

# **Piyadassi Thera: Selected Texts:**

Venerable Mahathera Piyadassi was one of the world's most eminent Buddhist monks having traveled widely carrying the message of the Buddha-Dhamma, both to the East and to West, he was able to write in a style that has universal appeal.

## **The Buddha His Life and Teaching by Piyadassi Thera**

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*Namo tassa bhagavato  
arahato sammaa sambuddhassa!*

— §§§ —

## **The Buddha**

### **Introduction**

"The ages roll by and the Buddha seems not so far away after all; his voice whispers in our ears and tells us not to run away from the struggle but, calm-eyed, to face it, and to see in life ever greater opportunities for growth and advancement.

The Buddha's personality counts today as ever, and a person who has impressed himself on the thought of mankind as the Buddha has, so that even today there is something living and vibrant about the thought of him, must have been a wonderful man—a man who was, as Barth says, 'the finished model of calm and sweet majesty of infinite tenderness for all that breathes and compassion for all that suffers, of perfect moral freedom and exemption from every prejudice.' "1

"His message old and yet very new and original for those immersed in metaphysical subtleties, captured the imagination of the intellectuals; it went deep down into the hearts of the people."2

Buddhism had its birth at Sarnath near the city of Vaaraanasi (Benares), India. With only five followers, at the beginning, it penetrated into many lands, and is, today, the religion of more than 600 million.

Buddhism made such rapid strides chiefly due to its intrinsic worth and its appeal to the reasoning mind. But there were other factors which aided its progress:

Never did the dhammaduutas, the messengers of the Dhamma, the teaching, use any iniquitous methods in spreading the Dhamma. The only weapon they wielded was that of universal love and compassion.

Furthermore, Buddhism penetrated to these countries peaceably without disturbing the creeds that were already there. Buddhist missions, to which the annals of religious history scarcely afford a parallel, were carried on neither by force of arms nor by the use of any coercive or reprehensible methods.

Conversion by compulsion was unknown among the Buddhists, and repugnant to the Buddha and his disciples. No decrying of other creeds has ever existed in Buddhism. Buddhism was, thus, able to diffuse itself, through a great variety of cultures throughout the civilized world.

"There is no record known to me," wrote TW Rhys Davids, "in the whole of the long history of Buddhism throughout the many centuries where its followers have been for such lengthened-periods supreme, of any persecution by the Buddhists of the followers of any other faith."

## **The Birth**

The Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, lived over 2,500 years ago and is known as Siddhattha Gotama.<sup>3</sup> His father, Suddhodana, the kshatriya<sup>4</sup> king, ruled over the land of the Saakyans at Kapilavatthu on the Nepalese frontier. As he came from the Gotama family he was known as Suddhodana Gotama. Mahaamaayaa, princess of the Koliyas, was Suddhodana's queen.

In 623 B.C. on a full-moon day of May—Vasanta-tide, when in India the trees were laden with leaf,

with flower, and fruit, and man, bird, and beast were in a joyous mood—Queen Mahaamaayaa was travelling in state from Kapilavatthu to Devadaha, her parental home, according to the custom of the times, to give birth to her child.

But that was not to be, for halfway between the two cities, in the beautiful Lumbini Grove, under the shade of a flowering Sal tree, she brought forth a son.

Lumbini, or Rummindei, the name by which it is now known, is one hundred miles north of Vaaraanasi and within sight of the snowcapped Himalayas. At this memorable spot where Prince Siddhattha, the future Buddha, was born, Emperor Asoka, 316 years after the event, erected a mighty stone pillar to mark the holy spot. The inscription engraved on the pillar in five lines consists of ninety-three Asokan characters, among which occurs the following: "hida budhe jaate saakyamuni. Here was born the Buddha, the sage of the Saakyans."

The mighty column is still to be seen. The pillar, as crisp as the day it was cut, had been struck by lightning even when Hiuen Tsiang, the Chinese

pilgrim, saw it towards the middle of the seventh century A.C. The discovery and identification of Lumbini Park in 1896 is attributed to the renowned archaeologist, General Cunningham.

On the fifth day after the birth of the prince, the king summoned eight wise men to choose a name for the child and to speak of the royal babe's future. He was named Siddhartha, which means one whose purpose has been achieved.

The brahmins deliberated and seven of them held up two fingers each and declared: "O King, this prince will become a cakravarti, a universal monarch, should he deign to rule, but should he renounce the world, he will become a sammaa-sambuddha, a Supremely Enlightened One, and deliver humanity from ignorance."

But Ko.n.dañña, the wisest and the youngest, after watching the prince, held up only one finger and said: "O King, this prince will one day go in search of truth and become a Supremely Enlightened Buddha."

Queen Mahaamaayaa, the mother, passed away on the seventh day after the birth of her child, and the

babe was nursed by his mother's sister, Pajaapati Gotami.

Though the child was nurtured till manhood in refinement amid an abundance of material luxury the father did not fail to give his son the education that a prince ought to receive. He became skilled in many branches of knowledge, and in the arts of war easily excelled all others. Nevertheless, from his childhood the prince was given to serious contemplation.

### **The Four Significant Visions**

When the prince grew up, the father's fervent wish was that his son should marry, bring up a family and be his worthy successor; for he often recalled to mind with dread the prediction of the sage Ko.n.dañña, and feared that the prince would one day give up home for the homeless life of an ascetic.

According to the custom of the time, at the early age of sixteen the prince was married to his cousin, the beautiful Princess Yasodharaa, the only daughter of King Suppabuddha and Queen Pamitaa of the

Koliyas. The princess was of the same age as the prince.

His father provided him with the greatest comforts. He had, so the story tells, three palaces, one for each of the Indian year's three seasons. Lacking nothing of the earthly joys of life, he lived amid song and dance, in luxury and pleasure, knowing nothing of sorrow

Yet all the efforts of the father to hold his son a prisoner to the senses and make him worldly minded were of no avail. King Suddhodana's endeavors to keep away life's miseries from his son's inquiring eyes only heightened Prince Siddhaatha's curiosity and his resolute search for truth and Enlightenment.

With the advance of age and maturity the prince began to glimpse the woes of the world.

On one occasion, when the prince went driving with his charioteer Channa to the royal gardens, he saw to his amazement what his eyes had never be-held before: a man weakened with age, and in the last stage of ageing, crying out in a mournful voice:



"Help master! lift me to my feet; oh, help! Or I shall die before I reach my house!"<sup>5</sup>

This was the first shock the prince received. The second was the sight of a man, mere skin and bones, supremely unhappy and forlorn, "smitten with some pest. The strength is gone from ham, and loin, and neck, and all the grace and joy of manhood fled."<sup>6</sup>

On a third occasion he saw a band of lamenting kinsmen bearing on their shoulders the corpse of one beloved for cremation. These woeful signs, seen for the first time in his life, deeply moved him. From the charioteer, he learned that even he, his beloved Princess Yasodharaa, and his kith and kin—all, without exception, are subject to ageing, disease, and death.

Soon after this, the prince saw a recluse moving with measured steps and down-cast eyes, calm and serene, aloof and independent. He was struck by the serene countenance of the man. He learned from Channa that this recluse was one who had abandoned his home to live a life of purity to seek truth and answer the riddle of life.

Thoughts of renunciation flashed through the prince's mind and in deep contemplation he turned homeward.

The heart throb of an agonized and ailing humanity found a responsive echo within his own heart. The more he came in contact with the world outside his palace walls, the more convinced he became that the world was lacking in true happiness. But before reaching the palace, he was met by a messenger with the news that a son had been born to Yasodharaa. "A fetter is set upon me," uttered the prince and returned to the palace.

### **The Great Renunciation**

In the silence of that moonlit night (it was the full-moon day of July Aasaa.lha) such thoughts as these arose in him: "Youth, the prime of life, ends in old age and man's senses fail him at a time when they are most needed. The hale and hearty lose their vigor and health when disease suddenly creeps in. Finally, death comes, suddenly, perhaps, and unexpectedly, and puts an end to this brief span of life. Surely there must be an escape from this unsatisfactoriness, from ageing and death."

Thus, the great intoxication of youth (yobbana-mada), of health (aarogya-mada), and of life (jivita-mada) left him. Having seen the vanity and the danger of the three intoxications, he was overcome by a powerful urge to seek and win the Deathless, to strive for deliverance from old age, illness, misery and death not only for himself but for all beings (including his wife and child) that suffer.<sup>7</sup>

It was his deep compassion that led him to the quest ending in enlightenment, in Buddhahood. It was compassion that now moved his heart towards the great renunciation and opened for him the doors of the golden cage of his home life. It was compassion that made his determination unshakeable even by the last parting glance at his beloved wife asleep with the baby in her arms.

Thus, at the age of twenty-nine, in the flower of youthful manhood, on the day his beautiful Yasodharaa had given birth to his only son, Raahula, Prince Siddhaartha Gotama, discarding and disdaining the enchantment of the royal life, scorning and spurning joys that most young men yearn for, tore himself away renouncing wife and

child and a crown that held the promise of power and glory.

He cut off his long locks with his sword, doffed his royal robes, and putting on a hermit's robe retreated into forest solitude to seek a solution to those problems of life that had so deeply stirred his mind.

He sought an answer to the riddle of life, seeking not a palliative, but a true way out of suffering—to perfect enlightenment and Nibbaana.

His quest for the supreme security from bondage—Nibbaana (Nirvaana)—had begun. This was the great renunciation, the greatest adventure known to humanity.

First, he sought guidance from two famous sages, from Alaara Kaalaama and Uddaka Raamaputta, hoping that they being masters of meditation, would teach him all they knew, leading him to the heights of concentrative thought.

He practised concentration and reached the highest meditative attainments possible thereby but was not to be satisfied with anything short of Supreme Enlightenment.

These teachers' range of knowledge, their ambit of mystical experience, however, was insufficient to grant him what he so earnestly sought, and he saw himself still far from his goal. Though both sages, in turn, asked him to stay and succeed them as the teacher of their following, the ascetic Gotama declined. Paying obeisance to them, he left them in search of the still unknown.

In his wanderings, he finally reached Uruvelaa, by the river Nerañjaraa at Gayaa. He was attracted by its quiet and dense groves, and the clear waters of the river were soothing to his senses and stimulating to his mind. Nearby was a village of simple folk where he could get his alms.

Finding that this was a suitable place to continue his quest for enlightenment, he decided to stay, and soon five other ascetics who admired his determined effort joined him. They were Ko.n.dañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahaanaama, and Assaji.

### **Self-mortification**

There was, and still is, a belief in India among many of their ascetics that purification and final deliverance can be achieved by rigorous self-

mortification, and the ascetic Gotama decided to test the truth of it. So there at Uruvelaa, he began a determined struggle to subdue his body in the hope that his mind, set free from the shackles of the body might be able to soar to the heights of liberation.

Most zealous was he in these practices. He lived on leaves and roots, on a steadily reduced pittance of food; he wore rags from dust heaps; he slept among corpses or on beds of thorns. The utter paucity of nourishment left him a physical wreck.

Says the Master: "Rigorous have I been in my ascetic discipline. Rigorous have I been beyond all others: Like wasted, withered reeds became all my limbs." In such words as these, in later years, having attained to full enlightenment, did the Buddha give his disciples an awe-inspiring description of his early penances.<sup>8</sup>

Struggling thus for six long years, he came near to death's very door, but he found himself no nearer to his goal. The utter futility of self-mortification became abundantly clear to him by his own experience.

He realized that the path to the fruition of his ardent longing lay in the direction of a search inward into his own mind. Undiscouraged, his still active mind searched for new paths to the aspired for goal. He felt, however, that with a body so utterly weakened as his, he could not follow that path with any chance of success. Thus he abandoned self torture and extreme fasting and took normal food.

His emaciated body recovered its former health and his exhausted vigor soon returned. Now his five companions left him in their disappointment, for they thought that he had given up the effort and had resumed a life of abundance. Nevertheless, with firm determination and complete faith in his own purity and strength, unaided by any teacher, accompanied by none, the Bodhisatta resolved to make his final effort in complete solitude.

On the forenoon of the day before his enlightenment while the Bodhisatta was seated in meditation under a banyan tree, Sujaataa, the daughter of a rich householder, not knowing whether the ascetic was divine or human, offered milk-rice to him saying: "Lord, may your aspirations be crowned with

success!" This was his last meal prior to his enlightenment.

## **The Final Triumph**

Cross-legged he sat under a tree, which later became known as the Bodhi Tree, the "Tree of Enlightenment" or "Tree of Wisdom," on the bank of the river Nerañjaraa, at Gayaa (now known as Buddhagayaa), making the final effort with the inflexible resolution:

"Though only my skin, sinews, and bones remain, and my blood and flesh dry up and wither away, yet will I never stir from this seat until I have attained full enlightenment (sammaa-sambodhi)." So indefatigable in effort, so unflagging in his devotion was he, and so resolute to realize truth and attain full enlightenment.

Applying himself to the "mindfulness of in-and out breathing" (aanaapaana sati), the Bodhisatta entered upon and dwelt in the first meditative absorption (jhaana; Skt. dhyaana). By gradual stages, he entered upon and dwelt in the second, third, and fourth jhaanas.



Thus cleansing his mind of impurities, with the mind, thus composed, he directed it to knowing and recollecting past births (pubbenivaasaanussati-ñaa.na).

This was the first knowledge attained by him in the first watch of the night. Then the Bodhisatta directed his mind to the knowledge of the disappearing and reappearing of beings of varied forms, in good states of experience, and in states of woe, each faring according to his deeds (cutuupapaata-ñaa.na). This was the second knowledge attained by him in the middle watch of the night. Next he directed his mind to the knowledge of the eradication of the taints (aasavakkhayañaa.na).<sup>9</sup>

He understood as it really is: "This is suffering (dukkha), this is the arising of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the path leading to the cessation of suffering." He understood as it really is: "These are defilements (aasavas), this is the arising of defilements, this is the cessation of defilements, this is the path leading to the cessation of defilements."

Knowing thus, seeing thus, his mind was liberated from the defilement's of the sense pleasures (kaamaasava), of becoming (bhavaasava), and of ignorance (avijjaasava).<sup>10</sup> When his mind was thus liberated, there came the knowledge, "liberated" and he understood: "Destroyed is birth, the noble life (brahmacariya) has been lived, done is what was to be done, there is no more of this to come" (meaning, there is no more continuity of the mind and body no more becoming, rebirth). This was the third knowledge attained by him in the last watch of the night. This is known as *tevijjaa* (Skt. *trividya*), *threefold knowledge*.<sup>11</sup>

Thereupon, he spoke these words of victory:

"Seeking but not finding the house builder,  
I hurried through the round of many births:  
Painful is birth ever and again.  
O house builder, you have been seen;  
You shall not build the house again.  
Your rafters have been broken up,  
Your ridgepole is demolished too.  
My mind has now attained the unformed Nibbaana  
And reached the end of every sort of craving."<sup>12</sup>

Thus the Bodhisatta<sup>13</sup> Gotama at the age of thirty-five, on another full moon of May (vesaakha, vesak), attained Supreme Enlightenment by comprehending in all their fullness the Four Noble Truths, the Eternal Verities, and he became the Buddha, the Great Healer and Consummate Master-Physician who can cure the ills of beings. This is the greatest unshakeable victory.

The Four Noble Truths are the priceless message that the Buddha gave to suffering humanity for their guidance, to help them to be rid of the bondage of dukkha, and to attain the absolute happiness, that absolute reality—Nibbaana.

These truths are not his creation. He only re-discovered their existence. We, thus, have in the Buddha one who deserves our respect and reverence not only as a teacher but also as model of the noble, self-sacrificing, and meditative life we would do well to follow if we wish to improve ourselves.

One of the noteworthy characteristics that distinguishes the Buddha from all other religious teachers is that he was a human being having no

connection whatsoever with a God or any other "supernatural" being.

He was neither God nor an incarnation of God, nor a prophet, nor any mythological figure. He was a man, but an extraordinary man (acchhariya manussa), a unique being, a man par excellence (purisuttama). All his achievements are attributed to his human effort and his human understanding. Through personal experience, he understood the supremacy of man.

Depending on his own unremitting energy, unaided by any teacher, human or divine, he achieved the highest mental and intellectual attainments, reached the acme of purity and was perfect in the best qualities of human nature. He was an embodiment of compassion and wisdom, which became the two guiding principles in his Dispensation (saasana).

The Buddha never claimed to be a savior who tried to save "souls" by means of a revealed religion. Through his own perseverance and understanding he proved that infinite potentialities are latent in man and that it must be man's endeavor to develop and unfold these possibilities. He proved by his own

experience that deliverance and enlightenment lie fully within man's range of effort.

"Religion of the highest and fullest character can coexist with a complete absence of belief in revelation in any straightforward sense of the word, and in that kernel of revealed religion, a personal God. Under the term personal God I include all ideas of a so-called superpersonal god, of the same spiritual and mental nature as a personality but on a higher level, or indeed any supernatural spiritual existence or force." (Julian Huxley *Religion Without Revelation*, pp. 2 and 7.)

Each individual should make the appropriate effort and break the shackles that have kept him in bondage, winning freedom from the bonds of existence by perseverance, self-exertion, and insight. It was the Buddha who for the first time in the world's history taught that deliverance could be attained, independently of an external agency, that deliverance from suffering must be wrought and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

None can grant deliverance to another who merely begs for it. Others may lend us a helping hand by guidance and instruction and in other ways, but the highest freedom is attained only through self-realization and self-awakening to truth and not through prayers and petitions to a Supreme Being, human or divine. The Buddha warns his disciples against shifting the burden to an external agency directs them to the ways of discrimination and research, and urges them to get busy with the real task of developing their inner forces and qualities.

## **Misconceptions**

There are some who take delight in making the Buddha a non-human. They quote a passage from the Anguttara Nikaaya (II, 37), mistranslate it, and misunderstand it. The story goes thus:

Once the Buddha was seated under a tree in the meditation posture, his senses calmed, his mind quiet, and attained to supreme control and serenity. Then a Brahmin, Dona by name, approached the Buddha and asked:

"Sir, will you be a god, a deva?"

"No, brahmin."

"Sir, will you be a heavenly angel, a gandhabba?"

"No, brahmin."

"Sir, will you be a demon, a yakkha?"

"No, brahmin."

"Sir, will you be a human being, a manussa?"

"No, brahmin."

"Then, sir, what indeed will you be?"

Now, understand the Buddha's reply carefully:

"Brahmin, whatever defilements (aasavas) there be owing to the presence of which a person may be identified as a god or a heavenly angel or a demon or a human being, all these defilements in me are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, done away with, and are no more subject to future arising.

"Just as, brahmin, a blue or red or white lotus born in water, grows in water and stands up above the water untouched by it, so too I, who was born in the world and grew up in the world, have transcended the world, and I live untouched by the world. Remember me as one who is enlightened (Buddho ti ma.m dhaarehi braahma.na)."

What the Buddha said was that he was not a god or a heavenly angel or a demon or a human being full of defilements. From the above, it is clear that the Buddha wanted the brahmin to know that he was not a human being with defilements. He did not want the brahmin to put him into any of those categories. The Buddha was in the world but not of the world. This is clear from the simile of the lotus. Hasty critics, however, rush to a wrong conclusion and want others to believe that the Buddha was not a human being.

In the Anguttara Nikaaya (I, 22), there is a clear instance in which the Buddha categorically declared that he was a human being:

"Monks, there is one person (puggala) whose birth into this world is for the welfare and happiness of many out of compassion for the world, for the gain and welfare and happiness of gods (devas) and humanity Who is this one person (eka puggala)? It is the Tathaagata, who is a Consummate One (arahat), a Supremely Enlightened One (sammaasambuddho)... Monks, one person born into the world is an extraordinary man, a marvelous man (acchariya manussa)."



Note the Paali word *manussa*, a human being. Yes, the Buddha was a human being but not just another man. He was a marvelous man.

The Buddhist texts say that the Bodhisatta (as he is known before he became the Buddha) was in the Tusita heaven (devaloka) but came down to the human world to be born as a human being (manussatta). His parents, King Suddhodana and Queen Mahaamaayaa, were human beings.

The Bodhisatta was born as a man, attained enlightenment (Buddhahood) as a man, and, finally, passed away into parinibbaana as a man. Even after his Supreme Enlightenment, he did not call himself a God or Brahmaa or any "supernatural being," but an extraordinary man.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, a Hindu steeped in the tenets of the Vedas and Vedanta, says that Buddhism is an offshoot of Hinduism, and even goes to the extent of calling the Buddha a Hindu. He writes:

"The Buddha did not feel that he was announcing a new religion. He was born, grew up, and died a

Hindu. He was restating with a new emphasis the ancient ideals of the Indo-Aryan civilization."14

But the Buddha himself declares that his teaching was a revelation of truths discovered by himself, not known to his contemporaries, not inherited from past tradition. Thus, in his very first sermon, referring to the Four Noble Truths, he says: "Monks, with the thought 'This is the noble truth of suffering, this is its cause, this is its cessation, this is the way leading to its cessation,' there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, insight, and light concerning things unheard of before (pubbesu ananussutesu dhammesu)."15

Again, while making clear to his disciples the difference between a Fully Enlightened One and the arahats, the consummate ones, the Buddha says: "The Tathaagata, O disciples, while being an arahat is fully enlightened. It is he who proclaims a way not proclaimed before; he is the knower of a way who understands a way who is skilled in a way (maggaññu, maggavidu, maggakovido). And now his disciples are wayfarers who follow in his footsteps."16

The ancient way the Buddha refers to is the Noble Eightfold Path and not any ideals of the Indo-Aryan civilization as Dr. Radhakrishnan imagines.

However, referring to the Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, the architect of Indian independence, says: "By his immense sacrifice, by his great renunciation and by the immaculate purity of his life, he left an indelible impress upon Hinduism, and Hinduism owes an eternal debt of gratitude to that great teacher." (Mahaadev Desai, With Gandhiji in Ceylon, Madras, 1928, p.26.)

## **Dependent Arising**

For a week, immediately after the enlightenment, the Buddha sat at the foot of the Bodhi Tree, experiencing the supreme bliss of emancipation. At the end of the seven days he emerged from that concentration (samaadhi) and in the first watch of the night thought over the dependent arising (pa.ticca-samuppaada) as to how things arise (anuloma) thus:

"When this is, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises; namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional or kamma formations; dependent on

volitional formations, (rebirth or re-becoming) consciousness; dependent on consciousness, mentality-materiality (mental and physical combination); dependent on mentality-materiality the six-fold base (the five physical sense organs with consciousness as the sixth); dependent on the sixfold base, contact; depend on contact, feeling; dependent on feeling, craving; dependent on craving, clinging; dependent on clinging, the process of becoming; dependent on the process of becoming, there comes to be birth; dependent on birth arise ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Thus does this whole mass of suffering arise."

In the second watch of the night, the Buddha thought over the dependent arising as to how things cease (pa.tiloma) thus: "When this is not, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases; namely: with the utter cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of formations, the cessation of consciousness.... (and so on). Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease."

In the third watch of the night, the Buddha thought over the dependent arising both as to how things arise and cease thus:

"When this is, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises; when this is not, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases; namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional formations (and so on). Thus does this whole mass of suffering arise: With the utter cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional formations (and so on). Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease."<sup>17</sup>

The Buddha, now, spent six more weeks in lonely retreat at six different spots in the vicinity of the Bodhi Tree. At the end of this period two merchants, Tapassu and Bhallika, who were passing that way offered rice cake and honey to the Master, and said: "We go for refuge to the Buddha and to the Dhamma.<sup>18</sup> Let the Blessed One receive us as his followers."<sup>19</sup> They became his first lay followers (upaasakas).

## **The First Sermon**

Now, while the Blessed One dwelt in solitude, this thought occurred to him: "The Dhamma I have

realized is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, beyond mere reasoning, subtle, and intelligible to the wise. But this generation delights, revels, and rejoices in sensual pleasures. It is hard for such a generation to see this conditionality this dependent arising. Hard too is it to see this calming of all conditioned things, the giving up of all substance of becoming, the final extinction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbaana. And if I were to teach the Dhamma and others were not to understand me, that would be a weariness, a vexation for me."20

Pondering thus, he was first reluctant to teach the Dhamma, but on surveying the world with his mental eye, *he saw beings with little dust in their eyes and with much dust in their eyes, with keen faculties and dull faculties, with good qualities and bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach*, some who are alive to the perils hereafter of present wrongdoings, and some who are not. The Master then declared his readiness to proclaim the Dhamma in this solemn utterance:

"Apaarutaa tesa.m amatassa dvaaraa  
Ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham."

"Open are the doors of the Deathless.  
Let those that have ears repose trust."

When considering to whom he should teach the Dhamma first, he thought of Aalāra Kāśyapa and Uddaka Rāmaputta, his teachers of old; for he knew that they were wise and discerning. But that was not to be; they had passed away

Then the Blessed One made up his mind to make known the truth to those five ascetics, his former friends, still steeped in the fruitless rigors of extreme asceticism.

Knowing that they were living at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the Resort of Seers (modern Sarnath), the Blessed One left Gayā for distant Benares, walking by stages some 150 miles. On the way, not far from Gayā, the Buddha was met by Upaka, an ascetic who, struck by the serene appearance of the Master, inquired: "Who is your teacher? Whose teaching do you profess?"

The Buddha replied:

"I have no teacher, one like me does not exist in all the world, for I am the Peerless Teacher, the Arahata. I alone am Supremely Enlightened. Quenching all defilements, Nibbana's calm have I attained. I go to the city of Kaasi (Benares) to set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma. In a world where blindness reigns, I shall beat the Deathless Drum."

"Friend, you then claim you are a universal victor," said Upaka. The Buddha replied: "Those who have attained the cessation of defilements, they are, indeed, victors like me. All evil have I vanquished. Hence I am a victor."

Upaka shook his head, remarking sarcastically "It may be so, friend," and took a bypath.

The Buddha continued his journey and in gradual stages reached the Deer Park at Isipatana. The five ascetics, seeing the Buddha from afar, discussed among themselves: "Friends, here comes the ascetic Gotama who gave up the struggle and turned to a life of abundance and luxury. Let us make no kind of salutation to him." But when the Buddha approached them, they were struck by his dignified presence and they failed in their resolve. One went to meet him



and took his almsbowl and robe, another prepared a seat, still another brought him water. The Buddha sat on the seat prepared for him, and the five ascetics then addressed him by name and greeted him as an equal, saying, "aavuso" (friend).

The Buddha said,

"Address not the Tathaagata (Perfect One) by the word 'aavuso.' The Tathaagata, monks, is a Consummate One (Arahat), a Supremely Enlightened One.

"Give ear, monks, the Deathless has been attained. I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dhamma; following my teaching you will know and realize for yourselves even in this lifetime that supreme goal of purity for the sake of which clansmen retire from home to follow the homeless life."

Thereupon the five monks said: "Friend Gotama, even with the stern austerities, penances, and self-torture you practised, you failed to attain the superhuman vision and insight. Now that you are living a life of luxury and self-indulgence, and have given up the struggle, how could you have reached superhuman vision and insight?"

Then replied the Buddha: "The Tathaagata has not ceased from effort and reverted to a life of luxury and abundance. The Tathaagata is a Supremely Enlightened One. Give ear, monks, the Deathless has been attained. I shall instruct you. I shall teach you the Dhamma."

A second time, the monks said the same thing to the Buddha who gave the same answer a second time.

A third time they repeated the same question. In spite of the assurance given by the Master, they did not change their attitude.

Then the Buddha spoke to them thus: "Confess, O monks, did I ever speak to you in this way before?" Touched by this appeal of the Blessed One, the five ascetics submitted and said: "No, indeed, Lord." Thus did the Supreme Sage, the Tamed One, tame the hearts of the five ascetics with patience and kindness, with wisdom and skill. Overcome and convinced by his utterances, the monks indicated their readiness to listen to him.

## **The Middle Path**

Now on a full moon day of July, 589 years before Christ, in the evening, at the moment the sun was setting and the full moon simultaneously rising, in the shady Deer Park at Isipatana, the Buddha addressed them:

"Monks, these two extremes ought not to be cultivated by the recluse. What two? Sensual indulgence: which is low, vulgar, worldly ignoble, and conducive to harm; and self-mortification: which is painful, ignoble, and conducive to harm.

The middle path, monks, as understood by the Tathaagata, avoiding the extremes, gives vision and knowledge and leads to calm, realization, enlightenment, and Nibbaana. And what, monks, is that middle path? It is this Noble Eightfold Path, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, [and] right concentration."

Then the Buddha explained to them the Four Noble Truths: the noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of the arising of suffering, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, did the Supreme Buddha proclaim the truth and set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma (*dhamma-cakka-pavattana*). This first discourse, this message of the Deer Park, is the core of the Buddha's Teaching. As the footprint of every creature that walks the earth could be included in the elephant's footprint, which is pre-eminent for size, so does the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths embrace the entire teaching of the Buddha.

Explaining each of the Four Noble Truths, the Master said: "Such, monks, was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the insight, the light that arose in me, that I gained about things not heard before. As long as, monks, my intuitive knowledge, my vision in regard to these Four Noble Truths was not absolutely clear to me, I did not claim that I had gained the incomparable Supreme Enlightenment. But when, monks, my intuitive knowledge, my vision, in regard to these Four Noble Truths was absolutely clear to me, then only did I claim that I had attained to the incomparable Supreme Enlightenment. And there arose in me insight and vision: unshakeable is the deliverance of my mind (*akuppaa me cetovimutti*), this is my last birth, there is no more becoming (rebirth)."<sup>22</sup> Thus spoke the

Buddha, and the five monks, glad at heart, applauded the words of the Blessed One.

On December 2, 1933, at the royal dinner at the King's Palace, Sweden, when it was his turn to speak, Sir C. Venkata Raman, the Nobel Prize winning physicist, left aside science and, to the surprise of the renowned guests, delivered a most powerful address on the Buddha and India's past glories.

"In the vicinity of Benares," said Sir Venkata Raman, "there exists a path which is for me the most sacred place in India. This path was one day travelled over by the Prince Siddhaatha, after he had gotten rid of all his worldly possessions in order to go through the world and proclaim the annunciation of love."<sup>23</sup>

### **The Sinsapa Grove**

The supremacy of the Four Noble Truths in the teaching of the Buddha is abundantly clear from the message of the Sinsapa Grove as from the message of the Deer Park.

Once, the Blessed One was living at Kosambi (near Allahabad) in the Sinsapa Grove. Then, gathering a few sinsapa leaves in his hand, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

"What do you think, monks, which is greater in quantity the handful of sinsapa leaves gathered by me or what is in the forest overhead?"

"Not many trifling, venerable sir, are the leaves in the handful gathered by the Blessed One; many are the leaves in the forest overhead."

"Even so, monks, many are those things I have fully realized but not declared to you; few are the things I have declared to you. And why monks, have I not declared them? They monks, are not useful, are not essential to the life of purity they do not lead to disgust, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquillity to full understanding, [and] to full enlightenment, to Nibbaana. That is why monks, they are not declared by me.

"And what is it, monks, that I have declared? This is suffering—this have I declared. This is the arising of suffering—this have I declared. This is the cessation of suffering—this have I declared. This is the path

leading to the cessation of suffering—this have I declared.

"And why monks, have I declared these truths? "They are, indeed, useful, are essential to the life of purity they lead to disgust, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquillity to full understanding, to enlightenment, to Nibbaana. That is why monks, they are declared by me. Therefore, monks, an effort should be made to realize: 'This is suffering, this is the arising of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' "24

The Buddha has emphatically said: "One thing do I make known: suffering, and the cessation of suffering"25 (*dukkha.m ceva paññapemi, dukkhassa ca nirodham*).

To understand this unequivocal saying is to understand Buddhism; for the entire teaching of the Buddha is nothing else than the application of this one principle. What can be called the discovery of a Buddha is just these Four Noble Truths. This is the typical teaching of the Buddhas of all ages.

## **The Peerless Physician**

The Buddha is also known as the peerless physician (*bhisakko*), the supreme surgeon (*sallakatto anuttaro*). He indeed, is an unrivalled healer.

The Buddha's method of exposition of the Four Noble Truths is comparable to that of a physician. As a physician, he first diagnosed the illness, next he discovered the cause for the arising of the illness, then, he considered its removal, and lastly applied the remedy

Suffering (*dukkha*) is the illness; craving (*ta.nhaa*) is the arising or the root cause of the illness (*samudaya*); through the removal of craving, the illness is removed, and that is the cure (*nirodha-nibbaana*); the Noble Eightfold Path (*maggā*) is the remedy.

The Buddha's reply to a brahmin who wished to know why the Master is called a Buddha clearly indicates that it was for no other reason than a perfect knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. Here is the Buddha's reply:

"I knew what should be known,  
What should be cultivated I have cultivated,  
What should be abandoned that have I let go.



Hence, O brahmin, I am Buddha—  
The Awakened One."<sup>26</sup>

With the proclamation of the Dhamma for the first time, with the setting in motion of the Wheel of the Dhamma, and with the conversion of the five ascetics, the Deer Park at Isipatana became the birthplace of the Buddha's Dispensation (*saasana*) and of his Community of Monks (*sangha*).<sup>27</sup>

### **The Spread of the Dhamma**

Thereafter, the Buddha spent the vassa<sup>28</sup> at the Deer Park at Isipatana, sacred this day to over 600 million of the human race. During these three months of "rains" fifty others headed by Yasa, a young man of wealth, joined the Order.

Now the Buddha had sixty disciples, all arahats who had realized the Dhamma and were fully competent to teach others. When the rainy season ended, the Master addressed his immediate disciples in these words:

"Released am I, monks, from all ties whether human or divine. You also are delivered from all fetters whether human or divine. Go now and wander for

the welfare and happiness of many out of compassion for the world, for the gain, welfare, and happiness of gods and men. Let not two of you proceed in the same direction. Proclaim the Dhamma that is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end, possessed of meaning and the letter and utterly perfect. Proclaim the life of purity the holy life consummate and pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes who will be lost through not hearing the Dhamma, there are beings who will understand the Dhamma. I also shall go to Uruvelaa, to Senaanigama, to teach the Dhamma."29

Thus did the Buddha commence his sublime mission, which lasted to the end of his life. With his disciples he walked the highways and byways of India enfolding all within the aura of his boundless compassion and wisdom.

Though the Order of Monks began its career with sixty bhikkhus, it expanded soon into thousands, and, as a result of the increasing number of monks, many monasteries came into being.

In later times monastic Indian universities like Naalanda, Vikramasilaa, Jagaddalaa, Vikramapuri, and Odantapuri, became cultural centres which gradually influenced the whole of Asia and through it the mental life of humankind.

After a successful ministry of forty-five years the Buddha passed away at the age of eighty at the twin Saala Trees of the Mallas at Kusinaaraa (in modern Uttara Pradesh about 120 miles northeast of Benaares).<sup>30</sup>

### **The Buddha's Ministry**

During his long ministry of forty-five years the Buddha walked widely throughout the northern districts of India. But during the rains retreat (*vassa*), he generally stayed in one place. Here follows a brief sketch of his retreats gathered from the texts:

1st year: Vaaraanasi. After the first proclamation of the Dhamma on the full moon day of July the Buddha spent the first *vassa* at Isipatana, Vaaraanasi.

The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years: Raajagaha (in the Bamboo Grove, Veluvana). It was during the third

year that Sudatta, a householder of Saavatthi known for his bounty as Anaathapindika, "the feeder of the forlorn," having heard that a Buddha had come into being, went in search of him, listened to him, and having gained confidence (*saddhaa*) in the Teacher, the Teaching, and the Taught (the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha), attained the first stage of sainthood (*sotaapatti*). He was renowned as the chief supporter (*daayaka*) of the Master. Anaathapindika had built the famous Jetavana monastery at Saavatthi, known today as Sahet-mahet, and offered it to the Buddha and his disciples. The ruins of this monastery are still to be seen.

5th year: Vesaali. The Buddha kept retreat in the Pinnacled Hall (*kuu.taagaarasaalaa*). It was at this time that King Suddhodana fell ill. The Master visited him and preached the Dhamma, hearing which the king attained perfect sanctity (*arahatta*), and after enjoying the bliss of emancipation for seven days, passed away. The Order of Nuns was also founded during this time.

6th year: Mankula Hill. Here the Buddha performed the "Twin Wonder" (*yamaka paa.tihaariya*). He did

the same for the first time at Kapilavatthu to overcome the pride of the Sakyas, his relatives.

7th year: Taavatimsa (the Heaven of the Thirty-three). Here the Buddha preached the Abhidhamma or the Higher Doctrine to the deities (*devaas*) headed by his mother Mahaamaayaa, who had passed away seven days after the birth of Prince Siddhattha, and was reborn as a deva in the Taavatimsa.

8th year: Bhesakalaa Forest (near Su.msumaaragiri). It was here that Nakulapitaa and his wife, a genial couple, came to see the Buddha, told him about their very happy married life, and expressed the wish that they might continue to live together both here and hereafter. These two were placed by the Buddha as chiefs of those that win confidence.

9th year: Kosambi—at the Ghosita Monastery

10th year: Paarileyakka Forest. It was in the tenth year that, at Kosambi, a dispute arose between two parties of monks owing to a trivial offence committed by a monk. As they could not be reconciled, and as they did not pay heed to his exhortation, the Buddha retired to the forest. At the

end of the *vassa*, their dispute settled, the monks came to Saavatthi and begged pardon of the Buddha

11th year: Village of Ekanaala (in the Magadha country). It was here that the Buddha met the brahmin farmer Kasibhaaradvaja who spoke to the Buddha somewhat discourteously. The Buddha, however, answered his questions with his characteristic sobriety. Bhaaradvaja became an ardent follower of the Buddha. It was on this occasion that the very interesting discourse, Kasibhaaradvaja Sutta (Suttanipaata), was delivered. (Read *The Book of Protection* by this author (BPS).)

12th year: Verañja. The introduction of the Vinaya is attributed to the twelfth year. It was also during this retreat that the brahmin Verañja came to see the Buddha, asked a series of questions on Buddhist practices, and being satisfied with the answers, became a follower of the Blessed One. He invited the Master and the Sangha to spend the rainy season (*vassa*) at his village Verañja. At that time there was a famine. The Buddha and his disciples had to be satisfied with very coarse food supplied by horse merchants. As it was the custom of the Buddha to

take leave of the inviter before setting out on his journeying, he saw the brahmin at the end of the *vassa*. The latter admitted that though he had invited the Buddha and his disciples to spend the retreat at Verañja, he had failed in his duties towards them during the entire season owing to his being taxed with household duties. However, the next day he offered food and gifts of robes to the Buddha and the Sangha.

13th year: Caaliya Rock (near the city of Caalika). During this time the elder Meghiya was his personal attendant. The elder being attracted by a beautiful mango grove near a river asked the Buddha for permission to go there for meditation. Though the Buddha asked him to wait till another monk came, he repeated the request. The Buddha granted him permission. The elder went, but to his great surprise he was oppressed by thoughts of sense pleasures, ill will, and harm, and returned disappointed. Thereupon the Buddha said: "Meghiya, for the deliverance of the mind of the immature, five things are conducive to their maturing: (1) a good friend; (2) virtuous behaviour guided by the essential precepts for training; (3) good counsel tending to dispassion, calm, cessation, enlightenment and

Nibbaana; (4) the effort to abandon evil thoughts, and (5) acquiring of wisdom that discerns the rise and fall of things."31

14th year: Jetavana monastery Saavatthi. During this time the Venerable Raahula, who was still a novice (*saamanera*), received higher ordination (*upasampadaa*). According to the Vinaya, higher ordination is not conferred before the age of twenty; Ven. Raahula had then reached that age.

15th year: Kapilavatthu (the birthplace of Prince Siddhattha). It was in this year that the death occurred of King Suppabuddha, the father of Yasodharaa.

16th year: City of Aalavi: During this year Aalavaka, the demon who devoured human flesh, was tamed by the Buddha. He became a follower of the Buddha. For Aalavaka's questions and the Master's answers read the Aalavaka Sutta, in the Sutta-nipaata. (See *The Book of Protection*, p.81 by this author (BPS).)

17th year: Raajagaha, at Ve.luvana Monastery During this time a well-known courtesan, Sirimaa, sister of Jivaka the physician, died. The Buddha



attended the funeral, and asked the king to inform the people to buy the dead body—the body that attracted so many when she was alive. No one cared to have it even without paying a price. On that occasion, addressing the crowd, the Buddha said in verse:

"Behold this painted image, a body full of wounds, thus heaped up (with bones), diseased, the object of thought of many in which there is neither permanence nor stability "

### **Dhammapada, 147**

18th year: Caaliya Rock. During this time a young weaver's daughter met the Buddha and listened to his discourse on mindfulness of death (*marana.naanussati*). On another occasion she answered correctly all the four questions put to her by the Master, because she often pondered over the words of the Buddha. Her answers were philosophical, and the congregations who had not given a thought to the Buddha word, could not grasp the meaning of her answers. The Buddha, however, praised her and addressed them in verse thus:

"Blind is this world;  
few here clearly see.  
Like a bird that escapes from the net,  
only a few go to a good state of existence."

Dhammapada, 174

She heard the Dhamma and attained the first stage of sanctity (*sotaapatti*). But unfortunately she died an untimely death. (For a detailed account of this interesting story and the questions and answers, see the *Commentary on the Dhammapada*, Vol. III, p.170, or Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, Part 3, p.14.)

19th year: Caaliya Rock.

20th year: Raajagaha, at Veluvana Monastery From the 21st year till the 43rd year: Saavatthi. Of these twenty-four *vassas*, eighteen were spent at Jetavana Monastery and all the rest at Pubbaaraama. Anaathapi.n.dika and Visaakhaa were the chief supporters.

44th year: Beluva (a small village, probably situated near Vesaali), where the Buddha suppressed, by force of will, a grave illness.

In the 45th year of his Enlightenment, the Buddha passed away at Kusinaaraa in the month of May (*vesaakha*) before the commencement of the rains.

During the first twenty years of the Buddha's life, the bhikkhus Naagasamaala, Naagita, Upavaana, Sunakkhatta, Saagata, Raadha, and Meghiya, and the novice (*saama.nera*) Cunda attended upon him, though not regularly

However, after the twentieth year, the Buddha wished to have a regular attendant. Thereon all the great eighty arahats, such as Saariputta and Moggallaana, expressed their willingness to attend upon their Master. But this did not meet with his approval. Perhaps the Buddha thought that these arahats could be of greater service to humanity

Then the elders requested Aananda Thera, who had kept silent all this while, to beg of the Master to be his attendant. Aananda Thera's answer is interesting. He said, "If the Master is willing to have me as his attendant, he will speak." Then the Buddha said: "Aananda, let not others persuade you. You on your own may attend upon me."

## **Buddhahood and Arahatsip**

Perfect Enlightenment, the discovery and realization of the Four Noble Truths (Buddhahood), is not the prerogative of a single being chosen by divine providence, nor is it a unique and unrepeatable event in human history. It is an achievement open to anyone who earnestly strives for perfect purity and wisdom, and with inflexible will cultivates the *paarami*, the perfections which are the requisites of Buddhahood, and the Noble Eightfold Path.

There have been Buddhas in the dim past and there will be Buddhas in the future when necessity arises and conditions are favourable. But we need not think of that distant future; now, in our present days, the "doors to the Deathless" are still wide open. Those who enter through them, reaching perfect sanctity or arahatship, the final liberation from suffering (Nibbaana), have been solemnly declared by the Buddha to be his equals as far as the emancipation from defilements and ultimate deliverance is concerned:

"Victors like me are they indeed,  
They who have won defilements' end."<sup>32</sup>

The Buddha, however, also made clear to his disciples the difference between a Fully Enlightened One and the arahats,<sup>33</sup> the accomplished saints:

"The Tathaagata, O disciples, while being an arahat, is Fully Enlightened. It is he who proclaims a path not proclaimed before; he is the knower of a path, who understands a path, who is skilled in a path. And now his disciples are wayfarers who follow in his footsteps. That, disciples, is the distinction, the specific feature which distinguishes the Tathaagata, who being an arahat, is Fully Enlightened, from the disciple who is freed by insight."<sup>34</sup>

### **Salient Features of the Dhamma**

There are no dark corners of ignorance, no cobwebs of mystery no smoky chambers of secrecy; there are no "secret doctrines," no hidden dogmas in the teaching of the Buddha, which is open as daylight and as clear as crystal. "The doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Buddha shine when open and not when covered, even as the sun and moon shine when open and not when covered" (A.I,283).

The Master disapproved of those who professed to have "secret doctrines," saying, "Secrecy is the

hallmark of false doctrines." Addressing the disciple Aananda, the Master said: "I have taught the Dhamma, Aananda, without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths, Aananda, the Tathaagata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who hides some essential knowledge from the pupil."<sup>35</sup>

A Buddha is an extreme rarity but is no freak in human history. He would not preserve his supreme knowledge for himself alone. Such an idea would be completely ridiculous and abhorrent from the Buddhist point of view, and to the Buddha such a wish is utterly inconceivable. Driven by universal love and compassion, the Buddha expounded his teaching without keeping back anything that was essential for man's deliverance from the shackles of sa.msaara, repeated wandering.

The Buddha's teaching from beginning to end is open to all those who have eyes to see and a mind to understand. Buddhism was never forced upon anyone at the point of the gun or the bayonet. Conversion by compulsion was unknown among Buddhists and repugnant to the Buddha.

Of the Buddha's creed of compassion, H. Fielding Hall writes in *The Soul of a People*:

"There can never be a war of Buddhism. No ravished country has ever borne witness to the prowess of the followers of the Buddha; no murdered men have poured out their blood on their hearth-stones, killed in his name; no ruined women have cursed his name to high heaven. He and his faith are clean of the stain of blood. He was the preacher of the Great Peace, of love of charity of compassion, and so clear is his teaching that it can never be misunderstood."

When communicating the Dhamma to his disciples, the Master made no distinctions whatsoever among them; for there were no specially chosen favorite disciples. Among his disciples, all those who were arahats, who were passion-free and had shed the fetters binding to renewed existence, had equally perfected themselves in purity. But there were some outstanding ones who were skilled in different branches of knowledge and practice, and because of their mental endowments, they gained positions of distinction; but special favors were never granted to anyone by the Master. Upaali, for instance, who

came from a barber's family was made the chief in matters of discipline (*vinaya*) in preference to many arahats who belonged to the class of the nobles and warriors (*kshatriya*). Saariputta and Moggallaana, brahmins by birth, because of their longstanding aspirations in former lives, became the chief disciples of the Buddha. The former excelled in wisdom (*pañña*) and the latter in supernormal powers (*iddhi*).

The Buddha never wished to extract from his disciples blind and submissive faith in him or his teachings. He always insisted on discriminative examination and intelligent inquiry. In no uncertain terms, he urged critical investigation when he addressed the inquiring Kaalaamas in a discourse that has been rightly called the first charter of free thought:

"Come, Kaalaamas. Do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning, by reflection on reasons, by the acceptance of a view after pondering it, by the seeming competence of a speaker, or because you think, 'The ascetic is our teacher.' But when you



know for yourselves, 'These things are unwholesome, these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practised, lead to harm and suffering,' then you should abandon them. And when you know for yourselves, 'These things are wholesome, these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, if undertaken and practised, lead to welfare and happiness,' then you should engage in them."

To take anything on trust is not in the spirit of Buddhism, so we find this dialogue between the Master and the disciples: "If now, knowing this and preserving this, would you say: 'We honor our Master and through respect for him we respect what he teaches'?" "No, Lord." "That which you affirm, O disciples, is it not only that which you yourselves have recognized, seen, and grasped?" – "Yes, Lord."<sup>36</sup>

The Buddha faced facts and refused to acknowledge or yield to anything that did not accord with truth. He does not want us to recognize anything indiscriminately and without reason. He wants us to comprehend things as they really are, to put forth the

necessary effort and work out our own deliverance with mindfulness.

"You should make the effort  
The Tathaagatas point out the way "37

"Bestir yourselves, rise up,  
And yield your hearts unto the Buddha's teaching.  
Shake off the armies of the king of death,  
As does the elephant a reed-thatched shed."38

The Buddha, for the first time in the world's history taught that deliverance should be sought independent of a savior, be he human or divine.

The idea that another raises a man from lower to higher levels of life, and ultimately rescues him, tends to make man indolent and weak, supine and foolish. This kind of belief degrades a man and smothers every spark of dignity from his moral being.

The Enlightened One exhorts his followers to acquire self-reliance. Others may lend us a helping hand indirectly but deliverance from suffering must

be wrought out and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

## **True Purification**

In the understanding of things, neither belief nor fear plays any role in Buddhist thought. The truth of the Dhamma can be grasped only through insight, never through blind faith, or through fear of some known or unknown being.

Not only did the Buddha discourage blind belief and fear of an omnipotent God as unsuitable approaches for understanding the truth, but he also denounced adherence to unprofitable rites and rituals, because the mere abandoning of outward things, such as fasting, bathing in rivers, animal sacrifice, and similar acts, does not tend to purify a man or make a man holy and noble.

We find this dialogue between the Buddha and the brahmin Sundarika Bhaaradvaja: Once the Buddha, addressing the monks, explained in detail how a seeker of deliverance should train himself, and further added that a person whose mind is free from taints, whose life of purity is perfected, and the task done, could be called one who bathes inwardly.

Then Bhaaradvaaja, seated near the Buddha, heard these words and asked him:

"Does the Venerable Gotama go to bathe in the river Baahuka?"

"Brahmin, what good is the river Baahuka? What can the river Baahuka do?"

"Indeed, Venerable Gotama, the river Baahuka is believed by many to be holy. Many people have their evil deeds (*paapa*) washed away in the river Baahuka."

Then the Buddha made him understand that bathing in rivers would not cleanse a man of his dirt of evil, and instructed him thus:

"Bathe just here (in this Doctrine and Discipline, *Dhamma-vinaya*), brahmin, give security to all beings. If you do not speak falsehood, or kill or steal, if you are confident, and are not mean, what does it avail you to go to Gayaa (the name of a river in India during the time of the Buddha)? Your well at home is also a Gayaa."<sup>39</sup>

## **Caste Problem**

Caste, which was a matter of vital importance to the brahmins of India, was one of utter indifference to

the Buddha, who strongly condemned the debasing caste system. In his Order of Monks all castes unite as do the rivers in the sea. They lose their former names, castes, and clans, and become known as members of one community—the Sangha.

Speaking of the equal recognition of all members of the Sangha the Buddha says:

"Just as, O monks, the great rivers Gangaa, Yamunaa, Aciravati, Sarabhaa, and Mahi, on reaching the ocean, lose their earlier name and identity and come to be reckoned as the great ocean, similarly O monks, people of the four castes (*va.n.nas*)... who leave the household and become homeless recluses under the Doctrine and Discipline declared by the Tathaagata, lose their previous names and identities and are reckoned as recluses who are sons of Saakya" (Udaana 55).

The Buddhist position regarding racism and racial discrimination made explicit at such an early age is one reflected in the moral and scientific standpoint adopted by UNESCO in the present century (Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice, UNESCO 1978).<sup>40</sup>

To Sundarika Bhaaradvaaja, the brahmin who inquired about his lineage, the Buddha answered:

"No Brahmin I, no prince,  
No farmer, or aught else.  
All worldly ranks I know,  
But knowing go my way  
as simply nobody:  
Homeless, in pilgrim garb,  
With shaven crown, I go  
my way alone, serene.  
To ask my birth is vain."41

On one occasion a caste-ridden brahmin insulted the Buddha saying. "Stop, thou shaveling! Stop, thou outcast!"

The Master, without any feeling of indignation, gently replied:

"Birth makes not a man an outcast,  
Birth makes not a man a brahmin;  
Action makes a man an outcast,  
Action makes a man a brahmin."

(Sutta-nipaata, 142)

He then delivered a whole sermon, the Vasala Sutta, explaining to the brahmin in detail the characteristics of one who is really an outcast (*vasala*). Convinced, the haughty brahmin took refuge in the Buddha. (See *The Book of Protection*, p.91.)

The Buddha freely admitted into the Order people from all castes and classes when he knew that they were fit to live the holy life, and some of them later distinguished themselves in the Order. The Buddha was the only contemporary teacher who endeavored to blend in mutual tolerance and concord those who hitherto had been rent asunder by differences of caste and class.

Upaali, who was the chief authority on the Vinaya—the disciplinary rules of the Order—was a barber, regarded as one of the basest occupations of the lower classes. Sunita, who later won arahatship, was a scavenger, another base occupation. In the Order of Nuns were Pu.n.naa and Pu.n.nikaa, both slave girls. According to Mrs. C.A.F Rhys Davids, 8.5% of the number of those nuns who were able to realize the fruits of their training were drawn from the despised castes, which were mostly illiterate.<sup>42</sup>

## **Chief Disciples**

Raajagaha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, was one of the first places visited by the Buddha soon after his enlightenment. As a wandering ascetic in the early days of his renunciation, he had promised King Seniya Bimbisara that he would visit Raajagaha when he achieved the object of his search. King Bimbisara was overjoyed at the sight of the Buddha, and having listened to his teaching, became a lay follower. His devotion to the Buddha became so ardent that within a few days he offered him his pleasure park, Veluvana, for residence.

Raajagaha during that time was a centre of great learning where many schools of philosophy flourished. One such school of thought had as its head Sañjaya; and among his retinue of two hundred and fifty followers were Upatissa and Kolita, who were later to become Sariputta and Mahaa Moggallaana, the two chief disciples of the Buddha.

One day when Upatissa was walking through the streets of Raajagaha, he was greatly struck by the serene countenance and the quiet, dignified deportment of one of the first disciples of the



Buddha, the arahat Assaji, who was on his alms round.

All the strenuous endeavors to achieve perfection that Upatissa had made through many a birth were now on the verge of being rewarded. Without going back to his teacher, he followed the arahat Assaji to his resting place, eager to know whom he followed and what teaching he had accepted.

"Friend," said Upatissa, "serene is your countenance, clear and radiant is your glance. Who persuaded you to renounce the world? Who is your teacher? What Dhamma (teaching) do you follow?" The Venerable Assaji, rather reluctant to speak much, humbly said: "I cannot expound the Doctrine and Discipline at length, but I can tell you the meaning briefly " Upatissa's reply is interesting: "Well, friend, tell little or much; what I want is just the meaning. Why speak many words?" Then the arahat Assaji uttered a single verse which embraces the Buddha's entire doctrine of causality:

*"Ye dhammaa hetuppabhavaa  
Tesa.m hetum tathaagato aaha  
Tesa.m ca yo nirodho*

*Evam vaadi mahaa sama.no."*

"Whatever from a cause proceeds, thereof  
The Tathaagata has explained the cause,  
Its cessation too he has explained.  
This is the teaching of the Supreme Sage."

(Vinaya Mahaavagga)

Upatissa instantly grasped the meaning and attained the first stage of realization, comprehending "whatever is of the nature of arising, all that is of the nature of ceasing" (*yam kiñci samudayadhamma.m sabba.m ta.m nirodhadhamma.m*).

With a heart full of joy, he quickly went back to his friend Kolita and told him of his meeting with the arahat and of the teaching he had received. Kolita, too, like Upatissa, instantly gained the first stage of realization, having heard the Dhamma from his friend. Thereon, both of them approached Sañjaya and asked him to follow the Buddha. But afraid of losing his reputation as a religious teacher, he refused to do so. Upatissa and Kolita then left Sañjaya—much against his protestations—for the Veluvana monastery and expressed their wish to

become followers of the Buddha. The Buddha gladly welcomed them saying, "Come, monks, well proclaimed is the Dhamma. Live the holy life for the complete ending of suffering." He admitted them into the Order. They attained deliverance and became the two chief disciples.

Another great one who joined the Order during the Buddha's stay at Veluvana was the brahmin sage Mahaa Kassapa, who had renounced great wealth to find the way to deliverance. It was the Venerable Mahaa Kassapa, three months after the Buddha's passing away (*parinibbaana*), who called up the convocation of arahats (the First Council), at the Sattapa.n.ni Cave near Raajagaha under the patronage of King Ajaatasattu, to collect and codify the Dhamma and Vinaya.

## **The Order of Nuns**

In the early days of the Order, only men were admitted to the Sangha since the Buddha was reluctant to admit women. But there were many devout women among the lay followers who had a keen desire for a life of renunciation as nuns. Urged by their keenness, Pajaapati Gotami, the foster-

mother of the Buddha, in the company of many ladies of rank, approached the Buddha, beseeching him to grant them ordination. But the Buddha still hesitated to accept them.

Seeing their discomfiture, and urged by their zeal, the Venerable Aananda took up their cause and pleaded with the Buddha on their behalf. The Buddha finally yielded to this appeal, placing, however, eight cardinal rules on the ordination of women. Thus was established, in the fifth year after his enlightenment, the Order of Nuns, the Bhikkhuni Saasana, for the first time in history; for never before this had there been an Order where woman could lead a celibate life of renunciation.

Women from all walks of life joined the Order. Foremost, in the Order stood the Theris Khemaa and Uppalava.n.naa. The lives of quite a number of these noble nuns, their strenuous endeavors to win the goal of freedom, and their paeons of joy at deliverance of mind, are graphically described in the *Therigaathaa, The Psalms of the Sisters*.<sup>43</sup>

**At Kapilavatthu**

While at Raajagaha, the Blessed One heard that his father wished to see him, and he set out for Kapilavatthu. He did not, however, go straight to the palace, but, according to custom, stopped in a grove outside the town. The next day the Buddha, with his bowl, went for his alms from house to house in the streets of Kapilavatthu.

King Suddhodana, startled at the news, rushed to the Buddha and said; "Why Master, why do you put us to shame? Why do you go begging for your food? Not one of our race has ever done so."

Replied the Buddha: "You and your family may claim descent from kings; my descent is from the Buddhas of old; and they begging their food, always lived on alms."

Then explaining the Dhamma the Master said, "Be alert, be mindful, lead a righteous life. The righteous live happily both in this world and the next." And so the king became established in the Path, he realized the Dhamma.

The Buddha was then conducted into the palace where all came to pay their respects to him, but not Princess Yasodharaa. The Buddha went to her, and

the princess, knowing the impassable gulf between them, fell on the ground at his feet and saluted him. Then relating the Candakinnara Jaataka, a story of his previous birth<sup>44</sup> revealing how great her virtue had been in that former life, he made her an adherent to the Doctrine. Later when the Buddha was induced to establish an Order for women, Yasodharaa became one of the first nuns and attained arahatship, highest sanctity

When the Buddha was in the palace, Princess Yasodharaa arrayed her son Raahula in all his best attire and sent him to the Blessed One, saying, "That is your father, Raahula, go and ask for your inheritance."

Prince Raahula went to the Buddha, stood before him, and said, "Pleasant indeed is your shadow, sage."

And when the Blessed One had finished his meal and left the palace, Prince Raahula followed him saying, "Give me my inheritance, sage; give me my inheritance." At that the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Saariputta: "Well then, Saariputta, take him into the Order."

Then the Venerable Saariputta gave Prince Raahula the ordination.<sup>45</sup> In the Majjhima Nikaaya, one of the five original collections in Paali containing the Buddha's discourses, there are three discourses (Nos. 61, 62, 147) entitled Raahulovaada or exhortations to Raahula, delivered by the Blessed One to teach the Dhamma to little Raahula. The discourses are entirely devoted to advice on discipline and meditation. Here is an extract from the Master's exhortation in the Mahaa Raahulovaada Sutta:<sup>46</sup>

"Cultivate the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettaa*), Raahula; for by cultivating loving-kindness, ill will is banished. Cultivate the meditation on compassion (*karu.naa*), Raahula, for by cultivating compassion, cruelty is banished. Cultivate the meditation on appreciative joy (*mudita*), Raahula, for by cultivating appreciative joy aversion is banished. Cultivate the meditation on equanimity (*upekkha*), Raahula, for by cultivating equanimity hatred is banished. Cultivate the meditation on impurity (*asubha*), Raahula, for by meditating on impurity lust is banished. Cultivate the meditation on the concept of impermanence (*anicca-sañña*), Raahula, for by meditating on the

concept of impermanence, pride of self (asmi-maana) is banished. Cultivate the meditation on mindfulness of in-and-out-breathing (anaapaana sati), Raahula, for mindfulness of breathing, cultivated and frequently practised, bears much fruit and is of great advantage."

## **Women in Buddhism**

Generally speaking, during the time of the Buddha, owing to brahminical influence, women were not given much recognition. Sometimes, they were held in contempt and in servility to man. It was the Buddha who raised the status of women and there were cases of women showing erudition in matters of philosophy. In his large-heartedness and magnanimity he always treated women with consideration and civility and pointed out to them, too, the path to peace, purity and sanctity. Said the Blessed One: "A mother is the friend at one's home. A wife is the highest friend of the husband."

The Buddha did not reject the invitation for a meal though Ambapaali 47 was of bad repute. Whatever food she offered he accepted, and in return, gave her the *Dhammadaana*, the gift of truth. She was



immediately convinced by the teaching and leaving aside her frivolous lay life, she entered the Order of Nuns. Ardent and strenuous in her religious practices, she then became an arahat.

Kisaagotami was another woman to whom the Buddha gave the assistance of his great compassion. Her story is one of the most touching tales recorded in our books. Many more are the instances where the Buddha helped and consoled women who suffered from the vicissitudes of life.

### **Ministering to the Sick**

Great indeed, was the Master's compassion for the sick. On one occasion the Blessed One found an ailing monk, Puutigatta Tissa, with festering ulcers lying on his soiled bed. Immediately the Master prepared hot water, and with the help of the Venerable Aananda washed him, tenderly nursed him with his own hands, and taught the Dhamma, thus enabling him to win arahatship before he died. On another occasion, too, the Master tended a sick monk and admonished his disciples thus:

"Whosoever, monks, would follow my admonition (would wait upon me, would honor me), he should wait upon the sick."48

When the arahat Tissa passed away the funeral rites were duly performed and the Buddha caused the relics to be enshrined in a stupa.49

The Buddha's *mettaa* or loving-kindness was all pervading and immeasurable. His earnest exhortation to his disciples was:

"Just as with her own life  
a mother shields from hurt  
her own, her only child,  
let all-embracing thoughts  
for all that lives be thine."50

Being one who always acted in constant conformity with what he preached, loving-kindness and compassion always dominated his actions.

While journeying from village to village, from town to town, instructing, enlightening, and gladdening the many the Buddha saw how superstitious folk, steeped in ignorance, slaughtered animals in worship of their gods. He spoke to them:

"Of life, which all can take but none can give,  
Life which all creatures love and strive to keep,  
Wonderful, dear, and pleasant unto each,  
Even to the meanest...."51

Thus when people who prayed to the gods for mercy were merciless, and India was blood-stained with the morbid sacrifices of innocent animals at the desecrated altars of imaginary deities, and the harmful rites and rituals of ascetics and brahmins brought disaster and brutal agony the Buddha, the Compassionate One, pointed out the ancient path of the Enlightened Ones, the path of righteousness, love, and understanding.

*Metta* or love is the best antidote for anger in oneself. It is the best medicine for those who are angry with us. Let us then extend love to all who need it with a free and boundless heart. The language of the heart, the language that comes from the heart and goes to the heart, is always simple, graceful, and full of power.

### **Equanimity and Self-composure**

Amid all the vicissitudes of life—gain and loss, repute and ill-repute, praise and censure, pain and

happiness<sup>52</sup>—the Buddha never wavered. He was firm as a solid rock. Touched by happiness or by pain he showed neither elation nor depression. He had never encouraged wrangling and animosity. Addressing the monks he once said: "I do not quarrel with the world, monks. It is the world that quarrels with me. An exponent of the Dhamma does not quarrel with anyone in the world."<sup>53</sup>

He admonished his disciples in these words:

"Monks, if others were to speak ill of me or ill of the Dhamma or ill of the Sangha (the Order), you should not on that account entertain thoughts of enmity and spite, and be worried. If, monks, you are angry and displeased with them, it will not only impede your mental development but you will also fail to judge how far that speech is right or wrong. You should unravel what is untrue and make it all clear. Also, monks, if others speak highly of me, highly of the Dhamma and the Sangha, you need not on that account be elated; for that too will mar your inner development. You should acknowledge what is right and show the truth of what has been said."<sup>54</sup>

There never was an occasion when the Buddha manifested unfriendliness towards anyone—even to his opponents and enemies. There were those who opposed him and his doctrine, yet the Buddha never regarded them as enemies. When others reproached him in strong terms, the Buddha neither manifested anger nor aversion nor uttered an unkind word, but said:

"As an elephant in the battlefield endures the arrows shot from a bow, even so will I endure abuse and unfriendly expressions of others."<sup>55</sup>

## **Devadatta**

A striking example of this mental attitude is seen in his relation with Devadatta. Devadatta was a cousin of the Buddha who entered the Order and gained supernormal powers of the mundane plane (*puthujjana-iddhi*). Later, however, he began to harbor thoughts of jealousy and ill will toward his kinsman, the Buddha, and his two chief disciples, Saariputta and Mahaa Moggallaana, with the ambition of becoming the leader of the Sangha, the Order of Monks.

Devadatta wormed himself into the heart of Ajaatasattu, the young prince, the son of King Bimbisara. One day, when the Blessed One was addressing a gathering at the Veluvana Monastery where the king, too, was present, Devadatta approached the Buddha, saluted him, and said: "Venerable sir, you are now enfeebled with age. May the Master lead a life of solitude free from worry and care. I will direct the Order."

The Buddha rejected this overture and Devadatta departed irritated and disconcerted, nursing hatred and malice toward the Blessed One. Then, with the malicious purpose of causing mischief, he went to Prince Ajaatasattu, kindled in him the deadly embers of ambition, and said:

"Young man, you had better kill your father and assume kingship lest you die without becoming the ruler. I shall kill the Blessed One and become the Buddha."

So when Ajaatasattu murdered his father and ascended the throne Devadatta suborned ruffians to murder the Buddha, but failing in that endeavor, he himself hurled down a rock as the Buddha was

climbing up Gijjhakuuta Hill in Raajagaha. The rock tumbled down, broke in two, and a splinter slightly wounded the Buddha. Later Devadatta made an intoxicated elephant charge at the Buddha; but the animal prostrated himself at the Master's feet, overpowered by his loving-kindness. Devadatta now proceeded to cause a schism in the Sangha, but this discord did not last long. Having failed in all his intrigues, Devadatta retired, a disappointed and broken man. Soon afterwards he fell ill, and on his sick-bed, repenting his follies, he desired to see the Buddha. But that was not to be; for he died on the litter while being carried to the Blessed One. Before his death, however, he uttered repentance and sought refuge in the Buddha.<sup>56</sup>

## **The Last Days**

The Mahaa Parinibbaana Sutta,<sup>57</sup> the discourse on the passing away of the Blessed One, records in moving detail all the events that occurred during the last months and days of the Buddha's life.

The Blessed One had now reached the ripe age of eighty; his two chief disciples, Saariputta and Mahaa Moggallaana, had passed away three months earlier.

Pajaapati Gotami, Yasodharaa, and Raahula were also no more. The Buddha was now at Vesaali, and the rainy season having come, he went together with a great company of monks to Beluva to spend the rains there. There a severe sickness fell upon him, causing him much pain and agony but the Blessed One, mindful and self-possessed, bore it patiently. He was on the verge of death; but he felt he should not pass away without taking leave of the Order. So with a great effort of will he suppressed that illness and kept his hold on life. His sickness gradually abated, and when quite recovered he called the Venerable Aananda, his personal attendant, and addressing him said:

"Aananda, I am now grown old and full of years, my journey is drawing to a close. I have reached my sum of days, I am turning eighty years of age; and just as a worn-out cart, Aananda, can only with much additional care be made to move along, so the body of the Tathaagata can only be kept going with much infusion of will-power. It is only when the Tathaagata, ceasing to attend to any outward thing and to experience any worldly sensation, attains to the signless (*animitta*) concentration of mind, and



dwells in it—it is only then that the body of the Tathaagata is at ease.

"Therefore, Aananda, be islands unto yourselves. Be your own refuge. Have recourse to none else for refuge. Hold fast to the Dhamma as an island. Hold fast to the Dhamma as a refuge. Resort to no other refuge. Whosoever, Aananda, either now or after I am gone, shall be islands unto themselves, refuges unto themselves, shall seek no external refuge—it is they ânanda, among my disciples who shall reach the very topmost height! But they must be keen to progress."

From Beluva the Buddha journeyed to the Mahaavana, and there calling up an assembly of all the monks residing in the neighbourhood of Vesaali, addressed them saying: "Disciples, the Dhamma realized by me, I have made known to you. Make yourselves masters of the Dhamma, practise it, meditate upon it, and spread it abroad: out of pity for the world, for the good and the gain and welfare of gods and men."

The Buddha concluded his exhortation by saying:

"My age is now full, ripe, my life draws to its close; I leave you, I depart, relying on myself alone! Be earnest then, O disciples, holy full of thought! Be steadfast in resolve! Keep watch o'er your own hearts!

Who wearies not but holds fast to this Truth and Law  
Shall cross this sea of life, shall make an end of grief."

Worn out with sickness, with feeble limbs, the Blessed One now journeyed on with much difficulty followed by the Venerable Aananda and a great company of monks. Even in this last, long, wearisome journey of his, the Buddha never failed in his attention to others. He instructed Cunda, the smith, who offered him his last meal. Then on the way he stopped for Pukkusa, a disciple of Aalaaara Kaalaama, replied to all his questions, and so instructed him that Pukkusa offered himself as a follower of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.

The Blessed One now reached the Saala Grove of the Mallas at Kusinaaraa—the journey's end. Knowing that here would be his last resting place, he

told the Venerable Aananda: "I am weary Aananda, and would lie down. Spread over for me the couch with its head to the north between the twin saala trees."

He then lay down on his right side, composed and mindful, with one leg resting on the other. Speaking now to the Venerable Aananda, the Blessed One said:

"They who fulfil the greater and lesser duties, they who are correct in life, walking according to the precepts—it is they who rightly honor, reverence, and venerate the Tathaagata, the Perfect One, with the worthiest homage. Therefore, Aananda, be steady in the fulfillment of the greater and the lesser duties, and be correct in life, walking according to the precepts. Thus, Aananda, should you train yourselves."

## **The Last Convert**

At that time, a wandering ascetic named Subhadda, who was at Kusinaaraa, heard the news of the Blessed One's approaching death; and in order to clear-up certain doubts that troubled his mind, he hurried to the Saala Grove to speak to the Buddha.

The Venerable Aananda, however, did not wish the Buddha to be disturbed in his last moments, and though Subhadda made several appeals, access to the Master was refused. The Blessed One overheard the conversation. He knew at once that Subhadda was making his investigations with a genuine desire for knowledge; and knowing that Subhadda was capable of quickly grasping the answers, he desired that Subhadda be allowed to see him.

Subhadda's uncertainty was whether the leaders of the other schools of thought such as Puurana Kassapa, Nigantha Naataputta, and others had attained a true understanding. The Blessed One then spoke:

"In whatsoever Doctrine and Discipline (*dhammavinaya*), Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, neither in it is there found a man of true saintliness of the first, or of the second, or of the third, or of the fourth degree. And in whatsoever Doctrine and Discipline, Subhadda, the Noble Eight fold Path is found, in it is found the man of true saintliness of the first, and the second, and the third, and the fourth degree.<sup>58</sup> Now, in this Doctrine and Discipline, Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold

Path, and it too are found the men of true saintliness of all the four degrees. Void are the systems of other teachers—void of true saints. And in this one, Subhadda, may the brethren live the life that is right, so that the world be not bereft of arahats."

Hearing the words of the Blessed One, Subhadda gained confidence, and took refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. Furthermore, he desired to be admitted into the Order, and the Buddha requested the Venerable Aananda to receive him. Subhadda thus became the last convert and the last disciple of the Blessed One, and before long by his strenuous effort he attained the final stage of arahatship.

### **The Last Scene**

Now the Blessed One, addressing the Venerable Aananda, said:

"I have taught the Dhamma, Aananda, without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine, for in respect of the truth, Aananda, the Tathaagata has no such thing as the 'closed fist' of a teacher who hides some essential knowledge from the pupil.

"It may be, Aananda, that in some of you the thought may arise, 'The word of the Master is ended. We have no teacher anymore,' but it is not thus, Aananda, that you should think.

"The Doctrine and the Discipline which I have set forth and laid down for you—let them, after I am gone, be your teacher. It may be, monks, that there may be doubts in the minds of some brethren as to the Buddha, or the Dhamma, or the Sangha, or the path (*magga*) or method (*pa.tipadaa*). Inquire, monks, freely Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought: 'Our teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to inquire of the Exalted One when we were face to face with him.' "

When the Buddha had thus spoken the monks were silent.

A second and a third time the Blessed One repeated these words to the monks, and yet the monks were silent. And the Venerable Aananda said to the Blessed One: "How wonderful a thing is it, Lord, how marvelous! Truly I believe that in this whole assembly of the monks there is not one who has any

doubt or misgivings as to the Buddha or the Dhamma or the Sangha, or the path or the method."

The Blessed One confirmed the words of the Venerable Aananda, adding that in the whole assembly even the most backward one was assured of final deliverance. And after a short while the Master made his final exhortation to those who wished to follow his teaching now and in the future:

"Behold now, O monks, I exhort you: impermanent are all compounded things. Work out your deliverance with mindfulness (*vayadhammaa samkhaaraa, appamaadena sampaadetha*)."<sup>59</sup>

These were the last words of the Buddha.

Then the Master entered into those nine successive stages of meditative absorption (*jhaana*) which are of increasing sublimity: first the four fine-material absorptions (*ruupa-jhaana*), then the four immaterial absorptions (*aruupa-jhaana*), and finally the state where perceptions and sensations entirely cease (*sññaa-vedayita-nirodha*). Then he returned through all these stages to the first fine-material absorption and rose again to the fourth one. Immediately after having re-entered this stage (which has been

described as having "purity of mindfulness due to equanimity"), the Buddha passed away (*parinibbaayi*). He realized Nibbaana that is free from any substratum of further becoming (*parinibbaana*).<sup>60</sup>

In the Mahaa Parinibbaana Sutta are recorded, in moving detail, all the events that occurred during the last months and days of the Master's life.

In the annals of history no man is recorded as having so consecrated himself to the welfare of all beings, irrespective of caste, class, creed, or sex, as the Supreme Buddha. From the hour of his enlightenment to the end of his life, he strove tirelessly and unostentatiously to elevate humanity regardless of the fatigue involved and oblivious to the many obstacles and handicaps that hampered his way. He never relaxed in his exertion for the common weal and was never subjected to moral or spiritual fatigue. Though physically he was not always fit, mentally he was ever vigilant and energetic.

Therefore it is said:



*"Ah, wonderful is the Conqueror,  
who e'er untiring strives,  
for the blessings of all beings,  
for the comfort of all lives."*

Though twenty-five centuries have gone since the passing away of the Buddha, his message of love and wisdom still exists in its purity decisively influencing the destinies of humanity. Forests of flowers are daily offered at his shrines and countless millions of lips daily repeat the formula: *Buddham sarana.m gacchaami*, "I take refuge in the Buddha." His greatness yet glows today like a sun that blots out lesser lights, and his Dhamma yet beckons the weary pilgrim to Nibbaana's security and peace.

## Notes

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discover y of India* (Calcutta: Signet Press, 1946)
2. Ibid.,
3. In Sanskrit, Siddhaartha Gautama.
4. The warrior class. [back]
5. Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*.

6. Ibid. 7. A.I,146. 8. For a detailed account see M. No. 36, trans. by I.B. Horner in *Middle Length Sayings*, Vol. I (PTS ). See also R. Abeysekara, "The Master's Quest for Light" (Kandy BPS) BL A7. 9. Mahaa Saccaka Sutta, M. No. 36.

10. Elsewhere we see the defilement of false view (*di.t.thaasava*) added to these as the fourth taint. 11. M. No. 36; I,249.

12. Dhp 153-154. Trans. by Ña.namoli Thera.

13. A bodhisatta (Skt. *bodhisattva*) is one who adheres to or is bent on (*satta*) the ideal of enlightenment, or knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (*bodhi*). In this sense, the term may be applied to anyone who is bent on supreme enlightenment (*sammaa-sambodhi*). A Bodhisatta fully cultivates ten perfections or *paarami*, which are essential qualities of an extremely high standard initiated by compassion, and ever tinged with understanding, free from craving, pride, and false views (*ta.nhaa*, *di.t.thi*, and *maana*) that qualify an aspirant for Buddhahood.

They are: *daana*, *sila*, *nek khamma*, *pañña*, *viriyā*, *khanti*, *sacca*, *adhi.t.thaana*, *mettaa*, and

*upekkhaa*—generosity morality renunciation, wisdom, effort, forbearance, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness, and equanimity.

14. *2500 Years of Buddhism*, Foreword, p ix, Government of India, 1971.

15. Vin.I,10; V 420.

16. S III,66.

17. Ud.1. See too the author's *Dependent Origination* (Wheel No.15).

18. At this time there was as yet no Order (*sangha*).

19. Vin.I,4.

20. M. No. 26; I,167-68.

21. For a comprehensive explanation of these truths, see the author's *The Buddha's Ancient Path*; Bhikkhu Ñā.namoli, *Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha* (Wheel No. 17); Francis Story *The Four Noble Truths* (Wheel No. 34/35); Nyanatiloka Thera, *The Word of the Buddha*. All published by BPS

22. Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, S V 420. [back]

23. *The Bosat* (Vol. 5, No.I, 1942), Vajirarama, Colombo, p 8.

24. S V 437. 25. M. No. 22; I,140.

26. S V 588; M. No. 92; Vin.I,45; Thag. 828.

27. In 273 B.C. Emperor Asoka came on pilgrimage to this holy spot and caused a series of monuments and a commemorative pillar with the lion capital to be erected. This capital with its four magnificent lions upholding the *dharmacakra*, "the Wheel of Dharma," now stands in the museum of Sarnath, Benares, and is today the official crest of India. The *dharmacakra* festival is still held in Sri Lanka.

Jawaharlal Nehru writes: "At Sarnath near Benares, I would almost see the Buddha preaching his first sermon, and some of his recorded words would come like a distant echo to me through two thousand five hundred years. Asoka's pillars of stone with their inscriptions would speak to me in their magnificent language and tell me of a man who, though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor " (*The Discovery of India*, p 44.) [back]

28. The "rains" is the three months of seclusion during the rainy season, i.e. from July to October in India.

29. Vin.I,21.

30. It is interesting to note that this greatest of Indian rishis (seers) was born under a tree in a park, attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma at the Deer Park under trees, and finally passed away under the twin saala trees. He spent most of his time in the open in forests and in the villages of India. The south branch of the Bodhi Tree was brought to Sri Lanka by the arhat nun Sanghamittaa, daughter of Asoka the Great of India, in the third century B.C. The oldest recorded tree in the world, it still flourishes at Anuradhapura.

31. The whole of this discourse is at A.IV 354, Ud.3437, and in brief at *Dhammapada Commentary*, I,287. In the elder's verse (66) in *Theragaatha*, it is said that Venerable Meghiya was of a Saakyan raajaa's family The Dhammapada verses

(33, 34) are as follows:

The unsteady fickle mind

Hard to guard and hard to control,  
The wise man straightens  
Even as a fletcher an arrow.

Like a fish jerked out of its watery abode  
And cast on land, this mind quakes;  
(Therefore) the realm of Maara  
Should be abandoned.  
[back]

32. Ariya-pariyesana Sutta, M.No. 26; I,264. [back]

33. The word is applied only to those who have fully destroyed the taints. In this sense the Buddha was the first arahat in the world, as he himself revealed to Upaka.

34. S III,66.

35. Mahaa Parinibbaana Sutta, D. No. 16; II,100.

36. M. No. 38; I,264.

37. Dhp 276.

38. S I,156.

39. Vatthuupama Sutta, M. No. 7. See Nyanaponika Thera, *The Simile of the Cloth* (Wheel No. 61/62).

40. P.D. Premasiri, "The Buddhist Concept of A Just Social and Political Order," *Young Buddhist*, Singapore.

41. Sn. 455, 456; Chalmer's translation (Harvard Oriental Series). [back]

42. See G.P. Malalasekera and K.N. Jayatilleke, *Buddhism and the Race Question* (Wheel 200/201).

43. *Psalms of the Early Buddhists - The Sisters*, trans. by C.A.F Rhys Davids (PTS Translation Series).

44. Jaataka No. 485.

45. Vin.I,82-83. See Piyadassi Thera and J.F Dickson, *Ordination in Theravaada Buddhism* Wheel No.56

46. M. No. 62. For a full translation see *Advice to Raahula* (Wheel No. 33). [back]

47. C.A.F Rhys Davids, *Psalms of the Early Buddhists - The Sisters*, p 120.

48. Vin.I,302.

49. "To the north-east of the monastery of Jetavana," wrote General Alexander Cunningham in his *Archaeological Report*, 1862-3, "there was a *stuupa* built on the spot where the Buddha had washed the hands and feet of a sick monk.... The remains of the *stuupa* still exist in a mass of solid brick work at a distance of 550 feet from the Jetavana Monastery " In General Cunningham's map of Saavatti (modern Sahet-Mahet), the site of this *stuupa* is marked H. in the plan. *Archaeological Survey of India* (Simla 1871), p 341.

50. Metta Sutta, *Sutta Nipaata*, 149, 149; Chalmer's trans. [back]

51. Edwin Arnold, *The Light of Asia*. 52. These are the *a.t.tha loka-dhamma*, the eight vicissitudes of life.

53. S II,138.

54. D.I,3.

55. Dhammapada, 310.

56. Comy on the Dhammapada, Vol. I, p 147.



57. D No 16, translated as *Last Days of the Buddha* (BPS).

58. These four stages are: *sotaapatti* (stream-entry); *sakadaagaami*, (once-return); *anaagaami* (non-return); and *arahatta* (the final stage of sainthood). Arahathship is the stage at which fetters are severed and taints rooted out.

59. The Mahaa Parinibbaana Sutta (D. No. 16) records in moving detail all the events that occurred during the last months and days of the Master's life.

60. The passages in quotations are taken with slight alterations from the "Book of the Great Decease" in *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Digha Nikaaya, Part II.

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— §§§ —

# **Buddhist Meditation**

*Bhikkhu Piyadassi Mahathera*

Part II [Excerpted]  
Source: BuddhaSasana

## **Beauty is Skin Deep**

As the discourse explains, the meditator reflects on this very body encased by the skin and full of impurities from the soles up and from the hair of the head down thinking thus: "There are in this body, hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, flesh, sinews, bones, etc. Thus he lives contemplating foulness in this body."

This may not be a subject of meditation quite agreeable to the Westerner. The young in the East or West, in particular, do not like to regard the body as foul. However, whether we like it or not, if we dispassionately review this "fathom-long body" we will not see anything beautiful in it such as pearls and gems, etc., but only a heap of repulsive parts.

"Beauty is skin deep." Young or old it is good to understand the real nature of this body, and the fact

that we all confront *birth, ageing and death*. We live, love and laugh, yet our life is dark with ageing, smothered with death, bound up with change, and these qualities are so inherent in it -- even as greenness is to grass, and bitterness to quinine that not all the magic and power of science can ever transform it.

*"Like as the damask rose you see,  
Or like the blossom on the tree,  
Or like the dainty flower of May  
Or like the morning to the day  
Or like the sun, or like the shade,  
Or like ground which Jonas had -  
Even such is man, whose thread is spun,  
Drawn out, and out, and so is done.  
The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,  
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,  
The sun sets, the shadow flies,  
The gourd consumes; and man he dies.  
Even such is man, who lives by breath,  
Is here, now there: so life and death.  
Even such is man, who heaps up sorrow,  
Lives but this day and dies tomorrow.  
The song is short, the journey's so,*

*The pear doth rot, the plum doth fall,  
The snow dissolves, and so must all" i[1]*

This view of life is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but realistic. Do not think that the Buddhist outlook on life and the world is a gloomy one, and that the Buddhist is in low spirits. Far from it, he smiles as he walks through life.

From the above contemplation of the body (*kayanupassana*) let us, now, proceed to the contemplation of feelings or of sensations (*vedananupassana*). In this meditation we are expected to become mindful of our feelings: pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. When experiencing a pleasant feeling, the meditator knows that it is a pleasant feeling because he is mindful of the feeling [and] the same with regard to all other feelings. He tries to experience each feeling as it really is.

Generally, people are depressed when they are experiencing unpleasant feelings and are elated by pleasant feelings. This mental exercise of mindfulness helps a man to experience all feelings with a detached outlook, with equanimity and to avoid becoming a slave to sensations. Through

insight meditation (*vipassana*) he also learns to realize that there is only a feeling, a sensation. That, too, is not lasting and there is no permanent entity or "self" that feels.

The contemplation of mind (*cittanupassana*), which is the third type of mindfulness, speaks to us of the importance of studying our own mind, of being aware of our diverse thoughts. Thoughts in this context are those of lust, hatred and delusion, which are the root causes of all wrong doing, and their opposites that counteract those unwholesome states of mind. Rather than thoughts of lust it concerns lust as a state of mind (*saragam cittam, etc.*).

The meditator tries to know through mindfulness both the wholesome states of mind and the unwholesome states of mind. He sees them without attachment or aversion. This kind of dispassionate discernment of the mind makes a man understand the real function of his mind, its real nature and behaviour. Those who practise contemplation of the mind learn to control the mind.

A feature of the modern world is its superficiality. Modern man will object, but if he makes an

impartial introspection, he cannot deny this. Modern man does not pause to think deeply. External appearance goes a great way with him. See the extent to which modern man is influenced by advertisements and shop-window exhibitions. If these did not influence him, shop-owners would not spend the enormous sums they do on advertisements. Buddhist meditation has a cure for this superficiality: *cittanupassana*, mindfulness of thought or contemplation of mind.

Modern man does very little independent thinking. He seldom forms his own views. The style of dress he adopts, the brand of articles he buys, is decided for him by advertisers. How easily he is moved by the shouting of slogans. Slogans and political propaganda mould man's mind, and life tends to be mechanical; man has become a puppet controlled by others.

Modern man has become enmeshed in all sorts of ideas, views, opinions and ideologies both wise and foolish. He is film-fed, television-minded, and radio-trained. Today what is presented by the newspapers, radio, television, some novels and pictures, by certain literature on sex, psychology and by sex-

ridden films tend to confuse man, and turn him from the path of rectitude and understanding. But the man who practises mindfulness will be protected from the subtle persuasive power of advertisement or the shouts of the propagandists, or the dramatic effects of mass movements.

Another weakness of modern man is his desire for change and for quick results. The absence of calm in him is a great deficiency. Calm begets mental strength. Absence of calm begets impatience and the impatient man is never satisfied. He always wants something new and startling. He is disappointed if he takes up the morning newspaper and finds no banner headlines.

Modern man craves for variety. He craves for sensations, he is fed on sensations. He continually yearns for something fresh, for new methods, new machinery, new drugs, a new way of life, a new ideology. There is no end to this. This modern attitude is symptomatic of a disease -- *the disease of mental unrest*.

Here again, the practice of mindfulness is the much needed cure. Mindfulness leads to calmness, and

calmness gives an even tone to one's life. Trained in calmness, he will shed a host of unnecessary desires. He will "walk through the uneven with an even stride" (*visame samam caranti*). ii[2]

The contemplation of the mind also makes us realize that what we call mind is only an ever-changing process consisting of changing mental factors and that there is no abiding entity called ego or self.

The fourth and the last type of mindfulness is the contemplation of mental objects or mind contents (*dhammanupassana*). This covers all the essential Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha, most of which are discussed in *The Buddha's Ancient Path* by the present writer.

The contemplation of mental objects is not mere thinking or deliberation -- rather it goes hand in hand with mindfulness in discerning mind objects as and when they arise and cease (*samudayavaya*). When, for example, sense desire is present in him the meditator knows: "There is sense desire in me," or when sense desire is absent, he knows: "There is no sense desire in me," and so on. The same with regard to the other hindrances (*nivaramani*). iii[3]



In the same manner he discerns through mindfulness the five aggregates of clinging (*panca-upadanakkhandha*) -- body or material form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness.

He discerns with mindfulness the six internal and the six external sense-bases. Herein the meditator knows well the eye, the visible form and the fetter iv[4] that arises dependent on both (the eye and form); he knows well the ear and sounds ... the nose and smells ... tongue and savors ... the body and tactile objects ... the mind and mind objects, and knows well the fetter arising dependent on both. He also knows the ceasing of the fetter.

Similarly, he discerns the seven factors of enlightenment (*sattabojjhanga*) v[5] and the Four Noble Truths (*cattari ariyasaccani*). The Four Noble Truths in this context are not intellectual categories to be cogitated upon, but palpable illustrations of them which the meditator comes across and identifies.

*"Thus he lives mindfully investigating and understanding the mental objects. He lives*

*independent, clinging to nothing in the world". The fourfold mindfulness is a teaching (Dhamma) on which all aspects of the Dhamma converge.*

The description of each type of mindfulness in the discourse ends with the words: "*He lives independent clinging to nothing in the world*"; for "*everything when clung to fails.*" vi[6] This is the result aimed at by the meditator to be achieved by the earnest and ever zealous. "Lives independent" means aloof from craving and wrong views (*tanha, ditthi*). Here "world" means the world of being, one's own psycho-physical organism. He does not cling to this process of mind and body and regard it as a permanent ego entity or self.

### **The Simile of the Raft**

It is because of our greed, our craving that we cling to people and things. If we can practise the art of dealing with things with a detached outlook, then we learn to let go. Our bonds are not in the sense organs or in sense objects. They are due to our greed that arises when the sense organs come in contact with sense objects. vii[7] So the problem and solution, the

malady and the remedy, lie within. Learn the art of giving up.

It is hard to live clinging to nothing in the world and our efforts to reach such spiritual heights may appear impossible. Yet it is possible and worth striving for again and again; for by dint of effort and hard work, many have attained those heights in this very life. *"Sow a thought and you reap a deed. Sow a deed, and you reap a habit. Sow a habit, and you reap a character. Sow a character, and you reap a destiny - - for character is destiny."*

In this connection it is interesting to know the Buddha's simile of the raft. viii[8] Let us listen to him:

"Using the simile of a raft, monks, I teach the Dhamma designed for crossing over and not for retaining. Listen and attend carefully to what I say."

"Yes, Venerable Sir," the monks replied. The Buddha continued:

"Monks, a man sets out on a journey and comes to a vast stretch of water. The near bank is beset with fears and dangers, the far bank is safe. But no boat

goes to the further shore and there is no bridge. He thinks: 'Vast, indeed, is this stretch of water, the near bank is unsafe but the further one is without danger. I had better collect grass, leaves, branches and wood to make a raft and with its aid using my hands and feet, ferry myself across to the further shore.'

"Then, monks, that man having made a raft crosses over safely to the further shore striving with his hands and feet.

“Having crossed he thinks: 'This raft has been very useful, for with its aid I have reached the further bank safely. I had better carry it on my head or back and go wherever I want.' "What do you think, monks, if he does this is he acting rightly about the raft?" "No, indeed, Lord."

"Suppose that man who has crossed over to the further bank should think:

'This raft has been very useful, with its aid I have reached the further bank safely. I had better beach it, or let it float down the vast stretch of water and go wherever I want.'

“If he acts thus, monks, he would be acting rightly about the raft. *Even so, monks, using the simile of a raft have I taught the Dhamma designed for crossing over, and not for retaining. You, monks, who understand the Dhamma taught by using the simile of the raft, have to give up good things (dhamma); how much more the evil things (a-dhamma).*” It is interesting to note that the word “*dhamma*” here, according to the Commentary, means calm or concentration of mind (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassana*). Clinging even to such high mental attainments as these should be given up. Need one speak of evil things?

## **Subjective and Objective Looking**

In the **Satipatthana Sutta** mindfulness is especially concerned with just four things: *body, feelings, mind and mental objects*.

The contemplation of the body makes us realize the true nature of the body, without any pretence, by analyzing it right down to its ultimates, its fundamental elements. This mental scrutiny of our own body helps us to understand that it is a process

without any underlying substance or core that may be taken as permanent and lasting.

A special feature of this all-important mental factor of mindfulness is that it involves a method of looking at things, objectively, rather than subjectively. So it is important to know the difference between objective and subjective looking.

The practice of all the four types of meditation on setting up of mindfulness is done objectively without any subjective reaction. One should not be an interested observer, but a bare observer, to practise mindfulness. Then only can one see the object in its proper perspective, as it really is, and not as it appears to be.

When you observe a thing subjectively, your mind gets involved in it, you tend to identify yourself with it. You judge, evaluate, appraise and comment on it.

Such subjective looking *colours* your observation. *So in the practice of the four types of mindfulness, that is, mindfulness of body, of feelings, of the mind, and of mental objects, one should contemplate it without any biases, prejudices, likes and dislikes and other preconceived considerations and notions. In*

*other words, mindfulness should be practised in an objective way as if you are observing the object from outside.*

When "contemplating the body in the body" (*kaye-kayanupassi*) you do not contemplate feelings, states of mind, or mental objects concerning your body, but only the body itself. In this connection we should take to heart the precise and clear way the Buddha taught Bahiya.

Bahiya was the leader of a religious sect who assumed himself to be an Arahant, a consummate one. But later, on the advice of another, he went to the Buddha to learn the technique, the process, whereby one can become an Arahant. Knowing that Bahiya was a man of understanding, the Buddha taught him the technique in these words:

*"Bahiya, thus should you train yourself: 'In what is seen there should be to you only the seen; in the heard there should be only the heard; in what is sensed (as smell, taste and touch) there should be only what is sensed; in the cognizing there should be only the cognizing.' "*

Here the idea of "I am seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and cognizing" is removed. The "I" concept, the ego-illusion, drops away. This kind of attention removes tension, it calms and relaxes the mind, and that is the reason why meditators do not need much sleep. Let alone deep meditation, many do not know the art of seeing even a natural phenomena; for they have not trained themselves in observing things objectively.

Suppose you are gazing at a gorgeous sunset. If you start commenting, judging, and observing it subjectively, then you are not seeing the sunset, you do not really see its beauty.

But if you view it objectively with a calm and quiet mind, with complete attention, then you will see the beauty of the sunset in all its fullness, and also that the so called beauty is ephemeral, impermanent and ever changing.

This applies to many other things. If you can look at a rose or a lotus objectively without any subjective reaction, then you will see. If you are a lover of music and if you listen to music with undivided



attention, you may enjoy the music more than the musician does.

## **Calm and Insight**

Even the higher practice of calming concentration (*samadhi*) does not place the meditator in a position of security; for the underlying defilements or latent tendencies (*anusaya*) are not removed. They are in abeyance. At any moment they may re-appear when circumstances permit, and plague his mind if right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration wane. As he still has the impurities, unwholesome impulses latent in his mental make-up, he is not yet in a state of absolute security. He has gained calm of mind through *samadhi* or concentration. However, it is through *vipassana*, insight meditation, that the latent defilements are rooted out of his mind. So the meditator training himself in virtue and concentration, develops *vipassana* or insight.

The development of concentrative calm, *samadhi*, is thus never an end in itself. It is only a means to something more sublime which is of vital importance, namely, insight, *vipassana*. In other words, it is a means to gain right understanding, the

first factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. Though only a means to an end, *samadhi* plays an important role in the path. It is also known as *citta-visuddhi*, purity of mind, which is brought about by the stilling of hindrances. ix[9] The Buddha says: "Develop calm, the disciple who has gained calm sees things as they really are" (*samadhim bhavetha, samahito yatha bhatam pajanati*). x[10]

"Two things (*dhamma*), monks, should be developed for the understanding of lust, hatred and delusion ... What two? Calm and insight. These two things should be developed for the abandonment, extinction and cessation of lust, hatred and delusion ..." xi[11]

Further says the Buddha: "Two things, monks, partake of knowledge (*vijja-bhagiya*): calm and insight; when calm is developed, mind is developed; through developed mind, lust is abandoned. When insight is developed, wisdom is developed. Through developed insight, ignorance is abandoned. The mind polluted with lust is not liberated. When there is pollution through ignorance, wisdom is not developed."

Thus deliverance of the mind (*ceto vimutti*) is due to the mind being cleansed from lust. Deliverance through wisdom (*panna-vimutti*) is due to the mind being cleansed from ignorance. xii[12]

From the foregoing it, is obvious that calm and insight, in other words, right concentration and right understanding of the path, cannot be separated. Together they support each other. Without a certain measure of concentrative calm, no insight can be developed and without some measure of insight, no concentration can be developed. They are inseparable; this fact is explained by the Buddha thus:

*"No concentration is there for the unwise,  
No wisdom in one who lacks concentration;  
In whom there is concentration and wisdom,  
He truly is in Nibbana's neighbourhood.  
xiii[13]*

## **Understanding Ourselves**

The meditator who gains deep concentration of mind through mindfulness of in-and-out-breathing, now directs his thoughts to insight meditation (*vipassana bhavana*). In this context *vipassana*, or insight,

means understanding things as they really are, that is seeing the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-substantial (non-self) nature of the five aggregates of clinging.

In plain language it is understanding ourselves. It is not easy for us to understand ourselves because of our wrong concepts, baseless illusions, perversions and delusions. It is so difficult to see the real person. Through *vipassana* one endeavors to remove the illusions (*maya*), concepts (*pannatti*) and perversions (*vipallasa*) and see ourselves as we really are.

When the meditator has advanced in his breathing meditation, when his mind is calmed through stilling the hindrances, he can see the impermanent nature of his own breath: its rise and fall like the waves of the sea.

Now based on the impermanent breath, he endeavors to understand the impermanent nature of the five aggregates of clinging. The analysis of the so called being into the five ever-changing aggregates makes it clear that there is nothing abiding, nothing eternally conserved in this so called being -- this

process of mind and body. One has also to take to heart the sequence between mindfulness (*sati*), analysis of the Dhamma (*dhamma-vicaya*), effort (*viriya*) and so forth, in the factors of enlightenment, mentioned in the fourth type of mindfulness (*dhammanupassana*).

Mindfully one analyzes the dhamma. Here "*dhamma*" means one's mind and body. For this, one needs determination and the fourfold effort xiv[14] to have a clear picture of the function of the mental factors, to overcome the unwholesome and maintain the wholesome thoughts. As the meditator proceeds with indefatigable zeal analyzing the mind and body, seeing with insight what is beyond the naked eye, there arises unalloyed joy (*araddha viriyassa uppajjati piti niramisa*). xv[15]

Change or impermanence (*anicca*) is the essential characteristic of phenomenal existence.

We cannot say of anything, animate or inanimate, "this is lasting"; for even while we say this, it is undergoing change. The aggregates are compounded and conditioned, and, therefore, ever subject to cause and effect.

Unceasingly does mind and its factors change, and just as unceasingly, though at a lower rate, the physical body also changes from moment to moment.

"He who sees clearly that the impermanent aggregates are impermanent, he has right understanding." xvi[16]

The Buddha gives five very striking similes to illustrate the impermanent nature of the five aggregates of clinging. He compares material form or body to a lump of *foam*, feeling to a *bubble*, perception to a *mirage*, mental formations or volitional activities to a plantain trunk which is *pithless*, without heartwood and consciousness to an illusion. He asks:

"What essence, monks, could there be in a lump of foam, in a bubble, in a mirage, in a plantain trunk, in an illusion?" Continuing, the Buddha says:

"Whatever material form there be whether past, future or present; internal or external; gross or subtle; low or lofty; far or near; that material form the meditator sees, meditates upon, examines with systematic and wise attention (*yoniso manasikara*),

he thus seeing, meditating upon, and examining with systematic and wise attention, would find it empty, unsubstantial and without essence. What essence, monks, could there be in material form?" The Buddha speaks in the same manner of the remaining aggregates and asks: "What essence, monks, could there be in feeling, in perception, in mental formations and in consciousness?"

Thus, we see that a more advanced range of thought comes with the analysis of the five aggregates of clinging. It is at this stage that right understanding, insight (*vipassana*) begins to work. It is through this insight that the true nature of the aggregates is grasped and seen in the light of the three signs or characteristics (*ti-lakkhana*), *signata* namely: impermanence, suffering or unsatisfactoriness and not-self. The Master explains it thus:

*"The five aggregates, monks, are impermanent (anicca); whatever is impermanent, that is dukkha, unsatisfactory; that is without self (anatta), that is not mine, that I am not, that is not my self. Thus should it be seen through perfect wisdom (sammappannaya) as it really is. He who sees by*

*perfect wisdom as it really is, his mind not grasping, is detached from taints, he is liberated." xvii[17]*

It is not only the five aggregates that are impermanent, unsatisfactory and without a self, but the causes and conditions that produce the aggregates are also impermanent, unsatisfactory and without a self. This point the Buddha makes clear:

*"Material form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness, monks, are impermanent; whatever causes and conditions there are for the arising of these aggregates, they too are impermanent. How, monks, could aggregates, arising from what is impermanent be permanent?" xviii[18] "What is impermanent is not worth rejoicing, not worth approval, not worth clinging to ..." xix[19]*

We actually live for one moment only, and the next moment, it is another life. Thus, the duration of life, in the ultimate sense, is for one moment only. This is sometimes referred to as the instantaneousness of life.

There is a living and dying every moment.



Today is the tomorrow we spoke of yesterday.

The meditative mind unrelated to the past and to the future is capable of living with clarity and reason in the world.

The essence of *vipassana* meditation is in the experience, not in sermons and books on meditation, though they have their advantages. Do not cling to any goal or results of meditation. This is a practice without any attachment to anything material, mental or spiritual; for all things when clung to fail. Be ever vigilant and mindful.

The Discourse on Setting Up of Mindfulness (Satipatthana Sutta) repeats the saying: "He lives independent, clinging to nothing in the world" (*anissito ca viharati na ca kinci loke upadiyati*). This is the result a meditator gains.

## **Removing Perversions**

It is always when we fail to see the true nature of things that our views become clouded. Because of our likes and dislikes, we fail to see the sense organs and sense objects objectively and in their proper

perspective and go after mirages, illusions and deceptions.

The sense organs delude and mislead us and then we fail to see things in their true light as a result of which our way of seeing things becomes perverted.

The delusion of mind mistakes the unreal for the real, the passing shadows for permanence, and the result is confusion, conflict, disharmony and perpetual sorrow.

When a man is caught-up in these illusions, he perceives, thinks and views incorrectly.

He perceives permanence in the impermanent; pleasure in pain; self in what is not self; beauty in the repulsive. He thinks and views in the same erroneous manner. Thus each perversion works in four ways, xx[20] and leads man astray [and] clouds his vision and confuses him.

He is deluded by his own senses. This is due to unwise reflection, unsystematic attention (*ayoniso-manasikara*).

He who cannot see the true nature of this world, its ways, its tendencies, the inevitable fruit of actions,

and he who cannot see that life is not permanent and lacking in true happiness, and who, therefore, still clings to the world, is too young yet in life.

He has to mature in right understanding before the *Buddhadhamma* has a message for him. His veils of lust, self-conceit and delusion are thick and strong. The terrible dangers of the world of life lay in the understanding of life; for everything here pertaining to world changes; there is no exception, one can rely on nothing.

Right understanding or insight alone removes these illusions and helps man to cognize the real nature that underlies all appearance.

It is only when man comes out of this cloud of illusions and perversions that he shines with true wisdom like the full moon that emerges brilliant from behind a black cloud.

When discussing the three-fold training: virtue, concentration and wisdom, leading to final deliverance and complete mental purity, it is important to understand how man's latent or underlying tendencies function.

When the defilements lie dormant in the recesses of man's mind, they are called latent, underlying or hidden (*anusaya*). xxi[21] "They are dormant so long as they are not fed.

The five sense organs with the mind as the sixth, provide the necessary food in the form of visible objects, sounds, smell, taste, touch and mental objects.

These six kinds of food can be either agreeable or offensive. In either case, sense objects act as stimulants, and no sooner are the latent tendencies thus stimulated than they rise to the surface. This uprising of the tendencies is known as *pariyutthana* or *samudagata*.

When they are thus awakened and aroused, they tend to escape, and seek an outlet. If man fails to exercise systematic wise attention (*yoniso-manasikara*) and calm down the risen tendencies, they escape either through the doors of speech or deed or through both, and that is called transgression or going beyond (*vitikkama*).

Of these three stages of the tendencies, the third, that is the "transgression stage," is coarse, the second, the

"risen stage," is fine, and the first, or the "latent stage," is still finer. The three weapons to overcome them and to deliver the mind from their grip are *virtue, concentration* and *wisdom*.

Through virtue or *sila* all bodily and verbal ill actions are brought under control, and the transgression stage is checked. It is true, even for training verbal and physical acts a certain measure of mental discipline is needed, though not necessarily intense and serious meditation.

Man may, through *sila*, be calm and composed verbally and physically, but not in mind; he lacks concentration, *samadhi*.

Virtue cannot control the mind, though it is an asset to mental calm. Concentration with the aid of wise attention subdues the second type of tendencies thus preventing them from escaping. Concentration, however, is incapable of removing the latent tendencies.

It is through wisdom, which is insight, *vipassana*, that all impulses, all tendencies are completely eradicated. And then no more can a man be confused

by the terrible, or swept off his feet by the glamour of things ephemeral.

No more is it possible for him to have a clouded view of phenomena; for he has transcended all capacity for error through perfect immunity which *vipassana* alone can grant. And this is *deliverance* (*vimutti*), the stepping out (*nissarama*) from the vicious circle of *samsara*, repeated existence.

Let us now call to mind the proclamation of the Buddha in the opening lines of the Satipatthana Sutta:

*Satipatthana is the one and only way for the purification of beings, for the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, for the abandoning of pain and grief, for reaching the right path and realising Nibbana.*

## **Summing-Up**

As we discussed earlier, the starting point in the Dispensation of the Buddha (*Buddha-sasana*) is *silā*, virtuous behaviour.

Standing on the firm ground of *silā*, the meditator should endeavor to discipline the fickle mind. The

Buddha pointed out to his disciples ways and means of overcoming verbal and physical ill behaviour. By taming his tongue, controlling his bodily actions, and making himself pure in the way he earns his living, the meditator establishes himself well in moral habits.

While thus restraining himself in word and deed, he tries to guard the doors of the senses; for if he lacks control over his senses, unhealthy thoughts are bound to fill his mind. He maintains his balance putting away all likes and dislikes. This control of the senses he practises with zest. He eats moderately and mindfully and is devoted to wakefulness.

Now if he is earnest and mindful, he will advance without faltering and start the more difficult task of meditation.

Taking up a subject of meditation that suits his temperament and continuing with it without stopping, he gains concentrative calm by overcoming the hindrances which obstruct the meditation.

Thus the meditator who strives mindfully gains control over his fickle mind. With his speech,

actions and sense organs subjugated and his mind under control, he has now gained self-mastery.

Thus training himself in virtue and concentration (*sila-sikkha* and *samadhi-sikkha*), he now tries to gain true wisdom or insight by seeing all things as they really are (*yathabh|tam*).

Viewing things as they really are implies, as we have discussed above, seeing the transient, unsatisfactory and selfless nature of all conditioned and component things. To such a meditative disciple of the Buddha, the "world" is not the external or empirical world, but the human body with its consciousness -- the world of the five aggregates of clinging.

It is this that he tries to understand as impermanent, unsatisfactory and without self or ego entity. It is to this world of body and mind that the Buddha referred when he said to Mogharaja: "Ever mindful, Mogharaja, see the world as void (*sunna*) --having given up the notion of a self (underlying it) -- so may one overcome Mara (death.)" xxii[22]

The *vipassana* method implies gaining knowledge by direct observation. It goes beyond the intellect,



beyond theory, beyond conceptual interpretation, to the actual experiencing of life itself.

Thus comprehending things as they really are, thus realising the true nature of the five aggregates of clinging, by washing out the impurities of his mind, he "lives independent, clinging to nothing in the world."

The reader will note that in this self-purification and self-mastery for final deliverance, there is no coercion or compulsion by any external agency, there are no rewards or punishments for deeds done or left undone.

Deliverance from mental taints lies absolutely and entirely in one's own hands, not in someone else's -- be it human or divine. The door is free of all bolts and bars except those that man himself has made. Not even a supreme Buddha can deliver a man from the fetters of existence except by showing him the path.

The path is virtue, concentration and wisdom.

All life's problems can be reduced to one single problem, which is that of *dukkha*, suffering or

unsatisfactoriness. And the solution put forward by the Buddhas or Enlightened Ones of all ages is the Noble Eightfold Path.

The efficiency of this path lies in the practice of it. The Buddha's meditation path, which is the Noble Eightfold Path, still beckons the weary pilgrim to the haven of Nibbana's security and peace. "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step" and as the old saying goes: "Some run swiftly; some walk; some creep painfully; but all who keep on will reach the goal."

-ooOoo-

## **ADDENDUM I**

Thus Have I Heard

Then a certain monk visited the Buddha, saluted him and sat on one side. Having saluted, he said to the Buddha: "They say, Lord, 'Living according to the Dhamma' (*dhamma-vihari*). Lord, how does a monk live according to the Dhamma?"

1. "Here, O monk, a monk masters the Dhamma (the teaching of the Buddha) and spends the day in that mastery, does not go into solitude, does not practise mind concentration. That monk is said to be intensely bent on study, but he lives not according to the Dhamma.

2. "Again, O monk, a monk teaches others the Dhamma in detail as he has heard it, as he has mastered it; he spends the day convincing others of the Dhamma, does not go into solitude, does not practise concentration of mind. That monk is said to be intent on convincing others, but he lives not according to the Dhamma.

3. "Again, O monk, a monk repeats the Dhamma in detail as he has heard it, as he has mastered it, he spends the day in that repetition, does not go into solitude, does not practise mind concentration. That monk is said to be intent on repeating, but he lives not according to the Dhamma.

4. "Again, O monk, a monk turns his mind to the Dhamma, ponders over it, reflects on it, as he has heard it, as he has mastered it; he spends the day in

thinking about the Dhamma, but he lives not according to the Dhamma.

5. "But, O monk, a monk masters the Dhamma, but does not spend the day in that mastery; he goes into solitude and practises mind concentration. Verily, O monk, such a monk lives according to the Dhamma.

"O monk, thus, indeed, have I declared: one intent on study, one intent on convincing others, one intent on repeating, one intent on thinking and one who lives according to the Dhamma.

"What should be done by a teacher for his disciples out of love and compassion, that has been done by me for you. Here are tree-roots, empty places; meditate, O monks, do not be heedless, do not have any regrets afterwards: This is my exhortion to you"

*(Anguttara Nikaya, Pancaka Nipata 73).*

## **ADDENDUM II**

### **The Art of Noble Living** *(Brahma-vihara)*

*Brahma-vihara* is another subject of meditation that is beneficial to practise. The word "*brahma*" can be rendered as excellent, lofty, sublime or noble, and *vihara*, "as states of living." *Brahma-vihara*, therefore, means sublime states; some call it "divine abodes." It can also be called "the art of noble living."

There are four *brahma-viharas*, namely:

Loving-kindness or universal love (*metta*),  
Compassion (*karuna*),  
Sympathetic joy, altruistic or appreciative joy  
(*mudita*),  
Equanimity (*upekkha*).

These are excellent virtues conducive to noble living. They banish selfishness and disharmony and promote altruism, unity and brotherhood. They are also known as boundless states or illimitables (*appamannayo*) because they are virtues to be extended towards all beings, without exception, irrespective of race, caste, colour, community, creed, East or West.

*Subha-vimokkha* is another term by which these qualities of the heart are known. It means

deliverance of the mind (*vimokkha*) through recognition of the good (*subha*) in others. Instead of seeing the evil in others, the meditator sees the good in them and cultivates the four sublime states.

Latent in the human mind are defilements of diverse type, so it is natural for man to entertain unwholesome thoughts.

However, each and every defilement has its opposite virtue; thus it is possible to develop a virtue to overcome and eliminate a defilement.

When developing the sublime states no living being is to be excluded. These qualities make no distinction between man and man as high and low, rich and poor, strong and weak, wise and unwise, dark and fair, brahmin and candala, or as Christian, Hindu, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, etc.; for these sublime states, as we saw above, are boundless, and no sooner do we try to keep men apart on the basis of false distinctions, than the feeling of separateness creeps in and these boundless qualities become limited, contrary to the high ideals they represent.

*The brahma-vihara* can also be taken as subjects of meditation, then, they are called "*brahma-vihara*

*bhavana*," "the meditative developments of the sublime states." By cultivating these positive virtues one can maintain a calm and pure mind.

When practising meditation on the *brahma-viharas*, it is easier to start with oneself. For instance, when meditating on love, proceed thus: "May I be well, may I be happy; may I be free from illness, may no harm come to me," and so forth. Then think of a teacher, a friend, an indifferent person and lastly an enemy (if any, but one should not create an enemy), and radiate thoughts of love towards them. It may appear very difficult to extend love to an enemy, but this difficult thing one has to do to remove discrimination. Love should be extended to all without any compromising limitations.

You may ask why love should be radiated to oneself. Is it not selfish to do so? Seemingly it may be, but by doing so it becomes easier to extend our love to others: "I like to be well and happy, so let other beings also be well and happy." "As I am so they are: as they are so am I," thus comparing self with others cultivate love towards all. xxiii[23]

Verse number 130 of the Dhammapada reads:

*"All tremble at punishment,  
To all life is dear.  
Comparing others with oneself,  
One should neither kill nor cause to kill."*

## **I - Loving-kindness (*Metta*)**

*Metta* (Skt. *maitri*) is the wish for the welfare and happiness of all beings, making no restriction whatsoever. It has the character of a benevolent friend. Its direct enemy is ill will or hatred while the indirect or masked enemy is carnal love, sensual attachment or selfish affectionate desire (*pema*) which is quite different from *metta*. Carnal love when disguised as *metta* can do much harm to oneself and others. We have to be on our guard against this masked enemy, sensuality and greedy possessiveness. If the feeling of love is the direct result of attachment and clinging, then it is not really *metta*.

To love someone means to develop an attachment to the loved one, and when the latter is equally fond of you, a bond is created, but when you are separated or when the dear one's affection towards you wanes,



you become miserable and may even behave foolishly.

In his formulation of the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Buddha says: "Association with the unloved is suffering, separation from the loved is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering." *Metta*, however, is a very pure sublime state which, like quicksilver, cannot attach itself to anything.

It is difficult to love a person dispassionately, without clinging, without any idea of self, me and mine; for in man the notion of "I" is dominant, and to love without making any distinction between this and that, without barriers between persons, to regard all as sisters and brothers with a boundless heart, may appear to be almost impossible. But those who try even a little will be rewarded; it is worthwhile.

Vicious thoughts of animosity and hatred are most detrimental and harmful to those who harbor them. When people are angry, they can behave very much as the other animals do. They growl and bite, or cringe and fawn. This is due to man's ignorance. This is as true on the personal as it is on the international level.

*Metta* is the best antidote for anger in ourselves. It is the best medicine for those who are angry with us. Let us extend love to all who need it with a free and boundless heart. Love is the language of the heart, a language that comes from the heart and goes to the heart. Love is a force linking heart with heart to heal, and uniting us in true companionship. Highly developed thoughts of *metta* seem to possess magnetic power. By radiating such sublime thoughts it is possible to influence and win over people.

Through love one adds to the fund of human happiness, one makes the world brighter, nobler and purer and prepares it for the good life better than in any other way. There is no ill-luck worse than hatred it is said, and no safety from others' hostility greater than the heart of love, the heart in which hate is dead. Love is an active force. Every act of *metta* is done with the stainless mind to help, to succor, to cheer, to make the paths of others easier, smoother, and more adapted to the conquest of sorrow, the winning of the highest bliss.

The way to develop love is through thinking out the evils of hate, and the advantages of non-hate; through thinking out according to actuality,

according to kamma, that really there is none to hate, that hate is a foolish way of feeling, which breeds more and more darkness which obstructs right understanding.

Hatred restricts; love releases. Hatred strangles; love liberates. Hatred brings remorse; love brings peace. Hatred agitates; love quietens, stills, calms. Hatred divides; love unites. Hatred hardens; love softens. Hatred hinders; love helps. Thus one can use a correct study and appreciation of the effects of hatred and the benefits of love, as a basis for developing the meditation on loving-kindness.

### *Love*

As a mother loves her child,  
An only child,  
With love that knows no limit,  
Spreading wide,  
Measureless and immense --  
And, for it, will sacrifice  
Her very life --  
So let your love for all beings,  
East and west, north and south,  
Below, above --

Extending and extending wide,  
Be immeasurable, exhaustless.  
Unfathomable.  
Chaste is such love,  
Not clinging -- and so to fools  
'Tis incomprehensible;  
But the Seers understood,  
And understanding, knew full well  
Its golden worth.  
(after Metta Sutta, trans. Kassapa Thera)

## **II - Compassion (*Karuna*)**

*Karuna* is defined as "the quality which makes the heart of the good man tremble and quiver at the distress of others," "the quality that rouses tender feelings in the good man at the sight of others' suffering." Cruelty or violence is the direct enemy of *karuma* while homely grief is the indirect or masked enemy. Though the latter may appear in the guise of a friend, it is not true *karuna*, but false sympathy; such sympathy is deceitful and one must try to distinguish true from false compassion. The compassionate man, who refrains from harming and oppressing others, and endeavors to relieve them of

their distress, gives the gift of security to one and all, making no distinction whatsoever.

*Karuna* is loving-compassion. It is that sublime quality which makes the hearts of the noble quiver at the suffering of the world. *Karuna* has the characteristic of a mother whose thoughts, words and deeds tend to relieve the distress of her babe. It has the property of not being able to tolerate the sufferings of others, and the manifestation of perfect non-violence. Its consummation is the eradication of all cruelty. Its proximate cause is the sight of the forlorn state of those in distress.

By precept and example the Buddha was the Great Compassionate One (*Mahakarumika*). He radiated his great compassion towards all beings, and never encouraged wrangling, animosity and violence. Addressing the disciples he once said: "I quarrel not with the world, it is the world that quarrels with me. An exponent of the Dhamma does not quarrel with anyone in the world." xxiv[24] The entire dispensation of the Buddha is permeated with this sublime quality of *karuna*.

Goodness and violence cannot co-exist; goodness constructs while violence destroys. Compassion cannot be cultivated by one who is obsessed with thoughts of selfishness. It is the self-sacrificing man who fills his heart with pure thoughts of pity and wishes to help and serve others. The selfish cannot be of real service to others for their selfish motives prevent them from doing good. No sooner do they become selfish and self-possessed than they fail to soften their hearts. Hard-heartedness is overcome by pity, by sympathy. If you remove compassion from the teachings of the Buddha, you remove the heart of Buddhism; for all virtues, all goodness and righteousness have compassion as their basis, as their matrix (*karuna nidhanam hi silam*).

All the virtues (*paramita*) that a Bodhisatta, one bent on Enlightenment, cultivates are initiated by compassion. Compassion is guided by wisdom and wisdom by compassion. They go hand in hand; they are the backbone of Buddhism, the guiding principles.

Compassion is surely not a flabby state of mind. It is a strong enduring thing. When a person is in distress, it is compassion that spurs us to action and incites us

to rescue the distressed. And this needs strength of mind.

People are fascinated by a study of the various types of machinery which science has invented. What is urgently needed is a study of the machinery of the human mind. It is this study that can help to clear the misunderstanding between man and man.

As the poet says:

*"Life is mostly froth and bubble,  
Two things stand like stone:  
Kindness in another's trouble,  
Courage in our own."*

### **III - Sympathetic Joy (*Mudita*)**

Gladness at others' success is the third sublime state, known as *mudita*. It is not mere sympathy but sympathetic, altruistic or appreciative joy. Its direct enemy is jealousy and the indirect enemy is exhilaration. Jealousy is a vice that defiles our hearts and makes us unhappy.

When others are in distress we show our compassion, we sympathize with them and try to relieve them of their distress. But to appreciate

another's success we need sympathetic joy. It is this quality of the heart that makes us rejoice over the success of others as we rejoice over our own. Jealous people cannot feel happy when others are progressing, but they rejoice over the failures and misfortunes of others. Some parents feel jealous when others' children are doing well while their own are not successful. This is meaningless, and bears unpleasant fruit.

Jealousy is a vice shared by people of different walks of life -- intellectuals, politicians and even men of large calibre. If that is so, need one speak of the poor and the illiterate? However, at times, the latter are more co-operative and unselfish.

Instead of entertaining thoughts of jealousy, we should work hard with determination to surmount obstacles and fulfil our hopes. Let us also bear in mind that our kamma, or moral causation also has a role to play in our lives.

*Mudita* is the congratulatory attitude of a person, it removes aversion. Through meditation and the study of the vicissitudes of life, we can cultivate this sublime virtue of appreciating others' happiness,



welfare and progress. When we learn to rejoice with the joy of others, our hearts get purified, serene and lofty.

Seeing a starving man we offer him food out of compassion (*karuna*). When we see that he has eaten, that his hunger has ceased, and that he feels happy, then we too feel happy and pleased. Such selfless action really brings us unalloyed joy, sympathetic joy (*mudita*). You will now see how these sublime states function together supporting one another.

#### **IV - Equanimity (*Upekkha*)**

The fourth and the last sublime state is equanimity, *upekkha*. It is "even-mindedness," mental equipoise and not hedonic indifference. Equanimity is the result of a calm concentrative mind. The four sublime states are interrelated and interdependent, but it is equanimity that guards the rest: love, compassion and sympathetic joy. Equanimity is the most essential quality, deep and difficult to cultivate.

Life is not a bed of roses. One needs much patience, energy and determination to cultivate these qualities without being selfish or partial. Equanimity or

balance of mind guides the other three qualities and keeps the meditator in a place of security. It brings about self-reliance.

We are all confronted with the eight vicissitudes of life (*attha loka dhamma*): gain and loss, good repute and ill repute, praise and censure, pain and pleasure.

It is hard to be undisturbed when touched by this welter of experience. But the man who cultivates equanimity is not upset. He does not waver. Amidst blame and praise, success and failure, he is firm as a solid rock. This, of course, is the attitude of the Arahats, the Consummate Ones. Of them it is said: "Truly the good give up longing for everything. They prattle not with thoughts of craving. Touched by pain or happiness, the wise show neither elation nor depression. xxv[25]

People of lesser attainment who understand the nature of human life and its ups and downs, who cultivate equanimity, can also face the vicissitudes of life with a brave heart. They see things in their proper perspective, how things come into being and pass away. Free from anxiety and restlessness, they can see the fragility of the fragile.

Quiet minds ... go on, in fortune or misfortune, at their own private pace, like a clock during a thunderstorm. xxvi[26]

The proximate cause of equanimity is the understanding that all beings are the result of their actions (*kamma*). The direct enemy of *upekkha* is attachment and the indirect or the masked enemy is callousness or unintelligent indifference.

Understanding the working of *kamma*, action or moral causation, and how *kamma* comes to fruition (*kamma-vipaka*), is very necessary to cultivate equanimity. In the light of *kamma* one will be able to keep a detached attitude toward all beings, even inanimate things.

*Upekkha* puts aside both attachment (*anurodha*) and resentment (*virodha*). They are two extremes. The meditator who follows the Middle Path is neither attracted by the pleasant nor repelled by the unpleasant. He keeps a balanced mind without temper, tantrums, depression or anxiety.

As Wordsworth observed: "Strongest minds are often those of whom the noisy world hears least," and 2,500 and more years ago the Buddha said:

"Yes, emptiness is loud, but fullness calm;

The fool's a half-filled crock; the sage a lake."

xxvii[27]

*Metta* embraces all beings; *karuna* embraces those who are suffering; *mudita* embraces the prosperous; and *upekkha* embraces both the good and bad, the loved and the unloved, the pleasant and the unpleasant, the ugly and the beautiful, without making any discrimination.

"... The meditator experiences joy, being joyful, the mind is concentrated. He dwells suffusing one direction with his heart filled with loving-kindness (*metta*). Likewise the second, the third, and the fourth direction, so above, below and around; he dwells suffusing the whole world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with loving-kindness, abundant, grown great, measureless, without enmity, without ill will. He dwells with a heart full of compassion (*karuna*) ... sympathetic joy (*mudita*) ... equanimity (*upekkha*) ... without enmity, without ill will.

"It is as if there were a lovely lotus pond with clear water, sweet water, cool water, limpid, with

beautiful banks; and a man were to come along from the east, west, north or south, overcome and overpowered by the heat, exhausted, parched and thirsty. On coming to that lotus pond he might quench his thirst with water and quench his feverish heat. Even so ... one who has come into this doctrine and discipline (*dhamma-vinaya*) taught by the Buddha, having thus developed loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, attains inner calm -- I say it is by inner calm that he is following the practices fitting for recluses (meditators)." (M. 40/I, 284)

## **ADDENDUM III**

### **Right Effort**

The function of right effort is fourfold: to prevent, abandon, develop and maintain. xxviii[28]

#### ***1. What is the effort to prevent?***

"Herein a meditator puts forth his will to prevent the arising of evil, of unwholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen. He strives, develops energy and strengthens his mind (to this end).

"Herein a meditator, seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odor, tasting a flavor, feeling some tangible thing or cognizing a mental object, apprehends neither signs nor particulars (that is, he is not moved by their general features or by their details). In as much as coveting and dejection, evil and unwholesome thoughts break in upon one who dwells with senses unrestrained, he applies himself to such control, he guards over the senses, restrains the senses. This is called the effort to prevent."

## ***2. What is the effort to abandon?***

"Herein a meditator puts forth his will to abandon the evil, unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen. He strives, develops energy and strengthens his mind (to this end).

"Herein a meditator does not admit sense desires that have arisen, but abandons, discards and repels them, makes an end of them and causes them to disappear. So also with regard to thoughts of ill will and of harm that have arisen. This is called the effort to abandon."

## ***3. What is the effort to develop?***

"Herein a meditator puts forth his will to produce and develop wholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen. He strives, develops energy and strengthens his mind (to this end).

"Herein a meditator develops the factors of enlightenment based on seclusion, on dispassion, on cessation that is deliverance, namely: mindfulness, investigation of the Dhamma, energy, rapturous joy, calm, concentration and equanimity. This is called the effort to develop."

#### ***4. What is the effort to maintain?***

"Herein a monk maintains a favourable object of concentration (meditation). This is called the effort to maintain."

These then are the four efforts:

The unwholesome thoughts referred to here are the three root causes of evil namely: thoughts of lust (craving), hatred and delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*). All other passions gather round these three root causes, while wholesome thoughts are their opposites.

The sole purpose of this fourfold effort is success in meditation. The four right efforts are the requisites for concentration. As we saw above, right effort is included in the groups of *samadhi* or concentration. As such, right effort functions together and simultaneously with the other two factors of the group, namely right mindfulness and right concentration. Without right effort the hindrances xxix[29] to mental progress cannot be overcome. Right effort removes the evil and unhealthy thoughts that act as a barrier to the calm of absorption, and promotes and maintains the healthy mental factors that aid the development of concentration.

## **ADDENDUM IV**

### **Hindrances (*Nivarama*)**

"There are, monks these five hindrances which cause blindness, loss of vision, and non-knowledge, which take away one's insight, are associated with pain and do not lead to Nibbana." xxx[30]

*"Nivarama"* means those states which hinder and obstruct mental development. They are called



hindrances because they completely close in, cut off and obstruct. They close the door to deliverance. What are the five?

1. Sense desire (*kamacchanda*),
2. Ill will (*vyapada*),
3. Sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*),
4. Restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*)
5. Sceptical doubt (*vicikiccha*).

1. *Kamacchanda* is lust for sense objects. Sensual thoughts definitely retard mental development. They disturb the mind and hinder concentration. Sensuality is due to non-restraint of the senses, which, when unguarded, gives rise to thoughts of lust so that the mind-flux is defiled. Hence, the need for the meditator to be on his guard against this hindrance, which closes the door to deliverance.

2. The next is ill will. As in the case of sense-desire, it is unwise and unsystematic attention that brings about ill will. When not checked, ill will propagates itself, saps the mind and clouds the vision. It distorts the entire mind and, thus, hinders awakening to truth, blocks the path to freedom. Lust and ill will,

based on ignorance, not only hamper mental growth, but act as the root cause of strife and dissension between man and man and nation and nation.

3. The third hindrance is sloth and torpor, a morbid state of the mind and mental properties. It is not, as some are inclined to think, sluggishness of the body; for even the Arahats, the Consummate Ones, who are free from this ill, also experience bodily fatigue. This sloth and torpor, like butter too stiff to spread, makes the mind rigid and inert. It thus lessens the yogi's enthusiasm and earnestness for meditation so that he becomes mentally sick and lazy. Laxity leads to greater slackness until finally there arises a state of callous indifference.

4. The fourth hindrance is restlessness and worry, another disadvantage that makes progress difficult. When the mind becomes restless like flustered bees in a shaken hive, it cannot concentrate. This mental agitation prevents calmness and blocks the upward path. Worry is just as harmful. When a man worries over one thing and another, over things done or left undone, and over misfortunes, he can never have peace of mind. All this bother and worry, this fidgeting and unsteadiness of mind, prevent

concentration. Hence, these two drawbacks, restlessness and worry, are included in the five hindrances that retard mental progress.

5. The fifth and the last hindrance is skeptical doubt. The Pali word "*vi + cikiċcha*" means literally "without (*vigata*) medicine (*cikiċcha*)." The commentators explain this hindrance as the inability to decide anything definitely; it includes doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the *jhana*, mental absorption. Perplexity is really a dire disease, and unless we shed our doubts, we will continue to suffer from it. As long as we continue to take a skeptical view of things, sitting on the fence, this will be most detrimental to mental development.

The mind that is obsessed by these five hindrances cannot concentrate successfully on any object of a wholesome nature. It is true that a man can concentrate on an object with thoughts of lust or ill will, etc.; but that is wrong concentration (*micċhasamadhi*). As long as impurities or passions (*kilesa*) exist in man, evil and unwholesome thoughts will continue to arise. The meditator who practises *samadhi*, however, is incapable of

committing any evil; for the hindrances are under control.

To overcome the hindrances, one has to develop five psychic factors known as factors of *jhana* (*jhana~ga*). They are: *vitakka*, *vicara*, *piti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggata*. It is these psychic factors that raise the meditator from lower to higher levels of mental purity. The consciousness that is associated with them becomes known as *jhana*. These psychic factors, in order, step by step, subdue the hindrances that block the path of concentration. Each is the exact opposite of a specific hindrance.

Sense desire is subdued by *ekaggata*, one-pointedness or unification of the mind; ill will, by joy (*piti*); sloth and torpor, by applied thought (*vitakka*); restlessness and worry, by happiness (*sukha*); and doubt, by sustained thought (*vicara*).

When placed side by side, they stand thus:

*Kamacchanda* <--> *Ekaggata*

*Vyapada* <--> *Piti*

*Thina-middha* <--> *Vitakka*

*Uddhacca-kukkucca* <--> *Sukha*

*Vicikiccha* <--> *Vicara*

## **ADDENDUM V**

### **Sona, the Earnest Meditator**

There is the story of a monk, the Venerable Sona-kolivisa, xxxi[31] who was making a violent but unsuccessful effort to exert himself physically and mentally. Then the following thought occurred to him while in solitude: "The disciples of the Blessed One live with zealous effort and I am one of them. Yet my mind is not free of taints. My family has wealth; I can enjoy my riches and do good; what if I were to give up the training and revert to the low life, enjoy the riches and do good?"

The Blessed One reading his thoughts approached him and asked: "Sona, did you not think: 'The disciples of the Blessed One live with zealous effort (as before) ... and do good?' "Yes, Venerable Sir."

"And what do you think, Sona, were you not skilful at the lute before when you were a layman?" "Yes Venerable Sir."

"And, what do you think, Sona, when the strings of your lute were over-strung, was it then in tune and playable?" "No, indeed, Venerable Sir."

"And what do you think, Sona, when the strings of your lute were too slack, was it then in tune and playable?" "No, indeed, Venerable Sir."

"But when, Sona, the strings of your lute were neither over-strung nor too slack but keyed to the middle pitch was it then in tune and playable?" "Surely, Venerable Sir."

"Even so, Sona, effort, when too strenuous leads to flurry and when too slack to indolence. Therefore, Sona, make a firm determination thus: Understanding the equality of the faculties," I shall grasp at the aim by uniformity of effort." "Yes, Venerable Sir."

The Venerable Sona followed the instructions of the Blessed One and in due course attained perfection and was numbered among the Arahats. xxxii[32]

## **ADDENDUM VI**

## **The Removal of Distracting Thoughts**

The twentieth discourse of the *Majjhima Nikaya* (*Vitakka-samthana Sutta*) gives practical instructions on how to keep away distracting thoughts, and is indispensable to a meditator. The gist of it is as follows. xxxiii[33] The Buddha addressing his disciples said:

"Monks, the meditator who is intent on higher thought should reflect on five things from time to time. What five?

1. If through reflection on an object, evil, unwholesome thoughts associated with desire, hate and delusion arise in a meditator, he should (in order to get rid of them) reflect of another object which is wholesome. Then the evil, unwholesome thoughts are removed; they disappear. By their removal the mind stands firm and becomes calm, unified and concentrated within (his subject of meditation).

"As a skilled carpenter or his apprentice knocks out and removes a coarse peg with a fine one, so should the meditator get rid of that evil object by reflecting on another object, which is wholesome. Then the evil unwholesome thoughts associated with desire,

hate and delusion are removed, they disappear. By their removal the mind stands firm ... within.

2. "If the evil thoughts still arise in a meditator who reflects on another object which is wholesome, he should consider the disadvantages of evil thoughts thus: 'Indeed, these thoughts of mine are unwholesome, blameworthy, and bring painful consequences.' Then his evil thoughts are removed, they disappear. By their removal the mind stands firm ... within.

3. "If the evil thoughts still arise in a meditator who thinks over their disadvantages, he should pay no attention to, and not reflect on those evil thoughts. Then the evil thoughts are removed, they disappear. By their removal the mind stands firm ... within.

4. "If the evil thoughts still arise in a meditator who pays no attention to and does not reflect on evil thoughts, he should reflect on removing the root of those thoughts. Then the evil unwholesome thoughts are removed, they disappear. By their removal the mind stands firm ... within.

5. "If the evil thoughts still arise in a meditator who reflects on the removal of their root, he should with



clenched teeth, and tongue pressed against his palate restrain, overcome and control the (evil) mind with the (good) mind. Then the evil thoughts are removed, they disappear. By their removal the mind stands firm ... within.

"If through a meditator's reflection on a wholesome object, thinking over disadvantages of evil thoughts, paying no attention to and not reflecting on evil thoughts, reflecting on the removal of their root, restraining, overcoming, and controlling the (evil) mind with the (good) mind with clenched teeth and tongue pressed against his palate, evil thoughts are removed, and the mind stands firm and calm, becomes unified and concentrated within (its subject of meditation) that meditator is called a master of the paths along which thoughts travel. He thinks the thought that he wants to think; he thinks not the thought that he does not want to think. He has cut off craving and removed the fetter fully; mastering pride he has made an end of suffering."

-ooOoo-

*revised: 27-08-2003*

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i[1] From *The Centuries Poetry*. Vol. 2, pp 153-155.

ii[2] Samyutta Nikaya i, 4

iii[3] See Addendum IV

iv[4] There are ten fetters: 1, sense desire, 2. ill will. 3. pride, 4. speculative opinion or wrong view, 5. doubts, 6. lust for existence, 7. indulgence in wrong rites, rituals and ceremonies, 8. envy, 9. avarice, 10. ignorance. These fetters arise depending on both eye and forms, ear and sounds, etc. The Commentary explains how these fetters arise. Read Soma Thera, *The Way of Mindfulness* (Kandy BPS) p. 132.

v[5] 1) Mindfulness, 2) investigation of the dhamma (mind and matter), 3) energy, 4) rapture, 5) calm, 6) concentration, 7) equanimity.

vi[6] *Sabbe dhamma nalam abhinivesayati*, Majjhima Nikaya i. 251

vii[7] Samyutta Nikaya, i, 39.

viii[8] Majjhima 22

ix[9] See Addendum IV

x[10] Samyutta Nikaya ii, 13.

xi[11] Anguttara Nikaya, i. 100

xii[12] Anguttara, i. 61

xiii[13] Dhammapada v.372

xiv[14] See Addendum III

xv[15] Majjhima Nikaya 118/ III 85.

xvi[16] Samyutta Nikaya iii, 23

xvii[17] Samyutta Nikaya iii, 44.

xviii[18] Samyutta Nikaya iii, 23.

xix[19] Majjhima Nikaya 106/ II. 263

xx[20] Anguttara Nikaya ii, 52, Catukka Nipata 49; *Anguttara Nikaya, Part I* translation by Nyanaponika (Kandy: BPS) Wheel 155/158, p. 86

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xxi[21] There are seven latent tendencies: 1. sense desire, 2. ill will, 3. wrong view, 4. doubt, 5. pride, 6. lust for continued existence, 7. ignorance (*kama-raga, patigha, ditthi, vicikiccha, mana, bhava-raga, avijja*) -- D.iii, 11.12.

xxii[22] R. L. Stevenson

xxiii[23] Sutta-Nipata v.721.

xxiv[24] Majjhima Nikaya 40/ I. 284.

xxv[25] Dhammapada, v. 83.

xxvi[26] R. L. Stevenson.

xxvii[27] Sutta Nipata v.721

xxviii[28] *Samvara, pahana, bhavana, anurakkhana*

xxix[29] See Addendum IV.

xxx[30] Samyutta Nikaya v. 97.

xxxi[31] Vinaya Pitaka II. I ff; Anguttara Nikaya iii 374-5.

xxxii[32] This episode occurs in the *Commentary to the Theragatha*: "He received a subject of study from the Master, but was unable to concentrate, owing to his meeting people while he stayed in Cool Wood. And he thought: 'My body is too delicately reared to arrive happily at happiness. A recluse's duties involve bodily fatigues.' So he disregarded the painful sores on his feet gotten from pacing up and down, and strove his utmost but was unable to win. And he thought: 'I am not able to create either path or fruit. Of what use is this religious life to me? I will go back to lower things and work merit. Then the Master discerned, and saved him by the lesson on the Parable of the Lute, showing him how to temper energy with calm. Thus corrected, he went to Vulture's Peak, and in due course won Arahatsip." *Psalms of the Brethren* by Mrs Rhys Davids (PTS) p. 275.

xxxiii[33] For brevity's sake all the similes but one are omitted. For a detailed account read: *The Removal of Distracting Thoughts*, trans. by Soma Thera (Kandy: BPS), Wheel 21.

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## The Elimination of Anger

With two stories retold from the Buddhist texts

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by

## Venerable Piyadassi Thera

Access to Insight edition © 1994

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The ultimate goal of Buddhism is the deathless condition of Nibbana, the sole reality. Hence, one who aspires to that state should renounce mundane pursuits and attachments, which are ephemeral, for the sake of that reality. But there are very few who are sufficiently mature to develop themselves to achieve that state in this very life. Thus, the Buddha does not force the life of renunciation upon those who lack the spiritual capacity to embark upon the higher life.

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Therefore, one should follow the path of mundane advantage which is twofold, namely, the advantage obtainable here in this very life and the advantage obtainable in future lives, as steps on the path to the spiritual life. Although one may enjoy the pleasures of life, one must regard one's body as an instrument with which to practice virtue for one's own and other's benefit; in short, one should live a useful life of moral integrity, a life of simplicity and paucity of wants.

As regards acquisition of wealth, the Buddha said: "One must be diligent and energetic," and as regards the safeguarding of one's wealth, "one must be mindful and economical."

It is not impossible that even the life of such a man may be somehow or other disturbed and harassed as a result of the actions of "unskillful" men. Although this might induce him to abandon his chosen path, it is at such times that one must not forget the steps to be taken for the purpose of establishing peace.

According to the teaching of the Buddha this includes the reflection: "Others may be harmful, but I shall be harmless, thus should I train myself." We

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must not forget that the whole spirit of Buddhism is one of pacification.

In the calm and placid atmosphere of the Buddha's teaching there is every chance, every possibility, of removing hatred, jealousy and violence from our mind.

It is no wonder, when we, at times, in our everyday life, feel angry with somebody about something. But we should not allow this feeling to reside in our mind. We should try to curb it at the very moment it has arisen. Generally, there are eight ways to curb or control our anger.

The first method is to recollect the teachings of the Buddha. On very many occasions the Buddha explained the disadvantages of an angry temper. Here is one of his admonitions:

Suppose some bandits catch one of you and sever his body limb from limb with a two-handed saw, and if he should feel angry thereby even at that moment, he is no follower of my teaching.

— Kakacupama Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya 21

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Again:

As a log from a pyre, burnt at both ends and fouled in the middle, serves neither for firewood in the village nor for timber in the forest, so is such a wrathful man.

— Anguttara Nikaya II, 95

Further, we may consider the Buddha's advice to be found in the *Dhammapada*:

He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me of my property. Whosoever harbors such thoughts will never be able to still their enmity.

Never indeed is hatred stilled by hatred; it will only be stilled by non-hatred — this is an eternal law.

— Dhp., vv. 4-5

Do not speak harshly to anyone. Those who are harshly spoken to might retaliate against you. Angry words hurt other's feelings, even blows may overtake you in return.

— Dhp., v. 133

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Forbearance is the highest observance. Patience is the highest virtue. So the Buddhas say.

— Dhp., v. 184

Let a man remove his anger. Let him root out his pride. Let him overcome all fetters of passions. No sufferings overtake him who neither clings to mind-and-body nor claims anything of the world.

— Dhp., v. 221

Conquer anger by non-anger. Conquer evil by good. Conquer miserliness by liberality. Conquer a liar by truthfulness.

— Dhp., v. 223

Guard your mind against an outburst of wrong feelings. Keep your mind controlled. Renouncing evil thoughts, develop purity of mind.

— Dhp., v. 233

If by contemplating the advice of the Buddha, in this way, one cannot curb his anger, then let him try the second method.



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Naturally, any bad person may possess some good quality. Some men are evil in mind but speak in deceptive language or slyly perform their deeds in an unsuspecting manner. Some men are coarse only in their language but not in their mind or deeds. Some men are coarse and cruel in their deeds but neither in their speech nor in their mind. Some are soft and kind in mind, speech and deed as well.

When we feel angry with any person, we should try to find out some good in him, either in his way of thinking, or in his way of speaking or in his way of acting. If we find some redeeming quality in him, we should ponder its value and ignore his bad qualities as natural weaknesses that are to be found in everyone. Whilst we think thus, our mind will soften and we may even feel kindly towards that person. If we develop this way of thinking we will be able to curb or eliminate our anger towards him.

At times, this method may not be successful and we shall then have to try the third method. Basically, this entails reflecting thus:

"He has done some wrong to me and in so doing has spoiled his mind. Then why should I spoil or impair

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my own mind because of his foolishness? Sometimes I ignore support or help offered by my relatives; sometimes their tears even shed because of my activities. Being a person of such type myself, why should I not therefore ignore that foolish man's deed?

"He has done that wrong, being subject to anger, should I too follow him, making my mind subject to anger? Is it not foolish to imitate him? He, harboring his hatred, destroys himself internally. Why should I, on his account, destroy my reputation?

"All things are momentary. Both his mind and body are momentary too. The thoughts and the body with which the wrong was done to me are not now existing. What I call the same man now are the thoughts and physical parts which are different from the earlier ones that harmed me although belonging to the same psycho-physical process.

Thus, one thought together with one mass of physical parts did me some wrong, and vanished there and then, giving place to succeeding thoughts and material parts to appear. So with which am I getting angry? With the vanished and disappeared

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thoughts and physical parts or with the thoughts and material parts which do not do any wrong now? Should I get angry with one thing which is innocent whereas another thing has done me wrong and vanished?

"The so-called 'I' is not the same for two consecutive moments. At the moment the wrong was done there was another thought and another mass of molecules which were regarded as 'I,' whereas what are regarded as 'I' at the present moment are a different thought and collection of molecules, though belonging to the same process. Thus, some other being did wrong to someone else and another gets angry with another. Is this not a ridiculous situation?"

If we scrutinize the exact nature of our life and its happenings in this manner, our anger might subside or vanish there and then.

There is another way, too, to eliminate upsurging anger. Suppose we think of someone who has done wrong to us. On such occasions we should remember that we suffer harm or loss as a result of our previous *kamma*.

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Even if others were angry with us, they could not harm us if there were no latent force of past unwholesome *kamma* committed by us which took advantage of this opportunity to arouse our adversary.

So it is I who am responsible for this harm or loss and not anybody else. And at the same time, now while I am suffering the result of past *kamma*, if I, on account of this, should get angry and do any harm to him, by that do I accumulate much more unwholesome *kamma* which would bring me correspondingly unwholesome results.

If we recall to mind this law of *kamma*, our anger may subside immediately. We can consider such a situation in another way too. We as the followers of Buddha believe that our Bodhisatta passed through incalculable numbers of lives practicing virtues before he attained Buddhahood. The Buddha related the history of some of his past lives as illustrations to teach us how he practiced these virtues. The lives of the prince Dhammapala and the ascetic Khantivadi are most illustrative and draw our attention.

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At one time the Bodhisatta had been born as the son of a certain king named Mahapatapa. The child was named Culla Dhammapala. One day the Queen sat on a chair fondling her child and did not notice the King passing by. The King thought the Queen was so proud of her child as not to get up from her chair even when she saw that her lord the King passed that way. So he grew angry and immediately sent for the executioner. When he came the King ordered him to snatch the child from the Queen's arms and cut his hands, feet and head off, which he did instantly. The child, our Bodhisatta, suffered all that with extreme patience and did not grow ill-tempered or relinquish his impartial love for his cruel father, lamenting mother and the executioner. So far had he matured in the practice of forbearance and loving-kindness at that time.

At another time, our Bodhisatta was an ascetic well-known for his developed virtue of forbearance and, consequently, people named him Khantivadi, the preacher of forbearance. One day he visited Benares and took his lodgings at the royal pleasure grove. Meanwhile, the King passed that way with his harem and, seeing the ascetic seated under a tree, asked

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what virtue he was practicing, to which the ascetic replied that of forbearance. The King was a materialist who regarded the practice of virtue to be humbug. So, hearing the words of the ascetic, he sent for the executioner and ordered him to cut off his hands and feet and questioned the ascetic as to whether he could hold to forbearance at the severing of his limbs. The ascetic did not feel ill-tempered but even at that time he lay down extending his loving-kindness and holding his forbearance undiminished. He spoke to the King in reply to the effect that his forbearance and other virtues were not in his limbs but in his mind. The King, being unsuccessful in his attempts to disturb the ascetic's feelings, grew angrier and kicked the stomach of the ascetic with his heel and went away. Meanwhile, the King's minister came over and, seeing what had happened, bowed before the dying ascetic and begged him saying: "Venerable one, none of us agreed to this cruel act of the King and we are all sorrowing over what has been done to you by that devilish man. We ask you to curse the King but not us." At this the ascetic said: "May that king who has caused my hands and feet to be cut off, as well as you, live long

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in happiness. Persons who practice virtues like me never get angry." Saying this, he breathed his last.

Since the Buddha in his past lives, while still imperfect like us, practiced forbearance and loving-kindness to such a high extent, why cannot we follow his example?

When we remember and think of similar noble characters of great souls, we should be able to bear any harm, unmoved by anger.

Or if we consider the nature of the round of rebirths in this beginningless and infinite universe, we will be able to curb our up-springing anger. For, it is said by the Buddha: "It is not easy to find a being who has not been your mother, your father, your brother, sister, son or daughter." Hence with regard to the person whom we have now taken for our enemy, we should think: "This one now, in the past has been my mother who bore me in her womb for nine months, gave birth to me, unweariedly cleansed me of impurities, hid me in her bosom, carried me on her hip and nourished me. This one was my father in another life and spent time and energy, engaged in toilsome business, with a view to maintaining me,

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even sacrificing life for my sake," and so on. When we ponder over these facts, it should be expected that our arisen anger against our enemy will subside.

And further, we should reflect on the advantages of the development of mind through the practice of extending loving-kindness. For, the Buddha has expounded to us eleven advantages to be looked for from its development. What are the eleven? The person who fully develops loving-kindness sleeps happily. He wakes happily. He experiences no evil dreams. He is beloved of men. He is beloved even of non-human beings. He is protected by the gods. He can be harmed neither by fire, poison or a weapon. His mind is quickly composed. His complexion is serene. At the moment of his death he passes away



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When we are able to curb our anger and control our mind, we should extend from ourselves boundless love as far as we can imagine throughout every direction pervading and touching all living beings with loving-kindness. We should practice this meditation every day at regular times without any break. As a result of this practice, we will be able, one day, to attain to the *jhanas* or meditative absorptions, comprising four grades which entail the control of sensuality, ill-will and many other passions, bringing at the same time purity, serenity and peace of mind.

## **Appendix:**

### **Two Stories Retold from the Buddhist Texts**

#### **The Reviler**

Once while the Blessed One stayed near Rajagaha in the Veluvana Monastery at the Squirrels' Feeding Place, there lived at Rajagaha a Brahman of the Bharadvaja clan who was later called "the Reviler." When he learned that one of his clan had gone forth from home life and had become a monk under the recluse Gotama, he was angry and displeased. And in that mood he went to see the Blessed One, and

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having arrived he reviled and abused him in rude and harsh speech.

Thus being spoken to, the Blessed One said: "How is it, Brahman: do you sometimes receive visits from friends, relatives or other guests?"

"Yes, Master Gotama, I sometimes have visitors."

"When they come, do you offer to them various kinds of foods and a place for resting?"

"Yes, I sometimes do so."

"But if, Brahman, your visitors do not accept what you offer, to whom does it then belong?"

"Well, Master Gotama, if they do not accept it, these things remain with us."

"It is just so in this case, Brahman: you revile us who do not revile in return, you scold us who do not scold in return, you abuse us who do not abuse in return. So we do not accept it from you and hence it remains with you, it belongs to you, Brahman..."

[The Buddha finally said:]

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"Whence should wrath rise for him who void of  
wrath,  
Holds on the even tenor of his way,  
Self-tamed, serene, by highest insight free?

"Worse of the two is he who, when reviled,  
Reviles again. Who doth not when reviled,  
Revile again, a two-fold victory wins.  
Both of the other and himself he seeks  
The good; for he the other's angry mood  
Doth understand and groweth calm and still.  
He who of both is a physician, since  
Himself he healeth and the other too, —  
Folk deem him a fool, they knowing not the  
Norm."1

— Abridged and freely rendered from *Samyutta Nikaya, Brahmana Samyutta*, No. 2. Verses translated by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, in "Kindred Sayings," vol. I.

## **The Anger-eating Demon**

Retold from an ancient Buddhist Story

by Nyanaponika Thera

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Once there lived a demon who had a peculiar diet: he fed on the anger of others. And as his feeding ground was the human world, there was no lack of food for him. He found it quite easy to provoke a family quarrel, or national and racial hatred. Even to stir up a war was not very difficult for him. And whenever he succeeded in causing a war, he could properly gorge himself without much further effort; because once a war starts, hate multiplies by its own momentum and affects even normally friendly people. So the demon's food supply became so rich that he sometimes had to restrain himself from over-eating, being content with nibbling just a small piece of resentment found close-by.

But as it often happens with successful people, he became rather overbearing and one day when feeling bored he thought: "Shouldn't I try it with the gods?" On reflection he chose the Heaven of the Thirty-three Deities, ruled by Sakka, Lord of Gods. He knew that only a few of these gods had entirely eliminated the fetters of ill-will and aversion, though they were far above petty and selfish quarrels. So by magic power he transferred himself to that heavenly

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realm and was lucky enough to come at a time when Sakka the Divine King was absent. There was none in the large audience hall and without much ado the demon seated himself on Sakka's empty throne, waiting quietly for things to happen, which he hoped would bring him a good feed. Soon some of the gods came to the hall and first they could hardly believe their own divine eyes when they saw that ugly demon sitting on the throne, squat and grinning. Having recovered from their shock, they started to shout and lament: "Oh you ugly demon, how can you dare to sit on the throne of our Lord? What utter cheekiness! What a crime! You should be thrown headlong into the hell and straight into a boiling cauldron! You should be quartered alive! Be gone! Be gone!"

But while the gods were growing more and more angry, the demon was quite pleased because from moment to moment he grew in size, in strength and in power. The anger he absorbed into his system started to ooze from his body as a smoky red-glowing mist. This evil aura kept the gods at a distance and their radiance was dimmed.

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Suddenly a bright glow appeared at the other end of the hall and it grew into a dazzling light from which Sakka emerged, the King of Gods. He who had firmly entered the undeflectible Stream that leads Nibbana-wards, was unshaken by what he saw. The smoke-screen created by the gods' anger parted when he slowly and politely approached the usurper of his throne. "Welcome, friend! Please remain seated. I can take another chair. May I offer you the drink of hospitality? Our Amrita is not bad this year. Or do you prefer a stronger brew, the vedic Soma?"

While Sakka spoke these friendly words, the demon rapidly shrank to a diminutive size and finally disappeared, trailing behind a whiff of malodorous smoke which likewise soon dissolved.

— Based on Samyutta Nikaya, Sakka Samyutta, No. 22

The gist of this story dates back to the discourses of the Buddha. But even now, over 2500 years later, our world looks as if large hordes of Anger-eating Demons were haunting it and were kept well nourished by millions slaving for them all over the earth. Fires of hate and wide-traveling waves of

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violence threaten to engulf mankind. Also the grass roots of society are poisoned by conflict and discord, manifesting in angry thoughts and words and in violent deeds. Is it not time to end this self-destructive slavery of man to his impulses of hate and aggression which only serve the demoniac forces? Our story tells how these demons of hate can be exorcised by the power of gentleness and love. If this power of love can be tested and proven, at grass-roots level, in the widely spread net of personal relationships, society at large, the world at large, will not remain unaffected by it.

## **Note**

1. The "Norm" or law (dhamma), here referred to, may be expressed in the words of the Dhammapada (v. 5):

"Not by hating hatred ceases  
In this world of tooth and claw;  
Love alone from hate releases —  
This is the Eternal Law."

[Translated by Francis Story]

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## **Majjhima Nikaya 141**

### **Saccavibhanga Sutta**

#### **Discourse on The Analysis of the Truths**

*Translated from the Pali*

**by**

**Piyadassi Thera.**



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<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/majjhima/mn141.html>

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Saints) near Varanasi (Benares). Then he addressed the monks saying: "O Monks." "Venerable Sir," replied those monks in assent to the Blessed One. Thereupon he said:

"The matchless Wheel of Dhamma set in motion by the Tathagata,[1] the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse or brahmana or Deva or Mara or Brahma or by anyone in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them.

"Of what four: It was a proclamation of the Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha*), by way of teaching... (as

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before) and elucidating it; of the Noble Truth of the arising (cause) of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering. This matchless Wheel of Dhamma, monks, set in motion by the Tathagata, the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse... or by anyone in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them.

"Monks, follow Sariputta and Moggallana; associate with Sariputta and Moggallana. Wise monks do help (materially and spiritually) those who live the holy life. Monks, Sariputta is like unto a mother, Moggallana is like unto a foster-mother to a child. Sariputta, monks, trains (beings) in the path[2] of stream-attainment. Moggallana in the highest goal (arahantship).[3] Sariputta, monks, is able to proclaim, teach, lay down, establish, open up, analyze, and elucidate the Four Noble Truths."

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This the Blessed One said, and having said so, the Welcome Being (*sugata*)[4] rose from his seat and entered (his) abode. Not long after the Blessed One had departed, the Venerable Sariputta addressed the monks, saying: "Reverend friends." "Your reverence," the monks replied the Venerable Sariputta in assent.

This the Venerable Sariputta said:

"Your reverence, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set in motion by the Tathagata, the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park, at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse or brahmana... (as before) in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them.

"Of what four? It was a proclamation of the Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha*) by way of teaching... elucidating it; of the Noble Truth of the arising of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering.

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"What, your reverence, is the Noble Truth of suffering? Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; death is suffering; grief, lamentation, bodily pain, mental pain and despair are suffering; not getting what one desires, that too is suffering: In brief the five aggregates subject to grasping are suffering.

"What is birth? It is the birth of beings in the various classes (planes) of beings; the production, their conception, coming into existence (re-birth), the appearance of the aggregates, acquiring of the sense-bases. This is called birth.

"What is aging? It is the aging of beings in the various classes of beings, their decay, broken teeth, graying hair, wrinkled skin, the dwindling of the life-span, the wearing out of the sense-organs. This is called aging.

"What is death? It is the passing away of beings in the various classes of beings; the falling away, the breaking up, the disappearance, the death, making end of life, the breaking up of the aggregates, the laying down of the body. This is called death.

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"What is grief? It is the grief, sorrow, sorrowfulness, the state of being sorry, inward sorrow, inward intense sorrow visited by some calamity or other, smitten by some kind of ill or other. This is called grief.

"What is lamentation? It is the crying, the wailing, the act of crying, the act of wailing, the state of crying, the state of wailing of one visited by some calamity or other, smitten by some kind of ill or other. This is called lamentation.

"What is suffering? It is bodily suffering, bodily unpleasantness, the painful and unpleasant feeling produced by bodily contact. This is called suffering.

"What is misery? It is mental suffering, unpleasantness, the painful and unpleasant feeling produced by mental contact. This is called misery.

"What is despair? It is despondency, despair, the state of despondency, the state of despair of one visited by some calamity or other. This is called despair.

"What is meant by not getting what one desires, that too is suffering? To beings subject to birth there

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comes desire: 'O might we not be subject to birth, and birth not come to us.' But this cannot be attained by mere desiring. So not getting what one desires, that too, is suffering. To beings subject to aging there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to aging, and aging not come to us...' (as before). To beings subject to disease there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to disease and disease not come to us...' To beings subject to death there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to death and death not come to us...' To beings subject to sorrow, lamentation, suffering, misery, and despair there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to sorrow, lamentation, suffering, misery, and despair, and sorrow, lamentation, suffering, misery, and despair not come to us.' But this cannot be attained by merely desiring. So not getting what one desires that too is suffering.

"What, in brief, are the five aggregates subject to grasping that are suffering? These are the aggregate of matter subject to grasping, the aggregate of feeling..., the aggregate of perception..., the aggregate of mental (volitional) formations..., the aggregate of consciousness subject to grasping.

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These are called, in brief, the five aggregates subject to grasping that are suffering. This is called the Noble Truth of suffering.

"What is the Noble Truth of the arising of suffering? It is this craving which produces re-becoming (re-birth) accompanied by passionate greed, and finding delight now here now there, namely the craving for sense pleasures, craving for existence and craving for non-existence (self-annihilation). This is called the Noble Truth of the arising of suffering.

"What is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering? It is the complete cessation of that very craving, giving it up, relinquishing it, liberating oneself from it, and detaching oneself from it. This is called the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering.

"And what is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering? It is this Noble Eightfold Path itself, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

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"What is *right understanding*? It is this knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the arising of suffering, knowledge of the cessation of suffering, knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of suffering -- this is called right understanding.

"What is right thought? Thought of renunciation, thought of goodwill, thought of not harming -- this is called right thought.

"What is right speech? Abstention from false speech, abstention from tale-bearing, abstention from harsh (abusive) speech, abstention from idle chatter (gossip), this is called right speech.

"What is right action? Abstention from killing, abstention from stealing, abstention from illicit sexual indulgence, this is called right action.

"What is right livelihood? Herein (in this dispensation) the ariyan disciple avoiding wrong livelihood, makes his living by right livelihood, this is called right livelihood.

"What is right effort? Herein a monk puts forth will, strives, stirs up energy, strengthens his mind, exerts himself to prevent the arising of evil, of



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unwholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen; puts forth will... (as before) to banish the evil, unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen; puts forth will... to develop wholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen; and puts forth will, strives, stirs up energy, strengthens his mind, exerts himself to maintain, to preserve, increase, to bring them to maturity, development, and to complete the wholesome thoughts that have arisen. This is called right effort.

"What is right mindfulness? Herein a monk lives practicing body contemplation on the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it), having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of the body).

"He lives practicing feeling-contemplation on the feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it) having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of feelings).

"He lives practicing mind-contemplation on the mind, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it) having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of the mind).

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"He lives practicing mind-object contemplation on the mind objects, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it) having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of mental objects). This is called right mindfulness.

"And what is right concentration? Herein a monk aloof from sense desires, aloof from unwholesome thoughts, attains to and abides in the first meditative absorption (*jhana*) which is detachment-born and accompanied by applied thought, sustained thought, joy, and bliss.

"By allaying applied and sustained thought he attains to and abides in the second *jhana* which is inner tranquillity, which is unification (of the mind), devoid of applied and sustained thought, and which has joy and bliss.

"By detachment from joy he dwells in equanimity, mindful, and with clear comprehension and enjoys bliss in body, and attains to and abides in the third *jhana* which the noble ones (ariyas) call: 'Dwelling in equanimity, mindfulness, and bliss.'

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"By giving-up of bliss and suffering, by the disappearance already of joy and sorrow, he attains to, and abides in the fourth *jhana*, which is neither suffering nor bliss, and which is the purity of equanimity-mindfulness. This is called right concentration.

"This is called the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering.

"Your reverence, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set in motion by the Tathagata, the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park, at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse or brahmana or deva or Brahma or by anyone in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them."

This the Venerable Sariputta said. Those monks glad at heart rejoiced at the words of the Venerable Sariputta.

## Notes

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1. For a very comprehensive account of the Four Noble Truths read *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, Piyadassi Thera, Buddhist Publication Society. Kandy, Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

2. Literally "fruit", "*sotapatti phala*."

3. To train in the path of stream-attainment is more difficult than to train in the path of arahantship for the reason that in the former case one has to deal with undeveloped beings, and in the latter case with those who are already developed, and who are, by virtue of their development, not destined to fall back.

4. This is another epithet of the Buddha.

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Revised: Fri 21 September 2001

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/majjhima/mn141.html>

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# **The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism**

by

**Piyadassi Thera**

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## **The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism**

*I am happy to be here in response to-the invitation of the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association to deliver the fifth Sir Baron Jayatilaka Memorial Lecture. Let me, at the outset, speak a few words about Sir Baron Jayatilaka who was the President of the Y. M. B. A. for forty six years, that is almost from its inception until his death in 1944.*

*A self-willed individual who toiled his way upwards from small beginnings, unaided by patronage and unsupported by the influence of friends, Sir Baron Jayatilaka is in every respect a self-made man. The story of his life richly*

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*illustrates the power of the human mind. It is appropriate, therefore, on an occasion like this when we recall the flights of his many-sided career, to devote an hour or so to what the Buddha, the Supremely Enlightened Master, has said about the power of the human mind. In other words let us dwell on "The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism."*

▲ The text below has been blown-up/enlarged a bit for the sake of easier reading. Venerable Piyadassi takes some time to go over the differences between Western and Eastern religion and philosophy, building a bridge between as speaker and audience, but, then, when the bridge is built, he goes into a tight analysis of Buddhist phenomenology of mind, in a way which comprehensively compacts the causal relationship between human consciousness and suffering and happiness.

A dispassionate student of Buddhism who carefully reads through the books of early Buddhism is confronted with a dynamic personality, a religious teacher, who had attained supreme enlightenment and security from bondage through moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection, a teacher with an indefatigable zeal and steel determination

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for propagating the truth he had realized. That dynamic personality is none other than Siddhattha Gotama (Sanskrit, Siddhartha Gautama) popularly known as the Buddha. This teacher who did not claim to be other than a human being was not one more philosopher among many others, but a teacher of a way of life, who set in motion the matchless "Wheel of Truth" (*dharma-cakra*) which was to revolutionize the thought and life of the human race. His self sacrificing zeal, large love, kindness and tolerance combined with his remarkable personality, aroused the Indians from their slumber of ignorance and inspired them.

The Buddha spoke to all men and for all time. His teaching, the Dhamma, is for all men, whatever language they speak,



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whatever clothes they wear, whatever country they call 'home' - the Buddha's language is truth. He was clothed in truth, and the whole world was his home; for truth is everywhere for all time to be realized by each one individually. This is what is meant by the universality of the Dhamma.

Truth is not conceptual, and therefore, cannot be passed on by means of words or other symbols. An Enlightened One could guide us by showing the way to truth, but we ourselves should pursue the method of self-inquiry called meditation in Buddhism so that the hidden workings of the mind could be revealed, truth realized, and power within contacted.

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What the Buddha taught during, a period of forty-five years is so vast, its aspects so varied and fascinating that scholars called Buddhism a religion; a philosophy; an ethical code; a religio-philosophical system; and ethical idealism.

But one has still to find a religion where psychology looms so large as in Buddhism. The commonly called academical psychology - like other academical sciences - defined mind in static terms, whereas Buddhist psychology defines mental life in dynamic terms. However, after many struggles and persistent efforts modern psychology has left the dilapidated abode of

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orthodox schools, and is rediscovering the old doctrine of a dynamic mind.

There are some variations no doubt, but the basic principle is one. Today many a psychologist accepts the dynamic nature of the human mind, and modern text books of psychology have abandoned the concept of a soul, and are regarding psychology as the science of human behaviour. Let us hope that it will not deviate from its well-found track.

To the Buddhist even the question of religion and its origin is not a metaphysical one, but a psychological and intellectual one. To him religion is no mere creed or code of revelation or fear of the unknown, fear of a supernatural being who rewards

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and punishes the good deeds and ill deeds of his creatures. It is not a theological concern, but rather, a psychological and intellectual concern resulting from the experience of *dukkha*, that is, suffering, conflicts, unsatisfactoriness of the empirical existence, of the nature of life.

When we consider the doctrinal contents of Buddhism we are necessarily compelled to regard the Buddha's teaching as distinguished and different from other systems of religion where the central feature is the concept of a creator God.

It is correct to say that there is much religion in Buddhism, but it cannot be included among the many religions in existence

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today, at least in the sense in which anthropologists understand the word religion.

Generally the concept of religion is associated with a system centered around God and supernatural forces. Buddhism, however, does not advocate any prescribed system of ritual and worship and supplication of deities, or gods. There is no recognition, on the part of man, of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny.

In Buddhism, man attributes all his attainments and achievements to human effort and human understanding. Buddhism is anthropocentric and not theocentric.

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Thus, to a Buddhist, religion is a way of life, in the sense of a way of moral, spiritual and intellectual training leading to complete freedom of the mind, highest attainment of Insight which puts an end to, all sufferings and repeated existence.

Looked at from the point of view of philosophy, the Buddha was not concerned with the problems that have worried philosophers both of the East and West from the beginning of history.

He was not concerned with metaphysical problems which only confused man and upset his mental equilibrium. Their solution, he knew, 'will not free mankind from suffering,' from the unsatisfactory nature of life.

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That was why the Buddha hesitated to answer such questions, and, at times; refrained from explaining those which were, often wrongly formulated. He was not ready to answer such questions as: Is the world eternal or not? Is it finite or infinite? Has the world an end or not? What is the origin of the world? At times the Buddha was silent to such, seemingly important but futile questions, because silence was the best answer to such speculations and *meaningless* questions.

The only way to resolve these doubts and difficulties is by exploring the innermost recesses of the human mind which can only be effected by deep self-introspection based on purity of conduct and consequent meditation.

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All the principal tenets of Buddhism like the doctrine of kamma (Skt, karma), volitional activities or moral causation, and rebirth, meditation and the resultant mental attainments are best studied and investigated as workings of the human mind, and therefore, Buddhism can most fittingly be described as a study of the highest psychology.

The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* of the Buddhist Canon gives a very comprehensive account of the mind and the mental factors in a manner so as to help the Buddhist way of life. However, a close study of the dialogues, or the discourses of the Buddha, tends to produce the conviction that psychology plays a significant role in the *Sutta pitaka*, too.



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What the Buddha had to say with regard to the nature of the human mind, the method of cleansing it and the art of becoming its master and not its slave, is clearly enunciated in the discourses of the Sutta Pitaka. In this respect the *Satipatthana Sutta*,<sup>xxxiii</sup> the discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, the *Vitakka Santhana Sutta*,<sup>xxxiii</sup> the Removal of Distracting Thoughts, and such other cardinal discourses are glaring examples.

Buddhism is the most psychological of religions. It is significant that the intricate workings of the human mind are more fully dealt with in Buddhism rather than in any other religion, and, therefore, psychology works hand in hand more with Buddhism than with any other religion.

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Is Buddhism related to modern psychology?  
one may ask.

Yes, but with some difference: Buddhism is more concerned with the curative rather than analysis. Buddhism helps us to get beyond the intellect to the actual experience of life itself. Through meditation, the Buddha had discovered the deeper universal maladies of the human heart and mind.

The remarkable insight into the workings of the mind makes the Buddha a psychologist and scientist of the highest eminence. Admittedly his way of arriving at these truths of mental life is not that of an experimentalist, yet what the Buddha had discovered remains true, and in fact has been corroborated by experimentalists. But the

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purpose in engaging in these inquiries is quite different from that of the scientist.

The statements of the Buddha about the nature of the mind and matter are directed towards specific ends. They are simply the deliverance of man, supreme security from bondage. The Buddha places so much emphasis on mind and mental phenomena because of the crucial role that our inner life occupies in the genesis of human action. In theistic religions the basis is God. In Buddhism, which is non-theistic, the mind is the basis.

The Christian Bible begins by saying, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" whereas in the Dhammapada, which may be regarded as the Buddhist Bible, the

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opening lines read: '*Manopubangama dhamma mano settha manomaya*,' 'Mind precedes things; mind dominates them; mind creates them'; The words of the Christian God, as a matter of fact, the words of Gods of all theistic religions, point the way to God and heaven, to the Beyond. The Buddha gives the greatest importance to mind in the scheme of deliverance, directs man to the ways of discrimination and research, and urges him to get busy with the real task of developing the inner forces and qualities of the mind.

The Buddha says: "You yourselves should put forth the necessary effort, and work out your deliverance; the Buddhas only show the way."<sup>xxxiii</sup>

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In order to understand fully the ideal of freedom of the mind, it is necessary to appreciate the importance of the mind. If there is no proper understanding of the importance of the human mind, we cannot appreciate to its fullest extent the reason why it so necessary to develop and safeguard the freedom of the mind.

Of all forces the force of the mind is the most potent. It pre-dominates every other force. It is a power by itself and within itself. Any attempt to thwart the growth of this force is a step in the wrong direction. No one has understood the power of the mind so clearly as the Buddha.

Buddhism, while not denying the world of matter and the great effect that the physical

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world has on mental life, emphasises the very great importance of the human mind.

Once a monk asked the Buddha: 'Pray, Venerable Sir, by what is the world led? By what is the world drawn along? Under the sway of what one dhamma have all gone?

The Buddha's answer is categorical: "*Well, monk, the world is led by mind (thought); by mind the world is drawn along; all have gone under the sway of the mind, the one dhamma.*"<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The Buddhist point of view is that the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good and evil, life and death are not attributed to any external agency. They are

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the results of our own thoughts and their resultant actions.

The Buddhist way of life is an intense process of cleansing one's speech, action and thought. It is self development and self-purification resulting in self-realization. The emphasis is on practical results and not on mere philosophical speculation, logical abstraction or even mere cogitation.

The Buddhist ethos and psychology is built on the eternal truth of *dukkha*, the unsatisfactoriness of all sentient beings, all empirical existence. The Buddha said:

*"One thing only do I teach  
Suffering and its end to reach."*<sup>xxxiii</sup>

To understand this unequivocal saying is to understand Buddhism; for the entire

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teaching of the Buddha is nothing else than the application of this one principle.

It seems to me that what can be called the discovery of a Buddha, is just the Four Noble Truths: namely *dukkha*, the arising or the cause of *dukkha*, the cessation of *dukkha*, and the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*. And the rest are logical developments and more detailed explanations of the four truths. 'This is the typical teaching of the Buddhas of all ages.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The Buddha was a practical teacher. He was more concerned with beings than with inanimate nature. His sole object was to unravel the mystery of existence, to solve the problem of becoming. This he did by



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comprehending in all their fullness the four truths, the eternal verities of life.

To those who listened to him, he explained in its detail the problem of *dukkha*, the universal fact of life, and tried to make people feel its full force, and convince them of it. He had definitely told us what he explains and what he does not. To one who views the world, and all it holds, in its proper perspective, the primary concern of life is not mere speculation or vain voyaging into the imaginary regions of high fantasy, but the gaining of true happiness and freedom from *dukkha*, unsatisfactoriness.

To him true knowledge depends on the central question: Can this learning be of use

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to us in the conquest of mental peace and tranquillity, of real happiness?

The Buddha says: "*In this very body, a fathom long, with its consciousness and perception I declare are the world, its cessation and the path that leads to the cessation of the world.*" Here the word 'world' denotes *dukkha*.

According to his teaching, suffering cannot be separated from the five aggregates, from this fathom long body with a mind. The five aggregates and suffering are same, and not two different things. "What is suffering?" The Buddha asks, and answers: It should be said that it is the five aggregates of clinging.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

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Now it becomes clear that to understand the first truth, *dukkha*, as well as the other three truths, it is essential to have a clear idea of the five aggregates that comprise man.

In ordinary parlance we speak of a "being," but in the ultimate sense there is no such "being," there is only a manifestation of ever-changing psycho-physical forces or energies. These forces or energies form the aggregates, and what we call a being is nothing but a combination of these ever-changing five aggregates. Now what are the five aggregates?

According to Buddhism man is a psycho-physical combination of mind and body (*nama-rupa*). The components of the "mind" are classified into four groups, namely:

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feeling (*vedana*); perceptions, that is sense-impressions, images or ideas and concepts (*sanna*); mental formations or connative ideas and their concomitants (*sankhara*); and consciousness, (*vinnana*). These four mental groups which are the non-physical factors in man are collectively regarded as mind (*nama*).

With the physical factor body (*rupa*), the so-called man comes to be known as the five aggregates (*pancakkhandha*) composing an individuality.

In our study of psychology, Buddhist or otherwise, we feel obliged to ask whether the mind and the brain are different from each other. It is true that there is a close

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connection between mind and brain. Mental actions are related to brain charges.

Mind is not something that can be handled, that can be submitted to any chemical test. It is invisible, intangible and as such cannot be discerned by the five senses. It lies outside the realm of the physical world; we can however form some idea of its nature and structure and how it works as a whole. But the brain is otherwise. We can speak of its actual position, its structure and also its function.

The mind, whilst not impervious to external influences, is not under the control of other factors, but it is the master of them. It is with a man's mind that he seeks truth, that he

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probes into the inner meaning of things, by which he learns their secret and significance.

In this talk I do not intend to go into details regarding the aggregate of material form or body as the subject is "The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism." In brief, matter, the physical body of man, contains and comprises the Four Great Primaries (*Cattari mahabhutani*) which are traditionally known as solidity, fluidity, heat or temperature and motion or vibration (*pathavi, apo, tejo, vdyo*).

In this context, they are not simply earth, water, fire and wind, though conventionally they may be so called. In Buddhist thought, especially in the *Abhidhamma* teaching, they are more than that. Very briefly *pa pathavi*

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or solidity is the element of expansion. Apo or fluidity is the element of cohesion. *Te jo* is the element of heat or temperature. Yoyo is the element of motion, it is displacement. Every material object is made up of the four Great Primaries though one or other seems to preponderate.

As discussed earlier, the four non-physical factors of man, all his mental and emotional processes, are included in the word mind.

Students of Buddhism are familiar with the three pail terms: *mano*, *citta*, and *vinnana*. These terms are often translated as mind in some context or other, although a more discriminating student will translate *vinnana* as consciousness or cognitive consciousness. The English word mind does not adequately

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convey the meaning of the Pali words *mano* or *citta*.

These three terms, *mano*, *citta* and *vinnana*, however, are synonyms (*yam ca kho bhikkhave vuccati cittam itipi mano, itipi vinnanam*),<sup>xxxiii</sup> but they have their distinct and special uses in certain contexts and with all their different shades of meaning they indicate the psychological aspects of Buddhism.

The term *vinnana*, has a deeper connotation in Buddhist psychology. In western psychology mind is generally defined as: "The organized totality of psychical structures and processes, conscious, unconscious and endopsychic philosophically, rather than psychologically,



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the entity or substratum underlying these structures and processes.”<sup>xxxiii</sup> According to philosophy: "Mind is used in two principal senses: (a) the individual mind is the self or subject which perceives, remembers, imagines, feels, conceives, reasons, wills, etc. and which is functionally related to an individual bodily organism. (b) Mind, generically considered, is a metaphysical substance which pervades all individual mind and which is contrasted with matter or material substance.”<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Let us now discuss the four aggregates *vedana' sanna, sankhara* and *vinnana* which form the psychical parts of the mind.

Vedana is the, aggregate of Feeling which accompanies our impressions and ideas.

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Feelings are threefold: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. They are dependent on contact: Seeing a form or visible object, hearing a sound, smelling an odor, tasting a flavor, touching some tangible thing, cognizing a mental object (an idea or thought) man experiences feeling. These six kinds of feelings are experienced through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind, respectively (the faculty of mind, *manindriya*, is regarded as the sixth faculty in Buddhist psychology).

When for instance, eye, form, and visual consciousness (*cakkhu vinnana Ana*) come together, it is their coincidence that is called contact. Contact means the combination of the organ of sense, the object of sense, and sense consciousness. When these are all

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present together there is no power or force that can prevent the arising of feeling.

Next, comes the aggregate of perception (*sannak-khandha*). The function of perception in Buddhist psychology is recognition (*samjanana*) of objects, both physical and mental. *perception*, like feeling, also is six-fold: perception of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily contacts and mental objects. Perception in Buddhism is not used in the sense of Western philosophers like Bacon, Descartes.

Spinoza and Leibnitz used the term, but as a mere sense perception. Extra-sensory forms of perception such as telepathy and clairvoyance are also included in the aggregate of perception.

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There is a certain *affinity* between awareness (*vi vijanana*), which is the function of consciousness, and recognition (*sam janana*), the function of perception. While consciousness becomes aware of an object, simultaneously, perception takes the distinctive mark of the object and thus distinguishes it from other objects. This distinctive mark is instrumental in cognizing the object a second and a third time, and in fact, every time we become aware of the object. Thus it is perception, *sanna*, that brings about memory.

It is important to note that perceptions often deceive us. Then they become known as illusion or perversity of perceptions (*sanna vipallasa*), It is always when we fail to see the true nature of things that our views

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become clouded; because of our preconceived notions, our attachment and aversion, our likes and dislikes (*anurodha*, *virodha*,<sup>xxxiii</sup> we fail to see the sense organs and sense objects in their respective and objective natures, and go after mirages and deceptions.

The sense organs delude and mislead us, and then we fail to see things in their true light, in their proper perspective, so our way of seeing things become perverted (*viparita dassana*).

Right understanding alone removes these illusions and helps man to cognize the real nature that underlies all appearances. It is only when man comes out of this cloud of illusions and perversions that he shines with

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true wisdom like the full moon that emerges brilliant from behind a black cloud.

When a particular perception, perverted or not, occurs frequently, it grows stronger and grips our mind. Then it becomes difficult to get rid of that perception, and the result is well explained in this verse of the *Suttanipata* (verse 841),

*“Who is free from sense perceptions  
In him no more bonds exist;  
Who by insight freedom gains  
All delusions cease in him;  
But who clings to sense perceptions  
And to view-points wrong and false  
He lives wrangling in this world.”*

Perception is followed by the aggregate of Mental (often called ‘volitional’) Formations (*samkharakkhandha*). It is good to keep in

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mind that ‘volitional formations’ is the popular term for the word *samkhara* in the list of the five aggregates. In other contexts *samkhara* does signify anything conditioned and compounded. In the statement '*sabbe samkhara' anicca' or anicca vata samkhara'* (all compounded things are impermanent), the term *samkhara* applies to all compounded and conditioned things, i. e., all things that come into being as the effect of contacts of causes and conditions and which, themselves act as causes and conditions in turn again to give rise to other effects.

In this group of mental formations (*samkhara*) are included all mental factors except feeling (*vedana*) and perception (*sanna*) as mentioned earlier.

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The Abhidhamma speaks of fifty two mental concomitants or factors (*cetasika*). Feeling and perceptions are two of them, but they are not volitional formations. The remaining fifty are collectively known as *samkhara*, mental or volitional formations. Volition plays a vital role in the mental realm, and we shall discuss this when we deal with the psychology of *karma*.

Next: The aggregate of consciousness (*vinnanakkhandha*) is the most important of the five aggregates which comprise man. Now what is the function of consciousness? Like feeling, perception and volitional formations, consciousness also has six types and its function is varied. It has its basis and objects.



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All our feelings are experienced through the contact of sense faculties with the external world. The faculty of mind which cognizes mental objects is not something tangible and perceptible, as are the other five faculties which cognize the external world. The eye cognizes the world of colours (*vanna*) or visible objects, the ear audible sounds, and so forth.

The mind, however, cognizes the world of ideas and thoughts. When it comes to the world of thoughts and ideas, the faculty of the mind is lord over the mental realm. The eye cannot think thoughts, and collect ideas, but it is instrumental in seeing visible forms, the world of colours.

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It is very important to understand the function of consciousness. Although there is this functional relationship between the faculties and their objects, for instance, eye with forms, ear with sounds, and so forth, awareness comes through consciousness. In other words, sense objects cannot be experienced with the particular sensitivity without the appropriate kind of consciousness.

When the three things: eye, form and visual consciousness come together, it is their coincidence that is called contact. From contact comes feeling and so on as explained in the dependent origination, sometimes translated as conditioned genesis (*paticca samuppada*).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

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When it is said that consciousness arises through the interaction of the sense organs and objects (*indriya* and *arammana*), it does not mean that consciousness is some thing created by the sense organ and object which are purely physical. Otherwise, we will be subscribing to the theory of the materialistic schools which believed that consciousness is a mere by-product of matter.

The function of *vinnana*, consciousness, is to become aware of objects (*vi janana*). The human eye may come in contact with the visible object, but unless there is awareness we are not conscious of the object. Consciousness is also conditioned and subject to change, and so it is not a spirit or soul opposed to matter, nor a projection, an offspring of matter.

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The concept of vinnana occupies a very high place in the teachings of the Buddha, but it is not studied or understood by many in all its aspects; it is the least understood.

To many, vinnana is just one of the five aggregates, which becomes aware of sense objects. Its deeper interpretation, the broader aspects involved, are ignored. When we discuss the concept of vinnana in relation to the doctrine of survival or the rebirth process of beings, it becomes clear that consciousness plays an important role in the process of becoming (*punabbhava*).

This fact is clearly brought out in the *paticca samuppada: sankhara paccaya vinnanam*, dependent on the *kamma* or good and evil actions (*samkhara*) of the past births is

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conditioned the conscious life in this present birth.

Consciousness, therefore, is the first factor (niddna) or first of the conditioning links belonging to the present existence. As this, consciousness or vinnana is the first of the stream of consciousness (*vinnana-sota*) belonging to one single existence (*bhava*), it is also known as *patisandhi vinnana*, relinking or rebirth consciousness. Samkhara, in the form of kamma, is the 'motive force' that causes rebirth. We must understand the dynamic importance of the two psychic factors, *samkhara* and *vinnana*. *Samkhara* means *karma*, good and evil actions, all actions, physical, verbal and mental (*kaya samkhara*, *vaci samkhara*, *citta samkhara*) which will bring out

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reactions giving rise to rebirth. Thus samkhara determines that part of consciousness in the next life influencing the new personality.

What we call life here is the functioning of the five aggregates which we have already discussed, or the functioning of mind and body (*nama rupa*) which are only energies or forces.

They are never the same for two consecutive moments, and, in this conflux of mind and body, we do not see anything permanent. The grown-up man is neither the child nor quite a different person; there is only a relationship of continuity.

The conflux of mind and body or mental and physical energy, is not lost at death, for no

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force or energy is ever lost. It undergoes change. It resets, reforms in new conditions.

This is called rebirth, re-existence or re-becoming (*punabbhava*). Karmic process (*kammabhava*) is the energy that out of a present life conditions a future life in unending sequence. In this process there is nothing that passes or transmigrates from one life to another. It is only a movement that continues unbroken.

The 'being' who passes away here and takes birth elsewhere is neither the same person, nor a totally different one (*na ca so na ca anno*).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

There is the last moment of consciousness (*cuti vinnana or cuti citta*) belonging to the immediately previous life; immediately

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next, upon the cessation of that consciousness, but conditioned by it, there arises the first moment of consciousness of the present birth which is called (*pati-sandhi vinnana*) relinking or rebirth consciousness, the first stirring of mental life in the newly begun individual.

Similarly the last thought moment in this life conditions the first thought moment in the next life. In this way consciousness comes into being and passes away yielding place to new consciousness. Thus the perpetual stream of consciousness (*vinnana sota*) goes on until existence ceases through the eradication of the root causes leading to becoming or existence (*bhava*). The root causes are: lust, hate and delusion (*raga,*



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*dosa, moha*).<sup>xxxiii</sup> Existence, in a way, is consciousness, the will to live.

The Pali word *pati-sandhi vinnana* is a term found only in the Abhidhamma literature, and a detailed account of the term is found in the commentaries and treatises on the Abhidhamma. *Patisandhi* or Sanskrit *pratisandhi* literally means re-linking, re-uniting, re-joining. It is called re-uniting through its being the thing which links one existence to another (the succeeding one). *Patisandhivinnana* is the resultant consciousness (*vipuka-vinnana*) present at rebirth, or owing to the presence of which at the moment of rebirth the new existence is connected with the immediately preceding existence, and through that with the entire past of the individual reborn. This resultant

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consciousness is due to previous re-birth producing mental factors *samkhara*, volitional formations, or *kamma*.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

It is interesting to note that the counterpart of the Abhidhamma term '*Pati-sandhi vinnana*' is found in the Sutta Pitaka. In the *Anenjasappaya Sutta (106)* of the Majjhima Nikaya, this *vipaka vinnana* is referred to as the *samvattanikam vinnanam*, the consciousness that goes on, that proceeds from one life to another as *vipaka*. The consciousness that evolves into the next life. But be it noted that this consciousness, is not an unchanging entity. Dependent on consciousness arises mentality-materiality (*nama-rupa*), or the psycho-physical personality.

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Consciousness, on the other hand, is conditioned by mentality-materiality (*nama-rupa paccaya vinnanam vinnana paccaya nama-rupam*).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

They are mutually dependent and the two together form a new being. In the *Maha Nidana Sutta* of the Digha Nikaya the question was raised by the Buddha in the course of a discussion with his attendant disciple Ananda Thera as to whether the *nama-rupa* will develop, and grow into maturity if *vinnana* were not to be able to descend into the mother's womb (*matukucchimhi na okkamissatha*), or being entered into the mother's womb were to leave (*okkamitva vokkamissatha*). Ananda Thera's reply was in the negative: `Lord, the development of the embryo will not be

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successful'. The answer was approved by the Buddha. According to biology, "A new human life begins in that miraculous instant when a sperm cell from the father merges with the egg shell or ovum within the mother." This is the moment of birth. Science speaks of only these two physical common factors. Buddhism, however, speaks of a third factor which is purely psychic,

As the *Mahatanhasankhaya Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikaya points out, a conception (*gabbhassa avakkanti*) of a being takes place by the conjunction of three factors. If the mother and father come together (there should be coitus of parents), and it is the mother's proper season (the mother should not have her period), and the *gandhabba* is

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also present (*paccupatthito hoti*) then a germ of life is planted there.

The third factor *gandhabba* is simply a term for the *vinnana*, or *pal patisandhi vinnana*, or the *samvattanika vinnana*, rebirth consciousness.

According to Acariya Buddhaghosa, the Commentator, *gandhabba* means the being about to enter the womb (*paccupatthito hoti*). What is meant is that a *satta*, a being, about to be born in that situation, is being driven on by the mechanism of *kamma*. It should be clearly understood that this *gandhubba* is neither a "semigod who presides over child-conception<sup>xxxiii</sup> nor a 'discarnate spirit' as implied by the Vedic *gandharva*.

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It is quite clear from the early Buddhist texts that there is no spirit or soul, or ego-entity going from birth to birth. It is the *vinnana* conditioned by *samkharas* or *kamma* formations, that brings about the rebirth of an individual after his death.

Consciousness, which is the psychic factor that determines the rebirth of an individual or being, is not something permanent in the form of a self or soul or an ego-entity. Even consciousness is conditioned and subject to change.

There were many during the time of the Buddha who thought, and there are many who continue to think, that consciousness in the form of a permanent, enduring self or soul exists in man, continues through life,

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and at death transmigrates from one life to another, and binds life together.

During the Buddha's time some metaphysicians held the view: "whatever there is to be called *citta* or *mano* or *vinnana*, that is designated as the soul; permanent, constant, eternal, unchanging"<sup>xxxiii</sup>

We also see a glaring instance of this in the thirty-eighth discourse of the Majjhima Nikaya. One of the Buddha's own disciples, Sati by name, held the following view: "In so far as I understand the Dhamma taught by the Buddha, it is the same consciousness, *vinnana* that fares on and continues (*sandhavati samsarati*), that transmigrates and wanders about (in rebirth)."

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When Sati intimated his point of view to the Buddha, the Master questioned him: "What is this consciousness, Sati?" "It is that which expresses, which feels and experiences (*vado vedeyyo*) the result of good and evil deeds now here now there."

The Buddha, however, dispelled his erroneous belief by explaining to him that apart from conditions there is no arising of consciousness, that consciousness always arises depending on conditions.

Sati erred when he said that the same consciousness continues as speaker and experiencer thus regarding consciousness as an agent behind all mental activities.

Now this consciousness referred to as the stream of consciousness (*vinnana sota*)<sup>xxxiii</sup>



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is not a unity that abides unchanged, and continues in the same state without perishing throughout the cycle of existence.

Consciousness also is conditioned, and therefore, is not permanent. It does not, as Sati thought, transmigrate from one life to another.

The eminent American psychologist, William James, only echoes the words of the Buddha when he writes referring to consciousness: "It is nothing jointed. It flows. A 'river' or 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described ... *Let us call it the stream of thoughts, the stream of consciousness or of subjective life.*"<sup>xxxiii</sup> (the italics are his)

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If I do not even make a passing reference to the Bhavanga aspect of Buddhist psychology I shall not be doing justice to the subject. *Bhavanga citta* or *Bhavanga sota* plays an important role in the mental life of man.

Modern psychology postulates three levels of the mind: the Conscious, the Sub-conscious, the Unconscious. The Conscious level is one of awareness. During our waking-life the conscious mind works through the five channels known as the five sense faculties.

Sub-conscious stratum of the mind is the area which holds those memories that we can recall at will. It is said that the subconscious level of mental life which lies

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immediately below that of the conscious is a repository of memories which can be brought back into consciousness at will.

The level of the unconscious is a store-house for all past experiences that cannot be recalled at will, but can, at times, on its own, manifest itself in the conscious level without any external stimulation, or under such special methods as hypnosis.

Sigmund Freud who was chiefly concerned with the unconscious mind as the store-house of mental causes for a nervous breakdown, gives in "*Psychopathology of Every Day Life*" numerous examples of the fact of unconscious activity.

Though some local scholars identify the Bhavanga citta with the sub-conscious or

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unconscious mind, I do not see a complete parallel. In Buddhist psychology there are no such levels of consciousness. Abhidhamma speaks of two types of mind, the *Vithi-citta* and *Bhavanga-citta*.

Vithi-citta is a thought process which occurs always at conscious-level, that is during waking-life. It works through the five sense faculties.

The Bhavanga-citta operates during waking-life as well as in the dreamless state of deep sleep, and, therefore, it may be said that it functions below the level of consciousness. It can also be called a sub-conscious or an unconscious mental process not identical with the full range of the Western concept of the sub-conscious or unconscious mind. It

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does not cover the entire ground of the Western conception of the sub-conscious or unconscious mind.

The Bhavanga which is made up of '*bhava*' (becoming or existence) and '*anga*' (cause or instrumental, rather than factor) is an essential condition for continued existence.

'Life continuum' is the closest English equivalent for the Pali word Bhavanga. By reason of the existence of the Bhavanga citta, the stream of consciousness is kept going without interruption.

If our present birth here is the beginning, and our death is the end of this life, there is hardly any need to worry, and try to understand from a psychological point of

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view the problem of *dukkha*, the unsatisfactoriness of all empirical existence.

A moral order in the universe, the reality of right and wrong, may not be of any practical significance to us. To enjoy and gratify the senses at any cost may seem to be the sensible thing to do during this brief span of life.

This view, however, does not explain the inequality of mankind. An inquiring mind will always strive to seek the cause of this inequality.

There are two principal teachings of the Buddha which should be studied from a psychological point of view. They are *kamma* and *rebirth*. Kamma is the law of moral causation that shapes the destiny of

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beings and brings about rebirth. Basically, it is volition (*cetana*), action prompted by will. The Buddha says:

"Volition, O monks, I declare is kamma, having willed man acts by deed, word and thought."<sup>xxxiii</sup> Volition which is will, is the deciding factor in all our activities, good or ill. *Kamma* is the action or seed. The reaction, the effect, or fruit is known as *kammavipaka*.

Volition may be good or bad, so actions may be wholesome or unwholesome according to their results. This endless play of action and reaction, cause and effect, seed and fruit, continues in perpetual motion, and this is becoming (*bhava*), - a continually changing

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process of the psycho-physical phenomena of existence discussed earlier.

Man acts through body, speech and mind; actions bring about reactions. Craving (*tanha* Skt. *trishna*), our thirst, which is a factor of the mind, gives rise to deeds, deeds produce results; results in turn bring about new desires, new craving and thirsting.

The process of cause and effect, actions and reactions, is natural law. It is a law in itself with no need for a law giver.

An external agency that rewards and punishes the good and evil deeds of man has no place in Buddhist thought. Man is always changing either for good or for ill. This changing is unavoidable and depends entirely on his own will and action. "This is



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merely the universal natural law of the conservation of energy extended to the moral domain."

It may be observed, from a psychological point of view, that Buddhism does not support the idea of repentance, for it will not do any good to oneself or others.

According to Buddhism wrong doing is not regarded as a 'sin,' for that word is foreign to the teaching of the Buddha. There is no such things as 'breaking the Buddha's law' because he was not a law-giver, an arbitrator or potentate who punished the bad and rewarded the good deeds of beings.

The doer of the deed is responsible for his own actions; he suffers or enjoys the consequences of deeds, and it is his concern

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either to do good or to do bad. It must also be stated that all actions, good or ill, do not necessarily mature.

One's good kamma may suppress the evil kamma and vice versa.

We must also understand that the Buddhist doctrine of kamma is not fatalism, is not a philosophical doctrine to the effect that human action is not free, but necessarily determined by motives which are regarded as external forces acting upon the will, or predetermined by God.

The Buddha neither subscribed to the theory that all things are unalterably fixed; that all things happen by inevitable necessity, that would be Strict Determinism, (*niyata-vada*) nor did he uphold the opposing theory of

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*(adiccusamuppanna)* which would be complete indeterminism.

According to Buddhism, there is no life after death or life before birth independent of kamma or volitional actions. Kamma is the corollary of rebirth; rebirth, on the other hand, is the corollary of kamma. Birth precedes death, and death on the other hand, precedes birth, and the pair, thus, accompany each other in unbroken succession.

Still there is no permanent self or soul or fixed entity that passes from birth to birth. Though man comprises a psycho-physical unit of mind and matter, the 'psyche' or mind is not a soul or self, in the sense of an

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enduring entity, something ready-made and permanent.

It is a force, a dynamic continuum, capable of storing-up memories not only of this life but also of past lives.

To the scientist matter is energy in a state of stress, change without real substance. To the psychologist the 'psyche' is no more a fixed entity. And when the Buddha emphatically stressed that the so called 'being' or 'individual' is but a combination of physical and mental forces or energies, a change with continuity, did he not antedate modern science and psychology by twenty five centuries?

An individual existence is thus a succession of change, something that comes into being

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and passes away not remaining the same for two consecutive moments.

This psychophysical organism, though, undergoes incessant changes, creates new psycho-physical processes every instant, thus preserving the potentiality for future organic processes and leaving no gap between one moment and the other.

We live and die every moment of our lives. It is merely a coming into being and passing away, like the waves of the sea.

This change of continuity which is patent to us in this life does not cease at death. The mind flux continues incessantly. It is the dynamic mind-flux that is termed as kammic energy.

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This mighty force, this will to live, keeps life going. Thus, this perpetual stream of consciousness (vinnana-sota) goes on without end, so long as that myriad-faced thirst (*tanha*) in the company of ignorance (*avijja*), the crowning corruption of all our madness, generate it.

All forms of appetite are included in *tanha*: greed, thirst lust, burning, yearning, longing, inclination, affection, household love are some of the many terms that denote *tanha* which, in the word of the Buddha, leads to becoming (*bhava-netti*). Becoming which manifests itself as *dukkha*, as suffering, frustration, conflicts, painful excitement, unsatisfactoriness, is our own experience.

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Beings in their own intense thirst for either possession or the satisfaction of desires, become bound to the wheel of existence, are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony, and securely close the door to final deliverance.

The enemy of the whole world is lust through which all evil comes to living beings. It is not only greed for and attachment to pleasure caused by the senses, wealth and property, and by the wish to defeat others and conquer countries, but also attachment to ideas, views, opinions and beliefs (*dhamma-tanha*) which often leads to calamity, and destruction and brings untold suffering to whole nations, in fact to the whole world.

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This *tanha*, this craving of man, is three-fold, and the mind is urged to act under the influence of these three types of *tanha*. Whenever craving for objects is connected with sense pleasures it is called Sensuous Craving (*kama-tanha*). When it is associated with the belief in eternal personal existence, then it is called Craving for Existence, for Becoming (*bhava-tanha*). It is the desire for continuing, to exist for ever, self-preservation (*jivitukama*).

When craving is associated with the belief in Self Annihilation it is called craving for non-existence, for destruction (*vibhava-tanha*). The three-fold *tanha* or craving may



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be compared with that of the Freudian conception the *eros*, *libido*, and *thanatoes*.

According to Buddhism many are the defilements (*kilesa*) of the mind, but the root causes of all evil are: lust or craving; hatred or ill-will; delusion or ignorance (*lobha*, *doaa*, *moha*).

They are the motive forces by which man acts. Actions performed through these defilements bring about repeated existence, for it is said "Without abandoning lust, hate and delusion one is not free from birth."<sup>xxxiii</sup>

When a person totally eradicates the trio he is liberated from the shackles of *samsara*, repeated existence.

He is free in the full sense of the word. He no longer has any quality which will cause

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him to be reborn as a living being, because he has realized Nibbana, the entire cessation of becoming (*bhavo nirodha*); he has transcended common or worldly activities, and has raised himself to a state above the world while yet living in the world; his actions are issue-less, are kammically ineffective; for they are not motivated by the trio, by mental defilements.

He is immune to all evil, to all defilements of the heart. In him, there are no motivating underlying tendencies (*anusaya*); he has given up both good and evil (*punna papa pahina*)<sup>xxxiii</sup>; he is not worried by the past, the future nor even the present. He clings to nothing in the world, and so is not troubled.

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He is not perturbed by the vicissitudes of life. His mind is unshaken by contact with worldly contingencies; he is sorrowless, taintless and secure (*asokam, vira jam, khemain*)<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

*Thus* Nibbana is a 'state' realizable in this very life (*ditthadhamma-nibbana*). The thinker, the inquiring mind, will not find it difficult to understand this state which can be postulated only of the Arahant and not of any other being either in this world or in the realm of heavenly enjoyment.

As the Buddha has so clearly pointed out: "Whatever there is of evil, connected with evil, belonging to evil, all issue from mind (literally, mind precedes them all: *mano pubbangama*)". Whatever there is of good,

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connected with good, belonging to good, all issue from mind."<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Hence, the need for man to scrutinize his own mind with a view to understanding how the human mind works, how thoughts arise and pass away.

As Sigmund Freud says:

"Psychological changes only come about very slowly. If they occur quickly and suddenly it is a bad sign". Knowing good thoughts as good, and evil as evil, an attempt should be made to prevent the arising of evil and unwholesome thoughts not yet arisen; to abandon the evil thoughts already arisen; to produce and develop good thoughts that have not yet arisen; and to maintain the good thoughts already arisen. This is the function

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of Right Effort (*sammu vayama*), a doing in the mind: to prevent, to abandon, to develop and maintain (*samvara, pahana, bhavana, anurakkhana*).<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Thus, in Buddhism even ethics is studied from the psychological point of view. This emphasis on right effort by the Buddha explains in unmistakable language that Buddhism is not a philosophy of pessimism, a teaching for the feeble-minded who look at things from the most unfavorable point of view, but that it is a true warrior's religion.

Hard it is to give up what lures and holds us in thrall, and hard it is to exorcise the evil spirits that haunt the human heart in the shape of unwholesome thoughts. These evils are the manifestation of lust, hate and

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delusion discussed earlier. Until one attains the very crest of purity by constant training of the mind, one cannot defeat these hosts completely.

The mere abandoning of outward things, fasting and so forth, these do not tend to purify a man; these things do not make a man holy and harmless.

Self torture is one extreme which the Buddha in his first proclamation of the dhamma cast off as wrong, and so also did he reject sensual indulgence calling it ignoble. Avoiding these two extremes the Buddha revealed to the world the Middle Way, the Ancient Path, which still beckons the weary pilgrim to the haven of Nirvana's security and peace.

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Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom or Insight (*sila, samadhi, panna*) are the cardinal teaching which when fully cultivated raise man from lower to higher levels of mental life; lead him from darkness to light; from passion to dispassion; from turmoil to tranquillity. These three are not isolated reactions, but integral parts of the path. This idea is crystallized in that oft-quoted but ever fresh admonition of the Buddhas of all ages (Dhammapada, 183).

*"Sabba papassa akaranam  
Kusalassa upasampada  
Sacitta pariyodapanarn  
Etam Buddhdnasasanam"*

*"The giving up of all evil  
The cultivation of the good  
The cleansing of one's mind  
This is the Buddhas' teaching."*

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I think we have now sufficiently dealt with  
*"The Psychological Aspect of Buddhism."*

In conclusion I wish to take your minds back to the introductory paragraph in this talk where I stated that the life story of Sir Baron Jayatilaka richly illustrates the power of the human mind. The one lesson that we all can learn from his unique life is that we can improve and develop our minds on the lines indicated in Buddhist psychology.

Mere learning bereft of the elevating and purifying influence of a mind trained in the Buddhist way of life carries us nowhere.

Let us hope that the life story of Sir Baron Jayatilaka, and this talk inspired by that life story, will help us to rise above the passions and prejudices, great and small, which beset



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us at every turn in life, and introduce us to those higher realms of noble living which the Buddha has been at pains to emphasize. May we all, leading that higher life, attain the bliss of Nibbana.

*“Be loving and be pitiful  
And well controlled in virtue's  
ways,  
Strenuous, bent upon the goal,  
And onward ever bravely press.*

*That danger both in dalliance lie:  
That earnestness is sure and safe:  
This when you see, then cultivate  
The Eightfold Path, so shall ye  
touch,<sup>xxxiii</sup>  
So make your own, the Deathless  
Way.”*

***Psalms of the Brethren, 979, 980.***

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[end]

*In a postscript, to the above essay, I. B. Horne, President, Pali Text Society, London, wrote:*

“We of today, in view of this wonderful gift of the Dhamma that has been vouchsafed to us, cannot be merely recipients. We must be givers too. We have had the lofty privilege of coming to know something of the Teachings of the Buddha. We live in a Buddha-era — that is at a time when the Teachings of a Buddha are still remembered and are of significance. This alone would make it incumbent on us to spread this

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Teaching of Peace, inner and outer, as far  
and wide and as faithfully as we can.”

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**The Seven Factors of Enlightenment**  
by  
**Piyadassi Thera**

Revised: Sunday 2006-06-18

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**Wheel Publication 1**

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The Tipitaka, the Buddhist canon, is replete with references to the factors of enlightenment expounded by the Enlightened One on different occasions under different circumstances.

In the *Book of the Kindred Sayings*, V (Samyutta Nikaya, Maha Vagga) we find a special section under the title Bojjhanga Samyutta wherein the Buddha discourses on the *bojjhangas* in diverse ways.

In this section we read a series of three discourses or sermons recited by Buddhists since the time of the Buddha as a protection (*paritta* or *pirit*) against pain, disease, and adversity.

The term *bojjhanga* is composed of *bodhi* + *anga*. *Bodh* denotes enlightenment — to be exact, insight concerned with the realization of the four Noble Truths, namely: the Noble Truth of suffering; the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering; the Noble Truth of the cessation of

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suffering and the Noble Truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. *Anga* means factors or limbs. Bodhi + anga (bojjhanga), therefore, means the factors of enlightenment, or the factors for insight, wisdom.

"Bojjhanga! Bojjhanga! Is the saying, Lord. Pray, Lord, how far is this name applicable?" queried a monk of the Buddha.

*"Bodhaya samvattantiti kho bhikkhu tasma bojjhanga ti vuccanti" —*

"They conduce to enlightenment, monk, that is why they are so called," was the succinct reply of the Master.<sup>1</sup>

Further says the Buddha, "Just as, monks, in a peaked house all rafters whatsoever go together to the peak, slope to the peak, join in the peak, and of them all the peak is reckoned chief: even so, monks, the monk who cultivates and makes much of the seven factors of wisdom, slopes to

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Nibbana, inclines to Nibbana, tends to Nibbana."<sup>2</sup>

The seven factors are:

1. Mindfulness (*sati*)
2. Keen investigation of the *dhamma* (*dhammavicaya*)<sup>3</sup>
3. Energy (*viriya*)
4. Rapture or happiness (*piti*)
5. Calm (*passaddhi*)
6. Concentration (*samadhi*)
7. Equanimity (*upekkha*)

One of the discourses on the Bojjhargas may be mentioned here. It begins:

Thus I heard: At one time the Buddha was living at Rajagaha, at Veluvana, in the squirrel's feeding-ground. At that time the Venerable Maha Kassapa, who was living in Pippali Cave, was sick, stricken with a severe illness. Then the Buddha, rising from his solitude at eventide, visited the Venerable Maha Kassapa,

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took his seat, and spoke to the Venerable Maha Kassapa in this wise:

"Well, Kassapa, how is it with you? Are you bearing up; are you enduring? Do your pains lessen or increase? Are there signs of your pains lessening and not increasing?"

"No, Lord, I am not bearing up, I am not enduring. The pain is very great. There is a sign not of the pains lessening but of their increasing."

"Kassapa, these seven factors of enlightenment are well expounded by me, cultivated and much developed by me, and when cultivated and much developed, they conduce to full realization, perfect wisdom, to Nibbana. What are the seven?"

"Mindfulness. This, O Kassapa, is well expounded by me, cultivated and much developed by me, and when cultivated and

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much developed, it conduces to full realization, perfect wisdom, to Nibbana.

"Investigation of the dhamma...

"Energy...

"Rapture...

"Calm...

"Concentration...

"Equanimity, O Kassapa, is well expounded by me...

"These seven factors of enlightenment, verily, Kassapa, are well expounded by me, cultivated and much developed by me, and when cultivated and much developed they conduce to full realization, perfect wisdom, to Nibbana."

"Verily, Blessed One, they are factors of enlightenment! Verily, O Welcome One, they are factors of enlightenment!" uttered Maha Kassapa. Thus spoke the Buddha, and the



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Venerable Maha Kassapa, rejoicing, welcomed the utterances of the Worthy One. And the Venerable Maha Kassapa rose from that illness. There and then that ailment of the Venerable Maha Kassapa vanished.

— SN 46.14

Another discourse (Maha Cunda Bojjhanga Sutta) of the three mentioned above reveals that once, when the Buddha himself was ill, the Venerable Maha Cunda recited the bojjhangas, factors of enlightenment, and the Buddha's grievous illness vanished.<sup>4</sup>

Man's mind tremendously and profoundly influences and affects the body. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome and harmful thoughts, mind can cause disaster, nay even kill a being; *but mind also can cure a sick body. When concentrated on right thoughts with right understanding, the effects mind can produce are immense.*

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Mind not only makes sick, it also cures. An optimistic patient has more chance of getting well than a patient who is worried and unhappy. The recorded instances of faith healing include cases in which even organic diseases were cured almost instantaneously.

— Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (London, 1946), p. 259

Buddhism (Buddha-dhamma) is the teaching of enlightenment. One, who is keen on attaining enlightenment, should first know clearly the impediments that block the path to enlightenment.

Life, according to the right understanding of a Buddha, is suffering; and that suffering is based on ignorance or *avijja*. Ignorance is the experiencing of that which is unworthy of experiencing — namely evil.

Further, it is the non-perception of the conglomerate nature of the aggregates; non-

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perception of sense-organ and object in their respective and objective natures; non-perception of the emptiness or the relativity of the elements; non-perception of the dominant nature of the sense-controlling faculties; non-perception of the thus-ness — the infallibility — of the four Truths. And the five hindrances (*pañca nivaranaṇi*) are the nutriment of (or condition for) this ignorance. They are called hindrances because they completely close in, cut off, and obstruct. They hinder the understanding of the way to release from suffering. These five hindrances are:

sensuality (*kamacchanda*),

ill-will (*vyapada*),

obduracy of mind and

mental factors (*thinamiddha*),

restlessness and flurry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*),  
and doubt (*vicikiccha*).

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And what is the nutriment of these hindrances? The three evil modes of life (*tini duccharitani*), bodily, vocal, and mental wrong-doing. This threefold nutriment is in turn nourished by non-restraint of the senses (*indriya asamvaro*), which is explained by the commentator as the admittance of lust and hate into the six sense-organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

The nutriment of non-restraint is shown to be lack of mindfulness and of complete awareness (*asati asampajañña*). In the context of nutriment, the drifting away of the object (dhamma) — the lapsing, from the mind, of the knowledge of the *lakkhanas* or characteristics of existence (impermanence, suffering and voidness of self), and forgetfulness of the true nature of things — is the reason for non-restraint. It is when one does not bear in mind the transience and the other characteristics of things that one allows oneself all kinds of liberties in speech and deed, and gives rein to

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full thought imagery of an unskillful kind. Lack of complete awareness is lack of these four: complete awareness of purpose (*sattha sampajañña*), of suitability (*sappaya sampajañña*), of resort (*gocara sampajañña*), and of non-delusion (*asammoha sampajañña*). When one does a thing without a right purpose; when one looks at things or does actions which do not help the growth of the good; when one does things inimical to improvement; when one forgets the dhamma, which is the true resort of one who strives; when one deludedly lays hold of things, believing them to be pleasant, beautiful, permanent, and substantial — when one behaves thus, then too non-restraint is nourished.

And below this lack of mindfulness and complete awareness lies unsystematic reflection (*ayoniso manasikara*).

The books say unsystematic reflection is reflection that is off the right course; that is,

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taking the impermanent as permanent, the painful as pleasure, the soulless as a soul, the bad as good. The constant rolling-on that is *samsara* is rooted in unsystematic thinking. When unsystematic thinking increases it fulfils two things: nescience and lust for becoming. Ignorance being present, the origination of the entire mass of suffering comes to be. Thus a person who is a shallow thinker, like a ship drifting at the wind's will, like a herd of cattle swept into the whirl pools of a river, like an ox yoked to a wheel-contraption, goes on revolving in the cycle of existence, *samsara*.

And it is said, that imperfect confidence (*assaddhiyam*) in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha is the condition that develops unsystematic reflection; and imperfect confidence is due to non-hearing of the True Law, the dhamma (*asaddhamma savanam*). Finally, one does not hear the dhamma through lack of contact with the wise, through not consorting with the good (*asappurisa sansevo*).

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Thus, want of *kalyanamittata*, good friendship, appears to be the basic reason for the ills of the world. And conversely, the basis and nutriment of all good is shown to be good friendship. That furnishes one with the food of the sublime dhamma, which in turn produces confidence in the Triple Gem (*tiratana*): the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha. When one has confidence in the Triple Gem there come into existence profound or systematic thinking, mindfulness and complete awareness, restraint of the senses, the three good modes of life, the four arousings of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment and deliverance through wisdom, one after another, in due order.<sup>5</sup>

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## I

Let us now deal with the enlightenment factors one by one. The first is *sati*, mindfulness. It is the instrument most efficacious in self-mastery,

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and whosoever practices it has found the path to deliverance.

**It is fourfold:** mindfulness consisting in contemplation of the

1. body (*kayanupassana*),
2. feeling (*vedananupassana*),
3. mind (*cittanupassana*), and
4. mental objects (*dhammanupassana*).<sup>6</sup>

The man lacking in this all-important quality of mindfulness cannot achieve anything worthwhile. The Buddha's final admonition to his disciples on his death bed is this: "*Transient are all component things. Work out your deliverance with heedfulness!*" (*vaya-dhamma sankhara, appamadena sampadetha*).<sup>7</sup> And the last words of the Venerable Sariputta, the foremost disciple of the Buddha, who predeceased the Master, were this: "Strive on with Heedfulness! This is my advice to you!" (*sampadetha appamadena, esa me anusasana*).



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In both these injunctions the most significant and pregnant word is *appamada*, which literally means incessant heedfulness. Man cannot be heedful unless he is aware of his actions — whether they are mental, verbal, or physical — at every moment of his waking life. Only when a man is fully awake to and mindful of his activities can he distinguish good from bad and right from wrong. It is in the light of mindfulness that he will see the beauty or the ugliness of his deeds.

The word *appamada*, throughout the Tipitaka, is used to denote sati, mindfulness; *pamada* is defined as absence of mindfulness. Says the Buddha in the Anguttara Nikaya:

Monks, I know not of any other single thing of such power to cause the arising of good thoughts if not yet arisen, or to cause the waning of evil thoughts if already arisen, as heedfulness. In him, who is heedful, good

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thoughts not yet arisen, do arise, and evil thoughts, if arisen, do wane.

Constant mindfulness and vigilance are necessary to avoid ill and perform good. The man with presence of mind, who surrounds himself with watchfulness of mind (*satima*), the man of courage and earnestness, gets ahead of the lethargic, the heedless (*pamatto*), as a racehorse outstrips a decrepit hack. The importance of sati, mindfulness, in all our dealings is clearly indicated by the following striking words of the Buddha:

Mindfulness, O disciples, I declare is essential in all things everywhere. It is as salt is to the curry.

— MA, Satipatthana commentary

The Buddha's life is one integral picture of mindfulness. He is the *sada sato*, the ever-mindful, the ever-vigilant. He is the very embodiment of mindfulness. There was never

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an occasion when the Buddha manifested signs of sluggish inactivity or thoughtlessness.

Right mindfulness or complete awareness, in a way, is superior to knowledge, because in the absence of mindfulness it is just impossible for a man to make the best of his learning.

Intelligence devoid of mindfulness tends to lead man astray and entice him from the path of rectitude and duty. Even people who are well informed and intelligent fail to see a thing in its proper perspective when they lack this all-important quality of mindfulness.

Men of good standing, owing to deeds done and words spoken thoughtlessly and without due consideration to their consequences, are often subjected to severe and justified criticism.

Mindfulness is the chief characteristic of all wholesome actions tending to one's own and others' profit.

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*Appamado mahato atthaya sanvattati:* <sup>8</sup>  
"Mindfulness is conducive to great profit" —  
that is, highest mental development — and it is  
through such attainment that deliverance from  
the sufferings of samsara is possible.

The man who delights in mindfulness and  
regards heedlessness with dread, is not liable to  
fall away. He is in the vicinity of Nibbana.

— Dhp 32

## II

Then, the second enlightenment factor is  
*dhammavicaya*, keen investigation of the  
Dhamma. It is the sharp analytical knowledge of  
understanding the true nature of all constituent  
things animate or inanimate, human or divine.

It is seeing things as they really are; seeing  
things in their proper perspective. It is the  
analysis of all component things into their

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fundamental elements, right down to their ultimates.

Through keen investigation one understands that all compounded things pass through the inconceivably rapid moments of *uppada*, *thiti*, and *bhanga*, or of arising, reaching a peak, and ceasing, just as a river in flood sweeps to a climax and fades away.

The whole universe is constantly changing, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments. All things in fact are subjected to causes, conditions, and effects (*hetu*, *paccaya*, and *phala*). Systematic reflection (*yoniso manasikara*) comes naturally through right mindfulness, and it urges one to discriminate, to reason and investigate.

Shallow thinking, unsystematic investigation (*ayoniso manasikara*) makes men muddle-

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headed; and then they fail to investigate the nature of things. Such people cannot see cause and effect, seed and fruit, the rise and fall of compounded things. Says the Buddha: "This doctrine is for the wise and not for the unwise."<sup>9</sup>

Buddhism is free from compulsion and coercion and does not demand of the follower blind faith. At the very outset, the skeptic will be pleased to hear of its call for investigation. Buddhism from beginning to end is open to all those who have eyes to see and minds to understand.

The Buddha never endeavored to wring out of his followers blind and submissive faith in him and his teaching. He tutors his disciples in the ways of discrimination and intelligent inquiry.

To the inquiring Kalamas the Buddha answered: "Right is it to doubt, right is it to question what is doubtful and what is not clear. In a doubtful matter wavering does arise."

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We find this dialogue between the Master and his disciples:

[The Buddha:] "If, now knowing this and perceiving this, would you say: 'We honor our Master and through respect for him we respect what he teaches?'"

"Nay, Lord."

"That which you affirm, O disciples, is it not only that which you yourselves have recognized, seen and grasped?"

"Yes, Lord."

— MN 38

And in conformity with this thoroughly correct attitude of true inquiry the philosophers of later times observed:

"As the wise test the purity of gold by burning, cutting and examining it by means of a piece of touchstone, so should you accept my words after

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examining them and not merely out of regard and reverence for me."<sup>10</sup>

Thus blind belief is condemned in the analytic teaching (*vibhajjavada*) of the Buddha. The truth of the dhamma can be grasped only through calm concentrative thought and insight (*samatha* and *vipassana*) and never through blind faith.

One who goes in quest of truth is never satisfied with surface knowledge. He wants to delve deep and see what is beneath. That is the sort of search encouraged in Buddhism. That type of search yields right understanding.

We read in the texts the following story:

On one occasion Upali, a fervent follower of Nigantha Nathaputta, the Jain, visited the Buddha, thoughtfully listened to the dhamma, gained *saddha* (confidence based on knowledge) and forthwith manifested his readiness to become a follower of the Master.



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Nevertheless the Master said: "Of a truth, Upali, make thorough investigation," and thus discouraged him.

This clearly shows that the Buddha was not keen on converting people to his way of thinking, and to his fold. He did not interfere with another man's freedom of thought; for freedom of thought is the birthright of every individual. It is wrong to force someone out of the way of life which accords with his outlook and character, spiritual inclinations and tendencies; compulsion in every form is bad.

It is coercion of the blackest kind to make a man gulp down beliefs for which he has no relish. Such forced feeding cannot be good for anybody, anywhere.

He that cultivates dhammavicaya, investigation of the dhamma, focuses his mind on the five aggregates of grasping:

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the *pañcupadanakkhandha*, and endeavors to realize the rise and fall or the arising and passing away (*udaya-vaya*) of this conglomeration of bare forces (*suddha sankhara puñja*), this conflux of mind and matter (*nama-rupa santati*). It is only when he fully realizes the evanescent nature of his own mind and body that he experiences happiness, joyous anticipation. Therefore, it is said:

*Yato yato sammasati — khandhanam  
udayabbayam  
Labhati piti pamojjam — amatam tam  
vijanatam*

Whenever he reflects on the rise and fall of the aggregates, he experiences unalloyed joy and happiness. To the discerning one that (reflection) is deathless, Nibbana.

— Dhp 374

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What is impermanent and not lasting he sees as sorrow-fraught. What is impermanent and sorrow-fraught, he understands as void of a permanent and everlasting soul, self, or ego entity. It is this grasping, this realization of the three characteristics, or laws of transience, sorrow, and non-self (soullessness) — *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta* — that is known to Buddhists as *vipassana-ñāna* or penetrative insight, which, like the razor-edged sword, entirely eradicates all the latent tendencies (*anusaya*); and with it all the varied ramifications of sorrow's cause are finally destroyed.

A man who ascends to this summit of vision is an *arahat*, a perfect one, whose clarity of vision, whose depth of insight, penetrates into the deepest recesses of life and cognizes the true nature that underlies all appearance. No more can he be swept off his feet by the glamour of things ephemeral. No more can he be confused by fearful and terrible appearances. No more is

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it possible for him to have a clouded view of phenomena; for he has transcended all capacity for error through the perfect immunity which penetrative insight alone can give.

### III

The third enlightenment factor is *viriya*, energy. It is a mental property (*cetasika*) and the sixth limb of the Noble Eightfold Path, there called *samma-vayama*, right effort.

The life of the Buddha clearly reveals that he was never subjected to moral or spiritual fatigue. From the hour of his enlightenment to the end of his life, he strove tirelessly to elevate mankind, regardless of the bodily fatigue involved and oblivious to the many obstacles and handicaps that hampered his way.

He never relaxed in his exertion for the common weal. Though physically he was not always fit, mentally he was ever vigilant and energetic. Of him it is said:

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Ah, wonderful is the Conqueror,  
Who e'er untiring strives  
For the blessing of all beings, for  
the comfort of all lives.

Buddhism is for the sincerely zealous, strong and firm in purpose, and not for the indolent (*araddhviriyassayam dhammo nayam dhammo kusitassa*).<sup>11</sup> The Buddha has not proclaimed himself a savior willing and able to take upon himself the evil of mankind.

On the contrary, he declares that each person has to bear the burden of his ill deeds. In the words of the Buddha, each individual has himself to put forth the necessary effort and work out his own deliverance with diligence.

The Buddha is only a path-revealer and not a savior who endeavors to save 'souls' by means of a revealed religion. The idea that another raises a man from lower to higher levels of life, and ultimately rescues him, tends to make a man indolent and weak, supine and foolish. Others

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may lend us a helping hand indirectly, but deliverance from suffering must be wrought out and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

"Be ye islands unto yourselves, be ye your own refuge."<sup>12</sup> Thus did the Master exhort his followers to acquire self-reliance.

A follower of the Buddha should not under any circumstances relinquish hope and effort; for the Buddha was one who never gave up hope and courage even as a Bodhisatta. As an aspirant for Buddhahood, he had as his motto the following inspiring words: *ma nivatta, abhikkhama* —

"Falter not; advance." The man who is mindful (*satima*) and cultivates keen investigation should next put forth the necessary effort to fight his way out.

The function of energy is four-fold: (1) the effort to eradicate evils that have arisen in the mind; (2) the effort to prevent the arising of

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un arisen evil; (3) the effort to develop un arisen good; (4) the effort to promote the further growth of good already arisen.<sup>13</sup>

"Just," says the Vitakka Santhana Suttanta of the Majjhima Nikaya (No. 20), "as a competent carpenter or carpenter's apprentice with a slender pin will knock out, remove and dispose of a thicker one, so also, when through dwelling on some idea that has come to him, evil, unsalutary considerations connected with desire, hate, and delusion arise in the monk, then he should engender in his mind an idea other than that former idea and connected with salutary things, whereupon the evil unsalutary considerations will disappear, and with their disappearing his mind will become settled, subdued, unified, concentrated."<sup>14</sup>

Thus the path of purification is impossible for an indolent person. The aspirant for enlightenment (or bodhi) should possess unflinching energy coupled with fixed

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determination. Enlightenment and deliverance lie absolutely and entirely in his own hands.

"Man must himself by his own resolute efforts rise and make his way to the portals of liberty, and it is always, in every moment, in his power so to do. Neither are those portals locked and the key in possession of someone else from whom it must be obtained by prayer and entreaty. *That door is free of all bolts and bars save those the man himself has made.*"

By precept and example, the Buddha was an exponent of the strenuous life. Hear these words of the Buddha: "The idler who does not strive, who, though young and strong, is full of sloth, who is weak in resolution, that lazy and idle man will not find the way to wisdom, the way to enlightenment."<sup>15</sup>

Following in the footsteps of the Buddha the disciple thinks: "Though only my skin, sinews and bones remain, and my blood and flesh dry up and wither away, yet never will I give up my



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quest and swerve from the path of rectitude and enlightenment."

#### IV

The fourth enlightenment factor is *piti*, rapture or happiness. This, too, is a mental property (*cetasika*) and is a quality which suffuses both the body and mind. The man lacking in this quality cannot proceed along the path to enlightenment.

There will arise in him a sullen indifference to the dhamma, an aversion to the practice of meditation, and morbid manifestations.

It is, therefore, very necessary that a man striving to attain enlightenment and final deliverance from the fetters of samsara, that repeated wandering, should endeavor to cultivate the all-important factor of happiness.

No one can bestow on another the gift of happiness; each one has to build it up by effort, reflection, and concentrated activity. As

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happiness is a thing of the mind it, should be sought not in external and material things though they may in a small way be instrumental.

Contentment is a characteristic of the really happy individual. The ordinary worldling seems to think that it is difficult to cultivate and develop contentment; but by dint of courage, determination, systematic attention, and thought about the things one meets with in everyday life, by controlling one's evil inclinations, and by curbing the impulses — the sudden tendencies to act without reflection — one can keep the mind from being soiled and experience happiness through contentment.

In man's mind arise conflicts of diverse kinds, and if these conflicts are to be controlled, while still not eliminated, man must give less rein to inclinations and longings — in other words, he must cultivate contentment.

Hard it is to give up what lures and holds us in thrall; and hard it is to exorcise the evil spirits

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that haunt the human heart in the shape of ugly and unwholesome thoughts. These evils are the manifestations of lust, hate, and delusion (*lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*).

Until one attains to the very crest of purity and peace by constant training of the mind one cannot defeat these hosts completely. The mere abandoning of outward things, fasting, bathing in rivers and hot springs, and so forth, these do not tend to purify a man, these things do not make a man happy, holy, and harmless. Hence, the need to develop the Buddha's path of purification: morality, meditation and insight (*sila*, *samadhi*, and *pañña*).

When discussing happiness, in the context of sambojjhangas, we must bear in mind the vast difference between pleasure and happiness.

Pleasure — pleasant feeling — is something very momentary and fleeting. Is it wrong to say that pleasant feelings are the prelude to pain? What people hug in great glee this moment,

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turns to be a source of pain in the next moment. "The desired is no longer there when the outstretched hand would grasp it, or, being there and grasped, it vanishes like a flake of snow."

In the words of Robert Burns:

Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;  
Or, like the snow-fall in the river,  
A moment white then melts forever.

Seeing a form, hearing a sound, perceiving an odor, tasting a flavor, feeling some tangible thing, cognizing an idea, people are moved; and from those sense objects and mental objects they experience a certain degree of pleasure.

But it is all a passing show of phenomena. Unlike the animal whose sole purpose is to derive a feeling of pleasure from any source, at any cost, man should endeavor to gain real *piti* or happiness.

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Real happiness or rapture comes not through grasping or clinging to things animate or inanimate but by giving up (*nekkhamma*). It is the detached attitude toward the world that brings about true happiness.

The Satipatthana Sutta, the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, speaks of pleasant worldly feeling (*samisasukha*) and pleasant unworldly feeling (*niramisasukha*). Niramisa sukha is far superior to samisasukha.

Once the Buddha did not receive even a single morsel of food when he went on his alms round, and an intruder remarked that the Master was apparently afflicted with hunger. Thereupon the Supreme Buddha breathed forth the following verse:

Ah, happily do we dwell —  
we who have no impediments!  
Feeders on joy shall we be —  
even as the radiant devas!<sup>16</sup>

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— Dhp 200

Unalloyed joy comes to a man who ponders thus: "Others may harm, but I will become harmless; others may slay living beings, but I will become a non-slayer; others may live unchaste, but I will live pure. Others may utter falsehood; I, however, will speak the truth. Others may slander, talk harshly, indulge in gossip, but I will talk only words that promote concord, harmless words agreeable to the ear, full of love, heart-pleasing, courteous, worthy of being borne in mind, timely, fit and to the point. Others may be covetous; I will not covet. Energetic, steeped in modesty of heart, unswerving as regards truth and rectitude, peaceful, honest, contented, generous, and truthful in all things will I be." Thus conducive to full realization, perfect wisdom, to Nibbana is this fourth enlightenment factor *piti*, happiness.

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## V

*Passaddhi* — calm or tranquility — is the fifth factor of enlightenment. *Passaddhi* is two-fold. *Kaya passaddhi* is calm of body. *Kaya* here means all the mental properties rather than the physical body; in other words, calm of the aggregates of feeling (*vedanakkhandha*), perception (*saññakkhandha*), and the volitional activities or the arising conformations (*samkharakkhandha*). *Citta passaddhi* is the calm of the mind — that is, the aggregate of consciousness (*viññanakkhandha*).

*Passaddhi* is compared to the happy experience of a weary walker who sits down under a tree in a shade, or the cooling of a hot place by rain.

Hard it is to tranquillize the mind; it trembles and it is unsteady, difficult to guard and hold back; it quivers like a fish taken from its watery home and thrown on the dry ground. It wanders at will.<sup>17</sup>

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Such is the nature of this ultra-subtle mind. It is systematic reflection (*yoniso manasikara*) that helps the aspirant for enlightenment to quieten the fickle mind. Unless a man cultivates tranquility of mind, concentration cannot be successfully developed. A tranquillized mind keeps away all superficialities and futilities.

Many a man, today, thinks that freedom and unrestraint are synonyms and that the taming of the self is a hindrance to self-development. In the teaching of the Buddha, however, it is quite different. The self must be subdued and tamed on right lines if it is to become truly well. The Tathagata, the Tamed, teaches the Dhamma for the purpose of taming the human heart (*danto so Bhagava damataya dhammam deseti*).<sup>18</sup>

It is only when the mind is tranquillized and is kept to the right road of orderly progress that it becomes useful for the individual possessor of it and for society. A disorderly mind is a liability



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both to the owner of it and for others.

All the havoc wrought in the world is wrought by men who have not learned the way of mental calm, balance, and poise. Calmness is not weakness. The calm attitude at all times shows a man of culture. It is not too hard a task for a man to be calm when all things around him are favorable. But to be composed in mind in the midst of unfavorable circumstances is hard indeed, and it is this difficult quality that is worth achieving; for by such control one builds up strength of character. The most deceptive thing in the world is to imagine that they alone are strong who are noisy, or that they alone possess power, who are fussily busy.

The man who cultivates calm of the mind does not get upset, confused or excited when confronted with the eight vicissitudes of the world (*atthaloka dhamma*). He endeavors to see the rise and fall of all things conditioned, how

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things come into being and pass away. Free from anxiety and restlessness he will see the fragility of the fragile.

A story in our books tells us how when a mother was asked why she did not lament and feel pain over the death of her beloved son, said: "Uninvited he came, uninvited he passed away, as he came so he went, what use is there in lamenting, weeping, and wailing?"<sup>19</sup> Such is the advantage of a tranquillized mind. It is unshaken by loss or gain, blame and praise, and undisturbed by adversity. This frame of mind is brought about by viewing the sentient world in its proper perspective. Thus calm or passaddhi leads man to enlightenment and deliverance from suffering.

## VI

The sixth enlightenment factor is *samadhi*, concentration. It is only the tranquillized mind that can easily concentrate on a subject of meditation. The calm concentrated mind sees

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things as they really are (*samahito yatha bhutam pajanati*). The unified mind brings the five hindrances (*pañca nivaranaani*) under subjugation.

Concentration is the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to an unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless place. It is concentration that fixes the mind aright and causes it to be unmoved and undisturbed. Correct practice of samadhi maintains the mind and the mental properties in a state of balance like a steady hand holding a pair of scales.

Right concentration dispels passions that disturb the mind, and brings purity and placidity of mind. The concentrated mind is not distracted by sense objects; concentration of the highest type cannot be disturbed under the most adverse circumstances.

One who is intent on samadhi should develop a love of virtue, sila, for it is virtue that nourishes mental life, and makes it coherent and calm,

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equable and full of rich content. The unrestrained mind dissipates itself in frivolous activity.

Many are the impediments that confront a yogi, an aspirant for enlightenment, but there are five particular hindrances that hinder concentrative thought, samadhi, and obstruct the way to deliverance. In the teaching of the Buddha they are known as *pañca nivarana*, the five hindrances.

The Pali term *nivarana* denotes that which hinders or obstructs mental development (*bhavana*). They are called hindrances because they completely close in, cut off and obstruct. They close the doors to deliverance. The five hindrances are:

1. *kamacchanda* — sensual desires
2. *vyapada* — ill-will
3. *thinamiddha* — obduracy of mind and mental factors

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4. *uddhaccakukkucca* — restlessness and  
worry

5. *vicikiccha* — doubt

Kamacchanda or sensual desires or intense thirst for either possessions or the satisfaction of base desires, is the first that binds man to samsara, repeated wandering, and closes the door to final deliverance. What is sensuality? Where does this craving (*tanha*) arise and take root? According to the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana Sutta), "where there is the delightful and the pleasurable, there this craving arises and takes root." Forms, sounds, smell, taste, bodily contacts, and ideas are delightful and pleasurable; there this craving arises and takes root. Craving when obstructed by some cause is transformed to frustration and wrath.

As the Dhammapada says:

*Tanhaya jayati soko — tanhaya jayati bhayam*

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*Tanhaya vipamuttassa — natthi soko kuto  
bhayam.*

From craving arises grief, from craving arises  
fear;

To one who is free from craving there is no  
grief, whence fear?

— Dhp 216

The next hindrance is vyapada, ill-will, hatred,  
or aversion. Man naturally revolts against the  
unpleasant and the disagreeable, and also is  
depressed by them. To be separated from the  
loved is painful, and equally painful is the union  
with the loathed. Even a disagreeable dish, an  
unpleasant drink, an unlovely demeanor, and a  
hundred other trifles, may cause indignation. It  
is wrong thinking, unsystematic reflection, that  
brings about hatred.

Hatred on the other hand breeds hatred and  
clouds the vision; it distorts the entire mind and  
its properties and thus hinders awakening to

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truth, blocks the way to freedom. This lust and hatred based on ignorance, *the crowning corruption of all our madness (avijja paramam malam)*, indeed are the root causes of strife and dissension between man and man and nation and nation.

The third hindrance consists of a pair of evils, *thina* and *middha*. *Thina* is lassitude or morbid state of the mind, and *middha* is a morbid state of the mental properties. *Thinamiddha*, as some are inclined to think, is, certainly, not sluggishness of the body; for even the arahats, the perfect ones, who are free from this pair of evils, may also experience bodily fatigue. *Thinamiddha* retards mental development; under its influence mind is inert like butter too stiff to spread or like molasses sticking to a spoon.

Laxity is a dangerous enemy of mental development. Laxity leads to greater laxity until, finally, there arises a state of callous indifference. This flabbiness of character is a

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fatal block to righteousness and freedom. It is through viriya or mental effort that one overcomes this pair of evils.

The fourth hindrance also comprises twin drawbacks: or *uddhacca* and *kukkucca*, restlessness and brooding, or flurry and worry.

As a rule, anyone who commits evil is mentally excited and restless; the guilty and the impatient suffer from this hindrance. The minds of men who are restless and unstable are like flustered bees in a shaken hive. This mental agitation impedes meditation and blocks the upward path.

Equally baneful is mental worry. Often people repent over the evil actions they have committed. This is not praised by the Buddha; for it is useless to cry over spilt milk. Instead of brooding over such shortcomings one should endeavor not to repeat such unwholesome deeds. There are others who worry over the good deeds omitted and duties left undone. This, too, serves no purpose.



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*It is as futile as to ask the further bank of a river to come over that we may get to the other side. Instead of uselessly worrying over what good one has failed to do, one should endeavor to perform wholesome deeds. This mental unsteadiness (kukkucca) also hinders mental progress.*

The fifth and the last hindrance is vicikiccha, doubt. The Pali term *vi + cikiiccha* literally means medicineless. One who suffers from perplexity is really suffering from a dire disease, and until and unless one sheds one's doubts one will continue to suffer from it.

*So long as man is subject to this mental itching, so long will he continue to take a cynical view of things which is most detrimental to mental development.*

The commentators explain this hindrance as the inability to decide anything definitely; it also comprises doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the jhanas, concentrative thought.

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In this connection, one may add that even non-Buddhists and yogis who are not concerned with the Buddha-Dhamma and the Sangha at all, can inhibit doubt (*vicikiccha nivarana*) and gain the jhanas.

The yogi who attains the jhanas inhibits all five hindrances by the five *jhanangas*, characteristics or factors of jhanas; kamacchanda is inhibited by *ekaggata* (one-pointedness or unification of the mind); vyapada by piti (joy); thinamiddha by *vitakka* (applied thought); uddhaccakukkucca by *sukha* (happiness) and vicikiccha by *vicara* (sustained thought). The attainment of jhanas, however, is not the end aimed at. Jhanas should be made to lead to vipassana, intuitional insight. It is through insight that the yogi eradicates the latent corruptions (*anusaya kilesas*) and attains perfect purity.

So long as impurities or taints (*kilesas*) exist in man's mind latent, so long will the arising of *papa* (evil) in him continue. The practitioner of

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jhana, whose purpose is to attain vipassana, commits no ill action, because the hindrances are inhibited, but he has the impurities latent in his make-up.

Therefore, he is not yet in a state of absolute security. But the Arahant, the perfect one, wipes out all the latent impurities with their rootlets and brings this repetitive wandering, samsara, to a standstill. He is one whose samsara is indubitably ended; for by him the noble life has been perfected and the task done. For him there is no more rebirth.<sup>20</sup>

A sincere student, who is bent on deep study, cuts himself off from sense attractions and, retiring to a congenial atmosphere, holds fast to his studies. Thus, steering through all disturbing factors, he attains success in his examinations.

In the same way, seated in a cloister-cell or some other suitable place "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," the yogi, the meditator, fixes his mind on a subject of meditation

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(*kammattana*) and by struggle and unceasing effort inhibits the five hindrances, and washing out the impurities of his mind-flux, gradually reaches the first, the second, the third and the fourth jhana. Then by the power of samadhi, concentrative thought, thus won, he turns his mind to the understanding of reality in the highest sense. It is at this stage that the yogi cultivates vipassana, intuitional insight.

It is through vipassana that one understands the real nature of all component and conditioned things. Vipassana aids one to see things as they truly are. One sees truth face to face and comprehends that all tones are just variations struck on the one chord that runs through all life — the chord which is made up of anicca, dukkha and anatta: impermanence, sorrow, and soullessness.

The yogi gains insight into the true nature of the world he has clung to for so long. He breaks through the egg shell of ignorance to the

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Hypercosmic. With that final catharsis he reaches the state where dawns for him the Light of Nibbana, the Calm beyond words, the unshakable deliverance of the mind (*akuppa cetovimutti*),<sup>21</sup> and the world holds nothing more for him.

Says the Dhammapada (373),

"To the bhikkhu who has retired to a secluded spot, whose mind is calmed, and who clearly discerns the dhamma, there comes unalloyed joy and happiness transcending that of humans."

## VII

The seventh and the last factor of enlightenment is *upekkha*, equanimity. In the Abhidhamma, *upekkha* is indicated by the term *tatramajjhata*, neutrality. It is mental equipoise and not hedonic indifference. Equanimity is the result of a calm concentrative mind. It is hard, indeed, to be undisturbed when touched by the vicissitudes of life, but the man

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who cultivates this difficult quality of equanimity is not upset.

Amidst the welter of experience (*attha loka dhamma*) — gain and loss, good-repute and ill-repute, praise and censure, pain and happiness — he never wavers. He is firm as a solid rock. Of course, this is the attitude of the Arahant, the perfect one. Of him it is said: "Truly the good give up longing for everything. The good prattle not with thoughts of craving. Touched by happiness or by pain, the wise show neither elation nor depression."<sup>22</sup>

Refraining from intoxicants and becoming heedful, establishing themselves in patience and purity, the wise train their minds; it is through such training that a quiet mind is achieved. Can we also achieve it? Lord Horder answers the question thus: "'Yes.' But how? Well, not by doing 'some great thing.' 'Why were the saints saints?' someone asked. And the answer came: 'Because they were cheerful when it was

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difficult to be cheerful and patient when it was difficult to be patient. They pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silent when they wanted to talk.' That was all. So simple but so difficult. A matter of mental hygiene..."

The poet says:

It is easy enough to be pleasant,  
When life flows along like a song,  
But the man worthwhile  
Is the man who can smile  
When everything goes dead wrong.

Mention is made in our books of four wrong paths (*cattaro agati*).

The path of greed (*chanda*),  
of hate (*dosa*),  
of cowardice (*bhaya*),  
of delusion (*moha*).

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People commit evil, being enticed along one or more of these wrong paths, but the man who has reached perfect neutrality through the cultivation of equanimity always avoids such wrong paths. His serene neutrality enables him to see all beings impartially.

A certain understanding of the working of *kamma* (actions), and how *kamma* comes into fruition (*kamma-vipaka*) is very necessary for one who is genuinely bent on cultivating equanimity.

In the light of *kamma* one will be able to have a detached attitude toward all beings, nay even inanimate things. The proximate cause of equanimity is the understanding that all beings are the result of their actions (*kamma*).

Santideva writes in *Bodhicaryavatara*:

Some there be that loathe me; then why  
Shall I, being praised, rejoice?  
Some there be that praise me; then why



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Shall I brood over blaming voice?

Who master is of self, will ever bear  
A smiling face; he puts away all frowns  
Is first to greet another, and to share  
his all.

This friend of all the world Truth crowns.<sup>23</sup>

I have here made an attempt to give a glimpse of the seven enlightenment factors, expounded over 2500 years ago by the Supreme Buddha, for the attaining of full realization and perfect wisdom, of Nibbana, the Deathless.

The cultivation or the neglect of these factors of enlightenment is left to each one of us. With the aid of the teaching of the Buddha each one of us has the power to detect and destroy the cause of suffering. Each one individually can put forth the necessary effort to work out his deliverance.

The Buddha has taught us the way to know life as it is, and has furnished the directions for such research by each of us individually. Therefore,

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we owe it to ourselves to find out for ourselves the truth about life and to make the best of it.

We cannot say justifiably that we do not know how to proceed. There is nothing vague in the teaching of the Buddha. All the necessary indications are clear as clear could be. Buddhism from beginning to end is open to all those who have eyes to see, and minds to understand. "So clear is his teaching that it can never be misunderstood."<sup>24</sup>

The only thing necessary on our part for the full realization of the truth is firm determination, endeavor and earnestness to study and apply the teaching, each working it out for himself, to the best of his ability. The dhamma yet beckons the weary pilgrim to the happy haven of Nibbana's security and peace. Let us, therefore, cultivate the seven enlightenment factors with zest and unflagging devotion, and advance:

Remembering the Saints of other days,  
And recollecting how it was they lived,

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Even though today be but the after-time —  
One yet may win the Ambrosial Path of Peace.

— *Psalms of the Brethren* (Theragatha) 947

***May All Living Beings Be Well and Happy!***

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## Notes

1. SN 46.5 (S v 72; CDB p. 1574).

2. SN 46.7 (S v 75; CDB p. 1577).

3. Dhamma is a multi-significant term. Here it means mind and matter (*nama-rupa*); *dhammavicaya* is the investigation or analysis of this conflux of mind and body, and all component and conditioned things.

4. SN 46.16 (S v 79; CDB p. 1581).

5. Sāmmohavinodani.

6. Satipatthana Sutta, MN 10 or DN 22. See *The Foundations of Mindfulness* (The Wheel No. 19).

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7. Parinibbana Sutta, DN 16.

8. SN, Sagathaka Vagga.

9. AN 8.30.

10. Jñanasara-Samuccaya, p. 31.

11. AN 8.30.

12. Parinibbana Sutta, DN 16.

13. AN 4.13.

14. Adapted from Silacara, *Discourses of Gotama the Buddha*. A translation of this discourse has been published in *The Removal of Distracting Thoughts (The Wheel No. 21)*.

15. Dhp 280.

16. Devas are deities.

17. Dhp (Citta Vagga).

18. DN 25.

19. Uruga Jataka, 354.

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**20.** MN 27.

**21.** MN 30.

**22.** Dhp 83.

**23.** Translation by Kassapa Thera.

**24.** Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*.

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# The Book of Protection

## Paritta

translated from the original Pali,  
with introductory essay and  
explanatory notes by  
**Piyadassi Thera**  
with a Foreword by  
**V.F. Gunaratna**  
Accesstoinsight Edition

Buddhist Publication Society© 1999–2009

*May peace harmonious bless this land;  
May it be ever free from maladies and war;  
May there be harvest rich, and increased yield of grain;  
May everyone delight in righteousness;  
May no perverted thought find entry to your minds;  
May all your thoughts e'er pious be and lead  
to your success religiously.*  
— *Tibetan Great Yogi, Milarepa*

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Most gratefully and most devotedly  
dedicated to my departed parents  
(*'Matapitaro pubbacariyati vuccare'*)  
— Anguttara Nikaya, ii. p. 70

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Be loving and be pitiful  
And well controlled in virtue's ways,  
Strenuous bent upon the goal,  
And onward ever bravely press.

That danger does in dalliance lie —  
That earnestness is sure and safe —  
This when you see, then cultivate  
The Eight-fold Path so shall ye realize,  
So make your own, the Deathless Way!  
— Psalms of the Brethren, 979,980



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## **Preface**

The *Book of Protection* which is an anthology of selected discourses of the Buddha, compiled by the teachers of old, was originally meant as a handbook for the newly ordained novice. The idea was that those novices who are not capable of studying large portions of the "Discourse Collection" (sutta pitaka) should at least be conversant with the *Book of Protection*. Even today it is so. The twenty four discourses are selected from the five Nikayas or the original Collections in Pali containing the Buddha's discourses. The fact that the book was meant for the novice is clear from the prefatory paragraphs that precede the discourses.

The precepts are ten, and not five which are the basic principles of the lay follower. The novice is expected to observe the ten precepts. This is followed by the "Questions to be Answered by a Novice" and the "Thirty Two Parts of the Body" which is really a type of meditation on the constituent parts of one's body. Then comes the

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"Four-fold reflection of a Monk," and finally the "Ten Essentials (Dhammas)" to be reflected upon by one who has gone forth to live the holy life. The discourses come next. *If one patiently and painstakingly studies these discourses, he could gather a good knowledge of the essentials and fundamental teachings of the Buddha.*

The Maha-samaya sutta and the Atanatiya sutta ending the book may appear to some as pointless, but a careful reader will no doubt appreciate their relevance. In the essay on the Value of Paritta an attempt is made to show what paritta means to a Buddhist.

I have endeavored to keep as close as possible to the original wording of the text without making it too literal a translation on the one hand, and a word for word translation on the other, and have avoided translating the Pali stanzas into verse (except the stanzas of discourses No. 5, 11, 19) in order to give a very faithful, easy, and readable rendering. I have preserved the synonymous words and

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repetitions found in the suttas since they are the *ipsissima verba* of the Buddha handed down to us through oral tradition.

In all the suttas the word "Bhagava," the "Blessed One," an epithet of the Buddha, is frequently used. To avoid using the same word too often in the translation, I have, at times, used the word "the Buddha" for "Bhagava" or a personal pronoun to denote him.

The Pali words and names included in this work are lacking in diacritical marks. In some places however, the smaller type with such marks are used. But students of Pali may not find any difficulty in pronouncing them. The reader may refer to the Khandha-vatta Jataka (No. 203) when studying the Khandha Paritta.

The Angulimala Paritta is a short discourse that does not appear in the Book of Protection (Paritta text), but as it is a paritta made use of by expectant mothers in Buddhist lands, I have included it in the Appendix. Other Pali stanzas, used by the Buddhists when reciting the Parittas,

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are also included in the Appendix with their English renderings.

I am indebted beyond measure to Mr. V.F. Gunaratna, retired public trustee of Sri Lanka, for his painstaking reading of the script, his careful and valuable suggestions, and for writing the Foreword. The Ven. Kheminda Maha Thera assisted me in finding the references, the Ven. Siridhamma Thera in reading the proofs, and Mr. K.G. Abeysinghe in typing the script. I am grateful to them. To Miss K. Jayawardana of Union printing Works and her staff who took a keen interest in the printing of this work, I am thankful. Last, but far from least, my thanks are due to Messrs D. Munidase and U.P. de Zoysa for all the help they have given me.

—Piyadassi

Vesakha-mase, 2519: May 1975

Vajirarama,

Colombo 5,

Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

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## Foreword

by V.F. Gunaratna

The world of English Buddhist literature has been enriched by the publication of this book entitled *The Book of Protection*. This is a translation by the Ven. Piyadassi Maha Thera of what is well known to every Sinhala Buddhist home as the Pirit Potha which means the book of protection.

It contains a collection of suttas or discourses taken from the teaching of the Buddha and are meant to be recited in temples and homes for the purpose of obtaining protection from all harm. This is achieved by recalling with saddha or confidence the virtues of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha referred to in these discourses.

There are many who listen to the recitation of these discourses but who hardly understand the import of these discourses and therefore any

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benefit they may gain must be necessarily slight. This translation, therefore, supplies a long-felt need, as it will help such persons to listen with understanding when pirith is being recited. The venerable translator is therefore to be congratulated as being the first to translate a book of this nature.

To translate a book is not so easy as to write a book. The work of translation calls for precision and concentrated thought. A translation that keeps too close to the original is apt to suffer from a failure to convey the spirit underlying the original text.

At the same time a translation that is too free runs the risk of expressing more than the author of the original composition had intended and thereby misrepresents him. The venerable translator has certainly done well by steering clear between these two extremes and therefore deserves special praise.

Furthermore, he has by the manner of his translation made it evident that he has been at

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pains to facilitate the purpose for which pirith is recited. By means of explanations in parenthesis and helpful foot notes he has striven to elucidate the meaning of words and phrases where their full significance appears to be obscure. If a further clarification is needed the reader is invited to refer to Ven. Piyadassi Maha Thera's book *The Buddha's Ancient Path* [Buddhist Publication Society, P.O. Box 61, Kandy, Sri Lanka] which deals with quite a number of points concerning the Buddha-dhamma.

There can be no doubt that this translation of the Pirith Potha by one such as the Ven. Piyadassi Maha Thera — a reputed author of several Buddhist books and a preacher whose sermons have gained great acceptance both in the East and the West — will be hailed with delight by those who desire to obtain a full understanding of the pirith that is recited in temples and homes — sometimes with marvelous effect.

Hitanukampa sambuddho-yadannamanusasati  
Anurodha virodhehi-vippamutto Tathagato

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Love and compassion does the Enlightened feel  
Towards another when he instructs him  
The Tathagata is fully released  
From attachment and resentment.  
— Samyutta Nikaya i. p. iii.

### **The Value of Paritta**

'Recent research in medicine, in experimental psychology and what is still called parapsychology has thrown some light on the nature of mind and its position in the world. During the last forty years the conviction has steadily grown among medical men that very many causes of diseases organic as well as functional, are directly caused by mental states.

The body becomes ill because the mind controlling it either secretly wants to make it ill, or else because it is in such a state of agitation that it cannot prevent the body from sickening. Whatever its physical nature, resistance to



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disease is unquestionably correlated with the physiological condition of the patient.'<sup>1</sup>

'Mind not only makes sick, it also cures. An optimistic patient has more chance of getting well than a patient who is worried and unhappy. The recorded instances of faith healing include cases in which even organic diseases were cured almost instantaneously.'<sup>2</sup>

In this connection it is interesting to observe the prevalence, in Buddhist lands, of listening to the recital of the dhamma or the doctrine of the Buddha in order to avert illness or danger, to ward off the influence of malignant beings, to obtain protection and deliverance from evil, and to promote health, prosperity, welfare, and well-being.

The selected discourses for recital are known as "paritta suttas," discourses for protection. But they are not "rakshana mantras" or protective incantations found in Brahmanic religion, nor

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are they magical rites. There is nothing mystical in them.

"Paritta" in Pali, "paritrana" in Sanskrit and "pirit" (pronounced pirith) in Sinhala<sup>3</sup> mean principally protection. Paritta suttas describe certain suttas or discourses delivered by the Buddha and regarded as affording protection. This protection is to be obtained by reciting or listening to the paritta suttas.

The practice of reciting or listening to the paritta suttas began very early in the history of Buddhism. The word paritta, in this context, was used by the Buddha, for the first time, in a discourse known as Khandha Paritta 4 in the Culla Vagga of the Vinaya Pitaka (vol. ii, p. 109), and also in the Anguttara Nikaya under the title "Ahi (metta) Sutta" (vol. ii, p. 82). This discourse was recommended by the Buddha as guard or protection for the use of the members of the Order. The Buddha in this discourse exhorts the monks to cultivate metta or loving-kindness towards all beings.

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It is certain that paritta recital produces mental well-being in those who listen to them with intelligence, and have confidence in the truth of the Buddha's words. Such mental well being can help those who are ill to recover, and can also help not only to induce the mental attitude that brings happiness but also to overcome its opposite.

Originally, in India, those who listened to paritta sayings of the Buddha understood what was recited and the effect on them was correspondingly great. The Buddha himself had paritta recited to him, and he also requested others to recite paritta for his own disciples when they were ill. 5 This practice is still in vogue in Buddhist lands.

The Buddha and the arahants (the Consummate Ones) can concentrate on the paritta suttas without the aid of another. However, when they are ill, it is easier for them to listen to what others recite, and, thus, focus their minds on the dhamma that the suttas contain, rather than think

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of the dhamma by themselves. There are occasions, as in the case of illness, which weaken the mind (in the case of worldlings), when hetero-suggestion has been found to be more effective than autosuggestion.

According to the teachings of the Buddha the mind is so closely linked with the body that mental states affect the body's health and well being. Some doctors even say there is no such thing as purely physical disease. That even so grossly "physical" a complaint as dental caries may be due to mental causes was maintained in a paper read before the American Dental Congress in 1937. The author pointed out that children living on a perfectly satisfactory diet may still suffer dental decay. In such cases, investigation generally shows that the child's life at home or at school is in some way unsatisfactory. The teeth decay because their owner is under mental strain.'<sup>6</sup> Unless, according to the Buddhist doctrine of kamma (Sanskrit karma), <sup>7</sup> these bad mental states are

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caused as a result of one's own acts (akusala kamma-vipaka), and are therefore unalterable, it is possible so to change these mental states as to cause mental health and physical well-being to follow thereafter.

## **1. The Power of Truth**

Several factors combine to contribute towards the efficacy of paritta recitals. Paritta recital is a form of saccakiriya, i.e., an asseveration of truth. Protection results by the power of such asseveration. This means establishing oneself in the power of truth to gain one's end. At the end of the recital of each sutta, the reciters bless the listeners with the words, “etena sacca vajjena sotti te hotu sabbada” which mean "by the power of the truth of these words may you ever be well." The saying, "the power of the dhamma or Truth protects the follower of the dhamma" (dhammo have rakkhati dhammcarin) indicates the principle behind these sutta recitals.

"The belief in the effective power to heal, or protect, of the saccakiriya, or asseveration of

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something quite true, is but another aspect of the work ascribed to the paritta."8

## **2. The Power of Virtue**

Several discourses of the Book of Protection describe the virtuous life. The starting point in Buddhism is sila (virtue). Standing on the firm ground of sila one should endeavor to achieve a collected mind. If it is true that virtue protects the virtuous, then a person who listens to the recital of paritta suttas intelligently, in a reflective mood, with complete confidence in the Buddha's words, uttered by one who has gained complete Enlightenment, will acquire so virtuous a state of mind as would enable him to dominate any evil influence, and to be protected from all harm.

## **3. The Power of Love**

The utterances of the compassionate Buddha are never void of love. He walked the high-ways and by-ways of India enfolding all within the aura of his love and compassion, instructing, enlightening, and gladdening the many by his

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teaching. The reciters of the paritta are therefore expected to do so with a heart of love and compassion wishing the listeners and others weal and happiness and protection from all harm.

Love (metta) is an active force. Every act of one who truly loves is done with the pure mind to help, to cheer and to make the paths of others more easy, more smooth and more adapted to the conquest of sorrow, the winning of the Highest Bliss.

C. A. F. Rhys Davids commenting on amity (metta) writes: "The profession of amity, according to Buddhist doctrine, was no mere matter of pretty speech. It was to accompany and express a psychic suffusion of the hostile man or beast or spirit with benign, fraternal emotion — with metta. For strong was the conviction, from Sutta and Vinaya, to Buddhaghosa's Visuddhi Magga,<sup>9</sup> that "thoughts are things," that psychological action, emotional or intellectual, is capable of working

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like a force among forces. Europe may yet come round further to this Indian attitude."10

#### **4. The Power of Sound**

It is believed that the vibratory sounds produced by the sonorous and mellifluous recital of the paritta suttas in their Pali verses are soothing to the nerves and induce peace and calm of mind; they also bring about harmony to the physical system.

How can bad influences springing from evil beings be counteracted by recital of paritta suttas? Bad influences are the results of evil thinking. They can, therefore, be counteracted by wholesome states of mind. One sure way of inducing a wholesome state of mind is by listening and reflecting on paritta recitals with intelligence and confidence. So great is the power of concentration that by adverting wholeheartedly to the truth contained in the paritta recitals one is able to develop a wholesome state of mind.



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The recital of paritta suttas can also bring material blessings in its wake through the wholesome states of mind induced by concentration and confidence in listening intelligently to the recital. According to the Buddha, right effort is a necessary factor in overcoming suffering.<sup>11</sup> Listening to these recitals in the proper way can also generate energy for the purpose of securing worldly progress while it also secures spiritual progress. There is no better medicine than truth (Dhamma) for the mental and physical ills which are the causes of all suffering and misfortune. So the recital of paritta suttas in as much as they contain the dhamma, may, when they are listened to in the proper attitude, bring into being wholesome states of mind which conduce to health, material progress and spiritual progress. The effect of Pirit can also transcend distance however great.

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It is true that the Buddhists consider the parittas as a never-failing, potent, and purifying force, a super-solvent.

However, a question may arise whether recitals from the Book of Protection will, in every case, result in the protection and blessing sought for. In this connection the same reply given by the Venerable Nagasena to King Milinda's question why the recital of paritta does not in all cases protect one from death, is worth remembering: "Due to three causes recital of paritta may have no effect: kamma hindrances (kammavarana); hindrances from defilements (kilesavarana); lack of faith (asaddhanataya)." 12

Kamma means action and not the result of action; therefore, action can be counteracted by other action. Kamma is not something static, but is always changing, i.e., always in the making; that being so, action can be counteracted by other action. Hence, bad actions on the part of the hearers of the recital may negative the beneficial effects of the recital.

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If the mind of the hearer is contaminated with impure thoughts then also the intended beneficial effects of the recital may not materialize. But however impure the mind of the hearer may be, if there is great confidence in the efficacy of the recital then this important factor may help to secure for him the beneficial effects of the recital.

### **Notes**

1.

For the physical basis of resistance, see *The Nature of Disease* by J. E. R. McDonagh, F.R.C.S.

2.

Aldous Huxley. *Ends and Means* (London, 1946), p. 259.

3.

The state language of Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

4.

See below, discourse no. 5.

5.

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See below Bojjhanga and Girimananda suttas,  
numbers 12, 13, 14 and 15.

6.

Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, London 1946,  
p. 259.

7.

Karma in Buddhism means action brought about  
by volition.

8.

C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*,  
part 3, p. 186.

9.

Chapter ix. p. 313. According to the  
Sasamalankara quoted in Gray's  
Buddhaghosuppatti, p.15, Buddhaghosa was  
about to write a Commentary on the Paritta,  
when he was sent to greater work in Ceylon.

10.

Dialogues of the Buddha, part 3, p. 185.

11.

S. i. 214.

12.

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Milinda Pañha, vol. I., p. 216.

### **The Book of Protection**

This collection of paritta discourses — in Sinhala, The Pirit Potha — is the most widely known Pali book in Sri Lanka.

It is called The Buddhist Bible; it is given an important place in the Buddhist home, and is even treated with veneration. In most houses where there is a small shrine, this book is kept there so that the inmates may refer to it during their devotional hour. Some have committed to memory the three well known discourses — Mangala, Ratana and Karaniya-metta suttas. 1 Even children are familiar with these discourses; for they learn them from their parents and elders or from the "dhamma school."

The habit of listening to the recital of paritta suttas among the Westerners is growing slowly but steadily. The present writer, while on his missions in the European and American countries, has, at request of several residents

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there, tape-recorded the recital of paritta suttas for their benefit, and has air-mailed cassettes containing the sutta recitals to those who sent him such cassettes.

Now what does this book contain? It is a collection of twenty four suttas or discourses almost all delivered by the Buddha, and found scattered in the five original collections (nikayas) in Pali, which form the Sutta Pitaka, the "Canonical Discourses." These discourses are preceded by an enunciation of the Three Refuges; the Ten Precepts and the questions asked of a novice.

This collection of discourses, popularly known as Pirit Potha or The Book of Protection, has a less known title, Catubhanavara (in Sinhala Satara Banavara). A 13<sup>th</sup> century Commentary to this, written in Pali, by a pupil of the Venerable Rajaguru Vanaratana of Sri Lanka, is available under the title Catubhanavara Atthakatha or Sarattha Samuccaya.

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What is a bhanavara? It is a collection of sermons or discourses. Four such collections are called Catubhanavara. As the teachers of old have said, a three-word line (pada) is made up of eight syllables (attha akkhara), four such padas make a stanza or a gatha. Thus stanzas consists of thirty-two syllables. 250 such stanzas is called a bhanavara which consists of 8,000 syllables. The Catunabhanavara was compiled by the Maha Theras, the teachers of yore (paranakacariya), of Sri Lanka, and today it is known among the Buddhists of Sri Lanka as the Pirit Potha The Book of Protection.

It is customary for Buddhist monks, when they are invited to the homes of the laity on occasions of domestic importance, such as birth days, house-warming, illness, and similar events, to recite the three popular discourses mentioned above. In the domestic and social life of the people of Sri Lanka pirit ceremony is of great significance.

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No festival or function, religious or social, is complete without the recital of the paritta. On special occasions monks are invited to recite the paritta suttas not for short periods but right through the night or for three or seven days, and at times, for weeks. On such occasions a pavilion (pirit mandapaya) is constructed for the purpose of accommodating the monks at the recital. Before the commencement of the recital the laity present at the ceremony makes a formal invitation to the monks by reciting in Pali three stanzas which explain the purpose of the recital.<sup>2</sup> Then the monks, generally about twelve or fourteen, who have been invited, will recite the three popular suttas. Thereafter a pair of monks will commence reciting the remaining suttas for two hours. They will then retire and will be followed by another pair for another two hours. Two monks must be constantly officiating. In this manner the recital will last till dawn.



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While the recital continues there will be found a pot of water placed on a table before the monks. On this table there is also a sacred thread (pirit nula). For an all night pirit ceremony the casket containing a relic of the Buddha, and the Pirit Potha or The Book of Protection written on ola leaves, are also brought into the pavilion. The relic represents the Buddha, the "Pirit Potha" represents the Dhamma or the teachings of the Buddha, and the reciting Bhikkhu-Sangha represent the Ariya-Sangha, the arahant disciples of the Buddha.

The thread is drawn round the interior of the pavilion, and its end twisted round the casket, the neck of the pot of water, and tied to the cord of the ola-leaf book. While the special discourses are being recited the monks hold the thread. The purpose is to maintain an unbroken communication from the water to the relic, to the Pirit Potha and to the officiating monks, (Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, the Ti-ratana, the three jewels.) A ball of thread connected to "The

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Three Jewels" and the water, is unloosened and passed on to the listeners (seated on the ground on mats), who hold the thread while the recital goes on.

When the recital in Pali of the entire book is over at dawn, the thread sanctified by the recital is divided into pieces and distributed among the devotees to be tied round their wrists or necks. At the same time the sanctified water is sprinkled on all, who even drink a little of it and sprinkle it on their heads. These are to be regarded as symbols of the protective power of the paritta that was recited. It is a service of inducing blessings. It has its psychological effects.

Dr. Bernard Grad of McGill University in Montreal painstakingly proved that if a psychic healer held water in a flask and this water was later poured on barley seeds, the plants significantly outgrew untreated seeds. But — and this is the intriguing part — if depressed

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psychiatric patients held the flasks of water, the growth of seeds was retarded.

'Dr. Grad suggests, that there appeared to be some "x factor" or energy that flows from the human body to affect growth of plants and animals. A person's mood affected this energy. This previously unacknowledged "energy" has the widest implications for medical science, from healing to lab tests, Grad says.'

As experimentally discovered by Dr. Grad mind can influence matter. If that be so, not much thinking is necessary to draw the logical inference that mind can influence mind. Further if the human mind can influence lower animals, then by a parity of reasoning the human mind can influence the minds of beings higher than animals.

## **Notes**

1.

See below nos. 2, 3, 4.

2.

See Invitation (aradhana) below.

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3.

Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain,  
Sheila Ostrander & Lynn Schroeder, Bantam  
Books, U.S.A., p. 224; also read chapter on  
"Healing with Thought," p. 293.

### **Invitation (aradhana)**

Vipatti patibahaya -sabba sampatti siddhiya  
Sabba dukkha vinasaya — parittam bratha  
mangalam

Vipatti patibahaya -sabba sampatti siddhiya  
Sabba bhaya vinasaya — parittam bratha  
mangalam

Vipatti patibahaya -sabba sampatti siddhiya  
Sabba roga vinasaya — parittam bratha  
mangalam

That from misfortune I may be free  
That all good luck should come to me  
And also from anguish to be free  
Chant "The Protection" I invite thee.

That from misfortune I may be free

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That all good luck should come to me  
Also from all fear to be free  
Chant "The Protection" I invite thee.1

That from misfortune I may be free  
That all good luck should come to me  
And also from sickness to be free  
Chant "The Protection" I invite thee.

**Note**

1.

See above section on The Book of Protection.

**I. Going for Refuge (Sarana-gamana 1)**

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma  
sambuddhassa

Homage to the Blessed One, the Consummate  
One,

the supremely Enlightened One

Buddham saranam gacchami

Dhammam saranam gacchami

Sangham saranam gacchami

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Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami  
Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami  
Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami

Tatiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami  
Tatiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami  
Tatiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami

I go for refuge to the Buddha (Teacher)  
I go for refuge to the Dhamma (the Teaching)  
I go for refuge to the Sangha (the Taught)

For the second time I go for refuge to the  
Buddha  
For the second time I go for refuge to the  
Dhamma  
For the second time I go for refuge to the  
Sangha

For the third time I go for refuge to the Buddha  
For the third time I go for refuge to the Dhamma  
For the third time I go for refuge to the Sangha

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## **Note**

1.

Vin. I, 22 (cf. M. i. 24); Khp. No. 1.

## **II. The Ten Training Precepts (Dasa-sikkhapada 1)**

1. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from killing.

2. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from stealing.

3. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct.

4. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from lying.

5. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from liquor that causes intoxication and heedlessness.

6. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from untimely eating.

7. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from dancing, singing, music, and visiting unseemly shows.

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8. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from the use of garlands, perfumes, cosmetics, and embellishments.

9. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from the use of high and luxurious beds.

10. I undertake to abide by the precept to abstain from accepting gold and silver.

### **Note**

1.

Khp. No. 2; cf. Vin. I, 83-84; Vbh. 285 ff.

### **III. Questions to be Answered by a Novice (Samanera Pañha 1)**

One is what? All beings subsist on food.<sup>2</sup>

Two is what? Name and form (mind and matter).

Three is what? Three kinds of feeling.

Four is what? Four Noble Truths.

Five is what? Five aggregates subject to grasping.

Six is what? Internal six-fold base.

Seven is what? Seven Factors of Enlightenment.



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Eight is what? The Noble Eightfold Path.

Nine is what? Nine abodes of beings.

Ten is what? He that is endowed with ten attributes is called an arahant.

### **Notes**

1.

Also known as "Kumaro Pañha," Questions to be answered by the Young One. Khp. No. 4; cf. A. v. 50 ff; 55 ff. The novice referred to here is the seven-year old Sopaka. He was questioned by the Buddha. It is not a matter for surprise that a child of such tender years can give profound answers to these questions. One has heard of infant prodigies. (See Encyclopaedia Britannica. Inc., 1955, II. p. 389. Also read The Case for Rebirth, Francis Story, Wheel 12-13, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka.)

2.

See notes at the end of the book.

## **IV. The Thirty-two Parts of the Body (Dvattimsakara 1)**

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There are in this body head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, intestinal tract, stomach, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucus, synovium (oil lubricating the joints), urine, and brain in the skull.

### **Note**

1.

Khps. No. 3; cf. D. ii, 293; M. I, 57; iii, 90. Also see below Girimananda sutta 15.

## **V. The Fourfold Reflection of a Monk (Paccavekkhana 1)**

1. Wisely reflecting do I wear the robe, only in order to protect myself from cold, heat, gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, and sun and from snakes; and also as a constant covering for my modesty.

2. Wisely reflecting I will partake of food not for pleasure of it, not for the pride (resulting from physical strength obtainable), not for adornment, not for beautifying the body, but

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merely to maintain this body, to still the hunger, and to enable the practice of the holy life; also to resist the pangs of hunger (due to previous want of food), and to resist the pain (resulting from excess of food). Thus will my life be maintained free from wrong doing and free from discomfort.

3. Wisely reflecting I will make use of lodgings only in order to protect myself from cold and heat, from gadflies and mosquitoes; from wind and sun, from snakes, and also as a constant protection against the rigors of climate, and in order to realize that ardent desire for seclusion (which begets mental concentration).

4. Wisely reflecting I will make use of medicine only as an aid to eliminate bodily pains that have arisen, and also to maintain that important condition, freedom from disease.

### **Note**

1.

M. i. p. 10; cf. A. ii. 40; M. 53.

### **Discourses**

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## **1. Discourse on the Ten Dhammas (Dasa-dhamma sutta 1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at the monastery of Anathapindika.

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, saying: "Monks." — "Venerable Sir," they said by way of reply. The Blessed One then spoke as follows:

"These ten essentials (dhammas) must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth (to live the holy life). What are these ten?

1. "'I am now changed into a different mode of life (from that of a layman).' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

2. "'My life depends on others.'

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3. "'I must now behave in a different manner.' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

4. "'Does my mind upbraid me regarding the state of my virtue (sila)?' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

5. "'Do my discerning fellow-monks having tested me, reproach me regarding the state of my virtue?' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

6. "'There will be a parting (some day) from all those who are dear and loving to me. Death brings this separation to me.' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

7. "'Of kamma<sup>2</sup> I am constituted. Kamma is my inheritance; kamma is the matrix; kamma is my kinsman; kamma is my refuge. Whatever kamma I perform, be it good or bad, to that I shall be heir.' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

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8. "How do I spend my nights and days?' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

9. "Do I take delight in solitude?' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

10. "Have I gained superhuman faculties? Have I gained that higher wisdom so that when I am questioned (on this point) by fellow-monks at the last moment (when death is approaching) I will have no occasion to be depressed and downcast?' This must be reflected upon again and again by one who has gone forth.

"These, monks, are the essentials that should be reflected again and again by one who has gone forth (to live the holy life)."

So spoke the Blessed One. Those monks rejoiced at the words of the Blessed One.

## **Notes**

1.

A. v. 87.

2.

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Literally action — mental, verbal, and physical.

## **2. Discourse on Blessings Maha-mangala Sutta 1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at Anathapindika's monastery. Now when the night was far advanced, a certain deity, whose surpassing radiance illuminated the whole of Jetavana, approached the Blessed One, respectfully saluted him, and stood beside him. Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse:

1. "Many deities and men longing for happiness have pondered on (the question of) blessings. Pray tell me what the highest blessings are.
2. "Not to associate with the foolish, but to associate with the wise, and to honor those worthy of honor — this is the highest blessing.
3. "To reside in a suitable locality, to have performed meritorious actions in the past, and to

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set oneself in the right direction — this is the highest blessing.

4. "Vast learning, skill in handicrafts, well grounded in discipline, and pleasant speech — this is the highest blessing.

5. "To support one's father and mother; to cherish one's wife and children, and to be engaged in peaceful occupations — this is the highest blessing.

6. "Liberality, righteous conduct, rendering assistance to relatives, and performance of blameless deeds — this is the highest blessing.

7. "To cease and abstain from evil, to abstain from intoxicating drinks, and diligent in performing righteous acts — this is the highest blessing.

8. "Reverence, humility, contentment, gratitude, and the timely hearing of the Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha — this is the highest blessing.



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9. "Patience, obedience, meeting the Samanas (holy men), and timely discussions on the Dhamma — this is the highest blessing.

10. "Self-control, chastity, comprehension of the Noble Truths, and the realization of Nibbana — this is the highest blessing.

11. "The mind that is not touched by the vicissitudes of life,<sup>2</sup> the mind that is free from sorrow, stainless, and secure — this is the highest blessing.

12. "Those who have fulfilled the conditions (for such blessings) are victorious everywhere, and attain happiness everywhere — To them these are the highest blessings."

## Notes

1.

Khp. No. 5; Sn. 46 under the title Mangala sutta; cf. Mahamangala Jataka No. 452.

2.

The vicissitudes are eight in number: gain and loss, good-repute and ill-repute, praise and blame, joy and sorrow. This stanza is a

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reference to the state of mind of an arahant, the Consummate One.

### **3. The Jewel Discourse (Ratana Sutta 1)**

The occasion for this discourse, in brief, according to the commentary, is as follows: The city of Vesali was afflicted by a famine, causing death, especially to the poor folk. Due to the presence of decaying corpses the evil spirits began to haunt the city; this was followed by a pestilence. Plagued by these three fears of famine, non-human beings and pestilence, the citizens sought the help of the Buddha who was then living at Rajagaha.

Followed by a large number of monks including the Venerable Ananda, his attendant disciple, the Buddha came to the city of Vesali. With the arrival of the Master, there were torrential rains which swept away the putrefying corpses. The atmosphere became purified, the city was clean. Thereupon the Buddha delivered this Jewel Discourse (Ratana sutta<sup>2</sup>) to the Venerable

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Ananda, and gave him instructions as to how he should tour the city with the Licchavi citizens reciting the discourse as a mark of protection to the people of Vesali. The Venerable Ananda followed the instructions, and sprinkled the sanctified water from the Buddha's own alms bowl. As a consequence the evil spirits were exorcised, the pestilence subsided. Thereafter, the Venerable Ananda returned with the citizens of Vesali to the Public hall where the Buddha and his disciples had assembled awaiting his arrival. There the Buddha recited the same Jewel Discourse to the gathering: 3

1. "Whatever beings (non-humans) are assembled here, terrestrial or celestial, may they all have peace of mind, and may they listen attentively to these words:

2. "O beings, listen closely. May you all radiate loving-kindness to those human beings who, by day and night, bring offerings to you (offer merit to you). Wherefore, protect them with diligence.

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3. "Whatever treasure there be either in the world beyond, whatever precious jewel there be in the heavenly worlds, there is nought comparable to the Tathagata (the perfect One). This precious jewel is the Buddha.<sup>4</sup> By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

4. "That Cessation, that Detachment, that Deathlessness (Nibbana) supreme, the calm and collected Sakyan Sage (the Buddha) had realized. There is nought comparable to this (Nibbana) Dhamma. This precious jewel is the Dhamma.<sup>5</sup> By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

5. "The Supreme Buddha extolled a path of purity (the Noble Eightfold Path) calling it the path which unfailingly brings concentration. There is nought comparable to this concentration. This precious jewel is the Dhamma. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

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6. "The eight persons extolled by virtuous men constitute four pairs. They are the disciples of the Buddha and are worthy of offerings. Gifts given to them yield rich results. This precious jewel is the Sangha.<sup>6</sup> By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

7. "With a steadfast mind, and applying themselves well in the dispensation of the Buddha Gotama, free from (defilements), they have attained to that which should be attained (arahantship) encountering the Deathless. They enjoy the Peace of Nibbana freely obtained.<sup>7</sup> This precious jewel is the Sangha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

8. "As a post deep-planted in the earth stands unshaken by the winds from the four quarters, so, too, I declare is the righteous man who comprehends with wisdom the Noble Truths. This precious jewel is the Sangha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

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9. "Those who realized the Noble Truths well taught by him who is profound in wisdom (the Buddha), even though they may be exceedingly heedless, they will not take an eighth existence (in the realm of sense spheres).<sup>8</sup> This precious jewel is the Sangha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

10. "With his gaining of insight he abandons three states of mind, namely self-illusion, doubt, and indulgence in meaningless rites and rituals, should there be any. He is also fully freed from the four states of woe, and therefore, incapable of committing the six major wrongdoings.<sup>9</sup> This precious jewel is the Sangha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

11. "Any evil action he may still do by deed, word or thought, he is incapable of concealing it; since it has been proclaimed that such concealing is impossible for one who has seen the Path (of Nibbana).<sup>10</sup> This precious jewel is

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the Sangha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

12. "As the woodland groves though in the early heat of the summer month are crowned with blossoming flowers, even so is the sublime Dhamma leading to the (calm) of Nibbana which is taught (by the Buddha) for the highest good. This precious jewel is the Buddha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

13. "The Peerless Excellent one (the Buddha) the Knower (of Nibbana), the Giver (of Nibbana), the Bringer (of the Noble Path), taught the excellent Dhamma. This precious jewel is the Buddha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

14. "Their past (kamma) is spent, their new (kamma) no more arises, their mind to future becoming is unattached. Their germ (of rebirth-consciousness) has died, they have no more desire for re-living. Those wise men fade out (of existence) as the flame of this lamp (which has

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just faded away). This precious jewel is the Sangha. By this (asseveration of the) truth may there be happiness.

15. "Whatever beings (non-human) are assembled here, terrestrial or celestial, come let us salute the Buddha, the Tathagata (the perfect One), honored by gods and men. May there be happiness.11

16. "Whatever beings are assembled here terrestrial or celestial, come let us salute the perfect Dhamma, honored by gods and men. May there be happiness.

17. "Whatever beings are assembled here terrestrial or celestial, come let us salute the perfect Sangha, honored by gods and men. May there be happiness."

## **Notes**

1.

Khp. No. 6; Sn. 39

2.

Ratana means precious jewel. Here the term is applied to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.



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3.

KhpaA. 161.

4.

Literally, in the Buddha is this precious jewel.

5.

Literally, in the Dhamma is this precious jewel.

6.

Literally, in the Sangha is this precious jewel.

7.

Obtained without payment; "avyayena," KhpaA. I., 185.

8.

The reason why it is stated that there will be no eighth existence for a person who has attained the stage of sotapatti or the first stage of sanctity is that such a being can live at the most for only a period of seven existences in the realm of sense spheres.

9.

Abhithanani; i. matricide, ii. patricide, iii. the murder of arahants (the Consummate Ones), iv. the shedding of the Buddha's blood, v. causing

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schism in the Sangha, and vi. pernicious false beliefs (niyata micca ditthi).

10.

He is a sotapanna, stream-enterer, one who has attained the first stage of sanctity. Also see Notes at the end of the book.

11.

The last three stanzas were recited by Sakka, the chief of Devas (gods), KhpA. 195.

#### **4. Discourse on Loving-kindness (Karaniya Metta Sutta 1)**

While the Buddha was staying at Savatthi, a band of monks, having received subjects of meditation from the master, proceeded to a forest to spend the rainy season (vassana). The tree deities inhabiting this forest were worried by their arrival, as they had to descend from tree abodes and dwell on the ground. They hoped, however, the monks would leave soon; but finding that the monks would stay the vassana period of three months, harassed them in diverse

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ways, during the night with the intention of scaring them away.

Living under such conditions being impossible, the monks went to the Master and informed him of their difficulties. Thereon the Buddha instructed them in the Metta sutta and advised their return equipped with this sutta for their protection.

The monks went back to the forest, and practicing the instruction conveyed, permeated the whole atmosphere with their radiant thoughts of metta or loving-kindness. The deities so affected by this power of love, henceforth allowed them to meditate in peace.

The discourse gets divided into two parts. The first detailing the standard of moral conduct required by one who wishes to attain Purity and Peace, and the second the method of practice of metta. 2

1. "He who is skilled in (working out his own) well being, and who wishes to attain that state of Calm (Nibbana) should act thus: he should be

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dexterous, upright, exceedingly upright, obedient, gentle, and humble.

2. "Contented, easily supportable, with but few responsibilities, of simple livelihood, controlled in the senses, prudent, courteous, and not hanker after association with families.

3. "Let him not perform the slightest wrong for which wise men may rebuke him. (Let him think:) 'May all beings be happy and safe. May they have happy minds.'

4.& 5. "Whatever living beings there may be — feeble or strong (or the seekers and the attained) long, stout, or of medium size, short, small, large, those seen or those unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born as well as those yet to be born — may all beings have happy minds.

6. "Let him not deceive another nor despise anyone anywhere. In anger or ill will let him not wish another ill.

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7. "Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life even so let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.

8. "Let him radiate boundless love towards the entire world — above, below, and across — unhindered, without ill will, without enmity.

9. "Standing, walking, sitting or reclining, as long as he is awake, let him develop this mindfulness. This, they say, is 'Noble Living' here.

10. "Not falling into wrong views — being virtuous, endowed with insight, lust in the senses discarded — verily never again will he return to conceive in a womb."

## **Notes**

1.

Khp. No. 9.; Sn. 25, under the title Metta-sutta.

2.

KhpA. 232.

## **5. Protection of the Aggregates (Khandha Paritta 1)**

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Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at Anathapindika's monastery. At that time at Savatthi a certain monk had died bitten by a snake. Thereupon many monks approached the Buddha and having saluted him sat beside him. So seated those monks spoke thus to the Blessed One:

"Bhante (Venerable Sir), a certain monk at Savatthi had died bitten by a snake."

"Assuredly, monks," said the Buddha. "That monk has not suffused with thoughts of loving-kindness (metta) the four royal tribes of snakes. Had he done so, that monk would not have died of snake-bite. What are the four royal tribes of snakes? The royal tribe of snakes called Virupakkha, Erapatha, Chabyaputta, and Kanhagotamaka. Monks, that monk, did not suffuse with thoughts of loving-kindness these four royal tribes of snakes, had not done so he would not have died of snake-bite. Monks, I enjoin you to suffuse with thoughts of loving-

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kindness these four royal tribes of snakes for your safety, for your preservation and for your protection." So said the Blessed One. Having thus spoken, the Buddha, the "Welcome One" (Sugata), further said (suggesting how they should express themselves:)

1. May I have metta towards Virupakkhas  
Towards Erapathas may I have metta  
May my metta be towards Chabyaputtas  
Towards Kanha-gotamakas also metta may I have.

2. May I have metta towards the footless  
And towards bipeds too, my metta may I have  
May I have metta towards the quadrupeds  
And towards the many footed also, metta may I have.

3. Let not the footless do me harm  
Nor those that have two feet  
Let not quadrupeds do me harm  
Nor those endowed with many feet.

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4. All beings, all living creatures,  
May good fortune befall them all  
May not the least harm on them befall.

"Infinite (in virtue) is the Buddha, infinite is the Dhamma, infinite is the Sangha. Finite are creeping creatures — snakes, scorpions, centipedes, spiders, lizards, and rats. I have guarded myself, I have made my protection. Depart from me, ye beings. I bow down to the Blessed One; and to the seven Supreme Buddhas." 2

## **Notes**

1.

Culla Vagga, ii. p. 110; also in the Anguttara under the title Ahi (metta) sutta, ii.72; Khandha-Vatta Jataka, 203.

2.

Vipassi, Sikhi, Vessabhu, Kakusanda,  
Konagama, Kassapa, Gotama.



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## **6. Discourse on Advantages of Loving-kindness (Mettanisamsa Sutta 1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at Anathapindika's monastery. Then he addressed the monks saying, "Monks." — "Venerable Sir," said the monks, by way of reply. The Blessed One then spoke as follows:

"Monks, eleven advantages are to be expected from the release (deliverance) of heart by familiarizing oneself with thoughts of loving-kindness (metta), by the cultivation of loving-kindness, by constantly increasing these thoughts, by regarding loving-kindness as a vehicle (of expression), and also as something to be treasured, by living in conformity with these thoughts, by putting these ideas into practice, and by establishing them. What are the eleven?

1. "He sleeps in comfort. 2. He awakes in comfort. 3. He sees no evil dreams. 4. He is dear to human beings. 5. He is dear to non-human

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beings. 6. Devas (gods) protect him. 7. Fire, poison, and sword cannot touch him. 8. His mind can concentrate quickly. 9. His countenance is serene. 10. He dies without being confused in mind. 11. If he fails to attain arahantship (the highest sanctity here and now, he will be reborn in the brahma-world.

"These eleven advantages, monks, are to be expected from the release of heart by familiarizing oneself with thoughts of loving-kindness, by cultivation of loving-kindness, by constantly increasing these thoughts, by regarding loving-kindness as a vehicle (of expression), and also as something to be treasured, by living in conformity with these thoughts, by putting these ideas into practice and by establishing them."

So said the Blessed One. Those monks rejoiced at the words of the Blessed One.

## **Note**

1.

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The paritta text has puttanam phalamasnati, which means, "blessed with offspring." This is hardly compatible in the context of the stanza concerned. The original Jataka text has vuttanam phalamasnati which means, "the fruit of what is sown he enjoys," a meaning which harmonizes with the rest of the stanza.

## **7. The Advantages of Friendship (Mittanisamsa)**

These ten gathas (stanzas) recounting the beneficial effects of friendship, are found in the Magapakkha (Temiya) Jataka, vol. vii. No. 538.

1. He who maintains genuine friendship (who is not treacherous towards friends) will, whenever he goes far out of his home, receive abundance of hospitality. Many will obtain their living through him.

2. He who maintains genuine friendship will, whatever country, village or town he visits, be honored.

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3. He who maintains genuine friendship — robbers will not overpower him. Royalty will not look down upon him. He will triumph over all his enemies.

4. He who maintains genuine friendship, returns home with feeling of amity, rejoices in the assemblies of people, and becomes the chief among his kinsmen.

5. He who maintains genuine friendship, being hospitable to others, in turn, receives hospitality. Being respectful to others, in turn, receives respect. He enjoys both praise and fame.

6. He who maintains genuine friendship, being a giver, in turn, receives gifts himself. Being worshipful to others, in turn, himself is worshipped. He attains prosperity and fame.

7. He who maintains genuine friendship, shines (in glory) like the fire, and is radiant as a deity. Never will prosperity forsake him.

8. He who maintains genuine friendship, to him there will be many breeding cattle. What is

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sown in the field will flourish. The fruit of that which is sown he enjoys.<sup>1</sup>

9. He who maintains genuine friendship, should he fall from a precipice or mountain or tree, he will be protected (will not be harmed).

10. He who maintains genuine friendship cannot be overthrown by enemies even as the deep-rooted banyan tree cannot be overthrown by the wind.

### **Note**

1.

A. v. 342.

## **8. The Peacock's Prayer for Protection (Mora Paritta 1)**

1. There rises the golden hued one, the one who has sight, the one who is sole monarch, the one who illuminates the earth (it is the sun that is being addressed). I adore thee, the golden hued one who illuminates the earth (it is the sun that is being addressed). I adore thee, the golden

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hued one who illuminates the earth. Protected by thee we live this day safe and secure.

2. May my adoration be to those Brahmanas<sup>2</sup> (the Buddhas) who have attained Enlightenment by comprehending all dhammas. May they protect me. May my adoration be to the Buddhas (of the past), to their Enlightenment (the Four Paths and the Four Fruits). May my adoration be to those supremely secured from bondage (the Buddhas) and to their Deliverance. Having made this protection, the peacock goes about seeking (food).

3. There descends the golden hued one, the one who has sight, the one who is sole monarch, the one who illuminates the earth. I adore thee, the golden hued one who illuminates the earth. Protected by thee we live this night safe and secure.

4. May my adoration be to those Brahmanas (the Buddhas) who have attained Enlightenment by comprehending all dhammas. May they protect me. May my adoration be to the

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Buddhas (of the past), to their Enlightenment. May my adoration be to those supremely secured from bondage (the Buddhas) and to their Deliverance. Having made this protection the peacock spent his life happily.

## **Notes**

1.

Jataka, ii. 23; No. 159.

2.

The word "Brahmana" is used in the literal sense of one who has unloaded the burden of evil (bahita papoti brahmano), i.e., the Buddha, or an arahant, the Consummate One. The word Brahmana in the Brahmana Vagga (last chapter of the Dhammapada, refers to the arahant.

## **9. The Moon Deity's Prayer for Protection (Canda Paritta 1)**

In Indian cosmology the major planets are regarded as deities or gods. This view, at times, extends to the common parlance of today, e.g., "rain god," "sun god," etc. The Buddha was not

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disposed to comment on these views, and so he contented himself with merely expressing the message of the Dhamma through the medium of these views.

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi, at Jetavana at Anathpindika's monastery. At that time Candima, the moon deity, was seized by Rahu, lord of Asura. Thereupon calling to mind the Blessed One, Candima, the moon deity, recited this stanza:

i. "O Buddha, the Hero, thou art wholly free from all evil. My adoration to thee. I have fallen into distress. Be thou my refuge."

Thereupon the Blessed One addressed a stanza to Rahu, Lord of Asuras, on behalf of Candima, thus:

ii. "O Rahu, Candima has gone for refuge to the Tathagata, the Consummate One. Release Candima. The Buddhas radiate compassion on the world (of beings)."



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Thereupon Rahu, Lord of Asuras, released Candima, the deity, and immediately came to the presence of Vepacitta, Lord of Asuras, and stood beside him trembling with fear and with hair standing on end. Then Vepacitta addressed Rahu in this stanza.

iii. "Rahu. Why did you suddenly release Candima? Why have you come trembling, and why are you standing here terrified?"

iv. "I have been spoken to by the Buddha in a stanza (requesting me to release Candima). If I had not released Candima my head would have split into seven pieces. While yet I live, I should have had no happiness. (Therefore I released Candima)."

### **Note**

1.

S. i. 50.

## **10. The Sun Deity's Prayer for Protection (Suriya Paritta 1)**

Thus have I heard:

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On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at Anathapindika's monastery. At that time Suriya, the sun deity, was seized by Rahu, Lord of Asuras. Thereupon calling to mind the Blessed One, Suriya, the Sun deity, recited this stanza:

i. "O Buddha, the Hero, thou art wholly free from all evil. My adoration to thee. I have fallen into distress. Be thou my refuge."

Thereupon the Blessed One addressed a stanza to Rahu, Lord of Asuras, on behalf of Suriya thus:

ii. "O Rahu, Suriya has gone for refuge to the Tathagata, the Consummate One. Release Suriya. The Buddhas radiate compassion on the world (of beings).

iii. "O Rahu, swallow not the dispeller of darkness, the shining one, the radiant and effulgent traveler through the sky. Rahu, release Suriya, my son."

Thereupon Rahu, Lord of Asuras, released Suriya, and immediately came to the presence of

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Vepacitta, Lord of Asuras, and stood beside him trembling with fear and with hair standing on end. Then Vepacitta addressed Rahu in this stanza:

iv. "Rahu, why did you suddenly release Suriya? Why have you come trembling, and why are you standing here terrified?"

"I have been spoken to by the Buddha in a stanza (requesting me release Suriya). If I had not released Suriya my head would have split into seven pieces. While yet I live, I should have had no happiness. (Therefore I released Suriya)."

### **Note**

1.

S. i. 51.

## **11. Banner Protection (Dhajagga Paritta 1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at the monastery of

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Anathapindika. Then he addressed the monks saying, "O monks." — "Venerable Sir," said the monks by way of reply to the Blessed One. Thereupon he spoke as follows:

"Monks, I shall relate a former incident. There arose a battle between the Devas (gods) and Asuras. Then Sakka, the Lord of the devas, addressed the devas of the Tavatimsa heaven thus:

"Happy ones, if the devas who have gone to the battle should experience fear or terror or suffer from hair standing on end, let them behold the crest of my own banner. If you do so, any fear, terror or hair standing on end arising in you will pass away.

"If you fail to look up to the crest of my banner, look at the crest of the banner of Pajapati, King of gods. If you do so, any fear, terror or hair standing on end arising in you will pass away.

"If you fail to look up to the crest of Pajapati, King of the gods, look at the crest of the banner of Varuna, King of the gods. If you do so, any

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fear, terror or hair standing on end arising in you will pass away.'

"Monks, any fear, terror or hair standing on end arising in them who look at the crest of the banner of Sakka... The Lord of the gods, of Pajapati... of Varuna... of Isana, the King of the gods, any fear terror or hair standing on end, may pass away, or may not pass away. What is the reason for this?

"Sakka, the Lord of gods, O monks, is not free from lust, not free from hate, not free from delusion, and is therefore liable to fear, terror, fright, and flight. I also say unto you O monks — if any fear, terror or hair standing on end should arise in you when you have gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty house (lonely place), then think only of me thus: "Such Indeed is the Blessed One, arahant (Consummate One), supremely enlightened, endowed with knowledge and virtue, welcome being, knower of worlds, the peerless trainer of persons, teacher of gods and men, the Buddha,

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the Blessed One.' Monks, if you think of me, any fear, terror, or standing of hair on end, that may arise in you, will pass away.

"If you fail to think of me, then think of the Dhamma (the Doctrine) thus: 'Well expounded is the Dhamma by the Blessed One, a Dhamma to be realized by oneself and gives immediate results, a Dhamma which invites investigation and leads up to Nibbana, a Dhamma to be understood by the wise each for himself.' Monks, if you think of the Dhamma, any fear, terror or hair standing on end, that may arise in you, will pass away.

"If you fail to think of the Dhamma, then think of the Sangha (the Order) thus: 'Of good conduct is the Order of Disciples of the Blessed One, of upright conduct is the Order of Disciples of the Blessed One, of wise conduct is the Order of Disciples of the Blessed One, of dutiful conduct is the Order of Disciples of the Blessed One. This Order of Disciples of the Blessed One — namely those four pairs of

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persons,<sup>2</sup> the eight kinds of individuals<sup>3</sup> — is worthy of offerings, is worthy of hospitality, is worthy of gifts, is worthy of reverential salutations, is an incomparable field of merit for the world.' Monks, if you think of the Sangha, any fear, terror or hair standing on end, that may arise in you, will pass away. What is the reason for this? The Tathagata, O monks, who is arahant, supremely enlightened, is free from lust, free from hate, is free from delusion, and is not liable to fear, terror, fright or flight."

So said the Blessed One: Having thus spoken, the teacher, the "Welcome Being" (Sugata), further said:

i. Whether in forest or at foot of tree,  
Or in some secluded spot, O monks,  
Do call to mind that Buddha Supreme;  
Then will there be no fear to you at all.

ii. If you think not of the Buddha, O monks,  
That Lord of the world and Chief of men,  
Then do think, O monks, of that Dhamma;

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So well preached and leading to Nibbana.

iii. If you think not of the Dhamma, O monks  
Well preached and leading to Nibbana;  
Then do think, O monks, of that Sangha,  
That wonderful field of merit to all.

iv. To those recalling the Buddha supreme,  
To those recalling the Dhamma sublime,  
And to those recalling the Sangha,  
No fear, no terror will make them quiver.

### **Notes**

1.

S. i. 218.

2.

The four pairs of persons constitute the four kinds of aryan disciples who have attained the four paths and four fruits of sanctity (magga and phala), namely: sotapatti, "stream-entry"; sakadagami, "once-return"; anagami, "non-return"; and arahattha, arahantship, the fourth



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and the last stage at which all fetters are severed and taints rooted out.

3.

The above four pairs become eight when the Paths and Fruits are regarded separately.

## **12. Factors of Enlightenment (Maha Kassapa Thera Bojjhanga 1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Rajagaha, in the bamboo grove, in the Squirrels' feeding ground. At that time the Venerable Maha Kassapa who was living in the Pippali Cave, was afflicted with a disease, was suffering therefrom, and was gravely ill.

Then the Blessed One arising from his solitude at eventide visited the Venerable Maha Kassapa and sat down on a seat made ready (for him).

Thus seated the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Maha Kassapa:

"Well Kassapa, how is it with you? Are you bearing up, are you enduring (your suffering)?"

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Do your pains decrease or increase? Are there signs of your pains decreasing and not of increasing?"

"No, Ven. Sir, I am not bearing up, I am not enduring, the pain is very great. There is a sign not of pains decreasing but of their increasing."

"Kassapa, these seven factors of enlightenment are well expounded by me and are cultivated and fully developed by me. They conduce to perfect understanding, to full realization (of the four Noble Truths) and to Nibbana. What are the seven?"

i. "Mindfulness, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

ii. "Investigation of the Dhamma, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

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iii. "Persevering effort, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

iv. "Rapture, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

v. "Calm, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

vi. "Concentration, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

vii. "Equanimity, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is

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cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

"These seven factors of enlightenment, Kassapa, are well expounded by me and are cultivated and fully developed by me. They conduce to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana."

"Most assuredly, O Blessed One, they are factors of enlightenment. Most assuredly, O Welcome Being (Sugata), they are factors of enlightenment."

Thus said the Buddha, and the Venerable Maha Kassapa glad at heart approved the utterances of the Buddha. Thereupon the Venerable Kassapa recovered from that affliction, and that affliction, of the Venerable Kassapa disappeared.

### **Note**

1.

S. v. 79.

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### **13. Factors of Enlightenment**

#### **(Maha Moggallana Thera Bojjhanga1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Rajagaha in the bamboo grove, in the squirrels' feeding ground. At that time the Venerable Maha Moggallana who was living on the Gijjhakuta Hill (Vultures' Peak) was afflicted with a disease, was suffering therefrom, and was gravely ill. Then the Blessed One arising from his solitude at eventide visited the Venerable Maha Moggallana and sat down on a seat made ready for him. (Exactly the same as in previous discourse changing "Maha Kassapa" into "Maha Moggallana.")

#### **Note**

1.

S. v. 80.

### **14. Factors of Enlightenment**

#### **(Maha Cunda Thera Bojjhanga1)**

Thus have I heard:

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On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Rajagaha in the bamboo grove in the squirrels' feeding ground. At that time, he was afflicted with a disease, was suffering therefrom, and was gravely ill.

Then the Venerable Maha Cunda<sup>2</sup> 'arising from his solitude at eventide'<sup>3</sup> approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down beside him.

To the Venerable Maha Cunda thus seated, the Blessed One said:

"O Cunda, let the factors of enlightenment occur to your mind."

"These seven factors of enlightenment, bhante (Ven. Sir), are well expounded and are cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. They conduce to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana. What are the seven?

i. "**Mindfulness**, the factor of enlightenment, bhante, is well expounded by the Blessed One, and is cultivated and fully developed by the

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Blessed One. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

ii. "**Investigation of the Dhamma**, the factor of enlightenment, bhante, is well expounded by the Blessed One and is cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

iii. "**Persevering effort**, the factor of enlightenment, bhante, is well expounded by the Blessed One and is cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

iv. "**Rapture**, the factor of enlightenment, bhante, is well expounded by the Blessed One and is cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

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v. "**Calm**, the factor of enlightenment, bhante, is well expounded by the Blessed One and is cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

vi. "**Concentration**, the factor of enlightenment, bhante, is well expounded by the Blessed One and is cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

vii. "**Equanimity**, the factor of enlightenment, bhante, is well expounded by the Blessed One, and is cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana. These seven factors of enlightenment, bhante, are well expounded and cultivated and fully developed by the Blessed One. They conduce to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana."



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"Most assuredly Cunda, they are factors of enlightenment. Most assuredly, Cunda, they are factors of enlightenment."

Thus said, the Venerable Maha Cunda, and the Master approved of it. Then the Blessed One recovered from his affliction, and, thus, disappeared his affliction.

### Notes

1.

S. v. 81.

2.

Younger brother of the Venerable Sariputta. [Is this an error? According to Nyanaponika in *Great Disciples of the Buddha* (Somerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 1997), p. 33, Cunda's monastic name was Samanuddesa, to distinguish him from the elder Ven. Mahacunda. — ATI ed.]

3.

"Sayanha samayam patisallana vutthito," not found in the original Samyutta text.

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## **15. Discourse to Girimananda Thera (Girimananda Sutta 1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at the monastery of Anathapindika. Now at that time, the Venerable Girimananda was afflicted with a disease, was suffering therefrom, and was gravely ill. Thereupon the Venerable Ananda approached the Buddha and having saluted him sat beside him. So seated the Venerable Ananda said this to the Blessed One:

"Bhante (Venerable Sir,) the Venerable Girimananda is afflicted with disease, is suffering therefrom, and is gravely ill. It were well, bhante, if the Blessed One would visit the Venerable Girimananda out of compassion for him." (Thereupon the Buddha said):

"Should you, Ananda, visit the monk Girimananda and recite to him the ten contemplations, then that monk Girimananda

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having heard them, will be immediately cured of his disease.

"What are the ten?

Contemplation of impermanence.

Contemplation of anatta

(absence of a permanent self or soul).

Contemplation of foulness (asubha).

Contemplation of disadvantage (danger).

Contemplation of abandonment.

Contemplation of detachment.

Contemplation of cessation.

Contemplation of distaste for the whole world.

Contemplation of impermanence of all component things.

Mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing.

i. "And what, Ananda, is contemplation of impermanence? Herein, Ananda, a monk having gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to an empty house (lonely place) contemplates thus: 'Matter (visible objects) is impermanent; feeling or sensation is impermanent; perception is

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impermanent; formations are impermanent; consciousness is impermanent. Thus, he dwells contemplating impermanence in these five aggregates.' This, Ananda, is called contemplation of impermanence.

ii. "And what Ananda is contemplation of anatta? Herein, Ananda, a monk having gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to a lonely place contemplates thus: 'The eye is not the self; visible objects are not the self; the ear is not the self; sounds are not the self; the nose is not the self; smells are not the self; the tongue is not the self; tastes are not the self; the body is not the self; bodily contacts (tangible objects) are not the self; the mind is not the self; mental objects are not the self.' Thus he dwells contemplating not self in these internal and external bases. This, Ananda, is called contemplation of anatta.

iii. "And what, Ananda, is contemplation of foulness? Herein, Ananda, a monk contemplates this body upwards from the soles of the feet, downwards from the top of the hair, enclosed in

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skin, as being full of many impurities. In this body there are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, intestinal tract, stomach, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal mucous, synovium (oil lubricating the joints), and urine. Thus he dwells contemplating foulness in this body. This, Ananda, is called contemplation of foulness.

iv. "What, Ananda, is contemplation of disadvantage (danger)? Herein, Ananda, a monk having gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a lonely place, contemplates thus: 'Many are the sufferings, many are the disadvantages (dangers) of this body since diverse diseases are engendered in this body, such as the following: Eye-disease, ear-disease, nose-disease, tongue-disease, body-disease, headache, mumps, mouth-disease, tooth-ache, cough, asthma, catarrh, heart-burn, fever, stomach ailment, fainting, dysentery, swelling, gripes, leprosy,

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boils, scrofula, consumption, epilepsy, ringworm, itch, eruption, tetter, pustule, plethora, diabetes, piles, cancer, fistula, and diseases originating from bile, from phlegm, from wind, from conflict of the humors, from changes of weather, from adverse condition (faulty deportment), from devices (practiced by others), from kamma-vipaka (results of kamma); and cold, heat, hunger, thirst, excrement, and urine.' Thus he dwells contemplating disadvantage (danger) in this body. This Ananda, is called contemplation of disadvantage (danger).

v. "And what, Ananda, is contemplation of abandonment? Herein, Ananda, a monk does not tolerate a thought of sensual desire that has arisen in him, dispels it, makes an end of it, and annihilates it. He does not tolerate a thought of ill-will that has arisen in him, but abandons, dispels it, makes an end of it, and annihilates it. He does not tolerate a thought of cruelty that has arisen in him but abandons it, dispels it, makes

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an end of it, and annihilates it. He does not tolerate evil, unprofitable states that arise in him from time to time, but abandons them, dispels them, makes an end of them, and annihilates them. This, Ananda, is called contemplation of abandonment.

vi. "And what, Ananda, is contemplation of detachment? Herein, Ananda, a monk having gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a lonely place, contemplates thus: 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, namely, the stilling of all conditioned things, the giving up of all substratum of becoming, the extinction of craving, detachment, Nibbana.' This, Ananda, is called contemplation of detachment.

vii. "And what, Ananda, is contemplation of cessation? Herein, Ananda, a monk having gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a lonely place, contemplates thus: 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, namely, the stilling of all component things, the extinction of craving,

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cessation, Nibbana.' This, Ananda, is called contemplation of cessation.

viii. "And what, Ananda, is contemplation of distaste for the whole world? Herein, Ananda, (a monk) by abandoning any concern and clinging to this world, by abandoning mental prejudices, wrong beliefs, and latent tendencies concerning this world, by not grasping them, but by giving them up, becomes detached. This, Ananda, is called contemplation of distaste for the whole world.

ix. "And what, Ananda, is contemplation of impermanence of all component things? Herein, Ananda, a monk is wearied, humiliated, and disgusted with all conditioned things. This, Ananda, is called contemplation of impermanence of all component things.

x. "And what, Ananda, is mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing? Herein, Ananda, a monk having gone to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a lonely place, sits down, having folded his legs crosswise, keeping the body



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erect, and his mindfulness alive, mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.

"When he is breathing in a long breath, he knows: 'I am breathing in a long breath'; when he is breathing out a long breath, he knows: 'I am breathing out a long breath'; when he is breathing in a short breath, he knows: 'I am breathing in a short breath'; when he is breathing out a short breath, he knows: 'I am breathing out a short breath.' 'Conscious of the entire process I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself. 'Conscious of the entire process I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Calming the entire process, I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'calming the entire process I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Experiencing rapture, I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'experiencing rapture, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

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"'Experiencing bliss, I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'experiencing bliss, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Experiencing the mental formations (feeling and perception), I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'experiencing the mental formations, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Calming the mental formations, I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'calming the mental formations, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Experiencing the mind (according to the fourfold absorptions, or jhanas), I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'experiencing the mind, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Exceedingly gladdening the mind (by samatha, calming, as well as by vipassana, insight), I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'exceedingly gladdening the mind, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Concentrating the mind (on the breath), I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; concentrating

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the mind I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

"'Liberating the mind (from the nivaranas, or hindrances), I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself, 'liberating the mind I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself; 'contemplating impermanence (in body, feelings, perceptions, volitional formations, consciousness), I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'contemplating impermanence, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself; 'contemplating detachment, I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'contemplating detachment, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself; 'contemplating cessation, I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself, 'contemplating cessation, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself; 'contemplating abandonment, I shall breathe in,' thus he trains himself; 'contemplating abandonment, I shall breathe out,' thus he trains himself.

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"This, Ananda, is called mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing. If, Ananda, you visit the monk Girimananda and recite to him these ten contemplations, then that monk, Girimananda, having heard them, will be immediately cured of his affliction."

Thereupon the Venerable Ananda, having learned these ten contemplations from the Blessed One, visited the Venerable Girimananda, and recited to him the ten contemplations. When the Venerable Girimananda had heard them, his affliction was immediately cured. He recovered from that affliction, and thus disappeared the affliction of the Venerable Girimananda.

## **Notes**

1.

A. v. 108.

2.

Sabba-kaya. Literally, "the whole (breath) body." According to the Visuddhi Magga, "kaya" here does not mean the physical body,

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but the whole mass of in-breathing and out-breathing.

## 6. The Discourse at Isigili (Isigili Sutta1)

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living on Isigili mountain near Rajagaha. Then he addressed the monks saying, "O monks." "Bhante (Venerable Sir)," replied those monks in assent to the Blessed One. Thereupon he said this:

"Do you, monks, see this Vebhara mountain?"

"Yes, bhante."

"There was another name, monks, for this Vebhara mountain, another designation. Do you, monks, see this Pandava mountain?"

"Yes, bhante."

"There was another name, monks, for this Pandava mountain, another designation. Do you, monks, see this Vepulla mountain?"

"Yes, bhante."

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"There was another name, monks, for this Vepulla mountain, another designation. Do you, monks, see this Gijjhakuta mountain?"

"Yes, bhante."

"There was another name, monks, for this Gijjhakuta mountain, another designation. Do you, monks, see this Isigili mountain?"

"Yes, bhante."

"This has been the very name, monks, the very designation for this Isigili mountain. In the past, monks, five hundred paccekabuddhas<sup>2</sup> lived for a long time on this Isigili mountain. As they were entering the mountain they were visible, but once they have entered, they were invisible. People seeing this remarked: 'This mountain swallows these seers (isigilati)'; hence the name Isigili came into being.

"I will tell you, monks, the names of the paccekabuddhas. I will reveal, monks, the names of the paccekabuddhas. Listen, pay close attention, I will speak."

"Yes, bhante," replied the monks.

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The blessed One said:

"Arittha,<sup>3</sup> monks, was a paccekabuddha who lived for a long time on this Isigili mountain, Uparittha... Tagarasikhi... Yasassi... Sudassana... Piyadassi... Gandhara... Pindola... Upasabha... Nitha... Tatha... Sutava... Bhavitatta, monks, was a paccekabuddha who lived for a long time on this Isigili mountain.

i. "The names of those supreme beings<sup>4</sup> who are free from sorrow and desire, who have overcome their passions,<sup>5</sup> and have individually attained enlightenment, noble among men. I make known. Listen to me:

ii. "Arittha, Uparittha, Tagarasikhi, Yasassi, Sudassana, Piyadassi the enlightened.<sup>6</sup> Gandhara, Pindola and Upasabha, Nitha, Tatha, Sutava, Bhavitatta.

iii. "Sumbha, Subha, Methula, Atthama, and then Megha, Anigha, Sudatha are paccekabuddhas whose desire for becoming (re-living) is destroyed. Hingu and Hinga of great power.

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iv. "The two sages Jali<sup>7</sup> and Atthaka, then Kosala, the enlightened one, then Subahu, Upanemisa, Nemisa, Santacitta, Sacca, Tatha, Viraja, and Pandita.

v. "Kala, Upakala, Vijita and Jita, Anga and Panga and Gutijjita. Passi removed defilements, the root of suffering. Aparajita, conqueror of Mara's might.

vi. "Satta, Pavatta, Sarabhanga, Lomahamsa, Uccangamaya, Asita, Anasava. Manomaya and Bandhuma, the destroyers of pride; Tadadhimutta, Vimala, and Ketuma.

vii. "Ketumbaraga and Matanga, Ariya. Then Accuta and Accutagamabyamaka. Sumangala, Dabbila, Suppatitthita, Asayha, Khemabhirata, and Sorata.

viii. "Durannaya, Sangha, and Uccaya, and then the sage Sayha of sublime energy. Ananda, Nanda, Upananda, the twelve paccekabuddhas,<sup>8</sup> Bharadvaja bearing his last body.<sup>9</sup>



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ix. "Bodhi, Mahanama, and then Uttara; Kesi, Sikhi, Sundara, and Bharadvaja. Tissa, Upatissa, Upasidari, the destroyer of the bonds of becoming, and Sidari, the destroyer of craving.

x. "Mangala was the lust-free paccekabuddha, Usabha who cut away the ensnaring root of suffering.

Upanita who attained state of Calm (Nibbana), Uposatha, Sundara, and Saccanama.

xi. "Jeta, Jayanta, Paduma, and Uppala; Padumuttara, Rakkhita, and Pabbata. Manatthaddha, Sobhita, Vataraga, and the paccekabuddha Kanha well freed in mind.

xii. "These and others are paccekabuddhas of great power whose desires for becoming (re-living) are destroyed.

Do salute these great sages of immeasurable (virtue) who have gone beyond all attachment<sup>10</sup> and attained Parinibbana."

## Notes

1.

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M. 116.

2.

They are Buddhas, who have attained enlightenment independent of another's aid, but lack the faculty of convincing others.

3.

For stories connected with these thirteen names see Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, G. P. Malalasekera.

4.

Literally, those essences of beings, MA. iv. 129. Having declared the names of these thirteen paccekabuddhas, the names of those others who are the essences of beings, are now revealed in verse.

5.

Literally, removed the spike of passions (visalla).

6.

It would appear that the reason why in the Pali stanzas attributes are mentioned in respect of

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some paccekabuddhas, and not all, is for metrical purposes.

7.

Culla Jali and Maha Jali.

8.

Four Anandas, four Nandas and four Upanandas, MA., iv. 129.

9.

The five aggregates of: body; feelings or sensations; perceptions; formations and consciousness.

10.

Sangha, attachment or grasping, they are: lust, hate, delusion, pride, and false views.

## **17. Setting In Motion the Wheel of Truth (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta 1)**

### **The First Sermon Of The Buddha**

For seven weeks immediately following the enlightenment, the Buddha spent his time in lonely retreat. At the close of this period he decided to proclaim the doctrine (dhamma), he

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had realized, to those five ascetics who were once struggling with him for enlightenment. Knowing that they were living at Isipatana (modern Sarnath), still steeped in the unmeaning rigors of extreme asceticism, the master left Gaya, where he attained enlightenment, for distant Varanasi, India's holy city. There at the Deer Park he rejoined them.

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers) near Varanasi (Benares). Then he addressed the group of five monks (bhikkhus):

"Monks, these two extremes ought not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the household life. (What are the two?) There is addiction to indulgence of sense-pleasures, which is low, coarse, the way of ordinary people, unworthy, and unprofitable; and there is addiction to self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy, and unprofitable.

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"Avoiding both these extremes, the Tathagata (The Perfect One)<sup>2</sup> has realized the Middle Path; it gives vision, gives knowledge, and leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment and to Nibbana. And what is that Middle Path realized by the Tathagata...? It is the Noble Eightfold path, and nothing else, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. This is the Middle Path realized by the Tathagata which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment, and to Nibbana.

"The Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha), monks, is this: Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, association with the unpleasant is suffering, dissociation from the pleasant is suffering, not to receive what one desires is suffering — in brief the five aggregates subject to grasping are suffering.

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"The Noble Truth of the Origin (cause) of Suffering is this: It is this craving (thirst) which produces re-becoming (rebirth) accompanied by passionate greed, and finding fresh delight now here, and now there, namely craving for sense pleasure, craving for existence and craving for non-existence (self-annihilation).

"The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is this: It is the complete cessation of that very craving, giving it up, relinquishing it, liberating oneself from it, and detaching oneself from it.

"The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering is this: It is the Noble Eightfold Path, and nothing else, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.<sup>3</sup>

"This is the Noble Truth of Suffering': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before.

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'This suffering, as a noble truth, should be fully realized': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth has been fully realized': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before.

'''This is the Noble Truth of the Origin (cause) of Suffering': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before.

'This Origin of Suffering as a noble truth should be eradicated': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before. 'This Origin of suffering as a noble truth has been eradicated': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before.

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"This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before. 'This Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, should be realized': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before. 'This Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth has been realized': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before.

'This Path leading to the cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, should be developed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before. 'This Path leading to the



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cessation of suffering, as a noble truth has been developed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me concerning things not heard before.

"As long as my knowledge of seeing things as they really are, was not quite clear in these three aspects, in these twelve ways, concerning the Four Noble Truths,<sup>4</sup> I did not claim to have realized the matchless, supreme Enlightenment, in this world with its gods, with its Maras and Brahmas, in this generation with its recluses and brahmanas, with its Devas and humans. But when my knowledge of seeing things as they really are was quite clear in these three aspects, in these twelve ways, concerning the Four Noble Truths, then I claimed to have realized the matchless, supreme Enlightenment in this world with its gods, with its Maras and Brahmas, in this generation with its recluses and brahmanas, with its Devas and humans. And a vision of insight arose in me thus: 'Unshakable is the deliverance of my heart. This is the last

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birth. Now there is no more re-becoming (rebirth)."

This the Blessed One said. The group of five monks was glad, and they rejoiced at the words of the Blessed One.

When this discourse was thus expounded there arose in the Venerable Kondañña the passion-free, stainless vision of Truth (dhamma-cakkhu; in other words, he attained sotapatti, the first stage of sanctity, and realized: "Whatever has the nature of arising, has the nature of ceasing."

Now when the Blessed One set in motion the Wheel of Truth, the Bhummattha devas (the earth deities) proclaimed: "The Matchless Wheel of Truth that cannot be set in motion by recluse, brahmana, deva, Mara, Brahma, or any one in the world, is set in motion by the Blessed One in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi."

Hearing these words of the earth deities, all the Catummaharajika devas proclaimed: "The Matchless Wheel of Truth that cannot be set in

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motion by recluse, brahmana, deva, Mara, Brahma, or any one in the world, is set in motion by the Blessed One in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi." These words were heard in the upper deva realms, and from Catummaharajika it was proclaimed in Tavatimsa... Yama... Tusita... Nimmanarati... Paranimmita-vasavatti... and the Brahmas of Brahma Parisajja... Brahma Purohita... Maha Brahma... Parittabha... Appamanabha... Abhassara... Parittasubha... Appamana subha... Subhakinna... Vehapphala... Aviha... Atappa... Sudassa... Sudassi... and in Akanittha: "The Matchless Wheel of Truth that cannot be set in motion by recluse, brahmana, deva, Mara, Brahma, or any one in the world, is set in motion by the Blessed One in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi."

Thus at that very moment, at that instant, the cry (that the Wheel of Truth is set in motion) spread as far as Brahma realm, the system of ten thousand worlds trembled and quaked and

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shook. A boundless sublime radiance surpassing the effulgence (power) of devas appeared in the world.

Then the Blessed One uttered this paeon of joy: "Verily Kondañña has realized; verily Kondañña has realized (the Four Noble Truths)." Thus it was that the Venerable Kondañña received the name, "Añña Knondañña' — Kondañña who realizes."

With the proclamation of the Dhamma, for the first time, and with the conversion of the five ascetics, the Deer Park at Isipatana became the birth place of the Buddha's Dispensation (Buddha-sasana), and the Sangha, the community of monks, the ordained disciples.

Emperor Asoka, 281 years after the event, came on pilgrimage to this holy spot and caused a series of monuments and a commemorative pillar with the lion capital to be erected. This capital with its four magnificent lions upholding the "Dharma Cakra," the "Wheel of Dharma," now stands in the museum of Sarnath, and is

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today the official crest of India. The "Dharma-Cakra" festival is still maintained in Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

Jawaharlal Nehru, the late prime Minister of India, writes: "At Sarnath near Benares, I would almost see the Buddha preaching his first sermon, and some of his recorded words would come like a distant echo to me through two-thousand five hundred years. Asoka's pillars of stone with their inscriptions would speak to me in their magnificent language and tell me of a man who, though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor." — *The Discovery of India* (The Signet Press, Calcutta), p. 44.

## **Notes**

1.

S. v. 420; Vinaya (Mahavagga, i. 10. No. 17).

2.

The Perfect One, one attained to Truth. The Buddha used it when referring to himself. For details, see *The Buddha's Ancient Path*,

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Piyadassi Thera, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, p 17, n.4.

3.

For a very comprehensive account of the Four Noble Truths read *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, Piyadassi Thera, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

4.

As the previous paragraphs indicate, there are three aspects of knowledge with regard to each of the Four Noble Truths: 1. The knowledge that it is the Truth (*sacca-ñāna*). 2. The knowledge that a certain function with regard to this Truth should be performed (*kicca-ñāna*). 3. The knowledge that the function with regard to this Truth has been performed (*kata-ñāna*). The twelve ways or modes are obtained by applying these three aspects to each of the Four Noble Truths.

## **18. The Great Assembly (Maha-samaya Sutta1)**

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Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Maha-vana (great wood) near the city of Kapilavatthu in the province of the Sakyans together with a great retinue of monks, all of them arahants, and five hundred in number. Devas (gods) from ten thousand world-systems frequently assembled for the purpose of seeing the Blessed One and the bhikkhu-sangha (ordained monks).

Then to four devas of the Suddhavaśa (pure Abodes) brahma world, this thought occurred: "The Blessed One is living in the Mahavana near the city of Kapilavatthu in the province of the Sakyans with a great retinue of monks, all of them arahants, and five hundred in number. Devas are frequently assembling there for the purpose of seeing the Blessed One and the bhikkhu-sangha. It is well if we were also to repair to the place where the Blessed One is, and each of us recite a stanza in his presence."

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Then those devas as quickly as a strong man might stretch out his arm, or bend his outstretched arm, vanished from the pure abodes, and appeared before the Blessed One, saluted him, and stood beside him. So standing one of the devas recited this stanza in his presence:

1. "There is a great assembly in the forest. A host of devas has assembled. We have come to this dhamma-assembly to see the invincible<sup>2</sup> sangha."

Then another deva recited this stanza in the presence of the Blessed One:

2. "The monks in this (assembly<sup>3</sup>) have collected their thoughts, and made their minds upright. The wise (monks) guard their senses even as a charioteer holds the reins."

Then another deva recited this stanza in the presence of the Blessed One:

3. "Having cut off the stake, having dug up the cross-bar (of lust, hate, and delusion), devoid of desire, they go their way, pure, stainless, with



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vision clear, and well tamed, these young arahants move about like elephants."4

Then another deva recited this stanza in the presence of the Blessed One:

4. "They who go for refuge to the Buddha shall not go to evil state of existence; but will quit the human body and fill the ranks of the devas."

The Blessed One then addressed the monks: "Often, monks, devas from the ten world-systems foregather to see the Tathagata (the Buddha) and the monks, the community of bhikkhus. Devas have assembled before the consummate (arahanto), supreme Buddhas of the past; devas will appear before the consummate, supreme Buddhas of the future as they do assemble now before me. I will tell you, monks, the names of the host of devas, I will reveal the names of the host of devas. Listen, pay attention. I will speak." "Yes, Venerable Sir," said the monks by way of assent. The Blessed One said this:5

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5-6. "In measured speech<sup>6</sup> I will give utterance. The terrestrial devas remain in their realm. Those bent on meditation frequent rocky clefts. Well composed they (arahants) live like solitary lions overcoming the fear that causes hair to stand on end, with immaculate minds, pure, serene, and undefiled."

7. Knowing that there were in the forest, near the city of Kapilavatthu, five hundred and more disciples, delighted in the word of the Buddha, the Master thereupon addressed them:

8. "Monks, hosts of devas have assembled. Do know them well." And they (the monks) hearing the word (sasanam) of the Buddha, strove ardently (to see and know them).

9. There arose in them knowledge of perceiving the non-humans. Some saw one hundred, some thousand non-humans (devas and brahmas), and others seventy thousand non-humans.

10. Some saw one hundred thousand non-humans, others saw countless numbers, every quarter being filled with them.

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11. Thereupon the seeing One (the Buddha) knowing all things through super knowledge, addressed the disciples delighted in the word of the Buddha:

12. "Monks, a host of devas have assembled. I will announce them to you in words, and in due order. Know ye them.

13. "Seven thousand terrestrial yakkhas<sup>7</sup> of Kapilavatthu possessed of iddhi (super normal) power, radiant, comely, and followed by a retinue of attendants,<sup>8</sup> have come rejoicing to the forest to see<sup>9</sup> the assembly of (arahant) monks.

14. "Six thousand Yakkhas from the Himalayan mountain, diverse in hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and followed by a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to this forest to see the assembly of monks.

15. "Three thousand Yakkhas from the Sata's mountain (satagira), diverse in hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and followed by a

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retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

16. "Thus sixteen thousand Yakkhas, diverse in hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and followed by a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

17. "Five hundred Yakkhas from the Vessamitta mountain, diverse in hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and followed by a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

18. "Kumbhira of Rajagala town, having his dwelling on Vepulla's Mountain, with more than a hundred thousand Yakkhas in his train, has come to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

19-20. "Dhatarattha, King of the East, adviser to the Eastern clime, and Chief of the Gandhabbas, followed by a retinue of attendants, and with his many mighty sons (devaputtas), Ina their names, possessed of iddhi power, radiant,

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comely, and with a retinue, has come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

21-22. "Virulha, King of the South, adviser to the Southern clime, and Chief of the Kumbhandas, followed by a retinue of attendants, and with his many mighty sons, Ina their names, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, has come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

23-24. "Virupakkha, King of the West, adviser to the Western clime, and Chief of the Nagas, followed by a retinue of attendants, and with his many mighty sons, Ina their names, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, has come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

25-26. "Kuvera, King of the North, adviser to the Northern clime, and Chief of the Yakkhas, followed by a retinue of attendants, and with his many mighty sons, Ina their names, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a

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retinue of attendants, has come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

27-28. "Dhatarattha over the East, to the South Virulhaka, Westward Virupakkha, Kuvera over the North — these four great Kings stood illuminating the four quarters of the forest in the vicinity of Kapilavatthu.

29. "With them came their crafty, deceitful, cunning slaves: enticing Kutendu, Vetendu, Vitucca, and Vituda.

30. "And (also the slaves) Candana, Kamasettha, Kinnughandu, and Nighandu. There also came Panada and Opamanna and Matali charioteer of the Devas.

31. "Citta and Sena, the Ghandhabbas, Nala (kara), Janesabha (Janavasabha, Pañcasikha, the Devas, Timbaru, the Gandhabba, and Suriyavaccasa (the daughter of Timbaru) also came.

32. "Along with these (Gandhabba) kings, other Gandhabba kings too, have come rejoicing with

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each other to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

33. "Then came the (divine) Nagas of the (lake Nabhasa), those of the Naga realm Visali together with the Nagas named Tacchaka. Also came Nagas of Kambala and Assatara and Payaga accompanied by their relatives.

34. "Nagas from Yamuna, and those of the race of Dhatarattha came with their retinue of attendants, and Eravana, the great Naga too, came to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

35. "Those birds (harpies, garula or suppana) who carry away Nagas by force, endowed with divine power, and twice born,<sup>10</sup> with clear eyes (keen of sight), have flown into the middle of the forest from the sky — Citra and Supanna are their names.

36. "At that time the Naga king (with other Nagas) were free from fear. The Buddha vouchsafed his protection to the Nagas from the harpies (suppana). Entreating one another with

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gentle words, the Nagas and Suppanas (harpies) took refuge in the Buddha.

37. "The Asuras dwelling in the ocean were defeated by Vajirahattha (Sakka). They are brethren of Vasavassa (Sakka)<sup>11</sup> possessed of iddhi power, and are followed by a retinue of attendants.

38. "The terrible Kalakanjas, the Danaveghasas, Vepacitti, Sucitti, and Paharada — all Asuras have also come with Namuci (the Vasavatti Mara, the Evil One).

39. "Hundreds of the sons of Bali, all of them named after Veroca (that is their uncle Rahu), with an armed host of warriors, approached Rahu (Asurendra, the lord of Asuras), and said: 'Lord, it is time to go to the forest to see the assembly of monks.'

40. "The Devas Apo and Pathavi, Tejo, and Vayo<sup>12</sup> have also come to the forest, and the Devas Varuna, Varuna, and Soma with Yasa.

41-42. "There also came the Devas Mettakayika and Karunakayika<sup>13</sup> followed by their



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attendants. These ten groups of Devas of diverse hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

43. "The Devas Venhu, Sahali, Asama, the two Yama, (ka), and those who attend on the Moon god came preceded by him.

44. "Those Devas attending on the Sun god too, came preceded by him. Those Devas attending the Planets came preceded by them. The Devas of the rain clouds too, came.

45. "Also came Sakka, the chief of gods, who is also called Vasava and Purindada. Also those ten groups of Devas of diverse hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

47. "Then too, came the Deva Sahabhu, shining like unto a flame of fire, the Devas Aritthaka, Roja, and Ummapupphanibha.

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48-49. "There came also the Devas Varuna Sahadhamma, Accuta and Anojaka, Suleyya, Rucira, and Vasavanesi. All those ten groups of Devas of diverse hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

50. "The Devas Samana, Mahasamana, Manusa, Manusuttama, Khiddapadusika, and Manopadusika all have come.

51. "Then came the Devas Hari, those of Lohita, Paraga, and Maha-paraga with their retinue of attendants.

52. "All those ten groups of Devas of diverse hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

53. "There also came the Devas Sukha, Karumha, Aruna with Veghanasa. The Deva Odatagayha, Pamokkha, and Vicakkhana also came.

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54. "Sadamatta, Haragaja, mighty Missaka and Pajjuna, who causes rain to pour in every direction, came thundering.

55. "All these ten groups of Devas of diverse hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

56. "The Devas Khemiya, Tusita, Yama, the mighty Katthaka, Lambhitaka, Lamasettha, Joti, and Asava also came.

57-58. "There also came the Devas Nimmanarati, and Paranimmita (Vasavatthi). All these ten groups of Devas of diverse hue, possessed of iddhi power, radiant, comely, and with a retinue of attendants, have come rejoicing to the forest to see the assembly of monks.

59. "These sixty (six of ten groups, indicated in the order of Apo Deva, etc.) Devas of diverse hue, according to their name and class, have come with others (similar in name and class).

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60. (These Devas came saying:) "Let us see (the Sangha, the arahant monks), who have outlived birth, who have removed the stake (of lust, hate, and delusion), who have crossed the four currents or streams (of sense-pleasures, becoming, wrong views and ignorance),<sup>14</sup> free from taints. (Let us also see the Buddha) who has crossed the streams, who is called Naga (in the sense of one who commits no evil)<sup>15</sup> and shining like the unclouded moon.'

61. "The Brahmas Subrahma and Paramatta, came (with other Brahmas) who are possessed of iddhi power, and sons (disciples of the Buddha). The Brahmas Sanankumara and Tissa also came to the forest (to see the assembly of monks).

62-63. "There is born a Mahabrahma (for every Brahma world) excelling other Brahmas, mighty in power, with a formidable stature, and of great glory. Among them, ten chief Brahmas, lords over their retinues have come, and in the midst

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of them with all his attendants came Brahma Harita.

64. "When all the Devas headed by Indra (Sakka), and all Brahmas headed by Haritta had come, there came the host of Mara. Lo! The folly of Mara, the Murky One, (Kanha).<sup>16</sup>

65. "'Come on, seize them, bind them, let them all be bound by lust, surrounded on every side, suffer not anybody to escape' (Thus Vasavatti Mara gave order).

66-67. "Mara thus striking the earth with his palm and thereby producing a dreadful sound as when a storm cloud thunders and causes lightning during rainy season, sent his black army to the midst of the Devas. Nevertheless, unable to bring the Devas under his sway, he filled with anger and he recoiled.

68. "Then the Seeing One (the Buddha) knowing perfectly well what had transpired, addressed his disciples who take delight in the word of the Buddha.

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69. "Monks, the host of Mara have come (and gone). Know them (beware of them).' And they (non-arahants) hearing the word of the Buddha, strove (to gain Deliverance) from their defilements. (From the passion-free arahants) the army of Mara has departed; even so much as a hair in them (arahants) was not affected.

70. "All those disciples (monks) are victors in the war of passions; they are free from fear, glorious, and renowned among mankind. They live rejoicing with Aryan disciples." (Praising thus Mara departed.)

### **Notes**

1. D. No. 20.

2. Aparajita, because they are arahants, the Consummate Ones, who have overcome all defilements.

3. Tatra in the text means "there," but the preceding stanza has "imam" this (assembly), and the devas are already in the presence of the Blessed One; so the rendering "in this."

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4. The word "naga" admits of dual meaning. It can mean an elephant, or it can mean an arahant. An elephant is physically steadfast, an arahant can be referred to as one who is mentally steadfast. He is faultless: he does no evil. "Na hi agum karoti so" see Theragatha, No. 692, cf. Sutta-nipata, stanza 522.

5. In most of the Paritta books the numbering of stanzas is not consecutive. I have adopted a consecutive method.

6. Akkhara pada niyamitam vacanam (Comy).

7. Yakkha here used in the sense of Devas.

8. Parivara sampanna (Comy).

9. Bhikkhu das anattaya agata (Comy). This meaning is clear from the words dakkhitaya (to see) stanza No.1, dakkhema (shall see) No. 60.

10. Twice-born is a reference to birds since they first come out as an egg, and when hatched a complete bird is born.

11. Vajirahattha and Vasavassa are other names for Sakka, the chief of Devas.

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12. The Devas born in brahma-loka by practicing the kasina, or devices for concentration, namely: the water (apo) kasina; the earth (pathavi) kasina; the fire (tejo) kasina; and the air (vayo) kasina.

13. The Devas who have developed jhana, or mental absorption by practicing metta and karuna, loving-kindness and compassion, two of the four sublime states (brahma-vihara).

14. Kama-ogha, bhava-o., ditthi-o., avijja-o.

15. See above comment No. 4.

16. Kanha, is a name for Mara.

## **19. Discourse to Alavaka (Alavaka Sutta1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the abode of Alavaka, the Yakkha (demon), at Alavi. Then Alavaka approached the Blessed One and said: "Get out, recluse (samana)." — "Very well, friend," so saying the Blessed One went out.



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"Come in, recluse." — "Very well, friend," so saying the Blessed One entered.

"Get out, recluse," said Alavaka to the Blessed One a second time. — "Very well, friend," so saying the Blessed One went out.

"Come in, recluse." — "Very well, friend," so saying the Blessed One entered.

"Get out, recluse," said Alavaka to the Blessed One a third time. — "Very well, friend," so saying the Blessed One went out.

"Come in, recluse." — "Very well, friend," so saying the Blessed One entered.

"Get out recluse," said Alavaka to the Blessed One a fourth time. — "No, O friend, I will not get out. Do what you will."

"I will ask you a question, recluse. If you do not answer me, I will confound your mind (thoughts), or cleave your heart, or take you by your feet and fling you over to the further shore of the ocean (para gangaya).

"Well, friend, I do not see anyone in the world of Devas, Maras, Brahmas, or among the

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generation of recluses, brahmanas, deities, and humans, who could either confound my mind or cleave my heart, or take me by the feet and fling me over to the further shore of the ocean; nevertheless, friend, ask what you will."

Then Alavaka addressed the Blessed One in verse:

1. What wealth here is best for man?  
What well practiced will happiness bring?  
What taste excels all other tastes?  
How lived is the life they say is best?  
[The Buddha:]

2. Faith is the wealth here best for man;  
Dhamma well practiced shall happiness bring;  
Truth indeed all other tastes excels;  
Life wisely lived they say is best.

[Alavaka:]

3. How does one the currents<sup>1</sup> cross?  
How is ocean's<sup>2</sup> existence crossed?

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How is one's suffering quelled?

How is one purified?

[The Buddha:]

4. By faith are currents crossed;  
By diligence is the ocean crossed;  
By effort is one's suffering quelled;  
By wisdom is one purified;

[Alavaka:]

5. How does one wisdom win?  
How does one wealth obtain?  
How does one come to fame?  
How does one friendship win?  
How does one without sorrow fare  
When from this world to another he's gone?

[The Buddha:]

6. The mindful and discerning one,  
Who in the Dhamma plead his faith;  
By his will to hear that Dhamma  
Wins the wisdom of Nibbana.

7. Who is tactful and energetic,  
And gains wealth by his own effort;

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Fame will he acquire by truth,  
And friendship by his giving.

8. He who has faith and is also truthful,  
virtuous, firm, and fond of giving;  
By virtue of these four conditions  
Will never in the hereafter grieve.

9. Truth and Restraint,  
Charity and Forbearance,  
Are the great reformers of man;  
If there be any better  
Ask of other samanas and brahmanas.

[Alavaka:]

10. Why should I now try to ask  
From other samanas and brahmanas  
When this day I came to learn  
What weal is here and hereafter?

11. This for my weal indeed  
The Buddha to Alavi came;  
A gift always bears a fruit;

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This too I learned today.

12. From village to village and town to town  
I shall now wander along

Praising that Supreme Buddha

And the Dhamma well preached by him.

Having thus spoken, Alavaka said to the Blessed One:

"Most excellent, O Gotama, is thy teaching, most excellent. Just as a man would set upright what is overturned, reveal what is concealed, point out the way to one gone astray, bring an oil lamp into the darkness so that those with eyes could see objects; even so the Dhamma (doctrine) has been declared in many a manner by the Venerable Gotama. I take refuge in the Venerable Gotama (the Buddha), in the Dhamma and in the Sangha (the Order). May the Venerable Gotama accept me as a disciple who has taken refuge, from this day forth while life lasts."

**Notes**

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1.

Sn. p. 31.

2.

"Current" stands for the Pali word "ogha" which is fourfold — sense pleasures, becoming, wrong views and ignorance (kama-ogha, bhava-o., ditthi-o., avijja-o).

3.

"Ocean" stands for the Pali word "annavam" which is metaphorically used to signify repeated existence, or samsara.

## **20. Discourse to Bharadvaja, the Farmer (Kasibharadvaja Sutta1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Dakkhinagiri (monastery), in the brahmana village Ekanala, in Magadha. Now at that time, it being the sowing season, five hundred plows of the brahman Kasibharadvaja were put to use. Then in the forenoon the Blessed One having dressed himself, took bowl and (double) robe,

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and went to the place where brahman Kasibharadvaja's work was going on. It was the time of food distribution by the brahman, and the Blessed One drew near, and stood at one side. Bharadvaja seeing the Blessed One standing there for alms said to him:

"Recluse, I do plow, and do sow, and having plowed and sown I eat. You also, recluse should plow and sow; having plowed and sown you should eat."

"I, too, brahman, plow and sow; having plowed and sown, I eat."

"We do not see the Venerable Gotama's yoke, or plow, or plowshare, or goad or oxen. Nevertheless the Venerable Gotama says: 'I, too, brahman, plow and sow; having plowed and sown, I eat.'"

Thereupon the brahman addressed the Blessed One in a stanza:

1. "You profess to be a plowman, yet your plow we do not see; asked about your plow and the rest, tell us of them that we may know."

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[The Buddha:]

2. "Faith is my seed, austerity the rain, wisdom my yoke and plow, modesty is the pole, mind the strap, mindfulness is my plowshare and goad.

3. "Controlled in speech and conduct, guarded in deed and speech, abstemious in food,<sup>1</sup> I make truth my weed cutter; arahantship, my deliverance complete.

4. "Exertion, my team in yoke, draws me to Nibbana's security, and on it goes without stopping, wither gone one does not suffer.

5. "Thuswise is this plowing plowed which bears the fruit of Deathlessness; having plowed this plowing one is freed from every ill."

Then brahman Kasibharadvaja filling a golden bowl with milk-rice offered it to the Blessed One saying: "May the Venerable Gotama partake of this milk rice; a plowman, indeed, is Venerable Gotama who plows a plow for the fruit of Deathlessness (Nibbana)."

[The Buddha:]



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6. "What I receive by reciting verses, O brahman, I should not eat. It is not the tradition of those who practice right livelihood. The Buddhas reject what is received by reciting verses. This, brahman, is the conduct (of the Buddhas) as long as Dhamma reigns.

7. "To those wholly consummate, taintless, and well-disciplined great sages, should thou offer other food and drink; sure field is that for merit-seeking men."

"To whom, then Venerable Gotama, shall I give this milk rice?"

"Brahman, in the world of Devas, Maras, and Brahmas or among the generation of recluses, brahmanas, deities, and humans, there is no one by whom this milk rice, if eaten, could be wholly digested except by the Tathagata (the Buddha), or the disciple of a Tathagata. Therefore, brahman, either cast this milk rice where there is no grass, or into water where there are no living creatures."

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Thereupon the brahman flung that milk rice into water where there were no living creatures, and the milk rice thrown into the water smoked and steamed making the noise "cicchita, citicita," just like a plowshare heated during the day, when thrown into water, smokes, and steams making the noise "cicchita, citicita."

Then the brahman Kasibharadvaja, alarmed, with hair standing on end, approached, and fell with his head at the Blessed One's feet and said as follows.

"Most excellent, O Gotama, is thy teaching, most excellent. Just as a man would set upright what is overturned, reveal what is concealed, point out the way to one gone astray, bring an oil lamp into the darkness so that those with eyes could see objects, even so the Dhamma (doctrine) has been declared in many a manner by the Venerable Gotama. I take refuge in the Venerable Gotama (the Buddha), in the Dhamma and in the Sangha (the Order). I wish

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to receive the novice's ordination (pabbajja) and higher ordination (upasampada)."

Brahman Kasibharadvaja duly received both the pabbajja and upasampada from the Blessed One. Not long after his upasampada the Venrable Bharadvaja dwelling alone and aloof, diligent, strenuous, and resolute, ere long, by his own insight, here and now, realized and attained the highest perfection (arahantship), the end of the Noble Life — for the sake of which men of good family go forth from home to live the homeless life. Birth is destroyed, lived is the noble life, done is what has to be done, there is no more of this state. The Venerable Bharadvaja became one of the arahants.

## **Notes**

1.

Sn. 12; S. i. 172.

2.

In the use of the four requisites: robes, food, lodging, medicine (Comy).

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## **21. Discourse on Downfall (Parabhava Sutta1)**

Having heard the discourse on Blessings (Mangala sutta, see above) which deals with things that tend to man's weal and prosperity, the deities thought to themselves: "The Buddha has told us about the blessings but not about the downfall and decline of man; what if we were to approach the Buddha and question him about the things that tend to downfall." So the day after the teaching of the Blessings by the Buddha, the deities came up to the Master and asked these questions. (Comy)

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi, at Jetavana, at Anathapindika's monastery. Now when the night was far advanced, a certain deity, whose surpassing radiance illuminated the whole of Jetavana, came to the presence of the Blessed One, respectfully saluted him, and stood beside him.

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Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse:

1. "About the declining man we question thee, Gotama. We have come to ask the Blessed One: What is the cause of his downfall?"

2. "Easily known is the progressive one, easily known is the declining one. The lover of the Dhamma prospers. The hater of the Dhamma declines.

3. "We understand this as explained (by thee); this is the first cause of his downfall. Tell us the second, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?"

4. "The vicious are dear to him. He likes not the virtuous; he approves the teachings of the ill-natured — this is the cause of his downfall.

5. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the second cause of his downfall. Tell us the third, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?"

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6. "The man who is fond of sleep and company, inactive and lazy, and manifesting anger- this is the cause of his downfall.

7. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the third cause of his downfall. Tell us the fourth, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

8. "Whoever being affluent, does not support his mother and father who are old, and past their prime — this is the cause of his downfall.

9. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the fourth cause of his downfall. Tell us the fifth, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

10. "Whoever by falsehood deceives either a brahmana, or a samana (a holy man), or any other mendicant — this is the cause of his downfall.

11. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the fifth cause of his downfall. Tell us the six, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

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12. "The person who is possessed of much wealth, who has gold, and who has an abundance of food, but enjoys his delicacies all by himself — this is the cause of his downfall.

13. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the sixth cause of his downfall. Tell us the seventh, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

14. "The man who, proud of his birth, of his wealth, and of his clan, despises his relations — this is the cause of his downfall.

15. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the seventh cause of his downfall. Tell us the eighth, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

16. "The man who is addicted to women (given to a life of debauchery), is a drunkard, a gambler, and a squanderer of his earnings — this is the cause of his downfall.

17. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the eighth cause of his downfall. Tell us

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the ninth, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

18. "Not satisfied with one's own wives,<sup>2</sup> he is seen among the whores and the wives of others — this is the cause of his downfall.

19. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the ninth cause of his downfall. Tell us the tenth, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

20. "A person past his youth takes as wife, a girl in her teens, and sleeps not, - being jealous of her<sup>3</sup> — this is the cause of his downfall.

21. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the tenth cause of his downfall. Tell us the eleventh, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

22. "He who places in authority a woman given to drink and squandering, or a man of similar nature — this is the cause of his downfall.

23. "We understand this as explained by thee; this is the eleventh cause of his downfall. Tell us



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the twelfth, O Blessed One. What is the cause of his downfall?

24. "He who having but little possessions but great ambition (greed), is of warrior birth and aspires selfishly to (an unattainable) sovereignty — this is the cause of his downfall.

25. "Fully realizing these (twelve) causes of downfall in the world, the sage, endowed with ariyan insight, shares a realm of security (Nibbana)."

### **Notes**

1.

Sn. p. 18.

2.

Apparently during the Buddha's time, in Indian society, a man could legally have more than one wife if he could maintain them. Kings had harems. What was prohibited was illegal sexual relations.

3.

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By reason of his anxiety as to whether she would long for young men in preference to him.  
(Comy)

## **22. Discourse on Outcasts**

### **(Vasala Sutta1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at Anathapindika's monastery. Then in the forenoon the Blessed One having dressed himself, took bowl and (double) robe, and entered the city of Savatthi for alms. Now at that time a fire was burning, and an offering was being prepared in the house of the brahman Aggikabharadvaja. Then the Blessed One, while on his alms round, came to the brahman's residence. The brahman seeing the Blessed One some way off, said this: "Stay there, you shaveling, stay there you wretched monk, stay there you outcast." When he spoke thus the Blessed One said to the brahman: "Do you know, brahman, who an outcast is and what the conditions are that make an outcast?" "No,

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indeed, Venerable Gotama, I do not know who an outcast is nor the conditions that make an outcast. It is good if Venerable Gotama were to explain the Dhamma to me so that I may know who an outcast is and what the conditions are that make an outcast."1

"Listen then, brahman, and pay attention, I will speak."

"Yes, Venerable Sir," replied the brahman.

1. "Whosoever is angry, harbors hatred, and is reluctant to speak well of others (discredits the good of others), perverted in views, deceitful — know him as an outcast.

2. "Whosoever in this world kills living beings, once born or twice born,<sup>2</sup> in whom there is no sympathy for living beings — know him as an outcast.

3. "Whosoever destroys and besieges villages and hamlets and becomes notorious as an oppressor — know him as an outcast.

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4. "Be it in the village, or in the forest, whosoever steals what belongs to others, what is not given to him — know him as an outcast.

5. "Whosoever having actually incurred a debt runs away when he is pressed to pay, saying, 'I owe no debt to you' — know him as an outcast.

6. "Whosoever coveting anything, kills a person going along the road, and grabs whatever that person has — know him as an outcast.

7. "He who for his own sake or for the sake of others or for the sake of wealth, utters lies when questioned as a witness — know him as an outcast.

8. "Whosoever by force or with consent associates with the wives of relatives or friends — know him as an outcast.

9. "Whosoever being wealthy supports not his mother and father who have grown old — know him as an outcast.

10. "Whosoever strikes and annoys by (harsh) speech, mother, father, brother, sister or mother-

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in-law or father-in-law — know him as an outcast.

11. "Whosoever when questioned about what is good, says what is detrimental, and talks in an evasive manner- know him as an outcast.

12. "Whosoever having committed an evil deed, wishes that it may not be known to others, and commits evil in secret — know him as an outcast.

13. "Whosoever having gone to another's house, and partaken of choice food, does not honor that host by offering food when he repays the visit — know him as an outcast.

14. "Whosoever deceives by uttering lies, a brahman or an ascetic, or any other mendicant — know him as an outcast.

15. "Whosoever when a brahman or ascetic appears during mealtime angers him by harsh speech, and does not offer him (any alms) — know him as an outcast.

16. "Whosoever in this world, shrouded in ignorance, speaks harsh words (asatam) or

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falsehood<sup>3</sup> expecting to gain something — know him as an outcast.

17. "Whosoever debased by his pride, exalts himself and belittles other — know him as an outcast.

18. "Whosoever is given to anger, is miserly, has base desires, and is selfish, deceitful, shameless and fearless (in doing evil) — know him as an outcast.

19. "Whosoever reviles the Enlightened One (the Buddha), or a disciple of the Buddha, recluse or a householder — know him as an outcast.

20. "Whosoever not being an arahant, a Consummate One, pretends to be so, is a thief in the whole universe — he is the lowest of outcasts.

21. "Not by birth is one an outcast; not by birth is one a brahman. By deed one becomes an outcast, by deed one becomes a brahman.

22. "Know ye by the example I now cite (the fact that by birth one is not an outcast). There

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was an outcast's son, Sopaka, who became known as Matanga.

23. "This Matanga attained the highest fame so difficult to gain. Many were the warriors (kshatriyas) and brahmans who went to attend on him.

24. "Mounting the celestial chariot (the Noble Eightfold path, and driving) along the passion-free high road, (Sopaka, now a monk), reached the Brahma realm having given up sense desires.

25. "His (lowly) birth did not prevent him from being reborn in the Brahma realm. There are brahmans born in the family of preceptors, kinsmen of (veda) hymns.

26. "They are often seen committing evil deeds. In this life itself they are despised, in the next they are born in an evil state of existence. High birth does not prevent them from falling into a woeful state, or from censure.

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27. *"Not by birth is one an outcast; not by birth is one a brahman. By deed one becomes an outcast, by deed one becomes an brahman."*

When the Buddha had thus spoken, the Brahman Aggikabharadvaja said to the Blessed One: "Excellent, O Venerable Gotama, excellent! Just as, O Venerable Gotama, a man were to set upright what had been overturned, or were to reveal what had been hidden, or were to point the way to one who had gone astray, or were to hold an oil lamp in the dark so that those with eyes may see things, even so in many ways has the Venerable Gotama expounded the Dhamma, the doctrine. I take refuge in the Venerable Gotama, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, the Order. May the Venerable Gotama accept me as a lay follower who has taken refuge from this day onwards while life lasts."

### **Notes**

1.

Sn. p. 21. Also known as aggikabharadvaja sutta.



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2.

The abusive terms used by the brahman and the respectful address that follows need a word of explanation. The brahman had just prepared his offering to the great Brahma, his God, when his eyes fell on Buddha. To the brahman the sight of a samana, a shaven-headed recluse, was an unlucky sign. Hence he burst into angry words. The Buddha, however, was unruffled and spoke to him quietly in words of soft cadence. The brahman apparently was ashamed, and repenting of his folly, addressed the Buddha courteously (Comy). It is interesting to note the Buddha's stress on anger and hatred in his very first stanza.

3.

dvijam, birds. Twice-born is a reference to birds since they first come out as an egg, and when hatched a complete bird is born.

4.

asantamtipi patho, SnA.

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## **23. Discourse on The Analysis of the Truths (Saccavibhanga Sutta<sup>1</sup>)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Saints) near Varanasi (Benares). Then he addressed the monks saying: "O Monks." "Venerable Sir," replied those monks in assent to the Blessed One. Thereupon he said:

"The matchless Wheel of Dhamma set in motion by the Tathagata,<sup>2</sup> the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse or brahmana or Deva or Mara or Brahma or by anyone in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them.

"Of what four: It was a proclamation of the Noble Truth of suffering (dukkha), by way of teaching... (as before) and elucidating it; of the

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Noble Truth of the arising (cause) of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering. This matchless Wheel of Dhamma, monks, set in motion by the Tathagata, the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse... or by anyone in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them.

"Monks, follow Sariputta and Moggallana; associate with Sariputta and Moggallana. Wise monks do help (materially and spiritually) those who live the holy life. Monks, Sariputta is like unto a mother, Moggallana is like unto a foster-mother to a child. Sariputta, monks, trains (beings) in the path<sup>3</sup> of stream-attainment. Moggallana in the highest goal (arahantship).<sup>4</sup> Sariputta, monks, is able to proclaim, teach, lay

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down, establish, open up, analyze, and elucidate the Four Noble Truths."

This the Blessed One said, and having said so, the Welcome Being (sugata)<sup>5</sup> rose from his seat and entered (his) abode. Not long after the Blessed One had departed, the Venerable Sariputta addressed the monks, saying: "Reverend friends." "Your reverence," the monks replied the Venerable Sariputta in assent.

This the Venerable Sariputta said:

"Your reverence, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set in motion by the Tathagata, the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park, at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse or brahmana... (as before) in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them.

"Of what four? It was a proclamation of the Noble Truth of suffering (dukkha) by way of

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teaching... elucidating it; of the Noble Truth of the arising of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering... of the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering.

"What, your reverence, is the Noble Truth of suffering? Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; death is suffering; grief, lamentation, bodily pain, mental pain and despair are suffering; not getting what one desires, that too is suffering: In brief the five aggregates subject to grasping are suffering.

"What is birth? It is the birth of beings in the various classes (planes) of beings; the production, their conception, coming into existence (re-birth), the appearance of the aggregates, acquiring of the sense-bases. This is called birth.

"What is aging? It is the aging of beings in the various classes of beings, their decay, broken teeth, graying hair, wrinkled skin, the dwindling of the life-span, the wearing out of the sense-organs. This is called aging.

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"What is death? It is the passing away of beings in the various classes of beings; the falling away, the breaking up, the disappearance, the death, making end of life, the breaking up of the aggregates, the laying down of the body. This is called death.

"What is grief? It is the grief, sorrow, sorrowfulness, the state of being sorry, inward sorrow, inward intense sorrow visited by some calamity or other, smitten by some kind of ill or other. This is called grief.

"What is lamentation? It is the crying, the wailing, the act of crying, the act of wailing, the state of crying, the state of wailing of one visited by some calamity or other, smitten by some kind of ill or other. This is called lamentation.

"What is suffering? It is bodily suffering, bodily unpleasantness, the painful and unpleasant feeling produced by bodily contact. This is called suffering.

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"What is misery? It is mental suffering, unpleasantness, the painful and unpleasant feeling produced by mental contact. This is called misery.

"What is despair? It is despondency, despair, the state of despondency, the state of despair of one visited by some calamity or other. This is called despair.

"What is meant by not getting what one desires, that too is suffering? To beings subject to birth there comes desire: 'O might we not be subject to birth, and birth not come to us.' But this cannot be attained by mere desiring. So not getting what one desires, that too, is suffering. To beings subject to aging there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to aging, and aging not come to us...' (as before). To beings subject to disease there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to disease and disease not come to us...' To beings subject to death there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to death and death not come to us...' To

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beings subject to sorrow, lamentation, suffering, misery, and despair there comes the desire: 'O might we not be subject to sorrow, lamentation, suffering, misery, and despair, and sorrow, lamentation, suffering, misery, and despair not come to us.' But this cannot be attained by merely desiring. So not getting what one desires that too is suffering.

"What, in brief, are the five aggregates subject to grasping that are suffering? These are the aggregate of matter subject to grasping, the aggregate of feeling..., the aggregate of perception..., the aggregate of mental (volitional) formations..., the aggregate of consciousness subject to grasping. These are called, in brief, the five aggregates subject to grasping that are suffering. This is called the Noble Truth of suffering.

"What is the Noble Truth of the arising of suffering? It is this craving which produces re-becoming (re-birth) accompanied by passionate greed, and finding delight now here now there,



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namely the craving for sense pleasures, craving for existence and craving for non-existence (self-annihilation). This is called the Noble Truth of the arising of suffering.

"What is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering? It is the complete cessation of that very craving, giving it up, relinquishing it, liberating oneself from it, and detaching oneself from it. This is called the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering.

"And what is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering? It is this Noble Eightfold Path itself, namely: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"What is right understanding? It is this knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the arising of suffering, knowledge of the cessation of suffering, knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of suffering — this is called right understanding.

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"What is right thought? Thought of renunciation, thought of goodwill, thought of not harming — this is called right thought.

"What is right speech? Abstention from false speech, abstention from tale-bearing, abstention from harsh (abusive) speech, abstention from idle chatter (gossip), this is called right speech.

"What is right action? Abstention from killing, abstention from stealing, abstention from illicit sexual indulgence, this is called right action.

"What is right livelihood? Herein (in this dispensation) the ariyan disciple avoiding wrong livelihood, makes his living by right livelihood, this is called right livelihood.

"What is right effort? Herein a monk puts forth will, strives, stirs up energy, strengthens his mind, exerts himself to prevent the arising of evil, of unwholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen; puts forth will... (as before) to banish the evil, unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen; puts forth will... to develop wholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen; and puts forth

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will, strives, stirs up energy, strengthens his mind, exerts himself to maintain, to preserve, increase, to bring them to maturity, development, and to complete the wholesome thoughts that have arisen. This is called right effort.

"What is right mindfulness? Herein a monk lives practicing body contemplation on the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it), having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of the body).

"He lives practicing feeling-contemplation on the feelings, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it) having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of feelings).

"He lives practicing mind-contemplation on the mind, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it) having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of the mind).

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"He lives practicing mind-object contemplation on the mind objects, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful (of it) having overcome covetousness and dejection concerning the world (of mental objects). This is called right mindfulness.

"And what is right concentration? Herein a monk aloof from sense desires, aloof from unwholesome thoughts, attains to and abides in the first meditative absorption (jhana) which is detachment-born and accompanied by applied thought, sustained thought, joy, and bliss.

"By allaying applied and sustained thought he attains to, and abides in the second jhana which is inner tranquillity, which is unification (of the mind), devoid of applied and sustained thought, and which has joy and bliss.

"By detachment from joy he dwells in equanimity, mindful, and with clear comprehension and enjoys bliss in body, and attains to and abides in the third jhana which the

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noble ones (ariyas) call: 'Dwelling in equanimity, mindfulness, and bliss.'

"By giving up of bliss and suffering, by the disappearance already of joy and sorrow, he attains to, and abides in the fourth jhana, which is neither suffering nor bliss, and which is the purity of equanimity-mindfulness. This is called right concentration.

"This is called the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering.

"Your reverence, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set in motion by the Tathagata, the Consummate One, the supremely Enlightened One, in the Deer Park, at Isipatana near Varanasi, cannot be set in motion by a recluse or brahmana or deva or Brahma or by anyone in the world. That is to say, it was a proclamation of the Four Noble Truths, by way of teaching, laying down, establishing, opening up, analyzing, and elucidating them."

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This the Venerable Sariputta said. Those monks glad at heart rejoiced at the words of the Venerable Sariputta.

## **Notes**

1.

M. 141.

2.

For a very comprehensive account of the Four Noble Truths read *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, Piyadassi Thera, Buddhist Publication Society. Kandy, Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

3.

Literally "fruit," "sotapatti phale."

4.

To train in the path of stream-attainment is more difficult than to train in the path of arahantship for the reason that in the former case one has to deal with undeveloped beings, and in the latter case with those who are already developed, and who are, by virtue of their development, not destined to fall back.

5.

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This is another epithet of the Buddha.

## **24. Discourse on Atanatiya (Atanatiya Sutta 1)**

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living on the Vulture's Peak near Rajagaha (Rajagir).

Then four great kings<sup>2</sup> having placed a guard over the four quarters, with a large army of Yakkhas, of Gandhabbas, of Kumbhandas, of Nagas; having placed troops; having placed a barricade of soldiers on four sides, came to the presence of the Blessed One, when the night was far advanced, illuminating the entire Vulture's Peak with their surpassing radiance, saluted the Blessed One and sat on one side. From among the (attendant) Yakkhas, some saluted the Blessed One, and sat on one side; some exchanged greetings with the Blessed One conversing in a friendly and courteous manner, and sat on one side; some saluted him with clasped hands, and sat on one side; some

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announced their name and lineage, and sat on one side; some sat on one side in silence.

Then the great King Vessavana (Skt. Vaisravana<sup>3</sup>), who was seated on one side, said to the Blessed One:

"Venerable Sir (bhante), there are eminent Yakkhas who are not pleased with the Blessed One, there are also eminent Yakkhas pleased with the Blessed One. There are Yakkhas of middle rank who are not pleased with the Blessed One, and there are those who are pleased with the Blessed One. There are Yakkhas of inferior rank who are not pleased with the Blessed One, and there are those who are pleased with the Blessed One. The Yakkhas, bhante, as a rule, are not pleased with the Blessed One. What is the reason for this?"

"Well, the Blessed One teaches the Dhamma to establish abstention from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from liquor that causes intoxication and



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negligence. To them such teaching is unpleasant and unpalatable."

"Surely bhante, there are disciples of the Blessed One. They frequent the remote recesses of forest and woodland wilderness where there is no sound, no tumult, where breezes are void of human contact, and suitable for man's seclusion and quiet contemplation. There are eminent Yakkhas who haunt these forests, who have no faith in the word of the Blessed One.

"Bhante, may the Blessed One learn the Atanata<sup>4</sup> protection so that the displeased Yakkhas may be pleased, so that the monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, may be at ease, guarded, protected and unharmed."

The Blessed One gave consent by his silence. Then the great King Vessavana, knowing that the Blessed One had consented, recited the Atanatiya protection:

1. "Homage to Vipassi (the Buddha) possessed of the eye (of wisdom) and splendor. Homage to

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Sikhi (the Buddha) compassionate towards all beings.

2. "Homage to Vessabhu (the Buddha) free from all defilements and possessed of ascetic energy.

Homage to Kakusanda (the Buddha), the conqueror of (the five-fold) host of Mara.

3. "Homage to Konagamana (the Buddha) who has shed all defilements, and had lived the holy life. Homage to Kassapa (the Buddha) who is fully freed from all defilements.

4. "Homage to Angirasa (the Buddha Gotama), the son of the Sakyas, who is full of radiance, and who proclaimed the Dhamma that dispels all suffering.

5. "Those in the world, who have extinguished (the flames of passion), and have perceived through insight (meditation), things as they really are, they never slander anyone; they are mighty men who are free from fear.

6. "Gotama (the Buddha) dear to gods and men, endowed with knowledge and virtue,<sup>5</sup> mighty

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and fearless, all do homage to him (homage be to him).

7-8. "When the resplendent sun — offspring of Aditi — with its full orb, arises, then the night ceases, and it is called the day. The direction from which the sun rises (is the East). There exists the ocean deep and vast.

9. "This — a spreading sheet of water — they know as the ocean. Where there is East (to the East of Mount Meru) they say that quarter is East.

10. "Custodian of this quarter is a great king named Dhatarattha who has a retinue of attendants, and is sovereign lord of the Gandhabbas.

11. "Attended by Ghandhabbas he enjoys their song and dance. Many are his (Datharatta's) sons, all of one name, so have I heard.

12-13. "Eighty and ten and one are they, Inda their name, and mighty are they. They too, beholding the Buddha — Kinsman of the sun, mighty and fearless — salute him from afar:

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"Homage to thee, who art unique among mankind; glory to thee, the noblest among men."<sup>6</sup>

14-15. "As by thy omniscience,<sup>7</sup> thou hast looked on (mankind with a knowing eye), even the non-humans pay reverence to thee. This we have often heard. We, therefore, request the Yakkhas to pay homage to Gotama, the Conqueror (the Buddha). They too say: 'We reverence Gotama, the Conqueror, we reverence Gotama who is endowed with knowledge and virtue.'"

16-18. "The direction from where the petas (corpses), backbiters, murderers, the fierce brigands, and the deceitful are removed, is the direction (to the right of Mount Meru), and is called the quarter of the South. The custodian of this quarter is a great king named Virulha who has a retinue of attendants, and is the sovereign lord of Kumbhandas. Attended by the Kumbhandas he enjoys their song and dance.

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19. "Many are his (Virulha's) sons, all of one name, so have I heard. Eighty and ten and one are they, Ina their names, and mighty are they.

20. "They too, beholding the Buddha — Kinsman of the sun, mighty and fearless — salute him from afar: 'Homage to thee, who art unique among mankind; glory to thee, the highest among men.'

21-22. "As by thy omniscience, thou hast looked on (mankind with a knowing eye), even the non-humans pay reverence to thee. This we have often heard. We, therefore, request the Yakkhas to pay homage to Gotama, the Conqueror (the Buddha). They too say: 'We reverence, Gotama, the Conqueror, we reverence Gotama who is endowed with knowledge and virtue.'

23-24. "When the resplendent sun — offspring of Aditi — with its full orb, sets, then the day ceases, and it is called night. The direction where the sun sets (is the West). There exists the ocean deep and vast.

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25. "This — a spreading sheet of water — they know as the ocean. Where there is West (to the West of Mount Meru) they say that quarter is West.

26. "Custodians of this quarter is a great king named Virupakkha who has a retinue of attendants, and is sovereign lord of the Nagas.

27. "Attended by Nagas he enjoys their song and dance. Many are his (Virupakkha's) sons, all of one name, so have I heard.

28-29. "Eighty and ten and one are they, Inda their name, and mighty are they. They too, beholding the Buddha — Kinsman of the sun, mighty and fearless — salute him from afar: 'Homage to thee, who art unique among mankind; glory to thee, the noblest among men.'

30-31. "As by thy omniscience, thou hast looked on (mankind with a knowing eye), even the non-humans pay reverence to thee. This we have often heard. We, therefore, request the Yakkhas to pay homage to Gotama, the Conqueror (the Buddha). They too say: 'We reverence, Gotama,

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the Conqueror, we reverence Gotama who is endowed with knowledge and virtue.'

32. "Where lies delightful Uttarakuru (the Northern continent), where towers beautiful Mount Meru, there are born men who are selfless and unattached.

33. "They neither sow the seed nor use the plow. Spontaneously grown corn is there for them to enjoy.

34. "The rice, purged of the red powder and of husk, clean and sweet-scented, is boiled in golden vessels; it is this that they partake of.

35. "They make of cows a single-seated mount (like mounting on horseback)<sup>9</sup> and ride about from place to place.

36-37. "They make use of women and men, girls and boys as vehicles, and travel from place to place in them.

38. "Mounting on vehicles (on elephants and horses) they (the Yakkhas of King Vessavana) travel in every direction.

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39. "This king who has a retinue of attendants, is possessed of elephants and horses on which he rides. He also has celestial chariots, palaces, and palanquins. He has cities well built in the celestial regions.

"Their names are Atanata, Kusinata, Parakusinata, Natapuriya, Parakusitanata. To the North, the city of Kapilavata, to the South<sup>10</sup> Janogha, and cities named Navanavati, Ambaravati and the kingdom of Alakamanda. Happy one (addressing the Buddha), this Kuvera (another name for Vessavana) has a kingdom named Visna, therefore, the great king Kuvera is called Vessavana. There are Yakkhas (of this king) who hold investigations and make them known. They are Tatola, Tattala, Tatotala, Ojasi, Tejasi, Tatojasi, Suro, Raja (Sura-raja) Arittho, Nemi (Arittha-nemi). There (in Visana kingdom) lies the lake Dharani whence rain-clouds (drawing water) pour them forth. And there is also the hall named Bhagalavati where the Yakkhas assemble.



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40. "There (round about the hall) are trees bearing perpetual fruit. (On these trees) there are multitudes of birds. There also is heard the cry of peacocks and herons, and the melodious song of kokilas (the Indian cuckoo).

41. "There (near the lake) the cry of the birds, who call 'Live ye! Live ye!' (jivamjivaka) is heard. The bird Otthavacittaka ('O lift your hearts!'), the jungle fowls, the crabs and the Pokkharasataka birds roam the woods.

42. "There the cry of the parrot, the myna-birds and the dandamanavaka birds is heard. And Kuvera's lotus-lake ever lies in her beauty in all seasons.

43-44. "That direction (to the North of Mount Meru) is called by people the quarter of the North. The custodian of this quarter is a great king named Kuvera who has a retinue of attendants, and is sovereign lord of the Yakkhas. Attended by the Yakkhas he enjoys their songs and dance.

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45. "Many are his (Kuvera's) sons, all of one name, so have I heard. Eighty and ten and one are they, Ina their names, and mighty are they.

46. "They too, beholding the Buddha, kinsman of the sun, mighty and fearless, salute him from afar: 'Homage to thee, who art unique among mankind! Glory to thee, the noblest among men.'

47-48. "As by thy pure omniscience thou hast looked on (mankind); even the non-humans pay reverence to thee, this we have heard. We, therefore, request the Yakkhas to pay homage to Gotama, the Conqueror (the Buddha). They, too, say, 'We reverence Gotama, the Conqueror, we reverence Gotama who is endowed with knowledge and virtue.'

"Happy One, this is the Atanata protection whereby both the monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen may live at ease, guarded, protected, and unharmed.

"If any monk or nun, layman or laywoman learns by heart this Atanata protection, and be

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word-perfect in repeating it, and if any non-human male or female Yakkha, youth or maiden Yakkha, Yakkha Minister or any Yakkha, or Yakkha attendant; male or female Gandhabba... (as before); male or female Kumbhanda... male or female Naga... were to walk with him or her, or stand or sit or lie down with him or her with malevolent intent, such a non-human, Happy One, will not obtain hospitality from any town or township, will not obtain a place to dwell, nor could live in the Kingdom of Alakamanda. He will not be able to attend the meetings of the Yakkhas. Further he would not be accepted or given in marriage, he would be reproached (by casting remarks on his deformed teeth or eyes or any part of the body), and the non-humans would put an empty bowl over his head and split it (head) in seven pieces.

"Happy One, there are non-humans who are fierce, violent, given to retaliation; those non-humans heed neither the (four) great kings, nor their ministers nor their attendants. They are

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called rebels against the (four) great kings. Even as in the kingdom of Magadha, the thieves heed neither the king of Magadha, nor the ministers, nor their attendants, and are called rebels against the king of Magadha, so there are non-humans who are fierce... (as before). They are called rebels against the (four) great kings.

"Happy One, if any non-human — male or female Yakkha, youth or maiden Yakkha, yakkha minister or any Yakkha, or Yakkha attendant; male or female Gandhabba... (as before); male or female Kumbhanda... male or female Naga... were to walk with a monk or nun, or a layman or laywoman, or stand, or sit, or lie down with him or her with malevolent intent, then should (the molested one) inform, cry aloud and shout to those Yakkhas, to the mighty Yakkhas, their commanders and chief commanders saying: 'This Yakkha is seizing me, takes possession of me, is harassing me, assailing me, is harming me, harming me intensely and would not let me go!'

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"Who are the Yakkhas, mighty Yakkhas and commanders, and chief commanders (to whom such appeal should be made)?

49. Inda, Soma, and Varuna,  
Bharadvaja, Pajapati,  
Candana, Kamasettha too,  
Kinnughandu, Nigahandu,

50. Panada, Opamanna too,  
Devasata and Matali,  
Cittasena and Gandhabba,  
Nala, Raja, Janesabha,

51. Satagira, Hemavata,  
Punnaka, Karatiya, Gula,  
Sivaka, Mucalinda too,  
Vessamitta, Yugandhara,

52. Gopala, Suppagedha too,  
Hiri, Netti, and Mandiya,  
Pañcalacanda, Alavaka,  
Pajjunna, Sumana, Sumukha, Dadamukkha,

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With these Serisakka.

"These are the Yakkhas, mighty Yakkhas, the commanders, the chief commanders to whom (the molested one) should inform, cry aloud and shout saying: 'This Yakkha is seizing me, takes possession of me, is harassing me, assailing me, is harming me, and harming me intensely, and this Yakkha would not let me go!'

"This, Happy One, is the Atanata protection whereby monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen may live at ease, guarded, protected, and unharmed.

"Happy One, we now take our leave of you; for we have many duties to attend to (so said the four Great Kings)."

"Great Kings, it is time for your departure" (replied the Buddha).

The four great kings arose from their seats, and saluting the Blessed One, circled round him on his right side, and there and then vanished. From among the (attendant) Yakkhas some arose from

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their seats, and saluted the Blessed One, circled round him on his right side, and there and then vanished; some exchanged greetings with the Blessed One conversing in a friendly and courteous manner, and there and then vanished; some saluted the Blessed One with clasped hands, and there and then vanished; some announced their name and lineage, and there and then vanished; some in silence there and then vanished.

When the night had passed the Blessed One addressed the monks: (The Buddha related to the monks word for word what has been said by the great King Vessavana, see above.) "Learn by heart, monks, the Atanata protection, constantly make use of it, bear it in mind. This Atanata protection, monks, pertains to your welfare, and by virtue of it, monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen may live at ease, guarded, protected, and unharmed."

This the Blessed One said. Those monks glad at heart rejoiced at the words of the Blessed One.

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## Notes

1.

D. No. 32.

2.

They are Dhatarattha, Virulha, Virupakkha, and Vessavana, presiding over the four quarters in the celestial regions.

3.

Vessavana, king of the Northern quarter, according to the Commentary, was familiar with the Buddha, expert in conversation and well-disciplined, and thus he became the spokesman. Kuvera is another name for Vessavana. See above, p. 75, stanza 27.

4.

According to *Dighanikaya-attakatha-tika* (vol iii, p. 194), King Vessavana had a town by the name of Atanata (cf. below, stanza 39), where the four kings assembled and recited this Paritta which speaks of the virtues of the seven Buddhas: Vipassi, Sikhi, Vessabhu, Kakusanda, Konagama, Kassapa, Gotama.



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They approached the Buddha with the intention of obtaining his approval in which event, they felt, that this Paritta will attain a revered position: "satthu kathite imam parittam garu bhavissatiti pi aha" (Comy).

Learn, ugganhatha: There is nothing for the Buddha to learn afresh. As the Commentary says, it was to create an opportunity for the Buddha to listen to the discourse, "Imam parittam savetum okasam karonto evamha."

5.

Vijja-carana: literally science and conduct.

6.

From the 13th stanza I have adopted the method of numbering the stanzas in consecutive order.

7.

Kusalena, an unusual phrase: "omniscience," "pure wisdom," "sublime wisdom" (Comy).

8.

Na piniyanti, literally they do not carry the plough.

9.

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Tam pittim abhiruyha, mounting on the back  
(Comy).

10.

Etassa aparabhage (Comy).

## **Here Ends the Book of Protection**

### **Appendix**

#### **Protective Discourse to Angulimala (Angulimala Paritta)**

The Venerable Angulimala while on his rounds for alms in Savatthi saw a woman in travail. After his meal he approached the Buddha and told him what he had seen. Thereupon the master taught him this paritta. He then went to the presence of the suffering sister, sat on a seat separated from her by a screen, and made this asseveration of the Truth. Instantly she gave birth to the child with great ease. The efficacy of the Angulimala paritta persists to this day.

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This sutta is not included in the "Book of Protection." The words, uttered by the Buddha by way of protection, and learned by the Venerable Angulimala, are found in the Angulimala sutta (Majjhima nikaya, sutta no. 86).

The very water that washed the seat of him who recited this paritta has put an end to all danger. At that very moment this paritta effected a safe delivery of the infant.

Now we shall recite that very efficacious paritta uttered by the Protector of the world (Buddha) which holds good for an aeon.<sup>1</sup>

"Since I was born of Aryan birth,<sup>2</sup> O sister, I am not aware of having intentionally deprived any living being of his life. By this asseveration of Truth may you be well! May thy unborn child be well!"

### **Notes**

1.

Majjhima Comy.

2.

---

i.e., since Angulimala joined the Sangha, the Order.

### **Invitation to Deities (Devaradhana)**

May devas (deities) of all world systems assemble here, and listen to that sublime Dhamma of the Great Sage (Buddha) which confers the bliss of heaven and deliverance (Nibbana).

Good friends, now is time for listening to the Dhamma.

At the end of the recital of each discourse the reciters bless the listeners thus:

By the asseveration of this truth may you ever be well.

By the asseveration of this truth may you be free from illness.

By the asseveration of this truth may all blessings be upon you.

By the (protective) power of all Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and all arahants I secure my (your) protection in every way.

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(The preceding stanza is recited at the moment the thread is being tied round the arm.)

May all misfortunes be warded off, may all ailments cease; may no calamities befall you; may you live long in peace.

May all blessings be upon you. May all devas (deities) protect you.

By the protective power of all the Buddhas may safety ever be yours.

By the protective power of all the Dhamma may safety ever be yours.

By the protective power of all the Sangha may safety ever be yours.

By the power of this paritta (protection) may you be free from all dangers arising from malign influences of the planets, demons, and spirits.

May thy misfortunes vanish.

By the power of the Buddha may all evil omens and untoward circumstances, the ominous cry of birds, the malign conjunctions of the stars, and evil dreams be rendered nugatory.

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By the power of the Dhamma... (as before) be rendered nugatory.

By the power of the Sangha... (as before) be rendered nugatory.

May those beings who suffer be free from suffering.

May those beings who are in fear be free from fear.

May those beings who are in grief be free from grief.

May the rains fall in due season; may there be a rich harvest; may the world prosper; may the ruler be righteous.

May beings, celestial and terrestrial, Devas and Nagas of mighty power, share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Dispensation.

May all beings share this merit which we have thus acquired. May it redound to their happiness.

Let this (merit) accrue to my relatives; may they be well and happy.

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From the highest realm of existence to avici hell, whatever beings that are born — those with form and the formless ones, those with or without consciousness — may they all be free from suffering! May they attain Nibbana! By the power of the immense merit I have acquired by paying homage to the "Triple Gem" (the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha) which is eminently worthy of reverence, may all dangers cease!

## **End Notes**

**ahara**, Food or nutriment is of four kinds: 1. ordinary material food (kabalinkarahara); 2. contact (of sense organs with sense objects, phassahara); 3. consciousness (viññanahara); and 4. mental volition (manasañcetanahara). See *The Four Nutriment of Life* by Nyanaponika Thera, Wheel No. 105/106, Buddhist Publication Society, (BPS) Kandy, Sri Lanka.

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**Asubha**, Non-attractiveness, foulness; (literally non-beautifulness).

**Vedana**, Feeling or sensation is of three kinds: pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feeling.

**Pañca-upadanakkhandha**, The five aggregates subject to grasping: matter, feeling or sensation, perceptions, mental (volitional) formations, and consciousness.

**Salayatana**, The internal six-fold base: the five physical sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the mind base (see Dependent Origination or Paticca samuppada, by Piyadassi Thera, Wheel No. 15, BPS).

**Satta Bojjhanga**, Seven Factors of Enlightenment: 1. Mindfulness; 2. Investigation of the dhamma; 3. Energy; 4. Rapture or happiness; 5. Calm; 6. Concentration; and 7. Equanimity (see Seven Factors of Enlightenment, by Piyadassi Thera, Wheel No. 1, BPS).

**The Noble Eightfold Path**: see Discourse on the Analysis of the Truths.



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**The four pairs of persons** constitute the four kinds of aryan disciples who have attained the four paths (or stages) and four fruits of sanctity (magga and phala). The four stages are: sotapatti ('stream-entry') where self-illusion, doubt, and ritualism are ended, sakadagami ('once-return') where sensuality and ill will are weakened, anagami ('non-return') where sensuality and ill will are ended, and arahattha ('arahantship') where craving for form, craving for formless phenomena, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance are ended. (Ten bonds or fetters (sanyojanas) that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirths are in Pali: sakkaya ditti, vicikiccha, silabbata-paramasa, kama-raga, vyapada, rupa-raga, arupa-raga, mana, uddhacca and avijja, respectively. See Maha-parinibbana Sutta, D.16 (<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/sutta/digha/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html>); Three Cardinal Discourses by Bhikkhu Ñanamoli Thera, Wheel Publ. No.17.)

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**Navasattavasa**, Nine abodes of beings: the abodes where beings such as humans, animals, devas, ghosts, and brahmas are born, and the realms of the infinity of space, infinity of consciousness, of nothingness, and of neither perception and non-perception (see *Minor Readings and Illustrations*, by Bhikkhu Ñanamoli, Pali Text Society, London, p.92).

**The ten attributes of an arahant, or Asekha**, one who has completed his moral and spiritual training, i.e., the Consummate One: 1. Right Understanding, 2. Right Thought, 3. Right Speech, 4. Right Action, 5. Right Livelihood, 6. Right Effort, 7. Right Mindfulness, 8. Right Concentration, 9. Right Knowledge (Sammañana), 10. Right Deliverance (Samma vimutti) which is the fruit of arahantship.

## **Abbreviations**

### **A. Books**

All references to Pali texts are to the editions of the PTS.

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A	Anguttara-nikaya (number of the volume and page marked against).	
D	Digha-nikaya (number of the sutta marked against).	
DA	Digha-nikayatthakatha, Sumangalavilasini.	i.e.,
Khpa	Khuddaka-patha.	
Khpa <sup>A</sup>	Khuddaka-patha Atthakatha, Paramatthajotika.	i.e.,
M	Majjhima-nikaya (number of the sutta marked against).	
MA	Majjhima-nikayatthakatha, Papañcasadani.	i.e.,
S	Samyutta-nikaya (number of the volume and page marked against).	
Sn	Sutta-nipata.	
Sn <sup>A</sup>	Sutta-nipatatthakatha, Paramatthajotika II.	i.e.,

## **B. Terms**

Comy Commentary.

Nikaya A collection of suttas in Pali.

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n Note.

Skt Sanskrit.

Sutta A sermon or discourse of the Buddha or his disciples recorded in the Canonical Texts.

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# Dependent Origination

**Piyadassi Thera**

**paticca-samuppāda**

Wheel No. 15

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'Dependent origination', is the doctrine of the conditionality of all physical and psychical

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phenomena, a doctrine which, together with that of impersonality (*anattā*), forms the indispensable condition for the real understanding and realization of the teaching of the Buddha. It shows the conditionality and dependent nature of that uninterrupted flux of manifold physical and psychical phenomena of existence conventionally called the ego, or man, or animal, etc.

Whereas the doctrine of impersonality, or *anattā*, proceeds analytically, by splitting existence up into the ultimate constituent parts, into mere empty, unsubstantial phenomena or elements, the doctrine of dependent origination, on the other hand, proceeds synthetically, by showing that all these phenomena are, in some way or other, conditionally related with each other.

In fact, the entire Abhidhamma Pitaka, as a whole, treats really of nothing but just these two doctrines: *phenomenality* - implying impersonality and *conditionality* of all existence.

The former or analytical method is applied in Dhammasangani, the first book of the Abhidhamma Pitaka; the latter or synthetical method, in Patthāna,

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the last book of the Abhidhamma Pitaka. For a synopsis of these two works, s. Guide I and VII.

Though this subject has been very frequently treated by Western authors, by far most of them have completely misunderstood the true meaning and purpose of the doctrine of dependent origination, and even the 12 terms themselves have often been rendered wrongly.

**The formula of dependent origination runs as follows:**

- 1. *Avijjā-paccayā sankhārā*: "Through ignorance are conditioned the sankhāras," i.e. the rebirth-producing volitions (*cetanā*), or 'karma-formations' .
- 2. *Sankhāra-paccayā viññānam*: "Through the karma-formations (in the past life) is conditioned consciousness (in the present life)."
- 3. *Viññāna-paccayā nāma-rūpam*: "Through consciousness are conditioned the mental and physical phenomena (*nāma-rūpa*)," i.e. that

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which makes up our so-called individual existence.

- 4. *Nāma-rūpa-paccayā salāyatanam*: "Through the mental and physical phenomena are conditioned the 6 bases," i.e. the 5 physical sense-organs, and consciousness as the sixth.
- 5. *Salāyatana-paccayā phasso*: "Through the six bases is conditioned the (sensorial mental) impression."
- 6. *Phassa-paccayā vedanā*: "Through the impression is conditioned feeling."
- 7. *Vedanā-paccayā tanhā*: "Through feeling is conditioned craving."
- 8. *Tanhā-paccayā upādānam*: "Through craving is conditioned clinging."
- 9. *Upādāna-paccayā bhavo*: "Through clinging is conditioned the process of becoming," consisting in the active and the passive life process, i.e. the rebirth-producing karma-process (*kamma-bhava*) and, as its result, the rebirth-process (*upapatti-bhava*).
- 10. *Bhava-paccayā jāti*: "Through the (rebirth-producing karma-) process of becoming is conditioned rebirth."



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- 11. *Jāti-paccayā jarāmaranam*, etc.: "Through rebirth are conditioned old age and death (sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair). Thus arises this whole mass of suffering again in the future."

The following diagram shows the relationship of dependence between three successive lives:

PAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1. Ignorance (<i>avijjā</i>)</li> <li>• 2. Karma-formations (<i>sankhārā</i>)</li> </ul>	Karma-Process ( <i>kammabhava</i> )  5 causes: 1,2,8,9,10
PRESENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3. Consciousness (<i>viññāna</i>)</li> <li>• 4. Mind &amp; Matter (<i>nāma-rūpa</i>)</li> <li>• 5. Six Bases (<i>āyatana</i>)</li> <li>• 6. Impression (<i>phassa</i>)</li> <li>• 7. Feeling (<i>vedanā</i>)</li> </ul>	Rebirth-Process ( <i>upapattibhava</i> )  5 results: 3-7

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8. Craving (<i>tanhā</i>)</li> <li>• 10. Process of Becoming (<i>bhava</i>)</li> </ul>	Karma-Process ( <i>kammabhava</i> ) 5 causes: 1,2,8,9,10
FUTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11. Rebirth (<i>jāti</i>)</li> <li>• 12. Old Age and Death (<i>jarā-marana</i>)</li> </ul>	Rebirth-Process ( <i>upapattibhava</i> ) 5 results: 3-7

Before taking up the study of the following exposition, it is suggested that the reader first goes thoroughly through the article on the 24 conditions (*s. paccaya*). For a thorough understanding of the *paticcasamuppāda* he should know the main modes of conditioning, as decisive support, co-nascence, pre-nascence, etc.

For a closer study of the subject should be consulted:

- Vis.M. XVII;
- Fund. III;
- Guide (Ch. VII and Appendix);
- Dependent Origination, by Piyadassi Thera (Wheel 15);
- The Significance of Dependent Origination (Wheel 140).

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(1.) "Through ignorance are conditioned the karma-formations" (*avijjā-paccayā sankhārā*), i.e. all wholesome and unwholesome actions (karma) of body, speech and mind, are conditioned through ignorance. By 'karma-formations' are meant karmically wholesome and unwholesome volitions (*cetanā*), or volitional activities, in short karma (q.v., and Fund. II).

In view of the many misconceptions current in the West, it is necessary to repeat here that karma, as a technical term, never signifies anything but moral or immoral action, i.e. the above mentioned volitional activities, or karma-formations, as either causing results in the present life or being the causes of future destiny and rebirth. Thus karma, as a philosophical term, never means the result of action, as often wrongly conceived by Western authors.

Now, in what way are the karma-formations conditioned through ignorance? As concerns the unwholesome karma-formations associated with greed, hate or delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*), these are always and in all circumstances, conditioned

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through the simultaneous ignorance inseparably associated therewith. Thus, ignorance is for the unwholesome karma-formations a condition by way of conascence (*sahajāta-paccaya*), association (*sampayutta-paccaya*), presence (*atthi-paccaya*), etc. Ignorance further may be for them a condition by way of decisive support or inducement (*upanissaya-paccaya*), if, for instance, ignorance coupled with greed induces a man to commit evil deeds, such as killing, stealing, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc. In these cases, therefore, ignorance is a 'natural decisive support' or 'direct inducement' (*pakati-upanissaya-paccaya*). It also may become an indirect inducement, by way of object (*ārammanūpanissaya-paccaya*) of our thinking. This takes place, if, for example, someone remembers a former state of ignorance combined with sensual enjoyment, and in doing so karmically unwholesome states spring up, such as sensual desire, grief, etc.

For the wholesome (*kusala*) karma-formations, ignorance can only be a condition by way of decisive support (*upanissaya*), never by way of conascence (*sahajāta*), etc., since wholesome consciousness at that very moment, of course,

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cannot be associated with any unwholesome phenomenon, such as ignorance. Ignorance is a 'natural decisive support' or 'direct inducement' (*pakatupanissaya*), for example, if, induced by ignorance and vanity, one exerts oneself to attain the absorptions, and thus finally, through perseverance, reaches these wholesome states of mind. Ignorance may also be for wholesome karma-formations a 'decisive support' or 'inducement by way of object' (*ārammanūpanissaya*), if, for example, one reflects on ignorance as the root of all misery in the world, and thus finally attains insight and entrance into one of the 4 supermundane paths of holiness.

For ignorance, s. *avijjā*; for karma-formations, s. *sankhāra*.

(2.) "Through the karma-formations is conditioned consciousness" (*sankhāra-paccayā viññānam*). This proposition teaches that the wholesome and unwholesome karma-formations are the causes of future rebirth in an appropriate sphere (*gati*). The karma-formations of the previous life condition the budding in a new mother's womb of a fresh psycho-

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physical aggregation of the 5 groups of existence (s. *khandha*), which here are represented by consciousness (*viññāna*). All such karma-resultant (*vipāka*) consciousness, however, such as eye-consciousness (seeing), etc., as well as all the mental phenomena associated therewith (feeling, etc.), are karmically neutral. It should be understood that already from the very first moment of conception in the mother's womb, this karma resultant consciousness of the embryonic being is functioning.

Against Dr. Paul Dahlke's misconception of the *paticcasamuppāda* as "one single karmical moment of personal experience," and of the 'simultaneity' of all the 12 links of this formula, I should like to state here distinctly that the interpretation given here as comprising 3 successive lives not only agrees with all the different schools of Buddhism and all the ancient commentaries, but also is fully identical with the explanations given already in the canonical suttas. Thus, for example, it is said verbatim in Nidāna-Samyutta (S. XII, 51): "Once ignorance (1) and clinging (9) are extinguished, neither karmically meritorious, nor demeritorious, nor imperturbable karma-formations (2=10) are produced, and thus no

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consciousness (3=11) will spring up again in a new mother's womb." And further: "For, if consciousness were not to appear in the mother's womb, would in that case mentality and corporeality (4) arise?" Cf. above diagram.

The purpose of the Buddha in teaching the Paticca-samuppāda [p.] was to show to suffering mankind how, depending on ignorance and delusion, this present existence and suffering has come about, and how through extinction of ignorance, and of the craving and clinging conditioned thereby, no more rebirth will follow, and, thus, the standstill of the process of existence will have been realized and therewith the extinction of all suffering.

(3.) "Through consciousness are conditioned corporeality and mentality" (*viññāna-paccayā nāma-rūpani*). This proposition implies that without consciousness there can be no mental and physical process of existence. By mentality (*nāma*) is here to be understood the karma-resultant (*vipāka*) mental phenomena, such as feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*: non-karmical volition is

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here meant), consciousness-impression (*phassa*), advertence (*manasikāra*) (M. 9; S. XII, 2). For the basic 7 mental phenomena inseparably associated with every state of consciousness, s. *nāma*. By corporeality (*rūpa*) is meant the 4 physical elements (s. *dhātu*) and the corporeality dependent thereon (s. *khandha*, I).

Mentality is always conditioned through consciousness; i.e. consciousness (*viññāna*) is for mentality (*nāma*) a condition by way of co-nascence (*sahajāta*), mutuality (*aññamañña*), association (*sampayutta*), etc., since the 4 mental groups at all times form an inseparable unit.

Consciousness (*viññāna*) is for corporeality (*rūpa*) a condition by way of co-nascence only at the moment of conception, thereafter a condition by way of post-nascence (*pacchājāta-paccaya*; *paccaya* 11) and nutriment (*āhāra*), i.e. as a support. Just as the repeatedly arising hunger is a condition and support for the pre-arisen body, so is the consciousness arising afterwards a condition and support for the maintenance of this pre-arisen body.



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(4.) "Through mentality and corporeality are conditioned the 6 bases (*nāma-rūpa paccayā salāyatanaṃ*). The 6 bases are a name for the 5 physical sense-organs and, as 6th, the mind-base (*manāyatana*), i.e. consciousness.

Mentality (*nāma*; s. 3) is for the 5 physical bases (*āyatana*), or sense-organs, a condition by way of post-nascence. Cf. end of 3.

Mentality (*nāma*), i.e. feeling. etc., is for the 6th base, or consciousness - as being always inseparably associated therewith a condition by way of co-nascence. etc.

Corporeality (*rūpa*), here the 4 elements, are for the 5 physical bases (*āyatana*), or sense-organs, a condition by way of support (*nissaya*).

Corporeality (*rūpa*), here the 5 physical sense-organs, are for the 6th base (*āyatana*), i.e. consciousness, a condition by way of support and pre-nascence (*purejāta-paccaya*).

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(5.) "Through the 6 bases is conditioned the (sensorial and mental) impression" (*salāyatana-paccayā phasso*), for without the 5 physical bases, or sense-organs, there can be no sense-impressions; and without the 6th base, or consciousness, there can be no mental impression.

Thus, the 5 physical bases, eye, etc., are for the corresponding 5 sense-impressions (visual impression, etc.) a condition by way of support (*nissaya*) and pre-nascence (*purejāta*), whereas the 6th, the mind-base (consciousness), is for the mental impression a condition by way of co-nascence, association, mutuality, etc.

(6.) "Through impression is conditioned feeling" (*phassa-paccayā vedanā*), i.e. the sensorial and the mental impressions are for the feeling associated therewith a condition by way of co-nascence, association, mutuality, etc.

(7.) "Through feeling is conditioned craving" (*vedanā-paccayā tanhā*). Any (karma-resultant)

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feeling, whether agreeable, disagreeable or neutral, bodily or mental, past or expected, may become for craving a condition of decisive support by way of object (*ārammanūpanissaya*). Even physically and mentally painful feeling may, through the desire to be released there from, become for craving a condition of decisive support by way of object (*ārammanupanissaya*).

(8.) "Through craving is conditioned clinging" (*tanhā-paccayā upādānam*). 'Clinging' is explained as an intensified form of craving. It is of 4 kinds:

- (1) clinging to sensuality,
- (2) to erroneous views,
- (3) to rules and ritual,
- (4) to personality-belief.

Sensuous craving is to (1) a condition of natural decisive support (*pakatupanissaya*). For (2-4), craving is a condition by way of co-nascence, mutuality, root (*hetu*), etc. It also may be a condition of natural decisive support. For example, through craving for heavenly rebirth, etc. people often may

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be induced to cling to certain rules and rituals, with the hope of reaching thereby the object of their desires.

(9.) "Through clinging is conditioned the process of becoming" (*upādāna-paccayā bhavo*), i.e. the wholesome and unwholesome active karma-process of becoming (*kamma-bhava*), as well as the karma-resultant (*vipāka*) passive process, the so-called 'rebirth-process' (*upapatti-bhava*). The karma-process (*kammabhava*) comprises the 5 karmical causes: ignorance, karma-formations, craving, clinging, karma-process (s. 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, of the diagram); the rebirth-process (*upapatti-bhava*) comprises the 5 karma-results (s. 3-7 of the diagram).

The karma-process is here, correctly speaking, a collective name for generative karmic volition (*kamma-cetanā*) and all the mental phenomena associated therewith, whilst the 2nd link (karma-formations) designates only karmic volition (s. *āyūhana*). Both, however, i.e. the 2nd and 10th proposition, practically state one and the same thing,

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namely, that karma is the cause of rebirth, as we shall see under 10.

Clinging (*upādāna*) may be an inducement of decisive support (*upanissaya*) to many kinds of wholesome and unwholesome karma. Sensuous clinging (*kāmūpādāna*), i.e. clinging to sensuous objects, for example, may be a direct inducement to murder, theft, unlawful intercourse with the other sex, evil words and thoughts, etc. Clinging to rules and ritual (*sīlabbatūpādāna*) may lead to self-complacency, fanaticism, cruelty, etc. Clinging is also for the evil karma associated therewith, a condition by way of co-nascence, association, etc.

(10.) "Through the process of becoming is conditioned rebirth" (*bhava-paccayā jāti*), i.e. through the wholesome and unwholesome karma-process (*kamma-bhava*) is conditioned the rebirth-process (*upapatti-bhava*). The 2nd and 10th propositions, as already pointed out, practically teach one and the same thing, namely, that karma is the cause of rebirth; in other words, that the karmical volition (*cetanā*) is the seed out of which springs the

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new life, just as from the mango-seed is generated the new mango-tree.

Hence, the 5 karmical causes (ignorance, etc.) of the past birth are the condition for the karma-results of the present birth; and the 5 karmical causes of the present birth are the condition for the 5 karma-results of the next birth (s. diagram). As it is said in Vis.M. XVII:

"Five causes were there in the past,  
Five fruits we find in present life;  
Five causes do we now produce,  
Five fruits we reap in future life."

Now, just as in this process of continually changing mental and bodily phenomena, nothing can be found that would pass from one moment to the next moment, so also there is no enduring entity, ego, or personality, within this process of existence that would transmigrate from one life to the next (s. *nāma-rūpa*, *anattā*, *patisandhi*, *khandha*). "No being and no living soul passed from the former life to this life, and yet this present embryo could not have

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entered into existence without the preceding causes" (Vis.M. XVII). "Many things may serve to illustrate this fact, as for example the echo, the light of a lamp, the impression of a seal, or the image produced by a mirror" (ib.).

"Whosoever is in the dark with regard to the conditionally arisen things, and does not understand that karma originates from ignorance, etc., he thinks that it must be his ego that knows or does not know, acts and causes to act, and that arises at rebirth. Or he thinks that the atoms, or a creator, with the help of this embryonic process, must have formed this body, or that it is the ego endowed with faculties that has impressions, feels, desires, clings, continues and enters again into existence in a new birth. Or he thinks that all beings have been born through fate, or fortuitously" (Vis.M. XVII).

Now, on hearing that Buddhism teaches that everything whatever in the world is determined by conditions some might come to the conclusion that Buddhism teaches some sort of fatalism, and that man has no free will, or that will is not free.

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The problem 'whether man has a free will' does not exist for, the Buddhist, since he knows that, apart from these ever-changing mental and physical phenomena, no such entity as 'man' can be found, and that 'man' is merely a name not relating to any reality. And the question, 'whether will is free', must be rejected for the reason that 'will', or volition, is a mental phenomenon flashing forth only for a moment, and that as such it had not any existence at the preceding moment. For of a thing which is not, or is not yet, one cannot, properly speaking, ask whether it is free or un-free. The only admissible question would be whether the arising of 'will' is independent of conditions, or whether it is conditioned. But the same question would equally apply also to all the other mental phenomena, as well as to all physical phenomena, in other words: to everything and every occurrence whatever. And the answer would be: whether will arises, or whether feeling arises, or whether any other mental or any physical phenomenon arises, the arising of anything whatsoever is dependent on conditions, and without conditions nothing ever can arise or enter into existence.



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According to Buddhism, everything mental or physical happens in accordance with laws and conditions; and if it were otherwise, chaos and blind chance would reign. But such a thing is impossible and contradicts all laws of thinking. Cf. Fund. III (end).

(11.) "Through rebirth are conditioned old age and death" (*jātipaccayā jarā-maranam*). Without birth there can be no old age and death, no suffering and misery. Thus rebirth is to old age and death, etc. a condition by way of decisive support (*upanissaya*).

The Buddha has said (D.15): "Profound, Ananda, is this dependent origination, and profound does it appear. It is through not understanding, not penetrating, this law that this world resembles a tangled ball of thread, a bird's nest, a thicket of sedge or reed, and that man does not escape from the lower states of existence, from the course of woe and perdition, suffering from the round of rebirth." And further (M. 28): 'Whoso understands the dependent origination understands the Dhamma; and whoso

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understands the Dhamma understands the dependent origination."

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**This is the end.**