

A discourse on
**TO NIBBĀNA VIA
THE
NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH**

by
The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw
of
Burma



Inclusive of
Sāraṇiya Dhamma & Mahāpaccavekkhana



Translated by U Htin Fatt (Maung Htin)

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Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization
Mahasi Thathana Yeiktha
Rangoon

A DISCOURSE ON
**TO NIBBANA VIA
THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH**

by
THE VENERABLE MAHASI SAYĀDAW
OF BURMA

INCLUSIVE OF
**Saraniya Dhamma
&
Mahapaccavekkhana**

*Translated from Burmese
by*
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TO NIBBANA VIA THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

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TO NIBBĀNA VIA THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

INTRODUCTION

The original Burmese version of this book of Dhamma was written by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw of Burma. This has been painstakingly translated into English as is presented now, by a well-known and prominent writer U Htin Fatt (Pen-name Maung Htin), who is one of the members of the Mahasi Translation Committee of this Sasana Yeiktha. The book is intended for foreign yogis in particular for their benefit. It is hoped that they will find the text of this translation with its original style of expression and essence truly preserved, really enlightening.

The leading item in this treatise is one of the famous Suttas relating to an incident that occurred on the eve of Buddha's mahā-parinibbāna when an ascetic by the name of Subhadda called on the Buddha and made queries to find out the real truth of the Dhamma. In answer to these queries, Buddha with deep compassion elucidated the Dhamma and the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path as the only way leading

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to the end of sufferings and the cessation of the round of rebirths. Buddha discovered and called it the Middle Path (majjhima paṭtipadā) between the two extremes, namely, indulgence in sensual pleasures which is one extreme, and self-torture in the form of severe ascetism—harmful, painful and deplorable, is the other. The Path comprising the eight steps signify eight mental factors. They are interdependent and interrelated. Taken in all they constitute three essential groups of spiritual development—Sīla (Morality), Samādhi (Mental concentration), and Paññā (Insight—wisdom).

Buddha has pointed out that a living being is the Aggregate of five factors, one of them being material and the remaining four psychic. They are the tangible corporeal matter—the physical body, the sensations, the perceptions, the tendency formations (volitions) and the consciousness, and are known as panca-shandā or Five Aggregates. In fact, it is these five aggregates that the Buddha has summed up all the mental and physical phenomena of existence.

In the first part of this book “To Nibbāna *via* the Noble Eightfold Path”, it is clearly manifested that all sufferings arising out of craving for life can be eradicated by perfect training of the mind through Vipassanā Bhāvanā— which is aimed at direct insight into the true nature of reality. Vipassanā meditation

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means observing every phenomenon occurring at the six-sense doors. Through such meditation, the true nature of the five aggregates, or mind and body is grasped and seen in the light of the characteristics of Impermanence, Unsatisfactoriness and Non-Self (*Anicca, Dukkha* and *Anatta*). Such seeing or knowledge is known as Insight (*Vipassanā-ñāṇa*). The process of gaining various stages of *Ñāṇa* has been vividly described therein in brief.

This method – the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path has been preserved and handed down to us in the form of written texts known as scriptures and by a long line of Arahats and samanās in an unbroken continuity since the life time of Buddha well over 2500 years ago

In reading through this book, one is given to understand very clearly that for a person without right or correct understanding and faith, no progress can be made for attaining true wisdom in his right effort in the exercise of meditation.

Eminently well versed in scriptures (*pariyatti*) as well as in the field of practical *vipassanā*, the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw, Agga Mahā Paṇḍita, the Author, is capable of giving us inspiring guidance as to how liberation from *dukkha* can be achieved. This is simply due to his great gift as a distinguished teacher of *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation. In the text of this book the process of purification or refinement of

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the moral, mental spiritual perceptions has been explained with lucidity in a very simple and easy way. To Buddhists, the correct way to overcome all sufferings and attain the ultimate goal of Nibbāna is to follow the right Path. This is the only way for purification of the mind, for the overcoming of all vices and defilements of mind and for the cessation of all sufferings. According to Buddhism, realization of Nibbāna through mindfulness is the ultimate objective. *Nibbāna*, in a nutshell, is the supreme state of being absolutely free from all *Kilesās* (defilements) and all kinds of sufferings from rebirth.

The next part included in this book is "Sāraṇīya Dhamma". It teaches both monks and laymen alike the way to live in mental peace, to respect and love each other. Buddha's exhortation in this Sutta is to practise and strictly observe morality, and to generate the feeling of loving-kindness in thought, word and deeds. Emphasis has been made on the paramount importance of the cardinal values of Mettā, Universal Benevolence and Compassion to acquire merit and to bring about peace and harmony among nations and for all mankind. It also enjoins us to subdue anger, and avoid hatred and jealousy and to share among ourselves, as far as possible, when occasion arises what we own and possess so that love is reciprocated and harmonious relationship

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established. The Buddhist way of life is an intense process of cleansing one's speech, action and thought. It is self-development and self-purification.

The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw in amplification of this noble dhamma, expresses in detail that inasmuch as people have insatiable desires, they are apt to pursue their blind career of whirling round the wheel of existence, and are twisted and torn between the spokes of trouble, misery and suffering. Sensual pleasures and happiness derived sporadically in this worldly life is ephemeral or to put it in another way, occasional flashes in darkness. The fundamental point also stressed therein is to seek for true happiness and gain complete freedom from all sufferings. The method of Dhamma revealed to us by the Buddha is, in essence, to follow the true Path through the practice of insight meditation which will eventually lead to cessation of dukkha.

The last exposition of Dhamma incorporated in this book related to Mahā Paccavekkhaṇā dhamma originally set forth in the Kosambiya Sutta of Mūlapaṇṇāsa. It is an elaboration of *ariya-magga paññā*. It "seeks to explain the seven principles relating to the examination of oneself in the application of the noble knowledge to salvation from suffering." In particular, a Sotāpanna (Stream-winner) may reflect upon

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himself and make his own self-analysis possibly in a quiet place best suited for him to enhance his samādhi. The mental attitude and behaviour borne by a Sotāpanna is candidly explained. Never will he submerge his own good conscience in anything he does, and being more or less constantly aware of the true nature of things, he will exercise his mindfulness to the exclusion of detrimental thoughts and action. For a yogi who makes a determined effort to narrow down the range of thoughts of his fleeting mind, he can gain mindfulness which in turn will help to bring the mind by Right Concentration to a state of one-pointedness, samādhi. This, when achieved, the mind becomes free from Hindrances, which are five in number, called in Pāli as “Nivaraṇas”. A *yogi* may therefore conduct his own self-appraisal and find out the answers whether his state of mental and physical behaviour does fall in line with the qualifications of a Sotāpanna.

As Buddhists, we all are aware that in all living beings, the craving for life results in three manifestations which are evil. The root causes of evil are greed, hatred, and delusion or ignorance (lobha, dosa and moha) that, constantly assail the human mind. This dhamma being highly profound, an ordinary layman, if lacking in practical vipassanā meditation, may find it difficult to grasp well. But the

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Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, being endowed with an adequate knowledge of dhamma, is able to explain it with clarity thereby bringing to light the essence of dhamma that would ordinarily have remained in obscurity. This dhamma should therefore prove to be of immense value to *Yogis* and those taking keen interest in deeper aspects of the Buddhist philosophy.

May all beings be happy.

Min Swe

SECRETARY

Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization

September 1980

TO NIBBANA VIA THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

My discourse today (the waxing of Taw-thalin, 1333 Burmese Era), at this Mogaung Ariyavāsa Dhammāyon, will be on the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Nibbāna. It was expounded by the Buddha, soon after his enlightenment as the Dhammacakka Sutta preached first and foremost to the group of five monks. Later, he continued preaching this doctrine for the round of 45 years. Even on the eve of the mahāparinibbāna he explained it to Subhadda, the wandering ascetic, the last to become an Arahat in his lifetime, in whose name the Subhadda Sutta was canonized.

BACKGROUND OF THE SUTTA

Having earned 45 *vassas*, Buddha decided that it was time for him to shake off the sum of his life as requested earlier by Māra. So, on the full moon day of Kason (about May) in 148 *mahā sakkarāi*, he accepted food offered by Cunda, the goldsmith of Pāvā. Subsequently, he was attacked with diarrhoea.

Although physically weak, the Buddha walked the three *gavutas*, about six miles, from Pāvā to Kusināgara. He made this great effort bent on preaching the last two *suttas* before his death.

It may be recalled that, earlier, Ānandā had requested Buddha, when too late, to defer the *mahāparinibbāna*. This incident prompted the Buddha to keep two things in mind, one to preach *Mahāsudassana Sutta*, and the other to expound the Eightfold Path to Subhadda. In the Commentaries no mention is made of anyone seeing the light of *dhamma* on hearing *Mahāsudassana Sutta*. But when he delivered the sermon to Subhadda, the latter became illumined and attained the status of an Arahāt in a matter of hours. Had Buddha entered Nibbāna at Pāvā, and not at Kusināgara Subhadda would have no opportunity to see the light of the *dhamma*. It was with a sense of great compassion for the wandering ascetic that Buddha made the supreme effort to travel to the place where he intended to pass his last moments.

It would be sheer impossibility for a sick *sayadaw* (chief monk) to march the few miles to preach his disciples however much he is compassionate. But the Buddha accomplished this feat of marching the whole distance resting 25 times at 25 stages of the journey in the hottest of the season with the assistance of such devotees like Ānandā and Cunda.

When he reached the Garden of Sal trees in the domain of the Kings of Mallā, a couch was prepared for him to rest upon between two ṣal saplings, with its head part directed towards

BACKGROUND OF THE SUTTA

the north. the Buddha rested on this couch reclining on his right side.

At that time Subhadda happened to be at Kusināgara. When he heard the news that the Buddha would be entering *nibbāna* that very night, it occurred to him that it was only the Buddha who could dispel doubts that troubled his mind.

Subhadda was no mean ascetic. He was of noble birth like Sāriputtarā and Moggallāna, close disciples of the Buddha. He belonged to the class of millionaires known as *mahasala* rich men. He was not just a naked fakir. He dressed himself properly and wandered about in search of truth having renounced all his worldly possessions. He should not be confused with the unruly Subhadda, the son of Upaka, the husband of Cāpā, the daughter of a hunter. Cāpā has become Sāwā in Burmese legends. Upaka, the heretic, was not of noble birth.

With a view to have his doubts dispelled, Subhadda had asked questions of the heads of heretical schools then flourishing, such as Purānakassapa etc., but had no satisfactory answers from them. He had not, however, tried the Buddha for clarification, for, he thought that if the elderlies like Purānakassapa could not explain things, the Buddha, who was younger than all the heads of the heretical

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schools, would not be able to answer the questions he posed. This is according to the Commentaries. And if they are to be relied upon, the usual Burmese laymen's conception that the enquiring Subhadda was the son of Upaka and Sāwā must be dismissed as incorrect.

By now Subhadda had become extremely anxious lest he would lose all opportunities of enquiring for the truth if the Buddha entered *nibbāna* here and now. Perhaps at this particular moment he felt complaisant towards the Buddha. He was, however, destined to be the last to attain *dhamma* through the Buddha's personal attention. That he was to be the last was because in one of his previous existences he made the offering of cereals out of the late harvest at the last moment, unlike his elder brother (who was destined to be Koṇḍañña during the time of the present Gotama Buddha) who offered cereals out of the first earliest harvest.

REQUEST TO SEE THE BUDDHA

At midnight Subhadda came hurrying to the Buddha. But he had first to seek permission from Ānandā for interviewing the Teacher. "O Ānandā!" he entreated, "It is common knowledge that the Buddhas flourished once in an aeon. I have just heard that Gotama is entering *nibbāna* at the last watch of the night. I have doubts to be resolved, and I believe he can dispel them. So please let me see him."

REQUEST TO SEE THE BUDDHA

Ānandā thought to himself. "Ascetics are usually against the teaching of the Buddha. Any argumentation with Subhadda would make the Teacher weary and tired."

So Ānandā told him not to victimize the Blessed One with questions in the throes of an approaching death. Thrice the latter made the request, and thrice was that request turned down.

The Buddha heard all what the two were talking about. So he intervened. "Ānandā!" he said, "It is not proper that you should forbid Subhadda. Let him see me. He wants to ask me a question. He has no intention to victimize me. If I give the answer, he will at once get enlightened."

Having got the permission from Ānandā, Subhadda greeted the Blessed One with agreeable words to suit the occasion and sat himself down at an appropriate place, free from six faults, which is described in the scriptures as neither too close nor too far away, neither windward nor leeward, neither directly opposite nor at the back, in relation to the couch the Buddha was resting upon.

At the head part of the couch laid towards the north, there was one sal sapling, and at the foot part another. As the Buddha was reclining on his right side, he was facing west. Subhadda might be sitting not far away from the feet of

the Teacher, facing towards the head part of the couch.

Nothing is mentioned in the Canons about the enquiring ascetic doing obeisance to the Teacher at this moment. This incident shows that although the sceptic had come to believe in the Buddha's ability to resolve all his doubts, his faith in the Blessed One had not been as strong as he had for his false ideologies.

SUBHADDA QUESTIONS BUDDHA

Then Subhadda addressed the Buddha as plain Gotama without paying due respects and asked him what he wanted to know. "There are," he said, "many disciples under many different wings of religious sects (founded by such ascetics as Purānakassapa, etc.,) which are famed far and wide. Their ideologies relate to crossing the river of the troublous *saṃsāra*, the endless cycle of birth and death. These ideologies are also revered by many. Do they all know what they profess to know, or do they not?" When he was referring to the leaders of the religious sects he had Purānakassapa, Makkhaligosāla, Ajita, Pakudha, Sañjaya and Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta in mind. These six leaders of heretical school professed to know the past, present and future of all the phenomena of existence. Subhadda had doubts as to whether they did really know or whether they did not, or whether there were some among them who

knew. It is but natural for him to entertain such doubts. Most of the people in this world accept religious beliefs because they are traditionally handed down from father to son or from teacher to pupil. They have a blind faith in them refusing to investigate the propriety or otherwise of such beliefs with due process of reasoning. Subhadda had an enquiring mind. He could not accept heresy. If the six leaders of the ascetics did really know the truth, the truth must be one. There should not have been different kinds of truth.

Indeed truth must be one and indivisible. This must be borne in mind. Now—a—days, when Buddha—dhamma is being disseminated there should be only one basis of teaching relating to the Middle Way or the Eightfold Path, the practice of morality, concentration and acquisition of profound knowledge and the Four Noble Truths. But if one were preaching that the aims and objects of Buddhism can be achieved without recourse to actual practice of the *dhamma*, we should at once understand that one is off the rails.

To Subhadda's mind the different lines of knowledge propagated by the six ascetic leaders tended to show that they were all at sixes and sevens because they did not know. But he was still complaisant towards his old masters and, therefore, he brought up the three questions to the Enlightened One.

TO NIBBANA VIA THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

BUDDHA'S REPLY

The Buddha gave him the answer. "O Subhadda! Your question relates to whether your six old masters do really know or do not know, or whether while some do, the rest do not. But leave aside this question. Let me give you the *dhamma* which will prove beneficial to you. Hark me well."

The Buddha did not answer Subhadda's questions directly, because if he told him the plain truth that all his six ascetic leaders did not actually know what they professed to know, it would not have done him good. Moreover to those narrow minds this plain statement might be taken as mere castigation, in which case it would be unwholesome and of no avail.

Not to say of old times, even now [in those days, when a wrong is pointed out, the wrong-doer takes offence and reacts accordingly. So monks like us have to be very careful in making statements. Sometimes we have to ignore faults for so long as they do not run counter to the correct practice of the *dhamma*. But when they actually prove harmful we have to explain the niceties of the Law objectively. Else they would have thought that we do not know things ourselves and yet we are trying to overmaster them. Some would even regard us as malevolent. In the case of the Blessed One, he purposely set aside Subhadda's inquisi-

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tions and preached him only what would prove beneficial to him.

Now Subhadda had behaved himself well by addressing Buddha reverentially as *bhante* (Your Reverence) to express his willingness in accepting the latter's proposition. Imagine someone telling the questioner that he declined to answer the latter but proposed to preach his own doctrine. The questioner would certainly become antagonistic. But here Subhadda said, "So be it!" in deference to the Blessed One. This shows that faith had developed in him.

DEFILEMENTS CAN BE EXTIRPATED ONLY THROUGH THE ARIYA PATH

Then Buddha delivered the following sermon to Subhadda: "If, in any set of laws (*dhamma*) and discipline (*vinaya*), the Noble Eightfold Path is absent, their practice can never bring about the first stage of *samaṇa* (monk) who enters the stream (that leads to progressive sanctification and becomes a *sotāpanna*, nor the second who becomes a once-returner or *sakadāgāmi*, nor the third who never returns to this world and becomes an *anāgāmi*. Lastly, there will be no Arahats or Worthy Ones, who have finally conquered all *kilesās*, defilements."

These are Buddha's words, original and not cited at second-hand from Commentaries. They should be well borne in mind. Briefly put, they mean that any religious teaching, unguided by

the Noble Eightfold Path, can never produce the four categories of noble ones going through the four stages of emancipation as mentioned above, unassailed by defilements of the mind comprising the 14 immoral mental states beginning with greed, anger and ignorance. In this context I have rendered the term *dhamma-vinaya* as religion or religious teaching so that the layman can readily understand what Buddha taught.

Any religious teaching to the exclusion of the Noble Eightfold Path can never bring about any *sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmi*, *anāgāmi* and *arahatta*. This is axiomatic of Buddhist teaching. In the world of non-Buddhists the Ariyā Path is unknown. Before Buddha's enlightenment and before the exposition of the Wheel of the Law, *Dhammacakka Sutta*, even Ālāra and Udaka who respectively had attained the seventh and eighth stages of *jhāna* or Bliss, did not know this Ariyā Path. Not knowing it, they could not disseminate knowledge about it. Without this knowledge there could have been no occasion for the realization of even the basic *sotāpanna* stage.

In these days there have cropped up misstatements running counter to what Buddha actually taught. Knowledge, it is said, is accomplishment; and there is no need for anybody to practise *dhamma* once knowledge has been attained. Such kind of statement virtually

amounts to the rejection of the practice of the *dhamma* to the exclusion of the Noble Eightfold Path. But in point of fact the Noble Eightfold Path is to be constantly practised, for it is a set of discipline called *bhāvetabba* which is conducive to the generation of the power to gain insight into the nature of the Path. Without effort nothing comes up naturally. And yet there is a school of thought which wrongly suggests that making an effort itself is *dukkha* or unsatisfactoriness and that, therefore, it should not be indulged in. In the face of such dogma who will be prepared to take the trouble of meditating upon the Noble Eightfold Path and practise its tenets? If there is no one to practise this *dhamma* how can its light shine within him? And in the absence of any insight into the nature of the Path, how can one eliminate defilements and attain Nibbanic peace?

The principles of the Noble Eightfold Path can be achieved only through meditation and contemplation in the way of *vipassanā-bhāvana*. Any proposition to negate the principles and practice of the Ariyā Path is to forbid or destroy Buddhist teaching. Beyond the pale of Buddhism there is no Ariyā Path, and where there is no Ariyā Path there is no annihilation of defilements which obstruct the way to *nibbāna*.

In preaching this sermon to Subhadda, Buddha made no personal illusions. He did not say

anything about the religious ideologies of the ascetics like Puranakassapa, Makkhaligosāla and etc., nor of the Brāhmins who were then in the majority. He was only emphasising that where the path is absent there will be only obstructions in the way to peace. At this Subhadda got enlightened at once. He realized that because the leaders of the ascetics did not know the method and practice of meditation according to the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path, they could not be all-knowing as they professed. In the teachings of the leaders of the heretical school and of the Brahmins, Ariyā Path was lacking. Under their guidance there would be none who could do away with defilements that impede the way to peace.

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH IN PRACTICE

The practice of the Ariya Path rests mainly on the observance of moralities, *sīla*, the practice of meditation, *samādhi*, and the acquisition of wisdom, *paññā*. If *sīla* is observed with dedication, one would be bringing the three *magga sīlas* into play, namely, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. If one meditates, the three requirements of *samādhi magga* will be fulfilled, namely, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. Meditation for insight is *vipassanā bhāvanā* which encourages Right Views and Right Thoughts. These two qualities constitute *paññā magga*.

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH IN PRACTICE

Sīla, *samādhi* and *paññā* can lead one to the Path. Yet some assert that it is not necessary to observe the rules of morality if they get convinced with the teaching. It is often put forward by such protagonists that they have invented simplified or easy methods for their followers. How strange! It cannot be denied that, in Buddha's times, there were instances of intelligent and experienced individuals who at once saw the light of *dhamma* the moment they heard Buddha's sermons. Of course geniuses exist like the *ugghātitaṇṇu* who can at once grasp the meaning of the Four Noble Truths after a brief exposition or the *vipaṇṇitaṇṇu* who can realize the Truth after a wider exposition. In Buddha's times such individuals gained the light of knowledge while listening to Buddha's teachings without appreciable endeavour. But when it comes to an ordinary *neyya* individual who has to be guided for the gradual realization of Truth, even Buddha may not be able to let him see the light of *dhamma* all at once. So, the following *gāthā* (verse), canonized in the *Dhammapada*, stanza 276, as taught by Buddha, should serve one as a reminder:

"You should strive for the annihilation of all potentials of defilements. Tathāgatas can only show you the way. You yourself must practise meditation on the objects of *samatha*-concentration and *vipassanā*-meditation.

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Only then will you be liberated from the bonds of *kilesās* or defilements that destroy what is wholesome and moral."

Yes, Buddhas can only show you the way. They cannot make the command that so and so shall reach such and such a stage of the Path. Disciples should personally practice to train their minds dwell on the object of *samatha*-concentration to gain *vipassanā*-insight. Furthermore, they must meditate on *upādānakkhandhā*, the five aggregates of grasping, so that they can stand firm on the foundation of *vipassanā*, *samādhi* and *paññā*.

MAKE YOUR OWN EFFORT

When Buddha preached the *Dhammacakka Sutta* first and foremost to the group of five, the four of the group, namely, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji, did not get illumined as the Law was being propounded. They had to put up tremendous efforts under the guidance of Buddha. They became *sotāpannas* only after one, two, three or four days in respective cases after rigorous practice of meditation.

LIBERATION FROM DEFILEMENTS

It is only in the realm of Buddhist teaching or *sasānā* that one can find the way to liberation from the bonds of *kilesā*-defilements. The following is what Buddha preached to Subhadda further.

LIBERATION FROM DEFILEMENTS

“O Subhadda! Under the law and discipline laid down by me, you can attain the Ariyā path with its eight constituents. Only under the wings of my teaching can you come across firstly the *sotāpanna* samaṇa, secondly the *sagadāgāmi*, thirdly the *anāgāmi* and fourthly the *arahat*. Outside my *sasānā* there are no such *samaṇas* who actually know what they profess to know, able to annihilate the potentials of *kilesā*—defilements.”

Let me recapitulate the point I have made. Before the Noble Eightfold Path was expounded on Buddha's enlightenment, neither *Alara*, nor *Udaka* nor the ordinary *puthujjana* Brāhmas obtained the benefit of knowledge about the Path. When the Wheel of the Law was first turned, 18 crores of higher Brahmas and myriads of devas gained wisdom by which defilements could be extirpated. Among the human beings *Koṇḍañña* alone attained the state of spiritual development called *sotāpanna* first and foremost, while others of the group of five became *samaṇas* unassailed by defilements only later. So in pre-Buddhist period, there were none who conquered defilements because there were none who taught the Noble Path. Even in these days when Buddhism is said to be thriving there are people who are either ignorant or sceptical of the Path. Consequently there can be no *sotāpanna* among

them. Buddha emphasized this point to Subhadda that there could be no *samaṇas* outside the realm of his *Dhamma-vinaya*.

The Commentaries give twelve kinds of such *samaṇas* who can be subdivided into three divisions. In the first division are the four kinds of *vipassanā yogis* who have already striven for the Path and so are known as *āraddhavipassaka*. In the second division are the four *ariyās* who have established themselves on the Path. The third division comprises the four *ariyās* who have come to the final stage to enjoy the fruition of the Path.

The *āraddhavipassaka* who has endeavoured in the practice of meditation is worthy of note. He will ultimately develop *udayabbaya ñāna* or knowledge of arising and passing away of conditioned things. Judging from this fact, it must be noted that a *yogi* aspiring to the Path must of necessity practise insight-meditation for the attainment of the first *sotāpattimagga*. One who meditates for the realization of this *magga* will have to contemplate on the Three Marks, *anicca*, impermanence, etc. As he contemplates he shall be constantly directing his attention to all things that are in a flux, now arising, now passing away. Since his mind is thus fixed on this phenomenon of change, there will be no opportunities for defilements to trouble his mind. In fact they will all be eliminated. Such a one is known as *samaṇas*.

THE BEST WAY TO MAKE BUDDHA SĀSANĀ LAST LONG

Without the realm of Buddhism, the practice of insight-meditation is unknown and so there can be no *samaṇas*. It, therefore, follows that the lineage of ordinary *samaṇas*, not to say of the eight lofty and noble *ariyās*, will come to an end among sectarians who claim to be Buddhists and assert that it is enough if understanding is reached with regard to corporeality and consciousness and to impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and unsubstantiality, and that the practice of insight-meditation is superfluous.

THE BEST WAY TO MAKE BUDDHA SASANĀ LAST LONG

Having shown that true *samaṇas* who have annihilated defilements exist only under Buddhism, and that beyond the pale of Buddhism the lineage of *samaṇas* are usually extinct, Buddha went on to enlighten Subhadda on the best way to prolong the life of *sāsanā*.

“Subhadda, I will tell you how to maintain this *sāsanā* for long with its complements of the Noble Eightfold Path and the *samaṇas* practising it. If the twelve kinds of Bhikkhus that I have enumerated live well, there shall be no extinction of the lineage of true *samaṇas* including the *Arahats*.”

Thus said Buddha. I have here rendered the term Bhikkhu as belonging to the twelve kinds of *samaṇas* following the annotations in the Commentaries. The four *vipassanā yogis* and the

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eight noble *Ariyās* constitute the twelve. But what is meant by the term "to live well?". Does it mean to say that Bhikkhus lead quiet lives immersed in the *dhamma* but doing nothing? Indeed no! If they lead a life of ease, there will be no continuity in the line of Arahats. Only when the Eightfold Noble Path is disseminated from generation to generation, will *ariyās* continue to flourish and the line of Arahats remain unbroken. Regarding this, the commentaries have this to say:

By the term "*sammā vihareyyum*— to live well,"— is meant that a *sotāpanna* (Stream-winner) who has attained the first Path of holiness must be able to disseminate the knowledge he has gained to others and organize them to become *sotāpanna* like him.

I believe I have made myself clear. A *sotāpanna* should have the ability to make others interested in the *dhamma* which he has acquired and teach them the method of developing the Noble Eightfold Path. He should be able to persuade others to practise insight-meditation. If, because of such efforts, a meditator attains the Path and becomes a *sotāpanna* who will develop himself in like manner to reach the higher levels of *sagadāgāmi* (Once-Returner), *anāgāmi* (Never-Returner) and *Arahat* (Worthy One), then there will be a succession of Arahats for posterity.

SOTAPANNA STATE

As this purport of the term, "to live well" applies also to *sagadāgāmi*, etc., it needs no further elaboration. Suffice it to say that for so long as new Arahats continue to come into being, their lineage will never become extinct. In the Commentaries the manner how more and more *samaṇas* can be developed on the basis of the first four *ariyā maggas* have been fully explained. But it must be remembered that new *ariyās* do not just come into being automatically the instant Path-consciousness is attained. They can arise anew only after the fruition (*phala*) of the Path.

INSIGHT MEDITATION FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF SOTAPANNA STATE

Continuing, the Commentaries have this to say:

The *vipassanā yogi*, who has already striven for the *sotāpanna* state and attained that stage of knowledge or wisdom called *udayabbaya ñāna*, will also be able to convert others to his own way of striving for *satāpanna magga*, demonstrating them the exercises in meditation, *kammaṭṭhāna*, in which he has excelled. If he has done so, he may be said to have "lived well."

The *vipassanā yogi*, who has, as aforesaid, striven for the Path and acquired the *udayabbaya ñāna* is an *Araddhavi-passaka*. A *yogi* who has

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acquired the *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa* or knowledge in distinguishing consciousness, or knowing subject (*nāma*) from corporeality, or the known object (*rūpa*), or knowledge in the realization of cause and effect of all phenomena relating to *nāma* and *rūpa*, or a yogi who has acquired the *sammasana ñāṇa* or knowledge in the recognition of the Three Marks of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and unsubstantiality as a result of the constant watching on the behaviour of *nāma* and *rūpa* cannot be regarded as an *āraddhavipassaka* unless and until he becomes endowed with *udayabbaya ñāṇa*. Only when one gets this knowledge will he, now enriched with personal experience, be able to serve as an impetus to others to develop the Path.

Special attention is invited to this *āraddhavipassakā* in the face of wild assertions that it is not imperative that one should meditate since knowing the method is quite sufficient. This view is entirely wrong. The four categories of the *ariyās* become established in the Path only after practising meditation on the Noble Eightfold Path. If, by constant practice, one reaches the stage of *banga ñāṇa*, knowledge about the dissolution of the knowing mind, *nāma*, and the known object, *rūpa*, nothing more needs be said because he has achieved the desideratum.

This *vipassanā yogi* who reaches the stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa* attains proficiency in *kammaṣṭhāna*

or exercises in meditation. But when he reaches the stage of the *saṅkhārūpekkhā ñāṇa* or knowledge appertaining to perfect equanimity towards all conditioned things, he shall be regarded as the most proficient. It is, therefore, urged that the yogi share his knowledge with those who are near and dear to him. If, as a result of his persuasion, his friends and neighbours reach the stage of *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, they will become *āraddhavipassakas* bent on striving for the Path. Gaining inspiration, they will make successive attempts till they attain Arahatship. Then a new generation of Arahats will arise.

We, bhikkhus, take upon ourselves the task of meditation with a view to maintain the life of our *sāsanā* with its complements of Arahats. I appeal to those who are genuinely wishing a long life for the *sāsanā* to help us in our venture. But there still exist some among us who run counter to our efforts with unfavourable criticisms launched behind our back. This, indeed, is a sorry state of affairs.

In the times of preceding Buddhas similar efforts were made for the long life of the *sāsanā*; but there were also times when the *dhamma* could no longer be taught and propagated, and consequently it could not be practised. Under such circumstances, the Noble Eightfold Path became entirely forgotten. It was only when a new Buddha arose that the world came to know of

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the Path together with the method of developing it. For as long as the *yogis* strive for the renaissance of the Path, true *samaṇas* will continue to flourish.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Therefore, I shall deal with the Noble Eightfold Path concisely. The constituents of the Path are:

1. Sammāditthi—Right Views
2. Sammāsaṅkappa—Right Thoughts or Intentions
3. Sammāvācā—Right Speech
4. Sammākammanta—Right Action
5. Sammāājīva—Right Livelihood
6. Sammāvāyama—Right Effort
7. Sammāsati—Right Mindfulness
8. Sammāsamādhi—Right Concentration

Among the eight constituents, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are grouped in *Sīla magga*, the Path of morality. If one abstains from four oral sins of lying, slander-ing, harsh speech and frivolous talk, one may be regarded as practising the Path to Right Speech. If one abstains from committing the three sins of killing, stealing and incontinence, one would be regarded as practising the Path to Right Action. If one abstains from the seven kinds of misdeeds so far described, one would

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

also be regarded as practising the Path to Right Livelihood. These *sīla maggas* form basic steps to be observed before practising the Law.

Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are grouped in *samādhi magga*, the Path relating to calmness of the mind. It is achieved only after *samatha* concentration. When the watchful mind takes note of each object of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, he is said to have made the Right Effort which can accomplish four tasks viz., (1) the task of preventing immoralities that have not yet arisen from arising (2) the task of eliminating immoralities that have already arisen, (3) the task of developing moralities that have not yet been developed and (4) the task of establishing the moralities that have been developed.

Concentration on the sense-object to be observed is Right Mindfulness. It has two parts, the *samatha sammā sati*, right concentration, and *vipassanā sammā sati*, right meditation. The Pali Canon defines Right Mindfulness as follows:

There are four *satipatthānas*, namely, mindfulness as regards body, mindfulness as regards feelings or sensations, mindfulness as regards thoughts and mindfulness as regards *dhamma*. These four are achieved after due reflection of the mind on body, sensation, thought and *dhamma*.

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It has been definitely shown that these four foundations of mindfulness are grouped in *sammāsati magga*. Therefore, noting the process of respiration of breathing in and breathing out as well as noting the parts of human anatomy such as hair of the head, hair of the body, etc., is *samatha sammāsati*. So also the observation of *kasina* objects or corpses for purposes of exercise in mind-culture constitute *samatha sammāsati*. However, noting and remembering physical behaviour, sensations of the mind or of the body, sight, hearing, attachment, anger, etc., is *vipassanā sammāsati*, Right Mindfulness in insight-meditation. When the state of *sammāsati* is established, one shall be regarded as possessing Right Views having gained insight into the arising and passing away of *nāma* (consciousness) and *rūpa* (corporeality) or in other words, mind and matter, and also into the Three Marks of existence, namely, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and unsubstantiality.

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

When mindfulness, *satipatthāna*, is achieved knowledge of concentration, *samādhi ñāṇa*, is gained.

To enable the layman to remember how to practice meditation in order that Right Mindfulness and Right Views can be achieved, I have laid down the following instructions:

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

To develop mindfulness and gain insight-knowledge, the following points must be borne in mind:—

1. Recognize correctly all physical behaviour as it arises.
2. Recognize correctly all mental behaviour as it arises.
3. Recognize all manner of sensation, good, bad and indifferent, as it arises.
4. Know all the manifestations of the *dhamma* with an analytical mind.

I have explained these points extensively in my other discourse on Dhammacakka Sutta which may be consulted.

In the course of concentrating on a sense-object with due awareness, Right Mindfulness will be established together with its concomitant of *samādhi magga* which Buddha elaborated as the four *jhānas*, the highest stage in *samādhi*. At the lowest level of *Samādhi*, is the *upacāra samādhi*, proximate concentration, so called because it can be placed in the neighbourhood of *jhāna* (or *jhāna samādhi*, *appanā samādhi*), all denoting ecstasy. At the stage of approximate concentration, *cittavisuddhi* or purity of mind is achieved. There is also *vipassanā-khanika samādhi*, which may be described as an instantaneous concentration by which one gets illumined in

a flash. It may be equated with the true proximate concentration in its ability to repel *nīvāraṇas*, such as sloth, torpor, etc., which prevent the arising of wholesome thoughts thus obstructing the *nibbāna* bliss. In the commentaries this *khanika samādhi* is shown as *upacāra samādhi*.

When a Vipassanā-Yogi's insight meditation becomes strengthened, Right Thoughts would direct his mind to realities of the sense-objects on which he concentrates; and eventually he will get the Right Views. All this happens in this way. As one begins to reach the stage of mindfulness and subsequently of purity of mind, one will be able to distinguish the knowing mind from the object known. For instance, when one is meditating on the rising and falling of the abdominal wall, one may be able to distinguish the phenomenon of rising and falling from the knowing mind. In much the same way, in the process of walking, one may notice that the act of raising the foot, extending it forward and putting it down may be distinguishable from the mind motivating the movement. In this way, *nāma*, the knower, can be distinguished from *rūpa*, the known. This can be effected without any premeditation. One recognizes the phenomena without giving any thought to them. In other words, recognition is spontaneous.

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

As the power of concentration of the meditator gains strength and his wisdom gets sharpened thereby, he will come to realize the fact that his knees bend because he wishes them to be bent. He walks because he wants to. He sees because he has eyes to see and the object to be seen is there. He hears because he has ears to hear and the object to be heard is there. He enjoys life because his *kamma* is favourable. In this way he is enabled to distinguish between cause and effect with reference to every phenomenon that takes place.

As his power of concentration and wisdom gets stronger and stronger, he will further come to realize that the knowing subject and the known object arise in a moment to pass away at the next instant. Then they arise anew to pass away again. As this continual process is perceived, he will come to the revelation that all is *anicca*, impermanence, all is *dukkha*, unsatisfactoriness, and all is *anatta*, unsubstantiality. These are revealed in all reality. They are not just a figment of imagination. He now knows these without having to direct his mind especially to them. As he has been noting things as they happen, he has come to know their true nature. As consciousness and corporeality are truly different, he comes to know that they are not one and the same. Subsequently, he realizes the cause as well as the effect of all that happens. Realism of things observed goad

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him on to the knowledge that all consciousness and corporeality are not permanent, not satisfactory and not substantial. Now he is on the Path to Right Views.

A *yogi* has to note and observe every object that appears to him via the six sense-doors. This he does with an effort; and that is the Right Effort. Then he has to keep his mind on what he has noted so as to be aware of it. And that is the Right Mindfulness. As he has to be mindful, his mind will have to be fixed or concentrated on the object. And that is the Right Concentration. These three constituents of the Path, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are grouped in *samādhi magga*. Then there is the process of thinking out the reality of nature, which is classified as Right Thinking, or Right Thought. As a result of this right thinking we have the Right View. These two are grouped in *paññā magga*. All these five in *samādhi* and *paññā* sections are added together to be classified as *karaka magga* or the activators, which combine in their efforts in the process of simultaneously noting and knowing.

Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, as mentioned earlier, constitute *sīla magga* which may generally be deemed to have been fulfilled before the *yogi* indulges in insight-meditation. During the period of meditation, these three *sīla maggas* remain unpolluted; in

HOW TO DEVELOP THE THREE MAGGAS

fact they get more and more purified as time goes on. With these three in this group added to the five in the previous groups, we have the eight *vipassanā magga* on which we are to meditate.

Again, in the development of insight meditation, basic qualities of *mūla magga* must be fulfilled. Of them the first and foremost is *kammasakata sammāditthi*, a view well established in the law of *kamma*. Only when a yogi has absolute faith in this law of action and its consequences, can he practise *vipassanā*. He must believe that the result of carrying out *vipassanā* or meditation exercises can lead him to the Path, to its fruition and finally to *nibbāna*. It is only with this faith that he will be able to exert right effort. Second in importance in *mūla magga* is *sīla* or morality, which must forever remain clean and pure. Third in importance is *vipassanā khanika samādhi*, which is akin to *upacāra samādhi* which have been explained already. Accomplished in this *mūla magga*, a yogi is deemed to be on the right path to *vipassanā* to attain insight-knowledge. The *vipassanā magga* which I mentioned before elsewhere is *pubbha magga* which is precursory to the fulfilment of *ariyā magga*.

HOW TO DEVELOP THE THREE MAGGAS

It may be reiterated here that the right view in accepting the law of *kamma*, the three moralities of right speech, right action and right

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livelihood and the three kinds of concentration, namely, *jhāna* or *appanā samādhi*, *upacāra samādhi* and *vipassanā-khanika samādhi* are grouped in *mūla magga*. While meditating, instantaneous or *khanika samādhi* may become established; but if insight-meditation remains weak, even the lower stage of *nāmarūpapariccheda* wisdom may not bloom forth. Only when *nivāranas* or hindrances are dispelled can a yogi arrive at *nāma-rūpa pariccheda* stage. But it is quite evident that he needs must first be accomplished in *khanika samādhi*. Some, however, would like to direct him to concentrate on the Three Marks of *anicca*, etc., before any *samādhi* has become established. But this does not augur well for the development of knowledge about meditation.

The three basic *mūla magga* should have been accomplished before a *yogi* starts practising meditation. But a beginner may skip over *jhāna* or *upacāra samādhi* practice and start meditating first on the Five Aggregates of grasping (*upādānakkhandhā*) in accordance with the example cited in *Mūlapaṇṇāsa Dhammadāyada Sutta* as follows:

In the realm of this *sāsanā* some would prefer practising proximate concentration or ecstatic concentration before first practising insight-meditation. Such practice is *samatha*. If a *yogi*, accomplished in that *samatha*-concentration, practises meditation further,

HOW TO DEVELOP THE THREE MAGGAS

or practises other *dhammas* relating to meditation, observing the Three Marks of *anicca*, etc., that will also be *vipassanā* or insight-meditation.

This illustrates the way a *yogi* using *samatha* as a vehicle (*samatha yānika*) practises insight-meditation; but meditation involving the Three Marks or Characteristics can be stated here only briefly. The *Visuddhimagga* has amply elaborated on the subject of acquirement of *namarūpapariccheda ñāna* through the exercise of *jhāuā samādhi*, ecstatic concentration, and also the attainment of that knowledge coupled with *paccayapariggahana ñāna* through the exercise of *upacāra samādhi*, proximate concentration.

The manner by which a *yogi* using *vipassanā* as a vehicle (*vipassanā yānika*) meditates for the insight knowledge is shown below:

In the realm of this *sāsanā* some yogis prefer to meditate on the five aggregates of grasping while noting and observing the Three Marks of *anicca*, etc., without developing such *samāthas* as proximate concentration. Such practice is *vipassanā*.

Although the Texts thus say that one gains insight into the Three Marks of *anicca*, etc., after meditating the five aggregates of grasping without resorting to the practice of proximate and ecstatic concentration, it must not be taken

that the Three Marks are perceived and appreciated from the very outset of exercising meditation. If the *nīvāraṇas*, hindrances, cannot be cleansed, the characteristics of *nāma* and *rūpa*, mind and matter in ordinary parlance, may not be fully appreciated. Here the strength of *vipassanākhanika samādhi*, must be called into aid. This *samādhi* is attentiveness which lasts for a while. But when it becomes established, tranquility and purity of mind occur at the moment of meditation. Only when the mind is thus purified, *nāmarūpapariccheda ñāṇa*, knowledge of discernment regarding *nāma* and *rūpa* will become established. Thereafter knowledge about the cause and effect of the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* will come forth spontaneously, when the *yogi* may be said to have reached the stage of *paccaya-pariggahana ñāṇa*. These have been shown in detail in the *Visuddhimagga*. But here it can only be briefly said that *anicca*, etc., are observed and noted in relation to the aggregates of grasping. This observation, however, does not ensure gaining insight into the Three Marks from the very beginning meditation is practised. If one holds that it does so, it goes against the *Visuddhimagga*, and if it is against it, it will be far away from truth.

The stage when knowledge about the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* is gained through the meditation of the aggregates of

HOW TO DEVELOP PUBBA MAGGA

grasping, keeping the mind pure by means of the three *samādhis*, the yogi is said to be on the road to *pubba magga*. Ability to distinguish between *nāma* and *rūpa* leads to *vipassanā magga*. Ability to know the cause and effect of the nature of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* also leads to *vipassanā magga*. Ability to perceive the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* leads to *pubbabhaga vipassanā*, which is precursory to the realization of *ariya magga*. This *magga* can be realized in ten stages ranging from *samasana ñāṇa*, investigating knowledge, to *anuloma ñāṇa*, knowledge of adaptation. After the attainment of this final stage of wisdom there arises consciousness known as *gotrabhū*, a thought-moment which overcomes sense-sphere lineage and develops the sublime or exalted lineage. That means arriving at the stage of noble *ariyās* from that of worldings.

HOW TO DEVELOP PUBBA MAGGA

Pubba magga is precursory to *ariya magga*. It is one step before reaching the noble stage. To get to it one must contemplate on the aggregates of clinging or grasping, *upādānakkhandhā*, so that one gets the conviction of the Truth of Suffering or unsatisfactoriness of existence. When this Truth is realized one can discover the Truth of Cause of Suffering. Constant concentration on this Truth will again lead to the discovery of the method of elimination of

causes which bring about suffering. This is the accomplishment of the task of *vipassanā-bhāvanā*. Once you are convinced of the Law of impermanence, your mind will be detached from the idea of permanence, and when you reach that stage, ignorance will be dispelled from your mind. Then you will be able to get away from *Saṅkhāra*, or mental formations which constitute *kamma* that produces rebirth. Now you see a flash of *nibbāna*.

So the five aggregates of grasping must be well learnt. You do not learn them by rote. You learn them by actual experience and practice. You must try to realize yourself the phenomena of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. *Vipassanā* insight means the insight you gain through your own inquiry and effort. Only after self-discovery as a result of meditation all doubts about the non-existence of self or ego will be dispelled. Then only it can be said with certainty that there is none which can be called an entity and that what appears to be an entity is after all an aggregate of *nāma* and *rūpa*. As you get illumined with this realization, you will come to understand the law of cause and effect. As you continue to meditate on this causality you will encounter the state of flux, or the constant arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* which, after all are not permanent.

TO KNOW THE TRUE NATURE OF THINGS

TO KNOW THE TRUE NATURE OF THINGS

Only when you observe and note the phenomenon as it arises can you know its true nature comprising *nāma* and *rūpa* as well as causes and effects relating to their arising and passing away. Consider this. Suppose your body becomes hot. When you notice this "hotness", and constantly contemplate on it, you will come to realize its nature, which is but one of the attributes of *tezo dhātu*, the element governing both states of being hot and cold. When you are concentrating your mind on the nature of heat, you do not identify it with yourself or with individuals other than yourself, be they men or women. You get the cognition of "hotness" correctly. In like manner, if you concentrate your mind on stiffness of your body, you will notice only "stiffness" without reference to yourself or to others. Apply such experiments to every movement that you make. Invariably you will take cognizance of the movement and not the individual who moves. The movement, you will further realize, is occasioned by *vāyo dhatu*, the element of motion.

Buddha enjoins us to note and know the fact of going just as going is being done. We must understand the act of standing as "standing", of sitting as "sitting" of resting as "resting", of sleeping as "sleeping", and so on and so forth, just as we stand, or sit, or

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rest, or sleep. Any physical action that is made must at once be noted. We simply arrest that moment when a thing happens and note the happening. All actions arise because of the desire to act which stimulates *vāyo*. You might possess a vicarious knowledge of all that is now being described through reading books; but we do not go according to book knowledge. We know things by actual practice of observation, contemplation and meditation.

Watch a flash of lightning. If you watch it at the moment lightning strikes, you will see it for yourself and know all about it. If you are simply imagining in your mind as to how lightning strikes before or after the event, you may not be regarded as having seen and known the flash of lightning. So try to know things for yourself by actual observation of things as they happen.

In the beginning of exercises in contemplation or meditation, one may not notice anything extraordinary. But after regular practice all *nīvaraṇas*, hindrances, such as thoughts of sense-desires, thoughts of hatred and thoughts of cruelty, will be cleared and the distinction between the bodily movement and the mind that takes note of it will become apparent. Again reverting to the example given with reference to going, the *yogi* will realize that he "goes", because his *citta* (mind) "desires" to

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go, and because his *rūpa* (body) brings about locomotion that constitute "going".

In the Commentaries on Satipatthāna Sutta, it has been written:

"When intention to go arises in the mind, it impels *vāyo* to propel (the body). On the stimulus given by the mind, the expansivity of *vāyo* is brought into play; and the body moves. Then we say "It goes".

As the *yogi* meditates focussing his attention constantly on the rising of his distended abdomen, for instance, his power of concentration will eventually get stronger and stronger. Then the successive movements that constitute the phenomenon of the "rising belly" will be distinctly noticed as they occur. For beginners to watch and note all that happens in relation to the six sense-doors might prove difficult or even impossible. So we first direct the *yogi* to begin with observing the rising and falling of the abdomen. While doing this exercise he may think of something else. We urge him to note this also and then revert to observing the phenomenon of "rising", and "falling". He might feel tired, painful or hot while he meditates. Here, too, we urge him to note all these sensations and then revert to the original task of noting the movements of the abdomen. As he goes on meditating, he will come to

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realize that all these discomforts are all *dukkha vedanās*, suffering or unsatisfactory sensations. He is repeatedly told to make observation of such things. We have reasons for doing so. A beginner usually does not understand things at first. When he is noting one thing as he was told, he may wonder what to note next. He is, therefore, asked to concentrate on one thing at a time so that there can be no waste of time by such kind of wandering of the mind. When his *samādhi*, or will-power in common language, gains strength, we shall instruct him further to concentrate on all that happens at the doors of the six senses. There are among us now many *yogis* who are able to note all that happens in relation to the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, that is, the origination and cessation of all phenomena.

WHEN REALITIES ARE KNOWN

As the *yogi* keeps on watching the phenomenon of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, knowledge of their true nature will be developed in his mind. Then he will realize that all origination of the phenomenon ceases in the end. What arises, passes into dissolution. The process of origination is *udaya* and that of cessation is *vaya*; and hence the term *udayabbaya*. The reality of these two phases of the phenomenon cannot be felt or perceived unless the significance of *nāma* and *rūpa* are fully apprecia-

CONVICTION IN ANICCA

ted. In the metaphor of a flash of lightning, unless one actually sees the flash one can never know it. Without actually seeing a thing happening, one can never know what happens. Therefore, the mere recital of "arising and passing away" cannot lead one to knowledge about the realities of all phenomena relating to *nāma* and *rūpa*. One who cannot appreciate these realities cannot be said to have attained *vipassanā ñāṇa*.

CONVICTION IN ANICCA

When the realities of *nāma* and *rūpa* are known, the *yogi* will realize that things come into being only to pass away. *Hutwā abhavato anicca*, the Commentaries say. "Having become, things cease to exist; and that is impermanence." Only when he can appreciate the realities of this nature of origination and cessation, will he gain conviction in the impermanence of existence. So that Commentaries add:

Know impermanence. Know the sign
or Mark of Impermanence. Know how
to contemplate on Impermanence.

The five aggregates are all impermanent. In the Dhammacakka Sutta they are explained as the Five Aggregates of clinging or grasping. All compound things that come into being and pass away are impermanent.

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When the *yogi* is watching the six sense-doors, he will notice the process of seeing, hearing, etc., and he will eventually attain *sammasana* and *udayabbaya ñānas* by which the law of impermanence is realized. You build a house in a field. That house was not there before. Now that you have built it, it has come into existence. But it will become dilapidated one day, and finally disappear altogether. What was not there before comes into being and totally disappears the next moment. That is the way of impermanence. You see a flash of lightning in the dark and it blacks out the next moment. Is the flash eternal?

So the Commentaries again say: *Hutwā abhava-karo aniccalakkhanam*, "That which arises to be subjected to dissolution is the Mark or characteristic of Impermanence".

CONTEMPLATION ON ANICCA

We have on our bodies identification marks, such as our looks and appearances, by which we recognize one another. In much the same way we recognize the nature of existence by its identification marks. Before we notice the identification marks in others we do not know who is who. In much the same way, before we see the Mark of Impermanence we do not gain real knowledge about impermanence. In that way we say that the *yogi* has not come up to the stage of *aniccānupassanā*. So by merely

FROM ANICCA TO DUKKHA AND ANATTA

reciting "Impermanence! Impermanence!" from book-knowledge, he cannot arrive at that stage. When he watches what he sees or hears, and is able to take note of that what he sees or hears gets dissolved, then only *aniccānupassanā* is accomplished. In other words, it is only when he has constantly contemplated on impermanence and realized the truth of the impermanent nature of existence that he becomes truly apprehensive of the law of *anicca*.

FROM ANICCA TO DUKKHA AND ANATTA

When the *yogi* appreciates that impermanence is real, he will also be able to appreciate the realism of unsatisfactoriness and unsubstantiality of life. But here superficial knowledge is not meant. When a pot is broken we say that it does not last long and is, therefore, impermanent. When a thorn gets into the flesh, we say that it is painful, and that, therefore, it is unsatisfactory. This is mere *paññāta* or conceptual knowledge. Here we are concerned with *paramattha* or absolute knowledge. When one has only a so-called knowledge of *anicca* and *dukkha*, one may not be able to grasp the real import of *anatta*. The Commentaries say:

When the Mark of Impermanence is recognized, the Mark of Unsubstantiality will also be recognized. To know one of the Three Marks is to know all of them.

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And when a *yogi* sees the truth of unsubstantiality of all conditioned things he is ready to enter the gateway to *nibbāna*.

TEN KINDS OF INSIGHT

There are ten kinds of insight. The foregoing mainly relates to the first kind, *sammasana ñāṇa*, by which a *yogi* is able to investigate into the aggregates as composite. When this knowledge works, he becomes fully convinced of the truth of the dhamma relating to the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, on the contemplation of which he can further follow the trend of knowledge about the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. This is the stage when he attains *udayabbaya ñāṇa*. At his stage he will see radiance in his mind. He will feel highly exultant. His awareness will be extraordinary. There will be nothing of which he fails to take notice. His mind is sharpened and his memory becomes clear. Strong faith will be established. He will be joyous both physically and spiritually. This state of mind fails description. But if, at this stage, one becomes attached to such kind of pleasurable sensations, which in the negative sense, are precursors to defilements of the mind, there will be no further mental development. Joy, in a way, is no doubt a support to the *yogi* in his efforts to gain more strength and determination to strive further for higher ideals till he reaches his

TEN KINDS OF INSIGHT

destination, namely, *vipassanā ñāṇa*. So he is warned to note it only as it occurs and discard it altogether to gain insight.

If he discards all what appears to be radiance, attended by all manner of pleasurable sensations, he will clearly see the arising and dissolution of *nāma* and *rūpa*. After that he will notice that both *nāma*, the knowing mind, and *rūpa*, the sense-object known, disappear altogether as quickly as they appear. In other words, he at once knows the rapid dissolution, in pairs, of both the bent of mind towards the object and *ārammaṇika* (the knowing mind) simultaneously. This realization is called *baṅga ñāṇa*, knowledge with regard to the dissolution of things. On attaining this wisdom, he will become convinced that whatever sensations arise thereafter from outside stimuli, they are not permanent, not satisfactory and not substantial. This applies also to sensations formed inwardly in his mind in relation to sense-objects. At this stage, he will be able to discard all ideas about permanence, satisfactoriness and substantiality.

As he finds that all conditioned things dissolve quickly, he becomes apprehensive; and at this stage he is said to have attained *bhaya ñāṇa*, knowledge of dissolving things as fearful, which leads him to another higher stage called *ādīnava ñāṇa* when he realizes all apprehensive things as baneful. From this stage he moves

to *nibbinda ñāṇa* when he becomes very weary and regards all baneful things as disgusting. When this knowledge is developed he desires to escape from such things, and by further striving he reaches *muñcitukamyatā ñāṇa*, knowledge of liberation. As the will to liberate himself from such ills further develops, he attains *patisaṅkhā ñāṇa*, knowledge of reflecting contemplation. At this stage he makes extraordinary efforts to gain *samādhi*, tranquility. As his *samādhi* strengthens, he gains *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, knowledge of developing equanimity towards all conditioned things.

In the Visuddhimagga the growth and development of *bhaya ñāṇa* and its successive stages are metaphorically described as the plight of a fisherman who had caught a fish in his trap. He put his hand in the trap and was very much delighted to find it caught. He then took it out to discover that what he had caught was not a fish but a viper with three characteristic marks denoting its snaky nature. Fear seized him. He now realized that it was wrong of him to have seized it. He wished he had never done it, and would like very much to get rid of it. But if he released it carelessly, it would bite him. Becoming apprehensive, therefore, he held it high overhead, whirled it three times, and threw it away so that it landed elsewhere. Then he ran for his freedom. After some time he looked back.

TEN KINDS OF INSIGHT

Before the Three Marks of Impermanence, etc., were unnoticed we were very much attached to our psycho-physical entity. Perhaps we were delighted with our "self" like that fisherman who thought he had held a fish in his hand. Only when we saw the Three Marks we took fright, realized the error of our ways and became disgusted with what we saw. Then we could no longer be pleased with our consciousness and corporeality. In fact we would like to escape from what we call our mind and body. A *yogi* practises insight meditation so that he sees *nāma* and *rūpa* as repugnance, and therefore, develops a desire to liberate himself from their hold on him in much the same way as the fisherman did to get rid of the viper.

Some might argue that for so long as one knows what is *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, the task is done. If one contemplates on *dukkha*, unsatisfactoriness, they say, one finds *dukkha* and *dukkha* only. Such kind of argument is not in accord with the Texts. What these people know of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* is superficial. This superficial or *paññātti* knowledge fails to instil fear in the mind of the *yogi*. What is there to be afraid of with seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, contacting and knowing things? They think it pleasurable to see things that they like to see and to hear things that they like to hear. It tastes good, they

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would say. It smells fragrant; it is pleasant to the touch; it is delightful to think about. When one is free to think about a variety of things and is able to let loose one's imagination, one feels that the experience is the most enjoyable. Naturally, therefore, one feels irksome when one has to put restraint on one's mind and meditate. Perhaps that is the reason why some would like to invent "easy methods" to gain insight. But in point of fact if one gives the reins to imagination in which one takes delight, one would be reluctant to get away from one's happy thoughts. In that case, how could one fling away this corporeality and consciousness in the way the fisherman did with his loathsome snake? So the so-called knowledge is not enough for one seeking liberation. It is difficult even for those rich in wisdom to develop this sense of weariness of existence instilled by *muñcitukamyatā ñāṇa*.

When a *yogi* attempts to escape from *Saṅkhāra* or mental formations appertaining to *nāma* and *rūpa*, he may be likened to the fisherman trying to fling the poisonous snake away. Having made an extraordinary effort to free himself from those formations using *patisaṅkhā ñāṇa*, he arrives at the next stage of *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, which is the most singular among the ten kinds of insight.

THE SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF SAṆKHARUPEKKHA NĀṆA

THE SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF SAṆKHARUPEKKHA NĀṆA

This knowledge of equanimity towards conditioned things has six characteristics. The first relates to neutrality where mind is unmoved by fear or pleasurable-ness induced by sense-objects. Before reaching this stage of knowledge a *yogi* is apprehensive of the dangers thrown in his way by conditioned things. As *bhaya ñāṇa* is invoked he realizes with anxiety and fear that things have gone wrong. He then develops weariness in his mind. He longs to be free from this undesirable phenomenon. So he makes a great effort in meditation. Thereby he develops further *saṅkharupekkha ñāṇa*, which is knowledge about equanimity of mind unaffected by fear or anxiety. Tranquility is thus established.

The second characteristic is mental equilibrium where he neither feels glad for things pleasant nor sad for things that bring about pain and distress. He can now note joy as joy and pain or sorrow as pain or sorrow. He is able to view things impartially, with neither attachment nor aversion towards the sense-objects.

The third characteristic relates to the *yogi's* balance of mind. When he is meditating on his volitional activities he establishes a perfect balance of mind that "remains right in the middle". That is to say he remains neutral to all objects of his volitional activities. But here it may be asked if *saṅkharupekkha ñāṇa*

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should be concerned only with neutrality towards the objects of volitional activities and not to the actual deed of *vipassanā* or meditation. Regarding this point the Commentaries say that just as the mind views the sense-objects with equanimity so also it accepts the act of *vipassanā* with equanimity. Previously, in the earlier stages of knowledge, the *yogi* had to bend his efforts to concentrate on the sense-objects as well as on the mind that meditated. Now that he attains *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa* he is effortless in focussing his mind on the sense-object as well as on the very act of focussing. It may be that initially he will have to bend his efforts to note the rising and falling of his abdomen or the activities of sitting, touching, etc., for a couple of times. These are all preliminaries. After that no such efforts are necessary. The two processes of noting and knowing the object will become spontaneous, running together in their own sequence. Concentration is rendered easy.

To these three characteristics may be added the other three mentioned in the Canons relating to analytical knowledge- *paṭisambhidāmagga*. So, now we have the fourth characteristic, namely, the firm establishment of knowledge. It means the knowledge achieved is retained for a long time in all its sequences. Formerly the knowledge attained through meditation lasted only for four or five minutes to get dissipated or

THE SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF SĀṆKHARŪPEKKHA ÑĀṆA

forgotten thereafter for various reasons. In that case one had to begin meditation afresh. But when *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa* gets firm, the stream of knowledge will flow without losing momentum, after the *yogi* has initially repeated his efforts to meditate four, or five, or utmost ten times. When this momentum is achieved the meditator will be noting and knowing conditioned things for two or three hours at a stretch. This is how knowledge is established for any length of time.

The fifth characteristic of *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa* is refinement. When grounded or powdered rice is sifted again and again in a sieve, all the chaff will be discarded and only the finest grain will remain. In much the same way refinement is achieved when this *ñāṇa* is exercised time and again.

The last characteristic of this insight is the ability of the observing mind to remain fixed only on the object it has set itself to work without wavering. The Texts say that at this stage the mind withdraws from the many enjoyable sensations it encounters and refuses to flicker. It might direct its attention to those pleasurable sensations for a fleeting moment, but it does not dwell on them for long. It reverts to its task of noting and knowing conditioned things impassively as it has done before. The meditator may be noting and knowing various sense-objects within himself;

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but his mind will not be hopping about to get dispersed. In fact he will recoil or withdraw from them and finally fix his mind on only a selected few prominent among them.

Those three characteristics belonging to the second part herein stated may succinctly be described as firm establishment of knowledge, achievement of refinement and building up of an unwavering mind. With the three earlier shown we have now the six characteristics of *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*. Yogis in meditation should examine themselves whether they are qualified for this insight with its six properties. If found wanting in any of them they may not be considered as proficient and, therefore, they may regard themselves as not having attained the stage of *ariya magga*.

REALIZATION OF NIBBĀNA THROUGH ARIYA MAGGA AND PHALA

As *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa* ripens, the process of knowing gains pace as the mind takes note of the sense-objects effortlessly. As speed is gathered in the process, consciousness is quickened till it arrives at the stage when it ceases along with the object it is concentrating upon. This indicates going beyond the volitional activities of *nāma* and *rūpa* to gain entry into the portals of peaceful bliss called *nibbāna*.

In Milinda Paññā, it is said:

As the *yogi* turns his mind towards the object by a step-by-step observation, the mind overrides the phenomena of incessant arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* (consciousness and corporeality) and arrives at the stage when the stream of psycho-physical forces that are in constant vibration cease.

Initially the *yogi* has been noting step by step the process relating to the phenomena of touching, thinking, knowing, hearing and seeing that arise in his mind and body thereby discovering the nature of the various volitional activities which are too numerous to be taken into account. But he realizes that they are all impermanent. Finally all sense-objects and consciousness of these sense-objects get dissolved. At this stage he can look forward to *nibbāna*.

So Milinda Paññā again has the following:

O King Milinda! When the *yogi*, who has well-practised *vipassanā* leading to *pubbabhāga magga*, the forerunner to *airyā magga*, reaches the stage where the stream of forces relating to consciousness and corporeality ceases, he may be said to have headed for *nibbāna*.

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As I have said, concentrating on the arising and passing away of consciousness and corporeality, observing the Three Marks of *anicca*, etc., is *pubbabhāga magga*, the precursor. Having reached that stage and progressing from there step by step, the *yogi* gets to *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*, from which again, he moves on to the next stage of *anuloma ñāṇa*, knowledge of adaptation, so called because it is through this knowledge that an aspirant for enlightenment can adapt himself to the 37 factors of enlightenment (*bodipakkhiya*). When this knowledge is achieved the *yogi* is in the path of the *ariyās* ready to find shelter in the peaceful and cool shade of *nibbāna*. Once he looks forward to *nibbāna* in like manner, he becomes a *sotāpanna* who can totally get away from the four nether worlds. Gaining insight into the nature of *anatta*, unsubstantiality, one gains entrance into *nibbāna*; and once *nibbāna* is in sight, one escapes from the nether worlds.

In fine, all that I have discussed relates to the manner in which the *ariya samanās* or the Worthy Ones arise having liberated themselves from defilements with objective *nibbāna* through the practice of insight meditation.

Now I shall go back to the story of Subhadda. On the eve of *mahāparinibbāna*, Buddha preached the last sermon taking compassion on the ascetic who had by now listened to the discourse reverentially and with rapt attention.

LAST WORDS TO SUBHADDA

LAST WORDS TO SUBHADDA

These are the last words of Buddha addressed to Subhadda:

O Subhadda! At the age of twenty-nine, I entered priesthood to seek *Sabbaññuṭṭa ñāṇa*, Enlightenment. Since then more than fifty years have gone by. Beyond the realm of the Law and Discipline that I have been teaching during those years, there has been none who practises insight meditation as part of the doctrine of *Ariyā* Path. Neither has there appeared any *sotāpanna*, the first category of *samanas*, nor *sagadāgami*, the second category, nor *anāgāmi*, the third category, nor *arahat*, the fourth category. Outside the pale of my teaching, there is a void because of the absence of the twelve *samanas* belonging to the four categories, who are freed from defilements of the mind, and who profess to know what they really know. Subhadda! Know ye that for so long as the Eightfold Path remains extant, the lineage of the true *samanas* shall forever remain unbroken. If the twelve *samanas* or *bhikkhus* live well and true, true *arahats* shall never become extinct,

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Ekūnatmso vayasā Subhadda,
Yam pabbajim kim kusalānu-esi,
Vassāni paññāsa samādhikāni,
Yato aham pabbajito, Subhadda,
Ñāyassa dhammassa padesavaṇṇī,
Ito bahiddhā samanopi natthi.
Dutiyopi samano natthi;
Tatīyopi samano natthi;
Catutthopi samano natthi.
Suññā parappavādā samaneti aññehi.
Ime ca, Subhadda, bikkhū sammā
vihareyyum
Asuñño loko arahantehi assa.

One thing which stands out prominently in this valediction is the revelation that there are, in any other religious teachings or ideologies, none who practises insight meditation (*vipassanā*). So beware of those who assert that *vipassanā* is unnecessary or superfluous. Such statements are not conducive to the practice of insight-meditation without which our *Buddhasāsanā* would be like any other ordinary teaching.

SUBHADDA'S INTROSPECTION

Then Subhadda thinks:

"In the doctrine that my teachers, and my teachers' teachers taught me, no instruction is

BUDDHA LAYS DOWN DISCIPLINE

given regarding the practice of insight-meditation. Therefore, among the ascetics there are none who are liberated from the snares of defilements of the mind. Among them there are no meditators who take note of the phenomena of conditioned things such as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking, observing the Three Marks *anicca dukkha* and *anatta*. There are none who follow the precursory path of *pubba magga*, not to say of the actual practice of *vipassanā magga*. Then, how can there be true *samanas* who have eliminated defilements of the mind to reach the *ariyā* path? So I hereby renounce ascetism to embrace the teaching of Buddha."

Having thought to himself thus, he told Buddha:

"Reverend Sir! Your words touched me. You have uncovered what has been hidden. You have shown the way to one losing it. You have borne the torch and shed light where darkness was. You have let me see the light of the *dhamma* after many expositions. I, who have heard you teach, take refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Let me be ordained as a monk in your presence."

BUDDHA LAYS DOWN DISCIPLINE

Then Buddha said:

"Subhadda! Anyone belonging to religious denominations foreign to my teaching is usually

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Origination because he was an extraordinary man. If this argument holds water, what of Chanda, who was equally extraordinary? He had not been taught in this Law, and he could not get illumined in the *dhamma* in spite of his being extraordinary, because he was highly egoistic. To an individual whose attachment to life in this world is not strong, it would not have been too difficult to see the laws of cause and effect. Once he becomes convinced in these laws and tries to take note of the conditioned things arising as they arise, he shall see for himself the working of the law of cause and effect. These have been dealt with when I gave the discourse about the Dhammacakka Sutta elsewhere.

Having got instructions from Buddha, Subhadda noted them and wended his way to a suitable place. In those days Buddha had so many disciples with him that it would not be easy to find solitude where monks were absent. By a suitable place is meant a place which was not overcrowded with monks. Finding such a place, he walked to and fro there and meditated. Since he walked during his meditation, his exercise could have had no relation to *samatha*. In that practice, whether he meditated on breathing-in or breathing-out, *ānāpāna*, or whether he reflected on the 32 impure parts of the body, *dvattimsa*, he would have to be at rest. In *kasina*-meditation, one has to concen-

SUBHADDA PRACTISES KAMMAṬṬHĀNA

trate his mind on the conceptualized image of a circle. In *asubha*-meditation, one has to concentrate his mind on corpses. In *anussati*-meditation, one has to concentrate his mind on loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. All these exercises in meditation require the meditator to remain at rest. So it may safely be taken that Buddha instructed Subhadda to observe *vipassanā kammaṭṭhāna* or exercises in insight-meditation. As *Satipatthāna Sutta* also enjoins the *yogi* to note action of going while one is going, it may safely be assumed that Subhadda practised *satipaṭṭhāna vipassanā* or mindfulness and insight-meditation.

While walking, Subhabda noted the antecedents and precedents of the phenomenon of moving and developed insight-knowledge after repeated concentration and finally became an *arāhat* possessed with the four virtues of higher knowledge called *patisambhiva ñāna*. Then he came to where Buddha was and, having made his obeisance, sat there.

At the first Synod, all these incidents were related and duly noted. It must be observed from all what I have preached that merely thinking over the *dhamma* does not lead one to *magga* or *phala* or *nibbāna*. It is common knowledge that if you keep your mind follow letting it go wherever it pleases to go, exerting no effort to train it, you cannot be on the Eightfold Path.

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Without the realization of this Path, one cannot become a true *ariyā* who has been liberated from all defilements.

At the first Synod it was duly noted that Subhadda was the last one who attained the stage of an *arahat* during the life time of Buddha.

May all who have heard this discourse on Subhadda Sutta attain *nibbāna* from the basic stage of *mūla magga* through the precursory stage of *pubba magga* to the final stage of *ariyā magga*, the Path trodden by the Worthy Ones.

PART H

**SARANIYA DHAMMA THAT EXCITES
MEMORY OF GOOD DEEDS**

PART II

SĀRANĪYA DHAMMA THAT EXCITES MEMORY OF GOOD DEEDS

(A sermon delivered by Mahasi Sayadaw at Mayantabin)

This sermon, delivered at Mayantabin Ward, on the 12 th. and 13th. waning of Tagu, 1314 Burmese Era, relates to the *Sāranīya* and *Mahāpaccavekkhana dhammas* expounded in the Kosambiya Sutta of Mūlapaṇṇāsa. *Sāranīya* alone is dealt with in the Saṅgīti Sutta in Dīgha Nikāya as well as in the Sāmagama Sutta in Majjhima Nikāya. The Chakka Nipāta in Aṅguttara Nikāya also contains that *Sāranīya* Sutta. "Sāranīya" means that which excites one's memory. One who practises it is always remembered. It is good for both monks and laymen.

INTRODUCING THE SUTTA

I shall introduce this Sutta to you in the words of the Enlightened One:

O bhikkhus! There are six components in the *sāranīya dhamma* which can perpetuate a person practising it in the memory of his companions. It also instils love in the minds of those living together, inspires respect and venera-

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tion for one another and generates a feeling of oneness. It, therefore, eliminates all controversies and is conducive to the establishment of unity and solidarity in the community.

If a person is accomplished in *sāraṇīya*, he will be remembered with affection by his associates, companions and friends. Since he instils love in others in his company, he will be loved by them in turn, consequently earning respect. Is it not respect cherished by all? He, who is not treated with respect that is due him, will surely be offended. But here it must be borne in mind that, if he expects respect, he must himself be respectable. The entire responsibility of generating respect rests with him, for if he does not behave to be worthy of it, who will ever respect him?

Absence of controversy lays the foundations for unanimity. *Sāraṇīya* eliminates all tendencies to disagree. So it is conducive to the building up of a united whole. If we are of one mind all divisive activities will cease. In a family there are at least two members, while there may be three or four in other cases. It is imperative that members of a family live in harmony. The way to achieve this is to practise *sāraṇīya*. When families live in harmony, the entire village community containing these families will live in unity. Eventually the whole town, the whole

SIX COMPONENT OF SARANIYA THAT LEADS TO UNITY

country and the whole world will achieve unity and live in peace. So the virtues of *sāranīya* are not confined to a section of humanity. They are universal and common to all, irrespective of differences in nationality or religion usually met with among mankind.

SIX COMPONENTS OF SĀRANIYA THAT LEADS TO UNITY

I shall first enumerate the six components of *sāranīya* that lead to unity. As you know, there are three aspects in *mettā*, loving-kindness, namely *mettā* in thought, *mettā* in word and *mettā* in deed. These three aspects constitute the first three components of *sāranīya*. To them may be added the other three, namely, charitableness, morality and knowledge or wisdom. These six qualities of *sāranīya* can bless mankind with unity.

All actions are *kamma* which embraces all *kusala* (moral) and *akusala* (immoral) volitions. When we say prayers we implore that we may be condoned for what we have wrongfully done, either in thought, word or deed. This, of course, relates to absolution of our sins. But when we pray, we must not only pray for it. We should also pray for rewards of merit for wholesome and moral deeds that we perform.

Volitional activities in thought, word or deed, free from greed and anger but promoting loving-kindness, are *kammas* devoid of all sins. They deserve merit. Acquire it by wishing your

neighbour happiness, speaking of happiness for him and doing things that bring him happiness.

All sentient beings desire happiness and not suffering. If you wish them well and happy, their desires will be fulfilled. Then they will feel that you have brought them under the cool shade of a tree. So, whatever you do, do it with loving-kindness, whatever you speak, speak with loving-kindness and whatever you think, think with loving-kindness all for the sake of happiness for others. When mankind becomes pervaded with that spirit of loving-kindness, the three *kammas* of *mettā* will be accomplished. They are indeed the three components of *sāraṇīya dhamma*.

Besides these three, there are, as I have said, charitableness, morality and wisdom. I use the term, *cāga*, for charitableness although the Sutta does not explicitly employ this term. It merely says that one must share with others practising morality what one earns by licit means. I hold that this spirit of charity to encourage morality denotes *cāga*. Adding this to *sīla*, morality, and *paññā*, wisdom, we have the three components which, together with the three *kammas* above-mentioned, total six. The last two of them relate to the practice of *vipassanā* or meditation, one being classified as *ariyāsīla* (morality practised by the Nobles Ones) and the other as *ariyāpaññā* (wisdom belonging to the Noble Ones.)

METTA IN ACTUAL PRACTICE

Of those two, the fundamental *dhamma* for the *vipassanā* yogi is *ariyāpaññā*, which being too subtle for ordinary people, I shall not elaborate at length; but I shall deal with others in detail as they are basic for the practice of *sāraṇīya*.

1. METTA IN ACTUAL PRACTICE

As regards putting *mettā* into practice, Buddha makes this exhortation:

O bhikkhus! Let your deeds testify to your spirit of loving-kindness with which you wish happiness for your fellow-disciples who live together with you in each other's presence, or apart from you in each other's absence.

Here mention is made of fellow-disciples of monks practising *dhamma* together because this sermon was first preached to the monks. Among laymen living together, it can also be practised with advantage. If you, with a spirit of service, do good to those in your company, that will be putting loving-kindness into practice. You may start practising it in the first instance with your near and dear ones, such as your wife, your sons and daughters, your parents, your relatives, your pupils and your friends. When you do so, make it a point to avoid anger which invariably causes disaffection that brings disharmony even among your own kith and kin. In all organizational work, it is this ill-will that usually sows the seed of discord.

TO NIBBANA VIA THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

In practising *mettā*, even the outward behaviour of the well-wisher should reveal his good intention for the happiness of others, whether they are near and dear to him, or just mere acquaintances living in places far away from him. He should help them all with a spirit of service before self. If he finds a person carrying a heavy load, he should lighten it with his help. Finding a sick man, he should nurse him back to health by massaging him (which is the Burmese way of tending the sick and the aged). When he walks on the floor on which someone is sleeping, he should tread lightly on it so as not to disturb his sleep. These little things go a long way towards making others happy.

Let me tell you how a person can practice *mettā* towards people living far away from him and, therefore, out of his sight. Perhaps they might have left the place leaving their personal belongings with him. Or, they might have gone leaving their jobs unfinished. In that case, he should act as a custodian of their property and look after it. He should also try to bring their unfinished jobs to completion. If he helps them with this practical application of loving-kindness, he shall be always remembered even though he may be out of their sight.

He who helps others will be loved and respected. Where there is love there can be no cause for quarrels and disputes. So, whether

METTA IN SPEECH

they are living apart from him or not, they shall feel that they are at one with him. And, he, in turn, is at one with them. In this way unity is achieved among people knowing one another. They shall be united by the bonds of love and compassion. Love usually brings compassion, and so I have purposely added this quality to loving-kindness.

Do people like to have their good name and reputation forgotten? I think not. Do they not like to be loved and respected? Of course, they do. Do they want to be quarelling among themselves creating schisms and divisions? I don't think so. People usually like to be sociable and live together in harmony.

If a man wants to establish an undivided society, he must practise loving-kindness that makes unity a reality. At home, even in his relations with his wife, he should never say anything in anger, not even making a scowling face. His smiles mean joy for his wife who shall always love and respect him. She would be thinking of her husband as dutiful and magnanimous. Where love begets love, the entire household is happy. If loving-kindness begins at home among families, there is but unity among their members.

2. METTA IN SPEECH

Regarding speech imbued with the spirit of *mettā*, Buddha has this to say:

TO NIBBANA VIA THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Again, O bhikkhus, when you communicate with your fellow disciples, speak in the language of loving-kindness, whether they are with you together, or whether they live apart in far away places.

Metiā in speech means speaking with intent to serve for the welfare and happiness of others whether they are in one's presence or absence. When a person has something to say, let him say it in sweet and gentle words, wishing for the welfare and happiness of the man spoken to. Even when he finds occasion to chastise his companions, let him not say it in anger. He should wait for his anger to subside and then say what he has to say persuasively. Among numerous people living together, it will not be easy to find everyone perfect. If he notices any defects in others, let him draw their attention to them, using sweet words that would remind them of their mistakes and faults, which they would correct at leisure voluntarily in their own way. Occasionally he would come across people finding fault with their fellow companions. In that event he should be able to speak in defence of the man criticised. At times critics would be maligning his friend behind his back. Here, too, he must be able to say something in his defence.

I am bringing up this point because I think it important. There are people among us who

METTA IN THOUGHT

pretend to wish well of others although actually they would be doing harm behind their backs. Sincere friends always speak in the interest of their fellow-men. They usually come to the aid of those who are unable to say or do things for themselves. Where there is discord they patch up the differences. They prevent their comrades from indulging in fruitless undertakings. Here it cannot be over-emphasized that all words intended for the good of others should always be sweet and gentle to the ear. If a person practises *mettā* in speech in the manner that I have described, he shall forever live in the memory of others who will have nothing but praises for his wholesome speech motivated by loving-kindness.

3. METTA IN THOUGHT

Regarding thought that instils *mettā* in the minds of all fellow-beings, Buddha has this to say:

Again, O bhikkhus, when you think about your fellow disciples, think in terms of loving-kindness praying for their happiness whether they are with you together or whether they live in distant lands.

When we pray with *mettā* for our fellow-disciples we used to say: "*Averā hontu!* (May all be free from danger), *Abyāpajjhā hontu!* (May all be free from suffering in mind), *Anīghā hontu!* (May

all be free from suffering in body), *Sukhī attānaṃ parihārantu!* (May all be able to establish themselves in the happiness and well-being of mind and body)." This is thinking *mettā* or loving-kindness. When we express this sentiment to others, we must be absolutely sincere. Saying "May all be happy!" but wishing ill of others cannot be held to be *mettā mano kamma* (implementation of *mettā* in thought). It should be well-developed in the mind. Whenever you have something to say or do, you should be mindful of happiness for others. You shall then be well-remembered. When people love one another there shall be no disagreement among them, and thus unity will be realised.

I have laid down the following as a motto for all to remember:

All human behaviour resulting from the practice, in deed, word and thought, of loving-kindness shall be rendered memorable throughout one's life.

Where love, compassion and respect pervade human society, there shall one find everlasting unity.

These three *kammas*, the practical application of loving-kindness in thought, word and deed, are essential in building unity and promoting welfare among peoples. They are not hard to practise, and every home should take up loving-

CHARITABLENESS

kindness as a way of life which then shall extend to every school or monastery and every village or town so that the whole world remains established in unity and happiness. I urge you to work for it with determination. Now I shall deal with the remaining *sāranīya dhamma*, firstly with *cāga* or charitableness.

4. CHARITABLENESS

Regarding charitableness Buddha has this to say:

Again, O bhikkhus, there is another *sāranīya dhamma*. Monks obtain their necessities, such as food, etc. To say the least, what is received in their bowls is their legitimate belongings acquired through the means of right livelihood. Monks use what they rightfully get unreservedly for the common weal of the Order.

In this way Buddha pointed out what *cāga* means. Acquiring money or property through the practice of soothsaying or medicine is called *micchājīva* or wrong livelihood. It is not fit or proper for monks to eke out their living by such means. They must not appropriate for their own use such acquisitions of property. Neither must other monks, who strictly observe *vinaya* rules, when they are offered such kind of property. All necessities obtained in accordance

with *vinaya* rules are deserving both for the monk who receives them and for his fellow-monks with whom he shares what he gets. When he receives alms from laymen, he should regard them as the collective property of the Order, and should share them with others. It will not be proper for him even to think that they are his own and that, therefore, he can dispense with them in whatever way he likes.

A monk practising charitableness usually obtains food offered by laymen for doing his duties according to the *vinayas*, such as going round the village for alms, preaching the *dhamma*, observing *dhutaṅga*, a set of 13 ascetic rules for the elimination of defilements of the mind, etc., and he, in turn, offers it, first and foremost, to monks practising *sīla*. Next, he shares it with monks who are sick, or with guest-monks, or with newly ordained monks not yet fully conversant with the way of life of the monks. If, in spite of such giving away, any food remains, he shares it with the remaining monks in order of their seniority. If, however, the food is consumed, and more of it is required, he makes another round for alms and distributes them in the same way. What food is left after this distribution, he consumes for himself. As the Pali Canon explicitly says that this practice should be applied to monks fulfilling *sīla*, it is not imperative that food must be shared with those not fulfilling it.

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This *sāraṇīya* may be difficult in implementation, for among the monks there are those who are not accommodating. The Commentaries, therefore, have this to say:

This *sāraṇīya* practice by which a monk consumes food only after having it offered to others, is difficult of implementation, unless it is done in an environment of well-experienced and accommodating monks.

Then, how long will it take for this *sāraṇīya* to be fulfilled? Usually twelve years. Even then, in one case, it has been recorded, a monk failed to fulfil its requirement on the last day before the completion of the twelve-years vow, because a wilful monk ate up the share of food the donor had reserved for himself. So, a monk desiring to take the vow of *cāga* must keep it for twelve years without a break. During those years there must not be a single occasion when he feels sorry for his acts of charity for any reason whatsoever. If he can strictly keep his vow, he will gain merit. For instance, when he goes round for alms he will get the best of everything. Commentaries cite many instances of the fruition of *cāga*. Long ago, a monk who practised it unflinchingly was unaffected by famine. Devas or divine beings offered him food, and so his bowl was always full. However much he shared it with others it never got depleted.

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I, for myself, however, admit that I shall not be able to practise *cāga* to the extent that I have now explained, because it is so difficult. But I will tell you what ordinary men can do.

You can practise charity among your own community by sharing with others what you earn by licit means. If you practise it at home or in monasteries or schools, it will be conducive to the cultivation of love and respect among those with whom you live together. A man who used to share what he has with others in his company will be remembered by his fellow-beings even though they may have gone out to live away from him. In a society where the spirit of charity is dominant, there will be no cause for quarrels and disputes, and consequently it will remain solid and united. Then happiness will become a reality. You might have come across generous and benevolent men donating money and materials, not only for religious and social purposes, but also for relief for the distressed. Such kindnesses are appreciated by humanity; and so the donors live in the thoughts of the rest of mankind. When love and respect prevail among donors and donees alike, discord will be eliminated and unity established. Where there is unity, there is happiness.

So please remember this aphorism:

Acts of charity live forever in
human memory, generating love and

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respect among mankind, thus laying foundations for the unity of the whole world.

5. PRACTISING MORALITY LIKE ARIYĀ

Regarding the practice of morality in the way of *ariyās* or Noble Ones, Buddha's advice is as follows:

Again, O bhikkhus, there is another *sāraṇīya* dhamma called *sīla* or morality. Observance of *sīla* should be whole and complete without any violation. Your *sīla* shall be like unto a piece of cloth untorn at the edges. It shall not be like unto a piece of cloth with holes in the middle. Neither shall the cloth of *vinaya* be variegated in colours, or stained with dirt here and there. You should not be egoistical in the observance of *sīla*, thinking that it is you alone who are moral. It must be observed with all the attentiveness of *khanika*, *upacāra* and *appanā samādhī*, instantaneous, proximate and ecstatic concentration. If you practise *sīla* in this way you will be on a par with your companions regarding accomplishment in moral behaviour, whether they are by you in your presence, or away from you in your absence.

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Now what is meant by such terms as "untorn at the edges, etc."? When laymen take the precepts there shall be no violation of the undertaking to abide by the *pañcasīla* (the five precepts). For instance, the first undertaking not to kill should never be violated. So also the last undertaking not to take intoxicants should be implicitly observed. Monks must also observe the *vinayas* without breaking the first or the last of the rules. If, for any reason the first and the last vows were broken, one's, *sīla* would be like a sheet of cloth torn at the edges. If, likewise, the middle vow is broken, the cloth of *sīla* would appear as rifled with holes. If violation occurs in two or three rules in a set of undertakings, the cloth of *sīla* would appear to be in various colours. If one rule of *sīla* is broken here and another there, the cloth would look stained. All moralities shall remain pure, untainted and unshattered.

With *ariyās*, be they laymen or monks, *sīla* remains absolutely pure. This purity is maintained both in the presence of one another and in the absence of one another. It is not attained through wilful restraint. It comes naturally. The purity of *sīla* is in the very nature of the *ariyās*. It is not affected by the presence or absence of the compatriots. To equate oneself with those *ariyās*, one must have attained *sotāpanna* stage. A *sotāpanna's* *sīla* always remain pure without his making special efforts. If that

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sotāpanna happens to be a monk, even when he transgresses voluntarily, he will be absolved from guilt. His *sīla* would be of the same kind and quality with that of his fellow-monks whether in their company or not. Such an individual whose *sīla* approaches that of an *ariyā* will not only be remembered by others, but also loved and respected. There will be no cause for him and his fellow men to be disagreeable with one another. He will be at one with them and be happy in the same way as his comrades are.

So Buddha said:

When the purity of one's *sīla* becomes the same as that of the *ariyās*, whether one remains in their company or not, one will be well-remembered, loved and respected. Under these circumstances, there shall be developed sociableness, accord, unity and solidarity in the community.

This *sāraṇīya dhamma* is mentioned in the Kosambhiya Sutta preached by Buddha in connection with a dispute that arose among the monks of Kosambhi who disagreed over a question of morality. Buddha desired the monks realize the need for living together in harmony without creating divisions among them. Unity can be achieved only through the practice of this *ariyā sīla* which may prove difficult of applica-

tion to laymen. Observance of the five precepts is also *ariyākanta sīla* or morality approved by the *ariyās*. If they are well-observed with all seriousness, they are also conducive to generation of love, respect, harmony and unity among peoples. In this discourse, the words "in their presence or in their absence", have been used very often. The purport of these words is a reminder to the fact that sin has no place to hide. You may think that no one sees you as you are sinning. But there are devas or divine beings who can see you doing evil. Even if no one can see you, you yourself will be seeing you in the act. Such deeds that you have done will get into your consciousness as you are nearing death. That there is no hiding place for misdeeds has been shown in *Sīlavīmamsana Jātaka*.

THE STORY OF SILAVIMAMSANA

In one of his past existences Sāriputtā was a *disāpāmokkha*, or professor, with five hundred disciples. He had a beautiful and intelligent daughter. He wanted to marry her to a man of good morality. So he called in his pupils to his side and said: "I have a daughter who is beautiful, wise and accomplished. I want to give her away in marriage to any one of you who is deserving. My daughter needs jewellery to adorn herself with on the occasion of her marriage. If any one of you can bring

VICE HAS NO PLACE TO HIDE

it here without the knowledge of the owner, I shall marry her to him.”

Vieing with one another the disciples brought all kinds of jewellery and surrendered them to the Master. But one disciple, who was destined to be a Buddha later, did not bring anything. So the Master asked him why he did not steal. The disciple replied:

“You told us to steal so that no one can know. Even though no one sees me stealing, I, who steal, is fully aware of myself actually stealing. Hence, I failed to find a place where crime can be committed without anyone’s knowledge or anyone seeing me. So I have not brought any stolen property.”

At this, the *disāpāmokkha* realized that his pupil, the Buddha-to-be, was a man of morality and gave away his daughter to him.

VICE HAS NO PLACE TO HIDE

When you commit vice in secret, although no one sees you committing it, you know it that you have committed it. You may not admit it; but in your mind you would be saying, “I did it! I did it!”. When you approach death, the evil that you have done pricks your conscience. If you die with an attachment to the evil that you have done, you will certainly go down to the nether world. If you believe in *kamma* and its resultants, you

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should abstain from committing evil in thought, word and deed. If you practice morality seriously without violating it, you will gain the confidence of those with whom you live. You will always be in their thoughts, loved and respected. This is how you establish harmony and unanimity in the company you keep.

6. AS WISE AS THE ARIYĀS

Regarding approach to knowledge or wisdom of the *ariyās*, Buddha's advice is as follows:

Again, O bhikkhus, there is another *sāraṇīya dhamma* relating to wisdom. It can accomplish its task of delivering one from evil. Hence it is noble. One who possesses it and does things in the right way according to its dictates will be delivered from all suffering. If a monk establishes himself in this kind of wisdom while living in the company of his fellow-monks, he will be held to be equal in wisdom with others whether they are living together with him in his presence or not.

In Buddhasāsanā there is the noble and supramundane knowledge about the four maggas (paths) and *phalas* (fruition) which in essence mean one and the same thing, the only difference being that the former denote the cause while the latter the effect. The four *ariyāmagga paññā*

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eliminate all *kilesās* or defilements of the mind and deliver one from the round of rebirths, *saṃsāra*. They are collectively known as *niyyānika diṭṭhi*, because they are able to accomplish deliverance from suffering. One who is endowed with this knowledge will be liberated from all kinds of suffering. But there are two ways of bringing about the cessation of suffering, the wrong way and the right way. Following the wrong way one gets only a temporary relief from suffering. If one adopts the right course, one can get rid of it once and for all.

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When you bend your arms or legs for a long time, you feel stiff. Then you straighten them out and relax. But after a long time, you again feel stiff and you try to get relief by bending them again. In the same way you feel stiff if you sit for a long time, and you get relaxed if you stand up. In all these physical activities you get a temporary relief as you correct your posture. You feel hot; so, you fan yourself or take a bath. You get a temporary relief; but later you again feel hot. So when you fight discomfort in this way, suffering will be relieved only temporarily.

Consider hunger. It is usually appeased when food is taken. But after some time you will feel hungry again. So you have to take food

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twice or thrice a day. At times this will not be enough. So you eat four or five times daily. All sentient beings, men or animals, go round in search of food when they get hungry; but their hunger is never appeased. They search for food throughout their lives. Therefore, Buddha had a name for hunger, namely, *jighacchāparama*, a kind of chronic disease. Of all diseases, hunger is the most virulent kind. There is medicine for each of the diseases. Once the prescribed medicine is taken, the disease is cured. But not so with that disease called hunger. As soon as you were born, you had to be fed with your mother's milk; and yet, your hunger was not appeased. So you go on feeding yourself daily with food, and yet you get hungry when the time comes. You suffer hunger during this existence. You shall do so in your next existence. So appeasement of hunger does not mean a permanent cessation of suffering.

When the resultant consequences of your past deeds tend to be bad, you may be of low birth and in trouble during the present existence. You may even be famished, being stricken with poverty. You may be afflicted with all kinds of diseases. If, becoming repentent, you do wholesome deeds that earn merit in the future, you shall be liberated from sufferings that you are encountering in this life. If you are to be reborn in this human world, you will be of noble birth. Or, you may even be reborn in

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the abode of the devas or divine beings. But the force of your good actions cannot last forever. When it is spent, you may be reborn a poor man in a sea of troubles. So the attainment of human or divine happiness due to your meritorious deeds through the practice of morality is transitory and not permanent. Peace and happiness gained in this way is not real peace and happiness.

Supposing you lead a moral life, practising meditation for the first, second, third and fourth stages of *jhāna* in succession, you will be transported to the realm of *rūpabrāhmas*, Form-Sphere, or of *arūpabrāhmas*, Formless Sphere. You will remain in the height of *jhānic* ecstasy for the duration of many worlds. If you happen to get to the Realm of Neither Perception nor Non-perception, you will remain there for the duration of 84,000 worlds wrapt in ecstasy. But when your *kamma* forces come to an end, you will again be reborn in this world to enjoy life or to suffer its miseries. If you happen to commit evil deeds while leading the life of a human, your unwholesome and immoral acts would drag you down to the four nether worlds.

Therefore, although charity and morality can lead one to the abode of the *Brahmās*, such attainments to higher planes of existence do not give one eternal peace and happiness.

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TRUE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

What, then, is the true cessation of suffering or unsatisfactoriness? Suffering ceases only when one finds *nibbāna* through treading the Path of Four Noble Truths. If one attains to the lowest stage of *sotāpanna*, one shall never go down to the four nether worlds where suffering is rife. A *sotāpanna* may be reborn seven times in the world of men or devas, and at the last existence, he will become an *arahat* ready to enter *nibbāna*. A *sagadāgāmi* has only two existences, first as a man, and then as a divine being, intervening between him and *nibbāna*. An *anāgāmi* never returns to this world. He may be either in the Form-Sphere or Formless-Sphere, from whence he departs as an *arahat* entering *nibbāna*.

In such cases we use the term, "entering *parinibbāna*," which means that, after entry to that stage, *rūpas* and *nāmas* do not arise afresh, and that all unsatisfactoriness connected with them ceases altogether. There will be no *nāma-rūpa* which becomes old, sick and subject to death. There is no cause for anxiety and fear for old age, sickness and death. One knows no pain or sadness. All unsatisfactoriness relating to the body or to the mind is eliminated. Nothing arises; and therefore, there is complete peace and calmness. Hence, according to Buddha, knowledge relating to the Noble Path

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transports one to the stage where all suffering or unsatisfactoriness ceases. But it must be always borne in mind that the Path offers salvation only to those who actually practise it.

SALVATION AWAITS HIM WHO PUTS KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

In your travels a vehicle takes you to your destination while those who stand by it are left behind. Knowledge about the Noble Path is like that vehicle. If you ride in it, you will be conveyed to your destination; and if you merely stand by it, you will be left behind. Those who desire to be liberated from all sufferings should use that vehicle. That is to say they should use knowledge they gained for practical purposes. The most important task for you while you are born into this Buddha-sāsanā is to practise *dhmma* so that you get to *Nibbāna* where all sufferings cease. The least that you should do is to try to attain to the stage of *sotāpanna*, the basic step in the liberation from sufferings attending the four nether worlds. To be worthy of this *sāsanā* into which you are born, you should strive after liberation from suffering. Enjoyment of life in the mundane world of men, devas and Brāhmās is not the end in itself. This can be attained through the practice of *dāna*, charity, *sīla*, morality and *bhāvanā*, meditation. Merits can be gained by the practice of these three virtues

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either when you are under the wings of the *sāsanā* or outside the realm of it. They are just ordinary meritorious deeds with which you should not feel complacent. If, although you are one of the disciples of Buddha, you are still destined, in one of your future existences, to descend to the four nether worlds, what will avail you? So we urge you to make efforts to reach beyond the stages of *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā* and attain knowledge of salvation from suffering to avoid going down to the four nether worlds. Valuable jewels are incompatible with common man. This *dhamma* relating to the knowledge that I am speaking of is a veritable jewel not to be easily acquired by ordinary individuals. It is only for those endowed with *pārāmitas* or aptitude acquired through the exercise of cardinal virtues. If you do not have the aptitude yet, try and acquire it by continual practice of those virtues. We are showing you the way.

HOW TO GAIN THIS KNOWLEDGE

Here it may be asked whether to gain this knowledge one must at once begin with the implementation of the *ariyāmagga*. No. One should not at once begin with it. There is what is called *pubbabhāgamagga* which is precursory to the Path of the Noble Ones. This is to be practised from *vipassanā* or insight-meditation stage. In exercising this kind of meditation, first, you will

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notice the arising of *nāma* and *rūpa* at the six sense-doors. Observe and note such arising at every moment. When you see an object, note your "seeing". When you hear, or smell, or taste, or touch, or think in relation to an object, note those phenomena of "hearing, smelling, tasting, touching or thinking." The beginner, however, may not be able to note and observe all such phenomena in detail on every occasion. So, begin noting what is most palpable. When one walks, one can feel the element of motion, *vāyo dhātu*. Then one should take note of the state of "walking". In the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta it has been said, "When you go, know that you go, when you stand, know that you stand, when you sit, know that you sit, and when you lie down, know that you lie down." You must note the working of *vāyo dhātu* such as "going, standing, sitting and lying down."

Majority of *yogīs* practising *vipassanā* starts initially with the sitting posture. The meditator first takes note of his entire body in the act of sitting. But he also notices that as he sits, he is also breathing, and as he breathes in and out, his abdomen rises or falls in consonance with his activity of breathing. In whatever position a *yogi* assumes, he is conscious of the way his body behaves. So we direct him to note the rising and falling of his abdomen as he sits for *vipāssanā*. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

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directs that such bodily actions may be noted. It does not mean, however, that a meditator should note only these two movements of rising and falling of the abdomen. While noting them, something might get into his mind. For instance, he might notice stiffness in his body. He might feel hot or painful. These are *vedanās* or sensations which he might also note. When he stretches his arms or bends them just to relieve stiffness, he might have noted his stretching or bending. He is enjoined to note all his mental and physical behaviour as it occurs; and when nothing special happens to his mind and body, he will concentrate on noting only the rising and falling of his abdomen.

As the *yogi* continues noting in this way, he will come to distinguish between *nāma* and *rūpa*, the relation between them, and the causes and effects of their arising and passing away. The sense-object and the knowing mind appear as he is taking note of them and then disappear. That is to say, their activities arise and then cease. It then dawns upon the meditator that arising and passing away denote *anicca*, impermanence. What is impermanent is unsatisfactory, *dukkha*. Things just happen as is their wont. As he gains experience in this exercise, he will be able to take note of all phenomena as they arise, and finally he comes to realize not only the law of *anicca* and *dukkha*, but also

HOW TO GAIN THIS KNOWLEDGE

of *anatta* unsubstantiality. In this way he gains knowledge of the Noble Path and sees *nibbāna*. At this stage the Three Marks that he realizes remain permanently impressed in his mind, whether in the act of noting or of reflecting what has been noted. All *ariyās* or Noble Ones possess this knowledge of the Path. A *yogi* who gains it can equate himself with an *ariyā*. His convictions in the Three Marks remain firm whether he is living with them in their presence or apart from them in their absence. In this connection, Buddha's saying goes: "When one attains *ariyamagga ñāṇa* (knowledge of the Noble Path) one is said to be living as equals with *ariyās* who have been endowed with it, whether one lives with them together in their presence or apart from them in their absence." Such a *yogi* shall forever live in the memory of others and will also be loved and respected. In this way he builds up around him harmony and unanimity.

Buddha taught these six *sāraṇīya dhammas* in *Sāmagāma Sutta* of *Uparipaṇṇāsa* on the occasion when factions arose among the followers of Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta, one of the leaders of the heretics. It was Ānandā who first expressed his anxiety to Buddha about the possibility of discord arising among the Sanghas in the same way as it arose among the Nigaṇṭhas as a result of their ideological differences. Buddha, therefore, discussed about the origin of such

controversies, and then he taught the six components of the *sāraṇīya dhamma*, which, in essence, are qualities that would bring the Sanghas together in unity and solidarity. The last of the six lays emphasis on the *ariyāmagga ñāṇa*. If the monks living together are unanimous in their views about the analytical knowledge of the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* and are firmly convinced in the law of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, there can be no controversy regarding this *paññā*. If, in spite of all this, controversy arises it may be due to the fact that one of the parties to it is not an *ariyā*, or worse still, both parties are not *ariyās* at all. True *ariyās* shall be of one mind relating to their knowledge about *nāma*, *rūpa* and the Three Marks, which shall remain unshaken.

THE STORY OF SURAMBAṬṬHA

In the time of Buddha there was a man named Surambaṭṭha who worshipped the heretics. Buddha saw that he would see the light of dhamma if he had the chance to preach him. So, one day he visited him for alms. The follower of the heretics had no adoration for Buddha; but since the Enlightened One happened to be a great personage, he could not help but offer him food. As a congratulatory to this meritorious deed, Buddha preached the donor

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a sermon, in the course of which the latter saw the light of *dhamma* and became a *sotāpanna*.

At this *Māra* thought: "Here is Surambaṭṭha who belongs to our party. But to-day Buddha has gone to his house. Perhaps our man might have been converted. I shall investigate." So thinking, he disguised himself as Buddha and went to Surambaṭṭha. *Māra* was known for his wiles. He practised his cunning on those whom he considered to be of low intellect. Usually he applied his art of deception on the weaker sex. For example, he would approach a *bhikkhunī*, female monk, when she was alone, and say, "There is no *nibbāna* which brings you salvation. What does it profit you to remain in solitude? Even the great monks fail to realize *dhamma*. With a pittance of your intellect, how can you see the light?" In this way he tried to demoralize the womenfolk. But, unfortunately, the *bhikkhunīs* were all *arahats* and they could not be hoodwinked.

Allow me here to make a digression. In these days there are some who try to demoralize others with their erroneous views. They used to assert that *satipaṭṭhāna*, the foundation of mindfulness, is an exercise not to be practised by *puthujjanas*, ordinary individuals, since it is meant only for the *ariyās*. Others would say, "Sotāpanna stage cannot be realized by practice. Suffice it that one knows the *dhamma* by listen

ing to it. One can become a *sotāpanna* by simply listening to the teaching." Still others would say, "By merely noting that you are going, standing, sitting, bending, straightening, expanding, contracting, etc., you cannot realize the *dhamma*. Such people belong to the army of Māra. Or, else, they are possessed by a Māra personified in Kilesā, or defilements of the mind, such as ignorance, wrong views, pride, etc. The worst are those who assert that one should not practise *dhamma*, since those who practise it will get far removed from *nibbāna*, as *nibbāna* can be attained only when the mind is kept at rest. Such people are catering to the wishes of malevolent Mārā.

As I was saying, Māra went to Surambattha disguised as Buddha with intent to deceive him. The man was bewildered because he thought that Buddha had come back again so soon as he left. So, he asked the impersonator why he had come back. Mārā then told him: I would like to correct my statement made a while ago. So I came back. I told you that the five aggregates of existence are impermanent, unsatisfactory and unsubstantial. But in point of fact, some of the aggregates are permanent, solid, constant and eternal."

Then Surambattha thought to himself: Why, these words are highly irresponsible! It is not in the nature of the Buddhas to make glib statements without proper reflection. I have

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heard people say that Māra is antagonistic towards Buddha. "Then he asked Māra point-blank if he was not Māra, who had to confess that he was. He rebuffed the evil one saying," Let a hundred, nay, a thousand Māras come forward and shake my faith in Gotama Buddha. It will remain unshaken. Buddha has said that all *nāmas*, *rūpas* and volitional activities are subject to change, and that, therefore, they are impermanent. As I have realized the truth of this *dhamma*, I will have none of you. Out you go!" In this way he showed his implicit faith in the law of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. To any whose knowledge of the Noble Path is weak, that Buddha wanted to make a correction to what he had stated before would be regarded as acceptable.

In these days we have many among us who have returned from foreign countries. Some of them went there as Buddhist missionaries. Among them there are deviationists in outlook. It is because they are not solid and firm in their conviction in *ariyāmagga ñāṇa*. Without the realization of this knowledge, recognition of the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* cannot be held as fully established in the individual. At times it may fade out totally, in his future existences, even if not in the present existence. Burmese people as they earn merit, may be reborn in foreign lands. And then they will be conditioned by the ideologies

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of their parents and relatives native to those lands. In that case, their realization of the *dhamma* may not be as strong as when they had the benefit of the knowledge of the Path in their previous existence.

So we must strive for wisdom which can be equated with that attained by the Noble Ones. As we take note of *nāma* and *rūpa* as they arise, and as the Three Marks of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* become self-evident to us, we reach the stage of *ariyamagga paññā* which paves the way to *nibbāna*. When this knowledge is realized we shall become endowed with *ariyāsīla*, having practised loving-kindness in thought, word and deed. This is the reason why among the *sāraṇīya dhamma*, *ariyamagga paññā* or *ariyā paññā*, for short, is regarded as the noblest.

May you all be able to strive after *sāraṇīya dhamma* so that you shall always be remembered by your compatriots. May you all live in harmony unruffled by discord, and achieve unity. May you all be healthy in body and happy in mind. May you all realize wisdom relating to *maggā* and *phala* in a short space of time and get to *nibbāna*.

PART III

**MAHAPACCAVEKKHANA—PRINCIPLES
OF
SELF—APPRECIATION**

PART III

MAHĀPACCAVEKKHANĀ

or

PRINCIPLES OF SELF - APPRECIATION

(A continuation of the sermon delivered at Mayantabin by Mahasi Sayadaw for three consecutive nights beginning with the 14th, waning of Tagu, 1314 B.E.)

The subject for tonight's sermon is *Mahāpaccavekkhanā* as expounded in Kosambhiya Sutta of *Mūlapaṇṇāsa*. It is an elaboration of *ariyamagga paññā*, knowledge of the Noble Path which is the last of the components of the *Sāraṇīya dhamma* that I discussed last night.

Let me introduce this subject with the following question posed by Buddha:

There is, O bhikkhus, the knowledge of the Noble Path which leads to the *sotāpanna* (stream-winner) stage. How does this knowledge pave the way for one practising it to true cessation of dukkha, suffering or unsatisfactoriness?

Mahāpaccavekkhanā seeks to explain the seven principles relating to the examination of oneself in the application of the noble knowledge to salvation from suffering.

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1. THE FIRST MAHAPACCAVEKKHANA

O bhikkhus! A *sotāpanna*, be he a monk or a layman, under the aegis of my teaching, repairs to a forest, seeks shelter under a tree, or takes up his abode in a suitable place of solitude, and makes an appreciation of himself thus: "Possessed by *Kilesā*, defilements, my mind may be under their influence, in which case, I shall neither perceive nor know the nature of the phenomena of arising and passing away of *nāma*, mind, and *rūpa*, body. So I must examine my own self if defilements or impurities of the mind still remain with me." So saying he makes a repeated self-appreciation.

Puthujjanas, ordinary individuals or worldlings, are usually unable to note the phenomena of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, or in other words the psycho-physical phenomena, as they are dominated by defilements surging in their breasts. But a *sotāpanna*, meditating in the solitude of a forest, either under a tree or within a monastic dwelling, will be able to perceive the arising and passing away of all conditioned things, because he is absolutely free from care and anxiety that pollute the mind. Now what are the defilements that despoil the mind of the ordinary individuals? They are

EXAMPLES OF PARIYUTTHANA-KILESA

sensuality, ill-will, etc. To a beginner in insight-meditation, desire, anger, etc., might arise in him while he is noting breathing in and breathing out, or rising and falling of the abdomen in *vipassanā* exercises. Such interferences indicate the upsurgence of defilements called *pariyuṭṭhāna-kilesā*. Only *sotāpannas* can do away with them.

EXAMPLES OF PARIYUTTHANA-KILESA

O bhikkhus! If a monk is subjected to the onslaught of sensual pleasures, he is possessed by *pariyuṭṭhāna-kilesā*.

While a monk is noting, in the course of his exercise, the rising and falling of his abdomen, or sitting, or touching an object, at the same time thinking of sensual pleasures to which he has come to be attached, he is being victimized by upsurging defilements called *pariyuṭṭhāna-kilesā*. He must note this attachment and eliminate it at once. If he fails to do, he will not be able to perceive the realities of the nature of *nāma* and *rūpa* that arise only to pass away.

O bhikkhus! If a monk has hatred or animosity arising in his mind, he is possessed by *pariyuṭṭhāna-kilesā*.

As a monk is noting the rising and falling of his abdomen, hatred might arise within his mind. Then he must realize that he is being

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victimized by uprising defilements. Note this hatred as it occurs and eliminate it. If he cannot, he will fail in the realization of the nature of the phenomena of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

O bhikkhus! If a monk has doubts troubling his mind, he is possessed by *pariyuṭṭhāna-kilesā*.

While a monk is noting the psycho-physical phenomena as described above, he might entertain doubts as to whether this task of noting as an exercise for meditation does really contribute to the development of *vipassanā ñāṇa*, knowledge of insight-meditation. He now falls a prey to upsurging defilements. He must note how his doubts arise and eliminate them. If he cannot he will fail to realize the nature of the psycho-physical phenomena. What I am now saying concerns ordinary individuals. With *sotāpanna* doubts usually get resolved of their own accord without voluntary efforts. So he need not trouble himself with noting and eliminating them. But here I purposely make references to them as I want to enumerate in full all the *nīvāraṇas*, hindrances in the way of salvation.

O bhikkhus! If a monk speculates about the present existence and other existences as well, that is to say, now and hereafter, he is obsessed by *pariyuṭṭhāna-kilesā*.

EXAMPLES OF PARIYUTTHANA-KILESA

Who creates this universe? Who creates mankind? Does life come into being without any cause? Is there *atta* (self) or no *atta*? If one speculates about such things as well as about the present life, one may be considered as generating wrong views and fostering doubts. Those ideas usually assail the minds of ordinary individuals. After departing from this life where will I be reborn? What will I be then? If I continue to exist hereafter, how would I fare in the next existence? Common people would contemplate about the hereafter in this manner. With *sotāpannas* there would never arise any such speculations which engender doubts and wrong views. It is not usual for people to think about life in villages, towns and countries that can be met with in this world, or even go further to speculate about the life and world of the devas or divine beings, or even of hell or nether world. These are the workings of a restless mind. Such speculations might arise when a *yogi* is practising meditation. They are a result of *uddhacca*, restlessness. They also belong to the turbulent type of defilements. Note such wandering of the mind and eliminate it so that one is able to realize the nature of conditioned things that arise and pass away.

O bhikkhus! If a monk enters into a dispute, or picks up a quarrel, or gets involved in controversies or

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maligns others with sharp words, he is under the influence of *pariyuṭṭhāna-kilesā*.

Whether a monk enters into a dispute only in imagination or in real life while noting sense-objects, he is possessed by the uprising type of defilements. If he imagines himself quarrelling he must note this fact and eliminate it. If he fails to do so, he will not realize the true nature of the psycho-physical phenomena. If he wounds others' sensibilities with sharp words, he will be guilty of the priestly offence of *pācittiya*. His *sīla*, morality, would then become polluted. If he fails to establish purity of morality, he will not be able to attain correct views when he will be denied knowledge of the true nature of the phenomena of arising and passing away of *nama* and *rūpa*. Therefore, those who are practising the *dhamma* should never engage themselves in dispute or quarrels.

These examples seek to show the kind of obstructions that stand in the way of establishing *samādhi*, concentration or attentiveness, and *cittavisuddhi*, purity of mind. They must be removed first and foremost. Now I shall deal with the way how to remove them.

(A) SENSUAL DESIRES

When a *yogi* is practising *kasina* or *ānāpāna*, concentrating his mind on Earth-element or on breathing in and out, or when he is noting the

SENSUAL DESIRES

acts of sitting, standing, bending, stretching, contracting, etc., in accordance with the instructions of the Satipaṭṭhāna Text, his mind might wander. It might travel to the office or factory where he works. It might get into an imaginary conversation with the man he desires to meet. It might be thinking about plans that he desires to lay down. All these desires relating to the senses are called *kāmacchanda* which has been referred to in the Sutta as *kāmarāga*, sensuality. When such human desires are let loose, how can a *yogi* practise *kammaṭṭhāna* or *vipassanā*, of concentrating his mind on the Earth-element or on the process of respiration and on postures of sitting, standing walking etc.? Hence, contemplating on such desires is an impediment to the development of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. He should, therefore, avoid thinking of them. When they arise in his mind, note this arising. After repeated noting, once, twice or thrice, they will disappear. Then he reverts his attention to the original sense-object, the rising and falling of his abdomen, if he is doing this kind of mental exercise.

Sensual desires are likened to debts contracted by a person. When he is thus indebted, he has to be condescending to the creditor. He has to tolerate the creditor's chastisement. He is at the bidding of the creditor. In the case of husband and wife who love each other, one has to take extraordinary care to avoid going

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counter to the wishes of the other, lest disaffection might develop between them. This is condescension in the highest degree. So when desires arise in your mind while you are meditating, regard them as debts you have contracted, and don't let yourself run into them.

(B) HATRED

The other *nīvaraṇa*, obstruction (hindrance), is hatred. It is like a disease. When you are suffering from it you cannot enjoy life and the luxuries it offers. When you are gravely sick, all your senses are impaired. You won't find any taste in what you eat. When there is singing and dancing around a patient grumbling with pain and exhaustion, how can he enjoy them? A man will be all smiles to his friends when he has not yet been seized with anger; but when he becomes angry, he cannot be pleasant to them. Even when his friends offer their advice to him for his own good, he will not be able to appreciate it. When two persons quarrel, the negotiator who tries to patch it up is usually misunderstood. Both parties think that he is siding with the opposition. Then hatred grows. It is, therefore, like a disease. As the disease is contagious, nobody would like to be near the sick man. Even though you may not be practising *vipassanā*, it will profit you if you try to avoid anger. When it cannot be controlled, animosity develops among your friends and

SLOTH AND TORPOR

members of your family. When it arises during the *vipassanā* exercise, contemplate on it, note it and then drive it away from your mind. When you have a headache and take medicine for the cure, your headache will be removed. In the same way when you have anger and take the medicine of noting it, it will immediately disappear. Say what you have to say only when your anger has subsided. Then you will be saying it sweetly in which case friendship will grow. Suppress this disease called *byāpāda*, anger.

(C) SLOTH AND TORPOR

When one is disinclined to pray or do meritorious deeds, one is said to be suffering from *thina-middha*, sloth and torpor. When a man gets imprisoned, he is denied the opportunity to enjoy entertainments going on outside the prison. A man suffering from sloth and torpor is like that imprisoned man. He is denied the opportunity to enjoy the *dhamma*. A lazy-bone will not sit for *vipassanā*, nor will he attend any meeting where religious teaching is discussed or lectured. When he hears some one relating to him about it, he will not be able to appreciate it. He is a prisoner to his own lazy habits. So when you feel that you are seized with sloth and torpor while you are meditating, consider yourself as being imprisoned. Try to eliminate these from your mind by making note of their arising.

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(D) WAVERING AND ANXIETY

Uddhacca-kukkucca denotes wavering of mind and anxiety. When one is obsessed with it one lives in fear of one's own guilt. This sentiment is likened to a slave, who has to do at his master's bidding. He has to live where he is assigned to. He has to eat what is given him by his master. He has no opportunity to do things in his own way for his own development. All born of a slave become slaves, and so there can be no end of them. He has no fundamental rights. One who is obsessed with wavering and anxiety is a veritable slave and they are impediments to the realization of concentration and knowledge. A meditator should note their arising and eliminate them.

(E) DOUBT

Now I shall deal with *vicikicchā*, doubt. It does not relate to ordinary, everyday affairs. A man going to the bazaar (market) doubts if the road he takes leads to the bazaar. Owing to a lapse of memory, he wonders if the name of the person to whom he is addressing is correct. Such doubts have nothing to do with *nīvaraṇas* we are talking about. They are not hindrances that bring about *akusala dhamma*, demerits. The doubts that I am talking about are real impediments in the way of the realization of the Path in the practice of concentration and meditation. One doubts if it is true that

DOUBT

jhāna, transcendental state, can be fulfilled by merely observing the Earth-element or noting breathing-in and breathing-out. If a man entertains such doubts while practising concentration and meditation he can never gain *samādhi*, attentiveness, not to say of insight. As he is noting the phenomena of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*, it might occur to him whether insight-knowledge can be attained by such method, whether what the teacher has instructed is true or false, and whether it is correct to say that his efforts can lead to the realization of the Path and its fruition. In that event he notes his "considering and doubting," and eliminates such kind of thinking. A man in doubt is at the junction of two ways unable to decide which way to take. It happened that he had been carrying a load of money and running for life to escape the robbers trying to waylay him. As he got to a place where the road forked into two, he wondered which road would be the best for him to take, either right or left. As he was vacillating, he was caught, robbed and killed by the dacoits. A *yogi* who casts doubts on himself noting the nature of the conditioned things is very much like that indecisive man. Because of doubts, delusion arises; and because of delusion, *akusala dhammas* or demerits; and because of demerits, *akusala kammās* or results of demeritorious acts. Because of such *kammās* he will be reborn, and

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that means that he will again get old, become sick and meet death. So I insist that you must get rid of doubt which acts as an obstacle to gaining insight.

When these five obstructions (hindrances) are absent, the mind that takes note of the phenomena of conditioned things remain pure, and this purity of mind is called *citta visuddhi*. One who has attained this state of mind can note clearly *nāma*, *rūpa* and their relations together with causes and effects that bring them about. An ordinary individual cannot grasp the true nature of these *dhammas* because of the obstructions enumerated herein.

A SOTĀPANNA IS ABLE

A *sotāpanna* removes doubt with the help of the noble knowledge of the Path. Care and anxiety are absent in him. Practising *vipassanā* in solitude, he is able to shake off all hindrances from his mind. His clear mind is able to take note of every phenomenon of the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*.

That the *ariyās* have conquered *nīvaraṇas* is shown by Buddha as follows:

A *sotāpanna*, practising *vipassanā* in solitude, will come to the following conclusion: "Formerly I might not have known correctly the nature of conditioned things because obstructions lie

A SOTĀPANNA IS ABLE,

in my way in all directions. Now that I am able to remove them, I have established myself in the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths."

This is self-examination by a *sotāpanna* contemplating in solitude the phenomena of conditioned things in the absence of obstructions (hindrances).

Knowledge obtained by such a self-examination is called the first *paccavekkhanā* and is supramundane or transcendental, not consistent with ordinary human beings, or worldlings.

This means that the knowledge is related to the Noble Path and resides in the minds of the Noble Ones. If, after this self-examination, one is convinced that one has attained this knowledge, one can safely assume that one has become a *sotāpanna*. So, those who regard themselves as having reached that stage should make a self-examination to ascertain whether they are freed from the clutches of the upsurging defilements when they are noting in solitude all phenomena that happen at the six sense-doors. When they find their minds cleared of all hindrances that have been enumerated, they may feel certain that they have come up to the stage they presume they have. But if they find out that their minds are still hovering over so many imagined objects of their desires, they may regard themselves as having failed in the test.

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2. THE SECOND MAHĀPACCAVEKKHANA

O bhikkhus! There is another method of self-appreciation. A noble disciple or *sotāpanna* investigates himself repeatedly in this way. "I have been thriving on this knowledge, developing it and putting it into practice again and again. By this means I have come to the state of mind freed of all obstructions and delivered from defilements."

In a *sotāpanna's* mind are firmly established views relating to *nāma* and *rūpa* being subject to the laws of *anicca*, impermanence, *dukkha*, unsatisfactoriness, and *anatta*, unsubstantiality, thereby enabling him to perceive the nature of *nibbāna* with the support of the knowledge of the Path and its fruition. So he is now in a position to examine himself if he has gained *samādhi*, concentration, by which all obstructions lying in the way of deliverance from defilements are to be extirpated. These defilements are of two kinds, the coarse and the subtle. Ordinarily all coarse impurities are usually eliminated leaving no residue. But he has to be very careful with *anusaya kilesā*, the subtle kind of impurities, which has also to be expelled from his mind. In this connection Buddha declared thus:

THE SECOND MAHĀPACCAVEKKHANĀ

A *sotāpanna* who examines himself in that way will come to the conclusion in this way: "I have practised this knowledge, developed it and extended it many a time. So I have mastered concentration which has eliminated defilements in my mind. I have now come to the stage of deliverance from defilements."

A *sotāpanna* can establish concentration of mind by doing away with care and anxiety and restlessness with regard to sensual pleasures. Ordinary individuals are not free from the influence of such subtle kind of defilements. So they cannot get illumined on the nature of *nāma* and *rūpa* and assume that there dwells in his body a living substance. Even when they get acquainted with the knowledge about *nāma* and *rūpa*, they cannot get away from the idea of a living substance or matter. "I think, so I exist," they say. To a *sotāpanna*, however, life is but a manifestation of the nature of *nāma* and *rūpa*, or in other words, a psycho-physical phenomenon. There is nothing which can be called *animūs* or living matter. When one concentrates on *nāma* and *rūpa*, one will realize that the compound of consciousness and corporeality is not "I". This realization shakes off *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*, erroneous view of the existence of self.

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With *sotāpannas* doubts never arise in their minds regarding moralities compatible with Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, the Three Gems. They relinquished the wrong view that salvation lies in the observance of religious rites. In this context, rites refer to the practice of *sīlabbata-parāmāsa* according to the belief that all sins will be washed away if one bathes in the Ganges, that all sins are expiated with the blood of the sacrificial animals, that the result of evil deeds is neutralised by exercises in austerities that oppress the body, that one reaches heaven by merely worshipping *devas*, *sakkas*, *brahmas* and gods in heaven and that one can reach *nibbāna* by merely keeping his mind at ease giving it no opportunity for moral or spiritual development. A *sotāppnua* always hold the view that one can never get to *nibbāna* without development of the knowledge of the Path and its fruition.

A *sotāpanna* is, therefore, free from the shackles of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, wrong views about self, *vicikicchā*, doubts about the practice of moralities and *sīlabbata-parāmāsa*, belief in ritualism. He is also free from greed, anger and delusion which lead to evil deeds of killing, stealing, etc., which all belong to coarser types of defilements. *Anusayas* or subtle types occur when one fails to gain the truth of conviction that all is impermanent, unsatisfactory and unsubstantial.

THE THIRD PACCAVEKKHANĀ

The second *paccavekkhaṇā* is, therefore, a self-examination as to whether course and subtle forms of defilements have been extirpated through repeated insight-meditation with a view to realize the knowledge of the Path leading to *nibbāna*.

3. THE THIRD PACCAVEKKHANĀ

There is, O bhikkhus, another method of self-examination. A *sotāpanna* thinks over thus: "I have accomplished myself in the knowledge relating to the phenomena of *nāma* and *rūpa* that arise and pass away at the six sense-doors. Outside Buddhasāsanā, is there any *samaṇa* or ascetic and *brāhmaṇa* or *brāhmins* who is likewise accomplished in this knowledge?" Then he comes to the conclusion that he has truly become accomplished in this knowledge while outside Buddhasāsanā there have appeared no *samaṇas* or *brāhmaṇas* who are so accomplished.

How can a *sotāpanna* arrive at this conclusion? In other teachings outside the realm of Buddhasāsanā, there are no instructions for insight-meditation with regard to noting the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. They do not enlighten the fact that there is no "self," and what is taken as *atta*, self, is in fact *anatta*, "not-self" but a manifestation of the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. They do

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not reveal the way to *nibbāna* where all impurities of the mind are cleansed and all unsatisfactoriness comes to an end. It is this consideration which drives a *sotāpanna* to conclude that outside the teachings of Buddha there can be no *samaṇas* or *brāhmaṇas* who realize the knowledge about *nāma* and *rūpa*.

Regarding insight-meditation, I have dealt with it in detail in my discourse on *Sāraṇīya dhamma*, citing Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as an authority. In the Sutta it has been stated that when one goes one must be aware of "going." It means that you must note your posture of sitting, standing, lying down, bending, stretching etc. All behaviour of the mind and body must be noted. It may prove difficult for a beginner to note all these phenomena. So my instructions relate to noting the rising and falling of the abdomen. As you note all these you will come to realize the working of the aggregates of clinging which is called *upādānekkhandhā*. Then, step by step, you will also come to realize *viññāṇekkhādhā*, the aggregates of consciousness, *vedanakkhandhā*, the aggregates of sensations, *saññākkhandhā*, the aggregates of perception and finally *saṅkhārakkhandhā*, the aggregates of volitional activities. In *Sīlavanta Sutta*, it has been said that a monk accomplished in moralities becomes aware that the five aggregates of clinging are *anicca*, impermanent, *dukkha*, unsatisfactory and *anatta*, unsubstantial

THE FOURTH PACCAVEKKHANĀ

This awareness leads him to the fruition of *sotāpattimagga*, the Path for the realization of the *sotāpanna* stage. From this status he progresses to the higher stages of *sakadāgāmi*, once-returner, *anāgāmi*, non-returner, and *arahat*, Worthy One.

On further examination a *sotāpanna* will come to realize that outside the teaching of Buddha there are none like him who attains his status. But even under the aegis of this *sāsanā*, if *satipaṭṭhāna*, exercise in mindfulness, is not practised methodically, no one can get enlightened about the conditioned things, the Three Marks (of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*), etc., and so no one can attain the status of a *sotāpanna*.

4. THE FOURTH PACCAVEKKHANĀ

O bhikkhus! There is another method of self-appreciation. A *sotāpanna* examines himself thus: "A noble one accomplished in the knowledge of the Noble Path possesses a nature characteristic of his nobility. Have I possessed this nature?" As he considers this, he comes to the conclusion that he has.

What is this nature belonging to the noble ones attaining the status of a *sotāpanna*? There are certain offences prescribed for priesthood. When any one of them is committed without any intent, it is held to be technical. For

instance, a monk is presumed to have committed an offence if he happened to sleep under the same roof in the company of the laity or of novices for more than three nights in succession. He may have slept in such a company without any intention or preparation to sleep so. Technically he is guilty. When he realizes that he has committed a technical offence, he at once atones for his guilt. When an infant accidentally touches fire, he withdraws his hand quickly. In the same way, when a monk accidentally transgresses, he quickly seeks expiation. Furthermore, he takes especial care not to repeat the same transgression. This habit is in the nature of the *sotāpannas*. Among the laity also, there are minor offences which do not send the offender to the nether worlds. Ordinarily, the guilty may be absolved from blame.

A *sotāpanna* never commits grave offences of murder, theft, adultery, cheating, taking intoxicants, etc. But as he is not yet completely free from avarice and anger, he might have committed minor offences. If he is chastised for them by his wiser companions, he would at once confess the guilt and undertake not to repeat it. This nature of the *sotāpanna* is unlike that of the ordinary individuals. A common man rarely restrains himself from committing grave offences. When his companions chastise him for them, he pretends that he is innocent, neither owning them up nor abstaining

THE FIFTH PACCAVEKKHANĀ

himself from repeating them. Although a *sotāpanna*, not being totally free from sensual desires, anger, etc., may be enjoying himself in pleasures, he is fully aware that such enjoyments are unwholesome and should be abstained. Ordinary individuals would not behave like this.

5. THE FIFTH PACCAVEKKHANĀ

The fifth *paccavekkhanā* is almost the same as the fourth, with only this difference. The fourth relates to the habit of the *sotāpanna* in confessing their guilt and abstaining from repeating it. Here in this fifth principle of self-appreciation he makes it his habit to observe three *sikkhās* or rules of higher conduct, such as *adhisīla*, higher morality, *adhicitta*, higher meditational practice and *adhipaññā*, higher knowledge.

In the congregation, there are many odd jobs for monks to do to facilitate their fellow-monks in the pursuit of their religious practice. Although a *sotāpanna* is hard-pressed for priestly duties, his mind is always bent on the observance of the three *sikkhās*. Especially, he is an enthusiast for meditational practice. He is, therefore, likened to a milch-cow which keeps her whole attention on her newly-born calf, although she cannot help but munch grass all the time. Regarding this nature of the *sotāpannas*, the Commentaries have this story:

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Once upon a time, at Anuradhapura in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), a monk was making repairs to the Mahāceti stupa with cement and mortar. He went up to a high platform with a view to have solitude so that he could meditate while doing the repairs. At that time, a fellow-monk approached him just to while away the time with talking, as he had no interest in meditation. The first monk, who was an *ariyā*, noble one, avoided the ordinary monk by moving out to another place. But he was followed by the latter. The *ariyā* had better be frank and told him, "The platform of the stupa is very wide. Can you not find any other place where you can do the repairs?" Then only, the interfering monk departed. The *ariyā* could not afford to lose the opportunity to do meditational exercises.

Laymen have their daily chores more burdensome than the monks. Everyone of them is busy eking out a living. And then there are many community affairs to attend to. In spite of all these, a *sotāpanna*, even though he may be a layman, never relaxes in the practice of morality, concentration and knowledge. He never forgets to note things in the exercise of insight-meditation.

The nature of an *ariyā* is, therefore, never to forget the practice of insight-meditation. When one makes an appraisal of himself and finds

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that he has acquired the habit of meditation he can rest assured that he has reached the stage of *sotāpanna*.

6. THE SIXTH PACCAVEKKHANA

And, again, O bhikkhus, an *ariyā* examines himself in this way: "One who is accomplished in the wisdom of the *ariyās* is endowed with strength. Am I so endowed with it?"

Animals like horses and bullocks are endowed with strength; but their strength is mainly physical. There is also the strength of the mind, or moral strength. Fools possess the strength of a fool. They dare kill, steal, lie, etc. Wise men have the strength of wisdom. They possess compassion and loving-kindness towards all beings. They delight in the performance of wholesome deeds. Even ordinary individuals have their own strength characteristic of themselves. *Ariyas*, however, possess the strength of the *ariyas*. What, then, is the strength of the *ariyās*?

Buddha has described it as follows:

O bhikkhus! When one pays respectful attention to a teacher making an exposition of the Law and the Rules of discipline, as if they are one's own valuable possession, one may be said to have been endowed with the strength of the *ariyās*.

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Buddha's teachings relate to right mindfulness based on *Satipaṭṭhāna* and right exertion based on *sammappadhāna* for the realization of the Path and its fruition. When a teacher expounds these doctrines, a pupil must listen to him with respectful and rapt attention. He must regard the teaching as his own valuable possession. When a trader does business, he takes especial care that his business dealings produce no loss. Farmers make especial efforts so that not a grain of their produce is wasted. It is because they regard their business or the crops as their material possession which must be guarded from loss or damage. In the same way, you must regard the *dhammas* taught as your spiritual or moral possession, not one of them to be frittered away. While listening to religious lectures, you must note every word or point discussed without diverting your attention to other matters. If you are attentive, you are endowed with the strength of the *ariyās*.

Here, for the sake of comparison, I must tell you what the strength of the *puthujjanas* or worldlings is. These people regard it as tiresome to listen to religious sermons delivered sedately. They want to hear lively talks delivered mellifluously in a sentimental strain. They enjoy stories, comic or tragic. Jokes are always preferred. If you feel tedious to listen to religious discourses in an unlively way, remember that you have the strength of the worldlings.

7. THE SEVENTH PACCAVEKKHANĀ

This seventh principle of self-appreciation is a variant of the sixth. Here the strength of the *ariyās* is defined as follows:

A listener to Law and Discipline must try to get at their meaning and purport. He must also try to understand how salient points in the *dhamma* are arranged or programmed. He must listen to religious discourses with joy. If one takes up the *dhamma* in this way, one may be regarded as having been endowed with the strength of the *ariyās*.

In the Commentaries, joy in listening is emphasised. As the listener fully realizes the significance of the *dhamma*, he is thrilled with joy that permeates through his body. We are often told that when a *yogi* hears us reciting Pali texts, he at once grasps the meaning and understands the arrangements of points for discussion when he becomes overwhelmed with joy.

When an *ariyā* can decide for himself that he feels joyous as he gets the true meaning of what has been preached, he may be regarded as possessing the strength of the *ariyās*. This self-appraisal shows that he has fulfilled the seventh principle of *pacca-*

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vekkhaṇā. This realization is not consistent with ordinary individuals.

This subject of self-appreciation is conducive to the propagation of knowledge about Buddhist literature. *Yogis*, well-versed in *vipassanā*, insight-meditation, can appreciate the meaning of the scriptural texts better and assimilate the philosophy of mind and matter. A learned man confessed to me that he became truly literate only after the practice of the *dhamma*. He thought he knew what he had read; but actually he did not. After the practice of meditation he came to know what he did not previously know. He is not a common man. He is an ex-monk well versed in Buddhist literature. Meditation has made him enlightened. A learned monk also told me that one cannot see the light of *dhamma* by mere reading of the scriptures. Among the seven requisites for the attainment of enlightenment, there is *upekkhāsambojjhaṅga*, accomplishment in equanimity, which is very difficult to understand unless one can appreciate the mental state of indifference through practical experience. The text says that equanimity has the characteristic of balancing the two equal weights. Unless one actually experiences this state of mind, one may not really know what it is about. Only when you have practised meditation and realized *udayabbaya ñāṇa*, knowledge about the arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa* and *saṅkhārupekkhā ñāṇa*,

knowledge of equanimity towards all conditioned things, can you appreciate what *upekkhā* actually means. A meditator can at once recognize *upekkhā* although he is not learned. The same way may be said of the realization of *pīti sambojjhaṅga*, accomplishment in joy. A *vipassanā yogi* can at once recognize it even though he may be illiterate. In fact he can differentiate all the nuances of the five kinds of joy, such as *khuddaka-pīti*, thrilling joy, *khaṇika-pīti*, instantaneous joy, *okkantika-pīti*, flooding joy, *ubbega-pīti*, transporting joy, and *pharaṇā-pīti*, suffusing joy. Thus said the learned monk while relating his own experience. A *vipassanā yogi* makes great contributions not only to the theory but also to the practice of the *dhamma*. If a learned man, proficient both in theory and practice of the Law teaches it to his disciples, he will be putting theory into practice; and if his disciples practise insight-meditation according to his instructions, they will easily understand his teachings because they can concentrate well. Eventually there will be the development of character in his pupils. Insight-meditation is, therefore, a supporting factor to the advancement of scriptural learning.

Development of *pīti* while listening to a religious discourse is, therefore, a sign which shows that the listener has gained the strength of an *ariyā*. Ordinary people might give the excuse that the teachings are too deep and too difficult

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of understanding and that they prefer romantic tales and sentimental stories related by the teacher in a mellifluous voice. Then only, they say, the lectures generate joy. But we, *phongyis* (monks), have to concentrate our efforts on teaching the *dhamma* in a sedate way because it is of primary importance for us to disseminate *paṭivedha*, insight-knowledge for the attainment of the Path.

O bhikkhus! If you have qualified yourselves in these tests laid down under the seven principles of self-appreciation, you are a *sotāpanna*.

Thus said Buddha. These principles can be understood by *sotāpannas*. Anyone who thinks that he has reached the *sotāpanna* stage may examine himself applying these tests. If he can stand them he may rest assured that he has come to the stage he thinks he has. Even though he fails in the test, he will have the advantage of knowing that a *sotāpanna* in this *sāsanā* rests on a very high level, and that, however, he can also aspire to that stage. So I urge all disciples to strive after that stage.

May all be able to strive after the fulfilment of qualifications as set out in the seven *paccavekkhaṇā*. May all achieve progress in the practice of the *dhamma* and attain the knowledge of the Path and fruition so that they can enter *nibbāna* hereafter as speedily as possible.

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(Buddha's Message of love and understanding)

"This is the path itself,
For none other leads
To purity of vision:
If you follow it and so confuse
King Māra, all suffering will end.

Since I have learned how to remove
The thorns, I have revealed the path.
You yourselves should (always) strive,
Tathāgatas only teach.
Those who walk in meditation
Free themselves from Māra's bondage."

DHAMMAPADA