THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING:

The Doctrine and The Practice

By U Tin U (Myaung)

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OUR THREE MAIN NATIONAL CAUSES

Non-disintegration of the union	Our cause
Non-disintegration of national solidarity	Our cause
Consolidation of national sovereignty	Our cause

PEOPLE'S DESIRE

- Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views.
- Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation.
- Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State.
- Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy.

FOREWORD

By Ashin Thitthila, Aggamaha pandita, Abhidhaja maharatthaguru, Abhidhaja aggamaha saddhamma Jotika.

Books on the teachings of the Buddha written in English by Myanmar writers are hard to come by. Recently there have appeared English translations from the Pali texts by the Myanmar Pitaka Association, now defunct but the Editorial Committee of which has become merged with the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana, a new department of the Government. These translations are more suitable for scholars than for a casual reader who wants to have a basic idea of the Buddha's teachings.

The author, an Editor on the Editorial Committee of the D.P.P.S., has felt the need for some introductory work which, while being short, should cover the essentials of the Doctrine that the Buddha taught and the practice the Buddha

extolled. This is his first attempt at filling the need. He uses a style that is of straight talk which makes the book more readable than it would be if written in a scholarly style.

The author lays stress on the practical applicability of the Buddha's Doctrine to a lay person's daily life. I would endorse this view. For I believe that the practice of the Dhamma will prove to be the best self- training for anyone.

I wish to congratulate the author on his bold attempt and sincerely believe that this little book will go a long way towards making the Buddha's teachings clear to the reader.

No.8, Mogaung Road
Pyitharyar P.O.,
Yankin Township,
Yangon.
June 1993

Veneration to the Exalted One, the Homage-Worthy, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened

PREFACE

This book aims at arousing a lively interest in what the greatest of sages known to civilization had taught some two and a half centuries ago. The Teaching of the Buddha, called the *Sāsana,* will last for as long as there are those Noble Ones who have made their heart and mind pure to such an extent that they will no longer be slaves to their own passions, either here or in the hereafter, and who have made an end of all ills. A follower of the Buddha aspires to becoming such a one called an *arahat.* The way to become an *arahat* begins with giving up illusions that we are born with and, if not corrected by the Buddha's method, will persist in us till the end of this ephemeral existence and beyond.

If the message the Buddha brought to the world is heeded and his teachings are correctly understood, one can see through the illusions even though they are indeed very hard to see. Taking a positive attitude contained in the Buddha's sayings, one is awakened to the fact that these strong illusions, misleading us all along, are only due to a bad habit, and that, as with all bad habits, they can be given up, provided that the will is there.

This book is a modest attempt to help a well-meaning one to break that habit.

The reader will notice that the term 'Buddha's disciple or follower of the Buddha' is used here instead of the usual word 'Buddhist'. This is because the author feels that the Buddha is a unique personality so that an upbolder of his Teaching should not be described in terms of an ' ism' which would convey a rather commonplace concept. The Buddha's Teaching in its proper sense is not an 'ism' although the English coinage 'Buddhism' has become widespread usage. It is a way of life which frees man from the bondage of his own making. It is not a revelation but a natural law penetrated by a superhuman mind. Cursory opinion tends to label it as pessimistic. The fact is that there is no doctrine amongst mankind that is more optimistic because it opens up our eyes to the truth that to a very real extent man can control his own destiny. But to have the eye opened, the mind must first be kept open. And this, it would seem, is the crux of the matter.

While not claiming any scholarship, the author avows his sincerity in venturing out this unpretentious attempt at conveying the Buddha's message. The language here is, as far as is compatible with the context, of daily usage. Direct talk rather than didactic style is employed for immediacy of effect.

The author believes that anyone going through this book with a mind not loaded with his own accepted religious dogma or philosophic musing, but with a child's curiosity about his first toy, can experience some kind of awakening. If such an awakening, however slight, is caused, the author should be gratified. For " the gift of the Dhamma excels all gifts. "

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to put on record my deep thanks to the late Venerable Thitthila who patiently listened to my reading out to him, sentence by sentence, of the manuscript of this book. He did so in his reclining posture. He was in his late nineties, but quite good in his hearing and very much alert mentally. At the end of the book he praised me for the work and wrote a note by way of the foreword to the book. To my old 'Saya' the late Professor U Myo Min, I am greatly indebted for kindly going through the draft and making useful suggestions.

My thanks are also due to Daw Sanda Tun and Daw Khin Lay Thet, assistants to the Editorial Committee of the DPPS, who painstakingly read the proofs turned out by Daw Myint Myint Than on her word-processor with competence. Last but not the least, I thank Daw Yee Yee Myint, Editor at the TODAY Publishing House, for her kind assistance in getting the book published.

U Tin U (Myaung)

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(a free translation of Ledi Sayadaw's Verse beginning with 'so-peint- ma- hṅyar .. ' (' I am not going to mince my words')

REFERENCE BOOKS

THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING:THE DOCTRINE AND THE PRACTICE*

PART ONE

THE DOCTRINE

1. Belief In Kamma

A follower of the Buddha has explicit belief in *kamma*.The word *kamma* means action. But not every action is *kamma*: only deliberate action is meant. All intentional thoughts, words and deeds are called action. So in the final analysis *kamma* is volition, whether good or bad, that is behind any mental action,verbal action, or physical action.The Buddha says: "Volition, bhikkhus, is what I call action." Therefore if someone thinks well, says well, or does well, he is said to be possessed of good kamma, and if someone thinks evil, says evil, or does evil, he is said to be possessed of bad *kamma*.

Belief in kamma is nothing but an unfailing conviction that good thoughts, good words, or good deeds bring happiness as their result, and that evil thoughts, evil words or evil deeds bring sorrow as their result.

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* This is the original version of ဗုဒ္ဓဝါဒဦးဘာ၏ အမြင်နှင့်ကျင့်ဝတ်စဉ် which was pubilished in 1994.

2. Why Is Kamma To Be Believed In?

Everyone wants to be happy and well: no one wants to be in trouble. That being so, steadfast belief in " Good begets good, evil begets evil" will be a sure guide for one's actions, inspiring one to do good things, and guarding oneself against evil things. This in essence is the basic knowledge to be initially acquired by a follower of the Buddha. It is called Right Understanding of the principle of kamma - *kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi.*

3. Ten kinds of Evil Action(Ten Demeritorious Courses of Action)

(a) Three kinds of evil physical action:
- (i) killing
- (ii) stealing
- (iii) sexual misconduct

(b) Four kinds of evil verbal action:
- (i) lying
- (ii) slandering
- (iii) harsh speech
- (iv) frivolous speech or foolish babble

(c) Three kinds of evil mental action:
- (i) covetousness
- (ii) ill will
- (iii) wrong views

The above ten kinds of action are called evil or immoral conduct. They carry evil conse-

quences and are therefore demeritorious. If the requisite conditions for the commitment of any of them are present the action is said to be complete or the course of action (*kamma patha*) is taken. (*kamma*, action; *patha*, *course*). For instance, with regard to killing, five conditions must be present to complete the offence:

(1) The thing destroyed must be a living being:
(2) The killer knows that it is a living being:
(3) The intention to kill is there:
(4) The effort is made:
(5) The victim dies as the result.

Once the action is completed, it is followed by its evil consequence just as an object is followed by its own shade. The evil consequence will arise at some later existence of the doer, when circumstances are appropriate. (More of this later). One who is a true follower of the Buddha takes great care not to commit these ten evil actions, called *akusala kamma patha.*

4. Ten kinds of Moral Conduct (Ten Meritorious Courses of Action)

Refraining from the above ten evil actions and conducting oneself righteously constitutes ten kinds of moral conduct. Since this righteous conduct brings good results in future existences leading to rebirth in the good destinations, i.e, the six deva (celestial) worlds and the human world

they are also called the ten meritorious courses of adtion, *kusalsa kamma patha.*

5. Ten Occasions of Meritorious Action (Puññakiriya vatthu)

1. Generous giving
2. Moral conduct
3. Developing the mind by meditation
4. Respect for . and reverence to the Triple Gem, and to those where respect and reverence is due
5. Helpfulness and service in meritorious activities
6. Dedicatiing or sharing one's merit to others
7. Rejoicing in others' merit, saying,"Good!" (sādhu!) thrice
8. Listening to the Doctrine
9. Teaching or discussing the Doctrine
10. Straightening one's views, i.e, the volition that is associated with the conviction in the efficacy of actions.

These ten moral actions produce happy results in the Sensuous Sphere, i,e, human existence and *deva* existence.

6. Kamma Is The Only Possession For a Being.

On one occasion the Buddha was staying at the Jetavana Monastery in Sāvatthī. At that

time young Subha, son of Todeyya, said to the Buddha:

" O Gotama, among human beings, there are some who are inferior and some who are superior.

1. (a) some have short lives and (b) some have long lives.
2. (b) some are sickly and (b)some are healthy.
3. (a) some are ugly and (b)some are beautiful.
4. (a) some possess little influence and (b) some possess great influence.
5. (a) some are poor and (b) some are rich.
6. (a) some are of low birth and (b) some are of high birth.
7. (a) some are stupid and (b) some are wise.

What is the cause, and what is the reason, for such inequalities? "

" Young man, beings have *kamma* as their possession, *kamma* as their inheritance, *kamma* as their cause, *kamma* as their kinsman, *kamma* as their refuge. It is only *kamma* that conditions beings either to be inferior or superior."

Young Subha did not follow what the Buddha said in brief and so begged the Buddha to explain the Dhamma. The Buddha then spoke thus;

7. Kamma and Its Resultants

1. (a) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male of female, has little compassion for beings and is inclined to destroy them. Due to that evil deed of killing, on his death he is reborn in the realms of continuous suffering (*niraya*). If that person does not fall to *niraya*, but is reborn in the world of human beings, he will be short-lived. Young man, taking of life is the conduct that leads to a short life.

(b) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, abstains from destruction of life, is ashamed to do evil, and works for the good of all beings. Due to these good deeds, on his/ her death he is reborn in the happy world of *devas*. If he/ she does not appear as a deva in the celestial world but is reborn in the world of human beings, he/ she will live long. Young man, abstaining from destruction of life and promoting the welfare of all beings, is the conduct that leads to a long life.

2.(a) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is given to causing harm to others. Due to that evil deed of oppressing others, on his/ her death he/ she falls to the *niraya* realms. If he/she does not fall to *niraya* but is reborn in the world of human beings, he/ she will be sickly. Young man, oppressing others is the conduct that leads to poor health.

(b) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is not given to oppressing others. Due to that good blameless conduct, on his/ her death he is reborn as a *deva.* If he/ she is not reborn in the celestial world, but is reborn in the world of human beings he/ she will enjoy good health. Young man, not being given to oppressing any being is the conduct that leads to good health.

3. (a) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is given to lose his / her temper for no good reason. Due to that malicious conduct, on his/ her death he/ she goes to the *niraya* world. If he/she does not fall to *niraya*, but is reborn as a human being, he/ she will be ugly. Young man, being given to anger is the conduct that leads to ugliness in appearance.

(b) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is not given to anger but controls his temper. Due to that blameless conduct, on his/ her death, he / she goes to the world of devas. If he/ she does not appear as a *deva* in the celestial world, but is reborn as a humun being, he/ she will be good-looking. Young man, not being given to anger is the conduct that leads to having good looks.

4.(a) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, has an envious mind and begrudges other's good fortune and honour. Due to that envious attitude towards oth-

ers, on his / her death he/ she falls to *niraya.* If he / she does not go to *niraya*, but is reborn in the human world, he/she will possess little influence. Young man, being envious about other's good fortune and honour is the conduct that leads to lack of influence.

(b) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male of female, has no envy in him and does not begrudge other's good fortune and honour. Due to that blameless attitude towards others, on his / her death, he/ she is reborn as a *deva.* If he/she is not reborn as a *deva*, but is reborn in the human world, he/she will possess great influence.

Young man, not begrudging other's good fortune and honour is the conduct that leads to having great influence.

5. (a) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, does not give food, drink, clothes, vehicles (which here include footwear and parasols),beds, dwelling-places and lamps, etc., to *samaṇas* and *brahmaṇas.* Due to that neglect of *samaṇas* and *brahmaṇas,* on his/ her death, he/she will go to *niraya.* If he/ she does not fall to niraya, but is reborn as a human being, he/she will be poor. Young man, not giving food, drink and other offerings to *samaṇas* and brahmanas is the conduct that leads to poverty.

(b) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, gives, food, drink, clothes, vehicles, etc. to samaṇas and brahmaṇas. Due to that charitable acts towards samaṇas and brahmaṇas, on his/ her death, he/ she is reborn in the world of devas. If he/ she does not appear as a deva in the world of devas, but is reborn as a human being he/she will be wealthy.Young man, giving food, drink and other offerings to samaṇas and brahmaṇas is the conduct that leads to great wealth.

6. (a) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is vain and arrogant, and does not venerate those who should be venerated, does not esteem those who should be esteemed, does not revere those who should be revered. Due to this arrogance towards reverential persons, on his/ her death he/she will fall to *niraya*. If he/she does not fall to *niraya*, but is reborn in the human world, he/she will be born in a low class family. Young man,being arrogant to worthy persons is the conduct that leads to low birth.

(b) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is not vain or arrogant. He/she venerates those who should be venerated, esteems those who should be esteemed, reveres those who should be revered. Due to his/ her proper behaviour towards reverential persons, on his / her death he/she appears as a *deva* in the

world of *devas*. If he/she does not become a deva in his next existence but comes back to the human world, he is born in a high class family. Young man, being not arrogant and honouring those who deserve honour is the conduct that leads to superior lineage.

7.(a) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is not in the habit of approaching a samaṇa or brahmaṇa and asking (thus:)

' What, Sir, is meritoriousness, and what is demeritiousness?

' What is blamable and what is blameless?

' What should be resorted to and what should not be resorted to?

' What actions will lead to my disadvantage and suffering for a long time? And what actions will lead to my advantage and happiness for a long time?'

Due to the bad actions done by him/her on his/ her death he/she is raborn in *niraya*. If he/she does not fall to *niraya* but is reborn in the human world he will lack in wisdom. Young man, not consorting with samaṇas and brahmaṇas and seeking wise counsel is the conduct that leads to lack of wisdom.

(b) " Young man, in this world, some person, whether male or female, is in the habit of

approaching a samaṇa or brahmaṇa and asking (thus:)

' What Sir, is meritoriousness and what is demeritorious? What is blamable and what is blameless?

' What should be resorted to and what should not be resorted to?

' What actions will lead to my disadvantage and suffering for a long time? And what actions will lead to my advantage and happiness for a long time?'

Due to the good actions done by him/her, on his/ her death, he/ she is reborn as a *deva* in the *deva* world. If he/she is not reborn as a *deva*, but is reborn in the human world, he/she will be of great wisdom. Young man, consorting with samaṇas and brahmaṇas and seeking wise counsel is the conduct that leads to great wisdom."

The Buddha then wound up the discourse re-stating the principle that difference in the circumstances that are born into for each individual is caused by his or her own conduct in previous existences.

Subha the young brahmin was greatly satisfied and vowed to become a disciple of the Buddha for life.

- (Uparipaṇṇāsa, Cūḷakamma vibhaṅga sutta)

8. The Meaning of Kamma

The Buddha's Teaching embodies the absolute truth which means natural laws that never change. Kamma, the cardinal doctrine of the Teaching is nothing but the natural law of cause and effect. Every action produces an effect in like manner. Since *kamma* occupies such an important place in the scheme of things one should have a basic understanding about it.

Kamma generally means action, either good or bad. In its ultimate sense kamma means all moral and immoral volition. The Buddha says, "Mental volition, *bhikkhus,* is what I call action (*kamma*)." In making a gift, the voltion that motivates the giving is indeed the act of giving. Similarly, in destroying life, the intention to cause death or the volition is the act of killing.

The volition behind an act passes away after the action; however its potential to produce the appropriate effect remains in the mental makeup of the doer, to fructify in later existences. This potential will always be there until it appears under appropriate circumstances as the resultant. And this resultant may arise myriads of existences after the actual action has taken place. Seldom is that effect rendered unfruitful, so that the general principle is that kammic effect is stored up over innumerable existences in the mental makeup of beings. This cumulated *kamma* is called past *kamma.*

Actions being done in the present existence are called present *kamma* or *fresh kamma.* This fresh kamma may bring their appropriate results here and now or they may add to the store of cumulated kamma to fructify later. Thus in a broad sense we are products of our past kamma and at the same time architects of our future.

9. Can One See the Workings of Kamma?

No one can take kamma for granted: if you walk barefooted on a heap of thorns trusting in your good luck you will only suffer for your own foolhardiness. *Kamma* is not something to be believed in as blind faith. Since your present conduct has certain foreseeable consequences you have present *kamma* within your control to a very good extent. As for your past *kamma* you cannot be certain; yet if you are thoughtful about what you are doing and how you are faring, you can get some inkling of your past *kamma.* If, in spite of your right efforts, you are not getting your deserts, you may say to yourself, "Ah, well, my past evil deed is now telling upon me. I will not let the same thing happen in future." So, instead of feeling despondent, you take heart and make up your mind not to do fresh evil. There is no use in consulting astrologers if you do not succeed as you feel you ought to. Instead, review your actions objectively, correct mistakes, if any, and go on your right path, exerting as usual till you succeed.

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Past *kamma* is inexplicably strange. Quite often we come across persons who are well off throughout their lives without making any visible effort. They are those endowed with very strong good kamma. Unless one is helpd by a powerful good kamma one needs to strive for one's success. Powerful kamma may be likened to a strong flood that innundates its path without canals. A not-so-powerful flood needs canals to get its waters to the desired field. If the flood is very weak its waters may not even be successfully channelled.

Past kamma may get reinforced by present *kamma* to produce results, or it may be neutralised by present *kamma*. Past evil *kamma* in conjunction with present evil *kamma* may produce horrendous results. Past good *kamma* coupled with present good *kamma* may produce magnificent results.

Past evil *kamma* may be neutralised by present good kamma.

Past good *kamma* may be negated by present evil *kamma*.

Kamma is a most profound matter, involving Abhidhamma principles of volition, impulsion thought-moment, etc. Certain *kamma*, for instance, may not have any chance to produce result for lack of certain auxiliary causes such as circumstances, surroundings, etc. Such *kamma* is called ' In-effective kamma'. These details, however, we shall have to pass over.

10. Right View Regarding the Ten Subjects (Dasavutthukasammādiṭṭhi)

We have seen from the story of Subha (in *Cūḷa kamma vibhaṅga Sutta*) above, the nature of kamma and its results. From that we can make out that *kamma* is the true creator of the world. That is why a follower of the Buddha clearly holds the Right View that--

1. there is benefit in giving alms;
2. there is benefit in making big sacrificial offerings;
3. there is benefit in making even small gifts;
4. there is fruit or result of good or bad actions;
5. there is the present world;
6. there is the future world;
7. there is consequence of good or bad deeds done to one's mother;
8. there is consequence of good or bad deeds done to one's father;
9. there are beings reborn spontaneously;
10. there are samaṇas and brahmaṇas in the world who have reached the highest attainments through their own endeavour and practice and who realize with special apperception the present and future existences and make them known:

(Dhammasaṅgaṇī, 1371)

As a matter of fact, these ten points form the very basis of the initial understanding of

Buddha's Teaching. It is the outcome of what is called "straightened views."
See para (5:10 above).

11. Taking Refuge In the Triple Gem

(a) Getting Estabilshed in the Three Refuges

Belief in ***kamma*** and its consequences is not the sole feature of the Buddha's Teaching. ***Brahmaṇas*** also are ***kammavādins***, believers in kamma. Besides being a ***kammavādin***, a follower of the Buddha has also to make an express vow: ' I take refuge in the Buddha' ***(Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi)***

' I take refuge in the Dhamma' (***Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi)***

' I take refuge in the Saṁgha' (***Saṁghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi).***

This vow is to be made heart and soul with full conviction. No parrot-like reciting of the formula without understanding the import of the words would do. One may say these words repeatedly with no sincere purpose simply because they have been taught from childhood; yet if one does not take in the meaning, this mere recital does not get one established in the Three Refuges. His uttering the words without conviction will not make him a true follower of the Buddha. Possibly he may change over to another faith if circumstances permit.

Why is it necessary to say the vow aloud?

The vow is to be spelled out not to let others hear it but to make the devotee himself sure of his own commitment. Once he has made the vow aloud in full awareness of his pronouncement, he is established in the Three Refuges.

(b) Why Are The Triple Gem Called Refuge ?

It is human nature to seek refuge in something. Primitive people took refuge in mountains or forests or some other physical phenomenon such as thunder. The Buddha, the Damma and the Saṁgha are called the Three Refuges---the only true refuges---for the following reasons:

We go to the Buddha, our precious source of spiritual pleasure, for refuge because the Buddha had boundless compassion on all beings, and showed them the right path for their welfare, while warning them against the wrong path leading to decline. Most important of all, he found for us the Middle Way, the path of liberation from the woeful round of rebirths and deaths.

We go to the Dhamma, our precious source of spiritual pleasure, for refuge because it enables one who follows it to find internal peace at present, and to attain the end of all unsatisfactoriness and suffering of sentient existence through complete wisdom (i,e. ***arahaṭṭā phala***).

We go to the Saṁgha, our precious source

We go to the Saṁgha, our precious source of spiritual pleasure, for refuge because it provides the fertile field to sow seeds of merit that are going to yield great results. Through merit gained for offerings made to the Saṁgha, one can save oneself from bad destinations. In the words of the Venerable Thitthila, " the Saṁgha is the living stream through which the Dhamma flows to us."

12. The Nine Supreme Attributes of the Buddha

(1) The Buddha is called *Arahaṁ* because he is worthy of homage by the greatest of men, *devas* and *brahmās.*

(2) The Buddha is called *Sammāsambuddha*, Perfectly Self-Enlightened, because he knows all things fundamentally and truly by his own perfect wisdom.

(3) The Buddha is endowed with *Vijjācaraṇa sampanna*, Supreme knowledge and Perfect practice of morality, because he has mastered the Three Knowledges (i.e knowledge of the Divine Eye, knowledge of past existences, knowledge of extinction of defilements), the Eight Knowledges and fifteen kinds of perfect conduct.

(4) The Buddha is called *Sugata* because he speaks only what is beneficial and true.

(5) The Buddha is called *Lokavidū* because he knows all the three worlds, i.e the world of sentient beings, the world of conditioned phenomana and the bases of the various planes of existence.

(6) The Buddha is called *Anuttaro purisa dammasārathi* because he is incomparable in taming those who deserve to be tamed.

(7) The Buddha is called *Sattādevamanussāna* because he is the Teacher of devas and men.

(8) The Buddha is called *Buddha* because he is the Enlightened One, knowing and teaching the Four Ariya Truths.

(9) The Buddha is called *Bhagavā* because he is the Most Exalted One, being endowed with the six great qualities of glory, namely, Supremacy, Knowledge leading to Nibbāna, Fame and Following, Noble Splendour of Appearance, Power of Accomplishment, and Diligent mindfulness.

13. The Six Supreme Attributes of the Dhamma

(1) The Teaching of the Buddha, the Dhamma, is well-expounded because it is the exposition of the Four Ariya Truths in such a way that it is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end.

(2) Its truths are personally apperceivable, i.e, they can be actually experienced and compre-

hended by anyone through adequate practice of Insight-development.

(3) It is not delayed in its results because it mmediately yields the benefit(*phala ñaṇa)* of realization of *Nibbāna* after gaining Path-Knowledge, *magga nāṇa.*

(4) It can stand investigation because its truths can be tested by anyone.

(5) Its is worthy of being perpetually borne in mind.

(6) Its truths can be realized by the *Ariyas* individually by their own effort and practice.

14. The Nine Supreme Attributes of the Saṁgha

(1)The disciples of the Buddha,the Saṁgha are endowed with right practice because the Saṁgha practise theThreefold Training---Morality, Concentration and Knowledge.

(2) They are endowed with straightforward uprightness because they follow the straight Middle Way, i.e, the Ariya Path of Eight Consituents.

(3) They are endowed with right conduct because their practice is solely directed to the realization of Nibbāna.

(4) They are endowed with correctness in practice because they are devoted to the development of the *Ariya* Path, thereby deserving rever-

ence by men and devas.

The disciples of the Buddha, the Ariya *Saṁgha*, consisting of eight categories of disciples in four pairs ---

(5) are worthy of receiving offerings brought even from afar;

(6) are worthy of receiving offerings specially set aside for guests;

(7) are worthy of receiving offerings made for the sake of acqauiring great merit;

(8) are worthy of receiving obeisance.

(9) are the incomparable fertile field for all to sow the seed of merit.

15. The Infinite Attributes of the Triple Gem

Although the attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṁgha are enumerated as above, these enumerations are by way of categorizing only. As a matter of fact, the noble attributes of the Triple Gem are infinite. For each of them is pregnant with meaning. For example, in the term arahat the meaning is 'homage worthiness' yet behind this meaning there lie infinite reasons for such homage- worthiness. They are: the Buddha has rid himself of all sorts of defilements, enumerated as one thousand and five hundred varieties, together with their roots, leaving no trace, and not even a vague inpression; and he has

shown to his followers, the right path by which they can themselves rid the defilements in them and attain the supreme peace of Nibbāna. The remaining attributes of the Buddha are likewise expandable in meaning. And the same is true of the attributes of the Dhamma and the Saṁgha.

16. The Incomparable Benefactors

Under the Buddha's Teaching there are five incomparable benefactors in a person's life: the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṁgha, one's parents and one's teachers. A person is so indebted to them that he or she can never repay the gratitude to them; so they are called 'the five objects of infinite gratitude'.

(1) The Buddha

The font of the Dhamma, the practice of which leads one to the peace of Nibbāna by quelling the eleven fires such as greed, hatred, constantly burning inside every being; the Compassionate One who shows the way of escape from *saṁsāra*, the woeful round of rebirths entailing death, separation,grief, lamentation;the Incomparable Teacher whose words, if well heeded, bring instant happiness---those and an endless multiplicity of benefits emanate from the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One who is thus one of Five Objects of Infinite Gratitude.

(2) The Dhamma

The profound Truth embodying eternal natural laws as penetrated into by the Supreme Wisdom of the Buddha is not delayed in its results, yielding immediate fruit. It is the radiance which sheds light into the inner sanctum of beings blinded by Ignorance, thus enabling them to pull themselves out of the floods of *saṁsāra* where worldlings either sink or drift along endlessly. The Dhamma is of such greatness that even the Buddha, its discoverer, pays reverence to it.

(3) The Saṁgha

The Order of *bhikkhus,* collectivity called the *saṁgha,* are the custodians of the Buddha's Teaching. They have for successive generations preserved the Dhamma in its pristine purity and propagated it to humanity as in the days of the Buddha who passed away to *Nibbāna* over two and a half centuries ago. They are the fertile field for sowing merit. They are untiring with their spiritual guidance. They also, by diffusing loving-kindness to all beings, help create a spiritual atmosphere conduciv to peace in the world.

(4) One's Parents

Even before they can set eyes on their procreation, the parents are delighted with the prospect of having an offspring, joyous with parental love. Mother's love turns her own blood into milk to feed her otherwise helpless infant. The tender-

ness with which one's parents nurture one may never be repaid in like manner. As the child's first teachers, parents instil virtue in the formative mind of their offspring which turns out to be intangible but invaluable assets, standing him in good stead even long after the parents are dead and gone. It has been pointed out by the Commentators that parental gratitude is of such order that even the Buddha's act of repaying the mother's gratitude by preaching the Abhidhamma to the *deva* who had been Queen Māyā, could barely discharge half of it.

(5) One's Teachers

The reason why one's teachers are classed with one's parents in the matter of **gratitude** is that teachers lavish care upon their pupils. They want their pupils to be good and to prosper in life. It is this benign attitude that makes teachers deserve the incomparable gratitude by their pupils.

17. Morality As the Cornerstone of Human Conduct

Having briefly described the noble attributes of the Triple Gem, it may be proper to consider how the Triple Gem can protect a Buddha's disciple and what special qualites they possess to be worthy of refuge.

The Buddha's Teaching in a nutshell is the Threefold Training, viz: Morality, Concentration,

Wisdom or Knowledge (*sīla , samādhi, paññā*). This Threefold Training is the way to gain liberation from the round of rebirths. As Morality is the foundation of the Training, we shall now take up Morality for discussion.

The Buddha's code of morality for lay persons is not stringent even for one leading a household life unless he or she is extraordinarily wayward. For bhikkhus who have renounced the bonds of the family in quest of liberation from the woefulness of worldly existence, there are appropriate rules of conduct prescribed by the Buddha. Here we shall concern ourselves with lay person's code of conduct for those who wish to be good householders, which is the initial step in being a Buddha's disciple. This is nothing but observance of the Five Precepts. This moral code is supposed to be the lifelong guide in the lay person's conduct for all purposes, never to be departed from just as one would never go naked. And since the observance of the Five Precepts is the true safeguard against falling to the miserable states of *apāya* they are also called ' morality of serious purpose'.

18. The Five Precepts Explained

The *pañca sīla*, the Five Precepts, are the Five vows one makes before the Buddha or a member of the Saṁgha; they are---

1. I solemnly take upon myself to observe the rule of conduct in abstaining from taking

the life of sentient beings.

2. I solemnly take upon myself to observe the rule of conduct in abstaining from taking what is not given.

3. I solemnly take upon myself to observe the rule of conduct in abstaining from unlawful sexual pleasures.

4. I solemnly take upon myself to observe the rule of conduct in abstaining from telling a lie.

5. I solemnly take upon myself to observe the rule of conduct in abstaining from taking intoxicants that tend to make one forgetful.

It will be seen that the first four of the above five precepts are already included in the ten courses of evil conduct, and that abstinence from intoxicants is the only new evil that one needs to observe.

19. The benefits of observing the Five Precepts

Why are the Five Precepts said to be the code of human (lay person's) conduct?

The Buddha points out the basic principle in human conduct as either meritorious or demeritorious on the following criteria:

Meritorious actions are those blameless actions that cause harm neither to oneself nor to others;

Demeritorious actions are those blameworthy actions that cause harm either to oneself or to others.

(*Note*: ' Actions ' here include speech, vocal action.)

20. Arahatship at the age of five

During the time of Buddha Anomadassī there lived in the City of Candavadī a certain man who wished to become a *bhikkhu* but could not do so because he was in the employ of another man. He took up the vow of observing the Five Precepts at the feet of the Venerable Nisabha, a Chief Disciple of Buddha Anomadassī, and kept the vow till his death.

On his death he was reborn as a *deva* in the *Tāvatiṁsa deva* realm. After that existence he was never reborn in the miserable states of *apāya*, and enjoyed the pleasures of the human world and the *deva* worlds in his successive existences. During the time of Gotama Buddha he was reborn in a family of fabulous wealth in the City of Vesālī.

When he was five years old he heard his parents take upon themselves the Five Precepts on the eve of the Vasa season. The Five Precepts had become so ingrained in him over successive

existences that he reflected on them and at that very sitting in meditation he attained arahatship.

So we should remember that the Five Precepts, if observed well, is the only guarantee against evil destinations after death, and the sure way that leads to the fortunate destinations of human and deva realms. Further, if one is endowed with the necessary store of previous merit, it can lead to arahatship.

21. The Evil Results that Breach of the Five Precepts Entail and the Benefits Due to Their Observance.

(1) Evil consequences of taking life:

(i) congenital physical deformity,
(ii) unsightly appearance,
(iii) lack of physical strength,
(iv) lack of physical swiftness,
(v) being given to constant fear,
(vi) liability to be killed by others,
(vii) being of fragile health,
(viii) liability to be deprived of followership,
(ix) short life.

Benefits of abstaining from taking life are the opposite of all the above consequences such as freedom from physical defects, attractive appearance, etc.

(2) Evil consequences of taking what is not given:

(i) poverty,
(ii) wretchedness,
(iii) starvation,
(iv) unfulfilled desires,
(v) waning wealth,
(vi) loss of property due to the five enemies.

Benefits of abstaining from taking what is not given are the opposite of all the above consequences such as great wealth, ease in life, etc.

(3) Evil consequences of indulging in unlawful sexual pleasures:

(i) being hated by many,
(ii) having enemies everywhere,
(iii) unsuccessful life,
(iv) being deprived of ease and comfort,
(v) being reborn as a female,
(vi) being reborn as a eunuch,
(vii) being reborn in a low caste,
(viii) liability to suffer disgrace and shame,
(ix) being born with physical defects and deficient faculties,
(x) having full of worries,
(xi) liability to be separated from lovers.

Benefits of abstaining from unlawfull sexual plesures are the opposite of all the above consequences such as being adored by others, being popular everywhere, etc.

(4) Evil consequences of telling lies:

(i) inability to articulate well,
(ii) having incongruous teeth,
(iii) having bad breath,
(iv) having a seedy complexion,
(v) having poor faculties,
(vi) having physical handicaps,
(vii) lacking influence,
(viii) being prone to using harsh speech,
(ix) being prone to vacillation.

Benefits of abstaining from telling lies are the opposite of all the above consequences such as ability to atriculate well, having teeth like sets of pearls, etc.

(5) Evil consequences of taking intoxicants:

(i) inability to judge things or situations,
(ii) sloth,
(iii) lack of memory bordering on insanity,
(iv) lack of gratitude towards benefactors,
(v) being without shame or fear to do evil,
(vi) being prone to commit all sorts of bad deeds.

Benefits of abstaining from taking intoxicants are the opposite of all the above consequences such as prudence, diligence, etc.

Note: Although the above list gives only the specific evil consequences for breach of each precept and the specific benefits of their observance, it must also be remembered that an evil- doer is bound for evil destinations and a well- doer is bound for fortunate destinations.

22. Human Responsibility, Human Dignity and Peace Among Men

The classification of human conduct into meritoriousness and demeritoriousness has far-reaching implications for the present life as for the hereafter, and for oneself as well as for society at large. If man lives in accordance with reasonable principles of good conduct there need be no conflicts. Living up to a certain standard of ethics in one's own generation will make for an enhancement of human dignity over succeeding generations. An honest man can look anybody straight in the face. He does not need to put up pretences or to resort to sycophancy. Straight talk and above-board dealing pay in the long run. Trust begets trust. When one's word is as good as one's bond, relationships between man and man will work out well and there need be no cause for concern; disputes will be few and far between.

These days clamour for human rights is growing louder and louder. It should be remembered that rights and obligations go together like the two sides of the same coin. Fairness demands that whenever the question of human rights is

mooted, human responsibilities must be given consideration.

The Five Precepts may be observed with benefit by all peoples regardless of religious persuasion. They may well be considered by non-Buddhists as meaningful mode of human behaviour. In as much as these precepts are adhered to by the national leadership of the various countries and their people, conflicts can be avoided, war will be kept at a distance and peace will reign in our world.

This is no mere platitude, nor a far-fetched theory. Anyone can test it out by personal practice. For it is only natural principles that underlie the Buddha's prescription of human behaviour.

23. Expressions of one's wishes before the Buddha-Image.

Everybody wishes well for oneself. To get things right for oneself, one must do good. Only one's kamma is what one really possesses in the world. The Buddha's disciples express their earnest wishes---in essence not prayers to the Buddha--- whenever they make adoration to the Buddha. These wishes invaribly include that one be free for all time from the four *apāyas* (miserable states), the three *kappas* (scourges), the eight disadvantages, the five enemies, the four *vipattis* (misfortunes), and the five *byasanas* (losses). We shall consider the meanings of these terms so that

we may have a clear idea or why these things we want to be free from are so dreadful.

(i) The Four Miserable States (*apāya*)

The Pāḷi word *apāya*, (adopted into the Myanmar language as *apai*), means rebirth in the four miserable states, namely: (1) niraya or realms of continuous intense suffering which lie deep down the earth where beings who have done serious misdeeds in their previous existences undergo untold forms or torture;

(2) the animal world;

(3) the realm of ghosts burning with thirst and hunger;

(4) the realm of *asūras* who suffer from mixed kamma-- i.e, alternating between painful and pleasurable existences due to evil deeds mixed with good deeds in past existences,

(ii) The Three Scourges (The Three Horrifying Periods), *kappa*

1. Widespred famine and death,
2. Widespread war conditions and death,
3. Widespread epidemics and death.

(iii) The Eight Disadvantages

1. Niraya, realms of continuous intense suffering,
2. the animal world,

3. the realm of ghosts and asūras
4. the realms of Fine- material Sphere where its denizems, the brahmās, are born without consciousness and remain so through great durations of time counted in thousands of aeons; and the brahmās of the Non-material Sphere;
5. places where the Buddha's Teaching is not in existence;
6. persons with congenitally deficient faculties such as being born blind, deaf or dumb;
7. persons who hold wrong views;
8. persons born with three good root-causes (of non- greed, non-hatred and non-bewilderment) but are born into a world- period where no Buddha arises.

The above eight cases are called disdvantages because persons in those cirucmatances cannot attain magga, phala and Nibbāna.

(iv) The Five Enemies

1. Water 2. Fire 3. Rulers
4. Thieves 5. One's wicked offspring who do not deserve inheritance.

(v) The Four Misfortunes (*vipatti*)

1. Unfortunate destiny such as rebirth in the four miserable states;

2. Physical deformity or disability;
3. Falling under unjust and oppressive regimes;
4. Lack of positive endeavour, particularly due to lack of interest in meritorious action.

(*vipatti* : misfortune, failure)

(vi) The Five Losses (*byassana*)

1. Loss of relatives
2. Loss of wealth
3. Loss of health
4. Loss of morality
5. Loss of right view.

24. One must know what is beneficial for oneself and work out one's own welfare

" Cherishing good actions, strive for goodness; Let good results accrue to you. "

That is the exhortation by a well-known learned monk of Ava who wrote these lines some five hundred years ago. Those wise words, if well heeded, can lead to mundane welfare as well as liberation from the woeful round of existences.

The sole purpose of Gotama Buddha's fortyfive years of untiring efforts in spreading the Good Doctrine was to show the way of escape from the quagmire of *saṁsāra*, the cycle of births and deaths. " Just as, bhikkhus, the ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, so also my

teachings have only one flavour, the flavour of liberation, " said the Buddha.

" But you yourselves have to make the effort," said the Buddha on another occasion," for the Buddhas only show the way." If one is not following the Buddha's way one will drift in the ocean of births and deaths, and ultimately sink in the depths of *niraya*. One must therefore work out for one's spiritual progress, seeing the benefits open to oneself in doing good. Otherwise one would be lacking in positive endeavour, (i,e. the fourth *vipatti* above).

25. Benefits here and now; benefits in the hereafter

The Buddha's disciples have dual perspectives in that in seeking merit they do not look forward only to benefits here and now, but also to benefits in the hereafter. The former refers to worldly progress, the latter refers to avoidance of a bad destination after death. More spiritually enlightened followers of the Buddha set their objective at liberation from the birth-death cycle of *saṁsāra.*

26. The Maṅgalas : Principles for the Welfare of Everyone both Here and in the Hereafter

The Pāḷi word *maṅgala* means ' the cutting off of all evil ', as the Commentary puts it. We shall examine each of the thirty-eight

maṅgalas, the factors of auspiciousness, the blessings that one may find in acting according to these principles.

A: The Foundations of Human Society

The following six *maṅgalas*, if adhered to by each and everyone in any society, will make for the stability of that society:

(1) Do not associate with the foolish

" The question is to know who a foolish person is. For appearances are deceptive. Some say from bitter experience that an oily-tongued person is dangerous. Some say that leopards never change their spots, implying that once a crook, always a crook. In a very general way, a foolish person may be defined as one who lacks a sense of judgment that enables him to tell the good from the bad, the blameworthy from the blameless, merit from demerit. Grave consequences of following a foolish leader have been repeatedly told in the Jataka, Birth Stories of the Buddha. Contemporary instances are also not lacking from which objective lessons may be drawn.

(2) Always seek wise persons for company.

The basic qualities of a wise person may be said to consist in the reverse qualities of the foolish one defined above. Here too appearances are deceptive. Many a promising person under the 'litmus test' of conscience may show his or her

true colours. People seldom practise what they preach. To know a wise man, it might therefore take years to study him. Has he prudence? Is he worldly wise, and at the same time wary of consequences in the hereafter? These, in short, are some useful hints. To have a wise one for company is to be secure. On one occasion the Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha that having a good friend accomplishes half the task in training oneself for enlightenment. To which the Buddha replied, " Ānanda, to have a good friend accomplishes *all* the task in training oneself for enlightenment. " The Buddha then pointed out to the ariyas that prove themselves to be good friends, giving counsel and guidance to the seeker-after-truth. It behoves well to seek the company of the wise. Remember that a learned person is not necessarily a wise person.

(3) Honour those who are worthy of honour.

It goes without saying that the Triple Gem, one's parents and teachers occupy special possition of honour. Under the Buddha's Teaching one's elderly relatives and others who have learning, morality, or who are in reverential positions (though not senior by age) also deserve honour. The Buddha says that one who shows respect and pays reverence to those who deserve respect and reverence will have long life, good looks, wealth and strength. The best way to honour the Triple Gem is to practise the Dhamma with a view to

gaining the *Supramundane*, i.e *Nibbāna*. You should honour your parents, teachers and elders by looking after them and tending to their needs. Better still, they would be honoured by your living up to their kind advice and admonition.

(4) Live in a suitable locality

One should live at a place where opportunities for worldly progress as well as for spiritual progress exist. " Once based at a suitable place, your future is assured for life", so goes a Myanmar maxim. Choice of place of residence will depend on various considerations. Among those, compatibility is an important factor. The locality should mean to you a place where you can perform meritorious deeds, one which provides an environment that best suits your spiritual needs such as access to pagodas or monasteries in your advanced age. However, there are practical limitations in making the choice of locality, and one has to adapt to a place as best as one could if change is not practicable.

(5) Be endowed with previous good actions

Being endowed with the merit of previous actions is a great asset. The term 'previous' refers both to the previous existences and to the previous periods of this existence. Obviously, if one has been diligent in acquiring a good education as a schoolboy one is better prepared for life.You cannot know what past kamma has in store for

you, and therefore you should do as much good as possible here and now so that future existences will be well provided for.

(6) Set your thoughts and deeds in the right course.

This means self-discipline which should be cultivated from youth.

B: Four Maṅgalas that will Qualify One For Life

(7) Acquire vast Learning

Learning means acquiring knowledge both from books and from life. Children should be guided by parents to be able to move about among people who can set good examples. Wide knowledge makes one intellectually satisfied. More satisfaction awaits one when some of it finds occasion to be put to use. Some wise person has said, " Be fit for more than what you are doing now." Indeed, versatility is a *maṅgala.*

(8) Acquire skills in handicrafts and technology.

This means to be knowledgeable about arts and crafts as well as science and technology.

(9) Be well versed in the Discipline

As man belonges to various social groups and organizations, he is expected to know the discipline that governs him in a particular situation.

The law of the land is the basic discipline. Then if he is a public servant he must abide by the disciplinary rules laid down for public servants. As a merchant he is bound by the accepted rules of doing business. A teacher has teacher's code of conduct, and pupils have pupils' discipline, and so on. In any given situation one must be not only conversant with the discipline that governs one, but also be conscious of it in one's behaviour.

(10) Speak truly and well

The Buddha praises truthful and beneficial speech. You are to be truthful and beneficial to others about what you say; furthermore, you should say it in such a way that it is acceptable to the other party. If other qualities are the same, the gift of good speech will tip the scale in your favour in any competitive situation.

C: Seven Maṅgalas that Provide Social Security

(11) Look after your parents

Administering to the needs of one's parents is a great virtue under the Buddha's Teaching. One should take care of one's parents to the best or one's ability.The Buddha extols this virtue so much that he even allowed *bhikkhus* to feed their parents out of daily alms collected by them.

(12) Maintain your wife and children

This is a common duty of the householder, the discharging of which makes for a stabler fam-

ily life. Even Sakka, Lord of *devas,* salutes the man who maintains his family by honest means.

(13) Discharge your duties well with due diligence

Blameless discharge of one's duties implies not only a blameless sort of work but also doing the work well with due care and application. There is a Myammar saying, " To start ploughing when the rainy season is over"; which makes this point regarding lack of diligence.

(14) Perform acts of charity

Give with a generous heart. Give to all classes of people.Giving is a sure way of promoting good human relations. But giving, to be of any real moral value, must be the outcome of sincere goodwill so that even though the gift be a trifling thing the one who receives it will be gladdened. The gladness that can cause to a destitute in receiving a gift will be just enormous. The giver is glad even before the act of his intended giving; he is glad during the act itself, and is glad later on whenever he recalls it. Such a healthy attitude in giving, if done without desiring for mundane welfare, but with an ardent wish to be a cause and condition for Enlightenment, will lead to Path-knowledge (*magga phala* and *Nibbāna).* Giving is also an exercise in relinquishing a part of one's own possessions. That is why it forms the first of the ten Perfections

needed for Enlightenment. That being so, it is wise to give in charity even to animals, and in such cases loving- kindness is the motivating factor.

(15) Live in accordance with righteousness.

This is another exhortation to practise the ten courses of meritorious conduct mentioned earlier on. The emphasis here is to lead a blameless life.

(16) Support your relatives

Charity to strangers is a virtuous act that you may do at your will and pleasure. Being charitable to one's relatives is not only a virtuous act but it is an obligation. One should lend support in kind or in other ways whenever a relative is in need. For instance, supporting a poor relative in his or her education will pave the way for his or her successful career.

(17) You should engage yourself in harmless but useful activities

By harmless but useful activities is meant socially useful activities. ' Harmless ' is to be construed as ' not demeritorious.' There is the story of a band of high-minded youths, thirty-three in number, villagers of Macala who repaired roads, planted shady trees along roads, placed drinking water by the wayside, etc. They were ardent social workers. On their death they reap-

peared in the *deva* world; their leader Māgha was reborn as Sakka, Lord of Devas. This *maṅgala* may be practised in modern situations either singly or in organized form to serve society in various ways.

D: Four Maṅgalas For Promoting Law And Order

(18) Refrain from evil thoughts.

(19) Refrain from evil words and deeds.

(20) Abstain from taking intoxicants.

In ancient times this last maxim might perhaps have reference mainly to spirits and other strong drinks. But these days not only drinks but abuse of drugs is imposing far greater danger to the world. Drug trafficking has recently become a serious international problem. A sure way of avoiding the evil of drug abuse is giving a wide berth to bad companions--- the first of the *maṅgalas.*

(21) Be steadfast in virtue

" Never a moment without some good deed, word or thought " is the essence here. Whatever good action comes to your mind, do it without delay, don't wait till tomorrow, for tomorrow you might be dead. This is what the Buddha says.

The above four *maṅgalas* may be taken as golden principles for individuals as well as for society. They are natural laws that underlie peaceful

society in all ages everywhere. Their observance may be ignored only with dire consequences.

E: Nine Maṅgalas For An Ideal Society

The term ' Utopia' has been used by some political thinkers to portray an ideal society. The nine maṅgalas that follow are the highest of worldly conduct, and as they ensure not only your welfare in the present existence but also your welfare in the hereafter, they delineate a nobler society than a Utopia.

(22) Be respectful where respect is due

Persons whom respect is due are the Triple Gem, one's parents, teachers, elders, etc, of whom we have mentioned under the third maṅgala. But here respect may be necessitated by circumstances; it is a good principle to deal with anybody, young or old, high or low, in a deferential manner.

(23) Humility

Humility should not be confused with shyness of servility. One can be humble and yet dignified. Humility may therefore be taken as another word for courtly manners. The essence of being humble is an appreciation of human sensibilities. 'Would I like to be slighted?' Ask yourself. Yet humility is a rare commodity in the possession of people in power. This maṅgala is a reminder to those in high places to remain unobstrusive, and unpretentious.

(24) Be contented

Contentment is a blessing. It is non-greed. Greed is like salt water that makes you more thirsty as you drink it. Contenment, however, does not mean resting on one's laurels. It means you should not be overambitious and unsatiated. More important, it gives you solace and sanity rather than frustrations and anger when your good efforts fail.

(25) Be grateful

You should be grateful to anyone who has done you a good turn.

This is a maxim that is seldom followed. But people who get to the top have, among other things, this rare quality. Repaying one's debt of gratitude is a magnanimous act. Gratefulness is the product of a kindly attitude to others. You can feel rightly grateful to your grocer for the facility he or she provides to you. In Myanmar tradition draught oxen are indispensable in almost all aspects of life so that the people generally feel averse to eating their flesh. This sentiment is nothing but a token of gratefulness to the bovine species.

(26) Listen to the Doctrine whenever appropriate

' Whenever appropriate ' connotes 'often'. Whenever you feel that your mind is ruffled or you know for certain that it is up for mischief,

resort to the Dhamma; you may switch on a tape-recorded sermon, or incantation of the *parittas*; or if possible, go to some bhikkhu or learned friend and discuss the Dhamma. At least you can read a book on the Dhamma. This will have the double effect of the *dhamma savana maṅgala* (listening to the Dhamma) and the *ārati maṅ-gala,* refraining from evil thoughts, the eighteenth in this discourse.

(27) Be patient

Patience is extolled by the Buddha as a supreme virtue. People at the top tend to lose patience which can be detrimental to them as well as to the people under their control or dominion. In fact, patience in a winner adds lustre to his success.

(28) Be amenable to kind admonition

Being receptive to good advice is also another rare quality with successful people. Success in life tends to make them so sure of themselves that they are apt to scorn good advice given sincerely. It is a mark of greatness to listen to kind admonition. Once the Venerable Sāriputta, the First Chief Disciple of Gotama Buddha, was reminded by a young novice about an improper way the great thera happened to have robed himself inadvertently, and the bhikkhu elder responded with appreciation.

(29) You should see the noble bhikkhus often.

A bhikkhu is a member of the Saṁgha, properly admitted by the Saṁgha into the Order, and he is one who is training himself to attain Path- Knowledge (*magga phala*). So he is venerable. Frequent contacts with members of the Saṁgha have the wholesome effect of strengthening one's religious conviction which may lead to significant spiritual progress. Under present-day conditions, contact between lay followers and the Saṁgha has become few and far between. This situation certainly needs improvement.

(30) You should discuss the doctrine whenever appropriate.

Here again, frequent discussions are intended. "The world is too much with us", so if we can manage to find time and opportunity for discussing the Dhamma it will obviously be a salutory exercise.

F: The Four maṅgalas that tend to the Supramundane

The first thirty maṅgalas are for mundane benefits. They make up a complete code of moral principles that certainly lead to success and happiness in life; the following four are for Supramundane benefits.

(31) You should take up the ascetic practice

By ascetic practice is meant control of the senses. Defilements arise in the mind through the six sense-doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. This is the rule with the multitudes who have the habit of being lax in self-control. One who aspires to the real Peace of *Nibbāna* controls the six senses so as not to allow the defilements to arise. This requires zealous effort. Accomplishing this difficult task is truly a great *maṅgala.*

(32) You should adopt the Practice of the Ariya Path

After you have kept off the defilements your morality will have become pure. Thereupon you strive for purity of mind through the practice of the *Ariya* Path of Eight Constituents. This means progress along the *Ariya* Path.

(33) You should attain Insight-Knowledge of the Truth, the property of Ariyas.

Having achieved purity of morality and purity of mind referred to in the two previous *maṅgalas*, one gains Insight-knowledge of the Four *Ariya* Truths which is the property of the Buddha and his *ariya* disciples.

(34) The realization of *Nibbāna*: this is the attainment of *arahatta phala.*

G: The Four Attributes of an Arahat

Up to the thirty- fourth *maṅgala*, the Buddha taught how to train oneself for arahatship. From the Thirty-fifth *maṅgala* to the thirty-eighth we are told of the most precious assets that an *Arahat* is endowed with. When an *arahat* is faced with the vicissitudes of life, thanks to his defilement- free mind, ---

(35) he is unperturbable;

(36) he knows no sorrow;

(37) he is absolutely pure;

(38) he is perfectly secure.

If you practise these thirty-eight auspicious principles you will conquer all enemies and find happiness and prosperity everywhere.

H: Twelve Years of Excitement in the World prior to the Discourse on the Maṅgalas

There is a uniqueness about the Maṅgala Sutta. Twelve years in advance of the Buddha's discourse on the subject, the word 'Maṅgala' had mysteriously been circulating among men and *devas* and *brahmas,* without anyone being able to say what it meant. There was a fever of excitement in all quarters in discussions and debates on what 'Maṅgala' signified, but none of the proponents in all the three worlds could satisfy his

audience.At last Sakka, Lord of the Devas delegated a *deva* to approach the Buddha to have the matter elucidated. So this discourse known as the Maṅgala Sutta was originally made to an unknown deva when the Buddha was staying at the Jetavana Monastery in Sāvatthī. In the following morning the Buddha related the discourse to the Venerable Ānanda who taught it to the human audience.

27. Siṅgālovāda Sutta

Another important discourse that is mainly concerned with worldly wisdom is the Siṅgālovada Sutta. It was made to a young man named Siṅgāla during the time when the Buddha was staying at the Veluvana Monastery in Rājagaha. Hence the title of the discourse is 'Admonition to Siṅgāla'

On a certain morning the Buddha came across a young man saluting the four cardinal quarters, upwards to the zenith and downwards to the nadir. The Buddha told the lad that under the Ariya's Teaching, the six quarters are covered in quite a different way and opened up his discourse which has great benefits for one for the present and for the hereafter.

The discourse is somewhat lengthy and we shall touch on some salient features only. It contains three major topics about unwholesome practices and one major topic about social obligations, the fulfilment of which is highly beneficial.

These three groups of unwholesome factors including fourteen items, should be avoided:

(1) Four Defiling Acts

(i) destroying of life

(ii) stealing

(iii) telling lies

(iv) unlawful sex, i.e, adultery.

(2) Four Courses of Wrongful Action

(i) partiality(favouritism, nepotism, bribery)

(ii) anger or ill will

(iii) fear

(iv) ignorance of what is right or wrong.

If one is led astray by these evil influences one's reputation wanes like the waning moon.

(3) Six Bad Habits That Cause Dissipation of Wealth

(i) indulging in intoxicants that tend to be-fuddle, the mind and make one forgetful;

(ii) loitering in streets at unseemly hours;

(iii)frequenting shows and entertainments;

(iv)being addicted to gambling which tends to make one forgetful;

(v) associating whith bad companions;

(vi) sloth.i.e. indulgence in idleness.

Note: These last six items, versified in Myanmar, which were included in the school text books in pre-war days, were quite familiar to schoolboys. The discource also elaborates on the true and false friends which are skipped here for the sake of brevity.

Covering the Six Directions or Fulfilling the Six Obligations

After giving fairly detailed instructions under the above three major headings, the Buddha proceeded to admonish the lad to cover the six directions ' which are figuratively used to denote one's social obligations:

1. One's parents are the earliest benefactors to one, so they should be regarded as the East.

2. One's teachers deserve special offerings, so they should be regarded as the South.

3. One's wife and children follow one's leadership, so they should be regarded as the West.

4. One's friends and companions are relied upon by one in time of need, so they should be regarded as the North.

5. One's servants and employees are below oneself, so they should be regarded as the Nadir.

6. *Samaṇas* and *Brāhmaṇas* with their morality, concentration and wisdom, are above

oneself, so they should be regarded as the Zenith.

The Buddha then exhorted the young man to fulfil the six obligations by using metaphorical expression 'covering the six directions', which means that if you fulfil these obligations reciprocal actions are bound to follow in the respective quarters.

1. Five Ways in which a Son Covers the East

(i) My parents have looked after me; I shall look after them in turn.

(ii) I shall manage their affairs on their behalf.

(iii) I shall maintain the family property and the family tradition of meritorious acts, and thus keep up the honour of the family,

(iv) I shall pay heed to their admonition so that I should be worhthy of inheriting them.

(v) I shall offer alms for the benefit of the departed parents.

Five Ways in which Parents Look After Their Children

(i) They restrain them from evil.

(ii) They encourage them to do good.

(iii) They give them education and teach them skills.

(iv) They arrange suitable marriages for them.

(v) They hand over property as inheritance to them at the proper time.

2. Five Ways in which a Pupil Covers the South

(i) By rising from the seat to greet the teacher;

(ii) By waiting upon the teacher;

(iii) By obeying the words of the teacher;

(iv) By doing personal service to the teacher;

(v) By learning and imbibing the teacher's instructions with respectful diligence.

Five Ways in which the Teacher Looks After the Pupil

(i) He instructs the pupil well to be worldly-wise and righteous.

(ii) He teaches well what should be taught.

(iii) He trains the pupil without reservation.

(iv) He entrusts the pupil to his friends and associates.

(v) He provides for protection in every quarter.

3. Five Ways in which a Husband Covers the West

(i) By addressing her in endearing terms and treating her with affection;

(ii) By giving her proper regard and not disparaging her;

(iii) By being faithful to her;

(iv) By giving her authority over domestic matters;

(v) By providing her with appropriate clothing and ornaments.

Five Ways in which the Wife Looks After the Husband

(i) She manages domestic affairs well.

(ii) She is hospitable and generous to the relatives of both sides, friends and servants.

(iii) She is faithful to her husband.

(iv) She manages well what the husband earns and entrusts her with.

(v) She is able as a housewife and never remains idle.

4. Five Ways in which a Man of Good Family Covers the North

(i) By giving generously;

(ii) By being pleasant and courteous;

(iii) By being helpful;

(iv) By treating his friends and associates on equal terms with himself;

(v) By being true to his words and promises.

Five Ways in which the Friends And Associates Look After Him

(i) They protect him when he is inebriated.

(ii) They guard over his property when he is inebriated.

(iii) They shelter him when he is in trouble.

(iv) They do not forsake him when he is in danger.

(v) They extend their acts of gratitude to his descendents.

5. Five Ways in which a Master Covers the Nadir

(i) By giving them tasks suitable to their abilities and 'physical strength;

(ii) By giving them food and wages;

(iii) By looking after them in sickness;

(iv) By sharing with them choice food;

(v) By granting them leave on festive days and giving them food and clothing for the occasion.

Five Ways in which the Servants and Employees Look After the Master

(i) They rise before him.

(ii) They go to sleep after him.

(iii) They take only what is given

(iv) They perform their duties well.

(v) They uphold his good name.

6. Five Ways in which a Man of Good Family Covers the Zenith

(i) By deeds of loving-kindness to samaṇas and brāhmaṇas;

(ii) By words of loving-kindness to them;

(iii) By thoughts of loving-kindness for them;

(iv) By keeping the house open to the samaṇas and brāhmaṇas;

(v) By providing them with the four requisites, viz, food, robes, lodging, and medicines.

Six Ways in which Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas look After the Lay Supporter

(i) They restrain him from evil.

(ii) They exhort him to do good.

(iii) They protect him with compassion.

(iv) They teach him the profound dhammas that he has not heard before.

(v) They explain and make clear for him the profound dhamma that he has heard before.

(vi) They exhort him to do acts of charity and to develop morality which constitute the path to the realm of *devas.*

On hearing the discourse, Siṅgāla the young man was very delighted and became a disciple of the Buddha.

28.The Real Benefit of the Buddha's Teaching

The Dhamma proclaimed by the Buddha is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the midle, and excellent in the end. It is excellent in the beginning in that it is founded on morality. It is excellent in the middle in that it purifies the mind through steadfast mindfulness and achieving concentration. It is excellent in the end in that, having purity of morality and achieving purity of mind, it leads one to Supramundane knowledge by one's own realization of the Truth.

The sole purpose of the Teaching of all Buddhas in the world is to extricate the multitudes from the quagmire of *saṁsāra.* During the immensely long periods where the Buddha's Teaching has fallen silent, there are holy persons who can show the practice leading to the *deva* realms through morality, or the practice leading to the *brāhmā* realms through concentration (jhāna). However, emancipation from Death is the prov-

ince of the Omniscient Buddhas alone. Hence the real benefit of the Buddha's Teaching lies in release from the woeful round of rebirths.

That is explicitly stated by the Buddha himself:

> " Bhikkhus, besides morality there are other dhammas which are profound, hard to see, hard to comprehend, tranquil, noble, surpassing logic, subtle and intelligible only to the *ariyas* who have attained the four *maggas*. The Tathāgata has set them forth after realization of these dhammas by himself through *sabbaññuta ñāṇa* (Perfect Wisdom). Anyone wishing to praise correctly the true virtues of the Tathāgata should do so in terms of these dhammas."

(-*Brahmajāla Sutta, Digha Nikāya* (Ten Suttas, translated by the MPA, Yangon, 1983)

Buddhahood is the sort of aspiration that no ordinary man can have. One could have a very faint idea of the magnitude of the will, zeal and courage that is required of a Buddha-aspirant. Yet it is fitting that a follower of the Buddha should know the superhuman sacrifices that the Bodhisatta (Buddha-to-be) had to make before his great purpose was achieved. So here is a sketch of the heroic journey taken by Gotama Buddha since the stage of an embryonic Buddha.

29. The Story of Bodhisatta Sumedha

Four incalculable periods (*asaṅkheyyas*) and a hundred thousand aeons (*kappas*) prior to the present aeon where five Buddhas are destined to appear, there lived in the City of Amaravatī a young brahmin named Sumedha who came from a line of rich householders. His parents died when he was a minor and the family property was held in trust by faithful employees of his deceased parents. When he came of age and had finished his education they handed over to him every item of family property that had descended from seven generations on each parent's side. Young Sumedhā, viewing the immense wealth he now possessed, reflected, "Ah, my parents and forebears had hoarded this wealth and, without putting it to good use, have left it behind at their death. What waste! As for me I will put every penny to good use by giving it away in charity" At the same time he pondered that since sentient existence is woeful there must be non-existence which is blissful. A sense of emotional religious awakening, a sense of profound urgency, came to his mind. " Even as a leaking boat is forsaken by its owner, so also will I forsake the pleasures pertaining to this putrid body with its nine openings which are discharging dirty matter by day and by night." Then, without wasting time, he reported to the king that he would be leaving the householder's life and that all his property would be left behind for the benefit of anyone who

might want them. This news was announced widely by the beating of the gong. For seven whole days the treasures were freely taken away by all and sundry but a sizable part of the property still remained. So Sumedhā, after having put up signs to the effect that those treasures might be taken away at will by anyone, left hearth and home for the Himalayas to lead the life of an asectic there. And at the end of seven days of arduous meditation he attained jhanic absorptions with transcendental powers.

On a certain occasion when he was travelling in the air he came across a party of men busily repairing a road. He came down and enquired, and was told by the road-menders that they were preparing to receive Dīpaṅkara Buddha. The very word ' Buddha' worked magic in him. He had never heard of this word before. Although the usual universal omens did take place on the occasion of the arising of Dīpaṅkara Buddha. Sumedha happened to be dwelling in jhanic absorption at the time and did not notice the great occasion.

(*Note*: Dīpaṅkarā Buddha appeared in the world during the period when human life span was a hundred thousand years.)

He enthusiastically volunteered to join in the undertaking and was assigned a boggy stretch of the roadway. His task was still unfinished when the Buddha and four hundred thousand

bhikkhus, all arahats, arrived. To make the road passable, Sumedhā decided to offer himself to be used as a human bridge. Accordingly, he laid himself across the marshy stretch, face downwards, and asked the Buddha and his company to step on him. Although his previous objective in becoming an asectic was to search for the way of emancipation for himself, on seeing the glory of the Buddha his aspiration to become a Buddha himself possessed him." If I so wished, I might burn up all the defilements in me and attain *Nibbāna* in this very existence. But why should I, endowed with power, zeal and right thinking, cross the ocean of *Saṁsara* alone? What now if I, like Dīpaṅkarā Buddha, were to acquire the Supreme Wisdom, were to ferry across the multitudes of the three worlds over the ocean of *Saṁsara*, and were to realise Nibbāna afterwards!" And so he made his earnest wish for Supreme Enlightenment there and then. And as Dīpaṅkarā Buddha stood near his head, reading the thought passing in Sumedhā's mind, contemplated the necessary factors in Sumedhā for a Buddha-aspirant to be declared a full-fleged *bodhisatta* destined to become a Buddha in a specific future. All the eight factors were present in Sumedha in:

(1) being a human being,

(2) being male of sex,

(3) loving virtue, being born with three good root causes,

(4) meeting a Buddha,

(5) being an ascetic,

(6) being endowed with supernormal spiritual powers,

(7) being possessed of a fiery zeal, ready to sacrifice his life for the Buddha,

(8) being steadfast in resolve.

Therefore Dīpaṅkarā Buddha declared to his *bhikkhu* followers: " Behold this hermit here who is prepared to give up his life in serving the Buddha. Four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons hence, he will arise as a Buddha with the name of Gotama", and also foretold the details connected with the Future Buddha such as parentage, lineage, place of birth, names of his Chief Disciples, etc. After that Dīpaṅkara Buddha raised his right foot and went his way. The great company of bhikkhus walked to the right around him as a mark of showing reverence to the Future Buddha.

30. Sumedhā's Reflection on the Ten Perfections

When Dīpankarā Buddha and his train of bhikhus had passed from sight, Sumedhā, the Future Buddha, raised himself up and sat cross-legged, his heart filled with rapture. Then he pondered thus: "To become a Buddha there must certainly be the necessary conditions that go to

make a Buddha. I will now search for them."

(i) As his keen mind probed the problem, he perceived the first Perfection which consists in *alms-giving*. " Sumedhā", he said to himself, "to attain Perfect Enlightenment, practise alms-giving. Give to all, high and low; give your all like a pot full of water being turned upside down so that not a drop is left in it!"

(ii) Next, it was revealed to his searching mind the second Perfection which constitutes *morality*. " Sumedhā," he said to himself, "if you mean to attain Perfect Enlightenment, perfect yourself in morality; just as the Himalayan yak would not tear off its proud tail that is caught in brambles, but would rather await its death, so also, guard the Precepts even with your own life."

(iii) Next, it was revealed to his searching mind the third Perfection which requires *renunciation.* " Sumedhā ", he said to himself, "if you wish to win Perfect Enlightenment, you must be able to renounce the world, just as a person serving a long prison sentence would long for release."

(iv) Next,it dawned on his mind the fourth Perfection that of *wisdom.* " Sumedhā," he asid to himself, " just as a *bhikkhu* on his daily alms round, would accept the offerings from all classes of donors, so also, seek wisdom from all quarters."

(v) Next, it came to his mind the fifth Perfection which lies in *endeavour*."Sumedhā," he said to himself," just as the lion, king of beasts, exercises the same alertness in all the four postures i,e. sitting, crouching, walking or standing still---so also,in every future existence that you may happen to be, never relax your endeavour."

(vi) Next, it came upon his mind the sixth Perfection that of *patience*. " Sumedhā," he said to himself, " just as the earth bears without a murmur all things thrown upon her, whether sweet or foul, so also, keep your patience well whether you are honoured or condemned."

(vii) Next, it struck him as the seventh Perfection--that of *truthfulness*. " Samedha", he said to himself, "just as the Morning Star never deviates from its set course in all the three seasons, so also, never depart from the truth in your speech."

(viii) Next, it arose in his mind the eighth Perfection which consists in *resolution*. " Sumedhā," he said to himself, "just as a rocky mountain peak stands firmly unmoved by the strongest gales, so also, never shift your position in whatever undertaking you may commit yourself to."

(ix) Next, it came to his mind the ninth Perfection which is embodied in *universal good - will*. " Sumedhā," he said to himself, "just as

water cleanses all alike, whether saint or scoundrel, and refreshes them with its coolness, so also, manintain goodwill to friend and foe alike."

(x) Next, it came to his mīnd the tenth Perfection--- that of *equanimity*. " Sumedhā ", he said to himself, "just as the earth bears with indifference all things thrown upon her, whether sweet or foul, so also, in meeting with pain or pleasure, never lose your mental balance."

31. The Ten Perfections in Three Grades

The Boddhisatta perfected the ten above-said virtues in every existnce over four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons, each in three grades--ten in the ordinary degree, ten in a higher degree, and ten in the superlative degree--- thus making a total of thirty kinds of perfections . The ordinary degree involved sacrifice of any of his possessions; the higher degree involved sacrifice of his limbs or organs; and ten in the superlative degree involved sacrifice of his own life.

(It is notewortly that a *bodhisatta* who has been prognosticated as such is never reborn in the four miserable states of *apāya*, which is just one of the eighteen boons he is endowed with.)

For innumerable existences the bodhisatta fulfilled the thirty types of Perfections, wishing for Buddhahood. Perfections fulfilled in the superlative are many.To name a few: when the bodhisatta

was born as a hare he had no other gift for the brahmin alms-seeker besides his own flesh, so he offered himself for the brahmin's food by descending into a fire caused to be made at his request. When the bodhisatta was born as King Sivi he let both his eyes taken out for the benefit of the blind brahmin.

(Note: in both those cases it was Sakka, Lord of the *devas*, who appeared in the guise of a brahmin to test the will of the bodhisatta.) These are instances of the superlative form of perfection in *Giving*. With regard to the superlative form of perfection in *Morality* we may recall the bodhisatta's existences as Nāga Saṁpeyya and Nāga Bhuridattha when he observed the moral precepts at the risk of his own life. With regard to the superlative form of perfection in *Wisdom* Mahosadha and Vidhūra are well-known instances when the bodhisatta staked his own life for the welfare of others in upholding the strength of wisdom. As King Mahā Sutasoma, the bodhisatta kept his word by surrendering himself to the demon captor and saved the hundred and one princes from being devoured by his captor. That was an instance of superlative form of perfection in *Truthfulness*. In the Lomahāṅsa Jātaka the bodhisatta kept his patience on being taunted to the extreme. These and many other instances bear witness to his extraordinary strength of will and spirit of sacrifice, all undertaken with the burning desire for Buddhahood. The reader may find the Jātaka Stories of great human interest

besides getting a good glimpse of how an aspirant to Buddhahood must undergo superhuman hardships, by way of perfecting himself.

32. The Greal Endeavour: Prince Siddattha's Struggle In Quest of Truth and His Perfect Enlightenment

In his last existence as Prince Siddattha the bodhisatta, having left wife and new-born child, turned first to Āḷāra and then to Udaka, the greatest ascetics of the time, for guidance. He acquired only the eight attainments in the absorptions (jhāna) but he knew that that was not the Ultimate Truth he was after. So he left them and sought solitary seclusion in the Uruvela Forest. He took up austerities to the extreme. He lived on one grain of rice a day. After some time his body became so emaciated that a mere skeleton dressed in dry dark skin remained of the golden complexioned royal physique bearing the thirty-two physical characteristics of a great man. Yet he never relented. One day he collapsed while trying to defecate.

When he came to, he pondered thus: " Perhaps a complete denial of nourishment would help." And without taking even a grain of rice or sesamun a day he practised inbreathing and outbreathing as meditation. He tried to hold his breath. When the air inside was not allowed to escape through the nose it rushed through his ears, causing him intense pain. He them plugged

both his ears. Then the air inside, not being allowed to escape through any hole in the head, rushed against the top of his head causing excruciating pain in him. He willed himself not to allow the inside air go up with the result that it descended causing very sharp sensations as though the intestines were being cut with a pair of scissors.

Now that everything has failed, the bodhisatta pondered: " This extreme practice is clearly no good. This starving does not help. What if I were to gain the jhānic absorption as I did in my infancy." For now he vividly recalled how in his infancy, when his royal father King Suddhodana was performing the annual ploughing ceremony, he gained concentration by means of inbreathing and outbreathing, alone underneath a rose apple tree. But then that would need physical fitness. His body was now in no sound state to practise the breathing for meditation. So he sought alms-food in the nearby village of Sena, began to take food in moderation, regained his golden complexion, and then, avoiding the two extremes of pampering the senses and inordinately punishing himself---which he was to tell his followers as the Middle Course---he won his goal of Perfect Enlightenment as the Buddha, thanks to his Perfections fulfilled over innumerable aeons.That was a Wednesday, the full moon day of Kason(May), 103 Kojā Era---just before dawn of the next day.

33. The Four Ariya Truths In A Nutshell

The Buddha who won Perfect Enlightenment by himself taught the Four Ariya Truths, the Ultimate Truth, as he discovered it. The Four Truths are termed 'Ariya' since they are the province of the Buddha and his disciples who come to realize them after diligently practising the Eightfold Ariya Path or the path which has eight constituents. The Four *Ariya* Truths, in a nutshell, are these:

1. The mind-matter complex usually considered as someone, some person, is mere psycho-physical phenomena in a constant state of flux, and is truly woeful, unsatisfactory. This is called the Truth of Dukkha, *dukka saccā.*

2. Chinging to this mind-matter complex which is a compound of five Aggregates (*khandhā*) is the cause of *dukkha.* This is called the Truth of the Cause, *samudaya saccā.*

3. The utter cessation of the re-arising of the five Aggregates through the realization of the Path-knowledge (*magga ñāṇa*) which abandons clinging to the five Aggregates is called the Truth of Cessation, *nirodha saccā.*

4. The Eight-factored Ariya Path, the practising of which leads to abandonment of clinging to the five Aggregates, is the Truth of the Path, *magga saccā.*

Right understanding of the Four *Ariya* Truths by the rightly practising of the Ariya Path of Eight Constituents is called *catussaca sammādiṭṭhi.*

34. The Eight Constituents of the Ariya Path

1. Right Speech : Speaking what is beneficial and true, i.e, refraining from the four evil verbal actions.

2. Right Action : Righteous conduct, i.e, refraining from the three evil physical actions, action guided by a sense of shame to do evil and a sense of dread to do evil.

3. Right Livelihood: Righteous way or living, never to earn one's living that involves killing, stealing, creating or causing the suffering of others.

(These three factors constitute the Morality Group)

4. Right Effort : Endeavouring in these four ways:

(a) Preventing the arising of evil actions (physically, verbally or mentally) that have not yet arisen;

(b) Giving up such evil actions as have arisen.

(c)Cultivating good actions that have not yet arisen;

(d) Nurturing the good actions that have arisen.

5. Right Midfulness: Being vigilant on the physical and mental phenomena that are happening within oneself which may be with regard to the body, or the sensations, or the mind, or the objects of thought.(These four subjects will be discussed later).

6. Right Concentration: A state of mind and the method designed to induce that state by exercising the mind to get fixed on an object of meditation. There are twenty-five methods to attain the First jhāna from which stage the yogī (earnest seeker-after-truth) advances up to the Fourth jhāna.

(This second group of three factors constitute the Concentration Group).

7. Right Thinking : The attitude to renounce worldly ties born of non-greed; kindly disposition towards all living things; and compassionate sympathy towards all suffering beings.

8. Right View : Full understanding of the Four Ariya Truths. This is the peak of Knowledge because it understands things as they really are.

(These last two factors constitute the Knowledge Group.)

The above eight factors which constitute the Ariya Path are also condensed into three stages of the Ariya practice, viz: Morality or Higher Morality, Concentration or Higher Consciousness and Higher Knowledge. These in perfect combination lead to *Nibbāna*. There is no other way for the attainment of *Nibbāna*.

35. The Three Rounds, vaṭṭa

Vaṭṭa means turning or going round. *Saṁsāra vaṭṭa* means the cycle of births and deaths. It refers to the beginningless round of a succession of existences the end of which cannot be known. This ceaseless wheel as it turns entails ageing, disease and death consequent to rebirth. Sometimes as a result of good actions in the past, one goes to the fortunate planes of existence, most

of the time going down to the unfortunate destinations. It is like the wheel that keeps going round behind the pair of oxen yoked to a cart. All this happens not in compliance with one's wishes. Who would wish for the miserable states of *apāya*? To be reborn in this human world is a great piece of good fortune, a most rare and difficult opportunity. This wheel of existence goes round and round due to cause, as taught by the Buddha, and is the cardinal principle of the Buddha's doctrine called Dependent Origination or Causal Arising, *Paṭiccassamuppāda*. The gist of the working of these dreary rounds of existence is this:

(i) Due to defilements (*kilesa vaṭṭa*),

(ii) one commits all sorts of deeds, good as well as bad (*kamma vaṭṭa)*,

(iii) These deeds carry appropirate results, either good or bad, the results being manifested as rebirth in one of the thirty-one abodes of existence (*vipāka vaṭṭa*) ; fresh deeds are again committed in the new existence, mostly associated with defilements, i.e. *kilesa vaṭṭa.* which lead to fresh existences and so on and on.

36. Why It Is Important To Attain Nibbāna?

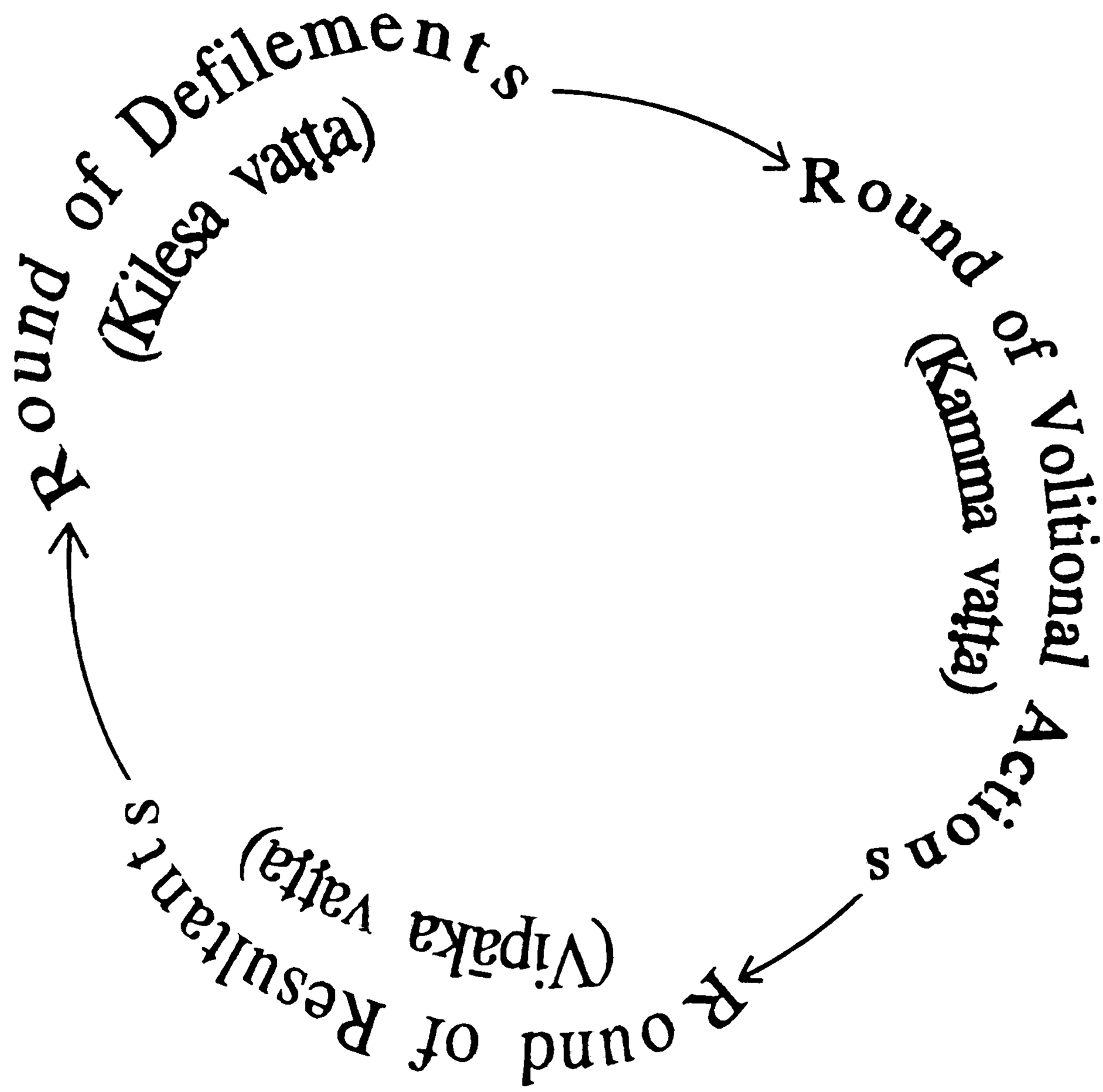
The cycle of existences is cut off only when *Nibbāna* is realized. The cycle extends to the thirty-one abodes which can be seen as belonging to the four levels, viz,.

(a) The three rounds pertaining to the miserable states of *apāya,*

(b) The three rounds pertaining to the Sensuous Sphere,

(c) The three rounds pertaining to the Fine Material Sphere,

Diagram Showing How the Three Rounds Perpetuate Themselves



(d) The three rounds pertaining to the Non-material Sphere,

The characteristics of these four levels:

(a) In the miserable states of *apāya,* the wrong view concerning the compound of the five aggregates, i.e, holding it as one's Self or *atta,* (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) together with Uncertainty (*vicikicchā*) are the round of defilements, *kilesa vaṭṭa.*

The ten courses of evil action are the round of actions. Renewed existence in the four miserable states is the round of resultants.

(b) In the Sensuous Sphere, the delight in, and attachment to, the five sense-pleasures of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch are the round of defilements. The ten bases of meritorious action such as alms-giving, morality and mental cultivation are the round of actions. Renewed existence in the human world and the six *deva* worlds is the round of resultants.

(c) (d) In the Fine Material Sphere, and the Non-material Sphere, attachment to the Fine-material existence and the Non-material existence, respectively, are the round of defilements. Meritorious actions leading to, and practised in, the Fine Material Sphere and the Non-material Sphere, respectively, are the round of actions. Renewed existence in the Fine Material Sphere and the Non-material Sphere, respectively, are the round of resultants.

37.Cutting Loose the Round of Resultants

The probability of sinking to the miserable planes of existence is overwhelmingly greater than that of rebirth in the human world or in the deva world. Considering the lack of opportunity in the four miserable existences for meritorious action needed to escape from there, it behoves one to strive for attaining *Nibbāna.*

The existences in the four *apāyas,* characterised by the defilements of the illusion of a Self (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) and Uncertainty, (*vicikicchā*); the former is the prime defilement. Once *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is dispelled by Magga-Insight, *vicikicchā* and the ten courses of evil action also disappear altogether, thereby closing the portals of the four miserable states of *apāya,* and putting an end to the round of existences in those unfortunate worlds. Just as someone whose head has caught fire would lose no time to put out the fire, even so should a wise person save himself from the spell of *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi.*

38: What Is Sakkāyadiṭṭhi?

Sakkāyadiṭṭhis is a term which is of the greatest import. It means a grossly mistaken belief in the existence of a Self or *atta* or soul or ego in this body which is a mere manifestaion of mind and matter, a compounded thing of the five aggregates (*khandhā*) the Aggregate of Corpore-

ality, the Aggregate of Sensation, the Aggregate of Perception, the Aggregate of Volitions, and the Aggregate of Consciousness. The unenlightened worldling (*puthujjana*) firmly holds the mind-matter complex as an abiding entity which he identifies with himself. He always thinks of it as his own. This is the grossest wrong view called *atta diṭṭhi*. It is this wrong view that makes us think of the eye as 'my eye', the seeing of something as 'my seeing' it; the ear as 'my ear', the hearing of a sound as 'my hearing' it; the nose as 'my nose' the smelling of an odour as 'my smelling' it; the tongue as' my tongue', the tasting of a taste as 'my tasting' it; the body as 'my body' the touching of a tangible object as 'my touching' it; the mind as 'my mind' the thinking of a thought as 'my thinking'. Thus in regard to the six sense-bases *(āyatanas*), the worlding firmly holds all these phenomena as his own self. This is the wrong view that has been ingrained in the ordinary man over infinite existences.

It will be seen that *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is behind evil deeds that send one to the miserable existences, and that *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is also behind meritorious actions that send one to the fortunate destinations. All of those destinations, fortunate or unfortunate, belong to the round of births and deaths; hence *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is the cause of continued existence which is woeful, unsatisfactory, *dukkha*.

To have a good idea of how *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is such a dreadful concept, let us consider its consequences. There are some pious persons who believe that mind is the source of suffering (*dukkha*) and that mind must be put away. Accordingly, they practise *jhāna* pertaining to the Fine-material Sphere as the result of which they are reborn in the Fine-material Sphere where existence is characterized by Corporeality alone without consciousness, called *asaññatta bhūmi* in the brahmā world. On the other hand, there are persons who consider corporeality as the source of suffering and believe that if existence were without any corporeality it would be blissful. Following their *jhānic* practice to the successful end, they are reborn in the Non-material Sphere where existence is characterized by consciousness alone, without corporeality, called *arūpa bhūmi*, in the brahmā world. Lifespan in the Sphere is eighty - four thousand aeons. During that time these brahmās though dwelling in bliss, do not have any chance to hear the Buddha's teachings, even if they happen to live during the time of the arising of a Buddha, and what an utter loss! All that is due to *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, the wrong view which inflates the ego to the full. At that end of those astonishingly long lifespans the brahmās also must die and there is no guarantee of a fortunate destination after passing away from the brahmā existence.

Although an understanding of, and belief in, kamma is a safeguard against falling to the

miserable states of apāya, that knowledge alone is not complete Right Understanding because it still has *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* which binds you up with the round of existences. So the task of escaping from the woes of *saṁsāra* is the real task that we should put ourselves to. Set your target high: aim at eliminating the ego right in the present existence, here and now!

39. How Sakkāyadiṭṭhi May Be Eliminated In Stages

Belief in the ego, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, is a wrong view. Let us compare it to fire.

Seeing things as they really are is the Righ View. Let us compare it to water.

To extinguish a fire, water is needed to cope with the blaze. To expel sakkādiṭṭhi from our mental makeup, Right View through Insight is needed, which demands diligence.

When we analyse *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* it falls under four categories as follows;

(1) The gross type of belief in ' I ', regarding the five Aggregates,
(2) The crude type of belief in ' I ', regarding the five Aggregates,
(3) The fine type of belief in ' I ', regarding the five Aggregates,
(4) The very subtle type of belief in ' I ', regarding the five Aggregates.

Those four grades of considering oneself as ' I ' lies behind every action of a worldling until

such time as he realizes the Four Ariya Truths by Path-knowledge. Whatever a common man (i.e. one who has not attained the knowledge with which an *ariya* is endowed), thinks, says or does---whether evil or good---this tenacious belief in the existence of a self, an abiding entity, persists. When one keeps oneself good the motivation is ' for my own welfare' and happiness, this ' my' being an outcome of the concept of 'I' when one observes morality one takes pride as ' my morality '. When one throws out a lavish feast one is satisfied with the thought:'Oh, my great feast, who can do it as much as I've done? Even in meditating, this regard for one's self creeps in. You think you feel the ache here, there, or you think you are aware of the sensation, and so cannot see the truth as it really is--- that there is just sensation that arises and no one to feel it. For sensation and feeling are only mental phenomena. This truth you have learnt from your meditation teacher, of course. Yet this is the kind of truth that evades you because *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* which is your second nature stands in the way of your seeing the truth.

The late Ledi Sayadaw Says: " Any desultory merit performed by a worlding, be it morality, concentration, or wisdom, is just like a sprinkling of rain drops onto an ocean of live coals of immense area and depth."(See *Bodhhipakkhiya Dīpanī)*

This misconception called *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is a mental state that corrupts the mind and that has dominated the mind over innumerable existences.Since it springs from the mind it can be rectified only by the mind.

It can be rectified by stages thus:

(1) The gross type of belief in 'I' with regard to the five Aggregates is eradicated by the Insight-knowledge that discerns mind and matter as two distinct natural phenomena.

(2) The crude type of belief in ' I ' regarding the five Aggregates is eradicated by the Insight-knowledge that discerns the Causal Law of nature that mind and matter arise dependent on cause.

(3) The fine type of belief in ' I ' regarding the five Aggregates is eradicated by the Insight-knowledge that discerns the three characteristics of all conditioned phenomena, i.e, that they are impermanent, that they are woeful and unsatisfactory, and that they are unsubstantial, lacking in an abiding entity(*anicca,dukkha, anatta).*

(4) The very subtle type of belief in ' I ' regarding the five Aggregates is eradicated by the Path-knowledge(*Magga ñāṇa)* and Fruition-knowledge (*Phala ñāṇa*) which are the culmination of the various stages of Insight-knowledge.

PART TWO
THE PRACTICE OF THE DHAMMA

40. Take up the good work today; you have no covenant with Death to be living tomorrow

You now know, having the Right Understanding of the Principle of *kamma, kammasakatā sammādiṭṭhi*, that only your own good actions are your real properly both here and in the hereafter.

You have the right view regarding the Ten Subjects (*dasavatthuka sammādiṭṭhi).* You also have the Right Understanding of the Four Ariya Truths, *Catusacca sammādiṭṭhi*, that will liberate you from the Saṁsāric round.

And you are established in the three Refuges.

So you are well equipped with the right understanding of a true follower of the Buddha. It is now up to you to practise the Dhamma for your own benefit.

" Whatever is worth doing should be
done today;
one may die tomorrow, who knows?
We have no covenant with the King
of Death and his many warriors."

Thus said the Buddha.(See *Uparipaṇṇāsa Bhaddekaraṭṭa Sutta*).

The practice of the Dhamma, briefly, is fulfilling the Threefold Training: Morality, Concentration and Knowledge.

41. Daily Routine As A Buddha's Disciple

As soon as you rise from bed, remember the Triple Gem, the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Samgha. You may mentally or verbally recite some words of veneration to the Triple Gem.Then, wish every living being well in a boundless way, i,e. not limited to any quarter or segment of living beings. This may be done either mentally or verbally. Make this a habit.

42. Paying Devotion To The Buddha

Why do we pay devotion to the Buddha?

The custom of the Buddha's devotees paying devotion to the Buddha is a matter of culture. But for the Myanmar people the words uttered in devotion have been so replete with meaning that they have remained in this form over these generations. When one thinks of them, the very first word 'Okāsa', a Pali word, means,'May the Buddha remain my object of veneration'and also, May the Bhagavā accept this my veneration'. In paying devotion to theBuddha, one says,'Casting aside all conceit, with joined palms raised to my head, I pay my devotion to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Samgha–the Triple Gem–with great veneration etc." Then the preliminary words,

of devotion end with one's main aspiration: "May I, for this meritorious act, realize *magga phala-Nibbāna* at the earliest! In saying those words the devotee is committing himself to the noble act mentally, verbally and physically, thereby going through a practical exercise of the Dhamma in these ways:

1. He asks permission of the Triple Gem to pay his devotion.
2. He sets aside his conceit: this in itself is a kind of self-discipline.
3. He performs the act of veneration in physical correctness, i,e. if seated, by (a) letting fall the two knees evenly together on the ground, (b) letting fall the two elbows together on the ground, (c) stretching two forearms and spreading the palms out, (d) keeping them evenly together on the ground, (e) placing the head on the back of the two palms.-(*Vinayālaṅkāra*).(Note 1: If on the floor, the word 'ground' should be taken to mean ' floor '.)

(*Note* 2: In paying obeisance to the Saṁgha or one's elders also the above fivefold physical correctness should be observed.)

In saying the traditional words of devotion, the mind must be always in every word being uttered, with full awareness of the meaning. Then only will the act justify the purpose. For this

is a volitional act performed as part of mental culture, with the Triple Gem as one's object of thought. Therefore while one bows three times in the fivefold posture, one should contemplate one or more of the attributes of the Buddha at the first bowing down, one or more of the attributes of the Dhamma at the second bowing down, and one of more attributes of the Saṁgha at the third bowing down.

43. Benefits of Contemplating the Buddha's Attributes

Contemplating the noble attributes of the Buddha as part of mental culture brings these benefits:

(1) When one is deeply devoted to the Buddha, the teachings of the Buddha carry great conviction.

(2) The deep devotion assumes a rational character, rather than emotional.

(3) Being constantly mindful of the Buddha, one acquires clear memory so that even in old age one has a clear mental faculty.

(4) Intelligence grows.

(5) Personal glory grows.

(6) There is tranquillity in the mind.

(7) One is fearless in the face of danger.

(8) One can forbear great hardships.

(9) Feeling oneself in the company of the Buddha, one is naturally disinclined to evil.

(10) The body of one whose mind is absorbed in the thoughts of the Buddha is like a shrine containing the Buddha so that one is deserving of homage by men, *devas* and *brāhmās.*

(11) Aspriation to become a Buddha arises in one.

(12) Whenever occasion for evil action arises, one feels oneself in the presence of the Buddha so that a sense of shame and dread deters one from evil.

(13) If one does not gain Path-Knowledge here and now one is reborn in the fortunate realms of the human world or the *deva* world.

44. The Auspicious Morning Time

Prior to the Buddha's discourse on Auspiciousness, *Maṅgala*, various people had been engaged for twelve long years in pondering the tantalizing subject of what constitutes *maṅgala.*

Some said that seeing an agreeable thing is *maṅgala.* There were others who said that hearing an agreeable sound is *maṅgala.* Yet others claimed that smelling an agreeable odour is

maṅgala; or that savouring some agreeable taste is *maṅgala;* or that coming into physical contact with some agreeable tangible object is *maṅgala.* Only when the Buddha proclaimed to the world the thirty-eight *maṅgalas* were all those wild conjectures proved wrong. The *maṅgalas* taught by the Buddha are beneficial to all beings who live by them for the present as well as for the hereafter.Therefore there can be nothing more auspicious for one to go before the Buddha (i,e. any likeness of thes Buddha) early in the morning and pay one's devotion to the Buddha, remembering his noble attributes, and at the same time pay homage to the Triple Gem.

In the old days Syadaws (bhikkhu elders) used to prelude their devotions by invoking the Buddha and the other venerable objects such as:

"May the Bhagavā kindly stand on my head."

"May the Venerable Sāriputta the Chief Diciple stand on my right shoulder."
"May the Venerable Mahā Moggallana the other Chief Disciple stand on my left shoulder."

"May the three *Piṭakas* remain in front of me."

These words of invocation help create a meritorious attitude and the age-old practice is still adopted by many today. There are a good many beautiful and inspiring compositions of various

lengths in the matter of paying devotion to the Triple Gem as well as invocations to choose from.

The paying of devotions is the first part which comprises the renewal of one's vow of establishing oneself in the Three Refuges. The seond part that always follows the devotion is the vow of getting oneself established in the five moral precepts, *pañca sīla.*(See Part One, para 18 above). For one who is about to go into meditation on a chosen subject, the usual vow consists of eight precepts which is a more elaborate form of the five fundamental precepts with Right Livelihood as the eighth, *ājīva ṭhamaka sīla*, which is also called the prerequisite of Path-Knowledge. The vow of right livelihood does not have retrospective effect: if one has had ill-gotten wealth one may enjoy it without incurring breach of the vow, which covers only present and future conduct.

45. Abstinence From Sex And The Five Precepts

Brahmacariya is a Pali word meaning the Noble Practice. It is the practice of brahmās and it consists in abstinence from sex. With the negative particle a prefixed to *brahmacariya*, *abrahmacariya* means the ignoble practice of sex. This item is one of the eight special precepts observed on Fasting-days or *uposatha* days. Uposatha literally means

special observance. *Uposatha sīla* is the eightfold precepts observed on specially marked out days, i,e, first quarter, full moon, last quarter, new moon. Although usually this item is included in *uposatha sīla* it may also be included in the five precepts in which case it is substituted for 'unlawful sex'. This way of observance is extolled by the Buddha in the *Dhammika Sutta, Sutta Nipāta.* Therein the Buddha says:

> " A wise person should avoid sexual intercourse as he would stay away from a pit of live coals. If one cannot abstain totally from it he should refrain from going to another man's wife."

46. Daily Offerings To The Buddha

Offering of food, water, flowers, lights to the Buddha are traditional custom among the devotees. These are made in memory of the Buddha, not propitiating the Buddha-image. In remembering the Buddha one is in effect meditating on the noble attributes of the Buddha. The offerings are therefore meritorious just as they were made to the living Buddha. Before the offerings are made, one says words of devotion and gets oneself established in the Triple Gem and in the precepts of morality. This meditative attitude based on morality puts one on the path of Concentration which renders the act more efficacious.

These offerings usually take place early in the morning in most Myanmar homes. They also may be made–without any food offering after mid-day in the evening, or at any time suitable to the devotee. It is customary for devotees to pay their devotion to the Buddha before retiring and to diffuse *mettā*, loving-kindness, to all living beings.

47. Diffusing Mettā

Mettā is a Pali word with special significance. It is something more comprehensive in meaning than ' love' in the English language. Mettā is one of three kinds of *pema*, love: (1) *Taṇhā pema,* love grounded on attachment, (2) *gehasita pema*, love between blood relations, and (3) *mettā pema*, universal goodwill or loving-kindness.

To diffuse *Mettā* is to cultivate the noble attitude of sending one's goodwill to all and sundry, with no trace of attachment. One who dwells in this kindly state of mind acquires eleven advantages or benefits.

48. The Four Sublime Abidings

(1) Cultivating Loving-kindness

In practice loving-kindness is diffused in four modes to each of the five categories of unspecified beings and the seven categories of specified beings, thus:

1. May they be free from enmity;

2. May they be free from anxiety;

3. May they be free from ailment;

4. May they be able to conduct themselves happily with a sound mind and body.

All those good wishes are to be diffused to the ten directions.

(2) Cultivating Compassion

This is developing a tender heart that takes pity on all these twelve categories of beings who are suffering pain physically or mentally, and that wishes them to be free from trouble.

(3) Cultivating Sympathetic Joy

This is developing a magnanimous mind that finds gladness in other's good fortune in respect of the above-mentioned twelve categories of beings, and that wishes them to be able to retain their fortune.

(4) Cultivating Equanimity

This is developing a neutral attitude towards the good fortune or the bad fortune of others, with an equable outlook: 'All beings are creatures of their own *kamma.*'

49. Equanimity Is Not Disinterestedness

Of the four Sublime Abidings, the first three being related to a kindly disposition towards others, are obviously sublime, but the fourth one, Equanimity, might perhaps be misconstrued as in-

difference or disinterest. But equanimity is truly sublime too because to be able to view others' woes and well-being with the same detachment is a most difficult thing for an undisciplined mind. The neutral attitude is neither impassiveness nor aloofness. It is not lack of interest in other people's affairs. On the contrary, an equable attitude is the outcome of a high thought which overcomes attachment. Human nature is such that it is not easy to remain unconcerned about one's own people meeting with misfortune. One who wants to develop equanimity must have already attained mastery in the *jhānas* of loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy, and only after emerging from the third *jhāna* (in the fourfold reckoning of *jhāna*) should he proceed to the practice of equanimity.

50. Expressing One's Wishes Before The Buddha

Expressing one's wishes at the time of paying devotion may be made aloud or inaudibly, or it may be just wishing in the mind. Bodhisatta Sumedha made this with in his mind to become a Buddha like Dīpaṅkarā. His aspiration was understood by Buddha Dīpaṅkarā by divine power of knowing other's minds, and hence the prophecy was made. In Vessantara Jātaka we find king Vessantara, the *bodhisatta*, making his wish: 'may this good deed be a cause of my attaining perfect wisdom.'

To wish for attaining one's goal is a natural thing with those who have strong aspirations.

Some may wish for worldly glory while others may wish for the Supramundane, Nibbāna, which surpasses worldly glory because of breaking up the bonds of *saṁsāra.* The dreadful consequence of wishing is that one gets what one asks for. In Chaddanta Jātaka, Cūḷa Subbhaddā the Lesser Queen of Chaddanta royal elephant wished for destroying the life of her royal husband and her wish was fulfilled. If one wishes for glorious existences in the human world or the *deva* world one can get them, but worldly greatness is always subject to ageing and death. Therefore it is wise to wish for *magga-phala ñāṇa,* Path-Knowledge and Fruition-Knowledge. Some wish for special apperception (*abhiññā*) without difficulty which is wishing for arahatship with facility, and this is a worthy aspiration indeed. Recluse Akitti's wish, " May I never in my future existences have occasion to meet a rogue" is in effect wishing for release from rebirth because association with foolish persons is the prime source of evil that hinders spiritual progress.

There are certain conditions to be met if one's wishes are to be fulfilled. The wish must be expressed. One making the wish must be possessed of five virtues, namely, conviction, morality, learning, sacrifice and wisdom. The wish must be not unnatural: you can't wish for a life free from ageing, disease and death. Wishing for *Nibbanā* where there is no ageing and death is of course something different.

It is important to note that the only wise wish is that which aspires to the end of *dukkha.*

51. The Practice of The Threefold Training

Having made each morning auspicious by the above-mentioned daily routine, and having purified the mind, one may go about meeting one's multifarious duties as a householder. The importance of making a clean living cannot be too much emphasised because, as we have seen earlier, right livelihood is a prerequisite for enlightenment.

He is a wise one who does not consider worldly success as the sole purpose of life, but also devotes his time to liberation from the unsatisfactoriness of the world. Right Understanding which sets up a righteous, blameless mode of life that we have discussed at the beginning of this book, is for security against the miserable states only; it cannot liberate one from the clutches of *saṁsāra.*

The main purpose of Buddhahood is to liberate the wayfarers of *saṁsāra* from the weary round of rebirth. Remember Sumedha's aspiration to save humanity as a Buddha rather than cross the ocean of *saṁsāra* alone. There are two ways of revering the Buddha: offering of material things and following his doctrines. The latter is more valued by the Buddha.

That is why a devotee should prepare himself to practise the Dhamma.

The practical aspect of the Buddha's Teaching comprises the Right View of the Ariya Path, which is superior to the Right View of the Principle of Kamma. In the exposition of the eight constituents of the Ariya Path, Right View is stated first. However, that is just a method of expounding the Dhamma. When it comes to practice, Right View belongs to the Wisdom Group, the third level of the Threefold Training which is the culmination and not the starting point.

52. The Eight Constituents of the Ariya Path as Guidelines for the Threefold Training

The Eightfold Ariya Path has been explained in Part One. In the practice of the Path there are three aspects of the Path grouped as follows:

(1) The Morality Group consisting of: Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood.

(2) The Concentration Group consisting of: Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

(3) The Wisdom Group consisting of; Right View and Right Thinking. *(Majjhimapaṇṇāsa, Cūḷavedalla Sutta.)*

In respect of the Morality Group the eight

precepts with Right Livelihood as the eighth is the requisite morality for a yogī, i.e, one who strives for the Path; The essence of this training lies in refraining from the evil conduct prescribed as eight moral restraints or precepts.

In respect of the Concentration Group the yogi disciplines the mind not to wander but to remain on a set object of meditation. This constitutes Right Effort. Putting the mind fixed to the object is the practice of Right Mindfulness. With the accomplishment of Right Effort and Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration is established. In respect of the Wisdom Group the yogi, possessed of morality and concentration, comes to discern the rising and falling of physical and mental phenomena within himself. This discernment is Right Thinking. When thinking becomes right there arises the Right View that "Whatever is subject to arising is subject to dissolution." This state of affairs is indeed unsatisfactory, woeful, and the physical and mental phenomena which are impermanent and woeful are not one's own, not one's self, lacking substance, merely phenomena in a state of flux. This in brief is how Right View arises. This is called Path-knowledge, *magga ñāṇa.*

Morality protects wisdom from falling away.

Concentration is the basis of knowledge.

Thus it should be seen that Morality and Concentration are the prerequisites for Knowledge.

Concentration acquired by one who lacks morality is not of much use; it is feeble. One who lacks concentration does not gain insight. One who lacks insight into reality—seeing things as they really are–cannot escape from the round of resultants.

53. What Does Rihgt View Point Out?

Path-knowledge of *Magga ñaṇa* is called Special Apperception (*abhiññā*). What does it perceive in a special way?

It perceives the faults of conditionality (*saṅkhāra*) which is the outcome of volition *(cetanā).*

We have noted earlier that volition is the name for action, good or bad. It is the function of volition to join mind and mind-object together, which has the effect of joining one existence with another. Since it causes action, *cetanā* (volition) is also called volitional activity (*saṅkhāra* or *abhisaṅ*khāra). Since it nourishes fresh existence, it is also called *āhāra.*

The Buddha says: " *Bhikkhus*, in much the same way as a pit of glowing embers would be shunned by a prisoner, should the nutriment of volition be shunned. Bhikkhus, if the nutriment of volition is well understood, the three kinds of Craving are well understood."

(- Nidāna Saṁyutta, Puttamaṁsupama Sutta)

Further, the Buddha says: " And if the three kinds of Craving are well understood, then, I say nothing further remains for the *ariya* disciple to do. (i.e, he attains arahatship.)"

To gain release from the round of rebirth, volitional action, good or evil, must be given up. The practice of the Path alone should make up one's activities if one wishes to gain release. The practice consists of Morality, Concentration and Knowledge as outlined above. The eight factors of the Path will then be fully developed and insight will result, culminating in Path-knowledge.

Not any and every good action is to be shunned; only volition that motivates action need be discarded. *Kamma* does not mean only volitional actions; it also includes practice of the Path.

54. The Type Of Kamma That Eliminates All Volitional Actions

The Buddha expounds four types of *kamma*:-

1. Kamma that is dark and that has dark consequences;
2. Kamma that is bright and that has bright consequences;
3. Kamma that is a mixture of dark and bright character and that has consequences of dark and bright character;

4. Kamma that is neither dark nor bright and has consequences which are neither dark nor bright.

And the Buddha explains that the fourth type of kamma is the practice of the eight factors of the Ariya path such as Right Understanding, etc.

- *(Aṅguttara Nikāya, (the four) Kammā Vagga, Ariya magga Sutta)*

The meaning of the above exposition:

1. Kamma that is dark and that has dark consequences means demeritoriousness.

2. Kamma that is bright and has bright consequences means meritoriousness.

3. Kamma that is a mixture of dark and bright character and that has consequences of dark and bright character means a mixture of demeritoriousness and meritoriousness.

4. Kamma that eliminates both demeritoriousenss and meritoriousness, i.e, the practice of the Ariya Path.

The fourth type of Kamma needs some elucidation. For it is seldom referred to as kamma.

Demeritoriousness is due to ignorance. Being oppressed by defilements, improper actions are committed. Whether in thought, word or deed, all

improper actions are motivated by volition. This volition called *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* is demeritorious motivation expressed as evil action that leads to unfortunate existences.

Meritorious action also is due to ignorance. The ignorance is the inability to see the fault of merit in the same way as one fails to see the fault of demerit. The inability to see the truth is the same in both cases. The right understanding in seeing merit as a fault is the function of Magga-insight only. There is fault in any merit because merit done with volition causes rebirth and prolongs *Saṁsāra.* Glorious existences in the human world or the celestial worlds of *devas* and brahmās are not worthy objectives. That is why moral volition called *puññābhisaṅkhāra* consisting in wholesome mental verbal or physical actions are also not to be cherished, but to be abandoned.

There is a third type of volition called *āneñjābhisaṅkhāra* which is developing concentration for calm resulting in mental absorptions of jhāna. Seeing the fault in corporeality, one practises concentration of the Non-material jhāna and as the result is reborn in the Non-material sphere. This is another type of moral action due to ignorance because existence in the Non-material Sphere, however blissful, is handicapped in not being able to hear the Dhamma. This handicap is compounded by the enormous life span of the brahmā existence in that Sphere.

55. Dependent Origination: The Law of Cause and Effect (*paṭiccasamuppāda*)

Fortunate existences of the *deva* worlds and the human world are definitely better than the four miserale states of *apāya.* The *brahmā* realms are blissful and noble. Yet all these higher forms of existence entail birth (rebith) and death. So they are essentially woeful,unsatisfactory. The right understanding of this truth is Path-knowledge. We have seen that volitional actions bind one to the wheel of existence, and that these actions are caused by ignorance. Thus we have had some idea of causes behind results.

The Law of Cause and Effect is a profound subject which only the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One can propound. In his first discourse to the group of five ascetics in the Migadāvana Park (Deer Park) the Buddha expounded the Four Ariya Truths and the Middle Way consisting of the Eight Constituents of the Ariya Path. The Four Ariya Truths basically reveal the principle of cause and effect but the doctrine of Dependent Origination that encompasses the whole Law of Cause and Effect was reserved for a later occasion. The Law of Cause and Effect, called *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is the natural law that took Gotama Buddha four incalculable periods and a hundred thousand aeons in fulfilling the Perfections, and in the last existence for six harrowing years close to death, to discover. As a matter of

fact, the discovery of this law is the Knowledge of the Truth in its four aspects thus usually called the Four Ariya Truths. Perfect Enlightenment came with discovery of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, which the Buddha reflected on in the forward order and the reverse order and then in the forward and reverse order again. Therefore *Paṭiccasamuppāda* may be considered as the mental development practice of the Buddha.

All the Buddhas go through this practice culminating in insight into the Four Ariya Truths and then flower forth as Perfectly-Enlightened Ones according to their Perfections. The disciples of the Buddha also must understand *Paṭiccasamappāda* to attain Path-knowledge and become Ariyas.

The twelve factors of Paṭiccasamuppāda should be noted:

(1) Ignorance, volitional activities

(2) Consciousness, Mind-and - matter, Six Sense-bases, Contact, Sensation

(3) Craving, Clinging, Bhava (kamma actions producing rebirth)

(4) Rebirth, Ageing and death (with its consequences: grief, lamentation, pain, distress and agony.)

Dependent on ignorance, volitional activities, arise.

Dependent on volitional activities, consciousness arises.

Dependent on consciousness, mind-and-matter arise.

Dependent on mind - and - matter, the six sense-bases arise.

Dependent on the six sense- bases, contact arises.

Dependent on contact, sensation arises.

Dependent on sensation, Craving arises.

Dependent on Craving, Clinging arises.

Dependent on Clinging, *bhava* (kamma-formations) arise.

Dependent on *bhava*, rebirth arises.

Dependent on rebirth, ageing and death come about.

Consequent to ageing and death, there come about grief, lamentation, distress and despair.

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

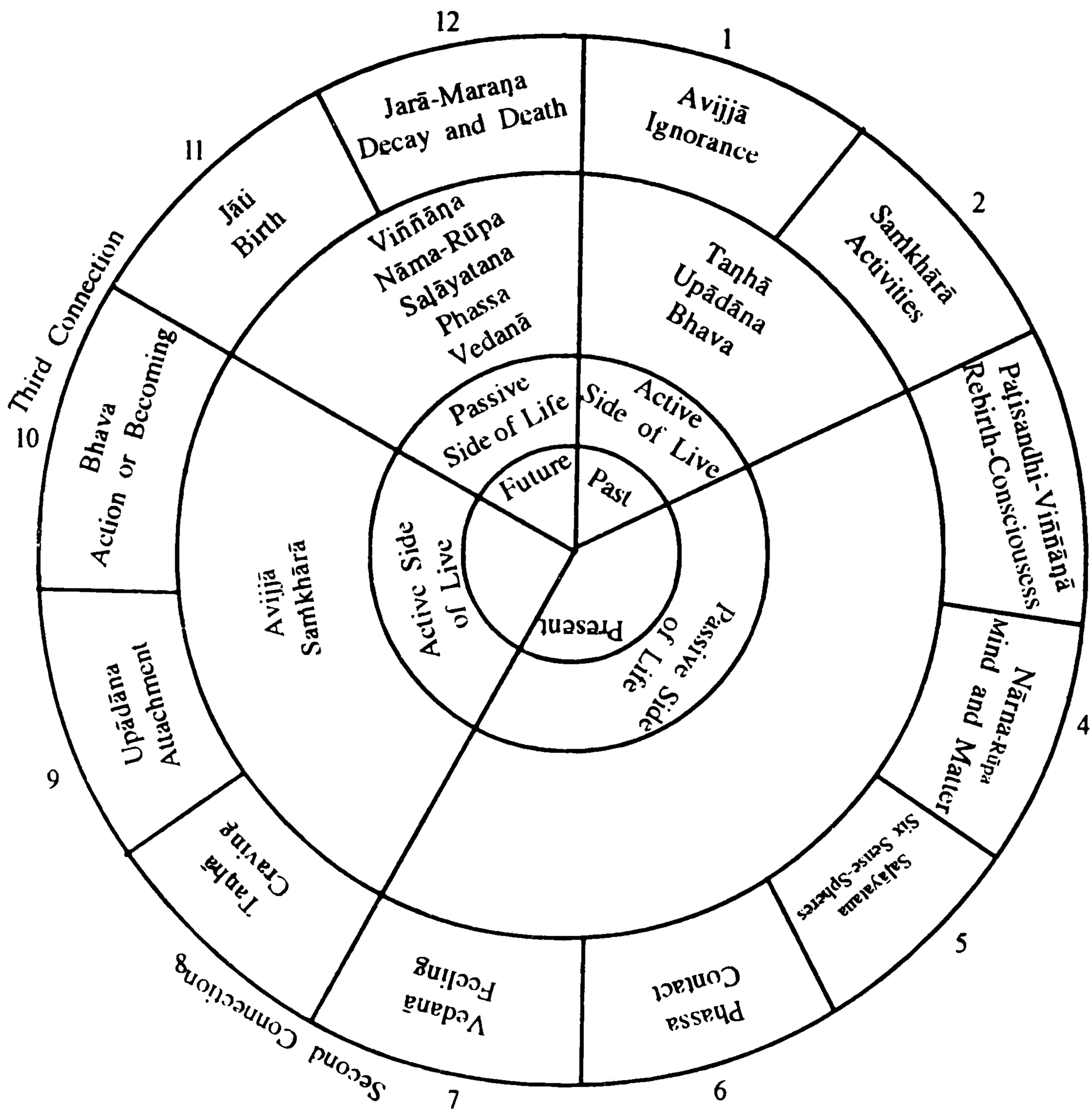


Diagram 4

(From 'A Manual of Abhidhamma' by Narada Thera)

DEPENDENT ORIGINATION BRIEFLY EXPLAINED

(1) Dependent on Ignorance, volitional activites arise. Ignorance (*avijjā*) means not knowing the Four Ariya Truths. Ignorance is essentially *moha*, delusion or bewilderment that conceals the Truth. It is so deepseated in all of us worldlings that only after attaining the four stages of Path-knowledge can it be ' peeled off ', so to speak. Under the spell of *moha*, a worldling holds tenaciously to the phenomena of mind-and-matter as his own self, his soul, or ego, his *atta*. The present existence manifested by his body, is seen as his own life. So he strives after his personal welfare: he does things, both good and bad. All these actions are called vlitional activities, purposive actions. And they naturally tend to rebirth.

(2) Dependent on volitional activities, Consciousness arises;

Once action has taken place, consequence of action follows naturally. Volitional activities in the past existences therefore result in Consciousness in the present existence. This refers to rebirth- consciousness, ie., the initial consciousness that arises at rebirth (conception). Rebirth, may take place in any of the thirtyone abodes, according to the type of volitional action.

(3) Dependent on Consciousness, mind-and- matter arises.

The arising of rebirth- consciousness is the condition for the arising of mind-and-matter. Mind (mental phenomenon) means the three aggregates of Sensation, Perception and Volitional acitvities. Matter (physical phenomenon constituting corporeality) means the four Primary Elements and the 24 material qualities dependent on the four Primary Elements.

(4) Dependent on mind-and-matter, the six sense- bases arise.

The six sense-bases are: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. They are called ' bases' because they act as 'receptors', so to speak, or external stimuli or sense- objects pertaining to each of them. Thus eye has eye-sensitivity which is an Element (*dhātu*), ear has ear-sensitivity, and so on.

(5) Dependent on the Six Sense-bases, Contact arises.

When eye-sensitivity meets with a visible object, there arises eye-contact which is associated with eye-consciousness. In the Text, is has been stated thus:

" Dependent on eye and visible object, eye-consciousness arises. The coming together of these three is Contact (*phassa*)."

(- ***Saḷāyatana. saṁyutta,*** 60,61, etc.)

In like manner, ear-sensitivity in associa-

tion with ear-consciousnesss cause the arising of ear-contact, and so on.

(6) Dependent on Contact, Sensation arises.

When the eye meets a visible object, there is eye-contact together with eye-consciousness. This natural phenomenon is evident. If the visible object is agreeable, there is a pleasant sensation. If it is disagreeable, there is an unpleasant senation. Contact has the force that we do not fully comprehend. The Buddha, in explaining Contact, gives the analogy of a skinned cow which is liable to suffer much wherever she goes. "Bhikkhus", he says, "if Contact is well understood, the three kinds of sensation are well understood. And if the three kinds of sensation are well understood, then, I say,nothing further remains for the ariya disciple to do" (i.e., he can make an end of *dukkha*). (*Nidāna saṁyutta, Puttamaṅsupama sutta)*

(7) Dependent on Sensation, Craving arises.

We have described how the three kinds of sensation are caused by Contact. Pleasant sensation or rather, fondness for sense-pleasure, is the source of all *dukkha*. Sensation is of six types based on the six sense-bases. Fondness for sensual pleasure is a mental state which, in the ultimate sense, is greed (*lobha)*. In Paṭicasamuppāda it is called *taṇhā*, (lit, ' thirst') or Craving. Thus there are six kinds of craving in accordance with the six kinds of sense-pleasures which can be

analysed in detail up to 108 kinds. But let us not concern ourselves with the details here.

(8) Dependent on Craving, Clinging arises.

Craving is longing for something. Clinging is firm grasping. Both are symptons of the same mental concomitant called greed, Clinging is craving intensified. Craving is the casuse or condition for the arising of four kinds of clinging, *viz:* clinging to sense desire, clinging to wrong views, clinging to the wrong view of the practice of morality, and clinging to the belief in (mind and matter as) Self (*atta*).

Clinging to sense-desire is firmness of craving. A sapling may be removed easily but when it has grown into a big tree and struck tap roots it cannot be removed easily. Likewise, craving may be put away but clinging that grasps its object may not be easy to do away with. Craving causes Clinging in the sense that Craving outgrows itself.

Clinging to wrong views means holding various dogmas as religious truth. There are sixty-two types of wrong views. But the three most vicious wrong views are: (i) wrong view of uncausedness of things i.e, there is no past cause; (ii) wrong view that there is mere action without any effect; and (iii) wrong view that there is no resultant in future existence. These three wrong views are the grossest of wrong views because

they reject the universal principle of *kamma*. Holders of these views are destined to the *niraya* world.

It should be remembered that it is not all wrong views that send one to the miserable states of *apāya*. The wrong view concerning the five aggregates, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, although it is a hindrance to attain the Path, can lead to the fortunate destinations when it is accompanied by meritorious actions.

Clinging to the Wrong View of Practice of Morality:

The Commentaries and sub-commentaries usually describe this type of clinging as clinging to the dog-practice performed by some ascetics in the mistaken belief that these forms of asceticism could purify themselves. In doctrinal terms, such clinging to worthless rituals is a fetter (*saṁyojana*).

All forms of practice with a desire for rebirth in the fortunate existences are classed as clinging to the Wrong View of the practice of Morality because they lead one away from Path-Knowledge.

Clinging to the belief in (mind-and-matter as) Self is essentially the mental concomitant of *diṭṭhi*, wrong view. The illusion of Self is a most tenacious idea in most persons. A mistaken concept of the existence of an abiding Self with regard to mind-and-matter, belief in the existence of ' I '. is *sakkāyadiṭṭhi,* Personality-belief.

The idea persists in one that there is a soul or *atta* in oneself, so that the body is taken as 'my body'. This vague idea about a permanent something residing in oneself makes one conceited. This egocentred outlook dirves one to all sorts of wholesome and unwholesome actions, in vainglorious self-assertiveness everywhere as ' my wife, my child, my house, my car, my offical status, my authority,' and so on and on.

Should this attitude be totally absent, there would hardly be any incentive for man to make effort in the wholesome ways. This belief in sowing merit and enjoying the fruit thereof is, as we have seen at the outset, Right Understanding at the primary level. Belief in *kamma* and its result is the right thing, of course. However, if one does not outgrow that belief, one will forever be tied fast to the wheel of rebirth. It is in this light that *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* personality-belief, is called Clinging to the belief in (mind- and- matter as) Self.

Sakkāyadiṭṭhi melts away when one perceives the truth that this body of the five aggregates is a product of *kamma,* that kamma is nothing but volitional action, and that volitional actions tend to rebirth. Then only Ignorance is seen as the source of all these actions; and then only the law of cause and effect is understood.

(9) Dependent on Clinging, *bhava* (kamma actions) arises.

Clinging to Self drives one to volitional actions

which cause the arising of *kamma,* or actions that result in rebirth, hence also called *kamma-bhava.* If we analyse our actions, if destruction of life is involved in one's earning a living then this action is conditioned by clinging to sense-desire (i.e,for enjoyment of oneself). If someone kills another it may be caused by clinging to the wrong view about the existence of 'I'. Sexual misconduct and covetousness arise due to clinging to sense-desire too.

(10) Dependent on *bhava,* rebirth takes place.

Due to kamma-actions consisting of ten kinds of moral conduct or ten kinds of immoral conduct, there arise the five aggregates (mind-and-matter) in a fresh existence. This is rebirth caused by *bhava.*

(11) Dependent on rebirth, ageing and death come about.

Rebirth implies conception. Right from the moment of birth, ageing sets in. The growth of an infant is not generally perceived as ageing because maturity has not been attained. Yet the development of an infant into adulthood and the development of an adult into a decrepit person are both the process of ageing only. This process is inescapable for anyone. It must inevitably end in death. This is the natural result of birth.

Paṭiccasamuppāda is the doctrine of causality which traces the process of the continuity of sentient existence from birth up to ageing and death.

Rebirth is the cause of ageing and death, and also the five states beginning with grief.But these five states do not arise in ariya and wise persons, so they do not count as factors in the chain of causation.

57. The Wheel of Life: How It Turns and How It may Be Stopped

Paṭiccasamuppāda is a relentless process of happenings that spring from cause. The causal chain of the twelve factors go on without a moment of break until " the wheel of life" is stopped by *arahatta magga.* Since each factor arises dependent on cause, there is no beginning to existence. This is not an exposition of a simple beginning. It is an exposition of a basic state. For ignorance, which is the mental state of *moha,* (delusion or bewilderment) is the basic state for the turning of the Wheel. In the Buddha's various discourses, this doctrine is taught to suit the receptive capacity of the hearer beginning with one of the twelve factors--and not always beginning with Ignorance. The point the Buddha drives home is the abandonment of the false view of the ego, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi.* Hence in some discourses we find the doctrine beginning from ageing and death, tracing the causal chain back to ignorance,

using the method of dialogue. In some discourses Craving is picked up as the starting point, and traced back to ignorance, and thence to ageing and death. Marvellous indeed are these dialogues which are as varied as they are elucidating in their own ways.

The crucial point about *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is:

> "When this exists, that comes to be;
>
> With the arising of this, that arises.
>
> When this does not exist, that does not come to be;
>
> With the cessation of this, that ceases."

Dependent Origination is the quintessence of the Buddha's Teaching because it points out that existence is conditioned by causes and these causes can be destroyed if one comes to understand that sentient existence is sheer *dukkha*, and clinging to it is abondoned. These twelve factors are presented through past,present and future relationships with three links, in four different sections which are determined by the beginnings and ends of the links; this wheel has twenty qualities as its spokes; and with triple round it spins on and on. This is a most profound subject. A comprehensive discussion is not possible within the scope of this book, so a brief analysis will be attempted below.

We have touched briefly on the three rounds in section 35 above. Dependent Origination is a fuller treatment of the three rounds which are shown thus:

- Ignorance, Craving and Clinging are the round of defilements.
- Volitional activities and (*kamma*) *bhava* are the round of *kamma*.
- Consciousness, mind-and-matter, the six sense-bases, contact, sensation, rebirth, ageing-and-death are the *round* of resultants.

The round of *kamma* is due to the round of defilements; the round of defilements produce the round of resultants which in turn bring about the round of defilements. Thus the three rounds have a causal realtionship between one another. As long as the round of defilements is not cut off, the conditions for the turning of the wheel remain intact and so it will spin on and on end-lessly. This is the bare outline.

Now to expand it:

Being blinded by ignorance, one becomes a natural slave of one's own craving. This craving. left unchecked, becomes Clinging. Therefore igno-rance, craving and clinging are the conditioning factors that give rise to the *round of defile-ments.*

Past actions, both good and bad, are committed, being motivated by volition. These Volitional activities bear fruit as renewed existence, hence they are called *bhava.* Therefore volitional activities and *(kamma-) bhava* are called the *round of kamma.*

As the result of the round of *kamma,* rebirth-consciousness arises; and dependent on rebirth-consciousness, there arises mind- and-body, and thence the six sense-bases, contact, sensation, rebirth, ageing-and-death. These seven factors constitute the round of resultants. Dependent on sensation, Craving arises, and wherever Craving arises *moha* or ignorance, its bedfellow, also arises, leading to the round or defilements.

Volition is the master concomitant that influences and directs the mind. It may direct the mind to aspire to mundane welfare like rebirth as a great king among men, or a great king among devas, or as a great *brahmā.* Or it may direct the mind to the attainment of *Nibbāna* which is free from ageing and death.In the former case volitional action is said to be'merit-tending-to-the round of rebirth',in the latter it is called'merit-not-tending-to-the round of rebirth'.The latter is associated with wisdom which arises due to mindfulness The mind is alert to the dangers of the round of rebirth,so it does not yield to the influence of volition that habitually draws it towards mundane welfare. Knowledge of Dependent Origination helps in making

the mind alert to the dangers of the round of rebirth,and thus breaks the habit of hankering after mundane welfare.

58. Dependent Origination In Reverse Order

We have seen how Dependent Origination was the key to the Perfect Enlightenment of the Buddha, and how the Buddha rediscovered it– as is the way with all Buddhas–how he contemplated it in the forward order, then in the reverse order, and then again in the forward and the reverse order. At the end of each round he uttered words of deep satisfaction and ecstatic joy known only to the Buddhas. For he had all these painful years been groping in the dark, but now he has discovered the crux of the problem. He has discovered the source of all woes, Craving,' the builder of the house' in every existence. *(See Udāna.)*

We have briefly discussed Dependent Origination in the forward order, the process of the arising of physical and mental phenomena. We shall now see its reverse order, how dependently arisen physical and mental phenomena come to a cessation.

The crucial thing is the elimination of ignorance.

In the forward order we have the twelve factors, each by its presence giving rise to the

next. Of all those factors, ignorance is the key: When ignorance ceases to be, then volitional activities cease;due to the cessation of volitional activities, Consciousness ceases; due to the cessation of Concsiousness, mind-and-matter ceases; and so on. It is just like when the seed of the banyan tree is roasted to cinder it can never grow into a banyan; when ignorance is cast away, burnt up 'completely, the Wheel of Life is put to a stop. With the cessation of ignorance, i.e, when ignorance does not arise at all, Craving ceases; it does not arise. Cessation of Craving means cessation of the Source of *dukkha:* it is the realization of the Truth of Cessation, it is the realization of (lit, 'coming face to face with') *Nibbāna.* This is the attainment of Knowledge *(vijjā)* the antethesis of Ignorance,*(avijjā).* This is Knowledge of the Path, *Magga-ñāṇa,* that discerns the impermanence, the woefulness and the unsubstantiality or Non-Self of mind-and-matter, the three characteristics of all conditioned phenomena. This is the culmination of stages of insight-development that come with earnest mental cultivation through mindfulness.

The understanding, the definite resolution, that conditioned existence made up of, or manifested by, mind-and-matter, a complex of the five *khandha* aggregates, is Knowledge of the Truth of *dukkha.* Once *dukkha* is understood, the cause of *dukkha* is also understood. When the source or origin of *dukkha* is understood, cessation of *dukkha* is automatically brought about. Now the

worldling becomes one of the lineage of the Ariyas, one who has successfully walked the Path of Eight Constituents.

The eradication of ignorance therefore must be the main objective in the effort for emancipation.

Ignorance can be eradicated only by the Path-Knowledge. In the threefold training within the framework of the Eight Constituents of the Ariya Path, the cultivation of *dāna* (giving) and *sīla* (morality) are the spadework for *paññā* (wisdom). *Vipassanā bhāvanā*, the development of insight-wisdom is the only way to attain Path-Knowledge. *Samathabhāvanā*, developing concentration (meditation for calm) is not in itself the practice of the Path, unless it is orientated towards the discernment of the three characteristics of conditioned phenomena.

59. The Illusions, the Products of Ignorance

Ignorance, rooted in *moha* (delusion, bewilderment), shrouds the world in darkness. The worldling's consciousness is concealed by ignorance, misinforming it, misguiding it. Every wrong action is due to the deluded mind. Ignorance makes the mind to have these three types of illusion or vipallāsa:

(1) illusion of perception,

(2) illusion of thought,

(3) illusion of views.

Illusion of perception is fourfold, namely:

It erroneously perceives:

(i) Impermanence as permanence;

(ii) Impurity or loathsomeness as purity or beauty;

(iii) Pain as pleasure;

(iv) Non-Self as Self.

The same four wrong ways of perceiving things holds true with regard to the other two illusions, i.e, those of thinking and viewing:a worldling thinks similarly in four wrong ways, and views things similarly in four wrong ways. Thus there are twelve ways in which a worldling labours under illusion on account of ignorance of the Truth.

60. Mind and Mental Concomitants

In this connection it would be useful to look into Mind, what Mind is.

" Mind is the forerunner of all *mental* phenomena," says the Buddha.(*Dhammapada*,v.1) Mental phenomena or mentality, *nāma*, is a general term for the four mental aggregates other than the Aggregate of Corporeality.

Mind by itself is merely the consciousness

of an object. But mind always has its inseparable associates called mental concomitants (*cetasikas*). It is these mental concomitants that arise together with and are dependent on mind, that influence the mind in various ways. There are fifty-two mental concomitants out of which *14* are immoral, 25 moral, and 13 common to both (out of which 7 are Universals, and 6 Particulars).Details may be found in the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha.*

Mental concomitants have four common characteristics:

(1) They arise simultaneously with mind.

(2) They perish simultaneously with mind.

(3) They have a common object.

(4) They have a common basis.

Mental concomitants are briefly introduced at this point merely to enable the reader to assess their various roles in influencing and directing the mind.

61. Mind In Its Natural State And How Consciousness Arises

Mind in its natural state is mere cognition; it cognizes sense-objects. ' Objects' means things that mind is conscious of. So we use ' consciousness' in describing the mind.

When the eye comes into contact with (i.e, sees) a visible object, eye-consciousness arises and so visible object is the sense-object of the eye.

When the ear comes into contact with (i.e, hears) a sound, ear-consciousness arises and so sound is the sense-object of the ear. Thus we have these six sense-objects:

1. Visible objects which are sense-objects of the eye;
2. Sounds which are sense-objects of the ear;
3. Smells which are sense-objects of the nose;
4. Tastes which are sense-objects of the tongue;
5. Tangible objects which are sense-objects of the body;
6. Mind-objects which are sense-objects of the mind.

In this way six kinds of consciousness arise in the respective sense-bases of the body (which here means inclusive of mind).

The six kinds of consciousness are always arising (and perishing) together with the various mental concomitants, giving rise to various states of mind which are termed 'thought' (*Citta)* to denote specific arisings of consciousness with the mental concomitants that arise together at a particular moment. There are in the *Abhidhamma* three classes of thought, viz:

1. Meritorious thought, *kusala citta*
2. Demeritorious thought, *akusala citta*

3. Neither - meritorious- nor - demeritorious thought, *abyākata citta.*

This is the First Schedule in the Abhidhamma, and all mental phenomena in all the spheres of existence as well as the Supramundane Sphere or *Nibbāna* are analysed and explained under those three classes.

Mind, as we have said above, just cognizes things. It is neutral in that it does not have likes and dislikes. Feelings of like or dislike, etc, are the function of the mental concomitants that arise with the mind on each particular occasion. For instance, a visible object that is cognized by the mind is said to be pleasant for him who sees it, depending on the nature of the object and the mental concomitants that arise in him.

For the common worldling, seeing something agreeable will be pleasing to him if he does not control his mind and as a result he will feel attachment to it. This is the influence of *lobha*, the mental concomitant called greed. The mind under the influence of greed is called the greedy mind. If that same person controls his mind and, viewing things as they really are, that this is not something pleasant, this is not to be hankered after, and that craving for it is not in his true interest, then the influence of *lobha* is driven away.

If one sees something disagreeable,and if

one does not control the mind, *dosa*, the mental concomitant called anger, arises and that mind, influenced by anger, is called the angry mind.

The same should be understood with regard to the rest of the five sense-bases, such as the ear, the nose, etc.

Not every sense-object arouses like or dislike: sometimes nothing will be felt about a certain sense-object. This may be due to lack of interest or curiosity, or due to lack of knowledge as to what sort of thing that sense-object is. This makes the mind wander away from the object or leave one doubting how to make up the mind. This state of mind is a bewildered mind, under the influence of *moha*, the mental concomitant called bewilderment.

62. Various Kinds of Consciousness

In the Abhidhamma, the following classes of consciousness are shown:

(a) By the Sphere of their arising:

Class of consciousness	By brief reckoning	By elaborate reckoning
(i) Sensnous Sphere	54	
(ii) Fine-material Sphere	15	
(iii) Non-material Sphere	12	
Mundane Consciousness	81	81
(iv) Supramundane Consciousness	8	40
Total	89	121

(b) By type

(i) Demeritorious	12	12
(ii)Meritorious	21	37
(iii)Resultant	36	52
(v)Non-cansative action	20	20
Total	89	121

The elaborate reckoning differs from the brief reckoning in respect of Supramundane consciousness.

Mental phenomena are very subtle. Their classification is far from easy to follow. Here it is shown as a bare outline with a view to getting acquainted with the nomenclature rather than the meaning of the various classes of consciousness. This bare knowledge, it is hoped, will be found useful in the field of practice.

63. Corporeality

Mind and mental concomitants are called *nāma*, mentality. A sentient being---from the highest brahmā to the lowest animal---is a compound of mentality and corporeality or mind and matter. One in search of truth needs to have a basic idea about mentality and corporeality as phenomena. This is because it is by contemplating their nature that one will gain insight into them that leads to Knowledge.

With regard to corporeality the first thing to know is that all materiality is a compound of the

four Primary Elements (*mahā bhūta*), viz,(1)The Element of extension (*pathavī dhātu*), (2) the Element of cohesion (*āpo dhātu*), (3) the Element of heat (*tejo dhātu*), and (4) the Element of motion (*vāyo dhātu*).Then there are also 24 kinds of Dependent Corporeality,(*Upādā rūpa*),so termed because they arise dependent on the four Primary Elements. Thus there are 28 kinds of corporeality in all, which are the sum of the four Primary Elements and 24 kinds of Dependent corporeality.

The *Pāḷi* term for Corporeality is *rūpa* so called because it has the nature of change and disintegration.Never for a moment is corporeality stable.

64. The Four Ultimate Realities (*paramattha)*

Puramattha means ultimate reality, something that really exists, something that is immutable. There are four Paramatthas, viz, mind, mental concomitants, matter and *Nibbāna*. These four embrace everything that is mundane and supramundane.

Mind has the immutable nature of cognizing objects. This nature never changes in any sentient being whether that may be a brahmā, or a deva, or man or an animal. A brahmā's mind cognizes objects, and so does the mind of an animal---- although the power of cognition differs between them.

Mental concomitants are immutable. Greed, for eample, is of the same nature whether it arises in a *deva*, or a man or an animal.

Matter is immutable in the sense not of indestructibilty but of unchangeableness in its intrinsic nature, Matter is changeable and destructible in a conceptual sense. In the ultimate sense it is immutable. For example, a pot made of earth is called an earthen pot. If we break up the pot there is no pot there, only bits of earth remain. Earth has its intrinsic nature of hardness. This nature never changes whether earth is in the form of a pot or as fragments of a broken pot.

Now, in that example 'pot' is a name, a concept that has got its name 'pot' by popular usage. It is a conceptual truth to call a pot. But if we say the pot really exists, it is not true in the ultimate sense because pot is not an immutable thing, (*paramattha*). A pot exists only in our concept, not in reality. Name and concept, *paññatti,* are indispensable in communicating. Without using *paññatti*, even the All-knowing Buddha would not be able to expound the ultimate truth, *paramattha*. For instance, when we speak of 'man' the word'man' is mere concept that goes by the name'man' a *sadda paññatti*.The physical body which we refer to as 'man' is the meaning (*attha paññatti*) of that word. But then there is no man in the ultimate analysis, for what we conventionally call a man is in truth and reality a compound

of the four Primary Elements only.

Nibbāna, although classified as a *nāma paramattha,* is supramundane, beyond the world. Unlike mind and mental concomitants, it is unconditioned, free of Craving, and is unique. Its peculiar character is peace. Peace means it is past all strife, untouched by the eleven fires of the restless striving individual called a being. No *khandhā* aggregates exist in *Nibbāna,* that is, on attaining *Nibbāna* no fresh aggregates will ever arise. That means release, emancipation, liberation from *dukkha.* That is why *Nibbāna* is the Ultimate Peace.

Ultimate reality is difficult to perceive since it is not conventional truth. It is not understood by intellection alone but perceivable only by insight. Of the four ultimate realities, *Nibbāna* being the supramundane *dhamma,* is beyond the pale of worldlings. It can only be conjectured by learned worldlings.There are numerous writings on Nibbāna which are exegetically significant but even if one could understand them one is still not much nearer *Nibbāna.* For only through the practice of the Ariya Path of Eight Constituents and on attaining *magga-phala,* can *Nibbāna* be understood.

65. The Key That Is *Vijja nāṇa*

We have said earlier that attainment of Path-knowledge, *magga-ñaṇa,* alone dispels the erroneous belief in an illusory Self, (*Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*).

An ordinary man cannot perceive that the mind-matter complex composed of the five aggregates is not one's own self; he cannot comprehend that the so-called Self, instead of being one's own and under one's control, is actually one's master because one has to attend to its needs at all times. Think of the need to eat, to sleep, to answer the calls of nature, to clean it quite often, to care for its indispositions, and so on. In doctrinal parlance this shortcoming common to all worldlings is lack of comprehending *anatta*--'*not-atta.*' This lack of comprehension persists because we fail to understand the nature of *dukkha,* the woefulness of conditioned existence. *Dukkha* is not understood because we fail to be aware of the impermanence of the composite of five aggregates, its changeability from moment to moment, which in doctrinal parlance is termed *anicca.*

66. Not-self Is Expounded By Way Of Impermanence And Woefulness.

In as much as morality and concentration prepare the way for knowledge, which is the principal objective, so also impermanence and woefulness are expounded by the Buddha to help understand not-Self. In his discourses the Buddha first lets the hearer settled about the fact of impermanence, or that of woefulness of existence,or both, until light dawns on him of the truth of not-Self, i.e, the unsubstantiality, the hollowness, the falsity of the five aggregates. The discourses usu-

ally are in the form of dialogues. To take an example:

In his discource to the Venerable Rāhula, his own son, the Buddha asks: " What do you think of this, Rāhula: is the eye permanent or impermanent? "

" Impermanent, Venerable Sir."

" That which is impermanent, is it painful or pleasant?".

" Painful, Venerable Sir."

" Is it proper to consider that which is impermanent, painful and subject to change as, 'this is I'; 'this is mine'; ' this is my Self '?"

" No, indeed, Venerable Sir."

This method of questions and answers covering the twelve sense-bases finally brings home the truth of *anatta,* not-Self. on this particular occasion. Rūhula who was already an *Ariya*, won arahatship. And a great number of *devas* who listened to the dialogue also got enlightenment such that 'whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of cessation', and attained Stream-Entry Knowledge. (*sotāpatti magga)*

(- *Saḷāyatana Saṁyutta, Rāhulovāda Sutt*a)

67. Thirth-seven Constituents of Enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya dhammā*)

Anyone aspiring to enlightenment needs a systematic development of the higher qualities conducive to attainment of Supramundane Knowledge. There are thirty-seven doctrines (principles) taught by the Buddha in his last discourse where he says:

" .... If you learn, pursue, cultivate and continually practise these doctrines, (this Teaching relating to) the Noble Practice of Purity will endure long–

" These doctrines are:

(a) the Four Methods of Steadfast Mindfulness

(b) the Four Supreme Efforts

(c) the Four Bases of Psychic Powers

(d) the Five Faculties

(e) the Five Powers

(f) the Seven Factors of Enlightenment

(g) the Ariya Path of Eight Constituents"

(*-Dīgha Nikāya, Mahā Vagga, Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*)

For the practice of the Ariya Path of Eight Constituents the detailed system of development

taught under the above seven groupings tend to produce a mental framework that makes enlightenment possible. As such, these doctrines make up a comprehensive course of spiritual development. Hence they are referred to as the essential features of the piṭāka. They can be reduced to the seven Stages of Purification which in turn boil down to the Threefold Training- Higher Morality. Higher Consciousness, Higher Knowledge or Wisdom (another expression for *sīla, samādhi, paññā.*)

As a background to *vipassanā* practice, the thirty-seven doctrines should be well acquainted with. A brief exposition is given here.

(a) The Four Methods of Steadfast Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna*)

This group consists of a detailed account of how Right Mindfulness, a factor in the Ariya Path of Eight Constituents, may be achieved by four methods:

(i) Contemplation on the Body: Under this heading there are six kinds of exercises: mindfulness in outbreathing and inbreathing, mindfulness in the four postures, mindfulness with clear comprehension, contemplation on the loathsomeness of the body, contemplation on the (four) material elements, and the nine cemetry contemplations. These various exercises lead to a clear comprehension of the true nature of the body–that it is impermanent, subject to change, full of suffering, unsubstantial, and loathsome.

(ii) Contemplation on the Sensations: - The yogī trains his mind to be constantly aware of all sensations that arise in him, be they pleasant, painful, or indifferent. This method leads to the understanding of the ephemeral nature of sensation, and that pleasant sensation is not to be clung to.

(iii) Contemplation on the Mind: One watches the state of consciousness as it arises, and remains vigilant about its shifting and its moods. This exercise enables the yogi to understand that mind is not something that lasts, but is indeed ephemeral.

(iv) Contemplation on the Mind-objects: The thoughts that come to the mind are made aware of. This leads to the underdending that there exists no abiding entity in mind- and- matter.

(b) The Four Supreme Efforts mean relentless effort in the practice of insight-development. It is tenacity of purpose.

(c) The Four Bases of Psychic Power: These four bases are the prior cause of success that is the potential for power. The four are:

(i) the prior cause consisting in zeal to win Magga-insight;

(ii) the prior cause consisting in energy;

(iii) the prior cause consisting in purity of consciousness;

(iv) the prior cause consisting in investigative knowledge, i.e, discerning the danger of the four miserable existences and the mental capacity to scrutinize abstruse things.

One who has fulfilled any one of these four prerequisites to success can win Path-knowledge if he has sufficing condition for it, or he can do so in the *deva* world in the next existence.(See Ledi Sayadaw: Bodhipakkhiya Dīpanī)

If none of those four prior conditions is already present in a person it would be well if he saw someone who can kindle the necessary interest. These days casette tapes are very handy for learning the dhamma without much trouble.This big advantage of the electronic age should be put to good use.

(d) The Five Faculties: -

(i) Control over one's conviction is so developed that in taking up the meditative exercise one is very willing and happy to do it and does not feel like undergoing some drudgery. The conviction is evident in a Stream-Enterer who has these attributes:

- unshakable faith in the Buddha,
- unshakable faith in the Dhamma,
- unshakable faith in the Saṅgha,
- unswerving conviction in the ariya pre-

cepts i.e, the five moral precepts, so that he is prepared to give up his life rather than give up his morality.

(ii) Control over one's endeavour, building up the four Supreme Efforts mentioned above.

(iii) Control over awareness of things such as inbreaths and outbreaths, being mindful all the time, keeping the mind fixed on the object of cotemplation.

(iv) Control over concentration, having overcome the hindrances that arise in the mind. This is clearly established when *jhāna* is achieved.

(v) Control over one's knowledge that is achieved when the Ariya Truth is realized.

(e) The Five Powers : -

(i) The Power of Conviction, (ii) the Power of Endeavour, (iii) the Power of Mindfulness, (iv) the Power of Concentration, (v) the Power of Wisdom or Knowledge. They are called Power because they can overcome the opposing forces such as the hindrinces, etc.

(f) The Seven Factors of Enlightenment:-

(i)Mindfulness : the mental concomitant *sati* that is present in the Steadfast Minfulness , the controlling faculty of awareness, the Power of Mindfulness, and Right-Mindfulness as a Path-factor.

(ii) **Investigation of conditioned phenomena:** the mental concomitant called *pannā* which is present in the psychic potency of Investigative Knowledge, the Controlling faculty of Knowledge, the Power of Wisdom, and Right View as a Path-factor. The ten stages of Insight-Knowledge that can analyse and discern the nature of mental and physical phenomena also is called Investigation as a Factor of Enlightenment.

(iii) **Endeavour:** the mental concomitant vīriya which is present in the Supreme Efforts, the psychic potency of Energy, the controlling faculty of Endeavour, the Power of Endeavour, and Right Effort as a Path-factor.

(iv) **Delightful satisfaction:** After mindfulness has been established, insight begins to develop. This causes delightful satisfaction.

(v) **Tranquillity:** When the Yogī has delightful satisfaction he is free from physical and mental discomfort.

(vi) **Concentration:** The controlling faculty of Concentration, the Power of Concentration, and Right Concentration as a Path-factor are all representative of this factor. In meditation for calm (*samatha*) Purification of Mind is called the Enlightenment factor of Concentration. In concentration for insight-meditation (*vipassanā*) Purification of Knowledge is called the Enlightenment factor of Concentration.

(vii) Equanimity: In training the mind by various methods of meditation, the yogī finds that he has to make adjustments in his effort. For instance, if he is overzealous he becomes fidgety and cannot achieve concentration. When mental equipoise is achieved through mindfulness and right contemplation, there is no botheration about balance. This state of mind, which is accompanied by the mental concomitant *tatramajjhattatā*,is called Equanimity.

(g) The Ariya Path of Eight Constituents .

This has been explained in Section 52 above.

The thirty-seven Constituents of Enlightenment are virtually the Buddha's legacy to the world because deliverance from the woeful round of existences can be attained by following these doctrines. On analysing these thirty-seven doctrines they are found to be woven around fourteen wholesome mental concomitants only, from *chanda* (zeal)to *ekaggatā*(one-pointedness of mind).

68. The Rare Opportunity Of Being Born As A Human Being

On one occasion the Buddha, putting a pinch of dust on his finger-nail, asked the bhikkhus;

" Bhikkhus, which is greater–this pinch of dust on my finge-nail, or the great earth?"

" Venerable Sir, the dust on th finger-nail

is infinitesimal; the great earth is far greater beyond comparison."

" Similarly, bhikkhus, said the Buddha," "you should remember that of those beings who pass away from the fortunate existences, the number of those who are reborn in the fortunate existences, is like this pinch of dust on my fingernail whereas the number of those who fall to the miserable states is like the great earth."

The *Nakhasikkha Sutta* should be a constant reminder to us about the rare opportunity we are now enjoying by being born as human beings. It is only due to excellent *kamma* that we are reborn here in the human plane, one of the fortunate existences. Once we leave the human world the chances of another rebirth in the fortunate existences are very very remote, while the chances of going down to the realms of misery are many indeed. This thought should occur to us often, for it will stirr up in us a sense or emotional awakening, a sense of earnestness to make the best use of the rare opportunity of being born in the human world.

This truth will be more evident if we think in terms of the Abhidhamma. Take an honest assessment of yourself. What sort of thoughts enter your mind—good thoughts or bad thoughts, i,e. meritorious thoughts or demeritorious thoughts —during your waking hours every day? Here, remember that all thoughts that are not meritorious

are demeritorious. What you might, from an ethical view, consider is a harmless thought, unless it tends to merit, is classed demeritorious. So a bewildered state of mind, *moha*, is counted as demeritorious. Each and every thought-moment (*cittakkhaṇa*) in which a meritorious thought arises results in a fortunate rebirth (at any time in the future):each and every thought-moment in which a demeritorious thought arises results in an unfortunate rebirth. A thought-moment occurs astonishingly fast: in a flip of your fingers, or in a flash of lighting or in a winking of your eyes, over a million million thought-moments come and go.

As an empirical study, just observe an ant-hill and imagine the number of ants in it. Consider the innumerable ant-hills in your locality, in your country,in the whole world. Think of the microbe world, see under a microscope how fast they reproduce themselves. Indeed, it is a sobering experience to reflect on the stupendous rate of growth of beings in the animal world alone which is only one of the four miserable states of *āpāya.* In the *niraya* world, the world of continuous suffering, the congestion is compared to containers in which needles are closely packed.

The stark fact stands out that the regular abode of beings is the world of the miserable states from where once in a blue moon–to use a rather odd idiom–an insignificant few rise up to the fortunate planes of existence, only to return to

the *apāya*, just as a stone thrown upwards remains as high and as long as the force it sends up lasts, and then drops on the ground. The kammic force that sends a being to the fortunate destinations may last aeons but at the end of that force he is likely to get back to his regular abode of the *apāya*.

When one falls to the miserable existences the chance of escape are slim indeed because only if the dying thought of a being is meritorious, can that being reappear in a fortunate destiny. In the miserable existences, under continuous suffering the dying thought-moment for beings is usually associated with anger.

69. The Rare Occasion of Coming Under a Buddha's Teaching

If to be born as a man is a rare occasion; to come under a Buddha's Teaching in still a rarer occasion. The rarity is due to two reasons:

(1) The appearance of a Buddha is in itself a very rare occasion;

(2) During the time of a Buddha that has arisen, there is a very rare chance for a being to listen to the teaching of the Buddha. Let us consider these two reasons.

(1) How the appearance of a Buddha is a very rare occasion

A Buddha arises in the world after immense intervals reckoned in aeons or *kappas*. The duration of a *kappa* is so great that it can only be imagined rather than calculated. To help the imagination, this illustration is given in the Scriptures: Let us say there is a solid piece of hard rock which is one *yojanā* in length, breadth and height. (A *yojanā* is a linear measure variously put as 7 ½ miles or 12 ½ miles). Once in every thousand years a man would rub this rock with a piece of cotton-wool. Sooner would the rock become worn away by this rubbing than would the one kappa come to an end.Taking that blood-curdling time-measure as one unit, after a lapse of four incalculable units plus a hundred thousand *kappas,* a Buddha may perhaps arise. The term incalculable unit, ' *asaṅkheyya*, is a Paḷi term which represents a number that is beyond counting because no known concept or calculation can describe its value even based on the scale of one crore (10 million) as equal to 1 (10,000,000=1). A great many kappas may pass without a single Buddha arising. During the *kappa* when a Buddha does arise the Teaching of that Buddha may last for a limited time only. For example, if a Buddha were to arise in a kappa where the human life span is a hundred thousand years, the Teaching of the Buddha may last only two to three hundred thousand years, after which even the word

'Buddha' is lost again to the world. Therefore even when a Buddha arisess in a certain *kappa*, the duration of the Budddh's Teaching, as compared to the duration of that *kappa*, lasts only for a flash of lightning. This is how the appearance of a Buddha is in itself a very rare occasion.

(2) How the opportunity to hear the Dhama is a very rare occasion

The Buddha arises only in this world system (*cakkavāḷa*) out of an infinite number of world-systems. Therefore, except for a Bodhisatta who has received the prophecy about his future Buddha-hood, it is a rare chance to be reborn in this world-system so as to be able to meet with the Buddha. Then those devas and brahmās who belong to the ten thousand world-systems surrounding this world-system also can come and listen to the Buddha's sermons because the Buddha's Sphere extends only to ten thousand world systems. World systems that lie beyond the Buddha's Sphere have no chance to listen to the Dhamma. As for human beings, those that live in the Southern Island where the Rose Apple Tree is its symbol, may meet with the Buddha while those belonging to the other three Islands do not have a chance to hear the Dhamma.

There are also eight disadvantageous situation which put one outside the presence of the Buddha even though one may happen to be living during the prevalence of the Teaching. See para 23 above.

The utter loss or two great men who missed meeting the Buddha may serve as eye-openers: Āḷāra the ascetic teacher under whom the Buddha-to-be received instructions,predeceased the Buddha's enlightenment by just seven days. Udaka, another ascetic teacher of similar relationship to the Buddha, predeceased the Buddha's enlightenment by just twelve hours.

70. Put This Human Existence To Your Real Benefit

Considering the golden opportunity of coming under the Buddha's Teaching,and considering that as a lay follower of the Buddha, possessed of four (out of the five) *dullabhas* or very rare opportunities---viz:

1. Living in the times when the Teaching is extant;

2. Being born as a human being;

3. Having conviction in the Triple Gem and kamma;

4. Having the opportunity to listen to the Good Doctrine---it behoves one to put this most fortunate situation to one's real benefit.

71. The Beginning Of The Way To Wisdom

The first step is of course the resolve to make the most or the present golden opprtunity.

Once the goal is defined as 'winning Stream-

Entry at the least here and now' one has to fulfill the following eleven conditions:

1. Getting established in the eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth;

2. Controlling the faculties which is morality concerning Restraint of the Faculties;

3. Eating moderately;

4. Never sleeping in the day time, and sleeping only for three to four hours a day;

5. Possessing *seven* moral qualities through self-discipline, *viz.* Conviction, mindfulness, shame to do evil, dread to do evil, learning, diligence, and wisdom.

72. Physical Fitness Necessary For Meditation

There are five conditions that make one suited to the self-appointed task of meditation. They are:

1. Conviction about the benefits that Triple Gem can bestow on you;
2. Physical fitness;
3. An upright attitude;
4. Earnest effort;
5. Having the innate wisdom to comprehend the rise and fall of mind-and-matter.

The second condition, physical fitness, is essential because the saying, " A sound mind in a sound body," is particularly true for ardent effort in meditation. This should remind one that procrastination till an advanced, infirm age is against one's true interest. One must be able to tear away from persons and things dear to oneself.

The practice of the Dhamma has benign effects. A notable benefit of meditating is that one gains detachment regarding oneself so that one is less concerned about death. This is because as one makes some headway, the moment-to-moment changes of mental and physical phenomena come to be noticed and the meaning of death in the perishing of phenomena is understood. In the ultimate sense, this arising and perishing of phenomena is what is commonly called life and death. There is no life or death in reality apart from rise and fall of phenomena taking place due to causes. The mind that has perceived real death is not frightened by the conventional death when the last breath becomes imminent. The pratictioner of the Dhamma, thus fortified with mindfulness and right contemplation, may win Stream-Entry here and now, or if not so, he is sure to win it in the next existence either as a human being or as a *deva.*

73. Insight Meditation

The practice of *vipassanā*, Insight-meditation becomes the vogue in the postwar period. The methods are as taught by the great Sayadaws who

have practised the Dhamma according to the text (i.e, Paḷi) in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.* The methods shown by the late Ledi Sayadaw and the late Monhyin Sayadaw (in the pre-war period) also are followed in a number of meditation centres across the country.

Insight-meditation is a system of mental development by training the mind to be aware of the nature of the mental and physical phenomena within oneself, and thereby gain insight into it. Mental and physical phenomena are the basic elements in the five Aggregates called this body in common parlance. ('Body' is also used in the doctrinal sense with its own meanings.) That being so, when the meditator can come up to a stage where the two complementary phenomena are differentiated he has gained the initial insight. To get to this basic knowledge, the meditator has first to attain purity of morality by observing the Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the eighth. The next stage, Purification of Mind, is achieved through several methods, which, according to Ledi Sayadaw, may be one of these five techniques of mastering Contemplation of the Body, *viz:*

1. Inbreathing and outbreathing:If one can keep the mind fixed on the inhaling breath and exhaling breath in all the four postures--- i.e, walking, sitting, standing, or lying down---he is said to have mastered contemplation of the body.

2. Mindfulness and Right Contemplation: Keeping

the mind aware of every movement of the body in its four postures.

3. Contemplating the thirty-two parts (or aspects) of the body: The body is made up of thirty-two parts which are grouped into six divisions for meditation practice. The first division consists of: hair, body-hair, nails, teeth and skin, and is called ' the Five ending with skin', *taca pañcaka.* These five parts of the body are repeatedly recited in the forward order and the reverse order and reflected upon one by one so that the mind becomes fully aware of the nature of the body which is truly loathsome. If the meditaor can fix the mind on these five parts in all the four portures he is said to have mastered contemplation of the body.

4. Contemplating the bone in the body: The head may well be the object of contemplation. If the meditator can fix the mind on the bone of the head he is said to have mastered contemplation of the body.

5. Differentiating Mind and Matter: If one can keep the mind constantly aware of the nature of the mind as different from that of the physical body this amounts to mastery of contemplation of the body.

All of those methods are the ways to gain just the initial insight. The concentration is still weak and transitory at this stage. The yogi must continue with diligence for gradual development

until Concentration is well established leading to Magga- insight. The practice of *vipassanā* is based upon the Seven Purities (*Visuddhi*) out of which we have so far covered the first two. The remaining five mark the gradual progress culminating in final release or attainment of *Nibbanā* through *arahatta magga* and *phala* (arahatship). Since our primary concern here is to put one on the track of *vipassanā*, we shall have to content ourselves with a mere mention of the five *Visuddhis*, viz:-

3. Purity of View

4. Purity by overcoming doubts

5. Purity of knowledge and Vision of What is and What is not the Path

6. Purity of Knowledge and Vision of the Practice

7. Purity of Knowledge and Vision (of the Ariya Path)

Purity of Mind needs to be established because when the mind is pure without the hindrances (*nīvāraṇas*) and firm without shifting from object to object it is ready to perceive things as they really are, shorn of old concepts and memories. Mindfulness is the key to such clear perception. The fixity of the mind on the object of meditation makes the mind alert and aware of every touch of in-breath or out-breath.

Then the power of mindfulness enables the mind to know as the six sense-objects come into contact at the six sense-bases. After sitting for a while the body starts aching or stiffening. The mindful yogī keeps the awareness of the sensation whether it is painful or easy or neutral. The awareness of any kind of sensation must be just awareness: it is not to be thought of as a personal feeling, not in any way connected with the ego such as "my pain", "my ease" etc. Sooner or later, the sensation is bound to go away. Then the yogi, if vigilant, knows by direct experience that the sensation that has arisen has vanished. The transitory nature of sensation is thus perceived as an objective fact. The succession of changes in the physical phenomena, their rise and fall, is made aware by mindfulness; the same is also noticed in the mental phenomena such as sensation. Apart from physical and mental phenomena that are constantly in a state of flux there is no real entity that is of any lasting nature. Those arisings and fallings, those changes, take place not as one's will at all, but by themselves quite beyond one's control " This state of affairs is woeful indeed ",– this truth flashes into the concentrated, firm and perceptible mind. One becomes weary of the transitory and woeful existence. The illusion of 'I' 'Mine', 'My' 'my Self' disappears altogether. This is Path-knowledge, *magga ñaṇa* which is the culmination of Insight (*vipassanā*), attained through the understanding of impermanence (*anicca*) of conditioned phenomena of mentality and materiality,

which at once makes one understand *dukkha* and *anatta* simultaneously.

Now there is nothing to cling to as ' my Self'. Previously one had the greatest attachment to this illusoy Self and nurtured it, committed all sorts of foolish acts, concerned oneself with endless triviality, all for the sake of 'my Self '. When the deluded view of the five aggregates is cast off one becomes an ariya, a *sotāpanna puggala*, 'One who has entered the Stream'.

74. The Great Advanages of Stream-Entry Knowledge

Once Path- knowledge has arisen, an ariya is able, by his Reviewing Knowledge *(paccavekkaṇa ñāṇa)*, to make a true assessment of himself. He knows what defilements he has rooted out and what defilements remain. The most important defilements he has abandoned are: *sakkāya diṭṭhi,* the illusion of 'I', uncertainty, and reliance on wrong religious rites and practices outside the Ariya Path. As he is well established in the Ariya Path, he is unable to commit evil, and as the result he is no more destined to the miserable states of *apāya.* His conviction in the Triple Gem is unshakable. His morality is unassailable. He can dwell in the bliss of *Nibbāna* by entering into *Phala sammāpatti*, i.e, Fruition - consciousness (*phala ñāṇa.*) This Fruition consciousness which arises immediately after the arising of *Magga ñāṇa*, is the most valued asset a

Stream-Enterer cherishes. Having first-hand knowledge of the supreme bliss of *Nibbāna,* he needs no teacher in any later existence to guide him: his Path-knowledge enables him to progress towards the journey's end, *arahattaphala*, which he reaches within seven further existences in the fortunate destinations.

75. How the Stream- Enterer Gradually Wins Liberation:

The Once-Returner or *Sakadāgāmi puggala*

The arising of *ariya magga* comes when the yogi has reached spiritual development that can discern the three characteristics–the impermanence, the woefulness, the impersonality (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*)– of the five aggregates which are nothing but conditioned phenomena. After winning the First Path-Knowledge, the Stream-Enterer continues reflecting on the three characteristics of any one of the conditioned phenomena and in due course attains the Second Path-Knowledge and its Fruition, *sakadāgāmi magga phala.* This knowledge further causes diminution of the defilements that have not been totally discarded. As the result of the purity he has attained, he will not be reborn in the human world for more than once and hence is called a *sakadāgtāmi puggala.* a' Once- Returner'.

The Never- Returner or Anāgāmi puggala

The *Sakadāgāmī* then proceeds with the selfsame reflection on the three characteristics and

not soon after attains the Third Path-Knowledge and its Fruition, *anāgāmi magga phala.* This knowledge roots out sensual attachment and ill will with the result that he will never be reborn in the Sensuous Sphere, i.e, the *deva* world and the human world. So he is called an *anāgāmi puggala*, a ' Never-Returner'.

Arahatta magga phala

The *Anāgāmī* carries on with the usual practice and in time attains the Fourth and Final Path-Knowledge, *arahatta magga phala.* This may be in the course of the same sitting that he won the Third Path-Knowledge or some time later. He has become one of the arahats, the Pure Ones, because he is rid of all the defilements. There is no more rebirth for him, he has won release from *saṁsāra*, the cycle of births and deaths with every form of sorrow and pain in between. He now has achieved what is his own true welfare. His purity deserves homage in all the three worlds of *brahmās*, *devas* and men.

> It is worth noting that the Ariya Path of Eight- Constiuents is the only way to liberation. The First Path-Knowledge is attained by 'the eradication of defilements through seeing Nibbāna' for the first time. The higher three Path-Knowledges are attained by' the eradication of defilements through cultivation (of the practice of the Path)'.

Appendix I

EXTRACTS FROM EXHORTATIONS OF SOME GREAT MEDITATION TEACHERS

The Late Mahagandayon Sayadaw, Sagaing Hills

" Just as you take your meals regularly, so also should you take up meditation exercise regularly with diligence. Sometimes you find yourself taking your meal without appetite and yet in the course of eating the appetite may come. Similarly with meditation: in spite of your zeal concentration may evade you; however, even if you do your exercise without much zeal but merely as a routine, concentration may be achieved."

The Late Mogok Sayadaw

" Don't think too little of yourselves: if you do you can be wrong. Don't keep doubting whether you have the three good roots (*tihetuka*) i.e, non-greed, non-hatred, non-bewilderment by birth to qualify for enlightenment here and now; or whether you had sufficient previous merit. Your task is to practise the Dhamma. When you discern rise and fall of phenomena you can say for sure that you were born with the three good roots. Consider yourself a great man if you discern rise and fall.

" *Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi. Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi. Saṁghṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi*", you are saying. But only if you really follow the

Teaching will you find refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṁgha. Your taking refuge will not save you unless you practise the Dhamma. If you have real conviction do the practice. Is that clear to you?

" There are persons who cling to their wealth and station and are loath to part with them, as though these things were of any great value. Mundane wellbeing is (from the standpoint of *Nibbāna*) as mean as crumbs or pickled tea left over from a banquet, or a stump of cigar that have been thrown away.

" They who do not practise the Path are those who are willing to pay Death's toll in the form of their bodies. Only foolish ones do that; a wise one does not. "

The Late Ledi Sayadaw

" Existences of beings in saṁsaric rounds are mostly marked by wrong views and evil-doing. A day's evil actions are sufficient to send the perpetrator to a hundred or a thousand existences in the miserable existences of *apāya*.

" *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is like a big flame. The store of demeritoriousness in the hearts of beings carried over countless past existences is like the light that is glowing from that big flame. So long as the big flame does not die out the light cannot be put out. For as long as the eye is considered

as ' I am the eye'; for as long as the mental phenomena arising due to eye are taken as 'I see this or that', there will be a myriad of evil *kamma* bound up in an individual that will have evil consequences in later existences. It is just like the potential of fire that is inherent in a box of matches. That being so, a worldling in the human world is not a cool man but a man who is burning within him; a worldling in the *deva* world is not a cool *deva* but a *deva* who is burning within him; a worldling in the *brahmā* world is not a cool *brahmā* but a *brahmā* who is burning within him. This is because inside every worldling there are a myriad of potential fires.

" ... The Scriptures say that a yogī must have Purity of Morality to practise for Purity of Mind; and that there must be Purity of Mind for proceeding towards Purity or View; and that only when there is Purity of View, one should strive for Purity by Overcoming Doubt; and that only when there is purity by Overcoming Doubt one should contemplate on the three characteristics. This is the practice laid down for those who aim at winning *magga phala* here and now. For those who cannot afford to set their aim so high but would be content to acquire the practice for fulfilling the requisite merit for enlightenment in future existences, they have to make a start somehow. As such, it is not proper for one to say that without having Purity of Morality you should not take up meditation for Purity of Mind, even to

gain concentration for calm. It is not proper to say to a person who lives on hunting or fishing not to meditate to achieve concentration for calm. Anyone who says so is putting his chances of winning Path-Knowledge in jeopardy.

" Remembrance of the Triple Gem is a form of meditating for calm; contemplation of the three characteristics is the practice for knowledge".

APPENDIX II

Ledi Sayadaw's Exhortation in verse beginning with the words: " So-peint-ma-nhyar "

Now, pay attention to what I am going to say: I am not going to mince my words. You have been born as a man or a deva during the periods when the Teaching of the Buddhas, as innumerable as the grains of sand on the banks of River Ganges, prevail. And yet you have lived a forgeftul life, never giving a thought to shedding your ignorance so that your spiritual assets are meagre indeed. You have led an aimless life all along. Right to this moment you have been muddling along.

Indeed, you are being shrouded in a darkness that greatly surpasses the pitch darkness that prevails at midnight on the night of the new moon in the heart of a thick forest where dark rain clouds envelop the eight directions and not a flash of lightning occurs.

Now you are very fortunate to be born in the human world when the Buddha's Teching is extant, and still you do not leave your old, carefree habits and happily go the stupid way as everybody else. The present world where you find yourself is a place full of woes, devoid of any real happiness.

Under the spell of the Devil of Craving, you foolishly think that your body belongs to you. The fact is that it is the victual for Death. This apparent person you assume as your ' self ' is a mere compounded thing of mind and matter; it is not under your control. But as you are sunk in superficiality, as most people are, you have never gained insight into this reality. Thus you have wasted a great number of days.

The sense-bases, together with their respective sense-objects, are only fuel for the fire of Death. Even while you are tending to your body with much care, it will have to be yielded without a murmur when Death the Great Robber with his powerful forces claim you. Then a pile of ashes will be all that remains of you. And, beware, that day is drawing near.

If you were to die after shilly-shallying, having acquired scant merit, you will go the wonted way to the (four) miserable states. Untold suffering will be your lot. Haggard, tearful and intensely miserable, you will have to spend endless existences in the nether realms of continuous suffering. Moreover, there is little chance of escape from the miserable existences; denizens of niraya stay here as if they had struck roots there. Now, mark you, this is the destiny that awaits foolish persons like you!

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U TIN U retired from public service and volunteered for the piṭaka translation project launched by the Myanmar Piṭaka Association in 1981 first as a translator and later as an editor. In 1991 the MPA was voluntarily wound up and its Editorial Committee was renamed the Honorary Editorial Committee of the Department for the Promotion and Propagation of the Sāsanā (D.P.P.S.) U Tin U as an editor is a member of the Committee. He was awarded the title of *Mahsāddhammajotikadhaja* in 1998 by the State in recognition of his distinguished contribution to the cause of spreading the Buddha's Teaching.

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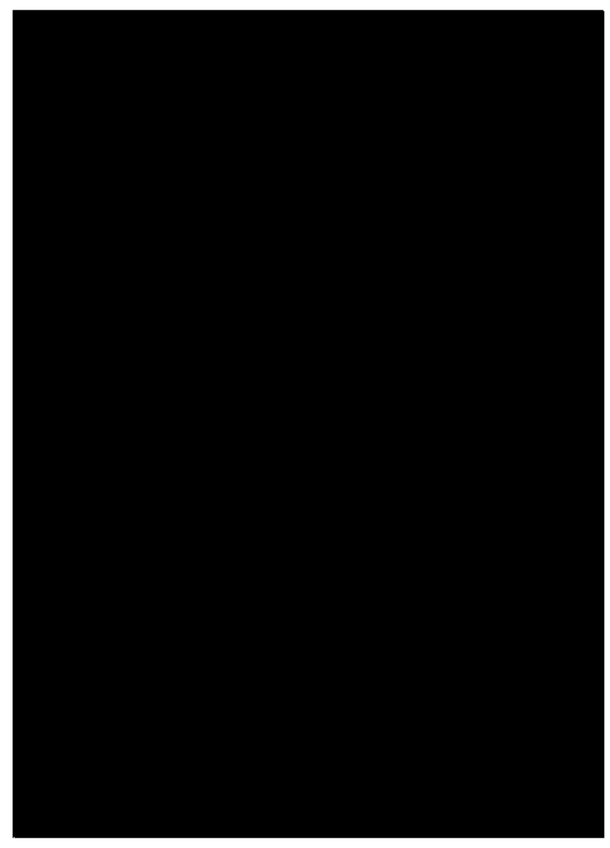

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" The practice of the Dhamma has benign effects. A notable benefit of meditating is that one gains detachment regarding oneself so that one is less concerned about death. This is because as one makes some headway, the moment-to-moment changes of mental and physical phenomena come to be noticed and the meaning of death in the perishing of phenomena is understood. In the ultimate sense, this arising and perishing of phenomena is what is commonly called life and death. There is no life or death in reality apart from rise and fall of ph ena taking place due to caus mind that has perceived rea is not frightened by the conventional death when the last breath becomes imminent....."