

# On The Path To Freedom

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Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.

# ON THE PATH TO FREEDOM

*A mind of wise discernment and openness*

SAYADAW U PANDITA

A  
compilation  
of dhamma discourses  
to foreign yogis  
at  
Mahasi Meditation Centre, Myanmar  
(1986 – 1987)

Translated from Myanmar by Mya Thaung

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## FOREWORD

Several translations have been made of the late Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's discourses by various translators. The present volume is one of the few attempts made of the Sayadaw U Pandita's discourses. This transcript covers discourses given to foreign yogis who came to practise under him in Yangon (formerly Rangoon) from August 1986 to March 1987.

Parts of discourses in typed copies have been distributed to meditators after each session, but seldom in a complete set like the present one. Since there had been a demand for the complete set, the typed copies were taken to Australia during Sayadaw's trip abroad in 1988. One of the Australian yogis, Leon Prolius, offered to arrange and computerise the articles. He managed to produce a draft set.

Though Leon was suffering from a terminal disease, he was dedicated to the completion of the work, so much so that he was reluctant to hand over the project to us even when he fell seriously ill. Months later, much to our grief, he succumbed to his illness. Chris MacLachlan of the Buddha Sasana Association of Australia managed to resume the work left by Leon. This was later returned to us.

During a discussion with the Venerable Sujiva of *Santisukharama*, Malaysia, in 1991, he readily agreed to edit and print the book. For any suggestions or comments, kindly contact the undersigned.

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To all those who have contributed to the completion of this work but whose names could not be mentioned individually, may I offer my heartiest appreciation.

*Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!*

Mya Thaung  
*Translator*

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# *On the Path to Freedom*

## FREEDOM

*Adorn with the garland of giving  
Feeling joy and dignity with kind living  
Dwell only in states of clarity  
Great beauty results with integrity.  
Adorn with the fragrance of virtuous activity  
For others a care and sensitivity  
Dwell only in states of contentment  
A heart removed of the thorns of resentment.  
Adorn with the sweetness of tranquillity  
Soft rapture from a life of simplicity  
Dwell only in states of calm peace  
Mental turbulence and distraction all cease.  
Dwell only in states of peace and happiness  
A mind of wise discernment and openness.  
The three poisons of wrong view, conceit and craving  
No longer hinder or cause inner tightening  
Vow deeply to develop the true way  
Adorned in the heart then freedom will lay.*



# CHAPTER 1

## VIEW OF INDIVIDUALITY

Today, I will like to talk about how people view their own self i.e., the erroneous view of the existence of self (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*). In accordance with the expression ‘*santo kāyo sakkāyo*’, *sakkāya* is a compound of *sa* or *santa* (existing or evident through direct experience) and *kāya* (*nāma-rūpa* aggregates). The right understanding of the *kāya* (aggregates) should arise not from books or imagination, but from personal experience (*attapaccakkha*), apprehending of the aggregates experientially.

Keeping his mind on the abdomen, the disciple notes (mentally) the movement of the rising and falling of the abdomen with diligent timing. This is the basic exercise of observing the *kāya* (collection or aggregates), prescribed to the beginners.

Suppose you are closing your fist. Before you actually close it, you think or intend to close. Such a process of intention occurs not only in one or two thought moments, but in a series of thought moments, several in a succession as you note ‘intending’, ‘intending’. Now this thought of intention which occurs in your mind is ‘*nāmakāya*’, (mental body or aggregate). Through empirical knowledge, the existence of *nāmakāya* is quite evident.

As you intend, you close your fist by bending the fingers gradually, noting each movement. You should proceed with the contemplation on every action of movement in the course of closing the hand, like ‘bending’, ‘bending’, ‘closing’, ‘closing’ and so on. These actions should be carried out slowly. The material element which bends or closes is called ‘*rūpakāya*’ or ‘*rūpakkhandha*’ (material body or aggregate).

Thus, you see the existence of these two *kāyas* or aggregates (*sakkāya*) – which united make up a sentient being. If you are careless, you tend to view this as “It is I who am closing the fingers” or “The one who is closing the fingers is I”, thus falling into believing in the existence of self in all three moments – past, present and future – resulting in *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. In the process of movement, you may feel pain, heat, stiffness, tension or other sensations of which you should make a mental note of. It is only when you observe and note the phenomenon as it arises can you know its true nature comprising of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

Life is seen as a manifestation of the nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*, or in other words, a psycho-physical phenomenon. There is nothing which cannot be called *sakkāya*. When one concentrates on *nāma* and *rūpa*, one will realize that the compound of consciousness and corporeality is not a person, a being or an individual, ‘I’, ‘me’ or ‘mine’. This realization shakes off the *sakkāya diṭṭhi*,

the erroneous view of the existence of self or personality belief.

Knowledge of *nāma-rūpa* removes *sakkāya diṭṭhi* temporarily and the knowledge of cause-effect removes doubt (*vicikicchā*) temporarily. If you don't understand these knowledges you will entertain false views and ideologies. In Dhamma practice you are striving to understand yourself and the truth.

At the moment of hearing there occurs three elements:

- sound: striker (*rūpakāya*)
- ear basis: receptor (*rūpakāya*)
- hearing consciousness,  
contact and feeling: ignition (*nāmakāya*)

If you are attentive or mindful, all the above three elements will be noticed. Noting the phenomena as they arise, one can see things according to their true nature, *rūpakāya* or *rūpa sakkāya* in the case of the sound and ear and *nāmakāya* or *nāma sakkāya* in the case of the third element. Thus the false view of individuality will be abandoned.

## DEFINITION OF PERSONALITY/INDIVIDUALITY

At one time the Bhikkhuni Vajira was harassed with doubts by Māra, the Tempter or God of Death: What is a 'person'? How does he arise? Who creates him?

However, Vajira understood that questions of this type were misleading and gave the following answer:

*“Kinnu satto ti paccesi?*

*Māra, diṭṭhigatam nu te.*

*Suddha-sankhāra-puñjo-yam, nayidha sattūpalabbhati.*

*Yathā hi angasambhārā hoti saddo ratho iti  
evam khandhesu santesu hoti satto ti sammuti.”*

*“Why do you then harp on the word ‘person’?*

*Māra, you are starting from wrong premises.*

*There is nothing but a lot of processes:*

*no ‘person’ is found here.*

*For just as the word ‘carriage’ is used*

*when the parts are combined,*

*so the word ‘person’ is commonly used*

*when the factors are present.”*

## CONSEQUENCES OF SAKKĀYA DIṬṬHI

### **Avijjā (Ignorance)**

If we are not mindful, we will not penetrate into the true nature of things (*Dhammas*) and we will be overcome by ignorance (*avijjā*), which is synonymous with delusion (*moha*). What then? Absence of knowledge (*paññā*) leads to the arising of ideas (*saññā*). We tend to accept the notion of ‘I’ as existing in all the three moments



– past, present and future – *atta diṭṭhi*. This notion of self will lead us to conceit (*māna*). Some even go to the extent of believing in the existence of a vital principle or a soul called *jīva atta* which sees or hears things.

If we are not mindful, we will be overcome by ignorance (*avijjā*). This is also the cause of craving for any of the three elements, i.e., we may crave to see or hear, cling to the eye or ear and desire for the seen or heard. When craving (*taṇhā*) increases, it will turn into grasping (*upādāna*), to *māna* and so on.

The Buddha told many stories to illustrate how the man who is wrapped in ignorance is to be pitied, more so than of a man who is physically blind. The Buddha pictured the man of ignorance as wearing blinders. A wise person can see the consequences of his actions (for himself and others), but the spiritually blind person cannot see that evil actions will bear only bitter fruit.

### ***Vedanā (Feeling)***

If we are not mindful, craving or anger will arise whenever a pleasant or painful sensation occurs. This means feeling (*vedanā*) causes craving (*lobha*) or anger (*dosa*). Both are unwholesome mental states. Again the root of feeling (*vedanā*) can be traced back to delusion (*moha*) which is synonymous with ignorance (*avijjā*). For the ordinary worldlings, it is so easy to drift into the cur-

rent of defilements (*kilesas*) as a result of seeing or hearing. The current may flow at a slow pace or at a fast rate – at times with the force of a waterfall.

Among the numerous speculative opinions and theories which have influenced mankind, the wrong view that has most misled and deluded mankind everywhere and at all times is the personality belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) or ego-illusion (*atta diṭṭhi*). There are two kinds of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*:

- *sassata diṭṭhi* – eternity belief,
- *uccheda diṭṭhi* – annihilation belief.

*Sassata diṭṭhi* is the belief in the existence of a persisting ego entity, soul or personality, existing independently of those physical or mental processes that constitute life, and that it continues even after death. *Uccheda diṭṭhi*, on the other hand, is the belief in the existence of an ego entity or personality as a being, more or less identical with those physical and mental processes, and which therefore, at the dissolution or death, will be annihilated. Here, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is the source or main factor. If *sakkāya diṭṭhi* does not arise, *sassata* and *uccheda diṭṭhis* will not arise. There are sixty two kinds of *diṭṭhis* which are the offshoots of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.

## PATIVEDHA LAKKHAṆA PAÑÑĀ

For instance, as you are closing your hand, you note the step-by-step process of intention (*nāmakāya*) and the act of closing (*rūpakāya*) which follows as the former occurs. If you are able to observe the arising and passing away of phenomena, you will understand that it is not the 'I' personality who is behind the act. As you understand the true nature of things you will not entertain any wrong views. Knowing the *nāma* and *rūpa* aggregates from personal experience, one will be free from *sakkāya diṭṭhi* temporarily and then permanently on the attainment of *sotapanna* (stage of realization of the first *magga* and *phala*).

Suppose you are bending your arm, you start out with a mental state, i.e., intention (*chanda*) to bend. Then you bend the arm as a result of this *chanda*. As you are bending, you note the sensations which arise during the bending process, such as tension, stiffness, heat, relaxation, etc. As you fix your attention to the process of bending you will learn the true nature of things as they occur. You will realize that in this process of bending of the arm there is no 'I' personality behind the act. You will realize that there are only *nāma-rūpa* aggregates in the whole process.

As you note every second, you will understand the true nature and the 'I' personality will disappear, overcom-

ing *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, like the saying “unknowing we seize, knowing we release”. In one minute of noting, if you can understand the true nature of things, you are said to have overcome wrong views (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) sixty times and so on for a longer period.

Thus you will gain true knowledge from practical experience with diligent effort instead of from books or imagination. Such kind of knowledge is known as *paṭivedha lakkaṇa paññā* – knowledge of the characteristic of penetration or realization of the true *Dhamma*. These characteristics (*lakkaṇas*) of phenomena, as experienced directly, fall into two categories:

- specific or unique (*visesa or sabhāva*) characteristics such as tension, stiffness occurring as a result of pressure element (*vayo*), heat, irritation and other sensations;
- common or universal characteristics (*sāmañña*), i.e., impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and selflessness (*anattā*).

When these two characteristics are seen, the remaining one, *sankhata lakkaṇa*, can be said to have been seen (refer to Chapter 12). Understanding unequivocally and discerning clearly, one abandons ignorance and wavering or doubt (*vicikicchā*). Hence we have the aphorism:

*Knowing what exists  
And what does not  
Sees Nāma-rūpa  
And purifies view.  
Knowing which course is real  
And which not  
Sees cause-effect  
And abandons doubt.*

Overcoming doubt, one cultivates faith (*saddhā*). It is said, a monk who has understanding establishes his faith in accordance with understanding. This kind of faith is based on real understanding through personal knowledge of the true nature (*sabhāva*) of things and is different from that of blind faith. Rational faith in the teaching will lead to faith in the teacher. The understanding of *nāma-rūpa* Dhammas through mindfulness is the true understanding or *paññā*. The knowledge arising out of imagination causes interference in one's effort.

*Satipaṭṭhāna*, the setting up of mindfulness practice, is the only way to practise for the understanding of the true *Dhamma*. It promotes unshakable faith which is one of the five spiritual faculties.

# CHAPTER 2

## IGNORANCE, AVARICE & NEGLIGENCE

### THE SHROUDED WORLD

There are two questions:

- In what is the world shrouded?  
(*Kenassu nivuto loko?*) and
- Why does it not shine?  
(*Kenassu nappakāsati loko?*)

*Loka* is of three, i.e., three divisions of the universe:

- *okāsa* – the world or the realm of space,
- *satta* – the world of sentient beings or animals,
- *saṅkhāra* – the realm of inanimates or formations.

The answer to the first question is that the world is shrouded in ignorance (*avijjaya nivuto loko*). What is it that you are ignorant of or don't know? It is the truth which you are ignorant of and which you don't know.

The truth is of four kinds:

- *dukkha sacca* – the truth of suffering,
- *samudaya sacca* – the truth of the origin of suffering,
- *nirodha sacca* – the truth of the cessation of suffering,
- *magga sacca* – the truth of the way that leads to the cessation of suffering.

*Avijjā* is of two kinds. The simple ignorance of the truth is called *appatipatti avijjā*. Wrong knowledge or misconception is *micchapatipatti avijjā*.

The fourth truth of the Eightfold Path (*Magga*) indicates the means by which this extinction is attained. Simple unknowing of the noble practices is *appatipatti avijjā* and misconceiving it as leading to a great deprivation or the end of pleasures, and so futile, is *micchapatipatti avijjā*.

## HOW TO OVERCOME IGNORANCE

Due to the lack of faith in the practice one does not make an effort – ardour or heat (*ātāpa*). Due to lack of effort one cannot cultivate mindfulness and concentration – in this case it is momentary concentration (*khaṇikā samādhi*).

Like the blood which is circulating in our body, if exposed to extreme cold will freeze causing hypothermia and attendant diseases, so too if the effort (heat or *ātāpa*) is not applied to the practice of mindfulness and concentration, the *kilesa* germs will attack us causing saṃsāric diseases. Not knowing the truth one will remain confused and bewildered (*assamapekkhana* or *aññānupekkhā*). Thus is the world shrouded in ignorance. Here the world means the being or *nāma-rūpa* process.

As to the second question, the answer is ‘because of avarice (*veviccha*) and negligence (*pamāda*), it does not shine’ (*veviccha, pamāda nappakasati loko*), e.g., the widening gap between the rich and the poor has brought with it some vices – avarice, envy and petty crime. Here avarice has two mental components, namely jealousy (*issa*) in respect of others’ success and properties, and stinginess (*macchariya*) in respect of one’s own property. Both *issa* and *macchariya* are regarded as the friends of *dosa* because each of them arises with it. *Macchariya* is of five kinds:

- *āvāsa macchariya* – stinginess with respect to dwelling place;
- *kula macchariya* – stinginess with respect to family, *dayaka* (male donor) and *dayika* (female donor);
- *lābha macchariya* – stinginess with respect to gain or inability to share gain;
- *vaṇṇa macchariya* – stinginess with respect to appearance and fame;
- *dhamma macchariya* – stinginess with respect to dhamma or mental state.

*Macchariya* dims the world. Instead of sharing one’s property with others, one is miserly. *Dāna* should be like a soldier fighting in a battle field. Just as the sol-



dier sacrifices his life to shine in the battle, so will one sacrifice one's property in *dāna*. *Macchhariya* leads to the lack of prosperity or wealth (*bhoga sampatti*) in all existences. It dims the world.

As to negligence (*pamāda*) it is of two parts, namely, negligence in abstention and negligence in observance. Evil conduct (*duccarita*) in deeds, words and thoughts are things to be abstained. Also, *kilesas* are to be abandoned by means of *vipassanā* and *magga* knowledge. The threefold *sikkhās*, namely, *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* are the practices to be undergone or observed by the yogis. Negligence of these abstentions and observances cause the world to dim and not shine. Hence the exhortation by the Blessed One in His last words: *Strive on with diligence*.

# CHAPTER 3

## THE BOOK OF THE SIXES

I would like to describe two types of individuals, namely:

- *sakkāya bhirata* –  
(individual who takes delight in individuality);
- *nibbāna bhirata* –  
(individual who strives towards the cessation of  
*nāma-rūpa* dhammas).

Whereas the former is a worldling who fails to fashion his life in six ways, the latter is a noble learner (*sekha*) or perfected in learning (*asekha*) who is able to fashion his life in six ways.

The six ways by which a *sakkāya bhirata* fashions his life into a luckless death or a luckless fate are:

- *kammārāma* –  
finding delight in worldly activity, or getting engrossed in the delight of worldly activity;
- *bhassārāma* –  
finding delight in conversations;
- *niddārāma* –  
finding delight in sleeping;
- *sanganikārāma* –  
finding delight in companionship;
- *samsaggārāma* –  
finding delight in social activities;

- *papañcārāma* –  
finding delight in diffuseness.

The monk who dwells mindfully and does not find delight in the manner mentioned above will fashion his life to a lucky death, or a lucky fate. With the attainment of *Nibbāna*, he is greatly delighted, he has got rid of his bundle of life for the utter evading of ill.

There are five kinds of social activities, namely:

- *dassana saṃsagga* –  
associating intimately with such persons as the royalty, ministers or high officials, the lay disciples, the worldlings, *upāsakas* and *upāsikas* (male and female devotees), the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*. This refers to the old days, whereas in the present times, this may include one's own members of the family with whom one associates intimately;
- *savana saṃsagga* –  
association through listening intimately;
- *samullapana saṃsagga* –  
association by conversation;
- *sambhoga saṃsagga* –  
enjoyment in personal belongings;
- *kāya saṃsagga* –  
delight in one's own body.

Such persons are known as *saṃsaggārāma* persons. The yogi should be free from them. As regards conver-

sation under unavoidable circumstances, the yogis may communicate with each other by setting a time limit (*pamāṇayutta*) to their conversations, limiting them to Dhamma affairs and with full awareness when they speak. Instead of talking the yogi should go to bed to avoid disturbing others. A conversation can cause a double disruptive effect: i.e., the loss of mindfulness and the time and effort to pick up the thread of meditation.

Regarding *kāya saṃsagga*, a meditating yogi needs only four hours of sleep, the other twenty hours should be devoted to meditation. In the old days, some *bhikkhus* even reduced their sleeping hours from four to one and then a few months later to none at all, or they would sleep only in a sitting position without lying down (*nesajjikanga*). This is one of the thirteen *dhutaṅgas* or ascetic practices as a means of purification.

There should not be any worry about sleeplessness, because the yogi feels he is rested by being released from defilements. If the yogi meditates for twenty hours a day, he will have accomplished seventy-two thousand notings at the rate of one second per noting ( $60 \times 60 \times 20 = 72,000$ ). For that duration, he is released from defilements. This is a noble and a high class kind of rest. As regards delight in companionship, the majority of worldlings prefer to stay in pairs. The yogi should prefer staying alone. He will find companionship a nuisance.

# CHAPTER 4

## DIVERSIFICATIONS

*Papañca* signifies obstacle, differentiation, diffuseness or diversification. It is of three kinds, namely, craving (*taṇhā*), conceit or pride (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). They are also known as *gahadhammas* (holdings).

Those beings who are not free from *papañca* cannot be freed from further becoming or rebirths. Instead, they will prolong their stay in *saṃsāra* and its concomitant suffering. Created by *taṇhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi*, the world of diffuseness causes the diffuseness of one's aggregates (*khandhas*) or the *saṃsāric* diffuseness of one's own *khandhas*. Having co-existed with them throughout this long *saṃsāra*, how does one avoid them now?

Due to the eye and a visible object, eye consciousness arises. The coincidence of this three is contact. With contact as a condition, there is feeling. What he feels, he perceives: what he perceives, he thinks about: and what he thinks about, he diversifies (*papañceti*). Owing to having been diversified, the evaluation of diversifying perception besets a man with respect to past, future and present visible objects and so on.

This kind of *papañca* is explained by the commentaries as due to craving, pride and views, and it may be

taken as the diversifying action, the choosing and rejecting, the approval and disapproval, exercised by craving, etc., as the base material supplied by perception and thought. It is said thus:

*Papañca bhirata paja nippapañca tathāgata*

*Mankind delights in the diffuseness of the world,  
The perfect ones are free from such diffuseness.*

## CRAVING (TAÑHA)

Let us take the case of craving (*tañhā*). Craving leads to more craving, so that there is no contentment, no limit. Suppose you earn one hundred kyats now. Later, you want more – two hundred or three hundred and so on. You own a house or a car which befits your status, but you still want a better or a new one. There is no end. Thus, being mired in a *tañhā* morass, you become a slave to craving and this differentiates you from the rest of our society as a craver.

Corresponding to the six sense objects, there are six kinds of craving – for visible objects, sounds, odours, flavours, bodily impressions and mental impressions. Here is a story of a Universal Monarch (*Cakka-vatti*) who was very powerful. Sakka (king of devas) offered him half the kingdom. But still he was not satisfied. He wanted all the kingdom. By that time, he was near-

ing death and had to return to the human world. Such craving for territories exists even in this world.

If the yogi is mindful of all *nāma rūpa* phenomena as they arise, he will realise their true nature, their causal relationship and their natural characteristics such as the arising, the decaying and the passing away of phenomena. This *nāma rūpa* dhammas are nothing but an aggregate of *dukkha*. One delights in them because one thinks they are wholesome. *Taṇha papañca* will not take effect when the yogi attains *dukkhanupassanā* (knowledge in the contemplation of suffering). Once he becomes a *sotapanna*, he will not be subjected to the diffuseness of craving (*taṇhā papañca*) in the way that will lead him to the lower worlds (*apāya-gamaniya*). However, he will still be subjected to diffuseness of craving such as *bhava-taṇhā* for the next seven existences. Out of the three kinds of temperament – craving, pride and views, craving is simply greed and pride is associated with that.

## CONCEIT (MĀNA)

*Māna* is rendered here both by ‘pride and conceit’. It also has the diversifying nature. Even children have pride. They take pride in the wealth of their parents, their education, their status, their skill in athletics and so on. Even in dhamma practice, some may take pride in their knowledge of literature, their ability to meditate

longer than others, their skill in teaching meditation, etc. You may refer to ‘Ten Armies of *Māra*’ (Chapter 18) for more information on this subject.

*Māna* is one of the ten fetters that binds one to existence. It vanishes completely only at the entrance to *Arahatship*. *Māna* is of three kinds:

- *māna* (the equality conceit) – he takes pride by virtue of his equality with another, like: “We are equals and not different”;
- *amāna* (the inferiority conceit) – he takes pride by virtue of his inferiority, as saying: “Though I am inferior, why should I care?”;
- *atimāna* (the superiority conceit) – he takes pride by virtue of his superiority, as saying: “I am better”.

The blind pursuit of self-interests has created a sense of power that seems to overwhelm anything that gets in its way.

This threefold conceit should be overcome. The monk, after overcoming this threefold conceit through full penetration, is said to have put an end to suffering. Not only the individual, nations are also egoistic. For example, the petroleum producing nations boast of their wealth. In reality, all things are *anattā* and no ego-entity is to be found.



Of course, one may feel proud of one's achievement, like "I can meditate longer than others" which can be classified as *kusala*. This is called *sevitabba-māna*, an innocent type of *māna* which is worth possessing. The *asevitabba* will be classified under evil conduct – *duccarita*. The perception of permanence, such as in one's position, causes *māna*. As the yogi becomes engaged in profound meditation and contemplates on the impermanence of phenomena innumerable times till he attains the stage of *aniccanupassanā* (contemplation of impermanence), *māna papañca* will then be reduced. At those stages, the 'I' personality and ego-entity will gradually decrease. If he is established in reflection on impermanence, he will uproot the conceit 'I am', the thought of non-self endures. Thinking on there being no self, he comes to the state wherein the conceit 'I am' has been uprooted. *Sotapannas*, *sakadāgāmis* and *anāgāmis* cannot totally eradicate *māna*, but their *māna* is certainly not *apāyagamaniya* (liable to descend to the lower worlds).

## VIEWS (DIṬṬHI)

*Kusala* actions may be performed, but unless *diṭṭhi* is overcome, views have their source in delusion. The temperament of views fall within the deluded temperaments. In any one of this deluded temperament there is the frequent occurrence of such states as stiffness,

torpor, agitation, worry, uncertainty and holding on tenaciously with the refusal to relinquish. Here, I would like to mention the belief in the soul (*atta*) theory which clings to the existence of the self, the ego, the soul, the permanent and the unchanging personality core. According to this soul theory, *atta* (soul) is the site of wisdom – *ñāṇādikarana mattaṃ*. Soul theory is of two kinds:

- *parama-atta* – the supreme or the universal soul
- *jīva-atta* – the individual soul

The former is the know-all, the one and only one, devoid of pain and pleasure, creates and controls the activities of the latter. Whatever the latter does it is done at the command of the former. Both are believed to be permanent. Such a view is called *sassata diṭṭhi* (eternity belief).

Among the numerous speculative opinions and theories, which at all times have influenced and still are influencing, misleading and deluding mankind is the wrong view of a personality-belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) or ego-illusion (*atta diṭṭhi*).

Now the Buddha has shown us that the personality, the ego, the individual, the man, and the woman, etc., are nothing but mere conventional designations which in the ultimate sense is only the self-consuming process

of mental and physical phenomena (*nāma-rūpa*) that continually arise and dissolve. The so-called Evil Views with a Fixed Destiny (*Niyatamicchā diṭṭhi*) constituting the last of the ten unwholesome courses of action (*kammapatha*) include:

- *ahetuka-diṭṭhi* or *ahetu-paccaya diṭṭhi* – the causeless view or the fatalistic view of the uncausedness of existence, that there is no cause or condition for the defilement of beings;
- *visamahetuka-diṭṭhi* or *issaranimmana hetuka diṭṭhi* – the fictitious cause view, holding that the world's occurrence is due to primordial essence (*prakati*), atoms (*aṇu*), and time (*kāla*) and so on as the result of the ignorance of cause-effect relationship.

When you bend your arm, first of all you develop an intention in your mind to bend, then you bend as intended. These continuous series of intentions (*chanda*) cause the whole process of bending. Intention is the cause and bending is the effect. This proves the existence of relations between actions or events.

At the moment of 'hearing' there occur:

- sound, the striker element as materiality (*rūpa*):
- ear basis, the receptor element as materiality (*rūpa*):

- hearing consciousness, contact, feeling and the ignition element as mentality (*nāma*).

They are all conditional things – conditioned by *kamma*, *citta*, *utu* and *āhāra*.

Similar is the case with the other five consciousness elements: seeing, smelling, tasting, body and mind. These elements become obvious at the moment of noting.

Whenever we are not mindful, there will be ignorance of the true nature of things and we tend to cling to the existence of a power-wielder behind each and every act. Whereas, whenever we are mindful of the arising phenomena, we will understand that there is neither a creator (*paramatman*) nor a created (*jīva-atta*), but only the process of materiality and mentality, which are nothing but *sabhāva* or *dhamma* (nature) and are soulless, impermanent and unsatisfactory. What is impermanent cannot be satisfactory and what is impermanent and unsatisfactory cannot have a soul or be soul. There is no supreme being who is controlling the sequence of all seasons, they are governed by a natural order or fixedness of law.

There is another view, namely, the unconditional belief in *kamma*. Such people tend to put the blame on past *kamma* for any fault with the common expression of ‘lucky’ or ‘unlucky’. Such view is known as *pubbekata-*

*hetuka diṭṭhi*. One cannot put personal responsibility on kamma alone. For instance, material phenomena arise in four ways, namely kamma, mind, seasonal conditions and food.

To be free from personality view, one must practise *anattānupassanā* (contemplation of non-self). And to be free from the no-cause view, one must practise or attain *yathā bhūtānupassanā ñāṇa* (knowledge and vision according to reality). If we do not know the true nature, we will feel doubtful (*vicikicchā*) about things of the past and future and of conditionality. It also causes *sammoha* (bewilderment or delusion). People who entertain such views are deeply rooted in materialism. It also becomes extremely difficult for them to get these ideas uprooted. Such a situation is known as *abhinivesa* (adherence or inclination to one's dogmas and strong attachment to views). If the yogi is mindful of the *nāma-rūpa* phenomena as they arise, he will realise the cause-effect relationships and thus believe that these dhammas arise not only in himself but also in others.

We always invite those of other denominations to show the way leading to true knowledge. We will also show them our method by which they can come and practise to understand the ultimate realities. We don't convert others by force. We only invite them to come and see for themselves.

This is said with reference to faith. It is worthy of an invitation to inspect (*ehipassiko*) this dhamma. If one responds to this clarion call and practises this dhamma, one is certain to understand the true nature of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena, their conditionality, their *anicca-dukkha* characteristics and finally the abandoning of the two *sakkāya ditthis*, i.e., *sassata-diṭṭhi* (eternity belief or doctrine of eternalism that the world is self and eternal) and *uccheda-diṭṭhi* (annihilation belief).

One who sees passing away of phenomena will eradicate the eternity belief (*sassata-diṭṭhi*): and one who sees reappearance will eradicate the annihilation belief (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*). Or one who sees only passing away and not reappearance assumes the annihilation view: and one who sees only reappearance and not passing away assumes the eternity belief. But since one who sees both these phenomena outstrip that two-fold false view, that vision of his is therefore a cause for purification of view.

Beings may perform wholesome (*kusala*) actions, but if *diṭṭhi* is not overcome in the three periods, namely, *pubba* (preliminary), *muñca* (during) and *pala* (aftermath), they may be reborn through rebirth-linking consciousness given by that kamma with *kusala ahetuka santīrana* (rootless profitable passive resultant consciousness), signified by congenitally blind, deaf, dumb, lame or with *somanassasahagata ñāṇa-vipayutta* of

*kāmāvacara vipāka citta* (the sense-sphere, beautiful type of resultant consciousness uncombined with knowledge) signified by slow understanding though they are otherwise prosperous and successful.

## SATIPAṬṬHĀNA AS REMEDY

The diffuseness of *papañcas* can go beyond limits so as to intoxicate those who succumb to the diversifying action, the choosing, rejecting, the approval and the disapproval, exercised by craving, etc. The consequences can get out of control and beyond limits and legal bounds. When confronted with disagreeable objects, *dosa* will arise and drive them mad. There have been instances of husband and wife quarrelling and breaking domestic materials. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is the remedy to cure madness.

The compound '*satipaṭṭhāna*' is derived from '*sati*' (mindfulness) and '*upaṭṭhāna*' (establishment or foundation), meaning that mindfulness approaches its object and remains there: '*paṭṭhāna*' signifies adherence, entering into (anchoring upon), continuous occurrence, firmness.

Mindfulness centred on the body, if practised, made much of and plunged into, conduces to pleasant living in this very life, to the realisation of the fruit of release by knowledge. Both the mind and body become calm and discursive thoughts come to rest.

# CHAPTER 5

## PERVERSIONS

The perversions of truth (*vipallāsa*) are three:

- *saññā vipallāsa* – the perversion of perception;
- *citta vipallāsa* – the perversion of consciousness;
- *ditṭhi vipallāsa* – the perversion of view.

These three occur apprehending objects that are impermanent, painful, non-self, and foul or ugly, as permanent, pleasant, self and beautiful. Is it the same as hallucinations? Not in the sense of ‘apparent sensory experience of something that does not exist’, but in the sense of ‘false notion’. *Vipallāsa* is like a false impression of a real person seen from a distance. It is defined as ‘turning aside or away from what is good or true or morally right.’ It is different from *vipallāpa* which means ‘argument, talking nonsense’.

Likewise, if the yogi is not mindful of the phenomena as they arise and not aware of *nāma-rūpa* dhammas, their conditionality and *anicca-dukkha* characteristics, he will remain perverted to false perception, consciousness and view. Such perversions find permanence in the impermanent, self in the non-self, pleasure in the pain and beauty in the foul (*asubha*). Such temperament has existed all along the *saṃsāra*, because we do



not know the method leading to the abandonment of perversions. It is in this way that we cling to the ego-entities and personality-views, no-cause views and so on.

At the time of natural disasters, one tends to put the blame on the work of demons or superhuman beings. And overcome by madness of views (*diṭṭhumattaka*), some resort to sacrificial offerings to please the demons. Things do not stop there. They will reserve a place in the house for the soul of the departed or keep his belongings in the grave for the soul to enjoy in his next life, or occasionally feed the soul: some will go and bathe in rivers to wash away their sins and others will fulfil their vows or show gratitude to the deities by piercing their body with skewers or walking over swords.

How about the offerings made to the shrine in this country? The offering should be done with reflection on the great virtues of the Buddha rather than to the image. Of the two kinds of offerings, *amisa puja* (offering of material) and *dhamma puja*, the latter is superior.

Until one understands the flaws of sensuous pleasure, one will inevitably indulge in it. Because he has not discovered step by step all things rightly, he does not understand the eye as the truth of suffering (*dukkha sacca*), the prior craving that originates it by being its root-cause as the truth of its origin (*samudaya sacca*), the non-occurrence of birth as the truth of cessation

(*nirodha sacca*), and the way that is the act of understanding cessation is the truth of the path (*magga sacca*).

One can understand the realities by being with the object at the moment of arising. Otherwise one will be deluded (*moha*) to mistake *dukkha* for *sukha* leading one to a mild form of madness. There are opinions that living with *lobha* is the cause of happiness. And *Nibbāna* is viewed as the absence of happiness, a point of no return and a great death because there are no *nāma-rūpa* and no relatives or friends to meet.

There are two kinds of beings which can be cited as examples of possessing perverted views. They are the child and the monkey. The child has a perverted sense of right and wrong. It does not understand right and wrong. It knows only to fulfil its desires. It yields to temptations. It is called ‘childish mentality’ – a kind of *mohumattaka*.

There are festivals where people are possessed by demons, have their bodies pierced with needles, walk on fire, and so on. There was an instance where even Ānanda was possessed by Māra and rendered forgetful to talk to the Buddha.

Once, Venerable Sariputta and Moggallana were living at Kapotakandara monastery. On one moonlit night,

Sariputta, whose head was just clean shaven, was absorbed in *Upekkhā Brahmavihāra Samādhi* (*Brahmavihārupekkhā Samādhi*). At that time, two demons (*yakkhas*) were travelling from north to south, and seeing Sariputta, one of them told his friend that he wanted to hit the head of the monk. The friend objected to this. For the second and third time, the same *yakkha* insisted and his friend objected. At last the *yakkha* hit Sariputta's head so hard that it was sufficient to plunge an elephant into the ground or break up a hilltop. When Mogallana knew this, he enquired about the health of Sariputta. The latter replied that he was alright except that he suffered from a slight headache. This shows that even Ariyas can be affected by the work of demons. Of course, this does not amount to *yakkhummattaka*.

There is another kind of madness called '*pittummattaka*' which is caused by seizure with some kind of organic disease such as malaria, yellow fever or even high fever. Then we have people who are driven mad by indulgence in intoxicants. Alcohol can trigger violent episodes. If one is schizophrenic, a single beer is enough to send him over the edge. There are nearly a million Americans who suffer the double jeopardy of mental illness and chemical dependence. Well known cases of death through accidents due to alcohol and drug abuse serve as ample proof of such madness, which is also very dangerous. This is called *surummattaka*.

Thus we have eight kinds of madness (*ummattaka*):

- *kāmummattaka* –  
*kāma* madness or frenzied with lust;
- *kodhummattaka* –  
*dosa* madness or frenzied with hate;
- *diṭṭhummattaka* –  
madness with wrong view or frenzied with error;
- *mohummattaka* –  
frenzied with infatuation;
- *yakkhummattaka* –  
driven mad by yakkhas or demonic possession;
- *pittummatakkā* –  
mad from organic disorders;
- *surummattaka* –  
frenzied with intoxicants;
- *vyasanummatakkā* –  
maddened by misfortune, such as suffering,  
tragic loss of family members and being devastated  
by the loss of loved ones.

We have a saying here:

*Puthujjanahi ummuttaka*  
*All ordinary persons are lunatics.*

*Satipaṭṭhāna* can overcome lunacy.

# CHAPTER 6

## TRAINING

*Sikkhā* (training) is of three kinds: *sīla* (virtue or morality), *samādhi* (concentration) and *paññā* (wisdom or understanding). It is the training which the Buddha's disciple has to undergo. The three aspects of *sikkhā* give confidence in the practice, self-confidence and confidence in the dispensator.

### BHIKKHU

Here, I would like to introduce a Buddhist term '*bhikkhu*' (male mendicant monk). He fears the round of rebirths, thus he is a *bhikkhu*.

The Blessed One said:

*“Sato bhikkave bhikkhu vihareyya  
Sampajāno ayamvo amhākaṃ anusāsani”*

*“O Bhikkhus,  
One who sees fear in the round of rebirths, thus he is  
a bhikkhu.*

*He dwells by devoting himself to the task of contemplation  
with true and comprehensive personal knowledge  
gained through intuition.*

*This to you, bhikkhus, has been our (Buddha's)  
repeated teaching.”*

## DEFILEMENT (KILESA)

There are three kinds of defilements:

- *vītikkaṃa kilesa* – defilements of transgression, ie., over one's precepts, rights of others and moral principles. They belong to the coarse or gross form (coarse manifestations in action and speech);
- *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa* – obsessive defilements which occur at the mental level, not manifested through body and speech. They belong to the medium form;
- *anusaya kilesa* – defilements that lie latent (dormant) and wait for the opportune time to assault us. They belong to the subtle or refined form. They are also called proclivities, inclinations or tendencies.

The first class is overcome by virtue, the second by concentration and the third by understanding. The states of the three may be compared to those of a match stick, spark and conflagration, or a person's slumber, awakening and movement respectively in their ascending order. Please refer to Chapter 19.

*Anusaya kilesa* is also qualified as possessing an inherent tendency which is difficult to eradicate (*thamagata*). It is of two kinds:

- *Santānānusaya kilesa* –  
*Santana* = ever flowing current of *nāma-rūpa* processes. Latent defilements in continuity, that can arise within the saṃsāric existence when conditions are favourable, so long as they have not been uprooted by *magga* (path). In short, they are the ones which are possible to arise in a being because they have not been eradicated. The example given here is that of a chronic patient with fever arising whenever opportune moment comes;
- *Ārammananusaya kilesa* –  
They are latent defilements in object, *ārammana*. They arise or have a chance to arise, whenever clear objects are perceived through the six sense doors, so long as they are not understood according to reality through *vipassanā*. The examples given here are that of a camera shutter which does not allow the image to be printed on the film, and that of a windshield wiper of a ship, which prevents the mist from collecting on the screen.

The main difference between the two is that the former is concerned with the saṃsāric existence and the latter, the present existence.

The *anusaya kilesa* is of seven kinds:

- *kāmarāga* – sensuous lust or greed;
- *bhavarāga* – craving for continued existence;

- *paṭigha* – ill-will;
- *māna* – pride;
- *diṭṭhi* – views;
- *vicikicchā* – sceptical doubt;
- *avijjā* – ignorance.

*Diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā* are overcome by *sotapatti magga* (first path consciousness). *Sakadāgāmi magga* (second path consciousness) weakens *kāmarāga* and *paṭigha*. These two are totally eradicated by *anāgāmi magga* (third path consciousness). The *arahat* (fourth path consciousness) eliminates the remaining proclivities.

What happens to a *sotapanna* – will he suffer the consequences of past deeds or of the remaining *anusayas*? Although a *sotapanna* can eradicate totally two *anusayas* only, he will not commit any gross forms of the remaining *anusayas* so as to cause him to be reborn in the lower worlds. Nor will he suffer to be reborn as such in respect of the past deeds.

During *vipassanā* absorption, the *anusayas* are temporarily inhibited, just like when a patient is taking medicines regularly no fever will arise. With the attainment of *magga*, the respective *anusayas* are totally eliminated, just as after the patient has taken his medicines regularly, he is totally recovered from his illness, and fever will not arise again under any conditions.



It is evident here that *vipassanā* practice is progressively weakening the *anusaya kilesas* so that they may be totally eradicated by the *ariya magga* (noble path consciousness). It may be illustrated like this. In a boxing match you avoid your opponent's blows and at the same time wait for your own opportunity to give him a good beating so as to decide the match. There is one note of caution, that is, however strong and competent you are – you may be a champion – yet you might not be able to knock him out with just a blow or two: you will need many decisive blows. Likewise, the yogi must practise the three *sikkhās* in order first to weaken the *kilesas* and then to eliminate them. With the observation of virtues, the yogi must concentrate his attention on the rising phenomena with diligence and persistence.

## THE THREE MAGGAS

Can you explain *ariya magga*? The time is not ripe to do so. Our immediate interest is in the formula and not the answer. The types of *magga* may, of course, be given. One is *mūla magga* (basic path), the other is *pubbabhāga magga* (preliminary path) and the third is *ariya magga* (noble path).

### ***Mūla Magga***

The first one is concerned with the fundamental right view on kamma, that is '*kammassakatā sammādiṭṭhi*'.

Whatever good or bad deeds you do – such actions (*kamma*) are your own property. In other words, moral actions beget wholesome results, immoral actions beget unwholesome results. Hence the Dhamma maxim: You are the owner of your deeds. Deeds are one's own. Beings are heirs to their deeds. It is like taking food – if it is wholesome there is no harm, if it is not, it will be harmful, and there is no other being responsible for the after effects. This kind of view is termed 'the light of the world'. So long as we are going through the *nāma-rūpa* process there is no end of the action-reaction mechanism, and as such this view is also called 'the light of the *Samāsāra*'.

Here, it may be mentioned that there are three branches of kusala actions or that the *mūla magga* is branched off into three, namely, *kamma*, *jhāna* and *ñāṇa*. The first one comprises *dāna* and *sīla* which result in the attainment of the higher realm of beings such as humans and devas. The Jhānic branch comprises the practice of *rūpa* and *arūpa jhānas* (*samatha bhāvanā*) which will result in the attainment of brahmaship. The third is the *ñāṇa* branch (branch of understanding) or *satipaṭṭhāna* practice by which one applies mindfulness diligently and persistently to know the true nature of phenomena in accordance with the *vipassanā niyāma* (natural law):

*Only if caught on the spot, you'll spot Sabhāva.*

The thing caught on the spot is each and every arising of mental and physical features.

### ***Pubbabhāga Magga***

When you close your hand, first you form an intention in your mind to do so. This intention occurs in series. What do you feel when you close or open your hand? Who is closing your hand, or which one wishes to do so? It is the mind. Don't you feel stiffness, tension and painful sensations? They are called *sabhāva* (nature). To note these phenomena is to develop understanding (*ñāṇa*). Like the electric current and the movement of the fan, *nāma-rūpa* phenomena are not difficult to be discerned. Just as you cannot see the electric current you cannot see the mental intentions, but you can note to know them. *Nāma* and *rūpa sabhāva* can be known only when you note at the moment of arising.

There are three things about the materiality – form, manner and nature. The former two are not materiality in reality, though they are called as such in the ordinary sense. The real materiality is the sensations which arise during the closing and opening process, called *sabhāvas*, which really exist and which you are required to note. Prior to the awareness of the *sabhāva* you can observe the form and manner.

During mindfulness, you apply mental factors such as making the right aim (*sammā saṅkappa*), that is aiming or directing the noting consciousness towards the target with the right effort (*sammā vāyāma*) to become aware rightly (*sammā sati*) and to plunge the consciousness into the object, that is, to concentrate rightly (*sammā samādhi*). No *lobha* or *dosa* arise during this practice. So, the mind is purified when it is directed to concentrate with right effort and right aiming. For one minute of such practice the mind will be sixty times purified and that many times more powerful. In this way, you will bypass the perception of form and manner to know the *sabhāva*. This is *ñāṇa* (understanding) or *sammā diṭṭhi magga* (path of right view). This is *pubbabhāga magga* (forerunner of *ariya magga*) synonymous with *vipassanā magga* or *lokiya magga*.

When you have fulfilled *pubbabhāga magga* you will advance to *ariya magga* without special effort. At *pubbabhāga wholesome magga* stage, *kilesas* are overcome during *vipassanā* absorption only but not abandoned totally. The four noble truths have not been perceived. This means that if the yogi leaves the practice at this stage before advancing to *ariya magga* the knowledge gained through *vipassanā* practice will wither away.

## ***Ariya Magga***

The advancement of knowledge from the *pubbabhāga* to *ariya magga* is like submission of official business by the junior staff to the senior or head of department for formal approval. It is only at this stage that the overcoming of *kilesa* and the perception of the truth are accomplished. It goes without saying that the *pubbabhāga magga* must be fulfilled as a prerequisite for the attainment of *ariya magga*, just as the case must be thoroughly studied and prepared by office staff to enable the chief to give his final approval.

This is mentioned here, because some people have the opinion that *ariya magga* or enlightenment will come at any moment like a flash without effort when the time comes for the auspicious occasion.

## PEACE (SANTI)

*Santi* (peace or complete freedom from *kilesas*) is of three kinds:

- *tadaṅga santi* (momentary peace) – which in fact is *vipassanā ñāṇa*;
- *accanta santi* (total peace) – it is none other than *nibbāna*;
- *sammuti santi* (conventional peace) – it is imaginary peace without any practice: for instance, the peaceful life one can attain due to

the saving by a powerful being, which is nothing but a misconception.

Buddhists are only concerned with the former two. When the yogi is attentively watching the phenomena at the moment of arising, he will penetrate the intrinsic nature, such as *anicca-dukkha* characteristic signs and the cause-effect relationship, and overcome *kilesas* and the misconception of self. The series of momentary peace thus attained will lead to total permanent peace.

## THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH (ARIYA AṬṬHANGIKA MAGGA)

By practising the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna*) namely: *Kāyanupassanā* (mindfulness of the body), *Cittanupassanā* (mindfulness of the mind), *Vedanānupassanā* (mindfulness of feeling) and *Dhammanupassanā* (mindfulness of mind-object), the following Noble Eightfold Path, which is the Buddha's way of life is achieved. The Noble Eightfold Path can be subdivided into three main groups:

- **Wisdom** group or understanding aggregate (*Paññā Khandha*):
  - Right view or understanding (*Sammā diṭṭhi*);
  - Right aim (*Sammā saṅkappa*).

- **Morality** group or virtue aggregate (*Sīla Khandha*):
  - Right speech (*Sammā vācā*);
  - Right bodily action (*Sammā kammanta*);
  - Right livelihood (*Sammā ājiva*).
- **Concentration** group or aggregate (*Samādhi Khandha or Samatha*):
  - Right effort (*Sammā vāyāma*);
  - Right mindfulness (*Sammā sati*);
  - Right concentration (*Sammā samādhi*).

When you have fulfilled the morality group, you are bodily and verbally purified and are said to have become an *ariya* (noble individual), i.e., *pārisuddha* (purified) and *uttama* (noble or highly). At the *paññā* stage *kilesas* are totally uprooted, that is the *ārammananusaya* form is eliminated. He becomes extremely pure and noble. Of course, these qualities are not of the kinds which occur in practising yogis.

At moment of absorption, the mind is purified and noble and is fulfilling the Noble Eightfold Path. These eight conditions, when cultivated and made much of, lead to *nibbāna*. Hence, the expression ‘*ariyo aṭṭhangiko maggo*’ qualifying the ‘message’ with *ariya* and *aṭṭhangika*. Another qualification is ‘*sammā dukkhakhaya gāmi magga*’ (right path leading to the cessation of suffering reached by the noting mind).

# CHAPTER 7

## CONTRADICTION AND COMPLIANCE

We live in a human world of likes and dislikes, conflict and harmony. Consequently, during the practice the yogi may experience undesirable objects (*anittthārammaṇa*) and unbearable sensations at which he may feel displeased (*domanassa*). Such kind of state is known as *virodha* (obstructing, opposing). It's proximate cause is unfulfilment. On the other hand, he may come across desirable objects (*ittthārammaṇa*) to which he may be tempted and which will serve as fundamental cause for greed. This is *anurodha* (compliance or satisfaction). It's proximate cause is fulfilment. Such is the nature of the world (*loka subhāva*).

A girl, coming of age, wishes to be beautiful. She will do all she can within her means to look more and more beautiful. She will never feel content. A boy, wishing to distinguish himself, does all he can to become outstanding in education or athletics. He wishes to shine in the spotlight. When both the boy and girl grow old, they wish to become more and more successful, more and more prosperous. These are the manifestations of craving for own body, own ability, as things and events conform to their wishes (*anurodha*).

When they grow old, in later years, things and events



rarely comply with these wishes: her appearance is not as attractive as before, and his efficiency is going down with age. They may even become social outcasts. Things are not conforming with their ambitions (*virodha*).

Thus, with the bright side of worldly conditions, such as gain, fame, praise or happiness one feels on top of the world and experiences *anurodha*. And with the dark side, such as loss, disgrace, blame or misery, one experiences *virodha*. As for our body, when her bodily appearance is complying with her wishes in her youth, she is satisfied: when it is not complying in old age, she is dissatisfied. Hence the expression:

*Kāya-sampatti-mūlako anurodho*

*Kāya vipatti mūlako virodho.*

Is there any worldly means to reconcile these two extremes? Both these opposite dhammas must be noted by the yogis. Sometimes the yogi becomes bored with the usual practice of noting the same object over and over again. So he yearns for new sensations which may be opposing (*virodha*) or desirable (*anurodha*). Both the dislikes and likes must be noted so that, seeing an object with the eye, he is neither attached to objects that charm, nor averse to objects that displease. He should be prepared to steer clear of these two extremes: in youth *anurodha*, in old age *virodha*. This is an example of *majjhima paṭipadā* (middle path).

# CHAPTER 8

## MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES

This is good advice to remind one to do things in time. For instance, if you are bleeding, you must at once be taken to the nearest hospital to save your life. Here, time is very important. If you are late by one hour, you may die. The same thing with other emergencies such as appendicitis.

Likewise, you must practise the dhamma in time, that is before you become too old or too indisposed, or death takes you over. You must practise when you have a teacher and when you have the opportunity or convenience. Just as youth is the best time for secular education, so also the first period of life (life is divided into three equal periods) is ideal for the practice of *sati-paṭṭhāna*, because one is young and active and free from responsibilities. This brings us to the story of the son of a millionaire called Mahaddhana.

### THE PRODIGAL SON

He did not study while he was young: when he came of age, he married the daughter of a rich man, who, like him, also had no education. When the parents of both sides died, they inherited eighty crores of wealth from each side and so were very rich. Both of them were

ignorant and knew only how to spend money and not how to keep it or make it grow. They just ate and drank and had a good time squandering their money. When they had spent it all, they sold their fields and gardens and finally their house.

Thus, they became very poor and helpless: and because they did not know how to earn a living, they had to go begging. One day, the Buddha saw the rich man's son leaning against the wall of the monastery taking the left-overs given by the *sāmaṇeras*. Seeing him the Buddha smiled.

The Venerable Ānanda asked the Buddha why he smiled, and the Buddha replied, “Ānanda, look at this son of a very rich man, he has lived a useless life, an aimless life of pleasure.

If he had learnt to look after his riches in the first stage of his life, he would have been a top-ranking rich man: or if he became a *bhikkhu*, he could have been an *Arahat*, and his wife could have been an *Anāgāmi*. If he had learnt to look after his riches in the second stage of his life, he would have been a second rank rich man, or if he became a *bhikkhu*, he could have been an *Anāgāmi* and his wife could have been a *Sakādāgami*. If he had learnt to look after his riches in the third stage of his life, he would have been a third rank rich man, or if he became a *bhikkhu*, he could have

been a *Sakādāgami* and his wife could have been a *Sotapanna*.

However, because he had done nothing in all the three stages of life, he has lost all his worldly riches, he has also lost all opportunities of attaining any of the *maggas* and *phalas*.”

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

*“Acaritvā brahmacariyam aladdhā yobbane dhanam.  
Jiṇṇakoncāva jhāyanti khīnamacche’va pallale.”*

*“They, who in their youth have neither led the life of purity  
nor have acquired wealth,  
waste away in dejection  
like decrepit herons on a drying pond deplete of fish.”*

❁ Dhammapada 155 ❁

## VIRTUOUS FRIEND (KALYĀṄAMITTA)

So, why this tragic drama? The moral of the story is that a good reliable friend (*kalyāṇamitta*) is *sine qua non*. Ānanda once said that noble friendship is half the holy life. To this, the Buddha refuted by saying, ‘Noble friendship is the entire holy life, I myself am the good friend. It is owing to my being a good friend to them that the living beings subject to birth are freed from birth.’

One has to be very careful of associating with *pāpamittatā* (friendship or association with sinners or evil companions). This will lead to *kariyaparihani* (diminution or loss of action or practice).

As it is the teacher's duty to teach and exhort correctly, it is the disciple's duty to learn and practise accordingly.

## BENEFITS

What are the maximum benefits of practising *sati-paṭṭhāna* meditation? They are:

- purification of mind;
  - overcoming of sorrows (*soka*) and attainment of peace (*santi*);
  - overcoming of lamentation (*parideva*);
  - diminution of physical pain (*kāyika dukkha*);
  - overcoming grief (*domanassa*);
  - overcoming of defilements (*kilesas*);
  - detachment (*viveka*);
  - freedom (*pamokkha*);
  - liberation (*vimokkha*);
- through the attainment of *magga phala*.

# CHAPTER 9

## WHEELS OF CONJUNCTURE

This topic is chosen to answer the question: Is there any relationship between past kamma and present perception of dhamma?

The Blessed One said:

*“Bhikkhus, there are these four wheels wherewith a fourfold wheel of gods and men so endowed rolls on, namely: dwelling in a suitable place, association with the good, self-control, accumulation of merit in previous existences.”*

The four *cakkas* (blessings or wheels of fulfilment) are:

- *Patirupadesavāsa* – living in a suitable place;
- *Sappurisupanissaya* – association with good persons;
- *Attasammāpaṇidhi* – right self-regulation;
- *Pubbekatapuññatā* – having done good work in former existences).

### PATIRUPADESAVĀSA

A suitable locality is where one can find conducive social conditions that can bring about wholesome actions, bodily, verbal and mental. Good social conditions include the state of good relations with friends,

family and teachers. They also include a situation where one can perform charity (*dāna*), observe precepts (*sīla*) and practice dhamma (*bhāvanā*). In other words, it is a place where Buddhism flourishes.

## SAPPURISUPANISSAYA

Association with good persons or company can be found in suitable locality. Good companions (*kalyāṇamitta*) can be found in parents, family members, teachers and friends. This will help to awaken faith (*saddhā*) and arouse urgency (*saṃvega*) to cultivate one's behaviour.

## ATTASAMMĀPAṆIDHI

“*Atta*” may be rendered as mind or the whole body including both mind and body. “*Attasammāpaṇidhi*” means putting one's life in order by using dhamma make up or dhamma dress.

We can regulate or mould ourselves correctly and set ourselves on the right course if we know the basic principle: ‘Good actions bring good results: bad actions bring bad results’. If we eat wholesome food, we feel good. If we eat unwholesome food, we suffer from indigestion or stomach complaint. So we have to avoid unwholesome things.

If a material is really good, people will publicize it as being wholesome: well-wishers will come to you and

say, 'use it, it is good'. The same thing goes with *sati-paṭṭhāna* practice. Since it is known to bring good results by way of wholesome courses of action, bodily, verbally and mentally, we want to practise it. So, we value it, cherish it and put it into practice. In this way we can skilfully mould ourselves.

When a dress is advertised as having an attractive design, women will go for it even if the price is high, because it is publicly advertised, and it must be genuine. So, when it is purchased and worn, it beautifies one. Likewise, where we have been out of fashion previously with *duccarita*, if we now develop our physical and verbal actions, we can fashion ourselves properly. We do not incur any expenditure for this.

Next we have to cultivate our minds by noting every arising object, not letting the mind wander off and freeing the mind from mental defilements. To a practising yogi, in one minute of mindfulness and fixed attention, for sixty times *kilesas* will not occur, and in one hour his mind will be purified three thousand six hundred times. He becomes beautiful and attains perfection of spiritual qualities. He perfects his bodily, verbal and mental courses of action. He is able to pursue the three kinds of training (*sikkhā*) – *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. The ugliness is transformed into beauty which everybody wants.



*Satipaṭṭhāna* practice uplifts one's life. Without it, one will be morally degraded. Though the material world progresses, people's morals do not, and so the wheel of right self-regulation is not revolving. It is most important to improve the mind. Unless the mind is properly fashioned, bodily and verbal behaviour cannot be fashioned. It depends on the mind. The only way to mould the mind is the *satipaṭṭhāna* way.

*Be mindful and fully aware.*

*Noting every arising.*

*To be always on your guard.*

If the yogi is not mindful of the objects at the moment of arising, vigilantly and fixedly, he will become negligent and will fail to prevent the entry of *kilesas*. If the mind is not properly moulded, unwholesome thoughts will arise and bodily and verbal actions will not be in order. Hence the expression: '*Sato bhikkhu paribbaje*' meaning 'the *bhikkhu* wanders mindfully': also the aphorism:

*By sati, one remembers the object – this is mindfulness.*

It exercises government (over associated states) by the characteristic of 'being present in', hence it is a controlling faculty.

How should the yogi fix his mind on the target? He should strive in such a way that his consciousness sinks into the object together with the collection of its

associated mental states (*sampayutta dhammas*) like a stone is dropped into the water, and not just float away along the stream like a cork on the surface of the water. Hence, the chief characteristic of *sati* is ‘not floating away’ or ‘non-superficiality’ (*apilāpana lakkaṇa*).

When you are noting the abdominal movement, as it rises, you watch all the three divisions of phenomena, i.e., the beginning, the middle and the end. You must make your effort in such a way that the consciousness is directed to coincide with the target. Otherwise the consciousness will glide, slide, slip or skim over the target. Mindfulness is the opposite of superficiality.

If you are unable to fix your attention to other phenomena, you must fall back on the original rise and fall of the abdomen and not lose sight of it. It is like when you are after a person you want to meet, you follow him closely so as not to lose sight of him. The notings should follow one after another and flow in close succession. The function of *sati* is *asammosa* (unforgetfulness, without omission or slipping).

*Sati* is manifested as encountering or meeting face to face with the object (*visayā bhimukha bhāva paccupatṭhāna*). If you feel any sensation such as heat or tension, or if you make any movement during walking, you note every sensation or movement. Your consciousness must encounter the object as it arises. When you

meet a person, you look not only at his whole face, but also at all the details of his face so as to understand him. Also, when you are eating your food, you munch it thoroughly so as to enjoy its taste. If you just swallow it, you will not know the full taste. Instead you may suffer from indigestion. So also, the yogi may feel dejected. Thus he must concentrate his attention on the target to understand its nature. When he is thus face to face with the object, he will understand its details and hence its *sabhāva* or *sarasa* (natural or essential property or quality). *Kilesas* will be prevented from entering (demonstration: watch closely the closing and opening of the hand).

If the yogi is negligent, he will be ugly. His mind, and so his life will not be protected. If his mind is cultured, his life will be protected from *kilesas* and properly fashioned. Hence, another manifestation of *sati* is the manner of guarding or protection (*āraṅkha pac-cupaṭṭhāna*), resulting in the chain of causal relations, namely, protection leading to security, security to peace, and peace to happiness. *Sati* has firm perception or application of mindfulness as regards to the body, etc., as proximate cause.

To fashion one's life, *satipaṭṭhāna* is vital. Realising the correctness of the method in purifying the mind, one will have faith in it. Being mindful in a face to

face manner with the object, the yogi understands the phenomena distinctly as *nāma* and *rūpa*. Previously, because he did not understand, he was not properly fashioned. So now one realises that it is superb (*mahantat-taṃ* or *vipulattam*). At this stage the yogi has not yet reached the stage of understanding the cause-effect relationship. However, as he progresses to a higher stage, he is said to have attained a great intellectual development (*vipulattam*). At this stage, he knows the causal relations between *nāma* and *rūpa* – *nāma* causing *nāma* or *rūpa*, and *rūpa* causing *rūpa* or *nāma*.

Prior to comprehension of causal relationship, one was doubtful and knowledge was limited. Now after realising the causal relationship, one overcomes doubt and the knowledge becomes eminent and distinctive. By overcoming the no-cause view, one is said to become properly moulded. However much people may say, ‘there is no cause’, this view will no longer be entertained.

Seeing the arising and passing away of phenomena, their natural (*dhamma*) characteristics and their unsatisfactory situation, however much people may say, ‘they are permanent, satisfactory and self’, one will not accept these views anymore. This is another sign of progress and proper fashioning.

In this way, sati becomes remarkable and progressive till one experiences *magga ñāṇa*. The unpleasant situ-

ation into which one has been shaped throughout the existences will be pleasantly shaped. It is only when one becomes an *ariya* (noble one), one is assured of graceful life. Otherwise one can get out of shape into a disgraceful life. Ariyas are the true disciples or listeners of the Buddha (*sāvaka*) who are walking on the four paths.

### PUBBEKATAPUÑÑATĀ

We do not earn the above three blessings freely. Our past merits have sent us to a suitable place where we have the opportunity of meeting right people. From the good friends we learn the good dhamma by which we can regulate or skilfully mould ourselves. This deed, *attasammāpanidhi*, becomes a cause for good merits, *pubbekatapuññatā*. The latter will send us again to a suitable place. Thus the cycle rotates.

Out of the four, the former three are the cause and the fourth is the effect. At present we are faced with the effect. If the effect is good, then the cause must have been good. When we see smoke, we can safely assume the presence of fire.

If we are unable to mould ourselves, (i.e., the wheel of *attasammāpanidhi* is out of order) we will stand to lose in spite of our best merits (*pubbekatapuññatā*). In the suttas, we find the example of Devadatta and

Ajātasattu. The former was able to develop *jhānas* and even supernormal knowledge (*abhiññā*) as a result of his past merits. But, since he opposed the Buddha by forming a sect of his own and committing the grievous sin of creating discord or schism within the brotherhood (*garuko saṅghabhedo*), he fell into *apāya*.

As for Ajattasatu, he had enough perfections (*paramis*) to become at least a *sotapanna* after the Blessed One expounded the famous Sutta of ‘*Samañña-Phala*’ (The Fruits of Monkhood). However, he fell into misery by ganging up with Devadatta and committing patricide.

So, although the past merits are extremely important, we can suffer if we cannot fulfill the third *sampatti*. Again, though basically we have not skilfully moulded ourselves, we can develop ourselves by learning and practising.

Once, a man called Ariya was fishing when the Blessed One passed by together with his *Saṅgha*. When he saw the Blessed One approaching, he put down his fishing tackle out of shame. The Blessed One stopped and asked the names of his disciples one by one, thus letting the fisherman wonder what he would say when his turn came. His turn did come at last. He replied that his name was ‘Ariya’. Thereupon, the Blessed One said that his name meant ‘noble’, but that he was fishing, unbecom-

ing of his name. The Buddha expounded the dhamma at the end of which the fisherman attained *Sotapanna*.

Whether one is rich or intelligent or enjoying good life, without *attasammāpaṇidhi* one is ignoble. If we wish to uplift our standard, we must possess this *sampatti*: it makes a human out of you. In the human world (*manussa loka*) we can strive to attain Buddhahood if we perform wholesome actions energetically. If this *sampatti* is satisfactorily accomplished, wholesome energetic actions will result and in such a situation we do not need to worry about the strength of *sati* (mindfulness): instead we can continue our effort with the same *sati* we had.

Thus, it can be seen that the first cause leads to the second, and the combination of the two leads to the third which is most crucial in uplifting oneself. This will again lead to the fourth, completing the cycle. If the wheel of self-regulation is not fulfilled, the cycle will be disrupted and one will fall into misery. Please also refer to the *Maṅgala Sutta* (Discourse on Blessings).

# CHAPTER 10

## HUMANKIND IS A RARE PRIVILEGE

This means the attainment of humanity is a rare thing. Compared to other worlds, the human world has three advantages:

- in the human world the *sati* (mindfulness) is stronger. In the celestial world, the celestial pleasures (*devatā sukha*) cause beings to be forgetful of doing meritorious deeds;
- In the *apāya* world, the hellish miseries (*niraya dukkha*) impair the mind so as to lose track of the dhamma;
- In the animal kingdom, it is fearful and the fear arises without the application of *sati*. It perceives knowledge only by training.

The human realm is a mixture of both pain and pleasure. If they are not mindful, they would meet with *dukkha*. So, they tend to be mindful. After we have skillfully moulded ourselves, our *sati* will be excellent. Thus it is evident that the *manussa loka* excels *deva loka*.

Secondly, human beings have an opportunity to possess courage and enthusiasm in doing good as well as bad things, producing good or bad results. So, to achieve good results, they shape their lives properly and



follow the wholesome courses of action courageously. Thirdly, human beings have the chance of practising the noble path of eight constituents. In this regard also the *manussa loka* is better than the *deva loka*.

In this way we can abandon unwholesome actions with a manner befitting our humankind, with sound mindfulness, courage and noble practice. Such prospect for advancement does not arise so easily in the *deva loka*. Life in the *deva loka* is too luxurious to enable the practice of *sikkhās*. It is said that whenever Sakka (ruler of gods or king of devas) wants to observe the eight precepts (*uposatha*), he is wont to take some earthly disguise and descend to the *manussa loka* to avoid the luxurious life in the *deva loka*.

In the human world, there is every chance of performing *kusala* actions and as such it is considered as virtue (*sukati*). We can practise the dhamma with steadfastness (*adhimokkha*) and fulfil the perfections (*pāramī*) to achieve *bodhiñāṇa* (enlightenment). *Manussa bhava* is truly admirable, and we are fortunate to be human beings. Bodhisattas prefer the human realm as they get better opportunities to serve the world and perfect the requisites for Buddhahood. Buddhas are always born as human beings.

By fulfilling the third *sampatta*, we can lead a happy family life because we will abstain from misconduct

unbecoming of a human being. At least, we can develop our manners, bodily and verbally, through *sīla*. Through *samādhi* we can develop our mind, and through *paññā* we can discover the truth and rectify our point of view.

The knowledge that we gain through the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* is a miraculous one and is known as '*parihariya paññā*' (mature knowledge guided by reason), by which we abstain from actions which are neither beneficial nor appropriate. This applies to mundane as well as supramundane activities. As we gain experience in skilfully moulding ourselves, we will become competent in sorting out what is beneficial or detrimental and what is appropriate or inappropriate. This is a great knowledge which can protect the world. We will become above-average even in this very existence. By practising *satipaṭṭhāna*, we can shape our lives properly.

# CHAPTER 11

## FULL AWARENESS

*Sampajañña* is derived from the word ‘*sam*’ meaning ‘correctly’, ‘fully’, ‘clearly’, ‘personally’, ‘*pa*’ meaning ‘distinctly’ or ‘unusually’ and ‘*jañña*’ is ‘knowing’.

*Pa + jañña* means awareness or comprehension of phenomena and their characteristics. Hence, *sampajañña* means full awareness or clear comprehension through personal experience. One should act consciously with full knowledge of what one is doing (*sampajañña**akāri*).

According to the Commentaries, *sampajañña* is of four kinds:

- *Sāttḥaka Sampajañña* – clarity of consciousness regarding the purpose, the progress of dhamma and benefit;
- *Sappāya Sampajañña* – clear comprehension of suitability;
- *Gocara Sampajañña* – sphere or domain of clear comprehension;
- *Asammoha Sampajañña* – undeluded conception of the activity concerned.

### SĀTTHAKA SAMPAJAÑÑA

When you are going to do something, you will first ponder whether it is beneficial or not and not suddenly

do it. After you have reflected you should act only when it is beneficial. Thus, prior reflection on the benefit or loss of an act is *sāttḥaka sampajañña*.

## SAPPĀYA SAMPAJAÑÑA

This means comprehension as to the suitability or appropriateness of an action. After clearly comprehending the purpose, we judge whether it is both beneficial and appropriate. For instance, giving a dhamma discourse is beneficial for both the speaker and the listener. But if the place is noisy and crowded it is not suitable to hold the *dhamma desanā*. Going on a pilgrimage is a noble deed. But if the place is crowded or dangerous, it will not be proper, especially for monks.

Contemplation of the impurity (foulness) of the body or *asubha-bhāvanā* is beneficial. But, if the yogi happens to contemplate on the body of the opposite sex, lust (*rāga*) may arise. So, it will not be appropriate. Thus, one must weigh one's actions and possess the quality of prudence (*nepakka paññā* or *parihariya paññā*), a kind of rationalism to reason whether an action is both beneficial and appropriate.

These two *sampajaññas* serve as the foundations for human reason and behaving in a manner befitting a human life. They also serve as a groundwork for the development of the other two *sampajaññas*. I have

already mentioned the seven benefits one can achieve through the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*. Knowing this is *sāttḥaka sampajañña*. Exerting vigorously while there is a teacher and you are young and healthy is an opportune and suitable moment. If you grow past this period, it will not be proper. Knowing this is *sappāya sampajañña*.

## GOCARA SAMPAJAÑÑA

*Gocara* is that whereby anything is limited, wherein it abides, lives, moves or expatiates, or upon which it operates: its sphere, domain, range, function, object or attributes. Thus, form is the *gocara* of the eye, ideas or knowledge the *gocara* of the mind, and so on. The sense-fields or objects of sense which serve as supports for the sense-cognitions to arise (*gocara-rūpas*) are the six, namely, form, sound, odour, taste, body-impression and mind-object. Full awareness of these objects is *gocara sampajañña*.

To comprehend clearly, one must note the *nāma-rūpa gocaras* as they arise. Note the rise and fall of the abdomen, note the sensations, note every movement of your body when you are walking, note every phenomenon that arises. Note continuously without omission. Full awareness of these objects means *gocara sampajañña*. Slackness in noting will not bring about *gocara sampajañña*.

## ASAMMOHA SAMPAJAÑÑA

As you apply *virīya* and *samādhi* and as these faculties gain strength, you will know the true nature of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena. Doubts and confusion, if any, will be overcome (*asammoha*), because whatever you observe is empirical – neither imagined nor what the teacher or the book says. You will understand (*pajañña*) distinctly, thoroughly and accurately (*sammā*). You will observe the real characteristics such as impermanence and unsatisfactoriness. This is the fulfilment of *gocara*.

*Sampajañña* will accomplish *asammoha sampajañña*, the former being the action and the latter the result. No action means no result.

Just as we have to supplement our food with vitamins to build our healthy body, we have to apply *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi* in our meditative effort so that these faculties serve as mental nutriment or vitamins to attain *bhāvanāmayā paññā* (wisdom based on mental development) or *dhammojā paññā* (wisdom based on dhamma practice).

But these *sampajañña* are neither *samatha* nor *vipassanā* as yet. They are merely fundamental support to them. They are termed *parihariyā paññā* in the *Visuddhimagga*.

Detrimental physical and mental habits may go strong, not only if fostered deliberately, but also if left unnoticed or unopposed. Much of what has now strong roots in our nature has grown from minute seeds planted in a long forgotten past. This growth of morally bad or otherwise detrimental habits can be effectively checked by gradually developing another habit: that of attending to them mindfully.

If we now do deliberately what had become a mechanical performance and if prior to doing it we pause a while for bare attention and reflection – this will give us a chance to scrutinise the habit and clearly comprehend its purpose and suitability (*sātthaka and sappāya sampajaññas*).

It will allow us to make a fresh assessment of the situation, to see it directly, unobscured by the mental haze that surrounds a habitual activity with the false assurance: “It is right because it was done before”. Even if a detrimental habit cannot be broken quickly, the reflective pause will counter its unquestioned spontaneity of occurrence. It will stamp it with the seal of repeated scrutiny and resistance, so that on its recurrence it will be weaker and will prove more amenable to our attempts to change or abolish it.

# CHAPTER 12

## THE CHARACTERISTICS

DHAMMA MAXIM

*Sabhāva, Sankhata, Samañña,*  
– the trio of *Lakkhaṇas*.

†

Note at the very moment, only then the  
*Sabhāva Lakkhaṇas* are sure to be known.

†

Only when *Sabhāva Lakkhaṇas* are seen,  
*Sankhata Lakkhaṇas* will become evident.

†

Only when *Sankhata Lakkhaṇas* become evident,  
*Samañña Lakkhaṇas* will be seen.

†

Only when *Samañña Lakkhaṇas* are seen,  
*Vipassanā Ñāṇa* arises.

†

Only when *Vipassanā Ñāṇa* matures,  
*Magga Ñāṇa* realizes.

†

Only when *Magga Ñāṇa* realizes,  
*Nibbāna* is seen.

†

Only when *Nibbāna* is seen,  
one is delivered from *Apāya*.



## NATURAL OR UNIQUE CHARACTERISTIC (SABHĀVA LAKKHAṆA)

It is *niyāma* (fixedness of law) in *vipassanā* that sensations such as stiffness, tension, irritation and pain are unique characteristics which arise to awareness as the yogi is mindful at the moment of occurrence. These are known as special or unique characteristics, *sabhāva lakkhaṇas*.

*Sabhāva* is a compound of two Pali words: *sako* (own, individual, specific, unique) and *bhavo* (existing, becoming), meaning individual or specific essence or nature. It is synonymous with *paccatta* (individual) *lakkhaṇa*, *visesa* (distinct) *lakkhaṇa* and *sarasa* (essential properties like the characteristic taste of food) *lakkhaṇa*.

As the yogi breathes or moves his posture, he notes attentively changes such as rising and falling of the abdomen, bending and stretching of the hand, sitting, standing or walking where he will be aware of the unique characteristics arising at every moment. *Sabhāva lakkhaṇas* are the types of *nāma* and *rūpa* phenomena which the yogi observes in the beginning of his meditation practice.

Whereas, in the Abhidhamma, one is concerned with the analytical aspect of the *paramattha dhammas*, in meditation, one follows the Sutta method, i.e. *vohara* aspect (common or universal usage or vocabulary), such as seeing, eating, sitting.

Years ago, Elder Dhammapala, the sub-commentarian on Visuddhi Magga, presented an argument (*codana*) with a question and answer to clarify any doubt which may arise in connection with labelling, i.e. mental noting of the consciousness arising as a result of the impingement of the sense door and sense object. This, I would like to explain to you for your general knowledge.

In the exposition entitled *Diṭṭhigata Sutta* is given the following passage:

*Kathañca bhikkhave cakkhumanto passanti?*

*Ida bhikkhu bhūtam bhūtato passati.*

*Bhūtam bhūtato disvā bhūttassa nibbidāya*

*Virāgāya nirodhāya palīpanno hoti*

*Evam kho bhikkhave cakkhumanto passanti.*

*Monks, how does a knowledgeable eye look (at things)?*

*Here, a monk looks at things as they are or occur.*

*If he sees things as they are (occur),*

*He reaches dispassion, fading away (of greed) and cessation.*

*This is the way a knowledgeable eye observes (things).*

In ‘*Bhūtam bhūtato passati*’, which says ‘one looks at things as they really are (occur)’, ‘things’ (*bhūta*) refers to conditioned phenomena, fivefold aggregates or *nāma-rūpa* and must be something that can be directly experienced, e.g., intention (to sit) and the whole process (of sitting) that follows: whereas the second word, *bhūtato*,

refers to the manner of looking, namely, as they are or occur. It is synonymous with *yathāsabhāvato*.

To see *sabhāva lakkhaṇas*, the yogi must fix his mind attentively and diligently on the object as it arises with exertion (*virīya*) and mindfulness (*sati*), just as he chews his food properly when eating so as to capture the different tastes in the food. Hence the motto:

*Only if caught on the spot, you'll spot sabhāva.*

In ordinary life, one says, 'strike while the iron is hot'. 'Only' is important because it emphasises the present moment. There is no place for thinking, reflections, speculations or interpretations. One has to be with the moment here and now on the spot, not before or later.

## LABELLING

This concise instruction of '*Bhūtam bhūtato passati*' was sufficient for people with keen insight (during the Buddha's time) who could contemplate on simple and bare guidance to gain insight. Later, this type of person became rare and therefore teachers of the Commentaries explained the necessity of labelling. Hence the argument put forward by the Elder as follows:

Does not labelling, which in fact amounts to an introduction of a new set of concepts (*paññātti*), contradict the actual instruction of seeing things

as they really are? Whereas in *samatha*, which has concepts as its objects, labelling takes place naturally such as setting the mind on the name concept as ‘earth, earth’ in earth *kaṣiṇa*, apprehending the sign and defining by colour, shape, location, etc., in mindfulness occupied with the thirty-two aspects of the body, *vipassanā* is concerned with the awareness of *paramatthas*, and labelling or mental noting of *sabhāva lakkaṇas*, such as the arising *rūpa* and *nāma* phenomena, would interfere with the awareness of *paramatthas*. Since *vipassanā* is concerned with the self-witnessing of *ārammanas* or bare sensations, is labelling not superfluous?

The sub-commentarian called such labelling ‘*tajja paññātti*’ (*tajja* – arising therefrom: *paññātti* or *vohara* – name or usage). Heat, a sensation, is a reality (*paramattha*) which can be felt without labelling. But there is a name concept (*vohara*) for it, ‘heat’, which can be used by beginners whose *samādhi* is not developed enough as a tool to direct the mind to the object.

Here the sensation of heat is *sabhāva* and the name concept is *tajja paññātti*. As the practice matures, the labelling becomes unnecessary and the mind will experience its object spontaneously, free from concepts.

In the *Visuddhimagga*, Mahatika is given the following:

*Na nu ca tajja-paññatti vasena sabhāva-dhammo gahyatīti?*

*Saccaṃ, gahyati pubbhabhāge*

*Bhāvanāya pana vaddhamānāya paññattiṃ samatikkammitvā sabhāve  
yeva cittaṃ titthati.*

*(Let us for the sake of argument, pose a question:)*

*Is it necessary, in the pursuit of the comprehension  
of the true nature (sabhāva) or reality (paramattha),*

*to contemplate by way of name concept or labelling, (tajja paññātti)?*

*It is indeed necessary, to contemplate in the manner (at least)  
in the preliminary stage.*

*However, despite conceptualizations, the mind,  
having gone beyond or abandoned the name concept,  
eventually rests on the real nature (paramattha sabhāva),  
as mind development (bhāvanā) matures.*

Thus in accordance with the teaching: ‘*Bhūtam bhūtato passati*’, whoever contemplates the four great primaries, namely earth, fire, water, air or extension, heat, cohesion, mobility, note by mentally labelling as soft or hard, hot or cold, fluidity or solidity, tension or relaxation: which are all *tajja paññātti*, belonging to conventional truth (*sammuti-sacca*).

Similarly, when he sees, hears, or touches, he notes as seeing, hearing or touching, which are *tajja paññātti*. Although the labelling differs with the difference in the languages, the ultimate sensations such as stiffness, tension, movement are the same.

With the maturity of *samādhi-paññā*, objects appear to arise in rapid procession. Hence, as the yogi gains experience in his practice, he will shift from noting with labelling to just noting, especially when he reaches *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, where he needs to keep pace with the fast rising phenomena, and more so at *bhanga ñāṇa*. Thus, at these stages, there are two choices for the yogi. If he wishes to stick to labelling, he will suffer a dampening effect in his practice and at the same time miss some of the objects. If he wishes to grasp all the objects, then he will do so without labelling.

At times, while he is noting the primary target with labelling, other phenomena might come into the avenue of his mind door. These tend to be noted without labelling, or simply known.

As much as it is not possible for a child, who is beginning to learn a language, to understand the sentences by mere scanning without spelling and pronouncing the words, it is impossible for a beginning practitioner to reach concentration without noting by labelling. As much as it is inappropriate for an adult to continue spelling and pronouncing the words, it is inappropriate for an experienced yogi to continue labelling at the higher ñāṇas.

The analogy is the case of a child who cannot pronounce at first. It spells the letters of the word (e.g., CAT

or RAT) and later pronounces the word. However, as it matures it need not spell the word, but is able to pronounce it directly, and even understand the words, sentences and paragraphs by mere scanning.

There have been instances where a few among the less intelligent youngsters and even adults practise by vocally labelling the objects at the initial stage. On the other hand, there are others among the intelligentsia who practise a 'choicless' method, that is with mere looking at the object and without going to the trouble of mentally labelling, thus going counter to the Buddha's teaching. It is not known whether the latter type of person attains any *samādhi* or *ñāṇa*. At this stage the application of two jhānic factors, namely, *vitakka* and *vicara* is necessary.

## THE TRIPLE CHARACTERISTICS (SANKHATA LAKKHAṆA)

If one sees *sabhāva lakkhana*, one will discern the mentality materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) together with its conditions. With continued and concerted effort, one sees the trio of moments or phenomena, i.e., the beginning, the middle and the end (according to sutta) or the arising, the presence and the dissolution (according to Abhidhamma).

In the beginning, one observes only the middle of the rise or fall, and, later, the beginning and the middle and not quite the end, as the yogi is occupied with noting the arising phenomena relentlessly. While the yogi is noting one *ārammana*, another one arises before the preceding one vanishes, and so on. This happens because the *samādhi* is not strong enough.

At this point, I might mention that one cannot know the *Sankhata Lakkhaṇas* without first experiencing the *Sabhava Lakkhaṇas*. If one does otherwise, then it is like painting a picture in the air without using a canvas. This will amount to mere imagination. This will serve as a reminder to imaginers.

## COMMON OR UNIVERSAL CHARACTERISTICS (SAMAÑÑA LAKKHAṆA)

On the fulfilment of *sankhata lakkhaṇas* and the application of *virīya* and *samādhi*, the yogi will realise the impermanence of things (*dhammas*), deny the assertions of permanence and admit the truth of impermanence. It is like the case of an accused person standing trial, denying his criminal offence and pleading not guilty. However, on persistent trial, he starts confessing his offence. The same goes with the truth of impermanence. The fact of impermanence is confessed to the yogi who understands. In *sāmañña*, if one mark, namely *anicca*, is thoroughly seen, the remaining marks can be seen.



The problem is, how does the yogi understand? Does he understand from the books or the teacher? The answer is 'No'. He understands from self-experience, by noting the *sabhāvas*. Thus will he understand the three characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*) of *nāma-rūpa*, namely *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. These are known as common or universal characteristics. Sometimes, *anicca* is apparent, at other times, *dukkha* or *anattā*. When *sāmañña lakkhaṇas* are seen, *vipassanā ñāṇa* arises.

# CHAPTER 13

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There are three *siddhās* (accomplishments or realizations) which are worthy to note.

They are:

- *paccakkha siddhā* – accomplishment through personal experience or evidence;
- *numāna siddhā* – accomplishment by inference;
- *okappana siddhā* – accomplishment by faith (*saddhā*).

### ACCOMPLISHMENT THROUGH PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OR EVIDENCE (PACCAKKHA SIDDHĀ)

An example is seeing where the four elements, namely visual element, visible object, light and attention (advertance) are involved. The simultaneous occurrence of these four elements causes seeing or eye consciousness. This is how things are apprehended by direct experiencing without any need for relevant opinion. Other examples are seeing *nāma-rūpa*, cause-effect, *anicca-dukkha* and overcoming *kilesa*.

## ACCOMPLISHMENT BY INFERENCE (ANUMĀNA SIDDHĀ)

*Anumana siddhā* which follows *paccakkha siddhā* is the process of arriving at some conclusion which possesses some degree of probability relative to the premises or evidence. An example is the presumption of the presence of fire when one sees the smoke. This is a deduction based on self-evidence, not quite logical thinking, since the latter sounds theoretical. Thus, when one accomplishes by direct experience (*paccakkha siddhā*) of the Dhamma practice, one deduces by *anumāna siddhā* the existence and truth of the Buddha who expounded the method. Another example is the cause-effect relations. Once you realize this knowledge, you will deduce that it also occurs in the others, that it occurred in the past and it will occur in the future as well.

## ACCOMPLISHMENT BY FAITH (OKAPPANA SIDDHĀ)

An example is the understanding of the existence of the other worlds (*paraloka*), such as the *apāya* world, *Nibbāna* and other possibilities, through one's own faith in the Buddha and the *Sasana*, although they are beyond one's reach. Such a faith is also called *saddheyya siddhā* (trustworthy accomplishment), which is different from blind faith. Blind faith is unreasoned faith. There are many things whose existence is pos-

sible, which are beyond the realm of science. These seemingly impossible things are understood as possible through faith only and not by knowledge (*ñāṇa*). Application of knowledge in this case would cause complication. *Okappana siddhā* is based on *paccakkha* and *anumāna siddhās*. Without *paccakkha siddhā*, no *anumāna siddhā* will arise, hence no *okappana siddhā*.

# CHAPTER 14

## NURTURING THE SAPLING OF INSIGHT

There are five ways of affording protection to *vipassanā ñāṇa* which is likened to a sweet mango sapling:

- In nurturing a sweet mango sapling, the gardener erects a suitable fence around the plantation as a protective measure. Likewise, the yogi observes morality (*sīla*) as non-transgression, by way of body or speech, of precepts of virtue that have been undertaken. (The monks are governed by *vinaya* code). In this way, he fortifies *vipassanā ñāṇa*. This method is known as *sīla-nuggahita*.
- The gardener waters the plant regularly in order to nourish it. So also, the yogi pursues the knowledge by learning from his teacher in order to adhere to the correct path. This is called *sutā-nuggahita*.
- The gardener prepares and improves the soil by digging the ground (so that the roots can grow freely) and fertilization. So also, the yogi makes an honest presentation of his practice to his teacher and discusses with an open mind enabling the teacher to give proper guidance. This is called *sakacchā-nuggahita*.

- The gardener regularly clears the plantation ground of weeds, creepers and insects which would harm his plant. Likewise, the yogi contemplates on his meditation object diligently and concentrates his attention on every arising of the phenomena relentlessly in order to overcome *nīvaraṇa* weeds and insects, to purify and strengthen *vipassanā ñāṇa*. This is known as *samatha-nuggahita*.
- The gardener removes the cobwebs which have entangled the plant. In the same way, the yogi abandons any attachment (*nikanti*) by means of strong (*balava*) *vipassanā* practice, so that the course of his insight practice is not interrupted by yearning (*nikanti*) for the unusual state of mind such as the presence of aura. This is called *vipassanā nuggahita*.
- The Buddha once said to one who was bent on peace:

*Neither to allow the mind to wander outside  
nor to stop inside.*

*To experience true peace, this is the advice.*

Wandering outside means being careless and ignorant when the sensual objects strike the sense doors and the mind runs after them resulting in *lobha*, *dosa*, as the case may be. Here, the yogi must apply diligent concentration, *samatha-nuggahita*.

*Wandering thoughts,  
On the spot,  
Miss not, note them all.*

On the other hand, pleasant sensations, such as thrills and rapture may arise in transition as the result of dhamma practice, allowing a subtle form of craving to creep in and causing hindrances to progress. This is called stopping inside or stagnating within. The antidote in such a case is strong *vipassanā* practice, *vipassanā-nuggahita*.

Just as the sweet mango tree which has been cared for in the above manner will grow smoothly and swiftly, bearing abundant quality fruits, so will the right understanding develop smoothly and swiftly in the direction of the Path bearing the *vipassanā ñāṇa* through the above five ways.

# CHAPTER 15

## ELEMENTS OF EXERTION

The Elements of Effort (*Padhāniyanga – padhāna+anga*) are the following five qualities:

- faith,
- health,
- sincerity,
- energy,
- wisdom.

### FAITH

Faith (*saddhā*) or confidence for a Buddhist means belief in the Perfect One's Enlightenment or in the Three Jewels, by taking his refuge in them. His faith should be reasoned and rooted in understanding. A Buddhist's faith is not in conflict with the spirit of inquiring. Thus, *saddhā* is not blind faith. It is confidence based on knowledge.

Faith is called the seed of all wholesome states because, according to the commentarial explanations, it inspires the mind with confidence and determination for launching to cross the floods of *saṃsāra*. Unshakable faith is attained on reaching the first stage of holiness, stream entry (*sotapatti*), when the fetter of sceptical doubt (*vīcicchā*) is eliminated. Unshakable confidence in the



Three Jewels is one of the characteristic qualities of the stream-winner.

Faith is the first of the nineteen beautiful mental states (concomitants), present in all kammically wholesome consciousness and its corresponding neutral consciousness. Purification (*sampassādana*) of its mental associates is its chief characteristic. It is compared to the water-purifying gem of the universal monarch.

This particular gem, when thrown into water causes mud and water-weeds to subside and purifies the water. In the same way, *saddhā* purifies the mind of its stains.

In general terms, *saddhā* is defined by Dhammasangani as the faith which on that occasion is trusting in, professing confidence in, the sense of assurance of faith as a faculty and as a power. Scepticism on the other hand will lead one nowhere. It will be like erecting a stairway in the air.

## HEALTH

Health (*arogyam*) here refers to equable state of both body and mind. It comprises freedom from illness (*appabadhatta*) and freedom from fatigue and suffering (*appatanko*). Suitable food must be taken for bodily health. So long as the yogi can digest his food, he can be said to be healthy.

## SINCERITY

Sincerity refers to honest presentation about the progress of dhamma practice. It is the relationship between the yogi and the meditation master and is compared to that of the patient and the physician. As the patient correctly reports his complaint to the physician, the latter prescribes and instructs what to take and abstain from. The practising yogi should on no account be deceitful (*amāyāvi*).

## ENERGY

Energy or effort (*virīya*) is the root of all achievements. It is of three kinds:

- *ārambha dhātu* –  
the element of putting forth effort or initial attack;
- *nikkhama dhātu* –  
the element of stepped-up effort or exertion;
- *parakkama dhātu* –  
the element of striving towards success.

Just as you weaken and prevent the weeds and insects from attacking the plantation, so also for every second you put in the energy, you will be able to remove the *kilesas* away from you and weaken the *nīvaraṇas*. Wisdom here refers to the knowledge of rise and fall of *nāmarūpa* (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*).

# CHAPTER 16

## FIVE WAYS TO PROGRESS

### AN EXTRANEOUS DISCOURSE (ANTARA KATHĀ)

Today, I want to talk to you about five ways to progress in your dhamma practice or to prevent *kilesas* from arising. There are faculties (*indriya*) such as eye (*cakkhu*), ear (*sota*), nose (*ghana*), tongue (*jivha*), body (*kāya*) and mind (*mano*) which are also called the six bases. The Blessed One says thus:

*“On seeing a visible object with the eye, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, undertakes the restraints of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear. On smelling an odour with the nose. On tasting a flavour with the tongue. On touching a tangible object with the body. On cognizing a mental object with the mind, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraints, he guards the mind faculty, undertakes*

*the restraint of the mind faculty, is virtuous in restraint of the sense faculties.”*

So, without control of faculties, the yogi will fall prey to *lobha*, *dosa* or *moha* (not knowing the objects as they arise) one way or another. It is like a soaked cloth which must be dried to become useful again. Even after drying, it will remain smelly. Likewise the mind will be wet, clumsy and smelly if it is always soaked in *kilesa*, instead of dry, alert and aromatic.

If the mind is not alert, neither *pīti* in any degree nor *sukha* will arise. If he does not feel bliss and peace within his body and mind he will not be able to develop neither the concentration (in *samatha*) nor the real knowledge (in *vipassanā*). If *samādhi* does not arise, the mind will not be calmed. If *vipassanā* does not arise, *vipassanā* bliss, *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* will not arise. What is the root cause of all these? It is the lack of restraint of the sense faculties. In this regard, it is said in the Milinda's Questions:

*Cakkhumassa yathā andho  
Though one has the eye to see,  
One must behave like the blind.*

The blind will not bother to see: he is disinterested and unconcerned. If you look around and see things, your practice will be disrupted and you will be inviting *lobha* and *dosa*. You will not grasp the quality of dhamma.

Actually, you control the eyes, but do not have to close your eyes physically. Similarly:

*Sotavā badhiro yathā  
Though one has the ear to hear,  
One must act like the deaf.*

Of course, you are hearing sounds. If you take interest, your work will be disturbed. You have to restrain yourself. The deaf takes no interest in the sounds: he is calm and unconcerned. Once you can exercise your controlling power in these two spheres, you are great. Intelligent people, learned in theories and practices, will wish to speak of what they already know, to compare and reason. However, during practice, it is advisable to be like the dumb and show no signs of intelligence. He restrains the faculty of speech. He should obey the instructions without argument. Thus, it is said:

*Paññāvassa yathā mūgo  
The wise man should not speak even skilled words.*

One can find argumentative persons everywhere. Once I came across a yogi who was well versed in literary knowledge. In every interview, he would chip in and point out references to books. I had to tell him the story of a wedding ceremony performer (master of ceremony) who was very efficient in performing marriage ceremonies. When he himself became a bridegroom, he went

over to the place of the performer, leaving his bridegroom seat vacant. He appeared very absurd in the eyes of the guests because he was not in the right place this time. After the story, I told the yogi to be in the right place, and that he should understand whether he was the disciple or the teacher.

So while the yogi is a disciple he should act like a disciple and be obedient. Then only he will learn. There is no need to show off. Like a cat, it must hide its claws till the time comes for it to show them. Again, the yogi must behave like a sick and weak person, moving slowly and noting intensively, otherwise the dhamma knowledge will not progress. It is thus said:

*Balavā dubbaloriva*

*Though he is strong and healthy,*

*He should act like a sick person.*

It is important to note all feelings and actions. If he acts like a strong person and moves fast, he will not be able to concentrate thoroughly. When you are looking at an object from a distance, the object may look rather dim and hazy: so also if the target is not observed closely, it will look gross and obscure. If the noting is extensive, you may miss certain objects. So, note intensively and slowly like a sick person, applying *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi*. Then you will penetrate the targets and see the true nature. You will develop confidence (*saddhā*).

When it comes to common activities, such as bathing, eating, etc., you may act normal. However, when you are on your own, please act slowly and note intensively. Otherwise you will be defeated in the dhamma practice. So, as not to suffer defeat, I exhort you to act slowly.

In this connection, Venerable Nagasena mentioned in 'Milinda's Questions' the five qualities of the cock to be adopted. "And this, sire, was said by the Elder Kaccayana the Great:

*'Let him with sight be as though blind,  
And he who hears as though deaf.  
Let him with a tongue be as though dumb,  
The strong man as if he were weak.  
Then when a matter arises,  
He could rest (as) in the resting place of thought.'*"

The arising of matters refers to feelings that arise in the minds of the yogis. In coming here to practise the dhamma, the yogis are separated from their families and friends. They have left behind their occupations and their usual pleasures. This is not easy for them. Moreover, they are required to restrain their faculties. They are certain to suffer from physical and mental restrictions. Only by sacrificing their body and life, will they succeed in overcoming these difficulties.

When such feelings arise, they should behave like a dead person. A corpse in the graveyard will have no

feeling when touched. It will not complain. The yogi will behave like a corpse and bear the difficulties with patience. This is an adventure, which, if successful, will enable him to face any eventuality. One may consider the Buddha's Path as severe and cruel. Not at all. We are not pushing the yogi to a meaningless destination or to death. To achieve a better bliss, one must be able to sacrifice. Thus, it is said:

*Atta atthe samuppanne sayetha matasāyikaṃ*

*When a matter arises, he must behave like a dead person.*

As for the fifth quality of the cock, it is said thus:

*“Again, sire, a cock, even though he is being attacked with clods of earth, sticks, clubs and cudgels, does not give up his own domain: even so, sire, while the yogi, the earnest student of yoga, is engaged in robe-making or repairing buildings, or in any of his practices and duties or in reciting (the Patimokkha) or making others recite it, he should not give up reasoned consideration. For this, sire, is a yogi's own domain, that is to say reasoned consideration. This, sire, is the fifth quality of the cock that must be adopted. And this too, sire, was said by the Lord, the deva above devas: ‘And what is a monk's own pasture, his native beat? It is the four applications of mindfulness.’”*



# CHAPTER 17

## MENTAL OBDURACIES AND BONDAGES

I am giving this interim discourse as a reminder to all yogis. In fact, I have been thinking of talking on this subject for some time, and now is the chance.

### MENTAL OBDURACIES (CETOKHILA)

This is known in Pali as *cetokhila*, which also means a thorny or difficult mind. In essence it is sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) and displeasure (*dosa*).

There are five things which stiffen and hinder the mind from making the right exertion, namely:

- doubts about the *Buddha*
- doubts about the *Dhamma*
- doubts about the *Saṅgha*
- doubts about the three *Sikkhā* (*Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā*)
- ill-will towards his fellow monks/companions.

When the yogi is striving towards an objective, he may entertain such thoughts as, 'Is the dhamma true?' 'Can it produce any benefit?' This is a case of defeatism. For him, his efforts will not be thorough and produce any benefit, and even if there is result, it will not be complete. Such is the *Loka Niyāma* (Natural Order).

Here faith is essential. If you wish to bend or stretch a piece of bamboo or wood, you will soften it by oiling, heating, etc., so as to render the material pliable, otherwise it may break. So also lack of faith in the yogi will harden and stiffen his mind so that he becomes unamenable.

It is understandable that those who are not born Buddhist will find it difficult to cultivate faith in the Buddha. I also do not mean to press for this. However, there is the possibility of accepting and having faith in the Dhamma, which is impersonal. Once such a faith is developed, the benefits are sure to arise. If the yogi strives sincerely and thoroughly, he may even risk his life to attain the objective. So, faith is very important.

It is important to have faith in the *Sikkhā* (*Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā*). In the absence of faith, the yogi will not have any interest and thus will not strive thoroughly. With faith in the *Sikkhā*, the yogi can practise sufficiently and satisfactorily. With bodily and verbal conduct well guarded and under control, he will have faith in *sīla* and with mind well under control, he will have faith in *samādhi*. As he strives he will understand the *nāma-rūpa* phenomena. He will say to himself, ‘*To know the Truth is a wonderful thing*’. So he will understand the nobleness and the benefits. He will cultivate faith in *paññā*. This will be his accomplishment. For a doubt-

ful person, the Buddha says there is no cure. Here is an illustration in connection with faith.

Soon after his enlightenment, the Lord travelled to the Deer Park of Isipatana in Benares, where the group of five monks (*pañcavaggi*) were staying. The Lord had great loving-kindness and compassion (*Māha Mettā* and *Māha Karuṇā*) for them. He wanted to expound his first doctrine to them. The group saw the Lord coming in the distance: seeing him, they agreed among themselves, saying ‘your reverences, this recluse Gotama is coming, he lives in abundance, he is wavering in the striving, he has reverted to a life of abundance. He should neither be greeted, nor stood up for, nor should his bowl and robe be received: all the same a seat may be put out, he can sit down if he wants to.’

But as the Lord gradually approached this group, the latter, not adhering to their own agreement, went towards the Lord. One received his bowl and robe and made ready a seat and one brought water for washing the feet, a foot-stool and a foot-stand. The Lord sat down on the seat made ready. They addressed the Lord by name and with the epithet of ‘*avuso*’ (friend).

The Lord told the group to listen to him because he had found the Dhamma. The latter refused to believe what the Lord said. For a second and third time, the Lord asked the group to listen to him. For a second and a

third time, they refused. Thus the group had no faith in the Lord and the Dhamma (there was no Saṅgha as yet at that time). They had a stubborn attitude (*cetokhila*) towards the Master.

At this, the Lord changed his technique of approach and convinced the group that he had never spoken to them like this before – not even hinting of seeing a vision while they were striving together in Uruvela forest. The Lord's *Māha Mettā* and *Māha Karuṇā* on the group seemed to work. They began to listen to him again, gave ear to him and aroused their minds for profound knowledge. Then the Lord rolled the Dhamma wheel. On the first day, Kondañña understood the Dhamma and became a *Sotapanna* followed by the remaining monks one after another. Finally, on the exposition of the *Anattālakkaṇa Sutta*, the group of five became *Arahats*.

Why did the group not believe in the Lord in the first place when he addressed them? It is like a well-known physician treating a patient who has no faith in him because he (the patient) has had no experience with him (the physician), although he may have heard of the physician's competence elsewhere. Only when the patient receives the treatment himself and finds it satisfactory, will he believe in the physician and in the latter's treatment of other patients.

Hence, we have two kinds of faith, namely, faith based on reliable statement and faith based on personal experience. Regarding the faith obstacle, bhikkhus are advised to practise tolerance towards one another.

## SABRAHMACARI

This means one who practises religious duties in association with others or a fellow bhikkhu or yogi. They are seven in number: namely *bhikkhu*, *bhikkhuni*, *sikkhamaṇa* (*bhikkhuni* under training), *sāmaṇera* (male novice), *sāmaṇeri* (female novice), *upāsaka* and *upāsikā* (male and female lay supporters or disciples).

Any cause for dissatisfaction, ill-temper or inexcuse towards these individuals amounts to suffering of mind and should be removed with a forgiving mind. Otherwise the yogi will have no chance of progress in the Buddha *sasana*.

If the yogi does not abstain from what should be abstained and observe what should be observed, he is said to have become negligent (*pamādavihārī*).

## MENTAL BONDAGES (CETOVINIBANDHA)

This is mental bondage that binds one so that one is unable to attain *magga* and *phala* and instead one has given up one's effort. This is of five kinds:

- *kāmarāga* – sensuous lust;
- *bhavarāga* – clinging to oneself or one's existence;
- craving for external things;
- enjoying luxuries, such as indulging in food (eating to belly-full), slumber (*seyya sukha*), torpor (*middha sukha*) and hangover;
- craving for becoming in the Deva world.

Those who possess these bondages have no hope of progress in the Buddha *sasana*. In other words, they are reluctant to work for the attainment of *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna* or have given up all hopes of attainment, and are known as '*nikkhita dhura*' individuals – those who are unamenable to discipline. Due to slackness of effort and because they do not abstain from what should be abstained and do not practise what should be practised, they are called *pamādavihārī* – those living negligently.

# CHAPTER 18

## TEN ARMIES OF MĀRA

In this sensuous world, people go after sensuous objects and desires. They consider them as the real pleasures. Neglecting the dhamma, they end their lives. In fact they have enjoyed such sensuous pleasures throughout *saṃsāra*, and still they do not wish to relinquish them.

Now the bhikkhus have left such worldly pleasures (either temporarily or permanently) and are practising the dhamma in order to free themselves from the *akusala* courses of action. They are said to have won over the Armies of Māra (killer). *Māra* has two definitions:

- the killer of virtue
- the killer of existence

As the yogis are practising *vipassanā*, they are in fact fighting a war against the Armies of Māra, who are on the side of *akusala*. The Armies of Māra are ten, namely:

- *kāma* – sensuous pleasures,
- *arati* – dissatisfaction,
- *khuppiṭṭhā* – hunger and thirst,
- *taṇhā* – craving,
- *thina middha* – sloth and torpor,
- *bhīru* – fear,

- *vicikicchā* – doubt,
- *makkha thambha* – hypocrisy and obstinacy,
- *lābha*, *siloka* and *sakkāra* – gain, fame and reverence,
- *attukkamsana* and *paravambhana* – self-exaltation and disparaging others.

## SENSUOUS PLEASURES (KĀMA)

There are two groups of *kāma*:

- the sensuous objects (*vatthukāma*)
- the hankering for these pleasant objects (*kilesakāma*)

There are five sensuous objects or cords of sensuousness: the visible, audible, odoriferous, edible and tangible objects which are desirable. The attachment to one's family, property, business and friends, which are *vatthukāma*, constitute the First Army of Māra. Normally for a sentient being, this army is difficult to overcome. I myself have no family, so I have nothing to cling to. Though a worldling may shed tears on such occasions, a monk will find it easy to overcome. For monks and yogis, they have left their families, their occupation and other pleasures. They are practising the dhamma and are able to achieve the First *Jhāna* with the application of *vitakka* and *vicāra* without difficulty. Thus are they able to overcome the First Army of Māra.



## DISSATISFACTION (ARATI)

After the yogi has left his sensuous pleasures behind, he may find staying in the retreat (*kammaṭṭhāna*) rather boring. While meditating he may find himself a bit unhappy. Though he has overcome the first obstacle, he may find the forest or monastery unappealing if he has not really captured the flavour of the dhamma. Such a condition is called dissatisfaction (*arati*).

For this, the yogi needs to become an opposite of *arati* (*abhirati*), a delighted or devoted person in dhamma. Comparing the happiness arising from kāmic pleasures and that from dhamma pleasures, the yogi finds the latter to be overwhelming, establishing a sound basis for becoming an *abhirati*.

Having found the correct method and the subsequent states of *pīti*, *sukha* and *samādhi* resulting from the absence of hindrances, the yogi begins to understand the wonderful quality of the dhamma, thus becoming a bit of *abhirati*. A bit of such understanding means a bit of interest in the dhamma. If the yogi is not thorough and careful, he will not find the quality in the dhamma. For a yogi, the state of *abhirati* is a rare achievement – *pabbajitena avuso abhirati dukkara* (difficult for a monk to become a dhamma devoted person).

Once the yogi enters upon and dwells in the first *vipassanā jhāna*, he will begin to delight in the dhamma, for one thing because he is experiencing the quality of the dhamma. As he progresses into the second *jhāna*, he experiences the lucidity as to perceptions with concentration becoming more intense, thereby generating higher forms of *pīti* (resulting from intense *samādhi*).

Comparing with the sensuous pleasures, he will find that the dhamma pleasure is supreme and that it is not ordinary *kusala*, but it is *adhikusala* (superior *kusala*). In this connection, I would like to quote the Dhammapada. In verse 374, it says:

*Yato, yato Sammāsatī  
Khandhānaṃ udayabbayaṃ  
Labhatī pītipāmojjaṃ  
Amataṃ taṃ vijanataṃ.*

*Every time he clearly comprehends the arising and the perishing  
of the khandhas he finds joy and rapture.*

*That, to the wise, is the way to Nibbāna (the Deathless).*

At this stage his interest in the dhamma will not diminish, but will increase and enable him to progress through the higher stages of *vipassanā*. Regarding the pleasures of the dhamma which excels that of *kāma*, it is stated in verse 373 as follows:

*Suññāgāraṃ pavitṭhassa  
Santacittassa bhikkhuno  
Amānusī rati hoti  
Sammā dhammaṃ Vipassato.*

*The bhikkhu who goes into seclusion (to meditate),  
whose mind is tranquil, who clearly perceives the Dhamma,  
experiences the joy which transcends that of (ordinary) man.*

Although the *pīti* is not to be delighted in and attached to as such, it is a good cause for delight in the dhamma. Hence, in a way, one may say it is good. Why? Because after the yogi has come into the domain of *vipassanā* and overcome the First Army of Māra, he may find certain dissatisfaction (*arati*), and if he experiences *pīti*, he will say to himself, 'It is not bad after all'. Thus will he be able to overcome the Second Army of Māra.

The overcoming of difficulties in the way of *vipassanā* practice is like fighting a war. The yogi will wage an offensive, a defensive or a guerilla warfare against his enemies, depending upon his capabilities. If he is strong, he will advance. If he is weak, he may withdraw temporarily, but in a victorious and systematic manner, not in a helter-skelter fashion, reeling and running in disorder.

## HUNGER AND THIRST (KHUPPIPĀSĀ)

Now, after the Second Armed Force of Māra has been beaten, he is satisfying himself with whatever necessities are offered to him by the donors. However, he may still miss the usual facilities that he has enjoyed before. This will lead him to another battlefield where the Third Armed Force of Māra is waiting. This force is called hunger and thirst (*khuppipāsā*).

He is not getting the sweet, sour, salty, hot or rich things he used to get and so he misses them. So his mind is agitated and he cannot perceive the dhamma. He is unable to concentrate the mind. For the monks, whatever is offered and for the lay yogis, whatever is available, has to be accepted. Thus it may be hard for the yogi to overcome this enemy.

If the yogi is an easily contented person, he can overcome this enemy easily. He is living on others' *dāna* and it is important that he is content with whatever he is offered, otherwise it is necessary to arrange things to be in keeping with the advantage of food, *bhojana sappāya*.

At one time, during the Buddha's time, there were sixty monks practising the dhamma in a forest. They were being looked after by an elderly lady called Matika Mata. While doing her daily chores at home, she prac-

tised the dhamma and attained Anāgāmi together with *abhiññās*. Thinking that her sons (that was how she called the sixty monks) who practised full-time might have attained *ñāṇas*, she looked at them with her supernatural powers to see how they fared. To her surprise, she saw that they had not attained any *ñāṇa*. She also saw that they lacked in one of the seven *sappayas*, namely *bhojana sappāya*. So, she prepared food accordingly and the monks became satisfied with their food requirements and gained perception in the dhamma. Thus, at last they became Arahats. This goes to show how important are the organization and management of the culinary matters in a meditation centre.

While on this subject, I would like to talk about vegetarianism. Some hold the view that it is moral to eat only vegetables. In Theravada (the School of the Elders) there is no such thing as vegetarianism leading to the perception of the dhamma in an exceptional manner.

The Buddha does not totally prohibit the eating of meat. When Devadatta demanded the Buddha to lay down a Vinaya rule to prohibit the eating of meat, the Buddha refused after considering the pros and cons of such a practice. In those days people ate both kinds of food. The monks had to go alms-begging for their livelihood. They could not distinguish between who were vegetarians and who were omnivorous and they had to take

whatever was offered by donors. If the Buddha had laid down a rule to refrain from eating meat, the perception of dhamma would be affected. So, the correct approach is to eat as specified by the Buddha, such as reflection on eating, not getting attached to any kind of food, etc. One need not restrict oneself to vegetarianism to practise the dhamma.

However, it is good if you can eat vegetables only. But for those whose body physiology is conditioned to eating meat and metabolizing animal protein, they may remain omnivorous. If they suddenly switch their diet to such things as beans and peas, they might end up with stomach complaints, thus not achieving *bhojana sappāya*.

In those days, both brahmins (who were vegetarian) and non-brahmins (who were omnivorous) came into the Buddha *sasana*. The Buddha had to consider this fact as well. One can look at the analogy of a motor vehicle engine. It may be either petrol-operated or diesel-operated. But one cannot use diesel in an engine which is constructed to use petrol, and vice versa. One can eat meat, so long as it is not sinful, as specified by the Buddha. The moral of this argument is that one cannot do everything one wishes to do, but do only what is most beneficial and appropriate. If a law is promulgated and cannot be obeyed by the majority, it is not effective.

## CRAVING (TAṄHA)

Once the yogi discovers the real taste of the dhamma, he gets the upper hand and is able to win over the Third Army of Māra. Otherwise he will crave for the usual facilities, *pariyesanā taṅhā* (searching and craving). A lot of effort is needed for this, so the yogi gets wearied with the punishment of hunger and thirst. This causes the yogi to face the Fourth Army of Māra, craving (*taṅhā*).

## SLOTH AND TORPOR (THINA-MIDDHA)

When we are unable to stop the hunger and thirst, and craving for sensuous desires, we become completely exhausted, stupid and not fresh and eventually a victim of the Fifth Army of Māra, sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*).

The yogi who is originally not liable to fall asleep so easily (or perhaps, suffering from insomnia) may, after a few sittings, doze and hit the floor with his forehead or reel back, thus destabilizing his posture. At this moment, the mind becomes viscous and slimy. His mental energy is exhausted. This is simply termed laziness. It is rather difficult for the yogi to overcome this.

It is said in the Aṅguttara Nikāya that Moggallāna encountered sloth and torpor while striving for the higher Paths (he was then a *sotapanna*). The Buddha had to give him some pointers and a strategy to combat

this Fifth Army of Māra. If a *sotapanna* with such maturity found it difficult to overcome this situation, what can we expect of an ordinary person?

The yogi can, however, refresh his mind by boosting up his energy, coupled with the experiencing of *pīti*, so that he mobilizes all his effort and is able to overcome *thina-middha*. Alternately, he can assume a dangerous situation where he needs to mobilize all his energy.

## FEAR (BHĪRU)

Under these circumstances, the yogi will need to make full exertion in order to overcome this state of laziness and slackness of mind. Otherwise, fear will arise while staying in the forest or retreat.

Also, if he has lost perception in the dhamma, he would feel uneasy to see the meditation teacher (*kammatṭhānacariya*) or even his fellow yogis. He will be just like a student who has not done his school lessons and so does not wish to see either the teacher or his fellow students. The yogi is said to face fear (*bhīru*) or better still, cowardliness, the Sixth Army of Māra.

On the other hand, if the yogi has an unusual perception of the dhamma, he would feel a strong urge to speak to his meditation master. And, if such a situation occurs at night, he would become so excited that it might even cause a dhamma hindrance, at least, for that night.



## DOUBT (VICIKICCHĀ)

If he perceives the dhamma, he will not find it difficult to overcome fear. If there is no such perception, he will be wasting his time from hours to days, tormented by a nagging general sense of failure. Then he will begin to feel doubtful about the authenticity of his efforts, leading him to face the dreadful Seventh Army of Māra, doubt (*vicikicchā*).

The books say that imagination (things beyond the scope of knowledge) can prevail over some who would be deluded (*vanceti*) by their doubtful views – in accordance with the expression: “*vicikicchā vanceti*” (the illusion of sceptical doubt emerging in the guise of reason). This is the moment for the yogi to receive instructions from able masters. Then he will overcome doubt, generate faith and attain *vipassanā jhānas*, first, second and third in succession.

## HYPOCRISY AND OBSTINACY (MAKKHA AND THAMBHA)

Now a stage will be reached, whereby the yogi experiences unusual perception in the dhamma and becomes complacent. He would think to himself, ‘What a wonderful fellow I am: I have attained to a high stage, haven’t I? Perhaps, the teacher himself has not attained to such a stage’. Thus he faces the Eighth Army of Māra, hypocrisy and obstinacy (*makkha and thambha*).

For a little of the above mentality, it is not difficult for the yogi to overcome. If he continues in his efforts, he will experience the qualities of the dhamma and begin to improve his manner and behaviour so as to become venerable and impressive. This will result in the possession of gains (*lābha*), fame (*siloka*) and reverence (*sakkāra*), the Ninth Army of Māra.

### GAINS, FAME AND REVERENCE (LĀBHA, SILOKA AND SAKKĀRA)

Such a situation rarely occurs in the meditating yogi. It usually occurs in the meditation master who, with his oratorical prowess, becomes skilled in instructing, teaching and exhortation, resulting in gains, fame and reverence.

This is such a wonderful treatment for him that he would drift toward delusion. Not being fully versed in the literary knowledge (*bahussuta*) of *vipassanā* meditation, he would preach fake laws (*dhamma-patirūpaka*).

Even in this country, where Theravada Buddhism is dominant, there have been instances of fake dhammas as a consequence of gains and reverence. Hence, possession of great religious knowledge (*bahussuta*) is important. This should be borne in mind.

It is like an unskilled student who is writing sentences on a blank paper without lines or rules (*sutta*). His

script may be going up and down and not straight. Also, a carpenter needs a line so that he can cut or saw the wood.

So also, in the realm of dhamma, the practitioners of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* require *sutta* or rules so that they will not deviate from the correct path laid down in the literature. Otherwise fake teachings can appear. The teacher may delight in this and the followers may increase in number in spite of the fake.

Hence are mentioned the two different paths in the following verse:

*Aññā hi lābhūpanisā  
Aññā nibbānagamini  
Evametaṃ abhiññāya  
Bhikkhu Bhuddhassa sāvako  
Sakkāraṃ nābhinandeyya  
Viveka manubyūhaye.*

*The practice of aspiring  
after gains and reverences (lābha and sakkāra)  
is quite apart from the good practice of realizing nibbāna.*

*The noble practice of realizing nibbāna  
in order to overcome all kinds of suffering  
is different from the unwholesome practice  
of aspiring after glories and gains.*

Being thus fully aware, without the shadow of a doubt of the twin paths, i.e., the path to the round of rebirths and *apāya* and the path to *nibbāna* and the true nature

of things, the *bhikkhu*, the good disciple who courageously follows the compassionate exhortations and affectionate teaching of the Omniscient One and who sees imminent dangers in the rounds of rebirths, will dwell with neither of the passions associated with *dāna* from male and female devotees: craving from not receiving and joyful excitement at receiving it.

For the purpose of seclusion, he will approach a quiet place and practise the twin *bhāvanā* till he fulfils attainment and progresses more and more. What makes a good disciple? The Commentary to the Visuddhi Magga says:

*Bhagavako ovādānusāsaṇiṃ  
Sakkaccaṃ sunantiti sāvaka.*

*Because they listen (suṇanti)  
to the Blessed One's teaching attentively (sakkaccaṃ),  
they are his disciples.*

[*Sāvaka* – lit. hearers]

Furthermore, the words '*Sakkaccaṃ savana*' are rendered in the Great Sub-commentary (*Māhatīkā*) as follows:

*Yathā nusitthaṃ paṭipajjanena kiccāsiddhiko  
ariyabhāvavahaṃ savanaṃ sakkacca savanaṃ nāma.*

*By 'sakkaccaṃ savana' (listening attentively)  
is meant listening in order to attain nobleness (ariyahood)  
by abandoning kilesa through the right way  
in accordance with instructions.*

## SELF-EXALTATION AND DISPARAGING OTHERS (ATTUKKAMSANA AND PARAVAMBHANA)

Out of respect and homage shown by the people, he begins to greatly overestimate and exalt himself (*attukkamsana*) and disparage others (*paravambhana*). This is the kind of battle faced by meditation masters.

Hence verses 438 to 441 of the Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nipata) say:

*Kāma te pathamā sena; dutiyā arati vuccati.  
Tatīyā khuppipāsā te; catutthī taṇhā pavuccati.  
Pañcamaṃ thina middhaṃ te; chatthā bhīru pavuccati.  
Cattamī vicikicchā te; makkho thambho te aṭṭhamo.  
Lābho siloko sakkāro; micchāladdho ca yo yaso.  
Yo cattānaṃ samukkamse; pare ca avajānati.  
Esā namuci te senā; kanhassā bhīppahārinī.  
Na nam asūro jināti; jettvā ca labhate sukhaṃ.*

*Sensuous pleasures are your first army;  
Discontent is called your second;  
Your third is hunger and thirst;  
The fourth is called craving;  
Sloth and torpor are your fifth;  
The sixth is called fear;  
Your seventh is doubt;  
Hypocrisy and obstinacy are your eighth;  
Gain, renown, honour and whatever fame is falsely received;  
And whoever both extols himself and disparages others.  
That is your army, Namuci (that is) the striking force of Kanha.  
One who is not a hero cannot conquer it,  
but having conquered it one obtains happiness.*

# CHAPTER 19

## BUDDHA LAYS DOWN THE DHAMMA PRINCIPLES

### SUBHADDA'S QUESTION

In the practice of Dhamma to overcome kilesas, Buddha lays down two principles. But before I come to these principles, I would like to relate an event leading to the exposition of these principles.

Hearing that 'On this day, in the last watch of the night, the *parinibbāna* of the Samaṇa Gotama will take place', Subhadda, a wandering ascetic, had this thought: 'I have heard that Tathagatas arise in the world only rarely. Today, in the last watch of the night, the *parinibbāna* of the Samaṇa Gotama will take place. There is an uncertainty (regarding the true doctrine) that has arisen in me. I have faith in the Samaṇa Gotama that he will be able to expound the Doctrine to me so as to remove this uncertainty.'

Subhadda approached the Venerable Ānanda in the Sal grove of the Malla princes, at Kusinara, and requested permission to see the Buddha. To this Ānanda refused saying that the Buddha was tired and that seeing him and talking to him at this time would amount to harassing him. For the second and third time, Subhadda repeated his request. And, for the second and third time also, Ānanda refused.

Overhearing the conversation between Ānanda and Subhadda, the Buddha said: ‘Ānanda, do not prevent Subhadda. Let him see me. If he asks me anything, everything he asks will be because he wants to know and not because he wishes to harass me. When I answer what he asks, he will readily understand.’

Obtaining permission, Subhadda approached the Buddha with courteous greetings and addressed him thus: ‘O Gotama, there are Samaṇas and Brāhmanas (religious leaders) who are leaders of their sects, who are well esteemed by many people, such as Purana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambala, Pakudha Kaccayana, Sancaya Belatthaputta and Nigantha Nataputta. Do all of them have knowledge and understanding as they themselves have declared? Or do all of them have no knowledge and understanding?’

To this the Buddha replied that such questions should not be asked and told him to listen to the Doctrine. The Buddha gave this discourse: ‘Subhadda, in whatever teaching is not found the Noble Eightfold Path, neither in it is there found a *Samaṇa* (priest) of the first stage (realization of the First *Magga* and *Phala*, a *Sotapanna*), nor a *Samaṇa* of the second stage (realization of the Second *Magga* and *Phala*, a *Sakādāgami*), nor a *Samaṇa* of the third stage (realization of the Third *Magga* and *Phala*, an *Anāgāmi*), nor a *Samaṇa* of the fourth stage (realization of the Fourth and Final *Magga* and *Phala*, an *Arahat*)’.

In this way the Buddha laid down the two principles for the assessment of any teaching. The Buddha continued to declare thus: ‘Now Subhadda, in this teaching (of mine) there is to be found the Noble Eightfold Path, and in this Teaching alone is found a *Samaṇa* of the first stage (*Sotapanna*), a *Samaṇa* of the second stage (*Sakādāgami*), a *Samaṇa* of the third stage (*Anāgāmi*) and a *Samaṇa* of the fourth stage (*Arahat*). Other systems of teaching are void of the Twelve Noble *Samaṇas* who have true knowledge. Subhadda, if these twelve types of *bhikkhus* practise and pass on the Teaching rightly, the world will not be void of *Arahats*.’

People accept that only when they are freed of kilesas of all forms (transgressive, obsessive and latent), will they become happy; if not, *dukkha* will arise. But, how to overcome it is the question. To find the right method is difficult. Should one look for a reliance or practise the correct method himself? In any teaching, one should examine in these ways:

- *Have the teachers fully evaluated their teachings to their satisfaction?*
- *Are the methods practised by their disciples successful?*
- *Are the teachers teaching from imagination?*
- *Have they themselves practised satisfactorily, tested with their disciples and found the truth of the Dhamma?*



One should make reference to the dhamma principles laid down by the Buddha. If in any teaching there is to be found the following Noble Eightfold Path, *kilesas* will be overcome and *Samaṇas* can be found:

- Morality (*Sīla*) group:
  - Right speech (*Sammā vācā*),
  - Right action (*Sammā kammanta*),
  - Right livelihood (*Sammā ājiva*).
- Concentration (*Samādhi*) group:
  - Right mindfulness (*Sammā sati*),
  - Right concentration (*Sammā samādhi*).
- Wisdom (*Paññā*) group:
  - Right view (*Sammā diṭṭhi*),
  - Right thought (*Sammā saṅkappa*).

One cannot assess any teaching by reason of mere tradition and by what the book says. One should assess by self-experiencing. The two principles laid down by the Buddha with reference to Subhadda enables one to make one's own judgment. Also these principles include a very important element of encouragement to all aspirants that, in this *sasana*, if *bhikkhus* can practise and pass on the teaching rightly, the world will not be void of Arahats. In order to convince the yogis, the Commentarians have mentioned the twelve kinds of *bhikkhus* as follows:

- four persons who attain the realization of *Magga* (Path).
- four persons who attain the realization of *Phala* (Fruition).
- four persons who are striving through *Vipassanā* meditation to attain the four stages of realization.

A yogi who has acquired the knowledge in distinguishing *nāma* and *rūpa*, the knowledge in the realization of cause and effect of all phenomena relating to *nāma-rūpa*, the knowledge in the recognition of the three marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*, leading to the *udayabbaya ñāṇa* (knowledge into arising and passing away of phenomena) is an *āraddhaviriya-vipassaka* (*vipassanā* striver). At this stage, he attains proficiency in the exercises of meditation with full faith (*saddhā*), so much so that he will not only make vigorous effort himself but also exhort others to do the same. In this way, he will experience *magga-phala* and become a true *samaṇa*.

In this connection, I would like to express my personal views: that is, if other teachings can offer a better way of finding peace and happiness, I will be prepared to forgo my faith. However, I have not found any after searching in an unbiased manner. Hence, my absolute faith in this teaching.

## DEFILEMENTS (KILESA)

All bhikkhus and yogis can prove for themselves. They can overcome the transgressive defilements (*vītikkaṃa kilesa*) through the observance of morality (*sīla*), and with one more step, that is with the application of *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi* (concentration group) they will overcome obsessive defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesa*). The immediate effect is evident. With further application of *sammā-saṅkappa* (insight group) they will attain *paññā*, thus cutting off the latent defilements (*anusaya kilesa*). Such yogis are ready to become *samaṇas* and attain various stages of *maggas*.

It can be observed here that in expounding this doctrine, the Buddha has not criticized other teachings. The Buddha declared that only in the *sasana* where the Noble Eightfold Path is found that there can exist true *samaṇas* who overcome *kilesa*. And this Path is the way or method of searching for truth and attainment and not religion in its strict sense.

The three grades of *kilesa* may be compared to the three states of a person, namely, the state of inactivity or slumber is comparable to *anusaya*, the state of wakefulness to *pariyuṭṭhāna* and the state of activity to *vītikkaṃa*. Another simile is the match stick (with its intrinsic property of causing fire), the spark (produced by striking the match) and the flame or conflagration to *anusaya*, *pariyuṭṭhāna* and *vītikkaṃa kilesas* respectively.

# CHAPTER 20

## THE TRIPLE ROUND

### BEGINNING OF THE ROUND

‘*Vaṭṭa*’ means ‘to proceed’ or ‘cycle’ or ‘round of rebirths’. With reference to the Dependent Origination (*Paticca-Samuppāda*), Visuddhi Magga speaks of three rounds:

- *Kilesa Vaṭṭa* –  
the cycle or round of defilements comprising ignorance, craving and clinging;
- *Kamma Vaṭṭa* –  
the cycle or round of *kamma* or action comprising the *kamma* formations and *kamma* process;
- *Vipāka Vaṭṭa* –  
cycle or round of results comprising consciousness or *viññāna*, mentality and corporeality or *nāma-rūpa*, six bases or *āyatana*, impression or *phassa* and feeling or *vedanā*.

This three-staged realm of existence (*tebhūmaka vaṭṭam*) is given in the exposition of the doctrine of metempsychosis (*vaṭṭakatham kathento*). For example, we may hear a sweet sound. If we are not mindful (ignorant), we crave and then cling to it (*kilesa vaṭṭa*). This leads to a desire for further hearing or actions (*kamma vaṭṭa*).

Then we resort to all available means and reap the kammic results (*vipāka vaṭṭa*).

If you are freed from *kilesa vaṭṭa*, will you commit any *akusala* actions? No. Not only that, you will also not commit any *kusala* actions that leads to further becoming. This freedom from *kilesa vaṭṭa* leads to freedom from *kamma vaṭṭa*. When there is no *kamma vaṭṭa*, there will be no *vipāka vaṭṭa*. Stoppage of such a cycle is known as '*vivaṭṭa*'. This state is also called '*Sammā-dukkhakkhaya-gamī*' (proper attainment of the cessation of suffering) which is one of the attributes of *Magga* (Path). The other qualification is *aṭṭhaṅgika* (eightfold).

Thus, it is clear that the yogi must be mindful, with diligence and persistence, knowing the value of every moment which must be devoted to the dhamma practice. Without such effort, there will be no progress; without progress, the yogi will become wearied with tedious repetition like a chronic patient who becomes immune to treatment. So, let us not become chronic yogis.

## CLINGING IS THE CAUSE

Clinging (*upādāna*) is an intensified degree of craving (*taṇhā*). Because the objects are delightful, it is sense-desire clinging and because the view is 'The world is self and eternal', it is false-view clinging. When you wish to take something, you stretch your hand to reach

it and after you have reached it, you grasp it and later cling to it (firmly grasp) if it is a desirable object. Thus it is said ‘With craving as condition, clinging arises.’ For the normal worldlings, the process of *avijjā-taṇhā-upādāna* will go on. Whenever you see, hear, smell, taste, contact or think, if you are not mindful you will be overcome by this process every moment. Such is *kilesa vaṭṭa*.

The force of this process varies like that of a rotating fan or of a waterfall. As the sense-desire and false-view clinging grow, they are translated into actions – bodily, verbal and mental, in the desire for further becoming. Here proper guidance in the form of wise or adjusted consideration (*yonisomanasikāra*) is required, just as one needs good steering and brakes in driving a car.

As a result of this *kilesa vaṭṭa*, *kamma vaṭṭa* arises. With good mental steering, *kusala* will result and without it, *akusala* will result. *Akusala kamma* will lead to *akusala vipāka* (immoral results). *Kusala kamma* will lead to *kusala vipāka* (moral results).

Thus, *kilesa vaṭṭa* leads to *kamma vaṭṭa* which leads to *vipāka vaṭṭa* – further becoming. As life begins, *avijjā-taṇhā* seed (potential) is contained in it so as to enable the *avijjā-taṇhā-upādāna* process to continue forming new *kamma*, new *vipāka* and so on in perpetuating the cycle.

*Kilesa* may be compared to the sap of a tree, *kamma* to the seed which germinates and sprouts into a tree, and *vipāka* to the tree. The supporting factors of the sap, such as the air, water and soil, may be compared to the sensuous pleasures (*kāma-raga*) which nourish the *kilesa* sap. *Vipassanā* is the killer of the tree. The tree can be killed by eliminating the sap or the factors leading to the development of the sap, such as by girdling (in the case of the teak tree).

## ESCAPE FROM THE ROUND

Mindfulness is the means to counter the force of *kilesa*, and once you are aware of the truth, *avijjā* is overcome and so is the *kilesa* sap. ‘Unknowing one craves, knowing one abandons’. So the *taṇhā* sap will be gone. In the absence of outstretched-hands (*taṇhā*), there will be no clinging (*upādāna*). Since the true nature of phenomena is known, the ‘I’ ego will be gone. The *upādāna* sap will be overcome.

In the yogi, as much as in the ordinary person, contact occurs, so there will arise the feeling (*vedanā*) in accordance with the clause ‘With contact as condition, feeling arises’. The feeling is immediately followed by mindfulness so as not to advance to craving.

No *kilesa vaṭṭa* means no *kamma vaṭṭa*, hence no *vipāka vaṭṭa* – no rebirth, old age and death. This is what *vivaṭṭa*

means. So, the question is: ‘When you note at the moment of hearing a sweet sound, will you be overcome by *kilesa vaṭṭa*, i.e., *avijjā*, *taṇhā* and *upādāna*?’ The crucial factor in putting a stop to the generation of new trees is the drying up of the sap. Similarly in severing the three rounds the eradication of defilements is the crucial factor.

*Kilesa, Kamma and Vipāka  
Are the triple round called Vaṭṭa  
Of Defilement, Action and Result.  
Ignorance, Craving, Clinging  
Are the rounds of Kilesa.*

*Deeds, good or bad, produced through these  
Are the rounds of Kamma.*

*Future becoming conditioned by Kamma  
Is the round of Vipāka.*

*With Kilesa unabandoned and Kamma performed  
Vipāka is bound to follow.*

*With Kilesa abandoned and Kamma unperformed  
Vipāka will cease to follow.*

*Without the practice of Eightfold Path  
The round will spin forever.*

*Practising the Eightfold Path cuts off the round.*



# CHAPTER 21

## MOMENTARY PEACE

*Anga* = that (*kilesa*) which will arise without mindfulness: *Ta* = by that mindfulness: and *Santi* = Cessation. This means momentary or temporary peace, achieved through the practice of *Vipassanā*. When you are practising the dhamma, you should act like one carrying a pot of oil (*telapatta*) with great care so as not to spill the oil. Another simile is walking on a narrow footbridge, slowly, steadily and cautiously so as not to fall.

In this regard, I wish to pose a riddle: How would you take the air out of an empty narrow-necked bottle? You can do it in three ways. One way is dropping water carefully through the narrow neck – the yogi penetrates his consciousness into the object with diligence and persistence. Another method is by heating the bottle to drive the air out – just as the yogi expels defilements through exertion (*ātāpa*). The third is to pump air out – just like the yogi noting the *kilesas* off his mind.

As you note the arising phenomena with the application of *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi*, diligently and persistently penetrating your consciousness into the object, you will be able to discern *nāma-rūpa* phenomena. In this way, you will overcome ego-illusion (*atta-dit̐hi*).

The next stage is the knowledge of conditionality or cause-effect relationship of *nāma-rūpa*. Unless you are aware of this fact, you will not be able to overcome doubts and instead you will entertain such heresies as causeless view (*ahetuka diṭṭhi*) and fictitious cause view (*visamahetuka diṭṭhi*).

The third stage is the knowledge on the contemplation of *anicca-dukkha* characteristics of phenomena<sup>1</sup>. This is the beginning of contemplation of impermanence (*anicca-nupassanā*) and hence *vipassanā*. Here, as you know the *anicca-dukkha* nature, you will understand its nature in terms of other tenses, namely past and future. Also as much as it occurs in you, you will realize that it occurs in others. The next step is the contemplation of arising and vanishing (*udayabbaya-nupassana ñāṇa*) in a fast manner.

So far the contemplation deals with the nature of the object. As the practice matures, you will know the nature of consciousness as well – that it is also arising and passing away. At this stage of the contemplation of the arising and vanishing of the two, namely both the object and the consciousness, in pairs, you are said to have reached the peak of *aniccanupassanā ñāṇa*.

At every mindfulness, *tadaṅga santi* is achieved. The accumulation of *tadaṅga santi* will result in the attain-

ment of *accanta santi* (permanent peace) or *Ariya Magga* (Noble Path).

**Q:** *How long would one take to attain accanta santi?*

**A:** It depends upon how far the disciple can follow the instructions of the teacher. In my experience, I have come across four types of yogis:

- Intelligent and clear, that is the quality possessed by the first kind. Being active, he understands and speaks clearly. Such people will perceive the dhamma very quickly, say within a span of three weeks.
- Intelligent but confused. Though active, he speaks in an unclear and indistinct manner.
- Dull though clear. Though he understands and speaks clearly, he is dull. He will take time.
- Dull and confused. He will take more time.

So, you can make your own judgment on how long you will take to see the dhamma.

# CHAPTER 22

## DIRECT AND FULL KNOWLEDGE

As per the expression:

*Sabhāva dhammānaṃ lakkaṇa sanlakkaṇato  
Ñeyyābhimukhaṃ paññā abhiññā.*

*Abhiññā* is rendered as direct (*abhi*) knowledge (*na*) which is synonymous with *neyyabhimukha paññā* (direct knowledge or cognizable things). As to direct or ‘face to face’ it is said *lakkaṇa sanlakkaṇato* – direct or face-to-face knowledge with mindfulness of the nature or individual essence (*sabhāva*). By *lakkaṇa*, we mean *sabhāva lakkaṇa* (natural, individual or unique characteristics which are clearly noticed). In short, they are ultimate things or realities (*paramattha dhamma*) possessed by *nāma* and *rūpa*.

In the mundane sphere it is important to discern the *pariññeyya dhammas* and for this purpose one must practise correctly, that is, practise mindfulness of *kāya-vedanā-citta-dhamma-dhamma* objects in a way that is described in the scriptures as *abhijañña* (higher direct knowledge) – the latter referring to *dhamma abhiññā* (direct dhamma knowledge) and not *iddhi abhiññā* (power or miracle).

To win the knowledge, one must confront the *pariññeyya dhammas*. For instance, as one notes the rising with

tension and falling with relaxation, one's consciousness must fall synchronously on the object as it arises, with mindfulness of the entire process of *nāma-rūpa*. For this, one needs to mobilize one's mental energy to propel one's consciousness towards the object and face the object, resulting in mindfulness and concentration. Such is the correct practice. The immediate benefit is the abandonment of defilements.

Due to synchronization of consciousness with the object and *jhāna*-like concentration there do not arise any sensual desires or evil thoughts. At this stage the rising is understood as rising or the tension as tension and the falling as falling or the relaxation as relaxation. Such is *abhiññā*. Previously one encountered these phenomena casually but never in this manner of confrontation, when one's knowledge becomes clear and devoid of dimness or haziness. Such is knowing (*parinnata* or *abhinnata*) what must be directly known (*pariññeyya dhamma* or *abhinnaya dhamma*). We may say *abhiññā* and *abhinnaya dhamma* confront each other.

Further, in the scriptures is given the manner of mindfulness as '*sabbakaya patisamvedī*' (experienced by the entire body). '*Sabba*' denotes the detailed three divisions of time, namely, the beginning (*adi*), middle (*majjha*) and end (*pariyo-sanam*) in respect of falling, rising, walking, instead of coarse noting as some are wont to do.

What sort of mentality would it be – pure, noble, matured or polluted, backward, childish? Pure, noble and matured. This is why we call this practice ‘*bhāvanā*’ (mental culture). At this point, there is no need for further (peculiar or spectacular) aspirations that would amount to craving. Also one should not become impatient with the simple routine practice, thinking that it is common place and boring, as this would amount to ill-will. When one does not respect one’s practice in this manner, the mind will become confused, leading to delusion. Such a situation is termed ‘*asamapekkhana*’ (ineffective knowledge as regards the correct nature of objects); not in the sense of confusion leading to loss of consciousness but, not knowing the arising phenomena thoroughly.

If, in respect of the arising phenomena, one confronts with diligence covering the entire process, no greed will arise; with painstakingness and patience, no ill-will will arise and with comprehension of all arising sensations, there is no reason for delusion. How wonderful! The dhamma is too simple for some to appreciate. Expecting miracles out of this they tend to overlook the standard exercise.

## THE FOUR GREAT ESSENTIALS

Let us consider the four great essentials or four primary elements (*mahābhūta*). Every material substance

consists of these fundamental elements which possess specific characteristics.

### ***Pathavī-dhātu***

*Pathavī-dhātu* literally means the earth element and its closest equivalent is ‘the element of hardness or harshness’. Both hardness and softness are characteristics of this element. These are the qualities possessed only by this element and none other. Hence the expression – individual or natural characteristics.

### ***Āpo-dhātu***

By the second essential element, *Āpo-dhātu* (the fluid element in literal sense), we mean ‘the element of cohesion’. Both fluidity and contraction are the properties of this element and none other.

### ***Tejo-dhātu***

*Tejo-dhātu* (literally the fire element) is explained as ‘the element of temperature’. Both heat and cold are the properties of this element and none other.

### ***Vayo-dhātu***

*Vayo-dhātu* (literally the air element) is given as the element of motion, a quality possessed only by this element and none other.

## MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Just as in the case of *rūpa*, *nāma* also has its specific characteristics. *Nāma* or *citta* is that which is aware of an object. *Cetasika* (consciousness-concomitants or mental states) are aspects of mentality that arise together with consciousness, colouring (influencing) the latter, giving a special character or distinguishing quality to the mind. Examples are *phassa* (contact) and *vedanā* (feeling). Direct knowledge of these aspects with mindfulness is *abhiññā*.

However, at the start of the practice, one would not see the natural characteristics. In order to be aware of the phenomena one employs customary usage (*voḥara*) such as ‘rising, falling, sitting, standing, walking, touching’, etc., in accordance with the explanatory method of teaching (*suttanta*).

For instance, ‘rising’ in the ultimate sense is, in the main, the element of motion (*vayo-dhātu*) – tangible datum (*phoṭṭhabba*). However, at the start it is not possible to note as *vayo-dhātu*; instead it will be noted as ‘rising’ in popular terminology, although in fact the natural characteristic of rising is the element of motion and when one is noting this phenomenon of rising one should be aware of the element of motion, or possess direct knowledge of natural characteristics; that is *abhiññā*.



## BEYOND FORM AND MANNER

To see the ultimate realities one needs to energize one's meditation practice with *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi*; otherwise just noting casually like a recitation will not produce any result. Trivial noting will not understand even the form (*saṅṭhāna rūpa*) or the manner (*ākāra rūpa*), not to mention the ultimate, due to dispersion of attention in most cases.

The dhamma practice is concerned with watching the ultimate. However, for the beginners it is difficult to see them. Instead the ultimates are mingled with forms and manners (concepts). Thus, using the *vohara* method, the rising and falling are noted and attention focussed on the forms and manners (securing concentration) and at times on the ultimate. In this manner, as the focussing power strengthens, one will be able to see the ultimate beyond the concept of forms and manners and win the knowledge. Such is *abhiññā*.

To explain this with a model, let us say we wish to close our hand. First we intend to bend the fingers, then we actually bend them. As we apply our mind to this process, we will see the form of our hand and at times the manner of bending; later with the stronger unification of mind the unique characteristics such as tension and stiffness will become obvious.

The direct knowledge of intention (to close) together with the series of sensations such as motion, tension and stiffness arising at the moment of their occurrence is *abhiññā*.

## PARIÑÑĀ

### ***Ñata Pariññā***

*Abhiññā* is also synonymous with *pariññā*. Hence mental phenomena such as intention and physical phenomena such as motion, tension and sensations are *ñata* or *neyya*. Full understanding of these phenomena at the moment of their arising is *pariññā*. Thus the discernible phenomena arising occasionally in one's body is *ñata* and their full understanding is *pariññā*. 'Ñata' means 'well-known' and '*pariññā*' is 'full understanding' or 'direct knowledge'.

It so happens at times that there arise too many events and the yogi is at a loss as to what to note. In such a case, note the most prominent one or, if the area is large, demarcate a small area (like encircling a zone on a group photograph to pin-point your favourite subject) and focus your attention accordingly.

As the bending process is composed of the mental phenomenon of intention and the physical phenomena of sensations, if they are removed from this process what

would remain? Nothing. As you note thoroughly the above phenomena, you will observe that the momentary stages of intention are the cause for the bending process, thus the cause-effect mechanism of *nāma-rūpa* becomes evident. The full understanding of this mechanism is *ñata pariññā*.

When the yogi has discerned the *nāma-rūpa* and their causal relations as described above, he sees that there is no living being over and above the *nāma-rūpa*. There is nothing else that is a being, a person, a deity or a Brahma in the ultimate sense. There is neither supreme or universal soul (*paramatman*) which commands nor individual soul (*jīva-atta*) which receives the command and acts. The *nāma-rūpa* has no overlord nor is itself its overlord. There is only *dhamma* or *sabhāva*.

We have spoken of the intention as the causative agent. Now who causes this intention? Let us say we stretch our arm and keep it like this. What will happen? We would feel the tension, discomfort. Our instinct tells us that we will overcome this situation by bending our arm. The feeling of tension causes our desire to bend and our desire to bend causes the actual bending.

Again, what is the cause of tension? It is contact (*phassa*). So *phassa* is the cause and tension is the effect. Similarly the rise-and-fall finds cause in inhalation-exhalation, which in turn is caused by the desire

to breathe, which in turn is caused by impulse. Thus the chain of cause and effect goes on.

What do you find in these phenomena? If you say *paramatman*, it is not possible because there cannot exist more than one *paramatman*. Some would hold the doctrine of fictitious cause, taking to be the cause what is not the cause and proposing something (false) as a causative agent to explain the occurrence of a phenomenon.

The Buddha is the knower and teacher of the doctrine of conditionality of all physical and psychical phenomena. He is fully enlightened (*sammāsambuddha*) because he has discovered (buddha) all things rightly (*sammā*) by himself (*samam*) as the result of perfections (*pāramī*), the qualities developed and brought to maturity by the *Bodhisatta* in his past existences.

For some who are not mindful of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena at the moment of their arising, they are disposed to go counter to what actually takes place or exists and cling to the notion of ‘my hand’ which is bending and ‘I’ who is bending it, leading to the mistaken view of individuality. In the ultimate sense there is only mental and material processes.

When with mindfulness one discerns the *nāma-rūpa* with its conditions, in the correct manner, one is said to have developed Correct Knowledge and Vision

or the Knowledge and Vision according to reality (*Yathābhūtānupassanā ñāṇa*), which is one of the eighteen principal Insights. Through its means, misinterpreting *sammohabhinivesa* (insisting or adherence (*abhinivesa*) due to confusion (*sammoha*) that occurs in this way: ‘It is I, mine, myself or overlord’, is abandoned temporary, that is, at the realization of this Knowledge. This adherence is totally overcome by the attainment of *sotapatti magga*.

As one realizes the Delimitation of Formations (*Saṅkhāra pariccheda ñāṇa*) and the Discernment of Conditions (*Paccaya pariggaha ñāṇa*) through *ñata pariññā*, one develops the Correct Knowledge and Vision and abandons misinterpretation due to confusion. So, let us develop *ñata pariññā*.

### **Discerning the Conditions for *Nāma-rūpa***

Kamma, consciousness, temperature and nutriment constitute the fourfold condition for materiality beginning with kamma. Herein it is only when it is past that kamma is a condition for kamma-originated materiality; consciousness is a condition when it is arising for consciousness-originated materiality.

Temperature and nutriment are conditions at the instant of their presence for temperature-originated and nutriment-originated materiality. As we have discussed,

the desire to bend causes the actual bending and this is the illustration of how *nāma* causes *rūpa*.

Out of several objects that arise at any of the six sense doors, the mind adverts to the most prominent or interesting object. Such an attention is called *manasikāra* (literal meaning – making in the mind). For instance, when you are reading a book, there arise some sounds; the sound of a car, people, etc. But since your attention is directed to your book, you do not hear or see other things. This illustrates how *nāma* (*manasikāra*) causes *nāma* (consciousness).

Similarly is the case when you are eating. You pay attention only to a particular taste (tasting consciousness) of the food. Also, when you take note of a particular odour, you smell only one thing.

Due to eye and visible object, eye consciousness arises. Thus the occurrence of *nāma* is due to *rūpa*. Thus the six doors beginning with the eye and the six objects beginning with visible data are conditions for *nāma*. Similarly, when the body comes in contact with hard, hot or cold objects, body consciousness (tactile cognition) arises.

When we are noting the rising and falling of the abdomen, as we accumulate concentration, one or both of the phenomena may vanish. Consequently, our mindful-

ness, which is dependent on the object, does not arise. These illustrate how *rūpa* causes *nāma*.

When your body comes in contact with the heat element of climate (*utu*), you will feel the effect of heat (*utuja-rūpa*) in the form of sweat, tiredness, etc. *Utu* (season) may be in the form of fire, corrosive chemicals, etc. Nutrition (*āhāra*) influences the body vitality. Your body will respond to the type of food you consume. These examples show how *rūpa* causes *rūpa*. Thus the conditioned nature of the phenomenal elements is known in accordance with the expression:

*So sabbaṃ dhammaṃ abhijānāti.*

The plane of full understanding as known (*ñata pariññā*) extends from the Delimitation of Formations up to the Discernment of Conditions and as such has not reached the stage of *vipassanā ñāṇa* which comprehends the arising and passing away.

### ***Tīraṇa Pariññā***

As the yogi matures in the practice of *ñata pariññā* he will advance to *tīraṇa pariññā* – full understanding by investigating, reflecting, judging the comprehensive characteristics or *sāmañña lakkaṇa* (universal or common characteristics) of each phenomenon, namely its impermanence, suffering and non-self. Hence the maxim:

*All characteristics at every mindfulness,  
Investigating and full understanding,  
This we call tīrana pariññā.*

As we note the rising and falling of the abdomen (which are known objects or *ñata*) we will see the manner (*akara*) of arising and passing away and as we gain meditative strength, we will see the arising and passing away of phenomena in segments, the old giving place to the new. If we are attentive we will see them appearing and disappearing like bubbles on the surface of the water.

Suppose you are aware of a sensation, say heat. As your mind is attentive you will notice the beginning of this sensation and as you note, it dissolves. So you see the genesis and dissolution and as you gain experience you will see their segmentation. Full understanding of the heat is *ñata pariññā* and full understanding of the arising and passing away of heat is *tīrana pariññā*.

Similarly is the case with irritation, numbness or pain. You will see their arising and passing away in segments, the old ones giving place to the new, thus contemplating impermanence. This is the beginning of Insight (*vipassanā*) and the start of the plane of *tīrana pariññā*.

Here one may ask, why does not *ñata pariññā* qualify as insight? The answer is the particular plane of *ñata*



*pariññā* is the direct knowing of mentality-materiality with its conditions and not the comprehensive knowledge of characteristics. In the beginning of the practice the yogi is able to note the middle portion of the phenomenon and not quite the beginning and the end, though the teacher usually urges him to note all divisions.

As he progresses, he is able to note the beginning in addition to the middle, the originating in addition to the proceeding, and not quite the termination because he is occupied with noting the ever newly arising phenomena before he is able to notice their termination. This applies to all meditation objects.

Let us define *vipassanā* again. ‘*Vi*’ means comprehensive characteristics and ‘*passati*’ or ‘*passanā*’ is seeing. Hence its rendering; seeing or knowing comprehensive characteristics such as transiency, unsatisfactoriness and impersonality. Investigating, reflecting and full understanding of these features are *tīraṇa pariññā*.

Since the arising of defilements depends upon the perception of permanence and pleasure, such states will not enter upon the mind of the yogi who sees impermanence and pain. Since he has abandoned the view of *nicca*, *sukha* and *atta* he may be said to have developed *pahāna pariññā* to some extent.

However, though he is able to note fast arising and dissolution and understands the triple features of phenomena, he does not yet see the dissolution of the noting consciousness itself and thus has not reached the climax of *aniccanupasanā ñāṇa*. He is still in the early stages of *vipassanā ñāṇa* and not quite in the plane of *pahāna pariññā*.

The plane of *tīraṇa pariññā* extends from Comprehension by groups of existence (*sammāssana ñāṇa*) up to Contemplation of rise and fall (*udayabbaya ñāṇa*), for in this interval the penetration of the general characteristics (*sāmañña lakkaṇa*) predominates.

Once you attain *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, you are said to be satisfactory and worthy of existence as a human being. This is said in verse 113 of the Dhammapada:

*Yo ca vassasataṃ jive  
Apassaṃ udayabbayaṃ  
Ekāhaṃ jivitaṃ seyyo  
Passato udayabbayaṃ*

*Better than a hundred years in the life of a person  
who does not perceive the arising and the dissolving  
of the five aggregates (khandhas)  
is a day in the life of one  
who perceives the arising and the dissolving  
of the five aggregates.*

At this stage, one will become inspired with confidence and with the exception of those who aspire to become Buddhas, it is possible for one to perceive the dhamma in this life. Such kind of person was conceived in his mother's womb (*paṭisandhi*) with the seed of wisdom and is known as *tihetuka paṭisandhi*, that is *paṭisandhi citta* (rebirth consciousness) is accompanied with three wholesome roots. Those who have had no *amoha* root are dull. For instance, animals are conceived without *amoha* root and are called *duggati ahetuka*. Such beings cannot perceive the dhamma in this life.

Just for general knowledge, it may be mentioned that in order to be endowed with *paññā* in this life, one must have performed in the previous existences, *paññāsamvattanika kamma* (meritorious works accompanied with, and leading to wisdom), such as teaching and scholarship without expectation of reward, performance of *danas* with the object of scholarliness. Another cause for the arising of wisdom is *avyāpajja-lokuppatti* (being reborn in an existence free of *dosa*, such as the Brahma plane). *Kusala* actions performed in this plane are always accompanied with knowledge. A third is *indriya paripaka*, perfection or maturity of the faculty of knowledge. When a person is young, he cannot perfect the faculty of knowledge, as he is indulged in *kāmarāga*. As he comes of age, he gains experience and can develop the faculty of knowledge. Some wish that

they be reborn at the age of fifty. One cannot say that youth is useless. If he is trained so as to be able to practise the true dhamma, he will excel those who have not.

Here, with the application of *Samādhi Khandha* (concentration group) or *samatha*, one achieves 'Kilesaduribhava' (state of being removed from defilements). To know the true nature, and develop knowledge, he purifies his mind by the application of *samatha*. The practising yogi must penetrate his consciousness into the object with diligence and persistence so as not to leave any gap to allow *kilesas* to enter. Here is given the example of the plank floor which looks like a solid plane. It is said by the Blessed One:

*Indeed, wisdom is born of meditation.*

*Without meditation wisdom is lost.*

*Knowing this twofold path of gain and loss of wisdom,  
one should conduct oneself so that wisdom may increase.*

Also:

*Samādhiṃ bhikkhave bhāvētha samāhito  
yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.*

*The Bhikkhu who concentrates sees things according to reality.*

To continue with the causes for the arising of knowledge, there are two as mentioned in the Aṅguttara Nikāya

Duka-nipata. Knowledge means *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* or *ñāṇa* and *magga sammādiṭṭhi* or *ñāṇa*. Firstly, we have *paratoca ghoso* – learning the right method from a good friend (*kalyāṇamitta*) or simply listening to the appropriate dhamma. This is to gain *sutamayañāṇa* (knowledge by learning). Secondly, one must reflect on the *nāma-rūpa* aggregates wisely or in an adjusted manner (*ajjhanttanca yonisomanasikāra*). *Yonisomanasikāra* (wise attention) may be divided into two:

- pre-practice adjustment
- adjustment of the consciousness with the object during practice.

As to the first part, the beginner of the practice tends to see the object as a person or being and not as *nāma* or *rūpa*. This kind of conception is not genuine. Knowing the existence of *nāma-rūpa* through learning from books or teachers is genuine or adjusted knowledge. So, you accept the existence of *nāma-rūpa*. Again you learn the conditionality of *nāma-rūpa* from books or teachers and this is genuine or adjusted knowledge. You now accept the existence of both *nāma-rūpa* and their conditionality. This much concept will stand you in good stead in the practice of the dhamma.

At this point, it may be mentioned that some have the opinion that literary knowledge is a *sine qua non* for the dhamma practice or, at the other extreme, that

no knowledge whatever is needed for the purpose. One must possess *sutamayañāṇa*. How much? So long as one knows *nāma-rūpa*, their cause-effect relationship and their *anicca-dukkha* characteristics, this is sufficient to give one a background knowledge.

To transform this concept into practical knowledge is the second adjustment – the adjustment of consciousness with the object. Then you prove the theoretical knowledge by means of personal experience.

To elaborate on the second type of adjustment, as you note the rise and fall of the abdomen, your consciousness should fall on each and every stage of the movement synchronously. Here again, the elements of *virīya* and *samādhi* are involved. The result will be knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of the true nature of *nāma-rūpa*. Once the *vipasānā ñāṇa* is achieved, *magga ñāṇa* will follow.

### ***Pahāna Pariññā***

This is ‘full understanding by overcoming or abandoning’, starting from the stage of *bhanga ñāṇa* (knowledge consisting in the contemplation of dissolution of all forms of existence). Here the yogi sees the terminal instead of the beginning and the middle, perceiving that both mind and matter, which constitute his personality, are in a state of rapid flux, not remaining for two consecutive moments the same.

*Pahāna* means freeing, abandoning. Since the yogi sees the dissolution of existence, he is freed from the perception of permanence. Since all forms are dissolving, he sees them as pain and is freed from the perception of pleasure. The previous perception of *atta* and *jīva* will also dissipate because every existence is seen as just nature and spontaneity. Thus the clinging to permanence, pleasure and self are overcome and the comprehensions rectified.

Because the dissolution of both the object and the consciousness is noted in pairs, at this stage this insight is known as *Patvipassanā ñāṇa* (Added insight knowledge). Previously the meditating consciousness seemed to remain perpetual. Now the meditator, who is contemplating dissolution of twin phenomena, sees the whole field of formations as impermanent, not as permanent; and because of the suffering inherent in what is impermanent, and because of the absence of self in what is painful he sees that same whole field of formations as painful, not as pleasant, and as non-self, not as self. Here his Insight of Impermanence (*Aniccanupassanā ñāṇa*) is said to have reached its climax. Hence the stanza:

*Gaining knowledge, sublimation,  
Resulting in abandonment of grasping,  
This we call pahāna pariññā.*

Why sublimation? Because he sees the dissolution of not only the object, but also the consciousness which clarifies his views of permanence, etc.

When the whole field of formations is seen in the light of dissolution:

- as impermanent he abandons pride (*māna*);
- as painful he abandons craving (*taṇhā*);
- and as non-self he abandons views (*diṭṭhi*).

Then, with the realization of *aniccanupassanā ñāṇa*, his pride fades away, with *dukkhanupassanā ñāṇa* his greed, and with *anattānupassanā ñāṇa* his views. Not giving a chance for the arising of the three diversifications (*papañca*) is what we mean by bringing about their cessation or abandonment. He is freed from them. Having entered on this way, he relinquishes, he does not grasp. Thus the plane of full understanding as abandoning extends from the Contemplation of Dissolution (*Bhanga ñāṇa*) up to Path Knowledge.

*Nāma-rūpa* is likened to an enemy who pretends to be a friend. One associates with him faithfully because one is infatuated. However much one's well-wisher comes and says, 'He is not your genuine friend; he might harm you or kill you even', one is not moved, instead one is not pleased with this kind of advice. However, this assumed friendship is actually causing trouble gradu-



ally without one's knowledge. One does not realize the mask and the flaws. One sees only pleasure in him and thus cannot relinquish him. The more one grasps in this manner with *taṇhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi* the more one gets into trouble.

So also, however much one preaches that all conditioned things are transient, unsatisfactory and non-self, if he adheres strongly to the view of self in permanence and pleasure, he will neither listen to the preacher nor relinquish his graspings. However, as he is repeatedly warned of the dangers, he begins to listen and learn the true characteristics. The more he pays attention, the better he understands, till he understands fully the characteristics of the real enemy. When he abandons him by seeing the flaws in this manner, he can do so without difficulty. If he does not see the flaws it would be difficult for him to relinquish. Now, seeing the flaws, his attachment will fade away till it is totally abandoned.

That's why we exhort you to pay attention so that you can see for yourself the real characteristics and the flaws of the states you admire. Unseen you seize, seen you release. If you see fully you will relinquish fully. Suppose while you are shopping you see a dress from a distance, whose design appeals to you. But on close scrutiny, you discover three holes in the dress which

cause you disappointment. You will not wish to acquire it any more. If you discover that your own dress has three holes, your attachment to the dress will fade away and you might even wish to relinquish it. Similarly, when you watch your own *khandhas* you may discover the three holes of transiency, unsatisfactoriness and impersonality, and your attachment to your *khandhas* will fade away.

Now the question is: Have you become detached from the holes or from the dress which has the three holes? In other words, have you become detached from the three characteristics or from the *nāma-rūpa* (aggregates) which has the characteristics? The answer is the dress which has the three holes or the *nāma-rūpa* which has the three characteristics. Without the dress, the holes cannot exist, nor the characteristics without *nāma-rūpa*. If the aversion is in respect of the three holes or the three characteristics, then it means you are still clinging to the dress or the *khandhas*, in which case you are not really abandoning the *kilesas*.

Here I would like to mention two things, *assādānupassanā* and *adīnavānupassanā*. The former means delightful attachment resulting from the ignorance of flaws in the *nāma-rūpa*. Seeing the pleasure in all the six sense objects arising at the six sense doors resulting from unmindfulness at the moment of arising, one

takes delight in these objects followed by craving and grasping. According to the latter, being mindful of the phenomena arising at the six sense doors and seeing the flaws such as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* characteristics, one does not crave or cling.

Not seeing the flaws in *nāma-rūpa*, or seeing the pleasure in *nāma-rūpa* is delusion or ignorance (*moha*), which is usually followed by craving and grasping. Seeing the flaws, one will not be deluded, one will gain knowledge. Seeing the misery and vanity one will not crave or cling. If a smoker sees pleasure in smoking, he takes delight in it and becomes attached to it. When he sees the disadvantages of smoking, he will not delight in it and will relinquish it. So here, which one does he relinquish – the flaws or the smoke which has the flaws? Finding the flaws, he relinquishes smoking.

In the *Visuddhimagga* is given the analogy of a fisherman who got hold of a creature under the water which he joyfully thought to be a fish. On taking it out of the water, to his surprise he discovered it to be not a fish but a snake. At this his perception of fish is at once changed into that of snake. Moreover, on close examination he saw three marks on the neck which signified it was poisonous. He decided to relinquish it. Seeing snake as snake is seeing the true nature. When he saw the three marks of poison he was more scared.

Similarly, to a *puthujjana*, mere possession of *nāma-rūpa* is considered a great achievement. Moreover, not knowing the truth, he supplements his life by taking on ideas, such as personality views. Once he realizes the true nature, causal relations and characteristics, he will become extremely frightened. Knowing the correct nature (*vijja*) he is freed from craving and grasping. He is said to achieve the extinction of misery or cessation of suffering (*dukkhakkhaya*). The yogi who achieves this is called '*bhabba*' (well-conducted).

# CHAPTER 23

## ONE BLOW FIVE SHOTS

How would you like to do just one thing and accomplish many things? In the Discourse on the Established (*Paṭiṭṭhita Sutta*) found in the Book of Kindred Sayings (*Samyutta Nikāya*) under *Mahā Vagga* chapter, the Buddha said just that in his teaching with the following verse:

*Ekadhamme paṭiṭṭhitassa bhikkhave,  
Bikkhuno pañcīndriyāni bhāvitāni honti subhāvitāni.  
Katamasamiṃ ekadhamme? Appamāde.*

*Monks, there is one thing which, if practised,  
can lead to the accomplishment of five other things.  
And what is that one thing? That is Appamāda (vigilance).*

### ESTABLISHED

Also on the *Paṭiṭṭhita Sutta* in the Book of Kindred Sayings (*Samyutta Nikāya*; *Mahā-Vagga*) are mentioned the following verses regarding mental faculties:

*Ekadhamme paṭiṭṭhitassa bhikkhave bhikkhuno pañcīndriyāni  
bhāvitāni honti subhāvitāni.  
Katamasamiṃ ekadhamme? Appamāde.  
Katamo ca bhikkhave appamādo,*

*Idhabhikkhave bhikkhu cittaṃ rakkhati āsavesu ca  
sāsavesu ca dhammesu,  
Tassa cittaṃ rakkhato āsavesu ca sāsavesu ca dhammesu  
Saddhindriyampi bhāvanāparipurimṃ gacchati,  
Viriyindriyampi bhāvanāparipurimṃ gacchati,  
Satindriyampi bhāvanāparipurimṃ gacchati,  
Samādhindriyampi bhāvanāparipurimṃ gacchati,  
Paññindriyampi bhāvanāparipurimṃ gacchati.  
Evampi kho bhikkhave ekadhamme patitṭhitassa bhikkhuno  
Pañcindriyani bhāvitāni honti subhāvitānīti.*

*Monks, by a monk who is established in one condition,  
the five controlling faculties  
are cultivated and cultivated well.*

*Established in what condition?*

*In earnestness.*

*And of what sort, monks, is earnestness?*

*Herein a monk wards his mind*

*amid the āsavas (cankers)<sup>2</sup> and conditions that go with the āsavas.*

*As he so wards his mind,*

*by cultivating the controlling faculty of faith,*

*he goes to perfection therein.*

*...by cultivating the controlling faculty of effort...*

*...by cultivating the controlling faculty of mindfulness...*

*...by cultivating the controlling faculty of concentration...*

*...by cultivating the controlling faculty of wisdom*

*he goes to perfection therein.*

*That, monks, is how in a monk who is established in one condition  
the five controlling faculties are cultivated and cultivated well.*

## APPAMĀDA

It is the opposite of *pamāda* (lit. forgetting), rendered here as failure, heedlessness, negligence. It means failure to abstain from what should be abstained from and observe what should be observed. *Pamāda* is of three kinds: Things to be abstained from are the ten misdeeds (*duccaritas*) by deed, word and thought – killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, harsh speech, gossip, covetousness, ill-will and wrong view, which have bases in *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

Why abstain? Because they are unwholesome, producing unwholesome results to oneself as well as others, secularly as well as spiritually. Such abstention can result from sympathetic feeling, and this is quite obvious. However, the majority are mired in the *kilesa* morass.

*Pamāda* is of three kinds:

- gross types –  
negligence in abstaining from *duccaritas* by body and speech – killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, taking drugs, lying, slander, harsh speech and gossips;
- medium types –  
negligence in restraint of the sense faculties.  
Though one succeeds in abstaining from misbehaviour by deed and word, if one leaves the sense faculties unguarded one would be tempted

by sensuous desire with passion for niceties – nice sights, odours, sounds, taste, touch and thought;

- refined types –  
this is also called *anupamāda* which concerns the practising yogi – failure in thoroughness, particularity and continuity of noting.

Furthermore, the majority do not believe in giving *dāna* to the needy, instead they would consider it no more than reduction of their wealth. That should not be the case. Just see what happens when you give *dāna* with love and compassion. Those who receive *dāna* are sure to respond with gratitude. It is also human to give *dāna* instead of being avaricious. Failure to fulfil such humane duty amounts to *pamāda*.

Failure to practise the noble and mind-purifying *Satipaṭṭhāna* which helps understand the intrinsic nature of things and achieve the sevenfold benefits is also *pamāda*. Although he practises, if he does not do so thoroughly, continuously and persistently, he is said to be failing.

Just as *pamāda* is threefold so is *appamāda*. While failure to accomplish his duties would cause him to feel remorseful (*vippatisara*), reflecting on his good conduct and profitable results are sure to make him happy and instil faith (*saddhā*) in the practice. Inspired with faith he possesses courage and makes effort (*virīya*) in his



practice. He becomes more mindful (*sati*) in accordance with the saying:

*Satā-rakkhena cetasā.*

which is aphorised as:

*Be mindful, noting every arising  
with watchfulness ever-present.*

With mindfulness his mind becomes concentrated (*samādhi*) until finally wisdom (*paññā*) blossoms. These five mental factors are called spiritual faculties (*indriya*), so called because they possess controlling power in their respective spheres, exercise lordship over associated states and overcome their opposing forces; uncertainty or wrong faith, cowardliness or wrong effort, carelessness or wrong mindfulness, distraction or wrongful concentration, ignorance or wrong views.

Hence the compounds:

- *saddhindriya* – faith-faculty,
- *viriyindriya* – effort-faculty,
- *satindriya* – mindfulness-faculty,
- *samādhindrinya* – concentration-faculty,
- *paññindriya* – wisdom-faculty.

Thus, holding on to one thing, he can accomplish the other five. Hence, the expression:

*One pluck, one bunch.  
One snatch, one cluster.*

Just as the Tathāgata is the chief of all creatures, *appamāda* (here it refers to *kārāpaka appamāda*) is the chief of all the profitable conditions. Now, *appamāda* is a mundane condition – *lokiya dhamma* belonging to *kāmāvacara*. There are four kinds of profitable conditions classified by plane, namely:

- *Kāmāvacara kusala*,
- *Rūpavacara kusala*,
- *Arūpavacara kusala*,
- *Lokuttara kusala*.

Of all these profitable conditions, *kāmāvacara kusala* is the lowest. So, how can *appamāda* of the *kāmāvacara* plane be the chief of all profitable conditions? The reason is *appamāda* can be applied to all profitable conditions leading to higher planes. For example, the diligent monk will cultivate and make much of the Ariyan eightfold way. Kindly refer the topic on ‘Earnestness’, under the *Mahā-Vagga* chapter in the Book of Kindred Sayings (*Samyutta Nikāya*).

Diligence is of two kinds:

- *Kārāpaka appamāda* – starting up diligence;
- *Kāraka appamāda* – performing diligence.

The first kind is to remind or awaken one to do something. The second one is concerned with implementing. The two go hand-in-hand, such as in the *Bodhisatta’s* fulfilment of perfections to attain the highest goal, and

the yogis' meditation effort. Diligence is required in meritorious deeds which fashion one's mind and body.

With *appamāda*, he gains self-reliance and self satisfaction and is free from blame by the wise. As these faculties build momentum, the yogi penetrates the intrinsic nature of things with one *ñāṇa* emerging at each stage; discernment of *nāma-rūpa*, comprehension of conditionality, the triple characteristics and the rapid arising-passing away of phenomena.

## ETHICAL ESSENCE

The ethical essence of Buddhism may be summed up by the word *appamāda*. The last words of the Buddha were: *appamādena sampadetha* – strive on with diligence. Before the Buddha's enlightenment, there had been only teaching of *sīla* and *samatha*, and not *appamāda*. It is only after the Buddha's enlightenment that the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path or *Sīla-Samādhi-Paññā* has come to be known. The continuous and stepwise occurrence of these controlling faculties called Dhamma rotating like a circle is known as *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana*.

Now, the yogis can judge from their own experience how these controlling faculties have progressed by comparing their states before and after their practice.

# CHAPTER 24

## ABSORPTIONS

### THREE TYPES OF CONCENTRATION

*Jhāna* is defined as the wilful concentration on an object. It has two purposes, namely, thinking closely of an object and burning or eradicating adverse things (hindrances).

There are three kinds of *samādhi* (concentration) namely:

- *upacarā samādhi* (neighbourhood or access concentration);
- *khaṇikā samādhi* (momentary concentration);
- *appanā samādhi* (attainment or full concentration).

*Upacāra samādhi* is the degree of concentration just before entering any of the absorptions or *jhānas*. It belongs to the mundane or sensuous sphere (*kāmāvacara*).

*Khaṇika samādhi* is the degree of concentration that lasts momentarily during contemplation on various meditation objects.

*Appanā samādhi* is the concentration existing during absorption, for example, entering into the *kaṣiṇa ārammana* (concentration object) such as the *pathavī kaṣiṇa* (earth as the concentration object) with full force.

Whereas *upacarā* and *appanā samādhi* arise with *paññātti ārammanas* (conceptual objects), *khaṇikā samādhi* arises with *paramattha dhammas* (ultimate realities). As the yogi is noting the arising phenomena and entering into *khaṇikā samādhi*, his mind is not scattered (*avikkhepo*) but is closely held onto the object.

There have been criticisms on the value of *khaṇikā samādhi*. For instance, about thirty years ago, a German Theravadan monk who came here to practise *vipassanā*, said that his original *samatha* concentration was lost because he was asked to note the arising phenomena.

The Buddha mentioned *khaṇikā samādhi* as being strong enough to lead to one-pointedness (*khaṇikā citte-kaggata*) and the Commentaries say that *khaṇikā* has the power of momentary concentration (*khaṇa-matta-thitiko-samādhi*).

In a rope, each of the constituent fibres is weak. But, when they are all made into a rope, they become quite strong. So also, *khaṇikā samādhi* when multiplied can lead to a wonderful energy. And especially when the yogi experiences *Magga* and *Phala Ñāṇas* (Path and Fruition Knowledge), the concentration can become very strong.

The *Satipaṭṭhāna* method guarantees mental purification, overcoming of pain (*dukkha*), leading to *Nibbāna*. The knowledge of *dukkha* is *paññā*. Thus one becomes endowed with clear vision and virtuous conduct (*vijjā-carāṇa sampanno*).

The meditation teacher always exhorts the yogis to contemplate or note – what is it? It is none other than *Jhāna*. It has two significances, namely; to concentrate, apply or direct the mind onto the object (meditative absorption) and to burn up adverse states, overcoming *nīvaraṇa dhammas* (hindrances).

## MUNDANE AND SUPRAMUNDANE JHANAS

There are two kinds of *Jhāna*, namely:

- *āramanūpa nijjhāna* (object-scrutinising *jhāna*);
- *lakḥhanūpa nijjhāna* (characteristic-examining *jhāna*).

The former is mundane, where the mind falls closely (*upa*) and completely (*ni*) with the object, e.g., the earth *kaṣiṇa*. This type of absorption refers to the eight attainments (*samāpatti*) – four meditation absorptions of the five material spheres (*rūpa-jhāna*) and four meditation absorptions of the four immaterial spheres (*arūpa-jhānas*) in conjunction with proximate concentration (*upacarā samādhi*).

The latter is concerned with mindfulness of *nāma-rūpa* objects by attributing the three characteristics to them, leading to the supramundane attainment of *magga* and *phala ñāṇa*. Thus the former is *samatha jhāna* and the latter, *vipassanā jhāna*.

# CHAPTER 25

## PRELIMINARY PRACTICE

This means pre-jhānic or preliminary practice in order to prepare the yogi for the main jhānic practice. It covers four elements, namely effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*satī*), calmness (*passaddhi*) and concentration (*samādhi*).

*Virīya* has four elements (*caturanga*). The yogi vows to make effort thus: 'Let my flesh and blood dry up leaving only the skin, bones and sinews, let me die, I shall not fail'. Such is the kind of courage the yogi should possess. When he is faced with severe feeling (*vedanā*) he will not shrink nor lose courage till he attains the desired goal.

The nature of *virīya* lies in determined patience with clenched teeth when the yogi is faced with *dukkha* and difficulties. Put in another way, it means perseverance not to fall back and flounder. Such a characteristic is called, *ussāha lakkaṇa* (sustaining characteristic).

Some yogis suffer from physical pain and are afraid that their blood circulation might stop and they might eventually die while meditating. One should possess stamina and not give in and change the posture till the target is achieved.

Just like an old leaning building needs a support to keep it upright, so also when his *virīya* is not strong enough, the yogi should support to strengthen it. Such a situation is known as *upatthambhana rasa* (supporting vigour). Thus will the yogi gain extra strength with a determination of 'not going back' till he sees the dhamma in a remarkable manner. Such a situation is known as *asamsidana paccupaṭṭhāna* – the manifestation of firm determination.

At this stage, one possesses *āradhāviriya* (initial effort) or *paggahita viriya* (exerting strength), the type of strength which goes to lift up gradually and firmly without stopping or lowering. It signifies unquailing, absence of shrinking, relaxation and easy-going (*asālīna*), never flinching from the practice.

With unquailing and resolute courage, the yogi will be able to fix his attention, *upaṭṭhita sati* (fixed attention) or *asammoha sati* (unbewildered attention), so that his mind-fulness will fall on the *ārammana* (object) and not float away. Such a situation is known as '*ārammanabhīṃukhi bhava*' the state of fixed and face-to-face attention on the object.

Thus the yogi will be able to go along and not lose sight of the target track. His consciousness (*ārammanika*) will become fastened to the object (*ārammana*) instead of just overarching the object and scattering. Otherwise



the yogi will feel repentant. For one minute's loosening of contact, he will suffer the loss of sixty notings and for two minutes, one hundred and twenty notings, thus eventually leading him to restlessness (*uddhacca*) and remorse (*kukkucca*). His mind would not be at peace.

The mindfulness of the rise and fall would be just in name because his attention is loose and not closely knitted with the object. Since the *sati* is not strong enough, his mind will be scattered. Then after a minute or two, he would recover his *sati* and start blaming himself for his disturbed mind.

Once he is able to fix his *sati* on the object, his mind will be able to fall on the target without creating any gap in the stream of mindfulness. He will then experience calmness (*passadhi*) in *nāma-kāya* followed by calmness in *rūpa-kāya*. When the mind is at ease, his body will also be at ease. If one worries and repents due to loosening of attention, how would one's mind behave – fixed or scattered?

Once the mind is calm and collected it will become fixed on one point, just like the dart which has been aimed attentively hits straight into the target. Such a situation is called *samādhi*.

When the mind is fixed on a point or is pierced into the target like an arrow for one or two minutes, in

an unshakable manner like a mountain (*acala*) and without trembling (*nippbandana*) one is said to attain *khaṇikā samādhi*.

One may argue (*codanā*) that the *pubbabhāga paṭipadā* should also include such wholesome mental states like faith (*saddhā*) and wisdom or knowledge (*paññā*). The answer to this argument is that once the yogi is fastened to the practice of *pubbabhāga paṭipadā*, it is to be understood that both *saddhā* and *paññā* have been possessed by him. For, without faith in the practice, one cannot exert, and in the practice of correct method, knowledge is obvious.

# CHAPTER 26

## TRANQUILLITY MEDITATION

### FACTORS OF ABSORPTION

Let us look at *samatha jhāna*, taking the earth *kaṣiṇa* as a meditation object. There are six factors, *jhānangas* (constituents or factors of absorption), namely:

- *vitakka* –  
applying, aiming or directing one’s mind to the object;
- *vicāra* –  
sustaining or holding the mind on the object, as if fastened to the object or stroking over the object;
- *pīti* –  
rapture, joy or happiness with interest in the object;
- *sukha* –  
bliss that is not connected with material pleasures;
- *upekkhā* –  
equanimity that is a sense of well-being and calmness without happiness or bliss;
- *ekaggatā* –  
one-pointedness, synonymous with *samādhi* or *jhāna*.

The consciousness which is associated with these factors is known as *jhāna sampayutta citta*. *Vitakka* has the quality of applying, aiming or directing the mind (*citta*) to the target in a continuous manner. It is active

and shiny. It is the opposite of *thina-middha* (sloth and torpor) where the mind is dull, inactive and slack. *Vitakka* has a blossoming effect and *thina-middha* has a withdrawal effect. *Vitakka*, in conjunction with other associated mental states (*cetasikas*), has the power of inhibiting *thina-middha cetasikas*.

Of the two *cetasikas*, one overwhelms the other. If the *thina-middha cetasika* group gains the upper hand, the mind will become hazy and the yogi will doze. As the mind shrinks, *thina-middha* will arise and as it strengthens it will become a hindrance (*nīvaraṇa*) to *kusala* (wholesome) course of action.

As *vitakka* matures, *vicara* arises. *Vicara* is defined as the sustained application of the mind by moving around or stroking over the object so that *sati* is held onto the object, like being fastened to it. *Vicara* inhibits doubts (*vicikicchā*).

When *vicara* matures, *pīti* will arise. When I played marbles in my young days and hit the target I jumped with joy. *Pīti* is defined as joy, happiness or pleasurable interest. It opposes ill-will (*vyāpāda*). It serves as a precursor to *sukha* (bliss, happiness or pleasant feeling not connected with material pleasures), which is the opposite of *uddhacca* and *kukkucca* (restlessness and regret).

As the mind calms down with bliss, it becomes fixed to a point, which is *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness or unification). This opposes sensuous desires (*kāmacchanda*). Such are the factors leading to first *jhāna* by streamlining all their associated mental states to perform the respective functions. The full attainment of concentration is known as *appanā samādhi*, which the practising yogi will enter upon and dwell in, burning or inhibiting adverse things – hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) or opposing dhammas.

If after the fulfilment of *vipassanā jhāna*, the yogi wishes to practise *samatha jhāna*, he may do so and will not find difficulty, especially if he has developed *Brahmavihāra* (the Four Sublime or Divine Abodes).

There is one of note of warning in regard to *samatha jhāna*, that is, though *samatha jhāna* will bring concentration and peace of mind and serve as a precursor to higher spiritual powers, it is a mundane achievement and is inferior, though it lends support to *vipassanā jhāna*. The *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*, which arises in *samatha jhāna*, is unable to discern *nāma-rūpa* phenomena.

The practice of *samatha* is based upon mindfulness of the concept (*paññātti*) by choosing one of the forty objects of concentration (*kasiṇa*). When one passes away while practising and being absorbed in *samatha jhāna*, one will be reborn in the respective Brahma world.

Prior to the enlightenment of the Buddha, and among non-believers even after the enlightenment, people practised just *samatha*. In doing so, they became delighted in the pleasures and joys of *jhāna* and attached (*nikanti*) to such objects. Such an attachment is known as ‘stagnating within’.

Either because such yogis get involved in *samāpatti* or because the *kammaṭṭhānacariya* (meditation teachers) cannot advance the yogis to the practice of *vipassanā*, the disciples with no practice of *paññā bhāvanā* or *vipassanā* do not gain the real understanding of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena, thus resulting in clinging to personality view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) and ego entity (*atta diṭṭhi*). When these people become *brahmas*, they continue to cling to such views. It is a shame that the majority in the West look to *samatha jhāna* and psychic powers (*abhiññās*) with attendant miracles, and that such yogis do not progress to more valuable *vipassanā jhāna*. However, if *samatha* can be used as a basis to step up to *vipassanā*, it will be very useful, because *nīvaraṇas* have been overcome by *samatha*.

*Buddha sasana* is giving a golden opportunity of teaching *vipassanā* practice, which is likened to a boat with which one can easily cross the river of *saṃsāra* (round of rebirths). After having practised *samatha*, if one cannot progress to *paññā bhāvanā* and dies as such, it will amount to a great loss.

Soon after the Blessed One attained enlightenment, he thought to himself to whom he should impart his Dhamma which was so subtle and profound. He remembered the two hermits under whom he practised *Samatha* and higher spiritual powers. He found out with his divine eye that one had already passed away seven days before and the other, only one day before. The two had been reborn in the fine-immaterial world where they did not possess sensitive corporeality (*pasāda rūpa*) such as the ear or audible sense organ to listen to the Dhamma. Thereby, the Buddha was greatly moved (*dhamma saṁvega*). Such is the way in which the *samāpatti jhāna* ends up.

At this point one may argue why the Buddha, with all his supernatural powers, could not create an ear (audible *pasāda*) for those two. The answer is that the Buddha never did anything which was against nature (*sabhāva*). Any worldling who is reborn in the *arūpa* plane cannot perceive the Dhamma.

At one time, a brahmin begged the Blessed One to send his disciples to all quarters of the world to show miracles through the practice of *samatha bhāvanā* and *abhiññās* (supernatural powers) so as to win more followers and convince people of the *sasana*. To this, the Buddha refused.

## THE THREE MIRACLES

At this juncture, I would like to mention three *pātihāriya* (marvels or miracles):

- *iddhi pātihāriya* – marvel of magic
- *āsesanā pātihāriya* – marvel of mind reading
- *anusāsani pātihāriya* – marvel of instruction or mental development

As regards the first one, though ignorant people may wonder at such marvels, wise people know that such practices can be accomplished by *gandhārī* art. As for the second one, it is not strange, because such miracles can be accomplished by means of *cintamani* art. Though they may be considered as wonders by common people, they are valueless to intelligent people. The Buddha says he sees danger in the first two and therefore abhors them.

However, the Buddha encourages the third practice as noble and sublime. Through the *anusāsani pātihāriya*, one can develop purity of mind, accomplished by knowledge. Through this marvel, one can cultivate fully-cultured life. As regards the other *pātihāriya*, though one may have supernatural powers, one cannot be cultured. Since these powers are of a mundane nature, they need to be practised continuously, otherwise they tend to dissipate easily. A beautiful glass is attractive



to a common eye but fragile. A steel cup is not so attractive but durable. A golden one would be the best.

There have been instances of abuse of *samatha* achievements. Some notable *samatha* yogis to whom people had held in high esteem began to misuse such powers and became infamous.

*Samatha* practice is like the experience of a person who stays indoors, enjoying his *pīti* and *sukha* in a closed manner, whereas *vipassanā* practice is like the experience of a person who goes out to learn all aspects of knowledge. It is like giving a microscope to him so that he can study all aspects of knowledge and discover a variety of sensations which add to his knowledge.

*Samatha* is such that if it is not practised continuously and mastery (*vasi*) developed, the *samādhi* can be lost, whereas in the case of *vipassanā*, *samādhi* may be lost due to non-practice, but knowledge gained will remain in the form of a nucleus or energy, from which one can develop one's *vipassanā ñāṇa* any time as well as *pātihāriya paññā* (prudence). One advantage is that whenever one is faced with the worldly conditions (eight *loka-dhammas*), one can behave with equanimity. One will also view worldly affairs with loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*) and sympathetic joy (*muditā*). As for *samatha bhāvanā*, nothing will be left over once the practice is disrupted. With *samatha*, aban-

doning of defilements cannot be assured. With *vipassanā*, one can be assured of eradicating defilements. The *Buddha sasana* is not complete with just *samatha bhāvanā*. Only when practice is with knowledge as the main objective, will the *sasana* be complete.

## MIRACLES OF FAITH

The Buddha refused to engage in displays of magical power. He instructed his disciples neither to perform magic for the sake of impressing a crowd nor to attend such a magic show. Here is the way he stated the matter in response to a request to send a disciple to convert certain people with the help of a miracle:

*“Kevaddha, I do not teach the Law to bhikkhus in that way; Come, bhikkhus, work a marvel of supernormal power higher than the human state for the white-clothed laity.”*

The Buddha went on to explain that he knew of three different kinds of miracles. First, he named miracles that are usually called “magical powers”. These include such things as walking on water, flying through the air, passing through walls and closed doors and going to visit the heavenly realm.

A second kind of miracle is that of seemingly super-normal mental abilities, such as the ability to read minds. The Buddha felt these two kinds of miracles were well

within the realm of possibility for the person with a perfected mind but they were not to be used to impress people.

A third kind of miracle is the miracle of instruction, that is, the practice of teaching people the right mode of behaving, which will work wonders in their lives.

While being confident that his disciples could work miracles because of their mental perfections, he instructed them not to do so, for he wished his message to have true light.

# CHAPTER 27

## INSIGHT MEDITATION

### DEFINITION

It is a compound of 'Vi' = unique features of all sorts, and 'Passati' = observing. It is defined as Insight Meditation. Insight is so called from its close examination of the characteristics of impermanence, etc. Because the work to be done by insight is accomplished through the path (*magga*), so it is called *Path*. And because fruition (*phala*) examines closely the truth of cessation and comes next after the path, so it is called *Fruition*. By means of spiritual insight knowledge called *vipassanā ñāṇa*, one observes and truly knows the characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* in respect of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena as they arise.

Through the experience of insight, *vipassanā* aims at freeing the mind of greed, hatred and delusion and cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, confidence, joy, tranquillity leading finally to attainment of highest wisdom which sees nature of things as they are, and realises the ultimate truth.

The yogi must observe the perceptible phenomena at the moment of arising to understand the true characteristics. If we wish to understand the nature of light-

ning, we must wait for a cloudy day and watch the actual flashing forth of the lightning. Likewise the yogi must observe any of the sensations arising at the six sense-doors to understand their intrinsic nature. In this centre, the technique focuses on watching whatever sensations, thoughts, feelings, pains and emotions that are occurring in each moment and making a mental note of them as they occur, while not identifying with them.

One may ask what would happen if they are not observed. The answer is that if they are not observed they will not be understood. Not knowing (*añāṇa*) or ignorance (*avijjā*) will lead to delusion (*moha*). Ignorance of true nature is the basis for the arising of defilements. *Lobha* or *dosa* will arise depending upon the desirability or undesirability of the object.

As one sees a pleasant form, *nimitta-gaha* (holding on or clinging to the image) may arise, thence the particulars, *Anubyanjana-gaha* (holding on or clinging to the details with relish) – like when one enjoys a delicious curry or sees the individual features of a body, manner of walking, etc., Bread as such is good to take but with other additives like butter, etc., it becomes more tasty.

However, if the yogi is able to note the sensations as they arise with vigilance and fixedness of mind, he will not be overcome by *kilesas* but will feel calm and indifferent.

Due to the eye (*cakkhu pasāda*) and to a visible object (*rūpa-ārammana*), eye consciousness (*cakkhu viññāna*) arises. Here one requires full understanding (*pariññā*) that these *nāma-rūpa* dhammas are the Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Sacca*), because they are the basis for many kinds of sufferings – *dukkha saccaṃ pariññeyyaṃ*.

Then it follows that the coincidence of the three is contact (*phassa*); with contact as condition, there is feeling (*vedanā*). These dhammas, which are perceptible phenomena, must be noted as they arise. There is no need for thoughts and imaginations.

The analysis of a seeing process as the combination of *cakkhu pasāda* and *rupārammana* resulting in *cakkhu viññāna* is in accordance with Abhidhamma, and if one notes in this manner one's thoughts will be scattered. According to the Sutta method, we simply say 'seeing', and this is how we note in the dhamma practice. So, all we have to do is fix our mindfulness on the target in a face-to-face manner and vigilantly in accordance with the *loka-vohara* (current usage in ordinary life) which is the Sutta method.

When we note in accordance with the *loka-vohara* such as 'seeing' 'seeing', we are labelling mentally so as to direct our attention specifically to the actual act of seeing, just like the children would spell 'CAT' or 'RAT' to

pronounce these words correctly in their primary class. Likewise, such name concept may be used by beginners whose concentration and mindfulness are not matured enough. After the practice matures and the concentration and mindfulness become strong, there is no more need of labelling, just as the children need not spell to pronounce the words when they grow up.

## NOTEWORTHY OBJECTS

*Rūpa dhammas* – sense organs or sensitive elements (*pasāda*), namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind and their respective sense objects (*ārammana*), such as visible, audible, olfactive, gustative, tangible and cognisable objects. *Nāma dhammas* – consciousness (*ārammanika*) of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, contact or impression (*phassa*) of the three elements such as eye, visible object and the consciousness, and the resultant feeling (*vedanā*). Both (*rūpa* and *nāma dhammas*) are all *dukkha sacca*, which are objects to be noted.

In *Vipassanā* practice, the practitioner abides contemplating every arising at the six sense-doors. However, in the initial stages, he would find it difficult to do so. Hence the instruction in this centre to note rising and falling of the abdomen which is quite perceptible to everybody. It is in keeping with the expression:

*Yathā yathā va paṇassa kāyo paṇihito hoti  
Tatthā tatthā nam pajānāti.*

*Again, that monk's material body may be placed  
or disposed in whatsoever manner he knows  
as it is placed or disposed.*

As stiffness, tension, relaxation or movement during the rising and falling of the abdomen constitute *vāyodhātu photthabba rūpa* (tangible material element of mobility), the practice of knowing rightly these sensations while noting as 'rising, falling' is in full agreement with the exposition in *Khandha Āyatana Desanā* and falls under *Khandha Dhamma-nupassanā* as given in *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, quoted below:

*Rūpam bhikkhave yonisomanasi karotha,  
Rūpāniccatanca yathābhūtam samanupassatha.*

*Monks, consider the materiality in an appropriate manner,  
Be mindful of its impermanence rightly.*

## OVERCOMING OF HINDRANCES

One may argue why other associated mental states (*sampayutta dhammas*) such as contact (*phassa*) are not considered as factors as well in the first *jhāna*. The answer is that the said five factors are most prominent. There are two main reasons for mentioning these five factors, namely:



- their ability to cause concentration on the object;
- they directly oppose the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*).

*Vitakka* has the power of aiming and directing the mind attentively on the object so that the mind can become fixed on the object. *Vicara* has the power of holding or fastening the directed mind on the object. *Pīti* has the power of delighting the mind, causing interest in the object. Just like the example of a marble game, or any other game, unless one has good practice and skill, one will not be able to aim properly. It may hit or miss the target. When one is fully skilled, one will be able to hit the target. Then one will achieve complete joy. The same goes with *vitakka* and *vicara*. Unless one is skilled in aiming the mind and holding onto the object, one will not achieve *pīti*. *Sukha* is bliss, a kind of pleasant feeling, brightening and developing the mental faculties. All these factors contribute to the achievement of *ekaggatā* or *samādhi*.

Secondly, as the faculties are balanced, *nīvaraṇas* are removed further and further away. The mind is freed from the opposing dhammas which tend to scatter and shrink. Thus the *sati* will become fixed onto the object, examining it closely and attaining *jhāna*.

## MOMENTARY CONCENTRATION (KHAṆIKA SAMĀDHI)

When one talks about *jhāna*, one tends to refer to *samatha* practice. There is a firm popular belief that *samatha jhāna* is the true *jhāna*. Of course, it is true that one can attain absorption in *samatha jhāna*. Whereas in *samatha jhāna*, one fixes attention on a single concept (*paññātti*), in *vipassanā jhāna*, one does not fix attention on one object alone, but moves from one sense object (*paramattha*) to another as they arise, and the concentration attained is *khaṇikā samādhi* (momentary concentration).

The Canon on *khaṇikā samādhi* describes it as '*khaṇikā-cittekaggatā*', meaning, momentary one-pointed concentration of the mind, to which the commentaries refer as *khanamatta-thitiko samādhi* – *samādhi* achieved momentarily. The books firmly support that *khaṇikā samādhi* also has the quality of fixing the *bhāvanā* mind in an unshakable manner. Comparable to ecstatic concentration (*appanā samādhi*), one can thus become enrapt in *jhāna*, enjoying the calmness and serenity of a one-pointed mind.

Under what conditions will the *khaṇikā samādhi* qualify as *appanā samādhi*? It is possible only when the opposite states (*patipakkha dhammas*) or *nīvaraṇas* are subdued. In what manner should one subdue the

hindrances? The answer is *‘ārammana pavatta mano’*. As the yogi is vigilantly mindful of the arising sense objects in an incessant manner, his *khaṇikā samādhi* should flow continuously like the current of water.

*Vipassanā jhāna* is not based on one object alone. Attention is averted to all and a variety of arisen phenomena, both *nāma* and *rūpa*, namely the rising and falling of the abdomen, the bending and stretching of hand, changing of postures, etc., and unique characteristics such as tension, irritation, stiffness and similar sensations unremittingly – *etena karaṇa pavatta mano*.

As one develops skill in the acts of directing and holding on of the mind to the *ārammana*, one automatically experiences ecstatic joy or rapture till finally one achieves *samādhi*. These jhānic factors become prominent especially when one attains *sammāsana ñāṇa* – insight knowledge consisting in the reflection of determination of all phenomena of existence as transient, unsatisfactory and impersonal.

The series of *khaṇikā samādhi* is likened to a line of people who are so close to one another that there is no gap for outsiders to enter and it becomes one continuous line. Another example is the floor which is made up of wooden parquet which are so closely placed that there is no gap and a whole set of wooden parquet forms

one complete floor. Such a situation is known as *pavat-tamano* – proceeding as one indivisible thing.

The Buddha also points out that one should not underestimate *khaṇikā samādhi* as trifling. As one raindrop after another can fill up the whole vessel, in like manner, one *khaṇikā samādhi* after another in a continuous chain of mindfulness will accumulate into a tremendous energy. In this regard, Visuddhimagga says:

*Khaṇikacittekaggatā ti  
Khaṇamattathitiko samādhi  
Sopi hi ārammane nirantaraṃ  
Ekākārena pavattamāno  
Patipakkhena anabibuto  
Appito viya cittaṃ niccalaṃ thapeti.*

*Khaṇika samādhi* is a unification of the mind concentration lasting only a moment. Indeed, it is so. For that too, when it occurs uninterruptedly on its object (presently arising *nāma-rūpa* phenomena) in a single mode (at the actual time of insight momentary unification of the mind arising through the penetration of the characteristics of impermanence and so on) and is not overcome by opposition (*nīvaraṇas*), fixes the (*bhāvanā*) mind immovably, as if in absorption, i.e., mundane *appanā samādhi*.

The Dhammapada also says in verses 121 and 122:

*Do not disregard evil, saying, 'It will not come nigh unto me'.  
By the falling drops even a water-jar is filled;  
likewise the fool, gathering little by little,  
fills himself with evil.*

*Do not disregard merit, saying, 'It will not come nigh unto me'.  
By the falling of drops even a water-jar is filled;  
likewise the wise man gathering little by little,  
fills himself with good.*

The yogis who are assembled here are not fools. They are wise people. So they will not disregard the small merits.

The robe worn by the bhikkhus is woven of several threads which by themselves are not strong. One single thread, even two pieces, will be very weak. But when they are closely knitted into a robe, they are united and strong. So is *khaṇikā samādhi*, which when accumulated into a strong unit will go a long way to the development of insight knowledge.

So not underestimating the *khaṇikā samādhi* as trifling and insignificant, please practise *vipassanā* meditation by acting slowly like a sick patient. Practise moderation in eating and sleeping habits; not taking unwholesome food and not sleeping beyond the limit.

## JOY AND HAPPINESS (PĪTI-SUKHAṀ VIVEKAJA)

I would like to talk about joy and happiness (*pīti-sukhaṃ*) arising as a result of overcoming *nīvaraṇas*. There are three sorts of *viveka* (seclusion or detachment), namely:

- *kāya viveka* –  
seclusion of the body, solitude;
- *citta viveka* –  
detachment of the mind from passions;
- *upadhi viveka* –  
freedom from substratum or *nibbāna* devoid of *khandha* and *kilesa*.

The first *viveka* refers to solitude, staying without a companion. Is *kāya viveka* good enough? No. One has to stay away from sensual desires and other hindrances, and be mentally detached (*citta viveka*). Because, although one may be free of a companion, one may get indulged in *kilesas* thinking of sensual pleasures.

In the Canon, it says that *citta viveka* arises in yogis who attain *vipassanā jhāna* and dwell absorbed in eight *samapattis* (absorptions of the fine-material and immaterial spheres). However, for the ordinary yogis, mindful living without *kilesas* and allowing no chance of *nīvaraṇas* to come in is sufficient to gain *citta viveka*.

As regards *upadhi viveka*, which means *nibbāna*, let us leave it for the moment. In ordinary life, people prefer

living in pairs. However, in the realm of Dhamma, it is not desirable. The aphorism is:

*Avoid companion  
And making full effort  
This is your job.*

One dwells mindfully with the application of *vitakka* and *vicara* so as to be freed from *nīvaraṇas*, which cause hindrances to not only the attainment of *jhāna*, *magga* and *phala* but also the performance of ordinary *kusala dhammas*.

When one is freed from *nīvaraṇas*, such as *kāmacchanda*, one's mind will be purified, whereas when one has ill-will (*dosa*), etc., one's mind becomes hazy and dull. When one is hazy, this haziness hinders *kusala* activities. The mind will scatter, forming doubts; thus it becomes impossible to perform ordinary *kusala* activities. Hence, *nīvaraṇas* oppose *kusala* activities. They will prevent performance of new *kusala* actions and also cause the loss of *kusala* actions already performed. They pollute the mind and are therefore dangerous.

Without *citta viveka*, gaps are formed and *nīvaraṇas* will come in. Thus the effort becomes disrupted, the mind gets polluted and *paññā* will be weakened. Although some yogis fulfil *kāya viveka*, they cannot fulfil *citta viveka*, thus the *paññās* which should arise do not

arise. Some, with whatever little knowledge they possess, become indulged in too much thinking, imagining and speculating, which cause them to lose track of real *paññās*.

Just as a dynamo needs to operate at specified revolutions to produce the required electricity, so also the yogi should make specified effort to generate the required *paññā*. In the ordinary worldly life, where one is earning a livelihood, one needs bodily and mental rest so as to recoup one's energy. Such is not the case with the Dhamma, where one must work incessantly so as to gain more energy. At this stage I would like to mention two sorts of *virīya*, namely:

- *Kāyika virīya*,
- *Cetasika virīya*.

The former is concerned with the four postures (*iriyāpatha*). One makes a determined effort in relentless mindfulness so that no gaps will form to allow *kilesas* to enter. Also one should be concerned that such *kilesas* are not carried over from one posture to another. The latter is concerned with the mental efforts in not allowing *kilesas* to enter.

Again the example of the engine. Continuous operation of the dynamo will give sufficient charge to the battery so as to enable the motorcar engine to start easily,



to light, sound the horn, etc., in a proper manner. Likewise, the yogi must put up diligent effort in the matter of *sati*, *samādhi*, etc., so that his mind becomes bright and serene. This fact should be well understood. Just as the car will not start because of the lack of charging and has to be pushed from behind, so also the yogi will suffer from hindrances, such as doubt and uncertainties, and find it difficult to start his practice. Due to *nīvaraṇas* which are ready to come upon him uninvited he becomes weak and unable to pick up his effort once again.

Hence the *vipassanā niyāma* (Fixedness of Law or Natural Order) – slackened mindfulness invites *nīvaraṇas*; relentless mindfulness abandons them. With *kāyika viriya* and *cetasika viriya*, *nīvaraṇas* will be absent. With clarity of mind, *pīti-sukham* from absence of *nīvaraṇas* will arise.

## KINDS OF PĪTI (JOY)

I would like to describe here the five kinds of *pīti*, namely:

- *khuddhaka pīti* –  
a minor form of thrill or joy that causes the flesh to creep or raises hair on the body;
- *khaṇikā pīti* –  
a momentary or instantaneous joy like flashes of lightning occurring at different moments;

- *okkantika pīti* –  
a showering or flood of joy like the waves breaking over the body on a seashore;
- *ubbega pīti* –  
(*ubbe* = above, *bega* = energy) thus, it means uplifting joy with the power of levitating the body and making it spring up in the air, like a lump of cotton carried by the wind;
- *pharaṇa pīti* –  
pervading or rapturous joy which pervades the whole body like a full-blown bladder. At times one feels like being rolled like a ball.

The first one can arise with *khaṇikā samādhi*. The first three types are weak forms of *pīti* (*dubbalo*). They are also labelled as ‘*pamojjaṃ*’ (gladness). The fourth one is the true *pīti* and is known as *balava* (strong) *pīti*. For those who have observed five precepts, these forms of *pīti* can arise after a few sittings. The arising of this *pīti* is likened to pregnancy. As the pregnant mother will nurture her unborn baby and take due care of her health so that the child will be born without any difficulty, so also, *pīti* arising as a result of the absence of *nīvaraṇas* is to be maintained so that the *jhānic* process may continue smoothly. One should note that this kind of mental state is not to be attached to, though without *pīti* one tends to get bored.

When *pīti* matures, *passaddhi* (calmness) arises – both *kāya passaddhi* and *citta passaddhi*. At this state, the yogi feels comfortable and happy. Seeing Dhamma, he feels satisfied. There is no more scattering of mind. In fact, his *khaṇikā samādhi* becomes strong. As this *samādhi* strengthens, he sees the states in their true nature (*yathābhūtaṃ*), discerning the *nāma-rūpa* phenomena and their unique characteristics.

Let us find out the root of this *ñāṇa*. It is none other than the absence of *nīvaraṇas* leading to *pīti* and the successive attainment of *khaṇikā samādhi*. Why are *nīvaraṇas* absent? The answer is vigilant mindfulness leading to *citta viveka* and thence to *pīti*.

## THE INDOLENT AND THE ENERGETIC

Now, I wish to mention two types of individuals. They are:

- *kusīta* – indolent,
- *araddhāviriya* – energetic.

The actual meaning of *kusīta* is indolent or lazy. In the metaphorical sense it means a defeated person in disgusting manner – slow and inactive, not being energetic in the performance of practical things. He is criticised for this as lazy-bones. The second one means a strenuous person. The condition in which the first individual suffers loss as well as that in which the second indi-

vidual gains full benefit, as mentioned by the Blessed One, is worth noting:

*“Bhikkhus, the indolent tends to suffer poverty. In the case of Dhamma, it means suffering dukkha in all the four postures during meditation.”*

How is it that one suffers *dukkha*? Because one is involved in base *akusala* actions which, in short, are the *miccha vitakkas* (wrong intentions). They are:

- *kāma vitakka* – thoughts or intentions regarding sensuous desires;
- *byāpada vitakka* – thoughts about ill-will to others;
- *vihimsa vitakka* – thoughts or intentions of causing *dukkha*.

To those who have not developed their mind, any of the above thoughts can occur in accordance with the expression: *Pāpasamin namati mano* – mind delights in unwholesomeness. Wherever there prevails *kāma vitakka*, people will want more and more, never contented and become excessive in *kāmarāga*, cruel, devoid of consideration to others, generating *lobha* and *dosa*. In this connection the Buddha says:

*Satiyā pariggannanto jināti pāpake akusale dhamme*

*By possessing mindfulness, unwholesome things are overcome.*

Such conditions prevail in regions where there are cruelty, persecution, quarrels and inhumanitarian acts, creating problems. Is that all? No. It causes loss of assets or benefits, not in the form of worldly ones but in the form of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. The Buddha has praised such kind of assets as *mahanta* (assets, truly and great). Such a loss will result in impurity of mind, unwholesome courses of action by way of physical, verbal and mental actions, and also wrong views. It is evident that a great loss results from becoming involved in the three *vitakkas*.

Outside of the *sasana* (dispensation), and where the three *sikkhās* are absent, indolence is happiness, whereas in the *sasana* the contrary is the case. In this *sasana*, one cannot take things easily. If one wishes to follow the easy way, one can act, speak and think as freely as one likes. So, which is better, the easy way or the hard way?

For the indolent, there is no security at the six sense doors. The doors will remain open so that everything can come in, such as rain, wind and worst of all, rogues. His mind will become contaminated. He cannot observe the *ājīvatthamaka sīla* (eight precepts involving wholesome livelihood).

## THREE KINDS OF EFFORT

I have already explained how the kusīta individual loses his opportunities because he is involved in the three *miccha vitakkas*. To deal with the other kind of individual, namely, the *araddhaviriya* (the energetic), I would like to refer you to the three kinds of *viriya*. They are:

- *ārambha dhātu* – initial take-off;
- *nikkhama dhātu* – exerted effort or booster made into advanced strength in order to overcome the present impasse;
- *parakkama dhātu* – endeavour made with progressive strength till the object is achieved.

From its overcoming idleness, energy is the controlling faculty in the sense of predominance (*adhipati*). Or, it exercises government with the characteristic of grasp. Combined with faculties (*indriya*) we get the compound ‘energy faculty.’

It has exerting as its characteristic, strengthening the co-existent states as its functions, and opposition to giving way as its manifestation. It has been said: ‘He, being agitated, makes a rational effort’, hence it has agitation, or the basic condition of making energy as proxi-

mate cause. Right energy should be regarded as the root of all attainments. As a human being and a meditating yogi, knowing the correct method of practice, one should take this opportunity of working towards the attainment of true knowledge, thus uplifting one's standard, in terms of physical, verbal and mental actions. This constitutes the initial attempt.

In the beginning, the yogi will find weariness, like a fish just fished out of the water. He would twist and turn, reel and sway like a fish. At this stage, he might feel repentant and think that it is a mistake for him to have come to the retreat. Thus, would he become a *kosajja* (an indolent). There have been instances of yogis running away from the retreat in this manner. After they have passed the active age, they may not wish to exert again, thus losing a great opportunity.

Realising the disadvantages of indolence, the exerting yogi would make an advance effort in order to overcome the present impasse while listening to encouraging advice. He would make a determined effort not to change his position, with a firm resolution of "*I'd rather die than to move.*" Then once he wins the contest according to his wish and finds that he has overcome the difficulty, he becomes happy and begins to possess courage to face any eventuality. His energy, which seemed to have diminished, becomes replenished. Now he will

come to say, 'This is wonderful'. He enjoys a kind of satisfaction which usually follows a success. He begins to possess an heroic courage and a willingness to take up the gauntlet for the dhamma cause. How will one feel at this state – *dukkha* or *sukha*? Such persons can live happily in the Buddha sasana as they are free from the vitakkas.

At this stage, I wish to mention the kind of *virīya* called *paggahitavirīya* (the strength of lifting up without any stoppage, stagnation, falling down, or shrinking away). Since it is lifting up, the yogi feels fulfilled (*paripuṇṇa*). All his six sense doors will become secure. His mind is pure and clean, having fulfilled *ājīvaṭṭhamaka sīla*. In the domain of holy people, he will be able to move about smoothly and fashion himself properly. Such type of individual is *araddhavirīya*, as distinct from *kusīta*.

Without *virīya*, the three vitakkas can overwhelm you. With *virīya*, they will be overcome. Your true and great assets will grow resulting in purity, knowledge and peace. Other tangible assets are not your own property. Social relations will improve. You will be able to take things (both the ups and downs of life) as they come, resulting in equitable treatment of all worldly conditions (*loka dhamma*).



# CHAPTER 28

## HINDRANCES TO PRACTICE

### FIVE HINDRANCES

*Nivarana* is derived from *ni* + *var*, to obstruct, to hinder. They are so called because they obstruct the way to celestial and nibbanic bliss. They prevent the arising of good thoughts in the way of *jhāna* or *vipassanā*.

The five hindrances are:

- *kāmacchanda* –  
sensuous lust, essentially *lobha*;
- *vyāpāda* –  
ill-will, essentially *dosa*;
- *thina-middha* –  
sloth and torpor, essentially *moha*;
- *uddhacca kukkuccha* –  
restlessness and worry (worry or anxiety for what has been done wrongly, or for right actions that have been left undone);
- *vicikicchā* –  
sceptical doubt or uncertainty.

These hindrances are temporarily inhibited by the *jhānas*. They are completely eradicated by attainment of *magga-phala ñāṇas* – sceptical doubt by *sotapatti*;

sensual lust, ill-will and worry by *anāgāmi*; and sloth, torpor and restlessness by *arahatta*.

*Vitakka* is the direct opposite of *thina-middha*. The former signifies activity, mobility and pervasion (*vip-phāravā*), whereas the latter is sickly, shrinking and undeveloped.

*Vicara* indicates moving around and holding on steadfastly. It has the element of certainty and apprehension resembling *paññā* (*paññāpatirupaka dhamma sabhāva*), whereas *vicikicchā* signifies looseness, uncertainty (uncertainty arising from one's inability to hold onto the object), doubts as to right or wrong and indecisiveness. Hence their contradiction (*patipakkha*).

*Pīti* (a *jhāna* factor) has the nature of joy, devoid of ill-will (*dosa* or *vyāpāda*). Ill-will has the nature of dissatisfaction and gloom. Thus the two mental states are directly opposite.

*Sukha*, which denotes ease, quietness, progress, is contrary to *uddhacca-kukkucca*, which denotes agitation, scattering, worrying and repentance. *Ekaggatā samādhi*, which has the characteristic of a calm and collected nature and not scattering, directly opposes *kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa* (hindrance by sensuous desires), which has the nature of mental agitation due to craving (*taṇhā*) of different sensuous desires arising through the six sense doors.

It is important to weaken the hindering states (*nīvaraṇa dhammas*), which tend to oppose the jhānic factors. Otherwise all or any of the *nīvaraṇas* may arise in the yogi. Hence, it is essential to carefully aim and direct the attention (*vitakka*) to the object. If this element is absent, one's mind will shrink and become sluggish (*thina-middha*). One needs to be mindful (*Satipaṭṭhāna*) all the time, except when one is asleep.

Without overcoming *nīvaraṇas*, *jhāna* cannot arise. Instead one will find oneself sitting on an 'unwholesome heap' (*akusala rāsi*). Just as there is an unwholesome heap, there must also be a wholesome heap. In this connection, the Buddha said:

*'Bhikkhu, if one who is speaking about the unwholesome heap wants to speak correctly, one must point out the nīvaraṇa dhammas as the unwholesome heap, and Bhikkhu, if one who is speaking about the wholesome heap wishes to speak correctly, one must mention the Satipaṭṭhāna (fourfold mindfulness).'*

If the yogi is not mindful and slacks for one minute, he will make sixty gaps to allow the *nīvaraṇas* to enter, and so on for one hour or one whole day, thus forming a big unwholesome heap on which he is said to be sitting. On the other hand, if he is vigilantly and relentlessly mindful and is absorbed in the jhānic factors, thus not

allowing any *nīvaraṇas* to enter into his mind, he will be sitting on the *kusala rāsi*. Every second he slacks in his jhānic effort, he is said to be jumping off his *kusala rāsi*.

So long as one's effort in mindfulness is strong, the opposite states (*nīvaraṇa dhammas*) will be subdued, and *vice versa*. Once again, I wish to refer you to *pubbabhāga paṭipadā* (preliminary practice), namely *virīya*, *sati*, *passaddhi* and *samādhi*, which causes the arising of *upacarā*-like *samādhi* (neighbourhood or access concentration), and makes a sound foundation to the attainment of the jhānic factors.

With vigilant effort to fix one's attention on the object, no overarching effect or looseness (*uddhacca*) will arise. With the mind firmly held onto the object, one will have no worries or agitation but will stay concentrated (*samādhi*). If the yogi leaves the mind unguarded, any of the hindrances may overwhelm him, torment him, causing cloudiness and obscurity, and as such are termed *cetaso upakkilesa*, imperfections of mental states. With the arising of any of these hindrances, knowledge will not be gained, even if some knowledge is gained it will be weak, and as such the hindrances are called *paññāya dubbati karaṇa dhammas* – states causing weakening of knowledge.

# CHAPTER 29

## IMPERFECTIONS OF INSIGHT

At the initial stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, ten imperfections of insight (*upakkilesa* or *vipassanupakkilesa*) arise in him who has reached *ñāṇa* by striving incessantly and who is thus known as *āraddha vipassaka* – one who is striving for insight. They do not arise in the following:

- *ariya sāvaka* – realised person;
- *vipattipannaka* – one who practises wrongly;
- *nikkhitta-kammaṭṭhāna* – one who stops practising meditation;
- *kusīta puggala* – the indolent.

The ten imperfections of insight are:

- *obhāsa* – illumination,
- *ñāṇa* – knowledge,
- *pīti* – rapturous happiness,
- *passaddhi* – tranquillity,
- *sukha* – bliss (pleasure),
- *adhimokkha* – resolute confidence,
- *paggaha* – exertion,
- *upaṭṭhāna* – assurance,
- *upekkhā* – equanimity,
- *nikanti* – attachment.

The above ten perfections of insight is given in *Paṭisambhidā* as:

*Obhāse ceve ñāṇe ca, Pītiya ca vikampati.  
Passaddhiyā sukhe ceva, Yehi cittam pavedhati.  
Adhimokkhe ca peggahe, Upaṭṭhāne ca kampati.  
Upekkhā vajjanāya ca, Upekkhāya nikantiyā.*

### **Illumination (Obhāsa)**

This may arise just with *samādhi* resulting from *samatha bhāvanā*, such as *Buddhanussati* (Recollection of the Enlightened One) or with *vipassanā ñāṇa*. One notable illustration of *samādhi*-originated illumination is the case of the house-holder, Anathapindika. Hearing the news of the enlightenment of the Buddha, he was so obsessed with the thought of seeing the Buddha that he woke up at night three times. Every time that he woke up he saw illumination derived from the contemplation of the Enlightened One. In the *vipassanā* yogi, such illumination would be mistaken for dhamma perception, that he is realising *magga-phala-nibbāna*.

### **Knowledge (Ñāṇa)**

Knowledge is clearly knowing *nāma-rūpa* phenomena arising and dissolving at the six sense doors while rapidly noting to keep pace with the accelerating process of *nāma-rūpa*. The yogi may delight in such knowledge thinking that it is the result of dhamma perception.

## **Rapturous Happiness (*Pīti*)**

For the types of *Pīti* refer Ch. 27 on Insight (*Vipassanā*).

## **Tranquillity (*Passaddhi*)**

It is a kind of sensation one feels when one suddenly enters a cool room after coming from a hot place, or when one suddenly overcomes exhaustion. The states which arise in association with it are: lightness (*lahuta*), malleability (*muditā*), wieldness (*kammaññatā*), proficiency (*pāguññatā*) and straightness (*ujjukata*). As a result of these the yogi feels elated with physical well-being and mental peace.

## **Bliss (*Sukha*)**

The effect of happiness, tranquillity and bliss on the yogi is illustrated in verses 373 and 374 of the Dhammapada as follows:

*Suññagāraṃ pavitṭhassa  
santacittassa bhikkhuno,  
Amānusī rati hoti  
sammā dhammaṃ vipassato.*

*The bhikkhu who has retired to a lonely abode,  
who has calmed his mind,  
who perceives the doctrine clearly,  
experiences a joy transcending that of men.*

\* \* \*

*Yato yato sammāsati  
khandhānaṃ udayabbayaṃ  
Labhati pīti pamojjaṃ  
amataṃ taṃ vijānataṃ.*

*Whenever he reflects on the rise and fall of the aggregates,  
he experiences joy and happiness.*

*To ‘those who know’ that (reflection) is deathless.*

### **Resolution (*Adhimokkha*)**

Here is intended confidence arising from resolution when truth is penetrated with knowledge. Noting mind is accompanied by very clear confidence (*adhimokkha*), purifying the mind at every noting as well as at rest.

### **Exertion (*Paggaha*)**

At this moment, the yogi is able to note without deliberate effort. Normal exertion is all that is needed for him.

### **Assurance (*Upaṭṭhāna*)**

This is the mindfulness wherein it appears as if the *nāma-rūpa* objects to be noted are automatically adhering to the noting consciousness or the noting consciousness is automatically penetrating the *nāma-rūpa* objects. By virtue of this keen mindfulness, very subtle *nāma-rūpa* objects emerge very clearly, and the succeeding object readily arises as soon as the preceding one passes away.



## **Equanimity (*Upekkhā*)**

In order to arouse consciousness, be it seeing, hearing or noting, a thought moment called *avajjana* arises, adverting the consciousness towards the object. The yogi, who is determined and experienced in 'noting the arising-dissolving *nāma-rūpa*' contemplates on the arising-dissolution initiated by the *avajjana* thought moment, and as such the entire thought process occurs with noting consciousness – *vipassanā javana* (impulsive thought moments) follow as a matter of course. The *avajjana* thought moment, which arises in *udayabbaya ñāṇa* when noting consciousness falls directly on the object to be noted without deliberate effort or search for the object, is called *avajjanupekkhā*. *Vipassanā ñāṇa* which arises, noting and knowing the arising-dissolution, is *Vipassanupekkhā*. Both these two kinds of *upekkhā* are said to be the imperfections of insight.

## **Attachment (*Nikanti*)**

Craving (*taṇhā*) for unusual events, such as illumination occurring in *vipassanā*, is *nikanti*. This kind of attachment can be mistaken for delight in mind development (*bhavanarati*) as the result of dhamma perception. Just the emergence of this *nikanti* can, therefore, disrupt insight. One need not speak of how *vipassanā* can be ruined by wrongful clinging to this *nikanti* through *taṇhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi*. For this reason, the other

nine objects of imperfection, if attached to through *taṇhā*, *māna* and *diṭṭhi*, are called *upakkilesa*, and if not attached to are not called as such. Thus, *Bojjhaṅga* (enlightenment factors) such as *sati* and the attendant states such as *sukha* and *saddhā*, which emerge during the succeeding *bhanga ñāṇa* and *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, cannot be labelled as *upakkilesa*.

As for the practising yogi, he will at once recognise the above as imperfections of insight not representing dhamma breakthrough and are only to be noted off, remembering the teacher's advice as to what is path and not path. Being disabled by the ten imperfections, he would not be capable of observing the triple characteristics in their true nature; but once freed from imperfections, he is able to do so.

# CHAPTER 30

## ENLIGHTENMENT FACTORS AND THEIR THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS

Due to the diffusion of *cittaja-rūpa* throughout the body, there arises the excellent body (*atipanita rūpa*). As the Seven Enlightenment Factors (*bojjhaṅga*) are also fulfilled at this stage, physiological benefits result from the dhamma practice.

It has already been said that the *udayabbaya ñāṇa* has reached maturity at this stage. Likewise, the *bojjhaṅga dhamma* has developed and become powerful. According to the books, it is only at this stage that the *bojjhaṅga dhamma* is fully accomplished. *Bojjhaṅga* is a compound of *bodhi* (Enlightenment, awakening) and *anga* (factor), meaning:

- the requisites of an enlightened person or a person who perceives the Four Noble Truths;
- the factors of Enlightenment.

*Bojjhaṅga* and *sambojjhaṅga* are identical in meaning. ‘*Sam*’ means exalted or good. The contents are as follows:

- *sati-sambojjhaṅga*,
- *dhamma-vicaya-sambojjhaṅga*,
- *virīya-sambojjhaṅga*,

- *pīti-sambojjhaṅga*,
- *passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga*,
- *samādhi-sambojjhaṅga*,
- *upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga*.

### ***Sati-sambojjhaṅga***

*Sati-sambojjhaṅga* is mindfulness as a requisite of an enlightened person or as a factor of enlightenment. There are four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*):

- Contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*),
- Contemplation of the feelings (*vedanānupassanā*),
- Contemplation of the mind (*cittānupassanā*),
- Contemplation of the mind objects (*dhammānupassanā*) or miscellaneous objects other than the above.

The kind of *sati* referred to here is not ordinary *sati*, but it is active, vigilant and powerful. As it develops and becomes energetic, the basic insight knowledge will manifest itself and at the state of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, *sati* becomes unremittingly powerful.

### ***Dhamma-vijaya-sambojjhaṅga***

*Dhammavicaya sambojjhaṅga* means investigation of the Law (*nāma-rūpa dhammas*) as a requisite of an enlightened person or as a factor of enlightenment.

This factor has arisen even in the early stage of *vipassanā* practice. Especially at the *udayabbaya ñāṇa* wherein are exposed the discernment of the *nāma-rūpa*, their interdependence and arising-perishing characteristics.

During the rising of the *vipassanā ñāṇa*, as the Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Sacca*) is directly known, the remaining truths, namely:

- The Truth of Origin of Suffering (*Samudaya Sacca*),
- The Truth of Extinction of Suffering (*Nirodha Sacca*),
- The Truth of the Path Leading to the Extinction of Suffering (*Magga Sacca*) are automatically understood.

Being mindful of sensations such as tension and stiffness, which are the result of *vayo photthabbaṃ* (element of motion resulting from contact), they are directly known. At every mindfulness of such phenomena, there arises the direct knowledge of *dukkha sacca*. And every time the object arises, there is no delight for it or there is no chance of the mind to take delight in it. In this way, *samudaya sacca* is abandoned, as it should be abandoned. Just as one builds up body resistance to diseases, that craving which is the cause of suffering will have no chance of occurring in the *nāma-rūpa* process.

As one clearly notes the process of interdependence, *anicca-dukkha* and a variety of other characteristics, one will not be deluded (*moha*). Not only *moha*, but also other *kilesas* which give rise to *akusala kammās* and *utthagami kusala kammās* will cease (*nirodha*). This kind of cessation or extinction is temporarily (*tadaṅga nirodha*) experienced during the *bojjhaṅga dhamma*, as distinct from complete extinction (*accanta nirodha*) or *nibbāna*. This *tadaṅga nirodha* arises as *pubbabhāga magga* (forerunner of Path).

In the course of *vipassanā* practice and the development of the *bojjhaṅga*, the Path of Right Effort (*Sammā Vayāma Magga*), the Path of Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati Magga*) and the Path of Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi Magga*) are fulfilled. These three make up the concentration group (*Samādhi Khandha*).

As to the simile, it is like when you are trying to pick up your food with a fork, you make the right effort by directing your fork, apply the right attention and penetrate into the food with the fork. Also, you have to aim correctly (*Sammā Saṅkappa Magga*) so that your consciousness synchronises with the target. As the practice matures, your penetration into the characteristics of the phenomena while noting is Right Understanding (*Sammā Diṭṭhi Magga*). These two belong to the insight group (*Paññā Khandha*). The two groups make up

the fivefold *Pancanica Magga*. The morality group (*Sīla Khandha*) of the remaining Noble Eightfold Path are:

- Right Speech (*Sammā Vaca Magga*),
- Right Action (*Sammā Kammanta Magga*) and
- Right Livelihood (*Sammā Ajiva Magga*) are accomplished by the yogi on taking up the precepts.

Thus, the Noble Eightfold Path is said to be fulfilled. If it is practised for one minute, it will be fulfilled sixty times and for one hour, three thousand six hundred times. This amounts to the development of *Magga Sacca*. This is how once *Dukkha Sacca* is discerned, the remaining three *Saccas* are automatically discerned. However, it cannot be said that the Four Noble Truths are formally known. It is only when *accanta nirodha* or *Ariya Magga* is self-witnessed that the Four Noble Truths are said to be formally known.

At the moment of the arising of *vipassanā ñāṇa*, *dhamma-vicaya-sambojjhaṅga* acts as a requisite of an enlightened person or as a factor of enlightenment. Seeing *accanta nirodha* means achieving *bodhi* (enlightenment). Hence, it becomes a requisite of an enlightened person or a factor of enlightenment.

At this point, one may say that the attainment of *vipassanā ñāṇa* is the knowledge of the Noble Truths, just as the attainment of *magga ñāṇa* is. Then what is the dif-

ference between these two statements? The attainment of *vipassanā ñāṇa* does not mean the formal knowledge of the Truths, whereas the attainment of *magga ñāṇa* or *ariya magga* means the formal knowledge of the Truths. It is like the case of an office management. The work done at the junior level of office staff has to be put up to the superior officer for final approval, where the case is supposed to become formally completed.

If the investigation of the dhamma is accomplished at the stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, one is said to have fulfilled the requisites for the perception of *Magga Phala dhammas*, or the Truths, in this very existence.

### ***Viriya-Sambojjhanga***

This is the enlightenment factor of energy. As the yogi attains *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, the three stages of effort will come about one by one, namely:

- *āraddha viriya* – diligent effort;
- *paggahita viriya* – this is an attempt which permits neither lowering of effort nor stagnation of energy, instead it inspires upward movement;
- *paripuṇṇa viriya* – accomplished effort.

### ***Pīti-sambojjhanga***

There are five kinds of *pīti* with the minor one occurring at the lower *ñāṇas* and the major ones such as *ubbega*



and *pharaṇa pitis* occurring at the higher *ñāṇas*. These *pitis* form one of the requisites of an enlightened person or one of the factors of enlightenment.

### ***Passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga***

This is the tranquillity factor of enlightenment, which is developed as a consequence of the arising of *pīti*, with the unscattered mind free of *uddhacca* and *kukkucca*. By *passaddhi*, it meant both *citta passaddhi* and *kāya passaddhi* mental states. This is developed as a requisite of an enlightened person or one of the factors of enlightenment. When this stage of *passaddhi* has been reached, mindfulness is thorough because it takes place without much effort, and the *dhamma* quality becomes distinct. The mental attitude becomes supple and upright so that the yogi is willing to confess any mistake which he may have committed previously.

### ***Samādhi-sambojjhaṅga***

This is the concentration enlightenment factor, wherein the mind is concentrated in a unified manner, just like a lighted candle in a still atmosphere.

### ***Upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga***

The last is the equanimity enlightenment factor arising from maintenance of neutrality towards living beings and formations, like in the case of *tatramajjhattu-*

*pekkhā*. This is a quality which should be possessed by the yogis so that they can resist the effects of worldly conditions and remain equanimous in the face of variable conditions.

This is how one develops the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and to do so, there is no other way than the repetitive *Satipaṭṭhāna* practice. Also its benefit would be understood as the sole condition for the protecting of clear vision and deliverance, for this has been said by the Blessed One:

*“Cattārome bhikkhave, satipaṭṭhāna bhāvitā bhahulikata  
Satta bojjhange paripurenti.”*

*“Bhikkhus, if you practise and repeatedly practise  
the four foundations of mindfulness,  
you will accomplish the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.”*

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE INVESTIGATION OF STATES

The commentaries have given seven factors leading to the arising of the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor (*dhammavicaya sambojjhaṅga*) as follows:

- asking questions and discussing;
- making the basics clean;
- balancing the faculties;
- avoidance of ignorant persons;
- cultivation of knowledgeable persons;

- reviewing the field for the exercise of profound knowledge;
- resoluteness upon the investigation of states.

On this occasion, let me deal with the second factor, namely, making the basics clean – that is internal and external cleanliness. Internal cleanliness refers to cleaning one's own body such as shaving, cutting finger and toe nails, bathing, taking suitable medicines, especially for gastro-intestinal ailments. External cleanliness refers to keeping one's requisites clean.

## **Food**

In the books is given the unsuitable food (*visama bhojana*) which is liable to cause stomach complaints. There are two kinds of food, suitable and tasty. Not all that is agreeable to one's tongue is agreeable to one's stomach. It is therefore, advisable to practise moderation in eating (*bhojanamhi mattannu*) even if the food is tasty. Here one may practise like a goat not like a cow. The goat eats a variety of food but in bits and pieces, whereas the cow concentrates on a single item of food. So, please follow the goat method to be on the safe side.

While on the subject of food, I wish to remind you that you should not put back any food chewed and detached from your body into the bowl and thus cause it to be mixed with the new food which has been offered.

You should not take such food unless re-offered to you, because a monk who puts in his mouth any nutriment which has not been proffered to him commits a *pacittiya* offence. Similar is the case with any hot fluid which you may have blown to cool and spattered with saliva. Please be careful not to spill any bits of food from your mouth, especially when you are taking soup. However, spillage from the spoon is not an offence. During the Buddha's time such problems were rare because the monks were eating out of the bowl without using either spoon or plate.

After talking about spill-overs, I wish to draw your attention also to leftovers of food with which some are wont to feed the animals, like cats, especially in the public place, creating an unsightly situation. Such a scene is not conducive to attainment. Moreover, the yogi should foster his mental balance and there is no need for undue concern, say, about feeding an animal. This brings us to the subject of environmental cleanliness.

### ***Environmental Cleanliness, Tidiness***

The practices of cleanliness and civic duty in respect of this matter in the developed countries serve as a model to all and are praiseworthy. The Buddha also admonished the yogis about cleanliness and tidiness leading

to the arising of the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor.

### ***Bojjhaṅga as Osadha***

As a result of the development of *bojjhaṅga* at the third *jhāna*, there occur changes in material phenomena. The *bojjhaṅga* practice brings about a radical change for the better in the physiological system, especially the blood circulation, resulting in the clarity of blood (*lohitaṃ pasidī*). As a result, there is also heightened awareness and sensitivity through the sense organs – *upadha rūpaṃ visuddhaṃ hoti*.

With the development of *bojjhaṅga*, there arises *atīpanīta rūpa* (excellent body) out of the combined formation of *cittaja-rūpa*, *kammaja-rūpa*, *utuja-rūpa* and *aharaja-rūpa*. Just as when the switch is on, electricity flows in a continuous manner to give uninterrupted light, so also as *bojjhaṅga dhammas* are developed the blood flows continuously in the system with the pure replacing the impure.

Purification of mind is achieved by the development of mindfulness, investigation of states, energy, happiness, tranquillity, concentration and equanimity. All these contribute to the abandonment of defilements so that *bhāvanā kusala citta* is strengthened and with purity of mind, the body becomes pure also.

## ***Mode of Healing***

Especially in the third *jhāna*, with the stilling of *pīti*, the mind becomes more stable and the sense organs become more acute. Thus is said: “*Upada rūpaṃ visuddhaṃ ahoti*” – derived corporeality (sense organs and objects) are clarified. The acuteness of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body sensitivities becomes evident as a result of *kammaja-rūpa*. Due to proper blood circulation, one appears better looking and the voice becomes sweeter. Previously bad body odour comes out with the body sweat. Now there is none of this kind and with the purity of *ghanda-rūpa*, the body odour smells sweet. This is due to the opening of the interspaces (*akāsarūpa* or *pariccheda rūpa*) and the expulsion of the bad odour by the power of *bojjhaṅga*. The body temperature will also become normal. The food will be easily digested. Hence the naming of *bojjhaṅga* as *osadha* (medicine).

Just as a water drop falling on a lotus leaf will not remain on the leaf, so will disease shrink away from the body and not remain in the newly-formed material due to *bojjhaṅga*. Another illustration is when a patient takes modern medicine as prescribed by the physician, new healthy matter appears in place of the old unhealthy one, which shrinks away. Such replacement of the old unhealthy tissues by new healthy ones is how a disease is cured.

To deal with the matter of prevention and cure, we who value health do all we can to keep ourselves fit, such as care in consuming food, living conditions, etc., so that our body can resist disease. Similarly, due to the purity and proper circulation of blood and the vitality of the sense organs resulting from the practice of *bojjhaṅga dhamma*, physical resistance is developed. If any disease attacks the body, the diseased tissues will be replaced by healthy tissues. Here again the age-old maxim, *prevention is better than cure*, applies.

The ancient healers of medicine in attributing the quality of *bojjhaṅga dhamma* said that it can overcome even *saṃsāric* sufferings. Another attribute is that it can annihilate the ten armies of Māra. This is of immediate importance to the practising yogi.

In the realm of *dhamma*, we are more interested in spiritual stamina, spiritual resistance. With the development of *bojjhaṅga dhamma* through the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*, we will be able to prevent and treat kilesa diseases such as *lobha* and *dosa*. If the mind is wholesome, so is the body. Just as we take time in building up physical resistance, we must do the same with the mental one.

As a result of the practice of *bojjhaṅga dhammas* and the attainment of at least *sotapanna*, one will overcome *diṭṭhis* such as *atta diṭṭhi* or *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *vicikicchā* and *silabbata-parāmāsa* (clinging to mere rites and ritu-

als as practice or affectation of rites). Thus, the three fetters fall away from him. Some people believe that bathing in the Ganges River will wash away their sins (*papa*) while others believe that the result of evil deeds is neutralised by exercising in austerities that oppress the body. There are also those who practise fivefold austerity (*pancatapa*). This is mere practice of wrong method to achieve an erroneous bliss.

This brings us to two divisions; the right path and the right destination. The former signifies *sīla*, *samādhī* and *paññā*, and is termed *sumagga* (good or right path) and the latter is derived bliss and is termed *khemanta bhumi* or *sukha bhumi* (blissful or right land). In a broad and dangerous desert, there is a road leading to an oasis. Here the road to the oasis is *sumagga* and the oasis, *khemanta bhumi*. So looking at it from the practical point of view, the practice of *sīla-samādhī-paññā* is the right path leading to the abandonment of all forms of *kilesas* as the achievement of right destination temporarily.

As he strives to attain *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, he will gain confidence, saying to himself, “This is the right method, there is none other, and this must be followed to achieve the right destination”. At this point, he is freed from all forms of wrong beliefs and clingings, at least temporary.



Finally, when he self-witnesses *nirodha* (extinction of *nāma-rūpa* dhammas), he will say to himself “This is it” and will be free from the shackles of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (wrong views about self), *vicikicchā* (doubts about the practice of moralities) and *sīlabbataparāmāsa* (belief in ritualism). Until and unless he attains *nirodha*, he will not be totally free from them throughout his round of existences. It is only with the attainments of *lokuttara magga jhāna* (supramundane path concentration) that one is able to be free from greed, anger and delusion, which leads to the *apāya*-related evil deeds of killing, stealing, etc., which all belong to coarser types of defilements. He will not suffer the consequences of his past deeds which would cause him to be reborn in unhappy states (*apāya*) nor will he ever repeat such deeds which will lead to such states (*apāya gamaniya*).

At this point, it may be mentioned that the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice has nothing to do with religion. Non-believers of Buddhism may also perform this. It is suitable for everybody.

One may ask whether there is no other sure method. It is essential to have a correct method. One cannot achieve something by mere praying. If it were possible to achieve in this manner, the whole world should be happy. This proves that one must find the correct method (taught by an able teacher) and follow this method by oneself.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude our discussion on the third *jhāna*, we shall now extract the essence out of this section.

In praise of the person who possesses the third *jhāna*, the Noble One announced: ‘He dwells in bliss who has equanimity and is mindful; he enters upon and dwells in that third *jhāna*’. But why do they praise him thus? Because he is worthy of praise. But why is he worthy of praise? To answer this question we must reveal the qualities of this *jhāna*.

First, let us deal with his equanimity towards the third *jhāna*; though it possesses exceedingly sweet bliss, it has reached the perfection of bliss and there is none greater. It goes without saying that he is no more affected by pleasures lower than this bliss, such as *kāmarāga*. No amount of craving will pull him down to the lower level. Such craving, if any, to lower himself is powerless. He is not drawn towards the *jhāna* by a liking for the bliss (*sukhabhisandeti*). He has freed himself from the orbit of attachment. And what is the reason behind all this?

One has to go to the basic elements – the basic energy – which has led to this situation. To overcome and evaporate *kilesa*, exertion (*ātāpa*) is necessary. To those who are careless and effortless, they cannot escape from the *kilesa* orbit; instead they are drawn towards pleas-

urable objects, because such objects have very strong attractive power. Once you are out of the orbit, you are well on your way without exertion, and you will not be drawn into the orbit – the liking for the bliss.

At this point, he has established his mindfulness in order to prevent the arising of happiness. Likewise he has established his full awareness. Both his attention and knowledge are wonderfully sharp, and too sharp to divert him to the liking of the bliss.

Here we have two wholesome states, namely *pīti* and *sukha*, competing with each other – the former is happiness with excitement and the latter is bliss with calmness. Which do you prefer? *Sukha*, of course. However, this *sukha* cannot be said to be the best. Only *upekkhā* (neutrality) which arises in the fourth *jhāna*, is the best. It is here that you find *santa* (tranquillity or peace). Even this *santa* is not free from *saṅkhāra-dukkhata* (evil of change, evil of existence). Only when this *santa* ceases, real, permanent peace is achieved. This is going from *pavatta* (revolving) to *apavatta* (stopping or permanent peace). The scriptures have mentioned the three qualities of bliss in the *jhāna*. They are:

- *ariya-kanta* –  
beloved by the Noble Ones;
- *ariya-jana-sevita* –  
cultivated by the Noble Ones, like medicine fit to be consumed;

- *asamkiliṭṭha* – freedom from defilements or exhausting effects of *kilesas*, or undefiled.

As he emerges from this *jhāna*, he feels blissful and fresh, bodily and mentally. It is the kind of bliss which is beyond comparison with *kāmarāga*, where you change and modify objects for enjoyment. Because he is worthy of praise in this way, the Noble Ones praise him with the words:

*Upekkhāko satima sukha viharati*

*He dwells in bliss who has equanimity and is mindful.*

However, this attainment is threatened by the nearness of *pīti*, which is dangerous. Thus, the factors need to be substituted by purer forms with the application of *sati* and *sampajañña*. Both these factors have not reached perfection because they are applied only to the basic object (*mūla arammāna*) and not to the subject or consciousness (*ārammanika*). Mindfulness of the subject and the awareness of the *anicca-dukkha* characteristics of the subject are still lacking. Complete mindfulness and awareness, noting and knowing of the phenomena in pairs, i.e., the advancement from *vipassanā* to *pati-vipassanā* will emerge in the fourth *jhāna*.

# CHAPTER 31

## SENSUOUSNESS

### KINDS OF SENSUOUSNESS

So far we have spent some time on *jhāna* – the first *jhāna*. We have not discussed *kāma* (sensuousness), without which the discussion *jhāna* will not be complete. Previously, I have touched on it briefly in order not to cause confusion. Now, I wish to talk about *kāma*. *Kāma* is of two kinds:

- *vatthu kāma* – objective sensuousness
- *kilesa kāma* – subjective sensuousness

The *vatthu kāma* (*vatthu* – object; *kāma* – sensuousness) means objective sensuousness, object-base of sensuousness or sense desire as object. It includes five sensuous objects, namely:

- agreeable visible object or view;
- agreeable audible object or sound;
- agreeable odorous object or odour;
- agreeable sapid object or flavour;
- agreeable tangible object or bodily impression.

The *kilesa kāma* means subjective sensuousness or sense desire as defilement. It is directed to all five sense objects and is synonymous with sensuous desire

(*kāmacchanda*), sensuous craving (*kāmarāga*), sensuous thought (*kāmavitakka*). Sense-desire is also one of the cankers and clingings.

*Vatthu kāma* and *kilesa kāma* when combined, lead to *assāda* (relish). Contemplation on *vatthu kāma* result in *ādīnava vipassanā ñāṇa* (knowledge of contemplation of misery) which overcomes *assāda* and thus preventing *kilesa kāma* from arising.

Suppose one hears a sound which one recognises as pleasant, lovely and alluring. Then, this desirable sound is the objective sensuousness (*vatthu kāma*) and the sensuous desire is the subjective sensuousness (*kilesa kāma*). Again, when a male and female meet each other, each sees the other as composite – man or woman, and sense desire (*kilesa kāma*) arises. Each fancies the other as beautiful. Things do not stop there. In one who fancies as beautiful, defilements arise with respect to details such as behaviour, manner, features, which are viewed as attractive. These thoughts arise successively with particularisation of *vatthu kāma*.

So now we have two parts, the solid composite and the sensuous object. The first is known as *nimittaggaha* – sign or object. At this stage it is not difficult to arouse a strong desire. From the solid aggregate of the male and female, one moves to particulars such as the individual features and manners.

Here, one enjoys *kilesas* with relish. It is like taking bread with meat, butter, cheese, etc. With bread alone, one will not find any taste unless one is hungry. Taken with meat, butter and cheese, etc., bread will be more delicious. This is known as *anubyañjanaggaha* – seizure of detail characteristics.

*Jhāna* and *kāma* are contradictory. So, in order to attain *jhāna*, one must overcome the conflicting dhamma, namely, *vatthu kāma* and *kilesa kāma*. What simple worldly measures would you take to overcome these *kāmas*? Mindfulness of course.

Everyday, one comes across agreeable sensuous objects as *vatthu kāma* – very often visible and audible ones, sometimes sapid (when we eat) and odorous, and all the time tangible ones like heat and cold, rough or smooth clothing, rough or smooth seats. One can hardly avoid them. When we meet *vatthu*, *kilesa kāma* follows. We relish and tend to want more and more. For those who yield to the sensuous pleasures very freely, *kilesa kāmas* will invade every second, except when they are sleeping. How will you avoid such situations? Close your eyes? Then how about thoughts?

If one tries to avoid, it will be like the story of the earth and the rabbit. The earth blamed the rabbit for throwing all his rubbish and excreta on him. So, the rabbit, saying he would avoid this, jumped off the earth. But as expected he fell back to earth.

One may close the eyes to avoid seeing agreeable objects. But what about the mind which wanders? The nose? One will suffocate if it is closed. As for the body, it will be receiving impressions all the time. As for the worldlings, they cannot avoid and are relieved only when sleeping. If one concentrates only on one's occupation, one will still yearn for agreeable things, such as the benefits resulting from this occupation.

## THE TWO EXTREMES

So, what some people do is self-mortification – hurting, torturing themselves, like sleeping on a thorny bed, head-stand, turning upside down, staying nude, going into the water when it is cold, making themselves hot by surrounding themselves with fire such as four fires under the scorching sun. This is known as *panchatappa*. All these are done so that *kāmas* will not assault him. Such practices are called *attakila-mathanuyoga* (one extreme of practice of self-mortification).

The other extreme of practice is *kāmasukhallikanuyoga*, where one yields fully or is addicted to sensuous pleasures. This kind of extreme arises in the ordinary worldlings. They would also jump from one extreme to another.

The Buddha himself had gone through these extremes before his enlightenment. Up to the age of twenty-nine, he had lived a princely luxurious life (*vatthu kāma*,



*kilesa kāma*), though it had been by chance and not by intention. And later, for six years he practised the other extreme, *attakilamatha-nuyoga*, thinking that he would be able to overcome kilesas. Nothing happened. He only suffered bodily pain. That was a popular belief in those days, as the only ascetic practice was self-mortification. It was later realised that he had been eliminating the effect instead of the cause.

One must kill the root (cause) and not the branch (effect) to overcome defilements. To deal with the effects, as is done by the *innatithiyas* (non-believers), is not the right way. It will be just like a dog going after the stone or stick when it is hit. Whereas, one should deal with the root cause like a lion, which goes after the source of the weapon and not the weapon. Buddha's method is like that of the lion, going after the real culprit. Another example of going after the origin is that when you want to close a tap, you do not plug it with your hand, but turn off the tap or better still turn off the main.

According to the jhānic law, the arising of *kāmas* contradicts *jhāna* attainment. One should then remove the opposite states to attain *jhāna*. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is the right way to do this. This means diligent mindfulness, fixing one's attention to phenomena as they arise and understanding them, their cause and effect, and the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* characteristics.

All the time one is confronted with *vatthu kāmas*, but with vigilant mindfulness, *kilesa kāmas* will not arise. Whenever one sees an agreeable visible object, one notes and lets it pass away. The same thing goes for audible, sapid, odorous and tangible ones, however desirable they may be, it is evident that *kilesa kāmas* will not arise, though one is confronted with *vatthu kāmas*.

Once the yogi overcomes *rāga*, he will find a better happiness – happiness of renunciation (*nekkhamma sukha*) in lieu of *kāmasukhallika*. To a yogi's question whether *satipaṭṭhāna* can overcome one's smoking habit, there have been instances in this retreat, heavy smokers bringing in their cigars and after they have completed their stay, taking with them the same quantity of cigars. In general, if one places value on *satipaṭṭhāna*, one will overcome sensuous pleasures.

After having been freed from one extreme of kāmic pleasures, the *bhikkhu* partakes of the four requisites – food, clothing, medicine and shelter, and exercises the four postures (*irriyāpatha*) as one needs. Without causing bodily trouble, one will be free from another extreme – self-mortification.

Being mindful in the right manner and noting kāmic objects as they arise without remiss, the yogi will not develop any desires and cravings for these objects, however agreeable they may be. It is obvious that even with

the contact of *vatthu kāmas*, delight in them, *kilesa kāma*, does not arise.

On the other hand, in a situation where the mind is unguarded and the *kāmas* invade the six sense doors, what will happen? There is no contemplation on the arising phenomena, no *samādhi*, no knowledge of cause and effect, no knowledge of actual characteristics. The result is craving for not only the arising *nāma-rūpa* phenomena but also other objects. A person surrounded by *kāmacchanda* and *kāma-taṇhā* is likened to a drowned person who is consumed by water. When one has yielded freely to the will of one's wishes, one is ready to invite any *kāma* and will get them without any effort. In this manner the worldly beings are habituated to enjoy *kāmasukha*.

However, as the yogi notes all phenomena arising at any of the six sense doors and knows by discerning as *nāma-rūpa*, etc., no craving for these objects will arise, like the saying "Unknowing causes craving. Knowing causes dissipation". Greed will not arise for either the arisen object or other objects. This is the way to overcome *kāmas* (*vatthu* and *kilesa*) and develop *vipassanā ñāṇa*, which is, therefore, synonymous with *nekkhamma* (freedom from sensuous lust).

## TWO KINDS OF HAPPINESS

When *vipassanā kusala* is not performed, *kāmasukha* will arise and *nekkhamma sukha* will not. When *vipassanā kusala* is performed, *nekkhamma sukha* will arise and *kāmasukha* will not. On seeing and hearing, ordinary worldlings will take delight and enjoy (*kāmasukha*), whereas the *vipassanā* yogi will not enjoy *kāmasukha*; instead, he will achieve happiness derived by renunciation (*nekkhamma sukha* or *vipassanā jhānic sukha*).

To the question, ‘How about enjoying both kinds of *sukha*?’ – the answer is, ‘One cannot have both *sukhas* at the same time. Besides, *kāmasukha* is harmfully good whereas *nekkhamma sukha* is harmlessly good. There is always the danger of being deprived of one’s kāmīc happiness’. There was once a question, ‘How can a consciousness have both greed (*lobha*) and mental pleasure (*somanassa*) at the same time?’ The answer was, ‘It is a kind of pleasure which is dangerous’.

In the scriptures, such kāmīc pleasures are given other terms. *Vyāseka sukha* is one which means the *sukha* which in itself is not delightful, but because something else is added, it becomes delightful. For instance, the meat is not delicious by itself, but when seasoned with condiments, etc., it becomes tasty. Likewise the addition of craving to sensuous objects increases flavour. This leads to another term – *missaka sukha*, a blended

pleasure. Because it is not pure, it is also called *aparisuddha sukha*, polluted pleasure. *Rāga* (craving or greed, synonymous with *lobha*) is involved in such pleasures. Hence they are not clean. There is present in them the element of anxiety – anxiety of loss, deprivation and so on. As *vipassanā kusala* progresses, the mind becomes calm, clear and peaceful. When the yogi has passed the stage of sensations (*vedanā*), attaining *udayabbaya ñāṇa* and experiencing *pīti* and *passaddhi*, *nekkhama sukha* will arise. How would you feel when you are eating an apple, ripe and sweet? Do you need to add anything to it? So, this kind of pleasure can be termed *avyāseka sukha* – pleasure which is pure and unadulterated and which in itself is good without additives. Since no additives are necessary, it is free of mixtures – *amissaka*, unblended. Also *parisuddha*, because it is pure and clean.

If the *vatthu* and *kilesa kāmas* cannot be removed, *kāmasukha*, *vyāseka sukha*, *missaka sukha* and *aparisuddha sukha* will arise. If the *kāmas* can be removed, *nekkhama sukha*, *avyāseka sukha*, *amissaka sukha* and *parisuddha sukha* will arise. So, there will be no complete loss of pleasure, one way or another.

On the question of enjoying both pleasures, one must assess and compare the two. The wise chooses good pleasures. The fool will delight in *kāmic* pleasures because he does not understand the quality of pure

happiness, nor does he see the fault of kāmic pleasures. In this regard the Buddha says in the Dhammapada, verse 373:

*Sunnagaram pavitthassa  
Santacittassa bhikkhuno  
Amanusi rati hoti  
Sammā dhammam vipassato.*

*The Bhikkhu who goes into seclusion (to meditate),  
whose mind is tranquil,  
who clearly perceives the Dhamma,  
experiences the joy which transcends that of (ordinary) persons.*

Again in verse 290, the Buddha says:

*Matta sukhapariccaga  
Passe ce vipulam sukhaṃ  
Caje matta-sukham dhiro  
Sampassam vipulam sukhaṃ.*

*If by giving up small pleasures,  
great happiness is to be found,  
the wise should give up small pleasures  
seeing (the prospect of) great happiness.*

A blind person wears his clothes not knowing that they are dirty and in wretched condition. Once he is cured and can see again, he will not cling to his clothes any more. On the other hand, he will not hesitate to exchange the wretched clothes for the better ones and will not even lay eyes on the discarded clothes again.

# CHAPTER 32

## THE MIDDLE WAY

By developing *vipassanā ñāṇa* through mindfulness, the yogi will not delight in kāmīc desires. He will be freed from *kāmasukhallikanuyoga* (devotion to pleasures of sense), a low and pagan practice, unworthy, unprofitable – the way of the world. And, as discussed previously, the yogi partakes of the four requisites as required and balances his postures without suffering from bodily fatigue. Thus, he is freed from *attakilamathānuyoga* (devotion to self-mortification), which is painful, unworthy, unprofitable.

So now, you can understand why the Buddha laid down the rules as regards moderation in the use of requisites and the practice of the four postures to alleviate physical pain. Being mindful, the yogi will not develop any attachment to objects. He is constantly aware of the sensations (of heat and cold), the requisites, the postures, etc. Hence, the *vatthu kāmās* and *kilesa kāmās* do not arise. He balances himself between the extreme sensations of heat and cold, practises moderation in taking food, striking a balance in the postures, etc., thus not practising the extreme discipline of self-mortification. With every mindfulness, one also practises the Noble Eightfold Path which constitute *Sīla*, *Samādhi*

and *Paññā*. This is the mode of progress. Thus, the practice lies between the two extremes – *majjhima* (middle, moderate or medium).

As dwelling in the above manner and with the above practice of avoiding the two extremes is a means of achieving complete happiness, we term it as *Majjhima Patipadā* – mode of progress to moderation, or popularly known as the “Middle Way”. As a young scholar, I had heard of this term quite often, but never understood its significance as much as when I entered into the practice of *Vipassanā*.

There is one question that I would like to ask the yogis, “Do you find the practice of restraint, such as fasting, sleeping moderately, staying in the four postures for long and devoting yourself to deep concentration, fatiguing for you? Do you think they are tantamount to the practice of self-mortification?” These are necessary and worthy efforts. One needs effort to achieve greater things. Of course, the Buddha does not want the yogis to starve, stay awake (sleepless devotion) and practise extreme postures.



# CHAPTER 33

## SECOND JHĀNA

### CONFIDENCE WITH ONE-POINTEDNESS OF MIND

It is the attainment of *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness of mind) without the application of *vitakka* and *vicara* which forms prominent factors in the first *jhāna*.

At this stage also, the yogi will continue with his effort in his mindfulness of the *nāma-rūpa* phenomena arising involuntarily according to their true nature, thus developing the *paccakkha ñāṇa* (knowledge gained through personal experience) in respect of the dhamma. Those who have had theoretical knowledge may start thinking. Pleased with his achievement the yogi may become indulged in dhamma *vitakkas* and not continue with his effort. Such an indulgence can delay his progress. When he continues to generate *bhāvanā* (mental development) without such reflections, either on the exhortation of the master or on his own accord, he will be able to attain *samādhi* without the application of *vitakka-vicara*.

Whenever he is faced with the arising phenomena, he will be able to concentrate his attention on the object and hit the target without special effort of directing his mind, as previously like the skilled darter. Without such extra effort, he is able to arrest the objects as they

quickly arise and dissolve. Assured with this skill, he will find the ability to experience visions in a wonderful manner. His mind will become very clear and with such a clarity of mind, he develops a type of confidence called *sampasādana* (serene tranquillization and reassurance).

The second *jhāna* is stated to have confidence because it makes the mind confident with the confidence possessed by it and by stilling the disturbance created by *vitakka* and *vicara*. Hence, the phrase: *Sampasādanam cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ* (confidence with the state of one-pointedness of mind).

It might be asked, “But does not this confidence exist in the first *jhāna*, too; also this concentration with the name of the single thing (*ekodibhāva*)? Then why is only this second *jhāna* said to have confidence and one-pointedness of mind?” It may be replied as follows:

*It is because the first jhāna is not fully confident owing to the disturbance created by vitakka and vicara, like water ruffled by ripples and wavelets. That is why, although faith does exist in it, it has no chance of developing into ‘confidence’. And there, too, concentration is not fully evident because of lack of full confidence. That is why it is not called one-pointedness there. But in this second jhāna with calm water, faith is strong, having got a footing*

*in the absence of the impediments of vitakka-vicara;  
and concentration is also evident through having  
strong faith as its companion.*

Men of science who concentrate on their research with inventive inclination can cause mental vibrations like wavelets so that some may have to take tranquillisers to calm the mind. *Vitakka* tends to cause *vipphandhana* (excitement) and *vicarana* (moving about) so that the mind can become agitated and scattered. Now, the one-pointedness comes about automatically without the application of *vitakka-vicara*. Every time the one-pointedness comes about, the yogi becomes encouraged with the clearness of thought. *Samādhi* becomes stronger and stronger as the attention gets fixed firmer and firmer to the target. Such a state is called '*Cetaso ekodibhāva*' (the state of one-pointedness of mind or unique exaltation of mind).

## PANORAMIC VIEW

*When samādhi becomes strong, awareness sharpens.*

*When sati becomes strong, awareness expands.*

*When saddhā becomes strong, awareness clarifies.*

*When viriya becomes strong, awareness progresses.*

Just as the skilled marksman can hit the bull's eye as often as he wants without the extra effort of aiming and firing, the experienced yogi will strengthen his samā-

dhi and sharpen his faculties. He will thus see even the minute objects. Whenever he notes one object, he will observe two or three objects in a distinct manner. Whenever he is noting one sensation, a variety of sensations will come into his awareness – such as numbness, stiffness, tension, heat, etc., in fragments, like seeing a swarm of ants. What a wonderful knowledge! One can spend time on this subject in detail, but here I am just touching on the major aspects only.

One has to understand that *vipassanā* is an effort to gain true knowledge in a progressive manner and also that *vitakka-vicara* have the delaying effect in the arising of confidence, *samādhi* and knowledge. So wasting time on these mental states is senseless. This is a lesson the yogi should remember.

Here *samādhi* is of two kinds:

- *Samādhi* of the first *jhāna*, which serves as a decisive support condition (*upanissaya-paccaya*) to *samādhi* of the second *jhāna*.
- *Samādhi* of the second *jhāna*, which serves as an associated condition with that of the first *jhāna* (*sampayutta-paccaya*). That is the second *samādhi* born of associated concentration.

In the first *jhāna*, *pīti* and *sukha* are born of seclusion and absence of hindrances – *vivekaja patisukham*. Here,

in the second *jhāna*, *pīti* and *sukha* have the additional property of “born of concentration” (*samādhija pītisukham*). These factors lead to one-pointedness of mind.

Here *pīti* is the strong one (*balava pīti*) born of two *samādhī* and is of *ubbega* and *pharaṇa* types. One would feel like being lifted in the air and enjoy a pervading happiness, like oil soaked in a piece of cotton or inflation of a ball. One would also feel a thrilling experience like riding on soft wavelets. The type of *sukha* one would experience here is like one being drenched with a gush of cool air when one enters an air-conditioned room or oozing of a stream – *abhisanna māna*.

This *jhāna* possesses only three factors, that is *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā* (unification or one-pointedness of mind). This *jhāna* arises at the tender stage of *udayabbaya nāṇa*. The calmness and concentration are extraordinary and the knowledge is wonderful, so much so that the yogi tends to think that he is seeing the Path (*Magga*) and Fruition (*Phala*) and becomes complacent. And he may not even listen to the master; instead he tends to think that he has become an Arahāt or even Buddha, bringing him to the brink of madness. This is the time when the yogi needs guidance.

From experience, I also found that yogis who had come to this stage felt very satisfied with themselves, because it was like having taken a drug. Feeling relaxed, a sense

of well-being and light-hearted, they would not proceed any further. They become attached to this situation (*nikanti*) and even crave for it (*taṇhā*). This is known as “internal stagnation”, resulting in *dhammantaraya* (dhamma obstacle). Hence, it is important not to make one’s own decision in such cases.

# CHAPTER 34

## THIRD JHĀNA

*Upasampajja viharati pītiyā ca  
Virāgā upekkhākoca viharati satoca  
Sampajāno sukhin ca  
Kāyena patisamvedati.*

*With the fading away of pīti as well,  
He dwells in equanimity, mindful  
and fully aware.*

He feels bliss (*sukhaṃ* with his body, he enters upon and dwells in the third *jhāna*, on account of which the Noble Ones announce: *Upekkhāko satima sukha-viharati* – He dwells in bliss who has equanimity and is mindful.

*Vitakka* and *vicara* have already been stilled in the second *jhāna*, and now in this *jhāna* *pīti* is absent. The *pīti* one enjoys at the tender or early stage (*taruṇa*) of *udayabbaya ñāṇa* is like body levitation (*ubbega pīti* – uplifting happiness), the feeling of a filled bladder which may roll along (*pharaṇa pīti* – pervading or rapturous happiness), so that one would neither wish to open the eyes nor change posture. The yogi tends to take delight in this kind of feeling as it is a wonderful experience, and becomes complacent, craves (*taṇhā*) and thus

causes an obstacle to the progress of dhamma (*dhammantarāya*).

## STAGNATION (AJJHATTAṂ SAṆṬHITA)

The yogi's enjoyment of his *pīti* is termed by the Buddha as *ajjhattaṃ saṅṭhita* (stagnating within the individual). This is a concise description, the details being given in the Uddesa Vibhaṅga Sutta. This discourse is a useful guide to the practising yogi. He who follows these instructions faithfully will succeed in the dhamma.

The Buddha says:

*“Neither will he go outside  
Nor stop inside.*

*He who abandons attachment by noting  
Will surely overcome suffering.”*

I shall now give you a dhamma riddle: What is meant by going out? How to stop one from going out?

On the impingement of the door and the object, there is contact and then feeling follows. This happens to the yogi all the time. As the yogi's mind is uncontrolled, he will experience the *nimittagaha* (clinging to the sign). As the opposite sexes meet, they will reflect on each other's forms, then details of manner, behaviour and features. For desirable objects, *lobha* will arise, for undesirable objects, *dosa*, and if not mindful of the *nāma-rūpa* phe-



nomena and their nature as they appear, *moha* will arise.

In short, as the yogi sees, hears, eats, smells or touches, he delights in the objects because he is not controlling his mind by noting. He succumbs to the attack of *kilesa*. If it is not desirable for the mind to go out (wander away), what would you do? Here, *jhāna* is involved. Note as you see, the mind will not go out. Similarly is the case as you hear, taste, smell or touch. The application of *jhānic* factors and *sati* will hinder *kilesas*.

On the attainment of the first *jhāna*, *sammāsaṇa ñāṇa* (comprehension of all groups of existence as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*) will arise as the beginning of insight. As one continues to advance to the second *jhāna*, a higher form of *pīti* occurs as a result of the stilling of *vitakka* and *vicāra*. I mention here *pīti*, in particular, because it is very prominent, although other mental concomitants occur at the same time. Passing the stage of visions and *upakkilesas* (impurities) and arriving at the stage of *taruna udayabbaya ñāṇa*, the yogi tends to stop inside (stagnation within the individual). With craving for the delightful feeling and without noting as one should be, the yogi stagnates within – *ajjhataṃ saṅghita*.

It is quite natural for human beings to enjoy a comfortable feeling, like a traveller who wants to stop when he

finds a comfortable resting place on the way. It is similar with the case of the yogi.

If he rests in transit without proceeding further, he may face dangers or *dukkha*. So, what should he do to leave this place? Which is the better way of leaving – the simple way or after seeing its faults? Suppose you compare the benefits arising from the attainment of destination and also those from stagnation at the transit. When you wish to stop smoking, what would you do – see the dangers of smoking or benefits of non-smoking? Both is the answer. Unless you realise the dangers of smoking, you may revert to the habit.

In India, in the old days, *samatha* meditation was quite popular. Some people could even practise eight *samapattis* (absorptions). They became content with *samatha jhānas*, which caused them to be reborn in the upper worlds. So they clung to it and thus missed *vimutti* (deliverance) *sukha*. Some could even practise *abhiññās* (higher spiritual powers) but not the true knowledge of the *nāma-rūpa*. They just end up at that stage.

Some Westerners prefer *jhānas* and *abhiññās* because they are interested in miracles, which are not lasting. Some are even cheated by these. Because one does not know the right method leading to *vimutti sukha*, one stops inside. This is a lesson to learn. In order not to stop inside, one must note all the delightful sensations

such as visions, happiness, lightness, etc., and understand their true nature; although such desirable feelings may arise, they will have no chance to stagnate the mind.

If the traveller stops on his way, he may face dangers and will not cover his journey and reach the destination. If he proceeds he will benefit. If he slackens he will lose. Thus, understanding the pros and cons, he will proceed. Once he understands *vimutti sukha*, he will not slacken. This is how one practises in accordance with the Buddha's teaching.

I have seen people who have come to this stage stopping at the delightful feeling saying: "That's enough", and that they have got a substitute for LSD and refusing to proceed any further. Today, I wish to exhort the yogis to march forward for the achievement of *vimutti sukha* which is unrelinquishable.

## FADING AWAY OF HAPPINESS

As the yogi emerges from the second *jhāna* into the third, he abandons another factor, namely *pīti* (happiness) – *pītiyaca viraga* (absence of *pīti*). He reviews the *jhāna* factors with mindfulness and full awareness (*sato ca sampajāno*). Thus, his mindfulness becomes very sharp. The bliss (*sukha*) which he feels is felt merely with his mental aggregates (*kāya*). Hence, the verse:

*Upasampajja viharati  
Pītiyā ca virāgā  
Upekkhā ko ca viharati  
Sato ca sampajāno  
Sukhin ca kāyena patisamvedeti  
Yaṃ taṃ ariyā acikkhanti  
Upekkhā ko satimā sukhavihāri ti  
Tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati*

*With the fading away of happiness  
as well he dwells in equanimity,  
mindful and fully aware,  
he feels bliss with his body,  
he enters upon and dwells in the third jhāna.*

On account of which the Noble Ones announce:

*Upekkhako satimā sukha viharati.*

*He dwells in bliss who has equanimity and is mindful.*

At this point, the yogi detests *pīti* and denounces any lust (*rāga*) that may have risen for *pīti*. All this description is given in accordance with the *desanā* (exposition of the Doctrine) and pertains to theory.

Now the practical aspect. The *pīti* one enjoys at this tender stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa* are of higher forms, namely uplifting and pervading nature. The yogi wishes neither to open his eyes nor change his posture. So long as the yogi does not avert to feelings, he does not

progress in his attainment. He must, therefore, note these objects and overcome the *rāga* and *nikanti* (desire). If he continues to delight in it, he shall note till it fades. This is what is meant by ‘the fading away of happiness’.

This is a situation where the yogi needs guidance. Though one can cover a journey with a map, it is better to have a reliable guide. Though an aeroplane flies with a map, it receives guidance from the ground. To this end the Buddha says:

*“Yathābhūtam ñāṇāya satthā pariyesitabbo.”*

*“To attain the knowledge and vision rightly, according to reality, one must seek a guide (teacher).”*

## LITERARY OBSTACLE

Once there was a monk learned in the *Tripitaka* (the three baskets or the three divisions of the Pali Canon) called Thera Potthila. When he wanted to practise the dhamma, he had to approach the young *sāmaṇera* for the correct method. This is an example to show how one cannot just travel according to the map without a guide.

In Sri Lanka, there was once a learned monk who was teaching the *Tripitaka* to others. He had to practise the dhamma for twenty years in a forest to become an arahat. These go to prove how a pure theoretician can

become vain of his book knowledge and indulge in imaginations which cause dhamma hindrances; though literary knowledge is supportive. Isn't it a shame and doesn't it look absurd that learned intellectuals are unable to occupy a place in the forefront of dhamma? Why does it happen? Because intellectuals tend to reason and argue.

The Venerable Sariputta, the *Dhammasenapati* (commander of the doctrine) attained arahatship one week later than the Elder Mahā Moggallana, who was not as learned as the former. Perhaps the intellectuals of the present day might be compared to Sariputta; perhaps they belong to the Sariputta family. Why was he so late in attainment? He applied his knowledge, thought over the pros and cons and considered about a thousand ways to achieve an objective.

To give a worldly example, when a king wants to travel out of his palace, people have to clear the way, prepare all the pomp and ceremonies befitting his high position, etc., whereas an ordinary person will accomplish this in no time.

## TEN KINDS OF EQUANIMITY

So the third *jhāna* abandons one factor (*pīti*) and possesses two factors, namely *sukha* and *ekaggatā*. The yogi dwells in equanimity (*upekkhako ca viharati*). Thus

the abandonment of *pīti* gives rise to the three qualities of *upekkhā*:

- *Visada* (purity or clarity) –  
At the matured stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, with the absence of *pīti* and the delight in *pīti*, *upekkhā* is pure, clean and lucid.
- *Vipula* (abundance) –  
Due to the fading away of *pīti*, *upekkhā* becomes large and extended.
- *Thamagata* (sound) –  
Due to the overcoming of *pīti*, *upekkhā* reaches a state of maturity and soundness.

At the matured form of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, *pīti* (which signifies immaturity) is completely stilled. At this point, there is some food for thought. The third *jhāna* possesses only two factors, mainly *sukha* and *ekaggatā*.

Hence there should not be any *upekkhā* factor or *upekkhā vedanā* (feeling). How is that he dwells in equanimity? I pose this question because I must then explain to you the ten kinds of equanimity namely:

- *chalangupekkhā* – six-factored equanimity;
- *brahmavihārupekkhā* – equanimity as a divine abiding;
- *bojjhaṅgupekkhā* – equanimity as an enlightenment factor;

- *viriyupekkhā* – equanimity of energy;
- *sankhārupekkhā* – equanimity about formations;
- *vedanupekkhā* – equanimity as a feeling;
- *vipassanupekkhā* – equanimity about insight;
- *tatramajjhattupekkhā* – equanimity as a specific neutrality;
- *jhānupekkhā* – equanimity of *jhāna*;
- *parisuddhupekkhā* – equanimity of purification.

### ***Chalangupekkhā***

Of the ten kinds of equanimity, I wish to deal here the first one, namely *chalangupekkhā* – six-factored equanimity, six-factored because it concerns six objects.

Whenever we contact a pleasant object (*itthārammana*) or unpleasant object (*anitthārammana*), we feel the greed (*lobha*), lust (*rāga*), or displeasure (*dosa*) respectively, and never feel neutral or unbiased if we have not come to the stage of mental purification and right knowledge. Also if we cannot note effectively and understand the true nature of objects whenever we come into contact with the objects, *moha* will arise, and this amounts to *asamapekkhana* (uneven outlook). It is difficult to hold a balanced view when encountered with objects. Balancing by thinking? How long will it last? Balancing by contentment? How many such people are there in the world? This kind of biased attitude has existed since infancy. When the infant is offered sweet



milk, he feels pleased (greed or *lobha*), and if not offered, he cries (*dosa*).

How many among the worldlings possess impartiality? If they exist, they must be perfect. In the realm of dhamma, the individual who possess such quality completely is an *arahat*. How about other *ariyas* (holy personages – those who have uprooted certain *kilesas*) such as *sotapanna*, *sakadāgāmi* and *anāgāmi*? They do possess it to a certain extent.

A meditating yogi can also possess such quality when he is so intensely mindful and concentrated that he can dwell with equanimity whenever he encounters any pleasant or unpleasant object. As the object arises, its nature, cause-effect relationship and *anicca dukkha* characteristics are known, so that *moha* (ineffective knowledge) does not arise.

Consider a yogi who is free from gladness and sadness and whose knowledge is clear. He is said to possess *chalangupekkhā* at that time. For one minute, he has sixty times this state of mind.

In the *dhamma desanā* (exposition of the Doctrine), such an attitude in which the mind is not affected by desirable or undesirable objects is given by the expression:

*Upekkhāko ca viharati sato ca sampajāno.*

*He dwells in equanimity, mindful and fully aware.*

What does it mean to say that he dwells in equanimity, mindful and aware? Thus it is said:

*Cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā  
Neva sumano hoti na dummano  
Upekkhāko viharati  
Sato sampajāno.*

*Here the bhikkhu whose cankers are destroyed,  
is neither glad nor sad on seeing an object with the eye;  
He dwells in equanimity, mindful and fully aware.*

In effect, *chalangupekkhā* is synonymous with *tatramajjhata* (remaining here and there – in the middle or keeping in the middle of all things), which is one of the nineteen beautiful mental states. Or, in another way, the impartial view of object (*chalangupekkhā*) is the chief characteristic of middleness or equipoise (*tatramajjhata*).

It has the characteristic of affecting the balance of consciousness and mental factors – *samavahita lakkaṇa*. Its function (*rasa*) is to prevent excessiveness and deficiency, or to put an end to partiality – *pakkhapatitupaccheda rasa*; as manifestation it keeps the proper middle – *majjhata bhava*.

It is compared to a charioteer who views equally a pair of well-trained horses. Neither of the horses is overtaking the other and the charioteer uses neither the cane nor the rein on the horses.

Another example is that of a driver of a motor car whose engine is operating perfectly and which is running along a straight smooth highway free of traffic. The driver simply has to hold onto the wheel with a calm mind without undue concern.

Previously the two pairs of mental faculties, namely *virīya* and *samādhi*, *saddhā* and *paññā* could not be balanced. Now at this stage they become balanced. The yogi enters upon the *jhāna* mindfully and fully aware – *sato ca sampajāno*. However agreeable the object may be, he does not feel attached (*rāga*); neither does he feel displeasure (*dosa*) in the case of disagreeable objects.

At this stage the yogi feels bliss with his body – *sukkhin ca kāyena patisamvedati*. The meditating yogi will also feel bliss like an *arahat* while he is deeply absorbed in the *jhāna*. It becomes more evident in the fourth *jhāna*.

As *chalangupekkhā* becomes more prominent and the equanimity becomes strengthened, especially at *sankhārupekkhā*, he will feel mentally steady, neither glad nor sad at any object. In this respect, he is no different from an *arahat*, though the complete state of this quality occurs in this *ariya*. This will become more evident as the yogi strives in his practice.

Moreover, the yogi is able to develop spiritual stamina and resistance towards the eight worldly conditions (*loka dhamma*), which he had not been able to face with

calmness, namely, gain, loss, fame, dishonour, praise, blame, happiness and suffering (*lābho, alābho, yaso, ayaso, pasam̐sā, nindā, sukhaṃ* and *dukkhaṃ*). As the yogi progresses to the stage of *sankhā-rupekkha nāṇa* (knowledge consisting in the equanimity regarding all formations), he is able to view the objects with impartiality and feel pacified.

In the scriptures it is said: This is an excellent condition. Such a quality is also called *tadibhāvaguna* (natural quality or equipoise), viewing objects, good or bad, with equilibrium without changing the originality – *Parisuddha pakatibhava vijjāhana kara bhūta upekkhā*. This becomes second nature to him. Just for your general knowledge, though an arahat can resist the effect of *loka dhamma*, he does not change his habit (*vasana*). The mannerism or attitude to which he has been habituated all along the *saṃsāra*, that is while he has been under the influence/contamination of *kilesas*, still persists and cannot be abandoned. If he has had the habit of disparaging others he would do so, of course, with no evil motive.

Once there was an arahat who was of a Brahmin caste, well learned in the vedic knowledge and used to disparaging lower castes. After he had attained enlightenment, he had the habit of calling others ‘*vasala*’ (wretched or good-for-nothing). This was done not with a wicked

intention of damaging others. Nor does it mean that an arahat still feels angry, which will amount to *kilesa*.

As for the Buddha, no such habit occurred in him. He is the only noble individual who is not only freed from *kilesas* but also from habit. Hence the name sublime (*sugata*), purified and blameless, as one of the epithets for the Buddha. It is like a bottle which used to contain alcohol, and though it has been washed clean, the odour persists in it. Likewise, though the arahat has been washed clean of *kilesa*, the stinking *vasana* still persists.

It is only if the yogi strives properly (vigilantly), so that *nīvaraṇas* have no chance of occurring in his mind, the knowledge progresses and defilements are overcome, that he will be able to become convinced of the above statements.

In this regard, the Buddha said in Dhammapada verse 276 in the chapter on *Magga Vagga* (The Way of the Path):

*Tumhehi kiccamātappaṃ  
Akkhātāro tathāgatā  
Paṭipannā pamokkhanti  
Jhāyino mārabandhanā*

*Striving should be done by yourselves;  
The Tathagatas are only teachers.  
The meditative ones, who enter the way,  
are delivered from the bonds of Māra.*

## ***Brahmaviharupekkhā***

Let us now go to the next one, namely *brahmaviharupekkhā* – equanimity as a divine abiding or noble living.

There are four divine states, namely loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). Now, let us survey their respective properties.

*Mettā* is practised for the good of all beings and one is happy to be absorbed in this. *Karuṇā* is developed with compassionate feelings towards all beings, and one cannot bear the sight of pain. *Muditā* is a feeling of sympathetic joy towards all beings in their happiness and prosperity. When the beings do not come up to expectations, even with the combined efforts of *mettā* and *karuṇā*, one must regard it as a mechanism of their own past kamma, consider that they are destined by their past deeds and view the consequences with a neutral sensation or equanimity.

The former three are accompanied with some concern or exertion (*vyāpara*); hence the absence of balanced attitude, whereas in the last state, there is the absence of concern and the presence of calmness. The different features of these four states are exemplified by the feelings of a conscientious mother, as follows:

A mother has four sons. To the youngest infant son, she wants every success. This is *mettā*. To the older child, who is not so healthy, she wants him to be freed from this suffering. This is *karuṇā*. The third boy is a little grown-up and somewhat well-off with wealth and education. With him, she is quite satisfied. This is *muditā*. As for the eldest son, he can stand on his own feet and is able enough to work his way up. About him, she has none of the *vyāpara* of *mettā*, *karuṇā* and *muditā* like the rest, but relieved from concern. This is what we mean by *upekkhā*.

One may argue, “Should all beings possess all the four noble states?” They should practise as much as possible. Which one is the best? All of them are fine in their own ways. We should radiate *mettā* and *karuṇā* to beings and help them. If we cannot succeed by them, we practise *upekkhā*. But it is difficult to practise *upekkhā* as we tend to become partial.

At times, while trying to practise compassion and pity, we are deceived by *soka* (grief for despair), like, for instance, the case of ‘mercy killing’. Instead of practising *upekkhā*, we are overcome by *soka*, to commit murder through mercy. Here *upekkhā* should have been exercised instead. Maybe it happens because the substitute for despair is not known. Compassion and mercy

have led to *domanassa* (sad-mindedness or ill-will) killing. One has to be careful about this.

On the other hand, absence of *mettā* and *karuṇā* does not mean *upekkhā*. For instance, some parents tend to send their children away when the latter grow up. When the children wish to stay on, the parents charge them for room and boarding. This, I say, is lack of *mettā* and *karuṇā*, and not *upekkhā*.

### ***Bojjhaṅgupekkhā***

Let us now go on to the third one, namely *bojjhaṅgupekkhā* – equanimity as an enlightenment factor.

The seventh in the Enlightenment Factors (*bojjhaṅga*) is *upekkhā*. It becomes quite evident at the developed stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*. At this point it has the characteristic of balancing the associated mental states, namely faith and wisdom (*saddhā* and *paññā*), effort and concentration (*virīya* and *samādhi*). As paradoxical as it may seem, overdoing is often counter productive. Prior to the developed state of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, these associated states are not equilibrated, hence no *samavahita*.

To give a practical example: Some yogis have gained some perception in the dhamma, so that they wish to tell others and spend their time in this manner – a



sign of excessive *saddhā*. The wisdom which is to be obtained by profound mindfulness suffers diminution. This is due to excessive *saddhā* and reduced *paññā*. On the other hand, some have much general knowledge, so they drift into all kinds of imagination, looking for different ways of approach. For instance, volition is sufficient to accomplish *dāna* without actual offering. Such an attitude is called *atidhavana* – over-braininess or cunningness. Thus they tend to weaken their faith (*saddhā*) that ‘practice makes perfect’. Here, the *bojjhaṅgupekkhā* balances the two extremes.

In another instance, due to excessive *chanda* (intention) to perceive the dhamma in a short time, they make excessive exertion, so that they cannot achieve the right concentration, that is, the consciousness overshoots the target instead of synchronising with it. This is the case of excessive *virīya* and diminished *samādhi*. On the other hand, some take it easy in the practice and slacken in their effort, resulting in sloth and torpor – weakening of *virīya*. Here, too, the *bojjhaṅgupekkhā* balances the two extremes.

### ***Viriyupekkhā***

It is a compound of two words – *virīya* (energy or effort) and *upekkhā* (equanimity). Thus, *viriyupekkhā* means

equanimity of energy. It is a name for the equanimity consisting in the evenness of energy.

Let us examine the hidden or implied definition of *virīya*. It is said, ‘*Virassa bhavo virīyaṃ*’ – because it has the nature of courage, vigour or heroic effort, it is called *virīya*. It has patient endeavour (*ussāha*) as its salient characteristic (*lakkaṇa*). It also implies unshrinking effort with patience and determination in the face of difficulties. It goes without saying that the yogi who possesses this quality will go all the way with unshrinking courage and face any eventuality in any undertaking.

In the beginning, the yogi is afraid of bodily pain, possible disease and even death as a result of dhamma practice. He is concerned about losing his sensuous pleasures, separation from his family, and forgoing his usual facilities. Thus he shows cowardliness. When he is in possession of *virīyupēkkhā*, he is not afraid to forgo all these privileges. He would risk his body and even life, if necessary, with patience he is able to face any *dukkha*. In this way, the *ussāha lakkaṇa* becomes more evident.

To give a practical example, the yogi begins to meditate for ten to fifteen minutes. He feels tired and painful because he has no experience. He is anxious of disease or even death. However, the energetic yogi would not

yield to this sort of lax attitude, such as changing postures, etc. Instead he would 'do or die' not withstanding any obstacle.

It has 'support or encouragement' (*upatthambhana*) as its function (*rasa*). Just as a leaning house is prevented from collapsing by means of support, so also it has the property of giving encouraging support to its con-nascent mental states so that his previous lax attitude becomes invigorated.

Once the yogi has overcome the crisis, he becomes more confident and courageous, so that he would challenge any difficulty to a contest. The heroic effort becomes evident in him. He who feels afraid on his first encounter with the enemy but later is able to put up a strong resistance, so that after winning a victory over the enemy, he assumes more courage and does not hesitate to engage in any battle. He is said to become invigorated. He would rather march forward than withdraw. Thus it has *asamsidana* (unshrinking) as its manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*) and this comes into his perception. Now, try to understand by comparing it with your experience.

Feeling sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*) is an akusala action leading to indolence (*kosajja*), which is both detestable and scoldable as laziness. Now the yogi who possesses *viriyupekkhā* will value this as the dhamma

which is capable of overcoming *kosajja*, and this perception comes to his mind. Though in the beginning, the yogi has to make strenuous effort, after victory he does not need to utilise that much energy, he can normalise his effort. He would not suffer mental scattering due to over-strenuous effort, and he will be devoid of *kosajja*, *thina-middha* and lax attitude. He is cordially placed as on a fulcrum. Such is the state of *viriyupekkhā*.

Let us consider two examples. A student is learning a new lesson. So he has to put in fresh effort. As he is very eager to learn the lesson in the beginning, his *viriya* is in excess, so that his mind is scattered and he cannot concentrate on his lessons. He is worried, retractive and unable to progress. However, when he develops more knowledge, he moderates his energy, and is able to study his lessons without excessive energy but with comfort. This is a situation where preceding efforts are a condition, repetitive condition (*asevana paccaya*) for succeeding efforts.

In another example, a worker who is ushered into a new assignment would put in a great effort to learn his job. When his effort is excessive, his mind would scatter and he would become erratic. However, as he continues in his attempt he becomes skilled in his work and his energy becomes normal.

Hence, equanimity of energy (*viriyupekkhā*) is a name for the equanimity otherwise known as neither over-strenuous (*anaccaraddha*) nor over-lax (*natisithila*) energy. This means that the yogi's mind is neither retractive nor dispersive (*uddhacca*).

The word *uddhacca* is a compound of *uddha* (upwards) and *gacchati* (go). It, therefore, means moving up. In the dhamma practice, it means that the consciousness is separated from the object. The mind may also wander away from the object, in which case it is also called *vikkhepa* – scattering, slipping.

How can one fix the mind on the target? Just as you direct your fork to the food, hold it firmly and pierce it so that it will not fall off, so also you direct and hold your attention to the target and fix the mind on it with *viriya* so that your mind will not move away from the target. The ability to aim correctly at the object is *sammā saṅkappa*, the right effort made to direct the mind is *sammā vāyāma* and the ability to note or right mindfulness is *sammāsati*. These elements must be present in the course of practice. To possess *viriyupekkhā*, persistent continuation of energy (*viriya*) is essential, so that the former *viriya* conditions the arising of the latter one. *Viriyupekkhā* will become evident from the stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa* onwards.

The starting energy is called *araddha viriya*, which after practice will lead to *paggahita viriya* (strenuous effort). The latter *viriya* is compared to the effort made to lift a thing so that it will neither fall off nor stop in transit, but will rise up by stages. When the *viriya* is perfected, it is called *paripunna viriya* (fulfilled energy or perfect effort). Hence it is essential to make effort every second without interruption.

At the stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, is it still necessary to apply *vitakka* and *vicara*? It is not particularly necessary. The ability to fix the mind on the target will arise automatically, just like a skilled marksman.

### ***Sankhārupekkhā***

This will be dealt with concisely. It is described in the scriptures as:

- How many kinds of equanimity about formations (*saṅkhāra*) arise through concentration (*samādhi*)?
- How many kinds of equanimity about formations arise through insight (*vipassanā*)?

The answers to these questions are given as:

- Six kinds of equanimity about formations arise through concentration.
- Ten kinds of equanimity about formations arise through insight.

In order to understand *sankhārupekkhā*, we need to define and understand the two attributes, namely reflection (*paṭisaṅkhā*) and firmness (*santitthana*). The former means apprehending reflection regarding the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) as the dhammas which ought to be abandoned. The latter means retention of composure regarding the hindrances despite the effort made in abandoning them without any concern (*vyāpara*).

It is thus, in his contest with the opposites, he gets the upper hand. It is like taking on an unconcerned attitude after the enemy has been weakened through defeat. Likewise, the yogi feels even-tempered (equanimous) in respect of the impediments.

This kind of temperament will also be evident in the *jhāna* factors at the stage of *sammāsaṇā* (*ñāṇa*) (knowledge consisting in the determination of all phenomena of existence as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*). The yogi who is by nature imaginative will find it difficult to still the directing and holding thoughts (*vitakka* and *vicara*). Why is it so? Because he is attached to these factors.

Thereafter, either on the instructions of the teacher or on his own accord, he realises the fault in these thought-provoking factors (as cause for delaying the progress) and continues in his meditative effort, resulting in the loss of momentum of these factors. In this example, the reflection regarding *vitakka* and *vicara* as the dham-

mas which ought to be abandoned is *paṭisaṅkhā*, and the retention of composure regarding these two dhammas despite the effort made in abandoning them without any concern (*vyāpara*) or difficulty is *santitthana*.

Again, passing the *vitakka-vicara* stage and at the tender stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, the stronger types of *pīti* arise. The yogi realises that attachment to *pīti* will hinder his progress to the matured stage of this *ñāṇa* and cause him to deviate from the right path. Discovering its flaws he abandons it and advances. Thus *pīti* fades away gradually.

In this, the reflection regarding *pīti* as the factor which ought to be abandoned is *paṭisaṅkhā*, and the retention of composure regarding the factor despite the effort made in abandoning it without any concern or difficulty is *santitthana*.

As the yogi emerges from the third *jhāna* and enters upon the fourth, he discerns the grossness of the bliss (*sukha*), the reason being *sukha* is too close to *pīti* and there is the danger of recession to the lower *jhānas*.

Here, the reflection regarding *sukha* as the factor which ought to be abandoned is *paṭisaṅkhā*, and the retention of composure and serenity regarding the factor despite the effort made in abandoning it is *santitthana*. This situation is manifested from the stage of *bhanga ñāṇa* up to *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa*.



From the practical stand-point, as the yogi crosses from one stage of insight knowledge to the next, he will experience *sankhārupekkhā* in the interval – a neutral state, neither pleasant nor unpleasant feeling in the practice.

### ***Vedanupekkhā***

As the definition goes (*Upa* – to approach and *ekkhā* – feeling), *upekkhā* is a proximate feeling which lies between pain and pleasure. It is neither pain nor pleasure. It neither coincides with nor contradicts pain or pleasure. It is felt in the intervals as transition takes place between pain and pleasure. *Upekkhā* is also synonymous with *udasina* (indifferent, neutral or passive).

With every consciousness there arises *vedanupekkhā*, as *vedanā* is one of the seven universal mental states (*sabbā-cittasādhāraṇa*). They are:

- *phassa* – contact,
- *vedanā* – feeling,
- *saññā* – perception,
- *cetanā* – volition,
- *ekaggatā* – one-pointedness or unity,
- *jīvitindriya* – psychic life or vitality,
- *manasikāra* – attention.

From this, we can see that feeling, as one of the seven universals, arises with every consciousness, such as seeing consciousness, and, in the absence of impulsive

forces, the arisen feeling, dependent on contact, is neutral. However, in the case of objects coming into the focus of the body sensitivity or tactility, body consciousness, called *kāya viññāna*, arises and dependent on contact (*phassa*) there arise two kinds of feelings (*vedanā*) – *sukha* and *dukkha* – depending on the nature of the object.

Such feelings can be exemplified as the ones which arise when the yogi is sitting on a stone or a cushion, having a fan or without a fan when hot, sleeping on a rough bed or a soft bed, etc. Dependent on good feeling arises craving (*taṇhā*) in the absence of mindfulness.

One may not be convinced of the arising of *taṇhā* dependent on *dukkha* as much as from *sukha*. When a yogi is not enjoying a good facility and feeling dissatisfied he yearns (*taṇhā*) for that facility. This is another instance of *vedanā-paccaya taṇhā*. Such a situation occurs if the yogi is not mindful. Hence, the transition from the *vedanā* to *taṇhā* is an extremely important and delicate step because it is here that the yogi must be vigilant, otherwise, once he is caught in delusion, the process of *paticca-samuppāda* will go on to *taṇhā*, *upādāna*, *bhava* and beyond.

Can one experience *vedanupekkhā* from body contact (*kāya phasa*)? According to Abhidhamma, there are points of transition between *sukha* and *dukkha*, at

which *vedanupekkhā* is experienced. From the sutta viewpoint, with any *phassa* there arise all the three *vedanās* – *sukha*, *dukkha* and *upekkhā*. With body impression, *sukha* and *dukkha* are more prominent. *Upekkhā* will be experienced while noting. Seeing an object with the eye, one is not attached to objects that charm, nor averse to objects that displease.

### ***Vipassanupekkhā***

To understand the *sabhāva* of *nāma-rūpa saṅkhāra* (formations) dhammas, the yogi fixes his mindfulness, that is, watches the phenomena arising at any of the six sense doors, noting as hearing, seeing, etc. In the beginning, his mind is not so powerful. But, as he gains experience and strengthens his *khaṇikā samādhi*, he will be able to distinguish the *nāma-rūpa* phenomena, observe their cause-effect relationship, their *anicca-dukkha* characteristics and spontaneity with equanimity and in a natural manner.

Such is *vipassanupekkhā* (equanimity about insight). It is a name for equanimity consisting in neutrality about investigation described thus: ‘What exists, what has become, that he abandons and he obtains equanimity’. This is said according to the discourse (*desanā*).

Now, the practical aspect. As the yogi watches closely what he sees or hears, and is able to take note that

they arise and perish (that is the arising and passing away of phenomena) – he is said to accomplish the *aniccanupassanā* (contemplation on *anicca*) *ñāṇa*. This he accomplishes with equanimity, emotional stability or composure and without tension or strain.

When he has constantly contemplated on impermanence and realised the truth of the impermanent nature of existence, he is sure to abandon the perception of permanence (*nicca-saññā*). Also, conceit (*māna*), whose arising is based on the perception of permanence, will also be abandoned automatically. After he has appreciated the reality of impermanence, he will recognise the painful (*dukkha*) characteristic of existence. He is said to accomplish the *dukkhanupassanā* (contemplation on *dukkha*) *ñāṇa*.

When he has constantly contemplated on the unsatisfactoriness of existence and realised the truth of the unsatisfactory nature of existence, he is certain to abandon the perception of satisfactoriness or *sukha* (*sukha saññā*). Also, craving (*taṇhā*), whose arising is dependent on the perception of *sukha*, will be abandoned automatically. These he will accomplish with equanimity, emotional stability or composure and without tension or strain (*vyāpara*).

When the marks of impermanence and unsatisfactoriness are recognised, the mark of unsubstantiality will

also be recognised, and this will become very evident at the stage of *bhanga ñāṇa* (knowledge consisting in the contemplation of dissolution of all forms of existence). As above, he will abandon the perception of self (*atta saññā*). The self-view clinging (*atta diṭṭhi*) will be discontinued.

When he is not aware of the true characteristics he will entertain the perceptions of *nicca*, *sukha* and *atta*. When he is fully aware, he will renounce these long-cherished perceptions. Also, *māna*, *taṇhā* and *diṭṭhi* will be automatically renounced. These he accomplishes with equanimity. This is the practical explanation of *vipassanupekkhā* (equanimity about insight).

### ***Tatramajjhattupekkhā***

Literally '*Tatra*' means 'there or here', ie., with respect to the object. *Majjhattata* means middleness or neutrality. So *Tatramajjhattata* means 'keeping in the middle of all things'. It is one of the fifty two mental states (*cetasika*) and one of the nineteen beautiful mental states (*sobhanasādhāraṇa*).

It has as characteristic that it effects the balance of consciousness and mental factors; as function (*rasa*), that it prevents excessiveness and deficiency, or that it puts an end to partiality; as manifestation, that it keeps in

the proper middle. Thus, it is stated of *tatramajjhattupekkhā* (equanimity as specific neutrality) ‘equanimity consisting in the equal efficiency of connascent states’.

### ***Jhānupekkhā***

It is said of the third *jhāna*, ‘*Upekkhako ca viharati*’ (he dwells in equanimity). *Pīti* has faded away having only two factors, namely *sukha* and *ekaggatā*.

At this state, *sukha* has reached perfection, its destination. This bliss (*sukha*) is termed ‘*atimadhura*’ (exceedingly sweet) as its attribute. Why? Because there is no better *sukha* beyond this state. It has reached its climax. It is the best of all worldly pleasures. Of all the mundane *jhānas*, it is the best. However, the attainer of this *jhāna* can dwell with equanimity in spite of the excellence of this *sukha*. Thus it is called *jhānupekkhā*.

Here, his mindfulness (*sati*) is very strong and so is his full-awareness (*sampajāna*). Thus, it is stated as personal attributes – *sato ca sampājano* (mindful and fully aware). There is non-greed for the bliss owing to the influence of the mindfulness and full-awareness and not for any other reason. Thus the Equanimity of *Jhāna* (*Jhānupekkhā*) is a name for equanimity producing impartiality towards even the highest bliss described thus: ‘He dwells in equanimity’.

## ***Parisuddhupekkhā***

As he emerges from the third *jhāna* to enter upon and dwell in the fourth, he has purity of *upekkhā* due to the influence of powerful *sati*. Hence the name *Parisuddhupekkhā* – Equanimity of Purification. *Upekkhā* is purified and uncorrupted; thus it becomes efficient.

Although the equanimity is of ten kinds, in essence they can be regrouped into four, namely – *viriyupekkhā*, *vedanupekkhā*, *tatramajjhattupekkhā* and *ñānupekkhā*. The following six kinds have one meaning and thus can be grouped under *tatramajjhattupekkhā*:

- *chalangupekkhā*
- *brahmaviharupekkhā*
- *bojjhaṅgupekkhā*
- *tatramajjhattupekkhā*
- *jhānupekkhā*
- *parisuddhupekkhā*

Their difference, however, is like one of age or position, like the difference in a single person as a boy, a youth, an adult, a general, a king and so on. Therefore, of these it should be understood that *bojjhaṅgupekkhā*, etc., are not found where there is *chalangupekkhā* and *vice versa*. So, also, *sankhārupekkhā* and *vipassanupekkhā* have one meaning, too. They belong to the *ñāṇa* group and are divided into two according to condition or time – *avatthā*.

*Viriyupekkhā* (under *virīya*) and *vedanupekkhā* (under *vedanā*) are different both from each other and from the rest. At times, they co-exist and at other times, they do not. Normally, *chalangupekkhā* arises in the arahats. It is called *avyākata* dhamma, indeterminate state, i.e., neither determined as kammically wholesome nor unwholesome, and kammically neutral.

However, the minor form of this *upekkhā* can arise in the *vipassanā* yogi as he attains the stage of *sankhārupekkhā nāṇa* (knowledge consisting in the contemplation of equanimity regarding all formations). At this moment, he is no different from an arahat. He is neither glad nor sad perceiving the six sense-objects. Due to the influence of the mindfulness and full-awareness he feels neither pain nor pleasure.

In the case of *vedanupekkhā*, it is associated with all the three states, namely, *kusala*, *akusala* and *avyākata*, because every time there is consciousness, feeling arises. However, this equanimity will not arise with such feelings as gladness (*somanassa*), grief (*domanassa*) and bodily pain (*dukkha*). In this connection, the *avyākata* (undefined) *dhammas* include *citta*, *cetasika*, *rūpa* and *nibbāna* which do not come under *kusala* or *akusala* and are also classed as *paramatthas* (ultimate truths). *Paramattha dhammas* are to be understood by self-evidence (*atta paccakka*), not from books or hear-



say. It is like an apple laid before you. To know its sweet taste, you must eat it for yourself. To know an elephant from a picture is not real knowledge. You must see the real animal for yourself.

Direct knowledge is the real one. Whatever paramattha you have heard of is only a shadow or reflection. For instance, you must note as you close your hand, to know the tension, which is pain and as you open it to know the relaxation, which is relief from pain. When you are noting, you will also observe the step-wise occurrence of intentions to close or open your hand. As you note, you will understand the true nature of existence yourself, that is *paramattha*.

The impressions (*phassa*), feelings (*vedanā*) and the arising of *lobha* and *dosa* will be understood by noting as they arise. And finally, the extinction of *nāma-rūpa* dhammas and *nibbāna* – all these can be understood by yourself. This is what we mean by seeing *paramattha* by self-witnessing (*atta paccakkha*). To understand *paramattha* by *atta paccakkha*, one needs only *sati* in accordance with one's capabilities. To accomplish *bhāvanāmayā ñāṇa* (wisdom based on mental development), one needs only *sati* and no other equipment or materials. Hence, the yogis are exhorted to apply mindfulness every second of their time to know the nature of existence and the real *paramattha*.

## DWELLING IN EQUANIMITY

At this point, it is necessary to explain what '*upekkhako ca viharati*' means. By this, we are referring to the Equanimity of *Jhāna*, which is qualified as producing impartiality towards even the highest bliss, enabling the aspirant to 'dwell in equanimity'. This equanimity is also synonymous with the Equanimity as Specific Neutrality, which has the property of equilibrating the efficiency of connascent states.

For better understanding we may analyse these two equanimities. As regards their nature (*sabhāva*) or characteristic (*lakkhana*), they possess *majjhata lakkhana* (the characteristic of neutrality, middleness, equipoise or balanced mind). Their function is *anabhoga rasa* (inattentiveness or to be unconcerned). In one actually possessed of the third *jhāna*, there is no concern about feeling bliss, however superior (*panita-sukha*) it may be and however insatiable or unrelinquishable it may be.

They have the function of opposing the inclination (*avannati patipakkha kicca*), the function of disinclination, without attaching any importance (to the *jhānic* bliss) because the mind has reached maturity. If he does not attach any importance to even such *panita* or *atimadhura sukha*, he need not speak of his attitude towards sensuous pleasures, from which he can

be averted because they become so common-place and boring. That is why the Noble One praises him thus:

*Upekkhā koca sato ca sampajañño viharati*

*He dwells in equanimity  
with mindfulness and full-awareness.*

He is worthy of praise since he has equanimity towards the third *jhāna*, though it possesses exceedingly sweet bliss (*atimadhura sukha*), and has reached the perfection of bliss, and he is not drawn towards it by a liking for the bliss. This manifestation is one of unconcernedness (*avyāpara paccu-paṭṭhāna*). Even about this kind of bliss, which is exceedingly sweet since there is none greater, he can remain unconcerned (*avyāpara*), because these *upekkhas* possess the property of causing *avyāpara* in the connascent mental states which are associated with this *jhāna*.

Their proximate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*) is one of *pītiviraga* (fading away or stilling of happiness, distaste for or abhorrence of happiness). *Bahasa-othegya* (joyful excitement) is absent in him who has equanimity. Is such kind of equanimity felt only when the yogi is absorbed in *jhāna*? Of course, yes. However, the potential feeling will remain in him even after he has emerged from this *jhāna*. At this point, mention may be made of the material phenomena (*rūpa*) arising in four ways, namely:

- *kamma* – action
- *citta* – mind
- *utu* – seasonal conditions
- *āhāra* – food

Due to the potential of the *jhāna* attainment, *panita-rūpa* (excellent materiality) arises. As a result of the dhamma practice, *kammaja-rūpa* (action-produced corporeality), *cittaja-rūpa* (mind-produced corporeality), *utuja-rūpa* (season-produced corporeality), *āhāraja-rūpa* (food-produced corpo-reality) will arise in a distinct manner and diffuse throughout the body.

As a result of the kamma-produced material phenomena, the material faculties such as the eye, ear, nose and tongue become clearer. The vocal media of communication, which is born only of mind, will become sweeter. *Cittaja-rūpas* are said to become activated. The qualities of bodily fitness (good appearance and normal feeling), lightness and so forth arise, from seasonal conditions, mind and food. The blood will be purified of contamination and circulation will be normalised.

Here, the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) are said to be involved. With its potential from the first *jhāna* through the second to the third, where it reaches maturity, *bojjhaṅga* becomes strengthened so as to make it an effective remedy for certain diseases.

Thus, if he is able to stand up against such a powerful bliss with a balanced mentality, ordinary sensuous pleasures are nothing to him. If you practise the dhamma, there is no need for concern about losing the usual worldly enjoyment. If he has no attraction for even the exceedingly superior bliss, he needs no mention about his attitude towards the ordinary one.

At this point, one can put forward an argument (*codana*) – *tatramajjhattupekkhā*-like equanimity has existed in the first and second *jhānas* as well. And why did we not use the expression ‘*Upekkhā koca viharati*’ (He dwells in equanimity)? This clause ought to have been stated of those also. Why is it not? Yes, it has existed, but this clause has not been stated because its function was not evident there – *avyatta kicca* (unevident function). Its functions of *anabhogarasa* and *avannati patipakkha kicca* were not evident there, since it was overshadowed by *vitakka* and *vicara*. But it appears here with a quite prominent and evident function, with head erect, as it were, because it is no more overshadowed by *vitakka*, *vicara* and *pīti*.

Possessed with a balanced mind, he can resist the worldly states (*loka dhamma*) in a calm manner and with spiritual stamina, even if these come to him unavoidably. The worldly pleasures are only temporary. To the majority, the worldly *pīti* and *sukha* appear very exciting. In the realm of dhamma, such things are very

lowly. The *tatramajjhattupekkhā*-mindedness is high and noble. One should compare the two.

## THE ROLE OF SATI AND SAMPAJAÑÑA

Now as to the statement of ‘*Sato ca sampajāno*’ in the third *jhāna*, which arouses interest. Is it because these two states, namely *sati* and *sampajañña* (refer Chapter 11), arise only in this *jhāna*? Have they not existed in the earlier *jhānas* as well? They have existed in the first and second *jhānas*, haven’t they? The reason why it is stated as such in this *jhāna* only will now be dealt with.

These two elements have existed in the first and second *jhānas* but their function was not evident there. It is only in this *jhāna* that they appear with a quite evident function.

Whether the practice is *samatha* or *vipassanā*, two kinds of *sampajañña* have been based, namely, *sāthaka sampajañña* (clear comprehension of benefit) and *sappāya sampajañña* (clear comprehension of suitability). *Sati*, too, has existed in due proportion. The presence of the *sampajaññas* is evidenced by the judgement that the unification of mind in *samatha* and attainment of knowledge in *vipassanā* are both beneficial and suitable. The yogi comprehends clearly that the practice is beneficial and appropriate compared to worldly matters with which he must not while the time away. Thus the

two *sampajañña* or *parihariya paññā* (prudence) have become the basis for dhamma practice.

In *samatha*, the unification of mind is achieved, and in *vipassanā*, the grasping of the object as it arises. Thus the yogi has taken his stand on *sati*. As he persists in his mindfulness on *nāma-rūpa* phenomena, *gocara sampajañña* (full awareness of target) is bound to be achieved. The combined function of *sati* and *gocara sampajañña* will have been quite evident since the beginning of the dhamma practice.

In all the stages, whether it is prior to the discernment of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena or after the discernment or the contemplation of cause-effect relationship, *sati* and *sampajañña* have existed in due proportion. They have also existed at the attainment of *upacarā*. Without *sati* and *gocara sampajañña*, discernment and contemplation of the causal relationship of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena could not have been achieved. One who is forgetful and not fully aware does not attain even access (*upacarā*) let alone absorption (*appanā*). Thus, they have existed in the earlier *jhānas* as well.

Yet, because of the comparative grossness (*olarika*) of these *jhānas*, the mind's going is easy, like that of a man on level ground, and so the functions of mindfulness and full awareness are not evident in them (*avy-*

*atta*) as though they were absent. It is like a short person who is lost in a crowd of tall people.

In the first *jhāna*, *vitakka* and *vicara* are quite manifest. In the second *jhāna*, *pīti* is prominent. So due to the presence of these gross factors, *sati* and *sampajañña* are obscure, although all the four *sampajaññas* are present. So, now that the gross factors are gone, *sati* and *sampajañña* become evident, like when the tall people have left, the short person can be clearly seen.

With the application of *gocara sampajañña*, details of the object (natural characteristics) are noted with persistence and the act of investigation and judgement (*tīrana kicca*) comes to the fore. Due to the abandoning of the gross (*olarika*) factors, and the possessing or embracing function (*pariggahita kicca*) of *sati* and *sampajañña*, this *jhāna* becomes subtle, and this is what is desirable.

Now, why are these gross factors abandoned? Because the mind going into *jhāna* requires the special functions of *sati* and *sampajañña*, like that of a man on a razor's edge or on a one-foot bridge or on a mountain slope. So, the functions of *sati*, not forgetting, and *sampajañña*, investigating and judging, become evident (*vyatta*). This *jhāna* has two factors, namely bliss (*sukha*) and one-pointedness or unification (*ekaggatā*). This kind of bliss is exceedingly sweet and according to the scriptures it



is superior to any other kind of bliss one can find in the world. The *sukha* which arises with *pīti* causes excitement and stirring or agitating, whereas the one without *pīti* is calm and serene, and hence most delightful.

However, if this *sukha* is left unguarded by the functions of *sati* and *sampajañña*, the mind will return to and rejoin *pīti*, which means the yogi will be degraded to the lower *jhāna*. And besides, beings are greedy for an exciting bliss and tend to feel bored with a calm bliss; so they yearn for the exciting one. In this way, the dhamma would retrogress.

A worldly example is found in that of a cow trying to replenish its stock of milk. It requires that the calf be prevented from returning to its mother. Unless it is prevented in this manner, the mother cow will not be able to replenish its stock of milk. Likewise, he who wishes to feel the *pīti*-free bliss to the full must see that *pīti* is abandoned with the protective power of *sati* and *sampajañña*. Detesting *pīti*, the yogi is finally able to stay aloof from it. So *pīti* is non-existent in him. Yet, if the *jhāna* is not guarded by the functions of *sati* and *sampajañña*, he can revert to the lower *jhāna*. Only if it is effectively guarded by *sati* and *sampajañña* will he be able to feel the bliss (of the third *jhāna*) to the fullest. In this example, *pīti* is likened to the calf and the third *jhāna* to the cow.

This time, I will explain to you the Blessed One's expressions in praise of the third *jhāna*, both by the *desanā* (discourse) and practical methods. I hope the yogis will not be bored with the lengthy explanation. Just as one waters the plant and works the soil as and when required to make it grow, or takes the daily meal, one should listen to the *dhammakatha* (religious discourse) and participate in *dhammasākacchā* (religious discussion or conversation), as and when required. In the third *jhāna*, the expression: '*Upekkhako ca viharati*', he dwells in equanimity, arouses some interest and calls for special attention.

## THE QUALITIES OF SATI AND SAMPAJAÑÑA

Now, as to '*Sato ca sampajāno*' – mindful and fully aware, there are two elements; *sati* and *sampajañña*. These two appeared in the previous *jhānas* as well in due proportion. Why is it only stated here? We shall discuss on doctrinal principle (*dhamma-ditṭhāna*). The Commentaries have given explanations with illustrations.

*Sato* is characterised as *sarati* (remembering) – *sarana lakkhaṇa* (the characteristic of remembering). In fact, it is more than just remembering; it is fixed (*upaṭṭhāna*) attention – attention fixed on a prominent object. Since the mind is brought to dwell with intense force, there is no going off the track and no forgetting. So, its function is not to forget – *asammosa rasa*. Just as the police

follow at the heels of the criminal so as not to lose sight of him, so will the yogi bring his mind to bear upon the target and not lose it.

The mindfulness is so compacted as to leave no inter-spaces for the entry of *kilesas*. Thus, *sati* is manifested as guarding – *āraṅkha paccupaṭṭhāna*. This is the qualitative aspect of the manifestation. As to its consequence, since it has the property of fixed attention with the application of continuous effort, it has the consequence or benefit of guarding against *kilesas* – *āraṅkha paccupaṭṭhāna*. This is the consequential aspect of the manifestation. As to the immediate benefit, the beings are exempt from assault by *kilesa* which is the cause of misery. So, the mindful person, who is well guarded, enjoys peace and bliss. Such is in accordance with the *desanā*.

Now, the practical aspect. In this *jhāna*, the target is more closely noted without remiss. Thus, *kilesa* has no chance of entering his mental process with the result that he is well guarded. The *sati*, which belongs to this *jhāna*, is unlike the other ones and is powerful. It is of the kind which is attentive in a distinguishing, distinctive and discriminating manner.

The knowledge which one attains from this *jhāna* is superior. *Sampajañña* (full awareness) has the characteristic of non-confusion – *asammoha lakkaṇa*. The objects will not get lost if the mind is fixed strongly

upon them as they arise, failing which, weakening, exhausting and defiling of the mind will occur, resulting in delusion and confusion.

If the mind is not strong, the objects appear obscure and vague. To give a common example, it will be like breathing polluted air, resulting in sluggishness, contamination, confusion and even unconsciousness. A close attention will prevent the loss of objects. *Kilesa* will be guarded against. There will be no confusion. This is like breathing fresh air, resulting in clarity and distinctiveness. Such is the character of *sati* – distinguishing, distinctive and discriminating. *Sati* is like the fresh air.

Most of us do not know the truth due to lack of *sati* – *asammoha* – resulting in confusion, imagination and clinging to falsehood. With clear comprehension, the true nature of *nāma-rūpa* dhammas, their causal relationships and their *anicca-dukkha* characteristic which take place according to nature, will be seen. Truth will be investigated and judged. Thus, the function of *sampajañña* is to investigate and judge or accomplish – *tīraṇa rasam* (what is judged is accomplished). It is clear judgement, through self-witnessing and not imagination, of *nāma-rūpa* phenomena from a simple discernment to the final discovery of their extinction. However, this last phenomenon will not be experienced in this *jhāna* as yet. This brings us to its manifestation as *pavicaya* (scrutiny) *paccupaṭṭhānaṃ*.

Hence, the *paññā* which is qualified with all the above characteristics, function and manifestation, becomes more prominent in the third *jhāna*. Here, due to the distinctiveness of *sati*, *sampajañña* becomes stronger and wider in view, or panoramic – *kharabhava*. Before, we were noting the rising and falling of the abdomen and we observed only three or four chunks/units. Now, when we note one thing, we will see a variety of things, like series of sensations such as heat, tension, etc. For instance, the solid chunk on the palm is observed as moving, radiating heat, sweating and so on.

Due to the strength of mindfulness, *vipassanā ñāṇa* widens its scope, especially at the higher level of *udayabbaya ñāṇa* and *tatramajjhattupekkhā*. For some, they are able to recollect their youthful life and for a few, even prenatal experience in the mother's womb (refer Chapter 47 on Questions and Answers).

## EQUANIMOUS BLISS

Why is it this kind of bliss, attributed as 'exceedingly sweet' (*atimadhura*), that beings are greedy for? It is because there is none greater. In spite of this, one who is possessed of the third *jhāna* does not take interest in it. Then by which influence can he remain so? The scriptures give the answer as due to the influence of *sati* and *sampajañña*. Hence the statement: '*Sato ca sampajāno*' is reasonable.

Those who prefer materialistic pleasures go after exciting or emotional bliss accompanied with joy (*pīti*), enjoying one pleasure after another in an insatiable manner. To make matters worse, some resort to intoxicants for more excitement. Yet they are never satisfied. They want more and more, and finally become the slaves of *taṇhā*. Hence, the Buddha says: ‘*Unoloko atitto taṇhā dāso*’ (The world is always in deficiency yielding like a slave in insatiable craving<sup>3</sup>).

Whether it is in the mundane or supramundane world *pīti*-accompanied *sukha* is emotional, whereas *pīti*-stilled *sukha* is calm and serene. Those who give priority to the latter type of *sukha* will detest *pīti* as being faulty. Among all the worldly pleasures, this latter type of *sukha* is exceedingly superior and there is none greater. Even towards this kind of *sukha* he can dwell in equanimity. What a wonderful quality!

If he has no concern about feeling this kind of bliss, how would he react towards sensuous pleasures whose quality has now fallen down. At this moment, even if he is tempted to take interest in sensuous pleasures, he would not be persuaded.

Can one maintain this state for a long time? How is realisation of *magga phala* related to the attainment of *jhānas*? Yes, one can do, but remaining possessed of the *jhāna* for too long will amount to stagnation

and cause hindrance to further progress. Attainment of *vipassanā jhāna* leads to that of *lokuttara magga phala* (supramundane path and fruition). Here *vipassanā jhāna* is the cause and *magga phala* are the effects. Without perfecting the *vipassanā jhānas*, *lokuttara magga phala* cannot be realised.

In this *jhāna*, although there is no concern about feeling bliss, it appears as though he was feeling the bliss. His material body is affected by the exceedingly superior matter (*atipanita rūpa*) originated by that bliss associated with the mental body. This *cittaja-rūpa* (consciousness-originated materiality) diffuses throughout the body. Hence the expression:

*Sukkhim ca kāyena patisamvedeti.*

*He feels bliss with the body.*

In the ordinary world, when it comes to feeling we say the 'person' is feeling. In fact, there is no feeler, as is said: 'Mere feeling exists, no feeler is found'. In this *jhāna*, if it is not *vipassanā* it is not understood, that the feeler is nothing but the mental aggregate (*nāmakhandha*). Thus, the personality view will persist and rebirth will take place in the respective plane of existence.

In the case of *vipassanā jhāna*, it is evident that no personality is involved in the matter of feeling. It is

the *nāmakkhandha* (mental aggregate) or the *nāma dhamma* which is felt and so there is no personality view involved. Thus, we have two kinds of *sukha* by this method:

- *sukha* with personality view clinging
- *sukha* without personality view clinging.

Which of the two are more profound? The one without view clinging of course. In the case of *samatha jhāna*, one has to grasp the object and maintain concentration on the same object. In the *vipassanā jhāna*, one notes the arising phenomena and knows their true nature of *anicca* and *dukkha*. The bliss which arises is noted off and understood as the state of *vipariṇāma dukkha*<sup>4</sup> – the evil or suffering caused by change or reversal of the situation. With the *samatha jhāna*, calm *sukha* or *samatha sukha* is achieved, whereas with the *vipassanā jhāna*, annihilated (*nibutti*) *sukha* is achieved.

Whatever form it may be the Noble One praises him: ‘He dwells in bliss who has equanimity and is mindful’. The bliss that arises in this *jhāna* and at the matured stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa* is *pīti*-free *sukha* which is caused by the influence of *sati* and *sampajañña*. The same bliss, which is nothing but *vedanā*, a mental state, is felt by *nāmakkhandha*.



# CHAPTER 35

## LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION

### INTRODUCTION

“*Mettā*”, one of the illimitables or boundless states (*appamañña*) or divine abidings (*Brahmavihāra*), is a common usage in Buddhism, though its significance is rarely understood. According to the definition “*Mijjhati sinihyatīti Mettā*” because of the nature of friendliness, wetness (sensitivity) and adherence it is termed *mettā*; in essence, it is “*Sineha*<sup>5</sup>” or “*Sneha*” (friendship) which has the same rendering. It is synonymous with *Adosa* (non-resentment or goodwill), one of the three wholesome roots. Its object is the friendly conceptual being.

When one is displeased (*dosa* or *patigha*), one becomes dry (insensible, unfeeling) or the consciousness which is accompanied with this mental state becomes dry. Dry papers will not adhere together, whereas wet ones will. When two persons are displeased with each other, they will not adhere to each other but will dislike each other. Society exists through strong adherence and goodwill. Here is given an illustration of plywood which consists of a number of veneers glued over one another so as to render it one solid plank.

In one who is overcome by *dosa*, his *cittaja-rūpa* will change, especially his blood circulation, with adverse

consequences such as heart failure. Another instance of *dosa*, of the sinking, retractive nature that is *dosa* in a timid or low-spirited situation, is when you catch a timid animal; it suddenly dies of fright due to the derangement of vital functions.

The Buddha Sasana has existed through the ages with *mettā* – goodwill between teacher and disciples and goodwill within the brotherhood. The elder cares for the younger who in turn respects the former. The elder relies on the younger who in turn depends on the former. Such a tradition of interdependence has produced the following advantages:

- *vuddhi* – prosperity like a tree;
- *virulhi* – growth of requisites;
- *vepulla* – development and expansion of the practice of *sikkhā*.

## GENUINE AND FICTITIOUS METTĀ

Now, let us discuss fictitious *mettā*, as different from the genuine one. Fictitious *mettā* is nothing but *taṇhā pema* (craving affection) though its object is the same, that is the friendly conceptual being through friendliness, wetness and adherence. It is conventionally known as *mettā* or simply love.

As to genuine *mettā*, it arises either with *kusala* or *kriya* (functional) consciousness, depending on whether the

consciousness arises in the non-arahats or arahats. As to fictitious *mettā* or *taṇhā pema*, *lobha* arises, that means *akusala*. The kind of love developed with attachment towards one's family is not genuine *mettā*, instead it is mostly *taṇhā pema*. Such kind of love is known in the literatures as "*Gehassita pema*" (home or domestic affection), which is a hindrance to dhamma practice. For instance, a bhikkhu called Chanda had this kind of *mettā* towards the Blessed One and thus was unable to perceive the dhamma during the lifetime of the Buddha. He grew up together with the Buddha, and thus considered that the Buddha belonged to him. He became too proud to associate with the others. It is only after the *Mahāparinibbāna* (death) of the Buddha, that he was subdued and softened by the extreme penalty, by which is meant noble taming or civilised punishment (*brahmadanda*) and became an *arahat*. This punishment involved dissociation and ostracisation by the other bhikkhus. Whatever he did or said, nobody would have anything to do with him. In the Buddha Sasana, if a bhikkhu, being subjected to excommunication, does not receive any teaching or advice, his life is finished and he is as good as dead.

At one time, a horse dealer by the name of Kesi was asked by the Blessed One how he tamed wild horses. The former replied that he used gentle methods or harsh methods or sometimes both, in order to domesticate his animals. And, the Buddha asked, what did

he do when he could not tame them by these methods. He replied that he killed them, so he would not be discredited. The horse dealer took his turn to ask the Lord how he tamed his disciples as he was unparalleled in taming the untamed. The Buddha replied that at times he tamed them by praising, at times by subduing and at other times by both methods. And, the horse dealer asked, what did he do if all these methods failed. The Buddha replied that he also killed them.

This is strange. Is such a behaviour becoming of the Buddha? Though the usage is the same, the nature is different. In the world of ariyas, non-receipt of teachings, admonishments and instructions is as good as being killed.

Going back to the discussion of fictitious *mettā*, one cannot take for granted that no genuine *mettā* at all is involved in domestic or family love. Once a cow was feeding its calf when a hunter approached and threw a spear at it. The spear could not pierce the cow, but fell away from it. This *mettā*, *balava piya citta*, arises as *kāmāvacara kusala* (sensuous-sphere morality) and not as *jhāna kusala*. Even as *kāmāvacara kusala* or ordinary *kusala*, it is mightily powerful. Briefly, one has to note that love with attachment or domestic or family affection is fictitious *mettā*. Detached love with goodwill towards others is genuine *mettā*.

The indirect or proximate enemy of *mettā* is *taṇhā pema* or affection. The direct or distant enemy is *dosa*. He who can overcome these two enemies can develop *mettā bhāvanā*. Although you may be able to overcome that distant enemy, it will be difficult to overcome the proximate enemy. In a boxing match it is easy to avoid the distant blow but difficult to avoid the near ones. One should be careful of false *mettā*, which is apt to cheat one. In the scriptures it is mentioned as “*Mettā yana mukhena rago vanceti*” – sensuous lust in the guise of loving-kindness is deceitful.

## NATURE OF METTĀ

In the development of meditation with *mettā* as the subject (*mettā bhāvanā*), the yogi dwells his mind on all beings for the welfare of all. The yogi who has the habit of practising *mettā bhāvanā* is always overwhelmed with the spirit of loving-kindness in the bottom of his heart like the profusion of fragrance. Whenever he sees, hears or judges that beings are at the mercy of suffering, he would show compassion (*karuṇā*) and would like to help them. Also when he sees, hears or judges that beings are enjoying happiness, he would feel sympathetic joy (*muditā*). All these three beautiful mental states can arise in a noble-minded person wherever he may be.

Though in this retreat preference is given to *vipassanā bhāvanā*, *mettā bhāvanā* is preached and practised. As

to *vipassanā*, not everybody can practise it, and at times it is regarded as not being concerned with the good or welfare of others (*parahita*). In fact it is indirectly beneficial to others as will be accepted by those who have practised the dhamma. Having perceived the *saṅkhāra dhammas* (reflection on the impermanence of mind and matter) he attains real bliss and peace, and this he wants others to share with him. Such compassionate consideration (*anukampa*) arises in the yogi in a natural manner. This subject will be dealt with later in connection with the exposition from Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, delivered at Vesali.

*Mettā* is one of the *Brahmacariya dhammas* (holy practices). In the Abhidhamma, it is given as an *Appamañña dhamma* (Illimitable or Boundless State) identical with *Brahmavihāra* (divine abiding) in the Suttas. *Mettā* has the promotion of the aspect of welfare as its characteristic – *hitakāra pavatti lakkaṇa* (state of benevolence or goodwill). Its function is the act of goodwill towards others. As both the intention and the act are for the welfare of others, any ill-will is subdued. Hence it is manifested as the suppression of ill-will, the pacification of animosity – *aghata vinaya paccupaṭṭhāna*. Its proximate cause is optimism or viewing on the more favourable or brighter side of things – *sattanaṃ manapabhava dassana padaṭṭhāna*. If one looks on the unpleasant side of things, one will feel miserable and ill-tempered.

Here I would like to stress the importance of adjusting your mentality to look on the brighter side of things. Such a mentality is called *yonisomanasikāra* – adjusted or reasoned consideration. It reminds me of an author-ess named Eleanor H. Porter, who writes about viewing things on the bright side in a constructive attitude and not finding fault with them (in her book called “*Pollyanna*”). She deserves the name “Lady or Madam *Mettā*”.

The disappearance of *vyāpāda* (ill-will) arises with the fulfilment of *mettā*. This is how the distant or direct enemy is won. *Mettā* is disrupted by the arising of *taṇhā pema*, which is its proximate or indirect enemy. Such affection is also called false *mettā*, which is deceitful.

### FAMILY LOVE (GEHASSITA PEMA)

Looking at ordinary, domestic (family) *mettā* as different from *samatha mettā*, one will find how effective love can be. For instance, when you smile at another, you will get a smile in return, like the saying ‘love begets love’. This is a simple example of *sineha*.

Have you seen a kind of one-eyed fish known in Pali as ‘*yugamaccha*’? Only when the two fish adhere together can they swim about easily. The same thing goes with teacher and pupil, monk and lay supporter. Even when somebody helps us in times of trouble, relieving us

from saṃsāric suffering, *mettā* and *karuṇā* are more profoundly felt.

There is a story of two friends travelling to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. On their way, they stayed at a rest house. On seeing a poor family, one of them stayed behind to help them and later returned home. The other proceeded on his journey to Jerusalem. Which of the two is nearer to God?

In working for the well-being of others, with *cetanā* and *mettā*, one can benefit by after-thoughts of civic-mindedness. Moreover, in times of difficulty you are liable to get assistance from somewhere, not necessarily from the ones you have assisted.

## METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT

There are two methods of developing *mettā*. One is to develop it as part of *kusala* activity or fulfilment of *pāramīs* – mentally, verbally and bodily, without any expectation of return or self-interest. If you expect anything in return and later find ingratitude, you will be disappointed and your *mettā* will become tainted.

The second method of development is by way of *mettā jhāna samāpatti* – the attainment of concentration on *mettā* or the mind-deliverance of loving-kindness. First and foremost, he should sever the impediments (*pali-bodha*) and learn the meditation subject. Then when



he has done the work connected with the meal and got rid of any dizziness due to it, (either by walking or sleeping it off), he should seat himself comfortably on a well-prepared seat in a secluded place. To start with, he should review the danger in hate and the advantage in patience (*khanti*) and forgiveness. Why? Because hate has to be abandoned and patience attained in the development of this subject. If a man hates, he is liable to transgress by killing, stealing, etc., with untoward consequences. Thus will he see the dangers in hate and abandon unwholesome acts. In accordance with the Buddhist Law such acts, being *kammāpatha*, can send you to *apāya*. Similarly the advantages in patience should be understood according to the saying: “*Patience leads one to nibbāna*”.

To illustrate further, in taking food, you avoid unwholesome ones because you know the fact in advance. Knowing the wholesome food in advance, you can eat with confidence and at ease. All such knowledge is to your advantage. You cannot abandon unseen dangers and attain unknown advantages.

Knowing the advantages of *mettā bhāvanā* in advance causes interest, confidence and enthusiasm in the practice; just like knowing the seven advantages of *sati-paṭṭhāna* practice, as revealed by the Blessed One in the beginning of the *desanā*, arouses faith in the yogi.

Thereupon, he should embark upon the development of loving-kindness for the purpose of secluding the mind from hate, seen as a danger, and introducing it to patience, known as an advantage.

## ADVANTAGES

The advantages obtained are eleven:

- *sukhaṃ supati* –  
he sleeps in comfort;
- *sukhaṃ patibujjhati* –  
he wakes in comfort;
- *na pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati* –  
he dreams no evil dreams;
- *manussānaṃ piyo hoti* –  
he is dear to and beloved by human beings;
- *amanussānaṃ piyo hoti* –  
he is dear to and beloved by non-human beings;
- *devatā rakkhanti* –  
deities guard him;
- *nassa aggi vā visam vā satthaṃ vā kamati* –  
fire, poison and weapons do not affect him;
- *tuvaṭaṃ cittaṃ samādhīyati* –  
his mind is easily concentrated;
- *mukhavaṇṇo vipasīdati* –  
the expression of his face is serene;
- *assammulho kālaṃ karoti* –  
he dies unconfused;

- *uttariṃ appativijjhanto Brahmālokupago hoti* – he reappears in the Brahma World.

We have discussed briefly the eleven advantages obtained by developing the mind deliverance of loving-kindness – *cetovimutti mettā bhāvanā* – which is practised as an attainment concentration (*appanā-samādhi*). Let us now deal with them in more detail.

As regards the first advantage – *Sukhaṃ supati* – some people can simply sleep leaning on the right side in a peaceful manner, whereas others turn and twist on the bed and snore. He who develops *mettā bhāvanā* can sleep comfortably as though he were entering upon an attainment – *Samapatti*. There are instances in some countries about couples breaking up because one of the partners snores during sleep. Some would gag their children to prevent them from snoring.

The second advantage is *Sukhaṃ patibujjhati* – waking in comfort and fresh as though he had emerged from concentration attainment.

The third one is *Na papakam supinam passati* – he dreams no evil dreams. When he dreams, he sees only auspicious ones, as though he were worshipping a shrine, making an offering or hearing the dhamma. He does not have evil dreams, such as being threatened by bandits or wild beasts or falling into chasms. Four kinds of dreams are given in the scriptures:

- *pubbanimitta* – prognostic;
- *anubhūta* – reflection of past experiences;
- *devatā upasamhāra* – teasing by the deities;
- *dhātukkhobha* – agitation due to ailment.

Even if he suffers any ailment, he will not be agitated during sleep due to the development of *cittaja-rūpa* which supports *āhāraja-rūpa* and *utuja-rūpa*, and prevents any abnormalities caused by the latter.

*Manussānam piyo hoti* is the fourth one. He is dear to and beloved by human beings. You will realize this effect through practice.

*Amanussānam piyo hoti* is the fifth. He is dear to and beloved by non-human beings. At one time, there lived a landowner called Visakha at Patna, India. Hearing that the island of Sri Lanka was adorned with shrines and offering favourable things such as climate, abodes, people and dhamma, he handed over his fortune to his family and left his home with only a single ducat. While he was waiting for a ship at the sea coast he made a thousand ducats by lawful trading.

On arrival at Sri Lanka, he was ordained at the Mahāvihāra Monastery. When he had acquired five years' seniority he set out to wander, living for four months in each monastery. On his way to Cittalāpabbata he came to a road fork where a deity pointed out the road to him.

After he had stayed at the Cittalapabbata Monastery for four months, while about to depart, he saw a deity sitting on a step of the stairs weeping. On enquiring, the deity replied that the Elder's presence had caused trust and peace among the deities, and if he were to leave, there would be quarrels among them. So, the Elder stayed on another four months. When he thought of leaving again, the deity wept as before. And so the Elder stayed on there till he attained *Nibbāna*. This is how, through one individual's *mettā*, others can live in peace and harmony, just like a local saying: "*One good tree can accommodate ten thousand birds*".

During the Buddha's time, some five hundred bhikkhus were meditating in a forest. Owing to their spiritual powers, the deities in the forest were unable to stay on the trees. Realizing that the monks were going to stay during the period of Vassa, they enacted horrible sights, sounds and smells to frighten the monks, who later suffered and became sick.

They discussed the situation among themselves and went to the Buddha for advice. He instructed them to return to the same forest with the *mettā* weapon. On their return, the monks were warmly welcomed and helped by the deities because the monks developed *mettā* towards them as instructed by the Blessed One.

This brings us to the sixth advantage, namely, *devatā rakkhanti* – deities guard him. It should be noted here that one should not develop *mettā bhāvanā* just for the sake of protection by the deities, because if one does, it will amount to self-interest.

The seventh one is *nassa aggi vā visam vā sattham vā kamati* – fire, poison and weapon do not affect him. There was the case of one lay woman devotee, Uttara, who, because of her loving-kindness, was not affected by the burning of hot liquid butter cruelly poured upon her. Another case was that of a bhikkhu who was not affected by poisoned food. In another, the novice Sankicca was not affected by a knife.

My own personal experience as regards poison may serve as further illustration. Once I was injured by a fish whose fin was poisonous. Although my hand was bleeding and swelling, I did not feel any pain. Some 30 years ago, while trying to save a dog which had fallen in a well, I was bitten by it. I did not suffer any pain or disease though scars were left on my hand. On another occasion, while I was one night sleeping in Sri Lanka, I was bitten by a centipede. I did not feel any pain. Cobras also came to that monastery but did not do any harm.

*Tuṇḍaṃ cittaṃ samādhīyati* is the eighth, meaning that the mind is quickly concentrated. He who abides in loving-kindness will find no difficulty in practising *vipassanā*.

The ninth advantage is *mukhavaṇṇo vipasīdati* – his face has a serene expression, like a palmyra fruit or a sunkist orange, just fallen from its stem and still glossy with its golden lustre.

The next is *assammulho kālam karoti* – he dies uncon- fused. Death takes place without bewilderment. Instead, it takes place as though emerging from attainment.

The last one is *uttarim appativijjhanto* or *Brahmalokupago hoti*. That is, if he is unable to reach any states higher than the attainment of loving-kindness to attain ara- hatship, then, when he falls from his life, he reappears in the Brahma world as if waking up from sleep.

For some people who are interested in further dhamma practice, they may abide in loving-kindness so as to be reborn in the Brahma world, where they can con- tinue the dhamma practice. In these planes, there is no *kāma rāga* and no differentiation of male and female.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH NON-HUMANS

To illustrate further the advantages of *mettā bhāvanā*, I would like to quote a discourse called *Kula Sutta* (The Clans) from Saṃyutta Nikāya (The Book of the Kindred Sayings or Grouped Suttas), Nidāna (Vagga) which runs thus:

*Just as whatever clans that have many women  
and few men, are easily harassed by robbers and*

*pot-thieves, even so, brethren, any brother who has not developed and often practised liberation of will through love is easily harassed by beings other than human.*

*Just as whatever clans that have few women and many men, are hard to be harassed by robbers and pot-thieves, even so, any woman who has developed and often practised liberation of will through love is hardly harassed by beings other than human.*

The literature mentions earth-bound goblins (*Pamsu-pisaca*) as non-humans (*amanussā*) who are not so powerful. There are more powerful non-humans who can annoy humans. Such beings came to be known after the Buddha's enlightenment. Though their existence cannot be proven easily, it can be believed through *Siddhās* (Chapter 13). Such a faith is not blind (*muddha pasanna*). It is rational faith cultivated after self-evaluation based on previous accomplishments which lie within one's own orbit of intelligence.

Such unseen beings could have been one's past enemies or they are just fond of teasing one for the fun of it. Such instances are many in the scriptures. One such instance was that of Elder Sariputta, who was hit by a demon. One can imagine how beings can be naughty at times. The moral of the story is that if even



such a great individual like Elder Sariputta could be afflicted by demons, one cannot speak about ordinary persons who do not abide in loving-kindness. *Mettā* is all the more important for yogis who practise sati-*paṭṭhāna*, in order to protect themselves. Hence the name *Ārakkha Bhāvanā* (Protective Mental Culture). Another sutta from the same book is “Okkha” (the Rich Gift) which says:

If anyone, brethren, were to give a morning gift of a hundred okkhas (pots), and the same at noontide, and the same at eventide, or if anyone were to practise a morning heart of love, a noontide heart of love, and an eventide of love, even if it were as slight as one pull at a cow’s udder, this practice would be by far the more fruitful of the two – *mahapphalatara*.

## KINDS OF PERSONS

There are four kinds of persons towards whom he or she should not suffuse *mettā* at the very beginning, namely:

- an unsympathetic person (*anattakāraka appiya puggala*);
- a very dearly loved person (*atippiya sahāyaka puggala*);
- a neutral person (*majjhata puggala*);
- a hostile person (*anattakāraka veri*).

There is one kind of person to whom he would not develop specifically, namely, the opposite sex, though he can develop as a group, and another kind to whom he should not develop at all, namely, a dead person.

To put an unsympathetic person in a dear one's place, i.e., uplifting from the *appiya* to *piya* status, is fatiguing. To put a very dearly loved friend in a neutral person's place, i.e., lowering from *atippiya* to *piyamanapa* status, is also fatiguing, because it would grieve him to see his close friend in the slightest trouble. To put a neutral person in a dear one's place is fatiguing. Anger may spring up in him if he recollects a hostile person.

If he develops it specifically towards the opposite sex, lust inspired by that person may spring up in him. At one time an Elder was asked by a layman to whom loving-kindness should be developed. The former casually replied, "Towards a person one loves". He loved his own wife. Through developing loving-kindness towards her he was fighting against the wall all the night to go to his wife because his door was locked and he did not notice it.

If he develops it towards a dead person, he reaches neither absorption nor access. A young bhikkhu started developing loving-kindness inspired by his teacher. His *bhāvanā* made no headway at all. He wondered what the reason was. Later, finding that the teacher had died,

he proceeded with developing *mettā* inspired by another, who was alive, and attained absorption. *Mettā bhāvanā* should be developed in the following order of persons:

- oneself;
- a dear person (*piya puggala*);
- a very dearly loved person (*atippiya sahāyaka puggala*);
- a neutral person (*majjhatta puggala*);
- a hostile person (*anattakāraka veri*).

## TOWARDS ONESELF

In developing only towards oneself he repeats thus:

- may I escape from all dangers (*ahaṃ avero homi*);
- may I be free from mental distress or suffering (*ahaṃ abyāpajjo homi*);
- may I be free from bodily suffering or injury (*ahaṃ anigho homi*);
- may I be able to look after myself happily (*ahaṃ sukhī attānaṃ pariharāmi*).

or, in short;

- may I be happy and free from suffering (*ahaṃ sukhito homi niddukkho*).

Though the expressions are different, the objective, which is the welfare of oneself, is the same. Does it tie in or conflict with what is said in the texts? For there is no mention of any development of it towards oneself

in the *vibhaṅga*, *patisambhidā* and *karaṇīya* or *mettā sutta*. It appears so. But it does not conflict. Why not? Because what is said in the texts refers to absorption (*appanā jhāna*). But this initial development towards oneself refers to making oneself an example. By mere developing to oneself, absorption would not arise. But if he develops it in this way:

*I am happy.*

*Just as I want to be happy and dread pain,  
as I want to live and not to die, so do other beings too.*

Making himself as the example, then desire for other beings' welfare and happiness arises in him. This is like starting a motor car engine.

Now to the question: 'Who is the dearest person in one's life?' Oneself, of course. Is it selfishness? At one time King Kosala asked his Queen Mallika who her dearest person was. She answered: "Myself and none dearer." "How about yourself?" questioned Mallika. "The same," answered the King. When the King asked, he expected a different answer because it was he who uplifted Mallika from a poor gardener family to the status of queen. However, Mallika was too intelligent and courageous to be prejudiced (*pakkhapātita*). Not fully satisfied with the answer, King Kosala approached the Blessed One for the Lord's opinion. The Blessed One replied:

*“I visited all quarters with my mind,  
Nor found I any dearer than myself;  
Self is likewise to every other dear,  
Who loves himself will never harm another.”*

What do you think? Is it sensible?

## TOWARDS A DEAR PERSON

The next in order to pervade is *piyapuggala* (dear person) or *manapa puggala* (he who has a pleasant, amiable character), recollecting their gifts such as kind words, etc., to inspire love and endearment; recollecting their virtue such as learning, etc., to inspire respect and reverence experienced with a teacher (*ācariya*) or his equivalent, or a preceptor (*upajjhāya*) or his equivalent (such as his sikkhās, knowledge, ascetic practices), developing loving-kindness towards him in the way beginning:

- may he escape from all dangers (*avero hotu*);
- may he be free from mental distress or suffering (*abyāpajjo hotu*);
- may he be free from bodily suffering or injury (*anigho hotu*);
- may he be able to look after himself happily (*sukhī attānaṃ pariharantu*).

or, in short,

- may this good person be happy and free from suffering.

With such a person, he attains absorption. This person should not be of the opposite sex (unless taken as a group) or a dead person. He may develop towards as many such persons as he can, one at a time. Why choose one person? Because just as when you plough the field you work one furrow after another, to achieve thoroughness and particularity you develop towards one person at a time.

#### FOUR EXPRESSIONS

As to the development: “*avero hotu*” (may he escape from all dangers or enmities), the dangers refer to both internal and external ones with emphasis on the former, which means the gross forms of kilesas, such as greed, hatred and delusion. Such internal dangers cause external ones, such as ill conduct and criminal acts with consequent miseries to oneself and others in this life as well as the next. Transgressions of this sort render him to be a danger to himself as much as to others. Hence, by developing towards the dear person in this manner, he (the dear person) may be able to purify his bodily and verbal actions and thus be freed from internal dangers, which are the root of all miseries, and to achieve bliss.

As to the development: “*abyāpajjo hotu*” (may he be free from mental distress or suffering), it means wishing him mental bliss.

As to the development: “*anigho hotu*” (may he be free from bodily suffering or injury), it means wishing him physical bliss. So, when he is both mentally and physically happy, what more does he need? This kind of development is very fundamental, going to the root cause of all evils.

This is still not considered enough. Everyone has to look after his own body – the burden (*bhara*) of *khandha*, such as feeding, relieving, clothing, washing, resting and so on. So in all these essential daily responsibilities too he may be able to manage. Hence the fourth development: “*sukhī attānaṃ. pariharantu*” (may he be able to look after himself happily). Though in the beginning, the development is made in four ways, as the practice matures the yogi should be able to develop non-conceptually by mere mental advertence, thus facilitating the unification of mind.

## FOUR POSTURES

As to the manner of taking a posture and the time for the purpose of developing, it is said in the *Karaniyametta Sutta* as:

*Tiṭṭham caram nissinno va  
Sayāno yāvatassa vītamiddho.*

It is developed while standing, walking, sitting or lying and as far as possible should be free from torpor, that

is, in all the four postures (*iriyāpatha*) like in the case of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

## RESOLUTIONS AND MASTERY

As the yogi gains energy and concentration power he will make a resolution to enter upon and dwell in the *jhānas*, first, second, third and fourth, mastering the *jhānic* factors at each stage in order to develop knowledge and skill for higher endeavour. He should acquire mastery in the five ways, first of all with respect to the first *jhāna*. There are five kinds of mastery:

- mastery in adverting (*avajjana vasibhāva*);
- mastery in attaining (*samapajjāna vasibhāva*);
- mastery in resolving or steadying the duration (*adhiṭṭhāna vasibhāva*);
- mastery in emerging (*vuṭṭhāna vasibhāva*);
- mastery in reviewing (*paccavekkhana vasibhāva*).

He should also practise *jhāna* sport (*jhāna kilā*) such as *anuloma* (upward), *patiloma* (downward), shuttle, every one other and every two other methods, thus sharpening his concentration capabilities.

## ASSOCIATED BENEFITS

Like it is said: “*attani bhāvanā nāma sakkhi-bhāvatā*”, as a result of self-development one can reap an assortment of associated benefits following the main benefit.



After one has started up one's self-developed *mettā* to proceed with the *piya puggala*, one will become free of hindrances and attain bliss such as *viveka* (hindrance free) *sukha* which is the immediate benefit, followed by *jhāna sukha* as a result of the attainment.

If, as a *samathayānika* yogi, he practises mindfulness of the mental states associated with the *jhānas* – the mental element which dwells in his heart while reciting “May he be happy”, and the *rūpa dhamma* – the material element which utters, the sense-object of voice which sounds, he would experience *vipassanā ñāṇa* with consequent *magga* and *phala* *sukhas*.

Other *sukhas* which he can attain are *anavajja* (blameless due to absence of defilements) and *avyāpajja* (freedom from suffering or purified). The former arises as a result of the attainment of *magga* and *phala*. This is very important in the world of Buddhism, for blamelessness is more important than glory. If you are glorious and not blameless, you will not achieve this kind of bliss. If you lead a blameless life, glory will follow. Hence a *niyāma* (natural order, law):

*If glory is not aspired it increases,*

*If it is aspired it decreases.*

*The wise will go after blamelessness.*

Having gained the power of concentration to which is added *khaṇikā samādhi*, the yogi will achieve

*abyasekha sukha* – pure bliss without any addition or the bliss which is as good as raw or unprocessed. It is also called *asammissa sukha* (unmixed bliss) or *parisuddha sukha* (pure and clean bliss) – all due to the proper control of faculties and the power of *sati*.

He who values the dhamma will find its suitability (*sāttḥaka sampajañña*) and its benefits (*sappāya sampajañña*). Whosoever possesses such reasoning powers will always choose the correct path, making him worthy of a human being. They are also called ‘*nepakka paññā*’ (prudence) or ‘*parihariya paññā*’ (sagacity in judging abstinences and observances or do’s and don’ts). They bring happiness with contentment not only to oneself but also to others – *santosa* or *santutthi sukha*. In a situation where one is surrounded by materials, this kind of attitude will relieve one of one’s insatiable worldly desires.

## METTĀ BHĀVANĀ AND VIPASSANĀ

Some twenty years ago in Sri Lanka I met a lay devotee to whom I taught *mettā bhāvanā* in addition to *sati-paṭṭhāna* practice. He practised the *samatha* and found it very inspiring. He blamed me for not having given the method to him previously, comparing himself to Sari (Elder Sariputta’s mother), who also blamed her son for not teaching her the dhamma. Why do we sandwich

*mettā bhāvanā* in with *vipassanā*? Because it gives support in the form of protection, just like one engaging in a battle behind a cover instead of in the open or crossing a river in a boat instead of swimming.

At times the *vipassanāyānikayogi* (yogi whose vehicle is insight only or practises *vipassanā* only) may find his practice wearisome and difficult in attaining *samādhi* and *paññā*, suffering a sort of burning sensation in his head. In such a situation he may switch over to *samatha*, such as *mettā bhāvanā*, and develop the mundane *jhāna* for a change and revitalisation, and then resume the *vipassanā* practice. Such a yogi is called ‘*samathayanika yogi*’ (yogi who practises both *samatha* and *vipassanā*).

During the Buddha’s time there were *vipassanāyānikayogis* who did not practise *samatha jhāna* at all. Such a practice is known as ‘*Suddha* (pure) *Vipassanāyānika*’, and the yogis are known as ‘*Sukkha Vipassaka*’ (Dry Contemplation – dry because it is devoid of mundane *jhānas*). Of course, when one has become an *anāgāmi* or *arahat* one can practise and attain mundane *jhānas* without difficulty.

There is a note of warning, that is the yogi may get attached to *samatha jhāna* and not progress to the noble objective of *bhava vimutti* (liberation from exist-

ence). Hence the teaching: *Never allow the mind to wander outside nor to stop inside.*

## THE FOUR BHĀVANĀS

*Mettā bhāvanā* is included in the four protective mind developments (*caturārakkha bhāvanā*) or fourfold guardian meditations, namely:

- *Buddhānussati* (recollection of the special qualities of the Buddha);
- *Mettā bhāvanā* (loving-kindness meditation);
- *Asubha bhāvanā* (contemplation of foulness);
- *Maranānussati* (mindfulness of death).

As a rule, a *vipassanāyānika* yogi would practise these four developments as protection. When he is devoted to the recollection of the Buddha (*Buddhānussati*), he conquers fear and dread. He is able to endure fear and pain. *Mettā bhāvanā* cultivates friendliness with other beings. With *Asubha bhāvanā*, he will not become attached to pleasurable visions or feelings. Devotion to mindfulness of death (*Maranānussati*) causes constant diligence, perception of impermanence grows in him and he will make the best use of his time for dhamma practice. He conquers attachment to life and a sense of urgency will awaken in him. For the Western yogis, *mettā bhāvanā* is most appropriate.

## THE BREAKING DOWN OF THE BARRIERS (SIMASAMBHEDA)

After he has pervaded to himself and the *piya* person, he should proceed with a very dearly loved person, a neutral person and a hostile person (if he has any) in order of sequence, making his mind malleable (*mudu bhuto*) and wieldable (*kamanya*) in each instance before passing on to the next. He will transform a very dearly loved person to the status of a dear person through *mettā*, thus normalising his relationship. So too will he do to a neutral person and a hostile person. If he has no enemy or he is of the type of generous person who does not perceive another as an enemy, he need not develop towards him.

He should break down the barriers by practising loving-kindness over and over again, accomplishing mental impartiality towards the four persons, that is to say, himself, the dear person, the neutral person and the hostile person.

Suppose bandits come to him and ask for the head of one of the above four for sacrificial offering, whom would he choose? It is only when he directs his mind impartially towards himself and the other three persons that he does not see who to single out (to be given to the bandits) that he has broken down the barriers of partiality – *simasambheda*.

## DEVELOPING 528 KINDS OF METTĀ

*Pharana* (pervasion) is of three kinds:

- *anodhisa* (boundless or illimitable);
- *odhisa* (identification);
- *disā* (direction-oriented).

### **Anodhisa method**

In this (unspecified) method there are five kinds of sentient beings to whom *mettā* is developed without distinction and limitation. They are:

- *sabbe sattā* (all creatures);
- *sabbe pānā* (all breathing things);
- *sabbe bhūtā* (all living beings);
- *sabbe puggalā* (all persons);
- *sabbe attabhāva-pariyāpannā* (all beings who have *khandha*).

They are developed in the four expressions. So with the four kinds of absorption in each of the five ways there are twenty kinds of absorption in unspecified pervasion.

### **Odhisa method**

In specified pervasion there are seven categories of beings grouped into three:

- Group 1
  - *sabbā itthiyo* – all females,
  - *sabbe purisā* – all males;
- Group 2
  - *sabbe ariyā* – all noble ones,
  - *sabbe anariyā* – all ordinary people;
- Group 3
  - *sabbe devā* – all celestial beings,
  - *sabbe manussā* – all human beings,
  - *sabbe vinipātikā* – all *apāya* beings.

They are also developed in the four expressions. With the four kinds of absorption in each of the seven categories there are twenty eight kinds of absorption. The two methods together make forty eight kinds of absorption.

### ***Disā method***

In the directional pervasion, with the forty eight kinds of absorption in each of the ten directions, there are four hundred and eighty kinds of absorption. Consequently, the kinds of absorption in all the three methods amount to five hundred and twenty eight.

### DHAMMA DISCUSSION (DHAMMASĀKACCĀ)

**Q:** *Does mettā bhāvanā accelerate vipassanā?*

**A:** *Mettā bhāvanā makes it easier for one to practise but does not hasten vipassanā.*

**Q:** *At what stage should one switch from mettā-bhāvanā to vipassanā?*

**A:** He can do so as soon as he attains *jhāna*. He does not have to wait till he accomplishes the 528 kinds of *mettā*.

**Q:** *Is mettā bhāvanā the best out of the forty concentration objects for a samathayānika yogi?*

**A:** It depends upon the individual taste and habit or temperament (*carita*); like taking a medicament in preference to another in the same therapeutic group. *Mettā*, as one of the four *brahmaviharas* (divine abidings) or *appamaññas* (boundless states) is best suited to those in whom *dosa* or anger is predominant, because *mettā* – loving-kindness, benevolence or goodwill – is defined as that which softens one’s heart.

**Q:** *Is vipassanāyānika a quicker method to attain magga-phala?*

**A:** Yes, it is, it is like when you are fighting a war in a do-or-die manner, you will win quickly, whereas when you are fighting with cover it takes more time. With *vipassanā*, you will never die or lose the battle.



**Q:** *At what stage of mettā bhāvanā will one gain any or all of the eleven advantages?*

**A:** Development of *mettā*, either as a meritorious deed or attainment, is beneficial in one way or another. Look at the story of the cow giving milk to its calf and the case of the lady devotee Uttara. Those were neither access nor absorption, but simple consciousness of love, *kāmāvacara kusala*, which can lead to certain advantages, though not all as in the case of attainment concentration. So mighty powerful is loving-kindness.

**Q:** *Will mettā bhāvanā protect one against nuclear weapons?*

**A:** We have never had any instances of one protected by *mettā* against such a weapon. One can try now. More dangerous than the distant danger, such as the nuclear weapon, is the internal enemy, *dosa*, which is exploding all the time. If we can eradicate this enemy, we need not bother about the distant one. But how to overcome malice? By love of course. The following is a quotation from the Dhammapada verse 223:

*Akkhodenā jine kodhaṃ, asādhuṃ asādhunā jine  
Jine kadariyam dānena, saccenā alikavādināṃ.*

*Conquer anger by love, conquer evil by good  
Conquer the stingy by giving, Conquer the liar by truth*

Thus the Blessed One urges you to overcome your own malice. People who are most afraid of atomic bombs are those who own them. Once you become a *sotapanna*, or better still, an *anāgāmi*, you will not be afraid of death, because your *bhava* (existence) is guaranteed.

**Q:** *I cannot find any piya person of my own sex to whom I should pervade mettā. I also find it difficult to reflect on the qualities of such a person together with the others, i.e., group-wise. What should I do ?*

**A:** As a meritorious deed you can develop towards anyone. But for attainment, you must follow the instructions given in the text.

# CHAPTER 36

## BUDDHIST CEREMONIES OF THE VASSA (LENT)

“*Pavāraṇā*” means “invitation” and has come to be a name given to a meeting held at the end of the rainy season, during which, members of the Saṅgha having dwelt cheek by jowl for three months, grievances might have made themselves felt. Mutual confession was invited (*Pavareti*) on this valedictory occasion in accordance with the tradition of the Saṅgha. It is of four kinds:

- *Paccaya Pavāraṇā*,
- *Patikkhepa Pavāraṇā*,
- *Yavadattha Pavāraṇā*,
- *Vassamvuttha Pavāraṇā*.

### ***Paccaya Pavāraṇā***

It is said:

*Icchāmaham bhante saṅghaṃ catumāsan pavāretuṃ.*

This is an invitation extended to the bhikkhus by the lay donor (*dayaka*) offering the responsibility for the requisites during the three months' lent.

## ***Patikkhepa Pavāraṇā***

It is said: *Pavārito nāma āsanaṃ paññāyati.*

*Bhojanaṃ paññāyati  
Hatthapāse ṭhito abhiharati  
Paṭikkhepo paññāyati vāso  
Eso pavārito nāma.*

The bhikkhu will not refuse the offering of food and drinks placed within his reach. If, however, after he has refused he wishes to partake those food and drinks, he must perform *Vinayakamma* (Disciplinary action).

## ***Yavadattha Pavāraṇā***

It is said: *Panītena khādanīyena bhojanīyena  
Sahatthā santappesi sampavāresi.*

When offering food or drinks prepared with the best materials (*Panitabhojanadini*), they are offered to the bhikkhu's satisfaction or till he expresses full satisfaction.

## ***Vassamvuttha Pavāraṇā***

Such *Pavāraṇā* is analysed (*Vibhajati*) as follows:

*Pakārehi ditthādihi vāreti  
Sanghādike bajāpeti vatte karoti  
Etāyāti Pavāraṇā.*

The bhikkhus after having spent the Vassa or Lent (three rainy months) successfully without a break invite

one another for criticism by means of *Ditthādihi pakārehi vāreti sanghādike bajāpeti* (causing oneself to approach and listen to the Saṅgha); *Vatte karoti* (do everything necessary to this effect). This is known as *Vassamvuttha* or *Iti Pavāraṇā*. For the purpose of (none other than) clearing up the flaws (*Apattisodhanaya*), one surrenders oneself to receive criticism and gives a chance to others to find fault with one (*Attavosaggokasadanam*). It is said:

*Anujanami bhikkhave vassamvutthānaṃ  
Tihī thānehi Pavāretuṃ.*

The Blessed One has permitted the monks to invite one another or surrender themselves for criticism, so that if there is any flaw which is heard, seen or suspected the same may be pointed out. To trace the development of this tradition, it was once the practice among non-Buddhists to remain silent during ascetic practices. When such practices were transmitted into the Buddha's Sasana, the Blessed One had to lay down a *vinaya* rule permitting the Saṅgha to invite one another for criticism.

In the Sasana, it is necessary to teach and guide. If the members remain silent, they will not be able to communicate among themselves, instead they will suffer aloofness (*vūpakatṭha*). Just as animals, for example, they will not be able to learn and discuss the dhamma and say what is good or bad. Hence the introduction of *Pavāraṇā*.

The Exalted One himself initiated this tradition. The Exalted One was once staying near Savatthi, in the East Park, at the terraced house of Migara's mother. And with him was a great company of bhikkhus (five hundred), all of them arahats. Now on that occasion, the Exalted One, presiding on the fortnightly festival day at the *Pavāraṇā* ceremony, was seated in the open. And surveying the silent company of brethren, he addressed them:

*“Well then, bhikkhus, I invite you -  
have you not aught herein you blame me, in deed or word?”*

So, it is evident how much the Buddha appreciated mutual confession among the members of the Saṅgha. Is the mutual invitation (*Pavareti*) valid even after the ceremony? Yes, it is. Why do we need such an invitation? Nobody is perfect in this world. Hence, it is necessary to invite one another for mutual fault-finding – that is, in a constructive way. If the colleagues remain silent in spite of the flaws, then they are said to be merciless on the monk concerned. They should understand that if they do not discuss the faults of the monks, the latter will end up in misery. So, having mercy on him, they should make critical comments. At the same time, they should bear in mind that destructive criticism will amount to insult.

In living together in the same monastery for the past three or four months, the monks are able to see, hear

or suspect the flaws in one another. Thus they are obligated to fill up the vacuum, make up for the deficiency and straighten out the divergences of one another. It is only appropriate that any feeling which has arisen during the period of their togetherness, should be revealed in a spirit of cooperation and brotherhood.

So, with due compassion (*anukampam*) towards their fellow bhikkhus, they should respond to one another's request for criticism in a constructive manner. In this way, the concerned bhikkhu will benefit by discovering his own flaws and mending his ways in time. It is said in the Sub-Commentaries:

*Pakārehi ditṭhādihi  
Vāreti kāyakammādi ke sarāpeti  
Gārayhe karoti etāyāti pavāraṇā  
Paṭipattivisodhanāya attano  
Attano vajjacodanāya okāsadānam.*

*If there is any flaw seen, heard or thought of, in deed or word,  
this should be revealed as a blame.*

*For the sole purpose of purifying the practice,  
submission is made and permission given for criticism.*

By this, performing *Pavāraṇā* at the end of the Lent means offering oneself to the Saṅgha (if there are four or more members), or sect (if there are only two or three), or individual, and opening the way for comments. In conformity with this principle, one must say:

*Sanghaṃ bhante.*

*Pavāremi ditthena vā sutena vā parisankaya vā.*

*Vadantu maṃ āyasmanto anukampaṃ upādāya.*

*Passanto patikarissāmi.*

*Dutiyampi Sanghaṃ bhante... Tatiyampi Sanghaṃ bhante...*

*Ven. Sirs. I submit myself to you and invite you to blame me in deed or word for any flaws that you might have seen, heard or thought with compassion towards me. Becoming aware of these flaws, I should not fail to correct my errors.*

*For the second time... For the third time....*

Thus he will be freed from flaws and be purified. Perhaps this culture may be adapted in other walks of life with benefit. One yogi has tried a similar method in school. It was not successful because the students were not living together close enough to know one another's faults. As much as the teacher points out the errors of the pupils, the latter should do likewise to the teacher. There are not many teachers who can stand criticism. The willingness to respond to another's bid in purifying (*visodhanaṃ*) in such a manner is a quality of *kalyāṇamitta*.

## KAṬHINA

This commonly follows *Pavāraṇā*. Kaṭhina means firmness or solidity. The performance is called "Kaṭhinatthāro"



(*Kaṭhina + attharo*), meaning that the five benefits (*anisaṃsa*) such as “*Anāmantacāro*” are spread over the precincts of the monastery in a firm manner so that these benefits may be derived within the monastery without letting them out. It is as solid and durable as the cord which can be gathered and stored. Hence, the act of extending the benefits to all parts of the monastery in accordance with vinaya rules is called *Kaṭhina* Festival.

## THE BEGINNING OF KAṬHINA

At one time, the Buddha was staying at the Jetavana monastery in Savatthi. At that time there were thirty brothers called Bhaddavaggiya who were related to King Kosala as sons of the same father and different mothers. They became monks, practised the Buddha’s teachings and became noble ones – *sotapannas*, *sakadāgāmis* and *anāgāmis*.

One day, they decided to go to the Buddha and travelled to Savatthi. However, as vassa was approaching they could not reach Savatthi in time. So, they remained at Sakila on the way to Savatthi for the vassa period. As they were obliged to spend the time away from the Exalted One they were unhappy. After the vassa they left for Savatthi but it was still raining on the way.

Now in those days, monks had few needs and possessed only a set of three robes and a bowl. The robes were

hand-woven and so were thick and coarse. So, when the robes were wet and muddy, they became heavy. When they reached Savatthi they were extremely exhausted.

On hearing their plight, the Buddha looked into the past and saw that *kaṭhina* robes had been allowed by the previous Buddhas. Thus, having compassion towards the Bhaddavaggiya brothers, the Buddha allowed them to accept *kaṭhina* robes.

*Kaṭhina* lasts for one month, from the first waning day of *Thadingyut* (about mid-October) to the full moon day of *Tazaung-daing* (about mid-November). Only those monks who stayed in the monastery continuously during the entire first *vassa* are entitled to *Kaṭhina* benefits.

## BENEFITS

### **Specific Benefits for Monks**

During the Lent, a monk is not allowed to travel or make house visits without the expressed permission of the Saṅgha. He can travel outside the monastery for a maximum of seven days on an emergency matter with the express permission of the Saṅgha. However, by performing the *Pavāraṇā* and *Kaṭhina*, he is allowed to travel or make house visits without permission from the Saṅgha. This is the first benefit, *Anāmantacāro*.

According to the *vinaya*, a monk can possess a set of three robes (*ticivaram*), which under resolution is specifically his and with which he must not part wherever he goes, especially at dawn, otherwise he has to forego the robes and he is said to have committed an offence. Now, by performing the *Pavāraṇā* and *Kaṭhina*, he is permitted to go about without carrying with him the full set. This is the second benefit, *Asamādānācaro*.

Normally, a monk is not allowed to keep more than one set of robes. In the olden days, monks used to keep many robes and when they travelled they would carry with them bundles of these robes, which appeared absurd and drew criticism from the lay people. They complained that after the monks had renounced *kāmarāga*, they were still in possession of property. At this, the Buddha tested by himself to see how many robes were needed to protect anybody from seasonal conditions. He put on one after another till he found that a set of three robes is sufficient for a monk any time of the day or night. Hence, the *vinaya* rule.

However, a bhikkhu can bypass this discipline by entrusting another monk with the excess robes, which he may use in actual fact, i.e., *vikappana* (alternative). This method is an alternative to using the robes as specifically his own by resolution (*adhittāna*) within ten days of receipt in respect of those offered by the lay sup-

porters. By performing the *Pavāraṇā* and *Kaṭhina*, he is exempted from this restriction and can keep many robes (without entrusting) for the next five months from the date of *Kaṭhina*, that is till March the following year. This is the third benefit, *Yāvadatthacīvara* – possibility of keeping as many robes as he requires in the next five months.

The fourth benefit is *Gaṇabhojana*, by which he can accept an invitation to a meal. Normally he is restricted from accepting an informal or inappropriate invitation to a meal where four monks or more are to partake. The *vinaya* rules also do not permit him to refuse the first invitation in preference to the second.

The fifth benefit is *Yo ca Tatthacivaruppādo*, by which the gift of robes, which arises on the occasion of the *Kaṭhina* ceremony, belongs to the monk who has successfully performed both *Pavāraṇā* and *Kaṭhina* in the same monastery, and he has the right to their use for the specified period, that is five months.

These are the five benefits which accrue in a firm manner to the monk who is said to have attained the *kaṭhina-anisamsa* (the blessing of solidness). This is the manner of spreading the five benefits over the precincts of the monastery firmly and is known as *Kaṭhinatthara* – *Kaṭhina* spreading.

## **Benefits for Lay Devotees**

There are also five benefits which accrue to the donor. By virtue of their voluntary service (*cetanā*) in enabling the monks to move about without permission from the Saṅgha, the devotees will also get the benefit of traveling from place to place without hindrance. By helping the monks to be relieved of the obligation in connection with the robes, the devotees will get the benefit of performing their tasks without difficulty. By enabling the monks to partake the food freely without vinaya restrictions, the devotees will not meet with any harm in connection with food. By enabling the monks to hold the privilege of keeping the robes for a specified period without vinaya restriction, the devotees will gain the benefit of keeping their belongings in safety.

*Kaṭhina* performance grants the monks the privilege of sharing the robes and requisites offered in the monastery. For this meritorious deed the devotees will be able to possess their properties free from harm.

Hence, it is always said that the offering of robes at *Kaṭhina* has special significance. The monks who participate on the occasion will be relieved of the disciplinary rules to some extent. Similarly, by virtue of their *cetanā*, devotees will gain both special and general benefits.

# CHAPTER 37

## SEVEN SUITABLE THINGS

### SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

Equilibrium, balance or harmony of faculties (*Indriya – samatta*), relates to the five spiritual faculties:

- *saddhā* – faith,
- *virīya* – energy,
- *sati* – mindfulness,
- *samādhi* – concentration,
- *paññā* – wisdom.

Of these there are two pairs of faculties, in each of which both faculties should well counter-balance each other, namely; faith and wisdom on one hand and energy and concentration on the other. Excessive faith with deficient wisdom leads to blind faith, while excessive wisdom with deficient faith leads to cunningness. In the same way, great energy with weak concentration leads to restlessness, while strong concentration with deficient energy leads to indolence. For both faculties in each of the two pairs, a balanced degree of intensity is desirable. As regards mindfulness, it should be allowed to develop to the highest degree of strength in accordance with the local saying:

*Sati is never in excess, but is always in deficiency.*

## SHARPENING OF FACULTIES

Now, “how to develop these faculties” is the problem. In accordance with the saying:

*Sappaya kiriyā ye sampādeti*

*The yogi should make sure of working suitably.*

This constituted the fourth in the nine ways of sharpening the five faculties. We are dealing with this factor because it is considered most important and instrumental for the penetration of the dhamma. As regards to the nine ways of sharpening the faculties, it is said in the Path of Purification:

While thus engaged in inductive insight, however, if it does not succeed, he should sharpen his faculties in the nine ways stated thus:

- he sees only the destruction of arisen formations – *navākārehi indriyāni tikkhāni bhavanti uppannuppānaṃ samkharānaṃ khayameva passati;*
- in that (occupation) he makes sure of working carefully – *tatthesa sakkacca kiriyāya sampādeti;*
- he makes sure of working perseveringly – *sātacca kiriyāya sampādeti;*
- he makes sure of working suitably – *sappāya kiriyāya sampādeti;*
- by apprehending the sign of concentration – *samādhissacca nimittaggāhena;*

- by balancing the enlightenment factors – *bojjhangānanca anupavattātāya;*
- he establishes disregard of body and life – *kāyeca jīviteca anapekkhatam upatthāpeti;*
- wherein he overcomes (pain) by renunciation – *tatthāca abhibhuya nekkhammena;*
- by not stopping halfway – *antarā ca abyosanena.*

## WORKING SUITABLY

He should avoid the seven unsuitable things and cultivate the seven suitable things, namely:

- *āvāsa sappāya* – suitability of abode;
- *gocara sappāya* – suitability of resort e.g., an alms-resort village, not too far, where alms food is easily obtainable;
- *bhassa sappāya* – suitability of speech, e.g., avoiding aimless talk, listening to the dhamma;
- *puggala sappāya* – suitability of person;
- *bhojana sappāya* – suitability of food;
- *utu sappāya* – suitability of climate;
- *iriyāpatha sappāya* – suitability of posture.

In the old days, the monks went to the forest and meditated under the trees or among the bushes. If they gained *samādhi* and *paññā* in three days they stayed



on, otherwise they moved to another location. As for the suitability of abode, this retreat may be said to be suitable. According to the Elder Sariputta, so long as one's body and knees do not get wet, the abode is suitable, since he never lay on his back.

There are limitations to a monk's resort or frequentation in order that he may not affect his concentration. Similar is the case with speech, listening to or making which should be related to the dhamma. It is like nurturing a plant, such as watering, etc. The suitable person is the one possessing special qualities of virtue, etc, and from whom you can learn the dhamma. In dealing with the fellow-bhikkhus, the spirit of dhamma-family should prevail, such as *mettā* and *anukampa* (kindness) in all aspects. If these persons are not helpful in his dhamma practice, then they will not conform to *puggala sappāya*. In short *kalyāṇamitta* (noble or good friend) is a suitable person.

At this juncture I wish to define *mettā*. It has the natural characteristic of helping others – *hitakara pavatti lakkaṇa* (the characteristic of practising benefaction). This is the ability or power (*satti*) which has to be matched with manifestation, demonstration or proof (*vyatta*).

That is, the yogi must also work for the benefit of others, both physically and verbally. This is called *hitupasam-*

*hara rasa* (the function of serving for the benefit of others) which is the actual practice of *mettā* as different from mere pretension. This leads to the manifestation of the overcoming of malice – *aghata vinaya paccupaṭṭhāna*. Its proximate cause is the opinion or knowledge of the charming condition – *manāpa bhāva dassana padaṭṭhāna*.

The malicious person is likened to an angry frog whose body swells and legs shrink when poked so that it becomes a prey to the crow.

At one time there were three monks, namely, Anuruddha, Kimila and Nandiya, who practised the dhamma in a forest with mutual agreement that they would live as one, that is with one mind. They did so, and since each would not have his own way in contradiction to the others they could live amiably and in harmony, and their minds mingle like milk and water. The eldest monk was respected, but he did not take advantage of his seniority. This kind of life is living with one's own body and another's mind. This is how we should behave.

Any unpleasantness found in another person should be disregarded (as a trifling matter) and any malice which may have arisen in one should be considered as a dhamma object to be noted and expelled, and a lesson learned from such experience. If only the yogis can prac-

tise *puggala sappāya* along these lines, there need not be any difficulty in sharpening the five faculties.

As to *bhojana sappāya*, one's food may not suit another. There is room in this retreat for improvement as regards suitability and requirement, especially for foreign yogis. Of course we should take nutritious food because food affects mood. Regarding *utu sappāya*, one can always improve the environmental conditions to suit oneself. As for the postures, sitting and walking suit the beginners. Later on they may resort to all four postures, including standing and lying down.

# CHAPTER 38

## THE STREAMS

Let us pose riddles – the very question raised by the Venerable Ajita to the Blessed One.

They are:

*Streams flow everywhere*

*What is the restraint for streams?*

*What is the constraint for streams?*

The questioner wants to know how to weaken, check and control the flow of *kilesa* streams (*nīvaraṇa*), and how to cut them off totally (*pidahana*). To these the Blessed One replied that their restraint is mindfulness – *sati tesam nīvaraṇam* – and the constraint is wisdom – *paññā tesam pidahanaṃ*. They are dammed by wisdom (*paññā*).

### THE RESTRAINT

The first method involves the control of faculties in the six bases to check the flow of *kilesa* streams.

Once there lived five monks in Savatthi. Each of them practised restraint of just one out of the five senses and each of them claimed that what he was practising was the most difficult. There were some heated arguments over this and they could not come to an agreement.

Finally they went to the Buddha to ask for his decision. The Buddha said to them, “Each of the senses is just as difficult to control as the other, but all bhikkhus must control all the five senses and not just one. Only those who control all the senses could escape from the round of rebirths.”

Then the Buddha spoke in verses (Dhammapada 360 and 361) as follows:

*Cakkhunā saṃvaro sādhu  
Sādhu sotena saṃvaro  
Ghānena saṃvaro sādhu  
Sādhu jivhāya saṃvaro.*

*Kāyena saṃvaro sādhu  
Sādhu vācāya saṃvaro  
Manasā saṃvaro sādhu  
Sādhu sabbatha saṃvaro  
Sabbatha samvuto bhikkhu  
Sabbadukkhā pamuccati*

*Restraint in the eye is good,  
Good is restraint in the ear,  
Restraint in the nose is good,  
Good is restraint in the tongue.*

*Restraint in the body is good,  
Good is restraint in speech,  
Restraint in mind is good,*

*Good is restraint in all the senses.  
The bhikkhu, restrained in all senses,  
Is freed from all ills (saṃsāra dukkha).*

Liberalisation in the eye will cause craving in the case of pleasant object, malice in the case of unpleasant object and delusion (*assamapekkhana*, *moha* or *avijjā*) if the true nature of object is not properly understood. These mental states become evident at the impulsive (*javana*) stage of the thought process (*vithi*<sup>6</sup>). This is when doubt and ambiguity (*asaddhā*) arise, as also do impatience, lack of forgiveness and forbearance (*akhanti*) towards pleasant or unpleasant objects, followed by indolence or cowardliness (*kosajja*), forgetfulness (*mutthasacca*) and ignorance (*añāṇa*). These *akusala javanas* arise occasion-ally in the minds of average persons.

As a result of fictitious views, that is imagining what are not actually present, the common persons will float bobbing along down the fivefold streams, namely:

- *taṇhā sota*,
- *diṭṭhi sota*,
- *kilesā sota*,
- *duccarita sota*,
- *avijjā sota*.

These fivefold streams flow incessantly through the six sense doors, except the time when one is asleep, at varying speeds comparable with the intensity of the sense

objects. One is like being surrounded by water so that one has nothing to cling to and becomes helpless.

Just look at yourself and look for something to rely upon. Can you find any modern scientific method to prevent you from being carried away by the *kilesa* current? How about using drugs? They will make matters worse, won't they?

The only effective remedy is *sati*, with which one can exercise restraint in one's faculties. Hence the Blessed One's admonishment of self-reliance – to rely on one's own effort, one's dhamma – so as to be saved from being drowned in the akusala streams. Here *sati* acts as a lifebuoy. Though *sati* is the main element, it has to be supported by such factors as *virīya* to enable the continuous application of *sati*. With mindfulness as restraint, *kilesa* stream is checked and weakened, so will the other streams.

## DISCOURSE ON BHĀRADVĀJA

In the Salayatana-Vagga-Saṃyutta is given the Discourse to Bhāradvāja. At one time, a king called Utena approached a young monk called Piṇḍolabhāradvāja and asked the latter how young adolescent monks could endure the sight of the opposite sex without being lustful. The young monk replied that they were careful

(applied *sati*) and viewed the opposite sex as their mother, sister or daughter instead of as strangers.

However, the king was not satisfied with the answer, maintaining that as the mind is changeable there was no guarantee that mere consideration of relationship could prevent passion arising, especially when the opposite sex was behaving in an enticing, seductive and glamorous manner.

This argument of the king is quite sensible because abnormal situations can arise under similar conditions, especially as *hiri-ottappa* (moral shame and dread) states in committing good and evil have dwindled in the world. These, the Buddha said, are two conducts that protect the world – *lokapala*.

Once again the monk replied that instead of viewing the opposite sex as one whole entity, they dissected the whole into pieces and viewed the ugliness of the segmentation, that is, contemplating the thirty-twofold aspects and in this way they overcame passion. Still the king was not satisfied, because what was to be considered as ugly could be seen as pretty by some as the mind was changeable.

There is a story on this subject. In a monastery was hung a human skeleton with a sentence, “I (the girl) am sixteen years old” written below with the aim of reminding visitors of the reality of death and causing *saṃvega*



(sense of urgency). One day a young man with splendid ideas came. First he viewed the skeleton contemplating foulness (*asubha*). Later he read the sentence below and started imagining the form of a sweet sixteen-year old over the skeleton and became passionate.

There were also instances in the old days of some monks collecting female skeletons from the graveyard and committing sexual misconduct. Hence the king's argument that the monk's reply was still inadequate.

The monk replied again that they practised *indriya saṃvara sīla* (morality of faculty control or subjugation or conquest of senses). To this the king was finally satisfied because the practice coincided with his own experience. As he was always surrounded by beautiful courtiers it would be difficult for him unless he exercised faculty restraint.

Thus one is protected from *kilesas* by possessing *sati*-protected mind (*satarakkhena cetasa*). As has been said, *sati* is indispensable like fresh air. If one inhales polluted air, one can feel sick and even unconscious. With fresh air one feels fresh and healthy. Though people value fresh air, they cannot appreciate the value of *sati*. They remain simply unmindful. The Buddha says that *sati* is required everywhere:

*Satiṃ ca khvāhaṃ bhikkhave sabbatthikaṃ vadāmi.*

Thus to the question: Which one kind of dhamma accomplishes two kinds? The answer is *appamāda sati* (unfailing mindfulness), which purifies the mind of *kilesas* in the present life and serves as a potential *kusala* in future existences.

## THE CONSTRAINT

The fivefold streams can be constrained by means of *vipassanā* and *magga paññās*. Thus to Ajita's question: "What is the constraint for streams (*kena sotaṃ pidhiyare*)?", the Buddha's reply was: "They are constrained by wisdom (*paññāya ete pidhiyare*)".

Without first restraining with *sati*, it is not possible to constrain with *paññā*. Thus the two states are interdependent. At this point, I would like to remind you of the three types of *kilesas* which are overcome by the three types of *sikkhās*. First, as regards to the meaning of *kilesa*, it has two significances, namely, it torments close-at-hand, fatiguing both mentally and bodily, and secondly, it burns, causing mental and bodily weariness during and after the effect. *Kilesas* are the root cause of all sufferings. "How to overcome them" is the problem.

The Buddha gave three methods to overcome *kilesas*. Defilements of transgression are overcome by virtue, obsessive defilements by concentration and latent ones

by wisdom. *Sīla* will stop the flow of *duccarita sota*, but is unable to overcome obsessive defilements, which are overcome by *sati*. As for the latent ones, neither *sīla* nor *sati* can overcome them. They are overcome by *paññā – vipassanā* and *magga*.

The latent type is divided into two, namely, *ārammananusaya* and *santananusaya*; the former is overcome by *vipassanā ñāṇa* and the latter by *ariya magga* or *magga-ñāṇa*. With *vipassanā* practice, one understands the true characteristics, such as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and spontaneity (non-self) both in the present tense and in the future (whenever one ponders). This understanding goes to constrain the fivefold streams. This occurs temporarily, that is, as *vipassanā ñāṇa* arises.

Constant or permanent constraint is accomplished at the attainment of *ariya magga* or *magga-ñāṇa*. For instance, at the attainment of *sotapatti magga*, the two streams, namely *diṭṭhi sota* and *vicikicchā sota* are permanently constrained. This happens because the *nāma-rūpa* dhammas are clearly understood so that there are no more false views and doubts. These streams stop flowing, seeping or leaking forever. As regards to the remaining streams, though they are not totally cut off, the *apāya*-related do not flow anymore. This means that a *sotapanna* will not commit any evil conduct which will lead him to *apāya*.

As the subject on *kilesa* is linked with that on *vaṭṭa*, which in turn is linked with that on *magga*, we shall now deal with the *vaṭṭas* and *maggas*.

## THE TRIPLE ROUND (VAṬṬA)

We shall now discuss the three kinds of *vaṭṭa* (the triple round) relating to four kinds of *saṃsāras* respectively. The four kinds of *saṃsāras* are:

- *apāya saṃsāra*,
- *kāmasugati saṃsāra*,
- *rūpa saṃsāra*,
- *arūpa saṃsāra*.

### ***Apāya Saṃsāra***

The three *vaṭṭas* relating to *apāya saṃsāra* are:

- *Kilesa vaṭṭa*.

It means personality belief (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) and sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*). The former refers to not knowing what really exists and knowing superfluous and erroneous things. As for the latter, it has the nature of wavering, and its manifestation is indecision and a divided attitude; its proximate cause is unwise attention, to matters of doubt.

- *Kamma vaṭṭa*

It means following the ten evil courses of action which result from personality-belief and sceptical doubt:

- *Kāyaduccarita* (misconduct by deed) –
  - *pāṇātipāta* (killing),
  - *adinnādāna* (stealing),
  - *kāmesumicchācara* (sexual misconduct);
- *Vacīduccarita* (misconduct by speech) –
  - *musāvāda* (lying),
  - *pisuṇavāca* (back-biting),
  - *pharusavācā* (rude speech using harsh or offensive language),
  - *samphappalāpa* (idle talk);
- *Manoduccarita* (misconduct by mind) –
  - *abhijjhā* (covetousness)
  - *byāpāda* (ill-will)
  - *micchāditthi* (wrong view)

They are also known as “*akusala kammaṣaṭṭha*” (unwholesome courses of action).

◦ *Vipāka vaṭṭa*.

It means the five *vipāka katattā* (resultant) *khandhas* of hell-beings, animals, ghosts and demons, which are the result of *kamma vaṭṭa*.

### ***Kāmasugati Saṃsāra***

The three *vaṭṭas* relating to *kāmasugati saṃsāra* (happy course of existence in the sensuous world) are:

◦ *Kilesa vaṭṭa*

It means desire for sensuous pleasures, such as, taking pleasure in and attachment to pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

◦ *Kamma vaṭṭa*

It means the three domains of meritorious actions of ten *puññā-kriyā-vatthu* (bases of meritorious action) consisting in:

- *dāna* (alms giving)
- *sīla* (observing the precepts)
- *bhāvanā* (mental concentration)
- *apacāyana* (respecting the elders)
- *veyyāvacca* (serving or helping others)
- *pattidāna* (sharing of merits)
- *pattanumodanā* (rejoicing in others' merits)
- *dhammassavana* (listening to the doctrine)
- *dhammadesanā* (delivering the doctrine)
- *diṭṭhijukamma* (holding right view)

Meritorious (*puññā*) deeds fashion one's mind and body. *Puññā* is so called because it complies with the wishes of the virtuous one to perform good deeds.

◦ *Vipāka vaṭṭa*.

It means the five *vipāka katatta* (resultant) *khandhas* of human beings and of devas in the six deva planes.

## ***Rūpa and Arupa Saṃsāra***

The three *vaṭṭas* relating to the above are:

◦ *Kilesa vaṭṭa.*

It means attachment to form and formlessness in the form-sphere and the formless-sphere respectively.

◦ *Kamma vaṭṭa.*

It means wholesome volitional actions leading to and practised in the form- and formless-spheres.

◦ *Vipāka vaṭṭa.*

It means the five *vipāka katatta khandhas* of the *rūpa-brahmas* and the four *vipāka nāmakkhandhas* of the *arūpa-brahmas*.

## CESSATION OF CYCLE

“Wisdom and mindfulness,” said the Venerable Ajita, “and name-and-form, sir, tell me this when asked, wherein is this stopped?” To this the Blessed One replied: “I shall answer this question which you have asked, Ajita, wherein name-and-form is completely stopped. By the stopping of consciousness, therein this is stopped.”

Here, the essence is the cessation of causative *kilesas* in the round of rebirths, just as the cessation of the causative sap in the cycle of tree growth.

In the case of *sotapanna*, by the stoppage of *apāya*-related *kilesa*, no *apāya*-related kamma will be performed. At the stoppage of kamma, no *nāma-rūpa* will be formed, that is, they cease at *nibbāna*. Due to the cessation of *viññāna* (life-force), the resultant *nāma-rūpa* also cease to exist. Such *viññāna* is called *abhisankhāra viññāna* – constructive or formative consciousness, or cumulative kamma.

The stream-winner Eightfold Path (*sotapatti magga*) completely extinguishes the three *vaṭṭas* relating to *apāya saṃsāra*. As regards to the three *vaṭṭas* relating to *kāmasugati saṃsāra*, it completely extinguishes only to the extent of having to come into seven more rebirths. In other words, the *abhisankhāra viññāna* having the potentiality of constructing *nāma-rūpa* existence beyond seven rebirths ceases to exist.

How does it cease? The *abhisankhāra viññāna* must be accompanied with *avijjā* and *taṇhā* to be effective, (*avijjā-paccaya sankhāra* – with ignorance as condition there are formations). The latter states are abandonable (*pahatabba*) only by *magga*, whereas *abhisankhāra viññāna* is not. However, since *magga* extinguishes the causative states, *avijjā* and *taṇhā*, it amounts to extinguishing *abhisankhāra viññāna*.

If *kilesa vaṭṭa* is extinguished, the other two *vaṭṭas* are also extinguished. Here the yogi's dhamma practice



is concerned with killing *kilesa vaṭṭa* on a temporary basis. During meditation the yogi abandons *avijjā* and *taṇhā*. Just as the saying: “knowing, one abandons; unknowing (*avijjā*), one craves (*taṇhā*)”, the *avijjā* and *taṇhā* are dual roots (*dvemūla*) or the twin foundation of the round of existence.

The once-returner Eightfold Path (*sakadāgāmi magga*) completely extinguishes the two *vaṭṭas*, *kilesa vaṭṭa* and *vipāka vaṭṭa*, relating to the sensuous sphere, which would otherwise come into existence after two more rebirths. No *kilesa* is specifically abandoned by it. It weakens the gross forms of *kāmarāga* and *byāpada*. The *abhisankhāra viññāna* having the potential of constructing *nāma-rūpa* existence beyond two rebirths ceases to exist.

The non-returner Eightfold Path (*anāgāmi magga*) completely abandons the refined form of *kāmarāga* and *byāpada*, and extinguishes the three *vaṭṭas* relating to the said two *kāmasugati* rebirths, leaving only *rūpa* and *arūpa-bhava*. *Anāgāmi* is of two kinds; *sukkhavipassaka*, who does not possess mundane *jhāna* and *samathayānika*, who possesses mundane *jhāna*.

The arahatta Eightfold Path completely extinguishes the three *vaṭṭas* relating to *rūpa* and *arūpa saṃsāra*, that is, *vivaṭṭa*. All defilements are completely extinguished. Here the *abhisankhāra viññāna* ceases to exist,

and on the death of the arahat all consciousness including *sati* and *paññā* ceases. I wish to mention here six kinds of *sammā-diṭṭhi*:

- *Kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi* –  
View of one's actions as one's property, with which one performs *kusala* or *akusala* deeds. This consciousness lies within the scope of *abhisankhāra viññāna* and is *vaṭṭagāmi kusala*.
- *Jhāna sammādiṭṭhi* –  
This is *abhisankhāra viññāna* associated with *rūpa* and *arūpa* consciousness and is *vaṭṭagāmi kusala*.
- *Vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* –  
If the *bhāvanā kusala* is “knowledge” implicated, that is with *ñāṇasampayutta* (accompanied with knowledge) and fully accomplished (*arahat*) it is *vivaṭṭagāmi*. If “*cetanā*” implicated or *ñānavippayutta* (unaccompanied with knowledge) it comes under *abhisankhāra viññāna* and is *vaṭṭagāmi*.
- *Magga sammādiṭṭhi* –  
Extinguishes *kilesa* and hence *vivaṭṭa* outside *abhisankhāra viññāna*.
- *Phala sammādiṭṭhi* –  
As above.
- *Paccavekkhana sammādiṭṭhi* –  
Right retrospective view, arises with mundane *jhāna*, and if in *sekkha*, comes under

*abhisankhāra viññāna* and *vaṭṭagāmi*. If it arises in arahats it is outside *abhisankhāra viññāna* and is *vivaṭṭa*.

**Q:** *How can vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi be vaṭṭagāmi?*

**A:** If the practice of *bhāvanā* is not knowledge-oriented that is, the consciousness is not accompanied with knowledge (*ñāṇavippayutta*), and the variety of characteristics are not understood, it is said to be *cetanā*-implicated and hence *vaṭṭagāmi*. There are five companions of knowledge (*paññā*), namely, *saddhā*, *chanda*, *viriya*, *sati* and *samādhi* (*khaṇikā*), which must arise in succession to lead to *paññā*. If one does not possess these factors or, even when one possesses, if one is half-hearted, the achievement will be weak.

In this connection, I wish to discuss a question by Venerable Ajita. Ajita asked mentally: “What is the head? What is beheading?” To this the Blessed One answered verbally: “*Avijjā* (ignorance of truth) is the head. Beheading is the removal of *avijjā*. *Avijjā* is the main thing in the *nāma-rūpa* sufferings. The removal of this leads to *vijja* (*paññā*). Application of the factors, namely, *saddhā*, *chanda*, *viriya*, *sati* and *samādhi*, leads to *paññā* – cessation of *nāma-rūpa* cycle”.

**Q:** *Is there any consciousness left, even in a subtle manner, at parinibbāna?*

**A:** At *parinibbāna*, *nāma-rūpa* group ceases to exist. Hence there is left no consciousness of any kind at this moment. The question implies that one wishes to continue enjoying *nibbāna*. Because of the extinction of *nāma-rūpa*, *nibbāna* is free of all sufferings which arise out of the existence of *nāma-rūpa*. Why do *anāgāmis* and *arahats* enter into *nirodha-samāpatti* (attainment of extinction)? For fun? No. It is because the *nāma-rūpa* is so burdensome that they feel relieved even temporarily by the suspension of all consciousness and mental activity. Their joyful utterance (*udana*) is *susukhaṃ vata* (wonderfully peaceful). Hence is said:

*Susukhaṃ vata nibbanaṃ, sammāsambuddha desitaṃ.*

*The perfectly Enlightened One says nibbāna is extremely peaceful.*

*Nibbāna* has four attributes, namely:

- *sammāsambuddha desitaṃ* – expounded by the fully Enlightened One because he has discovered (*buddha*) all things rightly (*sammā*) and by himself (*samaṃ*):
- *asokaṃ* – free of sorrow;
- *virajaṃ* – free of corruptions or kilesas;
- *khemam* – peace.

Thus, one should be satisfied with this state without worrying about loss of any form of consciousness (*nāma*).

## PATH (MAGGA)

Let us define the word “*magga*”, which is simply given as “path”, in more detail. Magga is divided into two, namely, “*ma*” and “*ga*”. “*Ma*” is derived from “*marenta*”, which means killing or abolishing. “*Ga*” is derived from “*gacchanta*”, which means arrived or realised. So, “*magga*” (*ma* + *ga*) means realised by abolishing (*kilesa*).

Let us now define the word “*pavatta*”. It means process (*nāma-rūpa*) or course of an existence, such as the *nāma* process of seeing and hearing. Its opposite is “*appavatta*”, which means cessation of process or existence, that is *nibbāna*. *Magga*, therefore, means realisation of *nibbāna*. Hence the definition of *magga* as;

*Kilese marento nibbānaṃ gacchati etenāti maggo*

These dhammas dispel the defilements such as *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and thus enable one to reach *nibbāna* – end of *apāya dukkha* and *vaṭṭa dukkha*. Hence they are called *magga*.

**Q:** *Can one overcome sakkāya diṭṭhi without realising sotapatti magga?*

**A:** One can overcome on a temporary basis at the attainment of *nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa* (discernment of *nāma* and *rūpa*). It is permanently overcome by the attainment of *sotapatti magga*, after being weakened by *vipassanā* practice.

**Q:** *Can anyone find out whether he has attained any path? Is such a knowledge conducive to further advancement?*

**A:** Nobody except the Buddha can decide on one's attainment. However, one can feel a dramatic change as a result of an attainment. There was the case of one hunchback female servant, Khujuttara, who used to steal four out of eight ducats which was given by her mistress to buy flowers. On becoming a *sotapanna* after listening to the dhamma at the flower seller's house, she felt guilty and thereafter did not steal anymore. Instead she confessed her past dishonesty to her mistress.

In another case, Visakha, the husband of Dhammadinna, became an *anāgāmi*, and when he returned home on that very evening he did not wish to associate with his wife as before. He experienced a sudden great change in himself.

# CHAPTER 39

## THE DHAMMA

### THE MEANING OF DHAMMA

The word “*Dhamma*” (Dharma in Sanskrit and Hindi) – perhaps the most important and frequently used of Pali words – has no simple equivalent in English because no English word has both a generalisation so wide and loose as the word “*Dhamma*” in its widest sense, which includes everything that can be known or thought of in any way, and at the same time an ability to be, as it were, focussed in a set of well-defined specific uses. The renderings of the word include: nature, condition, quality, property, characteristic, function, practice, duty, state, object, thing, idea, phenomenon, righteousness, discipline, truth, doctrine, law, scripture, justice, morality, good things, conditioned and non-conditioned states.

The word itself is gerund of the verb ‘*dhāreti*’ – to bear, hold. Hence, it is that which bears or holds. It also denotes protection (*rakkha*). Just as the clothes protect the wearer, so does the dhamma. Hence the expression: *Dhammo have rakkhati dhamma cāriṃ* – *Whoever adheres to the dhamma is sure to be protected by it.* It sustains one who acts in conformity with its principles

and thus prevents him from prolonging the saṃsāric suffering and falling into woeful states.

It is also defined as the Scriptures (*pariyatti*) on *Magga-Phala-Nibbāna* which enable those who believe, adhere and practise to be free from sufferings such as *Apāya* (lower worlds). The doctrinal portions of the Tripitaka, namely the Sutta and Abhidhamma are also called Dhamma in contra-distinction to the Vinaya.

## PROTECTION BY DHAMMA

First, the knowledge of scriptures is required. As the name denotes, such a knowledge will protect and support the knower. Next, comes the training (*sikkhā*). The observation of *sīla* will uphold and culture the observer. If only the practice of *sīla* could be initiated to the world by influential people and the resources diverted to dhamma!

Then we have mental culture in accordance with the scriptures. This is called *samādhi dhamma*, which will support the practitioner. We may call this “good conduct”. However, such a practice will not free us from dogmatism and realise true happiness. Hence, we need another training, *paññā dhamma* or *vipassanā ñāṇa*, to understand the facts of *nāma-rūpa* and realise genuine happiness. Thus, *paññā dhamma* protects the practitioner. Lastly, on the attainment of *magga*, *phala* and



*nibbāna*, the ariya dhammas will protect the seer or dhamma adherent.

Thus the protection or upholding by the dhamma means abandoning of *kilesas* by respective trainings and paths. Hence the expression: “*Dhāretīti dhammo*” meaning: because it denotes protection or upholding (from *kilesas*) it is known as *Dhamma*. By choosing the noble path (*sumagga*) one can attain the noble destination, *khemanta bhumi* (peaceful land), instead of pursuing the false path (*kumagga*), which will lead to danger. Hence the saying: “*Kumagga patipanno lokasannivaso*” meaning: all sentient beings are pursuing the detestable path.

## THE WHEEL OF LAW (DHAMMACAKKA)

It is only after the enlightenment of the Buddha that the mind-controlling dhammas or the five spiritual faculties, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, called *indriya-samatta*, are developed continuously to the highest degree of strength. This we call *Dhammacakka* (the Wheel of the Law), which does not refer to the physical turning of the drums as some are wont to do, and the Discourse is ‘Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth’ (*Dhammacakka-pavattana*) the first sermon of the Buddha.

## THE QUALITY OF LAW

The six-fold qualities of the Law are:

- *svakkhato* – the Dhamma is well proclaimed by the Blessed One;
- *sandiṭṭhiko* – visible here and now;
- *akāliko* – not delayed and timeless;
- *ehi-passiko* – inviting inspection;
- *opāneyyiko* – onward-leading;
- *paccattam veditabbo viññuhi* – directly experienceable by the wise.

Of these, we wish to quote the second quality, namely, ‘visible here and now’ (*sandiṭṭhiko*). Whenever anyone attains the Law, it is visible to him through reviewing knowledge without his having to rely on faith in another.

When preparing some of the potent modern medicines, like antibiotics, the respective micro-organisms are cultured and multiplied to produce the required medicine. In another case, the micro-organisms are injected into animals from which the antibodies are extracted and medicines like vaccines and serums are produced. These are then prescribed to the patients. In this way, harmful micro-organisms in the human body are killed and, sometimes, harmless ones are affected, in which case vitamins have to be supplemented.

In the case of dhamma treatment; with a little amount of *sati* factor, a little amount of negligence will be suppressed, and with a large amount of *sati*, a large amount of negligence will be suppressed. So it is the same with the *dhammavicaya* factor which overcomes wrong knowledge, the *virīya* factor the laziness, the *pīti* factor the sluggishness, the *passaddhi* factor the worries, the *samādhi* factor the scattering and the *upekkhā* factor the partiality. Having suppressed the negligence (*pamāda*) of organisms in the mental process, miseries will be overcome, achieving mental happiness accompanied by physical well-being.

As to the dhamma treatment, the Blessed One prescribed *satipaṭṭhāna* practice to develop *bojjhaṅga* medicine. This medicine can be produced and prescribed by the patient. It has the power of treating both the bodily and *kilesa* diseases. Incidentally, mention may also be made of traditional herbal medicine which has been in use without side effects for the past two thousand years.

Whereas in the case of modern medicine the direction is to take that number of times a day, in the case of dhamma medicine, it is every second, so as to do away with the *kilesa* disease. Hence, the saying:

*Non mindfulness invites kilesa; Mindfulness repels kilesa.*

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Even if the major *kilesas* such as *lobha* and *dosa* do not arise, at least the following four *akusala* mental states may arise:

- *moha* – delusion
- *ahirikā* – shamelessness, unconscientiousness
- *anottappa* – fearlessness of blame
- *uddhacca* – restlessness

These four are common to every immoral consciousness. The two mental states *ahirikā* and *anottappa* are described as black-coloured, metaphorically. As you know, the black colour absorbs heat and light so that the wearer of a black dress will feel very uncomfortable in a warm bright atmosphere. So it is with the twin mental states. They are the causes for *akusala* actions. Hence, the *niyāma* (the natural law):

*Shamelessness and fearlessness*

*Black is their colour  
and heat they absorb.*

If these twin *akusala* mental states are predominant, the world is sure to suffer.

The reverse of these twin mental states, namely *hiri-ottappa* (shamefulness and fearfulness), are described as white-coloured. Now we know that white repels heat

and light. Thus, they repel *akusala* actions. The Blessed One described them as *sukka dhamma* (white dhamma). Hence, the *niyāma*:

*Shamefulness and fearfulness*  
*White is their colour*  
*And heat they repel.*

If these two beautiful mental states are predominant, the world will blossom. Hence the name ‘universal guardians’ (*lokapala dhammas*).

A simile given in respect of the above mental states is the rear prop (back-rest) of a car seat, without which one can fall off the seat and get injured.

There is a certain amount of restlessness (*uddhacca*) of the mind when evil is committed. *Uddhacca* here refers to an overarching or gapping effect of the consciousness with respect to the object due to slackness in mindfulness.

The root of every evil is *moha* or ignorance, because the evil doer is not aware of the evil consequences. If the yogi cannot appreciate the value of mindfulness, every such moment will amount to *moha*. Also, any omission in the practice as well as non-awareness of its shortcomings amounts to *moha*. In this way, such omission or slackness in the practice results in overarching instead of contact of consciousness with the object.

**Q:** *What is the difference between faith and dogmatism?*

**A:** Faith is seeing the truth. When knowledge coincides with truth (i.e., seeing the truth), judgement is made based on truth, thus developing faith (*saddhā*). There is no deviation, no wrong view. Dogmatism or view clinging results when knowledge does not coincide with truth, amounting to mere perception (*saññā*) resulting in perversion (*vipallāsa*).

**Q:** *Why do the objects dissolve when noted?*

**A:** As you watch closely the objects are seen in detail, i.e., their arising and passing away. It is so as your *samādhi* strengthens. However, the closeness of your consciousness to the objects does not influence the speed of dissolution of the objects which occurs independently.

**Q:** *What is the category of sati consciousness – kusala, akusala or avyākata?*

**A:** It is *kusala* because it is faultless, that is free of unwholesome roots (*anavajja*) and it produces whole-some result (*sukhavipāka*). This *kusala* is of two kinds, namely, *vaṭṭagāmi kusala citta* and *vivaṭṭagāmi kusala citta*.

**Q:** What are the worst *kilesas* and why? How would one overcome them?

**A:** The worst *kilesas* are *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*, because they are the source of other *kilesas*. That is why they have to be abandoned by the first *magga*.

*Sakkāya diṭṭhi* is abandoned temporarily by the discernment of *nāma-rūpa*, and *vicikicchā* is abandoned by the knowledge of causal relations. All these *kilesas* arise because one does not understand oneself or the truth. The *satipaṭṭhāna* practice is to understand oneself and the truth.

# CHAPTER 40

## LEARNING THE SCRIPTURES

*Dhamma* is the Pali word for the Buddha's Doctrine. The Buddha-Dhamma is a moral and philosophical system which expounds a unique path of enlightenment and is not a subject to be studied from a mere academic standpoint. The Doctrine is certainly to be studied, more to be practised and above all to be realised by oneself.

Mere learning is of no avail without actual practice. The learned man who does not practise the Dhamma, the Buddha says, is like a colourful flower without scent. He, who does not study the Dhamma, is like a blind man. But, he who does not practise the Dhamma is comparable to a library.

### WHAT TO LEARN

*Āgama* – this means learning Pali by heart, studying the Pali Canons and *pariyatti* literature. It also denotes knowledge by learning (*sutamaya ñāṇa*) from the teachers, such as aggregates, elements, senses, etc.

Some assert that with *sutamaya ñāṇa* one can attain the level of virtuous person (*kalyāṇa puthujjana*). Not quite so. It is learning by heart (*uggaha*) stage only and not quite catechism (*paripucchā*) or beyond; because



one is not yet qualified to repress dogmatism. On the contrary, equipped with knowledge, be it scriptures or modern arts and sciences, one may become critical and entertain sceptical doubt.

Once a brahmin hermit told the Buddha that there were so many doctrines and ideologies that he could not decide which one was correct and that he was doubtful of them, implying that even the Buddha's words would be doubtful to him. To this the Buddha replied that he could not guide a sceptical person and that there was no alternative but to give up. It is said:

*Ubhayapakka santirana mukhena vicikicchā vanceti.*

*With apparent prudence yet without decision,  
one is liable to be deceived by sceptical doubt  
which has taken the place of rationalism.*

A knowledgeable person may not accept things and may not believe or have faith in things. He may become critical of matters which are beyond the extent of his knowledge. On the other hand, if he readily accepts things and takes them for granted it will amount to blind faith (*muddha pasāda*). The advice is to study scriptures which give correct practice.

As to the literal meaning of *āgama*, it is given as cause for the arising. Let us take the example of the precept of *abstaining from killing*. This kind of teaching is sensi-

ble, because you do not want yourself to be killed and it arouses sympathy. This morality develops reasoning power and causes prosperity in you as well as in others. Thus it is a cause for the arising of prosperity. Hence the term *āgama*.

Now, take the immediate case of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. As you develop *bhāvanā*, you are protecting yourself as well as others. In this way it is the cause for prosperity. Hence also *āgama*. Learning the cause-effect relationship of the *nāma-rūpa* processes (*paticcasamuppāda*<sup>7</sup>) you overcome the erroneous views in a gross manner. This theoretical knowledge will be translated into empirical knowledge. As such the teaching serves as a cause for the arising of prosperity. Hence also *āgama*.

By learning the scriptures one can overcome distorted views in a gross manner. Such learning will stand one in good stead in becoming a *kalyāṇa puthujjana*. If one conducts in accordance with the scriptures, one will understand truth and achieve peace. Then one will exhort others to follow suit. This will contribute to peace in this life and in the next. As such this will be a cause for the arising of prosperity. Hence also *āgama*.

From the stage of learning (*uggaha*) one will progress to that of discussion with the teacher through questions and answers (*paripucchā*), and then to deduction (*vinicchaya*) leading to a right conclusion. Only then the qual-

ity of *āgama* will be complete and one is ready to attain *ñāṇa*. Otherwise, one will not be able to repress erroneous views (*miccha* or *diṭṭhi patisedhaka*) and attain *samādhi*, let alone *ñāṇa*.

*Āgama suta* shows the method, namely *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* or *patipatti* which leads to *adhigama suta* (learning by attainment).

## PURPOSES OF LEARNING

There are three purposes of learning the scriptures, namely:

- *Alagaddūpamā* – learning like catching a serpent;
- *Nissāraṇattha* – learning for deliverance;
- *Bhaṇḍāgarika* – learning like an arahat.

The first kind (study after the manner of one catching a snake) has an ill motive behind it, such as one wishes to criticise and denigrate others (if he says “white” I will browbeat him by contradicting him as “black”), or one wishes to repulse another’s criticism (if he criticises me in this manner, I will repulse him in this manner), or one expects honour and gains. Since the scriptures are studied with these objectives, the meaning of each word or phrase is not taken into consideration, one cannot actually repress another’s opinion, and thus one defeats one’s purpose. Such a method of study is called “*duggahita*” (badly grasped) with the purpose of *upara-*

*mbha* (being critical of another person) which is, therefore, unwholesome. Besides *uparambha*, one becomes conceited (*māna*), haughty (*thambha*), hypocritical and disparaging (*makkha*), spiteful (*palasa*) and so on.

It is said:

*Yo hi Buddhavacanam*

“*Evaṃ cīvarādīni vā labhissāmi, Parisāmajjhe vā maṃ Janissantī*”

*Labhasakkārādi-hetu pariyapunāti.*

*Tassa sā pariyatti alagaddupamā nāma.*

*Evaṃ pariyapunato hi Buddhavacanaṃ apariyā*

*Punittva niddokkamānam varataraṃ.*

Some may study the Buddha’s teaching with the expectation of glory, gains and fame. Such a way of learning is termed *alagaddūpamā* – liable to sustain *akusala* as a result of an improper way of learning, like one who is liable to be bitten by a snake because one does not know how to catch it. One would be better off sleeping rather than learning like this. During sleep one stays with *bhavaṅga* (vacant or passive) consciousness, which is not *akusala*.

The second method of learning is with the object of fulfilment of *sīlakkhandha* (morality), etc. He would practise *sīla*, *samādhi* and *vipassanā* as he becomes learned in the literatures on these subjects. The purpose is to gain deliverance, hence the name *nissāraṇattha*.

The third method is practised by the arahats, who have understood the Four Noble Truths. The purpose is to preserve the scriptures and *sasana*. Hence the name *bhaṇḍāgārika pariyatti* – treasurer type of learning.

The Buddha said: “The Teaching is similar to a raft, which is for crossing over, and not for getting hold of and carrying on one’s back.”

# CHAPTER 41

## THE TRAINER AND NON-TRAINER

### AJITA'S QUESTION

*Sekha* means learner, practitioner or trainer (ie., training one's own mind) which comprises the three lower *ariya* and practising yogis or *kalyāṇa puthujjana* (virtuous common person). *Asekha* means non-trainer, accomplished or arahat.

Once the Venerable Ajita asked the Blessed One what the differences were between the two as regards their behaviours and ways thus:

*“Those who have considered the doctrine (or realised the truth),  
and the many under training here, (being) zealous,  
tell me when asked, sir, their way of life.”*

The Blessed One replied,

*“A bhikkhu would not be greedy for sensuous pleasures.*

*He would be undisturbed of mind.*

*Skilled in all mental states, he would wander about mindfully”.*

The reply was given in three parts:

- not greedy for sensual pleasures (referring to *sekha*);
- undisturbed mind (referring to *asekha*);

- skilled in all mental states, he would wander about mindfully (referring to both *sekha* and *asekha*).

Though he encounters sensuous objects the *sekha* has no greed for sensuous pleasures, and since he has no *nīvaraṇas* and *kilesa kāma*, his mind is serene. (Here reference is made to the two kinds of *kāma* and the effect of mindfulness in Chapter 32).

At the stage of *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa* his field of consciousness becomes narrowed and the mind is glued to the object – *patiliyati*. It has a boomerang effect, that is even if the mind is purposely diverted to the sensuous object, or *vice versa*, it will always return to its basic object – *parivattati*, or shrink from other objects, just as when silk or a feather is burnt it shrinks.

How does a *sotapanna* or *sakadāgāmi* behave, since he is not totally free from *kāmarāga*? He behaves like one who goes to the toilet to relieve himself, but does not stay longer than necessary in that place.

As to the *asekha*, since he has totally abandoned ignorance, he understands all dhammas to which he may advert his attention. Thus he is skilled in all dhammas or knowledge. In the case of the *sekha*, he understands *anicca* as *anicca* and *anattā* as *anattā*. However, in the matter of *dukkha*, he has not fully understood

as *dukkha*. It is only in the *asekha* that *dukkha* is fully understood as *dukkha*. The *asekha*'s mind will be undisturbed as the knowledge is complete in all aspects.

As to the third, which is common to both *sekha* and *asekha*, both are wandering or advancing mindfully, as it is said: *Sato bhikkhu paribbaje*. There is, of course, the possibility of difference in the intensity and profoundness of mindfulness. At the exposition of the dhamma by the Buddha, Ajita and his followers practised the dhamma and became *asekhas*. With this I exhort you to render these answers through your own practice.

## BHIKKHU

A *bhikkhu* is a person who practises *satipaṭṭhāna* to free himself from *kilesas*. Thus he is able to leave the realm of *kilesa* – *paribbaje*.

There are three kinds of *bhikkhus* – *bhikkhu* by appearance as well as practice, *bhikkhu* by practice but not by appearance and *bhikkhu* by appearance and not by practice, ie., a bogus *bhikkhu*. The difference between the first two lies in *sīla*. The kind of *sīla* upheld by the former is *adhisīla* (superior *sīla*). The second type of *bhikkhus* are those who have assembled here. All men and women are equal in their effort to practise



*satipaṭṭhāna* and advance towards liberation. The only caution is that not all worldly social practices can be brought into the dhamma realm.

## KNOWING THE ARIYAS

Is it possible to know an ariya or an arahat by mere book knowledge or modern scientific method? By IQ test? By just seeing him with your carnal or sensuous eyes? There are two kinds of seeing:

- *Cakkhu dassana* (seeing knowledge);
- *Ñāṇa dassana* (insight knowledge).

First, one must overcome mental hindrances or pollutants to purify the mind. Thus one believes in the ariya's practice as the path of purity. As one's *khaṇikā samādhi* (momentary concentration) gains strength, the *nāma-rūpa* are discerned together with their characteristics. This is *ñāṇa dassana*, because one is seeing what the ariya has seen. Through one's empirical knowledge, one can appreciate the ariya's knowledge and his penetration into the dhamma. Such is *ñāṇa dassana*. After one has progressed through the stages of insight knowledge and experienced *jhāna*, *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*, one can understand the characteristics of an arahat, and speculate and judge what an arahat is like, though one has not yet become an arahat. This is called *paccakkha siddhā* – accomplishment by evidence

or empirical knowledge. This is followed by *anumāna siddhā* (accomplishment by speculation, deduction or inference), and *ekappana siddhā* (accomplishment by rational faith) – refer Chapter 13. Here the example of a physician is given. I therefore urge you to practise mindfulness and overcome the mind/polluting *nīvaraṇas*.

## TYPES OF ARIYAS

The *ariya* is defined as follows:

- he has extinguished *kilesas* and thus is freed from them;
- he brings about prosperity;
- he is worthy of refuge by *satta loka* (world of beings);
- he has perceived *magga phala dhammas*;
- he is pure and noble.

In brief, he is a good man, as it is said:

*He of a great heart, of cultured mind,  
Firm in devotion, and a virtuous friend.  
Who carefully doth tend the many needs  
of them who ail; is called by mortals 'good'.*

There are four types of *ariya*:

- *ācara ariya* –  
living with the practice or practising *ariya*;

- *dassana ariya* –  
sightly *ariya*, i.e. with no expectation of fame or gain;
- *linga ariya* –  
*ariya* by sign or nominal *ariya* (with no practice);
- *paṭivedha ariya* –  
he is one who has attained or penetrated the truth. He has penetrated through the wall of *avijjā* to perceive the truth beyond. It covers four magga and four phala individuals and includes the Buddha, Pacceka Buddha (Silent Buddha) and Savaka. Savaka is a faithful listener of the Buddha's admonition (*ovada*) and instruction (*anusasana*).

Who does not perceive the ariyans? That person who is not used to perceiving these ariyans and does not consider it right to do so, would be known as one who perceives not the ariyans – *ariyanam adassāvī*. And there are two kinds: he who does not perceive them by the eye, and he who disregards them does not perceive them by insight. Of these the latter is meant here. Ariyans are both seen and not seen when the carnal or the psychic eye (*dibbacakkhu*) merely seizes on outward complexion, and is unable to take ariyanship as object. Dogs and jackals, etc., see ariyans by the eye, but are not perceivers of the ariyans.

Hereto this story: There was one who left the world in his old age, who was supporter of an Elder, purged of the intoxicants, resident at Mount Cittala, while walking about for alms one day with the Elder, carrying the Elder's bowl and robe behind him, asked, "Sir, what are the ariyans like?" The Elder said: "Friend, even though in this religion some old man goes about together with the ariyans taking their bowl and robe, and does the greater and lesser duties towards them, he does not know them. Friend, ariyans are difficult to know." Though this was said, he did not understand the hint. Therefore, seeing is not by the eye but by insight, as the Lord said: "Vakkali, what good to thee is this (my) visible foul body? Verily, Vakkali, he who sees the law sees me."

More stories of seeing the Buddha with carnal eyes are those of seeing the Buddha by Upaka, the wandering mendicant (*paribbājaka*) and the group of five (*pañcavaggiya*) soon after his enlightenment. Thus the (carnal) seeing is not reliable, and the ariyans are not seen when the carnal eye merely seizes on outward complexion and is unable to take arianship as object. The real seeing is perceived by insight. Hence the saying:

*The seer sees who sees or does not see;  
The non-seer does not see who sees or does not see.*

Hence, not seeing the characteristic signs of *anicca*, etc., seen by the ariyans with insight, not arriving at the Law arrived at by the ariyans, not seeing ariyanship or the states which bring about ariyanship, he, though he sees by the eye, should be known as “to perceive not the ariyans – *ariyanaṃ adassāvī*”.

# CHAPTER 42

## ORDINARY BEING

“*Puthujjana*” means one of the many folks, ordinary, average or common being or worldling (*puthu*; numerous and *jana*; producing or causing).

### SCRIPTURES AND ATTAINMENT

In ignorant average man, (*andha-Puthujjana*) “ignorant” should be known as “owing to the absence of access to the scriptures (*āgama*) and of the higher attainment of the Path and Fruition (*adhigama*)”. For to whosoever, owing to the absence of learning by heart (*uggaha*), catechism (*paripucchā*) thereon and deduction (*viniccahaya*) and reviewing (*pacca-vekkhana*) therefrom regarding the aggregates (*khandha*), elements (*dhātu*), sense-organs (*āyatana*), the causal mode (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), the application of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), etc., there is no attainment (*adhigama suta*) of that learning (*āgama suta*) which represses opinionatedness or dogmatism (*diṭṭhi patisedhaka*), nor any access, owing to the non-attainment of what should be attained by conduct, such a person, from the absence of such access (*āgama suta*) and attainment (*adhigama suta*), would be known as ignorant (*assutavā*) or mentally blind (*andha*) and it is thus said:

*An ordinary being is one who is not learned (in the two sutas)*

## PERCEIVING THE ARIYANS

A puthujjana perceives not the ariyans because he is not used to perceiving these ariyans, and does not consider it right to do so. This has been treated previously in detail.

## MULTIPLICITY OF THINGS

He who is ignorant is called average or common for such reasons as the production of corruptions, many and of various sorts, as has been said: “They produce many corruptions; they have many views of individuality unremoved; they look to the face of many teachers; they have not got clear of all tendencies; they construct many and various complexities; they are borne along by many and various floods; they are anxious with many and various anxieties; they burn with many and various heartburnings; with the manifold five desires of sense they are enamoured, swelled up, cleaving to, attached to, hung up on them, hanging from them, obstructed by them; by the various five hindrances they are enwrapped, muffled up, stifled, closed in, covered up, cramped; or being engulfed among persons, passing the bounds of calculation, of low practices (or princi-

ples), they are turned away from the Ariyan Law. Such are ‘common’ or counted as ‘separated from, unmixed with’ the ariyan folk possessed of the qualities of virtue, learning, etc., – thus average.”

As the word “*puthujjana*” denotes – *puthu* (multiplicity of *kilesas*) and *jana* (he who brings about), it means he who brings about a multiplicity of *kilesas*, namely, greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*māna*), speculative views (*ditṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), mental torpor (*thina*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), moral shamelessness (*ahirikā*) and moral fearlessness (*anottappa*).

To an unrestrained mind, the degree of *kilesa* will rise or fall depending on the situation of the object – thus it varies. Take, for instance, greed. For one minute of unguarded moments, sixty times of greed will arise, later leading to a multiplicity of evil conduct. The same goes with *dosa*, spreading world-wide and throughout the *saṃsāra*. Look at the majority – instead of making a minus sign they are making a plus sign to *kilesas*, liberally, in a quantity which is beyond the capability of a modern computer. One might say they are showing the green light to *kilesas*.

Let us take the case of delusion. The Buddha says that *nāma-rūpa* existence is suffering and craving is its cause. Simply not knowing them is delusion. He says that the cessation of suffering and craving is *nibbāna*



and there is a way (Noble Eightfold Path) leading to this state. Simply not knowing them is *moha*. Moreover, many folks understand them in a contrary manner – that the *nāma-rūpa* existence is pleasurable and craving is the cause of pleasure, that the cessation of suffering is a great deprivation and the way to cessation is the way to a great loss. Such misconception is also *moha*, another plus sign on *kilesas*. One can continue treating the remaining *kilesas* in like manner. Hence the verse:

*Puthunaṃ jananādihi, kāraṇehi puthujjano  
Puthujjananto gadhattā, puthuvāyaṃ jano iti.*

*One of the many folks is he who brings about  
A multiplicity of things, amidst many folks engulfed.*

The characteristics of *kilesas* are tormenting or torturing (*karaṇa*) and burning (*upatapeti*), so that those who succumb to them will suffer devastating effects. Right now the yogis are purifying themselves of gross *kilesas* with *sīla magga*, thus making a minus sign on *kilesas*. With *samādhi magga* the mind becomes collected, not scattered, again making another minus sign. When the truth is understood with *paññā magga*, the many and varied corruptions are weakened, then abandoned and finally uprooted, the yogis thus delisting themselves from the many folks and retracting themselves from the lineage of puthujjana.

As to the views of individuality unremoved, so long as one is unaware of the present *nāma* and *rūpa* phenomena, one will become opinionated as “It is I who is doing this, or, who is doing this is I”. Such personality opinionatedness is characteristic of puthujjana.

Now the yogis are practising with the application of *virīya*, *sati* and *samādhi*, noting the presently arising phenomena. What do they find? They find only two things – *nāma* aggregate and *rūpa* aggregate. Just imagine if you are not mindful, for one minute of unmindfulness, sixty *sakkāya diṭṭhis* will arise. So long as you do not realise the truth with mindfulness for one day, just imagine how many views of individuality will remain unremoved. Should such opinion-atedness be nurtured or abandoned? And how? Others say they have methods. Are they proven ones?

As to looking to the face of many teachers, one must approach a reliable teacher from whom one can learn the correct practice. How to choose the correct teacher? One must find the correct dhamma, that is, the dhamma which will produce correct results when practised. In this respect we should refer to Elder Ānanda’s replies to the questions by one Channa, a wanderer, which are given in the next chapter.

## TENDENCIES

Another characteristic of puthujjana is that they have not eradicated all the tendencies (directions or trends – *gati*) because they are bent (*nati*) or inclined to crave for further existence. Such tendencies, which arise as the result of *kusala* and *akusala* deeds, are five, namely:

- *niraya* – hell beings,
- *tiracchāna* – animals,
- *peta* – ghosts,
- *manussa* – human beings,
- *deva* – celestial beings.

The first three *gatis* are the result of *akusala* and the latter two the result of *kusala*. Freedom from these is priority. As one practises the dhamma and becomes an ariya of the lower stages, one is said to have eradicated the tendencies to exist more than seven rebirths, two rebirths or one rebirth as the case may be.

And when he becomes an *arahat*, he has eradicated all tendencies and he is no more bent to be reborn. Even if one is not yet an ariya and is not totally free from all the tendencies, so long as one has weakened one's inclination for further becoming through the practice, the scope of tendencies becomes narrowed.

Now to the question: “What does one get after uprooting all tendencies?” Deliverance (*vimutti*). *Vimutti* is of five kinds:

- *tadaṅga vimutti* – temporary deliverance, that is, during the practice of three *sikkhās*;
- *vikkhambhana vimutti* – stopping deliverance, causing the *kilesas* to be distanced or further removed;
- *samuccheda vimutti* – extirpation or relinquishment (of *kilesas*);
- *patipassaddhi vimutti* – repeated deliverance;
- *nissāraṇa vimutti* – escape from *saṃsāra* or *nibbāna*.

*Satipaṭṭhāna* practice is the best weapon. As one is mindful with *bhāvanā* consciousness, one is developing *tadaṅga vimutti*. With continued effort, at times one may have skipped the targets, nevertheless, *kilesas* will remain removed. Such a state is *vikkhambhana vimutti*. And on the attainment of *ariya magga*, the *kilesa* stream is extirpated to the point of non-return – *samuccheda vimutti*. The repeated extirpation, which is like watering the fire after it has been extinguished, is *patipassaddhi vimutti*. This has a cooling effect. The subsequent fruition consciousness, as the object of *patipassaddhi vimutti*, is *nissāraṇa vimutti*, leading one from *sankhata* (formed existence) to *asankhata dhātu* (the unconditioned or immaterial element or principle, the beyond of all becoming and conditionality).

## COMPLEXITIES

Another rendering of puthujjana is “he who constructs or produces many and various complexities or *abhisañkhāra* (formative or constructive) kammās”. These are the *sañkhāras* of the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, which means the aggregates of those states of mind which bring about the performance of good and bad actions. Practically, it is identical with kamma or merit and demerit. The *abhisañkhāras* are three in number:

- *puññābhisañkhāra* – good state of mind or mundane *kusala* actions relating to the sensuous and fine material planes;
- *apuññābhisañkhāra* – unwholesome states of mind or *akusala* kammās;
- *anenjābhisañkhāra* – states of the mind leading to immovability or actions causing rebirth in the fine immaterial planes.

Weaving between *kilesas* and *abhisañkhāras*, puthujjanas are drawn to respective destinies. The first one is concerned with *kāmāvacara kusala* deeds, which are the three domains of meritorious actions consisting in *dāna* (alms giving), *sīla* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (mental concentration), including the practices of *samatha jhānas*. The second one refers to the three modes of defilements, namely *kāyaduccarita* (unwholesome

deeds), *vacīduccarita* (unwholesome words) and *mano-duccarita* (unwholesome thoughts) which are based on greed and hatred. The third one refers to the practices of *arūpa jhānas* leading to fine immaterial planes. All these produce results (*vipāka*) – simple *vipāka* in the case of *nāma*, and *katatta* (resultant) *khandhas* in the case of *rūpa*. The latter is also termed *kammaja-rūpa* (action-originated materiality).

The chain of causation of beings (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) may be compared to the cycle of a tree. *Kilesa vaṭṭa* (round of defilements) mainly made up of ignorance, craving and attachment, which are the causes of *abhisankhāra*, is likened to the sap of a tree. *Kamma vaṭṭa* is likened to the fruit and the seed; *vipāka vaṭṭa* to the new tree. Just as soil, water and air constitute the factors responsible for the development of the sap, so too the sensuous pleasures and *jhāna* pleasures are responsible for the arising of *kilesa vaṭṭa*. Espousing the view that such pleasures are genuine ones, one craves for them with attachment in the form of craving attachment (*taṇhā-upādāna*) and erroneous attachment (*diṭṭhi-upādāna*), that is, viewing it as “I” who am attached.

Due to attachment to pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, one performs the round of volitional actions (*kamma vaṭṭa*). Bad actions bring bad results and good actions bring good results (*vipāka*), just as a sour seed

will grow a sour tree and a sweet seed a sweet tree. Hence the saying: *As you sow, so you reap.*

Now how to kill the tree to cut the cycle. By means of eliminating the vital elements, namely the soil, water and air, to dry up the sap. Similar is the case with *vaṭṭas*. Realising the truth and finding faults in the sensuous and jhānic pleasures, one will overcome ignorance, craving and attachment and eliminate *kamma vaṭṭa*, or *abhisarīkhāra kammās*, causing the stoppage of the cycle. This is accomplished by means of *vipassanā* practice. The practitioner is thus removed from the class of puthujjanas, at least on a temporary basis.

At every mindfulness the *avijjā-taṇhā-upādāna*, *kilesa* sap, is not allowed to develop. When one knows the truth, ignorance is eliminated, as is said: *Vijjuppādā avijjā-nirodho* – When knowledge arises ignorance vanishes.

## THE FLOODS

The floods (*ogha*) are so called in the sense of sweeping away into the ocean of becoming, and in the sense of being hard to cross. Thus the puthujjanas are those who are borne along by many and various floods, a swelling tide of problems, that goes to say that they possess many and various floods. The “*jana*” part of puthujjana will be rendered as carrying or transporting (*vahana*) in this case. The floods are fourfold, namely:

- *kāmogha* – the flood of sensuous desire;
- *bhavogha* – the flood of renewed existence;
- *diṭṭhogha* – the flood of wrong view;
- *avijjogha* – the flood of ignorance.

What would be our fate if we did not know the correct method – the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice? Surrounding us are materials, including ourselves, which allure us at all times. When we mention “ourselves” as objects of sense desire, we mean the appearance, voice, odour, taste and contact pertaining to our own body. For instance, looking in the mirror we tend to admire ourselves. Other sense objects include the appearance, voice, etc., of other persons, and lifeless materials. In this way, by enjoying many and various sense objects, one is borne along by many and various floods of sensuous desire, which span from seconds to hours to months and years. When one drifts along in this manner, one is like being surrounded by water with nothing to hang on to or rely on.

As to *bhavogha*, one can get attached to one’s life, one’s jhānic experience, etc., and be borne along by many and various floods of existence. Any desire other than sensuous desire will come under this heading. In the case of *diṭṭhogha*, the main thing is *sakkāya* or *atta diṭṭhi*, the view of self instead of perceptible *nāma-rūpa*, causing one to be borne along by many and various floods or wrong view. If we include the whole sixty-two kinds of views, the flood will include numerous floodlets and whirlpools.



When the truth is not understood, one is said to be borne along by many and various floods of ignorance. *Avijjā* is of two kinds, namely, simple ignorance of the truth (*appatipatti avijjā*) and misconception or knowing in an opposite manner (*micchapatipatti avijjā*). Refer Chapter 2 for detailed explanation on this subject. In another sense the two kinds of *avijjā* are ignorance of the correct practice and ignorance of knowing oneself due to unmindfulness. The former can lead to the floods of conceit and doubt. Even if one knows the correct method through books, etc., and does not practise it, one will still be ignorant due to unmindfulness.

One can look at oneself to see how one is borne along by these fourfold floods with their numerous floodlets and whirlpools. The Buddha sees the desperate situation of puthujjanas and shows the way out of this impasse by saying: “Depend on yourselves and not on others”. When we say depend on ourselves, we do not mean our physical body as such, because it is transient and painful. What we mean is to extract the dhamma essence out of it, just like extracting gold from waste. We should build such factories.

Depending on yourselves means depending on the dhamma and on *satipaṭṭhāna*. When the mind becomes collected on the arising phenomena with *khaṇikā samā-dhi*, will you still be borne along by these fourfold floods?

No, because you now have a lifebuoy or a boat to hang on to. *Satipaṭṭhāna* is the only saviour. Eventually, with continued striving, you cross the floods in the lifeboat till you land on a safe island where you find complete happiness by depending on your own ability, as said:

*Attā hi attano nātho*

*Ko hi nātho paro siya?*

*For self is one's protector*

*who else can be one's protector?*

## THE FIRES

Fire (*aggi*) is used metaphorically in the sense of torment, consuming evil or passion. Also rendered as *santapa* (burning, scorching, tormenting), such feelings have the nature of burning, intensely burning and not easily extinguishable. They are eleven kinds:

- *rāga* – lust,
- *dosa* – hate,
- *moha* – delusion,
- *jāti* – birth,
- *jarā* – decay,
- *maraṇa* – death,
- *soka* – sorrow,
- *parideva* – lamentation,
- *dukkha* – physical pain,
- *domanassa* – grief or mental displeasure,
- *upāyāsa* – despair, hopelessness or heart loss.

## ***Rāga* Fire**

The burning nature of *rāga* can be seen in a being since its birth. As an infant it lives dearly attached to the affection of its parents with its desire for objects such as toys. Then as it comes of age the desire grows and grows – the desire for sensuous pleasures, such as taking pleasure in and attachment to pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. As the fire intensifies, it affects not only the mind but also the body, as to accelerate one's heartbeat causing heart failure. For those who are simmering with lust in their thoughts, they would pass sleepless nights. Thus the nature of the fire as burning, intensely burning and not being easily extinguishable becomes evident. And here we are dealing with *rāga* alone.

For some who go beyond limits in lust, they age sooner than others. If they become too self-interested they will not be able to get along with their own societies.

As to the method of extinguishing the fire, either they do not learn or they do not practise it. Some extinguish in their own way, but since the method is incorrect, the more they try to extinguish, the more the fire burns. One can compare it with certain chemical fires which are difficult to extinguish unless one finds the right method.

In the scriptures is said about certain devas called '*khidda-padosika*' from the six celestial planes who die due to over-enjoyment and forgetting to eat. Because their bodies are delicate, they succumb to the burning effect of *rāga*, and no amount of delicious deva food can freshen their bodies.

At one time, on an *uposatha* (sabbath) day after the monastic ceremony in the chapter house, one bhikkhuni was coming out when she saw the statue of a handsome young man at the door. She happened to look at it with lustful eyes without being mindful and died. Of course, men are no exception in such matters. I have heard of one who while watching a sensational film suffered from heart failure. One may call such a film a fatally good or harmfully good one.

### ***Dosa Fire***

As to the *dosa* fire it burns in those who lose patience easily, and who are prone to jealousy (*issa*) and stinginess (*maccha-riya*). There are people who become angry with themselves. There are communities and nations who become angry and fight with one another. Even in the dhamma area there have been cases of yogis becoming ill-tempered when they cannot endure pains (*vedanā*) themselves or forgive fellow yogis, thus hindering the dhamma practice. Here it is advised to learn from one's weakness with patience and strive to improve oneself.

There is the story of a community of devas called *minopadosika* from the two lower heavenly realms who competed among themselves. The more prosperous ones jeered and scorned the less fortunate ones. The latter reacted with pride by disregarding them. This ill-feeling persisted and intensified so much so that it is said that they finally met death. Such instances are many in the human world and they arise with various after-effects.

So far we have talked about *dosa* in the aggressive form. There is yet another kind of *dosa* in the sinking or distressful form. For instance, a timid animal can die of fright when caught. Very difficult to extinguish indeed. There is no other method besides *satipatthāna* practice. The yogis who are here are doing this. Though one cannot eliminate this fire totally one can at least reduce its intensity. For the average common being, who does not know the correct method or does not practise it, the fire keeps on burning. Because they burn with many and various heartburnings, *puthujjanas* are called as such.

### ***Moha* Fire**

*Moha* means delusion, one who is deluded conceives things in a distorted way, a deluded person holds the true as false – the factual as non-factual and, the false as true – the non-factual as factual.

How does *moha* come into the picture when you are, say, taking unwholesome food? Not knowing its unwhole-

someness or thinking of its wholesomeness one is misled into taking this food with craving and desire – this is *moha*. The same thing goes with intoxicants and drugs. The world knows that these are dangerous. However, not knowing their flaws or thinking that they give good effects one craves for them and takes them. This is also *moha*.

A lot of people take rich and fatty food with disastrous results. Not knowing their shortcomings or thinking that they are beneficial, people relish them. On the other hand others do not understand how to take nutritious food – not knowing the nutritious content of the food or thinking that all that tastes good is wholesome. This is another aspect of *moha*.

Derived from “*muh*” (to be stupefied; to be deluded), *moha* is one of the three roots of evil and is common to all immoral types of consciousness. It is opposed to *paññā* (wisdom). The chief characteristic of *moha* is confusion with regard to the intrinsic nature of an object. It clouds one’s knowledge with regard to kamma (good and bad) and its consequences, the Four Noble Truths and the characteristics of *nāma-rūpa*.

*Moha* is of three types, namely:

- *anusaya* – latent or dormant,
- *pariyuṭṭhāna* – obsessive,
- *vītikkama* – transgressive.

For a being who is not yet an arahat, his rebirth consciousness is accompanied with the latent type of *moha*, just like the poisonous potentiality is diffused in a poisonous tree. This anusaya type clouds one's knowledge with regard to *kusala* and *akusala* and the Truths. Thus the majority are dimmed, confused and misled. In the case of the obsessive type the delusion and blurriness become more prominent. *Moha* co-exists either with *dosa* or *lobha*. If the obsessive form is not controlled, then one can commit the more severe form, that is, the transgressive form. When matters reach this stage, no fire extinguisher will be able to control the situation.

I would now like to illustrate *moha* with a story. Once there lived a *bodhisatta* hermit by the name of Haritassa. He had been a millionaire as a layman. Having been greatly moved by dhamma, he had renounced the world to become a hermit and attained *jhānas* and *abhiññās*. One rainy season, he left the forest to stay in the king's garden. The king happened to be would-be Ānanda. There he developed a liking and respect for the hermit, to whom he provided all the necessities.

It also happened that there was a rebellion in the country and the king had to go and quell the rebels. Before he left he told the queen to do all the necessary things for the hermit. One day the queen prepared a meal for the hermit in the palace, dressed herself up and

waited for the hermit while lying on her bed. On hearing the arrival of the hermit she rose up in a hurry. At that moment her dress fell apart and this was seen by the hermit. At this the hermit was unable to control his mind and went as far as committing the sexual offence. Here he was overwhelmed by the obsessive type of *moha* – stupefied as regards the consequences. Since he committed a sexual offence, which amounted to physical misconduct, he was also overcome by the transgressive type of *moha*.

This shows how *moha* can stupefy even wise persons, who in spite of their possession of spiritual powers are liable to be tormented by the fire of *moha*. *Moha* is like poisonous potentiality diffused throughout the poisonous plant and its effect is inflictible at any moment.

What resultant effects did he suffer due to his evil deed? The immediate result was that he lost his spiritual powers. As for the later effect the kamma-result was sure to follow, because when a stone is dropped in the water it will sink whether it is light or heavy. The *bodhisatta* is no exception – he is not exempted from the result of his deeds.

The moral of the story is that whenever one is exposed to desirable objects and if one is unmindful and unaware of the true nature of things, anything can befall one. If you have taken indigestible food you must take a



digestive, and if you have taken a poisonous substance you must take an antidote. *Sati* is like a digestive or antidote.

On arrival at the palace the king heard of the incident. What would happen if he were an ordinary person? However, the king happened to be would-be Ānanda, who had worked with the *bodhisatta* toward perfection and thus was able to forgive the hermit who, repenting, strove again to regain his spiritual powers and returned to the forest.

## JĀTI FIRE

*Jāti*, meaning “birth”, comprises the entire embryonic process beginning with conception and ending with parturition. The type of consciousness one experiences at the moment of conception is termed “*paṭisandhi citta*”. It is so called because it links the past with the present. It is one of the fourteen functions (*kiicca*) of consciousness (*viññāna*). Simultaneous with this consciousness there also arise the associated mental states and *kammajarūpa*.

Would one call this state “fire”? Of course at this very moment of *paṭisandhi*, which lasts only a split second, there is no burning element present. Though it is not a fire in itself, it serves as cause for the arising of consequential fires such as decay (*jarā*), death (*maraṇa*),

sorrow (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*) and so on to endless suffering. Here the mushroom plant analogises with *jāti*. As the mushroom plant shoots out of the ground, it carries with it on its cap (*pilus*) some mud, without anybody's doing. Likewise the *jāti* mushroom carries with it the potential element of fire and suffering.

As *jāti* is dormant with the sap of craving (origin of suffering) for further becoming, the endless round of rebirths will proceed. With the new becoming, aging and decaying will arise with greying hair, decline of hearing, decaying teeth, bending back, and so on like a gradually cindering fire. Though one wishes to stay young and beautiful one will feel disappointed and cry sometimes when this wish is not fulfilled. Such things happen especially to those who are vain of their qualities, cannot adjust themselves to the undependable nature of their body nor reflect on the dhamma.

Aged people who are deprived and discarded by posterity suffer from outcast misery. There have been tragic stories told in this connection, such as suicides and killing. Though one has contributed to society, one is liable to be rejected in old age. How saddening. This is nothing but *jara dukkha* – old age suffering.

## MARAṆA FIRE

Everybody is familiar with this subject. Normally, we speak of birth-decay-disease-death (*jāti-jarā-byādhimaraṇa*) as one chain of events. However, when we are on the topic of fires, we do not include disease (*byādhi*). People are afraid of these, they do not want to read or hear of them and even resent those who discuss these subjects. They regard such dhamma as inauspicious, having a demoralising effect and preaching defeatism because of its emphasis on these subjects without any obvious advantage. This attitude is not peculiar to this age. It happened even during the Buddha's time.

In respect of these states, decay, disease and death, there is no means or strength to resist or escape and beings are simply overcome by them. They are like wild fires from which poor animals cannot escape in the forest – they are simply surrounded. Such is the weakness of beings. Modern science and technology have not been able to tackle this problem. Neither can any powerful being nor the Buddha himself do likewise. Hence the following touching verse (*saṃvega gātha*);

*Aggakkhantaggi-khandhāva  
Maccu byādhi jarā tayo  
paccugantum balaṃ natthi  
Javo natthi palāyitum.*

*Death, disease, old age,  
These three approach like huge fires.  
There is no strength to comfort them;  
There is no speed to run away.*

However, the majority are not moved. They are afraid, no doubt. Yet, since they are afraid with ill-will, they do not possess any idea of how to escape. Only those who are afraid with knowledge are able to devise suitable methods of escape. So, let us look for the means. Will we simply wait and be consumed by these fires?

How about *vipassanā* practice? *Vipassanā* also cannot save you in this life. The Buddha himself yielded to decay, disease and death. No one can escape from the results of this life. There is no guarantee of freedom from these sufferings in this life. So, let them be as they are for this life. Only we should strive so that the same is not repeated. That is all we can do. It is important to discuss the *nāma-rūpa*, which are subject to decay, disease and death and understand their causal relations, and their flaws, such as their transience, unsatisfactoriness and spontaneity (uncontrollable nature).

If, fundamentally, one is unaware of the variety of characteristics in the above manner and instead enjoys what one sees, hears, smells and touches, one is said to realise *assādanupassanā*, the contemplation of pleasures. One will then crave for these objects and later become

attached to them, viewing that it is “I” who am enjoying. Thus two kinds of clinging will arise, namely, sensuous clinging (*kāmuṇāpādāna*) and view clinging (*diṭṭhupādāna*) which lead to action (*kamma*) and becoming (*bhava*). Dependent on birth arise decay, disease and death. These fires start burning towards you.

Let us look at the person who is attentive to the arising phenomena. His mind becomes concentrated and purified, understanding the variety of *nāma-rūpa* characteristics – their arising and passing away, their painful situation, their uncontrollable nature. Such a realisation is known as *ādīnavanupassanā*, contemplation of misery or danger. This runs counter to the former one.

As much as *taṇhā-upādāna* follow *assādanupassanā*, let us see what follows *ādīnavanupassanā*. Understanding the unreliable nature of *nāma-rūpa* and the truth, one will not crave or cling any more. Compare and contrast the consequential effects of the two. In the latter case, when there is no *thina upādāna*, no *kamma-bhava* will follow, hence no *jāti*, no *jarā-maraṇa*. Hence the only means to escape from these fires is *ādīnavanupassanā*. The Buddha himself used this method.

If you analyse *ādīnavanupassanā*, you will find the Noble Eightfold Path – the path of virtue, of concentration and of wisdom. By practising this method, you will discover the benefit. Does looking at the flaws of

*nāma-rūpa* amount to surrendering or winning in life? Striving to fulfil *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* means victory with complete peace and happiness.

## THE THREE DISASTERS

There are three kinds of disasters, both natural and artificial, where even the dearest member of the family, like mother and son, cannot help each other. Known as *amataputtika bhaya*, they are:

- conflagration,
- flood,
- rebellion or war.

The Buddha says, however, that in spite of the above disasters, there can be occasions where the mother and son may be able to help each other. There are, he continues, three disasters in dhamma where the mother and son cannot help each other at all. They are:

- decay (*jarā*),
- disease (*byādhi*),
- death (*maraṇa*).

The son cannot go to the aging mother and say: “I will age on your behalf”, nor can the mother take over the disease from the sick son. The same thing goes with death. Neither medical science nor any supernatural things can come to the rescue. There is, of course, one

way, that is the Noble Eightfold Path, which can obviate these miseries. Leaving alone the next life, which is not easily seen, one should practise the dhamma satisfactorily in this life in order not to be affected by youth or old age, health or disease, living or the prospect of death.

Normally one finds it difficult to maintain a neutral stand between the two extremes, namely, distress at the prospect of decay, disease and death on the one hand and comfort at the prospect of youth, health and life on the other. The first one is called obstructing or opposing (*virodha*), which is basically *dosa*, and the second one compliance or satisfaction (*anurodha*), which is basically *lobha*. If one has not cultivated oneself, one would rejoice in one's fulfilment, such as youthfulness, health and vitality, and be annoyed at one's failures, such as aging, disease and prospect of death. Thus, one oscillates regularly between elation and despair every second of one's life, like a table tennis ball. Do you accept this concept? For those who are well off and have not cultivated themselves, misfortune can cause a hard fall for them.

The only way to moderate oneself within proper limits is the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*, by which one achieves both *samatha sukha* due to mental concentration and *vipassanā sukha* as a result of the successive realisation of

*vipassanā ñāṇa*, attaining at least *udayabbaya ñāṇa* stage of insight. At this moment one can compare life's fulfilment with *samatha-vipassanā sukha*. Dhamma pleasure is sure to excel worldly pleasure and there will be no more *anurodha*. As one notes and realises the true characteristics, such as the transiency, unsatisfactoriness and impersonality (without any security) of *nāma-rūpa*, one will not develop *virodha* in respect of life's miseries.

As one continues to practise till one's insight is brought to maturity attaining *ariya-magga-phala ñāṇas*, one will achieve the state of originality or equilibrium (*tadibhava*) as the total dhamma benefit. This kind of quality is possessed by the arahat in full. However, the lower ariyas also possess this in their own ways. Even if one is not an ariya but has practised *vipassanā* to attain the insight stage of *sañkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, one will neither feel jubilant of pleasant objects nor feel sad about unpleasant ones. One will possess the ability to face any eventuality, any worldly condition, any prospect of decay, disease and death with complete serenity.

## SOKA AND OTHER FIRES

The five fires, namely, sorrow (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), physical pain (*dukkha*), mental displeasure (*domanassa*) and despair (*upāyāsa*) are basically feelings of displeasure (*domanassa vedanā*) belonging to



the twin immoral group of consciousness rooted in ill-will or aversion. They arise as a result of the loss of property, relatives, fame, honour or glory.

During the Buddha's time, there lived a minister called Santati who was given kingly pleasures for a week as a reward for his good services. During this short period, while he was enjoying royal entertainment, a dancing girl whom he loved dearly died. Due to her sudden death he came to his senses and suffered grief. Not being able to overcome grief he finally went to the Buddha, who spoke briefly in verse, meaning:

*Let the bygone kilesas be bygones  
Let the future ones not overcome you.  
As for the present ones you should remain  
Totally free from them by being mindful.*

For the majority, past reminiscences and future thoughts of good or bad would cause pleasure or sorrow respectively, and if the mind is unguarded they would waver as to what course to follow, thus keeping alive the kilesa sap. The root cause of such defilements is unmindfulness of the objects at the moment of their arising. Thus, practising mindfulness and realising insight knowledge the minister became an arahat, overcoming all *kilesas*.

In the very beginning of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha has boldly declared that the practice is the

only means of overcoming sorrow. And this should be practised as a preventive measure.

A few years ago there was a couple who were overcome by grief due to the death of their son. The husband took to drinking and the mother was feeling sad. They went mad – frenzied with intoxicants (*surummattaka*) and maddened by misfortune (*vyāsanummattaka*). There was no effective remedy to be found. Finally they came to this retreat. At first *soka* came to them uninvited. Later, as the practice matured, *soka* was substituted by dhamma; and even if *soka* was aroused it would not disturb them any more. So much did they cherish the dhamma that they lived with it throughout their lives. There are many such instances.

Even if one has not entered into the actual practice of the dhamma, mere understanding of causal relations through learning can be extremely beneficial. In some traditions, instead of overcoming sorrow, people purposely express sorrow whenever a member of the family dies and this has to be done for some length of time.

During the Buddha's time, Bandoola, the general of King Kosala, was assassinated together with his thirty sons. His wife did not show any sign of sorrow; instead she was able to hold the food-offering ceremony without any excitement. This is an example of preventing sorrow by the practice of contemplation of death (*maraṇanus-*

*sati*) and possession of sagacity and understanding. Anybody else in such a situation would have been driven mad.

People adopt measures for the prevention of external fires, such as fire extinguishers. However, they do not normally adopt measures for the prevention of internal fires, which can cause madness, death and suicide – first understanding of the dhamma and then effective practice can make you your own fire fighter.

When sorrow is expressed openly by mourning, one is said to lament (*parideva*) uttering articulate and inarticulate sounds, crying hysterically, synonymous with *citta vipalla sadda rūpa* – perverted sound or cries issuing from the mind or perverted revelation of the mind. Thence one may go to the extent of causing physical pain (*dukkha*), beating one's own chest, etc. Such feeling (*vedanā*) can also arise when one is confronted with extreme cold, heat or painful sensations.

Mental displeasure or grief (*domanassa*) arises when one is separated from beloved ones, united with hostile ones or when one endures loss of dear ones or property. As one suffers sorrow, lamentation, physical pain and mental displeasure one undergoes extreme mental distress over the affliction and is unable to express verbally. Such are the evils of the eleven fires which puthujjanas are prone to. The consequences for those who are

burned by these fires are tremendous. For instance, overcome by anger one may die of heart failure as the result of tachycardia (excessively rapid heartbeat).

## THE DEFILEMENTS

Another rendering of puthujjana – *puthu* (many and various heartburnings) and *jana* (he who is burned with) – he who is burned with many and various heartburnings. *Puthu* is also rendered as numerous flames or heat (*ñāṇa pariḷāhehi*). *Pariḷāha* means distress or absence of peace. There is similarity between this and the previous one, namely fires.

Defilements (*kilesa*) are of ten:

- *lobha* – greed,
- *dosa* – hate,
- *moha* – delusion or ignorance,
- *māna* – vanity,
- *ditṭhi* – heresy,
- *vicikicchā* – doubt,
- *thina* – sloth,
- *uddhacca* – restlessness or gapping,
- *ahirika* – shamelessness and
- *anottappa* – fearlessness.

They are also called *pariḷāha* (flame or heat). They have the nature of tormenting or defiling the mind. In respect of a desirable object one suffers excitement, physically

and mentally. Just as the burned-out fuel leaves black cinders, so too, *pariḷāha* defiles the mental process leaving behind weakened and exhausted mind and body. Just take the case of flame of hate (*dosa pariḷāha*), due to which one will find no peace. Lack of timely restraint can lead to criminal actions, communal troubles and even international conflicts. This defilement also covers jealousy (*issa*) and stinginess (*macchariya*), which are based on dissatisfaction and non-forgiveness simmering in ones' mind.

Now about flame of delusion (*moha pariḷāha*). This dims the mind causing a blackout of the truth. One becomes stupefied and deluded. It is one of the three evil roots and is common to all immoral types of consciousness. It clouds one's knowledge by fulfilling its own stupefying function and regulating the same function of other concomitants associated with itself.

There are also many more flames – vanity, heresy, doubt, sloth and restlessness or gapping. The last two, and not the least, are *ahirika* and *anottappa*. Their opposites are *hiri* and *ottappa*. Moral shame and dread (*hiri-ottappa*) are associated with all kammically wholesome consciousness. They are regarded as the two dominant factors that rule the world. No civilised society can exist without them. The sense of shame (conscientiousness) and fear of blame, are the guardians of the

world. For these two states do indeed guard the world, as the Blessed One said:

*“Bhikkhus, these two pure states guard the world. Which are the two? The sense of shame and fear of blame. If, Bhikkhus, these two pure states do not guard the world, there would be no regard paid to mother, or mother’s sister, or uncle’s wife, or teacher’s wife, or wives of honourable men. The world would be full of promiscuous births, as among goats, sheeps, fowls, pigs, dogs and jackals. Because, bhikkhus, these two pure states guard the world, regard it paid to the mother and the rest.”*

*Hiri-ottappa* are like a white background or cloth that absorbs (*kusala*) cold and repulses (*akusala*) heat; *ahirika-anottappa* are like a black background that absorbs (*akusala*) heat and repulses (*kusala*) cold. This has become a *niyāma* (natural order).

In the realm of dhamma, one should be ashamed and afraid of losing mindfulness, otherwise it will be like travelling in a car without a seat – one may fall off and get injured. So do not allow any remission in your mindfulness, however trifling it may be. Also apply relentless effort to your practice, just as a car has to rotate its wheels to move. And again, as the car must have a body to protect it from weather, *sati* must also be applied to protect oneself. Otherwise one will not be safe, instead one will be thrown off.

*Ahirika* is compared to the shamelessness of a village pig, which is not ashamed to take village waste with relish; *anottappa* is compared to the fearlessness of the moth that flutters around the light by which it has been attracted and gets singed by it.

Thus it can be seen that these last two are the worst of the ten *pariḷāha*. If one is not inflamed by these two things, one will not suffer greed and hatred; and since one has understanding there will not arise any delusion. Even if one assumes an overbearing behaviour arising from dhamma achievement, this feeling can be noted off without any difficulty. As the result of righteous views, one will not become heretic. Due to clear perception, doubts will not arise. Due to exertion there is no reason for sloth or gaps.

## DESIRES OF SENSES

With the manifold five desires of senses they are enamoured, swallowed up, cleaving to, attached to, hung up on them, hanging from them, obstructed by them; for such reasons also they are called average or common – *puthujjana*.

The five constituents of sensuous pleasures (*pañca kāmāgūna*), namely, pleasurable sights, sounds, odours, tastes and contacts, are most appealing to the sentient being. Because these pleasures of sense tend to fasten or chain

him to them in an unreleasable manner, they are called *kāmaguna* – *kāma* (sensuous) and *guna* (quality or string) – literally meaning desirable or sensuous fetters.

Suppose a beautiful object (*kāmaguna*) enters the stream of thought through the eye door, what will happen to one who has left the eye faculty unguarded? Since one is basically habituated to craving for pleasurable objects, an unprofitable state of lust (*rāga*) would invade him. Just like when a white cloth is dyed with a colour, the latter is fixed on it, so too one's pure mind will be stained (*ratta*) with lust. Hence the name *puthujjana*.

From the stage of inspired or stained (*ratta*) one advances to that of greed (*giddha*) in respect of pleasurable things. As the dye becomes colourfast and cannot be removed, the greed simmers in one and advances to the stage of aspiring lust (*saṅkappa rāga*), which we call clinging (*gadhita*). *Gadhita* may also be rendered as the state of unreleasable bondage due to constant lusty aspiration one has habituated. An example may be found in the case of a drug addict who started out with a trial consumption; later yielding to the habit and becoming addicted. Once one is bound up in *kāmaguna* one is completely obsessed with the thoughts of pleasures and nothing else, leading to the stage of obsession (*mucchita*). It is like when a person is possessed by a superhuman being. To quote a story in this regard:



This is the story of a young man who came from the Brahma world. Due to jhānic life in his previous existence, he was not bent on sensuous pleasures, especially in respect of the opposite sex, and he lived like a yogi. Even in his infancy he would not suck milk from a woman's breast unless she was disguised as a man. Hence his name Anitthigandha, meaning he who cannot bear the smell of the opposite sex. When he came of age, his parents tried to arrange his marriage but without any success. One songstress promised to allure him. So, she took a place not far from his home (which was like a meditation room) and started singing with a pleasant voice. What would happen when one hears a pleasant sound and the ear faculty is left unguarded?

As the sound or *kāmaguna* goes on striking the ear base, one will endure *ratta*, thence *giddha*. From that time on his brahma habit started disappearing. He soon developed an aspiration (*saṅkappa rāga*) to listen to the song and a clinging (*gadhita*) to it. He became fastened to it because the sound was alluring, like the attraction of a magnet. He became unmindful. The songstress went nearer to his home. Attraction of the song led to that of the songstress herself, to whom he started developing *ratta*. When at last the two met each other in the same room his desires advanced to *mucchita* stage. He was now obsessed with lust (possessed by *kilesa* of superhuman being) losing his normal senses.

This kind of madness is *kāma* madness or frenzied with lust (*kāmummattaka*). As the saying goes: “Still water runs deep”, a quieter one can become very dangerous. Wishing to monopolise this pleasure he started becoming jealous of others and harassing them. How tragic! Such things can happen to those who yield freely to worldly pleasures.

A puthujjana is thus one who is overcome or swallowed up (*ajjhohāraṇa* or *ajjhosaṇḍa*) by sensuous rejoicing (*kāmanandī*). By this we mean on seeing desirable objects with the eye one invites them all with the intention of monopolising and ruminating. If one leaves the eye faculty unguarded, one would apprehend the sign (*nimitta*) of woman or man, or any sign that is a basis for defilement, such as the sign of beauty, etc., leading to *nimitta kappana* (thought, sign, figure or aggregate) or *nimitta gaha* (grasping of the sign, figure or aggregate).

Next, one apprehends the aspect classed as hand, foot, smile, laughter, talk, looking ahead, looking aside, etc., which has acquired the name ‘particular’ (*anubyanjana*) because of its particularising or enlarging defilements, because of its making them manifest themselves, leading to *anubyanjana kappana* (thought of particulars or details) or *anubyanjana gaha* (grasping of particulars or details). It is like eating food – rice with curry or

bread with meat and vegetables; when taken together give a distinctive taste.

We may draw an analogy between *kāmanandī* and photographing. As you take a picture, first the image has to be focussed and reflected onto the film in the camera through the lens, later to be developed in the darkroom to produce the required picture. The first step is like grasping the sign, figure or aggregate, and the second process is like particularising of the aggregate. In photographing, we need darkness both in the camera and the developing room. If an actinic ray of light flashes inside the camera or the darkroom during the process, the image will fail to print on the film. Likewise, if the mindfulness is applied with a flash of understanding (*viññā*) at every seeing, hearing, etc., there will be apprehended neither the sign nor the particulars through which if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of lust might invade him.

This is reminiscent of the Blessed One's concise admonition to the Venerable Malunkya-putta (Malunkya's son) to stop at what is merely seen. According to the Sutta method: 'The seen shall be merely seen'. As soon as the colour basis has been apprehended by the consciousness of the cognitive series with eye-consciousness he stops; he does not fancy any aspect of beauty of the aggregate and beyond.

Overcome by *kāmanandī* he will be tormented and wearied. He looks for happiness – maybe he enjoys worldly happiness – but he ends up with suffering. Such a person is called *dukkhacinanta puggala* – one who heaps up or accumulates sufferings. Whereas if he enters upon the way of restraint, he guards the mind faculty, undertakes restraint of the mind faculty and grasps neither the sign nor the particulars in spite of the impingement of door and object. Such a person is known as *dukkhapacinanta puggala* – one who does not heap up or accumulate sufferings.

## HOOKED ON CRAVING

Another rendering of *puthujjana* is – (*puthu* = *ñāṇa*; numerous desires of sense, and *jana*; *lagga*; hung up on, hooked up by, stuck to or pierced with) – he who is hooked up by the numerous desires of senses. The example given here is that of a fish being pierced and hooked up by a fish-hook. So too, an average person is the one who gets hooked up by the *kāmaguna* – pleasurable sights, sounds, odours, tastes, touch – in an unreleasable manner. As long as he does not realise the dangerous consequences of these pleasures, he is sure to suffer from them. Unaware of the hook the fish nibbled at the bait only to be pierced by the hook and meet death.

Just as the clever fish would avoid the bait, so too, realising the flaws of sensuous objects which have little

pleasure and much pain, the wise person would shun *kāmaguna*. The way to do it is reasoning or wise consideration or thorough attention (*yonisomanasikāra*) followed by mindfulness. One mindfulness means one freedom, two mindfulness – two freedom, much mindfulness – much freedom, till he is not aroused at all by any pleasurable object and is free of sorrow (*soka*) and danger (*bhaya*). To be totally lust-free one must have become at least an *anāgāmi*, though the other two lower ariyas will be free to some extent, and as for the practising yogis they will be quite relieved. In this connection, the Blessed One says in verse 215 of the Dhammapada:

*Kāmato jāyatī soko  
Kāmato jāyatī bhayaṃ  
Kāmato vip̐pamuttassa  
natthi soko kuto bhayaṃ.*

*From lust springs grief,  
from lust springs fear;  
For he who is wholly free from lust  
there is no grief, much less fear.*

## AVOID THE EVIL WAY

Another way of defining an average being is the one who is sunk (*jana*) in the mire or swamp of sensuous pleasures (*puthu*); he sinks and sinks because the more he moves the more he sinks till he sinks past the nose.

Neither he himself nor any other can save him from this dangerous plight.

There was an exposition (*desanā*) given by the Blessed One in connection with the above. Once King Kosala's elephant strayed and got stuck in a swamp. Since it had served well in the king's military force, he ordered his mahout to save its life. The mahout appeared as if ready for battle and battle drums were also beaten. Reminiscent of its past militarism the elephant exerted itself and extricated itself from the mud. This matter was reported to the Buddha and prompted by this story he advised the monks to exert themselves as did the elephant stuck in the mud. Hence the verse (327 of the Dhammapada):

*Appamādaratā hotha  
Sacittam anurakkhatha  
Duggā uddharath' attānaṃ  
panke sannova kuñjaro.*

*Take delight in heedfulness.*

*Guard your mind well.*

*Draw yourselves out of the evil way  
as did the elephant sunk in the mire.*

Thus the way to freedom is *appamāda* (heedfulness, watchfulness), in abstaining from what should be abstained, namely the ten *duccarita*, and in practising what should be practised, namely guarding the mind.

These are nothing but beneficial. 'How to guard' is the problem. Watch at every arising or be mindful so as to hinder impurities. Here the Buddha preached against sensuous lust in the human world, because it is here that lust prevails. Of course, if the sensuous lust is overcome, other *kilesas* will also be overcome.

Just as the old elephant exerted itself and extricated itself from the mud, so too the yogi must exert himself by the application of his faculties, namely faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and knowledge, and extricate himself from the mud of *kilesa*.

## ATTACHED TO CRAVING

Here *puthu* means: manifold desires of senses, and *jana*: he who is attached to. Attachment to craving is related to the five faculties: eye (*cakkhu*), ear (*sota*), nose (*ghāna*), tongue (*jivha*) and body (*kāya*). If there is no eye or the eye is weak or there is no utilisation of the eye faculty, however much the view is pleasurable, he will not be attached to the object. On the other hand if the eye faculty (*cakkhundriya*) is keen, attachment would result. The same goes with the other faculties. Except the time when they are asleep, the majority of sentient beings are vulnerable to the assault of the *kāmaguna*.

Thus to the question raised by a young ascetic called Ramana: "Which one is gluey like the monkey plaster

(*makkata lepa*)?” The Blessed One replied: “The one which is gluey like the monkey glue is *taṇhā*.” Just as the monkey, being mischievous, plays with the glue (gummy exudation from a plant) with his limbs, which get stuck to it one by one till finally he is caught, so too the sentient being overcome by the five desire of senses is attached to them.

Suppose you are in the midst of a banquet where there are dancing, music, food, aromas and comfortable seats, thus completing the five *kāmagunas*, what would happen to you? Your attention will be drawn towards one pleasurable object after another and become attached to lust (*jappa*) like the monkey is glued. Here it becomes thought provoking. Out of these five *kāmaguna* which one would be predominant, since attention cannot be focussed on all at the same time? Let us also consider which consciousness will dominate. For this we must consider two things, namely:

- *visaya dhimatta* – predominance of the scope or attractiveness of the object of sense;
- *ābhujita* – inclination.

At times the dancing scene may be alluring, at other times the song may assault your ear, the sweet smell your nose, the tasty food your tongue or the good touch your body. Depending on the attractiveness of any of these objects your attention will be adverted to lust



(*jappa*). The other reason for the predominance of the sense faculty is your own basic inclination towards seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling or touching.

Since the arising of lust is dependent on the keenness of the faculty, it is essential to restrain the faculty – subjugation of the senses (*indriyasamvara*) such as restraint with the eye (*cakkhunā samvaro*), etc., which is synonymous with mindfulness at seeing, etc. Then the monkey plaster of *taṇhā* will not take effect. Without restraint of, say, the eye faculty, one will feel lustful in respect of pleasurable visible objects. The mind is said to become soaked in the slime of *kilesa* (*cittaṃ byāsincati*).

## HINDRANCES TO FREEDOM

If one is asked about the person who has no hope of release from saṃsāric prison, one must point out the saṃsāric prisoner who is overwhelmed by hindrances. The average common individual is one who is subjugated by hindrances to freedom – *niyyānavarāna* (*niyyāna* – release, freedom: *varāna* – hinders). Hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) are of five namely:

- *kāmacchanda* – lust or sensuous desires;
- *vyāpāda* – ill-will;
- *thina-middha* – sloth and torpor;
- *uddhacca-kukkucca* – restlessness, worry or agitation, remorse;
- *vicikicchā* – sceptical doubt or uncertainty.

Let us first examine the hindrances of sensuous desire (*kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa*). The average being is indulged in enjoying pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste and touch with a thirst for those not as yet acquired. Thus is he enwrapped or surrounded (*avuta*), muffled up or obstructed (*nivuta*), stifled or choked (*ovuta*), closed in (*pihita*), covered up (*paticchanna*), cramped or restrained (*patikujjita*) by the various five hindrances.

Meanwhile, in respect of any disagreeable object he may feel ill-tempered. Thus will he be enwrapped, muffled up, stifled, closed in, covered up and cramped by the hindrances of ill-will (*vyāpāda nīvaraṇa*). Since he is obsessed with sensuous pleasures he would not feel enthusiastic in the pursuance of good conduct, thus developing indolence (*thina-middha nīvaraṇa*). He would feel restless, diffusive and distracted as regards to an object and remorseful (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) because he has not done the right thing. Since he does not see the truth and cannot appreciate true values he ends up as a sceptic (*vicikicchā nīvaraṇa*).

Because reality is obstructed, hindered and concealed from consciousness he cannot discover all the things rightly, step by step, thus: The eye is the Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Sacca*): the prior craving that originates it by being its root-cause is the Truth of Origin (*Samudaya Sacca*): the non-occurrence of both is the

Truth of Cessation (*Nirodha Sacca*): and the way leading to the cessation of suffering is the Truth of the Path (*Magga Sacca*). He is perverted to finding pleasure in suffering, root-cause of pleasure in the root-cause of suffering, great loss in the cessation of suffering, the way to a great loss in the way to the cessation of suffering, involving both simple ignorance (*appatipatti avijjā*) and misconceived ignorance (*micchapatipatti avijjā*).

Being oblivious to the true nature of things, he craves and clings to the objects, causing round of defilements (*kilesavaṭṭa*), which in turn causes round of volitional actions (*kamma vaṭṭa*) and finally round of resultants (*vipāka vaṭṭa*). In this way, due to obstruction, hindrance and concealment by *nīvaraṇas*, he cannot free himself from the rounds (*vaṭṭa*).

With mindfulness at every arising, the yogi discovers rightly all *nāma-rūpa* dhammas, which are the basis of many kinds of suffering (*dukkha sacca*), as the truth of suffering and not pleasure. Overcoming ignorance of the truth and perception of pleasure, he develops understanding (*viññā*) in place of ignorance (*avijjā*). Discovering pain as pain, craving due to the perception of pleasure will not arise and hence no more clinging. This is what we mean by freedom (*niyyāna*) and the dissolution of hindrances to freedom (*niyyānavarana*) at least temporarily.

With diligence in the practice, neither lust nor aversion will arise in respect of sense objects, however pleasant or unpleasant. With vigilance in the practice, he will suffer neither *thina*, the dimness or shrinking state of mind, nor *middha*, the morbid state of the mental factors. With the convergence of consciousness and object, there arises neither the distraction as regards an object (*uddhaca*) nor the undue anxiety for what has been done wrongly or right actions that have been left undone (*kukkucca*). With faith in the quality of the dhamma through empirical knowledge, and especially on the achievement of dhamma knowledge, he is no more plagued with perplexities (*vicikicchā*) as to which is which.

Thus, with every mindfulness, and especially with the winning of dhamma knowledge, he is able to dispel all enwrapment, obstruction, impediment, closure, covering and cramping. On the maturity of *vipassanā ñāṇa* and the development of the path and fruition of stream entry (*sotapatti magga-phala*), the fetter of sceptical doubt disappears from him totally, so that he is no more enwrapped, muffled up, stifled, closed in, covered up or cramped by this fetter. And though he has not totally abandoned the other hindrances, he has weakened their gross forms related to the *apāya* world. Through the path of once-returning (*sakadāgāmi magga*), he weakens lust and ill-will. Thus the first

two noble individuals (*ariya puggala*) still raise families, though not in a lustful manner. Through the path of non-returning (*anāgāmi magga*), the subtle forms (*sukhuma*) of the first two hindrances are abandoned. The *anāgāmi* is also free from anxieties (*kukkucca*). As for the *arahat*, he is free from the rest, namely, stiffness-and-torpor and restlessness.

Thus, in their own way, these noble individuals are free from being enwrapped, muffled up, stifled, closed in, covered up and cramped. This is what we call freedom. It is important for the yogis to dispel the hindrance of uncertainties (*vicikicchā nīvaraṇa*).

## WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME HEAP

The fivefold hindrances are equated to the unwholesome heap (*akusala rāsi*). He who is overpowered by hindrances is said to be sitting on the unwholesome heap. It is given in the Mahāvagga Saṃyutta Nikāya as:

*Akusalarāsī ti bhikkhave vadamāno  
Pañca nīvarane sammā vadamāno vadeyya.  
Kevalo hayaṃ bhikkhave akusalarāsī  
Yadidaṃ pañca nīvaranā.*

*Bhikkhus, if one who is speaking  
about the unwholesome heap wishes to speak correctly,  
one must point out  
the hindering states as the unwholesome heap.*

And again it is mentioned:

*Kusalarāsī ti bhikkhave vadamāno  
Cattaro satipaṭṭhāne sammā vadamāno vadeyya  
Kevalo hayaṃ bhikkhave kusalarasi  
Yadidaṃ cattaro satipaṭṭhāna.*

*Bhikkhus, if one who is speaking  
about the wholesome heap wishes to speak correctly,  
one must mention  
the fourfold mindfulness.*

*Kusala* possesses two qualities, namely, blamelessness (*anavajja*) and good result (*sukhavipāka*) or desired or satisfactory result (*itthavipāka*) – the former being the main thing because if one is blameless good result will follow. One need not rely on any other being, however powerful. Just imagine, when one is practising the fourfold mindfulness one is free from hindrances and thus becomes flawless (*anavajja*), every minute, hour and so on till one attains holiness.

Which do you prefer – living on the unwholesome heap with hindrances, where you endure suffering or living on the wholesome heap, blameless and with satisfactory results? Those who desire good results and despise unsatisfactory consequences must leave the *nīvaraṇa* heap to go over to the wholesome heap by practising *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

Worldly sufferings are due to the unwholesome *nīvaraṇa* heap with its imperfections, so that no amount of worldly methods can solve the problems that inflict the average person. So strive to free yourselves from the snare of hindrances.

**Q:** *If a patient is suffering from a serious and terminal disease, is it advisable for him to commit suicide while he is still conscious and able to contemplate good deeds rather than to allow himself to become less conscious and suffer death when he is not able to contemplate good deeds?*

**A:** Committing suicide is an offence both from the legal and from the dhamma points of view. It amounts to taking one's life – *pānātipāta kamma*.

## LIVING WITH THE PRESENT

The Buddha admonished the yogis to live with the present and not to ruminate over past deeds or live with future expectations. It is thus said in the Group of Discourses (*Sutta-Nipata*) Jatukanni's questions:

*Yaṃ pubbe taṃ virosehi  
Pacchā te mahu kincanam  
Majjhe ce no gahessasi  
Upasanto carissasi.*

*Wither away what (existed) previously,  
May there be nothing afterwards  
If you do not grasp anything (in between)  
You will (wander calm).*

Living in the past or future is detrimental to the *dhamma*. At the time of World War I, people were terrified by the spectre of war and this caused consternation among the monks. Thus, one Sayadaw in Mandalay composed a verse as follows:

*Being surrounded by danger all sides  
Each with his own spectre and expectations  
Which will come  
Thus casting away bhāvanā  
The many will deteriorate.*

This is a reminder to those who ponder over impending dangers such as nuclear war. There are bombs more dangerous than hydrogen bombs exploding in the mind every second. Instead of wasting time on thoughts of future dangers, which may or may not be real, one should practise to overcome one's own defilements. Once you have your own practice to rely on, there is no need to worry about the consequences.

When the time comes to depart, there is no need to be afraid, instead it would be like moving from one old wretched house to a new robust building or getting a golden cup instead of an earthenware one.



## ARIYAS' ATTITUDE

Here I would like to mention the ariyas' attitude in respect to life. Once Sakya Mahanama was concerned about possible consequences if he had died in an accident while passing through the city of Kapilavastu on his way home from the Buddha. On revealing this to the Buddha, the latter replied that anyone who had been adorned with virtuous states such as *saddhā*, *sīla*, *cāga* and *paññā* would not prolong his existence in *saṃsāra*.

As for the arahat, he would not long for the undue prolongation of his life, which would amount to *rāga* or *taṇhā*. Neither would he wish to terminate his life immaturely nor meet an immature death which would amount to fright and impatience and thus *dosa*. All these states run contrary to the Buddha's teaching. The noble individuals live to strike a happy medium between the two extremes.

Everybody works to earn something: which do they prefer – the work or the earning? The earning. Of course he must work to earn. Likewise, though the arahat detests his body he wishes to practise his training and achieve benefit out of this. Thus, neither wishing to unduly prolong nor wishing to terminate his life, he makes the best of it. Such is rational behaviour – *nisammakari*. Refer to the chapters on *Sampajañña*, *Virodha* and *Anurodha* in this regard.

## TURNED AWAY FROM THE ARIYAN LAW

*Puthujjana* is also rendered as *puthu*: among many persons: *jana*: engulfed – engulfed among (many) persons. More completely it is given as:

*Puthunaṃ vā gaṇana pathātītaṃ  
ariya dhamma parammukhānaṃ  
hīna-dhamma-sāmacārānaṃ janānaṃ  
anto-gadhattāpi puthujjanā.*

*Being engulfed among persons,  
passing the bounds of calculation,  
of low practices (or principles) turned away from the  
Ariyan Law such are 'common'.*

As to 'ariyadhamma-paramukhā', 'ariya' means refined and noble, 'dhamma' refers to the three trainings or the eight paths, and 'parammukhā' is having the face averted from – because he is not aware of the existence of the Law or knowingly he does not practise, or though he practises he does not practise fully. When he is turned away from the practice of *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*, he cannot overcome *kilesas* of transgressive, obsessive and latent types and as such he is not clean in deed, word and thought, instead he is backward. Thus, he is of low practices or principles – *nicadhamma samācāra*.

Not being virtuous he is stained with the defilement of misconduct: such as bodily misconduct (*kāyaduccar-*

*ita*) – killing, stealing, sexual offence; vocal misconduct (*vacīduccarita*) – lying, slandering, speaking harshly, gossiping; mental misconduct (*manoduccarita*) – covetousness, ill-will and evil views. Overcome by avarice or wicked greed (*visama lobha*) he would take possession of others' property such as territories with threats or force. He would hold such views as 'good actions will not produce good results, bad actions will not produce bad results'. Mental misconduct can easily lead to physical misconduct. 'He is engulfed among persons' means he is engulfed among evil persons.

When we say he is backward because he is turned away from the Ariyan Law, it implies that he will be noble if he faces the Ariyan Law. At present the yogis are practising in three ways or paths, namely, basic path (*mūla magga*), preliminary path (*pubbabhāga magga*) and noble path (*ariya magga*). Refer Chapter 6 on Training (*Sikkhā*).

## MŪLA MAGGA

*Mūla magga* comprises the fundamental right view on *kamma*, or the dhamma maxim, namely *kammasakata sammādiṭṭhi*, holding the view that the three domains of meritorious deeds consisting in alms giving (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*) and mental concentration (*bhāvanā*) will lead to existence in sensuous spheres: *jhāna* to fine material and immaterial spheres: and the practice of

understanding to liberation from existence. Thus all his practices are based on the knowledge of the consequences of the three respective branches, namely *kammic*, *jhānic* and *magganga* or *ñāṇa*.

The next step in *mūla magga* is the establishment of the morality path (*sīla magganga*), namely, right speech, right action and right livelihood. Besides these main constituents, there are also other elements present, namely right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration (of the *samādhi* group), and right aim and right understanding (of the *paññā* group), for in order to practise even simple meritorious actions such as alms-giving and virtue – right effort, etc., must have been implied. Accomplished in this *mūla magga*, the yogi is deemed to be on the right path to the practice and development of *vipassanā*.

## PUBBABHĀGA MAGGA

It is the preliminary or preparatory step to the achievement of the *ariya magga*. It is the precursor of *ariya magga*. It is here that the concentration and insight paths (*samādhi* and *paññā maggangas*) are practised fully.

At this stage the yogi is classed from *andha* (blind) *puthujjana* to *kalyāṇa* (good) *puthujjana* and is said to be turning towards the Ariyan Law.

*The Buddha, kinsman of the sun, hath seen,  
In common folk two species: one is blind,  
The other class is good at heart*

## ARIYA MAGGA

Once the yogi is matured in the practice of insight path he is qualified to become an *ariya – sotapanna*, and so on. He is now turned directly to the Ariyan Law. He is truly sublime. He weakens and ousts *kilesas* and completely extinguishes the *vaṭṭas* relating to *apāya saṃsāra*.

Thus based on *mūla magga* he practises and develops *pubbabhāga magga* to attain *ariya magga*. Without *kammasakata sammādiṭṭhi* one cannot go to *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi*: without *vipassanā sammādiṭṭhi* one cannot advance to *magga sammādiṭṭhi*. This is how he progresses by sequential development. There is no short cut method. No one can jump into the realm of dhamma by skipping intermediate stages in the forward progression.

So now how does this exposition on puthujjana portray the attitude of the sentient beings? Isn't it because they are turned away from the Ariyan Law that they are misconducting in deed, word and thought? And as for number, it passes the bounds of calculation. The Buddha said in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta:

*Ekāyano ayaṃ bhikkhave maggo  
Sattānaṃ visuddhiyā, soka-paridevānaṃ  
Samatikkamāya, dukkhadomanassanaṃ  
Atthangamāya, ñāyassa adhigamāya,  
Nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya,  
Yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhāna.*

*There is only one way for all beings to purify the mind,  
to overcome sorrow, lamentation, physical pain and mental pain,  
and finally to attain magga and phala.  
This way is the fourfold mindfulness.*

It implies that there is no other way and it is the sure way. Thus whoever trains his mind on *kāya*, *vedanā*, *citta* and *dhamma* objects is turned towards the Ariyan Law, purified in deeds, words and thoughts, purified and sublime, progressing from *vipassanā ñāṇa* to *ariya magga* – such is noble class in place of common class.

Seven benefits of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice:

- mental purification;
- overcoming sorrow;
- overcoming lamentation;
- overcoming physical pain;
- overcoming mental pain;
- overcoming defilements;
- attainment of *ariya-magga-phala*.

## SEPARATED FROM ARIYAN LAW

The final exposition on puthujjana is given as: counted as separated from, unmixed with ariyan folks who possessed the qualities of virtue, learning, etc. – thus average.

It has been given in the Book of Gradual Sayings (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*), the Book of Seven (*Sattakanipata*) and Treasures in Brief (*Sankhittadhana*) as:

*Saddhādhanaṃ, sīladhanaṃ, hiri-ottappiyaṃ dhanaṃ  
Sutadhanañca cāgo ca, paññā ve sattamaṃ dhanaṃ.*

*Yassa ete dhanā atthi, itthiyā purisassa vā.*

*‘Adaliddo’ ti taṃ āhu, amogham tassa jīvitaṃ.*

*Tasmā saddhañca silañca, pasādaṃ dhamma dassanaṃ  
Anuyunjetha medhāvi, saram Buddhānaṃ pancamaṃ sāsanaṃti*

*Faith, virtue, conscientiousness and fear of blame,  
listening and bounty, yea, and wisdom seventh.*

*Who hath these treasures – woman, man – ’tis said*

*No paupers they, their lives are not in vain.*

*Wherefore faith, virtue, grace, the dhamma-view*

*Wise men pursue, minding the Buddha’s word.*

As to the quality of the ariyan folk, they are seven, namely:

- *saddhā dhana* – rich in faith,
- *sīla dhana* – morality,
- *hiri dhana* – conscientiousness,
- *ottappa dhana* – fear of blame,
- *suta dhana* – quality of listening,

- *cāga dhana* – generosity,
- *paññā dhana* – wisdom.

The ariyan folks are rich in these seven qualities or properties, the average are not, they are poor, hence two different classes with the majority subsisting below the poverty level.

A distinction should always be made between material wealth and spiritual progress. The latter is called merit, meaning spiritual power that is generated by good moral actions.

## SADDHĀ DHANA

*Saddhā* (faith) has confidence as its characteristic: purifying as its function, like the water-purifying gem: or aspiring faith as function, like the crossing of the floods – freedom from pollution or decision as its manifestation: an object worthy of faith or factors of stream-winning as its proximate cause, such as the good Dhamma (*saddhamma*). It also means trusting, clarifying, non-fogginess and resolution (*akalussiya paccupaṭṭhāna*)

The word ‘*pakkhandana*’ (rendered as entering into or reaching) is used to define the act of faith (*saddhā*). *Saddhā* is of four kinds:

- *pasāda saddhā* – serene faith;
- *okappana saddhā* – trusting faith;



- *adhigama saddhā* – attainment faith;
- *āgamana* or *agamiya saddhā* – oncoming/ongoing faith.

*Pasāda saddhā* is serene faith which arises at mere seeing or hearing a pleasant object. For a Buddhist, the examples are seeing a venerable image of the Buddha, hearing the dhamma (though not properly understood) or seeing a monk with a remarkable composure. However, this kind of faith is not accompanied with knowledge because the object of faith (*saddheyya vatthu*) has not been understood.

Such faith can lead to injudicious or unreasonable trust (*muddha pasāda* or *muddha pasanna*), not quite blind faith because the former still belongs to the group of beautiful mental states and thus is moral consciousness. It usually arises in children and in the immature and the undeveloped, who easily become prey to swindlers and influenced by orators possessing enough eloquence to extract a smile from a marble statue. When King Mahakapina heard of the enlightenment of the Buddha and the appearance of the three gems in the world, this mere news aroused *pīti* in him and made him faint. This is *pasāda saddhā*. Such a state also arises in the practising yogi who, after establishing *khaṇikā samādhi*, overcomes hindrances and develops serenity without knowledge.

*Okappana saddhā* is faith accompanied with or based on knowledge – *ñāṇa sampayutta saddhā*. Nowadays, hearing that *satipaṭṭhāna* practice has become widespread, people wish to try it out. After some practice they begin to taste the flavour of the dhamma by purifying the mind and realising its benefits. Such a faith with knowledge is *okappana saddhā*.

In the practising yogi, after overcoming defilements he discerns *nāma-rūpa* and deduces that there is only *nāma-rūpa* and no living being apart from *nāma-rūpa*: he sees the cause and effect of *nāma-rūpa* and deduces that life is nothing but a continuous process of cause and effect. Going another step further, he comprehends all phenomena as transient, unsatisfactory and non-self, and as he progresses in *vipassanā ñāṇa* his inductive insight is strengthened now that he is able to correlate facts with theory.

When the mind is free of hindrances, it becomes pure, like when alum is dropped into water, the water becomes clear and transparent because the impurities settle down as sediment, or like when the water is filtered through beds of sand and gravel it becomes clear. The mental faculties such as *virīya*, *sati*, *samādhi* and *paññā* purify the mind of its *kilesa* stains.

The type of faith which arises with the stage of insight knowledge prior to the attainment of ariya magga is

*okappana*. At the stage of *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, the mind becomes serene and subtle. However, if the yogi cannot develop inductive faith before and during practice, he may maintain a sceptical attitude, which would hinder his progress of insight.

On the maturation of *okappana saddhā*, leading to the establishment of *vipassanā ñāṇa* and the seeing of *nibbāna*, unshakable faith accompanies *ariya magga* and this we call sanctified faith, the faith of the ariyan folk (*adhigama saddhā*): also called rational faith (*avecca pasāda*). This kind of faith is so sound and enduring that he will not give it up even if he is offered a lifetime's wealth in exchange or under the threat of death. Nor will he be influenced by any oratorical ability. Such a state is also called *saddhā dhana* – rich in faith.

*Agamiya saddhā* is the faith of a *sabbaññubodhisatta* (one who will become a supreme Buddha), which accompanies him throughout his existences since the time of his fixed declaration (*niyata vyadita*) of his Buddhahood. Due to the potential of this faith bodhisattas never profess any doctrine which does not accept cause and condition of *nāma-rūpa*, nor have blind faith even if they are born into such families. So, the ariyan folk are rich – rich in moral values, whereas the common are poor – poor in moral values.

**Q:** *Can one not find saddhā in other denominations because their faith is also durable and substantial?*

**A:** The proximate cause of *saddhā*, which we translate as faith, is *saddheyya vatthu* (object of faith). The genuineness of faith depends on the genuineness of its object. If one takes a chemical ruby for a mineral one, what kind of faith would you call this? Would you call it a genuine one? Though the wording is the same, the value is different. To develop genuine faith (*saddhā*) you need a good friend – *kalyāṇamitta*.

As for the exposition of *saddhā – saddhāhana lakkaṇa* *saddhā* – it has the characteristic of trusting, professing confidence in, the sense of assurance in, after observation of the truth. It is like when a pillar is erected, its base needs to be laid deep enough into the ground so that it becomes unswayable. Such a state is also termed *saddhadhimokkha* (*saddhā + adhimokkha*) – firm determination after ascertainment of truth. Its opposite is *micchadhimokkha* – wrongful determination.

## TESTING THE OBJECT OF FAITH

When you decide on the mineral ruby as genuine after satisfying yourself with all available test methods, this is *saddhadhimokkha*. If you decide on the fake, synthetic ruby as genuine, then it amounts to *micchadhimokkha*, which in dhamma is immoral conscious-

ness. Believing the imitation as genuine is wrong view, and corresponding firm determination is delusion. Thus the whole process is represented by *diṭṭhi* and *moha*.

As *saddhadhimokkha* arises, hindrances are stilled, so that the mind becomes pure and serene. Hence its function as purification of its associated mental states (*pasādana rasaṃ*). In the scriptures is given the simile of the water-purifying gem of the universal monarch. This particular ruby when thrown into the water causes mud and water-weeds to subside and clarifies the water. But here we give the example of alum because we have not seen the water-purifying gem of the universal monarch. In the same way *saddhā* purifies the mind of its stains. *Saddhā* is manifested in the mind as clarifying its turbidity, non-fogginess, resolution (*akalussiya paccupaṭṭhāna*).

## RESOLUTENESS OF FAITH

In the *adhigama* form, which belongs to the ariyas, faith becomes more resolute – unwavering, undaunted, undeviating and unshakable by any means.

Once a leper by the name of Suppabuddha was listening to the Buddha's teaching at the periphery of the audience. Training his mind on the arising objects, he was able to grasp the Truth, purified his mind, developed *samādhi* and *ñāṇa* and finally attained *sotapanna*.

Wishing to describe his unique experience to the Exalted One, he waited for the crowd to disperse so that he could have an opportunity to draw near to the Buddha. While he was making his way he was met by Sakka (Devinda), the king of the Devas.

At this point, I would like to draw an analogy of the yogi who, having practised *satipaṭṭhāna*, experiences *pīti* and *khaṇikā samādhi* in a unique manner and develops a strong urge to express his feelings to the teacher and his colleagues. Such a situation becomes evident especially at the attainment of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*. Thus it is reasonable for Suppabuddha to become excited as the pure stainless insight of the Truth arose in him.

Wishing to test the leper's faith, Devinda called on him to declare that the Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha were false and worthless in exchange for the offer of lifelong wealth – thus persuading him to lose faith in the Three Gems. Devinda continued, in a tone of withering disparagement, that he (the leper) was poor, wretched, miserable, of low class and a loner. Now how would you react in such a situation? Would you tolerate this kind of insult?

When asked who he was, Sakka identified himself saying that he had come to help him. There upon the leper retorted that Sakka was shameless, that he (the leper) was indeed not poor, wretched or miserable

because surely a possessor of *saddhā* could not be poor, wretched or miserable, that he was not of low class because a possessor of *saddhā* could not be so and that he was far from being a loner for a devotee of the Exalted One has become his son and he could not be a loner. Hence the verse:

*Saddhādhanam, siladhanam, hiri-ottappiyam dhanam,  
Sutadhanañca cāgo ca paññā ve sattamaṃ dhanam  
Yassa ete dhanā atthi, itthiyā purisassa vā  
'Adaliddo' ti taṃ āhu, amogham tassa jivitaṃ.*

*Faith, virtue, conscientiousness and fear of blame,  
Listening and bounty, yea, and wisdom seventh  
Who hath these treasures – woman, man – 'tis said,  
No paupers they, their lives are not in vain.*

What gave the pauper the impetus to say this? Whosoever is in possession of unwavering faith (*saddhā*) after having practised the dhamma and seen the Truth, will possess the courage to speak out like this, not in a hardened air of sharp-tongued domineering toughness but as a matter-of-fact.

## MATERIAL WEALTH VERSUS ARIYAN WEALTH

There is a wide difference between material wealth and ariyan wealth. For one thing, to accumulate material wealth we have to work hard for several years, spending

the major portion of our lifetime and then the riches may be destroyed overnight by both natural and man-made disasters.

Whereas in the case of dhamma wealth, we need to devote a short span of our lifetime to the correct practice as laid down by able masters. As a result, we can achieve not only lifelong but also *saṃsāra*-long benefit. Moreover, only a selected few enjoy material wealth whereas dhamma wealth is accessible to all and sundry irrespective of race, creed, colour or sex.

*Mohapatalasamuppāṭanato vā  
Salākiyo viya Buddhho,  
Patalasamuppatamupayo viya Dhammo,  
Samuppātītapatalo vip̄pasannaloso  
Viya jano samuppātītamohapatalo  
Vip̄pasanna locano Saṅgho.*

*Just as the eye surgeon  
removes the cataract from the diseased eye,  
so too the Buddha helps peel off the layers of delusion.  
The Dhamma is the method by which  
the layers of delusion are removed.  
The Saṅgha are like the patients  
who receive treatment  
so that the layers of delusion are removed from them.*



## MOHAPATALA

As for sentient beings, they have been misled all along their existences because their mental eyes have been obscured by *moha* 'cataract' and as for the Buddha, he is the remover of their delusion. Let us examine whether they are cloaked with layers of delusion. The entire body is the Truth of Suffering (*Dukkhasacca*). If we are not mindful of the ever-arising phenomena, for one minute of such unawareness we shall be cloaked with sixty layers of delusion and so on for hours, days, months and years on end, not to include the time spent in the other existences, thus going beyond calculation. Thus the usage of the term '*mohapatala*' is reasonable.

The analogy given here is the cataract of the eye. Due to this infection the eye becomes abnormal, characterised by the opacity of the lens. The more the infection, the more the opacity until one becomes blind. The Buddha is given the epithet of an eye specialist or surgeon (*salakiya*) in accordance with the expression:

*Mohapatala samuppātanato vā salākiyo viya Buddho.*

As the yogi practises mindfulness of every arising with total effort, faith and aspiration, with consciousness penetrating the targets with vigilance and diligence, his mind becomes purified so that now he faces the realities – the truth of *nāma-rūpa*, the truth of cause-

effect and the truth of *anicca-dukkha* characteristics. As knowledge arises the layers of ignorance peel off. Knowing the cause-effect relationship, ignorance of truth is overcome, doubts are stilled, causeless and fictitious-cause views are abandoned resulting in clear perception. It is like when the cataract is treated the opacity is removed and normal eyesight is restored. With the dhamma treatment the layers of delusion are expelled till the bliss of extinction is reached. Hence the Blessed One's epithet as *salākiya*. As much as the Buddha will not create eyesight for a cataract patient he will not cause the removal of *mohapatala* from a deluded being. He shows only the method which must be practised by oneself. Hence the verse:

*Tumhehi kiccamātappam  
Akkhātāro tathāgata  
Patipannā pamokkhanti  
Jhāyino mārabandhanā.*

*Striving should be done by yourselves:  
The Tathagatas are only teachers.  
The meditative ones, who enter the way,  
Are delivered from the bonds of māra.*

It is because the sentient beings are enveloped with layers of delusion that they are oblivious of the profitable Dhamma, unable to practise and establish genuine faith. However much they may be rich materially, if they are

poor in dhamma their lives are in vain (*mogham*). Rich in the Dhamma their lives will be fruitful and not in vain (*amogham*). This expression is simple yet significant.

## THE BENEFITS

The one benefit, namely, the power of endurance against the emotions of prosperities and adversities alike in worldly conditions, not to mention the others, is profitable enough. What else do you think you need in life? The dhamma does good – through the fruit of the way it brings unshakable equipoise (*tadibhava*). It is good also because it brings about equipoise with respect to the desired (*itthārammana*) as much as the undesired (*anitthārammana*).

For this is said:

*Selo yathā ekaghano  
Vatena na samirati  
Evam nindapasamsasu  
Na saminjanti pandita*

*Just as a solid massive rock  
Remains unshaken by the wind  
So too, in face of blame and praise  
The wise remain immovable.*

Thus living these ariyan treasures – woman, man – their lives are not in vain. There have been many instances of strong faith. One of them was the case

of a brahmin woman called Daninjani, whose faith in the Buddha could not be shaken by the news of death of her husband. Another was a lay supporter called Surambattha, who became *sotapanna* after listening to and being established in the Master's teaching, and who could not be persuaded to forgo his faith by Māra. Such an assured ariyan faith is also called *saddhā dhana* – rich in faith.

## SĪLA DHANA

And what is the treasure of virtue? Consider the ariyan disciple who abstains from taking life, taking another's property without consent, lying, sexual misconduct, taking sloth-causing liquors, spirits and wines. This is called the treasure of virtue.

## HIRI DHANA AND OTTAPPA DHANA

And what are the treasures of conscientiousness (moral shame) and the fear of blame? Consider the ariyan disciple who is conscientious: he is shamed by misconduct in deeds, words and thoughts, shamed at having fallen into evil and unrighteous ways. This is called the treasure of conscientiousness.

Consider the ariyan disciple who fears blame: he fears to be blamed for misconduct in deeds, words and thoughts: he fears the blame of having fallen into evil

and unrighteous ways. This is called the treasure of blame.

Though *yonisomanasikāra* is not mentioned here, its adjustment function of mental attitudes and hence its supportive function are implied. If the mind is not properly adjusted, the opposite states can creep into it, namely *ahirika-anottappa*. Unblemished in deeds, words and thoughts, the yogi would seek the correct method.

## SUTA DHANA

And what is the treasure of listening? Consider the ariyan disciple who listens much: there is a retaining, a storing of things heard: and those things, lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely in the end, which set forth in meaning and detail the righteous goodly life, wholly fulfilled, perfectly pure. All those are heard by him, retained in mind, familiarised by talk, pored over, well penetrated by right view. Here both *āgama suta* and *adhigama suta* are involved. This is called the treasure of listening.

## CĀGA DHANA

Cāga has the dual significance of abandoning and giving away. Based on *suta dhana*, he practises, gains knowledge (*adhigama suta*) and attains *sotapatti magga*,

by which the respective defilements and volitional or *kamma* formations (*abhisankhāra*) are abandoned.

Such abandonment is effected only by the arising of knowledge. Consequently, there is no more *kamma*-result, no more *kamma* actions in respect of evil *apāya*-related deeds. This is one treasure of abandoning. And consider the ariyan disciple with mind free of stain of meanness, freely bounteous without the expectation of material returns. This is another treasure of bounty.

## PAÑÑĀ DHANA

Consider the ariyan disciple who is wise as to the way of *vipassanā* practice, causing temporary abandonment of defilements with the arising of insight, finally possessing ariyan penetration of the way to the utter destruction of ill – *nibbāna*. This is called the treasure of wisdom. Indeed, *saddhā dhana*, *sīla dhana*, *hiri dhana*, *ottappa dhana*, *suta dhana*, *cāga dhana* and *paññā dhana* are the seven ariyan treasures.

## THE DEVOUT ARE RESPECTED EVERYWHERE

*Cittagahapati Vatthu* (Verse 303 of the *Dhammapada*) says:

*Saddho sīlena sampanno  
yasobhogasamappito  
Yaṃ yaṃ padesaṃ bhajati  
tattha tattha eva pūjito*

*He who is full of faith and virtue,  
possessed of fame and wealth,  
He is honoured everywhere,  
in whatever land he sojourns.*

Citta, the householder, was greatly honoured when he visited the Buddha. While he was paying obeisance, offering almsfood and other requisites to the Buddha, his stock of food and offerings were replenished by the devas.

Seeing this, the Venerable Ānanda inquired from the Buddha whether he would have received the same honours if he had visited another religious teacher and thereupon the Buddha uttered the preceding verse.

## BORN OF UNDERSTANDING

In order to establish *adhigama saddhā*, faith must be based on realism and understanding (*paññā*). The kind of understanding intended here is one consisting in insight knowledge associated with profitable consciousness (*somanassa-sahagataṃ*).

Let us now define the word 'understanding'. It has the characteristic of penetrating the individual essences of states (*yathā sabbhāva paṭivedha lakkaṇa*). Basically one must develop *dhamma vavatthāna* (determination of states) which discerns *nāma-rūpa*, later proceeding to *paccaya vavatthāna* (determination of cause and effect).

For all that, however, one cannot be said to have understood *nāma-rūpa* thoroughly. It is only when one is able to contemplate the three characteristics following the causal relations, thus leading to *paṭivedha lakkaṇa* (the characteristic of penetrating). It is also known as *sabhāva dhammanam paṭivedha lakkaṇa*. Its function is to abolish the darkness of delusion which conceals the individual essences of states – *visayobhāsana rasa* (*visaya* meaning object or scope: *obhāsa* – illuminating, enlightening, shedding light upon). It is like boring a hole in the wall to see what lies or does not lie beyond. Here two elements are involved, namely, boring a hole and perception to the eye or imparting knowledge.

With the penetration of the mind to the object, the latter is discriminated without haziness, confusion or bewilderment. Thus it is manifested as non-delusion (*asam-moha paccu-paṭṭhāna*). Here the analogy given is that of a traveller who, having strayed from his direction, loses his bearings. When he comes into possession of a compass he is able to determine his directions correctly, thus overcoming bewilderment, confusion and haziness.

In accordance with the dhamma axiom ‘the concentrated (one who is concentrated) knows and sees correctly’, the proximate cause of understanding is concentration. Thus *adhigama saddhā* must be based on



under-standing, so that the mind is resolute, decisive hence stilling doubts and clarifying vision now that the Truth is seen.

## FIVE DELUSIONS

Why are the majority of the world deluded? Because of five reasons:

- *Kammasammoha*

This is bewilderment as to profitable and unprofitable actions, that is whether wholesome actions produce wholesome results and unwholesome actions produce unwholesome results. It is overcome by the view of *kammassakata sammādiṭṭhi*.

- *Dhammasammoha*

Since understanding as to the defining of *nāma-rūpa* has not been accomplished with mindfulness, delusion as to the existence of *nāma-rūpa* can arise. This is overcome by the development of *dhamma vavatthāna ñāṇa* (knowledge in determination of the law).

- *Paccayasammoha*

Since the cause-effect relationship is not understood through mindfulness, there can arise delusion as to cause that produces fruit, causelessness, creation by unseen power and so on. This is overcome by *paccaya vavatthāna*, which

arises on the contemplation of cause-effect of *nāma-rūpa*. At this stage one can be said to have stilled doubts and become inspired with faith.

- *Lakkhaṇasammoha*

For all that, however, if he has not properly understood the triple characteristics of *nāma-rūpa* through mindfulness, he can remain dubious about these characteristics. Once he sees the arising and passing away of phenomena following the cause and effect, he will come to accept the truth of impermanence. Through the contemplation of pain, he will abandon the perception of pleasure and accept the truth of pain.

When he sees the spontaneous genesis of phenomena beyond the control of any being, he abandons the perception of self or ego and accepts the notion of non-self. This is the knowledge of penetration of characteristics (*lakkhana paṭivedha ñāṇa*) which arises with *vipassanā* insight.

- *Nibbānasammoha*

However much he is endowed with well-founded *vipassanā ñāṇa*, if he has not yet seen the complete extinction (of the five aggregate process) through the attainment of ariyan path and fruition knowledge, he will be oblivious of the eternal bliss and thus is said to suffer from bewilderment, confusion and haziness with regards to *nibbāna*.

If, however, after developing *vipassanā ñāṇa* and seeing extinction through ariyan path and fruition, the darkness of delusion will be replaced by the light of *nibbāna paṭivedha ñāṇa*, and this is progressively followed by *adhigama saddhā*, the unshakable ariyan faith. Until and unless one is endowed with *nibbāna paṭivedha ñāṇa*, one will not possess *adhigama saddhā*, which means that one's faith is fragile and unreliable because it can be shaken off through various reasons.

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

For the establishment of the fourfold knowledge, namely, *dhamma vavatthāna*, *paccaya vavatthāna*, *lakkhaṇa paṭivedha* and *nibbāna paṭivedha*, the belief that 'good begets good, bad begets bad' is fundamental. The Buddha's admonishment to the yogis is to be firmly established in the right viewpoint (*diṭṭhijukamma*), otherwise it is impossible to practise. This viewpoint is known as the 'Light of the World' and so long as the five-aggregate process goes on, it will also be known as the 'Light of the Saṃsāra'.

## THE LIGHT OF THE SASANA

The four insights are known as the 'Light of the Sasana'. The yogis are striving to achieve the Light of the Sasana. If you are established in this you are said to possess

*adhigama saddhā*, at which stage your faith becomes enduring like the pillar that cannot be shaken, severed or uprooted by any means, come wind, storm or rain due to the depth of penetration and solidness of foundation. Likewise, due to the power of insight no amount of indoctrination or impassioned oratory will be able to swerve or subdue your faith.

# CHAPTER 43

## THE GOOD FRIEND

### WHAT IS A GOOD FRIEND?

The good friend (*kalyāṇamitta*) is the giver of a meditation subject and to whom the yogi approaches to apprehend from among the forty meditation subjects one that suits his own temperament.

### THE SEVEN QUALITIES

‘Monks, let a monk cultivate, follow and honour a friend who is endowed with seven things, even though he be driven away. What are the seven?’

*Katamehi sattahi  
Piyo ca hoti  
Manāpo ca garu ca  
Bhāvaniyo ca vattā ca  
Vacanakkhamo ca  
Gambhiranca kathamṃ kattā  
No catthāne niyojakoti.*

*He is revered and dearly loved,  
And one who speaks and suffers speech;  
The speech he utters is profound,  
He does not urge without a reason;  
He is wholly solicitous of welfare and partial to progress.*

## **The Dearly Loved**

He is of genial disposition and dearly loved (*piyo*) because he possesses a remarkably good moral character – observation of five precepts in the case of lay people and the patimokkha for monks. Virtue (*sīla*) has as its benefits the several special qualities beginning with being dearly loved in accordance with the stanza:

*Shine as they may, there are no kings  
Adorned with jewellery and pearls  
That shine as does a man restrained  
Adorned with virtue's ornament.*

## **The Revered**

He commands respect and reverence (*garu*).

## **Deserving Loving-kindness**

The third quality of the good friend is his worthiness of being pervaded with loving-kindness – *bhavaniyo*.

## **Ability of Speech**

He is of the kind, who, seeing the flaws, having loving-kindness, compassion and mercy, will not hesitate to speak out (*vatta*), openly and unreservedly, whenever it is something he believes to be for the benefit (of the yogi).

## **Sufferance of Speech**

He should be humble enough to stand criticism by others, however low the latter may be (*vacanakkhama*). Some would consider it an insult. In this regard one should follow the example of Elder Sariputta. At one time the Elder was wearing his robe a bit too long, thus arousing criticism by a seven-year-old *sāmaṇera*. Thereupon the Elder adjusted his robe and thankfully asked whether it was all right, addressing the latter as ‘teacher’ though not sarcastically. This shows that the Elder was not at all affected by the *sāmaṇera*’s criticism.

About thirty years ago we had a Western yogi in this retreat. When the details of practice were given to him (through the translator), he angrily remarked that these instructions were too childish and unnecessary, that mere hint on the subject would be sufficient and that it amounted to insulting his intelligence.

Here I may comment that this is a practice which looks shallow but runs deep. Take the case of the movement of the abdomen in breathing or the steps in walking: they sound easy but it is difficult in practice to move mindfully even for a minute or ten steps, not to speak of seeing the unique characteristics. If asked whether they are noting the rising and falling or stepping left and right, some might answer casually that they are noting without matter-of-factness. For them, the practice will take long.

There are some who, possessing general knowledge, would say they know *nāma-rūpa*, cause-effect relationship, the characteristics, *vipassanā ñāṇa* and so on. When interviewed and interrogated (like by the police) they would become upset saying they are not criminals. For the others, they would admit difficulty in concentration although they are noting the movement of breathing or walking. They who admit the truth in such a manner are sure to progress in no time once they listen to the teacher and practise accordingly – filling up the gaps, making up for the deficiencies and straightening out deviations.

Here one should follow the example of Rahula. When his master admonished him to fill up the gaps, make up for the deficiencies and straighten out the deviations in his practice, he held a handful of sand in his hand and prayed that there would be as many teachers who, seeing the flaws, having loving-kindness, compassion and mercy, would speak out without any concealment, purely for his benefit, as there are the grains of sand in his hand. Thus are they humble at all times.

For such a person he will have room in his treasure house (bag of knowledge) to receive and store further knowledge. For the know-all there will be no room because he thinks his bag is already full. Some would not attach any value to the dhamma because it is offered free.



## **Profound in Speech**

He gives the profound knowledge (*gambhīrañca kathamaṅ katta*), such as the Four Noble Truths, the Law of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*), the Thirty-seven Factors of Enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*), the Fourfold Mindfulness, and so on. When he does so, he combines theory with practice. One can always find out by listening if the teacher knows what he is saying.

## **Not Urging Without Reason**

He will not urge (the disciple) in an unjustified or improper manner to serve his (the teacher's) interest (*no caṭṭhāne niyojako*). He will not urge anyone to take poison or fall from a cliff even if the disciple is prepared to do so to the teacher's advantage.

Association with the good friend who fulfils the above qualities amounts to cultivating with the suitable (*puggala sappāya*), otherwise known as *kalyāṇamitta*, *ekanta hitesi* (positive well-wisher or wholly solicitous of welfare) or *vuddhi pakkhe thita* (standing up for the prosperity of others), Hence the verse:

*In whom these things are found, that is the friend  
To cultivate if any need a friend,  
A man moved always by desire for weal,  
Yea, tho' he drive thee forth, yet follow him.*

Another seven qualities of the Good Friend as mentioned in the Book of Gradual Sayings (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*) are given in the verse:

*He gives things hard to give, does what is hard,  
hard words to bear he bears, his secret tells,  
But others' secrets keeps, in times of want  
Forsakes you not, when ruined ne'er condemns  
In whom are found these ways, that is the friend.  
To cultivate if any need a friend.*

## THE EIGHT QUALITIES

The eight qualities of the good friend as given in the scriptures are:

- *saddhā sampanna* – endowed with faith,
- *sīla sampanna* – endowed with virtue,
- *suta sampanna* – endowed with learning,
- *cāga sampanna* – endowed with generosity,
- *virīya sampanna* – endowed with effort,
- *sati sampanna* – endowed with mindfulness,
- *samādhi sampanna* – endowed with concentration,
- *paññā sampanna* – endowed with wisdom.

He is endowed with faith in respect of the Buddha's enlightenment and the action-reaction mechanism. He has faith in the causes that lead to the *arahatta magga* and *sabbaññuta* (omniscience) of the Buddha, namely, the great loving-kindness and great compassion with

which the bodhisatta fulfilled the perfections ever since the time of Sumedha, enduring innumerable sufferings throughout the lengthy *saṃsāra*.

One can judge the amount of loving-kindness and compassion of the Blessed One by looking at the example of an ordinary mother, whose loving-kindness and compassion towards her infant child cause her to endure hardship, pain and insult inflicted upon her by the infant. The Buddha's loving-kindness and compassion are manifold greater.

Because he is endowed with virtue he commands love and respect. In response, he speaks out openly and rebukes in a constructive manner (*codaka*) irrespective of any ill-feeling by the yogi, because he abhors backwardness (*pāpakarahi*). If, for example, a child happens to swallow a pointed object, the parent pulls it out from its throat at once without regard to its pain, which is better than death. The quality of the good friend is similar to *vaṭṭa* (one who speaks out sensibly) as previously mentioned.

Here again the attitude of the Elder Sariputta may be mentioned. Whenever he saw any flaws, he would not postpone revelation of the flaws any longer than necessary. As to the endowment of learning, he possesses both types of *suta*, namely *āgama* and *adhigama*.

He is naturally devoted to generosity (*cāga*) and the constant practice of giving and sharing. He is content (*santuṭṭhi*) with what is offered. Since he is detached from sensuous pleasures, he stays secluded (*viveka*) – *kāya*, *citta* and *upadhi*. He is free from delight in social activities (*saṃsagga*). Endowment with effort means he is able to work for mutual benefit with courage. Endowment with mindfulness causes him to abide mindfully, with *upaṭṭhita sati* (fixed, ever-present *sati*), so that *sati* becomes second nature to him. *Samādhi* prevents his mind from scattering. Due to *paññā*, he is free from perverted views. Endowed with these qualities he would rather work for the well-being of others than urge them to impropriety.

Such are the qualities of the good friend whom one should seek so as not to suffer throughout *saṃsāra*. Watch out for those self-styled charismatic leaders who, being seized with hysteria in times of crisis, commit such horrible deeds as mass suicide, indulge in sexual misconduct or accumulate followers for their own benefit.

In seeking after the good friends, it is advised in the scriptures to follow the method called *jarudapāna* (*jara* – decayed, *udapāna* – well), meaning an old well. When a thirsty man sees an old well, he tries to draw water to drink. In doing so he must take care not to fall into the well but at the same time draw the water he wants.

# CHAPTER 44

## PASSION, MALICE AND DELUSION

### CHANNA THE WANDERER

Now one Channa, a wanderer, came to see the Venerable Ānanda and said this to the latter: “Reverend Ānanda, do you (people) preach the abandoning of passion, of malice and delusion?” “We do indeed, reverend sir” replied Ānanda.

This proves that even in those days people were convinced that these three *kilesas* were unwholesome things which needed to be abandoned. Many people had their own ways of abandoning them. Even now there are many ways. But are they proven by experience? They need to be proven by practice, not by oratorical prowess, which may be effective in the field of ideology.

Channa continued, “Seeing what disadvantages, therein do you so preach?” Before we hear Ānanda’s reply, let us try and answer this question ourselves – to what extent these states affect oneself as much as others. Let me relate a story.

I read a news item some years ago about a mother and two sons. It seemed that the late husband before his

demise had left a considerable amount of wealth for the two sons. It was not certain whether he had left anything for his wife.

At first the widow seemed to be looking after the kids with motherly love. However, over the years she became desirous of being glamorous as she was still of good age and the money she had was not sufficient to keep her going. She started developing passion towards the property belonging to the two sons. Being overwhelmed by passion, she became confused and deluded, and could not see reason.

One day, with a view to taking possession of the property, she took her sons out on a picnic on a lake. After the boat had gone out a distance, she capsized the boat and killed the two sons by drowning them. Here passion led her to malice (killing her own sons) and delusion (not knowing the truth because she was misled by passion). Later the case was investigated, with the result that she faced the penalty and at the same time losing her own sons and the property.

Now, do you get the answer to Channa's question? Are these unwholesome states to be nurtured or eradicated? Here the housewife had been robbed of her wholesome mind, and passion had overcome her instead. If only she had known the correct practice, she would have noted this thought at the moment of arising and aban-

done it. Instead, she had nurtured it and became overwhelmed by it, leading to evil conduct.

Let us now hear Ānanda's reply: "Sir, one who is overwhelmed by passion, losing control of mind, plans things which trouble himself, which trouble others, which trouble both himself and others, and so experiences mental suffering and dejection. Had he abandoned the passions, which he did not do so, he would not have experienced suffering and dejection.

Again, sir, one who is overwhelmed by passion practises immorality in deed, word and thought. But if passion be abandoned he understands.

Again, sir, passion is the cause of blindness (*andha-karano*), not seeing (*accakkhukarano*), not knowing (*añāṇa-karano*) and losing of insight (*paññā nirodho*).

It is joined with vexation (*vigata pakkhiko*), it does not conduce to nibbāna (*anibbāna samvattaniko*).

One who is malicious,... one who is deluded,... (undergoes just the same troubles)... delusion, sir, is the cause of blindness. it does not conduce to *nibbāna*.

Seeing this disadvantage in passion, malice and delusion, we preach the abandoning of them."

Thereupon, Channa went further and asked:

“But, sir, is there any way, is there any practice for the abandoning of passion, malice and delusion?”

“There is indeed, reverend sir.”

“Pray, sir, what is that way? What is that practice?”

“Sir, it is just this ariyan eightfold way, to wit: right view and the rest. right concentration.”

“A goodly way, sir, and a goodly practice for abandoning passion, malice and delusion! Moreover, sir, it is worthwhile applying energy thereto.”

Thus, for the practising yogi he is great (*uttama*). The dhamma is undeniably supreme, good in itself. If one could not be convinced, one must practise and experience for oneself.

Next, we shall go on to another discourse in connection with doctrinal catechism. Regarding ‘*Paññā Nirodho*’ which *paññā* is lost and how? *Paññā* is of three kinds: *kammassakata*, *jhāna* and *vipassanā*. All these are not given the chance to arise. In this way they are lost.

## ĀJĪVAKA’S FOLLOWER

On a certain occasion the Venerable Ānanda was staying at Kosambi in Ghosita Park. Now a certain house-father (*gahapati*), who was a follower of Ājīvaka, an ascetic mendicant (nude *samaṇa*), came to see the Venerable Ānanda and asked him:



“Pray, worthy Ānanda, whose doctrine is well taught (*svākkhāta*)? Who are rightly conducted in the world (*supatipanna* – entered on the right way)? Who are well farers in the world (*sugata*)?”

## GOOD TEACHING

Just like when a monkey is caught, it is tied with its own tail, so too Ānanda retorted:

“Now, housefather, in this matter, I will put you a question. You may answer my question as you think fit. What do you think, housefather: they who preach a doctrine for the abandoning of passion, malice and delusion – is their doctrine well preached or not? What do you think of this?”

“The doctrine of such, sir, is well preached (*svākkhāta*). That is my opinion.”

At this point, I wish to mention about some teachers who teach sensuous pleasures – that these are not to be abandoned, their restraint means pain, one should yield freely to them, enjoy them to the fullest, one will become happy and so forth, thus advocating passion, malice and delusion. Many follow this advice and meet trouble.

However, for the wise, even at the mentioning of the abandonment of passion, malice and delusion, they will feel happy and appreciate the dhamma by saying:

The dhamma of such scriptures is well proclaimed (*svākkhāta*), because it is good in the beginning (*adi kalyāṇa*). Then, after practising *patipatti* in accordance with the scriptures, one controls bodily and verbal conduct and attains *samatha sukha* and *vipassanā sukha*. Thus, also, the dhamma is well preached (*svākkhāta*) because it is good in the middle (*majjhe kalyāṇa*). Here one may compare the two – *kāmarāga*, which is harmfully good, and dhamma, which is harmlessly good: the former being invested with *saṅkhāra dukkha* (the evil of existence) causing *dukkhadukkha* (the evil of pain) and *vipariṇāma dukkha* (the evil of change): the latter is given in the books as ‘*amanusirati hoti*’ (incomparable, transcendental happiness which is good in itself). One note of caution is not to stop in the middle, the stage of *majjhe kalyāṇa*.

As one continues to strive, one achieves the benefit by seeing *magga*, *phala* and *nibbāna*, which is the end quality (*pariyosāna kalyāṇa*) of the dhamma. Passion, malice and delusion are also eradicated. Thus the dhamma of the scriptures is certain to be well proclaimed (*svākkhāta*).

The dhamma is well proclaimed because it is good in the beginning, the middle and the end and because it announces the life of purity that is utterly perfect and pure with meaning and with detail. When listened to, it does good through hearing it because it suppresses the hin-

drances, passion, malice and delusion, thus it is good in the beginning. And when made the way of practice, it does good through the way being entered upon because it brings the bliss of serenity and insight, thus it is good in the middle. And when it has thus been made the way of practice and the fruit of the way is ready, it does good through the fruit of the way because it brings unshakable equipoise, thus it is good in the end.

So it is well proclaimed because it is good in the beginning, the middle and the end.

## RIGHT CONDUCT

Now, to the second question by the Venerable Ānanda:

“Then, housefather, they who so conduct themselves as to abandon passion, malice and delusion – are they well conducted in the world? What is your opinion?”

“Certainly they are, sir.”

Herein, well conducted or entered on the good way (*supatipanna*) is thoroughly conducted or entered on the way (*sutthu patipanna*). That right conduct, being straight, unbent, uncrooked, unwarped, is called noble and true and is known as proper owing to its becomingness.

Walking along the path of morality practice (*sīla sikkhā*), one fulfils right action (*sammā kammanta*), right speech

(*sammā vācā*) and right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*): along the path of concentration practice (*samādhi sikkhā*) one fulfils right effort (*sammā vāyāma*), right mindfulness (*sammā sati*) and right concentration (*sammā samādhi*): along the path of insight practice (*paññā sikkhā*) one fulfils right understanding (*sammā diṭṭhi*) and right thought or aim (*sammā saṅkappa*), overcoming defilements of transgression, obsession and latency at respective stages.

## FARE-THEE-WELL

Now to the third question posed by the Venerable Ānanda:

“Now what do you think, housefather? They whose passion whose malice. whose delusion is abandoned, cut down at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, made such as not to become, of a nature not to spring up again in future time – are such well farers in the world (*sugata*) or not? What is your opinion?”

“Such, sir, are well farers in the world, methinks.”

To this, the Venerable Ānanda concluded:

“Then, you have admitted this much: They who preach a doctrine for the abandoning of passion, malice and delusion, – their doctrine is well preached. They who are so conducted as to abandon passion, malice and delusion. are well conducted in the world. They whose passion. is abandoned are well farers in the world.”

At this, Ājīvaka's follower recollected his own life and seeing the dhamma remarked:

“It is wonderful, sir! It is marvellous! (*abhikkantam, bhante*). Here is no trumpeting of one's own creed (hooting one's own horn), no depreciation of another's creed, but just teaching of dhamma in its proper sphere. You have spoken of (man's) welfare, and self is not brought into question (*attho ca vutto atta ca anupanito*).

Now you yourself, worthy Ānanda, preach dhamma for the abandoning of passion, malice and delusion, and your doctrine is well preached. You conduct yourself so as to abandon passion, malice and delusion, and you are well conducted in the world. In you, worthy Ānanda, these are abandoned, cut down at the root, made like a palm-tree stump. surely you are a well farer in the world.

Excellent, sir! It is excellent (*abhikkantam bhante*). It is as if one would raise the fallen, open up what is hidden, point out the way to one gone astray, hold up a shining light so that they who have eyes may see forms. Thus has dhamma been expounded by the worthy Ānanda in diverse ways. I, myself, worthy Ānanda, do go for refuge to the Buddha, to the Dhamma, to the Order of Monks. Let Master Ānanda accept me as a lay-follower (*upāsaka*) from this day forth, so long as life shall last, as one who has so taken refuge”.

# CHAPTER 45

## NOBLE SILENCE

### TALKING IS A GREAT HINDRANCE

Today I would like to deal with a quotation from the Buddha's admonishment to practising yogis as a reminder to our yogis here. This is about 'conversations' which, I feel, are causing disruptions in the practice. In this connection the Buddha says:

*Sannipatitānaṃ vo  
Bhikkhave dva-yaṃ karani-yaṃ  
Dhammī vā kathā  
Ariyo vā tuṃhi bhāvo.*

*Bhikkhus, when you are assembled together (unavoidably),  
you may perform two things –  
indulge yourselves on dhamma topics  
or remain nobly silent.*

Dhamma topics refer to those connected with the Fourfold Truths or the ten subjects of conversation (*katha vatthu*), namely:

- *appicchakathā* –  
conversation on frugality;
- *santuṭṭhikathā* or *santosakathā* –  
conversation on contentment;
- *vivekakathā* –  
conversation on seclusion or solitude;

- *asamsaṭṭhakathā* –  
conversation on dissociation or aloofness  
from society, i.e., mixing with opposite sex;
- *āradhāviriya-kathā* –  
conversation on exertion;
- *sīlakathā* –  
conversation on morality;
- *samādhikathā* –  
conversation on concentration;
- *paññākathā* –  
conversation on wisdom;
- *vimuttikathā* –  
conversation on deliverance;
- *vimuttiñāṇadassanakathā* –  
conversation on the knowledge and vision  
relating to deliverance.

Even if the conversation is related to the above subjects, there should be a limit (*pamāṇayutta*), because good things should be taken within limits. In short, the yogi should indulge in conversations on his own practice, i.e., *satipaṭṭhāna*, which actually means he converses only with the meditation master to whom he reports his observations and listens for further instructions.

While he is practising as a yogi, he need not observe social ethics such as friendly greetings or conversations. This advice is also for his own benefit.

As to the second advice, namely '*ariyo va tuṃhi bhavo*', it is synonymous with *akathanam* (remaining mute). Here again merely remaining silent will not amount to pure and noble silence if the mind is uncontrolled. By the term *tuṃhi bhavo* it denotes *samatha-vipassanā bhāvanā bhūtaṃ* (being absorbed in concentration and insight meditation). Only this type of *tuṃhi bhavo* can be termed pure and noble silence (*ariyo va tuṃhi bhavo*) and this is only manifested by practice.

Some view absorption in the second *jhāna* as realising the noble silence, because the two *jhānic* factors, namely, *vitakka* and *vicara* have been stilled; especially *vitakka*, which is essential for conversations, has been stilled. Others view absorption in the fourth *jhāna* as realising it, for when breathing stops one is sure that there cannot arise any conversation. However, *samatha* and *vipassanā* practices are sufficient to realise the noble silence.

In addition, there arises a series of benefits. For one thing, you are setting an example for others (newcomers) to follow suit and revere you by instilling *saddhā* in them. Such examples were many during the Buddha's time. For you, too, the benefits are sure to accrue in the forms of *vipassanā ñāṇa* and *magga ñāṇa*.



# CHAPTER 46

## ONE TRUTH LEADS TO ALL TRUTHS

### NATURAL LAW

As the natural law (*niyāma*) goes:

*Unknowing we cling  
Knowing we abandon  
Clinging leads to disaster  
Abandoning leads to peace.*

Let us find out the root cause of clinging and suffering.  
As per the verse:

*Taṇhāṃ kāmagaṇa-nidānaṃ  
Dukkhaṃ taṇhā-nidānaṃ.*

*Craving has its source in sensuous pleasures  
and suffering in craving.*

For instance, to become slim (*taṇhā*) one lives on a diet  
and suffers emaciation (*dukkha*).

### THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING (DUKKHA SACCA)

*Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariya saccam?  
Jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, vyādipi dukkho, maranāmpi*

*dukkhaṃ, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yam picchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ saṃkhittena pancupādānakkhandā dukkhā.*

*Now monks, what are the noble truths of suffering?*

*Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness and distress are suffering.*

*Being attached to the world is suffering,*

*Being separated from the loved ones is suffering,*

*not getting what one wants is suffering.*

*In short, the five aggregates of grasping*

*(pancupadanakkhandā) are suffering.*

This passage enumerates *dukkha sacca*, as quoted from the *Dhammacakka Sutta* – The Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma.

Now the eye is the Truth of Suffering (*dukkha sacca*): the prior craving that originates it by being its root-cause is the Truth of Origin (*samudaya sacca*): the non-occurrence of both is the Truth of Cessation (*nirodha sacca*): and the way that is the act of understanding cessation is the Truth of the Path (*magga sacca*). And so too in the case of the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. In fact, the whole body is *dukkha sacca* and so are the rising and falling, sitting and standing, walking, touching, etc. What should we do with them?

## KNOW THE TRUTH OF SUFFERING

All *nāma-rūpa* phenomena (*dukkha saccas*) arising at the six sense doors are to be noted and discerned (*dukkham pariññeyyaṃ*), otherwise they will not be known (*dukkhe añāṇaṃ*). When you note the rising and falling of the abdomen, you are aware of the tension at rising and relaxation at falling – discerning the Truth of Suffering. As you note with diligence at the moment of hearing you will notice the three Truths of Suffering, namely, the base element or the ear, the striker element or the sound and the ignition element or the hearing consciousness. By discerning these phenomena, their causal relations and their characteristics, you will overcome attachment. Every time you know the true nature you abandon *kilesas*.

On the other hand, if you are negligent and unmindful, you will be ignorant (*avijjā*) of suffering and thus cling to the objects. Hence:

*Unknowing we cling  
Knowing we abandon.*

What will happen if we cling? If we cling (*kilesa*), we will act (*kamma*) – thinking, saying and acting. Actually these *kammas* (good or bad) arise with the accompaniment of *avijjā* and *taṇhā* – mostly *taṇhā*, which conditions further becoming. Hence the saying: ‘Grief springs from craving.’

*Taṇhāya jāyatī soko  
taṇhāya jāyatī bhayaṃ  
Taṇhāya vippamuttassa  
natthi soko kuto bhayaṃ.*

*From craving springs grief,  
From craving springs fear,  
For he who is wholly free of craving  
There is no grief, much less fear.*

## KNOW THE OTHER TRUTH

When we say we know, it means there is something to be known. The knowable things are the *nāma-rūpa* phenomena which are *dukkha saccas*. Knowing is *magga sacca* (the Truth of the Path). Dissipation is *nirodha sacca* (the Truth of Cessation).

The *magga sacca* has eight constituents:

- *sammā vāyāma magganga* –  
the path of right effort to grasp the arising object;
- *sammā sati magganga* –  
the path of right mindfulness expelling the *kilesas*;
- *sammā samādhi magganga* –  
the path of right concentration causing solidarity of mental factors.

The above make up the path of concentration group.

- *sammā saṅkappa magganga* – the path of right aim so as not to deviate the mind elsewhere, such as to evil thoughts, speech or action;
- *sammā diṭṭhi magganga* – the path of right view, understanding truly the three elements of cognitive process.

The above make up the path of wisdom group. As for the path of morality group or the three abstinences (*virati*), namely:

- *sammā vācā* – right speech;
- *sammā kammanta* – right action;
- *sammā ājiva* – right livelihood.

They are fulfilled at the beginning of the practice. Thus, by discerning one *sacca*, namely *dukkha sacca*, one realises the other three *saccas* – *maggā sacca* because one is knowing, *samudaya sacca* because this is the cause which is abandoned, and *nirodha sacca* because the *kilesas* are extinguished, achieving *tadaṅga-nirodhi*. With the abandonment of *kilesas*, *kamma vaṭṭa* will not arise and so too *vipāka vaṭṭa*. Hence it is said:

*What must be directly known is directly known,  
 What has to be developed is developed,  
 What has to be abandoned is abandoned,  
 What will be realised is realised.*

As to the first line, what must be directly known (*pariññeyya dhamma*) is directly known, fully understood or discerned (*pariññata*). Here *pariññeyya dhammas* are *dukkha saccas*. What has to be developed (*bhāvetabba*) or development (*bhāvanā*) refers to *magga sacca* and this is developed (*bhāveti*). What has to be abandoned (*pahātabba*) refers to *samudaya sacca* and this is abandoned, overcome or repelled (*pahāna*). What will be realised is *nirodha sacca* (*sacchikātabba*) and this is realised (*sacchikaroti* or *paccakkhan karoti*).

Thus is said:

*Bhikkhus, he who sees suffering  
Sees also the origin of suffering,  
Sees also the cessation of suffering,  
Sees also the way leading to the cessation of suffering.*

# CHAPTER 47

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q:** *How does society benefit from vipassanā practice?*
- A:** By means of *vipassanā bhāvanā*, the mind ceases to wander. At this moment, there are no thoughts of aggression, lust or breaking the precepts. No malicious thoughts (to harm others) will arise. No unwholesome courses of action will be taken. Mind control leads to physical and verbal control. So society will not suffer from this practice. Instead, such a practice of one person will permeate through the society as the latter realises the advantages of such a practice on its own accord or on the exhortation of the yogi. Thus, the society will benefit from this practice.

The society will begin to support such a practice. By being able to control physical and verbal actions, social culture will be improved. Some non-Buddhists who visit here find serenity in the atmosphere. There are instances of such persons finding satisfaction in the practice.

It is not always easy to see the social value in the life of a wandering teacher of righteousness. Once, while the Buddha was making his rounds from village to village he happened to pass a farmer

who refused to offer him food and demanded to know what contribution the Buddha made to society to justify living on alms. The Buddha's reply was that whereas the farmer ploughed, planted, and produced physical food, a good teacher was a spiritual ploughman who nurtured the moral fibre of society. Thus, the support of the truly learned travelling teacher greatly benefits everyone.

In sharp contrast to the person of impure mind, who throws his praise and support to serving while at the same time neglecting to honour deserving persons, is the wise, developed disciple whose pure state of mind makes him a catalyst for that which is best in society.

**Q:** *They say pīti is harmful, but at the same time is a factor of attaining jhāna. Can we dwell in rapture (pīti), say for five minutes or so? If pīti arises, what should we do?*

**A:** *Pīti is essential for the attainment of jhāna and delight in the dhamma. However, pīti is not an end in itself but a means for advancement to higher factors. If you remain clinging to it, you will not reach a better state. Pīti itself is not harmful. It is desire (nikanti) which is harmful. You must note this mental state. There is no need*



to purposely make it or anything dissolve. You note it to be aware of it. Remember the following verse, 374 of the Dhammapada, and what I said about *pīti* as not an end in itself, but a means of achieving the deathless state:

*Yato, yato sammāsati,  
Khandhānam udayabbayaṃ  
Labhati pīti-pāmojjaṃ  
Amataṃ taṃ vijānataṃ*

*Every time he clearly comprehends  
the arising and the perishing of the khandhas,  
he finds joy and rapture.*

*That, to the wise, is the way to nibbāna (the deathless).*

If he succumbs to *nikanti* he will not attain the deathless. He is said to stop inside (internal stagnation). To delight in *pīti* is childish and immature. It is like giving a kid one dollar or a toy and cause rapture which is emotional and agitative. A grown-up will not feel in this manner. *Pīti* is like a cork floating on the surface of the water – not profound.

**Q:** *Are not pīti and sukha occurring at the same time?*

**A:** They do occur in the first and second *jhānas*. In the third *jhāna*, *pīti* is averted and *sukha* arises in its own right. Free of *pīti*, its quality becomes prominent – *atimadhura* (very sweet).

Now I shall explain the two types of *sukha*. *Sukha* derived through sensations is not complete bliss. It is only when *sukha* is derived without sensations or stimuli, do we enjoy the complete bliss – immaterial bliss.

People consider that real pleasures can be obtained through stimuli which arise out of *nāma-rūpa*. Without *nāma-rūpa* in *nibbāna*, how can they enjoy the pleasures? This question was posed by one Udayi to Elder Sariputta.

People delight in seeing agreeable visible objects, hearing agreeable audible objects and so on. Such bliss arising out of desirable objects is called *vedayita sukha* (bliss through stimuli or bliss roused by contact with present object). To get pleasure in seeing, there must be the eye (sensitivity) and the visible object: on the convergence of the two, seeing consciousness will arise, followed by impression (*phassa*) and feeling (*vedanā*).

Those who cling to the *nāma-rūpa* aggregates, consider the good feeling as real pleasure. To achieve such an insignificant amount of *sukha*, one has to pay for it, undergo a great amount of *dukkha* and even commit immoral deeds. For instance, to enjoy a movie, one has to go to the

cinema and spend some money. In the process, one may meet trouble (*dukkha*). Such a pleasure is a transitory one without any residual essence. At this point, three kinds of *dukkhas* may be mentioned:

- *Dukkha dukkha*

It is an extreme case of suffering, bodily and mentally experienced by all except *anāgāmis* and *arahats*, who suffer only bodily pain.

- *Vipariṇāma dukkha*

It is suffering caused by reversals or loss of *sukha*.

- *Saṅkhāra dukkha*

It refers to the transient and conditional nature of *nāma-rūpa dhammas*.

The yogi understands that with the development of *samādhi* and *paññā*, he experiences *sukha* arising as a result of the overcoming of *nīvaraṇas*. Compared to *kāma* pleasure, he finds *dhamma* pleasure purer, peaceful and more profound.

After the yogi has perceived and valued the *dhamma*, he will consider any thought of *kāmarāga* or the arising of rapture as a disease. Once you find any shortcoming, you will discard it. The *sukha* one derives without *nāma-rūpa* is known as *avedayita* or *santi sukha* (independent non-stimulant or peaceful bliss). Such a bliss can

only be properly understood by the ariyas and not by the *puthujjanas*. To illustrate that there can be bliss which is not associated with sensuous pleasure, we take for example a person who is sleeping so soundly that he does not wish to wake up even if he is offered some sensuous enjoyment. He does not enjoy any sensuous pleasures during his sleep, like any sweet smell in the room or soft mattress on which he may be lying, because he has no knowledge of such things. Yet when he wakes up, he says to himself, 'I have enjoyed a good sleep'. How can one show this pleasure? Though it is there, one cannot show it. Just because one cannot show it, would you say it does not exist? Hence this sleep, though not directly a sensuous or material pleasure, is a kind of pleasure which people relish. I give this example to prove the presence of nibbanic bliss or peace which is not connected with *nāma-rūpa*, and which is many times more blissful than sleep.

We may also compare pleasure arising out of smoking or drinking and that of non-smoking or non-drinking.

**Q:** *It is said that during training, one must not yearn for nibbāna. Why is it so?*

**A:** Once you are on the right path (i.e., *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*) leading to *nibbāna*, there is no need of yearning for it. When longing for *nibbāna*, one may generate *kusala* or *akusala*. If *nibbāna* in the *paññātti* form is desired, *lobha* can arise, and this *lobha* can become a dhamma hindrance. That is why I say, ‘Note every arising’. For example – in an examination hall, the student is answering a mathematical question. He must do the calculation and show the workings to arrive at the answer within a limited time. He cannot be thinking about the answer without working out the actual calculation or formula. Which is the better use of the precious time – working out the calculation and formula towards an answer or just sitting and thinking about the answer?

Understanding the suffering and misery of existence and practising towards the ultimate and absolute deliverance from them, one is well on the road to *nibbāna*, and there is no more need to yearn for it. If one does yearn, one will do so for *nibbāna* by name (*paññātti*) and not by ultimate knowledge (*paramattha*). During *vipassanā* practice, you can achieve momentary cessation (*tadaṅga nirodha*), which on repeated practice can develop into permanent peace (*accanta nirodha*).

In a football match, the clever player should carefully carry the ball as near to the goal post as possible while passing it among his team-mates and keeping it under control. Only when he is sure of the goal will he shoot it in. This is wiser than kicking the ball from a distance. So, just keep attention on the arising objects and proceed in accordance with the right priority.

**Q:** *When we say that as we note an object, such as a desire, it passes away – does it mean that the desire arises but does not take effect, or putting it in another way, defilement arises but does not take effect?*

**A:** Though the question was put briefly, I would like to give a more detailed answer to this.

There is a fundamental difference between the manner in which an ordinary person sees an object and that in which a yogi sees it. As the five sense-objects enter the avenue of five sense-doors, a thought process (*pañcadvāra citta-vīthi*) runs as follows in accordance with the psychic order (*cittaniyāma*):

Suppose a visible object which has passed in one instant enters the avenue of the eye or impinges

the sensory part of the eye, the *bhavaṅga* (life-continuum) consciousness vibrates for two or three thought moments and passes away. Then the five-door apprehending consciousness (*pañcadvaravajjana*) arises and passes away, apprehending that very visible object. At this stage, the natural flow is checked and turned towards the object as much as to say “Ah, *what is this?*”

Thereafter, the following thought moments arise and cease in the following order:

- eye-consciousness seeing that very form (*cakkhu-viññāna*)
- recipient consciousness receiving it (*sampaṭicchana*)
- investigating consciousness investigating it (*santīraṇa*)
- determining consciousness determining it (*voṭṭhapana*)

Such a process runs very fast, much faster than one can imagine. The rapidity of the succession of such thought moments is hardly conceivable by the ken of human knowledge.

The five sense-door thought process (*pañcadvara-vīthi*) is followed by the mind-door thought

process (*mano-dvara-vīthi*) perceiving the aforementioned visible object mentally. In the latter the mind-door apprehending consciousness or mental advertence (*manodvaravajjana*) follows the *bhavanga* vibrations. Up to this stage, the thought processes belong to *kriya avyākata cittani* – functional, ineffective consciousness, which is neutral, neither good nor bad. It is after these two states of thought processes that a meditating yogi is differentiated from an ordinary person.

The ordinary person will continue with the thought processes of name and object concepts till the object is actually known. Thereafter, he will cling to the idea of sign in the object (*nimitta gaha*) and eventually proceed into its details (*anubyanjana gaha*), thus developing *lobha*, *dosa* or *moha*, depending on the situation. These things occur at the stage of impulsion (*javana*) where an action is judged whether moral or immoral.

Whereas, the meditating yogi will cut off the continuing thought processes by noting the objects as they arise. He stops at the mind-door thought process and cuts off the chain before impulsion (*javana*) gains strength for the production of *kamma* (wholesome or unwholesome



volition concerning the respective process of consciousness).

As the seen is merely seen or the heard is merely heard, etc., and the thought processes cease at the moment of determining without giving rise to the *javanas*, *kilesa javanas* have no chance of arising in the mind of the yogi. This is known as '*Ditthe dittha mattam bhavissati*' meaning the seen shall merely be seen. The word '*mattam*' (merely) refers to cutting off the particulars such as form, manner and name of the object through mindfulness.

As the yogi is not indulged in further reflections on the object, *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* do not arise in them, whether agreeable or disagreeable. Discerning the phenomena, knowing their cause-effect relationship, and their natural characteristics, *akusala javanas* will not arise, the unwholesome roots will not arise.

The *javanas* can be moral, immoral or functional. In the mind of the yogi, moral *javanas* arise because it is devoid of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* and possesses *alobha*, *adosa*, and *amoha*. The moral consciousness has two parts, namely, *anavajja* (innocent) as it is devoid of unwholesome traits, and *sukhavipāka* (happy consequence).

There are two kinds of *kusala cittas*:

- *vaṭṭagāmi kusala citta* – moral consciousness leading to the round of rebirths (*saṃsāra*):
- *vivaṭṭagāmi kusala citta* – moral consciousness leading to the absence of the cycle of existence (*nibbāna*).

The former moral action is not free from *kilesa*, whereas the latter one is free from *kilesa*.

Through mindfulness, the yogi will develop the latter kind. Discerning the phenomena, knowing their cause-effect relationship and their natural characteristics – both unique and common, he will develop the *vipassanā ñāṇa*, thus overcoming the three *kilesa vaṭṭas*, namely ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*) and clinging (*upādāna*), leading to the stilling of both *akusala* and *vaṭṭagāmi javanas*. This is what we call the stoppage of *kamma vaṭṭa* (cycle of *kamma* formations and *kamma* process) and attainment of *vivaṭṭagāmi*. Recurrence of these cycles results in *vipāka vaṭṭa* (round of results). This stoppage means cessation of *vipāka vaṭṭa*. The stoppage of the three cycles, *kilesa*, *kamma* and *vipāka vaṭṭas*, through mindfulness, leads to temporary *vivaṭṭagāmi*.

As the *vivaṭṭagāmi bhāvanā kusala cittas* gain strength, even if the sense objects are invading the six sense-doors, with continuous noting the yogi's reflection will stop at the early stage of 'mere seeing', and no *kilesa* will arise.

A yogi who has developed the *balavā* (strong) *vipassanā* such *nibbidā ñāṇa* (contemplation of aversion) and especially *sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa* (contemplation of equanimity regarding all formations) will not develop any *kilesas*. Such a person is a super-yogi. In a medium type of yogi, *rāga* (lust or greed) may intervene once or twice in the noting process. But once he realises the arising of such *kilesa*, he will at once note it off. The *kilesa* is like a dirty spot on a clean white surface. Since the small dirty spot is very prominent it is easily seen and removed. So also, *rāga* will dissipate completely if the yogi is diligent.

As for the lowest type of yogi, attacks by *kilesa javanas* like *rāga* and *dosa* may be more frequent. The yogi will make great effort to eradicate the unwholesome *javanas*. As there are many gaps to accommodate *kilesas*, such a situation will disturb and impede the progress. In the ordinary mind, it is not strong enough to prevent defilements. It is like taking unwholesome

food. If taken in large quantities, it will cause much suffering. If only a little portion of the unwholesome food is taken it may be all right. In such a situation, if the person is well aware and the antidote is available it is also all right.

Similar is the case with the immoral states (*lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*). If the yogi is aware of their attack and is able to cure the defect, the ill effect may disappear. If, on the other hand, they are accepted, they will accumulate into a big heap. The treatment may become difficult, and the yogi may become a chronic patient. It is always advisable to prevent these immoral thoughts from entering. Note vigorously, then *kilesas* will not arise. Blame neither the physician nor the medicine.

To a worldling at the moment of spotting:

- He sees the clear object:
- Reflecting on the seen:
- Form and manifestation (*paññātti*) arise:
- A name is finally known.

To a *vipassanā* yogi at the moment of spotting:

- Noting at the very moment of spotting:
- At mere spotting, the thought process stops:
- Discerning *nāma-rūpa*, understanding their rise and fall:
- *Anicca*, *dukkha* nature manifesting.

To discern *Dukkha Sacca* (Truth of Suffering) at the moment of spotting:

- Eye and visible object the two materialities:
- Seeing consciousness, impression and feeling, the three mentalities:
- Known at the moment of seeing all *Dukkha Saccas*:
- Known through mindfulness as ‘seeing’.

**Q:** *Regarding the expression ‘note at the moment of arising’, does noting consciousness arise at exactly the same moment as spotting an object?*

**A:** It never does, because consciousness or more correctly ‘*vīthi*’ occurs one at a time. The best one can do is to let noting consciousness fall as close as possible to the moment of awareness of the object – *santati paccuppanna* (continuous existence or presence) – as soon as the object enters the avenue.

**Q:** *If one visions the youthful experiences which, though previously unknown, are considered reliable, can one conclude that one has attained the matured form of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*?*

**A:** One cannot say so. One with strong awareness can vision the past even before this stage – at the lower stage, i.e., between *sammāsana* and *udayabbaya ñāṇas* – as though one had possessed

supernatural powers. But in most cases, one cannot see because one is much too involved with the dhamma flavours such as *pīti* and *passadhi* which arise as overwhelming temptations and thus are classified as *vipassanupakkilesa* (imperfections of insight). Thus, it is only at the matured stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa* when *pīti* is abandoned, that *upekkhā* (*tatramajjhattupekkhā*) plays a prominent role and one can dwell with equanimity, the equanimity with which one is detached from the *atima-dhura sukha* of the third *jhāna*, not to speak of the *pīti* which arises in the second *jhāna* at the tender form of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*.

**Q:** *When one wins understanding by sharpening one's faculties through practice, can one sharpen one's intuitive knowledge in the choice between two different courses of action?*

**A:** It is possible that one seems to hear somebody coming and telling you what to do.

**Q:** *When the yogi is noting the objects, how can these visions arise in the noting process?*

**A:** They arise as objects to be noted.

Some twenty years ago, a female yogi, having attained *vipassanā* knowledge in an intense manner, visioned what was going on in the

kitchen of her house – cooking, washing dishes, etc. She noted the time and when her family came, they told her what they were doing in the kitchen at that time, which exactly coincided with what she visioned.

Some twenty-five years ago, a Japanese yogi by the name of Mr. Kami attained a stage of insight between *sammāsana ñāṇa* and *udayabbaya ñāṇa*. One day, he visioned that his sister in Japan was involved in a legal suit about a land dispute which he had not known before. When he read his sister's letter which came the same day, he was surprised about the exact coincidence.

A few days later, the same yogi visioned that a local business colleague of his came to him for advice. He had not known about this before. When he passed the Chapter House on his way to his meal, he met this colleague who came to seek for advice. The yogi was surprised at this coincidence.

Such visions become more evident at the matured stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*. These visions belong to the past and arise as *paññātti nimitta* (conceptual signs) in the *nāma-rūpa* process. Noting them as they arise (*nāma*) amounts to the Knowledge of Ultimates (*Paramattha-dhamma*).

What we have just discussed are very common and not strange. A remarkable episode is that of a eleven year old *sāmaṇera* who related in detail his experiences from the moment of conception up to date – the various stages of development of the body and his sufferings in the womb – in a clear tone and efficient manner surpassing those who had studied Abhidhamma.

The next day, we asked him to relate his story for our records. He could not. So, we asked him to try a method to enable him to relate. We did not tell him what to do. So he made another effort in his dhamma practice with a resolution for vision. This time he was able to relate more completely than before. He was also rather excited at this.

This is an example of the effect of *sati* which adheres closely to the object (*upaṭṭhāna*), where one advances to firmly establish mindfulness (*upaṭṭhita* or *suppaṭṭhita sati*).

At this stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, *sati* is extremely powerful, and one is able to visualise whatever one adverts to, so much so that one is able to see another world (*paraloka*) of this universe in a vivid manner as though one had achieved the higher spiritual powers. Such things are not strange.



**Q:** *What are the salient factors to differentiate sati from samādhi?*

**A:** In short, *sati* is the mental possession or grasping of the object, whereas *samādhi* is the concentrated consciousness. They are better understood by analysis.

### CHARACTERISTICS (LAKKHAṆA)

As to the characteristics of *sati*, its chief characteristic is ‘not floating away’ (*apilāpana*), that is to say, it is characterised as ‘sinking into the object’.

*Samādhi* is characterised as ‘not scattering’ (*avikkhepa*) which means it is ‘collected’. What if the *samādhi* is in excess? The target will become hazy, the mind will contract and become sluggish and drowsy.

### FUNCTION (RASA)

As to the function of *sati*, it functions as ‘not forgetting’ (*asammosa rasa*), that is not losing sight of the object, whereas *samādhi* functions as ‘condensing, collecting and concentrating the consciousness into the object (*sampiṇḍana rasa*)’ and produces this effect on the mental states (*cetasikas*) associated with it.

## MANIFESTATION (PACCUPAṬṬHĀNA)

As regards *sati*, it is of two kinds. Firstly, it is manifested as ‘confrontation’, that is coming into face-to-face contact with the object (*visayā-bhimukha-bhāva paccupaṭṭhāna*). Secondly, it is manifested as ‘guarding’ (*ārakkha*) against the entry of *kilesas*. As for *samādhi*, it is manifested as ‘calmness’ (*upasama*), that is calm unification of mind on a single object. It is like the boys taking part in a drill (physical training), assembling at an appointed place to follow the instructions of their master. In another sense, *sati* is the cause and *samādhi* is the effect. By fixing the mind on the object, unification or concentration of the mind is achieved.

# BIOGRAPHY

## THE MOST VENERABLE OVADACARIYA SAYADAW BHADDANTA PANDITABHIVAMSA

*Sayadaw U Pandita*, a name frequently referred to by many, was born to the family of *U Pe* and *Daw Chit Su* of Shwebosu Quarter at the Tadagale Village, Insein Township (now Greater Yangon) on the ninth waning day of Waso, 1283 BE (28 July 1921).

He received his early Buddhist education from the age of seven under the tutelage of ***Sayadaw U Zagara*** at Dekkhina-yone Monastery, Ohne Village where he passed the Pahtamagne and Pahtamalat (Primary and Middle Level) scriptural oral examinations.

At the age of twelve he was initiated into the Buddhist Saṅgha as a *sāmaṇera* (novice) at Ohne Village, Kawa Township and learned the basic *Piṭaka* and *Abidhammattha Saṅgaha*. At eighteen, he passed the Pathamagyī (Higher Level) examination held at the Mahabodhi Monastery, Kyauktan Township, Pegu District.

When he was twenty he received the Higher Ordination from **Maha-bodhi Sayadaw** of Kyauktan, Pegu District who acted as his Preceptor. After his third vassa, in 1948 (1309 BE), he studied the Pariyatti Dhamma at Kyaikkasan Shwekyin Monastery and passed the Pahtamagyi examination and the special Pariyatti examinations held by the Zediyanakana Association. His studies of Buddhist scriptures, Higher Pali Texts, *Atthagatha* and the *Tikas* were blessed by the good guidance and tutelage of eminent Theras, notably, **Ashin Ānanda Pandita** (Varanasi Sayadaw), **Ashin Vicittabhivamsa** and **Ashin Chandawsabhivamsa**. He passed the Government and Zediyanakana Teachership (*Dhammacariya*) examinations in the period between 1915 to 1952 (1313-1314 BE).

1950 (1312 BE) was the year where the Sayadaw first practised *Vipassanā* meditation under the instructions of the **Most Venerable Aggamahapandita Mahasi Sayadaw**. His immediate *Kammaṭṭhānacariya* (meditation teacher) was **Ashin Vicara**. In 1312 BE he also started serving as a Dhamma teacher at the new Pattiya Shwegyin Kyaikkasan Monastery. In 1316 BE he was involved in the Sixth Sanghayana (Sixth Synod) as *Pali Visodhaka* (Reviser).

Leaving behind the role of Dhamma teacher in 1317 BE (1955), he devoted himself fully to the practice of

*bhāvanā* (meditation) and undertook responsibilities assigned by Mahasi Sayadaw at Sasana Yeiktha in Yangon. In January 1959 (1320 BE – on the twelfth waning of the month of Nattaw) he accompanied Mahasi Sayadaw to Sri Lanka. Staying back there for three years, he rendered service in opening new centres.

Upon returning from Sri Lanka he acted as *Kammaṭṭhānacariya* at three centres – Yangon, Moulmein and Mandalay Mahasi Meditation Centres – for *bhikkhus* and *parabbajikas* (nuns) as well as lay yogis numbering in thousands. Hundreds of foreign yogis have benefited from his guidance during his tenure as *Kammaṭṭhānacariya*.

After the demise of Mahasi Sayadaw in 1982, Sayadaw U Pandita was elected as *Ovādacariya* (Principle Preceptor) by the Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization of Yangon Sasana Yeiktha on 22 August.

He made his first visit to the United States via United Kingdom in 1984 where he conducted a three-month meditation retreat followed by another six-week retreat in Penang, Malaysia. In 1985 he visited Nepal and Australia where he conducted a six week and four week retreat respectively.

His second visit to the States in May 1986 was made possible on the invitation of the Buddha Sasana

Foundation of California. A total of seven-five yogis attended his retreat in Hawaii and another ninety-five in Yucca Valley, California. January 1988 also saw Sayadaw U Pandita in Australia guiding a six-week retreat for fifty yogis.

*Sayadaw U Pandita*, is an eminent meditation master of his own merit, succeeding the late Mahasi Sayadaw as head of the Mahasi Centre of Myanmar. Presently the Sayadaw conducts retreats in his new meditation centre, *Panditarama*, which was established in 1990.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• suffering (<i>dukkha sacca</i>)</li> <li>• origin of suffering (<i>samudaya sacca</i>)</li> <li>• cessation of suffering (<i>nirodha sacca</i>)</li> <li>• way leading to the cessation of suffering (<i>magga sacca</i>)</li> </ul>	
FOUR WHEELS OF FULFILMENT (CAKKA)	70
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• living in a suitable place (<i>patirupadesavāsa</i>)</li> <li>• association with good persons (<i>sappurisupanissaya</i>)</li> <li>• right self-regulation (<i>attasammāpanidhi</i>)</li> <li>• done good work in former existence (<i>pubbekatapuññatā</i>)</li> </ul>	
FIVE KINDS OF DELIVERANCE (VIMUTTI)	411
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• temporary deliverance (<i>tadaṅga vimutti</i>)</li> <li>• stopping deliverance (<i>vikkhambbhana vimutti</i>)</li> <li>• relinquishment deliverance (<i>samuccheda vimutti</i>)</li> <li>• repeated deliverance (<i>patipassaddhi vimutti</i>)</li> <li>• deliverance from <i>saṃsāra</i> – <i>nibbāna</i> (<i>nissāraṇa vimutti</i>)</li> </ul>	
FIVE KINDS OF JOY (PĪTI)	209
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minor joy or thrill (<i>khuddhaka pīti</i>)</li> <li>• momentary or instantaneous joy (<i>khaṇikā pīti</i>)</li> </ul>	

- showering or flood of joy (*okkantika pīti*)
- uplifting joy (*ubbega pīti*)
- pervading or rapturous joy (*pharaṇa pīti*)

## FIVE KINDS OF HINDRANCES (NIVARAṆA)

217, 449

- sensuous lust (*kāmacchanda*)
- ill-will (*vyāpāda*)
- sloth and torpor (*thina-middha*)
- restlessness and worry (*uddhacca kukkuccha*)
- sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*)

## FIVE KINDS OF MASTERY (OF JHĀNIC FACTORS)

336

- in adverting (*avajjana vasībhāva*)
- in attaining (*samapajjāna vasībhāva*)
- in resolving or steadying the duration (*adhīṭṭhāna vasībhāva*)
- in emerging (*vuṭṭhāna vasībhāva*)
- in reviewing (*paccavekkhana vasībhāva*)

## FIVE KINDS OF MENTAL BONDAGES (CETOVINIBANDHA)

117

- sensuous lust (*kāmarāga*)
- clinging to oneself or one's existence (*bhavarāga*)
- craving for external things
- enjoying luxuries, such as indulging in food, slumber, torpor and hangover
- craving for becoming in the *deva* world

## FIVE KINDS OF STINGINESS (MACCHARIYA)

32

- dwelling place (*āvāsa macchhariya*)
- family, male and female donors (*kula macchhariya*)

- gain or inability to share gain (*lābha macchariya*)
- appearance and fame (*vaṇṇa macchariya*)
- dhamma or mental state (*dhamma macchariya*)

## FIVE KINDS OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

35

- association with persons (*dassana saṃsagga*)
- association through listening intimately (*savana saṃsagga*)
- association by conversation (*samullapana saṃsagga*)
- enjoyment in personal belongings (*sambhoga saṃsagga*)
- delight in one's own body (*kāya saṃsagga*)

## FIVE QUALITIES OF ELEMENTS OF EXERTION (PADHĀNIYANGA)

104

- faith (*saddhā*)
- health (*arogyam*)
- sincerity
- energy (*virīya*)
- wisdom (*paññā*)

## FIVE SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

358

- faith (*saddhā*)
- energy (*virīya*)
- mindfulness (*sati*)
- concentration (*samādhi*)
- wisdom (*paññā*)

## FIVE THINGS HINDERING THE MIND FROM MAKING RIGHT EXERTION

113

- doubts about the Buddha
- doubts about the Dhamma
- doubts about the Saṅgha
- doubts about the three *Sikkhā* (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*)
- ill-will towards his fellow monks/companions

## SIX FACTORS OF ABSORPTION (JHĀNANGA)

187

- applying one's mind to the object (*vitakka*)
- sustaining one's mind to the object (*vicara*)
- joy with interest in the object (*pīti*)
- bliss not connected with material pleasures (*sukha*)
- equanimity (*upekkhā*)
- one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*)

## SIX QUALITIES OF THE LAW (DHAMMA)

386

- well proclaimed by the Blessed One (*svakkhato*)
- visible here and now (*sandiṭṭhiko*)
- not delayed and timeless (*akāliko*)
- inviting inspection (*ehi-passiko*)
- onward-leading (*opāneyyiko*)
- directly experienceable by the wise (*paccataṃ veditabbo viññuhi*)

## SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT (SAMBOJJHAṄGA)

227

- mindfulness (*sati-sambojjhaṅga*)
- investigation of the dhamma (*dhammavijaya-sambojjhaṅga*)
- energy (*virīya-sambojjhaṅga*)
- joy (*pīti-sambojjhaṅga*)
- tranquillity (*passaddhi-sambojjhaṅga*)
- concentration (*samādhi-sambojjhaṅga*)
- equanimity (*upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga*)

## SEVEN FACTORS LEADING TO INVESTIGATION OF THE DHAMMA (DHAMMA-SAMBHOJJHAṄGA)

234

- asking question and discussing
- making the basics clean

- balancing the faculties
- avoidance of ignorant persons
- cultivation of knowledgeable persons
- reviewing the field for the exercise of profound knowledge
- resoluteness upon the investigation of states

## SEVEN KINDS OF LATENT DEFILEMENTS (ANUSAYA KILESA)

55

- sensuous lust or greed (*kāmarāga*)
- craving for continued existence (*bhavarāga*)
- ill-will (*paṭigha*)
- pride (*māna*)
- views (*ditṭhi*)
- sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*)
- ignorance (*avijjā*)

## SEVEN KINDS OF SUITABILITY (SAPPĀYA)

360

- of abode (*āvāsa sappāya*)
- of resort (*gocara sappāya*)
- of speech (*bhassa sappāya*)
- of person (*puggala sappāya*)
- of food (*bhojana sappāya*)
- of climate (*utu sappāya*)
- of posture (*iriyāpatha sappāya*)

## SEVEN QUALITIES OF AN ARIYAN

463

- rich in faith (*saddhā dhana*)
- morality (*sīla dhana*)
- conscientiousness (*hiri ottappa*)



- fear of blame (*ottappa dhana*)
- quality of listening (*suta dhana*)
- generosity (*cāga dhana*)
- wisdom (*paññā dhana*)

## SEVEN UNIVERSAL MENTAL STATES (SABBACITTASĀDHĀRANA) 289

- contact (*phassa*)
- feeling (*vedanā*)
- perception (*saññā*)
- volition (*cetanā*)
- one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*)
- attention (*manasikāra*)

## EIGHT KINDS OF MADNESS (UMMATTAKA) 52

- frenzied with lust (*kāmummattaka*)
- frenzied with hate (*kodhummattaka*)
- frenzied with wrong view (*diṭṭhummattaka*)
- frenzied with infatuation (*mohummattaka*)
- driven mad by *yakkhas* or demoniacal possession (*yakkhummattaka*)
- mad from organic disorders (*pittummattaka*)
- frenzied with intoxicants (*surummattaka*)
- maddened by misfortune (*vyasanummattaka*)

## EIGHT QUALITIES OF A GOOD FRIEND (KALYĀNAMITTA) 490

- endowed with faith (*saddhā sampanna*)
- endowed with virtue (*sīla sampanna*)
- endowed with learning (*suta sampanna*)
- endowed with generosity (*cāga sampanna*)

- endowed with effort (*virīya sampanna*)
- endowed with mindfulness (*sati sampanna*)
- endowed with concentration (*samādhi sampanna*)
- endowed with wisdom (*paññā sampanna*)

## EIGHTFOLD PATH, NOBLE (ARIYA AṬṬHANGIKA MAGGA)

62

- right understanding (*sammā diṭṭhi*)
- right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*)
- right speech (*sammā vācā*)
- right action (*sammā kammanta*)
- right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*)
- right effort (*sammā vāyāma*)
- right mindfulness (*sammā sati*)
- right concentration (*sammā samādhi*)

## NINE BENEFITS OF SATIPAṬṬHĀNA PRACTICE

69

SEE ALSO

462

- mental purification
- overcoming of sorrow (*soka*)
- overcoming of lamentation (*parideva*)
- overcoming of physical pain (*kāyika dukkha*)
- overcoming of grief (*domanassa*)
- overcoming of defilements (*kilesa*)
- detachment (*viveka*)
- freedom (*pamokkha*)
- liberation (*vimokkha*)

## TEN ARMIES OF MĀRA

119

- sensuous pleasures (*kāma*)
- dissatisfaction (*arati*)

- hunger and thirst (*khuppipāssā*)
- craving (*taṇhā*)
- sloth and torpor (*thina middha*)
- fear (*bhīru*)
- doubt (*vicikkicha*)
- hypocrisy and obstinacy (*makkha* and *thambha*)
- gain, fame and reverence (*lābha*, *siloka* and *sakkāra*)
- self-exaltation and disparaging others (*attukkamsana* and *paravambhana*)

## TEN IMPERFECTIONS OF INSIGHT (UPAKKILESA)

221

- illumination (*obhāsa*)
- knowledge (*ñāṇa*)
- rapturous happiness (*pīti*)
- tranquillity (*passaddhī*)
- bliss (*sukha*)
- resolute confidence (*adhimokkha*)
- exertion (*paggaha*)
- assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*)
- equanimity (*upekkhā*)
- attachment (*nikanti*)

## TEN KINDS OF EQUANIMITY (UPEKKHĀ)

270

- six-factored equanimity (*chalangupekkhā*)
- equanimity as a divine abiding (*brahmavihārupekkhā*)
- equanimity as an enlightenment factor (*bojjhaṅgupekkhā*)
- equanimity of energy (*viriyupekkhā*)
- equanimity as a feeling (*vedanupekkhā*)
- equanimity about formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā*)

- equanimity about insight (*vipassanupekkhā*)
- equanimity as a specific neutrality (*tatramajjhattupekkhā*)
- equanimity of *jhāna* (*jhānupekkhā*)
- equanimity of purification (*parisuddhupekkhā*)

## TEN KINDS OF DEFILEMENTS (KILESA)

436

- greed (*lobha*)
- hatred (*dosa*)
- delusion or ignorance (*moha*)
- vanity (*māna*)
- heresy (*diṭṭhi*)
- doubt (*vicikicchā*)
- sloth (*thina*)
- restlessness or gapping (*uddhacca*)
- shamelessness (*ahirika*)
- fearlessness (*anottappa*)

## TEN SUBJECTS OF CONVERSATION (KATHU VATTHU)

502

- conversation on frugality (*appicchakathā*)
- conversation on contentment (*santuṭṭhikathā* or *santosakathā*)
- conversation on seclusion or solitude (*vivekakathā*)
- conversation on dissociation or aloofness from society (*asamsaṭṭhakathā*)
- conversation on exertion (*āraddhaviriyakathā*)
- conversation on morality (*sīlakathā*)
- conversation on concentration (*samādhikathā*)
- conversation on wisdom (*paññākatha*)
- conversation on deliverance (*vimuttikatha*)
- conversation on the knowledge and vision relating to deliverance (*vimuttiñāṇadassanakathā*)

## TEN WHOLESOME OR MERITORIOUS ACTION

374

- alms giving (*dāna*)
- observing precepts (*sīla*)
- mental concentration (*bhāvanā*)
- respecting the elders (*apacāyana*)
- serving or helping others (*veyyavacca*)
- sharing of merits (*pattidāna*)
- rejoicing in others' merits (*pattanumodanā*)
- listening to the doctrine (*dhammassavana*)
- delivering the doctrine (*dhammadêšana*)
- holding right view (*diṭṭhijukamma*)

## ELEVEN ADVANTAGES OF METTĀ BHĀVANĀ

322

- sleeps well (*sukhaṃ supati*)
- wakes in comfort (*sukhaṃ patibujjhati*)
- dreams no evil dreams (*na papakaṃ supinaṃ passati*)
- dear to and beloved by human beings (*manussānam piyo hoti*)
- dear to and beloved by non-human beings (*amanussānam piyo hoti*)
- deities guard him (*devatā rakkhanti*)
- not affected by fire, poison and weapons (*nassa aggi vā  
visaṃ vā satthaṃ vā kamati*)
- mind easily concentrated (*tvaṇṇaṃ cittaṃ samādhīyati*)
- serene facial expression (*mukhavaṇṇo vipassīdati*)
- dies unconfused (*assammulho kālaṃ karoti*)
- reappears in Brahma world (*uttariṃ appativijjhanto  
Brahmalokupago hoti*)

- four persons who attain the realization of *Magga* (Path)
- four persons who attain the realization of *Phala* (Fruit)
- four persons who are striving through Vipassanā Meditation to attain the four stages of realization

## ENDNOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> This is in accordance with the well-known formula often found in original Pali text: *Yam kinci samudayadhamman sabbam taṃ nirodho dhammam* – *Whatever is of the nature of arising, all that is of the nature of cessation* and also *Yama aniccam taṃ dukkham* – *Whatever is impermanent is painful.* [BACK](#)
- <sup>2</sup> *Āsava* is synonymous with *kilesa*. *Āsavas* are either three or four: *kāmāsava*, *bhavāsava*, (*diṭṭhāsava*), and *avijjāsava*, i.e., cankers of sensual pleasure, existence, (heresy) and ignorance. [BACK](#)
- <sup>3</sup> *Attapaniya dhammas*: Sixteen insatiable desires. [BACK](#)
- <sup>4</sup> The conception of *dukkha* may be viewed from three aspects:
- *dukkha* as ordinary suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*);
  - *dukkha* as produced by change (*viparnāma-dukkha*);
  - *dukkha* as conditioned states (*saṅkhāra-dukkha*). [BACK](#)
- <sup>5</sup> *Sineha*: viscous liquid, sap - signifies affection. [BACK](#)
- <sup>6</sup> *Vithi* - thought process, cognitive series of consciousness. [BACK](#)
- <sup>7</sup> The Doctrine of Conditioned Genesis or Dependent Origination. [BACK](#)