. Therefore by having the chance of listening to the questions and answers of Ven. Maha Kotthika and Ven. Sariputta Maha Thera, the two well-known distinguished Disciples of Lord Buddha's *sasana* as expounded in the *Sila Vanta Sutta*, may all our meditators also be able to contemplate the five *Upadanakkhandhas* and achieve *Nibbana*, the end of all sufferings in the quickest possible time.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Four Great Elements

### DHAMMA XV

#### "Four Great Elements"

The subject of today's *Dhamma* Talk is "*Dhatumanasikara*" meaning Classification and division of Elements. Elements are the ultimate constituents of a whole. When Lord Buddha expounded the *Dhamma* "*sati*", he exemplified "*sati*" (mindfulness) to a bamboo. He divided "*sati*" into four divisions namely:

*Kaya* (physical)  
*Vedana* (feeling)  
*Citta* (mind) and  
*Dhamma* (mind-objects)

as a bamboo cutter cuts the bamboo into four equal parts. Again Buddha divided the *kaya* (physical) into 14 sub-divisions such as:

- (1) *anapana pabba* (mindfulness on In and Out breathing)
- (2) *iriyā-pathapabba* (way of movement)
- (3) *sampajanna pabba* (clarity of consciousness)



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and so forth as the bamboo cutter shreds the bamboo into thin strips. Out of these 14 subdivisions the subject of today's *Dhamma* talk (classification and division of elements) is the No.5 sub-division. By expounding this 5<sup>th</sup> sub-division, I hope to achieve the advantage that our meditators here will have less clinging on *atta-ditthi* (ego-belief), *sakkaya-ditthi* (personality-belief) and see with clarity all the physical and mental phenomena of existence.

Lord Buddha preaches: O *Bhikkhus!* All our meditators of Buddha *Sasana* should contemplate this physical body by dividing it into elements. The way to contemplate is: This physical body is composed of Earth, Water, Fire and Wind elements. If a meditator contemplates this way, he comes to know this physical body, after all, is not mine, not my body, not my possession but only a group of the above-mentioned elements. When a meditator analyses the physical body he may realize *rupa-khanda* as comprising of Four Elements :

(*Pathavi-dhatu*) the solid or earth element,

## Four Great Elements

( <i>Apo-dhatu</i> )	the liquid or water element,
( <i>Tejo-dhatu</i> )	the heat or fire element,
( <i>Vayo-dhatu</i> )	the motion or wind element.

There are twenty kinds of earth elements.

They are: head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes (including the pleura and diaphragm), spleen, lungs, stomach, intestines, gorge, faeces and brain.

If the human body is divided into component parts, you may find 42 items. The above 20 items starting from head hair to brain is (*Pathavi-dhatu*) the solid or earth element. The characteristic of earth element is hardness-softness, roughness-smoothness, heaviness-lightness, etc, etc. Yes, if you touch the bones they are hard. If you touch the head hair it is rough and if the flesh is touched it is soft and smooth. These are different characteristics. When you take steps to walk by lifting the legs, sometimes they are heavy and sometimes light. When a meditator contemplates on these elements, the

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meditator should not note according to the names of elements contemplated.

So when a meditator experiences heaviness in lifting the legs he should note "heavy, heavy". Sometimes a meditator experiences heaviness in the head while he is engaged in sitting meditation, he must note "heavy, heavy". By noting this he is noting *Pathavi-dhatu* (the solid or earth element). When a meditator notes roughness and hardness in his buttock, touching the floor, it is the solid or earth element (*Pathavi*). In walking meditation, a meditator sometimes experiences smoothness or softness when he drops the foot on the ground or floor, then the meditator is noting the *Pathavi-dhatu*.

Sometimes a meditator, on taking steps, feels heavy sometimes light and at other times the meditator feels the whole body is afloat. If the meditator notes these characteristics as they occur he is noting the *Pathavi-dhatu* (the earth element). Though the meditator may not spell as *pathavi* he has

## Four Great Elements

contemplated one of the four elements, solid or earth element. The *pathavi* element has 20 items.

The hardness or softness, the roughness or smoothness, the heaviness or lightness are defined in that way in the conventional definition (*pannatti* name). But they are the same in the analysis of element. Let us analyze the word hardness. If you compare iron and brick you may say iron is hard and brick is soft. When you compare a brick and earth block you will define the brick as hard and the earth block as soft. Examine the status of the brick. When compared to iron it is soft but when compared to earth it is hard. Therefore in the analysis of element hardness and softness can be regarded as the same. This is called in Pali *Upanita pannatti*. Again if earth is to be compared to mud, earth becomes hard and mud is soft. Earth, when compared with brick, is soft but when compared to mud is hard. Therefore, we can say that hardness and softness are the same in the classification of elements.

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Let us examine the roughness and smoothness of things. Clothing made of coarse cotton is rough but poplin cloth made of fine cotton is smooth. But poplin cloth is rough when compared to silk. And silk becomes rough when compared to other cloth of finer material. Roughness and smoothness are defined through comparison. Therefore, we can say roughness and smoothness are the same in the classification of elements.

Heaviness and lightness are also the same. In comparison it is different between a 10 kilo measurement and 5 kilo and a 1 kilo measurement, 5 kilo is heavier and 1 kilo lighter. The same with  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilo measurement and  $\frac{1}{4}$  kilo measurement. If compared to 1 kilo,  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilo is lighter and 1 kilo is heavier. These conventional definitions (*Upanita pannati* names) are so unreal. Therefore, heaviness and lightness are the same in the classification of elements. So when our meditators contemplate hardness or softness, heaviness or lightness, roughness or smoothness it can be said that the meditators are noting *pathavi-dhatu* (earth element). As mentioned above the earth

## Four Great Elements

element has 20 groups in one's own body starting from the head hair to the brain.

Next comes *Apo-dhatu*. The characteristics of *Apo* are fluidity and cohesion. It is the water element. In one's own body there are 12 groups of *Apo-dhatu*. They are:

Bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, solid fat, tears, liquid fat, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid and urine

When a meditator notes tears or saliva or blood or sweat or urine, the meditator is noting (*Apo-dhatu*) the water element. The characteristics of *Apo-dhatu* are fluidity and cohesion. Dried parts are joined together by the water element which is cohesion. When one wants to bake bread or chapati (Indian bread) one has to mix the flour with water to have a cohesive effect. Then only it can be baked into bread. Water is the main instrument in binding the flour. Therefore if a meditator contemplates the fluidity cohesion and the following movement, it is noting the water element (*Apo*) in one's own body.

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Noting of "crying", "crying", "sweating", "sweating", "urinating", "urinating" are inclusive in the *Apo* element.

The (*Apo*) water element is 12 in number and (*pathavi*) the earth element is 20 and we have a total of 32 groups by adding these 2 groups together. The details of the 32 *Kotthasas* are:-

Head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes (including the pleura and diaphragm), spleen, lungs, stomach, intestines, gorge, faeces and brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, solid fat, tears, liquid fat, saliva, mucus, synovial fluid and urine.

Since one's body consists of 4 great elements if you add the components of the two other elements (10 in all), there will be 42 in the group (*kotthasas*).

There are 4 kinds of *tejo* (heat element).

- (1) *Santappana tejo* is the normal body heat before the feverish temperature is reached.

## Four Great Elements

- (2) *Jirana tejo* is the aging process of heat that matures a person into old age. When mangoes cannot ripen readily we have to give heat to ripen the mangoes. So also this *Jirana tejo* gives heat to persons to become mature and grow into old age.
- (3) *Daha tejo* is very severe and a person has to cry for help due to unbearable heat when *Daha tejo* attacks one's body.
- (4) *Pacaka tejo* is the heat that helps digest the food. If a meditator notes the heat or the cold in his own body, "heat, heat or cold, cold" the contemplation of *tejo* (fire or heat element) is accomplished.

The last one is (*vayo dhatu*) the motion or wind element. There are six kinds of wind element:

- (1) *Uddhangama veyo* is the wind that moves upwards (like yawning, hiccupping, belching, etc.)
- (2) *Adhogama vayo* is the wind that moves downward. (It helps in pushing excrements, urinating, farting, etc.)



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- (3) *Kussittha vayo* is the wind that plays havoc inside the stomach, making noises, etc.
- (4) *Kotthasaya vayo* is the wind inside the intestines. (It pressures the food in the intestines).
- (5) *Enganusari vayo* is the wind that plays an important part in the movement of legs, hands, opening and closing of eyes and so forth.
- (6) *Assasapassasa vayo* : in-breathing and out-breathing. How do we contemplate the the *vayo-dhatu*? Supporting of the body to stay upright is *vayo dhatu*. So when a meditator notes standing, standing, it is noting *vaya dhatu* (wind element). Rising and falling of the abdomen is due to the wind element. When the meditator notes "rising, falling" he is noting *vayo-dhatu*.

When sitting the stiffness occurs at the backside and it is (*vayo*) the wind element. Walking, stepping forward is also *vayo-dhatu*. Pushing towards an inclined direction is also *vayo-dhatu*. When a

## Four Great Elements

meditator notes all these movements of the limbs, legs, hands and so forth he is noting all (*vayo-dhatu*) the wind or motion element.

The grand total is 42 items (*kotthasas*). The detailed counting is *Pathavi dhatu* 20, *Apo-dhatu* 12, *Tejo-dhatu* 4 and *vayo-dhatu* 6, making it the total 42. Buddha further explained, if the butcher or his assistant killed a bull and placed it at the cross road, everybody regarded this as the carcass of a bull. But when the butcher dissected the meat into small bundles weighing one kilo each the people will see this meat as beef.

So also the *khandha* aggregates of one's own body is regarded as my body, my possession and forth. But when it is divided into four different elements of the earth element, water element, heat element and wind element, there is no such thing as self, ego, *atta* or personality to be attached to the group of 42 items, *kotthasas*. By such realization one cannot and will not cling to the ego-entity, ego belief and his *sakkaya-ditthi* is entirely abandoned and such a

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meditator will strive towards the attainment of *magga-nana* and *phala nana* and thus realize *Nibbana*.

Therefore our meditators here should contemplate on *pathavi-dhatu* (the solid or earth element), *Apo-dhatu* (the liquid or water element), *Tejo-dhatu* (heat or fire element) and *vayo-dhatu* (motion or wind element); the four great elements which form into a group of aggregates called *Khanda*.

By contemplating thus may our meditators realize that human bodies are after all groups of 4 great elements and no such ego-entity or personality-belief to be relied on. By persistent noting of these four elements and realizing the true nature of one's own body, may all our meditators attain *Nibbana*, the end of all suffering in the shortest possible time.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Cause and Effect

### DHAMMA XVI

**"Those who can differentiate  
'Cause and effect'  
is a *cula sotapanna*"**

The name of today's *Dhamma* Talk is those who can differentiate between "Cause and effect is a *cula sotapanna*, *cula* meaning small, so I interpret it as junior *sotapanna*. It means not a full-fledged *Sotapanna* yet. A meditator after a certain of time of practice comes to know that there is only *Nama* and *Rupa* but no self, no ego-entity, no man, no woman. After that stage, a meditator will come to know of "Cause and Effect". *Paccaya Pariggaha Nana* is the knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect.

Until the Cause and Effect theory is digested, a clear vision, a proper perspective on the cycle of life is not possible. Some believe there is a soul which never perishes but transfer to another body in another existence. A living being after discarding

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the old body, transfer into a new body and believes that the human soul is a permanent entity. Such a belief is called "*Sassata-ditthi*" (Eternity-belief), the belief in the existence of a persisting Ego-entity, Soul or Personality existing independently of those physical and mental processes that constitute life and continuing even after death.

On the other hand, there are people who believe in the "*Uccheda-ditthi*" (Annihilation belief), the belief in the existence of an Ego-entity or Personality as being more or less identical with those physical and mental processes and which therefore at the dissolution at death, will come to be annihilated.

Some believe sentient beings are created by god. We are here not to criticize, not to give judgment which belief is right or wrong. Here we want to expound Buddha's doctrine. According to Buddha, in the *samsaric* existence beings arise as effects of resultant causes. In the doctrine of *Paticcasamuppada* or dependent Origination is expounded thus: *Avijja paccaya sankhara*. Through

## Cause and Effect

ignorance (*avijja*) there arises *sankhara* (effort or *kamma* formation).

### ***Sankhara-paccaya vinnanam***

Through *kamma* formation (in the past life) is conditioned Consciousness (in the present life).

### ***Vinnana-paccaya nama-rupam***

Through consciousness are conditioned the Mental and Physical Phenomena (*nama-rupa*) i.e. that which makes up our so called individual existences.

### ***Nama-rupa-paccaya salayatanam***

Through the Mental and Physical Phenomena are conditioned the 6 bases, i.e. the 5 physical sense-organs and consciousness as the sixth.

### ***Salayatana-paccaya phasso***

Through the six bases is conditioned the (sensorial mental) impression.

### ***Phassa-paccaya-vedana***

Through the impression is conditioned feeling.

### ***Vedana-paccaya tanha***

Through feeling is conditioned craving.

### ***Tanha paccaya upadanam***

Through craving is conditioned clinging.

### ***Upadana-paccaya bhavo***

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Through clinging is conditioned the process of becoming, "consisting of the active and passive life process" i.e. the rebirth producing *kamma*-process (*kamma-bhava*) and as its result, the rebirth-process (*upapatti bhava*).

### ***Bhava-paccaya Jati***

Through the (rebirth producing *kamma*) process of becoming is conditioned rebirth.

### ***Jati-paccaya jaramaranam etc.***

Through rebirth are conditioned old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, grief and despair. Thus arises this whole mass of suffering again in the future.

This is how the Doctrine of Dependent Origination is to be understood. The second definition of cause and effect is an account of *kammic* effect. Please have a look at the people, though they are all human beings, why they are not exactly alike except for only the protruding head and shoulders.

Regarding these dissimilarities among human beings, in one *sutta*, a young man by the name of Subha put forward a question to Buddha: "Venerable Sir, some

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people have long lives, some short lives, some are sickly, some are healthy, some are pretty, some ugly, some people have plenty of friends and servants, some have none, some are wealthy, some poor, some are of noble birth, some of low-class, some learned, some illiterate. Will the Venerable Sir explain the causes?" Buddha wanted to test Subha the young man and answered in brief: "The dissimilarities are due to *kammic* effects".

The young man Subha requested the Buddha to explain in detail as he could not understand the brief answer. Buddha expounded: "Young man Subha, the longevity of life depends on their previous actions. Those who indulge in killing others have short lives, those who refrain from killing enjoy longevity of life. The killing is the cause and the short life is the effect. Refraining from killing is the cause and longevity is the effect."

"Those who indulge in cruelties on others with all kinds of weapons are poor in health. Those who are kind to others enjoy good health. Young man Subha,



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there are some who are easily aroused to anger and when in anger their appearance becomes cruel and ugly and they use abusive language on others. Due to their unwholesome deeds and speech such persons are born to (*apaya*) the nether worlds; even if they are born to the human world they have ugly appearances."

"Those who are kind and patient have handsome appearances. Patience and kindness is the cause and the handsome appearance is the effect. Some are jealous of other people, they envy other people's success and prosperity. Such persons have no friends and assistants. Some persons are happy and generate *Mudita* (sympathetic joy) for other persons' success and prosperity, such persons have plenty of friends and assistants."

"Having *Mudita* (sympathetic joy) is the cause and having plenty of friends and assistants are the effect. Being jealous and envious is the cause and having no friends and assistants is the effect. Persons who are generous and give *dana* to other

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needy persons are successful and wealthy. Some persons are miserly and never give *dana* to other persons; such persons are poor."

Buddha continued: "Young man Subha, some persons do not want to learn and they do not impart their knowledge to others. Such persons become illiterate as a result. Some persons try to learn and they willingly impart their knowledge to others; such persons are intelligent and learned. These are *kamma-samudaya*, *kammic* cause and effect. Meditators should know about *khanika samudaya*. It denotes ever changing causes and effects.

When our meditators make a detailed study of their present meditation practice they will find that everything has a cause and an effect. In the walking meditation, intention to step is the cause and stepping is the effect and the stepping is the cause and the noting of the step is the effect. The same analogy applies in the lifting, moving and dropping of the leg. Intention to lift is the cause, lifting is the

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effect and lifting is the cause and noting of the lifting is the effect.

When noting rising and falling of the abdomen breathing-in is the cause, the rising of the abdomen is the effect, the rising of the abdomen is the cause and the noting of the rising is the effect. In the falling process, intention to breath-out is the cause, the falling of the abdomen is the effect, next, the falling of the abdomen is the cause and noting the falling of the abdomen is the effect. When seeing an object a meditator may think seeing is I. it is not so but the cause and effect process is working.

When noting sight there should be:

- (1) good eye sight
- (2) presence of light
- (3) presence of seeing object
- (4) presence of consciousness.

These four elements are the cause and seeing is the effect. Next, seeing is the cause and noting of seeing is the effect.

When noting hearing there must be:

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- (1) good ear
- (2) presence of sound
- (3) absence of obstacles between sound and ear
- (4) presence of consciousness.

These four elements are the cause and hearing is the effect. Next, hearing is the cause and noting of hearing is the effect.

When noting eating there must be:

- (1) good tongue
- (2) some taste (hot, sweet or salty)
- (3) presence of fluid
- (4) presence of consciousness.

These four elements are the cause and the discovery of taste is the effect. Next discovery of taste is the cause, noting the taste is the effect.

When noting the sensation there must be:

- (1) body consciousness sensitive material qualities of the body (note if the body consciousness is marred, it has no sensations, end of fingernails, defective or dead skin also has no sensation).

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- (2) Presence of object
- (3) Presence of actual touching
- (4) Presence of sensation consciousness.

These four elements are the cause and the touching sensation is the effect. Next, the touching sensation is the cause and the noting is the effect.

When noting the smell there must be:

- (1) presence of good nose
- (2) presence of smell
- (3) smell bearing wind
- (4) presence of consciousness.

These four factors are the cause and the smell is the effect, next the smell is the cause, the noting is the effect.

Therefore, seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, touching are all causes and noting of them are the effects. By their own experience the meditators come to know that the effects arise out of the causes. The effects do not appear without causes and if there is no cause there can be no effect. Sentient beings also appear with causes. Whatever actions done by

## Cause and Effect

sentient beings with sensual desire are transformed into *kammic* effects. These are causes for a cycle of *samsaric* effects.

These causes and effects will repeat by themselves until the process can be terminated by *Arahatta Magga*. When *kammic* causes exist the effects are becoming of *Nama-rupa*. Therefore these factors cause rebirth, shaping the destiny of beings. In the scriptures it is described thus: when sounds are made into the forest, the echoes come back. Sound made from this side is the cause and the coming back echo sound is the effect. If a person looks into the mirror he can see his own image, the person is the cause and the image is the effect. The same applies with a rubber stamp as an example. After applying ink from the inkpad on a rubber stamp and then stamping it on paper there is the mark on the paper. The rubber stamp is the cause and the mark is the effect.

The next example is regarding fire in the candle. If a second candle is lighted from the first candle

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there are two lighted candles but the first candle is the cause and the second candle is the effect. As mentioned above the becoming of *nama-rupa* of sentient beings is the effect, the rebirth-producing *kamma* is the cause. By this profound *Dhamma* we realize the conditionality and dependent nature of that uninterrupted flux of manifold physical and mental phenomena of existence.

There is no such thing as the existence of a persisting ego-entity, soul or personality existing independently of these physical and mental processes that constitute life called Man or Animal, etc. There is no Creator of sentient beings. Through the rebirth-producing *kamma* process of Becoming arises *Nama Rupa*. Through good *kamma* formations in the past life, the resultant good present life is formed but the bad *kamma* formations in the past life will be the cause of the present bad life.

The doctrine of Causes and Effect can now be understood properly. Therefore a person who understands this Cause and Effect *Dhamma* by his

## Cause and Effect

own experience through practical meditation can be called a *Cula Sotapanna* (a junior *sotapanna*). When such a clear view has been realized there can be no way of having rebirth in the lower worlds (*Apaya* world).

Therefore, *Sayadaw* would like to end today's talk by wishing "May all our meditators here, having acquired the knowledge that distinguishes between Cause and Effect, achieve progress stage by stage until they realize *Nibbana*, the end of all sufferings in the easiest way in the shortest possible time."

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



## Dhamma Discourses

### DHAMMA XVII

#### **"Dhamma Therapy For Human Illness"**

Today, I am going to deliver a talk entitled "Dhamma Therapy for Human Illness". Some human afflictions have been reported to have been cured or relieved by administering the "Dhamma Therapy". This talk is given with the hope of elucidating the *Dhamma* Therapy for certain disorders.

There are innumerable diseases afflicting this human world. It is said in the olden days that there are 96 major groups of diseases, out of which 32 are phlegm related disease, 32 are bile related diseases and 32 are related to the wind element. Nowadays modern scientific discoveries have added to the list the incalculable number of abominable diseases like AIDS, Malignant disease, etc.

## Dhamma Therapy for Human Illness

To combat such disorders, a correspondingly varied number of both scientific and indigenous medicaments are flourishing in the market. But, unfortunately no single product has been proven to be ideally effective in any affliction. That is why the Lord Buddha has admonished thus:

"Bhikkhus, Disciples, Sons and Daughters, there is no medicine that is effective like *Dhamma* medicine. So take the *Dhamma* therapy by diligently practising it." Surely, the *Dhamma* medicine is curative not only of the physical ailments but also those disorders caused by mental defilements or *kilesas*. By practising the *Satipatthana vipassana bhavana* or insight meditation both the physical and mental sufferings can be eradicated.

All human sufferings can be summarized as physical suffering and mental suffering. To be free from such sufferings, we should take *Dhamma* Therapy. For example, when one is walking one should make heedful noting of left step, right step or lifting (of the foot), dropping (of the foot), or lifting, dropping.

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At the end of the walk note standing, standing. Then turning, turning, etc. When sitting, one should make note of the rising and falling of the abdomen or the phenomena occurring at the six sense-doors as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, sensations like aches and pains and also thoughts or the wandering mind. That briefly is the *Dhamma* Therapy

The Lord Buddha, on some occasions, treated his disciples by administering the *Dhamma* Therapy. Once, the two Mahatheras, Venerable Mahakassapa and Venerable Moggallana fell ill and the Lord Buddha went to their bedside and recited the *Bojjhanga Sutta*,

the seven factors of  
enlightenment.

*Sati-sambojjhanga*

Mindfulness,

*Dhamma-vicaya*

Investigation of the Law,

*Viriya*

Energy,

*Piti*

Rapture,

*Passaddhi*

Tranquillity,

*Samadhi*

Concentration,

*Upekkha*

Equanimity.

## Dhamma Therapy for Human Illness

Because they lead to enlightenment, therefore they are called factors of Enlightenment. While heedfully listening to the Lord Buddha's recitation of the *Bojjhanga Sutta*, the two *Mahatheras* contemplated on all the physical and mental phenomena invigorating all the seven factors of enlightenment (*Bojjhanga*), thereby enabling them to convalesce from their illnesses.

At another time, the Lord Buddha himself was laid up in bed with some illness and the Venerable Cunda Thera was asked to recite the *Bojjhanga Sutta*. The Lord Buddha also completely recovered from that illness after mindfully listening to and vitalizing all the seven factors of Enlightenment (*Bojjhanga*).

Here, three reasons can be given for the cure of diseases by listening to the *Bojjhanga Sutta*:

1. The suffering due to illnesses is the resultant effect of past unwholesome deeds and that is replaced by the good deeds of listening to the *Dhamma*. The same mechanism as in reestablishing the

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continuous flow of water in the suction pump supply pipe by expelling the entrapped air by filling the pipe with some water from the outside.

2. The Lord Buddha's *Dhamma* is well expounded in the beginning, in the middle and in the end. It has the noble virtue of immediate personal benefit for those who practise the *Dhamma*. To cite as an example, we had one meditator by the name of U Thein Mg who was given a life expectancy of one month for his disease by local physicians but lived an extended year of life by practising *Satipatthana Vipassana bhavana* or insight meditation.
3. The meditator who earnestly practises the *Satipatthana Vipassana Bhavana* or insight meditation incessantly for some time usually develops all or some of the seven factors of enlightenment (*Bojjhanga*). For example, when a meditator is noting the rising and

## Dhamma Therapy for Human Illness

falling of the abdomen in sitting meditation, whenever his mindfulness is present and undisturbed, at such a time he is developing the factor of enlightenment mindfulness or *Sati-Sambojjhanga*. While dwelling with mindfulness, he wisely investigates, examines and thinks over the law, clearly perceiving the physical object of the rising and falling of the abdomen and the mental factor of the noting mind he is developing the factor of enlightenment: "Investigation of the law or *Dhammavicaya Sambojjhanga*". Whenever his effort is firm and unshaken, he is developing the factor of enlightenment "Energy" or *Viriya Sambojjhanga*. Then supersensuous rapture such as lightness of the body, vibration and coolness of the whole body, etc. arises and he is developing the factor of enlightenment "Rapture" or *Piti Sambojjhanga*. While enraptured in mind, his body and his mind become composed and calm. At such a time he is

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developing the factor of enlightenment  
"Tranquillity" or *passaddhi sambojjhanga*.

Whenever his mind is calm and his body composed his noting mind becomes fixed and synchronized with the object to be noted. At such a time he is developing the factor of enlightenment "concentration" or *Samadhi Sambojjhanga*.

Finally regardless of good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, whenever he contemplates with complete Indifference on all the objects he is developing the factor of enlightenment "Equanimity" or *Upekkha Sambojjhanga*. The resultant peace and tranquillity of the mind in turn enhances the recuperation of physical disorders.

We have relevant evidence of one Japanese lady meditator whose long suffering low back pain resulting from a car accident has been completely relieved after practising *Satipatthana Vipassana bhavana* or insight meditation. Another Korean *Bhikkhu*, Venerable Amarayano, gained total recovery

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from his chronic heart disease by practising *Satipatthana Vipassana bhavana* or insight meditation.

So to conclude my *Dhamma* talk, may all meditators be free from all kinds of physical and mental disorders by diligent contemplation in accordance with *Satipatthana Vipassana bhavana* or insight meditation.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*



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**DHAMMA XVIII**

**"The Four Paths of Preference"  
(Part I)**

Today I would like to expound on the four different paths that all sentient beings choose according to their own preferences. The four paths are:

- (1) The bad path
- (2) The good path
- (3) The better path and
- (4) The best path

The first path leads to the four *Apaya* worlds i.e. the lower worlds of animal-world, ghost-world, demon-world and hell (the demon is the inferior kind of spiritual being). This path is regarded as the bad path. The second path, which is regarded as the good path, leads to existences as human beings or celestial beings (heavenly beings). The third path which is regarded as the better path leads to *Brahma-kayika-deva*. Brahma-world is regarded as

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part I)

nobler than Deva-world. The fourth path which is regarded as the best path is realization of *Nibbana*, the final goal of all Buddhists and is defined as the end of all suffering.

Out of these four different paths, all sentient beings have the option to choose the path of their own preference. Human existence is like landing on a mountain which is full of precious gems. In this mountain of precious gems, there are rubies, sapphires, peridot, topaz, cat's eye, quartz and other ordinary stones like grinding stones or road stones.

On going down the mountain, a sentient being can pick up a ruby or a sapphire or he can pick up a peridot or topaz. He is in a position to make a choice. Is he going to pick up a grinding stone or an ordinary road stone? It is his choice. It is the choice of preference that is available on achieving human existence out of the four paths, is he going to choose the bad path or the good path? Is he going to choose the better path or the best path? It is his option.

## Dhamma Discourses

The bad path means committing deeds (unwholesome activities) which leads to the four nether worlds of animal-world, ghost-world, demon world and hell. Those who perform wholesome activities such as *dana* (generosity) and observe *sila* (morality) lead themselves to existence of human beings or heavenly beings. Those who perform metta (loving-kindness) *bhavana* and *samatha bhavana* (tranquillity meditation) land themselves in nobler Brahma-worlds. Those who perform *sila*, *samadhi* and *vipassana bhavana* insight meditation will achieve the path of *Nibbana*, the best path out of the four.

Out of the four paths of preference, *Sayadaw*, as a preacher, would like to encourage all listeners to follow the good, better and the best paths. Today I would like to expound exegesis of *akusala* deeds (unwholesome activities) which result in the four *apaya* worlds. *Akusala* is a Pali word. In English, it can be translated as "sinful deeds, however secretly done, they will result in bad resultant effects. Suppose one commits a sinful deed alone without

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part I)

anybody knowing it, it cannot be kept a secret because though nobody knows he is conscious that one knows his deed, that is, himself".

It will become an obsession and one despises oneself for one's own misdeeds. One accuses oneself of being an imposter, posing to be a noble person whereas in truth one is a wicked and an immoral person. In Pali such kind of self-accusation or self-criticism is *Attanuvada* Affliction. If somebody happens to see such a mischief done, he is sure to accuse that person of having committed the unwholesome deed or speech. This, in Pali, is called *Paranuvada* Affliction or accusation by others. If one commits a crime, one can be given a jail sentence for such a crime. It is called *Danda* Affliction. In such a case a monetary fine or reprisal by weapons can also happen.

After death, he can also land in the 4 *Apaya* worlds which can be termed as *Duggati* Affliction. This is the resultant effect of *akusala* deeds. Therefore these are 4 kinds of resultant bad effects of *akusala*

## Dhamma Discourses

deeds such as killing, stealing and committing adultery collectively (collectively defined as three physical immoral acts). Four kinds of immoral acts committed by speech are telling lies, slandering, abusive language and frivolous gossip. To elaborate these immoral acts:

- (a) Telling untruths with the object of causing detriment to others is called *musavada* (telling lies),
- (b) *Pisunavacaya* is (slandering) with the object of causing disharmony among intimate friends,
- (c) *Pharusavacaya* is abusing with harsh words causing hatred.
- (d) *Samphappalapa* is frivolous gossip, which has neither benefit nor advantage to society.

Lastly there are three kinds of mental immoral acts. They are:

- (i) *Abhijjha* is covetousness and unrighteous greed i.e. wishing others' possessions to be his own,

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part I)

- (ii) *Vyapada* is ill will towards those who are wealthy and happy. It is a kind of anger or jealousy wishing others adversity to one's own advantage.
- (iii) *Miccha-ditthi* is the wrong view that no benefit can be obtained by doing wholesome deeds and no disadvantages are attained by doing unwholesome deeds or in other words, disbelief in merits and demerits. Therefore, there are 10 *akusala* deeds (3 physical immoral acts, 4 oral or verbal immoral acts and 3 mental immoral thinking).

These 10 kinds of *Upakkilesa* or impurities can only give bad resultant effects. At one time, Young man Subha raised a question to Lord Buddha. His question was: "Respected Sir, why do people not have the same privileges? For instance, some enjoy long lives while others have short lives."

Lord Buddha replied: "Young man Subha, some people kill. By killing, such person land in hell and even after

## Dhamma Discourses

they regain human existences, they have short lives. Therefore one must refrain from killing. Those who refrain from killing enjoy long lives. Those who steal will also have the resultant effect of adversity. In every existence he is liable to be disturbed and destroyed by five enemies namely water, fire, unscrupulous kings, robbers and Ill-disposed heirs."

"Those who commit sexual misconduct earn the hatred of others, have plenty of enemies and are poor. The other bad resultant effect is one can be born as a human being of neuter gender (neither male nor female). The resultant effect of liars is they can be born as mutes or having slurring speech. They can also suffer from uneven teeth, foul smelling mouth and ugly appearance. They tend to have the habit of rude speech and restless minds. The resultant effect of slandering can result in separation from loved ones. Committing *vyapada* (ill will) can also result in economic ruin."

Therefore Lord Buddha elucidated that wholesome deeds and unwholesome deeds have enormous

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part I)

differences in resultant effects. Wholesome deeds or acts will give good and happy results but unwholesome acts or deeds can give undesirable and bad results in the next existence like being born into the 4 *apaya* worlds (i.e. animal world, ghost world, demon world and hell).

Some critics argued that Buddha had not explicitly elucidated that *akusala* deeds indeed land one in the *apaya* worlds. It is not true. In the *Deva-duta sutta*, Buddha expounded: "Oh *Bhikkhus*! In my vision, I can clearly see with my Divine eye the states of all sentient beings as a person with good eye can see the activities of the inhabitants of two adjacent houses. I can clearly see those who committed physical immoral acts, oral immoral speeches and mental immoral thinkings or those who harmed *ariya-puggala* or who practised and propagated *miccha-ditthi* (wrong view) to others, when they died, some landed in hell, some landed in the animal world and some landed in the demon world."



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Since Lord Buddha had the Divine Eye, he could see sentient beings suffering according to the degree of mischief they had committed. Therefore we should be very careful not to commit any kind of immoral act, speech or thoughts however slight, small or trivial it may be, as raindrops can fill big containers in due course, tiny or slight immoral acts can accumulate *akusala* effects and give rise to grave resultant bad effects.

During Buddha's time there was an episode that could be regarded as proof of these theories. At one time Ven. Moggallana Mahathera, the famous Disciple who was the most renowned in supernatural powers among arahats, was returning from the "Gijjhakuta" mountain together with Ven. Lakkhana. On the way Ven. Moggallana saw something and smiled. Ven. Lakkhana asked him the reason for his smiling. Ven. Moggallana told Ven. Lakkhana to ask his reasons for smiling only in the presence of Lord Buddha. Therefore Ven. Lakkhana, in front of Lord Buddha again asked why Ven. Moggallana smiled on the way down.

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Then, Ven. Moggallana answered in front of Lord Buddha. "Ven. Lakkhana, on the way down the mountain, I saw a big serpent, 25 *yojanas* long (One *yojana* is roughly 8 miles and therefore the big serpent is roughly 200 miles long.) And that big serpent was covered with fire from head to tail and from tail to head. Sometimes the fire started from different ends and came to meet in the middle part. The big serpent was writhing with heat and pain and suffering but could not die. I did not smile on this account. I smiled because I realised that we are free from such miseries. (Such kind of suffering can no longer occur to Arahats.)"

Lord Buddha confirmed Ven. Moggallana's assertion by declaring: "My disciple who had achieved arahatship had the power to see what ordinary people could not see. When I attained Omniscient Buddhahood, I also had such visions through my Divine Eye. But I kept these visions to myself. Now since my disciples had also seen such visions I should relate the episode of this burning serpent."

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Ages ago during the time of Buddha Kassapa, one rich man by the name of Sumangala built a big monastery and donated it to Kassapa Buddha. He was so respectful of Buddha Kassapa that he went daily to this monastery and did cleaning, tidying and sweeping of the monastery by himself. One day on his return home he saw a man sleeping at a rest house covered by yellow *Sangha* robe over his body as a blanket. Sumangala lifted the yellow robe and saw a man with hair on his head and his feet were also covered with mud. And he thought this man must be a thief and after committing immoral acts in the night he was impersonating a monk by covering himself with a yellow robe. He remarked that this man must be an imitation monk. On hearing this remark the thief was very angry and vowed to take revenge on this rich man one day. Then he set fire to Sumangala's rich farmland and after that he cut the veins of the rich man's cattle out of spite. But the rich man Sumangala was very tolerant and patient. He merely contemplated that these were the laws of *kamma* that nobody could prevent or alter and anyway he had not suffered too seriously by this

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part I)

incident. The thief did not feel he had exacted sufficient revenge since the rich man was tolerant and had not expressed lamentation. He came to know that Sumangala's dearest dana was the big monastery donated to Buddha Kassapa and one day while Buddha Kassapa and the *Bhikkhus* were on almsround he set fire to the big monastery and burnt the building to ashes.

As a result of this great immoral act the thief suffered in hell for a long time. After suffering in hell he became a big serpent and the remnants of his *akusala* deeds followed him and the serpent was being burned from head to tail. This suffering had been going on for a long time and Lord Buddha said that these were the resultant bad *kammic* effects of his burning the big monastery of Kassapa Buddha. Hence committing of *akusala* deeds such as physical, oral or mental acts should be avoided. If such immoral acts cannot be avoided one is sure to land in the four *apaya* worlds (animal world, ghost world, demon world and hell).

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If a person had committed such *akusala* deeds the only way to rescue oneself is to strive to attain *magga* and *phala nana* (the Path and Fruition) which will automatically prevent the *akusala* resultant effects from occurring to oneself by practising *Vipassana Bhavana* or insight meditation.

May I conclude this *Dhamma* talk by wishing our meditators here to be able to strive for the attainment of *Nibbana*, the end of all suffering, in the shortest and easiest way.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

### DHAMMA XIX

#### "The Four Paths of Preference" (Part II)

In our talk of Part I, we had explained that sentient beings committing *akusala* deeds (unwholesome activities) could land in the four *Apaya* worlds, the lower worlds of animal-world, ghost-world, demon-world and hell.

Today I would like to elucidate the Second Path of preference to sentient beings who perform *kusala* deeds (wholesome activities) such as *dana* and *sila* which lead to existence of human beings or heavenly beings.

All worldings are travelling towards the Four Paths of Preferences. They are:

- (1) The Path leading to the *Apaya* world,
- (2) The Path leading to the human world and the Deva-world,
- (3) The Path leading to the Brahma-world and

## Dhamma Discourses

### (4) The Path leading to realisation of *Nibbana*.

Worldly beings are travelling in these Four Paths according to their own preferences. Those who indulge in unwholesome activities can be said to be travelling the path that leads to the four *apaya*-worlds. Those who immerse themselves in wholesome activities can be said to be travelling the path that leads to the human world or celestial world. Those who have achieved the human existences can be regarded as motorcars which have come to a cross-road traffic point controlled by electric lights. He can turn to the east, to the west or he can turn and drive to the south or to the north; it is his own choice.

After making his own choice he can drive his car towards the chosen direction. If he has chosen the eastern direction he has to wait for the green light, release the clutch and turn his steering towards the east and drive his car. If he has chosen the western direction, the same procedure has to be followed and he drives towards the western direction on the show

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

of the green light. According to the above example of driving a car along the Path of one's own preference, worldly beings who indulge in unwholesome activities choose to drive towards the direction of the four *Apaya* worlds. There are those who immerse themselves in wholesome activities and choose to drive towards the direction of human or celestial worlds. So also there are those who practise *samatha bhavana* and choose to drive towards the *Brahma-loka* (more noble heavenly world). Those who practise *Vipassana bhavana* choose to drive towards the Path of *Nibbana* (the end of suffering). The latter three Paths are the Paths of good, better and best choices only to be achieved by those who immerse themselves in good and meritorious wholesome activities called *kusala* deeds. *Kusala* is *ANAVAJJA SUKHA VIPAKA LAKKHANA* in Burmese. It is innocent and give good resultant effect (in English).

For example, when one decides to give *dana* (almsgiving), one has to reject attachment to one's own property. This is in a way rejecting greed. One



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has to kindle *metta* (loving kindness) towards the recipient.

After the rejection of attachment on one's own property one is free from one's *akusala* deed of greed in property. By radiating loving kindness on the recipient one is free from anger since loving kindness has replaced the anger. When one believes that *dana* will result in meritorious effects one is free from *moha* (delusion), one of the three unwholesome roots.

When one is free from *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* (greed, anger and delusions), one becomes innocent and resultant advantages are also accrued.

The general public has high esteem for and adores the donor. The noble persons and learned elders are happy to visit the donor's house and by such a visit one can benefit because such noble persons and learned elders usually give lectures on *dhamma* and words of advice.

The donor is courageous and harmonious in social gatherings and the public has a high esteem for the

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

donor's good deeds. In addition to these advantages in this present life the donor can be sure to land in the world of human or celestial beings in the next existences. Therefore giving *dana* is defined as a wholesome activity.

*Sila* is also regarded as a good deed. Persons observing *sila* (morality precepts) will refrain from killing.

If one commits killing with the intention of eating the flesh it is a greed-connected *akusala* deed. If killing is committed with mischievous intention, it is an anger-connected *akusala* deed, when one refrains from killing, the *akusala* deeds of greed and anger are extinguished. When one realises that committing *akusala* deeds will result in bad effects one will eliminate *moha* (delusions).

Therefore a person by observing *sila* can be free from *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* (greed, anger and delusions). Not only is he free from these unwholesome *kammical* volitions and the

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consciousness and mental concomitants associated therewith, he can gain advantageous merits such as good memory and health and rich conditions during the present existence. A person who is observing morality (*sīla*) earns a good reputation among the populace. He is also respected by society and he has the courage and boldness to face any kind of audience under any circumstances.

The other advantage to observers of morality (*sīla*) is gaining peaceful and clear conscious mind states at the time of their deaths. Such persons will also land in good and better existences in the cycle of *samsaric* rebirths.

That is why Lord Buddha defined morality (*sīla*) as an innocent, merit-earning and noble *kusala* deed, with resultant good effects in future *samsaric* existences. In the *Devaduta sutta* Lord Buddha elucidated: "Oh *Bhikkhus*! In my vision I can clearly see with my Divine Eye the fate of all sentient beings as a person with good eyes can see the activities of inhabitants of the two adjacent houses.

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

I can clearly see those who committed physical immoral acts, oral immoral speeches and mental immoral thinking, or those who harmed *Ariya-puggala*. When they die they land themselves in the lower worlds of *Apaya*. Those who abstained from such *Akusala* deeds as killing, stealing and observed morality (*sila*), giving *dana*, etc. and gave due respects to the *Ariya-puggala* and had right-view and *puggala* who propagated the right view to others, when they died they landed in better *sugati* (Happy Course of existence)."

Buddha saw the fates of all these good people achieving good existences by using His Divine Eye (*Dibbacakkhu*). Those who engaged in wholesome deeds in the previous existences became rich and wealthy men in the present life. The Kings, emperors and feudal lords or the rich and wealthy men were also persons who had engaged in wholesome deeds in their previous lives.

Those who attained celestial world due to their wholesome deeds landed in *Tavatimsa* and

## Dhamma Discourses

*Catumaharajikadeva* (2 of the 6 classes of heavenly beings of the sensuous sphere). On analysis it is found that these good achievements were resultant effects of previous *kusala* deeds. We want to relate an episode during Buddha's time as an example.

At one time Lord Buddha was staying in the Nigyawdayone monastery in Kapilavatthu province. Ven. Anuruddha, the most renowned arahat who achieved *Dibba-cakkhu*, came to pay respect to Lord Buddha. Since Ven. Anuruddha Maha Thera was a native of Kapilavatthu he had plenty of relatives and pupils. After many of the relatives had gone back Ven. Anuruddha enquired of his uncles why his younger sister "Rohini" was not present. When Ven. Anuruddha came to know that his sister was ashamed of her disease, he sent for her. When Rohini came to see her brother, she was covered with a cloth over her body. When her brother demanded the reason of her absence she replied: "Dear brother, I am afflicted with leprosy. My skin and my face are disfigured and I am ashamed of putting in an appearance with the crowd".

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

Ven. Anuruddha said that such a calamity had befallen her due to akusala deeds of her previous life. "To get relief from such a calamity you should perform alms-giving and other wholesome deeds," advised Ven. Anuruddha.

She replied: "Of course I want to do alms-giving (*dana*) but with what shall I do *dana*?"

Being brother and sister, Ven. Anuruddha knew she had a necklace and he asked, "What happened to your necklace?" She replied that she still had the necklace and it was worth a lot of money. Ven. Anuruddha advised her to sell the necklace and do *kusala* deeds with the money.

She replied, "Who will organize for me? I am helpless to do anything by myself." Ven. Anuruddha requested the help of his uncles and directed her to sell her necklace and build a monastery and a dining hall. He also instructed her to give manual labour in clearing the site and cleaning of the site by sweeping, etc. When the upper storey was completed

## Dhamma Discourses

she was asked to sweep the floor daily. She was also advised to practise *dana*, *sila*, *bhavana* and *organize* the merit-sharing libation ceremony after the completion of the monastery. Sister Rohini did what her brother told her by giving her necklace to the uncles who sold it and started organising the building of the monastery and the dining hall. She also participated in the cleaning, clearing, sweeping of the sites and building of the monastery by giving manual labour. From that time onwards her leprosy subsided.

When the time comes for the merit-sharing and libation ceremony Ven. Anuruddha invited Lord Buddha and his fellow *bhikkhus* on Rohini's behalf for lunch *dana*. Rohini did not come to the ceremony and Lord Buddha had to send for her. She came and stated leprosy as an excuse for her absence. Then Lord Buddha explained to her that it was her own fault and recounted events of the previous existence.

"Ages ago you were the queen of the King of a state. There was a pretty maid-of-honour whom the king

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

favoured and out of sheer jealousy you managed to spread harmful and itchy powder on the woman's bed and she was disfigured. Due to that *akusala* deed you are suffering leprosy now. Therefore you must perform wholesome deeds now to get relief."

After that Lord Buddha preached her the libation and merit-sharing discourse for her *dana* of monastery and lunch. He also advised her to practise meditation there and then.

After the completion of the libation ceremony, Rohini practised as she was told by Lord Buddha. She cleaned and swept the monastery, she filled the pots with drinking water for the monks, she observed *sila* and she also practised *vipassana bhavana* meditation, she achieved *sotapatti magga-nana* and shed all her *akusala* resultant effect of her previous existence. Her leprosy was also cured and she led a normal life. At the time of her natural death she landed in the *Deva*-world.



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In becoming a celestial being in *Deva*-world it is called instant birth. They suddenly appeared as full-grown *devas*. If she landed on the breast, she became a daughter. Sometimes the landing might be in a neutral location. In such a case dispute arose and the distance had to be measured and the nearest household claimed possession. If the landing was right in the middle, the ownership went to the dwelling she faced.

Now Rohini landed right in the middle of the field and she faced nowhere and nobody could claim her. She was very pretty and all the male *devas* of the vicinity were clamouring for possession. So the matter was reported to *Sakka* (the King of *Devas*). When the King of *Devas* saw Rohini, he also fell in love with her.

So *Sakka* (the King of *Devas*) opened a Court of Enquiry as to who should claim Rohini as his own. There were 4 *deva* males who could claim Rohini.

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

*Sakka* (the King of *Devas*) put a question to the first *Deva*. When you first saw Rohini what was your reaction? The *Deva* replied, "O Noble *Sakka*, when I saw Rohini I felt as if a big war drum was being beaten very loudly in my chest: Bang! Bang! Bang! I shall be in misery until I possess Rohini." The King commented, "Your plight is understandable." Then he asked the second *Deva* how he felt on seeing Rohini. The second *Deva* replied: "O King *Sakka*, when I saw Rohini my love flowered like a mountain torrent. So let me claim Rohini as my wife." King *Sakka* commented: "You also seem to be in a terrible fix." He asked the third *Deva* what his feelings were when he saw Rohini. The third *Deva* answered: "As soon as I saw Rohini my eyes were locked on her as the eyes of a crab could not be closed. I could not help staring at Rohini all the time."

King *Sakka* commented: "In that case you are also in trouble." Then he asked the fourth *Deva* how he fared on seeing Rohini. The fourth *Deva* replied that when he saw Rohini he felt like a flag on the top of a post. When the wind blew the flag fluttered and his

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love for Rohini was also fluttering like that flag. "Therefore I should be awarded Rohini," he said. King *Sakka* declared: "What you all suffered is nothing compared to my own feeling and suffering. If I am denied Rohini I am certainly going to die on the spot. What shall I do?" The other *Devas* replied, "In that case our miseries are tolerable since King *Sakka* will die. We do not want the death of Sakka, the King of *Devas*. King *Sakka* may take possession of Rohini." So Rohini became the Queen of the *Devas*. Since Rohini was very beautiful, the King loved her dearly. Rohini became very powerful and lived for a long time enjoying the joyful bliss of the celestial beings. These are the resultant effects of *dana* and *sila*.

Therefore according to the words of Lord Buddha, those who observed wholesome deeds of *dana* (almsgiving) and *sila* (moral precepts) could be regarded as travelling towards the good path that led to the existences of human or celestial beings.

May all our meditators here also be able to travel the best path by practising wholesome deeds of *dana*

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part II)

and *sīla* during the interim and finally achieve the noble goal of *Nibbana*, the end of all suffering quickly and easily.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

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### DHAMMA XX

#### **"The Four Paths of Preference" (Part III)**

Today's dhamma talk is Part III of the Four Paths of Preference which we had expounded in our previous *Dhamma* talks.

In those talks we had explained that those who committed *akusala* deeds (unwholesome activities) would travel towards the Path of the four *Apaya* worlds, the lower worlds of animal-world, ghost-world, demon-world and hell and those who indulge in *kusala* deeds (wholesome activities) such as *dana* and *sila* would travel towards existences of human or heavenly beings.

Today I would like to elucidate the Better Path, the third path of preference out of the four.

### The Four Paths of Preference (Part III)

The Better Path means the path leading to the Heavenly Beings of the Brahma-world, regarded as more noble than the *Deva*-world.

The longevity of life is more than in the *Deva*-world. Moreover there is no anxiety for sensual pleasures as in the *Deva*-world. *Dana* and *sila* alone are not enough to travel the path towards the Brahma-world. *Samatha bhavana* (tranquillity meditation) can only lead to the *brahma*-world. *Nivarana*s (hindrances) can be extinguished by the practice of *samatha bhavana*.

A person who has gained the human existence can be described as a traveller who has reached the railway junction. At the junction, the traveller can buy a ticket to go to up-country or he may buy to go to the leftward or rightward direction according to his wish.

A person who has achieved the human world has the option to do unwholesome deeds and travel towards the four *apaya* worlds. He can also practise wholesome deeds of *dana* and *sila* and travel towards

## Dhamma Discourses

the human or heavenly worlds. By practising *samatha bhavana* he can also travel towards the *Brahma*-world.

*Samatha* has the attributes of extinguishing the hindrances. There are five hindrances (*Nivaranas*). Namely:

- (1) *Kamacchanda nivarana* (sensuous desire)
- (2) *Vyapada nivarana* (ill will)
- (3) *Thina-middha nivarana* (sloth and torpor)
- (4) *Uddhacca kukkucca nivarana* (restless and remorse)
- (5) *Vicikiccha nivarana* (skeptical doubt)

A person practising *samatha bhavana* has cast away sensuous desire; he dwells with a heart free from sensuous desire, from desire he cleanses his heart. But it is not total annihilation. It is a temporary suspension called "overcoming through repression". He may cast away the sensuous desire during his lifetime in the *Brahma*-world. A *Brahma* life-span is an extraordinary long world cycle or *kappa* (long space of time, an aeon.)

### The Four Paths of Preference (Part III)

Sensuous desire can also be suppressed by practising *asubha* (loathsome) *bhavana* (meditation on subjects of impurity). A person practising tranquillity meditation can also suspend *vyapada* (ill will) though it is not total annihilation. Total annihilation of ill will can only be done by *anagami magga* and *phala nana*. A person engaged in *metta-bhavana* can also reject anger. Anger cannot arise since he is immersed in loving-kindness. Even if he visualizes a person to be angry with, he can contemplate the 32 parts of the person's body such as head hair, body hair, etc. and prevent anger towards that person. There is also an alternative method. In the round of rebirths of this *samsara*, a single lifetime constitutes only a tiny and fleeting fraction of *samsara*. At one time or other existences that person may be a relative, a brother or a sister or a mother or son. On this assumption of a previous relationship the anger towards that person can subside. In such a way he can cast away ill will; he dwells with a heart free from ill-will cherishing love and compassion towards all living beings, he cleanses his heart from ill will.



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In this way by practising *samatha bhavana* a person can reject *thina-middha* (sloth and torpor). He can also reject *uddhaccakukkucca* (restlessness and remorse). He has cast away restlessness and scruples; dwelling with mind undisturbed, with heart full of peace, he cleanses his mind from restlessness and scruples. He can also reject *vicikiccha nivarana* (skeptical doubt); dwelling free from doubt, full of confidence in the good, he cleanses his heart from doubt.

In *samatha bhavana* there are 40 subjects prescribed for meditation. One of them is *pathavi Kasina*, a round piece of earth called *parikammanimitta*. One has to concentrate one's full and undivided attention on this round piece of earth until at last one perceives, even with the eyes closed, a mental reflex, the acquired Image called *uggaha-nimitta*. This kind of *samatha bhavana* is called *parikamma bhavana*. Now, while continuing to direct one's attention to this image there may arise the spotless and immovable counter concentration like clean and shining full moon called *patibhaga-nimitta*.

### The Four Paths of Preference (Part III)

By repeated contemplation of *patibhaga-nimitta*, *upacara-samadhi* (neighbourhood-concentration) is achieved.

While still persevering in the concentration on the *Pathavi Kasina*, one finally reaches a state of mind where all sense-activity is suspended, where there is no more seeing and hearing, no more perception of bodily impression and feelings called *appana Samadhi* or the state of mental absorption which will eventually lead to *jhanic* achievement.

The attainment of such *jhanic* states will finally lead to the *Brahma*-world. There were many examples of such achievement.

During Lord Buddha's time, one heavenly being from *Brahma*-world known as Rohitassa came to pay respect to Lord Buddha and put the following question:

"Lord Buddha! Could a person go on foot to the end of the universe where there is no birth, no death, no old age and no decay?"

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Lord Buddha replied, "Rohitassa Brahma! It is impossible to reach the end of the universe by travelling on foot," since the Omniscient Buddha knew by his intuitive insight wisdom.

Rohitassa Brahma said to Lord Buddha: "Lord Buddha, your answer is surprisingly correct. I raised this question after knowing by my own experience that the end of the universe cannot be reached by travelling on foot. Let me relate my own experience.

Ages ago, I was the son of a hunter by the name of Rohitassa. I became a recluse after forsaking the family life. As a recluse I practised the noble life of a hermit in the heart of the forest. After attaining *jhanic* achievements I was endowed with supernatural powers and I could travel instantly by such powers. If I might describe my speed, I could travel around the universe during the short time an expert archer's swift arrow passed through a palm tree shadow. I could also take big strides. My steps could be so vast that my one step could reach from the east ocean bank to the west ocean bank. I had a

### The Four Paths of Preference (Part III)

very strong desire to travel to the end of the universe and endowed with the supernatural powers of swiftness I prepared my journey to the end of the world.

Leaving aside the time for rest and toilets I travelled for a full one hundred years with all the powers and swiftness at my command but after one hundred years without reaching the end of *Okasa loka*, I died at the edge of the universe.

Though not realising my aim, since I was endowed with *jhanic* achievements, I was born into the Brahma-world. Through my past experience I came to know that the end of the universe could not be reached by travelling on foot," related Rohitassa.

This Rohitassa Brahma was the son of a hunter who became a hermit and practised as a recluse. By dint of his *samatha bhavana* meditation he was endowed with *abhinna* (Magical powers) such as floating through the air and passing through the earth without being obstructed. When such a person died

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he would land in the Brahma-world. Therefore by practising *samatha bhavana* one can gain the third Path of preference which we have named the better Path.

The Brahma-world in the widest sense is a name for the fine-material (*rupa-loka*) and immaterial world (*arupa-loka*). The *Brahmas* have their own shining reflection of body and they don't need other artificial lights.

The *Brahmas* do not need food like human beings or *deva* beings. *Piti* (joy) is gained by absorption *jhana* and this *piti* alone is their way of a comfortable life.

The eyes of *Brahmas* are for visions of Buddha alone but for no other eye consciousness such as movies or other entertainment.

The ears of Brahma's are entirely for hearing Buddha's words or *Dhamma* and not for hearing consciousness of songs or other entertainment. The tongues and noses of *Brahmas* have no consciousness

### The Four Paths of Preference (Part III)

of taste or odour. Therefore *Brahmas* do not need good smell nor good edibles nor good body-impressions. *Brahmas* do not enjoy sensual pleasure but enjoy *jhanic* bliss of the four meditative Absorptions of the Fine-material Sphere attained through Full Ecstatic Concentration.

To achieve such kind of innocent carefree and noble life, one has to practise *samatha bhavana*, which is the only way to land in the *Brahma* world. Lord Buddha had elucidated that a person who practises *samatha bhavana* alone can achieve the *Brahma-loka*.

Therefore our meditators here are engaged in the best and highest meditation of *vipassana bhavana* but they should know how *samatha bhavana* could lead to the attainment of the noble *Brahma*-world.

Let me conclude this *Dhamma* talk by wishing that our meditators will be able to choose the Path of Preference and finally realise *Nibbana*, the end of all suffering, in the immediate future.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

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**DHAMMA XXI**

**"The Four Paths of Preference"  
(Part IV)**

The subject of today's *Dhamma* Talk is about the Fourth Path of Preference which is regarded as the Best Path. It is the realisation of *Nibbana* by contemplating *Satipathana vipassana bhavana* or insight meditation. *Nibbana* is the most cherished and the ultimate goal of all Buddhists. All Buddhists aspire for *Nibbana* and so in any kind of religious activity, the final wish is to attain *Nibbana* in the shortest possible time. When Buddhists pay respect to the Triple Gems (Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*) it is *Nibbana* that they wish for. When they pay respect to parents or to the elders or when they observe the Precepts, their final wish is to attain *Nibbana* by doing so. Why do all Buddhists aspire for *Nibbana*? Because it was, it is and it will always be the best, the noblest and the perfect, passionless happiness.

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part IV)

But some may have doubts when told that there is nothing, no sensual pleasures nor sensations in *Nibbana*. Those who are addicted to betel chewing do not like the place where there are no betel leaves. Those who are addicted to smoking do not like places where smoking is prohibited. Those who are accustomed to watching entertainment do not like places where there is no entertainment. The same applies to any person who enjoys sensual pleasures, the pleasures that attribute to contact with the five internal bases: eye and the visible object, ear and the audible object, nose and the odour, tongue and the taste, body and the tactile object, the consciousness and the mind-object. These are called *vedayika-sukha*, the pleasure that is attributed to contact with sense organs.

Another kind of pleasure is *santi-sukha*, it is not connected with sense organs. It is a supreme consciousness of peace and tranquillity, a perfect passionless happiness. In the case of any sensual pleasure, effort has to be made to acquire the material. To enjoy good sights a person has to search



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for films or videotapes. Expenses have to be incurred to look at the films or tapes. To enable him to pay for the expenses, a person has to work. Even if he can afford the expenses, there is the physical trouble of having to watch with the eyes and the eyes can get tired or affected to the detriment of the eyesight.

The same applies to good taste. A person has to accumulate edibles, prepare and cook a good meal to have a good feed. Good edibles are hard to get since other persons may also try to collect the same for themselves and there can be a rush, a competition for the same material and the rivalry may involve great risks. After acquiring the good food there is the process of eating, chewing, swallowing, etc. etc. If the food happens to be disagreeable with a person there can be food poisoning. There are risks and physical, financial and mental efforts are needed to have a good feed. Even after a successful tasty meal, there is that trouble of excretion and urination. Therefore sensual pleasures of good visual objects, good audible objects, good odour, good taste, good

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part IV)

tactile objects, etc. are not just plain happiness. It is a mixed event of *dukkha* and *sukha* or suffering and pleasure.

In contrast, "*Santi-sukha*" is a kind of happiness untainted by sensual pleasure. It may be defined as deliverance from the trammels of the body. A fine feeling of peace and rest, a perfect happiness, an extinction of all suffering. It is very hard to give a good similar example of it but to have an idea of it, the following can be quoted. Let us say someone is in jail for his crimes. Naturally he is very sad, physically maltreated and the condition of his living there is also very miserable. The quarter allotted for him is very cramped, filled with pests and mosquitoes, full of foul smell and also the suffering of mental and physical agonies during his stay as a convict. At this very moment, if he is suddenly released from his imprisonment and free from all miseries that are associated with his jail life, he may not be endowed with the material luxuries of a wealthy person in the normal sense but the very fact

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that he has been set free gives him immense happiness, freedom from sufferings.

A second example is this. A person is suffering from leprosy. He is disfigured, his sores are wet all over and nobody wants to be associated with him socially. He is an outcast. He suffers from pains and aches. As a result of the disease he is helpless since he is not able physically and financially. He is almost starving. Such a person would be at the lowest moral and very unhappy. Then, he meets a kind and able physician who gives him the latest medicine and cures him of his miserable disease. Imagine how happy he will be. It can be said that it is the happiest moment of his life. But he does not have any material abundance or any riches. But his total cure of the disease is so overwhelming that his happiness is no less than the happiness derived from sensual pleasures. So also the bliss of *Nibbana* is not associated with material acquirement not connected with sensual pleasure. As stated in the beginning of this talk it is a supreme consciousness of peace and tranquillity, a perfect passionless happiness, the final release from all kinds of sufferings.

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part IV)

Some try to describe *Nibbana* as a magnificent palace and try to paint a very beautiful capital city of Utopia. Some visualize *Nibbana* as a shining glass palace and some imagine *Nibbana* as a place where there is a cool and peaceful atmosphere surpassing all kinds of artificial creations of luxurious human abodes. Such kinds of imagination are illusions. Let us try and determine the definition of *Nibbana* by questions and answers. What is *Nibbana*? Is it a grand palace or is it a grand and pompous capital city? Is it a shining glass house? Is it a cool and peaceful atmosphere?

The answer is "No" to all these questions. Some definitions are relevant by the following Pali sentences:

- 1) *Nibbati Vattam Dukkham Etthati Nibbanam* i.e. *Nibbana* is peace established with the annihilation of suffering. The state of peaceful coolness or "*santi*" in Pali is a characteristic of *Nibbana*. When meditators while contemplating physical and mental phenomena, suddenly achieve

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the cessation of all phenomena and when such cessation occurs the amber of suffering is extinguished.

- 2) *Nibbati Vatta Dukkham Etasamin Adhigatetiva Nibbanam*, that is, when the peaceful coolness is achieved, the round of suffering in the realm of defilement (*kilesa vatta*) of action (*kamma vatta*), and result of action (*vipaka vatta*) are extinguished or annihilated. There are now 3 complete severance of the world of existence, which signify annihilation in sight of *Nibbana*.
- 3) *Nibbayate Nibbanam*, that is in *Nibbana*, the round of suffering comes to peaceful end. Hence cessation of suffering is *Nibbana*.

What are extinguished?

- a) *Kilesa vatta* - that is *avijja* (not knowing the 4 Noble truths), *tanha* (craving) and *upadana* (clinging) are all extinguished. These three defilements contribute to the endless round of suffering.

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part IV)

- b) *Kamma vatta* is the realm of action that includes both meritorious and demeritorious deeds that contribute to the emergence of the endless round of rebirths.
- c) *Vipaka vatta* is the realm of the result of action usually called *kamma*-result, relates to the consequences of action good or bad. Every action produces a resultant of mind, matter, feeling, etc. and causes rebirth in superior or inferior existences as a result of good or bad actions. On realising *Nibbana* these three "*vattas*" are extinguished.

Meditators may not understand clearly as the words are couched in scriptural language. In plain language what is realisation of *Nibbana*, the meditators may ask. Such a question was asked before. At one time the King Milinda asked Ven. Nagasena the same question. The learned Ven. Nagesena answered: "O! Noble King, a meditator contemplating his mental and physical phenomena all the time without any skipping, suddenly reached into a stage where all mental and

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physical phenomena disappeared. O! Noble King, by rightful practice, when a meditator reached a stage of cessation of all mental and physical phenomena, such stage is called realization of *Nibbana*."

In other words, a meditator since the time of awakening from sleep is contemplating his mental and physical phenomena of rising, falling, sitting, touching, walking, seeing, hearing, smelling, eating, thinking and knowing, etc. without missing a moment suddenly finds nothing to note; not only missing that noting objects but also there is no noting mind itself, nothingness. Such an experience (cessation of phenomena) is called realisation of *Nibbana*.

What do meditators know at the moment of realisation of *Nibbana*? It is to be known by characteristic, function and manifestation.

- a) **Characteristics:** The meditator knows the realisation of *Nibbana* by the characteristic of peacefulness, by the characteristic of cessation of mental and physical phenomena. It

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part IV)

is not sleep; it is not death; unconsciousness. Some meditators may think that some of the symptoms like violent vibration of the body and legs, losing consciousness and falling down, etc. are realisations of *Nibbana*. It is not so.

- b) Function: Impulsion (*Javana*) has a very solemn and calm characteristic. There should be no ungracious composure of a body posture. If cessation of phenomena occurs while sitting he body position will be very erect and composed and if it occurs while standing, it must stay without bending, without swaying or falling down but stay in a proper, graceful and still composure.
- c) Manifestation: At the time of realisation of *Nibbana*, the meditators will not be conscious of the form, vision or the shadow of the body, etc. Becoming and disappearing of mind and matter cease altogether and it becomes peaceful. All motions, forms and visions and



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shadows vanish. These are the symptoms of the realisation of *Nibbana*.

How do meditators strive to achieve *Nibbana*? Buddha said, "Oh! Bhikkhus! To achieve *Nibbana* *Bhikkhus* have to contemplate *Satipatthana vipassana bhavana* because it is the only way to the realisation of *Nibbana*. Therefore our meditators here must note left step, right step, rising, falling, seeing, hearing, etc. all the time until cessation of all mental and physical phenomena is achieved because this is the only way to achieve *magga nana*, *phala nana* and *Nibbana*.

During the time of Buddha, "Soreya", a rich man's son on his way to the river for a bath, saw a very handsome monk namely "Ven. Kaccayana". At that very moment of seeing that very handsome monk, he failed to note the phenomenon in his mind and he wished for the monk to become his wife. But the monk was an Arahant (a purified and noble monk) and "Soreya" was transformed into a woman due to his insulting wish towards an Arahant. On realising his sin,

## The Four Paths of Preference (Part IV)

he apologized and begged for forgiveness by paying respect to the arahat and finally he regained his manhood. Then he became repentant due to this incident and decided to ordain as a monk and practised *vipassana bhavana* meditation.

He contemplated his foot movements in walking meditation, noting rising and falling of the abdomen in the sitting meditation and all the mental and physical phenomena of seeing, hearing, thinking, eating, touching until he achieved *magga* and *phala nana*. In other words he reached the state of realisation of Nibbana. So, contemplating the *satipatthana Vipassana bhavana* on insight meditation is tantamount to selecting the Best Path, *Nibbana*.

May all our meditators achieve the final release from all kinds of sufferings, extinction of all defilements and enjoy a perfect passionless happiness, the realisation of *Nibbana*.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

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### DHAMMA XXII

#### "Sila Visuddhi" (Purification of Conduct)

Today's *Dhamma* Talk is about *Sila Visuddhi*. Purification of Conduct is the foundation or the first of the seven *Visuddhis*. Without observing *Sila* (Morality), the higher *magga phala nana* is hardly attainable.

*Sila* (morality) here means, for the laity the observation of either the five or the eight precepts and for the *Bhikkhus*, that of the *patimokkhas* (the code of monk's rules). *Sila* (morality) with regard to its solemnity is of three kinds namely:

- (1) the ordinary *Sila*
- (2) the noble *upa Sila* and
- (3) the ultimate *paramattha Sila*

By observing the said *Sila*, one can be reborn in the human world at a higher position of influence or in the world of noble *devas* or if with *vipassana*

## Sila Visuddhi

meditation can realise *Nibbana*, the extinction of all sufferings.

There are also five benefits available if one observes the precepts steadfastly and permanently. They are:

- (1) to gain great wealth in the present life
- (2) to gain great fame and reputation
- (3) to be able to appear with courage and confidence in any public gathering
- (4) to be able to face death with calmness and serenity
- (5) to be reborn in a noble *deva* world or at least in the human world at a higher position.

Moreover, *sila* (morality) is an ageless virtue and fragrant at all times. Ornaments and dresses that one wears seem pretty and elegant only at the appropriate time and place whereas *sila* (morality) shines in all ages, young or old. The Pali sentence "*Silam yogissa lankaro*" means "*Sila* (morality) is the ornament of the meditator, the very one practising *vipassana* meditation."

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In the time of Lord Buddha, a certain youth by the name of Subha, once asked Him as to why some people are weak and sick, some are strong and healthy. "Oh young Subha, Lord Buddha replied, some people who fail to observe *sīla* and get into the habit of doing unwholesome acts and deeds become sick and weak and those who observe *sīla* steadfastly and continuously appear strong and healthy." Thus it is evident that *sīla* (morality) becomes a support in whatever existence you are and happens to be an ornament of the meditator. Fragrance, sweetness of smell travels in the direction of the wind only whereas *sīla* (morality) radiates in all directions at all times.

Once, Lord Buddha spoke on the value of a virtuous life with reference to *samanera Samkicca*. In the time of Lord Buddha, thirty *Bhikkhus*, after taking a subject of meditation from Him, left for a large village. Lord Buddha, foreseeing danger in their practice of meditation and that danger would be overcome by *samanera Samkicca* who was staying with Thera Sariputta, advised them to go and pay

## Sila Visuddhi

homage to their brother Sariputta before going to the village. Thera Sariputta, foreseeing the Buddha's wish, sent *samanera* Samkicca to accompany them as a *kappiya*, an attendant, when they paid homage to him before their departure.

Here you should know something about *samanera* Samkicca. He was only seven years of age and had already attained arahatship. His mother met a certain death when she had conceived the child, Samkicca-to-be, about to be born. During the cremation of the corpse, the whole body except the womb was burnt to ashes. At night, a watchman who had burnt the corpse pierced the unburnt womb with a bamboo staff and hit a little corner of an eye. The next morning the child was seen curiously lying on the fire that had burnt the corpse. He was then taken to his relatives who gradually brought him up. A fortune-teller, when asked about the child's future, predicted that if he should be adopted, his seven generations would be poor and that if he ordained in the Order as a novice, he would become very famous with a great retinue in the Order. As

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the child grew up, he was told about his recovery-from-death and became greatly moved. So he thought he would not lead his life in vain and would go into the Order so that he could do meritorious deeds to make him free from the cycles of rebirth. His relatives agreed when asked for permission and he was sent to Thera Sariputta for ordination as a novice. While holding a shaving of hair from his head, he meditated *vipassana* and at the end of the shaving, he attained arahatship at the age of only seven years.

Now let me continue with my *Dhamma* talk. With this young novice Samkicca, the thirty *Bhikkhus* started *vipassana* insight meditation in the forest near the village. While thus meditating, five hundred robbers hiding in the thick forest wanted to make an offering of the blood of a man's throat to the guardian spirits of the forest with the delusion that their stealing and robbing could be done successfully. So the robbers came up to the village monastery and demanded that one of the *Bhikkhus* be given as a

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sacrifice. It was the very danger that Lord Buddha had foreseen.

When the meditating *Bhikkhus* came to know of the demand, the eldest of them stood up and proudly said, "Oh young brothers, this is my responsibility to go with the robbers. All the rest of you should continue practising *vipassana* insight meditation peacefully and I'll go with the robbers." A second elder stood up and requested, "No elder brother, you should not do it. The younger ones will be left without a nayaka-chieftain, so please do not go with the robbers." Again a third elder stood up and requested in the same manner. From the eldest to the youngest *bhikkhu*, each voluntarily requested to go with the robbers. At last, *samanera* Samkicca interfered, "Oh Reverend *Bhikkhus*, this is my responsibility. My teacher, Thera Sariputta, foreseeing the danger in advance, had purposely sent me to accompany you all." So saying, he went along with the robbers. The *Bhikkhu* chief requested the robbers not to show the novice the sword as he was so young and to treat him properly so that he would



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not be frightened. The robbers took the *samanera* to the forest and placed him under a shady tree and sharpened their swords. While they were making preparations for their sacrifice, the young *samanera* attained the supreme ecstasy under the shady tree. When everything was ready for the occasion, the leader of the robbers went to *samanera* Samkicca who was then seated with his mind fixed on a kind of *samapatti* concentration. The leader lifted his sword and swung and struck hard at the neck of the young *samanera*. "Dunn" came the sound of striking as if the blade of the sword had struck a stone. The blade curled up and again he tried with the same result. The young *samanera* was invulnerable and could not be attacked. Then the leader of the robbers shook the novice and said, "Oh young novice, I cut you with this sword. Are you not afraid to die? You seem not to be afraid of going to be killed. Your face looks very serene, peaceful and tranquil and your behaviour is very calm. Are you not frightened?" *samanera* Samkicca replied, "Oh leader of robbers, an arahat like me is not afraid of going to die; this *khandha* or this body is a heavy burden to me. To feed the body

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everyday is nothing but suffering. The day to put down the burden of this *khandha* or this body is the happiest day for us. Arahats like us have no fear or unhappiness."

Listening to what the young novice said and holding his sword up, the leaders of the robbers uttered, "Oh, he is an arahat. This lifeless sword knows the good qualities of an arahat and yet I, having the mind, know nothing. I have been wrong." Thus realising his misdeed, he dropped his sword and knelt at the feet of *samanera* Samkicca and asked for his pardon. "Oh *samanera*, let me enter the Order and let me take the suitable precepts beginning right from here. I'll never steal nor rob again."

All the five hundred robbers were terror-stricken, repented for their wrong deeds and asked permission to become *samaneras*. The young *samanera* Samkicca complied with their request and gave them ten precepts.

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*Samanera* Samkicca, accompanied by his new five hundred disciples in yellow robes, returned to the thirty *Bhikkhus* who were anxiously waiting to know what had happened to him. They felt very relieved on hearing the happy news and said, "Oh Samkicca, you should go and see your teacher. Thera Sariputta will be very glad if he sees you and your disciples."

Then *samanera* Samkicca and his disciple continued on their way to pay respect to his teacher. Thera Sariputta, after receiving them, advised them to pay homage to Lord Buddha. On seeing them, "Oh *samanera* Samkicca, how wonderful it is that you have so many disciples," the Exalted One exclaimed. Then Samkicca explained that it was true that all the robbers had taken precepts from him and had become *samaneras* (novices) in the Order. "Ah *samaneras*, it is fine. You old robbers, you lived so long for many years without virtue and concentration. It was all in vain. Now you yourselves are full of virtue and so also is your teacher. A short but virtuous life is better than a long immoral life," Lord Buddha remarked.

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Then Lord Buddha spoke in verse as follows:-

**"Better than a hundred years in the life of an immoral person who has no control over his senses, is a day in the life of a virtuous person who cultivates Tranquillity and Insight Development Practice."**

So meditators, let me conclude here for today by expressing my sincerest blessing. May you all make effort to be full of purity and virtue which is the very basis of the seven purities. May you attain *magga phala nana* in the serial order of the stages of seven purities and may you all realise *Nibbana*, the extinction of all suffering very soon.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

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DHAMMA XXIII

"Citta Visuddhi,"  
Purity of Mind

The *Dhamma* to be delivered is *Citta Visuddhi*, the second of the seven *Visuddhis*. Having purified morality, the meditator should make an effort to purify the mind. The purification of the mind is termed "*Citta Visuddhi*" in Pali. There are many ways of purifying the mind. First of all, I want to tell you about *Vipassana-kammatthana* which can purify our minds.

*Vipassana-kammatthana* is again subdivided into:

- (a) *samatha-yanika*, one who takes up the basic exercise of *samatha-kammatthana* for realizing *Nibbana*. A person who has already practised, at first, the *upacara samadhi* and the *appana-samadhi* continue with

## Citta Visuddhi

*Vipassana*-insight-contemplation based on his *samatha* calm.

- (b) *Suddha-Vipassana-yanika*, one who directly carries out the practice of *Vipassana* without the basic exercise of *samatha-kammatthana* for realising Nibbana. Now, the way you are practising is called *Suddha-vipassana-yanika*.

In *Vipassana-bhavana*, however, all physical and mental phenomena that occur at the six sense-doors have to be observed. From the very beginning, the meditator must note every object whenever it arises with *Khanika Samadhi* (momentary concentration of insight). At the beginning of contemplation, the meditator's mind wanders about. When the concentration is weak it is very difficult to control the mind. As soon as it wanders to other objects the mental state is immediately noticed and contemplated on and then it ceases to wander any longer. When the wandering mental state is contemplated on repeatedly in this manner for many times there

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will hardly be any wandering. Contemplating the wandering mind is called *cittanupassana*. Observing the mind is also *Dhamma*.

At this level of contemplation it is found that the mind which is contemplating on its object always comes together closely and fixedly. This fixedness of the mind on its object is "*Vipassana-khanika-samadhi*" (momentary concentration of insight). It is termed "*Citta Visuddhi*". Therefore, the late Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, our benefactor, said: "Only the observing mind which is not wandering to other objects and concentrating only on the object to be observed is termed *citta visuddhi*, purity of mind. Thus you are to exert to purify your mind.

Generally people try to purify their bodies. In the morning, after rising from bed, people wash their faces, brush their teeth and go to the latrine. In doing so they are cleansing or purifying their bodies. At midday they take a bath, change their clothes, comb their hair and use make-up. Doing

## Citta Visuddhi

these things are also purifying their bodies. In the evening they do the same again. In the same way they purify their bodies three times a day every day. Only a few people purify their minds. Because of one's impurity of body, one will not reach any one of the four lower planes of existence namely, the animal-world, ghost-world, demon-world and hell. If one's mind is not pure, one will reach any one of the four lower planes of the existence. Now, we human beings can see buffaloes, sows, oxen, dogs, ducks, pigs and hens, etc. with our own eyes. These animals are leading low, base and depraved lives, not because of the impurity of their bodies but their minds. In consequence of their past evil thoughts, words and actions these animals fell into the low and miserable worlds.

In order to purify the mind, Buddha said thus: "*Ekayano ayam bhikkhave maggo sattanam visuddhiya*" in the introduction of *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*. The meaning is this: "*Bhikkhus*, this is the one and only way for the



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purification (of the minds) of beings. Therefore, if you want your minds to be pure, you should develop that way of steadfast mindfulness, *Satipatthana*."

That (only way) is the practice of the four methods of steadfast mindfulness, *Satipatthana*.

What are the four *Satipatthana*?

- (1) Mindfulness regarding body,
- (2) Mindfulness regarding feelings
- (3) Mindfulness regarding thoughts
- (4) Mindfulness regarding the *Dhamma*.

If all beings apply themselves most assiduously and continuously in strict accordance with the instruction contained in the *Patipatti Sasana*, all of them will surely gain purity of mind. Practising *Satipatthana*, steadfast mindfulness, Buddhas too, gain purity of mind. Similarly Pacceka Buddhas (semi-Buddhas), arahats and Noble disciples too attain purity of mind. That is why you are to exert and develop *Satipatthana* if you want to purify mind. There are many defilements or impurities that make the mind impure.

## Citta Visuddhi

*Lobha* (greed) which wants more and more is defilement. *Dosa* (anger) and *Mana* (conceit) are also defilements. If you want to be free from defilements, you are to practise and develop *Satipatthana*, steadfast mindfulness. Therefore, our late Mahasi Sayadaw also said, "In order to be free from defilements, you must develop steadfast mindfulness, that is *satipatthana*." For purifying your minds, practising and developing *Satipatthana* is the very best way.

The mind is also like a wild elephant. The wild elephant is delighted only in the forest; it is not happy in the towns where there are buildings. However, if the wild elephants are set free, they will not be useful and will be harmful to men. Therefore, the wild elephants are not usually kept as they are but are lured by tamed and trained elephants, put into a stockade and left without food and water. After some time, they are taken out of it, tied to a post, given a little food and water and tamed by the elephant trainers. After such taming, they become well-trained elephants

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and are very useful. Just so, the mind (wild elephant) must be lured by this *saddha-chanda*, faith and confidence and desire. Then it must be put into the stockade. The mind is cut away from worldly objects such as seeing films, pictures, listening to songs, music and plays, etc. this cutting away is called not giving food and water to the mind (wild elephant). This mind is tied to a post of meditation object and will be tamed. The Buddha spoke in verse as follows:-

"The mind wanders far and moves about alone; thoughts appear and disappear one after another; it is non-material. Those who control their minds will be free from evil passions."

It is essential to subdue the mind. If it is not controlled, it can reach the place where it wants to.

The above verse was uttered by the Buddha with reference to the nephew of Thera Samgharakkhita. The name of the nephew was

## Citta Visuddhi

Samgharakkhita Bhagineyya. He was also a monk. Being assigned by the uncle monk, the nephew stayed in a village monastery as the head of the monastery. The villagers offered the nephew monk some cloths to make robes as they were pious. He intended to offer the cloths to his uncle for making robes. Intending to go to his uncle just after lent (October), he folded the cloths and kept them. After lent, he went to his uncle, carrying the cloths and paid homage to him. As the uncle was sitting, the nephew fanned the Thera and said, "Oh Venerable uncle, may I offer you the cloths as robes Reverend Sir? Would you be kind enough to accept the cloths?" But the uncle declined to accept cloths, saying that he had enough and he, the nephew, should use them. Then the nephew said, "Oh no! Reverend Sir, I have reserved them to offer to you." Although he repeated his request, the Thera would not accept it. The young *bhikkhu* felt disheartened and thought that since his uncle did not love him, he was unwilling to share the requisites with him. It

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would be better for him to leave the Order and live the life of a layman.

From that point, his mind wandered and a train of thoughts followed. He thought that after leaving the Order, as a layman who had just left monkhood, he should be rich and if he was poor he would be blamed. His thought went on that he would sell the cloths and buy a she-goat for his livelihood. That she-goat would breed a lot of goats and make enough money to enable him to marry. After tending his goats he would return home to cook food for himself. That would be very tedious. He thought that he would look for a helpmate and find a spouse. He would marry her. His wife would give birth to a son. His son would resemble the grand uncle. He would take a box of food with a conical cover and show his uncle his son. Having bought a small cart and a pair of blue bulls, he would say to his wife, "Oh, my dear, would you like to go to my uncle monk with me and take rice and curry for him?" He would take his wife and child in a small cart to visit his uncle at

## Citta Visuddhi

the monastery. He would yoke the blue bulls to the cart and put the box of food in the cart. Getting onto the cart and pulling hard the rein of the bulls yoked to the cart, he would say to his wife, "Oh my dear! Could you pass me the child?" She would tell him drive the cart and not to bother about the child. He would insist and grab the child from her. Between them the child would drop onto the cart-track and the wheel would pass over the child. He would get so furious with the wife that he would strike her with the goading-stick.

At that time he was fanning the therā with a palmyra fan and he absent-mindedly struck the head of the therā with the fan. The therā, knowing the thoughts of the young *Bhikkhu*, said, "You are unable to beat your wife; why have you beaten an old *Bhikkhu*?" Young Samgharakkhita was very much surprised and embarrassed at the words of the old *Bhikkhu*, he also became extremely frightened. So he fled. Young *Bhikkhus*

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and novices of the monastery chased him and finally took him to the presence of the Buddha.

When told about the whole episode, the Buddha said that the mind had the ability to think of an object even though it might be far away and that one should strive hard for liberation from the bondage of passion, ill will and ignorance. The Buddha said, "It is not easy to subdue the mind; it is very swift in arising and passing away; it is impossible to dispel it; you are to control your mind to overcome it; if you subdue the mind, you are freed from the bond of passion." Then the young *Bhikkhu* observed *citta* (mind) and practised *Vipassana* meditation. He noted *raga* (lust) if it appeared. He observed anger as soon as it arose. If he was angry, he noted "angry, angry". If he was lazy, he noted "lazy, lazy". Noting like this is *cittanupassana*. Thus noting repeatedly, the young *Bhikkhu* became an *ariya*, Noble one. That is why, after purifying *sila* (virtue) you should exert to purify *citta* (mind).

## Citta Visuddhi

The dirt of mind arises because of mind. For example, rain turns soil into mud. If you are besmeared or besmirched with mud, you are to clean or wash away the dirt with water. Similarly greed and anger appear because of mind. If your mind is besmirched, you are to note it with your mind. Next is a Burmese saying: "If a boat is floating, you should chase it in another boat. If some money is lost, you should use the money left for getting back the lost money. Likewise, you are to note the mind if it is wandering. If you can note so, *citta* (mind) will be pure. Then the mind will not wander and it becomes serene and calm. Therefore, the late Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw said, "Only the observing mind which is not wandering to the other objects and concentrating only on the subject to be observed is termed *citta visuddhi*, purity of mind."

And so meditators, I conclude by expressing the sincerest blessing. May you all observe the object whenever it arises in order to purify your mind and may you realise *Nibbana*, the extinction of all



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suffering soon, in the serial order of stages of seven purities such as Purify of Virtue and Purify of Mind, etc.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Ditthi Visuddhi

### DHAMMA XXIV

#### "Ditthi Visuddhi" (Purity of View)

Today's *Dhamma* Talk that I am going to deliver is about "Purity of View (*ditthi visuddhi*)", the third of the seven *visuddhis*. As one steps on a flight of stairs, the meditator aspirant should purify his morality (*sila*). Securing a firm footing on the ground of morality, he should go on with making effort to purify the mind. By contemplating on the psycho-physical phenomena, the mind no longer wanders and his attention settles on the objects of mindfulness. Thus purity of mind (*citta visuddhi*) is gained through momentary concentration at the instant of noting. When noting becomes comfortable, without the mind wandering anywhere, the insight knowledge that distinguishes between mind and matter arises with every act of noting. If the mind and matter can be distinguished, personality-belief (*sakkaya-ditthi*) is perceptibly removed. This stage is known as purity of view (*ditthi visuddhi*).

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There are sixty-two kinds of wrong views (*ditthis*).  
The most common wrong views are:

- (1) eternity-belief (*sassata ditthi*)
- (2) annihilation-belief (*uccheda ditthi*) and
- (3) personality belief (*sakkaya ditthi*) respectively.

(1) Eternity-belief (*sassata ditthi*) is the belief in the existence of a persisting ego-entity, soul or personality, existing independently of those physical and mental processes that constitute life and the body even after death. Soul never dies but only the body dies. After the dissolution of the present body in this life, soul from the present life goes or escapes to the next life eternally. Therefore they invite the soul of a person who has died recently and share their merits with the soul. In fact, there is no soul and when a person dies, his present mind and matter (*nama* and *rupa*) stop and cease for the present life. But what remain is the cause which are his merits and demerits, volitions, ignorance and craving. If the causes still remain, then his new mind and matter still arise in the new life.

## Ditthi Visuddhi

After death, some are reborn in the ghost (*peta*) realm as ghost. From such a realm, they may rejoice in the merits of others by saying well done (*sadhu*). Some people think that the so-called soul comes. In reality, it does not come, but says well done (*sadhu*) from the other realm.

(2) Annihilation-belief (*uccheda ditthi*) as opposed to eternity-belief, insists on annihilation of mind and matter after death. According to this annihilation-belief the physical body and the soul perish after death. So one can do whatever one likes because there will be no result good or bad after death as there is no life in the coming life-cycle (*samsara*). Annihilation-belief denied the existence of the other worlds. This also is wrong view.

(3) Personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*) is the most important of all which the meditators should know about thoroughly because, unless you get rid of this personality-belief, progress in your meditation will be hindered. Personality-belief is nothing but the

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wrong view or wrong interpretation of the mind and matter or mentally and physically as individual "self" or "I". This personality-belief can be abandoned or discarded by the meditator who must practise *vipassana* meditation until he attains the insight knowledge that discriminates between mind and matter or consciousness and corporeality. Therefore the late Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, our benefactor, said, "The belief that there is only mind and matter while noting is purity of view (*ditthi visuddhi*).\" For example, while noting the walking movement, the meditator distinguishes the walking as matter and his awareness of walking as mind. He must walk, noting as lifting, moving and dropping. While noting so, he surely perceives that lifting, moving and dropping is matter and noting is mind. Perceiving or knowing in this way is purity of view because he can distinguish mind and matter. Moreover, when observing the rising and falling of the abdomen, he is able to distinguish the rising and falling movements as separate from the consciousness, the rising and falling as matter and the awareness of the movements as mind. Similarly

## Ditthi Visuddhi

with seeing, he distinguishes the eye and the object of sight as matter and the awareness of seeing as mind. So also with smelling, tasting and touching. But while noting thinking of something, the mind-base, mind object and the noting of the mind object are all mind (*nama*). Similarly while noting on aches and pains, aches and pains and noting of them are mind (*nama*). Here what really matters is to know or to perceive the object and distinguish it while noting. The insight knowledge thus gained by the meditator through mental development in this way is the insight knowledge based on mental development (*bhavanamaya nana*).

The knowledge gained by reading books or hearing *Dhamma* talks is knowledge based on learning (*Sutamaya nana*). So also the knowledge which one has acquired through one's own thinking, without having learnt from others is knowledge based on thinking (*citamaya nana*). But for the meditators, they should acquire knowledge based on mental development through meditation. If one has acquired this knowledge, one is sure to know or experience

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the nature of mind and matter even while he is noting. There are only:

- (1) the object matter to be noted and
- (2) the noting mind.

Therefore, every time he notes, there arise only mind and matter, no individual self or "I", men or women. At the outset, the meditator cultivates the purity of view in order to see things as they truly are. With one-pointed mind, he analyses and examines this so-called being. This analysis and examination show what he calls the "I" personality to be complex compound of mind and matter which are in a state of constant flux or arising and passing away. Now his view has become clear and correct as he knows that there is nothing but mind and matter (*nama* and *rupa*). Having thus gained a correct view of the real nature of the so-called being, he is freed from the false notion of a permanent soul. His view becomes totally purified.

Now, I would like to give you further explanation of personality-belief (*sakkaya-ditthi*). The Pali word

## Ditthi Visuddhi

*sakkaya* means a visible, perceivable aggregation of mind and matter and *ditthi* means wrong interpretation. Thus the view of mind and matter or an aggregation of matter and mind as individual self, "I" or sentient being can be called personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*). Nowadays, people do not say mind and matter (*nama* and *rupa*) but "this is a man, this is a woman, this is a monk, this is an animal, etc." People call beings individual selves but these are not real. You may ask questions. Is the hair of the head called a man? The answer is, no, it isn't, it is hair. Is the flesh of a man called a man? No, it isn't. Are the organs such as heart, liver, etc. called a man? No, they aren't. Are the bones called a man? No, they aren't. Therefore, if we really look for a "so-called man", we cannot find a man as this is not really in existent but rather it is only a name (*pannatti*) according to Buddhist Applied Psychology (*Abhidhamma*).

Therefore, man, woman, person and beings are non-existent; they are only names. The thing which is real and existent is the nature of mind and matter. One



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One may be asked, "Is the hair of the head matter or mind?" It is matter. Is the flesh of the body matter or mind? It is matter. Are the bones of the body matter or mind? They are matter. Are the organs matter or mind? They are matter. Are the organs matter or mind? They are also matter. But is consciousness matter or mind? It is mind. So, if you are asked to say the thing which is real and in existent, you will say mind and matter really exist.

In order to know and understand the *Dhamma* clearly, you should be able to differentiate the two fields of *Dhamma*, namely:

- the field of real and absolute (*paramattha*) and
- the field of unreal and relative (*pannati*).

According to Lord Buddha, there are in the world only four real and absolute realities, namely:

- (1) mind (*citta*)
- (2) mental factor or accompaniment of mind  
(*cetasika*)
- (3) matter (*rupa*) and

## Ditthi Visuddhi

- (4) *Nibbana*, supreme state of bliss, devoid of suffering and decay.

The rest are all unreal and relative, in name only believed to be real through illusion or delusion. But it is desirable to deal with unreal and relative because according to Lord Buddha, to attain insight knowledge into the ideas which are real and absolute, it is essential to know also what is unreal and relative or otherwise it will confuse one in distinguishing the real from the unreal and he will be led to chase a mirage or illusion. To fully understand, Lord Buddha has enjoined us to scrutinize and probe into the nature of things, animate and inanimate and find for ourselves if they are animatedly real or unreal. For instance, the so-called man, woman or beast is a mere name, having no substantiality in it and when we come to critically examine it, we find in it only those ideas which fall within the domain of mind and matter which are only real and substantial. Therefore, the so-called man, woman or beast is nothing but a name (*pannati*), unreal and relative.

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In the field of unreal and relative (*pannatti*) name, we can say that there is a human, a monk, a man, a woman, etc. In this field, it is impossible to use words like mind and matter, etc. Let us suppose we are having lunch. At that time you should not say that rice is matter, curry is matter, the spoon is also matter, the fork is matter too. If I say "use this matter to lift this matter into that matter", nobody will understand what I'm saying. So we should not use the terms of real and absolute (*paramattha*) field in the field of unreal and relative (*pannatti*) name. But we can say that, in the field of real and relative (*paramattha*), there is no "I" nor he, no man nor woman and no person nor being and there is mind and matter only in reality. What is evident is that at the moment of seeing, there simultaneously exist the eye, the visible object and the mental faculty of recognizing the vision. The first two are matter and the mental faculty is mind. Thus at the moment of seeing, what clearly exist are mind and matter and knowing that there are only mind and matter is to know or understand things as they truly are.

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Viewing the real and existent mind and matter as my body, my group (*khandha*) and mine is wrong view. Almost all worldlings or ordinary men have this wrong view of personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*). But noble ones (*ariyas*) do not have though they have mind and matter. The ignorant man misconceives the five aggregates of groups namely, the body group, the feeling group, the perception group, the mental formation group and the consciousness group as "I", my matter, my sentient matter and matter including "I".

In order to abandon or discard all these wrong views, the meditator must contemplate or practise *vipassana* meditation until he can distinguish matter and mind as instructed by Lord Buddha in the *Satipatthana Sutta*.

While walking, you are to note 'left step, right step or lifting, moving, dropping'. While sitting, you are to note all movements involved in arranging your arms and legs such as stretching, bending, etc. to rising and falling of the abdomen. You are also to note while

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seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and thinking or wandering as these phenomena occur, without missing any or whatsoever. Thus, you will distinctly come to realise the simultaneous occurrence in pairs of these psycho-physical phenomena while noting. While noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, the form of rising and falling is matter and the nature of noting or awareness is mind. When noting the sitting, the form of sitting is matter and the nature of noting or awareness is mind. With seeing, the eye and sight is matter and the noting of the sight or awareness is mind. So also with the nose and the smell, the tongue and the taste, the body and the touch. But while noting thinking or wandering (mind base), the mind object and noting of them or awareness are both mind. So also with aches and pains and the noting of them are both mind. Thus you are to distinguish mind and matter, one from the other, only when you are contemplating. Reaching that stage, you will not misconceive the aggregates of mind and matter as a living individual "I", my body and my belonging. Having

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realized thus, as they are, you gain the very right view - purity of view (*ditthi visuddhi*).

By this view, personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*) is almost eradicated. But if the meditator goes on noting unremittingly and becomes the noble stream-winner, he has eliminated or uprooted the personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*) entirely. Whosoever attains the stage of the noble stream-winner (*sotapanna*) would be completely disburdened of personality-belief and there shall henceforth be no possibility of being cast into the four lower realms (*apaya*). Thus, it is of utmost importance to get oneself rid of the personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*) just as Lord Buddha has said in the *Sati Sutta*.

With the same urgency and dispatch as someone whose breast has been pierced or impaled with a spear or whose head is on fire, will seek immediate relief from the affliction, the *bhikkhu* who is mindful of the perils of the cycles of birth (*samsara*) shall

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make haste to free himself from the personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*).

Worldlings or laymen (*puthujjanas*) may have a lot of duties to do and they may think it is of utmost importance to pay attention to their duties than anything else. However, if personality-belief is not removed, they may be reborn or exist in the four lower realms (*apaya*). But they are sure to be released from the said four lower realms if they do attain or realise the path of stream-winner knowledge (*sotapatti magga nana*) which can enable them to abandon or discard the personality-belief completely. So, in this life, as you meditators are good human beings who have the golden opportunity to benefit from Lord Buddha's teaching, it is of utmost importance to get yourselves completely rid of personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*) and to have purity of view (*ditthi visuddhi*) by contemplating *vipassana* meditation.

Therefore, I conclude my *Dhamma* Talk by expressing the sincerest blessing. May you all make

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effort to observe mindfully every psycho-physical phenomenon whenever it arises in order to purify your view so that you may realise *Nibbana*, the extinction of all suffering by the path knowledge (*magga nana*) which can eradicate the personality-belief (*sakkaya ditthi*) completely.

*Sadhu!      Sadhu!      Sadhu!*



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DHAMMA XXV

**"Kankhavitarana Visuddhi"**  
**(Purity of transcending doubt)**

The *Dhamma* Talk I am going to deliver today is about "purity of transcending doubt or overcoming doubt (*kankhavitarana visuddhi*)". There may be a lot of doubts concerning the three divisions of time, the renewal of existence and so on. These doubts can be removed by right view in meditation called insight knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect (*paccayapariggaha nana*). According to the path of purification, it ensures a good rebirth and the lower stage of Stream-winning path (*cula-sotapanna*). But the meditator must not remain content with it; he should carry on with his meditation.

Thus I am delivering this *Dhamma* talk, purity of transcending doubt, that can set you free from your doubts.

## Kankhavitarana Visuddhi

Worldlings or ordinary men may have a lot of doubts.

There are eight kinds of doubts namely:

- (1) Has the Buddha lived in the past?
- (2) Are the *Dhammas* preached by the Buddha real or not?
- (3) Are there noble monks (*bhikkhus*) who practise according to the Buddha's *Dhamma*?
- (4) Are the training of morality, concentration and wisdom (*sila, samadhi* and *panna*) true or not?
- (5) Are there past existences?
- (6) Are there future existences?
- (7) Are there also both past and future existences?
- (8) Is the Doctrine of Dependent Origination (*Paticca samuppada*) delivered by the Buddha true or not or mere thoughts?

You will know these later.

There are also sixteen kinds of doubts different from the above eight, namely:

- (1) Have I lived in the past?

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- (2) Have I not lived in the past?
- (3) What have I been in the past?
- (4) Is so, how was I in the past?
- (5) From what form into what form did I change in the past?

These are five doubts about the past.

- (6) Shall I be in the future?
- (7) Shall I not be in the future?
- (8) What shall I be in the future?
- (9) If so, how shall I be in the future?
- (10) From what state into what state shall I change in the future?

These are five doubts about the future.

- (11) Am I real?
- (12) Am I not real?
- (13) What am I?
- (14) If so, how am I?
- (15) Whence have I come?
- (16) Whither shall I go?

These are six doubts about the present.

## Kankhavitarana Visuddhi

More doubts can arise concerning the renewal of existence. Some doubt their own existence and ask why they have become human beings as they are now. A lot of people believe all are created. Some believe beings arise as they usually do. Some believe because of parents being arise but we find some parents who have no children. Others believe that after the death of the body, the soul moves onto other physical abodes. A great many doubts can arise concerning the renewal of existence. All these doubts can be removed by the insight knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect (*paccaya pariggaha nana*). You will soon gain purity of transcending or overcoming doubt (*kankhavitarana visuddhi*) through meditation.

The cause and effect are of three types:

- (1) Dependent arising or dependent origination (*paccaya samudaya* or *paticcasamupadda*),
- (2) Action origination (*kamma samudaya*) and
- (3) Temporary origination (*khanika samudaya*).

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- (1) In the Doctrine of Dependent origination, ignorance of the four noble truths is the first link or cause of the wheel of life. It clouds all right understandings. It runs like this: from ignorance arises activity, from activity arises consciousness, from consciousness arises organized beings, from organized beings arises six organs of sense, from six organs of sense arises contact, from contact arises sensation, from sensation arises desire, from desire arises attachment, from attachment arises continuous existence, from continuous existence arises birth, from birth arises death, decay, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. All these are the cycle of cause and effect.
- (2) In action origination, there is the order of act and result, for example, desirable and undesirable acts produce corresponding good and bad results. There are similarities and differences amongst mankind. On one occasion, a certain youth by the name of Subha

## Kankhavitarana Visuddhi

approached Lord Buddha and asked why and wherefore human beings are born high and low, hale (healthy) and ailing, good-looking, powerful and powerless, poor and rich, ignorant and intelligent, short life and long life. Lord Buddha briefly replied, "Every living being has an action (*kamma*) as its own, its inheritance, its cause, its kinsman, its refuge. Action is that which differentiates all living beings into high and low states. "If one kills any sentient being (cause) then one will live a short life (effect); abstain from killing (cause), live a long life (effect); if one does not hurt or torture any sentient being (cause), then one will be hale and healthy (effect); hurt and torture (cause), ail and sick (effect); if one is full of anger and hatred (cause), then one will be ugly-looking (effect); patience, contentment and calmness (cause), good looking (effect); if one does pay respect and humility (cause), then one will be powerful (effect); no respect and no humility (cause), powerless (effect); no generosity and no help (cause), poor (effect); if one does not

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associate with the wise (cause), then one will be ignorant (effect); associate with the wise (cause), intelligent (effect); all these are the causes and effects in action origination.

- (3) Now, what our meditators have to know is the cause and effect in practical meditation called temporary origination which arises whenever they note; when walking, they note the desire to step and the actual stepping. While noting so, the intention or desire to step arises first. Because of the desire to step, there appears stepping. Here the desire to step is the cause and the stepping is the effect. In the same way the stepping is the cause and the noting of the stepping is the effect. So it is also noting the raising of the foot, its moving forward and its dropping down. The intention or desire to raise is the cause and raising the foot is the effect, to know the raising is the cause and the noting of the raising is the effect, etc. In this way, we will know similar causes and effects during mindful observance of stepping

## Kankhavitarana Visuddhi

of the foot and dropping down of the foot. So also in the physical behaviors, if we note standing, the intention or desire to stand is the cause and standing is the effect; when sitting, the desire to sit is the cause and sitting is the effect. Likewise, standing or sitting is the cause and noting of the standing and sitting is the effect. Thus we are to know the turning of cause and effect while we are noting. While noting the rising of the abdomen, the intention or desire to inhale or breathe in is the cause and the inhaling or breathing-in is the effect. Again the rising of the abdomen is the cause and the noting is the effect. So also with the exhaling process. In this way, causes and effects arise. Besides these, we have to make a note of each of these six sense organs or doors like this: noting seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. There are also causes and effects in noting the said phenomena.



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Suppose we hear a kind of sound with our ears. Lots of people think they hear directly. Actually it is not so. It is only cause and effect. How is it cause and effect? Let us see. For the arising of the consciousness of sound, there is needed (1) good ear (ear basis) (2) object of sound (3) medium or space through which sound is transmitted to the ear (*akasa*) and (4) intention to hear (*manasikara*.) These four factors are the combined cause and hearing the sound is the effect. So we see cause and effect in the case of hearing. And then hearing is the cause and noting of the hearing is the effect.

Likewise, for the arising of the consciousness of sight, there is needed (1) good eye (eye basis) (2) object of sight (3) light (*aloka*) and (4) intention to see (*manasikara*). Unless there is light, the function of seeing cannot take place, nor the process of cognition. These four factors combined together are the cause and the seeing is the effect. And then seeing is the cause and making a note of seeing is the effect.

## Kankhavitarana Visuddhi

In the same way, for the arising of the consciousness of taste, there is needed (1) good tongue (tongue - basis) (2) object of touch (3) quality of the object of touch (coarse or fine) and (4) intention to touch (*manasikara*). If the object of touch is too fine, it cannot impinge an impression upon the body basis. And unless there is impingement, neither consciousness of touch nor the body-door cognition can arise. Scars, finger or toe nails, hair where no blood and air can flow, cannot sense the impingement. These combined factors are the cause and the touch is the effect; and then, the touch is the cause and noting of the touch is the effect. Now you should know that on account of cause, effect comes to be.

If we know that there is cause and effect in everything, every phenomena, the said doubts are removed, overcome, transcended. If there is cause, there is effect, no cause, no effect. Thus you will surely realize the cause of the renewal of existence. What is the cause of the renewal of existence? It is action (*kamma*) rooted in ignorance and craving

## Dhamma Discourses

(desire) that conditions rebirth. Past action conditions the present birth and present action in combination with the past action condition the future. According to Buddhism, we are born from the matrix (mould) of action. Parents merely provide an infinitesimally small cell. In Dependent Origination, it is said that there is continued existence (action) and arising birth (rebirth). As such being precedes being.

One is unable to note the objects and phenomena every time one senses them because one fails to practise *vipassana* meditation and partly because one's ignorance clouds all understandings. Ignorance brings about attachment and attachment leads to craving. Because of craving one cannot stand without doing what one wants. Thus, we see that ignorance, craving, attachment are the causes of action (*kamma*). Nevertheless, the meritorious deeds done by the noble ones (*ariya*) are action ineffective (*kariya*) because the noble ones have totally no defilements. The worldlings do actions because of defilements that give them rebirth, new existence. Inherent in action is the potentiality of producing its

## Kankhavitarana Visuddhi

due effect. The new life does not arise automatically. Actions constitute both good and evil; good begets good and evil produces evil. The action of this present life, as a cause, gives new existence in the future, as an effect.

The commentaries cite the analogies of echo, flame, impression of a seal and reflection in the mirror with regard to the new existence. Echo is a reflection of sound produced by the impact of sound waves on walls or any barrier. It does not mean the transfer of the original sound to a distant place although we cannot deny the causal relation between the original sound and its echo either. Here the original sound is the cause and its echo is the effect. The flame of the new lamp is obviously not the flame of the old lamp since the latter is still burning but causally related. Here the old flame is the cause and the new flame is its effect. When you look at a mirror, your face is reflected but you must not confuse it with your face, although it is casually related to the latter. Here your face is the cause and the reflection is the effect. Lastly the seal leaves an

## Dhamma Discourses

impression that is like its face but it is not really the face and it cannot occur in the absence of the seal either. Here also, the seal is the cause and its impression is the effect.

The cause produces the effect and the effect explains the cause. Because of the action one did, one organized being arises in a new existence. Past action conditions the present life. If one did lots of good actions, one can be reborn in one of the six worlds of good devas or in the world of good human beings. Good produces good. If one did lots of evil deeds, one can be reborn in one of the four lower planes of existence namely, hell, animal, ghost or demon existence. Evil begets evil. If one did both good and evil deeds, one will be a kind of human in the next existence, low-born and lacking in some limbs of the body in the new life. Life attracts life. According to one's action, one is to be. Because of the cause that is action, there arises the effect that is, organized being, in the new existence. When the meditator realizes that on account of cause, effect

## Kankhavitaraṇa Visuddhi

comes to be, then his doubts are removed, overcome and transcended.

When the meditator comes to distinguish between cause and effect every time he notes he will surely know that there must be a cause for the new existence. And he goes on thinking what the cause should be. Then the answer that comes to him is action. Action is the cause and organized being is the effect. Because of the cause (action), the effect, organized being, arises. Then he truly realizes that if there is cause, there is effect. This knowledge is purity of transcending doubt (*kankhavitaraṇa visuddhi*). The doubts of eight and sixteen are removed, overcome, transcended by this knowledge. When knowing the cause and effect, this knowledge is called the insight knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect (*Paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa*).

Now let me conclude here by expressing the sincerest blessing. May all meditators make an effort to attain the insight knowledge that distinguishes between cause and effect to realize

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*Nibbana*, the cessation of all suffering, by the path and fruition (*magga phala nana*) in the serial order of stages of seven purities.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

## Three Kinds of Magga

### DHAMMA XXVI

## Three Kinds of Magga

The subject of today's *Dhamma* Talk is Three Kinds of *Magga*. The ultimate goal of all true Buddhists is *Nibbana* and the way to the realisation of *Nibbana* is through *Ariya-magga-nana*.

To achieve that, a person has to practise *Pubbabhaga Magga* which really means the practice of *Vipassana bhavana* or insight meditation. To practise *Pubbabhaga Magga* a person must have faith in *Mula Magga*, which is "*Kamma sakata sammaditthi*" meaning belief or faith in the fundamental right view on *Kamma* and its effect. In other words believe in the doctrine that moral actions beget wholesome results, immoral actions beget unwholesome results. The most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw expounded that there are three *Maggas*:

- (1) *Mula Magga*
- (2) *Pubbabhaga Magga*
- (3) *Ariya Magga*



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If a person can absorb all these three *Maggas* into his or her own system they can hope to gain the realisation of *Nibbana*.

Now to explain *Mula Magga*.

The word *Mula* means 'the root' or 'the main'. *Magga* means overcome by killing. Hence the two words *Mula-Magga* connotes being the root and having the characteristic of overcoming by killing (extinction). 'The root' can be regarded as the basic factor to achieve *Dhamma* or realisation of *Nibbana*. The basic factor is in having faith in *kammic* results. A person has to believe in *kusala kamma* and *akusala kamma*. He must also accept the doctrine that moral actions beget wholesome results; immoral actions beget unwholesome results. In Pali this doctrine is called "*Kammasakata samma ditthi*". In other words one believes in "whatever good or bad deeds one does, the results of such actions (*kamma*) are one's own property."

### Three Kinds of Magga

*Kammasakata sammaditthi* can be called *Mula Magga*. To realise *Magga nana phala* the basic factor is believing in the doctrine of "*Kamma* and *Kammic* results". The word *Magga* has the characteristic of overcoming or killing the doubts or disbeliefs and travels towards *Pubbabhaga magga* path.

Some traditional Buddhists though they claim to be Buddhists, do not believe deeply in the doctrine of *Kamma* and *Kammic* results. Some believe that if a person is endowed with cleverness and industriousness he will be completely successful. If this premiss is true all businessmen will be rich and successful because all businessmen are clever and industrious. Do they all become rich? Though they are all clever and industrious and try with their utmost ability to become rich, not all of them are successful. Some are poor.

If we look at the countries of the world, some are rich and some are poor. In spite of the fact that every country or every government tries to develop

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and enrich themselves, yet there are many poor countries in our world.

In the field of health every person is trying his or her best to maintain health and fitness by being clever and industrious. In addition all governments want their citizens to be healthy, thus they constantly train more doctors and develop medicines. The question here is: do all the citizens become fit and healthy? The answer is no.

The hospitals are still crowded with sick citizens. By dint of cleverness and industriousness alone the citizens cannot be rich and healthy in spite of all their efforts to be so.

In the field of literature all people try hard to become scholars and learned persons. Governments open schools and give help in many ways to make their citizens literate, intelligent and learned. Do all their citizens become learned scholars? Not all become scholars. Why is this so and what is the

### Three Kinds of Magga

factor that brings about these differences? The deciding factor is their *Kamma*.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, *kamma* is the basic factor. Intelligence and industry are only secondary factors. *Kamma*, cleverness or wisdom and industry or effort (*viriya*) is like a three-legged stool. If one of its legs is broken the stool cannot stay upright. So also if one of the factors of *Kamma*, Wisdom and *Viriya* is missing the objective success cannot be achieved. Among the three, the basic factor is *Kamma*. But there is a Burmese proverb: "Having faith in *Kamma* do not jump into the thorny bushes; if you jump into the thorny bushes you are sure to get pierced by the thorns." Another proverb is: "Don't rely on *Kamma* and go into the forest where tigers are rampant. If you go into that forest you will be eaten by tigers."

These proverbs also show that *Kamma*, Wisdom and *Viriya* are equally to be depended upon. However the dominant factor is *Kamma*, in accordance with Buddhist doctrine. In one "*Cula Kamma Vibanga*"

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*sutta*, the young man Subha asked Buddha, "Omniscient Buddha, though all people seem to be the same in appearance some enjoy long lives, some are short-lived. Please explain to me the reasons for such inequalities." Buddha replied to Subha: "Some people indulge in killing others. Such persons have short lives as a result of killing others. Those who refrain from killing others have long life in the *samsaric* rebirths."

The difference is due to *akusala kamma* or unwholesome deeds of killing and *kusala kamma*, wholesome deeds of practising loving kindness. Some people enjoy healthy lives but some people suffer from illness. It is also the resultant of cruelty and kindness. Those who commit cruelties on other beings are poor in health and those who are kind and refrain from cruelties to others enjoy healthy lives.

Some people are handsome but some are ugly. The reason for such variances is anger and patience.

### Three Kinds of Magga

Those who are always overwhelmed with anger are ugly in their next existences but those who are patient and tolerant to others are endowed with handsome appearances.

Some people have plenty of helpers or assistants, some are lonely and helpless. Those who are jealous of others' prosperity and abundance are lonely and helpless. Those who are compassionate and enjoy others' prosperity are endowed with plenty of helpmates and assistants.

Some people are of noble birth and some are of humble birth. The young man Subha also enquired of Buddha the reason for such happenings.

Those persons who give due respects and regard to elders, teachers and parents enjoy noble births and those who are rude and disobedient to parents, teachers and elders are born of low and humble births.

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Subha also asked why some people are rich and some poor. Those who are generous and engage in giving *dana* to others enjoy riches in the coming existences and those who are miserly and do not give *dana* tend to be poor in their coming existences. Some people are educated and some uneducated. Subha also wanted to know the reason. Buddha replied to young man Subha that some people did not want to share their knowledge with others. Such people were ignorant. Those who were willing to teach others, willing to share their knowledge with others and at the same time willing to learn from teachers what they did not know achieve *panna parami* and become scholars.

All these are the basic differences because of *Kamma*. Thus, Buddha answered young man Subha's questions.

Believing in the doctrine of "moral actions beget wholesome results, immoral actions beget unwholesome results" is called *Mula Magga*. The literary translation of *Mula Magga* is "Believing in

### Three Kinds of Magga

*Kamma* and *kammic* results as a basic factor, which also overcomes the doubts and travel towards *Pubbabhaga Magga Path*".

A person accepting this *Pubbabhaga Magga Path* has full confidence that he can attain wholesome results by engaging in wholesome actions. But at the same time he has some anxieties. At some time when persons are overwhelmed by *lobha* and *dosa* they may commit some *akusala* deeds. In such cases they can land in the *apaya* world or animal world. When studying how to avoid such situations these people will understand that the way to avoid landing in such lower worlds is by practising *Satipatthana Vipassana bhavana* which also leads to *magga nana*.

One who believes in *Kamma* and *kammic* results understands that to reject *akusala* deeds one has to practise the *Pubbabhaga magga path*. *Pubbabhaga* actually means events that precedes *ariya magga*. *Magga* is having the characteristic of overcoming by killing (extinction). What does it kill? It kills



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*arammananusaya kilesa* and travels towards *Ariya magga*.

*Arammananusaya kilesa* means latent defilements in object *Arammana*. They arise whenever clear objects are perceived through the six sense-doors.

*Pubbabhaga Magga* path is the meditation practice our meditators are now engaged in. As instructed in *Satipatthana sutta* "*Gacchantova Gacchamiti Pajanati*" which means one must know one's movements if one is moving. When a meditator notes his leg movement as left step, right step or lifting, moving, dropping, etc. it is *Pubbabhaga Magga* path.

The second stanza "*Thitova Thitomhiti Pajanati*" means; when you are stopping you have to note stopping, stopping. Third stanza "*Nisinnova Nisinnomhiti Pajanati*" means when you are sitting you have to note sitting, sitting, touching, touching. The fourth stanza; "*Sayanova Sayanomhiti Pajanati*" means when you are lying down you have to note lying, lying. Fifth stanza "*Yatha yatha vapanassa kayo*

### Three Kinds of Magga

*panihito hoti tatha tathanam pajanati*" means all bodily movements should be noted as they really are. By these meditation exercises meditators are following the *Pubbabhaga Magga* path. Each and every note brings *loki maggangas*.

For instance when practising walking meditation, he notes taking left step and he notes his movement. He is aware of his leg making movement and his mind noting the leg movements. This is *Samma Ditthi*.

If a meditator assumes 'I am making the leg movements (walking)', it is wrong knowledge. The right knowledge is the leg is moving; the mind is noting, the abdomen is rising, the mind is noting, the ear hears the sound, the mind notes. It is *samma ditthi* (Right View). The thought on the noting mind is *samma sankappa*. Making effort on every step is *samma vayama*. Mindfulness on every step is *samma-sati*. Taking step and noting, taking step and noting serialized into concentration is *samma samadhi*.

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These are 5 *Pubbabhaga Magga*. When a meditator observes precepts he has achieved *samma-vaca*, *samma-kammanta* and *samma-ajiva* and these are the three *sila maggas*. Altogether the total is eight *maggas*.

By each and every note a meditator achieves eight *maggas*. When these eight *magga Dhammas* are developed and perfected to maturity a meditator attains *Ariya Magga*.

When a meditator has achieved *Ariya-magga* he is sure to realise *Nibbana*. Therefore to achieve the cherished goal of all true Buddhists may all our meditators have faith in *Mula-Magga* which is the belief in *Kamma* and its effects; and by the practice of *Satipatthana Vipassana* meditation called *Pubbabhaga magga* may they achieve *Ariya magga*, the purification of all *kilesas* and finally realise *Nibbana*, the end of all sufferings.

*Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

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**DHAMMA XXVII**

**"The Four Auspicious Wheels"**

In the book of Fours, of the Gradual Sayings (*Anguttaranikaya*) the Buddha said, "Monks, there are four auspicious wheels that need to be achieved to become intelligent, noble and famous in the present life and in future lives too.

Every human being would like to be famous, wealthy and attain a high status. To realise such aspirations one needs to be endowed with the four auspicious wheels or blessings. If one is endowed with these blessings, one can be regarded as an intelligent and good person. To achieve fame and a high status one needs all of the four auspicious wheels, without any defect. Take the example of a car. It may have a good engine, good bodywork and frame, but if the wheels are missing, it cannot move an inch. Even if only one wheel is missing or there is a flat tyre, it cannot move properly.

## The Four Auspicious Wheels

Like a car in good condition, it can be driven anywhere with ease. One, who is endowed with the four "wheels", can aspire to become famous and intelligent, not only in this present life, but wherever one is reborn until attaining final *nibbana*.

What are the four auspicious wheels?

1. To live in a suitable locality.
2. To have the help and guidance of a noble, Dhamma-faring person.
3. To maintain the status of a noble and learned person.
4. To have done meritorious deeds in the past.

The first one is *patirupadesavaso* in Pali, which can be defined as living in a place that is suitable and compatible. One should be able to get the necessities of life such as food, clothing, accommodation, education, health care, etc. without difficulty.

Many people lead miserable lives. For some people, even the basic needs like food, clothing and

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accommodation are hard to get. Some cannot even get clean water easily. Poor people have to struggle just to survive. How can they aspire to have a noble life and economic prosperity in such circumstances?

To become a learned person in the arts, sciences or technology, one needs good facilities to gain a thorough education. To enjoy good health, one needs easy access to doctors, dentists, and hospitals. Somewhere that offers all these social amenities for education, health care, economic prosperity and good communications is a suitable locality (*patirupadesavaso*). However, even people in the most prosperous societies are not often able to live with complete satisfaction. There is a second very important aspect.

To have the facilities to work to improve one's present life is not sufficient. One must also have the means to work for one's spiritual development, which will improve the condition of one's future lives throughout the round of rebirth (*samsara*). So one should have the chance to practise

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generosity (*dana*), morality (*sila*) and meditation (*bhavana*), which are the vehicles to carry one to good and comfortable lives in future existences. The opportunity to practise these in full can be found only where the Buddha Sasana flourishes. There one can find worthy individuals to whom to offer charity, one can find virtuous teachers who will encourage one to observe morality and instructors who can explain how to practise meditation.

So a suitable locality should be defined as a place where Buddha Sasana is flourishing and where the necessities of life are easily available. In such a place one can get comfortable accommodation, warm clothing, nutritious food and expert health care. With the basics taken care of, one will be able to practise the wholesome deeds of charity, morality and meditation with the guidance of a noble and a learned person, well versed in the teaching of the Buddha. To have the help and guidance of a noble Dhamma-faring person is the second auspicious wheel (*sappurisavassayo*).

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When one is born as a human being, it is very beneficial to have noble and honest parents, pure-hearted and virtuous teachers, loyal relatives and to live among pious and religious folks. We have an aphorism in Burmese that says, "A person living among hunters will become a hunter; a person living among fishermen will become a fisherman." To become a person who is intelligent and wise, he needs a conducive environment, noble parents, virtuous teachers, loyal relatives and friends.

Venerable Ananda once said to the Buddha, "Lord, if one has a dependable Dhamma friend and teacher, the purpose of the holy life to become an intelligent and wise person is half accomplished."

The Buddha corrected Venerable Ananda. "Say not so Ananda. It is not only half accomplished. The purpose of the holy life is fully accomplished if one has a dependable Dhamma friend and teacher."

There is a striking example of the importance of such a good friend in the story of Angulimala.



## The Four Auspicious Wheels

When Angulimala was under the influence of a bad teacher, he killed nearly a thousand people. He collected their forefingers to keep count, hence his name means 'finger-garland.' When he was about to kill his mother to collect the last one, the Buddha came to his rescue. If he had killed his own mother, he would have been destined to be reborn in Avici hell for that heinous crime. However, owing to meeting the Buddha, he was saved from committing this unforgivable act and instead attained arahantship after practising meditation. This episode vividly shows that a dependable and virtuous teacher can help a person attain both mundane and supramundane benefits. Thus, having a dependable friend is the second of the four auspicious wheels.

The third wheel is to maintain the status of a noble and learned person. The natural tendency of ordinary persons (*puthujjana*) is towards unwholesome actions, speech and thoughts. To refrain from such unwholesome deeds, self-restraint is ultimately the only remedy. The advice of noble parents and teachers helps to create the right

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attitude, but if one is lacking self-restraint, one will still tend to do unwholesome things when away from their influence. Therefore, self-restraint is the last resort to avoid bad thoughts, speech and deeds.

One can climb to the top of a pole with a strenuous effort, but to remain there for a long time is even more difficult. One must strive very hard to become rich and famous or to become a President or Prime Minister but to maintain such a high status is extremely difficult. It requires much self-restraint and integrity to maintain one's reputation.

Self-restraint can be maintained by thinking of the reputation of one's family. Every person has a duty to protect the good name of his parents, ancestors, relatives and friends. By thinking of this statement, "All of my ancestors are known as virtuous and honest people, if I commit an evil deed, the family's reputation will be tarnished," one can restrain oneself. Otherwise one can think of the censure of the community one lives in, "If I commit any misdeed, people will blame and gossip about me

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and my reputation will be ruined." Thus one may reason in various ways how one's reputation will be damaged and prestige lost in spite of many years of careful behaviour. By such noble and sensible thinking, a person can maintain his or her good reputation and restrain from immoral deeds, which amount to fulfilling the third of the auspicious wheels, to maintain the status of a noble and learned person (*attasammapanidhi*).

The name of Devadatta is notorious from the time of the Buddha. Though he came from the royal family and was ordained as a *bhikkhu* in the Buddha Sasana, he fell prey to evil desires and committed all kinds of evil deeds. He created a schism in the Sangha, urged Prince Ajatasattu to kill his father, King Bimbisara (who was a Streamwinner) and even tried to kill the Buddha. For these evil deeds he landed in Avici hell.

Venerable Sariputta and Venerable Moggallana were originally *paribajakas*, followers of another sect, but they practised the principles of

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*attasammapanidhi*, and maintained their status as noble and learned persons. They were both determined to search for liberation from all suffering. After learning the Dhamma from Venerable Assaji (one of the Buddha's first five disciples) they attained the stage of Streamwinners. Soon they attained Arahantship in the Buddha Sasana and were awarded the title of *Aggasavaka* - the leading disciples of the Buddha, after the Buddha himself.

The fourth auspicious wheel is *pubbe ca "katapunnata"*. The meaning of this is to have accumulated wholesome and meritorious deeds. We have been fortunate enough to become human beings in this existence due to our meritorious deeds in previous existences. As human beings we can live comfortable lives with abundance of food, clothing, medicine and shelter and we have opportunities to practise charity, morality and meditation. By the repeated practice of such merits in this life too, we can again be assured of the same benefits in our future lives.

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If we do not perform meritorious deeds in this life it will be very difficult to become human beings again in the next. One will probably land in one of the four realms of misery as an animal, a hungry ghost, a demon, or in hell. Therefore, to fulfill the fourth wheel, we should constantly perform meritorious deeds.

The Bodhisatta always performed meritorious deeds whenever he had a chance even though he had accumulated masses of merits. Even when he was reborn as a Cakkavatti (Universal Monarch), he renounced the pleasures and power of life and became a recluse to accumulate further merits. It is this chain-reaction where one good deed leads to another that results in good existences throughout the cycle of rebirth.

There is a Burmese aphorism, "A person whose stomach is full can observe morality (*sīla*)."  
The implication is that if one does not have even enough to eat, one may steal or commit other crimes. If one has enough means to be self-sufficient, one

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can practise charity, morality and meditation. Then, eventually one can attain *Nibbana*. So, meritorious deeds are vital.

The meditators at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha are now enjoying fruits of meritorious deeds done in previous existences since they are now endowed with all four auspicious wheels.

1. To live in a suitable locality.
2. To have the help and guidance of a noble Dhamma-faring person.
3. To maintain the status of a noble and learned person.
4. To have done meritorious deeds in the past.

By fulfilling these four auspicious wheels may you be able to achieve your cherished goal of *Nibbana*, the end of all suffering in the shortest possible time.

*Sadhu!*

*Sadhu!*

*Sadhu!*

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Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

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