

In Commemoration of Sayādaw's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday

# BUDDHA DESANĀ

AND

## ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

THE MOST VENERABLE KABA-AYE SAYĀDAW

BHADDANTA PAÑÑĀ DĪPA

AGGAMAHA SADDHAMMA JOTIKA DHAJA

Patron Sayādaw of 1. The Myanmar Naing-Ngan  
Aravāda Buddhist Mission, 2. The Mingalā Byuhā  
Society and 3. The Mahā Bodhi Society, Myanmar.]

8 FEBRUARY 1998



15372

In Commemoration of Sayādaw's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**BUDDHA DESANĀ**

**AND**

**ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES  
FOR ENLIGHTENMENT**

THE MOST VENERABLE KABA-AYE SAYĀDAW

**BHADDANTA PAÑÑĀ DĪPA**

AGGAMAHAḤ SADDHAMMA JOTIKA DHAJA

[Patron Sayādaw of 1. The Myanmar Naing-Ngan  
Theravāda Buddhist Mission, 2. The Mingalā Byuhā  
Society and 3. The Mahā Bodhi Society, Myanmar.]

8 FEBRUARY 1998

# **Buddha Desanā and Essential Principles for Enlightenment**

First published - February 1998

Circulation - 2,000 copies

Manuscript permission No. - 20/98 (2)

Cover permission No. - 30/98 (2)

Price - Dhamma Dāna

Publisher - U Aung Gyi

Shwe Parabaik Sarpay

5, Tintsann Road, Goodliff,  
Bahan, Yangon.

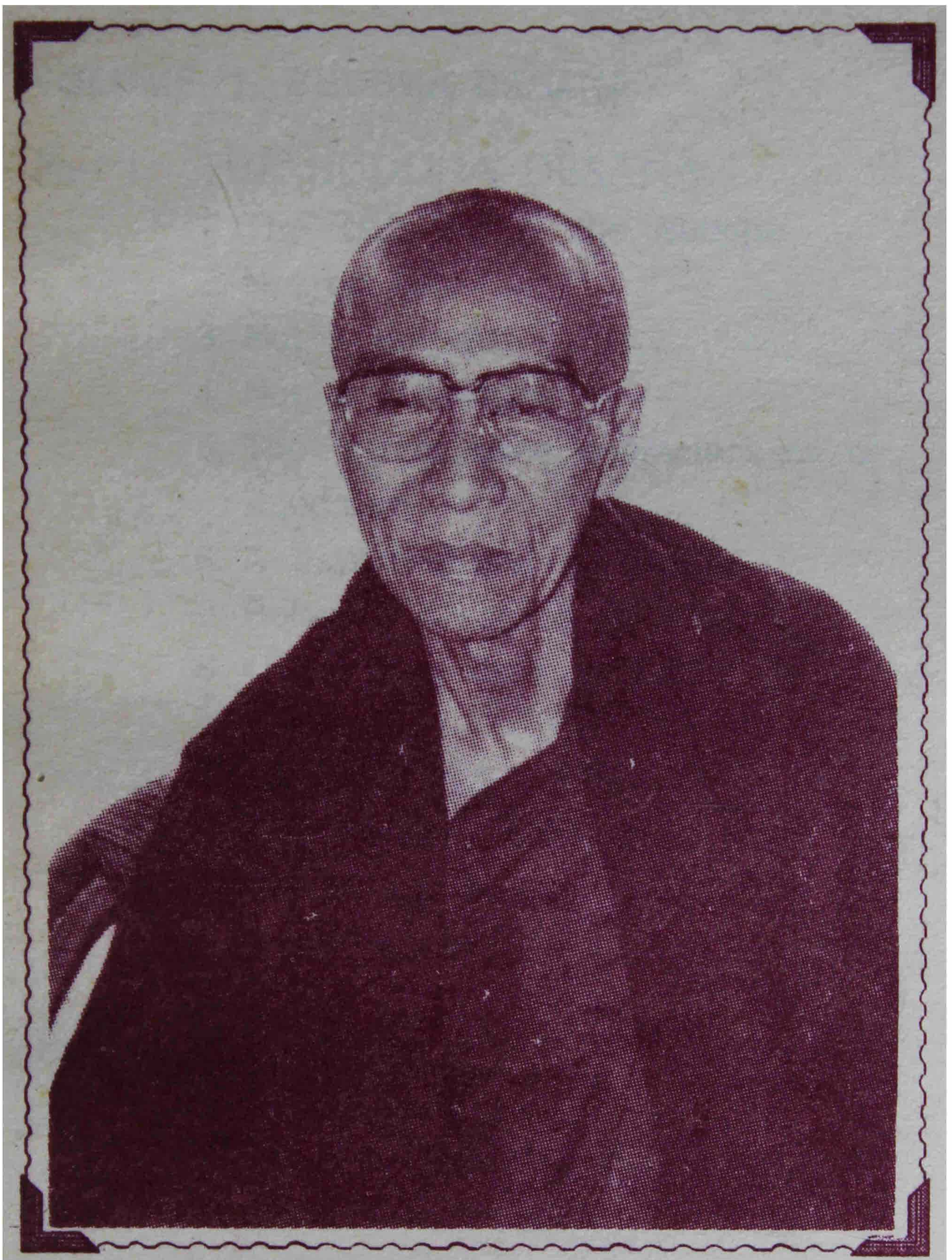
Printing agent - U That Winn (04444)

Win Win Myat Offset

88, Gaba Aye Pagoda Rd.  
Bahan, Yangon.

Phone - 550927





THE MOST VENERABLE KABA-AYE SAYĀDAW

**BHADDANTA PAÑÑĀ DĪPA**

AGGAMAHA SADDHAMMA JOTIKA. DHĀJA



# CONTENT

## VOLUME 1. BUDDHA DESANĀ

### Part I. THE BUDDHA DESANĀ

1. The Teaching of the Buddha	1
2. Not an ism	2
3. Not a religion	3
4. Not a philosophy	5
5. The distinguished characteristics of Buddhism	8
6. A psycho-ethical philosophy	10
7. Relevant principles of Man	11
8. Outstanding facts in Buddhism	12

### Part II. THE BUDDHA

1. The Perfectly Enlightened One	18
2. Life of the Buddha	19
3. Supreme Qualities of the Buddha	23

### Part III. THE DHAMMA

1. His teaching	25
2. Noble Attributes of the Dhamma	29
3. Some salient points	32

### Part IV. THE SANGHA

1. His Noble disciples	34
2. The founder	36
3. Two devoted lay disciples	36
4. The origin of the Sangha	37

5. Yasa, the second convert into the order	38
6. Yasa's friends	40
7. The Holy Order of the Sangha	40
8. The advantages of being a Sangha	42
9. Noble Attributes of the Sangha	44

## VOLUME 2. THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

### Part I. KAMMA AND REBIRTH

1. Kamma and its result	46
2. Short life and long life	54
3. Sickness and health	54
4. Ugliness and beauty	55
5. Few friends and many friends	55
6. Poverty and wealth	55
7. Low-born and high-born	56
8. Ignorance and intelligence	56

### Part II. THE DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

1. An effect depends on a cause	59
2. The links between cause and effect	61
3. Two root defilements	61
4. Three rounds in the process of existence	62
5. Links in natural order	62
6. Links in reverse order	64
7. Grasping on the aggregates	70
8. A being – merely mind and matter	70

9. Cutting of the wheel of lives	71
----------------------------------	----

### Part III. THE DOCTRINE OF ANATTA

1. The origin of religion	73
2. Basic knowledge of the Noble Truths	74
3. Four great religions	74
4. The fundamentals of The Buddha-Dhamma	75
5. The views of other three religions	76
6. Atta versus Anatta (Soul and no-soul)	77
7. Natural law and The Buddha-Dhamma	77
8. No-soul view and human being	79
9. Arising and passing away of mind and body	80
10. Nothing reality in the phenomenal existence	81
11. No-self, no-ego	83
12. Anatta, the ultimate reality	83
13. Origin of life	84
14. Three tenses of life-process	85
15. The practice of one's sake	86
16. The noble advice of the Buddha	87

# VOLUME . 1

## BUDDHA DESANĀ

### Part I. THE BUDDHA DESANĀ

#### 1. THE TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA

One of the great religions commonly known to various part of the world as Buddhism is the Teaching of the Buddha. In general, the real essence of Buddhism is not properly understood by many people of the world especially in the west. The term "Buddhism" is generally used all over the world as a religion which is believed by the Buddhist people. Some scholars who have earnestly done research in comparative study of religions understand Buddhism correctly in its proper sense. However, many are, as a matter of course, liable to be mistaken with other isms as the word "Buddhism" itself is exposed with its suffix "ism".

The teaching of the Buddha in terms of Buddha-desanā was discovered by Gotama the Buddha who was fully enlightened and awakened in the Four Noble Truths (*ariya saccā*) in India over 2,500 years ago. Gotama is the name of a clan; and the term Buddha is a Pāli word which literally means the Enlightened One. This particular name was given to the holy man who had perfectly realized the Noble Truths and became an All-knower or Omniscience (*sabbaññu*).

Before he became the Buddha, he was born as a prince of King Suddhodana and Queen Mahāmāyā. But



he was extraordinary human being who had fulfilled the perfections for aeons of time in long long past lives searching for the Noble Dhamma and aiming at the cessation of sufferings for himself and for all sentient beings as well. That is, Buddha intended if He could attain Nibbāna He would help other beings so that they also could attain it like Himself. He, having practised through strenuous effort and by human means, found out the very state of utter liberation in Nibbāna and revealed it to others with His enlightened wisdom. That is, He taught to all mankind His Dhamma - the only straight path of enlightenment that lead thereto. And as such, the main objective or the final goal of His Teaching is for the attainment of Nibbāna - the ultimate liberation from all the endless sufferings in samsāra (the cycle of birth and death). Here, in order to attain the state of happiness of Nibbāna we have only to follow devotedly the footpath of the Buddha or the principles of the Dhamma laid down by the Buddha.

## 2. NOT AN ISM

As the term "Buddhism" is exposed with the suffix 'ism', many are, however, led to believe incorrectly that it is a kind of isms like several other ideological isms, such as socialism, communism, capitalism, feudalism etc. Since the term is liable to confusion with



other isms as described above, I am really afraid that Buddhism, especially Theravāda Buddhism, is not well understood in its proper sense by the majority of the people of the world.

As you may know, an ism is a system, theory, doctrine, method of practice and so forth, adopted by philosophers or politicians. Buddhism, however, is not a system of practice for material development only, nor is it theory merely to be studied, nor a doctrine revealed by the miracle power of Buddha. But Buddhism is the natural principles of man and the universe discoverable only by the supremely enlightened human individuals for moral and spiritual attainment of the highest and noblest character now and hereafter or at least for self-purification and self-enlightenment.

### 3. NOT A RELIGION

The question of whether Buddhism is a religion as casually known and accepted depends either on one's own inner attitude or conviction or on the definition of the term 'religion' referred to. If religion is defined as constancy in the acceptance of duty as a divine command or as self-surrender of the human spirit to the Divine Power or God, or as a belief in the Divine Power or Heavenly Being for guidance on one's destiny or for sanctifying any committed sins, then obviously Buddhism



is not any such kind of religion.

If on the other hand, the religion is defined in a modern or wider sense as a system of thought, a rational faith or practice followed by individuals, or as an object of veneration and devotion for the attainment of mental perfection and peace of mind and body, then Buddhism may be called a religion.

Most of world religions originally based their teachings on the idea of God. The believers in God always maintain that God is the only Supreme One who is eternally existent indefinitely everywhere in the heaven and elsewhere. Their ultimate aim is more or less ever connected or concerned with the will or command of God. They ever pray to God to get rewards for their good and for sanctification of their sins. Such being the case, when they say 'religion', they mean only the idea of God. In most cases, when they come up to the stage of unsolved mystery of thought, they hand up at last all their problems into the will of God.

Quite contrary to the above view, in Buddhism there is no Heavenly Being or Almighty God who can guide one to one's own fate or destiny, make judgements on one's own behaviour or answer to any supplications of prayer. In short, Buddhism believes in one's own actions of how one has done either good or bad and in the results of how one has to reap the fruits as reaction out of their very actions previously done. For the



aforesaid reasons Buddhism, as seen from the western religious point of view, cannot possibly be called a 'religion'.

#### 4. NOT A PHILOSOPHY

Moreover, another question, that of whether Buddhism is a philosophy or not also depends on the definition used. If the term 'philosophy' is defined as 'love of wisdom', 'serious thinking', 'world view of things' or 'speculation about reality', then Buddhism is obviously not a philosophy.

But, if the scope of philosophy is wide enough to cover the deeper and more profound sense of 'search of truth', then Buddhism may be called, in the same way, a philosophy. The interpretation 'search of truth' is quite similar to the search after the Noble Truth (*ariya saccā*) in Buddhism. But generally, most of the philosophers in the west are usually seeking outward as well as inward to find out underlying reality behind the temporal manifestations.

They generally avail themselves of the different ways of finding out Ultimate Reality. They enjoy, mostly, the intellectual satisfaction in the quest itself and thus are not necessarily concerned with arriving at the ultimate truth. Philosophy, as is commonly known, asserted by several well-known philosophers, is found different in



ideas, views and opinions. That is only because of the fact that an inference asserted by a philosopher was often times rejected by another one when it was disagreeable to his own view or opinion. That, in fact, proves that the inferences were not really mature and true enough, but still lacking any real validity.

The statements of their philosophy guide one to take part not in a steady and orderly advance from speculation to knowledge, but in a series of marches and counter-marches of views and criticisms. They are hardly able to arrive at the final goal, instead they are choosing to tread in the footsteps of their predecessors. Thus we see that their quest is essentially speculative.

The western philosophers, of course, had admirably reasoned and laboriously worked out what they could, but their tremendous conflict of opinions largely cancelled out each other's value and left the students bewildered, ignorant and confused in their attempt to see in a dim light. Moreover, the western thinkers usually claimed that nobody had discovered ultimate truth and that human intellectual limitations were so narrow that nobody was likely to discover it. However, the Buddhist canon claimed that the ultimate truth was certainly discoverable and that even many sages had actually realized it. The western philosophers, apparently in such a gloomy search, had not reached the stage of the Noble Truth which was discoverable only by the Perfectly



Enlightened One, as they were naturally incomplete and lacking in systematic methods or principles of the Absolute Truth (*paramattha saccā*).

In the case of Indian philosophers, their quest after the Truth was also not absolutely perfect and final though they exerted themselves to a great extent within their practice. So what they had realized was not the final goal as seen from the view of Buddhist sages who had become the Noble Ones (*Ariyas*). Their interpretations regarding the Ultimate Reality were true only to the extent of their own realizations, going no further and not wholly true. The knowledge of truth that they had attained was only part and partial knowledge. And so the perfection of human wisdom could never develop out of any mystical hermitage. In fact, they could enter into mystic trances, yet they were not really enlightened in the higher stages of insight or supreme wisdom (*adhipaññā*).

In the case of enlightened ones in Buddhism, their approach was empirical like the approach of the scientists and Indian philosophers, but the difference was that the latter could reach only the culmination of the trance and no further. As for the Noble Ones in Buddhism, when they came to the end of the meditative journey, there needed to be no speculation for them as they had fully realized that they had reached the final end, (*Nibbāna*), by their actual experience of the Noble



Truth (*saccā*). This decidedly shows that there are the Noble Ones in the Buddhist dispensation for some of whom there is no more rebirth as they have attained the final state of Nibbāna, i.e. totally cutting off the fetters, thereby going beyond the mind-body complex, above the space-time and cause-effect order of life-existence. Therefore it is a true fact that the way to achieve the Ultimate Reality can be found only in the Teaching of the Buddha, as the Buddha Himself taught in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta that 'in this doctrine and discipline of Him, the Eightfold Noble Path is duly realizable'.

### 5. THE DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERISTICS OF BUDDHISM

The whole teaching of the Buddha, in terms of Buddhism, can also be called 'Dhamma', 'Sāsana', or 'Desanā'. The term, "Dhamma", is a Pāli word which means to bear or to hold up or support. That is, the Dhamma holds up or supports one who lives up to its principles so that one will not suffer in lower miserable abodes (*apāya*). The Dhamma in its full sense means truth, that which really is. It also means Law, the law which exists in man's mind-body and in the universe. It consists of the natural principles of its own cosmic order.

The Dhamma has been founded on the original conditions of man and the universe and therefore man



and the universe are only the states or the conditions of the Dhamma. Just as the Dhamma, the natural Law exists in the universe, it also positively exists in the man's mind and body. The Dhamma actually means natural principles of righteous path for a man to liberate himself from the miseries of life and to reach the state of supreme peace and happiness — Nibbāna. The Buddha Himself had found out the very state of ultimate liberation and revealed it to others with His enlightened wisdom, i.e. He taught to all mankind the Dhamma — the only straight path that leads thereto.

Nevertheless, Buddhism is not the kind of revelation created by any Supernatural Being or God, but natural or universal principles discovered through a practical experience by a holy human being, the enlightened Buddha. The principles in the Teaching are something like guidance for one who has mistaken a wrong way, or like the medicine for a patient who is seriously sick from diseases of defilements, or like a map for a traveller who is ignorant of the way to take for his journey. The Dhamma indeed consists of ways and means on how one is to live for one's mental or spiritual evolution of life towards the climax of ever-lasting peace and happiness.

The other two terms — “Sāsana” and “Desanā” - have also the same connotations. Sāsana is a Pāli word which means advice or exhortation or injunction of the



Buddha. There are three kinds of Sāsana, namely 1. study or theoretical aspect of the Dhamma (*pariyatti*), 2. practice or practical aspect (*patipatti*), and 3. attainment of enlightenment in Nibbāna by way of the Path (*magga*) and Fruition (*phala*), i.e. realizable aspect (*pativedha*). Desanā is also a Pāli term too, which consists of all the words or teachings delivered by the Buddha Himself during His life-time.

## 6. A PSYCHO-ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY

As the Dhamma is the embodiment of natural or universal principles, as mentioned above, Buddhism is therefore in the strictest sense of the term, neither a religion nor a philosophy, nor an ism as known in many parts of the globe. The Dhamma discovered by the Buddha through His supreme enlightenment is for every individual the practice to improve self-discipline, self-morality, self-purification, to develop self-enlightenment and to strive for self-emancipation from the miseries of life in Samsāra (round of rebirths).

The Buddha not only showed the ways and means for the attainment of supramundane wisdom (*lokuttara ñāna*), but also prescribed social principles to solve the various problems of the different classes of mankind in His time. These social principles laid down by Him over 2,500 years ago are still fresh and quite



applicable to the present age of scientific achievement and computer era.

The Scholars of Buddhism might find that different branches of study,<sup>1</sup> such as philosophy, psychology, ethics, sociology and many others in modern cultural arts, are so to speak, embraced in His Teaching. This is one of the reasons why it is not easy for us to define exactly whether the Dhamma of the Buddha is a philosophy , psychology, ethics or sociology. That is why Theravāda Buddhist scholars in particular prefer to call it "Buddha-dhamma" or "Buddha-desanā" or "Dhamma" or "psycho-ethical philosophy" instead of Buddhism.

## 7. RELEVANT PRINCIPLES OF MAN

The Buddha-dhamma which was discovered by the supremely enlightened man is therefore free from dogmas and divine commands, and not related to any kind of Divine Power or God. In fact, there is no punishment nor threat of hellfire, nor reward of the Heavenly Being, nor forceful conversion. It only appeals to man's reason to choose a right kind of belief or faith. Since Buddhism is founded on reasoning knowledge, compassion (*karunā*) and wisdom (*paññā*), it encourages each and every person to have a critical outlook by himself, reason with his own experiments and to have free thoughts, free choice. It also guides one to strive



with his own effort for the progress of one's mature life because one is solely responsible for one's own destiny and salvation.

Obviously, Buddhism believes that good or evil actions are done only by oneself and thereby oneself is to reap its corresponding fruits, either good or bad as a natural consequence. The obvious fact is that, in Buddhism, there is no Heavenly Being or God who can shape or create one or make judgements on one's behaviour or destiny. In fact, one is wholly responsible to develop one's own standard or stage of morality (*sīla*), concentration ( *samādhi* ) and wisdom ( *paññā* ) in order that one can finally reach the very end of Supreme Enlightenment ( *adhipaññā* ). By only so doing can one evolve one's potential stages of enlightenment in life, say from the stages of an ignorant worldling to a virtuous person, then to a junior Stream-winner ( *culasotapanna* ) who has realized the actual nature of mind and matter as well as of the cause and effect, then to the Noble Ones or Holy Saints ( *ariyas* ) till up to the Supremely Enlightened One ( *arahanta* ).

## 8. OUTSTANDING FACTS IN BUDDHISM

The Buddha-dhamma is a complete discovery of a dynamic cosmic order. So to say, complete scientifically because it accounts not only for human life, but also for



the life of all sentient beings from the lowest to the highest; and also complete morally because it includes all these forms of life in the one moral order. Buddhism, in fact, teaches a cosmic law that exists everywhere; hence the same moral law of spiritual evolution must prevail everywhere. Cosmic law and moral order in Buddhism are related to one another as they are not in any other religious systems.

Apparently, Buddhism does not condemn anybody to eternal hell just because he happens not to be a Buddhist. If a being goes to the regions of great woeful misery after death, it is only because his own bad deeds have sent him there, and not because he happens to believe in the wrong set of dogmas. The Dhamma only teaches that whatever suffering a man may bring upon himself is commensurate with the gravity of his own evil actions — neither more nor less. He may suffer through several lives because of some very heavy evil actions (*garu akusala kamma*), but sometime that suffering must come to an end when the evil that has been generated has spent itself. The atrocious idea or view that a being may be made to suffer throughout eternity for the sins committed in one short lifetime does not exist in Buddhism. Neither does the equally unjust doctrine that he may wash out all his sins by formal acts of contrition or by mere faith in one particular deity or God for whom man has invented with his own idea.



In Buddhism, there is no personal judge who condemns, but only the working of an impersonal law that is just like the law of gravitation. Buddhism indeed indicates that the natural law is immutably just, in other words, it is an absolute truth or cosmic principle for which one has to keep up oneself with love, compassion, morality, nobility, holiness, wisdom, etc., that only makes oneself divine or supreme.

In Buddhism, the first and foremost fact, most difficult to understand is “rebirth” (*jāti*) that one oneself has created with one’s own action. An ordinary person may surely find very hard even to appreciate series of lives until and unless he understands cause-effect cycles of the Dependent Origination (*patīccasamuppāda*). The very inexplicable question that this present life is out of measureless eternity, is still unsolved and undiscovered by modern scientists and philosophers. But the Enlightened Buddha, since over 2,500 years, had vividly shown the ample light of the theory of Karma and rebirth, that life-series and samsāra are so long that the beginning as well as the end of beings is unknowable.

Naturally, a serious thinking person, seeing the various sights of inequality amongst mankind is by no means satisfied as to why one becomes differentiated from another and ever in quest of obtaining an appropriate answer of the real cause or reason. Evidently, there are untold numbers of blind, deaf and



dumb, mentally deficient and diseased human beings whose pitiful conditions are not due to any fault of theirs in this present life, nor any remediable defect in the organization of human society.

In this respect, Buddhism is alone in presenting rebirth as a scientific principle. When I say here scientific, I mean that it is a principle in accordance with other universal laws which can be understood scientifically and even investigated by scientific methods. The principle of change ( *aniccatā* ), serial continuity ( *santati* ) and passing away ( *vaya* ) is one that runs throughout nature; all scientific principles are based on it. The three fundamental characteristics of existence taught by the Buddha are common to each and every one and everywhere. They are: “all conditioned things are impermanent, all conditioned things are suffering and all things are insubstantial”. What is transient that is painful; what is painful that is soulless, impersonal or insubstantial ( *anatta* ) i.e. the absence of a permanent unchanging self or soul or ego in anywhere or in anybody.

All beings must come into being as the result of past Kamma and pass away again just as we do here in our human existence. As we all are subject to these three characteristics of impermanence ( *anicca* ), suffering ( *dukkha* ) and insubstantiality or soulless or egoless ( *anatta* ), all sentient beings also follow just the same



universal principles. For instance, the composition of an aggregate of every being is changing all the time, not remaining the same even for two consecutive moments.

Similarly, the Four Noble Truths – suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the way to cessation of suffering – are quite universal principles relating to each and every being. And this being so, the three characteristics and the four Noble Truths are utterly valid wherever life exists.

Moreover, with regard to the phenomena of mind and matter, the Buddha also taught that every being is composed of mind and matter, yet one finds very hard to know the real fact of these two phenomena. So one must strive to realize the differentiation between mind and matter of his own physical and mental being. This also is quite a valid principle for each and every one of humankind.

In the last but not the least, the ultimate release, the attainment of the everlasting unchanging state of Nibbāna is something, so to say, the most supreme Peace and happiness of life, that man can reach since man is the supreme master of himself. This very state of Nibbāna is to be attained only by eliminating all the factors of rebirth that are rooted in the two fundamental defects of defilement, i.e. ignorance ( *avijjā* ) and craving ( *tanhā* ), in other words, the three kinds of canker, greed ( *lobha* ), hatred ( *doṣa* ) and delusion ( *moha* ). Nibbāna,



which the Buddha described as the Unconditioned (*Asankhata*), the Ageless (*Ajarā*), the Deathless (*Amata*) and the Ever-permanent (*Dhuvā*) is the Absolute Reality that lies outside the realms of conditioned and illusory cycles of rebirths (*samsāra*). In reality, Nibbāna can be reached only by the actual practice of giving charity (*dāna*), of morality (*sīla*), and of mental development by meditation (*bhāvanā*); in other words, giving charity (*dāna*) eliminates greed (*lobha*), loving kindness (*mettā*) or morality (*sīla*) eradicates anger (*dosa*), and mental development (*bhāvana*) roots out ignorance (*moha*). In this way, when all cankers or defilements are exterminated then only Nibbāna can be attained.





## Part II. THE BUDDHA

### 1. THE PERFECTLY ENLIGHTENED ONE

The founder of the Buddhist religion is Gotama, the Buddha. The name "Buddha" is a Pāli word which literally means "The Knower", or "The Awakened One", or "The Enlightened One" of the Four Noble Truths (*Saccā*). Gotama is a family name and the personified title "Buddha" is so known as He was endowed with supreme wisdom of Omnipotence and Omniscience by virtue of His eminent honorific attributes. The Buddha attained the highest and loftiest Dhamma, called Nibbāna, through His strenuous practice of Supreme Morality (*Adhisila*), Supreme Concentration (*Adhicitta*) and Supreme Wisdom (*Adhipaññā*).

For the above reasons, the Buddha should, by no means, be regarded as a mere prophet or a messenger deputed by the Almighty God, or a Supreme Being, or a Brahma to visit the earth for the salvation of mankind. In this respect Buddhists believe that Buddhas appear in the world occasionally for saving those who are fit and perfect enough to be saved, not as Saviours but by showing them the way leading to the happiest state of Nibbāna which was discovered by themselves. Men and Gods alike who follow His teaching and guidance, are, like the Buddhas themselves, assured of



attaining Nibbāna where all kinds of suffering would be totally exhausted and non-existent altogether.

Any one who wants to become a Buddha can aspire to attain Buddhahood, but one could only accomplish it in a very long distant future. The present Buddha before he attained enlightenment went through innumerable existences (i.e. four aeons and one hundred thousand world-cycles), had fulfilled ten categories of Perfection ( *Dasa Pārami* ), more difficult services ( *Upapārami* ) and the most difficult sacrifices ( *Paramattha pārami* ), such as forsaking his children, wife, body and even his life for the welfare of all beings.

## 2. LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

In this world-cycle, the aspiring Buddha was born as a son of King Suddhodana and Queen Mahāmāyā in the sixth century B.C. about 566, in the state of Kappilavatthu of the royal Sakya dynasty, near the borders of present day Nepal in northern India. The prince was given the name of Siddhattha, meaning wish-fulfilled.

On the birth of the prince, the royal father invited eight Brahmins to predict the prince's future. The youngest Brahmin Kondañña raised one finger and predicted precisely that the prince would certainly become a Buddha, while other seven raising two fingers and



prophesied that the prince would become a great spiritual leader or a universal monarch.

Naturally the king desired his son to become a universal monarch rather than a Buddha. Therefore he brought up his son amidst worldly pleasures and luxuries as bountiful as possible. Then at the age of sixteen, he was not only provided with three magnificent palaces according to the three seasons, but also got married with his beautiful cousin Princess Yasodhara. In this way his royal father had showered upon him the utmost of all the pleasures of life. The king's purpose was to allure the prince to the mundane world in the fond hope that his beloved son and heir would not think of renouncing the world. In due course, the king hoped that his son would become the greatest king ruling over the whole world. Thus in a great voluptuous manner the royal prince lived in the fullest enjoyment of all the pomps and pleasures up to the age of 29 years.

One day the prince being desirous of visiting the Royal Garden went out in a chariot. On the way he saw an aged man, a sick man and a dead man. He was very much shocked and alarmed to observe the true nature of conditioned life, its impermanence, suffering and impersonality. Then upon seeing a holy hermit, he came to realize that it was the only way for escaping from these worldly miseries and attaining the supreme happiness. Again on his return, incidentally a messenger



brought the news that a son was born to Princess Yasodhara. Hearing thus his mind was more deplored and distressed by the thought that “a son is a mere fetter”.

He realized his responsibilities as a married man with a son and also his position as a prince. He thought that if he remained a ruler he would have to spend his precious life absorbed in kingly duties rather than in searching for a way out of the universal sufferings of humanity. He therefore finally renounced all his royal possessions including his wife and son, and went forth in search of Truth and Peace. Wearing the yellow robe and wandering about the valley of the Ganges for six years as an ascetic, he studied all the systems of philosophies and religious beliefs of his time.

First he practised under the sage Alara who could only teach up to a seventh mental absorption stage of the eight Jhānic trances. So he left him and went to practice under another sage Udaka who also could teach him only up to a still higher mental stage of the eighth ecstasy. The Bodhisatta then realized that these Jhānic states were only mundane and incapable of releasing him from the sufferings of old age, disease and death of one's life that he sought for. At most he might attain only one of the Formless Realms (Arūpa) with life spans of 60,000 and 84,000 world-cycles in each plane.

He therefore departed from these sages and



continued the search for truth on his own accord. He practised many forms of severe austerities (*dukkaracariyā*) for six long years. Yet he was still far from his goal. These misleading practices only reduced him physically almost to a skeleton with pale complexion, dry skin, sunken eyes and almost to the verge of death.

At this stage he reminisced over his past experiences and discerned the knowledge that he should give up these extreme ascetic practices and have some food to renew his strength in order to continue his search of Buddhahood. Thus he reverted to a normal diet and balanced mode of living by avoiding the two extremes, i.e. self-indulgence in sensual pleasures and self-mortification, and followed the new path known as the “Middle Way” (*Majjhima Patipadā*). Then one evening under the Bodhi Tree on the bank of the River Nerañjara at Buddha-Gaya (in modern Bihar), during his deep meditation on in-breathing and out-breathing, he first attained the higher Jhānic states and spiritual powers. The Bodhisatta then meditated on the arising and vanishing of the five groups of clingings (*Pancupadanakkhanda*) which again enabled him to penetrate into higher insight and supreme knowledge. Finally at the age of 35 years, he gained the knowledge of Rememberance of innumerable past lives (*Pubbenivāsa ñāna*), the Divine Eye which could see the birth and death of all beings (*Dibbacakkhu ñāna*) and the

total Exhaustion of all Passions (*Asavakkhaya ñāna*). Having realized perfectly the Four Noble Truths (the Truth of Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering and the Way to the Cessation of Suffering), he at last became a *Sammāsambuddha* which means the Supremely Self-Enlightened One or Fully Awakened One.

### 3. SUPREME QUALITIES OF THE BUDDHA

The Buddha therefore by virtue of His Supreme Enlightenment is endowed with the following nine inherent qualities:

1. The Lord is worthy,
2. Omniscient,
3. Endowed with Supreme Knowledge and Virtue,
4. Well-gone to Nibbāna,
5. Knower of all worlds,
6. An incomparable Charioteers for the training of persons,
7. Teacher of Gods and Men,
8. Fully Enlightened and
9. Supremely Glorious.

After attaining Buddhahood, the Buddha expounded the Doctrine which He Himself found out in His search. In His Teaching, the Dhamma, the Buddha proclaimed to the world that man in his nature has latent



inconceivable possibilities and talented creative power within himself for the attainment of supreme happiness. He, of course, can gain purification, enlightenment and deliverance, by his own effort through the practice of the Dhamma.

The Buddha made no discrimination as to caste, colour, race, sex, rank or position, but He taught that all beings are the same, as they have been made up of two constituent components, i.e. mind and body, and also pointed out that they have therefore equal opportunities for the attainment of liberation.

He explicitly encouraged His followers to have freedom of thought and action to practice the Teaching aiming only at one objective, i.e. that they might be liberated from the woeful anguish of life and attain the Ultimate Peaceful Happiness of Nibbāna.



### Part III. THE DHAMMA

#### 1. HIS TEACHING

After the attainment of Buddhahood, the Buddha expounded the sublime Dhamma for forty-five years. The Dhamma or the Teaching of the Buddha, commonly known as Buddhism, is collected and divided into two main parts, namely:

- I. The Law of Truth (*Dhamma*) and
- II. Codes of Discipline (*Vinaya*).

The teaching is also classified into three parts called the Baskets (*Tipitaka*), as follows:

1. Discourse (*Sutta*),
2. Codes of Discipline (*Vinaya*) and
3. Higher Teaching of the Truth (*Abhidhammā*).

The *Tipitaka* is again further divided into five collections ( *Pañcanikāya* ), namely:

1. The Collections of Long Discourses (*Dighanikāya*),
2. The Collections of Middle Length Discourses (*Majjhimanikāya*),
3. The Collections of Kindred Sayings (*Samyuttanikāya*),
4. The Collections of Discourses from Gradual



- Sayings (*Anguttaranikāya*) and
5. The Collections of Minor Anthologies (*Khuddakanikāya*).

The *Tipitaka* is again further divided into nine parts called *Navangāni*. They are:

1. Discourses (*Suttam*),
2. Prose and verse (*Geyam*),
3. Prose (*Veyākaranam*),
4. Verse (*Gāthā*),
5. Paean of Joy (*Udāna*),
6. Thus-said Discourses (*Itivuttaka*),
7. Birth Stories (*Jātaka*),
8. Admired Doctrine (*Abbhutadhamma*) and
9. Explanatory Conversations (*Vedalla*).

On the whole the *Tipitaka* consists of 84,000 groups of doctrines which is called *Caturasitisahassāni Dhammakkhandhā*.

The Dhamma, an immutable law of nature or the eternal truth of the nature of universe, is always in existence whether the Buddhas appear in the world or not. However, it can be discovered and fully realized only by the Buddhas. The Dhamma itself is, therefore, that what really is. In other words, it is the doctrine of Reality or Truth comprehensible only by the wise or Noble Ones, and therefore, it is a mean of Deliverance from all sufferings of life. Thus the Dhamma prevents one who

lives by its principles from falling into the miserable and woeful planes of existence (*apāya*). The Dhamma contains only non-aggressive morals and psycho-philosophical principles; it demands no blind faith, expounds no dogma, and encourages no superstitions.

The Dhamma is not regarded as a divine revelation, but simply as the advice of a great religious Teacher to His Disciples. It is not to be accepted and believed but to be understood and practised. It, in fact, does not appeal to blind faith, but to practical and experimental intelligence.

Here, we can observe how the Buddha taught the Kālāma Princess in Kesamutti Sutta of the Anguttara Nikāya: "Now, you Kālāmas, do not be led by hearsay nor by what is handed down by tradition nor by what people say, nor by what is stated on the authority of your traditional teaching. Do not be led by reasoning, nor by inferring, nor by argument as to method nor by delight in speculative opinions, but by seeing possibilities, by the directions from your teachers. But O Kālāmas, when you know by yourselves that certain actions done by you are not good, wrong and considered worthless by the wise; when followed and put into practice, lead to loss or suffering, then give them up ... and when you know by yourselves that certain actions done by you are good, true and considered worthy by the wise, then accept them and put them into practice."



The Dhamma therefore advocates a golden rule that guides a person by pure thought and good living to attain supreme wisdom, with liberation from life's miseries. The Dhamma is not a subject to be studied from a historical or literary standpoint but is to be learned and put into actual practice in the course of one's life. It lays emphasis mainly on practice, for without practice one can never expect to realize the truth.

Theoretical learning of the Dhamma (*pariyatti*) and constant meditation practice (*patipatti*) will sooner or later bring about insight and higher knowledge of knowing the Path and Fruition (*pativedha*). In other words, one must learn the Dhamma thoroughly for general knowledge of the scriptures (*sutamaya ñāna*) there by developing the reasoning faculty (*cintāmayā ñāna*). Then one must develop oneself for the meditative attainment (*bhāvanāmayā ñāna*) and the final realization of Supreme Wisdom ( *adhipaññā* ).

Ordinary worldlings, being deluded with the darkness of ignorance (*avijjā*) and ensnared with craving (*tanhā*), indeed find it very difficult to realize the true nature of things as they really are. As such, the Buddha and His Noble Disciples, having realized the Supramundane Dhamma through their enlightenment, showed the light of it to all beings so that they also may attain like themselves the Noble Path towards the Deliverance of Nibbāna.

That is the only reason why the Dhamma can prevent a person not to sink down into lower miserable plane of existence (*apāya*) and convey him to the stage of the Path, Fruition and Nibbāna by virtue of its (*Dhamma*) preventability from doing evils. The true followers of the Buddha who actually live up to the principles of the Dhamma can enjoy the Blissful Happiness of Liberation from passions (*Vimutti sukha*) and comprehend the real Essence of Emancipation from all sufferings of life (*Vimutti rasa*).

The Dhamma therefore proves itself that "one who practices Dhamma will, in turn, be certainly protected by the Dhamma. He who imbibes the Dhamma lives happily with the purified mind, and the wise ever delight in the Dhamma revealed by the Noble Ones (*Ariyas*). The gift of Truth (*Dhamma*) excels all gifts, the flavour of the Truth excels all flavours, the delight of the Truth excels all delights; and the final victory over all sufferings is the extinction of craving".

## 2. NOBLE ATTRIBUTES OF THE DHAMMA

The Dhamma is thus endowed with the following six special attributes:

1. (*Svakkhāto*) The Dhamma is not speculative philosophy but is the Universal Law found through enlightenment and is preached



precisely. Therefore, it is excellent in the beginning (*Sīla* - Moral Principles), excellent in the middle (*Samādhi* - Concentration) and excellent in the end (*Paññā* - Wisdom).

2. (*Samditthiko*) The Dhamma can be tested by practice and therefore he who follows it will reap the results through his own experience;
3. (*Akāliko*) The Dhamma is able to bestow timeless and immediate results here and now, for which there is no need to wait till the future or next existence;
4. (*Ehipassiko*) The Dhamma welcomes all beings to put it to the test and see for themselves;
5. (*Opāneyyiko*) The Dhamma is capable of being entered upon and therefore it is worthy to be followed as a part of one's life;
6. (*Paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*) The Dhamma can be perfectly realized only by noble disciples (*Ariyas*) who have matured enough in supreme wisdom.

In the Dhamma, the Buddha enunciated many salient points but some points will be explained here. "He who sees the Dhamma sees me. He who practices the Dhamma to the best of his ability, honours me best. One is one's own refuge who else could be the refuge?"

"By oneself evil is done, by oneself one suffers;

by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity being dependent on one's ownself, no one can purify another."

"You should do your work, for the Buddhas only teach and show the way. You yourself should make an effort, the Buddhas are only Teachers."

"Be ye enlightened unto yourself, be ye a refuge unto yourself, be ye a refuge unto the Dhamma, there is no external refuge."

Here taking refuge in the Dhamma and oneself means to actually practise it accordingly. The Buddha said that the essence of the Dhamma lies in the practice of it. Throughout His life the Buddha always inspired His disciples to practise virtuous conduct (*Sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and realize supreme wisdom (*paññā*).

The ultimate goal in the Buddhism is the realization of the truth (*saccā*), through the actual practice of the Teaching. On the whole, in the Dhamma there can be found neither divine revelation nor divine messenger, neither reward nor punishment, neither fear nor prayer to the Almighty God, neither self-mortification nor self-indulgence, neither metaphysical way nor ritualistic way, neither pessimism nor optimism, neither skepticism nor dogmatism, neither eternalism nor nihilism. The Dhamma therefore, in a word, is a unique principle to be practised for the attainment of supreme wisdom (*adhipaññā*) and perfect Enlightenment, Nibbāna. The



Dhamma maintains that the final realization depends only upon the individual exertion of His followers and on no other factors. The Buddha shows us the path, but we ourselves must tread on the path. Even the last words which the Buddha uttered were "Vayadamma sankhārā appamādena sampādeṭṭha". "The compounded things are transient, do ye be vigilantly mindful."

### 3. SOME SALIENT POINTS

In the teaching of the Dhamma, the following main salient factors are of importance:

1. Kamma and Kammavipāka, i.e. proper understanding of one's action and its fruit,
2. The four Sublime Factors of Living (*Brahmavihāra*),
3. The Dependent Origination (*Paticcasamuppāda*),
4. The Forty objects of Concentration (*Samatha*),
5. The Penetrating insight in the Real Nature of Mind and Body (*Vipassanā*),
6. The Four Noble Truths (*Ariya saccā*),
7. The Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya atthangika magga*),
8. The Supramundane Blissful Happiness (*Nibbāna*) or the State of Ultimate

Deliverance from all sufferings.

To sum up all these main factors in the Dhamma, the Buddha instructed us only in a verse:

*Sabba pāpassa akaranam,  
Kusalassa upasampadā,  
Sacitta pariyodāpanam,  
Etam Buddhassa sāsanaṃ.*

The meaning is this, "Refrain from all evils, cultivate what is good and purify one's mind, this is the Teaching of the Buddha."

In conclusion if one really practises the Dhamma diligently and strenuously developing self-discipline, self-purification and self-enlightenment, one is in consequence, assured of attaining the Supreme Blissful of Nibbāna in this present life.





## Part IV. THE SANGHA

### 1. HIS NOBLE DISCIPLES

In Buddhism there are three noble objects of veneration, namely:

1. The Buddha, the Perfectly Enlightened one,
2. The Dhamma, The Teaching of the Buddha,  
and
3. The Sangha, the Buddhist Monks of the  
Holy Order of the Buddha.

The word "Sangha", a Pāli term, is commonly and essentially used in the texts of Buddhism, but ordinary readers might find it difficult to properly understand this term in the actual sense.

Outside Buddhist countries, there are many who have little knowledge of the accurate facts about the Sangha. A Buddhist monk is therefore generally thought of in a similar sense as the Christian term for "monk" or "priest".

The term "*Sangha*" is a compound Pāli word San-hr which according to Pāli dictionary means a group or a community or an assembly of the Buddhist monks. The Sangha, in a general sense, is a community of Buddha's disciples who follow and practise the Teaching in order to attain Liberation (*Vimutti*) from the incessant suffering of life. A Sangha, as an individual, is one who

destroys or cuts off defilements in himself (*Kilese himsatiti sangho*). Also Sangha in a wider sense of the term means the congregation which comprises of those monks who have renounced home for the homeless life and having the same view of right understanding and moral observance of Vinaya Discipline (*Ditthi sīla samaññaena sanghata bhāvena sangho*).

The following are some other synonyms of the word Sangha:

1. Bikkhu is one who contemplates on the cycle of birth and death (*Samsāra*) as the greatest danger;
2. Samana is one who endeavours to extinguish and eliminate the defilements;
3. Muni is one who controls his mind from wavering or flittering away because of greed, hatred and delusion;
4. Brahmana is one who discards and avoids all evil actions;
5. Tapodhana is one who practises restraint in all matters; such as in the use of his own wealth.

The Sangha therefore refers to those monks who have reached four stages of the Path and four stages of the Fruition (*Magga and Phala*). They are called the Noble Ones or the Holy Saints (*Ariya Sanghas*). And lastly Sangha, since the time of the Buddha till the



present day, refers to all those who are practising the Dhamma for the attainment of the Path and the Fruition (*Samuti Sanghas*).

## 2. THE FOUNDER

The founder of this Holy Order was Gotama the Buddha who became Perfectly Enlightened in the Four Noble Truths. He then proclaimed His Dhamma to the world elucidating how he Himself found out in His search for the Ultimate Peaceful Happiness (*Santi*). Thus the second noble object of veneration, the Dhamma, was discovered by the Buddha through His Supreme Enlightenment.

## 3. TWO DEVOTED LAY DISCIPLES

Before the Buddha expounded the Dhamma, there were no Sanghas in the world at that time, but many hermits or recluses were found in India finding their own salvation with their respective religious practices. When the Buddha appeared in the world and taught the Dhamma, it was said that there were only two objects of veneration, the Buddha and the Dhamma, called in Pali *dve vacika* (Twofold formula) – literally two news, that is one can know the news of only two objects of veneration in the whole world.

Soon after He attained Enlightenment two brother

merchants named Tapussa and Bhallika who were informed by their friends that there appeared the Buddha, the Enlightened One who attained the Supreme Buddhahood, came to see Him. When they met the Buddha they respectfully paid homage to Him and offered some dried rice-flour cakes and honeycomb saying that they took refuge in the Buddha and His Teaching' (*Dhamma*). Thus the brothers became the first devoted lay disciples who had sought two refuges or objects of veneration.

#### 4. THE ORIGIN OF THE SANGHA

Seven weeks after the enlightenment, the Buddha went to Isipatana (modern Sarnath) near Benares where His old companions, the five ascetics, were residing. There He delivered to them the first sermon called the "Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta, the Discourse on the Wheel of Truth". Then He delivered the second sermon called the "Anattalakkhana Sutta, the Discourse on the Theory of Non-self". On hearing the teaching, with the result of their fruitful perfection, the five ascetics attained the Final Liberation (Arahathood). And thus they became, by virtue of utter elimination of defilements, the first and foremost *Ariya Sanghas* who were the origin of the Noble Order of the Buddha.



## 5. YASA, THE SECOND CONVERT INTO THE ORDER

At that time there was a young man named Yasa living in Benares who was the only son of a wealthy merchant. He was surrounded by different kinds of sense pleasures and beautiful ladies, but he was greatly distressed and shocked realising the true nature of impermanence, suffering and impersonality of life. And so having made a resolution to become an ascetic, he set out early towards Sarnath where the Buddha was residing. On that day the Buddha, as usual was pacing up and down in an open space. Seeing Yasa approaching Him, the Buddha returned from His walk and sat down on a prepared seat. Not far from Him stood Yasa complaining, "O distressed am I! Oppressed am I!"

Thereupon the Buddha said, "Here Yasa, there is no distress and no oppression in this Noble life. Come here Yasa and take a seat. I shall expound the Dhamma to you." Then on hearing, having filled with joy, Yasa approached the Buddha, respectfully saluted Him and sat on one side. The Buddha expounded the doctrine to him, and he attained the transcendental stage of wisdom of the first Path and Fruition of the Stream-winner. (*Sotapanna*).

When Yasa's mother Sujata noticed the absence of her son, she reported the matter to her husband. The millionaire went out to look for his son. Following the

imprint of the golden slippers of his son, he arrived at Isipatana where the Buddha was residing. The Buddha saw him coming from afar, and by His Psychic powers willed that he should not be able to see his son, knowing that he would also be converted into the Dhamma.

The millionaire approached the Buddha and respectfully enquired whether He saw his son. The Master said, "Well then sit down here for a while, you would be able to see your son before long". Being pleased with the happy news, the rich man sat down and then the Buddha delivered the Dhamma as He had done to Yasa.

On hearing the discourse, the rich man became a devout lay disciple who took refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Order (*Sangha*). He was the first lay disciple who sought refuge in the three-formula (*Tevacika*). While the Buddha was delivering the Dhamma to the rich man, Yasa attained Arahatsip. Then the Buddha conferred on Yasa the Higher Ordination with the words "*Ehi Bhikkhu*", come, O Bhikkhu. Thus there the number of Arahantas increased to six.



## 6. YASA'S FRIENDS

The venerable Yasa had four close friends of noble birth, named Vimala, Subhahu, Punnaji and Gavampati. When they heard that their noble friend abandoned household life on account of the Noble Teaching of the Buddha, they came to see him and expressed their desire to follow his example. Yasa then introduced them to the Buddha and on hearing the Dhamma they also became Arahats.

Besides, fifty more worthy friends of Yasa, who belonged to the noble families dwelling in various provinces came to him and also received instructions from Buddha. And they attained Arahatship and entered the Noble Order of the Buddha.

## 7. THE HOLY ORDER OF THE SANGHA

After the Buddha had spent the rainy season (*vassa*) in Benares with His sixty Arahats disciples, He addressed them thus: "O, Bhikkhus, I am free from all the fetters and attachments in the world, both divine and human; you also are free in the same manner. You have now become fit to be messengers of the Dhamma. So go ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of many, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the glorious doctrine, preach ye the life of holiness and purity."

Having followed the obeisance to the instruction, the disciples went to different direction and preached the Dhamma at many places. And thus the number of Sanghas increased by the thousands even during the Buddha's life time. Since then the Holy Order of the Buddha has continued without a break to the present day.

The Buddha was thus the first religious teacher to send His enlightened ordained disciples to propagate the doctrine out of compassion for the welfare of the others. With no permanent abode, alone and penniless, these first missionaries were expected to wander from place to place to teach the sublime Dhamma, just by living on ālms-food. They had no other material possessions but their robes to cover themselves and alms-bowls for receiving their food. As they were Arahats who had been freed from all sensual bonds, their chief and only object was to teach the Dhamma and proclaim the Holy Life (*Brahmacariya*). The original role of Arahats who had already achieved their life's goal was only to work for the moral upliftment of the people both by examples and by precept. Their real concern was to release people like themselves from the whirlpool of sufferings and to the safety of Nibbāna.

With His sixty Arahats disciples the Buddha founded a celibate Order as the nucleus: it was a real systematic organization of democratic principles in



constitution. The member of the Order shared the same lifestyle; dress, abode, almsfood and medicine were equally shared. The original members were selected from the highest status of society. All were educated and rich men, but the Order was open to all worthy ones, irrespective of caste, class, colour or rank. Both young and old belonging to all the castes, anyone who could follow the Rules were freely admitted into the Order. All the members of the Sangha lived like brothers of the same family without any distinction. This Noble Order of Bhikkhus or Sanghas which stands to this day is the oldest historic body of celibates in the world.

### 8. THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING A SANGHA

The religious life of a Sangha or Buddhist monk, in other words the righteous conduct of a *Samana* is also called *Brahmacariya* which means "Holy life". A Sangha lives a righteous life as he carefully observes and follows the precepts and rules of discipline which the Lord Buddha laid down for all Buddhist monks to follow. His life is a real virtuous blessing and insightful peace since he has renounced the world, he has no cares and no need to be worried about his family or relatives. He tries to be content with what he gets and so does not have to compete for his livelihood.

He can freely and safely go wherever he likes at

any time, day or night or to any place. Just like a bird that flies where it wishes, a Bhikkhu can freely go for his study, teaching or preaching and practice. He has no need to fear any one, for he has no enemy to cause him harm. In short, the advantageous fruit of being a Sangha is simple, joyous, calm, secluded, free and safe life. It is also a life that can lead one to attain virtue, concentration, insight knowledge, wisdom, psychic powers, divine eye, divine ear, remembrance of one's former births, etc. These are completely and orderly described by the Lord Buddha in the *Samaññaphala* Sutta of *Dighanikāya*.

As a Sangha's main intent is on releasing sufferings of life and attain Nibbāna, he is always trying to lessen avarice, ill-will, delusion, etc. He endeavours to free himself from all forms of sensual pleasures and improper companies. Thus he can devote his time only in learning, teaching or preaching and practising the Dhamma which will lead him to the utter Liberation, Nibbāna.

The advantages of becoming a Sangha are numerous. So in order to realize the actual benefits and experience a taste of the supramundane peace of holy life, every man should try for himself the life of a Buddhist monk for at least three weeks, or if possible three months or more, under the guidance of a well versed and experienced elderly monk. He who enters the



Order has a great rare opportunity, i.e. the golden opportunity of being born as a human in the dispensation of the Buddha. As a homeless Buddhist monk, who lives a virtuous and pure life without harm to others, he will enjoy real benefits in this present life as well as in all lives to come till he gains Nibbāna. However, a man who enters into the Order merely to have an easy life is not a good Sangha. Such a man is not really dutiful on study, teaching, preaching and practice, and is also not following the precept or rules of discipline according to Buddha's teachings. Such a person will not only lose the benefits of being a Sangha, but also after his death will go down to the lower woeful planes of existence (*apāya*). Therefore only a Sangha who can follow the principles according to the Teaching is quite in accordance with the inherent qualities of an Ariya Sangha as mention below.

### 9. NOBLE ATTRIBUTES OF THE SANGHA

The nine highest qualities of the Sangha of the Noble Order are:

1. Of good conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One;
2. Of upright conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One;
3. Of wise conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One;

4. Of dutiful conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One;
5. This is Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One - namely these Four Pairs of persons, the Eight Kinds of individuals - is worthy of offering;
6. Is worthy of hospitality;
7. Is worthy of gifts;
8. Is worthy of reverential salutation;
9. Is an incomparable field of merit to the world.

All Sanghas are bound by the rules laid down by the Buddha in the *Vinaya Pitaka* and required to teach the Dhamma to mankind for the attainment of prosperity, peace and happiness in this life as well as in the lives to come. In this way over 2,500 years after the Buddha's demise, the Sangha preserved the Buddha's words which passed down from teacher to teacher or from generation to generation. Now as a consequence, Buddhists possess the Dhamma, the most precious treasure in their presence, and for that they value the proudest confidence in the Sangha who is earnestly carrying on the main task of study and practice (*dvedhura*) of the Dhamma.



# VOLUME II

## THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

### Part I. KAMMA AND REBIRTH

#### 1. KAMMA AND ITS RESULT

The Dhamma taught by the Buddha is based on conditional relation between cause and effect or action and its results ( *Kamma and kamma vipāka* ). To understand Buddhism or the Dhamma, in its plain sense, one should know that there are only two views or concepts in the world, namely:

1. Soul or Self (*Atta*); and
2. No-soul or No-self (*Anatta*) theories.

Several other religions, except Buddhism, advocate the Soul or God or Self theory in various denominations.

With reference to *Anatta* theory, there are two views, namely:

1. *Kammasakata Sammā Ditthi Ñāna*, i.e. the knowledge of proper understanding of one's own actions and their reactions, or cause and effect; and
2. *Vipaṣsanā Ñāna*, i.e. the insight knowledge of realization of things as they truly are.

With regard to the first view, Buddhists do not believe, like followers of other religions, in any creation by God or Divine Being or other supernatural powers or



in a permanent or indestructible Soul or Self, which are regarded in Buddhism as *Issara Nimmana Ditthi*, meaning the wrong view of creation by dominant Power or Soul or God. And they also do not hold the view that what is experienced, whether good or bad, happy or unhappy, in this present life is due to past cause only (*Pubbekatahetu Ditthi*). In a similar fashion, Buddhism teaches that there are causal relationships for our existence, resultant from the past births and the things do not evolve by blind chance or no-cause (*Akiriya* or *Ahetuka Ditthi*), but dependent on their previous cause. According to the causal or conditional law of nature, there is also the possibility of resultant existence after one's life, as long as one has craving or clinging for something in one's mind.

Other religions generally believe in transmigration or reincarnation, eternalism and nihilism, self-indulgence and self-mortification, pessimism and optimism, all of which differ from Buddhist Teaching. But Buddhists believe only in the principles of Cause and Effect, the Cycle of Dependent Origination (*Paticca Samuppāda*).

With regard to Kamma formation, Buddhists believe that in the whole universe there are only three phenomena, namely wholesome ( *Kusalā Dhammā* ), unwholesome ( *Akusalā Dhammā* ), and neither-wholesome-nor-unwholesome ( *Avyākatā Dhammā* ). According to the Buddhist concept, wholesome means

good action, good speech and good thought, whereas unwholesome means evil action, evil speech and evil thought.

Buddhists try to cultivate good actions, speech and thought. That is, one is trying to create and accumulate good Kamma as much as possible. Kamma here means wholesome and unwholesome volition. Good resultant fruits are acquired by creating good volition or good Kamma, and vice versa.

It therefore depends upon how one cultivates Kamma, for good or bad during one's lifetime. Quite simply, you can expect that the result of what you are related to what you have done, and will also result from what you are doing presently. Good begets good and evil begets evil.

It is natural and scientific law of the universe that whoever does any good or bad action will surely have good or bad reaction. As an old proverb says; "As we sow so shall we reap". Similarly, there is also a Buddhist saying that "a tree will bear fruits according to its seed, whether bitter or sweet" (*Yādisam vappate bījam tādisam harate phalam* ).

Buddhist Kamma is neither fatalism nor determinism. It is dynamic and moves always upwards and downwards according to one's activities, movements or volition either good or bad. One will see, therefore, that one's Kamma can be modified or created as one

likes, so that one can progress to a higher realm of life. As such, man is supreme master of himself; it is man's creative power and that alone makes himself, his status, or his Kamma to be developed for the betterment of his life. One must strive to raise the degree of one's moral virtues and cultivate good Kamma for spiritual evolution.

In Buddhism to have faith in Kamma and its effects is first and foremost essential. If one does not believe in Kamma and its effects and wrongly believes that an Almighty Being or God is arranging the good and bad results, human power or capacity becomes of no use for one's own destiny and one must then solely surrender oneself to God only. If that is so, man is not required to do anything good and just has to wait for the guidance of God. Thus he is more inclined to do bad deeds instead of good since man mostly delights in evil things. As a result, he will not enjoy happiness, but surely meet sufferings which are natural consequences of his own bad deeds.

Those who have done meritorious deeds in the past gain prosperity and happiness in the present. They are born in high and noble families. Their hearts are full of kindness and love for their fellow beings. They shun evil actions, and love honesty and truth. Their minds are occupied with noble thoughts. They receive the love and respect of the people. They are brave and fearless in doing right; they act, speak and think rightly. They act



calmly and thoughtfully. Other people regard them as their true leaders. Their good fame spreads far and wide all over the country and the world. These are the results of meritorious actions done only by themselves in the past as well as the present.

For example, a person receives good education and moral teaching in his or her youth from good parents, guardians and teachers. He or she thus enjoys at a later date the fruits of his or her labours. In the same way, persons who performed good deeds in the past enjoy good fruits in the present as a consequence of their good deeds; they lead a life of prosperity, peace and happiness.

There are four kinds of personalities, namely:

1. One who is born of rich parents and become rich and prosperous, is said to be good in both past and present Kamma - like Anāthapindika and Visākha;
2. One who is born of rich parents, but become poor and low in one's living is said to be good in the past but not good at present, like a begger son of a very rich man;
3. One who is born of poor parents, but becomes rich and prosperous is said to be bad in the past and good at present Kamma;
4. One who is born of poor parents and become low in living is said to be bad in

both the past and present Kamma.

Though the past Kamma is not exempt now in the present life and is supporting occasionally, unless one cultivates the present Kamma as good as possible, one cannot by any means become rich and prosperous.

Therefore in order to fulfil the present Kamma better, one must earn one's living according to the following four ways;

1. One should live according to the means of alertness or diligence in doing one's business, education, service, etc. (*Utthāna Sampadā*).
2. One should live according to the means of wariness, watchfulness and good care, etc. so that one's wealth and possessions may not be lost (*Arakkha Sampadā*).
3. One should live according to the means of association with good friends (*Kalayāna Mittatā*) who have such good qualities as-  
A. Faith (*Saddhā*) B. Morality (*Sīla*)  
C. Liberality (*Cāga*) D. Wisdom (*Paññā*)
4. One should live within one's means (*Samajīvatatā*).

In observing the above mentioned factors, it is obvious that the inequalities in human characters, appearances, positions, abilities, status, etc. are only due to their own actions (*Kamma*) and experiences of their

resultant effects. Apparently, in this world, the basic and natural process of individual mentality or tendency differs from person to person. Consequently, as the manner of their actions differs from one another, their consequences also are not the same, just like their fingers. Such being the case, we, all human beings, appear in the world in different forms and qualities. That is why some are rich while some are poor, and some are wise while some are foolish and so on. It is a well-known fact that the natural phenomenon, like Kamma, can never produce two identical things; that is the reason why even identical twins of the same parents differ from one another.

The Lord Buddha teaches us about the consequences of actions. Kamma literally means action. In the ultimate sense of the term, Kamma means good and bad volition, Kamma does not necessarily mean only past action; it may be both past and present actions; Kamma is action and Vipaka its fruit, is reaction. The various kinds of bad and good volition engender the resultant mental properties and material qualities produced out of one's actions, as a result of Kamma.

It is not like fate, nor predestination which is imposed on us by some mysterious unknown Being to whom we must helplessly submit ourselves. In a plain sense, it is one's own doing or action which reacts or result on one's own self. It is a natural law in itself.

As Kamma is good or bad actions, and Vipaka



is the natural consequence of those actions, no one can escape from the consequence of one's moral or immoral actions. In other words, every action or cause is followed by its reaction or effects like a shadow following the person. For no power on earth or heaven can prevent the consequence of one's own actions or avert the actions resulting therefrom.

It is therefore necessary to perform whatever action may be, bodily, verbally, and mentally, with good will or intention, as far as possible. The meritorious deeds done in the present life will bear fruits of a future blissful state either in the heavenly birth or human abode. But in the performance of any activity, one should not forget to use right effort, right judgement, common sense and reason. Otherwise, for the lack of these, one's actions in the past may not bear good resultant fruits in the present.

Buddhism attributes that one's action is one's own heir, one's own inheritance, one's own cause, one's own kinsmen, one's own refuge. If one does good or bad, one is the heir of that action.

Here we shall take an instance how the Buddha delivered the Doctrine of Kamma, the Law of Cause and Effect and replied to the questions by the young man Subha, the son of Todeya as follows:

“Why is that among human beings some live short, whilst some long lives,

some have poor health whilst some good health,  
 some are ugly whilst some beautiful,  
 some are friendless whilst some have plenty,  
 some are poor whilst some rich,  
 some are low-born whilst some high-born, some  
 are ignorant whilst some intelligent? Why is it  
 that human beings have these differences?"

## 2. SHORT LIFE AND LONG LIFE

If a certain man or woman kills a living being, as a result of this evil deed he or she will be born in Hell (*Niraya*). If born again in the human abode such a person will live a short life. But one who abstains from killing will be in a happy celestial (*Deva*) plane; if one comes to be born as a human being one will live long.

## 3. SICKNESS AND HEALTH

If a certain man or woman harms others, as a result of this evil deed, he or she will be born in Hell (*Niraya*). If born again in the human abode, such a person will be full of sickness. Being kind and harms not, one will be born in a happy celestial (*Deva*) plane; if one comes to be born as a human being one will be healthy.

#### 4. UGLINESS AND BEAUTY

If a certain man or woman is full of anger, as a result of this evil deed, he or she will be born in Hell (*Niraya*). If born again in the human abode, such a person will be ugly. But being not angry and impatient, one will be born in a happy celestial (*Deva*) plane; if one comes to be born as a human being one will be beautiful.

#### 5. FEW FRIENDS AND MANY FRIENDS

If a certain man or woman feels jealous of others, as a result of this evil deed, he or she will be born in Hell (*Niraya*). If born again in the human abode, such a person will be friendless. But without a jealous mind if one feels rejoice, one will be born in a happy celestial (*Deva*) plane; if one comes to be born as a human being one will have many friends.

#### 6. POVERTY AND WEALTH

If a certain man or woman does not give to charity, and prevents others from giving, as a result of this evil deed, he or she will be born in Hell (*Niraya*). If born again in the human abode, such a person will be poor. But if one gives charity, one will be born in a happy celestial (*Deva*) plane; if one comes to be born



as a human being one will be wealthy.

### 7. LOW-BORN AND HIGH-BORN

If a certain man or woman being proud, does not pay respect or homage to whom respect is due, as a result of this evil deed, he or she will be born in Hell (*Niraya*). If born again in the human abode, such a person will be born in a low family. But if one, not being proud of oneself, shows respect to whom respect is due, one will be born in a happy celestial (*Deva*) plane; if one comes to be born as a human being one will be born in a high family.

### 8. IGNORANCE AND INTELLIGENCE

If a certain man or woman does not ask questions as to what is good or evil, or how he or she ought to practise, and is ignorant and has done evil in deeds, speech and thought, such a person will be born in Hell (*Niraya*). If born again in the human abode, such a person will become an ignorant person. But if one asks questions as to what is good or evil, what deed is faulty or faultless, what ought to be practised or otherwise, what deed will bring disadvantage and suffering or advantage and happiness, one will be born in a happy celestial (*Deva*) plane; if one comes to be born as a human being one will be wise and intelligent.

Regarding the above mentioned differences, the Buddha has clarified as follows:

“Owners of their deed, young man, are the beings, heirs of their deeds, their deeds are the causes that bear them, their deeds are their relatives, their deeds are their refuge. Their deeds differentiate the being into low and high states.”

Here one would like to know who create Kamma to prolong *Samsāra* and why it is going on like this.

A being is bound to go round in *Samsāra* through the consequences of his or her moral or immoral deeds. And these moral or immoral deeds are motivated by ignorance (*Avijjā*) and craving (*Tanhā*). As long as these two defilements are latent in one's mind, Kamma is being generated in the process of Samsara and thus one can never attain Nibbāna.

In order to dispel the two latent defiled tendencies of ignorance and craving, one must concentrate to combat or eliminate the craving and meditate to dispel the ignorance. Here we can fulfil the two tasks of concentration and meditation simultaneously by just being aware and noting the touch at the tip of the nostrils, of the in-breathing and out-breathing. This concentration and meditation technique will be explained later.

When one comes to realize that one is composed of physical and mental phenomena from the

notion of touch and awareness, it is said that one has reached the Purity of View (*Ditthi Visuddhi*) or the insight knowledge of realization between Mind and Matter.

By continuing meditation on the arising and passing away of psycho-physical phenomena, and knowing them as they really are, the defilements of greed, hatred or anger, and delusion have no chance of penetration into the mind and thus one can gain *Ariyan* Path, Fruition and Nibbāna in the present life.





## **Part II. THE DEPENDENT ORIGINATION** (THE DOCTRINE OF *PATICCA SAMUPPĀDA* )

### **1. AN EFFECT DEPENDS ON A CAUSE**

Natural Law of the Universe provides that cause and effect are related to one another. If there is cause there must be effect. Without a cause there cannot be an effect. The effect again becomes a cause, which, in turn, produces its effect and thus the cycle of cause and effect goes on ad infinitum.

The central theme of this doctrine of *Paticca Samuppāda* is that every phenomenon is produced depending on cause and conditions. All mental and physical states are being produced depending on other state of mind and matter, which, in turn, are produced depending on still other states. In reality, there is nothing that can arise of its own accord or lead an isolated life, quite independent of everything else.

The doctrine of *Paticca Samuppāda* is the real foundation on which the entire philosophy of Buddhism is built up. *Paticca Samuppāda* is a combination of Pāli words. *Paticca* meaning “depending upon”, *Sam* meaning “well” and *Uppāda* meaning “arising of effect”, hence it is known in English as the Law of Dependent Origination or Cycle of Birth and Death of a being.

It is to be borne in mind that *Paticca*

Samuppāda pertains to nothing but your own self, your own aggregate (*Khandha*) of Mind and Body (*Nāma and Rūpa*). It shows the casual continuum of your so-called self, the process of arising and passing away of Mind and Matter. In other words, the series of sufferings since indefinite time and space.

Paticca Samuppāda actually is in itself the cyclic order of arising and passing away of the aggregate of Mind and Body. One phenomenon gives rise to another in an endless continuum. This process is therefore only the arising and passing away of Mind and Matter, or Law of Casualty, in which there is no semblance that can be taken for I, you, he, she, man, woman, self or ego, etc.

In the Dighanikāya, the Buddha Himself has said, "O Bikkhus, one who understands Paticca Samuppāda does understand the Dhamma, and who understands the Dhamma understands Paticca Samuppāda". And, soon after His Enlightenment, the Buddha meditated on the Wheel of Life and proclaimed to the world of beings how He had realized the actual stratum of the links of life, the Buddha therefore uttered a Paean of Joy (*Udāna*) on this very Doctrine of Paticca Samuppāda.

In this chain, we see one incident depends upon another one previous to it, and gives rise to one after it. Everything that we find in the world can be brought under a chain of cause and effect; nothing can originate without depending on something else previous to it, and

no originated thing can be conceived of which does not give rise to something else in its turn.

## 2. THE LINKS BETWEEN CAUSE AND EFFECT

Thus the process is going on, yet, anything can be traced upwards to where it originated and downwards to that which has origin depending on it, for nature is governed by the Law of Paticca Samuppāda or depending on that, this originates. There is no break in the process. The events flow continuously in a series, one giving rise to another. As one ripple in a stream causes another, and that, also still another, so the causation goes on.

In reality, Paticca Samuppāda is nothing but the ceaseless process of one's own *Khadhas*, i.e. perishing of the old ones giving place to the new, in other words, Paticca Samuppāda is the Causal Continuum of arising and vanishing of physical and mental phenomena.

## 3. TWO ROOT DEFILEMENTS

*Samsāra* is unmeasurable in that the beginning of it is inconceivable. Being shrouded in ignorance (*Avijjā*) and bound up by craving (*Tanhā*) the beginning of beings who are undergoing round of rebirths from one existence to another is incomprehensible. The first predominant factor of the potential force of *Samsāra* is



ignorance (*Avijjā*) which blinds the beings so that he cannot see the Truth as it really is, and the second, its ally is craving or lust (*Tanhā*), which binds or fetters oneself, to one's own family, property, possessions, wealth and all animate and inanimate objects.

#### 4. THREE ROUNDS IN THE PROCESS OF EXISTENCE

Due to ignorance (*Avijjā*) and craving (*Tanhā*), a man does all sorts of good and bad actions, and thereby having gathered new Kammās at every instance of action is thus reborn after death. And again he goes on doing the same actions with his ignorance and craving and continues being born and reborn. These two predominant factors are indeed the origins of life which cause the being tremendously miserable in the cycle of lives in Samsāra. Until and unless they are totally uprooted and annihilated the cycle of life (*Bhavadakkara*) or the Law of Cause and Effect or the Dependent Origination will be repeated continually round and round in the following twelve links.

#### 5. LINKS IN NATURAL ORDER

1. Depending on ignorance there arise Volitional Activities (*Sankhāra*);
2. Depending on the Volitional Activities there arises Rebirth Consciousness (*Vinnāna*);

3. Depending on Rebirth Consciousness there arise the Mental and Physical States of a being (*Nāma-rūpa*);
4. Depending on the Mental and Physical States there develop the Six Senses ( eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) (*Salāyatanā* );
5. Depending on the Six Senses there arises Contact (with sense objects) (*Phassa*);
6. Depending on the Contact there arises Feelings (e.g. pleasant, unpleasant and neutral) (*Vedanā* );
7. Depending on Feelings there arises Craving for the objects (*Tanhā* );
8. Depending on Craving there arises Grasping or Clinging (*Upādāna* );
9. Depending on Clinging there arises the Process of Life (*Bhava*);
10. The Process of Life flows into another rebirth (*Jāti* );
11. The present birth is followed by
12. Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Suffering, Intense Grief and Mental Distress.

Thus a being, composed of Mind and Body, is endlessly suffering from the worldly ills of life in circling around these links.

## 6. LINKS IN REVERSE ORDER

Just as the Dependent Origination evolves and “chains” from link to link through depending on the first predominant Cause, Ignorance , so also this Dependent Origination ceases through depending on the extinction of this very Ignorance as follows:

1. Depending on the extinction of Ignorance, Volitional Activities become extinct;
2. Depending on the extinction of Volitional Activities, Rebirth Consciousness becomes extinct;
3. Depending on the extinction of Rebirth Consciousness, the Mental and Physical States of a being become extinct;
4. Depending on the extinction of the Mental and Physical States of a being, Six Senses become extinct;
5. Depending on the extinction of Six Senses, Contact becomes extinct;
6. Depending on the extinction of the Contact, Feelings become extinct;
7. Depending on the extinction of the Feelings, Craving becomes extinct;
8. Depending on the extinction of the Craving, Grasping becomes extinct;
9. Depending on the extinction of the Grasping,



the Process of Life becomes extinct;

10. Depending on the extinction of the Process of Life, Rebirth becomes extinct;
11. Depending on the extinction of Rebirth,
12. Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Suffering, Intense Grief and Mental Distress become extinct.

Thus the whole mass of suffering in Samsāra is ultimately exhausted and annihilated.

Here Avijjā means not comprehensively understanding the Four Noble Truths, the past, the future and both the past and the future existences, the Cycle of Dependent Origination of all phenomena of existence, as they are in reality. Due to this Avijjā, all the physical, verbal and mental activities were done, good or bad in a previous life, called *atitakamma bhava*, i.e. the process of active life in one's former birth.

In other words, a being deluded with ignorance has done:

- (a) Wholesome actions for which rebirth takes place in pleasant abodes, such as human or lesser Gods (*Deva* );
- (b) Unwholesome actions for which rebirth takes place in lower woeful miserable abodes, such as hell, animal kingdom, the kingdom of ghosts (*Peta* ), or ghost - like beings whose life is partly pleasant and partly

hellish;

- (c) Higher mental actions for which rebirth takes place in the planes of higher Gods (*Arupa Brahma* ) enjoying a limited period of continual bliss of ecstasy.

All moral and immoral thoughts, words and deeds are included in Sankhāra. Actions good or bad, which are directly rooted in or indirectly tainted with ignorance, must necessarily produce their due effect and tend to prolong in Samsāra. Even in moral activities, still conjoined with ignorance and craving for something, they too produce their due good or bad result, and nevertheless, are necessary to reduce or get rid of these ills of life. Ignorance, indeed, is more predominant in immoral activities, while it is latent in moral activities.

Thus dependent on past conditioning activities arises relinking or rebirth consciousness (*patisandhi viññāna* ) in a subsequent birth. For instance, the foetus in the mother's womb is formed by the combination of this relinking-consciousness with the fertilized sperm-ovum cells of the parents. In this consciousness are latent all the past impressions, characteristics and tendencies of the particular individual life-flux. Simultaneous with the arising of the relinking-consciousness there appear physical and mental states or mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa* ) or the "corporeal organism".

Here Nāma means the three aggregates -

feeling ( *Vedanā* ), perception ( *Saññā* ) and mental formation ( *Sankhāra* ) - that arise simultaneously with the relinking-consciousness. Rūpa means the three combinations - body ( *Kāya* ), sex ( *Bhāva* ) and seat of consciousness ( *Vatthu* ) - that also arise simultaneously with the relinking-consciousness, conditioned by past Kamma.

Then depending on these psycho-physical phenomena, there evolve the six sense-bases ( *salāyatana* ). All the six senses - eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind have their respective objects and functions. Again, the six sense-objects, such as forms, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles and mental objects collide with their respective sense-organs giving rise to six types of consciousness. The conjunction of the sense-bases, sense-objects and the resultant consciousness is contact ( *phassa* ) which is purely subjective and impersonal.

When the objects come in contact with the senses, there appear feelings ( *Vedanā* ) that experience desirable or undesirable fruits of an action done in this or in previous births. Chiefly there are three kinds of feelings, namely, pleasurable ( *Somanassa* ), unpleasurable ( *Domanassa* ), and neutral ( *Upekkhā* ). This is the process of the present life as a result of the previous Kamma, called ( *Paccupanna upapatti-bhava* ), i.e. the process at the time of taking birth.



Then, dependent on feeling arises craving (*Tanhā*) which, like ignorance, is the other predominant factor in the Dependent Origination. Craving is threefold, namely craving for sensual pleasures (*Kāmatanhā*), craving for existence (*Bhavatanhā*) and craving for non-existence (*Vibbavatanhā*). There are also twelve kinds of craving corresponding to internal six senses and external sense-objects. When they are viewed as past, present and future, there are 36, and again when multiplied by three kinds of craving they all amount to 108.

After that, dependent on craving, there appears grasping or clinging (*Upādā na*). Here *Tanhā* is something like the love of a mother to her son, whereas *Upādāna* is akin to much attachment for her husband. Grasping is caused by both attachment and false view. There are four kinds of grasping namely Sensuality, False Views, Adherence to rites and rituals and Theory of Soul or Self-illusive View.

Again, dependent on grasping, there arises the Process of Life (*Bhava*) which literally means becoming. Thus a being or person keeps on the struggle of life, doing all kinds of good and bad actions. This is the active part of the present life called *Paccupanna* “*Kammabhava*”, i.e. the process of his or her activities in the course of his or her present span of life. These yield results in the form of “*patisandhi*” conception of Rebirth, in the following life accordingly, which is again followed

by decay, death and all other miserable evils. This future resultant of the present is called “anāgata upapatti bhava”, i.e. the process of life in the future as a result of the present.

Thus the cycle of Paticca Samuppāda, meaning the “Wheel of Life” or the “Dependent Origination” takes into consideration as follows;

- a. two root bases (*mūla* ), i.e. ignorance and craving;
- b. two Noble Truths (*Saccā* ), i.e. Suffering and the Cause of Suffering;
- c. three tenses (*kāla* ), i.e. Past, Present and Future;
- d. three junctions (*Sandhi* ), i.e. First, Second and Third;
- e. three rounds of defilements (*vatta* ), i.e. Sensuality, its Result and Defilement;
- f. four sections ( *Sankhepa* ), i.e. First, Second, Third and Fourth;
- g. twelve parts ( *Anga* ), i.e. Ignorance, Volitional Activity, Consciousness, etc.;
- h. twenty constituents or modes (*Ākāra* ), i.e. five modes in each section.

The cycle of Paticca Samuppāda lengthens so long as the aggregate of grasping is apparent in one's life-process. So we must be mindfully aware of how this aggregate of grasping takes place in the Dependent

Origination. In the act of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking, the psycho-physical phenomena become apparent at every moment one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches and thinks. In every act of thus seeing when the eye-base comes in contact (*Phassa*) with the visible object, the phenomenon of seeing-consciousness indelibly becomes apparent.

### 7. GRASPING ON THE AGGREGATES

Along with this seeing consciousness, the perception ( *saññā* ) of what is seen, the feeling (*Vedanā* ) whether pleasant or unpleasant or neutral at the sight seen, the encouragement of the active volition to see (*sankhāra* ) and attention (*manasikāra* ), all these become apparent. Of these, the eye-base and the object constitute the aggregate of material qualities (*rūpakkhandhā* ). And if these material qualities are considered as existent, permanent and pleasing as a living entity and clung to, both of the eye and the object are called (*rupupādānakkhandhā* ). Due to the similar attachment, the eye consciousness is called (*viññānupādānakkhandhā* ).

### 8. A BEING - MERELY MIND AND MATTER

In brief, the eye and the sight are only material qualities (*rūpa* ) and the consciousness of the sight is



mental quality (*nāma*). In reality, there are only these two phenomena, i.e. mental and material (*nāma-rūpa*), which constitute a being.

If we scrutinise them, we will discern that they are momentarily arising and passing away for ever and ever. During such a moment of seeing, unless we meditate on the phenomena of Mind and Matter and their arising and passing away, the defilements of ignorance (*Avijjā*) and craving (*Tanhā*) do arise in our eyes. Then due to this, there arises grasping which again gives rise to the process of new birth (*bhava*) and it lengthens the Cyclic Chain of Paticca Samuppāda, widening the scope of Samsāra.

## 9. CUTTING OFF THE WHEEL OF LIVES

Here, in order to cut off the stratum of Paticca Samuppāda, we must meditate on every link of the wheel and should be fully aware of the eye-base and visible objects as the material qualities and the eye-consciousness too as the mental quality, but not I or he or she or yours or mine or hers.

In the like manner, we should be fully aware of the pleasant feeling as pleasant feeling, the unpleasant feeling as unpleasant feeling and the neutral feeling as neutral feeling, in their own intrinsic nature, but not I or he or she or mine or yours or his or hers, and in fact,

they also are arising and passing away all the time.

As a result, the feeling can produce non-craving, which, in turn, gives rise to no-grasping, no-new-life-process, no-rebirth, no-old age and no-death.

Thus you will be liberated from all the cyclic endless sufferings of Paticca Samuppāda and it is called in Buddhism the Most Supreme Happiness of Nibbāna.

Note – See Appendix for "Dependent Origination Diagram".



### **Part III. THE DOCTRINE OF ANATTA (THEORY OF NO-SOUL)**

#### **1. THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION**

Man of the ancient times, in his fundamental nature, was dreadful for having come across with any kind of troubles or dangers and then he sought for his reliance to get rid of his fears and frights. With the confrontation of any difficulty or problems, he was generally incited to try to find out a powerful and influential person or thing for his reliance which could console or remedy his worries, anxieties, griefs or sorrow etc. In finding out the ways and means for relief and release from any kind of his trouble, he had taken refuge in the ideational spirit of a big tree, or a mountain, or a river, or the sun, or the moon or any seeming beings or idea.

These various imaginary refuges were taken sparingly only for their satisfaction, but never tested with a reasoning and scientific proof as is done in our modern day and even they dared not miss or affect their worship. For this reason some were quite far from the true goal of ultimate reality; some might be only satisfied with an imaginary worship; many became invalid from the scientific and rationalistic view point of real deliverance. But only a few who had been opportune enough of



having a right method of the Dhamma, the naturalistic philosophy of the law of the universe, could see the truth as it is.

## **2. BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE NOBLE TRUTHS**

Consequently, men, without having true light of knowledge, in a normal way, accepted the sayings of their forefathers from earlier generations and believed in the tradition. If their fore-generations were wise enough of the knowledge of truth according to their scriptures, the sphere of their knowledge could have been more developed and their view might be on the right path.

.But if there were not rational intelligent factors in the sayings, they remained helpless satisfying just only with their sayings in the delusion of their knowledge. The obvious fact is that the standard of knowledge mostly dependent on the situation whether the society or race has had the appropriate correct literature or sayings of wise fore-father.

## **3. FOUR GREAT RELIGIONS**

There exist now in the world four great religions; they are, Brahmanism or Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Brahmanism dated from the beginning of the world of mankind. Buddhism originated more than 2,500 years ago. Christ was born 543 BC after the demise of

the Buddha. Mohammed was born 570 years after the birth of Christ.

These religions have their own respective scriptures, viz. the Vedic Scriptures of Hinduism, the Bible of Christianity, the Koran of Islam and the Buddhist Scriptures of Buddhism. Generally, we find that there is not so much difficulty for Buddhists for studying the doctrines of other religions. A considerable comprehension of their meaning and significance is possible with just a reasonable effort within a few months or years.

In the case of Buddhist Scriptures, however, people of other religions are sure to find very hard even by spending many years when making them a subject of study, even harder in the actual practice and most difficult for the attainment of the Noble Truth.

Buddhism is originally written in Pali language known as Magadha in the Buddha's time. The Pāli words, though now known by many people of the world, have a great wealth or richness of meaning of varying depth and profundity.

#### **4. THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE BUDDHA-DHAMMA**

Some of the Buddhist doctrines have been taught by direct method (nitattha) whereas others by indirect method (neyyatta). Unless these two ways are properly

understood, the content or meaning of the doctrine is liable to be construed contrariwise.

For instance, not easy to understand indeed is the true significance of the supreme knowledge or wisdom (omniscience) of the Buddha. In like manner, it is most difficult to know the actual meaning of Nibbāna and experience the blissful happiness of Nibbanic Peace (santi sukha) "*Nibbānam paramam sukham*".

Buddhism is therefore distinguished from all other religions and philosophies for its unique character. In particular, the technique of deliverance which is distinguished characteristics of Buddhism is quite different from that of all other religions.

## 5. THE VIEWS OF OTHER THREE RELIGIONS

Christianity, Islam and Judaism primarily base their teachings on the idea of God, whereas Hinduism on *Atta or Atman, Self* or Eternal Soul. They say, "Turn to God; pray to Him; give yourself utterly to Him who will wash away your sins and reward for your good; become one with Him or Eternal Soul or Brahma".

These religions says that until a man believes in God or Brahma, he cannot begin to live a truly righteous or useful life of purity. Evidently enough, there are thousands in these religions who do live of charity, purity and holiness, but the strange fact is that there are also



lives of charity, purity and holiness lived by thousands who follow the Buddha, who yet never asked men to worship any God or Brahma for their deliverance.

### 6. ATTA VERSUS ANATTA (Soul and No-soul)

On the whole, there are in the world of mankind, only two views or concepts, namely Soul (*Atta*) and No-soul (*Anatta*). Of these two views, the one expounded by the Buddha through His Supreme Enlightenment is the No-Soul (*Anatta*) view. The rest of mankind generally hold the view of eternal Soul or God (*Atta*) under various denominations.

Of all soul-views, the one held by the Hindus is quite like others. The Hindu system believes in the cosmic law of action-and-reaction governed by cause-effect righteousness (*Kammavipaka*). Other systems of Soul or God (*Atta*) have no faith in the law of Kamma formations.

### 7. NATURAL LAW AND THE BUDDHA-DHAMMA

However, it is only in recent years that modern philosophers and scientists have come to recognise that “everything is in a state of flux or change; nothing whatsoever is permanent and substantial in all the worldly domain”. That been explicitly taught by the

Buddha over 2,500 years ago in its exposition not only to the body, so called matter, but also the mind.

In Buddhism, for higher rational thinking and philosophy, knowledge is divided into two kinds:

1. Knowledge of *Kammassakata* (i.e.) proper understanding of action and reaction; and
2. Knowledge of insight meditation (*Vipassanā ñāna*) which corresponds to the adaptation of sublime truth (*Saccanulomika nana*).

The followers of Hindu faith can attain kamassakata knowledge, but not Saccanulomika ñāna which can lead to the attainment of the Path and Fruition of *Ariya* stages. However, in the Buddha's teaching specifically both knowledge can be attained.

In the Buddha's teaching, by virtue of these two kinds of knowledge or wisdom, the aspirant can attain the ultimate blissful Peace of Nibbāna, through the Paths and Fruitions which cannot be attained by following any doctrine of other religions. The Buddha's teaching alone contains the significant prescription or technique to be practised for the higher knowledge pertaining to the transcendental Path of Nibbāna and thereby closing forever all doors to rebirth in the lower realms of gravest misery and woe (*Apāya*) and then leading to the utter liberation from Samsāra.

To acquire such a higher knowledge of adaptation to the sublime truths, the aspirant intending to

achieve the final goal of Deliverance should first establish himself in the Purity of View or Understanding (*Ditthi Visuddhi*).

### 8. NO-SOUL VIEW AND HUMAN BEING

Here he should know the theoretical aspect of mind and matter which constitute the so-called being or man.

A being whom we call 'man' is indeed composed of mind and matter only. According to Buddhism apart from mind and matter (*nāma rūpa*), which constitute the so-called man, there is no such thing as an immortal soul (*Atta*), which lives (behind them) inside him.

Our body is composed of particles of matter (*rūpa*). Matter, in fact, is the visible complex of invisible qualities and forces known in Pāli as *Mahābhuta*, essential or great elements. Along with the arising of these four primary elements there also arise four secondary characteristics of matter, i.e. colour, smell, taste and nutritional quality. The whole physical body, composed primarily of these material qualities, can be experienced only in terms of these eight elemental properties of matter.

In fact, these eight properties are inseparable and interrelated, yet different in cosmic nature with one



another.

## 9. ARISING AND PASSING AWAY OF MIND AND BODY

Each quality or property, being a combination of themselves in one proportion or another, can only be “seen” by the inner eye or insight knowledge. As soon as the material quality is changed into different forms, the composite things are held to be mere conceptions presented to the mind by the particular appearance, shape or form. Above all, matter in its perishable or dissolvable nature is not a substantial entity, but merely an arising and passing phenomenon along its psychological process.

Mind, which is the most important in the being, is consciousness plus mental factors. Consciousness is just the knowing faculty, that which knows the object. Generally people imagine that mind exists somewhere in the brain or in the heart as a solid entity. As a matter of fact, it is not so.

The so-called mind is nothing but a series of successive momentary thoughts or process of consciousnesses which are the product of the impact between sense organs and sense object. Due to the contact between eye and visible object, there arises for sure eye-consciousness (*Viññāna*) and simultaneously along with it there also arises mental constituents called

(*cetasika*), such as, sensation or feeling of whatever kind (*vedanā*), perception of sense-objects (*saññā*) and fifty types of mental factors including tendencies and faculties (*sankhāra*). Thus the so-called mind consists of the four mental aggregates.

In this way, the so-called being or man (*satta*) is a composition of five aggregates of the material and mental forces, the composition of which is changing all the time, not remaining the same even for two consecutive moments. If so, apart from the five aggregates of the mind and matter, there remain nothing to be called *Atta*, the Self or Soul.

Here we have to quote the three fundamental characteristics of existence taught by the Buddha. "All conditioned things are impermanent; all conditioned things are suffering; all things are insubstantial. What is transient that is painful; what is painful that is soulless, essenceless, impersonal or insubstantial (*Anatta*), i.e., the absence of a permanent unchanging self or soul in anywhere or in anybody.

## 10. NOTHING REALITY IN THE PHENOMENAL EXISTENCE

Let us take a simile here. A cart is set up by various part of accessories. But if these parts are taken out, there is no form to be called as a cart. In the same way, the combination of physical and mental elements is

called a “being” or “man” which may assume as many names as its types, shapes, forms and so on varying according as the mode of physical and mental changes. Here, in this respect, we find no permanent entity or identity or soul or self.

Moreover, let us cite the case of eye-sight. When the eye-base is in contact with a visible object, there invariably arises the eye-consciousness which comes into being by its own cosmic nature, not by any other supernatural being or power. Both the eye-base and the visible object are only material phenomena, not my eye, nor yours nor his nor hers.

In the like manner, the consciousness which arises by the result of contact between two material elements is a mental phenomenon, not my consciousness or mind, nor yours, his nor hers.

Just at the moment of seeing, these two phenomena are respectively arising and vanishing away in its own nature. Therefore, in each of these two phenomena there is really no I who see it, no personality, no identity, no soul, self, ego nor Atta, but a mere natural process of happening of physical and mental elements. This way can be applied to other sense organs, too.

## 11. NO-SELF, NO-EGO

By scrutinizing and reviewing the above fact, it may be noted that there is no real Atta or soul or self, ego, God or Brahma in the matter of seeing, or likewise in all the universe, apart from the happening of the five aggregates of mind-body, the six internal sense organs and six corresponding objects and eight kinds of elements (which arise in the impact between physical and mental elements). Thus our whole being is in reality rolling on in the circle or speed of our own vices and virtues, not as a personality, identity, but as the process of cause and effect itself.

## 12. ANATTA – THE ULTIMATE REALITY

So in the ultimate sense of reality, there is no entity of body or mind, but just the manifestation of physical and mental states which are always subject to the nature of insubstantially or Non-soul (*Anatta*). It is only because of this significant doctrine of Anatta, non-soul theory, Buddhism firmly stands its pristine purity abreast with modern science and is still seen as good and beneficial as in our modern age. In this way, Buddhism should be properly understood as to how it differs from other religions.



### 13. ORIGIN OF LIFE

There are two main views in the world with regard to the problem of the ultimate origin of life. The first one is that life must have had a beginning in the infinite past and that beginning of the first cause is the Creator – God or Brahma. This view is believed mostly by other religions except Buddhism. The other view believed by Buddhists is that life is considered beginningless, for the cause ever becomes the effect and the effect again becomes the cause, and thus in circles of cause and effect; a first cause is not conceivable and no personality or identity can be utterly found out in the process of cause-effect cycle.

Here the Buddha states in the Samyutta Nikaya II, “The origin of phenomenal existence is inconceivable, and the beginning of the beings obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by craving is not to be discoverable”. Such being the case, the life process or the universe is governed by the natural law of cause and effect. Birth is the cause; death is the effect and so birth and death are two phases of the life process.

So in this circle of cause and effect or of birth and death, the first beginning or creator is not discoverable. In actuality, no one creates the first origin of the universe, but the obvious fact is that the phenomena or elements alone are rolling on in all

universe since the time immemorial. In Buddhism, the perpetual wandering or round of rebirths is called Samsāra (lit. *Sam-ever, sāra-becoming*). The cosmic law on this process of life and death is explicitly explained by the Buddha in the Paticca Samuppāda - The Dependent Origination.

#### 14. THREE TENSES OF LIFE-PROCESS

Our present position in character and circumstances is the result of our past actions (*Kamma*). What we shall be in future depends on what we do now, upon how we face circumstances or how we condition our volitional activities in the present, and also that at present it is within our power to alter or modify the quality of the life-force that continues the next birth. Thus we come to understand that no other being or power apart from oneself is creating one's own kamma either wholesome or unwholesome. It is only man himself who creates his own position or status whether noble or mean, rich or poor, wise or foolish, beautiful or ugly, long-lived or short-lived and so on and so forth.

There are only three consecutive existences, past, present and future. By properly understanding the sequence of tenses, we come to realise that our being is really not a personality or entity, but the resultant combination produces out of the things which we have

done before; out of past vices and virtues; out of darkness of our own ignorance and craving. Thus we come to the present bringing with us the virtues and vices, our own joys and sorrows, ups and downs of our status and positions of life. We all are led here by our own desires or craving and here we remain in the present and again condition our new activities until our selfish desire or craving is annihilated.

### 15. THE PRACTICE OF ONE'S SAKE

To the wise man therefore, the life he lives here is a very valuable and golden opportunity to rid himself of the burden which he has accumulated in the past; to rid himself of his wrong doings, wrong views and wrong concepts of life and death, and dispelling them away all behind, to attain the highest blissful peak of life, Nibbāna.

Without attainment of the final goal of Nibbāna, we are sure to go again to the effect of our causation as long as we condition our activities. Such a round of our activities and their results is called the wheel of life (*Samsāra*)- the whole mass of sufferings. Those actually follow the Buddha and discern the real nature of the Anatta doctrine can be released from all sufferings of Samsara and reach the state of Nibbāna, the ultimate lasting peaceful Happiness.

## 16. THE NOBLE ADVICE OF THE BUDDHA

In conclusion, I would like to express the noble advice of the Buddha:

To give charity or alms-giving (*dāna* );

To perfect oneself with moral conduct (*sīla* );

To love all sentient beings (*mettā* );

To concentrate on the noble attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha (*anussati*) and in-and-out breathing (*Ānapāna* );

To detach dear and near ones and worldly things (*Samyojana* );

To dispel ignorance (*avijjā* ) and craving (*tanhā*);

To be absorbed into the reality and enlightened knowledge in the Noble Truths of the Path, Fruition and Nibbāna.

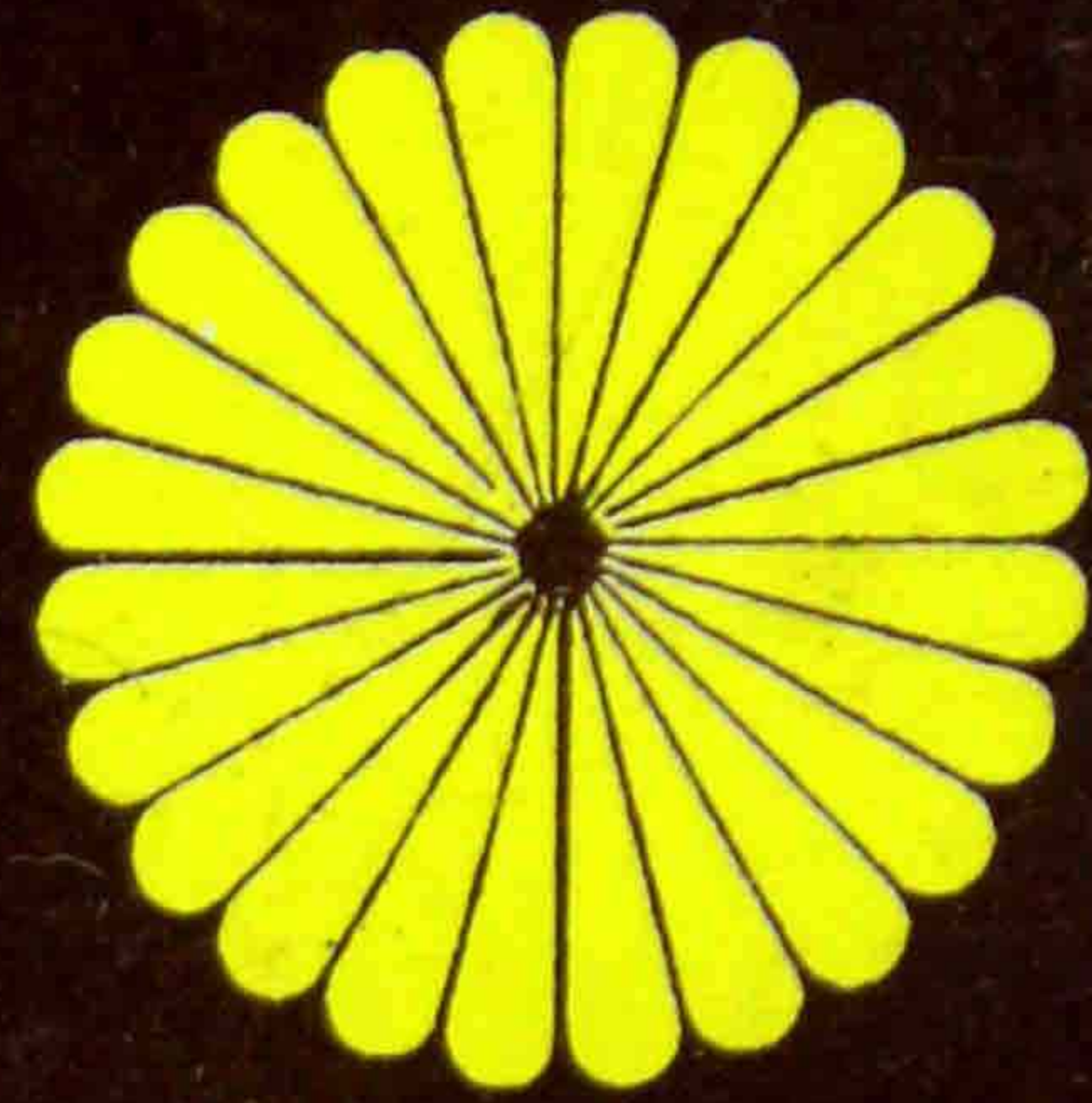
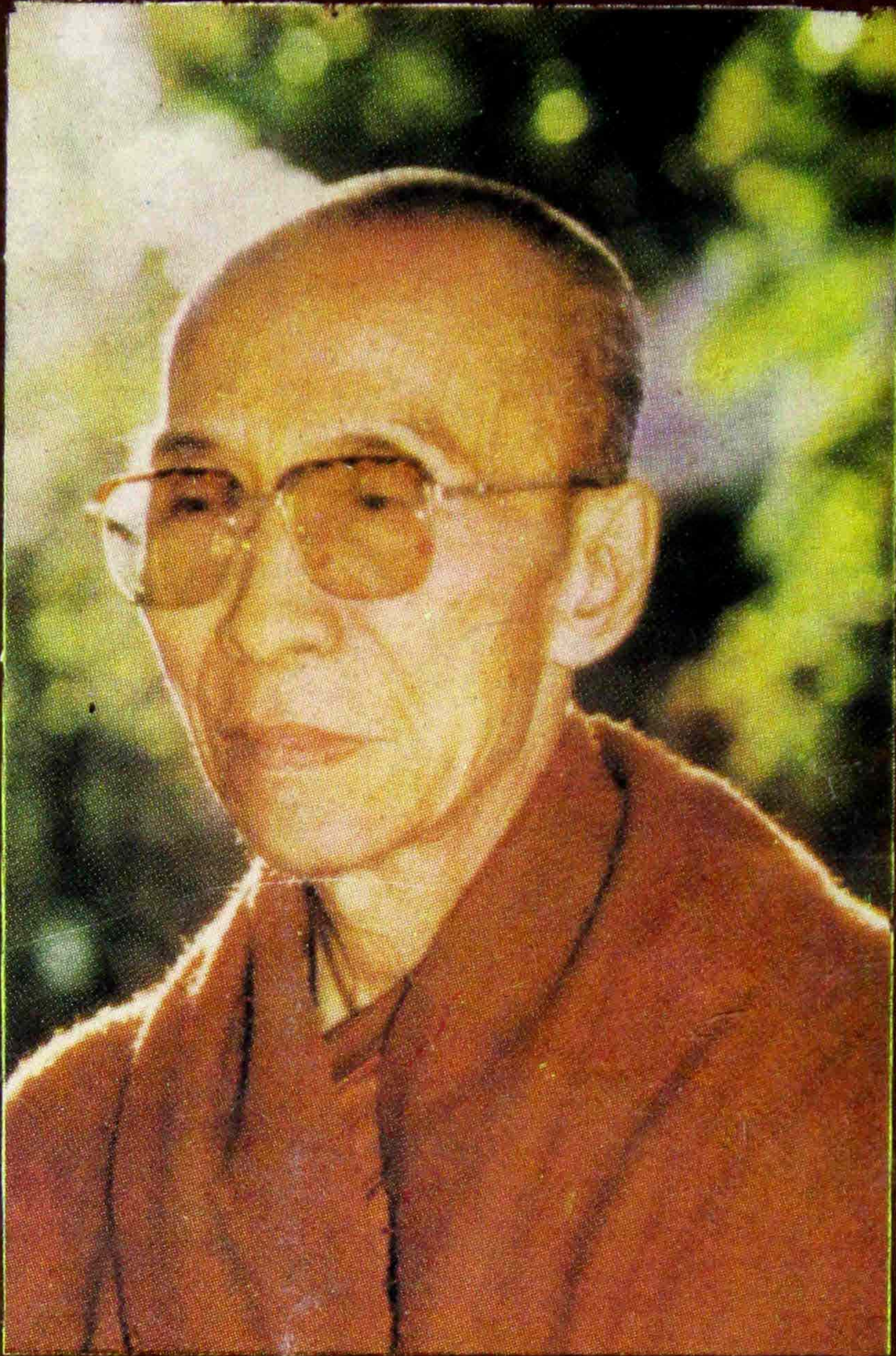
Is the most valuable and noble advice of the Buddha.

May you all be liberated from the sufferings of Samsāra (the cycle of birth and death) and attain the Ultimate Happiness of Nibbāna!

May you all be well and happy!







Sayādaw Bhaddanta Paññā Dīpa is President of the World Buddhists Meditation Institute, Yangon, Myanmar.

Sayādaw had travelled to USA, UK, former USSR and other European and Asian countries as a Buddhist Missionary for the propagation of the Dhamma.

He had attended many seminars and conferences on Buddhism in those countries and presented many papers.

This book is a collection of some of those papers on Buddha-Dhamma.

Sayādaw is well known for his untiring efforts for the propagation of the Buddha Sāsanā and also for his patience and kindness.

#### **Compiler**

*U Hla Myint, the compiler of this book, is an Assistant Director of the Department of Technical and Vocational Education. He serves as an assistant to Sayādaw when the Buddha Desanā Courses (in English) are conducted under the Sayādaw's guidance.*